

Composition and Literature

Composition and Literature

A Handbook and Anthology

James Sexton and Derek Soles

BCCAMPUS
VICTORIA, B.C.



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Preface

The purpose of this book is to help students achieve the learning objectives of their English 12 course. English 12 teaches students how to

- Write intelligently, clearly, and fluently;
- Understand and employ effectively the conventions of various forms of school and college writing assignments;
- Read actively and critically;
- Understand and appreciate diverse and inclusive works of imaginative literature; and
- Think critically, creatively, and reflectively.

By achieving these goals, English 12 helps students find success in all the academic courses they take, whether they complete high school or earn their Adult Graduation Diploma. This course also helps prepare students for further work at the post-secondary level if they choose to continue their formal education and for successful employment if they choose to enter the workforce after they have earned their Graduation Diploma.

Organization of this book

Composition and Literature: A Handbook and Anthology is divided into seven chapters. The first two chapters are a Composition Handbook designed to help Grade 12 students write clearly and effectively:

- “Chapter One: The Writing Process” reviews, explains, and presents the components of the process of completing writing assignments successfully at the Grade 12 level. It covers how to generate ideas, research a topic, compose a thesis, make a plan, write a draft, revise the draft, edit the draft, provide a source list. It includes questions for study and discussion and suggestions for small group activities.
- “Chapter Two: Common Writing Assignments” provides instruction and models of writing assignments commonly used in Grade 12 English: the narrative essay, examples essay, process essay, compare/contrast essay, cause/effect essay, and argumentative essay. The models are annotated to explain why they are successful representatives of their genre. The chapter includes questions for study and discussion and suggestions for small group activities.

The last five chapters are an Anthology of Literature, designed to help students read actively, analyze, understand, enjoy, and appreciate stories, poems, and plays by a diverse and inclusive group of exceptional writers:

- Chapter Three introduces students to the study of poetry. It contains many poems and links to other poems that are not in the public domain. It contains brief biographies of the authors, an

authoritatively edited text of the poems, appropriate footnotes, questions for study and discussion, suggestions for small group activities, and links that provide additional relevant information.

- Chapters Four, Five, and Six introduce students to the study of fiction: short stories, novellas, and novels. It contains many works of fiction and links to other works that are not in the public domain. It contains brief biographies of the authors, an authoritatively edited text of the stories, appropriate footnotes, questions for study and discussion, suggestions for small group activities, links to video productions of about half of the stories anthologized, and other relevant links.
- Chapter Seven introduces students to the study of drama. It contains plays and links to plays that are not in the public domain. It contains brief biographies of the authors, an authoritatively edited text of the plays, appropriate footnotes, questions for study and discussion, suggestions for small group activities, links to video productions of about half of the plays in the anthology, and other relevant links.

This book also contains appendices: a glossary of literary terms, a handbook of English grammar and usage, and an appendix on writing about literature.

I

The Writing Process

To achieve success, students must learn how to write effectively. Your teachers will assess your progress in most of the courses you take partially based on writing assignments they will require you to complete. In the future, your college instructors and even your employers will also assess the quality of your work based, in part, upon your ability to communicate in writing clearly and intelligently.

There is a process to follow to complete most school writing assignments successfully and effectively. You must access and acquire the knowledge you will need to give substance to your work; compose a thesis, which will provide readers the main or controlling idea you wish to express; shape the knowledge, the content you have accessed and acquired into an outline, to make certain your readers will follow your train of thought, as you develop your thesis; write a first draft; revise that draft, usually more than once; and edit the draft, carefully correcting errors in sentence grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling. If you have used information you took from books, articles, and internet sources in your assignment, you must check to make certain you have acknowledged those sources carefully and accurately.

The way in which the writing process is described above may make it seem straightforward and linear. Note carefully that it is usually not. You may refine your thesis after you have written a draft. You may acquire a new research source halfway through the process and refine the content of your essay as a result. You will revise and edit your work as you are writing, even if you apply the finishing touches to your work just before you hand it in. Writing is much more of a recursive than a linear process.

In this chapter, the components of the writing process are explained and illustrated in that linear order—from knowledge to thesis to plan to draft to revision to editing—but remember that good writers usually mix up that process.

1.

Access and Acquire Knowledge

Research Your Topic

Many of the writing assignments you undertake will require research. You will need to read and take notes on print and internet sources—books, articles, websites—that contain information that will help you develop the thesis of your essay. While you do so, keep in mind these guidelines for effective research:

1. Make certain your sources are valid and reliable. There is so much information readily available on any topic, and not all of it will be authentic. Some of it might even be so inaccurate it will undermine rather than support your thesis. Online encyclopedias are uneven: the content of some articles is excellent, but the content of others might be riddled with errors. Articles, online or in print, from academic journals are usually good sources, as are articles from established and respected magazines and newspapers. Internet sources with a URL ending in .edu (for education) or .gov (for government) are usually valid and reliable.¹ Be wary of using information from blogs and Facebook posts. Internet sources with a URL ending in .org (for organization) might be biased if the organization represents a certain social or political cause or point of view.
2. Make certain your sources are directly relevant to your topic. In this information age, it is usually possible to find good print and, especially, internet sources that will provide you with just the information you need to complete an assignment successfully. Some topics require current information. If, for example, you were writing an essay about treating the flu or recombinant DNA or the progress of global warming, sources written even just a couple of years ago may be outdated.
3. Refine your search terms, which are those keywords that you enter into database search boxes. For example, “Global warming” as a Google search term (without quotation marks) could yield about 444 million results; “causes of global warming” about 364 million; “the effects of global warming on hurricane intensity” about 37,000; and “the effects of global warming on hurricane intensity in Florida in 2017” about 12,000. This last number is still a lot, but it would be possible now to skim through the first twenty or so results to find the best sources. Another good way to refine your search and to have confidence in the sources it yields is by using a digitized database, such as JSTOR, EBSCO, or ProQuest, if your school has a subscription.
4. Write down all of the bibliographical information about your source, so you won’t have to access it again online or, worse, find a book again that you have already returned to the library. Record the full names of all of the authors; the full title of the book or article; the

1. Note that these domains are American.

exact date of publication: the year, and, for articles, the month and the day; the issue number and volume number for an article in an academic journal; the edition number, if it is other than the first edition or if it is a revised edition; the URL and, if available, the DOI (digital object identifier).

5. Consult your school librarian. Librarians can direct you to sources you might not otherwise have known about; help you identify the best, most reliable and valid sources; and help you refine your search terms so they yield the best results.

Exercise One

Select a topic of interest to you. Carefully following the guidelines presented above, find three articles that will be good sources of information for the topic you have selected.

In small groups, share and discuss the process you went through to find your sources and explain why you believe they are good sources. Share constructive advice on the source lists group members have put together.

Your teacher might ask you to hand in your articles.

Generate Ideas

All academic writing assignments require knowledge, but some do not require research. Both a narrative essay about a significant personal experience and an in-class or examination essay, which tests your knowledge of course content, do not require—in fact, preclude—the use of secondary sources. Even so, there are some techniques you can try to help you discover or access knowledge you can use to develop the ideas in a narrative or examination essay.

1. Focus in on your topic and then, for ten minutes or so, write out quickly and without regard to the rules of grammar and sentence structure ideas about your topic as they come randomly into your head. This is a technique known as freewriting, and it can be an effective way of generating ideas and content you can use.
2. Write out the keywords from your topic in the centre of a blank sheet of paper. Circle the keywords. Then, around the keywords, write out other points as they occur to you, points that are relevant to and could develop the main idea the keywords express. Then circle these points and draw lines linking together related ideas. This technique, known as webbing, can not only reveal ways of developing your thesis, but also help you begin to establish the organizational structure of your writing assignment.
3. Write out the questions that you will need to answer as you work your way through the process of completing your assignment successfully. Try to answer these questions, to the best of your ability, with the knowledge you already possess. This is a technique journalists use to file a full story. They ask who is involved; what happened; where did it happen; when did it happen; why did it happen; how did it happen? It is sometimes referred to as the W5 method or the pentad, though the “how” question does add a sixth dimension.

Exercise Two

Select one of the following broad topics: hockey, hip-hop music, vacations, designer handbags, reality television programs, weddings, lipstick. Working quickly, use the methods for generating ideas explained above to generate ideas about the topic you selected.

Remember this is often a good method for refining a broad topic into a workable thesis. See if any potential thesis statements emerge from this exercise.

In small groups, share your experience using these methods for generating ideas, stressing the extent to which you found them useful or ineffective.

2.

Find Your Thesis

An essay's thesis or thesis statement is its central or controlling idea, its essence, its main idea. It is the focal point for your topic. It is usually expressed as an opinion or an assertion, usually in a single sentence, which the rest of the essay supports and augments. It is typically the last sentence of the opening paragraph (when you are using paragraphs in a longer essay), though it can also be effectively placed elsewhere.

If, for example, your topic is on the search for life on other planets, your thesis, among the many possibilities, might be:

- Recent research into the topography of Mars increases the odds that Earth is not the only planet in our solar system that harbours life.
- While the search for extraterrestrial intelligence is an important function of the SETI Institute, the Institute also provides resources for students and educators in all aspects of astronomy and keeps the public informed about current issues in the field.
- Among the scores of movies about extraterrestrial intelligence, *Arrival* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* are the most thought-provoking.
- The Drake Equation provides no hard evidence of the existence of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, but it does suggest that the odds are in its favour.
- No official government investigation or serious scientific study has confirmed the existence of UFOs.

A good essay will develop the thesis in a series of paragraphs that provide some combination of examples, details, definitions, anecdotes, comparisons, contrasts, causes, and effects so that readers feel satisfied that the writer has established the validity of the thesis.

Keep in mind that your thesis might evolve and change as you work your way through the process of composing your essay. While revising your first or second draft, you may realize that some of the content of your essay does not quite relate to your thesis, which you may then have to refine.

A Blueprint Thesis

A blueprint thesis provides readers with not only the essay's controlling idea, but also the reasons and arguments in phrase or even word form in support of the controlling idea. A simple blueprint thesis for a short essay about the popularity of jeans might be:

Jeans are so popular because they are comfortable, durable, and stylish.

For a longer essay, the thesis would add more supporting points:

Jeans are so popular because they are an icon of our culture, cleverly marketed, comfortable, stylish, and durable.

The advantage of the blueprint thesis is that it alerts the reader to the essay's organizational pattern and so enhances the overall clarity of the text. One disadvantage is that it could reduce readers' interest in the rest of the essay since it gives much away. Another disadvantage is that the more complex the reasons in support of the thesis are, the more difficult the essay becomes to construct.

A General Thesis

A general thesis presents little else than the essay's controlling idea:

- There are several reasons why jeans are so ubiquitous an article of clothing.
- It is not difficult to explain the universal appeal of jeans.

The advantage of the general thesis is that it is concise and to the point. The disadvantage is that it can seem too much a statement of the obvious.

A Question Thesis

A question thesis poses a question to which the rest of the essay responds.

Why are denim jeans so popular?

An Implied Thesis

The implied thesis is not in a single sentence in an opening paragraph. Rather, it floats between the sentences, an authoritative but invisible presence. Here is an example:

Wander around a shopping mall, an airport, or a college campus, observe what the people are wearing, and you will learn, if you did not know already, that denim jeans are among the most popular items of clothing that people choose to wear. Today, in my college English class, 14 of the 26 students—and my professor—are wearing jeans. The average North American college student owns seven pairs of jeans (Ellison 14). Once acceptable only in casual venues, jeans are common now in the workplace—my bank manager wears jeans on casual Fridays!—and in restaurants that once had jacket-and-tie dress codes.

We love jeans because...

There is no single sentence that spells out the thesis, but its presence is there, confirmed by the opening phrase of the second paragraph.

The implied thesis is common in the writing of professional journalists and academics. In a good essay or article, readers know what the thesis is by the time they have come to the end of the introduction, but there may not be a single sentence they can underline and write beside in the margin "thesis." For students, the implied thesis is a bit of a risk: many teachers want a clear thesis, as an obvious sign that the student, whose essay they are evaluating, has learned and can apply this essential feature of academic writing.

An Argumentative Thesis

The thesis for an argument essay needs to be especially forthright. It must signal clearly to your readers your position on the issue under consideration.

An oil pipeline, spanning two provinces, would threaten the environment, fail to create enough jobs to justify the government's investment, and delay the crucial search for renewable sources of energy.

Exercise Three

Using the topic from Exercise One or Two, compose a general thesis, a blueprint thesis, and a thesis in the form of a question.

In small groups, share your thesis statements and share constructive advice about the scope, interest level, and clarity of the thesis statements group members have composed.

Your teacher might also want to check your thesis statements.

3.

Make a Plan

Clarity is essential in academic writing, and a sound organizational structure enhances clarity. After you have composed your thesis, consider how you will arrange the knowledge you have collected in support of your thesis into a well-organized series of paragraphs.

Your plan or outline might consist of a sophisticated system of headings and subheadings. Your teacher might expect you to turn in a formal outline of this nature. If not, the least you should do is jot down the points you know you will need to cover as you support and develop your thesis. If, for example, your thesis is “It is hardly surprising that McDonald’s is such a successful fast food franchise,” the points you jot down in support might include:

- Taste
 - food appeals to the taste buds of many consumers
 - burgers and fries are a staple of the North American diet
 - special sauce
 - toppings and condiments
- Cost
 - inexpensive
 - a family of four can eat out for under \$30
 - examples of cost of select menu items compared to cost of same or similar items at other restaurants
- Efficiency
 - assembly-line food preparation
 - wait is rarely more than ten minutes
 - drive-through

Note that different genres or rhetorical modes presuppose certain organizational structures or templates. These are included in the next chapter.

Exercise Four

Using one of the thesis statements you have composed while completing the exercises in this chapter,

construct an essay outline using a simple point-form structure or a numbered system of headings and subheadings.

In small groups, share your outline and offer constructive suggestions for improving the outlines of other group members.

Your teacher might ask you to hand in your outline.

4.

Write Your First Draft

After you have formulated your outline, you are ready to write the first draft of your assignment. Remember you might want to refine your outline, even after you have written parts of your first draft.

Your task now is to transform your outline into paragraphs.

Introductory Paragraph(s)

The opening of an academic writing assignment will vary in length, proportionate to the length of the entire assignment, from one paragraph for a shorter essay, to several for a longer one. A good opening typically serves two purposes: it provides context related to the assignment topic, and it presents the main or controlling idea, the thesis.

The context will make clear the genre of the essay: argument, compare/contrast, cause/effect, process. It will usually establish the topic's broader parameters, and it might include essential background information related to the topic. The thesis, discussed above, presents the assignment's central focus.

In the example below, the context is presented in the first two sentences and the thesis in the third.

Shin hanga means “new prints” in Japanese, and it designates an art movement by a group of gifted Japanese woodblock artists at work in the first two decades of the twentieth century. These exquisite works of art capture the human eye and command its attention until it examines carefully each square inch of the woodblock. The subjects—especially the quietly beautiful Japanese landscapes and seascapes—the clear and bold shapes and forms, and the glorious colours, in every shade and every hue, account for the excitement and enthusiasm *shin hanga* generates among discriminating art lovers.

Exercise Five

Write an introductory paragraph, based upon the outline you made for Exercise Four. Consider carefully the model introductory paragraph and the instructions for writing an effective introduction.

In small groups, share your introductory paragraphs and share constructive advice about the paragraphs' strengths and weaknesses.

Your teacher might ask you to hand in your introductory paragraph.

Revise and edit your introductory paragraph, in light of your group members' and teacher's advice.

Body Paragraphs

The body paragraphs of an academic writing assignment elucidate, augment, support, and develop the essay's thesis. The body consists of at least three, and up to about a dozen or more, paragraphs, depending upon the requirements of the assignment. A minor 500-word writing assignment will typically call for three body paragraphs; a major 5000-word assignment, approximately twelve. Good body paragraphs in an academic writing assignment have three qualities: unity, coherence, and substance.

Unity refers to the relationship of the content of a paragraph to its topic sentence. The topic sentence presents the main point of the paragraph. It is to a paragraph what the thesis is to the essay as a whole. For a paragraph to have unity, its content should develop its topic sentence. It may be stated explicitly—often, though by no means always, as the first sentence in the paragraph—or implied.

Coherence, or cohesion, is that property of written discourse that binds sentences and paragraphs together in the interest of clarity, logic, rhythm, and flow. The repetition of a keyword can establish coherence within a paragraph. A transitional word or phrase, such as “for example,” “on the other hand,” “in addition,” “however,” or “moreover,” can also establish coherence within a paragraph.

Substance, or adequate development, is a property a body paragraph possesses when that paragraph contains enough sentences to develop its topic sentence to the readers' satisfaction. Body paragraphs need examples, details, definitions, comparisons, contrasts, anecdotes, causes, and effects that support the thesis in order to be adequately developed. One or any combination of these methods or patterns of development will typically be used to develop a topic sentence.

Here is the first body paragraph from an essay, the thesis of which is, “The chow chow is a great choice for a pet owner who wants a distinctive-looking dog; a dog who is fiercely loyal, if a bit aloof with strangers; and one who is intelligent and easy to train.”

1In its homeland in northern China, the chow chow is *songshi quan*, “puffy lion-dog.” 2The name suits the dog's physical appearance. 3The chow chow has deep-set eyes; a large head; a beautiful, if squashed face; a pug nose; a bushy tail, which lies curled upon its back; and an impressive mane of hair, features which, together, do indeed make this breed resemble a stuffed toy lion. 4Chow chows are short and stocky, usually ranging from 43 to 51 cm tall. 5They have thick fur, usually reddish-brown, though, in some, black- or fawn-coloured. 6This is not an affectionate breed, but if one does lick your hand, you may notice that its tongue has a bluish tinge. 7Legend has it that when the god of creation was painting the sky blue, a chow chow licked the drops that fell from the divine brush. 8The chow chow's straight hind legs are another distinctive feature unusual among dogs, who usually have curved hind legs. 9The straight legs give the breed a distinctive stiff gait, especially noticeable when chow chows try to run.

This is a solid body paragraph, exemplifying the unity, coherence, and development a good body paragraph needs. It has a topic sentence and sentences, including the first, that develop the topic. Each sentence relates to the topic sentence, establishing paragraph unity. Sentence 7, about the chow chow licking the blue paint, almost veers away from the topic sentence, but the writer does link the sentence to the dog's blue-tinged tongue, one of its distinctive features.

Coherence is established by the repetition of the keyword “chow chow,” words like “breed” and “dog,” which echo the keyword, and pronouns, like “they” at the beginning of sentence 5 and “This” at the beginning of sentence 6. The transitional phrase “another distinctive feature” in sentence 8 also helps the paragraph cohere.

The paragraph is well-developed, hitting all of the right notes. It references the dog's size, its colour,

its facial features, its distinct physical characteristics. At nine sentences and about 180 words, it is the appropriate length for a school assignment body paragraph.

Exercise Six

Write a body paragraph (or more than one, according to your teacher's instructions) based on the outline you made for Exercise Four. Consider carefully the model body paragraph and the instructions for writing an effective body paragraph.

In small groups, share your body paragraphs and share constructive advice about the paragraphs' strengths and weaknesses.

Your teacher might ask you to hand in your body paragraph(s).

Revise and edit your body paragraph(s), in light of your group members' and teacher's advice.

Concluding Paragraph

The purpose of a concluding paragraph is to establish a sense of closure for your readers, to assure them that you have provided them with the information promised in your introduction and/or presented your argument in a forceful way that urges readers to consider your opinions carefully. This process may include a reaffirmation of your thesis and a summary of the essay's body.

Here is a concluding paragraph for an essay, the thesis of which questions the use of wind power as a viable source of renewable energy.

While there is no doubt that wind can be harnessed to produce a source of renewable energy, evidence cited here suggests that environmentalists have reason to curb their enthusiasm for wind power. Wind farms are a blight upon the landscape, a source of noise pollution, and a danger to birds. And when the wind dies down for a day or two, the TV turns off, the freezer thaws, and the lights go out.

Note that this concluding paragraph reaffirms the essay's thesis in the first sentence; then it recapitulates the points the writer made in the body; then, especially in that phrase "the lights go out," it establishes a sense of closure.

There is an old adage of communication theory: tell them what you are going to tell them; then tell them; then tell them what you have told them. It's too simplistic, of course, for the complex challenge of writing a school essay, but useful insofar as it reminds us of the function of introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs.

Exercise Seven

Write a concluding paragraph, based upon the outline you made for Exercise Four. Consider carefully the model concluding paragraph and the instructions for writing an effective conclusion.

In small groups, share your concluding paragraphs and share constructive advice about the paragraphs' strengths and weaknesses.

Your teacher might ask you to hand in your concluding paragraph.

Revise and edit your concluding paragraph, in light of your group members' and teacher's advice.

5.

Revise and Edit

Revise Your Work

Revision is an essential component of the writing process. It is distinct from editing (discussed next), which involves a reassessment of your work at the sentence level to correct any errors in sentence grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. Revision is a second (or third or fourth) look at your assignment's "big picture," the time when you re-read your drafts to make certain your organizational structure is sound, your content is robust, and your transitions from one paragraph to the next bind the essay together and establish its sense of coherence.

Revise your work, keeping in mind these guidelines for revision. A well-written essay needs:

- a sound organizational structure; a beginning, a middle, and an end; an introduction, a body, and a conclusion
- sufficient content so readers feel the writer has delivered on the promise implicit in the thesis statement and the paragraph topic sentences
- **cohesion**; a repetition of keywords and use of transitional words and phrases which link paragraphs together

Edit Your Work

Editing is the process of reviewing each sentence in your writing assignment, identifying and correcting errors in sentence grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. If you turn in a draft of your assignment, your teacher might flag and identify editing errors, but leave it to you to make the corrections. Certainly, editing errors will be identified when your teacher returns a graded assignment to you. You want to review those errors to make you avoid them in your next assignment.

Common Editing Errors

Here is a list of common editing errors, preceded by the abbreviation your teacher might use to identify them in the margins of your writing assignment. Please note that you will find instruction on identifying, avoiding, and correcting these errors in [Appendix A: Glossary of English Rhetoric, Grammar, and Usage](#).

ad: adjective used incorrectly.

agr: usually refers to an error in pronoun agreement; could refer to an error in subject-verb agreement, though that may be abbreviated as sv. agr.

awk: awkward sentence structure.

cap: error in use of capitalization.

case: error in pronoun case.

co: error in use of coordinate conjunction.

coh: coherence weak.

com: faulty comparison.

concl: weak concluding paragraph.

cs: comma splice.

d: diction; poor word choice.

def: term used should be defined.

dm: dangling modifier.

doc: documentation; source needs to be cited or error in citation.

ex: example needed or would be useful.

for: formatting error.

frag: sentence fragment.

fs: fused sentence.

hyph: hyphen needed or not needed.

^: insert.

intro: first paragraph weak; should be revised.

it: italics needed or used incorrectly.

jarg: jargon.

lc: lowercase needed; usually indicates a capital letter (uppercase) used incorrectly.

mix: mixed construction; similar to awk (awkward).

mm: misplaced modifier.

no ,: comma not needed.

np: begin new paragraph.

//: parallelism needs improving.

pass: switch from passive voice to active voice.

ref: pronoun reference (not to be confused with pronoun case) not clear.

run-on: run-on sentence.

shift: an abrupt change (often in tone) within a sentence.

sp: spelling.

sub: subordination; usually means that sentence structure and variety would be improved with subordination.

sum: better to summarize this; usually in reference to a quote from a secondary source.

trans: transition; need to connect this sentence with previous one or this paragraph with the next.

vague: sentence or passage needs to be revised in the interest of clarity.

vt: verb tense.

wrdy: wordy; revise for concision.

ww: wrong word.

[Provide link to editing exercises with answers]

6.

Cite Your Sources

Many of your writing assignments, not just in your English class but in other classes as well, require research. Your teachers will expect you to acknowledge your research sources and will provide instruction in how to do this, using a recognized academic citation method.

It is essential that you acknowledge your sources thoroughly and accurately. If you do not, you may face an accusation of plagiarism. Plagiarism is the failure—deliberately, unknowingly, or carelessly—to signal to your readers that the content of any part of your written work—direct quotes, paraphrases, or summaries—comes from a research source, including an essay purchased online. Plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct, usually punished at the minimum by a failing grade.

There are a variety of reputable and widely used citation methods, the method chosen usually dependent upon the academic discipline within which the writer is working. The Modern Language Association of scholars in literature and language designed the MLA method for citing sources. History and philosophy may also use the MLA method. The American Psychological Association developed the APA method for citing sources, widely used in the social sciences, including education. The University of Chicago publishes *The Chicago Manual of Style*, which provides another citation system widely used in academia.

This chapter provides instruction in the use of the MLA method. It then provides links to instructions in the use of the APA and CMS methods.

The MLA Method

If you are required to use the MLA citation method, you must cite all of your sources twice: first in MLA shorthand in parentheses within the text, and second at the end of the paper in a list called works cited. The in-text parenthetical citation is brief, typically an author's last name and a page number only.

The works cited list contains the complete bibliographical information for each source, which is all the information readers who want to access the source would require. It is organized alphabetically, by author's last name, so the parenthetical citation directs readers efficiently to the corresponding entry in the works cited list.

Rules for In-Text Parenthetical Citation

To indicate a direct quote from a secondary source, place quotation marks around the words you are quoting and then put the author's last name and the page number from the secondary source in which the information can be found. Short direct quotes are integrated into the text of the essay and placed between quotation marks, "so a short direct quote properly acknowledged would look like this" (Author 34). Note the quotation marks around our imagined quote from a secondary source and note

that there is not a comma between the author's last name ("Author," in our example) and the page number.

If the author's name is already mentioned in the text, only the page number is placed in parentheses: As Author notes, "only the page number is required" (34).

Long quotes are indented and blocked off from the text of the essay. The distinction between short quotes and long ones is somewhat arbitrary, but quotes of more than about three lines should be set off from the rest of the essay in the manner illustrated here.

Note that the quotation marks have been eliminated. The indentation indicates that the material is quoted directly from a secondary source. Quotation marks are used only if the original uses quotation marks. Note also that after a short quote comes the parenthetical citation followed by a period, but in the long, indented quote, like this one, the period precedes the parenthetical citation. (Author 39)

Most instructors do not appreciate too many long direct quotes in student essays, especially if the quotes create the impression that students are turning in a "cut and paste" assignment.

In addition to direct quotes, you must cite other information taken from a secondary source. The general rule is that if you possessed the information before you began the essay (as in, it's general knowledge), you do not need to cite it, but if you acquired the information in the course of writing the essay, you do need to cite it. Again, put in parentheses the author's last name and the page number where the information can be found. You need to include the page number even if you have paraphrased the information.

If you have used two or more works by the same author, you need to provide a shorthand version of the title of the source to distinguish it from other titles by the same author (Author, *Short* 34). Note the use of the comma after the author's name but not between the title and the page number. If the author's name is mentioned, his or her name is not included in the citation: As Author has shown, "citing sources can be frustrating" (*Short* 34).

If your source is written by four or more people, you need only name the first author followed by the Latin words *et al.* (meaning "and others") and, of course, the page number (First et al. 145). Note the period after "al." Again, note that no commas are used. *Et al.* is also used in place of all but the first author's name if you mention the author's name in the text of the essay: Smith et al. have conducted research that suggests that "students enjoy writing academic essays" (145).

If your source is written by a corporate author, treat the corporate author as you would a single author: According to government sources, ten-year-olds watch an average of four hours of television per day (Royal Commission on Elementary Education 234).

If the author of your source is anonymous, name the title or a shortened version in the parenthetical citation. *Italicize* a book title; put quotation marks around an article title. If you use a shortened version, include the first word in the title since it will be alphabetized by title in the works cited list. If, for example, the title of your source is "Rating the Quality of the Undergraduate Programs of British Universities," your citation could be as short as the word "Rating" ("Rating" 86).

If you quote from a novel, follow the procedure for a single author. You may also include the chapter number to help your readers find the passage in a different edition of the novel from the one you used. If you include the chapter number, put a semicolon between the page number and the chapter number (Austen 79; ch. 6). Usually you do not have to include the author's name because the context of your discussion will make clear who the author is.

If you quote from a poem, give the line numbers you are quoting instead of the page number on which the quote appears (Wordsworth 34–40). Provide a shortened version of the title if you quote from

more than one poem by the same author and if the context has not made clear the author and the title (Wordsworth, “Tintern” 34–40). Note the punctuation.

If you quote from a Shakespearean play or from another play in verse, list the act, scene, and line numbers, separated by periods, so that a quote taken from Act IV, Scene 2, lines nine to eleven would be (4.2.9–11).

If you quote from the Bible, list the chapter and the verse or verses, separated by a period. Include an abbreviated title of the book, if the context does not make it obvious. For example, a quote from “Leviticus,” Chapter 12, verses two to four would be (Lev. 12.2–4).

If you quote from a work from an anthology, remember it is the author’s name and not the name of the anthology editor that appears in parentheses.

If you quote from an indirect source—a source quoted in one of your sources—include the abbreviation for “quoted in” in your parenthetical citation: Smith notes that “indirect sources must be cited appropriately” (qtd. in Robins 257). Note carefully the way the citation is punctuated.

If you got the same information from more than one source or if you want to underscore the authority of a point by citing more than one source, do so by separating the sources from each other with semicolons: Experts agree that the semicolon can be used between sources (Wilson 34; Martens 68; Pelies 124).

If your source has no page numbers (as many electronic sources do not), you may omit the page numbers or include the paragraph number if the paragraphs are numbered (as they sometimes are in electronic sources): If necessary, “you should cite the paragraph number in place of the page number” (Smith, par. 12). Note the way this citation is punctuated.

Rules for List of Works Cited

The works cited list contains the complete bibliographical information for each source used in an academic writing assignment. Each item in a works cited list must contain enough information so that readers could access the source themselves, online or at the library, if they chose to do so.

You should follow a model, in order to use MLA format correctly. Determine the type of source you are using in your list of works cited; then find an example of the same type of source, properly cited; then mimic the format of the properly cited source as you prepare your own. A variety of such models are presented below. If the model you need is not represented in the list below, consult the most recent edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

The Modern Language Association recognizes the complexity of citing sources at a time when we get our information from such a wide array of print, digital, and online media. They allow for some leeway in the information included.

Sample Citations

For a **book in print**, the core elements are author, italicized title, publisher, and date of publication. The place of publication is no longer a core element. Here is an example:

Smitherman, Geneva. *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans*. Routledge, 2006.

A book, of course, might have more than one author; it might be in an edition subsequent to the first; it might have an editor or a translator. Note the form of the MLA Works Cited for the books listed below. Note, especially:

If a book has **two authors**, the second author's name follows, first name first.

Adler-Kassner, Linda and Elizabeth Wardle. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. Utah State UP, 2015.

If a book is in an **edition other than the first**, the edition number follows the title. Note the punctuation.

Ferris, Dana. *Treatment of Error in Second Language Student Writing*, 2nd. Ed. U of Michigan Press, 2011.

If there are **two books by the same author** a line replaces the author's name for the second (and subsequent, if there are any) source. This rule applies to all types of sources.

Gee, James P. *The Anti-Education Era: Creating Smarter Students Through Digital Learning*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

—. *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Smitherman, Geneva. *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans*. Routledge, 2006.

If the book **does not have a named author**, the title takes the place of the author and is alphabetized in the Works Cited list, accordingly.

Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. American Educational Research Association, 2014.

If the book is a **translation**, the name of the translator follows the title.

Voloshinov, V.N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik, Harvard UP, 1986.

If a book has **three or more authors**, the Latin phrase et al. (meaning "and others") follows the first author's name.

White, Edward, et al. *Very Like a Whale: The Assessment of Writing Programs*. Utah State UP, 2015.

For an **article or a story or a poem from a book**, typically an anthology of readings or literary works, start with the name of the author and the title of the shorter work, followed by the title of the book and the names of its editor(s), in the manner illustrated below.

Larkin, Philip. "Talking in Bed." *Poems. Poets. Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology*. 3rd. ed., edited by Helen Vendler, Bedford St. Martin's, 2010, p. 114.

For an article from a periodical (journal, magazine, newspaper) in print, the core elements are author(s), title of article, title of periodical, number(s), date, page numbers. If the article is suspended, meaning it is to be continued towards the end of the newspaper or magazine, a plus sign follows the page numbers. Study these examples:

Burrough, Bryan. "Field of Nightmares." *Vanity Fair*, Nov. 2016, pp. 164–169+.

Gabriel, Trip. "50 Years Into the War on Poverty, Hardship Hits Back." *New York Times*, 20 April 2014, p. A1.

Greer, Jane. "Expanding Working-Class Rhetorical Traditions: The Moonlight Schools and Alternative Solidarities among Appalachian Women, 1911-1920." *College English*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2015, pp. 216-35.

For sources accessed **online**, state the author; the title; the name of the journal, newspaper, or magazine;

the volume and issue number, if available; the information service (ProQuest, Academic Search Premier...), and the URL or, better, the DOI. If you use a DOI, the date of access is not necessary; it is recommended if you use the source's URL. The MLA allows some latitude in citing internet sources, in recognition of the vast array of choices and the inconsistency in information available about authors, dates, titles. Study the following examples of online sources, cited in MLA format.

Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and The National Writing Project (NWP), "Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing," January 2001, wpacouncil.org/framework.

Lovett, Richard A. and Scott Hoffman. "Ark of the Covenant: Many Legends, No Evidence." *National Geographic*. (n.d.), <http://science.nationalgeographic.com/science/archaeology/ark-covenant/>. Accessed 3 Jan. 2017.

"Oral Presentation – Classroom Workshop." *YouTube*, uploaded by [tamuwritingcenter](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd963LM), 1 Feb. 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJvUcd963LM.

Robertson, Liane, et al. "Notes Toward a Theory of Prior Knowledge and Its Role in Composers' Transfer of Knowledge and Practice." *Composition Forum*, no. 26, Fall 2012, compositionforum.com/issue/26/prior-knowledge-transfer.php.

Takayoshi, Pamela. "The Shape of Electronic Writing: Evaluating and Assessing Computer-assisted Writing Processes and Products." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 13, no. 2, December 1996, pp. 245-57. JSTOR, doi: 10.1016/S8755-4615(96)90013-4.

Additional Notes

1. The title "Works Cited" is centred and appears in roman type. Do not use italics, boldface, or large lettering. One line is left between the title and the first entry.
2. The works cited list is arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. If the author of the source is anonymous, the source is placed in the list alphabetically by its title. The sources are not numbered.
3. The list uses hanging indentation. The first line of each source is not indented but all subsequent lines are.
4. Book, journal, newspaper, and magazine titles are italicized, but article titles are placed in quotation marks.
5. Page numbers are included for articles in journals, newspapers, and magazines and for articles or essays included in an edited anthology or collection of essays.
6. Academic journals are identified by the year in which they were published, a volume number, and, if there is one, an issue number.
7. Citations for online sources include the date the source appeared online and may include the date the user of the source accessed the source.
8. Citations for online sources include the source's Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or, preferred if available, the Digital Object Identifier (DOI).
9. Like the rest of the essay, the works cited list is double-spaced.
10. If one author has written two (or more) different sources cited in an academic text, a straight

line replaces the author's name in the subsequent citations.

11. You might wish to use an online citation generator, such as Citation Machine, EasyBib, or Cite This For Me to help you cite your sources correctly. You should still double-check the accuracy of your citation against a textbook model. And you need to make certain the citation generator uses the most recent version of the citation system.

The APA Method

The American Psychological Association method for citing sources is also widely used, especially in college courses. If you take a psychology or an education course, you will be required to use the APA method to cite sources in your writing assignments. Other disciplines which may use APA include business, sociology, international relations, political science, and criminology.

Here, courtesy of University of Alberta Libraries, is a link which explains the rules and regulations for citing books, articles, web resources, and multimedia resources using the APA method: [APA Citation Style Guide](#).

II

Common Writing Assignments

Once you have acquired a sound understanding of the (recursive) process you must go through to complete a school writing assignment successfully, you need to match this knowledge with the conventions of the writing assignments your teachers will require you to complete, as there are a wide variety.

Your biology teacher might ask you to explain in writing the process of photosynthesis. Your history teacher might ask you to write an essay about the causes and effects of the Vietnam War. Your English teacher might ask you to compare and contrast the themes and style of two poems or short stories. Your economics teacher might ask for an extended definition of deflation. Your business teacher might ask for a paper summarizing examples of successful fast-food marketing campaigns. Most of your teachers, and certainly college instructors, will ask for a written argument in which you support your views on an issue relevant to course content.

In this chapter, you will learn about the nature of the content and the organizational structure of writing assignments common in high school and college courses. They are the common types or genres of written discourse. They are also referred to as the rhetorical modes of written expression. They are:

- The narrative essay
- The examples essay
- The extended definition essay
- The process (“how to”) essay
- The cause/effect essay
- The compare/contrast essay
- The argument essay

Note that there is often overlap among these rhetorical modes. An extended definition essay and a cause/effect could certainly include examples; a compare/contrast essay might embed an argument; a narrative anecdote might enrich an assignment in any rhetorical mode; a process essay might need key terms defined. Usually one rhetorical mode will dominate a writing assignment, but other modes are often present as well.

7.

The Narrative Essay

A narrative essay recounts a personal experience. Not just any personal experience, but usually one that taught the author an important life lesson. It is a common high school writing assignment.

The template for a narrative essay is usually simple and straightforward because the essay is typically presented in a series of linear paragraphs, arranged in chronological order. The thesis is often implied, rather than stated explicitly, in the introduction, but its reaffirmation in the conclusion may be more explicit, especially if the writer wants to stress the nature of the life lesson he or she learned from the experience the essay recounts.

A good narrative essay shares most of the qualities of a good essay in other rhetorical modes. It should be clear, detailed, interesting, and informative. The difference between narrative and other essay forms lies in its tone. The tone or voice of a writing assignment refers to the level of formality or informality evident in the writing style. An email or text message to your friend, with its use of slang, relative indifference to grammar, emojis, and inside jokes, is written in a very informal style. An article in an academic journal, with its sophisticated diction and perfect grammar, is written in a formal style. Most of your writing assignments will have a relatively formal tone, not to the level of an academic journal article, but far more sophisticated than your text messages.

A narrative essay, however, since it recounts a personal experience, told from the first-person (“I was in Bangladesh to visit...”) point-of-view, will tend to have a more casual, informal tone. Diction your teacher might frown upon in an argument essay (“It was the last sailing of the night and it was one wild ride”) is usually deemed acceptable in a narrative essay, which might also contain dialogue, rarely used in other rhetorical modes. A less formal sentence structure may also be more acceptable in a narrative than in a more academic essay (“And the curried prawns simmered in coconut milk. So good.”) It is not essential to share with readers an experience they can relate to, but it does help add human interest to a narrative.

Here is a famous example of a narrative essay, “Shooting an Elephant” by George Orwell (1903–1950), the English novelist and essayist, best known for his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. When he was a young man, Orwell worked for the Indian Imperial Police in Burma. “Shooting an Elephant” is based upon an incident he experienced there.

Example: Shooting an Elephant by George Orwell

Published 1936

In Moulmein, in lower Burma,¹ I was hated by large numbers of people—the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically—and secretly, of course—I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been Bugged with bamboos—all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj² as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in *saecula saeculorum*,³ upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. It was a tiny incident in itself, but it gave me a better glimpse than I had had before of the real nature of imperialism—the real motives for which despotic governments act. Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old .44 Winchester and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful *in terrorem*.⁴ Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone “must.” It had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of “must” is due, but on the previous night it had broken its chain and escaped. Its mahout, the only person who could manage it when it was in that state, had set out in pursuit, but had taken the wrong direction and was now twelve hours' journey away, and in the morning the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. The Burmese population had no weapons and were quite helpless against it. It had already destroyed somebody's bamboo hut, killed a cow and raided some fruit-stalls and devoured the stock; also it had met the municipal rubbish van and, when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had turned the van over and inflicted violences upon it.

1. Now known as Myanmar, it is a country in southeast Asia bordering Thailand, Laos, China and Bangladesh.

2. British rule in India.

3. A Latin phrase which expresses the idea of eternity.

4. Latin, a legal threat; here, to inspire fear in someone.

The Burmese sub-inspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palm-leaf, winding all over a steep hillside. I remember that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning the people as to where the elephant had gone and, as usual, failed to get any definite information. That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes. Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of any elephant. I had almost made up my mind that the whole story was a pack of lies, when we heard yells a little distance away. There was a loud, scandalized cry of "Go away, child! Go away this instant!" and an old woman with a switch in her hand came round the corner of a hut, violently shooing away a crowd of naked children. Some more women followed, clicking their tongues and exclaiming; evidently there was something that the children ought not to have seen. I rounded the hut and saw a man's dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie,⁵ almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes. The people said that the elephant had come suddenly upon him round the corner of the hut, caught him with its trunk, put its foot on his back and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony. (Never tell me, by the way, that the dead look peaceful. Most of the corpses I have seen looked devilish.) The friction of the great beast's foot had stripped the skin from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. As soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend's house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. I had already sent back the pony, not wanting it to go mad with fright and throw me if it smelt the elephant.

The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below, only a few hundred yards away. As I started forward practically the whole population of the quarter flocked out of the houses and followed me. They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant—I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary—and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. I marched down the hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels. At the bottom, when you got away from the huts, there was a metalled road and beyond that a miry waste of paddy fields a thousand yards across, not yet ploughed but soggy from the first rains and dotted with coarse grass. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd's approach. He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth.

I had halted on the road. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. It is a serious matter to shoot a working elephant—it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery—and obviously one ought not to do it if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance, peacefully eating, the elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow. I thought then and I think now that his attack of "must" was already passing off; in which case he would merely wander harmlessly about until the mahout came back and caught him. Moreover, I did not in the least

5. Dravidians are ancient race of southern India. Originally, "coolie" was a term meaning unskilled labourer; it is now considered a racially offensive term.

want to shoot him. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not turn savage again, and then go home.

But at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes—faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd—seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib.⁶ For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the “natives,” and so in every crisis he has got to do what the “natives” expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing—no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a large animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steam-roller. But even then I was not thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of “natives”; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do.

There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim. The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the

6. A term used by native inhabitants of India under the Raj to address a European of official status.

theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole, actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick—one never does when a shot goes home—but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time—it might have been five seconds, I dare say—he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upward like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open—I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing dahs and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee⁷ coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

7. Dravidian labourer from the town of Coringa, India.

Activities

Shooting an Elephant

Study Questions

Respond to these questions in writing, in small group discussion, or both.

1. Do you think “Shooting an Elephant” is a well-written and entertaining narrative? Explain your answer.
2. The narrator’s decision to kill the elephant is influenced by the crowd of onlookers. Describe a time when you let other people’s expectations influence your actions.
3. How would you describe the tone or voice of “Shooting an Elephant”? How does the author establish this tone?
4. This narrative is notable for its long paragraphs, filled with vivid details. Select one such paragraph and analyze it in the context of the guidelines for effective paragraph development discussed in the previous chapter.
5. “Shooting an Elephant” is not a racist narrative, yet some racist views are evident on occasion in the story. Provide two examples of racist elements and comment on the effect they have on the story Orwell tells.

Writing Assignments

1. Keeping in mind the guidelines presented above for writing an effective narrative, write a narrative essay of approximately 750 words on a topic of your choice or one your teacher provides.
2. Write a brief essay in which you examine the reasons why—the causes—the narrator shot the elephant. See the section later in this chapter on the cause/effect essay.

Text Attributions

- “Shooting an Elephant” by George Orwell is free of known copyright restrictions in Canada.

8.

The Examples Essay

An examples essay supports, develops, and defends its thesis in a series of paragraphs, each of which typically illustrates one way in which the thesis statement can be supported.

If you were writing an essay on “Common Minor Penalties in Hockey,” you might have one body paragraph on tripping, one on interference, and one on roughing. If you were doing a longer assignment, such as a survey of all penalties in hockey, you could subdivide your essay into examples of minor, major, and match penalties, each section of which would require more than one paragraph. The conclusion needs to provide readers with that important sense of closure, asserting that the examples have affirmed the thesis and possibly reminding readers of the benefits your information has provided: Hockey is more entertaining to watch when we understand why players are sometimes sent to the penalty box.

To better understand what an examples essay is, read carefully this essay, which describes examples of the red wine grapes of British Columbia.

Example: Red Wine Grapes of British Columbia

Oenophiles and even less devoted wine drinkers are more likely to associate red wine production with France, Italy, and California than Canada. Yet British Columbia is home now to some excellent estate wineries, especially in the Okanagan region, the climate of which is conducive to the growth of the finest red wine grapes. British Columbia vintners grow and harvest Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Pinot Noir grapes to produce red wines, which are growing in quality and reputation.

The Merlot grape is dark blue. It is cultivated by vintners in virtually every wine-producing regions of the world. It is the red wine grape that BC vintners plant and harvest most frequently (Pawsey 2). It produces excellent varietal wines, which are those made mainly from the juice of a single type of grape (“Varietal”). The Merlot grapes grown in British Columbia are high in tannins, a substance found in the skin of the grape, which gives BC Merlots a pleasantly dry and bitter taste, redolent of unsweetened black tea (“Tannins”). The tannins combined with the red fruit flavours from the juice of the grape mellow out the taste of a Merlot wine, producing a medium-bodied, earthy sensation on the tongue. BC Merlots pair well with most foods, though vegetarians and pescatarians will usually prefer a lighter-bodied red.

The Cabernet Sauvignon grape is hardy enough to thrive in all wine-producing climates, including in the Okanagan, with its sometimes severe temperature fluctuations. It produces wine darker in colour than the Merlot but with less tannins (“Cabernet”). BC “cab savs” are usually full-bodied with moderate acidity. Skilled wine drinkers can taste cherry and mint working in harmony in a fine Cabernet Sauvignon wine (“Cabernet”). This is the carnivore’s grape, pairing well with meat lovers’ pizza, rare steak, baked ham, lamb chops, and thick pulled-pork sandwiches.

If the Cabernet Sauvignon is the muscle grape, the Pinot Noir is the delicate and sensitive member of the family. It is more susceptible than others to disease, and even when it is harvested successfully and

made into wine, the wine it produces is fickle, sometimes outstanding, sometimes disappointing (Pawsey 3). British Columbia’s climate should not be conducive to growing the pinot noir grape, but has become so, as one of the few fortunate consequences of global warming (Pawsey 2). BC Pinots are low in tannins, light-bodied, and paler in colour than their Merlot and cab sav cousins. They typically taste of red fruits, with hints of vanilla and leather (“Pinot Noir”). They pair perfectly with the salmon caught in the Pacific Ocean and in the rivers of British Columbia, with other fish dishes, lighter cheeses, and even vegan food.

When it comes to choosing a BC wine cultivated from a red grape, discriminating omnivores are the lucky ones. They may choose a Merlot, a Cabernet Sauvignon, a Pinot Noir, or any blending of the three to fulfill their quest for the perfect complement for their meal.

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Activities

Red Wine Grapes of British Columbia

Study Questions

Respond to these questions in writing, in small group discussion, or both.

1. What is the thesis of this essay?
2. What is an oenophile?
3. Do you think “The Red Wine Grapes of British Columbia” is informative? What did you learn from the essay?
4. Is the concluding paragraph effective? Why or why not?
5. Is the works cited list appropriate for this essay? Why or why not?

Writing Assignment

Write an examples essay of approximately 750 words on one of the following topics: popular video games, designer handbags, basketball shoes, science fiction movies, high-performance sports cars. You may also select your own topic or one recommended by your teacher.

9.

The Extended Definition Essay

The extended definition essay presents a detailed account of a single term or concept that is central to the content of the course for which the essay is written. What is cryptocurrency? What is a black hole? What is an algorithm? What is symbolism? What is deoxyribonucleic acid? What is National Socialism? Every subject has its own special vocabulary, and teachers will often assign an essay requiring students to present a detailed definition of a key term.

Read carefully this extended definition of feminism.

Example: On Feminism

The word “feminism” describes a popular movement for social justice, based on the premise that women have been and continue to be systemically oppressed by men who do not want to share the greater social, political, and economic power they have historically possessed. But the definition of feminism extends beyond raising the status of one gender; feminism recognizes that equal standards for all people regardless of gender will benefit society as a whole (Montgomery). In this respect, feminism can be interpreted as synonymous with egalitarianism.

Feminist scholars divide the movement into three phases or “Waves.” First-wave feminism emerged in the early twentieth century in the form of a fight for the rights to vote, to own property, and to qualify for work in fields historically reserved for men. Second-wave feminism emerged in the 1960s as baby boomers entered university and demanded admission to programs that traditionally favoured men, such as engineering, medicine, and forestry, as well as “equal pay for work of equal value” (Montgomery). Third-wave or post-feminism is the movement’s twenty-first century incarnation, devoted essentially to ending all forms of gender discrimination. Some even argue that a fourth wave has recently emerged, one that is concerned with the portrayal of women in social media.

While there is no clear consensus as to when first-wave feminism began, most accept that it emerged as industrialization progressed in the nineteenth century. Martha Lear coined the term in 1968, though the first wave focused on what we now consider basic issues of inequality (“What Was”). One of the earliest feminists was Mary Wollstonecraft, who mostly wrote in the late eighteenth century advocating that societies, and individuals specifically, should have rights that the state provides. Most other philosophers and writers of the time ignored women and Wollstonecraft was among the first to call for gender equality. After the American Civil War, Elizabeth Stanton and Susan Anthony rallied support for what they saw as one of the first great obstacles to greater freedom: the right to vote. Others, such as Barbara Leigh Smith, saw employment and education for women as critical areas to focus on.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Biblical interpretation of women’s role in the house and family prevented their ability to advance feminist ideals. To counteract the power of the church’s sex-based hierarchy, Stanton produced an influential work called *The Woman’s Bible*, in which she argued for equality using biblical references. This helped to provide religious justification, at least for some, for emerging feminism in the period. Furthermore, the National Woman Suffrage Association became a

prominent organization, and in 1869, John Allen Campbell, the governor of Wyoming, became the first governor to grant women the right to vote (“What Was”). And when women replaced men in factories during the First World War, many realized that women did have equal skills to men. In Canada, women won the right to vote in most provinces during the war. In 1921, Agnes Macphail became the first woman in Canada elected to Parliament.

In the US, women had to wait a bit longer. Feminist organizations lobbied indefatigably and eventually convinced Congress that women should have the right to vote. Finally, in 1920, women won the right to vote across the United States. While the process itself was contentious, featuring hunger strikes and even mob violence, the gradual acceptance of women as voters can be considered the culminating success of first-wave feminism.

“The Progressive Era” took place in the 1930s; women’s social and political activism grew, and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt advocated for the appointment of women to positions within the administration. Her cause was further advanced during the Second World War when, again, women had to take over the work enlisted men were forced to abandon. After the war, however, North America saw a new emphasis on domesticity. When the soldiers returned, women were almost uniformly fired and forced back into their duties of domestic chores and child-raising (Bisignani). Second-wave feminism was a reaction to this post-war obsession with the ideal of the contented housewife and suburban domesticity, a lifestyle that often isolated women and severely limited their choices and opportunities.

Feminism’s second wave truly began in the early 1960s and focused not just on legal barriers to civil equality but also examined social inequalities. Second-wave feminists sought to change discriminatory policies on sexuality and sexual identity; marriage and child-rearing; workplace environment; reproductive rights; and violence against women. They formed local, regional, and federal government groups on behalf of women, resulting in human rights and women’s equality becoming a growing part of the North American political agenda. Finally, they created new, more positive images of women in both pop culture and the media to fight the negative stereotypes commonly in circulation, primarily that of the “happy housewife.”

The second wave of feminism included many landmark moments. In the 1960s, many government health agencies approved the oral contraceptive pill, and in 1963, the Equal Pay Act was passed in the US. In 1968, Coretta Scott King assumed leadership of the African-American civil rights movement and expanded the platform to include women’s rights. This led to Shirley Chisholm becoming the first African-American woman elected to Congress. In 1972, the passage of Title IX ensured equal funding for women’s opportunities in education, and the first women’s studies program in the US opened at San Diego State University. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the second wave came in 1973, when the *Roe v. Wade* case resulted in women’s access to safe and legal abortion (Bisignani).

Third-wave feminism began in the 1990s and still exists today (Demarco). There are many different outlets and angles of feminism now, but the most important values of the third wave include gender equality, identity, language, sex positivity, breaking the glass ceiling, body positivity, ending violence against women, fixing the media’s image of women, and environmentalism.

Third-wave feminists assert that there is no universal identity for women; women come from every religion, nationality, culture, and sexual preference. Different forms of media such as fashion magazines, newspapers, and television favour white, young, slender women, a fact which negatively impacts all women and results in body anxiety. To combat this anxiety, modern feminists have fought for body positivity, quashing the opinions of those who believe that overweight people are lazy and unhealthy. Feminists want society’s view of women to expand, to recognize, for example, that it is possible to be beautiful enough to be a model, but also smart enough to be an astronaut or a CEO. But considering that, in 2017, only 18 out of 500 Fortune CEOs and 22 out of 197 global heads of state were women, it is clear that third-wave feminism has not yet removed the glass ceiling (Demarco).

The emerging fourth wavers speak in terms of “intersectionality,” whereby women’s oppression can only fully be understood in the context of marginalization of other groups, who are victims of racism, ageism, classism, and homophobia (Demarco). Among the third wave’s bequests is the importance of inclusion; in the fourth wave, the internet takes inclusion further by levelling hierarchies. The appeal of the fourth wave is that there is a place in it for everyone. The academic and theoretical apparatus are now well-honed and ready to support new broad-based activism in the home, in the workplace, on the streets, and online.

No one is sure how feminism will progress from here. The movement has always included many political, social and intellectual ideologies, each with its own tensions, points and counterpoints. But the fact that each wave has been chaotic, multi-valenced, and disconcerted is cause for optimism; it is a sign that the movement continues to thrive.

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Activities

On Feminism

Study Questions

Respond to these questions in writing, in small group discussion, or both.

1. “On Feminism” is an extended definition essay, but it has qualities of what other rhetorical modes explained in this chapter?
2. What are the main differences between first- and second-wave feminism?
3. What are the main differences between third- and fourth-wave feminism?
4. Respond to the conclusions the author offers in her final paragraph. Do you agree with what she writes?
5. In academic writing assignments, paragraphs should be unified, coherent, and well-developed. Analyze two body paragraphs from this essay, commenting on the qualities of effective

paragraphs they illustrate.

Writing Assignment

Write an extended definition of approximately 750 words on one of the following terms: Marxism, irony (in literature), recession (in economics), pentathlon (as Olympic sport), dressage, algorithm, neutral zone trap, cryptocurrency. You may also select your own topic or one provided by your teacher.

10.

The Process (“How to”) Essay

The process or “how to” essay guides readers through the stages of completing a task successfully. It is certainly among the most common forms of written discourse, an industry among publishers. Think of the number of self-help books, cookbooks, textbooks, and guidebooks for doing virtually every activity you can think of. In school subjects, the process essay is also a common assignment. Explain how a bill becomes a law; how do you determine the theme of a poem; how do trees produce oxygen; how does company X market its product; how does a hydroelectric dam produce electricity; how do you serve a tennis ball?

The template for a process essay is usually straightforward. After the introductory paragraph, which provides some context and presents the thesis, comes a series of body paragraphs, each one explaining a step in the process. The conclusion often confirms the validity and usefulness the body of the essay has provided.

Read carefully the following process essay on how to treat a common cold.

Example: How to Treat a Common Cold

From that first itch in your nose to your final cough, a cold generally lasts from seven to ten days (Newman). Though researchers have yet to find a cure for these common but pesky viruses, some home treatments can provide relief from a cold’s most unpleasant symptoms.

During the first couple days of a cold, no symptoms will alert you that you’ve been infected, but by day three, you’ll start to sneeze, your body may ache, and you’ll likely have a tickle or soreness in your throat (Jones). Next, you’ll feel congestion in your sinuses; your nose will run and, due to inflammation around the airways, you may develop a cough that can persist after your other symptoms are long gone (Jones). Fortunately, two weeks after the infection, you will produce antibodies that prevent you from catching that particular cold virus again. Unfortunately, there exist around another 199 strains of cold virus, so you can easily pick up another one (Jones)!

Purported cold remedies are almost as common as the cold virus itself; some might even help ease your symptoms. Staying hydrated with water, clear broth or tea can loosen congestion; a saltwater gargle made with ½ teaspoon of salt in eight ounces of water can relieve a sore throat (Mayo Clinic). Over-the-counter saline nasal drops can relieve stuffiness, and pain relievers such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen can help with aches and fever, as long as you follow the recommended dosage. Some cold remedies contain multiple ingredients, such as a decongestant plus a pain reliever, so make sure you’re not taking too much of any medication and remember: medication will not shorten a cold’s duration (Mayo Clinic).

The list of cold remedies with conflicting evidence is long! Taking vitamin C before the onset of cold symptoms may shorten the duration of symptoms, but it appears that, for the most part, taking vitamin C won’t help the average person prevent colds (Mayo Clinic). Study results on whether echinacea prevents or shortens colds are also mixed. Some studies show no benefit, but others show

some reduction in the severity and duration of cold symptoms when taken in the early stages of a cold. Different types of echinacea used in different studies may have contributed to the differing results (Mayo Clinic).

There has been a lot of talk about taking zinc for colds ever since a 1984 study showed that zinc supplements reduced the severity of colds (Mayo Clinic). Since then, other studies have shown that zinc lozenges or syrup reduce the length of a cold by one day, especially when taken within 24 hours of the first signs and symptoms of a cold. Both echinacea and zinc have potentially harmful side effects. Talk to your doctor before considering the use of zinc to prevent or reduce the length of colds.

Evidently, the common cold defies medical science; it eludes both our immune systems and the pharmaceutical industry. Colds are most often caused by rhinoviruses, a large family of viruses with hundreds of variants. This makes vaccination impossible and gives our immune system a challenging task. Additionally, these viruses evolve rapidly, so even if we could produce vaccines to cover the full spectrum of rhinoviruses, they would quickly become resistant (Newman). However, according to a new study, help may soon be at hand.

Professor Ed Tate of Imperial College London in the United Kingdom and his team of scientists are taking a new approach. They have been looking for a compound to combat malaria and have found two molecules that become effective when combined. Using advanced techniques, they used these two molecules to produce a new compound that blocks an enzyme called N-myristoyltransferase (NMT), which is found in human cells. Viruses normally steal NMT from human cells and use it to create a protective shell; NMT is vital for the survival of cold viruses. All strains of the common cold virus use this technique, so inhibiting NMT would cure all strains of common cold virus. The researchers have high hopes for the drug, but much more research will be needed to confirm its efficacy and safety (Mayo Clinic).

Until then, it may be tempting to try the latest internet-approved remedy, but the best thing to do is take care of yourself. Rest, drink fluids, and try to wait patiently for your cold’s demise.

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Activities

How to Treat a Common Cold

Study Questions

Respond to these questions in writing, in small groups, or both.

1. What is the thesis of this essay? How does the writer support her thesis?
2. For what audience or what type of reader is this essay written? How might the content and style of this essay change if it were written for health care professionals?
3. A common and effective strategy for the conclusion of an essay is to look forward to future circumstances and conditions related to the essay's thesis. How does this essay employ this strategy?

Writing Assignment

Write a process essay of about 750 words on one of the following topics: How to train for a marathon, cook a dinner for your boyfriend or girlfriend, buy a used car, win at poker, win at Fortnite (or other popular video game), dance the tango, teach an alien the rules of hockey (or a different sport); determine if a designer handbag is fake or real. You can also select your own topic or one provided by your teacher.

11.

The Cause/Effect Essay

The cause/effect essay delineates the reasons why—the causes—an event or phenomenon has occurred and explains the consequences—the effects—of that event or phenomenon. It is a common assignment in most school and college courses. What were the causes of the First World War and how did the war affect Canadian society? Why does Hamlet procrastinate and how does his procrastination affect the plot of the play? What causes global warming and how does global warming affect the integrity of the planet? Why did the NBA introduce the three-point shot into basketball and how has the three-point shot affected the game?

Every cause/effect essay will include causes and effects, though not necessarily in the same proportion. The writer might give them equal treatment: Here are the three main causes of global warming and here are three ways in which global warming affects our lives on planet earth. Or the writer might privilege one, depending on the purpose of the essay or the nature of the assignment. If you are writing an essay about how divorce affects teenagers, you are not necessarily going to present a full account of the causes of divorce, but rather provide some indication of its frequency as part of your introduction. If you are writing an essay about the effects on health of a vegetarian diet, you may mention the increasing popularity of vegetarianism in your introduction, but then focus your attention on the diet's effects in body paragraphs.

Read carefully the following essay on the causes of forest fires.

Example: Why Our Forests Are Burning

Forestry ranks among British Columbia's most lucrative industries, generating billions of dollars in export revenue and providing jobs for over 200,000 workers. However, forest fires pose a big threat to the viability of the business; in the past two years, fire has destroyed some 24,000 square kilometres of British Columbia forests. The resulting costs to the province in loss of revenue, purchase and use of expensive equipment, and overtime wages have reached nearly half a billion dollars (Lindsay). Though lightning strikes and human carelessness continue to be the leading causes of forest fires, global warming has intensified the danger in recent years.

In order to spread, fire needs fuel, oxygen, and heat. Biomass production and vegetative growth provide fuel for forest fires and the photosynthesis of living green organisms creates oxygen (Nix). When these natural combustibles reach 572°F, gas in the steam given off reacts with oxygen to reach its flash point with a burst of flame, creating an uncontrolled forest fire.

There are three primary classes of forest fires, depending on the types of fuels involved and their moisture content. *Surface fires* typically burn readily but at a low intensity; *crown fires* generally result from intense rising ground fire heat and occur in the higher sections of draping trees; *ground fires* are the most infrequent type of fire but make for very intense blazes that can potentially destroy all vegetation and organic matter, leaving only bare earth. These largest fires actually create their own winds and weather, increasing the flow of oxygen and "feeding" the fire (Nix).

Naturally caused forest fires are usually started by dry lightning, where drought accompanies a stormy weather disturbance. Lightning randomly strikes the earth an average of 100 times each second and has caused some of the most notable woodland fire disasters in North America. Because they often occur in isolated locations with limited access, lightning fires burn more acres than human-caused starts (Nix).

In 2018, between April 1 and August 27, humans were responsible for starting more than 420 of about 1,950 wildfires in British Columbia. Campfires, cigarettes, flares, and car accidents are some of the most common human causes (Smart). During periods of heightened fire activity, these wildfires divert critical resources away from the naturally caused wildfires that can't be prevented. The Wildfire Service lumps human activities that spark fires into broad categories, including smoking, electrical, and structure or vehicle fires that spread. About 23 per cent of fires started by humans fall under the broad umbrella of "incendiary devices," which include matches, lighters, flare guns, and others. About 22 per cent spread from campfires. And about the same number begin with open fires, which are larger fires that include burn barrels, pile burning, and large-scale industrial burning (Smart).

Today, climate change is increasing both the frequency and intensity of wildfires; severe droughts, declining snowpack, more frequent thunderstorms and extreme heat due to rapid warming in the Arctic are all contributing factors. Early in 2018, the World Meteorological Organization noted that the years 2015, 2016, and 2017 were clearly warmer than any year prior to 2015 and, in BC, numerous heat records were broken across the province in July 2018 (Riley).

Prolonged periods of drought cause forest floors to become lined with dry, dead wood. This combustible material becomes fuel for wildfires and, in hot, dry conditions, a strike of lightning or a carelessly discarded cigarette can be incendiary. Ensuing fires can rip through forests, quickly becoming a dangerous crown fire that burns from treetop to treetop. We can attribute some of these hot, dry conditions to the weakening of the jet stream, the air current that drives weather conditions in the northern hemisphere. The jet stream gets its energy from the temperature difference between Arctic areas and equatorial regions. That temperature difference is getting smaller, so that means our jet stream is getting stagnant and it stalls. A weaker jet stream means hot and dry areas stay that way. The result has obvious implications for wildfires (Riley).

Adaptation to a new climate-fuelled fire season will prove difficult. Most fire ecologists advocate for prescribed burns, whereby intentionally lit fires burn off the excess fuel in the forest. Letting fires burn may diminish the possibility of catastrophic fires in the future by reducing the amount of fuel built up in the forest. But past forestry-management practices favoured extinguishing wildfires as soon as they started, which has also contributed to increasingly devastating mega-fires. Climate change on top of fire suppression has made the situation much worse. Even if we stopped producing greenhouse gases today, we would continue to warm for the next 50 to 100 years because of the lag in our climate system (Riley). We are going to continue to warm, so the time to act is now.

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Activities

Why Our Forests Are Burning

Study Questions

Respond to these questions in writing, in small groups, or both.

1. “Why Our Forests Are Burning” is a cause/effect essay. Are there aspects of other rhetorical modes also present? Explain your answer.
2. Why and how does global warming intensify the danger of forest fires?
3. Why do some fire ecologists recommend deliberately starting forest fires in some areas?
4. Provide a few examples of the author’s use of rich detail to add content and interest to her essay.

Writing Assignment

Write a cause/effect essay of approximately 750 words on one of the following topics:

- Computer Science, communications, business, government, and economics are among the most popular college majors. Select one and explain why students choose to major in this subject.
- Why did Team X fail to make the playoffs this year? (Or why did Team Y finish first this year?)
- Why is the sky blue?
- Why did Nation X win (or lose) War Y?
- You can also select your own topic or one provided by your teacher.

12.

The Compare/Contrast Essay

The compare/contrast essay is a common high school and college writing assignment. Your teachers might ask you to write an essay comparing and contrasting two poems, two short stories, two characters in one or two novels, two similar consumer products, a policy of two world leaders, health care in the US and Canada, the zone and the man-to-man defence, two film or music stars, two cities. Every academic subject lends itself to the compare/contrast essay, and teachers assign it often because it assesses higher order reasoning, since it requires reflection upon, knowledge of, and the ability to assess characteristics of two different phenomena, entities, or artifacts.

There are two templates or outlines for a compare/contrast essay.

The first is the common traits method. Using this method, you identify the common traits for both of the items you are comparing and contrasting, then write alternate paragraphs for each common trait. If you were writing a compare/contrast essay on two capital cities, a paragraph on the friendliness of the citizens of Ottawa might be compared and contrasted in the following paragraph with the friendliness of the citizens of Beijing. The culture of the two cities, the shopping, the restaurants, the economy, the natural beauty—these might be other points for comparison and contrast.

The second is the similarities and differences method. The first part of the body of your essay describes how X and Y are similar; the second half describes how they are different. Suppose, for example, you were comparing the Ferrari with the Lamborghini. The Ferrari and the Lamborghini are both highest end luxury sports cars; their aesthetic appeal is similar; they both use 7-speed semi-automatic transmissions; their performance ratings—horsepower, top speed, zero-to-sixty speed—are close. These are all points of similarity you might include in the first part of a compare/contrast essay. The Ferrari engine is closer to the front of the car than the Lamborghini engine, which is in the middle of the body of the car; Ferrari is rear-wheel drive, Lamborghini is four-wheel drive; Ferrari offers more model choices; Ferrari has won more prestigious racing awards. These are some points you might develop into paragraphs for the differences part of this compare/contrast essay.

The compare/contrast essay is usually expository in that it presents readers with information and broadens their knowledge, but it might have an argumentative edge. If, for example, you don't want a new strip mall built on the outskirts of your small town, your compare/contrast essay might end up favouring the main street shopping experience.

Read carefully the following example of a compare/contrast essay on alternate sources of energy.

Example: The Wind and the Sun as Sources of Green Energy

Fossil fuels, oil, and natural gas have provided the power we need to drive our cars, heat our houses, and operate our businesses for more than the last hundred years. Unfortunately, in about another hundred years, the world's reserves of fossil fuels will be depleted (Puiu). The demise of the fossil fuel industry will not be mourned by all because carbon emissions are a source of pollution and a major factor in climate change. But the end of fossil fuels does mean there will be a crucial need for alternate

sources of energy, and now is the time to find them. Wind and solar power are among the promising new sources of the energy our great-grandchildren will require in the next century.

The wind and the sun provide renewable energy, at least as long as the wind blows and the sun shines. They are also free, though harvesting their energy is not. Their energy is stored in a similar manner. The sun's heat can be absorbed by specially designed panels, which convert the sun's heat and light into electrical energy, which is stored within a battery. High-tech windmills power a turbine, which converts wind into electrical energy and stores it within a battery. The two sources differ, however, in more ways than they are similar.

Wind energy is more cost-effective than solar energy is. The panels that gather the sun's energy are more expensive to install—so expensive, in fact, that it may take many years before consumers start to save the money they would have spent on oil or natural gas (Anderson). Wind is a more reliable source of energy because it can blow all day and all night. The sun cannot shine all day and all night, and even during the day, it can be blocked by clouds. Solar panels require less maintenance than wind turbines, but not so much less to make them more cost-effective.

Solar panels do have the advantage when it comes to location. They can be installed on the roof of a house, in an urban neighbourhood. Wind turbines are too noisy to erect in an urban neighbourhood. They usually sprout on wind farms remote from urban settings, and even in oceans, where the wind can be fierce. The cost of transporting wind energy to the consumers and businesses that need it can be high. Too many wind farms are a blight on the landscape. And they can be lethal to inattentive birds, which all too frequently unwittingly fly into their deadly blades.

Some environmentally conscious homeowners are installing both solar panels and wind turbines to provide uninterrupted energy to heat and light their houses and run their entertainment units and appliances. This approach solves or at least diminishes the problem of intermittent energy loss, which occurs when the sun is not shining or the wind is not blowing. It is not an ideal solution. Upfront installation costs are high. The wind turbine needs to be as high as possible to catch the wind, but it will still generate noise that might disturb the neighbours. Ironically, the system can produce too much energy, which can overwhelm and harm the batteries, or it might produce too little energy on calm nights.

Those skeptical of the promise of green energy love the joke “Is the wind blowing? I want to watch TV tonight.” There is still some truth in this jest. But green energy engineers continue to work hard to lower costs and improve performance, and they are confident that, properly harnessed, energy from the wind and the sun can significantly diminish our reliance on disappearing fossil fuels and improve the air we breathe.

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Activities

The Wind and the Sun as Sources of Green Energy

Study Questions

Respond to these questions in writing, in small group discussion, or both.

1. List the two main reasons why we will need new sources of energy, other than that provided by fossil fuels, in the future.
2. Which of the two templates explained above for structuring a compare/contrast essay does the writer use for this essay?
3. Which green energy source—wind or sun—shows greater promise, according to this essay?

Writing Assignment

Write a compare/contrast essay of approximately 750 words on one of these topics: two popular video games; two television sitcoms; the defensive (or offensive) strategies of two sports teams; two brands of jeans, or other clothing item; two fast-food burgers. You can also select your own topic or one your teacher provides.

13.

The Argument Essay

The argumentative or persuasive essay attempts to convince readers that the writer’s position, views, and opinions on a controversial topic are valid, logical, and supported by research. The writer might simply present his or her evidence in support of the thesis (an argument essay) or more assertively urge readers to adopt his or her position, as well (a persuasive essay).

The template for an argument essay is less straightforward than it might at first appear. It is basic insofar as the writer presents his or her thesis in the opening paragraph, and then presents a series of body paragraphs that are well-developed with examples and details and supported by sources to back up, support, and augment the thesis.

But a sound argument includes one more feature: it acknowledges the opposing point of view and refutes or rebuts it. This is an important strategy in developing a sound argument because it indicates that the writer knows the topic well and is treating the other side fairly. Moreover, the argument weakens if the reader realizes there is a counter-argument the writer has not addressed.

If, for example, you were arguing that students who attend public schools should wear uniforms, you might cite evidence of higher academic achievement, decrease in the amount of bullying, and greater sense of community in schools whose students wear uniforms. But you would want to acknowledge the opposing points—uniforms stifle individual expression and identity; they are too expensive for some families to afford; they lack comfort and style—and explain why the opposing points are dubious or illogical.

An essay’s conclusion typically reaffirms its thesis and establishes a sense of closure; the former is especially important in an argument essay.

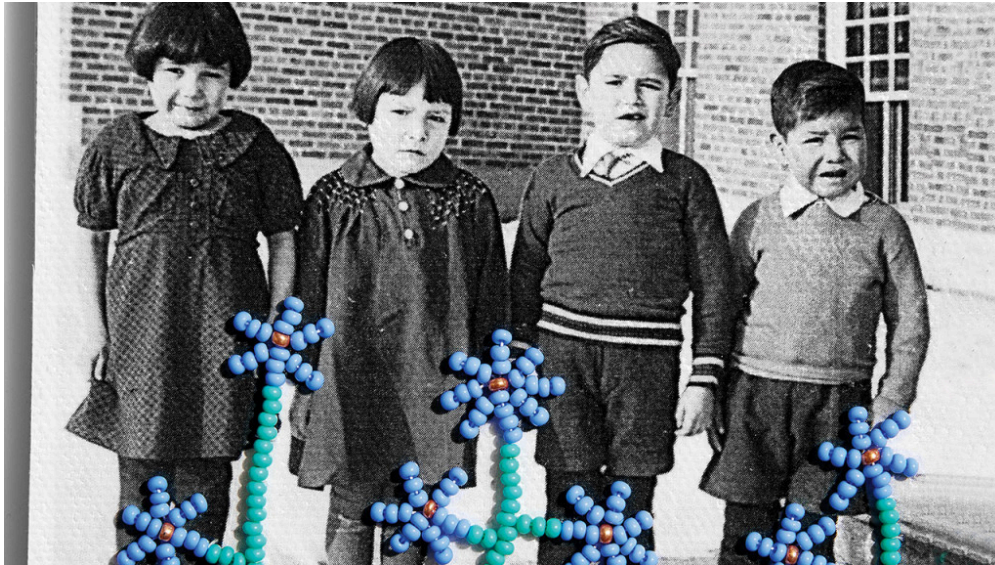
Read carefully this essay about residential schools.

Example: Why Our Kids Need to Learn About Residential Schools by Bonnie Schiedel

How would you feel, if this happened in your kid’s class? Last fall, a grade 6 social studies class outside of Edmonton was learning about residential schools. A student put up her hand and said, “I don’t have anything against Indigenous people, but my grandpa told me we had to put the Indians in residential schools because they were killing each other and we had to civilize them.”

Her words hung in the air for a moment. And then her teacher responded, “Well, I don’t have anything against your grandpa, but people who are your grandpa’s age and your parents’ age and even my age didn’t have the opportunity to learn the truth. So, we have a responsibility, because we’re learning the truth now.”

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Roberto Caruso, Beadwork: Catherine Blackburn; The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church Of Canada.

For generations, the full history of Canada’s residential schools, which existed for more than a century and housed 150,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit kids with the flat-out mission of assimilation into white society, was suppressed and ignored. If you’re non-Indigenous, you may have had some hazy idea of “Indian schools,” but the kind of nightmarish abuse, bullying, deprivation and death that went on? It was rarely acknowledged and never discussed. I can remember first hearing about the schools only about 10 years ago in one of those free-ranging discussions that go on at noisy book club meetings, and thinking, “I have a history degree...how is it even possible I’ve never heard of residential schools?”

Today, however, Canadians—kids, adults, everybody—have that opportunity to learn that really difficult truth. And we have a responsibility to acknowledge the truth and fight untruths, just like that teacher told her class.

Two years ago, the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** (TRC) issued 94 calls to action to address the legacy of residential schools and move toward reconciliation. I still can’t quite figure out what reconciliation could or should look like in everyday life; it’s one of those slippery words that can mean a thousand different things to a thousand different people. Maybe, then, we should pay attention to the truth part first. As Pamala Agawa, a curriculum coordinator for First Nation, Métis and Inuit education (FNMI) at York Region District School Board in Ontario, told me, we need to figure out the truth for ourselves: “What biases do we carry; what learning do we need to do to better understand the true history of the country?”

Chances are, your own kids are learning about residential schools in class this year. In the TRC’s calls to action, points 62 and 63 specifically call on schools to deliver age-appropriate curriculum about residential schools, as well as Indigenous culture and treaty education, to students in kindergarten to grade 12. It’s not a quick and easy item on a to-do list. How do we talk about Canada’s cultural genocide with our kids? How do we tell them about what our country did to families? Our world still has racist grandpas and internet trolls and prejudices that have built up over decades. We owe it to our kids to learn more and do better.



Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Growing up with the truth

As parents, we worry about our kids learning scary information. Sexual and physical abuse went on at some residential schools—what age should kids learn about that? We may ask, is my kid going to feel guilty now? Or, how could our church have been involved in that? I know I stuttered out a garbled explanation when my seven-year-old asked why kids had to go away to school when it made them and their families so sad. Still, I'm glad she asked me, even if I didn't have a polished answer. Talking honestly about hard things in a way kids can understand helps open a door to the empathy that's part of being a decent human being.

For some Indigenous parents, there may be added worry about classroom lessons. Will their child feel singled out? Will they be anxious they'll be taken away, too? For others, the lessons are welcome. Julie Mallon of Port Dover, Ont., who is Anishinaabe and the daughter of a residential school survivor, says she didn't have any concerns. "I absolutely think it's important for kids to learn it in school. It's been a hidden part of our history," she says. "For this to be taught is just another layer of becoming more emotionally aware and learning how to deal with their feelings." While Mallon's mom rarely talked about her experiences when Mallon was a kid, she didn't want it to be a taboo subject with her own kids.

Charlene Bearhead, the former education lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, has thought about those parent-kid conversations a lot. "Our children are going to grow up with this truth, whether we're ready or not," she says. "The best thing we can do as parents is find the courage, and know that it's not going to be easy and it's not going to be things that we want to hear. But it's things that we need to hear, and we can learn with our children."

Our kids are going to be paying attention to how we talk about this, too. "There's nothing in the calls to action that calls on parents, and yet parents are among the most important people in a child's life. They are their children's first teachers," she says. "When a child goes home from school and talks to a parent, their response is really going to have a major influence on how that child moves forward with what they've learned."

Teaching the teachers

That can feel daunting as parents, but we're all in this learning curve together—teachers, board trustees and superintendents are learning this along with the kids. “Educators have to relearn what they think they know about Canada,” says Melissa Wilson, coordinator of Indigenous education at the Peel District School Board in Ontario. “For instance, we talk about what it means to be Canadian: We're multicultural, everyone is welcome to this country, we believe in spreading human rights around the world. It's not that that story is incorrect; the problem is that story is very incomplete. It doesn't speak to the story of how Indigenous peoples have been treated in Canada.” At the Peel board, Wilson and her colleagues offer teachers two years of Indigenous education training. They learn from Indigenous educators, elders and knowledge keepers, tour a former residential school and meet with school survivors. Teachers then pass on what they've learned to teachers and students in their own schools.

There's no national standard for curriculum, and quality and content vary a great deal. It's vital that Indigenous educators take a lead role in both developing curriculum and visiting schools. One Indigenous educator who's deeply involved in creating curriculum is Rachel Mishenene, who is Ojibway from Eabametoong First Nation, and works as an executive at the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. She's excited about the possibilities of expanding FNMI curriculum. “I want to make sure we highlight the positive and innovative contributions Indigenous peoples have made or continue to make in arts, music, sports, science, anthropology, media, and as storytellers,” she says. “Residential schools made their mark, and teaching that history is important. We also need to share stories of strength, resilience and excellence.” Parents can play a key role here, too—Bearhead encourages parents to talk to teachers and principals about the curriculum and what else can be added.

Helping kids get it

Talking about resilience is really powerful—and it's something that kids can identify with. Janet Porter, a reconciliation education consultant in the Nova Scotia department of education, which works with the education group Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, says Mi'kmaw community members were very clear they wanted any representation of residential schools to be combined with the idea of resilience. In one of the school programs, for example, kids make their own dolls after learning how Magit Poulette, now an elder, secretly created a doll with rags and sticks after her baby doll was taken from her when she arrived at Shubenacadie Residential School as a four-year-old.

It's essential, too, to deal with the tough stuff in age-appropriate ways. “If a child's primary reaction to a book or video or illustration is one of upset or fear, then those emotions may become a barrier to learning,” explains Porter. To that end, in the younger grades, teachers introduce the topic through books and stories, and then ask kids about something special to them and how they'd feel if it was taken from them, using phrases that kids can understand, like “not right” and “not fair.” (In older grades, students talk more in depth about the devastating ripple effect that the abuse and loss of culture has on Indigenous communities.)

By making stories about residential schools relatable, kids can understand in their hearts, as well as their brains. “It's overwhelming when you hear that 150,000 kids were taken from their families, so it was really important to us to connect the students with one child,” says Gail Stromquist, assistant director of Aboriginal education at the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. Along with her sister, Janet Stromquist, who's also a teacher, Gail created the e-book and teaching module *Gladys We Never Knew*, about the life of their aunt Gladys Chapman, who fell ill with tuberculosis while at residential school and died in 1931 at the age of 12. Jean Moir, a grade 4/5 teacher in Langley, BC, who helped

develop the lessons and piloted the project with her class two years ago, says that learning about a child who lived fairly close by made Gladys real to her students. “They cared what happened to her and absolutely ‘got’ how horribly she and so many others were treated.”

On a cool fall day, her grade 4/5 class got on a school bus and went on a field trip to Spuzzum, B.C. to visit the territory of the Nlaka’pamux Nation, where Gladys grew up and was buried. Danny Ferguson went with his son Joe on the field trip and saw how the kids reacted after they decorated the mossy headstone with handmade hearts and flowers. “It’s not just about the information; there’s definitely a teaching to the heart there,” he says. “Even today, Joe really connects with Gladys’ story. He still talks about it and gets a bit emotional. Gladys is basically a hero to those kids.

Another personal story that resonates with kids is about Phyllis Webstad—and it sparked the national movement of Orange Shirt Day, held annually on September 30. In 1973, six-year-old Phyllis was excited about going away to school and she picked out a new orange shirt. When she arrived at school, all her clothes, including her orange shirt, were taken from her. “The colour orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn’t matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing,” explains Webstad. Orange Shirt Day’s message is that every child matters.

My daughter Jane, who’s in grade 2, is fully on board with theme days of any sort and picked out orange hair elastics to go with her shirt when the note about Orange Shirt Day at her school here in Thunder Bay, Ont., came home in her backpack this past fall. I don’t remember her telling us about her day at dinner—I’m pretty sure she was in a hurry to go trampolining at the neighbours. But more than two months later, we were at her school for an event and I spotted the mini-essays she and her classmates had written on Orange Shirt Day, still taped up in the foyer. As we walked over to the display, she matter-of-factly told me all about it. “We learned about those really mean schools they used to have, mom,” she said. “It was real, you know, not just in a book. And there was this girl who had an orange shirt she really liked and they took it away and she never got it back, so that’s why we wear orange shirts, to remember those kids who had to go away to school.”

When Bearhead told me about that grade 6 student repeating her grandpa’s comment, I flinched, thinking my daughter could hear something that casually cruel in her classroom, too. The legacy of residential schools—those strained and broken threads of relationships and culture and identity—is like a widening tear in a piece of fabric. If we have any hope of patching it, we’ve got to listen, really listen, to Indigenous stories and experiences, and then talk to our kids. “The biggest measure of success for me is about how families are talking about reconciliation at the dinner table, when no one else is listening,” says Bearhead. “When we see that shift happening there, that’s when I believe we’ll be on the road to reconciliation as a country.”

Activities

Why Our Kids Need to Learn About Residential Schools

Study Questions

Respond to these questions in writing, in small group discussion, or both.

1. The thesis for this essay is in the essay's title. What are the key arguments the author makes in support of her thesis?
2. What is the counter-argument that the author refutes in this essay, and how does the author rebut these counter-arguments? Are there counter-arguments the writer fails to address?
3. Is this essay well-researched? What are the main sources of the author's research?
4. How do the photographs support (or undermine) the author's thesis?
5. What rhetorical modes, other than argument, are present in this essay?

Written Assignment

Select a social or political issue you feel strongly about—climate change, an endangered species, lowering the voting age, vegetarian diet, social media, concussions in sports, violence in video games, Canada and the monarchy, cloning, online dating, lyrics in modern music—and write an argument essay of approximately 750 words on that topic. You can also select a topic your teacher assigns.

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14.

Further Reading

It is easy to access online many other examples of all of the rhetorical modes of written expression. It is well worth the effort. We learn by imitating the behaviour or the work of others who are especially adept at the skill we are trying to acquire. Virtually all accomplished writers confirm that they read widely and that the close reading of a written text is instructive and helps them learn how to master their craft.

Online editions of major national newspapers include well-written articles and editorials in all of the rhetorical modes included in this chapter. Current issues are not always free, but back issues often are. Check out the [The Globe and Mail](#) and [The National Post](#).

Some magazine articles can also provide student writers with models worth studying and emulating. *Maclean's* magazine has a team of writers who cover all manner of topics. Kyle Edwards is Anishinaabe and he writes informative articles on Indigenous issues. John Geddes writes about federal politics. Anne Kingston covers contemporary culture. Shannon Proudfoot writes about public policy and is especially adept at explaining in layman's terms the content of serious academic studies. To access, go to the [Maclean's](#) website and click on the "Authors" tab.

[The Walrus](#) is a great source for fine narrative essays and for articles on arts and culture.

Articles in academic journals can also provide good models for student writers, though the content of academic journals tends to be very specialized and their prose style tends to be more formal than the more moderate style your teachers will expect. Many academic journals are indexed in search engines and digital libraries. [Google Scholar](#) is one such search engine. Your school library might subscribe to popular digital libraries such as Academic Search Premier or [JSTOR](#). It is worth browsing through some of the titles on these sources to see if they contain articles that might be of interest to you and help you develop your writing skills.

III

Poetry

The Elements of Poetry

Poetry is the genre of literature which uses language in its most unique, creative, and innovative ways to clarify and intensify human experience. Language has its own rhythms. It has words that rhyme. Words can be blended together to produce sensory images. Poets exploit the aesthetic properties of language to intensify the human experience they are presenting.

Theme

This insight into human experience the poet offers is called the theme of the poem. Recurring themes in poetry comment upon, explain, clarify, intensify, and offer insights into:

- aspects of love,
- work and leisure,
- family ties,
- the pursuit of happiness,
- social justice,
- the horror of war,
- the promise of faith,
- the nature of death and the quest for eternal life.

In this Chapter, we will read and study a variety of poems which deal with these and other themes which inspire poets.

Form and Genre

There are three major forms or genres of poetry:

- regular verse,
- blank verse,
- free verse.

There are a variety of other minor forms of poetry, usually forms of regular verse. They include the:

- sonnet,
- ballad,
- ode,
- dramatic monologue,
- villanelle,
- elegy,
- haiku.

In this Chapter, we will learn about the conventions of the various forms of poetry, through a close reading of iconic examples of each genre.

Figurative Language

Poetry is also distinguished by its use of figurative language. Figurative language is the blending of words in ways to create a special effect, which intensifies and heightens the aesthetic appeal and the theme of the poem. There are a variety of forms of figurative language. The forms of figurative language we will define, learn about, and consider examples of, in this Chapter, include:

- simile,
- metaphor,
- alliteration,
- assonance,
- irony,
- imagery,
- hyperbole,
- symbolism,
- onomatopoeia,
- metonymy,
- oxymoron,
- personification.

Context

Many poems, and works of literature, in general, are based upon the author's personal experience or on historical circumstances within which the author lived. Knowledge of historical and biographical context can help enrich our enjoyment, appreciation, and understanding of a poem. In this Chapter we will read and study some poems, whose meanings are enhanced by our knowledge of the author's life and times.

In the first section—the Introduction—of this Chapter, we will examine closely poems by a diverse group of authors, in order to further our knowledge of:

- common themes in poetry;
- the major and minor forms of poetry;
- the use of the forms of figurative language;
- the role of biographical and historical context in enjoying and understanding poetry.

This introductory first section is followed by an Anthology of Poetry by a diverse group of authors. Each poem is followed by Questions for Study and Discussion, activities, and links designed to facilitate understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation.

15.

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth (Regular Verse)



Biography

William Wordsworth was born on April 7, 1770, at Cockermouth in Cumbria in northeast England, near the Lake District, whose natural beauty would inspire many of Wordsworth's poems. His mother died when he was just 8 and his father, a lawyer, died when Wordsworth was 13. The five Wordsworth children were scattered and spent their childhood with different relatives.

Wordsworth attended Cambridge University from 1787 to 1791. He studied French, and after he graduated, he went to France to gain fluency in the language. In Blois, he met Annette Vallon, whom he hoped to marry. They had a daughter, Caroline. Short of money, Wordsworth returned to England, planning to return to France as soon as he was able. But in the wake of the French Revolution, which Wordsworth ardently supported, and the subsequent leadership of Napoleon, England and France were at war. Wordsworth could not return and would not for many years.

In 1795, Wordsworth received a legacy from a close relative, and he and his sister Dorothy went to live in Dorset. Two years later they moved again, this time to Somerset, to live near Wordsworth's dear friend and collaborator Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Together, they produced a collection of poems, *Lyrical Ballads*, published in 1798. It would prove to be a milestone in the history of English poetry, one of the books that ushered in the Romantic movement (from 1800 to 1850, approximately).

Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" are among the most famous poems in this collection.

With sufficient independent means, Wordsworth settled in to the life of a poet, gaining fame and recognition for his work over the years, culminating in 1842, when he was named England's poet laureate. "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" and the autobiographical *The Prelude* are among his more famous long poems. He also wrote scores of much-loved short lyric poems and sonnets.

Wordsworth's personal life was filled with joy and sorrow. In 1802, he married his childhood friend Mary Hutchinson and they settled into Dove Cottage in Grasmere in the Lake District and raised a happy family, which included the beloved aunt Dorothy. Unfortunately, over the years, he feuded with Coleridge, three of his children died, one of his brothers, a ship's captain, was drowned at sea, and Dorothy suffered a mental breakdown. He was no longer the idealistic, radical young poet who supported the cries for social justice that sparked the French Revolution. His political views evolved, becoming increasingly conservative. He died on April 23, 1850.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Published 1807

Analysis

Theme

What is the theme of this poem? The poet describes his appreciation—indeed, his awe—of nature’s beauty. Out on a walk one day, he sees a field of golden daffodils, seeming to stretch in a “never-ending line.” Here is a widely shared human experience, a common theme among poets. We have all been overwhelmed by nature’s beauty at some point in our lives. But note that Wordsworth takes the theme one step further. Experiences as significant as the one described in the poem have staying power. Days, month, years later, perhaps one day when we are simply resting on the couch, that image will flash across our minds—today, we might look at the picture we took with our cellphones—and we will experience again the serenity that nature’s beauty provides.

Form

Now note the form of the poem. It consists of twenty-four lines, divided into four sections—that is, stanzas or verses—each six lines in length. Read the poem out loud, in a way that exaggerates its rhythm. You will note that each line has four stressed sounds or beats, preceded by a less stressed sound. To diagram this pattern, we assign a curved or a smile line to the less stressed beat and a slash to the stressed beat.

```

~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
I wandered lonely as a cloud
~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
When all at once I saw a crowd,
~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
A host, of golden daffodils.
```

The stressed-unstressed unit is called an iamb. Because there are four iambs in each line, we designate the rhythm pattern of “I Wandered Lonely” as iambic tetrameter. There are four rhythm patterns in English poetry: iambic, trochaic, anapestic, and dactylic. A line of poetry will typically contain four (tetrameter) or five (pentameter) units, also called “beats” or “feet.” Examples of a variety of rhythm patterns are presented in this chapter.

Discerning poetry readers might notice that Wordsworth alters the iambic tetrameter rhythm in the last line of the first stanza, which would have to be scanned:

/ ~ ~ ~ / ~ / ~ /
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze,

and, again, in the last line of the second stanza, which would be scanned:

/ ~ ~ / ~ / ~ /
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

Poets will sometimes alter their rhythm pattern to achieve a certain effect. The change in rhythm to describe the daffodils “fluttering” and “tossing their heads” accentuates the movement of the flowers, which so captured the poet’s attention.

Now note the words at the end of each line of each verse. The first and the third lines rhyme; the second and fourth lines rhyme; the final two lines rhyme. There is a pattern, a scheme to the rhyme. We illustrate this pattern by assigning small letters to words that rhyme. So the rhyme pattern or rhyme scheme of each stanza of “I Wandered Lonely” is ababcdcdee.

Because there is a consistent rhythm pattern and consistent rhyme scheme to “I Wandered Lonely,” we say this is a regular verse poem. There are two other genres or forms of poetry: blank verse and free verse. We will see examples of each in this chapter. There are also several minor forms of poetry, usually types of regular verse. The most common are the sonnet, elegy, ode, villanelle, epic, and dramatic monologue. We will see examples of each in this chapter.

Note that each stanza of “I Wandered Lonely” forms a single sentence. Remember that the sentence and not the line is the unit of meaning in a poem. When you are reading a poem, pay attention to the punctuation, and discern the meaning of the complete sentence in poetry, not each individual line.

Figurative Language

Wordsworth opens the poem by comparing the poet, wandering alone through the woods to a cloud floating high above him. He later writes that the flowers were “continuous as the stars that shine.” These comparisons are a form of figurative language called a simile. A simile is cousin to a metaphor, which is also a comparison used to describe more vividly an object in the poem. The difference is that a simile signals the comparison with the words “like” or “as,” while a metaphor asserts the comparison directly. Note “I felt like a fish out of water when I went skating for the first time” versus “I was a fish out of water when I went skating for the first time.”

Wordsworth writes that the daffodils “stretched in never-ending line.” In reality, of course, the line ended, but the poet wants to stress that he was so overwhelmed by the multitude of the beautiful flowers that it seemed as if they never ended. He is using here a form of figurative language called hyperbole. Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration, not to deceive, but to achieve a poetic effect.

Wordsworth writes that the daffodils danced and tossed their heads. But they can’t dance, and they

don't have heads. Here the poet uses personification, which ascribes human characteristics to an object that is not human in order to achieve a poetic effect.

Embedded in the types of figurative language explained above and in other lines throughout the poem, Wordsworth appeals to our sense sight, helping us visualize his experience. We see the poet out on his country walk and, later, recalling his walk while resting on his couch. The daffodils dance and play, stars “twinkle on the milky way,” the waves along the margin of the bay sparkle. This is imagery, words in succession that arouse readers’ senses—the senses of sight and sound, especially, though sometimes also the senses of taste and touch.

There are other forms of figurative language besides the five referenced here (simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and imagery). We will see examples of the others in our discussion of other poems.

Context

“I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” is based upon a true story which occurred on April 15, 1802. Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy were taking a walk near Glencoyne Bay in England’s beautiful Lake District, where they lived. Dorothy kept a journal that describes the experience in language and detail similar to that Wordsworth uses in the poem. *The Grasmere Journal* was meant to be private, but it is of great value to English literary history, and it was published in 1897, about forty years after Dorothy’s death.

Related Activities and Questions for Study and Discussion

Activities

1. [Listen to “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” with musical accompaniment](#)
2. Have you had an experience similar to the one Wordsworth describes, an experience when you were so overwhelmed with some aspect of nature’s beauty that you take pleasure from it still? Describe that experience in one or two paragraphs—or in a poem of your own, if that is an option your teacher will accept.

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16.

“Birches” by Robert Frost (Blank Verse)



Biography

Robert Frost was born on March 26, 1874, in San Francisco. His father, a teacher and a journalist, died in 1885, and his mother, also a teacher, moved the family to Lawrence, Massachusetts, where the extended Frost family had settled generations ago. Frost graduated from Lawrence High School in 1892 and attended Dartmouth College briefly before returning to Lawrence to teach at his mother’s school and to answer his calling to become a poet. He married his high school sweetheart, Elinor White, in December of 1895.

Frost returned to university, this time to Harvard, where he was a student from 1897 to 1899. He left to work the farm his grandfather purchased for him in Derry, New Hampshire. From 1906 to 1911, he also taught high school and college English, mainly in Plymouth, New Hampshire. Throughout all of these years, he was writing poetry, but he was not having much success getting his work published.

In 1912, he took his family to England, hoping he would find more success there as a poet. His instincts proved to be exceptional. His first collection of poetry, *A Boy’s Will*, was published in England in 1913; his second, *North of Boston*, in 1914. Including such iconic Frost poems as “Mending Wall” and “After Apple-Picking” and his famous narrative “The Death of the Hired Man,” *North of Boston* established firmly Frost’s reputation.

The Frosts returned to America in 1915, to Franconia, New Hampshire, where the growing family bought another farm. His reputation was now established, and over the years, he would become a public figure, America’s best-known and most popular poet. He supplemented his income, in the

manner typical of successful modern poets, by teaching and serving as poet-in-residence at a number of universities, including the University of Michigan and Amherst and Middlebury Colleges.

Frost's professional success is unmatched by any other American poet. He won four Pulitzer Prizes for outstanding poetry: for *New Hampshire*, in 1924; *Collected Poems*, in 1931; *A Further Range*, in 1937; and *A Witness Tree*, in 1943. The world's great universities—Harvard, Princeton, Oxford, Cambridge, Dartmouth—gave him honorary degrees. In 1960, he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for his contribution to American culture.

This professional success was tempered by tragedy in his personal life. His wife died of cancer in 1938. Four of his six children died before he did, his son Carol as a result of suicide. The contemplative and sorrowful voice of much of his poetry is the result, in part, of these events.

Frost was invited to read a poem at the inauguration of President Kennedy, on January 20, 1961. He was 87. He had written a poem especially for this occasion, but the glare from the sun on his paper obscured his vision. Instead, he recited from memory “The Gift Outright,” his iconic poem about America's progress from a colony of Great Britain to an independent nation.

Frost died from complications of prostate surgery on January 29, 1963.

Birches

Read [“Birches” by Robert Frost](#) online.

Published 1915

Analysis

Theme

The poem is set in the wake of an ice storm that has bent the branches of the birch trees in the woods near the poet's farm. The poet notices the bent branches, knows they are the victims of the ice storms, but wishes they were bowed down because a young boy has been swinging on them. The poem suggests that, through the exercise of our imagination, we can turn an unpleasant experience into a pleasant one. He knows he is deceiving himself. He can't escape the “Truth,” capitalized, in line 20. But he is grateful for the temporary escape from the harsh realities of life his play provides.

There is a religious dimension to the theme of the poem. In line 13, the poet imagines “the inner dome of heaven had fallen,” as the ice crystals fall from the branches. In line 56, he climbs the birches “*Toward* [italicized] heaven.” But Earth is better, “the right place for love” (line 52). Ultimately, the theme of the poem is that it is great to imagine, but it is better to be grounded. It is restorative to escape from harsh reality, but ultimately, we must confront reality.

Form

“Birches” is written in blank verse. Blank verse is a genre of poetry consisting of a regular rhythm pattern—iambic pentameter—but no recurring rhyme scheme.

~ / ~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
 When I see birches bend to left and right
 ~ / ~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
 Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
 ~ / ~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
 I like to think some boy's been swinging them.

It is a common and widely used verse form, revered because it is the form Shakespeare chose for his thirty-seven plays, though he does break the form on occasion in the interest of certain dramatic effects. It was also the form John Milton chose to use for the great epic poem in the English language, *Paradise Lost*.

Blank verse poems are usually quite long; at 59 lines, "Birches" is about average. They are often narrative poems in that they tell a story. Blank verse is the poetry genre that most closely resembles human speech, and so it lends itself to the narrative form. Blank verse poems often have a serious, philosophical tone or voice.

Figurative Language

"Birches" is an example of an extended metaphor, in that tree climbing is associated with a temporary, restorative escape from harsh reality throughout the poem.

In lines 10 and 11, Frost uses a series of words that begin with "s" and "sh": "Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells / Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—." This repetition of a consonant sound to achieve a particular effect is called alliteration. The repetition, especially of the "sh" sound, mimics the sound of the ice crumbling from the branches and falling to the ground. The effect is aided by the repetition of the vowel sound "e" in "shed" and "shells" and the "a" sound in "shattering" and "avalanching." This repetition of vowel sounds, a cousin to alliteration, is called assonance.

In line 19, Frost uses a simile, comparing the bowed branches to girls who dry their hair in the sun. The relationship between the human and the natural worlds is central to the theme of this poem, and this simile helps to augment this theme.

In line 21, Frost personifies Truth, breaking into his fantasy about the branches of the birch trees bowed down because boys have been swinging on them. Truth will triumph over fantasy by the end of the poem, and the personification highlights Truth's strength.

The simile in line 44 draws an interesting comparison between life and "a pathless wood." This is actually an example of an extended simile, since the comparison does not end until line 47. Those cobwebs that burn and tickle the face and those twigs that slash across the eyes are symbols that represent all of the physical and emotional challenges life sends our way.

Context

"Birches" was written while Frost was living in England, in 1913–14. It was first published in the August 1915 edition of *Atlantic Monthly*, and it was included in his collection of poetry, *Mountain*

Interval, published in 1916. Frost biographies note that the action in the poem is based upon Frost's own adventures, climbing birch trees when he was a boy.

Related Activities and Questions for Study and Discussion

Activities

1. In this poem, Frost suggests that it is good to use our imagination to escape from harsh realities, but only if we are prepared to face reality after the vacation our imagination can provide. In his poetry, Frost often recommends communing with nature as a way of coping with stress. Can you relate to his recommendation? Explain your answer.
2. [Hear Frost read "Birches"](#).

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17.

“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes (Free Verse)



Biography

James Mercer Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1901, in Joplin, Missouri. For many years, he lived an unsettled life. His father deserted the family while Langston was still an infant. Langston was sent to Lawrence, Kansas, to be raised by his grandmother. When he reached adolescence, he rejoined his mother and her new husband, now living in Lincoln, Illinois, but soon to relocate to Cleveland, where Langston attended high school. He spent time with his father, now a lawyer in Mexico, who agreed to help finance Langston’s education at Columbia University.

He dropped out of Columbia in 1922, feeling alienated as one of the few black students there. He travelled and worked a variety of odd jobs. He was a busboy at a Washington hotel, where he encountered the poet Vachel Lindsay. He shared some of his work with Lindsay, who, impressed, helped him publish his first book of poems, *The Weary Blues*, which he had been writing since he was a high school student.

Hughes returned to university, attending the historically black Lincoln University and graduating in 1929. He travelled some more, notably to the Soviet Union, because he was optimistic about the social justice—the racial equality, especially—that communism promised. He returned to the US, settling now in the Harlem borough of New York City, the centre for a renaissance in African-American culture. For the rest of his life, he was a productive man of letters, the author of poetry collections, short stories, novels, plays, and children’s books.

Hughes is generally regarded as the finest writer of the Harlem Renaissance. After the First World

War, the American economy boomed, and thousands of African-Americans migrated north to find work in the rapidly expanding manufacturing sector. Many settled in the Harlem neighbourhood of New York. Economic prosperity helps breed artistic expression, and scores of talented black poets began to publish highly acclaimed collections. The Harlem Renaissance helped spawn the civil rights movement of the 1950s.

Hughes died on May 22, 1967, after an unsuccessful operation to treat prostate cancer.

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

Read [“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes](#) online.

Published 1921

Analysis

Theme

“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” is a black pride poem. In just thirteen free verse lines, the author reviews milestones in the history of his race. Hughes presents a catalogue of the rivers the “Negro” speaker—who is a kind of Everyman for the black race—has known. The great rivers of West Asia and Africa—the Euphrates, the Congo, and the Nile—are naturally featured, but so, too, near the end of the poem is the Mississippi, which he heard “singing,” “when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans.” Hughes’s purpose is to extol the contributions of his race to world history.

Form

“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” is a free verse poem, one that will have rhythm and may have rhyme but not a recurring rhythm pattern or rhyme scheme. Note the varying lengths of the lines on the page, usually a marker for a free verse poem.

The genius of the free verse form of the poem lies in the way it mimics the movement of a river. A river flows in free verse. A three-word line winds into an eighteen-word line. An eight-word line forms its own stanza, the waters moving slowly, then a five-line stanza picks up the pace, with a series of subject-verb, imagery-rich lines—“I bathed,” “I built,” “I looked,” “I heard”—as the river of the poem seems to straighten out. The ending reaffirms the spiritual affinity of the black race with the natural world, as the narrator repeats his earlier declaration that his soul “has grown deep like the rivers.”

Figurative Language

Hughes’s use of metaphor reaffirms the connection between the human and natural worlds, symbolized by the rivers and essential to the poem’s theme. The metaphor in the poem’s first line compares rivers to the “flow of human blood in human veins.” The simile that first appears in the fourth line and is repeated in the last line reaffirms this connection, especially as it connects with black history: “My soul has grown deep like the rivers.”

Hughes also uses imagery effectively, especially in the ninth and tenth lines. He is describing Abe

Lincoln sailing down the Mississippi River to its delta in New Orleans, and he writes of the river, “I’ve seen its muddy / bosom turn all golden in the sunset.”

Context

Hughes revealed that he wrote this poem in 1920, when he was crossing the Mississippi River on a train, on his way to Mexico to visit his father. He included it in his volume of poetry *The Weary Blues*, published in 1926. It is among Hughes’s most popular and anthologized poems.

Related Activities and Questions for Study and Discussion

Activities

1. Read [Glynn Wilson’s essay “The Ultimate Metaphor: Life Is Like a River”](#) online. Compare her essay with Hughes’s poem.
2. Read some of the poems by other leading Harlem Renaissance authors, including Countee Cullen and Jean Toomer.
3. [Hear Hughes read some of his poetry.](#)

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18.**“How Do I Love Thee?” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (Sonnet)****Biography**

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was born March 6, 1806. Her father was wealthy, the owner of sugar plantations and other businesses in Jamaica. Throughout most of her childhood and young adulthood, Elizabeth lived with her family—she was the oldest of twelve children—on a magnificent estate near Ledbury, Herefordshire, in the southwest central part of England. She craved knowledge, reading voraciously and, with her brothers, attending lessons with well-qualified tutors. Before she was a teenager, Elizabeth was writing poetry. When she was a young teenager, she began to suffer intense headaches and spinal discomfort from a cause never really diagnosed. She spent most of her time indoors, reading and writing.

In the early 1830s, her father suffered a financial setback, in part because of new laws ending slavery. The family retained enough means to settle in a fine home on Wimpole Street in London. Elizabeth continued to write, and the high quality of her poetry brought her critical recognition and some financial success. By the time she was in her late 30s, Elizabeth was among the best-known and most highly respected poets in the country.

Her work drew the attention of another poet, Robert Browning, who eventually wrangled an invitation to visit. In May of 1845, they met and fell in love. Elizabeth began to write a series of sonnets, among the most famous in English literary history, celebrating her love for Robert. To be together, they had to elope. Elizabeth’s father, devoted insofar as he encouraged and supported her

education and literary talent, was eccentrically opposed to Elizabeth's marriage, indeed, to marriage of any of his children.

The couple moved to Florence, Italy, where they settled into the happy life of two writers who still had enough independent means to live well enough to have the freedom to devote themselves to their work. When William Wordsworth died in 1850, Elizabeth came close to becoming British Poet Laureate, barely losing out to Alfred Tennyson. In Italy, her health improved, though she still used laudanum, a derivative of heroin, to control her pain and elevate her mood. At age 43, she gave birth to a son, Robert, whom they always called Pen. Throughout her life, she was an advocate for social justice, opposing slavery and child labour in "The Cry of the Children"; championing women's rights, in her verse novel *Aurora Leigh*; and supporting Italy in its campaign for independence from Austria.

How Do I Love Thee?

Published 1850

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of being and ideal grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Analysis

Theme

The theme of Barrett Browning's poem is that true love is an all-consuming passion. The quality of true love the poet especially stresses is its spiritual nature. True love is an article of faith. References to "soul," "grace," "praise," "faith," "saints," and "God" help create this impression. The last line confirms the power of true love, asserting as it does that it is eternal, surviving even death.

Form

"How Do I Love Thee" is a sonnet. A sonnet is a form of regular verse, so it will have a regular rhythm pattern and rhyme scheme. The rhythm pattern, as it is for most sonnets, is iambic pentameter, five beats of an unstressed then stressed sound in each line:

~ / ~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
~ / ~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

Barrett Browning alters the rhythm pattern with extra stressed sounds—for emphasis—in the first and thirteenth lines. Read those lines out loud, and you will hear the extra stressed sounds.

The rhyme scheme is abbaabba cdcdd. Note that some of the rhymes are not absolute: ways/grace, for example, and faith/breath. These are called half-rhymes and they are included in the assessment of the rhyme scheme.

Note that the rhyme scheme divides the poem into two parts. The abbaabba part is called the octave (octave for eight) and the cdcdd section is called the sestet (sestet for six). This is a distinctive sonnet pattern, called the Petrarchan sonnet, named after the Italian poet Francesco Petrarch, who first used the form in the fourteenth century. It is a common pattern in English poetry. The other common pattern is the Shakespearean sonnet, examples of which we will read later in the chapter.

Figurative Language

Barrett Browning uses hyperbole throughout the poem to underscore the intensity of her love. She uses clever similes to the same effect, asserting that she loves as intensely as the free man determined to champion all that is right (line 7); as purely as the pious man at prayer (line 8). Almost half of the lines in the sonnet begin with the sentence "I love thee," which reads like a mantra that reinforces the spiritual connection she feels.

Context

Elizabeth Barrett met Robert Browning in May of 1845, and they married in September of 1846. During their courtship, Elizabeth wrote a series of forty-five sonnets expressing her love for her fiancé. When she showed them to Robert, he recognized their brilliance and encouraged her to publish them in her next volume of poems, which came out in 1850. They did realize such an intensely emotional and personal expression of love might make the Victorian English uneasy, and so the poems were published under the title *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, to make it seem as if they were translations. “How Do I Love Thee?” is Sonnet 43. The deception was soon uncovered, and Barrett Browning’s sonnet sequence came to be revered, second only to Shakespeare’s, in English literary history.

Related Activities and Questions for Study and Discussion

Activities

1. “How Do I Love Thee?” has become such an iconic poem, it has overshadowed the others in *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, though there are other sonnets in the collection that are equally moving and powerful. Browse through the other sonnets, easily accessible online. Select one. Paraphrase it and assess and comment on its theme and use of figurative language.
2. See a [documentary on the relationship between Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning](#).

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19.

“The Cremation of Sam McGee” by Robert Service (Ballad)



Biography

Robert Service was born January 16, 1874, in Preston, Lancashire, England. His father was a banker. For some years in his childhood, he lived with relatives in his father’s small hometown in Scotland before rejoining his parents, who had relocated to Glasgow. He followed in his father’s footsteps, finding work after his schooling with what would become the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Service was a wanderer who rarely settled for long in one place. In 1895, he made his way to British Columbia, worked as a store clerk in Cowichan Bay, and wrote poems, published in the Victoria newspaper the *Daily Colonist*. He took some courses at what is now the University of Victoria, apparently to impress a woman with whom he had fallen in love, but he did not distinguish himself. By 1903, he was working at a bank in Victoria. Head office sent him off to the new small town of Whitehorse, established in the frenzy of the Klondike Gold Rush and now in need of a bank.

Here, Service wrote his two now iconic comical ballads, “The Cremation of Sam McGee” and “The Shooting of Dan McGrew.” Soon he had enough poems to fill a book, *Songs of a Sourdough*, which was a huge success and made Service a wealthy man. Another book, *Ballads of a Cheechako* (1909), was published soon after and was another bestseller. A novel, *The Trail of ’98*, and another book of poems, *Rhymes of a Rolling Stone*, were published over the next few years. Service decided to move on, and he left the Yukon.

In 1913, after working for a year as a correspondent for the *Toronto Star*, which sent him off to cover

the Balkan Wars, Service settled in France. He married a Parisian girl, Germaine, and they had a daughter, Iris. He continued to write poetry and novels, some of which were made into silent movies.

Service worked as a stretcher bearer and ambulance driver in the First World War. After the war, he returned to Paris, wintered in Nice, and continued to write, mostly suspense thrillers. He hobnobbed with some of the great writers of his generation: H.G. Wells, Somerset Maugham, Colette, and James Joyce. *Ballads of a Bohemian* was published in 1921.

He was in his 60s when the Second World War broke out and he moved his family to the safety of California, though he did his part for the war effort, reciting his poetry—he was always a fine dramatic reader—to soldiers in U.S. Army camps. He also appeared—as himself—in a movie, *The Spoilers* (1942), with Marlene Dietrich and John Wayne.

After the war, Service returned to Paris, though he continued to travel, wintering in Monte Carlo and Monaco, where he lived on and off from 1947 until his death in 1958.

The Cremation of Sam McGee

*There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who toil¹ for gold;
The Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold;
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see
Was that night on the marge² of Lake Lebarge³
I cremated Sam McGee.*

Published 1907

Now Sam McGee was from Tennessee, where the cotton blooms and blows.
Why he left his home in the South to roam 'round the Pole, God only knows.
He was always cold, but the land of gold seemed to hold him like a spell;
Though he'd often say in his homely way that "he'd sooner live in hell."

On a Christmas Day we were mushing our way over the Dawson trail.⁴
Talk of your cold! through the parka's fold it stabbed like a driven nail.
If our eyes we'd close, then the lashes froze till sometimes we couldn't see;
It wasn't much fun, but the only one to whimper was Sam McGee.

And that very night, as we lay packed tight in our robes beneath the snow,
And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'erhead were dancing heel and toe,
He turned to me, and "Cap," says he, "I'll cash in this trip, I guess;
And if I do, I'm asking that you won't refuse my last request."

Well, he seemed so low that I couldn't say no; then he says with a sort of moan:
"It's the cursed cold, and it's got right hold till I'm chilled clean through to the bone.
Yet 'tain't being dead—it's my awful dread of the icy grave that pains;
So I want you to swear that, foul or fair, you'll cremate my last remains."

A pal's last need is a thing to heed, so I swore I would not fail;
And we started on at the streak of dawn; but God! he looked ghastly pale.
He crouched on the sleigh, and he raved all day of his home in Tennessee;
And before nightfall a corpse was all that was left of Sam McGee.

There wasn't a breath in that land of death, and I hurried, horror-driven,
With a corpse half hid that I couldn't get rid, because of a promise given;
It was lashed to the sleigh, and it seemed to say: "You may tax your brawn and brains,
But you promised true, and it's up to you to cremate those last remains."

Now a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its own stern code.
In the days to come, though my lips were dumb, in my heart how I cursed that load.
In the long, long night, by the lone firelight, while the huskies, round in a ring,
Howled out their woes to the homeless snows— O God! how I loathed the thing.

And every day that quiet clay seemed to heavy and heavier grow;
And on I went, though the dogs were spent and the grub was getting low;

1. Work hard.

2. The margin; the shore.

3. Actually Lake Laberge, which Service changes to "Lebarge" to rhyme with "marge." Lake Laberge is a widening of the Yukon River, north of Whitehorse.

4. Supply route between Dawson City and Whitehorse.

The trail was bad, and I felt half mad, but I swore I would not give in;
 And I'd often sing to the hateful thing, and it hearkened with a grin.

Till I came to the marge of Lake Lebarge, and a derelict there lay;
 It was jammed in the ice, but I saw in a trice it was called the "Alice May."
 And I looked at it, and I thought a bit, and I looked at my frozen chum;
 Then "Here," said I, with a sudden cry, "is my cre-ma-tor-eum."

Some planks I tore from the cabin floor, and I lit the boiler fire;
 Some coal I found that was lying around, and I heaped the fuel higher;
 The flames just soared, and the furnace roared—such a blaze you seldom see;
 And I burrowed a hole in the glowing coal, and I stuffed in Sam McGee.

Then I made a hike, for I didn't like to hear him sizzle so;
 And the heavens scowled, and the huskies howled, and the wind began to blow.
 It was icy cold, but the hot sweat rolled down my cheeks, and I don't know why;
 And the greasy smoke in an inky cloak went streaking down the sky.

I do not know how long in the snow I wrestled with grisly fear;
 But the stars came out and they danced about ere again I ventured near;
 I was sick with dread, but I bravely said: "I'll just take a peep inside.
 I guess he's cooked, and it's time I looked"; ... then the door I opened wide.

And there sat Sam, looking cool and calm, in the heart of the furnace roar;
 And he wore a smile you could see a mile, and he said: "Please close that door.
 It's fine in here, but I greatly fear you'll let in the cold and storm—
 Since I left Plumtree, down in Tennessee, it's the first time I've been warm."

*There are strange things done in the midnight sun
 By the men who moil for gold;
 The Arctic trails have their secret tales
 That would make your blood run cold;
 The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,
 But the queerest they ever did see
 Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge
 I cremated Sam McGee.*

Analysis

Theme

“The Cremation of Sam McGee” is a narrative poem, set during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896–1899. Until the last verse, it tells a grisly, almost Gothic story of two friends mushing their way along the Dawson Trail, moiling for gold. The main—and title—character is sick and, convinced he is dying, asks his friend to cremate him. A native of Tennessee, Sam simply cannot survive in such a harsh and forbidding climate.

He dies, and his friend is determined to honour his last request. An old boat, the *Alice May*, is shipwrecked on the shore of Lake Lebarge, and here the narrator will build a fire and cremate his friend. He leaves, unable to watch his friend incinerate; he returns an hour or so later.

And here the plot of the poem twists: Gothic is replaced by comedy. The fire has thawed Sam out, and he is alive and happy, warm for the first time since he has been in the Yukon.

“The Cremation of Sam McGee” is a popular ballad, meant to entertain and amuse readers, but a theme about the meaning of friendship and respecting and honouring the wishes—however gruesome—of a friend does emerge from the plot.

Form

“The Cremation of Sam McGee” is a ballad. A ballad is a narrative poem, usually written in quatrains (four-line stanzas) that alternate between iambic/anapestic pentameter and iambic/anapestic trimeter lines and use an abcb rhyme scheme. This rhythm, metre, and rhyme creates the sing-song voice which makes ballads so much fun to read out loud.

Here is the opening verse of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” perhaps the best-known ballad in English literature. Read it out loud and note how the rhythm and the rhyme quicken the pace of the lines:

~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
It is an ancient Mariner,
~ ~ / ~ / ~ /
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

Service begins his poem with a refrain—also common in ballads—repeated at the end of the poem and written in the typical tetrameter and trimeter, iambic and anapestic, ballad metre:

~ ~ / ~ / ~ ~ / ~ /
There are strange things done in the midnight sun
 ~ ~ / ~ / ~ /
By the men who moil for gold;
The Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold;

His narrative begins thereafter, in lines of seven beats each—heptameter—in iambic and anapestic. Service doubles the length of the typical ballad line, while maintaining the 4/3 pattern of the more traditional ballad stanza.

~ / ~ / ~ ~ / ~ / ~ ~ / ~ / ~ /
 Now Sam McGee was from Tennessee, where the cotton blooms and blows.
 Why he left his home in the South to roam ‘round the Pole, God only knows.
 He was always cold, but the land of gold seemed to hold him like a spell;
 Though he’d often say in his homely way that “he’d sooner live in hell.”

Note also the use of internal rhyme—that is, words that rhyme within a single line: McGee/Tennessee; home/roam; cold/gold; say/way. Internal rhyme is often a feature of the ballad stanza.

Ballads also often contain an element of the supernatural. The fire reanimates Sam, dead by the time he is cremated for several days. The refrain hints at supernatural events to come in the poem.

Figurative Language

In the first stanza, the simile “the land of gold seemed to hold him like a spell” illustrates the allure of wealth that brought a hundred thousand prospectors to the Yukon in the late 1890s. The simile in the second stanza, which has the cold stabbing into Sam “like a driven nail,” creates an effective image of the bitterest cold and foreshadows Sam’s “death.”

In the third stanza, stars are personified, “dancing heel and toe,” illustrating the natural beauty of the Yukon, despite its bitter cold.

The assonance in stanza seven—“In the long, long night, by the lone firelight”—highlights the narrator’s sense of loneliness, as he looks for a place to cremate his friend. The haunting image in the next line, as the huskies “Howled out their woes to the homeless snows,” has a similar effect. The personification and imagery of the eleventh stanza—“And the heavens scowled, and the huskies howled, and the wind began to blow”—further enhances the poem’s ominous tone. The last line of the same stanza—“And the greasy smoke in an inky cloak went streaking down the sky”—is a similarly effective metaphor and image.

The hyperbole of the final stanza, wherein the resurrected Sam wears “a smile you could see a mile,” perfectly alters the tone of the poem from ominous to hilarious.

Context

“The Cremation of Sam McGee” is based in part on an experience of one of Service’s close friends, Dr. Leonard Sugden, who had to cremate the body of a miner whom he found on an abandoned steamer, the *Olive May*—Service makes it the *Alice May*—because the ground was too frozen to allow for a burial.

William Samuel McGee was a client of Service’s when he worked at the Bank of Commerce in Whitehorse. Service asked and received permission to use McGee’s name.

The poem was published in Service’s 1907 collection, *Songs of a Sourdough*. A sourdough is a resident of the Yukon.

Activities

The Cremation of Sam McGee

Your school library might have a copy of the book-length edition of “The Cremation of Sam McGee,” illustrated by Ted Harrison, an artist who painted beautifully coloured, whimsical landscapes of the Yukon. There are several readings of the poem on YouTube, including one by Service himself and an excellent one by Johnny Cash, also illustrated with Ted Harrison paintings. Consult these sources and consider how they add to your understanding and enjoyment of this iconic Canadian poem.

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20.

“Ode to a Nightingale” by John Keats (Ode)**Biography**

John Keats was born in London on October 31, 1795. His father helped manage businesses, an inn and a livery stable, owned by his father-in-law, John Jennings. His childhood was traumatized by the death of his father in a riding accident in April of 1804 and his mother’s hasty remarriage to William Rawlings, who replaced Keats’s father as the family property manager but not, apparently, as a responsible father figure. Conflicts over the dispersal of John Jennings’s considerable estate after his death broke the family apart and would plague Keats with financial problems all of his life, though his share of the estate, entangled in court proceedings, would have been considerable. Keats and his sister and two brothers went off to live with their grandmother.

Eventually, the family did reconcile, and Keats did well at John Clarke’s school in Enfield, where, despite his small size, he was an excellent athlete and a prizewinning student, popular with the other boys at the school. Tragedy struck again when Keats’s mother died in March 1810. Her mother appointed a family friend, Richard Abbey, executor of her estate.

Keats chose—or had chosen for him—medicine as his career. In the summer of 1810, he began work as apprentice to the family doctor, Thomas Hammond, and he was accepted into medical school at Guy’s Hospital in October of 1815. He did well, and in July of 1816, he earned the degree, which would qualify him to practice as a pharmacist, physician, and surgeon.

Keats continued his friendship with Charles Clarke, whose father was headmaster of the school they attended together. Clarke encouraged Keats’s budding interest in writing poetry, and he introduced

Keats to the radical editor Leigh Hunt, with whom Clarke had shared some of Keats’s work. Hunt was impressed, especially with the early sonnet “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer,” written in October of 1816, after Clarke had loaned Keats George Chapman’s translation of Homer’s great epic poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Keats was a member now of the Hunt circle—he met poet Percy Shelley in December. Soon they were seen, justifiably so, as the rising stars of English poetry.

Abbey was, understandably, furious that Keats was giving up medicine to be a poet, especially given that the considerable expense of attending medical school would exacerbate Keats’s financial problems. Keats’s first book, simply titled *Poems*, appeared in March of 1817, but it was hardly a commercial success. He spent the next six months working on his long poem, *Endymion*, about the moon goddess Cynthia, who falls in love with the mortal shepherd Endymion and eventually assumes mortal shape herself so that they can be together. It was published in 1818 to indifferent reviews and poor sales. Still, Keats’s reputation was growing, and he was enjoying an active social life, travelling throughout the English countryside (on walking tours, mainly) and partying with a large group of London’s artists and poets, Shelley and Wordsworth among the most prominent.

In December of 1818, Keats’s brother Tom died of tuberculosis. His other brother, George, had immigrated to America, and Keats, always the responsible oldest brother, cared for Tom during his last days. The sorrow of Tom’s death coincided with some cruel reviews of Keats’s work, his continuing financial issues, and his own failing health, but his voluminous correspondence to his friends reveals the extent to which he was determined to keep his spirits up. A new relationship with his neighbour Frances Brawne helped him during this trying time.

Despite—perhaps because of—symptoms, which Dr. Keats recognized as the onset of tuberculosis, he worked with determined intensity, completing his great poems, including “The Eve of St. Agnes,” “Ode to a Nightingale,” “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” “La Belle Dame sans Merci,” and “To Autumn,” by the end of 1819. He became unofficially engaged to Fanny, to the consternation of her mother, who was doubtful of Keats’s prospects, and Keats’s friends, who did not warm to her. His final book (recognized now as a milestone of English poetry), *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes and Other Poems*, was published in July 1820.

As his health continued to deteriorate, Keats sailed off to Italy with his close friend, the artist Joseph Severn, hoping the mild Italian climate would revive him. He saw Fanny for the last time in September of 1820. He lingered in Rome for some months before tuberculosis claimed him, as it had his brother and mother, in February of 1821.

Ode to a Nightingale

Published 1819

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock¹ I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe²-wards had sunk:
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thine happiness,—
 That thou, light-winged Dryad³ of the trees

In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provençal⁴ song, and sunburnt mirth!
 O for a beaker full of the warm South,
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,⁵
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stained mouth;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;⁶
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs,
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus⁷ and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,

1. A highly poisonous plant.

2. In Greek mythology, the river of forgetfulness in the underworld.

3. In Greek mythology, a spirit that resides in trees.

4. Provence is a region in southeastern France, known for its natural beauty.

5. In Greek mythology, a spring on Mount Helicon. Drink from the stream and you will be inspired to write poetry.

6. Keats's younger brother Tom died of tuberculosis at just nineteen years of age. Keats, trained as a physician, cared for him. Keats himself, like his mother and brother before him, would also die of tuberculosis at the young age of twenty-five. He knew he had the illness when he wrote this poem in 1819.

7. The Roman god of wine, agriculture, fertility, and general partying. His chariot was pulled by leopards, the "pards" referenced later in the same line.

Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays⁸;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous⁹ glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling¹⁰ I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth,¹¹ when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades

8. Fairies and/or elves.

9. Lushly green vegetation.

10. In the dark.

11. In the Bible, Ruth moves with her mother-in-law to Jerusalem after the death of her husband, though she is not herself Jewish. She misses her home in Moab, but sacrifices her own happiness to be with and protect her mother-in-law.

Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

Analysis

Theme

As the poem opens, the speaker expresses heartache and despair. He contrasts this with the summer song of the nightingale, whose happiness he envies. He wishes he had a magic potion that would transport him to the nightingale’s world, where he could forget about the trials and tribulations of his own life.

By virtue of his poetic imagination, the speaker does imagine he enters the nightingale’s magical world of tender nights, starry skies, and fragrant flowers. He is struck by the immortality of the nightingale’s song in contrast to his own mortality and dark thoughts. He hears the birdsong on this day and imagines Ruth of the Bible hearing it and remembering fondly her homeland.

He is jolted back to reality as the nightingale’s song fades away. He is left disoriented by the sensuous experience which has both pleased and confused him.

The theme of the poem is that nature’s beauty, represented by the nightingale’s song, can take us away from the harsh realities of life, but eventually, we will need to face and cope with them.

Form

The poem is, as its title proclaims, an ode. An ode is a medium-length to long poem, ranging from about 36 to about 210 lines in length, formal in tone, and usually on a serious topic that has a philosophical slant to it. Odes tend to be in iambic pentameter and have regular rhyme schemes, but the ode form is determined by the author rather than prescribed.

“Ode to a Nightingale” is in iambic pentameter, with each of its eight ten-line stanzas using an ababcdecde rhyme scheme.

Figurative Language

The nightingale’s song is a synecdoche, the use of a part to represent the whole. The famous aphorism “the pen is mightier than the sword” is built upon synecdoche, the pen representing the written word and the sword representing warfare. The nightingale’s song is a synecdoche for the beauty and the permanence of nature, in that Keats heard it and celebrated it in 1819; Ruth of the Bible heard it two thousand years ago; and we continue to hear it and marvel at it today.

Keats is a master of imagery, and sensuous images that help us see the poem’s beautiful settings and hear its beautiful music appear in every stanza. The latter half of stanza 4 and all of stanza 5, wherein Keats describes the imaginary world to which the nightingale’s song transported him, are especially effective. As we read the poem aloud, we can feel the tender night, see the bright moon, smell and hear, almost taste, the lush gardens, even though they are lit only by the moon. Alliteration and assonance support and feed the imagery.

Context

In the spring of 1819, Keats was sharing a house with his friend Charles Brown. The house was

Wentworth Place, in Hampstead, a suburb of London. The house is now Keats House, a museum dedicated to John Keats. According to Brown, Keats was captivated by the song of a nightingale, which had nested in a plum tree—still there—in the garden. One morning, he sat under the plum tree for two or three hours and wrote the poem.

Related Activities and Questions for Study and Discussion

Activities

1. [Hear a nightingale sing \[YouTube\]](#).
2. [Hear Benedict Cumberbatch read “Ode to a Nightingale”](#).
3. Do you get more out of the poem after you hear the bird sing and professional actor read? Explain your answer.
4. Watch the [trailer for *Bright Star*, a film about Keats’s relationship with Fanny](#).

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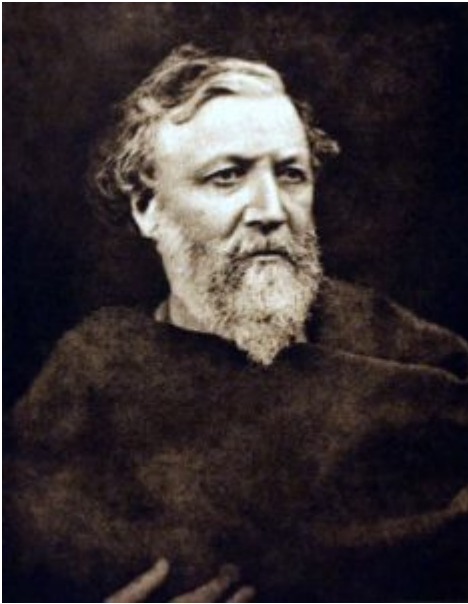
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21.

“My Last Duchess” by Robert Browning (Dramatic Monologue)



Biography

Robert Browning was born on May 7, 1812, in Camberwell, England. His mother was an accomplished pianist and a devout evangelical Christian. His father worked as a bank clerk and was also an artist, scholar, antiquarian, and collector of books and pictures. His rare book collection of more than 6,000 volumes included works in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish. Much of Browning’s education came from his well-read father. It is believed that he was already proficient at reading and writing by the age of five. A bright and anxious student, Browning learned Latin, Greek, and French by the time he was fourteen. From fourteen to sixteen, he was educated at home, attended to by various tutors in music, drawing, dancing, and horsemanship.

At the age of twelve, he wrote a volume of Byronic verse entitled *Incondita*, which his parents attempted, unsuccessfully, to have published. In 1825, a cousin gave Browning a collection of Shelley’s poetry; Browning was so taken with the book that he asked for the rest of Shelley’s works for his thirteenth birthday, and declared himself a vegetarian and an atheist in emulation of the poet. Despite this early passion, he apparently wrote no poems between the ages of thirteen and twenty. In 1828, Browning enrolled at the University of London, but he soon left, anxious to read and learn at his own pace. The random nature of his education later surfaced in his writing, leading to criticism of his poems’ obscurities.

In 1833, Browning anonymously published his first major published work, *Pauline*, and in 1840, he published *Sordello*, which was widely regarded as a failure. He also tried his hand at drama, but his

plays, including *Strafford*, which ran for five nights in 1837, and the *Bells and Pomegranates* series, were for the most part unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the techniques he developed through his dramatic monologues—especially his use of diction, rhythm, and symbol—are regarded as his most important contribution to poetry, influencing such major poets of the twentieth century as Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and Robert Frost.

After reading Elizabeth Barrett's *Poems* (1844) and corresponding with her for a few months, Browning met her in 1845. They were married in 1846, against the wishes of Barrett's father. The couple moved to Pisa and then Florence, where they continued to write. They had a son, Robert "Pen" Browning, in 1849, the same year Browning's *Collected Poems* was published. Elizabeth inspired Robert's collection of poems *Men and Women* (1855), which he dedicated to her. Now regarded as one of Browning's best works, the book was received with little notice at the time; its author was then primarily known as Elizabeth Barrett's husband.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning died in 1861, and Robert and Pen Browning moved to London soon after. Browning went on to publish *Dramatis Personae* (1864), and *The Ring and the Book* (1868). The latter, based on a seventeenth century Italian murder trial, received wide critical acclaim, finally earning Browning renown and respect in the twilight of his career. The Browning Society was founded in 1881, and he was awarded honorary degrees by Oxford University in 1882 and the University of Edinburgh in 1884. Robert Browning died on the same day that his final volume of verse, *Asolando*, was published, in 1889.

My Last Duchess

*FERRARA*¹

That’s my last Duchess² painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I³ call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf’s⁴ hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
5Will’t please you sit and look at her? I said
“Fra Pandolf” by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
10The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, ’twas not
Her husband’s presence only, called that spot
15Of joy into the Duchess’ cheek; perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, “Her mantle⁵ laps
Over my lady’s wrist too much,” or “Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat.”⁶ Such stuff
20Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate’er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
25Sir, ’twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
30Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked

Published 1842

1. Browning identifies the speaker, who delivers the lines which form the poem. He is Alfonso II, the Duke of Ferrara, a Province in northeast Italy.
2. In 1558, Ferrara married 14-year-old Lucrezia de Medici, daughter of the Grand Duke of another Italian province, Tuscany. She died in 1561. She may have died from tuberculosis, but Browning suggests in the poem she was murdered—poisoned or strangled—on the orders of her husband.
3. The Duke is based upon Alfonso II, fifth Duke of Ferrara (1533–97). In 1558, he married 14-year-old Lucrezia de’ Medici, who died in 1561 under suspicious circumstances.
4. Brother or Friar Pandolf, a fictitious painter from a monastic order.
5. Her shawl.
6. Perhaps a hint, a foreshadowing, of the Duchess’s death by strangulation.

My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
 35 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
 In speech—which I have not—to make your will
 Quite clear to such a one, and say, "Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
 Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
 40 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
 Her wits to yours, forsooth,⁷ and made excuse—
 E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
 Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
 45 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
 As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
 The company below, then. I repeat,
 The Count your master's known munificence
 50 Is ample warrant that no just pretense
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;⁸
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune,⁹ though,
 55 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
 Which Claus of Innsbruck¹⁰ cast in bronze for me!

7. Indeed.

8. We learn now that the listener is the ambassador for another Duke or, in this case, a Count, whose daughter Ferrara wishes to marry, as long as the dowry is sufficient. (In the interest of historical accuracy, it was more likely Tyrol's niece whom Ferrara wished to marry.)

9. Roman sea god, here depicted as subduing a mythical beast, half horse, half fish.

10. An imaginary sculptor. The reference may be an indirect compliment to Ferdinand of Innsbruck, Count of Tyrol, whose daughter Alfonso married in 1565.

Analysis

Theme

The Duke’s speech reveals his character, and from his character emerges the theme of the poem. The Duke’s late wife displeased him, because he thinks she took joy in the simple pleasures of life at the expense of the attention and reverence she should have granted exclusively to him and to his “nine-hundred-years-old name.” His last Duchess chatted with Fra Pandolf, who painted her portrait; she loved the sunset; she loved the bough of cherries the gardener brought her; she loved riding around the estate on her white mule. The Duke believes, on the basis of no evidence, that his Duchess flirted with men. And so he “gave commands / Then all smiles stopped together.” He has her executed. The Duke reveals himself to be pathologically jealous, a product of his own deep-seated insecurities. And herein lies the main theme of the poem: the destructive power of jealousy arising from an arrogance that masks low self-esteem.

Form

“My Last Duchess” is a dramatic monologue. It is a monologue in the sense that it consists of words spoken by one person. It is dramatic in the sense that another person is present, listening to the speaker’s words, which are shared with a wider audience, the poem’s readers. A dramatic monologue is, in a sense, a very short one-act play.

This is a regular verse dramatic monologue, in rhyming couplet iambic pentameter.

Figurative Language

The Duke comes across as a blunt, plain-spoken man, not one to use imagery or metaphor. The striking image of lines 18–19, noting that a painter would have trouble reproducing “the faint / Half-flush that dies along [the Duchess’s] throat,” is in the voice of the artist. It does foreshadow the Duchess’s fate.

The bronze sculpture of Neptune taming a sea horse, which the Duke points out to the Count’s ambassador before they rejoin the other guests, is a symbol of the control the Duke intends to exert upon his new bride. He has an ulterior motive in pointing out the statue.

Irony, as an element of literature, is a behaviour or an event which is contrary to readers’ or audience expectations. We say it is “ironic” when the Chief of Police is convicted of a crime. “My Last Duchess” rings with irony. The Duke condemns his wife’s behaviour but reveals her to be an innocent free spirit. He believes he is an honourable man, acting appropriately in the interest of preserving the integrity of his “nine-hundred-years-old name.” Readers soon understand the truth: the Duke is an insecure control freak and a murderer.

Context

“My Last Duchess” was published in 1842, in Browning’s poetry collection *Dramatic Lyrics*. Browning was a student of the history, literature, and culture of Renaissance Italy, which is the poem’s setting, though he had not yet eloped with Elizabeth and settled with her in Italy.

Related Activities and Questions for Study and Discussion

Activities

1. “My Last Duchess” was published in 1842 and is set in Italy in 1561. Consider how, if at all, the story it tells and the character of the Duke continue to be relevant today.
2. Watch a [dramatic reading of “My Last Duchess” by Robert Pennant Jones](#).
3. Watch a [dramatic reading of “My Last Duchess” by Ed Peed](#).

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22.

"One Art" by Elizabeth Bishop (Villanelle)



Biography

Elizabeth Bishop was born on February 8, 1911, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her father was a prosperous building contractor, but he died while Elizabeth was still an infant. He left enough of a legacy so his daughter, when she came of age, would be free to travel widely and pursue her work as a poet. Elizabeth's mother, devastated by her husband's death, broke down emotionally and had to be institutionalized.

Elizabeth was sent to live with her mother's family in Nova Scotia. She was happy there, but her father's family was wealthy enough to effect Elizabeth's return to Massachusetts to live with them. She was less happy there, and she was sent off again, this time to live with her mother's sister, who encouraged her love of reading, her interest in poetry, especially. Her health was never robust; she would suffer from asthma all her life. But she was always a good student, and in 1934, she graduated from Vassar.

She travelled widely—France, Spain, Africa, Italy—then settled for a time in Key West, where she transformed her travel memories into poetry: *North & South* was published in 1946. Her famous and much anthologized poem "The Fish" is included in this volume. She would return to Florida often throughout her life.

Bishop moved to New York, the best city for networking and for making the contacts a poet needed, where she would live until 1951. The poets Marianne Moore (1887–1972) and Robert Lowell (1917–1977) befriended her, offered her the emotional support she always needed, and helped her

promote her work. Her next book, *Poems: North & South. A Cold Spring*, was published in 1955. It won the 1956 Pulitzer Prize for poetry.

By then, Bishop was living in Rio de Janeiro. She had left New York in the fall of 1951, planning a world tour. But in Rio, she caught up with Lota de Macedo Soares, whom she had met in New York. They fell in love and lived together until 1967. Lota had an apartment in Rio and an estate near Petropolis, an enclave for wealthy Brazilians. For a time, Elizabeth thrived. Her health improved, and she controlled the heavy drinking that had plagued her all her adult life. Brazil's natural beauty inspired her. She was never a prolific poet, but her third book, *Questions of Travel*, was published in 1965.

Lota was a landscape architect from a prominent Brazilian family. In 1961, she was commissioned to oversee the development of the lush gardens and buildings for Rio's Flamengo Park, a massive project which consumed much of her time. She also became increasingly involved in Brazil's frenetic politics. The intensity of her work strained her relationship with Elizabeth.

In 1965, Bishop took a teaching position at the University of Washington in Seattle. She returned to Brazil in the summer of 1966, hoping to recover her happy life there. It was not to be. Lota could not cope with the stress of her work, and she was furious to learn of Elizabeth's relationship in Seattle with a young woman, Roxanne Cummings. Lota had to be hospitalized, as did Elizabeth, for mental exhaustion. In the summer of 1967, Elizabeth returned to New York. Feeling stronger, Lota joined her that autumn, hoping to revive the relationship. But she was still far from healthy. She took an overdose of sleeping pills the night she arrived, and died a few days later in September of 1967.

Elizabeth reunited with Roxanne and moved her—and her two-year-old son—to Brazil, hoping to resume there the semblance of a happy life she had enjoyed there once. But the relationship did not last; Roxanne and her son returned to Seattle. Elizabeth floundered, but was rescued again by Robert Lowell, who got her a teaching position at Harvard, where he was a distinguished professor.

Elizabeth rallied and wrote some of the finest poetry she had ever written, published in *Geography III* in 1977. At Harvard, she met the third love of her life, Alice Methfessel. They were happy enough together (except for one dramatic temporary breakup) until Elizabeth's death in October of 1979.

One Art

Read [“One Art” by Elizabeth Bishop](#) online.

Published 1977

Analysis

Theme

“One Art” asserts that, over time, we can recover from the loss of an object or even the loss of a loved one. “The art of losing isn’t hard to master,” the poet says; practice by losing small objects, then build up to the loss of homeland, home, and loved ones.

The key question the poem raises is this: Is the poet sincere or disingenuous? Is she deceiving herself to mask the pain of heartache? Has she really recovered from the loss of the woman she loved? Her advice—that we should practice the art of losing to prepare ourselves for a big loss—seems counterintuitive. We do lose things we treasure and people we love, but it is hard to master loss.

On its surface, the theme of “One Art” is that with patience and practice, we can recover from loss.

The deeper theme might be the reverse: the loss of love is a disaster for which there is little or no consolation.

Form

“One Art” is a form of regular verse known as a villanelle. It is a complex and challenging genre. It consists of nineteen lines, divided into five tercets (three-line stanzas) and a final quatrain. The rhythm pattern is iambic pentameter. The rhyme scheme is aba aba aba aba abaa. The first line of the poem and the last line of the first tercet are repeated throughout the poem with, at most, slightly altered wording. The first line of the poem serves as the last line of the second and fourth tercets. The last line of the first stanza serves as the last line of the third and the fifth stanza. These repeating lines repeat one last time, forming a rhyming couplet with which the poem ends.

The villanelle is not a form widely used by poets. Its subject is often personal and emotional. The controlled and rigid structure helps poets restrain the emotion that might otherwise become excessive.

Figurative Language

The first phrase of the poem—“The art of losing”—is an oxymoron, a phrase that embeds a deliberate contradiction to achieve a literary effect. The speaker is deceiving herself, pretending she does not care about loss, and so she refers to it as an “art,” pretending to diminish the pain and frustration of loss.

Context

In the fall of 1975, Bishop split up with her girlfriend, Alice Methfessel. They would reunite and remain together until Bishop’s death in 1979, but the split inspired “One Art.” The “you” of the final stanza is a reference to Alice.

The loss of the cities, countries, and even continents she alludes to in the poem remind readers of her extensive travels and long residence in Rio de Janeiro.

Related Activities and Questions for Study and Discussion

Exercises

1. In the film, *In Her Shoes*, the character of Maggie, played by Cameron Diaz, recites “One Art” to a patient in the hospital where she works. She then offers her interpretation of the poem. [Watch Cameron Diaz recite “One Art” in the film *In Her Shoes*](#). What do you think of Maggie’s interpretation of the poem?
2. Compare “One Art” with the song [“The Place Where the Lost Things Go” from the film *Mary Poppins Returns*](#).
3. Do you agree that Bishop is being disingenuous when she claims that losing her partner is not a

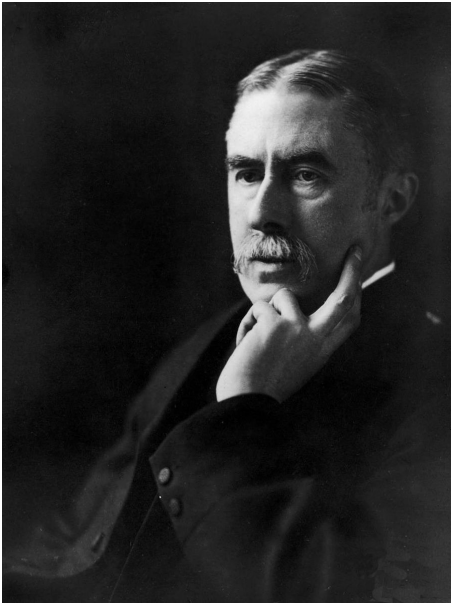
disaster? Do you think she successfully exorcises Alice's presence in her heart by writing a poem about it? Is this a good way to cope with loss?

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23.

"To an Athlete Dying Young" by A.E. Housman (Elegy)



Biography

Alfred Edward Housman was born March 26, 1859, in a suburb of Bromsgrove, a small Worcestershire town southwest of Birmingham. His father was a solicitor. Housman's childhood was basically happy, though marred by the death of his mother in 1871. His father remarried to his cousin Lucy, with whom Housman had a close relationship. He was a bright student who won a scholarship to attend Oxford in October of 1877.

Housman was brilliant but arrogant and overly self-confident about his intellectual abilities. He read what he preferred to read, at the expense of the readings his professors assigned to him. Another distraction was his unrequited love for his friend and fellow student, Moses Jackson. Housman failed his final exams in May of 1881, and he had to return for another semester to earn his undistinguished degree in Greek and Latin literature.

He was forced to put on hold the academic career for which he was well suited. For the next ten years, he was a humble clerk in the Patent Office in London, where Moses also worked. He shared a house with Moses and Moses's brother, Adalbert. Apparently the roommates quarrelled, possibly because of the awkwardness of Housman's feelings. He moved out of the house in 1885; Jackson left for a teaching position in India, in 1887, and Housman rarely saw him thereafter. Jackson would eventually settle in Vancouver, where he died in 1923.

In his spare time, Housman edited the work of and wrote academic articles about Greek and Latin writers. By 1892, he had a growing reputation, and University College London hired him as a professor

of Latin. In the spare time he now had, he travelled on holidays to the continent—France and Italy were his favourite destinations—and he dabbled in poetry. His first collection, *A Shropshire Lad*, was published in 1896. It would become one of the most popular, bestselling collections of poetry in the history of English literature.

In 1910, Cambridge lured Housman away from UCL, and he worked at Cambridge as professor of Latin for the rest of his life. *Last Poems* (mistitled, as it would turn out) was published in 1922. He died in 1936, and his brother Laurence included additional poems in the biography he published the year after Housman's death. Housman was prouder of his brilliant scholarship and meticulous editing of Greek and Latin texts than he was of his poetry, about which he was always reluctant to speak, though he remains a famous man today due mainly to the enduring popularity of the poems in *A Shropshire Lad*.

To an Athlete Dying Young

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you¹ through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsmen of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel² grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears.

Now you will not swell the rout³
Of lads that wore their honours out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,⁴
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.⁵

And round that early-laurelled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.⁶

Published 1896

1. Carried you above us on a chair to commemorate your victory.

2. In ancient Greece, victorious athletes were honoured with a laurel wreath, placed upon their head.

3. The crowd.

4. Here likely a reference to the coffin.

5. A lintel is the cross beam at the top of a door or a window. It is "low" here because it is the top of the coffin, where the dead athlete, metaphorically, holds up his trophy.

6. The garland, the wreath of flowers, which girls make fade quickly, while the wreath on the head of the athlete does not fade.

Analysis

Theme

Coping with death is a common theme among virtually all poets, who often speculate on the promise of eternal life through faith and the immortality of the soul. Housman has a different theme, asserting that there are advantages to dying young, at the height of your fame, before your glory fades with time.

“Smart lad,” he writes, in praise of the athlete dying young, “to slip betimes away / From fields where glory does not stay.”

Form

“To an Athlete Dying Young” is an elegy, a poem written to honour and commemorate the passing of someone to whom the poet was close, often a friend or family member. Elegies are naturally sad, though the poet will often temper the sorrow by expressing the conviction the loved one lives on in the memory of friends and family and in the promise of eternal life.

Housman’s is a regular verse elegy, in iambic tetrameter, with an aabb rhyme scheme.

Figurative Language

The tone of the poem is triumphant in the first stanza, when the young athlete has won the race. The iambic tetrameter lines move quickly, and the diction—“cheering by,” “shoulder-high”—is upbeat. But notice how the tone becomes more sombre as the verses progress. By the third verse, the lines, though still iambic tetrameter, slow down, and the diction is more and more associated with the death, the coffin, and the burial.

Plants and flowers—laurel, roses, garlands—are used throughout the poem as symbols of athletic prowess and the transience of life.

Context

“To an Athlete Dying Young” is one of the poems from Housman’s collection *A Shropshire Lad*, published in 1896. Sales were slow at first, but picked up to such an extent that it eventually became a bestseller, selling hundreds of thousands of copies, and is still in print today.

If there is an actual person whom Housman knew, a young athlete who died young, the person has not been identified. He is likely a fictitious character.

Related Activities and Questions for Study and Discussion

Activities

1. Housman is the protagonist of Tom Stoppard’s 1997 play *The Invention of Love*. Watch an [excerpt of *The Invention of Love*](#).
2. Listen to [some of the poems in *A Shropshire Lad* set to music](#).
3. In “To an Athlete Dying Young,” Housman suggests that dying young, at the height of your fame, is less tragic than it might appear to be because your accomplishments are frozen in time, unable to fade away. Do you agree? Think of those famous people who have died young—James Dean, Princess Diana, Michael Jackson, Prince.
4. Housman’s poems have been parodied often. Clever parodies by Max Beerbohm and Humbert Wolfe are easy to access online.

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24.

“Eastern Guard Tower” by Etheridge Knight (Haiku)

Biography

Etheridge Knight was born on April 19, 1931, in Corinth, Mississippi. His father was a farmer and, later, a construction worker on the Kentucky Dam. Knight’s childhood was unsettled. He was an excellent student, but opportunities for poor black children in the South were few. He dropped out of school when he was sixteen. He joined the army and served as a medical technician in the Korean War until November 1950. He was wounded and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, conditions which led to an addiction to painkillers, morphine especially.

He settled in Indianapolis, where his family was now living. Opportunities were still few, and Knight sold drugs to support his own addiction. In 1960, he was sentenced to eight years in prison for armed robbery. In prison, Knight read widely and began to write poetry. By the mid 1960s, he was gaining a reputation—especially among other African-American poets—as a gifted writer. *Poems from Prison* was published in 1968, the same year Knight was released.

Upon his release, Knight married fellow poet Sonia Sanchez. They were, with Dudley Randall, Amiri Baraka, and Gwendolyn Brooks, prominent in the Black Arts Movement. BAM was a more radical successor to the Harlem Renaissance (see entry for Langston Hughes). By the 1960s, African-American writers and artists were impatient with the slow march toward civil rights, and their work took a more aggressive, radical, assertive position on the need for social change, for the end to racism, especially.

Knight struggled to control his drug addiction; his marriage to Sanchez did not survive. But his career flourished. He found work as poet-in-residence at several universities, including the University of Pittsburgh. He was the recipient of prestigious grants, including a Guggenheim. He continued to publish poetry collections: *Belly Song and Other Poems*, in 1973; *Born of a Woman*, in 1980. His work was widely acclaimed, and he was nominated for prestigious awards, including a Pulitzer Prize.

Knight got some control over his drug addiction; earned a degree in American poetry; and married again, though he and his second wife separated in 1977. He died of lung cancer in March of 1991.

Eastern Guard Tower

Eastern guard tower
glints in sunset; convicts rest
like lizards on rocks.

Published 1968

Analysis

Theme

As is usually the case for a haiku, theme emerges from the contrast embedded in the poem’s imagery. The guard tower “glints in sunset,” the tower suggesting the beauty and freedom that lies beyond it. The convicts, resting “like lizards on rocks,” suggests the pain and resentment of incarceration, of the loss of freedom.

Form

“Eastern Guard Tower” is a haiku. The haiku is a form of free verse that originated in Japan and, though it is a free verse form, does have its conventions. It is three lines in length. In its strict, classical form, the three lines add up to seventeen syllables: five in the first line, seven in the second, and five again in the third. Knight’s haiku follows this pattern.

A haiku typically consists of two contrasting images, its theme emerging from this contrast.

Figurative Language

The image of the guard tower, glinting in the sunset, contrasts with the simile, comparing the convicts to lizards, resting on rocks. From the contrast emerges the theme of the poem.

Context

Knight was imprisoned, from 1960 to 1968, for armed robbery. In prison, he wrote poems about the pain and anguish of the life of a convict. He wrote a series of haikus, which reveal the intensity of his ability to observe life around him and express his vision in the sharp, concise images that haikus require. “Eastern Guard Tower” is the first in the series. It was published in 1968, in *Poems from Prison*.

Related Activities and Questions for Study and Discussion

Activities

1. Read [other haikus by Etheridge Knight](#).
2. [Watch and hear Knight speak and read his poetry](#).
3. Write a haiku on a topic of your choice or on one assigned or recommended by your teacher.

25.

An Anthology of Poems for Further Study

Philip Kevin Paul (1971–)

“Such a Tiny Light”

Read “[Such a Tiny Light](#)” and learn about its context.

Activities

1. “Such a Tiny Light,” Paul explains, “represents my conversation with and sensitivity to mortality and loss.” What examples of mortality and loss does he provide in the poem to reinforce this theme?
2. What is the form or genre of the poem?
3. Identify examples of personification in the poem, and explain how they support the poem’s theme?
4. What, literally, is the tiny light to which the poem’s title alludes? What (metaphorically/symbolically) does the tiny light represent?

Gregory Scofield (1966–)

“The Sewing Circle”

Read “[The Sewing Circle](#)” [\[PDF\]](#).

Activities

1. Who is the narrator of this poem? What seminal event in Canadian history inspired this poem?
2. What is a sewing circle? How has Scofield altered its traditional purpose to underscore the theme of his poem?

3. Why does the poem include so many religious references, and how does the narrator’s faith influence the poem’s theme?
4. Identify and explain the effect of the simile Scofield uses in stanzas 6-7.
5. Describe the tone, the voice of the poem. Does the tone suggest the outcome of battle to be fought?

Marilyn Dumont (1955–)

“Leather and Naugahyde”

Read “[Leather and Naugahyde](#).”

Activities

1. What are the qualities of “Leather and Naugahyde” that make it a poem, rather than a single prose paragraph?
2. What is Naugahyde and why is it an effective metaphor for the differences in ethnic identities at the heart of the poem?
3. What is a “treaty guy”? How and why does his attitude towards the poem’s narrator suddenly change? What is the nature of the change?
4. What is the theme of the poem?
5. Read [additional information on indigenous Canadian authors \[PDF\]](#).

Rita Dove (1952–)

“Heart to Heart”

Read “[Heart to Heart](#).”

Activities

1. What is a cliché? List the clichés related to the human heart that Dove references in the poem.

What is her purpose in doing so?

2. How would you describe the tone, the voice of the poem? How does the form of the poem shape the tone? Is there a change in tone, as the poem comes to an end?
3. Poems about hearts are usually love poems. Is this a love poem? Support your answer.
4. Watch an [interview with Rita Dove](#). Does the interview give you any insights into the theme and form of “Heart to Heart”?

Emma Laroque (1949–)

“The Red in Winter”

Read “[The Red in Winter](#)” and learn about its context.

Activities

1. What is the significance—the double entendre—of the title of the poem?
2. How do personification and symbolism add layers of meaning to this poem?
3. How does the form of the poem—its brevity, especially—influence its theme?

Yusef Komunyakaa (1947–)

“Facing It”

Read “[Facing It](#)” and watch and [listen to Komunyakaa read “Facing It.”](#)”

Activities

1. How do we know that the poet, visiting the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial, is a Vietnam vet himself?
2. Komunyakaa wants readers to know that civilians who would not have served in Vietnam still were involved in the war. How does he accomplish this?
3. Why and how is race important in the context of this poem?

4. What is the significance of the name “Andrew Johnson” mentioned in the poem?
5. Note two examples of imagery in the poem and determine how the imagery enhances the impact the poem has on its readers.
6. Why does the poet end “Facing It” as he does? Do you think this is an effective ending? Explain your answer.

Wendy Cope (1945–)

“Bloody Men”

Read “[Bloody Men](#).”

Activities

1. In her poetry, Wendy Cope often uses humour to express a serious theme. How does “Bloody Men” illustrate this technique?
2. Is this a feminist or an anti-feminist poem? Explain your answer.
3. What is the form of the poem? Why does Cope use this form?
4. Comment on the effectiveness of the extended simile/metaphor at the centre of this poem. What does Cope mean by “flashing their indicators”?
5. See an [interview with Cope](#). How does the interview help you understand and appreciate “Bloody Men”?

Kay Ryan (1945–)

“Blandeur”

Read “[Blandeur](#).”

Activities

1. What does Ryan say in this poem about the nature of nature? What is the theme of the poem?

2. What is a pun? How is the title of this poem a pun?
3. “Blandeur is not a word found in the dictionary, nor is “unlean.” Has Ryan made a mistake? Why does she make up her own words?
4. See an [interview with Ryan](#). How does the interview help you understand and appreciate “Blandeur”?

Billy Collins (1941-)

“Introduction to Poetry”

Read “[Introduction to Poetry](#).”

Activities

1. What is the source of the speaker’s frustration in the poem? How does this frustration help to establish the poem’s theme?
2. Compare and contrast the two ways of reading poetry presented in “Introduction to Poetry.” In your opinion, which method is preferable?
3. What metaphors does Collins use for the art of reading poetry? Do you think they are effective?
4. [Watch and hear Collins read and discuss his poetry](#). How does his presentation help you understand and appreciate “Introduction to Poetry”?

Buffy Sainte-Marie (1941-)

“Now that the Buffalo’s Gone”

Read the [lyrics of “Now that the Buffalo’s Gone”](#). [Hear Buffy Saint-Marie sing](#) the song.

Activities

1. Why does the author reference the Buffalo in this song? For what is the buffalo a symbol and a metaphor?

2. What is the theme of this poem/song?
3. What is the basis of the comparison the author makes between the government's defeat of Germany and the defeat of Native Americans? How are the "victories" similar and how are they different? Is the analogy effective?
4. The tribes the author references in the final stanza are the Inuit, Cheyanne, and Navaho? What is the significance of her choice of these three tribes?
5. Buffy Sainte-Marie recorded "Now that the Buffalo's Gone" in 1964. Have conditions for indigenous people improved? Remained the same? Gotten worse? Explain your answer.

Margaret Atwood (1939–)

"You Fit into Me"

Read "[You Fit into Me](#)."

Activities

1. What do we expect the hook and eye reference in the first stanza to be about? What does it actually refer to, as revealed in the second stanza? How does this juxtaposition inform the theme of the poem?
2. What do you think is the source of the problems with the relationship alluded to in the poem?
3. What is the form/genre of this poem?
4. [Watch and listen to Margaret Atwood read one of her poems.](#)

Sylvia Plath (1932–1963)

"Mirror"

Read "[Mirror](#)."

Activities

1. Who narrates this poem? What literary device is Plath using here? How does this narrator inform the theme of the poem?
2. What is the form or genre of the poem?
3. How is the poem relevant to contemporary life?

Adrienne Rich (1929–2012)

“Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers”

Read “[Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers](#).”

“Diving into the Wreck”

Read “[Diving into the Wreck](#).” [Watch and hear Rich read “Diving into the Wreck”](#).

Activities

1. “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” was published in 1950, before the feminist movement caught fire. How does the poem foreshadow Rich’s eventual emergence as a leading feminist poet?
2. How do we know Aunt Jennifer is not in a happy marriage?
3. How does Aunt Jennifer cope with the sorrow in her life? What is the theme of the poem?
4. What is the form of the poem?
5. Compare and contrast “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” with William Blake’s “The Tiger.”
6. How is the aphorism “We destroy in order to recreate” relevant to the context and the theme of “Diving into the Wreck?”
7. Identify three examples of symbolism used in “Diving into the Wreck” and reflect upon how the symbolism augments the theme of the poem.
8. How and why is the sunken ship that the narrator explores an effective extended metaphor to enhance the poem’s theme?
9. Can we tell by reading this poem that the poet is a feminist? Explain your answer.

Maya Angelou (1928–2014)

“Still I Rise”

Read “[Still I Rise](#).” [Watch and hear Angelou read “Still I Rise”](#).

“Phenomenal Women”

Read “[Phenomenal Woman](#).” [Watch and hear Angelou read “Phenomenal Woman”](#).

Activities

1. “Still I Rise” has a distinctive rhythm pattern. Identify the rhythm and explain why it is effective. Why does the rhythm pattern change in the last few stanzas?
2. Based upon the evidence in these poems, what social causes/movements does Angelou support? Explain your answer.
3. How might we know these poems were written by the same author?
4. What stereotypes about female beauty does Angelou debunk in “Phenomenal Woman”? What is the theme of the poem?

Maxine Kumin (1925–2014)

“Morning Swim”

Read “[Morning Swim](#).”

“Woodchucks”

Read “[Woodchucks](#).” [Watch and hear Kumin read “Woodchucks”](#).

Activities

1. [Hear the hymn “Abide with Me”](#). Explain why the narrator of “Morning Swim” is singing this hymn, while she swims. How does the hymn help develop the theme of the poem?
2. Provide three examples of imagery in “Morning Swim” and explain how imagery supports the

poem's theme?

3. Compare and contrast the forms of the two poems by Kumin, noting especially similarities and differences in theme and form.
4. What does "NIMBY" stand for, and how is the phrase relevant to the theme of "Woodchucks"?
5. Think of a time when your own values and ideals have been challenged by extraneous circumstances and relate this conflict to the theme of "Woodchucks."

Feature Unit: The Poetry of the Harlem Renaissance

The Poetry of the Harlem Renaissance

Introduction

In the early years of the twentieth century, a labour shortage, mainly in the manufacturing sector, combined with a pervasive racism, which the abolition of slavery had failed to eradicate, lured hundreds of thousands of African Americans north, to the large cities of New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Chicago. Many settled in the Harlem borough of New York. Prosperity fosters culture, and soon black artists, musicians, poets, playwrights, and novelists were painting, writing music, editing literary magazines, producing plays, and publishing their stories and poems.

Claude McKay's 1922 poetry collection *Harlem Shadows* is among the earliest and most successful books, credited by some literary historians as the book that initiated the Harlem Renaissance. Jean Toomer's, *Cane*, appeared a year later, to critical acclaim from not only black but prominent white authors, notably Sherwood Anderson. Langston Hughes has emerged as the great poet of the movement, mainly because of his innovative style, echoing the jazz rhythms and speech patterns of African American musicians and ordinary citizens, evident in the poems included in his 1926 collection, *The Weary Blues*. Countee Cullen preferred to work in traditional regular verse forms, though his poetry collections, *Copper Sun*, in 1927 and *The Ballad of the Brown Girl*, a year later, reveal his commitment to the struggle for equal rights.

As a literary movement, the Harlem Renaissance faded in the 1930's, as the Great Depression challenged the same economic prosperity that had helped to launch the Renaissance. But the Harlem Renaissance left a lasting legacy. It provided the inspiration—and fuel—for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. It resurged in the Black Arts Movement of the 1970's, when poets like Amiri Baraka, Audre Lorde, Nikki Giovanni, and Sonia Sanchez, using more militant language and angrier tones, protested against the same social conditions which had angered and frustrated the poets of the Harlem Renaissance.

Claude McKay (1889–1948)

"Harlem Shadows"

I hear the halting footsteps of a lass
In Negro Harlem when the night lets fall

Its veil. I see the shapes of girls who pass
 To bend and barter at desire's call.
 Ah, little dark girls who in slippered feet
 Go prowling through the night from street to street! Through the long night until the silver break
 Of day the little gray feet know no rest;
 Through the lone night until the last snow-flake
 Has dropped from heaven upon the earth's white breast,
 The dusky, half-clad girls of tired feet
 Are trudging, thinly shod, from street to street.
 Ah, stern harsh world, that in the wretched way
 Of poverty, dishonor and disgrace,
 Has pushed the timid little feet of clay,
 The sacred brown feet of my fallen race!
 Ah, heart of me, the weary, weary feet
 In Harlem wandering from street to street.

Activities

1. What is the significance of the title of the poem?
2. What is the tone, the voice, of this poem and how does the poet achieve this tone?
3. Assess the poem's rhythm and rhyme scheme.
4. Whom does the poet blame for the plight of the "dusky, half-clad girls of tired feet"?

Jean Toomer (1894–1967)

"Georgia Dusk"

The sky, lazily disdaining to pursue
 The setting sun, too indolent to hold
 A lengthened tournament for flashing gold,
 Passively darkens for night's barbecue, A feast of moon and men and barking hounds,
 An orgy for some genius of the South
 With blood-hot eyes and cane-lipped scented mouth,
 Surprised in making folk-songs from soul sounds. The sawmill blows its whistle, buzz-saws stop,
 And silence breaks the bud of knoll and hill,
 Soft settling pollen where plowed lands fulfill
 Their early promise of a bumper crop.

Smoke from the pyramidal sawdust pile
 Curls up, blue ghosts of trees, tarrying low
 Where only chips and stumps are left to show
 The solid proof of former domicile.

Meanwhile, the men, with vestiges of pomp,
 Race memories of king and caravan,
 High-priests, an ostrich, and a juju-man,¹
 Go singing through the footpaths of the swamp.

1. The magician/healer of the African village. The ostrich is native to Africa. It cannot fly; hence it might have symbolic overtones in a poem which touches on African American freedom and oppression.

Their voices rise . . . the pine trees are guitars,
 Strumming, pine-needles fall like sheets of rain . .
 Their voices rise . . . the chorus of the cane
 Is caroling a vesper² to the stars . .

O singers, resinous and soft your songs
 Above the sacred whisper of the pines,
 Give virgin lips to cornfield concubines,
 Bring dreams of Christ to dusky cane-lipped throngs.

Activities

1. Where and when is this poem set? How might the “dusk” of the title be used symbolically?
2. There is a narrative tinge to the poem. Summarize the story it tells.
3. What is the poet urging the black sawmill workers to do in the poem’s last stanza?
4. The Harlem Renaissance poets were concerned with African American emancipation, civil rights, equality. How do these concerns figure in “Georgia Dusk”?

Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

“Harlem”

Read “[Harlem](#).”

Activities

1. What is the veiled threat implicit in this poem? What are the sources of the threat? How does this threat inform the theme of the poem?
2. Identify similes and metaphors Hughes uses in the poem and assess why they are effective?
3. [Hear Hughes read “Harlem”](#). How does hearing the poet read his work help you understand and appreciate it?

Countee Cullen (1903–1946)

“Yet Do I Marvel”

I doubt not God is good, well-meaning, kind
 And did He stoop to quibble could tell why
 The little buried mole continues blind,
 Why flesh that mirrors Him must some day die,
 Make plain the reason tortured Tantalus³
 Is baited by the fickle fruit, declare
 If merely brute caprice dooms Sisyphus⁴

2. A religious service held in the late afternoon/early evening.

3. In Greek mythology, Tantalus was left stranded in a pool of water, as punishment for his offenses against the gods. Above him were branches filled with ripe fruits, but they were always just out of reach, whenever he tried to pick them. Below his was sweet water, but it receded whenever he tried to drink. Our word “tantalize” comes from the Tantalus myth.

4. In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was forced to push a heavy boulder up a hill (in some versions of the myth, climb a never-ending staircase) as punishment for his offenses against the gods. Whenever he was about to crest the hill, the boulder rolled back down.

To struggle up a never-ending stair.
 Inscrutable His ways are, and immune
 To catechism⁵ by a mind too strewn
 With petty cares to slightly understand
 What awful brain compels His awful hand.
 Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:
 To make a poet black, and bid him sing!

Activities

1. What is the issue troubling the poet? What four examples does he provide to illustrate the nature of the problem?
2. Does the “curious thing” referenced near the end of the poem help to exonerate God and the gods or is it another example of the gods’ indifferent cruelty?
3. How do we know this poem is a Shakespeare sonnet?
4. [Watch and hear “Yet Do I Marvel” read](#). Does hearing the poem read aloud help you understand it?

John Magee (1922–1941)

“High Flight”

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
 And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
 Sunward I’ve climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
 Of sun-split clouds, —and done a hundred things
 You have not dreamed of —Wheeled and soared and swung
 High in the sunlit silence. Hov’ring there
 I’ve chased the shouting wind along, and flung
 My eager craft through footless halls of air...
 Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
 I’ve topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
 Where never lark or even eagle flew —
 And, while with silent lifting mind I’ve trod
 The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
 Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

5. Explication of a Christian text.

Activities

1. Why does Magee describe the “bonds of earth” as “surly”?
2. Magee tries to use the rhythm of his language to mimic the feel of a small plane (here a spitfire in which he was training to be a fighter pilot in World War II) in flight. Does he succeed? Support your answer.
3. Why does God enter the poem in the last line? How does the reference add to the theme of the poem?
4. How do we know this poem is a sonnet?

Dylan Thomas (1914–1953)

“Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night”

Do not go gentle into that good night,
 Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light. Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
 Because their words had forked no lightning they
 Do not go gentle into that good night. Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
 Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light. Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
 And learn, too late, they grieve it on its way,
 Do not go gentle into that good night. Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
 Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light. And you, my father, there on the sad height,
 Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
 Do not go gentle into that good night.
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Activities

1. To what do the phrases “that good night” and “the dying of the light,” which echo throughout the poem, refer?
2. What is the form/genre of this poem? How does the form influence the poem’s content?
3. Thomas references four types of people who refuse to go gentle into that good night, who rage against the dying of the light. What are these four types of people? Why have all of them experienced disappointments in their lives? What is the nature of these disappointments? How do

they or should they express their regrets?

4. [Watch and hear Thomas read “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night”](#). Does the reading of the poem help you understand and appreciate it? Explain your answer.

Stevie Smith (1902–1971)

“Not Waving but Drowning”

Read [“Not Waving but Drowning.”](#) [Watch and hear Smith read and explain the context of “Not Waving but Drowning”](#).

Activities

1. How does the metaphor implicit in the poem’s title signal the theme of the poem?
2. Why do the drowning man’s friends misread and misinterpret signals he sends them?
3. Assess the truth of the theme of the poem, providing an example if you can.

E.E. Cummings (1894–1962)

“Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town”

Read [“Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town.”](#) [Watch and hear Cummings read “Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town”](#).

“Somewhere I Have Never Travelled”

Read [“Somewhere I Have Never Travelled.”](#) [Watch and hear Cummings read “Somewhere I Have Never Travelled”](#).

Activities

1. What is a ballad? How is “Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town” like a ballad? How is it not?

2. Why are the names of the characters in “Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town” so indeterminate? How do their names help establish the theme of the poem?
3. Paraphrase stanza six of “Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town.”
4. The syntax in some lines of “Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town” is convoluted to such an extent they make no literal sense. Identify two or three examples. What is Cummings’ point in so defying the conventions of language?
5. Compare and contrast the form of “Somewhere I Have Never Travelled” with the form of “Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town.”
6. To whom is “Somewhere I Have Never Travelled” addressed? Who is the “I”; who is the “you” in the poem? How do you know this?
7. What effect does the “you” in the poem have upon the speaker? How does this relationship help establish the theme of the poem?
8. Paraphrase stanza four of “Somewhere I Have Never Travelled.”

T.S. Eliot (1888–1965)

“The Hollow Men”

Read [“The Hollow Men.”](#)

“The Journey of the Magi”

Read [“The Journey of the Magi.”](#)

“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

Read [“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.”](#)

Activities

1. Consider the form of “The Hollow Men”: short, free-verse lines, in five parts, sub-divided into stanzas of various length and number. Some lines seem to end before the poet’s thought is completed. How does this form augment the poem’s theme?
2. Is “The Hollow Men” as relevant today as it was when Eliot wrote it? Who are “The Hollow Men” of contemporary society, and what do they need to lead a more fulfilling life?
3. Compare and contrast the tone (cf. Glossary) of “The Journey of the Magi” with the tone of the earlier poems by Eliot. Is there a difference in tone? How do you account for the difference or the

lack thereof?

4. Like “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” “The Journey of the Magi” is a free-verse narrative poem, its speaker one of the Magi or Wise Men. Compare and contrast the characters of Prufrock and the Wise Man.
5. Is “The Journey of the Magi” a Christian poem only, or is it relevant to people of other faiths? Explain your answer.
6. What features of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” identify it as a dramatic monologue (cf. Glossary)?
7. Why does Prufrock find it impossible to ask “the overwhelming question”? What changes might he make to his life and attitude that would help him ask the woman the question?
8. Does Prufrock evoke your pity? Your condemnation? Can you identify with him, in any way?

E. J. Pratt (1882–1964)

“From Stone to Steel”

Read “[From Stone to Steel](#).”

Activities

1. Throughout the poem, Pratt presents many comparisons and contrasts: the stone age, bronze age, steel age; Java and Geneva; the Neanderthal and the Aryan; paganism and Christianity; the Euphrates and the Rhine; the temple and the cave. What point is Pratt making? What is the theme of the poem?
2. Paraphrase the third stanza of the poem.
3. How does the regular verse form of the poem complement its theme?
4. In what sense do “The yearlings still the altars crave / As satisfaction for a sin”?

Feature Unit: The Poetry of World War I

The Poetry of World War I

Introduction

The “war to end wars,” as H.G. Wells described it in a series of newspaper articles,⁶ began in 1914. The main belligerents were the allied forces of France, Britain, and the dominions, including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; Russia (until 1917) and, after April 1917, the United States—versus the central powers: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Few believed that the war would last very long, but gradually both sides became mired in a stalemate, and it dragged on until November 1918, with unparalleled loss of life—nearly nine million combatants and millions of civilians died as a result of the war.

One striking difference between the war poetry of the Victorian Age as seen in Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Light Brigade” and the poetry of World War I is the shift from a more or less unquestioning acceptance of war to a growing disillusionment. Although Tennyson makes clear that the military command had blundered in this instance, he refuses to dwell on the incompetence of the generals and instead emphasizes the bravery of the British soldier. Similarly, Rupert Brooke, perhaps the public face of the British war effort before his death prior to seeing action, carries forward a romanticized, chivalric view of war, particularly in his poem, “The Soldier,” a poem that Dean Inge, one of the most important clergymen in Britain, read as part of his Easter Sunday sermon at St. Paul’s Cathedral in 1914, and to which Winston Churchill referred in an obituary published in the *Times* three days after Brooke’s death. Even Siegfried Sassoon, the poet who, along with Wilfred Owen, was considered one of the poets most critical of the war, seems to echo Brooke’s romanticizing attitude in an early poem, “Absolution”:

...War is our scourge; yet war has made us wise,
And, fighting for our freedom, we are free.

Horror of wounds and anger at the foe,
And loss of things desired; all these must pass.
We are the happy legion...

But as the war dragged on, with more and more poets killed and the survivors increasingly disillusioned, a patriotic poem such as ‘The Soldier’ became a ridiculous anachronism in the face of the realities of trench warfare, and the even more blatantly patriotic note sounded by John Freeman’s ‘Happy is England Now,’ which claimed that ‘there’s not a nobleness of heart, hand, brain/But shines the purer; happiest is England now/In those that fight’ seemed obscene” (*Norton Anthology of English Literature, 20th Century and After*, 9th ed., 2017). And unlike Tennyson’s uncritical response to the effects of blundering generals, Sassoon implies in a later poem, that the cheery old general, safely distant from the front line, who passes two enlisted men on their way to the front, is perhaps the real enemy: “Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of ’em dead/And we’re cursing his Staff for incompetent swine” (“The General”). Interestingly, Sassoon tempered the sting of the final line in the published version. A draft version reads, “murdered them” rather than “did for them.”

For a complete account of the rich history of World War I poetry, see the [First World War Poetry Digital Archives](#).

6. The articles were later published in book form as *The War That Will End War* (<https://archive.org/details/warthatwillendwa00welluoft>>);

Wilfred Owen (1893–1918)**“Disabled”**

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,
 And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,
 Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park
 Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,
 Voices of play and pleasure after day,
 Till gathering sleep had mothered them from him. About this time Town used to swing so gay
 When glow-lamps budded in the light blue trees,
 And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew dim,
 —In the old times, before he threw away his knees.
 Now he will never feel again how slim
 Girls’ waists are, or how warm their subtle hands.
 All of them touch him like some queer disease.

There was an artist silly for his face,
 For it was younger than his youth, last year.
 Now, he is old; his back will never brace;
 He’s lost his colour very far from here,
 Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry,
 And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race,
 And leap of purple spurted from his thigh.
 One time he liked a bloodsmear down his leg,
 After the matches carried shoulder-high.
 It was after football, when he’d drunk a peg,
 He thought he’d better join. He wonders why . . .
 Someone had said he’d look a god in kilts.

That’s why; and maybe, too, to please his Meg,
 Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts,
 He asked to join. He didn’t have to beg;
 Smiling they wrote his lie; aged nineteen years.
 Germans he scarcely thought of; and no fears
 Of Fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts
 For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;
 And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;
 Esprit de corps; and hints for young recruits.
 And soon, he was drafted out with drums and cheers.

Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer Goal.
 Only a solemn man who brought him fruits
 Thanked him; and then inquired about his soul.
 Now, he will spend a few sick years in Institutes,
 And do what things the rules consider wise,
 And take whatever pity they may dole.
 To-night he noticed how the women’s eyes
 Passed from him to the strong men that were whole.
 How cold and late it is! Why don’t they come
 And put him into bed? Why don’t they come?

“Dulce et Decorum Est”⁷

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
 Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
 Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
 And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
 Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
 But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
 Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
 Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines⁸ that dropped behind. Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,
 Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
 But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
 And flound’ring like a man in fire or lime...
 Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
 As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
 In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
 He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
 His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin; (20)
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest (25)
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,
 The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori.

“Futility”

Move him into the sun—
 Gently its touch awoke him once,
 At home, whispering of fields unsown.
 Always it woke him, even in France,
 Until this morning and this snow.
 If anything might rouse him now
 The kind old sun will know. Think how it wakes the seeds—
 Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
 Are limbs so dear-achieved, are sides
 Full-nerved,—still warm,—too hard to stir?
 Was it for this the clay grew tall?
 —O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
 To break earth’s sleep at all?

7. Owen alludes in the title and in the last two lines to Horace, Odes 3.2.13: “It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.”

8. 5.9-caliber shells.

“Anthem for Doomed Youth”⁹

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle¹⁰?
 — Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
 Only the stuttering rifles’ rapid rattle
 Can patter out their hasty orisons.
 No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
 Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
 The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
 And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
 Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
 Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
 The pallor of girls’ brows shall be their pall;
 Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
 And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds¹¹.

Owen Activities

1. Look at the following [recruitment poster](#). Do you think Owen had it in mind when he wrote the last line of “Disabled”?
2. Read [Dr. Stuart Lee’s Background to “Dulce et Decorum Est”](#). Which one of the four do you prefer and why?
3. Notice the subtitle in the first: “To a Certain Poetess” Who might that be? Remember to click on the Stage 1 and 2 links at To visit [Oxford Tutorial page for Dulce et Decorum Est](#).
4. What has occurred just before the poem “Futility” begins?
5. What scene do you visualize at the opening of “Futility”?
6. Who is speaking in “Futility”? What is his relation to “him”?
7. To whom is he speaking in line 1 of “Futility”?
8. Why does the speaker in “Futility” want “him” moved into the sun?
9. What reasons does the speaker in “Futility” give for thinking the sun will help?
10. What is the connotation of “sun”? “snow”? “clay”?
11. What does “fatuous” mean?
12. Rhythm: How should we read the second stanza of “Futility”? What effect do the many

9. Siegfried Sassoon helped Owen with the revision of this poem and suggested the word “anthem” for the title.

10. Jon Stallworthy notes in his edition of Owen’s poetry, “WO was probably responding to the anonymous Prefatory Note to Poems of Today: an Anthology (1916), of which he possessed the December 1916 reprint: ‘This book has been compiled in order that boys and girls, ...may also know something of the newer poetry of their own day. Most of the writers are living...while one of the youngest...has gone singing to lay down his life for his country’s cause...there is no arbitrary isolation of one theme from another; they mingle and interpenetrate throughout, to the music of Pan’s flute, and of Love’s viol, and the bugle-call of Endeavour, and the passing-bells of Death.’”

11. Stallworthy reminds the reader that “the drawing down of blinds, now an almost-forgotten custom, indicated either that a funeral procession was passing or that there had been a death in the house. It was customary to keep the coffin in the house until taking it to church; it would be placed in the darkened parlour, with a pall and flowers on it and lighted candles nearby. Relatives and friends would enter the room to pay their last respects. The set of the poem, in fact, refers to a household in mourning.”

hyphens have on the tempo of our reading?

13. How does the title “Futility” relate to the theme?
14. What kind of sonnet is “Anthem for Doomed Youth”? What is its rhyme scheme?

Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967)

“Counter-Attack”

Read Sassoon’s [“Counter-Attack.”](#)

Sassoon Activities

1. What does the image in line 8 of Stanza 2 describe? One critic is reminded of the Goya painting [The Colossus](#), which described another war scene (the Peninsular War). What do you think?
2. In the published version of the poem (*Collected Poems: 1908-1956*, Faber), the lines 7–13 are indented. What would be the effect or purpose of this indentation?

Wallace Stevens (1879–1955)

“The Emperor of Ice Cream”

Read [“The Emperor of Ice Cream.”](#)

Activities

1. What is a wake? What evidence in the poem suggests its setting is a wake?
2. What is the denotation and the connotation of the “wenches” of line 4?
3. Express line 7 in your own words. How does this line, along with line 15, suggest the theme of the poem?
4. What is hedonism? Does “The Emperor of Ice Cream” embrace or reject a hedonistic philosophy? Explain your answer.
5. [Hear “The Emperor of Ice Cream” read and explicated.](#) Does the explication enhance your understanding and enjoyment?

E.A. Robinson (1869–1935)

“Richard Cory”

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
 We people on the pavement looked at him:
 He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
 Clean favored, and imperially slim. And he was always quietly arrayed,
 And he was always human when he talked;
 But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
 “Good-morning,” and he glittered when he walked. And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
 And admirably schooled in every grace:
 In fine, we thought that he was everything
 To make us wish that we were in his place. So on we worked, and waited for the light,
 And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
 And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
 Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Activities

1. What does Richard Cory look like? Why is his physical appearance important to the poem’s meaning?
2. What is the form/genre of this poem, its rhythm pattern and rhyme scheme? How does the form intensify the shock of the poem’s ending?
3. When is the poem set? How does the setting intensify the shock of the poem’s ending?
4. Is the story embedded in this poem credible? Support your answer.

William Butler Yeats (1865–1939)

“The Lake Isle of Innisfree”¹²

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
 And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles¹³ made;
 Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
 And live alone in the bee-loud glade. And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping

12. Innisfree is a small island in the middle of Lough (Lake) Gill, near Sligo, the town in the northwest of Ireland, where Yeats spent many happy summers, holidaying with his mother’s family. He was living in London in 1888 when he wrote the poem. The poem expresses the universal desire to “get away from it all,” to retreat from a busy life in the city and find a quiet haven, surrounded by nature’s beauty. Though one of his most famous poems, he, ironically, grew weary of reciting it at his lectures, so often was it requested.
13. Thin branches woven together.

slow,
 Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
 There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
 And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
 I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
 While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
 I hear it in the deep heart's core.

"No Second Troy"

Why should I blame her¹⁴ that she filled my days
 With misery¹⁵, or that she would of late
 Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
 Or hurled the little streets upon the great.
 Had they but courage equal to desire?
 What could have made her peaceful with a mind
 That nobleness made simple as a fire,
 With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
 That is not natural in an age like this,
 Being high and solitary and most stern?
 Why, what could she have done, being what she is?
 Was there another Troy for her to burn?

"Easter, 1916"¹⁶

I have met them at close of day
 Coming with vivid faces
 From counter or desk among grey
 Eighteenth-century houses.
 I have passed with a nod of the head
 Or polite meaningless words,
 Or have lingered awhile and said
 Polite meaningless words,
 And thought before I had done

14. Maud Gonne, the beautiful Irish revolutionary leader, whom Yeats loved for much of his life. She was to him the reincarnation of Helen of Troy, in the ancient world a major trading port in what is now Turkey. Helen was so beautiful, she was abducted by the Trojan Paris, and her husband, Menelaus, King of the Greek city of Sparta, attacked Troy to get her back.
15. Yeats proposed to Maud, but she admitted to him she had two children with a married French journalist. Later, she married John MacBride, a major in the Irish Republican Army, a man Yeats despised. (cf. "Easter, 1916").
16. On Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, a paramilitary group of Irish republicans occupied central Dublin and proclaimed Ireland independent of Great Britain. The British government regained control within the week, and, ultimately charged the republican leaders with treason. They were tried quickly and executed, compounding rather than solving the problem, in that many moderate republicans were outraged and radicalized. Yeats was among them. His bewildered new perspective is expressed in the poem's famous refrain, "A terrible beauty is born." He knew many of the revolutionary leaders, including Maud Gonne's estranged husband whom he despised, as "A drunken vainglorious lout," but whom he nevertheless acknowledges in this poem.

Of a mocking tale or a gibe
 To please a companion
 Around the fire at the club,
 Being certain that they and I
 But lived where motley¹⁷ is worn:
 All changed, changed utterly:
 A terrible beauty is born. That woman's¹⁸ days were spent
 In ignorant good-will,
 Her nights in argument
 Until her voice grew shrill.
 What voice more sweet than hers
 When, young and beautiful,
 She rode to harriers?
 This man¹⁹ had kept a school
 And rode our winged horse²⁰ ;
 This other his helper and friend²¹
 Was coming into his force;
 He might have won fame in the end,
 So sensitive his nature seemed,
 So daring and sweet his thought.
 This other man I had dreamed
 A drunken, vainglorious lout²² .
 He had done most bitter wrong
 To some who are near my heart,
 Yet I number him in the song;
 He, too, has resigned his part
 In the casual comedy;
 He, too, has been changed in his turn,
 Transformed utterly:
 A terrible beauty is born.

Hearts with one purpose alone
 Through summer and winter seem
 Enchanted to a stone
 To trouble the living stream.
 The horse that comes from the road.
 The rider, the birds that range
 From cloud to tumbling cloud,
 Minute by minute they change;
 A shadow of cloud on the stream

17. Colourful, often ragged clothing worn by a court jester.

18. Constance Gore-Booth (1868-1927), the only woman among the revolutionary and the only one spared execution, sentenced instead to a long prison sentence, later commuted.

19. Padraic Pearse (1879-1916), a teacher and a poet.

20. Pegasus, the winged horse, upon whom rode the poets' muse.

21. Thomas MacDonagh (1878-1916), Yeats's fellow poet and dramatist.

22. John MacBride, Irish Republican Army major, whom Yeats despised because he had married and abused Maud before she left him.

Changes minute by minute;
 A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
 And a horse splashes within it;
 The long-legged moor-hens dive,
 And hens to moor-cocks call;
 Minute by minute they live:
 The stone's in the midst of all.

Too long a sacrifice
 Can make a stone of the heart.
 O when may it suffice?
 That is Heaven's part, our part
 To murmur name upon name,
 As a mother names her child
 When sleep at last has come
 On limbs that had run wild.
 What is it but nightfall?
 No, no, not night but death;
 Was it needless death after all?
 For England may keep faith²³
 For all that is done and said.
 We know their dream; enough
 To know they dreamed and are dead;
 And what if excess of love
 Bewildered them till they died?
 I write it out in a verse —
 MacDonagh and MacBride
 And Connolly²⁴ and Pearse
 Now and in time to be,
 Wherever green is worn,
 Are changed, changed utterly:
 A terrible beauty is born.

“The Second Coming”²⁵

Turning and turning in the widening gyre²⁶
 The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
 Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst

23. That is, may grant independence to Ireland, as Britain finally did in 1921.

24. James Connolly (1870-1916), prominent trade unionist, one of the rebellion's paramilitary commanders.

25. The second coming of Jesus Christ—whom Yeats envisions here as an anti-Christ—on Judgment Day.

26. A spiral that continues to widen until it collapses. The gyre is Yeats's symbol of a civilization spiralling out of control, at the end of its 2,000-year cycle.

Are full of passionate intensity. Surely some revelation is at hand;
 Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
 The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
 When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi²⁷
 Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
 A shape with lion body and the head of a man,²⁸
 A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
 Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
 Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
 The darkness drops again; but now I know
 That twenty centuries of stony sleep²⁹
 Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,³⁰
 And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
 Slouches towards Bethlehem³¹ to be born?

“A Prayer for My Daughter”³²

Once more the storm is howling, and half hid
 Under this cradle-hood and coverlid
 My child sleeps on. There is no obstacle
 But Gregory’s wood³³ and one bare hill
 Whereby the haystack- and roof-levelling wind.
 Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;
 And for an hour I have walked and prayed
 Because of the great gloom that is in my mind. I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour
 And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,
 And-under the arches of the bridge, and scream
 In the elms above the flooded stream;
 Imagining in excited reverie
 That the future years had come,
 Dancing to a frenzied drum,
 Out of the murderous innocence of the sea.

May she be granted beauty and yet not
 Beauty to make a stranger’s eye distraught,
 Or hers before a looking-glass, for such,
 Being made beautiful overmuch,

27. The spirit of the world. Similar to Carl Jung’s notion of the collective unconscious, it is a storehouse of knowledge shared by all; here, knowledge of a saviour or demon.

28. The anti-Christ, similar to the Beast of the Apocalypse, described in the “Book of Revelation” in the Christian Bible.

29. The 2,000 years before the birth of Christ.

30. Wherein lay the baby Jesus.

31. Town in the Middle East, famous as the birthplace of Jesus.

32. Yeats was 54 when his first child, a daughter Ann, was born on February 26, 1919. An artist, she never married and died in 2001. Yeats’s son, two years younger, was an Irish politician. He died in 2007, survived by three daughters and a son.

33. On Lady Gregory’s property (cf. “The Wild Swans at Coole”), and near the ancient Norman tower, Thoor Ballylee, in Galway, which Yeats renovated, and where he lived, on and off, from his marriage in 1917 until his death.

Consider beauty a sufficient end,
Lose natural kindness and maybe
The heart-revealing intimacy
That chooses right, and never find a friend.

Helen³⁴ being chosen found life flat and dull
And later had much trouble from a fool,
While that great Queen,³⁵ that rose out of the spray,
Being fatherless could have her way
Yet chose a bandy-legged smith³⁶ for man.
It's certain that fine women³⁷ eat
A crazy salad with their meat
Whereby the Horn of plenty³⁸ is undone.

In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;
Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned
By those that are not entirely beautiful;
Yet many, that have played the fool
For beauty's very self, has charm made wise.
And many a poor man that has roved,
Loved and thought himself beloved,
From a glad kindness cannot take his eyes.

May she become a flourishing hidden tree
That all her thoughts may like the linnet be,
And have no business but dispensing round
Their magnanimities of sound,
Nor but in merriment begin a chase,
Nor but in merriment a quarrel.
O may she live like some green laurel
Rooted in one dear perpetual place.

My mind, because the minds that I have loved,
The sort of beauty that I have approved,
Prosper but little, has dried up of late,
Yet knows that to be choked with hate
May well be of all evil chances chief.
If there's no hatred in a mind
Assault and battery of the wind
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.

An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed.
Have I not seen the loveliest woman³⁹ born
Out of the mouth of plenty's horn,

34. See "No Second Troy," note 1.

35. Venus, the goddess of love.

36. Vulcan, lame; i.e., bandy-legged, blacksmith to the gods.

37. Yeats is likely thinking of Maud Gonne, who married a man vastly inferior, in Yeats's opinion, to him.

38. In Greek myth, the horn of the goat that suckled the chief of the gods, Zeus, filling Zeus with nectar and ambrosia; hence, the horn of plenty is a symbol of abundance, "plenty."

39. Maud Gonne again.

Because of her opinionated mind
 Barter that horn and every good
 By quiet natures understood
 For an old bellows full of angry wind?
 Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
 The soul recovers radical innocence
 And learns at last that it is self-delighting,
 Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,
 And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will;
 She can, though every face should scowl
 And every windy quarter howl
 Or every bellows burst, be happy still.

 And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
 Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
 For arrogance and hatred are the wares
 Peddled in the thoroughfares.
 How but in custom and in ceremony
 Are innocence and beauty born?
 Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
 And custom for the spreading laurel tree

"Leda and the Swan"⁴⁰

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
 Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
 By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
 He holds her helpless breast upon his breast. How can those terrified vague fingers push
 The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
 And how can body, laid in that white rush,
 But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there
 The broken wall, the burning roof and tower⁴¹
 And Agamemnon dead.

 Being so caught up,
 So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
 Did she put on his knowledge with his power
 Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

40. Leda was the queen of the Greek city state, Sparta; the Swan was Zeus, supreme god of Greek mythology. According to the myth that inspired this sonnet, Zeus came to Leda in the form of a swan and raped her. Nine months later, Leda gave birth to two girls. Helen would precipitate the Trojan War when she ran off with the Trojan prince, Paris, escaping from her Greek husband Menelaus. Clytemnestra would marry and murder Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek army and the brother of Menelaus. Leda also gave birth to two boys: Castor and Pollux.

41. References events of the Trojan War.

“Sailing to Byzantium”⁴²

I That⁴³ is no country for old men. The young
 In one another’s arms, birds in the trees
 — Those dying generations — at their song,
 The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
 Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
 Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
 Caught in that sensual music all neglect
 Monuments of unageing intellect.

II

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
 A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
 Soul clap its hands and sing,⁴⁴ and louder sing
 For every tatter in its mortal dress,
 Nor is there singing school but studying
 Monuments of its own magnificence;
 And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
 To the holy city of Byzantium.

III

O sages standing in God’s holy fire
 As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
 Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,⁴⁵
 And be the singing-masters of my soul.
 Consume my heart away; sick with desire
 And fastened to a dying animal
 It knows not what it is; and gather me
 Into the artifice of eternity.

IV

Once out Of nature I shall never take
 My bodily form from any natural thing,
 But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
 Of hammered gold and gold enamelling⁴⁶
 To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
 Or set upon a golden bough to sing

42. In *A Vision*, the book wherein he outlines his personal philosophy, Yeats identified sixth-century Byzantium (present-day Istanbul in Turkey) as his idea of Utopia. The unity of purpose among citizens from all walks of life to create a city that revealed their reverence for art, poetry, music, and architecture was, for Yeats, a model all nations, especially Ireland, should follow.

43. Ireland.

44. One of Yeats’s favourite poets was William Blake (1757-1827), who claimed he saw the soul of a brother who had just died, rise out of his body and ascend to heaven, clapping its hands for joy as it did so. Here Yeats says old age is “a paltry thing” unless we can renew our spirit.

45. To “perne” means to spin; the gyre is the ever-widening spiral, Yeats’s favourite symbol of the progress of life and civilization. The “sages” on the Byzantium mosaics approach the poet in this manner to symbolize his spiritual rebirth.

46. In Yeats’s own note to this poem, he references the golden mechanical birds which sat in a tree in the emperor’s palace in Byzantium and sang. Yeats wants to be reincarnated as one of these birds, to end the cycle of birth and rebirth, once he is “Out of nature.” The singing echoes his own profession as a poet.

To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

“Among School Children”

II walk through the long schoolroom questioning;
A kind old nun in a white hood replies;
The children learn to cipher and to sing,
To study reading-books and histories,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way — the children’s eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty-year-old smiling public man.⁴⁷

II

I dream of a Ledaean⁴⁸ body, bent
Above a sinking fire, a tale that she
Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
That changed some childish day to tragedy —
Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent
Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
Or else, to alter Plato’s⁴⁹ parable,
Into the yolk and white of the one shell.

III

And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
I look upon one child or t’other there
And wonder if she stood so at that age —
For even daughters of the swan can share
Something of every paddler’s heritage —
And had that colour upon cheek or hair,
And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
She stands before me as a living child.

IV

Her present image floats into the mind —
Did Quattrocento⁵⁰ finger fashion it
Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wind
And took a mess of shadows for its meat?
And I though never of Ledaean kind
Had pretty plumage once — enough of that,

47. Yeats was a politician when he wrote the poem, a senator in the Irish Free State. The inspiration for this poem was an official visit he made to a school in Waterford in 1926.

48. Maud Gonne, who was to Yeats the reincarnation of Helen of Troy, the “Ledaean body,” in that her mother was Leda. See notes to “Leda and the Swan.”

49. The reference is to Greek philosopher Plato’s Symposium, the parable being that the primitive human was spherical, like an egg, divided in the process of evolution. Love is the desire to form the sphere again.

50. Some 15th-century (“Quattrocento”) Italian painters painted women in the anorexic way Maud now appears to Yeats.

Better to smile on all that smile, and show
There is a comfortable kind of old scarecrow.

V

What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation⁵¹ had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape
As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her Son, did she but see that shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting forth?

VI

Plato thought nature but a spume⁵² that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things;
Solider Aristotle⁵³ played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings;⁵⁴
World-famous golden-thighed Pythagoras⁵⁵
Fingered upon a fiddle-stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard:
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird.

VII

Both nuns and mothers worship images,
But those the candles light are not as those
That animate a mother's reveries,
But keep a marble or a bronze repose.
And yet they too break hearts — O presences
That passion, piety or affection knows,
And that all heavenly glory symbolise —
O self-born mockers of man's enterprise;

VIII

Labour is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul.
Nor beauty born out of its own despair,
Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.
O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole⁵⁶?

51. The neo-Platonic philosopher, Porphyry, believed that an ambrosia, honey-like drug was released at birth, and if the infant tasted it, he or she would forget about the bliss of prenatal happiness; but if he or she did not taste it, the infant would be condemned to a sad life because he or she would always search for the unattainable happiness of a previous life.
52. Froth; insubstantial matter, in contrast, in Plato's view, to a real substantial ideal world, a "paradigm of things."
53. Aristotle was "solider" in that he believed the physical world we experience is the real world, not the "spume" Plato believed it was.
54. Alexander the Great (356 – 323 BC), leader of the Greek confederation, student of Aristotle who strapped him, "played the taws," when he needed discipline.
55. Greek philosopher, venerated by his followers who thought he had a golden thigh, the sign of a god. He believed that the beauty of music reflected a universal harmony.
56. Stem or trunk.

O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

“Byzantium”⁵⁷

The unpurged images of day recede;
The Emperor’s drunken soldiery are abed;
Night resonance recedes, night walkers’ song
After great cathedral gong;
A starlit or a moonlit dome⁵⁸ disdains
All that man is,
All mere complexities,
The fury and the mire of human veins. Before me floats an image, man or shade,
Shade more than man, more image than a shade;
For Hades’ bobbin bound in mummy-cloth
May unwind the winding path;⁵⁹
A mouth that has no moisture and no breath
Breathless mouths may summon;
I hail the superhuman;
I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.

Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,
More miracle than bird or handiwork,
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,⁶⁰
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud
In glory of changeless metal
Common bird or petal
And all complexities of mire or blood.

At midnight on the Emperor’s pavement flit
Flames that no faggot⁶¹ feeds, nor steel has lit,
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
Where blood-begotten spirits come
And all complexities of fury leave,
Dying into a dance,
An agony of trance,
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.⁶²
Astraddle on the dolphin’s mire and blood,

57. In “Sailing to Byzantium,” written four years earlier in 1926, Yeats expresses his desire to be reincarnated as a work of art, a golden bird, living in sixth-century Byzantium (now Istanbul), his ideal city. In this poem, he imagines he has achieved his dream, and he watches as other souls are purified.

58. Of the sprawling Greek Orthodox basilica, St. Sophia (now a museum).

59. After death, when the soul is in Hades (the underworld), the bobbin or spool or gyre of life may unwind, in preparation to enter the realm of pure spirit.

60. To announce a reincarnation.

61. A bundle of sticks tied together, used to fuel fire.

62. Here Yeats describes the ritual process whereby the mortal soul is purified to render it immortal.

Spirit after Spirit! The smithies break the flood.
 The golden smithies of the Emperor!⁶³
 Marbles of the dancing floor
 Break bitter furies of complexity,
 Those images that yet
 Fresh images beget,
 That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented⁶⁴ sea.

“Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop”⁶⁵

I met the Bishop on the road
 And much said he and I.
 ‘Those breasts are flat and fallen now,
 Those veins must soon be dry;
 Live in a heavenly mansion,
 Not in some foul sty.’ Fair and foul are near of kin,
 And fair needs foul,’ I cried.
 ‘My friends are gone, but that’s a truth
 Nor grave nor bed denied,
 Learned in bodily lowliness
 And in the heart’s pride.

‘A woman can be proud and stiff
 When on love intent;
 But Love has pitched his mansion in
 The place of excrement;
 For nothing can be sole or whole
 That has not been rent.’

“The Circus Animals’ Desertion”

II sought a theme and sought for it in vain,
 I sought it daily for six weeks or so.
 Maybe at last, being but a broken man,
 I must be satisfied with my heart, although
 Winter and summer till old age began
 My circus animals were all on show,
 Those stilted boys, that burnished chariot,
 Lion and woman and the Lord knows what.

II

What can I but enumerate old themes?

63. Overwhelmed by the number of sprites who come on the backs of dolphins, which in Greek mythology carried souls to the Isles of the Blessed, the goldsmiths call a halt to the purification process, unable to accommodate any more, for now.

64. From the ringing of the gong, the funeral bell.

65. Between 1929 and 1932, Yeats wrote seven poems featuring the wisdom of an old peasant woman who lived in Galway.

First that sea-rider Oisín⁶⁶ led by the nose
 Through three enchanted islands, allegorical dreams,
 Vain gaiety, vain battle, vain repose,
 Themes of the embittered heart, or so it seems,
 That might adorn old songs or courtly shows;
 But what cared I that set him on to ride,
 I, starved for the bosom of his faery bride?

And then a counter-truth filled out its play,
 ‘The Countess Cathleen’ was the name I gave it;
 She, pity-crazed, had given her soul away,
 But masterful Heaven had intervened to save it.
 I thought my dear⁶⁷ must her own soul destroy,
 So did fanaticism and hate enslave it,
 And this brought forth a dream and soon enough
 This dream itself had all my thought and love.

And when the Fool and Blind Man stole the bread
 Cuchulain⁶⁸ fought the ungovernable sea;
 Heart-mysteries there, and yet when all is said
 It was the dream itself enchanted me:
 Character isolated by a deed
 To engross the present and dominate memory.
 Players and painted stage took all my love,
 And not those things that they were emblems of.

III

Those masterful images because complete
 Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?
 A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
 Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,
 Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
 Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder’s gone,
 I must lie down where all the ladders start
 In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.

Activities

“The Lake Isle of Innisfree”

1. How would you describe the tone, the voice, and the mood of this poem? Is it melancholy,

66. Pronounced “Usheen,” Oisín was a hero in Irish mythology, a warrior poet, and the subject of Yeats’s early epic poem, *The Wanderings of Oisín*.

67. Maud Gonne, who starred not in Yeats play *The Countess Cathleen*, but in his 1902 play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. She hated the British and was, indeed, a fanatical and active opponent of their rule in Ireland.

68. A hero in Irish mythology, and a recurring character in several of Yeats’s plays and poems.

enthusiastic, or some point between? How does Yeats achieve this tone? How does it complement his theme?

2. What is alliteration (cf. Glossary)? Find an example in “Lake Isle” and comment on its effect.
3. Determine the poem’s rhythm (cf. Glossary) and rhyme scheme (cf. Glossary) and assess their effect on theme.

“No Second Troy”

1. How do you interpret the last line of this poem?
2. Why is this poem almost, but not quite, a Shakespearean sonnet (cf. Glossary)?
3. What does this poem reveal about Yeats’s attitude to Maud, who was married to another man, when Yeats wrote this poem? Does he love her still? Dislike her? Resent her?

“Easter, 1916”

1. The rhythm of this poem is unusual, basically uneven iambic trimetre (cf. Glossary). Why do you think Yeats used this rhythm for this poem?
2. Explain the meaning of the poem’s famous refrain, “A terrible beauty is born.” Reveal in your answer the type of figurative language exemplified in the phrase “a terrible beauty.”
3. “Easter, 1916” presupposes a considerable knowledge of historical and biographical context. Does the need for this knowledge add to or take away from the poem’s intensity?

“A Prayer for My Daughter”

1. What are the character traits and the outlook on life Yeats hopes his daughter will possess? How does Yeats’s relationship with Maud Gonne influence his hopes?
2. Why is there a “great gloom” in Yeats’s mind, as he writes this poem?
3. “A Prayer for My Daughter” is a regular verse poem, mainly iambic pentameter, with an aabbccdd rhyme scheme. Note that in lines 6 and 7 of each stanza (after the first) Yeats switches to iambic tetrameter. What effect does this switch have on theme of the poem?

“Leda and the Swan”

1. What are three features of the form and structure of “Leda and the Swan” that identify it as a sonnet (cf. Glossary)?
2. What, in the Christian faith, is the Annunciation, and how and why does Yeats connect the Annunciation to the events he describes in this poem?
3. Express in your own words the meaning of the question with which the sonnet concludes.

“Sailing to Byzantium”

1. Note the rhyme scheme (cf. Glossary) of this poem. It is regular, but Yeats makes extensive use

of half rhyme (cf. Glossary). What is the effect of this use of half rhyme?

2. Review Yeats's biography and determine why he expresses disappointment in his native Ireland at the beginning of this poem.
3. The desire to transcend death is a common poetic theme. How does Yeats render this theme in "Sailing to Byzantium"? How does he hope to transcend death?

"Among School Children"

1. In "Among School Children," Yeats seeks common ground among apparently disparate, things, people, and ideas: nuns, mothers, and philosophers; Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras; leaf, blossom, and bole; music, dancer, and dance. How does this search for a unity of purpose influence the theme of the poem?
2. An understanding of this poem presupposes so much reader prior knowledge of the poet's life and of philosophy and mythology. What are the benefits and the drawbacks this presupposition?
3. The verse form of the poem is Ottava rima (cf. Glossary). Why might Yeats have chosen this form for this poem?

"Byzantium"

1. Is "Byzantium" a regular verse or a free verse poem (cf. Glossary)? Explain your answer.
2. What is it that Yeats, now reincarnated as a golden bird, witnesses from his perch on the golden bough of the Emperor's palace? What are his mood and emotions as he witnesses the transformation?
3. The desire that Yeats expresses in "Sailing to Byzantium" and its fulfillment in "Byzantium" has been described by some as visionary and by others as eccentric. How would you describe the goal, expressed in these poems, Yeats wants to achieve? Explain your answer.

"Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop"

1. What is satire (cf. Glossary)? In what sense is "Crazy Jane" a satiric poem?
2. The poem is framed as a debate between Jane and a bishop. What argument does Jane advance to win the debate? Do you support hers or the bishop's argument?
3. The poem is a first-person narrative, written in modified ballad stanzas (cf. Glossary). Why might Yeats have chosen this form for this poem?

"The Circus Animals' Desperation"

1. What fear does Yeats express in this poem? How will he overcome this fear?
2. How might readers know, without referring to Yeats's biography, that this is one of his last poems?
3. Explain the famous metaphor with which this poem concludes.

Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936)

“Fuzzy Wuzzy”

Soudan Expeditionary force. Early campaign
 We’ve fought with many men across the seas,
 An’ some of ’em was brave an’ some was not.
 The Paythan⁶⁹ an’ the Zulu an’ Burmese;
 But the Fuzzy⁷⁰ was the finest o’ the lot.
 We never got a ha’porth’s⁷¹ change of ‘im:
 ‘E squatted in the scrub an’ ‘ocked our ‘orses,
 ‘E cut our sentries up at Suakim⁷²,
 An’ ‘e played the cat an’ banjo with our forces.
 So ‘ere’s to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your ‘ome in the Soudan;
 You’re a pore benighted ‘eathen but a first-class fightin’ man;
 We gives you your certificate, an’ if you want it signed
 We’ll come an’ ‘ave a romp with you whenever you’re inclined.

We took our chanst among the Kyber’ills⁷³,
 The Boers⁷⁴ knocked us silly at a mile,
 The Burman give us Irriwady chills⁷⁵,
 An’ a Zulu *impi*⁷⁶ dished us up in style:
 But all we ever got from such as they
 Was pop⁷⁷ to what the Fuzzy made us swaller⁷⁸;
 We ‘eld our bloomin’ own, the papers say,
 But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us ‘oller.
 Then ‘ere’s to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an’ the missis and the kid;
 Our orders was to break you, an’ of course we went an’ did.
 We sloshed you with Martinis⁷⁹, an’ it wasn’t ‘ardly fair;
 But for all the odds agin’ you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you broke the square⁸⁰.
 ‘E ‘asn’t got no papers of ‘is own,
 ‘E ‘asn’t got no medals nor rewards,
 So we must certify the skill ‘e’s shown

69. Pathans, people on the northwest frontier of India.

70. Sudanese followers of the Mahdi, so called because of their frizzled hair (Durand, Ralph. *A Handbook to the Poetry of Rudyard Kipling* [London: 1914]).

71. A halfpenny’s worth.

72. A port in northeast Sudan on the Red Sea, it was the headquarters of British and Egyptian troops operating in the eastern Sudan against the dervishes in 1884 (Durand, 22).

73. Khyber Mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

74. Dutch-speaking settlers in South Africa who fought against the British in the Boer Wars.

75. In the Burmese campaign, the British forces came down with malaria near the Irrawady River.

76. A regiment of the Zulus, a Bantu ethnic group in South Africa.

77. Ginger beer.

78. Swallow.

79. A rifle in general use in the British Army from 1871-1888.

80. In 1884, near Tamai, the Sudanese army broke into the first British brigade square (a formation of soldiers) and “temporarily captured the naval guns” (Durand, 23).

In usin' of 'is long two-'anded swords:
 When 'e's 'oppin' in an' out among the bush
 With 'is coffin-'eaded shield an' shovel-spear,
 An 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush
 Will last an 'ealthy Tommy⁸¹ for a year.
 So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' your friends which are no more,
 If we 'adn't lost some messmates we would 'elp you to deplore;
 But give an' take's the gospel, an' we'll call the bargain fair,
 For if you 'ave lost more than us, you crumpled up the square!

'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,
 An', before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ead;
 'E's all 'ot sand an' ginger when alive,
 An' 'e's generally shammin'⁸² when 'e's dead.
 'E's a daisy⁸³, 'e's a ducky⁸⁴, 'e's a lamb⁸⁵!
 'E's a injia-rubber idiot on the spree⁸⁶,
 'E's the on'y thing that doesn't give a damn
 For a Regiment o' British Infantree!

So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
 You're a pore benighted 'eathen, but a first-class fightin' man;
 An' 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air—
 You big black boundin' beggar—for you broke a British square!

[The editor is indebted to *Representative Poetry*, ed. Ian Lancashire for many of the notes to this poem].

Activities

1. Who is the poem's speaker? Why would Kipling have chosen him to represent British presence in the Nile region?
2. The term "Fuzzy-Wuzzy" refers to the Sudanese Hadandoa tribesmen of the upper Nile, who charged into battle with their hair arranged to look as fearsome as possible. What is the effect of the speaker's use of this term? Of his reference to his enemy in the singular?
3. What do we know about the speaker from his use of language?
4. What attitudes are ascribed to the speaker as he says, "We'll come an' 'ave romp with you whenever you're inclined"? What other attitudes seemingly appropriate for a British soldier does he exhibit?
5. On what grounds does the speaker respect his enemy? Are the Hadandoa expected to successfully defend their homeland? What are the implications of praising the tribesmen for

81. Colloquial term for a British soldier.

82. Pretending.

83. Good fellow.

84. Nice chap.

85. Darling.

86. A drunken binge.

breaking “a British square” (a reference to the victory of the Sudanese in the battle of Tamai, 1884)?

6. How do the poem’s stanza form and rhythms convey or complement its meaning?
7. In reading this poem, what attitude toward the issue of imperialist wars is the Victorian reader expected to take?

Pauline Johnson (1861–1913)

“The Song My Paddle Sings”

West wind, blow from your prairie nest,
 Blow from the mountains, blow from the west.
 The sail is idle, the sailor too;
 O! wind of the west, we wait for you.
 Blow, blow!
 I have wooed you so,
 But never a favour you bestow.
 You rock your cradle the hills between,
 But scorn to notice my white lateen.⁸⁷ I stow the sail, unship the mast:
 I wooed you long but my wooing’s past;
 My paddle will lull you into rest.
 O! drowsy wind of the drowsy west,
 Sleep, sleep,
 By your mountain steep,
 Or down where the prairie grasses sweep!
 Now fold in slumber your laggard wings,
 For soft is the song my paddle sings.

August is laughing across the sky,
 Laughing while paddle, canoe and I,
 Drift, drift,
 Where the hills uplift
 On either side of the current swift.
 The river rolls in its rocky bed;
 My paddle is plying its way ahead;
 Dip, dip,
 While the waters flip
 In foam as over their breast we slip.
 And oh, the river runs swifter now;
 The eddies circle about my bow.
 Swirl, swirl!

87. A sail in the shape of a triangle.

How the ripples curl
 In many a dangerous pool awhirl!
 And forward far the rapids roar,
 Fretting their margin for evermore.
 Dash, dash,
 With a mighty crash,
 They seethe, and boil, and bound, and splash.
 Be strong, O paddle! be brave, canoe!
 The reckless waves you must plunge into.
 Reel, reel.
 On your trembling keel,
 But never a fear my craft will feel.
 We've raced the rapid, we're far ahead!
 The river slips through its silent bed.
 Sway, sway,
 As the bubbles spray
 And fall in tinkling tunes away.
 And up on the hills against the sky,
 A fir tree rocking its lullaby,
 Swings, swings,
 Its emerald wings,
 Swelling the song that my paddle sings.

Activities

1. Why does the speaker “stow the sail” of her canoe?
2. What is the effect of the word repetition at the middle of each stanza?
3. What type of figurative language does Johnson use throughout this poem? What is its effect?
4. In what sense is “The Song My Paddle Sings” a narrative poem? What elements of suspense are in the narrative?
5. Compare and contrast this poem with John Magee’s “High Flight” and with Lampman’s “Morning on the Lievre.”
6. [Hear a musical version of “The Song My Paddle Sings”.](#)

A.E. Housman (1859–1936)

“Loveliest of Trees”

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
 Is hung with bloom along the bough,

And stands about the woodland ride
 Wearing white for Eastertide. Now, of my threescore years and ten⁸⁸,
 Twenty will not come again,
 And take from seventy springs a score,
 It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
 Fifty springs are little room,
 About the woodlands I will go
 To see the cherry hung with snow.

“Is My Team Ploughing”

“Is my team ploughing,
 That I was used to drive
 And hear the harness jingle
 When I was man alive?”

Ay, the horses trample,
 The harness jingles now;
 No change though you lie under
 The land you used to plough.

“Is football playing
 Along the river shore,
 With lads to chase the leather,
 Now I stand up no more?”

Ay, the ball is flying,
 The lads play heart and soul;
 The goal stands up, the keeper
 Stands up to keep the goal.

“Is my girl happy,
 That I thought hard to leave,
 And has she tired of weeping
 As she lies down at eve?”

Ay, she lies down lightly,
 She lies not down to weep,
 Your girl is well contented.
 Be still, my lad, and sleep.

“Is my friend hearty,
 Now I am thin and pine,
 And has he found to sleep in
 A better bed than mine?”

Yes, lad, I lie easy,
 I lie as lads would choose;
 I cheer a dead man’s sweetheart,
 Never ask me whose.

88. Psalm 90:10 “The days of our years are threescore and ten....” A score is 20, so threescore and ten is 70 years.

Activities

“Loveliest of Trees”

1. How old is the speaker in the poem?
2. What is the setting of the poem (i.e., time and place)?
3. What is the speaker’s purpose in the poem?
4. What is the significance of the word “Eastertide”?
5. What kind of cycle is suggested by the second stanza, and how is this connected to Eastertide and nature?
6. What is the theme of the poem?

“Is My Team Ploughing”

1. According to Thomas Hardy’s widow, this was Hardy’s favourite Housman poem. Compare it with Hardy’s “Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?”
2. Of the three kinds of irony — verbal, situational, and dramatic — which type do you find in this poem? Discuss.
3. [View Ian Bostridge’s rendition of Ralph Vaughan Williams’s “Is My Team Ploughing”](#). How does the singer emphasize the colloquy between the living and the dead?
4. Dr. Joseph Mersand, in his edition of *A Shropshire Lad*, points out that Vaughan Williams cut stanzas 3 and 4, which prompted Housman’s angry observation, “How would he like me to cut two bars of his music?” (*A Shropshire Lad*, p. 82). Which version, Housman’s original or that of Vaughan Williams, do you prefer?

Read [“Farewell to Barn and Stack”](#) by A. E. Housman

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)**“Drummer Hodge”**

They throw in Drummer Hodge, to rest
 Uncoffined – just as found:
 His landmark is a kopje-crest⁸⁹
 That breaks the veldt⁹⁰ around;
 And foreign constellations west
 Each night above his mound.

89. Afrikaans for “small hill.”

90. South African grassland.

II

Young Hodge the Drummer never knew –
 Fresh from his Wessex home –
 The meaning of the broad Karoo⁹¹,
 The Bush, the dusty loam,
 And why uprose to nightly view
 Strange stars amid the gloam.

III

Yet portion of that unknown plain
 Will Hodge forever be;
 His homely Northern breast and brain
 Grow to some Southern tree,
 And strange-eyed constellations reign
 His stars eternally.

“The Ruined Maid”

“O ‘Melia’⁹², my dear, this does everything crown!
 Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?
 And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?” —
 “O didn’t you know I’d been ruined?” said she. — “You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,
 Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks⁹³;
 And now you’ve gay bracelets and bright feathers three!” —
 “Yes: that’s how we dress when we’re ruined,” said she.

— “At home in the barton⁹⁴ you said thee’ and thou,’
 And thik oon,’ and theäs oon,’ and t’other’; but now
 Your talking quite fits ‘ee for high compa-ny!” —
 “Some polish is gained with one’s ruin,” said she.

— “Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak
 But now I’m bewitched by your delicate cheek,
 And your little gloves fit as on any la-dy!” —
 “We never do work when we’re ruined,” said she.

— “You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream,
 And you’d sigh, and you’d sock⁹⁵; but at present you seem
 To know not of megrims⁹⁶ or melancho-ly!” —

“True. One’s pretty lively when ruined,” said she.

— “I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,
 And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!” —
 “My dear — a raw country girl, such as you be,
 Cannot quite expect that. You ain’t ruined,” said she.

91. Semi-desert region of South Africa.

92. Short and familiar form of Amelia.

93. Weeds.

94. Farmyard.

95. Sigh.

96. Low spirits.

“The Convergence of the Twain”

*(Lines on the loss of the Titanic)*I

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II

Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III

Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls — grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV

Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: “What does this vaingloriousness down here?” ...

VI

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

VII

Prepared a sinister mate
For her — so gaily great —
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

VIII

And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace, and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

IX

Alien they seemed to be;
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

X

Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
On being anon twin halves of one august event,

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years

Said “Now!” And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

“Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave”

“Ah, are you digging on my grave,
My loved one? — planting rue⁹⁷?”
— “No: yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred.
‘It cannot hurt her now,’ he said,
‘That I should not be true.’”
“Then who is digging on my grave,
My nearest dearest kin?”
— “Ah, no: they sit and think, ‘What use!
What good will planting flowers produce?
No tendance of her mound can loose
Her spirit from Death’s gin⁹⁸ .’”
“But someone digs upon my grave?
My enemy? — prodding sly?”
— “Nay: when she heard you had passed the Gate
That shuts on all flesh soon or late,
She thought you no more worth her hate,
And cares not where you lie.
“Then, who is digging on my grave?
Say — since I have not guessed!”
— “O it is I, my mistress dear,
Your little dog , who still lives near,
And much I hope my movements here
Have not disturbed your rest?”
“Ah yes! *You* dig upon my grave...
Why flashed it not to me
That one true heart was left behind!
What feeling do we ever find
To equal among human kind
A dog’s fidelity!”
“Mistress, I dug upon your grave
To bury a bone, in case
I should be hungry near this spot
When passing on my daily trot.
I am sorry, but I quite forgot
It was your resting place.”

97. A strong-scented, woody herb. Also, sorrow, regret.

98. A trap.

“Channel Firing”⁹⁹

That night your great guns, unawares,
 Shook all our coffins as we lay,
 And broke the chancel¹⁰⁰ window-squares,
 We thought it was the Judgment-day
 And sat upright. While drearisome
 Arose the howl of wakened hounds:
 The mouse let fall the altar-crumbs,
 The worms drew back into the mounds,
 The glebe¹⁰¹ cow drooled. Till God called, “No;
 It’s gunnery practice out at sea
 Just as before you went below;
 The world is as it used to be:
 “All nations striving strong to make
 Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters
 They do no more for Christ’s sake
 Than you who are helpless in such matters.
 “That this is not the judgment-hour
 For some of them’s a blessed thing,
 For if it were they’d have to scour
 Hell’s floor for so much threatening....
 “Ha, ha. It will be warmer when
 I blow the trumpet (if indeed
 I ever do; for you are men,
 And rest eternal sorely need).”
 So down we lay again. “I wonder,
 Will the world ever saner be,”
 Said one, “than when He sent us under
 In our indifferent century!”
 And many a skeleton shook his head.
 “Instead of preaching forty year,”
 My neighbour Parson Thirdly said,
 “I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer.”
 Again the guns disturbed the hour,
 Roaring their readiness to avenge,
 As far inland as Stourton Tower¹⁰²,
 And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.

99. The title refers to gunnery practice in the English Channel in April 1914. World War I began on August 4, 1914.

100. Part of the church nearest the altar.

101. A portion of land assigned to a clergyman as part of his benefice.

102. King Alfred’s Tower was built near Stourton in the county of Wiltshire, to celebrate a victory by the Saxon, King Alfred, over the Danes in AD 878. Camelot was the legendary site of King Arthur’s court, and Stonehenge is the site of the prehistoric stone circle at Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain.

“The Man He Killed”

“Had he and I but met
 By some old ancient inn,
 We should have sat us down to wet
 Right many a nipperkin!

“But ranged as infantry,
 And staring face to face,
 I shot at him as he at me,
 And killed him in his place.

“I shot him dead because —
 Because he was my foe,
 Just so: my foe of course he was;
 That’s clear enough; although

“He thought he’d ‘list, perhaps,
 Off-hand like — just as I —
 Was out of work — had sold his traps —
 No other reason why.

“Yes; quaint and curious war is!
 You shoot a fellow down
 You’d treat if met where any bar is,
 Or help to half-a-crown.”

Activities

“Drummer Hodge”

1. What place and what war make up the setting?
2. Compare the point of stanza 3 to a similar point made in Rupert Brooke’s “The Soldier.”

“The Ruined Maid”

1. What are some meanings of the word “ruined”?
2. Look up the word “maid.” What does the word mean in the title?
3. Describe the structure: the number of speakers, the use of dashes, who speaks first, who speaks last.
4. Describe the two former co-workers.
5. Can you distinguish between the two women’s speech patterns?
6. What is the main irony?

“The Convergence of the Twain”

1. In what year did the *Titanic* sink?
2. Define both nouns in the title.
3. Paraphrase the first stanza, placing the grammatical subject at the beginning of the sentence.
4. Who is guilty of pride?
5. How does alliteration emphasize theme?
6. How is the deity depicted? How is the deity depicted in “Let Me Enjoy”?
7. What is the “creature of cleaving wing”?
8. Clarify the marriage metaphor in the poem.

“Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave”

1. Clarify the major irony and its type in this poem.
2. Compare this poem with Housman’s “Is My Team Ploughing?”

“Channel Firing”

1. To what promised biblical event does the poem refer?
2. Who is the speaker?
3. How does Hardy use humour to make serious points about war?
4. How is this a pessimistic poem?
5. Discuss the thematic significance of the three places mentioned in the last two lines.

“The Man He Killed”

1. Comment on how the speaker’s diction characterizes him.
2. Why did the soldier enlist?
3. Give specific examples of irony in the third stanza and final stanzas. What are the denotations of “quaint” and “curious”?
4. How does Hardy’s use of dashes affect the metre and theme?

Archibald Lampman (1861–1899)

“Morning on the Lievre”¹⁰³

Far above us where a jay
Screams his matins¹⁰⁴ to the day,
Capped with gold and amethyst,¹⁰⁵
Like a vapor from the forge
Of a giant somewhere hid,
Out of hearing of the clang
Of his hammer, skirts of mist
Slowly up the woody gorge
Lift and hang. Softly as a cloud we go,
Sky above and sky below,
Down the river; and the dip
Of the paddles scarcely breaks,
With the little silvery drip
Of the water as it shakes
From the blades, the crystal deep
Of the silence of the morn,
Of the forest yet asleep;
And the river reaches borne
In a mirror, purple gray,
Sheer away
To the misty line of light,
Where the forest and the stream
In the shadow meet and plight,
Like a dream.

From amid a stretch of reeds,
Where the lazy river sucks
All the water as it bleeds
From a little curling creek,
And the muskrats peer and sneak
In around the sunken wrecks
Of a tree that swept the skies
Long ago,
On a sudden seven ducks
With a splashy rustle rise,
Stretching out their seven necks,
One before, and two behind,
And the others all arow,

103. The Lievre is a tributary, flowing into the Ottawa River, about 97 kilometers north of Ottawa. A camping trip with fellow poet Duncan Campbell Scott inspired Lampman to write this poem.

104. A morning prayer, especially in the Anglican Church. Lampman's father was an Anglican minister.

105. A precious stone, violet or purple in colour.

And as steady as the wind
 With a swivelling whistle go,
 Through the purple shadow led,
 Till we only hear their whir
 In behind a rocky spur¹⁰⁶,
 Just ahead.

Activities

1. Compare this poem with two other poems you have studied about the effects of nature's beauty.
2. How do we know this is a free verse poem?
3. Identify a simile in the poem's first stanza. Is the simile appropriate and effective?
4. What does the poet mean by "sky below," in the second stanza?
5. What is the tone, the mood, the voice of this poem?
6. What is the effect of the alliteration in the final stanza?
7. Watch the [film the National Film Board of Canada made of "Morning on the Lievre"](#). Does the film enhance your appreciation of the poem? Explain your answer.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889)

"God's Grandeur"

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
 It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
 It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil¹⁰⁷
 Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod¹⁰⁸?
 Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
 And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
 And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
 Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod. And for all this, nature is never spent;
 There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
 And though the last lights off the black West went
 Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
 Because the Holy Ghost¹⁰⁹ over the bent
 World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

106. Here meaning a projection from the base of the mountain.

107. Likely olive oil, a sacramental oil in the Catholic faith. Hopkins was a Jesuit priest.

108. Obey God's commands.

109. The Holy Spirit, the resurrected soul of Jesus.

Activities

1. Compare and contrast this sonnet with Wordsworth's "The World Is Too Much with Us."
2. To what extent does the theme of this poem, written in the middle of the 19th century hold true today?
3. Why, in the context of this poem, will humankind never destroy nature?
4. How does Hopkin's language, his style, reinforce humankind's relationship with the natural world, as the poet describes it in the poem's octave?

Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

"Goblin Market"

Morning and evening
 Maids heard the goblins cry:
 "Come buy our orchard fruits,
 Come buy, come buy:
 Apples and quinces,
 Lemons and oranges,
 Plump unpecked cherries,
 Melons and raspberries,
 Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
 Swart-headed mulberries,
 Wild free-born cranberries,
 Crab-apples, dewberries,
 Pine-apples, blackberries,
 Apricots, strawberries;—
 All ripe together
 In summer weather,—
 Morns that pass by,
 Fair eves that fly;
 Come buy, come buy:
 Our grapes fresh from the vine,
 Pomegranates full and fine,
 Dates and sharp bullaces¹¹⁰,
 Rare pears and greengages,
 Damsons and bilberries,
 Taste them and try:
 Currants and gooseberries,

110. Bullaces, greengages, damsons are all varieties of plum. A bilberry resembles a blueberry.

Bright-fire-like barberries¹¹¹,
 Figs to fill your mouth,
 Citrons from the South,
 Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
 Come buy, come buy."Evening by evening
 Among the brookside rushes,
 Laura bowed her head to hear,
 Lizzie veiled her blushes:
 Crouching close together
 In the cooling weather,
 With clasping arms and cautioning lips,
 With tingling cheeks and finger-tips.
 "Lie close," Laura said,
 Pricking up her golden head:
 "We must not look at goblin men,
 We must not buy their fruits:
 Who knows upon what soil they fed
 Their hungry thirsty roots?"
 "Come buy," call the goblins
 Hobbling down the glen.
 "O," cried Lizzie, "Laura, Laura,
 You should not peep at goblin men."
 Lizzie covered up her eyes,
 Covered close lest they should look;
 Laura reared her glossy head,
 And whispered like the restless brook:
 "Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
 Down the glen tramp little men.
 One hauls a basket,
 One bears a plate,
 One lugs a golden dish
 Of many pounds' weight.
 How fair the vine must grow
 Whose grapes are so luscious;
 How warm the wind must blow
 Through those fruit bushes."
 "No," said Lizzie, "no, no, no;
 Their offers should not charm us,
 Their evil gifts would harm us."
 She thrust a dimpled finger
 In each ear, shut eyes and ran:
 Curious Laura chose to linger
 Wondering at each merchant man.
 One had a cat's face,
 One whisked a tail,

111. Oblong red berries of a barberry shrub.

One tramped at a rat's pace,
 One crawled like a snail,
 One like a wombat¹¹² prowled obtuse and furry,
 One like a ratel¹¹³ tumbled hurry-scurry.
 She heard a voice like voice of doves
 Cooing all together:
 They sounded kind and full of loves
 In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
 Like a rush-imbedded swan,
 Like a lily from the beck¹¹⁴,
 Like a moonlit poplar branch,
 Like a vessel at the launch
 When its last restraint is gone.
 Backwards up the mossy glen
 Turned and trooped the goblin men,
 With their shrill repeated cry,
 "Come buy, come buy."
 When they reached where Laura was
 They stood stock still upon the moss,
 Leering at each other,
 Brother with queer brother;
 Signalling each other,
 Brother with sly brother.
 One set his basket down,
 One reared his plate;
 One began to weave a crown
 Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown
 (Men sell not such in any town);
 One heaved the golden weight
 Of dish and fruit to offer her:
 "Come buy, come buy," was still their cry.
 Laura stared but did not stir,
 Longed but had no money:
 The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste
 In tones as smooth as honey,
 The cat-faced purr'd,
 The rat-paced spoke a word
 Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
 One parrot-voiced and jolly
 Cried "Pretty Goblin" still for "Pretty Polly";—
 One whistled like a bird.
 But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:

112. A burrowing marsupial resembling a small bear.

113. A nocturnal animal resembling a badger. Pronounced "ray-tell."

114. A small brook.

“Good folk, I have no coin;
 To take were to purloin:
 I have no copper in my purse,
 I have no silver either,
 And all my gold is on the furze
 That shakes in windy weather
 Above the rusty heather.”
 “You have much gold upon your head,”
 They answered altogether:
 “Buy from us with a golden curl.”
 She clipped a precious golden lock,
 She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,
 Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red:
 Sweeter than honey from the rock¹¹⁵,
 Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
 Clearer than water flowed that juice;
 She never tasted such before,
 How should it cloy with length of use?
 She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
 Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
 She sucked until her lips were sore;
 Then flung the emptied rinds away,
 But gathered up one kernel stone,
 And knew not was it night or day
 As she turned home alone.
 Lizzie met her at the gate
 Full of wise upbraidings:
 “Dear, you should not stay so late,
 Twilight is not good for maidens;
 Should not loiter in the glen
 In the haunts of goblin men.
 Do you not remember Jeanie,
 How she met them in the moonlight,
 Took their gifts both choice and many,
 Ate their fruits and wore their flowers
 Plucked from bowers
 Where summer ripens at all hours?
 But ever in the noonlight
 She pined and pined away;
 Sought them by night and day,
 Found them no more, but dwindled and grew gray,
 Then fell with the first snow,
 While to this day no grass will grow
 Where she lies low:
 I planted daisies there a year ago

115. cf. Deuteronomy 32:13, “...suck honey out of the rock.”

That never blow.
 You should not loiter so.”
 “Nay, hush,” said Laura:
 “Nay, hush, my sister:
 I ate and ate my fill,
 Yet my mouth waters still;
 To-morrow night I will
 Buy more,”—and kissed her.
 “Have done with sorrow;
 I’ll bring you plums to-morrow
 Fresh on their mother twigs,
 Cherries worth getting;
 You cannot think what figs
 My teeth have met in,
 What melons icy-cold
 Piled on a dish of gold
 Too huge for me to hold,
 What peaches with a velvet nap,
 Pellucid grapes without one seed:
 Odorous indeed must be the mead
 Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink,
 With lilies at the brink,
 And sugar-sweet their sap.”

Golden head by golden head,
 Like two pigeons in one nest
 Folded in each other’s wings,
 They lay down in their curtained bed:
 Like two blossoms on one stem,
 Like two flakes of new-fallen snow,
 Like two wands of ivory
 Tipped with gold for awful kings.
 Moon and stars gazed in at them,
 Wind sang to them lullaby,
 Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
 Not a bat flapped to and fro
 Round their rest:
 Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
 Locked together in one nest.
 Early in the morning
 When the first cock crowed his warning,
 Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
 Laura rose with Lizzie:
 Fetched in honey, milked the cows,
 Aired and set to rights the house,
 Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
 Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
 Next churned butter, whipped up cream,

Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;
 Talked as modest maidens should:
 Lizzie with an open heart,
 Laura in an absent dream,
 One content, one sick in part;
 One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
 One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came:
 They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;
 Lizzie most placid in her look,
 Laura most like a leaping flame.
 They drew the gurgling water from its deep;
 Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags¹¹⁶,
 Then turning homeward said: "The sunset flushes
 Those furthest loftiest crags;
 Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,
 No wilful squirrel wags,
 The beasts and birds are fast asleep."
 But Laura loitered still among the rushes
 And said the bank was steep.
 And said the hour was early still,
 The dew not fallen, the wind not chill:
 Listening ever, but not catching
 The customary cry,
 "Come buy, come buy,"
 With its iterated jingle
 Of sugar-baited words:
 Not for all her watching
 Once discerning even one goblin
 Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;
 Let alone the herds
 That used to tramp along the glen,
 In groups or single,
 Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged: "O Laura, come;
 I hear the fruit-call, but I dare not look:
 You should not loiter longer at this brook:
 Come with me home.
 The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
 Each glow-worm winks her spark,
 Let us get home before the night grows dark;
 For clouds may gather
 Though this is summer weather,
 Put out the lights and drench us through;
 Then if we lost our way what should we do?"

Laura turned cold as stone
 To find her sister heard that cry alone,
 That goblin cry,
 "Come buy our fruits, come buy."
 Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?
 Must she no more such succous¹¹⁷ pasture find,
 Gone deaf and blind?
 Her tree of life drooped from the root:
 She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;
 But peering thro' the dimness, naught discerning,
 Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
 So crept to bed, and lay
 Silent till Lizzie slept;
 Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
 And gnashed her teeth for balked desire, and wept
 As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,
 Laura kept watch in vain,
 In sullen silence of exceeding pain.
 She never caught again the goblin cry:
 "Come buy, come buy";—
 She never spied the goblin men
 Hawking their fruits along the glen:
 But when the noon waxed bright
 Her hair grew thin and gray;
 She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn
 To swift decay, and burn
 Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone
 She set it by a wall that faced the south;
 Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,
 Watched for a waxing shoot,
 But there came none;
 It never saw the sun,
 It never felt the trickling moisture run:
 While with sunk eyes and faded mouth
 She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees
 False waves in desert drouth
 With shade of leaf-crowned trees,
 And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,
 Tended the fowls or cows,
 Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
 Brought water from the brook:

117. Succulent.

But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care,
Yet not to share.
She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy."
Beside the brook, along the glen,
She heard the tramp of goblin men,
The voice and stir
Poor Laura could not hear;
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,
But feared to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest winter-time,
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp winter-time.

Till Laura, dwindling,
Seemed knocking at Death's door:
Then Lizzie weighed¹¹⁸ no more
Better and worse,
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook;
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel and wombat-like,

Snail-paced in a hurry,
 Parrot-voiced and whistler,
 Helter-skelter, hurry-skurry,
 Chattering like magpies,
 Fluttering like pigeons,
 Gliding like fishes,—
 Hugged her and kissed her;
 Squeezed and caressed her;
 Stretched up their dishes,
 Panniers and plates:
 “Look at our apples
 Russet and dun,
 Bob at our cherries,
 Bite at our peaches,
 Citrons and dates,
 Grapes for the asking,
 Pears red with basking
 Out in the sun,
 Plums on their twigs;
 Pluck them and suck them,
 Pomegranates, figs.”
 “Good folk,” said Lizzie,
 Mindful of Jeanie,
 “Give me much and many”;—
 Held out her apron,
 Tossed them her penny.
 “Nay, take a seat with us,
 Honor and eat with us,”
 They answered grinning:
 “Our feast is but beginning.
 Night yet is early,
 Warm and dew-pearly,
 Wakeful and starry:
 Such fruits as these
 No man can carry;
 Half their bloom would fly,
 Half their dew would dry,
 Half their flavor would pass by.
 Sit down and feast with us,
 Be welcome guest with us,
 Cheer you and rest with us.”
 “Thank you,” said Lizzie; “but one waits
 At home alone for me:
 So, without further parleying,
 If you will not sell me any
 Of your fruits though much and many,
 Give me back my silver penny

I tossed you for a fee.”
 They began to scratch their pates,
 No longer wagging, purring,
 But visibly demurring,
 Grunting and snarling.
 One called her proud,
 Cross-grained, uncivil;
 Their tones waxed loud,
 Their looks were evil.
 Lashing their tails
 They trod and hustled her,
 Elbowed and jostled her,
 Clawed with their nails,
 Barking, mewling, hissing, mocking,
 Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
 Twitched her hair out by the roots,
 Stamped upon her tender feet,
 Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
 Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
 Like a lily in a flood,—
 Like a rock of blue-veined stone
 Lashed by tides obstreperously,—
 Like a beacon left alone
 In a hoary roaring sea,
 Sending up a golden fire,—
 Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
 White with blossoms honey-sweet
 Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
 Like a royal virgin town
 Topped with gilded dome and spire
 Close beleaguered by a fleet
 Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,
 Twenty cannot make him drink.
 Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
 Coaxed and fought her,
 Bullied and besought her,
 Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
 Kicked and knocked her,
 Mauled and mocked her,
 Lizzie uttered not a word;
 Would not open lip from lip
 Lest they should cram a mouthful in;
 But laughed in heart to feel the drip
 Of juice that syrugged all her face,
 And lodged in dimples of her chin,

And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.
 At last the evil people,
 Worn out by her resistance,
 Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit
 Along whichever road they took,
 Not leaving root or stone or shoot.
 Some writhed into the ground,
 Some dived into the brook
 With ring and ripple,
 Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
 Some vanished in the distance.

 In a smart, ache, tingle,
 Lizzie went her way;
 Knew not was it night or day;
 Sprang up the bank, tore through the furze,
 Threaded copse and dingle,
 And heard her penny jingle
 Bouncing in her purse,—
 Its bounce was music to her ear.
 She ran and ran
 As if she feared some goblin man
 Dogged her with gibe or curse
 Or something worse:
 But not one goblin skurried after,
 Nor was she pricked by fear;
 The kind heart made her windy-paced
 That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
 And inward laughter.

 She cried “Laura,” up the garden,
 “Did you miss me?
 Come and kiss me.
 Never mind my bruises,
 Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
 Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
 Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
 Eat me, drink me, love me;
 Laura, make much of me:
 For your sake I have braved the glen
 And had to do with goblin merchant men.”

 Laura started from her chair,
 Flung her arms up in the air,
 Clutched her hair:
 “Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
 For my sake the fruit forbidden?
 Must your light like mine be hidden,
 Your young life like mine be wasted,
 Undone in mine undoing

And ruined in my ruin,
 Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?"
 She clung about her sister,
 Kissed and kissed and kissed her:
 Tears once again
 Refreshed her shrunken eyes,
 Dropping like rain
 After long sultry drouth;
 Shaking with aguish¹¹⁹ fear, and pain,
 She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,
 That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
 She loathed the feast:
 Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,
 Rent all her robe, and wrung
 Her hands in lamentable haste,
 And beat her breast.
 Her locks streamed like the torch
 Borne by a racer at full speed,
 Or like the mane of horses in their flight,
 Or like an eagle when she stems the light
 Straight toward the sun,
 Or like a caged thing freed,
 Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart,
 Met the fire smouldering there
 And overbore its lesser flame;
 She gorged on bitterness without a name:
 Ah! fool, to choose such part
 Of soul-consuming care!
 Sense failed in the mortal strife:
 Like the watch-tower of a town
 Which an earthquake shatters down,
 Like a lightning-stricken mast,
 Like a wind-uprooted tree
 Spun about,
 Like a foam-topped water-spout
 Cast down headlong in the sea,
 She fell at last;
 Pleasure past and anguish past,
 Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.
 That night long Lizzie watched by her,
 Counted her pulse's flagging stir,
 Felt for her breath,

Held water to her lips, and cooled her face
 With tears and fanning leaves:
 But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,
 And early reapers plodded to the place
 Of golden sheaves,
 And dew-wet grass
 Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
 And new buds with new day
 Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,
 Laura awoke as from a dream,
 Laughed in the innocent old way,
 Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;
 Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of gray,
 Her breath was sweet as May,
 And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
 Afterwards, when both were wives
 With children of their own;
 Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
 Their lives bound up in tender lives;
 Laura would call the little ones
 And tell them of her early prime,
 Those pleasant days long gone
 Of not-returning time:
 Would talk about the haunted glen,
 The wicked, quaint¹²⁰ fruit-merchant men,
 Their fruits like honey to the throat,
 But poison in the blood;
 (Men sell not such in any town;)
 Would tell them how her sister stood
 In deadly peril to do her good,
 And win the fiery antidote:
 Then joining hands to little hands
 Would bid them cling together,
 "For there is no friend like a sister,
 In calm or stormy weather,
 To cheer one on the tedious way,
 To fetch one if one goes astray,
 To lift one if one totters down,
 To strengthen whilst one stands."

Feature Poet: Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)

Emily Dickinson

Introduction

Emily Dickinson was born December 10, 1830, in Amherst Massachusetts. Her family was prominent in the community; her father was a lawyer and a politician, who served a term in the U.S. Congress.

Emily attended school in Amherst and enrolled in Mount Holyoake College, where she stayed for less than a year. The curriculum privileged evangelical Christianity and did not mesh with Emily's independent spirit and free-thinking nature.

She returned to Homestead, her spacious family home in Amherst, where she would live for most of the rest of her life. She settled into a routine which was partly domestic—she loved to bake, and she tended a most beautiful fragrant garden—and partly intellectual—she was a voracious reader and a prolific poet and letter writer. She wrote nearly 1,800 poems, over the course of her life.

She had close friendships, though they tended to be affirmed through the frequent long letters she wrote nearly every day. Some were school friends, and some were older men. One was Samuel Bowles, editor of a local newspaper, one of the few editors to publish any of her poems. Another was Charles Wadsworth, a Philadelphia preacher whom she met on one of her rare trips away from Amherst. They corresponded regularly, though few of their letters are extant. Another was Thomas Higginson, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, who rejected her poems for publications but entered into a correspondence with the aspiring young poet. A later correspondent was a Massachusetts judge Otis Lord, whose interest in Emily may have been romantic, after his wife died in December of 1877, though no romance developed.

Neither she nor her younger sister Lavinia married. Too many young men left Amherst to strike it rich in the Gold Rush or to fight in the Civil War. There were few men available to court upper-middle class women. And, in such poems as “I Cannot Live with You,” Emily expresses her reluctance to marry and lose her own independent identity to that of wife and mother.

She was close to her family, celebrating the birth of her brother's children and devastated by the death of her nephew Gilbert in 1882. Her most intense friendship was with Austin's wife, her sister-in-law Susan, in whom she confided and to whom she sent her poems for constructive criticism. The relationship was close, if contentious at times, and perhaps, at least in the view of some biographers, intimate. Susan lived with her family next door to Emily's house. The two houses are now the [Emily Dickinson Museum](#).

Emily died in 1886, likely from kidney disease. She had asked Lavinia to destroy the letters stacked in her dresser drawers. Lavinia destroyed the letters—an immeasurable loss to American literary history—but she saved the poems—an immeasurable gift to world literature. Her brother's mistress, Mabel Loomis Todd, the wife of an Amherst College professor, and another one of Emily's pen pals, recognized the excellence of Emily's work. With the help of Higginson, she arranged for publication of a book of selected poems, privileging those that were regular in rhythm and rhyme; providing titles, which Emily had not; and even altering the content of some poems to render them more conventional. That book appeared in 1890. Thereafter, more and volumes appeared, culminating in R.W. Franklin's Variorum edition of *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, published in 1998.

Dickinson wrote nearly two thousand poems. Her themes are conventional—nature, faith, death—but her treatment of the themes is complex. Nature is beautiful, a tonic that eases a troubled heart and mind; but it is

also has a dark side, in the form of a bird that bites a worm in half and eats it raw, a snake slithering ominously through the grass. God's love can comfort us—if God exists. “Faith is a fine invention,” she writes, though it's advisable to turn to science for answers to some questions. The soul is immortal: Death is not the end of existence, in such poems as “Because I Could not Stop for Death.” But in “Safe in Their Alabaster Chambers,” the dead seem soulless. She did not write often about love, though the passion of poems such as “Wild Nights, Wild Nights” suggest an unexpected longing for physical intimacy.

She wrote several startling poems about her health, which was fragile. One of her few trips outside Amherst was to Boston to see an eye specialist about her vision issues. Her shaky mental health—her proneness to depression—emerges in such poems as “There's a Certain Slant of Light” and “I Felt a Funeral in My Brain.”

Dickinson's style, similarly, reflects her preference for conventional regular verse forms, but her work explodes beyond the confines of regular verse in compact images dense with meaning, jarring half-rhymes, and those signature dashes which moderate the pace of her poems.

Poems

39 [I never lost as much but twice -]¹²¹

I never lost as much but twice,
And that was in the sod.¹²²
Twice have I stood a beggar
Before the door of God!

Angels—twice descending
Reimbursed my store—¹²³
Burglar! Banker—Father!¹²⁴
I am poor once more!

112 [Success is counted sweetest]

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple Host¹²⁵
Who took the Flag today
Can tell the definition
So clear of victory

As he defeated – dying –
On whose forbidden ear

121. Dickinson did not number or title her poems. In 1998, Belknap Press published *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition*, edited by R.W. Franklin, who numbered the poems in chronological order, based upon the best available evidence on the order in which Dickinson composed them. He used the number followed by the first line, the line enclosed in square brackets, to identify the poems. His numbering has become the standard.

122. A loved one has died, and Dickinson is reminded of two others now dead and buried.

123. Perhaps her nieces and/or nephews, children of her brother Austin.

124. God stole from her; then He deposited two more loved ones into the bank of her love; the third name she gives to God—“Father”—seems to suggest she is reconciled to inevitable change.

125. The victorious army which defeated—took the flag—of the enemy.

The distant strains of triumph
Burst agonized and clear!

124 [Safe in their Alabaster Chambers -]

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers –
Untouched by Morning –
and untouched by noon –
Sleep the meek members of the Resurrection,
Rafters of Satin and Roof of Stone –

Grand go the Years,
In the Crescent above them –
Worlds scoop their Arcs –¹²⁶
and Firmaments – row –
Diadems¹²⁷ – drop –
And Doges¹²⁸ surrender –
Soundless as Dots,
On a Disk of Snow.

202 [“Faith” is a fine invention]

“Faith” is a fine invention
For Gentlemen who *see!*
But Microscopes are prudent
In an Emergency!

207 [I taste a liquor never brewed -]

I taste a liquor never brewed –
From Tankards scooped in Pearl –
Not all the Frankfort¹²⁹ Berries
Yield such an Alcohol!

Inebriate of air – am I –
And Debauchee of Dew –
Reeling – thro’ endless summer days –
From inns of molten Blue –

When “Landlords” turn the drunken Bee
Out of the Foxglove’s door –
When Butterflies – renounce their “drams” –
I shall but drink the more!

Till Seraphs¹³⁰ swing their snowy Hats –
And Saints – to windows run –
To see the little Tippler
Leaning against the – Sun!

126. The universe evolves and revolves in its orbits.

127. Jewels of monarchs.

128. Chief magistrates; important people.

129. Known for producing fine white wines.

130. Angels.

236 [Some keep the Sabbath going to Church -]

Some keep the Sabbath going to Church –
 I keep it, staying at Home –
 With a Bobolink for a Chorister –
 And an Orchard, for a Dome –

Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice –
 I, just wear my Wings –
 And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church,
 Our little Sexton¹³¹ – sings.

God preaches, a noted Clergyman –
 And the sermon is never long,
 So instead of getting to Heaven, at last –
 I'm going, all along.

269 [Wild Nights -Wild Nights!]

Wild nights – Wild nights!
 Were I with thee
 Wild nights should be
 Our luxury!

Futile – the winds –
 To a Heart in port –
 Done with the Compass –
 Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden –
 Ah – the Sea!
 Might I but moor – tonight –
 In thee!

320 [There's a certain Slant of light]

There's a certain Slant of light,
 Winter Afternoons –
 That oppresses, like the Heft
 Of Cathedral Tunes –

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us –
 We can find no scar,
 But internal difference –
 Where the Meanings, are –

None may teach it – Any –
 'Tis the seal Despair –
 An imperial affliction
 Sent us of the Air –

When it comes, the Landscape listens –

131. Caretaker of a church and churchyard.

Shadows – hold their breath –
 When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
 On the look of Death –
 When is “There’s a Certain Slant of Light” set? What is the significance of this setting?

340 [I felt a Funeral, in my Brain]

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
 And Mourners to and fro
 Kept treading – treading – till it seemed
 That Sense was breaking through –

And when they all were seated,
 A Service, like a Drum –
 Kept beating – beating – till I thought
 My mind was going numb –

And then I heard them lift a Box
 And creak across my Soul
 With those same Boots of Lead, again,
 Then Space – began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,
 And Being, but an Ear,
 And I, and Silence, some strange Race,
 Wrecked, solitary, here –

And then a Plank in Reason, broke,
 And I dropped down, and down –
 And hit a World, at every plunge,
 And Finished knowing – then –

355 [It was not Death, for I stood up]

It was not Death, for I stood up,
 And all the Dead, lie down –
 It was not Night, for all the Bells
 Put out their Tongues, for Noon.

It was not Frost, for on my Flesh
 I felt Siroccos¹³² – crawl –
 Nor Fire – for just my marble feet
 Could keep a Chancel,¹³³ cool –

And yet, it tasted, like them all,
 The Figures I have seen
 Set orderly, for Burial
 Reminded me, of mine –

As if my life were shaven,
 And fitted to a frame,

132. Hot winds.

133. Part of the church behind the altar.

And could not breathe without a key,
And 'twas like Midnight, some –

When everything that ticked – has stopped –
And space stares – all around –
Or Grisly frosts – first Autumn morns,
Repeal the Beating Ground –

But most, like Chaos – Stopless – cool –
Without a Chance, or spar¹³⁴ –
Or even a Report of Land –
To justify-Despair.

359 [A Bird, came down the Walk -]

A Bird, came down the Walk –
He did not know I saw –
He bit an Angle Worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then, he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass –
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass –

He glanced with rapid eyes,
That hurried all abroad –
They looked like frightened Beads, I thought,
He stirred his Velvet Head. –

Like one in danger, Cautious,
I offered him a Crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers,
And rowed him softer Home –

Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon,
Leap, plashless¹³⁵ as they swim.

409 [The Soul selects her own Society -]

The Soul selects her own Society —
Then — shuts the Door —
To her divine Majority —
Present no more —

Unmoved — she notes the Chariots — pausing —
At her low Gate —
Unmoved — an Emperor be kneeling
Upon her Mat —

134. Pole that supports the mast of a ship. The poet is shipwrecked and there is not even a remnant of the ship to save her.

135. Without splashing.

I've known her — from an ample nation —
 Choose One —
 Then — close the Valves of her attention —
 Like Stone —

479 [Because I could not stop for Death -]

Because I could not stop for Death –
 He kindly stopped for me –
 The Carriage held but just Ourselves –
 And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste
 And I had put away
 My labor and my leisure too,
 For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove
 At Recess – in the Ring –
 We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –
 We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed Us –
 The Dews drew quivering and Chill –
 For only Gossamer, my Gown –
 My Tippet¹³⁶ – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed
 A Swelling of the Ground –
 The Roof was scarcely visible –
 The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet
 Feels shorter than the Day
 I first surmised the Horses' Heads
 Were toward Eternity –

519 [This is my letter to the World]

This is my letter to the world,
 That never wrote to me,-
 The simple news that Nature told,
 With tender majesty

Her message is committed
 To hands I cannot see;
 For love of her, sweet countrymen,
 Judge tenderly of me!

591 [I heard a Fly buzz -when I died -]

I heard a Fly buzz – when I died –

136. Her shawl, which is made of the fine light fabric tulle.

The Stillness in the Room
 Was like the Stillness in the Air –
 Between the Heaves of Storm –

The Eyes around – had wrung them dry –
 And Breaths were gathering firm
 For that last Onset – when the King
 Be witnessed – in the Room –

I willed my Keepsakes – Signed away
 What portion of me be
 Assignable – and then it was
 There interposed a Fly –

With Blue – uncertain – stumbling Buzz –
 Between the light – and me –
 And then the Windows failed – and then
 I could not see to see –

598 [The Brain -is wider than the Sky -]

The Brain—is wider than the Sky—
 For—put them side by side—
 The one the other will contain
 With ease—and You—beside—

The Brain is deeper than the sea—
 For—hold them—Blue to Blue—
 The one the other will absorb—
 As Sponges—Buckets—do—

The Brain is just the weight of God—
 For—Heft them—Pound for Pound—
 And they will differ—if they do—
 As Syllable from Sound—

620 [Much Madness is divinest Sense -]

Much Madness is divinest Sense –
 To a discerning Eye –
 Much Sense – the starkest Madness –
 'Tis the Majority
 In this, as all, prevail –
 Assent – and you are sane –
 Demur – you're straightway dangerous –
 And handled with a Chain –

656 [I started Early -Took my Dog -]

I started Early – Took my Dog –
 And visited the Sea –
 The Mermaids in the Basement
 Came out to look at me –

And Frigates¹³⁷ – in the Upper Floor
 Extended Hempen Hands –
 Presuming Me to be a Mouse –
 Aground – upon the Sands –

But no Man moved Me – till the Tide
 Went past my simple Shoe –
 And past my Apron – and my Belt
 And past my Bodice – too –

And made as He would eat me up –
 As wholly as a Dew
 Upon a Dandelion's Sleeve –
 And then – I started – too –

And He – He followed – close behind –
 I felt His Silver Heel
 Upon my Ankle – Then my Shoes
 Would overflow with Pearl –

Until We met the Solid Town –
 No One He seemed to know
 And bowing – with a Mighty look –
 At me – The Sea withdrew –

706 [I cannot live with You -]

I cannot live with You —
 It would be Life —
 And Life is over there —
 Behind the Shelf

The Sexton keeps the Key to —
 Putting up
 Our Life — His Porcelain —
 Like a Cup —

Discarded of the Housewife —
 Quaint — or Broke —
 A newer Sevres pleases —
 Old Ones crack —

I could not die — with You —
 For One must wait
 To shut the Other's Gaze down —
 You — could not —

And I — Could I stand by
 And see You — freeze —
 Without my Right of Frost —
 Death's privilege?

Nor could I rise — with You —
 Because Your Face

Would put out Jesus' —
That New Grace

Glow plain — and foreign
On my homesick Eye —
Except that You than He
Shone closer by —

They'd judge Us — How —
For You — served Heaven — You know,
Or sought to —
I could not —

Because You saturated Sight —
And I had no more Eyes
For sordid excellence
As Paradise

And were You lost, I would be —
Though My Name
Rang loudest
On the Heavenly fame —

And were You — saved —
And I — condemned to be
Where You were not —
That self — were Hell to Me —

So We must meet apart —
You there — I — here —
With just the Door ajar
That Oceans are — and Prayer —
And that White Sustenance —
Despair —

764 [My Life had stood -a Loaded Gun -]

My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –
In Corners – till a Day
The Owner passed – identified –
And carried Me away –

And now We roam in Sovereign Woods –
And now We hunt the Doe –
And every time I speak for Him
The Mountains straight reply –

And do I smile, such cordial light
Upon the Valley glow –
It is as a Vesuvian¹³⁸ face
Had let it's pleasure through –

And when at Night – Our good Day done –
I guard My Master's Head –

138. Vesuvius is a volcanic mountain in Italy.

'Tis better than the Eider Duck's
Deep Pillow – to have shared –

To foe of His – I'm deadly foe –
None stir the second time –
On whom I lay a Yellow Eye –
Or an emphatic Thumb –

Though I than He – may longer live
He longer must – than I –
For I have but the power to kill,
Without – the power to die –

1096 [A narrow Fellow in the Grass]

A narrow Fellow in the Grass
Occasionally rides –
You may have met him? Did you not
His notice instant is –

The Grass divides as with a Comb,
A spotted Shaft is seen,
And then it closes at your Feet
And opens further on –

He likes a Boggy Acre –
A Floor too cool for Corn –
But when a Boy and Barefoot
I more than once at Noon

Have passed I thought a Whip Lash
Unbraiding in the Sun
When stooping to secure it
It wrinkled And was gone –

Several of Nature's People
I know, and they know me
I feel for them a transport
Of Cordiality

But never met this Fellow
Attended or alone
Without a tighter Breathing
And Zero at the Bone.

1263 [Tell all the Truth but tell it slant -]

Tell all the truth but tell it slant —
Success in Circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased
With explanation kind

The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind —

1773 [My life closed twice before its close]

My life closed twice before its close—
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me

So huge, so hopeless to conceive
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven.
And all we need of hell.

Activities

1. What does the poet beg for “Before the door of God” in “I Never Lost as Much but Twice”? What does the line “Angels—twice descending” mean? To whom does “Banker” refer in the last stanza?
2. What argument is the poet making in “Success Is Counted Sweetest”? Do you agree with her?
3. What is the form of “Safe in Their Alabaster Chambers,” and how does the form help establish the theme of the poem? How are the first and second stanzas connected to each other? Explain the simile in the last two lines.
4. Does Dickinson place more faith in science or religion? Support your answer.
5. What effect does the beauty of nature have on the poet in “I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed”? What are the “inns of molten Blue” referenced in the second stanza? How does the use of alliteration in the final stanza of enliven the poem?
6. What does the poet mean by the reference to her “Wings” in “Some Keep the Sabbath Going to Church”? Why is it better to worship in God in nature than in a church?
7. How does the rhythm of “Wild Nights, Wild Nights” inform the action in the poem? Explain the metaphor in the second stanza. To whom does the “thee” in the last line refer?
8. Paraphrase the second stanza of “There’s a Certain Slant of Light.” How is “the certain slant of light” used metaphorically? Is this an effective metaphor? Support your answer. What is the soundtrack to “There’s a Certain Slant of Light”? How is the soundtrack appropriate to the tone and theme of the poem? What is the nature of the “Despair” the poet alludes to in stanza 3? How do such phrases as “Heavenly Hurt” and “imperial affliction” help define the nature of the despair? What type of figurative language is “heavenly hurt” an example of? Note the trochaic meter of “There’s a Certain Slant of Light.” Why is the trochaic meter appropriate for this poem? Compare and contrast the mood of the poet at the start of the poem with her mood at the end of the poem.
9. What is wrong with the speaker in “I Felt a Funeral in My Brain”? What is happening to her?
10. Find two examples of imperfect rhyme in the poem. Does the imperfect rhyme mar or enhance the poem? Explain your answer. How is a funeral and its rituals an appropriate metaphor for the poet’s condition in “I Felt a Funeral in My Brain”? What is the significance of the inconclusive ending to the poem?

11. How, in the first two stanzas of “It Was not Death” is the poet’s fate worse than death? Is there any relief for the state the poet is in? Explain your answer. What is the effect of the imperfect rhyme the poet uses throughout the poem?
12. How does “A Bird Came Down the Walk” defy a conventional view of the beauty and harmony of the natural world? What do you make of the final stanza? When is the ocean “Too silver for a seam”? What are the “Banks of Noon”?
13. What is the theme of “The Soul Selects Her Own Society”? Do you agree with the argument implicit in this poem? Note the rhythm of “The Soul Selects Her Own Society.” Dickinson usually alternates between a line with four beats and a line with three beats, usually iambic. But in this poem, she alternates four with two, and, in the last stanza, four iambic beats with just one. How does this rhythm support the theme of the poem?
14. How is Death personified in “Because I Could not Stop for Death”? Explain the poet’s symbolism in stanza 3. What is the “house” of stanza 5? Where is the carriage going, and how does its destination inform the theme of the poem?
15. What is the chief source of Dickinson’s inspiration, judging from “This Is My Letter to the World”?
16. How is the phrase “tender majesty” an apt description of nature? Dickinson commits, entrusts, the poem to your hands. What does she ask in return?
17. Identify the simile in stanza 1 of “I Heard a Fly Buzz,” and comment on its effectiveness.
18. Who is the “King” the family of the dying person awaits? Dickinson does not use enjambment regularly but uses it to dramatic effect in Stanza 3. Where is the enjambment and what is its effect? How is significant, symbolic, that a fly buzzes at the moment of the narrator’s death?
19. In what sense is the brain wider than the sky and deeper than the sea? What is the significance of the poet’s claim that “The Brain is just the weight of God? What is the theme of the poem?
20. Is Dickinson correct, when she says, in “Much Madness is Divinest Sense” that “’Tis the Majority / In this, as all, prevail”? What example does she give to support her theme? What example can you provide to confirm her theme?
21. What elements of a nursery rhyme does “I Started Early—Took My Dog” have in the first two stanzas? How does the narrative change thereafter? Why does the narrator remain still in stanza 3, while the tide rises past her waist? How might the rising tide be used metaphorically? Note the spondee in the first line of stanza 5; why does Dickinson change the rhythm here? How can the narrator feel “His Silver Heel” (note that she capitalizes each word), if “He” is chasing her from behind? What is the “Pearl” which covers her shoes? What is the nature of the danger the narrator faces, and does she escape from it?
22. What seems to have provoked Dickinson to write “I Cannot Live with You”? What reasons does she give for her refusal to agree with the request from the “You” in the poem? What does she offer in place of the request made to her? How do you think the “You” might respond”? What do the last two lines of the poem mean to you?
23. Who is the narrator of “My Life Had Stood—a Loaded Gun”? What story does the narrator tell? Explain the apparent paradox with which the poem concludes.
24. What is “the narrow fellow in the grass”? What does the poet say here about the nature of nature? What does “Zero at the Bone” mean?
25. In what sense is “Tell All the Truth but Tell It Slant” a poem about white lies? In what sense is

it a poem about poetry? In what sense is it a poem about religion? [Watch Jack Nicolson, as Colonel Jessup give his “you can’t handle the truth” speech from A Few Good Men.](#) How might this speech and Dickinson’s poem be similar?

Robert Browning (1812–1889)

“Porphyria’s Lover”

The rain set early in to-night,
 The sullen wind was soon awake,
 It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
 And did its worst to vex the lake:
 I listened with heart fit to break.
 When glided in Porphyria; straight
 She shut the cold out and the storm,
 And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
 Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
 Which done, she rose, and from her form
 Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
 And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
 Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
 And, last, she sat down by my side
 And called me. When no voice replied,
 She put my arm about her waist,
 And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
 And all her yellow hair displaced,
 And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
 And spread, o’er all, her yellow hair,
 Murmuring how she loved me — she
 Too weak, for all her heart’s endeavour,
 To set its struggling passion free
 From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
 And give herself to me for ever.
 But passion sometimes would prevail,
 Nor could to-night’s gay feast restrain
 A sudden thought of one so pale
 For love of her, and all in vain:
 So, she was come through wind and rain.
 Be sure I looked up at her eyes
 Happy and proud; at last I knew
 Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
 Made my heart swell, and still it grew
 While I debated what to do.

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
 Perfectly pure and good: I found
 A thing to do, and all her hair
 In one long yellow string I wound
 Three times her little throat around,
 And strangled her. No pain felt she;
 I am quite sure she felt no pain.
 As a shut bud that holds a bee,
 I warily oped her lids: again
 Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
 And I untightened next the tress
 About her neck; her cheek once more
 Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
 I propped her head up as before,
 Only, this time my shoulder bore
 Her head, which droops upon it still:
 The smiling rosy little head,
 So glad it has its utmost will,
 That all it scorned at once is fled,
 And I, its love, am gained instead!
 Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
 Her darling one wish would be heard.
 And thus we sit together now,
 And all night long we have not stirred,
 And yet God has not said a word!

Activities

1. Why does the speaker murder Porphyria?
2. Read the following [essay about Browning's "Porphyria's Lover"](#), which argues that Shakespeare's *Othello* is another source for the poem.

Read "[The Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister](#)", "[The Bishop Orders His Tomb](#)", and see the [study questions](#).

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849)

"The Raven"

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
 Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
 While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,

As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
 "'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
 Only this and nothing more." Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;
 And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
 Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
 From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
 For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
 Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
 Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
 So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
 "'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
 Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
 This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
 "Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
 But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
 And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
 That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—
 Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
 Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
 But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
 And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"
 This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"—
 Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
 Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
 "Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
 Let me see, then, what theroat is, and this mystery explore—
 Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—
 'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
 In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;
 Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
 But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
 Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
 Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
 By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
 "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
 Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian¹³⁹ shore!"
 Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

139. In Roman mythology, Pluto is god of the underworld, of Hell.

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
 Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
 With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
 Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—
 Till I scarcely more than muttered “Other friends have flown before—
 On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before.”
 Then the bird said “Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
 “Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and store
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
 Of ‘Never—nevermore’.”

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
 Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core;
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
 On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o’er,
 But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o’er,
 She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
 Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
 “Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee
 Respite—respite and nepenthe¹⁴⁰ from thy memories of Lenore;
 Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!”
 Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—
 Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
 Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
 On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—
 Is there—is there balm in Gilead?¹⁴¹—tell me—tell me, I implore!”
 Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!
 By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—

140. A drug of Greek mythology. When ingested, nepenthe induces relief from pain, sorrow, and grief.

141. In the Bible, Gilead is a region in Jordan associated with despair; hence, it is the name of the nation in Margaret Atwood’s dystopian novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale*. The speaker asks “Is there...balm in Gilead”? Will I ever have relief from my suffering.

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,¹⁴²
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.”
 Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting—
 “Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
 Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”
 Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
 On the pallid bust of Pallas¹⁴³ just above my chamber door;
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,
 And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
 And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
 Shall be lifted—nevermore!

Activities

1. What is the narrator’s state of mind? Why is he in this state of mind?
2. The poem is set at midnight in December. Why is this significant?
3. Why might we suspect the narrator is hallucinating?
4. How does the poem’s dramatic trochaic meter, frequent use of alliteration, and internal rhyme influence tone and theme?
5. What does the Raven mean by “Nevermore”? How does the Raven’s declaration help establish the theme of the poem?
6. [Watch and hear James Earl Jones read “The Raven”](#). [Watch and hear Vincent Price read “The Raven”](#). Which version do you prefer? Why?

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892)

“The Lady of Shalot”

Part I

On either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,

142. Arabic word for paradise; Eden.

143. In Greek mythology, the Goddess of Wisdom.

That clothe the wold¹⁴⁴ and meet the sky;
 And through the field the road runs by
 To many-towered Camelot;
 And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow¹⁴⁵
 Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten¹⁴⁶, aspens quiver,
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Through the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
 Slide the heavy barges trailed
 By slow horses; and unhailed
 The shallop¹⁴⁷ flitteth silken-sailed
 Skimming down to Camelot:
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?
 Or at the casement seen her stand?
 Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to towered Camelot:
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colours gay.
 She has heard a whisper say,
 A curse is on her if she stay¹⁴⁸
 To look down to Camelot.

144. A plain.

145. Bloom.

146. The white underside of the willow leaves are lifted by the wind.

147. A small, open boat propelled by oars or sails and used mainly in shallow waters.

148. Pause.

She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror¹⁴⁹ clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.
 There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot:
 There the river eddy whirls,
 And there the surly village-churls¹⁵⁰,
 And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
 An abbot on an ambling pad,
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
 Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to towered Camelot;
 And sometimes through the mirror blue
 The knights come riding two and two:
 She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,
 For often through the silent nights
 A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot:
 Or when the moon was overhead,
 Came two young lovers lately wed;
 "I am half sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott.

Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,
 The sun came dazzling through the leaves,
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves¹⁵¹
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.
 A red-cross knight for ever kneeled
 To a lady in his shield,
 That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,

149. At her loom, the lady faces the back of her tapestry, and weaves by consulting a mirror in which the design is reflected.

150. Peasants.

151. Armour for the leg below the knee.

Like to some branch of stars we see
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.
 The bridle bells rang merrily
 As he rode down to Camelot:
 And from his blazoned baldric¹⁵² slung
 A mighty silver bugle hung,
 And as he rode his armour rung,
 Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
 Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burned like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 As often through the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
 On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
 From underneath his helmet flowed
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 From the bank and from the river
 He flashed into the crystal mirror,
 "Tirra lirra"¹⁵³, " by the river
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
 She made three paces through the room,
 She saw the water-lily bloom,
 She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She looked down to Camelot.
 Out flew the web and floated wide;
 The mirror cracked from side to side;
 "The curse is come upon me," cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
 The pale yellow woods were waning,
 The broad stream in his banks complaining,
 Heavily the low sky raining
 Over towered Camelot;
 Down she came and found a boat
 Beneath a willow left afloat,

152. A belt worn over one shoulder to support a sword or bugle.

153. In Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, (4.3: 11-12), Autolycus sings about "tumbling in the hay" with his "aunts" (whores).

And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse,
Like some bold seer in a trance
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

“Ulysses”

The main source of this dramatic monologue is Dante’s Inferno XXVI, 94-126. Here Ulysses sets out westward through the Pillars of Hercules: “When I left Circe...not fondness for my son, ...nor Penelope’s claim to the joys of love could drive out of my mind the lust to experience the far-flung world...I put out on the...open sea/with a single ship/and only those few souls/who stayed true when the rest deserted me.” But Tennyson melds details of this account with those of Homer’s Odyssey 19-24, after he has returned to Ithaca and been reunited with his wife and son and resumed his duties as king.

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match’d with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees; all times I have enjoy’d
Greatly, have suffer’d greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro’ scudding drifts the rainy Hyades¹⁵⁴
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour’d of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy,
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro’
Gleams that untravell’d world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end¹⁵⁵,
To rust unburnish’d, not to shine in use!
As tho’ to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,

154. A cluster of stars in Taurus, associated by the ancients with rainy weather.

155. cf. Ulysses’ speech in Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida* 3.3. 144-47: “Perseverance.../Keeps honour bright. To have done is to hang/
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail/In monumental mockery.”

To whom I leave the scepter and the isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you¹⁵⁶ and I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles¹⁵⁷,
 And see the great Achilles¹⁵⁸, whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

“Selected poems from In Memoriam A.H.H.”

Obiit MDCCCXXXIII¹⁵⁹
 Strong Son of God, immortal Love,

156. The companions of Ulysses.

157. The Elysian Fields, or Greek paradise.

158. Greek hero of the *Iliad* who defeated Hector in the Trojan War. When he died, his arms went to Ulysses.

159. He died in 1883.

Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
 By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
 Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade¹⁶⁰;
 Thou madest Life in man and brute;
 Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
 Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
 Thou madest man, he knows not why,
 He thinks he was not made to die;
 And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
 The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
 Our wills are ours, we know not how;
 Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems¹⁶¹ have their day;
 They have their day and cease to be:
 They are but broken lights of thee,
 And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
 For knowledge is of things we see
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,
 A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
 But more of reverence in us dwell;
 That mind and soul, according well,
 May make one music as before¹⁶²,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
 We mock thee when we do not fear:
 But help thy foolish ones to bear;
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
 What seem'd my worth since I began;
 For merit lives from man to man,
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
 I trust he lives in thee, and there
 I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
 Confusions of a wasted youth;
 Forgive them where they fail in truth,
 And in thy wisdom make me wise.

160. Sun and moon.

161. Systems of philosophy.

162. Before mind and soul came to sing different tunes with the advent of science.

—1849.¹⁶³

I

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones¹⁶⁴,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,
Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn.'

II

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock¹⁶⁵
Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom¹⁶⁶:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

163. The 11 stanzas that Tennyson wrote as a prologue were written after the rest of the poem was complete.

164. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832).

165. The clock of the church tower behind the yew.

166. The yew tree, symbolic of grief, has a very long life.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,
 What whispers from thy lying lip?
 'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run'¹⁶⁷;
 A web is wov'n across the sky;
 From out waste places comes a cry,
 And murmurs from the dying sun:
 'And all the phantom, Nature, stands?
 With all the music in her tone,
 A hollow echo of my own,
 A hollow form with empty hands.'
 And shall I take a thing so blind,
 Embrace her as my natural good;
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;
 My will is bondsman to the dark;
 I sit within a helmless bark,
 And with my heart I muse and say:
 O heart, how fares it with thee now,
 That thou should'st fail from thy desire,
 Who scarcely darest to inquire,
 'What is it makes me beat so low?'
 Something it is which thou hast lost,
 Some pleasure from thine early years.
 Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
 That grief hath shaken into frost!
 Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
 All night below the darken'd eyes;
 With morning wakes the will, and cries,
 'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V

I sometimes hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel;
 For words, like Nature, half reveal
 And half conceal the Soul within.

167. cf. "Planets and Suns run blindly thro' the sky," Pope, "Essay on Man", I. 252.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds¹⁶⁸, I'll wrap me o'er,
 Like coarsest clothes against the cold:
 But that large grief which these enfold
 Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'
 That 'Loss is common to the race'?
 And common is the commonplace,
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
 My own less bitter, rather more:
 Too common! Never morning wore
 To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
 Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
 Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
 Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud¹⁶⁹
 Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
 At that last hour to please him well;
 Who mused on all I had to tell,
 And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
 And ever met him on his way
 With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'
 Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove¹⁷⁰,
 That sittest ranging golden hair;
 And glad to find thyself so fair,
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
 In expectation of a guest;

168. Mourning clothes.

169. Sailors were often buried in their own hammocks, which were weighted to allow the corpse to sink.

170. Tennyson's sister Emilia (1811-87), who had been engaged to Hallam. She later married Richard Jesse, a British naval officer, and their eldest son was given the names Arthur Henry Hallam.

And thinking 'this will please him best,'
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her colour burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house¹⁷¹, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more?
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber, and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there

171. The house at 67 Wimpole Street where Hallam had lived.

In those deserted walks, may find
 A flower beat with rain and wind,
 Which once she foster'd up with care;
 So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with thee
 And this poor flower of poesy
 Which little cared for fades not yet.
 But since it pleased a vanish'd eye¹⁷²,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may bloom,
 Or, dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore¹⁷³
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.
 So draw him home to those that mourn
 In vain; a favourable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.
 All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor¹⁷⁴, bright
 As our pure love, thro' early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.
 Sphere all your lights around, above;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
 My friend, the brother of my love;
 My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
 I hear the bell struck in the night:
 I see the cabin-window bright;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.
 Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,

172. Hallam wrote a positive review of Tennyson's early poems in 1831.

173. Hallam's body was brought back by ship from Trieste, the Italian port.

174. The morning star.

And travell'd men from foreign lands;
 And letters unto trembling hands;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him; we have idle dreams:
 This look of quiet flatters thus
 Our home-bred fancies. O to us,
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems
 To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
 The chalice of the grapes of God;
 Than if with thee the roaring wells
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;
 And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
 Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
 Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
 And only thro' the faded leaf
 The chestnut pattering to the ground:
 Calm and deep peace on this high wold¹⁷⁵,
 And on these dews that drench the furze¹⁷⁶,
 And all the silvery gossamers
 That twinkle into green and gold:
 Calm and still light on yon great plain
 That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
 And crowded farms and lessening towers,
 To mingle with the bounding main:
 Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
 These leaves that redden to the fall;
 And in my heart, if calm at all,
 If any calm, a calm despair:
 Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
 And waves that sway themselves in rest,
 And dead calm in that noble breast
 Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
 To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,

175. An upland plain.

176. A spiny evergreen shrub.

Some dolorous message knit below
 The wild pulsation of her wings;
 Like her I go; I cannot stay;
 I leave this mortal ark behind,
 A weight of nerves without a mind,
 And leave the cliffs, and haste away
 O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
 And reach the glow of southern skies,
 And see the sails at distance rise,
 And linger weeping on the marge,
 And saying; 'Comes he thus, my friend?
 Is this the end of all my care?'
 And circle moaning in the air:
 'Is this the end? Is this the end?'
 And forward dart again, and play
 About the prow, and back return
 To where the body sits, and learn
 That I have been an hour away.

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees
 A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
 And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
 Her place is empty, fall like these;
 Which weep a loss for ever new,
 A void where heart on heart reposed;
 And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
 Silence, till I be silent too.
 Which weep the comrade of my choice,
 An awful thought, a life removed,
 The human-hearted man I loved,
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice.
 Come, Time, and teach me, many years,
 I do not suffer in a dream;
 For now so strange do these things seem,
 Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;
 My fancies time to rise on wing,
 And glance about the approaching sails,
 As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
 And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV

If one should bring me this report,

That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,
 And I went down unto the quay,
 And found thee lying in the port;
 And standing, muffled round with woe,
 Should see thy passengers in rank
 Come stepping lightly down the plank,
 And beckoning unto those they know;
 And if along with these should come
 The man I held as half-divine;
 Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
 And ask a thousand things of home;
 And I should tell him all my pain,
 And how my life had droop'd of late,
 And he should sorrow o'er my state
 And marvel what possess'd my brain;
 And I perceived no touch of change,
 No hint of death in all his frame,
 But found him all in all the same,
 I should not feel it to be strange.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping day:
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies;
 The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
 The cattle huddled on the lea;
 And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
 The sunbeam strikes along the world:
 And but for fancies, which aver
 That all thy motions gently pass
 Athwart a plane of molten glass¹⁷⁷,
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir
 That makes the barren branches loud;
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in woe
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud
 That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a labouring breast,
 And topples round the dreary west,
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XIX

The Danube to the Severn¹⁷⁸ gave
 The darken'd heart that beat no more;
 They laid him by the pleasant shore,
 And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
 The salt sea-water passes by,
 And hushes half the babbling Wye,
 And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
 And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
 When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
 I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
 Is vocal in its wooded walls;
 My deeper anguish also falls,
 And I can speak a little then.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight
 As pure and perfect as I say?
 The very source and fount of Day
 Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
 This earth had been the Paradise
 It never look'd to human eyes
 Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
 Makes former gladness loom so great?
 The lowness of the present state,
 That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
 A glory from its being far;
 And orb into the perfect star
 We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
 The captive void of noble rage,
 The linnet born within the cage,
 That never knew the summer woods:

178. Hallam died in Vienna, on the Danube River, and was buried in the church at Clevedon on the Severn River in southwest England.

I envy not the beast that takes
 His license in the field of time,
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
 To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
 The heart that never plighted troth
 But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
 Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;
 'Tis better to have loved and lost
 Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ¹⁷⁹:
 The moon is hid; the night is still;
 The Christmas bells from hill to hill
 Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
 From far and near, on mead and moor,
 Swell out and fail, as if a door
 Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes¹⁸⁰ on the wind,
 That now dilate, and now decrease,
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
 I almost wish'd no more to wake,
 And that my hold on life would break
 Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
 For they controll'd me when a boy;
 They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
 The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas hearth;
 A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall

179. As the first Christmas (1833) after Hallam's death approaches, the poet listens to the church bells from four villages. A.C. Bradley suggests that the second part of "In Memoriam" begins here in XXVIII. *A Commentary on Tennyson's In Memoriam*.

180. Arrangements of church bell ringing.

We gambol'd, making vain pretence
 Of gladness, with an awful sense
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:
 We heard them sweep the winter land;
 And in a circle hand-in-hand
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
 We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
 A merry song we sang with him
 Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us: surely rest is meet:
 'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
 Once more we sang: 'They do not die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail
 With gather'd power, yet the same,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
 O Father, touch the east, and light
 The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,
 That life shall live for evermore,
 Else earth is darkness at the core,
 And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
 Fantastic beauty such as lurks
 In some wild Poet, when he works
 Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
 'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
 Of things all mortal, or to use
 A tattle patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
 Like birds the charming serpent draws,
 To drop head-foremost in the jaws
 Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXIX

Old warder¹⁸¹ of these buried bones,
 And answering now my random stroke
 With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones
 And dippest toward the dreamless head,
 To thee too comes the golden hour
 When flower is feeling after flower;
 But Sorrow?fixt upon the dead,
 And darkening the dark graves of men,?
 What whisper'd from her lying lips?
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
 And passes into gloom again.

L

Be near me when my light is low,
 When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
 And tingle; and the heart is sick,
 And all the wheels of Being slow.
 Be near me when the sensuous frame
 Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
 And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
 And Life, a Fury slinging flame.
 Be near me when my faith is dry,
 And men the flies of latter spring,
 That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
 And weave their petty cells and die.
 Be near me when I fade away,
 To point the term of human strife,
 And on the low dark verge of life
 The twilight of eternal day.

LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
 That nothing walks with aimless feet;
 That not one life shall be destroy'd,

181. The churchyard yew. This section was written in 1868; cf. II.

Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile complete;
 That not a worm is cloven in vain;
 That not a moth with vain desire
 Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.
 Behold, we know not anything;
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last—far off—at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.
 So runs my dream: but what am I?
 An infant crying in the night:
 An infant crying for the light:
 And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
 The likest God within the soul¹⁸²?
 Are God and Nature then at strife,
 That Nature lends such evil dreams?
 So careful of the type¹⁸³ she seems,
 So careless of the single life;
 That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear,
 I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs
 That slope thro' darkness up to God,
 I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
 And gather dust and chaff, and call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope¹⁸⁴.

LVI

'So careful of the type?' but no.

182. The inner consciousness—the divine in man [Tennyson's note].

183. Species; i.e., Nature ensures the preservation of the species but is indifferent to the fate of the individual.

184. Tennyson's son Hallam writes in the biography of his father, "...by 'the larger hope' that the whole human race would through, perhaps, ages of suffering, be at length purified and saved" (*Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, I, 321-22).

From scarpèd cliff and quarried stone
 She¹⁸⁵ cries, 'A thousand types are gone'¹⁸⁶:
 I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
 I bring to life, I bring to death:
 The spirit does but mean the breath:
 I know no more.' And he, shall he,
 Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
 Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
 Who built him fanes¹⁸⁷ of fruitless prayer,
 Who trusted God was love indeed
 And love Creation's final law?
 Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
 With ravine, shriek'd against his creed?
 Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
 Who battled for the True, the Just,
 Be blown about the desert dust,
 Or seal'd within the iron hills?
 No more? A monster then, a dream,
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,
 That tare each other in their slime,
 Were mellow music match'd with him.
 O life as futile, then, as frail!
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
 What hope of answer, or redress?
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
 No casual mistress, but a wife,
 My bosom-friend and half of life;
 As I confess it needs must be;
 O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
 And put thy harsher moods aside,
 If thou wilt have me wise and good.
 My centred passion cannot move,
 Nor will it lessen from to-day;
 But I'll have leave at times to play
 As with the creature of my love;

185. Nature.

186. The new science of geology, particularly in Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830), which Tennyson had read, was providing evidence that countless forms of life have disappeared from the earth.

187. Temples.

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
 With so much hope for years to come,
 That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
 Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
 I know that in thy place of rest
 By that broad water of the west¹⁸⁸,
 There comes a glory on the walls;
 Thy marble bright in dark appears,
 As slowly steals a silver flame
 Along the letters of thy name,
 And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
 From off my bed the moonlight dies;
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes
 I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray;

And then I know the mist is drawn
 A lucid veil from coast to coast,
 And in the dark church like a ghost
 Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again¹⁸⁹,
 And howlest, issuing out of night,
 With blasts that blow the poplar white,
 And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate¹⁹⁰ begun
 To pine in that reverse of doom¹⁹¹,
 Which sicken'd every living bloom,
 And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
 With thy quick tears that make the rose
 Pull sideways, and the daisy close
 Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame
 Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd

188. Hallam was buried near the Severn River in southwestern England.

189. The first anniversary of Hallam's death, September 15, 1884.

190. State of happiness.

191. Reversal of fortunes as the result of Hallam's death.

A chequer-work of beam and shade
 Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
 Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,
 When the dark hand struck down thro' time,
 And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
 Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,
 And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
 And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
 Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
 Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
 And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXVIII

Again at Christmas¹⁹² did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas hearth;
 The silent snow possess'd the earth,
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog¹⁹³ sparkled keen with frost,
 No wing of wind the region swept,
 But over all things brooding slept
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
 Again our ancient games had place,
 The mimic picture's¹⁹⁴ breathing grace,
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
 No single tear, no mark of pain:
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
 O grief, can grief be changed to less?
 O last regret, regret can die!
 No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
 Her deep relations are the same,
 But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,
 That holy Death ere Arthur died

192. The second Christmas (1884) after Hallam's death.

193. Yule log.

194. Tableau-vivant; literally, "living picture," a silent and motionless group of people arranged to represent a scene or incident.

Had moved me kindly from his side,
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;
 Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
 The grief my loss in him had wrought,
 A grief as deep as life or thought,
 But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
 I hear the sentence that he speaks;
 He bears the burthen of the weeks
 But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
 And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
 Unused example from the grave
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers¹⁹⁵, ambrosial air,
 That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
 Of evening over brake and bloom
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
 And shadowing down the horned flood
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
 The full new life that feeds thy breath
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
 On leagues of odour streaming far,
 To where in yonder orient star
 A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
 And thou, with all thy breadth and height
 Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
 My Arthur found your shadows fair,

195. This poem signals "the full new life which is beginning to revive in the poet's heart and to dispel the last shadow of the evil dreams which Nature seemed to lend when he was under the sway of...Doubt and Death" (Bradley, 223).

And shook to all the liberal air
 The dust and din and steam of town:
 He brought an eye for all he saw;
 He mixt in all our simple sports;
 They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
 And dusty purlieus of the law¹⁹⁶.

O joy to him in this retreat,
 Inmantled in ambrosial dark,
 To drink the cooler air, and mark
 The landscape winking thro' the heat:
 O sound to rout the brood of cares,
 The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
 The gust that round the garden flew,
 And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
 About him, heart and ear were fed
 To hear him, as he lay and read
 The Tuscan poets¹⁹⁷ on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,
 Or here she brought the harp and flung
 A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
 And break the livelong summer day
 With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
 Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
 Or touch'd the changes of the state,
 Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
 He loved to rail against it still,
 For 'ground in yonder social mill
 We rub each other's angles down,
 'And merge,' he said, 'in form and gloss
 The picturesque of man and man.'

We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,
 The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,
 Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
 And last, returning from afar,
 Before the crimson-circled star
 Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
 We heard behind the woodbine veil

196. After leaving Cambridge, Hallam became a law student in London.

197. Dante and Petrarch.

The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in un conjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates
And hear the household jar within.

XCV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,

For underfoot the herb was dry;
 And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
 The silvery haze of summer drawn;
 And calm that let the tapers burn
 Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd:
 The brook alone far-off was heard,
 And on the board the fluttering urn¹⁹⁸:
 And bats went round in fragrant skies,
 And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
 And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;
 While now we sang old songs that peal'd
 From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,
 The white kine¹⁹⁹ glimmer'd, and the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field.
 But when those others, one by one,
 Withdrew themselves from me and night,
 And in the house light after light
 Went out, and I was all alone,
 A hunger seized my heart; I read
 Of that glad year which once had been,
 In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
 The noble letters of the dead:
 And strangely on the silence broke
 The silent-speaking words, and strange
 Was love's dumb cry defying change
 To test his worth; and strangely spoke
 The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward back,
 And keen thro' wordy snares to track
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.
 So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touch'd me from the past,
 And all at once it seem'd at last
 The living soul was flash'd on mine,
 And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd
 About empyreal heights of thought,
 And came on that which is, and caught
 The deep pulsations of the world,
 Aeonian music²⁰⁰ measuring out
 The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
 The blows of Death. At length my trance
 Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.
 Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame

198. Vessel for boiling water for tea or coffee.

199. Cows.

200. Age-old music.

In matter-moulded forms of speech,
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach
 Thro' memory that which I became:
 Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
 The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field;
 And suck'd from out the distant gloom
 A breeze began to tremble o'er
 The large leaves of the sycamore,
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,
 And gathering freshlier overhead,
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung
 The lilies to and fro, and said,
 'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
 And East and West, without a breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
 To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
 Are tender over drowning flies,
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.
 I know not: one²⁰¹ indeed I knew
 In many a subtle question versed,
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
 But ever strove to make it true:
 Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
 At last he beat his music out.
 There lives more faith in honest doubt,
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.
 He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
 He would not make his judgment blind,
 He faced the spectres of the mind
 And laid them: thus he came at length
 To find a stronger faith his own;
 And Power was with him in the night,
 Which makes the darkness and the light,
 And dwells not in the light alone,
 But in the darkness and the cloud,
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,

While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again²⁰²,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;
 Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;
 Who murmurest in the foliated eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;
 Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.
 O, wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ²⁰³;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church²⁰⁴ below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.
 A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know²⁰⁵.
 Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

202. September 15, 1835, the second anniversary of Hallam's death.

203. The third Christmas since Hallam's death.

204. Waltham Abbey.

205. Tennyson's family has moved to a new home in Epping, Surrey, where they spent their first Christmas in 1837, four years after Hallam's death.

CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave
 This laurel, let this holly stand:
 We live within the stranger's land,
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
 And silent under other snows:
 There in due time the woodbine blows,
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
 The genial hour with mask and mime,
 For change of place, like growth of time,
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
 By which our lives are chiefly proved,
 A little spare the night I loved,
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
 For who would keep an ancient form
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;
 No dance, no motion, save alone
 What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
 Run out your measured arcs, and lead
 The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:
 The year is dying in the night;
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die²⁰⁶.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
 The year is going, let him go;
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no more;

206. New Year's resolutions. Tennyson is determined "to re-shape his attitude to Hallam's death: 'let him die....Year by year, Tennyson's cause has been to keep Hallam's memory alive; all of a sudden, he sounds resolved to let his memory fade in the comforting knowledge that he lives forever in Christ' ('Ring in the Christ that is meant to be')" (Cash 9).

Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII

It is the day when he was born²⁰⁷,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;

Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
 Of all things ev'n as he were by;
 We keep the day. With festal cheer,
 With books and music, surely we
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
 And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,
 I will not eat my heart alone,
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:
 What profit lies in barren faith,
 And vacant yearning, tho' with might
 To scale the heaven's highest height,
 Or dive below the wells of Death?
 What find I in the highest place,
 But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
 And on the depths of death there swims
 The reflex of a human face.
 I'll rather take what fruit may be
 Of sorrow under human skies:
 'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
 Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of quick²⁰⁸
 About the flowering squares²⁰⁹, and thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.
 Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drown'd in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.
 Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea;
 Where now the seamew²¹⁰ pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly

208. Hawthorn hedge.

209. Fields.

210. Seabird.

The happy birds, that change their sky
 To build and brood; that live their lives
 From land to land; and in my breast
 Spring wakens too; and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this
 To hold me from my proper place,
 A little while from his embrace,
 For fuller gain of after bliss:
 That out of distance might ensue
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
 And unto meeting when we meet,
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,
 For every grain of sand that runs,
 And every span of shade that steals,
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,
 And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII

Contèmpilate all this work of Time²¹¹,
 The giant labouring in his youth;
 Nor dream of human love and truth,
 As dying Nature's earth and lime²¹²;
 But trust that those we call the dead
 Are breathers of an ampler day
 For ever nobler ends. They²¹³ say,
 The solid earth whereon we tread
 In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
 Till at the last arose the man;
 Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place,
 If so he type²¹⁴ this work of time
 Within himself, from more to more;

211. The Titan giant Cronus (Saturn) regarded as the god of devouring time.

212. Do not dream that love and fidelity are merely transient things.

213. Scientists.

214. Prefigures.

Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
 Like glories, move his course, and show
 That life is not as idle ore,
 But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning fears,
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom
 To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun²¹⁵, the sensual feast;
 Move upward, working out the beast,
 And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX

Doors²¹⁶, where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, not as one that weeps
 I come once more; the city sleeps;
 I smell the meadow in the street;
 I hear a chirp of birds; I see
 Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn
 A light-blue lane of early dawn,
 And think of early days and thee,
 And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
 And bright the friendship of thine eye;
 And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
 I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:
 I think we are not wholly brain,
 Magnetic mockeries²¹⁷; not in vain,
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;
 Not only cunning casts in clay:
 Let Science prove we are, and then
 What matters Science unto men,
 At least to me? I would not stay.
 Let him, the wiser man who springs
 Hereafter, up from childhood shape
 His action like the greater ape,
 But I was born to other things.

215. Faunus. Also Pan, Roman god of country life, half-beast, half man.

216. The doors of Hallam's London house at 67 Wimpole Street, to which Tennyson has returned.

217. Automaton.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
 O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
 There where the long street roars, hath been
 The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
 From form to form, and nothing stands;
 They melt like mist, the solid lands,
 Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
 And dream my dream, and hold it true;
 For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
 I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;
 Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
 He, They, One, All; within, without;
 The Power in darkness whom we guess,—

I found Him not in world or sun,
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye²¹⁸,
 Nor thro' the questions men may try,
 The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
 I heard a voice 'believe no more,'
 And heard an ever-breaking shore
 That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would melt
 The freezing reason's colder part,
 And like a man in wrath the heart
 Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
 But that blind clamour made me wise;
 Then was I as a child that cries,
 But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
 What is, and no man understands;
 And out of darkness came the hands
 That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;

218. Tennyson rejects the argument of God's existence from the design of nature and hence the need for a designer.

I hear thee where the waters run;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
 But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;
 My love is vaster passion now;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will²¹⁹ that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock²²⁰,
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquer'd years
 To one that with us works, and trust,
 With faith that comes of self-control,
 The truths that never can be proved
 Until we close with all we loved,
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

[from Epilogue²²¹]

...And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
 Till over down and over dale
 All night the shining vapour sail
 And pass the silent-lighted town,
 The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
 And catch at every mountain head,
 And o'er the friths that branch and spread
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;
 And touch with shade the bridal doors,
 With tender gloom the roof, the wall;

219. Tennyson equated this with "Free-will, the higher and enduring part of man" (*Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, I, 319).

220. Christ. cf. 1 Corinthians: 10.4

221. The poem comes full circle with a description of the wedding of Tennyson's sister Cecilia to Edward Lushington and to the birth which will result from their union.

And breaking let the splendour fall
 To spangle all the happy shores
 By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
 And, star and system rolling past,
 A soul shall draw from out the vast
 And strike his being into bounds,
 And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
 Result in man, be born and think,
 And act and love, a closer link
 Betwixt us and the crowning race
 Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
 On knowledge, under whose command
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
 Is Nature like an open book;
 No longer half-akin to brute,
 For all we thought and loved and did,
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
 Of what in them is flower and fruit;
 Whereof the man, that with me trod
 This planet, was a noble type
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,
 That friend of mine who lives in God,
 That God, which ever lives and loves,
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off divine event,
 To which the whole creation moves.

"The Charge of the Light Brigade"

Half a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.
 'Forward, the Light Brigade!
 Charge for the guns' he said:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.
 'Forward, the Light Brigade!'

Was there a man dismay'd?
 Not tho' the soldiers knew
 Some one had blunder'd:
 Theirs not to make reply,
 Theirs not to reason why,
 Theirs but to do and die:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode and well,
 Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of Hell
 Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
 Flash'd as they turned in air
 Sabring the gunners there,
 Charging an army while
 All the world wonder'd:
 Plunged in the battery-smoke
 Right thro' the line they broke;
 Cossack and Russian
 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.
 Then they rode back, but not
 Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon behind them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 While horse and hero fell,
 They that had fought so well
 Came thro' the jaws of Death,
 Back from the mouth of Hell,
 All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
 O the wild charge they made!
 All the world wonder'd.
 Honour the charge they made!
 Honour the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred!

Activities

"The Lady of Shalott"

1. After looking at both published versions of the poem, might you, as did George Eliot, express a preference for any of the original lines, published in 1833? If so, which ones would you wish Tennyson had not revised?
2. What are features of the poem's meter and diction? How do these add to the magical or eerie effect?
3. What might the striking image of the tower symbolize? the mirror? What is significant about the lady's being enclosed in a high tower?
4. What was the result of Sir Lancelot's adulterous relationship with King Arthur's queen, Guinevere?
5. What irony is associated with Lancelot?
6. After looking at the link above—isolate some details that support the contention that the poem deals with "the Woman Question"; that is, the position of Victorian women?
7. What details might support an allegorical interpretation pertaining to art versus life?
8. Why do you think the Lady of Shalott became the subject of so many Victorian paintings (Hunt, Rossetti, Waterhouse)? First, see the link above: "The Man Behind the Lady."
9. Listen to Loreena McKennitt's musical adaptation of ["The Lady of Shalott"](#).

"Ulysses"

1. Tennyson is quoted as saying that "Ulysses" was "written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and gave my feeling about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in 'In Memoriam'" (*Memoir*, I, 196). To which section of "In Memoriam" is "Ulysses" most parallel?
2. Some critics argue that the poem is not wholly a dramatic monologue. Looking at it section by section (i.e., ll. 1–32; ll. 33–43, and ll. 44–70), which section is most clearly a dramatic monologue?

"Selected poems from In Memoriam A.H.H."

1. Download Gatty's *A Key to In Memoriam* as well as a searchable Project Gutenberg e-text of *In Memoriam*:
 - [A Key to Lord Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' by Alfred Gatty](#)
 - [In Memoriam](#)
2. In her excellent [notes on In Memoriam](#), Professor Florence Boos states, "According to Tennyson, the poem fell naturally into the following 10 sections, with 1–77; 78–103; and 104–131 forming the three main sections:

- Sections 1–8, ending with a sense of hope; 9–20, ending with a sense of hope; 21–27, ending with a sense of hope; 28–49, ending with a sense of despair; 50–58; 59–71; 72–98; 99–103; 104–131; Epilogue.
3. Find examples to support the following assertion. “Whereas the first Christmas (28–77) was marked overwhelmingly by grief, the second cycle (78–103) beginning with the second Christmas since Hallam's death, marks a turning point in the poem, as from here on the poet begins to move more steadily towards hope and consolation”. Compare sections 30 and 78, as well as 7 and 119, in particular.
 4. Look in a glossary of literary terms and then find examples of anaphora in Parts 11 and 101.
 5. The *Cambridge History of English Literature* (CHEL), (XIII, II, 3) states that Ben Jonson and Lord Herbert of Cherbury used the so-called “In Memoriam stanza” before Tennyson. Find one example of Jonson’s and Lord Herbert of Cherbury’s use of the “In Memoriam stanza.” See Edward Hirsch, *A Poet’s Glossary* (Google books). See also Hallam Tennyson, [Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir, I, 305](#) for Tennyson’s own discussion of what is now known as the “In Memoriam stanza.” Be sure to use quotes before and after your search terms when using the “search inside” box inside the *Memoir*.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861)

Selected poems from *Sonnets from the Portuguese*

XXI

Say over again, and yet once over again,
 That thou dost love me. Though the word repeated
 Should seem a "cuckoo-song,"²²² as thou dost treat it,
 Remember, never to the hill or plain,
 Valley and wood, without her cuckoo-strain
 Comes the fresh Spring in all her green completed.
 Beloved, I, amid the darkness greeted
 By a doubtful spirit-voice, in that doubt's pain
 Cry, "Speak once more—thou lovest!" Who can fear
 Too many stars, though each in heaven shall roll,
 Too many flowers, though each shall crown the year?
 Say thou dost love me, love me, love me—toll
 The silver iterance!—only minding, Dear,
 To love me also in silence with thy soul.

XXII

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
 Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,

222. Repetitious.

Until the lengthening wings break into fire
 At either curved point,—what bitter wrong
 Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
 Be here contented? Think! In mounting higher,
 The angels would press on us and aspire
 To drop some golden orb of perfect song
 Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
 Rather on earth, Beloved,—where the unfit
 Contrarious moods of men recoil away
 And isolate pure spirits, and permit
 A place to stand and love in for a day,
 With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

XXXII

The first time that the sun rose on thine oath
 To love me, I looked forward to the moon
 To slacken all those bonds which seemed too soon
 And quickly tied to make a lasting troth.
 Quick-loving hearts, I thought, may quickly loathe;
 And, looking on myself, I seemed not one
 For such man's love!—more like an out-of-tune
 Worn viol, a good singer would be wroth
 To spoil his song with, and which, snatched in haste,
 Is laid down at the first ill-sounding note.
 I did not wrong myself so, but I placed
 A wrong on thee. For perfect strains may float
 'Neath master-hands, from instruments defaced,—
 And great souls, at one stroke, may do and doat.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
 I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
 My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
 For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
 I love thee to the level of everyday's
 Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
 I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
 I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
 I love thee with the passion put to use
 In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
 With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
 Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
 I shall but love thee better after death.

Activities

1. Determine the rhyme scheme for each of these sonnets. To what type do the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* belong—the English or the Petrarchan form?
2. Log on to the Wikisource page for all 43 sonnets. Do any of the sonnets break from the standard rhyme scheme used in sonnets 21, 22, 32, and 43 above?
3. In terms of form, especially rhyme scheme, which English sonneteer does Barrett Browning most resemble: Sidney, Spenser, or Shakespeare? For Sidney, see [Astrophil and Stella](#), Sonnets 31, 52, 74. For Spenser, see any of the sonnets in [Amoretti](#). For Shakespeare, see [Sonnet 1](#).
4. Barrett Browning knew the poetry of John Donne very well. Do any of the above sonnets resemble Donne's "sonnets" in terms of style or imagery?
5. In a short essay, compare and contrast one sonnet by Browning and one by either Shakespeare, Sidney, or Spenser.

John Keats (1795–1821)

"On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"²²³

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,²²⁴
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
 Round many western islands have I been
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.²²⁵
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;²²⁶
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
 When a new planet swims into his ken²²⁷;
 Or like stout Cortez²²⁸ when with eagle eyes
 He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—

223. The Elizabethan poet George Chapman (1559 – 1634) translated the great epic poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, by the ancient Greek poet, Homer. Keats had not read Chapman's translation of Homer, until his old school friend, Charles Clarke, shared his copy which the two friends read together on evening in October, 1816. Keats was so enthralled with Chapman's translation, he wrote this sonnet the same night and gave Clarke a copy the following morning.

224. In other words, I have read a lot of wonderful poetry in my day.

225. I have read much of the work of western European poets, those bards who pay homage to Apollo, the god of poetry.

226. I often heard about the dominion, the "demesne," described by Homer,

227. Likely a reference to the discovery of the planet Uranus by William Herschel in 1781.

228. Hernan Cortes, Spanish explorer—though it was actually a different Spanish explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa, who was the first European explorer to see the Pacific Ocean from a peak in the Panama region of Darien.

Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

"La Belle Dame Sans Merci"²²⁹

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads²³⁰,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
'I love thee true'.

She took me to her Elfin grot²³¹,
And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;

229. French for the beautiful woman without mercy or pity. The 15th century French poet Alain Chartier wrote a poem with the same title though with different content.

230. The meadow.

231. Her home, her cave, her grotto.

They cried—‘La Belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall!’

I saw their starved lips in the gloam²³²,
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill’s side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

"To Autumn"

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spare the next swath and all its twined flowers: And sometimes like a gleaner²³³ thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows,²³⁴ borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft

232. Short for gloaming; the twilight, just after sunset or before sunrise, when the sky is in semi-darkness.

233. The farm worker who gathers any remains of a crop, after it has been harvested.

234. Willow trees.

The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Activities

"On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"

1. What is an extended metaphor and what metaphor does Keats use in "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"?
2. How do we know "Chapman's Homer" is a sonnet?
3. Describe a personal experience, similar to the one Keats describes in "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." Have you ever read a book or seen a film or had another experience you could describe as awe-inspiring and inspirational?

"La Belle Dame Sans Merci"

1. In what season is "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" set? How do we know? How is the setting significant?
2. What is the answer to the question which opens "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"?
3. How might you support an opinion that la belle dame sans merci symbolizes the poet's muse?

"To Autumn"

1. What qualities of Autumn does Keats stress in "To Autumn"?
2. How would you describe the tone, the voice of "To Autumn"?
3. How does Keats use personification to communicate his vision of autumn?
4. How does Keats' use of imagery help readers experience the sights and sounds of autumn?
5. How do we know "To Autumn" is an ode?
6. What is the effect of the last line of "To Autumn"?

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822)

"Ozymandias"²³⁵

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

235. The Greek name for the ancient Egyptian pharaoh, Ramesses II, who ruled Egypt from 1279–1213, B.C.E. He expanded the Egyptian empire into what is now Syria and Libya.

Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
 And on the pedestal, these words appear:
 My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
 Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

"Ode to the West Wind"

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
 Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
 The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
 Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
 With living hues and odours plain and hill:
 Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
 Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
 Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,
 Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
 On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head
 Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge
 Of the dying year, to which this closing night
 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,
Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be
The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe

Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!
 And, by the incantation of this verse,
 Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
 Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth
 The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Activities

"Ozymandias"

1. The story of "Ozymandias" is told not directly by the poet but by "a traveller from an antique land." How is this remote point-of-view significant to the theme of the poem?
2. Provide examples of and explain the significance of the dramatic irony and situational irony in "Ozymandias."
3. How does the poet's use of half rhyme and the unconventional sonnet rhyme scheme add to the meaning of "Ozymandias"?

"Ode to the West Wind"

1. What is the tone, the mood, the voice of "Ode to the West Wind"? Does the poet's mood change as the poem evolves? Quote from the poem to help explain your answer.
2. How and for what does Shelley use the west wind as a metaphor?
3. What effect does the west wind have on land? In the sky? In the ocean?
4. What does the poet want from the West Wind, in stanza 5?

George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824)

"She Walks in Beauty"

She²³⁶ walks in beauty, like the night
 Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
 And all that's best of dark and bright
 Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
 Thus mellowed to that tender light
 Which heaven to gaudy day denies. One shade the more, one ray the less,
 Had half impaired the nameless grace

236. Probably Byron's aristocratic distant cousin, Anne Horton (Lady Wilmot). He met her at a London party in June, 1814 and was struck by her beauty.

Which waves in every raven tress,
 Or softly lightens o'er her face;
 Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
 How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
 But tell of days in goodness spent,
 A mind at peace with all below,
 A heart whose love is innocent!

"So We'll Go No More A Roving"

So, we'll go no more a roving
 So late into the night,
 Though the heart be still as loving,
 And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
 And the soul wears out the breast,
 And the heart must pause to breathe,
 And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
 And the day returns too soon,
 Yet we'll go no more a roving
 By the light of the moon.

Activities

"She Walks in Beauty"

1. How does Byron's use of imagery and simile accentuate the beauty of the woman he describes in "She Walks in Beauty"?
2. What is the other quality the woman possesses that accentuates her beauty? How does this emphasis help establish the theme of the poem?

"So We'll Go No More A Roving"

1. Why does the poet, in "So We'll Go No More A Roving," resolve to spend less time partying?
2. Explain the metaphors Byron presents in the first two lines of the second stanza of "So We'll Go No More A Roving."
3. The rhythm pattern of "So We'll Go No More A Roving" is a combination of iambic and

anapestic. What is the effect of the poem's rhythm?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)

"Kubla Khan; Or, a vision in a dream. A Fragment."

In Xanadu²³⁷ did Kubla Khan²³⁸
 A stately pleasure-dome decree:
 Where Alph,²³⁹ the sacred river, ran
 Through caverns measureless to man
 Down to a sunless sea.
 So twice five miles of fertile ground
 With walls and towers were girdled round;
 And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,²⁴⁰
 Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
 And here were forests ancient as the hills,
 Enfolding sunny spots of greenery. But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
 Down the green hill athwart²⁴¹ a cedarn cover!
 A savage place! as holy and enchanted
 As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
 By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
 And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
 As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
 A mighty fountain momently was forced:
 Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
 Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
 Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
 And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
 It flung up momently the sacred river.
 Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
 Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
 Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
 And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;
 And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
 Ancestral voices prophesying war!
 The shadow of the dome of pleasure
 Floated midway on the waves;

237. A region in China, around what is now Beijing.

238. Thirteenth century Chinese emperor, grandson of Genghis Khan.

239. There is no Alph River in China, but Coleridge may be referring to the Alpheus River in Greece. It flows into the Ionian Sea. Legend has it that its waters rise again in fountains in Sicily, similar to the Alph fountain of line 20.

240. Curving streams.

241. Diagonally from corner to corner.

Where was heard the mingled measure
 From the fountain and the caves.
 It was a miracle of rare device,
 A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer²⁴²
 In a vision once I saw:
 It was an Abyssinian maid
 And on her dulcimer she played,
 Singing of Mount Abora.²⁴³
 Could I revive within me
 Her symphony and song,
 To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
 That with music loud and long,
 I would build that dome in air,
 That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
 And all who heard should see them there,
 And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
 His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
 Weave a circle round him thrice,
 And close your eyes with holy dread
 For he on honey-dew hath fed,
 And drunk the milk of Paradise.²⁴⁴

Activities

1. What is unusual about the gardens of Xanadu? Compare and contrast the gardens as they appear in the first and the second stanzas. What might the gardens symbolize. How might they act as a metaphor?
2. The Romantic poets believed in the power of the imagination to effect social change. How does this belief influence the theme of “Kubla Khan”? Is this an optimistic or a pessimistic poem? Compare this poem with Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind.”
3. How does the imagery in the poem help establish its tone?

242. Young woman playing a small stringed instrument. Likely representing the muse who inspires poetry, though she has deserted the poet at this point in the poem. According to a note Coleridge prefaced to this poem, he had taken some medicine—probably opium-based laudanum—and had fallen asleep, while reading a travel book, describing the magnificent gardens of Kubla Khan’s palace. The description in the book gave rise to a vivid dream, which he planned to transform into a long narrative poem about Kubla Khan’s reign. Upon awaking, he began to write the poem, the lines coming swiftly and easily to him. He was interrupted by a knock on his door, the visitor taking up an hour of his time on an unspecified matter of business. When he returned to his desk, he found his inspiration had vanished. Instead of the epic poem he had planned, “Kubla Khan” becomes a poem about the loss of poetic inspiration.
243. There is no Mount Abora, but the first draft of the poem read “Mount Amara,” which is in Ethiopia, known as Abyssinia in Coleridge’s time. Not clear why Coleridge changed the name.
244. The poet is frustrated that the muse has deserted him because the inspired artist is a force to be reckoned with, one who, having drunk the nectar of Eden, deserves to be worshipped.

4. What is the effect of the alliteration of line 26?
5. What is the verse form, the genre, the rhythm and the rhyme scheme of “Kubla Khan”? What is the effect of form and language and theme of the poem?

William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

"She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways"

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
 Beside the springs of Dove,²⁴⁵
 A Maid whom there were none to praise
 And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
 Half hidden from the eye!
 —Fair as a star, when only one
 Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
 When Lucy²⁴⁶ ceased to be;
 But she is in her grave, and, oh,
 The difference to me!

"The World Is Too Much with Us"

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—
 Little we see in Nature that is ours;
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon²⁴⁷!
 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
 It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;

245. There is a Dove River in England's Lake District, where Wordsworth famously lived.

246. Wordsworth wrote a series of poems—the “Lucy Poems”—about a beautiful young woman, who died young and unknown. Efforts have been made to identify a real-life counterpart, but they have not been successful.

247. An inappropriate gift.

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.²⁴⁸

Activities

"She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways"

1. Consider the form in which "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways" is written and the effect the form has on the poem's theme.
2. What is the nature of the poet's relationship with Lucy?

"The World Is Too Much with Us"

1. "The World is Too Much with Us" was written in the earliest years of the 19th century. How does it maintain its relevance today?
2. How is the rhyme scheme of "The World Is Too Much with Us" deviate from usually sonnet patterns?

William Blake (1757–1827)

"The Tyger"

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?
 In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?
 And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?
 What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!
 When the stars threw down their spears

248. Wordsworth suggests that in Pagan times people had more respect for nature. Proteus was a sea creature who could assume many shapes. Triton was a sea god who played a conch shell like a trumpet.

And water'd heaven with their tears:
 Did he smile his work to see?
 Did he who made the Lamb make thee?
 Tyger Tyger burning bright,
 In the forests of the night:
 What immortal hand or eye,
 Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

"London"

I wander thro' each charter'd²⁴⁹ street,
 Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
 And mark in every face I meet
 Marks of weakness, marks of woe.
 In every cry of every Man,
 In every Infants cry of fear,
 In every voice: in every ban,²⁵⁰
 The mind-forg'd manacles I hear
 How the Chimney-sweepers cry
 Every blackning Church appalls,²⁵¹
 And the hapless Soldiers sigh
 Runs in blood down Palace walls²⁵²
 But most thro' midnight streets I hear
 How the youthful Harlots curse
 Blasts the new-born Infants tear²⁵³
 And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.²⁵⁴

Activities

"The Tyger"

1. Is the tiger, as described by Blake, beautiful or ugly? Is it a product of heaven or of hell? Does it symbolize good or evil or something else?
2. What is the theme of the "The Tyger"?
3. How does the poem's trochaic rhythm complement the tiger's nature?

249. Mapped out in a way implying constriction, as if private property.

250. Rules suppressing human freedom.

251. Chimney sweeping epitomizes cruel child labour, to which the Church turns a blind eye.

252. The implication is that the rulers forge the mindless foreign policy which leads to the wars the common soldier pays for with his life.

253. Probably referring the blindness that can result when the harlot's venereal disease is passed on to her infant.

254. Prostitution destroys, kills marriages.

"London"

1. Why do the citizens of London, as Blake describes them, seem so downcast?
2. What do you think Blake means by “mind-forged manacles,” in line 8 of “London”?
3. Explain the metaphors Blake uses in the third stanza of “London.”
4. Blake describes the London of the late nineteenth century. How have the world’s largest cities changed since then, and how have they remained the same?

Richard Lovelace (1617–1657)**"To Lucasta, Going to the Wars"**

Tell me not (Sweet) I am unkind,
 That from the nunnery
 Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
 To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
 The first foe in the field;
 And with a stronger faith embrace
 A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
 As you too shall adore;
 I could not love thee (Dear) so much,
 Lov'd I not Honour more.

Activities

1. Who is Lucasta? How do you think she might have responded when she received this poem? Will she “adore” the poet’s “inconstancy”?
2. Identify examples of alliteration in the poem and explain why Lovelace uses alliteration.
3. This poem was written in the 17th century. Is its theme still relevant today? Support your answer.

Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672)

"To My Dear and Loving Husband"

If ever two were one, then surely we.
 If ever man were loved by wife, then thee.
 If ever wife was happy in a man,
 Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
 I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold,
 Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
 My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
 Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.
 Thy love is such I can no way repay;
 The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
 Then while we live, in love let's so persevere,
 That when we live no more, we may live ever.

Activities

1. The poem is written in rhyming couplets. How does the form support the theme?
2. What is hyperbole, and how is it used in this poem?
3. The poem was written in the 17th century. Is it old-fashioned? Would a spouse express such sentiments today?

John Milton (1608–1674)

"When I Consider How My Light Is Spent"

When I consider how my light is spent,
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,²⁵⁵
 And that one Talent which is death to hide
 Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest he returning chide²⁵⁶;
 "Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
 I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need

255. Milton gradually lost his eyesight, becoming completely blind by 1652, when he was 44.

256. He is worried that God will "chide," scold him for his inability to put his "Talent" as a poet to good use, though he would complete *Paradise Lost*, the great English language epic poem, after he lost his sight.

Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
 Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
 And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
 They also serve who only stand and wait."

Activities

1. What is the double meaning of "spent" in line 1?
2. How do we know "When I Consider How My Light Is Spent" is a Petrarchan sonnet?
3. How does Milton use personification in this sonnet?
4. What is the meaning of the last line, and how does the line inform the theme of the poem?

John Donne (1572–1631)

"The Sun Rising"

Busy old fool, unruly Sun,
 Why dost thou thus,
 Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?
 Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
 Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
 Late school-boys and sour prentices,²⁵⁷
 Go tell court-huntsmen that the king will ride,
 Call country ants to harvest offices;
 Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,
 Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams so reverend, and strong
 Why shouldst thou think²⁵⁸?
 I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
 But that I would not lose her sight so long.
 If her eyes have not blinded thine,
 Look, and to-morrow late tell me,
 Whether both th' Indias²⁵⁹ of spice and mine
 Be where thou left'st them, or lie here with me.
 Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
 And thou shalt hear, "All here in one bed lay."

She's all states, and all princes I;

257. Apprentice workers angry ("sour") about getting to work so early.

258. i.e. why do you think your beams are so strong, when all I have to do is close my eyes to blot them out?

259. The West Indies were associated with mineral wealth (gold), and India or the East Indies, with spices.

Nothing else is;
 Princes do but play us; compared to this,
 All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
 Thou, Sun, art half as happy as we,
 In that the world's contracted thus;
 Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
 To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
 Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
 This bed thy center is, these walls thy sphere.

"The Indifferent"

I can love both fair and brown;
 Her whom abundance melts, and her whom want betrays;
 Her who loves loneliness best, and her who masks and plays;
 Her whom the country form'd, and whom the town;
 Her who believes, and her who tries;
 Her who still weeps with spongy eyes,
 And her who is dry cork, and never cries.
 I can love her, and her, and you, and you;
 I can love any, so she be not true.
 Will no other vice content you?
 Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
 Or have you all old vices spent, and now would find out others?
 Or doth a fear that men are true torment you?
 O we are not, be not you so;
 Let me—and do you—twenty know;
 Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
 Must I, who came to travail through you,
 Grow your fix'd subject, because you are true?
 Venus heard me sigh this song;
 And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore,
 She heard not this till now; and that it should be so no more.
 She went, examined, and return'd ere long,
 And said, "Alas! some two or three
 Poor heretics in love there be,
 Which think to stablish dangerous constancy.
 But I have told them, 'Since you will be true,
 You shall be true to them who're false to you.'"

"The Apparition"

WHEN by thy scorn, O murd'ress, I am dead,
 And that thou thinkst thee free
 From all solicitation from me,
 Then shall my ghost come to thy bed,

And thee, feign'd vestal,²⁶⁰ in worse arms shall see:
 Then thy sick taper will begin to wink,
 And he, whose thou art then, being tired before,
 Will, if thou stir, or pinch to wake him, think
 Thou call'st for more,
 And, in false sleep, will from thee shrink:
 And then, poor aspen wretch, neglected thou
 Bathed in a cold quicksilver²⁶¹ sweat wilt lie,
 A verier ghost than I.
 What I will say, I will not tell thee now,
 Lest that preserve thee; and since my love is spent,
 I'd rather thou shouldst painfully repent,
 Than by my threatenings rest still innocent.

"Break of Day"

'Tis true, 'tis day; what though it be?
 O, wilt thou therefore rise from me?
 Why should we rise because 'tis light?
 Did we lie down because 'twas night?
 Love, which in spite of darkness brought us hither,
 Should in despite of light keep us together.
 Light hath no tongue, but is all eye;
 If it could speak as well as spy,
 This were the worst that it could say,
 That being well I fain would stay,
 And that I loved my heart and honour so
 That I would not from him, that had them, go.
 Must business thee from hence remove?
 O! that's the worst disease of love,
 The poor, the foul, the false, love can
 Admit, but not the busied man.
 He which hath business, and makes love, doth do
 Such wrong, as when a married man doth woo.

"Love's Alchemy"

Some that have deeper digg'd love's mine than I,
 Say, where his centric happiness doth lie.
 I have loved, and got, and told,
 But should I love, get, tell, till I were old,
 I should not find that hidden mystery.
 O! 'tis imposture all;

260. Pretending to be a virgin.

261. A treatment for sexually transmitted disease.

And as no chemic²⁶² yet th' elixir²⁶³ got,
 But glorifies his pregnant pot,
 If by the way to him befall
 Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,
 So, lovers dream a rich and long delight,
 But get a winter-seeming summer's night²⁶⁴.
 Our ease, our thrift, our honour, and our day,
 Shall we for this vain bubble's shadow pay?
 Ends love in this, that my man²⁶⁵
 Can be as happy as I can, if he can
 Endure the short scorn of a bridegroom's play?
 That loving wretch that swears,
 'Tis not the bodies marry, but the minds,
 Which he in her angelic finds,
 Would swear as justly, that he hears,
 In that day's rude hoarse minstrelsy, the spheres²⁶⁶.
 Hope not for mind in women; at their best,
 Sweetness and wit they are, but mummy²⁶⁷, possess'd.

"The Flea"

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
 How little that which thou deniest me is;
 It suck'd me first, and now sucks thee,
 And in this flea our two bloods mingled be.
 Thou know'st that this cannot be said
 A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead;
 Yet this enjoys before it woo,
 And pamper'd swells with one blood made of two;
 And this, alas! is more than we would do.
 O stay,²⁶⁸ three lives in one flea spare,
 Where we almost, yea, more than married are.
 This flea is you and I, and this
 Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is.
 Though parents grudge, and you, we're met,
 And cloister'd in these living walls of jet²⁶⁹.
 Though use make you apt to kill me,

262. Alchemist.

263. The alchemists held that the elixir prolonged life indefinitely and that it could change ordinary metals into gold.

264. A cold, short night.

265. Manservant.

266. Pythagoras theorized that the planets made harmonious sounds in their motions.

267. Body without mind. Paste or wax. See Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* Bk. 4, 12, hypothetical warfaring horses, "battering the warriors' faces into mummy."

268. The young woman threatens to kill the flea.

269. Black, as in "jet black."

Let not to that self-murder added be,
 And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.
 Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
 Purpled thy nail in blood of innocence²⁷⁰?
 Wherein could this flea guilty be,
 Except in that drop which it suck'd from thee?
 Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
 Find'st not thyself nor me the weaker now.
 'Tis true; then learn how false fears be;
 Just so much honour, when thou yield'st to me,
 Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
 And whisper to their souls to go,
 Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
 "Now his breath goes," and some say, "No."
 So let us melt, and make no noise,
 No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
 'Twere profanation of our joys
 To tell the laity our love.
 Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears;
 Men reckon what it did, and meant;
 But trepidation of the spheres,
 Though greater far, is innocent.²⁷¹
 Dull sublunary²⁷² lovers' love
 —Whose soul is sense—cannot admit
 Of absence, 'cause it doth remove
 The thing which elemented it.
 But we by a love so much refined,
 That ourselves know not what it is,
 Inter-assurèd of the mind,
 Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss.
 Our two souls therefore, which are one,
 Though I must go, endure not yet
 A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to aery thinness beat.
 If they be two, they are two so
 As stiff twin compasses are two;
 Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
 To move, but doth, if th' other do.

270. She kills the flea by scraping it with her nail against her skin.

271. We feel an earthquake but not tremors that occur in outer space.

272. A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning. In the Ptolemaic depiction of the universe, the concentric sphere below the moon was considered less perfect and more time-bound than the spheres above the moon and furthest from the earth.

And though it in the centre sit,
 Yet, when the other far doth roam,
 It leans, and hearkens after it,
 And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
 Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
 Thy firmness makes my circle just
 And makes me end where I begun.

"Holy Sonnet 10"

Death be not proud, though some have callèd thee
 Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so,
 For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
 Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
 From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures bee,
 Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,²⁷³
 And soonest our best men with thee do go,
 Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
 Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
 And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
 And poppy, or charmes can make us sleep as well,
 And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then;
 One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
 And death shall be no more, death, thou shalt die.

"Holy Sonnet 14"

Batter my heart, three-person'd God; for you
 As yet but knock; breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
 That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
 Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
 I, like an usurp'd town, to another due,
 Labour to admit you, but O, to no end.
 Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
 But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
 Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,
 But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
 Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,
 Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
 Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
 Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

273. Since we take pleasure in rest and sleep, we must take even more pleasure in death.

Activities

"The Sun Rising"

1. What is the meaning of "busy" in line 1?
2. Give the dramatic situation; i.e., the setting and the speaker.
3. If you were filming this poem, how many actors and what props would you need?
4. Paraphrase lines 11–14.
5. What is the meaning of "reverend"?
6. How does the speaker's tone change in the last stanza?

"The Indifferent"

1. Define "indifferent"
2. What is the one kind of woman the speaker cannot love? See line 9.
3. Explain the paradox in the use of the word "vice" in line 10.
4. Clarify who is meant by "you" in line 10.
5. Explain the shift in dramatic situation beginning in line 19.
6. Who was Venus?
7. Identify the speaker in lines 23–29.

"The Apparition"

1. Define "apparition."
2. List at least two Petrarchan conventions in this poem. Name one that is used straightforwardly, another which is parodied.
3. What is the dramatic situation at the beginning of the poem? If you were filming a dramatization of the poem, how many actors would you need? What props would be essential?
4. What is a taper and why would her taper "wink"?
5. What dramatic movement do you see in the poem?
6. How is the conflict resolved?
7. What does "preserve" mean (l. 15)?
8. What does "still" mean in the last line?

"Break of Day"

1. Show how this poem is a good example of an aubade.

2. What is the probable gender of the speaker?
3. What quality does the speaker insist is incompatible with being a lover?

"Love's Alchemy"

1. The title can be read as "the alchemy of love", but also "Love is alchemy". If the latter, what does the title suggest about the nature of love?
2. What does the speaker suggest about his man servant in lines 15–17?
3. What is the speaker's opinion about platonic, spiritual love?
4. Look up the word "charivari". What kind of "music" was associated with a wedding day charivari?

"The Flea"

1. Who is the speaker and his audience?
2. What is the best way to kill a flea by hand?
3. Look up the word "jet" in a good college dictionary. Why do you suppose jet is used in the phrase "jet-black"?
4. What is the fate of the flea?
5. Why does the speaker ask the lady to spare the flea?
6. How does the speaker use the lady's killing of the flea to his advantage?

"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"

1. What is a valediction? Look up this word and find its etymology. What is the purpose of the valedictorian's address at a high school graduation?
2. As with "The Sun Rising", if you were directing a film adaptation of this poem, how many actors and props would you need?
3. Why would a virtuous man die "mildly"? What might "mildly" mean here?
4. Who is speaking in this poem, and to whom is he speaking?
5. Define "laity" and "profanation". Both are terms associated with religion. Is Donne suggesting a "religion" of love here? If so, explain.
6. The title of the poem suggests that the poem might be discussing death as its main subject. Is this the case? If not, what is the main subject of the poem?
7. What property of gold does the poet highlight in line 24?
8. What kind of compass is described in the famous metaphor of stanza 7: a navigational or a geometrical one?

"Holy Sonnet 10"

1. Donne's sonnets follow the Petrarchan pattern distinguished by its octave (first 8 lines) and its sestet (last 6 lines rhyming cde cde or variation). Analyze Donne's Holy Sonnets according to the following description of this twofold division: "The octave bears the burden: a doubt, a problem, a reflection, a query, a historical statement, a cry of indignation or desire, a vision of the ideal. The sestet eases the load, resolves the problem or doubt, answers the query, solaces the yearning, realizes the vision." Quoted in Holman and Harmon, *Handbook to Literature*, 6th ed., p. 449.
2. Does the octave in this sonnet serve one of the functions listed above by Holman and Harmon?
3. Explain the personification in this poem.
4. In what way is Death a slave?
5. Cite one example of paradox in this poem.
6. Why does Donne use the second person singular form of the pronoun (thee, thou) rather than "you"?
7. Is this an Elizabethan or a Petrarchan sonnet?
8. What is the poem's rhyme scheme?

"Holy Sonnet 14"

1. Define paradox, and then give two examples in this poem.
2. Explain the simile "like an usurped town".
3. What is meant by "three-personed god"?
4. What is a viceroy? Why does Donne call "reason" god's viceroy?
5. Who is "You" in line 9?
6. Define "fain", then provide a more modern word.
7. In line 14, what does "except" mean? Substitute a word that you think would be clearer.

Activities

1. In an extended definition essay of around 600 words, show how Donne's poem "Love's Alchemy" (or another Donne poem) is a good example of a metaphysical poem. Be sure to jot down several characteristics of metaphysical poetry. See the following definition:
 - When it was first applied to Donne and his imitators by the poet John Dryden in dubbing them the "Metaphysical school", it meant intellectual poetry, poetry characterized by WIT. Metaphysical wit means the combining of dissimilar images in which the poet brings together things normally remote. The two prime characteristics of metaphysical poetry are LEARNING and SUBTLETY. In addition, the verse is marked by FRANKNESS, REALISM, and a deliberate SHOCK effect. DISCORD is evident in the deliberate harshness in tone and diction and in the distortion of rhythm. There is a fondness for PROSAIC DICTION; the diction is blunt, matter-of-fact, explosive. The poetry reveals a POWERFUL DRAMATIC AND VISUAL SENSE.

There is a SCIENTIFIC PREOCCUPATION evident; the poet draws for his imagery on geography, alchemy, navigation, and medicine. The poets SEARCH FOR NOVELTY; they avoid the stock conceit and search for freshness and surprising originality. Finally, there is a SPECIAL KIND OF ATTITUDE TOWARD LOVE AND DEATH. Love is often turned into religion, but Donne regards love as all-consuming and emphasizes the tyrannical demands of love, both physical and spiritual.

....We are always aware of the speaking voice in the poem, a feature which makes many of Donne's poems approach the Dramatic Monologue in form. The conversational diction, the shifting tones, the tangled, tortuous, sinewy development of the thought all combine to produce an intensely dramatic and realistic situation as though we are the onlookers to the workings of the human mind. (*Renaissance Prose and Poetry*, John Stumpf, Toronto: Forum, 1969.)

2. Contrast Donne's "The Apparition" with Spenser's "Men Call You Fair" paying particular attention to how Petrarchan love conventions are followed or parodied.

- Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) from *Amoretti* Sonnet 79

Men call you fair, and you do credit it,
 For that yourself ye daily such do see:
 But the true fair, that is the gentle wit,
 And vertuous mind, is much more prais'd of me.
 For all the rest, however fair it be, 5
 Shall turn to naught and lose that glorious hue:
 But only that is permanent and free
 From frail corruption, that doth flesh ensue.
 That is true beauty: that doth argue you
 To be divine, and born of heavenly seed: 10
 Deriv'd from that fair Spirit, from whom all true
 And perfect beauty did at first proceed.
 He only fair, and what he fair hath made,
 All other fair, like flowers untimely fade.

3. For a good overview of Donne, look at these excellent public domain Creative Commons websites at the British Library:

- [John Donne and metaphysical poetry](#)
- [A close reading of 'The Flea'](#)
- [Love poetry in Renaissance England](#)

4. According to one critic, Donne capitalizes on "the witty depravity, the entirely unidealized and unspiritualized sensuality, of Ovid, . . ." J.B. Leishman, *The Monarch of Wit*, 149). Compare Ovid's *Amores II.IV* (2.4) and "The Indifferent". Have a look at [J. Lewis May's 1930 English translation of Ovid's Love Books](#), particularly the *Amores*, 2.4. How do you think Donne used it as a source for "The Indifferent"? Also, perhaps [Ovid's Amores I: XIII](#) (1.13) can be seen as a rough source for Donne's "The Sun Rising".

Feature Unit: The Sonnets of William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

The Sonnets of William Shakespeare

Introduction

William Shakespeare began to write his famous collection of sonnets, in the early 1590's, when he was in his late 20's.

He was mainly a playwright, of course, but outbreaks of a horrific and highly contagious disease, known as the bubonic plague, occasionally forced the theatres to close, and it may have been one such epidemic which forced Shakespeare to take a reprieve from play writing and turn to poetry instead. There was also a vogue for sonnet writing, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, another reason which likely motivated him. And he had found the love interest upon which a sonnet collection will focus.

The sonnets tell a story of a young writer who forms a deep friendship with a young man, apparently of noble birth. The poet praises his dear friend's beauty and intelligence, and urges him, possibly at instigation of his friend's mother, to marry and raise a family. Such rare beauty and intelligence must be passed along; you owe it to the world, the poet argues.

As time goes by, the poet seems to realize that his advice is misplaced because a wife and family would threaten the amount of time his friend could spend with him. He turns his attention away from recommendations his friend marry and raise a family and more towards expressions of praise for his friend's beauty, grace, intelligence, generosity, and charm. He resolves to immortalize his friends' many virtues, a resolution he certainly fulfilled.

But paradise always has its troubles, and trouble comes in the form of a rival poet who turns the friend's head and secures the patronage Shakespeare now must share. Suddenly Shakespeare is worried about his place in his friend's universe, and he pours out his anguish and insecurity, convinced of his own inferiority in this new chapter in the story.

The influence of the rival poet fades and passes, but another crisis arises. The poet has fallen for a beautiful dark-haired woman, and expresses his love, and, more so, his desire for her. He is insecure in this relationship. The Dark Lady is something of a free spirit. He suspects that his dear friend and his Dark Lady are cheating on him. He is devastated.

The crisis is not resolved. The story ends inconclusively, the poet unable to resist the Dark Lady's charms, even while he suspects her of infidelity.

The real-life identities of the characters in the Sonnets, are the great mystery of English literary history. Who is the handsome noble friend? There are intriguing clues. When the Sonnets were published in 1609, possibly without the poet's permission. The title page announced "the only begetter" of the sonnets as one W.H. Scholars who define begetter as author believe the printer simply mistook the H for an S or omitted the S before the H, which would have established the "begetter" clearly as W. SH.

Scholars who define begetter as muse suggest the W.H. refers to the handsome young nobleman, who inspired the poems. Shakespeare knew well two such men. Both were generous patrons of poets and playwrights. One was Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton; the other was William Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke. Southampton's age and physical appearance match the contents of some of the sonnets, but his initials are reversed on the title page, possibly by error, possibly as an attempt to conceal his true identity.

Pembroke's initials are correct, but he was only twelve when the sonnets were written, inappropriately young to be the muse of a thirty-year old man. The debate continues, with other even less likely identities suggested, but it will probably never be resolved.

Nor can the identity of the other major characters in the story be established with any certainty. The rival poet may be one of Shakespeare's contemporaries: Christopher Marlow or George Chapman or Samuel Daniel. The Dark Lady may be Amelia Lanier, the daughter of Queen Elizabeth's musical director, though this recent [essay on Lanier](#) leads away from the thesis that she was the origin of Shakespeare's Dark Lady.

All of the main characters may be fictitious, products of Shakespeare's magnificent imagination. In the end, it makes little difference to the integrity of Shakespeare's sonnet sequence, one of the crowning achievements of English literature.

Sonnets

Sonnet 3

Look in thy glass,²⁷⁴ and tell the face thou viewest
 Now is the time that face should form another;²⁷⁵
 Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
 Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother,²⁷⁶
 For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb
 Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?²⁷⁷
 Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
 Of his self-love, to stop posterity?²⁷⁸
 Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
 Calls back the lovely April of her prime:²⁷⁹
 So thou through windows of thine age shall see
 Despite of wrinkles this thy golden time.²⁸⁰
 But if thou live, remember'd not to be,
 Die single, and thine image dies with thee.²⁸¹

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;

274. Your mirror.

275. You should have a child to replicate your good looks.

276. You deny the world and the mother of your child the pleasure of adding another beautiful person to the population, if you do not renew yourself.

277. Any woman would be happy to bear your child.

278. Don't be so vain as to think physical beauty ends when you end.

279. Your mother was very beautiful, and you have inherited her beauty. She sees this when she looks at you. Details like these in lines 8 and 9 lead many Shakespeare critics, scholars, and biographers to believe that the sonnets are autobiographical, that Shakespeare did have a handsome friend, and that the sonnets chronicle the course of their friendship. Opinion about the true identity is divided, though most experts believe the handsome friend is either Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, or William Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke. Both men had mothers known for their beauty.

Pembroke's mother was the sister of Philip Sidney, the author of another famous sonnet sequence.

280. You want to be able to look at your child and remember your own beauty, which will fade as you age.

281. If you want to deny yourself this form immortality, don't marry and have children.

And every fair from fair sometime declines,²⁸²
 By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;²⁸³
 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines²⁸⁴ to time thou grow'st;
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Sonnet 20

A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted
 Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;
 A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
 With shifting change²⁸⁵, as is false women's fashion;
 An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
 Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
 A man in hue²⁸⁶, all 'hues' in his controlling,
 Much steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
 And for a woman wert thou first created;
 Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,
 And by addition me of thee defeated,
 By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
 But since she prick'd²⁸⁷ thee out for women's pleasure,
 Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure.

Sonnet 29

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless²⁸⁸ cries,
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
 Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
 Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
 Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
 For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

282. Everything that is beautiful—"fair"—declines with time.

283. That beauty you own.

284. The wrinkles on your face; also the lines of this sonnet.

285. Sonnet 20. Trending, according to the latest fashion.

286. Appearance.

287. Obvious sexual pun.

288. Useless. Heaven does not answer the poet's prayers for a happier, more fulfilled life.

Sonnet 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruin'd choirs²⁸⁹, where late the sweet birds²⁹⁰ sang.
 In me thou seest the twilight of such day
 As after sunset fadeth in the west,
 Which by and by black night doth take away,
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
 As the death-bed whereon it must expire
 Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by²⁹¹.
 This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

Sonnet 80

O, how I faint when I of you do write,
 Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
 And in the praise thereof spends all his might,
 To make me tongue-tied, speaking of your fame!²⁹²
 But since your worth, wide as the ocean is,
 The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
 My saucy bark inferior far to his
 On your broad main doth wilfully appear.²⁹³
 Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
 Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride;²⁹⁴
 Or being wreck'd, I am a worthless boat,
 He of tall building and of goodly pride:²⁹⁵
 Then if he thrive and I be cast away,
 The worst was this; my love was my decay.²⁹⁶

Sonnet 97

How like a winter hath my absence been

289. Sonnet 73. The area in the church where the choir sang.

290. Choir members.

291. The image is that of a burnt-out fire-log.

292. The poet is jealous because his special friend has befriended another poet, one better, he thinks, than he is. The other poet's genius makes Shakespeare tongue-tied. The identity of this other poet, known as the Rival Poet, is also the subject of endless speculation among Shakespeare biographers, critics, and scholars. Contenders include Christopher Marlowe and Samuel Daniel.

293. Still my smaller boat—"bark"—continues to sail on the ocean of your love.

294. I don't ask for much—just a bit of help to keep me afloat. Both the Earl of Southampton and the Earl of Pembroke—assuming one of these two is the dear friend Shakespeare writes about in his sonnets—were patrons of poets and playwrights: they would provide some financial support so writers had the time they need to work.

295. If I am shipwrecked—if your patronage ends—I will be worthless, while the "tall building" of the Rival Poet's ship sails on, proud of his victory over me.

296. The irony is that my love for you has caused my feelings of worthlessness.

From thee,²⁹⁷ the pleasure of the fleeting year!
 What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
 What old December's bareness every where!
 And yet this time remov'd was summer's time,
 The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
 Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
 Like widow'd wombs after their lord's decease:²⁹⁸
 Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
 But hope of orphans and unfather'd fruit;²⁹⁹
 For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
 And, thou away, the very birds are mute;
 Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
 That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments³⁰⁰. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove:
 O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
 It is the star to every wandering bark³⁰¹,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come:
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom³⁰².
 If this be error and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Sonnet 129

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame³⁰³
 Is lust in action; and till action, lust
 Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
 Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,
 Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
 Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
 Mad in pursuit and in possession so;

297. The Earl of Southampton was imprisoned in 1601 for his support of the Essex Rebellion against Queen Elizabeth I. Some Shakespeare biographers cite this fact as evidence that the special friend is Henry Wriothesley.

298. As if a widow had become pregnant after her husband had died. The poet stresses his point that richness of autumn is muted because his friend is away.

299. He reiterates the point of lines 7–8. Autumn is the season of abundance but it is diminished for the poet because his friend is not around.

300. Sonnet 116. Obstacles. See Study Questions.

301. Small boat.

302. Judgement Day.

303. Sonnet 129. Sexual puns: spirit (semen). Waste (desert, but also waist.)

Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
 A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
 Before, a joy proposed; behind³⁰⁴, a dream.
 All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

Sonnet 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
 I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
 And in some perfumes is there more delight
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
 I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
 That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
 I grant I never saw a goddess go;
 My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
 And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
 As any she belied with false compare.

Sonnet 138

When my love swears that she³⁰⁵ is made of truth
 I do believe her, though I know she lies,
 That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
 Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.³⁰⁶
 Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,³⁰⁷
 Although she knows my days are past the best,
 Simply I credit her false speaking tongue:
 On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd.
 But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
 And wherefore say not I that I am old?
 O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
 And age in love loves not to have years told:
 Therefore I lie³⁰⁸ with her and she with me,
 And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

Sonnet 144

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,

304. Afterwards.

305. The final major character of Shakespeare's sonnet sequence is a Dark Lady, with whom the poet falls in love, or, perhaps more accurately, in lust. (See Sonnet 129, easily accessible online). Predictably, biographers have speculated industriously on the identity of the Dark Lady, but proof of her identity remains elusive. The poet suspects the Dark Lady and his nobleman friend are in a clandestine relationship. (See Sonnet 144). The poet confronts her; she denies it; and he pretends to believe her.

306. He pretends to believe her because he wants her to think he has the naivety of youth.

307. Shakespeare was probably in his late 20's, early 30's, when he wrote his sonnets.

308. We tell each other lies and continue to lie, that is, to sleep, together.

Which like two spirits do suggest³⁰⁹ me still:
 The better angel is a man right fair,
 The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.
 To win me soon to hell, my female evil
 Tempteth my better angel from my side,
 And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
 Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
 And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend
 Suspect I may, but not directly tell;
 But being both from me³¹⁰, both to each friend,
 I guess one angel in another's hell:
 Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
 Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

Sonnet 146

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
 [Thrall to]³¹¹ these rebel powers that thee array;
 Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
 Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
 Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
 Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
 Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
 Eat up thy charge? is this thy body's end?
 Then soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
 And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
 Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
 Within be fed, without be rich no more:
 So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
 And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

Activities

1. Why does the poet urge his friend to marry and have children in Sonnet 3? What is a modern synonym for “glass”? What is meant by the verb “beguile”? What is the theme of this poem?
2. How does the poet support his view expressed in Sonnet 18 that his friend’s beauty is superior even to the beauty of nature? What, according to the poet, will make the person addressed (“thee”) live on, even after death? Define “temperate” and “temperance”. In what ways is the beloved more temperate than a summer’s day? Which meaning of the transitive verb “untrim” listed in the Oxford English Dictionary seems most apt in line 8: a. to deprive of trimness or elegance, to strip of ornament or b. to unbalance. Give an example of personification in the poem. What is the rhyme scheme?
3. What is the gender of the person praised in Sonnet 20? What is the vice the speaker’s “master mistress” does not share with the “false women” of lines 4 and 5? How does the speaker

309. Sonnet 144. Seek to influence. “Still” Always.

310. Away from me.

311. Sonnet 146. The edition of 1609 incorrectly repeats the last three words of line 1. “Thrall to”, as well as “Starved by” are among several guesses by scholars as to the original words. A thrall is a slave or captive, hence the word “enthralled”: “to hold in slavery” but also “to hold spellbound”.

- personify Nature? Paraphrase lines 11 and 12; 13 and 14.
4. Why is the poet depressed in Sonnet 29, and how does he overcome his depression? How would he like to change his life? Why is such change not necessary?
 5. How old was Shakespeare when Sonnet 73 was published in 1609? Of course, it is possible that he wrote it before that year, since at least two (138 and 144) were published in 1599 in “The Passionate Pilgrim”, an anthology of some 20 poems. How many sentences make up this poem? What are the four main similes? Where does the variation from the iambic foot come in line 4, line 8, 13? Give a few examples of assonance (repetition of vowel sounds) in the first five lines. What is the effect of alliteration in line 7?
 6. What does the poet mean when he writes, at the end of Sonnet 80, “my love was my decay”? Who might the rival poet of line 2 be? See this [article on the Rival Poet](#). “Speaking of your fame” Who might the poet be referring to here? Which meaning in line 14 seems most apt, “my beloved” or, “the love I feel for you”?
 7. How does the use of irony, in Sonnet 97, underscore the theme of the poem? Explain the metaphor around which this sonnet is built.
 8. For the context of the first two lines of Sonnet 116, see the [Anglican Book of Common Prayer](#). How does the speaker define love? How is time personified? Paraphrase line 3. Define “bark” in line 7. Which star is suggested in line 7? Is each line written in iambic pentameter? Which are not? In each of the three quatrains, state the main idea about love.
 9. What is a cliché, and how does the use of cliché in Sonnet 130 help establish the theme of the poem? Give some examples to demonstrate that this is an anti-Petrarchan poem. What does the word “reeks” mean here? Is the poet suggesting that his lady has bad breath? Paraphrase the last two lines, paying special attention to the meaning of “rare”, “she”, and “belied.” Is the word “she” in line 14 being used as a pronoun? If not, what part of speech is being used here?
 10. Assess the health of the relationship between the poet and the Dark Lady, based upon the content of Sonnet 138. Why does the poet believe “her,” when “he knows she lies”? Why does she believe him? What is the theme of this sonnet?
 11. Paraphrase the first line of Sonnet 144. Look up the term “psychomachia” in a good college dictionary. Then show how this poem is a kind of “psychomachia”. Look up Prudentius, a Christian Latin poet, whose poem “Psychomachia” was written in the 5th century. What does “still” mean in this instance (line 2)? “Suggest”? Paraphrase lines 11 and 12. What suspicion troubles the speaker? Look up the term “hell” in Eric Partridge’s reference book Shakespeare’s Bawdy, then paraphrase the last line.
 12. Does line 1 of Sonnet 146 use imagery that suggests astronomy, or does “earth” suggest “body”? What are the powers that rebel against the soul? What does “array” mean? Note it sometimes has a military sense. See O.E.D., “To set or place in order of readiness, to marshal. esp. To draw up prepared for battle, and in obsolete phr. to array a battle. List some of the real estate metaphors. Is the verb “aggravate” being used in the sense of “annoy”? Look up this verb in a good college dictionary.
 13. You might enjoy looking at the [historical documents in the unit on Shakespeare’s sonnets from the British Library](#).

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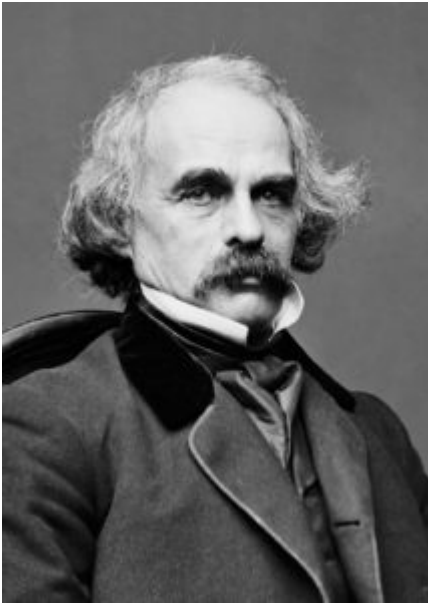
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IV

Short Stories

26.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864)



Biography

Nathaniel Hawthorne was an American novelist and short story writer. He was born in 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts. His ancestors include John Hathorne, the only judge involved in the Salem witch trials who never repented of his actions. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825. He worked at the Boston Custom House and joined Brook Farm, a transcendentalist community, before marrying Sophia Peabody in 1842.

Much of Hawthorne's writing centres on New England, with many of his works featuring moral metaphors with an anti-Puritan inspiration. His themes often centre on the inherent evil and sin of humanity, and his works often have moral messages and deep psychological complexity. Hawthorne's works belong to Romanticism or, more specifically, Dark Romanticism, cautionary tales that suggest that guilt, sin, and evil are the most inherent natural qualities of humanity. Many of his works are inspired by Puritan New England, combining historical romance loaded with symbolism and deep psychological themes, bordering on surrealism. His depictions of the past are a version of historical fiction used only as a vehicle to express common themes of ancestral sin, guilt, and retribution. His later writings also reflect his negative view of the transcendentalism movement.

Hawthorne was predominantly a short story writer in his early career. Upon publishing the collection *Twice-Told Tales*, however, he noted, "I do not think much of them," and he expected little response from the public. His four major novels were written between 1850 and 1860: *The Scarlet*

Letter (1850), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), and *The Marble Faun: Or, The Romance of Monte Beni* (1860).

Hawthorne died on May 19, 1864, and was survived by his wife and their three children.

Young Goodman Brown

Published in 1835

Young Goodman Brown came forth at sunset into the street at Salem village; but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown.

“Dearest heart,” whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, “prithee put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed to-night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she’s afraid of herself sometimes. Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year.”

“My love and my Faith,” replied young Goodman Brown, “of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done ‘twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?”

“Then God bless you!” said Faith, with the pink ribbons; “and may you find all well when you come back.”

“Amen!” cried Goodman Brown. “Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee.”

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meeting-house, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

“Poor little Faith!” thought he, for his heart smote him. “What a wretch am I to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done tonight. But no, no; ‘t would kill her to think it. Well, she’s a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night I’ll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven.”

With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude.

“There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree,” said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, “What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!”

His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose at Goodman Brown’s approach and walked onward side by side with him.

“You are late, Goodman Brown,” said he. “The clock of the Old South was striking as I came through Boston, and that is full fifteen minutes ago.”

“Faith kept me back a while,” replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected.

It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveller was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in

expression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who would not have felt abashed at the governor's dinner table or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light.

"Come, Goodman Brown," cried his fellow-traveller, "this is a dull pace for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary."

"Friend," said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, "having kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples touching the matter thou wot'st of."

"Sayest thou so?" replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. "Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I convince thee not thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet."

"Too far! too far!" exclaimed the goodman, unconsciously resuming his walk. "My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs; and shall I be the first of the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept—"

"Such company, thou wouldst say," observed the elder person, interpreting his pause. "Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain be friends with you for their sake."

"If it be as thou sayest," replied Goodman Brown, "I marvel they never spoke of these matters; or, verily, I marvel not, seeing that the least rumor of the sort would have driven them from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness."

"Wickedness or not," said the traveller with the twisted staff, "I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of divers towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too—But these are state secrets."

"Can this be so?" cried Goodman Brown, with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. "Howbeit, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with thee, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble both Sabbath day and lecture day."

Thus far the elder traveller had listened with due gravity; but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snake-like staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted he again and again; then composing himself, "Well, go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but, prithee, don't kill me with laughing."

"Well, then, to end the matter at once," said Goodman Brown, considerably nettled, "there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I'd rather break my own."

"Nay, if that be the case," answered the other, "e'en go thy ways, Goodman Brown. I would not for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us that Faith should come to any harm."

As he spoke he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown

recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

“A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse should be so far in the wilderness at nightfall,” said he. “But with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behind. Being a stranger to you, she might ask whom I was consorting with and whither I was going.”

“Be it so,” said his fellow-traveller. “Betake you to the woods, and let me keep the path.”

Accordingly the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road until he had come within a staff’s length of the old dame. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so aged a woman, and mumbling some indistinct words—a prayer, doubtless—as she went. The traveller put forth his staff and touched her withered neck with what seemed the serpent’s tail.

“The devil!” screamed the pious old lady.

“Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?” observed the traveller, confronting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

“Ah, forsooth, and is it your worship indeed?” cried the good dame. “Yea, truly is it, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But—would your worship believe it?—my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unhangd witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolf’s bane.”

“Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe,” said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

“Ah, your worship knows the recipe,” cried the old lady, cackling aloud. “So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me there is a nice young man to be taken into communion to-night. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling.”

“That can hardly be,” answered her friend. “I may not spare you my arm, Goody Cloyse; but here is my staff, if you will.”

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magi. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and, looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveller alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

“That old woman taught me my catechism,” said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveller exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week’s sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat himself down on the stump of a tree and refused to go any farther.

“Friend,” said he, stubbornly, “my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven: is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?”

“You will think better of this by and by,” said his acquaintance, composedly. “Sit here and rest yourself a while; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along.”

Without more words, he threw his companion the maple stick, and was as speedily out of sight as if

he had vanished into the deepening gloom. The young man sat a few moments by the roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the verge of the forest, conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man's hiding-place; but, owing doubtless to the depth of the gloom at that particular spot, neither the travellers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures brushed the small boughs by the wayside, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky athwart which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tiptoe, pulling aside the branches and thrusting forth his head as far as he durst without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

"Of the two, reverend sir," said the voice like the deacon's, "I had rather miss an ordination dinner than to-night's meeting. They tell me that some of our community are to be here from Falmouth and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island, besides several of the Indian powwows, who, after their fashion, know almost as much deviltry as the best of us. Moreover, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion."

"Mighty well, Deacon Gookin!" replied the solemn old tones of the minister. "Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground."

The hoofs clattered again; and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered or solitary Christian prayed. Whither, then, could these holy men be journeying so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and overburdened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubting whether there really was a heaven above him. Yet there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

"With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!" cried Goodman Brown.

While he still gazed upward into the deep arch of the firmament and had lifted his hands to pray, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible, except directly overhead, where this black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of towns-people of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine at Salem village, but never until now from a cloud of night. There was one voice of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating for some favor, which, perhaps, it would grieve her to obtain; and all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

"Faith!" shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying, "Faith! Faith!" as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage, and terror was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

“My Faith is gone!” cried he, after one stupefied moment. “There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee is this world given.”

And, maddened with despair, so that he laughed loud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a rate that he seemed to fly along the forest path rather than to walk or run. The road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds—the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and shrank not from its other horrors.

“Ha! ha! ha!” roared Goodman Brown when the wind laughed at him.

“Let us hear which will laugh loudest. Think not to frighten me with your deviltry. Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powwow, come devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fear you.”

In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the hour of midnight. He paused, in a lull of the tempest that had driven him onward, and heard the swell of what seemed a hymn, rolling solemnly from a distance with the weight of many voices. He knew the tune; it was a familiar one in the choir of the village meeting-house. The verse died heavily away, and was lengthened by a chorus, not of human voices, but of all the sounds of the benighted wilderness pealing in awful harmony together. Goodman Brown cried out, and his cry was lost to his own ear by its unison with the cry of the desert.

In the interval of silence he stole forward until the light glared full upon his eyes. At one extremity of an open space, hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame, their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting. The mass of foliage that had overgrown the summit of the rock was all on fire, blazing high into the night and fitfully illuminating the whole field. Each pendent twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light arose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once.

“A grave and dark-clad company,” quoth Goodman Brown.

In truth they were such. Among them, quivering to and fro between gloom and splendor, appeared faces that would be seen next day at the council board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly heavenward, and benignantly over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm that the lady of the governor was there. At least there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honored husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and fair young girls, who trembled lest their mothers should espy them. Either the sudden gleams of light flashing over the obscure field bedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a

score of the church members of Salem village famous for their especial sanctity. Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, his revered pastor. But, irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints. Scattered also among their pale-faced enemies were the Indian priests, or powwows, who had often scared their native forest with more hideous incantations than any known to English witchcraft.

“But where is Faith?” thought Goodman Brown; and, as hope came into his heart, he trembled.

Another verse of the hymn arose, a slow and mournful strain, such as the pious love, but joined to words which expressed all that our nature can conceive of sin, and darkly hinted at far more. Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends. Verse after verse was sung; and still the chorus of the desert swelled between like the deepest tone of a mighty organ; and with the final peal of that dreadful anthem there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconcerted wilderness were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man in homage to the prince of all. The four blazing pines threw up a loftier flame, and obscurely discovered shapes and visages of horror on the smoke wreaths above the impious assembly. At the same moment the fire on the rock shot redly forth and formed a glowing arch above its base, where now appeared a figure. With reverence be it spoken, the figure bore no slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England churches.

“Bring forth the converts!” cried a voice that echoed through the field and rolled into the forest.

At the word, Goodman Brown stepped forth from the shadow of the trees and approached the congregation, with whom he felt a loathful brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart. He could have well-nigh sworn that the shape of his own dead father beckoned him to advance, looking downward from a smoke wreath, while a woman, with dim features of despair, threw out her hand to warn him back. Was it his mother? But he had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought, when the minister and good old Deacon Gookin seized his arms and led him to the blazing rock. Thither came also the slender form of a veiled female, led between Goody Cloyse, that pious teacher of the catechism, and Martha Carrier, who had received the devil’s promise to be queen of hell. A rampant hag was she. And there stood the proselytes beneath the canopy of fire.

“Welcome, my children,” said the dark figure, “to the communion of your race. Ye have found thus young your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!”

They turned; and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend worshippers were seen; the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage.

“There,” resumed the sable form, “are all whom ye have revered from youth. Ye deemed them holier than yourselves, and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness and prayerful aspirations heavenward. Yet here are they all in my worshipping assembly. This night it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds: how hoary-bearded elders of the church have whispered wanton words to the young maids of their households; how many a woman, eager for widows’ weeds, has given her husband a drink at bedtime and let him sleep his last sleep in her bosom; how beardless youths have made haste to inherit their fathers’ wealth; and how fair damsels—blush not, sweet ones—have dug little graves in the garden, and bidden me, the sole guest to an infant’s funeral. By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin ye shall scent out all the places—whether in church, bedchamber, street, field, or forest—where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot. Far more than this. It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which

inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than human power—than my power at its utmost—can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other.”

They did so; and, by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith, and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar.

“Lo, there ye stand, my children,” said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. “Depending upon one another’s hearts, ye had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream. Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race.”

“Welcome,” repeated the fiend worshippers, in one cry of despair and triumph.

And there they stood, the only pair, as it seemed, who were yet hesitating on the verge of wickedness in this dark world. A basin was hollowed, naturally, in the rock. Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? or was it blood? or, perchance, a liquid flame? Herein did the shape of evil dip his hand and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own. The husband cast one look at his pale wife, and Faith at him. What polluted wretches would the next glance show them to each other, shuddering alike at what they disclosed and what they saw!

“Faith! Faith!” cried the husband, “look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one.”

Whether Faith obeyed he knew not. Hardly had he spoken when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

The next morning young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard to get an appetite for breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint as if to avoid an anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. “What God doth the wizard pray to?” quoth Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine at her own lattice, catechizing a little girl who had brought her a pint of morning’s milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting-house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him that she skipped along the street and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.

Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?

Be it so if you will; but, alas! it was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath day, when the congregation were singing a holy psalm, he could not listen because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit with power and fervid eloquence, and, with his hand on the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the gray blasphemer and his hearers. Often, waking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and

grandchildren, a goodly procession, besides neighbors not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom.

Activities

Young Goodman Brown

Study Questions

1. What characters seem to correspond to Sigmund Freud's ego, id, and superego?
2. Is Faith aptly named?
3. Why are her pink ribbons mentioned so often?
4. Give two examples of dramatic irony in the story.
5. Look up "**allegory**" in the glossary. In an allegory, an image on the surface level represents an abstract idea on a deeper level. What do the following surface details in the story represent: the forest, the town of Salem, the path, the serpentine staff, the dew, the fire in the clearing?
6. What is the meaning of the last sentence?
7. Look up C.G. Jung's theory of individuation and the shadow, persona, and anima as archetypes and show how they might be applied in this story.
8. Look up "Witches' Sabbath" in an encyclopedia. Is the description accurate?
9. What is the cause of Goodman Brown's tragedy?

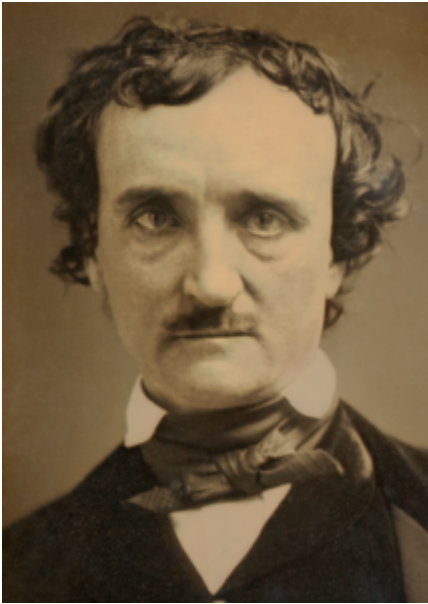
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27.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849)**Biography**

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Within a year, his alcoholic father deserted his mother and three infant children. When his mother died of tuberculosis in Richmond, Virginia, three-year-old Edgar was adopted by John Allan and his wife. Allan, a prosperous businessperson, spent time in England, where Poe began his education at private schools.

Back in the United States, Allan forced Poe to leave the University of Virginia in 1826 when Poe incurred gambling debts he could not pay. He served in the U.S. Army from 1827 to 1829, eventually attaining the rank of sergeant major. Poe next attended West Point, hoping for further military advancement.

Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Allan died of tuberculosis. Poe angrily confronted his foster father about his extramarital affairs; for this candour, he was disowned. Believing that Allan would never reinstate him as heir, Poe deliberately violated rules to provoke his dismissal from the Academy. In 1835, Poe began his career as editor, columnist, and reviewer, earning a living he could not make as a writer of stories and poems. That same year, he married his thirteen-year-old cousin, Virginia Clemm, and lived with her and her mother during a period marked by illness and poverty. Virginia died of tuberculosis in 1847. Poe died, delirious, under mysterious circumstances, in 1849.

He perfected the Gothic horror story with “The Fall of the House of Usher” and originated the modern detective story in “The Gold-Bug” and “The Murders in the Rue Morgue.”

The Cask of Amontillado

Published 1846

THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practise imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmery, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially;—I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him—”My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day. But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts.”

”How?” said he. “Amontillado, A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!”

”I have my doubts,” I replied; “and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain.”

”Amontillado!”

”I have my doubts.”

”Amontillado!”

”And I must satisfy them.”

”Amontillado!”

”As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchresi. If any one has a critical turn it is he. He will tell me—”

”Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry.”

”And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own.

”Come, let us go.”

”Whither?”

”To your vaults.”

“My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchresi—”

“I have no engagement;—come.”

“My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre.”

“Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchresi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado.”

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a roquelaure¹ closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honour of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together upon the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

“The pipe,” he said.

“It is farther on,” said I; “but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls.”

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

“Nitre?” he asked, at length.

“Nitre,” I replied. “How long have you had that cough?”

“Ugh! ugh! ugh! —ugh! ugh! ugh! —ugh! ugh! ugh! —ugh! ugh! ugh! —ugh! ugh! ugh!”

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

“It is nothing,” he said, at last.

“Come,” I said, with decision, “we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchresi —”

“Enough,” he said; “the cough’s a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough.”

“True—true,” I replied; “and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily—but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Médoc will defend us from the damps.

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

“Drink,” I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

“I drink,” he said, “to the buried that repose around us.”

“And I to your long life.”

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

“These vaults,” he said, “are extensive.”

“The Montresors,” I replied, “were a great and numerous family.”

“I forget your arms.”

“A huge human foot d’or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel.”

1. A lined and trimmed cloak reaching to the knees.

“And the motto?”

“*Nemo me impune lacessit.*²”

“Good!” he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

“The nitre!” I said; “see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river’s bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—”

“It is nothing,” he said; “let us go on. But first, another draught of the Médoc.”

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

“You do not comprehend?” he said.

“Not I,” I replied.

“Then you are not of the brotherhood.”

“How?”

“You are not of the masons.”

“Yes, yes,” I said; “yes, yes.”

“You? Impossible! A mason?”

“A mason,” I replied.

“A sign,” he said, “a sign.”

“It is this,” I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my roquelaure a trowel.

“You jest,” he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. “But let us proceed to the Amontillado.”

“Be it so,” I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavoured to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

“Proceed,” I said; “herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchresi—”

“He is an ignoramus,” interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From

2. No one harms me with impunity.

one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

“Pass your hand,” I said, “over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power.”

“The Amontillado!” ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

“True,” I replied; “the Amontillado.”

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was not the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labours and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamoured. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamourer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

“Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—a very good joke, indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!”

“The Amontillado!” I said.

“He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone.”

“Yes,” I said, “let us be gone.”

“For the love of God, Montresor!”

“Yes,” I said, “for the love of God!”

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—

“Fortunato!”

No answer. I called again—

“Fortunato!”

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick; it was the dampness of the catacombs that made it so. I hastened to make an end of my labour. I forced the last stone into its position; I

plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat*³!

3. Rest in peace.

Activities

The Cask of Amontillado

Study Questions

1. What is the evidence that Montresor has carefully planned the murder of Fortunato?
2. Why is it significant that the murder takes place during “the supreme madness of the carnival season”?
3. Explain the significance of all of the names in the story—Fortunato, Montresor, and Luchresi.
4. Summarize in your own words Montresor’s criteria for successful revenge and then explain whether they are met.
5. How does the Montresor family coat of arms relate to the events of the story?
6. Dramatic irony occurs when there is a discrepancy between what a character seems to be saying and what he or she actually means. For example, dramatic irony occurs when Montresor tells Fortunato that he is “luckily met” because Montresor knows that the meeting will be an unlucky one. Explain some other instances of dramatic irony in the story.
7. Explain the circumstances under which Montresor tells his story. Who is the speaker addressing?
8. Give some examples of situational irony.

Resources

1. You might like to view this short film adaptation of the story. [Watch “The Cask of Amontillado \(Edgar Allan Poe\)”](#).
2. You can read a collection of work written by and about Edgar Allan Poe here: [EDGAR ALLAN POE: Tales, Sketches and Selected Criticism](#)

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28.

Kate Chopin (1850–1904)



Biography

Katherine O'Flaherty was born in 1850 in St. Louis, Missouri, to an affluent family. She was formally educated in a Catholic school for girls. At age twenty, she married Oscar Chopin and moved with him to New Orleans. In 1879, the couple relocated to Cloutierville, an area where many members of the Creole community lived. The Chopins lived, worked, and raised their six children together until Oscar died unexpectedly in 1882, leaving his wife in serious debt. Chopin worked and sold the family business to pay off the debt, eventually moving back to St. Louis to be near her mother, who died soon after Chopin returned.

After experiencing these losses, Chopin turned to reading and writing to deal with her grief. Her experiences in New Orleans and Cloutierville provided rich writing material, and during the 1890s, she enjoyed success as a writer, publishing a number of stories in the local colour tradition. By 1899, her style had evolved, and her important work *The Awakening*, published that year, shocked the Victorian audience of the time in its frank depiction of a woman's sexuality. Unprepared for the negative critical reception that ensued, Chopin retreated from the publishing world.

She died unexpectedly a few years later in 1904 from a brain hemorrhage.

In her lifetime, Chopin was known primarily as a regional writer who produced a number of important short stories, many of which were collected in *Bayou Folk* in 1894. Her groundbreaking novel *The Awakening* (1899) was ahead of its time in the examination of the rigid cultural and legal

boundaries placed on women, which limited or prevented them from living authentic, fully self-directed lives.

Désirée's Baby

Published 1893

As the day was pleasant, Madame Valmonde drove over to L'Abri to see Désirée and the baby.

It made her laugh to think of Désirée with a baby. Why, it seemed but yesterday that Désirée was little more than a baby herself; when Monsieur in riding through the gateway of Valmonde had found her lying asleep in the shadow of the big stone pillar.

The little one awoke in his arms and began to cry for "Dada." That was as much as she could do or say. Some people thought she might have strayed there of her own accord, for she was of the toddling age. The prevailing belief was that she had been purposely left by a party of Texans, whose canvas-covered wagon, late in the day, had crossed the ferry that Coton Mais kept, just below the plantation. In time Madame Valmonde abandoned every speculation but the one that Désirée had been sent to her by a beneficent Providence to be the child of her affection, seeing that she was without child of the flesh. For the girl grew to be beautiful and gentle, affectionate and sincere,—the idol of Valmonde.

It was no wonder, when she stood one day against the stone pillar in whose shadow she had lain asleep, eighteen years before, that Armand Aubigny riding by and seeing her there, had fallen in love with her. That was the way all the Aubignys fell in love, as if struck by a pistol shot. The wonder was that he had not loved her before; for he had known her since his father brought him home from Paris, a boy of eight, after his mother died there. The passion that awoke in him that day, when he saw her at the gate, swept along like an avalanche, or like a prairie fire, or like anything that drives headlong over all obstacles.

Monsieur Valmonde grew practical and wanted things well considered: that is, the girl's obscure origin. Armand looked into her eyes and did not care. He was reminded that she was nameless. What did it matter about a name when he could give her one of the oldest and proudest in Louisiana? He ordered the *corbeille*¹ from Paris, and contained himself with what patience he could until it arrived; then they were married.

Madame Valmonde had not seen Désirée and the baby for four weeks. When she reached L'Abri she shuddered at the first sight of it, as she always did. It was a sad looking place, which for many years had not known the gentle presence of a mistress, old Monsieur Aubigny having married and buried his wife in France, and she having loved her own land too well ever to leave it. The roof came down steep and black like a cowl, reaching out beyond the wide galleries that encircled the yellow stuccoed house. Big, solemn oaks grew close to it, and their thick-leaved, far-reaching branches shadowed it like a pall. Young Aubigny's rule was a strict one, too, and under it his negroes had forgotten how to be gay, as they had been during the old master's easy-going and indulgent lifetime.

The young mother was recovering slowly, and lay full length, in her soft white muslins and laces, upon a couch. The baby was beside her, upon her arm, where he had fallen asleep, at her breast. The yellow nurse woman sat beside a window fanning herself.

Madame Valmonde bent her portly figure over Désirée and kissed her, holding her an instant tenderly in her arms. Then she turned to the child.

"This is not the baby!" she exclaimed, in startled tones. French was the language spoken at Valmonde in those days.

1. Fr., literally, a basket. A kind of trousseau or hope chest filled with household gifts.

“I knew you would be astonished,” laughed Désirée, “at the way he has grown. The little *cochon de lait*²! Look at his legs, mamma, and his hands and fingernails,—real finger-nails. Zandrine had to cut them this morning. Isn’t it true, Zandrine?”

The woman bowed her turbaned head majestically, “Mais si, Madame.”

“And the way he cries,” went on Désirée, “is deafening. Armand heard him the other day as far away as La Blanche’s cabin.”

Madame Valmonde had never removed her eyes from the child. She lifted it and walked with it over to the window that was lightest. She scanned the baby narrowly, then looked as searchingly at Zandrine, whose face was turned to gaze across the fields.

“Yes, the child has grown, has changed,” said Madame Valmonde, slowly, as she replaced it beside its mother. “What does Armand say?”

Désirée’s face became suffused with a glow that was happiness itself.

“Oh, Armand is the proudest father in the parish, I believe, chiefly because it is a boy, to bear his name; though he says not,—that he would have loved a girl as well. But I know it isn’t true. I know he says that to please me. And mamma,” she added, drawing Madame Valmonde’s head down to her, and speaking in a whisper, “he hasn’t punished one of them—not one of them—since baby is born. Even Negrillon, who pretended to have burnt his leg that he might rest from work—he only laughed, and said Negrillon was a great scamp. Oh, mamma, I’m so happy; it frightens me.”

What Désirée said was true. Marriage, and later the birth of his son had softened Armand Aubigny’s imperious and exacting nature greatly. This was what made the gentle Désirée so happy, for she loved him desperately. When he frowned she trembled, but loved him. When he smiled, she asked no greater blessing of God. But Armand’s dark, handsome face had not often been disfigured by frowns since the day he fell in love with her.

When the baby was about three months old, Désirée awoke one day to the conviction that there was something in the air menacing her peace. It was at first too subtle to grasp. It had only been a disquieting suggestion; an air of mystery among the blacks; unexpected visits from far-off neighbors who could hardly account for their coming. Then a strange, an awful change in her husband’s manner, which she dared not ask him to explain. When he spoke to her, it was with averted eyes, from which the old love-light seemed to have gone out. He absented himself from home; and when there, avoided her presence and that of her child, without excuse. And the very spirit of Satan seemed suddenly to take hold of him in his dealings with the slaves. Désirée was miserable enough to die.

She sat in her room, one hot afternoon, in her *peignoir*, listlessly drawing through her fingers the strands of her long, silky brown hair that hung about her shoulders. The baby, half naked, lay asleep upon her own great mahogany bed, that was like a sumptuous throne, with its satin-lined half-canopy. One of La Blanche’s little quadroon boys—half naked too—stood fanning the child slowly with a fan of peacock feathers. Désirée’s eyes had been fixed absently and sadly upon the baby, while she was striving to penetrate the threatening mist that she felt closing about her. She looked from her child to the boy who stood beside him, and back again; over and over. “Ah!” It was a cry that she could not help; which she was not conscious of having uttered. The blood turned like ice in her veins, and a clammy moisture gathered upon her face.

She tried to speak to the little quadroon boy; but no sound would come, at first. When he heard his name uttered, he looked up, and his mistress was pointing to the door. He laid aside the great, soft fan, and obediently stole away, over the polished floor, on his bare tiptoes.

She stayed motionless, with gaze riveted upon her child, and her face the picture of fright.

Presently her husband entered the room, and without noticing her, went to a table and began to search among some papers which covered it.

“Armand,” she called to him, in a voice which must have stabbed him, if he was human. But he did not notice. “Armand,” she said again. Then she rose and tottered towards him. “Armand,” she panted once more, clutching his arm, “look at our child. What does it mean? tell me.”

He coldly but gently loosened her fingers from about his arm and thrust the hand away from him. “Tell me what it means!” she cried despairingly.

“It means,” he answered lightly, “that the child is not white; it means that you are not white.”

A quick conception of all that this accusation meant for her nerved her with unwonted courage to deny it. “It is a lie; it is not true, I am white! Look at my hair, it is brown; and my eyes are gray, Armand, you know they are gray. And my skin is fair,” seizing his wrist. “Look at my hand; whiter than yours, Armand,” she laughed hysterically.

“As white as La Blanche’s,” he returned cruelly; and went away leaving her alone with their child.

When she could hold a pen in her hand, she sent a despairing letter to Madame Valmonde.

“My mother, they tell me I am not white. Armand has told me I am not white. For God’s sake tell them it is not true. You must know it is not true. I shall die. I must die. I cannot be so unhappy, and live.”

The answer that came was brief:

“My own Désirée: Come home to Valmonde; back to your mother who loves you. Come with your child.”

When the letter reached Désirée she went with it to her husband’s study, and laid it open upon the desk before which he sat. She was like a stone image: silent, white, motionless after she placed it there.

In silence he ran his cold eyes over the written words.

He said nothing. “Shall I go, Armand?” she asked in tones sharp with agonized suspense.

“Yes, go.”

“Do you want me to go?”

“Yes, I want you to go.”

He thought Almighty God had dealt cruelly and unjustly with him; and felt, somehow, that he was paying Him back in kind when he stabbed thus into his wife’s soul. Moreover he no longer loved her, because of the unconscious injury she had brought upon his home and his name.

She turned away like one stunned by a blow, and walked slowly towards the door, hoping he would call her back.

“Good-by, Armand,” she moaned.

He did not answer her. That was his last blow at fate.

Désirée went in search of her child. Zandrine was pacing the sombre gallery with it. She took the little one from the nurse’s arms with no word of explanation, and descending the steps, walked away, under the live-oak branches.

It was an October afternoon; the sun was just sinking. Out in the still fields the negroes were picking cotton.

Désirée had not changed the thin white garment nor the slippers which she wore. Her hair was uncovered and the sun’s rays brought a golden gleam from its brown meshes. She did not take the broad, beaten road which led to the far-off plantation of Valmonde. She walked across a deserted field, where the stubble bruised her tender feet, so delicately shod, and tore her thin gown to shreds.

She disappeared among the reeds and willows that grew thick along the banks of the deep, sluggish bayou; and she did not come back again.

Some weeks later there was a curious scene enacted at L’Abri. In the centre of the smoothly swept back yard was a great bonfire. Armand Aubigny sat in the wide hallway that commanded a view of the

spectacle; and it was he who dealt out to a half dozen negroes the material which kept this fire ablaze.

A graceful cradle of willow, with all its dainty furbishings, was laid upon the pyre, which had already been fed with the richness of a priceless layette. Then there were silk gowns, and velvet and satin ones added to these; laces, too, and embroideries; bonnets and gloves; for the *corbeille* had been of rare quality.

The last thing to go was a tiny bundle of letters; innocent little scribblings that Désirée had sent to him during the days of their espousal. There was the remnant of one back in the drawer from which he took them. But it was not Désirée's; it was part of an old letter from his mother to his father. He read it. She was thanking God for the blessing of her husband's love:—

“But above all,” she wrote, “night and day, I thank the good God for having so arranged our lives that our dear Armand will never know that his mother, who adores him, belongs to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery.”

The Story of an Hour

Published 1894

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the colour that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little, whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There

would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

“Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister’s importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister’s waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine’s piercing cry; at Richards’ quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of the joy that kills.

Activities

Désirée's Baby

Study Questions

1. Look at the names in the story: Désirée, La Blanche, L'Abri. What is the associated meaning of each name, and how does that relate to the story?
2. Examine the character of Armand. What is his background? Does he have a choice at the end of the story regarding Désirée and the baby?
3. What do the shadow and the pillar suggest? What might fire symbolize at the end of the story?
4. Identify the three main colours in the story. Who is associated with each of the colours and what is the significance?
5. Discuss Chopin's treatment of gender in this story.
6. Do you think Armand knew he was of mixed race before discovering the letter from his mother to his father at the end of the story?
7. Find an example of irony in the story.
8. Find two examples of foreshadowing that prepare the reader for the ending.

The Story of an Hour

Study Questions

1. What is the double meaning of Mrs. Mallard's heart trouble, mentioned in the first line of the story?
2. Discuss the function of the imagery in paragraphs four, five, and six.
3. How does Chopin maintain our sympathy for Mrs. Mallard?
4. Discuss the significance of images associated with spring.
5. Discuss the irony of the final line.
6. Was Brently Mallard a bad husband?
7. Try to find two examples of irony in the story. What type of irony is found in the doctor's words at the end of the story? Explain the irony.

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29.

Charles G.D. Roberts (1860–1943)



Biography

Sir Charles George Douglas Roberts was born in New Brunswick in 1860. A prolific poet and prose writer, he was one of the first Canadian authors to gain an international audience. He, his cousin Bliss Carman (1861–1929), Archibald Lampman (1861–1899) and Duncan Campbell Scott (1862–1947), are known as the Confederation Poets. He earned his B.A. and M.A. from the University of New Brunswick, and in 1880, he married Mary Fenety. The couple had five children.

After moving to New York City, he continued to publish animal stories, and according to critic W.J. Keith, he is remembered for helping to establish “the one native Canadian art-form” in his animal stories. (*Canadian Encyclopedia*, online ed., February 10, 2008). During the First World War, he served in the British Army, attaining the rank of captain, and later transferred to the Canadian Army. After the war he sojourned in North Africa and Europe until 1925. In that year, he returned to Canada and resumed his poetry writing. He died in 1943 shortly after his second marriage at the age of 83.

The Truce

Too early, while yet the snow was thick and the food scarce, the big black bear had roused himself from his long winter sleep and forsaken his snug den under the roots of the pine tree. The thawing spring world he found an empty place—no rabbits to be captured, no roots to be dug from wet meadows; and his appetite was sorely vexing him. He would have crept back into his hole for another nap; but the air was too stimulatingly warm, too full of promise of life, to suffer him to resume the old,

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comfortable drowsiness. Moreover, having gone to bed thin the previous December, he had waked up hungry; and hunger is a restless bedfellow. In three days he had had but one meal—a big trout, clawed out half-dead from a rocky eddy below the Falls; and now, as he sniffed the soft, wet air with fiercely eager nostrils, he forgot his customary tolerance of mood and was ready to do battle with anything that walked the wilderness.

It was a little past noon, and the shadows of the tree-tops fell blue on the rapidly shrinking snow. The air was full of faint, trickling noises, and thin tinklings where the snow veiled the slopes of little rocky hollows. Under the snow and under the rotting patches of ice, innumerable small streams were everywhere hurrying to swell the still ice-fettered flood of the river, the Big Fork, whose roomy valley lay about a half-mile eastward through the woods. Every now and then, when a soft gust drew up from the south, it bore with it a heavy roar, a noise as of muffled and tremendous trampling—the voice of the Big Fork Falls thundering out from under their decaying lid of ice. The falls were the only thing which the black bear really feared. Often as he had visited them, to catch wounded fish in the black eddies at their foot, he could never look at their terrific plunge without a certain awed dilation of his eyes, a certain shrinking at his heart. Perhaps by reason of some association of his cubhood, some imminent peril and narrow escape at the age when his senses were most impressionable, in all his five years of life the falls had never become a commonplace to him. And even now, while questing noiselessly and restlessly for food, he rarely failed to pay the tribute of an instinctive, unconscious turn of head whenever that portentous voice came up upon the wind.

Prowling hither and thither among the great ragged trunks, peering and sniffing and listening, the bear suddenly caught the sound of small claws on wood. The sound came apparently from within the trunk of a huge maple, close at hand. Leaning his head to one side, he listened intently, his ears cocked, eager as a child listening to a watch. There was, indeed, something half childish in the attitude of the huge figure, strangely belying the ferocity in his heart. Yes, the sound came, unmistakably, from within the trunk. He nosed the bark warily. There was no opening; and the bark was firm. He stole to the other side of the tree, his head craftily outstretched and reaching around far before him.

The situation was clear to him at once—and his hungry muzzle jammed itself into the entrance to a chipmunk's hole. The maple tree was dead, and partly decayed, up one side of the trunk. All his craft forgotten on the instant, the bear sniffed and snorted and drew loud, fierce breaths, as if he thought to suck the little furry tenant forth by inhalation. The live, warm smell that came from the hole was deliciously tantalizing to his appetite. The hole, however, was barely big enough to admit the tip of his black snout, so he presently gave over his foolish sniffings, and set himself to tear an entrance with his resistless claws. The bark and dead wood flew in showers under his efforts, and it was evident that the chipmunk's little home would speedily lie open to the foe. But the chipmunk, meanwhile, from the

crotch of a limb overhead, was looking down in silent indignation. Little Stripe-sides had been wise enough to provide his dwelling with a sort of skylight exit.

Suddenly, in the midst of his task, the bear stopped and lifted his muzzle to the wind. What was that new taint upon the air? It was one almost unknown to him, but one which he instinctively dreaded, though without any reason based directly upon experience of his own. At almost any other time, indeed, he would have taken the first whiff of that ominous man-smell as a signal to efface himself and make off noiselessly down the wind. But just now, his first feeling was wrath at the thought of being hindered from his prospective meal. He would let no one, not even a man, rob him of that chipmunk. Then, as his wrath swelled rapidly, he decided to hunt the man himself. Perhaps, as the bear relishes practically everything edible under the sun except human flesh, he had no motive but a savage impulse to punish the intruder for such an untimely intrusion. However that may be, a red light came into his eyes, and he swung away to meet this unknown trespasser upon his trails.

On that same day, after a breakfast before dawn in order that he might make an early start, a gaunt trapper had set out from the settlement on the return journey to his camp beyond the Big Fork. He had been in to the settlement with a pack of furs, and was now hurrying back as fast as he could, because of the sudden thaw. He was afraid the ice might go out of the river and leave him cut off from his camp—for his canoe was on the other side. As the pelts were beginning to get poor, he had left his rifle at home, and carried no weapon but his knife. He had grown so accustomed to counting all the furry wild folk as his prey that he never thought of them as possible adversaries—unless it might chance to be some such exception as a bull-moose in rutting season. A rifle, therefore, when he was not after skins, seemed to him a useless burden; and he was carrying, moreover, a pack of camp supplies on his broad back. He was tall, lean, leather-faced and long-jawed, with calm, light blue eyes under heavy brows; and he wore a stout, yellow-brown home-spun shirt, squirrel-skin cap, long leggings of deerhide, and oiled cowhide moccasins. He walked rapidly with a long, slouching stride that was almost a lope, his toes pointing straight ahead like an Indian's.

When, suddenly, the bear lurched out into his trail and confronted him, the woodsman was in no way disturbed. The bear paused, swaying in surly fashion about ten paces in front of him, completely blocking the trail. But the woodsman kept right on. The only attention he paid to the big, black stranger was to shout at him authoritatively—“Git out the way, thar!”

To his unbounded astonishment, however, the beast, instead of getting out of the way, ran at him with a snarling growl. The woodsman's calm blue eyes flamed with anger; but the life of the woods teaches one to think quickly, or, rather, to act in advance of one's thoughts. He knew that with no weapon but his knife he was no match for such a foe, so, leaping aside as lightly as a panther, he darted around a tree, regained the trail beyond his assailant, and ran on at his best speed toward the river. He made sure that the bear had acted under a mere spasm of ill-temper and would not take the trouble to follow far.

When, once in a long time, a hunter or trapper gets the worst of it in his contest with the wild kindreds, in the majority of cases it is because he had fancied he knew all about bears. The bear is strong in individuality and delights to set at nought the traditions of his kind. So it happens that every now and then a woodsman pays with his life for failing to recognize that the bear won't always play by rule.

To the trapper's disgusted amazement, this particular bear followed him so vindictively that, before he realized the full extent of his peril he was almost overtaken. He saw that he must deliver up his precious pack, the burden of which was effectively handicapping him in the race for life. When the bear was almost upon him, he flung the bundle away, with angry violence, expecting that it would at once divert the pursuer's attention.

In about ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, perhaps, it would have done so, for it contained, among

other things, bacon and sugar, dainties altogether delectable to a bear's palate. But as luck would have it, the bundle so bitterly hurled struck the beast full on the snout, making him grunt with pain and fresh fury. From that moment he was a veritable demon of vengeance. Well enough he knew it was not the bundle, but the man who had thrown it, upon whom he must wipe out the affront. His hunger was all forgotten in red rage.

Fortunate it was now for the tall woodsman that he had lived abstemiously and labored sanely all that winter, and could depend upon both wind and limb. Fortunate, too, that on the open trail, cut years before by the lumbermen of the Big Fork drive, the snow was already almost gone, so that it did not seriously impede his running. He ran almost like a caribou, with enough in reserve to be able to glance back over his shoulder from time to time. But seeing how implacable was the black bulk that pursued, he could not help thinking what would happen, there in the great, wet, shadow-mottled solitudes, if he should chance to trip upon a root, or if his wind should fail him ere he could reach the camp. At this thought, not fear but a certain disgust and impotent resentment swelled his heart; and with a challenging look at the ancient trunks, the familiar forest aisles, the high, branch-fretted blue, bright with spring sunshine, he defied the wilderness, which he had so long loved and ruled, to turn upon him with such an unspeakable betrayal.

The wilderness loves a master; and the challenge was not accepted. No root tripped his feet, nor did his wind fail him; and so he came out, with the bear raging some ten paces behind his heels, upon the banks of the Big Fork. Once across that quarter-mile of sloppy, rotting ice, he knew there was good, clear running to his cabin and his gun. His heart rose, his resentment left him, and he grinned as he gave one more glance over his shoulder.

As he raced down the bank, the trampling of the falls, a mile away, roared up to him on a gust of wind. In spite of himself he could not but notice how treacherous the ice was looking. In spite of himself he noticed it, having no choice but to trust it. The whole surface looked sick, with patches of sodden white and sickly lead-color; and down along the shore it was covered by a lane of shallow, yellowish water. It appeared placid and innocent enough; but the woodsman's practised eye perceived that it might break up, or "go out," at any moment. The bear was at his heels, however, and that particular moment was not the one for indecision. The woodsman dashed knee deep through the margin water, and out upon the free ice; and he heard the bear, reckless of all admonitory signs, splash after him about three seconds later.

On the wide, sun-flooded expanse of ice, with the dark woods beyond and soft blue sky above, the threat of imminent death seemed to the woodsman curiously out of place. Yet there death was, panting savagely at his heels, ready for the first misstep. And there, too, a mile below, was death in another form, roaring heavily from the swollen falls. And hidden under a face of peace, he knew that death lurked all about his feet, liable to rise in mad fury at any instant with the breaking of the ice. As he thought of all this besetting menace, the woodsman's nerves drew themselves to steel. He set his teeth grimly. A light of elation came into his eyes. And he felt himself able to win the contest against whatever odds. As this sense of new vigor and defiance spurred him to a fresh burst of speed, the woodsman took notice that he was just about half-way across the ice. "Good," he muttered, counting the game now more than half won. Then, even as he spoke, a strange, terrifying sound ran all about him. Was it in the air, or beneath the ice? It came from everywhere at once, a straining grumble, ominous as the first growl of an earthquake. The woodsman understood that dreadful voice very well. He wavered for a second, then sprang forward desperately. And the bear pursuing understood also. His rage vanished in a breath. He stumbled, whimpered, cast one frightened glance at the too distant shore behind him, then followed the woodsman's flight—followed now, with no more heed to pursue.

For less than half a minute that straining grumble continued. Then it grew louder, mingled with sharp, ripping crashes; and long, black lanes opened suddenly in every direction. Right before the

woodsman's flying feet one opened. He took it with a bound. But even as he sprang the ice went all to pieces. What he sprang to was no longer a solid surface, but a tossing fragment which promptly went down beneath the impact of his descent. Not for nothing, was it, however, that the woodsman had learned to "run the logs" in many a tangled boom and racing "drive." His foot barely touched the treacherous floe ere he leaped again, and yet again; till he had gained, by a path which none but a riverman could ever have dreamed of traversing, an ice-cake broad and firm enough to give him foothold. Beyond this refuge was a space of surging water, foam, and ice-mush, too broad for the essay of any human leap.

The Big Fork from shore to shore was now a tossing, swishing, racing, whirling, and grinding chaos of ice-cakes, churning in an angry flood and hurrying blindly to the falls. In the center of his own floe the woodsman sat down, the better to preserve his balance. He bit off a chew from his plug of "blackjack," and with calm eyes surveyed the doom toward which he was rushing. A mile is a very short distance when it lies above the inevitable. The woodsman saw clearly that there was nothing to be done but chew his "blackjack," and wait on fate. That point settled, he turned his head to see what the bear was doing.

To his surprise, the animal was now a good fifty yards farther up stream, having evidently been delayed by some vagary of the struggling ice. He was now sitting up on his haunches on a floe, and staring silently at the volleying cloud which marked the Falls. The woodsman was aware of a curious fellow-feeling for the great beast which, not five minutes ago, had been raging for his life. To the woodsman, with his long knowledge and understanding of the wild kindreds, that rage and that pursuit now appeared as lying more or less in the course of events, a part of the normal savagery of nature, and no matter of personal vindictiveness. Now that he and his enemy were involved in a common and appalling doom, the enmity was forgotten. "Got cl'ar grit, too!" he murmured to himself, as he took note of the quiet way the bear was eyeing the Falls.

And now it seemed to him that the trampling roar grew louder every second, drowning into dumbness the crashing and grinding of the ice; and the volleying mist-clouds seemed to race up-stream to meet him. Then, with a sickening jump and turn of his heart, a hope came and shook him out of his stoicism. He saw that his ice-cake was sailing straight for a little rocky islet just above the fall. Two minutes more would decide his fate—at least for the time. He did not trouble to think what he would do on the island, if he got there. He rose cautiously and crouched, every sinew tense to renew the battle for life.

Another minute fled away, and the island was close ahead, wrapped in the roar and the mist-volleys. A cross-current, seizing the racing ice-cake, dragged it aside—and the man clenched his fists in a fury of disappointment as he saw that he would miss the refuge after all. He made ready to plunge in and at least die battling, when fate took yet another whim, and a whirling mass of logs and ice, colliding with the floe, forced it back to its original course. Another moment and it grounded violently, breaking into four pieces, which rolled off on either side toward the abyss. And the woodsman, splashing into the turbulent shallows, made good his hold upon a rock and dragged himself ashore.

Fairly landed, he shook himself, spat coolly into the flood, and turned to see what was happening to his fellow in distress. To the roaring vortex just below him—so close that it seemed as if it might at any moment drag down the little island and engulf it—he paid no heed whatever, but turned his back contemptuously upon the tumult and the mists. His late enemy, alive, strong, splendid, and speeding to a hideous destruction, was of the keener interest to his wilderness spirit.

The bear was now about twenty paces above the island; but caught by an inexorable current, he was nearly that distance beyond it. With a distinct regret, a pang of sympathy, the man saw that there was no chance of his adversary's escape. But the bear, like himself, seeing a refuge so near, was not of the temper to give up without a struggle. Suddenly, like a gigantic spring uncoiling, he launched himself

forth with a violence that completely up-ended his ice-cake, and carried him over a space of churned torrent to the edge of another floe. Gripping this with his mighty forearms till he pulled it half under, he succeeded in clawing out upon it. Scrambling across, he launched himself again desperately, sank almost out of sight, rose and began swimming, with all the energy of courage and despair combined.

But already he was opposite the head of the island. Could he make it? The man's own muscles strained and heaved in unconscious sympathy with that struggle. The bear was a gallant swimmer, and for a moment it looked as if there might be the ghost of a chance for him. But no; the torrent had too deadly a grip upon his long-furred bulk. He would just miss that last safe ledge!

In his eagerness, and without any conscious thought of what he was doing, the man stepped down into the water knee-deep, bracing himself, and clinging with his left hand to a tough projecting root. Closer came the bear, beating down the splintered refuse that obstructed him, his long, black body laboring dauntlessly. Closer he came—but not quite close enough to get his strong paws on the rock. A foot more would have done it—but that paltry foot he was unable to make good.

The man could not stand it. It was quite too fine a beast to be dragged over the falls before his eyes, if he could help it. Reaching out swiftly with his right hand, he caught the swimmer by the long fur of his neck, and heaved with all his strength.

For a moment he wondered if he could hold on. The great current drew and sucked, almost irresistibly. But his grip was of steel, his muscles sound and tense. For a moment or two the situation hung in doubt. Then the swimmer, stroking desperately, began to gain. A moment more and that narrow, deadly foot of space was covered. The animal got first one paw upon the rocks, then the other. With prompt discretion, the woodsman dropped his hold and stepped back to the top of the island, suddenly grown doubtful of his own wisdom.

Drawing himself just clear of the torrent, the bear crouched, panting, for several minutes, exhausted from the tremendous struggle; and the man, on the top of the rock, waited with his hand upon his knife hilt to see what would come of his reckless act. In reality, however, he did not look for trouble, knowing intuitively as he did the natures of the wild kindreds. He was merely holding himself on guard against the unexpected. But he soon saw that his caution was unnecessary. Recovering breath, the bear clambered around the very edge of the rocks to the farther side of the island, as far as possible from his rescuer. There he seated himself upon his haunches, and devoted himself to gazing down, as if fascinated, at the cauldron from which he had been snatched.

During the next half-hour the woodsman began to think. For the present, he knew that the bear was quite inoffensive, being both grateful and overawed. But there was no food on the island for either, except the other. So the fight was bound to be renewed at last. And after that, whoever might be the victor, what remained for him? From that island, on the lip of the fall and walled about with wild rapids, there could be no escape. The situation was not satisfactory from any point of view. But that it was clear against his principles to knuckle down, under any conditions, to beast or man or fate, the woodsman might have permitted himself to wish that, after all, his ice-cake had missed the island. As it was, however, he took another bite from his plug of "blackjack" and set himself to whittling a stick.

With a backwoodsman's skill in the art of whittling, he had made good progress toward the shaping of a toy hand-sled, when, looking up from his task, he saw something that mightily changed the face of affairs. He threw away the half-shaped toy, thrust the knife back into his belt, and rose to his feet. After a long, sagacious survey of the flood, he drew his knife again and proceeded to cut himself a stout staff, a sort of alpenstock. He saw that an ice-jam was forming just above the falls.

The falls of the Big Fork lie at a sharp elbow of the river, and cross the channel on a slant. Immediately above them the river shoals sharply, and though at ordinary seasons there is only one island visible, at times of low water huge rocks appear all along the brink. It chanced, at this particular time, that after the first run of the ice had passed there came a second run that was mixed with logs.

This ice, moreover, was less rotten than that which had formed near the falls, and it came down in larger cakes. When some of these big cakes, cemented with logs, grounded on the head of the island, the nucleus of a jam was promptly formed. At the same time some logs, deeply frozen into another floe, caught and hung on one of the unseen mid-stream ledges. An accumulation gathered in the crook of the elbow, over on the further shore; and then, as if by magic, the rush stopped, the flood ran almost clear from the lip of the falls, and the river was closed from bank to bank.

The woodsman sat quietly watching, as if it were a mere idle spectacle, instead of the very bridge of life, that was forming before his eyes. Little by little the structure welded itself, the masses of drift surging against the barrier, piling up and diving under, till it was compacted and knit to the very bottom—and the roar of the falls dwindled with the diminishing of the stream. This was the moment for which the man was waiting. Now, if ever, the jam was solid, and might hold so until he gained the further shore. But beyond this moment every second of delay only served to gather the forces that were straining to break the obstruction. He knew that in a very few minutes the rising weight of the flood must either sweep all before it or flow roaring over the top of the jam in a new cataract that would sweep the island bare. He sprang to his feet, grasped his stick, and scanned the tumbled, precarious surface, choosing his path. Then he turned and looked at the bear, wondering if that animal's woodcraft were subtler than his own to distinguish when the jam was secure. He found that the bear was eyeing him anxiously, and not looking at the ice at all; so he chuckled, told himself that if he didn't know more than a bear he'd no business in the woods, and stepped resolutely forth upon the treacherous pack. Before he had gone ten paces the bear jumped up with a whimper, and followed hastily, plainly conceding that the man knew more than he.

In the strange sudden quiet, the shrunken falls clamouring thinly and the broken ice swishing against the upper side of the jam, the man picked his way across the slippery, chaotic surface, expecting every moment that it would crumble with a roar from under his feet. About ten or a dozen yards behind him came the bear, stepping hurriedly, and trembling as he looked down at the diminished cataract. The miracle of the vanishing falls daunted his spirit most effectively, and he seemed to think that the whole mysterious phenomenon was of the man's creating. When the two reached shore, the flood was already boiling far up the bank. Without so much as a thank you, the bear scurried past his rescuer, and made off through the timber like a scared cat. The man looked after him with a slow smile, then turned and scanned the perilous path he had just traversed. As he did so, the jam seemed to melt away in mid-channel. Then a terrific, rending roar tortured the air. The mass of logs and ice, and all the incalculable weight of imprisoned waters hurled themselves together over the brink with a stupefying crash, and throbbing volumes of spray leaped skyward. The woodsman's lean face never changed a muscle, but presently, giving a hitch to his breeches under the belt, he muttered thoughtfully:

“Blame good thing we come away when we did!”

Then, turning on his larriganed¹ heels, he strode up the trail till the great woods closed about him and the raving thunders gradually died into quiet.

1. Larrigan. An oil-tanned moccasin with a long sock often reaching the knee.

Activities

The Truce

Study Questions

1. From whose point of view is the story written?
2. Quickly read the article "[Real and Sham Natural History](#)" by John Burroughs. What is his main negative critique of both Roberts regarding his description of the porcupine in *Kindred of the Wild* (which Burroughs called "the most brilliant collection of animal stories that has appeared") and Ernest Thompson Seton's story of the cottontail rabbit "[Raggylug](#)" [PDF] from *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898)?

Activity

In 1903, the American naturalist John Burroughs (1837–1921) criticized the animal stories of Roberts and others in an article called "Real and Sham Natural History" in *Atlantic Monthly* vol. 91, no. 545 (March 1903), pp. 298-310. Roberts later took part in this "nature fakers" controversy. Read and then, in an essay, summarize Burroughs's article, and try to find either Roberts's, Jack London's, or Ernest Thompson Seton's published rebuttals to this article. Start with the *Atlantic Monthly* article by Burroughs above and the online article "[Nature fakers controversy](#)". Another excellent source on Edsitement is "[Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*: "Nature Faker"?](#)"

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30.

E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake) (1861–1913)

E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake) (1895), wearing her performance costume. Cochran, Library and Archives Canada, accession number 1952-010, C-085125

Biography

Emily Pauline Johnson was born in 1861 at “Chiefswood,” the home her father built for his wife on what is now the largest First Nations reserve in Canada—the Six Nations reserve—near Brantford in present-day Ontario. Since her father was the Mohawk Chief Onwanonsyshon (George Johnson) and her mother was an Englishwoman, Emily Susanna Howells, the family enjoyed two cultural heritages. Chief Tekahionwake, Pauline’s great-grandfather, was the first to take the British name Johnson. He named himself after Sir William Johnson, his godfather and British Superintendent of Indian Affairs, who in turn was given the Mohawk name, Warraghiyagey.

During their Chiefswood period, her family hosted many distinguished guests, including Queen Victoria’s daughter and son Princess Louise and Prince Arthur, who served as the tenth Governor General of Canada.

Home-schooled in her early years, she later attended Brantford Central Collegiate. After the death of her father in 1884, Mrs. Johnson and her daughters left Chiefswood and moved to Brantford, Ontario.

In the 1880s, Johnson wrote and performed in amateur theatre productions as well as began publishing poems in the United States and Canada. In 1895, her first volume of poetry, *The White Wampum*, was published. She continued to publish poems and prose in various magazines and newspapers, and as her reputation grew, she began signing her work as both E. Pauline Johnson and

Tekahionwake, her great-grandfather's name, thereby emphasizing her Mohawk identity and creating the "Indian princess" persona.

From 1892 until 1909, she gave a series of successful poetry and prose recitals across Canada, the United States, and Britain. While visiting London for the second time in 1906, she met Squamish Chief Sa7plek (pronounced *Sahp-luk*), also known as Joe Capilano, and his delegation, who were there protesting against hunting and fishing restrictions imposed on the First Nations of the British Columbia coast.

In 1909, she moved to Vancouver to concentrate on writing. She soon began publishing Indigenous legends recounted to her by Capilano, first in the *Vancouver Province* newspaper, later collected in book form as *Legends of Vancouver* (1911). She died of breast cancer in 1913 and, at her request, was buried in Stanley Park.

A Red Girl's Reasoning

"Be pretty good to her, Charlie, my boy, or she'll balk sure as shooting."

That was what old Jimmy Robinson said to his brand-new son-in-law, while they waited for the bride to reappear.

"Oh! you bet, there's no danger of much else. I'll be good to her, help me Heaven," replied Charlie McDonald, brightly.

"Yes, of course you will," answered the old man, "but don't you forget, there's a good big bit of her mother in her, and," closing his left eye significantly, "you don't understand these Indians as I do."

"But I'm just as fond of them, Mr. Robinson," Charlie said assertively, "and I get on with them too, now, don't I?"

"Yes, pretty well for a town boy; but when you have lived forty years among these people, as I have done; when you have had your wife as long as I have had mine—for there's no getting over it, Christine's disposition is as native as her mother's, every bit—and perhaps when you've owned for eighteen years a daughter as dutiful, as loving, as fearless, and, alas! as obstinate as that little piece you are stealing away from me to-day—I tell you, youngster, you'll know more than you know now. It is kindness for kindness, bullet for bullet, blood for blood. Remember, what you are, she will be," and the old Hudson Bay trader scrutinized Charlie McDonald's face like a detective.

It was a happy, fair face, good to look at, with a certain ripple of dimples somewhere about the mouth, and eyes that laughed out the very sunniness of their owner's soul. There was not a severe nor yet a weak line anywhere. He was a well-meaning young fellow, happily disposed, and a great favorite with the tribe at Robinson's Post, whither he had gone in the service of the Department of Agriculture, to assist the local agent through the tedium of a long census-taking. As a boy he had had the Indian relic-hunting craze, as a youth he had studied Indian archaeology and folk-lore, as a man he consummated his predilections for Indianology, by loving, winning and marrying the quiet little daughter of the English trader, who himself had married a native woman twenty years ago. The country was all backwoods, and the Post miles and miles from even the semblance of civilization, and the lonely young Englishman's heart had gone out to the girl who, apart from speaking a very few words of English, was utterly uncivilized and uncultured, but had withal that marvellously innate refinement so universally possessed by the higher tribes of North American Indians.

Like all her race, observant, intuitive, having a horror of ridicule, consequently quick at acquirement and teachable in mental and social habits, she had developed from absolute pagan indifference into a sweet, elderly Christian woman, whose broken English, quiet manner, and still handsome copper-colored face, were the joy of old Robinson's declining years.

He had given their daughter Christine all the advantages of his own learning—which, if truthfully told, was not universal; but the girl had a fair common education, and the native adaptability to progress.

She belonged to neither and still to both types of the cultured Indian. The solemn, silent, almost heavy manner of the one so commingled with the gesticulating Frenchness and vivacity of the other, that one unfamiliar with native Canadian life would find it difficult to determine her nationality.

She looked very pretty to Charles McDonald's loving eyes, as she reappeared in the doorway, holding her mother's hand and saying some happy words of farewell. Personally she looked much the same as her sisters, all Canada through, who are the offspring of red and white parentage—olive-complexioned, gray-eyed, black-haired, with figure slight and delicate, and the wistful, unfathomable

expression in her whole face that turns one so heart-sick as they glance at the young Indians of to-day—it is the forerunner too frequently of “the white man’s disease,” consumption¹—but McDonald was pathetically in love, and thought her the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in his life.

There had not been much of a wedding ceremony. The priest had cantered through the service in Latin, pronounced the benediction in English, and congratulated the “happy couple” in Indian, as a compliment to the assembled tribe in the little amateur structure that did service at the post as a sanctuary.

But the knot was tied as firmly and indissolubly as if all Charlie McDonald’s swell city friends had crushed themselves up against the chancel to congratulate him, and in his heart he was deeply thankful to escape the flower-pelting, white gloves, rice-throwing, and ponderous stupidity of a breakfast, and indeed all the regulation gimcracks of the usual marriage celebrations, and it was with a hand trembling with absolute happiness that he assisted his little Indian wife into the old muddy buckboard that, hitched to an underbred-looking pony, was to convey them over the first stages of their journey. Then came more adieus, some hand-clasping, old Jimmy Robinson looking very serious just at the last, Mrs. Jimmy, stout, stolid, betraying nothing of visible emotion, and then the pony, rough-shod and shaggy, trudged on, while mutual hand-waves were kept up until the old Hudson Bay Post dropped out of sight, and the buckboard with its lightsome load of hearts deliriously happy, jogged on over the uneven trail.

She was “all the rage” that winter at the provincial capital.² The men called her a “deuced fine little woman.” The ladies said she was “just the sweetest wildflower.” Whereas she was really but an ordinary, pale, dark girl who spoke slowly and with a strong accent, who danced fairly well, sang acceptably, and never stirred outside the door without her husband.

Charlie was proud of her; he was proud that she had “taken” so well among his friend, proud that she bore herself so complacently in the drawing-rooms of the wives of pompous Government officials, but doubly proud of her almost abject devotion to him. If ever human being was worshipped that being was Charlie McDonald; it could scarcely have been otherwise, for the almost godlike strength of his passion for that little wife of his would have mastered and melted a far more invincible citadel than an already affectionate woman’s heart.

Favorites socially, McDonald and his wife went everywhere. In fashionable circles she was “new”—a potent charm to acquire popularity, and the little velvet-clad figure was always the centre of interest among all the women in the room. She always dressed in velvet. No woman in Canada, has she but the faintest dash of native blood in her veins, but loves velvets and silks. As beef to the Englishman, wine to the Frenchman, fads to the Yankee, so are velvet and silk to the Indian girl, be she wild as prairie grass, be she on the borders of civilization, or, having stepped within its boundary, mounted the steps of culture even under its superficial heights.

“Such a dolling little appil blossom,” said the wife of a local M.P., who brushed up her etiquette and English once a year at Ottawa. “Does she always laugh so sweetly, and gobble you up with those great big gray eyes of her, when you are togetheah at home, Mr. McDonald? If so, I should think youah pooah brothah would feel himself terrible *de trop*³.”

He laughed lightly. “Yes, Mrs. Stuart, there are not two of Christie; she is the same at home and abroad, and as for Joe, he doesn’t mind us a bit; he’s no end fond of her.”

“I’m very glad he is. I always fancied he did not care for her, d’you know.”

If ever a blunt woman existed it was Mrs. Stuart. She really meant nothing, but her remark bothered Charlie. He was fond of his brother, and jealous for Christie’s popularity. So that night when he and Joe were having a pipe, he said:

1. Tuberculosis.
2. Toronto.
3. Unwelcome.

“I’ve never asked you yet what you thought of her, Joe.” A brief pause, then Joe spoke. “I’m glad she loves you.”

“Why?”

“Because that girl has but two possibilities regarding humanity—love or hate.” “Humph! Does she love or hate *you*?”

“Ask her.”

“You talk bosh. If she hated you, you’d get out. If she loved you I’d *make* you get out.” Joe McDonald whistled a little, then laughed.

“Now that we are on the subject, I might as well ask—honestly, old man, wouldn’t you and Christie prefer keeping house alone to having me always around?”

“Nonsense, sheer nonsense. Why, thunder, man, Christie’s no end fond of you, and as for me—you surely don’t want assurances from me?”

“No, but I often think a young couple—”

“Young couple be blowed! After a while when they want you and your old surveying chains, and spindle-legged tripod telescope kickshaws, farther west, I venture to say the little woman will cry her eyes out—won’t you, Christie?” This last in a higher tone, as through clouds of tobacco smoke he caught sight of his wife passing the doorway.

She entered. “Oh, no, I would not cry; I never do cry, but I would be heart-sore to lose you Joe, and apart from that”—a little wickedly—“you may come in handy for an exchange someday, as Charlie does always say when he hoards up duplicate relics.”

“Are Charlie and I duplicates?”

“Well—not exactly”—her head a little to one side, and eyeing them both merrily, while she slipped softly on to the arm of her husband’s chair—“but, in the event of Charlie’s failing me”—everyone laughed then. The “someday” that she spoke of was nearer than they thought. It came about in this wise.

There was a dance at the Lieutenant-Governor’s, and the world and his wife were there. The nob⁴ were in great feather that night, particularly the women, who flaunted about in new gowns and much splendor. Christie McDonald had a new gown also, but wore it with the utmost unconcern, and if she heard any of the flattering remarks made about her she at least appeared to disregard them.

“I never dreamed you could wear blue so splendidly,” said Captain Logan, as they sat out a dance together.

“Indeed she can, though,” interposed Mrs. Stuart, halting in one of her gracious sweeps down the room with her husband’s private secretary.

“Don’t shout so, captain. I can hear every sentence you uttah—of course Mrs. McDonald can wear blue—she has a morning gown of cadet blue that she is a picture in.”

“You are both very kind,” said Christie. “I like blue; it is the color of all the Hudson’s Bay posts, and the factor’s residence is always decorated in blue.”

“Is it really? How interesting—do tell us some more of your old home, Mrs. McDonald; you so seldom speak of your life at the post, and we fellows so often wish to hear of it all,” said Logan eagerly. “Why do you not ask me of it, then?”

“Well—er, I’m sure I don’t know; I’m fully interested in the Ind—in your people—your mother’s people, I mean, but it always seems so personal, I suppose; and— a—a—”

“Perhaps you are, like all other white people, afraid to mention my nationality to me.”

The captain winced and Mrs. Stuart laughed uneasily. Joe McDonald was not far off, and he was

4. Wealthy people with high social standing.

listening, and chuckling, and saying to himself, "That's you, Christie, lay 'em out; it won't hurt 'em to know how they appear once in a while."

"Well, Captain Logan," she was saying, "what is it you would like to hear—of my people, or my parents, or myself?"

"All, all, my dear," cried Mrs. Stuart clamorously. "I'll speak for him—tell us of yourself and your mother—your father is delightful, I am sure—but then he is only an ordinary Englishman, not half as interesting as a foreigner, or—or, perhaps I should say, a native."

Christie laughed. "Yes," she said, "my father often teases my mother now about how *very* native she was when he married her; then, how could she have been otherwise? She did not know a word of English, and there was not another English-speaking person besides my father and his two companions within sixty miles."

"Two companions, eh? one a Catholic priest and the other a wine merchant, I suppose, and with your father in the Hudson Bay, they were good representatives of the pioneers in the New World," remarked Logan, waggishly.

"Oh, no, they were all Hudson Bay men. There were no rum-sellers and no missionaries in that part of the country then."

Mrs. Stuart looked puzzled. "No *missionaries*?" she repeated with an odd intonation.

Christie's insight was quick. There was a peculiar expression of interrogation in the eyes of her listeners, and the girl's blood leapt angrily up into her temples as she said hurriedly, "I know what you mean; I know what you are thinking. You were wondering how my parents were married—"

"Well—er, my dear, it seems peculiar—if there was no priest, and no magistrate, why—a—" Mrs. Stuart paused awkwardly.

"The marriage was performed by Indian rites," said Christie.

"Oh, do tell me about it; is the ceremony very interesting and quaint—are your chieftains anything like Buddhist priests?" It was Logan who spoke.

"Why, no," said the girl in amazement at that gentleman's ignorance. "There is no ceremony at all, save a feast. The two people just agree to live only with and for each other, and the man takes his wife to his home, just as you do. There is no ritual to bind them; they need none; an Indian's word was his law in those days, you know."

Mrs. Stuart stepped backwards. "Ah!" was all she said. Logan removed his eye-glass and stared blankly at Christie. "And did McDonald marry you in this singular fashion?" He questioned.

"Oh, no, we were married by Father O'Leary. Why do you ask?" "Because if he had, I'd have blown his brain out to-morrow."

Mrs. Stuart's partner, who had hitherto been silent, coughed and began to twirl his cuff stud nervously, but nobody took any notice of him. Christie had risen, slowly, ominously—risen, with the dignity and pride of an empress.

"Captain Logan," she said, "what do you dare to say to me? What do you dare to mean? Do you presume to think it would not have been lawful for Charlie to marry me according to my people's rites? Do you for one instant dare to question that my parents were not as legally—"

"Don't, dear, don't," interrupted Mrs. Stuart hurriedly; "it is bad enough now, goodness knows; don't make—" Then she broke off blindly. Christie's eyes glared at the mumbling woman, at her uneasy partner, at the horrified captain. Then they rested on the McDonald brothers, who stood within earshot, Joe's face scarlet, her husband's white as ashes, with something in his eyes she had never seen before. It was Joe who saved the situation.

Stepping quickly across towards his sister-in-law, he offered her his arm, saying, "The next dance is ours, I think, Christie."

Then Logan pulled himself together, and attempted to carry Mrs. Stuart off for the waltz, but for

once in her life that lady had lost her head. “It is shocking!” she said, “outrageously shocking! I wonder if they told Mr. McDonald before he married her!” Then looking hurriedly round, she too saw the young husband’s face—and knew that they had not.

“Humph! deuced nice kettle of fish—and poor old Charlie has always thought so much of honorable birth.”

Logan thought he spoke in an undertone, but “poor old Charlie” heard him. He followed his wife and brother across the room. “Joe,” he said, “will you see that a trap is called?” Then to Christie, “Joe will see that you get home all right.” He wheeled on his heel then and left the ball-room.

Joe *did* see.

He tucked a poor, shivering, pallid little woman into a cab, and wound her bare throat up in the scarlet velvet cloak that was hanging uselessly over her arm. She crouched down beside him, saying, “I am so cold, Joe; I am so cold,” but she did not seem to know enough to wrap herself up. Joe felt all through this long drive that nothing this side of Heaven would be so good as to die, and he was glad when the little voice at his elbow said, “What is he so angry at, Joe?”

“I don’t know exactly, dear,” he said gently, “but I think it was what you said about this Indian marriage.”

“But why should I not have said it? Is there anything wrong about it?” she asked pitifully.

“Nothing, that I can see—there was no other way; but Charlie is very angry, and you must be brave and forgiving with him, Christie, dear.”

“But I did never see him like that before, did you?”

“Once.”

“When?”

“Oh, at college, one day, a boy tore his prayer book in half, and threw it into the grate, just to be mean, you know. Our mother had given it to him at his confirmation.”

“And did he look so?”

“About, but it all blew over in a day—Charlie’s tempers are short and brisk. Just don’t take any notice of him; run off to bed, and he’ll have forgotten it by the morning.”

They reached home at last. Christie said goodnight quietly, going directly to her room.

Joe went to his room also, filled a pipe and smoked for an hour. Across the passage he could hear her slippered feet pacing up and down, up and down the length of her apartment. There was something panther-like in those restless footfalls, a meaning velvetyness that made him shiver, and again he wished he were dead—or elsewhere.

After a time the hall door opened, and someone came upstairs, along the passage, and to the little woman’s room. As he entered, she turned and faced him.

“Christie,” he said harshly, “do you know what you have done?”

“Yes,” taking a step nearer him, her whole soul springing up into her eyes, “I have angered you, Charlie, and—”

“Angered me? You have disgraced me; and, moreover, you have disgraced yourself and both your parents.”

“*Disgraced?*”

“Yes, *disgraced*; you have literally declared to the whole city that your father and mother were never married, and that you are the child of—what shall we call it—love? certainly not legality.”

Across the hallway sat Joe McDonald, his blood freezing; but it leapt into every vein like fire at the awful anguish in the little voice that cried simply, “Oh! Charlie!”

“How could you do it, how could you do it, Christie, without shame either for yourself or for me, let alone your parents?”

The voice was like an angry demon's—not a trace was there in it of the yellow-haired, blue-eyed, laughing-lipped boy who had driven away so gaily to the dance five hours before.

“Shame? Why should I be ashamed of the rites of my people any more than you should be ashamed of the customs of yours—of a marriage more sacred and holy than half of your white man's mockeries.”

It was the voice of another nature in the girl—the love and the pleading were dead in it. “Do you mean to tell me, Charlie—you who have studied my race and their laws for years—do you mean to tell me that, because there was no priest and no magistrate, my mother was not married? Do you mean to say that all my forefathers, for hundreds of years back, have been illegally born? If so, you blacken my ancestry beyond—beyond—beyond all reason.”

“No, Christie, I would not be so brutal as that; but your father and mother live in more civilized times. Father O'Leary has been at the post for nearly twenty years. Why was not your father straight enough to have the ceremony performed when he *did* get the chance?”

The girl turned upon him with the face of a fury. “Do you suppose,” she almost hissed, “that my mother would be married according to your *white* rites after she had been five years a wife, and I had been born in the meantime? No, a thousand times I say, *no*. When the priest came with his notions of Christianizing, and talked to them of re-marriage by the Church, my mother arose and said, ‘Never—never—I have never had but this one husband; he has had none but me for wife, and to have you re-marry us would be to say as much to the whole world as that we had never been married before. [Fact.] You go away; *I* do not ask that *your* people be re-married; talk not so to me. I *am* married, and you or the Church cannot do or undo it.’”

“Your father was a fool not to insist upon the law, and so was the priest.”

“Law? *My* people have *no* priest, and my nation cringes not to law. Our priest is purity, and our law is honor. Priest? Was there a *priest* at the most holy marriage known to humanity—that stainless marriage whose offspring is the God you white men told my pagan mother of?”

“Christie—you are *worse* than blasphemous; such a profane remark shows how little you understand the sanctity of the Christian faith—”

“I know what I *do* understand; it is that you are hating me because I told some of the beautiful customs of my people to Mrs. Stuart and those men.”

“Pooh! who cares for them? It is not them; the trouble is they won't keep their mouths shut. Logan's a cad and will toss the whole tale about at the club to-morrow night; and as for the Stuart woman, I'd like to know how I'm going to take you to Ottawa for presentation and the opening, while she is blabbing the whole miserable scandal in every drawing-room, and I'll be pointed out as a romantic fool, and you— as worse; I *can't* understand why your father didn't tell me before we were married; I at least might have warned you never to mention it.” Something of recklessness rang up through his voice, just as the panther-likeness crept up from her footsteps and couched herself in hers. She spoke in tones quiet, soft, deadly.

“Before we were married! Oh! Charlie, would it have—made—any—difference?” “God knows,” he said, throwing himself into a chair, his blonde hair rumpled and wet. It was the only boyish thing about him now.

She walked towards him, then halted in the centre of the room. “Charlie McDonald,” she said, and it was as if a stone had spoken, “look up.” He raised his head, startled by her tone. There was a threat in her eyes that, had his rage been less courageous, his pride less bitterly wounded, would have cowed him.

“There was no such time as that before our marriage, for we *are not married now*. Stop,” she said, outstretching her palms against him as he sprang to his feet, “I tell you we are not married. Why should I recognize the rites of your nation when you do not acknowledge the rites of mine? According to your

own words, my parents should have gone through your church ceremony as well as through an Indian contract; according to *my* words, *we* should go through an Indian contract as well as through a church marriage. If their union is illegal, so is ours. If you think my father is living in dishonor with my mother, my people will think I am living in dishonor with you. How do I know when another nation will come and conquer you as you white men conquered us? And they will have another marriage rite to perform, and they will tell us another truth, that you are not my husband, that you are but disgracing and dishonoring me, that you are keeping me here, not as your wife, but as your—your—*squaw*.”

The terrible word had never passed her lips before, and the blood stained her face to her very temples. She snatched off her wedding ring and tossed it across the room, saying scornfully, “That thing is as empty to me as the Indian rites to you.”

He caught her by the wrists; his small white teeth were locked tightly, his blue eyes blazed into hers.

“Christine, do you dare doubt my honor towards you? *you*, whom I should have died for; do you *dare* to think I have kept you here, not as my wife, but—”

“Oh, God! You are hurting me; you are breaking my arm,” she gasped.

The door was flung open, and Joe McDonald’s sinewy hands clinched like vices on his brother’s shoulders.

“Charlie, you’re mad, mad as the devil. Let go of her this minute.”

The girl staggered backwards as the iron fingers loosed her wrists. “Oh! Joe,” she cried, “I am not his wife, and he says I am born—nameless.”

“Here,” said Joe, shoving his brother towards the door. “Go downstairs till you can collect your senses. If ever a being acted like an infernal fool, you’re the man.”

The young husband looked from one to the other, dazed by his wife’s insult, abandoned to a fit of ridiculously childish temper. Blind as he was with passion, he remembered long afterwards seeing them standing there, his brother’s face darkened with a scowl of anger—his wife, clad in the mockery of her ball dress, her scarlet velvet cloak half covering her bare brown neck and arms, her eyes like flames of fire, her face like a piece of sculptured graystone.

Without a word he flung himself furiously from the room, and immediately afterwards they heard the heavy hall door bang behind him.

“Can I do anything for you, Christie?” asked her brother-in-law calmly. “No, thank you—unless—I think I would like a drink of water, please.”

He brought her up a goblet filled with wine; her hand did not even tremble as she took it. As for Joe, a demon arose in his soul as he noticed she kept her wrists covered.

“Do you think he will come back?” she said.

“Oh, yes, of course; he’ll be all right in the morning. Now go to bed like a good little girl, and—and, I say, Christie, you can call me if you want anything; I’ll be right here, you know.”

“Thank you, Joe; you are kind—and good.”

He returned then to his apartment. His pipe was out, but he picked up a newspaper instead, threw himself into an armchair, and in a half-hour was in the land of dreams.

When Charlie came home in the morning, after a six-mile walk into the country and back again, his foolish anger was dead and buried. Logan’s “Poor old Charlie” did not ring so distinctly in his ears. Mrs. Stuart’s horrified expression had faded considerably from his recollection. He thought only of that surprisingly tall, dark girl, whose eyes looked like coals, whose voice pierced him like a flint-tipped arrow. Ah, well, they would never quarrel again like that, he told himself. She loved him so, and would forgive him after he had talked quietly to her, and told her what an ass he was.

She was simple-minded and awfully ignorant to pitch those old Indian laws at him in her fury, but he could not blame her; oh, no, he could not for one moment blame her. He had been terribly severe and unreasonable, and the horrid McDonald temper had got the better of him; and he loved her so. Oh! He

loved her so! She would surely feel that, and forgive him, and— He went straight to his wife's room. The blue velvet evening dress lay on the chair into which he had thrown himself when he doomed his life's happiness by those two words, "God knows." A bunch of dead daffodils and her slippers were on the floor, everything—but Christie.

He went to his brother's bedroom door.

"Joe," he called, rapping nervously thereon; "Joe, wake up; where's Christie, d'you know?" "Good Lord, no," gasped that youth, springing out of his armchair and opening the door. As he did so a note fell from off the handle. Charlie's face blanched to his very hair while Joe read aloud, his voice weakening at every word:

"DEAR OLD JOE,—I went into your room at daylight to get that picture of the Post on your bookshelves. I hope you do not mind, but I kissed your hair while you slept; it was so curly, and yellow, and soft, just like his. Good-bye, Joe.

CHRISTIE."

And when Joe looked into his brother's face and saw the anguish settle in those laughing blue eyes, the despair that drove the dimples away from that almost girlish mouth; when he realized that this boy was but four-and-twenty years old, and that all his future was perhaps darkened and shadowed forever, a great, deep sorrow arose in his heart, and he forgot all things, all but the agony that rang up through the voice of the fair, handsome lad as he staggered forward, crying, "Oh! Joe—what shall I do—what shall I do!"

It was months and months before he found her, but during all that time he had never known a hopeless moment; discouraged he often was, but despondent, never. The sunniness of his ever-boyish heart radiated with warmth that would have flooded a much deeper gloom than that which settled within his eager young life. Suffer? ah! yes, he suffered, not with locked teeth and stony stoicism, not with the masterful self-command, the reserve, the conquered bitterness of the still-water sort of nature, that is supposed to run to such depths. He tried to be bright, and his sweet old boyish self. He would laugh sometimes in a pitiful, pathetic fashion. He took to petting dogs, looking into their large, solemn eyes with his wistful, questioning blue ones; he would kiss them, as women sometimes do, and call them "dear old fellow," in tones that had tears; and once in the course of his travels while at a little way-station, he discovered a huge St. Bernard imprisoned by some mischance in an empty freight car; the animal was nearly dead from starvation, and it seemed to salve his own sick heart to rescue back the dog's life. Nobody claimed the big starving creature, the train hands knew nothing of its owner, and gladly handed it over to its deliverer. "Hudson," he called it, and afterwards when Joe McDonald would relate the story of his brother's life he invariably terminated it with, "And I really believe that big lumbering brute saved him." From what, he was never to say.

But all things end, and he heard of her at last. She had never returned to the Post, as he at first thought she would, but had gone to the little town of B——, in Ontario, where she was making her living at embroidery and plain sewing.

The September sun had set redly when at last he reached the outskirts of the town, opened up the wicket gate, and walked up the weedy, unkept path leading to the cottage where she lodged.

Even through the twilight, he could see her there, leaning on the rail of the verandah—oddly enough she had about her shoulders the scarlet velvet cloak she wore when he had flung himself so madly from the room that night.

The moment the lad saw her his heart swelled with a sudden heat, burning moisture leapt into his eyes, and clogged his long, boyish lashes. He bounded up the steps—"Christie," he said, and the word scorched his lips like audible flame.

She turned to him, and for a second stood magnetized by his passionately wistful face; her peculiar grayish eyes seemed to drink the very life of his unquenchable love, though the tears that suddenly

sprang into his seemed to absorb every pulse in his body through those hungry, pleading eyes of his that had, oh! so often been blinded by her kisses when once her whole world lay in their blue depths.

“You will come back to me, Christie, my wife? My wife, you will let me love you again?”

She gave a singular little gasp and shook her head. “Don’t, oh! don’t,” he cried piteously. “You will come to me, dear? it is all such a bitter mistake—I did not understand. Oh! Christie, I did not understand, and you’ll forgive me, and love me again, won’t you—won’t you?”

“No,” said the girl with quick, indrawn breath.

He dashed the back of his hand across his wet eyelids. His lips were growing numb, and he bungled over the monosyllable “Why?”

“I do not like you,” she answered quietly. “God! Oh! God, what is there left?”

She did not appear to hear the heart-break in his voice; she stood like one wrapped in sombre thought; no blaze, no tear, nothing in her eyes; no hardness, no tenderness about her mouth. The wind was blowing her cloak aside, and the only visible human life in her whole body was once when he spoke the muscles of her brown arm seemed to contract.

“But, darling, you are mine—*mine*—we are husband and wife! Oh, heaven, you *must* love me, and you *must* come to me again.”

“You cannot *make* me come,” said the icy voice, “neither church, nor law, nor even”—and the voice softened— “nor even love can make a slave of a red girl.”

“Heaven forbid it,” he faltered. “No, Christie, I will never claim you without your love. What reunion would that be? But oh, Christie, you are lying to me, you are lying to yourself, you are lying to heaven.”

She did not move. If only he could touch her he felt as sure of her yielding as he felt sure there was a hereafter. The memory of the times when he had but to lay his hand on her hair to call a most passionate response from her filled his heart with a torture that choked all words before they reached his lips; at the thought of those days he forgot she was unapproachable, forgot how forbidding were her eyes, how stony her lips. Flinging himself forward, his knee on the chair at her side, his face pressed hardly in the folds of the cloak on her shoulder, he clasped his arms about her with a boyish petulance, saying, “Christie, Christie, my little girl wife, I love you, I love you, and you are killing me.”

She quivered from head to foot as his fair, wavy hair brushed her neck, his despairing face sank lower until his cheek, hot as fire, rested on the cool, olive flesh of her arm. A warm moisture oozed up through her skin, and as he felt its glow he looked up. Her teeth, white and cold, were locked over her under lip, and her eyes were as gray stones.

Not murderers alone know the agony of a death sentence.

“Is it all useless? all useless, dear?” he said, with lips starving for hers.

“All useless,” she repeated. “I have no love for you now. You forfeited me and my heart months ago, when you said *those two words*.”

His arms fell away from her wearily, he arose mechanically, he placed his little gray checked cap on the back of his yellow curls, the old-time laughter was dead in the blue eyes that now looked scared and haunted, the boyishness and the dimples crept away forever from the lips that quivered like a child’s; he turned from her, but she had looked once into his face as the Law Giver must have looked at the land of Canaan⁵ outspread at his feet. She watched him go down the long path and through the picket gate, she watched the big yellowish dog that had waited for him lumber up on to its feet—stretch—then follow him. She was conscious of but two things, the vengeful lie in her soul, and a little space on her arm that his wet lashes had brushed.

5. The promised land which God gave to Abraham and his descendants.

It was hours afterwards when he reached his room. He had said nothing, done nothing—what use were words or deeds? Old Jimmy Robinson was right; she had “balked” sure enough.

What a bare, hotelish room it was! He tossed off his coat and sat for ten minutes looking blankly at the sputtering gas jet. Then his whole life, desolate as a desert, loomed up before him with appalling distinctness. Throwing himself on the floor beside his bed, with clasped hands and arms outstretched on the white counterpane, he sobbed. “Oh! God, dear God, I thought you loved me; I thought you’d let me have her again, but you must be tired of me, tired of loving me too. I’ve nothing left now, nothing! it doesn’t seem that I even have you to-night.”

He lifted his face then, for his dog, big and clumsy and yellow, was licking at his sleeve.

Activities

A Red Girl's Reasoning

Study Questions

1. What is the main conflict in the story?
2. What are the story's settings?
3. Describe the social circle to which Charlie was accustomed in the provincial capital of Toronto. What does the word "swell" mean? Check the definition in the Canadian Oxford Dictionary or in a good college dictionary.
4. Describe Mrs. Stuart.
5. Describe Charlie's brother Joe McDonald.
6. Why does Captain Logan refer to Charlie as "poor old Charlie"?
7. What is the main disagreement between Charlie and Christine?
8. To what does Christine refer as "the most holy marriage known to humanity"?
9. How does Johnson critique stereotypes about women and Indigenous people in the story?
10. What does Charlie say that leads to the couple's breakup?

Activities

1. Read the short [CanLit study guide on Johnson](#) from the University of British Columbia (*Canadian Literature*) Apr. 2013.
2. Next, read Johnson's essay "[A Strong Race Opinion](#)" [PDF] (file provided by the [CanLit Guides page on "A Strong Race Opinion"](#)), in which she argues that North American literature represents Aboriginal women in a stereotypical way. How does "A Red Girl's Reasoning" reflect Johnson's criticism of North American representations of Indigenous women in "A Strong Race Opinion"? Is Christine her Indigenous heroine?
3. Look up the term "assimilation" in Canadian history. Does Christine reject the notion of assimilation?

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31.

O. Henry (1862-1910)



Biography

William Sidney Porter (who wrote under his pen name, O. Henry) was born on September 11, 1862, in Greensboro, North Carolina. When William was three, his mother died, and he and his physician father moved into the home of his paternal grandmother. As a child, Porter read widely. Until he turned fifteen, he received tutoring from his aunt, and by the age of nineteen, he was licensed as a pharmacist.

For health reasons, in 1882, Porter moved to Texas, where he became a ranch hand and his health improved. In 1884, he travelled to Austin, Texas, where he stayed for a number of years. He spent some time again working as a pharmacist and began writing on the side.

In 1887, Porter eloped with Athol Estes, who had been ill with tuberculosis. Two years later, she gave birth to a daughter.

Porter later began working at the First National Bank of Austin as a teller and bookkeeper, and in 1894, he was accused by the bank of embezzlement and lost his job, but he was not indicted at the time.

Porter's father-in-law posted bail to keep him out of jail. He was due to stand trial on July 7, 1896, but the day before, as he was changing trains to get to the courthouse, he fled to New Orleans and later to Honduras, with which the United States had no extradition treaty. Porter had sent Athol and Margaret back to Austin to live with Athol's parents. Athol became too ill to meet Porter in Honduras as he had planned. When he learned that his wife was dying, Porter returned to Austin in February 1897 and surrendered to the court, pending trial. Athol Estes Porter died from tuberculosis on July 25, 1897.

Found guilty on February 17, 1898, of embezzling \$854.08, he was sentenced to five years in prison

at the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus. Porter was a licensed pharmacist and was able to work in the prison hospital as the night druggist. He was given his own room in the hospital wing, and there is no record that he actually spent time in the cell block of the prison. He had fourteen stories published under various pseudonyms while he was in prison but was becoming best known as “O. Henry,” a pseudonym that first appeared over the story “Whistling Dick’s Christmas Stocking” in the December 1899 issue of *McClure’s Magazine*. A friend of his in New Orleans would forward his stories to publishers so that they had no idea that the writer was imprisoned.

Porter was released on July 24, 1901, for good behaviour after serving three years. He reunited with his daughter Margaret, now age 11, in Pittsburgh, where Athol’s parents had moved after Porter’s conviction. Margaret was never told that her father had been in prison—just that he had been away on business.

Porter’s most prolific writing period started in 1902, when he moved to New York City to be near his publishers. While there, he wrote 381 short stories. He wrote a story a week for over a year for the *New York World Sunday Magazine*. His wit, characterization, and plot twists were adored by his readers but often panned by critics.

Porter married again in 1907 to his childhood sweetheart Sarah Lindsey Coleman, whom he met again after revisiting his native state of North Carolina. Sarah Lindsey Coleman was herself a writer and wrote a romanticized and fictionalized version of their correspondence and courtship in her novella *Wind of Destiny*.

Porter was a heavy drinker, and by 1908, his markedly deteriorating health affected his writing. In 1909, Sarah left him, and he died on June 5, 1910.

Cabbages and Kings (1904) was his first collection of stories, followed by *The Four Million* (1906), whose title is something of a rebuke to a prominent society journalist. In the book’s preface, Porter criticized the journalist’s “assertion that there were only ‘Four Hundred’ people in New York City who were really worth noticing. But a wiser man has arisen—the census taker—and his larger estimate of human interest has been preferred in marking out the field of these little stories of the ‘Four Million.’” To O. Henry, everyone in New York counted.

After Twenty Years

The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely 10 o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh de-peopled the streets.

Trying doors as he went, twirling his club with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye adown the pacific thoroughfare, the officer, with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace. The vicinity was one that kept early hours. Now and then you might see the lights of a cigar store or of an all-night lunch counter; but the majority of the doors belonged to business places that had long since been closed.

When about midway of a certain block the policeman suddenly slowed his walk. In the doorway of a darkened hardware store a man leaned, with an unlighted cigar in his mouth. As the policeman walked up to him the man spoke up quickly.

"It's all right, officer," he said, reassuringly. "I'm just waiting for a friend. It's an appointment made twenty years ago. Sounds a little funny to you, doesn't it? Well, I'll explain if you'd like to make certain it's all straight. About that long ago there used to be a restaurant where this store stands—'Big Joe' Brady's restaurant."

"Until five years ago," said the policeman. "It was torn down then."

The man in the doorway struck a match and lit his cigar. The light showed a pale, square-jawed face with keen eyes, and a little white scar near his right eyebrow. His scarfpin was a large diamond, oddly set.

"Twenty years ago to-night," said the man, "I dined here at 'Big Joe' Brady's with Jimmy Wells, my best chum, and the finest chap in the world. He and I were raised here in New York, just like two brothers, together. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. The next morning I was to start for the West to make my fortune. You couldn't have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what distance we might have to come. We figured that in twenty years each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be."

"It sounds pretty interesting," said the policeman. "Rather a long time between meets, though, it seems to me. Haven't you heard from your friend since you left?"

"Well, yes, for a time we corresponded," said the other. "But after a year or two we lost track of each other. You see, the West is a pretty big proposition, and I kept hustling around over it pretty lively. But I know Jimmy will meet me here if he's alive, for he always was the truest, stanchest old chap in the world. He'll never forget. I came a thousand miles to stand in this door to-night, and it's worth it if my old partner turns up."

The waiting man pulled out a handsome watch, the lids of it set with small diamonds.

"Three minutes to ten," he announced. "It was exactly ten o'clock when we parted here at the restaurant door."

"Did pretty well out West, didn't you?" asked the policeman.

"You bet! I hope Jimmy has done half as well. He was a kind of plodder, though, good fellow as he

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was. I've had to compete with some of the sharpest wits going to get my pile. A man gets in a groove in New York. It takes the West to put a razor-edge on him."

The policeman twirled his club and took a step or two.

"I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right. Going to call time on him sharp?"

"I should say not!" said the other. "I'll give him half an hour at least. If Jimmy is alive on earth he'll be here by that time. So long, officer."

"Good-night, sir," said the policeman, passing on along his beat, trying doors as he went.

There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady blow. The few foot passengers astir in that quarter hurried dismally and silently along with coat collars turned high and pocketed hands. And in the door of the hardware store the man who had come a thousand miles to fill an appointment, uncertain almost to absurdity, with the friend of his youth, smoked his cigar and waited.

About twenty minutes he waited, and then a tall man in a long overcoat, with collar turned up to his ears, hurried across from the opposite side of the street. He went directly to the waiting man.

"Is that you, Bob?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Is that you, Jimmy Wells?" cried the man in the door.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the new arrival, grasping both the other's hands with his own. "It's Bob, sure as fate. I was certain I'd find you here if you were still in existence. Well, well, well!—twenty years is a long time. The old restaurant's gone, Bob; I wish it had lasted, so we could have had another dinner there. How has the West treated you, old man?"

"Bully; it has given me everything I asked it for. You've changed lots, Jimmy. I never thought you were so tall by two or three inches."

"Oh, I grew a bit after I was twenty."

"Doing well in New York, Jimmy?"

"Moderately. I have a position in one of the city departments. Come on, Bob; we'll go around to a place I know of, and have a good long talk about old times."

The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, his egotism enlarged by success, was beginning to outline the history of his career. The other, submerged in his overcoat, listened with interest.

At the corner stood a drug store, brilliant with electric lights. When they came into this glare each of them turned simultaneously to gaze upon the other's face.

The man from the West stopped suddenly and released his arm.

"You're not Jimmy Wells," he snapped. "Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's nose from a Roman to a pug."

"It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one," said the tall man. "You've been under arrest for ten minutes, 'Silky' Bob. Chicago thinks you may have dropped over our way and wires us she wants to have a chat with you. Going quietly, are you? That's sensible. Now, before we go on to the station here's a note I was asked to hand you. You may read it here at the window. It's from Patrolman Wells."

The man from the West unfolded the little piece of paper handed him. His hand was steady when he began to read, but it trembled a little by the time he had finished. The note was rather short.

Bob: I was at the appointed place on time. When you struck a match to light your cigar I saw it was the face of the man wanted in Chicago. Somehow I couldn't do it myself, so I went around and got a plain clothes man to do the job.

Jimmy.

Activities

After Twenty Years

Study Questions

1. Discuss the major irony revealed in the last section of the story.
2. Of the three types of irony, which one does it best illustrate: verbal irony, dramatic irony, or irony of situation?
3. Discuss the main difference between Jimmy and Bob in terms of their values.
4. Discuss the importance of the line near the end of the story, “It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one.” What is the theme of this story?
5. Find the two jewellery images and explain their significance.
6. Why was Jimmy twenty minutes late for the two men’s appointment?
7. Why does the tall policeman who walks with Bob wear his coat “up to his ears”?
8. What thematic purpose is served by the description of the first policeman as “guarding the peace”?
9. In terms of setting, how is “the West” contrasted with “New York”? What adjective in popular culture is often used before “West”? Find one line of Bob’s that suggests a key difference.
10. In the film script (using the closed captioning), find at least three examples of incorrect transcription in the movie adaptation below.
11. Write a short paper arguing that the policeman described in the first few paragraphs is or is not Jimmy Wells.

Activity

Please watch the following short film adaptation, produced in 2016 by an Indian production company. It soon becomes clear that the actors are not Americans, but Indians. Does this fact lessen your appreciation of the film? Discuss the effectiveness of the setting, the soundtrack, and the lighting. [Watch the short film adaptation of O. Henry’s “After Twenty Years”](#).

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32.

Edith Wharton (1862–1937)



Biography

Edith Wharton was an American author, born Edith Newbold Jones. She was born into a wealthy New York family, whose wealth and privilege made it the alleged source of the phrase “keeping up with the Joneses.” She was a prolific author of nearly twenty novels and many short stories, essays, poems, and works of non-fiction, and is best known for her novels and novellas, such as *The House of Mirth* (1905), *Ethan Frome* (1911), and *The Age of Innocence* (1920). For this last book she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, making her the first female recipient of this award.

Many of her novels of manners show New York society, often depicting individuals struggling against its rigid conventions and moral codes. Her marriage to a wealthy but older Bostonian was an unhappy one, and after gaining a divorce from Edward “Teddy” Wharton, who for years struggled with a mental disorder, she settled in Paris and later, in the south of France at Castel Sainte Claire in Hyères.

In 1932, Aldous Huxley wrote an article praising *Twilight Sleep* (1927), her novel satirizing modern materialistic values, noting that Edith Wharton “has laid her finger on the essential act about modern superstitions. They give results here and now; and if they don’t give results, they fail. People turn to the supernatural for some immediate benefit—such as slenderer hips, freedom from worry, shortcuts to success, improved digestions, money. They want not truth, but power” (*Aldous Huxley’s Hearst Essays*, ed. J. Sexton, New York 1994). Later he wrote a kind of fan letter to Wharton from his own villa nearby in Sanary-sur-Mer, near Marseille, and they remained friends until her death, exchanging visits a few times a year.

Roman Fever

Published 1934

From the table at which they had been lunching two American ladies of ripe but well-cared-for middle age moved across the lofty terrace of the Roman restaurant and, leaning on its parapet, looked first at each other, and then down on the outspread glories of the Palatine¹ and the Forum, with the same expression of vague but benevolent approval.

As they leaned there a girlish voice echoed up gaily from the stairs leading to the court below. “Well, come along, then,” it cried, not to them but to an invisible companion, “and let’s leave the young things to their knitting,” and a voice as fresh laughed back: “Oh, look here, Babs, not actually knitting—” “Well, I mean figuratively,” rejoined the first. “After all, we haven’t left our poor parents much else to do. . . .” At that point the turn of the stairs engulfed the dialogue.

The two ladies looked at each other again, this time with a tinge of smiling embarrassment, and the smaller and paler one shook her head and colored slightly.

“Barbara!” she murmured, sending an unheard rebuke after the mocking voice in the stairway.

The other lady, who was fuller, and higher in color, with a small determined nose supported by vigorous black eyebrows, gave a good-humored laugh. “That’s what our daughters think of us.”

Her companion replied by a deprecating gesture. “Not of us individually. We must remember that. It’s just the collective modern idea of Mothers. And you see—” Half guiltily she drew from her handsomely mounted black handbag a twist of crimson silk run through by two fine knitting needles. “One never knows,” she murmured. “The new system has certainly given us a good deal of time to kill; and sometimes I get tired just looking—even at this.” Her gesture was now addressed to the stupendous scene at their feet.

The dark lady laughed again, and they both relapsed upon the view, contemplating it in silence, with a sort of diffused serenity which might have been borrowed from the spring effulgence of the Roman skies. The luncheon hour was long past, and the two had their end of the vast terrace to themselves. At its opposite extremity a few groups, detained by a lingering look at the outspread city, were gathering up guidebooks and fumbling for tips. The last of them scattered, and the two ladies were alone on the air-washed height.

“Well, I don’t see why we shouldn’t just stay here,” said Mrs. Slade, the lady of the high color and energetic brows. Two derelict basket chairs stood near, and she pushed them into the angle of the parapet, and settled herself in one, her gaze upon the Palatine. “After all, it’s still the most beautiful view in the world.”

“It always will be, to me,” assented her friend Mrs. Ansley, with so slight a stress on the “me” that Mrs. Slade, though she noticed it, wondered if it were not merely accidental, like the random underlinings of old-fashioned letter writers.

“Grace Ansley was always old-fashioned,” she thought; and added aloud, with a retrospective smile: “It’s a view we’ve both been familiar with for a good many years. When we first met here we were younger than our girls are now. You remember!”

“Oh, yes, I remember,” murmured Mrs. Ansley, with the same undefinable stress— “There’s that head-waiter wondering,” she interpolated. She was evidently far less sure than her companion of herself and of her rights in the world.

1. Centremost of the Seven Hills of Rome. It stands forty metres above the Roman Forum, the central plaza of ancient Rome.

“I’ll cure him of wondering,” said Mrs. Slade, stretching her hand toward a bag as discreetly opulent-looking as Mrs. Ansley’s. Signing to the headwaiter, she explained that she and her friend were old lovers of Rome, and would like to spend the end of the afternoon looking down on the view—that is, if it did not disturb the service! The headwaiter, bowing over her gratuity, assured her that the ladies were most welcome, and would be still more so if they would condescend to remain for dinner. A full moon night, they would remember....

Mrs. Slade’s black brows drew together, as though references to the moon were out of place and even unwelcome. But she smiled away her frown as the headwaiter retreated. “Well, why not! We might do worse. There’s no knowing, I suppose, when the girls will be back. Do you even know back from where? I don’t!”

Mrs. Ansley again colored slightly. “I think those young Italian aviators we met at the Embassy invited them to fly to Tarquinia² for tea. I suppose they’ll want to wait and fly back by moonlight.”

“Moonlight—moonlight! What a part it still plays. Do you suppose they’re as sentimental as we were?”

“I’ve come to the conclusion that I don’t in the least know what they are,” said Mrs. Ansley. “And perhaps we didn’t know much more about each other.”

“No, perhaps we didn’t.”

Her friend gave her a shy glance. “I never should have supposed you were sentimental, Alida.”

“Well, perhaps I wasn’t.” Mrs. Slade drew her lids together in retrospect; and for a few moments the two ladies, who had been intimate since childhood, reflected how little they knew each other. Each one, of course, had a label ready to attach to the other’s name; Mrs. Delphin Slade, for instance, would have told herself, or anyone who asked her, that Mrs. Horace Ansley, twenty-five years ago, had been exquisitely lovely—no, you wouldn’t believe it, would you! though, of course, still charming, distinguished.... Well, as a girl she had been exquisite; far more beautiful than her daughter, Barbara, though certainly Babs, according to the new standards at any rate, was more effective—had more edge, as they say. Funny where she got it, with those two nullities as parents. Yes; Horace Ansley was—well, just the duplicate of his wife. Museum specimens of old New York. Good-looking, irreproachable, exemplary. Mrs. Slade and Mrs. Ansley had lived opposite each other—actually as well as figuratively—for years. When the drawing-room curtains in No. 20 East Seventy-third Street were renewed, No. 23, across the way, was always aware of it. And of all the movings, buyings, travels, anniversaries, illnesses—the tame chronicle of an estimable pair. Little of it escaped Mrs. Slade. But she had grown bored with it by the time her husband made his big coup in Wall Street, and when they bought in upper Park Avenue had already begun to think: “I’d rather live opposite a speakeasy for a change; at least one might see it raided.” The idea of seeing Grace raided was so amusing that (before the move) she launched it at a woman’s lunch. It made a hit, and went the rounds—she sometimes wondered if it had crossed the street, and reached Mrs. Ansley. She hoped not, but didn’t much mind. Those were the days when respectability was at a discount, and it did the irreproachable no harm to laugh at them a little.

A few years later, and not many months apart, both ladies lost their husbands. There was an appropriate exchange of wreaths and condolences, and a brief renewal of intimacy in the half shadow of their mourning; and now, after another interval, they had run across each other in Rome, at the same hotel, each of them the modest appendage of a salient daughter. The similarity of their lot had again drawn them together, lending itself to mild jokes, and the mutual confession that, if in old days it must have been tiring to “keep up” with daughters, it was now, at times, a little dull not to.

No doubt, Mrs. Slade reflected, she felt her unemployment more than poor Grace ever would. It was

2. An old Italian city approximately fifty miles northwest of Rome, known for its ancient Etruscan tombs.

a big drop from being the wife of Delphin Slade to being his widow. She had always regarded herself (with a certain conjugal pride) as his equal in social gifts, as contributing her full share to the making of the exceptional couple they were: but the difference after his death was irremediable. As the wife of the famous corporation lawyer, always with an international case or two on hand, every day brought its exciting and unexpected obligation: the impromptu entertaining of eminent colleagues from abroad, the hurried dashes on legal business to London, Paris or Rome, where the entertaining was so handsomely reciprocated; the amusement of hearing in her wakes: "What, that handsome woman with the good clothes and the eyes is Mrs. Slade—the Slade's wife! Really! Generally the wives of celebrities are such frumps."

Yes; being the Slade's widow was a dullish business after that. In living up to such a husband all her faculties had been engaged; now she had only her daughter to live up to, for the son who seemed to have inherited his father's gifts had died suddenly in boyhood. She had fought through that agony because her husband was there, to be helped and to help; now, after the father's death, the thought of the boy had become unbearable. There was nothing left but to mother her daughter; and dear Jenny was such a perfect daughter that she needed no excessive mothering. "Now with Babs Ansley I don't know that I should be so quiet," Mrs. Slade sometimes half-enviously reflected; but Jenny, who was younger than her brilliant friend, was that rare accident, an extremely pretty girl who somehow made youth and prettiness seem as safe as their absence. It was all perplexing—and to Mrs. Slade a little boring. She wished that Jenny would fall in love—with the wrong man, even; that she might have to be watched, out-manuevered, rescued. And instead, it was Jenny who watched her mother, kept her out of drafts, made sure that she had taken her tonic...

Mrs. Ansley was much less articulate than her friend, and her mental portrait of Mrs. Slade was slighter, and drawn with fainter touches. "Alida Slade's awfully brilliant; but not as brilliant as she thinks," would have summed it up; though she would have added, for the enlightenment of strangers, that Mrs. Slade had been an extremely dashing girl; much more so than her daughter, who was pretty, of course, and clever in a way, but had none of her mother's—well, "vividness," someone had once called it. Mrs. Ansley would take up current words like this, and cite them in quotation marks, as unheard-of audacities. No; Jenny was not like her mother. Sometimes Mrs. Ansley thought Alida Slade was disappointed; on the whole she had had a sad life. Full of failures and mistakes; Mrs. Ansley had always been rather sorry for her....

So these two ladies visualized each other, each through the wrong end of her little telescope.

II

For a long time they continued to sit side by side without speaking. It seemed as though, to both, there was a relief in laying down their somewhat futile activities in the presence of the vast Memento Mori³ which faced them. Mrs. Slade sat quite still, her eyes fixed on the golden slope of the Palace of the Caesars, and after a while Mrs. Ansley ceased to fidget with her bag, and she too sank into meditation. Like many intimate friends, the two ladies had never before had occasion to be silent together, and Mrs. Ansley was slightly embarrassed by what seemed, after so many years, a new stage in their intimacy, and one with which she did not yet know how to deal.

Suddenly the air was full of that deep clangor of bells which periodically covers Rome with a roof of silver. Mrs. Slade glanced at her wristwatch. "Five o'clock already," she said, as though surprised.

Mrs. Ansley suggested interrogatively: "There's bridge at the Embassy at five." For a long time Mrs. Slade did not answer. She appeared to be lost in contemplation, and Mrs. Ansley thought the remark had escaped her. But after a while she said, as if speaking out of a dream: "Bridge, did you say! Not unless you want to.... But I don't think I will, you know."

3. A remembrance of human mortality. From Latin, "Remember you will die."

“Oh, no,” Mrs. Ansley hastened to assure her. “I don’t care to at all. It’s so lovely here; and so full of old memories, as you say.” She settled herself in her chair, and almost furtively drew forth her knitting. Mrs. Slade took sideways note of this activity, but her own beautifully cared-for hands remained motionless on her knee.

“I was just thinking,” she said slowly, “what different things Rome stands for to each generation of travelers. To our grandmothers, Roman fever;⁴ to our mothers, sentimental dangers—how we used to be guarded!—to our daughters, no more dangers than the middle of Main Street. They don’t know it—but how much they’re missing!”

The long golden light was beginning to pale, and Mrs. Ansley lifted her knitting a little closer to her eyes. “Yes, how we were guarded”

“I always used to think,” Mrs. Slade continued, “that our mothers had a much more difficult job than our grandmothers. When Roman fever stalked the streets it must have been comparatively easy to gather in the girls at the danger hour; but when you and I were young, with such beauty calling us, and the spice of disobedience thrown in, and no worse risk than catching cold during the cool hour after sunset, the mothers used to be put to it to keep us in—didn’t they!”

She turned again toward Mrs. Ansley, but the latter had reached a delicate point in her knitting. “One, two, three—slip two; yes, they must have been,” she assented, without looking up.

Mrs. Slade’s eyes rested on her with a deepened attention. “She can knit—in the face of this! How like her....”

Mrs. Slade leaned back, brooding, her eyes ranging from the ruins which faced her to the long green hollow of the Forum, the fading glow of the church fronts beyond it, and the outlying immensity of the Colosseum. Suddenly she thought: “It’s all very well to say that our girls have done away with sentiment and moonlight. But if Babs Ansley isn’t out to catch that young aviator—the one who’s a Marchese⁵—then I don’t know anything. And Jenny has no chance beside her. I know that too. I wonder if that’s why Grace Ansley likes the two girls to go everywhere together! My poor Jenny as a foil—!” Mrs. Slade gave a hardly audible laugh, and at the sound Mrs. Ansley dropped her knitting.

“Yes—?”

“I—oh, nothing. I was only thinking how your Babs carries everything before her. That Campolieri boy is one of the best matches in Rome. Don’t look so innocent, my dear—you know he is. And I was wondering, ever so respectfully, you understand... wondering how two such exemplary characters as you and Horace had managed to produce anything quite so dynamic.” Mrs. Slade laughed again, with a touch of asperity.

Mrs. Ansley’s hands lay inert across her needles. She looked straight out at the great accumulated wreckage of passion and splendor at her feet. But her small profile was almost expressionless. At length she said, “I think you overrate Babs, my dear.”

Mrs. Slade’s tone grew easier. “No; I don’t. I appreciate her. And perhaps envy you. Oh, my girl’s perfect; if I were a chronic invalid I’d—well, I think I’d rather be in Jenny’s hands. There must be times... but there! I always wanted a brilliant daughter... and never quite understood why I got an angel instead.”

Mrs. Ansley echoed her laugh in a faint murmur. “Babs is an angel too.”

“Of course—of course! But she’s got rainbow wings. Well, they’re wandering by the sea with their young men; and here we sit... and it all brings back the past a little too acutely.”

Mrs. Ansley had resumed her knitting. One might almost have imagined (if one had known her less well, Mrs. Slade reflected) that, for her also, too many memories rose from the lengthening shadows of

4. Malaria. Before Rome’s swamps were drained, malaria (from Ital., *mala aria*, bad air) was a risk due to the presence in the swamps of the Anopheles mosquito, carrier of the disease.

5. An Italian aristocrat.

those august ruins. But no; she was simply absorbed in her work. What was there for her to worry about! She knew that Babs would almost certainly come back engaged to the extremely eligible Campolieri. “And she’ll sell the New York house, and settle down near them in Rome, and never be in their way... she’s much too tactful. But she’ll have an excellent cook, and just the right people in for bridge and cocktails... and a perfectly peaceful old age among her grandchildren.”

Mrs. Slade broke off this prophetic flight with a recoil of self-disgust. There was no one of whom she had less right to think unkindly than of Grace Ansley. Would she never cure herself of envying her! Perhaps she had begun too long ago.

She stood up and leaned against the parapet, filling her troubled eyes with the tranquilizing magic of the hour. But instead of tranquilizing her the sight seemed to increase her exasperation. Her gaze turned toward the Colosseum. Already its golden flank was drowned in purple shadow, and above it the sky curved crystal clear, without light or color. It was the moment when afternoon and evening hang balanced in midheaven.

Mrs. Slade turned back and laid her hand on her friend’s arm. The gesture was so abrupt that Mrs. Ansley looked up, startled.

“The sun’s set. You’re not afraid, my dear?”

“Afraid—?”

“Of Roman fever or pneumonia! I remember how ill you were that winter. As a girl you had a very delicate throat, hadn’t you?”

“Oh, we’re all right up here. Down below, in the Forum, it does get deathly cold, all of a sudden... but not here.”

“Ah, of course you know because you had to be so careful.” Mrs. Slade turned back to the parapet. She thought: “I must make one more effort not to hate her.” Aloud she said: “Whenever I look at the Forum from up here, I remember that story about a great-aunt of yours, wasn’t she? A dreadfully wicked great-aunt?”

“Oh, yes; Great-aunt Harriet. The one who was supposed to have sent her young sister out to the Forum after sunset to gather a nightblooming flower for her album. All our great-aunts and grandmothers used to have albums of dried flowers.”

Mrs. Slade nodded. “But she really sent her because they were in love with the same man—”

“Well, that was the family tradition. They said Aunt Harriet confessed it years afterward. At any rate, the poor little sister caught the fever and died. Mother used to frighten us with the story when we were children.”

“And you frightened me with it, that winter when you and I were here as girls. The winter I was engaged to Delphin.”

Mrs. Ansley gave a faint laugh. “Oh, did I! Really frightened you? I don’t believe you’re easily frightened.”

“Not often; but I was then. I was easily frightened because I was too happy. I wonder if you know what that means?”

“I—yes... ” Mrs. Ansley faltered.

“Well, I suppose that was why the story of your wicked aunt made such an impression on me. And I thought: ‘There’s no more Roman fever, but the Forum is deathly cold after sunset—especially after a hot day. And the Colosseum’s even colder and damper.’”

“The Colosseum—?”

“Yes. It wasn’t easy to get in, after the gates were locked for the night. Far from easy. Still, in those days it could be managed; it was managed, often. Lovers met there who couldn’t meet elsewhere. You knew that?”

“I—I daresay. I don’t remember.”

“You don’t remember? You don’t remember going to visit some ruins or other one evening, just after dark, and catching a bad chill! You were supposed to have gone to see the moonrise. People always said that expedition was what caused your illness.”

There was a moment’s silence; then Mrs. Ansley rejoined: “Did they? It was all so long ago.”

“Yes. And you got well again—so it didn’t matter. But I suppose it struck your friends—the reason given for your illness. I mean—because everybody knew you were so prudent on account of your throat, and your mother took such care of you.... You had been out late sightseeing, hadn’t you, that night?”

“Perhaps I had. The most prudent girls aren’t always prudent. What made you think of it now?”

Mrs. Slade seemed to have no answer ready. But after a moment she broke out: “Because I simply can’t bear it any longer—”

Mrs. Ansley lifted her head quickly. Her eyes were wide and very pale. “Can’t bear what?”

“Why—your not knowing that I’ve always known why you went.”

“Why I went—?”

“Yes. You think I’m bluffing, don’t you? Well, you went to meet the man I was engaged to—and I can repeat every word of the letter that took you there.”

While Mrs. Slade spoke Mrs. Ansley had risen unsteadily to her feet. Her bag, her knitting and gloves, slid in a panic-stricken heap to the ground. She looked at Mrs. Slade as though she were looking at a ghost.

“No, no—don’t,” she faltered out.

“Why not? Listen, if you don’t believe me. ‘My one darling, things can’t go on like this. I must see you alone. Come to the Colosseum immediately after dark tomorrow. There will be somebody to let you in. No one whom you need fear will suspect’—but perhaps you’ve forgotten what the letter said?”

Mrs. Ansley met the challenge with an unexpected composure. Steadying herself against the chair she looked at her friend, and replied: “No; I know it by heart too.”

“And the signature? ‘Only your D.S.’ Was that it? I’m right, am I? That was the letter that took you out that evening after dark?”

Mrs. Ansley was still looking at her. It seemed to Mrs. Slade that a slow struggle was going on behind the voluntarily controlled mask of her small quiet face. “I shouldn’t have thought she had herself so well in hand,” Mrs. Slade reflected, almost resentfully. But at this moment Mrs. Ansley spoke. “I don’t know how you knew. I burned that letter at once.”

“Yes; you would, naturally—you’re so prudent!” The sneer was open now. “And if you burned the letter you’re wondering how on earth I know what was in it. That’s it, isn’t it?”

Mrs. Slade waited, but Mrs. Ansley did not speak.

“Well, my dear, I know what was in that letter because I wrote it!”

“You wrote it?”

“Yes.”

The two women stood for a minute staring at each other in the last golden light. Then Mrs. Ansley dropped back into her chair. “Oh,” she murmured, and covered her face with her hands.

Mrs. Slade waited nervously for another word or movement. None came, and at length she broke out: “I horrify you.”

Mrs. Ansley’s hands dropped to her knees. The face they uncovered was streaked with tears. “I wasn’t thinking of you. I was thinking—it was the only letter I ever had from him!”

“And I wrote it. Yes; I wrote it! But I was the girl he was engaged to. Did you happen to remember that?”

Mrs. Ansley’s head drooped again. “I’m not trying to excuse myself... I remembered...”

“And still you went?”

“Still I went.”

Mrs. Slade stood looking down on the small bowed figure at her side. The flame of her wrath had already sunk, and she wondered why she had ever thought there would be any satisfaction in inflicting so purposeless a wound on her friend. But she had to justify herself.

“You do understand? I’d found out—and I hated you, hated you. I knew you were in love with Delphin—and I was afraid; afraid of you, of your quiet ways, your sweetness... your... well, I wanted you out of the way, that’s all. Just for a few weeks; just till I was sure of him. So in a blind fury I wrote that letter... I don’t know why I’m telling you now.”

“I suppose,” said Mrs. Ansley slowly, “it’s because you’ve always gone on hating me.”

“Perhaps. Or because I wanted to get the whole thing off my mind.” She paused. “I’m glad you destroyed the letter. Of course I never thought you’d die.”

Mrs. Ansley relapsed into silence, and Mrs. Slade, leaning above her, was conscious of a strange sense of isolation, of being cut off from the warm current of human communion. “You think me a monster!”

“I don’t know... It was the only letter I had, and you say he didn’t write it”

“Ah, how you care for him still!”

“I cared for that memory,” said Mrs. Ansley.

Mrs. Slade continued to look down on her. She seemed physically reduced by the blow—as if, when she got up, the wind might scatter her like a puff of dust. Mrs. Slade’s jealousy suddenly leaped up again at the sight. All these years the woman had been living on that letter. How she must have loved him, to treasure the mere memory of its ashes! The letter of the man her friend was engaged to. Wasn’t it she who was the monster?

“You tried your best to get him away from me, didn’t you? But you failed; and I kept him. That’s all.”

“Yes. That’s all.”

“I wish now I hadn’t told you. I’d no idea you’d feel about it as you do; I thought you’d be amused. It all happened so long ago, as you say; and you must do me the justice to remember that I had no reason to think you’d ever taken it seriously. How could I, when you were married to Horace Ansley two months afterward? As soon as you could get out of bed your mother rushed you off to Florence and married you. People were rather surprised—they wondered at its being done so quickly; but I thought I knew. I had an idea you did it out of pique—to be able to say you’d got ahead of Delphin and me. Kids have such silly reasons for doing the most serious things. And your marrying so soon convinced me that you’d never really cared.”

“Yes. I suppose it would,” Mrs. Ansley assented.

The clear heaven overhead was emptied of all its gold. Dusk spread over it, abruptly darkening the Seven Hills. Here and there lights began to twinkle through the foliage at their feet. Steps were coming and going on the deserted terrace—waiters looking out of the doorway at the head of the stairs, then reappearing with trays and napkins and flasks of wine. Tables were moved, chairs straightened. A feeble string of electric lights flickered out. A stout lady in a dustcoat suddenly appeared, asking in broken Italian if anyone had seen the elastic band which held together her tattered Baedeker. She poked with her stick under the table at which she had lunched, the waiters assisting.

The corner where Mrs. Slade and Mrs. Ansley sat was still shadowy and deserted. For a long time neither of them spoke. At length Mrs. Slade began again: “I suppose I did it as a sort of joke—”

“A joke?”

“Well, girls are ferocious sometimes, you know. Girls in love especially. And I remember laughing to myself all that evening at the idea that you were waiting around there in the dark, dodging out of sight,

listening for every sound, trying to get in—of course I was upset when I heard you were so ill afterward.”

Mrs. Ansley had not moved for a long time. But now she turned slowly toward her companion. “But I didn’t wait. He’d arranged everything. He was there. We were let in at once,” she said.

Mrs. Slade sprang up from her leaning position. “Delphin there! They let you in! Ah, now you’re lying!” she burst out with violence.

Mrs. Ansley’s voice grew clearer, and full of surprise. “But of course he was there. Naturally he came—”

“Came? How did he know he’d find you there? You must be raving!”

Mrs. Ansley hesitated, as though reflecting. “But I answered the letter. I told him I’d be there. So he came.”

Mrs. Slade flung her hands up to her face. “Oh, God—you answered! I never thought of your answering....”

“It’s odd you never thought of it, if you wrote the letter.”

“Yes. I was blind with rage.”

Mrs. Ansley rose, and drew her fur scarf about her. “It is cold here. We’d better go.... I’m sorry for you,” she said, as she clasped the fur about her throat.

The unexpected words sent a pang through Mrs. Slade. “Yes; we’d better go.” She gathered up her bag and cloak. “I don’t know why you should be sorry for me,” she muttered.

Mrs. Ansley stood looking away from her toward the dusky mass of the Colosseum. “Well—because I didn’t have to wait that night.”

Mrs. Slade gave an unquiet laugh. “Yes, I was beaten there. But I oughtn’t to begrudge it to you, I suppose. At the end of all these years. After all, I had everything; I had him for twenty-five years. And you had nothing but that one letter that he didn’t write.”

Mrs. Ansley was again silent. At length she took a step toward the door of the terrace, and turned back, facing her companion.

“I had Barbara,” she said, and began to move ahead of Mrs. Slade toward the stairway.

Activities

Roman Fever

Study Questions

1. Contrast Mrs. Slade and Mrs. Ansley in terms of appearance and character.
2. Contrast Alida Slade's and Grace Ansley's daughters, Barbara (Babs) and Jenny.
3. What is the medical name for roman fever? Is it a symbol? If so, what does it symbolize?
4. Discuss the significance of Grace Ansley's great-aunt Harriet to the plot.
5. Give a couple of examples of irony in the story.
6. What is the significance of the last line of the story?
7. What would you say is the climax of the story?
8. What does Grace's knitting symbolize?
9. What did Alida Slade appreciate most about being Mrs. Slade?
10. What is the main conflict in the story?

Activities

Look up Edith Wharton's biography. What autobiographical elements do you find in this story?

Three of Wharton's novels have been released as feature films: *Ethan Frome* (dir. John Madden, 1993), *The Age of Innocence* (dir. Martin Scorsese, 1993), and *The House of Mirth* (dir. Terence Davies, 2000). Watch this twenty-three-minute [short film adaptation of "Roman Fever"](#) that was released in 2014 (dir. Derek Coumts).

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33.

Hector Hugh Munro (Saki) (1870–1916)



Biography

Hector Hugh Munro (“Saki”) was born in Burma in 1870. His father was an inspector general in the Burma police, and when Hector was only two, his mother died following complications from a miscarriage. After their mother’s death, he and his two older siblings were raised in Devon by two strict and puritanical maiden aunts. In 1893, when he was in his early twenties, Munro joined the colonial Indian Imperial Police in Burma—just as the young Eric Blair (George Orwell) was to do years later. Malaria caused his return to England a year later, where he soon became a successful journalist and, by 1909, a popular writer of fiction. Many of his stories satirize Edwardian attitudes to the class structure—the nobility, the new rich, and the working classes. His pen name “Saki” is probably an allusion to the cupbearer in the Edward Fitzgerald translation of the *Rubáiyat of Omar Khayyám*, a very popular poem at the time.

His biographer describes his method: “Characters are defined with a bizarre name and a deft phrase or two, the wit depends on perfect wording and unexpected turns, and the action is often some kind of practical joke, aimed at deflating pretension or exposing cowardice....His epigrammatic style and witty, amoral young men such as Clovis Sangrail derive from Oscar Wilde, his fantastical humour owes much to Lewis Carroll, and some of his grimmer stories, like his politics, put him close to Kipling” (Dominic Hibberd, “Munro, Hector Hugh [Saki] (1870–1916),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004).

Even though, at the beginning of the First World War, he was 43 and officially too old to serve as a

soldier, Munro enlisted in the 22nd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. He refused a commission, but was soon promoted to lance sergeant. On November 16, 1916, while serving in France, he was killed by a German sniper's bullet. Allegedly, his last words were, "Put that bloody cigarette out!"

The Open Window

“My aunt will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel,” said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; “in the meantime you must try and put up with me.”

Framton Nuttel endeavoured to say the correct something which should duly flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing.

“I know how it will be,” his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; “you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul, and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there. Some of them, as far as I can remember, were quite nice.”

Framton wondered whether Mrs. Sappleton, the lady to whom he was presenting one of the letters of introduction, came into the nice division.

“Do you know many of the people round here?” asked the niece, when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communion.

“Hardly a soul,” said Framton. “My sister was staying here, at the rectory, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here.”

He made the last statement in a tone of distinct regret.

“Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?” pursued the self-possessed young lady.

“Only her name and address,” admitted the caller. He was wondering whether Mrs. Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. An undefinable something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation.

“Her great tragedy happened just three years ago,” said the child; “that would be since your sister’s time.”

“Her tragedy?” asked Framton; somehow in this restful country spot tragedies seemed out of place.

“You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon,” said the niece, indicating a large French window that opened on to a lawn.

“It is quite warm for the time of the year,” said Framton; “but has that window got anything to do with the tragedy?”

“Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their day’s shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favourite snipe-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It had been that dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the dreadful part of it.” Here the child’s voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. “Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back some day, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walk in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening till it is quite dusk. Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm, and Ronnie, her youngest brother, singing ‘Bertie, why do you bound?’¹ as he always did to tease her,

Published in 1911

1. A lyric from the song “Bertie the Bounder” in the popular Edwardian musical comedy *Our Miss Gibbs* (1909). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmB6J9eGThM>

because she said it got on her nerves. Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window —”

She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance.

“I hope Vera has been amusing you?” she said.

“She has been very interesting,” said Framton.

“I hope you don’t mind the open window,” said Mrs. Sappleton briskly; “my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way. They’ve been out for snipe in the marshes today, so they’ll make a fine mess over my poor carpets. So like you men-folk, isn’t it?”

She rattled on cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds, and the prospects for duck in the winter. To Framton it was all purely horrible. He made a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic; he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate coincidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary.

“The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise,” announced Framton, who laboured under the tolerably widespread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one’s ailments and infirmities, their cause and cure. “On the matter of diet they are not so much in agreement,” he continued.

“No?” said Mrs. Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention — but not to what Framton was saying.

“Here they are at last!” she cried. “Just in time for tea, and don’t they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!”

Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction.

In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window; they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house, and then a hoarse young voice chanted out of the dusk: “I said, Bertie, why do you bound?”

Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat; the hall-door, the gravel-drive, and the front gate were dimly-noted stages in his headlong retreat. A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid an imminent collision.

“Here we are, my dear,” said the bearer of the white mackintosh, coming in through the window; “fairly muddy, but most of it’s dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?”

“A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel,” said Mrs. Sappleton; “could only talk about his illnesses, and dashed off without a word of good-bye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost.”

“I expect it was the spaniel,” said the niece calmly; “he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make anyone lose their nerve.”

Romance at short notice was her specialty.

Activities

The Open Window

Study Questions

1. Consult a good dictionary and then clarify the meaning of the word “romance” in the last sentence.
2. In what way are the names of the three main characters well chosen?
3. Give an example of each of the three types of irony in the story: verbal, dramatic, and situational irony.

Activities

Watch the [short film *The Open Doors*](#), an adaptation of “The Open Window.”

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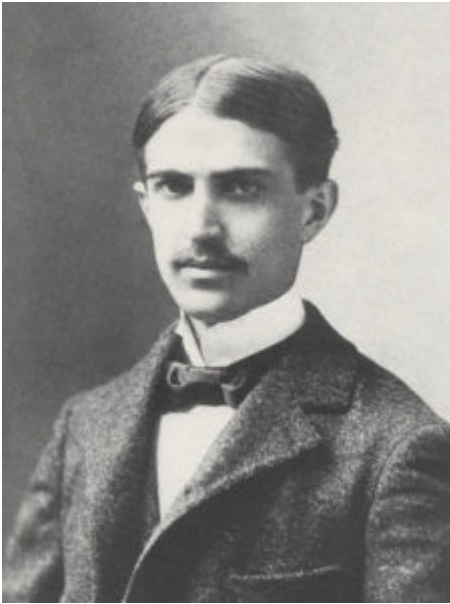
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34.

Stephen Crane (1871–1900)



Biography

Stephen Crane was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1871. He was the fourteenth and last child born to a Methodist minister and his devout wife. After the death of his father, Crane attended military school and later college, but eventually left to become a writer. He secured work as a freelance journalist, eventually accepting an assignment as a war correspondent in Cuba during the Spanish–American War. His first novel, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, published in 1893, offered a raw exploration of a young woman’s struggle to thrive in the slums of New York amid poverty and prostitution, and it represented a distinct departure from mainstream Realist works to a new literary style known as Naturalism. This philosophy emphasizes the ironies of human existence and the helplessness of people against the forces of society, nature, or fate.

Through his short life, Crane was a prolific writer, producing a significant number of poems, short stories, and journalistic pieces, as well as several other novels. While he never married, Crane established a relationship with Cora Taylor, a free-spirited bohemian from Jacksonville, Florida. The two travelled and lived abroad, eventually settling in England, where Crane’s health deteriorated from his long struggle with tuberculosis. Crane died at the young age of twenty-eight.

Most critics today see many of his major works as representative of American literary Naturalism. Taking issue with the Realism of William Dean Howells (1837–1920) as too restrictive and genteel and under the influence of Darwin’s ideas, Naturalist writers such as Crane and Jack London pushed for Realism to go further in scope and subject matter, to tackle grittier subjects such as poverty, crime,

violence, and other sociological ills of the increasingly urban landscapes of the late nineteenth century. Naturalist writers also explored humans at odds with the natural world—vast oceans, deserts, and frozen tundra—characterized as indifferent or even hostile to human striving and suffering.

In Crane's "The Open Boat," based on a real-life ordeal that Crane endured off the coast of Florida, the shipwreck survivors are depicted not as larger than life figures able to control their destinies through free will, but as small, insignificant dots on the vast and indifferent sea, unable to understand their plight or control the outcome of their desperate circumstances. While they fight for their lives, the correspondent comes to the stark conclusion that, after a brutal and exhausting fight to reach shore and safety, the waves may cause their dinghy to crash on the rocks, raising yet another hurdle to survival for the weakened and injured men, who must now swim to shore among the dangerous rocks in order to save their lives. As mentioned before, ideas such as justice, fairness, and mercy are shown as illusions in the Darwinian environment. The men are at the mercy of natural forces that they can neither understand nor control, and while they may feel some solidarity with one another in the boat, once it swamps, each man is alone in his struggle for survival.

The Blue Hotel

Published 1898

I

The Palace Hotel at Fort Romper was painted a light blue, a shade that is on the legs of a kind of heron, causing the bird to declare its position against any background. The Palace Hotel, then, was always screaming and howling in a way that made the dazzling winter landscape of Nebraska seem only a gray swampish hush. It stood alone on the prairie, and when the snow was falling the town two hundred yards away was not visible. But when the traveller alighted at the railway station he was obliged to pass the Palace Hotel before he could come upon the company of low clapboard houses which composed Fort Romper, and it was not to be thought that any traveller could pass the Palace Hotel without looking at it. Pat Scully, the proprietor, had proved himself a master of strategy when he chose his paints. It is true that on clear days, when the great trans-continental expresses, long lines of swaying Pullmans, swept through Fort Romper, passengers were overcome at the sight, and the cult that knows the brown-reds and the subdivisions of the dark greens of the East expressed shame, pity, horror, in a laugh. But to the citizens of this prairie town and to the people who would naturally stop there, Pat Scully had performed a feat. With this opulence and splendor, these creeds, classes, egotisms, that streamed through Romper on the rails day after day, they had no color in common.

As if the displayed delights of such a blue hotel were not sufficiently enticing, it was Scully's habit to go every morning and evening to meet the leisurely trains that stopped at Romper and work his seductions upon any man that he might see wavering, gripsack in hand.

One morning, when a snow-crueted engine dragged its long string of freight cars and its one passenger coach to the station, Scully performed the marvel of catching three men. One was a shaky and quick-eyed Swede, with a great shining cheap valise; one was a tall bronzed cowboy, who was on his way to a ranch near the Dakota line; one was a little silent man from the East, who didn't look it, and didn't announce it. Scully practically made them prisoners. He was so nimble and merry and kindly that each probably felt it would be the height of brutality to try to escape. They trudged off over the creaking board sidewalks in the wake of the eager little Irishman. He wore a heavy fur cap squeezed tightly down on his head. It caused his two red ears to stick out stiffly, as if they were made of tin.

At last, Scully, elaborately, with boisterous hospitality, conducted them through the portals of the blue hotel. The room which they entered was small. It seemed to be merely a proper temple for an enormous stove, which, in the centre, was humming with godlike violence. At various points on its surface the iron had become luminous and glowed yellow from the heat. Beside the stove Scully's son Johnnie was playing High-Five with an old farmer who had whiskers both gray and sandy. They were quarrelling. Frequently the old farmer turned his face towards a box of sawdust—colored brown from tobacco juice—that was behind the stove, and spat with an air of great impatience and irritation. With a loud flourish of words Scully destroyed the game of cards, and hustled his son up-stairs with part of the baggage of the new guests. He himself conducted them to three basins of the coldest water in the world. The cowboy and the Easterner burnished themselves fiery-red with this water, until it seemed to be some kind of a metal polish. The Swede, however, merely dipped his fingers gingerly and with trepidation. It was notable that throughout this series of small ceremonies the three travellers were

made to feel that Scully was very benevolent. He was conferring great favors upon them. He handed the towel from one to the other with an air of philanthropic impulse.

Afterwards they went to the first room, and, sitting about the stove, listened to Scully's officious clamor at his daughters, who were preparing the mid-day meal. They reflected in the silence of experienced men who tread carefully amid new people. Nevertheless, the old farmer, stationary, invincible in his chair near the warmest part of the stove, turned his face from the sawdust box frequently and addressed a glowing commonplace to the strangers. Usually he was answered in short but adequate sentences by either the cowboy or the Easterner. The Swede said nothing. He seemed to be occupied in making furtive estimates of each man in the room. One might have thought that he had the sense of silly suspicion which comes to guilt. He resembled a badly frightened man.

Later, at dinner, he spoke a little, addressing his conversation entirely to Scully. He volunteered that he had come from New York, where for ten years he had worked as a tailor. These facts seemed to strike Scully as fascinating, and afterwards he volunteered that he had lived at Romper for fourteen years. The Swede asked about the crops and the price of labor. He seemed barely to listen to Scully's extended replies. His eyes continued to rove from man to man.

Finally, with a laugh and a wink, he said that some of these Western communities were very dangerous; and after his statement he straightened his legs under the table, tilted his head, and laughed again, loudly. It was plain that the demonstration had no meaning to the others. They looked at him wondering and in silence.

II

As the men trooped heavily back into the front-room, the two little windows presented views of a turmoiling sea of snow. The huge arms of the wind were making attempts—mighty, circular, futile—to embrace the flakes as they sped. A gate-post like a still man with a blanched face stood aghast amid this profligate fury. In a hearty voice Scully announced the presence of a blizzard. The guests of the blue hotel, lighting their pipes, assented with grunts of lazy masculine contentment. No island of the sea could be exempt in the degree of this little room with its humming stove. Johnnie, son of Scully, in a tone which defined his opinion of his ability as a card-player, challenged the old farmer of both gray and sandy whiskers to a game of High-Five. The farmer agreed with a contemptuous and bitter scoff. They sat close to the stove, and squared their knees under a wide board. The cowboy and the Easterner watched the game with interest. The Swede remained near the window, aloof, but with a countenance that showed signs of an inexplicable excitement.

The play of Johnnie and the gray-beard was suddenly ended by another quarrel. The old man arose while casting a look of heated scorn at his adversary. He slowly buttoned his coat, and then stalked with fabulous dignity from the room. In the discreet silence of all other men the Swede laughed. His laughter rang somehow childish. Men by this time had begun to look at him askance, as if they wished to inquire what ailed him.

A new game was formed jocosely. The cowboy volunteered to become the partner of Johnnie, and they all then turned to ask the Swede to throw in his lot with the little Easterner. He asked some questions about the game, and, learning that it wore many names, and that he had played it when it was under an alias, he accepted the invitation. He strode towards the men nervously, as if he expected to be assaulted. Finally, seated, he gazed from face to face and laughed shrilly. This laugh was so strange that the Easterner looked up quickly, the cowboy sat intent and with his mouth open, and Johnnie paused, holding the cards with still fingers.

Afterwards there was a short silence. Then Johnnie said, "Well, let's get at it. Come on now!" They

pulled their chairs forward until their knees were bunched under the board. They began to play, and their interest in the game caused the others to forget the manner of the Swede.

The cowboy was a board-whacker. Each time that he held superior cards he whanged them, one by one, with exceeding force, down upon the improvised table, and took the tricks with a glowing air of prowess and pride that sent thrills of indignation into the hearts of his opponents. A game with a board-whacker in it is sure to become intense. The countenances of the Easterner and the Swede were miserable whenever the cowboy thundered down his aces and kings, while Johnnie, his eyes gleaming with joy, chuckled and chuckled.

Because of the absorbing play none considered the strange ways of the Swede. They paid strict heed to the game. Finally, during a lull caused by a new deal, the Swede suddenly addressed Johnnie: "I suppose there have been a good many men killed in this room." The jaws of the others dropped and they looked at him.

"What in hell are you talking about?" said Johnnie.

The Swede laughed again his blatant laugh, full of a kind of false courage and defiance. "Oh, you know what I mean all right," he answered.

"I'm a liar if I do!" Johnnie protested. The card was halted, and the men stared at the Swede. Johnnie evidently felt that as the son of the proprietor he should make a direct inquiry. "Now, what might you be drivin' at, mister?" he asked. The Swede winked at him. It was a wink full of cunning. His fingers shook on the edge of the board. "Oh, maybe you think I have been to nowheres. Maybe you think I'm a tenderfoot?"

"I don't know nothin' about you," answered Johnnie, "and I don't give a damn where you've been. All I got to say is that I don't know what you're driving at. There hain't never been nobody killed in this room."

The cowboy, who had been steadily gazing at the Swede, then spoke: "What's wrong with you, mister?"

Apparently it seemed to the Swede that he was formidably menaced. He shivered and turned white near the corners of his mouth. He sent an appealing glance in the direction of the little Easterner. During these moments he did not forget to wear his air of advanced pot-valor. "They say they don't know what I mean," he remarked mockingly to the Easterner.

The latter answered after prolonged and cautious reflection. "I don't understand you," he said, impassively.

The Swede made a movement then which announced that he thought he had encountered treachery from the only quarter where he had expected sympathy, if not help. "Oh, I see you are all against me. I see—"

The cowboy was in a state of deep stupefaction. "Say," he cried, as he tumbled the deck violently down upon the board "—say, what are you gittin' at, hey?"

The Swede sprang up with the celerity of a man escaping from a snake on the floor. "I don't want to fight!" he shouted. "I don't want to fight!"

The cowboy stretched his long legs indolently and deliberately. His hands were in his pockets. He spat into the sawdust box. "Well, who the hell thought you did?" he inquired.

The Swede backed rapidly towards a corner of the room. His hands were out protectingly in front of his chest, but he was making an obvious struggle to control his fright. "Gentlemen," he quavered, "I suppose I am going to be killed before I can leave this house! I suppose I am going to be killed before I can leave this house!" In his eyes was the dying-swan look. Through the windows could be seen the snow turning blue in the shadow of dusk. The wind tore at the house and some loose thing beat regularly against the clap-boards like a spirit tapping.

A door opened, and Scully himself entered. He paused in surprise as he noted the tragic attitude of the Swede. Then he said, "What's the matter here?"

The Swede answered him swiftly and eagerly: "These men are going to kill me."

"Kill you!" ejaculated Scully. "Kill you! What are you talkin'?"

The Swede made the gesture of a martyr.

Scully wheeled sternly upon his son. "What is this, Johnnie?"

The lad had grown sullen. "Damned if I know," he answered. "I can't make no sense to it." He began to shuffle the cards, fluttering them together with an angry snap. "He says a good many men have been killed in this room, or something like that. And he says he's goin' to be killed here too. I don't know what ails him. He's crazy, I shouldn't wonder."

Scully then looked for explanation to the cowboy, but the cowboy simply shrugged his shoulders.

"Kill you?" said Scully again to the Swede. "Kill you? Man, you're off your nut."

"Oh, I know," burst out the Swede. "I know what will happen. Yes, I'm crazy—yes. Yes, of course, I'm crazy—yes. But I know one thing—" There was a sort of sweat of misery and terror upon his face. "I know I won't get out of here alive."

The cowboy drew a deep breath, as if his mind was passing into the last stages of dissolution. "Well, I'm dog-goned," he whispered to himself.

Scully wheeled suddenly and faced his son. "You've been troublin' this man!"

Johnnie's voice was loud with its burden of grievance. "Why, good Gawd, I ain't done nothin' to 'im."

The Swede broke in. "Gentlemen, do not disturb yourselves. I will leave this house. I will go away because"—he accused them dramatically with his glance—"because I do not want to be killed."

Scully was furious with his son. "Will you tell me what is the matter, you young divil? What's the matter, anyhow? Speak out!"

"Blame it!" cried Johnnie in despair, "don't I tell you I don't know. He—he says we want to kill him, and that's all I know. I can't tell what ails him."

The Swede continued to repeat: "Never mind, Mr. Scully; never mind. I will leave this house. I will go away, because I do not wish to be killed. Yes, of course, I am crazy—yes. But I know one thing! I will go away. I will leave this house. Never mind, Mr. Scully; never mind. I will go away."

"You will not go 'way," said Scully. "You will not go 'way until I hear the reason of this business. If anybody has troubled you I will take care of him. This is my house. You are under my roof, and I will not allow any peaceable man to be troubled here." He cast a terrible eye upon Johnnie, the cowboy, and the Easterner.

"Never mind, Mr. Scully; never mind. I will go away. I do not wish to be killed." The Swede moved towards the door, which opened upon the stairs. It was evidently his intention to go at once for his baggage.

"No, no," shouted Scully peremptorily; but the white-faced man slid by him and disappeared.

"Now," said Scully severely, "what does this mane?"

Johnnie and the cowboy cried together: "Why, we didn't do nothin' to 'im!"

Scully's eyes were cold. "No," he said, "you didn't?"

Johnnie swore a deep oath. "Why this is the wildest loon I ever see. We didn't do nothin' at all. We were jest sittin' here play in' cards, and he—"

The father suddenly spoke to the Easterner. "Mr. Blanc," he asked, "what has these boys been doin'?"

The Easterner reflected again. "I didn't see anything wrong at all," he said at last, slowly.

Scully began to howl. "But what does it mane?" He stared ferociously at his son. "I have a mind to lather you for this, me boy."

Johnnie was frantic. "Well, what have I done?" he bawled at his father.

III

"I think you are tongue-tied," said Scully finally to his son, the cowboy, and the Easterner; and at the end of this scornful sentence he left the room.

Up-stairs the Swede was swiftly fastening the straps of his great valise. Once his back happened to be half turned towards the door, and, hearing a noise there, he wheeled and sprang up, uttering a loud cry. Scully's wrinkled visage showed grimly in the light of the small lamp he carried. This yellow effulgence, streaming upward, colored only his prominent features, and left his eyes, for instance, in mysterious shadow. He resembled a murderer.

"Man! man!" he exclaimed, "have you gone daffy?"

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" rejoined the other. "There are people in this world who know pretty nearly as much as you do—understand?"

For a moment they stood gazing at each other. Upon the Swede's deathly pale checks were two spots brightly crimson and sharply edged, as if they had been carefully painted. Scully placed the light on the table and sat himself on the edge of the bed. He spoke ruminatively. "By cracky, I never heard of such a thing in my life. It's a complete muddle. I can't, for the soul of me, think how you ever got this idea into your head." Presently he lifted his eyes and asked: "And did you sure think they were going to kill you?"

The Swede scanned the old man as if he wished to see into his mind. "I did," he said at last. He obviously suspected that this answer might precipitate an outbreak. As he pulled on a strap his whole arm shook, the elbow wavering like a bit of paper.

Scully banged his hand impressively on the foot-board of the bed. "Why, man, we're goin' to have a line of ilictric street-cars in this town next spring."

"A line of electric street-cars," repeated the Swede, stupidly.

"And," said Scully, "there's a new railroad goin' to be built down from Broken Arm to here. Not to mention the four churches and the smashin' big brick school-house. Then there's the big factory, too. Why, in two years Romper 'll be a *metropolis*."

Having finished the preparation of his baggage, the Swede straightened himself. "Mr. Scully," he said, with sudden hardihood, "how much do I owe you?"

"You don't owe me anythin'," said the old man, angrily.

"Yes, I do," retorted the Swede. He took seventy-five cents from his pocket and tendered it to Scully; but the latter snapped his fingers in disdainful refusal. However, it happened that they both stood gazing in a strange fashion at three silver pieces on the Swede's open palm.

"I'll not take your money," said Scully at last. "Not after what's been goin' on here." Then a plan seemed to strike him. "Here," he cried, picking up his lamp and moving towards the door. "Here! Come with me a minute."

"No," said the Swede, in overwhelming alarm.

"Yes," urged the old man. "Come on! I want you to come and see a picter—just across the hall—in my room."

The Swede must have concluded that his hour was come. His jaw dropped and his teeth showed like a dead man's. He ultimately followed Scully across the corridor, but he had the step of one hung in chains.

Scully flashed the light high on the wall of his own chamber. There was revealed a ridiculous photograph of a little girl. She was leaning against a balustrade of gorgeous decoration, and the

formidable bang to her hair was prominent. The figure was as graceful as an upright sled-stake, and, withal, it was of the hue of lead. "There," said Scully, tenderly, "that's the picter of my little girl that died. Her name was Carrie. She had the purtiest hair you ever saw! I was that fond of her, she—"

Turning then, he saw that the Swede was not contemplating the picture at all, but, instead, was keeping keen watch on the gloom in the rear.

"Look, man!" cried Scully, heartily. "That's the picter of my little gal that died. Her name was Carrie. And then here's the picter of my oldest boy, Michael. He's a lawyer in Lincoln, an' doin' well. I gave that boy a grand eddycation, and I'm glad for it now. He's a fine boy. Look at 'im now. Ain't he bold as blazes, him there in Lincoln, an honored an' respected gintleman. An honored an' respected gintleman," concluded Scully with a flourish. And, so saying, he smote the Swede jovially on the back.

The Swede faintly smiled.

"Now," said the old man, "there's only one more thing." He dropped suddenly to the floor and thrust his head beneath the bed. The Swede could hear his muffled voice. "I'd keep it under me piller if it wasn't for that boy Johnnie. Then there's the old woman—Where is it now? I never put it twice in the same place. Ah, now come out with you!"

Presently he backed clumsily from under the bed, dragging with him an old coat rolled into a bundle. "I've fetched him," he muttered. Kneeling on the floor, he unrolled the coat and extracted from its heart a large yellow-brown whiskey bottle.

His first maneuver was to hold the bottle up to the light. Reassured, apparently, that nobody had been tampering with it, he thrust it with a generous movement towards the Swede.

The weak-kneed Swede was about to eagerly clutch this element of strength, but he suddenly jerked his hand away and cast a look of horror upon Scully.

"Drink," said the old man affectionately. He had risen to his feet, and now stood facing the Swede.

There was a silence. Then again Scully said: "Drink!"

The Swede laughed wildly. He grabbed the bottle, put it to his mouth, and as his lips curled absurdly around the opening and his throat worked, he kept his glance, burning with hatred, upon the old man's face.

IV

After the departure of Scully the three men, with the card-board still upon their knees, preserved for a long time an astounded silence. Then Johnnie said: "That's the dod-dangest Swede I ever see."

"He ain't no Swede," said the cowboy, scornfully.

"Well, what is he then?" cried Johnnie. "What is he then?"

"It's my opinion," replied the cowboy deliberately, "he's some kind of a Dutchman." It was a venerable custom of the country to entitle as Swedes all light-haired men who spoke with a heavy tongue. In consequence the idea of the cowboy was not without its daring. "Yes, sir," he repeated. "It's my opinion this feller is some kind of a Dutchman."

"Well, he says he's a Swede, anyhow," muttered Johnnie, sulkily. He turned to the Easterner: "What do you think, Mr. Blanc?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied the Easterner.

"Well, what do you think makes him act that way?" asked the cowboy.

"Why, he's frightened." The Easterner knocked his pipe against a rim of the stove. "He's clear frightened out of his boots."

"What at?" cried Johnnie and cowboy together.

The Easterner reflected over his answer.

“What at?” cried the others again.

“Oh, I don’t know, but it seems to me this man has been reading dime-novels, and he thinks he’s right out in the middle of it—the shootin’ and stabbin’ and all.”

“But,” said the cowboy, deeply scandalized, “this ain’t Wyoming, ner none of them places. This is Nebrasker.”

“Yes,” added Johnnie, “an’ why don’t he wait till he gits *out West*?”

The travelled Easterner laughed. “It isn’t different there even—not in these days. But he thinks he’s right in the middle of hell.”

Johnnie and the cowboy mused long.

“It’s awful funny,” remarked Johnnie at last.

“Yes,” said the cowboy. “This is a queer game. I hope we don’t git snowed in, because then we’d have to stand this here man bein’ around with us all the time. That wouldn’t be no good.”

“I wish pop would throw him out,” said Johnnie.

Presently they heard a loud stamping on the stairs, accompanied by ringing jokes in the voice of old Scully, and laughter, evidently from the Swede. The men around the stove stared vacantly at each other. “Gosh!” said the cowboy. The door flew open, and old Scully, flushed and anecdotal, came into the room. He was jabbering at the Swede, who followed him, laughing bravely. It was the entry of two roisterers from a banquet-hall.

“Come now,” said Scully sharply to the three seated men, “move up and give us a chance at the stove.” The cowboy and the Easterner obediently sidled their chairs to make room for the new-comers. Johnnie, however, simply arranged himself in a more indolent attitude, and then remained motionless.

“Come! Git over, there,” said Scully.

“Plenty of room on the other side of the stove,” said Johnnie.

“Do you think we want to sit in the draught?” roared the father.

But the Swede here interposed with a grandeur of confidence. “No, no. Let the boy sit where he likes,” he cried in a bullying voice to the father.

“All right! All right!” said Scully, deferentially. The cowboy and the Easterner exchanged glances of wonder.

The five chairs were formed in a crescent about one side of the stove. The Swede began to talk; he talked arrogantly, profanely, angrily. Johnnie, the cowboy, and the Easterner maintained a morose silence, while old Scully appeared to be receptive and eager, breaking in constantly with sympathetic ejaculations.

Finally the Swede announced that he was thirsty. He moved in his chair, and said that he would go for a drink of water.

“I’ll git it for you,” cried Scully at once.

“No,” said the Swede, contemptuously. “I’ll get it for myself.” He arose and stalked with the air of an owner off into the executive parts of the hotel.

As soon as the Swede was out of hearing Scully sprang to his feet and whispered intensely to the others: “Up-stairs he thought I was tryin’ to poison ‘im.”

“Say,” said Johnnie, “this makes me sick. Why don’t you throw ‘im out in the snow?”

“Why, he’s all right now,” declared Scully. “It was only that he was from the East, and he thought this was a tough place. That’s all. He’s all right now.”

The cowboy looked with admiration upon the Easterner. “You were straight,” he said. “You were on to that there Dutchman.”

“Well,” said Johnnie to his father, “he may be all right now, but I don’t see it. Other time he was scared, but now he’s too fresh.”

Scully’s speech was always a combination of Irish brogue and idiom, Western twang and idiom, and

scraps of curiously formal diction taken from the story-books and newspapers, He now hurled a strange mass of language at the head of his son. "What do I keep? What do I keep? What do I keep?" he demanded, in a voice of thunder. He slapped his knee impressively, to indicate that he himself was going to make reply, and that all should heed. "I keep a hotel," he shouted. "A hotel, do you mind? A guest under my roof has sacred privileges. He is to be intimidated by none. Not one word shall he hear that would prejudice him in favor of goin' away. I'll not have it. There's no place in this here town where they can say they iver took in a guest of mine because he was afraid to stay here." He wheeled suddenly upon the cowboy and the Easterner. "Am I right?"

"Yes, Mr. Scully," said the cowboy, "I think you're right."

"Yes, Mr. Scully," said the Easterner, "I think you're right."

V

At six-o'clock supper, the Swede fizzed like a fire-wheel. He sometimes seemed on the point of bursting into riotous song, and in all his madness he was encouraged by old Scully. The Easterner was incased in reserve; the cowboy sat in wide-mouthed amazement, forgetting to eat, while Johnnie wrathily demolished great plates of food. The daughters of the house, when they were obliged to replenish the biscuits, approached as warily as Indians, and, having succeeded in their purpose, fled with ill-concealed trepidation. The Swede domineered the whole feast, and he gave it the appearance of a cruel bacchanal. He seemed to have grown suddenly taller; he gazed, brutally disdainful, into every face. His voice rang through the room. Once when he jabbed out harpoon-fashion with his fork to pinion a biscuit, the weapon nearly impaled the hand of the Easterner which had been stretched quietly out for the same biscuit.

After supper, as the men filed towards the other room, the Swede smote Scully ruthlessly on the shoulder. "Well, old boy, that was a good, square meal." Johnnie looked hopefully at his father; he knew that shoulder was tender from an old fall; and, indeed, it appeared for a moment as if Scully was going to flame out over the matter, but in the end he smiled a sickly smile and remained silent. The others understood from his manner that he was admitting his responsibility for the Swede's new viewpoint.

Johnnie, however, addressed his parent in an aside. "Why don't you license somebody to kick you down-stairs?" Scully scowled darkly by way of reply.

When they were gathered about the stove, the Swede insisted on another game of High Five. Scully gently deprecated the plan at first, but the Swede turned a wolfish glare upon him. The old man subsided, and the Swede canvassed the others. In his tone there was always a great threat. The cowboy and the Easterner both remarked indifferently that they would play. Scully said that he would presently have to go to meet the 6.58 train, and so the Swede turned menacingly upon Johnnie. For a moment their glances crossed like blades, and then Johnnie smiled and said, "Yes, I'll play."

They formed a square, with the little board on their knees. The Easterner and the Swede were again partners. As the play went on, it was noticeable that the cowboy was not board-whacking as usual. Meanwhile, Scully, near the lamp, had put on his spectacles and, with an appearance curiously like an old priest, was reading a newspaper. In time he went out to meet the 6.58 train, and, despite his precautions, a gust of polar wind whirled into the room as he opened the door. Besides scattering the cards, it dulled the players to the marrow. The Swede cursed frightfully. When Scully returned, his entrance disturbed a cosy and friendly scene. The Swede again cursed. But presently they were once more intent, their heads bent forward and their hands moving swiftly. The Swede had adopted the fashion of board-whacking.

Scully took up his paper and for a long time remained immersed in matters which were extraordinarily remote from him. The lamp burned badly, and once he stopped to adjust the wick. The newspaper, as he turned from page to page, rustled with a slow and comfortable sound. Then suddenly he heard three terrible words: "You are cheatin'!"

Such scenes often prove that there can be little of dramatic import in environment. Any room can present a tragic front; any room can be comic. This little den was now hideous as a torture-chamber. The new faces of the men themselves had changed it upon the instant. The Swede held a huge fist in front of Johnnie's face, while the latter looked steadily over it into the blazing orbs of his accuser. The Easterner had grown pallid; the cowboy's jaw had dropped in that expression of bovine amazement which was one of his important mannerisms. After the three words, the first sound in the room was made by Scully's paper as it floated forgotten to his feet. His spectacles had also fallen from his nose, but by a clutch he had saved them in air. His hand, grasping the spectacles, now remained poised awkwardly and near his shoulder. He stared at the card-players.

Probably the silence was while a second elapsed. Then, if the floor had been suddenly twitched out from under the men they could not have moved quicker. The five had projected themselves headlong towards a common point. It happened that Johnnie, in rising to hurl himself upon the Swede, had stumbled slightly because of his curiously instinctive care for the cards and the board. The loss of the moment allowed time for the arrival of Scully, and also allowed the cowboy time to give the Swede a great push which sent him staggering back. The men found tongue together, and hoarse shouts of rage, appeal, or fear burst from every throat. The cowboy pushed and jostled feverishly at the Swede, and the Easterner and Scully clung wildly to Johnnie; but, through the smoky air, above the swaying bodies of the peace-compellers, the eyes of the two warriors ever sought each other in glances of challenge that were at once hot and steely.

Of course the board had been overturned, and now the whole company of cards was scattered over the floor, where the boots of the men trampled the fat and painted kings and queens as they gazed with their silly eyes at the war that was waging above them.

Scully's voice was dominating the yells. "Stop now? Stop, I say! Stop, now—"

Johnnie, as he struggled to burst through the rank formed by Scully and the Easterner, was crying, "Well, he says I cheated! He says I cheated! I won't allow no man to say I cheated! If he says I cheated, he's a —— ———!"

The cowboy was telling the Swede, "Quit, now! Quit, d'ye hear—"

The screams of the Swede never ceased: "He did cheat! I saw him! I saw him—"

As for the Easterner, he was importuning in a voice that was not heeded: "Wait a moment, can't you? Oh, wait a moment. What's the good of a fight over a game of cards? Wait a moment—"

In this tumult no complete sentences were clear. "Cheat"—"Quit"—"He says"—these fragments pierced the uproar and rang out sharply. It was remarkable that, whereas Scully undoubtedly made the most noise, he was the least heard of any of the riotous band.

Then suddenly there was a great cessation. It was as if each man had paused for breath; and although the room was still lighted with the anger of men, it could be seen that there was no danger of immediate conflict, and at once Johnnie, shouldering his way forward, almost succeeded in confronting the Swede. "What did you say I cheated for? What did you say I cheated for? I don't cheat, and I won't let no man say I do!"

The Swede said, "I saw you! I saw you!"

"Well," cried Johnnie, "I'll fight any man what says I cheat!"

"No, you won't," said the cowboy. "Not here."

"Ah, be still, can't you?" said Scully, coming between them.

The quiet was sufficient to allow the Easterner's voice to be heard. He was repeating, "Oh, wait a moment, can't you? What's the good of a fight over a game of cards? Wait a moment!"

Johnnie, his red face appearing above his father's shoulder, hailed the Swede again. "Did you say I cheated?"

The Swede showed his teeth. "Yes."

"Then," said Johnnie, "we must fight."

"Yes, fight," roared the Swede. He was like a demoniac. "Yes, fight! I'll show you what kind of a man I am! I'll show you who you want to fight! Maybe you think I can't fight! Maybe you think I can't! I'll show you, you skin, you card-sharp! Yes, you cheated! You cheated! You cheated!"

"Well, let's go at it, then, mister," said Johnnie, coolly.

The cowboy's brow was beaded with sweat from his efforts in intercepting all sorts of raids. He turned in despair to Scully. "What are you goin' to do now?"

A change had come over the Celtic visage of the old man. He now seemed all eagerness; his eyes glowed.

"We'll let them fight," he answered, stalwartly. "I can't put up with it any longer. I've stood this damned Swede till I'm sick. We'll let them fight."

VI

The men prepared to go out-of-doors. The Easterner was so nervous that he had great difficulty in getting his arms into the sleeves of his new leather coat. As the cowboy drew his fur cap down over his ears his hands trembled. In fact, Johnnie and old Scully were the only ones who displayed no agitation. These preliminaries were conducted without words.

Scully threw open the door. "Well, come on," he said. Instantly a terrific wind caused the flame of the lamp to struggle at its wick, while a puff of black smoke sprang from the chimney-top. The stove was in mid-current of the blast, and its voice swelled to equal the roar of the storm. Some of the scarred and bedabbled cards were caught up from the floor and dashed helplessly against the farther wall. The men lowered their heads and plunged into the tempest as into a sea.

No snow was falling, but great whirls and clouds of flakes, swept up from the ground by the frantic winds, were streaming southward with the speed of bullets. The covered land was blue with the sheen of an unearthly satin, and there was no other hue save where, at the low, black railway station—which seemed incredibly distant—one light gleamed like a tiny jewel. As the men floundered into a thigh deep drift, it was known that the Swede was bawling out something. Scully went to him, put a hand on his shoulder and projected an ear. "What's that you say?" he shouted.

"I say," bawled the Swede again, "I won't stand much show against this gang. I know you'll all pitch on me."

Scully smote him reproachfully on the arm. "Tut, man!" he yelled. The wind tore the words from Scully's lips and scattered them far alee.

"You are all a gang of—" boomed the Swede, but the storm also seized the remainder of this sentence.

Immediately turning their backs upon the wind, the men had swung around a corner to the sheltered side of the hotel. It was the function of the little house to preserve here, amid this great devastation of snow, an irregular V-shape of heavily incrustated grass, which crackled beneath the feet. One could imagine the great drifts piled against the windward side. When the party reached the comparative peace of this spot it was found that the Swede was still bellowing.

"Oh, I know what kind of a thing this is! I know you'll all pitch on me. I can't lick you all!"

Scully turned upon him panther fashion. "You'll not have to whip all of us. You'll have to whip my son Johnnie. An' the man what troubles you durin' that time will have me to dale with."

The arrangements were swiftly made. The two men faced each other, obedient to the harsh commands of Scully, whose face, in the subtly luminous gloom, could be seen set in the austere impersonal lines that are pictured on the countenances of the Roman veterans. The Easterner's teeth were chattering, and he was hopping up and down like a mechanical toy. The cowboy stood rock-like.

The contestants had not stripped off any clothing. Each was in his ordinary attire. Their fists were up, and they eyed each other in a calm that had the elements of leonine cruelty in it.

During this pause, the Easterner's mind, like a film, took lasting impressions of three men—the iron-nerved master of the ceremony; the Swede, pale, motionless, terrible; and Johnnie, serene yet ferocious, brutish yet heroic. The entire prelude had in it a tragedy greater than the tragedy of action, and this aspect was accentuated by the long, mellow cry of the blizzard, as it sped the tumbling and wailing flakes into the black abyss of the south.

"Now!" said Scully.

The two combatants leaped forward and crashed together like bullocks. There was heard the cushioned sound of blows, and of a curse squeezing out from between the tight teeth of one.

As for the spectators, the Easterner's pent-up breath exploded from him with a pop of relief, absolute relief from the tension of the preliminaries. The cowboy bounded into the air with a yowl. Scully was immovable as from supreme amazement and fear at the fury of the fight which he himself had permitted and arranged.

For a time the encounter in the darkness was such a perplexity of flying arms that it presented no more detail than would a swiftly revolving wheel. Occasionally a face, as if illumined by a flash of light, would shine out, ghastly and marked with pink spots. A moment later, the men might have been known as shadows, if it were not for the involuntary utterance of oaths that came from them in whispers.

Suddenly a holocaust of warlike desire caught the cowboy, and he bolted forward with the speed of a broncho. "Go it, Johnnie! go it! Kill him! Kill him!"

Scully confronted him. "Kape back," he said; and by his glance the cowboy could tell that this man was Johnnie's father.

To the Easterner there was a monotony of unchangeable fighting that was an abomination. This confused mingling was eternal to his sense, which was concentrated in a longing for the end, the priceless end. Once the fighters lurched near him, and as he scrambled hastily backward he heard them breathe like men on the rack.

"Kill him, Johnnie! Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!" The cowboy's face was contorted like one of those agony masks in museums.

"Keep still," said Scully, icily.

Then there was a sudden loud grunt, incomplete, cut short, and Johnnie's body swung away from the Swede and fell with sickening heaviness to the grass. The cowboy was barely in time to prevent the mad Swede from flinging himself upon his prone adversary. "No, you don't," said the cowboy, interposing an arm. "Wait a second."

Scully was at his son's side. "Johnnie! Johnnie, me boy!" His voice had a quality of melancholy tenderness. "Johnnie! Can you go on with it?" He looked anxiously down into the bloody, pulpy face of his son.

There was a moment of silence, and then Johnnie answered in his ordinary voice, "Yes, I—it—yes."

Assisted by his father he struggled to his feet. "Wait a bit now till you git your wind," said the old man.

A few paces away the cowboy was lecturing the Swede. "No, you don't! Wait a second!"

The Easterner was plucking at Scully's sleeve. "Oh, this is enough," he pleaded. "This is enough! Let it go as it stands. This is enough!"

"Bill," said Scully, "git out of the road." The cowboy stepped aside. "Now." The combatants were actuated by a new caution as they advanced towards collision. They glared at each other, and then the Swede aimed a lightning blow that carried with it his entire weight. Johnnie was evidently half stupid from weakness, but he miraculously dodged, and his fist sent the over-balanced Swede sprawling.

The cowboy, Scully, and the Easterner burst into a cheer that was like a chorus of triumphant soldiery, but before its conclusion the Swede had scuffled agilely to his feet and come in berserk abandon at his foe. There was another perplexity of flying arms, and Johnnie's body again swung away and fell, even as a bundle might fall from a roof. The Swede instantly staggered to a little wind-waved tree and leaned upon it, breathing like an engine, while his savage and flame-lit eyes roamed from face to face as the men bent over Johnnie. There was a splendor of isolation in his situation at this time which the Easterner felt once when, lifting his eyes from the man on the ground, he beheld that mysterious and lonely figure, waiting.

"Are you any good yet, Johnnie?" asked Scully in a broken voice.

The son gasped and opened his eyes languidly. After a moment he answered, "No—I ain't—any good—any—more." Then, from shame and bodily ill he began to weep, the tears furrowing down through the blood-stains on his face. "He was too—too—too heavy for me."

Scully straightened and addressed the waiting figure. "Stranger," he said, evenly, "it's all up with our side." Then his voice changed into that vibrant huskiness which is commonly the tone of the most simple and deadly announcements. "Johnnie is whipped."

Without replying, the victor moved off on the route to the front door of the hotel.

The cowboy was formulating new and un-spellable blasphemies. The Easterner was startled to find that they were out in a wind that seemed to come direct from the shadowed arctic floes. He heard again the wail of the snow as it was flung to its grave in the south. He knew now that all this time the cold had been sinking into him deeper and deeper, and he wondered that he had not perished. He felt indifferent to the condition of the vanquished man.

"Johnnie, can you walk?" asked Scully.

"Did I hurt—hurt him any?" asked the son.

"Can you walk, boy? Can you walk?"

Johnnie's voice was suddenly strong. There was a robust impatience in it. "I asked you whether I hurt him any!"

"Yes, yes, Johnnie," answered the cowboy, consolingly; "he's hurt a good deal."

They raised him from the ground, and as soon as he was on his feet he went tottering off, rebuffing all attempts at assistance. When the party rounded the corner they were fairly blinded by the pelting of the snow. It burned their faces like fire. The cowboy carried Johnnie through the drift to the door. As they entered some cards again rose from the floor and beat against the wall.

The Easterner rushed to the stove. He was so profoundly chilled that he almost dared to embrace the glowing iron. The Swede was not in the room. Johnnie sank into a chair, and, folding his arms on his knees, buried his face in them. Scully, warming one foot and then the other at a rim of the stove, muttered to himself with Celtic mournfulness. The cowboy had removed his fur cap, and with a dazed and rueful air he was running one hand through his tousled locks. From overhead they could hear the creaking of boards, as the Swede tramped here and there in his room.

The sad quiet was broken by the sudden flinging open of a door that led towards the kitchen. It was instantly followed by an inrush of women. They precipitated themselves upon Johnnie amid a chorus of lamentation. Before they carried their prey off to the kitchen, there to be bathed and harangued with that mixture of sympathy and abuse which is a feat of their sex, the mother straightened herself and

fixed old Scully with an eye of stern reproach. "Shame be upon you, Patrick Scully!" she cried. "Your own son, too. Shame be upon you!"

"There, now! Be quiet, now!" said the old man, weakly.

"Shame be upon you, Patrick Scully!" The girls, rallying to this slogan, sniffed disdainfully in the direction of those trembling accomplices, the cowboy and the Easterner. Presently they bore Johnnie away, and left the three men to dismal reflection.

VII

"I'd like to fight this here Dutchman myself," said the cowboy, breaking a long silence.

Scully wagged his head sadly. "No, that wouldn't do. It wouldn't be right. It wouldn't be right."

"Well, why wouldn't it?" argued the cowboy. "I don't see no harm in it."

"No," answered Scully, with mournful heroism. "It wouldn't be right. It was Johnnie's fight, and now we mustn't whip the man just because he whipped Johnnie."

"Yes, that's true enough," said the cowboy; "but—he better not get fresh with me, because I couldn't stand no more of it."

"You'll not say a word to him," commanded Scully, and even then they heard the tread of the Swede on the stairs. His entrance was made theatric. He swept the door back with a bang and swaggered to the middle of the room. No one looked at him. "Well," he cried, insolently, at Scully, "I s'pose you'll tell me now how much I owe you?"

The old man remained stolid. "You don't owe me nothin'."

"Huh!" said the Swede, "huh! Don't owe 'im nothin'."

The cowboy addressed the Swede. "Stranger, I don't see how you come to be so gay around here."

Old Scully was instantly alert. "Stop!" he shouted, holding his hand forth, fingers upward. "Bill, you shut up!"

The cowboy spat carelessly into the sawdust box. "I didn't say a word, did I?" he asked.

"Mr. Scully," called the Swede, "how much do I owe you?" It was seen that he was attired for departure, and that he had his valise in his hand.

"You don't owe me nothin'," repeated Scully in his same imperturbable way.

"Huh!" said the Swede. "I guess you're right. I guess if it was any way at all, you'd owe me somethin'. That's what I guess." He turned to the cowboy. "'Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!'" he mimicked, and then guffawed victoriously. "'Kill him!'" He was convulsed with ironical humor.

But he might have been jeering the dead. The three men were immovable and silent, staring with glassy eyes at the stove.

The Swede opened the door and passed into the storm, giving one derisive glance backward at the still group.

As soon as the door was closed, Scully and the cowboy leaped to their feet and began to curse. They trampled to and fro, waving their arms and smashing into the air with their fists. "Oh, but that was a hard minute!" wailed Scully. "That was a hard minute! Him there leerin' and scoffin'! One bang at his nose was worth forty dollars to me that minute! How did you stand it, Bill?"

"How did I stand it?" cried the cowboy in a quivering voice. "How did I stand it? Oh!"

The old man burst into sudden brogue. "I'd loike to take that Swade," he wailed, "and hould 'im down on a shtone flure and bate 'im to a jelly wid a shtick!"

The cowboy groaned in sympathy. "I'd like to git him by the neck and ha-ammer him"—he brought his hand down on a chair with a noise like a pistol-shot—"hammer that there Dutchman until he couldn't tell himself from a dead coyote!"

“I’d bate ‘im until he—”

“I’d show him some things—”

And then together they raised a yearning, fanatic cry—”Oh-o-oh! if we only could—”

“Yes!”

“Yes!”

“And then I’d—”

“O-o-oh!”

VIII

The Swede, tightly gripping his valise, tacked across the face of the storm as if he carried sails. He was following a line of little naked, gasping trees, which he knew must mark the way of the road. His face, fresh from the pounding of Johnnie’s fists, felt more pleasure than pain in the wind and the driving snow. A number of square shapes loomed upon him finally, and he knew them as the houses of the main body of the town. He found a street and made travel along it, leaning heavily upon the wind whenever, at a corner, a terrific blast caught him.

He might have been in a deserted village. We picture the world as thick with conquering and elate humanity, but here, with the bugles of the tempest pealing, it was hard to imagine a peopled earth. One viewed the existence of man then as a marvel, and conceded a glamour of wonder to these lice which were caused to cling to a whirling, fire-smote, ice-locked, disease-stricken, space-lost bulb. The conceit of man was explained by this storm to be the very engine of life. One was a coxcomb not to die in it. However, the Swede found a saloon.

In front of it an indomitable red light was burning, and the snow-flakes were made blood color as they flew through the circumscribed territory of the lamp’s shining. The Swede pushed open the door of the saloon and entered. A sanded expanse was before him, and at the end of it four men sat about a table drinking. Down one side of the room extended a radiant bar, and its guardian was leaning upon his elbows listening to the talk of the men at the table. The Swede dropped his valise upon the floor, and, smiling fraternally upon the barkeeper, said, “Gimme some whiskey, will you?” The man placed a bottle, a whiskey-glass, and a glass of ice-thick water upon the bar. The Swede poured himself an abnormal portion of whiskey and drank it in three gulps. “Pretty bad night,” remarked the bartender, indifferently. He was making the pretension of blindness which is usually a distinction of his class; but it could have been seen that he was furtively studying the half-erased blood-stains on the face of the Swede. “Bad night,” he said again.

“Oh, it’s good enough for me,” replied the Swede, hardily, as he poured himself some more whiskey. The barkeeper took his coin and maneuvered it through its reception by the highly nickelled cash-machine. A bell rang; a card labelled “20 cts.” had appeared.

“No,” continued the Swede, “this isn’t too bad weather. It’s good enough for me.”

“So?” murmured the barkeeper, languidly.

The copious drams made the Swede’s eyes swim, and he breathed a trifle heavier. “Yes, I like this weather. I like it. It suits me.” It was apparently his design to impart a deep significance to these words.

“So?” murmured the bartender again. He turned to gaze dreamily at the scroll-like birds and bird-like scrolls which had been drawn with soap upon the mirrors back of the bar.

“Well, I guess I’ll take another drink,” said the Swede, presently. “Have something?”

“No, thanks; I’m not drinkin’,” answered the bartender. Afterwards he asked, “How did you hurt your face?”

The Swede immediately began to boast loudly. "Why, in a fight. I thumped the soul out of a man down here at Scully's hotel."

The interest of the four men at the table was at last aroused.

"Who was it?" said one.

"Johnnie Scully," blustered the Swede. "Son of the man what runs it. He will be pretty near dead for some weeks, I can tell you. I made a nice thing of him, I did. He couldn't get up. They carried him in the house. Have a drink?"

Instantly the men in some subtle way incased themselves in reserve. "No, thanks," said one. The group was of curious formation. Two were prominent local business men; one was the district-attorney; and one was a professional gambler of the kind known as "square." But a scrutiny of the group would not have enabled an observer to pick the gambler from the men of more reputable pursuits. He was, in fact, a man so delicate in manner, when among people of fair class, and so judicious in his choice of victims, that in the strictly masculine part of the town's life he had come to be explicitly trusted and admired. People called him a thoroughbred. The fear and contempt with which his craft was regarded was undoubtedly the reason that his quiet dignity shone conspicuous above the quiet dignity of men who might be merely hatters, billiard markers, or grocery-clerks. Beyond an occasional unwary traveller, who came by rail, this gambler was supposed to prey solely upon reckless and senile farmers, who, when flush with good crops, drove into town in all the pride and confidence of an absolutely invulnerable stupidity. Hearing at times in circuitous fashion of the despoilment of such a farmer, the important men of Romper invariably laughed in contempt of the victim, and, if they thought of the wolf at all, it was with a kind of pride at the knowledge that he would never dare think of attacking their wisdom and courage. Besides, it was popular that this gambler had a real wife and two real children in a neat cottage in a suburb, where he led an exemplary home life; and when any one even suggested a discrepancy in his character, the crowd immediately vociferated descriptions of this virtuous family circle. Then men who led exemplary home lives, and men who did not lead exemplary home lives, all subsided in a bunch, remarking that there was nothing more to be said.

However, when a restriction was placed upon him—as, for instance, when a strong clique of members of the new Pollywog Club refused to permit him, even as a spectator, to appear in the rooms of the organization—the candor and gentleness with which he accepted the judgment disarmed many of his foes and made his friends more desperately partisan. He invariably distinguished between himself and a respectable Romper man so quickly and frankly that his manner actually appeared to be a continual broadcast compliment.

And one must not forget to declare the fundamental fact of his entire position in Romper. It is irrefutable that in all affairs outside of his business, in all matters that occur eternally and commonly between man and man, this thieving card-player was so generous, so just, so moral, that, in a contest, he could have put to flight the consciences of nine-tenths of the citizens of Romper.

And so it happened that he was seated in this saloon with the two prominent local merchants and the district-attorney.

The Swede continued to drink raw whiskey, meanwhile babbling at the barkeeper and trying to induce him to indulge in potations. "Come on. Have a drink. Come on. What—no? Well, have a little one, then. By gawd, I've whipped a man to-night, and I want to celebrate. I whipped him good, too. Gentlemen," the Swede cried to the men at the table, "have a drink?"

"Ssh!" said the barkeeper.

The group at the table, although furtively attentive, had been pretending to be deep in talk, but now a man lifted his eyes towards the Swede and said, shortly, "Thanks. We don't want any more."

At this reply the Swede ruffled out his chest like a rooster. "Well," he exploded, "it seems I can't get anybody to drink with me in this town. Seems so, don't it? Well!"

“Ssh!” said the barkeeper.

“Say,” snarled the Swede, “don’t you try to shut me up. I won’t have it. I’m a gentleman, and I want people to drink with me. And I want ’em to drink with me now. *Now*—do you understand?” He rapped the bar with his knuckles.

Years of experience had calloused the bartender. He merely grew sulky. “I hear you,” he answered.

“Well,” cried the Swede, “listen hard then. See those men over there? Well, they’re going to drink with me, and don’t you forget it. Now you watch.”

“Hi!” yelled the barkeeper, “this won’t do!”

“Why won’t it?” demanded the Swede. He stalked over to the table, and by chance laid his hand upon the shoulder of the gambler. “How about this?” he asked, wrathfully. “I asked you to drink with me.”

The gambler simply twisted his head and spoke over his shoulder. “My friend, I don’t know you.”

“Oh, hell!” answered the Swede, “come and have a drink.”

“Now, my boy,” advised the gambler, kindly, “take your hand off my shoulder and go ‘way and mind your own business.” He was a little, slim man, and it seemed strange to hear him use this tone of heroic patronage to the burly Swede. The other men at the table said nothing.

“What! You won’t drink with me, you little dude? I’ll make you then! I’ll make you!” The Swede had grasped the gambler frenziedly at the throat, and was dragging him from his chair. The other men sprang up. The barkeeper dashed around the corner of his bar. There was a great tumult, and then was seen a long blade in the hand of the gambler. It shot forward, and a human body, this citadel of virtue, wisdom, power, was pierced as easily as if it had been a melon. The Swede fell with a cry of supreme astonishment.

The prominent merchants and the district attorney must have at once tumbled out of the place backward. The bartender found himself hanging limply to the arm of a chair and gazing into the eyes of a murderer.

“Henry,” said the latter, as he wiped his knife on one of the towels that hung beneath the bar-rail, “you tell ’em where to find me. I’ll be home, waiting for ’em.” Then he vanished. A moment afterwards the barkeeper was in the street dinning through the storm for help, and, moreover, companionship.

The corpse of the Swede, alone in the saloon, had its eyes fixed upon a dreadful legend that dwelt atop of the cash-machine: “This registers the amount of your purchase.”

IX

Months later, the cowboy was frying pork over the stove of a little ranch near the Dakota line, when there was a quick thud of hoofs outside, and presently the Easterner entered with the letters and the papers.

“Well,” said the Easterner at once, “the chap that killed the Swede has got three years. Wasn’t much, was it?”

“He has? Three years?” The cowboy poised his pan of pork, while he ruminated upon the news. “Three years. That ain’t much.”

“No. It was a light sentence,” replied the Easterner as he unbuckled his spurs. “Seems there was a good deal of sympathy for him in Romper.”

“If the bartender had been any good,” observed the cowboy, thoughtfully, “he would have gone in and cracked that there Dutchman on the head with a bottle in the beginnin’ of it and stopped all this here murderin’.”

“Yes, a thousand things might have happened,” said the Easterner, tartly.

The cowboy returned his pan of pork to the fire, but his philosophy continued. “It’s funny, ain’t it? If he hadn’t said Johnnie was cheatin’ he’d be alive this minute. He was an awful fool. Game played for fun, too. Not for money. I believe he was crazy.”

“I feel sorry for that gambler,” said the Easterner.

“Oh, so do I,” said the cowboy. “He don’t deserve none of it for killin’ who he did.”

“The Swede might not have been killed if everything had been square.”

“Might not have been killed?” exclaimed the cowboy. “Everythin’ square? Why, when he said that Johnnie was cheatin’ and acted like such a jackass? And then in the saloon he fairly walked up to git hurt?” With these arguments the cowboy browbeat the Easterner and reduced him to rage.

“You’re a fool!” cried the Easterner, viciously. “You’re a bigger jackass than the Swede by a million majority. Now let me tell you one thing. Let me tell you something. Listen! Johnnie was cheating!”

“Johnnie,” said the cowboy, blankly. There was a minute of silence, and then he said, robustly, “Why, no. The game was only for fun.”

“Fun or not,” said the Easterner, “Johnnie was cheating. I saw him. I know it. I saw him. And I refused to stand up and be a man. I let the Swede fight it out alone. And you—you were simply puffing around the place and wanting to fight. And then old Scully himself! We are all in it! This poor gambler isn’t even a noun. He is kind of an adverb. Every sin is the result of a collaboration. We, five of us, have collaborated in the murder of this Swede. Usually there are from a dozen to forty women really involved in every murder, but in this case it seems to be only five men—you, I, Johnnie, old Scully, and that fool of an unfortunate gambler came merely as a culmination, the apex of a human movement, and gets all the punishment.”

The cowboy, injured and rebellious, cried out blindly into this fog of mysterious theory: “Well, I didn’t do anythin’, did I?”

Activities

The Blue Hotel

Study Questions

1. Look up Naturalism in the glossary and then list several naturalistic aspects in this story.
2. Is the Swede correct in his belief that Fort Romper is a typical “Wild West” town?
3. Describe the character of the Easterner, Mr. Blanc. Do you agree with his final assessment that he and the cowboy were complicit in the Swede’s death? If so, why?
4. Discuss the role of chance in the story and give two examples of the use of this word.
5. Why does Scully insist that the Swede stay in the hotel even after it’s clear that the Swede wants to leave? Why does he show the pictures of his children?

Activities

How does this poem by Crane relate to the story’s theme? How would the response of Mr. Blanc, the Easterner, to this poem differ from that of the Cowboy?

A man said to the universe:
 “Sir, I exist!”
 “However,” replied the universe,
 “The fact has not created in me
 A sense of obligation.”

Watch this two-part [film adaption of “The Blue Hotel”](#).

Check out [Crane’s newspaper articles](#).

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35.

Willa Cather (1873–1947)



Biography

Willa Cather was born in Virginia on December 7, 1873. Her family moved to Nebraska in 1883, ultimately settling in the town of Red Cloud, where the National Willa Cather Center is located today. After graduating from the University of Nebraska, she became a journalist in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, later teaching high school English there.

Willa's first book, *April Twilights* (1903), was a collection of poems. In 1906, she moved to New York City to take an editorial position at *McClure's Magazine*, where she worked until 1912, when she left to again focus on her creative writing.

She is the author of twenty books and is best known for her fiction, including the novels *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927); *One of Ours* (1922), which won the Pulitzer Prize; *My Ántonia* (1918); and *O Pioneers!* (1913).

She died in New York City on April 24, 1947.

Paul's Case

It was Paul's afternoon to appear before the faculty of the Pittsburgh High School to account for his various misdemeanors. He had been suspended a week ago, and his father had called at the Principal's office and confessed his perplexity about his son. Paul entered the faculty room suave and smiling. His clothes were a trifle outgrown, and the tan velvet on the collar of his open overcoat was frayed and worn; but for all that there was something of the dandy about him, and he wore an opal pin in his neatly knotted black four-in-hand, and a red carnation in his buttonhole. This latter adornment the faculty somehow felt was not properly significant of the contrite spirit befitting a boy under the ban of suspension.

Paul was tall for his age and very thin, with high, cramped shoulders and a narrow chest. His eyes were remarkable for a certain hysterical brilliancy, and he continually used them in a conscious, theatrical sort of way, peculiarly offensive in a boy. The pupils were abnormally large, as though he were addicted to belladonna, but there was a glassy glitter about them which that drug does not produce.

When questioned by the Principal as to why he was there Paul stated, politely enough, that he wanted to come back to school. This was a lie, but Paul was quite accustomed to lying; found it, indeed, indispensable for overcoming friction. His teachers were asked to state their respective charges against him, which they did with such a rancor and aggrievedness as evinced that this was not a usual case. Disorder and impertinence were among the offenses named, yet each of his instructors felt that it was scarcely possible to put into words the real cause of the trouble, which lay in a sort of hysterically defiant manner of the boy's; in the contempt which they all knew he felt for them, and which he seemingly made not the least effort to conceal. Once, when he had been making a synopsis of a paragraph at the blackboard, his English teacher had stepped to his side and attempted to guide his hand. Paul had started back with a shudder and thrust his hands violently behind him. The astonished woman could scarcely have been more hurt and embarrassed had he struck at her. The insult was so involuntary and definitely personal as to be unforgettable. In one way and another he had made all his teachers, men and women alike, conscious of the same feeling of physical aversion. In one class he habitually sat with his hand shading his eyes; in another he always looked out of the window during the recitation; in another he made a running commentary on the lecture, with humorous intention.

His teachers felt this afternoon that his whole attitude was symbolized by his shrug and his flippantly red carnation flower, and they fell upon him without mercy, his English teacher leading the pack. He stood through it smiling, his pale lips parted over his white teeth. (His lips were continually twitching, and he had a habit of raising his eyebrows that was contemptuous and irritating to the last degree.) Older boys than Paul had broken down and shed tears under that baptism of fire, but his set smile did not once desert him, and his only sign of discomfort was the nervous trembling of the fingers that toyed with the buttons of his overcoat, and an occasional jerking of the other hand that held his hat. Paul was always smiling, always glancing about him, seeming to feel that people might be watching him and trying to detect something. This conscious expression, since it was as far as possible from boyish mirthfulness, was usually attributed to insolence or "smartness."

As the inquisition proceeded one of his instructors repeated an impertinent remark of the boy's, and

the Principal asked him whether he thought that a courteous speech to have made a woman. Paul shrugged his shoulders slightly and his eyebrows twitched.

“I don’t know,” he replied. “I didn’t mean to be polite or impolite, either. I guess it’s a sort of way I have of saying things regardless.”

The Principal, who was a sympathetic man, asked him whether he didn’t think that a way it would be well to get rid of. Paul grinned and said he guessed so. When he was told that he could go he bowed gracefully and went out. His bow was but a repetition of the scandalous red carnation.

His teachers were in despair, and his drawing master voiced the feeling of them all when he declared there was something about the boy which none of them understood. He added: “I don’t really believe that smile of his comes altogether from insolence; there’s something sort of haunted about it. The boy is not strong, for one thing. I happen to know that he was born in Colorado, only a few months before his mother died out there of a long illness. There is something wrong about the fellow.”

The drawing master had come to realize that, in looking at Paul, one saw only his white teeth and the forced animation of his eyes. One warm afternoon the boy had gone to sleep at his drawing board, and his master had noted with amazement what a white, blue-veined face it was; drawn and wrinkled like an old man’s about the eyes, the lips twitching even in his sleep, and stiff with a nervous tension that drew them back from his teeth.

His teachers left the building dissatisfied and unhappy; humiliated to have felt so vindictive toward a mere boy, to have uttered this feeling in cutting terms, and to have set each other on, as it were, in the gruesome game of intemperate reproach. Some of them remembered having seen a miserable street cat set at bay by a ring of tormentors.

As for Paul, he ran down the hill whistling the “Soldiers’ Chorus” from *Faust*, looking wildly behind him now and then to see whether some of his teachers were not there to writhe under his lightheartedness. As it was now late in the afternoon and Paul was on duty that evening as usher at Carnegie Hall,¹ he decided that he would not go home to supper. When he reached the concert hall the doors were not yet open and, as it was chilly outside, he decided to go up into the picture gallery—always deserted at this hour—where there were some of Raffelli’s² gay studies of Paris streets and an airy blue Venetian scene or two that always exhilarated him. He was delighted to find no one in the gallery but the old guard, who sat in one corner, a newspaper on his knee, a black patch over one eye and the other closed. Paul possessed himself of the peace and walked confidently up and down, whistling under his breath. After a while he sat down before a blue Rico³ and lost himself. When he bethought him to look at his watch, it was after seven o’clock, and he rose with a start and ran downstairs, making a face at Augustus, peering out from the cast room, and an evil gesture at the Venus de Milo as he passed her on the stairway.

When Paul reached the ushers’ dressing room half a dozen boys were there already, and he began excitedly to tumble into his uniform. It was one of the few that at all approached fitting, and Paul thought it very becoming—though he knew that the tight, straight coat accentuated his narrow chest, about which he was exceedingly sensitive. He was always considerably excited while he dressed, twanging all over to the tuning of the strings and the preliminary flourishes of the horns in the music room; but tonight he seemed quite beside himself, and he teased and plagued the boys until, telling him that he was crazy, they put him down on the floor and sat on him.

Somewhat calmed by his suppression, Paul dashed out to the front of the house to seat the early comers. He was a model usher; gracious and smiling he ran up and down the aisles; nothing was too

1. Not to be confused with Carnegie Hall in New York, both funded by Andrew Carnegie, wealthy steel magnate (1835–1919).

2. Jean-François Raffaelli (1850–1924). French realist artist.

3. Martín Rico (1833–1908). Spanish landscape painter. Paul sneers at statues of Augustus Caesar and the Venus de Milo as he descends the stairway.

much trouble for him; he carried messages and brought programs as though it were his greatest pleasure in life, and all the people in his section thought him a charming boy, feeling that he remembered and admired them. As the house filled, he grew more and more vivacious and animated, and the color came to his cheeks and lips. It was very much as though this were a great reception and Paul were the host. Just as the musicians came out to take their places, his English teacher arrived with checks for the seats which a prominent manufacturer had taken for the season. She betrayed some embarrassment when she handed Paul the tickets, and a *hauteur* which subsequently made her feel very foolish. Paul was startled for a moment, and had the feeling of wanting to put her out; what business had she here among all these fine people and gay colors? He looked her over and decided that she was not appropriately dressed and must be a fool to sit downstairs in such togs. The tickets had probably been sent her out of kindness, he reflected as he put down a seat for her, and she had about as much right to sit there as he had.

When the symphony began Paul sank into one of the rear seats with a long sigh of relief, and lost himself as he had done before the Rico. It was not that symphonies, as such, meant anything in particular to Paul, but the first sigh of the instruments seemed to free some hilarious and potent spirit within him; something that struggled there like the genie in the bottle found by the Arab fisherman. He felt a sudden zest of life; the lights danced before his eyes and the concert hall blazed into unimaginable splendor. When the soprano soloist came on Paul forgot even the nastiness of his teacher's being there and gave himself up to the peculiar stimulus such personages always had for him. The soloist chanced to be a German woman, by no means in her first youth, and the mother of many children; but she wore an elaborate gown and a tiara, and above all she had that indefinable air of achievement, that world-shine upon her, which, in Paul's eyes, made her a veritable queen of Romance.

After a concert was over Paul was always irritable and wretched until he got to sleep, and tonight he was even more than usually restless. He had the feeling of not being able to let down, of its being impossible to give up this delicious excitement which was the only thing that could be called living at all. During the last number he withdrew and, after hastily changing his clothes in the dressing room, slipped out to the side door where the soprano's carriage stood. Here he began pacing rapidly up and down the walk, waiting to see her come out.

Over yonder, the Schenley, in its vacant stretch, loomed big and square through the fine rain, the windows of its twelve stories glowing like those of a lighted cardboard house under a Christmas tree. All the actors and singers of the better class stayed there when they were in the city, and a number of the big manufacturers of the place lived there in the winter. Paul had often hung about the hotel, watching the people go in and out, longing to enter and leave schoolmasters and dull care behind him forever.

At last the singer came out, accompanied by the conductor, who helped her into her carriage and closed the door with a cordial *auf wiedersehen* which set Paul to wondering whether she were not an old sweetheart of his. Paul followed the carriage over to the hotel, walking so rapidly as not to be far from the entrance when the singer alighted, and disappeared behind the swinging glass doors that were opened by a Negro in a tall hat and a long coat. In the moment that the door was ajar it seemed to Paul that he, too, entered. He seemed to feel himself go after her up the steps, into the warm, lighted building, into an exotic, tropical world of shiny, glistening surfaces and basking ease. He reflected upon the mysterious dishes that were brought into the dining room, the green bottles in buckets of ice, as he had seen them in the supper party pictures of the *Sunday World* supplement. A quick gust of wind brought the rain down with sudden vehemence, and Paul was startled to find that he was still outside in the slush of the gravel driveway; that his boots were letting in the water and his scanty overcoat was clinging wet about him; that the lights in front of the concert hall were out and that the rain was driving in sheets between him and the orange glow of the windows above him. There it was, what he

wanted—tangibly before him, like the fairy world of a Christmas pantomime—but mocking spirits stood guard at the doors, and, as the rain beat in his face, Paul wondered whether he were destined always to shiver in the black night outside, looking up at it.

He turned and walked reluctantly toward the car tracks. The end had to come sometime; his father in his nightclothes at the top of the stairs, explanations that did not explain, hastily improvised fictions that were forever tripping him up, his upstairs room and its horrible yellow wallpaper, the creaking bureau with the greasy plush collarbox, and over his painted wooden bed the pictures of George Washington and John Calvin, and the framed motto, “Feed my Lambs,”⁴ which had been worked in red worsted by his mother.

Half an hour later Paul alighted from his car and went slowly down one of the side streets off the main thoroughfare. It was a highly respectable street, where all the houses were exactly alike, and where businessmen of moderate means begot and reared large families of children, all of whom went to Sabbath school and learned the shorter catechism, and were interested in arithmetic; all of whom were as exactly alike as their homes, and of a piece with the monotony in which they lived. Paul never went up Cordelia Street without a shudder of loathing. His home was next to the house of the Cumberland minister. He approached it tonight with the nerveless sense of defeat, the hopeless feeling of sinking back forever into ugliness and commonness that he had always had when he came home. The moment he turned into Cordelia Street he felt the waters close above his head. After each of these orgies of living he experienced all the physical depression which follows a debauch; the loathing of respectable beds, of common food, of a house penetrated by kitchen odors; a shuddering repulsion for the flavorless, colorless mass of everyday existence; a morbid desire for cool things and soft lights and fresh flowers.

The nearer he approached the house, the more absolutely unequal Paul felt to the sight of it all: his ugly sleeping chamber; the cold bathroom with the grimy zinc tub, the cracked mirror, the dripping spigots; his father, at the top of the stairs, his hairy legs sticking out from his nightshirt, his feet thrust into carpet slippers. He was so much later than usual that there would certainly be inquiries and reproaches. Paul stopped short before the door. He felt that he could not be accosted by his father tonight; that he could not toss again on that miserable bed. He would not go in. He would tell his father that he had no carfare and it was raining so hard he had gone home with one of the boys and stayed all night.

Meanwhile, he was wet and cold. He went around to the back of the house and tried one of the basement windows, found it open, raised it cautiously, and scrambled down the cellar wall to the floor. There he stood, holding his breath, terrified by the noise he had made, but the floor above him was silent, and there was no creak on the stairs. He found a soapbox, and carried it over to the soft ring of light that streamed from the furnace door, and sat down. He was horribly afraid of rats, so he did not try to sleep, but sat looking distrustfully at the dark, still terrified lest he might have awakened his father. In such reactions, after one of the experiences which made days and nights out of the dreary blanks of the calendar, when his senses were deadened, Paul’s head was always singularly clear. Suppose his father had heard him getting in at the window and had come down and shot him for a burglar? Then, again, suppose his father had come down, pistol in hand, and he had cried out in time to save himself, and his father had been horrified to think how nearly he had killed him? Then, again, suppose a day should come when his father would remember that night, and wish there had been no warning cry to stay his hand? With this last supposition Paul entertained himself until daybreak.

The following Sunday was fine; the sodden November chill was broken by the last flash of autumnal summer. In the morning Paul had to go to church and Sabbath school, as always. On seasonable Sunday

4. Christ’s words to Simon Peter. John 21:15.

afternoons the burghers of Cordelia Street always sat out on their front stoops and talked to their neighbors on the next stoop, or called to those across the street in neighborly fashion. The men usually sat on gay cushions placed upon the steps that led down to the sidewalk, while the women, in their Sunday "waists," sat in rockers on the cramped porches, pretending to be greatly at their ease. The children played in the streets; there were so many of them that the place resembled the recreation grounds of a kindergarten. The men on the steps—all in their shirt sleeves, their vests unbuttoned—sat with their legs well apart, their stomachs comfortably protruding, and talked of the prices of things, or told anecdotes of the sagacity of their various chiefs and overlords. They occasionally looked over the multitude of squabbling children, listened affectionately to their high-pitched, nasal voices, smiling to see their own proclivities reproduced in their offspring, and interspersed their legends of the iron kings with remarks about their sons' progress at school, their grades in arithmetic, and the amounts they had saved in their toy banks.

On this last Sunday of November Paul sat all the afternoon on the lowest step of his stoop, staring into the street, while his sisters, in their rockers, were talking to the minister's daughters next door about how many shirtwaists they had made in the last week, and how many waffles someone had eaten at the last church supper. When the weather was warm, and his father was in a particularly jovial frame of mind, the girls made lemonade, which was always brought out in a red-glass pitcher, ornamented with forget-me-nots in blue enamel. This the girls thought very fine, and the neighbors always joked about the suspicious color of the pitcher.

Today Paul's father sat on the top step, talking to a young man who shifted a restless baby from knee to knee. He happened to be the young man who was daily held up to Paul as a model, and after whom it was his father's dearest hope that he would pattern. This young man was of a ruddy complexion, with a compressed, red mouth, and faded, nearsighted eyes, over which he wore thick spectacles, with gold bows that curved about his ears. He was clerk to one of the magnates of a great steel corporation, and was looked upon in Cordelia Street as a young man with a future. There was a story that, some five years ago—he was now barely twenty-six—he had been a trifle dissipated, but in order to curb his appetites and save the loss of time and strength that a sowing of wild oats might have entailed, he had taken his chief's advice, oft reiterated to his employees, and at twenty-one had married the first woman whom he could persuade to share his fortunes. She happened to be an angular schoolmistress, much older than he, who also wore thick glasses, and who had now borne him four children, all nearsighted, like herself.

The young man was relating how his chief, now cruising in the Mediterranean, kept in touch with all the details of the business, arranging his office hours on his yacht just as though he were at home, and "knocking off work enough to keep two stenographers busy." His father told, in turn, the plan his corporation was considering, of putting in an electric railway plant in Cairo. Paul snapped his teeth; he had an awful apprehension that they might spoil it all before he got there. Yet he rather liked to hear these legends of the iron kings that were told and retold on Sundays and holidays; these stories of palaces in Venice, yachts on the Mediterranean, and high play at Monte Carlo appealed to his fancy, and he was interested in the triumphs of these cash boys who had become famous, though he had no mind for the cash-boy stage.

After supper was over and he had helped to dry the dishes, Paul nervously asked his father whether he could go to George's to get some help in his geometry, and still more nervously asked for carfare. This latter request he had to repeat, as his father, on principle, did not like to hear requests for money, whether much or little. He asked Paul whether he could not go to some boy who lived nearer, and told him that he ought not to leave his schoolwork until Sunday; but he gave him the dime. He was not a poor man, but he had a worthy ambition to come up in the world. His only reason for allowing Paul to usher was that he thought a boy ought to be earning a little.

Paul bounded upstairs, scrubbed the greasy odor of the dishwater from his hands with the ill-smelling soap he hated, and then shook over his fingers a few drops of violet water from the bottle he kept hidden in his drawer. He left the house with his geometry conspicuously under his arm, and the moment he got out of Cordelia Street and boarded a downtown car, he shook off the lethargy of two deadening days and began to live again.

The leading juvenile of the permanent stock company which played at one of the downtown theaters was an acquaintance of Paul's, and the boy had been invited to drop in at the Sunday-night rehearsals whenever he could. For more than a year Paul had spent every available moment loitering about Charley Edwards's dressing room. He had won a place among Edwards's following not only because the young actor, who could not afford to employ a dresser, often found him useful, but because he recognized in Paul something akin to what churchmen term "vocation."

It was at the theater and at Carnegie Hall that Paul really lived; the rest was but a sleep and a forgetting. This was Paul's fairy tale, and it had for him all the allurements of a secret love. The moment he inhaled the gassy, painty, dusty odor behind the scenes, he breathed like a prisoner set free, and felt within him the possibility of doing or saying splendid, brilliant, poetic things. The moment the cracked orchestra beat out the overture from *Martha*, or jerked at the serenade from *Rigoletto*, all stupid and ugly things slid from him, and his senses were deliciously, yet delicately fired.

Perhaps it was because, in Paul's world, the natural nearly always wore the guise of ugliness, that a certain element of artificiality seemed to him necessary in beauty. Perhaps it was because his experience of life elsewhere was so full of Sabbath-school picnics, petty economies, wholesome advice as to how to succeed in life, and the inescapable odors of cooking, that he found this existence so alluring, these smartly clad men and women so attractive, that he was so moved by these starry apple orchards that bloomed perennially under the limelight.

It would be difficult to put it strongly enough how convincingly the stage entrance of that theater was for Paul the actual portal of Romance. Certainly none of the company ever suspected it, least of all Charley Edwards. It was very like the old stories that used to float about London of fabulously rich Jews, who had subterranean halls there, with palms, and fountains, and soft lamps and richly appareled women who never saw the disenchanting light of London day. So, in the midst of that smoke-palled city, enamored of figures and grimy toil, Paul had his secret temple, his wishing carpet, his bit of blue-and-white Mediterranean shore bathed in perpetual sunshine.

Several of Paul's teachers had a theory that his imagination had been perverted by garish fiction, but the truth was that he scarcely ever read at all. The books at home were not such as would either tempt or corrupt a youthful mind, and as for reading the novels that some of his friends urged upon him—well, he got what he wanted much more quickly from music; any sort of music, from an orchestra to a barrel organ. He needed only the spark, the indescribable thrill that made his imagination master of his senses, and he could make plots and pictures enough of his own. It was equally true that he was not stage-struck—not, at any rate, in the usual acceptance of that expression. He had no desire to become an actor, any more than he had to become a musician. He felt no necessity to do any of these things; what he wanted was to see, to be in the atmosphere, float on the wave of it, to be carried out, blue league after blue league, away from everything.

After a night behind the scenes Paul found the schoolroom more than ever repulsive; the bare floors and naked walls; the prosy men who never wore frock coats, or violets in their buttonholes; the women with their dull gowns, shrill voices, and pitiful seriousness about prepositions that govern the dative. He could not bear to have the other pupils think, for a moment, that he took these people seriously; he must convey to them that he considered it all trivial, and was there only by way of a jest, anyway. He had autographed pictures of all the members of the stock company which he showed his classmates, telling them the most incredible stories of his familiarity with these people, of his acquaintance with the

soloists who came to Carnegie Hall, his suppers with them and the flowers he sent them. When these stories lost their effect, and his audience grew listless, he became desperate and would bid all the boys good-by, announcing that he was going to travel for a while; going to Naples, to Venice, to Egypt. Then, next Monday, he would slip back, conscious and nervously smiling; his sister was ill, and he should have to defer his voyage until spring.

Matters went steadily worse with Paul at school. In the itch to let his instructors know how heartily he despised them and their homilies, and how thoroughly he was appreciated elsewhere, he mentioned once or twice that he had no time to fool with theorems; adding—with a twitch of the eyebrows and a touch of that nervous bravado which so perplexed them—that he was helping the people down at the stock company; they were old friends of his.

The upshot of the matter was that the Principal went to Paul's father, and Paul was taken out of school and put to work. The manager at Carnegie Hall was told to get another usher in his stead; the doorkeeper at the theater was warned not to admit him to the house; and Charley Edwards remorsefully promised the boy's father not to see him again.

The members of the stock company were vastly amused when some of Paul's stories reached them—especially the women. They were hardworking women, most of them supporting indigent husbands or brothers, and they laughed rather bitterly at having stirred the boy to such fervid and florid inventions. They agreed with the faculty and with his father that Paul's was a bad case.

The eastbound train was plowing through a January snowstorm; the dull dawn was beginning to show gray when the engine whistled a mile out of Newark. Paul started up from the seat where he had lain curled in uneasy slumber, rubbed the breath-misted window glass with his hand, and peered out. The snow was whirling in curling eddies above the white bottom lands, and the drifts lay already deep in the fields and along the fences, while here and there the long dead grass and dried weed stalks protruded black above it. Lights shone from the scattered houses, and a gang of laborers who stood beside the track waved their lanterns.

Paul had slept very little, and he felt grimy and uncomfortable. He had made the all-night journey in a day coach, partly because he was ashamed, dressed as he was, to go into a Pullman, and partly because he was afraid of being seen there by some Pittsburgh businessman, who might have noticed him in Denny & Carson's office. When the whistle awoke him, he clutched quickly at his breast pocket, glancing about him with an uncertain smile. But the little, clay-bespattered Italians were still sleeping, the slatternly women across the aisle were in open-mouthed oblivion, and even the crumby, crying babies were for the nonce stilled. Paul settled back to struggle with his impatience as best he could.

When he arrived at the Jersey City station he hurried through his breakfast, manifestly ill at ease and keeping a sharp eye about him. After he reached the Twenty-third Street station, he consulted a cabman and had himself driven to a men's-furnishings establishment that was just opening for the day. He spent upward of two hours there, buying with endless reconsidering and great care. His new street suit he put on in the fitting room; the frock coat and dress clothes he had bundled into the cab with his linen. Then he drove to a hatter's and a shoe house. His next errand was at Tiffany's, where he selected his silver and a new scarf pin. He would not wait to have his silver marked, he said. Lastly, he stopped at a trunk shop on Broadway and had his purchases packed into various traveling bags.

It was a little after one o'clock when he drove up to the Waldorf, and after settling with the cabman, went into the office. He registered from Washington; said his mother and father had been abroad, and that he had come down to await the arrival of their steamer. He told his story plausibly and had no trouble, since he volunteered to pay for them in advance, in engaging his rooms; a sleeping room, sitting room, and bath.

Not once, but a hundred times, Paul had planned this entry into New York. He had gone over every detail of it with Charley Edwards, and in his scrapbook at home there were pages of description about

New York hotels, cut from the Sunday papers. When he was shown to his sitting room on the eighth floor he saw at a glance that everything was as it should be; there was but one detail in his mental picture that the place did not realize, so he rang for the bellboy and sent him down for flowers. He moved about nervously until the boy returned, putting away his new linen and fingering it delightedly as he did so. When the flowers came he put them hastily into water, and then tumbled into a hot bath. Presently he came out of his white bathroom, resplendent in his new silk underwear, and playing with the tassels of his red robe. The snow was whirling so fiercely outside his windows that he could scarcely see across the street, but within the air was deliciously soft and fragrant. He put the violets and jonquils on the taboret beside the couch, and threw himself down, with a long sigh, covering himself with a Roman blanket. He was thoroughly tired; he had been in such haste, he had stood up to such a strain, covered so much ground in the last twenty-four hours, that he wanted to think how it had all come about. Lulled by the sound of the wind, the warm air, and the cool fragrance of the flowers, he sank into deep, drowsy retrospection.

It had been wonderfully simple; when they had shut him out of the theater and concert hall, when they had taken away his bone, the whole thing was virtually determined. The rest was a mere matter of opportunity. The only thing that at all surprised him was his own courage—for he realized well enough that he had always been tormented by fear, a sort of apprehensive dread that, of late years, as the meshes of the lies he had told closed about him, had been pulling the muscles of his body tighter and tighter. Until now he could not remember the time when he had not been dreading something. Even when he was a little boy it was always there—behind him, or before, or on either side. There had always been the shadowed corner, the dark place into which he dared not look, but from which something seemed always to be watching him—and Paul had done things that were not pretty to watch, he knew.

But now he had a curious sense of relief, as though he had at last thrown down the gauntlet to the thing in the corner.

Yet it was but a day since he had been sulking in the traces; but yesterday afternoon that he had been sent to the bank with Denny & Carson's deposit, as usual—but this time he was instructed to leave the book to be balanced. There was above two thousand dollars in checks, and nearly a thousand in the bank notes which he had taken from the book and quietly transferred to his pocket. At the bank he had made out a new deposit slip. His nerves had been steady enough to permit of his returning to the office, where he had finished his work and asked for a full day's holiday tomorrow, Saturday, giving a perfectly reasonable pretext. The bankbook, he knew, would not be returned before Monday or Tuesday, and his father would be out of town for the next week. From the time he slipped the bank notes into his pocket until he boarded the night train for New York, he had not known a moment's hesitation. It was not the first time Paul had steered through treacherous waters.

How astonishingly easy it had all been; here he was, the thing done; and this time there would be no awakening, no figure at the top of the stairs. He watched the snowflakes whirling by his window until he fell asleep.

When he awoke, it was three o'clock in the afternoon. He bounded up with a start; half of one of his precious days gone already! He spent more than an hour in dressing, watching every stage of his toilet carefully in the mirror. Everything was quite perfect; he was exactly the kind of boy he had always wanted to be.

When he went downstairs Paul took a carriage and drove up Fifth Avenue toward the Park. The snow had somewhat abated; carriages and tradesmen's wagons were hurrying soundlessly to and fro in the winter twilight; boys in woolen mufflers were shoveling off the doorsteps; the avenue stages made fine spots of color against the white street. Here and there on the corners were stands, with whole flower gardens blooming under glass cases, against the sides of which the snowflakes stuck and melted;

violets, roses, carnations, lilies of the valley—somehow vastly more lovely and alluring that they blossomed thus unnaturally in the snow. The Park itself was a wonderful stage winterpiece.

When he returned, the pause of the twilight had ceased and the tune of the streets had changed. The snow was falling faster, lights streamed from the hotels that reared their dozen stories fearlessly up into the storm, defying the raging Atlantic winds. A long, black stream of carriages poured down the avenue, intersected here and there by other streams, tending horizontally. There were a score of cabs about the entrance of his hotel, and his driver had to wait. Boys in livery were running in and out of the awning stretched across the sidewalk, up and down the red velvet carpet laid from the door to the street. Above, about, within it all was the rumble and roar, the hurry and toss of thousands of human beings as hot for pleasure as himself, and on every side of him towered the glaring affirmation of the omnipotence of wealth.

The boy set his teeth and drew his shoulders together in a spasm of realization; the plot of all dramas, the text of all romances, the nerve-stuff of all sensations was whirling about him like the snowflakes. He burnt like a faggot in a tempest.

When Paul went down to dinner the music of the orchestra came floating up the elevator shaft to greet him. His head whirled as he stepped into the thronged corridor, and he sank back into one of the chairs against the wall to get his breath. The lights, the chatter, the perfumes, the bewildering medley of color—he had, for a moment, the feeling of not being able to stand it. But only for a moment; these were his own people, he told himself. He went slowly about the corridors, through the writing rooms, smoking rooms, reception rooms, as though he were exploring the chambers of an enchanted palace, built and peopled for him alone.

When he reached the dining room he sat down at a table near a window. The flowers, the white linen, the many-colored wineglasses, the gay toilettes of the women, the low popping of corks, the undulating repetitions of the *Blue Danube* from the orchestra, all flooded Paul's dream with bewildering radiance. When the roseate tinge of his champagne was added—that cold, precious, bubbling stuff that creamed and foamed in his glass—Paul wondered that there were honest men in the world at all. This was what all the world was fighting for, he reflected; this was what all the struggle was about. He doubted the reality of his past. Had he ever known a place called Cordelia Street, a place where fagged-looking businessmen got on the early car; mere rivets in a machine they seemed to Paul,—sickening men, with combings of children's hair always hanging to their coats, and the smell of cooking in their clothes. Cordelia Street—Ah, that belonged to another time and country; had he not always been thus, had he not sat here night after night, from as far back as he could remember, looking pensively over just such shimmering textures and slowly twirling the stem of a glass like this one between his thumb and middle finger? He rather thought he had.

He was not in the least abashed or lonely. He had no especial desire to meet or to know any of these people; all he demanded was the right to look on and conjecture, to watch the pageant. The mere stage properties were all he contended for. Nor was he lonely later in the evening, in his lodge at the Metropolitan. He was now entirely rid of his nervous misgivings, of his forced aggressiveness, of the imperative desire to show himself different from his surroundings. He felt now that his surroundings explained him. Nobody questioned the purple; he had only to wear it passively. He had only to glance down at his attire to reassure himself that here it would be impossible for anyone to humiliate him.

He found it hard to leave his beautiful sitting room to go to bed that night, and sat long watching the raging storm from his turret window. When he went to sleep it was with the lights turned on in his bedroom; partly because of his old timidity, and partly so that, if he should wake in the night, there would be no wretched moment of doubt, no horrible suspicion of yellow wallpaper, or of Washington and Calvin above his bed.

Sunday morning the city was practically snowbound. Paul breakfasted late, and in the afternoon he

fell in with a wild San Francisco boy, a freshman at Yale, who said he had run down for a "little flyer" over Sunday. The young man offered to show Paul the night side of the town, and the two boys went out together after dinner, not returning to the hotel until seven o'clock the next morning. They had started out in the confiding warmth of a champagne friendship, but their parting in the elevator was singularly cool. The freshman pulled himself together to make his train, and Paul went to bed. He awoke at two o'clock in the afternoon, very thirsty and dizzy, and rang for ice-water, coffee, and the Pittsburgh papers.

On the part of the hotel management, Paul excited no suspicion. There was this to be said for him, that he wore his spoils with dignity and in no way made himself conspicuous. Even under the glow of his wine he was never boisterous, though he found the stuff like a magician's wand for wonder-building. His chief greediness lay in his ears and eyes, and his excesses were not offensive ones. His dearest pleasures were the gray winter twilights in his sitting room; his quiet enjoyment of his flowers, his clothes, his wide divan, his cigarette, and his sense of power. He could not remember a time when he had felt so at peace with himself. The mere release from the necessity of petty lying, lying every day and every day, restored his self-respect. He had never lied for pleasure, even at school; but to be noticed and admired, to assert his difference from other Cordelia Street boys; and he felt a good deal more manly, more honest, even, now that he had no need for boastful pretensions, now that he could, as his actor friends used to say, "dress the part." It was characteristic that remorse did not occur to him. His golden days went by without a shadow, and he made each as perfect as he could.

On the eighth day after his arrival in New York he found the whole affair exploited in the Pittsburgh papers, exploited with a wealth of detail which indicated that local news of a sensational nature was at a low ebb. The firm of Denny & Carson announced that the boy's father had refunded the full amount of the theft and that they had no intention of prosecuting. The Cumberland minister had been interviewed, and expressed his hope of yet reclaiming the motherless lad, and his Sabbath-school teacher declared that she would spare no effort to that end. The rumor had reached Pittsburgh that the boy had been seen in a New York hotel, and his father had gone East to find him and bring him home.

Paul had just come in to dress for dinner; he sank into a chair, weak to the knees, and clasped his head in his hands. It was to be worse than jail, even; the tepid waters of Cordelia Street were to close over him finally and forever. The gray monotony stretched before him in hopeless, unrelieved years; Sabbath school, Young People's Meeting, the yellow-papered room, the damp dishtowels; it all rushed back upon him with a sickening vividness. He had the old feeling that the orchestra had suddenly stopped, the sinking sensation that the play was over. The sweat broke out on his face, and he sprang to his feet, looked about him with his white, conscious smile, and winked at himself in the mirror, With something of the old childish belief in miracles with which he had so often gone to class, all his lessons unlearned, Paul dressed and dashed whistling down the corridor to the elevator.

He had no sooner entered the dining room and caught the measure of the music than his remembrance was lightened by his old elastic power of claiming the moment, mounting with it, and finding it all-sufficient. The glare and glitter about him, the mere scenic accessories had again, and for the last time, their old potency. He would show himself that he was game, he would finish the thing splendidly. He doubted, more than ever, the existence of Cordelia Street, and for the first time he drank his wine recklessly. Was he not, after all, one of those fortunate beings born to the purple, was he not still himself and in his own place? He drummed a nervous accompaniment to the *Pagliacci* music and looked about him, telling himself over and over that it had paid.

He reflected drowsily, to the swell of the music and the chill sweetness of his wine, that he might have done it more wisely. He might have caught an outbound steamer and been well out of their clutches before now. But the other side of the world had seemed too far away and too uncertain then; he could not have waited for it; his need had been too sharp. If he had to choose over again, he would do

the same thing tomorrow. He looked affectionately about the dining room, now gilded with a soft mist. Ah, it had paid indeed!

Paul was awakened next morning by a painful throbbing in his head and feet. He had thrown himself across the bed without undressing, and had slept with his shoes on. His limbs and hands were lead heavy, and his tongue and throat were parched and burnt. There came upon him one of those fateful attacks of clear-headedness that never occurred except when he was physically exhausted and his nerves hung loose. He lay still, closed his eyes, and let the tide of things wash over him.

His father was in New York; "stopping at some joint or other," he told himself. The memory of successive summers on the front stoop fell upon him like a weight of black water. He had not a hundred dollars left; and he knew now, more than ever, that money was everything, the wall that stood between all he loathed and all he wanted. The thing was winding itself up; he had thought of that on his first glorious day in New York, and had even provided a way to snap the thread. It lay on his dressing table now; he had got it out last night when he came blindly up from dinner, but the shiny metal hurt his eyes, and he disliked the looks of it.

He rose and moved about with a painful effort, succumbing now and again to attacks of nausea. It was the old depression exaggerated; all the world had become Cordelia Street. Yet somehow he was not afraid of anything, was absolutely calm; perhaps because he had looked into the dark corner at last and knew. It was bad enough, what he saw there, but somehow not so bad as his long fear of it had been. He saw everything clearly now. He had a feeling that he had made the best of it, that he had lived the sort of life he was meant to live, and for half an hour he sat staring at the revolver. But he told himself that was not the way, so he went downstairs and took a cab to the ferry.

When Paul arrived in Newark he got off the train and took another cab, directing the driver to follow the Pennsylvania tracks out of the town. The snow lay heavy on the roadways and had drifted deep in the open fields. Only here and there the dead grass or dried weed stalks projected, singularly black, above it. Once well into the country, Paul dismissed the carriage and walked, floundering along the tracks, his mind a medley of irrelevant things. He seemed to hold in his brain an actual picture of everything he had seen that morning. He remembered every feature of both his drivers, of the toothless old woman from whom he had bought the red flowers in his coat, the agent from whom he had got his ticket, and all of his fellow passengers on the ferry. His mind, unable to cope with vital matters near at hand, worked feverishly and deftly at sorting and grouping these images. They made for him a part of the ugliness of the world, of the ache in his head, and the bitter burning on his tongue. He stooped and put a handful of snow into his mouth as he walked, but that, too, seemed hot. When he reached a little hillside, where the tracks ran through a cut some twenty feet below him, he stopped and sat down.

The carnations in his coat were drooping with the cold, he noticed, their red glory all over. It occurred to him that all the flowers he had seen in the glass cases that first night must have gone the same way, long before this. It was only one splendid breath they had, in spite of their brave mockery at the winter outside the glass; and it was a losing game in the end, it seemed, this revolt against the homilies by which the world is run. Paul took one of the blossoms carefully from his coat and scooped a little hole in the snow, where he covered it up. Then he dozed awhile, from his weak condition, seemingly insensible to the cold.

The sound of an approaching train awoke him, and he started to his feet, remembering only his resolution, and afraid lest he should be too late. He stood watching the approaching locomotive, his teeth chattering, his lips drawn away from them in a frightened smile; once or twice he glanced nervously sidewise, as though he were being watched. When the right moment came, he jumped. As he fell, the folly of his haste occurred to him with merciless clearness, the vastness of what he had left undone. There flashed through his brain, clearer than ever before, the blue of Adriatic water, the yellow of Algerian sands.

He felt something strike his chest, and that his body was being thrown swiftly through the air, on and on, immeasurably far and fast, while his limbs were gently relaxed. Then, because the picture-making mechanism was crushed, the disturbing visions flashed into black, and Paul dropped back into the immense design of things.

Activities

Paul's Case

Study Questions

1. Look up the noun “dandy” in a good college dictionary. To what is Paul unduly devoted or concerned about?
2. What is Paul’s reaction to the painting and the symphony at the concert hall? Does he love art? Does he want to be a musician or an actor? What does he get from art?
3. From what does Paul wish to escape?
4. Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919) was the very wealthy founder of the Carnegie Steel Company—later U.S. Steel—in Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh Carnegie Hall was one of at least two (the other in New York), and many libraries. Paul thinks of such concert halls and theatres as “temples.” Why?
5. Why does Paul’s father take Paul out of school and put him to work at Denny and Carson’s?
6. How does Paul get the money to travel to New York? Why didn’t he choose a sleeper (Pullman) car rather than a day car for the overnight train trip?
7. Why is the phrase “the omnipotence of wealth” so significant to Paul? What is his attitude to money? Remember that Carnegie referred to “the Gospel of Wealth.”
8. The words “radiance” and “many-colored” are used by Percy Shelley in his Romantic poem “Adonais,” an elegy on the early death of John Keats. (“Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,/Stains the white radiance of eternity.”) Paul’s dream at the Waldorf Hotel in New York is described in very similar terms. Is this a coincidence?
9. Paul increasingly doubts the reality of his past existence on Cordelia St. Has he, like Jay Gatsby, “sprung from some Platonic conception of himself”?
10. What does the symbol of the dark corner suggest? The flowers?
11. How does Paul view the world before he dies? Why does he put snow in his mouth?
12. Is Paul a Romantic?
13. Is it appropriate that he is killed by a locomotive?
14. Why does the author refer to Paul’s brain as “the picture-making mechanism?”

Resources

Watch this [film adaptation of *Paul's Case*](#), released in 1980 and available in two parts.

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- [Willa Cather ca. 1912 wearing necklace from Sarah Orne Jewett](#) © Aime Dupont Studio, New York is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license

36.

James Joyce (1882–1941)



Biography

James Joyce was born in Dublin, Ireland, on February 2, 1882, the eldest of ten surviving children. He was educated by Jesuits at Clongowes Wood College and Belvedere College before going on to University College, then located on St Stephen's Green in Dublin, where he studied modern languages.

After he graduated from university, Joyce went to Paris, ostensibly to study medicine, and was recalled to Dublin in April 1903 because of the illness and subsequent death of his mother. He stayed in Ireland until 1904, and in June that year, he met Nora Barncale, the Galway woman who was to become his partner and later his wife.

In August 1904, the first of Joyce's short stories was published in the *Irish Homestead* magazine, which later published two others. In October of that year, Joyce and Nora left Ireland, going first to Pola (now Pula, Croatia), where Joyce got a job teaching English at a Berlitz school. Joyce returned to Ireland only four times in his life, the last visit being in 1912, after which he never returned again.

Six months after their arrival in Pola, James and Nora moved to Trieste, Italy, where they spent most of the next ten years. While there, they learned the local Triestine dialect, and Italian remained the family's home language for many years. Joyce wrote and published articles in Italian in the newspaper *Il Piccolo della Sera* and gave lectures on English literature. A portrait of Nora was painted by the Italian artist Tullio Silvestri in Trieste just before the First World War. The James Joyce Centre in Dublin has on display a reproduction of this portrait.

The year 1914 proved a crucial one for Joyce. With Ezra Pound's assistance, *A Portrait of the Artist*

as a *Young Man*, Joyce's first novel, appeared in serial form in Harriet Weaver's *Egoist* magazine in London. His collection of short stories, *Dubliners*,¹ on which he had been working since 1904, was finally published, and he also wrote his only play, *Exiles*. Having cleared his desk, Joyce could then start in earnest on the novel he had been thinking about since 1907: *Ulysses*.

With the start of the First World War, Joyce and Nora, along with their two children, Giorgio and Lucia, were forced to leave Trieste. They moved to Zurich, Switzerland, where they lived for the duration of the war. The family had little money, relying on subventions from friends and family, people like Harriet Weaver in London, and Nora's uncle in Galway. They often ended up living in cramped, squalid accommodation as Joyce persisted in writing *Ulysses*. In fact, Joyce never really had a room or an office of his own in which to do his writing, and far from trying to block out the world around him while he wrote, Joyce included things going on around him as part of the book. Characteristics of his friends, Trieste, Zurich, and Paris are given to characters in the book, and, most notably, Nora's language and writing style become the voice of Molly Bloom in the novel.

Though Joyce wanted to settle in Trieste again after the war, the poet Ezra Pound persuaded him to come to Paris for a while, and Joyce stayed for the next 20 years. The publication of *Ulysses* in serial form in the American journal *The Little Review* was brought to a halt in 1921 when a court banned it as obscene. Shortly after, Harriet Weaver ran out of printers willing to set the text in England, and for a while, it looked as though *Ulysses* would never be published.

In July 1920, Joyce met Sylvia Beach, an American expatriate living in Paris who owned and ran the bookshop Shakespeare and Copany. In 1921, Beach offered to publish *Ulysses* and finally, on February 2, 1922, Joyce's 40th birthday, the first edition of the book was published. Beach continued to publish *Ulysses* through 1930.

After Beach gave up the rights to *Ulysses*, much of Joyce's business was taken over by Paul Léon, a Russian Jewish émigré living in Paris. As a close friend of Joyce and Joyce's family, Léon also became Joyce's business advisor, looking after his correspondence and dealing with his literary and legal affairs. The Léons' apartment became a centre for Joyce's studies, and Léon and others met Joyce there to discuss translations of *Ulysses* and the early serial publications of what became *Finnegans Wake*.

For the next ten years, Joyce and Léon were in almost daily contact, and Léon came to assume a role as necessary and important to Joyce and his work as Sylvia Beach had played in the 1920s. Not only did he manage Joyce's legal, financial, and daily existence, much as Beach had during the years she published *Ulysses*, Léon played an essential part in the composition and proofreading of Joyce's last and perhaps most challenging work, *Finnegans Wake*, which was published on May 4, 1939. It was immediately listed as "the book of the week" in the United Kingdom and the United States.

In 1940, when Joyce fled to the south of France ahead of the Nazi invasion, Léon returned to the Joyces' apartment in Paris to salvage their belongings and put them into safekeeping for the duration of the war, and it's thanks to Léon's efforts that much of Joyce's personal possessions and manuscripts survived.

Joyce died just short of age 59 on January 13, 1941, at 2 a.m., in Zurich, where he and his family had been given asylum. He is buried in Fluntern Cemetery, Zurich.

1. See a useful [introduction to *Dubliners* and detailed biography of Joyce](#) here.

Dubliners: Eveline

She sat at the window² watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne.³ She was tired.

Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening with other people's children. Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it — not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field — the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters. Ernest, however, never played: he was too grown up. Her father used often to hunt them in out of the field with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to keep nix and call out when he saw her father coming. Still they seemed to have been rather happy then. Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive. That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home.

Published 1904

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from. Perhaps she would never see again those familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided. And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the coloured print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque.⁴ He had been a school friend of her father. Whenever he showed the photograph to a visitor her father used to pass it with a casual word:

“He is in Melbourne now.”

She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life about her. O course she had to work hard, both in the house and at business. What would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad. She had always had an edge on her⁵, especially whenever there were people listening.

“Miss Hill, don't you see these ladies are waiting?”

“Look lively, Miss Hill, please.”

She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores.

But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married — she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. She knew it was that that had given her the palpitations. When they were growing up

2. cf. Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*, whose fate is sealed once she looks out the window.

3. A strong unglazed cotton or linen cloth used for curtains.

4. Canonized in 1920, a French nun (1647–1690) famed for “the Great Revelations of the Sacred Heart,” in which Christ made twelve promises to her.

5. Sharp, sarcastic manner.

he had never gone for her like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl but latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother's sake. And no she had nobody to protect her. Ernest was dead and Harry, who was in the church decorating business, was nearly always down somewhere in the country. Besides, the invariable squabble for money on Saturday nights had begun to weary her unspeakably. She always gave her entire wages — seven shillings — and Harry always sent up what he could but the trouble was to get any money from her father. He said she used to squander the money, that she had no head, that he wasn't going to give her his hard-earned money to throw about the streets, and much more, for he was usually fairly bad on Saturday night. In the end he would give her the money and ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday's dinner. Then she had to rush out as quickly as she could and do her marketing, holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowds and returning home late under her load of provisions. She had hard work to keep the house together and to see that the two young children who had been left to her charge went to school regularly and got their meals regularly. It was hard work — a hard life — but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life.

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the night-boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Ayres where he had a home waiting for her. How well she remembered the first time she had seen him; he was lodging in a house on the main road where she used to visit. It seemed a few weeks ago. He was standing at the gate, his peaked cap pushed back on his head and his hair tumbled forward over a face of bronze. Then they had come to know each other. He used to meet her outside the Stores every evening and see her home. He took her to see *The Bohemian Girl*⁶ and she felt elated as she sat in an unaccustomed part of the theatre with him. He was awfully fond of music and sang a little. People knew that they were courting and, when he sang about the lass that loves a sailor, she always felt pleasantly confused. He used to call her Poppens out of fun. First of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like him. He had tales of distant countries. He had started as a deck boy at a pound a month on a ship of the Allan Line going out to Canada. He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians. He had fallen on his feet in Buenos Ayres, he said, and had come over to the old country just for a holiday. Of course, her father had found out the affair and had forbidden her to have anything to say to him.

"I know these sailor chaps," he said.

One day he had quarrelled with Frank and after that she had to meet her lover secretly.

The evening deepened in the avenue. The white of two letters in her lap grew indistinct. One was to Harry; the other was to her father. Ernest had been her favourite but she liked Harry too. Her father was becoming old lately, she noticed; he would miss her. Sometimes he could be very nice. Not long before, when she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive, they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She remembered her father putting on her mother's bonnet to make the children laugh.

Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne. Down far in the avenue she could hear a street organ playing. She knew the air. Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could. She remembered the last night of her mother's illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered to go away and given sixpence. She remembered her father strutting back into the sickroom saying:

6. An opera by Michael Balfe (1808–1870). It contains a heroine ready to run away with the hero.

“Damned Italians! coming over here!”

As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother’s life laid its spell on the very quick of her being — that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness. She trembled as she heard again her mother’s voice saying constantly with foolish insistence:

“Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!”⁷

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her.

She stood among the swaying crowd in the station at the North Wall.⁸ He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again. The station was full of soldiers with brown baggages. Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat, lying in beside the quay wall, with illumined portholes. She answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold and, out of a maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty. The boat blew a long mournful whistle into the mist. If she went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres. Their passage had been booked. Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer.

A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand:

“Come!”

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

“Come!”

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish.

“Eveline! Evvy!”

He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.

7. Possibly a loose Gaelic equivalent of “The end of pleasure is pain.”

8. A quayside dock on the north bank of the River Liffey.

Dubliners: Araby

Published 1914

North Richmond Street being blind⁹, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbours in a square ground. The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces.

The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing-room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp: *The Abbot*,¹⁰ by Walter Scott, *The Devout Communicant*¹¹ and *The Memoirs of Vidocq*.¹² I liked the last best because its leaves were yellow. The wild garden behind the house contained a central apple-tree and a few straggling bushes under one of which I found the late tenant's rusty bicycle-pump. He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister.

When the short days of winter came dusk fell before we had well eaten our dinners. When we met in the street the houses had grown sombre. The space of sky above us was the colour of ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the cottages¹³, to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where odours arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from the buckled harness. When we returned to the street light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle was seen turning the corner we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea we watched her from our shadow peer up and down the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go in and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he obeyed and I stood by the railings looking at her. Her dress swung as she moved her body and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlour watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my eye and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her. This happened morning after morning. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-

9. A dead-end street.

10. A historical romance (1820). In this novel, the young hero becomes the guardian of Mary, Queen of Scots's state secrets.

11. Subtitled "Pious Meditations and Aspirations for the Three Days Before and the Three Days After Receiving the Holy Eucharist," by English Franciscan friar Pacificus Baker (1695–1774).

12. Memoirs of Eugène François Vidocq, a criminal turned French police detective. *The Memoirs* were first published in 1828.

13. Small dwellings for the poor.

boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a *come-all-you*¹⁴ about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.

One evening I went into the back drawing-room in which the priest had died. It was a dark rainy evening and there was no sound in the house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: "*O love! O love!*" many times.

At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked me was I going to *Araby*.¹⁵ I forgot whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar, she said she would love to go.

"And why can't you?" I asked.

While she spoke she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist. She could not go, she said, because there would be a retreat that week in her convent. Her brother and two other boys were fighting for their caps and I was alone at the railings. She held one of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

"It's well for you," she said.

"If I go," I said, "I will bring you something."

What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and the page I strove to read. The syllables of the word *Araby* were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped it was not some Freemason¹⁶ affair. I answered few questions in class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could not call my wandering thoughts together. I had hardly any patience with the serious work of life which, now that it stood between me and my desire, seemed to me child's play, ugly monotonous child's play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hallstand, looking for the hat-brush, and answered me curtly:

"Yes, boy, I know."

As he was in the hall I could not go into the front parlour and lie at the window. I left the house in bad humour and walked slowly towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw and already my heart misgave me.

When I came home to dinner my uncle had not yet been home. Still it was early. I sat staring at the

14. A topical ballad—in this case, one about the exploits of Fenian leader Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa (1831–1915).

15. The young Joyce attended the Araby Bazaar in 1894. The term "Araby" held exotic, romantic connotations in the nineteenth century British Empire, particularly after the reception of such works as Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1859) and Sir Richard Burton's version of the *Arabian Nights* (1885–88).

16. A fraternal organization to which the Roman Catholic Church objected.

clock for some time and, when its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below the dress.

When I came downstairs again I found Mrs. Mercer sitting at the fire. She was an old garrulous woman, a pawnbroker's widow, who collected used stamps for some pious purpose. I had to endure the gossip of the tea-table. The meal was prolonged beyond an hour and still my uncle did not come. Mrs. Mercer stood up to go: she was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was after eight o'clock and she did not like to be out late as the night air was bad for her. When she had gone I began to walk up and down the room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

"I'm afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord."

At nine o'clock I heard my uncle's latchkey in the hall-door. I heard him talking to himself and heard the hallstand rocking when it had received the weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs. When he was midway through his dinner I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

"The people are in bed and after their first sleep now," he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

"Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him late enough as it is."

My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he believed in the old saying: "*All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.*" He asked me where I was going and, when I had told him a second time he asked me did I know *The Arab's Farewell to his Steed*.¹⁷ When I left the kitchen he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.

I held a florin¹⁸ tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my journey. I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous house and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance and, fearing that the bazaar would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girdled at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognised a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the centre of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over which the words *Cafe Chantant*¹⁹ were written in coloured lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the fall of the coins.²⁰

Remembering with difficulty why I had come I went over to one of the stalls and examined porcelain

17. A popular romantic poem by Caroline Norton (1808–1877).

18. A two-shilling coin.

19. In France, a coffeehouse with entertainment.

20. cf. Matthew 21:12–13, Jesus confronts the moneylenders at the temple. A salver was derived from "saviour" and was originally used to catch drops of wine from the chalice placed upon it.

vases and flowered tea-sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

“O, I never said such a thing!”

“O, but you did!”

“O, but I didn’t!”

“Didn’t she say that?”

“Yes. I heard her.”

“O, there’s a . . . fib!”

Observing me the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

“No, thank you.”

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went back to the two young men. They began to talk of the same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger.

Dubliners: After the Race

Published 1914

The cars came scudding in towards Dublin, running evenly like pellets in the groove of the Naas Road.²¹ At the crest of the hill at Inchicore²² sightseers had gathered in clumps to watch the cars careering homeward and through this channel of poverty and inaction the Continent sped its wealth and industry. Now and again the clumps of people raised the cheer of the gratefully oppressed. Their sympathy, however, was for the blue cars — the cars of their friends, the French.²³

The French, moreover, were virtual victors. Their team had finished solidly; they had been placed second and third and the driver of the winning German car was reported a Belgian. Each blue car, therefore, received a double measure of welcome as it topped the crest of the hill and each cheer of welcome was acknowledged with smiles and nods by those in the car. In one of these trimly built cars was a party of four young men whose spirits seemed to be at present well above the level of successful Gallicism: in fact, these four young men were almost hilarious. They were Charles Ségouin, the owner of the car; André Rivière, a young electrician of Canadian birth; a huge Hungarian named Villona and a neatly groomed young man named Doyle. Ségouin was in good humour because he had unexpectedly received some orders in advance (he was about to start a motor establishment in Paris) and Rivière was in good humour because he was to be appointed manager of the establishment; these two young men (who were cousins) were also in good humour because of the success of the French cars. Villona was in good humour because he had had a very satisfactory luncheon; and besides he was an optimist by nature. The fourth member of the party, however, was too excited to be genuinely happy.

He was about twenty-six years of age, with a soft, light brown moustache and rather innocent-looking grey eyes. His father, who had begun life as an advanced Nationalist,²⁴ had modified his views early. He had made his money as a butcher in Kingstown and by opening shops in Dublin and in the suburbs he had made his money many times over. He had also been fortunate enough to secure some of the police contracts and in the end he had become rich enough to be alluded to in the Dublin newspapers as a merchant prince. He had sent his son to England to be educated in a big Catholic college and had afterwards sent him to Dublin University to study law. Jimmy did not study very earnestly and took to bad courses for a while. He had money and he was popular; and he divided his time curiously between musical and motoring circles. Then he had been sent for a term to Cambridge to see a little life. His father, remonstrative, but covertly proud of the excess, had paid his bills and brought him home. It was at Cambridge that he had met Ségouin. They were not much more than acquaintances as yet but Jimmy found great pleasure in the society of one who had seen so much of the world and was reputed to own some of the biggest hotels in France. Such a person (as his father agreed) was well worth knowing, even if he had not been the charming companion he was. Villona was entertaining also — a brilliant pianist — but, unfortunately, very poor.

The car ran on merrily with its cargo of hilarious youth. The two cousins sat on the front seat; Jimmy and his Hungarian friend sat behind. Decidedly Villona was in excellent spirits; he kept up a deep bass hum of melody for miles of the road. The Frenchmen flung their laughter and light words over their

21. Rhymes with "grace." A town to the southeast of Dublin.

22. Village on the south bank of the Liffey.

23. The race in question, which took place on July 2, 1903, was the Gordon Bennett Cup, a forerunner of the Grand Prix series of automobile races.

24. A strong supporter of home rule.

shoulders and often Jimmy had to strain forward to catch the quick phrase. This was not altogether pleasant for him, as he had nearly always to make a deft guess at the meaning and shout back a suitable answer in the face of a high wind. Besides Villona's humming would confuse anybody; the noise of the car, too.

Rapid motion through space elates one; so does notoriety; so does the possession of money. These were three good reasons for Jimmy's excitement. He had been seen by many of his friends that day in the company of these Continentals. At the control²⁵ Ségouin had presented him to one of the French competitors and, in answer to his confused murmur of compliment, the swarthy face of the driver had disclosed a line of shining white teeth. It was pleasant after that honour to return to the profane world of spectators amid nudges and significant looks. Then as to money — he really had a great sum under his control. Ségouin, perhaps, would not think it a great sum but Jimmy who, in spite of temporary errors, was at heart the inheritor of solid instincts, knew well with what difficulty it had been got together. This knowledge had previously kept his bills within the limits of reasonable recklessness, and if he had been so conscious of the labour latent in money when there had been question merely of some freak of the higher intelligence, how much more so now when he was about to stake the greater part of his substance! It was a serious thing for him.

Of course, the investment was a good one and Ségouin had managed to give the impression that it was by a favour of friendship the mite of Irish money was to be included in the capital of the concern. Jimmy had a respect for his father's shrewdness in business matters and in this case it had been his father who had first suggested the investment; money to be made in the motor business, pots of money. Moreover Ségouin had the unmistakable air of wealth. Jimmy set out to translate into days' work that lordly car in which he sat. How smoothly it ran. In what style they had come careering along the country roads! The journey laid a magical finger on the genuine pulse of life and gallantly the machinery of human nerves strove to answer the bounding courses of the swift blue animal.

They drove down Dame Street. The street was busy with unusual traffic, loud with the horns of motorists and the gongs of impatient tram-drivers. Near the Bank²⁶ Ségouin drew up and Jimmy and his friend alighted. A little knot of people collected on the footpath to pay homage to the snorting motor. The party was to dine together that evening in Ségouin's hotel and, meanwhile, Jimmy and his friend, who was staying with him, were to go home to dress. The car steered out slowly for Grafton Street²⁷ while the two young men pushed their way through the knot of gazers. They walked northward with a curious feeling of disappointment in the exercise, while the city hung its pale globes of light above them in a haze of summer evening.

In Jimmy's house this dinner had been pronounced an occasion. A certain pride mingled with his parents' trepidation, a certain eagerness, also, to play fast and loose for the names of great foreign cities have at least this virtue. Jimmy, too, looked very well when he was dressed and, as he stood in the hall giving a last equation to the bows of his dress tie, his father may have felt even commercially satisfied at having secured for his son qualities often unpurchaseable. His father, therefore, was unusually friendly with Villona and his manner expressed a real respect for foreign accomplishments; but this subtlety of his host was probably lost upon the Hungarian, who was beginning to have a sharp desire for his dinner.

The dinner was excellent, exquisite. Ségouin, Jimmy decided, had a very refined taste. The party was increased by a young Englishman named Routh whom Jimmy had seen with Ségouin at Cambridge. The young men supped in a snug room lit by electric candle lamps. They talked volubly and with little reserve. Jimmy, whose imagination was kindling, conceived the lively youth of the Frenchmen twined

25. One of the timing stages in the race.

26. The Bank of Ireland.

27. The most fashionable Dublin street.

elegantly upon the firm framework of the Englishman's manner. A graceful image of his, he thought, and a just one. He admired the dexterity with which their host directed the conversation. The five young men had various tastes and their tongues had been loosened. Villona, with immense respect, began to discover to the mildly surprised Englishman the beauties of the English madrigal, deploring the loss of old instruments. Rivière, not wholly ingenuously, undertook to explain to Jimmy the triumph of the French mechanics. The resonant voice of the Hungarian was about to prevail in ridicule of the spurious lutes of the romantic painters when Ségouin shepherded his party into politics. Here was congenial ground for all. Jimmy, under generous influences, felt the buried zeal of his father wake to life within him: he aroused the torpid Routh at last. The room grew doubly hot and Ségouin's task grew harder each moment: there was even danger of personal spite. The alert host at an opportunity lifted his glass to Humanity and, when the toast had been drunk, he threw open a window significantly.

That night the city wore the mask of a capital. The five young men strolled along Stephen's Green in a faint cloud of aromatic smoke. They talked loudly and gaily and their cloaks dangled from their shoulders. The people made way for them. At the corner of Grafton Street a short fat man was putting two handsome ladies on a car in charge of another fat man. The car drove off and the short fat man caught sight of the party.

"André."

"It's Farley!"

A torrent of talk followed. Farley was an American. No one knew very well what the talk was about. Villona and Rivière were the noisiest, but all the men were excited. They got up on a car, squeezing themselves together amid much laughter. They drove by the crowd, blended now into soft colours, to a music of merry bells. They took the train at Westland Row and in a few seconds, as it seemed to Jimmy, they were walking out of Kingstown Station. The ticket-collector saluted Jimmy; he was an old man:

"Fine night, sir!"

It was a serene summer night; the harbour lay like a darkened mirror at their feet. They proceeded towards it with linked arms, singing *Cadet Roussel*²⁸ in chorus, stamping their feet at every:

"*Ho! Ho! Hohé, vraiment!*"

They got into a rowboat at the slip and made out for the American's yacht. There was to be supper, music, cards. Villona said with conviction:

"It is delightful!"

There was a yacht piano in the cabin. Villona played a waltz for Farley and Rivière, Farley acting as cavalier and Rivière as lady. Then an impromptu square dance, the men devising original figures. What merriment! Jimmy took his part with a will; this was seeing life, at least. Then Farley got out of breath and cried "*Stop!*" A man brought in a light supper, and the young men sat down to it for form's sake. They drank, however: it was Bohemian. They drank Ireland, England, France, Hungary, the United States of America. Jimmy made a speech, a long speech, Villona saying: "*Hear! hear!*" whenever there was a pause. There was a great clapping of hands when he sat down. It must have been a good speech. Farley clapped him on the back and laughed loudly. What jovial fellows! What good company they were!

Cards! cards! The table was cleared. Villona returned quietly to his piano and played voluntaries for them. The other men played game after game, flinging themselves boldly into the adventure. They drank the health of the Queen of Hearts and of the Queen of Diamonds. Jimmy felt obscurely the lack of an audience: the wit was flashing. Play ran very high and paper began to pass. Jimmy did not know exactly who was winning but he knew that he was losing. But it was his own fault for he frequently

28. A popular French satirical song.

mistook his cards and the other men had to calculate his I.O.U.'s for him. They were devils of fellows but he wished they would stop: it was getting late. Someone gave the toast of the yacht *The Belle of Newport* and then someone proposed one great game for a finish.

The piano had stopped; Villona must have gone up on deck. It was a terrible game. They stopped just before the end of it to drink for luck. Jimmy understood that the game lay between Routh and Ségouin. What excitement! Jimmy was excited too; he would lose, of course. How much had he written away? The men rose to their feet to play the last tricks, talking and gesticulating. Routh won. The cabin shook with the young men's cheering and the cards were bundled together. They began then to gather in what they had won. Farley and Jimmy were the heaviest losers.

He knew that he would regret in the morning but at present he was glad of the rest, glad of the dark stupor that would cover up his folly. He leaned his elbows on the table and rested his head between his hands, counting the beats of his temples. The cabin door opened and he saw the Hungarian standing in a shaft of grey light:

“Daybreak, gentlemen!”

Dubliners: Counterparts

Published 1914

The bell rang furiously and, when Miss Parker went to the tube,²⁹ a furious voice called out in a piercing North of Ireland accent:

“Send Farrington here!”

Miss Parker returned to her machine, saying to a man who was writing at a desk:

“Mr. Alleyne wants you upstairs.”

The man muttered “*Blast him!*” under his breath and pushed back his chair to stand up. When he stood up he was tall and of great bulk. He had a hanging face, dark wine-coloured, with fair eyebrows and moustache: his eyes bulged forward slightly and the whites of them were dirty. He lifted up the counter and, passing by the clients, went out of the office with a heavy step.

He went heavily upstairs until he came to the second landing, where a door bore a brass plate with the inscription *Mr. Alleyne*. Here he halted, puffing with labour and vexation, and knocked. The shrill voice cried:

“Come in!”

The man entered Mr. Alleyne’s room. Simultaneously Mr. Alleyne, a little man wearing gold-rimmed glasses on a cleanshaven face, shot his head up over a pile of documents. The head itself was so pink and hairless it seemed like a large egg reposing on the papers. Mr. Alleyne did not lose a moment:

“Farrington? What is the meaning of this? Why have I always to complain of you? May I ask you why you haven’t made a copy of that contract between Bodley and Kirwan? I told you it must be ready by four o’clock.”

“But Mr. Shelley said, sir ——”

“*Mr. Shelley said, sir . . .* Kindly attend to what I say and not to what Mr. Shelley says, sir. You have always some excuse or another for shirking work. Let me tell you that if the contract is not copied before this evening I’ll lay the matter before Mr. Crosbie. . . . Do you hear me now?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Do you hear me now? . . . Ay and another little matter! I might as well be talking to the wall as talking to you. Understand once for all that you get a half an hour for your lunch and not an hour and a half. How many courses do you want, I’d like to know. . . . Do you mind me now?”

“Yes, sir.”

Mr. Alleyne bent his head again upon his pile of papers. The man stared fixedly at the polished skull which directed the affairs of Crosbie & Alleyne, gauging its fragility. A spasm of rage gripped his throat for a few moments and then passed, leaving after it a sharp sensation of thirst. The man recognised the sensation and felt that he must have a good night’s drinking. The middle of the month was passed and, if he could get the copy done in time, Mr. Alleyne might give him an order on the cashier. He stood still, gazing fixedly at the head upon the pile of papers. Suddenly Mr. Alleyne began to upset all the papers, searching for something. Then, as if he had been unaware of the man’s presence till that moment, he shot up his head again, saying:

“Eh? Are you going to stand there all day? Upon my word, Farrington, you take things easy!”

“I was waiting to see . . .”

“Very good, you needn’t wait to see. Go downstairs and do your work.”

29. Voice tube, an early type of office intercom.

The man walked heavily towards the door and, as he went out of the room, he heard Mr. Alleyne cry after him that if the contract was not copied by evening Mr. Crosbie would hear of the matter.

He returned to his desk in the lower office and counted the sheets which remained to be copied. He took up his pen and dipped it in the ink but he continued to stare stupidly at the last words he had written: *In no case shall the said Bernard Bodley be . . .* The evening was falling and in a few minutes they would be lighting the gas: then he could write. He felt that he must slake the thirst in his throat. He stood up from his desk and, lifting the counter as before, passed out of the office. As he was passing out the chief clerk looked at him inquiringly.

"It's all right, Mr. Shelley," said the man, pointing with his finger to indicate the objective of his journey.

The chief clerk glanced at the hat-rack, but, seeing the row complete, offered no remark. As soon as he was on the landing the man pulled a shepherd's plaid cap out of his pocket, put it on his head and ran quickly down the rickety stairs. From the street door he walked on furtively on the inner side of the path towards the corner and all at once dived into a doorway. He was now safe in the dark snug of O'Neill's shop, and filling up the little window that looked into the bar with his inflamed face, the colour of dark wine or dark meat, he called out:

"Here, Pat, give us a g.p.³⁰, like a good fellow."

The curate brought him a glass of plain porter. The man drank it at a gulp and asked for a caraway seed. He put his penny on the counter and, leaving the curate to grope for it in the gloom, retreated out of the snug as furtively as he had entered it.

Darkness, accompanied by a thick fog, was gaining upon the dusk of February and the lamps in Eustace Street had been lit. The man went up by the houses until he reached the door of the office, wondering whether he could finish his copy in time. On the stairs a moist pungent odour of perfumes saluted his nose: evidently Miss Delacour had come while he was out in O'Neill's. He crammed his cap back again into his pocket and re-entered the office, assuming an air of absent-mindedness.

"Mr. Alleyne has been calling for you," said the chief clerk severely. "Where were you?"

The man glanced at the two clients who were standing at the counter as if to intimate that their presence prevented him from answering. As the clients were both male the chief clerk allowed himself a laugh.

"I know that game," he said. "Five times in one day is a little bit . . . Well, you better look sharp and get a copy of our correspondence in the Delacour case for Mr. Alleyne."

This address in the presence of the public, his run upstairs and the porter he had gulped down so hastily confused the man and, as he sat down at his desk to get what was required, he realised how hopeless was the task of finishing his copy of the contract before half past five. The dark damp night was coming and he longed to spend it in the bars, drinking with his friends amid the glare of gas and the clatter of glasses. He got out the Delacour correspondence and passed out of the office. He hoped Mr. Alleyne would not discover that the last two letters were missing.

The moist pungent perfume lay all the way up to Mr. Alleyne's room. Miss Delacour was a middle-aged woman of Jewish appearance. Mr. Alleyne was said to be sweet on her or on her money. She came to the office often and stayed a long time when she came. She was sitting beside his desk now in an aroma of perfumes, smoothing the handle of her umbrella and nodding the great black feather in her hat. Mr. Alleyne had swivelled his chair round to face her and thrown his right foot jauntily upon his left knee. The man put the correspondence on the desk and bowed respectfully but neither Mr. Alleyne nor Miss Delacour took any notice of his bow. Mr. Alleyne tapped a finger on the correspondence and then flicked it towards him as if to say: "*That's all right: you can go.*"

30. A glass of porter.

The man returned to the lower office and sat down again at his desk. He stared intently at the incomplete phrase: *In no case shall the said Bernard Bodley be . . .* and thought how strange it was that the last three words began with the same letter. The chief clerk began to hurry Miss Parker, saying she would never have the letters typed in time for post. The man listened to the clicking of the machine for a few minutes and then set to work to finish his copy. But his head was not clear and his mind wandered away to the glare and rattle of the public-house. It was a night for hot punches. He struggled on with his copy, but when the clock struck five he had still fourteen pages to write. Blast it! He couldn't finish it in time. He longed to execrate aloud, to bring his fist down on something violently. He was so enraged that he wrote *Bernard Bernard* instead of *Bernard Bodley* and had to begin again on a clean sheet.

He felt strong enough to clear out the whole office single-handed. His body ached to do something, to rush out and revel in violence. All the indignities of his life enraged him. . . . Could he ask the cashier privately for an advance? No, the cashier was no good, no damn good: he wouldn't give an advance. . . . He knew where he would meet the boys: Leonard and O'Halloran and Nosey Flynn. The barometer of his emotional nature was set for a spell of riot.

His imagination had so abstracted him that his name was called twice before he answered. Mr. Alleyne and Miss Delacour were standing outside the counter and all the clerks had turned round in anticipation of something. The man got up from his desk. Mr. Alleyne began a tirade of abuse, saying that two letters were missing. The man answered that he knew nothing about them, that he had made a faithful copy. The tirade continued: it was so bitter and violent that the man could hardly restrain his fist from descending upon the head of the manikin³¹ before him:

"I know nothing about any other two letters," he said stupidly.

"*You — know — nothing.* Of course you know nothing," said Mr. Alleyne. "Tell me," he added, glancing first for approval to the lady beside him, "do you take me for a fool? Do you think me an utter fool?"

The man glanced from the lady's face to the little egg-shaped head and back again; and, almost before he was aware of it, his tongue had found a felicitous moment:

"I don't think, sir," he said, "that that's a fair question to put to me."

There was a pause in the very breathing of the clerks. Everyone was astounded (the author of the witticism no less than his neighbours) and Miss Delacour, who was a stout amiable person, began to smile broadly. Mr. Alleyne flushed to the hue of a wild rose and his mouth twitched with a dwarf's passion. He shook his fist in the man's face till it seemed to vibrate like the knob of some electric machine:

"You impertinent ruffian! You impertinent ruffian! I'll make short work of you! Wait till you see! You'll apologise to me for your impertinence or you'll quit the office instanter! You'll quit this, I'm telling you, or you'll apologise to me!"

He stood in a doorway opposite the office watching to see if the cashier would come out alone. All the clerks passed out and finally the cashier came out with the chief clerk. It was no use trying to say a word to him when he was with the chief clerk. The man felt that his position was bad enough. He had been obliged to offer an abject apology to Mr. Alleyne for his impertinence but he knew what a hornet's nest the office would be for him. He could remember the way in which Mr. Alleyne had hounded little Peake out of the office in order to make room for his own nephew. He felt savage and thirsty and revengeful, annoyed with himself and with everyone else. Mr. Alleyne would never give him an hour's rest; his life would be a hell to him. He had made a proper fool of himself this time. Could he not keep his tongue in his cheek? But they had never pulled together from the first, he and

31. A little man.

Mr. Alleyne, ever since the day Mr. Alleyne had overheard him mimicking his North of Ireland accent to amuse Higgins and Miss Parker: that had been the beginning of it. He might have tried Higgins for the money, but sure Higgins never had anything for himself. A man with two establishments to keep up, of course he couldn't. . . .

He felt his great body again aching for the comfort of the public-house. The fog had begun to chill him and he wondered could he touch Pat in O'Neill's. He could not touch him for more than a bob³² — and a bob was no use. Yet he must get money somewhere or other: he had spent his last penny for the g.p. and soon it would be too late for getting money anywhere. Suddenly, as he was fingering his watch-chain, he thought of Terry Kelly's pawn-office in Fleet Street. That was the dart! Why didn't he think of it sooner?

He went through the narrow alley of Temple Bar quickly, muttering to himself that they could all go to hell because he was going to have a good night of it. The clerk in Terry Kelly's said *A crown!*³³ but the consignor held out for six shillings; and in the end the six shillings was allowed him literally. He came out of the pawn-office joyfully, making a little cylinder, of the coins between his thumb and fingers. In Westmoreland Street the footpaths were crowded with young men and women returning from business and ragged urchins ran here and there yelling out the names of the evening editions. The man passed through the crowd, looking on the spectacle generally with proud satisfaction and staring masterfully at the office-girls. His head was full of the noises of tram-gongs and swishing trolleys and his nose already sniffed the curling fumes punch. As he walked on he preconsidered the terms in which he would narrate the incident to the boys:

"So, I just looked at him — coolly, you know, and looked at her. Then I looked back at him again — taking my time, you know. '*I don't think that that's a fair question to put to me,*' says I."

Nosey Flynn was sitting up in his usual corner of Davy Byrne's and, when he heard the story, he stood Farrington a half-one, saying it was as smart a thing as ever he heard. Farrington stood a drink in his turn. After a while O'Halloran and Paddy Leonard came in and the story was repeated to them. O'Halloran stood tailors of malt, hot, all round and told the story of the retort he had made to the chief clerk when he was in Callan's of Fownes's Street; but, as the retort was after the manner of the liberal shepherds in the eclogues³⁴, he had to admit that it was not as clever as Farrington's retort. At this Farrington told the boys to polish off that and have another.

Just as they were naming their poisons who should come in but Higgins! Of course he had to join in with the others. The men asked him to give his version of it, and he did so with great vivacity for the sight of five small hot whiskies was very exhilarating. Everyone roared laughing when he showed the way in which Mr. Alleyne shook his fist in Farrington's face. Then he imitated Farrington, saying, "*And here was my nabs, as cool as you please,*" while Farrington looked at the company out of his heavy dirty eyes, smiling and at times drawing forth stray drops of liquor from his moustache with the aid of his lower lip.

When that round was over there was a pause. O'Halloran had money but neither of the other two seemed to have any; so the whole party left the shop somewhat regretfully. At the corner of Duke Street Higgins and Nosey Flynn bevelled off to the left while the other three turned back towards the city. Rain was drizzling down on the cold streets and, when they reached the Ballast Office, Farrington suggested the Scotch House. The bar was full of men and loud with the noise of tongues and glasses. The three men pushed past the whining matchsellers at the door and formed a little party at the corner of the counter. They began to exchange stories. Leonard introduced them to a young fellow named Weathers who was performing at the Tivoli as an acrobat and knockabout *artiste*. Farrington stood a

32. One shilling.

33. Five shillings.

34. A possible reference to the gross "liberal shepherds" in *Hamlet* 4.7.

drink all round. Weathers said he would take a small Irish and Apollinaris³⁵. Farrington, who had definite notions of what was what, asked the boys would they have an Apollinaris too; but the boys told Tim to make theirs hot. The talk became theatrical. O'Halloran stood a round and then Farrington stood another round, Weathers protesting that the hospitality was too Irish. He promised to get them in behind the scenes and introduce them to some nice girls. O'Halloran said that he and Leonard would go, but that Farrington wouldn't go because he was a married man; and Farrington's heavy dirty eyes leered at the company in token that he understood he was being chaffed. Weathers made them all have just one little tincture at his expense and promised to meet them later on at Mulligan's in Poolbeg Street.

When the Scotch House closed they went round to Mulligan's. They went into the parlour at the back and O'Halloran ordered small hot specials all round. They were all beginning to feel mellow. Farrington was just standing another round when Weathers came back. Much to Farrington's relief he drank a glass of bitter this time. Funds were getting low but they had enough to keep them going. Presently two young women with big hats and a young man in a check suit came in and sat at a table close by. Weathers saluted them and told the company that they were out of the Tivoli.³⁶ Farrington's eyes wandered at every moment in the direction of one of the young women. There was something striking in her appearance. An immense scarf of peacock-blue muslin was wound round her hat and knotted in a great bow under her chin; and she wore bright yellow gloves, reaching to the elbow. Farrington gazed admiringly at the plump arm which she moved very often and with much grace; and when, after a little time, she answered his gaze he admired still more her large dark brown eyes. The oblique staring expression in them fascinated him. She glanced at him once or twice and, when the party was leaving the room, she brushed against his chair and said "*O, pardon!*" in a London accent. He watched her leave the room in the hope that she would look back at him, but he was disappointed. He cursed his want of money and cursed all the rounds he had stood, particularly all the whiskies and Apollinaris which he had stood to Weathers. If there was one thing that he hated it was a sponge. He was so angry that he lost count of the conversation of his friends.

When Paddy Leonard called him he found that they were talking about feats of strength. Weathers was showing his biceps muscle to the company and boasting so much that the other two had called on Farrington to uphold the national honour. Farrington pulled up his sleeve accordingly and showed his biceps muscle to the company. The two arms were examined and compared and finally it was agreed to have a trial of strength. The table was cleared and the two men rested their elbows on it, clasping hands. When Paddy Leonard said "*Go!*" each was to try to bring down the other's hand on to the table. Farrington looked very serious and determined.

The trial began. After about thirty seconds Weathers brought his opponent's hand slowly down on to the table. Farrington's dark wine-coloured face flushed darker still with anger and humiliation at having been defeated by such a stripling.

"You're not to put the weight of your body behind it. Play fair," he said.

"Who's not playing fair?" said the other.

"Come on again. The two best out of three."

The trial began again. The veins stood out on Farrington's forehead, and the pallor of Weathers' complexion changed to peony. Their hands and arms trembled under the stress. After a long struggle Weathers again brought his opponent's hand slowly on to the table. There was a murmur of applause from the spectators. The curate, who was standing beside the table, nodded his red head towards the victor and said with stupid familiarity:

"Ah! that's the knack!"

35. A German mineral water.

36. A Dublin music hall theatre.

“What the hell do you know about it?” said Farrington fiercely, turning on the man. “What do you put in your gab for?”

“Sh, sh!” said O’Halloran, observing the violent expression of Farrington’s face. “Pony up, boys. We’ll have just one little smahan more and then we’ll be off.”

A very sullen-faced man stood at the corner of O’Connell Bridge waiting for the little Sandymount tram to take him home. He was full of smouldering anger and revengefulness. He felt humiliated and discontented; he did not even feel drunk; and he had only twopence in his pocket. He cursed everything. He had done for himself in the office, pawned his watch, spent all his money; and he had not even got drunk. He began to feel thirsty again and he longed to be back again in the hot reeking public-house. He had lost his reputation as a strong man, having been defeated twice by a mere boy. His heart swelled with fury and, when he thought of the woman in the big hat who had brushed against him and said *Pardon!* his fury nearly choked him.

His tram let him down at Shelbourne Road and he steered his great body along in the shadow of the wall of the barracks. He loathed returning to his home. When he went in by the side-door he found the kitchen empty and the kitchen fire nearly out. He bawled upstairs:

“Ada! Ada!”

His wife was a little sharp-faced woman who bullied her husband when he was sober and was bullied by him when he was drunk. They had five children. A little boy came running down the stairs.

“Who is that?” said the man, peering through the darkness.

“Me, pa.”

“Who are you? Charlie?”

“No, pa. Tom.”

“Where’s your mother?”

“She’s out at the chapel.”

“That’s right. . . . Did she think of leaving any dinner for me?”

“Yes, pa. I—”

“Light the lamp. What do you mean by having the place in darkness? Are the other children in bed?”

The man sat down heavily on one of the chairs while the little boy lit the lamp. He began to mimic his son’s flat accent, saying half to himself: “*At the chapel. At the chapel, if you please!*” When the lamp was lit he banged his fist on the table and shouted:

“What’s for my dinner?”

“I’m going . . . to cook it, pa,” said the little boy.

The man jumped up furiously and pointed to the fire.

“On that fire! You let the fire out! By God, I’ll teach you to do that again!”

He took a step to the door and seized the walking-stick which was standing behind it.

“I’ll teach you to let the fire out!” he said, rolling up his sleeve in order to give his arm free play.

The little boy cried “*O, pa!*” and ran whimpering round the table, but the man followed him and caught him by the coat. The little boy looked about him wildly but, seeing no way of escape, fell upon his knees.

“Now, you’ll let the fire out the next time!” said the man striking at him vigorously with the stick.

“Take that, you little whelp!”

The boy uttered a squeal of pain as the stick cut his thigh. He clasped his hands together in the air and his voice shook with fright.

“O, pa!” he cried. “Don’t beat me, pa! And I’ll . . . I’ll say a *Hail Mary* for you. . . . I’ll say a *Hail Mary* for you, pa, if you don’t beat me. . . . I’ll say a *Hail Mary*. . . .”

Activities

Eveline

1. Describe Eveline's home life.
2. How does she expect her new life to be different?
3. Is Buenos Aires a symbol?
4. List specific references to dust. What is the significance of the dust image?
5. What is Eveline's father like? Compare him to Mansfield's late colonel or to O'Casey's Capt. Boyle.
6. What was her mother like? What happened to her? Does Eveline identify with her mother in any way?
7. What do you think her mother meant by her repeating "the end of pleasure is pain"?
8. What does her father mean when he tells her, "I know these sailor chaps"? What possible reasons would he have for trying to break up her romance with Frank?
9. What type of person is Frank? What does she actually know about him?
10. Has Eveline romanticized Frank in any way? Is her father's objection to him perhaps justified?
11. What is Eveline's duty to her father? What promise did she make to her dying mother?
12. What is her duty to herself? Does she really believe she has "a right to happiness"? Why or why not?
13. How does Eveline feel about leaving her brother, Harry?
14. In what ways is Eveline "like a helpless animal"? What is she afraid of?
15. Why do you think her eyes give Frank "no sign of love or farewell or recognition"?
16. Do you think Eveline made the right decision? Why or why not?
17. Read the notes on the musical allusion to ["The Lass that Loves a Sailor"](#) as well as the lyrics to the song. Then discuss how it contributes to a contrast between Frank and Eveline's father.
18. In an essay of 1,000 to 1,500 words, give a feminist interpretation of the story.

Araby

Study Questions

1. What are some connotations of the word “Araby”?
2. Give a few examples of how the narrator distances himself from the boy he once was.
3. What is the main meaning of the word in the last sentence? In what sense was the protagonist “driven and derided by vanity”?
4. In a brief essay, discuss how religious imagery relates to the theme.
5. Discuss the motif of initiation or innocence to experience in the story.

Resources

Listen to [John McCormack’s “I’ll Sing Thee Songs of Araby”](#) or [read the lyrics of “I’ll Sing Thee Songs of Araby.”](#) It’s possible that this song inspired “Araby,” which refers to an actual fair that took place in Dublin in May 1894. To learn more, see [Music in the Works of James Joyce](#).

After the Race

Study Questions

1. Comment on the thematic significance of paragraph 1, “...this channel of poverty and inaction” and of “cheer of the gratefully oppressed.”
2. Describe Jimmy’s education. Why is his father secretly proud of his excesses?
3. Why is Jimmy taken with Ségouin?
4. In what is Jimmy about to invest? Does this seem to be a good investment? Why or why not?
5. How does Ségouin diffuse the heated discussion of politics? What does this say about him?
6. What meaning do you take from the line “he would lose, of course”?
7. What is Routh’s nationality, and why is it significant to the theme?

Counterparts

Study Questions

1. What is the narrative point of view in the story?
2. In the office scene, what is the narrator's attitude toward Farrington? How does he refer to him? List some descriptions used.
3. Is there any difference between the descriptions and references to Farrington in the office scene and in the bar scenes?
4. Describe the atmosphere of the office.
5. Describe Mr. Alleyne.
6. Describe Farrington. What is his response after the arm-wrestling loss? What is his attitude to the chief clerk? The pub keeper (curate)?
7. The story breaks naturally into three main scenes. List them.
8. Describe the atmosphere of Farrington's home.
9. Is Tom's beating inevitable? That is, are you surprised when Farrington lashes out at him? If not, why not?
10. What is the significance of the title? Look up "counterpart" in a good dictionary.
11. Is it significant that Alleyne is from Northern Ireland, Weathers is from England, and the divided family is from Southern Ireland?
12. The protagonist Farrington beats his young son Tom (see last paragraph of story). Write a 600-word essay on what causes the beating. Try to find at least two or three major causes. If you decide that one of the causes of the beating is excessive alcohol consumption, be sure to make the logical link to violence. Otherwise, you might commit a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy, which occurs when the writer substitutes a mere correlation for the cause. An example: "Let's not invite Tom to our next picnic. Whenever he has attended our picnics, it has rained; whenever he was absent, it was sunny."
13. In an essay of 1,500 to 2,000 words, discuss "After the Race" and "Counterparts" as stories dealing with imperialism. Incidentally, the first chapter ("Telemachus") of Joyce's *Ulysses* also relates to the theme of colonialism: pay particular attention to Stephen's words to the English visitor Haines: "I am the servant of two masters...an English and an Italian." Identify these two masters and how they touch upon the colonialism topic. Also Joyce, in his portrait of the poor old milkwoman in the same chapter, alludes to Cathleen ni Houlihan, a traditional symbol of Ireland herself: she serves Mulligan and the Englishman Haines, "Her conqueror [Haines] and her gay betrayer [Mulligan]."

Additional Resources

- Check out [A Teacher’s Guide to the Signet Classic Edition of James Joyce’s *Dubliners* \[PDF\]](#) for useful study questions for each story, as well as useful historical and related bibliography.
- Read [“Joyce’s Dublin”](#) by Irene Togher for information on how Dublin appears in Joyce’s work.
- Check out this podcast on Joyce’s “The Dead,” the final story in *Dubliners*: [Joyce’s Dublin: An Exploration of “The Dead”](#).

Ulysses

[Read Ulysses online via Project Gutenberg](#)

Prof. Michael Groden’s [notes on Ulysses: Chapter 1, “Telemachus”](#).

[Notes on Ulysses: Chapter 4, “Calypso”](#).

[Notes on Ulysses: Chapter 18, “Penelope”](#).

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37.**D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930)****Biography**

David Herbert Lawrence, born on September 11, 1885, was an English novelist, poet, playwright, essayist, literary critic, and painter who published as D. H. Lawrence. His collected works, among other things, represent an extended reflection upon the de-humanising effects of modernity and industrialization. In them, some of the issues Lawrence explores are emotional health, vitality, spontaneity, and instinct.

Lawrence's opinions earned him many enemies and he endured official persecution, censorship, and misrepresentation of his creative work throughout the second half of his life, much of which he spent in a voluntary exile, which he called his "savage pilgrimage."

At the time of his death, on March 2, 1930, his public reputation was that of a pornographer who had wasted his considerable talents. E. M. Forster, in an obituary notice, challenged this widely held view, describing him as, "The greatest imaginative novelist of our generation." Later, the influential Cambridge critic F. R. Leavis championed both his artistic integrity and his moral seriousness, placing much of Lawrence's fiction within the canonical "great tradition" of the English novel.

The Horse Dealer's Daughter

'Well, Mabel, and what are you going to do with yourself?' asked Joe, with foolish flippancy. He felt quite safe himself. Without listening for an answer, he turned aside, worked a grain of tobacco to the tip of his tongue, and spat it out. He did not care about anything, since he felt safe himself.

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The three brothers and the sister sat round the desolate breakfast table, attempting some sort of desultory consultation. The morning's post had given the final tap to the family fortunes, and all was over. The dreary dining-room itself, with its heavy mahogany furniture, looked as if it were waiting to be done away with.

But the consultation amounted to nothing. There was a strange air of ineffectuality about the three men, as they sprawled at table, smoking and reflecting vaguely on their own condition. The girl was alone, a rather short, sullen-looking young woman of twenty-seven. She did not share the same life as her brothers. She would have been good-looking, save for the impassive fixity of her face, 'bull-dog', as her brothers called it.

There was a confused tramping of horses' feet outside. The three men all sprawled round in their chairs to watch. Beyond the dark holly-bushes that separated the strip of lawn from the highroad, they could see a cavalcade of shire horses swinging out of their own yard, being taken for exercise. This was the last time. These were the last horses that would go through their hands. The young men watched with critical, callous look. They were all frightened at the collapse of their lives, and the sense of disaster in which they were involved left them no inner freedom.

Yet they were three fine, well-set fellows enough. Joe, the eldest, was a man of thirty-three, broad and handsome in a hot, flushed way. His face was red, he twisted his black moustache over a thick finger, his eyes were shallow and restless. He had a sensual way of uncovering his teeth when he laughed, and his bearing was stupid. Now he watched the horses with a glazed look of helplessness in his eyes, a certain stupor of downfall.

The great draught-horses swung past. They were tied head to tail, four of them, and they heaved along to where a lane branched off from the highroad, planting their great hoofs floutingly in the fine black mud, swinging their great rounded haunches sumptuously, and trotting a few sudden steps as they were led into the lane, round the corner. Every movement showed a massive, slumbrous strength, and a stupidity which held them in subjection. The groom at the head looked back, jerking the leading rope. And the calvalcade moved out of sight up the lane, the tail of the last horse, bobbed up tight and stiff, held out taut from the swinging great haunches as they rocked behind the hedges in a motionlike sleep.

Joe watched with glazed hopeless eyes. The horses were almost like his own body to him. He felt he was done for now. Luckily he was engaged to a woman as old as himself, and therefore her father, who was steward of a neighbouring estate, would provide him with a job. He would marry and go into harness. His life was over, he would be a subject animal now.

He turned uneasily aside, the retreating steps of the horses echoing in his ears. Then, with foolish restlessness, he reached for the scraps of bacon-rind from the plates, and making a faint whistling sound, flung them to the terrier that lay against the fender. He watched the dog swallow them, and waited till the creature looked into his eyes. Then a faint grin came on his face, and in a high, foolish voice he said:

'You won't get much more bacon, shall you, you little b——?'

The dog faintly and dismally wagged its tail, then lowered his haunches, circled round, and lay down again.

There was another helpless silence at the table. Joe sprawled uneasily in his seat, not willing to go till the family conclave was dissolved. Fred Henry, the second brother, was erect, clean-limbed, alert. He had watched the passing of the horses with more *sang-froid*.¹ If he was an animal, like Joe, he was an animal which controls, not one which is controlled.

He was master of any horse, and he carried himself with a well-tempered air of mastery. But he was not master of the situations of life. He pushed his coarse brown moustache upwards, off his lip, and glanced irritably at his sister, who sat impassive and inscrutable.

‘You’ll go and stop with Lucy for a bit, shan’t you?’ he asked. The girl did not answer.

‘I don’t see what else you can do,’ persisted Fred Henry.

‘Go as a skivvy,’ Joe interpolated laconically.

The girl did not move a muscle.

‘If I was her, I should go in for training for a nurse,’ said Malcolm, the youngest of them all. He was the baby of the family, a young man of twenty-two, with a fresh, jaunty *museau*.²

But Mabel did not take any notice of him. They had talked at her and round her for so many years, that she hardly heard them at all.

The marble clock on the mantel-piece softly chimed the half-hour, the dog rose uneasily from the hearthrug and looked at the party at the breakfast table. But still they sat on in ineffectual conclave.

‘Oh, all right,’ said Joe suddenly, *à propos* of nothing. ‘I’ll get a move on.’

He pushed back his chair, straddled his knees with a downward jerk, to get them free, in horsy fashion, and went to the fire. Still he did not go out of the room; he was curious to know what the others would do or say. He began to charge his pipe, looking down at the dog and saying, in a high, affected voice:

‘Going wi’ me? Going wi’ me are ter? Tha’rt goin’ further than tha counts on just now, dost hear?’

The dog faintly wagged its tail, the man stuck out his jaw and covered his pipe with his hands, and puffed intently, losing himself in the tobacco, looking down all the while at the dog with an absent brown eye. The dog looked up at him in mournful distrust. Joe stood with his knees stuck out, in real horsy fashion.

‘Have you had a letter from Lucy?’ Fred Henry asked of his sister.

‘Last week,’ came the neutral reply.

‘And what does she say?’

There was no answer.

‘Does she *ask* you to go and stop there?’ persisted Fred Henry.

‘She says I can if I like.’

‘Well, then, you’d better. Tell her you’ll come on Monday.’

This was received in silence.

‘That’s what you’ll do then, is it?’ said Fred Henry, in some exasperation.

But she made no answer. There was a silence of futility and irritation in the room. Malcolm grinned fatuously.

‘You’ll have to make up your mind between now and next Wednesday,’ said Joe loudly, ‘or else find yourself lodgings on the kerbstone.’

The face of the young woman darkened, but she sat on immutable.

‘Here’s Jack Fergusson!’ exclaimed Malcolm, who was looking aimlessly out of the window.

1. Literally “cold blood”; self-possession, imperturbability.

2. Colloquial term for face.

‘Where?’ exclaimed Joe, loudly.

‘Just gone past.’

‘Coming in?’

Malcolm craned his neck to see the gate.

‘Yes,’ he said.

There was a silence. Mabel sat on like one condemned, at the head of the table. Then a whistle was heard from the kitchen. The dog got up and barked sharply. Joe opened the door and shouted:

‘Come on.’

After a moment a young man entered. He was muffled up in overcoat and a purple woollen scarf, and his tweed cap, which he did not remove, was pulled down on his head. He was of medium height, his face was rather long and pale, his eyes looked tired.

‘Hello, Jack! Well, Jack!’ exclaimed Malcolm and Joe. Fred Henry merely said, ‘Jack.’

‘What’s doing?’ asked the newcomer, evidently addressing Fred Henry.

‘Same. We’ve got to be out by Wednesday.—Got a cold?’

‘I have—got it bad, too.’

‘Why don’t you stop in?’

‘*Me* stop in? When I can’t stand on my legs, perhaps I shall have a chance.’ The young man spoke huskily. He had a slight Scotch accent.

‘It’s a knock-out, isn’t it,’ said Joe, boisterously, ‘if a doctor goes round croaking with a cold. Looks bad for the patients, doesn’t it?’

The young doctor looked at him slowly.

‘Anything the matter with *you*, then?’ he asked sarcastically.

‘Not as I know of. Damn your eyes, I hope not. Why?’

‘I thought you were very concerned about the patients, wondered if you might be one yourself.’

‘Damn it, no, I’ve never been patient to no flaming doctor, and hope I never shall be,’ returned Joe.

At this point Mabel rose from the table, and they all seemed to become aware of her existence. She began putting the dishes together. The young doctor looked at her, but did not address her. He had not greeted her. She went out of the room with the tray, her face impassive and unchanged.

‘When are you off then, all of you?’ asked the doctor.

‘I’m catching the eleven-forty,’ replied Malcolm. ‘Are you goin’ down wi’ th’ trap, Joe?’

‘Yes, I’ve told you I’m going down wi’ th’ trap, haven’t I?’

‘We’d better be getting her in then.—So long, Jack, if I don’t see you before I go,’ said Malcolm, shaking hands.

He went out, followed by Joe, who seemed to have his tail between his legs.

‘Well, this is the devil’s own,’ exclaimed the doctor, when he was left alone with Fred Henry. ‘Going before Wednesday, are you?’

‘That’s the orders,’ replied the other.

‘Where, to Northampton?’

‘That’s it.’

‘The devil!’ exclaimed Fergusson, with quiet chagrin.

And there was silence between the two.

‘All settled up, are you?’ asked Fergusson.

‘About.’

There was another pause.

‘Well, I shall miss yer, Freddy, boy,’ said the young doctor.

‘And I shall miss thee, Jack,’ returned the other.

‘Miss you like hell,’ mused the doctor.

Fred Henry turned aside. There was nothing to say. Mabel came in again, to finish clearing the table.

‘What are *you* going to do, then, Miss Pervin?’ asked Fergusson. ‘Going to your sister’s, are you?’

Mabel looked at him with her steady, dangerous eyes, that always made him uncomfortable, unsettling his superficial ease.

‘No,’ she said.

‘Well, what in the name of fortune *are* you going to do? Say what you mean to do,’ cried Fred Henry, with futile intensity.

But she only averted her head, and continued her work. She folded the white table-cloth, and put on the chenille cloth.

‘The sulkiest bitch that ever trod!’ muttered her brother.

But she finished her task with perfectly impassive face, the young doctor watching her interestedly all the while. Then she went out.

Fred Henry stared after her, clenching his lips, his blue eyes fixing in sharp antagonism, as he made a grimace of sour exasperation.

‘You could bray her into bits, and that’s all you’d get out of her,’ he said, in a small, narrowed tone.

The doctor smiled faintly.

‘What’s she *going* to do, then?’ he asked.

‘Strike me if I know!’ returned the other.

There was a pause. Then the doctor stirred.

‘I’ll be seeing you tonight, shall I?’ he said to his friend.

‘Ay—where’s it to be? Are we going over to Jessdale?’

‘I don’t know. I’ve got such a cold on me. I’ll come round to the Moon and Stars, anyway.’

‘Let Lizzie and May miss their night for once, eh?’

‘That’s it—if I feel as I do now.’

‘All’s one—’

The two young men went through the passage and down to the back door together. The house was large, but it was servantless now, and desolate.

At the back was a small bricked house-yard, and beyond that a big square, gravelled fine and red, and having stables on two sides. Sloping, dank, winter-dark fields stretched away on the open sides.

But the stables were empty. Joseph Pervin, the father of the family, had been a man of no education, who had become a fairly large horse dealer. The stables had been full of horses, there was a great turmoil and come-and-go of horses and of dealers and grooms. Then the kitchen was full of servants. But of late things had declined. The old man had married a second time, to retrieve his fortunes. Now he was dead and everything was gone to the dogs, there was nothing but debt and threatening.

For months, Mabel had been servantless in the big house, keeping the home together in penury for her ineffectual brothers. She had kept house for ten years. But previously, it was with unstinted means. Then, however brutal and coarse everything was, the sense of money had kept her proud, confident. The men might be foul-mouthed, the women in the kitchen might have bad reputations, her brothers might have illegitimate children. But so long as there was money, the girl felt herself established, and brutally proud, reserved.

No company came to the house, save dealers and coarse men. Mabel had no associates of her own sex, after her sister went away. But she did not mind. She went regularly to church, she attended to her father. And she lived in the memory of her mother, who had died when she was fourteen, and whom she had loved. She had loved her father, too, in a different way, depending upon him, and feeling secure in him, until at the age of fifty-four he married again. And then she had set hard against him. Now he had died and left them all hopelessly in debt.

She had suffered badly during the period of poverty. Nothing, however, could shake the curious

sullen, animal pride that dominated each member of the family. Now, for Mabel, the end had come. Still she would not cast about her. She would follow her own way just the same. She would always hold the keys of her own situation. Mindless and persistent, she endured from day to day. Why should she think? Why should she answer anybody? It was enough that this was the end, and there was no way out. She need not pass any more darkly along the main street of the small town, avoiding every eye. She need not demean herself any more, going into the shops and buying the cheapest food. This was at an end. She thought of nobody, not even of herself. Mindless and persistent, she seemed in a sort of ecstasy to be coming nearer to her fulfilment, her own glorification, approaching her dead mother, who was glorified.

In the afternoon she took a little bag, with shears and sponge and a small scrubbing brush, and went out. It was a grey, wintry day, with saddened, dark-green fields and an atmosphere blackened by the smoke of foundries not far off. She went quickly, darkly along the causeway, heeding nobody, through the town to the churchyard.

There she always felt secure, as if no one could see her, although as a matter of fact she was exposed to the stare of everyone who passed along under the churchyard wall. Nevertheless, once under the shadow of the great looming church, among the graves, she felt immune from the world, reserved within the thick churchyard wall as in another country.

Carefully she clipped the grass from the grave, and arranged the pinky-white, small chrysanthemums in the tin cross. When this was done, she took an empty jar from a neighbouring grave, brought water, and carefully, most scrupulously sponged the marble headstone and the coping-stone.

It gave her sincere satisfaction to do this. She felt in immediate contact with the world of her mother. She took minute pains, went through the park in a state bordering on pure happiness, as if in performing this task she came into a subtle, intimate connexion with her mother. For the life she followed here in the world was far less real than the world of death she inherited from her mother.

The doctor's house was just by the church. Fergusson, being a mere hired assistant, was slave to the countryside. As he hurried now to attend to the outpatients in the surgery, glancing across the graveyard with his quick eye, he saw the girl at her task at the grave. She seemed so intent and remote, it was like looking into another world. Some mystical element was touched in him. He slowed down as he walked, watching her as if spell-bound.

She lifted her eyes, feeling him looking. Their eyes met. And each looked again at once, each feeling, in some way, found out by the other. He lifted his cap and passed on down the road. There remained distinct in his consciousness, like a vision, the memory of her face, lifted from the tombstone in the churchyard, and looking at him with slow, large, portentous eyes. It was portentous, her face. It seemed to mesmerize him. There was a heavy power in her eyes which laid hold of his whole being, as if he had drunk some powerful drug. He had been feeling weak and done before. Now the life came back into him, he felt delivered from his own fretted, daily self.

He finished his duties at the surgery as quickly as might be, hastily filling up the bottles of the waiting people with cheap drugs. Then, in perpetual haste, he set off again to visit several cases in another part of his round, before teatime. At all times he preferred to walk, if he could, but particularly when he was not well. He fancied the motion restored him.

The afternoon was falling. It was grey, deadened, and wintry, with a slow, moist, heavy coldness sinking in and deadening all the faculties. But why should he think or notice? He hastily climbed the hill and turned across the dark-green fields, following the black cinder-track. In the distance, across a shallow dip in the country, the small town was clustered like smouldering ash, a tower, a spire, a heap of low, raw, extinct houses. And on the nearest fringe of the town, sloping into the dip, was Oldmeadow, the Pervins' house. He could see the stables and the outbuildings distinctly, as they lay towards him on the slope. Well, he would not go there many more times! Another resource would be

lost to him, another place gone: the only company he cared for in the alien, ugly little town he was losing. Nothing but work, drudgery, constant hastening from dwelling to dwelling among the colliers and the iron-workers. It wore him out, but at the same time he had a craving for it. It was a stimulant to him to be in the homes of the working people, moving as it were through the innermost body of their life. His nerves were excited and gratified. He could come so near, into the very lives of the rough, inarticulate, powerfully emotional men and women. He grumbled, he said he hated the hellish hole. But as a matter of fact it excited him, the contact with the rough, strongly-feeling people was a stimulant applied direct to his nerves.

Below Oldmeadow, in the green, shallow, soddened hollow of fields, lay a square, deep pond. Roving across the landscape, the doctor's quick eye detected a figure in black passing through the gate of the field, down towards the pond. He looked again. It would be Mabel Pervin. His mind suddenly became alive and attentive.

Why was she going down there? He pulled up on the path on the slope above, and stood staring. He could just make sure of the small black figure moving in the hollow of the failing day. He seemed to see her in the midst of such obscurity, that he was like a clairvoyant, seeing rather with the mind's eye than with ordinary sight. Yet he could see her positively enough, whilst he kept his eye attentive. He felt, if he looked away from her, in the thick, ugly falling dusk, he would lose her altogether.

He followed her minutely as she moved, direct and intent, like something transmitted rather than stirring in voluntary activity, straight down the field towards the pond. There she stood on the bank for a moment. She never raised her head. Then she waded slowly into the water.

He stood motionless as the small black figure walked slowly and deliberately towards the centre of the pond, very slowly, gradually moving deeper into the motionless water, and still moving forward as the water got up to her breast. Then he could see her no more in the dusk of the dead afternoon.

'There!' he exclaimed. 'Would you believe it?'

And he hastened straight down, running over the wet, soddened fields, pushing through the hedges, down into the depression of callous wintry obscurity. It took him several minutes to come to the pond. He stood on the bank, breathing heavily. He could see nothing. His eyes seemed to penetrate the dead water. Yes, perhaps that was the dark shadow of her black clothing beneath the surface of the water.

He slowly ventured into the pond. The bottom was deep, soft clay, he sank in, and the water clasped dead cold round his legs. As he stirred he could smell the cold, rotten clay that fouled up into the water. It was objectionable in his lungs. Still, repelled and yet not heeding, he moved deeper into the pond. The cold water rose over his thighs, over his loins, upon his abdomen. The lower part of his body was all sunk in the hideous cold element. And the bottom was so deeply soft and uncertain, he was afraid of pitching with his mouth underneath. He could not swim, and was afraid.

He crouched a little, spreading his hands under the water and moving them round, trying to feel for her. The dead cold pond swayed upon his chest. He moved again, a little deeper, and again, with his hands underneath, he felt all around under the water. And he touched her clothing. But it evaded his fingers. He made a desperate effort to grasp it.

And so doing he lost his balance and went under, horribly, suffocating in the foul earthy water, struggling madly for a few moments. At last, after what seemed an eternity, he got his footing, rose again into the air and looked around. He gasped, and knew he was in the world. Then he looked at the water. She had risen near him. He grasped her clothing, and drawing her nearer, turned to take his way to land again.

He went very slowly, carefully, absorbed in the slow progress. He rose higher, climbing out of the pond. The water was now only about his legs; he was thankful, full of relief to be out of the clutches of the pond. He lifted her and staggered on to the bank, out of the horror of wet, grey clay.

He laid her down on the bank. She was quite unconscious and running with water. He made the

water come from her mouth, he worked to restore her. He did not have to work very long before he could feel the breathing begin again in her; she was breathing naturally. He worked a little longer. He could feel her live beneath his hands; she was coming back. He wiped her face, wrapped her in his overcoat, looked round into the dim, dark-grey world, then lifted her and staggered down the bank and across the fields.

It seemed an unthinkable long way, and his burden so heavy he felt he would never get to the house. But at last he was in the stable-yard, and then in the house-yard. He opened the door and went into the house. In the kitchen he laid her down on the hearthrug, and called. The house was empty. But the fire was burning in the grate.

Then again he kneeled to attend to her. She was breathing regularly, her eyes were wide open and as if conscious, but there seemed something missing in her look. She was conscious in herself, but unconscious of her surroundings.

He ran upstairs, took blankets from a bed, and put them before the fire to warm. Then he removed her saturated, earthy-smelling clothing, rubbed her dry with a towel, and wrapped her naked in the blankets. Then he went into the dining-room, to look for spirits. There was a little whisky. He drank a gulp himself, and put some into her mouth.

The effect was instantaneous. She looked full into his face, as if she had been seeing him for some time, and yet had only just become conscious of him.

‘Dr. Fergusson?’ she said.

‘What?’ he answered.

He was divesting himself of his coat, intending to find some dry clothing upstairs. He could not bear the smell of the dead, clayey water, and he was mortally afraid for his own health.

‘What did I do?’ she asked.

‘Walked into the pond,’ he replied. He had begun to shudder like one sick, and could hardly attend to her. Her eyes remained full on him, he seemed to be going dark in his mind, looking back at her helplessly. The shuddering became quieter in him, his life came back in him, dark and unknowing, but strong again.

‘Was I out of my mind?’ she asked, while her eyes were fixed on him all the time.

‘Maybe, for the moment,’ he replied. He felt quiet, because his strength had come back. The strange fretful strain had left him.

‘Am I out of my mind now?’ she asked.

‘Are you?’ he reflected a moment. ‘No,’ he answered truthfully, ‘I don’t see that you are.’ He turned his face aside. He was afraid now, because he felt dazed, and felt dimly that her power was stronger than his, in this issue. And she continued to look at him fixedly all the time. ‘Can you tell me where I shall find some dry things to put on?’ he asked.

‘Did you dive into the pond for me?’ she asked.

‘No,’ he answered. ‘I walked in. But I went in overhead as well.’

There was silence for a moment. He hesitated. He very much wanted to go upstairs to get into dry clothing. But there was another desire in him. And she seemed to hold him. His will seemed to have gone to sleep, and left him, standing there slack before her. But he felt warm inside himself. He did not shudder at all, though his clothes were sodden on him.

‘Why did you?’ she asked.

‘Because I didn’t want you to do such a foolish thing,’ he said.

‘It wasn’t foolish,’ she said, still gazing at him as she lay on the floor, with a sofa cushion under her head. ‘It was the right thing to do. *I* knew best, then.’

‘I’ll go and shift these wet things,’ he said. But still he had not the power to move out of her

presence, until she sent him. It was as if she had the life of his body in her hands, and he could not extricate himself. Or perhaps he did not want to.

Suddenly she sat up. Then she became aware of her own immediate condition. She felt the blankets about her, she knew her own limbs. For a moment it seemed as if her reason were going. She looked round, with wild eye, as if seeking something. He stood still with fear. She saw her clothing lying scattered.

‘Who undressed me?’ she asked, her eyes resting full and inevitable on his face.

‘I did,’ he replied, ‘to bring you round.’

For some moments she sat and gazed at him awfully, her lips parted.

‘Do you love me then?’ she asked.

He only stood and stared at her, fascinated. His soul seemed to melt.

She shuffled forward on her knees, and put her arms round him, round his legs, as he stood there, pressing her breasts against his knees and thighs, clutching him with strange, convulsive certainty, pressing his thighs against her, drawing him to her face, her throat, as she looked up at him with flaring, humble eyes, of transfiguration, triumphant in first possession.

‘You love me,’ she murmured, in strange transport, yearning and triumphant and confident. ‘You love me. I know you love me, I know.’

And she was passionately kissing his knees, through the wet clothing, passionately and indiscriminately kissing his knees, his legs, as if unaware of every thing.

He looked down at the tangled wet hair, the wild, bare, animal shoulders. He was amazed, bewildered, and afraid. He had never thought of loving her. He had never wanted to love her. When he rescued her and restored her, he was a doctor, and she was a patient. He had had no single personal thought of her. Nay, this introduction of the personal element was very distasteful to him, a violation of his professional honour. It was horrible to have her there embracing his knees. It was horrible. He revolted from it, violently. And yet—and yet—he had not the power to break away.

She looked at him again, with the same supplication of powerful love, and that same transcendent, frightening light of triumph. In view of the delicate flame which seemed to come from her face like a light, he was powerless. And yet he had never intended to love her. He had never intended. And something stubborn in him could not give way.

‘You love me,’ she repeated, in a murmur of deep, rhapsodic assurance.

‘You love me.’

Her hands were drawing him, drawing him down to her. He was afraid, even a little horrified. For he had, really, no intention of loving her. Yet her hands were drawing him towards her. He put out his hand quickly to steady himself, and grasped her bare shoulder. A flame seemed to burn the hand that grasped her soft shoulder. He had no intention of loving her: his whole will was against his yielding. It was horrible. And yet wonderful was the touch of her shoulders, beautiful the shining of her face. Was she perhaps mad? He had a horror of yielding to her. Yet something in him ached also.

He had been staring away at the door, away from her. But his hand remained on her shoulder. She had gone suddenly very still. He looked down at her. Her eyes were now wide with fear, with doubt, the light was dying from her face, a shadow of terrible greyness was returning. He could not bear the touch of her eyes’ question upon him, and the look of death behind the question.

With an inward groan he gave way, and let his heart yield towards her. A sudden gentle smile came on his face. And her eyes, which never left his face, slowly, slowly filled with tears. He watched the strange water rise in her eyes, like some slow fountain coming up. And his heart seemed to burn and melt away in his breast.

He could not bear to look at her any more. He dropped on his knees and caught her head with his arms and pressed her face against his throat. She was very still. His heart, which seemed to have

broken, was burning with a kind of agony in his breast. And he felt her slow, hot tears wetting his throat. But he could not move.

He felt the hot tears wet his neck and the hollows of his neck, and he remained motionless, suspended through one of man's eternities. Only now it had become indispensable to him to have her face pressed close to him; he could never let her go again. He could never let her head go away from the close clutch of his arm. He wanted to remain like that for ever, with his heart hurting him in a pain that was also life to him. Without knowing, he was looking down on her damp, soft brown hair.

Then, as it were suddenly, he smelt the horrid stagnant smell of that water. And at the same moment she drew away from him and looked at him. Her eyes were wistful and unfathomable. He was afraid of them, and he fell to kissing her, not knowing what he was doing. He wanted her eyes not to have that terrible, wistful, unfathomable look.

When she turned her face to him again, a faint delicate flush was glowing, and there was again dawning that terrible shining of joy in her eyes, which really terrified him, and yet which he now wanted to see, because he feared the look of doubt still more.

'You love me?' she said, rather faltering.

'Yes.' The word cost him a painful effort. Not because it wasn't true. But because it was too newly true, the *saying* seemed to tear open again his newly-torn heart. And he hardly wanted it to be true, even now.

She lifted her face to him, and he bent forward and kissed her on the mouth, gently, with the one kiss that is an eternal pledge. And as he kissed her his heart strained again in his breast. He never intended to love her. But now it was over. He had crossed over the gulf to her, and all that he had left behind had shrivelled and become void.

After the kiss, her eyes again slowly filled with tears. She sat still, away from him, with her face drooped aside, and her hands folded in her lap. The tears fell very slowly. There was complete silence. He too sat there motionless and silent on the hearthrug. The strange pain of his heart that was broken seemed to consume him. That he should love her? That this was love! That he should be ripped open in this way!—Him, a doctor!—How they would all jeer if they knew!—It was agony to him to think they might know.

In the curious naked pain of the thought he looked again to her. She was sitting there drooped into a muse. He saw a tear fall, and his heart flared hot. He saw for the first time that one of her shoulders was quite uncovered, one arm bare, he could see one of her small breasts; dimly, because it had become almost dark in the room.

'Why are you crying?' he asked, in an altered voice.

She looked up at him, and behind her tears the consciousness of her situation for the first time brought a dark look of shame to her eyes.

'I'm not crying, really,' she said, watching him half frightened.

He reached his hand, and softly closed it on her bare arm.

'I love you! I love you!' he said in a soft, low vibrating voice, unlike himself.

She shrank, and dropped her head. The soft, penetrating grip of his hand on her arm distressed her. She looked up at him.

'I want to go,' she said. 'I want to go and get you some dry things.'

'Why?' he said. 'I'm all right.'

'But I want to go,' she said. 'And I want you to change your things.'

He released her arm, and she wrapped herself in the blanket, looking at him rather frightened. And still she did not rise.

'Kiss me,' she said wistfully.

He kissed her, but briefly, half in anger.

Then, after a second, she rose nervously, all mixed up in the blanket. He watched her in her confusion, as she tried to extricate herself and wrap herself up so that she could walk. He watched her relentlessly, as she knew. And as she went, the blanket trailing, and as he saw a glimpse of her feet and her white leg, he tried to remember her as she was when he had wrapped her in the blanket. But then he didn't want to remember, because she had been nothing to him then, and his nature revolted from remembering her as she was when she was nothing to him.

A tumbling, muffled noise from within the dark house startled him. Then he heard her voice: 'There are clothes.' He rose and went to the foot of the stairs, and gathered up the garments she had thrown down. Then he came back to the fire, to rub himself down and dress. He grinned at his own appearance when he had finished.

The fire was sinking, so he put on coal. The house was now quite dark, save for the light of a street-lamp that shone in faintly from beyond the holly trees. He lit the gas with matches he found on the mantel-piece. Then he emptied the pockets of his own clothes, and threw all his wet things in a heap into the scullery. After which he gathered up her sodden clothes, gently, and put them in a separate heap on the copper-top in the scullery.

It was six o'clock on the clock. His own watch had stopped. He ought to go back to the surgery. He waited, and still she did not come down. So he went to the foot of the stairs and called:

'I shall have to go.'

Almost immediately he heard her coming down. She had on her best dress of black voile, and her hair was tidy, but still damp. She looked at him—and in spite of herself, smiled.

'I don't like you in those clothes,' she said.

'Do I look a sight?' he answered.

They were shy of one another.

'I'll make you some tea,' she said.

'No, I must go.'

'Must you?' And she looked at him again with the wide, strained, doubtful eyes. And again, from the pain of his breast, he knew how he loved her. He went and bent to kiss her, gently, passionately, with his heart's painful kiss.

'And my hair smells so horrible,' she murmured in distraction. 'And I'm so awful, I'm so awful! Oh, no, I'm too awful.' And she broke into bitter, heart-broken sobbing. 'You can't want to love me, I'm horrible.'

'Don't be silly, don't be silly,' he said, trying to comfort her, kissing her, holding her in his arms. 'I want you, I want to marry you, we're going to be married, quickly, quickly—to-morrow if I can.'

But she only sobbed terribly, and cried:

'I feel awful. I feel awful. I feel I'm horrible to you.'

'No, I want you, I want you,' was all he answered, blindly, with that terrible intonation which frightened her almost more than her horror lest he should *not* want her

The Rocking Horse Winner

There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantages, yet she had no luck. She married for love, and the love turned to dust. She had bonny children, yet she felt they had been thrust upon her, and she could not love them. They looked at her coldly, as if they were finding fault with her. And hurriedly she felt she must cover up some fault in herself. Yet what it was that she must cover up she never knew. Nevertheless, when her children were present, she always felt the centre of her heart go hard. This troubled her, and in her manner she was all the more gentle and anxious for her children, as if she loved them very much. Only she herself knew that at the centre of her heart was a hard little place that could not feel love, no, not for anybody. Everybody else said of her: "She is such a good mother. She adores her children." Only she herself, and her children themselves, knew it was not so. They read it in each other's eyes. There were a boy and two little girls. They lived in a pleasant house, with a garden, and they had discreet servants, and felt themselves superior to anyone in the neighbourhood. Although they lived in style, they felt always an anxiety in the house. There was never enough money. The mother had a small income, and the father had a small income, but not nearly enough for the social position which they had to keep up. The father went in to town to some office. But though he had good prospects, these prospects never materialised. There was always the grinding sense of the shortage of money, though the style was always kept up. At last the mother said, "I will see if *I* can't make something." But she did not know where to begin. She racked her brains, and tried this thing and the other, but could not find anything successful. The failure made deep lines come into her face. Her children were growing up, they would have to go to school. There must be more money, there must be more money. The father, who was always very handsome and expensive in his tastes, seemed as if he never *would* be able to do anything worth doing. And the mother, who had a great belief in herself, did not succeed any better, and her tastes were just as expensive. And so the house came to be haunted by the unspoken phrase: *There must be more money! There must be more money!* The children could hear it all the time, though nobody said it aloud. They heard it at Christmas, when the expensive and splendid toys filled the nursery. Behind the shining modern rocking-horse, behind the smart doll's-house, a voice would start whispering: "There *must* be more money! There *must* be more money!" And the children would stop playing, to listen for a moment. They would look into each other's eyes, to see if they had all heard. And each one saw in the eyes of the other two that they too had heard. "There *must* be more money! There *must* be more money!" It came whispering from the springs of the still-swaying rocking-horse, and even the horse, bending his wooden, champing head, heard it. The big doll, sitting so pink and smirking in her new pram, could hear it quite plainly, and seemed to be smirking all the more self-consciously because of it. The foolish puppy, too, that took the place of the teddy-bear, he was looking so extraordinarily foolish for no other reason but that he heard the secret whisper all over the house: "There *must* be more money."

Published in 1926

Yet nobody ever said it aloud. The whisper was everywhere, and therefore no one spoke it. Just as no one ever says: "We are breathing!" in spite of the fact that breath is coming and going all the time.

"Mother!" said the boy Paul one day. "Why don't we keep a car of our own? Why do we always use uncle's, or else a taxi?"

"Because we're the poor members of the family," said the mother.

“But why *are* we, mother?”

“Well—I suppose,” she said slowly and bitterly, “it’s because your father has no luck.”

The boy was silent for some time.

“Is luck money, mother?” he asked, rather timidly.

“No, Paul! Not quite. It’s what causes you to have money.”

“Oh!” said Paul vaguely. “I thought when Uncle Oscar said *filthy lucker*, it meant money.”

“*Filthy lucre* does mean money,” said the mother. “But it’s lucre, not luck.”

“Oh!” said the boy. “Then what *is* luck, mother?”

“It’s what causes you to have money. If you’re lucky you have money. That’s why it’s better to be born lucky than rich. If you’re rich, you may lose your money. But if you’re lucky, you will always get more money.”

“Oh! Will you! And is father not lucky?”

“Very unlucky, I should say,” she said bitterly.

The boy watched her with unsure eyes.

“Why?” he asked.

“I don’t know. Nobody ever knows why one person is lucky and another unlucky.”

“Don’t they? Nobody at all? Does *nobody* know?”

“Perhaps God! But He never tells.”

“He ought to, then. And aren’t you lucky either, mother?”

“I can’t be, if I married an unlucky husband.”

“But by yourself, aren’t you?”

“I used to think I was, before I married. Now I think I am very unlucky indeed.”

“Why?”

“Well—never mind! Perhaps I’m not really,” she said.

The child looked at her, to see if she meant it. But he saw, by the lines of her mouth, that she was only trying to hide something from him.

“Well, anyhow,” he said stoutly, “I’m a lucky person.”

“Why?” said his mother, with a sudden laugh.

He stared at her. He didn’t even know why he had said it.

“God told me,” he asserted, brazening it out.

“I hope He did, dear!” she said, again with a laugh, but rather bitter.

“He did, mother!”

“Excellent!” said the mother, using one of her husband’s exclamations.

The boy saw she did not believe him; or rather, that she paid no attention to his assertion. This angered him somewhere, and made him want to compel her attention.

He went off by himself, vaguely, in a childish way, seeking for the clue to “luck”. Absorbed, taking no heed of other people, he went about with a sort of stealth, seeking inwardly for luck. He wanted luck, he wanted it, he wanted it. When the two girls were playing dolls, in the nursery, he would sit on his big rocking-horse, charging madly into space, with a frenzy that made the little girls peer at him uneasily. Wildly the horse careered, the waving dark hair of the boy tossed, his eyes had a strange glare in them. The little girls dared not speak to him.

When he had ridden to the end of his mad little journey, he climbed down and stood in front of his rocking-horse, staring fixedly into its lowered face. Its red mouth was slightly open, its big eye was wide and glassy bright.

“Now!” he would silently command the snorting steed. “Now take me to where there is luck! Now take me!”

And he would slash the horse on the neck with the little whip he had asked Uncle Oscar for. He *knew*

the horse could take him to where there was luck, if only he forced it. So he would mount again, and start on his furious ride, hoping at last to get there. He knew he could get there.

“You’ll break your horse, Paul!” said the nurse.

“He’s always riding like that! I wish he’d leave off!” said his elder sister Joan.

But he only glared down on them in silence. Nurse gave him up. She could make nothing of him. Anyhow he was growing beyond her.

One day his mother and his Uncle Oscar came in when he was on one of his furious rides. He did not speak to them.

“Hallo! you young jockey! Riding a winner?” said his uncle.

“Aren’t you growing too big for a rocking-horse? You’re not a very little boy any longer, you know,” said his mother.

But Paul only gave a blue glare from his big, rather close-set eyes. He would speak to nobody when he was in full tilt. His mother watched him with an anxious expression on her face.

At last he suddenly stopped forcing his horse into the mechanical gallop, and slid down.

“Well, I got there!” he announced fiercely, his blue eyes still flaring, and his sturdy long legs straddling apart.

“Where did you get to?” asked his mother.

“Where I wanted to go to,” he flared back at her.

“That’s right, son!” said Uncle Oscar. “Don’t you stop till you get there. What’s the horse’s name?”

“He doesn’t have a name,” said the boy.

“Gets on without all right?” asked the uncle.

“Well, he has different names. He was called Sansovino last week.”

“Sansovino, eh? Won the Ascot³. How did you know his name?”

“He always talks about horse-races with Bassett,” said Joan.

The uncle was delighted to find that his small nephew was posted with all the racing news. Bassett, the young gardener who had been wounded in the left foot in the war, and had got his present job through Oscar Cresswell, whose batman⁴ he had been, was a perfect blade of the “turf”. He lived in the racing events, and the small boy lived with him.

Oscar Cresswell got it all from Bassett.

“Master Paul comes and asks me, so I can’t do more than tell him, sir,” said Bassett, his face terribly serious, as if he were speaking of religious matters.

“And does he ever put anything on a horse he fancies?”

“Well—I don’t want to give him away—he’s a young sport, a fine sport, sir. Would you mind asking him himself? He sort of takes a pleasure in it, and perhaps he’d feel I was giving him away, sir, if you don’t mind.”

Bassett was serious as a church.

The uncle went back to his nephew, and took him off for a ride in the car.

“Say, Paul, old man, do you ever put anything on a horse?” the uncle asked.

The boy watched the handsome man closely.

“Why, do you think I oughtn’t to?” he parried.

“Not a bit of it! I thought perhaps you might give me a tip for the Lincoln⁵.”

The car sped on into the country, going down to Uncle Oscar’s place in Hampshire.

“Honour bright?” said the nephew.

“Honour bright, son!” said the uncle.

3. Sansovino won the Prince of Wales' Stakes at Ascot in 1924 two weeks after winning the Derby at Epsom Downs.

4. Servant of a cavalry officer.

5. Lincoln Handicap, run at Lincoln Racecourse in Lincolnshire. The racecourse closed in 1965.

“Well, then, Daffodil.”⁶

“Daffodil! I doubt it, sonny. What about Mirza?”

“I only know the winner,” said the boy. “That’s Daffodil!”

“Daffodil, eh?” There was a pause. Daffodil was an obscure horse comparatively.

“Uncle!”

“Yes, son?”

“You won’t let it go any further, will you? I promised Bassett.”

“Bassett be damned, old man! What’s he got to do with it?”

“We’re partners! We’ve been partners from the first! Uncle, he lent me my first five shillings, which I lost. I promised him, honour bright, it was only between me and him: only you gave me that ten-shilling note I started winning with, so I thought you were lucky. You won’t let it go any further, will you?”

The boy gazed at his uncle from those big, hot, blue eyes, set rather close together. The uncle stirred and laughed uneasily.

“Right you are, son! I’ll keep your tip private. Daffodil, eh! How much are you putting on him?”

“All except twenty pounds,” said the boy. “I keep that in reserve.”

The uncle thought it a good joke.

“You keep twenty pounds in reserve, do you, you young romancer? What are you betting, then?”

“I’m betting three hundred,” said the boy gravely. “But it’s between you and me, Uncle Oscar! Honour bright?”

The uncle burst into a roar of laughter.

“It’s between you and me all right, you young Nat Gould,”⁷ he said, laughing. “But where’s your three hundred?”

“Bassett keeps it for me. We’re partners.”

“You are, are you! And what is Bassett putting on Daffodil?”

“He won’t go quite as high as I do, I expect. Perhaps he’ll go a hundred and fifty.”

“What, pennies?” laughed the uncle.

“Pounds,” said the child, with a surprised look at his uncle. “Bassett keeps a bigger reserve than I do.”

Between wonder and amusement, Uncle Oscar was silent. He pursued the matter no further, but he determined to take his nephew with him to the Lincoln races.

“Now, son,” he said, “I’m putting twenty on Mirza, and I’ll put five for you on any horse you fancy. What’s your pick?”

“Daffodil, uncle!”

“No, not the fiver on Daffodil!”

“I should if it was my own fiver,” said the child.

“Good! Good! Right you are! A fiver for me and a fiver for you on Daffodil.”

The child had never been to a race-meeting before, and his eyes were blue fire. He pursed his mouth tight, and watched. A Frenchman just in front had put his money on Lancelot. Wild with excitement, he flayed his arms up and down, yelling ‘*Lancelot! Lancelot!*’ in his French accent.

Daffodil came in first, Lancelot second, Mirza third. The child, flushed and with eyes blazing, was curiously serene. His uncle brought him five five-pound notes: four to one.

“What am I to do with these?” he cried, waving them before the boy’s eyes.

6. Both Daffodil and Mirz were racehorses; the former ran unsuccessfully in six races 1924-25. Mirza won three races in 1919.

7. Nat Gould (1857-1919). Anglo-Australian horse-racing journalist, tipster and prolific writer, specializing in sporting novels.

"I suppose we'll talk to Bassett," said the boy. "I expect I have fifteen hundred now: and twenty in reserve: and this twenty."

His uncle studied him for some moments.

"Look here, son!" he said. "You're not serious about Bassett and that fifteen hundred, are you?"

"Yes, I am. But it's between you and me, uncle! Honour bright!"

"Honour bright all right, son! But I must talk to Bassett."

"If you'd like to be a partner, uncle, with Bassett and me, we could all be partners. Only you'd have to promise, honour bright, uncle, not to let it go beyond us three. Bassett and I are lucky, and you must be lucky, because it was your ten shillings I started winning with . . ."

Uncle Oscar took both Bassett and Paul into Richmond Park⁸ for an afternoon, and there they talked.

"It's like this, you see, sir," Bassett said. "Master Paul would get me talking about racing events, spinning yarns, you know, sir. And he was always keen on knowing if I'd made or if I'd lost. It's about a year since, now, that I put five shillings on Blush of Dawn for him: and we lost. Then the luck turned, with that ten shillings he had from you: that we put on Singhalese. And since that time, it's been pretty steady, all things considering. What do you say, Master Paul?"

"We're all right when we're *sure*," said Paul. "It's when we're not quite sure that we go down."

"Oh, but we're careful then," said Bassett.

"But when are you *sure*?" smiled Uncle Oscar.

"It's Master Paul, sir," said Bassett, in a secret, religious voice. "It's as if he had it from heaven. Like Daffodil now, for the Lincoln. That was as sure as eggs."

"Did you put anything on Daffodil?" asked Oscar Cresswell.

"Yes, sir. I made my bit."

"And my nephew?"

Bassett was obstinately silent, looking at Paul.

"I made twelve hundred, didn't I, Bassett? I told uncle I was putting three hundred on Daffodil."

"That's right," said Bassett, nodding.

"But where's the money?" asked the uncle.

"I keep it safe locked up, sir. Master Paul, he can have it any minute he likes to ask for it."

"What, fifteen hundred pounds?"

"And twenty! And *forty*, that is, with the twenty he made on the course."

"It's amazing!" said the uncle.

"If Master Paul offers you to be partners, sir, I would, if I were you: if you'll excuse me," said Bassett.

Oscar Cresswell thought about it.

"I'll see the money," he said.

They drove home again, and sure enough, Bassett came round to the garden-house with fifteen hundred pounds in notes. The twenty pounds reserve was left with Joe Glee, in the Turf Commission deposit.

"You see, it's all right, uncle, when I'm *sure*! Then we go strong, for all we're worth. Don't we, Bassett?"

"We do that, Master Paul."

"And when are you *sure*?" said the uncle, laughing.

"Oh, well, sometimes I'm *absolutely* sure, like about Daffodil," said the boy; "and sometimes I have an idea; and sometimes I haven't even an idea, have I, Bassett? Then we're careful, because we mostly go down."

8. Largest of the capital's eight Royal Parks.

“You do, do you! And when you’re sure, like about Daffodil, what makes you sure, sonny?”

“Oh, well, I don’t know,” said the boy uneasily. “I’m sure, you know, uncle; that’s all.”

“It’s as if he had it from heaven, sir,” Bassett reiterated.

“I should say so!” said the uncle.

But he became a partner. And when the Leger⁹ was coming on, Paul was “sure” about Lively Spark, which was a quite inconsiderable horse. The boy insisted on putting a thousand on the horse, Bassett went for five hundred, and Oscar Cresswell two hundred. Lively Spark came in first, and the betting had been ten to one against him. Paul had made ten thousand.

“You see,” he said, “I was absolutely sure of him.”

Even Oscar Cresswell had cleared two thousand.

“Look here, son,” he said, “this sort of thing makes me nervous.”

“It needn’t, uncle! Perhaps I shan’t be sure again for a long time.”

“But what are you going to do with your money?” asked the uncle.

“Of course,” said the boy, “I started it for mother. She said she had no luck, because father is unlucky, so I thought if *I* was lucky, it might stop whispering.”

“What might stop whispering?”

“Our house! I *hate* our house for whispering.”

“What does it whisper?”

“Why—why”—the boy fidgeted—“why, I don’t know! But it’s always short of money, you know, uncle.”

“I know it, son, I know it.”

“You know people send mother writs, don’t you, uncle?”

“I’m afraid I do,” said the uncle.

“And then the house whispers like people laughing at you behind your back. It’s awful, that is! I thought if I was lucky—”

“You might stop it,” added the uncle.

The boy watched him with big blue eyes, that had an uncanny cold fire in them, and he said never a word.

“Well then!” said the uncle. “What are we doing?”

“I shouldn’t like mother to know I was lucky,” said the boy.

“Why not, son?”

“She’d stop me.”

“I don’t think she would.”

“Oh!”—and the boy writhed in an odd way—“I *don’t* want her to know, uncle.”

“All right, son! We’ll manage it without her knowing.”

They managed it very easily. Paul, at the other’s suggestion, handed over five thousand pounds to his uncle, who deposited it with the family lawyer, who was then to inform Paul’s mother that a relative had put five thousand pounds into his hands, which sum was to be paid out a thousand pounds at a time, on the mother’s birthday, for the next five years.

“So she’ll have a birthday present of a thousand pounds for five successive years,” said Uncle Oscar. “I hope it won’t make it all the harder for her later.”

Paul’s mother had her birthday in November. The house had been “whispering” worse than ever lately, and even in spite of his luck, Paul could not bear up against it. He was very anxious to see the effect of the birthday letter, telling his mother about the thousand pounds.

When there were no visitors, Paul now took his meals with his parents, as he was beyond the nursery

9. The last leg of the five British Classic horse races, run every September at Doncaster.

control. His mother went into town nearly every day. She had discovered that she had an odd knack of sketching furs and dress materials, so she worked secretly in the studio of a friend who was the chief “artist” for the leading drapers. She drew the figures of ladies in furs and ladies in silk and sequins for the newspaper advertisements. This young woman artist earned several thousand pounds a year, but Paul’s mother only made several hundreds, and she was again dissatisfied. She so wanted to be first in something, and she did not succeed, even in making sketches for drapery advertisements.

She was down to breakfast on the morning of her birthday. Paul watched her face as she read her letters. He knew the lawyer’s letter. As his mother read it, her face hardened and became more expressionless. Then a cold, determined look came on her mouth. She hid the letter under the pile of others, and said not a word about it.

“Didn’t you have anything nice in the post for your birthday, mother?” said Paul.

“Quite moderately nice,” she said, her voice cold and absent.

She went away to town without saying more.

But in the afternoon Uncle Oscar appeared. He said Paul’s mother had had a long interview with the lawyer, asking if the whole five thousand could not be advanced at once, as she was in debt.

“What do you think, uncle?” said the boy.

“I leave it to you, son.”

“Oh, let her have it, then! We can get some more with the other,” said the boy.

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, laddie!” said Uncle Oscar.

“But I’m sure to *know* for the Grand National;¹⁰ or the Lincolnshire; or else the Derby. I’m sure to know for *one* of them,” said Paul.

So Uncle Oscar signed the agreement, and Paul’s mother touched the whole five thousand. Then something very curious happened. The voices in the house suddenly went mad, like a chorus of frogs on a spring evening. There were certain new furnishings, and Paul had a tutor. He was *really* going to Eton, his father’s school, in the following autumn. There were flowers in the winter, and a blossoming of the luxury Paul’s mother had been used to. And yet the voices in the house, behind the sprays of mimosa and almond-blossom, and from under the piles of iridescent cushions, simply trilled and screamed in a sort of ecstasy: “There *must* be more money! Oh-h-h! There *must* be more money! Oh, now, now-w! now-w-w—there *must* be more money!—more than ever! More than ever!”

It frightened Paul terribly. He studied away at his Latin and Greek with his tutors. But his intense hours were spent with Bassett. The Grand National had gone by: he had not “known”, and had lost a hundred pounds. Summer was at hand. He was in agony for the Lincoln. But even for the Lincoln he didn’t “know”, and he lost fifty pounds. He became wild-eyed and strange, as if something were going to explode in him.

“Let it alone, son! Don’t you bother about it!” urged Uncle Oscar. But it was as if the boy couldn’t really hear what his uncle was saying.

“I’ve got to know for the Derby! I’ve *got* to know for the Derby!” the child reiterated, his big blue eyes blazing with a sort of madness.

His mother noticed how overwrought he was.

“You’d better go to the seaside. Wouldn’t you like to go now to the seaside, instead of waiting? I think you’d better,” she said, looking down at him anxiously, her heart curiously heavy because of him.

But the child lifted his uncanny blue eyes.

“I couldn’t possibly go before the Derby, mother!” he said. “I couldn’t possibly!”

“Why not?” she said, her voice becoming heavy when she was opposed. “Why not? You can still go from the seaside to see the Derby with your Uncle Oscar, if that’s what you wish. No need for you to

10. A steeplechase race held at Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool.

wait here. Besides, I think you care too much about these races. It's a bad sign. My family has been a gambling family, and you won't know till you grow up how much damage it has done. But it has done damage. I shall have to send Bassett away, and ask Uncle Oscar not to talk racing to you, unless you promise to be reasonable about it: go away to the seaside and forget it. You're all nerves!"

"I'll do what you like, mother, so long as you don't send me away till after the Derby," the boy said.

"Send you away from where? Just from this house?"

"Yes," he said, gazing at her.

"Why, you curious child, what makes you care about this house so much, suddenly? I never knew you loved it!"

He gazed at her without speaking. He had a secret within a secret, something he had not divulged, even to Bassett or to his Uncle Oscar.

But his mother, after standing undecided and a little bit sullen for some moments, said:

"Very well, then! Don't go to the seaside till after the Derby,¹¹ if you don't wish it. But promise me you won't let your nerves go to pieces! Promise you won't think so much about horse-racing and events, as you call them!"

"Oh no!" said the boy, casually. "I won't think much about them, mother. You needn't worry. I wouldn't worry, mother, if I were you."

"If you were me and I were you," said his mother, "I wonder what we *should* do!"

"But you know you needn't worry, mother, don't you?" the boy repeated.

"I should be awfully glad to know it," she said wearily.

"Oh, well, you *can*, you know. I mean you *ought* to know you needn't worry!" he insisted.

"Ought I? Then I'll see about it," she said.

Paul's secret of secrets was his wooden horse, that which had no name. Since he was emancipated from a nurse and a nursery governess, he had had his rocking-horse removed to his own bedroom at the top of the house.

"Surely you're too big for a rocking-horse!" his mother had remonstrated.

"Well, you see, mother, till I can have a *real* horse, I like to have *some* sort of animal about," had been his quaint answer.

"Do you feel he keeps you company?" she laughed.

"Oh yes! He's very good, he always keeps me company, when I'm there," said Paul.

So the horse, rather shabby, stood in an arrested prance in the boy's bedroom.

The Derby was drawing near, and the boy grew more and more tense. He hardly heard what was spoken to him, he was very frail, and his eyes were really uncanny. His mother had sudden strange seizures of uneasiness about him. Sometimes, for half an hour, she would feel a sudden anxiety about him that was almost anguish. She wanted to rush to him at once, and know he was safe.

Two nights before the Derby, she was at a big party in town, when one of her rushes of anxiety about her boy, her first-born, gripped her heart till she could hardly speak. She fought with the feeling, might and main, for she believed in common-sense. But it was too strong. She had to leave the dance and go downstairs to telephone to the country. The children's nursery governess was terribly surprised and startled at being rung up in the night.

"Are the children all right, Miss Wilmot?"

"Oh yes, they are quite all right."

"Master Paul? Is he all right?"

"He went to bed as right as a trivet. Shall I run up and look at him?"

11. The richest and most prestigious of the five Classics, held at Epsom Downs, Surrey.

“No!” said Paul’s mother reluctantly. “No! Don’t trouble. It’s all right. Don’t sit up. We shall be home fairly soon.” She did not want her son’s privacy intruded upon.

“Very good,” said the governess.

It was about one o’clock when Paul’s mother and father drove up to their house. All was still. Paul’s mother went to her room and slipped off her white fur cloak. She had told her maid not to wait up for her. She heard her husband downstairs, mixing a whisky-and-soda.

And then, because of the strange anxiety at her heart, she stole upstairs to her son’s room. Noiselessly she went along the upper corridor. Was there a faint noise? What was it?

She stood, with arrested muscles, outside his door, listening. There was a strange, heavy, and yet not loud noise. Her heart stood still. It was a soundless noise, yet rushing and powerful. Something huge, in violent, hushed motion. What was it? What in God’s Name was it? She ought to know. She felt that she *knew* the noise. She knew what it was.

Yet she could not place it. She couldn’t say what it was. And on and on it went, like a madness.

Softly, frozen with anxiety and fear, she turned the door-handle.

The room was dark. Yet in the space near the window, she heard and saw something plunging to and fro. She gazed in fear and amazement.

Then suddenly she switched on the light, and saw her son, in his green pyjamas, madly surging on his rocking-horse. The blaze of light suddenly lit him up, as he urged the wooden horse, and lit her up, as she stood, blonde, in her dress of pale green and crystal, in the doorway.

“Paul!” she cried. “Whatever are you doing?”

“It’s Malabar!” he screamed, in a powerful, strange voice. “It’s Malabar!”

His eyes blazed at her for one strange and senseless second, as he ceased urging his wooden horse. Then he fell with a crash to the ground, and she, all her tormented motherhood flooding upon her, rushed to gather him up.

But he was unconscious, and unconscious he remained, with some brain-fever. He talked and tossed, and his mother sat stonily by his side.

“Malabar! It’s Malabar! Bassett, Bassett, I *know*: it’s Malabar!”

So the child cried, trying to get up and urge the rocking-horse that gave him his inspiration.

“What does he mean by Malabar?” asked the heart-frozen mother.

“I don’t know,” said the father, stonily.

“What does he mean by Malabar?” she asked her brother Oscar.

“It’s one of the horses running for the Derby,” was the answer.

And, in spite of himself, Oscar Cresswell spoke to Bassett, and himself put a thousand on Malabar: at fourteen to one.

The third day of the illness was critical: they were watching for a change. The boy, with his rather long, curly hair, was tossing ceaselessly on the pillow. He neither slept nor regained consciousness, and his eyes were like blue stones. His mother sat, feeling her heart had gone, turned actually into a stone.

In the evening, Oscar Cresswell did not come, but Bassett sent a message, saying could he come up for one moment, just one moment? Paul’s mother was very angry at the intrusion, but on second thoughts she agreed. The boy was the same. Perhaps Bassett might bring him to consciousness.

The gardener, a shortish fellow with a little brown moustache and sharp little brown eyes, tiptoed into the room, touched his imaginary cap to Paul’s mother, and stole to the bedside, staring with glittering, smallish eyes at the tossing, dying child.

“Master Paul!” he whispered. “Master Paul! Malabar came in first all right, a clean win. I did as you told me. You’ve made over seventy thousand pounds, you have; you’ve got over eighty thousand. Malabar came in all right, Master Paul.”

“Malabar! Malabar! Did I say Malabar, mother? Did I say Malabar? Do you think I’m lucky,

mother? I knew Malabar, didn't I? Over eighty thousand pounds! I call that lucky, don't you, mother? Over eighty thousand pounds! I knew, didn't I know I knew? Malabar came in all right. If I ride my horse till I'm sure, then I tell you, Basset, you can go as high as you like. Did you go for all you were worth, Bassett?"

"I went a thousand on it, Master Paul."

"I never told you, mother, that if I can ride my horse, and *get there*, then I'm absolutely sure—oh, absolutely! Mother, did I ever tell you? I *am* lucky!"

"No, you never did," said the mother.

But the boy died in the night.

And even as he lay dead, his mother heard her brother's voice saying to her: "My God, Hester, you're eighty-odd thousand to the good, and a poor devil of a son to the bad. But, poor devil, poor devil, he's best gone out of a life where he rides his rocking-horse to find a winner."

Activities

The Horse Dealer's Daughter

Study Questions

1. If you were writing a screenplay of this story, what would your three basic scenes be?
2. Describe the images in each scene. Is there any change in the imagery as the scenes change?
3. What do the water and mud symbolize?
4. How is Joe characterized?
5. In what way is Mabel like a bulldog?
6. What does Mabel's dead mother suggest?
7. Why does Mabel attempt suicide?
8. How does Fergusson change by the end of the story?
9. What are some key differences in the description of the Pervin house in the first and last scenes?
10. How is the theme of the story developed by images and symbols?

The Rocking-Horse Winner

Study Questions

1. How is the story like a fable or fairy tale?
2. What do the voices of the house tell Paul? What do these voices represent psychologically?
3. What, besides a lack of money, dissatisfies Paul's mother?
4. Why doesn't Paul want his mother to know that he is lucky?
5. Is Bassett genuinely concerned about Paul's welfare?
6. What do the many references to religion mean?
7. What does the rocking-horse symbolize?
8. How does the story use the quest myth or archetype?
9. Some critics have seen Lawrence's friend Lady Cynthia Asquith (1887-1960) as the model for

Paul's mother. Argue for or against this position. Start with the entry in Wikipedia or Oxford's *Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB).

Resources

Watch this [film adaptation of *Rocking-Horse Winner*](#), directed by Peter Medak in 1976. (30 minutes).

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38.

Ring Lardner (1885–1933)



Biography

Ringgold Wilmer “Ring” Lardner (1885–1933) was an American sports columnist and short story writer best known for his satirical writings on sports, marriage, and the theatre. His contemporaries, Virginia Woolf, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and celebrated critic Edmund Wilson, professed strong admiration for his writing.

Lardner began his writing career as a sports columnist in South Bend, Indiana. In 1913, the *Chicago Tribune* became the home newspaper for his syndicated column.

In 1919, his love for baseball was changed after the Black Sox scandal, when the Chicago White Sox sold out the World Series to the Cincinnati Reds. This scandal led to a sense of betrayal for Lardner, who had been close to the White Sox team.

Lardner influenced Ernest Hemingway, who sometimes wrote articles for his high school newspaper using the pseudonym Ring Lardner, Jr. In 1923, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Edmund Wilson described him as “America’s best humorist” in the March issue of *Vanity Fair* magazine, praising his “rare true ear...[which] has set down for posterity the accents of the American language.” Fitzgerald then encouraged his own distinguished editor, Maxwell Perkins of Scribner’s, to publish a collection of Lardner’s stories. Perkins agreed, and in the following year, Scribner’s published that story with several more in the book *How to Write Short Stories (With Samples)*.

Both “The Golden Honeymoon” and “Haircut” (1925) feature grammatically-challenged narrators and demonstrate Lardner’s facility in humorously capturing the voice and values of his semi-literate

characters. Lardner was in some respects the model for the tragic character Abe North of Fitzgerald's last completed novel, *Tender Is the Night*.

Lardner died in 1933 at the age of 48 due to complications from tuberculosis.

Haircut

I got another barber that comes over from Carterville¹ and helps me out Saturdays, but the rest of the time I can get along all right alone. You can see for yourself that this ain't no New York: City and besides that, the most of the boys works all day and don't have no leisure to drop in here and get themselves prettied up.

Published 1925

You're a newcomer, ain't you? I thought I hadn't seen you round before. I hope you like it good enough to stay. As I say, we ain't no New York City or Chicago, but we have pretty good times. Not as good, though, since Jim Kendall got killed. When he was alive, him and Hod Meyers used to keep this town in an uproar. I bet they was more laughin' done here than any town its size in America.

Jim was comical, and Hod was pretty near a match for him. Since Jim's gone, Hod tries to hold his end up just the same as ever, but it's tough goin' when you ain't got nobody to kind of work with.

They used to be plenty fun in here Saturdays. This place is jam-packed Saturdays, from four o'clock on. Jim and Hod would show up right after their supper round six o'clock. Jim would set himself down in that big chair, nearest the blue spittoon. Whoever had been settin' in that chair, why they'd get up when Jim come in and give it to him.

You'd of thought it was a reserved seat like they have sometimes in a theaytre. Hod would generally always stand or walk up and down or some Saturdays, of course, he'd be settin' in this chair part of the time, gettin' a haircut.

Well, Jim would set there a w'ile without opening his mouth only to spit, and then finally he'd say to me, "Whitey,"—my right name, that is, my right first name, is Dick, but everybody round here calls me Whitey—Jim would say, "Whitey, your nose looks like a rosebud tonight. You must of been drinkin' some of your aw de cologne."

So I'd say, "No, Jim, but you look like you'd been drinkin' something of that kind or somethin' worse."

Jim would have to laugh at that, but then he'd speak up and say, "No, I ain't had nothin' to drink, but that ain't sayin' I wouldn't like somethin'. I wouldn't even mind if it was wood alcohol."

Then Hod Meyers would say, "Neither would your wife." That would set everybody to laughin' because Jim and his wife wasn't on very good terms. She'd of divorced him only they wasn't no chance to get alimony and she didn't have no way to take care of herself and the kids. She couldn't never understand Jim. He was kind of rough, but a good fella at heart.

Him and Hod had all kinds of sport with Milt Sheppard. I don't suppose you've seen Milt. Well, he's got an Adam's apple that looks more like a mush-melon. So I'd be shavin' Milt and when I'd start to shave down here on his neck, Hod would holler, "Hey, Whitey, wait a minute! Before you cut into it, let's make up a pool and see who can guess closest to the number of seeds."

And Jim would say, "If Milt hadn't of been so hoggish, he'd of ordered a half a cantaloupe instead of a whole one and it might not of stuck in his throat."

All the boys would roar at this and Milt himself would force a smile, though the joke was on him. Jim certainly was a card!

There's his shavin' mug, setting on the shelf, right next to Charley Vail's. "Charles M. Vail." That's the druggist. He comes in regular for his shave, three times a week. And Jim's is the cup next to

1. A small town in Illinois, as is Benton, later mentioned.

Charley's. "James H. Kendall." Jim won't need no shavin' mug no more, but I'll leave it there just the same for old time's sake. Jim certainly was a character!

Years ago, Jim used to travel for a canned goods concern over in Carterville. They sold canned goods. Jim had the whole northern half of the State and was on the road five days out of every week. He'd drop in here Saturdays and tell his experiences for that week. It was rich.

I guess he paid more attention to playin' jokes than makin' sales. Finally the concern let him out and he come right home here and told everybody he'd been fired instead of sayin' he'd resigned like most fellas would of.

It was a Saturday and the shop was full and Jim got up out of that chair and says, "Gentlemen, I got an important announcement to make. I been fired from my job."

Well, they asked him if he was in earnest and he said he was and nobody could think of nothin' to say till Jim finally broke the ice himself. He says, "I been sellin' canned goods and now I'm canned goods myself.

You see, the concern he'd been workin' for was a factory that made canned goods. Over in Carterville. And now Jim said he was canned himself. He was certainly a card!

Jim had a great trick that he used to play w'ile he was travelin'. For instance, he'd be ridin' on a train and they'd come to some little town like, well, like, well, like, we'll say, like Benton. Jim would look out the train window and read the signs of the stores.

For instance, they'd be a sign, "Henry Smith, Dry Goods." Well, Jim would write down the name and the name of the town and when he got to wherever he was goin' he'd mail back a postal card to Henry Smith at Benton and not sign no name to it, but he'd write on the card, well somethin' like "Ask your wife about that book agent that spent the afternoon last week," or "Ask your Missus who kept her from gettin' lonesome the last time you was in Carterville." And he'd sign the card, "A Friend."

Of course, he never knew what really come of none of these jokes, but he could picture what probably happened and that was enough.

Jim didn't work very steady after he lost his position with the Carterville people. What he did earn, doin' odd jobs round town why he spent pretty near all of it on gin, and his family might of starved if the stores hadn't of carried them along. Jim's wife tried her hand at dressmakin', but they ain't nobody goin' to get rich makin' dresses in this town.

As I say, she'd of divorced Jim, only she seen that she couldn't support herself and the kids and she was always hopin' that some day Jim would cut out his habits and give her more than two or three dollars a week.

They was a time when she would go to whoever he was workin' for and ask them to give her his wages, but after she done this once or twice, he beat her to it by borrowin' most of his pay in advance. He told it all round town, how he had outfoxed his Missus. He certainly was a caution!

But he wasn't satisfied with just outwittin' her. He was sore the way she had acted, tryin' to grab off his pay. And he made up his mind he'd get even. Well, he waited till Evans's Circus was advertised to come to town. Then he told his wife and two kiddies that he was goin' to take them to the circus. The day of the circus, he told them he would get the tickets and meet them outside the entrance to the tent.

Well, he didn't have no intentions of bein' there or buyin' tickets or nothin'. He got full of gin and laid round Wright's poolroom all day. His wife and the kids waited and waited and of course he didn't show up. His wife didn't have a dime with her, or nowhere else, I guess. So she finally had to tell the kids it was all off and they cried like they wasn't never goin' to stop.

Well, it seems, w'ile they was cryin', Doc Stair come along and he asked what was the matter, but Mrs. Kendall was stubborn and wouldn't tell him, but the kids told him and he insisted on takin' them and their mother in the show. Jim found this out afterwards and it was one reason why he had it in for Doc Stair.

Doc Stair come here about a year and a half ago. He's a mighty handsome young fella and his clothes always look like he has them made to order. He goes to Detroit two or three times a year and w'ile he's there must have a tailor take his measure and then make him a suit to order. They cost pretty near twice as much, but they fit a whole lot better than if you just bought them in a store.

For a w'ile everybody was wonderin' why a young doctor like Doc Stair should come to a town like this where we already got old Doc Gamble and Doc Foote that's both been here for years and all the practice in town was always divided between the two of them.

Then they was a story got round that Doc Stair's gal had throwed him over, a gal up in the Northern Peninsula somewhere, and the reason he come here was to hide himself away and forget it. He said himself that he thought they wasn't nothin' like general practice in a place like ours to fit a man to be a good all round doctor. And that's why he'd come.

Anyways, it wasn't long before he was makin' enough to live on, though they tell me that he never dunned nobody for what they owed him, and the folks here certainly has got the owin' habit, even in my business. If I had all that was comin' to me for just shaves alone, I could go to Carterville and put up at the Mercer for a week and see a different picture every night. For instance, they's old George Purdy—but I guess I shouldn't ought to be gossipin'.

Well, last year, our coroner died, died of the flu. Ken Beatty, that was his name. He was the coroner. So they had to choose another man to be coroner in his place and they picked Doc Stair. He laughed at first and said he didn't want it, but they made him take it. It ain't no job that anybody would fight for and what a man makes out of it in a year would just about buy seeds for their garden. Doc's the kind, though, that can't say no to nothin' if you keep at him long enough.

But I was goin' to tell you about a poor boy we got here in town—Paul Dickson. He fell out of a tree when he was about ten years old. Lit on his head and it done somethin' to him and he ain't never been right. No harm in him, but just silly. Jim Kendall used to call him cuckoo; that's a name Jim had for anybody that was off their head, only he called people's head their bean. That was another of his gags, callin' head bean and callin' crazy people cuckoo. Only poor Paul ain't crazy, but just silly.

You can imagine that Jim used to have all kinds of fun with Paul. He'd send him to the White Front Garage for a left-handed monkey wrench. Of course they ain't no such thing as a left-handed monkey wrench.

And once we had a kind of a fair here and they was a baseball game between the fats and the leans and before the game started Jim called Paul over and sent him way down to Schrader's hardware store to get a key for the pitcher's box.

They wasn't nothin' in the way of gags that Jim couldn't think up, when he put his mind to it.

Poor Paul was always kind of suspicious of people, maybe on account of how Jim had kept foolin' him. Paul wouldn't have much to do with anybody only his own mother and Doc Stair and a girl here in town named Julie Gregg. That is, she ain't a girl no more, but pretty near thirty or over.

When Doc first come to town, Paul seemed to feel like here was a real friend and he hung round Doc's office most of the w'ile; the only time he wasn't there was when he'd go home to eat or sleep or when he seen Julie Gregg doin' her shoppin'.

When he looked out Doc's window and seen her, he'd run downstairs and join her and tag along with her to the different stores. The poor boy was crazy about Julie and she always treated him mighty nice and made him feel like he was welcome, though of course it wasn't nothin' but pity on her side.

Doc done all he could to improve Paul's mind and he told me once that he really thought the boy was getting better, that they was times when he was as bright and sensible as anybody else.

But I was goin' to tell you about Julie Gregg. Old man Gregg was in the lumber business, but got to drinkin' and lost the most of his money and when he died, he didn't leave nothin' but the house and just enough insurance for the girl to skimp along on.

Her mother was a kind of a half invalid and didn't hardly ever leave the house. Julie wanted to sell the place and move somewhere else after the old man died, but the mother said she was born here and would die here. It was tough on Julie as the young people round this town—well, she's too good for them.

She'd been away to school and Chicago and New York and different places and they ain't no subject she can't talk on, where you take the rest of the young folks here and you mention anything to them outside of Gloria Swanson or Tommy Meighan and they think you're delirious.² Did you see Gloria in *Wages of Virtue*? You missed somethin'!

Well, Doc Stair hadn't been here more than a week when he came in one day to get shaved and I recognized who he was, as he had been pointed out to me, so I told him about my old lady. She's been ailin' for a couple years and either Doc Gamble or Doc Foote, neither one, seemed to be helpin' her. So he said he would come out and see her, but if she was able to get out herself, it would be better to bring her to his office where he could make a completer examination.

So I took her to his office and w'ile I was waitin' for her in the reception room, in come Julie Gregg. When somebody comes in Doc Stair's office, they's a bell that rings in his inside office so he can tell they's somebody to see him.

So he left my old lady inside and come out to the front office and that's the first time him and Julie met and I guess it was what they call love at first sight. But it wasn't fifty-fifty. This young fella was the slickest lookin' fella she'd ever seen in this town and she went wild over him. To him she was just a young lady that wanted to see the doctor.

She'd came on about the same business I had. Her mother had been doctorin' for years with Doc Gamble and Doc Foote and without no results. So she'd heard they was a new doc in town and decided to give him a try. He promised to call and see her mother that same day.

I said a minute ago that it was love at first sight on her part. I'm not only judgin' by how she acted afterwards but how she looked at him that first day in his office. I ain't no mind reader, but it was wrote all over her face that she was gone.

Now Jim Kendall, besides bein' a jokesmith and a pretty good drinker, well Jim was quite a lady-killer. I guess he run pretty wild durin' the time he was on the road for them Carterville people, and besides that, he'd had a couple little affairs of the heart right here in town. As I say, his wife would have divorced him, only she couldn't.

But Jim was like the majority of men, and women, too, I guess. He wanted what he couldn't get. He wanted Julie Gregg and worked his head off tryin' to land her. Only he'd of said bean instead of head.

Well, Jim's habits and his jokes didn't appeal to Julie and of course he was a married man, so he didn't have no more chance than, well, than a rabbit. That's an expression of Jim's himself. When somebody didn't have no chance to get elected or somethin', Jim would always say they didn't have no more chance than a rabbit.

He didn't make no bones about how he felt. Right in here, more than once, in front of the whole crowd, he said he was stuck on Julie and anybody that could get her for him was welcome to his house and his wife and kids included. But she wouldn't have nothin' to do with him; wouldn't even speak to him on the street. He finally seen he wasn't gettin' nowheres with his usual line so he decided to try the rough stuff. He went right up to her house one evenin' and when she opened the door he forced his way in and grabbed her. But she broke loose and before he could stop her, she run in the next room and locked the door and phoned to Joe Barnes. Joe's the marshal. Jim could hear who she was phonin' to and he beat it before Joe got there.

2. Gloria Swanson (1899–1983), American leading lady, best known for her role as the reclusive silent film star Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). Thomas Meighan (1879–1936), American actor who appeared as Swanson's leading man in the silent film *Male and Female* (1919).

Joe was an old friend of Julie's pa. Joe went to Jim the next day and told him what would happen if he ever done it again.

I don't know how the news of this little affair leaked out. Chances is that Joe Barnes told his wife and she told somebody else's wife and they told their husband. Anyways, it did leak out and Hod Meyers had the nerve to kid Jim about it, right here in this shop. Jim didn't deny nothin' and kind of laughed it off and said for us all to wait; that lots of people had tried to make a monkey out of him, but he always got even.

Meanw'ile everybody in town was wise to Julie's bein' wild mad over the Doc. I don't suppose she had any idea how her face changed when him and her was together; of course she couldn't of, or she'd of kept away from him. And she didn't know that we was all noticin' how many times she made excuses to go up to his office or pass it on the other side of the street and look up in his window to see if he was there. I felt sorry for her and so did most other people.

Hod Meyers kept rubbin' it into Jim about how the Doc had cut him out. Jim didn't pay no attention to the kiddie' and you could see he was plannin' one of his jokes.

One trick Jim had was the knack of changin' his voice. He could make you think he was a girl talkin' and he could mimic any man's voice. To show you how good he was along this line, I'll tell you the joke he played on me once.

You know, in most towns of any size, when a man is dead and needs a shave, why the barber that shaves him soaks him five dollars for the job; that is, he don't soak him, but whoever ordered the shave. I just charge three dollars because personally I don't mind much shavin' a dead person. They lay a whole lot stiller than live customers. The only thing is that you don't feel like talkin' to them and you get kind of lonesome.

Well, about the coldest day we ever had here, two years ago last winter, the phone rung at the house w'ile I was home to dinner and I answered the phone and it was a woman's voice and she said she was Mrs. John Scott and her husband was dead and would I come out and shave him.

Old John had always been a good customer of mine. But they live seven miles out in the country, on the Streeter road. Still I didn't see how I could say no.

So I said I would be there, but would have to come in a jitney and it might cost three or four dollars besides the price of the shave. So she, or the voice, it said that was all right, so I got Frank Abbott to drive me out to the place and when I got there, who should open the door but old John himself! He wasn't no more dead than, well, than a rabbit.

It didn't take no private detective to figure out who had played me this little joke. Nobody could of thought it up but Jim Kendall. He certainly was a card!

I tell you this incident just to show you how he could disguise his voice and make you believe it was somebody else talkin'. I'd of swore it was Mrs. Scott had called me. Anyways, some woman.

Well, Jim waited till he had Doc Stair's voice down pat; then he went after revenge.

He called Julie up on a night when he knew Doc was over in Carterville. She never questioned but what it was Doc's voice. Jim said he must see her that night; he couldn't wait no longer to tell her somethin'. She was all excited and told him to come to the house. But he said he was expectin' an important long distance call and wouldn't she please forget her manners for once and come to his office. He said they couldn't nothin' hurt her and nobody would see her and he just *must* talk to her a little w'ile. Well, poor Julie fell for it.

Doc always keeps a night light in his office, so it looked to Julie like they was somebody there.

Meanw'ile Jim Kendall had went to Wright's poolroom, where they was a whole gang amusin' themselves. The most of them had drank plenty of gin, and they was a rough bunch even when sober. They was always strong for Jim's jokes and when he told them to come with him and see some fun they give up their card games and pool games and followed along.

Doc's office is on the second floor. Right outside his door they's a flight of stairs leadin' to the floor above. Jim and his gang hid in the dark behind these stairs.

Well, Julie come up to Doc's door and rung the bell and they was nothin' doin'. She rung it again and she rung it seven or eight times. Then she tried the door and found it locked. Then Jim made some kind of a noise and she heard it and waited a minute, and then she says, "Is that you, Ralph?" Ralph is Doc's first name.

They was no answer and it must of came to her all of a sudden that she'd been bunked. She pretty near fell downstairs and the whole gang after her. They chased her all the way home, hollerin', "Is that you, Ralph?" and "Oh, Ralphie, dear, is that you?" Jim says he couldn't holler it himself, as he was laughin' too hard.

Poor Julie! She didn't show up here on Main Street for a long, long time afterward.

And of course Jim and his gang told everybody in town, everybody but Doc Stair. They was scared to tell him, and he might of never knowed only for Paul Dickson. The poor cuckoo, as Jim called him, he was here in the shop one night when Jim was still gloatin' yet over what he'd done to Julie. And Paul took in as much of it as he could understand and he run to Doc with the story.

It's a cinch Doc went up in the air and swore he'd make Jim suffer. But it was a kind of a delicate thing, because if it got out that he had beat Jim up, Julie was bound to hear of it and then she'd know that Doc knew and of course knowin' that he knew would make it worse for her than ever. He was goin' to do somethin', but it took a lot of figurin'.

Well, it was a couple days later when Jim was here in the shop again, and so was the cuckoo. Jim was goin' duck-shootin' the next day and had come in lookin' for Hod Meyers to go with him. I happened to know that Hod had went over to Carterville and wouldn't be home till the end of the week. So Jim said he hated to go alone and he guessed he would call it off. Then poor Paul spoke up and said if Jim would take him he would go along. Jim thought a w'ile and then he said, well, he guessed a half-wit was better than nothin'.

I suppose he was plottin' to get Paul out in the boat and play some joke on him, like pushin' him in the water. Anyways, he said Paul could go. He asked him had he ever shot a duck and Paul said no, he'd never even had a gun in his hands. So Jim said he could set in the boat and watch him and if he behaved himself, he might lend him his gun for a couple of shots. They made a date to meet in the mornin' and that's the last I seen of Jim alive.

Next mornin', I hadn't been open more than ten minutes when Doc Stair come in. He looked kind of nervous. He asked me had I seen Paul Dickson. I said no, but I knew where he was, out duckshootin' with Jim Kendall. So Doc says that's what he had heard, and he couldn't understand it because Paul had told him he wouldn't never have no more to do with Jim as long as he lived.

He said Paul had told him about the joke Jim had played on Julie. He said Paul had asked him what he thought of the joke and the Doc told him that anybody that would do a thing like that ought not to be let live. I said it had been a kind of a raw thing, but Jim just couldn't resist no kind of a joke, no matter how raw. I said I thought he was all right at heart, but just bubblin' over with mischief. Doc turned and walked out.

At noon he got a phone call from old John Scott. The lake where Jim and Paul had went shootin' is on John's place. Paul had came runnin' up to the house a few minutes before and said they'd been an accident. Jim had shot a few ducks and then give the gun to Paul and told him to try his luck. Paul hadn't never handled a gun and he was nervous. He was shakin' so hard that he couldn't control the gun. He let fire and Jim sunk back in the boat, dead.

Doc Stair, bein' the coroner, jumped in Frank Abbott's flivver and rushed out to Scott's farm. Paul and old John was down on the shore of the lake. Paul had rowed the boat to shore, but they'd left the body in it, waiting for Doc to come.

Doc examined the body and said they might as well fetch it back to town. They was no use leavin' it there or callin' a jury, as it was a plain case of accidental shootin'.

Personally I wouldn't never leave a person shoot a gun in the same boat I was in unless I was sure they knew somethin' about guns. Jim was a sucker to leave a new beginner have his gun, let alone a half-wit. It probably served Jim right, what he got. But still we miss him round here. He certainly was a card! Comb it wet or dry?

The Golden Honeymoon

MOTHER says that when I start talking I never know when to stop. But I tell her the only time I get a chance is when she ain't around, so I have to make the most of it. I guess the fact is neither one of us would be welcome in a Quaker meeting, but as I tell Mother, what did God give us tongues for if He didn't want we should use them? Only she says He didn't give them to us to say the same thing over and over again, like I do, and repeat myself. But I say:

"Well, Mother," I say, "when people is like you and I and been married fifty years, do you expect everything I say will be something you ain't heard me say before? But it may be new to others, as they ain't nobody else lived with me as long as you have."

So she says:

"You can bet they ain't, as they couldn't nobody else stand you that long."

"Well," I tell her, "you look pretty healthy."

"Maybe I do," she will say, "but I looked even healthier before I married you."

You can't get ahead of Mother.

Yes, sir, we was married just fifty years ago the seventeenth day of last December and my daughter and son-in-law was over from Trenton to help us celebrate the Golden Wedding. My son-in-law is John H. Kramer, the real estate man. He made \$12,000 one year and is pretty well thought of around Trenton; a good, steady, hard worker. The Rotarians was after him a long time to join, but he kept telling them his home was his club. But Edie finally made him join. That's my daughter.

Well, anyway, they come over to help us celebrate the Golden Wedding and it was pretty crimpy weather and the furnace don't seem to heat up no more like it used to and Mother made the remark that she hoped this winter wouldn't be as cold as the last, referring to the winter previous. So Edie said if she was us, and nothing to keep us home, she certainly wouldn't spend no more winters up here and why didn't we just shut off the water and close up the house and go down to Tampa, Florida? You know we was there four winters ago and staid five weeks, but it cost us over three hundred and fifty dollars for hotel bill alone. So Mother said we wasn't going no place to be robbed. So my son-in-law spoke up and said that Tampa wasn't the only place in the South, and besides we didn't have to stop at no high price hotel but could rent us a couple rooms and board out somewheres, and he had heard that St. Petersburg, Florida, was *the* spot and if we said the word he would write down there and make inquiries.

Well, to make a long story short, we decided to do it and Edie said it would be our Golden Honeymoon and for a present my son-in-law paid the difference between a section and a compartment so as we could have a compartment and have more privacy. In a compartment you have an upper and lower berth just like the regular sleeper, but it is a shut in room by itself and got a wash bowl. The car we went in was all compartments and no regular berths at all. It was all compartments.

We went to Trenton the night before and staid at my daughter and son-in-law and we left Trenton the next afternoon at 3.23 P.M.

This was the twelfth day of January. Mother set facing the front of the train, as it makes her giddy to ride backwards. I set facing her, which does not affect me. We reached North Philadelphia at 4.03 P.M. and we reached West Philadelphia at 4.14, but did not go into Broad Street. We reached Baltimore at 6.30 and Washington, D.C., at 7.25. Our train laid over in Washington two hours till another train come along to pick us up and I got out and strolled up the platform and into the Union Station. When I come back, our car had been switched on to another track, but I remembered the name of it, the La Belle, as I

had once visited my aunt out in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, where there was a lake of that name, so I had no difficulty in getting located. But Mother had nearly fretted herself sick for fear I would be left.

“Well,” I said, “I would of followed you on the next train.”

“You could of,” said Mother, and she pointed out that she had the money.

“Well,” I said, “we are in Washington and I could of borrowed from the United States Treasury. I would of pretended I was an Englishman.”

Mother caught the point and laughed heartily.

Our train pulled out of Washington at 9.40 P.M. and Mother and I turned in early, I taking the upper. During the night we passed through the green fields of old Virginia, though it was too dark to tell if they was green or what color. When we got up in the morning, we was at Fayetteville, North Carolina. We had breakfast in the dining car and after breakfast I got in conversation with the man in the next compartment to ours. He was from Lebanon, New Hampshire, and a man about eighty years of age. His wife was with him, and two unmarried daughters and I made the remark that I should think the four of them would be crowded in one compartment, but he said they had made the trip every winter for fifteen years and knowed how to keep out of each other’s way. He said they was bound for Tarpon Springs.

We reached Charleston, South Carolina, at 12.50 P.M. and arrived at Savannah, Georgia, at 4.20. We reached Jacksonville, Florida, at 8.45 P.M. and had an hour and a quarter to lay over there, but Mother made a fuss about me getting off the train, so we had the darky make up our berths and retired before we left Jacksonville. I didn’t sleep good as the train done a lot of hemming and hawing, and Mother never sleeps good on a train as she says she is always worrying that I will fall out. She says she would rather have the upper herself, as then she would not have to worry about me, but I tell her I can’t take the risk of having it get out that I allowed my wife to sleep in an upper berth. It would make talk.

We was up in the morning in time to see our friends from New Hampshire get off at Tarpon Springs, which we reached at 6.53 A.M.

Several of our fellow passengers got off at Clearwater and some at Belleair, where the train backs right up to the door of the mammoth hotel. Belleair is the winter headquarters for the golf dudes and everybody that got off there had their bag of sticks, as many as ten and twelve in a bag. Women and all. When I was a young man we called it shinny and only needed one club to play with and about one game of it would of been a-plenty for some of these dudes, the way we played it.

The train pulled into St. Petersburg at 8.20 and when we got off the train you would think they was a riot, what with all the darkies barking for the different hotels.

I said to Mother, I said:

“It is a good thing we have got a place picked out to go to and don’t have to choose a hotel, as it would be hard to choose amongst them if every one of them is the best.”

She laughed.

We found a jitney and I give him the address of the room my son-in-law had got for us and soon we was there and introduced ourselves to the lady that owns the house, a young widow about forty-eight years of age. She showed us our room, which was light and airy with a comfortable bed and bureau and washstand. It was twelve dollars a week, but the location was good, only three blocks from Williams Park.

St. Pete is what folks calls the town, though they also call it the Sunshine City, as they claim they’s no other place in the country where they’s fewer days when Old Sol don’t smile down on Mother Earth, and one of the newspapers gives away all their copies free every day when the sun don’t shine. They claim to of only give them away some sixty-odd times in the last eleven years. Another nickname they

have got for the town is “the Poor Man’s Palm Beach,” but I guess they’s men that comes there that could borrow as much from the bank as some of the Willie boys³ over to the other Palm Beach.

During our stay we paid a visit to the Lewis Tent City, which is the headquarters for the Tin Can Tourists. But maybe you ain’t heard about them. Well, they are an organization that takes their vacation trips by auto and carries everything with them. That is, they bring along their tents to sleep in and cook in and they don’t patronize no hotels or cafeterias, but they have got to be bona fide auto campers or they can’t belong to the organization.

They tell me they’s over 200,000 members to it and they call themselves the Tin Canners on account of most of their food being put up in tin cans. One couple we seen in the Tent City was a couple from Brady, Texas, named Mr. and Mrs. Pence, which the old man is over eighty years of age and they had come in their auto all the way from home, a distance of 1,641 miles. They took five weeks for the trip, Mr. Pence driving the entire distance.

The Tin Canners hails from every State in the Union and in the summer time they visit places like New England and the Great Lakes region, but in the winter the most of them comes to Florida and scatters all over the State. While we was down there, they was a national convention of them at Gainesville, Florida, and they elected a Fredonia, New York, man as their president. His title is Royal Tin Can Opener of the World. They have got a song wrote up which everybody has got to learn it before they are a member:

“The tin can forever! Hurrah, boys! Hurrah!

Up with the tin can! Down with the foe!

We will rally round the campfire, we’ll rally once again,

Shouting, ‘We auto camp forever!’”

That is something like it. And the members has also got to have a tin can fastened on to the front of their machine.

I asked Mother how she would like to travel around that way and she said:

“Fine, but not with an old rattle brain like you driving.”

“Well,” I said, “I am eight years younger than this Mr. Pence who drove here from Texas.”

“Yes,” she said, “but he is old enough to not be skittish.”

You can’t get ahead of Mother.

Well, one of the first things we done in St. Petersburg was to go to the Chamber of Commerce and register our names and where we was from as they’s great rivalry amongst the different States in regards to the number of their citizens visiting in town and of course our little State don’t stand much of a show, but still every little bit helps, as the fella says. All and all, the man told us, they was eleven thousand names registered, Ohio leading with some fifteen hundred-odd and New York State next with twelve hundred. Then come Michigan, Pennsylvania and so on down, with one man each from Cuba and Nevada.

The first night we was there, they was a meeting of the New York-New Jersey Society at the Congregational Church and a man from Ogdensburg, New York State, made the talk. His subject was Rainbow Chasing. He is a Rotarian and a very convicting speaker, though I forget his name.

Our first business, of course, was to find a place to eat and after trying several places we run on to a cafeteria on Central Avenue that suited us up and down. We eat pretty near all our meals there and it averaged about two dollars per day for the two of us, but the food was well cooked and everything nice and clean. A man don’t mind paying the price if things is clean and well cooked.

On the third day of February, which is Mother’s birthday, we spread ourselves and eat supper at the

Poinsettia Hotel and they charged us seventy-five cents for a sirloin steak that wasn't hardly big enough for one.

I said to Mother: "Well," I said, "I guess it's a good thing every day ain't your birthday or we would be in the poorhouse."

"No," says Mother, "because if every day was my birthday, I would be old enough by this time to of been in my grave long ago."

You can't get ahead of Mother.

In the hotel they had a card-room where they was several men and ladies playing five hundred and this new fangled whist bridge. We also seen a place where they was dancing, so I asked Mother would she like to trip the light fantastic toe and she said no, she was too old to squirm like you have got to do now days. We watched some of the young folks at it awhile till Mother got disgusted and said we would have to see a good movie to take the taste out of our mouth. Mother is a great movie heroyne and we go twice a week here at home.

But I want to tell you about the Park. The second day we was there we visited the Park, which is a good deal like the one in Tampa, only bigger, and they's more fun goes on here every day than you could shake a stick at. In the middle they's a big bandstand and chairs for the folks to set and listen to the concerts, which they give you music for all tastes, from Dixie up to classical pieces like Hearts and Flowers.⁴

Then all around they's places marked off for different sports and games—chess and checkers and dominoes for folks that enjoys those kind of games, and roque⁵ and horse-shoes for the nimbler ones. I used to pitch a pretty fair shoe myself, but ain't done much of it in the last twenty years.

Well, anyway, we bought a membership ticket in the club which costs one dollar for the season, and they tell me that up to a couple years ago it was fifty cents, but they had to raise it to keep out the riffraff.

Well, Mother and I put in a great day watching the pitchers and she wanted I should get in the game, but I told her I was all out of practice and would make a fool of myself, though I seen several men pitching who I guess I could take their measure without no practice. However, they was some good pitchers, too, and one boy from Akron, Ohio, who could certainly throw a pretty shoe. They told me it looked like he would win the championship of the United States in the February tournament. We come away a few days before they held that and I never did hear if he win. I forget his name, but he was a clean cut young fella and he has got a brother in Cleveland that's a Rotarian.

Well, we just stood around and watched the different games for two or three days and finally I set down in a checker game with a man named Weaver from Danville, Illinois. He was a pretty fair checker player, but he wasn't no match for me, and I hope that don't sound like bragging. But I always could hold my own on a checker-board and the folks around here will tell you the same thing. I played with this Weaver pretty near all morning for two or three mornings and he beat me one game and the only other time it looked like he had a chance, the noon whistle blowed and we had to quit and go to dinner.

While I was playing checkers, Mother would set and listen to the band, as she loves music, classical or no matter what kind, but anyway she was setting there one day and between selections the woman next to her opened up a conversation. She was a woman about Mother's own age, seventy or seventy-one, and finally she asked Mother's name and Mother told her her name and where she was from and Mother asked her the same question, and who do you think the woman was?

4. A popular song written in 1893, later synonymous with sentimentality.

5. A hardcourt game similar to croquet.

Well, sir, it was the wife of Frank M. Hartsell, the man who was engaged to Mother till I stepped in and cut him out, fifty-two years ago!

Yes, sir!

You can imagine Mother's surprise! And Mrs. Hartsell was surprised, too, when Mother told her she had once been friends with her husband, though Mother didn't say how close friends they had been, or that Mother and I was the cause of Hartsell going out West. But that's what we was. Hartsell left his town a month after the engagement was broke off and ain't never been back since. He had went out to Michigan and become a veterinary, and that is where he had settled down, in Hillsdale, Michigan, and finally married his wife.

Well, Mother screwed up her courage to ask if Frank was still living and Mrs. Hartsell took her over to where they was pitching horse-shoes and there was old Frank, waiting his turn. And he knowed Mother as soon as he seen her, though it was over fifty years. He said he knowed her by her eyes.

"Why, it's Lucy Frost!" he says, and he threwed down his shoes and quit the game.

Then they come over and hunted me up and I will confess I wouldn't of knowed him. Him and I is the same age to the month, but he seems to show it more, some way. He is balder for one thing. And his beard is all white, where mine has still got a streak of brown in it. The very first thing I said to him, I said:

"Well, Frank, that beard of yours makes me feel like I was back north. It looks like a regular blizzard."

"Well," he said, "I guess yourn would be just as white if you had it dry cleaned."

But Mother wouldn't stand that.

"Is that so!" she said to Frank. "Well, Chancy ain't had no tobacco in his mouth for over ten years!" And I ain't!

Well, I excused myself from the checker game and it was pretty close to noon, so we decided to all have dinner together and they was nothing for it only we must try their cafeteria on Third Avenue. It was a little more expensive than ours and not near as good, I thought. I and Mother had about the same dinner we had been having every day and our bill was \$1.10. Frank's check was \$1.20 for he and his wife. The same meal wouldn't of cost them more than a dollar at our place.

After dinner we made them come up to our house and we all set in the parlor, which the young woman had give us the use of to entertain company. We begun talking over old times and Mother said she was a-scared Mrs. Hartsell would find it tiresome listening to we three talk over old times, but as it turned out they wasn't much chance for nobody else to talk with Mrs. Hartsell in the company. I have heard lots of women that could go it, but Hartsell's wife takes the cake of all the women I ever seen. She told us the family history of everybody in the State of Michigan and bragged for a half hour about her son, who she said is in the drug business in Grand Rapids, and a Rotarian.

When I and Hartsell could get a word in edgeways we joked one another back and forth and I chafed him about being a horse doctor.

"Well, Frank," I said, "you look pretty prosperous, so I suppose they's been plenty of glanders⁶ around Hillsdale."

"Well," he said, "I've managed to make more than a fair living. But I've worked pretty hard."

"Yes," I said, "and I suppose you get called out all hours of the night to attend births and so on."

Mother made me shut up.

Well, I thought they wouldn't never go home and I and Mother was in misery trying to keep awake, as the both of us generally always takes a nap after dinner. Finally they went, after we had made an engagement to meet them in the Park the next morning, and Mrs. Hartsell also invited us to come to

6. A disease infecting horses.

their place the next night and play five hundred. But she had forgot that they was a meeting of the Michigan Society that evening, so it was not till two evenings later that we had our first card game.

Hartsell and his wife lived in a house on Third Avenue North and had a private setting room besides their bedroom. Mrs. Hartsell couldn't quit talking about their private setting room like it was something wonderful. We played cards with them, with Mother and Hartsell partners against his wife and I. Mrs. Hartsell is a miserable card player and we certainly got the worst of it.

After the game she brought out a dish of oranges and we had to pretend it was just what we wanted, though oranges down there is like a young man's whiskers; you enjoy them at first, but they get to be a pesky nuisance.

We played cards again the next night at our place with the same partners and I and Mrs. Hartsell was beat again. Mother and Hartsell was full of compliments for each other on what a good team they made, but the both of them knowed well enough where the secret of their success laid. I guess all and all we must of played ten different evenings and they was only one night when Mrs. Hartsell and I come out ahead. And that one night wasn't no fault of hern.

When we had been down there about two weeks, we spent one evening as their guest in the Congregational Church, at a social give by the Michigan Society. A talk was made by a man named Bitting of Detroit, Michigan, on How I was Cured of Story Telling. He is a big man in the Rotarians and give a witty talk.

A woman named Mrs. Oxford rendered some selections which Mrs. Hartsell said was grand opera music, but whatever they was my daughter Edie could of give her cards and spades and not made such a hullabaloo about it neither.

Then they was a ventriloquist from Grand Rapids and a young woman about forty-five years of age that mimicked different kinds of birds. I whispered to Mother that they all sounded like a chicken, but she nudged me to shut up.

After the show we stopped in a drug store and I set up the refreshments and it was pretty close to ten o'clock before we finally turned in. Mother and I would of preferred tending the movies, but Mother said we mustn't offend Mrs. Hartsell, though I asked her had we came to Florida to enjoy ourselves or to just not offend an old chatter-box from Michigan.

I felt sorry for Hartsell one morning. The women folks both had an engagement down to the chiropodist's and I run across Hartsell in the Park and he foolishly offered to play me checkers.

It was him that suggested it, not me, and I guess he repented himself before we had played one game. But he was too stubborn to give up and set there while I beat him game after game and the worst part of it was that a crowd of folks had got in the habit of watching me play and there they all was, hooking on, and finally they seen what a fool Frank was making of himself, and they began to chafe him and pass remarks. Like one of them said:

“Who ever told you you was a checker player!”

And:

“You might maybe be good for tiddle-de-winks, but not checkers!”

I almost felt like letting him beat me a couple games. But the crowd would of knowed it was a put up job.

Well, the women folks joined us in the Park and I wasn't going to mention our little game, but Hartsell told about it himself and admitted he wasn't no match for me.

“Well,” said Mrs. Hartsell, “checkers ain't much of a game anyway, is it?” She said: “It's more of a children's game, ain't it? At least, I know my boy's children used to play it a good deal.”

“Yes, ma'am,” I said. “It's a children's game the way your husband plays it, too.”

Mother wanted to smooth things over, so she said:

“Maybe they's other games where Frank can beat you.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Hartsell, “and I bet he could beat you pitching horse-shoes.”

“Well,” I said, “I would give him a chance to try, only I ain’t pitched a shoe in over sixteen years.”

“Well,” said Hartsell, “I ain’t played checkers in twenty years.”

“You ain’t never played it,” I said.

“Anyway,” says Frank, “Lucy and I is your master at five hundred.”

Well, I could of told him why that was, but had decency enough to hold my tongue.

It had got so now that he wanted to play cards every night and when I or Mother wanted to go to a movie, any one of us would have to pretend we had a headache and then trust to goodness that they wouldn’t see us sneak into the theater. I don’t mind playing cards when my partner keeps their mind on the game, but you take a woman like Hartsell’s wife and how can they play cards when they have got to stop every couple seconds and brag about their son in Grand Rapids?

Well, the New York-New Jersey Society announced that they was goin’ to give a social evening too and I said to Mother, I said:

“Well, that is one evening when we will have an excuse not to play five hundred.”

“Yes,” she said, “but we will have to ask Frank and his wife to go to the social with us as they asked us to go to the Michigan social.”

“Well,” I said, “I had rather stay home than drag that chatterbox everywheres we go.”

So Mother said:

“You are getting too cranky. Maybe she does talk a little too much but she is good hearted. And Frank is always good company.”

So I said:

“I suppose if he is such good company you wished you had of married him.”

Mother laughed and said I sounded like I was jealous. Jealous of a cow doctor!

Anyway we had to drag them along to the social and I will say that we give them a much better entertainment than they had given us.

Judge Lane of Paterson made a fine talk on business conditions and a Mrs. Newell of Westfield imitated birds, only you could really tell what they was the way she done it. Two young women from Red Bank sung a choral selection and we clapped them back and they gave us Home to Our Mountains⁷ and Mother and Mrs. Hartsell both had tears in their eyes. And Hartsell, too.

Well, some way or another the chairman got wind that I was there and asked me to make a talk and I wasn’t even going to get up, but Mother made me, so I got up and said:

“Ladies and gentlemen,” I said. “I didn’t expect to be called on for a speech on an occasion like this or no other occasion as I do not set myself up as a speech maker, so will have to do the best I can, which I often say is the best anybody can do.”

Then I told them the story about Pat and the motorcycle, using the brogue, and it seemed to tickle them and I told them one or two other stories, but altogether I wasn’t on my feet more than twenty or twenty-five minutes and you ought to of heard the clapping and hollering when I set down. Even Mrs. Hartsell admitted that I am quite a speechifier and said if I ever went to Grand Rapids, Michigan, her son would make me talk to the Rotarians.

When it was over, Hartsell wanted we should go to their house and play cards, but his wife reminded him that it was after 9.30 P.M., rather a late hour to start a card game, but he had went crazy on the subject of cards, probably because he didn’t have to play partners with his wife. Anyway, we got rid of them and went home to bed.

It was the next morning, when we met over to the Park, that Mrs. Hartsell made the remark that she wasn’t getting no exercise so I suggested that why didn’t she take part in the roque game.

7. A popular English version of Verdi’s *Ai nostri monti*, from *Il trovatore* (1853).

She said she had not played a game of roque in twenty years, but if Mother would play she would play. Well, at first Mother wouldn't hear of it, but finally consented, more to please Mrs. Hartsell than anything else.

Well, they had a game with a Mrs. Ryan from Eagle, Nebraska, and a young Mrs. Morse from Rutland, Vermont, who Mother had met down to the chiroprapist's. Well, Mother couldn't hit a flea and they all laughed at her and I couldn't help from laughing at her myself and finally she quit and said her back was too lame to stoop over. So they got another lady and kept on playing and soon Mrs. Hartsell was the one everybody was laughing at, as she had a long shot to hit the black ball, and as she made the effort her teeth fell out on to the court. I never seen a woman so flustered in my life. And I never heard so much laughing, only Mrs. Hartsell didn't join in and she was madder than a hornet and wouldn't play no more, so the game broke up.

Mrs. Hartsell went home without speaking to nobody, but Hartsell stayed around and finally he said to me, he said:

"Well, I played you checkers the other day and you beat me bad and now what do you say if you and me play a game of horseshoes?"

I told him I hadn't pitched a shoe in sixteen years, but Mother said:

"Go ahead and play. You used to be good at it and maybe it will come back to you."

Well, to make a long story short, I give in. I oughtn't to of never tried it, as I hadn't pitched a shoe in sixteen years, and I only done it to humor Hartsell.

Before we started, Mother patted me on the back and told me to do my best, so we started in and I seen right off that I was in for it, as I hadn't pitched a shoe in sixteen years and didn't have my distance. And besides, the plating had wore off the shoes so that they was points right where they stuck into my thumb and I hadn't throwed more than two or three times when my thumb was raw and it pretty near killed me to hang on to the shoe, let alone pitch it.

Well, Hartsell throws the awkwardest shoe I ever seen pitched and to see him pitch you wouldn't think he would ever come nowheres near, but he is also the luckiest pitcher I ever seen and he made some pitches where the shoe lit five and six feet short and then schoonered up and was a ringer. They's no use trying to beat that kind of luck.

They was a pretty fair size crowd watching us and four or five other ladies besides Mother, and it seems like, when Hartsell pitches, he has got to chew and it kept the ladies on the anxious seat as he don't seem to care which way he is facing when he leaves go.

You would think a man as old as him would of learnt more manners.

Well, to make a long story short, I was just beginning to get my distance when I had to give up on account of my thumb, which I showed it to Hartsell and he seen I couldn't go on, as it was raw and bleeding. Even if I could of stood it to go on myself, Mother wouldn't of allowed it after she seen my thumb. So anyway I quit and Hartsell said the score was nineteen to six, but I don't know what it was. Or don't care, neither.

Well, Mother and I went home and I said I hoped we was through with the Hartsells as I was sick and tired of them, but it seemed like she had promised we would go over to their house that evening for another game of their everlasting cards.

Well, my thumb was giving me considerable pain and I felt kind of out of sorts and I guess maybe I forgot myself, but anyway, when we was about through playing Hartsell made the remark that he wouldn't never lose a game of cards if he could always have Mother for a partner.

So I said:

"Well, you had a chance fifty years ago to always have her for a partner, but you wasn't man enough to keep her."

I was sorry the minute I had said it and Hartsell didn't know what to say and for once his wife

couldn't say nothing. Mother tried to smooth things over by making the remark that I must of had something stronger than tea or I wouldn't talk so silly. But Mrs. Hartsell had froze up like an iceberg and hardly said good night to us and I bet her and Frank put in a pleasant hour after we was gone.

As we was leaving, Mother said to him: "Never mind Charley's nonsense, Frank. He is just mad because you beat him all hollow pitching horseshoes and playing cards."

She said that to make up for my slip, but at the same time she certainly riled me. I tried to keep ahold of myself, but as soon as we was out of the house she had to open up the subject and begun to scold me for the break I had made.

Well, I wasn't in no mood to be scolded. So I said:

"I guess he is such a wonderful pitcher and card player that you wished you had married him."

"Well," she said, "at least he ain't a baby to give up pitching because his thumb has got a few scratches."

"And how about you," I said, "making a fool of yourself on the roque court and then pretending your back is lame and you can't play no more!"

"Yes," she said, "but when you hurt your thumb I didn't laugh at you, and why did you laugh at me when I sprained my back?"

"Who could help from laughing!" I said.

"Well," she said, "Frank Hartsell didn't laugh."

"Well," I said, "why didn't you marry him?"

"Well," said Mother, "I almost wished I had!"

"And I wished so, too!" I said.

"I'll remember that!" said Mother, and that's the last word she said to me for two days.

We seen the Hartsells the next day in the Park and I was willing to apologize, but they just nodded to us. And a couple days later we heard they had left for Orlando, where they have got relatives.

I wished they had went there in the first place.

Mother and I made it up setting on a bench.

"Listen, Charley," she said. "This is our Golden Honeymoon and we don't want the whole thing spoilt with a silly old quarrel."

"Well," I said, "did you mean that about wishing you had married Hartsell?"

"Of course not," she said, "that is, if you didn't mean that you wished I had, too." So I said:

"I was just tired and all wrought up. I thank God you chose me instead of him as they's no other woman in the world who I could of lived with all these years."

"How about Mrs. Hartsell?" says Mother.

"Good gracious!" I said. "Imagine being married to a woman that plays five hundred like she does and drops her teeth on the roque court!"

"Well," said Mother, "it wouldn't be no worse than being married to a man that expectorates towards ladies and is such a fool in a checker game."

So I put my arm around her shoulder and she stroked my hand and I guess we got kind of spoony.

They was two days left of our stay in St. Petersburg and the next to the last day Mother introduced me to a Mrs. Kendall from Kingston, Rhode Island, who she had met at the chiroprapist's.

Mrs. Kendall made us acquainted with her husband, who is in the grocery business. They have got two sons and five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. One of their sons lives in Providence and is way up in the Elks as well as a Rotarian.

We found them very congenial people and we played cards with them the last two nights we was there. They was both experts and I only wished we had met them sooner instead of running into the Hartsells. But the Kendalls will be there again next winter and we will see more of them, that is, if we decide to make the trip again.

We left the Sunshine City on the eleventh day of February, at 11 A.M. This give us a day trip through Florida and we seen all the country we had passed through at night on the way down.

We reached Jacksonville at 7 P.M. and pulled out of there at 8.10 P.M. We reached Fayetteville, North Carolina, at nine o'clock the following morning, and reached Washington, D. C., at 6.30 P.M., laying over there half an hour.

We reached Trenton at 11.01 P.M. and had wired ahead to my daughter and son-in-law and they met us at the train and we went to their house and they put us up for the night. John would of made us stay up all night, telling about our trip, but Edie said we must be tired and made us go to bed. That's my daughter.

The next day we took our train for home and arrived safe and sound, having been gone just one month and a day.

Here comes Mother, so I guess I better shut up.

Activities

Haircut

Study Questions

1. Is Whitey the Barber a reliable narrator? That is, do you share his assessment of Jim Kendall?
2. Using clear examples, give your assessment of Jim Kendall.
3. Describe Paul Dickson and Julie Gregg.
4. Describe Doc Stair. Contrast his way of treating Paul Dickson and Julie Gregg with Kendall's treatment of them.
5. What finally happens to Jim?
6. Make a list of five of Whitey's grammatical/usage errors. Using grammatical terms, name the errors and how to fix them. Pay particular attention to his problems with verb tenses.
7. Is what happens to Jim Kendall inevitable?

Activities

In a short essay, trace the process by which Lardner makes Jim's end seem inevitable.

The Golden Honeymoon

Study Questions

1. How do you react to narrator Charley Tate? Do you find him obnoxious or vaguely likeable?
2. Describe the relationship of Charley and Lucy.
3. Make a list of Charley's difficulty distinguishing between the preterite form of a verb and its past participle. For reference, an example of an infinitive is **to drink**; its preterite form is **drank**; and the past participle is **drunk**. (e.g., "He drank; he has drunk").
4. What is a Rotarian, and why does Charley so often mention that someone is a Rotarian?

Activities

View the [film adaptation of Lardner's "The Golden Honeymoon" in two parts on Internet Archive](#) or in the

[film adaptation of “The Golden Honeymoon” in one part on YouTube](#). Compare and contrast the two versions in a short essay. Which do you prefer, the story or the film adaptation?

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39.

Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923)



Biography

Katherine Mansfield, one of New Zealand’s most famous writers, was closely associated with D.H. Lawrence and was something of a rival of Virginia Woolf. Mansfield’s creative years were burdened with loneliness, illness, jealousy, and alienation, all of which are reflected in her work with the bitter depiction of the marital and family relationships of her middle-class characters. Her short stories are also notable for their use of stream of consciousness. Like the Russian writer Anton Chekhov, Mansfield depicted trivial events and subtle changes in human behaviour.

Katherine Mansfield was born in 1888 in Wellington, New Zealand, into a middle-class colonial family. Her father, Harold Beauchamp, was a banker, and her mother, Annie Burnell Dyer, was of genteel origins. She lived for six years in the rural village of Karori. Later in life, Mansfield said, “I imagine I was always writing. Twaddle it was, too. But better far write twaddle or anything, anything, than nothing at all.” At the age of nine, she had her first story published. Entitled “Enna Blake,” it appeared in *The High School Reporter* in Wellington, with the editor’s comment that it “shows promise of great merit.”

As a first step to her rebellion against her background, she moved to London in 1903 and studied at Queen’s College, where she joined the staff of the college magazine. Returning to New Zealand in 1906, she took up music and became an accomplished cellist, but her father denied her the opportunity to become a professional musician. During this time, she had romantic affairs with both men and women.

In 1908, she studied typing and bookkeeping at Wellington Technical College. Her lifelong friend Ida Baker (known as “L.M.” or “Leslie Moore” in her diary and correspondence) persuaded Mansfield’s father to allow Katherine to move back to England with an allowance of £100 a year. There she devoted herself to writing. Mansfield never visited New Zealand again.

After an unhappy marriage in 1909 to George Bowden, whom she left a few days after the wedding, Mansfield toured for a while as an extra in opera. Before the marriage, she had had an affair with Garnet Trowell, a musician, and became pregnant. In Bavaria, where Mansfield spent some time, she suffered a miscarriage. During her stay in Germany, she wrote satirical sketches of German characters, which were published in 1911 under the title *In a German Pension*. Earlier, her stories had appeared in *The New Age*. On her return to London, Mansfield became ill with an untreated sexually transmitted disease she contracted from Floryan Sobieniowski, a condition which contributed to her weak health for the rest of her life. Sobieniowski was a Polish émigré translator whom she met in Germany. Her first story published in England was “The Child-Who-Was-Tired,” which is about an overworked nursemaid who kills a baby.

Mansfield attended literary parties without much enthusiasm: “Pretty rooms and pretty people, pretty coffee, and cigarettes out of a silver tankard... I was wretched.” Always outspoken, she was once turned out of an omnibus (a horse-drawn bus) after calling another woman a whore; the woman had declared that all suffragettes ought to be trampled to death by horses. In 1911, she met John Middleton Murry, a socialist and former literary critic, who was first a tenant in her flat, then her lover.

Until 1914, she published stories in *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review*. During the First World War, she travelled restlessly between England and France. After her brother “Chummie” died in the war, Mansfield focused her writing on New Zealand and her family, and “Prelude” (1916), one of her most famous stories, comes from this period. After divorcing her first husband in 1918, Mansfield married Murry. The previous year, she was found to have tuberculosis.

Mansfield and Murry were closely associated with D.H. Lawrence and his wife Frieda. Upon learning that Murry had an affair with Princess Bibesco, wife of Romanian Prince Antoine, Mansfield objected not to the affair but to her letters to Murry. In a letter to the princess, she wrote: “I am afraid you must stop writing these love letters to my husband while he and I live together. It is one of the things which is not done in our world.”

Mansfield spent her last years in southern France and in Switzerland, seeking relief from tuberculosis. As a part of her treatment in 1922 at an institute, Mansfield had to lie a few hours every day on a platform suspended over a cow manger. She breathed odours emanating from below, but the treatment did no good. Without the company of her literary friends, family, or her husband, she wrote much about her own roots and her childhood. Mansfield died of a pulmonary hemorrhage on January 9, 1923, in Gurdjieff Institute, near Fontainebleau, France. Her last words were: “I love the rain. I want the feeling of it on my face.”

Mansfield’s family memoirs were collected in *Bliss and Other Stories* (1920). Only three volumes of Mansfield’s stories were published during her lifetime. “Miss Brill” is about a woman who enjoys the beginning of the “season.” She goes to her “special” seat with her fur. She had taken it out of its box in the afternoon, shaken off the moth-powder, and given it a brush. She feels that she has a part in the play in the park, and somebody will notice if she isn’t there. A couple sits near her. The girl laughs at her fur and the man says: “Why does she come here at all – who wants her? Why doesn’t she keep her silly old mug at home?” Miss Brill hurries back home, unclasps the neckpiece quickly, and puts it in the box. “But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying.”

In “The Garden Party” (1921), an extravagant garden party is arranged on a beautiful day. Laura, the daughter of the party’s hostess, hears of the accidental death of a young local working class man, Mr. Scott, who lived in the neighbourhood. Laura wants to cancel the party, but her mother refuses to

understand. She fills a basket with sandwiches, cakes, pastries, and other food, goes to the widow's house, and sees the dead man in the bedroom where he is lying. "He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was playing, this marvel had come to the lane." Crying, she tells her brother, who is looking for her: "It was simply marvellous. But, Laurie –' She stopped, she looked at her brother. 'Isn't life,' she stammered, 'isn't life –' But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood."

Mansfield was greatly influenced by Anton Chekov, sharing his warm humanity and attention to small details of human behaviour. Her influence on the development of the modern short story was also notable. Among her literary friends were Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf (who considered her overpraised), and D.H. Lawrence, who later turned against Murry and her. Mansfield's journal, letters, and scrapbook were edited by her husband, who ignored her wish that he should "tear up and burn as much as possible" of the papers she left behind her.

Miss Brill

Although it was so brilliantly fine—the blue sky powdered with gold and great spots of light like white wine splashed over the Jardins Publiques¹—Miss Brill was glad that she had decided on her fur. The air was motionless, but when you opened your mouth there was just a faint chill, like a chill from a glass of iced water before you sip, and now and again a leaf came drifting—from nowhere, from the sky. Miss Brill put up her hand and touched her fur. Dear little thing! It was nice to feel it again. She had taken it out of its box that afternoon, shaken out the moth-powder, given it a good brush, and rubbed the life back into the dim little eyes. “What has been happening to me?” said the sad little eyes. Oh, how sweet it was to see them snap at her again from the red eiderdown!... But the nose, which was of some black composition, wasn’t at all firm. It must have had a knock, somehow. Never mind—a little dab of black sealing-wax when the time came—when it was absolutely necessary... Little rogue! Yes, she really felt like that about it. Little rogue biting its tail just by her left ear. She could have taken it off and laid it on her lap and stroked it. She felt a tingling in her hands and arms, but that came from walking, she supposed. And when she breathed, something light and sad—no, not sad, exactly—something gentle seemed to move in her bosom.

Published in 1920

There were a number of people out this afternoon, far more than last Sunday. And the band sounded louder and gayer. That was because the Season had begun. For although the band played all the year round on Sundays, out of season it was never the same. It was like some one playing with only the family to listen; it didn’t care how it played if there weren’t any strangers present. Wasn’t the conductor wearing a new coat, too? She was sure it was new. He scraped with his foot and flapped his arms like a rooster about to crow, and the bandsmen sitting in the green rotunda blew out their cheeks and glared at the music. Now there came a little “flutey” bit—very pretty!—a little chain of bright drops. She was sure it would be repeated. It was; she lifted her head and smiled.

Only two people shared her “special” seat: a fine old man in a velvet coat, his hands clasped over a huge carved walking-stick, and a big old woman, sitting upright, with a roll of knitting on her embroidered apron. They did not speak. This was disappointing, for Miss Brill always looked forward to the conversation. She had become really quite expert, she thought, at listening as though she didn’t listen, at sitting in other people’s lives just for a minute while they talked round her.

She glanced, sideways, at the old couple. Perhaps they would go soon. Last Sunday, too, hadn’t been as interesting as usual. An Englishman and his wife, he wearing a dreadful Panama hat and she button boots. And she’d gone on the whole time about how she ought to wear spectacles; she knew she needed them; but that it was no good getting any; they’d be sure to break and they’d never keep on. And he’d been so patient. He’d suggested everything—gold rims, the kind that curved round your ears, little pads inside the bridge. No, nothing would please her. “They’ll always be sliding down my nose!” Miss Brill had wanted to shake her.

The old people sat on the bench, still as statues. Never mind, there was always the crowd to watch. To and fro, in front of the flower-beds and the band rotunda, the couples and groups paraded, stopped to talk, to greet, to buy a handful of flowers from the old beggar who had his tray fixed to the railings. Little children ran among them, swooping and laughing; little boys with big white silk bows under their chins, little girls, little French dolls, dressed up in velvet and lace. And sometimes a tiny staggerer

1. Municipal public gardens.

came suddenly rocking into the open from under the trees, stopped, stared, as suddenly sat down “flop,” until its small high-stepping mother, like a young hen, rushed scolding to its rescue. Other people sat on the benches and green chairs, but they were nearly always the same, Sunday after Sunday, and—Miss Brill had often noticed—there was something funny about nearly all of them. They were odd, silent, nearly all old, and from the way they stared they looked as though they’d just come from dark little rooms or even—even cupboards!

Behind the rotunda the slender trees with yellow leaves down drooping, and through them just a line of sea, and beyond the blue sky with gold-veined clouds.

Tum-tum-tum tiddle-um! tiddle-um! tum tiddley-um tum ta! blew the band.

Two young girls in red came by and two young soldiers in blue met them, and they laughed and paired and went off arm-in-arm. Two peasant women with funny straw hats passed, gravely, leading beautiful smoke-coloured donkeys. A cold, pale nun hurried by. A beautiful woman came along and dropped her bunch of violets, and a little boy ran after to hand them to her, and she took them and threw them away as if they’d been poisoned. Dear me! Miss Brill didn’t know whether to admire that or not! And now an ermine toque and a gentleman in grey met just in front of her. He was tall, stiff, dignified, and she was wearing the ermine toque she’d bought when her hair was yellow. Now everything, her hair, her face, even her eyes, was the same colour as the shabby ermine, and her hand, in its cleaned glove, lifted to dab her lips, was a tiny yellowish paw. Oh, she was so pleased to see him—delighted! She rather thought they were going to meet that afternoon. She described where she’d been—everywhere, here, there, along by the sea. The day was so charming—didn’t he agree? And wouldn’t he, perhaps?... But he shook his head, lighted a cigarette, slowly breathed a great deep puff into her face, and even while she was still talking and laughing, flicked the match away and walked on. The ermine toque was alone; she smiled more brightly than ever. But even the band seemed to know what she was feeling and played more softly, played tenderly, and the drum beat, “The Brute! The Brute!” over and over. What would she do? What was going to happen now? But as Miss Brill wondered, the ermine toque turned, raised her hand as though she’d seen some one else, much nicer, just over there, and pattered away. And the band changed again and played more quickly, more gayly than ever, and the old couple on Miss Brill’s seat got up and marched away, and such a funny old man with long whiskers hobbled along in time to the music and was nearly knocked over by four girls walking abreast.

Oh, how fascinating it was! How she enjoyed it! How she loved sitting here, watching it all! It was like a play. It was exactly like a play. Who could believe the sky at the back wasn’t painted? But it wasn’t till a little brown dog trotted on solemn and then slowly trotted off, like a little “theatre” dog, a little dog that had been drugged, that Miss Brill discovered what it was that made it so exciting. They were all on the stage. They weren’t only the audience, not only looking on; they were acting. Even she had a part and came every Sunday. No doubt somebody would have noticed if she hadn’t been there; she was part of the performance after all. How strange she’d never thought of it like that before! And yet it explained why she made such a point of starting from home at just the same time each week—so as not to be late for the performance—and it also explained why she had quite a queer, shy feeling at telling her English pupils how she spent her Sunday afternoons. No wonder! Miss Brill nearly laughed out loud. She was on the stage. She thought of the old invalid gentleman to whom she read the newspaper four afternoons a week while he slept in the garden. She had got quite used to the frail head on the cotton pillow, the hollowed eyes, the open mouth and the high pinched nose. If he’d been dead she mightn’t have noticed for weeks; she wouldn’t have minded. But suddenly he knew he was having the paper read to him by an actress! “An actress!” The old head lifted; two points of light quivered in the old eyes. “An actress—are ye?” And Miss Brill smoothed the newspaper as though it were the manuscript of her part and said gently; “Yes, I have been an actress for a long time.”

The band had been having a rest. Now they started again. And what they played was warm, sunny, yet there was just a faint chill—a something, what was it?—not sadness—no, not sadness—a something that made you want to sing. The tune lifted, lifted, the light shone; and it seemed to Miss Brill that in another moment all of them, all the whole company, would begin singing. The young ones, the laughing ones who were moving together, they would begin, and the men’s voices, very resolute and brave, would join them. And then she too, she too, and the others on the benches—they would come in with a kind of accompaniment—something low, that scarcely rose or fell, something so beautiful—moving... And Miss Brill’s eyes filled with tears and she looked smiling at all the other members of the company. Yes, we understand, we understand, she thought—though what they understood she didn’t know.

Just at that moment a boy and girl came and sat down where the old couple had been. They were beautifully dressed; they were in love. The hero and heroine, of course, just arrived from his father’s yacht. And still soundlessly singing, still with that trembling smile, Miss Brill prepared to listen.

“No, not now,” said the girl. “Not here, I can’t.”

“But why? Because of that stupid old thing at the end there?” asked the boy. “Why does she come here at all—who wants her? Why doesn’t she keep her silly old mug at home?”

“It’s her fu-ur which is so funny,” giggled the girl. “It’s exactly like a fried whiting.²”

“Ah, be off with you!” said the boy in an angry whisper. Then: “Tell me, ma petite chere—”

“No, not here,” said the girl. “Not yet.”

On her way home she usually bought a slice of honey-cake at the baker’s. It was her Sunday treat. Sometimes there was an almond in her slice, sometimes not. It made a great difference. If there was an almond it was like carrying home a tiny present—a surprise—something that might very well not have been there. She hurried on the almond Sundays and struck the match for the kettle in quite a dashing way.

But to-day she passed the baker’s by, climbed the stairs, went into the little dark room—her room like a cupboard—and sat down on the red eiderdown. She sat there for a long time. The box that the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying.

2. A common, cod-like fish.

The Fly

Published in 1922

“Y’are very snug in here,” piped old Mr. Woodifield, and he peered out of the great, green-leather armchair by his friend the boss’s desk as a baby peers out of its pram. His talk was over; it was time for him to be off. But he did not want to go. Since he had retired, since his...stroke, the wife and the girls kept him boxed up in the house every day of the week except Tuesday. On Tuesday he was dressed and brushed and allowed to cut back to the City³ for the day. Though what he did there

the wife and girls couldn’t imagine. Made a nuisance of himself to his friends, they supposed....Well, perhaps so. All the same, we cling to our last pleasures as the tree clings to its last leaves. So there sat old Woodifield, smoking a cigar and staring almost greedily at the boss, who rolled in his office chair, stout, rosy, five years older than he, and still going strong, still at the helm. It did one good to see him.

Wistfully, admiringly, the old voice added, “It’s snug in here, upon my word!”

“Yes, it’s comfortable enough,” agreed the boss, and he flipped the *Financial Times* with a paper-knife. As a matter of fact he was proud of his room; he liked to have it admired, especially by old Woodifield. It gave him a feeling of deep, solid satisfaction to be planted there in the midst of it in full view of that frail old figure in the muffler.

“I’ve had it done up lately,” he explained, as he had explained for the past—how many?—weeks. “New carpet,” and he pointed to the bright red carpet with a pattern of large white rings. “New furniture,” and he nodded towards the massive bookcase and the table with legs like twisted treacle. “Electric heating!” He waved almost exultantly towards the five transparent, pearly sausages glowing so softly in the tilted copper pan.

But he did not draw old Woodifield’s attention to the photograph over the table of a grave-looking boy in uniform standing in one of those spectral photographers’ parks with photographers’ storm-clouds behind him. It was not new. It had been there for over six years.

“There was something I wanted to tell you,” said old Woodifield, and his eyes grew dim remembering. “Now what was it? I had it in my mind when I started out this morning.” His hands began to tremble, and patches of red showed above his beard.

Poor old chap, he’s on his last pins, thought the boss. And, feeling kindly, he winked at the old man, and said jokingly, “I tell you what. I’ve got a little drop of something here that’ll do you good before you go out into the cold again. It’s beautiful stuff. It wouldn’t hurt a child.” He took a key off his watch-chain, unlocked a cupboard below his desk, and drew forth a dark, squat bottle. “That’s the medicine,” said he. “And the man from whom I got it told me on the strict Q.T.⁴ it came from the cellars at Windor Castle⁵.”

Old Woodifield’s mouth fell open at the sight. He couldn’t have looked more surprised if the boss had produced a rabbit.

“It’s whisky, ain’t it?” he piped feebly.

The boss turned the bottle and lovingly showed him the label. Whisky it was.

“D’you know,” said he, peering up at the boss wonderingly, “they won’t let me touch it at home.” And he looked as though he was going to cry.

3. Chief financial and business district of London, usually capitalized so as to distinguish it from more general reference to the city of London. It is known colloquially as “the Square Mile.”

4. Abbreviation for “quiet”, meaning “secret” or “hush-hush.”

5. A royal residence in Windsor in the county of Berkshire, roughly 34 kilometres from London.

“Ah, that’s where we know a bit more than the ladies,” cried the boss, swooping across for two tumblers that stood on the table with the water-bottle, and pouring a generous finger into each. “Drink it down. It’ll do you good. And don’t put any water with it. It’s sacrilege to tamper with stuff like this. Ah!” He tossed off his, pulled out his handkerchief, hastily wiped his moustaches, and cocked an eye at old Woodifield, who was rolling his in his chaps.

The old man swallowed, was silent a moment, and then said faintly, “It’s nutty!”

But it warmed him; it crept into his chill old brain—he remembered.

“That was it,” he said, heaving himself out of his chair. “I thought you’d like to know. The girls were in Belgium⁶ last week having a look at poor Reggie’s grave, and they happened to come across your boy’s. They’re quite near each other, it seems.”

Old Woodifield paused, but the boss made no reply. Only a quiver in his eyelids showed that he heard.

“The girls were delighted with the way the place is kept,” piped the old voice. “Beautifully looked after. Couldn’t be better if they were at home. You’ve not been across, have yer?”

“No, no!” For various reasons the boss had not been across.

“There’s miles of it,” quavered old Woodifield, “and it’s all as neat as a garden. Flowers growing on all the graves. Nice broad paths.” It was plain from his voice how much he liked a nice broad path.

The pause came again. Then the old man brightened wonderfully.

“D’you know what the hotel made the girls pay for a pot of jam?” he piped. “Ten francs! Robbery, I call it. It was a little pot, so Gertrude says, no bigger than a half-crown. And she hadn’t taken more than a spoonful when they charged her ten francs. Gertrude brought the pot away with her to teach ’em a lesson. Quite right, too; it’s trading on our feelings. They think because we’re over there having a look round we’re ready to pay anything. That’s what it is.” And he turned towards the door.

“Quite right, quite right!” cried the boss, though what was quite right he hadn’t the least idea. He came round by his desk, followed the shuffling footsteps to the door, and saw the old fellow out. Woodifield was gone.

For a long moment the boss stayed, staring at nothing, while the grey-haired office messenger, watching him, dodged in and out of his cubby-hole like a dog that expects to be taken for a run. Then: “I’ll see nobody for half an hour, Macey,” said the boss. “Understand? Nobody at all.”

“Very good, sir.”

The door shut, the firm heavy steps recrossed the bright carpet, the fat body plumped down in the spring chair, and leaning forward, the boss covered his face with his hands. He wanted, he intended, he had arranged to weep....

It had been a terrible shock to him when old Woodifield sprang that remark upon him about the boy’s grave. It was exactly as though the earth had opened and he had seen the boy lying there with Woodifield’s girls staring down at him. For it was strange. Although over six years had passed away, the boss never thought of the boy except as lying unchanged, unblemished in his uniform, asleep for ever. “My son!” groaned the boss. But no tears came yet. In the past, in the first few months and even years after the boy’s death, he had only to say those words to be overcome by such grief that nothing short of a violent fit of weeping could relieve him. Time, he had declared then, he had told everybody, could make no difference. Other men perhaps might recover, might live their loss down, but not he. How was it possible? His boy was an only son. Ever since his birth the boss had worked at building up this business for him; it had no other meaning if it was not for the boy. Life itself had come to have no other meaning. How on earth could he have slaved, denied himself, kept going all those years without the promise for ever before him of the boy’s stepping into his shoes and carrying on where he left off?

6. Site of many World War I battles and military cemeteries.

And that promise had been so near being fulfilled. The boy had been in the office learning the ropes for a year before the war. Every morning they had started off together; they had come back by the same train. And what congratulations he had received as the boy's father! No wonder; he had taken to it marvellously. As to his popularity with the staff, every man jack of them down to old Macey couldn't make enough of the boy. And he wasn't the least spoilt. No, he was just his bright natural self, with the right word for everybody, with that boyish look and his habit of saying, "Simply splendid!"

But all that was over and done with as though it never had been. The day had come when Macey had handed him the telegram that brought the whole place crashing about his head. "Deeply regret to inform you..." And he had left the office a broken man, with his life in ruins.

Six years ago, six years....How quickly time passed! It might have happened yesterday. The boss took his hands from his face; he was puzzled. Something seemed to be wrong with him. He wasn't feeling as he wanted to feel. He decided to get up and have a look at the boy's photograph. But it wasn't a favourite photograph of his; the expression was unnatural. It was cold, even stern-looking. The boy had never looked like that.

At that moment the boss noticed that a fly had fallen into his broad inkpot, and was trying feebly but desperately to clamber out again. Help! help! said those struggling legs. But the sides of the inkpot were wet and slippery; it fell back again and began to swim. The boss took up a pen, picked the fly out of the ink, and shook it on to a piece of blotting-paper. For a fraction of a second it lay still on the dark patch that oozed round it. Then the front legs waved, took hold, and, pulling its small, sodden body up, it began the immense task of cleaning the ink from its wings. Over and under, over and under, went a leg along a wing, as the stone goes over and under the scythe. Then there was a pause, while the fly, seeming to stand on the tips of its toes, tried to expand first one wing and then the other. It succeeded at last, and, sitting down, it began, like a minute cat, to clean its face. Now one could imagine that the little front legs rubbed against each other lightly, joyfully. The horrible danger was over; it had escaped; it was ready for life again.

But just then the boss had an idea. He plunged his pen back into the ink, leaned his thick wrist on the blotting-paper, and as the fly tried its wings down came a great heavy blot. What would it make of that? What indeed! The little beggar seemed absolutely cowed, stunned, and afraid to move because of what would happen next. But then, as if painfully, it dragged itself forward. The front legs waved, caught hold, and, more slowly this time, the task began from the beginning.

He's a plucky little devil, thought the boss, and he felt a real admiration for the fly's courage. That was the way to tackle things; that was the right spirit. Never say die; it was only a question of...But the fly had again finished its laborious task, and the boss had just time to refill his pen, to shake fair and square on the new-cleaned body yet another dark drop. What about it this time? A painful moment of suspense followed. But behold, the front legs were again waving; the boss felt a rush of relief. He leaned over the fly and said to it tenderly, "You artful little b..." And he actually had the brilliant notion of breathing on it to help the drying process. All the same, there was something timid and weak about its efforts now, and the boss decided that this time should be the last, as he dipped the pen deep into the inkpot.

It was. The last blot fell on the soaked blotting-paper, and the draggled fly lay in it and did not stir. The back legs were stuck to the body; the front legs were not to be seen.

"Come on," said the boss. "Look sharp!" And he stirred it with his pen—in vain. Nothing happened or was likely to happen. The fly was dead.

The boss lifted the corpse on the end of the paper-knife and flung it into the waste-paper basket. But such a grinding feeling of wretchedness seized him that he felt positively frightened. He started forward and pressed the bell for Macey.

"Bring me some fresh blotting-paper," he said sternly, "and look sharp about it." And while the old

dog padded away he fell to wondering what it was he had been thinking about before. What was it? It was...He took out his handkerchief and passed it inside his collar. For the life of him he could not remember.

A Cup of Tea

Published in 1922

Rosemary Fell was not exactly beautiful. No, you couldn't have called her beautiful. Pretty? Well, if you took her to pieces... But why be so cruel as to take anyone to pieces? She was young, brilliant, extremely modern, exquisitely well dressed, amazingly well read in the newest of the new books, and her parties were the most delicious mixture of the really important people and... artists—quaint creatures, discoveries of hers, some of them too terrifying for words, but others quite

presentable and amusing.

Rosemary had been married two years. She had a duck of a boy⁷. No, not Peter—Michael. And her husband absolutely adored her. They were rich, really rich, not just comfortably well off, which is odious and stuffy and sounds like one's grandparents. But if Rosemary wanted to shop she would go to Paris as you and I would go to Bond Street.⁸ If she wanted to buy flowers, the car pulled up at that perfect shop in Regent Street⁹, and Rosemary inside the shop just gazed in her dazzled, rather exotic way, and said: "I want those and those and those. Give me four bunches of those. And that jar of roses. Yes, I'll have all the roses in the jar. No, no lilac. I hate lilac. It's got no shape." The attendant bowed and put the lilac out of sight, as though this was only too true; lilac was dreadfully shapeless. "Give me those stumpy little tulips. Those red and white ones." And she was followed to the car by a thin shop-girl staggering under an immense white paper armful that looked like a baby in long clothes....

One winter afternoon she had been buying something in a little antique shop in Curzon Street.¹⁰ It was a shop she liked. For one thing, one usually had it to oneself. And then the man who kept it was ridiculously fond of serving her. He beamed whenever she came in. He clasped his hands; he was so gratified he could scarcely speak. Flattery, of course. All the same, there was something...

"You see, madam," he would explain in his low respectful tones, "I love my things. I would rather not part with them than sell them to someone who does not appreciate them, who has not that fine feeling which is so rare..." And, breathing deeply, he unrolled a tiny square of blue velvet and pressed it on the glass counter with his pale finger-tips.

To-day it was a little box. He had been keeping it for her. He had shown it to nobody as yet. An exquisite little enamel box with a glaze so fine it looked as though it had been baked in cream. On the lid a minute creature stood under a flowery tree, and a more minute creature still had her arms round his neck. Her hat, really no bigger than a geranium petal, hung from a branch; it had green ribbons. And there was a pink cloud like a watchful cherub floating above their heads. Rosemary took her hands out of her long gloves. She always took off her gloves to examine such things. Yes, she liked it very much. She loved it; it was a great duck. She must have it. And, turning the creamy box, opening and shutting it, she couldn't help noticing how charming her hands were against the blue velvet. The shopman, in some dim cavern of his mind, may have dared to think so too. For he took a pencil, leant over the counter, and his pale, bloodless fingers crept timidly towards those rosy, flashing ones, as he murmured gently: "If I may venture to point out to madam, the flowers on the little lady's bodice."

7. A term of endearment, often applied to things as well as people, "a duck of a fellow."

8. A smart and fashionable street in London's exclusive Mayfair district, known for shops that are both elegant and expensive.

9. Another major shopping street in London's West End.

10. Another fashionable street in Mayfair.

“Charming!” Rosemary admired the flowers. But what was the price? For a moment the shopman did not seem to hear. Then a murmur reached her. “Twenty-eight guineas¹¹, madam.”

“Twenty-eight guineas.” Rosemary gave no sign. She laid the little box down; she buttoned her gloves again. Twenty-eight guineas. Even if one is rich... She looked vague. She stared at a plump tea-kettle like a plump hen above the shopman’s head, and her voice was dreamy as she answered: “Well, keep it for me—will you? I’ll...”

But the shopman had already bowed as though keeping it for her was all any human being could ask. He would be willing, of course, to keep it for her for ever.

The discreet door shut with a click. She was outside on the step, gazing at the winter afternoon. Rain was falling, and with the rain it seemed the dark came too, spinning down like ashes. There was a cold bitter taste in the air, and the new-lighted lamps looked sad. Sad were the lights in the houses opposite. Dimly they burned as if regretting something. And people hurried by, hidden under their hateful umbrellas. Rosemary felt a strange pang. She pressed her muff against her breast; she wished she had the little box, too, to cling to. Of course the car was there. She’d only to cross the pavement. But still she waited. There are moments, horrible moments in life, when one emerges from shelter and looks out, and it’s awful. One oughtn’t to give way to them. One ought to go home and have an extra-special tea. But at the very instant of thinking that, a young girl, thin, dark, shadowy—where had she come from?—was standing at Rosemary’s elbow and a voice like a sigh, almost like a sob, breathed: “Madam, may I speak to you a moment?”

“Speak to me?” Rosemary turned. She saw a little battered creature with enormous eyes, someone quite young, no older than herself, who clutched at her coat-collar with reddened hands, and shivered as though she had just come out of the water.

“M-madam, stammered the voice. Would you let me have the price of a cup of tea?”

“A cup of tea?” There was something simple, sincere in that voice; it wasn’t in the least the voice of a beggar. “Then have you no money at all?” asked Rosemary.

“None, madam,” came the answer.

“How extraordinary!” Rosemary peered through the dusk and the girl gazed back at her. How more than extraordinary! And suddenly it seemed to Rosemary such an adventure. It was like something out of a novel by Dostoevsky¹², this meeting in the dusk. Supposing she took the girl home? Supposing she did do one of those things she was always reading about or seeing on the stage, what would happen? It would be thrilling. And she heard herself saying afterwards to the amazement of her friends: “I simply took her home with me,” as she stepped forward and said to that dim person beside her: “Come home to tea with me.”

The girl drew back startled. She even stopped shivering for a moment. Rosemary put out a hand and touched her arm. “I mean it,” she said, smiling. And she felt how simple and kind her smile was. “Why won’t you? Do. Come home with me now in my car and have tea.”

“You—you don’t mean it, madam,” said the girl, and there was pain in her voice.

“But I do,” cried Rosemary. “I want you to. To please me. Come along.”

The girl put her fingers to her lips and her eyes devoured Rosemary. “You’re—you’re not taking me to the police station?” she stammered.

“The police station!” Rosemary laughed out. “Why should I be so cruel? No, I only want to make you warm and to hear—anything you care to tell me.”

Hungry people are easily led. The footman held the door of the car open, and a moment later they were skimming through the dusk.

11. An old British coin, valued at 21 shillings, or one shilling more than the pound, which was worth 20 shillings.

12. Influential novelist and philosopher. Novels such as *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) reflect the political, social and spiritual conflicts of his society.

“There!” said Rosemary. She had a feeling of triumph as she slipped her hand through the velvet strap. She could have said, “Now I’ve got you,” as she gazed at the little captive she had netted. But of course she meant it kindly. Oh, more than kindly. She was going to prove to this girl that—wonderful things did happen in life, that—fairy godmothers were real, that—rich people had hearts, and that women were sisters. She turned impulsively, saying’. “Don’t be frightened. After all, why shouldn’t you come back with me? We’re both women. If I’m the more fortunate, you ought to expect...”

But happily at that moment, for she didn’t know how the sentence was going to end, the car stopped. The bell was rung, the door opened, and with a charming, protecting, almost embracing movement, Rosemary drew the other into the hall. Warmth, softness, light, a sweet scent, all those things so familiar to her she never even thought about them, she watched that other receive. It was fascinating. She was like the rich little girl in her nursery with all the cupboards to open, all the boxes to unpack.

“Come, come upstairs,” said Rosemary, longing to begin to be generous. “Come up to my room.” And, besides, she wanted to spare this poor little thing from being stared at by the servants; she decided as they mounted the stairs she would not even ring to Jeanne, but take off her things by herself. The great things were to be natural!

And “There!” cried Rosemary again, as they reached her beautiful big bedroom with the curtains drawn, the fire leaping on her wonderful lacquer furniture, her gold cushions and the primrose and blue rugs.

The girl stood just inside the door; she seemed dazed. But Rosemary didn’t mind that.

“Come and sit down,” she cried, dragging her big chair up to the fire, “in this comfy chair. Come and get warm. You look so dreadfully cold.”

“I daren’t, madam,” said the girl, and she edged backwards.

“Oh, please,”—Rosemary ran forward—“you mustn’t be frightened, you mustn’t, really. Sit down, when I’ve taken off my things we shall go into the next room and have tea and be cozy. Why are you afraid?” And gently she half pushed the thin figure into its deep cradle.

But there was no answer. The girl stayed just as she had been put, with her hands by her sides and her mouth slightly open. To be quite sincere, she looked rather stupid. But Rosemary wouldn’t acknowledge it. She leant over her, saying:

“Won’t you take off your hat? Your pretty hair is all wet. And one is so much more comfortable without a hat, isn’t one?”

There was a whisper that sounded like “Very good, madam,” and the crushed hat was taken off.

“And let me help you off with your coat, too,” said Rosemary.

The girl stood up. But she held on to the chair with one hand and let Rosemary pull. It was quite an effort. The other scarcely helped her at all. She seemed to stagger like a child, and the thought came and went through Rosemary’s mind, that if people wanted helping they must respond a little, just a little, otherwise it became very difficult indeed. And what was she to do with the coat now? She left it on the floor, and the hat too. She was just going to take a cigarette off the mantelpiece when the girl said quickly, but so lightly and strangely: “I’m very sorry, madam, but I’m going to faint. I shall go off, madam, if I don’t have something.”

“Good heavens, how thoughtless I am!” Rosemary rushed to the bell.

“Tea! Tea at once! And some brandy immediately!”

The maid was gone again, but the girl almost cried out: “No, I don’t want no brandy. I never drink brandy. It’s a cup of tea I want, madam.” And she burst into tears.

It was a terrible and fascinating moment. Rosemary knelt beside her chair.

“Don’t cry, poor little thing,” she said. “Don’t cry.” And she gave the other her lace handkerchief. She really was touched beyond words. She put her arm round those thin, bird-like shoulders.

Now at last the other forgot to be shy, forgot everything except that they were both women, and

gasped out: "I can't go on no longer like this. I can't bear it. I can't bear it. I shall do away with myself. I can't bear no more."

"You shan't have to. I'll look after you. Don't cry any more. Don't you see what a good thing it was that you met me? We'll have tea and you'll tell me everything. And I shall arrange something. I promise. Do stop crying. It's so exhausting. Please!"

The other did stop just in time for Rosemary to get up before the tea came. She had the table placed between them. She plied the poor little creature with everything, all the sandwiches, all the bread and butter, and every time her cup was empty she filled it with tea, cream and sugar. People always said sugar was so nourishing. As for herself she didn't eat; she smoked and looked away tactfully so that the other should not be shy.

And really the effect of that slight meal was marvelous. When the tea-table was carried away a new being, a light, frail creature with tangled hair, dark lips, deep, lighted eyes, lay back in the big chair in a kind of sweet languor, looking at the blaze. Rosemary lit a fresh cigarette; it was time to begin.

"And when did you have your last meal?" she asked softly.

But at that moment the door-handle turned.

"Rosemary, may I come in?" It was Philip.

"Of course."

He came in. "Oh, I'm so sorry," he said, and stopped and stared.

"It's quite all right," said Rosemary, smiling. "This is my friend, Miss—"

"Smith, madam," said the languid figure, who was strangely still and unafraid.

"Smith," said Rosemary. "We are going to have a little talk."

"Oh yes," said Philip. "Quite," and his eye caught sight of the coat and hat on the floor. He came over to the fire and turned his back to it. "It's a beastly afternoon," he said curiously, still looking at that listless figure, looking at its hands and boots, and then at Rosemary again.

"Yes, isn't it?" said Rosemary enthusiastically. "Vile."

Philip smiled his charming smile. "As a matter of fact," said he, "I wanted you to come into the library for a moment. Would you? Will Miss Smith excuse us?"

The big eyes were raised to him, but Rosemary answered for her: "Of course she will." And they went out of the room together.

"I say," said Philip, when they were alone. "Explain. Who is she? What does it all mean?"

Rosemary, laughing, leaned against the door and said: "I picked her up in Curzon Street.

Really. She's a real pick-up. She asked me for the price of a cup of tea, and I brought her home with me."

"But what on earth are you going to do with her?" cried Philip.

"Be nice to her," said Rosemary quickly. "Be frightfully nice to her. Look after her. I don't know how. We haven't talked yet. But show her—treat her—make her feel—"

"My darling girl," said Philip, "you're quite mad, you know. It simply can't be done."

"I knew you'd say that," retorted Rosemary. Why not? I want to. Isn't that a reason? And besides, one's always reading about these things. I decided—"

"But," said Philip slowly, and he cut the end of a cigar, "she's so astonishingly pretty."

"Pretty?" Rosemary was so surprised that she blushed. "Do you think so? I—I hadn't thought about it."

"Good Lord!" Philip struck a match. "She's absolutely lovely. Look again, my child. I was bowled over when I came into your room just now. However... I think you're making a ghastly mistake. Sorry, darling, if I'm crude and all that. But let me know if Miss Smith is going to dine with us in time for me to look up *The Milliner's Gazette*."

"You absurd creature!" said Rosemary, and she went out of the library, but not back to her bedroom.

She went to her writing-room and sat down at her desk. Pretty! Absolutely lovely! Bowled over! Her heart beat like a heavy bell. Pretty! Lovely! She drew her check-book towards her. But no, checks would be no use, of course. She opened a drawer and took out five pound notes, looked at them, put two back, and holding the three squeezed in her hand, she went back to her bedroom.

Half an hour later Philip was still in the library, when Rosemary came in.

"I only wanted to tell you," said she, and she leaned against the door again and looked at him with her dazzled exotic gaze, "Miss Smith won't dine with us to-night."

Philip put down the paper. "Oh, what's happened? Previous engagement?"

Rosemary came over and sat down on his knee. "She insisted on going," said she, "so I gave the poor little thing a present of money. I couldn't keep her against her will, could I?" she added softly.

Rosemary had just done her hair, darkened her eyes a little and put on her pearls. She put up her hands and touched Philip's cheeks.

"Do you like me?" said she, and her tone, sweet, husky, troubled him.

"I like you awfully," he said, and he held her tighter. "Kiss me."

There was a pause.

Then Rosemary said dreamily: "I saw a fascinating little box to-day. It cost twenty-eight guineas. May I have it?"

Philip jumped her on his knee. "You may, little wasteful one," said he.

But that was not really what Rosemary wanted to say.

"Philip," she whispered, and she pressed his head against her bosom, "am I pretty?"

Activities

Miss Brill

Study Questions

1. What might Miss Brill’s fur wrap symbolize?
2. How does Miss Brill deal with reality?
3. What do we know about Miss Brill’s life?
4. What details suggest that Miss Brill might be ill?
5. What is the main conflict in the story?
6. Miss Brill is the protagonist in the story. Is there an antagonist?
7. The cupboard as simile is used twice: first, at the end of the fifth paragraph, and next, in the last paragraph. Explain how the final cupboard simile differs from the first.
8. Does she experience an epiphany?

Activities

[Watch a 15-minute film adaptation of “Miss Brill”.](#)

[Watch a documentary called *A Portrait of Katherine Mansfield*.](#)

The Fly

Study Questions

1. Contrast Old Woodfield with his boss.
2. What do the two men have in common in their personal lives?
3. How would you describe the boss’s reaction to the death of his son?
4. How does the office provide what is referred to in “A Cup of Tea” as a sense of shelter?
5. World War I is never specifically mentioned in the story. But in what way is this story about the war?
6. What does the fly symbolize? In Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, the Duke of Gloucester says, “As

flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods, they kill us for their sport” (4.1). Do you think Mansfield had this quotation in mind? If so, what key event in her experience of the World War I might have influenced her possible allusion to Gloucester’s lines?

Activities

[View a short excerpt from the dramatized film biography, *Bliss: the Beginning of Katherine Mansfield*.](#)

A Cup of Tea

Study Questions

1. Discuss narrative point of view. Where does it shift (the narrator uses words Rosemary would use herself).
2. What are the main scenes in the story? What do the scenes have in common in terms of imagery?
3. Where in the story does Rosemary emerge from a sense of shelter?
4. What might the little box in the antique shop symbolize?
5. Does Rosemary truly believe that women are sisters?
6. In the second paragraph of the story, the narrator refers to Michael. Is Michael— “a duck of a boy”— her son?
7. Before Michael is mentioned, the narrator refers to Peter. Who might he be?

Activities

[Watch *The Garden Party*](#), a 1983 film adaptation of a Katherine Mansfield short story by the same name.

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40.

William Faulkner (1897–1962)**Biography**

William Faulkner is the most important writer of the Southern Renaissance. Flannery O'Connor once compared the overpowering force of his influence to a thundering train, remarking that “nobody wants his mule and wagon stalled on the same track the Dixie Limited is roaring down.” Faulkner was born in Mississippi and raised on tales of his legendary great-grandfather, William Clark Falkner, the “Old Colonel” who led a group of raiders in the Civil War, built his own railroad, and was murdered by his former business partner, Richard Jackson Thurmond, the day after he was elected to the Mississippi legislature.

Dropping out of high school, Faulkner left Mississippi to pursue his interests in drawing and poetry. During the First World War, Faulkner pretended to be English in order to get around the height restriction in the U.S. Army and enlisted in the reserves of the British Army, although he never saw combat. He picked up his poetic career after the war, ultimately publishing his first book in 1924, a collection of poetry called *The Marble Faun*.

Turning his attention to fiction writing, Faulkner then wrote two timely novels. His first novel, *Soldier's Pay* (1926), explores the states of mind of those who did and did not fight in the First World War. His second novel, *Mosquitoes* (1927), exposes the triviality of the New Orleans art community, of which Faulkner was briefly a part. However, it was with his third novel, *Sartoris* (1929), that Faulkner made what he called his “great discovery”: the fictional possibilities contained within his home state of Mississippi. Returning to Oxford, Mississippi, with his new wife, Faulkner moved into an antebellum

mansion and began turning the tales he heard growing up about his hometown and surrounding area into one of the greatest inventions in American literary history: Yoknapatawpha County.

Faulkner eventually wrote thirteen novels, many of which were set in Yoknapatawpha County. Beginning with his fourth novel, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Faulkner began to incorporate modernist literary techniques such as stream-of-consciousness narration and non-linear plotting into his already lofty style. *The Sound and the Fury* describes the fall of the Compson family through four distinct psychological points of view, one of which is that of a young man who commits suicide, and another belonging to an illiterate who is severely mentally handicapped. *As I Lay Dying* (1930) describes the death and burial of a matriarch from the perspective of fifteen different characters in fifty-seven sections of often stream-of-consciousness prose.

In *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), four narrators relate the same story yet also change it to arrive at four very different meanings. Modernist techniques such as these enabled Faulkner to dramatize how the particulars of everyday life in the rural American South show what he saw as the universal truths of humanity as a whole.

While stylistically modernist, Faulkner's collective epic of Yoknapatawpha County ultimately explores not so much the future of narrative as the human condition itself as viewed through generation-spanning histories of great and low families.

One of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha stories is included here: "A Rose for Emily," one of his many tales about the decline of formerly great Southern families. This short story is a good representative of both the range of Faulkner's style and his ambition as a storyteller. In a deeply regional tale that is at once grotesque, tragic, brilliant, profound, loving, and hilarious, Faulkner leads us to the source, as he once put it, from which drama flows: "the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself."

A Rose for Emily

You can read the full text here: [A Rose for Emily \[Full Text\]](#)

Published 1930

Barn Burning

You can read the full text here: [Barn Burning \[Full Text – PDF\]](#)

Published 1939

Activities

A Rose for Emily

Study Questions

1. At what point does the story start? What information is the reader given about Miss Emily in the beginning?
2. A symbol is something that stands for or represents something else: the servant and china-painting represent a certain lifestyle. Notice the detailed description of the Grierson house. What might the house and its furnishings symbolize?
3. Why did Colonel Sartoris remit Miss Emily's taxes? Why was an attempt made later to collect the taxes again?
4. Describe Miss Emily's appearance. How is it related to her personality and behaviour? When does her hair turn iron grey? What is her attitude to time and change?
5. Who is the narrator? Describe him. What is his attitude to Miss Emily?
6. What is important about Miss Emily's reaction to her father's death? What is meant at the end of Part II: "She would have to cling to that which robbed her. . . . "?
7. What is the significance of the odour? When does this incident occur?
8. Describe as fully as you can Miss Emily's personality. What kind person is she? Why does she act the way she does? How important is her personality to this story?
9. What is Homer Barron like? Why do the townspeople gossip about his relationship with Miss Emily?
10. Why does Homer Barron leave town the first time? What happens between the time he leaves and the time he comes back? What happens after he comes back?
11. In the final scene, what is the effect of the order in which the details are given? Who placed the clothes carefully on the chair? What is the significance of the strand of iron grey hair? What happened in this room?
12. What is "*noblesse oblige*"?
13. What is the meaning of the title?
14. What do the dust images suggest?
15. Define necrophilia. Try to guess: "-philia, suggests "the love of" (A *philologist* is a lover of words).
16. Cite two examples of humour in the story.
17. Look at the image beginning on Part V "... the very old men ... [to] narrow bottleneck of the most recent decade of years." Clarify this complex metaphor. How do the old tend to view time?

Barn Burning

Study Questions

1. What did Abner Snopes do during the Civil War?
2. Explain why Sarty feels peace and joy when he first sees Major de Spain's house.
3. Why does Sarty's mother beg Abner to let her clean Major de Spain's rug?
4. Explain why Abner Snopes burns down barns.
5. Do you find Abner wholly despicable or do you think he has some good qualities?
6. Give some examples of how Faulkner's style differs from Hemingway's, especially in "[Hills Like White Elephants](#)." Pay attention to sentence structure and sentence length in each; to Faulkner's use of italics, and to the narrative point of view. Which author seems to get more deeply into the mind of the main character?
7. How does the first trial at the store foreshadow the later barn burning? Are there any other foreshadowings in the story?
8. What is the main conflict within Sarty? Does he change during the course of the story? In other words, if Abner is a static character, is Sarty dynamic, able to change?
9. Identify the story's protagonist and antagonist.

Activities

View the two-part [film adaptation of "Barn Burning"](#) from the 1977 American Short Story series on the Internet Archive, and then discuss how the ending differs from that of the print version of the story. Which ending do you think is the more effective?

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41.

Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961)**Biography**

Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) was born and raised in Oak Park, Illinois, an affluent suburb of Chicago. His father, who was prone to depression and would later commit suicide, was a physician, and his mother was a singer turned music teacher. Because Hemingway's father was an avid outdoorsman, the family spent many of their summers in northern Michigan, which is where Hemingway set much of his short fiction, including the Nick Adams stories.

In 1917, Hemingway, at that time a writer for *The Kansas City Star*, was eager to join the Armed Forces to fight in the First World War, but was medically disqualified. Undiscouraged, he joined the ambulance corps and served on the Italian front. During shelling, Hemingway received a shrapnel injury but still carried a comrade to safety and was decorated as a hero.

When Hemingway returned to the States, living ultimately in Chicago, he fell under the mentorship of fellow modernist, Sherwood Anderson, who encouraged Hemingway to move to Paris. In 1920, Hemingway married Hadley Richardson; soon afterwards, the couple left for Paris. Surrounded by other writers of the period, such as Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ezra Pound, Hemingway used these connections to help develop his own writing career. With F. Scott Fitzgerald's help, Hemingway published his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), to great acclaim. The novel established Hemingway's simplistic writing style while expressing the frustration that many felt about the First World War. His second novel, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), another critical success, once again, captured the disillusionment of the modernist period.

While Hemingway had a turbulent personal life, filled with divorces and failed relationships, he continued to write successful works, including several collections of short fiction, for which he was well known, as well as novels and non-fiction. Some of his many works are *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), bringing bullfighting to a larger audience; *To Have and Have Not* (1937); and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), a classic novel on the Spanish Civil War. In 1952, Hemingway wrote what many consider to be his finest work, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and led to his Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954.

In 1961, after struggling with depression for years, Ernest Hemingway took his own life in Ketchum, Idaho. In 1964, Scribner's published his posthumous memoir, *A Moveable Feast*, which details both Hemingway and Hadley's expatriate life in Paris during the modernist period.

Hemingway's writing was well known stylistically for its short declarative sentences and lack of detail. Hemingway often said this style was based on his iceberg approach to narrative, where, like an iceberg, ten per cent of the story was on the surface and ninety per cent was under the water. Hemingway attributes this style to his time spent as a journalist. Due to his distinctive style, Hemingway remained an immensely popular writer and his novels were not only critically acclaimed but also bestsellers. In "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," Hemingway writes about a couple with a troubled relationship on safari in Africa. This story is a good example of Hemingway's technique, since it is clear to the reader that the narrator is leaving out many details about the characters' history.

My Old Man

I guess looking at it now my old man was cut out for a fat guy, one of those regular little roly fat guys you see around, but he sure never got that way, except a little toward the last, and then it wasn't his fault, he was riding over the jumps only and he could afford to carry plenty of weight then. I remember the way he'd pull on a rubber shirt over a couple of jerseys and a big sweat shirt over that, and get me to run with him in the forenoon in the hot sun. He'd have, maybe, taken a trial trip with one of Razzo's skins early in the morning after just getting in from Torino at four o'clock in the morning and beating it out to the stables in a cab and then with the dew all over everything and the sun just starting to get going, I'd help him pull off his boots and he'd get into a pair of sneakers and all these sweaters and we'd start out.

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"Come on, kid," he'd say, stepping up and down on his toes in front of the jock's dressing room, "let's get moving".

Then we'd start off jogging around the infield once maybe with him ahead running nice and then turn out the gate and along one of those roads with all the trees along both sides of them that run out from San Siro. I'd go ahead of him when we hit the road and I could run pretty good and I'd look around and he'd be jogging easy just behind me and after a little while I'd look around again and he'd begun to sweat. Sweating heavy and he'd just be clogging it along with his eyes on my back, but when he'd catch me looking at him he'd grin and say, "Sweating plenty?" When my old man grinned nobody could help but grin too. We'd keep right on running out toward the mountains and then my old man would yell "Hey Joe!" and I'd look back and he'd be sitting under a tree with a towel he'd had around his waist wrapped around his neck.

I'd come back and sit down beside him and he'd pull a rope out of his pocket and start skipping rope out in the sun with the sweat pouring off his face and him skipping rope out in the white dust with the rope going cloppetty cloppetty clop clop clop and the sun hotter and him working harder up and down a patch of the road. Say, it was a treat to see my old man skip rope too. He could whirr it fast or lop it slow and fancy. Say, you ought to have seen wops look at us sometimes when they'd come by going into town walking along with big white steers hauling the cart. They sure looked as though they thought the old man was nuts. He'd start the rope whirring till they'd stop dead still and watch him, then give the steers a cluck and a poke with the goad and get going again.

When I'd sit watching him working out in the hot sun I sure felt fond of him. He sure was fun and he done his work so hard and he'd finish up with a regular whirring that'd drive the sweat out on his face like water and then sling the rope at the tree and come over and sit down with me and lean hack against the tree with the towel and a sweater wrapped around his neck.

"Sure is hell keeping it down, Joe" he'd say and lean back and shut his eyes and breath long and deep, "it aint like when you're a kid." Then he'd get up before he started to cool and we'd jog along back to the stables. That's the way it was keeping down to weight. He was worried all the time. Most jocks can just about ride off all they want to. A jock loses about a kilo every time he rides, but my old man was sort of dried out and he couldn't keep down his kilos without all that running.

I remember once at San Siro, Regoli, a little wop that was riding for Buzoni came out across the paddock going to the bar for something cool and flicking his boots with his whip, after he'd just weighed in and my old man had just weighed in too and came out with the saddle under his arm

looking red faced and tired and too big for his silks and he stood there looking at young Regoli standing up to the outdoors bar cool and kid looking and I says, "What's the matter Dad?" cause I thought maybe Regoli had bumped him or something and he just looked at Regoli and said, "Oh to hell with it" and went on to the dressing room.

Well, it would have been all right maybe if we'd stayed in Milan and ridden at Milan and Torino cause if there ever were any easy courses its those two. "Pianola, Joe." My old man said when he dismounted in the winning stall after what the wops thought was a hell of a steeplechase. I asked him once, "This course rides itself. It's the pace you're going at that makes riding the jumps dangerous, Joe. We ain't going any pace here, and they ain't any really bad jumps either. But it's the pace always—not the jumps that makes the trouble".

San Siro was the swellest course I'd ever seen but the old man said it was a dog's life. Going back and forth between Mirafiore and San Siro and riding just about every day in the week with a train ride every other night.

I was nuts about the horses too. There's something about it when they come out and go up the track to the post. Sort of dancy and tight looking with the jock keeping a tight hold on them and maybe easing off a little and letting them run a little going up. Then once they were at the barrier it got me worse than anything. Especially at San Siro with that big green infield and the mountains way off and the fat wop starter with his big whip and the jocks fiddling them around and then the barrier snapping up and that bell going off and them all getting off in a bunch and then commencing to string out. You know the way a bunch of skins gets off. If you're up in the stand with a pair of glasses all you see is them plunging off and then that bell goes off and it seems like it rings for a thousand years and then they come sweeping round the turn. There wasn't ever anything like it for me.

But my old man said one day in the dressing room when he was getting into his street clothes, "None of these things are horses Joe. They'd kill that bunch of skates for their hides and hoofs up at Paris." That was the day he'd won the Premio Commercio with Lantorna, shooting her out of the field the last hundred meters like pulling a cork out of a bottle.

It was right after the Premio Commercio that we pulled out and left Italy. My old man and Holbrook and a fat wop in a straw hat that kept wiping his face with a handkerchief were having an argument at a table in the Galleria. They were all talking French and the two of them were after my old man about something. Finally he didn't say anything any more but just sat there and looked at Holbrook and the two of them kept after him, first one talking and then the other and the fat wop always butting in on Holbrook.

"You go out and buy me a *Sportsman*, will you Joe?" my old man said and handed me a couple of *soldi* without looking away from Holbrook.

So I went out of the Galleria and walked over to in front of the Scala and bought a paper and came back and stood a little way away because I didn't want to butt in and my old man was sitting back in his chair looking down at his coffee and fooling with a spoon and Holbrook and the big wop were standing and the big wop was wiping his face and shaking his head. And I came up and my old man acted just as though the two of them weren't standing there and said, "Want an ice Joe?" Holbrook looked down at my old man and said slow and careful, "You son of a bitch" and he and the fat wop went out through the tables.

My old man sat there and sort of smiled at me but his face was white and he looked sick as hell and I was scared and felt sick inside because I knew something had happened and I didn't see how anybody could call my old man a son of a bitch and get away with it. My old man opened up the *Sportsman* and studied the handicaps for a while and then he said, "You got to take a lot of things in this world, Joe." And three days later we left Milan for good on the Turin train for Paris after an auction sale out in front of Turner's stables of everything we couldn't get into a trunk and a suit case.

We got into Paris early in the morning in a long dirty station the old man told me was the Gare de Lyon. Paris was an awful big town after Milan. Seems like in Milan everybody is going somewhere and all the trams run somewhere and there ain't any sort of a mix-up, but Paris is all balled up and they never do straighten it out. I got to like it though, part of it anyway, and say, it's got the best race courses in the world. Seems as though that were the thing that keeps it all going and about the only thing you can figure on is that every day the buses will be going out to whatever track they're running at, going right out through everything to the track. I never really got to know Paris well because I just came in about once or twice a week with the old man from Maisons and he always sat at the Café de la Paix on the Opera side with the rest of the gang from Maisons and I guess that's one of the busiest parts of the town. But say it is funny that a big town like Paris wouldn't have a Galleria isn't it?

Well, we went out to live at Maisons-Lafitte, where just about everybody lives except the gang at Chantilly, with a Mrs. Meyers that runs a boarding house. Maisons is about the swellest place to live I've ever seen in all my life. The town ain't so much, but there's a lake and a swell forest that we used to go off bumming in all day, a couple of us kids, and my old man made me a sling shot and we got a lot of things with it but the best one was a magpie. Young Dick Atkinson shot a rabbit with it one day and we put it under a tree and were all sitting around and Dick had some cigarettes and all of a sudden the rabbit jumped up and beat it into the brush and we chased it but we couldn't find it. Gee, we had fun at Maisons. Mrs. Meyers used to give me lunch in the morning and I'd be gone all day. I learned to talk French quick. It's an easy language.

As soon as we got to Maisons my old man wrote to Milan for his license and he was pretty worried till it came. He used to sit around the Café de Paris in Maisons with the gang there, there were lots of guys he'd known when he rode up at Paris, before the war, lived at Maisons, and there's a lot of time to sit around because the work around a racing stable for the jocks, that is, is all cleaned up by nine o'clock in the morning. They take the first batch of skins out to gallop them at 5.30 in the morning and they work the second lot at 8 o'clock. That means getting up early all right and going to bed early too. If a jock's riding for somebody too he can't go boozing around because the trainer always has an eye on him if he's a kid and if he ain't a kid he's always got an eye on himself. So mostly if a jock ain't working he sits around the Café de Paris with the gang and they can all sit around about two or three hours in front of some drink like a vermouth and seltz and they talk and tell stories and shoot pool and it's sort of like a club or the Galleria in Milan. Only it ain't really like the Galleria because there everybody is going by all the time and there's everybody around at the tables.

Well, my old man got his license all right. They sent it through to him without a word and he rode a couple of times. Amiens, up country and that sort of thing, but he didn't seem to get any engagement. Everybody liked him and whenever I'd come in to the Café in the forenoon I'd find somebody drinking with him because my old man wasn't tight like most of these jockeys that have got the first dollar they made riding at the World's Fair in St. Louis in Nineteen ought four. That's what my old man would say when he'd kid George Burns. But it seemed like everybody steered clear of giving my old man any mounts.

We went out to wherever they were running every clay with the car from Maisons and that was the most fun of all. I was glad when the horses came back from Deauville and the summer. Even though it meant no more bumming in the woods, cause then we'd ride to Enghien or Tremblay or St. Cloud and watch them from the trainers' and jockeys' stand. I sure learned about racing from going out with that gang and the fun of it was going every day.

I remember once out at St. Cloud. It was a big two hundred thousand franc race with seven entries and Kzar a big favourite. I went around to the paddock to see the horses with my old man and you never saw such horses. This Kzar is a great big yellow horse that looks like just nothing but run. I never saw such a horse. He was being led around the paddock with his head down and when he went by me I

felt all hollow inside he was so beautiful. There never was such a wonderful, lean, running built horse. And he went around the paddock putting his feet just so and quiet and careful and moving easy like he knew just what he had to do and not jerking and standing up on his legs and getting wild eyed like you see these selling platers with a shot of dope in them. The crowd was so thick I couldn't see him again except just his legs going by and some yellow and my old man started out through the crowd and I followed him over to the jock's dressing room back in the trees and there was a big crowd around there too but the man at the door in a derby nodded to my old man and we got in and everybody was sitting around and getting dressed and pulling shirts over their heads and pulling boots on and it all smelled hot and sweaty and linimenty and outside was the crowd looking in.

The old man went over and sat down beside George Gardner that was getting into his pants and said, "What's the dope George?" just in an ordinary tone of voice cause there ain't any use him feeling around because George either can tell him or he can't tell him.

"He won't win," George says very low, leaning over and buttoning the bottoms of his pants.

"Who will?" my old man says, leaning over close so nobody can hear.

"Kircubbin," George says, "And if he does, save me a couple of tickets".

My old man says something in a regular voice to George and George says, "Don't ever bet on anything I tell you," kidding like and we beat it out and through all the crowd that was looking in over to the 100 franc mutuel machine. But I knew something big was up because George is Kzar's jockey. On the way he gets one of the yellow odds-sheets with the starting prices on and Kzar is only paying 5 for 10, Cefisidote is next at 3 to 1 and fifth down the list this Kircubbin at 8 to 1. My old man bets five thousand on Kircubbin to win and puts on a thousand to place and we went around back of the grandstand to go up the stairs and get a place to watch the race.

We were jammed in tight and first a man in a long coat with a grey tall hat and a whip folded up in his hand came out and then one after another the horses, with the jocks up and a stable boy holding the bridle on each side and walking along, followed the old guy. That big yellow horse Kzar came first. He didn't look so big when you first looked at him until you saw the length of his legs and the whole way he's built and the way he moves. Gosh, I never saw such a horse. George Gardner was riding him and they moved along slow, back of the old guy in the gray tall hat that walked along like he was the ring master in a circus. Back of Kzar, moving along smooth and yellow in the sun, was a good looking black with a nice head with Tommy Archibald riding him; and after the black was a string of five more horses all moving along slow in a procession past the grandstand and the pesage. My old man said the black was Kircubbin and I took a good look at him and he was a nice-looking horse all right but nothing like Kzar.

Everybody cheered Kzar when he went by and he sure was one swell-looking horse. The procession of them went around on the other side past the pelouse and then back up to the near end of the course and the circus master had the stable boys turn them loose one after another so they could gallop by the stands on their way up to the post and let everybody have a good look at them. They weren't at the post hardly any time at all when the gong started and you could see them way off across the infield all in a bunch starting on the first swing like a lot of little toy horses. I was watching them through the glasses and Kzar was running well back, with one of the bays making the pace. They swept down and around and came pounding past and Kzar was way back when they passed us and this Kircubbin horse in front and going smooth. Gee, it's awful when they go by you and then you have to watch them go farther away and get smaller and smaller and then all bunched up on the turns and then come around towards into the stretch and you feel like swearing and god-damming worse and worse. Finally they made the last turn and came into the straightaway with this Kircubbin horse way out in front. Everybody was looking funny and saying "Kzar" in sort of a sick way and they pounding nearer down the stretch, and then something came out of the pack right into my glasses like a horse-headed yellow streak and

everybody began to yell “Kzar” as though they were crazy. Kzar came on faster than I’d ever seen anything in my life and pulled up on Kircubbin that was going fast as any black horse could go with the jock flogging hell out of him with the gad and they were right dead neck and neck for a second but Kzar seemed going about twice as fast with those great jumps and that head out—but it was while they were neck and neck that they passed the winning post and when the numbers went up in the slots the first one was 2 and that meant Kircubbin had won.

I felt all trembly and funny inside, and then we were all jammed in with the people going down stairs to stand in front of the board where they’d post what Kircubbin paid. Honest, watching the race I’d forgot how much my old man had bet on Kircubbin. I’d wanted Kzar to win so damned bad. But now it was all over it was swell to know we had the winner.

“Wasn’t it a swell race, Dad?” I said to him.

He looked at me sort of funny with his derby on the back of his head, “George Gardner’s a swell jockey all right”, he said. “It sure took a great jock to keep that Kzar horse from winning”.

Of course I knew it was funny all the time. But my old man saying that right out like that sure took the kick all out of it for me and I didn’t get the real kick back again ever, even when they posted the numbers up on the board and the bell rang to pay off and we saw that Kircubbin paid 67.50 for 10. All around people were saying “Poor Kzar. Poor Kzar!” And I thought, I wish I were a jockey and could have rode him instead of that son of a bitch. And that was funny, thinking of George Gardner as a son of a bitch because I’d always liked him and besides he’d given us the winner, but I guess that’s what he is all right.

My old man had a big lot of money after that race and he took to coming into Paris oftener. If they raced at Tremblay he’d have them drop him in town on their way hack to Maisons and he and I’d sit out in front of the Café de la Paix and watch the people go by. It’s funny sitting there. There’s streams of people going by and all sorts of guys come up and want to sell you things and I loved to sit there with my old man. That was when we’d have the most fun. Guys would come by selling funny rabbits that jumped if you squeezed a bulb and they’d come up to us and my old man would kid with them. He could talk French just like English and all those kind of guys knew him cause you can always tell a jockey, and then we always sat at the same table and they got used to seeing us there. There were guys selling matrimonial papers and girls selling rubber eggs that when you squeezed them a rooster came out of them and one old wormy-looking guy that went by with post cards of Paris showing them to everybody, and of course nobody ever bought any and then he would come back and show the under side of the pack and they would all be smutty post-cards and lots of people would dig down and buy them.

Gee, I remember the funny people that used to go by. Girls around supper time looking for somebody to take them out to eat and they’d speak to my old man and he’d make some joke at them in French and they’d pat me on the head and go on. Once there was an American woman sitting with her kid daughter at the next table to us and they were both eating ices and I kept looking at the girl and she was awfully good looking and I smiled at her and she smiled at me but that was all that ever came of it because I looked for her mother and her every day and I made up ways that I was going to speak to her and I wondered if I get to know her if her mother would let me take her out to Auteuil or Tremblay but I never saw either of them again. Anyway, I guess it wouldn’t have been any good, anyway, because looking back on it I remember the way I thought out would be best to speak to her was to say, “Pardon me, but perhaps I can give you a winner at Enghien today?” and, after all, maybe she would have thought I was a tout instead of really trying to give her a winner.

We’d sit at the Café de la Paix, my old man and me, and we had a big drag with the waiter because my old man drank whisky and it cost five francs, and that meant a good tip when the saucers were counted up. My old man was drinking more than I’d ever seen him, but he wasn’t riding at all now and

besides he said that whiskey kept his weight down. But I noticed he was putting it on, all right, just the same. He'd busted away from his old gang out at Maisons and seemed to like just sitting around on the boulevard with me. But he was dropping money every day at the track. He'd feel sort of doleful after the last race, if he'd lost on the day, until we'd get to our table and he'd have his first whiskey and then he'd be fine.

He'd be reading the *Paris-Sport* and he'd look over at me and say, "Where's your girl, Joe?" to kid me on account I had told him about the girl that day at the next table. And I'd get red, but I liked being kidded about her. It gave me a good feeling. "Keep your eye peeled for her Joe," he'd say, "She'll be back."

He'd ask me questions about things and some of the things I'd say he'd laugh. And then he'd get started talking about things. About riding down in Egypt, or at St. Moritz on the ice before my mother died, and about during the war when they had regular races down in the south of France without any purses, or betting or crowd or anything just to keep the breed up. Regular races with the jocks riding hell out of the horses. Gee, I could listen to my old man talk by the hour, especially when he'd had a couple or so of drinks. He'd tell me about when he was a boy in Kentucky and going coon hunting and the old days in the states before everything went on the bum there. And he'd say, "Joe, when we've got a decent stake, you're going back there to the States and go to school."

"What've I got to go back there to go to school for when everything's on the bum there?" I'd ask him.

"That's different," he'd say and get the waiter over and pay the pile of saucers and we'd get a taxi to the Gare St. Lazare and get on the train out to Maisons.

One day at Auteuil after a selling steeplechase my old man bought in the winner for 30,000 francs. He had to bid a little to get him but the stable let the horse go finally and my old man had his permit and his colors in a week. Gee, I felt proud when my old man was an owner. He fixed it up for stable space with Charles Drake and cut out coming in to Paris, and started his running and sweating out again, and him and I were the whole stable gang. Our horse's name was Gilford, he was Irish bred and a nice sweet jumper. My old man figured that training him and riding him, himself, he was a good investment. I was proud of everything and I thought Gilford was as good a horse as Kzar. He was a good solid jumper, a bay, with plenty of speed on the flat if you asked him for it and he was a nice-looking horse too.

Gee, I was fond of him. The first time he started with my old man up he finished third in a 2500 meter hurdle race and when my old man got off him, all sweating and happy in the place stall, and went in to weigh, I felt as proud of him as though it was the first race he'd ever placed in. You see, when a guy ain't been riding for a long time, you can't make yourself really believe that he has ever rode. The whole thing was different now, cause down in Milan, even big races never seemed to make any difference to my old man, if he won he wasn't ever excited or anything, and now it was so I couldn't hardly sleep the night before a race and I knew my old man was excited, too, even if he didn't show it. Riding for yourself makes an awful difference.

Second time Gilford and my old man started, was a rainy Sunday at Auteuil in the Prix du Marat, a 4500 meter steeplechase. As soon as he'd gone out I beat it up in the stand with the new glasses my old man had bought for me to watch them. They started way over at the far end of the course and there was some trouble at the barrier. Something with goggle blinders on was making a great fuss and roaring around and busted the barrier once, but I could see my old man in our black jacket with a white cross and a black cap sitting up on Gilford, and patting him with his hand. Then they were off in a jump and out of sight behind the trees and the gong going for dear life and the pari-mutuel wickets rattling down. Gosh, I was so excited, I was afraid to look at them, but I fixed the glasses on the place where they would come out back of the trees and then out they came with the old black jacket going third and they

all sailing over the jump like birds. Then they went out of sight again and then they came pounding out and down the hill and all going nice and sweet and easy and taking the fence smooth in a bunch and moving away from us all solid. Looked as though you could walk across on their backs they were all so hunched and going so smooth, Then they bellied over the big double Bullfinch and something came down. I couldn't see who it was, but in a minute the horse was up and galloping free and the field, all bunched still, sweeping around the long left turn into the straightaway. They jumped the stone wall and came jammed down the stretch toward the big water-jump right in front of the stands. I saw them coming and hollered at my old man as he went by and he was leading by about a length and riding way out over and light as a monkey, and they were racing for the water-jump. They took off over the big hedge of the water-jump in a pack and then there was a crash, and two horses pulled sideways out off it, and kept on going, and three others were piled up. I couldn't see my old man anywhere. One horse kneed himself up and the jock had hold of the bridle and mounted and went slamming on after the place money. The other horse was up and away by himself, jerking his head and galloping with the bridle rein hanging and the jock staggered over to one side of the track against the fence. Then Gilford rolled over to one side off my old man and got up and started to run on three legs with his off hoof dangling and there was my old man lying there on the grass flat out with his face up and blood all over the side of his head. I ran down the stand and bumped into a jam of people and got to the rail and a cop grabbed me and held me and two big stretcher bearers were going out after my old man and around on the other side of the course I saw three horses, strung way out, coming out of the trees and taking the jump.

My old man was dead when they brought him in and while a doctor was listening to his heart with a thing plugged in his ears, I heard a shot up the track that meant they'd killed Gilford. I lay down beside my old man when they carried the stretcher into the hospital room and hung onto the stretcher and cried and cried and he looked so white and gone and so awfully dead and I couldn't help feeling that if my old man was dead maybe they didn't need to have shot Gilford. His hoof might have got well. I don't know. I loved my old man so much.

Then a couple of guys came in and one of them patted me on the back and then went over and looked at my old man and then pulled a sheet off the cot and and spread it over him; and the other was telephoning in French for them to send the ambulance to take him out to Maisons. And I couldn't stop crying, crying and choking, sort of, and George Gardner came in and sat down beside me on the floor and put his arm around me and says, "Come on Joe, old boy. Get up and we'll go out and wait for the ambulance."

George and I went out to the gate and I was trying to stop bawling and George wiped off my face with his handkerchief and we were standing back a little ways while the crowd was going out of the gate and a couple of guys stopped near us while we were waiting for the crowd to get through the gate and one of them was counting a bunch of mutuel tickets and he said, "Well, Butler got his, all right."

The other guy said, "I don't give a good goddam if he did, the crook. He had it coming to him on the stuff he's pulled."

"I'll say he had," said the other guy and tore the bunch of tickets in two.

And George Gardner looked at me to see if I'd heard and I had all right and he said, "Don't you listen to what those bums said, Joe. Your old man was one swell guy."

But I don't know. Seems like when they get started they don't leave a guy nothing.

Hills Like White Elephants

You can read the full text here: [Hills like White Elephants \[PDF\]](#)

Published 1927

The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber

You can read the full text here: [The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber](#)

Published 1936

Activities

My Old Man

Among other things, this is a story about innocence to experience or coming of age.

Study Questions

1. What do we know about the boy's father that the boy doesn't know—or at least refuses to admit? [Your answer will lead you into dramatic irony.]
2. What is the significance of the skipping as a symbol? Of sweat?
3. What is the significance of the young, confident jockey?
4. What does the horse Kzar symbolize?
5. What is the effect of Joe's father's saying, "It sure took a great jockey to keep that Kzar from winning...?"
6. What do the father's reminiscences about the past suggest; for example, the images of St. Moritz, racing on the ice for fun, frozen ice, the hill country of Kentucky?
7. What does ice cream symbolize?
8. What is the significance of juxtaposing the "funny lady in trench coat" scene on the streets of Paris with the scene of the young girl with white socks and ice cream?
9. What does Joe's father mean when he says, "It's all in a mess there now."
10. If it's such a mess, why does he want his boy to go back there to school?
11. How does Ben Butler change? What is the significance of his quitting drinking?
12. What is the meaning of the last line, "Seems like when they get started they don't leave a guy nothing." To what does "they" refer?
13. Irony: situational irony seems to be the main type of irony in the story, although dramatic irony can be seen in the discrepancy between what Joe wants to believe about his father and what the reader knows about the father. Try to articulate the main situational irony in the story.

Resources

Watch the [film adaptation of "My Old Man"](#).

Hills Like White Elephants

Study Questions

1. Title: what is a “white elephant”? Consult the Canadian Oxford Dictionary or a good college dictionary. Discuss the term and how it is relevant to the story’s main theme.
2. Consider characterization. Distinguish between the two characters’ main traits.
3. Conflict. What is the nature of the conflict in the story? What does the American want? What does Jig want? How old is each? Are they happy or not? Which character appears satisfied with their current life? How would you describe their life?
4. Jig refers to the hills or mountains and the “coloring of their skin.” First, “hills like white elephants” is a metaphor, or more specifically a simile. Does “skin” seem an appropriate term for her description? What might her use of the term suggest?
5. What is the “awfully simple operation” to which the man refers? When the man refers to “lots of people” who have had the operation, Jig responds, “So have I....And afterward they were all so happy?” How would you describe her tone of voice here? How would you read her line here if this were being filmed as a movie?
6. Consider setting as symbol. In this story, setting is crucial to understanding theme. Notice the structural opposition in the descriptions of the landscape. How would you describe the landscape as described on the first page? The Ebro is an important river in Spain. After consulting a map of Spain, where do you think the story might be set?
7. Possibly Hemingway refers to a famous painting by Degas called *L’ Absinthe*. What is absinthe and what are its associations, especially with what era and country? What kind of people tended to be associated with absinthe? Look at the text accompanying [Degas’ famous work of art *L’Absinthe*](#).
8. When Jig looks at the riverbank, before saying, “And we could have all this”, how does the description of landscape differ from that on the first page? When Jig says, “We can have the whole world,” what does she mean? What other couple had the whole world but then lost it? Is this an “innocence to experience story” like, say, Hemingway’s “My Old Man”?
9. How is the conflict resolved?

Resources

Watch the [film adaptation of “Hills Like White Elephants.”](#)

The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber

Study Questions

1. Macomber is 35 when he dies. Does that explain Hemingway's choice of title? Where in the title could a comma be used? How would adding a comma change the meaning?
2. The chronological structure of the story is broken up by a flashback. Where does this flashback occur, and how long does it last?
3. How does our not knowing the information given in the flashback affect our reading of the opening scene?
4. What has been the relationship between Margot and Francis prior to the African safari?
5. What is Macomber's internal conflict?
6. How does Hemingway control point of view?
7. How is tone important in Margot's dialogue? Give at least one example.
8. What is the theme? What archetypal pattern helps to convey the theme?
9. Contrast the clothing worn by Macomber and Wilson.
10. Explain the quotation from Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, which Wilson uses as his watchword.

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42.

Eudora Alice Welty (1909–2001)



Biography

Eudora Alice Welty was born in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1909, the daughter of an insurance agent father and a retired teacher mother. Her family had moved to Mississippi from the Ohio Valley region, and Welty enjoyed an idyllic childhood spent in Mississippi with summers visiting relatives in the Midwest. While in high school, Welty published works in a national magazine before attending Mississippi State College for Women for an associate degree, then transferring to the University of Wisconsin in order to finish her degree in English. After earning that degree (1929), Welty enrolled at Columbia University but could not find full-time work in New York City during the depression. Due to finances, she returned home to Jackson (1931), where she would reside for the rest of her life.

Once home, Welty held a series of jobs to help support her mother, including working as a publicity agent for the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In 1936, Welty published her first short story, “The Death of a Traveling Salesman,” in *Manuscript* magazine. After this success, she continued to publish in many prominent journals and magazines, including *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Atlantic Monthly*. Her first collection of short stories, *A Curtain of Green* (1941), was largely well-received. Her follow-up novella, *The Robber Bridegroom* (1942), brought her national attention. Soon, Welty was receiving encouragement from fellow Mississippi native William Faulkner.

In both 1943 and 1944, Welty won the O. Henry Award, a prestigious award given for outstanding short fiction. Soon after, Welty would go on to write her classic, *The Golden Apples* (1949). After publishing *The Bride of the Innisfallen and Other Stories* (1955), Welty took a fifteen-year hiatus from

writing fiction before returning with her novel, *The Optimist's Daughter* (1972), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. In 1980, Welty was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom before publishing her bestselling autobiography, *One Writer's Beginnings*. Welty died in Jackson, Mississippi, in 2001.

Although she won a Pulitzer Prize for her novel *The Optimist's Daughter*, Welty is largely known as a master of short fiction. Her work engages Southern themes, often dealing with the problems of the post-Reconstruction South. "A Worn Path," originally published in *Atlantic Monthly*, is one of Welty's most famous and most anthologized short stories. It transposes the hero's journey (a tale in which a hero sets off on an adventure and is changed at the end) on to a seemingly simple tale of an elderly African-American grandmother, Phoenix Jackson, retrieving medication for her sick grandson.

A Worn Path

You can read the full text here: [A Worn Path \[Full Text\]](#)

Published 1941

Activities

A Worn Path

Study Questions

1. Who is the protagonist in “A Worn Path”? Describe her physical appearance. What is her goal? What is she trying to accomplish in the story?
2. Who are the antagonists in the story? How does Phoenix triumph over the antagonists?
3. Where and when is the story set? How does the setting influence the theme and style of the story?
4. What do Phoenix’s speech patterns and the dialogue in the story reveal about her character and her social status?
5. What role does race play in this story?
6. What is a quest narrative? Why might we consider “A Worn Path” to be an example of a quest narrative?
7. What is the theme of the story?

Activities

If you have a relationship with one or more of your own grandparents, compare the character of Phoenix with your own grandparent(s). Share in small groups and/or write about this topic in your journal.

In small groups, research together online the myth of the phoenix and discuss the relevance of the myth to the name of the story’s main character.

Watch a [film adaptation of “A Worn Path”](#).

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43.

Roald Dahl (1916–1990)



Biography

Roald Dahl (1916–1990) was a British novelist, short story writer, poet, screenwriter, and fighter pilot. His books have sold more than 250 million copies worldwide.

Born in Wales to Norwegian immigrant parents, Dahl served in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. He became a flying ace and intelligence officer, rising to the rank of acting wing commander. He rose to prominence as a writer in the 1940s with works for both children and adults, and he became one of the world's bestselling authors. He has been referred to as "one of the greatest storytellers for children of the 20th century." His awards for contribution to literature include the 1983 World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement and the British Book Awards' Children's Author of the Year in 1990. In 2008, *The Times* placed Dahl 16th on its list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945."

Dahl's short stories are known for their unexpected endings, and his children's books for their unsentimental, macabre, often darkly comic mood, featuring villainous adult enemies of the child characters. His books champion the kind-hearted and feature an underlying warm sentiment. Dahl's works for children include *James and the Giant Peach*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Matilda*, *The Witches*, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *The BFG*, *The Twits* and *George's Marvellous Medicine*. His adult works include *Tales of the Unexpected*. His story "The Landlady" first appeared in *The New Yorker* issue of 28 November 1959 and was subsequently published in his story collection *Kiss, Kiss* (1960).

The Landlady

Published 1959

You can read the full text here: [“The Landlady” by Roald Dahl \[PDF\]](#).

Activities

The Landlady

Study Questions

1. Give one example of foreshadowing.
2. What poison tastes like bitter almonds?
3. Characterize the landlady. What is a taxidermist?
4. Is what happens to Billy believable?
5. Give one supernatural element in the story.
6. How old is Billy Weaver? Why does he stay?
7. Why is Billy's desire to act briskly dangerous?
8. What do chrysanthemums often symbolize?
9. Give an example of irony in the story.
10. Why does the landlady keep forgetting Billy's name?

Resources

View this 24-minute [film adaptation of Dahl's "The Landlady"](#), filmed in 1979 as part of a British television series called *Tales of the Unexpected*, which features film adaptations of Dahl's stories and a brief introduction to the film by Dahl. How would you rate this film? Are the changes made good ones, or do they detract from the original story?

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44.**Flannery O'Connor (1925–1964)****Biography**

In 1925, Mary Flannery O'Connor was born in Savannah, Georgia. She lived there in the home where she was born until 1940. An Orthodox Catholic family, the O'Connors lived in Lafayette Square, a largely Catholic neighbourhood of Savannah, mainly through the generosity of her second cousin, Kate Semmes (whom O'Connor would call "Cousin Katie"). In 1936, O'Connor's father, Edwin, was diagnosed with lupus and was hospitalized in Atlanta; his diagnosis would later force the family to leave Savannah. While Edwin sought treatment, Flannery and her mother, Regina, would often stay with family in Milledgeville.

In 1941, Edwin's death would imprint itself on O'Connor, who was close with her father. Flannery and her mother subsequently moved to live at Andalusia, the maternal family farm in Milledgeville. After high school, O'Connor enrolled in Georgia State College for Women (now Georgia College & State University) in Milledgeville, where she completed a degree in English and sociology. After college, O'Connor enrolled in journalism school at the University of Iowa but, once there, enrolled in the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she was able to work with many of the most influential writers of her time.

At the Writers' Workshop, O'Connor established herself as one of their most promising writers, winning a book contract, as well as a prestigious writer's fellowship in New York. However, after being diagnosed with lupus in 1951, Flannery O'Connor returned to Andalusia, where she remained. At the age of twenty-five, she published her first novel, *Wise Blood* (1952), and followed it up with her first

collection of short stories, *A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories* (1955). Her second published novel, *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960), was nominated for a National Book Award. Up until her death from lupus, at the young age of thirty-nine, she was working on her second collection of stories, *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (1965). In 1971, O'Connor's friend and literary executor, Sally Fitzgerald, helped publish *The Complete Stories*, which won the National Book Award and was later awarded the Reader's Choice Best of the National Book Awards (2010).

O'Connor's fiction is famous for its Southern Gothic settings and her use of dark humour. Other themes in her fiction include the following her relationship with her mother, life at Andalusia, and her Orthodox Catholicism. "A Good Man is Hard to Find" is one of O'Connor's most anthologized stories and one of her most violent. The story follows a family of six who, while on vacation to Florida, encounter The Misfit, a pensive, yet troubled serial killer, and one of O'Connor's most famous characters. The Misfit states that his troubles centre on Christ's claims of resurrecting the dead.

A Good Man Is Hard to Find

Published 1953

Please click the link below to access this selection, but before doing so, please read the epigraph that is deleted in the link to the story. It provides significant thematic context:

“The dragon is by the side of the road, watching those who pass. Beware lest he devour you. We go to the Father of souls, but it is necessary to pass by the Dragon.”

— St. Cyril of Jerusalem

[Full text of “A Good Man is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor.](#)

Activities

A Good Man Is Hard to Find

Study Questions

1. List a few examples of foreshadowing in the story, especially regarding death.
2. How did you respond to The Misfit's behaviour? Are his scholarly looking spectacles a symbol?
3. What is The Misfit's main complaint about the way of the world?
4. How does O'Connor characterize the grandmother?
5. What do the parrots on Bailey's shirt suggest?
6. Do you agree with the grandmother that Red Sammy is a good man?
7. Is the boy's name, John Wesley, an allusion to another John Wesley? How might this allusion be relevant to theme?
8. What do we learn about the grandmother in her conversation with The Misfit?
9. What do we learn about him? What is his favourite saying, and what sense do you make of it?
10. How do you explain the story's title?
11. List some examples of Southern Gothic elements in the story.
12. What religious qualities or elements emerge in the story? How, as The Misfit says, has Jesus "thrown everything off balance"?
13. Does the grandmother find grace before she dies?

Activities

Read this [interesting exchange between a college English professor and O'Connor](#):

A Professor of English had sent Flannery the following letter:

I am writing as spokesman for three members of our department and some ninety university students in three classes who for a week now have been discussing your story "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." We have debated at length several possible interpretations, none of which fully satisfies us. In general we believe that the appearance of The Misfit is not 'real' in the same sense that the incidents of the first half of the story are real. Bailey, we believe, imagines the appearance of The Misfit, whose activities have been called to his attention on the night before the trip and again during the stopover at the roadside restaurant. Bailey, we further believe, identifies himself with The Misfit and so plays two roles in the imaginary last half of the story. But we cannot, after great effort, determine the point at which reality fades into illusion or reverie. Does the accident literally occur, or is it a part of Bailey's dream? Please believe me when I say we are not seeking an easy way out of our difficulty. We admire your story and have examined it with great care, but we are convinced that we are missing something important which you intended for

us to grasp. We will all be very grateful if you comment on the interpretation which I have outlined above and if you will give us further comments about your intention in writing “A Good Man Is Hard to Find.”

O’Connor replied:

To a Professor of English:

28 March 19661

The interpretation of your ninety students and three teachers is fantastic and about as far from my intentions as it could get to be. If it were a legitimate interpretation, the story would be little more than a trick and its interest would be simply for abnormal psychology. I am not interested in abnormal psychology.

There is a change of tension from the first part of the story to the second where The Misfit enters, but this is no lessening of reality. This story is, of course, not meant to be realistic in the sense that it portrays the everyday doings of people in Georgia. It is stylized and its conventions are comic even though its meaning is serious.

Bailey’s only importance is as the grandmother’s boy and the driver of the car. It is the grandmother who first recognizes The Misfit and who is most concerned with him throughout. The story is a duel of sorts between the grandmother and her superficial beliefs and The Misfit’s more profoundly felt involvement with Christ’s action which set the world off balance for him.

The meaning of a story should go on expanding for the reader the more he thinks about it, but meaning cannot be captured in an interpretation. If teachers are in the habit of approaching a story as if it were a research problem for which any answer is believable so long as it is not obvious, then I think students will never learn to enjoy fiction. Too much interpretation is certainly worse than too little, and where feeling for a story is absent, theory will not supply it.

My tone is not meant to be obnoxious. I am in a state of shock.

Flannery O’Connor

There is no town called Timothy in Georgia. Some critics argue convincingly that St. Paul’s Epistle to Timothy in the New Testament is a key source for themes in this story. Have a look at the King James version of both 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy, especially 2 Timothy 1:5, and 3: 1–5. Do you agree?

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45.

Fay Weldon (1931–2023)



Biography

Fay Weldon was born Franklin Birkinshaw in Worcestershire, England, in 1931. Her mother was also a novelist, whose *nom de plume*, Pearl Bellairs, was taken from the name of a character in Aldous Huxley’s story “The Farcical History of Richard Greenow” (1920). Weldon is a prolific author of more than thirty novels, seven short story collections, seven works of non-fiction, and sixteen screenplays (including the prizewinning first episode of the acclaimed British television series *Upstairs, Downstairs* and a 1985 BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*).

Her work often deals with gender politics, and many of her novels treat the “condition of woman” theme, detailing the oppression of women, but she is often critical of some dogmatic feminist responses. Critic Lorena Russell observes that “her satire is marked by an ironic tone that questions social inequalities and their often irrational and unexpected consequences” (“Fay Weldon”, *Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Fiction*, (Oxford: 2011), p. 380).

She lived in New Zealand until she was 15, when she returned to England with her mother and sister in 1946. In interviews and her memoir, *Auto da Fay* (2002), she recalls her early days in a household of women, and her new-found freedom upon entering the University of St Andrews in Scotland, where she studied psychology and economics and completed an M.A. in 1952 before she returned to reside in London. She became pregnant with her first child at age 22 but did not marry the child’s father. However, in 1957, tired of struggling to support herself as a single mother, she married a teacher 25 years her senior. They lived together in London for two years before the marriage dissolved.

She later became a copywriter in an advertising agency, earning enough to support herself and her son. In 1962, she married Ron Weldon and had three more sons. The couple later divorced, and she is currently married to poet Nick Fox.

One of her best-known novels, *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* (1983), was made into a television film and a Hollywood movie, and like some of her other novels, it follows the trials of a betrayed wife.

In 2006, she was appointed Professor of Creative Writing at Brunel University in West London, and in 2012, she became Professor of Creative Writing at Bath Spa University.

Weekend

You can read the full text here: [“Weekend” by Fay Weldon \[PDF\]](#).

Before you begin reading, please consider the following typographical corrections to the PDF:

- line 197 “ear”, should be “car”
- line 238 “an” should be “and”
- line 443 “oil” should be “on”
- line 570 insert “of” between “appearance” and “martyrdom”

Published 1978

Activities

Weekend

Study Questions

1. Martha is the name of the story's protagonist. What is symbolic about the name? See Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, or Luke 10:41–42.
2. Look up “boot” and “bonnet” (British usage). What do these words mean? Give their North American equivalents.
3. After you read the details in the first three paragraphs, do you see any irony in Martha's husband Martin's saying, “You ought to get Mrs. Hodder to do more. She takes advantage of you”?
4. Does Martin ever give a direct order to Martha?
5. Contrast Colin's first wife, Janet, with his new wife, Katie.
6. How do her three children treat Martha?
7. What is Martha's job in addition to homemaker?
8. What do Janet, Beryl, and Martha have in common?

Activities

Read this [scholarly article on Weldon's “Weekend”](#), which places the story in a feminist context.

[Listen to Fay Weldon reading her story “Weekend”](#).

Read Luke 10:41–42. In these lines, Christ rebukes Martha for occupying herself with household chores and for neglecting “the one thing needful,” unlike Martha's sister Mary Magdalene, who sits and listens at Christ's feet. Is there a character in the story who corresponds to Mary?

Click here for a [photo and another biography of Fay Weldon](#).

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46.

Beryl Bainbridge (1932–2010)

Biography

Dame Beryl Margaret Bainbridge was an English writer from Liverpool. She was primarily known for her works of psychological fiction, often macabre tales set among the English working class. Bainbridge won the Whitbread Awards prize for best novel in 1977 and 1996; she was nominated five times for the Booker Prize.

The summer she left school, she fell in love with a former German prisoner of war, who was waiting to be repatriated. For the next six years, the couple corresponded and tried to get permission for the German man to return to Britain so that they could marry. But permission was not granted and the relationship ended in 1953. The following year, she married artist Austin Davies. The two divorced soon after, leaving Bainbridge a single mother of two children. She later had a third child by Alan Sharp, a novelist and screenwriter. Bainbridge spent her early years working as an actress, and she appeared in one 1961 episode of the soap opera *Coronation Street* playing an anti-nuclear protester.

To help fill her time, Bainbridge began to write, mainly about incidents from her childhood. Her first novel, *Harriet Said . . .*, was rejected by several publishers, one of whom found the central characters “repulsive almost beyond belief.” It was eventually published in 1972, four years after her third novel (*Another Part of the Wood*). Her second and third novels were published (1967/68) and were received well by critics. She wrote and published seven more novels during the 1970s, the fifth of which, *Injury Time*, was awarded the Whitbread prize for best novel in 1977.

From 1980 onwards, eight more novels appeared. In the 1990s, Bainbridge turned to historical fiction. These novels continued to be popular with critics and were also met with commercial success. Among her historical fiction novels are *Every Man for Himself*, about the 1912 Titanic disaster, for which Bainbridge won the 1996 Whitbread Awards prize for best novel, and *Master Georgie*, set during the Crimean War, for which she won the 1998 James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction. Her final novel, *According to Queeney*, is a fictionalized account of the last years of the life of Samuel Johnson as seen through the eyes of Queeney Thrale, eldest daughter of Henry and Hester Thrale.

Bainbridge died in 2010.

Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie

Published 1985

You can read the full text here: [“Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie” by Beryl Bainbridge \[PDF\]](#).

Activities

Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie

Study Questions

1. Define “pantomime” as it applies to British theatre.
2. How does Alec treat his father?
3. Why does Mrs. Henderson tell her husband he isn’t going to the theatre?
4. Why do you think Charlie got angry with Alec about the treatment of Wayne?
5. Did Alec deliberately drive the car at Charlie?
6. List a few British words or phrases that sent you looking for definitions
7. What happens to Charlie at the end of the story?
8. What is the significance of the title?
9. For the title, is Bainbridge referencing the 1925 song with the same title, written by lyricist Billy Rose (1899–1966) and recorded in a 1961 album by American jazz vocalist Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996)?
10. List some elements of “black comedy” that are featured in the story. Start with the Wikipedia article, which gives a definition and a broad overview of black comedy.

Activities

1. If you are unfamiliar with the plot of J.M. Barrie’s play *Peter Pan*, it might be useful to read the brief [Wikipedia article on Peter Pan](#).
2. Look at this very short [trailer for a recent “panto” Peter Pan](#).
3. Listen to the [MP3 audio of “Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie”](#), read in appropriate British dialect. Each of the audio downloads is quite short.

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47.

William Dempsey Valgardson (1939–)



Biography

William Dempsey Valgardson (b. 1939) is an Icelandic-Canadian fiction writer and poet. He was a long-time professor of writing at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. Valgardson was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, of Icelandic descent, and raised in Gimli, Manitoba. He completed his B.A. at United College, B.Ed. at the University of Manitoba, and his M.F.A. at the University of Iowa.

His writing often focuses on cultural differences and involves irony and symbolism. His short stories involve normal people in normal situations who, under certain circumstances, lead unusual and surprising lives.

Valgardson has won numerous awards and accolades, including the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for *The Girl With the Botticelli Face* (1992) and the Books in Canada First Novel Award for *Gentle Sinners* (1980). His short story “Bloodflowers” was included in *Best American Short Stories 1971*. His most recent novel is *In Valhalla’s Shadows* (2018), a gothic crime novel.

Bloodflowers

Danny Thorson saw Mrs. Poorwilly before he stepped off the freight boat onto Black Island. He couldn't have missed her. She was fat and had thick, heavy arms and legs. She stood at the front of the crowd with her hands on her hips.

"You the new teacher?" Mrs. Poorwilly said.

"Yes, I'm--"

Mrs. Poorwilly cut him off by waving her arm at him and saying, "Put your things on the wheelbarrow. Mr. Poorwilly will take them up to the house. Board and room is \$50 a month. We're the only ones that give it. That's Mr. Poorwilly."

Mrs. Poorwilly waved her hand again, indicating a small man who was standing behind an orange wheelbarrow. He had a round, red face, and his hair was so thin and blond that from ten feet away he looked bald.

Danny piled his suitcases and boxes onto the wheelbarrow. He was tired and sore from the trip to the island. The bunk had been too short. The weather had been bad. For the first three days of the trip, he hadn't been able to hold anything down except coffee.

When the wheelbarrow was full, Mr. Poorwilly took his hands out of his pockets. They were twisted into two rigid pink hooks. He slipped them through two metal loops that had been nailed to the handles of the wheelbarrow, then lifted the barrow on his wrists.

At the top of the first rise, Mr. Poorwilly stopped. As if to reassure Danny, he said, "Mrs. Poorwilly's a good cook. We've got fresh eggs all winter, too."

Danny glanced back. Mrs. Poorwilly was swinging cases of tinned goods onto the dock. Her grey hair blew wildly about her face.

They started off again. As there were no paths on the bare granite, Danny followed Mr. Poorwilly. They walked along a ridge, dropped into a hollow. The slope they had to climb was steep, so Danny bent down, caught the front of the wheelbarrow and pulled as Mr. Poorwilly pushed. They had just reached the top when they met an elderly, wasted man who was leaning heavily on the shoulder of a young girl as he shuffled along.

Danny was so surprised by the incongruity of the pair that he stared. The girl's black hair fell to her shoulders, making a frame for her face. She looked tired, but her face was tanned and her mouth was a warm red. Her cheeks were pink from the wind. She stopped when she saw Danny.

The man with her made no attempt to greet them. His breath came in ragged gasps. His dark yellow skin was pulled so tightly over his face that the bone seemed to be pushing through. His eyes protruded and the whites had turned yellow. He gave the girl's shoulder a tug. They started up again.

When they had passed, Danny said, "Who was that? The girl is beautiful."

"Sick Jack and his daughter. It's his liver. Mrs. Poorwilly helps Adel look after him. She says he won't see the spring. He'll be the second. How are you feeling after the trip? You look green."

"I feel green. It was nine days in hell. The boat never quit rolling."

"Good thing you're not going back with them, then." Mr. Poorwilly twisted his head toward the dock to indicate who he meant. "Sunrise was red this morning. There'll be a storm before dawn tomorrow."

Mr. Poorwilly slipped his hands back into the metal loops. "Sorry to be so slow, but the arthritis causes me trouble. Used to be able to use my hands but not anymore. It's a good thing I've got a pension from the war. Getting shot was the best thing that has ever happened to me."

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Danny noticed a small, red flower growing from a crack in the rock. When he bent down to get a better look, he saw that the crack was filled with brown stems. He picked the flower and held it up. "What is it?"

"Bloodflower," Mr. Poorwilly replied. "Only thing that grows on the island except lichen. Shouldn't pick it. They say it brings bad luck. If you cut your finger or make your nose bleed, it'll be OK."

Danny laughed. "You don't believe that, do you?"

"Mrs. Poorwilly says it. She knows quite a bit about these things."

When they reached the house, Danny unloaded his belongings and put them into his bedroom. Mr. Poorwilly left him and went back to the dock for the supplies Mrs. Poorwilly had been unloading.

While the Poorwillys spent the day sorting and putting away their winter's supplies, Danny walked around the island. What Mr. Poorwilly said was true. Nothing grew on the island except lichen and bloodflowers. Despite the cold, patches of red tilled the cracks that were sheltered from the wind.

The granite of the island had been weathered smooth, but there was nowhere it was truly flat. Three-quarters of the island's shoreline fell steeply into the sea. Only in scattered places did the shoreline slope gently enough to let Danny walk down to the water. To the west the thin blue line of the coast of Labrador was just barely visible. Two fishing boats were bobbing on the ocean. There were no birds except for some large grey gulls that rose as he approached and hovered in the air until he was well past them. He would have liked to have them come down beside him so he could have touched them, but they rose on the updrafts. He reached toward them and shouted for them to come down, then laughed at himself and continued his exploring.

Except for the houses and the fish sheds, the only other buildings were the school and the chicken roost behind the Poorwillys. All the buildings were made from wood siding. Because of the rock, there were no basements. Rock foundations had been put down so the floors would be level.

Most of the houses showed little more than traces of paint. The Poorwillys' and Mary Johnson's were the only ones that had been painted recently. Danny knew the other house belonged to Mary Johnson because it had a sign with her name on it. Below her name it said, "General store. Post office. Two-way radio."

Danny explored until it started to get dark, then went back to the Poorwillys.

"Heard you've been looking around," Mrs. Poorwilly said. "If you hadn't come back in another five minutes, I would have sent Mr. Poorwilly to bring you back."

"There's no danger of getting lost." Danny was amused at her concern.

"No," Mrs. Poorwilly agreed, "but you wouldn't want to slip and fall in the dark. You're not in a city now with a doctor down the street. You break a leg or crack your skull and you might have to wait two, three weeks for the weather to clear enough for a plane to come. You don't want to be one of the three."

Danny felt chastised, but Mrs. Poorwilly dropped the subject. She and Mr. Poorwilly spent all during supper asking him about the mainland. As they talked, Mrs. Poorwilly fed her husband from her plate. He sat with his hands in his lap. There were no directions given or taken about the feeding. Both Mr. and Mrs. Poorwilly were anxious to hear everything he had to tell them about the mainland.

When he got a chance, Danny said, "What'd you mean 'one of the three'?"

"Trouble always comes in threes. Maybe you didn't notice it on the mainland because things are so complicated. On the island you can see it because it's small and you know everybody. There's just 35 houses. Somebody gets hurt, everybody knows about it. They can keep track. Three, six, nine, but it never ends unless it's on something made up of threes."

"You'll see before the winter is out. Last month the radio said Emily died in the sanatorium. TB. Now Sick Jack's been failing badly. He's got to be a hard yellow and he's lost all his flesh. He dies, then there'll be one more thing to end it. After that, everything will be OK."

Mrs. Poorwilly made her pronouncement with all the assuredness of an oracle. Danny started on his dessert.

“Mr. Poorwilly says you think Adel’s a nice bit of fluff.”

Danny had started thinking about the book on mythology he’d been reading at summer school. The statement caught him off guard. He had to collect his thoughts, then he said, “The girl with the long dark hair? I only caught a glimpse of her, but she seemed to be very pretty.”

“When her father goes, she’ll be on her own,” Mr. Poorwilly said. “She’s a good girl. She works hard.”

“Does she have any education?”

“Wives with too much education can cause a lot of trouble,” Mrs. Poorwilly said. “They’re never satisfied. The young fellows around here and on the coast have enough trouble without that.”

Danny tried not to show his embarrassment. “I was thinking in terms of her getting a job on the mainland. If her spelling is good and she learned to type, she could get a government job.”

“Might be that she’ll go right after her father. No use making plans until we see what the winter brings.” Mr. Poorwilly turned to his wife for confirmation. “It’s happened before.”

Mrs. Poorwilly nodded as she scraped the last of the pudding from the dish and fed it to her husband.

“What you want is what those people had that I was reading about. They used to ward off evil by choosing a villager to be king for a year. Then so the bad luck of the old year would be done with, they killed him in the spring.”

“They weren’t Christians,” Mr. Poorwilly said.

“No,” Danny replied. “They gave their king anything he wanted. A woman, food, gifts, everything, since it was only for a year. Then when the first flowers bloomed, they killed him.”

“Must have been them Chinese,” Mr. Poorwilly said.

“No. Europeans. But it was a long time ago.”

“Have you ever ridden on a train?” Mrs. Poorwilly asked. “Mr. Poorwilly and I rode on a train for our honeymoon. I remember it just like yesterday.”

Mr. and Mrs. Poorwilly told him about their train ride until it was time to go to bed. After Danny was in bed, Mr. Poorwilly stuck his head through the curtain that covered the doorway. In a low voice, he said, “Don’t go shouting at the sea gulls when you’re out walking. Most of the people here haven’t been anywhere and they’ll think you’re sort of funny.”

“OK,” Danny said. Mr. Poorwilly’s head disappeared.

The next day Mrs. Poorwilly had everyone in the village over to meet Danny. As fast as Danny met the women and children, he forgot their names. The men were still away fishing or working on the mainland. Mr. Poorwilly and Danny were the only men until Adel brought Sick Jack.

Sick Jack looked even thinner than he had the day before. The yellow of his skin seemed to have deepened. As soon as he had shaken Danny’s hand, he sat down. After a few minutes, he fell into a doze and his daughter covered him with a blanket she had brought.

Mrs. Poorwilly waited until Sick Jack was covered, then brought Adel over to see Danny.

“This is Adel. She’ll come for coffee soon, and you can tell her about the trains and the cities. She’s never been off the island.”

Adel blushed and looked at the floor. “Certainly,” Danny said. “I’ve a whole set of slides I’m going to show Mr. and Mrs. Poorwilly. If you wanted, you could come and see them.”

Adel mumbled her thanks and went to the side of the room. She stayed beside her father the rest of the evening, but Danny glanced at her whenever he felt no-one was looking at him.

She was wearing blue jeans and a heavy blue sweater that had been mended at the elbows and cuffs with green wool. It was too large for her so Danny assumed that it had belonged to her father or one of the other men. From what Mrs. Poorwilly had said, Danny had learned that Adel and her father were

given gifts of fish and second-hand clothing. When the men went fishing, they always ran an extra line for Sick Jack.

In spite of her clothing, Adel was attractive. Her hair was as black as he had remembered it and it hung in loose, natural waves. Her eyes were a dark blue. Underneath the too-large sweater, her breasts made soft, noticeable mounds.

She left before Danny had a chance to speak to her again, but he didn't mind as he knew he'd see her during the winter.

For the next two weeks, busy as he was, Danny couldn't help but notice the change in the village. The men returned at all hours, in all kinds of weather. Mostly they came two and three at a time, but now and again a man would come by himself, his open boat a lonely black dot on the horizon.

Most of the men brought little news that was cheerful. The fishing had been bad. Many of them were coming home with the absolute minimum of money that would carry them until spring. No-one said much, but they all knew that winter fishing would be necessary to keep some of the families from going hungry. In a good year, the winter fishing provided a change in diet for people sick of canned food. This year the fishing wouldn't be so casual.

By the end of September the weather had turned bitterly cold. The wind blew for days at a time. The houses rocked in the wind. Danny walked the smallest children to their homes.

The few days the fishermen were able to leave the island, there were no fish. Some of the men tried to fish in spite of the weather, but most of the time they were able to do little more than clear the harbour before having to turn around.

The evening Sick Jack died, Danny had gone to bed early. The banging on the door woke him. Mr. Poorwilly got up and answered the door. Danny heard the muttered talk, then Mr. Poorwilly yelled the news to Mrs. Poorwilly. They both dressed and left right away. Danny would have offered to go with them, but he knew that he would just be in the way so he said nothing.

Mrs. Poorwilly was back for breakfast. As she stirred the porridge, she said. "She's alone now. We washed him and dressed him and laid him out on his bed. She's a good girl. She got all his clothes out and would have helped us dress him, but I wouldn't let her. Mr. Poorwilly is staying with her until some of the women come to sit by the body. If the weather holds, we'll have the funeral tomorrow."

"Why not have the funeral while the weather stays good? It could change tomorrow."

"Respect," Mrs. Poorwilly said. "But it's more than that, too. I wouldn't say it to her, but it helps make sure he's dead. Once just around when I married, Mrs. Milligan died. She was 70. Maybe older. They rushed because the weather was turning. They were just pushing her over the side when she groaned. The cold did it. She died for good the next week, but since then we like to make sure."

Danny went to the funeral. The body was laid out on the bed with a shroud pulled to its shoulders. Mary Johnson sang "The Old Rugged Cross." Mrs. Poorwilly held the Bible so Mr. Poorwilly could read from it. Adel sat on a kitchen chair at the foot of the bed. She was pale and her eyes were red, but she didn't cry.

When the service was over, one of the fishermen pulled the shroud over Sick Jack's head and tied it with a string. They lifted the body onto a stretcher they had made from a tarpaulin and a pair of oars. The villagers followed them to the harbour.

They laid the body on the bottom of the boat. Three men got in. As the boat swung through the spray at the harbour's mouth, Danny saw one of the men bend and tie an anchor to the shrouded figure.

Mrs. Poorwilly had coffee ready for everyone after the service. Adel sat in the middle of the kitchen. She still had a frozen look about her face, but she was willing to talk.

Sick Jack's death brought added tension to the village. One day in class while they were reading a story about a robin that had died, Mary Johnson's littlest boy said, "My mother says somebody else is going to die. Maybe Miss Adel now that her father's gone."

Danny had been sharp with him. "Be quiet. This is a Grade Three lesson. You're not even supposed to be listening. Have you done your alphabet yet?"

His older sister burst out, "That's what my mother said. She said--"

Danny cut her off. "That's enough. We're studying literature, not mythology. Things like that are nothing but superstition."

That night Danny asked about Adel. Mrs. Poorwilly said, "She's got a settlement coming from the mine where he used to work. It's not much. Maybe \$500 or \$600. Everybody'll help all they can, but she's going to have to get a man to look after her."

During November, Danny managed to see Adel twice. The first time, she came for coffee. The second time, she came to see Danny's slides of the mainland. Danny walked her home the first time. The second time, Mrs. Poorwilly said, "That's all right, Mr. Thorson. I'll walk with her. There's something I want to get from Mary Johnson's."

Danny was annoyed. Mrs. Poorwilly had been pushing him in Adel's direction from the first day he had come. Then, when he made an effort to be alone with her, she had stepped between them.

Mrs. Poorwilly was back in half an hour with a package of powdered milk.

Danny said, "I would have got that for you, Mrs. Poorwilly."

"A man shouldn't squeeze fruit unless he's planning on buying," she replied.

Adel walked by the school a number of times when he was there. He got to talk to her, but she was skittish. He wished that she was with him in the city. There, at least, there were dark corners, alley-ways, parks, even doorsteps. On the

island, you couldn't do anything without being seen. At Christmas the villagers held a party at the school. Danny showed his slides. Afterwards they all danced while Wee Jimmy played his fiddle. Danny got to dance with Adel a good part of the night.

He knew that Mrs. Poorwilly was displeased and that everyone in the village would talk about his dancing for the rest of the year, but he didn't care. Adel had her hair tied back with a red ribbon. The curve of her neck was white and smooth. Her blouse clung to her breasts and was cut low enough for him to see where the soft curves began. Each time he danced with one of the other women, Danny found himself turning to see what Adel was doing. When the party was over, he walked Adel home and kissed her goodnight. He wanted her to stay with him in the doorway, but she pulled away and went inside.

Two days before New Year's, Mrs. Poorwilly's prediction came true. The fishing had remained poor, but Michael Fairweather had gone fishing in a heavy sea because he was one of those who had come back with little money. Two hundred yards from the island his boat capsized.

Danny had gone to school on the pretext of doing some work, but what he wanted was some privacy. He had been sitting at the window staring out to sea when the accident happened. He had seen the squall coming up. A violent wind whipped across the waves and behind it a white, ragged line on the water raced toward the island. Michael Fairweather was only able to turn his boat halfway round before the wind and sleet struck.

Danny saw the boat rise to the crest of a wave, then disappear, and Michael was hanging onto the keel. Danny bolted from the room, but by the time he reached the dock, Michael had disappeared.

The squall had disappeared as quickly as it had come. Within half an hour the sea was back to its normal rolling. The fishermen rowed out of the harbour and dropped metal bars lined with hooks. While one man rowed, another held the line at the back of the boat. As Danny watched, the boats crossed back and forth until it was nearly dark.

They came in without the body. Danny couldn't sleep that night. In the morning, when a group of men came to the Poorwillys, Danny answered the door before Mr. Poorwilly had time to get out of his bedroom. The men had come for the loan of the Poorwillys' rooster.

Mrs. Poorwilly nestled the rooster in her jacket on the way to the dock, then tied it to Mr. Poorwilly's wrist with a leather thong. Mr. Poorwilly stepped into the front of the skiff. The rooster hopped onto the bow. With that the other men climbed into their boats and followed Mr. Poorwilly and the rooster out of the harbour.

"What are they doing?" Danny asked.

Mrs. Poorwilly kept her eyes on the lead boat, but she said, "When they cross the body, the rooster will crow."

Danny turned and stared at the line of boats. In spite of the wind, the sun was warm. The rooster's feathers gleamed in the sun. Mr. Poorwilly stood as still as a wooden figurehead. The dark green and grey boats rose and fell on the waves. Except for the hissing of the foam, there was no sound.

Danny looked away and searched the crowd for Adel. He had looked for a third time, when Mrs. Poorwilly, without turning, said, "She won't come for fear the current will have brought her father close to shore. They might bring him up."

All morning and into the afternoon the boats crossed and re-crossed the area in front of the harbour in a ragged line. Noone left the dock. The women with small babies didn't come down from their houses, but Danny could see them in their doorways.

As the day wore on, Danny became caught up in the crossing and re-crossing of the boats. None of the men dragged their hooks. The only time the men in the rear of the boats moved was to change positions with the men at the oars.

When the cock crew, the sound caught Danny by surprise. The constant, unchanging motion and the hissing of the spray had drawn him into a quiet trance. It had been as if the boats and he had been there forever.

The sound was so sharp that some of the women cried out. The men with the iron bars covered with hooks threw them into the sea, and shoved the coils of rope after them. They didn't want to pass the spot where the cock crew until the hooks were on the bottom. The bars disappeared with little spurts of white foam. Danny could hear the rope rubbing against the side of the boat as it was pulled hand over hand.

"It's him," Mrs. Poorwilly said. "God have mercy, they've got him."

Danny turned back. It was true. Instead of a white shroud, the men were pulling a black bundle into the boat.

The funeral was bad. Marj Fairweather cried constantly and tried to keep the men from taking the body. As they started to leave, she ran to the dresser for a heavy sweater, then sat in the middle of the floor, crying and saying, "He'll be so cold. He'll be so cold."

In spite of Marj, the tension in the community eased after the funeral was over. People began to visit more often, and when they came they talked more and stayed longer.

Adel came frequently to the Poorwillys. When she came, she talked to the Poorwillys, but she watched Danny. She wasn't open about it, but when Danny looked at her, she let her eyes linger on him for a second before turning away. She had her colour back and looked even better than before. Most of the time, Danny managed to walk her home. Kissing her was not satisfactory because of the cold and the bulky clothes between them, but she would not invite him in and there was no privacy at the Poorwillys. In spite of the walks and goodnight kisses, she remained shy when anyone else was around.

The villagers had expected the weather and the fishing to improve. If anything, the weather became worse. Ice coated the boats. The wind blew night and day. Often, it only stopped in the hour before dawn.

Then, without warning, Marj Fairweather sent her children to the Poorwillys, emptied a gas lamp on herself and the kitchen floor, and lit a match.

This time there was no funeral. The entire village moved in a state of shock. While one of the sheds

was fixed up for the children, Marj's remains were hurried to sea and dumped in the same area as her husband's.

The village drew into itself. The villagers stayed in their own houses. When they came to the door, they only stayed long enough to finish their business. The men quit going to the dock. Most of them pulled their boats onto the island and turned them over.

A week after the fire, Danny arrived to find his room stripped of his belongings. Mrs. Poorwilly waited until he had come into the kitchen. "Mr. Poorwilly and I decided to take two of the Fairweather children. We'll take the two youngest. A fourteen-year-old can't take care of six kids."

Danny was too stunned to say anything. Mrs. Poorwilly continued. "Some of us talked about it. We hope you don't mind, but there's nothing else to do. Besides, there's going to be no money from the mine. Adel needs your board and room worse than we do. We'll keep the Fairweather children for nothing."

When Danny didn't reply, Mrs. Poorwilly added, "We got help moving your things. We gave Adel the rest of this month's money."

Danny hesitated for a moment, but there was nothing to say. He went outside.

He knocked at Adel's door. She let him in. "Mrs. Poorwilly says you're to stay with me now."

"Yes, she told me," Danny said.

Adel showed him to his bedroom. All his clothes had been hung up and his books had been neatly piled in one corner. He sat on the edge of the bed and tried to decide what to do. He finally decided he couldn't sit in the bedroom for the next five months and went back into the kitchen.

The supper was good, but Danny was too interested in Adel to pay much attention. In the light from the oil lamp, her eyes looked darker than ever. She was wearing a sweater with a V-neck. He could see the soft hollow of her throat and the smooth skin below her breastbone. Throughout supper he told her about the mainland and tried to keep his eyes above her neck.

The next morning when he went to school, he expected to see a difference in the children's attitudes. Twice he turned around quickly. Each time the children had all been busy writing in their notebooks. There was no smirking or winking behind their hands. At noon, he said, "In case any of you need to ask me something, there's no use your going to the Poorwillys. I'm staying at Miss Adel's now."

The children solemnly nodded their heads. He dismissed them and went home for lunch.

Adel was at home. She blushed and said, "The women at the sheds said I should come home early now that I've got you to look after. Since the men aren't fishing there isn't much to do."

"That's very good of them," Danny replied.

Danny and Adel were left completely alone. He had expected that some of the villagers would drop by, but no-one came to visit. Danny and Adel settled into a routine that was disturbed only by Danny's irritation at being close to Adel. Adel shied away from him when he brushed against her. At the end of the second week, she accepted his offer to help with the dishes. They stood side by side as they worked. Danny was so distracted by Adel's warmth and the constant movement of her body that the dishes were only half dried.

Danny put his hand on Adel's shoulder and turned her toward him. She let him pull her close. There was no place to sit or lie in the kitchen so he picked her up and carried her to the bedroom. She didn't resist when he undressed her. After he made love to her, he fell asleep. When he woke up, Adel had gone to her own bed.

Danny took Adel to bed with him every evening after that, but during the night she always slipped away to her own bedroom. At the beginning of the next week, they had their first visitor. Mrs. Poorwilly stopped by to see how they were doing. They had been eating supper when she arrived. Normally, they would have been finished eating, but Adel had been late in coming from the fish sheds.

The weather had improved enough for the men to go fishing. Mrs. Poorwilly accepted a cup of coffee and sat and talked to them for an hour.

It was as if her coming had been a signal. After that, villagers dropped by in the evenings to talk for a little while. They nearly always brought something with them and left it on the table. Danny had wanted to protest, but he didn't know what to say that wouldn't embarrass their visitors so he said nothing.

Adel stopped going back to her own bed. Danny thought about getting married but dismissed the idea. He was comfortable with things the way they were.

The day Danny started to get sick he should have known something was wrong. He had yelled at the children for no particular reason. When Adel had come home, he had been grouchy with her. The next day his throat had been sore, but he had ignored it. By the end of the day, he was running a temperature and his knees felt like water.

Adel had been worried, but he told her not to call Mrs. Poorwilly. Their things had become so mixed together that it was obvious they were using the same bedroom.

For the next few days he was too sick to protest about anything. Mrs. Poorwilly came frequently to take his temperature and to see that Adel kept forcing whisky and warm broth into him. All during his sickness Danny was convinced that he was going to die. During one afternoon he was sure that he was dead and that the sheets were a shroud.

The crisis passed and he started to cough up phlegm, but he was so weak that it was an effort for him to lift his head. The day he was strong enough to sit up and eat in the kitchen, Mrs. Poorwilly brought him a package of hand-rolled cigarettes.

"Nearly everyone is coming to see you tomorrow. They'll all bring something in the way of a present. It's a custom. Don't say they shouldn't or they'll think you feel their presents aren't good enough."

Danny said that he understood.

The school children came first with hand-carved pieces of driftwood. He admired the generally shapeless carvings, and after the first abortive attempt carefully avoided guessing at what they were supposed to be.

After the children left, the McFarlans came. Mr. McFarlan had made a shadow box from shingle. He had scraped the shingle with broken glass until the grain stood out. Inside the box he had made a floor of lichen and pebbles. Seagulls made from clam shells sat on the lichen.

His wife stretched a piece of black cloth over the end of a fish box. On it she had glued boiled fish bones to form a picture of a boat and man.

Someone brought a tin of pears, another brought a chocolate bar. One of the men brought half a bottle of whisky.

Each visitor stayed just long enough to inquire how Danny felt, wish him well and leave a present on the table. When the last visitor had gone, Danny was exhausted. Adel helped him to bed.

He felt much better by the end of the week, but when he tried to return to work, Mrs. Poorwilly said, "Mary Johnson's doing a fine job. Not as good as you, of course, but the kids aren't suffering. If you rush back before you're ready, everybody will take it that you think she's doing a poor job. If you get sick again, she won't take over."

Adel returned to work at the sheds, but the women sent her home. The weather had held and there was lots of fish, but they said she should be at home looking after Danny.

At first it was ideal. They had little to do except sit and talk or make love. Danny caught up on his reading. They both were happy, but by the end of March their confinement had made them both restless.

To get out of the house, Danny walked to Mrs. Poorwilly's. While they were having coffee, Danny said, "I guess everyone must have got the flu."

"No," Mrs. Poorwilly replied, "just some colds among the children. Adel and you making out all right?"

"Yes," Danny said.

"Her mother was a beauty, you know. I hope you didn't mind moving, but these things happen."

"No, I didn't mind moving."

They sat for five minutes before Danny said, "Could I ask you something? I wouldn't want anyone else to know."

Mrs. Poorwilly nodded her assent.

"Mary Johnson is doing such a good job that I thought I might ask her to radio for a plane. Maybe it would be a good idea for me to take Adel to the mainland for a week."

"Any particular reason?"

"Yes. If she wants, I'll marry her."

"Haven't you asked her?"

Danny shook his head. It had never occurred to him that she might say no.

"Wait until you ask her. The superintendent will want a reason. You'll have to tell him over the radio and everyone will know. You wouldn't want to tell him and then have her turn you down."

Adel was standing at the window when he returned. He put his arms around her. "You know, I think we should get married."

Adel didn't answer.

"Don't you want to marry me?" he asked.

"Yes. I do. But I've never been off the island. You won't want to stay here always."

"We can stay for a couple of years. We'll go a little at a time. We can start with a week on the mainland for a honeymoon. We'll go somewhere on a train."

That evening he went to Mary Johnson's. Mary tried to raise the mainland operator, but the static was so bad that no contact could be made. Danny kept Mary at the radio for half an hour. He left when she promised to send one of the children with a message if the radio cleared.

Danny returned the next night, but the static was just as bad. Mary promised to send for him as soon as the call went through.

A week went by. The weather continued to improve. Danny checked the thermometer. The temperature was going up a degree every two days.

At the end of the week he returned to Mary's. The radio wasn't working at all. One of the tubes needed to be replaced. He left. Halfway home he decided to go back and leave a message for the plane. The radio might work just long enough for a message, but not long enough for him to be called to the set. When he came up to the house, he was sure that he heard the radio. He banged on the front door. Mary took her time coining. When she opened the door, he said, "I heard the radio. Can you send a message right away?"

Mary replied that he must have just heard the children talking.

Danny insisted on her trying to make the call. She was annoyed, but she tried to get through. When she had tried for five minutes, Danny excused himself and left.

He walked part-way home, then turned and crept back over the rock.

The windows were dark. He lay in the hollow of rock behind the house until the cold forced him to leave.

In the morning, he went to the dock to talk to the fishermen. He offered to pay any one of them triple the normal fare to take him down the coast. They laughed and said they would bring him some fresh fish for supper.

When he had continued insisting that he wanted to leave, they said that a trip at this time of year was impossible. Even planes found it difficult to land along the coast. A boat could be crushed in the pack ice that was shifting up and down the shore.

Danny told Adel about the radio and the boats. She sympathized with him, but agreed with the men that it was hopeless to try and make the trip in an open boat.

“Besides,” she said, “the freight boats will be coming in a month or so.”

True to their word, the fishermen sent a fresh fish. Danny tried to pay the boy who brought it, but he said that he had been told not to accept anything. Danny had put the money into the boy’s hand. The boy had gone, but a few minutes later he returned and put the money in front of the door.

Late that afternoon, Danny walked to the dock. After looking around to see that no-one was watching, he bent down and looked at the rope that held one of the boats. He untied it, then tied it again.

He returned to the house and started gathering his heavy clothing. When Adel came into the room, she said, “What are you going to do?”

“I’m leaving.”

“Is the plane coming?”

“I’m taking myself. I’ve had enough. I’m not allowed to work. You’re not allowed to work. Everyone showers us with things they won’t let us pay for. I try to use the radio, but it never works. He turned to face here. “It always worked before.

“Sometimes it hasn’t worked for weeks,” Adel replied. “Once it was six weeks. It’s the change in temperature.”

“But it works. The other night I heard it working. Then when I asked Mary Johnson to call, she said it was just the children talking.”

“Mary told me,” Adel said. “You made her very upset. She thinks you’re still not feeling well.”

“I’m feeling fine. Just fine. And I’m leaving. I don’t know what’s going on here, but I’m getting out. I’m going to get a plane and then I’m coming back for you.”

“You said we could leave a little at a time.”

“That was before this happened. What if something goes wrong? Three people have died. One of them died right before my eyes and I couldn’t do anything about it. What if we needed a doctor? Or a policeman? What if someone took some crazy notion into his head?”

Danny took Sick Jack’s nor’westers off a peg. He laid out the clothes he wanted and packed two boxes with food. He lay awake until three o’clock, then slipped outside and down to the boats.

The boats were in their usual places. He reached for the rope of the first boat. His hand closed on a heavy chain. Danny couldn’t believe it. He jumped onto the boat and ran his hand around the chain. He climbed out and ran from boat to boat. Every boat was the same. He tried to break the chains loose. When they wouldn’t break, he sat on the dock and beat his hands on the chains. When he had exhausted himself, he sat with his face pressed into his hands.

In the morning, Mary sent one of the boys to tell Danny that the radio had worked long enough for her to send a message. It hadn’t been confirmed, but she thought it might have been heard. For the rest of the day, Danny was elated, but as the days passed and the plane did not appear, he became more and more depressed. Adel kept saying that the plane would come, but Danny doubted if it would ever come.

The weather became quite mild. Danny walked to the dock every day. The chains were still on the boats. He had spent an hour on the dock staring at the thin blue line that was the mainland and was walking back to Adel’s when he noticed that the snow had melted away from some of the cracks in the granite. The cracks were crammed with closely packed leaves.

He paused to pick a leaf. *April the first, he thought, April the first will come and we’ll be able to go.*

Then, as he stared at the small green leaf in his hand, he realized that he was wrong. It was weeks later that the first freight boat came.

The rest of the day he tried to make plans for Adel and himself, but he could not concentrate. The image of thousands and thousands of bloodflowers kept spilling into his mind.

Granite Point

Published 1983

The salt and pepper shakers were not quite aligned so Mathew grasped the salt shaker between his thumb and index finger, pushed it forward, then edged it back a fraction of an inch. "Pass the cream, please," he said.

Ellen reached the pitcher across to him. It was not real cream that he trickled over his oatmeal, but sweetened, condensed milk thinned with water. It was the twenty-eighth of May and they hadn't had fresh milk or cream since they had arrived at Granite Point the previous August.

They had dropped all pretence and Ellen never spoke unless Mathew asked her a direct question. Except for the small, sharp sounds of their spoons touching their bowls, they ate their meal in silence. Ellen would have preferred to eat when Mathew was gone but he insisted that they take their meals together so she ate mechanically, either looking at her food or studying the space just to the left or right of his head but never meeting his eyes. His eyes were small and grey and were the kind that never looked at things but peered into them as if to ferret out their smallest secrets.

Mathew was tall and angularly handsome, with black hair, a thin black moustache and an ability to look impeccable even in overalls and a red checkered shirt. Anyone seeing him for the first time with his straight posture and finely boned, patrician face would have assumed he was a young diplomat or, at least, an officer in the RAF rather than a Hudson Bay agent. Today, because it was Sunday, the store wasn't open and he was going to start building a new ice-house. The old one had been allowed to deteriorate until it would no longer keep ice over the summer. Rather than pay the Indians to help him cut and limb trees for beams, he was going to do it himself.

Ellen watched him stride to the nearby tractor and fill the gas tank from one of the red 45-gallon drums that stood in neat rows, the empty ones to the left, the full ones to the right. Only four full ones remained. Beside them, methodically arranged in ranks, were the black drums of fuel oil.

The tractor started with a series of jarring explosions that quickly ran together into a grating rhythm. Mathew jolted away and was suddenly enveloped by the dark wall of forest. The company had allotted him \$3000 for a new ice-house but by building most of it himself after work and on weekends, he intended to keep the cost below half his budget. It was the type of zealotry he hoped would bring a promotion to a larger centre like Snow Lake or Flin Flon where there were roads and streetlights and fresh food all year around.

Ellen slowly cleared the table. From the window over the sink, she could see the charred outline of Kloski's house. There were the ragged edges of walls, the floor of charcoal and ashes, the buckled and rusting oil heater, the stove with one leg broken so that it leaned steeply to one corner, the brown, twisted frames of the couch and bed. She had hoped someone would clear the rubble and carry it to the dump behind the trees but no-one had and she knew that no-one would. Gradually, the burning nettle and purple fireweed would engulf it, and, later, perhaps, a thick tangle of raspberry canes would spring up.

For weeks after the fire she had washed the dishes in an enamel pan on the other side of the room so as to avoid looking at the black rectangle in the snow. There had only been a slight wind the night Kloski had splashed fuel into the stove to get the green wood started but the fire had spread so rapidly they had been unable to do anything but let it burn itself out.

There had been water, a whole lake full of it, but it was locked under four feet of ice. Even if they had chopped a hole, the water would have had to be dipped out with buckets. Conditioned to accept the

inevitable, nearly the entire village stood in a semi-circle on the side of the house away from the wind. They might, except for their stillness, have been revellers around the bonfire at a winter carnival.

Not that it really mattered, the mountie who flew in to investigate had said, for Kloski was probably dead within a minute or two after the explosion. The mountie had been brisk, even impatient. He wrote his report from interviews with Mathew and Chief Albert, wrapped up the remains and rushed away before the weather closed in. Later, children playing in the debris had found melted Coke bottles. Ellen had seen them marvel as they traced the awkward shapes of slag with their fingers.

Now, the snow was gone in the open space, lingering only in the deep shade. In England it would be green but, here, everything was still yellow and grey and brown. The morning before, someone had left her a handful of willow with silver catkins just breaking their glossy casing, but, afraid of the questions Mathew would ask, she had thrown them all away except for one that she had carefully hidden beneath her side of the mattress. Ellen washed the bright blue bowls and began to scrub the sticky layer of oatmeal from the pot.

In a community as small as Granite Point, and with Kloski living next door, she had seen him several times a day but, already, without a picture of him to act as a reminder, his image was softening and fading.

When they first arrived, she was disappointed with the Indians. She had hoped they would be bright and colourful. Instead, the men and women, in their rumpled jackets and pants and ankle-length dresses, were as formless and drab as last year's leaves swept into a corner by a cold, spring rain. Behind them, the piece of granite that gave the settlement its name, thrust sharply into the lake like the prow of some massive battleship.

Behind the bare, exposed point, where they were protected by a wall of tamarack from the wind that swept down from the Arctic, was a scattering of houses. There was no break in the tree-line. It ringed the town, solid and heavy as a wall of carved slate. The sky was white and empty.

Mathew was still in the Otter, reaching out luggage. He skidded a suitcase along, accidentally striking the back of her leg. Startled, she had made a sudden movement forward, caught her toe on the rough boards and would have fallen if Kloski hadn't caught her.

"Careful," he said, his hand on her arm. "No fair getting killed before you are here a week."

He was not handsome. His face was too full and his complexion too pink. He was about 25 but his long, blond hair, his pink skin and his full, drooping moustache speckled with red hair, instead of making him look older, merely made him look like a little boy masquerading as a grownup. He was big and broad and just enough overweight that another ten pounds would have made him fat.

As Mathew stepped onto the dock, Kloski released her. They introduced themselves, then Kloski picked up a suitcase in each hand.

"Follow me. I'll show you to your place. Never mind that, Mrs. McDougal," he said when she went to lift a box. "I'll have all your belongings brought up. Everything that arrived on the boat is at your house."

He preceded them down the dock with his odd toe-out walk that made her think a little of a pregnant woman. The wall of Indians parted before him as if by magic. Without slowing down, he threw out directions in Cree.

"I asked them to bring your belongings," he explained. "See, over there? We're way over to the north side. There's my house, then your house, then your store."

All around them, like blocks dropped at random, were small, one-storey houses. Some were clapboard shacks, others were layered with tarpaper and a few were made from logs and chinked with mud. Kloski's house and their two buildings were neat, white frame structures that looked like they should have been sitting in a suburb.

"You're certain that our belongings will be safe?" Mathew asked, looking over his shoulder.

Kloski studied him a moment, then in a measured voice, said, "I've been here over two years and I've never locked my door."

"Well, I'll lock mine," Mathew replied.

They were speaking in undertones for the crowd was breaking up, some going onto the dock to ask news of the pilot, others starting to follow them back to the village. There were more huskies than people and they swirled through the crowd, evil tempered and aggressive, snarling and snapping as the larger dogs drove the smaller ones out of their way. Suddenly, with a cry of rage, a short, stocky brown dog turned on a gaunt grey with a scarred face.

Like a flock of frightened sparrows, the crowd scattered, leaving a cleared space into which the other dogs rushed to form a solid, seething mass that ebbed and flowed with the combatants. The two dogs lunged and rolled over so furiously that it was difficult to see what was happening.

"Oh, stop them!" Ellen exclaimed and impulsively started forward.

Kloski dropped a suitcase and roughly dragged her back.

"Leave them be," he ordered.

"Just who do you think you're manhandling?" Mathew demanded, his voice indignant.

Kloski ignored Mathew and pulled Ellen onto a porch so they would be out of the way and Mathew, his face rigid with outrage, followed. Kloski rescued the dropped suitcase.

"Once a fight begins, one or the other has to win. There's no place else to go and if you stop it now, they'll just finish it later. That grey's been bullying the other dog all summer. If he's going to be free of him, he's got to do it himself."

Below them, the crowd had formed a circle outside the pack and, as the dogs flowed first one way, then another, advanced and retreated with them. The crowd and the dogs who were fighting were silent but the air was filled with the excited yipping of the pack.

After a flurry of attacks, both dogs pulled away and circled each other warily, their sides heaving. Their muzzles were smeared with saliva and blood. They crouched low to the ground, their legs bent; then, at the same instant, they lunged forward. The grey caught his opponent's shoulder but his teeth slipped as the brown twisted to one side and caught the grey's leg close to the body. With a vicious jerk, the brown dog knocked his enemy down and crushed his leg.

From the grey, there was a scream of terror that rose to a keening wail. Spontaneously, the pack surged forward and tore him to pieces even as he tried to pull himself free. The brown dog leaped straight into the air, turning half around, then scrambled to safety over the backs of the pack. Within minutes it was all over. The dogs barked madly and milled about before stones and sticks dispersed them. The grey dog's mutilated head was carried off by a member of the pack and all that was left were pieces of fur.

"They're half-starved," Kloski explained emotionlessly. "All they get to eat is what they find or kill or steal. If you had got in there and been knocked off your feet, there wouldn't be any more left of you than that." Although he looked at Ellen as he spoke, his words were a reprimand for Mathew.

Ellen shuddered. She thought she was going to be sick but Kloski didn't give her time. He started off so abruptly that they were both caught unawares and had to hurry after him like children. He left them and their luggage at the front door of their bungalow.

Mathew thanked him curtly. Kloski didn't quite suppress a grin.

"Insolent beggar!" Mathew exploded when they were alone. "You would think he owned the place, the way he takes charge."

Ellen leaned against the doorframe. "It was so cruel," she said.

With a start, Ellen realized she was staring out the window. It took her a moment to remember what she was supposed to be doing, then she put away the dishes. There was less than a loaf of bread left and she had to make more. She carefully wiped and dried the table, then dusted it with flour.

As she worked, she wondered what her mother would think if she could see her making bread. Before she married Mathew she seldom made her own meals. She had worked in a tobacconist's and as she lived at home, room and board cost her very little. Mr. Dowling, her employer, considered her blond hair and trim shape an asset to the store.

They were a nice class of customers he had, mostly middle-aged, and they liked a pretty girl to take the gloom off a winter's day when they stepped into the shop. She always made a point of remembering a customer's name and the brand of tobacco he liked. Each of the two Christmases she worked at Dowling's, many of the regular customers had dropped by to present her with a box of candies or cookies or a pound note. She gave most of the candy and cookies away but she added the pound notes to her savings account.

Mathew had come into Dowling's for directions. He was from Newcastle and didn't know the city. It was near closing time and since his destination was on her way, she told him to wait a moment so he could come with her. He had visited the shop the next afternoon to thank her and, at the same time, he asked for permission to call on her at home. She had agreed and he had seen her frequently after that. He was working as a clerk for one of the unions but was waiting on an application for a job in Canada. When it came, he immediately proposed. Her parents were horrified at the idea of her going so far away but his being five years older than her and his assurance that he would send her home for a long vacation the next summer, even if he could not come, had made them agreeable.

The neighbours had been unsettled by her plans to leave. The people of the area were as solid and permanent as their square brick houses. The farthest away any of the daughters of the families who lived nearby had moved was to Ireland and that, to most; seemed much too far.

At the reception, Mr. Cummins, who lived two houses away and was a special friend of her father's because of a shared passion for roses, said, "It's very isolated up there, you know. You'll have to take along something for entertainment-besides the ones newlyweds have, you know." He winked and she blushed appropriately at his being so risqué. He had gone to Canada with the army before the Second World War so he considered himself an authority on the country.

"There's canoeing and hiking and I'm going to learn ice skating," she replied. "Where we're going is right on a lake." They had a large map taped to her parents' living-room wall with a gold star at Granite Point so everyone could see where it was. Mr. Cummins had a large red nose and gout in his big toes. It was, his wife was fond of saying, the condensation of the sherry he drank.

"You'll have to learn to use a rifle and hunt and fish and all that," he advised her.

Ellen had been horrified.

"Oh, no! I couldn't do that. When a moth gets into the house I try to catch it in a jam jar and let it go outside. I couldn't kill anything."

"It's going to be quite savage," Mr. Cummins had teased before his wife dragged him away. "You'll have to be careful you don't go native." In the first letter Ellen received from home, her mother told her that Mr. Cummins' toes pained him so much that for a week after the reception he couldn't move from his chair without his canes.

"Every Sunday," Ellen had confidently said to those who had been listening, "I'm going to set a full table of china so when we come to visit we'll remember our manners. I've got pictures of Mum and Dad and all and it's only ten months before I'll be home again. It'll be as if I've never been gone."

When they left, her father, who had never been very demonstrative, surprised her by hugging her fiercely, then going quickly into the house. Her mother cried and was still waving a sodden handkerchief to and fro like a distress signal when their taxi rounded a corner.

*"Where have you been all day,
My boy Tammie?"*

"I've been all the day

*Courting a lady gay;
But, oh! she's too young,
To be taken from her mummy!"*

Because of the oven heating, the kitchen was stifling, but the wind from the lake was too bitter to have the door open. Remembering one verse started another. Her hands moved mechanically, spreading flour, pulling and kneading at the pale dough, but her mind raced away.

*London bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down,
London bridge is falling down, my fair lady.
Build it up with sticks and stones, sticks and stones, sticks and stones,
Build it up with sticks and stones, my fair lady.*

She couldn't remember the rest of it. She desperately wished she had a book of children's verses. Not to remember made her head feel squeezed tight. It was, she remembered, about the fire of London. All the houses had burned. She wondered if they had burned with such intensity as Kloski's.

The flames made a large pillar in the darkness and the crowd rippled under the wavering light like objects seen under wind-touched water. Those who were closest were outlined starkly--their eyes and buttons gleaming—while those farther back were alternately exposed and hidden like rocks in surf. Except for the dogs, which poked here and there through people's legs, nearly everyone was as stiff and unmoving as granite.

Mathew and a few others had concentrated on saving his house and store from the clouds of sparks that whirled into the air. They worked to the point of exhaustion, some banking the endangered walls while others flung snow onto the roofs where it was spread into a deep, protective layer.

Kloski was such a fool. That was what the mountie had called him for using gasoline to get his fire going. But he would have known the remaining verses. Nothing ever got him down for long. He was an encyclopaedia of trivia. Officially, he was supposed to be developing some type of steady industry to take the place of the fishing and fur trapping.

The price of fish was rising but the catch was falling. The muskrat were multiplying but the price was falling. No-one in Winnipeg or Ottawa had any specific ideas. The best they were able to do was to offer vague suggestions about developing local resources and local initiative. The local resources, besides fish and muskrat, were tamarack trees and muskeg. If he could sell someone muskeg at ten cents a foot, Kloski had said, they would all be millionaires.

Mathew found Kloski's casualness annoying. Mathew said he had no sense of propriety. Rules, Kloski replied, were made to be broken by fools like me.

Mathew ran the store with absolute efficiency, never varying from prescribed procedure. He set hours and kept a tight hand on credit purchases. The last agent had let credit too easily, depending on the bills to be paid on government day when the welfare cheques arrived. 80 per cent of the families were on welfare. When Kloski had complained about the hardship Mathew's policies were causing, Mathew replied that Indians, like anyone else, could learn to budget. He also refused to cash cheques unless ten percent of their value went to clear any unpaid balance.

In spite of their differences, Mathew and Kloski saw a lot of each other. Mathew refused to have anything to do with the Indians socially so he was happy to have Kloski come over in the evenings to talk or listen to the radio or play three-handed cribbage. After Kloski left, the house always smelled of canned hide for he wore a deerskin jacket some of the women had made for him. The hood was fringed with timber wolf fur and the front and back were extravagantly beaded with brilliant, intricate flower patterns in red and blue and white. He also wore mukluks that someone else had made for him. The mukluks came half way to his knees and besides being encrusted with beads they were trimmed with fox fur and decorated with orange pompoms and small, circular bells that jingled whenever he moved. On still days you could hear the bells as he scrolled by.

“Oranges and lemons,” say the bells of St. Clement’s.

“You owe me five farthings,” say the bells of St. Martin’s.

“When will you pay me,” say the bells of Old Bailey.

“When I grow rich,” say the bells of Shoreditch.

“I don’t know how you can stand working with them,” Mathew said over cribbage.

Here comes a candle to light.

“You work with them all the time,” Kloski replied. His moustache had grown to outrageous proportions and his hair was so long that he had begun tying it back with a leather thong. Except for the area around his eyes where he was protected from snowblindness by home-made cardboard goggles, his face was burned brown. The two circles around his eyes were pink.

“No, I don’t work with them,” Mathew answered. “I deal with them. You associate with them. You’re in one house, then another, having coffee here, bannock there. I can’t imagine what you talk about.”

“I’m convincing them to make mukluks and moccasins. There’s a market for handicrafts. I’ve got to keep track of how things are going.”

They alternated visits. The first time they were playing cards and having whisky at Kloski’s, he went to start his wood stove to make them coffee. The wood was green and wet and didn’t catch right away so he picked up a red can with a flexible nozzle and splashed some coal-oil onto it. A black twist of smoke curled up.

“You shouldn’t do that,” Mathew cautioned him. “You could have an explosion.”

Kloski had just laughed. He had a deep, complete laugh. “I always get my fire going that way. It’s coal-oil, not gasoline.” He shook the can. They could hear the oil slosh about. “Got to fill it before I go to bed tonight. I don’t want the heater going out on me. I’m not like some people. I don’t have anyone to keep me warm.”

Mathew had taken three drinks and was more outspoken than usual. “Not during the night maybe. But I’ve noticed all those daytime visits while the husbands are away. You’re into one house, then another. Come spring, you might have some personal handicrafts produced.”

Ellen could no longer stand the heat. She pulled open the kitchen door. The wind off the lake was stronger. Patches of grey rock rose from the yellow and brown grass like the backs of playful dolphins.

The ice was no loner landfast. Where a large pressure ridge had built up during the winter, ice still remained, but between this eroding rim and the pack ice that reached to the horizon, there was 300 feet of indigo water. The floes would soon be gone. All day and night they ground upon themselves.

To the right, the line of tamarack was so dark that it seemed to have gathered into itself all the shadows of winter. Ellen pulled her cardigan more tightly about her shoulders. The houses that had been so closely joined by the snow, now that it was gone, were isolated within the circles of their own debris-empty barrels, snowmobiles, fish boxes, the spilled remnants of woodpiles. No one was outside, for the wind was bitter. Except for two who were scavenging along the shore for dead fish, the dogs were curled in the shelter of buildings and machinery.

“The north wind Both blow,/And we shall have snow,/ And what will poor robin do then,/Poor thing?” Ellen thought as she shut the door. The cold knifed to the bone. With a shiver, she moved back toward the heat.

It was right after New Year’s Eve that Mathew asked Kloski to quit coming over during the day while he was not at home. Ellen had not known about it until one afternoon when, as she was brooding and wanted cheering up, she heard the jingle of Kloski’s bells and had rushed to the door to ask him in.

“Coffee?” she asked eagerly.

He never turned down the offer of coffee. Mathew said it was because he was a loafer and had even suggested that it might be because Kloski had native blood.

“Not right now,” he replied.

Her disappointment was so great that she felt her face crumple.

“I’m sorry,” he apologized in a quiet, almost shy voice, and went on his way, leaving a trail of toed-out footprints in the snow.

She was so hurt, she cried. At supper, hoping that Mathew might fix whatever was wrong, she told him what had happened.

“I asked him not to come,” Mathew said matter-of-factly.

“But why?” she asked.

Mathew never liked having to explain things. Somewhat stiffly, he answered, “Because it doesn’t look right. There’s talk all over the village about how he stops to visit with the women for hours on end. That may not matter to the others, but I won’t have that kind of talk about my wife. We have our positions to uphold.”

“But he’s the only person I see besides you,” she protested. “I’ve got to see someone. I can’t just sit here as if I was in prison.”

“It’s my house and he won’t come unless I ask him.” Mathew’s face had become flushed.

“Then I’ll go to his house,” she retorted, her lips trembling.

He hit her. His hand caught her on the mouth. She touched the corner of her lips. When she looked at her fingers, the tips were smeared with blood.

“When I go home, I won’t come back.” She rose from the table and went to the sink to soak a cloth in cold water.

Defiantly, she added, “I’ll visit whoever I want.”

That had been after New Year’s. They had all spent Christmas and New Year’s together. At Christmas, Kloski had supplied a venison roast. She made Yorkshire pudding and plum pudding with custard sauce. Kloski gave Mathew a cribbage board made from the prong of a deer antler. For her he had a pair of beaded doeskin slippers. In return, they gave him a bottle of rum and a box of English toffee. For New Year’s they had gone to his place. He had a hot rum punch ready for them. Mathew brought his new cribbage board and she brought her slippers to wear around the house.

Christmas had been fun but New Year’s was melancholy. To make it good, they needed more people. They sat up until midnight, not saying much and drinking more than they should. At twelve, Ellen had kissed Mathew. Kloski had clumsily pecked at her cheek. She had thrown her arms around him and, laughing at his embarrassment, had refused to let go until he kissed her properly.

At the door, as he said goodnight to them, Kloski repeated his old joke by shivering and saying, “I’ll have to be sure the fire doesn’t go out. What’ll I do if it gets really cold?” It was twenty below.

“*He’ll sit in the barn/And keep himself warm/And tuck his head under his wing./Poor thing!*” She was staring at the remains of the house again. The charred foundations rose like black mountains seen from a great distance. She turned away.

She fitted the dough into a large, yellow bowl, covered it with a clean white towel and left it to rise. She looked at the clock. It was noon hour. Mathew should be back soon. She took the rest of the bread, sliced it, then cut slices from yesterday’s roast and made sandwiches. She put on water to boil for soup.

There wasn’t going to be any money for going home this year. She had no idea how much money Mathew made or had saved but all she had were two one-pound notes that she had brought as keepsakes. Even if she had a thousand, they wouldn’t have done her any good. No one here knew what they were. Anything she needed, Mathew brought from the store but she never saw any cash. Not a penny. And her mother’s letters and her own all had to pass through Mathew’s hands for the store was also the post office. When her mother’s letters arrived, they were always open.

In defiance of Mathew, she had gone to visit Kloski the next day. He was not at home but his door was always open so she went inside and waited till he appeared. Her mouth was swollen and the tea he

made for her hurt but Kloski didn't comment on her swollen lip. They silently played double solitaire. Mathew had burst in without knocking and ordered her home. She was terrified but she refused to budge. When Mathew grabbed her arm and tried to drag her to her feet, Kloski, like a large, clumsy bear, caught Mathew's arms just below the shoulders and shook him until he was helpless. Then Kloski sat Mathew down in a chair beside the door and returned to the card game. When Mathew recovered enough to stand, he stumbled outside. Neither of them looked up.

Lunch, Ellen thought, Mathew should be coming home for lunch. When she looked out she saw that something had drawn the dogs from their shelters. She was too restless to sit so she pulled on her parka. She couldn't see any sign of Mathew so she started walking toward the trees, following the ruts made by the tractor.

She was afraid of the forest. It was like a dark tunnel with no ending. Where the land was high, it was closely packed with tamarack, with their sharp, jutting branches that threatened your eyes. Where the land was low, muskeg shivered underfoot. She went slowly for the granite was slippery with moss and lichen and the muskeg sucked at her feet. Twice, she stumbled. As she walked, dogs dashed past her, crossing and recrossing the path made by the tractor. The farther she went, the more dogs there were and the more excited they were until it seemed as if all the dogs of the village were hurling themselves in a frenzy through the bush.

Just ahead, on a rise where there was a grove of birch, there was an excited, expectant yipping. Four trees had been felled and limbed. The yellow tractor stood in the middle of the small clearing. Mathew's head protruded above it.

Ellen circled around to the far side of the tractor. Mathew had been doing something with the motor and had caught his hand in the machinery. Blood had caked in long streaks down his arm. With his free hand, he held a length of branch. Some dogs were running excitedly back and forth but others were lying patiently in a semi-circle just out of reach of his club. As she watched, one of the dogs lunged forward and slashed at Mathew's leg. His club thumped awkwardly to the ground and he cried out with the pain. His pants were torn half-way to his knee.

He saw her then.

"Ellen!" he called with sudden hope. "Ellen!"

The dogs, aware of her presence, began to watch her.

"Get the axe," he cried, "and cut the belt." He was bound to the tractor by a taut, wide belt that had crushed his hand. The axe lay on the ground just out of reach of his club. Its head gleamed as brightly as polished silver. All around, the trees pressed close, making the clearing smaller.

She felt as if she was going to fall and stretched both arms out from her shoulders to keep her balance. She could see Mathew so clearly that the veins of the hand with which he gripped the tree branch stood out like ridges and the dark hair rose stiffly over his knuckles. At the same time, he seemed distant, beyond her reach, constantly shrinking. She pushed one foot toward him, craning her neck forward, then stopped, squinting suspiciously.

"Ellen," he pleaded, "help me." His voice was small with pain and fear and his lips worked convulsively even when there was no sound.

Where Mathew's pants were newly torn, she could see the line of bright blood. There was a rat, a mouse and a little froggie, she remembered. She concentrated intensely, trying to remember why she had come. *Lunch*, she thought, *he won't be able to come for lunch*. She studied the red smear where his hand disappeared beneath the rough-textured belt. The blood was brighter than she had ever imagined blood being, as bright as the gasoline barrels.

"Lift up the axe. Cut the belt." He was pleading with her as he might with a child. "It's just a little thing. Please."

She had thought that much blood would be darker, nearly black. Like the oil barrels. Like what had

been left of Kloski. They had stood in front of her so she could not see but they had not been quick enough.

The dogs had slowed. Their movements were no longer so abrupt. They still circled and twisted but they moved more rhythmically, their eyes on her, watching her every movement. Their barking had become muffled. She could see the strength in their legs and shoulders. Their muzzles were wet.

Mathew reached the branch toward her with the gentleness of an offering. It did not touch her. To gain her attention, he flicked it, striking her cheek with the tip of a twig. Involuntarily, she jerked back and clasped her hand to her cheek, her eyes momentarily focusing on her husband.

“Ellen!” he exclaimed hopefully.

She swayed back and forth, in danger of losing her balance. Catching herself, she turned and hurried away without looking back.

Activities

Granite Point

Study Questions

1. The story uses flashback. When did Matthew and Ellen arrive in Granite Point?
2. What is the setting of the story (time, place)?
3. How long have Matthew and Ellen been residing in Granite Point at the time the story begins in May?
4. Who is Matthew's employer, and what is his job?
5. Describe Kloski. Who is his employer?
6. What is Ellen's age?
7. Why is Mathew so set on building the ice house under budget?
8. How does Canada's Arctic fail to live up to Ellen's romantic expectations?
9. Describe Mr. Dowling and his understanding of Canada's north.
10. Make a list of the various excerpts from nursery rhymes or ballads. What purpose do these allusions serve?
11. Try to find all the words to the children's song "Oranges and Lemons" about London's church and other well-known bells. Where does George Orwell use this allusion in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*?
12. Historically, what was the cause of London Bridge's falling down? When did this calamity occur?
13. Contrast Mathew and Kloski's attitude to the Indigenous Cree people.
14. Why is Mathew late for lunch?

Bloodflowers

Study Questions

1. Where is the story set?
2. What kind of community is Black Island?

3. Why is Danny in Black Island?
4. Mrs. Poorwilly is described as being like an oracle. What is an oracle?
5. What kind of book was Danny reading at summer school?
6. What kind of myth seems to structure the events in Black Island?
7. What is Mardi Gras?
8. Look up “the fisher king” archetype.
9. What might bloodflowers symbolize?
10. Is Danny a scapegoat?

Activities

Look up Mardi Gras and Fisher King in a good encyclopedia. How does Danny fit into such myths?

Danny’s surname is “Thorson”. Why is this significant?

Look up James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (1890–1915), and the Roman Saturnalia. How does Danny’s probable fate parallel that of Frazer’s sacred king?

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48.

Alice Walker (1944-)**Biography**

Born in Eatonton, Georgia, Alice Walker grew up in rural middle Georgia. Her father was a sharecropper, and her mother was a maid. Although they lived under Jim Crow laws in Georgia, in which African-Americans were discouraged from education, Walker's parents turned her away from working in the fields, espousing instead the importance of education and enrolling her in school at an early age. Walker describes writing at the age of eight years old, largely as a result of growing up in what was a strong oral culture.

In 1952, Walker injured her eye after her brother accidentally shot her with a BB gun. Since the family did not have a car, it was a week before Walker received medical attention. By this time, she was blind in that eye, with scar tissue forming. As a result, Walker became shy and withdrawn, yet, years later, after the scar tissue healed, she became more confident and gregarious, graduating high school as valedictorian. Walker writes about this in her essay "Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self."

Walker left Eatonton for Atlanta, attending Spelman College, a prestigious historically black college for women, and later received a scholarship to Sarah Lawrence College in New York. Walker considers her time in New York as critical for her development. While there, Walker became involved in the Black Arts Movement before her work in the civil rights movement brought her back to the South.

In 1969, Walker took a teaching position as writer-in-residence at Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi, before accepting the same position at Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi. While there, she published her debut novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970). However, Walker soon returned to New York to join the editorial staff of *Ms.* magazine.

Her second novel, *Meridian* (1976), received positive reviews, but her third novel, *The Color Purple* (1982), perhaps best showcases her writing talents. This novel draws on some of Walker's personal experiences as well as demonstrates Walker's own creativity. For it, she won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. This novel was later adapted as a popular film. In addition to her engagement as an activist in many key issues, Walker has continued to write, publishing the famous book of essays, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens* (1983), as well as several other novels, such as *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992).

One theme that emerges in Walker's work is acknowledging the contributions of often underappreciated African-American writers, such as Zora Neale Hurston. Furthermore, Walker's writing calls attention to the discrepancies in America's treatment of African-Americans, while also acknowledging the importance of all Americans' shared past. In the short story "Everyday Use," we see many of these themes coalesce in the conflict between sisters Dee and Maggie. Although they are sisters, these two have very different lives, which leads to the central tension of the story—their argument over the quilt.

Everyday Use

You can read the full text here: [“Everyday Use” by Alice Walker \[Full Text\]](#).

Published in 1973

Activities

Exercises

Study Questions

1. From what point of view is this story told? Is the narrator the main character in the story or a minor character? Is she the protagonist?
2. Assess the narrator's character. Is she well-educated? Intelligent? Wise? Witty?
3. Explain the title of the story.
4. Compare and contrast the two sisters in the story, Dee and Maggie. How are they similar? How are they different?
5. Why has Dee changed her name? How does her mother react to the news that Dee has changed her name?
6. What does Dee want? Why has she come home?
7. How does the setting of the story influence the theme and point of view?
8. Why did the original house the Johnson family occupied burn down? What is the significance of the fire?
9. Identify and explain two examples of symbolism in the story.
10. Provide one example of verbal irony and one example of situational irony in "Everyday Use" and explain the nature of the irony.
11. What is the theme of the story?

Activities

In small groups, research and define the term "satire" and discuss the elements of satire in "Everyday Use."

In small groups (or in your journal), speculate on reasons why two siblings in the same family can be so different.

Watch a scene from a [film adaptation of "Everyday Use"](#).

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49.

Leslie Marmon Silko (1948–)



Biography

Leslie Marmon Silko was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but was raised in the outskirts of Old Laguna, a Pueblo village. Silko describes a lively childhood spent outdoors, one which included riding horses and hunting deer. Silko enjoys one-fourth Pueblo ancestry, and she also shares Mexican ancestry. Silko did not live on the Laguna Pueblo reservation, and Silko was not allowed to participate in many Pueblo rituals.

Through the fourth grade, she attended a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school, only to later commute to Manzano Day School, a Catholic private school in Albuquerque. After high school, Silko enrolled at the University of New Mexico, where she earned a bachelor's degree in English. After college, Silko taught creative writing courses at the University of New Mexico before enrolling in their American Indian law program. As her literary career blossomed, Silko dropped out to focus on her writing. Silko would later spend several years as a professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she currently resides.

Silko's first published short story, "The Man to Send Rain Clouds" (1969), was originally written for a class in college and was based around a similar autobiographic event. The story earned Silko a National Endowment for the Humanities Discovery Grant and, as Silko continued to publish, her literary reputation grew.

In 1974, her first book, *Laguna Woman*, featured a selection of Silko's poems and short fiction; however, it was the emergence of her debut novel, *Ceremony* (1977), that brought her national recognition and established her as a prominent Native American writer. Since then, Silko has remained one of the most respected contemporary American writers: her short story and poetry collection, *Storyteller* (1981), was well-received and, in the same year, Silko was awarded the famed MacArthur Genius Grant. Her other novels include *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) and *Gardens in the Dunes* (1999).

In 1996, Silko published *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*, a collection of essays on Native American life. These essays discuss many contemporary issues relevant to Native Americans as well as her own reflections on her storytelling background and writing process.

Silko's Native American heritage, especially her Pueblo upbringing, is a major thematic element that emerges within her writing regardless of its genre, be it poetry, fiction, or non-fiction. In "Yellow Woman," a part of her *Storyteller* collection, Silko is able to merge traditional Pueblo legends with a contemporary tale. Part action/adventure story and part mythology, "Yellow Woman" seamlessly tells the tale of a narrator who may or may not be caught up in Laguna ancestral lore.

Yellow Woman

You can read it here: ["Yellow Woman" by Leslie Marmon Silko \[PDF\]](#).

Published 1974

Activities

The Yellow Woman

Study Questions

1. What elements seem out of time? What effect on readers do these anachronistic elements have?
2. Is this a story of alienation or community? How does the narrator use the Kachina yellow woman story to connect with her community?
3. Is this a story about humanity or the mystical?

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50.

Andrea Levy (1956–2019)

Biography

Andrea Levy was an English novelist, born in London to Jamaican parents who sailed to England in 1948. Levy's novels frequently explore topics related to members of the Jamaican diaspora in England and the ways in which they negotiate racial, cultural, and national identities.

Andrea Levy was of primarily Afro-Jamaican descent. She had a Jewish paternal grandfather and a Scots maternal great-grandfather.

Growing up on a council estate in Highbury, London, she attended Highbury Hill Grammar School, "ate a lot of sweets, watched a lot of soap operas and 'lived the life of an ordinary London working-class girl.'" In her mid-20s, she worked for a social institution where she encountered racist attacks. She also worked part-time in the costume departments of the BBC and the Royal Opera House while starting a graphic design company with her husband, Bill Mayblin. During this time, she experienced a form of awakening to her identity concerning both her gender and her race. She also became aware of the power of books and began to read "excessively": it was easy enough to find literature by black writers from the United States, but she could find very little literature from black writers in the United Kingdom.

Levy began writing only in her mid-30s, having enrolled in a creative writing class at the City Lit in 1989, continuing on the course for seven years.

When Levy's first novel, the semi-autobiographical *Every Light in the House Burnin'*, was published in 1994, it attracted favourable reviews.

Levy's second novel, *Never Far from Nowhere* (1996), is a coming-of-age story about two sisters of Jamaican parentage growing up in London in the 1970s. The novel is narrated from the perspectives of Vivian and Olive and chronicles their difficulties living in 1970s England. The narrative focuses specifically on the physical differences between the sisters in terms of skin colour, eye colour, and hair type, which causes them to be treated differently by British people, and the ways in which they negotiate and constitute racial and national identities. The novel was long-listed for the Orange Prize for Fiction. After its publication, Levy visited Jamaica for the first time, and what she learned of her family's past provided material for her next book.

Fruit of the Lemon (1999), a novel set in England and Jamaica in the Thatcher era, "explores the notion of home, and how it differs for the formerly colonized and their descendants," as *The New York Times* noted. "Though Levy writes specifically about black Jamaican Britons and their struggles to be acknowledged as full members of the larger society, her novel illuminates the general situation facing all children of postcolonial immigrants across the West, from the banlieue of France to the Islamic neighborhoods of New York to the Hispanic ghettos of Los Angeles."

Levy's fourth novel, *Small Island* (2004), put her in a new major literary league. As Mike Phillips wrote in *The Guardian*: "*Small Island* is a great read, delivering the sort of pleasure which has been the traditional stock-in-trade of a long line of English novelists. It's honest, skilful, thoughtful and

important. This is Andrea Levy's big book." It won three prestigious awards: Whitbread Book of the Year, the Orange Prize, and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize. The novel was subsequently made into a two-part television drama that was broadcast by the BBC in December 2009.

Levy's fifth novel, *The Long Song*, won the 2011 Walter Scott Prize and was shortlisted for the 2010 Man Booker Prize. *The Daily Telegraph* called it a "sensational novel... [that] tells the life story of July, a slave girl living on a sugar plantation in 1830s Jamaica just as emancipation is juddering into action." Kate Kellaway in *The Observer* commented: "*The Long Song* reads with the sort of ebullient effortlessness that can only be won by hard work." *The Washington Post* reviewer, calling it "insightful and inspired," went on to say that the work "reminds us that she is one of the best historical novelists of her generation." *The Long Song* was adapted as a three-part BBC One television series that was broadcast in December 2018.

Her short book *Six Stories and an Essay* was published in 2014, described by Katy Guest in *The Independent* as "a slight collection, but full of important insights."

Andrea Levy died on February 14, 2019.

Loose Change

You can read the full text here: [Andrea Levy's "Loose Change" \[PDF\]](#).

Activities

Loose Change

Study Questions

1. Describe the narrator. What is her probable profession? Racial origin?
2. Describe Laylor.
3. Why do you think Laylor likes the picture of the English ballerina Darcey Bussell (b. 1949)?
4. Why are Laylor and her brother in London?
5. The narrator assumes that Laylor had sought her out, “sifted [her] from the crowd”? Do you agree? Why or why not? Provide evidence.
6. How has the narrator’s grandmother changed from when she had been without shelter as an immigrant?
7. Comment on the ladies who complain of too much froth in their coffee. Why does Levy place this detail at this point in the story?
8. Why does the narrator decide to be benevolent to Laylor?
9. Why does she suddenly decide not to help her?
10. What is the theme of the story?

Activities

1. Log on to the [website of the National Portrait Gallery in London](#). Comment on the portrait of Darcey Bussell. Then look at the online portraits of the figures mentioned on this site or elsewhere (mostly contemporary writers such as Bennett, Greer, and Byatt).
2. Read Katherine Mansfield’s story “A Cup of Tea” (above), which describes a similar encounter between two women; then write an essay comparing/contrasting Mansfield’s Rosemary Fell and the unnamed protagonist of “Loose Change.”
3. Look at the various contextual activities provided by the British Council in the kit that accompanies this story at the [Teaching English “Loose Change” site](#).

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V

The Novella

51.

Turn of the Screw by Henry James (1843-1916)



Biography

Henry James was a fierce defender of the novelistic tradition and of formal complexity. A master of focalization, he showed in works like *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904) the centrality of perspective to a novel's construction. His works explored the encounter between Americans and Europeans, between the innocent and the worldly, between individual, fluid consciousness and the obtuseness of others and the outside world. In his preface to *The Golden Bowl*, James wrote that the writing and reading of fiction was an ethical project, that "the effort really to see and really to represent is no idle business in face of the constant force that makes for muddlement." Moving from the Victorian melodrama of *The American* (1877) to the modernist impressionism of *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), James's entire career was defined by the seriousness with which he took the art of the novel.

James was born on April 15, 1843 in New York City into a family of wealth and intellect. His father, Henry James, Sr., was a leading theologian of the time and friends with Emerson and Thoreau; his older brother, William, would become an important figure in psychology and philosophy; and his sister, Alice, would later become famous as a diarist. Henry moved throughout his childhood, as the young cosmopolite studied in Geneva, Paris, and Bonn, among other cities. He briefly attended Harvard Law School, but decided upon a life of letters instead of the law.

In 1871, James published his first of twenty novels, *Watch and Ward*. For the next five years, James traveled throughout Europe, working as a contributor for the *Nation* and *Atlantic Monthly*, rarely living

in the United States. In 1875, Roderick Hudson, a Bildungsroman that contains hints of repressed homosexual longing, appeared serially in the Atlantic. The next year, James moved to Europe. He lived first in Rome, then in Paris, and finally settled in England, where he would live until his death in 1916.

James's early novels had a Transatlantic flavor: *The American*, *Daisy Miller* (1879), and *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) all featured young, naïve Americans traveling to Europe, where an encounter with corruption and cynicism forced the reconsideration of their own selves and ethical values. Showing James's lasting interest in Balzac and Dickens, these early novels are exemplars of the realist tradition. James tried his hand at drama, primarily from 1890 to 1895, but he failed spectacularly. Critics like Leon Edel have pointed towards the failure of works like *The Tragic Muse* (1890) as central to James's late style.

As James continued writing, his works became more and more opaque. "Muddlement," the epistemological uncertainty involved in consciousness and the negotiation of everyday social relations, caused a formal change in his novels. James's prose became oblique, a puzzle to be decoded rather than a mirror clearly and simply reflecting reality. *The Golden Bowl* is a perfect model of this narrative indirectness. The novel treats the complex and adulterous relations between Maggie Verver, her husband Prince Amerigo, and his former mistress Charlotte Stant. The atmosphere is almost claustrophobic in nature. James relentlessly tracks the thoughts of first Amerigo and then Maggie, refusing to give the reader information that his characters are not privy to. One feels trapped within the obsessive minds and machinations of the characters.

James traveled to the United States in 1904-1905 for a lecture tour, but came back to England shortly thereafter. In 1915, he became a British citizen in order to protest the United States' isolationism in the face of World War I. He died in London on February 28, 1916. Unlike T.S. Eliot, another Anglophile, expatriate American modernist, James's remains were returned to the United States.

Introduction

Published in 1898

The story had held us, round the fire, sufficiently breathless, but except the obvious remark that it was gruesome, as, on Christmas Eve in an old house, a strange tale should essentially be, I remember no comment uttered till somebody happened to say that it was the only case he had met in which such a visitation had fallen on a child. The case, I may mention, was that of an apparition in just such an old house as had gathered us for the occasion — an appearance, of a dreadful kind, to a little boy sleeping in the room with his mother and waking her up in the terror of it; waking her not to dissipate his dread and soothe him to sleep again, but to encounter also, herself, before she had succeeded in doing so, the same sight that had shaken him. It was this observation that drew from Douglas — not immediately, but later in the evening — a reply that had the interesting consequence to which I call attention. Someone else told a story not particularly effective, which I saw he was not following. This I took for a sign that he had himself something to produce and that we should only have to wait. We waited in fact till two nights later, but that same evening, before we scattered, he brought out what was in his mind.

“I quite agree — in regard to Griffin’s ghost, or whatever it was — that its appearing first to the little boy, at so tender an age, adds a particular touch. But it’s not the first occurrence of its charming kind that I know to have involved a child. If the child gives the effect another turn of the screw, what do you say to *two* children — ?”

“We say, of course,” somebody exclaimed, “that they give two turns! Also that we want to hear about them.”

I can see Douglas there before the fire, to which he had got up to present his back, looking down at his interlocutor with his hands in his pockets. “Nobody but me, till now, has ever heard. It’s quite too horrible.” This, naturally, was declared by several voices to give the thing the utmost price, and our friend, with quiet art, prepared his triumph by turning his eyes over the rest of us and going on: “It’s beyond everything. Nothing at all that I know touches it.”

“For sheer terror?” I remember asking.

He seemed to say it was not so simple as that; to be really at a loss how to qualify it. He passed his hand over his eyes, made a little wincing grimace. “For dreadful — dreadful!”

“Oh, how delicious!” cried one of the women.

He took no notice of her; he looked at me, but as if, instead of me, he saw what he spoke of. “For general uncanny ugliness and horror and pain.”

“Well then,” I said, “just sit right down and begin.”

He turned round to the fire, gave a kick to a log, watched it an instant. Then as he faced us again: “I can’t begin. I shall have to send to town.” There was a unanimous groan at this, and much reproach; after which, in his preoccupied way, he explained. “The story’s written. It’s in a locked drawer — it has not been out for years. I could write to my man and enclose the key; he could send down the packet as he finds it.” It was to me in particular that he appeared to propound this — appeared almost to appeal for aid not to hesitate. He had broken a thickness of ice, the formation of many a winter; had had his reasons for a long silence. The others resented postponement, but it was just his scruples that charmed me. I adjured him to write by the first post and to agree with us for an early hearing; then I asked him if the experience in question had been his own. To this his answer was prompt. “Oh, thank God, no!”

“And is the record yours? You took the thing down?”

“Nothing but the impression. I took that *here*” — he tapped his heart. “I’ve never lost it.”

“Then your manuscript — ?”

“Is in old, faded ink, and in the most beautiful hand.” He hung fire again. “A woman’s. She has been dead these twenty years. She sent me the pages in question before she died.” They were all listening now, and of course there was somebody to be arch, or at any rate to draw the inference. But if he put the inference by without a smile it was also without irritation. “She was a most charming person, but she was ten years older than I. She was my sister’s governess,” he quietly said. “She was the most agreeable woman I’ve ever known in her position; she would have been worthy of any whatever. It was long ago, and this episode was long before. I was at Trinity¹, and I found her at home on my coming down the second summer. I was much there that year — it was a beautiful one; and we had, in her off-hours, some strolls and talks in the garden — talks in which she struck me as awfully clever and nice. Oh yes; don’t grin: I liked her extremely and am glad to this day to think she liked me, too. If she hadn’t she wouldn’t have told me. She had never told anyone. It wasn’t simply that she said so, but that I knew she hadn’t. I was sure; I could see. You’ll easily judge why when you hear.”

“Because the thing had been such a scare?”

He continued to fix me. “You’ll easily judge,” he repeated: “*you* will.”

I fixed him, too. “I see. She was in love.”

He laughed for the first time. “You *are* acute. Yes, she was in love. That is, she had been. That came out — she couldn’t tell her story without its coming out. I saw it, and she saw I saw it; but neither of us spoke of it. I remember the time and the place — the corner of the lawn, the shade of the great beeches and the long, hot summer afternoon. It wasn’t a scene for a shudder; but oh — !” He quitted the fire and dropped back into his chair.

“You’ll receive the packet Thursday morning?” I inquired.

“Probably not till the second post.”

“Well then; after dinner — ”

“You’ll all meet me here?” He looked us round again. “Isn’t anybody going?” It was almost the tone of hope. “Everybody will stay!”

“I will — and I will!” cried the ladies whose departure had been fixed. Mrs. Griffin, however, expressed the need for a little more light. “Who was it she was in love with?”

“The story will tell,” I took upon myself to reply.

“Oh, I can’t wait for the story!”

“The story *won’t* tell,” said Douglas; “not in any literal, vulgar way.”

“More’s the pity, then. That’s the only way I ever understand.”

“Won’t you tell, Douglas?” somebody else inquired.

He sprang to his feet again. “Yes — tomorrow. Now I must go to bed. Good night.” And quickly catching up a candlestick, he left us slightly bewildered. From our end of the great brown hall we heard his step on the stair; whereupon Mrs. Griffin spoke. “Well, if I don’t know who she was in love with, I know who *he* was.”

“She was ten years older,” said her husband.

“*Raison de plus*² — at that age! But it’s rather nice, his long reticence.”

“Forty years!” Griffin put in.

“With this outbreak at last.”

“The outbreak,” I returned, “will make a tremendous occasion of Thursday night;” and everyone so

1. A constituent college of the University of Cambridge, founded by King Henry VIII in 1546.

2. All the more reason.

agreed with me that, in the light of it, we lost all attention for everything else. The last story, however incomplete and like the mere opening of a serial, had been told; we handshook and “candlestuck,” as somebody said, and went to bed.

I knew the next day that a letter containing the key had, by the first post, gone off to his London apartments; but in spite of — or perhaps just on account of — the eventual diffusion of this knowledge we quite let him alone till after dinner, till such an hour of the evening, in fact, as might best accord with the kind of emotion on which our hopes were fixed. Then he became as communicative as we could desire and indeed gave us his best reason for being so. We had it from him again before the fire in the hall, as we had had our mild wonders of the previous night. It appeared that the narrative he had promised to read us really required for a proper intelligence a few words of prologue. Let me say here distinctly, to have done with it, that this narrative, from an exact transcript of my own made much later, is what I shall presently give. Poor Douglas, before his death — when it was in sight — committed to me the manuscript that reached him on the third of these days and that, on the same spot, with immense effect, he began to read to our hushed little circle on the night of the fourth. The departing ladies who had said they would stay didn’t, of course, thank heaven, stay: they departed, in consequence of arrangements made, in a rage of curiosity, as they professed, produced by the touches with which he had already worked us up. But that only made his little final auditory more compact and select, kept it, round the hearth, subject to a common thrill.

The first of these touches conveyed that the written statement took up the tale at a point after it had, in a manner, begun. The fact to be in possession of was therefore that his old friend, the youngest of several daughters of a poor country parson, had, at the age of twenty, on taking service for the first time in the schoolroom, come up to London, in trepidation, to answer in person an advertisement that had already placed her in brief correspondence with the advertiser. This person proved, on her presenting herself, for judgment, at a house in Harley Street, that impressed her as vast and imposing — this prospective patron proved a gentleman, a bachelor in the prime of life, such a figure as had never risen, save in a dream or an old novel, before a fluttered, anxious girl out of a Hampshire vicarage. One could easily fix this type; it never, happily, dies out. He was handsome and bold and pleasant, offhand and gay and kind. He struck her, inevitably, as gallant and splendid, but what took her most of all and gave her the courage she afterward showed was that he put the whole thing to her as a kind of favor, an obligation he should gratefully incur. She conceived him as rich, but as fearfully extravagant — saw him all in a glow of high fashion, of good looks, of expensive habits, of charming ways with women. He had for his own town residence a big house filled with the spoils of travel and the trophies of the chase; but it was to his country home, an old family place in Essex, that he wished her immediately to proceed.

He had been left, by the death of their parents in India, guardian to a small nephew and a small niece, children of a younger, a military brother, whom he had lost two years before. These children were, by the strangest of chances for a man in his position — a lone man without the right sort of experience or a gram of patience — very heavily on his hands. It had all been a great worry and, on his own part doubtless, a series of blunders, but he immensely pitied the poor chicks and had done all he could; had in particular sent them down to his other house, the proper place for them being of course the country, and kept them there, from the first, with the best people he could find to look after them, parting even with his own servants to wait on them and going down himself, whenever he might, to see how they were doing. The awkward thing was that they had practically no other relations and that his own affairs took up all his time. He had put them in possession of Bly, which was healthy and secure, and had placed at the head of their little establishment — but below stairs only — an excellent woman, Mrs. Grose, whom he was sure his visitor would like and who had formerly been maid to his mother. She was now housekeeper and was also acting for the time as superintendent to the little girl, of whom,

without children of her own, she was, by good luck, extremely fond. There were plenty of people to help, but of course the young lady who should go down as governess would be in supreme authority. She would also have, in holidays, to look after the small boy, who had been for a term at school — young as he was to be sent, but what else could be done? — and who, as the holidays were about to begin, would be back from one day to the other. There had been for the two children at first a young lady whom they had had the misfortune to lose. She had done for them quite beautifully — she was a most respectable person — till her death, the great awkwardness of which had, precisely, left no alternative but the school for little Miles. Mrs. Grose, since then, in the way of manners and doings, had done as she could for Flora; and there were, further, a cook, a housemaid, a dairywoman, an old pony, an old groom, and an old gardener, all likewise thoroughly respectable.

So far had Douglas presented his picture when someone put a question. “And what did the former governess die of? — of so much respectability?”

Our friend’s answer was prompt. “That will come out. I don’t anticipate.”

“Excuse me — I thought that was just what you *are* doing.”

“In her successor’s place,” I suggested, “I should have wished to learn if the office brought with it —”

“Necessary danger to life?” Douglas completed my thought. “She did wish to learn, and she did learn. You shall hear tomorrow what she learned. Meanwhile, of course, the prospect struck her as slightly grim. She was young, untried, nervous: it was a vision of serious duties and little company, of really great loneliness. She hesitated — took a couple of days to consult and consider. But the salary offered much exceeded her modest measure, and on a second interview she faced the music, she engaged.” And Douglas, with this, made a pause that, for the benefit of the company, moved me to throw in —

“The moral of which was of course the seduction exercised by the splendid young man. She succumbed to it.”

He got up and, as he had done the night before, went to the fire, gave a stir to a log with his foot, then stood a moment with his back to us. “She saw him only twice.”

“Yes, but that’s just the beauty of her passion.”

A little to my surprise, on this, Douglas turned round to me. “It *was* the beauty of it. There were others,” he went on, “who hadn’t succumbed. He told her frankly all his difficulty — that for several applicants the conditions had been prohibitive. They were, somehow, simply afraid. It sounded dull — it sounded strange; and all the more so because of his main condition.”

“Which was — ?”

“That she should never trouble him — but never, never: neither appeal nor complain nor write about anything; only meet all questions herself, receive all moneys from his solicitor, take the whole thing over and let him alone. She promised to do this, and she mentioned to me that when, for a moment, disburdened, delighted, he held her hand, thanking her for the sacrifice, she already felt rewarded.

“But was that all her reward?” one of the ladies asked.

“She never saw him again.”

“Oh!” said the lady; which, as our friend immediately left us again, was the only other word of importance contributed to the subject till, the next night, by the corner of the hearth, in the best chair, he opened the faded red cover of a thin old-fashioned gilt-edged album. The whole thing took indeed more nights than one, but on the first occasion the same lady put another question. “What is your title?”

“I haven’t one.”

“Oh, *I* have!” I said. But Douglas, without heeding me, had begun to read with a fine clearness that was like a rendering to the ear of the beauty of his author’s hand.

Chapter 1

I remember the whole beginning as a succession of flights and drops, a little seesaw of the right throbs and the wrong. After rising, in town, to meet his appeal, I had at all events a couple of very bad days — found myself doubtful again, felt indeed sure I had made a mistake. In this state of mind I spent the long hours of bumping, swinging coach that carried me to the stopping place at which I was to be met by a vehicle from the house. This convenience, I was told, had been ordered, and I found, toward the close of the June afternoon, a commodious fly³ in waiting for me. Driving at that hour, on a lovely day, through a country to which the summer sweetness seemed to offer me a friendly welcome, my fortitude mounted afresh and, as we turned into the avenue, encountered a reprieve that was probably but a proof of the point to which it had sunk. I suppose I had expected, or had dreaded, something so melancholy that what greeted me was a good surprise. I remember as a most pleasant impression the broad, clear front, its open windows and fresh curtains and the pair of maids looking out; I remember the lawn and the bright flowers and the crunch of my wheels on the gravel and the clustered treetops over which the rooks circled and cawed in the golden sky. The scene had a greatness that made it a different affair from my own scant home, and there immediately appeared at the door, with a little girl in her hand, a civil person who dropped me as decent a curtsy as if I had been the mistress or a distinguished visitor. I had received in Harley Street a narrower notion of the place, and that, as I recalled it, made me think the proprietor still more of a gentleman, suggested that what I was to enjoy might be something beyond his promise.

I had no drop again till the next day, for I was carried triumphantly through the following hours by my introduction to the younger of my pupils. The little girl who accompanied Mrs. Grose appeared to me on the spot a creature so charming as to make it a great fortune to have to do with her. She was the most beautiful child I had ever seen, and I afterward wondered that my employer had not told me more of her. I slept little that night — I was too much excited; and this astonished me, too, I recollect, remained with me, adding to my sense of the liberality with which I was treated. The large, impressive room, one of the best in the house, the great state bed, as I almost felt it, the full, figured draperies, the long glasses in which, for the first time, I could see myself from head to foot, all struck me — like the extraordinary charm of my small charge — as so many things thrown in. It was thrown in as well, from the first moment, that I should get on with Mrs. Grose in a relation over which, on my way, in the coach, I fear I had rather brooded. The only thing indeed that in this early outlook might have made me shrink again was the clear circumstance of her being so glad to see me. I perceived within half an hour that she was so glad — stout, simple, plain, clean, wholesome woman — as to be positively on her guard against showing it too much. I wondered even then a little why she should wish not to show it, and that, with reflection, with suspicion, might of course have made me uneasy.

But it was a comfort that there could be no uneasiness in a connection with anything so beatific as the radiant image of my little girl, the vision of whose angelic beauty had probably more than anything else to do with me restlessness that, before morning, made me several times rise and wander about my room to take in the whole picture and prospect; to watch, from my open window, the faint summer dawn, to look at such portions of the rest of the house as I could catch, and to listen, while, in the fading dusk, the first birds began to twitter, for the possible recurrence of a sound or two, less natural and not without, but within, that I had fancied I heard. There had been a moment when I believed I recognized, faint and far, the cry of a child; there had been another when I found myself just

3. A spacious carriage.

consciously starting as at the passage, before my door, of a light footstep. But these fancies were not marked enough not to be thrown off, and it is only in the light, or the gloom, I should rather say, of other and subsequent matters that they now come back to me. To watch, teach, “form” little Flora would too evidently be the making of a happy and useful life. It had been agreed between us downstairs that after this first occasion I should have her as a matter of course at night, her small white bed being already arranged, to that end, in my room. What I had undertaken was the whole care of her, and she had remained, just this last time, with Mrs. Grose only as an effect of our consideration for my inevitable strangeness and her natural timidity. In spite of this timidity — which the child herself, in the oddest way in the world, had been perfectly frank and brave about, allowing it, without a sign of uncomfortable consciousness, with the deep, sweet serenity indeed of one of Raphael’s⁴ holy infants, to be discussed, to be imputed to her, and to determine us — I felt quite sure she would presently like me. It was part of what I already liked Mrs. Grose herself for, the pleasure I could see her feel in my admiration and wonder as I sat at supper with four tall candles and with my pupil, in a high chair and a bib, brightly facing me, between them, over bread and milk. There were naturally things that in Flora’s presence could pass between us only as prodigious and gratified looks, obscure and roundabout allusions.

“And the little boy — does he look like her? Is he too so very remarkable?”

One wouldn’t flatter a child. “Oh, miss, *most* remarkable. If you think well of this one!” — and she stood there with a plate in her hand, beaming at our companion, who looked from one of us to the other with placid heavenly eyes that contained nothing to check us.

“Yes; if I do — ?”

“You *will* be carried away by the little gentleman!”

“Well, that, I think, is what I came for — to be carried away. I’m afraid, however,” I remember feeling the impulse to add, “I’m rather easily carried away. I was carried away in London!”

I can still see Mrs. Grose’s broad face as she took this in. “In Harley Street?”

“In Harley Street.”

“Well, miss, you’re not the first — and you won’t be the last.”

“Oh, I’ve no pretension,” I could laugh, “to being the only one. My other pupil, at any rate, as I understand, comes back tomorrow?”

“Not tomorrow — Friday, miss. He arrives, as you did, by the coach, under care of the guard, and is to be met by the same carriage.”

I forthwith expressed that the proper as well as the pleasant and friendly thing would be therefore that on the arrival of the public conveyance I should be in waiting for him with his little sister; an idea in which Mrs. Grose concurred so heartily that I somehow took her manner as a kind of comforting pledge — never falsified, thank heaven! — that we should on every question be quite at one. Oh, she was glad I was there!

What I felt the next day was, I suppose, nothing that could be fairly called a reaction from the cheer of my arrival; it was probably at the most only a slight oppression produced by a fuller measure of the scale, as I walked round them, gazed up at them, took them in, of my new circumstances. They had, as it were, an extent and mass for which I had not been prepared and in the presence of which I found myself, freshly, a little scared as well as a little proud. Lessons, in this agitation, certainly suffered some delay; I reflected that my first duty was, by the gentlest arts I could contrive, to win the child into the sense of knowing me. I spent the day with her out-of-doors; I arranged with her, to her great satisfaction, that it should be she, she only, who might show me the place. She showed it step by step

4. Raffaello Sanzio (1483-1520). Italian painter of the High Renaissance. His “Madonna of the Goldfinch” depicts two children: Christ and John the Baptist, admiring a bird under Mary’s gaze.

and room by room and secret by secret, with droll, delightful, childish talk about it and with the result, in half an hour, of our becoming immense friends. Young as she was, I was struck, throughout our little tour, with her confidence and courage with the way, in empty chambers and dull corridors, on crooked staircases that made me pause and even on the summit of an old machicolated⁵ square tower that made me dizzy, her morning music, her disposition to tell me so many more things than she asked, rang out and led me on. I have not seen Bly since the day I left it, and I daresay that to my older and more informed eyes it would now appear sufficiently contracted. But as my little conductress, with her hair of gold and her frock of blue, danced before me round corners and pattered down passages, I had the view of a castle of romance inhabited by a rosy sprite, such a place as would somehow, for diversion of the young idea, take all color out of storybooks and fairytales. Wasn't it just a storybook over which I had fallen adoze and adream? No; it was a big, ugly, antique, but convenient house, embodying a few features of a building still older, half-replaced and half-utilized, in which I had the fancy of our being almost as lost as a handful of passengers in a great drifting ship. Well, I was, strangely, at the helm!

5. An opening in a projecting wall from which stones or boiling water could be dropped upon invaders.

Chapter 2

This came home to me when, two days later, I drove over with Flora to meet, as Mrs. Grose said, the little gentleman; and all the more for an incident that, presenting itself the second evening, had deeply disconcerted me. The first day had been, on the whole, as I have expressed, reassuring; but I was to see it wind up in keen apprehension. The postbag, that evening — it came late — contained a letter for me, which, however, in the hand of my employer, I found to be composed but of a few words enclosing another, addressed to himself, with a seal still unbroken. “This, I recognize, is from the headmaster, and the headmaster’s an awful bore. Read him, please; deal with him; but mind you don’t report. Not a word. I’m off!” I broke the seal with a great effort — so great a one that I was a long time coming to it; took the unopened missive at last up to my room and only attacked it just before going to bed. I had better have let it wait till morning, for it gave me a second sleepless night. With no counsel to take, the next day, I was full of distress; and it finally got so the better of me that I determined to open myself at least to Mrs. Grose.

“What does it mean? The child’s dismissed his school.”

She gave me a look that I remarked at the moment; then, visibly, with a quick blankness, seemed to try to take it back. “But aren’t they all — ?”

“Sent home — yes. But only for the holidays. Miles may never go back at all.”

Consciously, under my attention, she reddened. “They won’t take him?”

“They absolutely decline.”

At this she raised her eyes, which she had turned from me; I saw them fill with good tears. “What has he done?”

I hesitated; then I judged best simply to hand her my letter — which, however, had the effect of making her, without taking it, simply put her hands behind her. She shook her head sadly. “Such things are not for me, miss.”

My counselor couldn’t read! I winced at my mistake, which I attenuated as I could, and opened my letter again to repeat it to her; then, faltering in the act and folding it up once more, I put it back in my pocket. “Is he really *bad*?”

The tears were still in her eyes. “Do the gentlemen say so?”

“They go into no particulars. They simply express their regret that it should be impossible to keep him. That can have only one meaning.” Mrs. Grose listened with dumb emotion; she forbore to ask me what this meaning might be; so that, presently, to put the thing with some coherence and with the mere aid of her presence to my own mind, I went on: “That he’s an injury to the others.”

At this, with one of the quick turns of simple folk, she suddenly flamed up. “Master Miles! *him* an injury?”

There was such a flood of good faith in it that, though I had not yet seen the child, my very fears made me jump to the absurdity of the idea. I found myself, to meet my friend the better, offering it, on the spot, sarcastically. “To his poor little innocent mates!”

“It’s too dreadful,” cried Mrs. Grose, “to say such cruel things! Why, he’s scarce ten years old.”

“Yes, yes; it would be incredible.”

She was evidently grateful for such a profession. “See him, miss, first. *Then* believe it!” I felt forthwith a new impatience to see him; it was the beginning of a curiosity that, for all the next hours, was to deepen almost to pain. Mrs. Grose was aware, I could judge, of what she had produced in me,

and she followed it up with assurance. “You might as well believe it of the little lady. Bless her,” she added the next moment — “*look at her!*”

I turned and saw that Flora, whom, ten minutes before, I had established in the schoolroom with a sheet of white paper, a pencil, and a copy of nice “round o’s,” now presented herself to view at the open door. She expressed in her little way an extraordinary detachment from disagreeable duties, looking to me, however, with a great childish light that seemed to offer it as a mere result of the affection she had conceived for my person, which had rendered necessary that she should follow me. I needed nothing more than this to feel the full force of Mrs. Grose’s comparison, and, catching my pupil in my arms, covered her with kisses in which there was a sob of atonement.

Nonetheless, the rest of the day I watched for further occasion to approach my colleague, especially as, toward evening, I began to fancy she rather sought to avoid me. I overtook her, I remember, on the staircase; we went down together, and at the bottom I detained her, holding her there with a hand on her arm. “I take what you said to me at noon as a declaration that *you’ve* never known him to be bad.”

She threw back her head; she had clearly, by this time, and very honestly, adopted an attitude. “Oh, never known him — I don’t pretend *that!*”

I was upset again. “Then you *have* known him — ?”

“Yes indeed, miss, thank God!”

On reflection I accepted this. “You mean that a boy who never is — ?”

“Is no boy for *me!*”

I held her tighter. “You like them with the spirit to be naughty?” Then, keeping pace with her answer, “So do I!” I eagerly brought out. “But not to the degree to contaminate — ”

“To contaminate?” — my big word left her at a loss. I explained it. “To corrupt.”

She stared, taking my meaning in; but it produced in her an odd laugh. “Are you afraid he’ll corrupt *you?*” She put the question with such a fine bold humor that, with a laugh, a little silly doubtless, to match her own, I gave way for the time to the apprehension of ridicule.

But the next day, as the hour for my drive approached, I cropped up in another place. “What was the lady who was here before?”

“The last governess? She was also young and pretty — almost as young and almost as pretty, miss, even as you.”

“Ah, then, I hope her youth and her beauty helped her!” I recollect throwing off. “He seems to like us young and pretty!”

“Oh, he *did,*” Mrs. Grose assented — “it was the way he liked everyone!” She had no sooner spoken indeed than she caught herself up. “I mean that’s *his* way — the master’s.”

I was struck. “But of whom did you speak first?”

She looked blank, but she colored. “Why, of *him.*”

“Of the master?”

“Of who else?”

There was so obviously no one else that the next moment I had lost my impression of her having accidentally said more than she meant — and I merely asked what I wanted to know. “Did *she* see anything in the boy — ?”

“That wasn’t right? She never told me.”

I had a scruple, but I overcame it. “Was she careful — particular?”

Mrs. Grose appeared to try to be conscientious. “About some things — yes.”

“But not about all?”

Again she considered. “Well, miss — she’s gone. I won’t tell tales.”

“I quite understand your feeling,” I hastened to reply; but I thought it, after an instant, not opposed to this concession to pursue: “Did she die here?”

“No — she went off.”

I don't know what there was in this brevity of Mrs. Grose's that struck me as ambiguous. “Went off to die?” Mrs. Grose looked straight out of the window, but I felt that, hypothetically, I had a right to know what young persons engaged for Bly were expected to do. “She was taken ill, you mean, and went home?”

“She was not taken ill, so far as appeared, in this house. She left it, at the end of the year, to go home, as she said, for a short holiday, to which the time she had put in had certainly given her a right. We had then a young woman a nursemaid who had stayed on and who was a good girl and clever; and *she* took the children altogether for the interval. But our young lady never came back, and at the very moment I was expecting her I heard from the master that she was dead.”

I turned this over. “But of what?”

“He never told me! But please, miss,” said Mrs. Grose, “I must get to my work.”

Chapter 3

Her thus turning her back on me was fortunately not, for my just preoccupations, a snub that could check the growth of our mutual esteem. We met, after I had brought home little Miles, more intimately than ever on the ground of my stupefaction, my general emotion: so monstrous was I then ready to pronounce it that such a child as had now been revealed to me should be under an interdict. I was a little late on the scene, and I felt, as he stood wistfully looking out for me before the door of the inn at which the coach had put him down, that I had seen him, on the instant, without and within, in the great glow of freshness, the same positive fragrance of purity, in which I had, from the first moment, seen his little sister. He was incredibly beautiful, and Mrs. Grose had put her finger on it: everything but a sort of passion of tenderness for him was swept away by his presence. What I then and there took him to my heart for was something divine that I have never found to the same degree in any child — his indescribable little air of knowing nothing in the world but love. It would have been impossible to carry a bad name with a greater sweetness of innocence, and by the time I had got back to Bly with him I remained merely bewildered — so far, that is, as I was not outraged — by the sense of the horrible letter locked up in my room, in a drawer. As soon as I could compass a private word with Mrs. Grose I declared to her that it was grotesque.

She promptly understood me. “You mean the cruel charge — ?”

“It doesn’t live an instant. My dear woman, *look* at him!”

She smiled at my pretention to have discovered his charm. “I assure you, miss, I do nothing else! What will you say, then?” she immediately added.

“In answer to the letter?” I had made up my mind. “Nothing.”

“And to his uncle?”

I was incisive. “Nothing.”

“And to the boy himself?”

I was wonderful. “Nothing.”

She gave with her apron a great wipe to her mouth. “Then I’ll stand by you. We’ll see it out.”

“We’ll see it out!” I ardently echoed, giving her my hand to make it a vow.

She held me there a moment, then whisked up her apron again with her detached hand. “Would you mind, miss, if I used the freedom — ”

“To kiss me? No!” I took the good creature in my arms and, after we had embraced like sisters, felt still more fortified and indignant.

This, at all events, was for the time: a time so full that, as I recall the way it went, it reminds me of all the art I now need to make it a little distinct. What I look back at with amazement is the situation I accepted. I had undertaken, with my companion, to see it out, and I was under a charm, apparently, that could smooth away the extent and the far and difficult connections of such an effort. I was lifted aloft on a great wave of infatuation and pity. I found it simple, in my ignorance, my confusion, and perhaps my conceit, to assume that I could deal with a boy whose education for the world was all on the point of beginning. I am unable even to remember at this day what proposal I framed for the end of his holidays and the resumption of his studies. Lessons with me, indeed, that charming summer, we all had a theory that he was to have; but I now feel that, for weeks, the lessons must have been rather my own. I learned something — at first, certainly — that had not been one of the teachings of my small, smothered life; learned to be amused, and even amusing, and not to think for the morrow. It was the first time, in a manner, that I had known space and air and freedom, all the music of summer and all the

mystery of nature. And then there was consideration — and consideration was sweet. Oh, it was a trap — not designed, but deep — to my imagination, to my delicacy, perhaps to my vanity; to whatever, in me, was most excitable. The best way to picture it all is to say that I was off my guard. They gave me so little trouble — they were of a gentleness so extraordinary. I used to speculate — but even this with a dim disconnectedness — as to how the rough future (for all futures are rough!) would handle them and might bruise them. They had the bloom of health and happiness; and yet, as if I had been in charge of a pair of little grandees, of princes of the blood, for whom everything, to be right, would have to be enclosed and protected, the only form that, in my fancy, the afteryears could take for them was that of a romantic, a really royal extension of the garden and the park. It may be, of course, above all, that what suddenly broke into this gives the previous time a charm of stillness — that hush in which something gathers or crouches. The change was actually like the spring of a beast.

In the first weeks the days were long; they often, at their finest, gave me what I used to call my own hour, the hour when, for my pupils, teatime and bedtime having come and gone, I had, before my final retirement, a small interval alone. Much as I liked my companions, this hour was the thing in the day I liked most; and I liked it best of all when, as the light faded — or rather, I should say, the day lingered and the last calls of the last birds sounded, in a flushed sky, from the old trees — I could take a turn into the grounds and enjoy, almost with a sense of property that amused and flattered me, the beauty and dignity of the place. It was a pleasure at these moments to feel myself tranquil and justified; doubtless, perhaps, also to reflect that by my discretion, my quiet good sense and general high propriety, I was giving pleasure — if he ever thought of it! — to the person to whose pressure I had responded. What I was doing was what he had earnestly hoped and directly asked of me, and that I *could*, after all, do it proved even a greater joy than I had expected. I daresay I fancied myself, in short, a remarkable young woman and took comfort in the faith that this would more publicly appear. Well, I needed to be remarkable to offer a front to the remarkable things that presently gave their first sign.

It was plump, one afternoon, in the middle of my very hour: the children were tucked away, and I had come out for my stroll. One of the thoughts that, as I don't in the least shrink now from noting, used to be with me in these wanderings was that it would be as charming as a charming story suddenly to meet someone. Someone would appear there at the turn of a path and would stand before me and smile and approve. I didn't ask more than that — I only asked that he should *know* and the only way to be sure he knew would be to see it, and the kind light of it, in his handsome face. That was exactly present to me — by which I mean the face was — when, on the first of these occasions, at the end of a long June day, I stopped short on emerging from one of the plantations and coming into view of the house. What arrested me on the spot — and with a shock much greater than any vision had allowed for — was the sense that my imagination had, in a flash, turned real. He did stand there! — but high up, beyond the lawn and at the very top of the tower to which, on that first morning, little Flora had conducted me. This tower was one of a pair — square, incongruous, crenelated⁶ structures — that were distinguished, for some reason, though I could see little difference, as the new and the old. They flanked opposite ends of the house and were probably architectural absurdities, redeemed in a measure indeed by not being wholly disengaged nor of a height too pretentious, dating, in their gingerbread antiquity, from a romantic revival⁷ that was already a respectable past. I admired them, had fancies about them, for we could all profit in a degree, especially when they loomed through the dusk, by the grandeur of their actual battlements; yet it was not at such an elevation that the figure I had so often invoked seemed most in place.

It produced in me, this figure, in the clear twilight, I remember, two distinct gasps of emotion, which

6. Having battlements or open spaces surmounting a wall and used for defense.

7. Revival of interest in "gothic" architecture, such as the structure at Twickenham, "Strawberry Hill," built by Horace Walpole, author of an early gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).

were, sharply, the shock of my first and that of my second surprise. My second was a violent perception of the mistake of my first: the man who met my eyes was not the person I had precipitately supposed. There came to me thus a bewilderment of vision of which, after these years, there is no living view that I can hope to give. An unknown man in a lonely place is a permitted object of fear to a young woman privately bred; and the figure that faced me was — a few more seconds assured me — as little anyone else I knew as it was the image that had been in my mind. I had not seen it in Harley Street — I had not seen it anywhere. The place, moreover, in the strangest way in the world, had, on the instant, and by the very fact of its appearance, become a solitude. To me at least, making my statement here with a deliberation with which I have never made it, the whole feeling of the moment returns. It was as if, while I took in — what I did take in — all the rest of the scene had been stricken with death. I can hear again, as I write, the intense hush in which the sounds of evening dropped. The rooks stopped cawing in the golden sky, and the friendly hour lost, for the minute, all its voice. But there was no other change in nature, unless indeed it were a change that I saw with a stranger sharpness. The gold was still in the sky, the clearness in the air, and the man who looked at me over the battlements was as definite as a picture in a frame. That's how I thought, with extraordinary quickness, of each person that he might have been and that he was not. We were confronted across our distance quite long enough for me to ask myself with intensity who then he was and to feel, as an effect of my inability to say, a wonder that in a few instants more became intense.

The great question, or one of these, is, afterward, I know, with regard to certain matters, the question of how long they have lasted. Well, this matter of mine, think what you will of it, lasted while I caught at a dozen possibilities, none of which made a difference for the better, that I could see, in there having been in the house — and for how long, above all? — a person of whom I was in ignorance. It lasted while I just bridled a little with the sense that my office demanded that there should be no such ignorance and no such person. It lasted while this visitant, at all events — and there was a touch of the strange freedom, as I remember, in the sign of familiarity of his wearing no hat — seemed to fix me, from his position, with just the question, just the scrutiny through the fading light, that his own presence provoked. We were too far apart to call to each other, but there was a moment at which, at shorter range, some challenge between us, breaking the hush, would have been the right result of our straight mutual stare. He was in one of the angles, the one away from the house, very erect, as it struck me, and with both hands on the ledge. So I saw him as I see the letters I form on this page; then, exactly, after a minute, as if to add to the spectacle, he slowly changed his place — passed, looking at me hard all the while, to the opposite corner of the platform. Yes, I had the sharpest sense that during this transit he never took his eyes from me, and I can see at this moment the way his hand, as he went, passed from one of the crenelations to the next. He stopped at the other corner, but less long, and even as he turned away still markedly fixed me. He turned away; that was all I knew.

Chapter 4

It was not that I didn't wait, on this occasion, for more, for I was rooted as deeply as I was shaken. Was there a "secret" at Bly — a mystery of Udolpho or an insane, an unmentionable relative kept in unsuspected confinement?⁸ I can't say how long I turned it over, or how long, in a confusion of curiosity and dread, I remained where I had had my collision; I only recall that when I re-entered the house darkness had quite closed in. Agitation, in the interval, certainly had held me and driven me, for I must, in circling about the place, have walked three miles; but I was to be, later on, so much more overwhelmed that this mere dawn of alarm was a comparatively human chill. The most singular part of it, in fact — singular as the rest had been — was the part I became, in the hall, aware of in meeting Mrs. Grose. This picture comes back to me in the general train — the impression, as I received it on my return, of the wide white panelled space, bright in the lamplight and with its portraits and red carpet, and of the good surprised look of my friend, which immediately told me she had missed me. It came to me straightway, under her contact, that, with plain heartiness, mere relieved anxiety at my appearance, she knew nothing whatever that could bear upon the incident I had there ready for her. I had not suspected in advance that her comfortable face would pull me up, and I somehow measured the importance of what I had seen by my thus finding myself hesitate to mention it. Scarce anything in the whole history seems to me so odd as this fact that my real beginning of fear was one, as I may say, with the instinct of sparing my companion. On the spot, accordingly, in the pleasant hall and with her eyes on me, I, for a reason that I couldn't then have phrased, achieved an inward resolution — offered a vague pretext for my lateness and, with the plea of the beauty of the night and of the heavy dew and wet feet, went as soon as possible to my room.

Here it was another affair; here, for many days after, it was a queer affair enough. There were hours, from day to day — or at least there were moments, snatched even from clear duties — when I had to shut myself up to think. It was not so much yet that I was more nervous than I could bear to be as that I was remarkably afraid of becoming so; for the truth I had now to turn over was, simply and clearly, the truth that I could arrive at no account whatever of the visitor with whom I had been so inexplicably and yet, as it seemed to me, so intimately concerned. It took little time to see that I could sound without forms of inquiry and without exciting remark any domestic complication. The shock I had suffered must have sharpened all my senses; I felt sure, at the end of three days and as the result of mere closer attention, that I had not been practiced upon by the servants nor made the object of any "game." Of whatever it was that I knew, nothing was known around me. There was but one sane inference: someone had taken a liberty rather gross. That was what, repeatedly, I dipped into my room and locked the door to say to myself. We had been, collectively, subject to an intrusion; some unscrupulous traveler, curious in old houses, had made his way in unobserved, enjoyed the prospect from the best point of view, and then stolen out as he came. If he had given me such a bold hard stare, that was but a part of his indiscretion. The good thing, after all, was that we should surely see no more of him.

This was not so good a thing, I admit, as not to leave me to judge that what, essentially, made nothing else much signify was simply my charming work. My charming work was just my life with Miles and Flora, and through nothing could I so like it as through feeling that I could throw myself into it in trouble. The attraction of my small charges was a constant joy, leading me to wonder afresh at the vanity of my original fears, the distaste I had begun by entertaining for the probable gray prose of my

8. The allusions here are to Gothic elements in *The Mystery of Udolpho* (1794), by Ann Radcliffe, and to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847).

office. There was to be no gray prose, it appeared, and no long grind; so how could work not be charming that presented itself as daily beauty? It was all the romance of the nursery and the poetry of the school room. I don't mean by this, of course, that we studied only fiction and verse; I mean I can express no otherwise the sort of interest my companions inspired. How can I describe that except by saying that instead of growing used to them — and it's a marvel for a governess: I call the sisterhood to witness! — I made constant fresh discoveries. There was one direction, assuredly, in which these discoveries stopped: deep obscurity continued to cover the region of the boy's conduct at school. It had been promptly given me, I have noted, to face that mystery without a pang. Perhaps even it would be nearer the truth to say that — without a word — he himself had cleared it up. He had made the whole charge absurd. My conclusion bloomed there with the real rose flush of his innocence: he was only too fine and fair for the little horrid, unclean school world, and he had paid a price for it. I reflected acutely that the sense of such differences, such superiorities of quality, always, on the part of the majority — which could include even stupid, sordid headmasters — turns infallibly to the vindictive.

Both the children had a gentleness (it was their only fault, and it never made Miles a muff⁹) that kept them — how shall I express it? almost impersonal and certainly quite unpunishable. They were like the cherubs of the anecdote, who had — morally, at any rate — nothing to whack!¹⁰ I remember feeling with Miles in especial as if he had had, as it were, no history. We expect of a small child a scant one, but there was in this beautiful little boy something extraordinarily sensitive, yet extraordinarily happy, that, more than in any creature of his age I have seen, struck me as beginning anew each day. He had never for a second suffered. I took this as a direct disproof of his having really been chastised. If he had been wicked he would have “caught” it, and I should have caught it by the rebound — I should have found the trace. I found nothing at all, and he was therefore an angel. He never spoke of his school, never mentioned a comrade or a master; and I, for my part, was quite too much disgusted to allude to them. Of course I was under the spell, and the wonderful part is that, even at the time, I perfectly knew I was. But I gave myself up to it; it was an antidote to any pain, and I had more pains than one. I was in receipt in these days of disturbing letters from home, where things were not going well. But with my children, what things in the world mattered? That was the question I used to put to my scrappy retirements. I was dazzled by their loveliness.

There was a Sunday — to get on — when it rained with such force and for so many hours that there could be no procession to church; in consequence of which, as the day declined, I had arranged with Mrs. Grose that, should the evening show improvement, we would attend together the late service. The rain happily stopped, and I prepared for our walk, which, through the park and by the good road to the village, would be a matter of twenty minutes. Coming downstairs to meet my colleague in the hall, I remembered a pair of gloves that had required three stitches and that had received them — with a publicity perhaps not edifying — while I sat with the children at their tea, served on Sundays, by exception, in that cold, clean temple of mahogany and brass, the “grown-up” dining room. The gloves had been dropped there, and I turned in to recover them. The day was gray enough, but the afternoon light still lingered, and it enabled me, on crossing the threshold, not only to recognize, on a chair near the wide window, then closed, the articles I wanted, but to become aware of a person on the other side of the window and looking straight in. One step into the room had sufficed; my vision was instantaneous; it was all there. The person looking straight in was the person who had already appeared to me. He appeared thus again with I won't say greater distinctness, for that was impossible, but with a

9. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives this colloquial definition of “muff”: “a...feeble, or incompetent person.”

10. The anecdote in question is recorded by Charles Lamb (1775-1834) in his essay, “Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago.” Lamb recalls the reaction of Samuel Taylor Coleridge on learning that their former headmaster, James Boyer, a great advocate of corporal punishment, was dying: “Poor J.B.!—may all his faults be forgiven. And may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys, all head and wings, with no bottoms to reproach his sublunary infirmities.”

nearness that represented a forward stride in our intercourse and made me, as I met him, catch my breath and turn cold. He was the same — he was the same, and seen, this time, as he had been seen before, from the waist up, the window, though the dining room was on the ground floor, not going down to the terrace on which he stood. His face was close to the glass, yet the effect of this better view was, strangely, only to show me how intense the former had been. He remained but a few seconds — long enough to convince me he also saw and recognized; but it was as if I had been looking at him for years and had known him always. Something, however, happened this time that had not happened before; his stare into my face, through the glass and across the room, was as deep and hard as then, but it quitted me for a moment during which I could still watch it, see it fix successively several other things. On the spot there came to me the added shock of a certitude that it was not for me he had come there. He had come for someone else.

The flash of this knowledge — for it was knowledge in the midst of dread — produced in me the most extraordinary effect, started, as I stood there, a sudden vibration of duty and courage. I say courage because I was beyond all doubt already far gone. I bounded straight out of the door again, reached that of the house, got, in an instant, upon the drive, and, passing along the terrace as fast as I could rush, turned a corner and came full in sight. But it was in sight of nothing now — my visitor had vanished. I stopped, I almost dropped, with the real relief of this; but I took in the whole scene — I gave him time to reappear. I call it time, but how long was it? I can't speak to the purpose today of the duration of these things. That kind of measure must have left me: they couldn't have lasted as they actually appeared to me to last. The terrace and the whole place, the lawn and the garden beyond it, all I could see of the park, were empty with a great emptiness. There were shrubberies and big trees, but I remember the clear assurance I felt that none of them concealed him. He was there or was not there: not there if I didn't see him. I got hold of this; then, instinctively, instead of returning as I had come, went to the window. It was confusedly present to me that I ought to place myself where he had stood. I did so; I applied my face to the pane and looked, as he had looked, into the room. As if, at this moment, to show me exactly what his range had been, Mrs. Grose, as I had done for himself just before, came in from the hall. With this I had the full image of a repetition of what had already occurred. She saw me as I had seen my own visitant; she pulled up short as I had done; I gave her something of the shock that I had received. She turned white, and this made me ask myself if I had blanched as much. She stared, in short, and retreated on just *my* lines, and I knew she had then passed out and come round to me and that I should presently meet her. I remained where I was, and while I waited I thought of more things than one. But there's only one I take space to mention. I wondered why *she* should be scared.

Chapter 5

Oh, she let me know as soon as, round the corner of the house, she loomed again into view. “What in the name of goodness is the matter — ?” She was now flushed and out of breath.

I said nothing till she came quite near. “With me?” I must have made a wonderful face. “Do I show it?”

“You’re as white as a sheet. You look awful.”

I considered; I could meet on this, without scruple, any innocence. My need to respect the bloom of Mrs. Grose’s had dropped, without a rustle, from my shoulders, and if I wavered for the instant it was not with what I kept back. I put out my hand to her and she took it; I held her hard a little, liking to feel her close to me. There was a kind of support in the shy heave of her surprise. “You came for me for church, of course, but I can’t go.”

“Has anything happened?”

“Yes. You must know now. Did I look very queer?”

“Through this window? Dreadful!”

“Well,” I said, “I’ve been frightened.” Mrs. Grose’s eyes expressed plainly that *she* had no wish to be, yet also that she knew too well her place not to be ready to share with me any marked inconvenience. Oh, it was quite settled that she *must* share! “Just what you saw from the dining room a minute ago was the effect of that. What *I* saw — just before — was much worse.”

Her hand tightened. “What was it?”

“An extraordinary man. Looking in.”

“What extraordinary man?”

“I haven’t the least idea.”

Mrs. Grose gazed round us in vain. “Then where is he gone?”

“I know still less.”

“Have you seen him before?”

“Yes — once. On the old tower.”

She could only look at me harder. “Do you mean he’s a stranger?”

“Oh, very much!”

“Yet you didn’t tell me?”

“No — for reasons. But now that you’ve guessed — ”

Mrs. Grose’s round eyes encountered this charge. “Ah, I haven’t guessed!” she said very simply. “How can I if *you* don’t imagine?”

“I don’t in the very least.”

“You’ve seen him nowhere but on the tower?”

“And on this spot just now.”

Mrs. Grose looked round again. “What was he doing on the tower?”

“Only standing there and looking down at me.”

She thought a minute. “Was he a gentleman?”

I found I had no need to think. “No.” She gazed in deeper wonder. “No.”

“Then nobody about the place? Nobody from the village?”

“Nobody — nobody. I didn’t tell you, but I made sure.”

She breathed a vague relief: this was, oddly, so much to the good. It only went indeed a little way, “But if he isn’t a gentleman — ”

“What *is* he? He’s a horror.”

“A horror?”

“He’s — God help me if I know *what* he is!”

Mrs. Grose looked round once more; she fixed her eyes on the duskier distance, then, pulling herself together, turned to me with abrupt inconsequence. “It’s time we should be at church.”

“Oh, I’m not fit for church!”

“Won’t it do you good?”

“It won’t do *them* — !” I nodded at the house.

“The children?”

“I can’t leave them now.”

“You’re afraid — ?”

I spoke boldly. “I’m afraid of *him*.”

Mrs. Grose’s large face showed me, at this, for the first time, the faraway faint glimmer of a consciousness more acute: I somehow made out in it the delayed dawn of an idea I myself had not given her and that was as yet quite obscure to me. It comes back to me that I thought instantly of this as something I could get from her; and I felt it to be connected with the desire she presently showed to know more. “When was it — on the tower?”

“About the middle of the month. At this same hour.”

“Almost at dark,” said Mrs. Grose.

“Oh, no, not nearly. I saw him as I see you.”

“Then how did he get in?”

“And how did he get out?” I laughed. “I had no opportunity to ask him! This evening, you see,” I pursued, “he has not been able to get in.”

“He only peeps?”

“I hope it will be confined to that!” She had now let go my hand; she turned away a little. I waited an instant; then I brought out: “Go to church. Goodbye. I must watch.”

Slowly she faced me again. “Do you fear for them?”

We met in another long look, “Don’t *you*?” Instead of answering she came nearer to the window and, for a minute, applied her face to the glass. “You see how he could see,” I meanwhile went on.

She didn’t move. “How long was he here?”

“Till I came out. I came to meet him.”

Mrs. Grose at last turned round, and there was still more in her face. “*I* couldn’t have come out.”

“Neither could I!” I laughed again. “But I did come. I have my duty.”

“So have I mine,” she replied; after which she added “What is he like?”

“I’ve been dying to tell you. But he’s like nobody.”

“Nobody?” she echoed.

“He has no hat.” Then seeing in her face that she already, in this, with a deeper dismay, found a touch of picture, I quickly added stroke to stroke. “He has red hair, very red, close-curling, and a pale face, long in shape, with straight, good features and little, rather queer whiskers that are as red as his hair. His eyebrows are, somehow, darker; they look particularly arched and as if they might move a good deal. His eyes are sharp, strange — awfully; but I only know clearly that they’re rather small and very fixed. His mouth’s wide, and his lips are thin, and except for his little whiskers he’s quite clean-shaven. He gives me a sort of sense of looking like an actor.”

“An actor!” It was impossible to resemble one less, at least, than Mrs. Grose at that moment.

“I’ve never seen one, but so I suppose them. He’s tall, active, erect,” I continued, “but never — no, never! — a gentleman.”

My companion's face had blanched as I went on; her round eyes started and her mild mouth gaped. "A gentleman?" she gasped, confounded, stupefied: "a gentleman *he?*"

"You know him then?"

She visibly tried to hold herself. "But he *is* handsome?"

I saw the way to help her. "Remarkably!"

"And dressed — ?"

"In somebody's clothes. They're smart, but they're not his own."

She broke into a breathless affirmative groan: "They're the master's!"

I caught it up. "You *do* know him?"

She faltered but a second. "Quint!" she cried.

"Quint?"

"Peter Quint — his own man, his valet, when he was here!"

"When the master was?"

Gaping still, but meeting me, she pieced it all together. "He never wore his hat, but he did wear — well, there were waistcoats missed. They were both here — last year. Then the master went, and Quint was alone."

I followed, but halting a little. "Alone?"

"Alone with *us*." Then, as from a deeper depth, "In charge," she added.

"And what became of him?"

She hung fire so long that I was still more mystified. "He went, too," she brought out at last.

"Went where?"

Her expression, at this, became extraordinary. "God knows where! He died."

"Died?" I almost shrieked.

She seemed fairly to square herself, plant herself more firmly to utter the wonder of it. "Yes. Mr. Quint is dead."

Chapter 6

It took of course more than that particular passage to place us together in presence of what we had now to live with as we could — my dreadful liability to impressions of the order so vividly exemplified, and my companion's knowledge, henceforth — a knowledge half consternation and half compassion — of that liability. There had been, this evening, after the revelation that left me, for an hour, so prostrate — there had been, for either of us, no attendance on any service but a little service of tears and vows, of prayers and promises, a climax to the series of mutual challenges and pledges that had straightway ensued on our retreating together to me schoolroom and shutting ourselves up there to have everything out. The result of our having everything out was simply to reduce our situation to the last rigor of its elements. She herself had seen nothing, not the shadow of a shadow, and nobody in the house but the governess was in the governess's plight; yet she accepted without directly impugning my sanity the truth as I gave it to her, and ended by showing me, on this ground, an awestricken tenderness, an expression of the sense of my more than questionable privilege, of which the very breath has remained with me as that of the sweetest of human charities.

What was settled between us, accordingly, that night, was that we thought we might bear things together; and I was not even sure that, in spite of her exemption, it was she who had the best of the burden. I knew at this hour, I think, as well as I knew later, what I was capable of meeting to shelter my pupils; but it took me some time to be wholly sure of what my honest ally was prepared for to keep terms with so compromising a contract, I was queer company enough — quite as queer as the company I received; but as I trace over what we went through I see how much common ground we must have found in the one idea that, by good fortune, *could* steady us. It was the idea, the second movement, that led me straight out, as I may say, of the inner chamber of my dread. I could take the air in the court, at least, and there Mrs. Grose could join me. Perfectly can I recall now the particular way strength came to me before we separated for the night. We had gone over and over every feature of what I had seen.

“He was looking for someone else, you say — someone who was not you?”

“He was looking for little Miles.” A portentous clearness now possessed me. “*That's* whom he was looking for.”

“But how do you know?”

“I know, I know, I know!” My exaltation grew. “And *you* know, my dear!”

She didn't deny this, but I required, I felt, not even so much telling as that. She resumed in a moment, at any rate: “What if *he* should see him?”

“Little Miles? *That's* what he wants!”

She looked immensely scared again. “The child?”

“Heaven forbid! The man. He wants to appear to *them*.” That he might was an awful conception, and yet, somehow, I could keep it at bay; which, moreover, as we lingered there, was what I succeeded in practically proving, I had an absolute certainty that I should see again what I had already seen, but something within me said that by offering myself bravely as the sole subject of such experience, by accepting, by inviting, by surmounting it all, I should serve as an expiatory victim and guard the tranquility of my companions. The children, in especial I should thus fence about and absolutely save. I recall one of the last things I said that night to Mrs. Grose.

“It does strike me that my pupils have never mentioned — ”

She looked at me hard as I musingly pulled up. “His having been here and the time they were with him?”

“The time they were with him, and his name, his presence, his history, in any way.”

“Oh, the little lady doesn’t remember. She never heard or knew.”

“The circumstances of his death?” I thought with some intensity. “Perhaps not. But Miles would remember — Miles would know.”

“Ah, don’t try him!” broke from Mrs. Grose

I returned her the look she had given me. “Don’t be afraid.” I continued to think. “It *is* rather odd.”

“That he has never spoken of him?”

“Never by the least allusion. And you tell me they were ‘great friends’?”

“Oh, it wasn’t *him!*” Mrs. Grose with emphasis declared. “It was Quint’s own fancy. To play with him, I mean — to spoil him,” She paused a moment; then she added: “Quint was much too free.”

This gave me, straight from my vision of his face — *such* a face! — a sudden sickness of disgust.

“Too free with *my* boy?”

“Too free with everyone!”

I forbore, for the moment, to analyze this description further than by the reflection that a part of it applied to several of the members of the household, of the half-dozen maids and men who were still of our small colony. But there was everything, for our apprehension, in the lucky fact that no discomfortable legend, no perturbation of scullions, had ever, within anyone’s memory attached to the kind old place. It had neither bad name nor ill fame, and Mrs. Grose, most apparently, only desired to cling to me and to quake in silence. I even put her, the very last thing of all, to the test. It was when, at midnight, she had her hand on the schoolroom door to take leave. “I have it from you then — for it’s of great importance — that he was definitely and admittedly bad?”

“Oh, not admittedly. *I* knew it — but the master didn’t.”

“And you never told him?”

“Well, he didn’t like tale-bearing — he hated complaints. He was terribly short with anything of that kind, and if people were all right to him — ”

“He wouldn’t be bothered with more?” This squared well enough with my impression of him: he was not a trouble-loving gentleman, nor so very particular perhaps about some of the company *he* kept. All the same, I pressed my interlocutress, “I promise you I would have told!”

She felt my discrimination. “I daresay I was wrong. But, really, I was afraid.”

“Afraid of what?”

“Of things that man could do. Quint was so clever — he was so deep.”

I took this in still more than, probably, I showed. “You weren’t afraid of anything else? Not of his effect — ?”

“His effect?” she repeated with a face of anguish and waiting while I faltered.

“On innocent little precious lives. They were in your charge.”

“No, they were not in mine!” she roundly and distressfully returned. “The master believed in him and placed him here because he was supposed not to be well and the country air so good for him. So he had everything to say. Yes” — she let me have it — “even about *them*.”

“Them — that creature?” I had to smother a kind of howl. “And you could bear it!”

“No. I couldn’t — and I can’t now!” And the poor woman burst into tears.

A rigid control, from the next day, was, as I have said, to follow them; yet how often and how passionately, for a week, we came back together to the subject! Much as we had discussed it that Sunday night, I was, in the immediate later hours in especial — for it may be imagined whether I slept — still haunted with the shadow of something she had not told me. I myself had kept back nothing, but there was a word Mrs. Grose had kept back. I was sure, moreover, by morning, that this was not from a failure of frankness, but because on every side there were fears. It seems to me indeed, in retrospect, that by the time the morrow’s sun was high I had restlessly read into the fact before us almost all the

meaning they were to receive from subsequent and more cruel occurrences. What they gave me above all was just the sinister figure of the living man — the dead one would keep awhile! — and of the months he had continuously passed at Bly, which, added up, made a formidable stretch. The limit of this evil time had arrived only when, on the dawn of a winter's morning, Peter Quint was found, by a laborer going to early work, stone dead on the road from the village: a catastrophe explained — superficially at least — by a visible wound to his head; such a wound as might have been produced — and as, on the final evidence, *had* been — by a fatal slip, in the dark and after leaving the public house, on the steepish icy slope, a wrong path altogether, at the bottom of which he lay. The icy slope, the turn mistaken at night and in liquor, accounted for much — practically, in the end and after the inquest and boundless chatter, for everything; but there had been matters in his life — strange passages and perils, secret disorders, vices more than suspected — that would have accounted for a good deal more.

I scarce know how to put my story into words that shall be a credible picture of my state of mind; but I was in these days literally able to find a joy in the extraordinary flight of heroism the occasion demanded of me, I now saw that I had been asked for a service admirable and difficult; and there would be a greatness in letting it be seen — oh, in the right quarter! — that I could succeed where many another girl might have failed. It was an immense help to me — I confess I rather applaud myself as I look back! — that I saw my service so strongly and so simply. I was there to protect and defend the little creatures in the world the most bereaved and the most lovable, the appeal of whose helplessness had suddenly become only too explicit, a deep, constant ache of one's own committed heart. We were cut off, really, together; we were united in our danger. They had nothing but me, and I — well, I had *them*. It was in short a magnificent chance. This chance presented itself to me in an image richly material. I was a screen — I was to stand before them. The more I saw, the less they would. I began to watch them in a stifled suspense, a disguised excitement that might well, had it continued too long, have turned to something like madness. What saved me, as I now see, was that it turned to something else altogether. It didn't last as suspense — it was superseded by horrible proofs. Proofs, I say, yes — from the moment I really took hold.

This moment dated from an afternoon hour that I happened to spend in the grounds with the younger of my pupils alone. We had left Miles indoors, on the red cushion of a deep window seat; he had wished to finish a book, and I had been glad to encourage a purpose so laudable in a young man whose only defect was an occasional excess of the restless. His sister, on the contrary, had been alert to come out, and I strolled with her half an hour, seeking the shade, for the sun was still high and the day exceptionally warm. I was aware afresh, with her, as we went, of how, like her brother, she contrived — it was the charming thing in both children — to let me alone without appearing to drop me and to accompany me without appearing to surround. They were never importunate and yet never listless. My attention to them all really went to seeing them amuse themselves immensely without me: this was a spectacle they seemed actively to prepare and that engaged me as an active admirer. I walked in a world of their invention — they had no occasion whatever to draw upon mine; so that my time was taken only with being, for them, some remarkable person or thing that the game of the moment required and that was merely, thanks to my superior, my exalted stamp, a happy and highly distinguished sinecure. I forget what I was on the present occasion; I only remember that I was something very important and very quiet and that Flora was playing very hard. We were on the edge of the lake, and, as we had lately begun geography, the lake was the Sea of Azof¹¹.

Suddenly, in these circumstances, I became aware that, on the other side of the Sea of Azof, we had an interested spectator. The way this knowledge gathered in me was the strangest thing in the world — the strangest, that is, except the very much stranger in which it quickly merged itself. I had sat down

11. A shallow part of the Black Sea.

with a piece of work — for I was something or other that could sit — on the old stone bench which overlooked the pond; and in this position I began to take in with certitude, and yet without direct vision, the presence, at a distance, of a third person. The old trees, the thick shrubbery, made a great and pleasant shade, but it was all suffused with the brightness of the hot, still hour. There was no ambiguity in anything; none whatever, at least, in the conviction I from one moment to another found myself forming as to what I should see straight before me and across the lake as a consequence of raising my eyes. They were attached at this juncture to the stitching in which I was engaged, and I can feel once more the spasm of my effort not to move them till I should so have steadied myself as to be able to make up my mind what to do. There was an alien object in view — a figure whose right of presence I instantly, passionately questioned. I recollect counting over perfectly the possibilities, reminding myself that nothing was more natural, for instance, than the appearance of one of the men about the place, or even of a messenger, a postman, or a tradesman's boy, from the village. That reminder had as little effect on my practical certitude as I was conscious — still even without looking — of its having upon the character and attitude of our visitor. Nothing was more natural than that these things should be the other things that they absolutely were not.

Of the positive identity of the apparition I would assure myself as soon as the small clock of my courage should have ticked out the right second; meanwhile, with an effort that was already sharp enough, I transferred my eyes straight to little Flora, who, at the moment, was about ten yards away. My heart had stood still for an instant with the wonder and terror of the question whether she too would see; and I held my breath while I waited for what a cry from her, what some sudden innocent sign either of interest or of alarm, would tell me. I waited, but nothing came; then, in the first place — and there is something more dire in this, I feel, than in anything I have to relate — I was determined by a sense that, within a minute, all sounds from her had previously dropped; and, in the second, by the circumstance that, also within the minute, she had, in her play, turned her back to the water. This was her attitude when I at last looked at her — looked with the confirmed conviction that we were still, together, under direct personal notice. She had picked up a small flat piece of wood, which happened to have in it a little hole that had evidently suggested to her the idea of sticking in another fragment that might figure as a mast and make the thing a boat. This second morsel, as I watched her, she was very markedly and intently attempting to tighten in its place. My apprehension of what she was doing sustained me so that after some seconds I felt I was ready for more. Then I again shifted my eyes — I faced what I had to face.

Chapter 7

I got hold of Mrs. Grose as soon after this as I could; and I can give no intelligible account of how I fought out the interval. Yet I still hear myself cry as I fairly threw myself into her arms: “They *know* — it’s too monstrous: they know, they know!”

“And what on earth — ?” I felt her incredulity as she held me.

“Why, all that *we* know — and heaven knows what else besides!” Then, as she released me, I made it out to her, made it out perhaps only now with full coherency even to myself. “Two hours ago, in the garden” — I could scarce articulate — “Flora *saw!*”

Mrs. Grose took it as she might have taken a blow in the stomach. “She has told you?” she panted.

“Not a word — that’s the horror. She kept it to herself! The child of eight, *that* child!” Unutterable still, for me, was the stupefaction of it.

Mrs. Grose, of course, could only gape the wider. “Then how do you know?”

“I was there — I saw with my eyes: saw that she was perfectly aware.”

“Do you mean aware of *him?*”

“No — of *her.*” I was conscious as I spoke that I looked prodigious things, for I got the slow reflection of them in my companion’s face. “Another person — this time; but a figure of quite as unmistakable horror and evil: a woman in black, pale and dreadful — with such an air also, and such a face! — on the other side of the lake. I was there with the child — quiet for the hour; and in the midst of it she came.”

“Came how — from where?”

“From where they come from! She just appeared and stood there — but not so near.”

“And without coming nearer?”

“Oh, for the effect and the feeling, she might have been as close as you!”

My friend, with an odd impulse, fell back a step. “Was she someone you’ve never seen?”

“Yes. But someone the child has. Someone *you* have. Then, to show how I had thought it all out:

“My predecessor — the one who died.”

“Miss Jessel?”

“Miss Jessel. You don’t believe me?” I pressed.

She turned right and left in her distress. “How can you be sure?”

This drew from me, in the state of my nerves, a flash of impatience. “Then ask Flora — *she’s* sure!” But I had no sooner spoken than I caught myself up. “No, for God’s sake, *don’t!* She’ll say she isn’t — she’ll lie!”

Mrs. Grose was not too bewildered instinctively to protest “Ah, how *can* you?”

“Because I’m clear. Flora doesn’t want me to know.”

“It’s only then to spare you.”

“No, no — there are depths, depths! The more I go over it, the more I see in it, and the more I see in it, the more I fear. I don’t know what I *don’t* see — what I *don’t* fear!”

Mrs. Grose tried to keep up with me. “You mean you’re afraid of seeing her again?”

“Oh, no; that’s nothing — now!” Then I explained. “It’s of *not* seeing her.”

But my companion only looked wan. “I don’t understand you.”

“Why, it’s that the child may keep it up — and that the child assuredly *will* — without my knowing it.”

At the image of this possibility Mrs. Grose for a moment collapsed, yet presently to pull herself

together again, as if from the positive force of the sense of what, should we yield an inch, there would really be to give way to. "Dear, dear — we must keep our heads! And after all, if she doesn't mind it —!" She even tried a grim joke. "Perhaps she likes it!"

"Likes *such* things — a scrap of an infant!"

"Isn't it just a proof of her blessed innocence?" my friend bravely inquired.

She brought me, for the instant, almost round. "Oh, we must clutch at *that* — we must cling to it! If it isn't a proof of what you say, it's a proof of — God knows what! For the woman's a horror of horrors."

Mrs. Grose, at this, fixed her eyes a minute on the ground; then at last raising them, "Tell me how you know," she said.

"Then you admit it's what she was?" I cried.

"Tell me how you know," my friend simply repeated.

"Know? By seeing her! By the way she looked."

"At you, do you mean — so wickedly?"

"Dear me, no — I could have borne that. She gave me never a glance. She only fixed the child."

Mrs. Grose tried to see it. "Fixed her?"

"Ah, with such awful eyes!"

She stared at mine as if they might really have resembled them. "Do you mean of dislike?"

"God help us, no. Of something much worse."

"Worse than dislike?" — this left her indeed at a loss.

"With a determination — indescribable. With a kind of fury of intention."

I made her turn pale. "Intention?"

"To get hold of her." Mrs. Grose — her eyes just lingering on mine — gave a shudder and walked to the window; and while she stood there looking out I completed my statement. "*That's* what Flora knows."

After a little she turned round. "The person was in black, you say?"

"In mourning — rather poor, almost shabby. But — yes — with extraordinary beauty." I now recognized to what I had at last, stroke by stroke, brought the the victim of my confidence, for she quite visibly weighed this. "Oh, handsome — very, very," I insisted; "wonderfully handsome. But infamous."

She slowly came back to me. "Miss Jessel — *was* infamous." She once more took my hand in both her own, holding it as tight as if to fortify me against the increase of alarm I might draw from this disclosure. "They were both infamous," she finally said.

So, for a little, we faced it once more together; and I found absolutely a degree of help in seeing it now so straight. "I appreciate," I said, "the great decency of your not having hitherto spoken; but the time has certainly come to give me the whole thing." She appeared to assent to this, but still only in silence; seeing which I went on: "I must have it now. Of what did she die? Come, there was something between them."

"There was everything."

"In spite of the difference —?"

"Oh, of their rank, their condition" — she brought it woefully out. "*She* was a lady."

I turned it over; I again saw. "Yes — she was a lady."

"And he so dreadfully below," said Mrs. Grose.

I felt that I doubtless needn't press too hard, in such company, on the place of a servant in the scale; but there was nothing to prevent an acceptance of my companion's own measure of my predecessor's abasement. There was a way to deal with that, and I dealt; the more readily for my full vision — on the

evidence — of our employer's late clever, good-looking "own" man; impudent, assured, spoiled, depraved. "The fellow was a hound."

Mrs. Grose considered as if it were perhaps a little a case for a sense of shades. "I've never seen one like him. He did what he wished."

"With *her*?"

"With them all."

It was as if now in my friend's own eyes Miss Jessel had again appeared. I seemed at any rate, for an instant, to see their evocation of her as distinctly as I had seen her by the pond; and I brought out with decision: "It must have been also what *she* wished!"

Mrs. Grose's face signified that it had been indeed, but she said at the same time: "Poor woman — she paid for it!"

"Then you do know what she died of?" I asked.

"No — I know nothing. I wanted not to know; I was glad enough I didn't; and I thanked heaven she was well out of this!"

"Yet you had, then, your idea —"

"Of her real reason for leaving? Oh, yes — as to that. She couldn't have stayed. Fancy it here — for a governess! And afterward I imagined — and I still imagine. And what I imagine is dreadful."

"Not so dreadful as what I do," I replied; on which I must have shown her — as I was indeed but too conscious — a front of miserable defeat. It brought out again all her compassion for me, and at the renewed touch of her kindness my power to resist broke down. I burst, as I had, the other time, made her burst, into tears; she took me to her motherly breast, and my lamentation overflowed. "I don't do it!" I sobbed in despair; "I don't save or shield them! It's far worse than I dreamed — they're lost!"

Chapter 8

What I had said to Mrs. Grose was true enough: there were in the matter I had put before her depths and possibilities that I lacked resolution to sound; so that when we met once more in the wonder of it we were of a common mind about the duty of resistance to extravagant fancies. We were to keep our heads if we should keep nothing else — difficult indeed as that might be in the face of what, in our prodigious experience, was least to be questioned. Late that night, while the house slept, we had another talk in my room, when she went all the way with me as to its being beyond doubt that I had seen exactly what I had seen. To hold her perfectly in the pinch of that, I found I had only to ask her how, if I had “made it up,” I came to be able to give, of each of the persons appearing to me, a picture disclosing, to the last detail, their special marks — a portrait on the exhibition of which she had instantly recognized and named them. She wished of course — small blame to her! — to sink the whole subject; and I was quick to assure her that my own interest in it had now violently taken the form of a search for the way to escape from it. I encountered her on the ground of a probability that with recurrence — for recurrence we took for granted — I should get used to my danger, distinctly professing that my personal exposure had suddenly become the least of my discomforts. It was my new suspicion that was intolerable; and yet even to this complication the later hours of the day had brought a little ease.

On leaving her, after my first outbreak, I had of course returned to my pupils, associating the right remedy for my dismay with that sense of their charm which I had already found to be a thing I could positively cultivate and which had never failed me yet. I had simply, in other words, plunged afresh into Flora’s special society and there become aware — it was almost a luxury! — that she could put her little conscious hand straight upon the spot that ached. She had looked at me in sweet speculation and then had accused me to my face of having “cried.” I had supposed I had brushed away the ugly signs: but I could literally — for the time, at all events — rejoice, under this fathomless charity, that they had not entirely disappeared. To gaze into the depths of blue of the child’s eyes and pronounce their loveliness a trick of premature cunning was to be guilty of a cynicism in preference to which I naturally preferred to abjure my judgment and, so far as might be, my agitation. I couldn’t abjure for merely wanting to, but I could repeat to Mrs. Grose as I did there, over and over, in the small hours — that with their voices in the air, their pressure on one’s heart, and their fragrant faces against one’s cheek, everything fell to the ground but their incapacity and their beauty. It was a pity that, somehow, to settle this once for all, I had equally to re-enumerate the signs of subtlety that, in the afternoon, by the lake, had made a miracle of my show of self-possession. It was a pity to be obliged to reinvestigate the certitude of the moment itself and repeat how it had come to me as a revelation that the inconceivable communion I then surprised was a matter, for either party, of habit. It was a pity that I should have had to quaver out again the reasons for my not having, in my delusion, so much as questioned that the little girl saw our visitant even as I actually saw Mrs. Grose herself, and that she wanted, by just so much as she did thus see, to make me suppose she didn’t, and at the same time, without showing anything, arrive at a guess as to whether I myself did! It was a pity that I needed once more to describe the portentous little activity by which she sought to divert my attention — the perceptible increase of movement, the greater intensity of play, the singing, the gabbling of nonsense, and the invitation to romp.

Yet if I had not indulged, to prove there was nothing in it, in this review, I should have missed the two or three dim elements of comfort that still remained to me. I should not for instance have been able

to asseverate to my friend that I was certain — which was so much to the good — that *I* at least had not betrayed myself. I should not have been prompted, by stress of need, by desperation of mind — I scarce know what to call it — to invoke such further aid to intelligence as might spring from pushing my colleague fairly to the wall. She had told me, bit by bit, under pressure, a great deal; but a small shifty spot on the wrong side of it all still sometimes brushed my brow like the wing of a bat; and I remember how on this occasion — for the sleeping house and the concentration alike of our danger and our watch seemed to help — felt the importance of giving the last jerk to the curtain. “I don’t believe anything so horrible,” I recollect saying; “no, let us put it definitely, my dear, that I don’t. But if I did, you know, there’s a thing I should require now, just without sparing you the least bit more — , not a scrap, come! — to get out of you. What was it you had in mind when, in our distress, before Miles came back, over the letter from his school, you said, under my insistence, that you didn’t pretend for him that he had not literally *ever* been ‘bad’? He has *not* literally ‘ever,’ in these weeks that I myself have lived with him and so closely watched him; he has been an imperturbable little prodigy of delightful, lovable goodness. Therefore you might perfectly have made the claim for him if you had not, as it happened, seen an exception to take. What was your exception, and to what passage in your personal observation of him did you refer?”

It was a dreadfully austere inquiry, but levity was not our note, and, at any rate, before the gray dawn admonished us to separate I had got my answer. What my friend had had in mind proved to be immensely to the purpose. It was neither more nor less than the circumstance that for a period of several months Quint and the boy had been perpetually together. It was in fact the very appropriate truth that she had ventured to criticize the propriety, to hint at the incongruity, of so close an alliance, and even to go so far on the subject as a frank overture to Miss Jessel. Miss Jessel had, with a most strange manner, requested her to mind her business, and the good woman had, on this, directly approached little Miles. What she had said to him, since I pressed, was that *she* liked to see young gentlemen not forget their station.

I pressed again, of course, at this. “You reminded him that Quint was only a base menial?”

“As you might say! And it was his answer, for one thing, that was bad.”

“And for another thing?” I waited. “He repeated your words to Quint?”

“No, not that. It’s just what he *wouldn’t!*” she could still impress upon me. “I was sure, at any rate,” she added, “that he didn’t. But he denied certain occasions.”

“What occasions?”

“When they had been about together quite as if Quint were his tutor — and a very grand one — and Miss Jessel only for the little lady. When he had gone off with the fellow, I mean, and spent hours with him.”

“He then prevaricated about it — he said he hadn’t?” Her assent was clear enough to cause me to add in a moment: “I see. He lied.”

“Oh!” Mrs. Grose mumbled. This was a suggestion that it didn’t matter; which indeed she backed up by a further remark. “You see, after all, Miss Jessel didn’t mind. She didn’t forbid him.”

I considered. “Did he put that to you as a justification?”

At this she dropped again. “No, he never spoke of it.”

“Never mentioned her in connection with Quint?”

She saw, visibly flushing, where I was coming out. “Well, he didn’t show anything. He denied,” she repeated — “he denied.”

Lord, how I pressed her now! “So that you could see he knew what was between the two wretches?”

“I don’t know — I don’t know!” the poor woman groaned.

“You do know, you dear thing,” I replied; “only you haven’t my dreadful boldness of mind, and you keep back, out of timidity and modesty and delicacy, even the impression that, in the past, when you

had, without my aid, to flounder about in silence, most of all made you miserable. But I shall get it out of you yet! There was something in the boy that suggested to you,” I continued, “that he covered and concealed their relation.”

“Oh, he couldn’t prevent — ”

“Your learning the truth? I daresay! But, heavens,” I fell, with vehemence, a thinking, “what it shows that they must, to that extent, have succeeded in making of him!”

“Ah, nothing that’s not nice *now!*” Mrs. Grose lugubriously pleaded.

“I don’t wonder you looked queer,” I persisted, “when I mentioned to you the letter from his school!”

“I doubt if I looked as queer as you!” she retorted with homely force. “And if he was so bad then as that comes to, how is he such an angel now?”

“Yes, indeed — and if he was a fiend at school! How, how, how? Well,” I said in my torment, “you must put it to me again, but I shall not be able to tell you for some days. Only, put it to me again!” I cried in a way that made my friend stare. “There are directions in which I must not for the present let myself go.” Meanwhile I returned to her first example — the one to which she had just previously referred — of the boy’s happy capacity for an occasional slip. “If Quint — on your remonstrance at the time you speak of — was a base menial, one of the things Miles said to you, I find myself guessing, was that you were another.” Again her admission was so adequate that I continued: “And you forgave him that?”

“Wouldn’t *you?*”

“Oh, yes!” And we exchanged there, in the stillness, a sound of the oddest amusement. Then I went on: “At all events, while he was with the man — ”

“Miss Flora was with the woman. It suited them all!” It suited me, too, I felt, only too well; by which I mean that it suited exactly the particularly deadly view I was in the very act of forbidding myself to entertain. But I so far succeeded in checking the expression of this view that I will throw, just here, no further light on it than may be offered by the mention of my final observation to Mrs. Grose. “His having lied and been impudent are, I confess, less engaging specimens than I had hoped to have from you of the outbreak in him of the little natural man. Still,” I mused, “They must do, for they make me feel more than ever that I must watch.”

It made me blush, the next minute, to see in my friend’s face how much more unreservedly she had forgiven him than her anecdote struck me as presenting to my own tenderness an occasion for doing. This came out when, at the schoolroom door, she quitted me. “Surely you don’t accuse *him* — ”

“Of carrying on an intercourse that he conceals from me? Ah, remember that, until further evidence, I now accuse nobody.” Then, before shutting her out to go, by another passage, to her own place, “I must just wait,” I wound up.

Chapter 9

I waited and waited, and the days, as they elapsed, took something from my consternation. A very few of them, in fact, passing, in constant sight of my pupils, without a fresh incident sufficed to give to grievous fancies and even to odious memories a kind of brush of the sponge. I have spoken of the surrender to their extraordinary childish grace as a thing I could actively cultivate, and it may be imagined if I neglected now to address myself to this source for whatever it would yield. Stranger than I can express, certainly, was the effort to struggle against my new lights; it would doubtless have been, however, a greater tension still had it not been so frequently successful. I used to wonder how my little charges could help guessing that I thought strange things about them; and the circumstance that these things only made them more interesting was not by itself a direct aid to keeping them in the dark. I trembled lest they should see that they *were* so immensely more interesting. Putting things at the worst, at all events, as in meditation I so often did, any clouding of their innocence could only be — blameless and foredoomed as they were — a reason the more for taking risks. There were moments when, by an irresistible impulse, I found myself catching them up and pressing them to my heart. As soon as I had done so I used to say to myself: “What will they think of that? Doesn’t it betray too much?” It would have been easy to get into a sad, wild tangle about how much I might betray; but the real account, I feel, of the hours of peace that I could still enjoy was that the immediate charm of my companions was a beguilement still effective even under the shadow of the possibility that it was studied. For if it occurred to me that I might occasionally excite suspicion by the little outbreaks of my sharper passion for them, so too I remember wondering if I mightn’t see a queerness in the traceable increase of their own demonstrations.

They were at this period extravagantly and preternaturally fond of me; which, after all, I could reflect, was no more than a graceful response in children perpetually bowed over and hugged. The homage of which they were so lavish succeeded, in truth, for my nerves, quite as well as if I never appeared to myself, as I may say, literally to catch them at a purpose in it. They had never, I think, wanted to do so many things for their poor protectress; I mean — though they got their lessons better and better, which was naturally what would please her most — in the way of diverting, entertaining, surprising her; reading her passages, telling her stories, acting her charades, pouncing out at her, in disguises, as animals and historical characters, and above all astonishing her by the “pieces” they had secretly got by heart and could interminably recite. I should never get to the bottom — were I to let myself go even now — of the prodigious private commentary, all under still more private correction, with which, in these days, I overscored their full hours. They had shown me from the first a facility for everything, a general faculty which, taking a fresh start, achieved remarkable flights. They got their little tasks as if they loved them, and indulged, from the mere exuberance of the gift, in the most unimposed little miracles of memory. They not only popped out at me as tigers and as Romans, but as Shakespeareans, astronomers, and navigators. This was so singularly the case that it had presumably much to do with the fact as to which, at the present day, I am at a loss for a different explanation: I allude to my unnatural composure on the subject of another school for Miles. What I remember is that I was content not, for the time, to open the question, and that contentment must have sprung from the sense of his perpetually striking show of cleverness. He was too clever for a bad governess, for a parson’s daughter, to spoil; and the strangest if not the brightest thread in the pensive embroidery I just spoke of was the impression I might have got, if I had dared to work it out, that he was under some influence operating in his small intellectual life as a tremendous incitement.

If it was easy to reflect, however, that such a boy could postpone school, it was at least as marked that for such a boy to have been “kicked out” by a school master was a mystification without end. Let me add that in their company now — and I was careful almost never to be out of it — I could follow no scent very far. We lived in a cloud of music and love and success and private theatricals. The musical sense in each of the children was of the quickest, but the elder in especial had a marvelous knack of catching and repeating. The schoolroom piano broke into all gruesome fancies; and when that failed there were confabulations in corners, with a sequel of one of them going out in the highest spirits in order to “come in” as something new. I had had brothers myself, and it was no revelation to me that little girls could be slavish idolaters of little boys. What surpassed everything was that there was a little boy in the world who could have for the inferior age, sex, and intelligence so fine a consideration. They were extraordinarily at one, and to say that they never either quarreled or complained is to make the note of praise coarse for their quality of sweetness. Sometimes, indeed, when I dropped into coarseness, I perhaps came across traces of little understandings between them by which one of them should keep me occupied while the other slipped away. There is a *naïve* side, I suppose, in all diplomacy; but if my pupils practiced upon me, it was surely with the minimum of grossness. It was all in the other quarter that, after a lull, the grossness broke out.

I find that I really hang back; but I must take my plunge. In going on with the record of what was hideous at Bly, I not only challenge the most liberal faith — for which I little care; but — and this is another matter — I renew what I myself suffered, I again push my way through it to the end. There came suddenly an hour after which, as I look back, the affair seems to me to have been all pure suffering; but I have at least reached the heart of it, and the straightest road out is doubtless to advance. One evening — with nothing to lead up or to prepare it — I felt the cold touch of the impression that had breathed on me the night of my arrival and which, much lighter then, as I have mentioned, I should probably have made little of in memory had my subsequent sojourn been less agitated. I had not gone to bed; I sat reading by a couple of candles. There was a roomful of old books at Bly — last-century fiction, some of it, which, to the extent of a distinctly deprecated renown, but never to so much as that of a stray specimen, had reached the sequestered home and appealed to the unavowed curiosity of my youth. I remember that the book I had in my hand was Fielding’s *Amelia*, also that I was wholly awake. I recall further both a general conviction that it was horribly late and a particular objection to looking at my watch. I figure, finally, that the white curtain draping, in the fashion of those days, the head of Flora’s little bed, shrouded, as I had assured myself long before, the perfection of childish rest. I recollect in short that, though I was deeply interested in my author, I found myself, at the turn of a page and with his spell all scattered, looking straight up from him and hard at the door of my room. There was a moment during which I listened, reminded of the faint sense I had had, the first night, of there being something undefinably astir in the house, and noted the soft breath of the open casement just move the half-drawn blind. Then, with all the marks of a deliberation that must have seemed magnificent had there been anyone to admire it, I laid down my book, rose to my feet, and, taking a candle, went straight out of the room and, from the passage, on which my light made little impression, noiselessly closed and locked the door.

I can say now neither what determined nor what guided me, but I went straight along the lobby, holding my candle high, till I came within sight of the tall window that presided over the great turn of the staircase. At this point I precipitately found myself aware of three things. They were practically simultaneous, yet they had flashes of succession. My candle, under a bold flourish, went out, and I perceived, by the uncovered window, that the yielding dusk of earliest morning rendered it unnecessary. Without it, the next instant, I saw that there was someone on the stair. I speak of sequences, but I required no lapse of seconds to stiffen myself for a third encounter with Quint. The apparition had reached the landing halfway up and was therefore on the spot nearest the window, where

at sight of me, it stopped short and fixed me exactly as it had fixed me from the tower and from the garden. He knew me as well as I knew him; and so, in the cold, faint twilight, with a glimmer in the high glass and another on the polish of the oak stair below, we faced each other in our common intensity. He was absolutely, on this occasion, a living, detestable, dangerous presence. But that was not the wonder of wonders; I reserve this distinction for quite another circumstance: the circumstance that dread had unmistakably quitted me and that there was nothing in me there that didn't meet and measure him.

I had plenty of anguish after that extraordinary moment, but I had, thank God, no terror. And he knew I had not — I found myself at the end of an instant magnificently aware of this. I felt, in a fierce rigor of confidence, that if I stood my ground a minute I should cease — for the time, at least — to have him to reckon with; and during the minute, accordingly, the thing was as human and hideous as a real interview: hideous just because it *was* human, as human as to have met alone, in the small hours, in a sleeping house, some enemy, some adventurer, some criminal. It was the dead silence of our long gaze at such close quarters that gave the whole horror, huge as it was, its only note of the unnatural. If I had met a murderer in such a place and at such an hour, we still at least would have spoken. Something would have passed, in life, between us; if nothing had passed, one of us would have moved. The moment was so prolonged that it would have taken but little more to make me doubt if even *I* were in life. I can't express what followed it save by saying that the silence itself — which was indeed in a manner an attestation of my strength — became the element into which I saw the figure disappear; in which I definitely saw it turn as I might have seen the low wretch to which it had once belonged turn on receipt of an order, and pass, with my eyes on the villainous back that no hunch could have more disfigured, straight down the staircase and into the darkness in which the next bend was lost.

Chapter 10

I remained awhile at the top of the stair, but with the effect presently of understanding that when my visitor had gone, he had gone: then I returned to my room. The foremost thing I saw there by the light of the candle I had left burning was that Flora's little bed was empty; and on this I caught my breath with all the terror that, five minutes before, I had been able to resist. I dashed at the place in which I had left her lying and over which (for the small silk counterpane and the sheets were disarranged) the white curtains had been deceivingly pulled forward; then my step, to my unutterable relief, produced an answering sound: I perceived an agitation of the window blind, and the child, ducking down, emerged rosily from the other side of it. She stood there in so much of her candor and so little of her nightgown, with her pink bare feet and the golden glow of her curls. She looked intensely grave, and I had never had such a sense of losing an advantage acquired (the thrill of which had just been so prodigious) as on my consciousness that she addressed me with a reproach. "You naughty: where *have* you been?" — instead of challenging her own irregularity I found myself arraigned and explaining. She herself explained, for that matter, with the loveliest, eagerest simplicity. She had known suddenly, as she lay there, that I was out of the room, and had jumped up to see what had become of me. I had dropped, with the joy of her reappearance, back into my chair — feeling then, and then only, a little faint; and she had pattered straight over to me, thrown herself upon my knee, given herself to be held with the flame of the candle full in the wonderful little face that was still flushed with sleep. I remember closing my eyes an instant, yieldingly, consciously, as before the excess of something beautiful that shone out of the blue of her own. "You were looking for me out of the window?" I said. "You thought I might be walking in the grounds?"

"Well, you know, I thought someone was" — she never blanched as she smiled out that at me.

Oh, how I looked at her now! "And did you see anyone?"

"Ah, *no!*" she returned, almost with the full privilege of childish inconsequence, resentfully, though with a long sweetness in her little drawl of the negative.

At that moment, in the state of my nerves, I absolutely believed she lied; and if I once more closed my eyes it was before the dazzle of the three or four possible ways in which I might take this up. One of these, for a moment, tempted me with such singular intensity that, to withstand it, I must have gripped my little girl with a spasm that, wonderfully, she submitted to without a cry or a sign of fright. Why not break out at her on the spot and have it all over? — give it to her straight in her lovely little lighted face? "You see, you see, you *know* that you do and that you already quite suspect I believe it; therefore, why not frankly confess it to me, so that we may at least live with it together and learn perhaps, in the strangeness of our fate, where we are and what it means?" This solicitation dropped, alas, as it came: if I could immediately have succumbed to it I might have spared myself — well, you'll see what. Instead of succumbing I sprang again to my feet, looked at her bed, and took a helpless middle way. "Why did you pull the curtain over the place to make me think you were still there?"

Flora luminously considered, after which, with her little divine smile: "Because I don't like to frighten you!"

"But if I had, by your idea, gone out — ?"

She absolutely declined to be puzzled, she turned her eyes to the name of the candle as if the question were as irrelevant, or at any rate as impersonal, as Mrs. Marcet¹² or nine-times-nine. "Oh, but you know," she quite adequately answered, "that you might come back, you dear, and that you *have!*"

12. Jane Marcet (1769-1858). Author of many popular introductory textbooks on science, mainly for children.

And after a little, when she had got into bed, I had, for a long time, by almost sitting on her to hold her hand, to prove that I recognized the pertinence of my return.

You may imagine the general complexion, from that moment, of my nights. I repeatedly sat up till I didn't know when; I selected moments when my roommate unmistakably slept, and, stealing out, took noiseless turns in the passage and even pushed as far as to where I had last met Quint. But I never met him there again, and I may as well say at once that I on no other occasion saw him in the house. I just missed, on the staircase, on the other hand, a different adventure. Looking down it from the top I once recognized the presence of a woman seated on one of the lower steps with her back presented to me, her body half-bowed and her head, in an attitude of woe, in her hands. I had been there but an instant, however, when she vanished without looking round at me. I knew, nonetheless, exactly what dreadful face she had to show; and I wondered whether, if instead of being above I had been below, I should have had, for going up, the same nerve I had lately shown Quint. Well, there continued to be plenty of chance for nerve. On the eleventh night after my latest encounter with that gentleman — they were all numbered now — I had an alarm that perilously skirted it and that indeed, from the particular quality of its unexpectedness, proved quite my sharpest shock. It was precisely the first night during this series that, weary with watching, I had felt that I might again without laxity lay myself down at my old hour. I slept immediately and, as I afterward knew, till about one o'clock; but when I woke it was to sit straight up, as completely roused as if a hand had shook me. I had left a light burning, but it was now out, and I felt an instant certainty that Flora had extinguished it. This brought me to my feet and straight, in the darkness, to her bed, which I found she had left. A glance at the window enlightened me further, and the striking of a match completed the picture.

The child had again got up — this time blowing out the taper, and had again, for some purpose of observation or response, squeezed in behind the blind and was peering out into the night. That she now saw — as she had not, I had satisfied myself, the previous time — was proved to me by the fact that she was disturbed neither by my reillumination nor by the haste I made to get into slippers and into a wrap. Hidden, protected, absorbed, she evidently rested on the sill — the casement opened forward — and gave herself up. There was a great still moon to help her, and this fact had counted in my quick decision. She was face to face with the apparition we had met at the lake, and could now communicate with it as she had not then been able to do. What I, on my side, had to care for was, without disturbing her, to reach, from the corridor, some other window in the same quarter. I got to the door without her hearing me; I got out of it, closed it, and listened, from the other side, for some sound from her. While I stood in the passage I had my eyes on her brother's door, which was but ten steps off and which, indescribably, produced in me a renewal of the strange impulse that I lately spoke of as my temptation. What if I should go straight in and march to *his* window? — what if, by risking to his boyish bewilderment a revelation of my motive, I should throw across the rest of the mystery the long halter of my boldness?

This thought held me sufficiently to make me cross to his threshold and pause again. I preternaturally listened; I figured to myself what might portentously be; I wondered if his bed were also empty and he too were secretly at watch. It was a deep, soundless minute, at the end of which my impulse failed. He was quiet; he might be innocent; the risk was hideous; I turned away. There was a figure in the grounds — a figure prowling for a sight, the visitor with whom Flora was engaged; but it was not the visitor most concerned with my boy. I hesitated afresh, but on other grounds and only a few seconds; then I had made my choice. There were empty rooms at Bly, and it was only a question of choosing the right one. The right one suddenly presented itself to me as the lower one — though high above the gardens — in the solid corner of the house that I have spoken of as the old tower. This was a large, square chamber, arranged with some state as a bedroom, the extravagant size of which made it so inconvenient that it had not for years, though kept by Mrs. Grose in exemplary order, been occupied. I

had often admired it and I knew my way about in it; I had only, after just faltering at the first chill gloom of its disuse, to pass across it and unbolt as quietly as I could one of the shutters. Achieving this transit, I uncovered the glass without a sound and, applying my face to the pane, was able, the darkness without being much less than within, to see that I commanded the right direction. Then I saw something more. The moon made the night extraordinarily penetrable and showed me on the lawn a person, diminished by distance, who stood there motionless and as if fascinated, looking up to where I had appeared — looking, that is, not so much straight at me as at something that was apparently above me. There was clearly another person above me — there was a person on the tower; but the presence on the lawn was not in the least what I had conceived and had confidently hurried to meet. The presence on the lawn — I felt sick as I made it out — was poor little Miles himself.

Chapter 11

It was not till late next day that I spoke to Mrs. Grose; the rigor with which I kept my pupils in sight making it often difficult to meet her privately, and the more as we each felt the importance of not provoking — on the part of the servants quite as much as on that of the children — any suspicion of a secret flurry or of a discussion of mysteries. I drew a great security in this particular from her mere smooth aspect. There was nothing in her fresh face to pass on to others my horrible confidences. She believed me, I was sure, absolutely: if she hadn't I don't know what would have become of me, for I couldn't have borne the business alone. But she was a magnificent monument to the blessing of a want of imagination, and if she could see in our little charges nothing but their beauty and amiability, their happiness and cleverness, she had no direct communication with the sources of my trouble. If they had been at all visibly blighted or battered, she would doubtless have grown, on tracing it back, haggard enough to match them; as matters stood, however, I could feel her, when she surveyed them, with her large white arms folded and the habit of serenity in all her look, thank the Lord's mercy that if they were ruined the pieces would still serve. Flights of fancy gave place, in her mind, to a steady fireside glow, and I had already begun to perceive how, with the development of the conviction that — as time went on without a public accident — our young things could, after all, look out for themselves, she addressed her greatest solicitude to the sad case presented by their instructress. That, for myself, was a sound simplification: I could engage that, to the world, my face should tell no tales, but it would have been, in the conditions, an immense added strain to find myself anxious about hers.

At the hour I now speak of she had joined me, under pressure, on the terrace, where, with the lapse of the season, the afternoon sun was now agreeable; and we sat there together while, before us, at a distance, but within call if we wished, — the children strolled to and fro in one of their most manageable moods. They moved slowly, in unison, below us, over the lawn, the boy, as they went, reading aloud from a storybook and passing his arm round his sister to keep her quite in touch. Mrs. Grose watched them with positive placidity; then I caught the suppressed intellectual creak with which she conscientiously turned to take from me a view of the back of the tapestry. I had made her a receptacle of lurid things, but there was an odd recognition of my superiority — my accomplishments and my function — in her patience under my pain. She offered her mind to my disclosures as, had I wished to mix a witch's broth and proposed it with assurance, she would have held out a large clean saucepan. This had become thoroughly her attitude by the time that, in my recital of the events of the night, I reached the point of what Miles had said to me when, after seeing him, at such a monstrous hour almost on the very spot where he happened now to be, I had gone down to bring him in; choosing then, at the window, with a concentrated need of not alarming the house, rather that method than a signal more resonant I had left her meanwhile in little doubt of my small hope of representing with success even to her actual sympathy my sense of the real splendor of the little inspiration with which, after I had got him into the house, the boy met my final articulate challenge. As soon as I appeared in the moonlight on the terrace, he had come to me as straight as possible; on which I had taken his hand without a word and led him, through the dark spaces, up the staircase where Quint had so hungrily hovered for him, along the lobby where I had listened and trembled, and so to his forsaken room.

Not a sound, on the way, had passed between us, and I had wondered — oh, *how* I had wondered! — if he were groping about in his little mind for something plausible and not too grotesque. It would tax his invention, certainly, and I felt, this time, over his real embarrassment, a curious thrill of triumph. It was a sharp trap for the inscrutable! He couldn't play any longer at innocence; so how the deuce would

he get out of it? There beat in me indeed, with the passionate throb of this question, an equal dumb appeal as to how the deuce *I* should. I was confronted at last, as never yet, with all the risk attached even now to sounding my own horrid note. I remember in fact that as we pushed into his little chamber, where the bed had not been slept in at all and the window, uncovered to the moonlight, made the place so clear that there was no need of striking a match — I remember how I suddenly dropped, sank upon the edge of the bed from the force of the idea that he must know how he really, as they say, “had” me. He could do what he liked, with all his cleverness to help him, so long as I should continue to defer to the old tradition of the criminality of those caretakers of the young who minister to superstitions and fears. He “had” me indeed, and in a cleft stick; for who would ever absolve me, who would consent that I should go unhung, if, by the faintest tremor of an overture, I were the first to introduce into our perfect intercourse an element so dire? No, no: it was useless to attempt to convey to Mrs. Grose, just as it is scarcely less so to attempt to suggest here, how, in our short, stiff brush in the dark, he fairly shook me with admiration. I was of course thoroughly kind and merciful; never, never yet had I placed on his little shoulders hands of such tenderness as those with which, while I rested against the bed, I held him there well under fire. I had no alternative but, in form at least, to put it to him.

“You must tell me now — and all the truth. What did you go out for? What were you doing there?”

I can still see his wonderful smile, the whites of his beautiful eyes, and the uncovering of his little teeth shine to me in the dusk. “If I tell you why, will you understand?” My heart, at this, leaped into my mouth. *Would* he tell me why? I found no sound on my lips to press it, and I was aware of replying only with a vague, repeated, grimacing nod. He was gentleness itself, and while I wagged my head at him he stood there more than ever a little fairy prince. It was his brightness indeed that gave me a respite. Would it be so great if he were really going to tell me? “Well,” he said at last, “just exactly in order that you should do this.”

“Do what?”

“Think me — for a change — *bad!*” I shall never forget the sweetness and gaiety with which he brought out the word, nor how, on top of it, he bent forward and kissed me. It was practically the end of everything. I met his kiss and I had to make, while I folded him for a minute in my arms, the most stupendous effort not to cry. He had given exactly the account of himself that permitted least of my going behind it, and it was only with the effect of confirming my acceptance of it that, as I presently glanced about the room, I could say —

“Then you didn’t undress at all?”

He fairly glittered in the gloom. “Not at all. I sat up and read.”

“And when did you go down?”

“At midnight. When I’m bad I *am* bad!”

“I see, I see it’s charming. But how could you be sure I would know it?”

“Oh, I arranged that with Flora.” His answers rang out with a readiness! “She was to get up and look out.”

“Which is what she did do.” It was I who fell into the trap!

“So she disturbed you, and, to see what she was looking at, you also looked — you saw.”

“While you,” I concurred, “caught your death in the night air!”

He literally bloomed so from this exploit that he could afford radiantly to assent. “How otherwise should I have been bad enough?” he asked. Then, after another embrace, the incident and our interview dosed on my recognition of all the reserves of goodness that, for his joke, he had been able to draw upon.

Chapter 12

The particular impression I had received proved in the morning light, I repeat, not quite successfully presentable to Mrs. Grose, though I reinforced it with the mention of still another remark that he had made before we separated. "It all lies in half a dozen words," I said to her, "words that really settle the matter. 'Think, you know, what I *might* do!' He threw that off to show me how good he is. He knows down to the ground what he 'might' do. That's what he gave them a taste of at school."

"Lord, you do change!" cried my friend.

"I don't change — I simply make it out. The four, depend upon it, perpetually meet. If on either of these last nights you had been with either child, you would clearly have understood. The more I've watched and waited the more I've felt that if there were nothing else to make it sure it would be made so by the systematic silence of each. *Never*, by a slip of the tongue, have they so much as alluded to either of their old friends, any more than Miles has alluded to his expulsion. Oh, yes, we may sit here and look at them, and they may show off to us there to their fill; but even while they pretend to be lost in their fairytale they're steeped in their vision of the dead restored. He's not reading to her," I declared; "they're talking of *them* — they're talking horrors! I go on, I know, as if I were crazy; and it's a wonder I'm not. What I've seen would have made *you* so; but it has only made me more lucid, made me get hold of still other things."

My lucidity must have seemed awful, but the charming creatures who were victims of it, passing and repassing in their interlocked sweetness, gave my colleague something to hold on by; and I felt how tight she held as, without stirring in the breath of my passion, she covered them still with her eyes. "Of what other things have you got hold?"

"Why, of the very things that have delighted, fascinated, and yet, at bottom, as I now so strangely see, mystified and troubled me. Their more than earthly beauty, their absolutely unnatural goodness. It's a game," I went on; "it's a policy and a fraud!"

"On the part of little darlings — ?"

"As yet mere lovely babies? Yes, mad as that seems!" The very act of bringing it out really helped me to trace it — follow it all up and piece it all together. "They haven't been good — they've only been absent. It has been easy to live with them, because they're simply leading a life of their own. They're not mine — they're not ours. They're his and they're hers!"

"Quint's and that woman's?"

"Quint's and that woman's. They want to get to them."

Oh, how, at this, poor Mrs. Grose appeared to study them! "But for what?"

"For the love of all the evil that, in those dreadful days, the pair put into them. And to ply them with that evil still, to keep up the work of demons, is what brings the others back."

"Laws!" said my friend under her breath. The exclamation was homely, but it revealed a real acceptance of my further proof of what, in the bad time — for there had been a worse even than this! — must have occurred. There could have been no such justification for me as the plain assent of her experience to whatever depth of depravity I found credible in our brace of scoundrels. It was in obvious submission of memory that she brought out after a moment: "They *were* rascals! But what can they now do?" she pursued.

"Do?" I echoed so loud that Miles and Flora, as they passed at their distance, paused an instant in their walk and looked at us. "Don't they do enough?" I demanded in a lower tone, while the children, having smiled and nodded and kissed hands to us, resumed their exhibition. We were held by it a

minute; then I answered: "They can destroy them!" At this my companion did turn, but the inquiry she launched was a silent one, the effect of which was to make me more explicit. "They don't know, as yet, quite how — but they're trying hard. They're seen only across, as it were, and beyond — in strange places and on high places, the top of towers, the roof of houses, the outside of windows, the further edge of pools; but there's a deep design, on either side, to shorten the distance and overcome the obstacle; and the success of the tempters is only a question of time. They've only to keep to their suggestions of danger."

"For the children to come?"

"And perish in the attempt!" Mrs. Grose slowly got up, and I scrupulously added: "Unless, of course, we can prevent!"

Standing there before me while I kept my seat, she visibly turned things over. "Their uncle must do the preventing. He must take them away."

"And who's to make him?"

She had been scanning the distance, but she now dropped on me a foolish face. "You, miss."

"By writing to him that his house is poisoned and his little nephew and niece mad?"

"But if they *are*, miss?"

"And if I am myself, you mean? That's charming news to be sent him by a governess whose prime undertaking was to give him no worry."

Mrs. Grose considered, following the children again. "Yes, he do hate worry. That was the great reason — "

"Why those fiends took him in so long? No doubt, though his indifference must have been awful. As I'm not a fiend, at any rate, I shouldn't take him in."

My companion, after an instant and for all answer, sat down again and grasped my arm. "Make him at any rate come to you."

I stared. "To *me*?" I had a sudden fear of what she might do. "'Him'?"

"He ought to *be* here — he ought to help."

I quickly rose, and I think I must have shown her a queerer face than ever yet. "You see me asking him for a visit?" No, with her eyes on my face she evidently couldn't. Instead of it even — as a woman reads another — she could see what I myself saw: his derision, his amusement, his contempt for the breakdown of my resignation at being left alone and for the fine machinery I had set in motion to attract his attention to my slighted charms. She didn't know — no one knew — how proud I had been to serve him and to stick to our terms; yet she nonetheless took the measure, I think, of the warning I now gave her. "If you should so lose your head as to appeal to him for me — "

She was really frightened. "Yes, miss?"

"I would leave, on the spot, both him and you."

Chapter 13

It was all very well to join them, but speaking to them proved quite as much as ever an effort beyond my strength — offered, in close quarters, difficulties as insurmountable as before. This situation continued a month, and with new aggravations and particular notes, the note above all, sharper and sharper, of the small ironic consciousness on the part of my pupils. It was not, I am as sure today as I was sure then, my mere infernal imagination: it was absolutely traceable that they were aware of my predicament and that this strange relation made, in a manner, for a long time, the air in which we moved. I don't mean that they had their tongues in their cheeks or did anything vulgar, for that was not one of their dangers: I do mean, on the other hand, that the element of the unnamed and untouched became, between us, greater than any other, and that so much avoidance could not have been so successfully effected without a great deal of tacit arrangement. It was as if, at moments, we were perpetually coming into sight of subjects before which we must stop short, turning suddenly out of alleys that we perceived to be blind, closing with a little bang that made us look at each other — for, like all bangs, it was something louder than we had intended — the doors we had indiscreetly opened. All roads lead to Rome, and there were times when it might have struck us that almost every branch of study or subject of conversation skirted forbidden ground. Forbidden ground was the question of the return of the dead in general and of whatever, in especial, might survive, in memory, of the friends little children had lost. There were days when I could have sworn that one of them had, with a small invisible nudge, said to the other: “She thinks she'll do it this time — but she *won't!*” To “do it” would have been to indulge for instance — and for once in a way — in some direct reference to the lady who had prepared them for my discipline. They had a delightful endless appetite for passages in my own history, to which I had again and again treated them; they were in possession of everything that had ever happened to me, had had, with every circumstance the story of my smallest adventures and of those of my brothers and sisters and of the cat and the dog at home, as well as many particulars of the eccentric nature of my father, of the furniture and arrangement of our house, and of the conversation of the old women of our village. There were things enough, taking one with another, to chatter about, if one went very fast and knew by instinct when to go round. They pulled with an art of their own the strings of my invention and my memory; and nothing else perhaps, when I thought of such occasions afterward, gave me so the suspicion of being watched from under cover. It was in any case over *my* life, *my* past, and *my* friends alone that we could take anything like our ease — a state of affairs that led them sometimes without the least pertinence to break out into sociable reminders. I was invited — with no visible connection — to repeat afresh Goody Gosling's celebrated *mot* or to confirm the details already supplied as to the cleverness of the vicarage pony.

It was partly at such junctures as these and partly at quite different ones that, with the turn my matters had now taken, my predicament, as I have called it, grew most sensible. The fact that the days passed for me without another encounter ought, it would have appeared, to have done something toward soothing my nerves. Since the light brush, that second night on the upper landing, of the presence of a woman at the foot of the stair, I had seen nothing, whether in or out of the house, that one had better not have seen. There was many a corner round which I expected to come upon Quint, and many a situation that, in a merely sinister way, would have favored the appearance of Miss Jessel. The summer had turned, the summer had gone, the autumn had dropped upon Bly and had blown out half our lights. The place, with its gray sky and withered garlands, its bared spaces and scattered dead leaves, was like a theater after the performance — all strewn with crumpled playbills. There were

exactly states of the air, conditions of sound and of stillness, unspeakable impressions of the *kind* of ministering moment, that brought back to me, long enough to catch it, the feeling of the medium in which, that June evening out of doors, I had had my first sight of Quint, and in which, too, at those other instants, I had, after seeing him through the window, looked for him in vain in the circle of shrubbery. I recognized the signs, the portents — I recognized the moment, the spot. But they remained unaccompanied and empty, and I continued unmolested; if unmolested one could call a young woman whose sensibility had, in the most extraordinary fashion, not declined but deepened. I had said in my talk with Mrs. Grose on that horrid scene of Flora's by the lake and had perplexed her by so saying — that it would from that moment distress me much more to lose my power than to keep it. I had then expressed what was vividly in my mind: the truth that, whether the children really saw or not — since, that is, it was not yet definitely proved — I greatly preferred, as a safeguard, the fullness of my own exposure. I was ready to know the very worst that was to be known. What I had then had an ugly glimpse of was that my eyes might be sealed just while theirs were most opened. Well, my eyes *were* sealed, it appeared, at present — a consummation for which it seemed blasphemous not to thank God. There was, alas, a difficulty about that: I would have thanked him with all my soul had I not had in a proportionate measure this conviction of the secret of my pupils.

How can I retrace today the strange steps of my obsession? There were times of our being together when I would have been ready to swear that, literally, in my presence, but with my direct sense of it closed, they had visitors who were known and were welcome. Then it was that, had I not been deterred by the very chance that such an injury might prove greater than the injury to be averted, my exultation would have broken out. "They're here, they're here, you little wretches," I would have cried, "and you can't deny it now!" The little wretches denied it with all the added volume of their sociability and their tenderness, in just the crystal depths of which — like the flash of a fish in a stream — the mockery of their advantage peeped up. The shock, in truth, had sunk into me still deeper than I knew on the night when, looking out to see either Quint or Miss Jessel under the stars, I had beheld the boy over whose rest I watched and who had immediately brought in with him — had straightway, there, turned it on me the lovely upward look with which, from the battlements above me, the hideous apparition of Quint had played. If it was a question of a scare, my discovery on this occasion had scared me more than any other, and it was in the condition of nerves produced by it that I made my actual inductions. They harassed me so that sometimes, at odd moments, I shut myself up audibly to rehearse — it was at once a fantastic relief and a renewed despair — the manner in which I might come to the point. I approached it from one side and the other while, in my room, I flung myself about, but I always broke down in the monstrous utterance of names. As they died away on my lips, I said to myself that I should indeed help them to represent something infamous if, by pronouncing them, I should violate as rare a little case of instinctive delicacy as any school-room, probably, had ever known. When I said to myself: "*They* have the manners to be silent, and you, trusted as you are, the baseness to speak!" I felt myself crimson and I covered my face with my hands. After these secret scenes I chattered more than ever, going on volubly enough till one of our prodigious, palpable hushes occurred — I can call them nothing else — the strange, dizzy lift or swim (I try for terms!) into a stillness, a pause of all life, that had nothing to do with the more or less noise that at the moment we might be engaged in making and that I could hear through any deepened exhilaration or quickened recitation or louder strum of the piano. Then it was that the others, the outsiders, were there. Though they were not angels, they "passed," as the French say causing me, while they stayed, to tremble with the fear of their addressing to their younger victims some yet more infernal message or more vivid image than they had thought good enough for myself.

What it was most impossible to get rid of was the cruel idea that, whatever I had seen, Miles and Flora saw *more* — things terrible and unguessable and that sprang from dreadful passages of intercourse in the past. Such things naturally left on the surface, for the time, a child which we

vociferously denied that we felt; and we had, all three, with repetition, got into such splendid training that we went, each time, almost automatically, to mark the close of the incident, through the very same movements. It was striking of the children, at all events to kiss me inveterately with a kind of wild irrelevance and never to fail — one or the other — of the precious question that had helped us through many a peril. “When do you think he *will* come? Don’t you think we *ought* to write?” — there was nothing like that inquiry, we found by experience, for carrying off an awkwardness. “He” of course was their uncle in Harley Street; and we lived in much profusion of theory that he might at any moment arrive to mingle in our circle. It was impossible to have given less encouragement than he had done to such a doctrine, but if we had not had the doctrine to fall back upon we should have deprived each other of some of our finest exhibitions. He never wrote to them — that may have been selfish, but it was a part of the flattery of his trust of me; for the way in which a man pays his highest tribute to a woman is apt to be but by the more festal celebration of one of the sacred laws of his comfort; and I held that I carried out the spirit of the pledge given not to appeal to him when I let my charges understand that their own letters were but charming literary exercises. They were too beautiful to be posted; I kept them myself; I have them all to this hour. This was a rule indeed which only added to the satiric effect of my being plied with the supposition that he might at any moment be among us. It was exactly as if my charges knew how almost more awkward than anything else that might be for me. There appears to me, moreover, as I look back, no note in all this more extraordinary than the mere fact that, in spite of my tension and of their triumph, I never lost patience with them. Adorable they must in truth have been, I now reflect, that I didn’t in these days hate them! Would exasperation, however, if relief had longer been postponed, finally have betrayed me? It little matters, for relief arrived. I call it relief, though it was only the relief that a snap brings to a strain or the burst of a thunderstorm to a day of suffocation. It was at least change, and it came with a rush.

Chapter 14

Walking to church a certain Sunday morning, I had little Miles at my side and his sister, in advance of us and at Mrs. Grose's, well in sight. It was a crisp, clear day, the first of its order for some time; the night had brought a touch of frost, and the autumn air, bright and sharp, made the church bells almost gay. It was an odd accident of thought that I should have happened at such a moment to be particularly and very gratefully struck with the obedience of my little charges. Why did they never resent my inexorable, my perpetual society? Something or other had brought nearer home to me that I had all but pinned the boy to my shawl and that, in the way our companions were marshaled before me, I might have appeared to provide against some danger of rebellion. I was like a gaoler with an eye to possible surprises and escapes. But all this belonged — I mean their magnificent little surrender — just to the special array of the facts that were most abysmal. Turned out for Sunday by his uncle's tailor, who had had a free hand and a notion of pretty waistcoats and of his grand little air, Miles's whole title to independence, the rights of his sex and situation, were so stamped upon him that if he had suddenly struck for freedom I should have had nothing to say. I was by the strangest of chances wondering how I should meet him when the revolution unmistakably occurred. I call it a revolution because I now see how, with the word he spoke, the curtain rose on the last act of my dreadful drama, and the catastrophe was precipitated. "Look here, my dear, you know," he charmingly said, "when in the world, please, am I going back to school?"

Transcribed here the speech sounds harmless enough, particularly as uttered in the sweet, high, casual pipe with which, at all interlocutors, but above all at his eternal governess, he threw off intonations as if he were tossing roses. There was something in them that always made one "catch," and I caught, at any rate, now so effectually that I stopped as short as if one of the trees of the park had fallen across the road. There was something new, on the spot, between us, and he was perfectly aware that I recognized it, though, to enable me to do so, he had no need to look a whit less candid and charming than usual. I could feel in him how he already, from my at first finding nothing to reply, perceived the advantage he had gained. I was so slow to find anything that he had plenty of time, after a minute, to continue with his suggestive but inconclusive smile: "You know, my dear, that for a fellow to be with a lady *always* — !" His "my dear" was constantly on his lips for me, and nothing could have expressed more the exact shade of the sentiment with which I desired to inspire my pupils than its fond familiarity. It was so respectfully easy.

But, oh, how I felt that at present I must pick my own phrases! I remember that, to gain time, I tried to laugh, and I seemed to see in the beautiful face with which he watched me how ugly and queer I looked. "And always with the same lady?" I returned.

He neither blanched nor winked. The whole thing was virtually out between us. "Ah, of course, she's a jolly, 'perfect' lady; but, after all, I'm a fellow, don't you see? that's — well, getting on."

I lingered there with him an instant ever so kindly. "Yes, you're getting on." Oh, but I felt helpless!

I have kept to this day the heartbreaking little idea of how he seemed to know that and to play with it. "And you can't say I've not been awfully good, can you?"

I laid my hand on his shoulder, for, though I felt how much better it would have been to walk on, I was not yet quite able. "No, I can't say that, Miles."

"Except just that one night, you know — !"

"That one night?" I couldn't look as straight as he.

"Why, when I went down — went out of the house."

“Oh, yes. But I forget what you did it for.”

“You forget?” — he spoke with the sweet extravagance of childish reproach. “Why, it was to show you I could!”

“Oh, yes, you could.”

“And I can again.”

I felt that I might, perhaps, after all, succeed in keeping my wits about me. “Certainly. But you won’t.”

“No, not *that* again. It was nothing.”

“It was nothing,” I said. “But we must go on.”

He resumed our walk with me, passing his hand into my arm. “Then when *am* I going back?”

I wore, in turning it over, my most responsible air. “Were you very happy at school?”

He just considered. “Oh, I’m happy enough anywhere!”

“Well, then,” I quavered, “if you’re just as happy here — ”

“Ah, but that isn’t everything! Of course *you* know a lot — ”

“But you hint that you know almost as much?” I risked as he paused.

“Not half I want to!” Miles honestly professed. “But it isn’t so much that.”

“What is it, then?”

“Well — I want to see more life.”

“I see; I see.” We had arrived within sight of the church and of various persons, including several of the household of Bly, on their way to it and clustered about the door to see us go in. I quickened our step; I wanted to get there before the question between us opened up much further; I reflected hungrily that, for more than an hour, he would have to be silent; and I thought with envy of the comparative dusk of the pew and of the almost spiritual help of the hassock on which I might bend my knees. I seemed literally to be running a race with some confusion to which he was about to reduce me, but I felt that he had got in first when, before we had even entered the churchyard, he threw out —

“I want my own sort!”

It literally made me bound forward. “There are not many of your own sort, Miles!” I laughed. “Unless perhaps dear little Flora!”

“You really compare me to a baby girl?”

This found me singularly weak. “Don’t you, then, *love* our sweet Flora?”

“If I didn’t — and you, too; if I didn’t — !” he repeated as if retreating for a jump, yet leaving his thought so unfinished that, after we had come into the gate, another stop, which he imposed on me by the pressure of his arm, had become inevitable. Mrs. Grose and Flora had passed into the church, the other worshippers had followed, and we were, for the minute, alone among the old, thick graves. We had paused, on the path from the gate, by a low, oblong, tablelike tomb.

“Yes, if you didn’t — ?”

He looked, while I waited, about at the graves. “Well, you know what!” But he didn’t move, and he presently produced something that made me drop straight down on the stone slab, as if suddenly to rest.

“Does my uncle think what *you* think?”

I markedly rested. “How do you know what I think?”

“Ah, well, of course I don’t; for it strikes me you never tell me. But I mean does *he* know?”

“Know what, Miles?”

“Why, the way I’m going on.”

I perceived quickly enough that I could make, to this inquiry, no answer that would not involve something of a sacrifice of my employer. Yet it appeared to me that we were all, at Bly, sufficiently sacrificed to make that venial. “I don’t think your uncle much cares.”

Miles, on this, stood looking at me. “Then don’t you think he can be made to?”

“In what way?”

“Why, by his coming down.”

“But who’ll get him to come down?”

“*I will!*” the boy said with extraordinary brightness and emphasis. He gave me another look charged with that expression and then marched off alone into church.

Chapter 15

The business was practically settled from the moment I never followed him. It was a pitiful surrender to agitation, but my being aware of this had somehow no power to restore me. I only sat there on my tomb and read into what my little friend had said to me the fullness of its meaning; by the time I had grasped the whole of which I had also embraced, for absence, the pretext that I was ashamed to offer my pupils and the rest of the congregation such an example of delay. What I said to myself above all was that Miles had got something out of me and that the proof of it, for him, would be just this awkward collapse. He had got out of me that there was something I was much afraid of and that he should probably be able to make use of my fear to gain, for his own purpose, more freedom. My fear was of having to deal with the intolerable question of the grounds of his dismissal from school, for that was really but the question of the horrors gathered behind. That his uncle should arrive to treat with me of these things was a solution that, strictly speaking, I ought now to have desired to bring on; but I could so little face the ugliness and the pain of it that I simply procrastinated and lived from hand to mouth. The boy, to my deep discomposure, was immensely in the right, was in a position to say to me: "Either you clear up with my guardian the mystery of this interruption of my studies, or you cease to expect me to lead with you a life that's so unnatural for a boy." What was so unnatural for the particular boy I was concerned with was this sudden revelation of a consciousness and a plan.

That was what really overcame me, what prevented my going in. I walked round the church, hesitating, hovering; I reflected that I had already, with him, hurt myself beyond repair. Therefore I could patch up nothing, and it was too extreme an effort to squeeze beside him into the pew: he would be so much more sure than ever to pass his arm into mine and make me sit there for an hour in close, silent contact with his commentary on our talk. For the first minute since his arrival I wanted to get away from him. As I paused beneath the high east window and listened to the sounds of worship, I was taken with an impulse that might master me, I felt, completely should I give it the least encouragement. I might easily put an end to my predicament by getting away altogether. Here was my chance; there was no one to stop me; I could give the whole thing up — turn my back and retreat. It was only a question of hurrying again, for a few preparations, to the house which the attendance at church of so many of the servants would practically have left unoccupied. No one, in short, could blame me if I should just drive desperately off. What was it to get away if I got away only till dinner? That would be in a couple of hours, at the end of which — I had the acute prevision — my little pupils would play at innocent wonder about my nonappearance in their train.

"What *did* you do, you naughty, bad thing? Why in the world, to worry us so — and take our thoughts off, too, don't you know? — did you desert us at the very door?" I couldn't meet such questions nor, as they asked them, their false little lovely eyes; yet it was all so exactly what I should have to meet that, as the prospect grew sharp to me, I at last let myself go.

I got, so far as the immediate moment was concerned, away; I came straight out of the churchyard and, thinking hard, retraced my steps through the park. It seemed to me that by the time I reached the house I had made up my mind I would fly. The Sunday stillness both of the approaches and of the interior, in which I met no one, fairly excited me with a sense of opportunity. Were I to get off quickly, this way, I should get off without a scene, without a word. My quickness would have to be remarkable, however, and the question of a conveyance was the great one to settle. Tormented, in the hall, with difficulties and obstacles, I remember sinking down at the foot of the staircase — suddenly collapsing there on the lowest step and then, with a revulsion, recalling that it was exactly where more than a

month before, in the darkness of night and just so bowed with evil things I had seen the specter of the most horrible of women. At this I was able to straighten my self; I went the rest of the way up; I made, in my bewilderment, for the schoolroom, where there were objects belonging to me that I should have to take. But I opened the door to find again, in a flash, my eyes unsealed. In the presence of what I saw I reeled straight back upon my resistance.

Seated at my own table in clear noonday light I saw a person whom without my previous experience I should have taken at the first blush for some housemaid who might have stayed at home to look after the place and who, availing herself of rare relief from observation and of the schoolroom table and my pens, ink, and paper, had applied herself to the considerable effort of a letter to her sweetheart. There was an effort in the way that, while her arms rested on the table, her hands with evident weariness supported her head; but at the moment I took this in I had already become aware that, in spite of my entrance, her attitude strangely persisted. Then it was — with the very act of its announcing itself — that her identity flared up in a change of posture. She rose, not as if she had heard me, but with an indescribable grand melancholy of indifference and detachment, and, within a dozen feet of me, stood there as my vile predecessor. Dishonored and tragic, she was all before me; but even as I fixed and, for memory, secured it, the awful image passed away. Dark as midnight in her black dress her haggard beauty and her unutterable woe, she had looked at me long enough to appear to say that her right to sit at my table was as good as mine to sit at hers. While these instants lasted, indeed, I had the extraordinary chill of feeling that it was I who was the intruder. It was as a wild protest against it that, I actually addressing her — “You terrible, miserable woman!” — I heard myself break into a sound that, by the open door, rang through the long passage and the empty house. She looked at me as if she heard me, but I had recovered myself and cleared the air. There was nothing in the room the next minute but the sunshine and a sense that I must stay.

Chapter 16

I had so perfectly expected that the return of my pupils would be marked by a demonstration that I was freshly upset at having to take into account that they were dumb about my absence. Instead of gaily denouncing and caressing me, they made no allusion to my having failed them, and I was left, for the time, on perceiving that she too said nothing, to study Mrs. Grose's odd face. I did this to such purpose that I made sure they had in some way bribed her to silence; a silence that, however, I would engage to break down on the first private opportunity. This opportunity came before tea: I secured five minutes with her in the housekeeper's room, where, in the twilight, amid a smell of lately baked bread, but with the place all swept and garnished¹³, I found her sitting in pained placidity before the fire. So I see her still, so I see her best: facing the flame from her straight chair in the dusky, shining room, a large clean image of the "put away" — of drawers closed and locked and rest without a remedy.

"Oh, yes, they asked me to say nothing; and to please them — so long as they were there — of course I promised. But what had happened to you?"

"I only went with you for the walk," I said. "I had then to come back to meet a friend."

She showed her surprise. "A friend — *you*?"

"Oh, yes, I have a couple!" I laughed. "But did the children give you a reason?"

"For not alluding to your leaving us? Yes; they said you would like it better. Do you like it better?"

My face had made her rueful. "No, I like it worse!" But after an instant I added: "Did they say why I should like it better?"

"No; Master Miles only said, 'We must do nothing but what she likes!'"

"I wish indeed he would! And what did Flora say?"

"Miss Flora was too sweet. She said, 'Oh, of course, of course!' — and I said the same."

I thought a moment. "You were too sweet, too. I can hear you all. But nonetheless, between Miles and me, it's now all out."

"All out?" My companion stared. "But what, miss?"

"Everything. It doesn't matter. I've made up my mind. I came home, my dear," I went on, "for a talk with Miss Jessel."

I had by this time formed the habit of having Mrs. Grose literally well in hand in advance of my sounding that note: so that even now, as she bravely blinked under the signal of my word, I could keep her comparatively firm. "A talk! Do you mean she spoke?"

"It came to that. I found her, on my return, in the schoolroom."

"And what did she say?" I can hear the good woman still, and the candor of her stupefaction.

"That she suffers the torments — !"

It was this, of a truth, that made her, as she filled out my picture, gape. "Do you mean," she faltered, "— of the lost?"

"Of the lost. Of the damned. And that's why, to share them — " I faltered myself with the horror of it.

But my companion, with less imagination, kept me up. "To share them — ?"

"She wants Flora." Mrs. Grose might, as I gave it to her, fairly have fallen away from me had I not been prepared. I still held her there, to show I was. "As I've told you, however, it doesn't matter."

"Because you've made up your mind? But to what?"

13. Possible allusion to Matthew 12:44. Jesus tells the Pharisees that they are inhabited by an unclean spirit who returns to the house despite the fact that it is "swept, and garnished."

“To everything.”

“And what do you call ‘everything’?”

“Why, sending for their uncle.”

“Oh, miss, in pity do,” my friend broke out.

“Ah, but I will, I *will!* I see it’s the only way. What’s ‘out,’ as I told you, with Miles is that if he thinks I’m afraid to and has ideas of what he gains by that — he shall see he’s mistaken. Yes, yes; his uncle shall have it here from me on the spot (and before the boy himself, if necessary) that if I’m to be reproached with having done nothing again about more school — ”

“Yes, miss — ” my companion pressed me.

“Well, there’s that awful reason.”

There were now clearly so many of these for my poor colleague that she was excusable for being vague. “But — a — which?”

“Why, the letter from his old place.”

“You’ll show it to the master?”

“I ought to have done so on the instant.”

“Oh, no!” said Mrs. Grose with decision.

“I’ll put it before him,” I went on inexorably, “that I can’t undertake to work the question on behalf of a child who has been expelled — ”

“For we’ve never in the least known what!” Mrs. Grose declared.

“For wickedness. For what else — when he’s so clever and beautiful and perfect? Is he stupid? Is he untidy? Is he infirm? Is he ill-natured? He’s exquisite — so it can be only *that*; and that would open up the whole thing. After all,” I said, “it’s their uncle’s fault. If he left here such people — !”

“He didn’t really in the least know them. The fault’s mine” She had turned quite pale.

“Well, you shan’t suffer,” I answered.

“The children shan’t!” she emphatically returned.

I was silent awhile; we looked at each other, “Then what am I to tell him?”

“You needn’t tell him anything. *I’ll* tell him.”

I measured this. “Do you mean you’ll write — ?” Remembering she couldn’t, I caught myself up. “How do you communicate?”

“I tell the bailiff. *He* writes.”

“And should you like him to write our story?”

My question had a sarcastic force that I had not fully intended, and it made her, after a moment, inconsequently break down. The tears were again in her eyes. “Ah, miss, *you* write!”

“Well — tonight,” I at last answered; and on this we separated.

Chapter 17

I went so far, in the evening, as to make a beginning. The weather had changed back, a great wind was abroad, and beneath the lamp, in my room, with Flora at peace beside me, I sat for a long time before a blank sheet of paper and listened to the lash of the rain and the batter of the gusts. Finally I went out, taking a candle; I crossed the passage and listened a minute at Miles's door. What, under my endless obsession, I had been impelled to listen for was some betrayal of his not being at rest, and I presently caught one, but not in the form I had expected. His voice tinkled out. "I say, you there — come in." It was a gaiety in the gloom!

I went in with my light and found him, in bed, very wide awake, but very much at his ease. "Well, what are *you* up to?" he asked with a grace of sociability in which it occurred to me that Mrs. Grose, had she been present, might have looked in vain for proof that anything was "out."

I stood over him with my candle. "How did you know I was there?"

"Why, of course I heard you. Did you fancy you made no noise? You're like a troop of cavalry!" he beautifully laughed.

"Then you weren't asleep?"

"Not much! I lie awake and think."

I had put my candle, designedly, a short way off, and then, as he held out his friendly old hand to me, had sat down on the edge of his bed. "What is it," I asked, "that you think of?"

"What in the world, my dear, but *you*?"

"Ah, the pride I take in your appreciation doesn't insist on that! I had so far rather you slept."

"Well, I think also, you know, of this queer business of ours."

I marked the coolness of his firm little hand. "Of what queer business, Miles?"

"Why, the way you bring me up. And all the rest!"

I fairly held my breath a minute, and even from my glimmering taper there was light enough to show how he smiled up at me from his pillow. "What do you mean by all me rest?"

"Oh, you know, you know!"

I could say nothing for a minute, though I felt, as I held his hand and our eyes continued to meet, that my silence had all the air of admitting his charge and that nothing in the whole world of reality was perhaps at that moment so fabulous as our actual relation. "Certainly you shall go back to school," I said, "if it be that that troubles you. But not to the old place — we must find another, a better. How could I know it did trouble you, this question, when you never told me so, never spoke of it at all?" His dear, listening face, framed in its smooth whiteness, made him for the minute as appealing as some wistful patient in a children's hospital; and I would have given, as the resemblance came to me, all I possessed on earth really to be the nurse or the sister of charity who might have helped to cure him. Well, even as it was, I perhaps might help! "Do you know you've never said a word to me about your school — I mean the old one; never mentioned it in any way?"

He seemed to wonder; he smiled with the same loveliness. But he clearly gained time; he waited, he called for guidance. "Haven't I?" It wasn't for *me* to help him — it was for the thing I had met!

Something in his tone and the expression of his face, as I got this from him, set my heart aching with such a pang as it had never yet known; so unutterably touching was it to see his little brain puzzled and his little resources taxed to play, under the spell laid on him, a part of innocence and consistency. "No, never — from the hour you came back, You've never mentioned to me one of your masters, one of your comrades, nor the least little thing that ever happened to you at school. Never, little Miles — no,

never — have you given me an inkling of anything that *may* have happened there. Therefore you can fancy how much I'm in the dark. Until you came out, that way, this morning, you had, since the first hour I saw you, scarce even made a reference to anything in your previous life. You seemed so perfectly to accept the present." It was extraordinary how my absolute conviction of his secret precocity (or whatever I might call the poison of an influence that I dared but half to phrase) made him, in spite of the faint breath of his inward trouble, appear as accessible as an older person — imposed him almost as an intellectual equal. "I thought you wanted to go on as you are."

It struck me that at this he just faintly colored. He gave, at any rate, like a convalescent slightly fatigued, a languid shake of his head. "I don't — I don't. I want to get away."

"You're tired of Bly?"

"Oh, no, I like Bly."

"Well, then — ?"

"Oh, *you* know what a boy wants!"

I felt that I didn't know so well as Miles, and I took temporary refuge. "You want to go to your uncle?"

Again, at this, with his sweet ironic face, he made a movement on the pillow. "Ah, you can't get off with that!"

I was silent a little, and it was I, now, I think, who changed color. "My dear, I don't want to get off!"

"You can't, even if you do. You can't, you can't!" — he lay beautifully staring. "My uncle must come down, and you must completely settle things."

"If we do," I returned with some spirit, "you may be sure it will be to take you quite away."

"Well, don't you understand that that's exactly what I'm working for? You'll have to tell him — about the way you've let it all drop: you'll have to tell him a tremendous lot!"

The exultation with which he uttered this helped me somehow, for the instant, to meet him rather more. "And how much will *you*, Miles, have to tell him? There are things he'll ask you!"

He turned it over. "Very likely. But what things?"

"The things you've never told me. To make up his mind what to do with you. He can't send you back —"

"Oh, I don't want to go back!" he broke in. "I want a new field."

He said it with admirable serenity, with positive unimpeachable gaiety; and doubtless it was that very note that most evoked for me the poignancy, the unnatural childish tragedy, of his probable reappearance at the end of three months with all this bravado and still more dishonor. It overwhelmed me now that I should never be able to bear that, and it made me let myself go. I threw myself upon him and in the tenderness of my pity I embraced him. "Dear little Miles, dear little Miles — !"

My face was close to his, and he let me kiss him, simply taking it with indulgent good humor. "Well, old lady?"

"Is there nothing — nothing at all that you want to tell me?"

He turned off a little, facing round toward the wall and holding up his hand to look at as one had seen sick children look. "I've told you — I told you this morning."

Oh, I was sorry for him! "That you just want me not to worry you?"

He looked round at me now, as if in recognition of my understanding him; then ever so gently, "To let me alone," he replied.

There was even a singular little dignity in it, something that made me release him, yet, when I had slowly risen, linger beside him. God knows I never wished to harass him, but I felt that merely, at this, to turn my back on him was to abandon or, to put it more truly, to lose him "I've just begun a letter to your uncle," I said.

"Well, then, finish it!"

I waited a minute. "What happened before?"

He gazed up at me again. "Before what?"

"Before you came back. And before you went away "

For some time he was silent, but he continued to meet my eyes. "What happened?"

It made me, the sound of the words, in which it seemed to me that I caught for the very first time a small faint quaver of consenting consciousness — it made me drop on my knees beside the bed and seize once more the chance of possessing him. "Dear little Miles, dear little Miles, if you *knew* how I want to help you! It's only that, it's nothing but that, and I'd rather die than give you a pain or do you a wrong — I'd rather die than hurt a hair of you. Dear little Miles" — oh, I brought it out now even if I *should* go too far — "I just want you to help me to save you!" But I knew in a moment after this that I had gone too far. The answer to my appeal was instantaneous, but it came in the form of an extraordinary blast and chill, a gust of frozen air, and a shake of the room as great as if, in the wild wind, the casement had crashed in. The boy gave a loud, high shriek, which, lost in the rest of the shock of sound, might have seemed, indistinctly, though I was so close to him, a note either of jubilation or of terror. I jumped to my feet again and was conscious of darkness. So for a moment we remained, while I stared about me and saw that the drawn curtains were unstirred and the window tight. "Why, the candle's out!" I then cried.

"It was I who blew it, dear!" said Miles.

Chapter 18

The next day, after lessons, Mrs. Grose found a moment to say to me quietly: “Have you written, miss?”

“Yes — I’ve written.” But I didn’t add — for the hour — that my letter, sealed and directed, was still in my pocket. There would be time enough to send it before the messenger should go to the village. Meanwhile there had been, on the part of my pupils, no more brilliant, more exemplary morning. It was exactly as if they had both had at heart to gloss over any recent little friction. They performed the dizziest feats of arithmetic, soaring quite out of *my* feeble range, and perpetrated, in higher spirits than ever, geographical and historical jokes. It was conspicuous of course in Miles in particular that he appeared to wish to show how easily he could let me down. This child, to my memory, really lives in a setting of beauty and misery that no words can translate; there was a distinction all his own in every impulse he revealed; never was a small natural creature, to the uninitiated eye all frankness and freedom, a more ingenious, a more extraordinary little gentleman. I had perpetually to guard against the wonder of contemplation into which my initiated view betrayed me; to check the irrelevant gaze and discouraged sigh in which I constantly both attacked and renounced the enigma of what such a little gentleman could have done that deserved a penalty. Say that, by the dark prodigy I knew, the imagination of all evil *had* been opened up to him: all the justice within me ached for the proof that it could ever have flowered into an act.

He had never, at any rate, been such a little gentleman as when, after our early dinner on this dreadful day, he came round to me and asked if I shouldn’t like him, for half an hour, to play to me. David playing to Saul¹⁴ could never have shown a finer sense of the occasion. It was literally a charming exhibition of tact, of magnanimity, and quite tantamount to his saying outright: “The true knights we love to read about never push an advantage too far. I know what you mean now: you mean that — to be let alone yourself and not followed up — you’ll cease to worry and spy upon me, won’t keep me so close to you, will let me go and come. Well, I ‘come,’ you see — but I don’t go! There’ll be plenty of time for that. I do really delight in your society, and I only want to show you that I contended for a principle.” It may be imagined whether I resisted this appeal or failed to accompany him again, hand in hand, to the schoolroom. He sat down at the old piano and played as he had never played; and if there are those who think he had better have been kicking a football I can only say that I wholly agree with them. For at the end of a time that under his influence I had quite ceased to measure, I started up with a strange sense of having literally slept at my post. It was after luncheon, and by the schoolroom fire, and yet I hadn’t really, in the least, slept: I had only done something much worse — I had forgotten. Where, all this time, was Flora? When I put the question to Miles, he played on a minute before answering and then could only say: “Why, my dear, how do *I* know?” — breaking moreover into a happy laugh which, immediately after, as if it were a vocal accompaniment, he prolonged into incoherent, extravagant song.

I went straight to my room, but his sister was not there; then, before going downstairs, I looked into several others. As she was nowhere about she would surely be with Mrs. Grose, whom, in the comfort of that theory, I accordingly proceeded in quest of. I found her where I had found her the evening before, but she met my quick challenge with blank, scared ignorance. She had only supposed that, after the repast, I had carried off both the children; as to which she was quite in her right, for it was the very

14. See 1 Samuel 16:23. “And whenever the evil spirit...was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand; so Saul...was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

first time I had allowed the little girl out of my sight without some special provision. Of course now indeed she might be with the maids, so that the immediate thing was to look for her without an air of alarm. This we promptly arranged between us; but when, ten minutes later and in pursuance of our arrangement, we met in the hall, it was only to report on either side that after guarded inquiries we had altogether failed to trace her. For a minute there, apart from observation, we exchanged mute alarms, and I could feel with what high interest my friend returned me all those I had from the first given her.

“She’ll be above,” she presently said — “in one of the rooms you haven’t searched.”

“No; she’s at a distance.” I had made up my mind. “She has gone out.”

Mrs. Grose stared. “Without a hat?”

I naturally also looked volumes. “Isn’t that woman always without one?”

“She’s with *her*?”

“She’s with *her*!” I declared. “We must find them.”

My hand was on my friend’s arm, but she failed for the moment, confronted with such an account of the matter, to respond to my pressure. She communed, on the contrary, on the spot, with her uneasiness. “And where’s Master Miles?”

“Oh, *he*’s with Quint. They’re in the schoolroom.”

“Lord, miss!” My view, I was myself aware — and therefore I suppose my tone — had never yet reached so calm an assurance.

“The trick’s played,” I went on; “they’ve successfully worked their plan. He found the most divine little way to keep me quiet while she went off.”

“‘Divine’?” Mrs. Grose bewilderedly echoed.

“Infernal, then!” I almost cheerfully rejoined. “He has provided for himself as well. But come!”

She had helplessly gloomed at the upper regions. “You leave him — ?”

“So long with Quint? Yes — I don’t mind that now.”

She always ended, at these moments, by getting possession of my hand, and in this manner she could at present still stay me. But after gasping an instant at my sudden resignation, “Because of your letter?” she eagerly brought out.

I quickly, by way of answer, felt for my letter, drew it forth, held it up, and then, freeing myself, went and laid it on the great hall table. “Luke will take it,” I said as I came back. I reached the house door and opened it; I was already on the steps.

My companion still demurred: the storm of the night and the early morning had dropped, but the afternoon was damp and gray. I came down to the drive while she stood in the doorway. “You go with nothing on?”

“What do I care when the child has nothing? I can’t wait to dress,” I cried, “and if you must do so, I leave you. Try meanwhile, yourself, upstairs.”

“With *them*?” Oh, on this, the poor woman promptly joined me!

Chapter 19

We went straight to the lake, as it was called at Bly, and I daresay rightly called, though I reflect that it may in fact have been a sheet of water less remarkable than it appeared to my untraveled eyes. My acquaintance with sheets of water was small, and the pool of Bly, at all events on the few occasions of my consenting, under the protection of my pupils, to affront its surface in the old flat-bottomed boat moored there for our use, had impressed me both with its extent and its agitation. The usual place of embarkation was half a mile from the house, but I had an intimate conviction that, wherever Flora might be, she was not near home. She had not given me the slip for any small adventure, and, since the day of the very great one that I had shared with her by the pond, I had been aware, in our walks, of the quarter to which she most inclined. This was why I had now given to Mrs. Grose's steps so marked a direction — a direction that made her, when she perceived it, oppose a resistance that showed me she was freshly mystified. "You're going to the water, Miss? — you think she's in — ?"

"She may be, though the depth is, I believe, nowhere very great. But what I judge most likely is that she's on the spot from which, the other day, we saw together what I told you."

"When she pretended not to see — ?"

"With that astounding self-possession? I've always been sure she wanted to go back alone. And now her brother has managed it for her."

Mrs. Grose still stood where she had stopped. "You suppose they really *talk* of them?"

I could meet this with a confidence! "They say things that, if we heard them, would simply appal us."

"And if she *is* there — ?"

"Yes?"

"Then Miss Jessel is?"

"Beyond a doubt. You shall see."

"Oh, thank you!" my friend cried, planted so firm that, taking it in, I went straight on without her. By the time I reached the pool, however, — she was close behind me, and I knew that, whatever, to her apprehension, might befall me, the exposure of my society struck her as her least danger. She exhaled a moan of relief as we at last came in sight of the greater part of the water without a sight of the child. There was no trace of Flora on that nearer side of the bank where my observation of her had been most startling, and none on the opposite edge, where, save for a margin of some twenty yards, a thick copse came down to the water. The pond, oblong in shape, had a width so scant compared to its length that, with its ends out of view, it might have been taken for a scant river. We looked at the empty expanse, and then I felt the suggestion of my friend's eyes. I knew what she meant and I replied with a negative headshake.

"No, no; wait! She has taken the boat."

My companion stared at the vacant mooring place and then again across the lake. "Then where is it?"

"Our not seeing it is the strongest of proofs. She has used it to go over, and then has managed to hide it."

"All alone — that child?"

"She's not alone, and at such times she's not a child: she's an old, old woman." I scanned all the visible shore while Mrs. Grose took again, into the queer element I offered her, one of her plunges of submission; then I pointed out that the boat might perfectly be in a small refuge formed by one of the

recesses of the pool, an indentation masked, for the hither side, by a projection of the bank and by a clump of trees growing close to the water.

“But if the boat’s there, where on earth’s *she*?” my colleague anxiously asked.

“That’s exactly what we must learn.” And I started to walk further.

“By going all the way round?”

“Certainly, far as it is. It will take us but ten minutes, but it’s far enough to have made the child prefer not to walk. She went straight over.”

“Laws!” cried my friend again; the chain of my logic was ever too much for her. It dragged her at my heels even now, and when we had got halfway round — a devious, tiresome process, on ground much broken and by a path choked with overgrowth — I paused to give her breath. I sustained her with a grateful arm, assuring her that she might hugely help me; and this started us afresh, so that in the course of but few minutes more we reached a point from which we found the boat to be where I had supposed it. It had been intentionally left as much as possible out of sight and was tied to one of the stakes of a fence that came, just there, down to the brink and that had been an assistance to disembarking. I recognized, as I looked at the pair of short, thick oars, quite safely drawn up, the prodigious character of the feat for a little girl; but I had lived, by this time, too long among wonders and had panted to too many livelier measures. There was a gate in the fence, through which we passed, and that brought us, after a trifling interval, more into the open. Then, “There she is!” we both exclaimed at once.

Flora, a short way off, stood before us on the grass and smiled as if her performance was now complete. The next thing she did, however, was to stoop straight down and pluck — quite as if it were all she was there for — a big, ugly spray of withered fern. I instantly became sure she had just come out of the copse. She waited for us, not herself taking a step, and I was conscious of the rare solemnity with which we presently approached her. She smiled and smiled, and we met; but it was all done in a silence by this time flagrantly ominous. Mrs. Grose was the first to break the spell: she threw herself on her knees and, drawing the child to her breast, clasped in a long embrace the little tender, yielding body. While this dumb convulsion lasted I could only watch it — which I did the more intently when I saw Flora’s face peep at me over our companion’s shoulder. It was serious now — the flicker had left it; but it strengthened the pang with which I at that moment envied Mrs. Grose the simplicity of *her* relation. Still, all this while, nothing more passed between us save that Flora had let her foolish fern again drop to the ground. What she and I had virtually said to each other was that pretexts were useless now. When Mrs. Grose finally got up she kept the child’s hand, so that the two were still before me; and the singular reticence of our communion was even more marked in the frank look she launched me. “I’ll be hanged,” it said, “if *I’ll* speak!”

It was Flora who, gazing all over me in candid wonder, was the first. She was struck with our bareheaded aspect. “Why, where are your things?”

“Where yours are, my dear!” I promptly returned.

She had already got back her gaiety, and appeared to take this as an answer quite sufficient, “And where’s Miles?” she went on.

There was something in the small valor of it that quite finished me: these three words from her were, in a flash like the glitter of a drawn blade, the jostle of the cup that my hand, for weeks and weeks, had held high and full to the brim and that now, even before speaking, I felt overflow in a deluge. “I’ll tell you if you’ll tell *me* — ” I heard myself say, then heard the tremor in which it broke.

“Well, what?”

Mrs. Grose’s suspense blazed at me, but it was too late now, and I brought the thing out handsomely. “Where, my pet, is Miss Jessel?”

Chapter 20

Just as in the churchyard with Miles, the whole thing was upon us. Much as I had made of the fact that this name had never once, between us, been sounded, the quick, smitten glare with which the child's face now received it fairly likened my breach of the silence to the smash of a pane of glass. It added to the interposing cry, as if to stay the blow, that Mrs. Grose, at the same instant, uttered over my violence — the shriek of a creature scared, or rather wounded, which, in turn, within a few seconds, was completed by a gasp of my own. I seized my colleague's arm. "She's there, she's there!"

Miss Jessel stood before us on the opposite bank exactly as she had stood the other time, and I remember, strangely, as the first feeling now produced in me, my thrill of joy at having brought on a proof. She was there, and I was justified; she was there, and I was neither cruel nor mad. She was there for poor scared Mrs. Grose, but she was mere most for Flora; and no moment of my monstrous time was perhaps so extraordinary as that in which I consciously threw out to her — with the sense that, pale and ravenous demon as she was, she would catch and understand it — an inarticulate message of gratitude. She rose erect on the spot my friend and I had lately quitted, and mere was not, in all the long reach of her desire, an inch of her evil that fell short. This first vividness of vision and emotion were things of a few seconds, during which Mrs. Grose's dazed blink across to where I pointed struck me as a sovereign sign that she too at last saw, just as it carried my own eyes precipitately to the child. The revelation then of the manner in which Flora was affected startled me, in truth, far more than it would have done to find her also merely agitated, for direct dismay was of course not what I had expected. Prepared and on her guard as our pursuit had actually made her, she would repress every betrayal; and I was therefore shaken, on the spot, by my first glimpse of the particular one for which I had not allowed. To see her, without a convulsion of her small pink face, not even feign to glance in the direction of the prodigy I announced, but only, instead of that, turn at *me* an expression of hard, still gravity, an expression absolutely new and unprecedented and that appeared to read and accuse and judge me — this was a stroke that somehow converted the little girl herself into the very presence that could make me quail. I quailed even though my certitude that she thoroughly saw was never greater than at that instant, and in the immediate need to defend myself I called it passionately to witness. "She's there, you little unhappy thing — there, there, *there*, and you see her as well as you see me!" I had said shortly before to Mrs. Grose that she was not at these times a child, but an old, old woman, and that description of her could not have been more strikingly confirmed than in the way in which, for all answer to this, she simply showed me, without a concession, an admission, of her eyes, a countenance of deeper and deeper, of indeed suddenly quite fixed, reprobation. I was by this time — if I can put the whole thing at all together — more appalled at what I may properly call her manner than at anything else, though it was simultaneously with this that I became aware of having Mrs. Grose also, and very formidably, to reckon with. My elder companion, the next moment, at any rate, blotted out everything but her own flushed face and her loud, shocked protest, a burst of high disapproval. "What a dreadful turn, to be sure, miss! Where on earth do you see anything?"

I could only grasp her more quickly yet, for even while she spoke the hideous plain presence stood undimmed and undaunted. It had already lasted a minute, and it lasted while I continued, seizing my colleague, quite thrusting her at it and presenting her to it, to insist with my pointing hand. "You don't see her exactly as *we* see? — you mean to say you don't now — *now*? She's as big as a blazing fire! Only look, dearest woman, *look* — !" She looked, even as I did, and gave me, with her deep groan of negation, repulsion, compassion — the mixture with her pity of her relief at her exemption — a sense,

touching to me even then, that she would have backed me up if she could. I might well have needed that, for with this hard blow of the proof that her eyes were hopelessly sealed I felt my own situation horribly crumble, I felt — I saw — my livid predecessor press, from her position, on my defeat, and I was conscious, more than all, of what I should have from this instant to deal with in the astounding little attitude of Flora. Into this attitude Mrs. Grose immediately and violently entered, breaking, even while there pierced through my sense of ruin a prodigious private triumph, into breathless reassurance.

“She isn’t there, little lady, and nobody’s there and you never see nothing, my sweet! How can poor Miss Jessel — when poor Miss Jessel’s dead and buried? *We know, don’t we, love?*” — and she appealed, blundering in, to the child. “It’s all a mere mistake and a worry and a joke — and we’ll go home as fast as we can!”

Our companion, on this, had responded with a strange, quick primness of propriety, and they were again, with Mrs. Grose on her feet, united, as it were, in pained opposition to me. Flora continued to fix me with her small mask of reprobation, and even at that minute I prayed God to forgive me for seeming to see that, as she stood there holding tight to our friend’s dress, her incomparable childish beauty had suddenly failed, had quite vanished. I’ve said it already — she was literally, she was hideously, hard; she had turned common and almost ugly. “I don’t know what you mean. I see nobody. I see nothing. I never *have*. I think you’re cruel. I don’t like you!” Then, after this deliverance, which might have been that of a vulgarly pert little girl in the street, she hugged Mrs. Grose more closely and buried in her skirts the dreadful little face. In this position she produced an almost furious wail. “Take me away, take me away — oh, take me away from *her!*”

“From *me?*” I panted.

“From you — from you!” she cried.

Even Mrs. Grose looked across at me dismayed, while I had nothing to do but communicate again with the figure that, on the opposite bank, without a movement, as rigidly still as if catching, beyond the interval, our voices, was as vividly there for my disaster as it was not there for my service. The wretched child had spoken exactly as if she had got from some outside source each of her stabbing little words, and I could therefore, in the full despair of all I had to accept, but sadly shake my head at her. “If I had ever doubted, all my doubt would at present have gone. I’ve been living with the miserable truth, and now it has only too much closed round me. Of course I’ve lost you: I’ve interfered, and you’ve seen — under *her* dictation” — with which I faced, over the pool again, our infernal witness — “the easy and perfect way to meet it. I’ve done my best, but I’ve lost you. Goodbye.” For Mrs. Grose I had an imperative, am almost frantic “Go, go!” before which, in infinite distress, but mutely possessed of the little girl and clearly convinced, in spite of her blindness, that something awful had occurred and some collapse engulfed us, she retreated, by the way we had come, as fast as she could move.

Of what first happened when I was left alone I had no subsequent memory. I only knew that at the end of, I suppose, a quarter of an hour, an odorous dampness and roughness, chilling and piercing my trouble, had made me understand that I must have thrown myself, on my face, on the ground and given way to a wildness of grief. I must have lain there long and cried and sobbed, for when I raised my head the day was almost done. I got up and looked a moment, through the twilight, at the gray pool and its blank, haunted edge, and then I took, back to the house, my dreary and difficult course. When I reached the gate in the fence the boat, to my surprise, was gone, so that I had a fresh reflection to make on Flora’s extraordinary command of the situation. She passed that night, by the most tacit, and I should add, were not the word so grotesque a false note, the happiest of arrangements, with Mrs. Grose. I saw neither of them on my return, but, on the other hand, as by an ambiguous compensation, I saw a great deal of Miles. I saw — I can use no other phrase — so much of him that it was as if it were more than it had ever been. No evening I had passed at Bly had the portentous quality of this one; in spite of which — and in spite also of the deeper depths of consternation that had opened beneath my feet — there was

literally, in the ebbing actual, an extraordinarily sweet sadness. On reaching the house I had never so much as looked for the boy; I had simply gone straight to my room to change what I was wearing and to take in, at a glance, much material testimony to Flora's rupture. Her little belongings had all been removed. When later, by the schoolroom fire, I was served with tea by the usual maid, I indulged, on the article of my other pupil, in no inquiry whatever. He had his freedom now — he might have it to the end! Well, he did have it; and it consisted — in part at least — of his coming in at about eight o'clock and sitting down with me in silence. On the removal of the tea things I had blown out the candles and drawn my chair closer: I was conscious of a mortal coldness and felt as if I should never again be warm. So, when he appeared, I was sitting in the glow with my thoughts. He paused a moment by the door as if to look at me; then — as if to share them — came to the other side of the hearth and sank into a chair. We sat there in absolute stillness, yet he wanted, I felt, to be with me.

Chapter 21

Before a new day, in my room, had fully broken, my eyes opened to Mrs. Grose, who had come to my bedside with worse news. Flora was so markedly feverish that an illness was perhaps at hand; she had passed a night of extreme unrest, a night agitated above all by fears that had for their subject not in the least her former, but wholly her present, governess. It was not against the possible re-entrance of Miss Jessel on the scene that she protested — it was conspicuously and passionately against mine. I was promptly on my feet of course, and with an immense deal to ask; the more that my friend had discernibly now girded her loins to meet me once more. This I felt as soon as I had put to her the question of her sense of the child's sincerity as against my own. "She persists in denying to you that she saw, or has ever seen, anything?"

My visitor's trouble, truly, was great. "Ah, miss, it isn't a matter on which I can push her! Yet it isn't either, I must say, as if I much needed to. It has made her, every inch of her, quite old."

"Oh, I see her perfectly from here. She resents, for all the world like some high little personage, the imputation on her truthfulness and, as it were, her respectability. 'Miss Jessel indeed — *she!*' Ah, she's 'respectable,' the chit! The impression she gave me there yesterday was, I assure you, the very strangest of all; it was quite beyond any of the others. I *did* put my foot in it! She'll never speak to me again."

Hideous and obscure as it all was, it held Mrs. Grose briefly silent; then she granted my point with a frankness which, I made sure, had more behind it. "I think indeed, miss, she never will. She do have a grand manner about it!

"And that manner" — I summed it up — "is practically what's the matter with her now!"

Oh, that manner, I could see in my visitor's face, and not a little else besides! "She asks me every three minutes if I think you're coming in."

"I see — I see." I, too, on my side, had so much more than worked it out. "Has she said to you since yesterday — except to repudiate her familiarity with anything so dreadful — a single other word about Miss Jessel?"

"Not one, miss. And of course you know," my friend added, "I took it from her, by the lake, that, just then and there at least, there *was* nobody."

"Rather! And, naturally, you take it from her still."

"I don't contradict her. What else can I do?"

"Nothing in the world! You've the cleverest little person to deal with. They've made them — their two friends, I mean — still cleverer even than nature did; for it was wondrous material to play on! Flora has now her grievance, and she'll work it to the end."

"Yes, miss; but to *what* end?"

"Why, that of dealing with me to her uncle. She'll make me out to him the lowest creature — !"

I winced at the fair show of the scene in Mrs. Grose's face; she looked for a minute as if she sharply saw them together. "And him who thinks so well of you!"

"He has an odd way — it comes over me now," I laughed, " — of proving it! But that doesn't matter. What Flora wants, of course, is to get rid of me."

My companion bravely concurred. "Never again to so much as look at you."

"So that what you've come to me now for," I asked, "is to speed me on my way?" Before she had time to reply, however, I had her in check. "I've a better idea — the result of my reflections. My going

would seem the right thing, and on Sunday I was terribly near it. Yet that won't do. It's you who must go. You must take Flora."

My visitor, at this, did speculate. "But where in the world — ?"

"Away from here. Away from *them*. Away, even most of all, now, from me. Straight to her uncle."

"Only to tell on you — ?"

"No, not 'only'! To leave me, in addition, with my remedy."

She was still vague. "And what is your remedy?"

"Your loyalty, to begin with. And then Miles's."

She looked at me hard. "Do you think he — ?"

"Won't, if he has the chance, turn on me? Yes, I venture still to think it. At all events, I want to try. Get off with his sister as soon as possible and leave me with him alone." I was amazed, myself, at the spirit I had still in reserve, and therefore perhaps a trifle the more disconcerted at the way in which, in spite of this fine example of it, she hesitated. "There's one thing, of course," I went on: "they mustn't, before she goes, see each other for three seconds." Then it came over me that, in spite of Flora's presumable sequestration from the instant of her return from the pool, it might already be too late. "Do you mean," I anxiously asked, "that they *have* met?"

At this she quite flushed. "Ah, miss, I'm not such a fool as that! If I've been obliged to leave her three or four times, it has been each time with one of the maids, and at present, though she's alone, she's locked in safe. And yet — and yet!" There were too many things.

"And yet what?"

"Well, are you so sure of the little gentleman?"

"I'm not sure of anything but *you*. But I have, since last evening, a new hope. I think he wants to give me an opening. I do believe that — poor little exquisite wretch! — he wants to speak. Last evening, in the firelight and the silence, he sat with me for two hours as if it were just coming."

Mrs. Grose looked hard, through the window, at the gray, gathering day. "And did it come?"

"No, though I waited and waited, I confess it didn't, and it was without a breach of the silence or so much as a faint allusion to his sister's condition and absence that we at last kissed for good night. All the same," I continued, "I can't, if her uncle sees her, consent to his seeing her brother without my having given the boy — and most of all because things have got so bad — a little more time."

My friend appeared on this ground more reluctant than I could quite understand. "What do you mean by more time?"

"Well, a day or two — really to bring it out. He'll then be on *my* side — of which you see the importance. If nothing comes, I shall only fail, and you will, at the worst, have helped me by doing, on your arrival in town, whatever you may have found possible." So I put it before her, but she continued for a little so inscrutably embarrassed that I came again to her aid. "Unless, indeed," I wound up, "you really want *not* to go."

I could see it, in her face, at last clear itself; she put out her hand to me as a pledge. "I'll go — I'll go. I'll go this morning."

I wanted to be very just. "If you *should* wish still to wait, I would engage she shouldn't see me."

"No, no: it's the place itself. She must leave it." She held me a moment with heavy eyes, then brought out the rest. "Your idea's the right one. I myself, miss — "

"Well?"

"I can't stay."

The look she gave me with it made me jump at possibilities. "You mean that, since yesterday, you *have* seen — ?"

She shook her head with dignity. "I've *heard* — !"

"Heard?"

“From that child — horrors! There!” she sighed with tragic relief. “On my honor, miss, she says things — !” But at this evocation she broke down; she dropped, with a sudden sob, upon my sofa and, as I had seen her do before, gave way to all the grief of it.

It was quite in another manner that I, for my part, let myself go. “Oh, thank God!”

She sprang up again at this, drying her eyes with a groan. ““Thank God?”

“It so justifies me!”

“It does that, miss!”

I couldn’t have desired more emphasis, but I just hesitated. “She’s so horrible?”

I saw my colleague scarce knew how to put it. “Really shocking.”

“And about me?”

“About you, miss — since you must have it. It’s beyond everything, for a young lady; and I can’t think wherever she must have picked up — ”

“The appalling language she applied to me? I can, then!” I broke in with a laugh that was doubtless significant enough.

It only, in truth, left my friend still more grave. “Well, perhaps I ought to also — since I’ve heard some of it before! Yet I can’t bear it,” the poor woman went on while, with the same movement, she glanced, on my dressing table, at the face of my watch. “But I must go back.”

I kept her, however. “Ah, if you can’t bear it — !”

“How can I stop with her, you mean? Why, just *for* that: to get her away. Far from this,” she pursued, “far from them — ”

“She may be different? She may be free?” I seized her almost with joy. “Then, in spite of yesterday, you *believe* — ”

“In such doings?” Her simple description of them required, in the light of her expression, to be carried no further, and she gave me the whole thing as she had never done. “I believe.”

Yes, it was a joy, and we were still shoulder to shoulder: if I might continue sure of that I should care but little what else happened. My support in the presence of disaster would be the same as it had been in my early need of confidence, and if my friend would answer for my honesty, I would answer for all the rest. On the point of taking leave of her, nonetheless, I was to some extent embarrassed. “There’s one thing, of course — it occurs to me — to remember. My letter, giving the alarm, will have reached town before you.”

I now perceived still more how she had been beating about the bush and how weary at last it had made her. “Your letter won’t have got there. Your letter never went.”

“What then became of it?”

“Goodness knows! Master Miles — ”

“Do you mean he took it?” I gasped.

She hung fire, but she overcame her reluctance. “I mean that I saw yesterday, when I came back with Miss Flora, that it wasn’t where you had put it. Later in the evening I had the chance to question Luke, and he declared that he had neither noticed nor touched it.” We could only exchange, on this, one of our deeper mutual soundings, and it was Mrs. Grose who first brought up the plumb with an almost elated “You see!”

“Yes, I see that if Miles took it instead he probably will have read it and destroyed it.”

“And don’t you see anything else?”

I faced her a moment with a sad smile. “It strikes me that by this time your eyes are open even wider than mine.”

They proved to be so indeed, but she could still blush, almost, to show it. “I make out now what he must have done at school.” And she gave, in her simple sharpness, an almost droll disillusioned nod.

“He stole!”

I turned it over — I tried to be more judicial. “Well — perhaps.”

She looked as if she found me unexpectedly calm. “He stole *letters!*”

She couldn’t know my reasons for a calmness after all pretty shallow; so I showed them off as I might. “I hope then it was to more purpose than in this case! The note, at any rate, that I put on me table yesterday,” I pursued, “will have given him so scant an advantage — for it contained only the bare demand for an interview — that he is already much ashamed of having gone so far for so little, and that what he had on his mind last evening was precisely the need of confession.” I seemed to myself, for me instant, to have mastered it, to see it all. “Leave us, leave us” — I was already, at the door, hurrying her off. “I’ll get it out of him. He’ll meet me — he’ll confess. If he confesses, he’s saved. And if he’s saved — ”

“Then *you* are?” The dear woman kissed me on this, and I took her farewell. “I’ll save you without him!” she cried as she went.

Chapter 22

Yet it was when she had got off — and I missed her on the spot — that the great pinch really came. If I had counted on what it would give me to find myself alone with Miles, I speedily perceived, at least, that it would give me a measure. No hour of my stay in fact was so assailed with apprehensions as that of my coming down to learn that the carriage containing Mrs. Grose and my younger pupil had already rolled out of the gates. Now I *was*, I said to myself, face to face with the elements, and for much of the rest of the day, while I fought my weakness, I could consider that I had been supremely rash. It was a tighter place still than I had yet turned round in; all the more that, for the first time, I could see in the aspect of others a confused reflection of the crisis. What had happened naturally caused them all to stare; there was too little of the explained, throw out whatever we might, in the suddenness of my colleague's act. The maids and the men looked blank; the effect of which on my nerves was an aggravation until I saw the necessity of making it a positive aid. It was precisely, in short, by just clutching the helm that I avoided total wreck; and I dare say that, to bear up at all, I became, that morning, very grand and very dry. I welcomed the consciousness that I was charged with much to do, and I caused it to be known as well that, left thus to myself, I was quite remarkably firm. I wandered with that manner, for the next hour or two, all over the place and looked, I have no doubt, as if I were ready for any onset. So, for the benefit of whom it might concern, I paraded with a sick heart.

The person it appeared least to concern proved to be, till dinner, little Miles himself. My perambulations had given me, meanwhile, no glimpse of him, but they had tended to make more public the change taking place in our relation as a consequence of his having at the piano the day before, kept me, in Flora's interest, so beguiled and befooled. The stamp of publicity had of course been fully given by her confinement and departure, and the change itself was now ushered in by our nonobservance of the regular custom of the schoolroom. He had already disappeared when, on my way down, I pushed open his door, and I learned below that he had breakfasted — in the presence of a couple of the maids — with Mrs. Grose and his sister. He had then gone out, as he said, for a stroll than which nothing, I reflected, could better have expressed his frank view of the abrupt transformation of my office. What he would now permit this office to consist of was yet to be settled: there was a queer relief, at all events — I mean for myself in especial — in the renouncement of one pretension. If so much had sprung to the surface, I scarce put it too strongly in saying that what had perhaps sprung highest was the absurdity of our prolonging the fiction that I had anything more to teach him. It sufficiently stuck out that, by tacit little tricks in which even more than myself he carried out the care for my dignity, I had had to appeal to him to let me off straining to meet him on the ground of his true capacity.

He had at any rate his freedom now; I was never to touch it again; as I had amply shown, moreover, when, on his joining me in the schoolroom the previous night, I had uttered, on the subject of the interval just concluded, neither challenge nor hint. I had too much, from this moment, my other ideas. Yet when he at last arrived, the difficulty of applying them, the accumulations of my problem, were brought straight home to me by the beautiful little presence on which what had occurred had as yet, for the eye, dropped neither stain nor shadow.

To mark, for the house, the high state I cultivated I decreed that my meals with the boy should be served, as we called it, downstairs; so that I had been awaiting him in the ponderous pomp of the room outside of the window of which I had had from Mrs. Grose, that first scared Sunday, my flash of something it would scarce have done to call light. Here at present I felt afresh — for I had felt it again and again — how my equilibrium depended on the success of my rigid will, the will to shut my eyes as

tight as possible to the truth that what I had to deal with was, revoltingly, against nature. I could only get on at all by taking “nature” into my confidence and my account, by treating my monstrous ordeal as a push in a direction unusual, of course, and unpleasant, but demanding, after all, for a fair front, only another turn of the screw of ordinary human virtue. No attempt, nonetheless, could well require more tact than just this attempt to supply, one’s self, *all* the nature. How could I put even a little of that article into a suppression of reference to what had occurred? How, on the other hand, could I make reference without a new plunge into the hideous obscure? Well, a sort of answer, after a time, had come to me, and it was so far confirmed as that I was met, incontestably, by the quickened vision of what was rare in my little companion. It was indeed as if he had found even now — as he had so often found at lessons — still some other delicate way to ease me off. Wasn’t there light in the fact which, as we shared our solitude, broke out with a specious glitter it had never yet quite worn? — the fact that (opportunity aiding, precious opportunity which had now come) it would be preposterous, with a child so endowed, to forego the help one might wrest from absolute intelligence? What had his intelligence been given him for but to save him? Mightn’t one, to reach his mind, risk the stretch of an angular arm over his character? It was as if, when we were face to face in the dining room, he had literally shown me the way, The roast mutton was on the table, and I had dispensed with attendance. Miles, before he sat down, stood a moment with his hands in his pockets and looked at the joint, on which he seemed on the point of passing some humorous judgment. But what he presently produced was: “I say, my dear, is she really very awfully ill?”

“Little Flora? Not so bad but that she’ll presently be better. London will set her up. Bly had ceased to agree with her. Come here and take your mutton.

He alertly obeyed me, carried the plate carefully to my seat, and, when he was established, went on. Did Bly disagree with her so terribly suddenly?

“Not so suddenly as you might think. One had seen it coming on.”

“Then why didn’t you get her off before?”

“Before what?”

“Before she became too ill to travel.”

I found myself prompt. “She’s *not* too ill to travel: she only might have become so if she had stayed. This was just the moment to seize. The journey will dissipate the influence” — oh, I was grand! — “and carry it off.”

“I see, I see” — Miles, for that matter, was grand, too. He settled to his repast with the charming little “table manner” that, from the day of his arrival, had relieved me of all grossness of admonition. Whatever he had been driven from school for, it was not for ugly feeding. He was irreproachable, as always, today; but he was unmistakably more conscious. He was discernibly trying to take for granted more things than he found, without assistance, quite easy; and he dropped into peaceful silence while he felt his situation. Our meal was of the briefest — mine a vain pretense, and I had the things immediately removed. While this was done Miles stood again with his hands in his little pockets and his back to me — stood and looked out of the wide window through which, that other day, I had seen what pulled me up. We continued silent while the maid was with us — as silent, it whimsically occurred to me, as some young couple who, on their wedding journey, at the inn, feel shy in the presence of the waiter. He turned round only when the waiter had left us. “Well — so we’re alone!”

Chapter 23

“Oh, more or less.” I fancy my smile was pale. “Not absolutely. We shouldn’t like that!” I went on.

“No — I suppose we shouldn’t. Of course we have the others.”

“We have the others — we have indeed the others,” I concurred.

“Yet even though we have them,” he returned, still with his hands in his pockets and planted there in front of me, “they don’t much count, do they?”

I made the best of it, but I felt wan. “It depends on what you call ‘much!’.”

“Yes” — with all accommodation — “everything depends!” On this, however, he faced to the window again and presently reached it with his vague, restless, cogitating step. He remained there awhile, with his forehead against the glass, in contemplation of the stupid shrubs I knew and the dull things of November. I had always my hypocrisy of “work,” behind which, now, I gained the sofa. Steadying myself with it there as I had repeatedly done at those moments of torment that I have described as the moments of my knowing me children to be given to something from which I was barred, I sufficiently obeyed my habit of being prepared for the worst. But an extraordinary impression dropped on me as I extracted a meaning from the boy’s embarrassed back — none other than the impression that I was not barred now. This influence grew in a few minutes to sharp intensity and seemed bound up with the direct perception that it was positively he who was. The frames and squares of the great window were a kind of image, for him, of a kind of failure. I felt that I saw him, at any rate, shut in or shut out. He was admirable, but not comfortable: I took it in with a throb of hope. Wasn’t he looking, through the haunted pane, for something he couldn’t see? — and wasn’t it the first time in the whole business that he had known such a lapse? The first, the very first: I found it a splendid portent. It made him anxious, though he watched himself; he had been anxious all day and, even while in his usual sweet little manner he sat at table, had needed all his small strange genius to give it a gloss. When he at last turned round to meet me, it was almost as if this genius had succumbed. “Well, I think I’m glad Bly agrees with *me!*”

“You would certainly seem to have seen, these twenty-four hours, a good deal more of it than for some time before. I hope,” I went on bravely, “that you’ve been enjoying yourself.”

“Oh, yes, I’ve been ever so far; all round about — miles and miles away. I’ve never been so free.”

He had really a manner of his own, and I could only try to keep up with him. “Well, do you like it?”

He stood there smiling; then at last he put into two words — “*Do you?*” — more discrimination than I had ever heard two words contain. Before I had time to deal with that, however, he continued as if with the sense that this was an impertinence to be softened. “Nothing could be more charming than the way you take it, for of course if we’re alone together now it’s you that are alone most. But I hope,” he threw in, “yon don’t particularly mind!”

“Having to do with you?” I asked. “My dear child, how can I help minding? Though I’ve renounced all claim to your company — you’re so beyond me — I at least greatly enjoy it. What else should I stay on for?”

He looked at me more directly, and the expression of his face, graver now, struck me as the most beautiful I had ever found in it. “You stay on just for *that?*”

“Certainly. I stay on as your friend and from the tremendous interest I take in you till something can be done for you that may be more worth your while. That needn’t surprise you.” My voice trembled so that I felt it impossible to suppress the shake. “Don’t you remember how I told you, when I came and sat on your bed the night of the storm, that there was nothing in the world I wouldn’t do for you?”

“Yes, yes!” He, on his side, more and more visibly nervous, had a tone to master; but he was so much more successful than I that, laughing out through his gravity, he could pretend we were pleasantly jesting. “Only that, I think, was to get me to do something for *you!*”

“It was partly to get you to do something,” I conceded. “But you know, you didn’t do it.”

“Oh, yes,” he said with the brightest superficial eagerness, “you wanted me to tell you something.”

“That’s it. Out, straight out. What you have on your mind, you know.”

“Ah, then, is *that* what you’ve stayed over for?”

He spoke with a gaiety through which I could still catch the finest little quiver of resentful passion; but I can’t begin to express the effect upon me of an implication of surrender even so faint. It was as if what I had yearned for had come at last only to astonish me. “Well, yes — I may as well make a clean breast of it. It was precisely for that.”

He waited so long that I supposed it for the purpose of repudiating the assumption on which my action had been founded; but what he finally said was: “Do you mean now — here?”

“There couldn’t be a better place or time.” He looked round him uneasily, and I had the rare — oh, the queer — impression of the very first symptom I had seen in him of the approach of immediate fear. It was as if he were suddenly afraid of me — which struck me indeed as perhaps the best thing to make him. Yet in the very pang of the effort I felt it vain to try sternness, and I heard myself the next instant so gentle as to be almost grotesque “You want so to go out again?”

“Awfully!” He smiled at me heroically, and the touching little bravery of it was enhanced by his actually flushing with pain. He had picked up his hat, which he had brought in, and stood twirling it in a way that gave me, even as I was just nearly reaching port, a perverse horror of what I was doing. To do it in *any* way was an act of violence, for what did it consist of but the obtrusion of the idea of grossness and guilt on a small helpless creature who had been for me a revelation of the possibilities of beautiful intercourse? Wasn’t it base to create for a being so exquisite a mere alien awkwardness? I suppose I now read into our situation a clearness it couldn’t have had at the time, for I seem to see our poor eyes already lighted with some spark of a prevision of the anguish that was to come. So we circled about, with terrors and scruples, like fighters not daring to close. But it was for each other we feared! That kept us a little longer suspended and unbruised. “I’ll tell you everything,” Miles said — “I mean I’ll tell you anything you like. You’ll stay on with me, and we shall both be all right; and I *will* tell you — I *will*. But not now.”

“Why not now?”

My insistence turned him from me and kept him once more at his window in a silence during which, between us, you might have heard a pin drop. Then he was before me again with the air of a person for whom, outside, someone who had frankly to be reckoned with was waiting. “I have to see Luke.”

I had not yet reduced him to quite so vulgar a lie, and I felt proportionately ashamed. But, horrible as it was, his lies made up my truth. I achieved thoughtfully a few loops of my knitting. “Well, then, go to Luke, and I’ll wait for what you promise. Only, in return for that, satisfy, before you leave me, one very much smaller request.”

He looked as if he felt he had succeeded enough to be able still a little to bargain. “Very much smaller — ?”

“Yes, a mere fraction of the whole. Tell me” — oh, my work preoccupied me, and I was offhand! — “if, yesterday afternoon, from the table in the hall, you took, you know, my letter.”

Chapter 24

My sense of how he received this suffered for a minute from something that I can describe only as a fierce split of my attention — a stroke that at first, as I sprang straight up, reduced me to the mere blind movement of getting hold of him, drawing him close, and, while I just fell for support against the nearest piece of furniture, instinctively keeping him with his back to the window. The appearance was full upon us that I had already had to deal with here: Peter Quint had come into view like a sentinel before a prison. The next thing I saw was that, from outside, he had reached the window, and then I knew that, close to the glass and glaring in through it, he offered once more to the room his white face of damnation. It represents but grossly what took place within me at the sight to say that on the second my decision was made; yet I believe that no woman so overwhelmed ever in so short a time recovered her grasp of the *act*. It came to me in the very horror of the immediate presence that the act would be, seeing and facing what I saw and faced, to keep the boy himself unaware. The inspiration — I can call it by no other name — was that I felt how voluntarily, how transcendently, I *might*. It was like fighting with a demon for a human soul, and when I had fairly so appraised it I saw how the human soul — held out, in the tremor of my hands, at arm's length — had a perfect dew of sweat on a lovely childish forehead. The face that was close to mine was as white as the face against the glass, and out of it presently came a sound, not low nor weak, but as if from much further away, that I drank like a waft of fragrance.

“Yes I took it.”

At this, with a moan of joy, I enfolded, I drew him close; and while I held him to my breast, where I could feel in the sudden fever of his little body the tremendous pulse of his little heart, I kept my eyes on the thing at the window and saw it move and shift its posture. I have likened it to a sentinel, but its slow wheel, for a moment, was rather the prowl of a baffled beast. My present quickened courage, however, was such that, not too much to let it through, I had to shade, as it were, my flame. Meanwhile the glare of the face was again at the window, the scoundrel fixed as if to watch and wait. It was the very confidence that I might now defy him, as well as the positive certitude, by this time, of the child's unconsciousness, that made me go on, “What did you take it for?”

“To see what you said about me.”

“You opened the letter?”

“I opened it.”

My eyes were now, as I held him off a little again, on Miles's own face, in which the collapse of mockery showed me how complete was the ravage of uneasiness. What was prodigious was that at last, by my success, his sense was sealed and his communication stopped: he knew that he was in presence, but knew not of what, and knew still less that I also was and that I did know. And what did this strain of trouble matter when my eyes went back to the window only to see that the air was clear again and — by my personal triumph — the influence quenched? There was nothing there. I felt that the cause was mine and that I should surely get *all*. “And you found nothing!” — I let my elation out.

He gave the most mournful, thoughtful little headshake. “Nothing.”

“Nothing, nothing!” I almost shouted in my joy.

“Nothing, nothing,” he sadly repeated.

I kissed his forehead; it was drenched. “So what have you done with it?”

“I've burned it.”

“Burned it?” It was now or never. “Is that what you did at school?”

Oh, what this brought up! “At school?”

“Did you take letters? or other things?”

“Other things?” He appeared now to be thinking of something far off and that reached him only through the pressure of his anxiety. Yet it did reach him. “Did I *steal*?”

I felt myself redden to the roots of my hair as well as wonder if it were more strange to put to a gentleman such a question or to see him take it with allowances that gave the very distance of his fall in the world. “Was it for that you mightn’t go back?”

The only thing he felt was rather a dreary little surprise. “Did you know I mightn’t go back?”

“I know everything.”

He gave me at this the longest and strangest look. “Everything?”

“Everything. Therefore *did* you — ?” But I couldn’t say it again.

Miles could, very simply. “No. I didn’t steal.”

My face must have shown him I believed him utterly; yet my hands — but it was for pure tenderness — shook him as if to ask him why, if it was all for nothing, he had condemned me to months of torment. “What then did you do?”

He looked in vague pain all round the top of the room and drew his breath, two or three times over, as if with difficulty. He might have been standing at the bottom of the sea and raising his eyes to some faint green twilight. “Well — I said things.”

“Only that?”

“They thought it was enough!”

“To turn you out for?”

Never, truly, had a person “turned out” shown so little to explain it as this little person! He appeared to weigh my question, but in a manner quite detached and almost helpless. “Well, I suppose I oughtn’t.”

But to whom did you say them?”

He evidently tried to remember, but it dropped — he had lost it. “I don’t know!”

He almost smiled at me in the desolation of his surrender, which was indeed practically, by this time, so complete that I ought to have left it there. But I was infatuated — I was blind with victory, though even then the very effect that was to have brought him so much nearer was already that of added separation. “Was it to everyone?” I asked.

“No; it was only to — ” But he gave a sick little headshake. “I don’t remember their names.”

“Were they then so many?”

“No — only a few. Those I liked.”

Those he liked? I seemed to float not into clearness, but into a darker obscure, and within a minute there had come to me out of my very pity the appalling alarm of his being perhaps innocent. It was for the instant confounding and bottomless, for if he *were* innocent, what then on earth was *I*? Paralyzed, while it lasted, by the mere brush of the question, I let him go a little, so that, with a deep-drawn sigh, he turned away from me again; which, as he faced toward the clear window, I suffered, feeling that I had nothing now there to keep him from. “And did they repeat what you said?” I went on after a moment.

He was soon at some distance from me, still breathing hard and again with the air, though now without anger for it, of being confined against his will. Once more, as he had done before, he looked up at the dim day as if, of what had hitherto sustained him, nothing was left but an unspeakable anxiety. “Oh, yes,” he nevertheless replied — “they must have repeated them. To those *they* liked,” he added.

There was, somehow, less of it than I had expected; but I turned it over. “And these things came round — ?”

“To the masters? Oh, yes!” he answered very simply. “But I didn’t know they’d tell.”

“The masters? They didn’t — they’ve never told. That’s why I ask you.”

He turned to me again his little beautiful fevered face. "Yes, it was too bad."

"Too bad?"

"What I suppose I sometimes said. To write home."

I can't name the exquisite pathos of the contradiction given to such a speech by such a speaker; I only know that the next instant I heard myself throw off with homely force: "Stuff and nonsense!" But the next after that I must have sounded stern enough. "What *were* these things?"

My sternness was all for his judge, his executioner; yet it made him avert himself again, and that movement made *me*, with a single bound and an irrepressible cry, spring straight upon him. For there again, against the glass, as if to blight his confession and stay his answer, was the hideous author of our woe — the white face of damnation. I felt a sick swim at the drop of my victory and all the return of my battle, so that the wildness of my veritable leap only served as a great betrayal. I saw him, from the midst of my act, meet it with a divination, and on the perception that even now he only guessed, and that the window was still to his own eyes free, I let the impulse flame up to convert the climax of his dismay into the very proof of his liberation. "No more, no more, no more!" I shrieked, as I tried to press him against me, to my visitant.

"Is she *here*?" Miles panted as he caught with his sealed eyes the direction of my words. Then as his strange "she" staggered me and, with a gasp, I echoed it, "Miss Jessel, Miss Jessel!" he with a sudden fury gave me back.

I seized, stupefied, his supposition some sequel to what we had done to Flora, but this made me only want to show him that it was better still than that. "It's not Miss Jessel! But it's at the window — straight before us. It's *there* — the coward horror, there for the last time!"

At this, after a second in which his head made the movement of a baffled dog's on a scent and then gave a frantic little shake for air and light, he was at me in a white rage, bewildered, glaring vainly over the place and missing wholly, though it now, to my sense, filled the room like the taste of poison, the wide, overwhelming presence. "It's *he*?"

I was so determined to have all my proof that I flashed into ice to challenge him. "Whom do you mean by 'he'?"

"Peter Quint — you devil!" His face gave again, round the room, its convulsed supplication. "Where?"

They are in my ears still, his supreme surrender of the name and his tribute to my devotion. "What does he matter now, my own? — what will he *ever* matter? I have you," I launched at the beast, "but he has lost you forever!" Then, for the demonstration of my work, "There, *there!*" I said to Miles.

But he had already jerked straight round, stared, glared again, and seen but the quiet day. With the stroke of the loss I was so proud of he uttered the cry of a creature hurled over an abyss, and the grasp with which I recovered him might have been that of catching him in his fall. I caught him, yes, I held him — it may be imagined with what a passion; but at the end of a minute I began to feel what it truly was that I held. We were alone with the quiet day, and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped.

Activities

Turning the Screw

Study Questions

1. List some of the character names you think are symbolic or at least significant because of the connotations/associations of their names.
2. What do you think of the children’s uncle? What does the governess think of him?
3. Why do you think Miles was expelled from his school?
4. Did Miles survive to adulthood and become Douglas?
5. What images relating to Peter Quint might be interpreted symbolically or clinically in a Freudian way?
6. Are the children liars?
7. When Flora is seen at the lake, are her playthings symbolic?
8. Does anyone else beside the governess ever admit to seeing the ghosts?
9. What is gained by having the governess relate the story?
10. What are some of the novels the governess alludes to, and what do they have in common?
11. When Miles shouts, “Peter Quint—you devil!” to whom is he speaking?
12. Describe the circumstances surrounding each appearance of an apparition.

Short Essay Topic (750-1000 words)

C.G. Jung theorizes that “neuroses are the results of the person’s failure to confront and to accept some archetypal component of the unconscious. Instead of assimilating this unconscious element to their consciousness, neurotic individuals persist in projecting it upon some other person...” (Guerin, et al. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, 3rd ed., p. 169). Discuss characterization within a framework of Jung’s triad of shadow, persona, and anima.

Resources

See the three suggested “controlled research topics” in [Appendix E: The Turn of the Screw Casebook](#)

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52.

The Awakening by Kate Chopin (1850–1904)

Published 1899

Chapter I

A green and yellow parrot, which hung in a cage outside the door, kept repeating over and over:

“*Allez vous-en! Allez vous-en! Sapristi!*¹ That’s all right!”

He could speak a little Spanish, and also a language which nobody understood, unless it was the mocking-bird that hung on the other side of the door, whistling his fluty notes out upon the breeze with maddening persistence.

Mr. Pontellier, unable to read his newspaper with any degree of comfort, arose with an expression and an exclamation of disgust.

He walked down the gallery and across the narrow “bridges” which connected the Lebrun cottages one with the other. He had been seated before the door of the main house. The parrot and the mockingbird were the property of Madame Lebrun, and they had the right to make all the noise they wished. Mr. Pontellier had the privilege of quitting their society when they ceased to be entertaining.

He stopped before the door of his own cottage, which was the fourth one from the main building and next to the last. Seating himself in a wicker rocker which was there, he once more applied himself to the task of reading the newspaper. The day was Sunday; the paper was a day old. The Sunday papers had not yet reached Grand Isle². He was already acquainted with the market reports, and he glanced restlessly over the editorials and bits of news which he had not had time to read before quitting New Orleans the day before.

Mr. Pontellier wore eye-glasses. He was a man of forty, of medium height and rather slender build; he stooped a little. His hair was brown and straight, parted on one side. His beard was neatly and closely trimmed.

Once in a while he withdrew his glance from the newspaper and looked about him. There was more noise than ever over at the house. The main building was called “the house,” to distinguish it from the cottages. The chattering and whistling birds were still at it. Two young girls, the Farival twins, were playing a duet from “Zampa”³ upon the piano. Madame Lebrun was bustling in and out, giving orders in a high key to a yard-boy whenever she got inside the house, and directions in an equally high voice to a dining-room servant whenever she got outside. She was a fresh, pretty woman, clad always in white with elbow sleeves. Her starched skirts crinkled as she came and went. Farther down, before one of the cottages, a lady in black was walking demurely up and down, telling her beads. A good many persons of the pension had gone over to the *Chênière Caminada*⁴ in Beaufort’s lugger⁵ to hear mass. Some young people were out under the water-oaks playing croquet. Mr. Pontellier’s two children were there—sturdy little fellows of four and five. A quadroon⁶ nurse followed them about with a faraway, meditative air.

Mr. Pontellier finally lit a cigar and began to smoke, letting the paper drag idly from his hand. He fixed his gaze upon a white sunshade⁷ that was advancing at snail’s pace from the beach. He could see it plainly between the gaunt trunks of the water-oaks and across the stretch of yellow camomile. The gulf looked far away, melting hazily into the blue of the horizon. The sunshade continued to approach

1. Go away. For Heaven’s sake. (French).

2. A beach resort about 100 miles south of New Orleans, on the Gulf of Mexico.

3. A romantic opera by Louis Hérold (1791-1833).

4. An island near Grand Isle in the Gulf of Mexico.

5. A small fishing or coasting boat.

6. Someone with one-quarter African-American ancestry.

7. Parasol.

slowly. Beneath its pink-lined shelter were his wife, Mrs. Pontellier, and young Robert Lebrun. When they reached the cottage, the two seated themselves with some appearance of fatigue upon the upper step of the porch, facing each other, each leaning against a supporting post.

“What folly! to bathe at such an hour in such heat!” exclaimed Mr. Pontellier. He himself had taken a plunge at daylight. That was why the morning seemed long to him.

“You are burnt beyond recognition,” he added, looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage. She held up her hands, strong, shapely hands, and surveyed them critically, drawing up her lawn⁸ sleeves above the wrists. Looking at them reminded her of her rings, which she had given to her husband before leaving for the beach. She silently reached out to him, and he, understanding, took the rings from his vest pocket and dropped them into her open palm. She slipped them upon her fingers; then clasping her knees, she looked across at Robert and began to laugh. The rings sparkled upon her fingers. He sent back an answering smile.

“What is it?” asked Pontellier, looking lazily and amused from one to the other. It was some utter nonsense; some adventure out there in the water, and they both tried to relate it at once. It did not seem half so amusing when told. They realized this, and so did Mr. Pontellier. He yawned and stretched himself. Then he got up, saying he had half a mind to go over to Klein’s hotel and play a game of billiards.

“Come go along, Lebrun,” he proposed to Robert. But Robert admitted quite frankly that he preferred to stay where he was and talk to Mrs. Pontellier.

“Well, send him about his business when he bores you, Edna,” instructed her husband as he prepared to leave.

“Here, take the umbrella,” she exclaimed, holding it out to him. He accepted the sunshade, and lifting it over his head descended the steps and walked away.

“Coming back to dinner?” his wife called after him. He halted a moment and shrugged his shoulders. He felt in his vest pocket; there was a ten-dollar bill there. He did not know; perhaps he would return for the early dinner and perhaps he would not. It all depended upon the company which he found over at Klein’s and the size of “the game.” He did not say this, but she understood it, and laughed, nodding good-bye to him.

Both children wanted to follow their father when they saw him starting out. He kissed them and promised to bring them back bonbons and peanuts.

Chapter I Study Questions

1. What might the image of the caged bird suggest?
2. Pontellier is described as thinking of his sunburnt wife as a “valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage”? Look up the rights of the husband in the Napoleonic Code.
3. Give your first impressions of Robert Lebrun. What are some of his traits?
4. What indications are there that the relationship between Edna and her husband is less than ideal?

8. Linen or muslin.

Chapter II

Mrs. Pontellier's eyes were quick and bright; they were a yellowish brown, about the color of her hair. She had a way of turning them swiftly upon an object and holding them there as if lost in some inward maze of contemplation or thought.

Her eyebrows were a shade darker than her hair. They were thick and almost horizontal, emphasizing the depth of her eyes. She was rather handsome than beautiful. Her face was captivating by reason of a certain frankness of expression and a contradictory subtle play of features. Her manner was engaging.

Robert rolled a cigarette. He smoked cigarettes because he could not afford cigars, he said. He had a cigar in his pocket which Mr. Pontellier had presented him with, and he was saving it for his after-dinner smoke.

This seemed quite proper and natural on his part. In coloring he was not unlike his companion. A clean-shaved face made the resemblance more pronounced than it would otherwise have been. There rested no shadow of care upon his open countenance. His eyes gathered in and reflected the light and languor of the summer day.

Mrs. Pontellier reached over for a palm-leaf fan that lay on the porch and began to fan herself, while Robert sent between his lips light puffs from his cigarette. They chatted incessantly: about the things around them; their amusing adventure out in the water—it had again assumed its entertaining aspect; about the wind, the trees, the people who had gone to the *Chênrière*; about the children playing croquet under the oaks, and the Farival twins, who were now performing the overture to “The Poet and the Peasant.”⁹

Robert talked a good deal about himself. He was very young, and did not know any better. Mrs. Pontellier talked a little about herself for the same reason. Each was interested in what the other said. Robert spoke of his intention to go to Mexico in the autumn, where fortune awaited him. He was always intending to go to Mexico, but some way never got there. Meanwhile he held on to his modest position in a mercantile house in New Orleans, where an equal familiarity with English, French and Spanish gave him no small value as a clerk and correspondent.

He was spending his summer vacation, as he always did, with his mother at Grand Isle. In former times, before Robert could remember, “the house” had been a summer luxury of the Lebruns. Now, flanked by its dozen or more cottages, which were always filled with exclusive visitors from the “*Quartier Français*,”¹⁰ it enabled Madame Lebrun to maintain the easy and comfortable existence which appeared to be her birthright.

Mrs. Pontellier talked about her father's Mississippi plantation and her girlhood home in the old Kentucky bluegrass country. She was an American woman, with a small infusion of French which seemed to have been lost in dilution. She read a letter from her sister, who was away in the East, and who had engaged herself to be married. Robert was interested, and wanted to know what manner of girls the sisters were, what the father was like, and how long the mother had been dead.

When Mrs. Pontellier folded the letter it was time for her to dress for the early dinner.

“I see Léonce isn't coming back,” she said, with a glance in the direction whence her husband had disappeared. Robert supposed he was not, as there were a good many New Orleans club men over at Klein's.

When Mrs. Pontellier left him to enter her room, the young man descended the steps and strolled

9. An operetta by Franz von Suppé (1819-1895).

10. French Quarter, the oldest part of New Orleans, then occupied by wealthier families.

over toward the croquet players, where, during the half-hour before dinner, he amused himself with the little Pontellier children, who were very fond of him.

Chapter II Study Questions

1. Describe Edna Pontellier. Where was she born and raised? How is she different from the Creoles like her husband Léonce?
2. What do you learn about Mrs. Lebrun? Is there a Mr. Lebrun? How old is Robert, her eldest son?

Chapter III

It was eleven o'clock that night when Mr. Pontellier returned from Klein's hotel. He was in an excellent humor, in high spirits, and very talkative. His entrance awoke his wife, who was in bed and fast asleep when he came in. He talked to her while he undressed, telling her anecdotes and bits of news and gossip that he had gathered during the day. From his trousers pockets he took a fistful of crumpled bank notes and a good deal of silver coin, which he piled on the bureau indiscriminately with keys, knife, handkerchief, and whatever else happened to be in his pockets. She was overcome with sleep, and answered him with little half utterances.

He thought it very discouraging that his wife, who was the sole object of his existence, evinced so little interest in things which concerned him, and valued so little his conversation.

Mr. Pontellier had forgotten the bonbons and peanuts for the boys. Notwithstanding he loved them very much, and went into the adjoining room where they slept to take a look at them and make sure that they were resting comfortably. The result of his investigation was far from satisfactory. He turned and shifted the youngsters about in bed. One of them began to kick and talk about a basket full of crabs.

Mr. Pontellier returned to his wife with the information that Raoul had a high fever and needed looking after. Then he lit a cigar and went and sat near the open door to smoke it.

Mrs. Pontellier was quite sure Raoul had no fever. He had gone to bed perfectly well, she said, and nothing had ailed him all day. Mr. Pontellier was too well acquainted with fever symptoms to be mistaken. He assured her the child was consuming¹¹ at that moment in the next room.

He reproached his wife with her inattention, her habitual neglect of the children. If it was not a mother's place to look after children, whose on earth was it? He himself had his hands full with his brokerage business. He could not be in two places at once; making a living for his family on the street, and staying at home to see that no harm befell them. He talked in a monotonous, insistent way.

Mrs. Pontellier sprang out of bed and went into the next room. She soon came back and sat on the edge of the bed, leaning her head down on the pillow. She said nothing, and refused to answer her husband when he questioned her. When his cigar was smoked out he went to bed, and in half a minute he was fast asleep.

Mrs. Pontellier was by that time thoroughly awake. She began to cry a little, and wiped her eyes on the sleeve of her *peignoir*¹². Blowing out the candle, which her husband had left burning, she slipped her bare feet into a pair of satin mules¹³ at the foot of the bed and went out on the porch, where she sat down in the wicker chair and began to rock gently to and fro.

It was then past midnight. The cottages were all dark. A single faint light gleamed out from the hallway of the house. There was no sound abroad except the hooting of an old owl in the top of a water-oak, and the everlasting voice of the sea, that was not uplifted at that soft hour. It broke like a mournful lullaby upon the night.

The tears came so fast to Mrs. Pontellier's eyes that the damp sleeve of her *peignoir* no longer served to dry them. She was holding the back of her chair with one hand; her loose sleeve had slipped almost to the shoulder of her uplifted arm. Turning, she thrust her face, steaming and wet, into the bend of her arm, and she went on crying there, not caring any longer to dry her face, her eyes, her arms. She could not have told why she was crying. Such experiences as the foregoing were not uncommon in her

11. Running a temperature.

12. A woman's loose dressing gown.

13. Slippers.

married life. They seemed never before to have weighed much against the abundance of her husband's kindness and a uniform devotion which had come to be tacit and self-understood.

An indescribable oppression, which seemed to generate in some unfamiliar part of her consciousness, filled her whole being with a vague anguish. It was like a shadow, like a mist passing across her soul's summer day. It was strange and unfamiliar; it was a mood. She did not sit there inwardly upbraiding her husband, lamenting at Fate, which had directed her footsteps to the path which they had taken. She was just having a good cry all to herself. The mosquitoes made merry over her, biting her firm, round arms and nipping at her bare insteps.

The little stinging, buzzing imps succeeded in dispelling a mood which might have held her there in the darkness half a night longer.

The following morning Mr. Pontellier was up in good time to take the rockaway¹⁴ which was to convey him to the steamer at the wharf. He was returning to the city to his business, and they would not see him again at the Island till the coming Saturday. He had regained his composure, which seemed to have been somewhat impaired the night before. He was eager to be gone, as he looked forward to a lively week in Carondelet Street¹⁵.

Mr. Pontellier gave his wife half of the money which he had brought away from Klein's hotel the evening before. She liked money as well as most women, and accepted it with no little satisfaction.

"It will buy a handsome wedding present for Sister Janet!" she exclaimed, smoothing out the bills as she counted them one by one.

"Oh! we'll treat Sister Janet better than that, my dear," he laughed, as he prepared to kiss her good-bye.

The boys were tumbling about, clinging to his legs, imploring that numerous things be brought back to them. Mr. Pontellier was a great favorite, and ladies, men, children, even nurses, were always on hand to say good-bye to him. His wife stood smiling and waving, the boys shouting, as he disappeared in the old rockaway down the sandy road.

A few days later a box arrived for Mrs. Pontellier from New Orleans. It was from her husband. It was filled with *friandises*,¹⁶ with luscious and toothsome bits—the finest of fruits, *pâtés*,¹⁷ a rare bottle or two, delicious syrups, and bonbons in abundance.

Mrs. Pontellier was always very generous with the contents of such a box; she was quite used to receiving them when away from home. The pates and fruit were brought to the dining-room; the bonbons were passed around. And the ladies, selecting with dainty and discriminating fingers and a little greedily, all declared that Mr. Pontellier was the best husband in the world. Mrs. Pontellier was forced to admit that she knew of none better.

Chapter III Study Questions

1. Is Léonce a considerate husband? Despite the generous allowance he gives to his wife after he returns to New Orleans, do you agree with the Grand Isle women's estimation of him as "the best husband in the world"?

14. A light four-wheeled carriage.

15. Main financial district of New Orleans.

16. Fancy sweets.

17. Rich meat pastes such as *foie gras*.

Chapter IV

It would have been a difficult matter for Mr. Pontellier to define to his own satisfaction or any one else's wherein his wife failed in her duty toward their children. It was something which he felt rather than perceived, and he never voiced the feeling without subsequent regret and ample atonement.

If one of the little Pontellier boys took a tumble whilst at play, he was not apt to rush crying to his mother's arms for comfort; he would more likely pick himself up, wipe the water out of his eyes and the sand out of his mouth, and go on playing. Tots as they were, they pulled together and stood their ground in childish battles with doubled fists and uplifted voices, which usually prevailed against the other mother-tots. The quadroon nurse was looked upon as a huge encumbrance, only good to button up waists and panties and to brush and part hair; since it seemed to be a law of society that hair must be parted and brushed.

In short, Mrs. Pontellier was not a mother-woman. The mother-women seemed to prevail that summer at Grand Isle. It was easy to know them, fluttering about with extended, protecting wings when any harm, real or imaginary, threatened their precious brood. They were women who idolized their children, worshiped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels.

Many of them were delicious in the role; one of them was the embodiment of every womanly grace and charm. If her husband did not adore her, he was a brute, deserving of death by slow torture. Her name was Adèle Ratignolle. There are no words to describe her save the old ones that have served so often to picture the bygone heroine of romance and the fair lady of our dreams. There was nothing subtle or hidden about her charms; her beauty was all there, flaming and apparent: the spun-gold hair that comb nor confining pin could restrain; the blue eyes that were like nothing but sapphires; two lips that pouted, that were so red one could only think of cherries or some other delicious crimson fruit in looking at them. She was growing a little stout, but it did not seem to detract an iota from the grace of every step, pose, gesture. One would not have wanted her white neck a mite less full or her beautiful arms more slender. Never were hands more exquisite than hers, and it was a joy to look at them when she threaded her needle or adjusted her gold thimble to her taper¹⁸ middle finger as she sewed away on the little night-drawers or fashioned a bodice or a bib.

Madame Ratignolle was very fond of Mrs. Pontellier, and often she took her sewing and went over to sit with her in the afternoons. She was sitting there the afternoon of the day the box arrived from New Orleans. She had possession of the rocker, and she was busily engaged in sewing upon a diminutive pair of night-drawers.

She had brought the pattern of the drawers for Mrs. Pontellier to cut out—a marvel of construction, fashioned to enclose a baby's body so effectually that only two small eyes might look out from the garment, like an Eskimo's. They were designed for winter wear, when treacherous drafts came down chimneys and insidious currents of deadly cold found their way through key-holes.

Mrs. Pontellier's mind was quite at rest concerning the present material needs of her children, and she could not see the use of anticipating and making winter night garments the subject of her summer meditations. But she did not want to appear unamiable and uninterested, so she had brought forth newspapers, which she spread upon the floor of the gallery, and under Madame Ratignolle's directions she had cut a pattern of the impervious garment.

Robert was there, seated as he had been the Sunday before, and Mrs. Pontellier also occupied her

18. Tapered.

former position on the upper step, leaning listlessly against the post. Beside her was a box of bonbons, which she held out at intervals to Madame Ratignolle.

That lady seemed at a loss to make a selection, but finally settled upon a stick of nougat, wondering if it were not too rich; whether it could possibly hurt her. Madame Ratignolle had been married seven years. About every two years she had a baby. At that time she had three babies, and was beginning to think of a fourth one. She was always talking about her “condition.” Her “condition” was in no way apparent, and no one would have known a thing about it but for her persistence in making it the subject of conversation.

Robert started to reassure her, asserting that he had known a lady who had subsisted upon nougat during the entire—but seeing the color mount into Mrs. Pontellier’s face he checked himself and changed the subject.

Mrs. Pontellier, though she had married a Creole, was not thoroughly at home in the society of Creoles¹⁹; never before had she been thrown so intimately among them. There were only Creoles that summer at Lebrun’s. They all knew each other, and felt like one large family, among whom existed the most amicable relations. A characteristic which distinguished them and which impressed Mrs. Pontellier most forcibly was their entire absence of prudery. Their freedom of expression was at first incomprehensible to her, though she had no difficulty in reconciling it with a lofty chastity which in the Creole woman seems to be inborn and unmistakable.

Never would Edna Pontellier forget the shock with which she heard Madame Ratignolle relating to old Monsieur Farival the harrowing story of one of her *accouchements*,²⁰ withholding no intimate detail. She was growing accustomed to like shocks, but she could not keep the mounting color back from her cheeks. Oftener than once her coming had interrupted the droll story with which Robert was entertaining some amused group of married women.

A book had gone the rounds of the pension. When it came her turn to read it, she did so with profound astonishment. She felt moved to read the book in secret and solitude, though none of the others had done so,—to hide it from view at the sound of approaching footsteps. It was openly criticised and freely discussed at table. Mrs. Pontellier gave over being astonished, and concluded that wonders would never cease.

Chapter IV Study Questions

1. In what way is Adèle Ratignolle a character foil for Edna? Is Edna, like Adèle, “one of those women [who] idolize their children, worshiped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels”?
2. Read Coventry Patmore’s famous Victorian poem “The Angel in the House.” How does Adèle live up to this description of the Victorian mother? Edna? [Read “The Angel in the House” and Virginia Woolf’s attitude to the sentiments expressed in it.](#)

19. A descendant of the original French or Spanish settlers.

20. Birth of a child (French).

Chapter V

They formed a congenial group sitting there that summer afternoon—Madame Ratignolle sewing away, often stopping to relate a story or incident with much expressive gesture of her perfect hands; Robert and Mrs. Pontellier sitting idle, exchanging occasional words, glances or smiles which indicated a certain advanced stage of intimacy and *camaraderie*.

He had lived in her shadow during the past month. No one thought anything of it. Many had predicted that Robert would devote himself to Mrs. Pontellier when he arrived. Since the age of fifteen, which was eleven years before, Robert each summer at Grand Isle had constituted himself the devoted attendant of some fair dame or damsel. Sometimes it was a young girl, again a widow; but as often as not it was some interesting married woman.

For two consecutive seasons he lived in the sunlight of Mademoiselle Duvigné's presence. But she died between summers; then Robert posed as an inconsolable, prostrating himself at the feet of Madame Ratignolle for whatever crumbs of sympathy and comfort she might be pleased to vouchsafe.

Mrs. Pontellier liked to sit and gaze at her fair companion as she might look upon a faultless Madonna.

"Could any one fathom the cruelty beneath that fair exterior?" murmured Robert. "She knew that I adored her once, and she let me adore her. It was 'Robert, come; go; stand up; sit down; do this; do that; see if the baby sleeps; my thimble, please, that I left God knows where. Come and read Daudet'²¹ to me while I sew."

"*Par exemple!*"²² I never had to ask. You were always there under my feet, like a troublesome cat."

"You mean like an adoring dog. And just as soon as Ratignolle appeared on the scene, then it was like a dog. '*Passez! Adieu! Allez vous-en!*'"²³

"Perhaps I feared to make Alphonse jealous," she interjoined, with excessive naivete. That made them all laugh. The right hand jealous of the left! The heart jealous of the soul! But for that matter, the Creole husband is never jealous; with him the gangrene passion is one which has become dwarfed by disuse.

Meanwhile Robert, addressing Mrs. Pontellier, continued to tell of his one-time hopeless passion for Madame Ratignolle; of sleepless nights, of consuming flames till the very sea sizzled when he took his daily plunge. While the lady at the needle kept up a little running, contemptuous comment:

"*Blagueur—farceur—gros bête, va!*"²⁴

He never assumed this serio-comic tone when alone with Mrs. Pontellier. She never knew precisely what to make of it; at that moment it was impossible for her to guess how much of it was jest and what proportion was earnest. It was understood that he had often spoken words of love to Madame Ratignolle, without any thought of being taken seriously. Mrs. Pontellier was glad he had not assumed a similar role toward herself. It would have been unacceptable and annoying.

Mrs. Pontellier had brought her sketching materials, which she sometimes dabbled with in an unprofessional way. She liked the dabbling. She felt in it satisfaction of a kind which no other employment afforded her.

She had long wished to try herself on Madame Ratignolle. Never had that lady seemed a more

21. Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897). French novelist.

22. (French). Literally, for example, but here, "For heaven's sake."

23. (French). Go on, good-bye, go away.

24. Joker, trickster, silly, come off it.

tempting subject than at that moment, seated there like some sensuous Madonna, with the gleam of the fading day enriching her splendid color.

Robert crossed over and seated himself upon the step below Mrs. Pontellier, that he might watch her work. She handled her brushes with a certain ease and freedom which came, not from long and close acquaintance with them, but from a natural aptitude. Robert followed her work with close attention, giving forth little ejaculatory expressions of appreciation in French, which he addressed to Madame Ratignolle.

*“Mais ce n’est pas mal! Elle s’y connaît, elle a de la force, oui.”*²⁵

During his oblivious attention he once quietly rested his head against Mrs. Pontellier’s arm. As gently she repulsed him. Once again he repeated the offense. She could not but believe it to be thoughtlessness on his part; yet that was no reason she should submit to it. She did not remonstrate, except again to repulse him quietly but firmly. He offered no apology. The picture completed bore no resemblance to Madame Ratignolle. She was greatly disappointed to find that it did not look like her. But it was a fair enough piece of work, and in many respects satisfying.

Mrs. Pontellier evidently did not think so. After surveying the sketch critically she drew a broad smudge of paint across its surface, and crumpled the paper between her hands.

The youngsters came tumbling up the steps, the quadron following at the respectful distance which they required her to observe. Mrs. Pontellier made them carry her paints and things into the house. She sought to detain them for a little talk and some pleasantries. But they were greatly in earnest. They had only come to investigate the contents of the bonbon box. They accepted without murmuring what she chose to give them, each holding out two chubby hands scoop-like, in the vain hope that they might be filled; and then away they went.

The sun was low in the west, and the breeze soft and languorous that came up from the south, charged with the seductive odor of the sea. Children freshly befurbelowed²⁶, were gathering for their games under the oaks. Their voices were high and penetrating.

Madame Ratignolle folded her sewing, placing thimble, scissors, and thread all neatly together in the roll, which she pinned securely. She complained of faintness. Mrs. Pontellier flew for the cologne water and a fan. She bathed Madame Ratignolle’s face with cologne, while Robert plied the fan with unnecessary vigor.

The spell was soon over, and Mrs. Pontellier could not help wondering if there were not a little imagination responsible for its origin, for the rose tint had never faded from her friend’s face.

She stood watching the fair woman walk down the long line of galleries with the grace and majesty which queens are sometimes supposed to possess. Her little ones ran to meet her. Two of them clung about her white skirts, the third she took from its nurse and with a thousand endearments bore it along in her own fond, encircling arms. Though, as everybody well knew, the doctor had forbidden her to lift so much as a pin!

“Are you going bathing?” asked Robert of Mrs. Pontellier. It was not so much a question as a reminder.

“Oh, no,” she answered, with a tone of indecision. “I’m tired; I think not.” Her glance wandered from his face away toward the Gulf, whose sonorous murmur reached her like a loving but imperative entreaty.

“Oh, come!” he insisted. “You mustn’t miss your bath. Come on. The water must be delicious; it will not hurt you. Come.”

He reached up for her big, rough straw hat that hung on a peg outside the door, and put it on her

25. Rather good. She knows what she’s doing. She is skilled, yes.

26. Ornamented with frill.

head. They descended the steps, and walked away together toward the beach. The sun was low in the west and the breeze was soft and warm.

Chapter V Study Questions

1. How is Robert Lebrun something of a courtly lover of poetic convention? Look up “courtly love” in the glossary of literary terms.

Chapter VI

Edna Pontellier could not have told why, wishing to go to the beach with Robert, she should in the first place have declined, and in the second place have followed in obedience to one of the two contradictory impulses which impelled her.

A certain light was beginning to dawn dimly within her,—the light which, showing the way, forbids it.

At that early period it served but to bewilder her. It moved her to dreams, to thoughtfulness, to the shadowy anguish which had overcome her the midnight when she had abandoned herself to tears.

In short, Mrs. Pontellier was beginning to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her. This may seem like a ponderous weight of wisdom to descend upon the soul of a young woman of twenty-eight—perhaps more wisdom than the Holy Ghost is usually pleased to vouchsafe to any woman.

But the beginning of things, of a world especially, is necessarily vague, tangled, chaotic, and exceedingly disturbing. How few of us ever emerge from such beginning! How many souls perish in its tumult!

The voice of the sea is seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in abysses of solitude; to lose itself in mazes of inward contemplation.

The voice of the sea speaks to the soul. The touch of the sea is sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft, close embrace.

Chapter VI Study Questions

1. Suggest possible symbolic aspects of the sea in this chapter and throughout.

Chapter VII

Mrs. Pontellier was not a woman given to confidences, a characteristic hitherto contrary to her nature. Even as a child she had lived her own small life all within herself. At a very early period she had apprehended instinctively the dual life—that outward existence which conforms, the inward life which questions.

That summer at Grand Isle she began to loosen a little the mantle of reserve that had always enveloped her. There may have been—there must have been—influences, both subtle and apparent, working in their several ways to induce her to do this; but the most obvious was the influence of Adèle Ratignolle. The excessive physical charm of the Creole had first attracted her, for Edna had a sensuous susceptibility to beauty. Then the candor of the woman's whole existence, which everyone might read, and which formed so striking a contrast to her own habitual reserve—this might have furnished a link. Who can tell what metals the gods use in forging the subtle bond which we call sympathy, which we might as well call love.

The two women went away one morning to the beach together, arm in arm, under the huge white sunshade. Edna had prevailed upon Madame Ratignolle to leave the children behind, though she could not induce her to relinquish a diminutive roll of needlework, which Adèle begged to be allowed to slip into the depths of her pocket. In some unaccountable way they had escaped from Robert.

The walk to the beach was no inconsiderable one, consisting as it did of a long, sandy path, upon which a sporadic and tangled growth that bordered it on either side made frequent and unexpected inroads. There were acres of yellow camomile reaching out on either hand. Further away still, vegetable gardens abounded, with frequent small plantations of orange or lemon trees intervening. The dark green clusters glistened from afar in the sun.

The women were both of goodly height, Madame Ratignolle possessing the more feminine and matronly figure. The charm of Edna Pontellier's physique stole insensibly upon you. The lines of her body were long, clean and symmetrical; it was a body which occasionally fell into splendid poses; there was no suggestion of the trim, stereotyped fashion-plate about it. A casual and indiscriminating observer, in passing, might not cast a second glance upon the figure. But with more feeling and discernment he would have recognized the noble beauty of its modeling, and the graceful severity of poise and movement, which made Edna Pontellier different from the crowd.

She wore a cool muslin that morning—white, with a waving vertical line of brown running through it; also a white linen collar and the big straw hat which she had taken from the peg outside the door. The hat rested any way on her yellow-brown hair, that waved a little, was heavy, and clung close to her head.

Madame Ratignolle, more careful of her complexion, had twined a gauze veil about her head. She wore dogskin gloves, with gauntlets that protected her wrists. She was dressed in pure white, with a fluffiness of ruffles that became her. The draperies and fluttering things which she wore suited her rich, luxuriant beauty as a greater severity of line could not have done.

There were a number of bath-houses along the beach, of rough but solid construction, built with small, protecting galleries facing the water. Each house consisted of two compartments, and each family at Lebrun's possessed a compartment for itself, fitted out with all the essential paraphernalia of the bath and whatever other conveniences the owners might desire. The two women had no intention of bathing; they had just strolled down to the beach for a walk and to be alone and near the water. The Pontellier and Ratignolle compartments adjoined one another under the same roof.

Mrs. Pontellier had brought down her key through force of habit. Unlocking the door of her bathroom she went inside, and soon emerged, bringing a rug, which she spread upon the floor of the gallery, and two huge hair pillows covered with crash²⁷, which she placed against the front of the building.

The two seated themselves there in the shade of the porch, side by side, with their backs against the pillows and their feet extended. Madame Ratignolle removed her veil, wiped her face with a rather delicate handkerchief, and fanned herself with the fan which she always carried suspended somewhere about her person by a long, narrow ribbon. Edna removed her collar and opened her dress at the throat. She took the fan from Madame Ratignolle and began to fan both herself and her companion. It was very warm, and for a while they did nothing but exchange remarks about the heat, the sun, the glare. But there was a breeze blowing, a choppy, stiff wind that whipped the water into froth. It fluttered the skirts of the two women and kept them for a while engaged in adjusting, readjusting, tucking in, securing hair-pins and hat-pins. A few persons were sporting some distance away in the water. The beach was very still of human sound at that hour. The lady in black was reading her morning devotions on the porch of a neighboring bathhouse. Two young lovers were exchanging their hearts' yearnings beneath the children's tent, which they had found unoccupied.

Edna Pontellier, casting her eyes about, had finally kept them at rest upon the sea. The day was clear and carried the gaze out as far as the blue sky went; there were a few white clouds suspended idly over the horizon. A lateen²⁸ sail was visible in the direction of Cat Island, and others to the south seemed almost motionless in the far distance.

"Of whom—of what are you thinking?" asked Adèle of her companion, whose countenance she had been watching with a little amused attention, arrested by the absorbed expression which seemed to have seized and fixed every feature into a statuesque repose.

"Nothing," returned Mrs. Pontellier, with a start, adding at once: "How stupid! But it seems to me it is the reply we make instinctively to such a question. Let me see," she went on, throwing back her head and narrowing her fine eyes till they shone like two vivid points of light. "Let me see. I was really not conscious of thinking of anything; but perhaps I can retrace my thoughts."

"Oh! never mind!" laughed Madame Ratignolle. "I am not quite so exacting. I will let you off this time. It is really too hot to think, especially to think about thinking."

"But for the fun of it," persisted Edna. "First of all, the sight of the water stretching so far away, those motionless sails against the blue sky, made a delicious picture that I just wanted to sit and look at. The hot wind beating in my face made me think—without any connection that I can trace of a summer day in Kentucky, of a meadow that seemed as big as the ocean to the very little girl walking through the grass, which was higher than her waist. She threw out her arms as if swimming when she walked, beating the tall grass as one strikes out in the water. Oh, I see the connection now!"

"Where were you going that day in Kentucky, walking through the grass?"

"I don't remember now. I was just walking diagonally across a big field. My sun-bonnet obstructed the view. I could see only the stretch of green before me, and I felt as if I must walk on forever, without coming to the end of it. I don't remember whether I was frightened or pleased. I must have been entertained.

"Likely as not it was Sunday," she laughed; "and I was running away from prayers, from the Presbyterian service, read in a spirit of gloom by my father that chills me yet to think of."

"And have you been running away from prayers ever since, *ma chère*?" asked Madame Ratignolle, amused.

"No! oh, no!" Edna hastened to say. "I was a little unthinking child in those days, just following a

27. Coarse heavy fabric.

28. A triangular sail slung to a low mast.

misleading impulse without question. On the contrary, during one period of my life religion took a firm hold upon me; after I was twelve and until—until—why, I suppose until now, though I never thought much about it—just driven along by habit. But do you know,” she broke off, turning her quick eyes upon Madame Ratignolle and leaning forward a little so as to bring her face quite close to that of her companion, “sometimes I feel this summer as if I were walking through the green meadow again; idly, aimlessly, unthinking and unguided.”

Madame Ratignolle laid her hand over that of Mrs. Pontellier, which was near her. Seeing that the hand was not withdrawn, she clasped it firmly and warmly. She even stroked it a little, fondly, with the other hand, murmuring in an undertone, “*Pauvre chérie.*”²⁹

The action was at first a little confusing to Edna, but she soon lent herself readily to the Creole’s gentle caress. She was not accustomed to an outward and spoken expression of affection, either in herself or in others. She and her younger sister, Janet, had quarreled a good deal through force of unfortunate habit. Her older sister, Margaret, was matronly and dignified, probably from having assumed matronly and housewifely responsibilities too early in life, their mother having died when they were quite young, Margaret was not effusive; she was practical. Edna had had an occasional girl friend, but whether accidentally or not, they seemed to have been all of one type—the self-contained. She never realized that the reserve of her own character had much, perhaps everything, to do with this. Her most intimate friend at school had been one of rather exceptional intellectual gifts, who wrote fine-sounding essays, which Edna admired and strove to imitate; and with her she talked and glowed over the English classics, and sometimes held religious and political controversies.

Edna often wondered at one propensity which sometimes had inwardly disturbed her without causing any outward show or manifestation on her part. At a very early age—perhaps it was when she traversed the ocean of waving grass—she remembered that she had been passionately enamored of a dignified and sad-eyed cavalry officer who visited her father in Kentucky. She could not leave his presence when he was there, nor remove her eyes from his face, which was something like Napoleon’s, with a lock of black hair falling across the forehead. But the cavalry officer melted imperceptibly out of her existence.

At another time her affections were deeply engaged by a young gentleman who visited a lady on a neighboring plantation. It was after they went to Mississippi to live. The young man was engaged to be married to the young lady, and they sometimes called upon Margaret, driving over of afternoons in a buggy. Edna was a little miss, just merging into her teens; and the realization that she herself was nothing, nothing, nothing to the engaged young man was a bitter affliction to her. But he, too, went the way of dreams.

She was a grown young woman when she was overtaken by what she supposed to be the climax of her fate. It was when the face and figure of a great tragedian began to haunt her imagination and stir her senses. The persistence of the infatuation lent it an aspect of genuineness. The hopelessness of it colored it with the lofty tones of a great passion.

The picture of the tragedian stood enframed upon her desk. Any one may possess the portrait of a tragedian without exciting suspicion or comment. (This was a sinister reflection which she cherished.) In the presence of others she expressed admiration for his exalted gifts, as she handed the photograph around and dwelt upon the fidelity of the likeness. When alone she sometimes picked it up and kissed the cold glass passionately.

Her marriage to Léonce Pontellier was purely an accident, in this respect resembling many other marriages which masquerade as the decrees of Fate. It was in the midst of her secret great passion that she met him. He fell in love, as men are in the habit of doing, and pressed his suit with an earnestness and an ardor which left nothing to be desired. He pleased her; his absolute devotion flattered her. She

29. French: “poor dear.”

fancied there was a sympathy of thought and taste between them, in which fancy she was mistaken. Add to this the violent opposition of her father and her sister Margaret to her marriage with a Catholic, and we need seek no further for the motives which led her to accept Monsieur Pontellier for her husband.

The acme of bliss, which would have been a marriage with the tragedian, was not for her in this world. As the devoted wife of a man who worshiped her, she felt she would take her place with a certain dignity in the world of reality, closing the portals forever behind her upon the realm of romance and dreams.

But it was not long before the tragedian had gone to join the cavalry officer and the engaged young man and a few others; and Edna found herself face to face with the realities. She grew fond of her husband, realizing with some unaccountable satisfaction that no trace of passion or excessive and fictitious warmth colored her affection, thereby threatening its dissolution.

She was fond of her children in an uneven, impulsive way. She would sometimes gather them passionately to her heart; she would sometimes forget them. The year before they had spent part of the summer with their grandmother Pontellier in Iberville³⁰. Feeling secure regarding their happiness and welfare, she did not miss them except with an occasional intense longing. Their absence was a sort of relief, though she did not admit this, even to herself. It seemed to free her of a responsibility which she had blindly assumed and for which Fate had not fitted her.

Edna did not reveal so much as all this to Madame Ratignolle that summer day when they sat with faces turned to the sea. But a good part of it escaped her. She had put her head down on Madame Ratignolle's shoulder. She was flushed and felt intoxicated with the sound of her own voice and the unaccustomed taste of candor. It muddled her like wine, or like a first breath of freedom.

There was the sound of approaching voices. It was Robert, surrounded by a troop of children, searching for them. The two little Pontelliers were with him, and he carried Madame Ratignolle's little girl in his arms. There were other children beside, and two nurse-maids followed, looking disagreeable and resigned.

The women at once rose and began to shake out their draperies and relax their muscles. Mrs. Pontellier threw the cushions and rug into the bath-house. The children all scampered off to the awning, and they stood there in a line, gazing upon the intruding lovers, still exchanging their vows and sighs. The lovers got up, with only a silent protest, and walked slowly away somewhere else.

The children possessed themselves of the tent, and Mrs. Pontellier went over to join them.

Madame Ratignolle begged Robert to accompany her to the house; she complained of cramp in her limbs and stiffness of the joints. She leaned draggingly upon his arm as they walked.

Chapter VII Study Questions

1. What kind of relationship does Edna have with her two boys? Describe Edna's romantic experiences before she married Léonce.

30. A parish in Louisiana located south of Baton Rouge.

Chapter VIII

“Do me a favor, Robert,” spoke the pretty woman at his side, almost as soon as she and Robert had started their slow, homeward way. She looked up in his face, leaning on his arm beneath the encircling shadow of the umbrella which he had lifted.

“Granted; as many as you like,” he returned, glancing down into her eyes that were full of thoughtfulness and some speculation.

“I only ask for one; let Mrs. Pontellier alone.”

“*Tiens!*” he exclaimed, with a sudden, boyish laugh. “*Voilà que Madame Ratignolle est jalouse!*”³¹

“Nonsense! I’m in earnest; I mean what I say. Let Mrs. Pontellier alone.”

“Why?” he asked; himself growing serious at his companion’s solicitation.

“She is not one of us; she is not like us. She might make the unfortunate blunder of taking you seriously.”

His face flushed with annoyance, and taking off his soft hat he began to beat it impatiently against his leg as he walked. “Why shouldn’t she take me seriously?” he demanded sharply. “Am I a comedian, a clown, a jack-in-the-box? Why shouldn’t she? You Creoles! I have no patience with you! Am I always to be regarded as a feature of an amusing programme? I hope Mrs. Pontellier does take me seriously. I hope she has discernment enough to find in me something besides the *blagueur*. If I thought there was any doubt—”

“Oh, enough, Robert!” she broke into his heated outburst. “You are not thinking of what you are saying. You speak with about as little reflection as we might expect from one of those children down there playing in the sand. If your attentions to any married women here were ever offered with any intention of being convincing, you would not be the gentleman we all know you to be, and you would be unfit to associate with the wives and daughters of the people who trust you.”

Madame Ratignolle had spoken what she believed to be the law and the gospel. The young man shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

“Oh! well! That isn’t it,” slamming his hat down vehemently upon his head. “You ought to feel that such things are not flattering to say to a fellow.”

“Should our whole intercourse consist of an exchange of compliments? *Ma foi!*”³²

“It isn’t pleasant to have a woman tell you—” he went on, unheeding, but breaking off suddenly: “Now if I were like Arobin—you remember Alcée Arobin and that story of the consul’s wife at Biloxi?”³³ And he related the story of Alcée Arobin and the consul’s wife; and another about the tenor of the French Opera³⁴, who received letters which should never have been written; and still other stories, grave and gay, till Mrs. Pontellier and her possible propensity for taking young men seriously was apparently forgotten.

Madame Ratignolle, when they had regained her cottage, went in to take the hour’s rest which she considered helpful. Before leaving her, Robert begged her pardon for the impatience—he called it rudeness—with which he had received her well-meant caution.

“You made one mistake, Adèle,” he said, with a light smile; “there is no earthly possibility of Mrs. Pontellier ever taking me seriously. You should have warned me against taking myself seriously. Your advice might then have carried some weight and given me subject for some reflection. *Au revoir*. But

31. French: “Look.” “Notice that Mme Ratignolle is jealous.”

32. French: Lit., “my faith”; indeed; “upon my word.”

33. A coastal resort city on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

34. French Opera in New Orleans, a distinguished American opera company.

you look tired,” he added, solicitously. “Would you like a cup of bouillon? Shall I stir you a toddy? Let me mix you a toddy with a drop of Angostura.”³⁵

She acceded to the suggestion of bouillon, which was grateful and acceptable. He went himself to the kitchen, which was a building apart from the cottages and lying to the rear of the house. And he himself brought her the golden-brown bouillon, in a dainty Sèvres³⁶ cup, with a flaky cracker or two on the saucer.

She thrust a bare, white arm from the curtain which shielded her open door, and received the cup from his hands. She told him he was a *bon garçon*³⁷, and she meant it. Robert thanked her and turned away toward “the house.”

The lovers were just entering the grounds of the pension. They were leaning toward each other as the water-oaks bent from the sea. There was not a particle of earth beneath their feet. Their heads might have been turned upside-down, so absolutely did they tread upon blue ether. The lady in black, creeping behind them, looked a trifle paler and more jaded than usual. There was no sign of Mrs. Pontellier and the children. Robert scanned the distance for any such apparition. They would doubtless remain away till the dinner hour. The young man ascended to his mother’s room. It was situated at the top of the house, made up of odd angles and a queer, sloping ceiling. Two broad dormer windows looked out toward the Gulf, and as far across it as a man’s eye might reach. The furnishings of the room were light, cool, and practical.

Madame Lebrun was busily engaged at the sewing-machine. A little black girl sat on the floor, and with her hands worked the treadle of the machine. The Creole woman does not take any chances which may be avoided of imperiling her health.

Robert went over and seated himself on the broad sill of one of the dormer windows. He took a book from his pocket and began energetically to read it, judging by the precision and frequency with which he turned the leaves. The sewing-machine made a resounding clatter in the room; it was of a ponderous, by-gone make. In the lulls, Robert and his mother exchanged bits of desultory conversation.

“Where is Mrs. Pontellier?”

“Down at the beach with the children.”

“I promised to lend her the Goncourt³⁸. Don’t forget to take it down when you go; it’s there on the bookshelf over the small table.” Clatter, clatter, clatter, bang! for the next five or eight minutes.

“Where is Victor going with the rockaway?”

“The rockaway? Victor?”

“Yes; down there in front. He seems to be getting ready to drive away somewhere.”

“Call him.” Clatter, clatter!

Robert uttered a shrill, piercing whistle which might have been heard back at the wharf.

“He won’t look up.”

Madame Lebrun flew to the window. She called “Victor!” She waved a handkerchief and called again. The young fellow below got into the vehicle and started the horse off at a gallop.

Madame Lebrun went back to the machine, crimson with annoyance. Victor was the younger son and brother—a *tête montée*³⁹, with a temper which invited violence and a will which no ax could break.

“Whenever you say the word I’m ready to thrash any amount of reason into him that he’s able to hold.”

35. Aromatic bitters

36. Fine quality porcelain made at Sèvres, near Paris.

37. (French), “good boy.”

38. An unnamed novel by French author Edmond de Goncourt (1822-1896). His brother Jules (1830-1870) collaborated with Edmond on several novels. Edmond established the famous literary Prix Goncourt in 1903 in his memory.

39. (French) An impulsive, headstrong person.

“If your father had only lived!” Clatter, clatter, clatter, clatter, bang! It was a fixed belief with Madame Lebrun that the conduct of the universe and all things pertaining thereto would have been manifestly of a more intelligent and higher order had not Monsieur Lebrun been removed to other spheres during the early years of their married life.

“What do you hear from Montel?” Montel was a middle-aged gentleman whose vain ambition and desire for the past twenty years had been to fill the void which Monsieur Lebrun’s taking off had left in the Lebrun household. Clatter, clatter, bang, clatter!

“I have a letter somewhere,” looking in the machine drawer and finding the letter in the bottom of the workbasket. “He says to tell you he will be in Vera Cruz⁴⁰ the beginning of next month,”—clatter, clatter!—“and if you still have the intention of joining him”—bang! clatter, clatter, bang!

“Why didn’t you tell me so before, mother? You know I wanted—” Clatter, clatter, clatter!

“Do you see Mrs. Pontellier starting back with the children? She will be in late to luncheon again. She never starts to get ready for luncheon till the last minute.” Clatter, clatter! “Where are you going?”

“Where did you say the Goncourt was?”

Chapter VIII Study Questions

1. Does Adèle think that Robert might be a threat to the Pontellier marriage?

40. Mexican port city on the Gulf of Mexico coast.

Chapter IX

Every light in the hall was ablaze; every lamp turned as high as it could be without smoking the chimney or threatening explosion. The lamps were fixed at intervals against the wall, encircling the whole room. Someone had gathered orange and lemon branches, and with these fashioned graceful festoons between. The dark green of the branches stood out and glistened against the white muslin curtains which draped the windows, and which puffed, floated, and flapped at the capricious will of a stiff breeze that swept up from the Gulf.

It was Saturday night a few weeks after the intimate conversation held between Robert and Madame Ratignolle on their way from the beach. An unusual number of husbands, fathers, and friends had come down to stay over Sunday; and they were being suitably entertained by their families, with the material help of Madame Lebrun. The dining tables had all been removed to one end of the hall, and the chairs ranged about in rows and in clusters. Each little family group had had its say and exchanged its domestic gossip earlier in the evening. There was now an apparent disposition to relax; to widen the circle of confidences and give a more general tone to the conversation.

Many of the children had been permitted to sit up beyond their usual bedtime. A small band of them were lying on their stomachs on the floor looking at the colored sheets of the comic papers which Mr. Pontellier had brought down. The little Pontellier boys were permitting them to do so, and making their authority felt.

Music, dancing, and a recitation or two were the entertainments furnished, or rather, offered. But there was nothing systematic about the programme, no appearance of prearrangement nor even premeditation.

At an early hour in the evening the Farival twins were prevailed upon to play the piano. They were girls of fourteen, always clad in the Virgin's colors, blue and white, having been dedicated to the Blessed Virgin at their baptism. They played a duet from "Zampa," and at the earnest solicitation of everyone present followed it with the overture to "The Poet and the Peasant."

"*Allez vous-en! Sapristi!*" shrieked the parrot outside the door. He was the only being present who possessed sufficient candor to admit that he was not listening to these gracious performances for the first time that summer. Old Monsieur Farival, grandfather of the twins, grew indignant over the interruption, and insisted upon having the bird removed and consigned to regions of darkness. Victor Lebrun objected; and his decrees were as immutable as those of Fate. The parrot fortunately offered no further interruption to the entertainment, the whole venom of his nature apparently having been cherished up and hurled against the twins in that one impetuous outburst.

Later a young brother and sister gave recitations, which everyone present had heard many times at winter evening entertainments in the city.

A little girl performed a skirt dance in the center of the floor. The mother played her accompaniments and at the same time watched her daughter with greedy admiration and nervous apprehension. She need have had no apprehension. The child was mistress of the situation. She had been properly dressed for the occasion in black tulle⁴¹ and black silk tights. Her little neck and arms were bare, and her hair, artificially crimped, stood out like fluffy black plumes over her head. Her poses were full of grace, and her little black-shod toes twinkled as they shot out and upward with a rapidity and suddenness which were bewildering.

But there was no reason why everyone should not dance. Madame Ratignolle could not, so it was she

41. A sheer often stiffened silk, rayon or nylon net used chiefly for veils or ballet costumes.

who gaily consented to play for the others. She played very well, keeping excellent waltz time and infusing an expression into the strains which was indeed inspiring. She was keeping up her music on account of the children, she said; because she and her husband both considered it a means of brightening the home and making it attractive.

Almost everyone danced but the twins, who could not be induced to separate during the brief period when one or the other should be whirling around the room in the arms of a man. They might have danced together, but they did not think of it.

The children were sent to bed. Some went submissively; others with shrieks and protests as they were dragged away. They had been permitted to sit up till after the ice-cream, which naturally marked the limit of human indulgence.

The ice-cream was passed around with cake—gold and silver cake arranged on platters in alternate slices; it had been made and frozen during the afternoon back of the kitchen by two black women, under the supervision of Victor. It was pronounced a great success—excellent if it had only contained a little less vanilla or a little more sugar, if it had been frozen a degree harder, and if the salt might have been kept out of portions of it. Victor was proud of his achievement, and went about recommending it and urging everyone to partake of it to excess.

After Mrs. Pontellier had danced twice with her husband, once with Robert, and once with Monsieur Ratignolle, who was thin and tall and swayed like a reed in the wind when he danced, she went out on the gallery and seated herself on the low window-sill, where she commanded a view of all that went on in the hall and could look out toward the Gulf. There was a soft effulgence in the east. The moon was coming up, and its mystic shimmer was casting a million lights across the distant, restless water.

“Would you like to hear Mademoiselle Reisz play?” asked Robert, coming out on the porch where she was. Of course Edna would like to hear Mademoiselle Reisz play; but she feared it would be useless to entreat her.

“I’ll ask her,” he said. “I’ll tell her that you want to hear her. She likes you. She will come.” He turned and hurried away to one of the far cottages, where Mademoiselle Reisz was shuffling away. She was dragging a chair in and out of her room, and at intervals objecting to the crying of a baby, which a nurse in the adjoining cottage was endeavoring to put to sleep. She was a disagreeable little woman, no longer young, who had quarreled with almost everyone, owing to a temper which was self-assertive and a disposition to trample upon the rights of others. Robert prevailed upon her without any too great difficulty.

She entered the hall with him during a lull in the dance. She made an awkward, imperious little bow as she went in. She was a homely woman, with a small weazened⁴² face and body and eyes that glowed. She had absolutely no taste in dress, and wore a batch of rusty black lace with a bunch of artificial violets pinned to the side of her hair.

“Ask Mrs. Pontellier what she would like to hear me play,” she requested of Robert. She sat perfectly still before the piano, not touching the keys, while Robert carried her message to Edna at the window. A general air of surprise and genuine satisfaction fell upon everyone as they saw the pianist enter. There was a settling down, and a prevailing air of expectancy everywhere. Edna was a trifle embarrassed at being thus signaled out for the imperious little woman’s favor. She would not dare to choose, and begged that Mademoiselle Reisz would please herself in her selections.

Edna was what she herself called very fond of music. Musical strains, well rendered, had a way of evoking pictures in her mind. She sometimes liked to sit in the room of mornings when Madame Ratignolle played or practiced. One piece which that lady played Edna had entitled “Solitude.” It was a short, plaintive, minor strain. The name of the piece was something else, but she called it “Solitude.”

42. Wizenod, wrinkled, dry.

When she heard it there came before her imagination the figure of a man standing beside a desolate rock on the seashore. He was naked. His attitude was one of hopeless resignation as he looked toward a distant bird winging its flight away from him.

Another piece called to her mind a dainty young woman clad in an Empire gown⁴³, taking mincing dancing steps as she came down a long avenue between tall hedges. Again, another reminded her of children at play, and still another of nothing on earth but a demure lady stroking a cat.

The very first chords which Mademoiselle Reisz struck upon the piano sent a keen tremor down Mrs. Pontellier's spinal column. It was not the first time she had heard an artist at the piano. Perhaps it was the first time she was ready, perhaps the first time her being was tempered to take an impress of the abiding truth.

She waited for the material pictures which she thought would gather and blaze before her imagination. She waited in vain. She saw no pictures of solitude, of hope, of longing, or of despair. But the very passions themselves were aroused within her soul, swaying it, lashing it, as the waves daily beat upon her splendid body. She trembled, she was choking, and the tears blinded her.

Mademoiselle had finished. She arose, and bowing her stiff, lofty bow, she went away, stopping for neither thanks nor applause. As she passed along the gallery she patted Edna upon the shoulder.

"Well, how did you like my music?" she asked. The young woman was unable to answer; she pressed the hand of the pianist convulsively. Mademoiselle Reisz perceived her agitation and even her tears. She patted her again upon the shoulder as she said:

"You are the only one worth playing for. Those others? Bah!" and she went shuffling and sidling on down the gallery toward her room.

But she was mistaken about "those others." Her playing had aroused a fever of enthusiasm. "What passion!" "What an artist!" "I have always said no one could play Chopin⁴⁴ like Mademoiselle Reisz!" "That last prelude! *Bon Dieu!*⁴⁵ It shakes a man!"

It was growing late, and there was a general disposition to disband. But someone, perhaps it was Robert, thought of a bath⁴⁶ at that mystic hour and under that mystic moon.

Chapter IX Study Questions

1. Who is Mademoiselle Reisz and how is she different from Edna?
2. How does Edna respond to the music of Adèle? To that of Mademoiselle Reisz? Might the parrot's words apply to any one character in the novella?

43. A high-waisted gown dating back to Napoleon's first French Empire and popularized by the Empress Joséphine.

44. Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849). A Polish composer and virtuoso pianist of the Romantic era.

45. (French) "Good God!"

46. A swim.

Chapter X

At all events Robert proposed it, and there was not a dissenting voice. There was not one but was ready to follow when he led the way. He did not lead the way, however, he directed the way; and he himself loitered behind with the lovers, who had betrayed a disposition to linger and hold themselves apart. He walked between them, whether with malicious or mischievous intent was not wholly clear, even to himself.

The Pontelliers and Ratignolles walked ahead; the women leaning upon the arms of their husbands. Edna could hear Robert's voice behind them, and could sometimes hear what he said. She wondered why he did not join them. It was unlike him not to. Of late he had sometimes held away from her for an entire day, redoubling his devotion upon the next and the next, as though to make up for hours that had been lost. She missed him the days when some pretext served to take him away from her, just as one misses the sun on a cloudy day without having thought much about the sun when it was shining.

The people walked in little groups toward the beach. They talked and laughed; some of them sang. There was a band playing down at Klein's hotel, and the strains reached them faintly, tempered by the distance. There were strange, rare odors abroad—a tangle of the sea smell and of weeds and damp, new-plowed earth, mingled with the heavy perfume of a field of white blossoms somewhere near. But the night sat lightly upon the sea and the land. There was no weight of darkness; there were no shadows. The white light of the moon had fallen upon the world like the mystery and the softness of sleep.

Most of them walked into the water as though into a native element. The sea was quiet now, and swelled lazily in broad billows that melted into one another and did not break except upon the beach in little foamy crests that coiled back like slow, white serpents.

Edna had attempted all summer to learn to swim. She had received instructions from both the men and women; in some instances from the children. Robert had pursued a system of lessons almost daily; and he was nearly at the point of discouragement in realizing the futility of his efforts. A certain ungovernable dread hung about her when in the water, unless there was a hand near by that might reach out and reassure her.

But that night she was like the little tottering, stumbling, clutching child, who of a sudden realizes its powers, and walks for the first time alone, boldly and with over-confidence. She could have shouted for joy. She did shout for joy, as with a sweeping stroke or two she lifted her body to the surface of the water.

A feeling of exultation overtook her, as if some power of significant import had been given her to control the working of her body and her soul. She grew daring and reckless, overestimating her strength. She wanted to swim far out, where no woman had swum before.

Her unlooked-for achievement was the subject of wonder, applause, and admiration. Each one congratulated himself that his special teachings had accomplished this desired end.

"How easy it is!" she thought. "It is nothing," she said aloud; "why did I not discover before that it was nothing. Think of the time I have lost splashing about like a baby!" She would not join the groups in their sports and bouts, but intoxicated with her newly conquered power, she swam out alone.

She turned her face seaward to gather in an impression of space and solitude, which the vast expanse of water, meeting and melting with the moonlit sky, conveyed to her excited fancy. As she swam she seemed to be reaching out for the unlimited in which to lose herself.

Once she turned and looked toward the shore, toward the people she had left there. She had not gone

any great distance—that is, what would have been a great distance for an experienced swimmer. But to her unaccustomed vision the stretch of water behind her assumed the aspect of a barrier which her unaided strength would never be able to overcome.

A quick vision of death smote her soul, and for a second of time appalled and enfeebled her senses. But by an effort she rallied her staggering faculties and managed to regain the land.

She made no mention of her encounter with death and her flash of terror, except to say to her husband, “I thought I should have perished out there alone.”

“You were not so very far, my dear; I was watching you,” he told her.

Edna went at once to the bath-house, and she had put on her dry clothes and was ready to return home before the others had left the water. She started to walk away alone. They all called to her and shouted to her. She waved a dissenting hand, and went on, paying no further heed to their renewed cries which sought to detain her.

“Sometimes I am tempted to think that Mrs. Pontellier is capricious,” said Madame Lebrun, who was amusing herself immensely and feared that Edna’s abrupt departure might put an end to the pleasure.

“I know she is,” assented Mr. Pontellier; “sometimes, not often.”

Edna had not traversed a quarter of the distance on her way home before she was overtaken by Robert.

“Did you think I was afraid?” she asked him, without a shade of annoyance.

“No; I knew you weren’t afraid.”

“Then why did you come? Why didn’t you stay out there with the others?”

“I never thought of it.”

“Thought of what?”

“Of anything. What difference does it make?”

“I’m very tired,” she uttered, complainingly.

“I know you are.”

“You don’t know anything about it. Why should you know? I never was so exhausted in my life. But it isn’t unpleasant. A thousand emotions have swept through me to-night. I don’t comprehend half of them. Don’t mind what I’m saying; I am just thinking aloud. I wonder if I shall ever be stirred again as Mademoiselle Reisz’s playing moved me to-night. I wonder if any night on earth will ever again be like this one. It is like a night in a dream. The people about me are like some uncanny, half-human beings. There must be spirits abroad to-night.”

“There are,” whispered Robert, “Didn’t you know this was the twenty-eighth of August?”

“The twenty-eighth of August?”

“Yes. On the twenty-eighth of August, at the hour of midnight, and if the moon is shining—the moon must be shining—a spirit that has haunted these shores for ages rises up from the Gulf. With its own penetrating vision the spirit seeks someone mortal worthy to hold him company, worthy of being exalted for a few hours into realms of the semi-celestials. His search has always hitherto been fruitless, and he has sunk back, disheartened, into the sea. But to-night he found Mrs. Pontellier. Perhaps he will never wholly release her from the spell. Perhaps she will never again suffer a poor, unworthy earthling to walk in the shadow of her divine presence.”

“Don’t banter me,” she said, wounded at what appeared to be his flippancy. He did not mind the entreaty, but the tone with its delicate note of pathos was like a reproach. He could not explain; he could not tell her that he had penetrated her mood and understood. He said nothing except to offer her his arm, for, by her own admission, she was exhausted. She had been walking alone with her arms hanging limp, letting her white skirts trail along the dewy path. She took his arm, but she did not lean upon it. She let her hand lie listlessly, as though her thoughts were elsewhere—somewhere in advance of her body, and she was striving to overtake them.

Robert assisted her into the hammock which swung from the post before her door out to the trunk of a tree.

“Will you stay out here and wait for Mr. Pontellier?” he asked.

“I’ll stay out here. Good-night.”

“Shall I get you a pillow?”

“There’s one here,” she said, feeling about, for they were in the shadow.

“It must be soiled; the children have been tumbling it about.”

“No matter.” And having discovered the pillow, she adjusted it beneath her head. She extended herself in the hammock with a deep breath of relief. She was not a supercilious or an over-dainty woman. She was not much given to reclining in the hammock, and when she did so it was with no cat-like suggestion of voluptuous ease, but with a beneficent repose which seemed to invade her whole body.

“Shall I stay with you till Mr. Pontellier comes?” asked Robert, seating himself on the outer edge of one of the steps and taking hold of the hammock rope which was fastened to the post.

“If you wish. Don’t swing the hammock. Will you get my white shawl which I left on the window-sill over at the house?”

“Are you chilly?”

“No; but I shall be presently.”

“Presently?” he laughed. “Do you know what time it is? How long are you going to stay out here?”

“I don’t know. Will you get the shawl?”

“Of course I will,” he said, rising. He went over to the house, walking along the grass. She watched his figure pass in and out of the strips of moonlight. It was past midnight. It was very quiet.

When he returned with the shawl she took it and kept it in her hand. She did not put it around her.

“Did you say I should stay till Mr. Pontellier came back?”

“I said you might if you wished to.”

He seated himself again and rolled a cigarette, which he smoked in silence. Neither did Mrs. Pontellier speak. No multitude of words could have been more significant than those moments of silence, or more pregnant with the first-felt throbbings of desire.

When the voices of the bathers were heard approaching, Robert said good-night. She did not answer him. He thought she was asleep. Again she watched his figure pass in and out of the strips of moonlight as he walked away.

Chapter X Study Questions

1. Why does Edna’s successful swim make her begin to feel differently about herself and about her husband, who insists that she was not “so very far, my dear, I was watching you”? How is the swimming episode an example of foreshadowing?

Chapter XI

“What are you doing out here, Edna? I thought I should find you in bed,” said her husband, when he discovered her lying there. He had walked up with Madame Lebrun and left her at the house. His wife did not reply.

“Are you asleep?” he asked, bending down close to look at her.

“No.” Her eyes gleamed bright and intense, with no sleepy shadows, as they looked into his.

“Do you know it is past one o’clock? Come on,” and he mounted the steps and went into their room.

“Edna!” called Mr. Pontellier from within, after a few moments had gone by.

“Don’t wait for me,” she answered. He thrust his head through the door.

“You will take cold out there,” he said, irritably. “What folly is this? Why don’t you come in?”

“It isn’t cold; I have my shawl.”

“The mosquitoes will devour you.”

“There are no mosquitoes.”

She heard him moving about the room; every sound indicating impatience and irritation. Another time she would have gone in at his request. She would, through habit, have yielded to his desire; not with any sense of submission or obedience to his compelling wishes, but unthinkingly, as we walk, move, sit, stand, go through the daily treadmill of the life which has been portioned out to us.

“Edna, dear, are you not coming in soon?” he asked again, this time fondly, with a note of entreaty.

“No; I am going to stay out here.”

“This is more than folly,” he blurted out. “I can’t permit you to stay out there all night. You must come in the house instantly.”

With a writhing motion she settled herself more securely in the hammock. She perceived that her will had blazed up, stubborn and resistant. She could not at that moment have done other than denied and resisted. She wondered if her husband had ever spoken to her like that before, and if she had submitted to his command. Of course she had; she remembered that she had. But she could not realize why or how she should have yielded, feeling as she then did.

“Léonce, go to bed,” she said, “I mean to stay out here. I don’t wish to go in, and I don’t intend to. Don’t speak to me like that again; I shall not answer you.”

Mr. Pontellier had prepared for bed, but he slipped on an extra garment. He opened a bottle of wine, of which he kept a small and select supply in a buffet of his own. He drank a glass of the wine and went out on the gallery and offered a glass to his wife. She did not wish any. He drew up the rocker, hoisted his slippered feet on the rail, and proceeded to smoke a cigar. He smoked two cigars; then he went inside and drank another glass of wine. Mrs. Pontellier again declined to accept a glass when it was offered to her. Mr. Pontellier once more seated himself with elevated feet, and after a reasonable interval of time smoked some more cigars.

Edna began to feel like one who awakens gradually out of a dream, a delicious, grotesque, impossible dream, to feel again the realities pressing into her soul. The physical need for sleep began to overtake her; the exuberance which had sustained and exalted her spirit left her helpless and yielding to the conditions which crowded her in.

The stillest hour of the night had come, the hour before dawn, when the world seems to hold its breath. The moon hung low, and had turned from silver to copper in the sleeping sky. The old owl no longer hooted, and the water-oaks had ceased to moan as they bent their heads.

Edna arose, cramped from lying so long and still in the hammock. She tottered up the steps, clutching feebly at the post before passing into the house.

“Are you coming in, Léonce?” she asked, turning her face toward her husband.

“Yes, dear,” he answered, with a glance following a misty puff of smoke. “Just as soon as I have finished my cigar.”

Chapter XI Study Questions

1. How does Edna’s resistance to Léonce’s will differ from previous conflicts between them?

Chapter XII

She slept but a few hours. They were troubled and feverish hours, disturbed with dreams that were intangible, that eluded her, leaving only an impression upon her half-awakened senses of something unattainable. She was up and dressed in the cool of the early morning. The air was invigorating and steadied somewhat her faculties. However, she was not seeking refreshment or help from any source, either external or from within. She was blindly following whatever impulse moved her, as if she had placed herself in alien hands for direction, and freed her soul of responsibility.

Most of the people at that early hour were still in bed and asleep. A few, who intended to go over to the *Chênrière* for mass, were moving about. The lovers, who had laid their plans the night before, were already strolling toward the wharf. The lady in black, with her Sunday prayer-book, velvet and gold-clasped, and her Sunday silver beads, was following them at no great distance. Old Monsieur Farival was up, and was more than half inclined to do anything that suggested itself. He put on his big straw hat, and taking his umbrella from the stand in the hall, followed the lady in black, never overtaking her.

The little negro girl who worked Madame Lebrun's sewing-machine was sweeping the galleries with long, absent-minded strokes of the broom. Edna sent her up into the house to awaken Robert.

"Tell him I am going to the *Chênrière*. The boat is ready; tell him to hurry."

He had soon joined her. She had never sent for him before. She had never asked for him. She had never seemed to want him before. She did not appear conscious that she had done anything unusual in commanding his presence. He was apparently equally unconscious of anything extraordinary in the situation. But his face was suffused with a quiet glow when he met her.

They went together back to the kitchen to drink coffee. There was no time to wait for any nicety of service. They stood outside the window and the cook passed them their coffee and a roll, which they drank and ate from the window-sill. Edna said it tasted good.

She had not thought of coffee nor of anything. He told her he had often noticed that she lacked forethought.

"Wasn't it enough to think of going to the *Chênrière* and waking you up?" she laughed. "Do I have to think of everything?—as Léonce says when he's in a bad humor. I don't blame him; he'd never be in a bad humor if it weren't for me."

They took a short cut across the sands. At a distance they could see the curious procession moving toward the wharf—the lovers, shoulder to shoulder, creeping; the lady in black, gaining steadily upon them; old Monsieur Farival, losing ground inch by inch, and a young barefooted Spanish girl, with a red kerchief on her head and a basket on her arm, bringing up the rear.

Robert knew the girl, and he talked to her a little in the boat. No one present understood what they said. Her name was Mariequita. She had a round, sly, piquant face and pretty black eyes. Her hands were small, and she kept them folded over the handle of her basket. Her feet were broad and coarse. She did not strive to hide them. Edna looked at her feet, and noticed the sand and slime between her brown toes.

Beaudelet grumbled because Mariequita was there, taking up so much room. In reality he was annoyed at having old Monsieur Farival, who considered himself the better sailor of the two. But he would not quarrel with so old a man as Monsieur Farival, so he quarreled with Mariequita. The girl was deprecatory at one moment, appealing to Robert. She was saucy the next, moving her head up and down, making "eyes" at Robert and making "mouths" at Beaudelet.

The lovers were all alone. They saw nothing, they heard nothing. The lady in black was counting her

beads for the third time. Old Monsieur Farival talked incessantly of what he knew about handling a boat, and of what Beaudelet did not know on the same subject.

Edna liked it all. She looked Mariequita up and down, from her ugly brown toes to her pretty black eyes, and back again.

“Why does she look at me like that?” inquired the girl of Robert.

“Maybe she thinks you are pretty. Shall I ask her?”

“No. Is she your sweetheart?”

“She’s a married lady, and has two children.”

“Oh! well! Francisco ran away with Sylvano’s wife, who had four children. They took all his money and one of the children and stole his boat.”

“Shut up!”

“Does she understand?”

“Oh, hush!”

“Are those two married over there—leaning on each other?”

“Of course not,” laughed Robert.

“Of course not,” echoed Mariequita, with a serious, confirmatory bob of the head.

The sun was high up and beginning to bite. The swift breeze seemed to Edna to bury the sting of it into the pores of her face and hands. Robert held his umbrella over her. As they went cutting sidewise through the water, the sails bellied taut, with the wind filling and overflowing them. Old Monsieur Farival laughed sardonically at something as he looked at the sails, and Beaudelet swore at the old man under his breath.

Sailing across the bay to the *Chênière Caminada*, Edna felt as if she were being borne away from some anchorage which had held her fast, whose chains had been loosening—had snapped the night before when the mystic spirit was abroad, leaving her free to drift whithersoever she chose to set her sails. Robert spoke to her incessantly; he no longer noticed Mariequita. The girl had shrimps in her bamboo basket. They were covered with Spanish moss. She beat the moss down impatiently, and muttered to herself sullenly.

“Let us go to Grande Terre⁴⁷ to-morrow?” said Robert in a low voice.

“What shall we do there?”

“Climb up the hill to the old fort and look at the little wriggling gold snakes, and watch the lizards sun themselves.”

She gazed away toward Grande Terre and thought she would like to be alone there with Robert, in the sun, listening to the ocean’s roar and watching the slimy lizards writhe in and out among the ruins of the old fort.

“And the next day or the next we can sail to the Bayou Brulow⁴⁸,” he went on.

“What shall we do there?”

“Anything—cast bait for fish.”

“No; we’ll go back to Grande Terre. Let the fish alone.”

“We’ll go wherever you like,” he said. “I’ll have Tonie come over and help me patch and trim my boat. We shall not need Beaudelet nor any one. Are you afraid of the pirogue⁴⁹?”

“Oh, no.”

“Then I’ll take you some night in the pirogue when the moon shines. Maybe your Gulf spirit will whisper to you in which of these islands the treasures are hidden—direct you to the very spot, perhaps.”

47. An island in the Gulf of Mexico near Grand Isle.

48. A village near Grand Isle built on stilts, in the marshlands or bayoux of the Gulf Coast.

49. Canoe.

“And in a day we should be rich!” she laughed. “I’d give it all to you, the pirate gold and every bit of treasure we could dig up. I think you would know how to spend it. Pirate gold isn’t a thing to be hoarded or utilized. It is something to squander and throw to the four winds, for the fun of seeing the golden specks fly.”

“We’d share it, and scatter it together,” he said. His face flushed.

They all went together up to the quaint little Gothic church of Our Lady of Lourdes, gleaming all brown and yellow with paint in the sun’s glare.

Only Beaufort remained behind, tinkering at his boat, and Mariequita walked away with her basket of shrimps, casting a look of childish ill humor and reproach at Robert from the corner of her eye.

Chapter XII Study Questions

1. How does Edna’s interaction with Robert change in this chapter?

Chapter XIII

A feeling of oppression and drowsiness overcame Edna during the service. Her head began to ache, and the lights on the altar swayed before her eyes. Another time she might have made an effort to regain her composure; but her one thought was to quit the stifling atmosphere of the church and reach the open air. She arose, climbing over Robert's feet with a muttered apology. Old Monsieur Farival, flurried, curious, stood up, but upon seeing that Robert had followed Mrs. Pontellier, he sank back into his seat. He whispered an anxious inquiry of the lady in black, who did not notice him or reply, but kept her eyes fastened upon the pages of her velvet prayer-book.

"I felt giddy and almost overcome," Edna said, lifting her hands instinctively to her head and pushing her straw hat up from her forehead. "I couldn't have stayed through the service." They were outside in the shadow of the church. Robert was full of solicitude.

"It was folly to have thought of going in the first place, let alone staying. Come over to Madame Antoine's; you can rest there." He took her arm and led her away, looking anxiously and continuously down into her face.

How still it was, with only the voice of the sea whispering through the reeds that grew in the salt-water pools! The long line of little gray, weather-beaten houses nestled peacefully among the orange trees. It must always have been God's day on that low, drowsy island, Edna thought. They stopped, leaning over a jagged fence made of sea-drift, to ask for water. A youth, a mild-faced Acadian⁵⁰, was drawing water from the cistern, which was nothing more than a rusty buoy, with an opening on one side, sunk in the ground. The water which the youth handed to them in a tin pail was not cold to taste, but it was cool to her heated face, and it greatly revived and refreshed her.

Madame Antoine's cot⁵¹ was at the far end of the village. She welcomed them with all the native hospitality, as she would have opened her door to let the sunlight in. She was fat, and walked heavily and clumsily across the floor. She could speak no English, but when Robert made her understand that the lady who accompanied him was ill and desired to rest, she was all eagerness to make Edna feel at home and to dispose of her comfortably.

The whole place was immaculately clean, and the big, four-posted bed, snow-white, invited one to repose. It stood in a small side room which looked out across a narrow grass plot toward the shed, where there was a disabled boat lying keel upward.

Madame Antoine had not gone to mass. Her son Tonie had, but she supposed he would soon be back, and she invited Robert to be seated and wait for him. But he went and sat outside the door and smoked. Madame Antoine busied herself in the large front room preparing dinner. She was boiling mullets over a few red coals in the huge fireplace.

Edna, left alone in the little side room, loosened her clothes, removing the greater part of them. She bathed her face, her neck and arms in the basin that stood between the windows. She took off her shoes and stockings and stretched herself in the very center of the high, white bed. How luxurious it felt to rest thus in a strange, quaint bed, with its sweet country odor of laurel lingering about the sheets and mattress! She stretched her strong limbs that ached a little. She ran her fingers through her loosened hair for a while. She looked at her round arms as she held them straight up and rubbed them one after the other, observing closely, as if it were something she saw for the first time, the fine, firm quality and texture of her flesh. She clasped her hands easily above her head, and it was thus she fell asleep.

50. A descendant of the French-Canadians who were expelled from Acadia (Nova Scotia) in 1755 and who emigrated to Louisiana.

51. Cottage.

She slept lightly at first, half awake and drowsily attentive to the things about her. She could hear Madame Antoine's heavy, scraping tread as she walked back and forth on the sanded floor. Some chickens were clucking outside the windows, scratching for bits of gravel in the grass. Later she half heard the voices of Robert and Tonie talking under the shed. She did not stir. Even her eyelids rested numb and heavily over her sleepy eyes. The voices went on—Tonie's slow, Acadian drawl, Robert's quick, soft, smooth French. She understood French imperfectly unless directly addressed, and the voices were only part of the other drowsy, muffled sounds lulling her senses.

When Edna awoke it was with the conviction that she had slept long and soundly. The voices were hushed under the shed. Madame Antoine's step was no longer to be heard in the adjoining room. Even the chickens had gone elsewhere to scratch and cluck. The mosquito bar was drawn over her; the old woman had come in while she slept and let down the bar. Edna arose quietly from the bed, and looking between the curtains of the window, she saw by the slanting rays of the sun that the afternoon was far advanced. Robert was out there under the shed, reclining in the shade against the sloping keel of the overturned boat. He was reading from a book. Tonie was no longer with him. She wondered what had become of the rest of the party. She peeped out at him two or three times as she stood washing herself in the little basin between the windows.

Madame Antoine had laid some coarse, clean towels upon a chair, and had placed a box of *poudre de riz*⁵² within easy reach. Edna dabbed the powder upon her nose and cheeks as she looked at herself closely in the little distorted mirror which hung on the wall above the basin. Her eyes were bright and wide awake and her face glowed.

When she had completed her toilet she walked into the adjoining room. She was very hungry. No one was there. But there was a cloth spread upon the table that stood against the wall, and a cover was laid for one, with a crusty brown loaf and a bottle of wine beside the plate. Edna bit a piece from the brown loaf, tearing it with her strong, white teeth. She poured some of the wine into the glass and drank it down. Then she went softly out of doors, and plucking an orange from the low-hanging bough of a tree, threw it at Robert, who did not know she was awake and up.

An illumination broke over his whole face when he saw her and joined her under the orange tree.

"How many years have I slept?" she inquired. "The whole island seems changed. A new race of beings must have sprung up, leaving only you and me as past relics. How many ages ago did Madame Antoine and Tonie die? and when did our people from Grand Isle disappear from the earth?"

He familiarly adjusted a ruffle upon her shoulder.

"You have slept precisely one hundred years. I was left here to guard your slumbers; and for one hundred years I have been out under the shed reading a book. The only evil I couldn't prevent was to keep a broiled fowl from drying up."

"If it has turned to stone, still will I eat it," said Edna, moving with him into the house. "But really, what has become of Monsieur Farival and the others?"

"Gone hours ago. When they found that you were sleeping they thought it best not to awake you. Any way, I wouldn't have let them. What was I here for?"

"I wonder if Léonce will be uneasy!" she speculated, as she seated herself at table.

"Of course not; he knows you are with me," Robert replied, as he busied himself among sundry pans and covered dishes which had been left standing on the hearth.

"Where are Madame Antoine and her son?" asked Edna.

"Gone to Vespers⁵³, and to visit some friends, I believe. I am to take you back in Tonie's boat whenever you are ready to go."

52. (French) Face powder.

53. An evening church service.

He stirred the smoldering ashes till the broiled fowl began to sizzle afresh. He served her with no mean repast, dripping the coffee anew and sharing it with her. Madame Antoine had cooked little else than the mullets, but while Edna slept Robert had foraged the island. He was childishly gratified to discover her appetite, and to see the relish with which she ate the food which he had procured for her.

“Shall we go right away?” she asked, after draining her glass and brushing together the crumbs of the crusty loaf.

“The sun isn’t as low as it will be in two hours,” he answered.

“The sun will be gone in two hours.”

“Well, let it go; who cares!”

They waited a good while under the orange trees, till Madame Antoine came back, panting, waddling, with a thousand apologies to explain her absence. Tonie did not dare to return. He was shy, and would not willingly face any woman except his mother.

It was very pleasant to stay there under the orange trees, while the sun dipped lower and lower, turning the western sky to flaming copper and gold. The shadows lengthened and crept out like stealthy, grotesque monsters across the grass.

Edna and Robert both sat upon the ground—that is, he lay upon the ground beside her, occasionally picking at the hem of her muslin gown.

Madame Antoine seated her fat body, broad and squat, upon a bench beside the door. She had been talking all the afternoon, and had wound herself up to the storytelling pitch.

And what stories she told them! But twice in her life she had left the *Chênrière Caminada*, and then for the briefest span. All her years she had squatted and waddled there upon the island, gathering legends of the Baratarians⁵⁴ and the sea. The night came on, with the moon to lighten it. Edna could hear the whispering voices of dead men and the click of muffled gold.

When she and Robert stepped into Tonie’s boat, with the red lateen sail, misty spirit forms were prowling in the shadows and among the reeds, and upon the water were phantom ships, speeding to cover.

Chapter XIII Study Questions

1. What happens to Edna when she is at Madame Antoine’s house? How does her behaviour develop the theme of awakening?

54. Pirates and smugglers.

Chapter XIV

The youngest boy, Etienne, had been very naughty, Madame Ratignolle said, as she delivered him into the hands of his mother. He had been unwilling to go to bed and had made a scene; whereupon she had taken charge of him and pacified him as well as she could. Raoul had been in bed and asleep for two hours.

The youngster was in his long white nightgown, that kept tripping him up as Madame Ratignolle led him along by the hand. With the other chubby fist he rubbed his eyes, which were heavy with sleep and ill humor. Edna took him in her arms, and seating herself in the rocker, began to coddle and caress him, calling him all manner of tender names, soothing him to sleep.

It was not more than nine o'clock. No one had yet gone to bed but the children.

Léonce had been very uneasy at first, Madame Ratignolle said, and had wanted to start at once for the *Chênrière*. But Monsieur Farival had assured him that his wife was only overcome with sleep and fatigue, that Tonie would bring her safely back later in the day; and he had thus been dissuaded from crossing the bay. He had gone over to Klein's, looking up some cotton broker whom he wished to see in regard to securities, exchanges, stocks, bonds, or something of the sort, Madame Ratignolle did not remember what. He said he would not remain away late. She herself was suffering from heat and oppression, she said. She carried a bottle of salts and a large fan. She would not consent to remain with Edna, for Monsieur Ratignolle was alone, and he detested above all things to be left alone.

When Etienne had fallen asleep Edna bore him into the back room, and Robert went and lifted the mosquito bar that she might lay the child comfortably in his bed. The quadroon had vanished. When they emerged from the cottage Robert bade Edna good-night.

"Do you know we have been together the whole livelong day, Robert—since early this morning?" she said at parting.

"All but the hundred years when you were sleeping. Goodnight."

He pressed her hand and went away in the direction of the beach. He did not join any of the others, but walked alone toward the Gulf.

Edna stayed outside, awaiting her husband's return. She had no desire to sleep or to retire; nor did she feel like going over to sit with the Ratignolles, or to join Madame Lebrun and a group whose animated voices reached her as they sat in conversation before the house. She let her mind wander back over her stay at Grand Isle; and she tried to discover wherein this summer had been different from any and every other summer of her life. She could only realize that she herself—her present self—was in some way different from the other self. That she was seeing with different eyes and making the acquaintance of new conditions in herself that colored and changed her environment, she did not yet suspect.

She wondered why Robert had gone away and left her. It did not occur to her to think he might have grown tired of being with her the livelong day. She was not tired, and she felt that he was not. She regretted that he had gone. It was so much more natural to have him stay when he was not absolutely required to leave her.

As Edna waited for her husband she sang low a little song that Robert had sung as they crossed the bay. It began with "*Ah! Si tu savais*,"⁵⁵ and every verse ended with "*si tu savais*."

Robert's voice was not pretentious. It was musical and true. The voice, the notes, the whole refrain haunted her memory.

55. (French) A romantic song by Michael Balfe (1808-1870), "Could'st thou but know".

Chapter XIV Study Questions

1. How does Léonce react to his wife's lengthy absence?
2. Why does Léonce go to Klein's hotel rather than seek out his wife? Explain the significance of Robert's description of Edna's sleeping that day at Madame Antoine's as having lasted "a hundred years."

Chapter XV

When Edna entered the dining-room one evening a little late, as was her habit, an unusually animated conversation seemed to be going on. Several persons were talking at once, and Victor's voice was predominating, even over that of his mother. Edna had returned late from her bath, had dressed in some haste, and her face was flushed. Her head, set off by her dainty white gown, suggested a rich, rare blossom. She took her seat at table between old Monsieur Farival and Madame Ratignolle.

As she seated herself and was about to begin to eat her soup, which had been served when she entered the room, several persons informed her simultaneously that Robert was going to Mexico. She laid her spoon down and looked about her bewildered. He had been with her, reading to her all the morning, and had never even mentioned such a place as Mexico. She had not seen him during the afternoon; she had heard someone say he was at the house, upstairs with his mother. This she had thought nothing of, though she was surprised when he did not join her later in the afternoon, when she went down to the beach.

She looked across at him, where he sat beside Madame Lebrun, who presided. Edna's face was a blank picture of bewilderment, which she never thought of disguising. He lifted his eyebrows with the pretext of a smile as he returned her glance. He looked embarrassed and uneasy. "When is he going?" she asked of everybody in general, as if Robert were not there to answer for himself.

"To-night!" "This very evening!" "Did you ever!" "What possesses him!" were some of the replies she gathered, uttered simultaneously in French and English.

"Impossible!" she exclaimed. "How can a person start off from Grand Isle to Mexico at a moment's notice, as if he were going over to Klein's or to the wharf or down to the beach?"

"I said all along I was going to Mexico; I've been saying so for years!" cried Robert, in an excited and irritable tone, with the air of a man defending himself against a swarm of stinging insects.

Madame Lebrun knocked on the table with her knife handle.

"Please let Robert explain why he is going, and why he is going to-night," she called out. "Really, this table is getting to be more and more like Bedlam⁵⁶ every day, with everybody talking at once. Sometimes—I hope God will forgive me—but positively, sometimes I wish Victor would lose the power of speech."

Victor laughed sardonically as he thanked his mother for her holy wish, of which he failed to see the benefit to anybody, except that it might afford her a more ample opportunity and license to talk herself.

Monsieur Farival thought that Victor should have been taken out in mid-ocean in his earliest youth and drowned. Victor thought there would be more logic in thus disposing of old people with an established claim for making themselves universally obnoxious. Madame Lebrun grew a trifle hysterical; Robert called his brother some sharp, hard names.

"There's nothing much to explain, mother," he said; though he explained, nevertheless—looking chiefly at Edna—that he could only meet the gentleman whom he intended to join at Vera Cruz by taking such and such a steamer, which left New Orleans on such a day; that Beaufort was going out with his lugger-load of vegetables that night, which gave him an opportunity of reaching the city and making his vessel in time.

"But when did you make up your mind to all this?" demanded Monsieur Farival.

"This afternoon," returned Robert, with a shade of annoyance.

“At what time this afternoon?” persisted the old gentleman, with nagging determination, as if he were cross-questioning a criminal in a court of justice.

“At four o’clock this afternoon, Monsieur Farival,” Robert replied, in a high voice and with a lofty air, which reminded Edna of some gentleman on the stage.

She had forced herself to eat most of her soup, and now she was picking the flaky bits of a *court bouillon*⁵⁷ with her fork.

The lovers were profiting by the general conversation on Mexico to speak in whispers of matters which they rightly considered were interesting to no one but themselves. The lady in black had once received a pair of prayer-beads of curious workmanship from Mexico, with very special indulgence⁵⁸ attached to them, but she had never been able to ascertain whether the indulgence extended outside the Mexican border. Father Fochel of the Cathedral had attempted to explain it; but he had not done so to her satisfaction. And she begged that Robert would interest himself, and discover, if possible, whether she was entitled to the indulgence accompanying the remarkably curious Mexican prayer-beads.

Madame Ratignolle hoped that Robert would exercise extreme caution in dealing with the Mexicans, who, she considered, were a treacherous people, unscrupulous and revengeful. She trusted she did them no injustice in thus condemning them as a race. She had known personally but one Mexican, who made and sold excellent tamales, and whom she would have trusted implicitly, so soft-spoken was he. One day he was arrested for stabbing his wife. She never knew whether he had been hanged or not.

Victor had grown hilarious, and was attempting to tell an anecdote about a Mexican girl who served chocolate one winter in a restaurant in Dauphine Street. No one would listen to him but old Monsieur Farival, who went into convulsions over the droll story.

Edna wondered if they had all gone mad, to be talking and clamoring at that rate. She herself could think of nothing to say about Mexico or the Mexicans.

“At what time do you leave?” she asked Robert.

“At ten,” he told her. “Beaudelet wants to wait for the moon.”

“Are you all ready to go?”

“Quite ready. I shall only take a hand-bag, and shall pack my trunk in the city.”

He turned to answer some question put to him by his mother, and Edna, having finished her black coffee, left the table.

She went directly to her room. The little cottage was close and stuffy after leaving the outer air. But she did not mind; there appeared to be a hundred different things demanding her attention indoors. She began to set the toilet-stand to rights, grumbling at the negligence of the quadroon, who was in the adjoining room putting the children to bed. She gathered together stray garments that were hanging on the backs of chairs, and put each where it belonged in closet or bureau drawer. She changed her gown for a more comfortable and commodious wrapper. She rearranged her hair, combing and brushing it with unusual energy. Then she went in and assisted the quadroon in getting the boys to bed.

They were very playful and inclined to talk—to do anything but lie quiet and go to sleep. Edna sent the quadroon away to her supper and told her she need not return. Then she sat and told the children a story. Instead of soothing it excited them, and added to their wakefulness. She left them in heated argument, speculating about the conclusion of the tale which their mother promised to finish the following night.

The little black girl came in to say that Madame Lebrun would like to have Mrs. Pontellier go and sit with them over at the house till Mr. Robert went away. Edna returned answer that she had already undressed, that she did not feel quite well, but perhaps she would go over to the house later. She started

57. A broth used for poaching fish.

58. In the Roman Catholic faith, a pardon or remission of punishment due for sins.

to dress again, and got as far advanced as to remove her *peignoir*. But changing her mind once more she resumed the *peignoir*, and went outside and sat down before her door. She was overheated and irritable, and fanned herself energetically for a while. Madame Ratignolle came down to discover what was the matter.

“All that noise and confusion at the table must have upset me,” replied Edna, “and moreover, I hate shocks and surprises. The idea of Robert starting off in such a ridiculously sudden and dramatic way! As if it were a matter of life and death! Never saying a word about it all morning when he was with me.”

“Yes,” agreed Madame Ratignolle. “I think it was showing us all—you especially—very little consideration. It wouldn’t have surprised me in any of the others; those Lebruns are all given to heroics. But I must say I should never have expected such a thing from Robert. Are you not coming down? Come on, dear; it doesn’t look friendly.”

“No,” said Edna, a little sullenly. “I can’t go to the trouble of dressing again; I don’t feel like it.”

“You needn’t dress; you look all right; fasten a belt around your waist. Just look at me!”

“No,” persisted Edna; “but you go on. Madame Lebrun might be offended if we both stayed away.”

Madame Ratignolle kissed Edna good-night, and went away, being in truth rather desirous of joining in the general and animated conversation which was still in progress concerning Mexico and the Mexicans.

Somewhat later Robert came up, carrying his hand-bag.

“Aren’t you feeling well?” he asked.

“Oh, well enough. Are you going right away?”

He lit a match and looked at his watch. “In twenty minutes,” he said. The sudden and brief flare of the match emphasized the darkness for a while. He sat down upon a stool which the children had left out on the porch.

“Get a chair,” said Edna.

“This will do,” he replied. He put on his soft hat and nervously took it off again, and wiping his face with his handkerchief, complained of the heat.

“Take the fan,” said Edna, offering it to him.

“Oh, no! Thank you. It does no good; you have to stop fanning some time, and feel all the more uncomfortable afterward.”

“That’s one of the ridiculous things which men always say. I have never known one to speak otherwise of fanning. How long will you be gone?”

“Forever, perhaps. I don’t know. It depends upon a good many things.”

“Well, in case it shouldn’t be forever, how long will it be?”

“I don’t know.”

“This seems to me perfectly preposterous and uncalled for. I don’t like it. I don’t understand your motive for silence and mystery, never saying a word to me about it this morning.” He remained silent, not offering to defend himself. He only said, after a moment:

“Don’t part from me in any ill humor. I never knew you to be out of patience with me before.”

“I don’t want to part in any ill humor,” she said. “But can’t you understand? I’ve grown used to seeing you, to having you with me all the time, and your action seems unfriendly, even unkind. You don’t even offer an excuse for it. Why, I was planning to be together, thinking of how pleasant it would be to see you in the city next winter.”

“So was I,” he blurted. “Perhaps that’s the—” He stood up suddenly and held out his hand. “Good-bye, my dear Mrs. Pontellier; good-bye. You won’t—I hope you won’t completely forget me.” She clung to his hand, striving to detain him.

“Write to me when you get there, won’t you, Robert?” she entreated.

“I will, thank you. Good-bye.”

How unlike Robert! The merest acquaintance would have said something more emphatic than “I will, thank you; good-bye,” to such a request.

He had evidently already taken leave of the people over at the house, for he descended the steps and went to join Beaufort, who was out there with an oar across his shoulder waiting for Robert. They walked away in the darkness. She could only hear Beaufort’s voice; Robert had apparently not even spoken a word of greeting to his companion.

Edna bit her handkerchief convulsively, striving to hold back and to hide, even from herself as she would have hidden from another, the emotion which was troubling—tearing—her. Her eyes were brimming with tears.

For the first time she recognized the symptoms of infatuation which she had felt incipiently as a child, as a girl in her earliest teens, and later as a young woman. The recognition did not lessen the reality, the poignancy of the revelation by any suggestion or promise of instability. The past was nothing to her; offered no lesson which she was willing to heed. The future was a mystery which she never attempted to penetrate. The present alone was significant; was hers, to torture her as it was doing then with the biting conviction that she had lost that which she had held, that she had been denied that which her impassioned, newly awakened being demanded.

Chapter XV Study Questions

1. Is there another reason other than following up a business opportunity why Robert suddenly decides to leave for Mexico?
2. How does Edna react to the news of his departure?

Chapter XVI

“Do you miss your friend greatly?” asked Mademoiselle Reisz one morning as she came creeping up behind Edna, who had just left her cottage on her way to the beach. She spent much of her time in the water since she had acquired finally the art of swimming. As their stay at Grand Isle drew near its close, she felt that she could not give too much time to a diversion which afforded her the only real pleasurable moments that she knew. When Mademoiselle Reisz came and touched her upon the shoulder and spoke to her, the woman seemed to echo the thought which was ever in Edna’s mind; or, better, the feeling which constantly possessed her.

Robert’s going had some way taken the brightness, the color, the meaning out of everything. The conditions of her life were in no way changed, but her whole existence was dulled, like a faded garment which seems to be no longer worth wearing. She sought him everywhere—in others whom she induced to talk about him. She went up in the mornings to Madame Lebrun’s room, braving the clatter of the old sewing-machine. She sat there and chatted at intervals as Robert had done. She gazed around the room at the pictures and photographs hanging upon the wall, and discovered in some corner an old family album, which she examined with the keenest interest, appealing to Madame Lebrun for enlightenment concerning the many figures and faces which she discovered between its pages.

There was a picture of Madame Lebrun with Robert as a baby, seated in her lap, a round-faced infant with a fist in his mouth. The eyes alone in the baby suggested the man. And that was he also in kilts, at the age of five, wearing long curls and holding a whip in his hand. It made Edna laugh, and she laughed, too, at the portrait in his first long trousers; while another interested her, taken when he left for college, looking thin, long-faced, with eyes full of fire, ambition and great intentions. But there was no recent picture, none which suggested the Robert who had gone away five days ago, leaving a void and wilderness behind him.

“Oh, Robert stopped having his pictures taken when he had to pay for them himself! He found wiser use for his money, he says,” explained Madame Lebrun. She had a letter from him, written before he left New Orleans. Edna wished to see the letter, and Madame Lebrun told her to look for it either on the table or the dresser, or perhaps it was on the mantelpiece.

The letter was on the bookshelf. It possessed the greatest interest and attraction for Edna; the envelope, its size and shape, the post-mark, the handwriting. She examined every detail of the outside before opening it. There were only a few lines, setting forth that he would leave the city that afternoon, that he had packed his trunk in good shape, that he was well, and sent her his love and begged to be affectionately remembered to all. There was no special message to Edna except a postscript saying that if Mrs. Pontellier desired to finish the book which he had been reading to her, his mother would find it in his room, among other books there on the table. Edna experienced a pang of jealousy because he had written to his mother rather than to her.

Everyone seemed to take for granted that she missed him. Even her husband, when he came down the Saturday following Robert’s departure, expressed regret that he had gone.

“How do you get on without him, Edna?” he asked.

“It’s very dull without him,” she admitted. Mr. Pontellier had seen Robert in the city, and Edna asked him a dozen questions or more. Where had they met? On Carondelet Street, in the morning. They had gone “in” and had a drink and a cigar together. What had they talked about? Chiefly about his prospects in Mexico, which Mr. Pontellier thought were promising. How did he look? How did he seem—grave, or gay, or how? Quite cheerful, and wholly taken up with the idea of his trip, which Mr. Pontellier

found altogether natural in a young fellow about to seek fortune and adventure in a strange, queer country.

Edna tapped her foot impatiently, and wondered why the children persisted in playing in the sun when they might be under the trees. She went down and led them out of the sun, scolding the quadron for not being more attentive.

It did not strike her as in the least grotesque that she should be making of Robert the object of conversation and leading her husband to speak of him. The sentiment which she entertained for Robert in no way resembled that which she felt for her husband, or had ever felt, or ever expected to feel. She had all her life long been accustomed to harbor thoughts and emotions which never voiced themselves. They had never taken the form of struggles. They belonged to her and were her own, and she entertained the conviction that she had a right to them and that they concerned no one but herself. Edna had once told Madame Ratignolle that she would never sacrifice herself for her children, or for any one. Then had followed a rather heated argument; the two women did not appear to understand each other or to be talking the same language. Edna tried to appease her friend, to explain.

“I would give up the unessential; I would give my money, I would give my life for my children; but I wouldn’t give myself. I can’t make it more clear; it’s only something which I am beginning to comprehend, which is revealing itself to me.”

“I don’t know what you would call the essential, or what you mean by the unessential,” said Madame Ratignolle, cheerfully; “but a woman who would give her life for her children could do no more than that—your Bible tells you so. I’m sure I couldn’t do more than that.”

“Oh, yes you could!” laughed Edna.

She was not surprised at Mademoiselle Reisz’s question the morning that lady, following her to the beach, tapped her on the shoulder and asked if she did not greatly miss her young friend.

“Oh, good morning, Mademoiselle; is it you? Why, of course I miss Robert. Are you going down to bathe?”

“Why should I go down to bathe at the very end of the season when I haven’t been in the surf all summer,” replied the woman, disagreeably.

“I beg your pardon,” offered Edna, in some embarrassment, for she should have remembered that Mademoiselle Reisz’s avoidance of the water had furnished a theme for much pleasantry. Some among them thought it was on account of her false hair, or the dread of getting the violets wet, while others attributed it to the natural aversion for water sometimes believed to accompany the artistic temperament. Mademoiselle offered Edna some chocolates in a paper bag, which she took from her pocket, by way of showing that she bore no ill feeling. She habitually ate chocolates for their sustaining quality; they contained much nutriment in small compass, she said. They saved her from starvation, as Madame Lebrun’s table was utterly impossible; and no one save so impertinent a woman as Madame Lebrun could think of offering such food to people and requiring them to pay for it.

“She must feel very lonely without her son,” said Edna, desiring to change the subject. “Her favorite son, too. It must have been quite hard to let him go.”

Mademoiselle laughed maliciously.

“Her favorite son! Oh, dear! Who could have been imposing such a tale upon you? Aline Lebrun lives for Victor, and for Victor alone. She has spoiled him into the worthless creature he is. She worships him and the ground he walks on. Robert is very well in a way, to give up all the money he can earn to the family, and keep the barest pittance for himself. Favorite son, indeed! I miss the poor fellow myself, my dear. I liked to see him and to hear him about the place the only Lebrun who is worth a pinch of salt. He comes to see me often in the city. I like to play to him. That Victor! hanging would be too good for him. It’s a wonder Robert hasn’t beaten him to death long ago.”

“I thought he had great patience with his brother,” offered Edna, glad to be talking about Robert, no matter what was said.

“Oh! he thrashed him well enough a year or two ago,” said Mademoiselle. “It was about a Spanish girl, whom Victor considered that he had some sort of claim upon. He met Robert one day talking to the girl, or walking with her, or bathing with her, or carrying her basket—I don’t remember what;—and he became so insulting and abusive that Robert gave him a thrashing on the spot that has kept him comparatively in order for a good while. It’s about time he was getting another.”

“Was her name Mariequita?” asked Edna.

“Mariequita—yes, that was it; Mariequita. I had forgotten. Oh, she’s a sly one, and a bad one, that Mariequita!”

Edna looked down at Mademoiselle Reisz and wondered how she could have listened to her venom so long. For some reason she felt depressed, almost unhappy. She had not intended to go into the water; but she donned her bathing suit, and left Mademoiselle alone, seated under the shade of the children’s tent. The water was growing cooler as the season advanced. Edna plunged and swam about with an abandon that thrilled and invigorated her. She remained a long time in the water, half hoping that Mademoiselle Reisz would not wait for her.

But Mademoiselle waited. She was very amiable during the walk back, and raved much over Edna’s appearance in her bathing suit. She talked about music. She hoped that Edna would go to see her in the city, and wrote her address with the stub of a pencil on a piece of card which she found in her pocket.

“When do you leave?” asked Edna.

“Next Monday; and you?”

“The following week,” answered Edna, adding, “It has been a pleasant summer, hasn’t it, Mademoiselle?”

“Well,” agreed Mademoiselle Reisz, with a shrug, “rather pleasant, if it hadn’t been for the mosquitoes and the Farival twins.”

Chapter XVI Study Questions

1. How are Mademoiselle Reisz and Adèle Ratignolle foils to Edna?
2. What is the significance of Edna’s assertion “I would give up the unessential; I would give my money, I would give my life for my children; but I wouldn’t give myself”?

Chapter XVII

The Pontelliers possessed a very charming home on Esplanade Street⁵⁹ in New Orleans. It was a large, double cottage, with a broad front veranda, whose round, fluted columns supported the sloping roof. The house was painted a dazzling white; the outside shutters, or jalousies, were green. In the yard, which was kept scrupulously neat, were flowers and plants of every description which flourishes in South Louisiana. Within doors the appointments were perfect after the conventional type. The softest carpets and rugs covered the floors; rich and tasteful draperies hung at doors and windows. There were paintings, selected with judgment and discrimination, upon the walls. The cut glass, the silver, the heavy damask which daily appeared upon the table were the envy of many women whose husbands were less generous than Mr. Pontellier.

Mr. Pontellier was very fond of walking about his house examining its various appointments and details, to see that nothing was amiss. He greatly valued his possessions, chiefly because they were his, and derived genuine pleasure from contemplating a painting, a statuette, a rare lace curtain—no matter what—after he had bought it and placed it among his household gods.

On Tuesday afternoons—Tuesday being Mrs. Pontellier's reception day⁶⁰—there was a constant stream of callers—women who came in carriages or in the street cars, or walked when the air was soft and distance permitted. A light-colored mulatto boy, in dress coat and bearing a diminutive silver tray for the reception of cards, admitted them. A maid, in white fluted cap, offered the callers liqueur, coffee, or chocolate, as they might desire. Mrs. Pontellier, attired in a handsome reception gown, remained in the drawing-room the entire afternoon receiving her visitors. Men sometimes called in the evening with their wives.

This had been the programme which Mrs. Pontellier had religiously followed since her marriage, six years before. Certain evenings during the week she and her husband attended the opera or sometimes the play.

Mr. Pontellier left his home in the mornings between nine and ten o'clock, and rarely returned before half-past six or seven in the evening—dinner being served at half-past seven.

He and his wife seated themselves at table one Tuesday evening, a few weeks after their return from Grand Isle. They were alone together. The boys were being put to bed; the patter of their bare, escaping feet could be heard occasionally, as well as the pursuing voice of the quadroon, lifted in mild protest and entreaty. Mrs. Pontellier did not wear her usual Tuesday reception gown; she was in ordinary house dress. Mr. Pontellier, who was observant about such things, noticed it, as he served the soup and handed it to the boy in waiting.

"Tired out, Edna? Whom did you have? Many callers?" he asked. He tasted his soup and began to season it with pepper, salt, vinegar, mustard—everything within reach.

"There were a good many," replied Edna, who was eating her soup with evident satisfaction. "I found their cards when I got home; I was out."

"Out!" exclaimed her husband, with something like genuine consternation in his voice as he laid down the vinegar cruet and looked at her through his glasses. "Why, what could have taken you out on Tuesday? What did you have to do?"

"Nothing. I simply felt like going out, and I went out."

59. A fashionable street in New Orleans.

60. Fashionable women received guests at their homes on a specific day of the week, and not to be "at home" on such days would have been viewed as insulting to callers.

“Well, I hope you left some suitable excuse,” said her husband, somewhat appeased, as he added a dash of cayenne pepper to the soup.

“No, I left no excuse. I told Joe to say I was out, that was all.”

“Why, my dear, I should think you’d understand by this time that people don’t do such things; we’ve got to observe *les convenances*⁶¹ if we ever expect to get on and keep up with the procession. If you felt that you had to leave home this afternoon, you should have left some suitable explanation for your absence.

“This soup is really impossible; it’s strange that woman hasn’t learned yet to make a decent soup. Any free-lunch stand in town serves a better one. Was Mrs. Belthrop here?”

“Bring the tray with the cards, Joe. I don’t remember who was here.”

The boy retired and returned after a moment, bringing the tiny silver tray, which was covered with ladies’ visiting cards. He handed it to Mrs. Pontellier.

“Give it to Mr. Pontellier,” she said.

Joe offered the tray to Mr. Pontellier, and removed the soup.

Mr. Pontellier scanned the names of his wife’s callers, reading some of them aloud, with comments as he read.

“‘The Misses Delasidas.’ I worked a big deal in futures⁶² for their father this morning; nice girls; it’s time they were getting married. ‘Mrs. Belthrop.’ I tell you what it is, Edna; you can’t afford to snub Mrs. Belthrop. Why, Belthrop could buy and sell us ten times over. His business is worth a good, round sum to me. You’d better write her a note. ‘Mrs. James Highcamp.’ Hugh! the less you have to do with Mrs. Highcamp, the better. ‘Madame Laforce.’ Came all the way from Carrolton⁶³, too, poor old soul. ‘Miss Wiggs,’ ‘Mrs. Eleanor Boltons.’” He pushed the cards aside.

“Mercy!” exclaimed Edna, who had been fuming. “Why are you taking the thing so seriously and making such a fuss over it?”

“I’m not making any fuss over it. But it’s just such seeming trifles that we’ve got to take seriously; such things count.”

The fish was scorched. Mr. Pontellier would not touch it. Edna said she did not mind a little scorched taste. The roast was in some way not to his fancy, and he did not like the manner in which the vegetables were served.

“It seems to me,” he said, “we spend money enough in this house to procure at least one meal a day which a man could eat and retain his self-respect.”

“You used to think the cook was a treasure,” returned Edna, indifferently.

“Perhaps she was when she first came; but cooks are only human. They need looking after, like any other class of persons that you employ. Suppose I didn’t look after the clerks in my office, just let them run things their own way; they’d soon make a nice mess of me and my business.”

“Where are you going?” asked Edna, seeing that her husband arose from table without having eaten a morsel except a taste of the highly-seasoned soup.

“I’m going to get my dinner at the club. Good night.” He went into the hall, took his hat and stick from the stand, and left the house.

She was somewhat familiar with such scenes. They had often made her very unhappy. On a few previous occasions she had been completely deprived of any desire to finish her dinner. Sometimes she had gone into the kitchen to administer a tardy rebuke to the cook. Once she went to her room and studied the cookbook during an entire evening, finally writing out a menu for the week, which left her harassed with a feeling that, after all, she had accomplished no good that was worth the name.

61. Social conventions.

62. A stock or bond purchase made with an eye to future profit.

63. A village to the west of New Orleans; it was later absorbed by the city.

But that evening Edna finished her dinner alone, with forced deliberation. Her face was flushed and her eyes flamed with some inward fire that lighted them. After finishing her dinner she went to her room, having instructed the boy to tell any other callers that she was indisposed.

It was a large, beautiful room, rich and picturesque in the soft, dim light which the maid had turned low. She went and stood at an open window and looked out upon the deep tangle of the garden below. All the mystery and witchery of the night seemed to have gathered there amid the perfumes and the dusky and tortuous outlines of flowers and foliage. She was seeking herself and finding herself in just such sweet, half-darkness which met her moods. But the voices were not soothing that came to her from the darkness and the sky above and the stars. They jeered and sounded mournful notes without promise, devoid even of hope. She turned back into the room and began to walk to and fro down its whole length without stopping, without resting. She carried in her hands a thin handkerchief, which she tore into ribbons, rolled into a ball, and flung from her. Once she stopped, and taking off her wedding ring, flung it upon the carpet. When she saw it lying there, she stamped her heel upon it, striving to crush it. But her small boot heel did not make an indenture, not a mark upon the little glittering circlet.

In a sweeping passion she seized a glass vase from the table and flung it upon the tiles of the hearth. She wanted to destroy something. The crash and clatter were what she wanted to hear.

A maid, alarmed at the din of breaking glass, entered the room to discover what was the matter.

“A vase fell upon the hearth,” said Edna. “Never mind; leave it till morning.”

“Oh! you might get some of the glass in your feet, ma’am,” insisted the young woman, picking up bits of the broken vase that were scattered upon the carpet. “And here’s your ring, ma’am, under the chair.”

Edna held out her hand, and taking the ring, slipped it upon her finger.

Chapter XVII Study Questions

1. Now that the Pontelliers are back in New Orleans, how does Edna rebel against social convention? What does she refuse to continue doing, and how does Léonce react?

Chapter XVIII

The following morning Mr. Pontellier, upon leaving for his office, asked Edna if she would not meet him in town in order to look at some new fixtures for the library.

“I hardly think we need new fixtures, Léonce. Don’t let us get anything new; you are too extravagant. I don’t believe you ever think of saving or putting by.”

“The way to become rich is to make money, my dear Edna, not to save it,” he said. He regretted that she did not feel inclined to go with him and select new fixtures. He kissed her good-bye, and told her she was not looking well and must take care of herself. She was unusually pale and very quiet.

She stood on the front veranda as he quitted the house, and absently picked a few sprays of jessamine⁶⁴ that grew upon a trellis near by. She inhaled the odor of the blossoms and thrust them into the bosom of her white morning gown. The boys were dragging along the banquette⁶⁵ a small “express wagon,” which they had filled with blocks and sticks. The quadron was following them with little quick steps, having assumed a fictitious animation and alacrity for the occasion. A fruit vender was crying his wares in the street.

Edna looked straight before her with a self-absorbed expression upon her face. She felt no interest in anything about her. The street, the children, the fruit vender, the flowers growing there under her eyes, were all part and parcel of an alien world which had suddenly become antagonistic.

She went back into the house. She had thought of speaking to the cook concerning her blunders of the previous night; but Mr. Pontellier had saved her that disagreeable mission, for which she was so poorly fitted. Mr. Pontellier’s arguments were usually convincing with those whom he employed. He left home feeling quite sure that he and Edna would sit down that evening, and possibly a few subsequent evenings, to a dinner deserving of the name.

Edna spent an hour or two in looking over some of her old sketches. She could see their shortcomings and defects, which were glaring in her eyes. She tried to work a little, but found she was not in the humor. Finally she gathered together a few of the sketches—those which she considered the least discreditable; and she carried them with her when, a little later, she dressed and left the house. She looked handsome and distinguished in her street gown. The tan of the seashore had left her face, and her forehead was smooth, white, and polished beneath her heavy, yellow-brown hair. There were a few freckles on her face, and a small, dark mole near the under lip and one on the temple, half-hidden in her hair.

As Edna walked along the street she was thinking of Robert. She was still under the spell of her infatuation. She had tried to forget him, realizing the inutility of remembering. But the thought of him was like an obsession, ever pressing itself upon her. It was not that she dwelt upon details of their acquaintance, or recalled in any special or peculiar way his personality; it was his being, his existence, which dominated her thought, fading sometimes as if it would melt into the mist of the forgotten, reviving again with an intensity which filled her with an incomprehensible longing.

Edna was on her way to Madame Ratignolle’s. Their intimacy, begun at Grand Isle, had not declined, and they had seen each other with some frequency since their return to the city. The Ratignolles lived at no great distance from Edna’s home, on the corner of a side street, where Monsieur Ratignolle owned and conducted a drug store which enjoyed a steady and prosperous trade. His father had been in the business before him, and Monsieur Ratignolle stood well in the community and bore an enviable

64. Jasmine.

65. Sidewalk.

reputation for integrity and clearheadedness. His family lived in commodious apartments over the store, having an entrance on the side within the *porte cochère*.⁶⁶ There was something which Edna thought very French, very foreign, about their whole manner of living. In the large and pleasant salon which extended across the width of the house, the Ratignolles entertained their friends once a fortnight with a *soirée musicale*,⁶⁷ sometimes diversified by card-playing. There was a friend who played upon the 'cello. One brought his flute and another his violin, while there were some who sang and a number who performed upon the piano with various degrees of taste and agility. The Ratignolles' *soirées musicales* were widely known, and it was considered a privilege to be invited to them.

Edna found her friend engaged in assorting the clothes which had returned that morning from the laundry. She at once abandoned her occupation upon seeing Edna, who had been ushered without ceremony into her presence.

"'Cité can do it as well as I; it is really her business," she explained to Edna, who apologized for interrupting her. And she summoned a young black woman, whom she instructed, in French, to be very careful in checking off the list which she handed her. She told her to notice particularly if a fine linen handkerchief of Monsieur Ratignolle's, which was missing last week, had been returned; and to be sure to set to one side such pieces as required mending and darning.

Then placing an arm around Edna's waist, she led her to the front of the house, to the salon, where it was cool and sweet with the odor of great roses that stood upon the hearth in jars.

Madame Ratignolle looked more beautiful than ever there at home, in a *négligée* which left her arms almost wholly bare and exposed the rich, melting curves of her white throat.

"Perhaps I shall be able to paint your picture some day," said Edna with a smile when they were seated. She produced the roll of sketches and started to unfold them. "I believe I ought to work again. I feel as if I wanted to be doing something. What do you think of them? Do you think it worth while to take it up again and study some more? I might study for a while with Laidpore."

She knew that Madame Ratignolle's opinion in such a matter would be next to valueless, that she herself had not alone decided, but determined; but she sought the words of praise and encouragement that would help her to put heart into her venture.

"Your talent is immense, dear!"

"Nonsense!" protested Edna, well pleased.

"Immense, I tell you," persisted Madame Ratignolle, surveying the sketches one by one, at close range, then holding them at arm's length, narrowing her eyes, and dropping her head on one side.

"Surely, this Bavarian peasant is worthy of framing; and this basket of apples! never have I seen anything more lifelike. One might almost be tempted to reach out a hand and take one."

Edna could not control a feeling which bordered upon complacency at her friend's praise, even realizing, as she did, its true worth. She retained a few of the sketches, and gave all the rest to Madame Ratignolle, who appreciated the gift far beyond its value and proudly exhibited the pictures to her husband when he came up from the store a little later for his midday dinner.

Mr. Ratignolle was one of those men who are called the salt of the earth. His cheerfulness was unbounded, and it was matched by his goodness of heart, his broad charity, and common sense. He and his wife spoke English with an accent which was only discernible through its un-English emphasis and a certain carefulness and deliberation. Edna's husband spoke English with no accent whatever. The Ratignolles understood each other perfectly. If ever the fusion of two human beings into one has been accomplished on this sphere it was surely in their union.

As Edna seated herself at table with them she thought, "Better a dinner of herbs⁶⁸," though it did not

66. A covered entrance large enough for vehicles to pass through. The roof protects passengers from the weather.

67. A musical party held in the evening.

68. See Proverbs 15:17: "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

take her long to discover that it was no dinner of herbs, but a delicious repast, simple, choice, and in every way satisfying.

Monsieur Ratignolle was delighted to see her, though he found her looking not so well as at Grand Isle, and he advised a tonic. He talked a good deal on various topics, a little politics, some city news and neighborhood gossip. He spoke with an animation and earnestness that gave an exaggerated importance to every syllable he uttered. His wife was keenly interested in everything he said, laying down her fork the better to listen, chiming in, taking the words out of his mouth.

Edna felt depressed rather than soothed after leaving them. The little glimpse of domestic harmony which had been offered her, gave her no regret, no longing. It was not a condition of life which fitted her, and she could see in it but an appalling and hopeless ennui. She was moved by a kind of commiseration for Madame Ratignolle,—a pity for that colorless existence which never uplifted its possessor beyond the region of blind contentment, in which no moment of anguish ever visited her soul, in which she would never have the taste of life's delirium. Edna vaguely wondered what she meant by "life's delirium." It had crossed her thought like some unsought, extraneous impression.

Chapter XVIII Study Questions

1. Contrast the marriage of the Ratignolles with that of the Pontelliers.

Chapter XIX

Edna could not help but think that it was very foolish, very childish, to have stamped upon her wedding ring and smashed the crystal vase upon the tiles. She was visited by no more outbursts, moving her to such futile expedients. She began to do as she liked and to feel as she liked. She completely abandoned her Tuesdays at home, and did not return the visits of those who had called upon her. She made no ineffectual efforts to conduct her household *en bonne ménagère*,⁶⁹ going and coming as it suited her fancy, and, so far as she was able, lending herself to any passing caprice.

Mr. Pontellier had been a rather courteous husband so long as he met a certain tacit submissiveness in his wife. But her new and unexpected line of conduct completely bewildered him. It shocked him. Then her absolute disregard for her duties as a wife angered him. When Mr. Pontellier became rude, Edna grew insolent. She had resolved never to take another step backward.

“It seems to me the utmost folly for a woman at the head of a household, and the mother of children, to spend in an *atelier*⁷⁰ days which would be better employed contriving for the comfort of her family.”

“I feel like painting,” answered Edna. “Perhaps I shan’t always feel like it.”

“Then in God’s name paint! but don’t let the family go to the devil. There’s Madame Ratignolle; because she keeps up her music, she doesn’t let everything else go to chaos. And she’s more of a musician than you are a painter.”

“She isn’t a musician, and I’m not a painter. It isn’t on account of painting that I let things go.”

“On account of what, then?”

“Oh! I don’t know. Let me alone; you bother me.”

It sometimes entered Mr. Pontellier’s mind to wonder if his wife were not growing a little unbalanced mentally. He could see plainly that she was not herself. That is, he could not see that she was becoming herself and daily casting aside that fictitious self which we assume like a garment with which to appear before the world.

Her husband let her alone as she requested, and went away to his office. Edna went up to her *atelier*—a bright room in the top of the house. She was working with great energy and interest, without accomplishing anything, however, which satisfied her even in the smallest degree. For a time she had the whole household enrolled in the service of art. The boys posed for her. They thought it amusing at first, but the occupation soon lost its attractiveness when they discovered that it was not a game arranged especially for their entertainment. The quadron sat for hours before Edna’s palette, patient as a savage, while the house-maid took charge of the children, and the drawing-room went undusted. But the housemaid, too, served her term as model when Edna perceived that the young woman’s back and shoulders were molded on classic lines, and that her hair, loosened from its confining cap, became an inspiration. While Edna worked she sometimes sang low the little air, “*Ah! si tu savais!*”

It moved her with recollections. She could hear again the ripple of the water, the flapping sail. She could see the glint of the moon upon the bay, and could feel the soft, gusty beating of the hot south wind. A subtle current of desire passed through her body, weakening her hold upon the brushes and making her eyes burn.

There were days when she was very happy without knowing why. She was happy to be alive and breathing, when her whole being seemed to be one with the sunlight, the color, the odors, the luxuriant warmth of some perfect Southern day. She liked then to wander alone into strange and unfamiliar

69. As a good housekeeper.

70. Artist’s studio.

places. She discovered many a sunny, sleepy corner, fashioned to dream in. And she found it good to dream and to be alone and unmolested.

There were days when she was unhappy, she did not know why,—when it did not seem worth while to be glad or sorry, to be alive or dead; when life appeared to her like a grotesque pandemonium and humanity like worms struggling blindly toward inevitable annihilation. She could not work on such a day, nor weave fancies to stir her pulses and warm her blood.

Chapter XIX Study Questions

1. Edna neglects her housekeeping and instead takes up painting. What does Léonce think might be wrong with his wife? How is Edna beginning to cast aside her “fictitious self”? What is the significance of Edna’s singing “*Ah, si tu savais!*” while painting?

Chapter XX

It was during such a mood that Edna hunted up Mademoiselle Reisz. She had not forgotten the rather disagreeable impression left upon her by their last interview; but she nevertheless felt a desire to see her—above all, to listen while she played upon the piano. Quite early in the afternoon she started upon her quest for the pianist. Unfortunately she had mislaid or lost Mademoiselle Reisz's card, and looking up her address in the city directory, she found that the woman lived on Bienville Street, some distance away. The directory which fell into her hands was a year or more old, however, and upon reaching the number indicated, Edna discovered that the house was occupied by a respectable family of mulattoes who had *chambres garnies*⁷¹ to let. They had been living there for six months, and knew absolutely nothing of a Mademoiselle Reisz. In fact, they knew nothing of any of their neighbors; their lodgers were all people of the highest distinction, they assured Edna. She did not linger to discuss class distinctions with Madame Pouponne, but hastened to a neighboring grocery store, feeling sure that Mademoiselle would have left her address with the proprietor.

He knew Mademoiselle Reisz a good deal better than he wanted to know her, he informed his questioner. In truth, he did not want to know her at all, or anything concerning her—the most disagreeable and unpopular woman who ever lived in Bienville Street. He thanked heaven she had left the neighborhood, and was equally thankful that he did not know where she had gone.

Edna's desire to see Mademoiselle Reisz had increased tenfold since these unlooked-for obstacles had arisen to thwart it. She was wondering who could give her the information she sought, when it suddenly occurred to her that Madame Lebrun would be the one most likely to do so. She knew it was useless to ask Madame Ratignolle, who was on the most distant terms with the musician, and preferred to know nothing concerning her. She had once been almost as emphatic in expressing herself upon the subject as the corner grocer.

Edna knew that Madame Lebrun had returned to the city, for it was the middle of November. And she also knew where the Lebruns lived, on Chartres Street.

Their home from the outside looked like a prison, with iron bars before the door and lower windows. The iron bars were a relic of the old *régime*⁷², and no one had ever thought of dislodging them. At the side was a high fence enclosing the garden. A gate or door opening upon the street was locked. Edna rang the bell at this side garden gate, and stood upon the banquette, waiting to be admitted.

It was Victor who opened the gate for her. A black woman, wiping her hands upon her apron, was close at his heels. Before she saw them Edna could hear them in altercation, the woman—plainly an anomaly—claiming the right to be allowed to perform her duties, one of which was to answer the bell.

Victor was surprised and delighted to see Mrs. Pontellier, and he made no attempt to conceal either his astonishment or his delight. He was a dark-browed, good-looking youngster of nineteen, greatly resembling his mother, but with ten times her impetuosity. He instructed the black woman to go at once and inform Madame Lebrun that Mrs. Pontellier desired to see her. The woman grumbled a refusal to do part of her duty when she had not been permitted to do it all, and started back to her interrupted task of weeding the garden. Whereupon Victor administered a rebuke in the form of a volley of abuse, which, owing to its rapidity and incoherence, was all but incomprehensible to Edna. Whatever it was, the rebuke was convincing, for the woman dropped her hoe and went mumbling into the house.

Edna did not wish to enter. It was very pleasant there on the side porch, where there were chairs, a

71. (French) Furnished rooms.

72. The period of Spanish rule (1766-1803) in Louisiana.

wicker lounge, and a small table. She seated herself, for she was tired from her long tramp; and she began to rock gently and smooth out the folds of her silk parasol. Victor drew up his chair beside her. He at once explained that the black woman's offensive conduct was all due to imperfect training, as he was not there to take her in hand. He had only come up from the island the morning before, and expected to return next day. He stayed all winter at the island; he lived there, and kept the place in order and got things ready for the summer visitors.

But a man needed occasional relaxation, he informed Mrs. Pontellier, and every now and again he drummed up a pretext to bring him to the city. My! but he had had a time of it the evening before! He wouldn't want his mother to know, and he began to talk in a whisper. He was scintillant with recollections. Of course, he couldn't think of telling Mrs. Pontellier all about it, she being a woman and not comprehending such things. But it all began with a girl peeping and smiling at him through the shutters as he passed by. Oh! but she was a beauty! Certainly he smiled back, and went up and talked to her. Mrs. Pontellier did not know him if she supposed he was one to let an opportunity like that escape him. Despite herself, the youngster amused her. She must have betrayed in her look some degree of interest or entertainment. The boy grew more daring, and Mrs. Pontellier might have found herself, in a little while, listening to a highly colored story but for the timely appearance of Madame Lebrun.

That lady was still clad in white, according to her custom of the summer. Her eyes beamed an effusive welcome. Would not Mrs. Pontellier go inside? Would she partake of some refreshment? Why had she not been there before? How was that dear Mr. Pontellier and how were those sweet children? Had Mrs. Pontellier ever known such a warm November?

Victor went and reclined on the wicker lounge behind his mother's chair, where he commanded a view of Edna's face. He had taken her parasol from her hands while he spoke to her, and he now lifted it and twirled it above him as he lay on his back. When Madame Lebrun complained that it was so dull coming back to the city; that she saw so few people now; that even Victor, when he came up from the island for a day or two, had so much to occupy him and engage his time; then it was that the youth went into contortions on the lounge and winked mischievously at Edna. She somehow felt like a confederate in crime, and tried to look severe and disapproving.

There had been but two letters from Robert, with little in them, they told her. Victor said it was really not worth while to go inside for the letters, when his mother entreated him to go in search of them. He remembered the contents, which in truth he rattled off very glibly when put to the test.

One letter was written from Vera Cruz and the other from the City of Mexico. He had met Montel, who was doing everything toward his advancement. So far, the financial situation was no improvement over the one he had left in New Orleans, but of course the prospects were vastly better. He wrote of the City of Mexico, the buildings, the people and their habits, the conditions of life which he found there. He sent his love to the family. He inclosed a check to his mother, and hoped she would affectionately remember him to all his friends. That was about the substance of the two letters. Edna felt that if there had been a message for her, she would have received it. The despondent frame of mind in which she had left home began again to overtake her, and she remembered that she wished to find Mademoiselle Reisz.

Madame Lebrun knew where Mademoiselle Reisz lived. She gave Edna the address, regretting that she would not consent to stay and spend the remainder of the afternoon, and pay a visit to Mademoiselle Reisz some other day. The afternoon was already well advanced.

Victor escorted her out upon the banquette, lifted her parasol, and held it over her while he walked to the car⁷³ with her. He entreated her to bear in mind that the disclosures of the afternoon were strictly

confidential. She laughed and bantered him a little, remembering too late that she should have been dignified and reserved.

“How handsome Mrs. Pontellier looked!” said Madame Lebrun to her son.

“Ravishing!” he admitted. “The city atmosphere has improved her. Some way she doesn’t seem like the same woman.”

Chapter XX Study Questions

1. What does Victor notice about Edna when she visits his mother?
2. Why does Edna visit the Lebruns at their home in the French Quarter?
3. Why is Edna disappointed with the contents of Robert’s two letters to his family?

Chapter XXI

Some people contended that the reason Mademoiselle Reisz always chose apartments up under the roof was to discourage the approach of beggars, peddlars and callers. There were plenty of windows in her little front room. They were for the most part dingy, but as they were nearly always open it did not make so much difference. They often admitted into the room a good deal of smoke and soot; but at the same time all the light and air that there was came through them. From her windows could be seen the crescent of the river, the masts of ships and the big chimneys of the Mississippi steamers. A magnificent piano crowded the apartment. In the next room she slept, and in the third and last she harbored a gasoline stove on which she cooked her meals when disinclined to descend to the neighboring restaurant. It was there also that she ate, keeping her belongings in a rare old buffet, dingy and battered from a hundred years of use.

When Edna knocked at Mademoiselle Reisz's front room door and entered, she discovered that person standing beside the window, engaged in mending or patching an old prunella gaiter⁷⁴. The little musician laughed all over when she saw Edna. Her laugh consisted of a contortion of the face and all the muscles of the body. She seemed strikingly homely, standing there in the afternoon light. She still wore the shabby lace and the artificial bunch of violets on the side of her head.

"So you remembered me at last," said Mademoiselle. "I had said to myself, 'Ah, bah! she will never come.'"

"Did you want me to come?" asked Edna with a smile.

"I had not thought much about it," answered Mademoiselle. The two had seated themselves on a little bumpy sofa which stood against the wall. "I am glad, however, that you came. I have the water boiling back there, and was just about to make some coffee. You will drink a cup with me. And how is *la belle dame*⁷⁵? Always handsome! always healthy! always contented!" She took Edna's hand between her strong wiry fingers, holding it loosely without warmth, and executing a sort of double theme upon the back and palm.

"Yes," she went on; "I sometimes thought: 'She will never come. She promised as those women in society always do, without meaning it. She will not come.' For I really don't believe you like me, Mrs. Pontellier."

"I don't know whether I like you or not," replied Edna, gazing down at the little woman with a quizzical look.

The candor of Mrs. Pontellier's admission greatly pleased Mademoiselle Reisz. She expressed her gratification by repairing forthwith to the region of the gasoline stove and rewarding her guest with the promised cup of coffee. The coffee and the biscuit accompanying it proved very acceptable to Edna, who had declined refreshment at Madame Lebrun's and was now beginning to feel hungry. Mademoiselle set the tray which she brought in upon a small table near at hand, and seated herself once again on the lumpy sofa.

"I have had a letter from your friend," she remarked, as she poured a little cream into Edna's cup and handed it to her.

"My friend?"

"Yes, your friend Robert. He wrote to me from the City of Mexico."

"Wrote to *you*?" repeated Edna in amazement, stirring her coffee absently.

74. An overshoe with fabric upper that covers the ankle.

75. (French) Beautiful lady.

“Yes, to me. Why not? Don’t stir all the warmth out of your coffee; drink it. Though the letter might as well have been sent to you; it was nothing but Mrs. Pontellier from beginning to end.”

“Let me see it,” requested the young woman, entreatingly.

“No; a letter concerns no one but the person who writes it and the one to whom it is written.”

“Haven’t you just said it concerned me from beginning to end?”

“It was written about you, not to you. ‘Have you seen Mrs. Pontellier? How is she looking?’ he asks. ‘As Mrs. Pontellier says,’ or ‘as Mrs. Pontellier once said.’ ‘If Mrs. Pontellier should call upon you, play for her that Impromptu⁷⁶ of Chopin’s, my favorite. I heard it here a day or two ago, but not as you play it. I should like to know how it affects her,’ and so on, as if he supposed we were constantly in each other’s society.”

“Let me see the letter.”

“Oh, no.”

“Have you answered it?”

“No.”

“Let me see the letter.”

“No, and again, no.”

“Then play the Impromptu for me.”

“It is growing late; what time do you have to be home?”

“Time doesn’t concern me. Your question seems a little rude. Play the Impromptu.”

“But you have told me nothing of yourself. What are you doing?”

“Painting!” laughed Edna. “I am becoming an artist. Think of it!”

“Ah! an artist! You have pretensions, Madame.”

“Why pretensions? Do you think I could not become an artist?”

“I do not know you well enough to say. I do not know your talent or your temperament. To be an artist includes much; one must possess many gifts—absolute gifts—which have not been acquired by one’s own effort. And, moreover, to succeed, the artist must possess the courageous soul.”

“What do you mean by the courageous soul?”

“Courageous, *ma foi!* The brave soul. The soul that dares and defies.”

“Show me the letter and play for me the Impromptu. You see that I have persistence. Does that quality count for anything in art?”

“It counts with a foolish old woman whom you have captivated,” replied Mademoiselle, with her wriggling laugh.

The letter was right there at hand in the drawer of the little table upon which Edna had just placed her coffee cup. Mademoiselle opened the drawer and drew forth the letter, the topmost one. She placed it in Edna’s hands, and without further comment arose and went to the piano.

Mademoiselle played a soft interlude. It was an improvisation. She sat low at the instrument, and the lines of her body settled into ungraceful curves and angles that gave it an appearance of deformity. Gradually and imperceptibly the interlude melted into the soft opening minor chords of the Chopin Impromptu.

Edna did not know when the Impromptu began or ended. She sat in the sofa corner reading Robert’s letter by the fading light. Mademoiselle had glided from the Chopin into the quivering love notes of Isolde’s song⁷⁷, and back again to the Impromptu with its soulful and poignant longing.

The shadows deepened in the little room. The music grew strange and fantastic—turbulent, insistent, plaintive and soft with entreaty. The shadows grew deeper. The music filled the room. It floated out

76. “Fantaisie-Impromptu in C-Sharp Minor.”

77. In *Tristan and Isolde*, an opera by Richard Wagner (1813-1883), Isolde sings to her dead lover, Tristan, before dying of grief.

upon the night, over the housetops, the crescent of the river, losing itself in the silence of the upper air.

Edna was sobbing, just as she had wept one midnight at Grand Isle when strange, new voices awoke in her. She arose in some agitation to take her departure. “May I come again, Mademoiselle?” she asked at the threshold.

“Come whenever you feel like it. Be careful; the stairs and landings are dark; don’t stumble.”

Mademoiselle reentered and lit a candle. Robert’s letter was on the floor. She stooped and picked it up. It was crumpled and damp with tears. Mademoiselle smoothed the letter out, restored it to the envelope, and replaced it in the table drawer.

Chapter XXI Study Questions

1. What does Mlle Reisz insist an artist must have?
2. What theme is introduced by Mlle Reisz’s choice of the Chopin and Wagner pieces?
3. What might the piano music from Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* foreshadow?

Chapter XXII

One morning on his way into town Mr. Pontellier stopped at the house of his old friend and family physician, Doctor Mandelet. The Doctor was a semi-retired physician, resting, as the saying is, upon his laurels. He bore a reputation for wisdom rather than skill—leaving the active practice of medicine to his assistants and younger contemporaries—and was much sought for in matters of consultation. A few families, united to him by bonds of friendship, he still attended when they required the services of a physician. The Pontelliers were among these.

Mr. Pontellier found the Doctor reading at the open window of his study. His house stood rather far back from the street, in the center of a delightful garden, so that it was quiet and peaceful at the old gentleman's study window. He was a great reader. He stared up disapprovingly over his eye-glasses as Mr. Pontellier entered, wondering who had the temerity to disturb him at that hour of the morning.

"Ah, Pontellier! Not sick, I hope. Come and have a seat. What news do you bring this morning?" He was quite portly, with a profusion of gray hair, and small blue eyes which age had robbed of much of their brightness but none of their penetration.

"Oh! I'm never sick, Doctor. You know that I come of tough fiber—of that old Creole race of Pontelliers that dry up and finally blow away. I came to consult—no, not precisely to consult—to talk to you about Edna. I don't know what ails her."

"Madame Pontellier not well," marveled the Doctor. "Why, I saw her—I think it was a week ago—walking along Canal Street, the picture of health, it seemed to me."

"Yes, yes; she seems quite well," said Mr. Pontellier, leaning forward and whirling his stick between his two hands; "but she doesn't act well. She's odd, she's not like herself. I can't make her out, and I thought perhaps you'd help me."

"How does she act?" inquired the Doctor.

"Well, it isn't easy to explain," said Mr. Pontellier, throwing himself back in his chair. "She lets the housekeeping go to the dickens."

"Well, well; women are not all alike, my dear Pontellier. We've got to consider—"

"I know that; I told you I couldn't explain. Her whole attitude—toward me and everybody and everything—has changed. You know I have a quick temper, but I don't want to quarrel or be rude to a woman, especially my wife; yet I'm driven to it, and feel like ten thousand devils after I've made a fool of myself. She's making it devilishly uncomfortable for me," he went on nervously. "She's got some sort of notion in her head concerning the eternal rights of women; and—you understand—we meet in the morning at the breakfast table."

The old gentleman lifted his shaggy eyebrows, protruded his thick nether lip, and tapped the arms of his chair with his cushioned fingertips.

"What have you been doing to her, Pontellier?"

"Doing! Parbleu⁷⁸!"

"Has she," asked the Doctor, with a smile, "has she been associating of late with a circle of pseudo-intellectual women—super-spiritual superior beings? My wife has been telling me about them."

"That's the trouble," broke in Mr. Pontellier, "she hasn't been associating with any one. She has abandoned her Tuesdays at home, has thrown over all her acquaintances, and goes tramping about by herself, moping in the street-cars, getting in after dark. I tell you she's peculiar. I don't like it; I feel a little worried over it."

78. (French) "Good heavens!"

This was a new aspect for the Doctor. “Nothing hereditary?” he asked, seriously. “Nothing peculiar about her family antecedents, is there?”

“Oh, no, indeed! She comes of sound old Presbyterian Kentucky stock. The old gentleman, her father, I have heard, used to atone for his weekday sins with his Sunday devotions. I know for a fact, that his race horses literally ran away with the prettiest bit of Kentucky farming land I ever laid eyes upon. Margaret—you know Margaret—she has all the Presbyterianism undiluted. And the youngest is something of a vixen. By the way, she gets married in a couple of weeks from now.”

“Send your wife up to the wedding,” exclaimed the Doctor, foreseeing a happy solution. “Let her stay among her own people for a while; it will do her good.”

“That’s what I want her to do. She won’t go to the marriage. She says a wedding is one of the most lamentable spectacles on earth. Nice thing for a woman to say to her husband!” exclaimed Mr. Pontellier, fuming anew at the recollection.

“Pontellier,” said the Doctor, after a moment’s reflection, “let your wife alone for a while. Don’t bother her, and don’t let her bother you. Woman, my dear friend, is a very peculiar and delicate organism—a sensitive and highly organized woman, such as I know Mrs. Pontellier to be, is especially peculiar. It would require an inspired psychologist to deal successfully with them. And when ordinary fellows like you and me attempt to cope with their idiosyncrasies the result is bungling. Most women are moody and whimsical. This is some passing whim of your wife, due to some cause or causes which you and I needn’t try to fathom. But it will pass happily over, especially if you let her alone. Send her around to see me.”

“Oh! I couldn’t do that; there’d be no reason for it,” objected Mr. Pontellier.

“Then I’ll go around and see her,” said the Doctor. “I’ll drop in to dinner some evening *en bon ami*.⁷⁹”

“Do! by all means,” urged Mr. Pontellier. “What evening will you come? Say Thursday. Will you come Thursday?” he asked, rising to take his leave.

“Very well; Thursday. My wife may possibly have some engagement for me Thursday. In case she has, I shall let you know. Otherwise, you may expect me.”

Mr. Pontellier turned before leaving to say:

“I am going to New York on business very soon. I have a big scheme on hand, and want to be on the field proper to pull the ropes and handle the ribbons. We’ll let you in on the inside if you say so, Doctor,” he laughed.

“No, I thank you, my dear sir,” returned the Doctor. “I leave such ventures to you younger men with the fever of life still in your blood.”

“What I wanted to say,” continued Mr. Pontellier, with his hand on the knob; “I may have to be absent a good while. Would you advise me to take Edna along?”

“By all means, if she wishes to go. If not, leave her here. Don’t contradict her. The mood will pass, I assure you. It may take a month, two, three months—possibly longer, but it will pass; have patience.”

“Well, good-bye, *à jeudi*,⁸⁰” said Mr. Pontellier, as he let himself out.

The Doctor would have liked during the course of conversation to ask, “Is there any man in the case?” but he knew his Creole too well to make such a blunder as that.

He did not resume his book immediately, but sat for a while meditatively looking out into the garden.

79. (French) “As a good friend.”

80. (French) “Until Thursday.”

Chapter XXII Study Questions

1. What does Doctor Mandelst suspect might be the cause of Edna's recent behaviour?

Chapter XXIII

Edna's father was in the city, and had been with them several days. She was not very warmly or deeply attached to him, but they had certain tastes in common, and when together they were companionable. His coming was in the nature of a welcome disturbance; it seemed to furnish a new direction for her emotions.

He had come to purchase a wedding gift for his daughter, Janet, and an outfit for himself in which he might make a creditable appearance at her marriage. Mr. Pontellier had selected the bridal gift, as everyone immediately connected with him always deferred to his taste in such matters. And his suggestions on the question of dress—which too often assumes the nature of a problem—were of inestimable value to his father-in-law. But for the past few days the old gentleman had been upon Edna's hands, and in his society she was becoming acquainted with a new set of sensations. He had been a colonel in the Confederate army, and still maintained, with the title, the military bearing which had always accompanied it. His hair and mustache were white and silky, emphasizing the rugged bronze of his face. He was tall and thin, and wore his coats padded, which gave a fictitious breadth and depth to his shoulders and chest. Edna and her father looked very distinguished together, and excited a good deal of notice during their perambulations. Upon his arrival she began by introducing him to her *atelier* and making a sketch of him. He took the whole matter very seriously. If her talent had been tenfold greater than it was, it would not have surprised him, convinced as he was that he had bequeathed to all of his daughters the germs of a masterful capability, which only depended upon their own efforts to be directed toward successful achievement.

Before her pencil he sat rigid and unflinching, as he had faced the cannon's mouth in days gone by. He resented the intrusion of the children, who gaped with wondering eyes at him, sitting so stiff up there in their mother's bright *atelier*. When they drew near he motioned them away with an expressive action of the foot, loath to disturb the fixed lines of his countenance, his arms, or his rigid shoulders.

Edna, anxious to entertain him, invited Mademoiselle Reisz to meet him, having promised him a treat in her piano playing; but Mademoiselle declined the invitation. So together they attended a soiree musicale at the Ratignolles'. Monsieur and Madame Ratignolle made much of the Colonel, installing him as the guest of honor and engaging him at once to dine with them the following Sunday, or any day which he might select. Madame coquetted with him in the most captivating and naive manner, with eyes, gestures, and a profusion of compliments, till the Colonel's old head felt thirty years younger on his padded shoulders. Edna marveled, not comprehending. She herself was almost devoid of coquetry.

There were one or two men whom she observed at the soiree musicale; but she would never have felt moved to any kittenish display to attract their notice—to any feline or feminine wiles to express herself toward them. Their personality attracted her in an agreeable way. Her fancy selected them, and she was glad when a lull in the music gave them an opportunity to meet her and talk with her. Often on the street the glance of strange eyes had lingered in her memory, and sometimes had disturbed her.

Mr. Pontellier did not attend these *soirées musicales*. He considered them *bourgeois*,⁸¹ and found more diversion at the club. To Madame Ratignolle he said the music dispensed at her soirees was too "heavy," too far beyond his untrained comprehension. His excuse flattered her. But she disapproved of Mr. Pontellier's club, and she was frank enough to tell Edna so.

"It's a pity Mr. Pontellier doesn't stay home more in the evenings. I think you would be more—well, if you don't mind my saying it—more united, if he did."

81. (French) Middle-class, conventional.

“Oh! dear no!” said Edna, with a blank look in her eyes. “What should I do if he stayed home? We wouldn’t have anything to say to each other.”

She had not much of anything to say to her father, for that matter; but he did not antagonize her. She discovered that he interested her, though she realized that he might not interest her long; and for the first time in her life she felt as if she were thoroughly acquainted with him. He kept her busy serving him and ministering to his wants. It amused her to do so. She would not permit a servant or one of the children to do anything for him which she might do herself. Her husband noticed, and thought it was the expression of a deep filial attachment which he had never suspected.

The Colonel drank numerous “toddlies” during the course of the day, which left him, however, imperturbed. He was an expert at concocting strong drinks. He had even invented some, to which he had given fantastic names, and for whose manufacture he required diverse ingredients that it devolved upon Edna to procure for him.

When Doctor Mandelet dined with the Pontelliers on Thursday he could discern in Mrs. Pontellier no trace of that morbid condition which her husband had reported to him. She was excited and in a manner radiant. She and her father had been to the race course, and their thoughts when they seated themselves at table were still occupied with the events of the afternoon, and their talk was still of the track. The Doctor had not kept pace with turf affairs. He had certain recollections of racing in what he called “the good old times” when the Lecompte stables flourished, and he drew upon this fund of memories so that he might not be left out and seem wholly devoid of the modern spirit. But he failed to impose upon the Colonel, and was even far from impressing him with this trumped-up knowledge of bygone days. Edna had staked her father on his last venture, with the most gratifying results to both of them. Besides, they had met some very charming people, according to the Colonel’s impressions. Mrs. Mortimer Merriman and Mrs. James Highcamp, who were there with Alcée Arobin, had joined them and had enlivened the hours in a fashion that warmed him to think of.

Mr. Pontellier himself had no particular leaning toward horse-racing, and was even rather inclined to discourage it as a pastime, especially when he considered the fate of that blue-grass farm in Kentucky. He endeavored, in a general way, to express a particular disapproval, and only succeeded in arousing the ire and opposition of his father-in-law. A pretty dispute followed, in which Edna warmly espoused her father’s cause and the Doctor remained neutral.

He observed his hostess attentively from under his shaggy brows, and noted a subtle change which had transformed her from the listless woman he had known into a being who, for the moment, seemed palpitant with the forces of life. Her speech was warm and energetic. There was no repression in her glance or gesture. She reminded him of some beautiful, sleek animal waking up in the sun.

The dinner was excellent. The claret was warm and the champagne was cold, and under their beneficent influence the threatened unpleasantness melted and vanished with the fumes of the wine.

Mr. Pontellier warmed up and grew reminiscent. He told some amusing plantation experiences, recollections of old Iberville and his youth, when he hunted ‘possum in company with some friendly darky; thrashed the pecan trees, shot the grosbec⁸², and roamed the woods and fields in mischievous idleness.

The Colonel, with little sense of humor and of the fitness of things, related a somber episode of those dark and bitter days, in which he had acted a conspicuous part and always formed a central figure. Nor was the Doctor happier in his selection, when he told the old, ever new and curious story of the waning of a woman’s love, seeking strange, new channels, only to return to its legitimate source after days of fierce unrest. It was one of the many little human documents which had been unfolded to him during his long career as a physician. The story did not seem especially to impress Edna. She had one of her

82. (French). Large beak, a bird with a long bill.

own to tell, of a woman who paddled away with her lover one night in a pirogue and never came back. They were lost amid the Baratarian Islands, and no one ever heard of them or found trace of them from that day to this. It was a pure invention. She said that Madame Antoine had related it to her. That, also, was an invention. Perhaps it was a dream she had had. But every glowing word seemed real to those who listened. They could feel the hot breath of the Southern night; they could hear the long sweep of the pirogue through the glistening moonlit water, the beating of birds' wings, rising startled from among the reeds in the salt-water pools; they could see the faces of the lovers, pale, close together, rapt in oblivious forgetfulness, drifting into the unknown.

The champagne was cold, and its subtle fumes played fantastic tricks with Edna's memory that night.

Outside, away from the glow of the fire and the soft lamplight, the night was chill and murky. The Doctor doubled his old-fashioned cloak across his breast as he strode home through the darkness. He knew his fellow-creatures better than most men; knew that inner life which so seldom unfolds itself to unanointed eyes. He was sorry he had accepted Pontellier's invitation. He was growing old, and beginning to need rest and an imperturbed spirit. He did not want the secrets of other lives thrust upon him.

"I hope it isn't Arobin," he muttered to himself as he walked. "I hope to heaven it isn't Alcée Arobin."

Chapter XXIII Study Questions

1. Why is Edna's father, the Colonel from Kentucky, in New Orleans?
2. What interest do Edna and her father share?
3. At the Pontellier dinner party, what simile does Dr. Mandelet use to describe Edna?
4. What does Edna's story foreshadow?

Chapter XXIV

Edna and her father had a warm, and almost violent dispute upon the subject of her refusal to attend her sister's wedding. Mr. Pontellier declined to interfere, to interpose either his influence or his authority. He was following Doctor Mandelet's advice, and letting her do as she liked. The Colonel reproached his daughter for her lack of filial kindness and respect, her want of sisterly affection and womanly consideration. His arguments were labored and unconvincing. He doubted if Janet would accept any excuse—forgetting that Edna had offered none. He doubted if Janet would ever speak to her again, and he was sure Margaret would not.

Edna was glad to be rid of her father when he finally took himself off with his wedding garments and his bridal gifts, with his padded shoulders, his Bible reading, his "toddlies" and ponderous oaths.

Mr. Pontellier followed him closely. He meant to stop at the wedding on his way to New York and endeavor by every means which money and love could devise to atone somewhat for Edna's incomprehensible action.

"You are too lenient, too lenient by far, Léonce," asserted the Colonel. "Authority, coercion are what is needed. Put your foot down good and hard; the only way to manage a wife. Take my word for it."

The Colonel was perhaps unaware that he had coerced his own wife into her grave. Mr. Pontellier had a vague suspicion of it which he thought it needless to mention at that late day.

Edna was not so consciously gratified at her husband's leaving home as she had been over the departure of her father. As the day approached when he was to leave her for a comparatively long stay, she grew melting and affectionate, remembering his many acts of consideration and his repeated expressions of an ardent attachment. She was solicitous about his health and his welfare. She bustled around, looking after his clothing, thinking about heavy underwear, quite as Madame Ratignolle would have done under similar circumstances. She cried when he went away, calling him her dear, good friend, and she was quite certain she would grow lonely before very long and go to join him in New York.

But after all, a radiant peace settled upon her when she at last found herself alone. Even the children were gone. Old Madame Pontellier had come herself and carried them off to Iberville with their quadron. The old madame did not venture to say she was afraid they would be neglected during Léonce's absence; she hardly ventured to think so. She was hungry for them—even a little fierce in her attachment. She did not want them to be wholly "children of the pavement," she always said when begging to have them for a space. She wished them to know the country, with its streams, its fields, its woods, its freedom, so delicious to the young. She wished them to taste something of the life their father had lived and known and loved when he, too, was a little child.

When Edna was at last alone, she breathed a big, genuine sigh of relief. A feeling that was unfamiliar but very delicious came over her. She walked all through the house, from one room to another, as if inspecting it for the first time. She tried the various chairs and lounges, as if she had never sat and reclined upon them before. And she perambulated around the outside of the house, investigating, looking to see if windows and shutters were secure and in order. The flowers were like new acquaintances; she approached them in a familiar spirit, and made herself at home among them. The garden walks were damp, and Edna called to the maid to bring out her rubber sandals. And there she stayed, and stooped, digging around the plants, trimming, picking dead, dry leaves. The children's little dog came out, interfering, getting in her way. She scolded him, laughed at him, played with him. The

garden smelled so good and looked so pretty in the afternoon sunlight. Edna plucked all the bright flowers she could find, and went into the house with them, she and the little dog.

Even the kitchen assumed a sudden interesting character which she had never before perceived. She went in to give directions to the cook, to say that the butcher would have to bring much less meat, that they would require only half their usual quantity of bread, of milk and groceries. She told the cook that she herself would be greatly occupied during Mr. Pontellier's absence, and she begged her to take all thought and responsibility of the larder upon her own shoulders.

That night Edna dined alone. The candelabra, with a few candles in the center of the table, gave all the light she needed. Outside the circle of light in which she sat, the large dining-room looked solemn and shadowy. The cook, placed upon her mettle, served a delicious repast—a luscious tenderloin broiled *à point*⁸³. The wine tasted good; the *marron glace*⁸⁴ seemed to be just what she wanted. It was so pleasant, too, to dine in a comfortable *peignoir*.

She thought a little sentimentally about Léonce and the children, and wondered what they were doing. As she gave a dainty scrap or two to the doggie, she talked intimately to him about Etienne and Raoul. He was beside himself with astonishment and delight over these companionable advances, and showed his appreciation by his little quick, snappy barks and a lively agitation.

Then Edna sat in the library after dinner and read Emerson⁸⁵ until she grew sleepy. She realized that she had neglected her reading, and determined to start anew upon a course of improving studies, now that her time was completely her own to do with as she liked.

After a refreshing bath, Edna went to bed. And as she snuggled comfortably beneath the eiderdown a sense of restfulness invaded her, such as she had not known before.

Chapter XXIV Study Questions

1. What excuse does Edna offer for not attending her sister's wedding? Why is this significant?
2. Describe Edna's emotional state after Léonce leaves for New York. Where are Edna's children?

83. French "To perfection."

84. (French) Candied chestnuts.

85. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). American essayist.

Chapter XXV

When the weather was dark and cloudy Edna could not work. She needed the sun to mellow and temper her mood to the sticking point. She had reached a stage when she seemed to be no longer feeling her way, working, when in the humor, with sureness and ease. And being devoid of ambition, and striving not toward accomplishment, she drew satisfaction from the work in itself.

On rainy or melancholy days Edna went out and sought the society of the friends she had made at Grand Isle. Or else she stayed indoors and nursed a mood with which she was becoming too familiar for her own comfort and peace of mind. It was not despair; but it seemed to her as if life were passing by, leaving its promise broken and unfulfilled. Yet there were other days when she listened, was led on and deceived by fresh promises which her youth held out to her.

She went again to the races, and again. Alcée Arobin and Mrs. Highcamp called for her one bright afternoon in Arobin's drag⁸⁶. Mrs. Highcamp was a worldly but unaffected, intelligent, slim, tall blonde woman in the forties, with an indifferent manner and blue eyes that stared. She had a daughter who served her as a pretext for cultivating the society of young men of fashion. Alcée Arobin was one of them. He was a familiar figure at the race course, the opera, the fashionable clubs. There was a perpetual smile in his eyes, which seldom failed to awaken a corresponding cheerfulness in any one who looked into them and listened to his good-humored voice. His manner was quiet, and at times a little insolent. He possessed a good figure, a pleasing face, not overburdened with depth of thought or feeling; and his dress was that of the conventional man of fashion.

He admired Edna extravagantly, after meeting her at the races with her father. He had met her before on other occasions, but she had seemed to him unapproachable until that day. It was at his instigation that Mrs. Highcamp called to ask her to go with them to the Jockey Club⁸⁷ to witness the turf event of the season.

There were possibly a few track men out there who knew the race horse as well as Edna, but there was certainly none who knew it better. She sat between her two companions as one having authority to speak. She laughed at Arobin's pretensions, and deplored Mrs. Highcamp's ignorance. The race horse was a friend and intimate associate of her childhood. The atmosphere of the stables and the breath of the blue grass paddock revived in her memory and lingered in her nostrils. She did not perceive that she was talking like her father as the sleek geldings ambled in review before them. She played for very high stakes, and fortune favored her. The fever of the game flamed in her cheeks and eyes, and it got into her blood and into her brain like an intoxicant. People turned their heads to look at her, and more than one lent an attentive ear to her utterances, hoping thereby to secure the elusive but ever-desired "tip." Arobin caught the contagion of excitement which drew him to Edna like a magnet. Mrs. Highcamp remained, as usual, unmoved, with her indifferent stare and uplifted eyebrows.

Edna stayed and dined with Mrs. Highcamp upon being urged to do so. Arobin also remained and sent away his drag.

The dinner was quiet and uninteresting, save for the cheerful efforts of Arobin to enliven things. Mrs. Highcamp deplored the absence of her daughter from the races, and tried to convey to her what she had missed by going to the "Dante reading"⁸⁸ instead of joining them. The girl held a geranium leaf up to her nose and said nothing, but looked knowing and non-committal. Mr. Highcamp was a plain,

86. A large coach.

87. New Louisiana Jockey Club, a social club for the rich and prominent.

88. Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). The author of *The Divine Comedy*.

bald-headed man, who only talked under compulsion. He was unresponsive. Mrs. Highcamp was full of delicate courtesy and consideration toward her husband. She addressed most of her conversation to him at table. They sat in the library after dinner and read the evening papers together under the droplight; while the younger people went into the drawing-room near by and talked. Miss Highcamp played some selections from Grieg⁸⁹ upon the piano. She seemed to have apprehended all of the composer's coldness and none of his poetry. While Edna listened she could not help wondering if she had lost her taste for music.

When the time came for her to go home, Mr. Highcamp grunted a lame offer to escort her, looking down at his slippers with tactless concern. It was Arobin who took her home. The car ride was long, and it was late when they reached Esplanade Street. Arobin asked permission to enter for a second to light his cigarette—his match safe⁹⁰ was empty. He filled his match safe, but did not light his cigarette until he left her, after she had expressed her willingness to go to the races with him again.

Edna was neither tired nor sleepy. She was hungry again, for the Highcamp dinner, though of excellent quality, had lacked abundance. She rummaged in the larder and brought forth a slice of Gruyère⁹¹ and some crackers. She opened a bottle of beer which she found in the icebox. Edna felt extremely restless and excited. She vacantly hummed a fantastic tune as she poked at the wood embers on the hearth and munched a cracker.

She wanted something to happen—something, anything; she did not know what. She regretted that she had not made Arobin stay a half hour to talk over the horses with her. She counted the money she had won. But there was nothing else to do, so she went to bed, and tossed there for hours in a sort of monotonous agitation.

In the middle of the night she remembered that she had forgotten to write her regular letter to her husband; and she decided to do so next day and tell him about her afternoon at the Jockey Club. She lay wide awake composing a letter which was nothing like the one which she wrote next day. When the maid awoke her in the morning Edna was dreaming of Mr. Highcamp playing the piano at the entrance of a music store on Canal Street, while his wife was saying to Alcée Arobin, as they boarded an Esplanade Street car:

“What a pity that so much talent has been neglected! but I must go.”

When, a few days later, Alcée Arobin again called for Edna in his drag, Mrs. Highcamp was not with him. He said they would pick her up. But as that lady had not been apprised of his intention of picking her up, she was not at home. The daughter was just leaving the house to attend the meeting of a branch Folk Lore Society, and regretted that she could not accompany them. Arobin appeared nonplused, and asked Edna if there were any one else she cared to ask.

She did not deem it worth while to go in search of any of the fashionable acquaintances from whom she had withdrawn herself. She thought of Madame Ratignolle, but knew that her fair friend did not leave the house, except to take a languid walk around the block with her husband after nightfall. Mademoiselle Reisz would have laughed at such a request from Edna. Madame Lebrun might have enjoyed the outing, but for some reason Edna did not want her. So they went alone, she and Arobin.

The afternoon was intensely interesting to her. The excitement came back upon her like a remittent fever. Her talk grew familiar and confidential. It was no labor to become intimate with Arobin. His manner invited easy confidence. The preliminary stage of becoming acquainted was one which he always endeavored to ignore when a pretty and engaging woman was concerned.

He stayed and dined with Edna. He stayed and sat beside the wood fire. They laughed and talked; and before it was time to go he was telling her how different life might have been if he had known her

89. Edvard Grieg (1843-1907). Norwegian composer.

90. Fireproof box for matches.

91. Cheese from Gruyère, Switzerland.

years before. With ingenuous frankness he spoke of what a wicked, ill-disciplined boy he had been, and impulsively drew up his cuff to exhibit upon his wrist the scar from a saber cut which he had received⁹² in a duel outside of Paris when he was nineteen. She touched his hand as she scanned the red cicatrice⁹² on the inside of his white wrist. A quick impulse that was somewhat spasmodic impelled her fingers to close in a sort of clutch upon his hand. He felt the pressure of her pointed nails in the flesh of his palm.

She arose hastily and walked toward the mantel.

“The sight of a wound or scar always agitates and sickens me,” she said. “I shouldn’t have looked at it.”

“I beg your pardon,” he entreated, following her; “it never occurred to me that it might be repulsive.”

He stood close to her, and the effrontery in his eyes repelled the old, vanishing self in her, yet drew all her awakening sensuousness. He saw enough in her face to impel him to take her hand and hold it while he said his lingering good night.

“Will you go to the races again?” he asked.

“No,” she said. “I’ve had enough of the races. I don’t want to lose all the money I’ve won, and I’ve got to work when the weather is bright, instead of—”

“Yes; work; to be sure. You promised to show me your work. What morning may I come up to your *atelier*? To-morrow?”

“No!”

“Day after?”

“No, no.”

“Oh, please don’t refuse me! I know something of such things. I might help you with a stray suggestion or two.”

“No. Good night. Why don’t you go after you have said good night? I don’t like you,” she went on in a high, excited pitch, attempting to draw away her hand. She felt that her words lacked dignity and sincerity, and she knew that he felt it.

“I’m sorry you don’t like me. I’m sorry I offended you. How have I offended you? What have I done? Can’t you forgive me?” And he bent and pressed his lips upon her hand as if he wished never more to withdraw them.

“Mr. Arobin,” she complained, “I’m greatly upset by the excitement of the afternoon; I’m not myself. My manner must have misled you in some way. I wish you to go, please.” She spoke in a monotonous, dull tone. He took his hat from the table, and stood with eyes turned from her, looking into the dying fire. For a moment or two he kept an impressive silence.

“Your manner has not misled me, Mrs. Pontellier,” he said finally. “My own emotions have done that. I couldn’t help it. When I’m near you, how could I help it? Don’t think anything of it, don’t bother, please. You see, I go when you command me. If you wish me to stay away, I shall do so. If you let me come back, I—oh! you will let me come back?”

He cast one appealing glance at her, to which she made no response. Alcée Arobin’s manner was so genuine that it often deceived even himself.

Edna did not care or think whether it were genuine or not. When she was alone she looked mechanically at the back of her hand which he had kissed so warmly. Then she leaned her head down on the mantelpiece. She felt somewhat like a woman who in a moment of passion is betrayed into an act of infidelity, and realizes the significance of the act without being wholly awakened from its glamour. The thought was passing vaguely through her mind, “What would he think?”

She did not mean her husband; she was thinking of Robert Lebrun. Her husband seemed to her now like a person whom she had married without love as an excuse.

She lit a candle and went up to her room. Alcée Arobin was absolutely nothing to her. Yet his presence, his manners, the warmth of his glances, and above all the touch of his lips upon her hand had acted like a narcotic upon her.

She slept a languorous sleep, interwoven with vanishing dreams.

Chapter XXV Study Questions

1. Describe Alcée Arobin. How does he differ from Robert?
2. What effect does Edna's physical attraction to Alcée have on her feelings for Robert? Her husband?

Chapter XXVI

Alcée Arobin wrote Edna an elaborate note of apology, palpitant with sincerity. It embarrassed her; for in a cooler, quieter moment it appeared to her, absurd that she should have taken his action so seriously, so dramatically. She felt sure that the significance of the whole occurrence had lain in her own self-consciousness. If she ignored his note it would give undue importance to a trivial affair. If she replied to it in a serious spirit it would still leave in his mind the impression that she had in a susceptible moment yielded to his influence. After all, it was no great matter to have one's hand kissed. She was provoked at his having written the apology. She answered in as light and bantering a spirit as she fancied it deserved, and said she would be glad to have him look in upon her at work whenever he felt the inclination and his business gave him the opportunity.

He responded at once by presenting himself at her home with all his disarming naiveté. And then there was scarcely a day which followed that she did not see him or was not reminded of him. He was prolific in pretexts. His attitude became one of good-humored subservience and tacit adoration. He was ready at all times to submit to her moods, which were as often kind as they were cold. She grew accustomed to him. They became intimate and friendly by imperceptible degrees, and then by leaps. He sometimes talked in a way that astonished her at first and brought the crimson into her face; in a way that pleased her at last, appealing to the animalism that stirred impatiently within her.

There was nothing which so quieted the turmoil of Edna's senses as a visit to Mademoiselle Reisz. It was then, in the presence of that personality which was offensive to her, that the woman, by her divine art, seemed to reach Edna's spirit and set it free.

It was misty, with heavy, lowering atmosphere, one afternoon, when Edna climbed the stairs to the pianist's apartments under the roof. Her clothes were dripping with moisture. She felt chilled and pinched as she entered the room. Mademoiselle was poking at a rusty stove that smoked a little and warmed the room indifferently. She was endeavoring to heat a pot of chocolate on the stove. The room looked cheerless and dingy to Edna as she entered. A bust of Beethoven, covered with a hood of dust, scowled at her from the mantelpiece.

"Ah! here comes the sunlight!" exclaimed Mademoiselle, rising from her knees before the stove. "Now it will be warm and bright enough; I can let the fire alone."

She closed the stove door with a bang, and approaching, assisted in removing Edna's dripping mackintosh.

"You are cold; you look miserable. The chocolate will soon be hot. But would you rather have a taste of brandy? I have scarcely touched the bottle which you brought me for my cold." A piece of red flannel was wrapped around Mademoiselle's throat; a stiff neck compelled her to hold her head on one side.

"I will take some brandy," said Edna, shivering as she removed her gloves and overshoes. She drank the liquor from the glass as a man would have done. Then flinging herself upon the uncomfortable sofa she said, "Mademoiselle, I am going to move away from my house on Esplanade Street."

"Ah!" ejaculated the musician, neither surprised nor especially interested. Nothing ever seemed to astonish her very much. She was endeavoring to adjust the bunch of violets which had become loose from its fastening in her hair. Edna drew her down upon the sofa, and taking a pin from her own hair, secured the shabby artificial flowers in their accustomed place.

"Aren't you astonished?"

"Passably. Where are you going? to New York? to Iberville? to your father in Mississippi? where?"

“Just two steps away,” laughed Edna, “in a little four-room house around the corner. It looks so cozy, so inviting and restful, whenever I pass by; and it’s for rent. I’m tired looking after that big house. It never seemed like mine, anyway—like home. It’s too much trouble. I have to keep too many servants. I am tired bothering with them.”

“That is not your true reason, *ma belle*⁹³. There is no use in telling me lies. I don’t know your reason, but you have not told me the truth.” Edna did not protest or endeavor to justify herself.

“The house, the money that provides for it, are not mine. Isn’t that enough reason?”

“They are your husband’s,” returned Mademoiselle, with a shrug and a malicious elevation of the eyebrows.

“Oh! I see there is no deceiving you. Then let me tell you: It is a caprice. I have a little money of my own from my mother’s estate, which my father sends me by driblets. I won a large sum this winter on the races, and I am beginning to sell my sketches. Laidpore is more and more pleased with my work; he says it grows in force and individuality. I cannot judge of that myself, but I feel that I have gained in ease and confidence. However, as I said, I have sold a good many through Laidpore. I can live in the tiny house for little or nothing, with one servant. Old Celestine, who works occasionally for me, says she will come stay with me and do my work. I know I shall like it, like the feeling of freedom and independence.”

“What does your husband say?”

“I have not told him yet. I only thought of it this morning. He will think I am demented, no doubt. Perhaps you think so.”

Mademoiselle shook her head slowly. “Your reason is not yet clear to me,” she said.

Neither was it quite clear to Edna herself; but it unfolded itself as she sat for a while in silence. Instinct had prompted her to put away her husband’s bounty in casting off her allegiance. She did not know how it would be when he returned. There would have to be an understanding, an explanation. Conditions would some way adjust themselves, she felt; but whatever came, she had resolved never again to belong to another than herself.

“I shall give a grand dinner before I leave the old house!” Edna exclaimed. “You will have to come to it, Mademoiselle. I will give you everything that you like to eat and to drink. We shall sing and laugh and be merry for once.” And she uttered a sigh that came from the very depths of her being.

If Mademoiselle happened to have received a letter from Robert during the interval of Edna’s visits, she would give her the letter unsolicited. And she would seat herself at the piano and play as her humor prompted her while the young woman read the letter.

The little stove was roaring; it was red-hot, and the chocolate in the tin sizzled and sputtered. Edna went forward and opened the stove door, and Mademoiselle rising, took a letter from under the bust of Beethoven and handed it to Edna.

“Another! so soon!” she exclaimed, her eyes filled with delight. “Tell me, Mademoiselle, does he know that I see his letters?”

“Never in the world! He would be angry and would never write to me again if he thought so. Does he write to you? Never a line. Does he send you a message? Never a word. It is because he loves you, poor fool, and is trying to forget you, since you are not free to listen to him or to belong to him.”

“Why do you show me his letters, then?”

“Haven’t you begged for them? Can I refuse you anything? Oh! you cannot deceive me,” and Mademoiselle approached her beloved instrument and began to play. Edna did not at once read the letter. She sat holding it in her hand, while the music penetrated her whole being like an effulgence, warming and brightening the dark places of her soul. It prepared her for joy and exultation.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, letting the letter fall to the floor. “Why did you not tell me?” She went and grasped Mademoiselle’s hands up from the keys. “Oh! unkind! malicious! Why did you not tell me?”

“That he was coming back? No great news, *ma foi*.⁹⁴ I wonder he did not come long ago.”

“But when, when?” cried Edna, impatiently. “He does not say when.”

“He says ‘very soon.’ You know as much about it as I do; it is all in the letter.”

“But why? Why is he coming? Oh, if I thought—” and she snatched the letter from the floor and turned the pages this way and that way, looking for the reason, which was left untold.

“If I were young and in love with a man,” said Mademoiselle, turning on the stool and pressing her wiry hands between her knees as she looked down at Edna, who sat on the floor holding the letter, “it seems to me he would have to be some grand esprit⁹⁵; a man with lofty aims and ability to reach them; one who stood high enough to attract the notice of his fellow-men. It seems to me if I were young and in love I should never deem a man of ordinary caliber worthy of my devotion.”

“Now it is you who are telling lies and seeking to deceive me, Mademoiselle; or else you have never been in love, and know nothing about it. Why,” went on Edna, clasping her knees and looking up into Mademoiselle’s twisted face, “do you suppose a woman knows why she loves? Does she select? Does she say to herself: ‘Go to! Here is a distinguished statesman with presidential possibilities; I shall proceed to fall in love with him.’ Or, ‘I shall set my heart upon this musician, whose fame is on every tongue?’ Or, ‘This financier, who controls the world’s money markets?’

“You are purposely misunderstanding me, *ma reine*.⁹⁶ Are you in love with Robert?”

“Yes,” said Edna. It was the first time she had admitted it, and a glow overspread her face, blotching it with red spots.

“Why?” asked her companion. “Why do you love him when you ought not to?”

Edna, with a motion or two, dragged herself on her knees before Mademoiselle Reisz, who took the glowing face between her two hands.

“Why? Because his hair is brown and grows away from his temples; because he opens and shuts his eyes, and his nose is a little out of drawing; because he has two lips and a square chin, and a little finger which he can’t straighten from having played baseball too energetically in his youth. Because—”

“Because you do, in short,” laughed Mademoiselle. “What will you do when he comes back?” she asked.

“Do? Nothing, except feel glad and happy to be alive.”

She was already glad and happy to be alive at the mere thought of his return. The murky, lowering sky, which had depressed her a few hours before, seemed bracing and invigorating as she splashed through the streets on her way home.

She stopped at a confectioner’s and ordered a huge box of bonbons for the children in Iberville. She slipped a card in the box, on which she scribbled a tender message and sent an abundance of kisses.

Before dinner in the evening Edna wrote a charming letter to her husband, telling him of her intention to move for a while into the little house around the block, and to give a farewell dinner before leaving, regretting that he was not there to share it, to help out with the menu and assist her in entertaining the guests. Her letter was brilliant and brimming with cheerfulness.

94. (French) To be sure.

95. (French) Noble soul.

96. (French) My queen.

Chapter XXVI Study Questions

1. How does Edna plan to finance her “pigeon house”?
2. What does Edna learn from Mlle Reisz about Robert’s plans?

Chapter XXVII

“What is the matter with you?” asked Arobin that evening. “I never found you in such a happy mood.” Edna was tired by that time, and was reclining on the lounge before the fire.

“Don’t you know the weather prophet has told us we shall see the sun pretty soon?”

“Well, that ought to be reason enough,” he acquiesced. “You wouldn’t give me another if I sat here all night imploring you.” He sat close to her on a low *tabouret*⁹⁷, and as he spoke his fingers lightly touched the hair that fell a little over her forehead. She liked the touch of his fingers through her hair, and closed her eyes sensitively.

“One of these days,” she said, “I’m going to pull myself together for a while and think—try to determine what character of a woman I am; for, candidly, I don’t know. By all the codes which I am acquainted with, I am a devilishly wicked specimen of the sex. But some way I can’t convince myself that I am. I must think about it.”

“Don’t. What’s the use? Why should you bother thinking about it when I can tell you what manner of woman you are.” His fingers strayed occasionally down to her warm, smooth cheeks and firm chin, which was growing a little full and double.

“Oh, yes! You will tell me that I am adorable; everything that is captivating. Spare yourself the effort.”

“No; I shan’t tell you anything of the sort, though I shouldn’t be lying if I did.”

“Do you know Mademoiselle Reisz?” she asked irrelevantly.

“The pianist? I know her by sight. I’ve heard her play.”

“She says queer things sometimes in a bantering way that you don’t notice at the time and you find yourself thinking about afterward.”

“For instance?”

“Well, for instance, when I left her to-day, she put her arms around me and felt my shoulder blades, to see if my wings were strong, she said. ‘The bird that would soar above the level plain of tradition and prejudice must have strong wings. It is a sad spectacle to see the weaklings bruised, exhausted, fluttering back to earth.’ Whither would you soar?”

“I’m not thinking of any extraordinary flights. I only half comprehend her.”

“I’ve heard she’s partially demented,” said Arobin.

“She seems to me wonderfully sane,” Edna replied.

“I’m told she’s extremely disagreeable and unpleasant. Why have you introduced her at a moment when I desired to talk of you?”

“Oh! talk of me if you like,” cried Edna, clasping her hands beneath her head; “but let me think of something else while you do.”

“I’m jealous of your thoughts tonight. They’re making you a little kinder than usual; but some way I feel as if they were wandering, as if they were not here with me.” She only looked at him and smiled. His eyes were very near. He leaned upon the lounge with an arm extended across her, while the other hand still rested upon her hair. They continued silently to look into each other’s eyes. When he leaned forward and kissed her, she clasped his head, holding his lips to hers.

It was the first kiss of her life to which her nature had really responded. It was a flaming torch that kindled desire.

97. (French) chair without arms or back.

Chapter XXVII Study Questions

1. Discuss the bird symbolism in this chapter. What might it foreshadow?
2. Edna refers to herself as “a devilishly wicked specimen of the sex.” She is speaking of herself regarding “all the codes” of conduct she knows. What does she do in this chapter that might justify that description of her in terms of nineteenth century codes of behaviour?

Chapter XXVIII

Edna cried a little that night after Arobin left her. It was only one phase of the multitudinous emotions which had assailed her. There was with her an overwhelming feeling of irresponsibility. There was the shock of the unexpected and the unaccustomed. There was her husband's reproach looking at her from the external things around her which he had provided for her external existence. There was Robert's reproach making itself felt by a quicker, fiercer, more overpowering love, which had awakened within her toward him. Above all, there was understanding. She felt as if a mist had been lifted from her eyes, enabling her to take upon and comprehend the significance of life, that monster made up of beauty and brutality. But among the conflicting sensations which assailed her, there was neither shame nor remorse. There was a dull pang of regret because it was not the kiss of love which had inflamed her, because it was not love which had held this cup of life to her lips.

Chapter XXVIII Study Questions

1. What is Edna's major regret after Alcée leaves her that night?

Chapter XXIX

Without even waiting for an answer from her husband regarding his opinion or wishes in the matter, Edna hastened her preparations for quitting her home on Esplanade Street and moving into the little house around the block. A feverish anxiety attended her every action in that direction. There was no moment of deliberation, no interval of repose between the thought and its fulfillment. Early upon the morning following those hours passed in Arobin's society, Edna set about securing her new abode and hurrying her arrangements for occupying it. Within the precincts of her home she felt like one who has entered and lingered within the portals of some forbidden temple in which a thousand muffled voices bade her begone.

Whatever was her own in the house, everything which she had acquired aside from her husband's bounty, she caused to be transported to the other house, supplying simple and meager deficiencies from her own resources.

Arobin found her with rolled sleeves, working in company with the house-maid when he looked in during the afternoon. She was splendid and robust, and had never appeared handsomer than in the old blue gown, with a red silk handkerchief knotted at random around her head to protect her hair from the dust. She was mounted upon a high stepladder, unhooking a picture from the wall when he entered. He had found the front door open, and had followed his ring by walking in unceremoniously.

"Come down!" he said. "Do you want to kill yourself?" She greeted him with affected carelessness, and appeared absorbed in her occupation.

If he had expected to find her languishing, reproachful, or indulging in sentimental tears, he must have been greatly surprised.

He was no doubt prepared for any emergency, ready for any one of the foregoing attitudes, just as he bent himself easily and naturally to the situation which confronted him.

"Please come down," he insisted, holding the ladder and looking up at her.

"No," she answered; "Ellen is afraid to mount the ladder. Joe is working over at the 'pigeon house'—that's the name Ellen gives it, because it's so small and looks like a pigeon house—and someone has to do this."

Arobin pulled off his coat, and expressed himself ready and willing to tempt fate in her place. Ellen brought him one of her dust-caps, and went into contortions of mirth, which she found it impossible to control, when she saw him put it on before the mirror as grotesquely as he could. Edna herself could not refrain from smiling when she fastened it at his request. So it was he who in turn mounted the ladder, unhooking pictures and curtains, and dislodging ornaments as Edna directed. When he had finished he took off his dust-cap and went out to wash his hands.

Edna was sitting on the tabouret, idly brushing the tips of a feather duster along the carpet when he came in again.

"Is there anything more you will let me do?" he asked.

"That is all," she answered. "Ellen can manage the rest." She kept the young woman occupied in the drawing-room, unwilling to be left alone with Arobin.

"What about the dinner?" he asked; "the grand event, the *coup d'état*?⁹⁸"

"It will be day after to-morrow. Why do you call it the '*coup d'état*?' Oh! it will be very fine; all my best of everything—crystal, silver and gold, Sevres, flowers, music, and champagne to swim in. I'll let Léonce pay the bills. I wonder what he'll say when he sees the bills.

98. (French) A sudden and decisive effort.

“And you ask me why I call it a ‘*coup d’état*’?” Arobin had put on his coat, and he stood before her and asked if his cravat was plumb. She told him it was, looking no higher than the tip of his collar.

“When do you go to the ‘pigeon house?’—with all due acknowledgment to Ellen.”

“Day after to-morrow, after the dinner. I shall sleep there.”

“Ellen, will you very kindly get me a glass of water?” asked Arobin. “The dust in the curtains, if you will pardon me for hinting such a thing, has parched my throat to a crisp.”

“While Ellen gets the water,” said Edna, rising, “I will say good-bye and let you go. I must get rid of this grime, and I have a million things to do and think of.”

“When shall I see you?” asked Arobin, seeking to detain her, the maid having left the room.

“At the dinner, of course. You are invited.”

“Not before?—not to-night or to-morrow morning or tomorrow noon or night? or the day after morning or noon? Can’t you see yourself, without my telling you, what an eternity it is?”

He had followed her into the hall and to the foot of the stairway, looking up at her as she mounted with her face half turned to him.

“Not an instant sooner,” she said. But she laughed and looked at him with eyes that at once gave him courage to wait and made it torture to wait.

Chapter XXIX Study Questions

1. How has Edna acted upon subconscious desires that have been repressed since the first chapter?
2. Does she try to be fair to Léonce here?

Chapter XXX

Though Edna had spoken of the dinner as a very grand affair, it was in truth a very small affair and very select, in so much as the guests invited were few and were selected with discrimination. She had counted upon an even dozen seating themselves at her round mahogany board, forgetting for the moment that Madame Ratignolle was to the last degree *souffrante*⁹⁹ and unpresentable, and not foreseeing that Madame Lebrun would send a thousand regrets at the last moment. So there were only ten, after all, which made a cozy, comfortable number.

There were Mr. and Mrs. Merriman, a pretty, vivacious little woman in the thirties; her husband, a jovial fellow, something of a shallow-pate, who laughed a good deal at other people's witticisms, and had thereby made himself extremely popular. Mrs. Highcamp had accompanied them. Of course, there was Alcée Arobin; and Mademoiselle Reisz had consented to come. Edna had sent her a fresh bunch of violets with black lace trimmings for her hair. Monsieur Ratignolle brought himself and his wife's excuses. Victor Lebrun, who happened to be in the city, bent upon relaxation, had accepted with alacrity. There was a Miss Mayblunt, no longer in her teens, who looked at the world through lorgnettes and with the keenest interest. It was thought and said that she was intellectual; it was suspected of her that she wrote under a *nom de guerre*.¹⁰⁰ She had come with a gentleman by the name of Gouvernail, connected with one of the daily papers, of whom nothing special could be said, except that he was observant and seemed quiet and inoffensive. Edna herself made the tenth, and at half-past eight they seated themselves at table, Arobin and Monsieur Ratignolle on either side of their hostess.

Mrs. Highcamp sat between Arobin and Victor Lebrun. Then came Mrs. Merriman, Mr. Gouvernail, Miss Mayblunt, Mr. Merriman, and Mademoiselle Reisz next to Monsieur Ratignolle.

There was something extremely gorgeous about the appearance of the table, an effect of splendor conveyed by a cover of pale yellow satin under strips of lace-work. There were wax candles, in massive brass candelabra, burning softly under yellow silk shades; full, fragrant roses, yellow and red, abounded. There were silver and gold, as she had said there would be, and crystal which glittered like the gems which the women wore.

The ordinary stiff dining chairs had been discarded for the occasion and replaced by the most commodious and luxurious which could be collected throughout the house. Mademoiselle Reisz, being exceedingly diminutive, was elevated upon cushions, as small children are sometimes hoisted at table upon bulky volumes.

"Something new, Edna?" exclaimed Miss Mayblunt, with lorgnette directed toward a magnificent cluster of diamonds that sparkled, that almost sputtered, in Edna's hair, just over the center of her forehead.

"Quite new; 'brand' new, in fact; a present from my husband. It arrived this morning from New York. I may as well admit that this is my birthday, and that I am twenty-nine. In good time I expect you to drink my health. Meanwhile, I shall ask you to begin with this cocktail, composed—would you say 'composed?'" with an appeal to Miss Mayblunt—"composed by my father in honor of Sister Janet's wedding."

Before each guest stood a tiny glass that looked and sparkled like a garnet gem.

"Then, all things considered," spoke Arobin, "it might not be amiss to start out by drinking the

99. (French) Ill.

100. (French) Pseudonym.

Colonel's health in the cocktail which he composed, on the birthday of the most charming of women—the daughter whom he invented.”

Mr. Merriman's laugh at this sally was such a genuine outburst and so contagious that it started the dinner with an agreeable swing that never slackened.

Miss Mayblunt begged to be allowed to keep her cocktail untouched before her, just to look at. The color was marvelous! She could compare it to nothing she had ever seen, and the garnet lights which it emitted were unspeakably rare. She pronounced the Colonel an artist, and stuck to it.

Monsieur Ratignolle was prepared to take things seriously; the *mets*¹⁰¹ the *entre-mets*, the service, the decorations, even the people. He looked up from his pompano¹⁰² and inquired of Arobin if he were related to the gentleman of that name who formed one of the firm of Laitner and Arobin, lawyers. The young man admitted that Laitner was a warm personal friend, who permitted Arobin's name to decorate the firm's letterheads and to appear upon a shingle that graced Perdido Street.

“There are so many inquisitive people and institutions abounding,” said Arobin, “that one is really forced as a matter of convenience these days to assume the virtue of an occupation if he has it not.” Monsieur Ratignolle stared a little, and turned to ask Mademoiselle Reisz if she considered the symphony concerts up to the standard which had been set the previous winter. Mademoiselle Reisz answered Monsieur Ratignolle in French, which Edna thought a little rude, under the circumstances, but characteristic. Mademoiselle had only disagreeable things to say of the symphony concerts, and insulting remarks to make of all the musicians of New Orleans, singly and collectively. All her interest seemed to be centered upon the delicacies placed before her.

Mr. Merriman said that Mr. Arobin's remark about inquisitive people reminded him of a man from Waco¹⁰³ the other day at the St. Charles Hotel—but as Mr. Merriman's stories were always lame and lacking point, his wife seldom permitted him to complete them. She interrupted him to ask if he remembered the name of the author whose book she had bought the week before to send to a friend in Geneva. She was talking “books” with Mr. Gouvernail and trying to draw from him his opinion upon current literary topics. Her husband told the story of the Waco man privately to Miss Mayblunt, who pretended to be greatly amused and to think it extremely clever.

Mrs. Highcamp hung with languid but unaffected interest upon the warm and impetuous volubility of her left-hand neighbor, Victor Lebrun. Her attention was never for a moment withdrawn from him after seating herself at table; and when he turned to Mrs. Merriman, who was prettier and more vivacious than Mrs. Highcamp, she waited with easy indifference for an opportunity to reclaim his attention. There was the occasional sound of music, of mandolins, sufficiently removed to be an agreeable accompaniment rather than an interruption to the conversation. Outside the soft, monotonous splash of a fountain could be heard; the sound penetrated into the room with the heavy odor of jessamine that came through the open windows.

The golden shimmer of Edna's satin gown spread in rich folds on either side of her. There was a soft fall of lace encircling her shoulders. It was the color of her skin, without the glow, the myriad living tints that one may sometimes discover in vibrant flesh. There was something in her attitude, in her whole appearance when she leaned her head against the high-backed chair and spread her arms, which suggested the regal woman, the one who rules, who looks on, who stands alone.

But as she sat there amid her guests, she felt the old ennui overtaking her; the hopelessness which so often assailed her, which came upon her like an obsession, like something extraneous, independent of volition. It was something which announced itself; a chill breath that seemed to issue from some vast cavern wherein discords waited. There came over her the acute longing which always summoned into

101. Main dish; side dishes.

102. A fish of the South Atlantic and Gulf Coast.

103. A city in Texas.

her spiritual vision the presence of the beloved one, overpowering her at once with a sense of the unattainable.

The moments glided on, while a feeling of good fellowship passed around the circle like a mystic cord, holding and binding these people together with jest and laughter. Monsieur Ratignolle was the first to break the pleasant charm. At ten o'clock he excused himself. Madame Ratignolle was waiting for him at home. She was *bien souffrante*, and she was filled with vague dread, which only her husband's presence could allay.

Mademoiselle Reisz arose with Monsieur Ratignolle, who offered to escort her to the car. She had eaten well; she had tasted the good, rich wines, and they must have turned her head, for she bowed pleasantly to all as she withdrew from table. She kissed Edna upon the shoulder, and whispered: "*Bonne nuit, ma reine; soyez sage.*"¹⁰⁴ She had been a little bewildered upon rising, or rather, descending from her cushions, and Monsieur Ratignolle gallantly took her arm and led her away.

Mrs. Highcamp was weaving a garland of roses, yellow and red. When she had finished the garland, she laid it lightly upon Victor's black curls. He was reclining far back in the luxurious chair, holding a glass of champagne to the light.

As if a magician's wand had touched him, the garland of roses transformed him into a vision of Oriental beauty. His cheeks were the color of crushed grapes, and his dusky eyes glowed with a languishing fire.

"*Sapristi!*" exclaimed Arobin.

But Mrs. Highcamp had one more touch to add to the picture. She took from the back of her chair a white silken scarf, with which she had covered her shoulders in the early part of the evening. She draped it across the boy in graceful folds, and in a way to conceal his black, conventional evening dress. He did not seem to mind what she did to him, only smiled, showing a faint gleam of white teeth, while he continued to gaze with narrowing eyes at the light through his glass of champagne.

"Oh! to be able to paint in color rather than in words!" exclaimed Miss Mayblunt, losing herself in a rhapsodic dream as she looked at him.

*"There was a graven image of Desire
Painted with red blood on a ground of gold."*¹⁰⁵

murmured Gouvernail, under his breath.

The effect of the wine upon Victor was to change his accustomed volubility into silence. He seemed to have abandoned himself to a reverie, and to be seeing pleasing visions in the amber bead.

"Sing," entreated Mrs. Highcamp. "Won't you sing to us?"

"Let him alone," said Arobin.

"He's posing," offered Mr. Merriman; "let him have it out."

"I believe he's paralyzed," laughed Mrs. Merriman. And leaning over the youth's chair, she took the glass from his hand and held it to his lips. He sipped the wine slowly, and when he had drained the glass she laid it upon the table and wiped his lips with her little filmy handkerchief.

"Yes, I'll sing for you," he said, turning in his chair toward Mrs. Highcamp. He clasped his hands behind his head, and looking up at the ceiling began to hum a little, trying his voice like a musician tuning an instrument. Then, looking at Edna, he began to sing:

"Ah! si tu savais!"

"Stop!" she cried, "don't sing that. I don't want you to sing it," and she laid her glass so impetuously and blindly upon the table as to shatter it against a carafe. The wine spilled over Arobin's legs and

104. (French) Good night, my dear. Be good.

105. From the sonnet "A Cameo" by Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909).

some of it trickled down upon Mrs. Highcamp's black gauze gown. Victor had lost all idea of courtesy, or else he thought his hostess was not in earnest, for he laughed and went on:

"Ah! si tu savais

Ce que tes yeux me disent"—

"Oh! you mustn't! you mustn't," exclaimed Edna, and pushing back her chair she got up, and going behind him placed her hand over his mouth. He kissed the soft palm that pressed upon his lips.

"No, no, I won't, Mrs. Pontellier. I didn't know you meant it," looking up at her with caressing eyes. The touch of his lips was like a pleasing sting to her hand. She lifted the garland of roses from his head and flung it across the room.

"Come, Victor; you've posed long enough. Give Mrs. Highcamp her scarf."

Mrs. Highcamp undraped the scarf from about him with her own hands. Miss Mayblunt and Mr. Gouvernail suddenly conceived the notion that it was time to say good night. And Mr. and Mrs. Merriman wondered how it could be so late.

Before parting from Victor, Mrs. Highcamp invited him to call upon her daughter, who she knew would be charmed to meet him and talk French and sing French songs with him. Victor expressed his desire and intention to call upon Miss Highcamp at the first opportunity which presented itself. He asked if Arobin were going his way. Arobin was not.

The mandolin players had long since stolen away. A profound stillness had fallen upon the broad, beautiful street. The voices of Edna's disbanding guests jarred like a discordant note upon the quiet harmony of the night.

Chapter XXX Study Questions

1. How does Edna celebrate her twenty-ninth birthday?
2. Why does Edna become so upset when Victor sings "*Ah, si tu savais*"?
3. What accounts for Edna's eventual sadness at the party?

Chapter XXXI

“Well?” questioned Arobin, who had remained with Edna after the others had departed.

“Well,” she reiterated, and stood up, stretching her arms, and feeling the need to relax her muscles after having been so long seated.

“What next?” he asked.

“The servants are all gone. They left when the musicians did. I have dismissed them. The house has to be closed and locked, and I shall trot around to the pigeon house, and shall send Celestine over in the morning to straighten things up.”

He looked around, and began to turn out some of the lights.

“What about upstairs?” he inquired.

“I think it is all right; but there may be a window or two unlatched. We had better look; you might take a candle and see. And bring me my wrap and hat on the foot of the bed in the middle room.”

He went up with the light, and Edna began closing doors and windows. She hated to shut in the smoke and the fumes of the wine. Arobin found her cape and hat, which he brought down and helped her to put on.

When everything was secured and the lights put out, they left through the front door, Arobin locking it and taking the key, which he carried for Edna. He helped her down the steps.

“Will you have a spray of jessamine?” he asked, breaking off a few blossoms as he passed.

“No; I don’t want anything.”

She seemed disheartened, and had nothing to say. She took his arm, which he offered her, holding up the weight of her satin train with the other hand. She looked down, noticing the black line of his leg moving in and out so close to her against the yellow shimmer of her gown. There was the whistle of a railway train somewhere in the distance, and the midnight bells were ringing. They met no one in their short walk.

The “pigeon house” stood behind a locked gate, and a shallow *parterre*¹⁰⁶ that had been somewhat neglected. There was a small front porch, upon which a long window and the front door opened. The door opened directly into the parlor; there was no side entry. Back in the yard was a room for servants, in which old Celestine had been ensconced.

Edna had left a lamp burning low upon the table. She had succeeded in making the room look habitable and homelike. There were some books on the table and a lounge near at hand. On the floor was a fresh matting, covered with a rug or two; and on the walls hung a few tasteful pictures. But the room was filled with flowers. These were a surprise to her. Arobin had sent them, and had had Celestine distribute them during Edna’s absence. Her bedroom was adjoining, and across a small passage were the dining-room and kitchen.

Edna seated herself with every appearance of discomfort.

“Are you tired?” he asked.

“Yes, and chilled, and miserable. I feel as if I had been wound up to a certain pitch—too tight—and something inside of me had snapped.” She rested her head against the table upon her bare arm.

“You want to rest,” he said, “and to be quiet. I’ll go; I’ll leave you and let you rest.”

“Yes,” she replied.

He stood up beside her and smoothed her hair with his soft, magnetic hand. His touch conveyed to

her a certain physical comfort. She could have fallen quietly asleep there if he had continued to pass his hand over her hair. He brushed the hair upward from the nape of her neck.

“I hope you will feel better and happier in the morning,” he said. “You have tried to do too much in the past few days. The dinner was the last straw; you might have dispensed with it.”

“Yes,” she admitted; “it was stupid.”

“No, it was delightful; but it has worn you out.” His hand had strayed to her beautiful shoulders, and he could feel the response of her flesh to his touch. He seated himself beside her and kissed her lightly upon the shoulder.

“I thought you were going away,” she said, in an uneven voice.

“I am, after I have said good night.”

“Good night,” she murmured.

He did not answer, except to continue to caress her. He did not say good night until she had become supple to his gentle, seductive entreaties.

Chapter XXXI Study Questions

1. Who is Celestine?
2. When does Alcée leave the pigeon house?

Chapter XXXII

When Mr. Pontellier learned of his wife's intention to abandon her home and take up her residence elsewhere, he immediately wrote her a letter of unqualified disapproval and remonstrance. She had given reasons which he was unwilling to acknowledge as adequate. He hoped she had not acted upon her rash impulse; and he begged her to consider first, foremost, and above all else, what people would say. He was not dreaming of scandal when he uttered this warning; that was a thing which would never have entered into his mind to consider in connection with his wife's name or his own. He was simply thinking of his financial integrity. It might get noised about that the Pontelliers had met with reverses, and were forced to conduct their *ménage*¹⁰⁷ on a humbler scale than heretofore. It might do incalculable mischief to his business prospects.

But remembering Edna's whimsical turn of mind of late, and foreseeing that she had immediately acted upon her impetuous determination, he grasped the situation with his usual promptness and handled it with his well-known business tact and cleverness.

The same mail which brought to Edna his letter of disapproval carried instructions—the most minute instructions—to a well-known architect concerning the remodeling of his home, changes which he had long contemplated, and which he desired carried forward during his temporary absence.

Expert and reliable packers and movers were engaged to convey the furniture, carpets, pictures—everything movable, in short—to places of security. And in an incredibly short time the Pontellier house was turned over to the artisans. There was to be an addition—a small snuggerly; there was to be frescoing, and hardwood flooring was to be put into such rooms as had not yet been subjected to this improvement.

Furthermore, in one of the daily papers appeared a brief notice to the effect that Mr. and Mrs. Pontellier were contemplating a summer sojourn abroad, and that their handsome residence on Esplanade Street was undergoing sumptuous alterations, and would not be ready for occupancy until their return. Mr. Pontellier had saved appearances!

Edna admired the skill of his maneuver, and avoided any occasion to balk his intentions. When the situation as set forth by Mr. Pontellier was accepted and taken for granted, she was apparently satisfied that it should be so.

The pigeon house pleased her. It at once assumed the intimate character of a home, while she herself invested it with a charm which it reflected like a warm glow. There was with her a feeling of having descended in the social scale, with a corresponding sense of having risen in the spiritual. Every step which she took toward relieving herself from obligations added to her strength and expansion as an individual. She began to look with her own eyes; to see and to apprehend the deeper undercurrents of life. No longer was she content to “feed upon opinion” when her own soul had invited her.

After a little while, a few days, in fact, Edna went up and spent a week with her children in Iberville. They were delicious February days, with all the summer's promise hovering in the air.

How glad she was to see the children! She wept for very pleasure when she felt their little arms clasping her; their hard, ruddy cheeks pressed against her own glowing cheeks. She looked into their faces with hungry eyes that could not be satisfied with looking. And what stories they had to tell their mother! About the pigs, the cows, the mules! About riding to the mill behind Gluglu; fishing back in the lake with their Uncle Jasper; picking pecans with Lidie's little black brood, and hauling chips in

their express wagon. It was a thousand times more fun to haul real chips for old lame Susie's real fire than to drag painted blocks along the banquette on Esplanade Street!

She went with them herself to see the pigs and the cows, to look at the darkies laying the cane, to thrash the pecan trees, and catch fish in the back lake. She lived with them a whole week long, giving them all of herself, and gathering and filling herself with their young existence. They listened, breathless, when she told them the house in Esplanade Street was crowded with workmen, hammering, nailing, sawing, and filling the place with clatter. They wanted to know where their bed was; what had been done with their rocking-horse; and where did Joe sleep, and where had Ellen gone, and the cook? But, above all, they were fired with a desire to see the little house around the block. Was there any place to play? Were there any boys next door? Raoul, with pessimistic foreboding, was convinced that there were only girls next door. Where would they sleep, and where would papa sleep? She told them the fairies would fix it all right.

The old Madame was charmed with Edna's visit, and showered all manner of delicate attentions upon her. She was delighted to know that the Esplanade Street house was in a dismantled condition. It gave her the promise and pretext to keep the children indefinitely.

It was with a wrench and a pang that Edna left her children. She carried away with her the sound of their voices and the touch of their cheeks. All along the journey homeward their presence lingered with her like the memory of a delicious song. But by the time she had regained the city the song no longer echoed in her soul. She was again alone.

Chapter XXXII Study Questions

1. What does Léonce worry might happen if Edna moves into her pigeon house?

Chapter XXXIII

It happened sometimes when Edna went to see Mademoiselle Reisz that the little musician was absent, giving a lesson or making some small necessary household purchase. The key was always left in a secret hiding-place in the entry, which Edna knew. If Mademoiselle happened to be away, Edna would usually enter and wait for her return.

When she knocked at Mademoiselle Reisz's door one afternoon there was no response; so unlocking the door, as usual, she entered and found the apartment deserted, as she had expected. Her day had been quite filled up, and it was for a rest, for a refuge, and to talk about Robert, that she sought out her friend.

She had worked at her canvas—a young Italian character study—all the morning, completing the work without the model; but there had been many interruptions, some incident to her modest housekeeping, and others of a social nature.

Madame Ratignolle had dragged herself over, avoiding the too public thoroughfares, she said. She complained that Edna had neglected her much of late. Besides, she was consumed with curiosity to see the little house and the manner in which it was conducted. She wanted to hear all about the dinner party; Monsieur Ratignolle had left so early. What had happened after he left? The champagne and grapes which Edna sent over were *too* delicious. She had so little appetite; they had refreshed and toned her stomach. Where on earth was she going to put Mr. Pontellier in that little house, and the boys? And then she made Edna promise to go to her when her hour of trial overtook her.

“At any time—any time of the day or night, dear,” Edna assured her.

Before leaving Madame Ratignolle said:

“In some way you seem to me like a child, Edna. You seem to act without a certain amount of reflection which is necessary in this life. That is the reason I want to say you mustn't mind if I advise you to be a little careful while you are living here alone. Why don't you have someone come and stay with you? Wouldn't Mademoiselle Reisz come?”

“No; she wouldn't wish to come, and I shouldn't want her always with me.”

“Well, the reason—you know how evil-minded the world is—someone was talking of Alcée Arobin visiting you. Of course, it wouldn't matter if Mr. Arobin had not such a dreadful reputation. Monsieur Ratignolle was telling me that his attentions alone are considered enough to ruin a woman's name.”

“Does he boast of his successes?” asked Edna, indifferently, squinting at her picture.

“No, I think not. I believe he is a decent fellow as far as that goes. But his character is so well known among the men. I shan't be able to come back and see you; it was very, very imprudent to-day.”

“Mind the step!” cried Edna.

“Don't neglect me,” entreated Madame Ratignolle; “and don't mind what I said about Arobin, or having someone to stay with you.

“Of course not,” Edna laughed. “You may say anything you like to me.” They kissed each other good-bye. Madame Ratignolle had not far to go, and Edna stood on the porch a while watching her walk down the street.

Then in the afternoon Mrs. Merriman and Mrs. Highcamp had made their “party call.” Edna felt that they might have dispensed with the formality. They had also come to invite her to play *vingt-et-un*¹⁰⁸ one evening at Mrs. Merriman's. She was asked to go early, to dinner, and Mr. Merriman or Mr. Arobin

108. (French) Twenty-one, a card game.

would take her home. Edna accepted in a half-hearted way. She sometimes felt very tired of Mrs. Highcamp and Mrs. Merriman.

Late in the afternoon she sought refuge with Mademoiselle Reisz, and stayed there alone, waiting for her, feeling a kind of repose invade her with the very atmosphere of the shabby, unpretentious little room.

Edna sat at the window, which looked out over the house-tops and across the river. The window frame was filled with pots of flowers, and she sat and picked the dry leaves from a rose geranium. The day was warm, and the breeze which blew from the river was very pleasant. She removed her hat and laid it on the piano. She went on picking the leaves and digging around the plants with her hat pin. Once she thought she heard Mademoiselle Reisz approaching. But it was a young black girl, who came in, bringing a small bundle of laundry, which she deposited in the adjoining room, and went away.

Edna seated herself at the piano, and softly picked out with one hand the bars of a piece of music which lay open before her. A half-hour went by. There was the occasional sound of people going and coming in the lower hall. She was growing interested in her occupation of picking out the aria, when there was a second rap at the door. She vaguely wondered what these people did when they found Mademoiselle's door locked.

"Come in," she called, turning her face toward the door. And this time it was Robert Lebrun who presented himself. She attempted to rise; she could not have done so without betraying the agitation which mastered her at sight of him, so she fell back upon the stool, only exclaiming, "Why, Robert!"

He came and clasped her hand, seemingly without knowing what he was saying or doing.

"Mrs. Pontellier! How do you happen—oh! how well you look! Is Mademoiselle Reisz not here? I never expected to see you."

"When did you come back?" asked Edna in an unsteady voice, wiping her face with her handkerchief. She seemed ill at ease on the piano stool, and he begged her to take the chair by the window.

She did so, mechanically, while he seated himself on the stool.

"I returned day before yesterday," he answered, while he leaned his arm on the keys, bringing forth a crash of discordant sound.

"Day before yesterday!" she repeated, aloud; and went on thinking to herself, "day before yesterday," in a sort of an uncomprehending way. She had pictured him seeking her at the very first hour, and he had lived under the same sky since day before yesterday; while only by accident had he stumbled upon her. Mademoiselle must have lied when she said, "Poor fool, he loves you."

"Day before yesterday," she repeated, breaking off a spray of Mademoiselle's geranium; "then if you had not met me here to-day you wouldn't—when—that is, didn't you mean to come and see me?"

"Of course, I should have gone to see you. There have been so many things—" he turned the leaves of Mademoiselle's music nervously. "I started in at once yesterday with the old firm. After all there is as much chance for me here as there was there—that is, I might find it profitable some day. The Mexicans were not very congenial."

So he had come back because the Mexicans were not congenial; because business was as profitable here as there; because of any reason, and not because he cared to be near her. She remembered the day she sat on the floor, turning the pages of his letter, seeking the reason which was left untold.

She had not noticed how he looked—only feeling his presence; but she turned deliberately and observed him. After all, he had been absent but a few months, and was not changed. His hair—the color of hers—waved back from his temples in the same way as before. His skin was not more burned than it had been at Grand Isle. She found in his eyes, when he looked at her for one silent moment, the same tender caress, with an added warmth and entreaty which had not been there before the same glance which had penetrated to the sleeping places of her soul and awakened them.

A hundred times Edna had pictured Robert's return, and imagined their first meeting. It was usually at her home, whither he had sought her out at once. She always fancied him expressing or betraying in some way his love for her. And here, the reality was that they sat ten feet apart, she at the window, crushing geranium leaves in her hand and smelling them, he twirling around on the piano stool, saying:

"I was very much surprised to hear of Mr. Pontellier's absence; it's a wonder Mademoiselle Reisz did not tell me; and your moving—mother told me yesterday. I should think you would have gone to New York with him, or to Iberville with the children, rather than be bothered here with housekeeping. And you are going abroad, too, I hear. We shan't have you at Grand Isle next summer; it won't seem—do you see much of Mademoiselle Reisz? She often spoke of you in the few letters she wrote."

"Do you remember that you promised to write to me when you went away?" A flush overspread his whole face.

"I couldn't believe that my letters would be of any interest to you."

"That is an excuse; it isn't the truth." Edna reached for her hat on the piano. She adjusted it, sticking the hat pin through the heavy coil of hair with some deliberation.

"Are you not going to wait for Mademoiselle Reisz?" asked Robert.

"No; I have found when she is absent this long, she is liable not to come back till late." She drew on her gloves, and Robert picked up his hat.

"Won't you wait for her?" asked Edna.

"Not if you think she will not be back till late," adding, as if suddenly aware of some discourtesy in his speech, "and I should miss the pleasure of walking home with you." Edna locked the door and put the key back in its hiding-place.

They went together, picking their way across muddy streets and sidewalks encumbered with the cheap display of small tradesmen. Part of the distance they rode in the car, and after disembarking, passed the Pontellier mansion, which looked broken and half torn asunder. Robert had never known the house, and looked at it with interest.

"I never knew you in your home," he remarked.

"I am glad you did not."

"Why?" She did not answer. They went on around the corner, and it seemed as if her dreams were coming true after all, when he followed her into the little house.

"You must stay and dine with me, Robert. You see I am all alone, and it is so long since I have seen you. There is so much I want to ask you."

She took off her hat and gloves. He stood irresolute, making some excuse about his mother who expected him; he even muttered something about an engagement. She struck a match and lit the lamp on the table; it was growing dusk. When he saw her face in the lamp-light, looking pained, with all the soft lines gone out of it, he threw his hat aside and seated himself.

"Oh! you know I want to stay if you will let me!" he exclaimed. All the softness came back. She laughed, and went and put her hand on his shoulder.

"This is the first moment you have seemed like the old Robert. I'll go tell Celestine." She hurried away to tell Celestine to set an extra place. She even sent her off in search of some added delicacy which she had not thought of for herself. And she recommended great care in dripping the coffee and having the omelet done to a proper turn.

When she reentered, Robert was turning over magazines, sketches, and things that lay upon the table in great disorder. He picked up a photograph, and exclaimed:

"Alcée Arobin! What on earth is his picture doing here?"

"I tried to make a sketch of his head one day," answered Edna, "and he thought the photograph might help me. It was at the other house. I thought it had been left there. I must have packed it up with my drawing materials."

“I should think you would give it back to him if you have finished with it.”

“Oh! I have a great many such photographs. I never think of returning them. They don’t amount to anything.” Robert kept on looking at the picture.

“It seems to me—do you think his head worth drawing? Is he a friend of Mr. Pontellier’s? You never said you knew him.”

“He isn’t a friend of Mr. Pontellier’s; he’s a friend of mine. I always knew him—that is, it is only of late that I know him pretty well. But I’d rather talk about you, and know what you have been seeing and doing and feeling out there in Mexico.” Robert threw aside the picture.

“I’ve been seeing the waves and the white beach of Grand Isle; the quiet, grassy street of the *Chênrière*; the old fort at Grande Terre. I’ve been working like a machine, and feeling like a lost soul. There was nothing interesting.”

She leaned her head upon her hand to shade her eyes from the light.

“And what have you been seeing and doing and feeling all these days?” he asked.

“I’ve been seeing the waves and the white beach of Grand Isle; the quiet, grassy street of the *Chênrière Caminada*; the old sunny fort at Grande Terre. I’ve been working with a little more comprehension than a machine, and still feeling like a lost soul. There was nothing interesting.”

“Mrs. Pontellier, you are cruel,” he said, with feeling, closing his eyes and resting his head back in his chair. They remained in silence till old Celestine announced dinner.

Chapter XXXIII Study Questions

1. What warning does Adèle give to Edna when she visits her at the pigeon house?

Chapter XXXIV

The dining-room was very small. Edna's round mahogany would have almost filled it. As it was there was but a step or two from the little table to the kitchen, to the mantel, the small buffet, and the side door that opened out on the narrow brick-paved yard.

A certain degree of ceremony settled upon them with the announcement of dinner. There was no return to personalities. Robert related incidents of his sojourn in Mexico, and Edna talked of events likely to interest him, which had occurred during his absence. The dinner was of ordinary quality, except for the few delicacies which she had sent out to purchase. Old Celestine, with a bandana *tignon*¹⁰⁹ twisted about her head, hobbled in and out, taking a personal interest in everything; and she lingered occasionally to talk patois¹¹⁰ with Robert, whom she had known as a boy.

He went out to a neighboring cigar stand to purchase cigarette papers, and when he came back he found that Celestine had served the black coffee in the parlor.

"Perhaps I shouldn't have come back," he said. "When you are tired of me, tell me to go."

"You never tire me. You must have forgotten the hours and hours at Grand Isle in which we grew accustomed to each other and used to being together."

"I have forgotten nothing at Grand Isle," he said, not looking at her, but rolling a cigarette. His tobacco pouch, which he laid upon the table, was a fantastic embroidered silk affair, evidently the handiwork of a woman.

"You used to carry your tobacco in a rubber pouch," said Edna, picking up the pouch and examining the needlework.

"Yes; it was lost."

"Where did you buy this one? In Mexico?"

"It was given to me by a Vera Cruz girl; they are very generous," he replied, striking a match and lighting his cigarette.

"They are very handsome, I suppose, those Mexican women; very picturesque, with their black eyes and their lace scarfs."

"Some are; others are hideous, just as you find women everywhere."

"What was she like—the one who gave you the pouch? You must have known her very well."

"She was very ordinary. She wasn't of the slightest importance. I knew her well enough."

"Did you visit at her house? Was it interesting? I should like to know and hear about the people you met, and the impressions they made on you."

"There are some people who leave impressions not so lasting as the imprint of an oar upon the water."

"Was she such a one?"

"It would be ungenerous for me to admit that she was of that order and kind." He thrust the pouch back in his pocket, as if to put away the subject with the trifle which had brought it up.

Arobin dropped in with a message from Mrs. Merriman, to say that the card party was postponed on account of the illness of one of her children.

"How do you do, Arobin?" said Robert, rising from the obscurity.

"Oh! Lebrun. To be sure! I heard yesterday you were back. How did they treat you down in Mexique?"

109. A turban fashioned from a scarf.

110. A dialect of French mixed with Spanish, English spoken by the descendants of the Acadians.

“Fairly well.”

“But not well enough to keep you there. Stunning girls, though, in Mexico. I thought I should never get away from Vera Cruz when I was down there a couple of years ago.”

“Did they embroider slippers and tobacco pouches and hat-bands and things for you?” asked Edna.

“Oh! my! no! I didn’t get so deep in their regard. I fear they made more impression on me than I made on them.”

“You were less fortunate than Robert, then.”

“I am always less fortunate than Robert. Has he been imparting tender confidences?”

“I’ve been imposing myself long enough,” said Robert, rising, and shaking hands with Edna. “Please convey my regards to Mr. Pontellier when you write.”

He shook hands with Arobin and went away.

“Fine fellow, that Lebrun,” said Arobin when Robert had gone. “I never heard you speak of him.”

“I knew him last summer at Grand Isle,” she replied. “Here is that photograph of yours. Don’t you want it?”

“What do I want with it? Throw it away.” She threw it back on the table.

“I’m not going to Mrs. Merriman’s,” she said. “If you see her, tell her so. But perhaps I had better write. I think I shall write now, and say that I am sorry her child is sick, and tell her not to count on me.”

“It would be a good scheme,” acquiesced Arobin. “I don’t blame you; stupid lot!”

Edna opened the blotter, and having procured paper and pen, began to write the note. Arobin lit a cigar and read the evening paper, which he had in his pocket.

“What is the date?” she asked. He told her.

“Will you mail this for me when you go out?”

“Certainly.” He read to her little bits out of the newspaper, while she straightened things on the table.

“What do you want to do?” he asked, throwing aside the paper. “Do you want to go out for a walk or a drive or anything? It would be a fine night to drive.”

“No; I don’t want to do anything but just be quiet. You go away and amuse yourself. Don’t stay.”

“I’ll go away if I must; but I shan’t amuse myself. You know that I only live when I am near you.”

He stood up to bid her good night.

“Is that one of the things you always say to women?”

“I have said it before, but I don’t think I ever came so near meaning it,” he answered with a smile. There were no warm lights in her eyes; only a dreamy, absent look.

“Good night. I adore you. Sleep well,” he said, and he kissed her hand and went away.

She stayed alone in a kind of reverie—a sort of stupor. Step by step she lived over every instant of the time she had been with Robert after he had entered Mademoiselle Reisz’s door. She recalled his words, his looks. How few and meager they had been for her hungry heart! A vision—a transcendently seductive vision of a Mexican girl arose before her. She writhed with a jealous pang. She wondered when he would come back. He had not said he would come back. She had been with him, had heard his voice and touched his hand. But some way he had seemed nearer to her off there in Mexico.

Chapter XXXIV Study Questions

1. Why is Edna interested in the Vera Cruz woman who gave Robert the tobacco pouch?

2. What effect does the arrival of Alcée have upon Robert?

Chapter XXXV

The morning was full of sunlight and hope. Edna could see before her no denial—only the promise of excessive joy. She lay in bed awake, with bright eyes full of speculation. “He loves you, poor fool.” If she could but get that conviction firmly fixed in her mind, what mattered about the rest? She felt she had been childish and unwise the night before in giving herself over to despondency. She recapitulated the motives which no doubt explained Robert’s reserve. They were not insurmountable; they would not hold if he really loved her; they could not hold against her own passion, which he must come to realize in time. She pictured him going to his business that morning. She even saw how he was dressed; how he walked down one street, and turned the corner of another; saw him bending over his desk, talking to people who entered the office, going to his lunch, and perhaps watching for her on the street. He would come to her in the afternoon or evening, sit and roll his cigarette, talk a little, and go away as he had done the night before. But how delicious it would be to have him there with her! She would have no regrets, nor seek to penetrate his reserve if he still chose to wear it.

Edna ate her breakfast only half dressed. The maid brought her a delicious printed scrawl from Raoul, expressing his love, asking her to send him some bonbons, and telling her they had found that morning ten tiny white pigs all lying in a row beside Lidie’s big white pig.

A letter also came from her husband, saying he hoped to be back early in March, and then they would get ready for that journey abroad which he had promised her so long, which he felt now fully able to afford; he felt able to travel as people should, without any thought of small economies—thanks to his recent speculations in Wall Street.

Much to her surprise she received a note from Arobin, written at midnight from the club. It was to say good morning to her, to hope she had slept well, to assure her of his devotion, which he trusted she in some faintest manner returned.

All these letters were pleasing to her. She answered the children in a cheerful frame of mind, promising them bonbons, and congratulating them upon their happy find of the little pigs.

She answered her husband with friendly evasiveness,—not with any fixed design to mislead him, only because all sense of reality had gone out of her life; she had abandoned herself to Fate, and awaited the consequences with indifference.

To Arobin’s note she made no reply. She put it under Celestine’s stove-lid.

Edna worked several hours with much spirit. She saw no one but a picture dealer, who asked her if it were true that she was going abroad to study in Paris.

She said possibly she might, and he negotiated with her for some Parisian studies to reach him in time for the holiday trade in December.

Robert did not come that day. She was keenly disappointed. He did not come the following day, nor the next. Each morning she awoke with hope, and each night she was a prey to despondency. She was tempted to seek him out. But far from yielding to the impulse, she avoided any occasion which might throw her in his way. She did not go to Mademoiselle Reisz’s nor pass by Madame Lebrun’s, as she might have done if he had still been in Mexico.

When Arobin, one night, urged her to drive with him, she went—out to the lake, on the Shell Road. His horses were full of mettle, and even a little unmanageable. She liked the rapid gait at which they spun along, and the quick, sharp sound of the horses’ hoofs on the hard road. They did not stop anywhere to eat or to drink. Arobin was not needlessly imprudent. But they ate and they drank when they regained Edna’s little dining-room—which was comparatively early in the evening.

It was late when he left her. It was getting to be more than a passing whim with Arobin to see her and be with her. He had detected the latent sensuality, which unfolded under his delicate sense of her nature's requirements like a torpid, torrid, sensitive blossom.

There was no despondency when she fell asleep that night; nor was there hope when she awoke in the morning.

Chapter XXXV Study Questions

1. What, if anything, is happening between Robert and Edna?

Chapter XXXVI

There was a garden out in the suburbs; a small, leafy corner, with a few green tables under the orange trees. An old cat slept all day on the stone step in the sun, and an old *mulatresse*¹¹¹ slept her idle hours away in her chair at the open window, till someone happened to knock on one of the green tables. She had milk and cream cheese to sell, and bread and butter. There was no one who could make such excellent coffee or fry a chicken so golden brown as she.

The place was too modest to attract the attention of people of fashion, and so quiet as to have escaped the notice of those in search of pleasure and dissipation. Edna had discovered it accidentally one day when the high-board gate stood ajar. She caught sight of a little green table, blotched with the checkered sunlight that filtered through the quivering leaves overhead. Within she had found the slumbering *mulatresse*, the drowsy cat, and a glass of milk which reminded her of the milk she had tasted in Iberville.

She often stopped there during her perambulations; sometimes taking a book with her, and sitting an hour or two under the trees when she found the place deserted. Once or twice she took a quiet dinner there alone, having instructed Celestine beforehand to prepare no dinner at home. It was the last place in the city where she would have expected to meet any one she knew.

Still she was not astonished when, as she was partaking of a modest dinner late in the afternoon, looking into an open book, stroking the cat, which had made friends with her—she was not greatly astonished to see Robert come in at the tall garden gate.

“I am destined to see you only by accident,” she said, shoving the cat off the chair beside her. He was surprised, ill at ease, almost embarrassed at meeting her thus so unexpectedly.

“Do you come here often?” he asked.

“I almost live here,” she said.

“I used to drop in very often for a cup of Catiche’s good coffee. This is the first time since I came back.”

“She’ll bring you a plate, and you will share my dinner. There’s always enough for two—even three.” Edna had intended to be indifferent and as reserved as he when she met him; she had reached the determination by a laborious train of reasoning, incident to one of her despondent moods. But her resolve melted when she saw him before designing Providence had led him into her path.

“Why have you kept away from me, Robert?” she asked, closing the book that lay open upon the table.

“Why are you so personal, Mrs. Pontellier? Why do you force me to idiotic subterfuges?” he exclaimed with sudden warmth. “I suppose there’s no use telling you I’ve been very busy, or that I’ve been sick, or that I’ve been to see you and not found you at home. Please let me off with any one of these excuses.”

“You are the embodiment of selfishness,” she said. “You save yourself something—I don’t know what—but there is some selfish motive, and in sparing yourself you never consider for a moment what I think, or how I feel your neglect and indifference. I suppose this is what you would call unwomanly; but I have got into a habit of expressing myself. It doesn’t matter to me, and you may think me unwomanly if you like.”

“No; I only think you cruel, as I said the other day. Maybe not intentionally cruel; but you seem to be

111. (French) Mulatto woman of mixed black and white ancestry.

forcing me into disclosures which can result in nothing; as if you would have me bare a wound for the pleasure of looking at it, without the intention or power of healing it.”

“I’m spoiling your dinner, Robert; never mind what I say. You haven’t eaten a morsel.”

“I only came in for a cup of coffee.” His sensitive face was all disfigured with excitement.

“Isn’t this a delightful place?” she remarked. “I am so glad it has never actually been discovered. It is so quiet, so sweet, here. Do you notice there is scarcely a sound to be heard? It’s so out of the way; and a good walk from the car. However, I don’t mind walking. I always feel so sorry for women who don’t like to walk; they miss so much—so many rare little glimpses of life; and we women learn so little of life on the whole.

“Catiche’s coffee is always hot. I don’t know how she manages it, here in the open air. Celestine’s coffee gets cold bringing it from the kitchen to the dining-room. Three lumps! How can you drink it so sweet? Take some of the cress with your chop; it’s so biting and crisp. Then there’s the advantage of being able to smoke with your coffee out here. Now, in the city—aren’t you going to smoke?”

“After a while,” he said, laying a cigar on the table.

“Who gave it to you?” she laughed.

“I bought it. I suppose I’m getting reckless; I bought a whole box.” She was determined not to be personal again and make him uncomfortable.

The cat made friends with him, and climbed into his lap when he smoked his cigar. He stroked her silky fur, and talked a little about her. He looked at Edna’s book, which he had read; and he told her the end, to save her the trouble of wading through it, he said.

Again he accompanied her back to her home; and it was after dusk when they reached the little “pigeon-house.” She did not ask him to remain, which he was grateful for, as it permitted him to stay without the discomfort of blundering through an excuse which he had no intention of considering. He helped her to light the lamp; then she went into her room to take off her hat and to bathe her face and hands.

When she came back Robert was not examining the pictures and magazines as before; he sat off in the shadow, leaning his head back on the chair as if in a reverie. Edna lingered a moment beside the table, arranging the books there. Then she went across the room to where he sat. She bent over the arm of his chair and called his name.

“Robert,” she said, “are you asleep?”

“No,” he answered, looking up at her.

She leaned over and kissed him—a soft, cool, delicate kiss, whose voluptuous sting penetrated his whole being—then she moved away from him. He followed, and took her in his arms, just holding her close to him. She put her hand up to his face and pressed his cheek against her own. The action was full of love and tenderness. He sought her lips again. Then he drew her down upon the sofa beside him and held her hand in both of his.

“Now you know,” he said, “now you know what I have been fighting against since last summer at Grand Isle; what drove me away and drove me back again.”

“Why have you been fighting against it?” she asked. Her face glowed with soft lights.

“Why? Because you were not free; you were Léonce Pontellier’s wife. I couldn’t help loving you if you were ten times his wife; but so long as I went away from you and kept away I could help telling you so.” She put her free hand up to his shoulder, and then against his cheek, rubbing it softly. He kissed her again. His face was warm and flushed.

“There in Mexico I was thinking of you all the time, and longing for you.”

“But not writing to me,” she interrupted.

“Something put into my head that you cared for me; and I lost my senses. I forgot everything but a wild dream of your some way becoming my wife.”

“Your wife!”

“Religion, loyalty, everything would give way if only you cared.”

“Then you must have forgotten that I was Léonce Pontellier’s wife.”

“Oh! I was demented, dreaming of wild, impossible things, recalling men who had set their wives free, we have heard of such things.”

“Yes, we have heard of such things.”

“I came back full of vague, mad intentions. And when I got here—”

“When you got here you never came near me!” She was still caressing his cheek.

“I realized what a cur I was to dream of such a thing, even if you had been willing.”

She took his face between her hands and looked into it as if she would never withdraw her eyes more. She kissed him on the forehead, the eyes, the cheeks, and the lips.

“You have been a very, very foolish boy, wasting your time dreaming of impossible things when you speak of Mr. Pontellier setting me free! I am no longer one of Mr. Pontellier’s possessions to dispose of or not. I give myself where I choose. If he were to say, ‘Here, Robert, take her and be happy; she is yours,’ I should laugh at you both.”

His face grew a little white. “What do you mean?” he asked.

There was a knock at the door. Old Celestine came in to say that Madame Ratignolle’s servant had come around the back way with a message that Madame had been taken sick and begged Mrs. Pontellier to go to her immediately.

“Yes, yes,” said Edna, rising; “I promised. Tell her yes—to wait for me. I’ll go back with her.”

“Let me walk over with you,” offered Robert.

“No,” she said; “I will go with the servant.” She went into her room to put on her hat, and when she came in again she sat once more upon the sofa beside him. He had not stirred. She put her arms about his neck.

“Good-bye, my sweet Robert. Tell me good-bye.” He kissed her with a degree of passion which had not before entered into his caress, and strained her to him.

“I love you,” she whispered, “only you; no one but you. It was you who awoke me last summer out of a life-long, stupid dream. Oh! you have made me so unhappy with your indifference. Oh! I have suffered, suffered! Now you are here we shall love each other, my Robert. We shall be everything to each other. Nothing else in the world is of any consequence. I must go to my friend; but you will wait for me? No matter how late; you will wait for me, Robert?”

“Don’t go; don’t go! Oh! Edna, stay with me,” he pleaded. “Why should you go? Stay with me, stay with me.”

“I shall come back as soon as I can; I shall find you here.” She buried her face in his neck, and said good-bye again. Her seductive voice, together with his great love for her, had enthralled his senses, had deprived him of every impulse but the longing to hold her and keep her.

Chapter XXXVI Study Questions

1. What does Robert reveal to Edna at the pigeon house?
2. What does Edna mean when she says that Léonce could not set her free?

Chapter XXXVII

Edna looked in at the drug store. Monsieur Ratignolle was putting up a mixture himself, very carefully, dropping a red liquid into a tiny glass. He was grateful to Edna for having come; her presence would be a comfort to his wife. Madame Ratignolle's sister, who had always been with her at such trying times, had not been able to come up from the plantation, and Adèle had been inconsolable until Mrs. Pontellier so kindly promised to come to her. The nurse had been with them at night for the past week, as she lived a great distance away. And Dr. Mandelet had been coming and going all the afternoon. They were then looking for him any moment.

Edna hastened upstairs by a private stairway that led from the rear of the store to the apartments above. The children were all sleeping in a back room. Madame Ratignolle was in the salon, whither she had strayed in her suffering impatience. She sat on the sofa, clad in an ample white *peignoir*, holding a handkerchief tight in her hand with a nervous clutch. Her face was drawn and pinched, her sweet blue eyes haggard and unnatural. All her beautiful hair had been drawn back and plaited. It lay in a long braid on the sofa pillow, coiled like a golden serpent. The nurse, a comfortable looking Griffe¹¹² woman in white apron and cap, was urging her to return to her bedroom.

"There is no use, there is no use," she said at once to Edna. "We must get rid of Mandelet; he is getting too old and careless. He said he would be here at half-past seven; now it must be eight. See what time it is, Josephine."

The woman was possessed of a cheerful nature, and refused to take any situation too seriously, especially a situation with which she was so familiar. She urged Madame to have courage and patience. But Madame only set her teeth hard into her under lip, and Edna saw the sweat gather in beads on her white forehead. After a moment or two she uttered a profound sigh and wiped her face with the handkerchief rolled in a ball. She appeared exhausted. The nurse gave her a fresh handkerchief, sprinkled with cologne water.

"This is too much!" she cried. "Mandélet ought to be killed! Where is Alphonse? Is it possible I am to be abandoned like this—neglected by every one?"

"Neglected, indeed!" exclaimed the nurse. Wasn't she there? And here was Mrs. Pontellier leaving, no doubt, a pleasant evening at home to devote to her? And wasn't Monsieur Ratignolle coming that very instant through the hall? And Josephine was quite sure she had heard Doctor Mandelet's coupé. Yes, there it was, down at the door.

Adèle consented to go back to her room. She sat on the edge of a little low couch next to her bed.

Doctor Mandelet paid no attention to Madame Ratignolle's upbraidings. He was accustomed to them at such times, and was too well convinced of her loyalty to doubt it.

He was glad to see Edna, and wanted her to go with him into the salon and entertain him. But Madame Ratignolle would not consent that Edna should leave her for an instant. Between agonizing moments, she chatted a little, and said it took her mind off her sufferings.

Edna began to feel uneasy. She was seized with a vague dread. Her own like experiences seemed far away, unreal, and only half remembered. She recalled faintly an ecstasy of pain, the heavy odor of chloroform, a stupor which had deadened sensation, and an awakening to find a little new life to which she had given being, added to the great unnumbered multitude of souls that come and go.

She began to wish she had not come; her presence was not necessary. She might have invented a pretext for staying away; she might even invent a pretext now for going. But Edna did not go. With an

112. Daughter of a mulatto and a black.

inward agony, with a flaming, outspoken revolt against the ways of Nature, she witnessed the scene of torture.

She was still stunned and speechless with emotion when later she leaned over her friend to kiss her and softly say good-bye. Adèle, pressing her cheek, whispered in an exhausted voice: “Think of the children, Edna. Oh think of the children! Remember them!”

Chapter XXXVII Study Questions

1. What does Adèle mean when she begs Edna to “think of the children”?

Chapter XXXVIII

Edna still felt dazed when she got outside in the open air. The Doctor's coupé had returned for him and stood before the *porte cochère*. She did not wish to enter the coupé, and told Doctor Mandelet she would walk; she was not afraid, and would go alone. He directed his carriage to meet him at Mrs. Pontellier's, and he started to walk home with her.

Up—away up, over the narrow street between the tall houses, the stars were blazing. The air was mild and caressing, but cool with the breath of spring and the night. They walked slowly, the Doctor with a heavy, measured tread and his hands behind him; Edna, in an absent-minded way, as she had walked one night at Grand Isle, as if her thoughts had gone ahead of her and she was striving to overtake them.

"You shouldn't have been there, Mrs. Pontellier," he said. "That was no place for you. Adèle is full of whims at such times. There were a dozen women she might have had with her, unimpressionable women. I felt that it was cruel, cruel. You shouldn't have gone."

"Oh, well!" she answered, indifferently. "I don't know that it matters after all. One has to think of the children some time or other; the sooner the better."

"When is Léonce coming back?"

"Quite soon. Some time in March."

"And you are going abroad?"

"Perhaps—no, I am not going. I'm not going to be forced into doing things. I don't want to go abroad. I want to be let alone. Nobody has any right—except children, perhaps—and even then, it seems to me—or it did seem—" She felt that her speech was voicing the incoherency of her thoughts, and stopped abruptly.

"The trouble is," sighed the Doctor, grasping her meaning intuitively, "that youth is given up to illusions. It seems to be a provision of Nature; a decoy to secure mothers for the race. And Nature takes no account of moral consequences, of arbitrary conditions which we create, and which we feel obliged to maintain at any cost."

"Yes," she said. "The years that are gone seem like dreams—if one might go on sleeping and dreaming—but to wake up and find—oh! well! perhaps it is better to wake up after all, even to suffer, rather than to remain a dupe to illusions all one's life."

"It seems to me, my dear child," said the Doctor at parting, holding her hand, "you seem to me to be in trouble. I am not going to ask for your confidence. I will only say that if ever you feel moved to give it to me, perhaps I might help you. I know I would understand. And I tell you there are not many who would—not many, my dear."

"Some way I don't feel moved to speak of things that trouble me. Don't think I am ungrateful or that I don't appreciate your sympathy. There are periods of despondency and suffering which take possession of me. But I don't want anything but my own way. That is wanting a good deal, of course, when you have to trample upon the lives, the hearts, the prejudices of others—but no matter—still, I shouldn't want to trample upon the little lives. Oh! I don't know what I'm saying, Doctor. Good night. Don't blame me for anything."

"Yes, I will blame you if you don't come and see me soon. We will talk of things you never have dreamt of talking about before. It will do us both good. I don't want you to blame yourself, whatever comes. Good night, my child."

She let herself in at the gate, but instead of entering she sat upon the step of the porch. The night was

quiet and soothing. All the tearing emotion of the last few hours seemed to fall away from her like a somber, uncomfortable garment, which she had but to loosen to be rid of. She went back to that hour before Adèle had sent for her; and her senses kindled afresh in thinking of Robert's words, the pressure of his arms, and the feeling of his lips upon her own. She could picture at that moment no greater bliss on earth than possession of the beloved one. His expression of love had already given her in part. When she thought that he was there at hand, waiting for her, she grew numb with the intoxication of expectancy. It was so late; he would be asleep perhaps. She would awaken him with a kiss. She hoped he would be asleep that she might arouse him with her caresses.

Still, she remembered Adèle's voice whispering, "Think of the children; think of them." She meant to think of them; that determination had driven into her soul like a death wound—but not to-night. Tomorrow would be time to think of everything.

Robert was not waiting for her in the little parlor. He was nowhere at hand. The house was empty. But he had scrawled on a piece of paper that lay in the lamplight:

"I love you. Good-bye—because I love you."

Edna grew faint when she read the words. She went and sat on the sofa. Then she stretched herself out there, never uttering a sound. She did not sleep. She did not go to bed. The lamp sputtered and went out. She was still awake in the morning, when Celestine unlocked the kitchen door and came in to light the fire.

Chapter XXXVIII Study Questions

1. In her talk with Dr. Mandelot, what does Edna mean by "being a dupe to illusions"?
2. Why does Robert leave his note? What does the note mean; that is, why does Robert feel he must leave Edna at this time?

Chapter XXXIX

Victor, with hammer and nails and scraps of scantling¹¹³, was patching a corner of one of the galleries. Mariequita sat near by, dangling her legs, watching him work, and handing him nails from the tool-box. The sun was beating down upon them. The girl had covered her head with her apron folded into a square pad. They had been talking for an hour or more. She was never tired of hearing Victor describe the dinner at Mrs. Pontellier's. He exaggerated every detail, making it appear a veritable Lucullan¹¹⁴ feast. The flowers were in tubs, he said. The champagne was quaffed from huge golden goblets. Venus rising from the foam could have presented no more entrancing a spectacle than Mrs. Pontellier, blazing with beauty and diamonds at the head of the board, while the other women were all of them youthful houris, possessed of incomparable charms. She got it into her head that Victor was in love with Mrs. Pontellier, and he gave her evasive answers, framed so as to confirm her belief. She grew sullen and cried a little, threatening to go off and leave him to his fine ladies. There were a dozen men crazy about her at the *Chênère*; and since it was the fashion to be in love with married people, why, she could run away any time she liked to New Orleans with Celina's husband.

Celina's husband was a fool, a coward, and a pig, and to prove it to her, Victor intended to hammer his head into a jelly the next time he encountered him. This assurance was very consoling to Mariequita. She dried her eyes, and grew cheerful at the prospect.

They were still talking of the dinner and the allurements of city life when Mrs. Pontellier herself slipped around the corner of the house. The two youngsters stayed dumb with amazement before what they considered to be an apparition. But it was really she in flesh and blood, looking tired and a little travel-stained.

"I walked up from the wharf," she said, "and heard the hammering. I supposed it was you, mending the porch. It's a good thing. I was always tripping over those loose planks last summer. How dreary and deserted everything looks!"

It took Victor some little time to comprehend that she had come in Beaufort's lugger, that she had come alone, and for no purpose but to rest.

"There's nothing fixed up yet, you see. I'll give you my room; it's the only place."

"Any corner will do," she assured him.

"And if you can stand Philomel's cooking," he went on, "though I might try to get her mother while you are here. Do you think she would come?" turning to Mariequita.

Mariequita thought that perhaps Philomel's mother might come for a few days, and money enough.

Beholding Mrs. Pontellier make her appearance, the girl had at once suspected a lovers' rendezvous. But Victor's astonishment was so genuine, and Mrs. Pontellier's indifference so apparent, that the disturbing notion did not lodge long in her brain. She contemplated with the greatest interest this woman who gave the most sumptuous dinners in America, and who had all the men in New Orleans at her feet.

"What time will you have dinner?" asked Edna. "I'm very hungry; but don't get anything extra."

"I'll have it ready in little or no time," he said, bustling and packing away his tools. "You may go to my room to brush up and rest yourself. Mariequita will show you."

113. Timber.

114. Lavish, luxurious; a variant of Lucullan, after the Roman military leader and administrator Lucius Lucullus (c. 117-56 B.C.), famous for his extravagant feasts.

“Thank you,” said Edna. “But, do you know, I have a notion to go down to the beach and take a good wash and even a little swim, before dinner?”

“The water is too cold!” they both exclaimed. “Don’t think of it.”

“Well, I might go down and try—dip my toes in. Why, it seems to me the sun is hot enough to have warmed the very depths of the ocean. Could you get me a couple of towels? I’d better go right away, so as to be back in time. It would be a little too chilly if I waited till this afternoon.”

Mariequita ran over to Victor’s room, and returned with some towels, which she gave to Edna.

“I hope you have fish for dinner,” said Edna, as she started to walk away; “but don’t do anything extra if you haven’t.”

“Run and find Philomel’s mother,” Victor instructed the girl. “I’ll go to the kitchen and see what I can do. By Gimminy! Women have no consideration! She might have sent me word.”

Edna walked on down to the beach rather mechanically, not noticing anything special except that the sun was hot. She was not dwelling upon any particular train of thought. She had done all the thinking which was necessary after Robert went away, when she lay awake upon the sofa till morning.

She had said over and over to herself: “To-day it is Arobin; to-morrow it will be someone else. It makes no difference to me, it doesn’t matter about Léonce Pontellier—but Raoul and Etienne!” She understood now clearly what she had meant long ago when she said to Adèle Ratignolle that she would give up the unessential, but she would never sacrifice herself for her children.

Despondency had come upon her there in the wakeful night, and had never lifted. There was no one thing in the world that she desired. There was no human being whom she wanted near her except Robert; and she even realized that the day would come when he, too, and the thought of him would melt out of her existence, leaving her alone. The children appeared before her like antagonists who had overcome her; who had overpowered and sought to drag her into the soul’s slavery for the rest of her days. But she knew a way to elude them. She was not thinking of these things when she walked down to the beach.

The water of the Gulf stretched out before her, gleaming with the million lights of the sun. The voice of the sea is seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander in abysses of solitude. All along the white beach, up and down, there was no living thing in sight. A bird with a broken wing was beating the air above, reeling, fluttering, circling disabled down, down to the water.

Edna had found her old bathing suit still hanging, faded, upon its accustomed peg.

She put it on, leaving her clothing in the bath-house. But when she was there beside the sea, absolutely alone, she cast the unpleasant, pricking garments from her, and for the first time in her life she stood naked in the open air, at the mercy of the sun, the breeze that beat upon her, and the waves that invited her.

How strange and awful it seemed to stand naked under the sky! how delicious! She felt like some new-born creature, opening its eyes in a familiar world that it had never known.

The foamy wavelets curled up to her white feet, and coiled like serpents about her ankles. She walked out. The water was chill, but she walked on. The water was deep, but she lifted her white body and reached out with a long, sweeping stroke. The touch of the sea is sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft, close embrace.

She went on and on. She remembered the night she swam far out, and recalled the terror that seized her at the fear of being unable to regain the shore. She did not look back now, but went on and on, thinking of the blue-grass meadow that she had traversed when a little child, believing that it had no beginning and no end.

Her arms and legs were growing tired.

She thought of Léonce and the children. They were a part of her life. But they need not have thought

that they could possess her, body and soul. How Mademoiselle Reisz would have laughed, perhaps sneered, if she knew! “And you call yourself an artist! What pretensions, Madame! The artist must possess the courageous soul that dares and defies.”

Exhaustion was pressing upon and overpowering her.

“Good-bye—because I love you.” He did not know; he did not understand. He would never understand. Perhaps Doctor Mandelet would have understood if she had seen him—but it was too late; the shore was far behind her, and her strength was gone.

She looked into the distance, and the old terror flamed up for an instant, then sank again. Edna heard her father’s voice and her sister Margaret’s. She heard the barking of an old dog that was chained to the sycamore tree. The spurs of the cavalry officer clanged as he walked across the porch. There was the hum of bees, and the musky odor of pinks filled the air.

Chapter XXXIX Study Questions

1. What is the setting for the last chapter? Why is it appropriate?
2. Is Victor’s understanding of Edna accurate? What impediments are there to Edna’s freedom now? Would you call her death a suicide? What is suggested by Edna’s removal of all clothing as she starts to swim from shore?

Review by Willa Cather

Chopin was strongly influenced by French literature. Willa Cather was the first to compare “The Awakening” to Flaubert’s “Madame Bovary,” calling it “The American Bovary”. Find points of similarity. [Cather’s 1899 review of “The Awakening”](#) is reprinted in *The Awakening*, Norton Critical, 3rd ed., Margo Culley, pp. 188–191. She considers Chopin’s novel a pale imitation of Bovary. Do you agree? Here is the first part of Cather’s review. You will find the rest in Culley.

Cather was a young critic in her mid-twenties when she wrote this July 1899 review for *The Pittsburgh Leader* (8 July 1899, p. 6.).

A Creole “Bovary”

A Creole “Bovary” is this little novel of Miss Chopin’s. Not that the heroine is a Creole exactly, or that Miss Chopin is a Flaubert — but the theme is similar to that which occupied Flaubert.

There was, indeed, no need that a second *Madame Bovary* should be written, but an author’s choice of themes is frequently as inexplicable as his choice of a wife. It is governed by some innate temperamental bias that cannot be diagrammed.

This is particularly so in women who write, and I shall not attempt to say why Miss Chopin has devoted so exquisite and sensitive, well-governed a style to so trite and sordid a theme.

She writes much better than it is ever given to most people to write, and hers is a genuinely literary style; of no great elegance or solidity; but light, flexible, subtle and capable of producing telling effects directly and simply. The story she has to tell in the present instance is new neither in matter nor treatment.

Edna Pontellier, a Kentucky girl, who, like Emma Bovary, had been in love with innumerable dream heroes before she was out of short skirts, married Léonce Pontellier as a sort of reaction from a vague and visionary passion for a tragedian whose unresponsive picture she used to kiss.

She acquired the habit of liking her husband in time, and even of liking her children. Though we are not justified in presuming that she ever threw articles from her dressing table at them, as the charming “Emma” had a winsome habit of doing, we are told that “she would sometimes gather them passionately to her heart, she would sometimes forget them....”

Additional Resources

You may wish to view the interesting documentary from Louisiana Public Broadcasting: [Kate Chopin: A Reawakening](#).

And here is a useful [study guide to *The Awakening* \[PDF\]](#) from Penguin publishers.

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VI

The Novel

53.

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940)**Biography**

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (September 24, 1896–December 21, 1940) was an American fiction writer whose works helped to illustrate the flamboyance and excess of the Jazz Age. While he achieved popular success, fame, and fortune in his lifetime, he did not receive much critical acclaim until after his death. A notable member of the “Lost Generation” of the 1920s, Fitzgerald is now widely regarded as one of the greatest American writers of the twentieth century.

He finished four novels: *This Side of Paradise* (1920), *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and *Tender Is the Night* (1934). A fifth, unfinished novel, *The Last Tycoon*, was published posthumously in 1941. Four collections of his short stories were published, as well as 164 short stories in magazines during his lifetime, and fifty more uncollected stories were published by Fitzgerald scholar Matthew J. Bruccoli in *The Price Was High* (1979).

Born in 1896 in Saint Paul, Minnesota, to an upper-middle-class family, Fitzgerald was a distant

relative of Francis Scott Key, who wrote the poem that became the basis for the American national anthem.

With the help of relatives, he studied at Princeton University. There, he firmly dedicated himself to honing his craft as a writer. But his writing pursuits at Princeton came at the expense of his coursework, causing him to be placed on academic probation, and in 1917, he dropped out of university to join the army.

Fitzgerald was commissioned a second lieutenant in the infantry and assigned to Camp Sheridan near Montgomery, Alabama, where he met and fell in love with Zelda Sayre, the “golden girl,” in Fitzgerald’s terms, of Montgomery society. The war ended in 1918 before Fitzgerald was ever deployed. Upon his discharge, he moved to New York City, hoping to launch a career in advertising that would be lucrative enough to persuade Zelda to marry him.

Zelda accepted his marriage proposal, but unconvinced that he would be able to support her, she later broke off the engagement. However, with the success of Fitzgerald’s first novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920), they resumed their engagement and were married in New York. Their only child, Frances Scott “Scottie” Fitzgerald, was born on October 26, 1921.

During the 1920s—his most productive decade—Fitzgerald made several excursions to Europe, mostly Paris and the French Riviera, and became friends with many members of the American expatriate community in Paris, notably Ernest Hemingway. Like most professional authors at the time, Fitzgerald supplemented his income by writing short stories for several large-circulation American magazines.

Although Fitzgerald’s passion lay in writing novels, only his first novel sold well enough to support the opulent lifestyle that he and Zelda adopted as New York celebrities. (*The Great Gatsby*, now considered to be his masterpiece, did not become popular until after Fitzgerald’s death.) Because of this lifestyle, as well as the bills from Zelda’s medical care when they came, Fitzgerald was constantly in financial trouble. He died at the young age of 44 in 1940.

The publication of *The Great Gatsby* prompted T.S. Eliot to write, in a letter to Fitzgerald, “It seems to me to be the first step that American fiction has taken since Henry James.” Into the twenty-first century, millions of copies of *The Great Gatsby* and his other works have been sold, and *Gatsby*, a constant bestseller, is required reading in many high school and college classes.

The Great Gatsby

Published 1925

Then wear the gold hat, if that will move her;
If you can bounce high, bounce for her too,
Till she cry “Lover, gold-hatted, high-bouncing lover,
I must have you!”
—THOMAS PARKE D’INVILLIERS¹

1. Thomas Parke D’Invilliers was a fictitious poet, invented by FSF. He is based on Fitzgerald’s Princeton friend John Peale Bishop, a fellow member of the 1917 class. Thomas Parke D’Invilliers appears in Fitzgerald’s first novel *This Side of Paradise* (1920).

Chapter 1

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

"Whenever you feel like criticizing any one," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

He didn't say any more but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person, and so it came about that in college I was unjustly accused of being a politician, because I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men. Most of the confidences were unsought—frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation, or a hostile levity when I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon—for the intimate revelations of young men or at least the terms in which they express them are usually plagiaristic and marred by obvious suppressions. Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat, a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth.

And, after boasting this way of my tolerance, I come to the admission that it has a limit. Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on. When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction—Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the "creative temperament"—it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No—Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men.

My family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this middle-western city for three generations. The Carraways are something of a clan and we have a tradition that we're descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch, but the actual founder of my line was my grandfather's brother who came here in fifty-one, sent a substitute to the Civil War and started the wholesale hardware business that my father carries on today.

I never saw this great-uncle but I'm supposed to look like him—with special reference to the rather hard-boiled painting that hangs in Father's office. I graduated from New Haven² in 1915, just a quarter of a century after my father, and a little later I participated in that delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War. I enjoyed the counter-raid so thoroughly that I came back restless. Instead of being the warm center of the world the middle-west now seemed like the ragged edge of the universe—so I decided to go east and learn the bond business. Everybody I knew was in the bond business so I

2. Yale University, located in New Haven, Connecticut.

supposed it could support one more single man. All my aunts and uncles talked it over as if they were choosing a prep-school for me and finally said, “Why–ye-es” with very grave, hesitant faces. Father agreed to finance me for a year and after various delays I came east, permanently, I thought, in the spring of twenty-two.

The practical thing was to find rooms in the city but it was a warm season and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town it sounded like a great idea. He found the house, a weather beaten cardboard bungalow at eighty a month, but at the last minute the firm ordered him to Washington and I went out to the country alone. I had a dog, at least I had him for a few days until he ran away, and an old Dodge and a Finnish woman who made my bed and cooked breakfast and muttered Finnish wisdom to herself over the electric stove.

It was lonely for a day or so until one morning some man, more recently arrived than I, stopped me on the road.

“How do you get to West Egg³ village?” he asked helplessly.

I told him. And as I walked on I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler. He had casually conferred on me the freedom of the neighborhood.

And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees—just as things grow in fast movies—I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.

There was so much to read for one thing and so much fine health to be pulled down out of the young breath-giving air. I bought a dozen volumes on banking and credit and investment securities and they stood on my shelf in red and gold like new money from the mint, promising to unfold the shining secrets that only Midas⁴ and Morgan and Maecenas knew. And I had the high intention of reading many other books besides. I was rather literary in college—one year I wrote a series of very solemn and obvious editorials for the “Yale News”—and now I was going to bring back all such things into my life and become again that most limited of all specialists, the “well-rounded man.” This isn’t just an epigram—life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all.

It was a matter of chance that I should have rented a house in one of the strangest communities in North America. It was on that slender riotous island which extends itself due east of New York and where there are, among other natural curiosities, two unusual formations of land. Twenty miles from the city a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay, jut out into the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western Hemisphere, the great wet barnyard of Long Island Sound. They are not perfect ovals—like the egg in the Columbus⁵ story they are both crushed flat at the contact end—but their physical resemblance must be a source of perpetual confusion to the gulls that fly overhead. To the wingless a more arresting phenomenon is their dissimilarity in every particular except shape and size.

I lived at West Egg, the—well, the less fashionable of the two, though this is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little sinister contrast between them. My house was at the very tip of the egg, only fifty yards from the Sound, and squeezed between two huge places that rented for twelve or fifteen thousand a season. The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard—it was a factual imitation of some Hôtel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was

3. A fictitious part of Long Island, where, along with Manhattan, most of the events in the novel take place.

4. Legendary king of Phrygia, whose request of the gods that everything he touched be turned to gold was granted. J(ohn) P(ierpoint) Morgan (1837-1913) was a wealthy American financier and banker. Gaius Maecenas (ca. 70 BC-8 BC) was a wealthy advisor to Octavian, later Emperor Caesar Augustus of Rome. His name is a byword for a wealthy patron of the arts.

5. Christopher Columbus allegedly challenged his detractors on his discovery of America, to make an egg stand on its tip. When they gave up, he flattened its tip by tapping the egg on the table.

Gatsby's mansion. Or rather, as I didn't know Mr. Gatsby it was a mansion inhabited by a gentleman of that name. My own house was an eye-sore, but it was a small eye-sore, and it had been overlooked, so I had a view of the water, a partial view of my neighbor's lawn, and the consoling proximity of millionaires—all for eighty dollars a month.

Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water, and the history of the summer really begins on the evening I drove over there to have dinner with the Tom Buchanans. Daisy was my second cousin once removed and I'd known Tom in college. And just after the war I spent two days with them in Chicago.

Her husband, among various physical accomplishments, had been one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven—a national figure in a way, one of those men who reach such an acute limited excellence at twenty-one that everything afterward savors of anti-climax. His family were enormously wealthy—even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach—but now he'd left Chicago and come east in a fashion that rather took your breath away: for instance he'd brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest⁶. It was hard to realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that.

Why they came east I don't know. They had spent a year in France, for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together. This was a permanent move, said Daisy over the telephone, but I didn't believe it—I had no sight into Daisy's heart but I felt that Tom would drift on forever seeking a little wistfully for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game.

And so it happened that on a warm windy evening I drove over to East Egg to see two old friends whom I scarcely knew at all. Their house was even more elaborate than I expected, a cheerful red and white Georgian Colonial mansion overlooking the bay. The lawn started at the beach and ran toward the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens—finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run. The front was broken by a line of French windows, glowing now with reflected gold, and wide open to the warm windy afternoon, and Tom Buchanan in riding clothes was standing with his legs apart on the front porch.

He had changed since his New Haven years. Now he was a sturdy, straw haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining, arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward. Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body—he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body capable of enormous leverage—a cruel body.

His speaking voice, a gruff husky tenor, added to the impression of fractiousness he conveyed. There was a touch of paternal contempt in it, even toward people he liked—and there were men at New Haven who had hated his guts.

“Now, don't think my opinion on these matters is final,” he seemed to say, “just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are.” We were in the same Senior Society, and while we were never intimate I always had the impression that he approved of me and wanted me to like him with some harsh, defiant wistfulness of his own.

We talked for a few minutes on the sunny porch.

“I've got a nice place here,” he said, his eyes flashing about restlessly.

Turning me around by one arm he moved a broad flat hand along the front vista, including in its

6. A fashionable Chicago suburb.

sweep a sunken Italian garden, a half acre of deep pungent roses and a snub-nosed motor boat that bumped the tide off shore.

“It belonged to Demaine the oil man.” He turned me around again, politely and abruptly. “We’ll go inside.”

We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space, fragily bound into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding cake of the ceiling—and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.

The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died out about the room and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor.

The younger of the two was a stranger to me. She was extended full length at her end of the divan, completely motionless and with her chin raised a little as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall. If she saw me out of the corner of her eyes she gave no hint of it—indeed, I was almost surprised into murmuring an apology for having disturbed her by coming in.

The other girl, Daisy, made an attempt to rise—she leaned slightly forward with a conscientious expression—then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh, and I laughed too and came forward into the room.

“I’m p-paralyzed with happiness.”

She laughed again, as if she said something very witty, and held my hand for a moment, looking up into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was a way she had. She hinted in a murmur that the surname of the balancing girl was Baker. (I’ve heard it said that Daisy’s murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.)

At any rate Miss Baker’s lips fluttered, she nodded at me almost imperceptibly and then quickly tipped her head back again—the object she was balancing had obviously tottered a little and given her something of a fright. Again a sort of apology arose to my lips. Almost any exhibition of complete self-sufficiency draws a stunned tribute from me.

I looked back at my cousin who began to ask me questions in her low, thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth—but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered “Listen,” a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour.

I told her how I had stopped off in Chicago for a day on my way east and how a dozen people had sent their love through me.

“Do they miss me?” she cried ecstatically.

“The whole town is desolate. All the cars have the left rear wheel painted black as a mourning wreath and there’s a persistent wail all night along the North Shore.”

“How gorgeous! Let’s go back, Tom. Tomorrow!” Then she added irrelevantly, “You ought to see the baby.”

"I'd like to."

"She's asleep. She's two years old. Haven't you ever seen her?"

"Never."

"Well, you ought to see her. She's—"

Tom Buchanan who had been hovering restlessly about the room stopped and rested his hand on my shoulder.

"What you doing, Nick?"

"I'm a bond man."

"Who with?"

I told him.

"Never heard of them," he remarked decisively.

This annoyed me.

"You will," I answered shortly. "You will if you stay in the East."

"Oh, I'll stay in the East, don't you worry," he said, glancing at Daisy and then back at me, as if he were alert for something more. "I'd be a God Damned fool to live anywhere else."

At this point Miss Baker said "Absolutely!" with such suddenness that I started—it was the first word she uttered since I came into the room. Evidently it surprised her as much as it did me, for she yawned and with a series of rapid, deft movements stood up into the room.

"I'm stiff," she complained, "I've been lying on that sofa for as long as I can remember."

"Don't look at me," Daisy retorted. "I've been trying to get you to New York all afternoon."

"No, thanks," said Miss Baker to the four cocktails just in from the pantry, "I'm absolutely in training."

Her host looked at her incredulously.

"You are!" He took down his drink as if it were a drop in the bottom of a glass. "How you ever get anything done is beyond me."

I looked at Miss Baker wondering what it was she "got done." I enjoyed looking at her. She was a slender, small-breasted girl, with an erect carriage which she accentuated by throwing her body backward at the shoulders like a young cadet. Her grey sun-strained eyes looked back at me with polite reciprocal curiosity out of a wan, charming discontented face. It occurred to me now that I had seen her, or a picture of her, somewhere before.

"You live in West Egg," she remarked contemptuously. "I know somebody there."

"I don't know a single—"

"You must know Gatsby."

"Gatsby?" demanded Daisy. "What Gatsby?"

Before I could reply that he was my neighbor dinner was announced; wedging his tense arm imperatively under mine Tom Buchanan compelled me from the room as though he were moving a checker to another square.

Slenderly, languidly, their hands set lightly on their hips the two young women preceded us out onto a rosy-colored porch open toward the sunset where four candles flickered on the table in the diminished wind.

"Why *candles*?" objected Daisy, frowning. She snapped them out with her fingers. "In two weeks it'll be the longest day in the year." She looked at us all radiantly. "Do you always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it? I always watch for the longest day in the year and then miss it."

"We ought to plan something," yawned Miss Baker, sitting down at the table as if she were getting into bed.

"All right," said Daisy. "What'll we plan?" She turned to me helplessly. "What do people plan?"

Before I could answer her eyes fastened with an awed expression on her little finger.

“Look!” she complained. “I hurt it.”

We all looked—the knuckle was black and blue.

“You did it, Tom,” she said accusingly. “I know you didn’t mean to but you *did* do it. That’s what I get for marrying a brute of a man, a great big hulking physical specimen of a—”

“I hate that word hulking,” objected Tom crossly, “even in kidding.”

“Hulking,” insisted Daisy.

Sometimes she and Miss Baker talked at once, unobtrusively and with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter, that was as cool as their white dresses and their impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire. They were here—and they accepted Tom and me, making only a polite pleasant effort to entertain or to be entertained. They knew that presently dinner would be over and a little later the evening too would be over and casually put away. It was sharply different from the West where an evening was hurried from phase to phase toward its close in a continually disappointed anticipation or else in sheer nervous dread of the moment itself.

“You make me feel uncivilized, Daisy,” I confessed on my second glass of corky but rather impressive claret. “Can’t you talk about crops or something?”

I meant nothing in particular by this remark but it was taken up in an unexpected way.

“Civilization’s going to pieces,” broke out Tom violently. “I’ve gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read ‘The Rise of the Coloured Empires’ by this man Goddard?”⁷

“Why, no,” I answered, rather surprised by his tone.

“Well, it’s a fine book, and everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don’t look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged. It’s all scientific stuff; it’s been proved.”

“Tom’s getting very profound,” said Daisy with an expression of unthoughtful sadness. “He reads deep books with long words in them. What was that word we—”

“Well, these books are all scientific,” insisted Tom, glancing at her impatiently. “This fellow has worked out the whole thing. It’s up to us who are the dominant race to watch out or these other races will have control of things.”

“We’ve got to beat them down,” whispered Daisy, winking ferociously toward the fervent sun.

“You ought to live in California—” began Miss Baker but Tom interrupted her by shifting heavily in his chair.

“This idea is that we’re Nordics. I am, and you are and you are and—” After an infinitesimal hesitation he included Daisy with a slight nod and she winked at me again. “—and we’ve produced all the things that go to make civilization—oh, science and art and all that. Do you see?”

There was something pathetic in his concentration as if his complacency, more acute than of old, was not enough to him any more. When, almost immediately, the telephone rang inside and the butler left the porch Daisy seized upon the momentary interruption and leaned toward me.

“I’ll tell you a family secret,” she whispered enthusiastically. “It’s about the butler’s nose. Do you want to hear about the butler’s nose?”

“That’s why I came over tonight.”

“Well, he wasn’t always a butler; he used to be the silver polisher for some people in New York that had a silver service for two hundred people. He had to polish it from morning till night until finally it began to affect his nose—”

“Things went from bad to worse,” suggested Miss Baker.

“Yes. Things went from bad to worse until finally he had to give up his position.”

For a moment the last sunshine fell with romantic affection upon her glowing face; her voice

7. A probable reference to *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy* by Lothrop Stoddard (1883-1950), a book advocating eugenics and racism.

compelled me forward breathlessly as I listened—then the glow faded, each light deserting her with lingering regret like children leaving a pleasant street at dusk.

The butler came back and murmured something close to Tom's ear whereupon Tom frowned, pushed back his chair and without a word went inside. As if his absence quickened something within her Daisy leaned forward again, her voice glowing and singing.

"I love to see you at my table, Nick. You remind me of a—of a rose, an absolute rose. Doesn't he?" She turned to Miss Baker for confirmation. "An absolute rose?"

This was untrue. I am not even faintly like a rose. She was only extemporizing but a stirring warmth flowed from her as if her heart was trying to come out to you concealed in one of those breathless, thrilling words. Then suddenly she threw her napkin on the table and excused herself and went into the house.

Miss Baker and I exchanged a short glance consciously devoid of meaning. I was about to speak when she sat up alertly and said "Sh!" in a warning voice. A subdued impassioned murmur was audible in the room beyond and Miss Baker leaned forward, unashamed, trying to hear. The murmur trembled on the verge of coherence, sank down, mounted excitedly, and then ceased altogether.

"This Mr. Gatsby you spoke of is my neighbor—" I said.

"Don't talk. I want to hear what happens."

"Is something happening?" I inquired innocently.

"You mean to say you don't know?" said Miss Baker, honestly surprised. "I thought everybody knew."

"I don't."

"Why—" she said hesitantly, "Tom's got some woman in New York."

"Got some woman?" I repeated blankly.

Miss Baker nodded.

"She might have the decency not to telephone him at dinner-time. Don't you think?"

Almost before I had grasped her meaning there was the flutter of a dress and the crunch of leather boots and Tom and Daisy were back at the table.

"It couldn't be helped!" cried Daisy with tense gayety.

She sat down, glanced searchingly at Miss Baker and then at me and continued: "I looked outdoors for a minute and it's very romantic outdoors. There's a bird on the lawn that I think must be a nightingale come over on the Cunard or White Star Line⁸. He's singing away—" her voice sang "—It's romantic, isn't it, Tom?"

"Very romantic," he said, and then miserably to me: "If it's light enough after dinner I want to take you down to the stables."

The telephone rang inside, startlingly, and as Daisy shook her head decisively at Tom the subject of the stables, in fact all subjects, vanished into air. Among the broken fragments of the last five minutes at table I remember the candles being lit again, pointlessly, and I was conscious of wanting to look squarely at every one and yet to avoid all eyes. I couldn't guess what Daisy and Tom were thinking but I doubt if even Miss Baker who seemed to have mastered a certain hardy skepticism was able utterly to put this fifth guest's shrill metallic urgency out of mind. To a certain temperament the situation might have seemed intriguing—my own instinct was to telephone immediately for the police.

The horses, needless to say, were not mentioned again. Tom and Miss Baker, with several feet of twilight between them strolled back into the library, as if to a vigil beside a perfectly tangible body, while trying to look pleasantly interested and a little deaf I followed Daisy around a chain of

8. British passenger-ship lines running between Britain and America.

connecting verandas to the porch in front. In its deep gloom we sat down side by side on a wicker settee.

Daisy took her face in her hands, as if feeling its lovely shape, and her eyes moved gradually out into the velvet dusk. I saw that turbulent emotions possessed her, so I asked what I thought would be some sedative questions about her little girl.

“We don’t know each other very well, Nick,” she said suddenly. “Even if we are cousins. You didn’t come to my wedding.”

“I wasn’t back from the war.”

“That’s true.” She hesitated. “Well, I’ve had a very bad time, Nick, and I’m pretty cynical about everything.”

Evidently she had reason to be. I waited but she didn’t say any more, and after a moment I returned rather feebly to the subject of her daughter.

“I suppose she talks, and—eats, and everything.”

“Oh, yes.” She looked at me absently. “Listen, Nick; let me tell you what I said when she was born. Would you like to hear?”

“Very much.”

“It’ll show you how I’ve gotten to feel about—things. Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. ‘All right,’ I said, ‘I’m glad it’s a girl. And I hope she’ll be a fool—that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.’”

“You see I think everything’s terrible anyhow,” she went on in a convinced way. “Everybody thinks so—the most advanced people. And I *know*. I’ve been everywhere and seen everything and done everything.” Her eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom’s, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. “Sophisticated—God, I’m sophisticated!”

The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged.

Inside, the crimson room bloomed with light. Tom and Miss Baker sat at either end of the long couch and she read aloud to him from the “Saturday Evening Post”⁹—the words, murmurous and uninflected, running together in a soothing tune. The lamp-light, bright on his boots and dull on the autumn-leaf yellow of her hair, glinted along the paper as she turned a page with a flutter of slender muscles in her arms.

When we came in she held us silent for a moment with a lifted hand.

“To be continued,” she said, tossing the magazine on the table, “in our very next issue.”

Her body asserted itself with a restless movement of her knee, and she stood up.

“Ten o’clock,” she remarked, apparently finding the time on the ceiling. “Time for this good girl to go to bed.”

“Jordan’s going to play in the tournament tomorrow,” explained Daisy, “over at Westchester.”¹⁰

“Oh,—you’re Jordan Baker.”

I knew now why her face was familiar—its pleasing contemptuous expression had looked out at me

9. A popular U.S. magazine to which Fitzgerald contributed fiction.

10. An affluent county north of New York City.

from many rotogravure pictures of the sporting life at Asheville¹¹ and Hot Springs and Palm Beach. I had heard some story of her too, a critical, unpleasant story, but what it was I had forgotten long ago.

“Good night,” she said softly. “Wake me at eight, won’t you.”

“If you’ll get up.”

“I will. Good night, Mr. Carraway. See you anon.”

“Of course you will,” confirmed Daisy. “In fact I think I’ll arrange a marriage. Come over often, Nick, and I’ll sort of—oh—fling you together. You know—lock you up accidentally in linen closets and push you out to sea in a boat, and all that sort of thing—”

“Good night,” called Miss Baker from the stairs. “I haven’t heard a word.”

“She’s a nice girl,” said Tom after a moment. “They oughtn’t to let her run around the country this way.”

“Who oughtn’t to?” inquired Daisy coldly.

“Her family.”

“Her family is one aunt about a thousand years old. Besides, Nick’s going to look after her, aren’t you, Nick? She’s going to spend lots of week-ends out here this summer. I think the home influence will be very good for her.”

Daisy and Tom looked at each other for a moment in silence.

“Is she from New York?” I asked quickly.

“From Louisville. Our white girlhood was passed together there. Our beautiful white—”

“Did you give Nick a little heart to heart talk on the veranda?” demanded Tom suddenly.

“Did I?” She looked at me. “I can’t seem to remember, but I think we talked about the Nordic race. Yes, I’m sure we did. It sort of crept up on us and first thing you know—”

“Don’t believe everything you hear, Nick,” he advised me.

I said lightly that I had heard nothing at all, and a few minutes later I got up to go home. They came to the door with me and stood side by side in a cheerful square of light. As I started my motor Daisy peremptorily called “Wait!”

“I forgot to ask you something, and it’s important. We heard you were engaged to a girl out West.”

“That’s right,” corroborated Tom kindly. “We heard that you were engaged.”

“It’s libel. I’m too poor.”

“But we heard it,” insisted Daisy, surprising me by opening up again in a flower-like way. “We heard it from three people so it must be true.”

Of course I knew what they were referring to, but I wasn’t even vaguely engaged. The fact that gossip had published the banns¹² was one of the reasons I had come east. You can’t stop going with an old friend on account of rumors and on the other hand I had no intention of being rumored into marriage.

Their interest rather touched me and made them less remotely rich—nevertheless, I was confused and a little disgusted as I drove away. It seemed to me that the thing for Daisy to do was to rush out of the house, child in arms—but apparently there were no such intentions in her head. As for Tom, the fact that he “had some woman in New York” was really less surprising than that he had been depressed by a book. Something was making him nibble at the edge of stale ideas as if his sturdy physical egotism no longer nourished his peremptory heart.

Already it was deep summer on roadhouse roofs and in front of wayside garages, where new red gas-pumps sat out in pools of light, and when I reached my estate at West Egg I ran the car under its shed and sat for a while on an abandoned grass roller in the yard. The wind had blown off, leaving a loud

11. Fashionable resort cities in North Carolina, Virginia, and Florida.

12. Public announcement for three successive Sundays of an intended marriage.

bright night with wings beating in the trees and a persistent organ sound as the full bellows of the earth blew the frogs full of life. The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight and turning my head to watch it I saw that I was not alone—fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor’s mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens.

I decided to call to him. Miss Baker had mentioned him at dinner, and that would do for an introduction. But I didn’t call to him for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone—he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and far as I was from him I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness.

Chapter 1 Study Questions

1. Look up the literary term “epigraph.” Why do authors sometimes use them? What might be a thematic use for Fitzgerald’s epigraph?
2. What does the name “Daisy” symbolize?
3. What does the name “Fay” suggest?
4. Describe Tom. Is his last name symbolic in any way? What irrecoverable thing is he trying to recover?
5. What do Daisy’s words “paralyzed with happiness” suggest about her character?
6. Is Jordan’s name symbolic?
7. Which character did not serve overseas? Nick, Gatsby, or Tom?
8. What does the green light on Daisy’s dock suggest?

Chapter 2

About half way between West Egg and New York the motor-road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of grey cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak and comes to rest, and immediately the ash-grey men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud which screens their obscure operations from your sight.

But above the grey land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic—their retinas¹³ are one yard high. They look out of no face but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a non-existent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many paintless days under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground.

The valley of ashes is bounded on one side by a small foul river, and when the drawbridge is up to let barges through, the passengers on waiting trains can stare at the dismal scene for as long as half an hour. There is always a halt there of at least a minute and it was because of this that I first met Tom Buchanan's mistress.

The fact that he had one was insisted upon wherever he was known. His acquaintances resented the fact that he turned up in popular restaurants with her and, leaving her at a table, sauntered about, chatting with whomsoever he knew. Though I was curious to see her I had no desire to meet her—but I did. I went up to New York with Tom on the train one afternoon and when we stopped by the ash heaps he jumped to his feet and taking hold of my elbow literally forced me from the car.

"We're getting off!" he insisted. "I want you to meet my girl."

I think he'd tanked up a good deal at luncheon and his determination to have my company bordered on violence. The supercilious assumption was that on Sunday afternoon I had nothing better to do.

I followed him over a low white-washed railroad fence and we walked back a hundred yards along the road under Doctor Eckleburg's persistent stare. The only building in sight was a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the waste land, a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it and contiguous to absolutely nothing. One of the three shops it contained was for rent and another was an all-night restaurant approached by a trail of ashes; the third was a garage—Repairs. GEORGE B. WILSON. Cars Bought and Sold—and I followed Tom inside.

The interior was unprosperous and bare; the only car visible was the dust-covered wreck of a Ford which crouched in a dim corner. It had occurred to me that this shadow of a garage must be a blind and that sumptuous and romantic apartments were concealed overhead when the proprietor himself appeared in the door of an office, wiping his hands on a piece of waste. He was a blonde, spiritless man, anaemic, and faintly handsome. When he saw us a damp gleam of hope sprang into his light blue eyes.

"Hello, Wilson, old man," said Tom, slapping him jovially on the shoulder. "How's business?"

"I can't complain," answered Wilson unconvincingly. "When are you going to sell me that car?"

13. More likely "irises" or "pupils," since retinas are not visible.

“Next week; I’ve got my man working on it now.”

“Works pretty slow, don’t he?”

“No, he doesn’t,” said Tom coldly. “And if you feel that way about it, maybe I’d better sell it somewhere else after all.”

“I don’t mean that,” explained Wilson quickly. “I just meant—”

His voice faded off and Tom glanced impatiently around the garage. Then I heard footsteps on a stairs and in a moment the thickish figure of a woman blocked out the light from the office door. She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crepe-de-chine, contained no facet or gleam of beauty but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering. She smiled slowly and walking through her husband as if he were a ghost shook hands with Tom, looking him flush in the eye. Then she wet her lips and without turning around spoke to her husband in a soft, coarse voice:

“Get some chairs, why don’t you, so somebody can sit down.”

“Oh, sure,” agreed Wilson hurriedly and went toward the little office, mingling immediately with the cement color of the walls. A white ashen dust veiled his dark suit and his pale hair as it veiled everything in the vicinity—except his wife, who moved close to Tom.

“I want to see you,” said Tom intently. “Get on the next train.”

“All right.”

“I’ll meet you by the news-stand on the lower level.”

She nodded and moved away from him just as George Wilson emerged with two chairs from his office door.

We waited for her down the road and out of sight. It was a few days before the Fourth of July, and a grey, scrawny Italian child was setting torpedoes in a row along the railroad track.

“Terrible place, isn’t it,” said Tom, exchanging a frown with Doctor Eckleburg.

“Awful.”

“It does her good to get away.”

“Doesn’t her husband object?”

“Wilson? He thinks she goes to see her sister in New York. He’s so dumb he doesn’t know he’s alive.”

So Tom Buchanan and his girl and I went up together to New York—or not quite together, for Mrs. Wilson sat discreetly in another car. Tom deferred that much to the sensibilities of those East Eggers who might be on the train.

She had changed her dress to a brown figured muslin which stretched tight over her rather wide hips as Tom helped her to the platform in New York. At the news-stand she bought a copy of “Town Tattle” and a moving-picture magazine and, in the station drug store, some cold cream and a small flask of perfume. Upstairs, in the solemn echoing drive she let four taxi cabs drive away before she selected a new one, lavender-colored with grey upholstery, and in this we slid out from the mass of the station into the glowing sunshine. But immediately she turned sharply from the window and leaning forward tapped on the front glass.

“I want to get one of those dogs,” she said earnestly. “I want to get one for the apartment. They’re nice to have—a dog.”

We backed up to a grey old man who bore an absurd resemblance to John D. Rockefeller¹⁴. In a basket, swung from his neck, cowered a dozen very recent puppies of an indeterminate breed.

“What kind are they?” asked Mrs. Wilson eagerly as he came to the taxi-window.

14. John David Rockefeller (1839-1937). American oil magnate, once considered the wealthiest American of all time.

“All kinds. What kind do you want, lady?”

“I’d like to get one of those police dogs; I don’t suppose you got that kind?”

The man peered doubtfully into the basket, plunged in his hand and drew one up, wriggling, by the back of the neck.

“That’s no police dog,” said Tom.

“No, it’s not exactly a police dog,” said the man with disappointment in his voice. “It’s more of an airedale.” He passed his hand over the brown wash-rag of a back. “Look at that coat. Some coat. That’s a dog that’ll never bother you with catching cold.”

“I think it’s cute,” said Mrs. Wilson enthusiastically. “How much is it?”

“That dog?” He looked at it admiringly. “That dog will cost you ten dollars.”

The airedale—undoubtedly there was an airedale concerned in it somewhere though its feet were startlingly white—changed hands and settled down into Mrs. Wilson’s lap, where she fondled the weather-proof coat with rapture.

“Is it a boy or a girl?” she asked delicately.

“That dog? That dog’s a boy.”

“It’s a bitch,” said Tom decisively. “Here’s your money. Go and buy ten more dogs with it.”

We drove over to Fifth Avenue, so warm and soft, almost pastoral, on the summer Sunday afternoon that I wouldn’t have been surprised to see a great flock of white sheep turn the corner.

“Hold on,” I said, “I have to leave you here.”

“No, you don’t,” interposed Tom quickly. “Myrtle’ll be hurt if you don’t come up to the apartment. Won’t you, Myrtle?”

“Come on,” she urged. “I’ll telephone my sister Catherine. She’s said to be very beautiful by people who ought to know.”

“Well, I’d like to, but—”

We went on, cutting back again over the Park toward the West Hundreds. At 158th Street the cab stopped at one slice in a long white cake of apartment houses. Throwing a regal homecoming glance around the neighborhood, Mrs. Wilson gathered up her dog and her other purchases and went haughtily in.

“I’m going to have the McKees come up,” she announced as we rose in the elevator. “And of course I got to call up my sister, too.”

The apartment was on the top floor—a small living room, a small dining room, a small bedroom and a bath. The living room was crowded to the doors with a set of tapestried furniture entirely too large for it so that to move about was to stumble continually over scenes of ladies swinging in the gardens of Versailles. The only picture was an over-enlarged photograph, apparently a hen sitting on a blurred rock. Looked at from a distance however the hen resolved itself into a bonnet and the countenance of a stout old lady beamed down into the room. Several old copies of “Town Tattle” lay on the table together with a copy of “Simon Called Peter”¹⁵ and some of the small scandal magazines of Broadway. Mrs. Wilson was first concerned with the dog. A reluctant elevator boy went for a box full of straw and some milk to which he added on his own initiative a tin of large hard dog biscuits—one of which decomposed apathetically in the saucer of milk all afternoon. Meanwhile Tom brought out a bottle of whiskey from a locked bureau door.

I have been drunk just twice in my life and the second time was that afternoon so everything that happened has a dim hazy cast over it although until after eight o’clock the apartment was full of cheerful sun. Sitting on Tom’s lap Mrs. Wilson called up several people on the telephone; then there were no cigarettes and I went out to buy some at the drug store on the corner. When I came back they

15. A best-selling novel of 1921 by Robert Keable (1887-1927).

had disappeared so I sat down discreetly in the living room and read a chapter of “Simon Called Peter”—either it was terrible stuff or the whiskey distorted things because it didn’t make any sense to me.

Just as Tom and Myrtle—after the first drink Mrs. Wilson and I called each other by our first names—reappeared, company commenced to arrive at the apartment door.

The sister, Catherine, was a slender, worldly girl of about thirty with a solid sticky bob¹⁶ of red hair and a complexion powdered milky white. Her eyebrows had been plucked and then drawn on again at a more rakish angle but the efforts of nature toward the restoration of the old alignment gave a blurred air to her face. When she moved about there was an incessant clicking as innumerable pottery bracelets jingled up and down upon her arms. She came in with such a proprietary haste and looked around so possessively at the furniture that I wondered if she lived here. But when I asked her she laughed immoderately, repeated my question aloud and told me she lived with a girl friend at a hotel.

Mr. McKee was a pale feminine man from the flat below. He had just shaved for there was a white spot of lather on his cheekbone and he was most respectful in his greeting to everyone in the room. He informed me that he was in the “artistic game” and I gathered later that he was a photographer and had made the dim enlargement of Mrs. Wilson’s mother which hovered like an ectoplasm¹⁷ on the wall. His wife was shrill, languid, handsome and horrible. She told me with pride that her husband had photographed her a hundred and twenty-seven times since they had been married.

Mrs. Wilson had changed her costume some time before and was now attired in an elaborate afternoon dress of cream colored chiffon, which gave out a continual rustle as she swept about the room. With the influence of the dress her personality had also undergone a change. The intense vitality that had been so remarkable in the garage was converted into impressive hauteur. Her laughter, her gestures, her assertions became more violently affected moment by moment and as she expanded the room grew smaller around her until she seemed to be revolving on a noisy, creaking pivot through the smoky air.

“My dear,” she told her sister in a high mincing shout, “most of these fellas will cheat you every time. All they think of is money. I had a woman up here last week to look at my feet and when she gave me the bill you’d of thought she had my appendicitis out.”

“What was the name of the woman?” asked Mrs. McKee.

“Mrs. Eberhardt. She goes around looking at people’s feet in their own homes.”

“I like your dress,” remarked Mrs. McKee, “I think it’s adorable.”

Mrs. Wilson rejected the compliment by raising her eyebrow in disdain.

“It’s just a crazy old thing,” she said. “I just slip it on sometimes when I don’t care what I look like.”

“But it looks wonderful on you, if you know what I mean,” pursued Mrs. McKee. “If Chester could only get you in that pose I think he could make something of it.”

We all looked in silence at Mrs. Wilson who removed a strand of hair from over her eyes and looked back at us with a brilliant smile. Mr. McKee regarded her intently with his head on one side and then moved his hand back and forth slowly in front of his face.

“I should change the light,” he said after a moment. “I’d like to bring out the modelling of the features. And I’d try to get hold of all the back hair.”

“I wouldn’t think of changing the light,” cried Mrs. McKee. “I think it’s—”

Her husband said “*Sh!*” and we all looked at the subject again whereupon Tom Buchanan yawned audibly and got to his feet.

16. Best-known short haircut style for women, favored by “flappers,” young women determined to enjoy themselves and flouting conventional standards of behavior.

17. A supernatural viscous substance supposed to exude from the body of a medium during a spiritualistic trance.

“You McKees have something to drink,” he said. “Get some more ice and mineral water, Myrtle, before everybody goes to sleep.”

“I told that boy about the ice.” Myrtle raised her eyebrows in despair at the shiftlessness of the lower orders. “These people! You have to keep after them all the time.”

She looked at me and laughed pointlessly. Then she flounced over to the dog, kissed it with ecstasy and swept into the kitchen, implying that a dozen chefs awaited her orders there.

“I’ve done some nice things out on Long Island,” asserted Mr. McKee.

Tom looked at him blankly.

“Two of them we have framed downstairs.”

“Two what?” demanded Tom.

“Two studies. One of them I call ‘Montauk Point¹⁸—the Gulls,’ and the other I call ‘Montauk Point—the Sea.’ ”

The sister Catherine sat down beside me on the couch.

“Do you live down on Long Island, too?” she inquired.

“I live at West Egg.”

“Really? I was down there at a party about a month ago. At a man named Gatsby’s. Do you know him?”

“I live next door to him.”

“Well, they say he’s a nephew or a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm’s¹⁹. That’s where all his money comes from.”

“Really?”

She nodded.

“I’m scared of him. I’d hate to have him get anything on me.”

This absorbing information about my neighbor was interrupted by Mrs. McKee’s pointing suddenly at Catherine:

“Chester, I think you could do something with *her*,” she broke out, but Mr. McKee only nodded in a bored way and turned his attention to Tom.

“I’d like to do more work on Long Island if I could get the entry. All I ask is that they should give me a start.”

“Ask Myrtle,” said Tom, breaking into a short shout of laughter as Mrs. Wilson entered with a tray. “She’ll give you a letter of introduction, won’t you, Myrtle?”

“Do what?” she asked, startled.

“You’ll give McKee a letter of introduction to your husband, so he can do some studies of him.” His lips moved silently for a moment as he invented. “‘George B. Wilson at the Gasoline Pump,’ or something like that.”

Catherine leaned close to me and whispered in my ear: “Neither of them can stand the person they’re married to.”

“Can’t they?”

“Can’t *stand* them.” She looked at Myrtle and then at Tom. “What I say is, why go on living with them if they can’t stand them? If I was them I’d get a divorce and get married to each other right away.”

“Doesn’t she like Wilson either?”

The answer to this was unexpected. It came from Myrtle who had overheard the question and it was violent and obscene.

18. The easternmost tip of Long Island, on the Atlantic Ocean.

19. Wilhelm II, (1859-1941). The last German emperor, who abdicated in November, 1918 after Germany’s defeat in World War I.

“You see?” cried Catherine triumphantly. She lowered her voice again. “It’s really his wife that’s keeping them apart. She’s a Catholic and they don’t believe in divorce.”

Daisy was not a Catholic and I was a little shocked at the elaborateness of the lie.

“When they do get married,” continued Catherine, “they’re going west to live for a while until it blows over.”

“It’d be more discreet to go to Europe.”

“Oh, do you like Europe?” she exclaimed surprisingly. “I just got back from Monte Carlo²⁰.”

“Really.”

“Just last year. I went over there with another girl.”

“Stay long?”

“No, we just went to Monte Carlo and back. We went by way of Marseilles. We had over twelve hundred dollars when we started but we got gypped out of it all in two days in the private rooms. We had an awful time getting back, I can tell you. God, how I hated that town!”

The late afternoon sky bloomed in the window for a moment like the blue honey of the Mediterranean—then the shrill voice of Mrs. McKee called me back into the room.

“I almost made a mistake, too,” she declared vigorously. “I almost married a little kike²¹ who’d been after me for years. I knew he was below me. Everybody kept saying to me: ‘Lucille, that man’s way below you!’ But if I hadn’t met Chester, he’d of got me sure.”

“Yes, but listen,” said Myrtle Wilson, nodding her head up and down, “at least you didn’t marry him.”

“I know I didn’t.”

“Well, I married him,” said Myrtle, ambiguously. “And that’s the difference between your case and mine.”

“Why did you, Myrtle?” demanded Catherine. “Nobody forced you to.”

Myrtle considered.

“I married him because I thought he was a gentleman,” she said finally. “I thought he knew something about breeding, but he wasn’t fit to lick my shoe.”

“You were crazy about him for a while,” said Catherine.

“Crazy about him!” cried Myrtle incredulously. “Who said I was crazy about him? I never was any more crazy about him than I was about that man there.”

She pointed suddenly at me, and everyone looked at me accusingly. I tried to show by my expression that I had played no part in her past.

“The only *crazy* I was was when I married him. I knew right away I made a mistake. He borrowed somebody’s best suit to get married in and never even told me about it, and the man came after it one day when he was out. She looked around to see who was listening: ” ‘Oh, is that your suit?’ I said. ‘This is the first I ever heard about it.’ But I gave it to him and then I lay down and cried to beat the band all afternoon.”

“She really ought to get away from him,” resumed Catherine to me. “They’ve been living over that garage for eleven years. And Tom’s the first sweetie she ever had.”

The bottle of whiskey—a second one—was now in constant demand by all present, excepting Catherine who “felt just as good on nothing at all.” Tom rang for the janitor and sent him for some celebrated sandwiches, which were a complete supper in themselves. I wanted to get out and walk eastward toward the park through the soft twilight but each time I tried to go I became entangled in some wild strident argument which pulled me back, as if with ropes, into my chair. Yet high over the

20. Administrative area for the Principality of Monaco, located along the French riviera and noted for its Casino.

21. Racist slang term for Jew.

city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.

Myrtle pulled her chair close to mine, and suddenly her warm breath poured over me the story of her first meeting with Tom.

“It was on the two little seats facing each other that are always the last ones left on the train. I was going up to New York to see my sister and spend the night. He had on a dress suit and patent leather shoes and I couldn’t keep my eyes off him but every time he looked at me I had to pretend to be looking at the advertisement over his head. When we came into the station he was next to me and his white shirt-front pressed against my arm—and so I told him I’d have to call a policeman, but he knew I lied. I was so excited that when I got into a taxi with him I didn’t hardly know I wasn’t getting into a subway train. All I kept thinking about, over and over, was ‘You can’t live forever, you can’t live forever.’ ”

She turned to Mrs. McKee and the room rang full of her artificial laughter.

“My dear,” she cried, “I’m going to give you this dress as soon as I’m through with it. I’ve got to get another one tomorrow. I’m going to make a list of all the things I’ve got to get. A massage and a wave and a collar for the dog and one of those cute little ash-trays where you touch a spring, and a wreath with a black silk bow for mother’s grave that’ll last all summer. I got to write down a list so I won’t forget all the things I got to do.”

It was nine o’clock—almost immediately afterward I looked at my watch and found it was ten. Mr. McKee was asleep on a chair with his fists clenched in his lap, like a photograph of a man of action. Taking out my handkerchief I wiped from his cheek the remains of the spot of dried lather that had worried me all the afternoon.

The little dog was sitting on the table looking with blind eyes through the smoke and from time to time groaning faintly. People disappeared, reappeared, made plans to go somewhere, and then lost each other, searched for each other, found each other a few feet away. Some time toward midnight Tom Buchanan and Mrs. Wilson stood face to face discussing in impassioned voices whether Mrs. Wilson had any right to mention Daisy’s name.

“Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!” shouted Mrs. Wilson. “I’ll say it whenever I want to! Daisy! Dai—”

Making a short deft movement Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand.

Then there were bloody towels upon the bathroom floor, and women’s voices scolding, and high over the confusion a long broken wail of pain. Mr. McKee awoke from his doze and started in a daze toward the door. When he had gone half way he turned around and stared at the scene—his wife and Catherine scolding and consoling as they stumbled here and there among the crowded furniture with articles of aid, and the despairing figure on the couch bleeding fluently and trying to spread a copy of “Town Tattle” over the tapestry scenes of Versailles. Then Mr. McKee turned and continued on out the door. Taking my hat from the chandelier I followed.

“Come to lunch some day,” he suggested, as we groaned down in the elevator.

“Where?”

“Anywhere.”

“Keep your hands off the lever,” snapped the elevator boy.

“I beg your pardon,” said Mr. McKee with dignity, “I didn’t know I was touching it.”

“All right,” I agreed, “I’ll be glad to.”

. . . I was standing beside his bed and he was sitting up between the sheets, clad in his underwear, with a great portfolio in his hands.

“Beauty and the Beast . . . Loneliness . . . Old Grocery Horse . . . Brook’n Bridge . . .”

Then I was lying half asleep in the cold lower level of the Pennsylvania Station, staring at the morning “Tribune” and waiting for the four o’clock train.

Chapter 2 Study Questions

1. What does the dust suggest in the Valley of Ashes?
2. What do the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg symbolize?
3. Describe George Wilson.
4. Contrast Myrtle Wilson with Daisy.
5. Why does Tom assault Myrtle?

Chapter 3

There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city, between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants including an extra gardener toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York—every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour, if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb.

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d'oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived—no thin five-piece affair but a whole pitful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors and hair shorn in strange new ways and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside until the air is alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names.

The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. Laughter is easier, minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath—already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the center of a group and then excited with triumph glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and color under the constantly changing light.

Suddenly one of these gypsies in trembling opal, seizes a cocktail out of the air, dumps it down for courage and moving her hands like Frisco²² dances out alone on the canvas platform. A momentary hush; the orchestra leader varies his rhythm obligingly for her and there is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news goes around that she is Gilda Gray's²³ understudy from the "Follies." The party has begun.

I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually

22. Joe Frisco (1889-1958). American vaudeville performer, later a popular comedian.

23. Gilda Gray (1901-1959). American actress and dancer who popularized "the shimmy," a fashionable dance of the 1920s, popularized by her at The Ziegfeld Follies, a series of popular Broadway theatrical revues from 1907-1931.

been invited. People were not invited—they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island and somehow they ended up at Gatsby's door. Once there they were introduced by somebody who knew Gatsby and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with amusement parks. Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission.

I had been actually invited. A chauffeur in a uniform of robin's egg blue crossed my lawn early that Saturday morning with a surprisingly formal note from his employer—the honor would be entirely Gatsby's, it said, if I would attend his "little party" that night. He had seen me several times and had intended to call on me long before but a peculiar combination of circumstances had prevented it—signed Jay Gatsby in a majestic hand.

Dressed up in white flannels I went over to his lawn a little after seven and wandered around rather ill-at-ease among swirls and eddies of people I didn't know—though here and there was a face I had noticed on the commuting train. I was immediately struck by the number of young Englishmen dotted about; all well dressed, all looking a little hungry and all talking in low earnest voices to solid and prosperous Americans. I was sure that they were selling something: bonds or insurance or automobiles. They were, at least, agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key.

As soon as I arrived I made an attempt to find my host but the two or three people of whom I asked his whereabouts stared at me in such an amazed way and denied so vehemently any knowledge of his movements that I slunk off in the direction of the cocktail table—the only place in the garden where a single man could linger without looking purposeless and alone.

I was on my way to get roaring drunk from sheer embarrassment when Jordan Baker came out of the house and stood at the head of the marble steps, leaning a little backward and looking with contemptuous interest down into the garden.

Welcome or not, I found it necessary to attach myself to someone before I should begin to address cordial remarks to the passers-by.

"Hello!" I roared, advancing toward her. My voice seemed unnaturally loud across the garden.

"I thought you might be here," she responded absently as I came up. "I remembered you lived next door to—"

She held my hand impersonally, as a promise that she'd take care of me in a minute, and gave ear to two girls in twin yellow dresses who stopped at the foot of the steps.

"Hello!" they cried together. "Sorry you didn't win."

That was for the golf tournament. She had lost in the finals the week before.

"You don't know who we are," said one of the girls in yellow, "but we met you here about a month ago."

"You've dyed your hair since then," remarked Jordan, and I started but the girls had moved casually on and her remark was addressed to the premature moon, produced like the supper, no doubt, out of a caterer's basket. With Jordan's slender golden arm resting in mine we descended the steps and sauntered about the garden. A tray of cocktails floated at us through the twilight and we sat down at a table with the two girls in yellow and three men, each one introduced to us as Mr. Mumble.

"Do you come to these parties often?" inquired Jordan of the girl beside her.

"The last one was the one I met you at," answered the girl, in an alert, confident voice. She turned to her companion: "Wasn't it for you, Lucille?"

It was for Lucille, too.

"I like to come," Lucille said. "I never care what I do, so I always have a good time. When I was here last I tore my gown on a chair, and he asked me my name and address—inside of a week I got a package from Croirier's with a new evening gown in it."

“Did you keep it?” asked Jordan.

“Sure I did. I was going to wear it tonight, but it was too big in the bust and had to be altered. It was gas blue with lavender beads. Two hundred and sixty-five dollars.”

“There’s something funny about a fellow that’ll do a thing like that,” said the other girl eagerly. “He doesn’t want any trouble with *anybody*.”

“Who doesn’t?” I inquired.

“Gatsby. Somebody told me—”

The two girls and Jordan leaned together confidentially.

“Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once.”

A thrill passed over all of us. The three Mr. Mumbles bent forward and listened eagerly.

“I don’t think it’s so much *that*,” argued Lucille skeptically; “it’s more that he was a German spy during the war.”

One of the men nodded in confirmation.

“I heard that from a man who knew all about him, grew up with him in Germany,” he assured us positively.

“Oh, no,” said the first girl, “it couldn’t be that, because he was in the American army during the war.” As our credulity switched back to her she leaned forward with enthusiasm. “You look at him sometimes when he thinks nobody’s looking at him. I’ll bet he killed a man.”

She narrowed her eyes and shivered. Lucille shivered. We all turned and looked around for Gatsby. It was testimony to the romantic speculation he inspired that there were whispers about him from those who found little that it was necessary to whisper about in this world.

The first supper—there would be another one after midnight—was now being served, and Jordan invited me to join her own party who were spread around a table on the other side of the garden. There were three married couples and Jordan’s escort, a persistent undergraduate given to violent innuendo and obviously under the impression that sooner or later Jordan was going to yield him up her person to a greater or lesser degree. Instead of rambling this party had preserved a dignified homogeneity, and assumed to itself the function of representing the staid nobility of the countryside—East Egg condescending to West Egg, and carefully on guard against its spectroscopic gayety.

“Let’s get out,” whispered Jordan, after a somehow wasteful and inappropriate half hour. “This is much too polite for me.”

We got up, and she explained that we were going to find the host—I had never met him, she said, and it was making me uneasy. The undergraduate nodded in a cynical, melancholy way.

The bar, where we glanced first, was crowded but Gatsby was not there. She couldn’t find him from the top of the steps, and he wasn’t on the veranda. On a chance we tried an important-looking door, and walked into a high Gothic library, panelled with carved English oak, and probably transported complete from some ruin overseas.

A stout, middle-aged man with enormous owl-eyed spectacles was sitting somewhat drunk on the edge of a great table, staring with unsteady concentration at the shelves of books. As we entered he wheeled excitedly around and examined Jordan from head to foot.

“What do you think?” he demanded impetuously.

“About what?”

He waved his hand toward the book-shelves.

“About that. As a matter of fact you needn’t bother to ascertain. I ascertained. They’re real.”

“The books?”

He nodded.

“Absolutely real—have pages and everything. I thought they’d be a nice durable cardboard. Matter of fact, they’re absolutely real. Pages and—Here! Lemme show you.”

Taking our skepticism for granted, he rushed to the bookcases and returned with Volume One of the “Stoddard Lectures²⁴.”

“See!” he cried triumphantly. “It’s a bona fide piece of printed matter. It fooled me. This fella’s a regular Belasco²⁵. It’s a triumph. What thoroughness! What realism! Knew when to stop too—didn’t cut the pages. But what do you want? What do you expect?”

He snatched the book from me and replaced it hastily on its shelf muttering that if one brick was removed the whole library was liable to collapse.

“Who brought you?” he demanded. “Or did you just come? I was brought. Most people were brought.”

Jordan looked at him alertly, cheerfully without answering.

“I was brought by a woman named Roosevelt,” he continued. “Mrs. Claud Roosevelt. Do you know her? I met her somewhere last night. I’ve been drunk for about a week now, and I thought it might sober me up to sit in a library.”

“Has it?”

“A little bit, I think. I can’t tell yet. I’ve only been here an hour. Did I tell you about the books? They’re real. They’re—”

“You told us.”

We shook hands with him gravely and went back outdoors.

There was dancing now on the canvas in the garden, old men pushing young girls backward in eternal graceless circles, superior couples holding each other tortuously, fashionably and keeping in the corners—and a great number of single girls dancing individualistically or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps. By midnight the hilarity had increased. A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz and between the numbers people were doing “stunts” all over the garden, while happy vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky. A pair of stage “twins”—who turned out to be the girls in yellow—did a baby act in costume and champagne was served in glasses bigger than finger bowls. The moon had risen higher, and floating in the Sound was a triangle of silver scales, trembling a little to the stiff, tinny drip of the banjos on the lawn.

I was still with Jordan Baker. We were sitting at a table with a man of about my age and a rowdy little girl who gave way upon the slightest provocation to uncontrollable laughter. I was enjoying myself now. I had taken two finger bowls of champagne and the scene had changed before my eyes into something significant, elemental and profound.

At a lull in the entertainment the man looked at me and smiled.

“Your face is familiar,” he said, politely. “Weren’t you in the Third Division during the war?”

“Why, yes. I was in the Ninth Machine-Gun Battalion.”²⁶

“I was in the Seventh Infantry until June nineteen-eighteen. I knew I’d seen you somewhere before.”

We talked for a moment about some wet, grey little villages in France. Evidently he lived in this vicinity for he told me that he had just bought a hydroplane and was going to try it out in the morning.

“Want to go with me, old sport²⁷? Just near the shore along the Sound.”

24. John L. Stoddard (1850-1931). An American writer and lecturer who published popular travel texts in a series of books entitled John L. Stoddard’s Lectures.

25. David Belasco (1853-1931). American theatrical producer, director and playwright, known for his innovative stage settings and effects.

26. Third Infantry Division of the U.S. Army.

27. Old Sport. Although scholars have assumed that the origin of Gatsby’s often-used catchphrase is British (the Oxford English Dictionary’s earliest entry is from an edition of Punch magazine in 1905), Elyse Graham and Jon Heggstad have demonstrated that it was in common use by the lower classes in New York City as early as 1859 as a synonym for “gamester, a man fond of racing and gaming of

“What time?”

“Any time that suits you best.”

It was on the tip of my tongue to ask his name when Jordan looked around and smiled.

“Having a gay time now?” she inquired.

“Much better.” I turned again to my new acquaintance. “This is an unusual party for me. I haven’t even seen the host. I live over there—” I waved my hand at the invisible hedge in the distance, “and this man Gatsby sent over his chauffeur with an invitation.”

For a moment he looked at me as if he failed to understand.

“I’m Gatsby,” he said suddenly.

“What!” I exclaimed. “Oh, I beg your pardon.”

“I thought you knew, old sport. I’m afraid I’m not a very good host.”

He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced—or seemed to face—the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on *you* with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just so far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. Precisely at that point it vanished—and I was looking at an elegant young rough-neck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Some time before he introduced himself I’d got a strong impression that he was picking his words with care.

Almost at the moment when Mr. Gatsby identified himself a butler hurried toward him with the information that Chicago was calling him on the wire. He excused himself with a small bow that included each of us in turn.

“If you want anything just ask for it, old sport,” he urged me. “Excuse me. I will rejoin you later.”

When he was gone I turned immediately to Jordan—constrained to assure her of my surprise. I had expected that Mr. Gatsby would be a florid and corpulent person in his middle years.

“Who is he?” I demanded. “Do you know?”

“He’s just a man named Gatsby.”

“Where is he from, I mean? And what does he do?”

“Now *you*’re started on the subject,” she answered with a wan smile. “Well,—he told me once he was an Oxford man.”

A dim background started to take shape behind him but at her next remark it faded away.

“However, I don’t believe it.”

“Why not?”

“I don’t know,” she insisted, “I just don’t think he went there.”

Something in her tone reminded me of the other girl’s “I think he killed a man,” and had the effect of stimulating my curiosity. I would have accepted without question the information that Gatsby sprang from the swamps of Louisiana or from the lower East Side of New York. That was comprehensible. But young men didn’t—at least in my provincial inexperience I believed they didn’t—drift coolly out of nowhere and buy a palace on Long Island Sound.

“Anyhow he gives large parties,” said Jordan, changing the subject with an urbane distaste for the concrete. “And I like large parties. They’re so intimate. At small parties there isn’t any privacy.”

There was the boom of a bass drum, and the voice of the orchestra leader rang out suddenly above the echolalia of the garden.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he cried. “At the request of Mr. Gatsby we are going to play for you Mr. Vladimir Tostoff’s latest work which attracted so much attention at Carnegie Hall last May. If you read the papers you know there was a big sensation.” He smiled with jovial condescension and added “Some sensation!” whereupon everybody laughed.

“The piece is known,” he concluded lustily, “as ‘Vladimir Tostoff’s Jazz History of the World.’ ”

The nature of Mr. Tostoff’s composition eluded me, because just as it began my eyes fell on Gatsby, standing alone on the marble steps and looking from one group to another with approving eyes. His tanned skin was drawn attractively tight on his face and his short hair looked as though it were trimmed every day. I could see nothing sinister about him. I wondered if the fact that he was not drinking helped to set him off from his guests, for it seemed to me that he grew more correct as the fraternal hilarity increased. When the “Jazz History of the World” was over girls were putting their heads on men’s shoulders in a puppyish, convivial way, girls were swooning backward playfully into men’s arms, even into groups knowing that some one would arrest their falls—but no one swooned backward on Gatsby and no French bob touched Gatsby’s shoulder and no singing quartets were formed with Gatsby’s head for one link.

“I beg your pardon.”

Gatsby’s butler was suddenly standing beside us.

“Miss Baker?” he inquired. “I beg your pardon but Mr. Gatsby would like to speak to you alone.”

“With me?” she exclaimed in surprise.

“Yes, madame.”

She got up slowly, raising her eyebrows at me in astonishment, and followed the butler toward the house. I noticed that she wore her evening dress, all her dresses, like sports clothes—there was a jauntiness about her movements as if she had first learned to walk upon golf courses on clean, crisp mornings.

I was alone and it was almost two. For some time confused and intriguing sounds had issued from a long many-windowed room which overhung the terrace. Eluding Jordan’s undergraduate who was now engaged in an obstetrical conversation with two chorus girls, and who implored me to join him, I went inside.

The large room was full of people. One of the girls in yellow was playing the piano and beside her stood a tall, red haired young lady from a famous chorus, engaged in song. She had drunk a quantity of champagne and during the course of her song she had decided ineptly that everything was very very sad—she was not only singing, she was weeping too. Whenever there was a pause in the song she filled it with gasping broken sobs and then took up the lyric again in a quavering soprano. The tears coursed down her cheeks—not freely, however, for when they came into contact with her heavily beaded eyelashes they assumed an inky color, and pursued the rest of their way in slow black rivulets. A humorous suggestion was made that she sing the notes on her face whereupon she threw up her hands, sank into a chair and went off into a deep vinous sleep.

“She had a fight with a man who says he’s her husband,” explained a girl at my elbow.

I looked around. Most of the remaining women were now having fights with men said to be their husbands. Even Jordan’s party, the quartet from East Egg, were rent asunder by dissension. One of the men was talking with curious intensity to a young actress, and his wife after attempting to laugh at the situation in a dignified and indifferent way broke down entirely and resorted to flank attacks—at intervals she appeared suddenly at his side like an angry diamond, and hissed “You promised!” into his ear.

The reluctance to go home was not confined to wayward men. The hall was at present occupied by two deplorably sober men and their highly indignant wives. The wives were sympathizing with each other in slightly raised voices.

“Whenever he sees I’m having a good time he wants to go home.”

“Never heard anything so selfish in my life.”

“We’re always the first ones to leave.”

“So are we.”

“Well, we’re almost the last tonight,” said one of the men sheepishly. “The orchestra left half an hour ago.”

In spite of the wives’ agreement that such malevolence was beyond credibility, the dispute ended in a short struggle, and both wives were lifted kicking into the night.

As I waited for my hat in the hall the door of the library opened and Jordan Baker and Gatsby came out together. He was saying some last word to her but the eagerness in his manner tightened abruptly into formality as several people approached him to say goodbye.

Jordan’s party were calling impatiently to her from the porch but she lingered for a moment to shake hands.

“I’ve just heard the most amazing thing,” she whispered. “How long were we in there?”

“Why,—about an hour.”

“It was—simply amazing,” she repeated abstractedly. “But I swore I wouldn’t tell it and here I am tantalizing you.” She yawned gracefully in my face. “Please come and see me. . . . Phone book. . . . Under the name of Mrs. Sigourney Howard. . . . My aunt. . . .” She was hurrying off as she talked—her brown hand waved a jaunty salute as she melted into her party at the door.

Rather ashamed that on my first appearance I had stayed so late, I joined the last of Gatsby’s guests who were clustered around him. I wanted to explain that I’d hunted for him early in the evening and to apologize for not having known him in the garden.

“Don’t mention it,” he enjoined me eagerly. “Don’t give it another thought, old sport.” The familiar expression held no more familiarity than the hand which reassuringly brushed my shoulder. “And don’t forget we’re going up in the hydroplane tomorrow morning at nine o’clock.”

Then the butler, behind his shoulder:

“Philadelphia wants you on the phone, sir.”

“All right, in a minute. Tell them I’ll be right there. . . . good night.”

“Good night.”

“Good night.” He smiled—and suddenly there seemed to be a pleasant significance in having been among the last to go, as if he had desired it all the time. “Good night, old sport. . . . Good night.”

But as I walked down the steps I saw that the evening was not quite over. Fifty feet from the door a dozen headlights illuminated a bizarre and tumultuous scene. In the ditch beside the road, right side up but violently shorn of one wheel, rested a new coupé which had left Gatsby’s drive not two minutes before. The sharp jut of a wall accounted for the detachment of the wheel which was now getting considerable attention from half a dozen curious chauffeurs. However, as they had left their cars blocking the road a harsh discordant din from those in the rear had been audible for some time and added to the already violent confusion of the scene.

A man in a long duster²⁸ had dismounted from the wreck and now stood in the middle of the road, looking from the car to the tire and from the tire to the observers in a pleasant, puzzled way.

“See!” he explained. “It went in the ditch.”

The fact was infinitely astonishing to him—and I recognized first the unusual quality of wonder and then the man—it was the late patron of Gatsby’s library.

“How’d it happen?”

He shrugged his shoulders.

28. A long, lightweight overcoat to protect clothing from dust.

"I know nothing whatever about mechanics," he said decisively.

"But how did it happen? Did you run into the wall?"

"Don't ask me," said Owl Eyes, washing his hands of the whole matter. "I know very little about driving—next to nothing. It happened, and that's all I know."

"Well, if you're a poor driver you oughtn't to try driving at night."

"But I wasn't even trying," he explained indignantly, "I wasn't even trying."

An awed hush fell upon the bystanders.

"Do you want to commit suicide?"

"You're lucky it was just a wheel! A bad driver and not even trying!"

"You don't understand," explained the criminal. "I wasn't driving. There's another man in the car."

The shock that followed this declaration found voice in a sustained "Ah-h-h!" as the door of the coupé swung slowly open. The crowd—it was now a crowd—stepped back involuntarily and when the door had opened wide there was a ghostly pause. Then, very gradually, part by part, a pale dangling individual stepped out of the wreck, pawing tentatively at the ground with a large uncertain dancing shoe.

Blinded by the glare of the headlights and confused by the incessant groaning of the horns the apparition stood swaying for a moment before he perceived the man in the duster.

"Wha's matter?" he inquired calmly. "Did we run outa gas?"

"Look!"

Half a dozen fingers pointed at the amputated wheel—he stared at it for a moment and then looked upward as though he suspected that it had dropped from the sky.

"It came off," some one explained.

He nodded.

"At first I din' notice we'd stopped."

A pause. Then, taking a long breath and straightening his shoulders he remarked in a determined voice:

"Wonder'ff tell me where there's a gas'line station?"

At least a dozen men, some of them little better off than he was, explained to him that wheel and car were no longer joined by any physical bond.

"Back out," he suggested after a moment. "Put her in reverse."

"But the *wheel's* off!"

He hesitated.

"No harm in trying," he said.

The caterwauling horns had reached a crescendo and I turned away and cut across the lawn toward home. I glanced back once. A wafer of a moon was shining over Gatsby's house, making the night fine as before and surviving the laughter and the sound of his still glowing garden. A sudden emptiness seemed to flow now from the windows and the great doors, endowing with complete isolation the figure of the host who stood on the porch, his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell.

Reading over what I have written so far I see I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me. On the contrary they were merely casual events in a crowded summer and, until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs.

Most of the time I worked. In the early morning the sun threw my shadow westward as I hurried down the white chasms of lower New York to the Probity Trust. I knew the other clerks and young bond-salesmen by their first names and lunched with them in dark crowded restaurants on little pig sausages and mashed potatoes and coffee. I even had a short affair with a girl who lived in Jersey City

and worked in the accounting department, but her brother began throwing mean looks in my direction so when she went on her vacation in July I let it blow quietly away.

I took dinner usually at the Yale Club²⁹—for some reason it was the gloomiest event of my day—and then I went upstairs to the library and studied investments and securities for a conscientious hour. There were generally a few rioters around but they never came into the library so it was a good place to work. After that, if the night was mellow I strolled down Madison Avenue past the old Murray Hill Hotel and over Thirty-third Street to the Pennsylvania Station³⁰.

I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter into their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove. Sometimes, in my mind, I followed them to their apartments on the corners of hidden streets, and they turned and smiled back at me before they faded through a door into warm darkness. At the enchanted metropolitan twilight I felt a haunting loneliness sometimes, and felt it in others—poor young clerks who loitered in front of windows waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner—young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life.

Again at eight o'clock, when the dark lanes of the Forties were five deep with throbbing taxi cabs, bound for the theatre district, I felt a sinking in my heart. Forms leaned together in the taxis as they waited, and voices sang, and there was laughter from unheard jokes, and lighted cigarettes outlined unintelligible gestures inside. Imagining that I, too, was hurrying toward gayety and sharing their intimate excitement, I wished them well.

For a while I lost sight of Jordan Baker, and then in midsummer I found her again. At first I was flattered to go places with her because she was a golf champion and everyone knew her name.

Then it was something more. I wasn't actually in love, but I felt a sort of tender curiosity. The bored haughty face that she turned to the world concealed something—most affectations conceal something eventually, even though they don't in the beginning—and one day I found what it was. When we were on a house-party together up in Warwick³¹, she left a borrowed car out in the rain with the top down, and then lied about it—and suddenly I remembered the story about her that had eluded me that night at Daisy's. At her first big golf tournament there was a row that nearly reached the newspapers—a suggestion that she had moved her ball from a bad lie in the semi-final round. The thing approached the proportions of a scandal—then died away. A caddy retracted his statement and the only other witness admitted that he might have been mistaken. The incident and the name had remained together in my mind.

Jordan Baker instinctively avoided clever, shrewd men, and now I saw that this was because she felt safer on a plane where any divergence from a code would be thought impossible. She was incurably dishonest. She wasn't able to endure being at a disadvantage, and given this unwillingness, I suppose she had begun dealing in subterfuges when she was very young in order to keep that cool, insolent smile turned to the world and yet satisfy the demands of her hard jaunty body.

It made no difference to me. Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply—I was casually sorry, and then I forgot. It was on that same house party that we had a curious conversation about driving a car. It started because she passed so close to some workmen that our fender flicked a button on one man's coat.

“You're a rotten driver,” I protested. “Either you ought to be more careful or you oughtn't to drive at all.”

29. A private club in mid-town Manhattan for Yale University alumni.

30. A New York railroad station and terminal for trains to and from Long Island.

31. A suburb fifty miles northwest of New York City.

“I am careful.”

“No, you’re not.”

“Well, other people are,” she said lightly.

“What’s that got to do with it?”

“They’ll keep out of my way,” she insisted. “It takes two to make an accident.”

“Suppose you met somebody just as careless as yourself.”

“I hope I never will,” she answered. “I hate careless people. That’s why I like you.”

Her grey, sun-strained eyes stared straight ahead, but she had deliberately shifted our relations, and for a moment I thought I loved her. But I am slow-thinking and full of interior rules that act as brakes on my desires, and I knew that first I had to get myself definitely out of that tangle back home. I’d been writing letters once a week and signing them: “Love, Nick,” and all I could think of was how, when that certain girl played tennis, a faint mustache of perspiration appeared on her upper lip. Nevertheless there was a vague understanding that had to be tactfully broken off before I was free.

Everyone suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues, and this is mine: I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known.

Chapter 3 Study Questions

1. Describe “Owl Eyes” in this chapter and in his other appearance in the novel in chapter 9. What is his thematic role? According to V.R. Hampton, Owl Eyes was modelled on Fitzgerald’s friend Ring Lardner (“Owl Eyes in *The Great Gatsby*“, *American Literature*, volume 48, 1976, p.229.)
2. Make a list of all careless driving references. Who is guilty of such offences, and what is the thematic significance of “careless driving”?
3. Nick considers himself honest. In comparison to Jordan and Tom, is his judgment valid?
4. Why does Gatsby throw such elaborate parties?
5. Tom does not believe that Gatsby ever attended Oxford. Is he right?

Chapter 4

On Sunday morning while church bells rang in the villages along shore the world and its mistress returned to Gatsby's house and twinkled hilariously on his lawn.

"He's a bootlegger," said the young ladies, moving somewhere between his cocktails and his flowers. "One time he killed a man who had found out that he was nephew to von Hindenburg³² and second cousin to the devil. Reach me a rose, honey, and pour me a last drop into that there crystal glass."

Once I wrote down on the empty spaces of a time-table the names of those who came to Gatsby's house that summer. It is an old time-table now, disintegrating at its folds and headed "This schedule in effect July 5th, 1922." But I can still read the grey names and they will give you a better impression than my generalities of those who accepted Gatsby's hospitality and paid him the subtle tribute of knowing nothing whatever about him.

From East Egg, then, came the Chester Beckers and the Leeches and a man named Bunsen whom I knew at Yale and Doctor Webster Civet who was drowned last summer up in Maine. And the Hornbeams and the Willie Voltaires and a whole clan named Blackbuck who always gathered in a corner and flipped up their noses like goats at whosoever came near. And the Ismays and the Chrysties (or rather Hubert Auerbach and Mr. Chrystie's wife) and Edgar Beaver, whose hair they say turned cotton-white one winter afternoon for no good reason at all.

Clarence Endive was from East Egg, as I remember. He came only once, in white knickerbockers³³, and had a fight with a bum named Etty in the garden. From farther out on the Island came the Cheadles and the O. R. P. Schraeders and the Stonewall Jackson Abrams of Georgia and the Fishguards and the Ripley Snells. Snell was there three days before he went to the penitentiary, so drunk out on the gravel drive that Mrs. Ulysses Swett's automobile ran over his right hand. The Dancies came too and S. B. Whitebait, who was well over sixty, and Maurice A. Flink and the Hammerheads and Beluga the tobacco importer and Beluga's girls.

From West Egg came the Poles and the Mulreadys and Cecil Roebuck and Cecil Schoen and Gulick the state senator and Newton Orchid who controlled Films Par Excellence and Eckhaust and Clyde Cohen and Don S. Schwartze (the son) and Arthur McCarty, all connected with the movies in one way or another. And the Catlips and the Bembergs and G. Earl Muldoon, brother to that Muldoon who afterward strangled his wife. Da Fontano the promoter came there, and Ed Legros and James B. ("Rot-Gut") Ferret and the De Jongs and Ernest Lilly—they came to gamble and when Ferret wandered into the garden it meant he was cleaned out and Associated Traction would have to fluctuate profitably next day.

A man named Klipspringer was there so often and so long that he became known as "the boarder"—I doubt if he had any other home. Of theatrical people there were Gus Waize and Horace O'Donovan and Lester Meyer and George Duckweed and Francis Bull. Also from New York were the Chromes and the Backhyssons and the Dennickers and Russel Betty and the Corriganes and the Kellehers and the Dewars and the Scullys and S. W. Belcher and the Smirkes and the young Quinns, divorced now, and Henry L. Palmetto who killed himself by jumping in front of a subway train in Times Square.

Benny McClenahan arrived always with four girls. They were never quite the same ones in physical

32. Paul Von Hindenburg (1847-1934). Commander of the German Army during the second half of World War I, later president of the Weimar Republic from 1925-1934.

33. Loose-fitting trousers gathered at the knee or calf.

person but they were so identical one with another that it inevitably seemed they had been there before. I have forgotten their names—Jaqueline, I think, or else Consuela or Gloria or Judy or June, and their last names were either the melodious names of flowers and months or the sterner ones of the great American capitalists whose cousins, if pressed, they would confess themselves to be.

In addition to all these I can remember that Faustina O'Brien came there at least once and the Baedeker girls and young Brewer who had his nose shot off in the war and Mr. Albrucksburger and Miss Haag, his fiancée, and Ardita Fitz-Peters, and Mr. P. Jewett, once head of the American Legion, and Miss Claudia Hip with a man reputed to be her chauffeur, and a prince of something whom we called Duke and whose name, if I ever knew it, I have forgotten.

All these people came to Gatsby's house in the summer.

At nine o'clock, one morning late in July Gatsby's gorgeous car lurched up the rocky drive to my door and gave out a burst of melody from its three noted horn. It was the first time he had called on me though I had gone to two of his parties, mounted in his hydroplane, and, at his urgent invitation, made frequent use of his beach.

"Good morning, old sport. You're having lunch with me today and I thought we'd ride up together."

He was balancing himself on the dashboard of his car with that resourcefulness of movement that is so peculiarly American—that comes, I suppose, with the absence of lifting work or rigid sitting in youth and, even more, with the formless grace of our nervous, sporadic games. This quality was continually breaking through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness. He was never quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient opening and closing of a hand.

He saw me looking with admiration at his car.

"It's pretty, isn't it, old sport." He jumped off to give me a better view. "Haven't you ever seen it before?"

I'd seen it. Everybody had seen it. It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hatboxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of windshields that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory we started to town.

I had talked with him perhaps half a dozen times in the past month and found, to my disappointment, that he had little to say. So my first impression, that he was a person of some undefined consequence, had gradually faded and he had become simply the proprietor of an elaborate roadhouse next door.

And then came that disconcerting ride. We hadn't reached West Egg village before Gatsby began leaving his elegant sentences unfinished and slapping himself indecisively on the knee of his caramel-colored suit.

"Look here, old sport," he broke out surprisingly. "What's your opinion of me, anyhow?"

A little overwhelmed, I began the generalized evasions which that question deserves.

"Well, I'm going to tell you something about my life," he interrupted. "I don't want you to get a wrong idea of me from all these stories you hear."

So he was aware of the bizarre accusations that flavored conversation in his halls.

"I'll tell you God's truth." His right hand suddenly ordered divine retribution to stand by. "I am the son of some wealthy people in the middle-west—all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition."

He looked at me sideways—and I knew why Jordan Baker had believed he was lying. He hurried the phrase "educated at Oxford," or swallowed it or choked on it as though it had bothered him before. And with this doubt his whole statement fell to pieces and I wondered if there wasn't something a little sinister about him after all.

“What part of the middle-west?” I inquired casually.

“San Francisco.”

“I see.”

“My family all died and I came into a good deal of money.”

His voice was solemn as if the memory of that sudden extinction of a clan still haunted him. For a moment I suspected that he was pulling my leg but a glance at him convinced me otherwise.

“After that I lived like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe—Paris, Venice, Rome—collecting jewels, chiefly rubies, hunting big game, painting a little, things for myself only, and trying to forget something very sad that had happened to me long ago.”

With an effort I managed to restrain my incredulous laughter. The very phrases were worn so threadbare that they evoked no image except that of a turbaned “character” leaking sawdust at every pore as he pursued a tiger through the Bois de Boulogne³⁴.

“Then came the war, old sport. It was a great relief and I tried very hard to die but I seemed to bear an enchanted life. I accepted a commission as first lieutenant when it began. In the Argonne Forest³⁵ I took two machine-gun detachments so far forward that there was a half mile gap on either side of us where the infantry couldn’t advance. We stayed there two days and two nights, a hundred and thirty men with sixteen Lewis guns³⁶, and when the infantry came up at last they found the insignia of three German divisions among the piles of dead. I was promoted to be a major and every Allied government gave me a decoration—even Montenegro³⁷, little Montenegro down on the Adriatic Sea!”

Little Montenegro! He lifted up the words and nodded at them—with his smile. The smile comprehended Montenegro’s troubled history and sympathized with the brave struggles of the Montenegrin people. It appreciated fully the chain of national circumstances which had elicited this tribute from Montenegro’s warm little heart. My incredulity was submerged in fascination now; it was like skimming hastily through a dozen magazines.

He reached in his pocket and a piece of metal, slung on a ribbon, fell into my palm.

“That’s the one from Montenegro.”

To my astonishment, the thing had an authentic look.

Orderi di Danilo, ran the circular legend, *Montenegro, Nicolas Rex*.

“Turn it.”

Major Jay Gatsby, I read, *For Valour Extraordinary*.

“Here’s another thing I always carry. A souvenir of Oxford days. It was taken in Trinity Quad³⁸—the man on my left is now the Earl of Doncaster.”

It was a photograph of half a dozen young men in blazers loafing in an archway through which were visible a host of spires. There was Gatsby, looking a little, not much, younger—with a cricket bat in his hand.

Then it was all true. I saw the skins of tigers flaming in his palace on the Grand Canal³⁹; I saw him opening a chest of rubies to ease, with their crimson-lighted depths, the gnawings of his broken heart.

“I’m going to make a big request of you today,” he said, pocketing his souvenirs with satisfaction,

34. A large public park in Paris.

35. Forest of Argonne. Wild woodland three hours east of Paris. In the final months of World War I, American troops engaged German forces here, with many U.S. soldiers earning the Medal of Honor.

36. A light machine gun invented by U.S. Army colonel Isaac Lewis in 1911, widely-used by Allied troops during World War I.

37. Montenegro. A country in southeastern Europe, once part of Yugoslavia. During W.W. I, it was an independent nation which fought against Germany and Austria.

38. Quadrangle of Trinity College, Oxford.

39. The main waterway of Venice.

“so I thought you ought to know something about me. I didn’t want you to think I was just some nobody. You see, I usually find myself among strangers because I drift here and there trying to forget the sad thing that happened to me.” He hesitated. “You’ll hear about it this afternoon.”

“At lunch?”

“No, this afternoon. I happened to find out that you’re taking Miss Baker to tea.”

“Do you mean you’re in love with Miss Baker?”

“No, old sport, I’m not. But Miss Baker has kindly consented to speak to you about this matter.”

I hadn’t the faintest idea what “this matter” was, but I was more annoyed than interested. I hadn’t asked Jordan to tea in order to discuss Mr. Jay Gatsby. I was sure the request would be something utterly fantastic and for a moment I was sorry I’d ever set foot upon his overpopulated lawn.

He wouldn’t say another word. His correctness grew on him as we neared the city. We passed Port Roosevelt, where there was a glimpse of red-belted ocean-going ships, and sped along a cobbled slum lined with the dark, undeserted saloons of the faded gilt nineteen-hundreds. Then the valley of ashes opened out on both sides of us, and I had a glimpse of Mrs. Wilson straining at the garage pump with panting vitality as we went by.

With fenders spread like wings we scattered light through half Astoria—only half, for as we twisted among the pillars of the elevated I heard the familiar “jug–jug–*spat!*” of a motor cycle, and a frantic policeman rode alongside.

“All right, old sport,” called Gatsby. We slowed down. Taking a white card from his wallet he waved it before the man’s eyes.

“Right you are,” agreed the policeman, tipping his cap. “Know you next time, Mr. Gatsby. Excuse me!”

“What was that?” I inquired. “The picture of Oxford?”

“I was able to do the commissioner a favor once, and he sends me a Christmas card every year.”

Over the great bridge, with the sunlight through the girders making a constant flicker upon the moving cars, with the city rising up across the river in white heaps and sugar lumps all built with a wish out of non-olfactory money. The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge⁴⁰ is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world.

A dead man passed us in a hearse heaped with blooms, followed by two carriages with drawn blinds and by more cheerful carriages for friends. The friends looked out at us with the tragic eyes and short upper lips of south-eastern Europe, and I was glad that the sight of Gatsby’s splendid car was included in their somber holiday. As we crossed Blackwell’s Island a limousine passed us, driven by a white chauffeur, in which sat three modish Negroes, two bucks and a girl. I laughed aloud as the yolks of their eyeballs rolled toward us in haughty rivalry.

“Anything can happen now that we’ve slid over this bridge,” I thought; “anything at all. . . .”

Even Gatsby could happen, without any particular wonder.

Roaring noon. In a well-fanned Forty-second Street cellar I met Gatsby for lunch. Blinking away the brightness of the street outside my eyes picked him out obscurely in the anteroom, talking to another man.

“Mr. Carraway this is my friend Mr. Wolfsheim.”

A small, flat-nosed Jew raised his large head and regarded me with two fine growths of hair which luxuriated in either nostril. After a moment I discovered his tiny eyes in the half darkness.

“—so I took one look at him—” said Mr. Wolfsheim, shaking my hand earnestly, “—and what do you think I did?”

“What?” I inquired politely.

40. This bridge connects the borough of Queens with the island of Manhattan.

But evidently he was not addressing me for he dropped my hand and covered Gatsby with his expressive nose.

"I handed the money to Katspaugh and I said, 'All right, Katspaugh, don't pay him a penny till he shuts his mouth.' He shut it then and there."

Gatsby took an arm of each of us and moved forward into the restaurant whereupon Mr. Wolfsheim swallowed a new sentence he was starting and lapsed into a somnambulatory abstraction.

"Highballs?" asked the head waiter.

"This is a nice restaurant here," said Mr. Wolfsheim looking at the Presbyterian nymphs on the ceiling. "But I like across the street better!"

"Yes, highballs," agreed Gatsby, and then to Mr. Wolfsheim: "It's too hot over there."

"Hot and small—yes," said Mr. Wolfsheim, "but full of memories."

"What place is that?" I asked.

"The old Metropole.

"The old Metropole," brooded Mr. Wolfsheim gloomily. "Filled with faces dead and gone. Filled with friends gone now forever. I can't forget so long as I live the night they shot Rosy Rosenthal⁴¹ there. It was six of us at the table and Rosy had eat and drunk a lot all evening. When it was almost morning the waiter came up to him with a funny look and says somebody wants to speak to him outside. 'All right,' says Rosy and begins to get up and I pulled him down in his chair.

"Let the bastards come in here if they want you, Rosy, but don't you, so help me, move outside this room.'

"It was four o'clock in the morning then, and if we'd of raised the blinds we'd of seen daylight."

"Did he go?" I asked innocently.

"Sure he went,"—Mr. Wolfsheim's nose flashed at me indignantly—"He turned around in the door and says, 'Don't let that waiter take away my coffee!' Then he went out on the sidewalk and they shot him three times in his full belly and drove away."

"Four of them were electrocuted," I said, remembering.

"Five with Becker." His nostrils turned to me in an interested way. "I understand you're looking for a business gonnegtion."

The juxtaposition of these two remarks was startling. Gatsby answered for me:

"Oh, no," he exclaimed, "this isn't the man!"

"No?" Mr. Wolfsheim seemed disappointed.

"This is just a friend. I told you we'd talk about that some other time."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Wolfsheim, "I had a wrong man."

A succulent hash arrived, and Mr. Wolfsheim, forgetting the more sentimental atmosphere of the old Metropole, began to eat with ferocious delicacy. His eyes, meanwhile, roved very slowly all around the room—he completed the arc by turning to inspect the people directly behind. I think that, except for my presence, he would have taken one short glance beneath our own table.

"Look here, old sport," said Gatsby, leaning toward me, "I'm afraid I made you a little angry this morning in the car."

There was the smile again, but this time I held out against it.

"I don't like mysteries," I answered. "And I don't understand why you won't come out frankly and tell me what you want. Why has it all got to come through Miss Baker?"

"Oh, it's nothing underhand," he assured me. "Miss Baker's a great sportswoman, you know, and she'd never do anything that wasn't all right."

41. Gambler Herman Rosenthal was murdered after midnight on July 16, 1912 by four gangsters outside the Hotel Metropole, near Times Square. A New York City policeman, Charles Becker, was implicated and later executed.

Suddenly he looked at his watch, jumped up and hurried from the room leaving me with Mr. Wolfsheim at the table.

“He has to telephone,” said Mr. Wolfsheim, following him with his eyes. “Fine fellow, isn’t he? Handsome to look at and a perfect gentleman.”

“Yes.”

“He’s an Oggsgford man.”

“Oh!”

“He went to Oggsgford College in England. You know Oggsgford College?”

“I’ve heard of it.”

“It’s one of the most famous colleges in the world.”

“Have you known Gatsby for a long time?” I inquired.

“Several years,” he answered in a gratified way. “I made the pleasure of his acquaintance just after the war. But I knew I had discovered a man of fine breeding after I talked with him an hour. I said to myself: ‘There’s the kind of man you’d like to take home and introduce to your mother and sister.’ ” He paused. “I see you’re looking at my cuff buttons.”

I hadn’t been looking at them, but I did now. They were composed of oddly familiar pieces of ivory.

“Finest specimens of human molars,” he informed me.

“Well!” I inspected them. “That’s a very interesting idea.”

“Yeah.” He flipped his sleeves up under his coat. “Yeah, Gatsby’s very careful about women. He would never so much as look at a friend’s wife.”

When the subject of this instinctive trust returned to the table and sat down Mr. Wolfsheim drank his coffee with a jerk and got to his feet.

“I have enjoyed my lunch,” he said, “and I’m going to run off from you two young men before I outstay my welcome.”

“Don’t hurry, Meyer,” said Gatsby, without enthusiasm. Mr. Wolfsheim raised his hand in a sort of benediction.

“You’re very polite but I belong to another generation,” he announced solemnly. “You sit here and discuss your sports and your young ladies and your—” He supplied an imaginary noun with another wave of his hand—“As for me, I am fifty years old, and I won’t impose myself on you any longer.”

As he shook hands and turned away his tragic nose was trembling. I wondered if I had said anything to offend him.

“He becomes very sentimental sometimes,” explained Gatsby. “This is one of his sentimental days. He’s quite a character around New York—a denizen of Broadway.”

“Who is he anyhow—an actor?”

“No.”

“A dentist?”

“Meyer Wolfsheim? No, he’s a gambler.” Gatsby hesitated, then added coolly: “He’s the man who fixed the World’s Series back in 1919.”⁴²

“Fixed the World’s Series?” I repeated.

The idea staggered me. I remembered of course that the World’s Series had been fixed in 1919 but if I had thought of it at all I would have thought of it as a thing that merely *happened*, the end of some inevitable chain. It never occurred to me that one man could start to play with the faith of fifty million people—with the single-mindedness of a burglar blowing a safe.

42. A syndicate of New York gangsters bribed several members of the Chicago White Sox, to throw the 1919 World Series. The star outfielder “Shoeless Joe” Jackson (1887-1951), despite his strong performance in the series, was banned from playing after the 1920 season. “The Black Sox” scandal gave rise to the famous headline in a Chicago newspaper, “Say it ain’t so, Joe.” These words, later wrongly attributed to a young fan, became legend.

“How did he happen to do that?” I asked after a minute.

“He just saw the opportunity.”

“Why isn’t he in jail?”

“They can’t get him, old sport. He’s a smart man.”

I insisted on paying the check. As the waiter brought my change I caught sight of Tom Buchanan across the crowded room.

“Come along with me for a minute,” I said. “I’ve got to say hello to someone.”

When he saw us Tom jumped up and took half a dozen steps in our direction.

“Where’ve you been?” he demanded eagerly. “Daisy’s furious because you haven’t called up.”

“This is Mr. Gatsby, Mr. Buchanan.”

They shook hands briefly and a strained, unfamiliar look of embarrassment came over Gatsby’s face.

“How’ve you been, anyhow?” demanded Tom of me. “How’d you happen to come up this far to eat?”

“I’ve been having lunch with Mr. Gatsby.”

I turned toward Mr. Gatsby, but he was no longer there.

One October day in nineteen-seventeen— (said Jordan Baker that afternoon, sitting up very straight on a straight chair in the tea-garden at the Plaza Hotel) –I was walking along from one place to another half on the sidewalks and half on the lawns. I was happier on the lawns because I had on shoes from England with rubber nobs on the soles that bit into the soft ground. I had on a new plaid skirt also that blew a little in the wind and whenever this happened the red, white and blue banners in front of all the houses stretched out stiff and said *tut-tut-tut-tut* in a disapproving way.

The largest of the banners and the largest of the lawns belonged to Daisy Fay’s house. She was just eighteen, two years older than me, and by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville. She dressed in white, and had a little white roadster and all day long the telephone rang in her house and excited young officers from Camp Taylor⁴³ demanded the privilege of monopolizing her that night, “anyways, for an hour!”

When I came opposite her house that morning her white roadster was beside the curb, and she was sitting in it with a lieutenant I had never seen before. They were so engrossed in each other that she didn’t see me until I was five feet away.

“Hello Jordan,” she called unexpectedly. “Please come here.”

I was flattered that she wanted to speak to me, because of all the older girls I admired her most. She asked me if I was going to the Red Cross and make bandages. I was. Well, then, would I tell them that she couldn’t come that day? The officer looked at Daisy while she was speaking, in a way that every young girl wants to be looked at sometime, and because it seemed romantic to me I have remembered the incident ever since. His name was Jay Gatsby and I didn’t lay eyes on him again for over four years—even after I’d met him on Long Island I didn’t realize it was the same man.

That was nineteen-seventeen. By the next year I had a few beaux myself, and I began to play in tournaments, so I didn’t see Daisy very often. She went with a slightly older crowd—when she went with anyone at all. Wild rumors were circulating about her—how her mother had found her packing her bag one winter night to go to New York and say goodbye to a soldier who was going overseas. She was effectually prevented, but she wasn’t on speaking terms with her family for several weeks. After that she didn’t play around with the soldiers any more but only with a few flat-footed, short-sighted young men in town who couldn’t get into the army at all.

By the next autumn she was gay again, gay as ever. She had a debut after the Armistice, and in

43. Originally a U.S. Army training camp near downtown Louisville, Kentucky, named after former president Zachary Taylor.

February she was presumably engaged to a man from New Orleans. In June she married Tom Buchanan of Chicago with more pomp and circumstance than Louisville ever knew before. He came down with a hundred people in four private cars and hired a whole floor of the Seelbach Hotel, and the day before the wedding he gave her a string of pearls valued at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

I was bridesmaid. I came into her room half an hour before the bridal dinner, and found her lying on her bed as lovely as the June night in her flowered dress—and as drunk as a monkey. She had a bottle of sauterne in one hand and a letter in the other.

” ‘Gratulate me,’ she muttered. “Never had a drink before but oh, how I do enjoy it.”

“What’s the matter, Daisy?”

I was scared, I can tell you; I’d never seen a girl like that before.

“Here, dearis.” She groped around in a waste-basket she had with her on the bed and pulled out the string of pearls. “Take ’em downstairs and give ’em back to whoever they belong to. Tell ’em all Daisy’s change’ her mine. Say ‘Daisy’s change’ her mine!’.”

She began to cry—she cried and cried. I rushed out and found her mother’s maid and we locked the door and got her into a cold bath. She wouldn’t let go of the letter. She took it into the tub with her and squeezed it up into a wet ball, and only let me leave it in the soap dish when she saw that it was coming to pieces like snow.

But she didn’t say another word. We gave her spirits of ammonia and put ice on her forehead and hooked her back into her dress and half an hour later when we walked out of the room the pearls were around her neck and the incident was over. Next day at five o’clock she married Tom Buchanan without so much as a shiver and started off on a three months’ trip to the South Seas.

I saw them in Santa Barbara when they came back and I thought I’d never seen a girl so mad about her husband. If he left the room for a minute she’d look around uneasily and say “Where’s Tom gone?” and wear the most abstracted expression until she saw him coming in the door. She used to sit on the sand with his head in her lap by the hour rubbing her fingers over his eyes and looking at him with unfathomable delight. It was touching to see them together—it made you laugh in a hushed, fascinated way. That was in August. A week after I left Santa Barbara Tom ran into a wagon on the Ventura road one night and ripped a front wheel off his car. The girl who was with him got into the papers too because her arm was broken—she was one of the chambermaids in the Santa Barbara Hotel.

The next April Daisy had her little girl and they went to France for a year. I saw them one spring in Cannes⁴⁴ and later in Deauville and then they came back to Chicago to settle down. Daisy was popular in Chicago, as you know. They moved with a fast crowd, all of them young and rich and wild, but she came out with an absolutely perfect reputation. Perhaps because she doesn’t drink. It’s a great advantage not to drink among hard-drinking people. You can hold your tongue and, moreover, you can time any little irregularity of your own so that everybody else is so blind that they don’t see or care. Perhaps Daisy never went in for amour at all—and yet there’s something in that voice of hers. . . .

Well, about six weeks ago, she heard the name Gatsby for the first time in years. It was when I asked you—do you remember?—if you knew Gatsby in West Egg. After you had gone home she came into my room and woke me up, and said “What Gatsby?” and when I described him—I was half asleep—she said in the strangest voice that it must be the man she used to know. It wasn’t until then that I connected this Gatsby with the officer in her white car.

When Jordan Baker had finished telling all this we had left the Plaza for half an hour and were driving in a Victoria through Central Park. The sun had gone down behind the tall apartments of the

44. Cannes and Deauville are both seaside resorts, the former on France’s Côte d’Azur; the latter on France’s Atlantic coast.

movie stars in the West Fifties and the clear voices of girls, already gathered like crickets on the grass, rose through the hot twilight:

*“I’m the Sheik of Araby,
Your love belongs to me.
At night when you’re asleep
Into your tent I’ll creep”*⁴⁵—

“It was a strange coincidence,” I said.

“But it wasn’t a coincidence at all.”

“Why not?”

“Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay.”

Then it had not been merely the stars to which he had aspired on that June night. He came alive to me, delivered suddenly from the womb of his purposeless splendor.

“He wants to know—” continued Jordan “—if you’ll invite Daisy to your house some afternoon and then let him come over.”

The modesty of the demand shook me. He had waited five years and bought a mansion where he dispensed starlight to casual moths so that he could “come over” some afternoon to a stranger’s garden.

“Did I have to know all this before he could ask such a little thing?”

“He’s afraid. He’s waited so long. He thought you might be offended. You see he’s a regular tough underneath it all.”

Something worried me.

“Why didn’t he ask you to arrange a meeting?”

“He wants her to see his house,” she explained. “And your house is right next door.”

“Oh!”

“I think he half expected her to wander into one of his parties, some night,” went on Jordan, “but she never did. Then he began asking people casually if they knew her, and I was the first one he found. It was that night he sent for me at his dance, and you should have heard the elaborate way he worked up to it. Of course, I immediately suggested a luncheon in New York—and I thought he’d go mad:

” ‘I don’t want to do anything out of the way!’ he kept saying. ‘I want to see her right next door.’

“When I said you were a particular friend of Tom’s he started to abandon the whole idea. He doesn’t know very much about Tom, though he says he’s read a Chicago paper for years just on the chance of catching a glimpse of Daisy’s name.”

It was dark now, and as we dipped under a little bridge I put my arm around Jordan’s golden shoulder and drew her toward me and asked her to dinner. Suddenly I wasn’t thinking of Daisy and Gatsby any more but of this clean, hard, limited person who dealt in universal skepticism and who leaned back jauntily just within the circle of my arm. A phrase began to beat in my ears with a sort of heady excitement: “There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired.”

“And Daisy ought to have something in her life,” murmured Jordan to me.

“Does she want to see Gatsby?”

“She’s not to know about it. Gatsby doesn’t want her to know. You’re just supposed to invite her to tea.”

We passed a barrier of dark trees, and then the facade of Fifty-ninth Street, a block of delicate pale light, beamed down into the park. Unlike Gatsby and Tom Buchanan I had no girl whose disembodied face floated along the dark cornices and blinding signs and so I drew up the girl beside me, tightening my arms. Her wan, scornful mouth smiled and so I drew her up again, closer, this time to my face.

45. Popular song of 1921 written in response to the romantic silent film *The Sheik*, starring Rudolph Valentino (1895-1926).

Chapter 4 Study Questions

1. Describe Gatsby's car.
2. Describe Meyer Wolfsheim, starting with his surname and then his cufflinks. What does he suggest thematically?
3. Daisy is associated with the colour white. What does this colour suggest?
4. Why did Daisy marry Tom? Was she in love with him then?

Chapter 5

When I came home to West Egg that night I was afraid for a moment that my house was on fire. Two o'clock and the whole corner of the peninsula was blazing with light which fell unreal on the shrubbery and made thin elongating glints upon the roadside wires. Turning a corner I saw that it was Gatsby's house, lit from tower to cellar.

At first I thought it was another party, a wild rout that had resolved itself into "hide-and-go-seek" or "sardines-in-the-box" with all the house thrown open to the game. But there wasn't a sound. Only wind in the trees which blew the wires and made the lights go off and on again as if the house had winked into the darkness. As my taxi groaned away I saw Gatsby walking toward me across his lawn.

"Your place looks like the world's fair," I said.

"Does it?" He turned his eyes toward it absently. "I have been glancing into some of the rooms. Let's go to Coney Island⁴⁶, old sport. In my car."

"It's too late."

"Well, suppose we take a plunge in the swimming pool? I haven't made use of it all summer."

"I've got to go to bed."

"All right."

He waited, looking at me with suppressed eagerness.

"I talked with Miss Baker," I said after a moment. "I'm going to call up Daisy tomorrow and invite her over here to tea."

"Oh, that's all right," he said carelessly. "I don't want to put you to any trouble."

"What day would suit you?"

"What day would suit *you*?" he corrected me quickly. "I don't want to put you to any trouble, you see."

"How about the day after tomorrow?" He considered for a moment. Then, with reluctance:

"I want to get the grass cut," he said.

We both looked at the grass—there was a sharp line where my ragged lawn ended and the darker, well-kept expanse of his began. I suspected that he meant my grass.

"There's another little thing," he said uncertainly, and hesitated.

"Would you rather put it off for a few days?" I asked.

"Oh, it isn't about that. At least—" He fumbled with a series of beginnings. "Why, I thought—why, look here, old sport, you don't make much money, do you?"

"Not very much."

This seemed to reassure him and he continued more confidently.

"I thought you didn't, if you'll pardon my—you see, I carry on a little business on the side, a sort of sideline, you understand. And I thought that if you don't make very much—You're selling bonds, aren't you, old sport?"

"Trying to."

"Well, this would interest you. It wouldn't take up much of your time and you might pick up a nice bit of money. It happens to be a rather confidential sort of thing."

I realize now that under different circumstances that conversation might have been one of the crises of my life. But, because the offer was obviously and tactlessly for a service to be rendered, I had no choice except to cut him off there.

46. A popular seaside resort and amusement park in the borough of Brooklyn, New York City.

“I’ve got my hands full,” I said. “I’m much obliged but I couldn’t take on any more work.”

“You wouldn’t have to do any business with Wolfsheim.” Evidently he thought that I was shying away from the “gonnegtion” mentioned at lunch, but I assured him he was wrong. He waited a moment longer, hoping I’d begin a conversation, but I was too absorbed to be responsive, so he went unwillingly home.

The evening had made me light-headed and happy; I think I walked into a deep sleep as I entered my front door. So I didn’t know whether or not Gatsby went to Coney Island or for how many hours he “glanced into rooms” while his house blazed gaudily on. I called up Daisy from the office next morning and invited her to come to tea.

“Don’t bring Tom,” I warned her.

“What?”

“Don’t bring Tom.”

“Who is ‘Tom’?” she asked innocently.

The day agreed upon was pouring rain. At eleven o’clock a man in a raincoat dragging a lawnmower tapped at my front door and said that Mr. Gatsby had sent him over to cut my grass. This reminded me that I had forgotten to tell my Finn to come back so I drove into West Egg Village to search for her among soggy white-washed alleys and to buy some cups and lemons and flowers.

The flowers were unnecessary, for at two o’clock a greenhouse arrived from Gatsby’s, with innumerable receptacles to contain it. An hour later the front door opened nervously, and Gatsby in a white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold-colored tie hurried in. He was pale and there were dark signs of sleeplessness beneath his eyes.

“Is everything all right?” he asked immediately.

“The grass looks fine, if that’s what you mean.”

“What grass?” he inquired blankly. “Oh, the grass in the yard.” He looked out the window at it, but judging from his expression I don’t believe he saw a thing.

“Looks very good,” he remarked vaguely. “One of the papers said they thought the rain would stop about four. I think it was ‘The Journal.’ Have you got everything you need in the shape of—of tea?”

I took him into the pantry where he looked a little reproachfully at the Finn. Together we scrutinized the twelve lemon cakes from the delicatessen shop.

“Will they do?” I asked.

“Of course, of course! They’re fine!” and he added hollowly, “. . .old sport.”

The rain cooled about half-past three to a damp mist through which occasional thin drops swam like dew. Gatsby looked with vacant eyes through a copy of Clay’s⁴⁷ *Economics*, starting at the Finnish tread that shook the kitchen floor and peering toward the bleared windows from time to time as if a series of invisible but alarming happenings were taking place outside. Finally he got up and informed me in an uncertain voice that he was going home.

“Why’s that?”

“Nobody’s coming to tea. It’s too late!” He looked at his watch as if there was some pressing demand on his time elsewhere. “I can’t wait all day.”

“Don’t be silly; it’s just two minutes to four.”

He sat down, miserably, as if I had pushed him, and simultaneously there was the sound of a motor turning into my lane. We both jumped up and, a little harrowed myself, I went out into the yard.

Under the dripping bare lilac trees a large open car was coming up the drive. It stopped. Daisy’s face, tipped sideways beneath a three-cornered lavender hat, looked out at me with a bright ecstatic smile.

47. Henry Clay (1883-1954). British economist whose book *Economics: An Introduction for the General Reader* (1916) became a classic in the field.

“Is this absolutely where you live, my dearest one?”

The exhilarating ripple of her voice was a wild tonic in the rain. I had to follow the sound of it for a moment, up and down, with my ear alone before any words came through. A damp streak of hair lay like a dash of blue paint across her cheek and her hand was wet with glistening drops as I took it to help her from the car.

“Are you in love with me,” she said low in my ear. “Or why did I have to come alone?”

“That’s the secret of Castle Rackrent⁴⁸. Tell your chauffeur to go far away and spend an hour.”

“Come back in an hour, Ferdie.” Then in a grave murmur, “His name is Ferdie.”

“Does the gasoline affect his nose?”

“I don’t think so,” she said innocently. “Why?”

We went in. To my overwhelming surprise the living room was deserted.

“Well, that’s funny!” I exclaimed.

“What’s funny?”

She turned her head as there was a light, dignified knocking at the front door. I went out and opened it. Gatsby, pale as death, with his hands plunged like weights in his coat pockets, was standing in a puddle of water glaring tragically into my eyes.

With his hands still in his coat pockets he stalked by me into the hall, turned sharply as if he were on a wire and disappeared into the living room. It wasn’t a bit funny. Aware of the loud beating of my own heart I pulled the door to against the increasing rain.

For half a minute there wasn’t a sound. Then from the living room I heard a sort of choking murmur and part of a laugh followed by Daisy’s voice on a clear artificial note.

“I certainly am awfully glad to see you again.”

A pause; it endured horribly. I had nothing to do in the hall so I went into the room.

Gatsby, his hands still in his pockets, was reclining against the mantelpiece in a strained counterfeit of perfect ease, even of boredom. His head leaned back so far that it rested against the face of a defunct mantelpiece clock and from this position his distraught eyes stared down at Daisy who was sitting frightened but graceful on the edge of a stiff chair.

“We’ve met before,” muttered Gatsby. His eyes glanced momentarily at me and his lips parted with an abortive attempt at a laugh. Luckily the clock took this moment to tilt dangerously at the pressure of his head, whereupon he turned and caught it with trembling fingers and set it back in place. Then he sat down, rigidly, his elbow on the arm of the sofa and his chin in his hand.

“I’m sorry about the clock,” he said.

My own face had now assumed a deep tropical burn. I couldn’t muster up a single commonplace out of the thousand in my head.

“It’s an old clock,” I told them idiotically.

I think we all believed for a moment that it had smashed in pieces on the floor.

“We haven’t met for many years,” said Daisy, her voice as matter-of-fact as it could ever be.

“Five years next November.”

The automatic quality of Gatsby’s answer set us all back at least another minute. I had them both on their feet with the desperate suggestion that they help me make tea in the kitchen when the demoniac Finn brought it in on a tray.

Amid the welcome confusion of cups and cakes a certain physical decency established itself. Gatsby got himself into a shadow and while Daisy and I talked looked conscientiously from one to the other of us with tense unhappy eyes. However, as calmness wasn’t an end in itself I made an excuse at the first possible moment and got to my feet.

48. The home of the Rackrent family in the novel *Castle Rackrent* (1800) by Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849).

“Where are you going?” demanded Gatsby in immediate alarm.

“I’ll be back.”

“I’ve got to speak to you about something before you go.”

He followed me wildly into the kitchen, closed the door and whispered: “Oh, God!” in a miserable way.

“What’s the matter?”

“This is a terrible mistake,” he said, shaking his head from side to side, “a terrible, terrible mistake.”

“You’re just embarrassed, that’s all,” and luckily I added: “Daisy’s embarrassed too.”

“She’s embarrassed?” he repeated incredulously.

“Just as much as you are.”

“Don’t talk so loud.”

“You’re acting like a little boy,” I broke out impatiently. “Not only that but you’re rude. Daisy’s sitting in there all alone.”

He raised his hand to stop my words, looked at me with unforgettable reproach and opening the door cautiously went back into the other room.

I walked out the back way—just as Gatsby had when he had made his nervous circuit of the house half an hour before—and ran for a huge black knotted tree whose massed leaves made a fabric against the rain. Once more it was pouring and my irregular lawn, well-shaved by Gatsby’s gardener, abounded in small muddy swamps and prehistoric marshes. There was nothing to look at from under the tree except Gatsby’s enormous house, so I stared at it, like Kant⁴⁹ at his church steeple, for half an hour. A brewer had built it early in the “period” craze, a decade before, and there was a story that he’d agreed to pay five years’ taxes on all the neighboring cottages if the owners would have their roofs thatched with straw. Perhaps their refusal took the heart out of his plan to Found a Family—he went into an immediate decline. His children sold his house with the black wreath still on the door. Americans, while occasionally willing to be serfs, have always been obstinate about being peasantry.

After half an hour the sun shone again and the grocer’s automobile rounded Gatsby’s drive with the raw material for his servants’ dinner—I felt sure he wouldn’t eat a spoonful. A maid began opening the upper windows of his house, appeared momentarily in each, and, leaning from a large central bay, spat meditatively into the garden. It was time I went back. While the rain continued it had seemed like the murmur of their voices, rising and swelling a little, now and then, with gusts of emotion. But in the new silence I felt that silence had fallen within the house too.

I went in—after making every possible noise in the kitchen short of pushing over the stove—but I don’t believe they heard a sound. They were sitting at either end of the couch looking at each other as if some question had been asked or was in the air, and every vestige of embarrassment was gone. Daisy’s face was smeared with tears and when I came in she jumped up and began wiping at it with her handkerchief before a mirror. But there was a change in Gatsby that was simply confounding. He literally glowed; without a word or a gesture of exultation a new well-being radiated from him and filled the little room.

“Oh, hello, old sport,” he said, as if he hadn’t seen me for years. I thought for a moment he was going to shake hands.

“It’s stopped raining.”

“Has it?” When he realized what I was talking about, that there were twinkle-bells of sunshine in the room, he smiled like a weather man, like an ecstatic patron of recurrent light, and repeated the news to Daisy. “What do you think of that? It’s stopped raining.”

49. German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) habitually looked out his window at a distant church steeple while he worked or meditated.

"I'm glad, Jay." Her throat, full of aching, grieving beauty, told only of her unexpected joy.

"I want you and Daisy to come over to my house," he said, "I'd like to show her around."

"You're sure you want me to come?"

"Absolutely, old sport."

Daisy went upstairs to wash her face—too late I thought with humiliation of my towels—while Gatsby and I waited on the lawn.

"My house looks well, doesn't it?" he demanded. "See how the whole front of it catches the light."

I agreed that it was splendid.

"Yes." His eyes went over it, every arched door and square tower. "It took me just three years to earn the money that bought it."

"I thought you inherited your money."

"I did, old sport," he said automatically, "but I lost most of it in the big panic—the panic of the war."

I think he hardly knew what he was saying, for when I asked him what business he was in he answered "That's my affair," before he realized that it wasn't the appropriate reply.

"Oh, I've been in several things," he corrected himself. "I was in the drug business and then I was in the oil business. But I'm not in either one now." He looked at me with more attention. "Do you mean you've been thinking over what I proposed the other night?"

Before I could answer, Daisy came out of the house and two rows of brass buttons on her dress gleamed in the sunlight.

"That huge place *there*?" she cried pointing.

"Do you like it?"

"I love it, but I don't see how you live there all alone."

"I keep it always full of interesting people, night and day. People who do interesting things. Celebrated people."

Instead of taking the short cut along the Sound we went down the road and entered by the big postern.⁵⁰ With enchanting murmurs Daisy admired this aspect or that of the feudal silhouette against the sky, admired the gardens, the sparkling odor of jonquils and the frothy odor of hawthorn and plum blossoms and the pale gold odor of kiss-me-at-the-gate. It was strange to reach the marble steps and find no stir of bright dresses in and out the door, and hear no sound but bird voices in the trees.

And inside as we wandered through Marie Antoinette music rooms and Restoration salons I felt that there were guests concealed behind every couch and table, under orders to be breathlessly silent until we had passed through. As Gatsby closed the door of "the Merton College Library"⁵¹ I could have sworn I heard the owl-eyed man break into ghostly laughter.

We went upstairs, through period bedrooms swathed in rose and lavender silk and vivid with new flowers, through dressing rooms and poolrooms, and bathrooms with sunken baths—intruding into one chamber where a dishevelled man in pajamas was doing liver exercises on the floor. It was Mr. Klipspringer, the "boarder." I had seen him wandering hungrily about the beach that morning. Finally we came to Gatsby's own apartment, a bedroom and a bath and an Adam⁵² study, where we sat down and drank a glass of some Chartreuse⁵³ he took from a cupboard in the wall.

He hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy and I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes. Sometimes, too, he stared around at his possessions in a dazed way as though in her actual and astounding presence none of it was any longer real. Once he nearly toppled down a flight of stairs.

50. A back door or gate.

51. Merton College Library, Oxford University, is a venerable academic library.

52. Robert Adam (1728-1792) was an English neoclassical designer and architect.

53. A greenish or yellowish liqueur made of brandy and aromatic herbs.

His bedroom was the simplest room of all—except where the dresser was garnished with a toilet set of pure dull gold. Daisy took the brush with delight and smoothed her hair, whereupon Gatsby sat down and shaded his eyes and began to laugh.

“It’s the funniest thing, old sport,” he said hilariously. “I can’t—when I try to—”

He had passed visibly through two states and was entering upon a third. After his embarrassment and his unreasoning joy he was consumed with wonder at her presence. He had been full of the idea so long, dreamed it right through to the end, waited with his teeth set, so to speak, at an inconceivable pitch of intensity. Now, in the reaction, he was running down like an overwound clock.

Recovering himself in a minute he opened for us two hulking patent cabinets which held his massed suits and dressing-gowns and ties, and his shirts, piled like bricks in stacks a dozen high.

“I’ve got a man in England who buys me clothes. He sends over a selection of things at the beginning of each season, spring and fall.”

He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel which lost their folds as they fell and covered the table in many-colored disarray. While we admired he brought more and the soft rich heap mounted higher—shirts with stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and apple-green and lavender and faint orange with monograms of Indian blue. Suddenly with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily.

“They’re such beautiful shirts,” she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. “It makes me sad because I’ve never seen such—such beautiful shirts before.”

After the house, we were to see the grounds and the swimming pool, and the hydroplane and the midsummer flowers—but outside Gatsby’s window it began to rain again so we stood in a row looking at the corrugated surface of the Sound.

“If it wasn’t for the mist we could see your home across the bay,” said Gatsby. “You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock.”

Daisy put her arm through his abruptly but he seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one.

I began to walk about the room, examining various indefinite objects in the half darkness. A large photograph of an elderly man in yachting costume attracted me, hung on the wall over his desk.

“Who’s this?”

“That? That’s Mr. Dan Cody, old sport.”

The name sounded faintly familiar.

“He’s dead now. He used to be my best friend years ago.”

There was a small picture of Gatsby, also in yachting costume, on the bureau—Gatsby with his head thrown back defiantly—taken apparently when he was about eighteen.

“I adore it!” exclaimed Daisy. “The pompadour! You never told me you had a pompadour—or a yacht.”

“Look at this,” said Gatsby quickly. “Here’s a lot of clippings—about you.”

They stood side by side examining it. I was going to ask to see the rubies when the phone rang and Gatsby took up the receiver.

“Yes. . . . Well, I can’t talk now. . . . I can’t talk now, old sport. . . . I said a *small* town. . . . He must know what a small town is. . . . Well, he’s no use to us if Detroit is his idea of a small town. . . .”

He rang off.

“Come here *quick!*” cried Daisy at the window.

The rain was still falling, but the darkness had parted in the west, and there was a pink and golden billow of foamy clouds above the sea.

“Look at that,” she whispered, and then after a moment: “I’d like to just get one of those pink clouds and put you in it and push you around.”

I tried to go then, but they wouldn’t hear of it; perhaps my presence made them feel more satisfactorily alone.

“I know what we’ll do,” said Gatsby, “we’ll have Klipspringer play the piano.”

He went out of the room calling “Ewing!” and returned in a few minutes accompanied by an embarrassed, slightly worn young man with shell-rimmed glasses and scanty blonde hair. He was now decently clothed in a “sport shirt” open at the neck, sneakers and duck trousers of a nebulous hue.

“Did we interrupt your exercises?” inquired Daisy politely.

“I was asleep,” cried Mr. Klipspringer, in a spasm of embarrassment. “That is, I’d *been* asleep. Then I got up. . . .”

“Klipspringer plays the piano,” said Gatsby, cutting him off. “Don’t you, Ewing, old sport?”

“I don’t play well. I don’t—I hardly play at all. I’m all out of prac—”

“We’ll go downstairs,” interrupted Gatsby. He flipped a switch. The grey windows disappeared as the house glowed full of light.

In the music room Gatsby turned on a solitary lamp beside the piano. He lit Daisy’s cigarette from a trembling match, and sat down with her on a couch far across the room where there was no light save what the gleaming floor bounced in from the hall.

When Klipspringer had played “The Love Nest” he turned around on the bench and searched unhappily for Gatsby in the gloom.

“I’m all out of practice, you see. I told you I couldn’t play. I’m all out of prac—”

“Don’t talk so much, old sport,” commanded Gatsby. “Play!”

“In the morning

In the evening,

*Ain’t we got fun—?”*⁵⁴

Outside the wind was loud and there was a faint flow of thunder along the Sound. All the lights were going on in West Egg now; the electric trains, men-carrying, were plunging home through the rain from New York. It was the hour of a profound human change, and excitement was generating on the air.

“One thing’s sure and nothing’s surer

The rich get rich and the poor get—children.

In the meantime,

In between time—”

As I went over to say goodbye I saw that the expression of bewilderment had come back into Gatsby’s face, as though a faint doubt had occurred to him as to the quality of his present happiness. Almost five years! There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart.

As I watched him he adjusted himself a little, visibly. His hand took hold of hers and as she said something low in his ear he turned toward her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most

54. “Ain’t We Got Fun?” A popular foxtrot song of 1921.

with its fluctuating, feverish warmth because it couldn't be over-dreamed—that voice was a deathless song.

They had forgotten me, but Daisy glanced up and held out her hand; Gatsby didn't know me now at all. I looked once more at them and they looked back at me, remotely, possessed by intense life. Then I went out of the room and down the marble steps into the rain, leaving them there together.

Chapter 5 Study Questions

1. What does Gatsby offer Nick in this chapter?
2. What does the clock symbolize?
3. Who was Dan Cody, and is his surname symbolic?
4. Who is Ella Kaye?
5. What is Gatsby's major illusion?

Chapter 6

About this time an ambitious young reporter from New York arrived one morning at Gatsby's door and asked him if he had anything to say.

"Anything to say about what?" inquired Gatsby politely.

"Why,—any statement to give out."

It transpired after a confused five minutes that the man had heard Gatsby's name around his office in a connection which he either wouldn't reveal or didn't fully understand. This was his day off and with laudable initiative he had hurried out "to see."

It was a random shot, and yet the reporter's instinct was right. Gatsby's notoriety, spread about by the hundreds who had accepted his hospitality and so become authorities on his past, had increased all summer until he fell just short of being news. Contemporary legends such as the "underground pipeline to Canada"⁵⁵ attached themselves to him, and there was one persistent story that he didn't live in a house at all, but in a boat that looked like a house and was moved secretly up and down the Long Island shore. Just why these inventions were a source of satisfaction to James Gatz of North Dakota, isn't easy to say.

James Gatz—that was really, or at least legally, his name. He had changed it at the age of seventeen and at the specific moment that witnessed the beginning of his career—when he saw Dan Cody's yacht drop anchor over the most insidious flat on Lake Superior. It was James Gatz who had been loafing along the beach that afternoon in a torn green jersey and a pair of canvas pants, but it was already Jay Gatsby who borrowed a row-boat, pulled out to the *Tuolomne*⁵⁶ and informed Cody that a wind might catch him and break him up in half an hour.

I suppose he'd had the name ready for a long time, even then. His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people—his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was that Jay Gatsby, of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic⁵⁷ conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about His Father's Business⁵⁸, the service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end.

For over a year he had been beating his way along the south shore of Lake Superior as a clam digger and a salmon fisher or in any other capacity that brought him food and bed. His brown, hardening body lived naturally through the half fierce, half lazy work of the bracing days. He knew women early and since they spoiled him he became contemptuous of them, of young virgins because they were ignorant, of the others because they were hysterical about things which in his overwhelming self-absorption he took for granted.

But his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock ticked on the wash-stand and the moon soaked with wet light his tangled clothes upon the floor. Each night he added to the pattern of his fancies until drowsiness closed down upon some vivid scene with an oblivious embrace. For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a

55. A reference to Prohibition (1920-1933) during which time the manufacture and sale of alcohol was illegal in the United States. Canada did not have a similar law and so was used as a source of illegal smuggled alcohol.

56. Possibly a reference to the county in California. Yosemite National Park is located in the eastern part of the county.

57. Idealized. The Greek philosopher Plato (c.428-348 B.C.) taught that actual things are copies of transcendent ideas.

58. A reference to Luke 2:49, "... I must be about my Father's business"

satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing.

An instinct toward his future glory had led him, some months before, to the small Lutheran college of St. Olaf in southern Minnesota. He stayed there two weeks, dismayed at its ferocious indifference to the drums of his destiny, to destiny itself, and despising the janitor's work with which he was to pay his way through. Then he drifted back to Lake Superior, and he was still searching for something to do on the day that Dan Cody's yacht dropped anchor in the shallows along shore.

Cody was fifty years old then, a product of the Nevada silver fields, of the Yukon, of every rush for metal since Seventy-five.⁵⁹ The transactions in Montana copper that made him many times a millionaire found him physically robust but on the verge of soft-mindedness, and, suspecting this an infinite number of women tried to separate him from his money. The none too savory ramifications by which Ella Kaye, the newspaper woman, played Madame de Maintenon⁶⁰ to his weakness and sent him to sea in a yacht, were common knowledge to the turgid journalism of 1902. He had been coasting along all too hospitable shores for five years when he turned up as James Gatz's destiny at Little Girl Bay.

To the young Gatz, resting on his oars and looking up at the railed deck, the yacht represented all the beauty and glamor in the world. I suppose he smiled at Cody—he had probably discovered that people liked him when he smiled. At any rate Cody asked him a few questions (one of them elicited the brand new name) and found that he was quick, and extravagantly ambitious. A few days later he took him to Duluth and bought him a blue coat, six pair of white duck trousers and a yachting cap. And when the *Tuolomee* left for the West Indies and the Barbary Coast⁶¹ Gatsby left too.

He was employed in a vague personal capacity—while he remained with Cody he was in turn steward, mate, skipper, secretary, and even jailor, for Dan Cody sober knew what lavish doings Dan Cody drunk might soon be about and he provided for such contingencies by reposing more and more trust in Gatsby. The arrangement lasted five years during which the boat went three times around the continent. It might have lasted indefinitely except for the fact that Ella Kaye came on board one night in Boston and a week later Dan Cody inhospitably died.

I remember the portrait of him up in Gatsby's bedroom, a grey, florid man with a hard empty face—the pioneer debauchee who during one phase of American life brought back to the eastern seaboard the savage violence of the frontier brothel and saloon. It was indirectly due to Cody that Gatsby drank so little. Sometimes in the course of gay parties women used to rub champagne into his hair; for himself he formed the habit of letting liquor alone.

And it was from Cody that he inherited money—a legacy of twenty-five thousand dollars. He didn't get it. He never understood the legal device that was used against him but what remained of the millions went intact to Ella Kaye. He was left with his singularly appropriate education; the vague contour of Jay Gatsby had filled out to the substantiality of a man.

He told me all this very much later, but I've put it down here with the idea of exploding those first wild rumors about his antecedents, which weren't even faintly true. Moreover he told it to me at a time of confusion, when I had reached the point of believing everything and nothing about him. So I take advantage of this short halt, while Gatsby, so to speak, caught his breath, to clear this set of misconceptions away.

It was a halt, too, in my association with his affairs. For several weeks I didn't see him or hear his voice on the phone—mostly I was in New York, trotting around with Jordan and trying to ingratiate myself

59. Large placer gold deposits were discovered at Deadwood Gulch in present-day South Dakota in November 1875.

60. Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon (1635-1719). Powerful and influential second wife of King Louis XIV.

61. Red-light district of San Francisco of the period. It grew out of the California Gold Rush of 1849.

with her senile aunt—but finally I went over to his house one Sunday afternoon. I hadn't been there two minutes when somebody brought Tom Buchanan in for a drink. I was startled, naturally, but the really surprising thing was that it hadn't happened before.

They were a party of three on horseback—Tom and a man named Sloane and a pretty woman in a brown riding habit who had been there previously.

"I'm delighted to see you," said Gatsby standing on his porch. "I'm delighted that you dropped in."

As though they cared!

"Sit right down. Have a cigarette or a cigar." He walked around the room quickly, ringing bells. "I'll have something to drink for you in just a minute."

He was profoundly affected by the fact that Tom was there. But he would be uneasy anyhow until he had given them something, realizing in a vague way that that was all they came for. Mr. Sloane wanted nothing. A lemonade? No, thanks. A little champagne? Nothing at all, thanks. . . . I'm sorry—

"Did you have a nice ride?"

"Very good roads around here."

"I suppose the automobiles—"

"Yeah."

Moved by an irresistible impulse, Gatsby turned to Tom who had accepted the introduction as a stranger.

"I believe we've met somewhere before, Mr. Buchanan."

"Oh, yes," said Tom, gruffly polite but obviously not remembering. "So we did. I remember very well."

"About two weeks ago."

"That's right. You were with Nick here."

"I know your wife," continued Gatsby, almost aggressively.

"That so?"

Tom turned to me.

"You live near here, Nick?"

"Next door."

"That so?"

Mr. Sloane didn't enter into the conversation but lounged back haughtily in his chair; the woman said nothing either—until unexpectedly, after two highballs, she became cordial.

"We'll all come over to your next party, Mr. Gatsby," she suggested. "What do you say?"

"Certainly. I'd be delighted to have you."

"Be ver' nice," said Mr. Sloane, without gratitude. "Well—think ought to be starting home."

"Please don't hurry," Gatsby urged them. He had control of himself now and he wanted to see more of Tom. "Why don't you—why don't you stay for supper? I wouldn't be surprised if some other people dropped in from New York."

"You come to supper with *me*," said the lady enthusiastically. "Both of you."

This included me. Mr. Sloane got to his feet.

"Come along," he said—but to her only.

"I mean it," she insisted. "I'd love to have you. Lots of room."

Gatsby looked at me questioningly. He wanted to go and he didn't see that Mr. Sloane had determined he shouldn't.

"I'm afraid I won't be able to," I said.

"Well, you come," she urged, concentrating on Gatsby.

Mr. Sloane murmured something close to her ear.

"We won't be late if we start now," she insisted aloud.

"I haven't got a horse," said Gatsby. "I used to ride in the army but I've never bought a horse. I'll have to follow you in my car. Excuse me for just a minute."

The rest of us walked out on the porch, where Sloane and the lady began an impassioned conversation aside.

"My God, I believe the man's coming," said Tom. "Doesn't he know she doesn't want him?"

"She says she does want him."

"She has a big dinner party and he won't know a soul there." He frowned. "I wonder where in the devil he met Daisy. By God, I may be old-fashioned in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me. They meet all kinds of crazy fish."

Suddenly Mr. Sloane and the lady walked down the steps and mounted their horses.

"Come on," said Mr. Sloane to Tom, "we're late. We've got to go." And then to me: "Tell him we couldn't wait, will you?"

Tom and I shook hands, the rest of us exchanged a cool nod and they trotted quickly down the drive, disappearing under the August foliage just as Gatsby with hat and light overcoat in hand came out the front door.

Tom was evidently perturbed at Daisy's running around alone, for on the following Saturday night he came with her to Gatsby's party. Perhaps his presence gave the evening its peculiar quality of oppressiveness—it stands out in my memory from Gatsby's other parties that summer. There were the same people, or at least the same sort of people, the same profusion of champagne, the same many-colored, many-keyed commotion, but I felt an unpleasantness in the air, a pervading harshness that hadn't been there before. Or perhaps I had merely grown used to it, grown to accept West Egg as a world complete in itself, with its own standards and its own great figures, second to nothing because it had no consciousness of being so, and now I was looking at it again, through Daisy's eyes. It is invariably saddening to look through new eyes at things upon which you have expended your own powers of adjustment.

They arrived at twilight and as we strolled out among the sparkling hundreds Daisy's voice was playing murmurous tricks in her throat.

"These things excite me so," she whispered. "If you want to kiss me any time during the evening, Nick, just let me know and I'll be glad to arrange it for you. Just mention my name. Or present a green card. I'm giving out green—"

"Look around," suggested Gatsby.

"I'm looking around. I'm having a marvelous—"

"You must see the faces of many people you've heard about."

Tom's arrogant eyes roamed the crowd.

"We don't go around very much," he said. "In fact I was just thinking I don't know a soul here."

"Perhaps you know that lady." Gatsby indicated a gorgeous, scarcely human orchid of a woman who sat in state under a white plum tree. Tom and Daisy stared, with that peculiarly unreal feeling that accompanies the recognition of a hitherto ghostly celebrity of the movies.

"She's lovely," said Daisy.

"The man bending over her is her director."

He took them ceremoniously from group to group:

"Mrs. Buchanan . . . and Mr. Buchanan—" After an instant's hesitation he added: "the polo player."

"Oh no," objected Tom quickly, "Not me."

But evidently the sound of it pleased Gatsby for Tom remained "the polo player" for the rest of the evening.

"I've never met so many celebrities!" Daisy exclaimed. "I liked that man—what was his name?—with the sort of blue nose."

Gatsby identified him, adding that he was a small producer.

“Well, I liked him anyhow.”

“I’d a little rather not be the polo player,” said Tom pleasantly, “I’d rather look at all these famous people in—in oblivion.”

Daisy and Gatsby danced. I remember being surprised by his graceful, conservative fox-trot—I had never seen him dance before. Then they sauntered over to my house and sat on the steps for half an hour while at her request I remained watchfully in the garden: “In case there’s a fire or a flood,” she explained, “or any act of God.”

Tom appeared from his oblivion as we were sitting down to supper together. “Do you mind if I eat with some people over here?” he said. “A fellow’s getting off some funny stuff.”

“Go ahead,” answered Daisy genially, “And if you want to take down any addresses here’s my little gold pencil. . . .” She looked around after a moment and told me the girl was “common but pretty,” and I knew that except for the half hour she’d been alone with Gatsby she wasn’t having a good time.

We were at a particularly tipsy table. That was my fault—Gatsby had been called to the phone and I’d enjoyed these same people only two weeks before. But what had amused me then turned septic on the air now.

“How do you feel, Miss Baedeker?”

The girl addressed was trying, unsuccessfully, to slump against my shoulder. At this inquiry she sat up and opened her eyes.

“Wha?”

A massive and lethargic woman, who had been urging Daisy to play golf with her at the local club tomorrow, spoke in Miss Baedeker’s defence:

“Oh, she’s all right now. When she’s had five or six cocktails she always starts screaming like that. I tell her she ought to leave it alone.”

“I do leave it alone,” affirmed the accused hollowly.

“We heard you yelling, so I said to Doc Civet here: ‘There’s somebody that needs your help, Doc.’ ”

“She’s much obliged, I’m sure,” said another friend, without gratitude. “But you got her dress all wet when you stuck her head in the pool.”

“Anything I hate is to get my head stuck in a pool,” mumbled Miss Baedeker. “They almost drowned me once over in New Jersey.”

“Then you ought to leave it alone,” countered Doctor Civet.

“Speak for yourself!” cried Miss Baedeker violently. “Your hand shakes. I wouldn’t let you operate on me!”

It was like that. Almost the last thing I remember was standing with Daisy and watching the moving picture director and his Star. They were still under the white plum tree and their faces were touching except for a pale thin ray of moonlight between. It occurred to me that he had been very slowly bending toward her all evening to attain this proximity, and even while I watched I saw him stoop one ultimate degree and kiss at her cheek.

“I like her,” said Daisy, “I think she’s lovely.”

But the rest offended her—and inarguably, because it wasn’t a gesture but an emotion. She was appalled by West Egg, this unprecedented “place” that Broadway had begotten upon a Long Island fishing village—appalled by its raw vigor that chafed under the old euphemisms and by the too obtrusive fate that herded its inhabitants along a short cut from nothing to nothing. She saw something awful in the very simplicity she failed to understand.

I sat on the front steps with them while they waited for their car. It was dark here in front: only the bright door sent ten square feet of light volleying out into the soft black morning. Sometimes a shadow

moved against a dressing-room blind above, gave way to another shadow, an indefinite procession of shadows, who rouged and powdered in an invisible glass.

“Who is this Gatsby anyhow?” demanded Tom suddenly. “Some big bootlegger?”

“Where’d you hear that?” I inquired.

“I didn’t hear it. I imagined it. A lot of these newly rich people are just big bootleggers, you know.”

“Not Gatsby,” I said shortly.

He was silent for a moment. The pebbles of the drive crunched under his feet.

“Well, he certainly must have strained himself to get this menagerie together.”

A breeze stirred the grey haze of Daisy’s fur collar.

“At least they’re more interesting than the people we know,” she said with an effort.

“You didn’t look so interested.”

“Well, I was.”

Tom laughed and turned to me.

“Did you notice Daisy’s face when that girl asked her to put her under a cold shower?”

Daisy began to sing with the music in a husky, rhythmic whisper, bringing out a meaning in each word that it had never had before and would never have again. When the melody rose, her voice broke up sweetly, following it, in a way contralto voices have, and each change tipped out a little of her warm human magic upon the air.

“Lots of people come who haven’t been invited,” she said suddenly. “That girl hadn’t been invited. They simply force their way in and he’s too polite to object.”

“I’d like to know who he is and what he does,” insisted Tom. “And I think I’ll make a point of finding out.”

“I can tell you right now,” she answered. “He owned some drug stores, a lot of drug stores. He built them up himself.”

The dilatory limousine came rolling up the drive.

“Good night, Nick,” said Daisy.

Her glance left me and sought the lighted top of the steps where “Three o’Clock in the Morning,” a neat, sad little waltz of that year, was drifting out the open door. After all, in the very casualness of Gatsby’s party there were romantic possibilities totally absent from her world. What was it up there in the song that seemed to be calling her back inside? What would happen now in the dim incalculable hours? Perhaps some unbelievable guest would arrive, a person infinitely rare and to be marvelled at, some authentically radiant young girl who with one fresh glance at Gatsby, one moment of magical encounter, would blot out those five years of unwavering devotion.

I stayed late that night. Gatsby asked me to wait until he was free and I lingered in the garden until the inevitable swimming party had run up, chilled and exalted, from the black beach, until the lights were extinguished in the guest rooms overhead. When he came down the steps at last the tanned skin was drawn unusually tight on his face, and his eyes were bright and tired.

“She didn’t like it,” he said immediately.

“Of course she did.”

“She didn’t like it,” he insisted. “She didn’t have a good time.”

He was silent and I guessed at his unutterable depression.

“I feel far away from her,” he said. “It’s hard to make her understand.”

“You mean about the dance?”

“The dance?” He dismissed all the dances he had given with a snap of his fingers. “Old sport, the dance is unimportant.”

He wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: “I never loved you.” After she had obliterated three years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures

to be taken. One of them was that, after she was free, they were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house—just as if it were five years ago.

“And she doesn’t understand,” he said. “She used to be able to understand. We’d sit for hours—”

He broke off and began to walk up and down a desolate path of fruit rinds and discarded favors and crushed flowers.

“I wouldn’t ask too much of her,” I ventured. “You can’t repeat the past.”

“Can’t repeat the past?” he cried incredulously. “Why of course you can!”

He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand.

“I’m going to fix everything just the way it was before,” he said, nodding determinedly. “She’ll see.”

He talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was. . . .

. . . One autumn night, five years before, they had been walking down the street when the leaves were falling, and they came to a place where there were no trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight. They stopped here and turned toward each other. Now it was a cool night with that mysterious excitement in it which comes at the two changes of the year. The quiet lights in the houses were humming out into the darkness and there was a stir and bustle among the stars. Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalk really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees—he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder.

His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy’s white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips’ touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.

Through all he said, even through his appalling sentimentality, I was reminded of something—an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words, that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man’s, as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air. But they made no sound and what I had almost remembered was uncommunicable forever.

Chapter 6 Study Questions

1. What is the source of Gatsby’s wealth?
2. What god does Gatsby worship?
3. Who is James Gatz, and what are his main values?

Chapter 7

It was when curiosity about Gatsby was at its highest that the lights in his house failed to go on one Saturday night—and, as obscurely as it had begun, his career as Trimalchio⁶² was over.

Only gradually did I become aware that the automobiles which turned expectantly into his drive stayed for just a minute and then drove sulkily away. Wondering if he were sick I went over to find out—an unfamiliar butler with a villainous face squinted at me suspiciously from the door.

“Is Mr. Gatsby sick?”

“Nope.” After a pause he added “sir” in a dilatory, grudging way.

“I hadn’t seen him around, and I was rather worried. Tell him Mr. Carraway came over.”

“Who?” he demanded rudely.

“Carraway.”

“Carraway. All right, I’ll tell him.” Abruptly he slammed the door.

My Finn informed me that Gatsby had dismissed every servant in his house a week ago and replaced them with half a dozen others, who never went into West Egg Village to be bribed by the tradesmen, but ordered moderate supplies over the telephone. The grocery boy reported that the kitchen looked like a pigsty, and the general opinion in the village was that the new people weren’t servants at all.

Next day Gatsby called me on the phone.

“Going away?” I inquired.

“No, old sport.”

“I hear you fired all your servants.”

“I wanted somebody who wouldn’t gossip. Daisy comes over quite often—in the afternoons.”

So the whole caravansary had fallen in like a card house at the disapproval in her eyes.

“They’re some people Wolfsheim wanted to do something for. They’re all brothers and sisters. They used to run a small hotel.”

“I see.”

He was calling up at Daisy’s request—would I come to lunch at her house tomorrow? Miss Baker would be there. Half an hour later Daisy herself telephoned and seemed relieved to find that I was coming. Something was up. And yet I couldn’t believe that they would choose this occasion for a scene—especially for the rather harrowing scene that Gatsby had outlined in the garden.

The next day was broiling, almost the last, certainly the warmest, of the summer. As my train emerged from the tunnel into sunlight, only the hot whistles of the National Biscuit Company broke the simmering hush at noon. The straw seats of the car hovered on the edge of combustion; the woman next to me perspired delicately for a while into her white shirtwaist, and then, as her newspaper dampened under her fingers, lapsed despairingly into deep heat with a desolate cry. Her pocket-book slapped to the floor.

“Oh, my!” she gasped.

I picked it up with a weary bend and handed it back to her, holding it at arm’s length and by the extreme tip of the corners to indicate that I had no designs upon it—but every one near by, including the woman, suspected me just the same.

“Hot!” said the conductor to familiar faces. “Some weather! Hot! Hot! Hot! Is it hot enough for you? Is it hot? Is it . . . ?”

62. The vulgar, ostentatious and rich parvenu in Petronius Arbiter’s satirical romance *Satyricon* ((1st century A.D.).

My commutation ticket came back to me with a dark stain from his hand. That any one should care in this heat whose flushed lips he kissed, whose head made damp the pajama pocket over his heart! . . . Through the hall of the Buchanans' house blew a faint wind, carrying the sound of the telephone bell out to Gatsby and me as we waited at the door.

"The master's body!" roared the butler into the mouthpiece. "I'm sorry, madame, but we can't furnish it—it's far too hot to touch this noon!"

What he really said was: "Yes . . . yes . . . I'll see."

He set down the receiver and came toward us, glistening slightly, to take our stiff straw hats.

"Madame expects you in the salon!" he cried, needlessly indicating the direction. In this heat every extra gesture was an affront to the common store of life.

The room, shadowed well with awnings, was dark and cool. Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols, weighing down their own white dresses against the singing breeze of the fans.

"We can't move," they said together.

Jordan's fingers, powdered white over their tan, rested for a moment in mine.

"And Mr. Thomas Buchanan, the athlete?" I inquired.

Simultaneously I heard his voice, gruff, muffled, husky, at the hall telephone.

Gatsby stood in the center of the crimson carpet and gazed around with fascinated eyes. Daisy watched him and laughed, her sweet, exciting laugh; a tiny gust of powder rose from her bosom into the air.

"The rumor is," whispered Jordan, "that that's Tom's girl on the telephone."

We were silent. The voice in the hall rose high with annoyance. "Very well, then, I won't sell you the car at all. . . . I'm under no obligations to you at all. . . . And as for your bothering me about it at lunch time I won't stand that at all!"

"Holding down the receiver," said Daisy cynically.

"No, he's not," I assured her. "It's a bona fide deal. I happen to know about it."

Tom flung open the door, blocked out its space for a moment with his thick body, and hurried into the room.

"Mr. Gatsby!" He put out his broad, flat hand with well-concealed dislike. "I'm glad to see you, sir. . . . Nick. . . ."

"Make us a cold drink," cried Daisy.

As he left the room again she got up and went over to Gatsby and pulled his face down kissing him on the mouth.

"You know I love you," she murmured.

"You forget there's a lady present," said Jordan.

Daisy looked around doubtfully.

"You kiss Nick too."

"What a low, vulgar girl!"

"I don't care!" cried Daisy and began to clog on the brick fireplace. Then she remembered the heat and sat down guiltily on the couch just as a freshly laundered nurse leading a little girl came into the room.

"Bles-sed pre-cious," she crooned, holding out her arms. "Come to your own mother that loves you."

The child, relinquished by the nurse, rushed across the room and rooted shyly into her mother's dress.

"The Bles-sed pre-cious! Did mother get powder on your old yellowy hair? Stand up now, and say How-de-do."

Gatsby and I in turn leaned down and took the small reluctant hand. Afterward he kept looking at the child with surprise. I don't think he had ever really believed in its existence before.

"I got dressed before luncheon," said the child, turning eagerly to Daisy.

"That's because your mother wanted to show you off." Her face bent into the single wrinkle of the small white neck. "You dream, you. You absolute little dream."

"Yes," admitted the child calmly. "Aunt Jordan's got on a white dress too."

"How do you like mother's friends?" Daisy turned her around so that she faced Gatsby. "Do you think they're pretty?"

"Where's Daddy?"

"She doesn't look like her father," explained Daisy. "She looks like me. She's got my hair and shape of the face."

Daisy sat back upon the couch. The nurse took a step forward and held out her hand.

"Come, Pammy."

"Goodbye, sweetheart!"

With a reluctant backward glance the well-disciplined child held to her nurse's hand and was pulled out the door, just as Tom came back, preceding four gin rickeys that clicked full of ice.

Gatsby took up his drink.

"They certainly look cool," he said, with visible tension.

We drank in long greedy swallows.

"I read somewhere that the sun's getting hotter every year," said Tom genially. "It seems that pretty soon the earth's going to fall into the sun—or wait a minute—it's just the opposite—the sun's getting colder every year.

"Come outside," he suggested to Gatsby, "I'd like you to have a look at the place."

I went with them out to the veranda. On the green Sound, stagnant in the heat, one small sail crawled slowly toward the fresher sea. Gatsby's eyes followed it momentarily; he raised his hand and pointed across the bay.

"I'm right across from you."

"So you are."

Our eyes lifted over the rosebeds and the hot lawn and the weedy refuse of the dog days⁶³ along shore. Slowly the white wings of the boat moved against the blue cool limit of the sky. Ahead lay the scalloped ocean and the abounding blessed isles.⁶⁴

"There's sport for you," said Tom, nodding. "I'd like to be out there with him for about an hour."

We had luncheon in the dining-room, darkened, too, against the heat, and drank down nervous gayety with the cold ale.

"What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon," cried Daisy, "and the day after that, and the next thirty years?"

"Don't be morbid," Jordan said. "Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."

"But it's so hot," insisted Daisy, on the verge of tears, "And everything's so confused. Let's all go to town!"

Her voice struggled on through the heat, beating against it, moulding its senselessness into forms.

"I've heard of making a garage out of a stable," Tom was saying to Gatsby, "but I'm the first man who ever made a stable out of a garage."

"Who wants to go to town?" demanded Daisy insistently. Gatsby's eyes floated toward her. "Ah," she cried, "you look so cool."

Their eyes met, and they stared together at each other, alone in space. With an effort she glanced down at the table.

63. Hot, sultry days from early July through early September in the northern hemisphere.

64. Fortunate Isles or Isles of the Blessed were legendary, winterless islands inhabited by the heroes of Greek mythology.

“You always look so cool,” she repeated.

She had told him that she loved him, and Tom Buchanan saw. He was astounded. His mouth opened a little and he looked at Gatsby and then back at Daisy as if he had just recognized her as some one he knew a long time ago.

“You resemble the advertisement of the man,”⁶⁵ she went on innocently. “You know the advertisement of the man—”

“All right,” broke in Tom quickly, “I’m perfectly willing to go to town. Come on—we’re all going to town.”

He got up, his eyes still flashing between Gatsby and his wife. No one moved.

“Come on!” His temper cracked a little. “What’s the matter, anyhow? If we’re going to town let’s start.”

His hand, trembling with his effort at self-control, bore to his lips the last of his glass of ale. Daisy’s voice got us to our feet and out on to the blazing gravel drive.

“Are we just going to go?” she objected. “Like this? Aren’t we going to let anyone smoke a cigarette first?”

“Everybody smoked all through lunch.”

“Oh, let’s have fun,” she begged him. “It’s too hot to fuss.”

He didn’t answer.

“Have it your own way,” she said. “Come on, Jordan.”

They went upstairs to get ready while we three men stood there shuffling the hot pebbles with our feet. A silver curve of the moon hovered already in the western sky. Gatsby started to speak, changed his mind, but not before Tom wheeled and faced him expectantly.

“Have you got your stables here?” asked Gatsby with an effort.

“About a quarter of a mile down the road.”

“Oh.”

A pause.

“I don’t see the idea of going to town,” broke out Tom savagely. “Women get these notions in their heads—”

“Shall we take anything to drink?” called Daisy from an upper window.

“I’ll get some whiskey,” answered Tom. He went inside.

Gatsby turned to me rigidly:

“I can’t say anything in his house, old sport.”

“She’s got an indiscreet voice,” I remarked. “It’s full of—”

I hesitated.

“Her voice is full of money,” he said suddenly.

That was it. I’d never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals’ song of it. . . . High in a white palace the king’s daughter, the golden girl. . . .

Tom came out of the house wrapping a quart bottle in a towel, followed by Daisy and Jordan wearing small tight hats of metallic cloth and carrying light capes over their arms.

“Shall we all go in my car?” suggested Gatsby. He felt the hot, green leather of the seat. “I ought to have left it in the shade.”

“Is it standard shift?” demanded Tom.

“Yes.”

65. From 1905-1931, Arrow shirts and collars ran a series of successful advertising campaigns featuring handsome, confident “Arrow Collar” (later Arrow) men. American song-writer Cole Porter refers to the “Arrow collar” in his song “You’re the Top” (1934).

“Well, you take my coupé and let me drive your car to town.”

The suggestion was distasteful to Gatsby.

“I don’t think there’s much gas,” he objected.

“Plenty of gas,” said Tom boisterously. He looked at the gauge. “And if it runs out I can stop at a drug store. You can buy anything at a drug store nowadays.”

A pause followed this apparently pointless remark. Daisy looked at Tom frowning and an indefinable expression, at once definitely unfamiliar and vaguely recognizable, as if I had only heard it described in words, passed over Gatsby’s face.

“Come on, Daisy,” said Tom, pressing her with his hand toward Gatsby’s car. “I’ll take you in this circus wagon.”

He opened the door but she moved out from the circle of his arm.

“You take Nick and Jordan. We’ll follow you in the coupé.”

She walked close to Gatsby, touching his coat with her hand. Jordan and Tom and I got into the front seat of Gatsby’s car, Tom pushed the unfamiliar gears tentatively and we shot off into the oppressive heat leaving them out of sight behind.

“Did you see that?” demanded Tom.

“See what?”

He looked at me keenly, realizing that Jordan and I must have known all along.

“You think I’m pretty dumb, don’t you?” he suggested. “Perhaps I am, but I have a—almost a second sight, sometimes, that tells me what to do. Maybe you don’t believe that, but science—”

He paused. The immediate contingency overtook him, pulled him back from the edge of the theoretical abyss.

“I’ve made a small investigation of this fellow,” he continued. “I could have gone deeper if I’d known—”

“Do you mean you’ve been to a medium?” inquired Jordan humorously.

“What?” Confused, he stared at us as we laughed. “A medium?”

“About Gatsby.”

“About Gatsby! No, I haven’t. I said I’d been making a small investigation of his past.”

“And you found he was an Oxford man,” said Jordan helpfully.

“An Oxford man!” He was incredulous. “Like hell he is! He wears a pink suit.”

“Nevertheless he’s an Oxford man.”

“Oxford, New Mexico,” snorted Tom contemptuously, “or something like that.”

“Listen, Tom. If you’re such a snob, why did you invite him to lunch?” demanded Jordan crossly.

“Daisy invited him; she knew him before we were married—God knows where!”

We were all irritable now with the fading ale and, aware of it, we drove for a while in silence. Then as Doctor T. J. Eckleburg’s faded eyes came into sight down the road, I remembered Gatsby’s caution about gasoline.

“We’ve got enough to get us to town,” said Tom.

“But there’s a garage right here,” objected Jordan. “I don’t want to get stalled in this baking heat.”

Tom threw on both brakes impatiently and we slid to an abrupt dusty stop under Wilson’s sign. After a moment the proprietor emerged from the interior of his establishment and gazed hollow-eyed at the car.

“Let’s have some gas!” cried Tom roughly. “What do you think we stopped for—to admire the view?”

“I’m sick,” said Wilson without moving. “I been sick all day.”

“What’s the matter?”

“I’m all run down.”

“Well, shall I help myself?” Tom demanded. “You sounded well enough on the phone.”

With an effort Wilson left the shade and support of the doorway and, breathing hard, unscrewed the cap of the tank. In the sunlight his face was green.

"I didn't mean to interrupt your lunch," he said. "But I need money pretty bad and I was wondering what you were going to do with your old car."

"How do you like this one?" inquired Tom. "I bought it last week."

"It's a nice yellow one," said Wilson, as he strained at the handle.

"Like to buy it?"

"Big chance," Wilson smiled faintly. "No, but I could make some money on the other."

"What do you want money for, all of a sudden?"

"I've been here too long. I want to get away. My wife and I want to go west."

"Your wife does!" exclaimed Tom, startled.

"She's been talking about it for ten years." He rested for a moment against the pump, shading his eyes. "And now she's going whether she wants to or not. I'm going to get her away."

The coupé flashed by us with a flurry of dust and the flash of a waving hand.

"What do I owe you?" demanded Tom harshly.

"I just got wised up to something funny the last two days," remarked Wilson. "That's why I want to get away. That's why I been bothering you about the car."

"What do I owe you?"

"Dollar twenty."

The relentless beating heat was beginning to confuse me and I had a bad moment there before I realized that so far his suspicions hadn't alighted on Tom. He had discovered that Myrtle had some sort of life apart from him in another world and the shock had made him physically sick. I stared at him and then at Tom, who had made a parallel discovery less than an hour before—and it occurred to me that there was no difference between men, in intelligence or race, so profound as the difference between the sick and the well. Wilson was so sick that he looked guilty, unforgivably guilty—as if he had just got some poor girl with child.

"I'll let you have that car," said Tom. "I'll send it over tomorrow afternoon."

That locality was always vaguely disquieting, even in the broad glare of afternoon, and now I turned my head as though I had been warned of something behind. Over the ashheaps the giant eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg kept their vigil but I perceived, after a moment, that other eyes were regarding us with peculiar intensity from less than twenty feet away.

In one of the windows over the garage the curtains had been moved aside a little and Myrtle Wilson was peering down at the car. So engrossed was she that she had no consciousness of being observed and one emotion after another crept into her face like objects into a slowly developing picture. Her expression was curiously familiar—it was an expression I had often seen on women's faces but on Myrtle Wilson's face it seemed purposeless and inexplicable until I realized that her eyes, wide with jealous terror, were fixed not on Tom, but on Jordan Baker, whom she took to be his wife.

There is no confusion like the confusion of a simple mind, and as we drove away Tom was feeling the hot whips of panic. His wife and his mistress, until an hour ago secure and inviolate, were slipping precipitately from his control. Instinct made him step on the accelerator with the double purpose of overtaking Daisy and leaving Wilson behind, and we sped along toward Astoria at fifty miles an hour, until, among the spidery girders of the elevated, we came in sight of the easygoing blue coupé.

"Those big movies around Fiftieth Street are cool," suggested Jordan. "I love New York on summer afternoons when every one's away. There's something very sensuous about it—overripe, as if all sorts of funny fruits were going to fall into your hands."

The word "sensuous" had the effect of further disquieting Tom but before he could invent a protest the coupé came to a stop and Daisy signalled us to draw up alongside.

“Where are we going?” she cried.

“How about the movies?”

“It’s so hot,” she complained. “You go. We’ll ride around and meet you after.” With an effort her wit rose faintly, “We’ll meet you on some corner. I’ll be the man smoking two cigarettes.”

“We can’t argue about it here,” Tom said impatiently as a truck gave out a cursing whistle behind us. “You follow me to the south side of Central Park, in front of the Plaza.”

Several times he turned his head and looked back for their car, and if the traffic delayed them he slowed up until they came into sight. I think he was afraid they would dart down a side street and out of his life forever.

But they didn’t. And we all took the less explicable step of engaging the parlor of a suite in the Plaza Hotel.

The prolonged and tumultuous argument that ended by herding us into that room eludes me, though I have a sharp physical memory that, in the course of it, my underwear kept climbing like a damp snake around my legs and intermittent beads of sweat raced cool across my back. The notion originated with Daisy’s suggestion that we hire five bathrooms and take cold baths, and then assumed more tangible form as “a place to have a mint julep.” Each of us said over and over that it was a “crazy idea”—we all talked at once to a baffled clerk and thought, or pretended to think, that we were being very funny. . . .

The room was large and stifling, and, though it was already four o’clock, opening the windows admitted only a gust of hot shrubbery from the Park. Daisy went to the mirror and stood with her back to us, fixing her hair.

“It’s a swell suite,” whispered Jordan respectfully and every one laughed.

“Open another window,” commanded Daisy, without turning around.

“There aren’t any more.”

“Well, we’d better telephone for an axe—”

“The thing to do is to forget about the heat,” said Tom impatiently. “You make it ten times worse by crabbing about it.”

He unrolled the bottle of whiskey from the towel and put it on the table.

“Why not let her alone, old sport?” remarked Gatsby. “You’re the one that wanted to come to town.”

There was a moment of silence. The telephone book slipped from its nail and splashed to the floor, whereupon Jordan whispered “Excuse me”—but this time no one laughed.

“I’ll pick it up,” I offered.

“I’ve got it.” Gatsby examined the parted string, muttered “Hum!” in an interested way, and tossed the book on a chair.

“That’s a great expression of yours, isn’t it?” said Tom sharply.

“What is?”

“All this ‘old sport’ business. Where’d you pick that up?”

“Now see here, Tom,” said Daisy, turning around from the mirror, “if you’re going to make personal remarks I won’t stay here a minute. Call up and order some ice for the mint julep.”

As Tom took up the receiver the compressed heat exploded into sound and we were listening to the portentous chords of Mendelssohn’s Wedding March from the ballroom below.

“Imagine marrying anybody in this heat!” cried Jordan dismally.

“Still—I was married in the middle of June,” Daisy remembered, “Louisville in June! Somebody fainted. Who was it fainted, Tom?”

“Biloxi,” he answered shortly.

“A man named Biloxi. ‘Blocks’ Biloxi, and he made boxes—that’s a fact—and he was from Biloxi, Tennessee.”

“They carried him into my house,” appended Jordan, “because we lived just two doors from the

church. And he stayed three weeks, until Daddy told him he had to get out. The day after he left Daddy died.” After a moment she added as if she might have sounded irreverent, “There wasn’t any connection.”

“I used to know a Bill Biloxi from Memphis,” I remarked.

“That was his cousin. I knew his whole family history before he left. He gave me an aluminum putter that I use today.”

The music had died down as the ceremony began and now a long cheer floated in at the window, followed by intermittent cries of “Yea–ea–ea!” and finally by a burst of jazz as the dancing began.

“We’re getting old,” said Daisy. “If we were young we’d rise and dance.”

“Remember Biloxi,” Jordan warned her. “Where’d you know him, Tom?”

“Biloxi?” He concentrated with an effort. “I didn’t know him. He was a friend of Daisy’s.”

“He was not,” she denied. “I’d never seen him before. He came down in the private car.”

“Well, he said he knew you. He said he was raised in Louisville. Asa Bird brought him around at the last minute and asked if we had room for him.”

Jordan smiled.

“He was probably bumming his way home. He told me he was president of your class at Yale.”

Tom and I looked at each other blankly.

“Biloxi?”

“First place, we didn’t have any president—”

Gatsby’s foot beat a short, restless tattoo and Tom eyed him suddenly.

“By the way, Mr. Gatsby, I understand you’re an Oxford man.”

“Not exactly.”

“Oh, yes, I understand you went to Oxford.”

“Yes—I went there.”

A pause. Then Tom’s voice, incredulous and insulting:

“You must have gone there about the time Biloxi went to New Haven.”

Another pause. A waiter knocked and came in with crushed mint and ice but the silence was unbroken by his “Thank you” and the soft closing of the door. This tremendous detail was to be cleared up at last.

“I told you I went there,” said Gatsby.

“I heard you, but I’d like to know when.”

“It was in nineteen-nineteen, I only stayed five months. That’s why I can’t really call myself an Oxford man.”

Tom glanced around to see if we mirrored his unbelief. But we were all looking at Gatsby.

“It was an opportunity they gave to some of the officers after the Armistice,” he continued. “We could go to any of the universities in England or France.”

I wanted to get up and slap him on the back. I had one of those renewals of complete faith in him that I’d experienced before.

Daisy rose, smiling faintly, and went to the table.

“Open the whiskey, Tom,” she ordered. “And I’ll make you a mint julep. Then you won’t seem so stupid to yourself. . . . Look at the mint!”

“Wait a minute,” snapped Tom, “I want to ask Mr. Gatsby one more question.”

“Go on,” Gatsby said politely.

“What kind of a row are you trying to cause in my house anyhow?”

They were out in the open at last and Gatsby was content.

“He isn’t causing a row.” Daisy looked desperately from one to the other. “You’re causing a row. Please have a little self control.”

“Self control!” repeated Tom incredulously. “I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well, if that’s the idea you can count me out. . . . Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions and next they’ll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white.”

Flushed with his impassioned gibberish he saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization.

“We’re all white here,” murmured Jordan.

“I know I’m not very popular. I don’t give big parties. I suppose you’ve got to make your house into a pigsty in order to have any friends—in the modern world.”

Angry as I was, as we all were, I was tempted to laugh whenever he opened his mouth. The transition from libertine to prig was so complete.

“I’ve got something to tell *you*, old sport,—” began Gatsby. But Daisy guessed at his intention.

“Please don’t!” she interrupted helplessly. “Please let’s all go home. Why don’t we all go home?”

“That’s a good idea.” I got up. “Come on, Tom. Nobody wants a drink.”

“I want to know what Mr. Gatsby has to tell me.”

“Your wife doesn’t love you,” said Gatsby. “She’s never loved you. She loves me.”

“You must be crazy!” exclaimed Tom automatically.

Gatsby sprang to his feet, vivid with excitement.

“She never loved you, do you hear?” he cried. “She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me. It was a terrible mistake, but in her heart she never loved any one except me!”

At this point Jordan and I tried to go but Tom and Gatsby insisted with competitive firmness that we remain—as though neither of them had anything to conceal and it would be a privilege to partake vicariously of their emotions.

“Sit down Daisy.” Tom’s voice groped unsuccessfully for the paternal note. “What’s been going on? I want to hear all about it.”

“I told you what’s been going on,” said Gatsby. “Going on for five years—and you didn’t know.”

Tom turned to Daisy sharply.

“You’ve been seeing this fellow for five years?”

“Not seeing,” said Gatsby. “No, we couldn’t meet. But both of us loved each other all that time, old sport, and you didn’t know. I used to laugh sometimes—“but there was no laughter in his eyes, “to think that you didn’t know.”

“Oh—that’s all.” Tom tapped his thick fingers together like a clergyman and leaned back in his chair.

“You’re crazy!” he exploded. “I can’t speak about what happened five years ago, because I didn’t know Daisy then—and I’ll be damned if I see how you got within a mile of her unless you brought the groceries to the back door. But all the rest of that’s a God Damned lie. Daisy loved me when she married me and she loves me now.”

“No,” said Gatsby, shaking his head.

“She does, though. The trouble is that sometimes she gets foolish ideas in her head and doesn’t know what she’s doing.” He nodded sagely. “And what’s more, I love Daisy too. Once in a while I go off on a spree and make a fool of myself, but I always come back, and in my heart I love her all the time.”

“You’re revolting,” said Daisy. She turned to me, and her voice, dropping an octave lower, filled the room with thrilling scorn: “Do you know why we left Chicago? I’m surprised that they didn’t treat you to the story of that little spree.”

Gatsby walked over and stood beside her.

“Daisy, that’s all over now,” he said earnestly. “It doesn’t matter any more. Just tell him the truth—that you never loved him—and it’s all wiped out forever.”

She looked at him blindly. “Why,—how could I love him—possibly?”

“You never loved him.”

She hesitated. Her eyes fell on Jordan and me with a sort of appeal, as though she realized at last what she was doing—and as though she had never, all along, intended doing anything at all. But it was done now. It was too late.

“I never loved him,” she said, with perceptible reluctance.

“Not at Kapiolani?”⁶⁶ demanded Tom suddenly.

“No.”

From the ballroom beneath, muffled and suffocating chords were drifting up on hot waves of air.

“Not that day I carried you down from the Punch Bowl⁶⁷ to keep your shoes dry?” There was a husky tenderness in his tone. “. . . Daisy?”

“Please don’t.” Her voice was cold, but the rancour was gone from it. She looked at Gatsby. “There, Jay,” she said—but her hand as she tried to light a cigarette was trembling. Suddenly she threw the cigarette and the burning match on the carpet.

“Oh, you want too much!” she cried to Gatsby. “I love you now—isn’t that enough? I can’t help what’s past.” She began to sob helplessly. “I did love him once—but I loved you too.”

Gatsby’s eyes opened and closed.

“You loved me *too*?” he repeated.

“Even that’s a lie,” said Tom savagely. “She didn’t know you were alive. Why,—there’re things between Daisy and me that you’ll never know, things that neither of us can ever forget.”

The words seemed to bite physically into Gatsby.

“I want to speak to Daisy alone,” he insisted. “She’s all excited now—”

“Even alone I can’t say I never loved Tom,” she admitted in a pitiful voice. “It wouldn’t be true.”

“Of course it wouldn’t,” agreed Tom.

She turned to her husband.

“As if it mattered to you,” she said.

“Of course it matters. I’m going to take better care of you from now on.”

“You don’t understand,” said Gatsby, with a touch of panic. “You’re not going to take care of her any more.”

“I’m not?” Tom opened his eyes wide and laughed. He could afford to control himself now. “Why’s that?”

“Daisy’s leaving you.”

“Nonsense.”

“I am, though,” she said with a visible effort.

“She’s not leaving me!” Tom’s words suddenly leaned down over Gatsby. “Certainly not for a common swindler who’d have to steal the ring he put on her finger.”

“I won’t stand this!” cried Daisy. “Oh, please let’s get out.”

“Who are you, anyhow?” broke out Tom. “You’re one of that bunch that hangs around with Meyer Wolfsheim—that much I happen to know. I’ve made a little investigation into your affairs—and I’ll carry it further tomorrow.”

“You can suit yourself about that, old sport.” said Gatsby steadily.

“I found out what your ‘drug stores’ were.” He turned to us and spoke rapidly. “He and this Wolfsheim bought up a lot of side-street drug stores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over

66. Queen Kapiolani Regional Park, the largest public park in Hawaii, located in Honolulu.

67. A volcanic crater, now a national cemetery in Honolulu.

the counter. That's one of his little stunts. I picked him for a bootlegger the first time I saw him and I wasn't far wrong."

"What about it?" said Gatsby politely. "I guess your friend Walter Chase wasn't too proud to come in on it."

"And you left him in the lurch, didn't you? You let him go to jail for a month over in New Jersey. God! You ought to hear Walter on the subject of *you*."

"He came to us dead broke. He was very glad to pick up some money, old sport."

"Don't you call me 'old sport'!" cried Tom. Gatsby said nothing. "Walter could have you up on the betting laws too, but Wolfsheim scared him into shutting his mouth."

That unfamiliar yet recognizable look was back again in Gatsby's face.

"That drug store business was just small change," continued Tom slowly, "but you've got something on now that Walter's afraid to tell me about."

I glanced at Daisy who was staring terrified between Gatsby and her husband and at Jordan who had begun to balance an invisible but absorbing object on the tip of her chin. Then I turned back to Gatsby—and was startled at his expression. He looked—and this is said in all contempt for the babbled slander of his garden—as if he had "killed a man." For a moment the set of his face could be described in just that fantastic way.

It passed, and he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made. But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room.

The voice begged again to go.

"Please, Tom! I can't stand this any more."

Her frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage she had had, were definitely gone.

"You two start on home, Daisy," said Tom. "In Mr. Gatsby's car."

She looked at Tom, alarmed now, but he insisted with magnanimous scorn.

"Go on. He won't annoy you. I think he realizes that his presumptuous little flirtation is over."

They were gone, without a word, snapped out, made accidental, isolated, like ghosts even from our pity.

After a moment Tom got up and began wrapping the unopened bottle of whiskey in the towel.

"Want any of this stuff? Jordan? . . . Nick?"

I didn't answer.

"Nick?" He asked again.

"What?"

"Want any?"

"No . . . I just remembered that today's my birthday."

I was thirty. Before me stretched the portentous menacing road of a new decade.

It was seven o'clock when we got into the coupé with him and started for Long Island. Tom talked incessantly, exulting and laughing, but his voice was as remote from Jordan and me as the foreign clamor on the sidewalk or the tumult of the elevated overhead. Human sympathy has its limits and we were content to let all their tragic arguments fade with the city lights behind. Thirty—the promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know, a thinning brief-case of enthusiasm, thinning hair. But there was Jordan beside me who, unlike Daisy, was too wise ever to carry well-forgotten dreams from age to age. As we passed over the dark bridge her wan face fell lazily against

my coat's shoulder and the formidable stroke of thirty died away with the reassuring pressure of her hand.

So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight.

The young Greek, Michaelis, who ran the coffee joint beside the ashheaps was the principal witness at the inquest. He had slept through the heat until after five, when he strolled over to the garage and found George Wilson sick in his office—really sick, pale as his own pale hair and shaking all over. Michaelis advised him to go to bed but Wilson refused, saying that he'd miss a lot of business if he did. While his neighbor was trying to persuade him a violent racket broke out overhead.

"I've got my wife locked in up there," explained Wilson calmly. "She's going to stay there till the day after tomorrow and then we're going to move away."

Michaelis was astonished; they had been neighbors for four years and Wilson had never seemed faintly capable of such a statement. Generally he was one of these worn-out men: when he wasn't working he sat on a chair in the doorway and stared at the people and the cars that passed along the road. When any one spoke to him he invariably laughed in an agreeable, colorless way. He was his wife's man and not his own.

So naturally Michaelis tried to find out what had happened, but Wilson wouldn't say a word—instead he began to throw curious, suspicious glances at his visitor and ask him what he'd been doing at certain times on certain days. Just as the latter was getting uneasy some workmen came past the door bound for his restaurant and Michaelis took the opportunity to get away, intending to come back later. But he didn't. He supposed he forgot to, that's all. When he came outside again a little after seven he was reminded of the conversation because he heard Mrs. Wilson's voice, loud and scolding, downstairs in the garage.

"Beat me!" he heard her cry. "Throw me down and beat me, you dirty little coward!"

A moment later she rushed out into the dusk, waving her hands and shouting; before he could move from his door the business was over.

The "death car" as the newspapers called it, didn't stop; it came out of the gathering darkness, wavered tragically for a moment and then disappeared around the next bend. Michaelis wasn't even sure of its color—he told the first policeman that it was light green. The other car, the one going toward New York, came to rest a hundred yards beyond, and its driver hurried back to where Myrtle Wilson, her life violently extinguished, knelt in the road and mingled her thick, dark blood with the dust.

Michaelis and this man reached her first but when they had torn open her shirtwaist still damp with perspiration, they saw that her left breast was swinging loose like a flap and there was no need to listen for the heart beneath. The mouth was wide open and ripped at the corners as though she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long.

We saw the three or four automobiles and the crowd when we were still some distance away.

"Wreck!" said Tom. "That's good. Wilson'll have a little business at last."

He slowed down, but still without any intention of stopping until, as we came nearer, the hushed intent faces of the people at the garage door made him automatically put on the brakes.

"We'll take a look," he said doubtfully, "just a look."

I became aware now of a hollow, wailing sound which issued incessantly from the garage, a sound which as we got out of the coupé and walked toward the door resolved itself into the words "Oh, my God!" uttered over and over in a gasping moan.

"There's some bad trouble here," said Tom excitedly.

He reached up on tiptoes and peered over a circle of heads into the garage which was lit only by a

yellow light in a swinging wire basket overhead. Then he made a harsh sound in his throat and with a violent thrusting movement of his powerful arms pushed his way through.

The circle closed up again with a running murmur of expostulation; it was a minute before I could see anything at all. Then new arrivals disarranged the line and Jordan and I were pushed suddenly inside.

Myrtle Wilson's body wrapped in a blanket and then in another blanket as though she suffered from a chill in the hot night lay on a work table by the wall and Tom, with his back to us, was bending over it, motionless. Next to him stood a motorcycle policeman taking down names with much sweat and correction in a little book. At first I couldn't find the source of the high, groaning words that echoed clamorously through the bare garage—then I saw Wilson standing on the raised threshold of his office, swaying back and forth and holding to the doorposts with both hands. Some man was talking to him in a low voice and attempting from time to time to lay a hand on his shoulder, but Wilson neither heard nor saw. His eyes would drop slowly from the swinging light to the laden table by the wall and then jerk back to the light again and he gave out incessantly his high horrible call.

“O, my Ga-od! O, my Ga-od! Oh, Ga-od! Oh, my Ga-od!”

Presently Tom lifted his head with a jerk and after staring around the garage with glazed eyes addressed a mumbled incoherent remark to the policeman.

“M-a-v—” the policeman was saying, “o—”

“No, r—” corrected the man, “M-a-v-r-o—”

“Listen to me!” muttered Tom fiercely.

“r—” said the policeman, “o—”

“g—”

“g—” He looked up as Tom's broad hand fell sharply on his shoulder. “What you want, fella?”

“What happened—that's what I want to know!”

“Auto hit her. Ins'antly killed.”

“Instantly killed,” repeated Tom, staring.

“She ran out ina road. Son-of-a-bitch didn't even stopus car.”

“There was two cars,” said Michaelis, “one comin', one goin', see?”

“Going where?” asked the policeman keenly.

“One goin' each way. Well, she—” His hand rose toward the blankets but stopped half way and fell to his side, “—she ran out there an' the one comin' from N'York knock right into her goin' thirty or forty miles an hour.”

“What's the name of this place here?” demanded the officer.

“Hasn't got any name.”

A pale, well-dressed Negro stepped near.

“It was a yellow car,” he said, “big yellow car. New.”

“See the accident?” asked the policeman.

“No, but the car passed me down the road, going faster'n forty. Going fifty, sixty.”

“Come here and let's have your name. Look out now. I want to get his name.”

Some words of this conversation must have reached Wilson swaying in the office door, for suddenly a new theme found voice among his gasping cries.

“You don't have to tell me what kind of car it was! I know what kind of car it was!”

Watching Tom I saw the wad of muscle back of his shoulder tighten under his coat. He walked quickly over to Wilson and standing in front of him seized him firmly by the upper arms.

“You've got to pull yourself together,” he said with soothing gruffness.

Wilson's eyes fell upon Tom; he started up on his tiptoes and then would have collapsed to his knees had not Tom held him upright.

“Listen,” said Tom, shaking him a little. “I just got here a minute ago, from New York. I was bringing you that coupé we’ve been talking about. That yellow car I was driving this afternoon wasn’t mine, do you hear? I haven’t seen it all afternoon.”

Only the Negro and I were near enough to hear what he said but the policeman caught something in the tone and looked over with truculent eyes.

“What’s all that?” he demanded.

“I’m a friend of his.” Tom turned his head but kept his hands firm on Wilson’s body. “He says he knows the car that did it. . . . It was a yellow car.”

Some dim impulse moved the policeman to look suspiciously at Tom.

“And what color’s your car?”

“It’s a blue car, a coupé.”

“We’ve come straight from New York,” I said.

Some one who had been driving a little behind us confirmed this and the policeman turned away.

“Now, if you’ll let me have that name again correct—”

Picking up Wilson like a doll Tom carried him into the office, set him down in a chair and came back.

“If somebody’ll come here and sit with him!” he snapped authoritatively. He watched while the two men standing closest glanced at each other and went unwillingly into the room. Then Tom shut the door on them and came down the single step, his eyes avoiding the table. As he passed close to me he whispered “Let’s get out.”

Self consciously, with his authoritative arms breaking the way, we pushed through the still gathering crowd, passing a hurried doctor, case in hand, who had been sent for in wild hope half an hour ago.

Tom drove slowly until we were beyond the bend—then his foot came down hard and the coupé raced along through the night. In a little while I heard a low husky sob and saw that the tears were overflowing down his face.

“The God Damn coward!” he whimpered. “He didn’t even stop his car.”

The Buchanans’ house floated suddenly toward us through the dark rustling trees. Tom stopped beside the porch and looked up at the second floor where two windows bloomed with light among the vines.

“Daisy’s home,” he said. As we got out of the car he glanced at me and frowned slightly.

“I ought to have dropped you in West Egg, Nick. There’s nothing we can do tonight.”

A change had come over him and he spoke gravely, and with decision. As we walked across the moonlight gravel to the porch he disposed of the situation in a few brisk phrases.

“I’ll telephone for a taxi to take you home, and while you’re waiting you and Jordan better go in the kitchen and have them get you some supper—if you want any.” He opened the door. “Come in.”

“No thanks. But I’d be glad if you’d order me the taxi. I’ll wait outside.”

Jordan put her hand on my arm.

“Won’t you come in, Nick?”

“No thanks.”

I was feeling a little sick and I wanted to be alone. But Jordan lingered for a moment more.

“It’s only half past nine,” she said.

I’d be damned if I’d go in; I’d had enough of all of them for one day and suddenly that included Jordan too. She must have seen something of this in my expression for she turned abruptly away and ran up the porch steps into the house. I sat down for a few minutes with my head in my hands, until I heard the phone taken up inside and the butler’s voice calling a taxi. Then I walked slowly down the drive away from the house intending to wait by the gate.

I hadn't gone twenty yards when I heard my name and Gatsby stepped from between two bushes into the path. I must have felt pretty weird by that time because I could think of nothing except the luminosity of his pink suit under the moon.

"What are you doing?" I inquired.

"Just standing here, old sport."

Somehow, that seemed a despicable occupation. For all I knew he was going to rob the house in a moment; I wouldn't have been surprised to see sinister faces, the faces of "Wolfsheim's people," behind him in the dark shrubbery.

"Did you see any trouble on the road?" he asked after a minute.

"Yes."

He hesitated.

"Was she killed?"

"Yes."

"I thought so; I told Daisy I thought so. It's better that the shock should all come at once. She stood it pretty well."

He spoke as if Daisy's reaction was the only thing that mattered.

"I got to West Egg by a side road," he went on, "and left the car in my garage. I don't think anybody saw us but of course I can't be sure."

I disliked him so much by this time that I didn't find it necessary to tell him he was wrong.

"Who was the woman?" he inquired.

"Her name was Wilson. Her husband owns the garage. How the devil did it happen?"

"Well, I tried to swing the wheel—" He broke off, and suddenly I guessed at the truth.

"Was Daisy driving?"

"Yes," he said after a moment, "but of course I'll say I was. You see, when we left New York she was very nervous and she thought it would steady her to drive—and this woman rushed out at us just as we were passing a car coming the other way. It all happened in a minute but it seemed to me that she wanted to speak to us, thought we were somebody she knew. Well, first Daisy turned away from the woman toward the other car, and then she lost her nerve and turned back. The second my hand reached the wheel I felt the shock—it must have killed her instantly."

"It ripped her open—"

"Don't tell me, old sport." He winced. "Anyhow—Daisy stepped on it. I tried to make her stop, but she couldn't so I pulled on the emergency brake. Then she fell over into my lap and I drove on.

"She'll be all right tomorrow," he said presently. "I'm just going to wait here and see if he tries to bother her about that unpleasantness this afternoon. She's locked herself into her room and if he tries any brutality she's going to turn the light out and on again."

"He won't touch her," I said. "He's not thinking about her."

"I don't trust him, old sport."

"How long are you going to wait?"

"All night if necessary. Anyhow till they all go to bed."

A new point of view occurred to me. Suppose Tom found out that Daisy had been driving. He might think he saw a connection in it—he might think anything. I looked at the house: there were two or three bright windows downstairs and the pink glow from Daisy's room on the second floor.

"You wait here," I said. "I'll see if there's any sign of a commotion."

I walked back along the border of the lawn, traversed the gravel softly and tiptoed up the veranda steps. The drawing-room curtains were open, and I saw that the room was empty. Crossing the porch where we had dined that June night three months before I came to a small rectangle of light which I guessed was the pantry window. The blind was drawn but I found a rift at the sill.

Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other at the kitchen table with a plate of cold fried chicken between them and two bottles of ale. He was talking intently across the table at her and in his earnestness his hand had fallen upon and covered her own. Once in a while she looked up at him and nodded in agreement.

They weren't happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale—and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together.

As I tiptoed from the porch I heard my taxi feeling its way along the dark road toward the house. Gatsby was waiting where I had left him in the drive.

“Is it all quiet up there?” he asked anxiously.

“Yes, it's all quiet.” I hesitated. “You'd better come home and get some sleep.”

He shook his head.

“I want to wait here till Daisy goes to bed. Good night, old sport.”

He put his hands in his coat pockets and turned back eagerly to his scrutiny of the house, as though my presence marred the sacredness of the vigil. So I walked away and left him standing there in the moonlight—watching over nothing.

Chapter 7 Study Questions

1. Why does Gatsby stop throwing parties?
2. What role does Daisy and Tom's little girl play?
3. Why does Daisy say that Gatsby wanted too much?
4. Who is Walter Chase?
5. Why does Tom suggest Daisy and Gatsby leave in the car together?
6. Why does Myrtle run toward the car that kills her?
7. Who is driving the car that runs into Myrtle?

Chapter 8

I couldn't sleep all night; a fog-horn was groaning incessantly on the Sound, and I tossed half-sick between grotesque reality and savage frightening dreams. Toward dawn I heard a taxi go up Gatsby's drive and immediately I jumped out of bed and began to dress—I felt that I had something to tell him, something to warn him about and morning would be too late.

Crossing his lawn I saw that his front door was still open and he was leaning against a table in the hall, heavy with dejection or sleep.

"Nothing happened," he said wanly. "I waited, and about four o'clock she came to the window and stood there for a minute and then turned out the light."

His house had never seemed so enormous to me as it did that night when we hunted through the great rooms for cigarettes. We pushed aside curtains that were like pavilions and felt over innumerable feet of dark wall for electric light switches—once I tumbled with a sort of splash upon the keys of a ghostly piano. There was an inexplicable amount of dust everywhere and the rooms were musty as though they hadn't been aired for many days. I found the humidior on an unfamiliar table with two stale dry cigarettes inside. Throwing open the French windows of the drawing-room we sat smoking out into the darkness.

"You ought to go away," I said. "It's pretty certain they'll trace your car."

"Go away *now*, old sport?"

"Go to Atlantic City for a week, or up to Montreal."

He wouldn't consider it. He couldn't possibly leave Daisy until he knew what she was going to do. He was clutching at some last hope and I couldn't bear to shake him free.

It was this night that he told me the strange story of his youth with Dan Cody—told it to me because "Jay Gatsby" had broken up like glass against Tom's hard malice and the long secret extravaganza was played out. I think that he would have acknowledged anything, now, without reserve, but he wanted to talk about Daisy.

She was the first "nice" girl he had ever known. In various unrevealed capacities he had come in contact with such people but always with indiscernible barbed wire between. He found her excitingly desirable. He went to her house, at first with other officers from Camp Taylor, then alone. It amazed him—he had never been in such a beautiful house before. But what gave it an air of breathless intensity was that Daisy lived there—it was as casual a thing to her as his tent out at camp was to him. There was a ripe mystery about it, a hint of bedrooms upstairs more beautiful and cool than other bedrooms, of gay and radiant activities taking place through its corridors and of romances that were not musty and laid away already in lavender but fresh and breathing and redolent of this year's shining motor cars and of dances whose flowers were scarcely withered. It excited him too that many men had already loved Daisy—it increased her value in his eyes. He felt their presence all about the house, pervading the air with the shades and echoes of still vibrant emotions.

But he knew that he was in Daisy's house by a colossal accident. However glorious might be his future as Jay Gatsby, he was at present a penniless young man without a past, and at any moment the invisible cloak of his uniform might slip from his shoulders. So he made the most of his time. He took what he could get, ravenously and unscrupulously—eventually he took Daisy one still October night, took her because he had no real right to touch her hand.

He might have despised himself, for he had certainly taken her under false pretenses. I don't mean that he had traded on his phantom millions, but he had deliberately given Daisy a sense of security; he

let her believe that he was a person from much the same stratum as herself—that he was fully able to take care of her. As a matter of fact he had no such facilities—he had no comfortable family standing behind him and he was liable at the whim of an impersonal government to be blown anywhere about the world.

But he didn't despise himself and it didn't turn out as he had imagined. He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go—but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail⁶⁸. He knew that Daisy was extraordinary but he didn't realize just how extraordinary a “nice” girl could be. She vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby—nothing. He felt married to her, that was all.

When they met again two days later it was Gatsby who was breathless, who was somehow betrayed. Her porch was bright with the bought luxury of star-shine; the wicker of the settee squeaked fashionably as she turned toward him and he kissed her curious and lovely mouth. She had caught a cold and it made her voice huskier and more charming than ever and Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor.

“I can't describe to you how surprised I was to find out I loved her, old sport. I even hoped for a while that she'd throw me over, but she didn't, because she was in love with me too. She thought I knew a lot because I knew different things from her. . . . Well, there I was, way off my ambitions, getting deeper in love every minute, and all of a sudden I didn't care. What was the use of doing great things if I could have a better time telling her what I was going to do?”

On the last afternoon before he went abroad he sat with Daisy in his arms for a long, silent time. It was a cold fall day with fire in the room and her cheeks flushed. Now and then she moved and he changed his arm a little and once he kissed her dark shining hair. The afternoon had made them tranquil for a while as if to give them a deep memory for the long parting the next day promised. They had never been closer in their month of love nor communicated more profoundly one with another than when she brushed silent lips against his coat's shoulder or when he touched the end of her fingers, gently, as though she were asleep.

He did extraordinarily well in the war. He was a captain before he went to the front and following the Argonne battles he got his majority and the command of the divisional machine guns. After the Armistice he tried frantically to get home but some complication or misunderstanding sent him to Oxford instead. He was worried now—there was a quality of nervous despair in Daisy's letters. She didn't see why he couldn't come. She was feeling the pressure of the world outside and she wanted to see him and feel his presence beside her and be reassured that she was doing the right thing after all.

For Daisy was young and her artificial world was redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery and orchestras which set the rhythm of the year, summing up the sadness and suggestiveness of life in new tunes. All night the saxophones wailed the hopeless comment of the “Beale Street Blues⁶⁹,” while a hundred pairs of golden and silver slippers shuffled the shining dust. At the grey tea hour there were always rooms that throbbed incessantly with this low sweet fever, while fresh faces drifted here and there like rose petals blown by the sad horns around the floor.

Through this twilight universe Daisy began to move again with the season; suddenly she was again keeping half a dozen dates a day with half a dozen men and drowsing asleep at dawn with the beads and chiffon of an evening dress tangled among dying orchids on the floor beside her bed. And all the time something within her was crying for a decision. She wanted her life shaped now, immediately—and

68. The Holy Grail. A cup or chalice used by Christ at the Last Supper and subject of much legend, romance, and allegory.

69. A jazz song composed by W.C. Handy in 1916. The title refers to Beale Street, Memphis, Tennessee—an entertainment district for African-Americans in the 1920s.

the decision must be made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality—that was close at hand.

That force took shape in the middle of spring with the arrival of Tom Buchanan. There was a wholesome bulkiness about his person and his position and Daisy was flattered. Doubtless there was a certain struggle and a certain relief. The letter reached Gatsby while he was still at Oxford.

It was dawn now on Long Island and we went about opening the rest of the windows downstairs, filling the house with grey turning, gold turning light. The shadow of a tree fell abruptly across the dew and ghostly birds began to sing among the blue leaves. There was a slow pleasant movement in the air, scarcely a wind, promising a cool lovely day.

“I don’t think she ever loved him.” Gatsby turned around from a window and looked at me challengingly. “You must remember, old sport, she was very excited this afternoon. He told her those things in a way that frightened her—that made it look as if I was some kind of cheap sharper. And the result was she hardly knew what she was saying.”

He sat down gloomily.

“Of course she might have loved him, just for a minute, when they were first married—and loved me more even then, do you see?”

Suddenly he came out with a curious remark:

“In any case,” he said, “it was just personal.”

What could you make of that, except to suspect some intensity in his conception of the affair that couldn’t be measured?

He came back from France when Tom and Daisy were still on their wedding trip, and made a miserable but irresistible journey to Louisville on the last of his army pay. He stayed there a week, walking the streets where their footsteps had clicked together through the November night and revisiting the out-of-the-way places to which they had driven in her white car. Just as Daisy’s house had always seemed to him more mysterious and gay than other houses so his idea of the city itself, even though she was gone from it, was pervaded with a melancholy beauty.

He left feeling that if he had searched harder he might have found her—that he was leaving her behind. The day-coach—he was penniless now—was hot. He went out to the open vestibule and sat down on a folding-chair, and the station slid away and the backs of unfamiliar buildings moved by. Then out into the spring fields, where a yellow trolley raced them for a minute with people in it who might once have seen the pale magic of her face along the casual street.

The track curved and now it was going away from the sun which, as it sank lower, seemed to spread itself in benediction over the vanishing city where she had drawn her breath. He stretched out his hand desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she had made lovely for him. But it was all going by too fast now for his blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever.

It was nine o’clock when we finished breakfast and went out on the porch. The night had made a sharp difference in the weather and there was an autumn flavor in the air. The gardener, the last one of Gatsby’s former servants, came to the foot of the steps.

“I’m going to drain the pool today, Mr. Gatsby. Leaves’ll start falling pretty soon and then there’s always trouble with the pipes.”

“Don’t do it today,” Gatsby answered. He turned to me apologetically. “You know, old sport, I’ve never used that pool all summer?”

I looked at my watch and stood up.

“Twelve minutes to my train.”

I didn't want to go to the city. I wasn't worth a decent stroke of work but it was more than that—I didn't want to leave Gatsby. I missed that train, and then another, before I could get myself away.

"I'll call you up," I said finally.

"Do, old sport."

"I'll call you about noon."

We walked slowly down the steps.

"I suppose Daisy'll call too." He looked at me anxiously as if he hoped I'd corroborate this.

"I suppose so."

"Well—goodbye."

We shook hands and I started away. Just before I reached the hedge I remembered something and turned around.

"They're a rotten crowd," I shouted across the lawn. "You're worth the whole damn bunch put together."

I've always been glad I said that. It was the only compliment I ever gave him, because I disapproved of him from beginning to end. First he nodded politely, and then his face broke into that radiant and understanding smile, as if we'd been in ecstatic cahoots on that fact all the time. His gorgeous pink rag of a suit made a bright spot of color against the white steps and I thought of the night when I first came to his ancestral home three months before. The lawn and drive had been crowded with the faces of those who guessed at his corruption—and he had stood on those steps, concealing his incorruptible dream, as he waved them goodbye.

I thanked him for his hospitality. We were always thanking him for that—I and the others.

"Goodbye," I called. "I enjoyed breakfast, Gatsby."

Up in the city I tried for a while to list the quotations on an interminable amount of stock, then I fell asleep in my swivel-chair. Just before noon the phone woke me and I started up with sweat breaking out on my forehead. It was Jordan Baker; she often called me up at this hour because the uncertainty of her own movements between hotels and clubs and private houses made her hard to find in any other way. Usually her voice came over the wire as something fresh and cool as if a divot from a green golf links had come sailing in at the office window but this morning it seemed harsh and dry.

"I've left Daisy's house," she said. "I'm at Hempstead and I'm going down to Southampton this afternoon."

Probably it had been tactful to leave Daisy's house, but the act annoyed me and her next remark made me rigid.

"You weren't so nice to me last night."

"How could it have mattered then?"

Silence for a moment. Then—

"However—I want to see you."

"I want to see you too."

"Suppose I don't go to Southampton, and come into town this afternoon?"

"No—I don't think this afternoon."

"Very well."

"It's impossible this afternoon. Various—"

We talked like that for a while and then abruptly we weren't talking any longer. I don't know which of us hung up with a sharp click but I know I didn't care. I couldn't have talked to her across a tea-table that day if I never talked to her again in this world.

I called Gatsby's house a few minutes later, but the line was busy. I tried four times; finally an exasperated central told me the wire was being kept open for long distance from Detroit. Taking out my

time-table I drew a small circle around the three-fifty train. Then I leaned back in my chair and tried to think. It was just noon.

When I passed the ashheaps on the train that morning I had crossed deliberately to the other side of the car. I suppose there'd be a curious crowd around there all day with little boys searching for dark spots in the dust and some garrulous man telling over and over what had happened until it became less and less real even to him and he could tell it no longer and Myrtle Wilson's tragic achievement was forgotten. Now I want to go back a little and tell what happened at the garage after we left there the night before.

They had difficulty in locating the sister, Catherine. She must have broken her rule against drinking that night for when she arrived she was stupid with liquor and unable to understand that the ambulance had already gone to Flushing⁷⁰. When they convinced her of this she immediately fainted as if that was the intolerable part of the affair. Someone kind or curious took her in his car and drove her in the wake of her sister's body.

Until long after midnight a changing crowd lapped up against the front of the garage while George Wilson rocked himself back and forth on the couch inside. For a while the door of the office was open and everyone who came into the garage glanced irresistibly through it. Finally someone said it was a shame and closed the door. Michaelis and several other men were with him—first four or five men, later two or three men. Still later Michaelis had to ask the last stranger to wait there fifteen minutes longer while he went back to his own place and made a pot of coffee. After that he stayed there alone with Wilson until dawn.

About three o'clock the quality of Wilson's incoherent muttering changed—he grew quieter and began to talk about the yellow car. He announced that he had a way of finding out whom the yellow car belonged to, and then he blurted out that a couple of months ago his wife had come from the city with her face bruised and her nose swollen.

But when he heard himself say this, he flinched and began to cry "Oh, my God!" again in his groaning voice. Michaelis made a clumsy attempt to distract him.

"How long have you been married, George? Come on there, try and sit still a minute and answer my question. How long have you been married?"

"Twelve years."

"Ever had any children? Come on, George, sit still—I asked you a question. Did you ever have any children?"

The hard brown beetles kept thudding against the dull light and whenever Michaelis heard a car go tearing along the road outside it sounded to him like the car that hadn't stopped a few hours before. He didn't like to go into the garage because the work bench was stained where the body had been lying so he moved uncomfortably around the office—he knew every object in it before morning—and from time to time sat down beside Wilson trying to keep him more quiet.

"Have you got a church you go to sometimes, George? Maybe even if you haven't been there for a long time? Maybe I could call up the church and get a priest to come over and he could talk to you, see?"

"Don't belong to any."

"You ought to have a church, George, for times like this. You must have gone to church once. Didn't you get married in a church? Listen, George, listen to me. Didn't you get married in a church?"

"That was a long time ago."

70. Once a separate village, but as of 1898, part of the borough of Queens in New York City.

The effort of answering broke the rhythm of his rocking—for a moment he was silent. Then the same half knowing, half bewildered look came back into his faded eyes.

“Look in the drawer there,” he said, pointing at the desk.

“Which drawer?”

“That drawer—that one.”

Michaelis opened the drawer nearest his hand. There was nothing in it but a small expensive dog leash made of leather and braided silver. It was apparently new.

“This?” he inquired, holding it up.

Wilson stared and nodded.

“I found it yesterday afternoon. She tried to tell me about it but I knew it was something funny.”

“You mean your wife bought it?”

“She had it wrapped in tissue paper on her bureau.”

Michaelis didn’t see anything odd in that and he gave Wilson a dozen reasons why his wife might have bought the dog leash. But conceivably Wilson had heard some of these same explanations before, from Myrtle, because he began saying “Oh, my God!” again in a whisper—his comforter left several explanations in the air.

“Then he killed her,” said Wilson. His mouth dropped open suddenly.

“Who did?”

“I have a way of finding out.”

“You’re morbid, George,” said his friend. “This has been a strain to you and you don’t know what you’re saying. You’d better try and sit quiet till morning.”

“He murdered her.”

“It was an accident, George.”

Wilson shook his head. His eyes narrowed and his mouth widened slightly with the ghost of a superior “Hm!”

“I know,” he said definitely, “I’m one of these trusting fellas and I don’t think any harm to *nobody*, but when I get to know a thing I know it. It was the man in that car. She ran out to speak to him and he wouldn’t stop.”

Michaelis had seen this too but it hadn’t occurred to him that there was any special significance in it. He believed that Mrs. Wilson had been running away from her husband, rather than trying to stop any particular car.

“How could she of been like that?”

“She’s a deep one,” said Wilson, as if that answered the question. “Ah-h-h—”

He began to rock again and Michaelis stood twisting the leash in his hand.

“Maybe you got some friend that I could telephone for, George?”

This was a forlorn hope—he was almost sure that Wilson had no friend: there was not enough of him for his wife. He was glad a little later when he noticed a change in the room, a blue quickening by the window, and realized that dawn wasn’t far off. About five o’clock it was blue enough outside to snap off the light.

Wilson’s glazed eyes turned out to the ashheaps, where small grey clouds took on fantastic shape and scurried here and there in the faint dawn wind.

“I spoke to her,” he muttered, after a long silence. “I told her she might fool me but she couldn’t fool God. I took her to the window—” With an effort he got up and walked to the rear window and leaned with his face pressed against it, “—and I said ‘God knows what you’ve been doing, everything you’ve been doing. You may fool me but you can’t fool God!’ ”

Standing behind him Michaelis saw with a shock that he was looking at the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg which had just emerged pale and enormous from the dissolving night.

“God sees everything,” repeated Wilson.

“That’s an advertisement,” Michaelis assured him. Something made him turn away from the window and look back into the room. But Wilson stood there a long time, his face close to the window pane, nodding into the twilight.

By six o’clock Michaelis was worn out and grateful for the sound of a car stopping outside. It was one of the watchers of the night before who had promised to come back so he cooked breakfast for three which he and the other man ate together. Wilson was quieter now and Michaelis went home to sleep; when he awoke four hours later and hurried back to the garage Wilson was gone.

His movements—he was on foot all the time—were afterward traced to Port Roosevelt and then to Gad’s Hill where he bought a sandwich that he didn’t eat and a cup of coffee. He must have been tired and walking slowly for he didn’t reach Gad’s Hill until noon. Thus far there was no difficulty in accounting for his time—there were boys who had seen a man “acting sort of crazy” and motorists at whom he stared oddly from the side of the road. Then for three hours he disappeared from view. The police, on the strength of what he said to Michaelis, that he “had a way of finding out,” supposed that he spent that time going from garage to garage thereabouts inquiring for a yellow car. On the other hand no garage man who had seen him ever came forward—and perhaps he had an easier, surer way of finding out what he wanted to know. By half past two he was in West Egg where he asked someone the way to Gatsby’s house. So by that time he knew Gatsby’s name.

At two o’clock Gatsby put on his bathing suit and left word with the butler that if any one phoned word was to be brought to him at the pool. He stopped at the garage for a pneumatic mattress that had amused his guests during the summer, and the chauffeur helped him pump it up. Then he gave instructions that the open car wasn’t to be taken out under any circumstances—and this was strange because the front right fender needed repair.

Gatsby shouldered the mattress and started for the pool. Once he stopped and shifted it a little, and the chauffeur asked him if he needed help, but he shook his head and in a moment disappeared among the yellowing trees.

No telephone message arrived but the butler went without his sleep and waited for it until four o’clock—until long after there was any one to give it to if it came. I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn’t believe it would come and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about . . . like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees.

The chauffeur—he was one of Wolfsheim’s protégés—heard the shots—afterward he could only say that he hadn’t thought anything much about them. I drove from the station directly to Gatsby’s house and my rushing anxiously up the front steps was the first thing that alarmed any one. But they knew then, I firmly believe. With scarcely a word said, four of us, the chauffeur, butler, gardener and I, hurried down to the pool.

There was a faint, barely perceptible movement of the water as the fresh flow from one end urged its way toward the drain at the other. With little ripples that were hardly the shadows of waves, the laden mattress moved irregularly down the pool. A small gust of wind that scarcely corrugated the surface was enough to disturb its accidental course with its accidental burden. The touch of a cluster of leaves revolved it slowly, tracing, like the leg of compass, a thin red circle in the water.

It was after we started with Gatsby toward the house that the gardener saw Wilson's body a little way off in the grass, and the holocaust was complete.

Chapter 8 Study Questions

1. What was the nature of Gatsby and Daisy's relationship in Louisville in 1917?
2. Why does Gatsby insist that Daisy say that she never loved Tom?
3. Why does Nick say that Gatsby is worth the whole bunch of them?
4. Who does George Wilson first blame for Myrtle's death?

Chapter 9

After two years I remember the rest of that day, and that night and the next day, only as an endless drill of police and photographers and newspaper men in and out of Gatsby's front door. A rope stretched across the main gate and a policeman by it kept out the curious, but little boys soon discovered that they could enter through my yard and there were always a few of them clustered open-mouthed about the pool. Someone with a positive manner, perhaps a detective, used the expression "mad man" as he bent over Wilson's body that afternoon, and the adventitious authority of his voice set the key for the newspaper reports next morning.

Most of those reports were a nightmare—grotesque, circumstantial, eager and untrue. When Michaelis's testimony at the inquest brought to light Wilson's suspicions of his wife I thought the whole tale would shortly be served up in racy pasquinade—but Catherine, who might have said anything, didn't say a word. She showed a surprising amount of character about it too—looked at the coroner with determined eyes under that corrected brow of hers and swore that her sister had never seen Gatsby, that her sister was completely happy with her husband, that her sister had been into no mischief whatever. She convinced herself of it and cried into her handkerchief as if the very suggestion was more than she could endure. So Wilson was reduced to a man "deranged by grief" in order that the case might remain in its simplest form. And it rested there.

But all this part of it seemed remote and unessential. I found myself on Gatsby's side, and alone. From the moment I telephoned news of the catastrophe to West Egg village, every surmise about him, and every practical question, was referred to me. At first I was surprised and confused; then, as he lay in his house and didn't move or breathe or speak hour upon hour it grew upon me that I was responsible, because no one else was interested—interested, I mean, with that intense personal interest to which every one has some vague right at the end.

I called up Daisy half an hour after we found him, called her instinctively and without hesitation. But she and Tom had gone away early that afternoon, and taken baggage with them.

"Left no address?"

"No."

"Say when they'd be back?"

"No."

"Any idea where they are? How I could reach them?"

"I don't know. Can't say."

I wanted to get somebody for him. I wanted to go into the room where he lay and reassure him: "I'll get somebody for you, Gatsby. Don't worry. Just trust me and I'll get somebody for you—"

Meyer Wolfsheim's name wasn't in the phone book. The butler gave me his office address on Broadway and I called Information, but by the time I had the number it was long after five and no one answered the phone.

"Will you ring again?"

"I've rung them three times."

"It's very important."

"Sorry. I'm afraid no one's there."

I went back to the drawing room and thought for an instant that they were chance visitors, all these official people who suddenly filled it. But as they drew back the sheet and looked at Gatsby with unmoved eyes, his protest continued in my brain.

“Look here, old sport, you’ve got to get somebody for me. You’ve got to try hard. I can’t go through this alone.”

Some one started to ask me questions but I broke away and going upstairs looked hastily through the unlocked parts of his desk—he’d never told me definitely that his parents were dead. But there was nothing—only the picture of Dan Cody, a token of forgotten violence staring down from the wall.

Next morning I sent the butler to New York with a letter to Wolfsheim which asked for information and urged him to come out on the next train. That request seemed superfluous when I wrote it. I was sure he’d start when he saw the newspapers, just as I was sure there’d be a wire from Daisy before noon—but neither a wire nor Mr. Wolfsheim arrived, no one arrived except more police and photographers and newspaper men. When the butler brought back Wolfsheim’s answer I began to have a feeling of defiance, of scornful solidarity between Gatsby and me against them all.

Dear Mr. Carraway. This has been one of the most terrible shocks of my life to me I hardly can believe it that it is true at all. Such a mad act as that man did should make us all think. I cannot come down now as I am tied up in some very important business and cannot get mixed up in this thing now. If there is anything I can do a little later let me know in a letter by Edgar. I hardly know where I am when I hear about a thing like this and am completely knocked down and out.

Yours truly

MEYER WOLFSHEIM

and then hasty addenda beneath:

Let me know about the funeral etc do not know his family at all.

When the phone rang that afternoon and Long Distance said Chicago was calling I thought this would be Daisy at last. But the connection came through as a man’s voice, very thin and far away.

“This is Slagle speaking. . . .”

“Yes?” The name was unfamiliar.

“Hell of a note, isn’t it? Get my wire?”

“There haven’t been any wires.”

“Young Parke’s in trouble,” he said rapidly. “They picked him up when he handed the bonds over the counter. They got a circular from New York giving ’em the numbers just five minutes before. What d’you know about that, hey? You never can tell in these hick towns—”

“Hello!” I interrupted breathlessly. “Look here—this isn’t Mr. Gatsby. Mr. Gatsby’s dead.”

There was a long silence on the other end of the wire, followed by an exclamation . . . then a quick squawk as the connection was broken.

I think it was on the third day that a telegram signed Henry C. Gatz arrived from a town in Minnesota. It said only that the sender was leaving immediately and to postpone the funeral until he came.

It was Gatsby’s father, a solemn old man very helpless and dismayed, bundled up in a long cheap ulster⁷¹ against the warm September day. His eyes leaked continuously with excitement and when I took the bag and umbrella from his hands he began to pull so incessantly at his sparse grey beard that I had difficulty in getting off his coat. He was on the point of collapse so I took him into the music room and made him sit down while I sent for something to eat. But he wouldn’t eat and the glass of milk spilled from his trembling hand.

“I saw it in the Chicago newspaper,” he said. “It was all in the Chicago newspaper. I started right away.”

71. A long, loose overcoat.

“I didn’t know how to reach you.”

His eyes, seeing nothing, moved ceaselessly about the room.

“It was a mad man,” he said. “He must have been mad.”

“Wouldn’t you like some coffee?” I urged him.

“I don’t want anything. I’m all right now, Mr.—”

“Carraway.”

“Well, I’m all right now. Where have they got Jimmy?”

I took him into the drawing-room, where his son lay, and left him there. Some little boys had come up on the steps and were looking into the hall; when I told them who had arrived they went reluctantly away.

After a little while Mr. Gatz opened the door and came out, his mouth ajar, his face flushed slightly, his eyes leaking isolated and unpunctual tears. He had reached an age where death no longer has the quality of ghastly surprise, and when he looked around him now for the first time and saw the height and splendor of the hall and the great rooms opening out from it into other rooms his grief began to be mixed with an awed pride. I helped him to a bedroom upstairs; while he took off his coat and vest I told him that all arrangements had been deferred until he came.

“I didn’t know what you’d want, Mr. Gatsby—”

“Gatz is my name.”

“—Mr. Gatz. I thought you might want to take the body west.”

He shook his head.

“Jimmy always liked it better down East. He rose up to his position in the East. Were you a friend of my boy’s, Mr.—?”

“We were close friends.”

“He had a big future before him, you know. He was only a young man but he had a lot of brain power here.”

He touched his head impressively and I nodded.

“If he’d of lived he’d of been a great man. A man like James J. Hill⁷². He’d of helped build up the country.”

“That’s true,” I said, uncomfortably.

He fumbled at the embroidered coverlet, trying to take it from the bed, and lay down stiffly—was instantly asleep.

That night an obviously frightened person called up and demanded to know who I was before he would give his name.

“This is Mr. Carraway,” I said.

“Oh—” He sounded relieved. “This is Klipspringer.”

I was relieved too for that seemed to promise another friend at Gatsby’s grave. I didn’t want it to be in the papers and draw a sightseeing crowd so I’d been calling up a few people myself. They were hard to find.

“The funeral’s tomorrow,” I said. “Three o’clock, here at the house. I wish you’d tell anybody who’d be interested.”

“Oh, I will,” he broke out hastily. “Of course I’m not likely to see anybody, but if I do.”

His tone made me suspicious.

“Of course you’ll be there yourself.”

“Well, I’ll certainly try. What I called up about is—”

72. James Jerome Hill (1838-1916). Canadian-American railroad executive, nicknamed “The Empire Builder,” who headed the Great Northern Railway linking the Middle West to the Pacific.

“Wait a minute,” I interrupted. “How about saying you’ll come?”

“Well, the fact is—the truth of the matter is that I’m staying with some people up here in Greenwich⁷³ and they rather expect me to be with them tomorrow. In fact there’s a sort of picnic or something. Of course I’ll do my very best to get away.”

I ejaculated an unrestrained “Huh!” and he must have heard me for he went on nervously:

“What I called up about was a pair of shoes I left there. I wonder if it’d be too much trouble to have the butler send them on. You see they’re tennis shoes and I’m sort of helpless without them. My address is care of B. F.—”

I didn’t hear the rest of the name because I hung up the receiver.

After that I felt a certain shame for Gatsby—one gentleman to whom I telephoned implied that he had got what he deserved. However, that was my fault, for he was one of those who used to sneer most bitterly at Gatsby on the courage of Gatsby’s liquor and I should have known better than to call him.

The morning of the funeral I went up to New York to see Meyer Wolfsheim; I couldn’t seem to reach him any other way. The door that I pushed open on the advice of an elevator boy was marked “The Swastika Holding Company” and at first there didn’t seem to be any one inside. But when I’d shouted “Hello” several times in vain an argument broke out behind a partition and presently a lovely Jewess appeared at an interior door and scrutinized me with black hostile eyes.

“Nobody’s in,” she said. “Mr. Wolfsheim’s gone to Chicago.”

The first part of this was obviously untrue for someone had begun to whistle “The Rosary,” tunelessly, inside.

“Please say that Mr. Carraway wants to see him.”

“I can’t get him back from Chicago, can I?”

At this moment a voice, unmistakably Wolfsheim’s called “Stella!” from the other side of the door.

“Leave your name on the desk,” she said quickly. “I’ll give it to him when he gets back.”

“But I know he’s there.”

She took a step toward me and began to slide her hands indignantly up and down her hips.

“You young men think you can force your way in here any time,” she scolded. “We’re getting sickantired of it. When I say he’s in Chicago, he’s in Chicago.”

I mentioned Gatsby.

“Oh—h!” She looked at me over again. “Will you just—what was your name?”

She vanished. In a moment Meyer Wolfsheim stood solemnly in the doorway, holding out both hands. He drew me into his office, remarking in a reverent voice that it was a sad time for all of us, and offered me a cigar.

“My memory goes back to when I first met him,” he said. “A young major just out of the army and covered over with medals he got in the war. He was so hard up he had to keep on wearing his uniform because he couldn’t buy some regular clothes. First time I saw him was when he come into Winebrenner’s poolroom at Forty-third Street and asked for a job. He hadn’t eat anything for a couple of days. ‘Come on have some lunch with me,’ I sid. He ate more than four dollars’ worth of food in half an hour.”

“Did you start him in business?” I inquired.

“Start him! I made him.”

“Oh.”

“I raised him up out of nothing, right out of the gutter. I saw right away he was a fine appearing, gentlemanly young man, and when he told me he was an Ogsford I knew I could use him good. I got

73. Greenwich, Connecticut is a suburb of New York City.

him to join up in the American Legion and he used to stand high there. Right off he did some work for a client of mine up to Albany.⁷⁴ We were so thick like that in everything—” He held up two bulbous fingers “—always together.”

I wondered if this partnership had included the World’s Series transaction in 1919.

“Now he’s dead,” I said after a moment. “You were his closest friend, so I know you’ll want to come to his funeral this afternoon.”

“I’d like to come.”

“Well, come then.”

The hair in his nostrils quivered slightly and as he shook his head his eyes filled with tears.

“I can’t do it—I can’t get mixed up in it,” he said.

“There’s nothing to get mixed up in. It’s all over now.”

“When a man gets killed I never like to get mixed up in it in any way. I keep out. When I was a young man it was different—if a friend of mine died, no matter how, I stuck with them to the end. You may think that’s sentimental but I mean it—to the bitter end.”

I saw that for some reason of his own he was determined not to come, so I stood up.

“Are you a college man?” he inquired suddenly.

For a moment I thought he was going to suggest a “gonnegtion” but he only nodded and shook my hand.

“Let us learn to show our friendship for a man when he is alive and not after he is dead,” he suggested. “After that my own rule is to let everything alone.”

When I left his office the sky had turned dark and I got back to West Egg in a drizzle. After changing my clothes I went next door and found Mr. Gatz walking up and down excitedly in the hall. His pride in his son and in his son’s possessions was continually increasing and now he had something to show me.

“Jimmy sent me this picture.” He took out his wallet with trembling fingers. “Look there.”

It was a photograph of the house, cracked in the corners and dirty with many hands. He pointed out every detail to me eagerly. “Look there!” and then sought admiration from my eyes. He had shown it so often that I think it was more real to him now than the house itself.

“Jimmy sent it to me. I think it’s a very pretty picture. It shows up well.”

“Very well. Had you seen him lately?”

“He come out to see me two years ago and bought me the house I live in now. Of course we was broke up when he run off from home but I see now there was a reason for it. He knew he had a big future in front of him. And ever since he made a success he was very generous with me.”

He seemed reluctant to put away the picture, held it for another minute, lingeringly, before my eyes. Then he returned the wallet and pulled from his pocket a ragged old copy of a book called “Hopalong Cassidy⁷⁵ .”

“Look here, this is a book he had when he was a boy. It just shows you.”

He opened it at the back cover and turned it around for me to see. On the last fly-leaf was printed the word SCHEDULE, and the date September 12th, 1906. And underneath:

74. Capital of the state of New York.

75. A novel published in 1910 by Clarence E. Mulford (1883-1956). He wrote a number of short stories and novels featuring the cowboy Hopalong Cassidy.

Rise from bed 6.00 A.M.
 Dumbbell exercise and wall-scaling 6.15-6.30 ”
 Study electricity, etc 7.15-8.15 ”
 Work 8.30-4.30 P.M.
 Baseball and sports 4.30-5.00 ”
 Practice elocution, poise and how to attain it 5.00-6.00 ”
 Study needed inventions 7.00-9.00 ”

GENERAL RESOLVES

No wasting time at Shafters or [a name, indecipherable]
 No more smokeing or chewing
 Bath every other day
 Read one improving book or magazine per week
 Save \$5.00 [crossed out] \$3.00 per week
 Be better to parents

“I come across this book by accident,” said the old man. “It just shows you, don’t it?”

“It just shows you.”

“Jimmy was bound to get ahead. He always had some resolves like this or something. Do you notice what he’s got about improving his mind? He was always great for that. He told me I et like a hog once and I beat him for it.”

He was reluctant to close the book, reading each item aloud and then looking eagerly at me. I think he rather expected me to copy down the list for my own use.

A little before three the Lutheran minister arrived from Flushing and I began to look involuntarily out the windows for other cars. So did Gatsby’s father. And as the time passed and the servants came in and stood waiting in the hall, his eyes began to blink anxiously and he spoke of the rain in a worried uncertain way. The minister glanced several times at his watch so I took him aside and asked him to wait for half an hour. But it wasn’t any use. Nobody came.

About five o’clock our procession of three cars reached the cemetery and stopped in a thick drizzle beside the gate—first a motor hearse, horribly black and wet, then Mr. Gatz and the minister and I in the limousine, and, a little later, four or five servants and the postman from West Egg in Gatsby’s station wagon, all wet to the skin. As we started through the gate into the cemetery I heard a car stop and then the sound of someone splashing after us over the soggy ground. I looked around. It was the man with owl-eyed glasses whom I had found marvelling over Gatsby’s books in the library one night three months before.

I’d never seen him since then. I don’t know how he knew about the funeral or even his name. The

rain poured down his thick glasses and he took them off and wiped them to see the protecting canvas unrolled from Gatsby's grave.

I tried to think about Gatsby then for a moment but he was already too far away and I could only remember, without resentment, that Daisy hadn't sent a message or a flower. Dimly I heard someone murmur "Blessed are the dead that the rain falls on," and then the owl-eyed man said "Amen to that," in a brave voice.

We straggled down quickly through the rain to the cars. Owl-Eyes spoke to me by the gate.

"I couldn't get to the house," he remarked.

"Neither could anybody else."

"Go on!" He started. "Why, my God! they used to go there by the hundreds."

He took off his glasses and wiped them again outside and in.

"The poor son-of-a-bitch," he said.

One of my most vivid memories is of coming back west from prep school and later from college at Christmas time. Those who went farther than Chicago would gather in the old dim Union Station at six o'clock of a December evening with a few Chicago friends already caught up into their own holiday gayeties to bid them a hasty goodbye. I remember the fur coats of the girls returning from Miss This or That's and the chatter of frozen breath and the hands waving overhead as we caught sight of old acquaintances and the matchings of invitations: "Are you going to the Ordways'?' the Herseys'?' the Schultzes'?" and the long green tickets clasped tight in our gloved hands. And last the murky yellow cars of the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad looking cheerful as Christmas itself on the tracks beside the gate.

When we pulled out into the winter night and the real snow, our snow, began to stretch out beside us and twinkle against the windows, and the dim lights of small Wisconsin stations moved by, a sharp wild brace came suddenly into the air. We drew in deep breaths of it as we walked back from dinner through the cold vestibules, unutterably aware of our identity with this country for one strange hour before we melted indistinguishably into it again.

That's my middle west—not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Swede towns but the thrilling, returning trains of my youth and the street lamps and sleigh bells in the frosty dark and the shadows of holly wreaths thrown by lighted windows on the snow. I am part of that, a little solemn with the feel of those long winters, a little complacent from growing up in the Carraway house in a city where dwellings are still called through decades by a family's name. I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all—Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life.

Even when the East excited me most, even when I was most keenly aware of its superiority to the bored, sprawling, swollen towns beyond the Ohio, with their interminable inquisitions which spared only the children and the very old—even then it had always for me a quality of distortion. West Egg especially still figures in my more fantastic dreams. I see it as a night scene by El Greco⁷⁶: a hundred houses, at once conventional and grotesque, crouching under a sullen, overhanging sky and a lustreless moon. In the foreground four solemn men in dress suits are walking along the sidewalk with a stretcher on which lies a drunken woman in a white evening dress. Her hand, which dangles over the side, sparkles cold with jewels. Gravely the men turn in at a house—the wrong house. But no one knows the woman's name, and no one cares.

After Gatsby's death the East was haunted for me like that, distorted beyond my eyes' power of

76. Domenikos Theotokopoulos (1541-1614), known as El Greco ("The Greek") was an artist of the Spanish renaissance, known for his elongated figures.

correction. So when the blue smoke of brittle leaves was in the air and the wind blew the wet laundry stiff on the line I decided to come back home.

There was one thing to be done before I left, an awkward, unpleasant thing that perhaps had better have been let alone. But I wanted to leave things in order and not just trust that obliging and indifferent sea to sweep my refuse away. I saw Jordan Baker and talked over and around what had happened to us together and what had happened afterward to me, and she lay perfectly still listening in a big chair.

She was dressed to play golf and I remember thinking she looked like a good illustration, her chin raised a little, jauntily, her hair the color of an autumn leaf, her face the same brown tint as the fingerless glove on her knee. When I had finished she told me without comment that she was engaged to another man. I doubted that though there were several she could have married at a nod of her head but I pretended to be surprised. For just a minute I wondered if I wasn't making a mistake, then I thought it all over again quickly and got up to say goodbye.

"Nevertheless you did throw me over," said Jordan suddenly. "You threw me over on the telephone. I don't give a damn about you now but it was a new experience for me and I felt a little dizzy for a while."

We shook hands.

"Oh, and do you remember—" she added, "—a conversation we had once about driving a car?"

"Why—not exactly."

"You said a bad driver was only safe until she met another bad driver? Well, I met another bad driver, didn't I? I mean it was careless of me to make such a wrong guess. I thought you were rather an honest, straightforward person. I thought it was your secret pride."

"I'm thirty," I said. "I'm five years too old to lie to myself and call it honor."

She didn't answer. Angry, and half in love with her, and tremendously sorry, I turned away.

One afternoon late in October I saw Tom Buchanan. He was walking ahead of me along Fifth Avenue in his alert, aggressive way, his hands out a little from his body as if to fight off interference, his head moving sharply here and there, adapting itself to his restless eyes. Just as I slowed up to avoid overtaking him he stopped and began frowning into the windows of a jewelry store. Suddenly he saw me and walked back holding out his hand.

"What's the matter, Nick? Do you object to shaking hands with me?"

"Yes. You know what I think of you."

"You're crazy, Nick," he said quickly. "Crazy as hell. I don't know what's the matter with you."

"Tom," I inquired, "what did you say to Wilson that afternoon?"

He stared at me without a word and I knew I had guessed right about those missing hours. I started to turn away but he took a step after me and grabbed my arm.

"I told him the truth," he said. "He came to the door while we were getting ready to leave and when I sent down word that we weren't in he tried to force his way upstairs. He was crazy enough to kill me if I hadn't told him who owned the car. His hand was on a revolver in his pocket every minute he was in the house—" He broke off defiantly. "What if I did tell him? That fellow had it coming to him. He threw dust into your eyes just like he did in Daisy's but he was a tough one. He ran over Myrtle like you'd run over a dog and never even stopped his car."

There was nothing I could say, except the one unutterable fact that it wasn't true.

"And if you think I didn't have my share of suffering—look here, when I went to give up that flat and saw that damn box of dog biscuits sitting there on the sideboard I sat down and cried like a baby. By God it was awful—"

I couldn't forgive him or like him but I saw that what he had done was, to him, entirely justified. It was all very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things

and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made. . . .

I shook hands with him; it seemed silly not to, for I felt suddenly as though I were talking to a child. Then he went into the jewelry store to buy a pearl necklace—or perhaps only a pair of cuff buttons—rid of my provincial squeamishness forever.

Gatsby's house was still empty when I left—the grass on his lawn had grown as long as mine. One of the taxi drivers in the village never took a fare past the entrance gate without stopping for a minute and pointing inside; perhaps it was he who drove Daisy and Gatsby over to East Egg the night of the accident and perhaps he had made a story about it all his own. I didn't want to hear it and I avoided him when I got off the train.

I spent my Saturday nights in New York because those gleaming, dazzling parties of his were with me so vividly that I could still hear the music and the laughter faint and incessant from his garden and the cars going up and down his drive. One night I did hear a material car there and saw its lights stop at his front steps. But I didn't investigate. Probably it was some final guest who had been away at the ends of the earth and didn't know that the party was over.

On the last night, with my trunk packed and my car sold to the grocer, I went over and looked at that huge incoherent failure of a house once more. On the white steps an obscene word, scrawled by some boy with a piece of brick, stood out clearly in the moonlight and I erased it, drawing my shoe raspily along the stone. Then I wandered down to the beach and sprawled out on the sand.

Most of the big shore places were closed now and there were hardly any lights except the shadowy, moving glow of a ferryboat across the Sound. And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch⁷⁷ sailors' eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.

And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning—

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

Chapter 9 Study Questions

1. Who attends Gatsby's funeral?

77. New York City was founded originally as a Dutch trading post in 1624 and named New Amsterdam in 1626.

2. Compare young James Gatz's list to that of Benjamin Franklin. What is thematically significant about the similarity?
3. What did Dutch sailors have to do with the history of New York?

Activities

For a good resource, go to the [National Endowment for the Arts website on *The Great Gatsby*](#).

Compare and contrast any two of the following film adaptations of *The Great Gatsby*:

1. *The Great Gatsby* (1974), director Jack Clayton, featuring Robert Redford as Gatsby and Mia Farrow as Daisy.
2. *The Great Gatsby* (2001), director Robert Markowitz, featuring Toby Stephens as Gatsby and Mira Sorvino as Daisy.
3. *The Great Gatsby* (2013), director Baz Luhrmann, featuring Leonardo DiCaprio as Gatsby and Carey Mulligan as Daisy.

Using the search feature, browse chronologically in the text for references to various colours, especially green, yellow/gold, and white. Which character is most associated with green? What might green symbolize? Consider the same questions for yellow/gold and white.

With regard to allusions to Plato in the novel:

1. Look up “the myth of the egg” in Plato, associated with the character Aristophanes in Plato’s dialogue *Symposium*. Then discuss “the egg” as a thematically significant symbol in the novel. Use the search feature to find instances of the word.
2. Plato uses the metaphor of a ladder in *Symposium*. What does the ladder suggest here, and where and how is the ladder used in the novel?

Look for biographical elements in the novel. Then read Ernest Hemingway’s short story “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” and consider whether the character Julian in that story is based on F. Scott Fitzgerald. What are the parallels?

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VII

Drama

54.

Twelfth Night: Act 1

William Shakespeare

Twelfth Night (Modern). [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#). University of Victoria. Editors: David Carnegie and Mark Houlahan.

Scene 1

*[Music.]*¹ Enter DUKE ORSINO, CURIO, and other Lords.²

Orsino

If music be the food of love,³ play on,⁴
 Give me excess⁵ of it, that surfeiting,
 The appetite may sicken, and so die.
*[To the Musicians]*⁶ That strain again! It had a dying fall⁷;
 Oh, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound⁸
¹⁰That breathes upon a bank of violets,
 Stealing, and giving odor. *[To the Musicians]* Enough, no more.
 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
 O spirit of love, how quick and fresh⁹ art thou,
 That notwithstanding thy capacity

1. The musicians may enter onto the stage as a preliminary part of Duke Orsino's retinue. If the musicians form part of Orsino's court they are characters in the play. But they may be the regular theater musicians. At the Globe they might have been revealed by the drawing of a curtain that usually concealed them.
2. The effect of the courtly music will be confirmed by the entry of richly costumed courtiers. It is unlikely that a ducal state (i.e. a canopied throne) would be placed on the otherwise bare stage, since Orsino is not holding court, but the deference of the "Lords" will establish his preeminence, as will his costume.
3. The musicians have been playing, probably on viols, "music, moody food / Of us that trade in love" (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 2.5.1-2, TLN 1025-1026).
4. Possibly a command to the musicians. If the musicians are on stage this is likely to be addressed to them, especially if they stopped playing after Orsino's entry. He may address them again at TLN 8 and almost certainly at TLN 11.
5. Although the literal meaning may be that love's appetite for music can, by overfeeding, be satisfied, the clear poetic sense is that Orsino wishes, by over-indulgence in music, to eliminate the pain of love. His comments on "appetite" and "surfeit" at TLN 984-986 are in ironic contrast to this speech.
6. Orsino seems to exemplify the comic capriciousness of lovers by first telling the musicians to play a musical phrase again, then at TLN 11 stopping them altogether. A second level of comedy will operate if these are not characters in the play, but the theater's musicians (see note to TLN 2), since Orsino would in effect step out of the fictional narrative for a moment. But possibly he simply comments on a musical repeat.
7. A musical phrase dropping to its resolution or cadence.
8. I.e. of the gentle wind which distributes the scent of the violets.
9. Lively and eager.

15Receiveth¹⁰ as the sea, nought enters there,
 Of what validity and pitch¹¹ soe'er,
 But falls into abatement and low price¹²
 Even in a minute. So full of shapes is fancy,
 That it alone is high fantastical.

20**Curio**

Will you go hunt, my Lord?

Orsino

What, Curio?

Curio

The hart.¹³

Orsino

Why so I do, the noblest¹⁴ that I have.
 O when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
 25Methought she purged the air of pestilence;¹⁵
 That instant was I turned into a hart,
 And my desires, like fell¹⁶ and cruel hounds,
 E'er since pursue me.¹⁷
*Enter Valentine.*¹⁸

How now,¹⁹ what news from her?

30**Valentine**

So please my lord, I might not be admitted,²⁰
 But from her handmaid do return this answer:

10. Swallows.

11. Value. "Pitch," a technical term from falconry meaning the highest point of flight, is an appropriately aristocratic metaphor for Orsino to use.

12. Continuing his metaphor of appetite, Orsino says, as at TLN 987-988, that love is "all as hungry as the sea, / And can digest as much," but however excellent the thing love swallows ("receiveth"), it quickly loses its value in the eyes of a never-satisfied lover.

13. Stag.

14. I.e. noblest heart, punning on "hart."

15. Plague.

16. Savage.

17. Orsino draws on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (one of Shakespeare's favorite sources); having said that he hunts a heart/hart (TLN 23 {1.1.18}), he now imagines himself the quarry, like Actaeon, who was transformed to a stag (hart) by the goddess Diana (whom he spied bathing naked, and was enamored of) and torn apart by his own savage ("fell", TLN 27 {1.1.22}) hounds. Orsino is consciously using Actaeon as an allegory, but is unconscious of the irony that Olivia will indeed turn out to be an inappropriate object of his passion. Sixteenth-century paintings and woodcuts often depict Orsino's metamorphosis in process: his human legs are visible, but his hunting hounds already attacking the upper half of his body, a hart, as Diana and her nymphs look on.

18. "To enter booted is to imply a recently completed journey or one about to be undertaken and by extension to suggest weariness or haste" (Alan C Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama 1580–1642* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], under "booted"; see also "riding" and "spurs"). Valentine's function in 1.1 as a returning messenger would thus be reinforced if he enters in haste, booted and spurred, and perhaps wearing a riding cloak. So would a sense of both the geographical and emotional distance between the two households, far enough that it may be regarded as riding distance (although not incompatible with Viola apparently being on foot in 2.2). If Orsino were also wearing boots, dressed to "go hunt" (TLN 20 {1.1.16}), his failure to do so would reinforce a sense of love overwhelming his usual habits and determination; on the other hand, if he first wears boots and spurs only when he arrives at Olivia's in 5.1, the change would reinforce for the audience a metaphorical sense of movement and development in the character, and help prepare for the transfer of his affections from Olivia to Viola.

19. Abbreviation of "how is it now?" This interjection suggests sudden energy from Orsino, who has evidently been waiting.

20. Sometimes in production Valentine is clearly still surprised at Olivia's response, which he must now report.

The element²¹ itself, till seven years' heat,²²
 Shall not behold her face at ample²³ view;
 But like a cloistress²⁴ she will veiled walk,
 35And water once a day her chamber round
 With eye-offending brine²⁵ –all this to season²⁶
 A brother's dead love,²⁷ which she would keep fresh
 And lasting in her sad remembrance.²⁸

Orsino

O she that hath a heart of that fine frame
 40To pay this debt of love but to a brother,
 How will she love, when the rich golden shaft²⁹
 Hath killed the flock of all affections else³⁰
 That live in her—when liver, brain, and heart,³¹
 These sovereign thrones, are all supplied,³² and filled
 45Her sweet perfections,³³ with one self king!
 Away before me, to sweet beds of flowers;
 Love-thoughts lie rich, when canopied with bowers.³⁴
Exeunt.

21. Here, the air (or sky), one of the "four elements" (TLN 709), and also an apparently fashionable (or "overworn") word; compare TLN 1646 and TLN 1270.

22. Summer (i.e. the heat of the seven summers).

23. Full, complete.

24. Nun (cloistered from the world and the sun).

25. Stinging tears.

26. Preserve (in "brine").

27. (a) the love her dead brother bore her, and/or (b) her love for her dead brother.

28. The meter requires the old pronunciation "rememberance."

29. Cupid's arrow of love (his lead-tipped arrow caused aversion).

30. Other feelings.

31. Three governing organs (which also control attributes of love: desire, reason, and emotion).

32. Occupied.

33. Her perfections are made complete. Punctuation and meaning are much debated. Orsino continues his praise for how Olivia will love once she is married to him; the belief that "woman receiveth perfection [= completion] by the man" (Aristotle) is significant in the play's attitude to marriage.

34. Orsino may well, as last on the stage, share the second line of the couplet with the audience rather than his courtiers.

Scene 2

50 *Enter Viola, a Captain, and Sailors [as from a shipwreck].*³⁵

Viola

What country, friends, is this?

Captain

This is Illyria,³⁶ lady.

Viola

And what should I do in Illyria?

My brother he is in Elysium.³⁷

55 Perchance³⁸ he is not drowned—what think you, sailors?

Captain

It is perchance³⁹ that you yourself were saved.

Viola

Oh, my poor brother! And so perchance⁴⁰ may he be.

Captain

True, madam, and to comfort you with chance,⁴¹

Assure your self, after our ship did split,

60 When you, and those poor number saved with you,

Hung on our driving⁴² boat,⁴³ I saw your brother,

Most provident in peril, bind himself—

Courage and hope both teaching him the practice—

To a strong mast, that lived⁴⁴ upon the sea;

35. Perhaps wet. The Elizabethan stage had standard ways of indicating shipwreck by creating storm noise, sometimes lightning, and having actors enter wet. This group has escaped by boat, and Viola, at least, has sufficient money (see TLN 68 and TLN 104), so they are not utterly destitute (as in, e.g., the Branagh film).
36. East of the Adriatic Sea, particularly what is now the Dalmatian coast; Croatia and Bosnia. The Captain's information that they have been shipwrecked in Illyria (TLN 52 {1.2.2}) seems to leave Viola at a loss. Various suppositions have been made about what images an Elizabethan audience in England might have had of the land to the east of the Adriatic Sea, what we now call Dalmatia or Croatia: a dangerous place renowned for pirates ("Notable pirate, thou salt-water thief" is Orsino's abuse of Antonio at TLN 2220 {5.1.67}); a literary setting from romance tales or the *Metamorphoses* where those thought drowned at sea may miraculously be saved; or simply a far-off place of the imagination, a bit like the sea coast of Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale*. What is important to Viola is that it is unknown, and that she has here lost her brother. Historically, Illyricum (to use the Latin name) had been in use since classical Greek times, and was well known to Renaissance cartographers (e.g., Mercator, 1578, Ortelius, 1588, and Girolamo Porro, 1598) and readers as identifying the Roman province covering most of the Balkans north of Greece, and often appearing in more recent maps to designate part or all of the territories on the eastern coast and a good distance inland of the Adriatic Sea from Macedonia almost to Venice, which controlled the coastal region (hence the Italian names in the play, despite the very English local color).
37. The classical heaven. Similarity of sound to "Illyria" emphasizes Viola's sense of the contrast of places.
38. Perhaps (see note to TLN 57).
39. By chance (see note to TLN 55).
40. (a) perhaps, and (b) by chance. "Viola uses the term to mean 'perhaps,' the Captain uses it to mean 'by chance,' and Viola then plays upon both senses" (Donno). See also note to TLN 58.
41. Possibility. The fourth use of "chance" in as many lines lightens the mood, and leads directly to Viola's increased optimism from TLN 68.
42. Driven (by the wind), drifting.
43. I.e. the ship's boat.
44. Remained afloat (a nautical term).

65Where, like Arion⁴⁵ on the dolphin's back,
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves
So long as I could see.

Viola

[*Giving him gold*] For saying so, there's gold.⁴⁶
Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope,
70Whereto thy speech serves for authority,
The like of him.⁴⁷ Know'st thou this country?⁴⁸

Captain

Ay,⁴⁹ madam, well, for I was bred and born
Not three hours' travel from this very place.

Viola

Who governs here?

75Captain

A noble duke, in nature as in name.

Viola

What is his name?

Captain

Orsino.

Viola

Orsino! I have heard my father name him.
He was a bachelor then.

80Captain

And so is now, or was so very late;⁵⁰
For but a month ago I went from hence,
And then 'twas fresh in murmur⁵¹ (as you know,
What great ones do, the less will prattle of)
That he did seek the love of fair Olivia.

85Viola

What's she?

Captain

A virtuous maid, the daughter of a count
That died some twelvemonth since, then leaving her
In the protection of his son, her brother,
Who shortly also died;⁵² for whose dear love,
90They say, she hath abjured the sight
And company of men.

45. A classical poet and musician reputed to have been rescued, after jumping overboard to escape murder, by a dolphin charmed with his music.

46. A valuable coin, or just possibly a piece of jewellery.

47. My escape opens the hope, supported by your account, that he too has escaped.

48. Both Viola and the audience need this information. Equally important, Viola now puts aside her grief and faces the unknown with energy.

49. Pronounced, as spelled in Folio, "I" (sounds like "eye").

50. Recently.

51. Rumor.

52. In the Armfield film, Viola sighs in sympathy for another woman who has lost a brother. This may be the intention of the text's "Oh" at TLN 92.

Viola

Oh, that I served that lady,
 And might not be delivered to the world
 Till I had made mine own occasion mellow,
 95What my estate is!⁵³

Captain

That were hard to compass,⁵⁴
 Because she will admit no kind of suit,⁵⁵
 No, not the duke's.

Viola

There is a fair behavior in thee, Captain;
 100And though that nature with a beauteous wall
 Doth oft close in pollution,⁵⁶ yet of thee
 I will believe thou hast a mind that suits
 With this thy fair and outward character.⁵⁷
 I prithee—and I'll pay thee bounteously—
 105Conceal me what I am,⁵⁸ and be my aid
 For such disguise as haply shall become
 The form of my intent.⁵⁹ I'll serve this duke.
 Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him—
 It may be worth thy pains, for I can sing,⁶⁰
 110And speak⁶¹ to him in many sorts⁶² of music,
 That will allow me very worth⁶³ his service.
 What else may hap,⁶⁴ to time I will commit,
 Only shape thou thy silence to my wit.⁶⁵

Captain

Be you his eunuch, and your mute⁶⁶ I'll be;
 115When my tongue blabs, then let mine eyes not see.

Viola

53. The "occasion" (business) which is not yet mature ("mellow") includes a need to confirm her status ("estate") before she is, as it were, born ("delivered") into the public world. Viola needs to know if she still has a brother as head of her family. Many editors gloss more simply as "I wish that my position ('estate') should not become known until the time is ripe" (Donno) without addressing the complexity of Viola's "estate".
54. Accomplish.
55. Petition.
56. Concern about a fair outside concealing a corrupted interior is a common Renaissance preoccupation. Compare TLN 1889-1890, TLN 2287.
57. Appearance.
58. Conceal the fact that I am a woman.
59. As may chance to suit the shape of my plan.
60. Male singers were sometimes castrated before puberty to retain a soprano voice. No further reference is made to this disguise; Viola enters Orsino's service as a page boy, with youth taken to explain her "small pipe . . . shrill and sound" (TLN 283-284).
61. Figurative use for singing or playing an instrument.
62. Kinds (possibly indicating instrumental as well as songs).
63. Which will prove me worthy of.
64. Happen, occur by chance. In production Viola sometimes speaks this line direct to the audience to emphasize the role of time and fate.
65. (a) stratagem, (b) intelligence, ingenuity.
66. (a) dumb servant in a Turkish court, sometimes attending eunuchs, (b) a silent extra in the theatre.

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I thank thee. Lead me on.

Exeunt.

Scene 3

Enter Sir Toby [booted]⁶⁷, and Maria [with a light].⁶⁸

Sir Toby

120What a plague⁶⁹ means my niece⁷⁰ to take the death of her brother thus! I am sure care's an enemy to life.

Maria

By my troth⁷¹, Sir Toby, you must come in earlier a-nights.⁷² Your cousin, my lady, takes great exceptions to your ill hours.

125**Sir Toby**

Why let her except, before excepted.⁷³

Maria

Ay, but you must confine yourself within the modest⁷⁴ limits of order.

Sir Toby

Confine? I'll confine myself no finer⁷⁵ than I am! These clothes are good
130enough to drink in, and so be
these boots too; an⁷⁶ they be not, let them hang
themselves in their own straps.⁷⁷

Maria

That quaffing and drinking will undo you. I heard my lady talk of it yesterday—and of a foolish knight that you brought in one night here, to be her wooer.

135**Sir Toby**

Who, Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

Maria

Ay, he.

Sir Toby

He's as tall⁷⁸ a man as any's in Illyria.

Maria

What's that to th'purpose?

67. A clear sign on the Elizabethan stage that Sir Toby has just arrived home by horse (cf. TLN 129-131 and note to TLN 29). Sir Toby may well be wearing a riding cloak as well. His drinking haunts are evidently widespread.

68. This scene seems to be at night; cf. TLN 122-123. At the Globe this night scene (see previous note) would need various characters to carry candles, lanterns or torches to signal the fact at an outdoor afternoon performance.

69. i.e. what in the name of the plague (a mild oath).

70. i.e. young kinswoman. Cf. "cousin" at TLN 123.

71. By my faith (a very mild oath).

72. Of a night, at night.

73. Excepting those things previously named to be excepted. Sir Toby uses the legal phrase to evade and deliberately misunderstand Olivia's displeasure ("exceptions").

74. Moderate.

75. Sir Toby slides from "confine" as "keeping within limits" to being confined by "finer" clothing. "Fine" can mean both slender and elegant.

76. If.

77. Looped bands of leather or cloth attached to the top of boots to draw them on. Perhaps the loop suggests a noose to Sir Toby; hence "hang." In production Maria is sometimes pulling off his boots at this point.

78. Valiant. Maria deliberately takes the word in its other, more usual, sense of height.

Sir Toby

Why, he has three thousand ducats⁷⁹ a year.

¹⁴⁰**Maria**

Ay, but he'll have but a year⁸⁰ in all these ducats. He's a very⁸¹ fool, and a prodigal.

Sir Toby

Fie that you'll say so! He plays o'th' viol-de-gamboys⁸², and speaks three or four languages word for word without book⁸³, and hath all the good gifts of nature.

¹⁴⁵**Maria**

He hath indeed, all most natural.⁸⁴ For besides that he's a fool, he's a great quarreler; and but that he hath the gift⁸⁵ of a coward, to allay the gust⁸⁶ he hath in quarreling, 'tis thought among the prudent he would quickly have the gift of a grave.

¹⁵⁰**Sir Toby**

By this hand, they are scoundrels and substractors⁸⁷ that say so of him. Who are they?

Maria

They that add, moreover, he's drunk nightly in your company.

Sir Toby

¹⁵⁵With drinking healths to my niece! I'll drink to her as long as there is a passage in my throat, and drink in Illyria. He's a coward and a coistrel⁸⁸ that will not drink to my niece till his brains turn o'th'toe, like a parish top.⁸⁹

¹⁶⁰*Enter Sir Andrew.*⁹⁰

^{158.1}What, wench!⁹¹ *Castiliano vulgo*⁹²; for here comes Sir Andrew Agueface⁹³.

79. Venetian currency, approximately 4 to the English pound. Thus Sir Andrew has about £750 annually, a rich income. The rich Shylock, in *The Merchant of Venice*, 1.2.53-8, cannot raise such a sum without calling on associates.
80. He'll squander his income (and sell all the land which produces it) within a year.
81. Real, true.
82. Viol da gamba, held between the legs (Italian *gamba*) like the modern cello, and therefore frequently, as here, with an obscene connotation. The viol da gamba has more strings than a cello, and playing a melody on it was a minimum accomplishment expected of any gentleman. In 1.1 Viola was confident her "many sorts of music" (TLN 110) would help admit her to Orsino's service.
83. From memory. The ambiguity of this praise is reinforced by Sir Andrew's failure with the simplest French at TLN 205. Compare TLN 1283-1285.
84. Playing on Sir Toby's "all" as "almost" (so Folio) and "natural" (an idiot).
85. (a) talent, (b) present. So also TLN 149.
86. Gusto, relish.
87. Sir Toby's drunken error for "detractors"; Maria's "add" (TLN 152) puns on "subtract."
88. Knave, base fellow.
89. A large version of a child's spinning top, for public use (sometimes "town top"), about which little is known. In Fletcher and Massinger's *Thierry and Theodoret* we find a suggestion that children might still use it: "a boy of twelve / Should scourge him hither like a Parish Top, / And make him dance before you" (Act II). The point is the spinning: "Spins like the parish top" (Ben Jonson, *The New Inn*, II).
90. The exact moment of his entry is for the actors to decide, but the size of the Elizabethan stage made it possible for characters already on stage to comment on the approach of another character, as here.
91. "Sir Toby may be seeking Maria's approval for his drinking resolution, responding to some reproof of his deportment, or warning her of Sir Andrew's approach" (Donno).
92. Obscure. Perhaps, seeing Sir Andrew, "speak of the devil [and he will appear]"; or possibly a cant drinking cry with no meaning. A devil had adopted the name Castiliano (i.e. one from Castile) in a recent play, and *vulgo* means "in the common tongue."
93. Presumably a rude play on the significance of Sir Andrew's name.

Sir Andrew

Sir Toby Belch! How now, Sir Toby Belch!

Sir Toby

Sweet Sir Andrew!

Sir Andrew

Bless you, fair shrew⁹⁴.

Maria

And you too, sir.

¹⁶⁵**Sir Toby**

Accost⁹⁵, Sir Andrew, accost!

Sir Andrew

What's that?

Sir Toby

My niece's chambermaid.⁹⁶

Sir Andrew

Good Mistress Accost, I desire better acquaintance.

Maria

My name is Mary, sir.

¹⁷⁰**Sir Andrew**

Good Mistress Mary Accost—

Sir Toby

[*Aside*⁹⁷ to Sir Andrew] You mistake, knight. "Accost" is front⁹⁸ her, board⁹⁹ her, woo her, assail¹⁰⁰ her.

Sir Andrew

[*Aside to Sir Toby, indicating audience*] By my troth, I would not undertake¹⁰¹ her in this company¹⁰². Is that the meaning of "accost"?

¹⁷⁵**Maria**

Fare you well, gentlemen.

Sir Toby

[*Aside to Sir Andrew*] An thou let part so¹⁰³, Sir Andrew, would thou might'st never draw sword¹⁰⁴ again.

94. Perhaps an inadvertent reference to (a) an ill-tempered woman, when he intends (b) a shrew-mouse. This is the first reference to Maria's small stature. Compare the ironic "giant" at TLN 498).
95. Hail, go alongside (a nautical term, used figuratively here to mean "make up to"). When Sir Andrew mistakes "Accost" for Maria's name, Sir Toby expands on the nautical and sexual meanings at TLN 171-172.
96. It is unclear whether Sir Toby deliberately misleads Sir Andrew into thinking Maria a menial servant, or if the word at this time could mean "waiting gentlewoman," which she clearly is.
97. Most likely Sir Toby sets up Maria, fully confident she can cope with Sir Andrew's foolishness; but it is possible to play the scene with Maria allowed to hear the set-up.
98. (a) confront (military), (b) woo.
99. Come alongside (nautical).
100. (a) assault (military), (b) attempt to seduce.
101. Enter into combat with (here with a sexual implication).
102. Sir Andrew jokingly acknowledges the presence of the theatre audience.
103. If you allow her to leave "unaccosted." Sir Toby now uses the second person singular "thou" for the rest of the play, a familiarity which Sir Andrew does not attempt to copy.
104. Cease to be a gentleman (compare "forswear to wear iron," TLN 1770). Sir Andrew's repetition in the next line, since it refers to her action rather than his, is comically foolish.

Sir Andrew

An you part so, mistress, I would I might never draw sword again! Fair lady,
180do you think you have fools in hand?¹⁰⁵

Maria

Sir, I have not you by th'hand.

Sir Andrew

Marry¹⁰⁶, but you shall have, and here's my hand.

Maria

[*Taking his hand*] Now sir, thought is free¹⁰⁷. I pray you, bring your hand to
th'buttery bar, and let it drink¹⁰⁸.

¹⁸⁵**Sir Andrew**

Wherefore¹⁰⁹, sweetheart? What's your metaphor?

Maria

It's dry,¹¹⁰ sir.

Sir Andrew

Why, I think so. I am not such an ass but I can keep my hand dry¹¹¹. But what's
your jest?

¹⁹⁰**Maria**

A dry jest¹¹², sir.

Sir Andrew

Are you full of them?

Maria

Ay, sir, I have them at my fingers' ends¹¹³. [*Letting go his hand*] Marry, now I
let go your hand, I am barren¹¹⁴.

Exit Maria.

Sir Toby

195O knight, thou lack'st¹¹⁵ a cup of canary¹¹⁶. [*Pouring wine*] When did I see thee
so put down?¹¹⁷

Sir Andrew

Never in your life, I think, unless you see canary put me down. Methinks

105. To deal with. Maria deliberately takes him literally in her reply.

106. By (the Virgin) Mary (a mild oath).

107. I may think what I like (proverbial; here, an equivalent of the modern "you said it, not me").

108. Maria has taken the hand he offered, and in many performances brings it to her breasts (see "buttery bar," next note), usually to Sir Andrew's consternation. In productions such as Armfield's film which avoid this easy laugh, Sir Andrew's bewilderment ("what's your jest?," TLN 189) is the greater.

109. Why? Sir Andrew has not understood the "metaphor."

110. (a) thirsty, (b) sexually insufficient (a moist hand was a sign of amorousness and fertility). Cf. Antony and Cleopatra TLN 125-131, and Othello TLN 2177-2187.

111. Generally taken to refer to the proverb "Fools have wit enough to come in out of the rain"; but "hand" is specific, and Sir Andrew may simply be proud of not splashing himself when he "make[s] water" (TLN 238).

112. (a) insipid (compare TLN 333), (b) ironical, (c) Sir Andrew's dry hand (which she still holds).

113. (a) always ready, (b) in my hand (which she is about to "let go").

114. (a) unproductive, (b) empty of jests (having let go of Sir Andrew's hand which made her "full of them").

115. "lack'st" probably here means "stand in need of," though in production Sir Toby often refills a glass already in use.

116. A sweet wine originally from the Canary Islands.

117. (a) defeated in repartee, (b) rendered legless (from drink).

sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian¹¹⁸ or an ordinary man¹¹⁹ has. But I
200am a great eater of beef¹²⁰, and I believe that does harm to my wit.

Sir Toby

No question.

Sir Andrew

An I thought that, I'd forswear it. I'll ride home tomorrow, Sir Toby.

Sir Toby

Pourquoi¹²¹, my dear knight?

²⁰⁵**Sir Andrew**

What is *pourquoi*? "Do," or "not do"? I would I had bestowed that time in
the tongues¹²² that I have in fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting. O had I but
followed the arts!

Sir Toby

Then hadst thou had an excellent head of hair.

²¹⁰**Sir Andrew**

Why, would that have mended my hair?

Sir Toby

Past question, for thou see'st it will not curl by nature¹²³.

Sir Andrew

But it becomes me well enough, dost not?

Sir Toby

Excellent! It hangs like flax on a distaff¹²⁴; and I hope to see a housewife take
thee between her legs, and spin¹²⁵ it off.

²¹⁵**Sir Andrew**

Faith, I'll home tomorrow, Sir Toby. Your niece will not be seen, or if she be,
it's four to one she'll none of me¹²⁶. The count¹²⁷ himself here hard by woos her.

Sir Toby

She'll none o'th'count. She'll not match above her degree, neither in estate,
220years¹²⁸, nor wit; I have heard her swear't. Tut, there's life in't, man.

Sir Andrew

I'll stay a month longer. I am a fellow o'th' strangest mind i'th'world. I
delight in masques and revels¹²⁹ sometimes altogether.

118. i.e. "an ordinary man."

119. (a) typical, (b) one who eats at an "ordinary" (a cheap fixed price eating house). Hence Sir Andrew's reference to beef.

120. Believed to dull the brain, though possibly to instil valor.

121. Why (French). See TLN 144.

122. (a) foreign languages (Sir Andrew's meaning), (b) tongs for curling hair (Sir Toby's meaning). Pronunciation was the same.

123. In comparison to "arts" (TLN 208).

124. Sir Andrew is compared to the thin staff held upright between the knees to hold the straw-colored strands of flax ready for spinning.

125. A housewife would spin flax, but the pronunciation "hussif" also suggests "hussy" or prostitute, who might take Sir Andrew between her
legs and give him venereal disease, leading to his hair falling out.

126. (she'll have) nothing to do with me.

127. Orsino, earlier described as a duke. In the next speech Sir Toby says Olivia (a countess) will not marry "above her degree," so
Shakespeare is still thinking of Orsino as of higher rank than Olivia.

128. Implies that Orsino is older, but that Sir Andrew is much the same age as Olivia.

129. Courtly presentations in which some members of the audience joined in the dancing.

Sir Toby

Art thou good at these kickshawses¹³⁰, knight?

225**Sir Andrew**

As any man in Illyria, whatsoever he be, under the degree of my betters¹³¹; and yet I will not compare with an old man¹³².

Sir Toby

What is thy excellence in a galliard¹³³, knight?

Sir Andrew

Faith, I can cut a caper¹³⁴.

[*He dances.*]

230**Sir Toby**

And I can cut the mutton¹³⁵ to it.

Sir Andrew

And I think I have the back-trick¹³⁶ simply as strong as any man in Illyria.

[*He demonstrates.*]

Sir Toby

Wherefore are these things hid? Wherefore have these gifts a curtain before 235'em? Are they like to take dust, like Mistress Moll's picture?¹³⁷ Why dost thou not go to church in a galliard, and come home in a coranto¹³⁸? My very walk should be a jig¹³⁹; I would not so much as make water but in a cinquepace¹⁴⁰! 240What dost thou mean! Is it a world to hide virtues in? I did think by the excellent constitution of thy leg, it was formed under the star of a galliard.¹⁴¹

Sir Andrew

130. Trifles, (little) somethings (French, *quelque choses*).

131. "betters" = of higher rank, but the entire phrase is a foolish backtracking from meaning. "The whole phrase is probably as absurd as Verges' claim to be 'as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honestier than I'" (Arden 2 *Much Ado About Nothing*, TLN 1609-1610).

132. Perhaps "experienced," or a clumsy compliment to the older Sir Toby, or simply a further exception from comparison.

133. A lively dance in triple time with a leap, or "caper" after the fourth step.

134. Sir Toby's encouragement of Sir Andrew to dance draws on a vocabulary familiar to Elizabethans, including reference to the coranto, jig, and cinquepace. "What is thy excellence in a galliard," he asks at TLN 228 {1.3.117} referring to a lively dance of "four movements [steps], then a saut majeur. . . ." (Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchésographie* [Langres: 1589], transl Cyril W. Beaumont [London: C. W. Beaumont, 1925], p. 80). The saut majeur ("high leap") is sometimes translated as "caper" (see TLN 229), and certainly the general English sense of "caper" (French *capriole*) is "a frolicsome leap"; but Arbeau has a more technical definition: "there are many dancers so agile that, in making the saut majeur, they move their legs in the air, and this shaking is called capriole. . . ." Possibly Sir Andrew demonstrates at this point, leaping high and scissoring his long thin legs back and forth several times before landing. But when he boasts about his "back-trick" we are less certain what he means. A 1606 play, *The Return from Parnassus*, refers in 2.6 to a "back-caper," and this is what Cesare Negri's *Nuove Inventioni di Balli*, describes as a salto (again, a "leap") that finishes with the leg behind. It is no wonder Sir Toby ends the scene exhorting Sir Andrew to "caper. . . higher!" (TLN 248-249 {1.3.139}).

135. Sir Toby quibbles on "cut," and on "caper" as a pickle to eat with "mutton" (which may also suggest "prostitute").

136. Probably a "back-caper" (*OED*), possibly with a sexual quibble, given "mutton," and the association of a strong back with male sexual capacity. Amoretto's page in *The Return from Parnassus* (1606, D3r [2.6]) comments on his master's "crosspoint back-caper" in a galliard, presumably one or more backwards leaping steps in the dance.

137. Paintings were often protected by curtains. There may be a lost topical reference to a particular Mary (Moll, Mall).

138. A fast "running" (Italian) dance.

139. Another fast dance.

140. A dance of "five steps" (French). If Sir Toby mimes urinating ("make water") while advancing in a cinquepace, it is a bizarre sight indeed. He also quibbles on "sink" (so spelled in Folio) = sewer.

141. Astrology favorable to dancing. In *Much Ado About Nothing* Beatrice says "there was a star danced, and under that was I born" to explain her birth at a "merry hour" (TLN 732, TLN 730).

Ay, 'tis strong, and it does indifferent¹⁴² well in a flame-colored¹⁴³ stock. Shall we set about some revels?

Sir Toby

245 What shall we do else? Were we not born under Taurus!

Sir Andrew

Taurus?¹⁴⁴ That's sides and heart.

Sir Toby

No, sir, it is legs and thighs. Let me see thee caper.

[Sir Andrew dances.]

Ha, higher! Ha, ha, excellent!

Exeunt.

142. Moderately.

143. In Folio Sir Andrew's stocking ("stock") is "dam'd colored," but the profane intensifier seems unlikely. Other suggested emendations of this presumed compositorial misreading include "dun-," "lemon-" or "divers-" colored.

144. Taurus is the sign of the zodiac that governs the neck. Both men are wrong, Sir Toby perhaps deliberately. The twelve signs of the zodiac were thought to govern individual health and personality according to both when someone was born and the current date. Various signs were believed to be especially associated with particular parts of the body, as contemporary almanac woodcuts illustrate. Phillip Stubbes's *Anatomy of Abuses* (1583) provides a critical contemporary view: So far infatuate are these busy-headed astronomers, and curious searching astrologers, that they attribute every part of man's body to one particular sign or planet. And therefore to Aries they have assigned the government of the head and face. To Taurus the neck and throat. To Gemini the shoulders, the armes, and the hands. To Leo the heart and back. To Cancer the breast, stomach, and lungs. To Libra the reins [kidneys] and loins. To Virgo the guts and belly. To Scorpio the privy parts and bladder. To Sagittarius the thighs. To Capricorn the knees. To Aquarius the legs. To Pisces the feet. And thus they doe bear the world in hand that the whole body of man, both intern and extern, within and without, is ruled and governed by their signs, by stars and planets, not by God only. Because the astrological information was constant, the same woodcut would appear year after year in annual almanacs that listed holy days in the church calendar, dates for planting crops or seeking medical attention, astrological calculations, weather forecasts, and other useful information, so the image and its associated signs of the zodiac was known to everyone. Sir Toby justifies setting about revels by saying he and Sir Andrew were "born under Taurus" (TLN 244–5 {1.3.135–6}). Taurus (the Bull), as woodcuts show, governs the neck, so perhaps Sir Toby is thinking about drinking. (Arden 2 cites Lyly, *Galathea* 3.3.58, in which an astronomer advises, "Then the Bull for the throat.") Sir Andrew, however, mistakenly identifies Taurus with "sides and heart", so Sir Toby (mis-) corrects him to "legs and thighs" (TLN 246–7 {1.3.137–8}), but there is no way of knowing whether Sir Toby's mistake is deliberate (which seems likely, since his first use of Taurus was entirely appropriate) or a further error. Either way, the choice of "legs and thighs" encourages Sir Andrew to "caper . . . higher" (TLN 248 {1.3.139}) as they leave.

Scene 4

250 *Enter Valentine, and Viola in man's attire*¹⁴⁵ [*as Cesario*].

Valentine

If the Duke continue these favors towards you, Cesario, you are like to be much advanced. He hath known you but three days¹⁴⁶, and already you are no stranger.

Viola

255 You either fear his humor¹⁴⁷, or my negligence, that you call in question the continuance of his love. Is he inconstant, sir, in his favors?

Valentine

No, believe me.

Enter Orsino, Curio, and Attendants.

Viola

I thank you. Here comes the count¹⁴⁸.

Orsino

Who saw Cesario, ho?

260 **Viola**

On your attendance, my lord, here.

Orsino

[To the Courtiers] Stand you awhile aloof. *[All but Viola stand apart.]*

Cesario,

Thou know'st no less but all; I have unclasped

To thee the book even of my secret soul.

Therefore, good youth, address thy gait¹⁴⁹ unto her,

265 Be not denied access¹⁵⁰, stand at her doors,

And tell them, there thy fixèd foot shall grow¹⁵¹

Till thou have audience.

Viola

Sure, my noble lord,

If she be so abandoned to her sorrow

270 As it is spoke, she never will admit me.

Orsino

Be clamorous, and leap all civil bounds,¹⁵²

Rather than make unprofited return.

145. Viola may also appear to have cropped her hair (i.e. the actor may have had a long wig for 1.2). Various options are open as to how, and how much, to play Viola's difficulties, embarrassments or pleasures in impersonating the opposite sex.

146. For the double time scheme, see TLN 2246-2254.

147. Capriciousness.

148. In the first line of this scene "Duke"; see note to TLN 217.

149. Direct your steps.

150. Stressed on the second syllable.

151. Be planted.

152. Usual polite limits.

Viola

Say I do speak with her, my lord, what then?

Orsino

O then unfold the passion of my love,
 275 Surprise¹⁵³ her with discourse of my dear¹⁵⁴ faith;
 It shall become thee well to act my woes,
 She will attend¹⁵⁵ it better in thy youth,
 Than in a nuncio's¹⁵⁶ [*Indicating Valentine*] of more grave aspect¹⁵⁷.

Viola

I think not so, my lord.

Orsino

280 Dear lad, believe it;
 For they shall yet belie thy happy years¹⁵⁸
 That say thou art a man. Diana's lip
 Is not more smooth, and rubious¹⁵⁹; thy small pipe¹⁶⁰
 Is as the maiden's organ, shrill, and sound¹⁶¹;
 285 And all is semblative¹⁶² a woman's part¹⁶³.
 I know thy constellation¹⁶⁴ is right apt
 For this affair. [*To the Courtiers*] Some four or five attend him—
 All if you will, for I myself am best
 When least in company. Prosper well in this,
 290 And thou shalt live as freely as thy lord
 To call his fortunes thine¹⁶⁵.

Viola

I'll do my best
 To woo your lady.
 [*Exit Orsino.*]
 [*To the audience*] Yet a barful strife¹⁶⁶;
 Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife.
Exeunt [*Viola, Courtiers, and Attendants*].

153. Capture by surprise attack.

154. Loving.

155. Attend to.

156. Messenger's.

157. Serious expression, with implication of age. Accent is on the second syllable of "aspect."

158. "misrepresent your fortunate youthfulness" (Arden 2).

159. Ruby-colored (a Shakespearean coinage).

160. High voice.

161. High-pitched and unbroken.

162. Like.

163. (a) nature, (b) theatrical role. Ironically, Orsino thinks Cesario well-fitted to play a woman in the theatre, as boys did at the time.

164. Character, as determined by the configuration of the "stars" (i.e. planets) at one's birth. Cf. TLN 241.

165. Either (a) be as free as your lord is to control his fortune, or (b) live in the same freedom as your lord, and share his fortune.

166. (internal) conflict full of obstacles.

Scene 5

*Enter Maria, and Clown*¹⁶⁷.

Maria

Nay, either tell me where thou hast been, or I will not open my lips so wide as a bristle may enter, in way of thy excuse. My lady will hang thee¹⁶⁸ for thy absence.

³⁰⁰**Clown**

Let her hang me; he that is well hanged in this world needs to fear no colors¹⁶⁹.

Maria

Make that good.¹⁷⁰

Clown

He shall see none to fear!

Maria

³⁰⁵A good lenten¹⁷¹ answer. I can tell thee where that saying was born, of "I fear no colors."

Clown

Where, good Mistress Mary?

Maria

In the wars¹⁷²; and that may you be bold to say in your foolery.

Clown

³¹⁰Well, God give them wisdom that have it¹⁷³; and those that are fools, let them use their talents¹⁷⁴.

Maria

Yet you will be hanged for being so long absent; or to be turned away¹⁷⁵—is not that as good as a hanging to you?

Clown

167. The Clown was almost certainly played by Robert Armin. Armin joined the Lord Chamberlain's men as their clown in 1599, replacing Will Kemp, who was best known for extemporaneous jests, and for dancing and jigs; he even danced from London to Norwich for a dare (seen in the well-known title-page woodcut to his Kemp's Nine Days' Wonder [London, 1600]). Armin was better known for his singing, which may explain the number of songs in Twelfth Night, and perhaps why Viola's intention to offer her services as a singer in Orsino's court never materializes. He also specialized in ventriloquistic double acts such as his portrayal of both himself and "Sir Topaz" in 4.2. A similar scene for himself is written into one of his own plays, Two Maids of More-clacke (London, 1609). The title-page woodcut shows Armin himself in role, but wearing the long coat of an idiot, whereas he probably played Feste (also a "natural" fool) in the traditional jester's motley and cockscomb (see note to TLN 717). See Gurr 1992, pp. 84–90, C. S. Felver, Robert Armin, Shakespeare's Fool, (Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 1961), and David Wiles, Shakespeare's Clown (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987). The woodcut of Kemp's jig to Norwich (including a servant playing on pipe and tabor as at the start of 3.1) is available at TLN 1213.

168. An exaggeration; whipping was the standard punishment for fools.

169. Need not fear the battle flags (of any enemy). The Clown puns on "collars" = noose for hanging.

170. Explain the logic of that.

171. Dull, thin (like food during Lent, a period of fasting).

172. See TLN 301 and note.

173. Apparently nonsensical (since those who have wisdom are not in need of it); Given "God," and "talents" (professional skills), probably also a mock-religious admonition (compare Sir Topaz in 4.2) referring to the parable of the talents (Matthew 25: 14-29).

174. (a) professional skills, (b) unit of weight of gold or silver; hence, money. See Matthew 25: 14-29.

175. Dismissed (with a pun on "turned off" = hanged).

315 Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage; and for turning away, let
summer bear it out¹⁷⁶.

Maria

You are resolute, then?

Clown

Not so neither, but I am resolved on two points¹⁷⁷ —

Maria

That if one break, the other will hold; or if both break, your gaskins¹⁷⁸ fall!

320 **Clown**

Apt in good faith, very apt. Well, go thy way¹⁷⁹; if Sir Toby would leave
drinking, thou wert as witty a piece of Eve's flesh¹⁸⁰ as any in Illyria.

Maria

325 Peace,¹⁸¹ you rogue, no more o'that!

*Enter Lady Olivia, with Malvolio [and Gentlemen] [and Ladies]*¹⁸².

Here comes my lady. Make your excuse wisely, you were best.

Clown

[To the audience] Wit¹⁸³, an't be thy will, put me into good fooling! Those wits
that think they have thee, do very oft prove fools; and I, that am sure I lack
thee, may pass for a wise man. For what says Quinapalus?¹⁸⁴ "Better a witty
330 fool, than a foolish wit." *[To Olivia]* God bless thee, lady!

Olivia

[To the Gentlemen] Take the fool away.

Clown

Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the lady.

Olivia

Go to¹⁸⁵, y'are a dry¹⁸⁶ fool; I'll no more of you. Besides, you grow dishonest¹⁸⁷.

335 **Clown**

Two faults, madonna¹⁸⁸, that drink and good counsel will amend: for give the
dry fool drink, then is the fool not dry. Bid the dishonest man mend himself¹⁸⁹:
if he mend, he is no longer dishonest; if he cannot, let the botcher mend him.

176. Make it (i.e. dismissal) enduring (because summer will make food easy to find and shelter unnecessary).

177. (a) matters, (b) laces with metal "points" to tie breeches ("gaskins") up to the doublet. The Clown is setting up the well-worn joke, but Maria beats him to the punch line.

178. Wide knee-length slops (breeches).

179. Do things in your own manner, go about your business.

180. "Eve's flesh" = woman "Except for the conditional about Sir Toby's drinking, he implies that Maria and Sir Toby would make a good match and sexual partnership" (Donno).

181. Maria stops the Clown either to prevent further comment on Sir Toby, or because she sees Olivia entering.

182. Like Orsino, Olivia is well attended. She is likely to be in mourning black. Olivia is attended by both men and women. The Clown addresses "fellows" (TLN 332) and "gentlemen" (TLN 364); and since Viola cannot distinguish Olivia among the "Good beauties" (TLN 468), probably Maria is not the only waiting woman. The extent to which Olivia's household is also in mourning will be significant. It is possible, but unlikely, that a state (canopied throne) may be placed on stage (compare note to TLN 2-3).

183. Intelligence, wisdom (in contrast to "will" = desire).

184. A philosopher probably invented on the spot; compare "Pigrogromitus" (TLN 723)

185. An expression of impatience, like "Come, come."

186. Insipid. The Clown, like Maria earlier (TLN 187), plays on both meanings.

187. Dishonorable (because absent).

188. My lady (Italian), used often by the Clown as an endearment.

189. (a) amend, reform, (b) repair.

340Anything that's mended is but patched¹⁹⁰; virtue that transgresses is but
 patched with sin, and sin that amends is but patched with virtue. If that this
 simple syllogism¹⁹¹ will serve, so; if it will not, what remedy? As there is no
 true cuckold but calamity, so beauty's a flower. The lady bade¹⁹² take away the
 345fool,¹⁹³ therefore I say again, take her away.

Olivia

Sir, I bade them take away you.

Clown

Misprision¹⁹⁴ in the highest degree! Lady, *cucullus non facit monachum*¹⁹⁵—that's
 as much to say, as "I wear not motley¹⁹⁶ in my brain." Good madonna, give me
 350leave to prove you a fool.

Olivia

Can you do it?

Clown

Dexteriously¹⁹⁷, good madonna.

Olivia

Make your proof.

Clown

355I must catechize¹⁹⁸ you for it, madonna. Good my mouse of virtue¹⁹⁹, answer me.

Olivia

Well sir, for want of other idleness²⁰⁰, I'll bide²⁰¹ your proof.

Clown

Good madonna, why mourn'st thou?

Olivia

Good fool, for my brother's death.

360**Clown**

I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

Olivia

I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

Clown

190. (a) repaired, (b) ? clothed in the motley of a jester.

191. A proposition in logic; in this case the conclusion (that sin and virtue are much the same) is nonsense, but the implication that all life is a mixture of the two is important.

192. Pronounced "bad."

193. Olivia, currently "wedded to calamity" (*Romeo and Juliet*, TLN 1801), will eventually be unfaithful to calamity (i.e. will cheer up); but her beauty, like a flower, will fade (compare TLN 747-752 and TLN 926-929; she would do better to love and marry now). Therefore to insist on seven years' mourning is folly.

194. (a) misunderstanding, (b) action wrong in law (intensified by "in the highest degree").

195. (Wearing) a cowl does not make (a man) a monk (Latin proverb). The Clown may point to his own fool's cap, traditionally patterned on a monk's cowl with long ears and bells, and sometimes a coxcomb, added.

196. The particolored garment and cap worn by professional jesters, and emblematically signalling folly.

197. Dexterously (an Elizabethan form).

198. Question (as a priest teaches religious belief by question and answer). He possibly puts on his Sir Topaz voice.

199. My good virtuous mouse. For "mouse" as an endearment, see *Hamlet*: "tempt you again to bed, / Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse" (TLN 2558-2559).

200. Pastime (not pejorative).

201. (a) abide, await, (b) endure.

The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul, being in heaven.
 [To the Gentlemen] Take away the fool, gentlemen.

365 **Olivia**

What think you of this fool, Malvolio? Doth he not mend?²⁰²

Malvolio

Yes,²⁰³ and shall do, till the pangs of death shake him: infirmity, that decays the wise, doth ever make the better fool.

370 **Clown**

God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity, for the better increasing your folly: Sir Toby will be sworn that I am no fox²⁰⁴, but he will not pass²⁰⁵ his word for twopence²⁰⁶ that you are no fool.

Olivia

How say you to that, Malvolio?

375 **Malvolio**

I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren²⁰⁷ rascal. I saw him put down²⁰⁸ the other day with an ordinary²⁰⁹ fool, that has no more brain than a stone²¹⁰. Look you now, he's out of his guard²¹¹ already. Unless you laugh and minister occasion²¹² to him, he is gagged. I protest I take these wise men²¹³, that crow²¹⁴ so at these set²¹⁵ kind of fools, no better than the fools' zanies²¹⁶.

Olivia

Oh, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered²¹⁷ appetite. To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition²¹⁸, is to take those things for bird-bolts²¹⁹ that you deem cannon bullets. There is no slander in an allowed²²⁰ fool, though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet man²²¹, though he do nothing but reprove.

202. Improve. Evidently the Clown's catechism has led Olivia to "laugh" (TLN 379), or at least to accept his joking criticism. Malvolio interprets improvement in a fool as an increase in folly.

203. In performance, this single reluctant first word can reveal so much of Malvolio's antipathy to the Clown as to raise a laugh.

204. i.e. not crafty (in antithesis to "fool").

205. Pledge.

206. Pronounced, prior to British decimal coinage in 1971, "tuppence."

207. Empty (of jests; cf. TLN 193).

208. Defeated in repartee (cf. TLN 195).

209. (a) undistinguished, (b) who performs at an eating house ("ordinary"; cf. TLN 198).

210. Probably alluding to Stone, a popular "tavern fool" (compare "ordinary fool").

211. *OED* defines as "off guard," but Malvolio seems to be observing ("Look you now") the Clown abandoning the contest. Perhaps "shrugging his shoulders, or turning away" (Wilson).

212. Supply opportunities (as a comedy straight man).

213. Persons of good judgement. Originally one word (as in Folio), and not necessarily gender specific; therefore perhaps applying, rudely, to Olivia.

214. Laugh loudly (as perhaps Olivia has done).

215. Not spontaneous (possibly implying "memorized," or simply "formulaic." Compare *As You Like It*, TLN 989-9902: "railed . . . in good terms, / In good set terms, and yet a motley fool").

216. Subordinate comic performers who assist the act (from the Italian zanni, comic servants in the commedia dell'arte).

217. Diseased

218. Magnanimous, noble.

219. Blunt arrows or quarrels for shooting birds.

220. Licensed, allowed to jest. Cf. *King Lear*, TLN 712: "your all-licensed fool."

221. Presumably with reference to Malvolio. In production Olivia has been known to insist they shake hands.

Clown

390 Now Mercury endue thee with leasing²²², for thou speak'st well of fools.

Enter Maria.

Maria

Madam, there is at the gate a young gentleman much desires to speak with you.

Olivia

From the Count Orsino, is it?

Maria

I know not, madam. 'Tis a fair young man, and well attended²²³.

Olivia

Who of my people hold him in delay?

Maria

Sir Toby, madam, your kinsman.

Olivia

400 Fetch him off, I pray you, he speaks nothing but madman²²⁴. Fie on him!

[Exit Maria.]

Go you, Malvolio; if it be a suit from the count, I am sick, or not at home.

What you will, to dismiss it.

Exit Malvolio.

Now you see, sir, how your fooling grows old²²⁵, and people dislike it.

Clown

Thou hast spoke for us, madonna, as if thy eldest son should be a fool;
whose skull Jove cram with brains, for—

Enter Sir Toby [drunk].

here he comes—²²⁶ one of thy kin has a most weak pia mater²²⁷.

Olivia

410 By mine honor, half drunk. What is he at the gate, cousin?²²⁸

Sir Toby

A gentleman.

Olivia

A gentleman? What gentleman?

Sir Toby

'Tis a gentleman here—*[belching]* a plague o' these pickle herring²²⁹! *[To Clown]* How now, sot²³⁰!

222. The god of cheating give you the gift of lying ("leasing") (which you will need if you praise fools).

223. See TLN 287-288.

224. i.e. madman's talk.

225. Stale

226. The punctuation adopted here emphasizes the difference between Olivia's potential "eldest son," and another of her "kin" whom the Clown sees approaching. The Folio punctuation makes no sense, and probably results from compositorial error related to squeezing the entry direction for Sir Toby into limited space. An alternative emendation, requiring only the insertion of a comma after "comes," would read "has" as "who has."

227. Brain (physiologically, an enclosing membrane).

228. Olivia does not call her "kinsman" (TLN 398l) uncle; see TLN 119.

229. In the Armfield film, this weak attempt to blame on food the effects of drink leads the Clown to laugh, and thus draws Sir Toby's attention.

230. (a) fool, (b) drunkard.

415 **Clown**

Good Sir Toby!

Olivia

Cousin, cousin, how have you come so early by this lethargy²³¹?

Sir Toby

Lechery? I defy lechery! There's one at the gate.

420 **Olivia**

Ay, marry, what is he?

Sir Toby

Let him be the devil an he will, I care not; give me faith, say I. Well, it's all one²³².

Exit.

Olivia

What's a drunken man like, fool?

Clown

425 Like a drowned man, a fool, and a madman: one draught²³³ above heat²³⁴ makes him a fool, the second mads him, and a third drowns him.

Olivia

Go thou and seek the coroner, and let him sit²³⁵ o' my coz, for he's in the third degree of drink: he's drowned. Go look after him.

430 **Clown**

He is but mad yet, madonna, and the fool shall look to the madman.

[Exit.]

Enter Malvolio.

Malvolio

Madam, yond young fellow swears he will speak with you. I told him you
435 were sick; he takes on him to understand so much, and therefore comes to speak with you. I told him you were asleep; he seems to have a foreknowledge of that too, and therefore comes to speak with you. What is to be said to him, lady? He's fortified against any denial.

440 **Olivia**

Tell him he shall not²³⁶ speak with me.

Malvolio

He has been told so; and he says he'll stand at your door like a sheriff's post²³⁷, and be the supporter²³⁸ to a bench, but he'll speak with you.

Olivia

What kind o' man is he?

231. Torpor. This indicates the symptoms of Sir Toby's drunkenness, and perhaps why he mishears the word.

232. It doesn't matter (a phrase repeated elsewhere in the play).

233. Drink.

234. i.e. above normal body temperature (wine was thought to heat the blood).

235. Convene his court (to pass judgement).

236. Olivia uses the emphatic form (rather than the simple "will not").

237. One of the pair of large painted posts set up by the door of a sheriff, probably for displaying public notices.

238. Support, prop.

⁴⁴⁵**Malvolio**

Why, of mankind²³⁹.

Olivia

What manner of man?

Malvolio

Of very ill manner: he'll speak with you, will you or no.

Olivia

Of what personage and years is he?

⁴⁵⁰**Malvolio**

Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy: as a squash²⁴⁰ is before 'tis a peascod, or a codling²⁴¹ when 'tis almost an apple. 'Tis with him in standing water²⁴² between boy and man. He is very well-favored²⁴³, and he ⁴⁵⁵speaks very shrewishly²⁴⁴; one would think his mother's milk were scarce out of him.

Olivia

Let him approach.²⁴⁵ Call in my gentlewoman.

Malvolio

[Calling offstage] Gentlewoman, my lady calls.

Exit.

Enter Maria.

Olivia

Give me my veil. Come, throw it o'er my face.

[She is veiled.]

⁴⁶⁰We'll once more hear Orsino's embassy.

*Enter Viola*²⁴⁶ *[as Cesario].*

Viola

The honorable lady of the house, which is she?²⁴⁷

Olivia

Speak to me, I shall answer for her²⁴⁸. Your will?

Viola

⁴⁶⁵Most radiant, exquisite, and unmatchable beauty—*[To Maria or a*

239. I.e. ordinary. Malvolio's apparent quibbles, here and at TLN 457 ("manner"), which require Olivia to become ever more specific in her questions, may result from his confusion (or irritation) about Viola, and can also be played as Malvolio showing off his wit now that the Clown has gone.

240. Immature pea-pod ("peascod").

241. Immature "apple."

242. At the turn of the tide, between ebb and flow.

243. Good-looking

244. Sharply (but also perhaps "shrill," as at TLN 284).

245. This decision is likely to surprise, possibly irritate, Malvolio.

246. In original staging she may have worn riding boots and spurs here and in other scenes with Olivia to indicate arrival from a distance; see note to TLN 29.

247. Viola may or may not be in real uncertainty. In production, sometimes Maria and other ladies also wear veils, producing comic consternation in Viola. Olivia and Maria have even changed places several times to confuse Viola. However, it is possible Olivia alone is veiled, and Viola either (a) is being deliberately provocative, or (b) wants to ensure Olivia is not a deputy (see next note).

248. Deliberate equivocation: (a) act as her deputy, or (b) reply for myself.

*Gentleman*²⁴⁹ I pray you tell me if this be the lady of the house, for I never saw her. I would be loath to cast away my speech; for besides that it is excellently well penned²⁵⁰, I have taken great pains to con²⁵¹ it. [*Olivia and others laugh.*] Good beauties²⁵², let me sustain²⁵³ no scorn; I am very comptible,²⁵⁴
470 even to the least sinister usage.

Olivia

Whence came you, sir?

Viola

I can say little more than I have studied, and that question's out of my part²⁵⁵. Good gentle one, give me modest²⁵⁶ assurance if you be the lady of the house,
475 that I may proceed in my speech.

Olivia

Are you a comedian?²⁵⁷

Viola

No, my profound heart²⁵⁸; and yet—by the very fangs of malice I swear—I am not that²⁵⁹ I play²⁶⁰. Are you the lady of the house?

Olivia

If I do not usurp myself, I am.

Viola

Most certain, if you are she, you do usurp²⁶¹ yourself, for what is yours to bestow is not yours to reserve²⁶². But this is from my commission²⁶³. I will on
485 with my speech in your praise, and then show you the heart of my message.

Olivia

Come to what is important in't, I forgive you²⁶⁴ the praise.

249. Viola abandons her rhetorical speech and turns from Olivia, and Maria is the obvious source of help if she is not veiled (see note to TLN 462); otherwise an attendant gentleman must be intended.

250. Written, composed.

251. Memorize (see "studied," TLN 472).

252. Most likely Olivia and all her gentlewomen; but smaller productions have only Olivia and Maria.

253. Suffer.

254. Context suggests "sensitive even to the smallest discourtesy." Viola is pleading for a fair hearing. But "comptible" is a form of "accountable," in which case she may be defiant (because Orsino must be accounted to for any insult to his ambassador).

255. Not in my script.

256. Moderate, appropriate.

257. Actor (not necessarily comic). Olivia picks up Viola's various theatrical usages ("speech," "con," "studied," "part"), and probably a mocking insult is intended in asking a young gentleman if he earns money at a low occupation.

258. A mild oath, like "by my faith" (not a jocular form of address to Olivia).

259. i.e. that which.

260. The first of several occasions when Viola, though ostensibly replying to another character on stage, seems to share her most vulnerable feelings with the audience. Swearing by "my profound heart" is similar in its self-awareness to "by the fangs of malice" (the deadliest part of any hostility which might endanger her): she is, as the audience knows, not what she pretends.

261. Viola responds to Olivia's joke about supplanting herself ("usurp") with a more serious sense of the word—to appropriate a power wrongfully. See next note.

262. That which is your right to give where you choose (i.e. yourself in marriage) is not yours to withhold altogether. See previous and next note.

263. Outside, beyond, my instructions. This admission demonstrates the strength of Viola's personal belief in what she has just said; see two previous notes.

264. Excuse you (from delivering).

Viola

Alas, I took great pains to study it, and 'tis poetical.

490 **Olivia**

It is the more like to be feigned²⁶⁵, I pray you keep it in. I heard you were saucy at my gates, and allowed your approach rather to wonder at you, than to hear you. If you be not mad²⁶⁶, be gone. If you have reason, be brief. 'Tis not
495 that time of moon²⁶⁷ with me to make one in so skipping²⁶⁸ a dialogue.

Maria

Will you hoist sail²⁶⁹, sir? Here lies your way.

Viola

[To Maria] No, good swabber²⁷⁰, I am to hull²⁷¹ here a little longer. [To Olivia] Some mollification for your Giant²⁷², sweet lady! Tell me your mind, I am a messenger²⁷³.

500 **Olivia**

Sure you have some hideous matter to deliver, when the courtesy of it is so fearful²⁷⁴. Speak your office.

Viola

It alone concerns your ear. I bring no overture²⁷⁵ of war, no taxation of homage²⁷⁶. I hold the olive²⁷⁷ in my hand. My words are as full of peace as matter²⁷⁸.

505 **Olivia**

Yet you began rudely. What are you? What would you?

Viola

The rudeness that hath appeared in me, have I learned from my

265. (a) invented, "poetical" (TLN 489), (b) deceitful.

266. Sane. Olivia parallels "not mad" and "have reason." Some editors have interpreted as "not altogether mad" in order to achieve an antithesis between madness and "reason" that others have achieved by deleting the "not" as an error.

267. Period of lunacy. The lunar cycle was thought to influence madness. There is no reference here to the menstrual cycle ("time of the month"), despite the lunar connection.

268. Erratic, going from one thing to another.

269. If Maria wears a veil (see note to TLN 462), she has probably removed it by this point.

270. A low-ranked sailor who washes ("swabs") the decks.

271. Lie with sails furled. As with "swabber," this responds to Maria's "hoist sail."

272. Please pacify your huge protector. In romances and epic poems, ladies were often guarded by giants; and the part of Maria was evidently written for a particularly small boy actor (compare TLN 1029, 1446).

273. Tell me your views, and I shall report them back. Many editors have given the first half of the sentence to Olivia, on the basis that Viola has not yet delivered Orsino's embassy, and therefore cannot demand an answer. This change increases the dramatic tempo, and shows Olivia interested thus early in Viola herself (Viola then retreating into her role as a messenger for Orsino). But the Folio reading makes acceptable sense.

274. Terrible, inspiring fear.

275. Preliminary declaration.

276. Demand for payment due to a feudal superior.

277. i.e. olive branch (symbol of peace).

278. Substance.

entertainment²⁷⁹. What I am, and what I would, are as secret as maidenhead²⁸⁰: to
510 your ears, divinity²⁸¹; to any others', profanation.

Olivia

Give us the place alone; we will hear this divinity.

[Exeunt Maria, Gentlemen, and Ladies.]

Now sir, what is your text?²⁸²

Viola

Most sweet lady—

Olivia

515 A comfortable²⁸³ doctrine, and much may be said of it. Where lies your text?

Viola

In Orsino's bosom.

Olivia

In his bosom! In what chapter²⁸⁴ of his bosom?

Viola

To answer by the method²⁸⁵, in the first²⁸⁶ of his heart.

Olivia

520 O, I have read it. It is heresy. Have you no more to say?

Viola

Good madam, let me see your face.

Olivia

Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face? You
are now out of your text²⁸⁷. But we will draw the curtain²⁸⁸, and show you the
picture.

[She unveils.]

525 Look you, sir, such a one I was this present²⁸⁹. Is't not well done?

Viola

Excellently done, if god did all²⁹⁰.

Olivia

'Tis in grain²⁹¹, sir, 'twill endure wind and weather.

530 **Viola**

279. Viola refers to her reception by Sir Toby and Malvolio (and possibly Maria).

280. Virginity.

281. Religious discourse. Viola's theological vocabulary ("divinity," "profanation") is adopted by Olivia in the speeches following: "text," "comfortable," "doctrine," "chapter," "heresy."

282. Chosen passage (from the bible, as theme for a sermon).

283. Strengthening. The "Comfortable Words" in the Anglican liturgy are quotations from the bible that encourage the congregation before they receive communion.

284. As of the bible. Compare "text" (TLN 512, 515).

285. i.e. catechetical style (being adopted by Olivia, as earlier by the Clown; see note to TLN 354).

286. i.e. first chapter

287. Straying from your theme.

288. Unveil. Compare TLN 235 and note for the use of a "curtain" over a "picture."

289. Just now, today. In performance a pause often follows Olivia's mock-solemnity in unveiling, as Viola ruefully admires her rival's beauty. Olivia's next line may be entirely confident, or comically anxious at the lack of response.

290. i.e. if nature has not been assisted by cosmetics. A pause is implicit after Viola's true admiration, before this undercutting joke.

291. Fast dyed, indelible. Olivia's denial of needing cosmetics wittily uses the metaphor of Scarlet Grain (see "red," TLN 530), or another indelible dye.

'Tis beauty truly blent²⁹², whose red and white
 Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on.
 Lady, you are the cruel'st she alive
 If you will lead these graces to the grave,
 And leave the world no copy²⁹³.

535 **Olivia**

O sir, I will not be so hardhearted. I will give out divers schedules²⁹⁴ of my
 beauty. It shall be inventoried, and every particle and utensil labeled to my
 will²⁹⁵: as, item²⁹⁶, [*Indicating*] two lips, indifferent²⁹⁷ red; item, two grey eyes,
 540 with lids to them; item, one neck; one chin; and so forth. Were you sent
 hither to praise²⁹⁸ me?

Viola

I see you what you are, you are too proud;
 But if you were the devil²⁹⁹, you are fair.
 My lord and master loves you. O, such love
 Could be but recompensed³⁰⁰, though you were crowned
 545 The nonpareil³⁰¹ of beauty.

Olivia

How does he love me?³⁰²

Viola

With adorations, fertile³⁰³ tears,³⁰⁴
 With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.

Olivia

Your lord does know my mind, I cannot love him.
 550 Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
 Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;
 In voices well divulged³⁰⁵, free³⁰⁶, learn'd, and valiant,
 And in dimension, and the shape of nature,³⁰⁷
 A gracious³⁰⁸ person. But yet I cannot love him.
 555 He might have took his answer long ago.

292. Blended

293. i.e. a child (though Olivia will twist the meaning to "list, inventory" at TLN 536). As in Sonnets 1-17, the beloved is urged, as a duty, to marry and reproduce personal "graces" and beauty. Compare TLN 481-483. Viola's sincerity as well as her lyricism is evident in the switch to blank verse.

294. Various lists. Olivia refuses Viola's metaphor (and her use of blank verse), using "copy" literally to mean list or "inventory."

295. Every small portion and part of my body will be listed and attached as a codicil to my will (quibbling on Viola's "leave" as "bequeath").

296. Also (a Latin term, used to introduce each new entry in a formal list or inventory).

297. Moderately.

298. Appraise (for an inventory).

299. Lucifer was beautiful, but fell from heaven through being "proud."

300. Could be no more than requited (even if . . .).

301. Unmatchable person.

302. Olivia's more serious interest in what Viola says is signalled here by her completing the blank verse line, and then continuing in verse.

303. Abundant.

304. The short (four beat) line may suggest a pause in the middle or at the end.

305. Well spoken of (or possibly "well spoken of as: . . .").

306. Generous, magnanimous.

307. Physically.

308. Graceful.

Viola

If I did love you in my master's flame³⁰⁹,
 With such a suff'ring, such a deadly³¹⁰ life,
 In your denial I would find no sense;
 I would not understand it.

⁵⁶⁰**Olivia**

Why, what would you?

Viola

Make me a willow³¹¹ cabin at your gate,
 And call upon my soul³¹² within the house;
 Write loyal cantos³¹³ of contemnèd love,
 And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
⁵⁶⁵Hallow³¹⁴ your name to the reverberate³¹⁵ hills,
 And make the babbling gossip³¹⁶ of the air
 Cry out "Olivia!" O you should not rest
 Between the elements of air and earth,
 But you should pity me.

⁵⁷⁰**Olivia**

You might do much!
 What is your parentage?³¹⁷

Viola

Above my fortunes, yet my state³¹⁸ is well:
 I am a gentleman.

Olivia

Get you to your lord.³¹⁹
⁵⁷⁵I cannot love him. Let him send no more,
 Unless, perchance, you come to me again,
 To tell me how he takes it. Fare you well.
 [*Offering a purse*] I thank you for your pains. Spend this for me.

Viola

309. With Orsino's burning passion.

310. Deathly.

311. Associated with rejected love. Compare the "Willow" song in *Othello*, 4.3. This lyrical and passionate speech from Viola seizes the attention from the start by employing an emphatic contrapuntal stress on "Make" (the first verse foot trochaic, not iambic).

312. i.e. Olivia.

313. Songs.

314. Halloo, shout. The Folio spelling is retained here both to emphasize the play on "bless," and to indicate the contrapuntal stress on the first syllable (compare TLN 561).

315. Reverberating.

316. The nymph Echo. Compare "reverberate," TLN 565. Golding translates from Ovid, "a babbling nymph that Echo hight" (3.443).

317. TLN 570 may complete Viola's short line, or may start a new iambic line by Olivia incorporating TLN 571. The actor of Olivia has significant decisions to make about her verse. Viola's short final line may indicate an eloquent pause before Olivia expresses her admiration, and seeks information that would establish if "Cesario" is of rank to be a potential husband. If so, Olivia may make her two short lines in Folio a single verse line. Alternatively, she may complete the blank verse line begun by Viola (a kind of collaboration in meter), then finish with a short line herself. It may be here that the signs of love which Viola recalls at TLN 675-677 ("made good view," "lost her tongue," "did speak in starts") begin to be evident.

318. Viola's first response is as herself, her second about Cesario's social rank ("state").

319. Olivia's short line may complete the verse line started by Viola, or may indicate a pause as she considers what to say.

I am no fee'd post³²⁰, lady; keep your purse.
 580 My master, not myself, lacks recompense.
 Love³²¹ make his heart of flint, that you shall love,
 And let your fervor, like my master's, be
 Placed in contempt. Farwell, fair cruelty.
 Exit.

Olivia

"What is your parentage?"
 585 "Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:
 I am a gentleman." I'll be sworn thou³²² art!
 Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions, and spirit,
 Do give thee five-fold blazon³²³. Not too fast! Soft, soft³²⁴!
 Unless the master were the man.³²⁵ How now!
 590 Even so quickly may one catch the plague?
 Methinks I feel this youth's perfections³²⁶
 With an invisible and subtle stealth
 To creep in at mine eyes. Well, let it be.
[Calling] What ho, Malvolio!
 595 *Enter Malvolio.*

Malvolio

Here, madam, at your service.

Olivia

Run after that same peevish³²⁷ messenger,
 The county's³²⁸ man. He left this ring³²⁹ behind him,
[Having secretly taken a ring from her finger, she gives it to Malvolio.]
 Would I³³⁰ or not. Tell him I'll none of it.
 600 Desire him not to flatter with³³¹ his lord,
 Nor hold him up with hopes; I am not for him.
 If that the youth will come this way tomorrow,
 I'll give him reasons for't. Hie thee³³², Malvolio.

Malvolio

Madam, I will.

Exit.

320. Messenger requiring a tip.

321. May the god of love (Cupid). . . .

322. Olivia shifts to the more intimate singular form of address.

323. Coat of arms (indicating a gentleman).

324. Take it slowly! Olivia warns herself as the implications of her attraction to "Cesario" become clear to her, and she shares her consternation (? and delight) with the audience.

325. Unless Orsino were (like) his servant Cesario.

326. "-tions" is pronounced as two syllables (as elsewhere in the play when metrically required).

327. Perverse, obstinate.

328. Count's (Orsino's).

329. Since Viola left no ring, Olivia must quickly provide one.

330. Whether I wanted it.

331. Encourage.

332. Hasten. Some actors of Malvolio have adopted such a slow dignity that Olivia, after waiting, has felt obliged thus to urge him to speed. Malvolio's response is full of potential for the actor.

605 **Olivia**

[To the audience] I do I know not what, and fear to find
Mine eye too great a flatterer for my mind.³³³
Fate, show thy force, ourselves we do not owe³³⁴;
What is decreed must be; and be this so.³³⁵
[Exit.]

333. That my eye will over-praise (Cesario) and my reason be persuaded too easily (of his worth).

334. Own.

335. Like Viola at 1.2.60, Olivia expresses an openness to events. The rhyming couplets, as at the end of many scenes, emphasize the completion of a movement of the play.

55.

Twelfth Night: Act 2

William Shakespeare

Twelfth Night (Modern). [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#). University of Victoria. Editors: David Carnegie and Mark Houlahan.

Scene 1

Enter Antonio¹ and Sebastian².

Antonio

Will you stay³ no longer? Nor will you not⁴ that I go with you?

Sebastian

615By your patience⁵, no. My stars shine darkly⁶ over me. The malignancy⁷ of my fate might perhaps distemper⁸ yours; therefore I shall crave of you your leave that I may bear my evils⁹ alone. It were a bad recompense for your love to lay any of them on you.

Antonio

Let me yet know of you whither you are bound.

620**Sebastian**

No, sooth¹⁰, sir. My determinate voyage is mere extravagancy¹¹. But I perceive in you so excellent a touch of modesty that you will not extort from me what I am willing to keep in; therefore it charges me in manners the rather to
625express myself.¹² You must know of me then, Antonio, my name is Sebastian

1. Antonio's profession, as with the Captain who rescued Viola, will be evident from his costume, probably including the "sea-cap" he later discards. Antonio's "sea-cap" may have been in early productions a round brimless "Monmouth" cap. Some modern productions have, probably as on the Elizabethan stage, furnished him with a mariner's knife. See note to TLN 1847.
2. Sebastian will be instantly identifiable because his clothes (and in some productions, physical appearance and hair) are identical to Viola's (see TLN 1900-1905 and note).
3. As we learn later (TLN 2228-2249), Antonio has rescued Sebastian and looked after him. This scene, unlike 1.2, is not "as from a shipwreck."
4. Do you not wish
5. If you will be so indulgent
6. Ominously.
7. Evil influence. An astrological term linked to "stars" in the previous line, and with a sense of virulence related to "distemper" in the next.
8. Infect.
9. Misfortunes.
10. (in) truth, really.
11. Planned travel is just to wander.
12. I observe in you so much politeness that you will not try to force from me what I wish to keep hidden; therefore good manners require me the more to reveal who I am.

(which I called Roderigo). My father was that Sebastian of Messaline¹³¹⁴ whom I know you have heard of. He left behind him myself and a sister, both born in an hour¹⁵. If the heavens had been pleased, would we had so ended! But 630you, sir, altered that, for some hour¹⁶ before you took me from the breach¹⁷ of the sea was my sister drowned.

Antonio

Alas the day!

Sebastian

A lady, sir, though it was said she much resembled me, was yet of many 635accounted beautiful. But though I could not with such estimable wonder¹⁸ overfar believe that, yet thus far I will boldly publish¹⁹ her: she bore a mind that envy could not but call fair. [*Weeping*] She is drowned already, sir, with salt water, though I seem to drown her remembrance again with more²⁰.

640**Antonio**

Pardon me, sir, your bad entertainment²¹.

Sebastian

O good Antonio, forgive me your trouble²².

Antonio

If you will not murder me for my love, let me be your servant²³.

Sebastian

645If you will not undo what you have done—that is, kill²⁴ him whom you have recovered²⁵—desire²⁶ it not. Fare ye well at once; my bosom is full of kindness²⁷, and I am yet so near the manners of my mother²⁸ that upon the least occasion more mine eyes will tell tales²⁹ of me. I am bound to the Count Orsino's court; farewell.

Exit.

650**Antonio**

The gentleness of all the gods go with thee!

I have many enemies in Orsino's court,

Else would I very shortly see thee there.

13. Evidently a personage of high standing, whose children can eventually marry a duke and a countess (see TLN 2430, "right noble is his blood"). In a recent Australian production, Antonio dropped his knife in shock.
14. Geographically unknown. Possibly Marseilles, Messina, or Mytilene. In Plautus' comedy *Menaechmi*, the inhabitants of Marseilles and Illyria are mentioned together: "Massilienses, Hilurios."
15. At the same time.
16. About an hour.
17. Breaking waves, surf.
18. Admiring judgement. Sebastian modestly downplays his own good looks.
19. Proclaim.
20. i.e. more salt water (tears).
21. Poor hospitality (see note to TLN 612).
22. The inconvenience I have put you to.
23. The social gulf between them is fully established; see note to TLN 626.
24. Intensity of feeling becomes elaborate courtesy as each claims he will die unless he can be of service to the other.
25. Rescued, restored to life.
26. Request.
27. Tenderness.
28. Womanly readiness to cry.
29. Betray (by crying, as at TLN 639).

833 Drama

But come what may, I do adore thee so
That danger shall seem sport, and I will go.
Exit [following Sebastian].

Scene 2

Enter Viola [as Cesario] and Malvolio [with the ring], at several³⁰ doors.

Malvolio

Were not you even now with the Countess Olivia?

Viola

660 Even now, sir; on a moderate pace, I have since arrived but hither.

Malvolio

She returns this ring to you, sir. You might have saved me my pains to have taken it away yourself. She adds, moreover, that you should put your lord
665 into a desperate assurance³¹ she will none of³² him. And one thing more: that you be never so hardy³³ to come again in his affairs, unless it be to report your lord's taking of this³⁴. [*Offering the ring*] Receive it so³⁵.

Viola

She took the ring of me³⁶; I'll none of it.

Malvolio

670 Come, sir, you peevishly threw it³⁷ to her; and her will is, it should be so returned. [*Throwing the ring down*] If it be worth stooping for, there it lies, in your eye³⁸; if not, be it his that finds it.

Exit.

Viola

[*To the audience*] [*Picking up the ring*] I left no ring with her. What means this lady? Fortune forbid my outside³⁹ have not charmed⁴⁰ her!
675 She made good view of me; indeed so much That methought⁴¹ her eyes had lost her tongue, For she did speak in starts distractedly.⁴² She loves me, sure; the cunning⁴³ of her passion Invites me in⁴⁴ this churlish messenger.

30. Separate (two different stage doors). Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century editors altered this to have Malvolio enter following Viola, which satisfies realist logic; but Shakespeare's purpose here is evidently to emphasize them meeting. There is no basis for thinking that Shakespeare intended either Malvolio or the audience to be confused by an overlap of Sebastian's and Viola's (identically costumed) exit and entry, though some productions have sought thematic resonance in this way.
31. Certainty beyond hope.
32. Have nothing to do with.
33. Bold.
34. i.e. this message.
35. On this basis (i.e. understanding the message).
36. Viola quick-wittedly covers for Olivia.
37. This is embroidery; Malvolio's capacity for fancy will be his undoing.
38. View, sight.
39. Appearance.
40. Enchanted (see TLN 1325).
41. The line is one syllable short of regular meter. Some editors suggest a word has been lost after "That," such as "straight," "sure" or "as."
42. I.e. looking at Viola distracted her from coherent speech.
43. Craftiness.
44. Solicits me by means of.

680 None of my lord's ring? Why, he sent her none;
 I am the man⁴⁵! If it be so, as 'tis,
 Poor lady, she were better love a dream.
 Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness,
 Wherein the pregnant enemy⁴⁶ does much.
 685 How easy is it for the proper false⁴⁷
 In women's waxen hearts to set their forms.⁴⁸
 Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we,
 For such as we are made of, such we be⁴⁹.
 How will this fadge⁵⁰? My master loves her dearly,
 690 And I, poor monster⁵¹, fond⁵² as much on him,
 And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.
 What will become of this? As⁵³ I am man,
 My state is desperate⁵⁴ for my master's love;
 As⁵⁵ I am woman—now alas the day—
 695 What thriftless⁵⁶ sighs shall poor Olivia breathe?
 O time, thou must untangle this, not I,
 It is too hard a knot for me t'untie.
 [Exit.]

45. i.e. whom she loves.

46. Inventive quick-witted devil.

47. Handsome deceivers (men, or in this case, Viola).

48. To impress their (handsome) images into women's receptive affections (as a seal imprints itself in soft wax).

49. Since women are made of weak material, it is not our fault we are weak.

50. Turn out.

51. Because both "man" (TLN 692) and "woman" (TLN 694).

52. Dote.

53. Because, insomuch as.

54. Hopeless.

55. Because, insomuch as.

56. Unprofitable.

Scene 3

Enter Sir Toby and Sir Andrew.

700 Sir Toby

Approach⁵⁷, Sir Andrew. Not to be abed after midnight, is to be up betimes⁵⁸; and *diluculo surgere*⁵⁹, thou know'st.

Sir Andrew

Nay, by my troth, I know not; but I know to be up late is to be up late.

705 Sir Toby

A false conclusion.⁶⁰ I hate it as an unfilled can⁶¹. To be up after midnight, and to go to bed then, is early; so that to go to bed after midnight, is to go to bed betimes. Does not our life consist of the four elements⁶²?

710 Sir Andrew

Faith, so they say, but I think it rather consists of eating and drinking.

Sir Toby

Th'art a scholar; let us therefore eat and drink. [*Calling*] Marian⁶³, I say, a stoup⁶⁴ of wine!

Enter Clown.

715 Sir Andrew

Here comes the fool, i'faith.

Clown

How now, my hearts! Did you never see the picture of "We Three"⁶⁵?

57. Sir Toby evidently enters first. Sir Andrew may lag because, e.g., he is drunk, or until the coast is clear. Sir Toby is probably carrying a candle or lantern to signify night-time. The absence of his boots will help indicate that this is an indoor scene at home.

58. Early (see next note).

59. "T'arise betime in the morning" (is the most wholesome thing in the world). So William Lily's Latin grammar, known to every Elizabethan schoolboy (except Sir Andrew; see his next speech).

60. Faulty logic. Sir Toby develops a syllogism that plays on "be up" as (a) not yet in bed, and (b) arisen from bed, in order to prove ("conclude") that going to bed after midnight is early.

61. Empty drinking vessel. In production, Sir Toby is sometimes looking sadly at his own.

62. i.e. fire, air, water, earth, thought to be the basic components of all matter, including the human body ("our life").

63. A diminutive form of Mary or Maria.

64. A large tankard, usually about a quart (approx. 1 litre).

65. A picture or inn sign showing two fools or asses. The riddling caption can only be solved by the spectator admitting to being the third.

The Clown thus identifies the knights as fools like him, and Sir Toby responds in kind with "Welcome, ass." Robert Armin, the Clown in Shakespeare's company, played Feste, a "fool natural" (i.e., someone mentally subnormal from birth; see note to TLN 296) who is a jester or "allowed fool." The traditional fool's costume is motley: parti-colored garments in contrasting colors, probably gaskins and doublet or short coat. The coat was often of extravagant cut (sometimes with four sleeves), usually with bells at the elbows. The most instantly recognizable feature was the fool's cap. This originated in the medieval cowl or hood (see TLN 347–348, 'cucullus non facit monachum'), to which were added ass's ears (often with bells at the end) or a representation of a cock's head. Sometimes both features were found together, and sometimes the cock's head was reduced to just the comb (hence "coxcorn" for a fool), or simply to a conical hat with a bell on the end. Armin may have carried a bauble, which might be a bladder on a stick (a comic club, like a child's balloon now), or a truncheon, slapstick, wooden dagger or the like, or a "marotte." The marotte was a short stick with a carved image of the fool's head, complete with fool's cap, on it, allowing a fool to carry on a mock dialogue with himself as represented by the marotte. His arrival will almost certainly be accompanied by the jingling of bells on his costume and hat. Many of these features, including a marotte, can be seen in the painting "We Three."

Sir Toby

Welcome, ass. Now let's have a catch⁶⁶.

Sir Andrew

720 By my troth, the fool has an excellent breast⁶⁷. I had rather than forty shillings⁶⁸
I had such a leg⁶⁹, and so sweet a breath to sing, as the fool has. In sooth, thou
wast in very gracious fooling last night, when thou spok'st of Picrogromitus,
of the Vapians passing the equinoctial of Queubus⁷⁰. 'Twas very good, i' faith. I
725 sent thee sixpence⁷¹ for thy leman⁷²—hadst it?

Clown

I did impetico⁷³ thy gratillity⁷⁴: for Malvolio's nose is no whipstock⁷⁵, my lady⁷⁶
has a white hand, and the Myrmidons⁷⁷ are no bottle-ale houses^{78 79}.

Sir Andrew

730 Excellent! Why, this is the best fooling, when all is done. Now a song!

Sir Toby

[To Clown, giving money] Come on, there is sixpence for you. Let's have a
song.

Sir Andrew

[Giving sixpence] There's a testril⁸⁰ of me too. If one knight give a—⁸¹

Clown

735 Would you have a love song, or a song of good life⁸²?

Sir Toby

A love song, a love song.

Sir Andrew

66. Round, popular song with successive overlapping of parts. See TLN 769.

67. Singing voice.

68. Two pounds sterling.

69. Although this could simply refer to the Clown's well-turned leg, more likely it indicates that he dances ("leg" a metonym for dancing) as well as sings, or possibly that he bows ("makes a leg") before or after his songs.

70. Probably invented mock-astronomy; compare TLN 329. ("Queubus" is pronounced "queue-bus," possibly based on "cube.")

71. A small silver coin worth half a shilling, and commonly used as a tip.

72. Sweetheart, lover.

73. A burlesque word, like much of the nonsense which follows, it suggests pocketing the money in a petticoat. Since Robert Armin as the Clown was unlikely in this play to wear the long, full-skirted coat of a "natural fool", which might suggest petticoats (see note to TLN 296), the word may be a joke on his wide "gaskins" (TLN 319). See David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 187–8.

74. Another burlesque word, suggesting "little gratuity."

75. Handle of a whip.

76. Olivia (not his "leman").

77. The personal troops of the Homeric warrior Achilles.

78. Perhaps (a) low taverns selling mere bottled ale, or (b) establishments selling bottled ale for consumption at the theatre or elsewhere.

79. "For" suggests a logical proof, but what follows is Picrogromical. "All one can usefully say is that the reference to Malvolio is derogatory, the reference to Olivia is complimentary, and the reference to the Myrmidons is pure nonsense" (Arden 2). Arden 3 takes "for" not as introducing a syllogism, but as the Clown's justifying of pocketing the sixpence for himself instead of giving it to his sweetheart, "for" neither Malvolio nor Olivia gives him any money. This seems strained, since Sir Andrew gave the money to the Clown for him to spend.

80. Sixpence. Actually a debased silver coin originally worth a shilling, a "tester" or "teston". In production, Sir Toby may obtain the money from Sir Andrew.

81. Folio's lack of punctuation at the end of the line of type may indicate that part of the speech was accidentally omitted. Presuming interruption (as Folio 2) is the best we can do, and plays well.

82. Probably "a drinking song," but Sir Andrew misunderstands as a moral song or hymn.

Ay, ay. I care not for good life.⁸³

Clown sings.

Clown

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
 740 O stay and hear, your true love's coming,
 That can sing both high and low.
 Trip⁸⁴ no further, pretty sweeting,
 Journeys end in lovers meeting,
 Every wise man's son⁸⁵ doth know.

745 **Sir Andrew**

Excellent good, i'faith.

Sir Toby

Good, good.

Clown

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter,
 Present⁸⁶ mirth hath present laughter;
 What's to come is still⁸⁷ unsure.
 750 In delay there lies no plenty,
 Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty⁸⁸;
 Youth's a stuff will not endure.⁸⁹

Sir Andrew

A mellifluous voice, as I am true knight.

Sir Toby

A contagious⁹⁰ breath.

755 **Sir Andrew**

Very sweet and contagious, i'faith.

Sir Toby

To hear by the nose, it is dulcet in contagion. But shall we make the welkin⁹¹
 dance indeed? Shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch that will draw three
 souls out of one weaver⁹²? Shall we do that?

760 **Sir Andrew**

An⁹³ you love me, let's do't! I am dog at⁹⁴ a catch.

83. Whichever meaning of "good life" Sir Andrew understands (see previous note), the comment is sadly preposterous.

84. Tread nimbly, skip, dance (hence "go, run").

85. i.e. fool ("a wise man commonly has foolish children"; proverbial).

86. Immediate (in occurrence and effect).

87. Always.

88. Dear one, twenty times dear (or possibly "you darling twenty-year-old"; compare modern "sweet sixteen").

89. The words of this song, which reiterate the Clown's advice to Olivia that "beauty's a flower" (TLN 343-344), are probably Shakespeare's, sung to a popular tune.

90. Infectious, noxious. Although Sir Toby may be quibbling elaborately on "catching" (modern "catchy"), more likely he is leading Sir Andrew into his usual tendency to agree with everything, then emphasising the incongruity of the metaphor by extending the medical sense of infection ("by the nose").

91. Sky, heavens (compare TLN 1269).

92. Music was said to "hale souls out of men's bodies" (Ado TLN 894-896) with ecstasy, but to draw three souls from one man would be a triumph. Weavers were known for singing as they worked, but Calvinist psalms rather than catches.

93. If.

94. Good at (proverbial).

Clown

By'r lady, sir, and some dogs will catch well.

Sir Andrew

Most certain. Let our catch be "Thou Knave."⁹⁵

Clown

765 "Hold thy peace, thou knave," knight? I shall be constrained⁹⁶ in't to call thee knave, knight.

Sir Andrew

'Tis not the first time I have constrained one to call me knave. Begin, fool. It begins, [*Singing*] "Hold thy peace."

Clown

I shall never begin if I hold my peace.⁹⁷

Sir Andrew

Good, i' faith! Come, begin.

*Catch sung.*⁹⁸

770 *Enter Maria*⁹⁹ [*interrupting the song*].

Maria

What a caterwauling do you keep here! If my lady have not called up her steward Malvolio, and bid him turn you out of doors, never trust me.

Sir Toby

775 My lady's¹⁰⁰ a Cathayan¹⁰¹, we are politicians¹⁰², Malvolio's a Peg-a-Ramsay¹⁰³, and [*Singing*] "Three merry men¹⁰⁴ be we"! Am not I consanguineous¹⁰⁵? Am I not of her blood? Tilly-vally¹⁰⁶, lady¹⁰⁷! [*Singing*] "There dwelt a man in Babylon, lady, lady"¹⁰⁸!

Clown

Beshrew me¹⁰⁹, the knight's in admirable fooling.

Sir Andrew

95. Each of the three singers in turn tells another to be silent ("hold thy peace"), and calls him a knave.

96. Forced.

97. In a recent New Zealand production, the Clown remained silent until Sir Andrew finally got the joke.

98. In performance, the singing is likely to be rowdy ("caterwauling," TLN 771), and may include much stage business. Some effort may be required from Maria to make herself noticed or heard when she enters.

99. She probably carries a candle, and may well appear "as from bed," i.e. in her shift.

100. The meanings of the terms in this speech are much debated. All three are generally pejorative at this time, so the intention may be to reject Maria's criticism by inflating it to a ludicrous degree ("Olivia is a foreign barbarian, we are dangerous intriguers, and Malvolio is the naughty woman of a popular song").

101. A person from China (Cathay). The connotations of the term are not certain, but it sometimes indicated untrustworthiness (compare *MWW* TLN 682-683, "I will not believe such a Cathayan though the priest o'th' town commended him for a true man").

102. Amoral intriguers.

103. A popular tune, and probably a ribald reference to the Peggy of the title.

104. The final phrase of what was evidently a very popular song. Sir Toby completes his refutation of Maria by restarting the singing and dancing of the three "merry men."

105. "of her blood," kin. "It is a word that is usefully tricky for a drunk to pronounce" (Oxford).

106. Expression of contempt; "fiddle-faddle."

107. Probably addressed to Maria. Often put in quotation marks by editors to suggest a contemptuous repetition of Maria's formal reference to "my lady"; but more likely addressed to Maria. Sir Toby's drunken foolery may already be meandering into the associations of "lady," and the snatch of song which follows.

108. The opening line and refrain of a popular song, here chosen by Sir Toby for the reiteration of "Lady."

109. Curse me (a mild oath).

780Ay, he does well enough if he be disposed, and so do I too¹¹⁰. He does it with a better grace, but I do it more natural¹¹¹.

Sir Toby

[Singing] "O'the twelfth day¹¹² of December—"

Maria

For the love o' god, peace!

Enter Malvolio.¹¹³

785**Malvolio**

My masters, are you mad! Or what are you? Have you no wit¹¹⁴, manners, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers¹¹⁵ at this time of night? Do ye make an alehouse of my lady's house, that ye squeak out your coziers' catches¹¹⁶ without any mitigation or remorse¹¹⁷ of voice? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time in you?

Sir Toby

We did keep time, sir, in our catches. Sneck up!¹¹⁸

Malvolio

Sir Toby, I must be round¹¹⁹ with you. My lady bade me tell you that, though she harbors¹²⁰ you as her kinsman, she's nothing allied¹²¹ to your disorders. If you 795can separate yourself and your misdemeanors, you are welcome to the house. If not, an¹²² it would please you to take leave of her, she is very willing to bid you farewell.

Sir Toby

[Singing] [To Maria] "Farewell, dear heart¹²³, since I must needs be gone."

Maria

Nay, good Sir Toby.

800**Clown**

[Singing] [Indicating Sir Toby] "His eyes do show his days are almost done."

Malvolio

Is't even so?

Sir Toby

[Singing] "But I will never die."

110. The first of many comic/pathetic "me too"-isms.

111. (a) naturally, (b, unintended by Sir Andrew) like a "natural" or idiot (compare TLN 145). This interchange about Sir Toby implies they are watching him (as, probably, he dances with Maria).

112. No music has been certainly identified. Modern performances tend to use the carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas."

113. He probably carries a candle (see notes to TLN 700, 770). Maria's previous line may be motivated by seeing Malvolio earlier than this. In one modern production he had a large flashlight which he shone directly in the revellers' faces, like a threatening policeman.

114. Decency.

115. Often vagrants, with a reputation for drunken singing.

116. Cobblers' round songs. Compare "tinkers" (TLN 787) and "weaver" (TLN 759).

117. Considerate lowering (of volume).

118. Go hang (yourself).

119. Plain-spoken, blunt.

120. Provides lodging.

121. In no way related, not kin.

122. If.

123. Sir Toby and the Clown improvise on a popular song to make its words apply to the situation with Malvolio.

Clown

[Singing] Sir Toby, there you lie.¹²⁴

Malvolio

This is much credit to you.

805 Sir Toby

[Singing] [Indicating Malvolio] "Shall I bid him go?"

Clown

[Singing] "What an¹²⁵ if you do?"

Sir Toby

[Singing]

"Shall I bid him go, and spare not?"

Clown

[Singing]

"O no, no, no, no, you dare not!"

Sir Toby

810 [To Malvolio] Out o'tune¹²⁶, sir? Ye lie! Art any more than a steward? Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale¹²⁷?

Clown

Yes, by Saint Anne¹²⁸, and ginger¹²⁹ shall be hot i'th'mouth too.¹³⁰

Sir Toby

815 Th'art i'th'right. [To Malvolio] Go, sir, rub your chain with crumbs¹³¹. A stoup of wine¹³², Maria!

Malvolio

Mistress Mary, if you prized my lady's favor at anything more than contempt, you would not give means¹³³ for this uncivil rule¹³⁴. She shall know of it, by this hand.

Exit.

820 Maria

Go shake your ears!¹³⁵

Sir Andrew

124. In some productions Sir Toby lies on the stage in mock death, in addition to telling an untruth about being immortal, but there is a danger of breaking the musical rhythm of the exchange.
125. A metrical filler, anticipating and emphasising "if."
126. (a) musically off pitch, (b) out of order or harmony. Given Sir Toby's earlier quibble with Malvolio (TLN 791), Theobald's emendation of "tune" to "time" may be correct; it would be an easy misreading in Secretary hand.
127. Traditional at church festivals, disapproved of by puritans.
128. Mother of the Virgin Mary; because she is not a biblical figure, this oath was particularly repugnant to puritans.
129. Used to spice ale, but also regarded as an aphrodisiac.
130. Many editors introduce an exit for the Clown here, because (a) Maria's reference at TLN 864-865 may imply that he is no longer present, and (b) he has no more lines. However, there is no reason for him to leave at this point, and Sir Toby responds to him before turning on Malvolio. He may simply sit observing; in some productions he collapses into drunken sleep (in one, revealing in the process Maria hidden under his Christmas tree fancy dress).
131. i.e. polish your steward's insignia (which Malvolio may be wearing). He is being reminded of his subordinate position.
132. Sir Toby not only defies Malvolio, but puts Maria on the spot; stage business sometimes makes clear her choice.
133. i.e. wine.
134. Disorderly conduct.
135. A contemptuous dismissal, proverbially implying someone is an ass. The line is usually directed at Malvolio's just-departed back, since Maria wishes the others to be "patient for tonight" (TLN 826).

'Twere as good a deed as to drink when a man's a-hungry¹³⁶, to challenge him the field, and then to break promise with him, and make a fool¹³⁷ of him.

Sir Toby

825Do't, knight. I'll write thee a challenge; or I'll deliver thy indignation to him by word of mouth.

Maria

Sweet Sir Toby, be patient for tonight. Since the youth of the count's was today with my lady, she is much out of quiet. For *Monsieur*¹³⁸ Malvolio, let me 830alone with him. If I do not gull¹³⁹ him into a nayword¹⁴⁰, and make him a common recreation¹⁴¹, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed. I know I can do it.

Sir Toby

Possess us¹⁴², possess us, tell us something of him.

Maria

Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of puritan¹⁴³.

Sir Andrew

Oh, if I thought that, I'd beat him like a dog!

835**Sir Toby**

What, for being a puritan? Thy exquisite¹⁴⁴ reason, dear knight?

Sir Andrew

I have no exquisite reason for't, but I have reason good enough.

Maria

840The devil a puritan that he is, or anything constantly¹⁴⁵ but a time-pleaser¹⁴⁶, an affectioned¹⁴⁷ ass, that cons¹⁴⁸ state¹⁴⁹ without book, and utters it by great swaths¹⁵⁰. The best persuaded¹⁵¹ of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies, that it is his grounds¹⁵² of faith that all that look on him love him; and on that 845vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work.

Sir Toby

What wilt thou do?

136. This addition makes nonsense of the proverbial "as good a deed as to drink."

137. By challenging Malvolio to a duel, then dishonorably failing to show up, Sir Andrew would be the "fool."

138. A mocking use of the French form of address, here equivalent to "his high and mightiness." Compare *Ralph Roister Doister* 4.8, "monsieur grand captain."

139. Trick.

140. Byword (for foolishness).

141. Source of general amusement.

142. Put us in possession (of your scheme). On stage the scene usually becomes conspiratorial at this point, away from the exit Malvolio used, and with lowered voices.

143. An extreme protestant, morally strict. Maria here ("sometimes," "a kind of") and at TLN 839-840 makes clear that Malvolio is not simply or entirely a puritan.

144. Ingeniously devised.

145. Consistently.

146. Time-server.

147. Affected.

148. Learns by heart ("without book").

149. Matter appropriate to high rank.

150. The wide sweeps covered by the swing of the scythe.

151. Having the highest opinion.

152. Foundation (of all that he believes in).

Maria

I will drop in his way some obscure epistles of love, wherein by the color of his beard, the shape of his leg, the manner of his gait, the expressure¹⁵³ of his eye, forehead, and complexion, he shall find himself most feelingly personated¹⁵⁴. I can write very like my lady your niece; on a forgotten matter we can hardly make distinction of our hands.¹⁵⁵

Sir Toby

Excellent, I smell a device.¹⁵⁶

⁸⁵⁵**Sir Andrew**

I have't in my nose too.

Sir Toby

He shall think by the letters that thou wilt drop that they come from my niece, and that she's in love with him.

Maria

My purpose is indeed a horse of that color.

⁸⁶⁰**Sir Andrew**

And your horse now would make him an ass.

Maria

Ass¹⁵⁷, I doubt not.

Sir Andrew

Oh, 'twill be admirable!

Maria

Sport royal, I warrant you. I know my physic¹⁵⁸ will work with him. I will plant you two, and let the fool make a third¹⁵⁹, where he shall find the letter. Observe his construction¹⁶⁰ of it. For this night, to bed¹⁶¹, and dream on the event¹⁶². Farewell.

Exit.

Sir Toby

Good night, Penthesilea¹⁶³!

Sir Andrew

Before me¹⁶⁴, she's a good wench.

⁸⁷⁰**Sir Toby**

She's a beagle¹⁶⁵ true bred, and one that adores me. What o'that?

153. Expression.

154. Justly or vividly described.

155. When we no longer remember which of us wrote something, it is almost impossible to tell by the handwriting.

156. Sense a stratagem.

157. Maria repeats the punchline of this rare example of Sir Andrew's wit so that she can address him as "Ass," or for a pun on "As."

158. Medicine (to purge Malvolio of conceit).

159. It is not clear whether the Clown is present now, nor why he is, in the event, replaced by Fabian. See note to TLN 813.

160. Construing, interpretation.

161. Maria's prime purpose is to stop them partying (in the Armfield film she takes their gin bottle away). In some productions, however, Sir Toby takes "bed" as an invitation, which Maria has to gently put aside with "and dream on the event"; in the Nunn film, Maria means it as an invitation, but Sir Toby refuses, preferring to drink with Sir Andrew.

162. Outcome.

163. Queen of the warrior Amazon women (joking again about Maria's small stature).

164. A mild oath that substitutes "me" for "God."

165. A small breed of hound (perhaps loyal, perhaps "on the scent" of Malvolio).

Sir Andrew

I was adored once¹⁶⁶, too.

Sir Toby

Let's to bed, knight. Thou hadst need send for more money.

⁸⁷⁵**Sir Andrew**

If I cannot recover¹⁶⁷ your niece, I am a foul way out¹⁶⁸.

Sir Toby

Send for money, knight. If thou hast her not i'th'end, call me cut¹⁶⁹.

Sir Andrew

If I do not, never trust me, take it how you will¹⁷⁰.

⁸⁸⁰**Sir Toby**

Come, come, I'll go burn some sack¹⁷¹; 'tis too late to go to bed now. Come, knight, come, knight.

*Exeunt.*¹⁷²

166. This unexpected glimpse of Sir Andrew's unlikely past is usually both comic and, after a pause, poignant. Alternatively, it may be another "me-too"-ism, even resentful.

167. Obtain (and thereby retrieve expenses).

168. Either (a) grievously out of pocket, or (b) lost in my purpose.

169. Proverbial abuse: a "cut" is a curtail, a horse with its tail docked (cut short). Possibly also a cut (gelded) horse. Compare TLN 1100-1103, and Falstaff's "spit in my face, call me horse" (*IH4* TLN 1153).

170. A typically confused complication by Sir Andrew; this defiance makes no sense when Sir Toby has already given permission.

171. Mull some wine. Sack was Spanish or Canary (see TLN 196-197); the name seems to mean dry (French sec), but it was described as a sweet wine. In England, sugar (and probably spices) were often added at the time of drinking, but the precise preparation and heating of "burnt sack" is unknown.

172. If the Clown has not left earlier (see note to TLN 813 and TLN 865), he has to exit here. In a New Zealand production the knights were leaving, singing "Three Merry Men" again, but drunkenly realized they were one short; they returned to rouse the Clown from his stupor. Sometimes he observes the knights exit, then leaves a different way.

Scene 4

Enter Orsino, Viola [as Cesario], Curio, and others.

Orsino

[To the Musicians] Give me some music. *[To the Courtiers]* Now good morrow, friends;
 885 Now, good Cesario—but that piece of song,¹⁷³
 That old and antique¹⁷⁴ song we heard last night;
 Methought it did relieve my passion¹⁷⁵ much,
 More than light airs and recollected terms¹⁷⁶
 Of these most brisk and giddy-paced¹⁷⁷ times.
 890 Come, but one verse.

Curio

He is not here, so please your lordship, that
 should sing it.

Orsino

Who was it?

Curio

895 Feste¹⁷⁸ the jester, my lord, a fool that the Lady Olivia's father took much
 delight in. He is about the house.

Orsino

Seek him out, *[To the Musicians]* and play the tune the while.

[Exit Curio.]

*Music plays.*¹⁷⁹

Come hither¹⁸⁰, boy. If ever thou shalt love,
 900 In the sweet pangs of it, remember me.
 For such as I am, all true lovers are:
 Unstaid and skittish¹⁸¹ in all motions¹⁸² else,
 Save in the constant image of the creature
 That is beloved. How dost thou like this tune?

905 **Viola**

173. Orsino apparently commands music, greets his attendant lords, Cesario particularly, then returns his attention direct to the musicians.

Orsino is not asking Cesario to sing. Punctuation in Folio leaves some uncertainty about the intention of the lines and staging. Orsino may direct the musicians indirectly by instructing Curio. It is possible, however, that "friends" is to the musicians; and also possible that Orsino singles out Cesario to discuss "but [= only] that piece of song."

174. Old, quaint (at the time pronounced and often spelled "antic").

175. Love suffering

176. Frivolous tunes and artificial phrases. Orsino instead wants an "antique" folk song, "old and plain" (TLN 932).

177. Smart and whirling, frivolous.

178. The only mention of the Clown's name.

179. There is no SD for the music to stop, although there is a renewed direction for the musicians to play at TLN 939. Clearly a production decision is needed.

180. As at TLN 261, Viola's special attraction for Orsino is emphasized by their spatial separation from the other courtiers.

181. Capricious; unregulated and frivolous.

182. Impulses, emotions.

It gives a very echo¹⁸³ to the seat
Where love is throned.

Orsino

Thou dost speak masterly;
My life upon't, young though thou art, thine eye
Hath stayed upon some favor¹⁸⁴ that it loves.

910 Hath it not, boy?

Viola

A little, by your favor¹⁸⁵.

Orsino

What kind of woman is't?

Viola

Of your complexion¹⁸⁶.

Orsino

She is not worth thee then. What years, i'faith?

915 **Viola**

About your years, my lord.

Orsino

Too old, by heaven! Let still the woman take
An elder than her self; so wears she¹⁸⁷ to him,
So sways she level¹⁸⁸ in her husband's heart.
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
920 Our fancies¹⁸⁹ are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn¹⁹⁰,
Than women's are.

Viola

I think it well¹⁹¹, my lord.

Orsino

Then let thy love be younger than thyself,
925 Or thy affection cannot hold the bent¹⁹²;
For women are as roses, whose fair flower¹⁹³
Being¹⁹⁴ once displayed¹⁹⁵, doth fall that very hour.

Viola

183. Returns an exact reflection (to the heart, "the seat / Where love is throned"; see note to TLN 43-45).

184. Face.

185. If you please (with the hidden sense of "like your face").

186. (a) coloring, (b) temperament.

187. She adapts (like clothes to the wearer).

188. She adjusts to (him). There may be a pun on "sway" as "rule, exert influence," since "level" includes a sense of equality, but probably not on "swings in perfect balance" (so Donno).

189. Affections (compare TLN 18-19).

190. Worn out. Some editors suppose a misreading of "won," arguing that the inconstant man's love is lost to one woman and quickly won by another.

191. The irony of her agreement will be understood by both Viola and the audience.

192. Maintain its intensity (a metaphor from archery of a bow retaining its springiness).

193. Elided to one syllable for the meter, and to rhyme with "hour."

194. Elided to one syllable for the meter.

195. (a) unfolded, (b) open to view.

And so they are. Alas, that they are so:
 To die, even¹⁹⁶ when they to perfection grow.
 930 *Enter Curio and Clown.*

Orsino

Oh, fellow, come, the song we had last night.
 Mark it, Cesario, it is old and plain;
 The spinsters¹⁹⁷ and the knitters in the sun,
 And the free¹⁹⁸ maids that weave their thread with bones¹⁹⁹,
 935 Do use²⁰⁰ to chant it. It is silly sooth²⁰¹,
 And dallies²⁰² with the innocence of love,
 Like the old age²⁰³.

Clown

Are you ready, sir?²⁰⁴

Orsino

Ay²⁰⁵, prithee sing. *Music.*²⁰⁶
 940 *The Song.*²⁰⁷

Clown

[Singing]

Come away, come away, death,
 And in sad cypress²⁰⁸ let me be laid.
 Fie away²⁰⁹, fie away, breath,
 I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
 945 My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
 O prepare it.
 My part of death no one so true
 Did share it.²¹⁰
 Not a flower²¹¹, not a flower sweet,
 On my black coffin let there be strewn.
 Not a friend, not a friend greet

196. Just. Again the audience knows, with Viola, that her response to Orsino is rich in irony. Actors might elide "even" into one syllable for the meter.

197. Spinners (nearly always female, whence the modern usage).

198. Innocent, unconstrained.

199. Make lace with bone bobbins.

200. Have the custom.

201. Simple truth.

202. Speaks, plays (amorously).

203. i.e. golden age, olden times of ideal pastoral innocence and virtue.

204. In performance, the Clown sometimes asks this with heavy irony, thus lightly drawing attention to Orsino's intense involvement with Viola.

205. Since this is spelled "I" in Folio, it is possible that Orsino does not reply to the Clown, but simply says "I pray you to sing."

206. The stage direction implies the theatre musicians (see note to TLN 898), although in modern productions the Clown often accompanies himself.

207. Probably an old song, but no music survives. The stage focus throughout this song is usually on the reaction to it of Viola and Orsino as they listen together.

208. i.e. coffin of cypress wood (associated, like "yew," TLN 945, with mourning).

209. i.e. begone. Earlier editors often emended unnecessarily to "fly away."

210. No one as faithful (as I) has ever shared my allotted portion, death.

211. The meter requires elision to "flow'r" both times, as at TLN 926.

950 My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown.
 A thousand, thousand sighs to save,
 Lay me O where
 Sad true lover never find²¹² my grave,
 To weep there.

Orsino

[*Giving money*] There's for thy pains.

Clown

No pains, sir; I take pleasure in singing, sir.

⁹⁵⁵**Orsino**

I'll pay thy pleasure then.

Clown

Truly, sir, and pleasure will be paid²¹³, one time or another.

Orsino

Give me now leave to leave²¹⁴ thee.

Clown

960 Now the melancholy god²¹⁵ protect thee, and the tailor make thy doublet of
 changeable taffeta²¹⁶, for thy mind is a very opal²¹⁷. I would have men of such
 constancy put to sea, that their business might be everything, and their intent
 everywhere; for that's it that always makes a good voyage of nothing²¹⁸.

Farewell.

Exit.

⁹⁶⁵**Orsino**

Let all the rest give place.

[*All the Courtiers except Viola stand apart.*]

Once more, Cesario,

Get thee to yond same sovereign cruelty.

Tell her my love, more noble than the world²¹⁹,

Prizes not quantity of dirty lands;

The parts²²⁰ that Fortune hath bestowed upon her,

970 Tell her I hold as giddily²²¹ as Fortune;

But 'tis that miracle and queen of gems²²²

That Nature pranks²²³ her in, attracts my soul.

212. i.e. will never find.

213. i.e. paid for with pain (proverbial).

214. A courteous and witty dismissal.

215. Saturn (the planet ruling those of a melancholy disposition).

216. Shot silk ("changeable"--like a lover--when viewed from different angles, because the warp and woof are of different colors).

217. A semiprecious stone whose color changes with differences in light and angle of view (compare previous note).

218. I.e. men of no fixed purpose should be sea-faring merchants, so that either (a) they will get some pleasure from wasting their time (compare the proverb, "He that is everywhere is nowhere"), or (b) by being all over the place, they can be opportunistic and make a profit where none was expected.

219. Society (with worldly values).

220. Possessions.

221. Lightly (as the fickle goddess Fortune).

222. Her beauty (or more generally, her being, which is an enduring gift of Nature rather than a temporary whim of Fortune).

223. Adorns.

Viola

But if she cannot love you, sir?

Orsino

I cannot²²⁴ be so answered.

975 **Viola**

Sooth, but you must.

Say that some lady, as perhaps there is,
Hath for your love as great a pang of heart
As you have for Olivia. You cannot love her.
You tell her so. Must she not then be answered?

980 **Orsino**

There is no woman's sides
Can bide²²⁵ the beating of so strong a passion
As love doth give my heart; no woman's heart
So big, to hold so much. They lack retention²²⁶.
Alas, their love may be called appetite,
985 No motion of the liver, but the palate,
That suffers surfeit, cloyment, and revolt²²⁷;
But mine is all as hungry as the sea,
And can digest as much. Make no compare
Between that love a woman can bear me,
990 And that I owe²²⁸ Olivia.

Viola

Ay, but I know²²⁹ —

Orsino

What dost thou know?

Viola

Too well what love women to men may owe.
In faith, they are as true of heart as we.
995 My father had a daughter loved a man
As it might be perhaps, were I a woman,
I should your lordship.

Orsino

And what's her history?

Viola

A blank²³⁰, my lord. She never told²³¹ her love,
1000 But let concealment like a worm i'th'bud

224. Folio's "It cannot" (= your suit cannot) makes sense in Orsino's half-line, but matches neither Viola's reply "you must," nor "Must she not" at TLN 979.

225. Endure, bear.

226. Power to retain (a physiological metaphor, as becomes clearer in the lines following).

227. Mere appetite, not a true emotion of the liver (one of the seats of love; see note to TLN 43), just a greedy taste which is sated and sickened by excess.

228. Have for. See also TLN 993.

229. It is a production decision whether Viola stops herself just in time, or is cut off by Orsino.

230. (a) a void, (b) a vacant space yet to be filled in (i.e. a "history" not yet complete).

231. i.e. told of.

Feed on her damask²³² cheek. She pined in thought,
 And with a green and yellow melancholy²³³
 She sat like Patience on a monument,
 Smiling at grief.²³⁴ Was not this love indeed?
 1005 We men may say more, swear more, but indeed
 Our shows are more than will²³⁵: for still²³⁶ we prove
 Much in our vows, but little in our love.

Orsino

But died thy sister of her love, my boy?

Viola

I am all the daughters of my father's house,
 1010 And all the brothers too; and yet I know not²³⁷
 Sir, shall I to this lady?

Orsino

Ay, that's the theme.
 To her in haste; [*Giving a jewel*] give her this jewel²³⁸; say
 My love can give no place²³⁹, bide no deny²⁴⁰.
Exeunt [Viola a different way].

232. Allowed secrecy, like an insect larva (cankerworm) in a rosebud, to eat away at her healthy pink cheek. A "damask" is a pink and white rose; compare TLN 530, and AYL TLN 1897, "Betwixt the constant red and mingled damask."

233. Love sickness (specifically chlorosis, a form of anaemia in teenage girls which gives a greenish tinge to the skin, and was thought to result from love melancholy; and pale or jaundiced skin).

234. Like an allegorical statue of Patience. Patience (*Patientia*) is one of the seven heavenly virtues in Christian thinking, closely associated (and sometimes conflated or confused) with Fortitude. Viola here personifies her, just as she appears in art and emblem books; an elaborate iconography usually signals her emblematic role as suffering with great endurance. The "monument" is sometimes a squared plinth, sometimes simply a rock, on which she sits or leans, and to which she is often chained. Sometimes she bears a symbolic yoke of oppression on her shoulders, or thorns under her bare feet. The difficulties facing her are sometimes more general, such as the grotesquely deformed and frightening world surrounding her in "Patience," created by the artist Pieter Breugel the Elder as part of his sixteenth-century depiction of "The Seven Virtues." A more brutally political and military set of horrors to be endured is depicted in Hans Collaert's engraving "The Spanish Fury," in which Catholic Spanish troops in the Netherlands are sacking Antwerp. Patience sits with great forbearance as slaughter and flames engulf her. She is, as often in the iconography, holding a cross. In (*Pericles*, the king says of his long-lost daughter, "thou dost look / Like Patience smiling on kings' graves, and smiling / Extremity out of act" (5.1.137-9).

235. Our displays are greater than our passions.

236. Always.

237. This riddling culmination of her indirect love scene with Orsino offers many options to the actor of Viola, including cheerful obscurity, melancholy for Sebastian, uncertainty about his survival or her own best course of action, or such intense emotional or even erotic engagement with Orsino that a reassertion of her disguise role and a deflection of subject become essential.

238. Probably a ring or pendant; but Olivia's ring is the subject at Viola's next meeting with her. See also note to TLN 1297-1298.

239. Cede no priority (to anyone or anything else).

240. Denial, refusal. The older spelling retains the rhyme for the final couplet of the scene.

Scene 5

*Enter Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian*²⁴¹.

Sir Toby

Come thy ways²⁴², Signor Fabian.

Fabian

Nay²⁴³, I'll come! If I lose a scruple²⁴⁴ of this sport, let me be boiled to death with melancholy²⁴⁵.

¹⁰²⁰**Sir Toby**

Wouldst thou not be glad to have the niggardly²⁴⁶ rascally sheep-biter²⁴⁷ come by some notable shame?

Fabian

I would exult, man! You know he brought me out o' favor with my lady, about a bear-baiting²⁴⁸ here.

Sir Toby

¹⁰²⁵To anger him we'll have the bear again, and we will fool him black and blue²⁴⁹—shall we not, Sir Andrew?

Sir Andrew

An²⁵⁰ we do not, it is pity of our lives²⁵¹.

Enter Maria [with a letter].

Sir Toby

¹⁰³⁰Here comes the little villain²⁵²! How now, my metal of India²⁵³?

Maria

Get ye all three into the box-tree²⁵⁴. Malvolio's coming down this walk; he has been yonder i'the sun practicing behavior to his own shadow this half hour.

¹⁰³⁵Observe him, for the love of mockery, for I know this letter will make a contemplative idiot of him. Close²⁵⁵, in the name of jesting! [*The men hide.*]

241. For Fabian replacing the Clown, compare TLN 864-865.

242. Come along. Evidently Sir Toby enters before this new character.

243. An intensifier, like modern "don't worry."

244. Tiniest portion (literally, a very small unit of measurement of weight--20 grains--or of time).

245. A double joke, since (a) melancholy was a cold humor, and (b) "boil" was pronounced "bile," and black bile was thought to be the source of melancholy.

246. Mean.

247. Literally, a dog that savages sheep, but generally used of a malicious or sneaking fellow. The term also occurs in attacks on puritans as hypocrites, possibly linked to the sense of "woman hunter" (since mutton was slang for whore).

248. A sport particularly condemned by puritans (compare previous note and TLN 833).

249. i.e. he will be bruised by their planned foolery.

250. If.

251. We do not deserve to live.

252. Playful abuse, and another reference to Maria's small size.

253. (a) gold, (b) mettle, spirit.

254. I.e. box, a small evergreen tree or shrub much used for ornamental garden hedges, and, in its dwarf variety, for borders. Although Elizabethan theatre companies did have property trees for a few plays, and stage posts, this hedge may be imaginary in performance.

255. An urgent command to keep close, hide (pronounced with "s," not "z," sound). The hiding may be real, or stage convention; see note to TLN 1031.

Lie thou there; [*Placing the letter on the stage*] for here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling²⁵⁶.

Exit.

Enter Malvolio.

Malvolio

1040 [*To the audience*] 'Tis but fortune²⁵⁷, all is fortune. Maria once told me she²⁵⁸ did affect²⁵⁹ me, and I have heard herself²⁶⁰ come thus near, that should she fancy²⁶¹, it should be one of my complexion²⁶². Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than anyone else that follows her²⁶³. What should I think on't? [*He struts about the stage.*]

1045 **Sir Toby**

[*Aside to Sir Andrew and Fabian*] [*and the audience.*] Here's an overweening rogue!²⁶⁴

Fabian

[*Aside*] Oh, peace! Contemplation²⁶⁵ makes a rare turkey-cock²⁶⁶ of him; how he jets²⁶⁷ under his advanced²⁶⁸ plumes!

Sir Andrew

[*Aside*] 'Slight²⁶⁹, I could so beat the rogue!

Sir Toby²⁷⁰

[*Aside*] Peace, I say!

1050 **Malvolio**

To be Count Malvolio!

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] Ah, rogue!

Sir Andrew

[*Aside*] Pistol²⁷¹ him, pistol him!

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] Peace, peace!

Malvolio

256. Trout in shallow water can be caught by "tickling," i.e. gently stroking the belly until the fish can be hooked out by the gills with thumb and fingers. Hence a proverbial image of flattery and gulling.

257. Malvolio is indulging a fantasy of a higher life if Fortune were less fickle.

258. i.e. Olivia.

259. Feel fond of.

260. She, Olivia.

261. Fall in love (but see note to TLN 18-19).

262. Coloring (probably not "temperament" as at TLN 913).

263. Is in her service.

264. Neither this nor the subsequent interjections are heard by Malvolio, but this need not mean they are quiet.

265. Meditation, thought (compare TLN 1035).

266. Proverbially vain. Compare *H5* TLN 2912-2913, "swelling like a turkey-cock."

267. Struts.

268. Raised, displayed.

269. By God's light (an oath).

270. Here and at TLN 53 some editors have argued that Folio's speech prefix "To." must be a misreading of "Fa." because Fabian elsewhere restrains the others from giving themselves away. But Sir Toby's inconsistency adds to the humor; and although *T* and *F* could easily be confused in Secretary hand, speech prefixes were often in an Italian hand.

271. Shoot (with a pistol).

1055 There is example for't: the Lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe^{272 273}.

Sir Andrew

[*Aside*] Fie on him, Jezebel²⁷⁴!

Fabian

[*Aside*] Oh, peace, now he's deeply in²⁷⁵. Look how imagination blows²⁷⁶ him.

Malvolio

1060 Having been three months married to her, sitting in my state²⁷⁷—

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] Oh, for a stone-bow²⁷⁸ to hit him in the eye!

Malvolio

—calling my officers about me, in my branched²⁷⁹ velvet gown²⁸⁰, having come from a day-bed²⁸¹, where I have left Olivia sleeping—

1065 **Sir Toby**

[*Aside*] Fire and brimstone!

Fabian

[*Aside*] Oh, peace, peace!

Malvolio

—and then to have the humor of state²⁸², and after a demure travel of regard²⁸³—telling them I know my place, as I would they should do theirs—to ask for
1070 my kinsman Toby²⁸⁴.

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] Bolts²⁸⁵ and shackles!

Fabian

[*Aside*] Oh, peace, peace, peace! [*Malvolio walks near the letter.*] Now, now!²⁸⁶

Malvolio

Seven of my people, with an obedient start²⁸⁷, make out²⁸⁸ for him. I frown the

272. A subordinate who looks after the clothes in a great household.

273. i.e. a woman of high birth married a social inferior. Attempts to identify a historical lady called, or from, Strachy, and a specific yeoman, have not been persuasive.

274. A biblical example of shamelessness. Only Sir Andrew might fail to realize he is speaking of a woman, the wicked wife of King Ahab (2 Kings 9: 30-7).

275. Absorbed.

276. Inflates, puffs up.

277. Throne (canopied with the cloth of state). Possibly Fabian's previous speech is a result of Malvolio sitting on a stool to act out his idea of a count on a throne. A state may have been on stage for earlier scenes with Orsino and Olivia.

278. A crossbow modified to shoot small stones (rather than arrows).

279. Embroidered with foliage or flowers.

280. A dignified full length garment worn by a man of high social standing.

281. i.e. a bed for use during the day (in his fantasy, with Olivia). Cf. R3 TLN 2288 (Q1), "a lewd day-bed."

282. Temperament of high rank.

283. Grave looking about (at all present).

284. Malvolio, imagining himself of higher rank, familiarly drops the "Sir" here and at TLN 1076.

285. Fetters (equivalent to "shackles").

286. Fabian presumably draws their attention to Malvolio approaching the letter; if so, his failure to see it will heighten their frustration.

287. (a) sudden display of energy, (b) rush.

288. Go forth

1075 while, and perchance wind up my watch²⁸⁹, or play with my—²⁹⁰ [*Realizing he is playing with his steward's chain*] some rich jewel. Toby approaches; curtsies²⁹¹ there to me—

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] Shall this fellow live!

Fabian

[*Aside*] Though our silence be drawn from us with cars²⁹², yet peace!

1080 **Malvolio**

—I extend my hand to him, thus²⁹³; quenching my familiar²⁹⁴ smile with an austere regard of control—²⁹⁵

Sir Toby²⁹⁶

[*Aside*] And does not Toby take²⁹⁷ you a blow o'the lips then?

Malvolio

1085—saying, “Cousin Toby, my fortunes having cast me on your niece give me this prerogative of speech—”

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] What, what!

Malvolio

“—you must amend your drunkenness.”

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] Out, scab²⁹⁸!

Fabian

1090 [*Aside*] Nay, patience, or we break the sinews of our plot!

Malvolio

“Besides, you waste the treasure of your time with a foolish knight—”

Sir Andrew

[*Aside*] That's me, I warrant you.

Malvolio

“—one Sir Andrew.”

1095 **Sir Andrew**

[*Aside*] I knew 'twas I, for many do call me fool.

Malvolio

[*Seeing and then taking up the letter*] What employment²⁹⁹ have we here?

289. Watches were large and usually richly ornamented, so Malvolio is no doubt imagining an ostentatious display of winding it. Malvolio may be dreaming of future possession of such an emblem of wealth; but the Priest owns a watch (see TLN 2324), so it is possible Malvolio also has one. Even if he has, he would not have it out here, since he needs his hands free for the business with his steward's chain that follows (see next note).

290. Malvolio may habitually finger his steward's chain, which would give more point to the visual and verbal business here as he imagines himself a count.

291. Bows low, makes a "courtesy."

292. i.e. chariots, or carts and horses. Compare TGV TLN 1333-1334, "a team of horse shall not pluck that from me."

293. Probably lowering his hand to indicate that Sir Toby would have to kneel to kiss it.

294. Friendly

295. Commanding gaze.

296. Sir Toby mimics Malvolio's earlier familiarity (TLN 1070 and note).

297. Strike.

298. A common term of abuse.

299. Business.

Fabian

[*Aside*] Now is the woodcock³⁰⁰ near the gin³⁰¹.

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] Oh, peace, and the spirit of humors intimate reading aloud³⁰² to him.

Malvolio

[*To the audience, as he examines the outside of the letter*] By my life, this is my lady's hand: these be her very C's, her U's, and her T's³⁰³, and thus makes she her great P's³⁰⁴. It is, in contempt of question³⁰⁵, her hand.

Sir Andrew

[*Aside*] Her C's, her U's, and her T's—why that?³⁰⁶

Malvolio

[*Reading*]

“To the unknown belovèd, this, and my good wishes.”

1105 Her very phrases! [*Starting to break the seal*] By your leave, wax³⁰⁷.

[*Pausing*] Soft!³⁰⁸ And the impressure her Lucrece³⁰⁹, with which she uses to seal³¹⁰. 'Tis my lady! To whom should this be?

[*He breaks the seal and opens the letter.*]

Fabian

[*Aside*] This wins him, liver and all³¹¹.

Malvolio

“Jove knows I love,

But who?

Lips, do not move,

1110 No man must know.”

“No man must know.” What follows? The numbers³¹² altered. “No man must know.” If this should be thee, Malvolio!

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] Marry, hang thee, brock³¹³!

Malvolio

[*Reading*]

“I may command, where I adore,

300. Proverbially stupid birds, easy to trap.

301. Snare, trap.

302. May the god of eccentricity suggest to him that he read aloud.

303. A bawdy pun on "cut" as vulva. Malvolio is likely to be mystified by the audience laughter. The absence of "c" (or a "great P"; see next note) in the handwritten address Malvolio reads at TLN 1104 will not be noticed; they are introduced for the sake of the bawdy.

304. (a) capital P's, (b) copious urinations (pees from the "cut," TLN 1101).

305. Beyond doubt.

306. Sir Andrew's naivety extends the joke; in performance, one of the others sometimes whispers in his ear, and he looks shocked or intrigued.

307. i.e. sealing wax to hold the letter closed.

308. Not too fast (be cautious). Compare TLN 598.

309. i.e. the imprint (in the wax) is of her seal, an image of the Roman Lucretia (a model of chastity who killed herself because she had been raped; see Shakespeare's *Luc.*).

310. Habitually seals.

311. Totally. The liver is the seat of the passions; see note to TLN 43-45.

312. Meter.

313. Badger (often "stinking brock").

1115 But silence, like a Lucrece knife³¹⁴,
With bloodless stroke my heart doth gore;
M.O.A.I.³¹⁵ doth sway my life.”

Fabian

[*Aside*] A fustian³¹⁶ riddle.

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] Excellent wench, say I.

1120 **Malvolio**

“M.O.A.I. doth sway my life.” Nay, but first let me see, let me see, let me see.

Fabian

[*Aside*] What dish o’ poison has she dressed³¹⁷ him!

Sir Toby

[*Aside*] And with what wing³¹⁸ the staniel³¹⁹ checks at³²⁰ it!

Malvolio

1125 “I may command, where I adore.” Why, she may command me: I serve her,
she is my lady. Why, this is evident to any formal capacity.³²¹ There is no
obstruction³²² in this. And the end—what should that alphabetical position³²³
portend? If I could make that resemble something in me! Softly. “M.O.A.I.”³²⁴

1130 **Sir Toby**

[*Aside*] Oh, ay,³²⁵ make up³²⁶ that! He is now at a cold scent.³²⁷

Fabian

[*Aside*] Sowter will cry upon’t for all this, though it be as rank as a fox.³²⁸

Malvolio

“M.” Malvolio! “M,” why that begins my name!

Fabian

1135 [*Aside*] Did not I say he would work it out? The cur is excellent at faults.³²⁹

Malvolio

“M.” But then there is no consonancy in the sequel. That suffers under
probation³³⁰: “A” should follow, but “O” does.

314. i.e. the knife with which she committed suicide; see note to TLN 1106.

315. As the comments in the next two lines make clear, these letters have no obvious meaning (though some ingenious suggestions have been made), but are designed to persuade Malvolio they have.

316. High-sounding gibberish (literally, a coarse substitute cloth). Fabian approves of Maria's choice.

317. Prepared (for)

318. i.e. speed or manoeuvring in flight.

319. Kestrel (a small hawk held in contempt for falconry).

320. Is distracted by and flies at (falconry term).

321. Fully formed (i.e. normal) intelligence.

322. Obstacle, difficulty.

323. Arrangement.

324. Although the verse at TLN 1120 requires the individual letters to be named, it is possible here or at TLN 1145 for Malvolio to attempt various pronunciations as if "moai" were a word.

325. Echoing "O.I."

326. Complete, make sense of.

327. i.e. no longer able to be followed by the hounds. The terminology here switches from falconry to hunting.

328. i.e. the hound Sowter will (pick up the scent again and) give tongue, even though our bait stinks (of deception) as much as a fox.

329. The dog is good at (finding the right trail again where there are) breaks in the scent (because he is too poor a hunter to change direction at the fault).

330. No consistency in what follows; that breaks down under testing.

Fabian

[*Aside*] And “O” shall end³³¹, I hope.

1140 **Sir Toby**

[*Aside*] Ay, or I’ll cudgel him, and make him cry “O”!

Malvolio

And then “I” comes behind.

Fabian

[*Aside*] Ay, an you had any eye³³² behind you, you might see more detraction³³³ at your heels than fortunes before you.

1145 **Malvolio**

“M.O.A.I.” This simulation³³⁴ is not as the former; and yet to crush this a little, it would bow to me, for every one of these letters are in my name. Soft, here follows prose.

[*Reading*]

“If this fall into thy hand, revolve³³⁵. In my stars³³⁶ I am above thee, but be
 1150 not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness,
 and some have greatness thrust upon ’em. Thy fates open their hands,³³⁷
 let thy blood and spirit³³⁸ embrace them; and to inure³³⁹ thyself to what thou
 art like to be, cast thy humble slough³⁴⁰, and appear fresh. Be opposite³⁴¹
 1155 with a kinsman, surly with servants; let thy tongue tang arguments of
 state³⁴²; put thyself into the trick of singularity³⁴³. She thus advises thee, that
 sighs for thee. Remember who commended thy yellow stockings³⁴⁴, and
 1160 wished to see thee ever cross-gartered³⁴⁵. I say remember. Go to³⁴⁶, thou art
 made³⁴⁷ if thou desir’st to be so. If not, let me see thee a steward still³⁴⁸, the
 fellow of servants, and not worthy to touch Fortune’s fingers. Farewell.
 She that would alter services³⁴⁹ with thee,
 The Fortunate-Unhappy.”

331. It will conclude with a groan (punning on the letter "O," which possibly also suggests a hangman's noose).

332. Pronounced as "I" in the riddle; a repeat of the play on "O."

333. Disparagement (possibly with additional reference to stage business of the eavesdroppers behind Malvolio).

334. Counterfeit (i.e. code to be broken).

335. Turn (it) over in your mind. If the actor seeks an easy laugh by physically turning around, he risks losing the primary sense.

336. i.e. astrological determinants at birth (hence rank and fortune).

337. Are being generous.

338. Courage

339. Accustom

340. i.e. throw off your lowly behaviour (as a snake its old skin; pronounced "sluff").

341. Antagonistic (to Sir Toby).

342. Ring out (like a bell) with high political matter. Compare TLN 841.

343. Affectation of idiosyncrasy.

344. A popular color of hose suitable for young (marriageable) men. See note to TLN 1535. Given Olivia's aversion to yellow (TLN 1201), "probably the only commendation is in this letter, and . . . Malvolio's imagination does the rest" (Penguin).

345. A flamboyant style of garter finished with a bow above the knee. See note to TLN 1535.

346. "well then."

347. Assured of success (in life).

348. This final confirmation may be shared with the audience in delight.

349. Exchange duties (by raising him from servant to husband and master).

1165 Daylight and champaign³⁵⁰ discovers³⁵¹ not more! This is open³⁵². I will³⁵³ be proud, I
 will read politic authors³⁵⁴, I will baffle³⁵⁵ Sir Toby, I will wash off gross
 acquaintance, I will be point-device³⁵⁶ the very man. I do not now fool myself,
 to let imagination jade³⁵⁷ me; for every reason excites to³⁵⁸ this, that my lady
 1170 loves me. She did commend my yellow stockings of late, she did praise my
 leg being cross-gartered, and in this she manifests herself to my love, and
 with a kind of injunction drives me to these habits³⁵⁹ of her liking. I thank my
 stars, I am happy³⁶⁰. I will be strange, stout³⁶¹, in yellow stockings, and cross-
 1175 gartered, even with the swiftness of putting on. Jove³⁶² and my stars be
 praised! Here is yet a postscript. *[Reading]*

“Thou canst not choose but know who I am. If thou entertain’st³⁶³ my
 love, let it appear in thy smiling; thy smiles become thee well.

Therefore in my presence still³⁶⁴ smile, dear my sweet, I prithee.”

1180 Jove, I thank thee. I will smile³⁶⁵, I will do everything that thou³⁶⁶ wilt have me.
Exit.

Fabian

I will not give my part of this sport for a pension³⁶⁷ of thousands to be paid
 from the Sophy³⁶⁸.

Sir Toby

I could marry this wench for this device—

1185 **Sir Andrew**

So could I too.

Sir Toby

—and ask no other dowry with her, but such another jest.

Sir Andrew

Nor I neither.

Enter Maria.

350. Open country. The first syllable is stressed and pronounced as in "champion."

351. Reveals

352. Clear, evident.

353. Malvolio uses the emphatic "will," not the standard "shall," here and in the following lines.

354. i.e. from whom he can learn "arguments of state" (TLN 1155-1156).

355. (a) confound, (b) display to the world as disgraced.

356. Precisely (i.e. in every detail).

357. Trick (as a deceitful horse--a jade--would).

358. Induces (belief in).

359. (a) clothes, (b) behavior.

360. Fortunate.

361. Aloof, proud. Compare TLN 1154-1155.

362. Malvolio is perhaps echoing Olivia's apparent choice of pagan god in the letter (TLN 1109) here and in 3.4.

363. Receive, accept.

364. Always.

365. Malvolio uses the emphatic form "will." In production Malvolio often has some trouble forcing his customary disapproving face into a grotesque smile at this point. Practising a set face was a known Elizabethan affectation.

366. Malvolio for the first time uses the intimate singular pronoun such as lovers use (and Maria put in the letter).

367. Regular payment.

368. The Shah of Persia (modern Iran). An account of the embassy of Sir Anthony Sherley to Persia, and the Shah's rich gifts to him, was published in 1600.

1190**Fabian**

Here comes my noble gull-catcher³⁶⁹.

Sir Toby

[Abasing himself on the stage] Wilt thou set thy foot o' my neck?³⁷⁰

Sir Andrew

[Following suit as Sir Toby rises] Or o' mine either?

Sir Toby

Shall I play³⁷¹ my freedom at tray-trip³⁷², and become thy bondslave?

1195**Sir Andrew**

I' faith, or I either?

Sir Toby

Why, thou hast put him in such a dream that when the image of it leaves him he must run mad.

Maria

Nay, but say true, does it work upon him?

Sir Toby

Like aqua-vitae³⁷³ with a midwife.

1200**Maria**

If you will then see the fruits of the sport, mark his first approach before my lady. He will come to her in yellow stockings, and 'tis a color she abhors, and cross-gartered, a fashion she detests; and he will smile upon her, which
1205will now be so unsuitable to her disposition, being addicted to a melancholy as she is, that it cannot but turn him into a notable contempt³⁷⁴. If you will see it, follow me.

[Exit.]

Sir Toby

To the gates of Tartarus³⁷⁵, thou most excellent devil of wit!

[Exit following Maria.]

1210**Sir Andrew**

I'll make one too.³⁷⁶

[Exit following them both.]

369. Trapper of fools.

370. A traditional symbol of supremacy. Compare Cym. TLN 1652-1653, "Thus mine enemy fell, / And thus I set my foot on's neck."

371. Wager, play for.

372. A dice game needing a three ("tray") thrown to win.

373. Brandy (or other spirits).

374. Public subject of scorn.

375. The classical hell; note "devil" in this sentence.

376. Sir Andrew's fifth "me too"-ism since TLN 1185 is reinforced by a fear of being left behind as they exit following Maria.

56.

Twelfth Night: Act 3

William Shakespeare

Twelfth Night (Modern). [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#). University of Victoria. Editors: David Carnegie and Mark Houlahan.

Scene 1

Enter [from different ways] Viola [as Cesario] and Clown [playing on tabor and pipe¹].

Viola

1215 Save thee², friend, and thy music. Dost thou live by³ thy tabor?

Clown

No, sir, I live by⁴ the church.

Viola

Art thou a churchman?⁵

Clown

No such matter, sir. I do live by the church, for I do live at my house, and
1220 my house doth stand by the church.

Viola

So thou mayst say the king lies by⁶ a beggar, if a beggar dwell near him; or
the church stands by⁷ thy tabor, if thy tabor stand by the church.

Clown

You have said,⁸ sir. [*To the audience as well as Viola*] To see this age! A

1. Playing both at the same time was common, though Viola only refers to the Clown's drumming. Viola's reference to the Clown's "tabor" (a small drum used chiefly to accompany a pipe or trumpet), and mention of "thy music", strongly suggests that Robert Armin was playing both drum and pipe, one with each hand. An earlier Elizabethan clown, Richard Tarlton, is *pictured* in a manuscript drawing doing just that, and a woodcut of *Kemp's Nine Days' Wonder* (1600) shows Thomas Sly, Kemp's taborer, playing both instruments as he accompanies Kemp's famous jig from London to Norwich. See also note to TLN 296, and R. A. Foakes, *Illustrations of the English Stage 1580–1642* (London: Scolar Press, 1985), pp. 44–5 and 150.
2. God preserve you. Viola as a matter of course uses the singular pronoun to a social inferior; compare the more formal greetings at TLN 1281–1283.
3. Make a living by.
4. Live beside.
5. Since the Clown is in motley, Viola is ironic or continuing the joke.
6. (a) dwells by, (b) sleeps with.
7. (a) is near, (b) is maintained by.
8. The Clown appears to accept Viola's skill with words, as he did Maria's at TLN 320, but goes on to make that the subject for further jesting.

1225sentence⁹ is but a cheverel¹⁰ glove to a good wit: how quickly the wrong side may be turned outward!

Viola

Nay, that's certain: they that dally¹¹ nicely¹² with words may quickly make them wanton¹³.

Clown

I would therefore my sister¹⁴ had had no name, sir.

1230**Viola**

Why, man?

Clown

Why, sir, her name's a word, and to dally with that word might make my sister wanton. But indeed, words are very rascals since bonds¹⁵ disgraced them.

Viola

Thy reason, man?

1235**Clown**

Troth, sir, I can yield you none without words, and words are grown so false I am loath to prove reason with them.

Viola

I warrant thou art a merry fellow and car'st for nothing.

1240**Clown**

Not so, sir, I do care for something; but in my conscience, sir, I do not care for you: if that be to care for nothing, sir, I would it would make you invisible.¹⁶

Viola

Art not thou the Lady Olivia's fool?

Clown

1245No indeed, sir! The Lady Olivia has no folly. She will keep no fool, sir, till she be married; and fools are as like husbands as pilchards¹⁷ are to herrings: the husband's the bigger. I am indeed not her fool, but her corrupter of words.

Viola

I saw thee late¹⁸ at the Count Orsino's.

9. i.e. a pithy form of words, an aphorism (Latin *sententia*, whence modern "sententious").

10. Kid leather (noted for pliancy and capability of being stretched; pronounced "shevril"). Compare Rom. TLN 1185-1186, "a wit of cheverel, that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad."

11. (a) play, (b) flirt.

12. Subtly.

13. (a) capricious, equivocal, (b) lascivious. See also TLN 1231.

14. In production, Viola may become suddenly serious in listening to the Clown's wise wit about the ambiguity of sisters and words.

15. Either (a) words are regarded as rogues, now that legal contracts ("bonds") have made a person's word distrusted; or, less likely, (b) words are dishonored since so many promises have been broken.

16. The Clown's elaborate syllogism runs thus: since he does "care for something," Viola's proposition that he cares for nothing is untrue. But "I do not care for you" is the same, in this chop-logic, as "I do care for not-you, i.e. nothing." Hence "Cesario" is categorized as (a) invisible, and (b) worthless, naught (nought, zero, "nothing"), with possibly a double sexual quibble, unrecognized by the Clown, on "no thing" as lacking a penis, and "nought" (a circle) as the vagina.

17. Small fish very similar to "herrings."

18. Lately.

1250 **Clown**

Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb¹⁹ like the sun, it shines everywhere. I would be sorry, sir, but the fool should be as oft with your master as with my mistress²⁰: I think I saw your wisdom²¹ there.

Viola

1255 Nay, an²² thou pass upon me²³, I'll no more with thee. Hold, [*Giving him a coin*] there's expenses for thee.

Clown

Now Jove, in his next commodity²⁴ of hair, send thee a beard²⁵.

Viola

By my troth, I'll tell thee, I am almost sick for one, [*To the audience*] though
1260 I would not have it grow on my chin.²⁶ [*To the Clown.*] Is thy lady within?

Clown

[*Indicating the coin*] Would not a pair of these have bred,²⁷ sir?

Viola

Yes, being kept together, and put to use.²⁸

Clown

I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir, to bring a Cressida to
[*Displaying the coin*] this Troilus.²⁹

1265 **Viola**

I understand you, sir, 'tis well begged. [*Gives another coin.*]

Clown

The matter, I hope, is not great, sir, begging but a beggar³⁰: Cressida was a beggar. My lady is within, sir. I will conster³¹ to them whence you come; who
1270 you are, and what you would, are out of my welkin—I might say element, but the word is overworn.³²

Exit.

Viola

19. Around the earth. In the Ptolemaic system, the sun was thought to circle the earth, the centre of the universe.
20. i.e. it would be a pity if (a) I, (b) you, (c) folly, were not to spend as much time with Orsino as with Olivia.
21. A mocking title, = "fool."
22. If
23. Jest at (from fencing, "thrust") me; the emphasis is on "me."
24. Consignment.
25. The Clown's earlier implication that Viola is in some sense his fellow or rival is reinforced by this one use of the singular "thee" as he emphasizes Cesario's youth (and, probably unconsciously, Viola's disguise).
26. Emphasis must be on "my".
27. (a) produced offspring, (b) earned interest. Compare *MV TLN 422-423*, "is your gold and silver ewes and rams?" "I cannot tell, I make it breed as fast."
28. (a) copulation, (b) usury, earning interest. Viola, as usual, extends the Clown's jest.
29. Pandarus of Troy acted as "pander" to his niece Cressida and Troilus. The story was well known from Chaucer and other poets, and Shakespeare probably wrote his *Tro.* shortly after *TN*.
30. I.e. the coin he has begged is a beggar because it is Cressida (portrayed in later versions of the story, and in Dekker and Chettle's 1599 *Troyelles* and *Cresseda*, as a beggar and leper).
31. Construe, explain (to those within). This unusual usage, like "welkin" and "element," gives an air of mock-learning.
32. The Clown's main point is that he is in doubt about Cesario's identity and purpose. The Clown's word-play starts with the ostentatiously poetic "welkin" for "sky" (i.e. region, knowledge). The discarded "element" also means sky (air, one of the four elements; see *TLN 32*); it is "overworn" either because of recent stage satire (directed at Ben Jonson in Dekker's *Satiromastix*) or because Malvolio uses it (see *TLN 1646*).

[To the audience] This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,
 And to do that well craves a kind of wit.
 He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
 The quality³³ of persons, and the time;
 1275 And like the haggard, check at every feather³⁴
 That comes before his eye. This is a practice³⁵
 As full of labor as a wise man's art:
 For folly that he wisely shows,³⁶ is fit³⁷;
 But wise men, folly-fall'n,³⁸ quite taint their wit.³⁹
 1280 Enter Sir Toby and Sir Andrew.

Sir Toby

Save you, gentleman.

Viola

And you, sir.

Sir Andrew

*Dieu vous garde, monsieur.*⁴⁰

Viola

*Et vous aussi; votre serviteur.*⁴¹

1285 **Sir Andrew**

I hope, sir, you are, and I am yours.⁴²

Sir Toby

Will you encounter⁴³ the house? My niece is desirous you should enter, if
 your trade⁴⁴ be to her.

Viola

I am bound⁴⁵ to your niece, sir; I mean, she is the list⁴⁶ of my voyage.

1290 **Sir Toby**

Taste⁴⁷ your legs, sir, put them to motion.

Viola

33. (a) nature, (b) rank.

34. Like an untamed adult hawk, fly at every lure (that the trainer swings) in its view. Some editors believe this should read "Not, like the haggard," since good clowning, unlike the behavior of an unruly hawk, depends on careful observation and choosing the right moment; but that is the purpose of the hawk's training.

35. Profession, skill.

36. Shows wisely (with discretion).

37. Appropriate.

38. i.e. who have fallen into folly.

39. Infect their (? reputation for) intelligence. The rhyming couplet gives a sense of thematic completion to the entire sequence from the start of the scene.

40. "God save you, sir." (French.)

41. "And you also; [I am] your servant." (French.)

42. Since Sir Andrew's phrase is memorized ("without book," TLN 144), he is comically at a loss when Viola replies in French.

43. Either (a) confront as an adversary, or (b) go to meet. Whether Sir Toby is mocking Cesario, or is simply extravagant in his language (perhaps because drunk), is not clear.

44. Business. Perhaps contemptuous.

45. (a) bound for (nautical, following "trade"), (b) obliged to (for the invitation), (c) tied to. Viola's quick expansion of the nautical metaphor may be to avoid embarrassing inquiry into (c).

46. Boundary (hence, "destination"). Viola gives as good as she gets in response to Sir Toby's figurative language.

47. Try. Compare TLN 1762.

My legs do better understand⁴⁸ me, sir, than I understand what you mean by bidding me taste my legs.

Sir Toby

I mean to go, sir, to enter.

Viola

I will answer you with gait and entrance—⁴⁹

Enter Olivia and [Maria].

1295 But we are prevented.⁵⁰ [*To Olivia*] Most excellent accomplished lady, the heavens⁵¹ rain odors on you.⁵²

Sir Andrew

[*To the audience*] That youth's a rare courtier: "rain odors"—well.⁵³

1300 **Viola**

My matter hath no voice, lady, but to your own most pregnant⁵⁴ and vouchsafed⁵⁵ ear.

Sir Andrew

[*Writing*] "Odors," "pregnant," and "vouchsafed": I'll get 'em all three all ready.⁵⁶

Olivia

1305 Let the garden door⁵⁷ be shut, and leave me to my hearing.

[*Exeunt Maria and Sir Toby, followed by Sir Andrew*][*observing Olivia.*]

Give me your hand, sir.

[*Viola kneels instead to kiss Olivia's hand.*]

Viola

My duty, madam, and most humble service.⁵⁸

Olivia

What is your name?

Viola

Cesario is your servant's⁵⁹ name, fair princess.

Olivia

My servant, sir? 'Twas never merry world⁶⁰

1310 Since lowly feigning⁶¹ was called compliment.

Y'are servant to the Count Orsino, youth.

Viola

48. (a) stand under, (b) comprehend.

49. (a) going and entering (as Sir Toby asked), (b) gate and doorway.

50. Anticipated, forestalled.

51. May the heavens.

52. In production, Viola may present Orsino's jewel (TLN 1013) at this point. Shakespeare makes no mention of it here.

53. Probably "that's good" (rather than "good heavens!").

54. Receptive.

55. Bestowed (i.e. attentive); probably pronounced vouchsafed.

56. Perhaps memorizing, but more likely by writing them in his table-book, which he may now be doing. Compare Ham. TLN 792, "My tables--meet it is I set it down."

57. i.e. the door into the private walled garden where they are now imagined to be.

58. Although Olivia offers her hand, as to an equal, Viola emphasizes her page's role, probably kneeling and kissing the hand.

59. Servant: (a) attendant, (b) suitor, love.

60. i.e. things have never been good since.

61. Pretended humility.

And he is yours, and his must needs be yours:
Your servant's servant is your servant, madam.

Olivia

For him, I think not on him; for his thoughts,
1315 Would they were blanks,⁶² rather than filled with me.

Viola

Madam, I come to whet your gentle thoughts
On his behalf.

Olivia

Oh, by your leave, I pray you!⁶³
I bade you never speak again of him;
1320 But would you undertake another suit,
I had rather hear you to solicit that
Than music from the spheres.⁶⁴

Viola

Dear lady—

Olivia

Give me leave, beseech you. I did send,⁶⁵
1325 After the last enchantment you did here,
A ring in chase of you. So did I abuse⁶⁶
Myself, my servant, and I fear me, you.
Under your hard construction⁶⁷ must I sit,
To force that on you in a shameful cunning
1330 Which you knew none of yours. What might you think?
Have you not set mine honor at the stake,
And baited it with all th'unmuzzled⁶⁸ thoughts
That tyrannous heart can think? To one of your receiving⁶⁹
Enough is shown; a cypress, not a bosom,
1335 Hides my heart.⁷⁰ So, let me hear you speak.⁷¹

Viola

I pity you.

Olivia

That's a degree⁷² to love.

62. Blank pages. Compare TLN 999; Orsino's thoughts will be filled with the "blank" of Viola's story.

63. Olivia's completion of the blank verse line started by Viola suggests urgency and interruption.

64. i.e. the celestial music, inaudible to mortals, created by the rotation of the crystalline spheres supporting the planets and fixed stars.

65. Whether Viola's beginning and Olivia's interruption constitute two short lines or a shared hexameter, the metrical disruption clearly signals Olivia's urgency and breach of decorum.

66. Wrong.

67. Harsh interpretation.

68. The image is from bear-baiting, with Olivia's honor chained to a stake like the bear, and baited (bitten, hence wounded) by Cesario's contemptuous thoughts (like unmuzzled dogs).

69. Perception.

70. i.e. transparent gauze, not flesh, covers my heart (therefore you can see my feelings). The metaphor is stronger if Olivia is not actually wearing cypress; therefore she may have changed out of mourning. See TLN 459 and TLN 521-524, where her mourning veil is probably black cypress.

71. Possibly Olivia has to prompt Viola to speak.

72. Step.

Viola

No, not a grece⁷³: for 'tis a vulgar⁷⁴ proof
That very oft we pity enemies.

1340 **Olivia**

Why then, methinks 'tis time to smile again.
O world, how apt the poor are to be proud!⁷⁶
If one should be a prey, how much the better
To fall before the lion than the wolf!⁷⁷
*Clock strikes.*⁷⁸

1345 The clock upbraids me with the waste of time.
Be not afraid, good youth, I will not have you;
And yet when wit and youth is come to harvest,⁷⁹
Your wife is like to reap a proper⁸⁰ man.
There lies your way, due west.⁸¹

1350 **Viola**

Then westward ho!⁸²
Grace and good disposition⁸³ attend your ladyship.
You'll nothing, madam, to my lord by me?

Olivia

Stay!⁸⁴
I prithee tell me what thou⁸⁵ think'st of me?

Viola

That you do think you are not what you are.⁸⁶

1355 **Olivia**

If I think so, I think the same of you.⁸⁷

73. This obsolete word tends to be used for shallow ceremonial steps raising a throne, altar, etc., and does not have the more general meanings of "degree." Pronounced "greece." Viola is perhaps thinking of a high "degree" (e.g. temporary seating for theatre at court), and replying "not even a very low 'grece'." Folio's "grize" suggests a "z" sound in Elizabethan pronunciation.
74. Common, generally accepted.
75. Viola gently returns Olivia's ring at this point in the Nunn film.
76. Either (a) isn't it typical that, though rejected, I am still proud, or (b) look at him, poor but too proud to accept me.
77. Either (a) Cesario rather than anyone base, or (b) Orsino, a king among men, rather than the cruel Cesario. The first is more likely, because Olivia is a victim ("prey") to Cesario, but never offers herself to Orsino.
78. Since this unusual stage direction serves no plot function, the thematic importance to Shakespeare of time passing deserves notice.
79. i.e. when you reach maturity.
80. (a) worthy, excellent, (b) handsome.
81. Perhaps non-specific, perhaps metaphorically "into the sunset, out of my life"; or Shakespeare may simply be setting up Viola's next line.
82. The familiar Thames watermen's cry seeking passengers going upriver to the court at Westminster (perhaps suggesting Orsino's court) from the City (or the theaters). Compare departure by water at TLN 496-498. "Westward Ho" could also, as in Dekker and Webster's play of that name (perf. 1604, pub. 1607), imply less salubrious destinations upriver such as Brentford, notorious as a place of assignation.
83. God's grace, and peace of mind.
84. In the Folio, this is printed as part of the next line, adding an extra foot to the meter. But possibly a long pause is indicated, signaling the higher intensity of Olivia's question and the exchange to come.
85. Here and at TLN 1367 Olivia switches from "you" to "thou" as she declares her love; see note to TLN 1180.
86. That you mistake yourself. There are several ways in which Olivia mistakes herself, including loving a woman, loving beneath her rank, thinking herself rejected by a poor young man, and cloistering herself from an appropriate marriage with Orsino.
87. i.e. that you are more than you appear (perhaps noble in disguise; compare TLN 585-588).

Viola

Then think you right: *[Including the audience]* I am not what I am.⁸⁸

Olivia

I would you were as I would have you be.

Viola

Would it be better, madam, than I am?

I wish it might⁸⁹, for now I am your fool!⁹⁰

1360**Olivia**

[To the audience] Oh, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful⁹¹

In the contempt and anger of his lip!

A murd'rous guilt shows not itself more soon,

Than love that would seem hid. Love's night is noon.⁹²

[To Viola] Cesario, by the roses of the spring,

1365By maidhood, honor, truth, and everything,

I love thee so, that maugre⁹³ all thy pride,

Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide.

Do not extort thy reasons from this clause,

For that I woo, thou therefore hast no cause;

1370But rather reason thus with reason fetter:⁹⁴

Love sought is good, but giv'n⁹⁵ unsought is better.

Viola

By innocence I swear, and by my youth,

I have one heart, one bosom,⁹⁶ and one truth,

And that no woman has; nor never none

1375Shall mistress be of it, save I alone.

And so adieu, good madam; never more

Will I my master's tears to you deplore.⁹⁷⁹⁸

Olivia

Yet come again—for thou⁹⁹ perhaps mayst move

That heart, which now abhors, to like his love.

Exeunt [different ways].

88. Viola's rueful self-awareness about her situation again means more to the audience than to the person addressed.

89. (be better).

90. i.e. being made a fool of by you.

91. Compare *AYL TLN* 1838, "I had rather hear you chide than this man woo."

92. Proverbially, "murder will out," and "love cannot be hid." Olivia's passion is about to declare itself in full light.

93. Despite (pronounced "mauger": "au" as in "taught").

94. i.e. do not squeeze out arguments from this proposition, that because I love you therefore you should not love me; instead, restrain that reasoning with this, as follows.

95. In performance the actor would probably elide to one syllable for the meter.

96. (a) seat of affection (i.e. the heart), (b) repository of secrets.

97. i.e. tell you sadly about Orsino's love-grief.

98. The intensity of this exchange is heightened by its structure, a 14-line rhyming couplet sonnet of declaration and reply. Cf. *Rom. TLN* 670-685.

99. Stressed; therefore "you if anyone."

Scene 2

Enter Sir Andrew,¹⁰⁰ [followed by] Sir Toby and Fabian.

Sir Andrew

No, faith, I'll not stay a jot longer!

Sir Toby

Thy reason, dear venom, give thy reason.

Fabian

1385 You¹⁰¹ must needs yield your reason, Sir Andrew!

Sir Andrew

Marry, I saw your niece do more favors to the count's serving-man than ever she bestowed upon me. I saw't i'th'orchard.¹⁰²

Sir Toby

Did she see thee the while,¹⁰³ old boy, tell me that?

Sir Andrew

1390 As plain as I see you now.

Fabian

This was a great argument¹⁰⁴ of love in her toward you.

Sir Andrew

'Slight,¹⁰⁵ will you make an ass o'me?

Fabian

1395 I will prove it legitimate, sir, upon the oaths of judgment and reason.

Sir Toby

And they have been grand-jurymen¹⁰⁶ since before Noah was a sailor.

Fabian

She did show favor to the youth in your sight only to exasperate you, to
1400 awake your dormouse¹⁰⁷ valor, to put fire in your heart, and brimstone¹⁰⁸ in your
liver. You should then have accosted¹⁰⁹ her, and with some excellent jests, fire-
new from the mint,¹¹⁰ you should have banged the youth into dumbness. This
was looked for at your hand, and this was balked.¹¹¹ The double gilt¹¹² of this

100. Probably he enters first, given his "venom" (TLN 1383) and the other two trying to dissuade him from leaving. His intended departure may be evident by his wearing boots and spurs (see note to TLN 29). His intended departure may be evident by his wearing boots and spurs (see note to TLN 29).

101. Sir Toby uses, as always, the familiar second person singular, Fabian the respectful plural.

102. Garden (not necessarily for fruit trees). Compare "garden door," TLN 1304.

103. During that time.

104. Proof.

105. By God's light (as at TLN 1048).

106. Judgment and Reason are personified as members of a grand jury, who decide whether evidence is sufficient to send a case to trial.

107. (a) hibernating, (b) timid.

108. Sulphur.

109. The audience, and even Sir Andrew, may recall Sir Toby's definition at TLN 17-172.

110. i.e. like a coin freshly minted from molten metal.

111. Let slip.

112. I.e. "golden opportunity," since gilded twice over. Cf. *2H4* TLN 2661 "England shall double gild his treble guilt."

1405 opportunity you let time wash off, and you are now sailed into the north¹¹³ of
my lady's opinion, where you will hang like an icicle on a Dutchman's
beard,¹¹⁴ unless you do redeem it by some laudable attempt, either of valor or
policy.¹¹⁵

1410 **Sir Andrew**

An't be any way, it must be with valor, for policy I hate. [*To the audience*] I
had as lief¹¹⁶ be a Brownist,¹¹⁷ as a politician¹¹⁸.

Sir Toby

Why then, build me¹¹⁹ thy fortunes upon the basis of valor. Challenge me the
1415 count's youth to fight with him, hurt him in eleven places. My niece shall
take note of it; and assure thyself, there is no love-broker¹²⁰ in the world can
more prevail in man's commendation with women than report of valor.

Fabian

There is no way but this, Sir Andrew.

1420 **Sir Andrew**

Will either of you bear me a challenge to him?

Sir Toby

Go, write it in a martial hand.¹²¹ Be cursed¹²² and brief. It is no matter how witty,
so it be eloquent, and full of invention.¹²³ Taunt him with the license of ink.¹²⁴ If
1425 thou "thou'st"¹²⁵ him some thrice, it shall not be amiss; and as many lies¹²⁶ as will
lie in thy sheet¹²⁷ of paper, although the sheet were big enough for the bed of
Ware¹²⁸ in England, set 'em down. Go, about it! Let there be gall¹²⁹ enough in thy
ink; though thou write with a goose-pen¹³⁰, no matter. About it!

1430 **Sir Andrew**

Where shall I find you?

113. Cold and distant region.

114. The arctic expedition of Willem Barents in 1596-7 would have lent topicality to this use of "north." See also note to TLN 1467-1469 for discussion of Novaya Zembyla in the "new map".

115. (a) strategy, (b) scheming (derogatory; see "politicians," TLN 1411-1412, and TLN 774).

116. Rather.

117. i.e. puritan. The authorities feared the campaign by the sect's founder, Robert Browne, for radical reform of church government, as dangerously "political."

118. Amoral intriguer (cf. TLN 774).

119. The ethical dative, meaning "for me," but principally acting as an intensifier for Sir Toby's close involvement, as also in the next line.

120. Go-between.

121. No such style of handwriting is known; Sir Toby has probably made it up (although editors have suggested a careless scrawl, or aggressive flourishes).

122. Malignant, disagreeable (usually spelt at the time, as in Folio, "curst").

123. The major divisions of rhetoric, equivalent to style and content. Here, "invention" perhaps also carries the sense of "fabrication". Sir Toby contradicts his earlier advice (from dueling manuals) to be "brief," no doubt in hopes of encouraging Sir Andrew to laughable rhetorical excess.

124. Freedom conferred by writing (not face to face).

125. i.e. rudely use "thou" rather than "you." The prosecution of Sir Walter Raleigh illustrates the usage well: "I *thou* thee, thou traitor!"

126. i.e. iterations of "thou liest," an accusation that would provoke a duel.

127. (a) paper, (b) bedsheet.

128. This bed, an Elizabethan tourist attraction at an inn in Ware, measures over 3 meters square, and is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

129. (a) oak-gall (used in making ink), (b) bitterness.

130. (a) goose quill, (b) pen used by a goose (fool).

Sir Toby

We'll call thee at thy *cubiculo*.¹³¹ Go!

Exit Sir Andrew.

Fabian

This is a dear manikin¹³² to you, Sir Toby.

Sir Toby

1435 I have been dear¹³³ to him, lad, some two thousand¹³⁴ strong, or so.

Fabian

We shall have a rare letter from him—but you'll not deliver't?

Sir Toby

Never trust me¹³⁵ then; and by all means¹³⁶ stir on the youth to an answer. I think
1440 oxen and wainropes¹³⁷ cannot hale¹³⁸ them together. For Andrew, if he were
opened¹³⁹ and you find so much blood in his liver¹⁴⁰ as will clog¹⁴¹ the foot of a
flea, I'll eat the rest of th'anatomy.¹⁴²

Fabian

And his opposite¹⁴³, the youth, bears in his visage no great presage¹⁴⁴ of cruelty.

1445 *Enter Maria.*

Sir Toby

Look where the youngest wren of nine¹⁴⁵ comes.

Maria

If you desire the spleen¹⁴⁶, and will laugh your selves into stitches, follow me.

Yond gull Malvolio is turned heathen, a very renegado¹⁴⁷; for there is no
1450 Christian that means to be saved by believing rightly¹⁴⁸ can¹⁴⁹ ever believe such
impossible passages of grossness.¹⁵⁰ He's in yellow stockings!

Sir Toby

And cross-gartered?

Maria

131. Bedchamber (a humorous or affected use of Latin or Italian).

132. Little man (i.e. "you are fond of this plaything").

133. Expensive (punning on previous line).

134. Either ducats (see note to TLN 139) or pounds.

135. (if I do not). But Sir Toby changes his mind after reading the challenge: see TLN 1701-1706.

136. Probably (a) in every possible way, but possibly (b) certainly (i.e. used permissively).

137. Oxen and their wagon ("wain") harness.

138. Drag.

139. Dissected.

140. A "liver white and pale"--i.e. lacking in blood (courage)--is "the badge of . . . cowardice" (2H4 TLN 2341-2342). Compare "lily-liver'd" (*Mac.* TLN 2332).

141. (a) encumber, clog (in something sticky), (b) provide with clogs (wooden shoes).

142. (a) body for dissection (see "opened," TLN 1440), (b) skeleton (referring to Sir Andrew's thinness). Compare *Err.* TLN 1714-1715, possibly referring to the same actor, "a hungry lean-fac'd villain, / A mere anatomy".

143. Opponent.

144. Sign, portent.

145. i.e. the last hatched, and therefore tiniest, of a brood of nine of the smallest bird (another reference to Maria's size).

146. Amusement (laughter was thought to be controlled by the spleen).

147. Spanish form of "renegade"; traitor to Christianity.

148. Orthodoxly.

149. i.e. who can.

150. Either (a) acts of absurdity, or (b) grossly unbelievable statements (i.e. "passages" of Maria's letter).

1455 Most villainously,¹⁵¹ like a pedant that keeps a school i'th' church.¹⁵² I have
 dogged him like his murderer. He does obey every point of the letter that I
 dropped to betray him. He does smile his face into more lines than is in the
 new map with the augmentation of the Indies¹⁵³; you have not seen such a
 1460 thing as 'tis. I can hardly forbear hurling things at him; I know my lady will
 strike him. If she do, he'll smile, and take't for a great favor.

Sir Toby

Come, bring us, bring us where he is!

Exeunt omnes.

151. Abominably.

152. i.e. schoolmaster who has to use the church for lack of his own schoolroom. Like cross-gartering (see TLN 1159), this sounds far from fashionable.

153. The image of wrinkles probably comes from the rhumb-lines which were a striking feature of a recent map. Maria's description of Malvolio's smile creating "more lines than is in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies" seems to refer to the diagonal "rhumb lines" printed on maps and charts as navigation courses. They can be seen in the particular map Maria is probably referring to, Hakluyt's map of the world published in 1599 or 1600. The crisscrossing diagonal lines create a vivid image of a smiling face crinkling into laugh lines. The map's "augmentation of the Indies" evidently refers to a very much more detailed depiction of the East Indies than in earlier maps (just above one of the first extensive outlines of northern Australia). The other new feature on this map is the detail around the western and northern coasts of the island of Novaya Zemlya north of Russia. That the Dutch Arctic expedition under Barents (hence Barents Sea) was still in the popular imagination is evident in Fabian's warning to Sir Andrew at TLN 1404–1407 (3.2.24–6) that "you are now sailed into the north of my lady's opinion, where you will hang like an icicle on a Dutchman's beard . . ." (see note). Detail from this map is available at TLN 1458. See also Arthur M. Hind, *Engraving in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Part I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), Plates 100, 101.

Scene 3

Enter Sebastian and Antonio.

Sebastian

I would not by my will have troubled you,
But since you make your pleasure of your pains,
I will no further chide you.

¹⁴⁷⁰**Antonio**

I could not stay behind you. My desire,
More sharp than filèd steel, did spur me forth;
And not all¹⁵⁴ love to see you—though so much
As might have drawn one to a longer voyage—
But jealousy¹⁵⁵ what might befall your travel,
¹⁴⁷⁵Being skillless in¹⁵⁶ these parts, which to a stranger,
Unguided and unfriended, often prove
Rough and inhospitable.¹⁵⁷ My willing love,
The rather¹⁵⁸ by these arguments of fear,
Set forth in your pursuit.

¹⁴⁸⁰**Sebastian**

My kind Antonio,
I can no other answer make but thanks,
And thanks, and ever thanks; and oft¹⁵⁹ good turns
Are shuffled off¹⁶⁰ with such uncurrent¹⁶¹ pay.
But were my worth¹⁶², as is my conscience¹⁶³, firm,
¹⁴⁸⁵You should find better dealing. What's to do?
Shall we go see the relics¹⁶⁴ of this town?

Antonio

Tomorrow, sir; best first go see your lodging.

Sebastian

I am not weary, and 'tis long to night.
I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes
¹⁴⁹⁰With the memorials and the things of fame
That do renown this city.

Antonio

154. Only.

155. Anxiety, "fear" (TLN 1478).

156. Ignorant of.

157. Shakespeare may be thinking of pirates (compare 2H6 TLN 2276, "Bargulus the strong Illyrian pirate").

158. More speedily (the original meaning).

159. Folio ("thanks: and ever oft") is defective in meter and sense. Theobald's emendation, accepted here, assumes accidental omission by scribe or compositor of two words already occurring in the line.

160. Evaded.

161. Worthless (because not legal money, not "currency").

162. Value, wealth.

163. Awareness of being indebted.

164. Antiquities (as TLN 1490-1491).

Would you'd pardon me.¹⁶⁵
 I do not without danger walk these streets.
 Once in a sea-fight 'gainst the count his¹⁶⁶ galleys
 1495 I did some service, of such note indeed
 That were I ta'en here it would scarce be answered.¹⁶⁷

Sebastian

Belike¹⁶⁸ you slew great number of his people.

Antonio

Th'offence is not of such a bloody nature,
 Albeit the quality¹⁶⁹ of the time and quarrel
 1500 Might well have given us bloody argument.¹⁷⁰
 It might have since been answered in repaying
 What we took from them, which for traffic's sake¹⁷¹
 Most of our city did. Only myself stood out,
 For which, if I be lapsèd¹⁷² in this place,
 1505 I shall pay dear.

Sebastian

Do not then walk too open¹⁷³.

Antonio

It doth not fit¹⁷⁴ me. Hold, sir, here's my purse.
 In the south suburbs at the Elephant¹⁷⁵
 Is best to lodge; I will bespeak our diet,¹⁷⁶
 1510 Whiles you beguile the time, and feed your knowledge
 With viewing of the town. There shall you have me.¹⁷⁷

Sebastian

Why I your purse?

Antonio

Haply¹⁷⁸ your eye shall light upon some toy¹⁷⁹
 You have desire to purchase; and your store,
 1515 I think, is not for idle markets,¹⁸⁰ sir.

165. Possibly completing an irregular verse line.

166. Count's.

167. i.e. if I were captured, it would be virtually impossible for me to defend myself (under their law). Since reparation would not now be accepted (TLN 1501-1505), his life might be in danger. The metrical irregularity of the line seems to serve neither characterization nor Folio compositorial demands, and could be smoothed by reading: "That were I taken here t'would scarce be answered."

168. I suppose. This line can be spoken as a question from a Sebastian anxious for Antonio, or eager for stories of adventure.

169. Nature.

170. Reason justifying bloodshed. Orsino and the First Officer describe (at TLN 2202-2214) fights that certainly involved bloodshed, but no loss of life.

171. For the sake of trade.

172. Apprehended (an unusual usage).

173. Openly, publicly.

174. Is not appropriate for.

175. There was an inn with this common name very close to the Globe in the "south suburbs" of London.

176. Order our meals (note "feed" in the next line).

177. Find me.

178. Perhaps.

179. Trifle.

180. Your supply of money is not enough for unnecessary expenditure.

Sebastian

I'll be your purse-bearer,¹⁸¹ and leave you for
An hour.

Antonio

To th'Elephant.

Sebastian

I do remember.

Exeunt [different ways].

181. Sebastian is joking about a formal appointment as official in charge of payments.

Scene 4

Enter Olivia and Maria [following].

Olivia

[To the audience] I have sent after him; he says¹⁸² he'll come.

How shall I feast him? What bestow of¹⁸³ him?

For youth is bought more oft than begged or borrowed.¹⁸⁴

1525 I speak too loud—

[To Maria] Where's¹⁸⁵ Malvolio? He is sad and civil,¹⁸⁶

And suits well for a servant with my fortunes¹⁸⁷.

Where is Malvolio?¹⁸⁸

Maria

He's coming, madam, but in very strange manner. He is sure possessed,¹⁸⁹
madam.

1530 **Olivia**

Why, what's the matter? Does he rave?

Maria

No, madam, he does nothing but smile. Your ladyship were best to have
some guard about you if he come, for sure the man is tainted¹⁹⁰ in's wits.

Olivia

Go call him hither.

[Maria starts to exit.]

[To the audience] I am as mad as he,

If sad and merry madness equal be.

182. i.e. suppose he says. The servant sent after Cesario does not return until TLN 1578.

183. On.

184. Olivia turns the proverb "better to buy than to beg or borrow" to a wryly cynical meaning.

185. Folio may have had to contract the metrically preferable "where is" in order to justify a tight line.

186. Grave and circumspect.

187. (a) her bereavement, (b) her love melancholy.

188. The repetition of the question may indicate that Olivia has directed the previous line to the audience, and that Maria has stayed near the door looking out for Malvolio.

189. i.e. by the devil; mad.

190. Diseased. Compare TLN 1279.

1535 *Enter Malvolio*¹⁹¹ [*smiling, in yellow stockings, and cross-gartered*].¹⁹²

How now, Malvolio!

Malvolio

Sweet lady, ho, ho!¹⁹³

1540 **Olivia**

Smil'st thou? I sent for thee upon a sad¹⁹⁴ occasion.

Malvolio

Sad, lady? I could be sad. This does make some obstruction in the blood,¹⁹⁵
this cross-gartering; but what of that? If it please the eye of one,¹⁹⁶ it is with
1545 me as the very true sonnet¹⁹⁷ is, [*Singing*] "Please one, and please all."¹⁹⁸
[*He kisses his hand to her repeatedly.*]

Olivia

Why, how dost thou, man? What is the matter with thee?

Malvolio

Not black in my mind,¹⁹⁹ though yellow²⁰⁰ in my legs. [*Holding up letter*] It²⁰¹ did

191. Malvolio's extraordinary appearance usually provokes loud laughter (often Olivia's prompt to turn and see him), so theatres seldom follow the placing of the Folio entry direction prior to her aside, as Malvolio would upstage her.
192. Yellow was a fashionable color for young (marriageable) men; and garters crossed behind the knee and tied in front in a bow were equally appropriate to a lover. Some critics have suggested that the point about Malvolio's stockings being yellow is that the color had become unfashionable, but costume histories refute this; it is clear that yellow remained a popular color, both in general use and at court, into the seventeenth century. It was often associated with love and marriage (and marital jealousy), and such a light color was evidently fashionable for young (and therefore marriageable) men, or for older men seeking to relive their youth. What is fashionable for a young man may appear surprising or even shocking on an older man, or on a character like Malvolio whose usual dress is probably dark and sober in style and color, in keeping with the hint of puritanism (TLN 833-840). And of course for Olivia, "'tis a color she abhors" (TLN 1202). The purpose of garters was to support a man's trunk hose. Cross-gartering involved placing a ribbon below the front of the knee, passing the ends behind the knee and giving them a cross twist before bringing them forward above the knee and tying them in a bow at the side or in front. This flamboyant style was still in fashion at the time of *Twelfth Night* (though some critics deny this), but, like yellow stockings, it seems to have been a fashion more appropriate for the young and flamboyant than for an older and graver man. "As rare an old youth as ever walked cross-gartered" (John Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy* [1629], 3.1.2) describes a man seeking to dress younger than his age. The combination of yellow stockings and cross-gartering displays the usually soberly dressed Malvolio as a lover to Olivia. He is gartered, however, not ungartered; he does not show the proper marks of a lover as Rosalind describes them *As You Like It*:
- Your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied, and everything about you demonstrating a careless desolation. But you are no such man. You are rather point-device in your accouterments, as loving yourself. . . . (TLN 1562-1567)
- See M. Channing Linthicum, "Malvolio's Cross-Gartered Yellow Stockings," *Modern Philology* 25 (1927-28), pp. 87-93, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), and C. Willett and Phillis Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954) and *Handbook of English Costume in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1955).
193. The words are in effect a stage direction for laughter (in addition to his smiles) rather than words to be articulated.
194. (a) serious (Olivia's sense), (b) melancholy (Malvolio's sense in the next line).
195. Which would cause melancholy; see previous note.
196. i.e. of Olivia. His innuendo is lost on her.
197. Song (not exclusively a 14-line poem; see next note).
198. The refrain of a ballad, and therefore probably sung by Malvolio. Richard Tarlton, the theatre clown wrote the ballad, which says all women want the same thing: their (sexual) will.
199. Melancholy (thought to be caused by black bile; see also note to TLN 1542).
200. Although yellow might be the color for a lover (see note to TLN 1158), "Black and Yellow" was also a popular sad song.
201. i.e. the letter.

1550 come to his hands, and commands shall be executed. I think we do know the
sweet roman hand.²⁰²

Olivia

Wilt thou go to bed,²⁰³ Malvolio?

Malvolio

To bed! [*Singing*] "Ay, sweetheart, and I'll come to thee."²⁰⁴

Olivia

1555 God comfort thee! Why dost thou smile so, and kiss thy hand²⁰⁵ so oft?

Maria

How do you, Malvolio?

Malvolio

[*To Maria, scornfully*] At your request? Yes, nightingales answer daws!²⁰⁶

Maria

1560 Why appear you with this ridiculous boldness before my lady?

Malvolio

[*To Olivia*] "Be not afraid of greatness": 'twas well writ.

Olivia

What mean'st thou by that, Malvolio?

Malvolio

"Some are born great—"

Olivia

Ha?

¹⁵⁶⁵**Malvolio**

"—some achieve greatness—"

Olivia

What say'st thou?

Malvolio

"—and some have greatness thrust upon them."

Olivia

Heaven restore thee!

Malvolio

1570 "Remember who commended thy²⁰⁷ yellow stockings—"

Olivia

Thy yellow stockings?

Malvolio

"—and wished to see thee cross-gartered."

Olivia

Cross-gartered?

202. i.e. Olivia's fashionable italic (Italian) handwriting (not the old-fashioned English Secretary hand).

203. (a) to rest and recover (Olivia's sense), (b) for sex (Malvolio's sense in the next line).

204. Again from a popular song, and presumably sung.

205. A gentlemanly courtesy to a lady. Compare *Othello* TLN 947-951, "it had been better you had not kiss'd your three fingers so oft . . . Yet again, your fingers to your lips?"

206. Apparently sarcastic: he (the prized singing nightingale) refuses to answer Maria (a stupid noisy jackdaw).

207. It is not clear if Olivia here thinks Malvolio is addressing her (rudely) with "thy yellow stockings." Some editors emend "thy" to "my," but probably she simply echoes him in bewilderment, though at TLN 1575 she clearly believes his "thou" (from the letter) to be addressed to her.

Malvolio

“Go to, thou art made, if thou desir’st to be so—”

1575 **Olivia**
Am I made?²⁰⁸

Malvolio

“—if not, let me see thee a servant still.”

Olivia

[*To the audience*] Why, this is very midsummer madness.²⁰⁹
Enter Servant.

Servant

1580 Madam, the young gentleman of the Count Orsino’s is returned; I could hardly²¹⁰ entreat him back. He attends your ladyship’s pleasure.

Olivia

I’ll come to him. [*Exit Servant.*] Good Maria, let this fellow be looked to. Where’s my cousin 1585 Toby? Let some of my people have a special care of him; I would not have him miscarry²¹¹ for the half of my dowry.
Exit [following Servant, Maria a different way].

Malvolio

Oh ho, do you come near²¹² me now? [*To the audience*] No worse man than Sir Toby to look to me! This concurs directly with the letter. She sends him 1590 on purpose, that I may appear stubborn to him; for she incites me to that in the letter. “Cast thy humble slough,” says she, “be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants, let thy tongue tang with²¹³ arguments of state, put thyself 1595 into the trick of singularity”; and consequently²¹⁴ sets down the manner how: as, a sad face, a reverend carriage, a slow tongue, in the habit²¹⁵ of some sir of note,²¹⁶ and so forth. I have limed²¹⁷ her, but it is Jove’s²¹⁸ doing, and Jove make me thankful. And when she went away now, “Let this fellow²¹⁹ be looked to.” 1600 “Fellow!” Not Malvolio, nor after my degree,²²⁰ but “fellow.” Why, everything adheres together, that no dram of a scruple, no scruple of a scruple,²²¹ no obstacle, no incredulous or unsafe²²² circumstance—what can be said? Nothing that can be can come between me and the full prospect of my hopes. Well

208. Olivia is astonished at Malvolio's rude ("thou") offer of a position she already holds ("made" = assured of success in life).

209. Proverbial. Compare, in a different context. *Rom.* TLN 1434-1435, "now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring."

210. Only with difficulty.

211. Come to harm.

212. Begin to understand.

213. The Folio misprint of "langer" for "tang" may indicate confusion which would justify omitting the "with" in order to be absolutely consistent with the letter at TLN 1155-1156.

214. Subsequently.

215. (a) clothing, (b) manner.

216. Distinguished gentleman.

217. Caught (as birds ensnared with sticky birdlime).

218. See TLN 1175.

219. (a) equal (compare "fellow of servants," TLN 1161), (b) inferior person (compare TLN 2253). Malvolio understands (a), whereas Olivia clearly means (b).

220. Rank (as steward).

221. Not a tiny measure ("dram") of doubt ("scruple"), not even a third of a dram ("scruple") of doubt ("scruple").

222. Incredible or unreliable.

1605 Jove, not I, is the doer of this, and he is to be thanked.

Enter Sir Toby, Fabian, and Maria.

Sir Toby

[Pretending not to see Malvolio] Which way is he, in the name of sanctity?

If all the devils of hell be drawn²²³ in little²²⁴, and Legion²²⁵ himself possessed him, yet I'll speak to him.

1610 **Fabian**

Here he is, here he is. *[To Malvolio]* How is't with you, sir? How is't with you, man?

Malvolio

Go off, I discard you. Let me enjoy my private²²⁶. Go off!

Maria

[To Sir Toby and Fabian, aloud, to be overheard] Lo, how hollow the fiend

1615 speaks within²²⁷ him! Did not I tell you? Sir Toby, my lady prays you to have a care of him.

Malvolio

[Aside] Ah ha! Does she so?

Sir Toby

[To them, aloud] Go to, go to. Peace, peace, we must deal gently with him.

1620 Let me alone.²²⁸ *[Approaching Malvolio]* How do you, Malvolio? How is't with you? What, man, defy the devil; consider, he's an enemy to mankind.

Malvolio

Do you know what you say?

Maria

[To them, aloud] La you,²²⁹ an you speak ill of the devil, how he takes it at heart! Pray God he be not bewitched!

1625 **Fabian**

[To them, aloud] Carry his water²³⁰ to th'wise woman.²³¹

Maria

[To them, aloud] Marry, and it shall be done tomorrow morning²³² if I live. My lady would not lose him for more than I'll say.

Malvolio

How now, mistress?

1630 **Maria**

[To them, aloud] Oh Lord!

Sir Toby

223. (a) assembled (as an army), (b) painted.

224. In miniature.

225. The "unclean spirits" possessing a man in Mark 5: 1-20 replied to Jesus "My name is Legion: for we are many" (a Roman legion was about 6000 men).

226. Privacy.

227. This sequence depends on everything Malvolio says being taken as the voice of the devil possessing him (see TLN 1608 and note).

228. Leave it to me.

229. Look you. Malvolio has evidently reacted strongly to Sir Toby's implication that he is in league with the devil.

230. Urine (for diagnosis by a physician or a "wise woman"). Sometimes in production they present Malvolio with an empty flask for the purpose, much to his disgust.

231. A woman skilled in cures (and perhaps in undoing witchcraft).

232. The prospect of Maria's interest in his full chamber-pot will further outrage Malvolio.

[*To them, aloud*] Prithce hold thy peace, this is not the way. Do you not see you move him²³³? Let me alone with him.

Fabian

[*To them, aloud*] No way but gentleness; gently, gently. The fiend is rough, and will not be roughly used.

¹⁶³⁵**Sir Toby**

[*Approaching Malvolio*] Why, how now, my bawcock²³⁴? How dost thou, chuck²³⁵?

Malvolio

Sir!

Sir Toby

Ay, biddy,²³⁶ come with me. What, man, 'tis not for gravity²³⁷ to play at cherry-pit²³⁸ with Satan. Hang him, foul collier!²³⁹

¹⁶⁴⁰**Maria**

[*To them, aloud*] Get him to say his prayers, good Sir Toby, get him to pray.

Malvolio

My prayers, minx!²⁴⁰

Maria

[*To them, aloud*] No, I warrant you, he will not hear of godliness.

¹⁶⁴⁵**Malvolio**

Go hang yourselves all! You are idle,²⁴¹ shallow things; I am not of your element.²⁴² You shall know more hereafter.

Exit.

Sir Toby

[*Laughing*] Is't possible?

Fabian

¹⁶⁵⁰[*Including the audience*] If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction!²⁴³

Sir Toby

His very genius²⁴⁴ hath taken the infection of the device, man.

Maria

Nay, pursue him now, lest the device take air, and taint.²⁴⁵

233. Raise his emotions.

234. Fine bird (in this context a comic term of endearment, like "chuck" and "biddy" which follow). Possibly Sir Toby is clucking to call Malvolio.

235. Chicken.

236. Chick.

237. (a) dignified, (b) appropriate to Gravity (i.e. a personification of a grave, dignified person).

238. A children's game throwing cherry stones into a hole.

239. Dirty coalman (referring to the devil's blackness).

240. Hussy, impertinent girl.

241. Foolish.

242. i.e. in your sphere (of existence). Compare note to TLN 1269-1270.

243. Often in production Fabian acknowledges audience complicity in the theatrical illusion. Shakespeare uses such theatrical reflexivity elsewhere (e.g. *JC* TLN 1326-1331, *Ant.* TLN 3459-3464).

244. Spirit, soul.

245. Be exposed, and spoil (like food).

1655 **Fabian**

Why, we shall make him mad indeed.

Maria

The house will be the quieter.

Sir Toby

Come, we'll have him in a dark room and bound.²⁴⁶ My niece is already in the belief that he's mad. We may carry it thus²⁴⁷ for our pleasure, and his penance, 1660till our very pastime, tired out of breath, prompt us to have mercy on him; at which time we will bring the device to the bar²⁴⁸ and crown thee for a finder of madmen.²⁴⁹

Enter Sir Andrew [with a challenge].

But see, but see!

Fabian

More matter for a May morning!²⁵⁰

1665 **Sir Andrew**

Here's the challenge, read it. I warrant there's vinegar and pepper in't.

Fabian

[Taking the challenge] Is't so saucy?²⁵¹

Sir Andrew

Ay, is't, I warrant him!²⁵² Do but read.

Sir Toby

1670 Give me. *[Taking the challenge and reading]*

"Youth, whatsoever thou art, thou art²⁵³ but a scurvy fellow."

Fabian

[To Sir Andrew] Good, and valiant.

Sir Toby

[Reading]

"Wonder not, nor admire²⁵⁴ not in thy mind, why I do call thee so, for I will show thee no reason for't."

Fabian

[To Sir Andrew] A good note:²⁵⁵ that keeps you from the blow of the law.²⁵⁶

1675 **Sir Toby**

[Reading]

246. Standard treatment for madness. Compare *Err.* TLN 1380-1382, "both man and master is possess'd . . . They must be bound and laid in some dark room."

247. Maintain this pretence.

248. i.e. court; hence, the verdict of public opinion.

249. (a) discoverer of lunatics, (b) member of a jury which finds (declares) a person insane.

250. Sport fit for (a) May Day foolery, (b) a spring or early summer morning in the northern hemisphere.

251. (a) spicy (with "vinegar and pepper"), (b) insolent.

252. Give him (Cesario) my word.

253. Sir Andrew has followed Sir Toby's instruction to be insulting (see TLN 1423-1424).

254. Marvel, "wonder."

255. i.e. well said.

256. Punishment (for a breach of the peace).

“Thou com’st to the Lady Olivia, and in my sight she uses thee kindly. But thou liest in thy throat;²⁵⁷
that is not the matter I challenge thee for.”

Fabian

Very brief, and to exceeding good sense—*[Aside]* less.²⁵⁸

Sir Toby

[Reading]

“I will waylay thee going home, where if it be thy chance 1680to kill me—“

Fabian

Good.²⁵⁹

Sir Toby

[Reading]

“—thou kill’st me like a rogue and a villain.”

Fabian

[To Sir Andrew] Still you keep o’th’windy²⁶⁰ side of the law. Good.

Sir Toby

[Reading]

1685“Fare thee well, and God have mercy upon one of our souls. He may
have mercy upon mine, but my hope is better,²⁶¹ and so look to thyself.
Thy friend, as thou usest him,²⁶² and thy sworn enemy,
Andrew Aguecheek.”

Sir Toby

If this letter move him not, his legs cannot. I’ll giv’t him.

1690**Maria**

You may have very fit occasion for’t; he is now in some commerce²⁶³ with my lady, and will by and by depart.

Sir Toby

Go, Sir Andrew; scout me²⁶⁴ for him at the corner of the orchard like a bum-
1695bailly.²⁶⁵ So soon as ever thou see’st him, draw. And as thou draw’st, swear
horrible;²⁶⁶ for it comes to pass oft that a terrible oath with a swaggering
accent, sharply twanged off, gives manhood more approbation²⁶⁷ than ever
proof²⁶⁸ itself would have earned him. Away!

1700**Sir Andrew**

257. To "give the lie" in this emphatic form could only be answered by a duel, but Sir Andrew withdraws the insult in the next phrase. To refer to Olivia's reception of Cesario as Cesario lying is nonsensical, unless one presumes an elided thought that Cesario has claimed either that he is well received, or that his reception is why Sir Andrew is angry.

258. Because (a) Olivia using Cesario "kindly" is not a lie, and (b) Sir Andrew, having used it as provocation anyway, then says it is "not the matter."

259. Fabian's anticipation here may be comic if Sir Andrew realizes the implication.

260. i.e. windward (the safe side when sailing, or, for an animal, if being hunted). Fabian is pointing out Sir Andrew's absurd avoidance of giving legal offence in his challenge.

261. Sir Andrew means he hopes to survive, but sounds as if he hopes to be damned.

262. In so far as you treat me like (a friend).

263. Dealing, communication.

264. Keep a look out. For "me" as an intensifier, see note to TLN 1413.

265. A contemptuous term for a sneaking bailiff who caught debtors "in the rear" (OED, *bumbailiff*).

266. Horribly.

267. Credit.

268. Testing, trial.

Nay, let me alone for swearing.

Exit.

Sir Toby

Now will not I deliver his letter; for the behavior of the young gentleman gives him out to be of good capacity²⁶⁹ and breeding. His employment between 1705 his lord and my niece confirms no less. Therefore this letter, being so excellently ignorant, will breed no terror in the youth; he will find²⁷⁰ it comes from a clodpoll.²⁷¹ But, sir, I will deliver his challenge by word of mouth, set upon Aguecheek a notable report of valor, and drive the gentleman (as I 1710 know his youth will aptly receive it)²⁷² into a most hideous opinion of his rage, skill, fury, and impetuosity. This will so fright them both that they will kill one another by the look, like cockatrices.²⁷³

Enter Olivia and Viola [as Cesario].

Fabian

1715 Here he comes with your niece; give them way²⁷⁴ till he take leave, and presently²⁷⁵ after him.

Sir Toby

I will meditate the while upon some horrid²⁷⁶ message for a challenge.

[Exeunt Sir Toby, Fabian and Maria.]

Olivia

I have said too much unto a heart of stone,
And laid mine honor too unchary²⁷⁷ on't;²⁷⁸
1720 There's something in me that reproves my fault,
But such a headstrong potent fault it is,
That it but mocks reproof.

Viola

With the same havior that your passion bears²⁷⁹
Goes on my master's griefs.

1725 **Olivia**

Here, wear this jewel for me, 'tis my picture—²⁸⁰
Refuse it not,²⁸¹ *[Giving the jewel]* it hath no tongue to vex you—
And I beseech you come again tomorrow.

269. Intelligence.

270. Realize.

271. Blockhead.

272. His inexperience will readily accept it.

273. i.e. basilisks, mythical monsters that could kill with a look (in this case, comically, each other).

274. Stay out of their way. It appears they do, since Olivia and Viola give no indication of seeing them.

275. Immediately.

276. Horrible, terrifying.

277. Unwarily, carelessly.

278. Either (a) on the "heart of stone" (imagined as an altar, or as a known stone in a church where debts were paid), or (b) on what "I have said" (the idea is of wagering honor). Some editors emend to "out", imagining honor as now expended, or as exposed to view.

279. Behavior that characterizes your emotional state.

280. A miniature portrait in a richly jeweled setting, probably a pendant on a gold chain.

281. Viola bows her head to have the chain put round her neck after initial refusal; see TLN 1728.

What shall you ask of me that I'll deny,
That, honor saved,²⁸² may upon asking give?

¹⁷³⁰**Viola**

Nothing but this: your true love for my master.

Olivia

How with mine honor may I give him that
Which I have giv'n to you?

Viola

I will acquit²⁸³ you.

Olivia

Well, come again tomorrow. Fare thee well,
¹⁷³⁵A fiend like thee might bear my soul to hell.

[Exit Olivia.]

Enter Sir Toby and Fabian.

Sir Toby

Gentleman, god save thee.²⁸⁴

Viola

And you, sir.

Sir Toby

¹⁷⁴⁰That defense²⁸⁵ thou hast, betake thee to't. Of what nature the wrongs are thou
hast done him, I know not; but thy interceptor, full of despite,²⁸⁶ bloody as the
hunter, attends thee at the orchard-end. Dismount thy tuck,²⁸⁷ be yare²⁸⁸ in thy
preparation, for thy assailant is quick, skilful, and deadly.

¹⁷⁴⁵**Viola**

You mistake, sir; I am sure no man hath any quarrel to me. My
remembrance is very free and clear from any image of offence done to any
man.

Sir Toby

You'll find it otherwise, I assure you. Therefore, if you hold your life at any

282. My virtue (i.e. chastity) excepted. Olivia's general sense is clear, that she (or honor) will grant anything consistent with virtue. Folio's punctuation "honor (saved)" has "honor" doing double duty, as both the subject who will "give," and the object of "saved."

283. Release, discharge (from a debt).

284. Sir Toby initially asserts superiority (or scorn).

285. i.e. her sword.

286. Contempt and outrage.

287. Draw your rapier. "Dismount" is inflated language, since it properly applies to cannon.

288. Prompt.

1750price, betake you to your guard;²⁸⁹ for your opposite²⁹⁰ hath in him what youth,
strength, skill, and wrath can furnish man withal.²⁹¹

Viola

I pray you, sir, what is he?

Sir Toby

He is knight, dubbed with unhatched²⁹² rapier and on carpet consideration,²⁹³ but
1755he is a devil in private brawl. Souls and bodies hath he divorced three, and
his incensement at this moment is so implacable that satisfaction can be
none but by pangs of death and sepulcher. "Hob, nob"²⁹⁴ is his word:²⁹⁵ giv't or
take't.

Viola

1760I will return again into the house, and desire some conduct²⁹⁶ of the lady. I am
no fighter. I have heard of some kind of men that put quarrels purposely on
others to taste²⁹⁷ their valor; belike²⁹⁸ this is a man of that quirk.²⁹⁹

[As Viola starts to exit, Sir Toby blocks her way.]

Sir Toby

1765Sir, no. His indignation derives itself out of a very competent³⁰⁰ injury;
therefore get you on, and give him his desire. Back you shall not to the
house, unless you undertake that³⁰¹ with me which with as much safety you
might answer him. Therefore on, or strip your sword stark naked; for
1770meddle³⁰² you must, that's certain, or forswear to wear iron³⁰³ about you.

Viola

[To the audience] This is as uncivil³⁰⁴ as strange. [To Sir Toby] I beseech you,

289. Posture of defence (fencing term). Sir Toby employs specialized sword-fighting vocabulary as he prepares "Cesario" and Sir Andrew for their duel (see notes on "pass," TLN 1793, "stuck," TLN 1794, and "duello," TLN 1823). Joseph Swetnam's manual, *The School of the Noble and Worthy Science of Defence* (1617), is one among many books of instruction in the art of fighting, and a woodcut illustrates his description of the best en garde position for someone told to "betake you to your guard" (TLN 1749): Keep your rapier point something sloping towards your left shoulder, and your rapier hand so low as your girdlestead [waist], or lower, and bear out your rapier hand right at arm's end, so far as you can, and keep the point of your rapier something leaning outwards toward your enemy, keeping your rapier always on the outside of your enemy's rapier, but not joining with him, for you must observe a true distance at all weapons, that is to say, three feet betwixt the points of your weapons, and twelve foot distance with your fore-foot from your enemy's fore-foot. You must be careful that you frame your guard right, now you must not bear the rapier hand wide of the right side of your body, but right forward from your girdlestead, as before said. ("The true guard for the single Rapier," p. 117).

290. Opponent.

291. Emphatic form of "with."

292. Unhacked (i.e. the blade never nicked in battle).

293. i.e. dubbed at court, not kneeling on a battlefield: a carpet knight. "Consideration" may imply payment.

294. "give't or take't" (i.e. death; literally, "have or have not").

295. Motto (written on a shield).

296. An escort.

297. Try, test.

298. Either (a) probably, or (b) possibly. The choice will depend on Viola's level of confidence in trying to talk her way out.

299. Peculiarity.

300. Sufficient (in law to demand satisfaction).

301. i.e. a duel. Sir Toby's stance will no doubt indicate his readiness to draw his sword, and either he or Fabian will have blocked Viola's retreat.

302. Engage (in fighting).

303. i.e. admit your cowardice (compare "never draw sword again," TLN 177).

304. Discourteous.

do me this courteous office, as to know of³⁰⁵ the knight what my offence to him is. It is something of my negligence, nothing of my purpose.

1775 Sir Toby

I will do so.³⁰⁶ [*To Fabian*] Signor Fabian, stay you by this gentleman till my return.

Exit [Sir] Toby.

Viola

Pray you, sir, do you know of this matter?

Fabian

I know the knight is incensed against you, even to a mortal arbitrament,³⁰⁷ but
1780 nothing of the circumstance more.

Viola

I beseech you, what manner of man is he?

Fabian

Nothing of that wonderful promise, to read him by his form,³⁰⁸ as you are like to find him in the proof of his valor. He is indeed, sir, the most skilful,
1785 bloody, and fatal opposite that you could possibly have found in any part of Illyria. Will you walk towards him?³⁰⁹ [*Viola hesitates.*] I will make your peace with him, if I can.

Viola

I shall be much bound to you for't. I am one that had rather go with sir priest³¹⁰
1790 than sir knight; I care not who knows so much of my mettle.

*Exeunt. [or withdraw.]*³¹¹

Enter [Sir] Toby and [Sir] Andrew.

Sir Toby

Why, man, he's a very devil, I have not seen such a virago.³¹² I had a pass³¹³ with him, rapier, scabbard,³¹⁴ and all, and he gives me the stuck³¹⁵ in³¹⁶ with such a

305. Enquire from.

306. Sir Toby can increase Viola's anxiety by an extended pause before he speaks.

307. Decision by (combat to the) death.

308. Outward appearance.

309. This suggestion will usually terrify Viola. Folio's comma after "him" would mean Fabian is saying "If you please to . . ."

310. Priests were normally called "sir," whether or not they had taken a university degree, which would also entitle them to this English translation of Latin *dominus*. Compare Sir Topaz (TLN 1987).

311. Folio's *Exeunt* is playable, but most productions prefer the comic possibilities of the antagonists in sight of each other from a distance. Do Fabian and Viola leave the stage? Folio's *Exeunt* is clear. On the other hand, no new scene is marked, as would be the usual convention. It is fundamentally a production decision. Fabian and Viola can simply withdraw, perhaps to a corner; then, if Sir Toby and Sir Andrew come in at the other door and move forward, perhaps to an opposite corner, they are well placed for comic business around Sir Andrew believing Sir Toby's "Fabian can scarce hold him yonder" (see note to TLN 1800), and for the center-stage conference of Sir Toby and Fabian (TLN 1809-1812).

312. Female warrior. Possibly Sir Toby uses the term jokingly for the womanish-looking Cesario, unaware of its irony.

313. i.e. bout. Compare "stuck in," and *Rom.* TLN 1516, "Come, sir, your *passado*."

314. Either a ludicrous embellishment, or for a practice bout, explaining Sir Toby's lack of injury.

315. Thrust (Italian *stoccata*). Compare *Ham.* TLN 3152, "your venom'd stuck."

316. i.e. home (perhaps with emphatic gesture). Compare *Rom.* Q2, 3.1.84.2 [Norton], "*Tybalt under Romeo's arm thrusts Mercutio in.*"

1795 mortal³¹⁷ motion³¹⁸ that it is inevitable;³¹⁹ and on the answer,³²⁰ he pays³²¹ you as surely as your feet hits³²² the ground they step on. They say he has been fencer to the Sophy.³²³

Sir Andrew

Pox on't, I'll not meddle with him!

Sir Toby

1800 Ay, but he will not now be pacified; [*Pointing towards Viola and Fabian*] Fabian can scarce hold him yonder.³²⁴

Sir Andrew

Plague on't, an³²⁵ I thought he had been valiant, and so cunning³²⁶ in fence, I'd have seen him damned ere I'd have challenged him. Let him let the matter slip, and I'll give him my horse, gray Capilet.³²⁷

Sir Toby

1805 I'll make the motion.³²⁸ Stand here, make a good show on't; this shall end without the perdition of souls.³²⁹ [*Aside*] Marry, I'll ride³³⁰ your horse as well as I ride you.

*Enter Fabian and Viola. [or they come forward.]*³³¹

1810 [*To Fabian*] I have his horse to take up³³² the quarrel. I have persuaded him the youth's a devil.

Fabian

[*Indicating Viola*] He is as horribly conceited³³³ of him; and pants and looks pale, as if a bear were at his heels.

Sir Toby

[*To Viola*] There's no remedy, sir; he will fight with you for's oath sake.

1815 Marry, he hath better bethought him of his quarrel, and he finds that now scarce to be worth talking of. Therefore draw, for the supportance of his vow; he protests he will not hurt you.

Viola

[*To the audience*] Pray God defend me! A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man.³³⁴

317. Deadly.

318. i.e. a practiced fencing move.

319. Not able to be parried.

320. (your) counter-thrust.

321. i.e. kills. Compare *1H4* TLN 1151, "Two I am sure I have paid."

322. See TLN 843 for another example of a singular verb with a plural noun, not uncommon in Shakespeare. Editors and actors sometimes emend to "hit."

323. Shah of Persia (see note to TLN 1183).

324. Often the audience can see that Viola's attempts to escape might look to Sir Andrew like aggression (as in Nunn's film).

325. If.

326. Skillful.

327. Folio's spelling may represent the name Capulet, and it is possible that "Gray" should be part of the name.

328. Offer.

329. i.e. loss of life.

330. Make a fool of (punning on "ride your horse").

331. Often Sir Toby Meets Fabian center-stage before crossing to Viola. See notes to TLN 1790 and 1820.

332. Settle.

333. Has as terrifying an idea.

334. It would not take much to make me admit (a) how afraid I am, (b) that I am a woman (with a sexual quibble on the lack of "a little thing").

1820**Fabian**

*[To Viola]*³³⁵ Give ground if you see him furious.

Sir Toby

Come, Sir Andrew, there's no remedy, the gentleman will for his honor's sake have one bout with you. He cannot by the duello³³⁶ avoid it. But he has 1825promised me, as he is a gentleman and a soldier, he will not hurt you. *[To them both]* Come on, to't.

Sir Andrew

Pray God he keep his oath!

*Enter Antonio*³³⁷ *[observing Sir Andrew and Viola drawn].*

Viola

[To Sir Andrew] I do assure you, 'tis against my will.

Antonio

[To Sir Andrew, drawing] Put up your sword! If this young gentleman

1830Have done offence, I take the fault on me;

If you offend him, I for him defy you.³³⁸

Sir Toby

You, sir? Why, what are you?

Antonio

One, sir, that for his love dares yet do more
Than you have heard him brag to you he will.

1835**Sir Toby**

[Drawing] Nay, if you be an undertaker,³³⁹ I am for you.³⁴⁰

Enter Officers.

Fabian

O good Sir Toby, hold! Here come the officers.

Sir Toby

[To Antonio] I'll be with you anon.³⁴¹

[They sheathe their swords.]

Viola

[To Sir Andrew] Pray sir, put your sword up, if you please.

335. Staging will determine whether Fabian addresses Viola or Sir Andrew. Sir Toby crossing the stage repeatedly to (falsely) report on the failure of his intended embassies of peace is central to the scene. Since Fabian has been managing Viola throughout, and since Sir Toby is now returning to Sir Andrew, Fabian is likely to remain with her, causing her further comic terror. In such a staging each combatant has a supporter, like boxers with trainers, and often each has to physically push his combatant to the mark. If, alternatively, Fabian addresses this line to Sir Andrew, and the duel therefore starts with Fabian and Sir Toby both with him, they leave Viola clear for her aside to the audience, observe a comic gulling again as they did in 2.5, and provide an apparently unfair situation for Antonio to respond to.

336. Code of dueling (available in published manuals).

337. Precisely when Antonio enters will depend largely on how much comic business is involved in persuading the two unwilling duelists to face each other. Often performance includes some comic fighting by the terrified and incompetent duelists before they are interrupted. An audience will not worry about whether Antonio has entered the "orchard" (TLN 1694, TLN 1742) or we are now "in the streets" (TLN 2215).

338. Antonio probably interposes his body between Viola and Sir Andrew; the intrusion of the serious plot is also signaled by his speaking in verse.

339. (a) one who enters into combat with (see TLN 173), (b) one who accepts responsibility (often, for another).

340. Ready for you.

341. Straight away. There is implicit agreement to conceal from the Officers any evidence of a duel.

¹⁸⁴⁰**Sir Andrew**

Marry, will I, sir; [*Sheathing his sword*] and for that I promised you, I'll be as good as my word. He will bear you easily, and reins well.³⁴²

First Officer

[*To Second Officer*] This is the man; do thy office.

Second Officer

Antonio, I arrest thee at the suit
Of Count Orsino.

¹⁸⁴⁵**Antonio**

You do mistake me, sir.

First Officer

No, sir, no jot. I know your favor³⁴³ well,
Though now you have no sea-cap³⁴⁴ on your head.
Take him away; he knows I know him well.

Antonio

I must obey.³⁴⁵ [*To Viola*] This comes with seeking you;
¹⁸⁵⁰But there's no remedy, I shall answer³⁴⁶ it.
What will you do,³⁴⁷ now my necessity
Makes me to ask you for my purse? It grieves me
Much more for what I cannot do for you
Than what befalls myself. You stand amazed,³⁴⁸
¹⁸⁵⁵But be of comfort.

Second Officer

Come, sir, away.

Antonio

I must entreat of you some of that money.

Viola

What money, sir?
For the fair kindness you have showed me here,
¹⁸⁶⁰And part³⁴⁹ being prompted by your present trouble,

342. Sir Andrew sheathes his sword in relief, and reaffirms his promise (TLN 1803-1804) of his horse; Viola will be totally mystified.

343. Face.

344. A recognizable mariner's cap, which he was probably wearing earlier; see note to TLN 611. The exact nature of sailors' apparel in Shakespeare's time is not certain, but it seems to have been distinctive, as the Officer's identification of Antonio suggests (TLN 1847). Possibly Antonio was wearing it when he first appeared in the play, prior to following Sebastian to Orsino's court. The "sea-cap" was probably a "Monmouth" thrummed "shaggy brimless hat or cap" with its very long pile designed to shed water, which went with "baggy breeches gathered in below the knee [and] a loose waist-length coat" (Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Occupational Costume in England* [London: Adam and Charles Black, 1967], p 56). The breeches were likely made of canvas, possibly coated with tar (hence "tarpaulin"). Sailors often wore knives around their necks on a lanyard. Chaucer says of his Shipman, in the General Prologue, 392-393, that "A dagger on a lanyard falling free / Hung from his neck under his arm and down". In an illustration from Cesare Vecellio, *Habiti Antichi et Moderni di Tutto il Mondo* (Venice, 1598), a sailor in a thrummed sea-cap is carrying the additional identifier of a compass in its bowl, as does possibly the Captain who enters with his sailors at the start of the second scene of the play (TLN 50).

345. At some point Antonio will surrender his sword, if it has not already been seized.

346. (a) face the charge, (b) pay the penalty. See note to TLN 1496.

347. i.e. without enough money.

348. Bewildered. A much stronger word in Elizabethan English than now, as is evident from Antonio's concern.

349. In part.

Out of my lean and low ability
 I'll lend you something. My having is not much;
 I'll make division of my present³⁵⁰ with you.
 Hold, [*Offering a few coins*] there's half my coffer.³⁵¹

1865 **Antonio**

[*Rejecting them*] Will you deny me³⁵² now?
 Is't possible that my deserts³⁵³ to you
 Can lack persuasion?³⁵⁴ Do not tempt³⁵⁵ my misery,
 Lest that it make me so unsound³⁵⁶ a man
 As to upbraid you with those kindnesses
 1870 That I have done for you.

Viola

I know of none,
 Nor know I you by voice or any feature.
 I hate ingratitude more in a man
 Than lying, vainness, babbling drunkenness,
 1875 Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption
 Inhabits our frail blood.

Antonio

O heavens themselves!

Second Officer

Come, sir, I pray you go.

Antonio

Let me speak a little. This youth that you see here
 1880 I snatched one half out of the jaws of death,³⁵⁷
 Relieved him with such sanctity of love,³⁵⁸
 And to his image,³⁵⁹ which methought did promise
 Most venerable³⁶⁰ worth, did I devotion.³⁶¹

First Officer

What's that to us? The time goes by. Away!

1885 **Antonio**

But O, how vile an idol proves this god!
 [*To Viola*] Thou hast, Sebastian, done good feature shame.
 In nature, there's no blemish but the mind;

350. i.e. such money as I have at present.

351. Strong-box (a rueful exaggeration of her nearly-empty purse).

352. Antonio's anger may lead him to strike the few coins from her hand.

353. Deservings.

354. Can lack power to move you (of all people).

355. Put to the test (by refusing me).

356. Morally weak (since kindness should be for its own sake, not for reward).

357. i.e. from half-way to death.

358. i.e. great and almost holy love ("such" adds emphasis to "sanctity"). Folio's "Jove" ("Ioue" in Elizabethan typography) almost certainly results from a damaged "I" being set by mistake for an "I".

359. (a) appearance, (b) religious image (compare "idol," TLN 1885).

360. Worthy of veneration.

361. (a) loyal service, (b) worship (compare "god," TLN 1885).

None can be called deformed but the unkind.³⁶²
 Virtue is beauty, but the beauteous evil³⁶³
 1890Are empty trunks,³⁶⁴ o'er-flourished³⁶⁵ by the devil!

First Officer

The man grows mad; away with him. [*To Antonio*] Come, come, sir!

Antonio

Lead me on.

Exit [Antonio guarded by Officers].

Viola

[*To the audience*] Methinks his words do from such passion fly
 1895That he believes himself; so do not I.³⁶⁶

Prove true, imagination, O prove true,
 That I, dear brother, be now ta'en for you!

Sir Toby

Come hither,³⁶⁷ knight, come hither, Fabian. We'll whisper o'er a couplet or
 two of most sage saws.³⁶⁸

[*They stand apart.*]

1900**Viola**

[*To the audience*] He named Sebastian! I my brother know
 Yet living in my glass.³⁶⁹ Even such and so

In favor was my brother, and he went
 Still³⁷⁰ in this fashion, color, ornament,
 For him I imitate. O, if it prove,³⁷¹
 1905Tempests are kind, and salt waves fresh³⁷² in love.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Toby

A very dishonest³⁷³ paltry boy, and more a coward than a hare.³⁷⁴ His dishonesty
 appears in leaving his friend here in necessity, and denying him; and for his
 cowardship, ask Fabian.

1910**Fabian**

A coward, a most devout coward, religious³⁷⁵ in it.

Sir Andrew

'Slid,³⁷⁶ I'll after him again, and beat him.

362. (a) cruel, (b) unnatural.

363. Compare TLN 100-101.

364. (a) bodies, (b) household chests.

365. Painted with elaborate decoration.

366. i.e. I do not accept his belief (that I am Sebastian).

367. Shakespeare's purpose seems to be to give Viola most of the stage alone, to emphasize her next speech.

368. Wise sayings. Sir Toby is apparently mocking Antonio's conventional (though intensely felt) couplets at TLN 1887-1900.

369. In me as a mirror image (of him).

370. Always.

371. Prove true (that Sebastian is alive).

372. i.e. sweet (drinkable), not salt.

373. Dishonorable.

374. Proverbial.

375. i.e. making a religion of cowardice.

376. By God's eyelid (a mild oath).

Sir Toby

Do, cuff him soundly, but never draw thy sword.³⁷⁷

Sir Andrew

An I do not—³⁷⁸

[Exit following Viola.]

¹⁹¹⁵**Fabian**

Come, let's see the event.³⁷⁹

Sir Toby

I dare lay any money 'twill be nothing yet.³⁸⁰

Exit [Sir Toby and Fabian][following Sir Andrew].

377. Presumably Sir Toby realizes that Sir Andrew will lose his nerve if required to draw sword again. In production, Sir Toby sometimes relieves him of his sword.

378. If I do not (cuff him soundly).

379. Outcome.

380. After all.

57.

Twelfth Night: Act 4

William Shakespeare

Twelfth Night (Modern). [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#). University of Victoria. Editors: David Carnegie and Mark Houlahan.

Scene 1

*Enter Sebastian and Clown [following].*¹

Clown

1920 Will you make me believe that I am not sent for you?

Sebastian

Go to, go to, thou art a foolish fellow,
Let me be clear of thee.

Clown

Well held out² i' faith! No, I do not know you, nor I am not sent to you by my
1925 lady, to bid you come speak with her; nor your name is not Master Cesario;
nor this is not my nose neither. Nothing that is so, is so.

Sebastian

I prithee vent³ thy folly somewhere else,
Thou know'st not me.

Clown

1930 Vent my folly! [*To the audience*] He has heard that word of some great man,
and now applies it to a fool. Vent my folly! I am afraid this great lubber the
world will prove a cockney.⁴ [*To Sebastian*] I prithee now, ungird thy
strangeness,⁵ and tell me what I shall vent to my lady. Shall I vent to her that
thou art coming?

1935 **Sebastian**

I prithee, foolish Greek,⁶ depart from me. [*Giving a coin*]

1. Sebastian, sightseeing as arranged at 3.3, enters trying to get clear of the Clown, who has evidently been dogging him for some time.
2. Kept up.
3. Give vent to, let out. The Clown pretends that Sebastian is using this ordinary word affectedly to mean "utter forth" (a use becoming popular about this time). Compare his mockery of "element" at TLN 1269-1270. Possibly also a farting joke.
4. i.e. I fear the great clumsy world will turn out to be an affected townsman. Originally "cockney" meant "nestle-cock, mother's pet," was then applied disparagingly to adults spoiled in their upbringing, and by transference to townspeople with no country skills. "Londoners . . . are in reproach called Cockneys, and eaters of buttered toasts" (Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary*, 1617).
5. i.e. stop pretending you don't know me (literally, "unbelt your aloofness"). The Clown is adopting in mockery the affected speech of which he accuses Sebastian.
6. A "merry Greek" was a familiar term for a roisterer, a cheerful joker. The term is possibly a corruption of "grig" = grasshopper or cricket: "merry as a cricket."

There's money for thee; If you tarry longer,
[Threatening a blow] I shall give worse payment.⁷

Clown

By my troth, thou hast an open hand.⁸ *[To the audience]* These wise men that
 1940 give fools money get themselves a good report—after fourteen years'
 purchase!⁹

Enter Sir Andrew, Sir Toby, and Fabian.

Sir Andrew

Now, sir, have I met you again? There's for you!
[He strikes Sebastian.]

Sebastian

Why, there's for thee, and there, and there!
*[He beats Sir Andrew with the handle of his dagger.]*¹⁰
[To the audience] Are all the people mad?

¹⁹⁴⁵**Sir Toby**

[Seizing Sebastian] Hold, sir, or I'll throw your dagger o'er the house.

Clown

[To the audience] This will I tell my lady straight;¹¹ *[To them]* I would not be
 in some of your coats for twopence.
[Exit.]

Sir Toby

Come on, sir, hold!

Sir Andrew

1950 Nay, let him alone. I'll go another way to work¹² with him: I'll have an action
 of battery¹³ against him, if there be any law in Illyria. Though I struck him
 first, yet it's no matter for that.

Sebastian

[To Sir Toby] Let go thy hand!

Sir Toby

1955 Come, sir, I will not let you go. Come, my young soldier, put up your iron.¹⁴
 You are well fleshed.¹⁵ Come on!

Sebastian

I will be free from thee. *[He breaks free and draws his sword.]* What
 wouldst thou now?
 If thou dar'st tempt¹⁶ me further, draw thy sword.

Sir Toby

1960 *[Drawing]* What, what! Nay then, I must have an ounce or two of this

7. Blows.

8. Generous (with money, and the threat of blows).

9. At the rate of calculation of the purchase price as fourteen years' rent, an inflated price since twelve year's rent was the usual market value ("purchase"). A good reputation with fools is worthless anyway.

10. Compare *Rom.* TLN 2695-2696, "Then will I lay the serving-creature's dagger on your pate."

11. Immediately.

12. I'll use a different route for my purpose (proverbial).

13. Lawsuit for assault (which Sir Andrew goes on to admit has no basis in law).

14. Dagger. Compare *Rom.* TLN 2702-2703, "I will dry-beat you with an iron wit, and put up my iron dagger."

15. Blooded, initiated into fighting.

16. (a) test, (b) incite.

malapert¹⁷ blood from you.

*Enter Olivia.*¹⁸

Olivia

Hold, Toby! On thy life I charge thee, hold!

Sir Toby

Madam.¹⁹

Olivia

Will it be ever thus? Ungracious wretch,

¹⁹⁶⁵Fit for the mountains and the barbarous caves,

Where manners ne'er were preached! Out of my sight!

[To Sebastian] Be not offended, dear Cesario.

[To Sir Toby] Rudesby,²⁰ be gone! *[Exeunt Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian.]*

[To Sebastian] I prithee, gentle friend,

Let thy fair wisdom, not thy passion, sway²¹

¹⁹⁷⁰In this uncivil²² and unjust extent²³

Against thy peace. Go with me to my house,

And hear thou there how many fruitless pranks

This ruffian hath botched up,²⁴ that thou thereby

Mayst smile at this. Thou shalt not choose but go;

¹⁹⁷⁵Do not deny.²⁵ Beshrew his soul for me,²⁶

He started one poor heart²⁷ of mine in thee.²⁸

Sebastian

[To the audience] What relish²⁹ is in this? How runs the stream?

Or I am mad, or³⁰ else this is a dream.

Let fancy still my sense in Lethe steep;³¹

¹⁹⁸⁰If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep!

Olivia

Nay, come, I prithee; would thou'dst be ruled³² by me!

Sebastian

Madam, I will.

17. Impudent.

18. She may, possibly like Antonio with Viola in 3.4, throw herself between the combatants (so Nunn film).

19. Many options are open to the actor of Sir Toby in how to play this single word.

20. Ruffian. Presumably they are amazed at Olivia's open display of affection for "Cesario." Compare *Shr.* TLN 1398, "a mad-brain rudesby full of spleen."

21. Rule, bear sway.

22. Barbarous.

23. Assault (a legal term used here in a generalized sense).

24. Patched together (compare TLN 338-339).

25. Olivia may have taken "Cesario's" dazed failure to reply as a further refusal.

26. My curse upon him.

27. (a) startled my heart, (b) roused from cover (a hunting term) a hart (deer; compare TLN 26).

28. She has given her heart to "Cesario," hence Sir Toby's attack was as if on her. Olivia has used the intimate singular form "thee" throughout, which will further bewilder Sebastian.

29. Taste (hence, "How do I identify what is going on?")

30. Either . . . or. Compare another accidental lover, in *Err.* TLN 609, "Sleeping or waking, mad or well advised?"

31. Let imagination continue to drown my rationality in the river of forgetfulness.

32. i.e. if only you would do as I wish. Sebastian's agreement in the next line is an astonishing reversal of Olivia's despair.

Olivia

O say so, and so be³³. *Exeunt.*

33. i.e. "ruled by me".

Scene 2

1985 *Enter Maria [carrying a minister's gown and a false beard,] and Clown.*

Maria

Nay, I prithee put on this gown, and this beard;³⁴ make him believe thou art Sir Topaz³⁵ the curate.³⁶ Do it quickly.³⁷ I'll call Sir Toby the whilst.³⁸
[Exit.]

Clown

1990 [To the audience] Well, I'll put it on, and I will dissemble myself³⁹ in't, and I would I were the first that ever dissembled in such a gown.⁴⁰ I am not tall⁴¹ enough to become the function well, nor lean enough to be thought a good student;⁴² but to be said⁴³ an honest⁴⁴ man and a good housekeeper⁴⁵ goes as fairly
1995as to say a careful⁴⁶ man and a great scholar.

Enter Sir Toby [and Maria].

1995.1 The competitors⁴⁷ enter.

Sir Toby

Jove⁴⁸ bless thee, Master Parson.

Clown

*Bonos dies,*⁴⁹ Sir Toby: for as the old hermit of Prague,⁵⁰ that never saw pen and

34. False beards were standard in the theatre; compare *MND* TLN 354-356, "your straw-color beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-color beard."
35. Although Chaucer and others had comic knights of this name, here he is a priest (for the use of "sir," see note to TLN 1789). Precious stones were thought to be curative, the topaz of lunacy.
36. Probably (a) parish priest; just possibly (b) assistant curate (a minister appointed on a low salary to act for a non-resident or incapacitated priest).
37. This, like "Nay, I prithee," implies some reluctance on the part of the Clown; Maria is again the organiser.
38. In the meantime.
39. (a) disguise myself, (b) act hypocritically. The Clown's adoption of disguise here is a thematic reminder of Viola's (compare TLN 683), and of the multitude of mistakings in the play.
40. A minister's gown; but, if Maria has not provided the legally-required white surplice, possibly alluding to the black Geneva gown of the puritan clergy. Compare *AWW* TLN 414-416, "though honesty be no puritan . . . it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big [i.e. proud] heart."
41. Possibly "handsome," but more likely referring to a gown that is comically large for Armin. See also next note. Robert Armin, for whom Shakespeare presumably wrote the role, was apparently small, even "dwarfish" (David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], p. 136-163, esp. 148).
42. Divinity scholars (like other students) were regarded as prone to weight loss and melancholy. Robert Armin is thought to have been small, although the line seems to depend on a plump actor for part of its point.
43. Spoken of as.
44. Honorable.
45. Generous host.
46. Either (a) careworn (from study), or (b) conscientious.
47. Confederates, partners.
48. Possibly Sir Toby substitutes a pagan "God" as a comment on the substitute parson.
49. Good day (bad Latin for *bonus dies*). The Clown's bad Latin may be inadvertent, or a satire on the curate, or reflecting the Spanish *buenos días*. He almost certainly speaks now in the mock-clerical voice of Sir Topaz.
50. As at TLN 329, an invented mock-authority.

2000ink,⁵¹ very wittily said to a niece of King Gorboduc,⁵² “That that is, is”;⁵³ so I, being Master Parson, am Master Parson; for what is “that” but “that,” and “is” but “is”?

Sir Toby

To him, Sir Topaz!

Clown

[*In the voice of Sir Topaz*] What ho, I say. Peace in this prison.⁵⁴

Sir Toby

[*To the audience or Maria*] The knave counterfeits well: a good knave.

2005Malvolio *within*.⁵⁵

Malvolio

[*Within*] Who calls there?

Clown

Sir Topaz the curate, who comes to visit Malvolio the lunatic.

Malvolio

2010[*Within*] Sir Topaz, Sir Topaz, good Sir Topaz, go to my lady.

Clown

Out, hyperbolic fiend!⁵⁶ How vexest thou this man! Talkest thou nothing but of ladies?

Sir Toby

[*Aside to Clown*] Well said, Master Parson!

Malvolio

2015[*Within*] Sir Topaz, never was man thus wronged. Good Sir Topaz, do not think I am mad: they have laid me here in hideous darkness.

Clown

Fie, thou dishonest⁵⁷ Satan! I call thee by the most modest⁵⁸ terms— [*Including the audience*] for I am one of those gentle⁵⁹ ones that will use the devil

2020himself with courtesy—say'st thou that house is dark?⁶⁰

51. i.e. was illiterate.

52. A legendary British king, subject of the earliest English tragedy in blank verse (perf. 1562). His unknown niece knitted bedsocks for the hermit of Prague.

53. Mock-learning from the mock-authority.

54. n the Elizabethan *Book of Common Prayer* (1559), "the Priest entering into the sick person's house, shall say 'Peace be in this house'."

55. Malvolio is heard but not seen. The Folio stage direction at TLN 2005 says "*Malvolio within*," and there is no direction for him to enter later in the scene, or ever be seen at all. On the Elizabethan stage he could have been behind a stage door or, more likely, behind an arras at the back of the stage. The visual focus would therefore have been on the disguised Clown's apparently improvised comic teasing of Malvolio. Maria's comment to the Clown that "Thou might'st have done this without thy beard and gown, he sees thee not" (TLN 2049–2050) only makes sense if Malvolio is off-stage. Since the nineteenth century, however, it has been increasingly common to allow the audience to see Malvolio, or at least to see hands emerging from a trap door or through bars. The more of Malvolio they see, the more likely they are to feel sorry for him. Carried to an extreme, the character can be seen as tragic, as in Henry Irving's famous 1884 production in which he split the stage in half, as in the 1709 illustration (not based on performance) from Rowe below. (See David Carnegie, "*Malvolio within*": Performance Perspectives on the Dark House," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52 [2001], pp. 393–414.)

56. Fie, excessive devil (hyperbole, in rhetoric, is immoderate exaggeration of language). The Clown addresses the evil spirit which he pretends has taken possession of Malvolio (compare TLN 1614).

57. Dishonorable.

58. Moderate.

59. Courteous, well-bred.

60. i.e. room is dark. Compare AYL TLN 1580-1581, "Love . . . deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do."

Malvolio

[*Within*] As hell, Sir Topaz.

Clown

Why, it hath bay windows transparent as barricadoes,⁶¹ and the clerestories⁶² toward the south-north are as lustrous as ebony; and yet complainest thou of obstruction?⁶³

Malvolio

[*Within*] I am not mad, Sir Topaz; I say to you this house is dark.

Clown

Madman, thou errest. I say there is no darkness but ignorance, in which thou art more puzzled⁶⁴ than the Egyptians in their fog.⁶⁵

Malvolio

[*Within*] I say this house is as dark as ignorance, though ignorance were as dark as hell; and I say there was never man thus abused.⁶⁶ I am no more mad than you are. Make the trial of it in any constant question.⁶⁷

Clown

What is the opinion of Pythagoras⁶⁸ concerning wildfowl?

Malvolio

[*Within*] That the soul of our grandam might haply⁶⁹ inhabit a bird.

Clown

What think'st thou of his opinion?

Malvolio

[*Within*] I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve his opinion.

Clown

Fare thee well. Remain thou still in darkness.⁷⁰ Thou shalt hold th'opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wits,⁷¹ and fear to kill a woodcock⁷² lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam. [*Moving away*] Fare thee well.

Malvolio

[*Within*] Sir Topaz, Sir Topaz!

Sir Toby

My most exquisite Sir Topaz!

61. Barricades (i.e. solid, like "ebony" in the next line). "His joke is of the 'clear as mud' type" (Penguin), but in a hyperbolically inflated version of learned language.

62. Upper windows (especially in a church). Pronounced "clear-stories."

63. Blocking out (of light).

64. Confused.

65. One of the biblical plagues of Egypt was "thick" darkness "that may be felt" (Exodus 10: 21-3).

66. Ill-used, wronged.

67. Consistent interrogation.

68. A classical philosopher whose belief in the kinship of all living beings led to the frequently-mocked doctrine that the soul could migrate between humans and animals. Compare AYL TLN 1373-1374, "I was never so berhymed since Pythagoras' time, that I was an Irish rat, which I hardly can remember." For the thematic significance of transmigration of souls

69. Perhaps.

70. (a) without light, (b) theological ignorance.

71. Accept that you are sane.

72. Proverbial for stupidity; compare TLN 1097.

Clown

Nay, I am for all waters.⁷³

Maria

2050 Thou mightst have done this without thy beard and gown;⁷⁴ he sees thee not.

Sir Toby

[To Clown] To him in thine own voice, and bring me word how thou find'st him. I would we were well rid of this knavery. If he may be conveniently delivered,⁷⁵ I would he were, for I am now so far in offence with my niece, that I cannot pursue with any safety this sport to the upshot.⁷⁶ Come by and by to my chamber.⁷⁷

Exit [Sir Toby][with Maria].

Clown

[Singing]

Hey Robin,⁷⁸ jolly Robin,
Tell me how thy lady does.

Malvolio

[Within] Fool!

Clown

2060 My lady is unkind, perdie.⁷⁹

Malvolio

[Within] Fool!

Clown

Alas, why is she so?

Malvolio

[Within] Fool, I say!

Clown

She loves another—
Who calls, ha?

Malvolio

2065 *[Within]* Good fool, as ever thou wilt deserve well at my hand, help me to a candle, and pen, ink, and paper. As I am a gentleman, I will live to be thankful to thee for't.

Clown

Master Malvolio?

Malvolio

2070 *[Within]* Ay, good fool.

73. Versatile. The origin of the phrase is uncertain, perhaps based on the proverb "to have a cloak for all waters" (prepared for any weather).

The Clown may also pun on "water" as a measure of the luster of jewels (here, the "Topaz").

74. The Clown probably removes the disguise now, relying on changes of voice to bamboozle Malvolio for the rest of the scene.

75. Set free without trouble.

76. To its conclusion (archery term from the final shot in a match).

77. Since the dramatic purpose of this speech is to set in motion the release of Malvolio, it is probably all be spoken to the Clown. The sentence about Olivia's attitude could equally be to Maria; but "Come . . . to my chamber," which some productions have played as an invitation to Maria to the hurried marriage (see TLN 2535), or even to immediate sex, is a further request that the Clown "bring . . . word."

78. The Clown allows Malvolio to identify him by singing, in further mockery, a dialogue song about a lover who has lost to a rival (i.e. Malvolio to Cesario in the affections of Olivia).

79. By God (from French *par Dieu*).

Clown

Alas, sir, how fell you besides⁸⁰ your five wits?⁸¹

Malvolio

[*Within*] Fool, there was never man so notoriously⁸² abused. I am as well in my wits, fool, as thou art.

Clown

2075But as well? Then you are mad indeed, if you be no better in your wits than a fool.

Malvolio

[*Within*] They have here propertied⁸³ me: keep me in darkness, send ministers to me, asses, and do all they can to face⁸⁴ me out of my wits.

Clown

2080Advise you⁸⁵ what you say, the minister is here. [*Speaking as Sir Topaz*] Malvolio, Malvolio, thy wits the heavens restore. Endeavour thyself⁸⁶ to sleep, and leave thy vain bibble babble.⁸⁷

Malvolio

[*Within*] Sir Topaz!

Clown

2085[*As Sir Topaz*] Maintain no words with him, good fellow. [*Speaking as himself*] Who I, sir? Not I, sir! God buy you,⁸⁸ good Sir Topaz. [*As Sir Topaz*] Marry, amen. [*As himself*] I will, sir,⁸⁹ I will.

Malvolio

[*Within*] Fool! Fool! Fool, I say!⁹⁰

Clown

Alas, sir, be patient. What say you, sir? I am shent⁹¹ for speaking to you.

2090**Malvolio**

[*Within*] Good fool, help me to some light, and some paper; I tell thee I am as well in my wits as any man in Illyria.

Clown

Well-a-day⁹² that you were, sir.

Malvolio

2095[*Within*] By this hand,⁹³ I am! Good fool, some ink, paper, and light; and

80. Out of. Compare Sonnet 23: "As an unperfect actor on the stage, / Who with his fear is put besides his part."

81. Mind (sometimes identified as common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, and memory).

82. i.e. scandalously. The word will be repeated by both Malvolio and Olivia in 5.1, so it may be a Malvolioism.

83. i.e. treated like a chattel (or perhaps like a stage "prop").

84. Brazenly bully.

85. Be careful

86. Exert yourself in attempting (i.e. strain to relax).

87. Senseless babbling.

88. God be with you (modern "goodbye").

89. Perhaps spoken after a pause, as if Sir Topaz had whispered further instructions.

90. Probably an increasingly frantic stage whisper, since Malvolio will try to avoid being heard by Sir Topaz.

91. Rebuked.

92. Alas, I wish that.

93. A conventional oath (which Malvolio used at TLN 818-819), so there is no need for his hand to be seen, although in modern productions it often is.

convey what I will set down to my lady. It shall advantage thee more than ever the bearing of letter did.

Clown

I will help you to't. But tell me true, are you not mad indeed,⁹⁴ or do you but counterfeit?

²¹⁰⁰**Malvolio**

[*Within*] Believe me, I am not, I tell thee true.

Clown

Nay, I'll ne'er believe a madman till I see his brains! I will fetch you light, and paper, and ink.

Malvolio

[*Within*] Fool, I'll requite it in the highest degree. I prithee, be gone!

²¹⁰⁵**Clown**

[*Singing*]

I am gone, sir, and anon,⁹⁵ sir,

I'll be with you again,

In a trice,⁹⁶ like to the old Vice,⁹⁷

Your need to sustain;

Who with dagger of lath,⁹⁸ in his rage and his wrath,

²¹¹⁰Cries "Ah, ha!"⁹⁹ to the devil,

Like a mad lad, "Pare thy nails,¹⁰⁰ dad!"¹⁰¹

Adieu, goodman devil."¹⁰²

Exit.

94. Truly mad.

95. "I am gone" picks up Malvolio's last word; "anon" means "straight away." Internal rhyme continues through the song. No music survives, nor is it known if the words are by Shakespeare, but it seems clearly a song.

96. Moment.

97. In morality plays from a generation earlier, the popular Vice character would drive the plot forward with broad farce and slapstick, in league with the devil but impudent. F.W. Sternfeld describes "the Vice twitting the devil" as "a musical jester goading an anti-musical puritan" (*Music in Shakespearean Tragedy* [London: Routledge, 1963], p. 113).

98. Wood (a theatrical prop). Rhyme-word with "wrath," so probably here both vowels should be pronounced "ah."

99. i.e. in defiance.

100. i.e. have your wings clipped, your power reduced. Compare *H5* TLN 2450-2451, where the braggart but cowardly Pistol is "this roaring devil i' th' old play, that every one may pare his nails with a wooden dagger."

101. The Vice is occasionally the devil's son, but here it may simply be impudence: "old man."

102. "Goodman" is a respectful form of address, but absurd to the devil. It is unclear whether this final line belongs in quotes as addressed to the devil, or is the Clown's parting shot at Malvolio.

Scene 3

*Enter Sebastian.*¹⁰³

²¹¹⁵**Sebastian**

[To the audience] This is the air, that is the glorious sun,

[Indicating the pearl] This pearl¹⁰⁴ she gave me, I do feel't, and see't,

And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,

Yet 'tis not madness. Where's Antonio then?

I could not find him at the Elephant,

²¹²⁰Yet there he was,¹⁰⁵ and there I found this credit,¹⁰⁶

That he did range the town to seek me out.

His counsel now might do me golden service,

For though my soul disputes well (with my sense)¹⁰⁷

That¹⁰⁸ this may be some error, but no madness,

²¹²⁵Yet doth this accident¹⁰⁹ and flood of fortune¹¹⁰

So far exceed all instance,¹¹¹ all discourse,¹¹²

That I am ready to distrust mine eyes,¹¹³

And wrangle with my reason that persuades me

To any other trust but that I am mad,

²¹³⁰Or else the lady's mad.¹¹⁴ Yet if 'twere so,

She could not sway¹¹⁵ her house, command her followers,

Take and give back affairs and their dispatch,¹¹⁶

With such a smooth, discreet, and stable bearing

As I perceive she does. There's something in't

²¹³⁵That is deceivable.¹¹⁷

*Enter Olivia, and Priest.*¹¹⁸

But here the lady comes.

Olivia

103. Sebastian's manner may give sufficient indication of his reception by Olivia to provoke audience laughter at both his good fortune and confusion.
104. Possibly on a ring, brooch or chain; or, if large, unmounted (compare *Ham.* TLN 3731-3734). Sebastian is checking on real things as he conducts an internal dialogue between sanity and madness.
105. Needs emphasis for the meaning "had been."
106. Report (usage unique to Shakespeare).
107. In accord with the evidence of my senses.
108. Reasons convincingly . . . that (not "argues with").
109. Unexpected event.
110. i.e. river of good luck.
111. Example, precedent.
112. Reasoning.
113. (which are seeing the reality of sun and pearl).
114. i.e. argue against my reason, which produces good evidence in favor of any conclusion except that I am mad or Olivia is.
115. Rule, manage.
116. i.e. "take" in hand business matters ("affairs") and settle them quickly ("give back their dispatch").
117. Deceptive.
118. In some productions (e.g. the Nunn film) his appearance shows that he is the real Sir Topaz on whom the Clown modeled himself.

Blame not this haste of mine. If you mean well,
 Now go with me, and with this holy man,
 Into the chantry by;¹¹⁹ there before him,
 2140 And underneath that consecrated roof,
 Plight me the full assurance of your faith,¹²⁰
 That my most jealous¹²¹ and too doubtful soul
 May live at peace.¹²² He shall conceal it,
 Whiles¹²³ you are willing it shall come to note¹²⁴
 2145 What time¹²⁵ we will our celebration¹²⁶ keep
 According to my birth.¹²⁷ What do you say?

Sebastian

I'll follow this good man, and go with you,
 And having sworn truth, ever will be true.

Olivia

Then lead the way, good father, and heavens so shine
 2150 That they may fairly note¹²⁸ this act of mine.
Exeunt.

119. Nearby chapel (endowed for a priest to sing daily mass for the souls of the founders or others). Presumably the Priest is attached to Olivia's household.

120. i.e. enter with me into a full contract of betrothal (as binding as the marriage service later).

121. (a) fearful, (b) mistrustful.

122. A pause is possibly intended here, as the line has only four feet. If so, what follows is urgent reassurance.

123. Until.

124. Become known.

125. i.e. at what time. Many editors insert a semicolon after "note," taking "What time" to mean "at which time," but that obscures the sense that he's speaking of the future time "when" there will be a wedding ("celebration").

126. i.e. wedding.

127. Rank.

128. Look on with favor. The audience is aware that the gods have already improved Olivia's situation more than she knows.

58.

Twelfth Night: Act 5

William Shakespeare

Twelfth Night (Modern). [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#). University of Victoria. Editors: David Carnegie and Mark Houllahan.

Scene 1

Enter Clown [with a letter] and Fabian.

Fabian

Now as thou lov'st me, let me see his letter.¹

²¹⁵⁵**Clown**

Good Master Fabian, grant me another request.

Fabian

Anything.

Clown

Do not desire to see this letter.

Fabian

This is to give a dog, and in recompense desire my dog again.²

²¹⁶⁰*Enter Orsino,³ Viola [as Cesario], Curio, and Lords.*

Orsino

Belong you to the Lady Olivia, friends?

Clown

Ay, sir, we are some of her trappings.⁴

Orsino

I know thee well. How dost thou, my good fellow?

²¹⁶⁵**Clown**

Truly, sir, the better for my foes, and the worse for my friends.

Orsino

Just the contrary; the better for thy friends.

1. i.e. Malvolio's to Olivia.

2. Fabian may well have directed this repartee to the audience in early productions, especially if it was a well-known anecdote. According to John Manningham, who also reported the first known performance of *Twelfth Night*, Dr. Boleyn, a kinsman of Queen Elizabeth, "had a dog which he doted on, so much that the Queen understanding of it requested he would grant her one desire, and he should have whatsoever he would ask. She demanded his dog; he gave it, and 'Now, Madam' quoth he, 'you promised to give me my desire.' 'I will,' quoth she. 'Then I pray you give me my dog again!'"

3. If Valentine and Viola have been wearing riding boots earlier (see 1.1.24n), Orsino will here. An image of traveling may metaphorically suggest that Orsino's emotions are on the move too

4. Embellishments (literally, decorated horse-cloths).

Clown

No, sir, the worse.

Orsino

How can that be?

2170 **Clown**

Marry, sir, they praise me, and make⁵ an ass of me. Now, my foes tell me plainly I am an ass, so that by my foes, sir, I profit in the knowledge of myself, and by my friends I am abused.⁶ So that, conclusions to be as kisses, 2175 if your four⁷ negatives make your two affirmatives,⁸ why then, the worse for my friends and the better for my foes.

Orsino

Why, this is excellent.⁹

Clown

By my troth, sir, no; though it please you to be one of my friends.¹⁰

Orsino

Thou shalt not be the worse¹¹ for me; there's gold.¹²

[Orsino gives him a gold coin.]

2180 **Clown**

But that it would be double-dealing,¹³ sir, I would you could make it another.

Orsino

O you give me ill counsel.

Clown

Put your grace in your pocket,¹⁴ sir, for this once, and let your flesh and blood obey it.¹⁵

2185 **Orsino**

Well, I will be so much a sinner¹⁶ to be a double-dealer; there's another.

[Orsino gives him another gold coin.]

Clown

*Primo, secundo, tertio*¹⁷ is a good play;¹⁸ and the old saying is, "the third pays

5. And thus make.

6. Ill-used, deceived.

7. Unstressed, simply meaning "that you know of" (as with "your two" following).

8. In grammar, a double negative is an affirmative. The common joke based on this grammatical rule was that when a maid was asked for a kiss, her "No, no" meant "yes." The Clown is making a general defence of his chop-logic.

9. Orsino's willingness to jest with the Clown marks a distinct move away from his melancholy at their last encounter in 2.4. Presumably spoken to Viola and the other courtiers.

10. An invitation for praise (and, perhaps, a tip).

11. (a) "abused" (TLN 2173), (b) poorer.

12. A half-crown was the smallest English gold coin, so the Clown is getting at least five times as much as the silver sixpence given him by Sir Toby (TLN 731), ten times as much if he is given a gold crown (five shillings).

13. (a) duplicity, (b) giving twice.

14. i.e. (a) put your virtue where it cannot see (to criticize), (b) put your hand in your pocket (for more money), my lord Duke ("your grace").

15. i.e. let your normal human instincts (unwatched by virtuous "grace") obey my "ill counsel."

16. (because evading divine "grace").

17. First, second, third (Latin). Possibly a children's game, or a reference to a winning three at dice (compare "tray-trip", TLN 1193 and note).

Arden 3 argues that the reference is to "the philosophers' table", an "elaborate form of mathematical chess."

18. Game, or a throw at dice.

for all";¹⁹ the triplex,²⁰ sir, is a good tripping measure;²¹ or the bells of Saint
2190Bennet,²² sir, may put you in mind: one, two, three.²³

Orsino

You can fool no more money out of me at this throw.²⁴ If you will let your
lady know I am here to speak with her, and bring her along with you, it may
awake my bounty further.

²¹⁹⁵**Clown**

Marry, sir, lullaby²⁵ to your bounty till I come again. I go, sir, but I would not
have you to think that my desire of having is the sin of covetousness—but as
you say, sir, let your bounty take a nap; I will awake it anon.

Exit.

2200*Enter Antonio and Officers [guarding him].*

Viola

Here comes the man, sir, that did rescue me.

Orsino

That face of his I do remember well;
Yet when I saw it last, it was besmeared
As black as Vulcan²⁶ in the smoke of war.
2205A baubling²⁷ vessel was he captain of,
For shallow draught and bulk, unprizable;²⁸
With which such scatheful²⁹ grapple did he make
With the most noble bottom³⁰ of our fleet,
That very envy, and the tongue of loss,³¹
2210Cried fame and honor on him. What's the matter³²?

First Officer

Orsino,³³ this is that Antonio
That took the Phoenix,³⁴ and her fraught from Candy,³⁵
And this is he that did the Tiger board

19. Proverbial; compare modern "third time lucky."

20. Triple time in music.

21. Quick time (in music). Given "tripping," possibly "music for a nimble dance" is meant, which the Clown may give life to.

22. Benedict. There is no way of knowing which of the several churches named for this saint in London Shakespeare was thinking of for its distinctive chime of bells. Most editors cite St Bennet at Paul's Wharf, across the Thames from the Globe, whose bells might have been audible in the theatre, but another church of this name, such as St Bennet Fink, next to the Royal Exchange, may have had the distinctive chime of three that is the Clown's point (if we think of London rather than Illyrian bells).

23. In production the Clown may sing each of these words in the pitch of the supposed chime.

24. i.e. throw of the dice (continuing gambling references at TLN 2187-2188).

25. Soothing repose (picking up "awake," at TLN 2193, and anticipating "nap," TLN 2198).

26. Blacksmith of the Roman gods.

27. Paltry (like a child's bauble). Compare *Tro.* TLN 491 1.3.35, 'shallow bauble boats'.

28. i.e. so small as not to be worth capturing as a "prize."

29. Destructive.

30. Ship.

31. Even Ill-will and the voice of Loss. The emotions of his enemies are personified as proclaiming his honor.

32. Business, allegation.

33. The lack of an honorific before his name is surprising; but see note to TLN 2224.

34. Like "Tiger" in the next line, the name of a ship.

35. i.e. the cargo (freight) it had brought from Crete ("Candy"). Candy may mean either the sea port Candia, then capital of Crete, or simply the island of Crete.

When your young nephew Titus lost his leg.
 2215 Here in the streets, desperate of shame and state,³⁶
 In private brabble³⁷ did we apprehend him.

Viola

He did me kindness, sir, drew on my side,³⁸
 But in conclusion put strange speech upon me;³⁹
 I know not what 'twas, but distraction.⁴⁰

2220 **Orsino**

Notable⁴¹ pirate, thou saltwater thief,
 What foolish boldness brought thee to their mercies
 Whom thou, in terms so bloody and so dear,⁴²
 Hast made thine enemies?

Antonio

Orsino, noble sir,⁴³
 2225 Be pleased that I shake off these names you give me.
 Antonio never yet was thief, or pirate,
 Though I confess, on base and ground⁴⁴ enough,
 Orsino's enemy. A witchcraft drew me hither:
 That most ingrateful boy there by your side
 2230 From the rude sea's enraged and foamy mouth
 Did I redeem. A wrack⁴⁵ past hope he was.
 His life⁴⁶ I gave him, and did thereto add
 My love without retention⁴⁷ or restraint,
 All his in dedication.⁴⁸ For his sake
 2235 Did I expose myself, pure⁴⁹ for his love,
 Into the danger of this adverse⁵⁰ town;
 Drew to defend him, when he was beset;
 Where being apprehended, his false cunning,
 Not meaning to partake with me in danger,
 2240 Taught him to face me out of his acquaintance,⁵¹

36. Reckless of (his) reputation and (his) position. Some editors read "state" as "public order", or as "danger to himself". The meter requires "desperate" to be elided to two syllables.

37. i.e. brawling in a personal quarrel.

38. i.e. drew his sword in my defence.

39. Spoke to me strangely.

40. Madness. The meter requires four syllables.

41. Notorious.

42. Grievous.

43. Despite the accusations, and Sebastian's apparent betrayal, Antonio's response is both courteous and proud. Antonio's courtesy may be emphasized by the apparent lack of it from the First Officer at TLN 2211.

44. Foundation. The two words are synonyms.

45. Shipwrecked survivor.

46. As Sebastian has already expressed at TLN 645.

47. Reservation.

48. i.e. dedicated my love entirely to him.

49. Purely, only.

50. Hostile.

51. i.e. brazenly deny knowing me.

And grew a twenty years' removed thing⁵²
 While one would wink; denied me mine own purse,
 Which I had recommended⁵³ to his use
 Not half an hour before.

2245 **Viola**

How can this be?⁵⁴

Orsino

When came he to this town?

Antonio

Today, my lord; and for three months before,
 No int'rim,⁵⁵ not a minute's vacancy,
 Both day and night did we keep company.

2250 *Enter Olivia and Attendants.*⁵⁶

Orsino

Here comes the countess, now heaven walks on earth.

[To Antonio] But for thee, fellow–fellow, thy words are madness.

Three months⁵⁷ this youth hath tended upon me;

2255 But more of that anon. *[To Officers]* Take him aside.

Olivia

What would my lord, but that⁵⁸ he may not have,

Wherein Olivia may seem serviceable?

[To Viola] Cesario, you do not keep promise with me.

*[Viola and Orsino speak at the same time.]*⁵⁹

Viola

Madam–

2260 **Orsino**

Gracious Olivia–

Olivia

What do you say, Cesario? *[Silencing Orsino]* Good my lord.

Viola

My lord would speak, my duty hushes me.

Olivia

If it be aught to the old tune, my lord,

It is as fat and fulsome⁶⁰ to mine ear

2265 As howling after music.

52. i.e. like someone not met for twenty years.

53. Committed.

54. Viola probably breaks in quickly (thus completing Antonio's verse line). Alternatively, a pause may be implied after Antonio's line, in which case Orsino completes Viola's short line.

55. Interim (the Folio elision "*intrim*" serves the meter). The compositor set the word in italic, so may have mistaken it for Latin rather than the elided English word.

56. Maria is not named, but in many productions she appears.

57. The concurrence between Antonio and Orsino confirms for each the impossibility of the other's story. Viola seems only to have been with Orsino a few days.

58. Except that which (i.e. her love).

59. Viola defers to her master; Olivia urges her new betrothed (as she thinks) to continue, asking Orsino (probably with a gesture) to wait.

60. Gross and repugnant.

Orsino

Still so cruel?

Olivia

Still so constant, lord.⁶¹

Orsino

What, to perverseness? You uncivil⁶² lady,
 To whose ingrate⁶³ and unauspicious⁶⁴ altars
 2270 My soul the faithfull'st off'rings⁶⁵ have breathed out
 That e'er devotion tendered! What shall I do?

Olivia

Even what it please my lord, that shall become him

Orsino

Why should I not, had I the heart to do it,
 Like to th'Egyptian thief⁶⁶ at point of death,
 2275 Kill what I love?—a savage jealousy,
 That sometime savors nobly.⁶⁷ But hear me this:
 Since you to non-regardance⁶⁸ cast my faith,
 And that I partly know the instrument
 That screws⁶⁹ me from my true place in your favor,
 2280 Live you the marble-breasted⁷⁰ tyrant still.
 But [*Seizing Viola*] this your minion,⁷¹ whom I know you love,
 And whom, by heaven, I swear I tender⁷² dearly,
 Him will I tear out of that cruel eye
 Where he sits crownèd in his master's spite.⁷³
 2285 Come, boy, with me; my thoughts are ripe in mischief.⁷⁴
 I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love,
 To spite a raven's heart within a dove.⁷⁵ [*He moves to exit with Viola.*]

Viola

61. An acting choice is required as to which of Folio's three short lines constitutes a shared iambic pentameter (probably "Still . . . lord") and which a short line, perhaps followed by a pause.

62. Barbarous.

63. Ungrateful.

64. Unpropitious

65. Both elisions in Folio are for the meter.

66. Orsino's threat to Olivia is based on the story of a bandit who tried to kill a captive with whom he had fallen in love, in order that she not be enjoyed by his victorious enemies. Thyamis is an Egyptian robber-captain in Heliodorus's *Ethiopian History*. In the event, he killed the wrong woman, which may be Shakespeare's point in having Orsino threaten Olivia. (Orsino turns on Viola only at TLN 2281.)

67. i.e. has a noble quality.

68. Disregard.

69. Forces (as with a threaded instrument such as a vice--or thumbscrews).

70. Compare "heart of stone" (TLN 1718). The unfeeling mistress is a conventional figure of Elizabethan love poetry; what is less common is for the lover to take no for an answer (here, in preparation for his new attachment to Viola).

71. Darling, favorite (pejorative; and, ironically in view of Orsino's attachment to "Cesario," often of boys loved by men).

72. Hold, regard.

73. To the vexation of his master.

74. Ready to do harm.

75. i.e. the heart of a black (and predatory) bird within the outward appearance of a beautiful, often white (and loving, at least in poetry) bird. Compare TLN 100-101, TLN 1889-1890, and *Rom.* TLN 1727, "Dove-feathered raven."

And I most jocund, apt,⁷⁶ and willingly,
To do you rest,⁷⁷ a thousand deaths would die.

2290**Olivia**

Where goes Cesario?

Viola

After him I love

More than I love these eyes, more than my life,
More, by all mores,⁷⁸ than e'er I shall love wife.
If I do feign, you witnesses above⁷⁹
2295Punish my life, for tainting of⁸⁰ my love.

Olivia

Ay me, detested! How am I beguiled!⁸¹

Viola

Who does beguile you? Who does do you wrong?

Olivia

Hast thou forgot thyself? Is it so long?
Call forth the holy father. [*Exit an Attendant.*]

2300**Orsino**

[*To Cesario*] Come, away.

Olivia

Whither, my lord? Cesario, husband, stay!⁸²

Orsino

Husband?

Olivia

Ay, husband. Can he that deny?

Orsino

Her husband, sirrah?

2305**Viola**

No, my lord, not I.

Olivia

Alas, it is the baseness of thy fear
That makes thee strangle thy propriety.⁸³
Fear not, Cesario, take thy fortunes up,
Be that thou know'st thou art, and then thou art
2310As great as that thou fear'st.⁸⁴

Enter Priest.

O welcome, father!

76. Cheerful, ready.

77. Make you feel easy.

78. All possible comparisons.

79. i.e. in the heavens.

80. Sullyng, betrayng.

81. Robbed, cheated.

82. Olivia refers to the binding contract of betrothal (see TLN 2318 and note to TLN 2141; effectively, a marriage), apparently denied at TLN 2293. The word "husband," in performance, stops everyone dead, and preempts Orsino's exit with Viola. The rhyming couplets started by Orsino at TLN 2286-2287 assist in building the tension, and Viola's confusion ("wrong/long, away/stay, deny/not I").

83. Suppress your proper identity (as my husband to be).

84. Him whom you fear (i.e. Orsino).

Father, I charge thee by thy reverence
 Here to unfold (though lately we intended
 2315 To keep in darkness what occasion⁸⁵ now
 Reveals before 'tis ripe) what thou dost know
 Hath newly passed between this youth and me.

Priest

A contract⁸⁶ of eternal bond of love,
 Confirmed by mutual joinder⁸⁷ of your hands,
 2320 Attested by the holy close of lips,
 Strengthened by interchangement of your rings,
 And all the ceremony of this compact⁸⁸
 Sealed in my function,⁸⁹ by my testimony;
 Since when, my watch⁹⁰ hath told me, toward my grave
 2325 I have travelled but two hours.

Orsino

[To Viola] O thou dissembling cub!⁹¹ What wilt thou be
 When time hath sowed a grizzle⁹² on thy case⁹³?
 Or will not else thy craft so quickly grow
 That thine own trip⁹⁴ shall be thine overthrow?
 2330 Farewell,⁹⁵ and take her, but direct thy feet
 Where thou and I henceforth may never meet.

Viola

My lord, I do protest—

Olivia

O, do not swear,
 Hold little faith,⁹⁶ though thou hast too much fear.
 2335 *Enter Sir Andrew*⁹⁷ *[with his head bloody].*

Sir Andrew

For the love of God, a surgeon!⁹⁸ Send one presently⁹⁹ to Sir Toby.

85. The turn of events. Compare TLN 94.

86. Of betrothal. See notes to TLN 2301 and TLN 2141.

87. Joining.

88. Covenant, contract: accented on the second syllable.

89. Confirmed by my office (as a priest).

90. Displaying his (valuable) watch confirms the slight sense of pomposity in the Priest's speech.

91. (cunning) fox-cub.

92. Gray hair.

93. Skin (here, of the fox "cub").

94. Wrestling move to "overthrow" an opponent.

95. Presumably Orsino and his courtiers again start to leave, with Viola possibly following in desperation while Olivia, equally desperate, tries to keep her.

96. Keep at least a little faith.

97. Evidently Sir Andrew and Sir Toby have met Sebastian again, as we surmise from the blood and TLN 2345. The encounter in 4.1 did not produce these injuries.

98. A practitioner who treats wounds, fractures, etc., seldom at this time educated to the university level of a physician, and often combining the practice with barbering and pulling teeth.

99. Immediately.

Olivia

What's the matter?

Sir Andrew

2340He's¹⁰⁰ broke my head across, and has given Sir Toby a bloody coxcomb¹⁰¹ too.
For the love of God, your help! I had rather than forty pound I were at
home.

Olivia

Who has done this, Sir Andrew?

Sir Andrew

The count's gentleman, one Cesario. We took him for a coward, but he's the
very devil incardinate.¹⁰²

2345**Orsino**

My gentleman Cesario?

Sir Andrew

[Seeing Viola] [and recoiling in fear]. 'Od's lifelings,¹⁰³ here he is! *[To her]*
You broke my head for nothing; and that that I did, I was set on to do't by
Sir Toby.

Viola

Why do you speak to me? I never hurt you.

2350You drew your sword upon me without cause,
But I bespake you fair, and hurt you not.

Enter Sir Toby [limping, his head bloody,] and [supported by] Clown.

Sir Andrew

If a bloody coxcomb be a hurt, you have hurt me; I think you set nothing by¹⁰⁴
2355a bloody coxcomb. Here comes Sir Toby halting;¹⁰⁵ you shall hear more. But if
he had not been in drink, he would have tickled¹⁰⁶ you othergates¹⁰⁷ than he did.

Orsino

How now, gentleman? How is't with you?

Sir Toby

2360That's all one,¹⁰⁸ he's¹⁰⁹ hurt me, and there's th'end on't. *[To Clown]* Sot,¹¹⁰ didst see
Dick Surgeon, sot?

Clown

Oh, he's drunk, Sir Toby, an hour ago;¹¹¹ his eyes were set¹¹² at eight
i'th'morning.

100. i.e. He has.

101. Head (based on the fool's cap; see note to TLN 347-348).

102. Sir Andrew's error for "incarnate" ("in the flesh").

103. By God's little lives (a mild oath). Sir Andrew's violent reaction at seeing Cesario is partly fear, and in the Armfield film, confusion because he thought he had left him behind.

104. Think nothing of.

105. Limping

106. i.e. beaten.

107. In a different manner (i.e. more effectively).

108. i.e. without remedy.

109. i.e. he has.

110. (a) fool, (b) drunkard. As at TLN 414.

111. Ago.

112. Fixed, immoveable. Some editors have suggested "closed."

Sir Toby

Then he's a rogue, and a passy-measures pavan.¹¹³ I hate a drunken rogue.¹¹⁴

2365 **Olivia**

Away with him! Who hath made this havoc with them?

Sir Andrew

I'll help you, Sir Toby, because we'll be dressed together.¹¹⁵

Sir Toby

2370 Will you help? An ass-head, and a coxcomb,¹¹⁶ and a knave? A thin-faced knave, a gull!¹¹⁷

Olivia

Get him to bed, and let his hurt be looked to.

[*Exeunt*¹¹⁸ *Sir Toby and Sir Andrew led off by Clown and Fabian.*]

Enter Sebastian. [Everyone else observes the identically dressed Sebastian and Viola.]

Sebastian

I am sorry, madam, I have hurt your kinsman;

But had it been the brother of my blood,¹¹⁹

2375 I must have done no less with wit and safety.¹²⁰

You throw a strange regard¹²¹ upon me, and by that I do perceive it hath offended you.

Pardon me, sweet one, even for the vows

We made each other but so late ago.

2380 **Orsino**

One face, one voice, one habit,¹²² and two persons:

A natural perspective,¹²³ that is, and is not!

113. A variety of pavan, a slow dance; from the Italian *passamezzo pavana*. "Pavyn" was a current spelling, and indicates stress on the first syllable; Folio's "panyn" almost certainly results from an "n" being mistaken for a "u" (= "v") in the print shop. The point of Sir Toby's abuse is not clear: is he imagining a slow, swaying drunk, or the lethargy of the surgeon? In 1.3 Sir Toby favored livelier dances.

114. The irony of Sir Toby's comment on other drunkards may be comic, or, as in Nunn's film, sadly self-aware.

115. i.e. have our wounds dressed.

116. Fool. Compare note to TLN 347-348, and *H5* TLN 1926-1927, "an ass, and a fool, and a prating coxcomb."

117. Dupe, fool.

118. Folio gives no exit direction, but clearly Sir Toby and Sir Andrew leave, and the Clown and Fabian (who have an entry direction at TLN 2448) with them. In Nunn's film Sir Andrew, his eyes now opened, leaves in a different direction. There is no reason for the Priest to leave, but he could (as could Maria, helping Sir Toby, if she entered with Olivia). Some productions have kept them all on, in the background, although that weakens Olivia's assurance of future justice at TLN 2515-1525, and Fabian's subsequent explanation. Several stage options are open as to where Sebastian enters and whether he sees Sir Toby and the others departing (or they him), but it is essential that he not see Viola until after TLN 2389.

119. My own brother.

120. Sensible thought and in self-protection.

121. Distant (cold) look. He thinks Olivia is angry, but she, like everyone else, is in "wonder" (compare TLN 2390).

122. Costume. See TLN 1900-1904.

123. Either (a) an illusion seen through a distorting optical device, or, (b) a picture drawn so that its content varies depending on which angle it is viewed from. Accented on the first syllable. Orsino's "natural perspective, that is, and is not!" (TLN 2381) cannot be what we normally think of as realistic perspective in drawing. Rather, "perspective" is either an optical instrument that deceives the eye when looked through, or the trick perspective of "double pictures." Both were fashionable in the Tudor and Stuart period. Orsino's exclamation "One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons!" (TLN 2380) suggests a perspective glass, revealing "miraculous sights and conceits made and contained in glass. . . . for you may have glasses so made . . . where one image shall seem to be a hundred" (Reginald Scot, *The Discovery of Witchcraft* [1584], Book 13, Chap. 19 [p. 316]). Alternatively, Orsino may mean graphic distortion of pictures. Two techniques were used: (1) anamorphic drawing, such as that in Holbein's famous painting of "The Ambassadors," in

Sebastian

Antonio! Oh, my dear Antonio,
How have the hours racked and tortured me
Since I have lost thee!

2385 **Antonio**

Sebastian, are you?

Sebastian

Fear'st thou that, Antonio?¹²⁴

Antonio

How have you made division of yourself?
An apple cleft in two is not more twin
Than these two creatures. Which is Sebastian?

2390 **Olivia**

Most wonderful.¹²⁵

Sebastian

[*Seeing Viola*] Do I stand there? I never had a brother;
Nor can there be that deity in my nature
Of here and everywhere.¹²⁶ I had a sister,
Whom the blind¹²⁷ waves and surges have devoured.
2395 Of charity,¹²⁸ what kin are you to me?
What countryman? What name? What parentage?

Viola

Of Messaline. Sebastian was my father.
Such a Sebastian was my brother too;
So went he suited¹²⁹ to his watery tomb.
2400 If spirits¹³⁰ can assume both form and suit,
You come to fright us.

Sebastian

A spirit I am indeed,

which an ambiguous grey element in the foreground can be seen, if viewed sideways from a particular angle, as a skull, or in which an apparently grotesque picture is revealed, if viewed from an acute angle, as a realistic portrait (as in the anomorphic portrait of Edward VI by William Scrots); or (2) a drawing which appears one thing, but if turned upside down is revealed as something quite different, such as the sixteenth-century anti-Catholic "Perverted Church" images below that satirize the Council of Trent. One way up they appear to be the Pope and a cardinal; turned upside down ("perverted") the faces have become the devil and a jester. See Inga-Stina Ekeblad, "Webster's Realism, or, 'A Cunning Piece Wrought Perspective,'" in Brian Morris, ed, *John Webster*, Mermaid Critical Commentaries (London: Benn, 1970), pp. 159–78 (esp. pp. 160–4), and Arthur H. R. Fairchild, *Shakespeare and the Arts of Design* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1937; repr. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1972), pp. 125–130.

124. Do you doubt that.

125. Full of wonder. In performance, something of the modern sense may also come through as Olivia surveys a double helping of Cesario.

126. To be in two places at once is a divine attribute.

127. i.e. unfeeling, merciless (not seeing Viola's beauty and virtue).

128. Out of your generosity (tell me).

129. i.e. dressed like you (compare TLN 2380).

130. Ghosts. Although "spirits" can refer to devils taking the form of the dead (the reason for Hamlet's caution with the Ghost), here it simply refers to ghosts. How seriously this is taken will vary in different productions. There may also be reference to the attendant spirit (Greek *daemon*) thought to accompany every person throughout life; compare the meeting of the twins in *Err*: TLN 1818-1819, "which is the natural man, / And which the spirit?"

But am in that dimension¹³¹ grossly¹³² clad
 Which from the womb I did participate.¹³³
 2405 Were you a woman, as the rest goes even,¹³⁴
 I should my tears let fall upon your cheek,
 And say, "Thrice welcome, drownèd Viola."¹³⁵

Viola

My father had a mole upon his brow.

Sebastian

And so had mine.

2410 **Viola**

And died that day when Viola from her birth
 Had numbered thirteen years.

Sebastian

Oh, that record¹³⁶ is lively in my soul.
 He finishèd indeed his mortal act
 That day that made my sister thirteen years.

2415 **Viola**

If nothing lets¹³⁷ to make us happy both,
 But this my masculine usurped attire,
 Do not embrace me, till each circumstance
 Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump¹³⁸
 That I am Viola;¹³⁹ which to confirm,
 2420 I'll bring you to a captain in this town,
 Where lie my maiden weeds,¹⁴⁰ by whose gentle help
 I was preserved to serve this noble count.
 All the occurrence of my fortune since
 Hath been between this lady and this lord.

2425 **Sebastian**

[*To Olivia*] So comes it, lady, you have been mistook.¹⁴¹
 But nature to her bias drew¹⁴² in that.

131. Bodily form.

132. Materially, corporeally.

133. Have in common with others.

134. Agrees, fits together.

135. The first mention of her name.

136. Recollection. Stressed here on the second syllable.

137. Hinders.

138. Accord and agree.

139. At this emotional high point, few Sebastians obey Viola's injunction not to embrace her.

140. Clothes.

141. Mistaken.

142. i.e. Nature leaned in her usual direction (to have male mate with female). In the game of bowls, the "bias" is both the off-center lead weight in the bowl, and the curved path it follows as a result. Shakespeare delighted in metaphors deriving from the curved, indirect, path of the weighted ("biased") ball used in bowls. Although the ball initially goes in the direction it is bowled, the bias gradually asserts itself and the ball curves away from the line in which it was first heading, and towards the intended target. (Modern lawn bowling no longer uses a weight, but the ball is shaped to perform in the same way.) The application of the metaphor to Olivia's mistaken betrothal to Sebastian is clear: Nature, both human and the personification of the natural order, has ensured that Olivia has curved away from Viola and "kissed" (to use another bowls word, for a ball succeeding in resting against the "jack") the appropriately heterosexual male, Sebastian.

You would have been contracted to a maid;
 Nor are you therein, by my life, deceived:
 You are betrothed both to a maid and man.¹⁴³

2430 **Orsino**

[To Olivia] Be not amazed, right noble is his blood.

If this be so—as yet the glass seems true—¹⁴⁴

I shall have share in this most happy¹⁴⁵ wrack.¹⁴⁶

[To Viola] Boy,¹⁴⁷ thou hast said to me a thousand times

Thou never shouldst love woman like to me.¹⁴⁸

2435 **Viola**

And all those sayings will I over swear,¹⁴⁹

And all those swearings keep as true in soul

As doth that orbèd continent the fire¹⁵⁰

That severs day from night.¹⁵¹

Orsino

Give me thy hand,¹⁵²

2440 And let me see thee in thy woman's weeds.

Viola

The captain that did bring me first on shore

Hath my maid's garments; he upon some action¹⁵³

Is now in durance,¹⁵⁴ at Malvolio's suit,

A gentleman and follower of my lady's.

2445 **Olivia**

He shall enlarge¹⁵⁵ him. Fetch¹⁵⁶ Malvolio hither—

And yet, alas, now I remember me,

They say, poor gentleman, he's much distract.¹⁵⁷

Enter Clown with a letter, and Fabian.

A most extracting frenzy¹⁵⁸ of mine own

143. (a) man who is a virgin, (b) woman and man.

144. i.e. the "perspective" glass (TLN 2381) is still showing truth rather than illusion.

145. Fortunate.

146. Wreck, or wreckage thrown ashore.

147. Orsino's joke is both emotionally charged and wryly self-critical.

148. As much as (you love) me.

149. Swear over (and over) again.

150. As the sun keeps its fire. The "orbèd continent" (spherical container) is either the sun itself or the Ptolemaic sphere in which the sun is fixed.

151. i.e. the sun. Compare Genesis 1: 14.

152. Both a physical clasp that is now permissible, and symbolic betrothal.

153. Legal charge.

154. Imprisonment.

155. Free.

156. This instruction will be to one of her attendants, who presumably has no idea where Malvolio is. Olivia's next line may preempt the exit; Fabian is sent at TLN 2481.

157. Distraught, mad.

158. i.e. a madness which drew everything else out of my mind. See TLN 1536-1537 for Olivia's earlier comparison of her madness with Malvolio's.

2450 From my remembrance¹⁵⁹ clearly banished his.
 [To Clown] How does he,¹⁶⁰ sirrah?

Clown

Truly, madam, he holds Beelzebub at the stave's end¹⁶¹ as well as a man in his case may do. He's¹⁶² here writ a letter to you. I should have given't you today
 2455 morning,¹⁶³ but as a madman's epistles are no gospels,¹⁶⁴ so it skills not¹⁶⁵ much when they are delivered.¹⁶⁶

Olivia

Open't, and read it.

Clown

Look then to be well edified, when the fool delivers¹⁶⁷ the madman. [*Reading madly*]

“By the Lord, madam—“

2460 **Olivia**

How now, art thou mad?

Clown

No, madam, I do but read madness. An¹⁶⁸ your ladyship will have it as it ought to be, you must allow vox.¹⁶⁹

Olivia

Prithee, read i'thy right wits.

2465 **Clown**

So I do, madonna. But to read his right wits¹⁷⁰ is to read thus. Therefore perpend,¹⁷¹ my princess, and give ear.

[*Clown prepares to read madly again; Olivia seizes the letter and gives it to Fabian.*]

Olivia

[To Fabian] Read it you, sirrah.

Fabian

(*Reads.*)

2470 “By the Lord, madam, you wrong me, and the world shall know it. Though you have put me into darkness, and given your drunken cousin rule over me, yet have I the benefit of my senses as well as your ladyship. I have your own letter, that induced me to the semblance I put
 2475 on; with the which I doubt not but to do myself much right, or you

159. Memory.

160. The Clown's convenient entry, Olivia's assumption that he knows about Malvolio, and his sense of who Olivia's question refers to, are required by the plot, and will not be questioned in performance.

161. Keeps the devil at a distance (proverbial, from quarterstaff fighting). Folio's "Belzebub" may reflect Shakespearean pronunciation.

162. i.e. he has.

163. This morning.

164. (a) letters are not divine truth, (b) New Testament Epistles are not New Testament Gospels. The Epistles carry less sacred authority than the Gospels.

165. Does not matter.

166. (a) given to the addressee, (b) read aloud (in church, like the "gospels").

167. (a) reads aloud, (b) speaks on behalf of.

168. If.

169. Voice (appropriate to the rhetorical context; Latin).

170. His real mental state (madness).

171. Weigh carefully. A deliberately pompous word in what may be a deliberately old-fashioned blank verse line ("therefore . . . ear").

much shame. Think of me as you please. I leave my duty a little
 unthought of, and speak out of my injury.
 The madly-used Malvolio.”

Olivia

Did he write this?

Clown

Ay, madam.

Orsino

2480 This savors not much of distraction.

Olivia

See him delivered,¹⁷² Fabian, bring him hither.

[Exit Fabian.]

[To Orsino] My Lord, so please you, these things further thought on,

To think me as well a sister as a wife,¹⁷³

One day shall crown th'alliance on't,¹⁷⁴ so please you,

2485 Here at my house, and at my proper¹⁷⁵ cost.

Orsino

Madam, I am most apt t' embrace your offer.

[To Viola] Your master quits¹⁷⁶ you; and for your service done him,

So much against the mettle¹⁷⁷ of your sex,

So far beneath your soft and tender breeding,

2490 And since you called me master for so long,

Here is my hand;¹⁷⁸ you shall from this time be

Your master's mistress.

Olivia

A sister, you are she!¹⁷⁹

Enter [Fabian and] Malvolio¹⁸⁰ [with Maria's letter].

Orsino

2495 Is this the madman?

Olivia

Ay, my lord, this same.

[To Malvolio] How now, Malvolio?

Malvolio

Madam, you have done me wrong,

Notorious¹⁸¹ wrong.

Olivia

Have I, Malvolio? No.

172. Released.

173. i.e. be as pleased to approve of me as a sister-in-law (if you marry Viola) as you would have as a wife.

174. i.e. the relationship created by the double marriage.

175. Own.

176. Releases from service, acquits.

177. Nature, disposition.

178. (a) pledge of my word, (b) hand in betrothal (compare TLN 2439).

179. Emphatic delight at the double bond with Viola.

180. Presumably still in his yellow stockings and cross-garters; Orsino's question may be incredulous.

181. Compare TLN 2513 and note to TLN 2072.

2500 **Malvolio**

Lady,¹⁸² you have. Pray you peruse that letter.
[Giving her the letter] You must not now deny it is your hand.
 Write from it¹⁸³ if you can, in hand, or phrase,¹⁸⁴
 Or say 'tis not your seal, not your invention.¹⁸⁵
 You can say none of this. Well, grant it then,
 2505 And tell me, in the modesty of honor,¹⁸⁶
 Why you have given me such clear lights¹⁸⁷ of favor,
 Bade¹⁸⁸ me come smiling and cross-gartered to you,
 To put on yellow stockings, and to frown
 Upon Sir Toby, and the lighter¹⁸⁹ people;
 2510 And acting this in an obedient hope,
 Why have you suffered me to be imprisoned,
 Kept in a dark house, visited by the priest,
 And made the most notorious geck and gull¹⁹⁰
 That ere invention¹⁹¹ played on? Tell me, why?

2515 **Olivia**

Alas, Malvolio, this is not my writing,
 Though I confess much like the character;¹⁹²
 But out of question, 'tis Maria's hand.
 And now I do bethink me, it was she
 First told me thou wast mad; then cam'st¹⁹³ in smiling,
 2520 And in such forms which here were presupposed
 Upon¹⁹⁴ thee in the letter. Prithee, be content.
 This practice hath most shrewdly past¹⁹⁵ upon thee;
 But when we know the grounds and authors of it,
 Thou shalt be both the plaintiff and the judge
 2525 Of thine own cause.

Fabian

Good madam, hear me speak,¹⁹⁶
 And let no quarrel, nor no brawl to come,¹⁹⁷
 Taint the condition of this present hour,

182. Malvolio is given blank verse for the first time in the play, perhaps to allow him increased dignity.

183. Differently.

184. Handwriting or phraseology.

185. Composition.

186. With honorable moderation.

187. Unmistakable signs.

188. Pronounced "bad."

189. Frivolous (i.e. the "servants," TLN 1155).

190. Fool and dupe.

191. Contrivance.

192. Handwriting.

193. Then (you) came.

194. Previously suggested to.

195. This trick has been cunningly played. Manningham's diary also refers to the trick as a "good practice."

196. Fabian completes Olivia's verse line, which may indicate a quick cue (before things get worse).

197. Turbulent squabble awaiting (us).

Which I have wondered¹⁹⁸ at. In hope it shall not,
 2530 Most freely I confess myself and Toby
 Set this device against Malvolio here,
 Upon some stubborn and uncourteous parts
 We had conceived against him.¹⁹⁹ Maria writ
 The letter, at Sir Toby's great importance,²⁰⁰
 2535 In recompense whereof he hath married her.²⁰¹
 How with a sportful malice it was followed²⁰²
 May rather pluck on²⁰³ laughter than revenge,
 If that the injuries be justly weighed
 That have on both sides passed.

2540 **Olivia**

[To Malvolio] Alas, poor fool, how have they baffled²⁰⁴ thee!

Clown

[To Malvolio] Why,²⁰⁵ "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and
 some have greatness thrown upon them." I was one, sir, in this interlude,²⁰⁶ one
 Sir Topaz, sir; but that's all one.²⁰⁷ "By the Lord, fool, I am not mad!" But do
 2545 you remember: "Madam, why laugh you at such a barren rascal? An²⁰⁸ you
 smile not, he's gagged." And thus the whirligig of time²⁰⁹ brings in his
 revenges.

Malvolio

I'll be revenged on the whole pack²¹⁰ of you!

[Exit.]

Olivia

He hath been most notoriously abused.²¹¹

2550 **Orsino**

[To Fabian] Pursue him,²¹² and entreat him to a peace. [Exit Fabian.]

He hath not told us of the captain yet.

When that is known, and golden²¹³ time convents,²¹⁴

A solemn combination shall be made

198. Marveled. Compare TLN 2390; a sense of wonder is a vital element in the resolution of the play.

199. As a consequence of willful incivility we saw and resented in him.

200. Importunity.

201. Reaction of those on stage to this news may be a significant pointer to the tone of the production.

202. Pursued, carried out.

203. Induce.

204. (a) confounded, (b) displayed to the world as disgraced. As TLN 1165.

205. The Clown can mimic Malvolio's manner of speech in the various quotes which follow, which are close to what he said in 2.5, 4.2, and 1.5.

206. Play, entertainment.

207. Of no consequence. Compare TLN 2359 and TLN 2578.

208. If.

209. Either (a) time's spinning top (which is whipped to keep it turning), or (b) a merry-go-round. Both meanings suggest "The wheel is come full circle" (*Lr.* TLN 3136).

210. Malvolio picks up the Clown's "revenges"; "pack" refers to a gang of conspirators.

211. Possibly Olivia is picking up two Malvolioisms (see TLN 2498, TLN 2513, TLN 2033, and especially TLN 2072-2073).

212. Folio gives no exit; Fabian, who has played the peacemaker, seems the obvious choice.

213. i.e. favorable and precious, recalling the idyllic "golden age" of an ideal world. Compare "golden world in *AYL* TLN 117-119.

214. Convenes, calls (us) together. Stress is on the second syllable.

Of our dear²¹⁵ souls. [*To Olivia*] Meantime, sweet sister,
 2555 We will not part²¹⁶ from hence. [*To Viola*] Cesario, come—²¹⁷
 For so you shall be²¹⁸ while you are a man;
 But when in other habits you are seen,
 Orsino's mistress, and his fancy's²¹⁹ queen.
*Exeunt [all except Clown].*²²⁰

2560 **Clown**

(*Sings*)

When that I was²²¹ and a²²² little tiny boy,
 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
 A foolish thing²²³ was but a toy,²²⁴
 For the rain it raineth every day.
 But when I came to man's estate,
 2565 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
 'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,²²⁵
 For the rain it raineth every day.
 But when I came, alas, to wive,
 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
 2570 By swaggering²²⁶ could I never thrive,
 For the rain it raineth every day.
 But when I came unto my beds,
 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
 With tosspots still 'had drunken heads,²²⁷
 2575 For the rain it raineth every day.
 A great while ago the world begun,
 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,

215. (a) loving, (b) precious.

216. Orsino, by using the emphatic "will" rather than "shall," underlines the harmony of the two couples and households in his promise to remain at Olivia's house.

217. In this preparation for the final exit (to marriage and feasting, as traditional in comedy), Orsino presumably takes Viola's hand, and Sebastian Olivia's.

218. i.e. I would have you to be.

219. Love's (without the pejorative overtones of TLN 18-19).

220. The song is a form of epilogue, acknowledging and farewelling the audience (compare Puck in *MND* and Rosalind in *AYL*). There is no need for the Clown to exit, then reenter for the song.

221. The song is a form of epilogue, acknowledging and farewelling the audience (compare Puck in *MND* and Rosalind in *AYL*). It is generally agreed to be a thematic comment on the world of *Twelfth Night*. The traditional music may be later than Shakespeare. It is not known if the words are his (a similar verse is included in *Lr.*). In the Armfield film, the moon on a backdrop moves down onto the Clown and is revealed as a theatrical followspot.

222. Either emphatic, or an extra word to fit the music.

223. (a) bad behavior, (b) penis.

224. (a) trifle, (b) useless "thing" (like the Clown's bauble, which may itself be used as a mock phallus).

225. i.e. (once I was an adult) men locked their doors against knaves and thieves (like me). The possibly sexual connotation of "foolish thing" is not insisted on here.

226. Blustering, bullying. Compare TLN 1696-1699 for approbation of swaggering "manhood," and Doll Tearsheet in *2H4*, who calls Pistol a "swaggering rascal" (TLN 1098).

227. Either (a) when I came to whichever place served me as a bed, like the other drunks ("tospots") I had ("had") hangovers all the time ("still"), or (b) when I grew old, I was always drunk. The syntax is awkward, and supporters of the second version emend to singular "bed, head."

923 Drama

But that's all one,²²⁸ our play is done,
And we'll strive to please you every day.
[Exit.]

228. Epilogues traditionally announce the end of the play by seeking audience approval, and often encourage future attendance. Compare *AWW*, where in the epilogue the King seeks applause "which we will pay, / With strife to please you, day exceeding day" (TLN 3075-3076).

59.

Twelfth Night: Study Guide

To paraphrase the French critic and philosopher Henri Bergson, comedy depicts the triumph of the vital characters (those on the side of life, fertility) over mechanical characters (those given to rote, mechanical, predictable behaviour). Comedy is concerned with the social norm. Aberrant individualism must be checked, and all must be brought back within the social fold. Usually romantic comedies end in marriage(s). One etymology of comedy is Greek *Komoidia* (revel song). The title, *Twelfth Night* (January 5), is an allusion to an important feast day of the Christian calendar, namely the eve of the 12th day after Xmas, or Feast of the Epiphany, (January 6), which is a time of much merrymaking. This feast derives from the ancient Roman Saturnalia, held at the same season. The play was probably so named because it was written for performance at the Twelfth Night revels (ca. 1600–1601).¹ Typically at Saturnalia, a prototype of later English Christmas feasts or celebrations, a Lord of Misrule presided over the Festus Fatuorum (Feast of Fools).

Of course, the Christian calendar marks **Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) or Carnival** (Latin **carne + vale**). Think of some modern English words with the root *carne* (**carnal, incarnation**) and **valedictory** (a saying good-bye). So Carnival = farewell to the flesh, a time of excess, which is followed by Lent. As Feste says, “pleasure will be paid, one time or another.” (*TN* 2.4.957)

Its origins aside, the spirit of comedy celebrates life and the flesh. In **romantic comedy**, the young lovers encounter impediments to their eventual marriage and eventual reproduction. Sometimes the impediments are external (blocking parents or members of the older generation), but often the impediment is internal (self-indulgence or pride). The typical comic plot begins with exposition, moves to complication, then to release or liberation.

The subtitle is significant, too: “What You **Will**.” Look up the word “will” in the Oxford English Dictionary or any other good dictionary. (One suggested meaning is “To desire, wish for, want.”) It also had the sense of “to get lost, go astray.” Perhaps this obsolete meaning is relevant to theme.

Themes

The play’s **main plot** (the love plot: Orsino-Viola-Olivia-Sebastian) and the **subplot** (the revellers’ gulling of Malvolio) intersect thematically around the theme of **pride** or **self-indulgence**. Most of the characters must have their self-indulgence removed. Which characters are self-indulgent?

Self-indulgent characters in the main plot

I would suggest that Orsino is self-indulgent. He confuses wallowing in conventional attitudes of love with the real thing. He confuses sentimentality and imaginary love with the real thing. Next, Olivia is guilty of indulgently playing the chaste, scornful lady, one who abjures the sight of men for seven

1. “Twelfth Night”. *Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, Centenary Edition, 1109.

years. Thus, she tries too hard to show her own love for a dead brother, all the while perversely contradicting her own loving nature. Unlike Orsino, however, she does not adhere too long to the role she plays (scornful mistress of Petrarchan convention). Instead, she follows her natural, spontaneous loving tendency as Cesario. Neither Viola nor Feste is self-indulgent. Both observe others, and Viola is often selfless.

Self-indulgent characters in subplot

First: Sir Toby Belch. He insists on play, and like the eternal child, he refuses to deal with time and responsibility. He insists on ignoring the clock (“Not to be abed after midnight is to be up betimes” [early] (TN 2.3.701)), and staying outside time, insisting on holiday. His names both suggest drink—Toby jug and belching.

Second: Andrew Aguecheek. He is a fool, who, like Absalom in Chaucer’s “Miller’s Tale,” deludes himself that he could be worthy of a young, lusty, quick-witted woman. His lank hair and sallow complexion (ague is a flu-like disease) suggest the opposite of fertility. Belch bilks him shamelessly, perpetuating the laughable idea that Aguecheek is a worthy suitor (see especially the vulgar joke at TN 1.3.214).

Third, Malvolio (**Mal** and *Voglio*—Ital. “I wish”—suggest ill-will and bad volition. Contrast to Benvolio, the good-hearted friend of Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*). Malvolio’s will is indeed diseased. He is malevolent. Like Aguecheek, he indulgently thinks himself worthy of Olivia. A thoroughgoing materialist, he is only interested in Olivia’s status and wealth. One aspect of Shakespeare’s satire on Puritanism is Malvolio’s social climbing and extreme interest in increasing his wealth. If Aguecheek woos Olivia in part to try to convince himself of his own virility, Malvolio woos her chiefly to rise in station and wealth. See his daydream about the servant who married into the nobility, i.e., a yeoman of the wardrobe married the Lady Strachy (TN 2.5.1055).

Act Notes

Act 1 (Illyria, The Duke’s Palace)

Duke Orsino’s first speech introduces the motif of **excess**, metaphorically suggested by a reference to overeating. He suggests that his love for Olivia is all-consuming. Pay close attention to Orsino’s insistence on “fancy” or imagination. Fancy means “love” [verb: to fancy; noun “fancy,” love] but also “to imagine.” He then compares himself to the mythological Actaeon, a hunter who, after seeing Diana bathing, was transformed into a stag (hart) and torn to pieces—an emblem of intemperance.

[Painting: Diana and Actaeon by Titian \(1559\) Oil on canvas](#)

What key fact do we discover about Olivia, object of Orsino’s unrequited love (TN 1.1.25–34) in the first reference to her? The duke’s reply is important: affections (TN 1.1.42) are emotions. What kind of love does Orsino wish for from Olivia? In Renaissance psychology, the liver was held to be the seat of sexual passion, the brain, the seat of reason, and the heart, emotion.

Act 1

Act 1, Scene 2 (Illyria)

Viola, shipwrecked, finds herself in Illyria. The captain who rescued her gives her hope that Sebastian, her brother, might also not have drowned. The captain, a native of these parts, offers to be her guide. He tells her of the noble duke (Orsino) who governs the area and tells of Olivia's vow to forego suitors for seven years in honour of her dead brother.

Why do you think Viola decides to serve Olivia at this point? Why does she adopt the disguise of a eunuch?

What does Viola mean, "To time I will commit" (TN 1.2.112)?

Notice that Viola's name is a virtual anagram of Olivia. They have many similarities; for example, both are noble born, and both have seemingly lost brothers. What is their key difference in attitudes to love? It's too early to tell, but keep this question in mind.

Act 1, Scene 3

Toby is the Lord of Misrule figure, and he believes that "care is an enemy to life." Toby is anything but serious (and so, is Malvolio's opposite). Toby stands for holiday, whereas Malvolio seemingly stands for work. Toby loves humour; Malvolio is humourless. Of the seven deadly sins, foremost in Toby are gluttony, sloth, and lechery; Malvolio's besetting sins are pride, avarice, and envy, with a touch of wrath (see TN 5.1.2549).

Notice that Aguecheek is a "foolish knight"; he is **Sir** Andrew Aguecheek. (Look up the term "Merry Andrew" in a good dictionary. Is his first name appropriate? Is his surname apt? Explain.)

What is Toby's purpose in introducing Sir Andrew to his niece's household? (TN 1.140). Later, pay close attention to Toby's "She'll (i.e., Olivia) none o' the Count..." (TN 1.3.219). What do you make of Toby's lines here? One aspect of Aguecheek's character might seem out of place: see TN 1.3.147. Now look up "roaring boy."

Link this aspect of Aguecheek's character to the duelling scene (TN 3.4 and especially 4.1). Notice that Aguecheek is being proudly self-indulgent in that he pretends to be what he is not: a linguist, a macho-man/swordsman, dueller, a good dancer, etc. This trait heightens the appearance vs. reality theme.

Act 1, Scene 4

Note that Viola has now adopted the disguise of Cesario (a eunuch). How long has Cesario/Viola been at the duke Orsino's court? How does Orsino treat Cesario? Given the length of time Orsino has known Cesario, what does this tell you about Orsino? By the way, if you were madly in love with someone, would you send an intermediary to do your wooing for you? Further, what conventional aspect of the duke's role-playing personality is heightened in lines 288–289?

What does Viola/Cesario say in the scene's last line (TN 1.293–294) that complicates the plot?

Act 1, Scene 5

Here Feste, the Fool or jester, is introduced. Notice his name and its connotations. Notice that, as usual, Maria (Olivia's lady-in-waiting, more than a maid) holds her own in the verbal play with Feste. With

Olivia, his employer, Feste jokes his way out of trouble for his recent unexcused absence. How does he prove Olivia a fool? Like Toby, Feste feels that Olivia's mourning is excessive.

What aspect of Malvolio's character is immediately apparent in his discussion of the Fool? Notice Olivia's reproach: "O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio" (TN 1.5.383). He is certainly hostile to comic fooling, ever the serious-minded man. He wants to appear the wise counsellor and frequently "reproves" or scolds.

During Viola/Cesario's first encounter with Olivia, notice that Olivia pointedly asks for her veil, an item of mourning.

Viola's speech, she realizes, is artificial, and so she may consciously parody herself. Might the actress playing Viola deliver the lines in an exaggerated, ironic way? Note "comedian" (TN 1.476) means "actor." But Olivia is equally play acting, isn't she?

Note the dramatic irony in Viola's lines, "I am not that I play" (TN 479). This line could easily apply to several of the characters: Aguecheek, Orsino, Olivia, the Fool. Pay close attention to Viola's lines at 481–482—a thematic crux.

Is Olivia being vain when she asks, "Is it not well done?" (TN 526) What is ironic about Olivia's line, "Twill endure wind and weather" (TN 529)? Briefly, what is the gist of Viola's reproach in lines, "Lady, you are the cruelest she alive/If you will lead these graces to the grave/And leave the world no copy" (TN 532–534)? How do they relate to Shakespeare's sonnets quoted above?

Olivia's lines (TN 537–540) refer to the Petrarchan convention known as a blazon. See Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 for a parodic treatment of this convention. See also Spenser, "Long while I sought." Then look at Olivia's lines, "Thy tongue, they face...fivefold blazon" (TN 588). Now go online for [further discussion of Sonnet 130](#) if you wish. Note also that Viola refers to Olivia as the typical cruel maiden of the Renaissance sonnet tradition, calling on behalf of Orsino for "pity" (TN 1.569). Notice the **dramatic irony** in Olivia's response, "**You** might do much" (TN 570).

Act 1 ends with Olivia in love with a woman dressed as a man. So we have seen **exposition** (necessary background business), followed by some **complication**. The complication will increase and later be followed by **resolution**. Thus the 3-part structure of comedy: Act 1, exposition; Acts 2 and 3, complication; Act 3, Scene 4, climax; Acts 4 and 5, resolution.

Act 2

Act 2, Scene 1

The scenes with Sebastian (Viola's twin brother) and Antonio—the man who saved him from drowning and befriended him after the shipwreck—help develop the plot and the theme of love. Notice that Antonio willingly serves his friend out of love for him and even exposes himself to danger in Illyria.

Act 2, Scene 2

Short connecting scene. The invented story of the ring suggests to Viola that Olivia loves her/him. "I am the man" (TN 681). Both Olivia and Viola realize that only time can unravel the complexities.

Act 2, Scene 3

The three revellers—Toby, Andrew, and Feste—engage in much noisy foolery and song, with "O Mistress Mine" introducing the *carpe diem* theme mentioned above. Maria, the voice of reason, urges

them to be quiet, but Malvolio is awakened. Malvolio threatens Toby with dismissal if he does not mend his ways and continues in “this uncivil rule” (2.3.818.) At this point, Maria reveals her desire to gull (trick) Malvolio to teach him a lesson (828–831).

Analyze Maria’s speech about Malvolio—“The devil a Puritan” (839). What does Maria take to be the vice in Malvolio that will prove to be his undoing? Look now at the section on [Puritanism in Shakespeare’s Life and Times](#) by the University of Victoria. Pay most attention to the section “Satirical attacks on Puritanism.”

After Maria tells Toby and Andrew of her plan to trick Malvolio, Belch finally decides it is bedtime. What exactly does Andrew mean in the next lines, “If I cannot recover...” (875)?

Act 2, Scene 4

As Duke Orsino continues to call for melancholy music and to play the role of the unrequited lover, notice the **dramatic irony** in the exchange between him and Viola/Cesario, (907–915, also 999–1010).

Comment on Feste’s speech re the Duke Orsino: “Now the melancholy god protect thee...changeable taffeta...” (959–960). What exactly does Feste mean? What does the sea traditionally symbolize? Note that the god [Proteus](#) was associated with the sea. What does “protean” mean?

Comment on the conventional nature of the love song, “Come Away, Death” (sung by Feste, 941–952).

Lastly, notice that Orsino does not offer a jewel to Olivia until the end of Act 2.4 (“Give her this jewel”, 1.1013).

Act 2, Scene 5

Olivia’s servant Fabian, like Feste, has some reason to be hostile to Malvolio. What is it?

Why were Puritans against [bearbaiting](#)? How does bearbaiting become a symbol and to whom does it apply?

Maria’s Bait: Maria throws into Malvolio’s way a forged letter (ostensibly from Olivia, but Maria has copied her mistress’s hand and composed this letter). Notice how his own “contemplation” (1046) and “imagination” (1057) [cf. **Fancy**] lead to his gulling. Olivia’s special seal on her signet ring is an image of Lucrece. Clarify this allusion. Why is it apt that Olivia is linked to Lucrece? This scene is one of the most popular in the play. Describe what makes this scene (from Malvolio’s entrance at 1049) so amusing.

Notice Toby’s grateful line, “I could marry this wench for this device” (1184). How is this prophetic?

Act 3

Act 3, Scene 1

Viola, outside Olivia’s garden, encounters Feste as she prepares to woo Olivia again by proxy for Orsino. Although the puns are a bit forced, both characters reveal their linguistic abilities and their wit. Contrast their verbal dexterity with Andrew’s verbal ham-handedness. Both Feste and Viola observe that foolish behaviour (folly) is everywhere (3.1.1251). As with the Duke, Feste succeeds in getting a tip through his verbal dexterity. Note the dramatic irony in Viola’s lines (1258–59). What does she mean here? She also praises Feste’s ability to show people their folly (thus a fitting act), whereas wise men who fall into folly betray their common sense (1276–80).

The encounter between Viola and Olivia playfully satirizes euphemistic or courtly language, the inflated language of the court, after hearing Viola's cloyingly artificial, courtly praise of Olivia: "Most excellent accomplished lady, the heavens rain odors on you" (1297–98). Andrew is impressed by Viola's courtly diction: "That youth's a rare courtier" (1299). Compare this courtly language to that of Osric in Act 5 of *Hamlet*—or, to that of Absalom as he woos Alison in Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale."

Now read the following: [Backgrounds to Romance: "Courtly Love"](#)

Meanwhile, Andrew is most impressed with courtly language and vows to copy such phrases (1302). Notice the many references to the lover as "servant," and how Viola offers (Orsino) as Olivia's servant (1313). Olivia indirectly tries to indicate her interest in Cesario/Viola. Interestingly, just like Orsino, Olivia accuses Cesario of cruelty (1331–33), but unlike the traditional cruel mistress of poetic convention, Cesario/Viola responds, "I pity you" (1336).

Again, dramatic irony can be seen in line 1354: Viola: "That you do think you are not what you are" ... later, "I am not what I am" (1356).

The scene ends with a direct avowal of love from Olivia to Viola/Cesario, thus heightening the complication.

Act 3, Scene 2

Andrew, impatient at getting nowhere with Olivia, vows to leave. How does Toby deflect Andrew's objections that Olivia seems only to be interested in Viola? In particular, why do Toby and Fabian suggest that Andrew challenge Viola to a duel? This scene and its continuation in the latter part of Act 3.4 parallel the gulling of Malvolio. Here begins the "gulling of Andrew Aguecheek," and this tributary to the comic subplot continues until Act 4.1, much to Andrew's discomfiture, both verbal and physical. What do Malvolio and Aguecheek have in common as comic gulls? What does Toby mean when he says of Sir Andrew, "I have been dear to him ... some two thousand strong" (3.2.1434)?

Act 3, Scene 3

This short scene prepares for the introduction of Sebastian into the main plot as well as into the subplot, and he becomes an instrument in the fusion of both. Because Antonio is afraid to play the tourist in Illyria because of an outstanding warrant for his arrest, issued by the Duke, he begs off a tour of the city and instead lends Sebastian money for lodgings. They agree to meet later at an inn called the Elephant.

Act 3, Scene 4

This long comic scene develops the subplot gulling of Malvolio and of Andrew. First, Maria sets up Malvolio's one-sided verbal lovemaking to Olivia, suggesting that his odd behaviour is evidence of possession by the devil and thereby setting up a necessary exorcism that will serve Malvolio right for his previous ill treatment of Fabian, Feste, as well as Toby and Andrew.

Love-smitten Olivia opens the scene, wondering what gifts to give Viola/Cesario in order to win his love. Then she asks for the grave and formal Malvolio, qualities that suit her ill fortunes (3.4.1525–27). Dramatic irony governs the humorous dialogue between the amorous Malvolio and the miserable Olivia. His words to Olivia make her believe he is in very "midsummer madness." Just before she goes to meet the returned Viola, Olivia instructs Maria look after Malvolio, thereby giving Toby a pretext for tormenting Malvolio by locking him in a dark room (a common treatment for madness). Fabian, Maria, and Toby all pretend to be trying to cure Malvolio, even suggesting that his urine sample be sent to the

“wise woman” (1625). Malvolio acts surly to them, thinking that he is following Olivia’s bidding in the love letter (“be opposite with a kinsman”), and this behaviour leads Toby to lock him in a dark room.

At this point, Andrew shows Fabian and Toby the scornful challenge to Viola/Cesario that he has penned, replete with “thou’s” and “thee’s”—terms of address used by superiors to inferiors, rather than the more polite “you” pronoun. Toby represses the foolish letter and instead gives a verbal report of the challenge to Viola, who all the while is being reproached by Olivia for cruelty. Viola still insists that she is wooing Olivia on behalf of her master, the Duke Orsino. Toby pretends that Viola is a hot-tempered and formidable fencer, and Andrew immediately tries to chicken out of the challenge, adding, “Let him let the matter slip and I’ll give him my horse, gray Capilet” (1804). Clarify what Toby means: “This shall end without the perdition of souls. [Aside] Marry I’ll ride your horse as well as I ride you.” Note that an aside is an utterance not heard by anyone else on stage and is the equivalent of a character’s thinking to himself.

After Toby pretends to Viola that Andrew will not be appeased, Viola reluctantly draws her sword only to have Antonio intervene, thinking he is defending Viola’s twin, Sebastian. Toby draws as well, whereupon Antonio is arrested. At this point, Antonio asks Viola for his purse, and the astonished Viola denies him. Antonio naturally upbraids Viola for ingratitude as he is led off to prison (1879 ff.). Viola now hopes that Sebastian may still be alive. Toby reports on Viola’s seeming dishonesty and cowardice in abandoning his friend, so Andrew now regains his bluster: “’Slid, I’ll after him again and beat him” (1912).

By the way, notice the curse: “’Slid” (by God’s eyelid). Other common Elizabethan blasphemous oaths were “Gadzooks,” and “’Sblood”. Look up “Gadzooks” in the Oxford English Dictionary or college dictionary.

Act 4

Act 4, Scene 1

When Feste approaches Sebastian telling him to report to Olivia, Sebastian is bewildered and pays Feste to leave him alone, whereupon Andrew appears with Toby and strikes Sebastian a blow. Sebastian strikes back at Andrew, and Toby draws on Sebastian. When Olivia arrives, she takes Sebastian’s part, and Sebastian plays along, allowing her to govern him.

Act 4, Scene 2

Feste, disguised as the curate Sir Topas, further torments Malvolio, who asserts his sanity as Feste retorts, “There is no madness but ignorance, in which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog” (2030). Malvolio succeeds in getting Sir Topas to bring him pen and paper so that he can write to Olivia.

Act 4, Scene 3

Olivia’s garden. Sebastian decides to pledge his troth with Olivia, believing that Olivia must be sane or else she could not command her servants.

Act 5

Act 5, Scene 1

This long scene unravels all the plot complexities. The Duke finally appears at Olivia's household and encounters Feste, who charms him and receives a tip from Orsino. Orsino appears ready to woo by himself at long last. The Duke and Viola encounter Antonio, who defends his recent actions. Antonio insists that, for the past three months, he and Sebastian have been inseparable. So by this shorthand, the audience learns that three months have passed since the action began. The duke refutes Antonio: "Three months [Viola/Cesario] has [at]tended upon on me" (2254).

One more complication remains—Duke Orsino is again rebuffed by Olivia, and he responds, "Still so cruel?" (2266). Orsino now suspects Viola/Cesario is the true object of Olivia's affection and threatens to kill Cesario in spite: "Live you the marble-breasted tyrant still. / But ...your minion, whom I know you love, / And whom...I tender dearly.... I'll sacrifice a lamb that I do love. / To spite a raven's heart within a dove (2280 ff.)." Incredibly, Viola accepts: "And I...a thousand deaths would die" (2289). Olivia tries to persuade Viola/Cesario to stand up and tell of their marriage: "Cesario, husband, stay" (2301). The priest corroborates Olivia's words that she is married to Viola/Cesario. The Duke, in disgust, bids Viola farewell.

At this juncture, Andrew, nursing a broken head, blames Viola for his wound. Toby, too, complains of a beating at the hands of Viola. With the entry of Sebastian, all confusion ends, and the lovers pair off: Olivia and Sebastian, Orsino and Viola, even Toby and Maria. Three marriages will be celebrated. Only Malvolio remains at the periphery: "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you" (2548). So not quite everyone is integrated into the social circle: Malvolio still nurses a grudge. But the Duke urges Malvolio to make peace.

The closing song is hard to interpret, but perhaps its first verse suggests that foolishness is only acceptable in the young, but as one matures (verse 2), anti-social behaviour will have consequences—social expulsion ("gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gates"); verse 3: conducting oneself in an arrogant manner and "swaggering" does not end well (Orsino and Olivia?); verse 4: drunkenness (Toby) will lead to hangovers. Nothing changes—foolishness has negative consequences, so try to be integrated into the social norm.

Some Key Ideas

Early in the play, Viola counsels Olivia:

"What is yours to bestow is not yours to reserve" (1.5.482–83). First, what does this line mean? Who utters it? To whom? Compare this sentiment with the main point of [Shakespeare's Sonnets 1–17](#). In this context, Sonnets 1 and 3 are especially relevant.

SONNET I

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripener should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes, 5

Feed'st thy light'st flame with self-substantial fuel,
 Making a famine where abundance lies,
 Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
 Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament
 And only herald to the gaudy spring, 10
 Within thine own bud buriest thy content
 And, tender churl, makest waste in niggarding.
 Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
 To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

SONNET III

Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest
 Now is the time that face should form another;
 Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
 Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.
 For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb 5
 Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
 Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
 Of his self-love, to stop posterity?
 Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
 Calls back the lovely April of her prime: 10
 So thou through windows of thine age shall see
 Despite of wrinkles this thy golden time.
 But if thou live, remember'd not to be,
 Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

Perhaps the idea behind Viola's criticism of Olivia is that, by being foolishly chaste and closed to love, Olivia is committing an offence against nature.

The Songs of Twelfth Night

Each song in some way is a comment on action or theme.

Briefly analyze each song's theme or main point. To which character(s) is each most aptly directed?

1. "O Mistress Mine" (2.3.740 ff.)
2. "Come Away Death" (2.4.941 ff.)
3. "Hey, Robin" (4.2.2057 ff.)
4. "When that I was and a little tiny boy" (2.5.59 ff.)

Romantic Comedies

Characteristics of Shakespeare's Comedies (adapted from Roland Frye, *Shakespeare: The Art of the Dramatist* (1970), pp. 81–96):

- Optimistic atmosphere
- Festive endings
- Non-satiric, genial tone
- Young love and marriage in foreground
- Old characters in background
- Evil is muted

Recurrent Comic Plot/Character

1. **Romantic Lover.** Duke Orsino, the melancholy Petrarchan, conventional lover (compare to Orlando in *As You Like It*). Petrarchan conventions:
 1. Blazon—i.e., a feature-by-feature description of the beloved's body;
 2. Melancholy lover, sick for love; considers mistress cruel; heart ready to break;
 3. Lover uses conceits to describe mistress's beauty, cruelty, and his own suffering.
2. **Disdainful Lover.** Olivia (compare Olivia with Phebe in *As You Like It*).

Theme of Pride or Self-love/Self-indulgence

Which characters are guilty of pride? Self-indulgence?

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60.

Hamlet: Act 1

William Shakespeare

Hamlet (Modern, Editor's Version). [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#). University of Victoria. Editor: David Bevington. Adapted by James Sexton.

Scene 1

Enter Barnardo and Francisco, two sentinels.

Barnardo

Who's there?

FranciscoNay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.¹**Barnardo**

Long live the King!

Francisco

Barnardo?

Barnardo

He.

Francisco

You come most carefully upon your hour.

Barnardo

'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.

FranciscoFor this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.**Barnardo**

Have you had quiet guard?

Francisco

Not a mouse stirring.

Barnardo

Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.***Francisco**

I think I hear them.—Stand, ho! Who is there?

1. Identify who you are.

20Horatio

Friends to this ground.

Marcellus

And liegemen to the Dane.²

Francisco

Give you good night.

Marcellus

Oh, farewell, honest soldier. Who hath relieved you?

Francisco

Barnardo hath my place. Give you good night.

²⁵*Exit Francisco.*

Marcellus

Holla, Barnardo!

Barnardo

Say, what, is Horatio there?

Horatio

A piece of him.

Barnardo

Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

30Horatio

What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

Barnardo

I have seen nothing.

Marcellus

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,³

And will not let belief take hold of him,

Touching⁴ this dreaded sight twice seen of us.

³⁵Therefore I have entreated him along

With us⁵ to watch the minutes of this night,⁶

That if again this apparition come

He may approve⁷ our eyes and speak to it.

Horatio

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

40Barnardo

Sit down awhile,

And let us once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against our story,

What we two nights have seen.

Horatio

Well, sit we down,

⁴⁵And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.

2. Subjects of the Danish king.

3. Fantastic imaginings.

4. Regarding, concerning.

5. To come along with us.

6. To keep watch with us tonight.

7. Confirm, corroborate.

Barnardo

Last night of all,⁸
 When yond same star that's westward from the pole⁹
 Had made his course t'illuminate¹⁰ that part of heaven
 Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
 50The bell then beating one—
Enter the Ghost.

Marcellus

Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes again!

Barnardo

In the same figure like the King that's dead.

Marcellus

Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio.

55Barnardo

Looks it not like the King? Mark it, Horatio.

Horatio

Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.

Barnardo

It would be spoke to.¹¹

Marcellus

Question it, Horatio.

Horatio

What art thou that usurp'st¹² this time of night,
 60Together with that fair and warlike form
 In which the majesty of buried Denmark¹³
 Did sometimes¹⁴ march? By heaven, I charge thee speak!

Marcellus

It is offended.

Barnardo

See, it stalks away.

65Horatio

Stay, speak, speak, I charge thee speak!

Exit the Ghost.

Marcellus

'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Barnardo

How now, Horatio, you tremble and look pale.

Is not this something more than fantasy?

70What think you on't?¹⁵

8. In the night just before the present one.

9. Probably Arcturus, a bright star just to the west of the Big Dipper and the pole star or Polaris that is directly north in the night sky.

10. To illuminate.

11. According to a widely held belief, ghosts could not speak until spoken to.

12. You who wrongfully assert your authority over.

13. The buried former King of Denmark, Hamlet's dead father.

14. Formerly.

15. Of it.

Horatio

Before my God, I might not this believe
 Without the sensible¹⁶ and true avouch¹⁷
 Of mine own eyes.

Marcellus

Is it not like the King?

⁷⁵**Horatio**

As thou art to thyself.
 Such was the very armor he had on
 When he the ambitious Norway¹⁸ combated.
 So frowned he once, when in an angry parle¹⁹
 He smote the sledded Polacks²⁰ on the ice.
 80 'Tis strange.

Marcellus

Thus twice before, and jump²¹ at this dead hour,
 With martial stalk²² hath he gone by our watch.

Horatio

In what particular thought to work²³ I know not,
 But in the gross and scope of mine opinion²⁴
 85 This bodes²⁵ some strange eruption to our state.

Marcellus

Good now,²⁶ sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
 Why this same strict and most observant watch
 So nightly toils the subject²⁷ of the land,
 And why such daily cast²⁸ of brazen²⁹ cannon
 90 And foreign mart³⁰ for implements of war,
 Why such impress³¹ of shipwrights, whose sore task
 Does not divide the Sunday from the week:³²
 What might be toward,³³ that this sweaty haste

16. Evident to the senses (especially sight).

17. Authority, confirmation.

18. King of Norway.

19. Parley, conference with the enemy.

20. Poles traveling on sleds.

21. Precisely.

22. Stride.

23. To organize my thoughts.

24. In my opinion, as I consider the whole topic.

25. Foretells.

26. i.e., I implore you all.

27. Imposes toil on the subjects, the citizens.

28. Casting.

29. Brass.

30. Shopping abroad.

31. Impressment, conscription.

32. i.e., Requires them to work on Sunday just like every other day of the week.

33. About to happen.

Doth make the night joint-laborer with the day?³⁴
 95 Who is't that can inform me?

Horatio

That can I.
 At least the whisper goes so: our last King,
 Whose image even but now appeared to us,
 Was as you know by Fortinbras of Norway,³⁵ by a most emulate³⁶ pride,
 Dared to the combat;³⁷ in which our valiant Hamlet—
 For so this side of our known world³⁸ esteemed him—
 Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed³⁹ compact
 Well ratified by law and heraldry⁴⁰
 105 Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
 Which he stood seized of,⁴¹ to the conqueror;
 Against the which a moiety competent
 Was gaged by our King,⁴² which had returned⁴³
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras
 110 Had he been vanquisher, as, by the same cov'nant⁴⁴
 And carriage of the article design[ed]⁴⁵
 His fell to Hamlet.⁴⁶ Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimprovèd mettle hot and full,⁴⁷
 Hath in the skirts⁴⁸ of Norway here and there
 115 Sharked up a list of landless resolute⁴⁹
 For food and diet to some enterprise
 That hath a stomach in't,⁵⁰ which is no other,
 As it doth well appear unto our state,
 But to recover of us⁵¹ by strong hand
 120 And terms compulsative those foresaid lands
 So by his father⁵² lost. And this, I take it,
 Is the main motive of our preparations,

34. i.e., Demands that work continue all twenty-four hours.

35. Old Fortinbras, King of Norway (with whom old Hamlet fought as described in lines 64-5 TLN 76-7) above; not young Fortinbras, nephew of this present king.

36. Competitive, rivalrous.

37. Challenged to fight, one on one.

38. i.e., all of Western Europe.

39. Confirmed by an official seal.

40. The laws and pageant customs of chivalry.

41. Possessed of.

42. In return for which a comparable portion of land was pledged by our King of Denmark.

43. Which was to have been assigned.

44. Contractual agreement.

45. And intent of the contact in question.

46. Old Fortinbras's lands would have been transferred to old Hamlet.

47. Full of untested fiery spirits.

48. Outskirts.

49. Rounded up a troop of restlessly ambitious younger sons and other gentry without landed title.

50. To feed and supply a bold enterprise demanding appetite and raw courage for such a venture.

51. From us.

52. The old King of Norway, now dead, brother of the present Fortinbras of Norway.

The source⁵³ of this our watch, and the chief head
Of this post-haste and rummage⁵⁴ in the land.

124.1 **Barnardo**

I think it be no other but e'en so.
Well may it sort that⁵⁵ this portentous figure
Comes armèd through our watch so like the King
That was and is the question of these wars.

124.5 **Horatio**

A mote⁵⁶ it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy⁵⁷ state of Rome,
A little ere⁵⁸ the mightiest Julius⁵⁹ fell,
The graves stood tenantless,⁶⁰ and the sheeted⁶¹ dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets,
124.10 As⁶² stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,⁶³
Disasters⁶⁴ in the sun; and the moist star,⁶⁵
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,⁶⁶
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.⁶⁷
And even the like precursor of feared events,
124.15 As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.⁶⁸

125 *Enter Ghost again.*

But soft,⁶⁹ behold, lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it⁷⁰ though it blast me.⁷¹ –Stay, illusion!
It spreads his arms.

53. Motivation.

54. Frenetic activity and bustle.

55. That could well explain why.

56. Speck of dust.

57. Flourishing, prosperous.

58. Before.

59. Julius Caesar. Caesar's assassination in Rome on March 15, 44 BC, is dramatized in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, where the event is heralded by many of the same prodigious omens cited in these lines.

60. Unoccupied.

61. Shrouded in grave-clothes.

62. Just as, like.

63. Comets and their trails drizzling blood.

64. Unfavorable astrological signs or aspects.

65. i.e., the moon, governess of tides.

66. The sea depends. Neptune is the Roman god of the sea.

67. The moon in eclipse was a foreboding sign of the day of Judgment and second coming of Christ predicted in Matthew 24.29 and Revelation 6.12.

68. And no less fearful predictions of frightening happenings, serving as prognosticators and prologues incessantly preceding the calamitous events that are fated to come, are the means by which heaven and earth together make manifest to our regions and peoples what they can expect.

69. i.e., gently, wait, hold on.

70. Stand in its way, confront it; also, hold up a Christian cross in front of it (as Horatio may do here).

71. Strike or wither me with a curse.

If thou hast any sound or use of voice,
 Speak to me!
 130 If there be any good thing to be done
 That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
 Speak to me!
 If thou art privy to⁷² thy country's fate,
 Which happily⁷³ foreknowing may avoid,
 Oh, speak!
 Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
 Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
 135 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
 Speak of it. Stay and speak!
The cock crows.
 Stop it, Marcellus!

Marcellus

Shall I strike at it with my partisan⁷⁴?

Horatio

Do, if it will not stand.

Barnardo

'Tis here.

¹⁴⁰**Horatio**

'Tis here.

Exit Ghost.

Marcellus

'Tis gone.

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
 To offer it the show of violence,
 For it is as the air, invulnerable,
 145 And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Barnardo

It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Horatio

And then it started⁷⁵ like a guilty thing
 Upon a fearful summons. I have heard
 The cock, that is the trumpet⁷⁶ to the morn,
 150 Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
 Awake the god of day, and, at his warning,
 Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
 Th'extravagant and erring⁷⁷ spirit hies⁷⁸

72. Are possessed with secret knowledge of.

73. Haply, perchance.

74. Long-handled, broad-bladed spear.

75. Moved suddenly and violently.

76. Trumpeter, herald.

77. Wandering, unrestrained.

78. Hastens.

To his confine; and of the truth herein
155 This present object made probation.⁷⁹

Marcellus

It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst⁸⁰ that season comes
Wherein our Savior's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning⁸¹ singeth all night long,
160 And then they say no spirit can walk abroad;
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,⁸²
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,⁸³
So hallowed and so gracious⁸⁴ is that time.

Horatio

So have I heard and do in part believe it.
165 But look, the morn in russet⁸⁵ mantle clad
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.
Break we our watch up, and by my advice
Let us impart what we have seen tonight
Unto young Hamlet, for, upon my life,
170 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

Marcellus

Let's do 't, I pray, and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most conveniently.
Exeunt.

79. Proof.

80. Just before.

81. The rooster.

82. No planets exert their baleful influence.

83. Cast a spell, enchant.

84. Suffused with divine grace.

85. Reddish brown.

Scene 2

*Flourish.*⁸⁶ *Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, and his sister Ophelia, Lords attendant [including Voltmand and Cornelius].*

King

Though yet of Hamlet our⁸⁷ dear brother's death
 180The memory be green, and that it us befitted
 To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him
 185Together with remembrance of ourselves.
 Therefore our sometime⁸⁸ sister, now our queen,
 Th'imperial jointress⁸⁹ of this warlike state,
 Have we as 'twere with a defeated joy,
 With one auspicious and one dropping eye,⁹⁰
 190With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole,⁹¹
 Taken to wife. Nor have we herein barred
 Your better wisdoms,⁹² which have freely gone
 With this affair along.⁹³ For all, our thanks.
 195Now follows that you know: young Fortinbras,
 Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
 Or thinking by our late⁹⁴ dear brother's death
 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,⁹⁵
 Co-leaguèd with this dream of his advantage,⁹⁶
 200He hath not failed to pester us with message
 Importing⁹⁷ the surrender of those lands
 Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
 To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
 205Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting,
 Thus much the business is: we have here writ
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,

86. A trumpet fanfare announcing the arrival of royalty, etc.

87. The royal "we," seen also in lines 2, 3, 6, 7 (ourselves).

88. Former

89. Joint possessor of the throne.

90. With one eye smiling and the other tear-stained and lowered in grief.

91. Sorrow.

92. The sage advice of you elders and statesmen (like Polonius).

93. Have freely given consent to this marriage.

94. Recent.

95. Totally disordered.

96. Combined with this illusory dream of his having us at a disadvantage.

97. Concerning, signifying.

Who, impotent and bed-rid,⁹⁸ scarcely hears
 Of this his nephew's purpose, to suppress
 210 His further gait herein, in that the levies,
 The lists, and full proportions are all made
 Out of his subject;⁹⁹ and we here dispatch
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,
 For bearers¹⁰⁰ of this greeting to old Norway,
 215 Giving to you no further personal power
 To business with the King more than the scope
 Of these dilated¹⁰¹ articles allow.
 Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.¹⁰²

Cornelius and Voltemand

In that and all things will we show our duty.

220 King

We doubt it nothing.¹⁰³ Heartily farewell.
Exeunt Voltemand and Cornelius.
 And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
 You told us of some suit. What is't, Laertes?
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane¹⁰⁴
 225 And lose your voice.¹⁰⁵ What wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?¹⁰⁶
 The head is not more native¹⁰⁷ to the heart,
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,¹⁰⁸
 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
 230 What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laertes

Dread my lord,¹⁰⁹
 Your leave and favor¹¹⁰ to return to France,
 From whence though willingly I came to Denmark
 To show my duty in your coronation,
 235 Yet now I must confess, that duty done,

98. Wasted by disease and confined to bed.

99. i.e., insisting that the Norwegian king put an end to Fortinbras's proceeding any further in this business, since the raising of troops and supplies is all made up out of the King of Norway's subjects (and are therefore at his disposal for military purposes, not young Fortinbras's). ("The lists" means "The roster of the troops levied.")

100. To serve as bearers.

101. Expanded, set out at length.

102. Let your swift carrying out of my command give testimony of your dutiful obedience.

103. Not in the slightest.

104. The Danish king.

105. Waste your speech.

106. i.e., That I will offer almost before you ask.

107. Closely related.

108. Useful in carrying out what is verbally commanded.

109. My awe-inspiring lord and master.

110. Gracious permission.

My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.¹¹¹

King

Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

²⁴⁰**Polonius**

H'ath,¹¹² my lord, wrung from me my slow leave

240.1 By laborsome petition, and at last
Upon his will I sealed my hard consent.¹¹³

I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King

Take thy fair hour,¹¹⁴ Laertes. Time be thine,

And thy best graces spend it at thy will.¹¹⁵

But now, my cousin¹¹⁶ Hamlet, and my son—

²⁴⁵**Hamlet**

A little more than kin, and less than kind.¹¹⁷

King

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Hamlet

Not so, my lord, I am too much i'th' sun.¹¹⁸

Queen

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color¹¹⁹ off

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.¹²⁰

250 Do not forever with thy vailèd lids¹²¹

Seek for thy noble father in the dust.

Thou know'st 'tis common:¹²² all that lives must die,

Passing through nature to eternity.

Hamlet

Ay, madam, it is common.

²⁵⁵**Queen**

If it be,

Why seems it so particular¹²³ with thee?

Hamlet

“Seems,” madam? Nay, it is, I know not “seems.”

‘Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

111. And submissively ask your gracious permission and forgiveness for my having asked such a favor.

112. He has.

113. I gave my reluctant consent, as though affixing a seal to a document of approval.

114. Seize your opportunity while there is still time, while you are young.

115. And may you spend your time guided by your best qualities and inclinations.

116. Anyone related by blood or kinship but not of the immediate family.

117. i.e., Involved in a family relationship that is at once too close and yet lacking in loving affection. "Kind" puns on the ideas of (1) blood relationship and (2) kindly feeling.

118. i.e., (1) too closely related as step-son to Claudius (2) too much in the sunshine of royal favor.

119. (1) dark mourning garments (2) melancholy.

120. The King of Denmark.

121. Lowered eyelids.

122. (1) a common occurrence (2) as Hamlet uses the term in line 74, "vulgar, disgusting."

123. Personal.

Nor customary suits of solemn black,
 260Nor windy suspiration¹²⁴ of forced breath,
 No, nor the fruitful river¹²⁵ in the eye,
 Nor the dejected havior¹²⁶ of the visage,
 Together with all forms, moods,¹²⁷ shapes of grief
 That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
 265For they are actions that a man might play.
 But I have that within which passeth show;
 These but the trappings¹²⁸ and the suits of woe.

King

‘Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
 270To give these mourning duties to your father.
 But you must know your father lost a father;
 That father lost,¹²⁹ lost his, and the survivor bound
 In filial obligation for some term
 To do obsequious¹³⁰ sorrow; but to persever
 275In obstinate condolement is a course
 Of impious stubbornness. ‘Tis unmanly grief.
 It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
 A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
 An understanding simple and unschooled;
 280For what we know must be and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,¹³¹
 Why should we in our peevish opposition
 Take it to heart? Fie, ’tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 285To reason most absurd, whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still¹³² hath cried
 From the first corpse¹³³ till he that died today
 “This must be so.” We pray you throw to earth
 This unprevailing¹³⁴ woe, and think of us
 290As of a father; for let the world take note
 You are the most immediate¹³⁵ to our throne,
 And with no less nobility of love
 Than that which dearest father bears his son

124. Sighing.

125. Abundance of tears.

126. Expression.

127. Outward manifestations of feeling.

128. Outward decorative signs.

129. That father who is now dead.

130. Appropriate to obsequies or funerals.

131. For since everything that happens to us must be as common as the most ordinary experience.

132. Continually, always.

133. The body of the first human ever to have died, Abel. The murder of Abel at the hands of his brother Cain, depicted in Genesis 4, is the first recorded death in the Bible after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden for their having disobeyed God.

134. Profitless.

135. Next in succession.

Do I impart toward you. For¹³⁶ your intent
 295 In going back to school in Wittenberg,¹³⁷
 It is most retrograde¹³⁸ to our desire,
 And we beseech you bend you¹³⁹ to remain
 Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

300 Queen

Let not thy mother lose her prayers,¹⁴⁰ Hamlet.
 I pray thee stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Hamlet

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.¹⁴¹

King

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.
 305 Be as ourself¹⁴² in Denmark.—Madam, come.
 This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
 Sits smiling to¹⁴³ my heart, in grace¹⁴⁴ whereof
 No jocund¹⁴⁵ health that Denmark¹⁴⁶ drinks today
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,¹⁴⁷
 310 And the King's rouse¹⁴⁸ the heavens shall bruit again,¹⁴⁹
 Respeaking earthly thunder.¹⁵⁰ Come, away!
Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.

Hamlet

Oh, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
 Thaw, and resolve¹⁵¹ itself into a dew!
 315 Or that the Everlasting¹⁵² had not fixed
 His canon¹⁵³ 'gainst self-slaughter! Oh, God, God,

136. As for.

137. The German city on the River Elbe, home to the famous university where in 1517 Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of the Schlosskirche, in what is conventionally regarded as the opening salvo of the Protestant Reformation.

138. Contrary.

139. Yield to our wishes.

140. Fail to achieve the thing she prays for.

141. To the best of my ability. Hamlet pointedly replies to his mother, not to the King. He uses the formal "you" rather than "thee," as was appropriate in addressing a parent.

142. Enjoy the privileges and status of royalty. (The plural "ourself" indicates the royal plural; it means "myself, I as king.") The King invites Hamlet to enjoy the same privileges as the King himself.

143. Pleases.

144. Honor.

145. Cheerful, merry, joyful.

146. The King of Denmark, Claudius. Hamlet's disapproval of heavy drinking among the Danes as "a custom / More honored in the breach than the observance," in 1.4.15 ff., is directed particularly at Claudius, who uses any public ceremony as the opportunity to raise a toast. Drinking is emblematic of his worldly covetousness.

147. Sound, announce. The firing of artillery is to mark the occasion, as at 1.4.6 ff.

148. Bout of drinking, ceremonial toast.

149. Loudly echo.

150. Echoing our cannon.

151. Dissolve.

152. God.

153. Divine law.

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
 Seem to me all the uses of this world!
 Fie on't, ah, fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden
 320 That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature¹⁵⁴
 Possess it merely.¹⁵⁵ That it should come to this!
 But two months dead—nay, not so much, not two!
 So excellent a king, that was to this¹⁵⁶
 Hyperion¹⁵⁷ to a satyr,¹⁵⁸ so loving to my mother
 325 That he might not betem¹⁵⁹ the winds of heaven
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth,
 Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him
 As if increase of appetite had grown
 By what it fed on.¹⁶⁰ And yet within a month—
 330 Let me not think on't; frailty, thy name is woman!
 A little month,¹⁶¹ or ere¹⁶² those shoes were old
 With which she followed my poor father's body,
 Like Niobe,¹⁶³ all tears, why, she, even she—
 Oh, God, a beast that wants discourse of reason¹⁶⁴
 335 Would have mourned longer!—married with my uncle,
 My father's brother, but no more like my father
 Than I to Hercules.¹⁶⁵ Within a month,
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
 Had left the flushing of her gallèd¹⁶⁶ eyes,
 340 She married. Oh, most wicked speed, to post¹⁶⁷
 With such dexterity to incestuous¹⁶⁸ sheets!
 It is not, nor it cannot come to good,
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.
Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo.

345 **Horatio**

Hail to your lordship!

154. Offensively vigorous in growth and coarse in their very natures.

155. Completely.

156. Compared to Claudius.

157. Titan sun-god in Greek mythology.

158. Lecherous half-goat, half-human deity of classical mythology.

159. Would not allow.

160. As if her desire and love for her husband was augmented by the intense pleasure of that love.

161. Compare this interval of time with "But two months dead" at line 138 (TLN 322) above.

162. Even before.

163. When Niobe boasted that her fourteen children outnumbered those of Leto, Leto's children, Apollo and Artemis, slew all of Niobe's children as a punishment for their mother's hubris or pride. Turned by Zeus into a stone, Niobe never ceased her bitter tears, flowing as a spring from the rock. The story of Niobe and her children is told by (among others) Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, 6.146-312.

164. Lacks the ability to reason.

165. Hero of classical mythology noted for his twelve "labors," deeds requiring "Herculean" strength.

166. Inflamed, irritated.

167. Hasten.

168. Judaeo-Christian tradition (see Leviticus 18.16 and 20.21), incorporated into the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, forbade a man to marry his brother's wife' as Claudius has done in this play, and, historically as Henry VIII had done by marrying his dead brother Arthur's wife, Katharine of Aragon.

Hamlet

I am glad to see you well.—
Horatio, or I do forget myself!¹⁶⁹

Horatio

The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

³⁵⁰**Hamlet**

Sir, my good friend, I'll change that name with you.¹⁷⁰
And what make you from¹⁷¹ Wittenberg, Horatio?—
Marcellus.

Marcellus

My good lord.

³⁵⁵**Hamlet**

I am very glad to see you.¹⁷² [*To Barnardo.*] Good even, sir.
[*To Horatio*] But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Horatio

A truant disposition, good my lord.

Hamlet

I would not have your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do my ear that violence
³⁶⁰To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself.¹⁷³ I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

Horatio

My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

³⁶⁵**Hamlet**

I prithee do not mock me, fellow student.
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Horatio

Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.¹⁷⁴

Hamlet

Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.¹⁷⁵
³⁷⁰Would I had met my dearest¹⁷⁶ foe in heaven

169. i.e., I know you as well as I know myself. Hamlet, distracted and unhappy, does not recognize at first that Horatio is among those who have just entered and whom he initially greets with the conventional formula, "I am glad to see you well." Compare today's formulaic "How are you?"

170. Share and exchange mutually the name of "friend" with you, rather than having you address me as your master. If anything, I am your servant.

171. Are you going away from.

172. Hamlet, realizing that in his excitement at seeing Horatio he has not observed the social niceties of greeting the others who have just arrived, repairs that little slip by welcoming Marcellus by name and then Barnardo with "Good even, sir," before returning to his question to Horatio.

173. Nor will I trust my own ears if they tell me you are calling yourself a truant, a delinquent.

174. Quickly afterwards.

175. The food left uneaten from the funeral banquet, including meat pies and pastries, provided cold leftovers for the marriage festivities. A bitterly satiric exaggeration.

176. Direst, most hated, bitterest.

Ere I had ever seen that day, Horatio!
My father—methinks I see my father.

Horatio

Oh, where, my lord?

Hamlet

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

³⁷⁵**Horatio**

I saw him once. 'A¹⁷⁷ was a goodly king.

Hamlet

He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

Horatio

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.¹⁷⁸

Hamlet

Saw? Who?

³⁸⁰**Horatio**

My lord, the King your father.

Hamlet

The King my father?

Horatio

Season your admiration¹⁷⁹ for a while
With an attent¹⁸⁰ ear till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
³⁸⁵This marvel to you.

Hamlet

For God's love, let me hear!

Horatio

Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch
In the dead waste¹⁸¹ and middle of the night
³⁹⁰Been thus encountered: a figure like your father
Armed at all points,¹⁸² exactly, cap-à-pie,¹⁸³
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow¹⁸⁴ and stately by them. Thrice he walked
By their oppressed and fear-surprisèd eyes¹⁸⁵
³⁹⁵Within his truncheon's¹⁸⁶ length, whilst they, distilled
Almost to jelly with the act¹⁸⁷ of fear,

177. He.

178. Last night.

179. Moderate your astonishment.

180. Attentive.

181. Lifeless desolation. Perhaps with a pun in "waste" on "waist, middle."

182. Provided with weapons in every detail.

183. From head to foot. From old French.

184. Slowly.

185. Eyes that show sudden surprise and fear.

186. A truncheon is a military officer's baton or staff, a sign of his office.

187. Effect.

Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
 In dreadful¹⁸⁸ secrecy impart they did,
 And I with them the third night kept the watch,
 400Where, as they had delivered, both in time,
 Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
 The apparition comes. I knew your father.
 These hands are not more like.¹⁸⁹

Hamlet

But where was this?

405**Marcellus**

My lord, upon the platform¹⁹⁰ where we watched.

Hamlet

Did you not speak to it?

Horatio

My lord, I did,
 But answer made it none. Yet once methought
 It lifted up its head¹⁹¹ and did address
 410Itself to motion, like as it would speak;¹⁹²
 But even¹⁹³ then the morning cock crew loud,
 And at the sound it shrunk in haste away
 And vanished from our sight.

Hamlet

'Tis very strange.

415**Horatio**

As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true,
 And we did think it writ down in our duty¹⁹⁴
 To let you know of it.

Hamlet

Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
 Hold you the watch tonight?

420**All**¹⁹⁵

We do, my lord.

Hamlet

Armed, say you?

All

Armed, my lord.

Hamlet

From top to toe?

188. Full of dread, dread-inspired.

189. These two hands of mine are not more like each other than this apparition was like your father.

190. Battlements of the castle.

191. Its head.

192. Moved in such a way as to suggest that it was about to speak.

193. Just.

194. Prescribed in the duty we owe you.

195. i.e., Marcellus, Barnardo, and Horatio.

All

My lord, from head to foot.

425**Hamlet**

Then saw you not his face?

Horatio

Oh, yes, my lord, he wore his beaver¹⁹⁶ up.

Hamlet

What looked he, frowningly?¹⁹⁷

Horatio

A countenance¹⁹⁸ more in sorrow than in anger.

Hamlet

Pale, or red?

430**Horatio**

Nay, very pale.

Hamlet

And fixed his eyes upon you?

Horatio

Most constantly.

Hamlet

I would¹⁹⁹ I had been there.

Horatio

It would have much amazed you.

435**Hamlet**

Very like, very like.²⁰⁰ Stayed it long?

Horatio

While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Both²⁰¹

Longer, longer.

Horatio

Not when I saw't.

Hamlet

His beard was grizzled, no?²⁰²

440**Horatio**

It was as I have seen it in his life,

A sable silvered.²⁰³

Hamlet

I will watch²⁰⁴ tonight.

Perchance 'twill walk again.

196. Visor on the helmet.

197. Did it appear that he was frowning?

198. Expression.

199. I wish.

200. Very likely.

201. i.e., Marcellus and Barnardo.

202. Grey or mingled with grey, was it not?

203. silvered Black sprinkled with silver-grey. The sable, prized then and now for its fur, is a carnivorous weasel-like mammal.

204. Stand watch.

Horatio

I warr'nt²⁰⁵ it will.

Hamlet

If it assume my noble father's person,
 445 I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
 And bid me hold my peace.²⁰⁶ I pray you all,
 If you have hitherto concealed this sight
 Let it be tenable²⁰⁷ in your silence still,
 And whatsoever else shall hap tonight,
 450 Give it an understanding but no tongue;
 I will requite²⁰⁸ your loves. So, fare you well.
 Upon the platform 'twixt eleven and twelve
 I'll visit you.

All

Our duty to your honor.
Exeunt [all but Hamlet].

⁴⁵⁵**Hamlet**

Your loves, as mine to you.²⁰⁹ Farewell.
 My father's spirit—in arms! All is not well.
 I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come!
 Till then, sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,
 Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.
Exit.

205. Guarantee.

206. Be silent.

207. Able to be held.

208. Repay.

209. i.e., I accept your "duty" as love, and I pledge my love to you in that same sense.

Scene 3

*Enter*²¹⁰ *Laertes, and Ophelia his sister.*

Laertes

My necessaries are embarked.²¹¹ Farewell.
 And sister, as²¹² the winds give benefit
 And convoy is assistant, do²¹³ not sleep
 465 But let²¹⁴ me hear from you.

Ophelia

Do you doubt that?

Laertes

For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor,²¹⁵
 Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,²¹⁶
 A violet in the youth of primy nature,²¹⁷
 470 Forward,²¹⁸ not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
 The perfume and suppliance of a minute,²¹⁹
 No more.

Ophelia

No more but so?

Laertes

Think it no more.
 For nature crescent does not grow alone
 475 In thews and bulk, but as this temple²²⁰ waxes
 The inward service of the mind and soul
 Grows wide withal.²²¹ Perhaps he loves you now,
 And now no soil nor cautel²²² doth besmirch
 The virtue of his will;²²³ but you must fear,
 480 His greatness weighed,²²⁴ his will is not his own,
 For he himself is subject to his birth.

210. Location: Polonius's apartment in the castle, or some place nearby.

211. Loaded on board a sailing vessel.

212. Whenever.

213. And as means of transportation are available, do

214. Without letting

215. As for Hamlet and the attentions he pays you, which must be regarded as trifling.

216. A passing fancy prompted by sexual attraction.

217. i.e., Natural impulses in the springtime of their vigor.

218. Insistent, eagerly pulsating, early-blooming and soon to fade.

219. Something sweet to supply the pleasures of a moment.

220. The body, temple of the soul.

221. For all living creatures (especially humans), as they mature, grow not in physical strength alone, but as the body ages the inner qualities of mind and soul develop also. ("Thews" are sinews. "Inward service" is the inner life.) Laertes seems to be warning Ophelia that as Hamlet grows older, his interests may change.

222. Stain or deceit.

223. The sincerity of his desires and intentions.

224. When his royal rank is taken into consideration.

He may not, as unvalued persons²²⁵ do,
 Carve for himself,²²⁶ for on his choice depends
 The safety and health of the whole state,
 485 And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
 Unto the voice and yielding²²⁷ of that body²²⁸
 Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
 It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
 As he in his particular act and place²²⁹
 490 May give his saying deed, which is no further
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.²³⁰
 Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain
 If with too credent²³¹ ear you list²³² his songs,
 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
 495 To his unmastered importunity.²³³
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
 And keep within the rear of your affection,
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.²³⁴
 The chariest²³⁵ maid is prodigal enough
 500 If she unmask her beauty to the moon.²³⁶
 Virtue itself scapes not calumnious²³⁷ strokes.
 The canker galls the infants of the spring²³⁸
 Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,²³⁹
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth²⁴⁰
 505 Contagious blastments²⁴¹ are most imminent.
 Be wary, then; best safety lies in fear.
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.²⁴²

Ophelia

I shall the effect of this good lesson keep

225. Persons of ordinary social standing.

226. Help himself to the choicest morsel of the roast; i.e., choose for himself.

227. Expressed opinion and consent.

228. The body politic, the state.

229. In the particular circumstances to which he is restricted by his high station.

230. Than general opinion in Denmark will go along with.

231. Credulous, trusting.

232. Listen to.

233. Uncontrolled urgency of desire.

234. i.e., Don't let your passionate feelings lead you where you will be vulnerable to his amorous assaults.

235. Most modest.

236. Is taking enough of a risk if she merely expose herself to the chaste moon. The moon (Diana, Artemis, Phoebe), as a symbol of chaste affection, was widely associated with Queen Elizabeth I. Elizabethan ladies were careful to mask themselves from the sun; Ophelia is being urged to be even more cautious than that.

237. Slanderous.

238. The cankerworm injures the budding flowers of springtime.

239. Before their buds are open.

240. In the early time of life, a time that has the freshness and innocence of the dew-sprinkled dawn.

241. Blightings.

242. Youth yields to the rebellion of the flesh without any outside promptings.

As watchman to my heart.²⁴³ But, good my brother,
 510 Do not, as some ungracious²⁴⁴ pastors do,
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven
 Whilst, like a puffed²⁴⁵ and reckless libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own rede.²⁴⁶

Enter Polonius

515 **Laertes**

Oh, fear me not.²⁴⁷

I stay too long. But here my father comes.

A double blessing is a double grace;

Occasion smiles upon a second leave.²⁴⁸

520 **Polonius**

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,²⁴⁹

And you are stayed for. There, my blessing²⁵⁰ with thee,

And these few precepts in thy memory

See thou character.²⁵¹ Give thy thoughts no tongue,

525 Nor any unproportioned thought his act.²⁵²

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.²⁵³

Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,

Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel,²⁵⁴

But do not dull thy palm²⁵⁵ with entertainment²⁵⁶

530 Of each new-hatched, unfledged²⁵⁷ comrade. Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,

Bear't that th'opposè²⁵⁸ may beware of thee.

Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice.

Take each man's censure,²⁵⁹ but reserve thy judgment.²⁶⁰

243. Guardian over my affections.

244. Ungodly, lacking in spiritual grace.

245. Bloated or swollen (presumably with the arrogance of youth).

246. Pays no heed to his own best advice.

247. Don't worry about me.

248. The goddess Occasion or Opportunity has smiled upon me by provided me the chance to say goodbye to my father a second time and thereby receive from him a second blessing. In some modern productions, Laertes (and his sister too) are both rather put off by their father's tedious moralizing. If so, Laertes's speech here is tinged with irony; he thinks he's already been through the business of saying goodbye to his father.

249. i.e., You have a following wind now, so don't delay.

250. You are being waited for on board. There now, take my blessing.

251. See to it that you inscribe.

252. And do not act upon any thought that is inadequately thought through or miscalculated.

253. Be sociable but not indiscriminate in your social dealings.

254. Metal hoops such as would be used to hold together the sides of a barrel.

255. i.e., shake hands so often as to make the gesture essentially meaningless.

256. Greeting with a handshake.

257. Newly hatched in the nest and still unable to fly.

258. Manage the business so that your adversary.

259. Opinion, judgment.

260. Do not abandon your own opinion of what is said.

535 Costly thy habit²⁶¹ as thy purse can buy,
 But not expressed in fancy²⁶² –rich, not gaudy,
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man,²⁶³
 And they in France of the best rank and station
 Are of all most select and generous, chief in that.²⁶⁴

540 Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
 And borrowing dulleth edge of husbandry.²⁶⁵
 This above all: to thine own self be true,
 And it must follow as the night the day
 545 Thou canst not then be false to any man.
 Farewell. My blessing season this in thee!²⁶⁶

Laertes

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Polonius

The time invites you. Go. Your servants tend.²⁶⁷

Laertes

Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well
 550 What I have said to you.

Ophelia

‘Tis in my memory locked,
 And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laertes

Farewell.

Exit Laertes.

Polonius

What is’t, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

555 **Ophelia**

So please you, something touching²⁶⁸ the Lord Hamlet.

Polonius

Marry,²⁶⁹ well bethought.²⁷⁰

‘Tis told me he hath very oft of late
 Given private time to you, and you yourself
 Have of your audience²⁷¹ been most free and bounteous.
 560 If it be so—as so ’tis put on me,²⁷²
 And that in way of caution—I must tell you

261. Clothing, dress.

262. Extravagant fashion.

263. We are what we wear.

264. Are of all people the most refined in manners and in choosing what to wear.

265. Thrift.

266. May my blessing enable my advice to mature and ripen in your mind.

267. Attend, are waiting.

268. Concerning.

269. i.e., By the Virgin Mary. (A mild oath.)

270. Appropriately thought of; I’m glad you mentioned that.

271. Hearing, attention.

272. Presented or suggested to me.

You do not understand yourself²⁷³ so clearly
 As it behooves²⁷⁴ my daughter and your honor.²⁷⁵
 What is between you? Give me up the truth.

⁵⁶⁵**Ophelia**

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders²⁷⁶
 Of his affection to me.

Polonius

Affection? Pooh, you speak like a green²⁷⁷ girl,
 Unsifted²⁷⁸ in such perilous circumstance.
 Do you believe his "tenders," as you call them?

⁵⁷⁰**Ophelia**

I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Polonius

Marry, I'll teach you. Think yourself a baby
 That you have ta'en his tenders for true pay
 Which are not sterling.²⁷⁹ Tender yourself more dearly,²⁸⁰
 Or—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase
⁵⁷⁵Running it thus²⁸¹—you'll tender me a fool.²⁸²

Ophelia

My lord, he hath importuned me with love
 In honorable fashion.

Polonius

Ay, fashion²⁸³ you may call it. Go to, go to.²⁸⁴

Ophelia

And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
⁵⁸⁰With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Polonius

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks.²⁸⁵ I do know
 When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
 Lends the tongue vows.²⁸⁶ These blazes, daughter,
 Giving more light than heat, extinct in both
⁵⁸⁵Even in their promise as it is a-making,²⁸⁷

273. Appreciate your situation.

274. Befits.

275. Reputation.

276. Offers.

277. Inexperienced.

278. Untried.

279. Lawful currency.

280. (1) Take better care of yourself; (2) Hold out for a better bargain, i.e., marriage.

281. i.e., if I may use a metaphor from horsemanship, at the risk of running it so hard that it is broken-winded.

282. (1) make me look foolish, and yourself as well; (2) present me with a grandchild. (The word "fool" could be applied to babies, often endearingly.)

283. Mere form, conventional flattery. (Playing on Ophelia's "fashion" in the previous line in the more usual sense of "manner.")

284. i.e., What nonsense. (An expression of impatient dismissal).

285. Traps to catch proverbially gullible birds.

286. When passionate desire rages, how prodigally the soul prompts the tongue to promise anything to the desired person.

287. Lacking any real feeling or warmth of affection from the very first moment of the promise-making.

You must not take²⁸⁸ for fire. From this time, daughter,
 Be something²⁸⁹ scanter of your maiden presence.
 Set your entreatments at a higher rate
 Than a command to parley.²⁹⁰ For²⁹¹ Lord Hamlet,
 590 Believe so much in him²⁹² that he is young,
 And with a larger tether may he walk
 Than may be given you. In few,²⁹³ Ophelia,
 Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers²⁹⁴
 Not of that dye which their investments show,²⁹⁵
 595 But mere implorators of unholy suits,
 Breathing²⁹⁶ like sanctified and pious bawds
 The better to beguile. This is for all:²⁹⁷
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth
 Have you so slander any moment leisure²⁹⁸
 600 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
 Look to't, I charge you. Come your ways.²⁹⁹

Ophelia

I shall obey, my lord.
Exeunt.

288. Mistake.

289. Somewhat.

290. Do not offer to surrender your chastity simply because he has requested a meeting to discuss terms.

291. As for.

292. This much concerning him.

293. In brief.

294. Go-betweens, solicitors.

295. Not truly of the color that their garments seem to show. (The vows are not what they seem.)

296. Speaking.

297. This is once for all; I don't want to have to say it again.

298. Abuse any moment's leisure (or any occasion).

299. Come along.

Scene 4

Enter³⁰⁰ Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.

Hamlet

The air bites shrewdly;³⁰¹ it is very cold.

⁶⁰⁵**Horatio**

It is a nipping and an eager³⁰² air.

Hamlet

What hour now?

Horatio

I think it lacks of³⁰³ twelve.

Marcellus

No, it is struck.

Horatio

Indeed? I heard it not. It then draws near the season³⁰⁴

⁶¹⁰Wherein the spirit held his wont³⁰⁵ to walk.

A flourish of trumpets, and two pieces³⁰⁶ goes off.

What does this mean, my lord?

Hamlet

The King doth wake³⁰⁷ tonight and takes his rouse,³⁰⁸

Keeps wassail, and the swagg'ring upspring reels;³⁰⁹

And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish³¹⁰ down

⁶¹⁵The kettledrum and trumpet thus bray out

The triumph of his pledge.³¹¹

Horatio

Is it a custom?

Hamlet

Ay, marry,³¹² is't,

But to my mind, though I am native here

⁶²⁰And to the manner born,³¹³ it is a custom

More honored in the breach than the observance.³¹⁴

300. Location: The battlements or rampart walls of the castle.

301. Keenly, sharply.

302. Biting, keen, sharp. From French "aigre," sour.

303. Is just short of.

304. Time.

305. Was accustomed.

306. i.e., of cannon, ordnance.

307. Revels into the night.

308. Carouses.

309. Drinks many toasts and drunkenly reels his way through a lively German dance called the "upspring."

310. Rhine wine.

311. Raucously celebrate his draining the cup in his many celebratory toasts.

312. i.e., by the Virgin Mary. (A mild oath.)

313. Having a lifelong familiarity with this custom.

314. Better neglected than followed.

621.1 This heavy-headed revel east and west
 Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations.³¹⁵
 They clepe³¹⁶ us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
 Soil our addition,³¹⁷ and indeed it takes
 621.5 From our achievements, though performed at height,³¹⁸
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.³¹⁹
 So, oft it chances in particular men,
 That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,³²⁰
 As in their birth,³²¹ wherein they are not guilty,
 621.10 Since nature cannot choose his³²² origin,
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,³²³
 Oft breaking down the pales³²⁴ and forts of reason,
 Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens
 The form of plausible manners,³²⁵ that these men,
 621.15 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
 Being Nature's livery, or Fortune's star,³²⁶
 His virtues else,³²⁷ be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo,³²⁸
 Shall in the general censure take corruption³²⁹
 621.20 From that particular fault. The dram of evil
 Doth all the noble substance often dout
 To his own scandal.³³⁰

Enter Ghost.

Horatio

Look, my lord, it comes!

Hamlet

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!³³¹

625 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,³³²

315. This drunken reveling causes us to be defamed and censored everywhere (east and west) by all other nations.

316. Call.

317. And tarnish our reputation by calling us swine.

318. No matter how outstandingly performed.

319. The very essence of the reputation we should enjoy.

320. Because of some inborn vicious inclination in them.

321. The qualities bestowed on them by their parents and ancestors.

322. its.

323. i.e., By one element of our constitution gaining undue dominance over the others.

324. Palisades, barrier fences, serving as a fortification.

325. i.e., prompts excessive behavior, thereby corrupting what would otherwise be acceptable and pleasing manners (much as too much yeast causes excessive swelling in the dough).

326. Being the result of an inborn condition or a gift of Fortune, goddess of chance. Whether Nature and Fortune exerted the larger influence on human life was a favorite debating topic in the Renaissance.

327. Such a person's virtues in other respects.

328. Sustain.

329. Shall in the court of public opinion acquire a misconstrued reputation.

330. i.e., The tiny amount (literally, one eighth of an ounce) of evil qualities often blots or brings disrepute upon the noble substance of the whole. (To "dout" is to extinguish, blot out.)

331. May angels who minister grace defend us!

332. Whether you are a good angel or a demon.

Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts³³³ from hell,
 Be thy intents³³⁴ wicked or charitable,
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
 That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,
 630 King, father, royal Dane. Oh, answer me!
 Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell
 Why thy canonized³³⁵ bones, hearse³³⁶ in death,
 Have burst their cerements?³³⁷ Why the sepulcher
 Wherein we saw thee quietly inurned³³⁸
 635 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws
 To cast thee up again? What may this mean
 That thou, dead corpse, again in complete steel³³⁹
 Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,³⁴⁰
 Making night hideous, and we fools of nature³⁴¹
 640 So horridly to shake our disposition³⁴²
 With thoughts beyond the reaches³⁴³ of our souls?
 Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?
[The] Ghost beckons Hamlet.

Horatio

It beckons you to go away with it,
 645 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone.

Marcellus

Look with what courteous action
 It wafts you to a more removed ground.
 But do not go with it.

650 **Horatio**

No, by no means.

Hamlet

It will not speak. Then I will follow it.

Horatio

Do not, my lord.

Hamlet

Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee,³⁴⁴

333. Whether you bring gentle breezes from heaven or pestilent gusts.

334. Whether your intentions are.

335. Consecrated. Pronounced with the stress on the second of three syllables.

336. Laid in a coffin.

337. Grave clothes.

338. Entombed, placed in an urn for ashes of the dead.

339. Full armor.

340. The sublunary world, all that is fitfully lit by pale moonlight.

341. We mere mortals, limited to natural knowledge and subject to nature.

342. To unsettle our mental composure so horrendously.

343. The capacities.

344. The value of a pin.

655 And for³⁴⁵ my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?

[The Ghost beckons Hamlet.]

It waves me forth again. I'll follow it.

Horatio

What if it tempt you toward the flood,³⁴⁶ my lord,

Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff

660 That beetles o'er his base³⁴⁷ into the sea,

And there assume some other horrible form

Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason³⁴⁸

And draw you into madness? Think of it:

663.1 The very place puts toys of desperation,³⁴⁹

Without more motive, into every brain

That looks so many fathoms³⁵⁰ to the sea

And hears it roar beneath.

[The Ghost beckons Hamlet.]

Hamlet

It wafts me still.—Go on, I'll follow thee.

665 **Marcellus**

You shall not go, my lord.

[They attempt to restrain him.]

Hamlet

Hold off your hands!

Horatio

Be ruled. You shall not go.

Hamlet

My fate cries out³⁵¹

And makes each petty³⁵² artery in this body

670 As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.³⁵³

[The Ghost beckons Hamlet.]

Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen!

By heav'n, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me.

I say, away!—Go on, I'll follow thee.

Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.

675 **Horatio**

He waxes desperate with imagination.

345. As for.

346. Sea.

347. Threateningly overhangs its base like bushy eyebrows.

348. Take away from you the supremacy of reason over passion. "Your sovereignty" also hints at the fact that Hamlet is Prince of Denmark and heir to the throne.

349. Imaginings of desperate acts, such as suicide.

350. Units of depth measurement at sea of about six feet.

351. My destiny summons me.

352. Even the most insignificant.

353. A sinew of the huge lion (from Nemea, near Corinth in Greece) slain by Hercules in the first of his twelve labors.

Marcellus

Let's follow. 'Tis not fit thus to obey him.

Horatio

Have after.³⁵⁴ To what issue³⁵⁵ will this come?

Marcellus

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Horatio

Heaven will direct³⁵⁶ it.

⁶⁸⁰**Marcellus**

Nay, let's follow him.

Exeunt.

354. Let's go after him.

355. Outcome.

356. i.e., the "issue" or outcome.

Scene 5

*Enter*³⁵⁷ *Ghost and Hamlet.*

Hamlet

Whither wilt thou lead me? Speak. I'll go no further.

Ghost

Mark me.

Hamlet

I will.

⁶⁸⁵**Ghost**

My hour is almost come
When I to sulf'rous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Hamlet

Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
⁶⁹⁰To what I shall unfold.

Hamlet

Speak. I am bound³⁵⁸ to hear.

Ghost

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Hamlet

What?

Ghost

I am thy father's spirit,
⁶⁹⁵Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast³⁵⁹ in fires,
Till the foul crimes³⁶⁰ done in my days of nature³⁶¹
Are burnt and purged³⁶² away. But that³⁶³ I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison house,
⁷⁰⁰I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up³⁶⁴ thy soul, freeze thy young blood,

357. Location: The battlements of the castle, as before. The scene is virtually continuous, though the stage is momentarily bare and we are to understand that the Ghost and Hamlet have moved to a new location on the battlements.

358. (1) destined, ready; (2) obligated, duty-bound. The Ghost replies to the second of these meanings.

359. Do penance by fasting. A conventional punishment in Purgatory.

360. Sins.

361. My days on earth as a mortal.

362. In Roman Catholic doctrine, Purgatory (not actually mentioned by name in this play) is an intermediate state after death for the purging of sins. If an individual has died in God's grace but has committed sins not yet pardoned (owing, as in this present instance, to a sudden death leaving no time for confessing those sins to a priest), the soul can make satisfaction in Purgatory for those sins and thus become fit for heaven.

363. Were it not that.

364. Lacerate, tear up, uproot.

Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,³⁶⁵
 Thy knotted and combinèd locks³⁶⁶ to part,
 And each particular hair to stand on end³⁶⁷
 705 Like quills upon the fretful³⁶⁸ porpentine.³⁶⁹
 But this eternal blazon³⁷⁰ must not be
 To ears of flesh and blood. List, Hamlet, oh, list:³⁷¹
 If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

Hamlet

O God!

710 **Ghost**

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Hamlet

Murder?

Ghost

Murder most foul, as in the best it is,³⁷²
 But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Hamlet

715 Haste me to know't, that I with wings as swift
 As meditation or the thoughts of love
 May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost

I find thee apt,
 And duller shouldst thou be than the fat³⁷³ weed
 720 That rots itself in ease on Lethe³⁷⁴ wharf
 Wouldst thou³⁷⁵ not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
 'Tis given out³⁷⁶ that, sleeping in my orchard,³⁷⁷
 A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark
 Is by a forgèd process³⁷⁸ of my death
 725 Rankly abused.³⁷⁹ But know, thou noble youth,

365. Eye-sockets, compared here to the crystalline spheres or orbits in which, according to Ptolemaic astronomy, the heavenly bodies moved around the earth.

366. Hair neatly combed and arranged in its proper place.

367. The eighteenth-century actor-manager, David Garrick, wore a trick wig that would stand its hairs on end as a sign of fright. See 3.4.124-5 below, where the Queen sees Hamlet's hair standing on end; the effect is caused there by the appearance of the Ghost, though the Queen is unable to see that.

368. Peevish.

369. Shakespeare's usual spelling of "porcupine."

370. Revelation of the secrets of the supernatural world.

371. Listen.

372. Murder is foul even under the best of circumstances.

373. Torpid, lethargic, gross, bloated.

374. The river of forgetfulness in Hades.

375. If you would not.

376. The official story goes.

377. My garden.

378. Fabricated account.

379. Grossly deceived.

The serpent that did sting³⁸⁰ thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Hamlet

Oh, my prophetic soul! My uncle?

Ghost

Ay, that incestuous,³⁸¹ that adulterate³⁸² beast,
730 With witchcraft of his wits, with traitorous gifts³⁸³ —
Oh, wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming virtuous queen.
Oh, Hamlet, what a falling off was there!
735 From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow³⁸⁴
I made to her in marriage, and to decline
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To³⁸⁵ those of mine. But virtue, as it never will be moved,
740 Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel linked,
Will sate itself³⁸⁶ in a celestial bed
And prey on garbage.³⁸⁷
But soft,³⁸⁸ methinks I scent the morning's air.³⁸⁹
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
745 My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour,³⁹⁰ thy uncle stole
With juice of cursed hebona³⁹¹ in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears³⁹² did pour
The leperous distillment,³⁹³ whose effect
750 Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver³⁹⁴ it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,

380. Elizabethans generally believed that poisonous snakes attacked their victims with their tongues rather than their fangs.

381. See 1.2.157 (TLN 341) and note above.

382. Adulterous. Whether the Ghost suspects or knows that his brother had been involved with Queen Gertrude in an adulterous affair before the murder is not clear, though the Ghost's insistence later in this speech that the Queen is to be spared and left to the workings of her conscience (lines 84-8 below, TLN 769-73) tends to suggest that he does not regard her as guilty to such a heinous degree.

383. (1) with perfidious natural gifts; (2) with seductive presents.

384. With the very vow.

385. Compared with.

386. Satisfy its craving.

387. But just as true virtue will remain steadfast even when tempted by unchaste desire disguising itself as an angel, lust conversely will attempt to glut its insatiable appetite even in a heavenly bed, and then, unsatisfied with that, turn to prey on filth.

388. Wait a minute, hold on.

389. The Ghost here confirms the tradition that Horatio has reported at 1.1.148 ff. (TLN 155 ff.): ghosts who visit the world of the living at night are supposed to return to their confines by dawn.

390. A time free from worries, and a safe time when one can relax one's guard.

391. A poison. The name of this unidentified poison may be related to henbane, of the nightshade family.

392. i.e., the entranceways to my head.

393. A distillation causing a leprosy-like disfigurement.

394. Mercury.

And with a sudden vigor it doth posset
 And curd³⁹⁵ like eager³⁹⁶ droppings into milk
 755The thin and wholesome blood; so did it mine,
 And a most instant tetter³⁹⁷ barked about,
 Most lazarlike³⁹⁸ with vile and loathsome crust,³⁹⁹
 All my smooth body.
 Thus was I sleeping by a brother's hand
 760Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched,⁴⁰⁰
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,⁴⁰¹
 Unhoused, disappointed, unaneled,⁴⁰²
 No reck'ning⁴⁰³ made, but sent to my account
 With all my imperfections on my head.
 765Oh, horrible, oh, horrible, most horrible!
 If thou hast nature⁴⁰⁴ in thee, bear it not.
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury⁴⁰⁵ and damnèd incest.⁴⁰⁶
 But howsomever thou pursues this act,
 770Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught;⁴⁰⁷ leave her to heaven
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once.
 The glow-worm shows the matin⁴⁰⁸ to be near
 775And 'gins to pale his⁴⁰⁹ uneffectual fire.
 Adieu, adieu, Hamlet! Remember me.
Exit.

Hamlet

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
 And shall I couple⁴¹⁰ hell? Oh, fie! Hold, hold,⁴¹¹ my heart,
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,

395. Thicken and curdle (causing the blood to clot like sour cream).

396. Sour, acid.

397. Eruption of scabs or blisters.

398. Leper-like. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the man had died of a grievous sickness and had lain in the earth four days, so that his body was loathsome (John 11). Traditionally, his putrid condition came to be associated with leprosy.

399. Enveloped with a loathsome scaly crust, like the bark of a tree-trunk.

400. Deprived.

401. When my sins were at their height.

402. Without having partaken of the sacrament of the Mass, unprepared because of not having made deathbed confession and not having received absolution, and not anointed with the holy oil of Extreme Unction. These are specific terms from Roman Catholic practice.

"House!" signifies the host, the bread and wine that are consecrated in the Mass as the body and blood of Christ.

403. Settling of spiritual accounts, making restitution for sins.

404. i.e., the natural feelings of a son for his father.

405. Lechery.

406. See notes at 1.2.157 (TLN 341) and 1.5.43 (TLN 729) above.

407. Anything, any punishment.

408. Morning.

409. Begins . . . its.

410. Add.

411. Hold fast; do not panic; do not waver.

780But bear me stiffly⁴¹² up. Remember thee?
 Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat
 In this distracted globe.⁴¹³ Remember thee?
 Yea, from the table⁴¹⁴ of my memory
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond⁴¹⁵ records,⁴¹⁶
 785All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past⁴¹⁷
 That youth and observation copied there,⁴¹⁸
 And thy commandment all alone shall live
 Within the book and volume⁴¹⁹ of my brain,
 Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, yes, by heaven.
 790Oh, most pernicious woman!
 Oh, villain, villain, smiling damnèd villain!
 My tables, my tables—meet⁴²⁰ it is I set it down⁴²¹
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain.
 At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark.
 795So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word.⁴²²
 It is “Adieu, adieu, remember me.”
 I have sworn't.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus [calling first from within].

Horatio

My lord, my lord!

Marcellus

Lord Hamlet!

800**Horatio**

Heavens secure him!⁴²³

Hamlet

So be it.

Marcellus

Illo, ho, ho, my lord!⁴²⁴

Hamlet

Hillo, ho, ho, boy, come, bird, come!⁴²⁵

412. Strongly, vigorously.

413. As long as memory continues to function in my distracted head.

414. Wax writing tablet. Compare the use of the plural in "My tables, my tables" in line 107 below.

415. Foolish.

416. Stressed on the second syllable.

417. All wise sayings copied from books, all shapes or images drawn on the tablet of my memory, all past impressions.

418. That I observed and noted down when I was young.

419. Voluminous book.

420. Fitting.

421. Hamlet may actually have a wax tablet on which he proceeds to note his observation, or he may be speaking metaphorically.

422. Now to the business of fulfilling what I have promised.

423. May heaven keep him safe! Horatio and Marcellus have worried, at 1.4.71 (TLN 658), ff., that the Ghost might tempt Hamlet toward the sea or cliff and there deprive him into madness.

424. Marcellus is hallooing to Hamlet, seeking still to find him. Hamlet has not yet spoken to them to assure them he is safe.

425. Hamlet halloos in reply, as though he were calling out to a hawk or falcon, commanding it to return to its master. Hamlet may be mocking their halloos, or this may be part of the "wild and whirling words" or "antic disposition" that he begins to adopt.

Marcellus

How is't, my noble lord?

805**Horatio**

What news, my lord?

Hamlet

Oh, wonderful!

Horatio

Good my lord, tell it.

Hamlet

No, you'll reveal it.

Horatio

Not I, my lord, by heaven.

810**Marcellus**

Nor I, my lord.

Hamlet

How say you then, would heart of man once⁴²⁶ think it—
But you'll be secret?

Both

Ay, by heaven, my lord.

Hamlet

There's ne'er a villaindwelling in all Denmark
815But he's an arrant knave.⁴²⁷

Horatio

There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
To tell us this.

Hamlet

Why, right, you are i'th' right.
And so, without more circumstance⁴²⁸ at all
820I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:
You as your business and desires shall point you
(For every man hath business and desire,
Such as it is), and for my own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.

825**Horatio**

These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

Hamlet

I am sorry they offend you—heartily,
Yes, faith, heartily.

Horatio

There's no offense, my lord.

Hamlet

Yes, by Saint Patrick,⁴²⁹ but there is, Horatio,

426. Ever.

427. Hamlet seems about ready to tell them what he has learned from the Ghost, but then jestingly turns the matter aside with a self-evident truism: there's no villain in Denmark who is not a thoroughgoing villain.

428. Elaboration.

429. The keeper of Purgatory, according to tradition.

830 And much offense⁴³⁰ too. Touching⁴³¹ this vision here,
 It is an honest⁴³² ghost, that let me tell you.
 For⁴³³ your desire to know what is between us,
 O'ermaster it as you may. And now, good friends,
 As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
 835 Give me one poor request.

Horatio

What is't, my lord? We will.

Hamlet

Never make known what you have seen tonight.

Both

My lord, we will not.

Hamlet

Nay, but swear't.

840 **Horatio**

In faith, my lord, not I.⁴³⁴

Marcellus

Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Hamlet

Upon my sword.

[He holds out his sword.]

Marcellus

We have sworn, my lord, already.

Hamlet

Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

845 *Ghost cries under the stage.*

Ghost

Swear.

Hamlet

Ha, ha, boy, say'st thou so? Art thou there, truepenny⁴³⁵?—

Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage.

Consent to swear.

Horatio

Propose the oath, my lord.

850 **Hamlet**

Never to speak of this that you have seen.

Swear by my sword.

430. See also TLN 830. Horatio in line 140 means "There was no offense in what you just said; no need to apologize." Hamlet, in line 142, changes the meaning of the word to apply to Claudius's crime: "There certainly IS a great offense' against all human decency and law."

431. Concerning, regarding.

432. Genuine and truthful.

433. As for, regarding.

434. Horatio insists that he will not tell anyone what they have seen this night. In the next speech, Marcellus vows also to keep the secret. They are not refusing to swear; in fact, they both seemingly take the view that they have sworn already by what they just said "in faith." But Hamlet insists that they now swear by his sword, an especially solemn oath since the sword hilt can be held so as to form a crucifix. Hamlet may hold it that way. Mel Gibson, in Franco Zeffirelli's 1990 film *Hamlet*, holds his sword in such a way that the hilt forms a crucifix to ward off the potential evil of a supernatural visitation.

435. Honest fellow, as trustworthy as the penny. Compare "sterling," thoroughly excellent, conforming to the highest standard.

Ghost

Swear.

*[They swear.]***Hamlet**Hic et ubique?⁴³⁶ Then we'll shift our ground.⁴³⁷*[He moves them to another spot.]*

Come hither, gentlemen,

855And lay your hands again upon my sword.

Never to speak of this that you have heard

Swear by my sword.

Ghost

Swear by his sword.

*[They swear.]***Hamlet**

Well said, old mole. Canst work i'th' earth so fast?

860A worthy pioneer!⁴³⁸—Once more remove,⁴³⁹ good friends.*[They move once more.]***Horatio**

Oh, day and night, but this is wondrous strange.

Hamlet

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,

Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.⁴⁴⁰ But come,865Here as before: never, so help you mercy,⁴⁴¹How strange or odd some'er⁴⁴² I bear myself

(As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on),⁴⁴³

That you at such times seeing me never shall,

870With arms encumbered⁴⁴⁴ thus, or this headshake,⁴⁴⁵Or by pronouncing of some doubtful⁴⁴⁶ phrase

As, "Well, well, we know," or "We could an if we would,"

Or "If we list⁴⁴⁷ to speak," or "There be, an if they might,"⁴⁴⁸

436. Here and everywhere? (Latin). Traditionally, the devil was able to be everywhere at once.

437. Change where we are standing for another spot.

438. The small tiny-eyed burrowing mole is here compared to the "pioneer," a foot soldier who dug tunnels and trenches used in warfare.

439. Move.

440. This "natural philosophy" (i.e., science) that people talk about. The "your" is probably impersonal, though Hamlet's jibe does apply to Horatio particularly; the two of them love to argue over issues of natural history and skepticism vs. providential readings of human life on earth.

441. As you hope for God's mercy.

442. However strangely or oddly.

443. To assume the wild and erratic behavior of a madman.

444. Folded. The folded arms and headshake are intended to suggest that the person has knowledge but dares not speak. Folded arms in particular could suggest love melancholy.

445. Shaking my head thus.

446. Ambiguous.

447. Wished, chose.

448. There are those (namely, ourselves) who could talk if they so chose.

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note⁴⁴⁹
 875 That you know aught⁴⁵⁰ of me. This not to do,
 So grace and mercy at your most need help you,⁴⁵¹
 Swear.

Ghost

Swear.

[They swear.]

Hamlet

Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit.—So, gentlemen,
 880 With all my love I do commend me to you,⁴⁵²
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
 May do t'express his love and friending⁴⁵³ to you,
 God willing, shall not lack.⁴⁵⁴ Let us go in together,
 And still⁴⁵⁵ your fingers on your lips, I pray.
 885 The time is out of joint.⁴⁵⁶ Oh, cursèd spite,
 That ever I was born to set it right!

[They wait for him to leave first.]

Nay, come, let's go together.⁴⁵⁷

Exeunt.

449. Indicate.

450. Anything.

451. As you hope for God's grace and mercy at your hour of greatest spiritual need.

452. I give you my best wishes.

453. Friendliness, friendship.

454. Be lacking, be left undone.

455. Always, continually.

456. Disjointed, lacking coherence. The metaphor is derived from the medical procedure of setting bones that have been broken or separated at the joint.

457. When Horatio and Marcellus politely defer to Hamlet as of senior rank and thus entitled to go first, he insists on equalizing this business among friends.

61.

Hamlet: Act 2

William Shakespeare

Hamlet (Modern, Editor's Version). [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#). University of Victoria. Editor: David Bevington. Adapted by James Sexton.

Scene 1

*Enter*¹ old Polonius, with his man [Reynaldo] or two.

⁸⁹⁰**Polonius**

Give him² this money, and these notes, Reynaldo.

[He gives money and papers.]

Reynaldo

I will, my lord.

Polonius

You shall do marv'ulous wisely, good Reynaldo,

Before you visit him, to make inquire³

Of his behavior.

⁸⁹⁵**Reynaldo**

My lord, I did intend it.

Polonius

Marry,⁴ well said, very well said. Look you, sir,

Inquire me⁵ first what Danskers⁶ are in Paris,

And how,⁷ and who, what means,⁸ and where they keep,⁹

⁹⁰⁰What company, at what expense; and finding

By this encompassment and drift of question¹⁰

That they do know my son, come you more nearer

Than your particular demands will touch it;¹¹

1. Location: Polonius's apartment in the castle, as in 1.3.

2. Laertes (as confirmed in lines 6 ff.).

3. To inquire.

4. i.e., By the Virgin Mary. (A mild oath.) As at 1.3.91 (TLN 556) and 1.4.15 (TLN 618) above.

5. Inquire on my behalf.

6. Danes.

7. How they live.

8. What wealth they have.

9. Dwell, frequent.

10. By this roundabout way of asking questions.

11. You will find out more this way than you would by making pointed inquiries. "More nearer" is an emphatic double negative, an acceptable usage in Elizabethan English.

Take you,¹² as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him,
 905As thus: "I know his father, and his friends,
 And in part him." Do you mark this, Reynaldo?

Reynaldo

Ay, very well, my lord.

Polonius

"And in part him. But," you may say, "not well,
 But if't be he I mean, he's very wild,
 910Addicted so and so," and there put on him¹³
 What forgeries¹⁴ you please—marry, none so rank¹⁵
 As may dishonor him, take heed of that,
 But, sir, such wanton,¹⁶ wild, and usual slips
 As are companions noted and most known
 915To youth and liberty.

Reynaldo

As gaming,¹⁷ my lord?

Polonius

Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,
 Quarreling,¹⁸ drabbing¹⁹—you may go so far.

Reynaldo

My lord, that would dishonor him.

920**Polonius**

Faith, no, as you may season it in the charge.
 You must not put another scandal on him
 That he is open to incontinency²⁰;
 That's not my meaning. But breathe²¹ his faults so quaintly²²
 That they may seem the taints of liberty,²³
 925The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
 A savageness in unreclaimèd blood,
 Of general assault.²⁴

Reynaldo

But, my good lord—

Polonius

Wherefore should you do this?

12. Assume, pretend.

13. Impute to him.

14. Invented tales.

15. Gross.

16. Unrestrained.

17. Gambling.

18. Picking a quarrel with someone became an obsession with many young men intent on establishing themselves as persons of chivalric honor.

19. Whoring.

20. Chronic sexual overindulgence.

21. Name, utter.

22. Artfully, subtly.

23. Faults arising from too much free living.

24. A wildness in untamed youth that afflicts most young men.

Reynaldo

Ay, my lord, I would know that.

930 **Polonius**

Marry sir, here's my drift,
 And I believe it is a fetch of warrant.²⁵
 You laying these slight sullies²⁶ on my son
 As 'twere a thing a little soiled i'th' working,²⁷
 Mark you, your party in converse,²⁸ him you would sound,²⁹
 935 Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
 The youth you breathe of guilty,³⁰ be assured
 He closes with you in this consequence:³¹
 "Good sir" (or so), or "friend," or "gentleman,"
 According to the phrase and the addition
 940 Of man and country.

Reynaldo

Very good, my lord.

Polonius

And then, sir, does 'a this, 'a does—what was I about to say?
 By the mass, I was about to say something.
 Where did I leave?³²

945 **Reynaldo**

At "closes in the consequence."
 At "friend," or so, and "gentleman."

Polonius

At "closes in the consequence." Ay, marry,
 He closes with you thus: "I know the gentleman,
 I saw him yesterday"—or t'other day,
 950 Or then, or then—"with such and such, and as you say,
 There was 'a gaming, there o'ertook in's rouse,
 There falling out³³ at tennis," or perchance
 "I saw him enter such a house of sale³⁴,"
 Videlicet,³⁵ a brothel, or so forth. See you now,
 955 Your bait of falsehood takes this carp³⁶ of truth,
 And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,

25. A justifiable stratagem.

26. Stains, blemishes.

27. In the handling.

28. The person you are conversing with.

29. Sound out.

30. If he has ever detected the young man you are asking about to be guilty of the offenses we have just enumerated.

31. He takes you into his confidence in the following way.

32. Leave off.

33. Quarreling.

34. Whorehouse.

35. Namely (Latin).

36. A fish.

With windlasses³⁷ and with assays of bias,³⁸
 By indirections find directions³⁹ out;
 So by my former lecture⁴⁰ and advice
 960 Shall you my son. You have me,⁴¹ have you not?

Reynaldo

My lord, I have.

Polonius

God b'wi' ye, fare ye well.⁴²

Reynaldo

Good my lord.

Polonius

Observe his inclination in yourself.⁴³

965 **Reynaldo**

I shall, my lord.

Polonius

And let him ply his music.

Reynaldo

Well, my lord.

Exit Reynaldo.

Enter Ophelia.

Polonius

Farewell.—How now, Ophelia, what's the matter?

Ophelia

Alas, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

Polonius

With what, i'th' name of God?

Ophelia

My lord, as I was sewing in my chamber,
 Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,⁴⁴
 975 No hat upon his head,⁴⁵ his stockings fouled,⁴⁶
 Ungartered, and down-gyvèd to his ankle,⁴⁷
 Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
 And with a look so piteous in purport⁴⁸
 As if he had been loosèd out of hell
 980 To speak of horrors, he comes before me.

37. i.e., circuitous paths. (Literally, a hunter's roundabout circuit to head off pursued animals.)

38. Indirect courses (resembling the curved path or "bias" of the bowling ball that is weighted to one side).

39. The way things are going.

40. The set of instructions I've just given you.

41. Understand me.

42. i.e., God be with you; farewell.

43. Take a personal interest in observing his habits; judge his behavior from the perspective of your knowledge of your own inclinations.

44. Man's close-fitting jacket all unfastened.

45. Hats were customarily worn indoors in the Elizabethan period.

46. Dirty and untidy.

47. Hamlet's stockings, no longer held up by garters tied around the knees, have fallen down around his ankles, like a prisoner's "gyves" or shackles.

48. In what it expressed.

Polonius

Mad for thy love?

Ophelia

My lord, I do not know,
But truly I do fear it.

Polonius

What said he?

Ophelia

He took me by the wrist, and held me hard.
985 Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow
He falls to such perusal of my face
As 'a would draw it. Long stayed he so.
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
990 And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk⁴⁹
And end his being. That done, he lets me go,
And with his head over his shoulder turned
995 He seemed to find his way without his eyes,
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And to the last bended their light on me.

Polonius

Come, go with me. I will go seek the King.
This is the very ecstasy⁵⁰ of love,
1000 Whose violent property fordoes itself⁵¹
And leads the will to desperate⁵² undertakings
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

1005 **Ophelia**

No, my good lord, but as you did command
I did repel his letters, and denied
His access to me.

Polonius

That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed⁵³ and judgment
1010 I had not quoted⁵⁴ him. I feared he did but trifle
And meant to wrack⁵⁵ thee; but beshrew my jealousy!⁵⁶

49. Body.

50. Madness.

51. Whose violent nature is self-destructive.

52. Polonius points to the possibility of suicide.

53. Attentiveness, care.

54. Observed.

55. Ruin, seduce.

56. A plague on my suspicious nature!

By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions⁵⁷
As it is common for the younger sort
1015 To lack discretion. Come, go we to the King.
This must be known,⁵⁸ which, being kept close,⁵⁹ might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.⁶⁰
Come.
Exeunt.

57. I swear, it is as characteristic for old men to overreach and read too much into the things we see.

58. Made known to the King.

59. Concealed.

60. Might ultimately cause even more unhappiness than would be the result of my well-intended but unwelcome announcing of bad news (about Hamlet's mad love of Ophelia).

Scene 2

1020 *Flourish. Enter*⁶¹ *King, Queen, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern [with others].*

King

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.
 Moreover that⁶² we much did long to see you,
 The need we have to use you did provoke
 Our hasty sending.⁶³ Something have you heard
 1025 Of Hamlet's transformation—so I call it,
 Since not th' exterior nor the inward man
 Resembles that⁶⁴ it was. What it should be,
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
 So much from th' understanding of himself,
 1030 I cannot dream of. I entreat you both
 That, being of⁶⁵ so young days brought up with him,
 And since so neighbored to his youth and humor,
 That you vouchsafe your rest⁶⁶ here in our court
 Some little time, so by your companies⁶⁷
 1035 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
 So much as from occasions you may glean,⁶⁸
 1036.1 Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus
 That, opened,⁶⁹ lies within our remedy.

Queen

Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of you,
 And sure I am two men there is not living
 1040 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 To show us so much gentry⁷⁰ and good will
 As to expend your time with us awhile
 For the supply and profit of our hope,⁷¹
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks
 1045 As fits a king's remembrance.⁷²

Rosencrantz

Both your majesties

61. Location: The castle.

62. Besides the fact that.

63. Sending for you.

64. What.

65. From.

66. Consent to stay.

67. The company of you both.

68. Opportunities you may gather or infer.

69. Being revealed.

70. Courtesy.

71. In order to aid us in furthering what we hope for.

72. As would be a fitting gift of a king in rewarding your service.

Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,⁷³
 Put your dread pleasures⁷⁴ more into command
 Than to entreaty.

1050 Guildenstern

But we both obey,
 And here give up ourselves in the full bent⁷⁵
 To lay our service freely at your feet
 To be commanded.

King

Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

1055 Queen

Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz.
 And I beseech you instantly to visit
 My too-much-changed son.—Go, some of you,
 And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

1060 Guildenstern

Heavens make our presence and our practices⁷⁶
 Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen

Ay, amen.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern [and other Courtiers].

Enter Polonius.

Polonius

Th'ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
 1065 Are joyfully returned.

King

Thou still⁷⁷ hast been the father of good news.

Polonius

Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
 I hold my duty as I hold my soul,
 Both to my God and to my gracious king;
 1070 And I do think—or else this brain of mine
 Hunts not the trail of policy⁷⁸ so sure
 As it hath used to do—that I have found
 The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King

Oh, speak of that! That do I long to hear.

1075 Polonius

Give first admittance to th'ambassadors.
 My news shall be the fruit⁷⁹ to that great feast.

73. Over us.

74. The wishes of you who inspire awe and fear.

75. To the utmost extent of which we are capable. (A metaphor from drawing the bow in archery.)

76. Doings.

77. Always.

78. Statecraft.

79. The dessert.

King

Thyself do grace⁸⁰ to them, and bring them in.

[Polonius goes to bring in the ambassadors.]

He tells me, my sweet Queen, that he hath found
The head⁸¹ and source of all your son's distemper.

1080 **Queen**

I doubt⁸² it is no other but the main:

His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

Enter Polonius, Voltmand, and Cornelius.

King

Well, we shall sift him.⁸³—Welcome, my good friends.

Say, Voltmand, what from our brother Norway?

1085 **Voltmand**

Most fair return⁸⁴ of greetings and desires.⁸⁵

Upon our first,⁸⁶ he sent out to suppress

His nephew's levies,⁸⁷ which to him appeared

To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack,

But, better looked into, he truly found

1090It was⁸⁸ against your highness; whereat grieved

That so his sickness, age, and impotence⁸⁹

Was falsely borne in hand,⁹⁰ sends out arrests⁹¹

On Fortinbras, which he in brief obeys,

Receives rebuke from Norway, and, in fine,⁹²

1095Makes vow before his uncle never more

To give th'assay of arms⁹³ against your majesty.

Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,

Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee⁹⁴

And his commission to employ those soldiers

1100So levied (as before) against the Polack,

With an entreaty herein further shown

[Giving a letter to the King]

That it might please you to give quiet pass⁹⁵

80. Ceremonious honor. (With a suggestion of a "grace" said before a meal, continuing the metaphor of the previous line.)

81. Source.

82. Fear, suspect.

83. Question Polonius.

84. Reciprocation.

85. Good wishes.

86. At our first presentation of our mission.

87. Young Fortinbras's raising of troops.

88. He found that it in fact was.

89. Weakness.

90. Taken advantage of.

91. Orders to desist.

92. In conclusion.

93. Make trial of military might.

94. Income, payment.

95. Safe and uninterrupted passage.

Through your dominions for his enterprise
 On such regards of safety and allowance⁹⁶
 1105As therein⁹⁷ are set down.

King

It likes⁹⁸ us well,
 And at our more considered⁹⁹ time we'll read,
 Answer, and think upon this business.
 Meantime, we thank you for your well-took labor.
 1110Go to your rest. At night we'll feast together.
 Most welcome home!
Exeunt Ambassadors.

Polonius

This business is well ended.
 My liege¹⁰⁰ and madam, to expostulate¹⁰¹
 What majesty should be, what duty is,
 1115Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,¹⁰²
 I will be brief. Your noble son is mad.
 1120Mad call I it, for to define true madness,
 What is't but to be nothing else but mad?
 But let that go.

Queen

More matter with less art.¹⁰³

Polonius

Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
 1125That he is mad, 'tis true. 'Tis true 'tis pity,
 And pity 'tis 'tis true—a foolish figure,¹⁰⁴
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him, then. And now remains
 That we find out the cause of this effect,
 1130Or rather say the cause of this defect,
 For this effect defective comes by cause.¹⁰⁵
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.¹⁰⁶
 Perpend.¹⁰⁷

96. With such consideration for Denmark's safety and for the permission granted to Fortinbras.

97. in the document we have just delivered to you.

98. Pleases.

99. Suitable for deliberation.

100. One who is entitled to feudal allegiance or service.

101. Expound, debate.

102. And since long-windedness can add nothing but decorative rhetorical flourishes.

103. Give us more substance with less artfulness.

104. Figure of speech.

105. For this defective behavior in Hamlet must have a cause.

106. That pretty much sums up the situation, and leaves us to figure out what to make of it, what to do.

107. Consider.

I have a daughter—have whilst she is mine—
 Who in her duty and obedience, mark,
 1135 Hath given me this. Now gather and surmise.¹⁰⁸
[He reads from] the letter.]

“To the celestial and my soul’s idol, the most beautified Ophelia.”
 1140 That’s an ill phrase, a vile phrase; “beautified” is a vile phrase. But
 you shall hear. “These in her excellent white bosom, these,” etc.¹⁰⁹

Queen

Came this from Hamlet to her?

Polonius

Good madam, stay¹¹⁰ awhile, I will be faithful.¹¹¹
[He reads the] letter.

“Doubt thou the stars are fire,¹¹²
 1145 Doubt that the sun doth move,¹¹³
 Doubt truth to be a liar,
 But never doubt I love.”

“O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers.¹¹⁴ I have not art to reckon¹¹⁵
 my groans. But that I love thee best, oh, most best, believe it. Adieu.
 Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is¹¹⁶ to him,
 Hamlet.”

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me,
 And, more above, hath his solicitings,
 1155 As they fell out, by time, by means, and place,
 All given to mine ear.¹¹⁷

King

But how hath she received his love?

Polonius

What do you think of me?

King

As of a man faithful and honorable.

Polonius

1160 I would fain¹¹⁸ prove so. But what might you think,
 When I had seen this hot love on the wing—
 As I perceived it (I must tell you that)

108. Think about this and draw your own conclusions. ("Gather" may also suggest "gather around me.")

109. i.e., These words are addressed to the spotlessly white bosom of the one I love. (Young ladies would often keep such love letters in their blouses, next to their hearts.) The "etc." could be a part of the letter, or, more plausibly, Polonius's way of summarizing what he chooses not to read.

110. Hold on, wait.

111. I will do as I said I would.

112. Suspect or question the undoubted truth that the stars are fire (sooner than doubt my love for you).

113. (This "undoubted truth" seems postulated on the traditional Ptolemaic cosmology with the earth at the center of the universe and the sun one celestial body that moves about it.)

114. Lacking the skill needed to write verses like these, and too lovesick to do so.

115. (1) count, enumerate; (2) number metrically, scan.

116. Body belongs.

117. And moreover she has let me know when, by what means, and where his solicitings occurred ("fell out").

118. Gladly, willingly.

Before my daughter told me—what might you,
 Or my dear majesty your queen here, think
 1165 If I had played the desk or table-book,¹¹⁹
 Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,¹²⁰
 Or looked upon this love with idle sight,¹²¹
 What might you think? No, I went round¹²² to work,
 And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:¹²³
 1170 “Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star.¹²⁴
 This must not be.” And then I precepts¹²⁵ gave her
 That she should lock herself from his resort,¹²⁶
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice,
 1175 And he, repulsèd, a short tale to make,
 Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
 Thence to a watch,¹²⁷ thence into a weakness,
 Thence to a lightness,¹²⁸ and by this declension¹²⁹
 Into the madness wherein now he raves,
 1180 And all we mourn for.

King

[To Queen] Do you think 'tis this?

Queen

It may be, very like.

Polonius

Hath there been such a time—I'd fain¹³⁰ know that—
 That I have positively said “‘Tis so”
 1185 When it proved otherwise?

King

Not that I know.

Polonius

Take this from this,¹³¹ if this be otherwise.
 If circumstances lead me, I will find
 Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
 1190 Within the center.¹³²

119. i.e., If I had noted all this in my memory-book but had done nothing about it; or, if I had acted as go-between.

120. Or if I had deliberately shut my eyes to what my heart suspected.

121. Complacently or uncomprehendingly.

122. Directly, energetically.

123. Address.

124. Above your sphere or social station.

125. Orders.

126. His having access to her.

127. Sleepless state.

128. To lightheadedness.

129. Decline, deterioration. (Playing also with a grammatical metaphor.)

130. I would gladly.

131. The actor's various options here include the gesture of miming the severing of his head from his body, or removing the chain of office from around his neck or his staff of office from his hands.

132. Center of the earth, traditionally regarded as wholly inaccessible.

King

How may we try¹³³ it further?

Polonius

You know sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.¹³⁴

¹¹⁹⁵**Queen**

So he does indeed.

Polonius

At such a time, I'll loose¹³⁵ my daughter to him.
Be you and I behind an arras¹³⁶ then;
Mark the encounter. If he love her not,
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,¹³⁷
¹²⁰⁰Let me be no assistant for a state
But keep a farm and carters.¹³⁸

King

We will try it.

Enter Hamlet reading on a book.

Queen

¹²⁰⁵But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

Polonius

Away, I do beseech you both, away.
I'll board him presently.¹³⁹ Oh, give me leave.—¹⁴⁰

Exit King and Queen.

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Hamlet

Well, God-a-mercy.¹⁴¹

¹²¹⁰**Polonius**

Do you know me, my lord?

Hamlet

Excellent, excellent well. You're a fishmonger.¹⁴²

Polonius

Not I, my lord.

Hamlet

Then I would you were so honest a man.

Polonius

Honest, my lord?

¹²¹⁵**Hamlet**

133. Test.

134. Corridor or waiting-room.

135. Let loose (as if she were a caged animal about to be mated).

136. Wall-hanging, tapestry.

137. On that account.

138. Cart drivers.

139. Accost him immediately.

140. Leave this to me; leave me alone to handle this.

141. God have mercy, i.e., thank you.

142. Fish merchant.

Ay, sir, to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.¹⁴³

Polonius

That's very true, my lord.

Hamlet

For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion—¹⁴⁴
Have you a daughter?

Polonius

I have, my lord.

Hamlet

Let her not walk i'th' sun.¹⁴⁵ Conception¹⁴⁶ is a blessing, but as your daughter may conceive, friend, look to't.¹⁴⁷

¹²²⁵**Polonius**

[*Aside*] How say you by that? Still harping¹⁴⁸ on my daughter. Yet he knew me not at first. 'A said I was a fishmonger. 'A is far gone, far gone. And truly, in my youth I suffered much extremity for love, very near this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my lord?

¹²³⁰**Hamlet**

Words, words, words.

Polonius

What is the matter,¹⁴⁹ my lord?

Hamlet

Between who?

Polonius

I mean the matter that you read, my lord.

Hamlet

¹²³⁵Slanders sir; for the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plumtree gum,¹⁵⁰ and that they have a plentiful lack of wit,¹⁵¹ together with most weak hams—all ¹²⁴⁰which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty¹⁵² to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Polonius

143. Compare the proverb, "A man (one) among a thousand".

144. A good piece of flesh for kissing. Hamlet, in his mad guise, obliquely warns Polonius that Ophelia may respond to the heat of sexual desire by becoming pregnant, just as the sun presumably breeds maggots in rotting flesh--perhaps with a pun on "sun" and "son," i.e., Hamlet himself, as son of the dead king.

145. (1) In public; (2) into the sunshine of Hamlet's princely favors (continuing the pun on sun/son in the previous lines).

146. (1) Understanding; (2) Conceiving a child.

147. Take care, be wary.

148. Dwelling obsessively on.

149. What is the substance of what you are reading? (But Hamlet deliberately misunderstands, answering as if Polonius had asked, "What is the quarrel between the people you are talking about?")

150. Are dropping thick, moist discharges like the sticky resins from various trees.

151. Understanding.

152. Decency, honorable behavior.

1245[*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.—Will you walk out
of the air,¹⁵³ my lord?

Hamlet

Into my grave.

Polonius

[*Aside*] Indeed, that's out of the air. How pregnant¹⁵⁴ sometimes his replies are!
1250A happiness¹⁵⁵ that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not
so prosperously¹⁵⁶ be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the
1255means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honorable lord, I will
most humbly take my leave of you.

Hamlet

You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part
1260withal¹⁵⁷—except my life, except my life, except my life.

Enter Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.

Polonius

Fare you well, my lord.

Hamlet

These tedious old fools!

Polonius

[*To Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*] You go to seek the Lord Hamlet? There he is.

Rosencrantz

[*To Polonius*] God save you, sir.

[*Exit Polonius.*]

Guildenstern

My honored lord!

Rosencrantz

My most dear lord!

Hamlet

1270My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye
both?

Rosencrantz

As the indifferent¹⁵⁸ children of the earth.

Guildenstern

Happy¹⁵⁹ in that we are not over-happy. On Fortune's cap we are not the very
button.¹⁶⁰

1275**Hamlet**

Nor the soles of her shoe?

Rosencrantz

Neither, my lord.

153. The air outdoors was thought to be noxious, especially for the sick and old.

154. Cogent, full of meaning.

155. Aptness, felicity of expression.

156. Successfully, effectively.

157. With.

158. Ordinary, neither extremely fortunate nor unfortunate.

159. Fortunate.

160. Presumably, Fortune's cap has a button at its highest point.

Hamlet

Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors.¹⁶¹

Guildenstern

Faith,¹⁶² her privates¹⁶³ we.

1280**Hamlet**

In the secret parts of Fortune? Oh, most true, she is a strumpet.¹⁶⁴ What's the news?

Rosencrantz

None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

Hamlet

1285Then is doomsday near.¹⁶⁵ But your news is not true. Let me question more in particular. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison hither?

Guildenstern

Prison, my lord?

Hamlet

Denmark's a prison.

1290**Rosencrantz**

Then is the world one.

Hamlet

A goodly one, in which there are many confines,¹⁶⁶ wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o'th' worst.

Rosencrantz

We think not so, my lord.

1295**Hamlet**

Why, then 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison.

Rosencrantz

Why, then your ambition makes it one. 'Tis too narrow for your mind.

1300**Hamlet**

Oh, God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guildenstern

Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious
1305is merely the shadow of a dream.¹⁶⁷

Hamlet

A dream itself is but a shadow.

Rosencrantz

161. In her genital area.

162. In good faith. (A mild oath.)

163. (1) sexual members; (2) ordinary foot-soldiers; (3) informal friends and counselors, without official title.

164. Whore. (Fortune was proverbially fickle in bestowing her favors.)

165. The idea of the world growing honest is so radical as to be apocalyptic, a sure sign that the end is near.

166. Enclosures, places of confinement.

167. The goal of ambition is without substance, being nothing more than the unreal image of something that is itself mere illusion. (Rosencrantz repeats this idea in line 213.)

Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Hamlet

1310 Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows.¹⁶⁸ Shall we to th' court? For, by my fay,¹⁶⁹] I cannot reason.

Both

We'll wait upon¹⁷⁰ you.

Hamlet

1315 No such matter.¹⁷¹ I will not sort¹⁷² you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way¹⁷³ of friendship, what make you¹⁷⁴ at Elsinore?

Rosencrantz

To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.

Hamlet

1320 Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks, but I thank you; and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny.¹⁷⁵ Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free¹⁷⁶ visitation? Come, come, deal justly with me. Come, come, nay, speak.

Guildenstern

What should we say, my lord?

1325 Hamlet

Why, anything--but to th' purpose.¹⁷⁷ You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to color.¹⁷⁸ I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

Rosencrantz

To what end, my lord?

1330 Hamlet

That you must teach me. But let me conjure¹⁷⁹ you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth,¹⁸⁰ by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you
1335 withal,¹⁸¹ be even¹⁸² and direct with me whether you were sent for or no.

168. In that case, ordinary beggars must be more substantial, in that they lack ambition, whereas our monarchs and others, whom we make to seem greater than they really are by our adulation of them, are in fact only the unsubstantial shadows cast by our beggars.

169. Faith.

170. Accompany, attend.

171. Certainly not. (Hamlet interprets their "wait upon" as meaning "provide menial service." He will not treat his boyhood friends this way.)

172. Class, categorize.

173. Well-trodden path, tried-and-true course.

174. What are you doing.

175. Too expensive at even a mere halfpenny, a coin of little value; or, too expensive by a halfpenny for me to give in return for such worthless kindness.

176. Voluntary.

177. Say anything you like, but let's get to the main point.

178. Disguise.

179. Solemnly entreat.

180. The close friendship of our younger days and of our ages.

181. By whatever more earnest entreaty a more skillful proposer might urge.

182. On the level, straightforward.

Rosencrantz

[*Aside to Guildenstern*] What say you?

Hamlet

[*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.¹⁸³ --If you love me, hold not off.¹⁸⁴

Guildenstern

My lord, we were sent for.

¹³⁴⁰**Hamlet**

I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen molt no feather.¹⁸⁵ I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercise¹⁸⁶; and ¹³⁴⁵indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition¹⁸⁷ that this goodly frame,¹⁸⁸ the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory. This most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament,¹⁸⁹ this majestic roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent ¹³⁵⁰congregation¹⁹⁰ of vapors. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving¹⁹¹ how express¹⁹² and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension,¹⁹³ how like a god; ¹³⁵⁵the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals. And yet to me what is this quintessence¹⁹⁴ of dust? Man delights not me, no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

Rosencrantz

My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

¹³⁶⁰**Hamlet**

Why did you laugh, then, when I said man delights not me?

Rosencrantz

To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment¹⁹⁵ the players shall receive from you. We coted them on the way, and hither are they coming to offer you service.

Hamlet

He that plays the King shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me.¹⁹⁶ The Adventurous Knight shall use his foil and target, the Lover shall not

183. On you.

184. Don't hold back.

185. i.e., lose none of its attractive appearance.

186. exercise (Such as tennis or fencing.)

187. It weighs so heavily on my spirits.

188. Structure.

189. Splendid heavenly canopy hanging over us.

190. Mass, assemblage.

191. In shape and motion.

192. Well framed; expressive.

193. Understanding, power of comprehending.

194. Very essence.

195. Meager reception (appropriate to Lent, the forty days of penitence and fasting from Ash Wednesday to Easter). During Lent, the public theaters were not allowed to perform plays.

196. Payment; homage, praise from me.

1370sigh gratis,¹⁹⁷ the Humorous Man shall end his part in peace,¹⁹⁸ the Clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o'th' sear,¹⁹⁹ and the Lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they?

Rosencrantz

1375Even those you were wont to take such delight in,²⁰⁰ the tragedians²⁰¹ of the city.

Hamlet

How chances it they travel?²⁰² Their residence²⁰³ both in reputation and profit was better both ways.

Rosencrantz

1380I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.²⁰⁴

Hamlet

Do they hold the same estimation²⁰⁵ they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

Rosencrantz

No, indeed, they are not.

Hamlet

How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

Rosencrantz

1385Nay, their endeavor keeps in the wonted pace.²⁰⁶ But there is, sir, an eyrie²⁰⁷ of children, little eyases,²⁰⁸ that cry out on the top of question,²⁰⁹ and are most tyrannically²¹⁰ clapped for't. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the
1390common stages²¹¹ --so they call them--that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose quills²¹² and dare scarce come thither.

Hamlet

What, are they children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted?²¹³ Will

197. In vain, for nothing.

198. The eccentric character, displaying the dominance in him of a particular "humor" (obsession, whim, fancy), will have full license to speak without interruption.

199. i.e., the Clown will make those laugh who are predisposed to laugh easily. (Only those spectators who are thus inclined will laugh at the Clown's stale jokes.)

200. Were accustomed to take such delight in.

201. Actors (of comedy or tragedy).

202. i.e., tour the provinces.

203. Remaining in the city, not on tour.

204. Their being restrained from public performance is the result of recent disturbances. Hamlet may be referring to the recent revival in 1599-1600 of performances by the juvenile acting companies, whose marked tendency toward potentially libelous political satire had led to their being suppressed throughout the 1590s.

205. Esteem.

206. Continues at the usual pace.

207. Nest, and the brood of chicks in it.

208. Young hawks, here signifying the boy actors.

209. Shout more shrilly than their competitors.

210. Vehemently, outrageously.

211. Make noisy clamor against the adult acting companies.

212. That many gentlemen fear being satirized in the juvenile companies' plays. "Goose quills" are the pens of the dramatists writing for the boys' companies.

213. Maintained, provided for.

they pursue the quality²¹⁴ no longer than they can sing?²¹⁵ Will they not say
 1395 afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players²¹⁶ --as it is most
 like if their means are not better²¹⁷ --their writers do them wrong to make them
 exclaim against their own succession?²¹⁸

Rosencrantz

1400 Faith,²¹⁹ there has been much to-do²²⁰ on both sides, and the nation²²¹ holds it no sin
 to tarre²²² them to controversy. There was for a while no money bid for
 argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.²²³

Hamlet

Is't possible?

1405 Guildenstern

Oh, there has been much throwing about of brains.²²⁴

Hamlet

Do the boys carry it away?²²⁵

Rosencrantz

Ay, that they do, my lord, Hercules and his load²²⁶ too.

Hamlet

1410 It is not very strange, for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would
 make mows²²⁷ at him while my father lived give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred
 ducats²²⁸ apiece for his picture in little.²²⁹ 'Sblood,²³⁰ there is something in this more than
 natural, if philosophy could find it out.

1415 *Flourish for the players.*²³¹

Guildenstern

There are the players.

Hamlet

Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come.

Th'appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony.²³² Let me comply with you

214. The acting profession.

215. i.e., only until their voices break at adolescence.

216. Into adult actors for the "public" stage.

217. If they can find no better way to support themselves.

218. i.e., future careers.

219. In good faith. (A mild oath.)

220. Ado.

221. Populace.

222. Goad, incite (as in inciting dogs to attack a chained bear).

223. For a while, no money was offered to a playwright unless his play took part in the sharp controversy between the satirical writers for the juvenile companies and the dramatists who wrote for the adult companies.

224. Lively exchanges in the battle of wits.

225. Win the day.

226. Seemingly an allusion to the sign of the Globe Theater, which may have shown Hercules bearing the world on his shoulders in a "Herculean" labor.

227. Faces, grimaces.

228. Gold coins.

229. Portrait in miniature.

230. By God's (Christ's) blood. (An oath.)

231. A fanfare, usually on trumpets, for important entrances, here announcing the arrival of the actors at Elsinore Castle.

232. Ceremonious actions and gestures are the proper accompaniment to a welcome.

1420 in this garb,²³³ lest my extent to the players,²³⁴ which, I tell you, must show fairly outward,²³⁵ should more appear like entertainment²³⁶ than yours.²³⁷ You are welcome. But my uncle-father²³⁸ and aunt-mother²³⁹ are deceived.

Guildenstern

In what, my dear lord?

1425 Hamlet

I am but mad north-north-west;²⁴⁰ when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.²⁴¹

Enter Polonius.

Polonius

Well be²⁴² with you, gentlemen.

Hamlet

1430 Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too, at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.²⁴³

Rosencrantz

Haply²⁴⁴ he is the second time come to them, for they say an old man is twice a child.

Hamlet

1435 I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players. Mark it.-- You say right, sir, o'Monday morning, 'twas then indeed.

Polonius

My lord, I have news to tell you.

Hamlet

My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor²⁴⁵ in Rome--

1440 Polonius

The actors are come hither, my lord.

Hamlet

Buzz, buzz.²⁴⁶

Polonius

Upon my honor--

Hamlet

Then came each actor on his ass.

Polonius

1445 The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral,

233. Let me comply with ceremonious custom in the proper manner by shaking hands with you.

234. Lest my extending a welcome to the actors.

235. Must necessarily display all the customary signs of a courteous welcome.

236. Reception, welcome.

237. Than the welcome I have extended to you.

238. Both uncle and stepfather.

239. Both mother and now aunt (by the marriage which Hamlet considers incestuous).

240. Mad only a small degree from true north, i.e., not very mad; or, mad only when the wind blows from that direction.

241. i.e., Only a mad person would be unable to distinguish a hawk from a handsaw, and I have no trouble distinguishing them.

242. May all be well. (A conventional greeting.)

243. Clothes in which a baby is wrapped to keep it safe and still.

244. Perhaps.

245. Quintus Roscius Gallus, the famous Roman actor, lived c. 126-62 BC.

246. An interjection, here conveying Hamlet's contempt for Polonius's telling the already stale news of the actors' arrival.

pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited.²⁴⁷ Seneca²⁴⁸ cannot be 1450 too heavy nor Plautus²⁴⁹ too light. For the law of writ and the liberty,²⁵⁰ these²⁵¹ are the only men.

Hamlet

O Jephthah, judge of Israel,²⁵² what a treasure hadst thou?

Polonius

What a treasure had he, my lord?

Hamlet

Why,

One fair daughter and no more,
1455 The which he lovèd passing²⁵³ well.²⁵⁴

Polonius

[*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

Hamlet

Am I not i'th' right, old Jephthah?

Polonius

If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

¹⁴⁶⁰**Hamlet**

Nay, that follows not.²⁵⁵

Polonius

What follows then, my lord?²⁵⁶

Hamlet

Why,

As by lot,²⁵⁷

God wot,²⁵⁸

and then you know,

It came to pass,

As most like it was.²⁵⁹

1465 The first row of the pious chanson will show you more,²⁶⁰ for look where my

247. i.e., plays without scene breaks and unrestrained by rules, hence all-inclusive or unclassifiable--an absurdly catchall conclusion to Polonius's list of dramatic categories. Shakespeare was already well known for writing plays that ignored the classical "unities" of time, place, and action.
248. Seneca Lucius Annaeus, known as Seneca the Younger (c. 3 BC-65 AD), the most widely read of Latin writers of tragedy.
249. Plautus Titus Maccius (c. 254-184 BC), the most popular of Latin writers of comedy.
250. For plays written according to the classical rules as well as for those that disregard these conventions.
251. i.e., the actors, or possibly Seneca and Plautus.
252. The old-Testament patriarch (Judges 11:30-40) who vowed that he would sacrifice the first living thing he saw if God granted him the defeat of the Ammonites in battle; the first thing he saw turned out to be his daughter and only child.
253. Surpassingly, extremely.
254. Hamlet quotes from a ballad about Jephthah and his daughter.
255. i.e., (1) Just because you resemble Jephthah in having a daughter does not logically demonstrate that you love her; (2) You haven't quoted the next line of the ballad.
256. Polonius asks, what does follow logically? But Hamlet answers as if Polonius had asked, what is the next line of the ballad?
257. By chance.
258. God knows.
259. As was most likely.
260. The first line or stanza of this pious ballad will tell you more.

abridgment comes.²⁶¹

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters,²⁶² welcome all.--I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends.--Oh, my old friend! Thy face is valanced²⁶³ since I saw thee last.
 1470 Com'st thou to beard²⁶⁴ me in Denmark?-- What, my young lady²⁶⁵ and mistress!²⁶⁶
 By'r Lady,²⁶⁷ your ladyship is nearer heaven²⁶⁸ than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.²⁶⁹ Pray God your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold,²⁷⁰ be
 1475 not cracked within the ring.²⁷¹ --Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't, like French falconers:²⁷² fly at anything we see. We'll have a speech straight.²⁷³
 Come, give us a taste of your quality.²⁷⁴ Come, a passionate speech.

First Player

What speech, my good lord?

Hamlet

1480 I heard thee speak me²⁷⁵ a speech once, but it was²⁷⁶ never acted, or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million, 'twas caviare to the general.²⁷⁷ But it was, as I received it, and others whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine,²⁷⁸ an excellent play, well digested in the
 1485 scenes,²⁷⁹ set down with as much modesty²⁸⁰ as cunning.²⁸¹ I remember one said there were no sallets²⁸² in the lines to make the matter savory, nor no matter in
 1488.1 the phrase that might indict²⁸³ the author of affectation, but called it an honest
 1490 method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine.²⁸⁴ One speech in't I chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido,²⁸⁵

261. Actors are coming who will cut short what I was about to say, or who will make short my entertainment or diversion.

262. Good sirs. (Said to social inferiors.)

263. i.e., fringed with beard.

264. Confront, challenge, defy. (With obvious pun on the player's beard.)

265. The boy actor, to whom the female roles are assigned.

266. Hamlet addresses the boy actor with playful and courtly hyperbole as if he/she, now coming to age as a young adult, were a woman to be admired and courted.

267. By Our Lady (the Virgin Mary). A mild oath.

268. (1) taller; (2) older, and thus nearer death.

269. High platform shoe of Italian fashion.

270. Gold coin not legal because it is cracked or chipped inside the ring enclosing the image of the sovereign. Shaving or chipping gold coins was a common form of cheating.

271. i.e., the young male's voice having lost its soprano range suitable for acting female parts.

272. We'll go at it like the French (who are presumed here to be avid falconers, not discriminating as to what they loose their birds to fly at).

273. At once.

274. Skill in acting.

275. Speak for me or to me.

276. But the play containing this speech was.

277. i.e., a delicacy not generally appreciated by unsophisticated tastes.

278. Spoke with greater authority than mine.

279. Arranged in orderly fashion into scenes.

280. Moderation, restraint.

281. Skill.

282. .e., were no spicy bits, improprieties. (Literally, salads.)

283. Accuse.

284. Graceful and natural in proportion rather than artfully ornamented.

285. The story of the fall of Troy, as told by Aeneas to Dido in Book I of Virgil's Aeneid. The story, not told in Homer's Iliad, had been

and thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line--let me see, let me see--

The rugged²⁸⁶ Pyrrhus,²⁸⁷ like th'Hyrceanian beast--²⁸⁸

'Tis not so, it begins with Pyrrhus.

The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,²⁸⁹

1495 Black as his purpose, did the night resemble

When he lay couchèd²⁹⁰ in the ominous horse,²⁹¹

Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared

With heraldry more dismal.²⁹² Head to foot

Now is he total gules,²⁹³ horridly tricked²⁹⁴

1500 With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,

Baked and empasted with the parching streets²⁹⁵

That lend a tyrannous²⁹⁶ and damnèd light

To their vile murders.²⁹⁷ Roasted in wrath and fire,

And thus o'ersizèd²⁹⁸ with coagulate²⁹⁹ gore,

1505 With eyes like carbuncles,³⁰⁰ the hellish Phyrrhus

Old grandsire Priam seeks.

So proceed you.

Polonius

'Fore God, my Lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

First Player

Anon³⁰¹ he finds him,

1510 Striking too short at Greeks. His antique³⁰² sword,

Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,

Repugnant to command.³⁰³ Unequal matched,

Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide,

But with the whiff and wind of his fell³⁰⁴ sword

dramatized by Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe in *Dido Queen of Carthage* (c. 1585). The slaying of Priam, King of Troy, by Pyrrhus, as Troy fell to the Greeks.

286. Shaggy, savage.

287. Pyrrhus, also known as Neoptolemus, was the son of Achilles, and was thus another son (like Hamlet or Laertes or Fortinbras) seeking to avenge his father's death.

288. A tiger from Hyrcania, on the Caspian Sea, famed for its wild beasts.

289. Black armor.

290. Concealed.

291. The fateful wooden Trojan horse, hidden inside of which thirty Greek warriors deceitfully gained access to the citadel of Troy.

292. i.e., the blood that Pyrrhus has smeared on his already dark and terrifying appearance.

293. Totally red, as if in heraldic colors.

294. Smeared, decorated.

295. Roasted and encrusted into a thick paste by the parching heat of the streets and burning houses.

296. Cruel, fierce.

297. i.e., To the vile murders of "fathers, mothers, daughters, sons" mentioned three lines earlier.

298. Covered with size (a glutinous substance applied to canvases to make them ready for painting); also suggesting "larger than life size."

299. Congealed.

300. Large, fiery-red gems, thought to emit their own light.

301. Soon.

302. Ancient, long-used.

303. Resistant to Priam's bidding.

304. Cruel, fierce.

1515Th'unnervèd father³⁰⁵ falls. Then senseless Ilium,³⁰⁶
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
 Stoops to his base,³⁰⁷ and with a hideous crash
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear; for lo! his sword,
 Which was declining³⁰⁸ on the milky³⁰⁹ head
 1520Of reverend Priam, seemed i'th' air to stick.
 So as a painted³¹⁰ tyrant Pyrrhus stood,
 And, like a neutral to his will and matter,³¹¹
 Did nothing.
 But as we often see against³¹² some storm
 A silence in the heavens, the rack³¹³ stand still,
 1525The bold winds speechless, and the orb³¹⁴ below
 As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
 Doth rend the region,³¹⁵ so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
 A rousèd vengeance sets him new a-work,
 And never did the Cyclops³¹⁶ hammers fall
 1530On Mars his³¹⁷ armor forged for proof eterne³¹⁸
 With less remorse³¹⁹ than Pyrrhus' bleeding³²⁰ sword
 Now falls on Priam.
 Out, out,³²¹ thou strumpet³²² Fortune! All you gods
 In general synod³²³ take away her power,
 1535Break all the spokes and fellies³²⁴ from her wheel,
 And bowl the round nave³²⁵ down the hill of heaven³²⁶
 As low as to the fiends!

305. The strengthless old man (and father of many sons).

306. Then the citadel of Troy, lacking the strength to defend itself.

307. Its base.

308. Descending.

309. White-haired.

310. Motionless, as in a painting.

311. And, as though suspended between intent and fulfillment.

312. Just before.

313. Mass of clouds.

314. Globe, earth.

315. Sky.

316. The Cyclopes were primordial one-eyed giants of Greek mythology who served as armor-makers in Vulcan's smithy. The next line here presumes that they were the makers of armor for Mars, the god of war.

317. Mars's.

318. To provide eternal protection against assault.

319. Pity.

320. i.e., covered with the blood of previous assaults, and anticipating the blood that is about to be shed by old Priam.

321. An expression of outrage, fury, etc.

322. Fortune. The whorish goddess of Chance.

323. Assembly.

324. The curved pieces of wood forming the exterior rim of a wheel, to which the spokes are attached. Because "Fortune's wheel is ever turning" (a proverbial expression), a person who is at the top of Fortune's wheel one day may find himself or herself at the bottom the next.

325. Wheel hub (all that would be left on a wheel if its spokes and fellies were broken).

326. Mount Olympus, home of the gods in Greek mythology.

Polonius

This is too long.

Hamlet

1540 It shall to the barber's with your beard.--Prithee, say on. He's for a jig,³²⁷ or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps. Say on. Come to Hecuba..³²⁸

First Player

But who, oh, who, had seen the moblèd³²⁹ queen--.

Hamlet

The moblèd queen!

Polonius

That's good. "Mobleèd queen" is good.

1545 **First Player**

Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames

With bisson rheum,³³⁰ a clout upon that head

Where late³³¹ the diadem³³² stood, and, for a robe,

About her lank and all-o'erteemèd loins³³³

1550 A blanket in th'alarm of fear caught up--

Who this had seen,³³⁴ with tongue in venom steeped

'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced;³³⁵

But if³³⁶ the gods themselves did see her then,

When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport

1555 In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,

The instant burst of clamor that she made,

Unless things mortal move them not at all,

Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven³³⁷

And passion³³⁸ in the gods.

1560 **Polonius**

Look whe'er he has not turned his color, and has tears in's eyes.--Prithee, no more.

Hamlet

'Tis well. I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon. *[To Polonius]* Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed?³³⁹ Do ye hear, let them be well used,³⁴⁰

327. Comic entertainment with dance, often performed irrelevantly at the end of a play.

328. Wife of Priam and Queen of Troy.

329. Veiled, muffled.

330. i.e., weeping so with blinding tears that she seemed almost capable of extinguishing the flames of burning Troy.

331. Lately.

332. Crown.

333. Withered loins, utterly worn out with child-bearing.

334. Whoever had seen this.

335. Would have protested treasonously against Fortune's fickle rule.

336. But even if.

337. Would have caused the sun and other heavenly bodies to weep. ("Milch" means "milky, moist with tears.")

338. And would have provoked compassionate pity.

339. Lodged.

340. Well treated.

1565for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time.³⁴¹ After your death
you were better have a bad epitaph³⁴² than their ill report while you live.

Polonius

My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

1570**Hamlet**

God's bodykins,³⁴³ man, much better. Use every man after his desert and who should
scape whipping? Use them after³⁴⁴ your own honor and dignity; the less they
deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

1575**Polonius**

Come, sirs.

Exit Polonius.

Hamlet

Follow him, friends. We'll hear a play tomorrow. [*Aside to the First Player*]
Dost thou hear me, old friend, can you play "The Murder of Gonzago"?

[First] Player

Ay, my lord.

1580**Hamlet**

We'll ha't³⁴⁵ tomorrow night. You could for a need³⁴⁶ study³⁴⁷ a speech of some
dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

[First] Player

Ay, my lord.

Hamlet

1585Very well. Follow that lord, and look you mock him not.

Exeunt Players.

My good friends, I'll leave you till night. You are welcome to Elsinore.

Rosencrantz

Good my lord.³⁴⁸

Hamlet

Ay, so, God b'wi' you.

Exeunt [Rosencrantz and Guildenstern].

Now I am alone.

1590Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

Is it not monstrous that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his whole conceit³⁴⁹

That from her working³⁵⁰ all his visage³⁵¹ waned,³⁵²

341. Actors give us a concise epitome of the age in which we live.

342. i.e., you would do better to have been judged a bad person.

343. By God's (Christ's) dear little body. (An oath.)

344. According to.

345. Have it performed.

346. As required and necessary.

347. Learn, memorize.

348. Rosencrantz politely bids Hamlet farewell, understanding that he has asked them to leave.

349. Bring his innermost being so entirely into accord with his conception of the role he is playing.

350. As a result of, or in response to, his soul's activity.

351. His face.

352. Turned pale.

1595 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,³⁵³
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
 With forms to his conceit?³⁵⁴ And all or nothing?
 For Hecuba?
 What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
 1600 That he should weep for her? What would he do
 Had he the motive and the cue for passion
 That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
 And cleave the general ear³⁵⁵ with horrid³⁵⁶ speech,
 Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,³⁵⁷
 1605 Confound the ignorant,³⁵⁸ and amaze³⁵⁹ indeed
 The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
 A dull and muddy-mettled³⁶⁰ rascal, peak³⁶¹
 Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,³⁶²
 And can say nothing; no, not for a king
 1610 Upon whose property³⁶³ and most dear life
 A damned defeat³⁶⁴ was made. Am I a coward?
 Who calls me villain? Breaks my pate across?³⁶⁵
 Plucks off my beard³⁶⁶ and blows it in my face?
 Tweaks me by th' nose? Gives me the lie i'th' throat³⁶⁷
 1615 As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this,³⁶⁸
 Ha? 'Swounds,³⁶⁹ I should take it;³⁷⁰ for it cannot be³⁷¹
 But I am pigeon-livered,³⁷² and lack gall
 To make oppression bitter,³⁷³ or ere³⁷⁴ this
 I should ha' fatted all the region kites³⁷⁵

353. In his look.

354. And all his bodily gestures perfectly suited to what he was imagining.

355. Everybody's ear.

356. Horror-causing.

357. Horrify the innocent. ("Appal" conveys the literal sense of "make pale.")

358. Dumbfound those who know nothing of the crime that has been committed.

359. Stun, bewilder.

360. Dull-spirited.

361. Mope.

362. Like an idle dreamer, not quickened into action by my cause.

363. Person and identity as king.

364. A murderous act deserving damnation.

365. Slaps me across the face. (A profound insult.) "Pate" means head. To break someone's head in Elizabethan English is not to break it in two but to deliver a blow.

366. Yanks at my beard. Another deep insult, questioning the manliness of the one thus insulted.

367. Calls me an out-and-out liar. (Again, an especially insulting gesture.)

368. Does this to me.

369. By his (Christ's) wounds. (A strong oath.)

370. i.e., take it lying down, offering no response.

371. But It cannot be otherwise than that.

372. Pigeons' livers were thought to secrete no gall, thus making them mild and disinclined to anger.

373. To make my oppression bitter to me, and thus make me dangerous to my enemy.

374. Before.

375. All the kites (birds of prey) of the air.

1620 With this slave's offal.³⁷⁶ Bloody, bawdy³⁷⁷ villain!
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless³⁷⁸ villain!
 Oh, vengeance!
 Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,³⁷⁹
 That I, the son of a dear father murdered,
 1625 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
 Must like a whore unpack my heart with words,
 And fall a-cursing like a very drab,³⁸⁰
 A scullion.³⁸¹ Fie upon't, foh! About,³⁸² my brain!
 Hum, I have heard
 That guilty creatures sitting at a play
 1630 Have by the very cunning³⁸³ of the scene
 Been struck so to the soul that presently³⁸⁴
 They have proclaimed their malefactions;³⁸⁵
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
 1635 Play something like the murder of my father
 Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks;
 I'll tent him to the quick.³⁸⁶ If 'a but blench³⁸⁷
 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
 May be the devil, and the devil hath power
 1640 T'assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps,
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
 As he is very potent with such spirits,
 Abuses³⁸⁸ me to damn me. I'll have grounds
 More relative³⁸⁹ than this. The play's the thing
 1645 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.
Exit.

376. This wretch's entrails.

377. Lewd, immoral.

378. Unnatural, lacking in affection for one's kind.

379. Fine, admirable. (Said sarcastically.)

380. Whore.

381. i.e., menial, kitchen servant.

382. Go about it, get to work.

383. Artfulness, skill.

384. At once.

385. Evil deeds, crimes.

386. Probe his wound (i.e., his conscience) to its core.

387. If he flinches or turns pale.

388. Deludes, deceives.

389. Relevant, convincing.

62.

Hamlet: Act 3

William Shakespeare

Hamlet (Modern, Editor's Version). [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#). University of Victoria. Editor: David Bevington. Adapted by James Sexton.

Scene 1

*Enter*¹ King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Lords.

King

And can you by no drift of circumstance²
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
1650 Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Rosencrantz

He does confess he feels himself distracted,
But from what cause, 'a will by no means speak.

Guildenstern

Nor do we find him forward³ to be sounded,⁴
1655 But with a crafty madness keeps aloof
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen

Did he receive you well?

Rosencrantz

Most like a gentleman.

¹⁶⁶⁰**Guildenstern**

But with much forcing of his disposition.⁵

Rosencrantz

Niggard of question,⁶ but of our demands⁷
Most free in his reply.

1. Location: The castle.

2. Can you not, by means of roundabout inquiry.

3. Willing.

4. Probed, questioned.

5. Inclination, mood.

6. Laconic, reluctant to initiate talk.

7. In response to our questions.

Queen

Did you assay him to⁸ any pastime?

Rosencrantz

Madam, it so fell out⁹ that certain players
1665 We o'erraught¹⁰ on the way. Of these we told him,
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it. They are about the court,¹¹
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

¹⁶⁷⁰**Polonius**

'Tis most true,
And he beseeched me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King

With all my heart, and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined. Good gentlemen,
1675 Give him a further edge,¹² and drive his purpose on
To these delights.

Rosencrantz

We shall, my lord.
Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern [and Lords].

King

Sweet Gertrude, leave us too,
For we have closely¹³ sent for Hamlet hither,
1680 That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront¹⁴ Ophelia.
Her father and myself, lawful espials,¹⁵
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behaved,¹⁶
1685 If't be th'affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

Queen

I shall obey you.
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
1690 Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues

8. Endeavor to persuade him to try.

9. Happened.

10. Overtook, passed

11. Have arrived and are present here in the court.

12. Incitement.

13. Privately.

14. Confront, encounter.

15. Justifiable spies.

16. By his behavior.

Will bring him to his wonted¹⁷ way again,
To both your honors.

Ophelia

Madam, I wish it may.

[Exit Queen.]

Polonius

Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious,¹⁸ so please you,
1695 We will bestow ourselves. *[To Ophelia, as he gives her a book]* Read on this book,¹⁹
That show of such an exercise²⁰ may color²¹
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,
'Tis too much proved,²² that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
1700 The devil himself.

King

[Aside] Oh, 'tis too true!²³
How smart²⁴ a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,²⁵
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it²⁶
1705 Than is my deed to my most painted word.
Oh, heavy burden!
Enter Hamlet.

Polonius

I hear him coming. Let's withdraw, my lord.
[The King and Polonius conceal themselves.]

1710 **Hamlet**

To be, or not to be, that is the question,
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings²⁷ and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep—
1715 No more—and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub,²⁸

17. Customary.

18. Your Grace (addressed to the King).

19. Presumably, a book of devotion.

20. Religious exercise.

21. Give a plausible appearance to, justify.

22. It is too often shown to be the case and too often practiced.

23. These words need not be said aside; they could be the King's way of agreeing with what Polonius has just said, before the King pursues in tortured soliloquy the dark consequences of the idea. Conversely, the whole speech can be read as expressive of a guilty conscience.

24. Stinging.

25. Beautified by means of cosmetics.

26. / In comparison with or in response to the cosmetic that gives the cheek its false beauty.

27. Devices for propelling several kinds of missiles toward an enemy.

28. Impediment, difficulty. (Literally, an obstacle in the path of the ball in the game of bowls.)

1720 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil²⁹
 Must give us pause. There's the respect³⁰
 That makes calamity of so long life.³¹
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 1725 Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,³²
 The pangs of disprized³³ love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office,³⁴ and the spurns³⁵
 That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,³⁶
 When he himself might his quietus make³⁷
 1730 With a bare bodkin?³⁸ Who would these fardels³⁹ bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death,
 The undiscovered country from whose bourn⁴⁰
 No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
 1735 And makes us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of.
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
 And thus the native hue of resolution⁴¹
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,⁴²
 1740 And enterprises of great pith⁴³ and moment⁴⁴
 With this regard⁴⁵ their currents⁴⁶ turn awry⁴⁷
 And lose the name of action. Soft you now,⁴⁸
 The fair Ophelia!—Nymph, in thy orisons
 Be all my sins remembered.⁴⁹

1745 **Ophelia**

29. Cast off our mortal flesh and the turmoil of existence.

30. Consideration.

31. (1) That allows calamity to last so long; (2) that makes long life a calamity in itself.

32. The insolent abuse meted out by those of superior social rank.

33. Scorned, undervalued.

34. Officialdom.

35. Insults; literally, kicks.

36. That patient, deserving people must endure at the hands of unworthy persons.

37. Might settle his accounts (at the end of his life). A quietus was an affirmation that a bill had been paid, marked "Quietus est," laid to rest.

38. With nothing more elaborate than an unsheathed dagger.

39. Such burdens.

40. Boundary, border.

41. The natural color of one's complexion (i.e., ruddiness) that signals manly courage.

42. The white-faced pallor that accompanies too much introspection.

43. High seriousness, profound importance.

44. Momentousness, significance.

45. Consideration.

46. Courses.

47. Askew, off the expected course.

48. i.e., Wait a minute. (Said as Hamlet sees Ophelia.)

49. Remember me in your prayers, sinner that I am. Christian theology in medieval and Renaissance times dwelt on the innate sinfulness of all humans since the fall of Adam and Eve.

Good my lord,
How does your honor for this many a day?

Hamlet

I humbly thank you, well, well, well.

Ophelia

My lord, I have remembrances of yours
That I have longèd long to redeliver.
1750 I pray you now receive them.

Hamlet

No, not I. I never gave you aught.⁵⁰

Ophelia

My honored lord, you know right well you did,
And with them words of so sweet breath composed
As made these things more rich. Their perfume lost,
1755 Take these again, for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax⁵¹ poor when givers prove unkind,
There, my lord. [*She offers Hamlet the remembrances.*]

Hamlet

Ha, ha! Are you honest?⁵²

Ophelia

My lord?

Hamlet

Are you fair?⁵³

Ophelia

What means your lordship?

Hamlet

That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to
your beauty.⁵⁴

Ophelia

1765 Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce⁵⁵ than with honesty?

Hamlet

Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it
is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness.⁵⁶

1770 This was sometime a paradox,⁵⁷ but now the time gives it proof. I did love
you once.

Ophelia

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Hamlet

50. Anything.

51. Grow.

52. (1) chaste; (2) truthful.

53. Beautiful.

54. You should be chastely wary of any dealings with your beauty (since a beautiful woman is too often in danger of being seduced).

55. Dealings.

56. Its (honesty's) likeness.

57. Formerly a seeming absurdity, a conundrum.

You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it.⁵⁸ I loved you not.

¹⁷⁷⁵**Ophelia**

I was the more deceived.

Hamlet

Get thee to a nunnery.⁵⁹ Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest,⁶⁰ but yet I could accuse me⁶¹ of such things that it
1780 were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful,
ambitious, with more offenses at my beck⁶² than I have thoughts to put them
in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such
fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant⁶³ knaves,
1785 all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Ophelia

At home, my lord.

Hamlet

Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's
own house. Farewell.

Ophelia

Oh, help him, you sweet heavens!

¹⁷⁹⁰**Hamlet**

If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste
as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.⁶⁴ Get thee to a
nunnery. Go, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise
1795 men know well enough what monsters⁶⁵ you make⁶⁶ of them. To a nunnery go,
and quickly too. Farewell.

Ophelia

O heavenly powers, restore him!

Hamlet

I have heard of your paintings⁶⁷ too, well enough. God hath given you one face,
1800 and you make yourselves another. You jig, you amble, and you lisp,⁶⁸ and

58. Virtue cannot be grafted onto our inherently sinful nature without our retaining some taste or trace of the old stock, i.e., Adam's Original Sin.

59. Convent (perhaps too with the suggestion of a brothel, since Hamlet is openly skeptical of the idea that beauty and chastity can coexist in women).

60. Reasonably virtuous.

61. Accuse myself.

62. Command.

63. Downright.

64. Slander.

65. Cuckolded men were popularly supposed to have monster-like horns on their foreheads as a sign of their being cheated on by their wives.

66. You women make.

67. Use of cosmetics.

68. You dance about, you swing your hips suggestively when you walk, you speak with an affected voice.

nickname God's creatures,⁶⁹ and make your wantonness your ignorance.⁷⁰ Go to,⁷¹ I'll no more on't;⁷² it hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriages. Those that are married already, all but one,⁷³ shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

Exit.

Ophelia

Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
 The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,⁷⁴
 Th'expectancy and rose⁷⁵ of the fair state,
 The glass of fashion and the mold of form,⁷⁶
 1810 Th'observed of all observers,⁷⁷ quite, quite down,
 And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
 That sucked the honey of his music vows,
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason⁷⁸
 Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh,
 1815 That unmatched form and feature of blown youth⁷⁹
 Blasted with ecstasy.⁸⁰ Oh, woe is me
 T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Enter King and Polonius [stepping forward from concealment].

King

Love? His affections⁸¹ do not that way tend,
 1820 Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little,
 Was not like madness. There's something in his soul
 O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,⁸²
 And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose⁸³
 Will be some danger; which to prevent,
 1825 I have in quick determination
 Thus set it down:⁸⁴ he shall with speed to England

69. i.e., and you impose new names and false appearances on the creatures of this world instead of accepting them as God made them. In the Book of Genesis God gives names to his first creations, as when he "called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called the Seas," and then ordained the abundance of moving creatures (1.10-25), but when he had created Adam, he turned the naming of the beasts and fowl over to him: "he brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them," and so "Adam gave names to all the cattle, and to the fowl of the air" (2.19-20).

70. And you excuse your bad behavior on the grounds that you didn't know any better.

71. An expression of impatience.

72. I won't have any more of this.

73. Presumably, all but the King. (Whether Hamlet says this in the knowledge that the King is listening is a matter of interpretation.)

74. The three attributes are not listed in the same order as that used for the three types of persons; the pattern is more rhetorical than strictly logical. "Sword" clearly goes with the soldier; "eye" and "tongue" could indicate scholar and courtier, or the reverse.

75. The hope and ornament.

76. The mirror of true self-fashioning and the model of courtly behavior.

77. The admired center of attention in the court.

78. i.e., reason as properly the sovereign or ruler over the emotions and the senses.

79. Youth in its full blossoming.

80. Blighted with madness.

81. Emotions, feelings.

82. Sits like a bird on a nest, about to "hatch" mischief (in the next line).

83. And I do fear that the fulfillment and the discovery (like the hatching of a chick as it emerges from its shell).

84. Determined, resolved the matter; put it in writing.

For the demand of our neglected tribute.
Haply⁸⁵ the seas, and countries different,
With variable objects,⁸⁶ shall expel
1830 This something-settled⁸⁷ matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still⁸⁸ beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself.⁸⁹ What think you on't?

Polonius

It shall do well. But yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
1835 Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia?
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said,
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please,
But if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen-mother all alone entreat him
1840 To show his grief. Let her be round⁹⁰ with him,
And I'll be placed (so please you) in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,⁹¹
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

1845 **King**

It shall be so;
Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.
Exeunt.

85. Perhaps.

86. Various sights and surroundings to divert him.

87. Somewhat fixated.

88. Continually.

89. Out of his normal mode of behavior.

90. Blunt.

91. Is unable to discover what is troubling him.

Scene 2

*Enter*⁹² *Hamlet, and two or three of the Players.*

Hamlet

1850 Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth⁹³ it, as many of your players⁹⁴ do, I had as lief⁹⁵ the town crier⁹⁶ had spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget⁹⁷ a temperance that may give it smoothness. Oh, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious⁹⁸ periwig-pated⁹⁹ fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of¹⁰⁰ nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise.¹⁰¹ I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant.¹⁰² It out-Herods Herod.¹⁰³ Pray you avoid it.

Player

I warrant¹⁰⁴ your honor.

Hamlet

1865 Be not too tame, neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so o'erdone is from the purpose¹⁰⁵ of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image,¹⁰⁶ and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.¹⁰⁷ Now this overdone, or come tardy off,¹⁰⁸ though it make the unskillful¹⁰⁹ laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theater of others. Oh, there be players that

92. Location: A room of state in the castle.

93. Declaim, speak exaggeratedly.

94. Actors nowadays, the actors that people talk about.

95. I'd just as soon, be just as willing.

96. Person assigned the responsibility of loudly proclaiming public announcements in the streets.

97. Cultivate and nurture.

98. Boisterous, bombastic.

99. Wig-wearing. The term "groundlings," seemingly Shakespeare's invention, has condescending connotations of low taste and gullibility in the spectators.

100. Able to understand.

101. Noisy spectacles (as differentiated from complex and intellectually demanding drama).

102. A supposed Mohammedan deity who, though not actually found in extant English medieval drama, had become a byword for tyrannical bluster, like Herod (see next note).

103. King of Judea who ordered the massacre of all male children in his kingdom as a means of destroying the child that, wise men told him, was "born King of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2)--namely, Christ.

104. Assure.

105. Contrary to the purpose.

106. To show human nature an image of itself and scornful persons a picture of what they look like.

107. And the present state of affairs a likeness of itself as if impressed in wax. ("His form" means "its form.")

108. Done lamely.

109. Make those who lack critical discernment; the opposite of "the judicious."

I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely,¹¹⁰ that, neither having th'accent of Christians nor the gait of 1880Christian, pagan, nor no man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen¹¹¹ had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

Player

1885I hope we have reformed that indifferently¹¹² with us, sir.

Hamlet

Oh, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to 1890set on¹¹³ some quantity of barren¹¹⁴ spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. That's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go make you ready.

Exeunt Players.

Enter Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.

1895[*To Polonius*] How now, my lord, will the King hear this piece of work?

Polonius

And the Queen too, and that presently.¹¹⁵

Hamlet

Bid the players make haste.

Exit Polonius.

Will you two help to hasten them?

1900Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

We will, my lord.

Exeunt [Rosencrantz and Guildenstern].

Hamlet

What ho, Horatio!

Enter Horatio.

Horatio

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Hamlet

Horatio, thou art e'en¹¹⁶ as just¹¹⁷ a man
1905As e'er my conversation coped withal.¹¹⁸

Horatio

Oh, my dear lord—

110. i.e., I hope I will not be speaking profanely if I venture so far as to damn such bad actors as neither Christian, pagan, or any other part of the human race (as Hamlet says in the words that follow here).

111. i.e., not Nature herself but merely one of her hired assistants.

112. Tolerably, moderately well.

113. Incite.

114. Devoid of wit or judgment.

115. At once.

116. Even, absolutely.

117. Judicious, honorable, trustworthy.

118. As I have ever encountered in my experience with people.

Hamlet

Nay, do not think I flatter,
 For what advancement may I hope from thee
 That no revenue hast but thy good spirits
 1910 To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flattered?
 No, let the candied¹¹⁹ tongue lick absurd pomp
 And crook the pregnant¹²⁰ hinges of the knee
 Where thrift may follow fawning.¹²¹ Dost thou hear?
 Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
 1915 And could of men distinguish her election,
 Sh'hath sealed thee for herself,¹²² for thou hast been
 As one in suff'ring all that suffers nothing,
 A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
 Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those
 1920 Whose blood and judgment¹²³ are so well commingled
 That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
 To sound what stop¹²⁴ she please. Give me that man
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
 1925 As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—¹²⁵
 There is a play tonight before the King.
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance
 Which I have told thee of my father's death.
 I prithee, when thou see'st that act afoot,
 1930 Even with the very comment of thy soul¹²⁶
 Observe my uncle. If his occulted¹²⁷ guilt
 Do not itself unkennel¹²⁸ in one speech,¹²⁹
 It is a damnèd ghost that we have seen,
 And my imaginations are as foul
 1935 As Vulcan's stithy.¹³⁰ Give him heedful note,
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,

119. Sugary, flattering.

120. Compliant.

121. Wherever profit may accrue from abject flattery.

122. And could make discriminating choices among men, she (my soul) has marked you as her own, as though putting a legal seal on you to ensure possession.

123. Passion and reason.

124. Hole in a recorder or similar wind instrument for controlling pitch. This observation about the "stop" on a recorder anticipates Hamlet's caustic exchange with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern later in this present scene (lines 227, TLN 2221, and following).

125. i.e., I've already said too much on this subject. (Hamlet obliquely apologizes to Horatio for having expressed so deeply and personally his affection and admiration.)

126. With your utmost powers of concentration.

127. Hidden.

128. Reveal itself (as a fox might be flushed from its lair).

129. Presumably Hamlet here refers to the speech that he has asked the First Player to memorize and insert into the upcoming performance of "The Murder of Gongazo." See 3.1.331, TLN 1581-2, above.

130. The stithy or workshop of Vulcan, blacksmith-god of fire (and husband of Venus). Stiths are anvils.

And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

Horatio

Well, my lord,

1940If 'a steal aught the whilst this play is playing
And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.¹³¹

*Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and
1945other lord attendant with his Guard carrying torches. Danish march.
Sound a flourish.*

Hamlet

They are coming to the play. I must be idle.¹³² Get you a place.

King

How fares our cousin Hamlet?¹³³

Hamlet

1950Excellent, i'faith, of the chameleon's dish; I eat the air, promise-crammed.¹³⁴
You cannot feed capons¹³⁵ so.

King

I have nothing with¹³⁶ this answer, Hamlet. These words are not mine.¹³⁷

Hamlet

No, nor mine now.¹³⁸ [*To Polonius*] My lord, you played once i'th' university, you say?

Polonius

1955That I did, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

Hamlet

And what did you enact?

Polonius

I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i'th' Capitol. Brutus killed me.

Hamlet

1960It was a brute¹³⁹ part¹⁴⁰ of him to kill so capital a calf¹⁴¹ there.—Be the players
ready?

Rosencrantz

Ay, my lord, they stay upon your patience.¹⁴²

Queen

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

131. Pay for what has been stolen, i.e., make amends for my inadequate observation of the King.

132. (1) be unoccupied; (2) resume my mad guise.

133. How are things with you, my kinsman Hamlet? (But Hamlet, in his reply, plays on "fares" in the sense of "dines.")

134. (1) I am feeding on air, like the chameleon (which was fabled to feed thus); (2) I am feeding myself with thoughts about succeeding to the Danish crown, having been given nothing but empty promises of succession. (Hamlet is "heir" apparent; the word sounds like "air.")

135. (1) castrated roosters, often crammed with feed to make them succulent for the dinner table; (2) fools.

136. I can make nothing of, can learn nothing from.

137. Do not respond to what I asked and thus are meaningless to me.

138. These words are so longer mine, since I have uttered them and sent them forth into the air.

139. The word plays on "Brutus," the name of one of the chief conspirators against Caesar and also a synonym in Latin for "stupid." According to historical legend, Marcus Brutus's great ancestor in the founding of the Roman republic, Lucius Junius Brutus, pretended to be stupid (much as Hamlet assumes a guise of madness) to throw off his tyrannical enemies; hence, his name "Brutus," stupid.

140. (1) action; (2) role in a play.

141. i.e., so outstanding a fool. With satirical wordplay on "capital/Capitol"; see the previous line.

142. Await instructions from you as to when to begin.

Hamlet

No, good mother, here's mettle¹⁴³ more attractive.

¹⁹⁶⁵**Polonius**

[*To the King*] Oho, do you mark that?

Hamlet

[*To Ophelia, as he lies at her feet*] Lady, shall I lie in your lap?¹⁴⁴

Ophelia

No, my lord.

Hamlet

I mean, my head upon your lap.

Ophelia

Ay, my lord.

¹⁹⁷⁰**Hamlet**

Do you think I meant country matters?¹⁴⁵

Ophelia

I think nothing, my lord.

Hamlet

That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

Ophelia

What is, my lord?

Hamlet

Nothing.¹⁴⁶

¹⁹⁷⁵**Ophelia**

You are merry, my lord.

Hamlet

Who, I?

Ophelia

Ay, my lord.

Hamlet

Oh, God, your only jig-maker.¹⁴⁷ What should a man do but be merry? For
1980look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within's¹⁴⁸ two
hours.

Ophelia

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Hamlet

So long? Nay, then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables.¹⁴⁹ Oh,
1985heavens! Die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a

143. (1) mettle, disposition, temperament. (2) metal, an attractive quality (much as a magnet attracts iron).

144. On stage, Hamlet often reclines at Ophelia's feet.

145. Rustic goings-on. (The obscene punning here on "cunt" continues in "nothing.")

146. (1) The oval figure of zero, suggesting a woman's vagina; (2) No "thing," no penis. ("Thing" is a common euphemism in this sense.)

147. i.e., if you talk of being merry, let me tell you that I'm very best singer and dancer of jigs (that is, of pointless vulgar merriment) you could hope to find. (Said sardonically.) Jigs were often tacked on gratuitously at the ends of dramatic performances, for the diversion of the audience.

148. Within these.

149. i.e., if mourning for my dead father has ceased after only two months, then the devil can wear mourning black for all I care, while I shift to the dark fur of the sable, outwardly suitable for remembrance of the dead but in fact quite soft and luxurious.

great man's memory may outlive his life half a year. But, by'r Lady, 'a must build churches then, or else shall 'a suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse,¹⁵⁰ whose epitaph is, "For oh, for oh, the hobby-horse is forgot."
 1990 *Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters. Enter [Players as] a King and Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him. She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her*
 1995 *neck. Lays him down upon a bank of flowers. She, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the King's ears, and exits. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three mates, comes*
 2000 *in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner woos the Queen with gifts. She seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.*
Exeunt [Players].

Ophelia

What means this, my lord?

Hamlet

2005 Marry, this is miching mallico.¹⁵¹ It means mischief.

Ophelia

Belike¹⁵² this show imports the argument of the play.¹⁵³

Enter [a Player as] Prologue.

Hamlet

We shall know by this fellow. The players cannot keep counsel;¹⁵⁴ they'll tell all.

Ophelia

2010 Will 'a tell us what this show meant?

Hamlet

Ay, or any show that you will show him. Be not you¹⁵⁵ ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Ophelia

2015 You are naught,¹⁵⁶ you are naught. I'll mark¹⁵⁷ the play.

Prologue

For us and for our tragedy,
 Here stooping to your clemency,
 We beg your hearing patiently.
[Exit.]

150. A costuming device used in Morris dances and May-game sports in which the dancer is made up to resemble a horse and its rider by strapping the shape of a horse's body around his waist. Hamlet quotes from a lost ballad, occurring in *Love's Labor's Lost*, 3.1.27-8, lamenting the disappearance of Morris dancing and such folk customs under pressure from zealous Puritan reformers.

151. This is stealthy mischief.

152. Probably, perhaps.

153. Signifies the plot.

154. Keep a secret.

155. Provided you are not.

156. Naughty, indecent. (Ophelia sees all too clearly the offensive thrust of Hamlet's talk about her not being ashamed to show all.)

157. Pay attention to.

2020**Hamlet**

Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?¹⁵⁸

Ophelia

'Tis brief, my lord.

Hamlet

As woman's love.

Enter [two Players as] King and his Queen.

King

Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart¹⁵⁹ gone round
 2025Neptune's salt wash¹⁶⁰ and Tellus' orbèd ground,¹⁶¹
 And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen¹⁶²
 About the world have times twelve thirties¹⁶³ been
 Since love our hearts and Hymen¹⁶⁴ did our hands
 Unite commutual¹⁶⁵ in most sacred bands.¹⁶⁶

2030**Queen**

So many journeys may the sun and moon
 Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
 But woe is me, you are so sick of late,
 So far from cheer and from your former state,
 That I distrust you.¹⁶⁷ Yet though I distrust,
 2035Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must.¹⁶⁸
 2035.1For women fear too much, even as they love,¹⁶⁹
 And women's fear and love holds quantity:
 In neither aught, or in extremity.¹⁷⁰
 Now what my love is, proof¹⁷¹ hath made you know,
 And as my love is sized, my fear is so.¹⁷²
 2039.1Where love is great, the littlest¹⁷³ doubts are fear;
 Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

2040**King**

Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
 My operant powers their functions leave to do.¹⁷⁴

158. Brief verse motto inscribed inside a ring.

159. The sun-god's chariot, i.e., the sun itself.

160. The sea, the realm of the god Neptune.

161. The round earth, the realm of the goddess Tellus, Earth.

162. Light reflected from the sun.

163. The King reckons that he and his queen have been married thirty years, each year comprising a span of twelve lunar cycles.

164. God of marriage.

165. Mutually, reciprocally.

166. Bonds.

167. Am anxious about you.

168. It must not distress you at all, my lord.

169. Women are apt to be extreme in their loving and are fearful to the same excessive extent.

170. Either women feel no anxiety if they do not love at all, or, if they love extremely, they are prone to extreme anxiety.

171. Experience.

172. And just as my love is great in quantity, my fear of losing you is proportionately huge.

173. Even the littlest.

174. My vital faculties are ceasing to perform their functions.

And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,¹⁷⁵
Honored, beloved; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—¹⁷⁶

2045 **Queen**

Oh, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast.
In second husband let me be accurst!
None¹⁷⁷ wed the second but who¹⁷⁸ killed the first.

Hamlet

Wormwood, wormwood.¹⁷⁹

2050 **Queen**

The instances¹⁸⁰ that second marriage move¹⁸¹
Are base respects of thrift,¹⁸² but none of love.
A second time I kill my husband dead
When second husband kisses me in bed.

King

I do believe you think what now you speak,
2055 But what we do determine, oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,¹⁸³
Of violent birth, but poor validity,¹⁸⁴
Which now like fruit unripe¹⁸⁵ sticks on the tree,
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.
2060 Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt.¹⁸⁶
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
2065 Their own enactures¹⁸⁷ with themselves destroy.¹⁸⁸
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.¹⁸⁹
This world is not for aye,¹⁹⁰ nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;

175. After I am gone.

176. i.e., shalt thou find (to complete the couplet by rhyming "find" with "kind." (The Player King is interrupted by his consort.)

177. (1) Let no wife; (2) No wife does.

178. Except she who.

179. i.e., How bitter! (Wormwood is a bitter-tasting plant.)

180. Motives, reasons.

181. Prompt, motivate.

182. Ignoble considerations of financial prudence.

183. Our good intentions are too often subject to forgetfulness.

184. Energetically conceived at first but lacking in staying power.

185. Which purposeful intent, being immature and poorly thought through.

186. It's necessary and inevitable that in time we neglect to fulfill the obligations that we have imposed on ourselves.

187. Fulfillments, enactments.

188. Violent extremes of both grief and joy engender their own destruction in the very act of manifesting themselves.

189. Grief turns to joy and joy to grief on the slightest occasion.

190. For ever.

2070 For 'tis a question left us yet to prove
 Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.¹⁹¹
 The great man down,¹⁹² you mark his favorites flies;¹⁹³
 The poor advanced makes friends of enemies;¹⁹⁴
 And hitherto¹⁹⁵ doth love on fortune tend,¹⁹⁶
 2075 For who not needs¹⁹⁷ shall never lack a friend,
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try¹⁹⁸
 Directly seasons him¹⁹⁹ his enemy.
 But orderly to end where I begun,²⁰⁰
 Our wills and fates do so contrary run²⁰¹
 2080 That our devices still²⁰² are overthrown;
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.²⁰³
 So, think²⁰⁴ thou wilt no second husband wed,
 But die thy thoughts²⁰⁵ when thy first lord is dead.

Queen

Nor earth to me give²⁰⁶ food, nor heaven light,
 2085 Sport and repose lock from me day and night,²⁰⁷
 2085.1 To desperation turn my trust and hope,
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!²⁰⁸
 Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
 Meet what I would have well, and it destroy!²⁰⁹
 Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,²¹⁰
 If once a widow, ever I be wife!

2090 Hamlet

If she should break it now!²¹¹

King

'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile.

191. Whether Fortune or Love prevailed more mightily in the world's affairs was a favorite debating topic in the Renaissance.

192. Fallen in fortune.

193. His most favored supporter abandons him.

194. When one of humble station is promoted, you'll see his former enemies now becoming his friends.

195. Up to this point in the argument, or, to this extent.

196. Attend, play a subservient role.

197. Anyone who has no need (of wealth or a friend).

198. And anyone who, being in need, tests the generosity of an insincere friend.

199. Immediately turns him into.

200. Began.

201. What we wish for ourselves and what in fact happens to us are so opposite to each other.

202. Intentions continually.

203. No matter what we intend, the results go astray.

204. i.e., (1) So, go ahead and think, or, (2) So, even if you think now that.

205. Either (1) your thoughts will die, or (2) let them die.

206. Neither let earth give me.

207. May day bar me from recreation and night from repose.

208. May an anchorite's or hermit's fare be the extent of my portion of food and drink.

209. May every adverse thing that causes the face of joy to turn blank or pale encounter and destroy everything that I wish to see prosper!

210. May eternal punishment pursue me in this life and the next.

211. i.e., after the vows that she has sworn.

My spirits grow dull, and fain²¹² I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep.

²⁰⁹⁵**Queen**

Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance between us twain!
[The Player King] sleeps. Exit [Player Queen].

Hamlet

Madam, how like you this play?

Queen

The lady doth protest too much,²¹³ methinks.

Hamlet

Oh, but she'll keep her word.

²¹⁰⁰**King**

Have you heard the argument?²¹⁴ Is there no offense in't?

Hamlet

No, no, they do but jest,²¹⁵ poison in jest. No offense²¹⁶ i'th' world.

King

What do you call the play?

²¹⁰⁵**Hamlet**

*The Mousetrap.*²¹⁷ Marry, how? Tropically.²¹⁸ This play is the image of a murder
done in Vienna. Gonzago is the Duke's²¹⁹ name, his wife Baptista. You shall
see anon. 'Tis a knavish piece of work, but what of that? Your majesty and
²¹¹⁰we that have free²²⁰ souls, it touches²²¹ us not. Let the galled jade wince, our
withers are unwrung.²²²

Enter Lucianus.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

Ophelia

You are as good as a chorus,²²³ my lord.

Hamlet

²¹¹⁵I could interpret between you and your love if I could see the puppets
dallying.²²⁴

212. Willingly.

213. Offers too many promises and protestations.

214. Plot.

215. Make believe.

216. Something that offends one's sensibilities . . . crime.

217. Hamlet's nickname here for "The Murder of Gonzago" hints to the audience at his plan to use the play to "catch the conscience of the King" (2.2.391, TLN 1645).

218. / How, indeed? Figuratively, as a "trope" or figure of speech, playing on words.

219. i.e., the King's.

220. Guiltless, unfettered.

221. Concerns; injures.

222. Let the chafed horse wince and kick at being galled by its saddle or harness; our horse is not rubbed sore between its shoulder blades/ (i.e., only the guilty will be made uncomfortable by this story of a duke who murders in order to win the wife of his victim).

223. You serve as well as the actor whose function is to introduce forthcoming action on stage.

224. Hamlet imagines for himself the role of interpreter or chorus for a puppet show, with the suggestion too of being a go-between in an affair. "Dallying" continues the sexual suggestion, as do Hamlet's quips in the following lines.

Ophelia

You are keen,²²⁵ my lord, you are keen.

Hamlet

It would cost you a groaning to take off mine edge.²²⁶

Ophelia

Still better and worse.²²⁷

2120 Hamlet

So you mis-take your husbands.²²⁸ –Begin, murderer. Pox, leave²²⁹ thy damnable faces²³⁰ and begin. Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

Lucianus

2125 Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing,

Confederate season, else no creature seeing,²³¹

Thou mixture rank,²³² of midnight weeds collected,

With Hecate's ban²³³ thrice blasted,²³⁴ thrice infected,

Thy natural magic and dire property²³⁵

2130 On wholesome life usurp immediately.

Pours the poison in his ears. Exit.

Hamlet

'A poisons him i'th' garden for his estate.²³⁶ His name's Gonzago. The story is extant, and written in very choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets

2135 the love of Gonzago's wife.

Ophelia

The King rises.

Hamlet

What, frightened with false fire?

Queen

How fares my lord?

Polonius

Give o'er the play.

2140 King

Give me some light. Away!

The Courtiers

Lights, lights, lights!

Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.

Hamlet

225. Sharp, bitterly satirical (but see next note for Hamlet's wordplay).

226. It would cost you a pregnancy to satiate the keenness of my sexual appetite.

227. i.e., Witty as always, albeit incorrigibly smutty. (These exchanges are said as playful banter, not as overt barbs.)

228. i.e., That's just the way you women take other men into your beds instead of your husbands. Hamlet plays on the language of the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer bidding bride and groom to take their new partners "for better, for worse."

229. "Pox" or "Poxxe" is an exclamation of impatience, referring literally to the pock-marks caused by syphilis and other diseases.

230. Deplorable and devilish grimaces.

231. A complicit or conspiring time, providing darkness so that no one will discover the crime.

232. Foul, offensive.

233. The curse invoked by Hecate, goddess of witchcraft.

234. Blighted.

235. Baleful power or quality.

236. Property, i.e., the kingship.

“Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
 The heart ungallèd²³⁷ play,²³⁸
 2145 For some must watch²³⁸ while some must sleep;
 Thus runs the world away.”²³⁹²⁴⁰
 Would not this,²⁴¹ sir, and a forest of feathers²⁴²—if the rest of my fortunes turn
 Turk with me²⁴³—with two provincial roses²⁴⁴ on my razed²⁴⁵ shoes, get me a
 2150 fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

Horatio

Half a share.

Hamlet

A whole one, I.
 For thou dost know, O Damon²⁴⁶ dear,
 This realm dismantled was of Jove himself,
 2155 And now reigns here
 A very, very pajock.²⁴⁷²⁴⁸

Horatio

You might have rhymed.

Hamlet

O good Horatio, I'll take the Ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst
 perceive?

2160 **Horatio**

Very well, my lord.

Hamlet

Upon the talk of the poisoning?

Horatio

I did very well note him.

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Hamlet

Aha, come, some music! Come, the recorders.²⁴⁹
 2165 For if the King like not the comedy,

237. Unafflicted.

238. Stay awake.

239. That is the way of the world.

240. Seemingly from an unknown ballad, alluding to the folk tradition of the wounded deer that retires from company to weep in solitude as it dies.

241. i.e., the play I have just presented and contributed some lines to.

242. i.e., extravagantly plumed headgear worn by the actors.

243. Even if good fortune should desert me. (To "turn Turk" is to renounce Christianity in favor of the Muslim religion.) Hamlet jestingly asks if his newly proven skill in theatrical matters might offer him a mean of livelihood if his fortunes turn otherwise against him.

244. Two large rosettes of ribbon, worn decoratively over shoelaces and named for the region of Provence in southern France.

245. Decoratively slashed.

246. The steadfast friend of Pythias in the story as dramatized in Richard Edwards's *Damon and Pythias*, here appropriate to the friendship of Hamlet and Horatio.

247. This realm has been divested of its greatness by Jove himself, leaving the kingdom in the charge of a vain pretender to virtue and authority. ("Pajock", meaning "peacock" or "patchcock," provides a ludicrous substitution for the word that would rhyme with "was" in line 198, presumably "ass.")

248. This stanza appears to be adapted from some unknown ballad.

249. Wind instruments characterized by a conical tube, a whistle mouthpiece, and eight finger holes; related to the flute.

Why, then belike²⁵⁰ he likes it not, pardie.²⁵¹

Come, some music.

Guildestern

Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Hamlet

Sir a whole history.

²¹⁷⁰**Guildestern**

The King, sir—

Hamlet

Ay, sir, what of him?

Guildestern

Is in his retirement²⁵² marvelous distempered.²⁵³

Hamlet

With drink,²⁵⁴ sir?

Guildestern

No, my lord, rather with choler.²⁵⁵

²¹⁷⁵**Hamlet**

Your wisdom should show itself more richer²⁵⁶ to signify this to his doctor, for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.²⁵⁷

Guildestern

²¹⁸⁰Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame,²⁵⁸ and start²⁵⁹ not so wildly from my affair.

Hamlet

I am tame sir. Pronounce.

Guildestern

The Queen your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Hamlet

You are welcome.

²¹⁸⁵**Guildestern**

Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed.²⁶⁰ If it shall please

250. Perhaps.

251. A version of the French "par dieu."

252. His withdrawal to his private chambers.

253. Out of temper.

254. Hamlet deliberately takes Guildestern's "out of temper" to mean "drunk," supposing the four "humors" in the King's body to have been thrown out of balance by excessive drinking.

255. Instead of that, with anger.

256. More rich in wisdom. The double comparative is allowable in early modern usage.

257. Hamlet's sarcastic reply interprets "choler" in terms of humors theory, which saw "choler" as an excess of yellow bile producing indigestion as well as anger, and requiring purgation, usually bloodletting--with the ominous suggestion of Hamlet's letting out some of the King's blood. "Purgation" also suggests the spiritual cleaning through confession that the King is greatly in need of, with also the legal sense of clearing of guilt for a crime committed.

258. Coherent order.

259. Shy away like a nervous horse.

260. (1) kind; (2) breeding, manners. (Guildestern's point is that Hamlet's "You are welcome," while seemingly polite, sounds sarcastic and not addressed to the issue at hand.)

you to make me a wholesome²⁶¹ answer, I will do your mother's commandment. If not, your pardon²⁶² and my return shall be the end of my business.

²¹⁹⁰**Hamlet**

Sir, I cannot.

Guildenstern

What, my lord?

Hamlet

Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased. But, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command, or rather, as you say, my mother.²⁶³ Therefore no²¹⁹⁵ more, but to the matter. My mother, you say.

Rosencrantz

Then thus she says: your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Hamlet

Oh, wonderful son, that can so 'stonish a mother! But is there no sequel at²²⁰⁰ the heels of this mother's admiration?²⁶⁴ Impart.²⁶⁵

Rosencrantz

She desires to speak with you in her closet²⁶⁶ ere you go to bed.

Hamlet

We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

²²⁰⁵**Rosencrantz**

My lord, you once did love me.

Hamlet

So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.²⁶⁷

Rosencrantz

Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper?²⁶⁸ You do surely bar the door upon your own liberty if you deny your griefs to²⁶⁹ your friend.

²²¹⁰**Hamlet**

Sir, I lack advancement.

Rosencrantz

How can that be, when you have the voice of the King himself for your succession in Denmark?

²²¹⁵*Enter the Players, with recorders.*

Hamlet

261. Healthy, sane.

262. Permission for me to depart.

263. Instead, it is my mother's command you are uttering, not your own.

264. Bewilderment.

265. Speak, say something.

266. Private chamber.

267. i.e., hands. In the Catechism in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, the person who is being prepared for Confirmation must vow "to keep my hands from picking and stealing."

268. The cause of your disorder.

269. Refuse to share your unhappiness with.

Ay, sir, but “while the grass grows”²⁷⁰—the proverb is something²⁷¹ musty.
 —Oh, the recorders. Let me see one. [*He takes a recorder.*] To withdraw with you,
 why do you go about to recover the wind of me,²⁷² as if you would drive me
 into a toil?

Guildenstern

2220 Oh, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.²⁷³

Hamlet

I do not well understand that.²⁷⁴ Will you play upon this pipe?

Guildenstern

My lord, I cannot.

Hamlet

I pray you.

2225 **Guildenstern**

Believe me, I cannot.

Hamlet

I do beseech you.

Guildenstern

I know no touch of it, my lord.

Hamlet

It is as easy as lying. Govern these ventages²⁷⁵ with your fingers and thumb,
 2230 give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music.
 Look you, these are the stops.

Guildenstern

But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony. I have not the
 skill.

Hamlet

2235 Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would
 play upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the
 heart of my mystery,²⁷⁶ you would sound me²⁷⁷ from my lowest note to the top of
 my compass, and there is much music, excellent voice in this little organ,²⁷⁸
 2240 yet cannot you make it speak. ‘Sblood,²⁷⁹ do you think I am easier to be played on
 than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you
 cannot play upon me.²⁸⁰

Enter Polonius.

[*To Polonius, as he enters*] God bless you, sir.

270. The whole proverb reads “While the grass grows, the horse (steed) starves.” Hamlet implies that his hopes of succeeding to the throne are distant at best, despite the King’s having named him “most immediate to our throne” at 1.2.109 (TLN 291).

271. Somewhat.

272. Get to my windward side (just as a hunter would position himself in such a way that the hunted game, scenting danger, would then be driven in the opposite direction and thus into the “toil” or net).

273. If I am being bold in an unmannerly fashion, it is my affection for you that prompts me to be so.

274. Hamlet sounds skeptical of Guildenstern’s protestations of love.

275. Finger holes, the “stops” (TLN 2231) on the recorder.

276. (1) secret; (2) skill in one of the craft guilds, as practiced for example by musicians.

277. (1) fathom me to the depths of my mystery; (2) cause me to emit a sound.

278. (1) fathom me to the depths of my mystery; (2) cause me to emit a sound.

279. By God’s blood. (A strong oath.)

280. i.e., get me to play or dance to your tune.

2245 **Polonius**

My lord, the Queen would speak with you, and presently.²⁸¹

Hamlet

Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Polonius

By th' mass, and 'tis like²⁸² a camel indeed.

2250 **Hamlet**

Methinks it is like a weasel.

Polonius

It is backed like a weasel.

Hamlet

Or like a whale.

Polonius

Very like a whale.

Hamlet

2255 Then I will come to my mother by and by.²⁸³ [*Aside*] They fool me to the top of my bent.²⁸⁴

[*Aloud*] I will come by and by.

Polonius

I will say so.

Exit.

Hamlet

"By and by" is easily said.—Leave me, friends.²⁸⁵

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

'Tis now the very witching time²⁸⁶ of night,

2260 When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out

Contagion²⁸⁷ to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,

And do such bitter business as the day

Would quake to look on. Soft, now to my mother.

O heart, lose not thy nature!²⁸⁸ Let not ever

2265 The soul of Nero²⁸⁹ enter this firm²⁹⁰ bosom.

Let me be cruel, not unnatural;

I will speak daggers to her, but use none.

My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites:

How in my words somever she be shent,

281. i.e., and she means right now.

282. "By th' mass" is a familiar oath, invoking the Holy Sacrament.

283. At once.

284. They humor my odd behavior to the limit of my endurance. Literally, "to . . . bent" means "to the extent to which a bow may be bent."

285. "By and by" is easily said" is Hamlet's acerbic riposte to what Polonius has just said, uttered to him as he is leaving or to anyone who will listen, including the audience.

286. A time for witchcraft, when spells are cast and evil is abroad.

287. Spreads its poisonous contagion.

288. Natural feeling.

289. Despot and emotionally unbalanced Roman emperor (37-68 AD) who had his mother Agrippina put to death.

290. Resolved.

2270 To give them seals never my soul consent!²⁹¹
Exit.

291. However much my words may rebuke her, let not my soul ever consent to ratify those words with violence.

Scene 3

*Enter*²⁹² *King, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.*

King

I like him²⁹³ not, nor stands it safe with us
 To let his madness range.²⁹⁴ Therefore prepare you.
 I your commission will forthwith dispatch,²⁹⁵
 2275 And he to England shall along with you.
 The terms of our estate may not endure
 Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow
 Out of his lunacies.²⁹⁶

Guildenstern

We will ourselves provide.²⁹⁷
 2280 Most holy and religious fear²⁹⁸ it is
 To keep those many many bodies²⁹⁹ safe
 That live and feed upon your majesty.

Rosencrantz

The single and peculiar³⁰⁰ life is bound
 2285 With all the strength and armor of the mind
 To keep itself from noyance,³⁰¹ but much more
 That spirit³⁰² upon whose weal³⁰³ depends and rests
 The lives of many. The cease³⁰⁴ of majesty
 Dies not alone, but like a gulf³⁰⁵ doth draw
 2290 What's near it with it. It is a massy³⁰⁶ wheel
 Fixed on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 Are mortised and adjoined,³⁰⁷ which, when it falls,³⁰⁸

292. Location: The castle.

293. i.e., his behavior.

294. Roam freely.

295. Prepare, cause to be drawn up.

296. A person in my exalted position should not have to put up with such hazardous threats as seem hourly to be erupting out of Hamlet's feverish brain.

297. We will prepare ourselves.

298. Sacred concern and wise caution.

299. i.e., subjects, the members of the "body politic." The King's life must be protected because he is the embodiment of the body politic.

300. Individual and private.

301. Harm.

302. The monarch.

303. Well-being

304. Cessation.

305. Whirlpool.

306. Massive.

307. Fastened by inserting a tenon, or projecting member at the end of a timber, into a groove or slot in an adjoining timber called the mortise.

308. Descends, like the wheel of Fortune.

Each small annexment, petty consequence,³⁰⁹
 2295Attends³¹⁰ the boist'rous³¹¹ ruin. Never alone
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King

Arm you, I pray you, to³¹² this speedy voyage,
 For we will fetters put upon this fear
 Which now goes too free-footed.

2300Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

We will haste us.
Exeunt gentlemen [Rosencrantz and Guildenstern].
Enter Polonius.

Polonius

My lord, he's going to his mother's closet.³¹³
 Behind the arras³¹⁴ I'll convey myself
 To hear the process.³¹⁵ I'll warrant³¹⁶ she'll tax him home.³¹⁷
 2305And, as you said—and wisely was it said—
 'Tis meet³¹⁸ that some more audience than a mother,
 Since nature makes them partial,³¹⁹ should o'erhear
 The speech of vantage.³²⁰ Fare you well, my liege.³²¹
 I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
 2310And tell you what I know.

King

Thanks, dear my lord.
Exit [Polonius].
 Oh, my offense is rank! It smells to heaven.
 It hath the primal eldest curse³²² upon't,
 A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
 2315Though inclination be as sharp as will;³²³
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
 And like a man to double business bound³²⁴

309. i.e., Each lesser person serving and dependent on the King.

310. Takes part in, accompanies.

311. Tumultuous.

312. Prepare yourselves . . . for.

313. Private chamber.

314. Tapestry hangings, as at 2.2.157, TLN 1197. On the Elizabethan stage, the arras was presumably hung over a door or aperture such as the "discovery space" in the façade of the tiring-house.

315. Proceedings.

316. Promise, assure.

317. Reprove him severely.

318. Fitting.

319. Since their nearness of blood might render them less likely to see the business objectively.

320. (1) from an advantageous position, or, (2) in addition.

321. Liege lord, feudal superior to whom allegiance is due.

322. The curse of Cain, whose murder of his brother Abel was the first such crime after the Fall of Man from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 4).

323. Even though my desire (to seek forgiveness in prayer) is as strong as my determination to do so.

324. Simultaneously obliged to undertake two tasks that are mutually incompatible. (The King wishes he could seek forgiveness while still holding on to the guilty rewards of his crime.)

I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
 And both neglect. What if this cursèd hand
 2320 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,³²⁵
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
 To wash it white as snow?³²⁶ Whereto serves mercy
 But to confront the visage of offense?³²⁷
 And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
 2325 To be forestallèd³²⁸ ere we come to fall,
 Or pardoned being down? Then I'll look up.
 My fault is past.³²⁹ But, oh, what form of prayer
 Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul murder"?
 That cannot be, since I am still possessed
 2330 Of those effects for which I did the murder:
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
 May one be pardoned and retain th' offense?³³⁰
 In the corrupted currents of this world,³³¹
 Offense's gilded hand³³² may shove by justice,
 2335 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize³³³ itself
 Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above:
 There is no shuffling,³³⁴ there the action lies
 In his³³⁵ true nature,³³⁶ and we ourselves compelled,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,³³⁷
 2340 To give in evidence.³³⁸ What then? What rests?³³⁹
 Try what repentance can.³⁴⁰ What can it not?
 Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?
 O wretched state, O bosom black as death,
 O limèd³⁴¹ soul, that, struggling to be free,

325. Were covered with a layer of a brother's blood thicker than the hand itself.

326. The King alludes to three proverbial ideas, which contradict one another: (1) To wash one's hands of a thing, All the water in the sea cannot wash out this stain; and (3) As white as (the driven) snow. The Norton Shakespeare quotes Isaiah 1:15-18: "I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. / Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."

327. What function does mercy serve other than to confront sin face to face?

328. Prevented (from sinning).

329. i.e., already committed, but susceptible to pardon.

330. The thing for which one committed the crime.

331. Ways of the world.

332. The hand of the offender offering gold as a bribe.

333. The prize wickedly desired and achieved.

334. Evasion, trickery.

335. Its.

336. There, in heaven, each deed is seen for what it truly is, in its true form, like a rigorously conducted case at law.

337. Face to face with our crimes.

338. To testify against ourselves. (In heaven, an accused can be compelled to do this, not because heaven is tyrannical but because no guiltiness can be evaded at the heavenly bar of justice.)

339. Remains to be said or done.

340. Repentance can do.

341. Caught as if with birdlime, a sticky substance smeared on twigs to snare birds.

2345 Art more engaged!³⁴² Help, angels! Make assay.³⁴³
 Bow, stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe!
 All may be well.

[He kneels.]

Enter Hamlet.

2350 **Hamlet**

Now might I do it pat, now³⁴⁴ 'a³⁴⁵ is a-praying,
 And now I'll do't. *[He draws his sword.]* And so 'a goes to heaven,
 And so am I revenged. That would be scanned:³⁴⁶

A villain kills my father, and for that,
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send

2355 To heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.

'A took my father grossly, full of bread,³⁴⁷
 With all his crimes broad blown,³⁴⁸ as flush³⁴⁹ as May,
 And how his audit³⁵⁰ stands, who knows save³⁵¹ heaven?
 But in our circumstance and course of thought³⁵²

2360 'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged

To take him³⁵³ in the purging of his soul,
 When he is fit and seasoned³⁵⁴ for his passage? No.

[He sheathes his sword.]

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.³⁵⁵

When he is drunk asleep,³⁵⁶ or in his rage,³⁵⁷

2365 Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,

At gaming, swearing,³⁵⁸ or about some act

That has no relish³⁵⁹ of salvation in't,

342. Entangled.

343. Make some attempt. (Said by the King to himself, or possibly to the angels he hopes can hear him.)

344. Do it opportunely and neatly, now that.

345. He.

346. Needs to be looked into.

347. i.e., satiated with the pleasures of this world, rather than fasting and repenting. Hamlet seems to be talking about his father's spiritual unpreparedness for death when he was murdered; he died without being absolved of the normal but hazardous involvement in sinful appetite to which all mortals are prone.

348. With all of Hamlet Senior's sins in full bloom. The male personal pronouns are not perfectly clear in lines 80-5, but presumably Hamlet refers to his father's ghost in lines 80-1, suffering the pangs of Purgatory for the sins not atoned for through Last Rites, so that (in lines 82-4) Hamlet cannot be sure about his father's present spiritual welfare.

349. Vigorously thriving.

350. Hamlet Senior's spiritual reckoning.

351. Except for.

352. As seen from our mortal and necessarily limited perspective.

353. Claudius.

354. Prepared, made ready.

355. i.e., occasion to be grasped.

356. i.e., dead drunk.

357. Perhaps "in a fit of sexual passion," though being in an uncontrollable rage would also put Claudius in danger of hellfire.

358. Gambling, and swearing profusely.

359. Trace, hint.

Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,³⁶⁰
And that his soul may be as damned and black
2370As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays.³⁶¹
This physic³⁶² but prolongs thy sickly days.

Exit.

King

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below.
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

Exit.

360. Kick upwards as the body falls downward, suggesting also a spurning of heavenly reward and ineffectual kicking at the gates of heaven.

361. Is waiting.

362. Medicine (both the King's being at prayer, and Hamlet's consequent decision to postpone the killing).

Scene 4

Enter³⁶³ *Queen [Gertrude] and Polonius.*

2375 **Polonius**

'A will come straight. Look you lay home to him.³⁶⁴
Tell him his pranks have been too broad³⁶⁵ to bear with,
And that your grace hath screened and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.
2380 Pray you, be round with him.³⁶⁶

Hamlet

[Within.]

Mother, mother, mother!

Queen

I'll warrant you. Fear me not.³⁶⁷
Withdraw; I hear him coming.
[Polonius conceals himself behind the arras.]
Enter Hamlet.

2385 **Hamlet**

Now mother, what's the matter?

Queen

Hamlet, thou hast thy father³⁶⁸ much offended.

Hamlet

Mother, you³⁶⁹ have my father³⁷⁰ much offended.

Queen

Come, come, you answer with an idle³⁷¹ tongue.

Hamlet

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

2390 **Queen**

Why, how now,³⁷² Hamlet?

Hamlet

What's the matter now?

Queen

Have you forgot me?³⁷³

363. Location: The castle.

364. He will be here any moment. Be sure to reprove him soundly.

365. Unrestrained, outrageous.

366. Be blunt, forthright with him.

367. I assure you on that score. Don't worry about me.

368. Your stepfather, Claudius.

369. Throughout most of the scene, except for lines 11, 14, 17, 126, 133, and 141, the Queen uses the familiar "thou" in addressing her son, as was customary; he addresses her as "you," the required respectful form.

370. The dead King Hamlet.

371. A foolish.

372. What's this?

373. Forgotten that I am your mother, whom you must respect. (But Hamlet answers in the sense of "How could I forget that, in view of what you have done?")

Hamlet

No, by the rood,³⁷⁴ not so.

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife,
2395 And—would it were not so!—you are my mother.

Queen

Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.³⁷⁵

Hamlet

Come, come, and sit you down. You shall not budge.
You go not till I set you up a glass³⁷⁶
2400 Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen

What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!

Polonius

[Behind the arras] What ho! Help, help, help!

Hamlet

How now, a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead!³⁷⁷
*[Hamlet thrusts through the arras with his sword.]*³⁷⁸

2405 **Polonius**

[Behind the arras] Oh, I am slain!
[Polonius falls onto the stage floor, dead].

Queen

Oh, me, what hast thou done?

Hamlet

Nay I know not. Is it the King?

Queen

Oh, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Hamlet

A bloody deed—almost as bad, good mother,
2410 As kill³⁷⁹ a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen

As kill a king?

Hamlet

Ay, lady, it was my word.
[He parts the arras and discovers the dead Polonius.]
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better.³⁸⁰ Take thy fortune.

374. Cross of Christ.

375. i.e., talk sense into you.

376. Mirror.

377. i.e., I bet a ducat he's dead; or, a ducat as the price for his life. (A ducat is a gold coin, as at 2.2.244, TLN 1410.)

378. Presumably, Hamlet stabs Polonius here as he says "Dead for a ducat, dead!" Polonius actually dies a line later, after crying out that he is mortally wounded.

379. As to kill. The Queen's response seems to register shock and surprise at Hamlet's suggestion of killing a king. Some commentators see the fact that Hamlet now drops this line of inquiry as evidence that he is satisfied on that score.

380. i.e., the King, your social and moral superior.

2415 Thou find'st to be too busy³⁸¹ is some danger.
 [To the Queen] Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down,
 And let me wring your heart, for so I shall
 If it be made of penetrable stuff,³⁸²
 If damnèd custom³⁸³ have not brazed³⁸⁴ it so
 2420 That it is proof and bulwark against sense.³⁸⁵

Queen

What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue
 In noise so rude against me?

Hamlet

Such an act
 That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
 2425 Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
 From the fair forehead of an innocent love
 And sets a blister³⁸⁶ there, makes marriage vows
 As false as dicers' oaths—oh, such a deed
 As from the body of contraction³⁸⁷ plucks
 2430 The very soul, and sweet religion makes
 A rhapsody of words.³⁸⁸ Heaven's face doth glow
 O'er this solidity and compound mass
 With tristful visage, as against the doom,
 Is thought-sick at the act.³⁸⁹

2435 **Queen**

Ay me, what act,
 That roars so loud and thunders in the index?³⁹⁰

Hamlet

[Showing her two likenesses, of Hamlet senior and Claudius]
 Look here upon this picture, and on this,
 The counterfeit presentment³⁹¹ of two brothers.
 See what a grace was seated on this brow:
 2440 Hyperion's³⁹² curls, the front³⁹³ of Jove himself,
 An eye like Mars³⁹⁴ to threaten and command,

381. Nosy.

382. If your heart still has any sensitivity to feeling and emotion.

383. Sinful habit.

384. Brazened, hardened.

385. Armored and thus made impenetrable against natural feeling.

386. i.e., affixes there the brand of a prostitute.

387. The marriage contract.

388. And turns sweet religion into a mere senseless jumble of words.

389. Heaven's face blushes with shame at this solid earth, compounded as it is of the four elements, with sorrowful face as though the day of doom were at hand, and is sick with thinking of this horrid deed--i.e., Gertrude's second marriage.

390. Table of contents; prologue or preface.

391. Painted representation.

392. The sun-god's.

393. Forehead, brow.

394. The god of war.

A station³⁹⁵ like the herald Mercury³⁹⁶
 New lighted³⁹⁷ on a heaven-kissing³⁹⁸ hill,
 A combination and a form indeed
 2445 Where every god did seem to set his seal³⁹⁹
 To give the world assurance of a man.
 This was your husband. Look you now what follows:
 Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear,⁴⁰⁰
 Blasting⁴⁰¹ his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
 2450 Could you on this fair mountain leave⁴⁰² to feed
 And batten on this moor?⁴⁰³ Ha, have you eyes?
 You cannot call it love, for at your age
 The heyday in the blood⁴⁰⁴ is tame, it's humble,
 And waits upon⁴⁰⁵ the judgment, and what judgment
 2455 Would step from this to this? Sense,⁴⁰⁶ sure, you have,
 2455.1 Else could you not have motion, but sure that sense
 Is apoplexed,⁴⁰⁷ for madness would not err,⁴⁰⁸
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
 But it reserved some quantity of choice
 2455.5 To serve in such a difference.⁴⁰⁹ What devil was't
 That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?⁴¹⁰
 2456.1 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans⁴¹¹ all,
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense
 Could not so mope. O shame, where is thy blush?
 Rebellious hell,
 If thou canst mutine⁴¹² in a matron's bones,
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax

395. Stance.

396. Winged messenger of the gods.

397. Newly alighted.

398. Reaching to the sky where it is kissed by the light of the sun.

399. Affix his seal of approval.

400. Ear of grain.

401. Blighting.

402. Leave off, cease.

403. And gorge yourself on this barren, unfertile land. The images of mountain and moor offer contrasts of high and low, handsome and barren.

404. Sexual arousal.

405. Is subservient to.

406. Sensation and perception and through the five senses.

407. Paralyzed.

408. Err in this fashion, as you have done.

409. Nor could your physical senses ever have been so enslaved to ecstasy (i.e., lunacy) as to have been unable to perceive the difference between Hamlet Senior and Claudius.

410. Cheated you at blindman's bluff. (Hamlet imagines a diabolical trick in which the devil, having covered the eyes of Gertrude with a scarf in the children's game of blindman's bluff, has steered her in such a way that she gropingly encountered Claudius.)

411. Without. (French.)

412. Mutiny.

2460 And melt in her own fire.⁴¹³ Proclaim no shame
 When the compulsive ardor gives the charge,
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
 And reason panders will.⁴¹⁴⁴¹⁵

Queen

Oh, Hamlet speak no more!
 2465 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
 And there I see such black and grained⁴¹⁶ spots
 As will not leave their tinct.⁴¹⁷

Hamlet

Nay, but to live
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed⁴¹⁸ bed
 2470 Stewed⁴¹⁹ in corruption, honeying⁴²⁰ and making love
 Over the nasty sty!⁴²¹

Queen

Oh, speak to me no more!
 These words like daggers enter in my ears.
 No more, sweet Hamlet.

2475 **Hamlet**

A murderer and a villain,
 A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe⁴²²
 Of your precedent lord,⁴²³ a vice of kings,⁴²⁴
 A cutpurse⁴²⁵ of the empire and the rule,⁴²⁶
 That from a shelf the precious diadem⁴²⁷ stole
 2480 And put it in his pocket—

Queen

No more!
Enter Ghost [in his nightgown].

Hamlet

413. Chastity among the young will melt like wax held over a candle flame. (We cannot hope for self-restraint in young people when older women set such a bad example.)

414. And reason forgives or makes excuses for sexual passion.

415. Call it no shameful business when the compelling ardor of youth gives the signal for attack by committing lechery, since the frost of old age burns with as active a fire of lust and mature reason perverts its proper function by making excuses for lust rather than restraining it.

416. Ingrained, indelible.

417. Not leave off their dark indelible stain.

418. Saturated with the greasy filth of lust.

419. Steeped. (Suggesting also "stew," brothel.)

420. Indulging in lovey-dovey romantic behavior.

421. Pigsty.

422. Tenth part. (To be a twentieth part of a tenth part would be to embody a mere 0.5 percent of something, i.e., virtually none at all.)

423. Former husband.

424. A nonpareil of evil kings; with an allusion to the "Vice," the gloating and insidious tempter to vice of many a late-medieval and sixteenth-century morality play.

425. Pickpocket.

426. The kingdom.

427. Crown.

A king of shreds and patches—⁴²⁸

[*Seeing the Ghost*] Save me and hover o'er me with your wings,
2485 You heavenly guards! What would you, gracious figure?

Queen

Alas, he's mad!

Hamlet

Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion,⁴²⁹ lets go by
Th'important⁴³⁰ acting of your dread command?
Oh, say!

²⁴⁹⁰**Ghost**

Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But look, amazement on thy mother sits.
Oh, step between her and her fighting soul!
Conceit⁴³¹ in weakest bodies strongest works.
2495 Speak to her, Hamlet.

Hamlet

How is it with you, lady?

Queen

Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with th'incorporal⁴³² air do hold discourse?
2500 Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep,
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th'alarm,⁴³³
Your bedded⁴³⁴ hair, like life in excrements,⁴³⁵
Start up and stand on end. O gentle⁴³⁶ son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper⁴³⁷
2505 Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Hamlet

On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares!

428. Of ragged patchwork, appropriate for a monarch (Claudius) who is a sham, in Hamlet's view; suitable also for a fool or jester attired in motley.

429. Having let time and passionate commitment (to revenge) slip away; with a suggestion too that Hamlet has allowed himself to be distracted from his duty by a passionate berating of his mother.

430. Importunate, urgent.

431. Imagination.

432. The immaterial, bodiless.

433. Like sleeping soldiers awakened by the call to arms.

434. (previously) lying flat.

435. As if the hair, an outgrowth of the body, could take on a life of its own. Because hair was assumed to be lifeless, its standing on end would suggest the presence of something ominous and unnatural. "Excrement" is derived from the Latin ex-crescere, to grow out of. Compare 1.5.16-21, where the Ghost tells Hamlet how even the "lightest word" describing the horror of Purgatory would cause Hamlet's hairs "to stand on end / Like quills upon the fretful porpentine." The famous eighteenth-century actor David Garrick employed a trick wig that would enable him to make his hair stand on end.

436. Nobly born; chivalrous; honorable; kind.

437. Disorder, imbalance of mind.

His form and cause conjoined,⁴³⁸ preaching to stones,⁴³⁹
 Would make them capable.⁴⁴⁰ [*To the Ghost*] Do not look upon me,
 Lest with this piteous action you convert
 2510 My stern effects.⁴⁴¹ Then what I have to do
 Will want true color, tears perchance for blood.

Queen

To whom do you speak this?

Hamlet

Do you see nothing there?

Queen

Nothing at all, yet all that is I see.

2515 **Hamlet**

Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen

No, nothing but ourselves.

Hamlet

Why, look you there, look how it steals away!

My father in his habit⁴⁴² as he lived.

Look where he goes, even now out at the portal!⁴⁴³

Exit Ghost.

2520 **Queen**

This is the very coinage of your brain.

This bodiless creation ecstasy is very cunning in.⁴⁴⁴

Hamlet

Ecstasy?

My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time,
 And makes as healthful music. It is not madness

2525 That I have uttered. Bring me to the test,

And I the matter will reword,⁴⁴⁵ which madness

Would gambol from.⁴⁴⁶ Mother, for love of grace,

Lay not that flattering unction⁴⁴⁷ to your soul

That not your trespass but my madness speaks.

2530 It will but skin and film⁴⁴⁸ the ulcerous place,

Whiles rank corruption, mining⁴⁴⁹ all within,

Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven,

Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,

438. His appearance joined to his cause for appearing and speaking.

439. Even to stones.

440. Would make the stones capable of feeling and responding.

441. Lest your pitiful looks divert me from accomplishing what I have to do, prompting me to weep when I should be shedding blood.

442. Garments.

443. Doorway.

444. Madness (ecstasy) is very skillful in creating this kind of hallucination.

445. Repeat word for word.

446. Skip away from.

447. An ointment that comforts without healing.

448. Cover with a thin layer of skin.

449. Undermining.

And do not spread the compost on the weeds
 2535 To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,⁴⁵⁰
 For in the fatness⁴⁵¹ of these pursy times⁴⁵²
 Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
 Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.⁴⁵³

Queen

2540 Oh, Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.⁴⁵⁴

Hamlet

Oh, throw away the worser part of it,
 And live the purer with the other half.
 Good night. But go not to my uncle's bed;
 Assume⁴⁵⁵ a virtue if you have it not.
 2544.1 That monster custom, who all sense doth eat,⁴⁵⁶
 Of habits devil,⁴⁵⁷ is angel yet in this,
 That to the use of actions fair and good
 He likewise gives a frock or livery⁴⁵⁸
 2544.5 That aptly⁴⁵⁹ is put on. Refrain tonight,
 2545 And that shall lend a kind of easiness
 To the next abstinence; the next more easy:
 2546.1 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,⁴⁶⁰
 And either [in] the devil,⁴⁶¹ or throw him out
 With wondrous potency. Once more good night,
 And when you are desirous to be blest,
 I'll blessing beg of you.⁴⁶² For⁴⁶³ this same lord,
 I do repent; but heaven hath pleased it so
 2550 To punish me with this, and this with me,⁴⁶⁴
 That I must be their scourge and minister.⁴⁶⁵
 I will bestow him,⁴⁶⁶ and will answer well⁴⁶⁷
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night.

450. My urging you to a virtuous course.

451. Grossness.

452. This corpulent, swollen, short-winded era. ("Pursy" is often said of a horse.)

453. Bow obsequiously and beg for permission to serve vice.

454. Cut in two.

455. Give outward conformity to.

456. Our monstrous proclivity for habit-forming behavior, which can so easily consume and overwhelm the physical senses.

457. Being all too inclined toward evil habits.

458. A garb, an outward appearance. (One can incline one's soul, Hamlet says, toward virtue by willing oneself to adopt a virtuous stance; the outward behavior can then begin to shape the inner self.)

459. Readily.

460. For by rigorously adopting a custom or habit we can come close to changing our very inborn nature.

461. i.e., And custom or habit can either admit the devil into our hearts or throw him out.

462. i.e., And when you are penitently ready to seek God's blessing, I will ask your blessing as a dutiful son should.

463. As for.

464. i.e., it is (evidently) heaven's pleasure that I am to be punished for having killed Polonius, just as he has been fatally punished at my hands for his snooping into other people's business.

465. i.e., the heavens' agent of just retribution.

466. Dispose of.

467. Offer a suitable account of, pay for, atone for.

I must be cruel only to be kind.

2555 Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.⁴⁶⁸

2555.1 One word more, good lady.

Queen

What shall I do?

Hamlet

Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:

Let the bloat⁴⁶⁹ King tempt you again to bed,

Pinch wanton on your cheek,⁴⁷⁰ call you his mouse,⁴⁷¹

2560 And let him, for a pair of reechy⁴⁷² kisses,

Or paddling⁴⁷³ in your neck⁴⁷⁴ with his damned fingers,

Make you to ravel all this matter out⁴⁷⁵

That I essentially am not in madness,

But mad in craft.⁴⁷⁶ 'Twere good⁴⁷⁷ you let him know,

2565 For who that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,

Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,

Such dear concernings hide?⁴⁷⁸ Who would do so?

No, in despite of sense and secrecy,⁴⁷⁹

Unpeg the basket on the house's top,

2570 Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,

To try conclusions, in the basket creep,

And break your own neck down.⁴⁸⁰⁴⁸¹

Queen

Be thou assured, if words be made of breath

And breath of life, I have no life to breathe⁴⁸²

2575 What thou hast said to me.

Hamlet

I must to England. You know that?

Queen

Alack, I had forgot. 'Tis so concluded on.

468. i.e., Thus we can begin to face difficulties, but at least the worst is over; or, worse calamities are still to come.

469. Bloated, puffy.

470. Leave his sensual love pinches on your cheeks.

471. A term of endearment.

472. Reeking of filth.

473. Fingering amorously.

474. neck (including the breasts).

475. Unravel, disclose.

476. Only seemingly mad as a cunning device.

477. Said with a sardonic irony that continues in the following eight lines.

478. For why would any attractive, temperate, and wise queen wish to hide such important matters from a toad, a bat, a tom-cat? (Said sardonically; of course, such a woman would choose not to divulge Hamlet's secret to a repulsive villain.)

479. The secrecy that common sense would seem to require.

480. In the fall; or, utterly.

481. In this Aesop-like beast fable, for which no source has been found, an ape releases some birds from a basket-like birdcage on a roof and then, mindlessly wishing to imitate them as an experiment ("To try conclusions"), gets into the cage himself and, attempting to fly, falls to the ground and breaks his neck. Presumably Hamlet is warning the Queen against coming too quickly to conclusions and rashly telling her husband that Hamlet's madness is only pretense.

482. To utter.

2577.1 **Hamlet**

There's letters sealed, and my two schoolfellows,
 Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged,
 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way⁴⁸³
 And marshal me to knavery.⁴⁸⁴ Let it work,⁴⁸⁵
 2577.5 For 'tis the sport⁴⁸⁶ to have the engineer⁴⁸⁷
 Hoisted with his own petard,⁴⁸⁸ and't shall go hard
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,⁴⁸⁹
 And blow them at the moon.⁴⁹⁰ Oh 'tis most sweet
 When in one line two crafts directly meet.⁴⁹¹
 This man shall set me packing.⁴⁹²

I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.

2580 Mother, good night indeed. This counselor
 Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,⁴⁹³
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.⁴⁹⁴
 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.⁴⁹⁵

Good night, mother.

2585 *Exit Hamlet, tugging in Polonius.*

483. Prepare a path before me.

484. Conduct me to where some treachery lies in wait for me.

485. Proceed.

486. It's a fine ironic joke.

487. Deviser of "engines" of war, such as bombs.

488. Blown skyward by his own explosive devices, such as were used to make a breach in fortifications.

489. And it will be bad luck for me if I do not dig my tunnels underneath theirs. (Tunnels were used to attack enemy fortifications in siege warfare by undermining them and blowing them up from below.) Hamlet vows to outmaneuver Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

490. Moon-high, way up into the air.

491. When two cunning plots are on a collision course, as when mines and countermines confront each other.

492. The dead Polonius will set me to cooking up schemes; set me to lugging off the corpse; pack me off to England.

493. Playing on the "grave" where Polonius will now be buried.

494. An egregiously chattering rascal.

495. (1) finish up with you; (2) drag you to the place of burial, where you will continue to be "most still, most secret, and most grave" (line 220).

63.

Hamlet: Act 4

William Shakespeare

Hamlet (Modern, Editor's Version). [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#). University of Victoria. Editor: David Bevington. Adapted by James Sexton.

Scene 1

*Enter*¹ King, with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

King

There's matter² in these sighs, these profound heaves.³

You must translate;⁴ 'tis fit we understand them.

2590 Where is your son?

2590.1 **Queen**

[To Rosencrantz and Guildenstern] Bestow this place on us a little while.

[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen tonight!

King

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen

Mad as the sea and wind when both contend

Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit,

2595 Behind the arras hearing something stir,

Whips out his rapier, cries, "A rat, a rat!"

And in this brainish apprehension⁵ kills

The unseen good old man.

King

Oh, heavy⁶ deed!

2600 It had been so with us had we⁷ been there.

His liberty is full of threats to all—

To you yourself, to us, to everyone.

1. Location: The castle.
2. Significance, meaning.
3. Heaving of the breast and shoulders as the Queen sobs.
4. i.e., explain why you are weeping.
5. This brainsick misapprehension.
6. Grievous.
7. The royal plural.

Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?⁸
 It will be laid to us,⁹ whose providence¹⁰
 2605Should have kept short,¹¹ restrained, and out of haunt¹²
 This mad young man. But so much was our love,
 We would not understand what was most fit,
 But like the owner¹³ of a foul disease,
 To keep it from divulging,¹⁴ let¹⁵ it feed
 2610Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen

To draw apart the body he hath killed,
 O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
 Among a mineral of metals base,
 Shows itself pure:¹⁶ 'a¹⁷ weeps for what is done.

2615**King**

Oh, Gertrude, come away!
 The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch
 But we will ship him hence, and this vile deed
 We must with all our majesty and skill
 Both countenance and excuse.¹⁸ –Ho, Guildenstern!
 2520*Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*
 Friends both, go join you with some further aid.¹⁹
 Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
 And from his mother's closet²⁰ hath he dragged him.
 Go seek him out, speak fair,²¹ and bring the body
 2625Into the chapel. I pray you haste in this.
Exit Gentlemen [Rosencrantz and Guildenstern].
 Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends
 To let them know both what we mean to do
 And what's untimely done. So envious slander,
 2628.1Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
 As level as the cannon to his blank,
 Transports his poisoned shot, may miss our name

8. Explained, responded to, accounted for.

9. Laid at our (my) doorstep, blamed on me.

10. Foresight.

11. Kept on a short leash.

12. Secluded, away from public gatherings.

13. Sufferer.

14. From being made publicly known.

15. We let.

16. The Queen argues that Hamlet's weeping over Polonius's dead body shows his madness to be like a vein of pure gold amidst a mine of baser metals, i.e., revealing his finer nature even though he has madly done this deed. The Queen is doing as she promised to Hamlet: keeping from her husband the knowledge that Hamlet's "madness" is only a cover.

17. He.

18. Put the best face on and justify as well as we can.

19. Take with you some others to help.

20. Mother's private chamber.

21. Speak gently and courteously to him.

And hit the woundless air.²² Oh, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay.
Exeunt.

22. In that way, envious slander, spreading far and wide its poisonous whisper as if shot from a cannon at point-blank range, may be deflected from me as its target and expend itself harmlessly on the invulnerable air.

Scene 2

2630 *Enter*²³ Hamlet.

Hamlet

Safely stowed.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

[within] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

Hamlet

But soft, what noise? Who calls on Hamlet? Oh, here they come.

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

2635 **Rosencrantz**

What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Hamlet

Compounded²⁴ it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Rosencrantz

Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence

And bear it to the chapel.

Hamlet

Do not believe it.

2640 **Rosencrantz**

Believe what?

Hamlet

That I can keep your counsel and not mine own.²⁵ Besides, to be demanded of²⁶ a sponge, what replication²⁷ should be made by the son of a king?

Rosencrantz

Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

2645 **Hamlet**

Ay, sir, that soaks up the King's countenance,²⁸ his rewards, his authorities.²⁹

But such officers do the King best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape in the corner of his jaw, first mouthed to be last swallowed.³⁰ When he

2650 needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.³¹

Rosencrantz

I understand you not, my lord.

23. Location: The castle.

24. Mixed. Compare the Anglican "Order for the Burial of the Dead" in The Book of Common Prayer: "we commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

25. i.e., Don't expect me to do as you bid me and not follow my own counsel.

26. Interrogated by.

27. Reply.

28. Favor.

29. Influence.

30. i.e., Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are kept in reserve by the King, always there but to be used only when it serves the King's purposes, not theirs.

31. i.e., the King will squeeze you dry, taking back the benefits he seemingly bestowed on you.

Hamlet

I am glad of it. A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.³²

Rosencrantz

2655 My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the King.

Hamlet

The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body.³³ The King is a thing—

Guildenstern

A thing, my lord?

Hamlet

2660 Of nothing. Bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after!³⁴

Exeunt.

32. A crafty insult is not understood as such by a fool to whom the insult is directed.

33. A chiasmic riddle, perhaps suggesting that although Claudius's body is necessarily a part of him, the essence of true kingship is not to be found there. Claudius can order the body of Polonius to be brought to him, but that also will not make him any more a true king than he really is. A reference to the doctrine of "the King's two bodies," one political and one natural, thus differentiating the high office of kingship from any individual holder of the title, whose claim to true authority may be far less.

34. This cry from the children's game of fox-and-hounds, similar to hide-and-seek, here signals Hamlet's running away from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Scene 3

*Enter*³⁵ *King, and two or three.*

King

I have sent to seek him and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him;
2665 He's loved of the distracted multitude,³⁶
Who like not in their judgment but their eyes,³⁷
And where 'tis so, th'offender's scourge is weighed,
But ne'er the offense.³⁸ To bear all smooth and even,³⁹
This sudden sending him away must seem
2670 Deliberate pause.⁴⁰ Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance⁴¹ are relieved,
Or not at all.

Enter Rosencrantz.

King

How now, what hath befall'n?⁴²

Rosencrantz

Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,
2675 We cannot get from him.

King

But where is he?

Rosencrantz

Without,⁴³ my lord, guarded, to know your pleasure.

King

Bring him before us.

2680 **Rosencrantz**

[Calling] Ho, Guildenstern! Bring in my lord.

Enter Hamlet and Guildenstern [with Guards].

King

Now Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Hamlet

At supper.

King

At supper? Where?

35. Location: The castle.

36. By the irrationally unstable commoners.

37. Who choose not rationally but by appearances.

38. And in such cases people are likely to censure the severity of the punishment without sufficiently considering the gravity of the offense.

39. In order to manage the business without arousing suspicion.

40. The result of careful planning, or of a careful postponing of judgment.

41. Applying of remedies.

42. Now, what has happened?

43. Outside (the door).

2685 **Hamlet**

Not where he eats, but where 'a is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e'en⁴⁴ at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet.⁴⁵ We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and 2690 your lean beggar is but variable service:⁴⁷ two dishes but to one table.⁴⁸ That's the end.

2690.1 **King**

Alas, alas!

Hamlet

A man may fish with the worm that hath eat⁴⁹ of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King

What dost thou mean by this?

Hamlet

Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress⁵⁰ through the guts of a beggar.

King

Where is Polonius?

2695 **Hamlet**

In heaven. Send thither to see. If your messenger find him not there, seek him i'th' other place yourself. But if indeed you find him not within this month, you shall nose⁵¹ him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King

*[To some attendants]*⁵² Go seek him there.

2700 **Hamlet**

'A will stay till you come.

[Exeunt attendants.]

King

Hamlet, this deed of thine, for thine especial safety—
Which we do tender,⁵³ as we dearly⁵⁴ grieve
For that which thou hast done—must send thee hence
With fiery quickness. Therefore prepare thyself.

44. Even now, just now.

45. Worms are emperors in their diet in that they devour emperors and commoners alike. Compare the proverbial phrase, "Food for worms."

46. Often taken to refer to the Imperial Diet of Worms, a famous "convocation" or assembly of the Holy Roman Empire convened in Worms, Germany on 28 January 1521, on the authority of the Emperor Charles V, for the purpose of requiring Martin Luther to renounce or recant his heretical views. Pope Leo X had condemned 41 of Luther's 95 theses or propositions in June 1520, and, after a delay affording Luther time to recant, had excommunicated him on 3 January 1521. The Edict of Worms, issued on 25 May 1521, forbade all loyal Christians to offer any support to Luther, declaring him to be an obstinate heretic. In the light of this seeming allusion, "Not where 'a eats, but where 'a is eaten" (TLN 2685) could refer to the ceremony of the Mass in which the eating of bread signifies the eating of Christ's body. "Politic worms" are crafty worms, such as might deal with a crafty spy like Polonius.

47. Various dishes or courses served at table. (Worms feed on kings and beggars alike.)

48. i.e., rich and poor alike come at last to serve as food for one grisly emperor, the worm.

49. Has eaten.

50. Royal state journey.

51. Smell.

52. The persons addressed here could include Rosencrantz or Guildenstern together with one or more unnamed attendants, but in any case, at least one of those two gentlemen must remain to keep guard on Hamlet and exit with him at line 45.1.

53. Value, hold dear.

54. Intensely.

2705 The bark⁵⁵ is ready, and the wind at help,
Th' associates tend,⁵⁶ and everything is bent⁵⁷
For England.

Hamlet

For England!

King

Ay, Hamlet.

2710 **Hamlet**

Good.

King

So is it if thou knew'st our purposes.

Hamlet

I see a cherub⁵⁸ that sees them. But come, for England! Farewell, dear mother.

King

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

2715 **Hamlet**

My mother. Father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh,⁵⁹
and so, my mother. Come, for England!

Exit.

King

Follow him at foot.⁶⁰ Tempt⁶¹ him with speed aboard.

2720 Delay it not. I'll have him hence tonight.

Away! For everything is sealed and done

That else leans on th'affair.⁶² Pray you, make haste.

Exeunt all but the King.

And England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,

As my great power thereof may give thee sense,

2725 Since yet thy cicatrice⁶³ looks raw and red

After the Danish sword, and thy free awe⁶⁴

Pays homage to us, thou mayst not coldly set⁶⁵

Our sovereign process,⁶⁶ which imports at full⁶⁷

By letters congruing⁶⁸ to that effect

55. Sailing vessel.

56. Companions are waiting.

57. Is in readiness.

58. Cherubim, in the second order of angels, were possessors of a special wisdom and knowledge that would enable them, in Hamlet's view, to perceive the full extent of Claudius's treachery.

59. Other editions cite Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5-6, and Mark 10:8.

60. Close at his heels.

61. Entice, persuade.

62. Everything else that relates to this business is taken care of.

63. Scar.

64. Unconstrained show of respect and obedience.

65. Regard with indifference, ignore.

66. Royal command.

67. Conveys in full detail its message.

68. Agreeing, conforming.

2730The present⁶⁹ death of Hamlet. Do it, England,
For like the hectic⁷⁰ in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.⁷¹
Exit.

69. Immediate.

70. Fluctuating but persistent fever.

71. Whatever else my fortunes might be, I cannot begin to be happy.

Scene 4

*Enter*⁷² *Fortinbras [and a Captain] with his army over the stage.*⁷³

Fortinbras²⁷³⁵

Go, captain, from me greet the Danish King.
Tell him that by his license⁷⁴ Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance⁷⁵ of a promised march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If⁷⁶ that his majesty would aught with us,⁷⁷
²⁷⁴⁰We shall express our duty in his eye;⁷⁸
And let him know so.

Captain

I will do't, my lord.

Fortinbras

*[To his soldiers] Go softly on.*⁷⁹

[Exeunt all but the Captain.]

^{2743.1}*Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, [Guildenstern,] etc.*

Hamlet

*[To the Captain] Good sir, whose powers*⁸⁰ *are these?*

Captain

They are of Norway, sir.

Hamlet

How purposed, sir, I pray you?

Captain^{2743.5}

Against some part of Poland.

Hamlet

Who commands them, sir?

Captain

The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Hamlet

Goes it⁸¹ against the main⁸² of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

Captain^{2743.10}

Truly to speak, and with no addition,⁸³

72. The Danish coast.

73. With his army, marching across the stage (and then exiting at line 9).

74. Permission.

75. Unhindered and escorted passage; or, fulfillment of a promise made.

76. If.

77. Wishes to confer with me for any reason.

78. I will pay my respects in person.

79. Quietly, without creating a disturbance.

80. Soldiers, armed forces.

81. The army.

82. Major part, heart.

83. Exaggeration.

We go to gain a little patch of ground
 That hath in it no profit but the name.⁸⁴
 To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it,⁸⁵
 Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole⁸⁶
 2743.15 A ranker⁸⁷ rate, should it be sold in fee.⁸⁸

Hamlet

Why then the Polack⁸⁹ never will defend it.

Captain

Yes, it is already garrisoned.

Hamlet

Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
 Will not debate the question of this straw.⁹⁰
 2743.20 This is th'impostume⁹¹ of much wealth and peace,
 That inward breaks,⁹² and shows no cause without⁹³
 Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

Captain

God b'wi' you, sir.

[Exit.]

Rosencrantz

Will't please you go, my lord?

2743.25 **Hamlet**

I'll be with you straight.⁹⁴ Go a little before.

[Exeunt all but Hamlet.]

How all occasions do inform against⁹⁵ me,
 And spur my dull revenge! What is a man
 If his chief good and market⁹⁶ of his time
 Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
 2743.30 Sure he that made us with such large discourse,⁹⁷
 Looking before and after,⁹⁸ gave us not
 That capability and godlike reason
 To fust⁹⁹ in us unused. Now, whether it be

84. i.e., reputation to be gained by conquering it.

85. i.e., I would not take a lease on it as tenant farmer even for a mere five ducats a year. (The ducat is a gold coin.)

86. The King of Norway or of Poland.

87. Higher.

88. Sold outright as a freehold, in "fee simple."

89. The King of Poland (and his army).

90. Appear to be insufficient stakes in a quarrel about such a trifling matter.

91. The abscess.

92. Festers within.

93. Externally.

94. Right away.

95. Accuse, denounce.

96. Profit, advantage.

97. Wide-ranging capacity for reasoning.

98. Able to recall past events and anticipate the future.

99. Grow moldy.

Bestial oblivion,¹⁰⁰ or some craven¹⁰¹ scruple
 2743.35 Of thinking too precisely on th'event—¹⁰²
 A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom
 And ever three parts coward—I do not know
 Why yet I live to say this thing's to do,¹⁰³
 Sith¹⁰⁴ I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
 2743.40 To do't. Examples gross¹⁰⁵ as earth exhort me.
 Witness this army of such mass and charge,¹⁰⁶
 Led by a delicate and tender¹⁰⁷ prince,
 Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed¹⁰⁸
 Makes mouths¹⁰⁹ at the invisible event,
 2743.45 Exposing what is mortal and unsure
 To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,¹¹⁰
 Even for an eggshell.¹¹¹ Rightly to be great
 Is not to stir without great argument,
 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
 2743.50 When honor's at the stake.¹¹² How stand I, then,
 That have a father killed, a mother stained,
 Excitements of my reason and my blood,¹¹³
 And let¹¹⁴ all sleep, while to my shame I see
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men
 2743.55 That for a fantasy and trick of fame¹¹⁵
 Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot¹¹⁶
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,¹¹⁷
 Which is not tomb enough and continent¹¹⁸
 To hide the slain? Oh, from this time forth,
 2743.60 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!
Exit.

100. Forgetfulness and heedlessness of the sort one sees in animals.

101. Cowardly.

102. Caused by thinking too scrupulously about what might happen as a consequence of one's actions.

103. Not yet accomplished, still to be done.

104. Since.

105. Obvious.

106. Size and cost.

107. Refined and youthful.

108. Inspired.

109. Presents a scornful face to unforeseeable outcomes.

110. Can threaten him with.

111. A thing proverbially of no value.

112. True greatness is not to be measured solely in terms of being moved to action by a great cause; rather, it is to respond stirringly even to an apparently trivial cause when honor is at stake. The metaphor is from bearbaiting.

113. Enough cause to awaken a keen response in me that is both reasonable and passionate.

114. And yet I let.

115. The illusory and trifling business of striving to gain a reputation for bravery.

116. Plot of ground.

117. Containing insufficient room for the bodies of the soldiers who are fighting over it.

118. Receptacle, container.

Scene 5

Enter¹¹⁹ Queen and Horatio.

2745**Queen**

I will not speak with her.

Horatio

She is importunate,
Indeed, distract.¹²⁰ Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen

What would she have?

Horatio

She speaks much of her father, says she hears
2750There's tricks¹²¹ i'th' world, and hems,¹²² and beats her heart,¹²³
Spurns enviously at straws,¹²⁴ speaks things in doubt¹²⁵
That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshapèd use¹²⁶ of it doth move
The hearers to collection;¹²⁷ they yawn¹²⁸ at it,
2755And botch¹²⁹ the words up fit to¹³⁰ their own thoughts,
Which,¹³¹ as her winks and nods and gestures yield¹³² them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

Queen

'Twere good she were spoken with,
2760For she may strew dangerous conjectures
In ill-breeding¹³³ minds. Let her come in.

[Horatio withdraws to admit Ophelia.]

[Aside] To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,¹³⁴
Each toy¹³⁵ seems prologue to some great amiss.¹³⁶

119. Location: The castle.

120. Distaught.

121. Deceptions.

122. Clears her throat with a "hem" sound.

123. Breast.

124. Kicks bitterly, i.e., takes offense and reacts suspiciously, at trifles.

125. Obscurely.

126. Incoherent manner.

127. Inference, guessing at some sort of meaning.

128. Gape in wonderment; grasp.

129. Patch.

130. In such a way as to match.

131. Which words.

132. Deliver, represent.

133. Maliciously inclined, prone to suspect the worst.

134. As is the case in sin's true nature.

135. Trifle.

136. Calamity.

So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
2765It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.¹³⁷

Enter Ophelia distracted, playing on a lute, and her hair down, singing.

Ophelia

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

Queen

How now,¹³⁸ Ophelia?

Ophelia

*[She sings.]*¹³⁹

How should I your true love know
From another one?

2770By his cockle hat¹⁴⁰ and staff,
And his sandal shoon.¹⁴¹

Queen

Alas, sweet lady, what imports¹⁴² this song?

Ophelia

Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.¹⁴³

[Song.]

He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone.

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.¹⁴⁴

2774.1Oho!¹⁴⁵

Queen

Nay, but Ophelia—

Ophelia

Pray you, mark.

[Song.]

White his shroud as the mountain snow—

2775*Enter King.*

Queen

Alas, look here, my lord.

²⁷⁸⁰**Ophelia**

[Song.]

Larded¹⁴⁶ with sweet flowers,

137. Guilt is so burdened with a self-incriminating fear of detection that it betrays itself by the very fear of being detected.

138. What's this.

139. As editors have noted, this is a version of a popular song about a woman whose lover has died.

140. Hat with cockleshell (a mollusk scallop-like shell) stuck in it as a sign (along with a walking staff and sandals) that the wearer has been a pilgrim to the shrine of Saint James of Compostella in Spain (often associated with forlorn lovers).

141. Shoes. (An archaic plural.)

142. Signifies.

143. Listen, pay attention.

144. Gravestone.

145. Evidently, a sigh.

146. Strewn, bedecked.

Which bewept to the grave did not go
With true-love showers.¹⁴⁷

King

How do you, pretty lady?

Ophelia

2785 Well God'ield you.¹⁴⁸ They say the owl was a baker's daughter.¹⁴⁹ Lord, we know
what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King

Conceit¹⁵⁰ upon her father.

Ophelia

Pray you, let's have no words of this, but when they ask you what it means,
say you this:

2790 [Song.]¹⁵¹

Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day,¹⁵²

All in the morning betime,¹⁵³

And I a maid at your window

To be your Valentine.

Then up he rose, and donned his clothes

And dupp'd¹⁵⁴ the chamber door,

Let in the maid, that out a maid

Never departed more.¹⁵⁵

King

Pretty Ophelia—

2795 **Ophelia**

Indeed, la? Without an oath I'll make an end on't.¹⁵⁶

[Song.]

By Gis and by Saint Charity,¹⁵⁷

Alack, and fie for shame!

Young men will do't if they come to't;

By Cock,¹⁵⁸ they are to blame.

2800 Quoth she, "Before you tumbled me,

You promised me to wed."

147. i.e., tears.

148. God yield (i.e., reward) you.

149. This refers to a folktale about a baker's daughter who, when Jesus entered a baker's shop in disguise asking for something to eat, insisted on letting the visitor have only half of the loaf that the shopkeeper's wife (or the baker himself in some versions) had intended to give in full. When the dough nonetheless swelled to enormous size, the daughter cried "Heugh! heugh!" and was transformed into an owl for her lack of charity.

150. Fantasy, brooding.

151. No source is known for this song.

152. A feast day (February 14) in honor of Saint Valentine; traditionally a day on which the first person one meets is destined to be one's lovemate.

153. Early.

154. Did up, unlatched.

155. Who, when she departed, was no longer a virgin.

156. Of it.

157. By Jesus and in the name of Christian love and fellow feeling (a mild oath).

158. A euphemism for "By God"; with verbal play on the slang term for "penis."

2801.1 He answers,

“So would I ha’ done, by yonder sun,
An¹⁵⁹ thou hadst not come to my bed.”

King

How long hath she been thus?

2805 **Ophelia**

I hope all will be well. We must be patient. But I cannot choose but weep to think they would lay him i’th’ cold ground. My brother shall know of it. And so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies,
2810 good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

Exit.

King

[*To Horatio.*] Follow her close. Give her good watch, I pray you.

[*Exit Horatio.*]

Oh, this is the poison of deep grief! It springs

All from her father’s

death, and now behold!

Oh, Gertrude, Gertrude,

2815 When sorrows come, they come not single spies

But in battalions.¹⁶⁰ First, her father slain;

Next, your son gone, and he most violent author

Of his own just remove;¹⁶¹ the people muddied,¹⁶²

Thick¹⁶³ and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers

2820 For good Polonius’ death, and we have done but greenly¹⁶⁴

In hugger-mugger¹⁶⁵ to inter him; poor Ophelia

Divided from herself and her fair judgment,

Without the which we are pictures or mere beasts;

Last, and as much containing¹⁶⁶ as all these,

2825 Her brother is in secret come from France,

Feeds on this wonder,¹⁶⁷ keeps himself in clouds,¹⁶⁸

And wants not buzzers¹⁶⁹ to infect his ear

With pestilent speeches of his father’s¹⁷⁰ death,

Wherein necessity, of matter beggared,

2830 Will nothing stick our person to arraign

159. If.

160. When sorrows come, they come not one at a time but in swarms, or (militarily) battalions. ("Spies" are scouts sent in advance of the main army.) Compare the proverb, "Misfortune (Evil) never (seldom) comes alone."

161. Justly deserved removal (to England).

162. Stirred up, confused.

163. Bewildered, muddled.

164. Foolishly, naively.

165. Secret haste.

166. As serious.

167. Feeds his feeling of resentment about this whole shocking turn of events.

168. Behaves suspiciously and in ways that are hard to interpret or predict, arousing uncertainty and suspicion.

169. Is not lacking in gossipers and scandal mongers.

170. Polonius's.

In ear and ear.¹⁷¹ O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murd'ring piece, in many places
Gives me superfluous death.¹⁷²

A noise within.

Enter a Messenger.

²⁸³⁵**Queen**

Alack, what noise is this?

King

Where are my Switzers?¹⁷³ Let them guard the door.
What is the matter?

Messenger

Save yourself, my lord!

The ocean, overpeering of his list,¹⁷⁴

²⁸⁴⁰Eats not the flats¹⁷⁵ with more impiteous¹⁷⁶ haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,

O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord,

And, as the world were now but to begin,

Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

²⁸⁴⁵The ratifiers and props of every word,¹⁷⁷

They cry, "Choose we! Laertes shall be king!"

Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds:

"Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!"

Queen

How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!¹⁷⁸

A noise within.

²⁸⁵⁰Oh, this is counter,¹⁷⁹ you false Danish dogs!

King

The doors are broke.

Enter Laertes with others.

Laertes

Where is this king?—Sirs,¹⁸⁰ stand you all without.¹⁸¹

All¹⁸²

No, let's come in.

171. In which business, since they are unprovided with accurate information and yet long for some plausible explanation, they will not hesitate to whisper insinuations about me, their king.

172. Kills me over and over.

173. Where are my Swiss guards, mercenaries. Swiss mercenaries were often employed as personal guards in the courts of Europe, as today, ceremonially, at the Vatican in Rome.

174. Overflowing (literally, rising above and looking over) its shore or boundary.

175. Low-lying lands near shore.

176. Violent, unrelenting, merciless.

177. And, as if the world were to begin all over again, utterly neglecting all ancient traditional customs that should confirm and underprop everything that we say and promise.

178. Bay loudly. (Said of hunting dogs.)

179. Following a contrary or false scent. (The metaphor is from hunting game.)

180. "Sirs" is a standard form of address to commoners.

181. Outside.

182. Laertes's followers.

2855**Laertes**

I pray you, give me leave.¹⁸³

All

We will, we will.

Laertes

I thank you. Keep¹⁸⁴ the door.

[Exeunt followers.]

O thou vile king,

Give me my father!

Queen

Calmly, good Laertes.

2860**Laertes**

That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,

Cries "Cuckold!" to my father, brands the harlot

Even here between the chaste unsmirchèd brow

Of my true mother.

2865**King**

What is the cause, Laertes,

That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—¹⁸⁵

Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear our person.¹⁸⁶

There's such divinity doth hedge¹⁸⁷ a king

That treason can but peep to what it would,¹⁸⁸

2870Acts little of his will.¹⁸⁹—Tell me, Laertes,

Why thou art thus incensed?—Let him go, Gertrude.—

Speak, man.

Laertes

Where is my father?

King

Dead.

2875**Queen**

But not by him.

King

Let him demand his fill.

Laertes

How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with.¹⁹⁰

To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil!

Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!

2880I dare damnation. To this point I stand,¹⁹¹

183. i.e., leave matters to me, let me converse with the King alone.

184. Guard.

185. Claudius may be thinking of the unsuccessful rebellion of the Giants against Zeus and the Olympian gods in Greek mythology.

186. Fear for my personal safety.

187. That protects, surrounds defensively.

188. Can only peep furtively, as though a barrier, at what it wishes to accomplish.

189. But performs little of what it intends.

190. Deceived, played with.

191. I am resolved in this.

That both the worlds I give to negligence,¹⁹²
 Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged
 Most throughly¹⁹³ for my father.

King

Who shall stay¹⁹⁴ you?

²⁸⁸⁵**Laertes**

My will, not all the world's.¹⁹⁵
 And for my means, I'll husband¹⁹⁶ them so well
 They shall go far with little.

King

Good Laertes,
 If you desire to know the certainty
²⁸⁹⁰Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge
 That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,¹⁹⁷
 Winner and loser?

Laertes

None but his enemies,

King

Will you know them, then?

²⁸⁹⁵**Laertes**

To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms,
 And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
 Repast them with my blood.¹⁹⁸

King

Why, now you speak
 Like a good child and a true gentleman.
²⁹⁰⁰That I am guiltless of your father's death,
 And am most sensibly in grief¹⁹⁹ for it,
 It shall as level²⁰⁰ to your judgment 'pear²⁰¹
 As day does to your eye.
A noise within.

[Voices Within]

Let her come in!

Laertes

How now, what noise is that?
²⁹⁰⁵*Enter Ophelia, as before.*
 O heat, dry up my brains! Tears seven times salt

192. That I disregard the consequences of my actions both in this world and in the life to come.

193. Thoroughly.

194. Prevent, hinder.

195. I will cease when my will is accomplished, not for anyone else's.

196. Manage prudently and economically.

197. i.e., is it set down in and required by your need for revenge that you will sweep up friend and foe indiscriminately, like a gambler in a sweepstake, winning all the stakes on the gambling table.

198. The female pelican was popularly imagined to feed its young with its own blood. ("Repast" means "feed.")

199. Grief-stricken.

200. Straightforward, plain.

201. Appear.

Burn out the sense and virtue²⁰² of mine eye!
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight²⁰³
2910Till our scale turns the beam.²⁰⁴ O rose of May,
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens, is't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine
2915It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.²⁰⁵

Ophelia

[*Song.*]

They bore him bare-faced²⁰⁶ on the bier,²⁰⁷
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny,
And on his grave rained many a tear.
2920Fare you well, my dove.

Laertes

Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade²⁰⁸ revenge,
It could not move thus.

Ophelia

You must sing "a-down, a-down," an²⁰⁹ you call him "a-down-a."²¹⁰ Oh, how the
2925wheel²¹¹ becomes it! It is the false steward²¹² that stole his master's daughter.

Laertes

This nothing's more than matter.²¹³

Ophelia

There's rosemary; that's for remembrance. Pray you, love, remember. And there
is pansies; that's for thoughts.

2930**Laertes**

A document²¹⁴ in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Ophelia

There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you, and here's some
2935for me; we may call it herb of grace o'Sundays. You may wear your rue
with a difference. There's a daisy. I would give you some violets, but they

202. Function, power.

203. Avenged with equal gravity.

204. Until our cause of justice outweighs, as in a balance scales, the wrongful deed of the offender. A Senecan commonplace, that revenge must outdo the original offense.

205. Human nature's sensitivity in matters of love is such that it sends some precious part of itself after a lost object of that love. (In this case, Ophelia's sanity has deserted her under the burden of grief for her dead father.)

206. In an open coffin.

207. A litter on which a corpse or coffin is carried.

208. Argue for, urge.

209. If.

210. Ophelia madly assigns to those present the singing of the refrain to her song.

211. Perhaps Ophelia imagines a spinning wheel, where women might sit and work as they sang; or Fortune's wheel.

212. The story is unknown, but false stewards do sometimes steal their masters' daughters in romance tales. Perhaps Ophelia is madly fantasizing about her father's uneasy fear that Hamlet might in effect steal her away by seducing her.

213. Ophelia's ravings are more eloquent than ordinary sane utterance.

214. Object lesson.

withered all when my father died. They say 'a made a good end.²¹⁵
[She sings.] For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.²¹⁶

Laertes

Thought and afflictions,²¹⁷ passion,²¹⁸ hell itself
 2940 She turns to favor²¹⁹ and to prettiness.

Ophelia

[Song.]

And will 'a not come again?

And will 'a not come again?

No, no, he is dead,

Go to thy deathbed,

He never will come again.

2945 His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll.²²⁰

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan.²²¹

God 'a' mercy²²² on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God.

2950 God b'wi' you!

Exeunt Ophelia [and the Queen, following her.]

Laertes

Do you see this, O God?

King

Laertes, I must commune with your grief,

Or you deny me right. Go but apart,²²³

Make choice of whom your²²⁴ wisest friends you will,

2955 And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.

If by direct or by collateral hand²²⁵

They find us touched,²²⁶ we will our kingdom give,

Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours

215. Rosemary, used as a symbol of remembrance at weddings and funerals, is aptly suited to Laertes and to Ophelia herself as wedded offspring of Polonius; pansies for thoughts (compare the French *pensées*) are appropriate to courtship and love, or to remembering a dead father; fennel, associated with dissembling flattery, and columbines with marital infidelity and ingratitude, may apply to Claudius and Gertrude, though also to Ophelia's own sad story; rue, a bitter-tasting medicinal plant, betokens remorse and repentance, as indicated by its popular name, "herb of grace"; the daisy is conversely the flower of love and of amorous dissembling; and violets signify fidelity, the opposite of columbines. Ophelia may distribute these herbs to her listeners in a symbolically appropriate way. The text is unclear in most instances as to how Ophelia distributes the flowers to those who are with her, but one possibility is that Rosemary and pansies are for Laertes, fennel and columbine for the Queen, rue for Ophelia herself, the daisy and violets for the King.

216. This appears to be from a song that is now lost.

217. Melancholy, sad thoughts.

218. Suffering.

219. Grace, beauty.

220. His head of hair was as white as flax.

221. We loudly but unavailingly proclaim our grief.

222. God have mercy.

223. Withdraw with me to some other place where we can talk privately.

224. Of whichever of.

225. Indirect agency.

226. Me implicated.

To you in satisfaction;²²⁷ but if not,
2960 Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labor with your soul
To give it due content.

Laertes

Let this be so.
His means of death, his obscure burial—
2965 No trophy, sword, nor hatchment²²⁸ o'er his bones,
No noble rite, nor formal ostentation—²²⁹
Cry to be heard as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call't in question.²³⁰

King

So you shall,
2970 And where th'offense is, let the great ax fall.
I pray you go with me.
Exeunt.

227. Recompense.

228. Memorial display, sword betokening knightly prowess, or tablet displaying the coat of arms of the deceased.

229. Ceremony.

230. So that I must demand an explanation for that.

Scene 6

Enter²³¹ Horatio, with an Attendant [i.e., Servingman].

Horatio

What²³² are they that would speak with me?

Servingman

Sailors, sir. They say they have letters²³³ for you.

²⁹⁷⁵**Horatio**

Let them come in.

[Exit Servingman.]

I do not know from what part of the world I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

Sailor

God bless you, sir.

²⁹⁸⁰**Horatio**

Let him bless thee too.

Sailor

'A shall, sir, an't²³⁴ please him. There's a letter for you, sir. It comes from th'ambassador²³⁵ that was bound for England, if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know²³⁶ it is.

[He gives a letter.]

Horatio

Reads the letter.

Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked²³⁷ this, give these fellows some means²³⁸ to the King; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea,²³⁹ a pirate²⁴⁰ of very warlike appointment²⁴¹ gave us chase. Finding²⁹⁹⁰ ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valor, and in the grapple²⁴² I boarded them. On the instant they got clear of our ship, so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy,²⁴³ but they knew what they did:²⁴⁴ I am to do a good turn for them. Let the

231. Location: The castle, or possibly in Horatio's lodgings.

232. What sort of men; who.

233. A letter.

234. If it.

235. i.e., comes from Hamlet.

236. Led or permitted to believe.

237. Looked over, read.

238. Means of access.

239. Had been at sea for two days.

240. Pirate ship.

241. Equipment.

242. And during the action in which the pirate ship bound us, its intended victim, to the attacking vessel by means of grappling irons to facilitate close combat.

243. Merciful thieves.

244. i.e., they understood that I would be able to help them in return for their assisting me.

2995 King have the letters I have sent, and repair thou²⁴⁵ to me with as much
haste as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will
make thee dumb, yet are they much too light for the bore²⁴⁶ of the matter.
These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and
3000 Guildenstern hold their course for England. Of them I have much to tell
thee. Farewell. He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.

Come, I will give you way²⁴⁷ for these your letters,
And do't the speedier that you may direct me
3005 To him from whom you brought them.
Exeunt.

245. Come.

246. Calibre, size, importance.

247. Means of access for delivery.

Scene 7

*Enter*²⁴⁸ *King and Laertes.*

King

Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,²⁴⁹
 And you must put me in your heart for friend,
 Sith²⁵⁰ you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
 3010 That he which hath your noble father slain
 Pursued my life.

Laertes

It well appears. But tell me
 Why you proceeded not against these feats²⁵¹
 So crimeful²⁵² and so capital in nature,
 3015 As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
 You mainly²⁵³ were stirred up.

King

Oh for two special reasons,
 Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinewed,²⁵⁴
 And yet to me they're strong. The Queen his mother
 3020 Lives almost by his looks, and for myself—
 My virtue or my plague, be it either which—²⁵⁵
 She's so conjunctive²⁵⁶ to my life and soul
 That, as the star moves not but in his²⁵⁷ sphere,
 I could not but by her. The other motive
 3025 Why to a public count²⁵⁸ I might not go
 Is the great love the general gender²⁵⁹ bear him,
 Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,²⁶⁰
 Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,²⁶¹
 Convert his gyves²⁶² to graces, so that my arrows,

248. Location: The King's private apartments in the castle.

249. Confirm my release from a suspicion of having been guilty of Polonius's death.

250. Since.

251. Acts.

252. Punishable by death.

253. Greatly.

254. Weak, lacking sinew.

255. Whichever it may be. Claudius sees his passionate attachment to Gertrude as either an admirable thing or a sign of weakness.

256. She is so closely united. (A metaphor from astronomy; two or more celestial bodies meeting or passing in the same degree of the zodiac are said to be in conjunction.)

257. Its. (The Ptolemaic astronomical concept here is of the planets revolving around the earth in concentric spheres or transparent globes.)

258. Accounting, indictment.

259. Common people.

260. i.e., Who, testing all his faults by the forgiving standard of their affection for him.

261. Like a spring water with such a heavy concentration of lime that it can in effect petrify a piece of wood and thus make it more perfect and unflawed.

262. Fetters; here signifying "crimes," "faults."

3030 Too slightly timbered for so loud a wind,²⁶³
 Would have reverted to my bow again,
 And not where I had aimed them.

Laertes

And so have I a noble father lost,
 A sister driven into desp'rate terms,²⁶⁴
 3035 Whose worth, if praises may go back again,²⁶⁵
 Stood challenger on mount of all the age
 For her perfections.²⁶⁶ But my revenge will come.

King

Break not your sleeps for that. You must not think
 3040 That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger²⁶⁷
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more.
 I loved your father, and we love ourself,
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—
 3045 *Enter a Messenger with letters.*
 How now? What news?

Messenger

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet.
 This to your majesty, this to the Queen.
[He gives letters.]

King

From Hamlet! Who brought them?

3050 **Messenger**

Sailors, my lord, they say. I saw them not.
 They were given me by Claudio. He received them.

King

Laertes, you shall hear them. *[To the Messenger]* Leave us.
Exit Messenger.
[He reads.]

3055 High and mighty, you shall know I am set naked²⁶⁸ on your
 kingdom. Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes, when I
 shall first, asking your pardon thereunto,²⁶⁹ recount the occasion of my
 sudden and more strange return. Hamlet.

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?

3060 Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?²⁷⁰

263. Provided with too slight a shaft of wood to be able to cope with so mighty a gust of popular opposition.

264. Condition, circumstances.

265. Can recall what she once was.

266. Stood like a supreme challenger daring the world to match her perfections.

267. That I would allow anyone to threaten and insult me with shaking or plucking my beard. Plucking or disparaging a beard was considered a grave insult.

268. Unarmed; without possessions or followers.

269. i.e., your pardon for having returned without permission. Hamlet writes sardonically, with mock politeness.

270. Or is it a deception, and not at all what the letter says.

Laertes

Know you the hand?

King

'Tis Hamlet's character.²⁷¹ "Naked!"
And in a postscript here he says "alone."
Can you advise me?²⁷²

Laertes

I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come.
3065 It warms the very sickness in my heart
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth
"Thus diddest thou."

King

If it be so, Laertes—
As how should it be so, how otherwise?—²⁷³
Will you be ruled by me?

3070 **Laertes**

Ay, my lord,
If so you'll²⁷⁴ not o'errule me to a peace.

King

To thine own peace. If he be now returned
As checking at his voyage,²⁷⁵ and that²⁷⁶ he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,²⁷⁷
3075 Under the which he shall not choose but fall;²⁷⁸
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.

3078.1 **Laertes**

My lord, I will be ruled,
The rather if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.²⁷⁹

King

It falls right.
3078.5 You have been talked of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein they say you shine. Your sum of parts²⁸⁰
Did not together pluck such envy from him

271. Handwriting, style.

272. Explain this to me.

273. i.e., How could it be true that Hamlet has returned, and yet could it be otherwise than true since we have this letter from him?

274. Yes, my lord, so long as you will.

275. As one who has been diverted from his journey (like a falcon turning away from its intended quarry to fly at a chance bird).

276. And if it is the case that.

277. Devising.

278. From which he cannot possibly escape.

279. Agent, instrument.

280. All your other admirable qualities.

As did that one, and that, in my regard,
3078.10Of the unworthiest siege.²⁸¹

Laertes

What part is that, my lord?

King

A very ribbon²⁸² in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too, for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
3078.15Than settled age his sables and his weeds
Importing health and graveness.²⁸³ Two months since
Here was a gentleman of Normandy.
3080I have seen myself, and served against, the French,
And they can well on horseback,²⁸⁴ but this gallant²⁸⁵
Had witchcraft in't;²⁸⁶ he grew into his seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse
As had he been incorpsed and demi-natured
3085With the brave beast.²⁸⁷ So far he passed my thought²⁸⁸
That I in forgery of shapes and tricks²⁸⁹
Come short of what he did.

Laertes

A Norman²⁹⁰ was't?

King

A Norman.

3090**Laertes**

Upon my life, Lamord.

King

The very same.

Laertes

I know him well. He is the brooch²⁹¹ indeed
And gem of all the nation.

King

He made confession of you,²⁹²
3095And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defense,²⁹³

281. Least worthy in rank of importance.

282. i.e., decorative touch (one that is suitable to young men, flashy and handsome).

283. Youth and stylishly informal dress suit each other admirably, just as rich fur-lined robes and other sober garments are well suited to the concern for good health and the grave dignity of men in advancing years.

284. Are skillful riders.

285. Dashing young man.

286. In horsemanship.

287. As if he had become one body with the horse (like the fabled centaur, with the torso and legs of a horse and the head and arms of a man).

288. Surpassed my expectation.

289. In my imagining what devices and feats might be possible (in horsemanship).

290. One who hails from Normandy.

291. Ornament.

292. He testified to and conceded your superior ability.

293. With respect to your skill and practice in the art of self-defense.

And for your rapier most especially,
 That he cried out 'twould be a sight indeed
 If one could match you. Th'escrimers of their nation,
 3099.1 He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye²⁹⁴
 If you opposed them.²⁹⁵ Sir, this report of his
 3100 Did Hamlet so envenom²⁹⁶ with his envy
 That he could nothing do but wish and beg
 Your sudden coming o'er to play with him.²⁹⁷
 Now, out of this—

Laertes

What out of this,²⁹⁸ my lord?

King

Laertes, was your father dear to you?
 Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
 A face without a heart?

Laertes

Why ask you this?

King

Not that I think you did not love your father,
 3110 But that I know love is begun by time,²⁹⁹
 And that I see, in passages of proof,³⁰⁰
 Time qualifies³⁰¹ the spark and fire of it.
 3112.1 There lives within the very flame of love
 A kind of wick or snuff³⁰² that will abate it,
 And nothing is at a like goodness still,³⁰³
 For goodness, growing to a pleurisy,³⁰⁴
 3112.5 Dies in his own too much.³⁰⁵ That³⁰⁶ we would do
 We should do when we would, for this "would" changes
 And hath abatements³⁰⁷ and delays as many
 As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents,³⁰⁸

294. Movement, defensive strategy, or visual acuity.

295. The fencers (French: *escrimeurs*) of Normandy, he swore, would be seen as having no grace or skill in fencing if compared with you as a fencing opponent.

296. Embitter, poison.

297. That you would quickly come from France and fence with him.

298. Why are you saying "out of this"?

299. Comes into being at the right moment (and is subject to change).

300. Circumstances that have tested that love.

301. Weakens, moderates.

302. The charred end of the candlewick that needs occasional trimming to improve the light and reduce smoke. (Love is like a candle in that it consumes itself in its own ardor.)

303. Nothing remains always at a constant level of goodness.

304. Excess, plethora. (Literally, an inflammation of the chest.) Pleurisy, occasionally spelled "plurisy," was sometimes erroneously supposed to be derived from the Latin plus, pluris, "more," thus suggesting here an excess of humors, one of the four bodily fluids.

305. Of its own excess.

306. That which.

307. Diminutions.

308. As there are tongues to dissuade, hands to prevent, and chance events to intervene.

And then this “should” is like a spendthrift’s sigh,³⁰⁹
 3112.10 That hurts by easing.³¹⁰ But to the quick of th’ulcer:³¹¹
 Hamlet comes back. What would you undertake
 To show yourself your father’s son in deed
 3115 More than in words?

Laertes

To cut his throat i’th’ church.

King

No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize.³¹²
 Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
 Will you do this:³¹³ keep close³¹⁴ within your chamber.
 3120 Hamlet returned shall know you are come home.
 We’ll put on those shall³¹⁵ praise your excellence
 And set a double varnish on the fame³¹⁶
 The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine³¹⁷ together,
 And wager on your heads. He being remiss,³¹⁸
 3125 Most generous,³¹⁹ and free from all contriving,
 Will not peruse the foils,³²⁰ so that with ease,
 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
 A sword unbated,³²¹ and in a pass of practice³²²
 Requite him for your father.

3130 Laertes

I will do’t,
 And for that purpose I’ll anoint my sword.
 I bought an unction³²³ of a mountebank³²⁴
 So mortal that, but dip³²⁵ a knife in it,
 Where it draws blood no cataplasm³²⁶ so rare,³²⁷

309. The regretful sigh of one who has squandered his wealth. Alludes to the common belief that a sigh cost the heart a drop of blood.

310. i.e., That costs the heart a drop of blood even while it affords emotional relief.

311. i.e., heart of the disease.

312. Shield from punishment, by offering the shelter of the church. By custom, churches could provide offer sanctuary for those in need of shelter from the law for many criminal offenses. The King here argues that the demands of revenge should trump such a customary privilege; Laertes should be licensed to kill Hamlet, even inside a church.

313. If you will do this.

314. Remain out of sight.

315. I will arrange for some people to.

316. And enhance the lustrous reputation.

317. Finally, in conclusion.

318. Carelessly unwary.

319. Noble-minded.

320. Fencing weapons, normally buttoned at the tip to prevent stabbing.

321. Not blunted by a button at its tip.

322. Treacherous thrust instead of what should have been a conventional fencing move.

323. Ointment.

324. Quack, charlatan.

325. So deadly that if one were merely to dip.

326. Medicinal plaster or poultice.

327. Excellent, distinctive; uncommon, seldom found.

3135 Collected from all simples that have virtue³²⁸
 Under the moon,³²⁹ can save the thing from death
 That is but scratched withal. I'll touch my point
 With this contagion, that if I gall³³⁰ him slightly,
 It may be death.

3140 **King**

Lets further think of this,
 Weigh what convenience both of time and means
 May fit us to our shape.³³¹ If this should fail,
 And that our drift look through our bad performance,³³²
 'Twere better not essayed.³³³ Therefore this project
 3145 Should have a back or second, that might hold
 If this should blast in proof.³³⁴ Soft,³³⁵ let me see.
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings—³³⁶
 I ha't!³³⁷

When in your motion you are hot and dry—
 As make your bouts more violent to that end—
 3150 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared³³⁸ him
 A chalice for the nonce,³³⁹ whereon but sipping,
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,³⁴⁰
 Our purpose may hold there.

Enter Queen.

How [now], sweet queen?

3155 **Queen**

One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
 So fast they follow. Your sister's drowned, Laertes.

Laertes

Drowned! Oh, where?

Queen

There is a willow grows aslant a³⁴¹ brook
 That shows his hoar leaves³⁴² in the glassy stream.
 3160 Therewith fantastic garlands did she make

328. Composed of herbs with potent healing properties.

329. i.e., Anywhere on earth in the sublunary sphere beneath the moon.

330. Graze, wound.

331. To the roles we propose to act.

332. And if our intentions should be betrayed by our inept performance.

333. Attempted.

334. If this plot should come to grief (literally, blow up in our faces) when put to the test.

335. Gently, wait a minute.

336. Your respective skills.

337. I have it, I have a plan.

338. Offered.

339. A drinking cup just for this occasion.

340. Sword thrust. Compare the fencing term stoccado.

341. Obliquely, across the.

342. Leaves with grey-white undersides. Willows were traditionally associated with mourning or unrequited love.

Of crowflowers,³⁴³ nettles, daisies, and long purples,³⁴⁴
 That liberal³⁴⁵ shepherds give a grosser name,³⁴⁶
 But our cold³⁴⁷ maids do dead men's fingers call them.
 There on the pendent³⁴⁸ boughs her coronet weeds³⁴⁹
 3165 Clamb'ring to hang,³⁵⁰ an envious sliver³⁵¹ broke,
 When down her weedy trophies³⁵² and herself
 Fell in the weeping brook.³⁵³ Her clothes spread wide,
 And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up,
 Which time³⁵⁴ she chanted snatches of old lauds,³⁵⁵
 3170 As one incapable of³⁵⁶ her own distress,
 Or like a creature native and endued
 Unto that element.³⁵⁷ But long it could not be
 Till that³⁵⁸ her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pulled the poor wretch³⁵⁹ from her melodious lay³⁶⁰
 3175 To muddy death.

Laertes

Alas, then she is drowned.

Queen

Drowned, drowned.

Laertes

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
 And therefore I forbid my tears. But yet
 3180 It is our trick; nature her custom holds,³⁶¹
 Let shame say what it will. [*He weeps.*] When these are gone,
 The woman will be out.³⁶² Adieu, my lord.
 I have a speech of fire that fain³⁶³ would blaze,

343. Wild buttercups, bluebells, or ragged robins.

344. Early purple wild orchids. These flowers were often associated with fertility.

345. Free-speaking, hedonistic.

346. A more indecent name (such as "dogstones" or "cullions," in reference to the testicle-shaped tubers of some of these flowers). "Orchis" also means "testicle" in Greek.

347. Chaste.

348. Overhanging.

349. Coronet-like garland of wild flowers. A coronet is literally a smaller or lesser crown, usually signifying a noble rank below that of royal majesty.

350. Persons forsaken in love traditionally hung garlands of this sort on willow trees.

351. Malicious branch. Literally, a sliver is a twig.

352. Her garland of wild flowers.

353. The brook, with its gently flowing water, is personified as weeping for Ophelia's distress.

354. During which time.

355. Hymns.

356. Lacking the ability to comprehend or do anything about.

357. Naturally adapted to a watery existence.

358. Until.

359. Here, as often, a term of endearment and pity.

360. Song.

361. Weeping is the natural and characteristic way for us humans to express grief; nature holds to her customary course.

362. When my tears are all shed, this womanly weakness in me will have run its course.

363. Willingly, eagerly.

But that this folly douts³⁶⁴ it.

Exit.

³¹⁸⁵**King**

Let's follow, Gertrude.

How much I had to do to calm his rage!

Now fear I this will give it start again;

Therefore let's follow.

Exeunt.

64.

Hamlet: Act 5

William Shakespeare

Hamlet (Modern, Editor's Version). [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#). University of Victoria. Editor: David Bevington. Adapted by James Sexton.

Scene 1

*Enter*¹ two Clowns [with spades and mattocks].

3190 **Clown**

Is she to be buried in Christian burial,² that willfully seeks her own salvation?

Other

I tell thee she is, and therefore make her grave straight.³ The crowner hath sat
3195 on her, and finds it Christian burial.⁴

Clown

How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?⁵

Other

Why, 'tis found so.⁶

Clown

It must be *se offendendo*,⁷ it cannot be else, for here lies the point: if I
3200 drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches: it is to act, to do, and to perform.⁸ Argal,⁹ she drowned herself wittingly.

Other

Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver.¹⁰

Clown

3205 Give me leave. Here lies the water; good. Here stands the man; good. If the

1. Location: A churchyard.

2. Burial in consecrated ground--something that the Church would deny to any who had committed mortal sin, such as suicide.

3. Right away.

4. The coroner, the official charged with conducting an inquest into cases of accidental or violent death, has done so in this case, and has judged the deceased worthy of burial in sanctified ground.

5. Self-defense could constitute a legitimate defense against a charge of murder, but the speaker here is ludicrous to wonder if suicide could be self-defense.

6. Determined to be thus in the coroner's verdict.

7. Presumably an attempt at *se defendendo*, killing in self-defense.

8. Legal arguments put forward regarding the disposition of property.

9. Ergo, therefore.

10. Master Digger; worthy digger.

man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he,¹¹ he goes. Mark you that. But if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

3210**Other**

But is this law?

Clown

Ay, marry,¹² is't, crowner's quest¹³ law.

Other

Will you ha' the truth on't?¹⁴ If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o'Christian burial.

3215**Clown**

Why, there thou say'st, and the more pity that great folk should have countenance¹⁵ in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient¹⁶ gentlemen but 3220gardeners, ditchers, and gravemakers. They hold up¹⁷ Adam's profession.

Other

Was he a gentleman?

Clown

'A was the first that ever bore arms.¹⁸

Other

Why, he had none.

Clown

3225What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged. Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself¹⁹

Other

Go to.²⁰

3230**Clown**

What is he that builds stronger than either the mason,²¹ the shipwright, or the carpenter?

Other

The gallows-maker, for that frame²² outlives a thousand tenants.

Clown

3235I like thy wit well, in good faith, the gallows does well. But how does it

11. Willy-nilly, whether he is willing or not.

12. Indeed.

13. Coroner's inquest.

14. Of it.

15. Privilege, authority.

16. Venerable, going back to ancient times.

17. Uphold, practice, keep up.

18. (1) was entitled to display the coat of arms of a gentleman; (2) had arms on his body.

19. i.e., prepare yourself spiritually for death.

20. An expression of impatience.

21. Stonemason.

22. Since that frame, the gallows (used for hanging criminals).

well? It does well²³ to those that do ill. Now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church. Argal, the gallows may do well to thee.²⁴ To't again,²⁵ come.

Other

3240“Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?”

Clown

Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.²⁶

Other

Marry, now I can tell.

Clown

To't.

Other

Mass,²⁷ I cannot tell.

3245*Enter Hamlet and Horatio afar off.*

Clown

Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass²⁸ will not mend²⁹ his pace with beating; and when you are asked this question next, say “a grave-
3250maker.” The houses that he makes lasts till doomsday. Go get thee to Johan.³⁰ Fetch me a stoup³¹ of liquor.

[Exit Second Clown.]

[The First Clown digs.]

[Sings.]

In youth when I did love, did love,

Methought it was very sweet

To contract—oh—the time for—a—my behave,³²

3255Oh, methought there—a—was nothing—a—meet.³³

Hamlet

Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that ‘a sings at grave-making?

Horatio

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.³⁴

3260**Hamlet**

‘Tis e’en so.³⁵ The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.³⁶

Clown

[Sings.]

23. (1) It provides a good answer; (2) The gallows serves well as an instrument of execution.

24. May serve your turn when it comes time for you to be hanged.

25. Try again.

26. i.e., unharness your wit, like a tired team of plow animals; put an end to your mental efforts.

27. By the Mass. (A common oath.)

28. Any ordinary plodding ass.

29. Improve.

30. i.e., to a tavern in the vicinity whose proprietor is named "Johan" or John.

31. Flagon, tankard.

32. To shorten the time for my own benefit.

33. Suitable, more appropriate.

34. A thing he can do easily, without distress.

35. Exactly.

36. One who seldom does such things is apt to be more squeamish.

But age with his stealing steps
 Hath clawed me in his clutch,
 3265 And hath shipped me intil the land,³⁷
 As if I had never been such.³⁸

[The Clown throws up a skull.]

Hamlet

That skull had a tongue in it and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to
 3270 the ground, as if 'twere Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder!³⁹ This might be
 the pate of a politician,⁴⁰ which this ass now o'er-offices,⁴¹ one that would circumvent
 God, might it not?

Horatio

It might, my lord.

Hamlet

Or of a courtier, which could say, "Good morrow, sweet lord, how dost thou,
 3275 good lord?" This might be my Lord Such-a-one, that praised my Lord Such-
 a-one's horse when 'a meant to beg it,⁴² might it not?

Horatio

Ay, my lord.

Hamlet

Why, e'en so. And now my Lady Worm's,⁴³ chapless,⁴⁴ and knocked about the
 3280 mazard⁴⁵ with a sexton's spade. Here's fine revolution,⁴⁶ an⁴⁷ we had the trick to
 see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding but to play at loggets with
 'em?⁴⁸ Mine ache to think on't.

Clown

Sings.

3285 A pickax and a spade, a spade,
 For and⁴⁹ a shrouding sheet;
 Oh, a pit of clay for to be made
 For such a guest is meet.

[He throws up another skull.]

Hamlet

3290 There's another. Why might not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his

37. i.e., sent me on my way toward death.

38. i.e., alive and in love.

39. Though not mentioned in the account in Genesis (4.8) of Cain's murder of his brother Abel, the jawbone was often assumed in medieval representations to be the murder weapon.

40. The skull of a scheming manipulator intent on gaining political advantage.

41. Triumphs over by means of political or social advantage.

42. i.e., who praised that lord's horse with the intent of suggesting that the horse be presented to the praiser as a gift.

43. i.e., a skull belonging to one who now dances attendance on Lady Worm, in whose court worms feast on dead bodies.

44. Lacking the lower jaw.

45. Literally a drinking vessel, here applied to the head.

46. Reversal of destiny, by the turning of Fortune's wheel.

47. If.

48. Was so little care taken in bringing up the owner of these bones that we can now play a game like skittles or horse-shoes with the bones.

49. And also.

quiddities now, his quilllets,⁵⁰ his cases, his tenures,⁵¹ and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude⁵² knave now to knock him about the sconce⁵³ with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery?⁵⁴ H'm! This fellow
 3295 might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries.⁵⁵ Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt?⁵⁶ Will his
 3300 vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures?⁵⁷ The very conveyances of his lands⁵⁸ will hardly lie in this box,⁵⁹ and must th'inheritor⁶⁰ himself have no more, ha?

Horatio

Not a jot more, my lord.

3305 **Hamlet**

Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

Horatio

Ay, my lord, and of calves' skins too.

Hamlet

They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow.—Whose grave's this, sirrah?

3310 **Clown**

Mine, sir.

[Sings.]

Oh, a pit of clay for to be made

For such a guest is meet.

Hamlet

I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in't.

Clown

3315 You lie out on't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours. For my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

Hamlet

Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say 'tis thine. 'Tis for the dead, not for the quick;⁶¹ therefore thou liest.

50. His subtleties and legal niceties.

51. Property titles.

52. Foolish.

53. Head.

54. Legal action charging physical assault.

55. His securities acknowledging obligation of a debt, his bonds undertaken to repay debts, his procedures for converting entailed estates into "fee simple" or freehold, his vouchers signed by two signatories guaranteeing the validity of titles to land, (and) his suits to obtain possession of land.

56. To have the skull of his once elegant head filled with minutely sifted dirt.

57. Will his vouchers, no matter how carefully duplicated, guarantee him no more land than is needed to bury him in?

58. Legal documents pertaining to the purchases of his lands.

59. (1) this coffin; (2) this deed box.

60. The purchaser, owner.

61. The living.

Clown

3320 'Tis a quick⁶² lie, sir; 'twill away again from me to you.

Hamlet

What man dost thou dig it for?

Clown

For no man, sir.

Hamlet

What woman, then?

Clown

For none, neither.

3325 **Hamlet**

Who is to be buried in't?

Clown

One that was a woman, sir, but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Hamlet

[To Horatio] How absolute⁶³ the knave is! We must speak by the card,⁶⁴ or equivocation⁶⁵ will
3330 undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it, the
age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of
the courtier he galls his kibe.⁶⁶—How long hast thou been grave-maker?

Clown

3335 Of all the days i'th' year, I came to't that day that our last King Hamlet
overcame Fortinbras.

Hamlet

How long is that since?

Clown

Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that. It was the very day that young
Hamlet was born—he that is mad and sent into England.

3340 **Hamlet**

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

Clown

Why, because 'a was mad. 'A shall recover his wits there, or if 'a do not,
'tis no great matter there.

Hamlet

Why?

Clown

'Twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.

Hamlet

3345 How came he mad?

Clown

Very strangely, they say.

62. Nimble. (Punning on "quick," living, in the previous speech.)

63. Precise.

64. i.e., precisely. Literally, by marks indicated on a compass-card showing the points of the compass for navigational use.

65. Quibbling.

66. i.e., the world today has become so fastidious and refined that the lower classes ape their social betters, following so closely at their heels as to chafe their "kibes" or chilblains.

Hamlet

How strangely?

Clown

Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

3350 Hamlet

Upon what ground?⁶⁷

Clown

Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton⁶⁸ here, man and boy, thirty years.

Hamlet

How long will a man lie i'th' earth ere he rot?

Clown

3355 I'faith, if 'a be not rotten before 'a die—as we have many pocky corsers⁶⁹ nowadays that will scarce hold the laying in⁷⁰—'a will last you⁷¹ some eight year, or nine year. A tanner will last you nine year.

Hamlet

Why he more than another?

Clown

3360 Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that 'a will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore⁷² decayer of your whoreson⁷³ dead body. [*He picks up a skull.*] Here's a skull now: this skull hath lain you i'th' earth three-and-twenty years.

Hamlet

Whose was it?

Clown

3365 A whoreson mad fellow's it was. Whose do you think it was?

Hamlet

Nay, I know not.

Clown

A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! 'A poured a flagon of Rhenish⁷⁴ on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

3370 Hamlet

This?

Clown

E'en that.

Hamlet

Let me see. [*taking the skull*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne⁷⁵ me on his back

67. Cause, reason. (But the Gravedigger answers in the sense of "land," "country.")

68. A minor official who tends to church property, ringing bells, digging graves, etc.

69. Diseased, rotten corpses; literally, riddled with the pox or syphilis.

70. Hold together long enough to be buried.

71. He (or "it") will last.

72. Keen, veritable.

73. Son-of-a-bitch.

74. Rhenish wine.

75. Borne, carried.

3375a thousand times, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises⁷⁶ at it.
 Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft.—Where be your
 gibes⁷⁷ now? Your gambols,⁷⁸ your songs, your flashes of merriment that were
 3380wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning?
 Quite chopfall'n?⁷⁹ Now get you to my lady's chamber⁸⁰ and tell her, let her
 paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come. Make her laugh at that.
 Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Horatio

What's that, my lord?

3385**Hamlet**

Dost thou think Alexander⁸¹ looked o'this fashion i'th' earth?

Horatio

E'en so.

Hamlet

And smelt so? Pah!

[He throws the skull down.]

Horatio

E'en so, my lord.

3390**Hamlet**

To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace
 the noble dust of Alexander till 'a find it stopping a bunghole?⁸²

Horatio

'Twere to consider too curiously⁸³ to consider so.

Hamlet

3395No, faith, not a jot. But to follow him thither with modesty enough, and
 likelihood to lead it,⁸⁴ as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried,
 Alexander returneth into dust,⁸⁵ the dust is earth, of earth we make loam,⁸⁶ and
 why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer-
 barrel?

3400Imperial Caesar,⁸⁷ dead and turned to clay,
 Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

Oh, that that earth⁸⁸ which kept the world in awe
 Should patch a wall t'expel the winter's flaw!⁸⁹

3405*Enter King, Queen, Laertes, and a coffin [containing the corpse of Ophelia, in funeral*

76. I feel nauseated. The gorge is literally the throat or stomach.

77. Taunts.

78. Skipping or leaping about in play.

79. (1) lacking the lower jaw; (2) downcast, dejected.

80. Dressing table.

81. Alexander the Great.

82. Hole in a cask or barrel for filling or emptying.

83. Consider too minutely, over-subtly.

84. With moderation and plausibility.

85. Compare the Anglican burial service, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

86. A mixture of moistened sandy clay and straw used to make bricks, plaster, or (in this case) bungs for a beer barrel.

87. The term can apply to Julius Caesar, or to the emperors starting with Augustus Caesar.

88. i.e., Caesar's body.

89. Winter's squalls and destructive force.

procession,
with the "Doctor" or Priest], with Lords attendant.

But soft,⁹⁰ but soft; aside! Here comes the King,
The Queen, the courtiers. Who is that they follow?
And with such maimèd rites?⁹¹ This doth betoken
The corpse they follow did with desp'rate hand
3410Fordo it⁹² own life. 'Twas of some estate.⁹³
Couch we⁹⁴ awhile and mark.

[Hamlet and Horatio conceal themselves. Ophelia's body is taken to the grave.]

Laertes

What ceremony else?

Hamlet

[*Aside to Horatio*] That is Laertes, a very noble youth. Mark.

Laertes

What ceremony else?

3415**Priest**

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged⁹⁵
As we have warrantise. Her death was doubtful,
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,⁹⁶
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet.⁹⁷ For charitable prayers,
3420Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her;
Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,⁹⁸
Her maiden strewments,⁹⁹ and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.¹⁰⁰

Laertes

Must there no more be done?

3425**Priest**

No more be done.
We should profane the service of the dead
To sing sage requiem¹⁰¹ and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.¹⁰²

90. Gently, wait a moment.

91. Truncated ceremonies.

92. Destroy its.

93. Of considerable social rank.

94. Let's conceal ourselves, lie low.

95. Extended to the full ritual.

96. Were it not that royal command overrules the customary practice (as prescribed too by our monastic order) of denying sacred burial to suicides.

97. She should have been buried in unsanctified ground awaiting the Day of Judgment, when all souls will be condemned or saved for all eternity by divine decree.

98. Garlands betokening maidenhood.

99. Flowers strewn on a coffin.

100. Laying the body to rest, to the tolling of the church bell and the recitation of the burial ceremony.

101. A solemn mass for the dead and other rituals beseeching heaven to grant rest to those who have died at peace with God.

102. The souls of those who have died at peace with God.

Laertes

Lay her i'th' earth,
 3430 And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
 May violets¹⁰³ spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
 A minist'ring angel shall my sister be
 When thou liest howling.¹⁰⁴

Hamlet

[*To Horatio*] What, the fair Ophelia!

3435 **Queen**

[*Scattering flowers*] Sweets to the sweet! Farewell.
 I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife.
 I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,
 And not t'have strewed thy grave.

Laertes

Oh, treble woe
 3440 Fall ten times treble on that cursèd head
 Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
 Deprived thee of!¹⁰⁵—Hold off the earth awhile,
 Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.
 [*He*] leaps in the grave.

3445 Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,¹⁰⁶
 Till of this flat¹⁰⁷ a mountain you have made
 T'o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
 Of blue Olympus.¹⁰⁸

Hamlet

[*Coming forward*] What is he whose grief
 3450 Bears such an emphasis,¹⁰⁹ whose phrase of sorrow
 Conjures the wand'ring stars,¹¹⁰ and makes them stand¹¹¹
 Like wonder-wounded¹¹² hearers? This is I,
 Hamlet the Dane.¹¹³

Laertes

[*Grappling with Hamlet*] The devil take thy soul!

3455 **Hamlet**

Thou pray'st not well.
 I prithee take thy fingers from my throat,
 For, though I am not splenative and rash,¹¹⁴

103. Compare 4.5.172-4 (TLN 2927-37) and note, where violets are associated with fidelity to a lost love.

104. i.e., are lodged in hell.

105. Deprived you of your fine, quick intelligence.

106. The living and the dead.

107. Level place.

108. i.e., To tower above Greece's highest mountains, including Olympus, the reputed home of the Olympian gods.

109. Is conveyed so forcefully.

110. Whose sorrowful speech invokes the planets to come to his aid.

111. Remain stationary in their heavenly paths.

112. Struck with amazement.

113. A customary form of title for the King of Denmark.

114. Hot-tempered.

Yet have I something in me dangerous,
Which let thy wiseness fear. Away thy hand!

3460**King**

Pluck them asunder.

Queen

Hamlet, Hamlet!

3461.1**All**

Gentlemen!

Horatio

Good my lord, be quiet.

[Hamlet and Laertes are parted.]

Hamlet

Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.¹¹⁵

3465**Queen**

Oh, my son, what theme?

Hamlet

I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
Could not with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her?

King

Oh, he is mad, Laertes.

3470**Queen**

For love of God, forbear him.¹¹⁶

Hamlet

‘Swounds,¹¹⁷ show me what thou’lt do.
Woo’t¹¹⁸ weep? Woo’t fight? Woo’t fast? Woo’t tear thyself?
Woo’t drink up eisel?¹¹⁹ Eat a crocodile?
I’ll do’t. Dost thou come here to whine?
3475 To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick¹²⁰ with her, and so will I.
And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
3480 Make Ossa like a wart.¹²¹ Nay, an thou’lt mouth,¹²²
I’ll rant as well as thou.

Queen

115. Move, flutter (as a sign that the person is still living).

116. Let him alone.

117. By His (Christ's) wounds. (A strong oath.)

118. Wilt thou, wouldst thou.

119. Vinegar.

120. Alive.

121. Until the vast acres of land that have been thrown on top of us, scorching the very top of this huge mound by its nearness to the burning sun, make Mount Ossa seem comparatively as small as a wart. Ossa is the mountain piled on top of Mount Pelion by the Giants in their rebellious attempt to scale Mount Olympus, home of the Olympian gods.

122. If you want to rant.

This is mere¹²³ madness,
 And thus awhile the fit will work on him;
 Anon, as patient as the female dove
 3485 When that her golden couplets¹²⁴ are disclosed,¹²⁵
 His silence will sit drooping.

Hamlet

[To Laertes] Hear you, sir,
 What is the reason that you use me thus?
 I loved you ever. But it is no matter.
 3490 Let Hercules himself do what he may,
 The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.
Exit Hamlet.

King

I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon¹²⁶ him.
 And Horatio *[exits too]*.
[Aside to Laertes] Strengthen your patience in¹²⁷ our last night's speech;
 We'll put the matter to the present push.¹²⁸
 3495 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.—
 This grave shall have a living monument.
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be.
Exeunt.

123. Utter.

124. Baby pigeons clad in golden-colored down. Pigeons are traditionally thought to be gentle and patient.

125. Hatched.

126. Attend.

127. i.e., by recalling.

128. Immediate test.

Scene 2

Enter¹²⁹ *Hamlet and Horatio.*

3500 **Hamlet**

So much for this, sir. Now let me see, the other.
You do remember all the circumstance?

Horatio

Remember it, my lord!¹³⁰

Hamlet

Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep. Methought I lay
3505 Worse than the mutines in the bilboes.¹³¹ Rashly,
And praised be rashness for it: let us know,¹³²
Our indiscretion¹³³ sometime serves us well
When our deep¹³⁴ plots do pall,¹³⁵ and that should learn¹³⁶ us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
3510 Rough-hew¹³⁷ them how we will.

Horatio

That is most certain.

Hamlet

Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown¹³⁸ scarfed¹³⁹ about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them,¹⁴⁰ had my desire,
3515 Fingere¹⁴¹ their packet, and in fine¹⁴² withdrew
To mine own room again, making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio—
Oh, royal knavery!—an exact command,
3520 Larded¹⁴³ with many several¹⁴⁴ sorts of reasons

129. Location: The castle.

130. i.e., How could I ever forget such a thing?

131. Mutineers in shackles. The word "bilboes" is from Bilbao in Spain, famed for its excellent swords and presumably also for high-quality iron instruments of confinement that could be used to restrain English prisoners aboard Spanish war vessels.

132. Acknowledge.

133. An action that is not premeditated.

134. Secret, obscure.

135. Lose strength, falter, fade away.

136. Teach.

137. Shape roughly.

138. Seaman's coat.

139. Loosely wrapped, as with a scarf.

140. Find out Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, uncover their villainy.

141. Pilfered, lifted.

142. Finally, in conclusion.

143. Garnished.

144. Different, separate.

Importing¹⁴⁵ Denmark's health, and England's too,
 With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,¹⁴⁶
 That on the supervise, no leisure bated,¹⁴⁷
 No, not to stay¹⁴⁸ the grinding¹⁴⁹ of the ax,
 3525 My head should be struck off.

Horatio

Is't possible?

Hamlet

[*Showing a document*] Here's the commission. Read it at more leisure.
 But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

Horatio

I beseech you.

3530 **Hamlet**

Being thus benetted round with villainies—
 Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
 They had begun the play—I sat me¹⁵⁰ down,
 Devised a new commission, wrote it fair.¹⁵¹
 I once did hold¹⁵² it, as our statists¹⁵³ do,
 3535 A baseness¹⁵⁴ to write fair, and labored much
 How to forget that learning, but, sir, now
 It did me yeoman's service.¹⁵⁵ Wilt thou know
 Th'effect of what I wrote?

Horatio

Ay, good my lord.

3540 **Hamlet**

An earnest conjuration¹⁵⁶ from the King,
 As England was his faithful tributary,¹⁵⁷
 As love between them like the palm should flourish,¹⁵⁸
 As peace should still¹⁵⁹ her wheaten garland¹⁶⁰ wear
 And stand a comma¹⁶¹ 'tween their amities,

145. Concerning, relating to.

146. i.e., With all sorts of imagined fanciful terrors if I were allowed to remain alive. ("Bugs" are bugbears, hobgoblins.)

147. That on the reading of this commission, no delay being permitted.

148. Await.

149. Sharpening.

150. Myself.

151. In the formal handwriting used in official documents.

152. Regard.

153. Statesmen.

154. As something beneath my dignity.

155. i.e., It stood me in good stead, by providing me with secretarial handwriting skills.

156. Entreaty.

157. Country obligated to pay tribute money, usually as a result of having been subjugated militarily.

158. The palm branch was traditionally a symbol of festive triumph and flourishing; cf. Psalms, 92:12, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree."

159. Always.

160. A symbol of peace and fruitful plenty.

161. i.e., And stand as a link uniting two entities that, though separate, are closely integrated. A period or semicolon would signify a greater break.

3545 And many suchlike "as"es of great charge,¹⁶²
That on the view and knowing¹⁶³ of these contents,
Without debatement further more or less,¹⁶⁴
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving time allowed.

3550 **Horatio**

How was this sealed?

Hamlet

Why, even in that was heaven ordaint.¹⁶⁵
I had my father's signet¹⁶⁶ in my purse,
Which was the model¹⁶⁷ of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in the form of th'other,¹⁶⁸
3555 Subscribed¹⁶⁹ it, gave't th'impression,¹⁷⁰ placed it safely,
The changeling¹⁷¹ never known. Now the next day
Was our sea fight, and what to this was sequent¹⁷²
Thou know'st already.

Horatio

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

3560 **Hamlet**

Why, man, they did make love to this employment.
They are not near my conscience. Their defeat¹⁷³
Does by their own insinuation¹⁷⁴ grow.
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensèd points
3565 Of mighty opposites.¹⁷⁵

Horatio

Why, what a King is this!

Hamlet

Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon—¹⁷⁶
He that hath killed my King and whored my mother,

162. And many similarly weighty clauses, each introduced (as in formal legal documents or proclamations) by "As" or "Whereas." (With
wordplay on "'as'es" and "asses.")

163. Knowledge.

164. Without any further discussion.

165. Directing, ordaining.

166. Small seal.

167. Duplicate, likeness.

168. Folded the written document just as its predecessor had been folded.

169. Signed (forging the King's name).

170. Sealed it by stamping the official seal into the wax.

171. i.e., The substituted document.

172. Followed.

173. Their destruction.

174. Intrusive intervention, ingratiating themselves with the King by doing his dirty business.

175. i.e., when persons of lower social station and capability come between the deadly and enraged weapon-thrusts of two such mighty
opponents such as the King and Hamlet.

176. Become incumbent on me now.

Popped in between th'election and my hopes,¹⁷⁷
 3570 Thrown out his angle¹⁷⁸ for my proper life,¹⁷⁹
 And with such coz'nage¹⁸⁰ –is't not perfect conscience
 To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damned
 To let this canker of our nature come
 In further evil?¹⁸¹

3575 **Horatio**

It must be shortly known to him from England
 What is the issue of the business there.

Hamlet

It will be short.

The interim's mine, and a man's life's no more
 Than to say one.¹⁸² But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
 3580 That to Laertes I forgot myself,
 For by the image of my cause I see
 The portraiture of his. I'll court his favors.¹⁸³
 But sure the bravery¹⁸⁴ of his grief did put me
 Into a tow'ring passion.

3585 **Horatio**

Peace, who comes here?

Enter young Osric, a courtier.

Osric

Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Hamlet

I humbly thank you, sir. [*Aside to Horatio*] Dost know this water-fly?¹⁸⁵

Horatio

[*Aside to Hamlet*] No, my good lord.

3590 **Hamlet**

[*Aside to Horatio*] Thy state is the more gracious,¹⁸⁶ for 'tis a vice to know
 him. He hath much land, and fertile. Let a beast be lord of beasts, and his

177. i.e., between me and my hopeful expectation of being "elected" to the Danish kingship after the death of my father. Succession to the Danish throne is assumed in this play to have been the choice of a small body of noble electors, like those of the Hapsburg empire or of the papacy. Polonius is presumably such an elector. See lines 274-5 (TLN 3844-5) below, where Hamlet, with his "dying voice," predicts that "th'election" will light on Fortinbras, and 1.2.109 (TLN 291), where Claudius proclaims Hamlet "the most immediate to our throne."

178. Fishing hook and line.

179. My own life.

180. Deception.

181. To allow this ulcerous sore that afflicts human nature commit further evil?

182. Than it takes to count to one.

183. Try to ingratiate myself with Laertes.

184. Extravagance.

185. i.e., a giddy, superficial person.

186. Blessed.

crib shall stand at the King's mess.¹⁸⁷ 'Tis a chuff,¹⁸⁸ but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.¹⁸⁹

3595 **Osric**

Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure,¹⁹⁰ I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Hamlet

I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet¹⁹¹ to his right use. 'Tis for the head.

Osric

I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

3600 **Hamlet**

No, believe me, 'tis very cold. The wind is northerly.

Osric

It is indifferent¹⁹² cold, my lord, indeed.

Hamlet

But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.¹⁹³

3605 **Osric**

Exceedingly, my lord, it is very sultry, as 'twere—I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that 'a has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter—

Hamlet

[Reminding Osric once more about his hat] I beseech you, remember.

3610 **Osric**

Nay, good my lord, for my ease, in good faith.¹⁹⁴ Sir, 3610.1 here is newly come to court Laertes—believe me, an absolute¹⁹⁵ gentlemen, full of most excellent differences,¹⁹⁶ of very soft society¹⁹⁷ and great showing.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, to speak feelingly¹⁹⁹ of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry,²⁰⁰ for you shall find in him the continent of what part a 3610.5 gentleman would see.²⁰¹

Hamlet

Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you,

187. Provided a man, no matter how beastlike, is rich in livestock and possessions (as Osric appears to be), he may eat at the King's meal-table.

(A crib is a manger or trough for feeding livestock.)

188. (1) boor, churl; (2) chatterer, jackdaw.

189. A large landowner.

190. i.e., if you have the time, if I'm not interrupting.

191. Put your hat. Presumably Osric has doffed his hat as a token of respect. Gentleman normally wore hats indoors.

192. Somewhat, rather.

193. Constitution.

194. A polite declining of Hamlet's adjuration to Osric that he put on his hat.

195. Perfect, complete.

196. Superior and distinctive qualities.

197. Agreeable manners.

198. Distinguished appearance.

199. With just perception, appreciatively.

200. The model or paradigm (literally, the map or directory) of good breeding.

201. One who contains in himself all the attributes a gentleman might wish to see. A "continent" is "that which contains."

though I know to divide him inventorially would dazzle
 th'arithmetical of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in
 respect of his quick sail.²⁰² But in the verity of extolment,
 3610.10 I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion
 of such dearth and rareness as, to make true diction of
 him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would
 trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.²⁰³

Osric

Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Hamlet

The concernancy,²⁰⁴ sir? Why do we wrap the gentleman in
 3610.15 our more rawer breath?²⁰⁵

Osric

Sir?

Horatio

[To Hamlet] Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really.²⁰⁶

Hamlet

[To Osric] What imports the nomination²⁰⁷ of this gentleman?

3610.20 **Osric**

Of Laertes?

Horatio

[To Hamlet] His purse is empty already; all's golden words are spent.

Hamlet

[To Osric] Of him, sir.

Osric

I know you are not ignorant—

Hamlet

I would you did, sir. Yet in faith if you did, it would not
 3610.25 much approve me.²⁰⁸ Well, sir?

Osric

Sir, you are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

3612.1 **Hamlet**

I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence. But to know a man well were to
 know himself.²⁰⁹

202. Your characterizing of Laertes's qualities in no way diminishes his excellence, though I know that to enumerate all his graces would stultify one's powers of reckoning, and even so could do no more than veer unsteadily off-course (yaw) in a vain attempt to track the brilliance of his accomplishments. Hamlet words this speech in such a way as to mock Osric's vapid and trendy jargon.
203. But to speak truthful praise of him, I take him to be a person of remarkable substance, one whose essence is of such rarity and excellence that, to speak truly of him, no one can be compared with him other than his own likeness; anyone else attempting to emulate him can only hope to attain the shadow of his substance, not the real thing. More parody on Hamlet's part of Osric's officious flattering mannerisms.
204. Import, relevance.
205. i.e., inelegant speech, more so than can hope to succeed in praising Laertes worthily enough.
206. i.e., (to Hamlet),/ You will truly have your joke at Osric's expense; or (to Osric), You can speak plainly if you just try hard enough.
207. Naming, mention.
208. i.e., I wish you would admit me to be knowledgeable ("not ignorant") in these matters, though, even if you did allow that, it would not be much of a commendation, coming from you.
209. i.e., I dare not claim to know that Laertes is an excellent young man lest I seem to imply a comparable excellence in myself.

Osric

I mean, sir, for his weapon. But in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.²¹⁰
You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is at his weapon.

Hamlet

What's his weapon?

Osric

Rapier and dagger.²¹¹

³⁶¹⁵**Hamlet**

That's two of his weapons—but well.²¹²

Osric

The King, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses,²¹³ against the which he has impawned,²¹⁴ as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards,²¹⁵ with their assigns, as
3620 girdle,²¹⁶ hangers, or so.²¹⁷ Three of the carriages,²¹⁸ in faith, are very dear to fancy,
very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal
conceit.²¹⁹

Hamlet

What call you the carriages?

^{3622.1}**Horatio**

[*To Hamlet*] I knew you must be edified by the margin ere you had done.²²⁰

Osric

The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Hamlet

3625 The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could carry cannon by our sides; I would it might be "hangers" till then.²²¹ But on. Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages: that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this "impawned," as you call it?

³⁶³⁰**Osric**

The King, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall

210. i.e., I mean his excellence with his rapier, not his general excellence. But in the reputation he enjoys among knowledgeable people for use of his weapon, in his merit he is unrivalled.

211. Gentlemanly duellists in the early modern period often fought with a rapier (a straight two-edged fencing weapon with a narrow pointed blade) in one hand and a dagger in the other.

212. But never mind that.

213. Arabian horses, originally from the Barbary region of northern Africa, especially (today) Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

214. Laertes has staked, wagered.

215. Daggers.

216. Sword belt.

217. Strap on the girdle or sword belt from which the sword hung, and so on.

218. Another term for "hangers," straps.

219. Are very appealing to the "fancy" or imagination, decoratively matched as they are with the hilts or the cases for the swords, finely wrought in workmanship, and elaborately designed.

220. I knew you'd need to have the matter explained to you more clearly, as if by an explanatory note (often printed in the margins of books), before you're finished asking about "carriages."

221. Hamlet's satirical point is that the term "carriages" is best reserved for gun carriages on which cannon are mounted, rather than pretentiously applied to mere straps used to hold rapiers and their hilts.

not exceed you three hits. He hath laid on't twelve for nine,²²² and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.²²³

Hamlet

How if I answer no?²²⁴

Osric

I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Hamlet

Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it please his majesty, it is the breathing
3640time of day²²⁵ with me. Let²²⁶ the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

Osric

Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

Hamlet

3645To this effect, sir, after what flourish your nature will.

Osric

I commend my duty²²⁷ to your lordship.

Hamlet

Yours, yours.

[Exit Osric.]

'A does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.²²⁸

Horatio

3650This lapwing²²⁹ runs away with the shell on his head.

Hamlet

'A did comply with his dug²³⁰ before 'a sucked it. Thus has he, and many more of the same bevy that I know the drossy age dotes on, only got the tune
3655of the time and outward habit of encounter, a kind of yeasty collection, which carries them through and through the most fanned and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.²³¹

3657.1Enter a Lord.

Lord

222. Seemingly, the King has "laid" or wagered that, in a dozen "passes" or bouts of fencing, the total number of hits scored by Laertes will not exceed Hamlet's total by three; to win, Laertes would have to win at least eight to Hamlet's four, two to one odds.
223. Be so good as to accept the challenge.
224. By replying in pretended ignorance as though he has been asked for a simple "yes" or "no" answer, Hamlet mischievously refuses to acknowledge that the polite formula in which the challenge has been delivered to him requires that he acquiesce.
225. Time for exercise.
226. i.e., If.
227. I dedicate my service. (A conventionally polite phrase of departure.)
228. i.e., He needs to commend his own virtues; no one else will do it for him.
229. Plover, a wading bird known to flap its wings and scurry about in a wily fashion calculated to draw intruders away from the nest. According to legend, a newly hatched bird was thought to run around with the shell still on its head. Horatio satirically alludes to Osric's fatuous mannerisms and to his confusion about wearing or not wearing his hat.
230. He bowed ceremoniously to his mother's or nurse's breast.
231. Thus has he--and many more of the same sort that our frivolous age dotes on--acquired the trendy manner of speech of the time and formulaic conversation with courtiers of their own kind: a kind of frothy repertoire of current phrases which enables such gallants to pass themselves off as persons of the most select and well-sifted views; and yet do but test these creatures by merely blowing on them, and their bubbles burst.

My lord, his majesty commended him²³² to you by young Osric, who brings back to him that you attend him in the hall. He sends to know if your pleasure hold to play²³³ with Laertes, or that²³⁴ you will take longer time?

Hamlet

I am constant to my purposes; they follow the King's pleasure. If his fitness speaks, mine is ready:²³⁵ now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord

The King and Queen and all are coming down.

^{3657.10}**Hamlet**

In happy time.²³⁶

Lord

The Queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment²³⁷ to Laertes before you fall to play.²³⁸

Hamlet

She well instructs me.

[Exit Lord.]

Horatio

You will lose this wager, my lord.

Hamlet

³⁶⁶⁰I do not think so. Since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds.²³⁹ But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart, but it is no matter.

Horatio

Nay, good my lord—

Hamlet

³⁶⁶⁵It is but foolery, but it is such a kind of gaingiving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Horatio

If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestall their repair²⁴⁰ hither and say you are not fit.

Hamlet

Not a whit,²⁴¹ we defy augury.²⁴² There's a special providence²⁴³ in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, ³⁶⁷⁰it will be now; if

232. Has sent his commendations, his greetings.

233. Fence.

234. Or if.

235. If this suits his convenience, it suits me as well.

236. i.e., They come at an opportune time.

237. Courteous greeting.

238. Begin fencing.

239. According to the wager as defined by the King at line 116 (TLN 3630-2) above, which have given Hamlet favorable odds.

240. Coming.

241. Not at all.

242. i.e., superstition, or hunches. Literally, divination from auspices or omens, such as the flight of birds.

243. Providential direction oversees even the smallest details of human history. Calvinist preachers especially were fond of quoting Christ's teaching in Matthew 10:29: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." See also Matthew 6:28-30: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin . . . Wherefore, if God so clothe the grasses of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all. Since no man has aught
of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?²⁴⁴

3673.1 Let be.²⁴⁵

3675 *Trumpets, drums, and officers with cushions. Enter King, Queen, and Lords [including Laertes and Osric, and all the state], with other Attendants with foils and gauntlets, a table, and flagons of wine on it.*

King

Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[The King puts Laertes's hand into Hamlet's.]

Hamlet

[To Laertes] Give me your pardon, sir. I've done you wrong,

But pardon't as you are a gentleman.

3680 This presence²⁴⁶ knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punished

With a sore distraction.²⁴⁷ What I have done

That might your nature, honor, and exception²⁴⁸

Roughly awake, I hear proclaim was madness.

3685 Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet.

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.

Who does it, then? His madness. If't be so,

3690 Hamlet is of the faction²⁴⁹ that is wronged;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil²⁵⁰

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts

3695 That I have shot my arrow o'er the house

And hurt my brother.²⁵¹

Laertes

I am satisfied in nature,²⁵²

Whose motive²⁵³ in this case should stir me most

To my revenge. But in my terms of honor

3700 I stand aloof, and will²⁵⁴ no reconciliation,

Till by some elder masters of known honor

I have a voice and precedent of peace

244. Being in readiness is the crucially important thing, since no one can truly be said to possess the worldly goods and physicality that must be left behind at the moment of death. Why then should it matter if one must leave those things "betimes," i.e., earlier rather than later?

245. Enough; say no more. Leave things as they are.

246. Royal assembly.

247. Afflicted by a serious mental disturbance.

248. Disapproval, dissatisfaction.

249. Party.

250. Let my denial of having had any evil intention.

251. i.e., comrade, fellow gentleman.

252. i.e., as to my personal feelings.

253. The promptings of which.

254. Desire, will allow.

To keep my name ungor'd.²⁵⁵ But till that time
I do receive your offered love like love,
3705 And will not wrong it.

Hamlet

I do embrace it freely,²⁵⁶
And will this brother's wager frankly play.—
Give us the foils. Come on.

Laertes

Come, one for me.

3710 **Hamlet**

I'll be your foil,²⁵⁷ Laertes. In mine ignorance²⁵⁸
Your skill shall like a star i'th' darkest night
Stick fiery off²⁵⁹ indeed.

Laertes

You mock me, sir.

Hamlet

No, by this hand.

3715 **King**

Give them the foils, young Osric.
[Foil is handed to Hamlet and Laertes.]
Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager.

Hamlet

Very well, my lord.
Your grace has laid the odds o'th' weaker side.²⁶⁰

King

3720 I do not fear it; I have seen you both.
But since he is bettered, we have therefore odds.²⁶¹

Laertes

This is too heavy. Let me see another.
[He exchanges his foil for another.]

Hamlet

3725 This likes²⁶² me well. These foils have all a length?²⁶³

Osric

255. Until by the official judgment of those gentlemen of the court who preside over the duel I can obtain an authoritative pronouncement and previous instance of a similar reconciliation to clear my reputation of any injury. Laertes declares himself ready to let the outcome of the duel determine whether Hamlet has wronged him or not, following the medieval custom of trial by combat.

256. Voluntarily and without ill feeling.

257. Hamlet puns on the term. Literally, a foil is a thin metal background used to set off and enhance the brilliance of a jewel. Hamlet modestly suggests that he will make Laertes look good in fencing by means of a contrasting comparison of the two.

258. i.e., comparative inexperience in fencing. Hamlet's modesty here is polite and tactical.

259. Stand out brilliantly.

260. Bet on the weaker side.

261. i.e., since Laertes is the favored contestant, we have settled on odds according to which Laertes will have to win at least eight of the twelve bouts of fencing to your four (as announced by Osric at line 116 (TLN 3630-2) above).

262. Pleases.

263. Are equal in length.

Ay, my good lord.

[They] prepare to play.

King

Set me the stoups²⁶⁴ of wine upon that table.

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,

Or quit in answer of the third exchange,²⁶⁵

3730 Let all the battlements their ordnance fire.²⁶⁶

The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath,²⁶⁷

And in the cup an union²⁶⁸ shall he throw

Richer then that which four successive kings

3735 In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups,

And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,

The trumpet to the cannoneer²⁶⁹ without,

The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,

"Now the King drinks to Hamlet." Come, begin.

*Trumpets the while.*²⁷⁰

3740 And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Hamlet

Come on, sir.

Laertes

Come, my lord.

They play. [Hamlet scores a hit.]

Hamlet

One.

Laertes

No.

3745 **Hamlet**

[To Osric] Judgment.

Osric

A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laertes

Well, again.

King

Stay.²⁷¹ Give me drink. Hamlet this pearl is thine.

[He drinks, and throws a pearl in Hamlet's cup.]

3750 Here's to thy health.—Give him the cup.

Trumpets sound, and shot goes off.

Hamlet

264. Flagons.

265. Or shows himself a worthy opponent of Laertes by winning on the third exchange.

266. Let the soldiers stationed on the battlements or parapets fire their cannon.

267. Better energy and performance.

268. i.e., pearl.

269. The soldier(s) firing the cannon.

270. The trumpeters sound their trumpets while the King drinks.

271. Stop.

I'll play this bout first. Set it by awhile.
Come. [*They fence.*] Another hit. What say you?

Laertes

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

³⁷⁵⁵**King**

[*To the Queen*] Our son shall win.

Queen

He's fat²⁷² and scant of breath.—

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin,²⁷³ rub thy brows.

[*The Queen takes a cup of wine to offer a toast to Hamlet.*]

The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Hamlet

Good madam.

³⁷⁶⁰**King**

Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen

I will, my lord, I pray you pardon me.

[*She drinks.*]

King

[*Aside*] It is the poisoned cup. It is too late.

Hamlet

³⁷⁶⁵I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

Queen

Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laertes

[*Aside to the King*] My lord, I'll hit him now.

King

[*Aside to Laertes*] I do not think't.

Laertes

[*Aside*] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

³⁷⁷⁰**Hamlet**

Come for the third, Laertes, you do but dally.

I pray you, pass²⁷⁴ with your best violence;

I am afeard you make a wanton of me.²⁷⁵

Laertes

Say you so? Come on.

[*They*] play.

³⁷⁷⁵**Osric**

Nothing neither way.

Laertes

Have at you now!

272. Not physically fit, out of training.

273. Here's a handkerchief.

274. Thrust.

275. I fear you are trifling with me, treating me as if I were a spoiled child.

*[Laertes wounds Hamlet with his unbated rapier.] In scuffling they change rapiers. [Hamlet wounds Laertes.]*²⁷⁶

King

Part them! They are incensed.

Hamlet

Nay, come again.

[Laertes falls down. The Queen falls down.]

³⁷⁸⁰**Osric**

Look to the Queen there, ho!

Horatio

They bleed on both sides. *[To Hamlet]* How is it, my lord?

Osric

How is't, Laertes?

Laertes

Why, as a woodcock to mine own spring,²⁷⁷ Osric;

³⁷⁸⁵I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

Hamlet

How does the Queen?

King

She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen

No, no, the drink, the drink,

O my dear Hamlet, the drink, the drink!

I am poisoned.

[She dies.]

Hamlet

Oh, villainy! Ho! Let the door be locked.

Treachery! Seek it out.

[Exit Osric.]

Laertes

It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain.

³⁷⁹⁵No med'cine in the world can do thee good;

In thee there is not half an hour of life.

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated²⁷⁸ and envenomed. The foul practice²⁷⁹

Hath turned itself on me. Lo, here I lie

³⁸⁰⁰Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned.

I can no more. The King, the King's to blame.

Hamlet

The point envenomed too? Then, venom, to thy work.

[He] hurts the King.

276. Though Hamlet presumably does not know that Laertes's sword is also tipped with poison, the poison does its work on Laertes, who realizes that he is "justly killed" with his own treachery (line 227, TLN 3785).

277. I am like that proverbially stupid bird, the woodcock, caught in my own trap.

278. Not blunted with a button.

279. Plot, stratagem.

3805**All**

Treason, treason!

King

Oh, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

Hamlet

[Forcing the King to drink] Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous,
damnèd Dane,

Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?

3810Follow my mother.

The King dies.

Laertes

He is justly served.

It is a poison tempered²⁸⁰ by himself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

3815Nor thine on me!

[He] dies.

Hamlet

Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched Queen, adieu.

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mutes or audience to this act,

3820Had I but time, as this fell sergeant Death

Is strict in his arrest, oh, I could tell you—

But let it be. Horatio, I am dead,

Thou liv'st. Report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

3825**Horatio**

Never believe it.

I am more an antique Roman²⁸¹ than a Dane.

Here's yet some liquor left.

[He attempts to drink from the poisoned cup, but is prevented by Hamlet.]

Hamlet

As thou'rt a man,

Give me the cup! Let go! By heaven I'll ha't.

3830Oh, God, Horatio, what a wounded name,

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

Absent thee from felicity awhile,

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain

3835To tell my story.

March afar off, and shout within.

What warlike noise is this?

Enter Osric.

280. Mixed.

281. i.e., one who embraces death, if necessary by suicide, before dishonor.

Osric

Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
 3840 To th'ambassadors of England gives this warlike volley.²⁸²

Hamlet

Oh, I die, Horatio.

The potent poison quite o'ercrows²⁸³ my spirit.

I cannot live to hear the news from England,

But I do prophesy th'election lights

3845 On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice.²⁸⁴

So tell him, with th'occurents²⁸⁵ more and less

Which have solicited.²⁸⁶ The rest is silence.

Oh, oh, oh, oh!

[He] dies.

Horatio

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,

3850 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

[March within.]

Why does the drum come hither?

Enter Fortinbras and the English Ambassadors, with Drum, Colors, and Attendants.

Fortinbras

Where is this sight?

3855 **Horatio**

What is it ye would see?

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

Fortinbras

This quarry cries on havoc.²⁸⁷ O proud Death,

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,²⁸⁸

That thou so many princes at a shot

3860 So bloodily hast struck?

Ambassador

The sight is dismal,

And our affairs from England come too late.

The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,

To tell him his commandment is fulfilled,

3865 That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.

Where should we have our thanks?

Horatio

282. Simultaneous firing of weapons in a military salute.

283. Proclaims triumph over (like the winner of a cockfight).

284. Vote (in "th'election" referred to in the previous line). As crown prince and one who was named successor to the throne by Claudius, Hamlet has a presumed right to be one of the electors of the royal succession.

285. The events of greater or lesser importance.

286. Moved, urged (me in what I have done or attempted, and in my wish to support the succession of Fortinbras to the throne).

287. This heap of corpses (literally, slaughtered game) loudly proclaims a general slaughter. "Cry havoc" in battle is the signal for pillage, slaughter, and a total laying waste.

288. O thou insolent and mighty Death, what feasting on the slain is being prepared in your everlasting dwelling place.

Not from his mouth,
 Had it th'ability of life to thank you;
 He never gave commandment for their death.
 3870But since so jump upon this bloody question²⁸⁹
 You from the Polack wars and you from England
 Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
 High on a stage be placèd the view,
 And let me speak to th'yet unknowing world
 3875How these things came about. So shall you hear
 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
 Of accidental judgments,²⁹⁰ casual²⁹¹ slaughters,
 Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,²⁹²
 And in this upshot, purposes mistook
 3880Fall'n on th'inventors' heads. All this can I
 Truly deliver.²⁹³

Fortinbras

Let us haste to hear it,
 And call the noblest to the audience.
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune.
 3885I have some rights of memory²⁹⁴ in this kingdom,
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.²⁹⁵

Horatio

Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
 3890And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more.
 But let this same be presently²⁹⁶ performed,
 Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance
 On plots²⁹⁷ and errors happen.

3895**Fortinbras**

Let four captains
 Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
 For he was likely, had he been put on,²⁹⁸
 To have proved most royal; and for his passage,
 3900The soldiers' music and the rites of war
 Speak²⁹⁹ loudly for him.
 Take up the body. Such a sight as this
 Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
 Go bid the soldiers shoot.

289. So hard on the heels of this bloody business.

290. Retributive acts brought about by accident (such as the death of Polonius).

291. Chance.

292. Of deaths gratuitously instigated by cunning stratagems and contrivances.

293. Report.

294. Claims that must not be forgotten.

295. Which my favorable position and opportunity now invite met to claim.

296. Immediately.

297. On top of plots.

298. Invested in royal office and thereby given the opportunity to prove what sort of ruler he would be.

299. (Let the beating drums) speak.

3905 *Exeunt marching, after the which a peal of ordnance are shot off.*
FINIS

65.

Hamlet: Study Guide

First, browse the award-winning website maintained by the University of Victoria. It is a very useful resource for the study of Shakespeare's plays.

[Internet Shakespeare Editions: Hamlet, Prince of Denmark](#)

Ideally, before beginning your study of *Hamlet*, you should view the entire *Hamlet* video, available in various versions at most public libraries and on the main video streaming sites.

Now let's begin our study of *Hamlet*.

Background

Notice that, although the play is set in Denmark, the characters would dress in English costumes, just as they would have in a Roman play such as *Julius Caesar*, with no togas, just English Elizabethan costumes.

First, some necessary background. The following table shows major binaries in *Hamlet*. The two columns, beginning with nature vs. grace are important for an understanding of the intellectual background to all Shakespeare's tragedies.

Mighty Opposites from Sonnets through Tragedies

Negative binary	Positive binary
Nature	Grace
Fallen world	Redeemed time
Unweeded garden	Eden
Time	Eternity
City, court	Green world: Forest of Arden
Money, sex, power	Unworldliness
Goddess Fortuna	Transcendent (this binary links to service theme)
Illusion	Truth
Cupidity	Charity
Disorder	Order
Ambition	Chain of being
Shadow	Substance
Passive virtue	Active virtue
Darkness	Light
Intemperance	Temperance
Euphemism	Plain language

Shakespeare's was a Christian society, and educated people accepted the traditional way of looking at the universe: human history began as a direct result of Adam and Eve's sin of disobedience. Prior to that sin, they inhabited an eternal spring in Eden—the changeless utopian realm of harmony. With their sin, nature fell with them. The result was that the realm of Nature was removed from Grace, and only through the intervention of Christ on behalf of fallen humanity could people hope to return to the state of grace. Earth became a battleground between those who try to uphold **virtue** vs. those who practice **vice**.

The terms on the left-hand (Nature) side of the table represent negative binaries: Denmark, like Eden, becomes an **unweeded garden**. You should try to find out what changed Hamlet's view of Denmark from a once-virtuous state into a place where something is rotten.

Typically in Shakespeare, the country was deemed to be closer to virtue than the city, the seat of power and upward mobility. The king held his court in the city, and those wishing to rise had to adopt the values of court. So the Court is the realm of money, sex, power, whereas the country suggests unworldliness. A typical symbol of this virtuous, utopian (because it is non-materialistic) green world is presented in the comedy *As You Like It* as the Forest of Arden.

The corrupt, fallen world pays allegiance to the Goddess Fortuna (a mythological figure, still current in our society. One thinks of the game show *Wheel of Fortune*). Most of the characters in *Hamlet* can be described as either those who serve **Fortune** (or time, hence time-servers) and those who opt to

serve the **Transcendent** (God, eternal values such as love). In the fallen world, unlike in Eternity, perception is never simple, because those who are seeking worldly advancement tend to employ deception; for example, they often lie or pretend to be something they are not. Thus, the fog in Act 1 serves as a metaphor for the fallen world and the difficulty people have in penetrating through appearances to find the reality.

As the play starts, Hamlet is aware of a change from his late father's open ways to the often devious ways of his uncle, the usurper King Claudius, and of his chief adviser, Polonius.

Act Notes

In *Hamlet*, the text invites us to structure the conflict as Hamlet vs. Claudius, “mighty opposites.” The play breaks into two opposed camps, with the Claudian group on the left outnumbering the Hamlet group on the right:

- Claudius vs. Hamlet
- Rosencrantz and Guildenstern vs. Horatio
- Osric vs. Hamlet Sr.
- Polonius vs. Fortinbras

Note that Ophelia and Gertrude do not quite fit either camp, though Ophelia actually fits squarely into the Hamlet camp in her true nature, while Gertrude moves out of Claudius's orbit towards the end, after the closet scene (3.4).

A key to understanding *Hamlet* is to focus on the conflict between two kinds of **service**: one must choose between serving the “corrupt times” or else serving the transcendent. Most of the main characters either serve “time,” i.e., the materialistic world, or else they choose to serve the opposite: the TRANSCENDENT. More simply put, this conflict is the immoral vs. the moral.

In this context, two important plot/characterization elements need to be considered in terms of the oppositions between TIME-SERVERS vs. SERVANTS of GRACE and THE TRANSCENDENT/DIVINE. First, we should try to understand why Hamlet treats Ophelia, the woman he loved, so cruelly. Next, we should try to understand why Hamlet allows his erstwhile friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to go to their deaths. Wrongly or rightly, Hamlet views all three as time-servers; he believes that all three defile or betray love. Ophelia's behaviour towards Hamlet disillusioned him. He is unaware that Ophelia is merely following her father Polonius's orders when she returns his ardent love letters and denies him all further access to her. He concludes that she was merely pretending to be in love with him. But since her seeming coldness towards him is not acted on stage, but merely reported by Hamlet, the reader may not grasp just why Hamlet turns against her. Then, too, Hamlet's disillusion with Ophelia is aggravated by his feeling that his mother was also incapable of constancy towards her first husband, Hamlet Sr. Hamlet is mistaken about Ophelia, but correct in his assessment of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's alleged love for Hamlet. He soon regards them as mere time-servers, pawns of King Claudius. Hamlet concludes (rightly) that they are all too willing to betray their friend and the bonds of friendship in return for personal advancement.

In order to comprehend Hamlet's behaviour, we should notice that it is grounded upon what he considers his divinely appointed fate to serve as God's agent, one who must not condone, but punish the actions of the various time-servers in the play: “... heaven hath pleased it so / To punish me with

this ... / That I must be their¹ scourge² and minister³.” Hamlet soon embarks on a course of action to correct or “redeem” fallen nature. The corrupt “pursy” times need correction. The rare virtuous individual can help set the times aright.

Act 1

Scene 1

Act 1, scene 1 begins on the ramparts of Elsinore, the site of the Danish court. The dominant images in this scene suggest the Fallen World. Elsinore is dark and foggy. The fog suggests uncertain perception. It is midnight, the witching hour, and the guards feel sick at heart. When Hamlet’s true friend Horatio first sees Hamlet’s ghost, he cries out, “Stay illusion” (1.127). Horatio knows that perceptions can be untrustworthy—the fog and darkness are fitting images for the present world of Denmark, described by Hamlet as a “prison.” In this first scene, we learn that Denmark is on a war footing—Hamlet Sr. was a representative of the old heraldic, chivalric ordered world. He fought and defeated fairly Fortinbras Sr., King of Norway, and thereby won his lands legally. We soon learn that the late king of Norway’s son Fortinbras has decided to win back Norway’s lost land as a point of chivalric honour, and that he is preparing to attack Denmark.

You might ask whether the ghost is a good or an evil spirit. He appears to shun the image of grace—the cock crowing (it was a Christian belief that the cock, the watch-bird placed on church spires, was sacred). The uncertainty about the ghost is the main reason for Hamlet’s delay in attacking the usurper King Claudius. He needs proof that Claudius murdered his father before he sets about acting as God’s scourge and minister.

Scene 2

Act 1, scene 2 takes place in King Claudius’s illegal court. (Illegal because he usurped the throne.) In this scene, notice his preparedness for war with Norway; he is capable of playing the role of a legitimate king. His first speech is very much official and ceremonial. His language is highly rhetorical. He refers to the recent death of his brother, King Hamlet, and speaks of this “warlike state.” However, he attempts diplomacy as a way of checking the military goals of young Fortinbras (who, like young Hamlet, has lost a father and will attempt to avenge that loss). Claudius writes to the old King of Norway, asking him to check young Fortinbras.

After giving Polonius’s son Laertes leave to return to France, he addresses Hamlet as his son, but in an aside,⁴ Hamlet says, “A little more than kin, and less than kind,” meaning he does not feel kindly towards Claudius. King Claudius does not want Hamlet to continue mourning, but when his mother, Queen Gertrude, asks him to “cast thy nighted color off” (Hamlet is traditionally played in this scene wearing black), insisting that he is being excessive in his grief and reminding him that it is “common” knowledge that the living must eventually die, Hamlet seizes upon her word “common,” saying, “Ay, madam, it is common,” thereby implying that she has behaved commonly or in a way unbecoming a queen. Hamlet implicitly accuses Gertrude of hypocrisy and deceit as he throws her word “seems” back

1. the heavens’ or God’s

2. punisher

3. divine agent

4. An aside is a conventional way of conveying that the words are not meant to be heard by others on stage.

at her: Hamlet says, “‘Seems,’ madam? Nay, it is. I know not ‘seems’” (1.2.257). His feelings are sincere; her feelings of grief were mere pretense, play-acting. He insists his black mourning garments alone cannot convey the sincerity of his grief—clothes are merely external, but his inner feelings are sincere, unlike the “suits of woe.” Hamlet would prefer, like Laertes, to leave Denmark, but grudgingly accepts his mother’s request that he stay, stating pointedly, “I shall in all my best obey *you*, madam,” thereby excluding Claudius. The scene ends with Hamlet’s reference to Denmark as an “unweeded garden” (1.2.319). His world is a fallen one. Eden has become a jungle where “things rank and gross” (i.e., Claudius) possess it (320). His ensuing soliloquy bitterly contrasts his late father, King Hamlet, as a sun god in relation to his goat-like uncle, the new king. Perhaps Hamlet exaggerates the period of mourning, collapsing it into “a month,” but he cannot forgive his mother for rushing into another marriage so quickly, accusing her of womanly frailty. To Hamlet, this fallen world values a demi-goat (satyr) like Claudius more than a god-like king (Hamlet Sr.). The scene ends when his friend Horatio informs Hamlet that his father’s ghost has just appeared, and Hamlet immediately assumes that the sudden appearance of his father’s ghost means that all is not well. He suspects foul play, observing that foul deeds cannot be covered up indefinitely—evil will out.

Act 2

Scene 1

Typically, Polonius, the King’s chief adviser, spies on people. This time, he spies on his son, and his *modus operandi* is “by indirections, [to] find directions out” (2.1.958). In other words, he is the opposite of direct. He snoops, he infers, but he does not ask direct questions. He relies on “intelligence.”

Notice in the latter part of 2.1, Ophelia tells Polonius of Hamlet’s “perusal of her face / As he would draw it” (987). What is significant about Hamlet’s keeping his eyes fixed on her as he backs away out of the room? Might he not be emphasizing the extreme difficulty of perceiving people’s real nature in this fallen world?⁵ Polonius concludes that Hamlet’s bizarre behaviour is proof that he is mad as the result of unrequited love for his daughter. Polonius kicks himself for being too clever by half, and for assuming Hamlet was merely leading his daughter on (l. 1009–11). But is Hamlet really mad here? In any case, Ophelia makes it clear that she followed her father’s commands and denied access to Hamlet as well as returned his letters. This is proof to Hamlet that she was merely pretending to love him, and so Hamlet concludes that both women—his mother and the object of his love, Ophelia—substitute the appearance of love for its reality.

Scene 2

Hamlet meets his old university friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in this scene. When Hamlet greets them, they pretend indifference to the Goddess Fortuna. The repartee degenerates into a sexual joke, “her privates we” (1279). Hamlet says, “She is a strumpet.” Why does Hamlet describe the goddess Fortune as a whore? Because she is fickle, she dumps all, and fortune’s wheel turns. Hamlet implies that, in a world governed by Fortune, everything is for sale to the highest bidder. This explains the high frequency of prostitution images: love, like everything else, is for sale, as opposed to ideal

5. Compare King Duncan to Macbeth, referring to The Thane of Cawdor’s treason: “There’s no art / To find the mind’s construction in the face. / He was a gentleman on whom I built / An absolute trust (*Macbeth* 1.4.12–15).

love as described in Shakespeare's Sonnet 116: "Love's not time's fool." To Hamlet, if the world's grown honest, then doomsday must be upon us ... It would take something as momentous as the Last Judgment for the world to become honest. (Note also the meaning of "honest" as "chaste," "faithful"—cf. Hamlet to Ophelia "Are you honest?" (3.1.1758).)

Now look back to 2.2.1230 as Hamlet reflects to Polonius upon "Words, words, words ..." Hamlet is disillusioned by evidence of false, insincere language: his mother has shown herself untrue to her word about fidelity towards her first husband, Hamlet Sr., and because Ophelia returns his letters, Hamlet now views her as untrue to him. Hamlet focuses on Polonius's obliquity, indirectness, lies. Polonius, the trusted political adviser, even lies about his own son and thinks the worst of Hamlet's motives. Not surprisingly, Hamlet is now convinced that all are materialists, sensualists. He adopts a **satiric** mode in his conversation with Polonius: Hamlet's satire on falsehood—"Slanders—the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards"—is his *reductio ad absurdum* (2.2.1235 ff.). He labels as satire the basic truth that old men have gray beards, but in a world given over to topsy-turvydom, black equals white; then Plain truth is viewed as a lie. Hamlet is holding up the mirror to nature as it should be: where words are true tender, not something to be manipulated for gain as they habitually are for Laertes, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern. (See Polonius's punning on "tender" in his speech to Ophelia—"You have taken these tenders for true Pay / Which are not sterling" (1.3.569 ff.).)

Now let's return to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet tells them that "Denmark's a prison" (2.2.1289). Rosencrantz replies: "We think not so, my lord." As in 3.3, Hamlet focuses on the **literal** meaning of words. Hamlet says, "Why, then 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so" (2.2.1295). This is a key speech. To Hamlet, the criterion for proper human behaviour is the thoughtful application of moral law. He chooses to live in a **moral** as opposed to a **relativistic** universe. Faced, like Falstaff, with a vision of Nature in red with tooth and claw, he recoils and gives his allegiance to those who also seek something higher, like his sincere friend Horatio. The upright Horatio would never justify theft as Falstaff does ("If the young dace be a fair bait for the old Pike / I see no reason in the law of nature / But that I may snap at him" (2 *Henry IV*)). This is the kind of fallen, corrupt world of self-interest to which most give allegiance: Claudius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the young courtier Osric, and Polonius.

Hamlet's seeming digression on acting in 2.2.1392 ff. relates to the theme of fashion lowering standards of acting. Trendy, fashionable child actors are now applauded for crying out their lines. Hamlet takes up his attack on trendy art again in 3.2. Hamlet's advice to the players at the start of 3.2 is central to the play's meaning and not a digression. Actors should be the abstract and chronicles of the times (1565). Here Hamlet refers to Aristotle's **mimesis**—drama should "hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature" (1870 ff.). Its purpose is a moral one, concerning ethics: it should depict and praise virtue, and depict and scorn vice. "Use every man after his own desert, and who shall scape whipping?"—He insists on fallen nature, but also on gracious forgiveness. By the end of Act Two, Hamlet's plot to trap the King is hatched. "The Play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king."

Act 3

Scene 1

Polonius gets his daughter Ophelia to feign devotion. He tells her to read this holy book "to color your loneliness"—i.e., to make your solitary walk more plausible to Hamlet. She allows herself to be the means of spying on Hamlet. Ophelia is too Passive, her virtue is a fugitive and cloistered one. She is

Passive to a fault. Later, when speaking to the king, Polonius refers to the prevalence of hypocrisy: “We are oft to blame in this, / Tis too much proved, that with devotion’s visage / ... we do sugar o’er the devil himself” (ll. 1698–1700). Claudius responds to these lines by referring to his own guilty conscience in this scene: “How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience! / The harlot’s cheek, beautified with plast’ring art, / Is not more ugly ... Than is my deed to my most painted word” (1702–06). Notice again another reference to false language—painted words. As the king and Polonius hide in order to eavesdrop on Hamlet, Hamlet begins his famous soliloquy in 3.1.

His “To be or not to be” (1710 ff.) soliloquy is a response to his awareness of a fallen world. How should he respond? Should he give up and just commit suicide? He comes across Ophelia and asks, “Are you honest, fair?” (1758). Again, he focuses on the literal meaning of his words. She seemed honest (faithful), but has proven untrue—she has denied him access; now she returns his love letters. He denies giving her anything—i.e., “the Person you now are, the Person you are proving yourself to be—not his idealized woman. In 3.1.96: “I never gave you aught (anything)” (1751)—and that is just what Hamlet means: he is referring to the woman she is now, not the woman he thought she was in the past.

The Power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty unto his likeness. That is, physical beauty is more capable (in this fallen world) of corrupting innocence than the other way around—honesty is less able to urge beauty on to virtue. This was Sometime (once) a Paradox (lie), but now the time gives it proof. “I did love you once ... I loved you not” (1773). Again he refers to the ideal. Note how Hamlet, we are told, stared at Ophelia in his earlier mad scene. He stares because he now sees her as traitor to love and truth when she gives back his love letters. Virtue will be blighted in the fallen world, so Hamlet urges her to flee from this corrupt world: “Get thee to a nunnery” (138)—a refuge because Carnality is the dominant force. He now mordantly advises her that, if she must marry, then marry an imperceptive man, for wise men know what monsters (cuckolds) you make of them. A cuckold is a man with the goat’s horns—therefore a monster. Wise men who know the truth about women have no illusions about their lechery.

Scene 2

This scene contains Hamlet’s advice to the travelling actors or “players.” His speech to the players is a thematic crux, and it alludes to the motto of Shakespeare’s own Globe Theatre: *Totus mundus agit histrionem*—all the world’s a stage. Hamlet’s advice to the players (1849 ff.) is richly symbolic: don’t overact, acquire temperance—self-restraint, control your Passions. Find the middle way, the *via media*. Be not too tame, neither; don’t be too Passive.

The purpose of playing (acting) is ethical: to show **virtue** her own feature, **scorn** (or vice) her own image. (cf. Aristotle’s **mimesis**). This is exactly what Hamlet does a few lines later in this scene: He paints a verbal portrait of the virtuous man, Horatio (3.2.1904): “Horatio, thou art e’en as just a man / As e’er my conversation coped withal.”

Clearly, Horatio is exempt from Hamlet’s comment that some players “imitate humanity so abominably.” Polonius is like the clown who interferes with a necessary question of the play (life). Horatio is the temperate man, not a pipe for Fortune’s finger (cf. the same image used by Hamlet earlier for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who would try to play him like a pipe. Hamlet satirizes this attempt by giving Rosencrantz the pipe to play.)

Now in 3.2.1966, immediately after praising virtue, Hamlet shows **scorn** to vice: this is Hamlet’s

sardonic satire on the inconstant love of two women, Ophelia and Gertrude. Their love is now seen to be debased to mere sexuality and sale.

Before the play, “The Mousetrap,” Hamlet lies beside Ophelia, and she embarrassedly says, “You are keen⁶ my lord ...” (2116). Hamlet replies, “It would cost you a groaning to take my edge off”—notice the sexually gross language that Hamlet uses with her (3.2.2117). Why? Hamlet is now playing the role of the denizen of a brothel. Even the Player King/Queen speeches here reiterate this theme of inconstancy, fickleness.

The battle lines are now drawn. Hamlet and Horatio have seen Claudius’s conscience smarting. He cannot view the depiction of a husband being murdered, and he must get away from the play. Now Hamlet mocks Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He asks Rosencrantz, “Have you any further **trade** with **us**?” (3.2.2203)—note the distance, the coldness now that Hamlet chooses to use the royal “we” to his former friends. Here Hamlet mocks what moderns would now call Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s Skinnerian, behaviorist conception of humanity. “You would play upon me ... heart of my mystery” (2237 ff.). Hamlet, an anti-materialist, sees more than just stimulus–response (money, sex, power) governing human relations.

Scene 3

In this crucial soliloquy, Claudius admits that he murdered Hamlet’s father: “O my offense is **rank**.⁷ It smells to heaven” (2312 ff.). Claudius here reveals a conscience, yet he nevertheless sticks to his materialistic course. Claudius pretends to ask for grace, but doesn’t really want it. “My words fly up; my thoughts remain below” (2372).

Scene 4

Hamlet storms into Queen Gertrude’s bedchamber. Hamlet tells Gertrude, “I [will] set you up a glass⁸ where you may see the inmost part of you” (2399). His verbal portrait elicits shame in his mother (3.4.2464–67). Note the dynamics of this scene: it starts with Gertrude initially on the offensive, but Hamlet invokes traditional ethics—he entreats his mother to repeat virtue (sexual abstinence) until it becomes habitual. “Forgive me this my virtue. For in the fatness of these pury times / Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg” (2535–6). Note the garden and weed imagery, which suggests the fallen world of nature. Hamlet now sees himself as Heaven’s “scourge and minister” (3.4.2551). You should look carefully at the editor’s gloss for both words.

Act 4

Notice that in 4.2, Hamlet is even more openly contemptuous of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: Rosencrantz is a mere sponge. In 4.3, Hamlet here uses a key image: one to which he will return in the graveyard scene at Act 5.1. Here he points out that “your fat king and your lean beggar” (2693) are equal in that, after death, they both become food for worms. So he stresses here and in the graveyard scene the futility of attaining worldly power.

In Hamlet’s soliloquy in 4.4, he states that the purpose of life is to serve honorably the transcendent

6. Note double meaning—eager, but also sexually excited.

7. Recall Hamlet’s speech at 1.2.320: “Things *rank* and gross in nature possess it merely”

8. mirror

realm: “What is man / If his chief good and market of his time / Be but to sleep and feed?” Contrasting his own delay in seeking revenge, unlike Fortinbras, he now commits to revenge. In Act 4, scene 5, Ophelia utters the line, “We know not what we may be.” This fatalistic, deterministic line reminds us of her Passive, rather than Active virtue. Her bawdy jingle: “Young men will do’t if they come to it / By cock they are to blame” (2799) points to the fallen world: it is an appetitive world. Laertes rants and threatens the king, whom he blames for the death of his father, Polonius. Hamlet later satirically imitates Laertes’s intemperate rant by jumping into the grave, just as he later parodies Osric’s sycophancy by imitating his speech patterns in Act 5 as well. In both instances, Hamlet, through exaggerated imitation or parody, is again holding the mirror up to human nature and showing vice its own ugliness.

In Act 4.7, while speaking with Laertes, Claudius gives his view of love. His view is the opposite to that of Hamlet and matches Shakespeare’s Sonnet 116: “Let me not to the marriage of true minds / Admit impediments” Essentially, Claudius says that love IS time’s fool: “Time qualifies the spark and fire of it. / There lives within the very flame of love / A kind of ... snuff that will abate it” (3110 ff.). Thus, by implying that Laertes might be insincere in his professions of love for his dead father, Claudius tricks him into trying to murder Hamlet to avenge the death of Polonius.

Act 5

Scene 1

In the graveyard scene, note the imagery Hamlet uses in this scene from lines 3267 onward. The lawyer, this “great buyer of land” (3295) is reduced to skulls filled with dirt. Notice Hamlet’s contempt for the worldly, or *contemptus mundi*: “Now get you to my lady’s chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor [skull] she must come. Make her laugh at that” (3382). Here Hamlet stresses the futility of time-service and the quest for money and power. Note the fate of Alexander the Great, who once conquered the known world: now he is mud to stop a bung hole in a barrel. Compare this cyclic image to that which he uttered in 4.3.2693. Hamlet then mocks Laertes’s bombast at Ophelia’s grave.

Scene 2

“There’s a divinity that shapes our ends / Rough hew them how we will” (3509). Here Hamlet suggests that human beings can take up an opportunity for partnership with the divine. Rashness becomes a good thing when our deep plots (planning) do pall. Hamlet realizes that his opportunity to embrace a transcendent moment (the right time) has arrived. His will be an Active virtue. Notice that Hamlet here uses imagery from drama. He speaks of scripting his own action: “Being thus benetted round with villainies / Ere I could make a prologue to my brains, / They⁹ had begun the play—I sat me down, / Devised a new commission, wrote it fair” (3530–3534). Notice again the metaphor of life as a kind of play, one with ethical significance. He creates action himself, writes a new letter commanding the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. “Tis dangerous when the baser nature¹⁰ comes between the pass and fell incensed points / Of mighty opposites” (5.2.3563–65). What two characters are the “mighty opposites”?

9. his enemies Claudius and his followers

10. i.e., Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

Now we are introduced to Osric. Like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, he is a courtier, a time-server. Hamlet contemptuously refers to him as a “Waterfly ... He hath much land ... dirt.” Hamlet contemptuously refers to that which shows Osric’s wealth—land—which he again describes as mere dirt (5.2.3588). Hamlet bitterly observes, “Let a beast / be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the King’s mess” (3591–3592). Power and wealth are always obeyed in the fallen world. Hamlet’s final putdown of Osric: “He did comply with his dug before he sucked it” (3651). What does this amusing line mean? How does it relate to the dominant theme of obsequious compliance with the powerful’s wishes?

Immediately before Hamlet’s climactic confrontation with Laertes, whose sword Claudius has tipped with poison so that Hamlet will die if touched, Hamlet says, “The readiness is all” (3668 ff.). Horatio had just urged Hamlet not to continue the bout if he felt any misgivings about the outcome, but Hamlet is now committed to his course of action. One thinks here of Hemingway’s “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” and the big-game hunter Wilson’s quotation from Shakespeare’s *2 Henry IV* just before he confronts a potentially dangerous wild animal: “By my troth, I care not, a man can die but once. We / owe god a death ... an it be my / destiny, so; an’t be not, so. No man’s too good to serve his prince¹¹, / and let it go which way it will, he that dies this year is quit for / the next” (*2 Henry IV*, 3.2.216 ff.). Here, it is helpful to read the definition of “readiness”: “Promptness in voluntary action, prompt compliance, willingness” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Now Hamlet has committed himself to serving the transcendent. He is mortally wounded by Laertes’s sword and turns it upon Laertes, who also dies. But before his own death from drinking the wine that was poisoned, Gertrude, who had first drunk the wine destined for Hamlet, warns Hamlet that the wine was poisoned. Hamlet now realizes that Claudius is the poisoner and runs him through with the poisoned sword, killing him. Before Hamlet dies, he asks Horatio to convey Hamlet’s vote for Fortinbras as the next King of Denmark, thereby ensuring that an honorable, incorruptible king will govern.

Like most tragic heroes, Hamlet is something of a tragic scapegoat. Note that the Greek root of tragedy is “tragos” (goat) + “aeidein” (to sing), thus “goat song.” This tragic hero chooses to die in order to ensure that the kingdom will flourish.

Prose Paraphrase Exercises

Paraphrase each of Shakespeare’s mostly blank verse speeches (i.e., put a given speech into your own words without avoiding the hard bits). Here is an example:

Marcellus in Act 1, Scene 1, lines 32–38.¹²

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him,
Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us.
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night,

11. God

12. This can also be written as 1.1.32–38.

That if again this apparition come
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

Paraphrase

Horatio¹³ says that the ghost is just in our imaginations, and he won't let himself be persuaded by what Barnardo and I have already seen twice. So I have urged him to come along and stand guard with us tonight, so that if this ghost reappears, he can witness it with us and speak to the ghost.

As you know, I'm suggesting that the fog imagery in Act 1 immediately sets up the Illusion vs. Truth binary that parallels Nature vs. Grace; that is, just as fog makes our immediate sense perceptions, at best, iffy, so too does the fallen world mean that people don't always speak or behave sincerely. They cover up their real emotions and motives. It is hard, therefore, to be certain about our judgments. This is the kind of world Hamlet feels himself all of a sudden to be inhabiting.

Now, paraphrase these speeches. Number 7 has been paraphrased for you. See if you agree.

1. Marcellus, "Good now ... that can inform me" (1.1.86–95).
2. Horatio, "That can I ... rummage in the land" (1.1.96–124).
3. Horatio, "A mote it is ... Stay, illusion!" (1.1.124.5–127).
4. King Claudius, "Though yet of Hamlet ... taken to wife." (1.2.179–192).
5. Queen Gertrude and Hamlet, "Good Hamlet ... denote me truly" (1.2.248–264). (Say what he means by "Ay, it is common.")
6. Hamlet, "Oh, that this too ... hold my tongue" (1.2.313–343).
7. Hamlet, "Thrift thrift ... marriage tables" (1.2.368–369):
 - "The royal couple, keeping to their household budget, put food wrap over the leftover funeral dishes and served them cold at the wedding banquet."¹⁴
8. Hamlet, "My father's spirit ... to men's eyes" (1.2.456–459).¹⁵
9. Laertes, "For nature ... none else near" (1.3.474–507).
10. Ophelia, "I shall ... own rede" (1.3.508–514).
11. Polonius, "Do not believe ... Come your ways" (1.3.593–601).
12. Hamlet Sr. (Ghost), "Thus was I ... incest" (1.5.759–768).
13. Hamlet, "O all you ... Remember thee?" (1.5.777–782).
14. Ophelia and Polonius, "My Lord ... light on me" (2.1.973–997).

13. Horatio is well named—note that the last part of his name, "ratio," is Latin for reason. Horatio is the skeptical, rational one, it would appear.

14. Thrift often had the negative connotation of selfish behaviour in Shakespeare's day. Hamlet's ironic speech, pretending approval, is a cut at his mother and stepfather, cynically emphasizing the unseemly haste of his mother's remarrying.

15. Notice throughout Act 1, so far, the constant jostling to pierce through to the truth.

Be sure to look at the footnotes in your edition. It takes some practice, but the footnote next to a word means that the editor thinks you will need help interpreting a word or phrase. Your own dictionary will help, but remember, Shakespeare's diction is not easy to follow at first. But it gets easier as you read further.

Additional Resources

The British Library has posted a number of excellent units on *Hamlet*. Please browse any of these these topics:

- [Hamlet: The Play within the Play](#)
- [Teacher's Notes — Theme: Ophelia, Gender, and Madness \[PDF\]](#)
- [Ophelia, gender and madness](#)
- [Character Analysis: Gertrude in Hamlet](#)
- [Hamlet and Revenge](#)

66.

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)



Biography

Oscar Wilde, the son of an eminent Dublin surgeon, stands out among the fraternity of Victorian dramatists, which includes fellow-Irishman Dion Boucicault (1820–1890), James Robinson Planché (1796–1880), Tom Robertson (1829–1871), Tom Taylor (1817–1880), W.S. Gilbert (1836–1911), and Arthur Wing Pinero (1859–1934). After studying at Trinity College, Dublin, Wilde attended Magdalen College, Oxford, where as a disciple of Walter Pater, he participated in the Aesthetic Movement, which advocated “art for art’s sake.” His aesthetic idiosyncrasies (such as his wearing his hair long, dressing colourfully, and carrying flowers while lecturing) were parodied by Gilbert and Sullivan in their operetta *Patience* (1881), for which Wilde acted as a “front man” by delivering lectures on aestheticism in advance of the road tour of the operetta.

After his marriage to Constance Lloyd in 1884, Wilde published several children’s books, and in 1891 the tale of a hedonistic Adonis with the tormented soul of a satyr, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In a brilliant series of domestic comedies — *Lady Windermere’s Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), and *An Ideal Husband* (1894) — Wilde took the London stage by storm with his witty, epigrammatic style, insolent ease of utterance, and suave urbanity. Wilde described *Lady Windermere’s Fan* as “one of those modern drawing-room plays with pink lampshades.” Its combination of polished social drama and corruscatingly witty dialogue was repeated in 1895 in the two hits that he had on the London stage simultaneously, *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Later that same year, Wilde’s tragic downfall was precipitated by an accusation of homosexuality by

the Marquis of Queensbury, father of Wilde's intimate, Lord Alfred Douglas. The irate peer left a card at Wilde's club addressed thus: "To Oscar Wilde posing as a Somdomite" (sic). Wilde, taking it that the writer meant "Sodomite," made the catastrophic error of deciding to sue the peer for libel. After a sensational trial, Wilde was sentenced to two years hard labour for homosexual practices. Sent to Wandsworth Prison in November 1895, Wilde was subsequently transferred to Reading Gaol. Bankrupt and ruined in health, Wilde left prison in 1897 and settled, bitter and broken, in Paris under the pseudonym Sebastian Melmoth (the name of his favourite martyr from *Melmoth the Wanderer*, a novel written by his great-uncle, Charles Maturin, in 1820).

Of his time as a prisoner, he wrote in "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" (1898):

*I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Under the little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky.
All that we know who lie in gaol
Is that the wall is strong;
And that each day is like a year,
A year whose days are long.*

The Importance of Being Earnest

Here is where you can read the full text: [The Importance of Being Earnest](#).

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67.

The Importance of Being Earnest: Study Guide

Study Questions

1. Discuss the significance of some of the characters' names. What do Jack and Algernon connote? Is Wilde alluding to Swinburne, and if so, why?
2. Find an example of a paradox with reference to Lady Harbury? Is Wilde commenting on one aspect of the "Woman Question" here?
3. Give two examples of irony in Act I.
4. Wilde's characters often create a witty line by standing familiar proverbs on their heads. Choose two or three of the following lines and show how they ridicule conventional moral beliefs:
 - a. "Divorces are made in Heaven."
 - b. "Produce your explanation and pray make it improbable."
 - c. "The amount of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public."
 - d. "You don't seem to realize that in married life three is company and two none."
 - e. "I don't mind hard work where there is no definite object of any kind."
 - f. "Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out."
5. Compare the way Jack uses his brother, Ernest, with the way Algernon uses Bunbury.
6. Contrast Lady Bracknell's attitude to marriage with that of Algernon.

Brief Writing Assignments

1. Choose one line or piece of dialogue that you think is especially clever or funny and explore your reasons for liking it.
2. A conventional feature of most social comedy is the "blocking character"—often a parent or rival who opposes the romantic aspirations of the younger lovers. They often provide the basis for much of the comic action. Discuss Lady Bracknell as a blocking character. Who else in the play might be considered to be a blocking character?
3. Comment on the significance of Lord Bracknell, who never actually appears on stage.

4. Comment on the comic significance of Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble.

Essay Topics

Suggested length: 1,500 to 2,500 words.

1. According to Karl Beckson, “Central to Wilde’s life and art was the idea of the dandy as the embodiment of the heroic ideal as well as of the **aesthetic** temperament hostile to bourgeois sentiment and morality” (p. 205). Which of the characters in the play embodies this aesthetic principle, and how? From your consideration of these characters’ utterances and actions, develop an appropriate essay topic. Starting point: Consult this Internet [definition of Dandy](#). Pay particular attention to Baudelaire’s definition. For Gilbert and Sullivan, aestheticism was a subject for parody. See the operetta *Patience* (1881), particularly the song, “[If You’re Anxious for to Shine...](#)”
2. William Keach contends that Lady Bracknell’s “cross-examination of Jack lays the groundwork for much of the rest of the plot” (p. 184), and that the underlying tension of the play depends upon “the contrast of city and country so important to the double lives being led” (p. 183). Explain these two points, then develop one of them into a suitable essay topic.
3. Otto Reinert claims that “Wilde’s basic formula for satire is [his characters’] assumption of a code of behavior that represents the reality that Victorian convention pretends to ignore.” Reinert argues that in this play Wilde is principally concerned with the difference between conventional and actual manners and morality. Discuss these points, then refine this “formula for satire” into an essay topic.
4. Using three examples drawn from the play, show how Algernon uses Wilde’s aesthetic principles to transform his life into a work of art.

Additional Resources

- Kloepfel, Lise. [A Teacher’s Guide to the Signet Classics Edition of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Other Plays by Oscar Wilde \[PDF\]](#). New York: Penguin Group, 2012.
- Dietrich, Richard F. “[The Importance of Being Earnest](#).” *British and Irish Drama 1890 to 1950: A Critical History*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 2012.
- [The Importance Of Being Earnest Film \(1952\)](#)



QR Code for the *Importance of Being Earnest* Film

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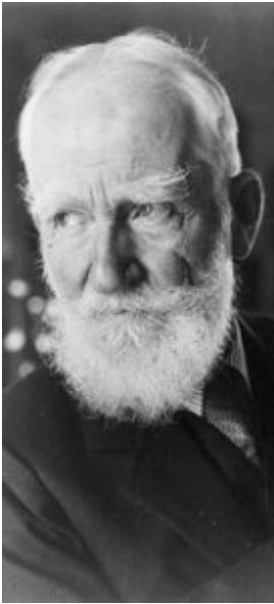
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68.

Major Barbara by Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)



Biography

G. Bernard Shaw (he hated the “George” and never used it, either personally or professionally) was born in 1856 in Dublin, Ireland, in a lower-middle-class family of Scottish-Protestant ancestry. His father was a failed corn merchant, with a drinking problem and a squint (which Oscar Wilde’s father, a leading Dublin surgeon, tried unsuccessfully to correct); his mother was a professional singer, the sole disciple of Vandeleur Lee, a voice teacher claiming to have a unique and original approach to singing.

When Shaw was just short of his 16th birthday, his mother left her husband and son and moved with Vandeleur Lee to London, where the two set up a household, along with Shaw’s older sister, Lucy (who later became a successful music hall singer). Shaw remained in Dublin with his father, completing his schooling (which he hated passionately), and working as a clerk for an estate office (which he hated just as much as school).

It may not be accidental, then, that Shaw’s plays, including *Misalliance*, are filled with problematic parent-child relationships: with children who are brought up in isolation from their parents; with foundlings, orphans, and adopted heirs; and with parents who wrongly presume that they are entitled to their children’s obedience and affection.

In 1876, Shaw left Dublin and his father and moved to London, moving in with his mother’s *menage*. There he lived off his mother and sister while pursuing a career in journalism and writing. The first medium he tried as a creative writer was prose, completing five novels (the first one appropriately titled *Immaturity*) before any of them were published. He read voraciously, in public libraries and in the

British Museum reading room. He also became involved in progressive politics. Standing on a soapbox at Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park and at socialist rallies, he learned to overcome his stagefright and his stammer. And, to hold the attention of the crowd, he developed an energetic and aggressive speaking style that is evident in all of his writing.

With Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Shaw founded the Fabian Society, a socialist political organization dedicated to transforming Britain into a socialist state, not by revolution but by systematic progressive legislation, bolstered by persuasion and mass education. The Fabian Society would later be instrumental in founding the London School of Economics and the Labour Party. Shaw lectured for the Fabian Society and wrote pamphlets on the progressive arts, including *The Perfect Wagnerite*, an interpretation of Richard Wagner's Ring cycle, and *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, based on a series of lectures about the progressive Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen. Meanwhile, as a journalist, Shaw worked as an art critic, then as a music critic (writing under the pseudonym "Corno di Bassetto"), and finally, from 1895 to 1898, as theatre critic for *Saturday Review*, where his reviews appeared over the infamous initials "GBS."

In 1891, at the invitation of J. T. Grein, a merchant, theatre critic, and director of a progressive private new-play society, the Independent Theatre, Shaw wrote his first play, *Widower's Houses*. Over the next 12 years, he wrote close to a dozen plays, though he generally failed to persuade the managers of the London theatres to produce them. A few were produced abroad; one (*Arms and the Man*) was produced under the auspices of an experimental management; one (*Mrs Warren's Profession*) was censored by the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays (the civil servant who, from 1737 until 1967, was empowered with the prior censorship of all spoken drama in England); and several were presented in single performances by private societies.

In 1898, after a serious illness, Shaw resigned as theatre critic and moved out of his mother's house (where he was still living) to marry Charlotte Payne-Townsend, an Irish woman of independent means. Their marriage (quite possibly unconsummated) lasted until Charlotte's death in 1943.

In 1904, Harley Granville Barker, an actor, director, and playwright 20 years younger than Shaw who had appeared in a private theatre society's production of Shaw's *Candida*, took over the management of the Court Theatre on Sloane Square in Chelsea (outside of the "theatreland" of the fashionable West End) and set it up as an experimental theatre specializing in new and progressive drama. Over the next three seasons, Barker produced 10 plays by Shaw (with Barker officially listed as director, but with Shaw actually directing his own plays), and Shaw began writing new plays with Barker's management specifically in mind. Over the next 10 years, all but one of Shaw's plays (*Pygmalion* in 1914) was produced either by Barker or by Barker's friends and colleagues in the other experimental theater managements around England. With the royalty income from his plays, Shaw, who had become financially independent on marrying, became quite wealthy. Throughout the decade, he remained active in the Fabian Society, in city government (he served as vestryman for the London borough of St. Pancras), and on committees dedicated to ending dramatic censorship and to establishing a subsidized national theatre.

The outbreak of war in 1914 changed Shaw's life. For Shaw, the war represented the bankruptcy of the capitalist system, the last desperate gasps of the 19th-century empires, and a tragic waste of young lives, all under the guise of patriotism. He expressed his opinions in a series of newspaper articles under the title *Common Sense about the War*. These articles proved to be a disaster for Shaw's public stature: he was treated as an outcast in his adopted country, and there was even talk of his being tried for treason. His dramatic output ground to a halt, and he succeeded in writing only one major play during the war years, *Heartbreak House*, into which he projected his bitterness and despair about British politics and society.

After the war, Shaw found his dramatic voice again and rebuilt his reputation, first with a series of

five plays about “creative evolution,” *Back to Methuselah*, and then, in 1923, with *Saint Joan*. In 1925, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. (Not needing the money, he donated the cash award toward an English translation of the works of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg, who had never been recognized with a Nobel prize by the Swedish Academy). Shaw’s plays were regularly produced and revived in London. As well, several theatre companies in the United States began producing his plays, old and new, on a regular basis (most notably the Theatre Guild in New York, and the Hedgerow Theatre, in Rose Valley, Pennsylvania, which became internationally known for its advocacy of the plays of Shaw and of the Irish playwright Sean O’Casey). In the late 1920s, a Shaw festival was established in Malvern, England.

Shaw lived the rest of his life as an international celebrity, travelling the world, continually involved in local and international politics. He visited the Soviet Union at the invitation of Stalin, and he visited the United States briefly at the invitation of William Randolph Hearst, stepping on shore only twice, for a lecture at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and for lunch at Hearst’s castle in San Simeon in California. He continued to write thousands of letters and over a dozen more plays.

In 1950, Shaw fell off a ladder while trimming a tree on his property at Ayot St. Lawrence in Hertfordshire, outside of London, and he died a few days later of complications from the injury at age 94. He had been at work on yet another play (*Why She Would Not*). In his will, he left a large part of his estate to a project to revamp the English alphabet. (Only one volume was published with the new “Shaw Alphabet”: a parallel text edition of Shaw’s *Androcles and the Lion*). After that project failed, the estate was divided among the other beneficiaries in his will: the National Gallery of Ireland, the British Museum, and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Royalties from Shaw’s plays, and from the musical *My Fair Lady*, based on Shaw’s *Pygmalion*, have helped to balance the budgets of these institutions ever since.

Major Barbara

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Major Barbara: Study Guide

Study Questions

1. Contrast Barbara with her brother Stephen.
2. Explain the Andrew Undershaft foundling tradition.
3. What challenge does Barbara level at her father in Act I?
4. Who is Barbara's grandfather?
5. Why does Bill Walker strike Jenny Hill?
6. What financial aid does Undershaft offer his three children?
7. What is Stephen's main criticism of Undershaft's treatment of his workers?
8. Does Nietzsche's definition of "Dionysian" (and "Apollonian") in *Birth of Tragedy* apply to Dolly's understanding of the term? See a good handbook of literary terms such as *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*, ed. J.A. Cuddon; or *A Handbook to Literature*, Holman and Harmon; or *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M.H. Abrams.
9. Why is winning Barbara's capitulation in the wager so important to Undershaft? Why does Barbara capitulate?
10. Discuss how Shaw explores the notion of class in the play.
11. Explore Shaw's presentation of men and women as it challenges or conforms to dramaturgical conventions of gender at the turn of the 20th century as well as today.
12. Who is Mrs. Baines, and what key announcement does she make?

Essay or Discussion Topics

1. Look up the term *psychomachia* in a good reference source such as your favourite glossary or handbook of literary terms. Is *Major Barbara* structured as a kind of psychomachia? If so, whose soul is being fought over? Who are the angelic and diabolical characters or tempters?
2. In what way is Undershaft a "[Grand Inquisitor](#)" figure?
3. Compare characters and situations from *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Major Barbara*. How might Lady Bracknell be seen as a source character for Lady Britomart?
4. One critic suggests that in addition to the Spenserean allusion, Britomart's name also suggests "British Market." Refute or support with evidence.

5. Why does Shaw name Undershaft's business partner Lazarus? Be sure to read Chapter 16 from the Gospel of Luke as a starting point.
6. Discuss Charles "Cholly" Lomax as comic character.
7. What typical characteristics of a utopia do you find in the depiction of the community of Perivale St. Andrews in Act III?
8. Discuss any particularly useful changes to the play in Gabriel Pascal's 1941 film version of *Major Barbara*. Note that Shaw helped write the film script and published his screen version in 1946.
9. Explore the use of music in the play.
10. Discuss Rosalind Howard, Countess of Carlisle (1845-1921) as the source for Lady Britomart.
11. Discuss Gilbert Murray as Shaw's source for Adolphus Cusins.
12. Discuss the various comic techniques, especially characterization, that Shaw uses to keep his audience involved in the action of the play.

Resources

- "[Major Barbara Study Guide \[PDF\]](#)" by the Shaw Festival.
- Shaw, Bernard. "[Preface to Major Barbara: First Aid to Critics.](#)" *Major Barbara*. Adelaide: University of Adelaide, 2014.
- Dietrich, Richard F. "[Major Barbara: Dionysius Unbound.](#)" *British and Irish Drama 1890 to 1950: A Critical History*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 2012.

Appendix A: Glossary of English Rhetoric, Grammar, and Usage

Academic Voice

Voice refers to the relationship between writer and reader, conveyed by the level of formality in diction and syntax. The “voice” of your text messages and emails to your friends is informal, characterized by the use of slang, acronyms, and incomplete sentences. The “voice” of an essay or report you write for your teachers and professors is more formal, characterized by the use of complete sentences, Standard English, and sophisticated (but not ostentatious) diction.

Active Voice

Describes the usual syntactical relationship between a subject, verb, and object, in which the subject is the agent of the verb’s action and the object is the agent acted upon.

In this sentence, for example—The wind scattered tree branches all over the street.—“wind” is the subject, “scattered” is the verb, and “branches” is the object. The verb “scattered” is in past tense and active voice.

Active voice is distinct from passive voice, in which the agent acted upon becomes the subject of the verb, and the agent becomes the object of the verb: Tree branches were scattered by the wind, all over the street.

Active voice is generally considered more effective in academic writing because it is usually clearer and more concise. The active voice version of our example sentence above contains nine words, while the passive voice version contains eleven words.

But there are instances when the use of passive voice is required and even more effective, especially if the agent for the action is indeterminate. The verb in the sentence—Smoking is forbidden now in restaurants in most western nations—is in passive voice, but is not an error in usage.

Acronym

A word formed, in the interest of brevity, concision, and creativity, by combining first letters of related words: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome becomes AIDS, white Anglo Saxon protestant becomes WASP. Other common acronyms include NATO, MAAD, HUD, NORAD, DOT, BAFTA, UNESCO.

Technically, such letter combinations which do not form pronounceable words—FBI, CBS, NVAA, UBC, USC, RCMP—are not acronyms but abbreviations, though it is pedantic to insist on the distinction.

Acronyms and abbreviations are usually represented with capital letters, without periods after each letter.

Some acronyms have morphed into words in their own right—laser and radar, for example, began as acronyms for light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation and radio detection and ranging, respectively.

The use of acronyms in academic writing is fine, but if there is doubt that readers won't recognize the acronym, it should be spelled out the first time it is used.

Ad Populum Fallacy

One of several errors in logic which asserts that a proposition is correct because many, even most people, the *ad populum*, believe it to be correct.

You can argue that “She is the best candidate because she was elected by popular vote,” but your argument cannot begin and end there. Democracy presupposes an informed electorate which also considers and assesses the experience, intelligence, and character of the candidates.

The world was never flat, though the people of many ancient civilizations believed it to be.

Adjective

A word which modifies, qualifies, describes a noun: an excellent athlete; a provocative film; a Chinese character.

Adjective Clause

A group of words which begins with a relative pronoun, contains a subject and a verb and modifies a noun or a pronoun. For example,

The report on enhanced interrogation, which the Committee released last week, will damage the Agency's reputation.

The adjective clause (underlined) modifies the noun “report.”

A homeless person who drives a Porsche is not going to have much luck panhandling.

The adjective clause (underlined) modifies the noun “person.”

Note the punctuation: in the first sentence, commas separate the adjective clause from the main clause because the clause is non-restrictive; in the second, commas do not separate the adjective clause from the rest of the sentence, because the clause is restrictive.

In some adjective clauses, the relative pronoun may be omitted, in the interest of concision, as long as meaning is clear: The homeless person (who) the limo driver claims ran away is wanted for questioning.

Adverb

Among the most versatile words in English, an adverb can describe, qualify, modify a verb—move quickly—an adjective—a very fast runner—or another adverb—move quite quickly. Its position in a clause is also somewhat flexible—both silently crept and crept silently are fine.

Adverbs cause few errors in academic writing. You do have to check to make certain you are not using an adjective, where an adverb is required—not I studied real hard, but I studied really hard; not he does good in math, but he does well in math. Nor is it a good idea to overuse adverbs.

Adverb Clause

A group of words which begins with a subordinate conjunction, contains a subject and a verb and modifies a verb. For example,

The flight was canceled, because the fog was so dense.

The adverb clause (underlined) modifies the verb, “was canceled.”

If the delegate from Venezuela is appointed to the committee, the South American contingent will withdraw its complaint.

The adverb clause (underlined) modifies the verb “will withdraw.”

Note that a comma does not have to separate the subordinate from the main clause if the subordinate clause is restrictive. The previous sentence illustrates this rule: there is no comma before the word “if.”

However, if the subordinate clause comes before and introduces the main clause—as in the “Venezuela” sentence above, a comma follows the subordinate clause, even if the subordinate clause is restrictive.

Affect, Effect

Two words which often provoke an error in usage due to their virtually identical sounds.

The main difference is that affect is a verb, while effect is a noun.

Her decision will affect the global economy, but the economy of France should suffer no ill effects.

However, “effect” can also be a verb, meaning to bring about.

Her decision will affect the global economy, and may effect positive changes to the economy of Canada.

Pay attention to these words, when you are editing your work, and make certain you have used them correctly.

Agreement

As a term in grammar, agreement refers to the correct relationship between two elements in a sentence.

A subject must “agree” with its verb: Germany is a democracy, not Germany are a democracy. See Subject-Verb Agreement.

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent, which is the word it is replacing. A brainwashed terrorist will sacrifice his or her (not their) life for the cause.

Rules governing pronoun-antecedent agreement are evolving.

Antecedent

A noun, preceding and referring to a pronoun which follows. In this sentence, for example—Elaine needed her ugg, but she couldn’t find them—“Elaine” is the antecedent of “her” and “she” and “uggs” is the antecedent of “them.”

Apostrophe (')

Punctuation mark which indicates possession, placed before the “s” for singular possession and after the “s” for plural possession: my teacher’s laptop was stolen; my teachers’ laptops were stolen.

In the first sentence one teacher had one laptop stolen; in the second, more than one did.

Note that nouns which form their plural by changing a letter within a word (when man becomes men, for example) the apostrophe comes before the “s” even in plural form: woman’s shelter; women’s shelter; a child’s room; the children’s room.

Note that an additional “s” followed by an apostrophe in names that already end in “s” is optional: both she loves Dickens’ novels and Keats’ poetry or she loves Dickens’s novels and Keats’s poetry is acceptable.

To show the possession of compound nouns, the apostrophe usually appears in the last word only. The Minister of Defense’s travel plans are not being released to the public.

To show joint possession, the apostrophe appears in the last noun only: This sentence—IT needs to update Jack and Clara’s computer—indicates that Jack and Clara share one computer, while this sentence—IT needs to update Jack’s and Clara’s computers—indicates that Jack and Clara each have a computer they do not share.

Note that possessive pronouns are possessive by virtue of their case so the use of an apostrophe is daft and redundant. Confusion between the contraction “it’s” and the possessive pronoun “its” is especially widespread.

The apostrophe is also used in contractions: isn’t, won’t, doesn’t, can’t.

Note that an apostrophe is different from a single quotation mark, despite appearances. See Quotation marks.

Argument/Argumentative Essay

One of the most important types or genres or rhetorical modes of academic writing. In many high school and most college courses you will take, your teachers will assign a written argument, related to an issue central to the content of the course.

An argument essay proffers a robust thesis, which asserts a proposition about which there is enough controversy to foster disagreement. The essay attempts to validate the thesis.

An effective argument essay will typically acknowledge and refute the opposing point of view.

An argument essay will typically avoid logical fallacies or use them judiciously and surreptitiously in support of its thesis.

An effective argument essay will show evidence of critical thinking.

The basic template for an argument essay consists of an introduction which provides some context and presents the thesis, a body which contains the paragraph developing the points in support of the thesis, and a conclusion which reaffirms the thesis, maybe hints at additional or future implications. The number of paragraphs in each section depends upon the number of words the assignment calls for; obviously the body of the essay will contain more paragraphs than the introduction or conclusion.

The wrinkle in the argument essay template is the acknowledgement and refutation of the opposing point of view. It might be contained in a separate section of the body of the essay; it might be spread throughout the body, perhaps in a point/counterpoint form within paragraphs. The writer is in the best position to make this decision.

Audience

In the field of written composition, synonymous with readers. Audience influences the voice and style of a written text.

The author of a sixth-grade geography textbook, a travel writer, the tourist bureau, and a professional climatologist might all write a chapter or a magazine or journal article, or a brochure describing the climate of Seattle. The information in these texts will be similar. But the voice, diction, sentence structure, and style will change, according to the needs and expectations of the audience—the readers.

High school and college essay writers need to assess the needs and expectations of their audience, usually their instructor/professor as part of the pre-writing process. Read the assignment carefully and assess and consider exactly what it is your instructor/professor wants from you. This will help you shape the content of your essay.

Auxiliary Verb

Words which join with main verbs to form a verb phrase to present as precisely as possible the nature of the action of the subject of the main verb. They are also called helping verbs.

Compare “those birds sing all day,” with one main verb, with “those birds have been singing all day,” which adds two helping verbs to the main verb, “singing” and so adds depth to the meaning of the sentence,

Some auxiliary verbs can also be main verbs. Forms of the verb “to be” (is, am are, was, were, been) and forms of the verb “to have” (perfect tense), and “to do” can be main verbs. She is an engineer; she has a degree from Drexel; she did all that work alone. They can also be auxiliary verbs. She was dating an engineer; she has dumped him; he did not work well with others.

Some auxiliary verbs cannot also be main verbs; they must work in concert with a main verb. They are also called modals or modal auxiliary verbs.

The common modal auxiliary verbs are would, should, could, may, might, must, will, shall, and can. They define the exact nature of the verb they are paired with and thereby refine meaning. Try inserting each modal between the subject and verb of this sentence: I (would, should, could, may, might, must, will, shall, can) sleep all day. Notice how much more precise meaning is when the modal is inserted.

Some modals signal the presence of conditions:

- I would sleep all day, if...
- I could sleep all day, but...
- I should sleep all day, in order to...

Usage has blurred precise distinctions in meanings between some modals.

Begging the Question

A logical fallacy, its ambiguous designator the result of a poor translation from the original Latin, a better translation of which would be “assuming the initial point.”

Begging the question means that a proposition’s initial point is reaffirmed by what follows, obviating the need to validate that proposition. Vote for the socialist candidate because she will implement policies based on socialist philosophy. Other, more reasoned and logical reasons are needed to support the proposition.

Blueprint Thesis

Sentence which expresses an essay's controlling idea, and which includes phrases that will be developed in body paragraphs.

If a general thesis is as follows: "There are several factors that might cause a commercial jet airline to crash," its blueprint thesis might be "Common causes for a jet airline crash include pilot error, mechanical failure, poor weather, and foul play. Each cause will be developed in at least one paragraph in the body of the essay."

Body Paragraphs

The body paragraphs of an academic writing assignment elucidate, augment, support, and develop the essay's thesis. The body consists of at least three, and up to about a dozen or more, paragraphs, depending upon the requirements of the assignment. A minor 500 word writing assignment will typically call for three body paragraphs; a major 5000 word assignment, approximately twelve. Good body paragraphs in an academic writing assignment have three qualities: unity, coherence, and substance.

Unity refers to the relationship of the content of a paragraph to its topic sentence. The topic sentence presents the main point of the paragraph. It is, to a paragraph, what the thesis is to the essay as a whole. For a paragraph to have unity, its content should develop its topic sentence. It may be stated explicitly—often, though by no means always, the first sentence in the paragraph—or implied.

Suppose, for example, this is your topic sentence: "Another issue which animates the Black Lives Matter movement is unusually high unemployment among younger African American men." A unified paragraph focuses on unemployment and does not veer off to reference other Black Lives Matter issues, except insofar as they might inform the paragraph's topic sentence.

Coherence or cohesion is that property of written discourse which binds sentences and paragraphs together in the interest of clarity, logic, rhythm, and flow. The repetition of a key word can establish coherence within a paragraph. The repetition of the word "body" in the first paragraph of this listing, establishes the paragraph's coherence.

A transitional word or phrase, such as for example, on the other hand, in addition, however, moreover, can establish coherence within a paragraph. The phrase "for example" in the third sentence of the second paragraph of this listing helps establish the paragraph's coherence.

Substance or adequate development is a property a body paragraph possesses, when that paragraph contains enough sentences to develop its topic sentence. Body paragraphs need examples, details, definitions, comparisons, contrasts, anecdotes, causes, effects that the thesis needs, in order to be adequately developed. One or any combination of these methods or patterns of development will typically be used to develop a topic sentence.

Brackets []:

In academic writing, brackets are used primarily to insert explanatory information into a direct quote, information the author of the quote did not include but the author of the academic text believes readers need, in the interest of clarity. For example:

The friendly rivalry may never be resolved, though experts like Duplessis insist that "French roast [coffee beans] produce coffee that is darker, if not richer, than Italian roast" (37).

Similarly, brackets are used to enclose those Latin abbreviations, the most common of which is *sic*, which means “thus it is written,” and which a writer of an academic text uses to indicate that there is an error in the original text from which the academic writer is quoting, an error which the writer of the academic text wants readers to know she did not make. For example,

He goes on to say that “coffee beans that come from Guatamala [sic] produce coffee with a medium flavour and intensity” (Duplessis 38).

Brackets are also used to enclose additional parenthetical information, which adds to information already in parenthesis. For example,

Coffee beans grown in Antigua produce coffee milder than Kenya bean coffee (and other beans grown in East Africa [Somalia, for example, is starting to export beans] and beans grown in Sumatra and other Indonesian islands), but the annual yield is not high.

This use of brackets is rare and is not recommended. It can impede clarity and is usually easy enough to avoid.

Can/May

Commonly used auxiliary verbs.

The distinction between them may have been sacrosanct years ago: “Can” implied the ability to act and “may” implied permission to act. Then, a sentence such as “Can I use a comma before this clause” made little sense because obviously a writer has the physical ability to type in or print a comma, wherever he or she wishes. “May I use a comma before this clause” was the correct usage because the “may” connotes uncertainty which the permission of an authority figure has to validate. You “can” use a comma there, but you “may” not. Common usage has blurred the distinction between may and can, and now “may” can seem stuffy, the difference between “May I see you again” and “Can I see you again.”

The distinction may still be important in academic writing. In this sentence from an assignment done for a psychology course—“Students in the control group can play all of the video games whenever they choose, but the experimental group can play only *Sudden Impact* and only for an hour a night”—the “can” should be changed to “may,” but the instructor grading the assignment may not flag the misuse of “can.”

The use of “may” to connote uncertainty—Evans may be traded to the Warriors—or doubt—“The distinction between them may have been sacrosanct years ago”—remains.

Capitalization

Some rules are universal and straightforward: capitalize proper nouns and proper adjectives: Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band.

Capitalize the first word in a sentence, not one that follows a semi-colon, but one that follows a colon may or may not be capitalized.

Some of your relatives’ titles may be capitalized—I love my Aunt Jane—though I love my brother, Edmund, not my Brother Edmund—though Brother John heard his confession is correct.

Titles that follow a proper noun do not have to be capitalized: Horatio Bennett was promoted to

admiral, when he was just 34-years old. Sometimes those titles at the very top of the food chain are capitalized, even if they follow the name: Ford was President for four years.

The rules vary among cultures, among handbooks, among publishing houses, newspaper and magazine style guides. Best advice, if you have a capital letter conundrum, is to consult a dictionary or a style manual, approved by those reading your writing.

Causes Assignment

An essay-length text in a college/university course, one which requires the student to explain the reasons for—the causes—of a situation or phenomenon.

This assignment often answers a “what” or a “why” essay question or report. Why was the marketing campaign for X energy drink so successful? What causes a black hole to form? Why do teenagers like scary movies?

The template/outline for a causes assignment is straightforward.

The introduction establishes context for the topic and presents the thesis. The thesis in the form of a question, which the rest of the essay answers, often works well for a causes assignment because questions are implicit in the topic: Why have changes to the climate of the Earth increased significantly since 1950? What causes global warming?

The body paragraphs answer the thesis question. They contain as many topic sentences as there are important answers to the question. Topic sentences are developed with appropriate details, supported by valid and reliable sources. Remember that one topic sentence might be important and complex enough to require more than one paragraph for development. For our global warming example, for instance, the rise in the level of greenhouse gasses would likely require explanation exceeding one paragraph.

The conclusion would reaffirm the thesis and might reference possibly dire consequences, if global warming is not curtailed.

Causes/Effects Assignment

An essay or report length text in a college/university course, which requires students to explain not only the causes of a phenomenon or an outcome but its subsequent effects, as well.

It often adds a “how” to the “why” or “what” to the causes part. What causes inflation and how does inflation affect the economy of a country? Why did Canada participate in World War I, and how did this participation shape Canada’s national identity? Why have tuition fees increased so dramatically over the past few years, and how is the increase affecting access to and the quality of higher education.

The standard template/outline for a cause/effect assignment is binary. The essay/report is in two parts: the first part presents the causes, and the second part presents the effects. But there might be different structure, alternating between causes and effects, if one effect is a specific result of one cause. If, for example, a cause of increased tuition fees is student demand for better housing and recreational facilities, then the cause paragraph explaining why this generation of students demand better facilities might be followed immediately by an effects paragraph, providing examples and descriptions of upscale residences and gymnasiums colleges/universities have built—the effect of the cause.

Citation Generators

Websites which help writers of research papers cite sources accurately. Citation Machine, EasyBib, and BibMe are among the most popular.

Use them with caution and check their format carefully because they are far from infallible.

Classification and Division Assignment

An account, usually essay length, which describes and explains the parts which make up a unified whole: Classify—explain and describe—the varieties of grapes that can be used to make red wine. Classify the styles of women’s purses. Classify the types of video games.

The template/outline for a classification/division essay is usually straightforward. If your thesis is “There are xx grape varieties commonly used in the production of red wine, your essay will likely have a paragraph which discusses the properties of each.

Clause

A meaningful sequence of words that contains a subject and a verb.

An independent, also known as a main clause, is synonymous with a sentence.

A dependent, also known as a subordinate clause, does contain a subject and a verb, but must be connected to an independent (main) clause. Otherwise, it is a sentence fragment.

In this sentence—“The executive members of the fraternity insisted an assault could not have taken place on the night in question, because there was no party at Phi Beta Kappa that night”—the words which precede the comma form an independent (main) clause, and the words which follow the comma form a dependent (subordinate) clause.

Coherence/Cohesion

Essential quality of academic writing, coherence refers to connections between and among sentences in a paragraph and paragraphs within a text, essential to establishing clarity and flow and a partner, with unity and substance, in effective paragraph construction.

Cohesion is typically established through the use of cohesive ties, which include repetition, pronoun/antecedent agreement, and transitional expressions. Cohesive ties in this paragraph are underlined.

The hallmarks of Palladian architecture are symmetry, clarity, order, utilitarianism. The Palladians did not really care for curves and spires, apses and flying buttresses, which might add character and beauty to a building, but which can be less than practical uses of space. Instead, they went for squares, triangles, and rectangles, all in perfect harmony and balance. A rectangular shape on the west side of a building would be balanced by one the same size on the east side. Similarly...

Note how the repetition of the key term “Palladian”; the pronoun “they”; and the transitional expressions, “instead” and “similarly” help establish coherence in this paragraph.

Collective Noun

A word that references a group or a collective, such as team, orchestra, press, congress, sorority, gang, audience....

Collective nouns are usually considered to be an “it” rather than a “they,” and, as such, take singular verbs; The orchestra is playing a Mozart symphony; Their team [it] wins every game it plays.

Some rulebooks distinguish between a collective noun acting as a unit and one the members of which are acting as individuals—the difference between “The orchestra is playing a Mozart symphony” and “The orchestra are tuning up their instruments.” However, to avoid ambiguity, we might write “The musicians in the orchestra are tuning up their instruments.”

Colon (:)

The colon is the punctuation mark which signals that additional information, which explains or expands upon the information which precedes the colon, is about to be presented.

Example: Today we learned the rules that govern the use of three punctuation marks: the comma, the semi-colon, and the period.

Note that a colon should not separate a preposition from its object, so it would be incorrect to write: Today we learned the rules that govern the use of: the comma, the semi-colon, and the period.

Note also that a colon should not separate a verb from its object, so it would be incorrect to write: For breakfast, my youngest daughter likes: eggs sunny side up, crisp bacon, and fried green tomatoes.

The colon can separate two sentences, when the second explains something about the first.

Example: His mark on the final exam determined his fate: he was not going to pass Philosophy 200.

A semi-colon could also be used here, though the colon underscores the nature of the relationship between the two sentences.

It is acceptable to capitalize the first word that follows a colon, if that word begins a complete sentence.

Comma (,)

The punctuation mark which signals a pause in the rhythm and flow of a sentence, in order to enhance the clarity of the sentence.

In academic writing, there are basically four rules that govern the use of the comma, but there are exceptions to most of these rules.

Rule One: The comma separates words or phrases, sometimes even clauses, in a series.

Examples:

We are learning all of the rules that govern the use of the comma, semi-colon, colon, and dash.

This week, I have an essay to write for my English class, an oral presentation to prepare for my economics class, and a mid-term to study for in my French class.

Note that opinion is divided about the use of the comma which precedes “and” in the series, commonly known as the “Oxford comma.” Some feel that the presence of “and” makes the need for the final comma redundant; other think it enhances the clarity of the sentence. Its use is optional, though it should be used if its absence causes ambiguity. With the Oxford comma, for example, the following sentence suggests that the wife, the best friend, and the spiritual advisor are three different people, but

without the Oxford comma, it suggests that the wife, the best friend, and the spiritual advisor are one and the same.

Before he makes a decision, he always discusses the issue with his wife, his best friend, and his spiritual advisor.

Rule Two: A comma is used before a coordinate conjunction in a compound sentence.

Example:

Natural gas is a cleaner source of energy than coal, and it is abundant in some areas of the country. Natural gas is a cleaner source of energy than coal, but it is still less green than wind or solar power.

A short compound sentence might eliminate the comma.

I arrived and she left.

Rule Three: A comma separates non-restrictive words, phrases, and clauses from the rest of a sentence, but it does not separate restrictive words, phrases, and clauses from the rest of a sentence. A restrictive word, phrase, or clause is one that is essential to the meaning of a sentence, one that impairs the clarity of a sentence if it is absent.

In the following sentence, the phrase “restricting abortion” is not set off from the rest of the sentence with commas, because to do so would render the sentence meaningless:

There are no laws restricting abortion in my country.

However, in this sentence—There are no laws, which I know of, restricting abortion in my country—the clause “which I know of” could be eliminated, and the sentence would still make logical sense; therefore, commas surround it.

Note that parenthetical expressions are usually non-restrictive:

Any forms of enhanced interrogation technique, however, (or, on the other hand,; or, moreover,) are strictly forbidden.

Rule Four: A word, phrase, or clause at the beginning of a sentence, usually appearing before the subject, is usually followed by a comma, even if that word, phrase, or clause is restrictive:

In my country, there are no laws forbidding abortion.

Comma Splice

An error in sentence structure caused when a comma alone separates two complete sentences.

It is easy now to store files in a cloud, I still prefer to use a thumb drive.

To correct the comma splice add a coordinate conjunction to the comma:

It is easy now to store files in a cloud, but I still prefer to use a thumb drive.

Or change one of the sentences to a dependent clause:

Although it is easy now to store files in a cloud, I still prefer to use a thumb drive.

Or use a period or a semi-colon, in place of the comma.

The term “comma splice” is usually synonymous with run-on sentence.

Compare and Contrast Assignment

A rhetorical mode, wherein a writer is required to point out the similarities and differences between two entities. Compare and contrast a shopping mall in a large city with the main street of a small town. Compare and contrast Piaget’s and Chomsky’s theories of language acquisition in children.

This is a common assignment because it assesses higher order reasoning, requiring reflection upon and knowledge and ability to assess characteristics and value of two different entities or artefacts.

There are two templates/outlines for a compare/contrast essay.

There is the two-essay method. You may describe all of the attributes of one of the elements, then all of the attributes of the other and leave it to the reader to draw the comparisons and contrasts or you can, perhaps, highlight them at the end of the essay.

There is the common traits method. You identify the common traits for both of the items you are comparing and contrasting, then write alternate paragraphs for each common trait. A paragraph on the friendliness of the sales associates in small town shops would be compared and contrasted, in the following paragraph, with the friendliness of the sales associates who work in a similar shop in a mall.

The compare/contrast essay is usually expository, but it might have an argumentative edge. If, for example, you don’t want a new strip mall built on the outskirts of your small town, your compare/contrast essay might favor the main street shopping experience.

Complex Sentence

A simple sentence plus one or more dependent clauses, also known as subordinate clauses.

The community was especially outraged, because the police officer was white, while the teenager was black.

The simple sentence is “The community was especially outraged.” It is followed by the two dependent clauses “because the police officer was white” and “while the teenager was black.”

Compound Sentence

Two simple sentences joined together by a coordinate conjunction or by a semi-colon.

He shoots; he scores

Their goal is to make the playoffs, and they think they have a good chance.

Note that, in a compound sentence, a comma precedes the coordinate conjunction. In a simple sentence, with a compound verb, there is not a comma before the coordinate conjunction:

Their goal is to make the playoffs and avoid elimination in the first round.

Compound-Complex Sentence

A compound sentence plus one or more dependent clauses, also known as subordinate clauses.

Hedge fund managers earn millions of dollars a year, but their clients don't complain if they see a good return on their investments.

The compound sentence is "Hedge fund managers earn millions of dollars a year, but their clients don't complain."

The dependent clause is "if they see a good rate of return on their investments."

Hedge fund managers, who earn millions of dollars a year, are unpopular in some circles, but their rich clients love them.

The compound sentence is "Hedge fund managers are unpopular in some circles, but their rich clients love them."

The dependent clause is "who earn millions of dollars a year."

Conditional Verb Tense

The subordinate conjunction "if," signals a condition elaborated upon and explained in the main clause.

If the shoes in his fall collection sell well, buyers will order even more from his spring collection.

In academic writing, it is important to match the verb in the conditional clause to the verb in the main clause appropriately. Note that:

1. If the verb in the "if" or conditional clause is in present tense, the verb in the main clause is in future tense.
If the shoes in his fall collection sell well, buyers will order even more from his spring collection.
2. If the action in the "if" clause did not occur, use past perfect tense in both the subordinate and the main clauses.
If the shoes in his fall collection had sold well, buyers would have ordered even more from his spring collection.
3. The subjunctive mood form of the verb "to be" is usually the correct form in a conditional clause. For plural subjects this does not pose any problems because the plural subjunctive form is the same as the simple present form.
If the spike heels were stronger, the shoes would be more marketable.
4. But if the subject in the "if" clause is singular, the subjunctive may seem counter intuitive, but it is the correct form.
If the manager were (not was) here today, she would approve of our decision.

Conjunctive Adverb

A conjunctive adverb is a word which functions as an adverb insofar as it qualifies or modifies a verb, and as a conjunction, insofar as it provides a link between two sentences. Consider this sentence:

Conjunctive adverbs are often misused; however, the rules which govern the use of a conjunctive adverb are not complex.

In this sentence, “however,” is a conjunctive adverb. It qualifies the verb “are misused,” in that it signals a refinement to the use of the verb; and it links together the two complete sentences.

Other common conjunctive adverbs include anyway, as a result, consequently, eventually, for example, furthermore, in addition, indeed, in fact, instead, in the meantime, meanwhile, moreover, namely, nevertheless, next, now, on the other hand, similarly, therefore.

When a conjunctive adverb does not link two sentences together, it is functioning more as a parenthetical expression, and it is usually preceded and followed by a comma. Compare: “We waited and waited;” eventually, he did arrive safely with: “We waited and waited; he did, eventually, arrive safely.”

In the first sentence, “eventually” is a conjunctive adverb; in the second, it is a parenthetical expression.

Continuous Present Verb Tense

Refers to use of present tense (see Verb Tense), even when describing events that were written about in the past. A book might have been written or a painting painted many years ago, but an analysis of the work will typically be written in present tense:

Gatsby knows Daisy cannot leave Tom.
 The girl with the pearl earring glances over her shoulder.
 Hamlet is not really insane.

Coordinate Conjunction

Those small words—and, but, or—which join together and define the relationship between and among syntactical elements: oranges and lemons; oranges but not lemons; oranges or lemons.

Note that when the syntactical elements are sentences, a comma usually precedes the coordinate conjunction.

She promised to save the last dance for the drummer, and she kept her promise; she promised to save the last dance for the drummer, but she chose the lead singer, instead; she promised she would save the last dance for the drummer, or she would go home alone.

Critical Thinking

The ability to evaluate opinion with an open mind, unclouded by ideology.

The ability to think critically is always listed as a fundamental goal of a liberal education. Its tenets include:

A willingness to reconsider and even alter social and political values, in light of impartial evaluation of information in reliable and authoritative sources;

A recognition that social and political issues are complex and not resolved by hasty generalizations or slogans;

A commitment to learn about, research, and reflect upon an issue before reaching a conclusion;

An ability to distinguish opinion from fact and to recognize and reject biased, uninformed, bigoted opinion;

A hesitation to jump on a bandwagon, until you are convinced it is going in the proper direction;

A realization that it is wiser to refute than to ignore or shut out opinion that dissents from your own;

The ability to think critically is especially important in writing an argument essay, which can be undermined by opinion which has not been vetted or by bias which cannot be dismissed. Critical thinking privileges reason and logic over ideology and emotion. A thesis statement might be refined, even reconstituted, in the wake of critical thinking.

The term “critical” may, but does not necessarily, connote disagreement. It is more synonymous with “straight” or independent thinking

Dangling Modifier

A word or a phrase which has been abandoned by the word it is supposed to modify. In this sentence, for example—

Walking along the beach at sunrise, the waves shimmer beneath the early morning light—

the walker seems not to be present. It seems, almost, as if the waves are doing the walking. The walker needs to be identified to correct the dangling modifier:

Walking along the beach at sunrise, I (we, my mother, Elton) love(s) to see the waves shimmer beneath the early morning light.

The word the dangling modifier refers to might be in the sentence, but too far away from its modifier. This sentence—

After losing seven games in a row, even their most loyal fans were ready to abandon the team—

should be:

After losing seven games in a row, the team was in danger of being abandoned even by its most loyal fans.

This sentence:

Forced to punt again, the fans booed the home team

should be

Forced to punt again, the home team heard the boos of its fans.

See also Misplaced Modifier

Dash (-)

A single dash usually indicates a break in thought or a change in tone, within a sentence, and it tends to have the effect of stressing the words that follow the dash:

It was a familiar refrain, as the game ended and the home-town crowd, convinced the referee had determined the outcome by calling too many fouls on the Grizzlies and too few on the Bulls—“We was robbed”!

The dash in this sentence could be replaced with a semi-colon or a colon or even a period, but the dash signals the emphasis and change in voice which the sentence which follows the dash conveys.

Double dashes occur within a sentence. They have the same purpose as the single dash, emphasizing the phrase or clause contained within and sometimes indicating a change in tone.

Admissions committees will be more impressed—and Ivy League admissions committees need to be impressed—if you are the president of one club rather than a passive member of three

Note that commas or parentheses could replace the dashes in the above sentence. The dashes tend to highlight the sentence between them, while parentheses tend to deemphasize the sentence, while commas suggest equal emphasis with the information in the rest of the sentence.

Dependent Clause

Synonymous to a subordinate clause, a dependent clause, like an independent clause (that is, a sentence) contains a subject and a verb but cannot act as a sentence, because it begins with a subordinate conjunction or a relative pronoun.

Study this sentence:

Although the phrase could be separated from the rest of the sentence with commas, the writer chose dashes, because she wanted to stress the enormity of the victory of the Trojan army, which was outnumbered two to one.

The sentence contains one independent clause: “The writer chose dashes.” There are three other clauses, which do contain subjects and verbs, but they are dependent or subordinate clauses, not complete sentences, because of the words with which they begin. Two begin with a subordinate conjunction: “Although the phrase could be separated from the rest of the sentence with commas” and “because she wanted to stress the enormity of the victory of the Trojan army.” One begins with a relative pronoun: “which was outnumbered two to one.”

Description

Kind of rhetorical mode or genre, characterized by an account of the properties, aspects, characteristics of a person, a place, a thing—anything interesting or significant enough to be so depicted.

Description can be a rhetorical mode in and of itself, but, in academic writing, it is usually in support of a paragraph’s topic sentence. The author of a study of the causes of surfing accidents might include a paragraph, part of which describes a fierce wind and its effect on the size and speed of Hawaiian waves.

Diction

As a term germane to academic writing, diction refers to the word choices a writer makes, the vocabulary he or she uses.

Like so many other properties of written discourse, diction should be reader sensitive. Consider this paragraph:

The big change to the Aventador's 6.5 liter V-12 is a freer-flowing exhaust. It also has fresh calibrations for its variable valve timing and variable intake system. Peak power is achieved 100 rpm below redline at a shrill 8400 revs. Torque remains 509 pound-feet at 5500 rpm.

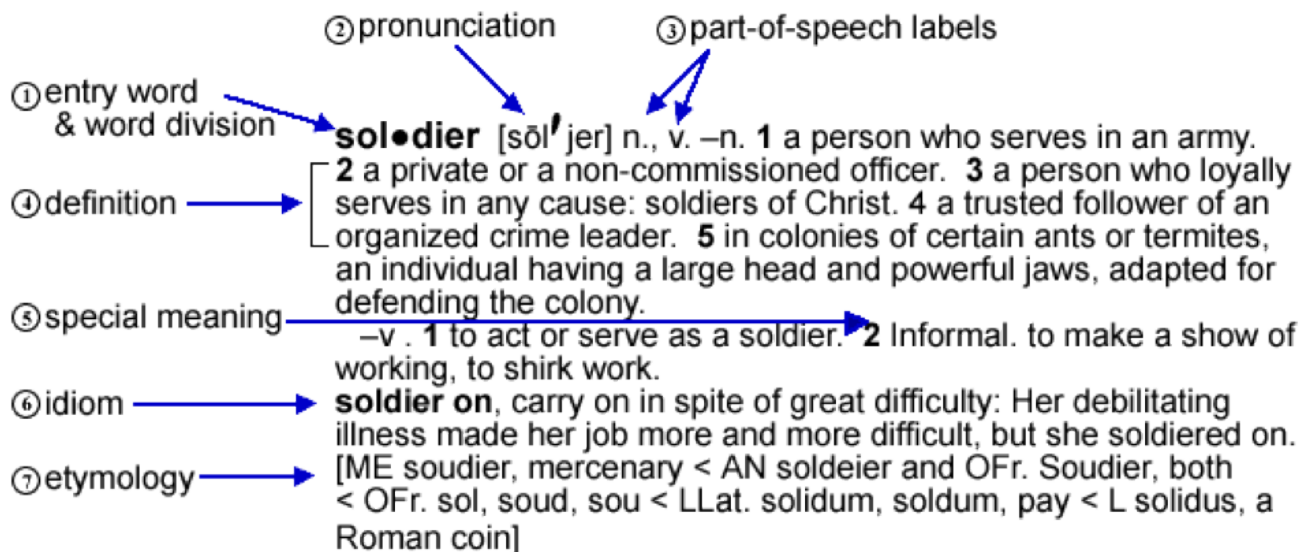
The diction this writer uses—"calibrations for its variable valve timing"—presupposes readers who know about automotive specifications. He would have to change his word choices, if he were writing for a general audience.

Academic writing is often inaccessible to general readers because of the specialized diction often found in articles in academic journals.

Dictionary

One of any writer's essential resources, for spelling, connotation, capitalization, homonyms and, if necessary, etymology. You have access to many free online dictionaries; a good paper dictionary lodges spelling and meaning in memory more effectively and should always be within easy reach, when you are working on a writing assignment.

Below is an illustrative dictionary item on the word *soldier*. This entry provides information about the word, including the word division (sol•dier); pronunciation [sōl'jer]; part-of-speech labels (noun and verb); all potential definitions, special meanings, and idioms; and the word's etymology.



Dictionaries must necessarily squeeze a lot of information into a single entry, so various symbols and abbreviations are used in order to save space. This can make a dictionary item somewhat difficult to read. In the opening pages of a dictionary you will find a key to abbreviations and symbols and sometimes an anatomized sample entry like the one above.

Effects Assignment

An academic writing task that calls for the writer to explain the consequences of an action or a phenomenon. How has the three-point shot affected basketball? What effect has feminism had on the Catholic Church? What effect do gamma rays have on man-in-the-moon marigolds?

The template/outline for an effects assignment is usually straightforward. Suppose, for example, your thesis is “Children who are victims of bullying are prone to depression, decline in academic performance, and changes in eating and sleeping patterns.” The body of your essay would develop each of these effects. There would be at least one paragraph for each effect, more for an assignment that requires a longer response. The conclusion might stress the need for schools to implement anti-bullying policies.

The Effects Assignment may be combined with the Causes Assignment. What causes global warming and how has global warming affected the climate of the Pacific Northwest?

Either/Or Fallacy

A logical fallacy which suggests there is only one alternative to a proposition, when there may be several. This fallacy is especially acute when the alternative is melodramatic.

It may not be fallacious to assert that our college must start offering online courses or we risk losing revenue to other schools. It is a fallacy to say we must start offering online courses or remain in the dark ages.

Ellipses...

Punctuation mark consisting of three periods and used to indicate that some text has been omitted, usually from a quote, usually because it is not as relevant as the rest of the quote to the point a writer is making.

The ellipses is a punctuation mark consisting of three periods...used to indicate that some text has been omitted, usually from a quote...

Note in the example above that if the omitted information is at the end of the sentence, a period follows the ellipses.

Exposition/Expository Essay

A main genre or rhetorical mode of discourse, one which provides information to readers, in support of a thesis. Also known as the informative mode. An essay on the physiological effects of performance enhancing drugs on Olympic athletes is expository, while an essay arguing in favor or against allowing Olympic athletes to use performance enhancing drugs is not. It would be an argument essay. Expository essays deal more with fact; argument, with opinion.

Students in most academic disciplines are required to write expository essays. An economics major might write an essay defining and providing examples of monetary policy; a psych major might write an essay outlining the symptoms of bi-polar disorder; an art history major might write an essay defining and providing examples of cubism.

There are various types of expository essay: compare/contrast, cause/effect, definition, examples and details, classification and division. They are covered under separate alphabetical listings.

Ethos

Along with logos and pathos one of the three features of an effective argument, according to Aristotle.

If the author of a written argument asserts that his or her thesis or an argument in support of a thesis is ethical or that it is the position of the ethical, often an intellectually or socially elite, individual, the argument is more compelling. When a writer reminds readers that the President considers global warming a serious national security threat, that writer strengthens any thesis in support of the urgent need to curtail any human activity that causes global warming.

Examination Essay

Many of your teachers and professors will include questions on mid-term and final exams that require at least paragraph, if not essay length responses.

There is no substitute for hard study and sound knowledge of the content of your courses to perform well on an examination essay. But there are other things you can do to increase your chances of doing well.

1. Anticipate some of the questions your professor might ask and draft practice answers, even if they are in the form of an outline only. Pay attention, also, to clues your instructors might drop about the questions they might ask.
2. Read the prompt slowly and carefully. You need to know if your professor wants an expository or an argument essay, and that information will be implicit in the prompt. It will help a lot if you know a template—offered in this book—for various forms of expository essay and for an argument essay. You need to know what your instructor wants from you and to respond to the assignment appropriately. You need to know the purpose of the assignment and do your best to fulfill that purpose.
3. Mine the prompt also for content you might use in your response. Longer prompts often contain information you can integrate into your answer.
4. Manage your time well. If time permits, jot down a thesis and an outline; even a rough draft, if you have enough time to edit and revise it. If you are pressed for time, do your best to write extemporaneously. Bring white out and double space, so you can at least edit, if not revise, as you proceed.
5. Eat a protein-rich meal an hour or two before you write an examination essay.
6. Be well rested. Sometimes two more hours of sleep will serve you better than two more hours of study time.
7. View moderate stress as a good sign. Some studies suggest that we perform best in stressful situations when we have moderate, but not severe nor absent stress.

Exclamation point (!)

Punctuation mark used to add emphasis to the end of a sentence.

Common in informal writing, friendly emails and text messages, especially, the exclamation point

should be used sparingly in academic writing. Its frequent use in an argument essay will not strengthen the force of the argument!!

Exclamation points are common in quoted dialogue. The quotation mark comes after the exclamation point.

“No mean no!” she exclaimed.

Extended Definition Assignment

An essay-length explanation of a complex term or concept, often one germane to a particular academic discipline. Often requires examples. What, in Freudian psychology, is the super ego? What, in literary theory, is deconstruction? What is Marxism? What is a cost/benefit ratio?

After the key term is defined at length, the extended definition essay often morphs into an essay developed by examples. A “What is Autism” essay will provide a thorough definition of the key term and then might recount examples of typical autistic behaviour, in a paragraph, perhaps, on an atypical ability to communicate, another on an atypical ability to empathise, another on a tendency toward obsessive-compulsive behaviour.

Famous / Infamous

Both of these words mean well-known, but the difference between them lies in the reasons for the notoriety. Famous means well-known for positive reasons, infamous for negative reasons. Think of President Roosevelt saying the attack on Pearl Harbour will live in infamy. Jane Austen is famous; Count Dracula is infamous. Many celebrities, of course, are both.

Fewer, Less

Two adjectives that are often interchanged incorrectly. “Fewer” identifies a quantity and is used before a noun which could be counted; “less” identifies a quantity but is used before a noun which could not be counted.

There are fewer people eating in the cafeteria today so less food is being wasted.

Beatrice has fewer children than Beth, so Beth has less time to devote to yoga and Pilates.

I take fewer pieces of tape so that I use less tape.

Five Hundred Word Essay/Theme

A written academic text in its fundamental form. As such, it consists of an introductory paragraph which establishes some context and presents a thesis; three body paragraphs, which develop the thesis; and one concluding paragraph, which reaffirms the thesis and establishes closure.

The five-hundred-word essay is a common assignment in high-school English courses and is often the first assignment in a first-year college writing course, assigned in the belief that it is the basic template, a sound knowledge of which will help students transition to longer, more complex writing assignments.

Flammable / Inflammable

These two words are synonymous, both meaning easily ignited.

Freewriting

One of several heuristics, designed to help a writer generate content for a text. The theory behind freewriting asserts that we have many ideas and insights within our minds, but that we sometimes need ways to release them. The physical act of writing is liberating. It stimulates mental activity and forces us to get ideas onto paper. Some of these ideas, some of this content, should find its way into a complete writing assignment.

The free writer takes a minute to consider the essay topic, then begins to write, without regard for sentence grammar or structure: the goal is to liberate those great ideas and insights, trapped in the mind, abandoned and forgotten, and get them down on paper. The necessary revising and editing can come later.

Freewriting continues only until the law of diminishing returns sets in, usually after about ten minutes. However, the free writer might isolate a key point or two the first round of freewriting has revealed and begin again, using this point as the starting point.

Fused Sentence

Two sentences which run together with no punctuation between them.

Some planes are grounded if the temperature exceeds 118 degrees Fahrenheit it's almost that hot in Arizona today.

Note that a comma after "Fahrenheit" would not correct the error. You need both a comma and a coordinate conjunction.

Some planes are grounded if the temperature exceeds 118 degrees Fahrenheit, and it's almost that hot in Arizona today.

A period or a semi-colon after "Fahrenheit" would also correct the error.

A fused sentence is a form of the run-on sentence.

Future Tense

Verb identifying action to occur beyond the present, signalled by the auxiliary verb "will" or, less frequently, especially in American English, "shall."

He will have to support the policy, or he will not be re-elected.

We shall not be re-elected, if the committee exceeds the budget.

The rule which dictates the use of shall with first-person pronouns (I shall report this incident to the principle; we shall not fail) has weakened over time, and your teachers will not likely penalize you for using "will" with first-person pronouns. I will pass this course.

Will and shall are often contracted: She'll be coming around the mountain, but she won't be driving six white horses. Contractions are less acceptable in academic writing, than in informal speech and writing.

Gender Neutral Pronoun

Usually refers to the use of plural pronouns they/them/their as singular pronouns, in order to avoid the tiresome repetition of he/she, his/her. A colonel has to obey their [as opposed to his or her] general's orders.

The singular "they" is now widely accepted, though some of your instructors might still flag it as an error in grammar.

"They" can also refer now to those who do not identify as either gender. Neologisms such as "ze" and "ey" are also used in some circles now to identify those who do not identify as either gender or even to replace "he" and "she," on the assumption that gender identity is fluid. Such neologisms have gained some but not gained widespread acceptance within the academic community.

General Thesis

An essay's controlling idea, expressed without telegraphing the points to be developed in the body of the essay or report.

The Mediterranean diet is among those most beneficial to human health.

A blueprint thesis would telegraph the points to be developed in the body of the essay.

The Mediterranean diet is among those most beneficial to human health, because it includes a wide array of vegetables, monounsaturated fats, and vitamin-rich sauces.

Gerund

A word that is derived from a verb, ends in "ing," and functions as a noun. Golfing is good exercise, but I prefer fishing.

Grader/Marker Abbreviations

Your instructor may use abbreviations in the margins of your essay to indicate an error you have made. The error will also typically be circled or otherwise flagged.

Here is a list of common symbols instructors often use when evaluating student writing. Note that in this book there is a full discussion of each error.

- ad: adjective used incorrectly.
- agr: usually refers to an error in pronoun agreement; could refer to an error in subject-verb agreement, though that may be abbreviated as sv. agr.
- awk: awkward sentence structure.

- cap: error in use of capital letter.
- case: error in pronoun case.
- co: error in use of coordinate conjunction.
- coh: coherence weak.
- com: faulty comparison.
- concl: weak concluding paragraph.
- cs: comma splice.
- d: diction; poor word choice.
- def: term used should be defined.
- dm: dangling modifier.
- doc: documentation; source needs to be cited or error in citation.
- ex: example needed or would be useful.
- for: formatting error.
- frag: sentence fragment.
- fs: fused sentence.
- hyph: hyphen needed or not needed.
- intro: first paragraph weak; should be revised.
- it: Italics needed or used incorrectly, often in
- jarg: jargon.
- lc: lower case needed; usually indicates a capital letter (upper case) used incorrectly.
- mix: mixed construction; similar to awk (awkward).
- mm: misplaced modifier.
- no ,: comma not needed.
- para: better if you paraphrase this (usually in reference to a quote from a secondary source).
- pass: active voice verb better here than passive.
- ref: pronoun reference (not to be confused with pronoun case) not clear.
- run-on: run-on sentence.
- shift: an abrupt change (often in tone) within a sentence.
- sp: spelling.
- sub: subordination; usually means that sentence structure and variety would be improved with subordination.
- sum: better to summarize this; usually in reference to quote from a secondary source.
- trans: transition; need to connect this sentence with previous one more clearly.

- vague: sentence or passage needs to be revised in the interest of clarity.
- vt: verb tense.
- wrdy: wordy; revise for concision.
- ww: wrong word.
- ^: insert.
- ~: transpose.
- ¶: begin new paragraph.
- //: faulty parallelism

Hasty Generalization

A logical fallacy, because it purports to support an argument by implying that one example of a phenomenon or circumstance is universally applicable. Automotive magazines have panned the performance of the Blink; electric cars will never replace gas-powered ones.

Note that, like many logical fallacies, a generalization is not necessarily false or mendacious. It is ineffective to argue against tobacco use because a friend or relative died of lung cancer, only if this is only one or a small part of the evidence you offer in support of your thesis.

Helping Verb

Short word used to define the nature of an action more precisely than that conveyed by the main verb alone. You (can, may, might, will, must, should) dance.

Hyphen (-)

The hyphen is a punctuation mark, consisting of a straight line, similar in appearance to a dash—but half the length. There are four rules for hyphenation, which are fairly consistent among editors and style manual authors.

1. A hyphen is used within a word or between two closely related words to avoid ambiguity:

In New York, small-business owners don't make much money. (Without the hyphen the sentence might refer to business owners who are not tall).
A little-used desk.
He resigned? No, I said he re-signed!
2. A hyphen is used between a prefix and its stem word, when the last letter of the prefix is the same as the first letter of the stem word:

His anti-immigration policies are controversial.
Co-op housing is less expensive.
The game was pre-empted by the speech.
3. A hyphen is used between a prefix and its stem word, when the stem word is a proper noun.

Countries which are pro-Israeli are often anti-Iraqi.

4. A hyphen is used between a compound adjective that precedes a noun but not used for a compound adjective that follows a noun.

She is famous for her strawberry-blond hair.

Her hair is strawberry blond.

She has a five-year-old child.

Her child is five years old.

I was the second-to-last finisher.

I finished second to last.

A hyphen will also indicate a break within a word in text which has margins justified right, but academic texts do not usually require right, only left-justified margins.

Other rules which govern the use of hyphens tend to depend upon the authority under which your essay or report is composed. You can read an article on line, online, or on-line. You can read your text book, your text-book, or your textbook. You can send an email or an e-mail. Some style manuals advise against the use of hyphens for compound words before a noun when one of the words is an adverb: an unusually pleasant day, but not an unusually-pleasant day, though always a day that is unusually pleasant. Hyphens in literary terms such as point of view or point-of-view and antihero or anti-hero are optional.

When in doubt, consult the style manual which corresponds to the format and citation method your instructor/professor has prescribed, which will usually be *The MLA Handbook* or *The Chicago Manual of Style* or *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. An authoritative dictionary is also a good source for acceptable hyphenation.

Implied/Implicit Thesis

A robust thesis is an essential component of an academic text. The thesis is often expressed in a single sentence, or perhaps spread over two sentences in the introduction of the essay or report. However, the thesis can be implied, rather than stated explicitly.

The thesis of the following introductory paragraph is that Japanese *shin hanga* prints are priceless and exquisite, but there is no single thesis sentence which nutshells the thesis

Shin hanga means “new prints” in Japanese, and it designates a group of gifted Japanese wood block artists, at work in the first two decades of the twentieth century. They were inspired by the quietly beautiful landscapes and seascapes of their native land, and by the human face and form—some of their paintings of young Japanese women, bathing, applying make up, flirting, can be surprisingly sensual. The *shin hanga* line is pure and precise and bold, a style which can be difficult to achieve in wood block art. The glorious colors, in every shade, every hue, are the crowning achievement of movement, the main reason why these paintings are so mesmerizing, it is difficult to turn away from them, once the eye is arrested.

Indefinite Pronoun

A word which identifies a general or indeterminate group: everyone, everybody, all, nobody, no one.

Indefinite pronouns are usually singular: Everyone is coming; all is not lost.

However, the use of the pronouns they, their, and them as the antecedent of an indefinite pronoun is widely accepted. No one is bringing their car. Everyone is paying their taxes on time this year.

Similarly, context might determine subject-verb agreement, when an indefinite pronoun is the subject: All of the money is missing; all of the students are present.

Infinitive Verb Form

The root or base form of the verb, preceded by “to”: to eat; to pray; to love.

Infinitive verb form can act as the subject of a verb: To play for the Maple Leafs was his dream come true.

Infinitive verb form can act as the object of a verb: I want to forgive him. In that sentence, “to forgive” is the object of the verb “want” and “him” is the object of the infinitive “to forgive.”

In Terms Of

In the interest of concision, student writers are advised to revise sentences which contain this compound preposition. Change “My writing has improved in terms of the number of grammar errors I used to make” to My writing has improved; I make fewer grammar errors now.”

Introduction

The opening of an academic writing assignment will vary in length, proportionate to the length of the entire assignment, one paragraph for a shorter essay, several for a longer one. The rules that apply to the content of the opening are usually more constant. A good opening typically serves two purposes: it provides context related to the assignment topic, and it presents the main or controlling idea, the thesis.

The context will make clear the genre of the essay—argument, compare/contrast, cause/effect, process. It will usually establish the topic’s broader parameters, and it might include essential background information, related to the topic.

Suppose, for example, you were to write an essay explaining the popularity among students of an iconic consumer product, and you chose denim jeans as your topic. It is a cause/effect essay, insofar as it explains the reasons why (the causes) jeans are so popular (the effect). The context portion of your opening might include this information:

- Your own observation done over the course of a week or so which reveals that on any given day, about half of the students on your campus wear denim jeans to class on a regular basis;
- Some historical context you have learned from your research about how long jeans have been around;
- An interesting and relevant fact that you have learned from your research, that, for example, the average college/university student owns seven pair of jeans.

The thesis is the main or controlling idea of an essay or report, usually expressed as an opinion or an assertion, usually expressed in a single sentence, which the rest of the essay supports and augments. It is typically the last sentence of the opening paragraph (paragraphs in a longer essay), though it can also be effectively placed elsewhere.

A blueprint thesis provides readers with not only the essay’s controlling idea, but also the reasons and arguments, in phrase or even word form, in support of the controlling idea. A simple blueprint thesis for a short essay about the popularity of jeans essay, might be:

Jeans are so popular because they are comfortable, durable, and stylish.

For a longer essay, the thesis would add more supporting points:

Jeans are so popular because they are an icon of our culture, cleverly marketed, comfortable, stylish, and durable.

The advantage of the blueprint thesis is that it alerts the reader to the essay's organizational pattern and so enhances the overall clarity of the text. One disadvantage is that it could reduce readers' interest in the rest of the essay since it gives much away. Another is that it becomes more difficult to construct, the more complex are the reasons in support of the thesis.

A general thesis presents little else than the essay's controlling idea:

There are several reasons why jeans are so ubiquitous an article of clothing.
It is not difficult to explain the universal appeal of jeans.

The advantage of the general thesis is that it is concise, to the point. The disadvantage is that it can seem too much a statement of the obvious.

A question thesis poses a question, to which the rest of the essay responds:

Why are denim jeans so popular?

The implied thesis is not in a single sentence in an opening paragraph. Rather, it floats between the sentences, an authoritative but invisible presence. Here is an example:

Wander around a shopping mall, an airport, or a college campus, observe what the people are wearing, and you will learn, if you did not know already, that denim jeans are among the most popular items of clothing that people choose to wear. Today, in my college English class, 14 of the 26 students—and my professor—are wearing jeans. The average North American college students own seven pairs of jeans (Ellison 14). Once acceptable only in casual venues, jeans are common now in the workplace—my bank manager wears jeans on casual Fridays!—and in restaurants that once had jacket-and-tie dress codes.

We love jeans because...

There is no single sentence that spells out thesis, but its presence is there, confirmed by the opening phrase of the second paragraph.

The implied thesis is common in the writing of professional journalists and academics. In a good essay or article, readers know what the thesis is by the time they have come to the end of the introduction, but there may not be a single sentence they can underline and write in the margin "thesis." For students, the implied thesis is a bit of a risk: many professors want a clear thesis, as an obvious sign that the student, whose essay they are evaluating, has learned and can apply this essential feature of academic writing.

Irregardless

Word processing programs put the squiggly red line under this word because it is not a word. The correct term for not taking into account is regardless.

Irregular verb

A verb which forms its past tense and past participle in ways different than a regular verb does. A

regular verb usually forms its past tense by adding the suffix “ed.” I play, played, have played my violin is past tense regular form, while I sing, sang, have sung is past tense and past perfect tense (see **Verb tense**) with an irregular verb.

The list of irregular verbs is long; some have the same form for present tense, past tense, and past participle: I just cut myself! I cut myself yesterday! I have cut myself too often.

Some have three different forms: Don’t bite me again! You bit me again! You have bitten me three times this week! I go every year; I went last year; maybe I have gone too often.

Some have two different forms: He won’t fight tonight; he fought last night; he has fought too often this week.

The misuse of an irregular verb form is a fairly common error in student academic writing: They had sang it often enough (should be had sung); the teacher had spoke to me before about this (should be had spoken).

Look the verb up in the dictionary, if you are not certain if it is regular or irregular or if you know it is irregular but are not certain of the difference between the past tense and the past participle. Remember, you use the past participle with an auxiliary verb.

Independent Clause

Synonymous with a main clause or simple sentence, and independent clause contains a subject and a verb and stands on its own as complete: Terrorist attacks on major European cities have escalated in the past few months.

As distinct from a subordinate or dependent clause, which also contains a subject and a verb, but which cannot stand on its own as complete: Since terrorist attacks on major European cities have increased in the past few months....

Infinitive Verb Form

The verb form, when preceded by “to”: to cook, to clean, to sew.

Infinitives function as nouns, hence as subjects or objects of verbs—To launder that much money requires some sophisticated financial transactions, but he wants to launder all of it.

Intransitive Verb

One which does not take a direct object. The police arrived in time. I will retire next spring. A verb which does take a direct object—He failed math—is a transitive verb. Verbs can be both: He could not see (the screen).

Its, It’s

The pronoun it has only two forms or cases (See Pronoun Case), but it is responsible for a common error in English usage. It is the subjective case: It is a fact. And it is also the objective case: I know it.

The possessive case is its. I like its beaches, but I don’t like its high prices.

It is, especially in less formal writing, is often expressed as the contraction it’s. It’s all good. This is where the error sometimes occurs. We see that contraction, and we know it signals possession—the

quarterback's helmet—so we might think the contraction in it's also signals possession. It does not. It signals a contraction, like doesn't, hasn't.

Its is already in possessive case. It does not need a contraction, any more than his does.

All of its (not it's) tires are flat.

Memorize this brief simple sentence, and it might help you avoid the error: It's missing one of its pages.

And there is no such thing as its'.

Jargon

Experts in a field usually have their own language, used and understood by other experts in the field, but baffling to those on the outside.

Snowboarders talk about shreddin the gnar and avoiding a yard sale: going snowboarding and avoiding losing equipment in a fall.

Realtors talk about double-enders, balloon mortgages, half-baths, and PITI: earning a commission on both the sale and the purchase of a property; a short-term mortgage that does not fully repay the debt, due in full at a later point; a bathroom without a bath or shower; an acronym for principal, interest, taxes, insurance.

Butchers talk about chitlins, flat-iron steaks, and six-inch boners, which are, respectively, pig intestines, meat from under the shoulder blade, a special knife for boning meat out of a carcass.

Jargon has a bad reputation, but its use is not a solecism if the readers are in the know. Your literature professor will expect you to know about omniscient point-of-view, a rites-of-passage story, trochaic tetrameter, and to use these terms in your written work. The jargon of the economist, the computer scientist, the historian is fine for papers written for those courses.

But avoid using the jargon from one discipline in a paper written for another.

Kind Of

As a verb synonymous with “thoughtful and nice” the phrase “kind of” is fine: That is kind of you. As a synonym for “type,” the use of kind is fine: This kind of behaviour is inappropriate.

In academic writing, avoid the “kind of” as a synonym for rather: The critics kind of like Selena's voice.

Lay, Lie

Two verbs often the source of errors in usage because their sound and meaning are so similar.

The difference is that “to lay” is a transitive verb and therefore takes a direct object, “eggs,” in this sentence:

Chickens lay eggs.

“To lie” is an intransitive verb and therefore does not take a direct object.

Pigs lie in the mud.

Usage errors are common between the progressive forms of the verb—laying and lying—but the rule remains the same. Don't use "laying" if there is no direct object. These sentences are incorrect.

I plan to spend all day just laying around. Should be "lying around." I plan to spend all day laying the groundwork for the new development is correct because now there is a direct object—groundwork.

His body was still laying [should be lying] in the street for two hours after he was shot.

Note also that confusion may arise because the past tense of "to lie" is the same as the present tense of "to lay."

All day yesterday, the pigs lay in the mud.

Note that the past participle form of "to lie" is "lain" and the past participle of "to lay" is "laid."

Chickens have laid eggs on this farm for generations.

Those pigs have lain in the mud all day.

Here are the two verbs, in all of their tenses. See Verb Tense.

Chickens lay eggs.

The chickens laid an even dozen eggs yesterday.

I hope the chickens will lay even more eggs tomorrow.

The chickens are laying eggs.

The chickens were laying eggs.

The chickens will be laying eggs.

That chicken has laid a dozen eggs today.

Those chickens have laid a dozen eggs today.

Those chickens will have laid a dozen eggs by sunset.

The chickens have been laying eggs all day.

The chickens had been laying eggs all day, but then the storm came.

If they continue, the chickens will have been laying eggs steadily for eight hours.

Pigs lie in the mud.

Pigs lay in the mud all day yesterday.

Pigs will lie in the mud tomorrow.

The pigs are lying in the mud.

My pig was lying in the mud.

Those pigs were lying in the mud.

My pig has lain in the mud for three hours now.

Those pigs have lain in the mud for three hours now.

Pigs have been lying in the mud all day.

My pig has been lying in the mud all day.

The pigs had been lying in the mud for three hours, before the storm hit.

If they stay there for another hour, the pigs will have been lying in the mud for eight hours straight.

Less, Fewer

Both words describe quantity, but less should be used before nouns that cannot be broken down and counted, while fewer should be used for nouns which have separate, countable units.

Less butter; fewer chocolate chips

Less fat; fewer calories
Less traffic; fewer cars
Less work; fewer chores
Less confusion; fewer words

Licence, License

The first spelling of the word is not a part of American English. You have a driver's license and you are licensed to drive. In British English, the version with two c's is the noun form. You have a driver's licence. But not the verb form. You are licensed to drive. Canadians can use either.

Like

Your grammar cop instructors and professors might not approve of the use of like, as a subordinate conjunction, insisting that as should be used instead. In the following sentence, "as" is correct; "like" would be a solecism: The movie won the academy award, as most critics predicted it would. However, many essay graders would not object to the use of "like" in the previous sentence.

In academic writing, don't use like as a parenthetical expression: Gatsby was, like, stunned when Daisy finally chose Tom.

Linking verb

A verb which links together a subject and a noun or pronoun or an adjective which follows the verb to establish a different relationship between subject-verb-noun/pronoun than that established by a transitive verb. This sentence for example—Ottawa is the capital of Canada—links together two entities that are the same—while this sentence—Ottawa plays Vancouver tonight does not. The first uses the linking verb "is"; the second uses the transitive verb "plays." The noun or pronoun or adjective that follows a linking verb is called a subject complement.

The verb to be (is, am, are, was, were, been) is the most commonly used linking verb. Other linking verbs are to appear (The ghost appears harmless) ; seems (The Conservative candidate seems nervous); look (You look marvelous, darling); sound (the band sounds fine to me).

Consider these two sentences, containing a word often misused, following a linking verb.

I feel bad.

I feel badly.

They are both correct, but they have different meanings. I feel bad is a sympathetic condition or an indication of poor health. I feel badly means that my sense of touch is poor. This sentence—I feel badly about the company's bankruptcy—is incorrect. It should be I feel bad about the company's bankruptcy.

Logical Fallacy

A breach in rational thought that could undermine the content and the reception of a spoken or written argument. If you are constructing or critiquing an argument, you need to know about logical fallacies. They come in in several forms.

A hasty generalization implies that the consequences of one action or event will also apply to similar,

related actions or events. He was an unarmed African American teenager, and Officer Wilson shot him dead. The police are such racists.

The post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy (Latin for “after this, therefore because of this”) asserts that one action or event will cause a similar, related action or event to occur. Marijuana has just been legalized in Washington. It won’t be long before everyone who lives in Seattle is wandering around stoned. Also called the slippery slope fallacy, this implies a series, as opposed to a single successive action or event. The government is increasing its taxes on cigarettes. It is just a matter of time before it increases taxes on alcohol, gasoline, and junk food.

The straw man fallacy matches attitudes and beliefs to group membership, implying that the attitudes and beliefs of members of that group are about as substantive as straw. Senator Smiley is a Christian conservative, so he wants homosexuality to be criminalized. Quote the senator’s words in support of the proposition, but don’t merely assume a position due to association.

Begging the question occurs when a speaker or writer precludes an opposing argument by embedding unsubstantiated evidence in the proposition. The identity of victims of rape must be protected during trial because men who are charged with rape are vile predators whose presence will traumatize victim yet again. Rapists are vile predators but those charged with rape deserve a presumption of innocence.

The either/or fallacy implies that there is only one alternative to a controversial proposition. Either radical animal rights activists must be prosecuted and imprisoned or furriers will go out of business.

The ad populum fallacy implies that a group shares common values and that you are not a real member of the group, unless you, too, share all of that group’s values. If you are a good Christian, you will oppose gay marriage.

A red herring may offer support for an argument but not for the one under discussion. Computer hackers accessed credit card and social insurance numbers, and those businesses they hacked need to stay profitable to survive. Similar to a non sequitur, Latin for “it does not follow.”

Note that a logical fallacy is not synonymous with a lie. It is a proposition that, in and of itself, forms a weak link in an argument. But if that proposition is supported by research, it no longer becomes a logical fallacy. For example, the “slippery slope” fallacy asserts that one action will lead to another related action: If we ban fighting in professional hockey, soon body checking will be banned, then all forms of contact will be band, and soon hockey will be not more exciting than ringette. There is no evidence this has happened or will happen. This is a slippery slope fallacy.

However, if, a generation ago, an editorial writer opposed a ban on smoking in government buildings, by arguing that soon smoking will be banned in private businesses, and restaurants, and apartment buildings and even sports bars (!), what appears to be a slippery slope argument is actually valid.

Logos

Along with ethos and pathos, one of the three qualities of an effective argument, originally expounded by Aristotle and now widely used in writing instruction.

Aristotle used term “logos” to refer not only to the quality of the logic in a text and of the writer’s care in avoiding logical fallacies, but to the efficacy of the structure of the text as well. However, the term now is more narrowly applied to an assessment of the extent to which reason and logic characterize a text.

Loose and Periodic Sentences

A periodic sentence is syntactically conservative, the order of its clauses and phrases orthodox.

The order of phrases and clauses in an English sentence is quite flexible. In a periodic sentence, the order is conventional, in that it begins with the main idea, followed by any qualification or support.

There will be more Muslims than Christians in Europe by the end of the century.

In a loose sentence, the qualification or support comes at the beginning.

By the end of the century, there will be more Muslims than Christians in Europe.

Here is another example of a periodic sentence followed by its loose counterpart

A loose sentence is more syntactically radical, in that its main point is delayed until the end.

Its main point delayed until the end, the loose sentence is more syntactically radical.

The lesson here is in sentence variety. A loose sentence amidst a group of periodic sentences can improve style and refocus a reader's attention, changing as it does the rhythm and flow of the prose.

Sentence variety is important in academic writing but it must be natural, not forced. It is not a good idea to insert a loose sentence into a paragraph just because there are no others. Instead, while you are revising your work, read it out loud and listen to the rhythm and flow of your sentences and change the structure of some of them, if your ear indicates you should do so.

Main Clause

A group of words, containing a subject and a verb, autonomous in that the words form a complete sentence.

Also known as a sentence.

Also known as an independent clause.

Distinct from a subordinate or dependent clause, which does have a subject and a verb, but which is not autonomous.

Consider this sentence:

Full body swim suits are no longer allowed in Olympic competition, because they are too buoyant and too aerodynamic.

The first half of the sentence—Full body swim suits are no longer allowed in Olympic competition—is a main or independent clause—a sentence. The second half of the sentence—because they are too buoyant and too aerodynamic—is a dependent or subordinate clause, because it cannot stand alone as an independent syntactical unit. It would be a sentence boundary error, known as a sentence fragment.

Methods of Paragraph Development

In academic writing, a series of body paragraphs elucidate, develop, augment, explain the essay's

thesis. Writers typically use any combination of methods, including examples, details, definitions, comparisons, contrasts, causes, effects, and anecdotes to develop their thesis, in body paragraphs.

This paragraph is developed by the use of details.

Coast redwoods grow along the Pacific coast of the United States, as far south as Monterey County, California and as far north as southern Oregon, an area about 470 miles in length and of varying widths, from a narrow range of five miles to an upper range of forty-seven. The elevation also varies widely: some redwoods grow at ninety-eight feet above sea level; others as high as 2,460 feet. They prefer the mountains, where they can draw rain from the incoming moisture off the Pacific Ocean, especially mountain valleys where streams flow year around and fog drip is regular. Redwoods above the fog layer are less majestic, the drier, windier, and colder conditions stunting their growth, and the Douglas fir and pine trees competing with them for sun, water and soil nutrients. They cannot flourish too close to the ocean, where the salt spray, sand, and wind can denude their branches.

This paragraph is developed by the use of examples, though there is also a compare/contrast element in the fifth sentence.

The pick-up lines with lowest ratings were those which predicted, expected, or otherwise referenced any form of desire for sexual conquest. Every woman surveyed gave a zero rating (immediately suspend the conversation) to “Did you ever realize screw rhymes with me and you.” All were equally disgusted by “Hey I’m looking for treasure; can I look around your chest?” If there was a hint of cleverness or wit in the line, the ratings were higher but still much lower than the friendship lines which scored the highest. “I lost my virginity...can I have yours” scored an average of 1.3 on the five-point scale. “What’s your favorite silverware...cause I like to spoon” scored 1.6, a reflection likely of the comparative mildness of the sexual innuendo. But the results of the survey clearly indicate that young women despise lines that hint of sexual desire, and assertively spurn the men who speak them.

This is a compare/contrast paragraph, the similarities and differences illustrated with examples and details.

The main difference between the two agencies is jurisdiction. The FBI works within the United States, tracking down criminals who commit federal crimes, including mail fraud, aircraft hijacking, kidnapping, bank robbery, identity theft, and tax evasion. The CIA operates in foreign countries, not so much to track down criminals as to spy on other countries and detect and neutralize potential threats to America, in extreme cases engineering a coup to oust a government so unfriendly to theirs that they pose an existential risk. FBI agents act when a crime is committed. CIA agents are more proactive, identifying and preventing threats to the U.S. The FBI is a federal police force; the CIA, an intelligence gathering organization.

Missing Comma after an Introductory Word, Phrase, or Clause

A sentence needs a comma after an introductory word, phrase, or clause:

Badly wounded himself, the medic was unable to care for other wounded soldiers.

In the valley, concealed by rocks and trees, the opposing army lay in wait.

Insulted, the women vowed to occupy the art gallery until their demands were met.

Note that even if the word, phrase, or clause is restrictive (essential to the meaning of the sentence), it needs a comma, if it is at the beginning of the sentence.

Many Americans claim they will emigrate to Canada if Mogul is elected President.

But:

If Mogul is elected president, many Americans claim they will emigrate to Canada.

Misplaced Modifier

A modifier is a word or a phrase or a clause, which describes or qualifies or limits the parameters of another word: a minor error; a very minor error; an error in judgement; an error that I always make.

When a modifying word or phrase or clause is in a sentence, it must be placed in a position which does not cause confusion. If it does cause confusion, it is a misplaced modifier. In this sentence, for example—After a long and intense meeting, we enjoyed a gourmet dinner, especially prepared for us, leisurely—the writer most likely wants to indicate that the dinner was enjoyed leisurely, not prepared leisurely. If this is the case, the modifier needs to be placed in a position which improves its clarity: we leisurely enjoyed a gourmet dinner or we enjoyed a gourmet dinner leisurely.

In this sentence—They served a gourmet meal to all the guests on fine china—it is a phrase, “on fine china,” that is misplaced. It seems as if the guests, not the food, were on fine china. A revised version: They served a gourmet meal on fine china to all the guests (or they served, on fine china,...).

In this sentence—They served a gourmet meal to all the guests, accompanied by a vintage Bordeaux—it is a clause that is misplaced. The meal and not the guests was accompanied by a vintage Bordeaux. They served a gourmet meal, accompanied by a vintage Bordeaux, to all of the guests.

I have a pizza in the freezer, which I will be baking. I have a pizza, which I will be baking, in the freezer. In the freezer, I have a pizza, which I will be baking. Only the third sentence does not contain a misplaced modifier.

The misplaced modifier is the comedian of the errors in sentence structure, as Groucho Marx’s famous joke—This morning I shot an elephant in my pajamas. What he was doing in my pajamas, I’ll never know—illustrates.

MLA Citation Method

A method designed, prescribed, and authorized by the Modern Language Association for acknowledging sources used in a scholarly paper or college/university research assignment. Instructors and professors teaching courses in the humanities—English, history, fine arts, philosophy—often require MLA citation for student essays.

If you are required to use the MLA Citation Method, you must cite all of your sources twice, first in MLA shorthand in parentheses within the text, and, second, at the end of the paper in a list called Works Cited. The in-text parenthetical citation is brief, typically an author’s last name and a page number only.

The Works Cited list contains the complete bibliographical information for each source, enough information for readers who want to access the source would require. It is organized alphabetically, by author’s last name, so the parenthetical citation directs readers efficiently to the corresponding entry in the Works Cited list. For more information, see the [MLA Style Center website](#).

The MLA Citation Method Rules for In-Text Parenthetical Citation

To indicate a direct quote from a secondary source, place quotation marks around the words you are quoting and then put the author’s last name and the page number from the secondary source on which

the information can be found. Short direct quotes are integrated into the text of the essay and placed between quotation marks “so a short direct quote properly acknowledged would look like this” (Author 34). Note the quotation marks around our imagined quote from a secondary source and note that there is not a comma between the author’s last name (Author in our example) and the page number.

If the author’s name is already mentioned in the text, only the page number is placed in parentheses: As Author notes, “only the page number is required” (34).

Long quotes are indented and blocked off from the text of the essay. The distinction between short quotes and long ones is somewhat arbitrary, but quotes of more than about three lines should be set off from the rest of the essay in the manner illustrated here.

Note that the quotation marks have been eliminated. The indentation indicates that the material is quoted directly from a secondary source. Quotation marks are used only if the original uses quotation marks. Note also that after a short quote comes the parenthetical citation followed by a period, but in the long, indented quote, like this one, the period precedes the parenthetical citation. (Author 39)

Most instructors do not appreciate too many long direct quotes in student essays, especially if the quotes create the impression that students are turning in a “cut and paste” assignment.

In addition to direct quotes, you must cite other information taken from a secondary source. The general rule is that if you possessed the information before you began the essay you do not need to cite it, but if you acquired the information in the course of writing the essay, you do need to cite it. Again, put in parentheses the author’s last name and the page number on which the information can be found. You need to include the page number even if you have paraphrased the information.

If you have used two or more works by the same author, you need to provide a short-hand version of the title of the source to distinguish it from other titles by the same author (Author, *Short* 34). Note the use of the comma after the author’s name but not between the title and the page number. If the author’s name is mentioned, his or her name is not included in the citation: As Author has shown, “citing sources can be frustrating” (*Short* 34).

If your source is written by four or more people, you need only name the first author followed by the Latin words *et al.* (meaning “and others”) and, of course, the page number (First et al. 145). Note the period after “al.” Again, note that no commas are used. *Et al.* is also used in place of all but the first author’s name if you mention the author’s name in the text of the essay: Smith et al. have conducted research that suggests that “students enjoy writing academic essays” (145).

If your source is written by a corporate author, treat the corporate author as you would a single author: According to government sources, ten-year-olds watch an average of four hours of television per day (Royal Commission on Elementary Education 234).

If the author of your source is anonymous, name the title or a shortened version in the parenthetical citation. *Italicize* a book title; put quotation marks around an article title. If you use a shortened version, include the first word in the title since it will be alphabetized by title in the Works Cited list. If, for example, the title of your source is “Rating the Quality of the Undergraduate Programs of British Universities,” your citation could be as short as the word “Rating” (“Rating” 86).

If you quote from a novel, follow the procedure for a single author. You may also include the chapter number to help your readers find the passage in a different edition of the novel from the one you used. If you include the chapter number, put a semicolon between the page number and the chapter number (Austen 79; ch. 6). Usually you do not have to include the author’s name because the context of your discussion will make clear who the author is.

If you quote from a poem, give the line numbers you are quoting instead of the page number on which the quote appears (Wordsworth 34–40). Provide a shortened version of the title if you quote from

more than one poem by the same author and if the context has not made clear the author and the title (Wordsworth, “Tintern” 34–40). Note the punctuation.

If you quote from a Shakespearean play or from another play in verse, list the act, scene, and line numbers, separated by periods, so that a quote taken from Act IV, Scene 2, lines nine to eleven would be (4.2.9–11).

If you quote from the Bible, list the chapter and the verse or verses, separated by a period. Include an abbreviated title of the book, if the context does not make it, so, for example, a quote from “Leviticus,” Chapter 12, Verses two to four would be (Lev. 12.2–4).

If you quote from a work from an anthology, remember it is the author’s name and not the name of the anthology editor that appears in parentheses.

If you quote from an indirect source—a source quoted in one of your sources—include the abbreviation for “quoted in” in your parenthetical citation: Smith notes that “indirect sources must be cited appropriately” (qtd. in Robins 257). Note carefully the way the citation is punctuated.

If you got the same information from more than one source or if you want to underscore the authority of a point by citing more than one source, do so by separating the sources from each other with semicolons: Experts agree that the semicolon can be used between sources (Wilson 34; Martens 68; Pelies 124).

If your source has no page numbers (as many electronic sources do not), you may omit the page numbers or include the paragraph number if the paragraphs are numbered (as they sometimes are in electronic sources): If necessary, “you should cite the paragraph number in place of the page number” (Smith, par. 12). Note the way this citation is punctuated.

The MLA Citation Method Rules for List of Works Cited

The Works Cited list contains the complete bibliographical information for each source used in an academic writing assignment. Each item in a Works Cited list must contain enough information so that readers could access the source themselves, online or at the library, if they choose to do so.

You should follow a model, in order to use MLA format correctly. Determine the type of source you are using in your list of works cited; then find an example of the same type of source, properly cited; then mimic the format of the properly cited source, as you prepare your own. A variety of such models are presented below. If the model you need is not represented in the list below, consult the most recent edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

As a rule, begin the list of Works Cited on a separate page. If the text of your essay ends early on the last page, and your list of Works Cited contains just a few entries, you should not need to begin on a new page.

The Modern Language Association recognizes the complexity of citing sources, at a time when we get our information from such a wide array of print, digital, and online media. They allow for some leeway in the information included.

Book in Print

For a book in print, the core elements are author, italicized title, publisher, and date of publication. The place of publication is no longer a core element. Here is an example:

Smitherman, Geneva. *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans*. Routledge, 2006.

A book, of course, might have more than one author; it might be in an edition subsequent to the first; it might have an editor or a translator. Note the form of the MLA Works Cited for the books listed below. Note, especially:

- If a book has two authors, the second author's name follows, first name first.
- If a book is in an edition other than the first, the edition number follows the title. Note the punctuation.
- If there are two books by the same author a line replaces the author's name for the second (and subsequent, if there are any) source. This rule applies to all types of sources.
- If the book does not have a named author, the title takes the place of the author and is alphabetized in the Works Cited list, accordingly.
- If the book is a translation, the name of the translator follows the title.
- If a book has three or more authors, the Latin phrase et al. (meaning and others) follows the first author's name.

Works Cited

- Adler-Kassner, Linda and Elizabeth Wardle. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. Utah State UP, 2015.
- Ferris, Dana. *Treatment of Error in Second Language Student Writing*, 2nd. Ed. U of Michigan Press, 2011.
- Gee, James P. *The Anti-Education Era: Creating Smarter Students Through Digital Learning*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013
- _____. *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Smitherman, Geneva. *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans*. Routledge, 2006.
- Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*. American Educational Research Association, 2014.
- Voloshinov, V.N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik, Harvard UP, 1986.
- White, Edward, et al. *Very Like a Whale: The Assessment of Writing Programs*. Utah State UP, 2015.

An Article, Story, or Poem within an Anthology

For an article or a story or a poem from a book, typically an anthology of readings or literary works, start with name of the author and the title of the shorter work, followed by the title of the book and the names of its editor(s), in the manner illustrated below.

Work Cited

- Larkin, Philip. "Talking in Bed." *Poems. Poets. Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology*. 3rd. ed., edited by Helen Vendler, Bedford St. Martin's, 2010, p. 114.

Article from a Periodical in Print

For an article from a periodical (journal, magazine, newspaper) in print, the core elements are author(s), title of article, title of periodical, number(s), date, page numbers. If the article is suspended, to be continued towards the end of the newspaper or magazine, a plus sign follows the page numbers. Study these examples:

Works Cited

- Burrough, Bryan. "Field of Nightmares." *Vanity Fair*, Nov. 2016, pp. 164-169+.
- Gabriel, Trip. "50 Years Into the War on Poverty, Hardship Hits Back." *New York Times*, 20 April 2014, p. A1.
- Greer, Jane. "Expanding Working-Class Rhetorical Traditions: The Moonlight Schools and Alternative Solidarities among Appalachian Women, 1911-1920." *College English*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2015, pp. 216-35.

Online Sources

For sources accessed online, state the author; the title; the name of the journal, newspaper, or magazine; the volume and issue number, if available; the information service (ProQuest, Academic Search Premier...), and the URL or, better, the DOI. If you use a DOI, the date of access is not necessary; it is recommended if you use the source's URL. The MLA allows some latitude in citing internet sources, in recognition of the vast array of choices and the inconsistency in information available about authors, dates, titles. Study the following examples of online sources, cited in MLA format.

Works Cited

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Additional Notes about MLA Works Cited Format

1. The title "Works Cited" is centered and appears in roman type. Do not use italics, boldface, or large lettering. One line is left between the title and the first entry.
2. The Works Cited list is arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. If the author of the source is anonymous, the source is placed in the list alphabetically by its title. The sources are not numbered.
3. The list uses hanging indentation. The first line of each source is not indented but all subsequent lines are.
4. Book, journal, newspaper, and magazine titles are italicized, but article titles are placed in

quotation marks.

5. Page numbers are included for articles in journals, newspapers, and magazines and for articles or essays included in an edited anthology or collection of essays.
6. Academic journals are identified by the year in which they were published, a volume number, and, if there is one, an issue number.
7. Citations for online sources include both the date the source appeared online and may include the date the user of the source accessed the source.
8. Citations for online sources include the source's Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or, preferred if available, the Digital Object Identifier (DOI).
9. Like the rest of the essay, the Works Cited list is double-spaced.
10. If one author has written two (or more) different sources cited in an academic text, a straight line replaces the author's name, in the subsequent citations.
11. You might wish to use an online citation generator, such as Citation Machine, EasyBib, or RefME to help you cite your sources correctly. You should still double check the accuracy of your citation against a textbook model. And you need to make certain the citation generator uses the most recent version of the citation system.

Explore these two sample MLA essays with an excellent range of sources in their list of Works Cited:

- [“‘Coal Is in My Blood’: Public and Private Representations of Community Identity in Springhill, Nova Scotia” \[PDF\]](#) by Catherine Charlton
- [“Disrupting White Normativity in Langston Hughes’s ‘I, Too’ and Toni Morrison’s ‘Recitatif’” \[PDF\]](#) by Alyiah Gonzales

MLA Format

Essays and reports written in MLA format do not have a separate title page.

At the top of the first page of an MLA formatted essay, flush right, is the author's last name and the number 1, for page one, no punctuation between the name and the number.

On the next line, or, rather, the line after the next, since the entire MLA paper is double spaced, flush left, are the author's name, then, two lines below, the professor's name, then, two lines below, the course title and number, then, two lines below the date: the day, followed by the month, followed by the year, no punctuation between any of the date indicators.

Two lines below the names, course identification, and date comes the title of the essay, centered on the page, but not italicized, underlined, bolded, enclosed in quotation marks, or displayed in a larger font.

Subsequent pages include the author's name and the page number, flush right, at the top of the page.

The Works Cited list begins on a new page. The title, Works Cited, is centered, but not italicized, underlined, bolded, surrounded by quotation marks, or in a larger font.

MLA format, the text of the essays, as well as its title and Works Cited list, is Times New Roman font, 12-point type.

Note that your teacher may relax some of the MLA format rules.

Narrative

A type or genre of written discourse within which the writer uses personal pronouns (I, me, my) to recount a personal story of significance to the writer and of interest to the reader. The narrative is not, strictly speaking, an academic genre, though an academic text might include narrative elements, often as a compelling way to help develop a thesis.

Noun

A written or spoken word that names or identifies a person, a place, or a thing. In a sentence, a noun can function as a subject or an object of a verb, typically in a subject-verb-object order: Scissors cut paper; paper covers rock; rock crushes scissors. A noun can also function as the object of a preposition: Over the river, and through the wood, to grandmother's house, we go. A noun can also function as an adjective: grandmother's house.

States of existence are also nouns: Happiness is Thanksgiving dinner at grandmother's house.

Adjectives can become nouns, when they are used as subjects or objects, when, for example, "poor people" become "the poor."

Noun Clause

A group of words that begins with a relative pronoun, contains a subject and a verb, and acts as a noun. Like a noun, a noun clause can be the subject of a verb—What Anna really wants is to see him again—or as the object of a verb—Anna knew that she would see him again—or as the object of a preposition—Anna lost a sweater for which she paid over a thousand dollars.

Object of Preposition

The noun or pronoun which ends a prepositional phrase. Study this sentence:

The *Daily Mail* usually prints the horoscope on the last page of the morning edition, but, on Sundays, the horoscope appears in the Leisure Section, usually before Sports or between Fashion and Travel, which I always have to share with her.

"page" is the object of the preposition "on."

"edition" is the object of the preposition "of."

"Sundays" is the object of the preposition "on."

"Section" is the object of the preposition "in."

"Sports" is the object of the preposition "before."

"Fashion and Travel" are the objects of the preposition "between."

“her” is the object of the preposition “with.”

Objective Case of Pronoun

A pronoun is (usually) a short word—I, me, my, he, him, his, she, her, hers, they, them, their—which replaces a noun.

Do you know the prime minister? Yes, I know her.

They have three forms or “cases.”

The objective cases are me, him, her, them, whom. They are used as the object of a verb: Whom will that manager promote? The manager will promote me, him, her, or them.

Objective case pronouns are also used as objects of prepositions: with her, without him, near me, by them, to whom.

One as Subject

As a subject “one” is usually paired with a singular verb: One is the loneliest number.

However if the context is “one of many,” then “one” takes a plural verb. One of the factors that influence the way a writer composes and a reader interprets a text is clarity of structure.

Organization

As a term in academic composition/rhetoric, refers to the manner in which a text is arranged, usually with a beginning, a middle and an end, also known as an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

A robust organization is essential to the clarity of an academic text, one of the features teachers value, when they grade student writing.

The effective-writing aphorism “Tell them what you are going to tell them; then tell them; then tell them what you have told them” references the importance of a good organization for an effective text.

Outline

An important stage in the process of composing a written text, the outline is usually a point form summary of the content of the essay, arranged in a system of headings and sub-headings.

It is always a good idea to make an outline before you begin to draft, but remember that an outline will likely change, develop, grow, as you draft and revise, part of the recursive process of writing.

Pathos

One of the points of Aristotle’s Rhetorical Triangle, referring to the use of appeals to emotion to persuade readers and listeners.

Emotional appeals can be effective in an academic argument, but they should be restrained. In an argument in support of euthanasia, tell the story of your grandfather’s suffering with a terminal illness but favor this language:

His suffering was acute. The painkillers were so powerful, he could only stare, catatonically, into space; but when he was off the painkillers, he alternately curled up and writhed in agony,

to this language:

Hot tears streamed down poor Gramps face, as he....

Paragraph

A paragraph is a unit of written text, usually consisting of several sentences, usually part of a larger rhetorical unit, a letter, essay, report, book. A paragraph might consist of just a single sentence, when the writer is aiming for a particular rhetorical effect. A complete text might consist of a single paragraph, of a brief letter, for example, or an email or text message.

In academic writing, a paragraph typically develops a topic sentence (see p. x), which supports, augments, develops the text's controlling idea or thesis. Good paragraphs are characterized by unity, coherence, and robust development.

Unity means that the content of the paragraph develops the topic sentence. The writer does not wander off topic. Coherence means that there are rhetorical ties in the paragraph, clearly linking one sentence to the next. Robust development means that the content of the paragraph fulfills the expectations the topic sentence promises. Consider this paragraph:

The success small businesses have enjoyed, in the wake of the decision by many communities to legalize cannabis for medical and recreational use, may not be sustainable. The federal government has not legalized cannabis, and the new attorney general seems opposed to marijuana use, for any purpose, and he might be prepared to challenge state rights to legalize the drug. Even now, the vetting pot shops need to go through before they can get a license to sell—the multiple government forms the owners need to fill out, the red tape they need to navigate—has discouraged many would-be small marijuana dealers from setting up shop. Competition is lowering prices, further diminishing the incentive to deal. But the most egregious threat comes from big tobacco, ready to enter the fray, if and when the federal government agrees to legalize cannabis. With their deep pockets and marketing savvy, tobacco companies will soon squeeze out small pot dealers.

The paragraph has a clear topic sentence—the first—and four points in support, providing the paragraphs with the unity and the robust content it needs. The repetition of key words and the use of synonyms for key words—cannabis, marijuana, pot—helps establish coherence, as do the transitional words and phrases—Even now, further, but. At 156 words, the paragraph is the average length for a body paragraph in an academic writing assignment.

Parentheses ()

A punctuation mark, the purpose of which is to insert information into a sentence, information which expands or elaborates or qualifies the thought the sentence is expressing, but which you nevertheless prefer to deemphasize.

Facing such stiff competition from Japan and Korea, auto manufacturers closed their plants in Detroit (leaving a once vibrant and wealthy city devastated) and relocated to countries where wages are considerably lower.

Dashes or commas could replace the parentheses in the sentence above. Dashes would tend to bring

more attention to Detroit's devastation. Commas suggest that the information is neither more nor less important than the content of the rest of the sentence.

As a general rule, do not put a comma before the first parenthesis but, after the second, follow the rules for the use of the comma. (Note that neither dashes nor commas could replace the parentheses at the end of the previous sentence.)

If an entire sentence is in parentheses (see example in previous sentence), the period comes before the second parenthesis; if it is within the sentence, there is no period.

Use parentheses sparingly in academic writing assignments.

Participle

A word derived from a verb but acting as an adjective.

In this sentence—Skillfully deflecting most of the questions, the witness was excused—“deflecting” is a present participle, modifying the noun “witness.” A present participle always ends in “ing.”

In this sentence—Bemused by his response, the prosecutor decided to call a new witness—“Bemused” is a past participle, modifying the noun “prosecutor.”

Passive Voice

Describes the syntactical relationship between the subject, verb, and object of a sentence, when the agent acted upon becomes the subject of the verb and the verb's agent becomes the object.

Passive voice is formed when a form of the verb to be (is, am, are, was, were, been) teams up with the past participle form of a main verb, when, for example, the active voice, a good team played that game, becomes that game was played by a good team.

This sentence—Janet sells sea shells, by the sea shore—is in active voice, because the verb's (sells) agent (Janet) is the verb's subject. In passive voice, the sentence becomes—Sea shells are sold by Janet by the sea shore. The agent acted upon (the sea shells) becomes the subject of the verb “are sold.”

As our example sentences illustrate, active voice is often preferable, because it is clearer and more concise. The active voice version of our sample sentence contains eight words; the passive voice version, ten.

The use of passive voice is fine, however, when the subject is indeterminate or not particularly relevant to the message: Smoking is forbidden throughout the college. A dozen priceless works of art were stolen. But all is not lost.

Passive voice is common in science and social science writing: Students at Sundance College were surveyed, as opposed to we surveyed students at Sundance College....

Note that passive voice is sometimes confused with, but is very different from past tense.

Past Participle

The form of the verb used with an auxiliary verb. Most past participles, those of regular verbs end in “ed.” I have ended, suspended, terminated my relationship with her.

The past participles of irregular verbs form their past participle in ways other than the use of the “ed” suffix. I have not forgotten her, seen her for ages, brought her home to meet my mother.

A past participle can also act as an adjective. In this sentence—Stunned by the news, the entire country went into mourning—the past participle “Stunned” modifies the noun “country.”

Check the dictionary, if you are not sure about the proper form or use of the past participle form of an irregular verb. Be careful not to use the simple past, when the past participle is needed. “She drank a bottle of wine” is correct, but “She has drank a bottle of wine” is incorrect, must be changed to the past participle has drunk. “She began to feel better” is correct, but “She begun to feel better” is not; the verb must team with an auxiliary—“She had begun to feel better...”

Past Tense

Verb form which indicates action which occurred an earlier point in time. I saw the light.

Perfect Tense

The form of a verb to which any form of the verb “to have” has been added as an auxiliary or helping verb. There is present perfect tense: She has sung the national anthem before each home game for the past eight years. There is past perfect tense: She had sung the national anthem before each home game for eight years, before they replaced her with a recorded version. There is future perfect tense: If she sings for another year, she will have sung the national anthem before each home game for eight consecutive years.

Notice how the information in the subordinate clauses influences tense.

Notice the subtle difference in meaning between simple present, past, and future tense and present perfect, present past, and present future tenses. “She sings the national anthem before each home game” does not signal a qualification as does “She has sung...”. “She sang the national anthem before each home game” does not require a qualification in the same way “She had sung” does. “She will sing the national anthem before each home game” does not signal a condition in the same way “She will have sung” does.

Periodic and Loose Sentences

The order of phrases and clauses in an English sentence is quite flexible. In a periodic sentence, the order is conventional, in that it begins with the main idea, followed by any qualification or support.

There will be more Muslims than Christians in Europe by the end of the century.

In a loose sentence, the qualification or support comes at the beginning.

By the end of the century, there will be more Muslims than Christians in Europe.

The lesson here is in sentence variety. A loose sentence amidst a group of periodic sentences can improve style and refocus a reader’s attention, changing as it does the rhythm and flow of the prose.

Sentence variety is important in academic writing but it must be natural, not forced. It is not a good idea to insert a loose sentence into a paragraph just because there are no others. Instead, while you are revising your work, read it out loud and listen to the rhythm and flow of your sentences and change the structure of some of them, if your ear indicates you should do so.

Persuasive Essay

A written text, usually academic in nature, which posits and defends a thesis about which there is some controversy.

Virtually synonymous with argument essay.

Some rhetoricians draw a slight distinction between the two modes, indicating that an argument essay is mainly concerned with defending a point-of-view, while a persuasive essay also attempts, more actively, to seek agreement or a change in point-of-view from the reader.

Phrase

A group of two or more words which forms a syntactic unit in a sentence but which, distinct from a clause, does not contain a subject and a verb.

A prepositional phrase begins with a preposition, ends with a noun or a pronoun called the object of the preposition, and modifies a noun or a verb. Consider this sentence:

A jubilation of larks flew through the sky alighting in unison on a single tree in the enchanted forest.

There are 5 prepositional phrases in this sentence:

- “of larks” acts as an adjective modifying the noun “jubilation”;
- “through the sky” acts as an adjective modifying the verb “flew”;
- “in unison” and “on a single tree” act as adverbs”, modifying the participle “alighting”;
- “in the enchanted forest” acts as an adjective modifying the noun “tree.”

A verb phrase consists of a verb and its auxiliary verb or verbs: I will be seeing you in all the old familiar places.

A participial phrase begins with a present or a past participle. It functions as an adjective:

“Staring silently” into space, the patient seemed to be in a catatonic state.

“Defeated again,” the team remained in last place.

Plagiarism

Research is usually an essential component of the process of writing an academic essay or report. College/university students, professors, and scholars read and make notes on the books and articles they use as research sources, and they blend this information with their own knowledge and insights and integrate it, judiciously, into the text of the essay. When they do so, they must pay tribute to the author of the knowledge they gave borrowed.

Plagiarism is the failure to pay this tribute. It is the use of information from secondary sources, without proper acknowledgement. Not only direct quotations but also information, ideas, and concepts taken from sources other than a writer’s own knowledge must be properly acknowledged, using a recognized academic citation system, such as APA or MLA.

Plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct.

Plan/Planning

One of the key stages in the process of composing a college/university essay. Planning or “Make a Plan” typically follows generating ideas, research your topic, and finding a thesis in a linear account of the process of writing a college/university essay, though, since writing is a recursive process, planning is typically ongoing: a writer might reconsider his or her original organizational structure in light of a revised purpose or new information which might come even after a first or second draft is in process.

The most basic plan for a basic expository essay consists of point-form notes for an introductory paragraph, which establishes context and presents a thesis, for three paragraphs which develop the thesis, and for a conclusion which establishes closure.

If, for example, you were writing an essay about McDonald’s success, as a fast food restaurant, your plan might be

Thesis: It is hardly surprising that McDonald’s is such a successful fast food franchise.

Taste: food appeals to the taste buds of many consumers

Burgers and fries a staple of the American diet

Special sauce

Toppings and condiments

Cost—inexpensive

A family of four can eat out for under \$20

Examples of cost of select menu items compared to cost of same or similar menu items at other restaurants.

Efficiency

Assembly-line food preparation

Wait is rarely more than ten minutes

Drive through

Conclusion: McDonald’s formula for success proven to work profitably.

Obviously more sophisticated assignments call for a more sophisticated plan. Some writers simply jot down some notes and use indentation to distinguish main points from sub points. Other writers might use a more sophisticated system of numbers and letters.

Remember that your plan might evolve, as you draft and revise you assignment, in light of new information you might acquire along the way or other ideas you might have for a more effective organizational structure.

Possessive Pronoun

One of the three “cases” of pronouns, which signals ownership: my car; his boat; her private jet; their yacht; your loss.

The possessive case, not the objective case pronoun comes before a gerund, though the use of the objective case is common and usually goes unnoticed, as this sentence illustrates:

The committee does not like (his, him) asking for the minutes of the meetings.

The possessive case “his” is technically correct because “asking” is a gerund; but the misuse of the objective case “him” is common.

Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc

Latin for “After this, therefore because of this.”

It is a Logical Fallacy, a flaw in the logic of an argument, which can undermine the impact of an argument. It asserts, without ample proof, that one action or outcome followed another, and therefore must be its cause.

The key phrase is “without ample proof.” You may argue that smoking causes lung cancer, because you can compile enough credible evidence in support of your thesis. But if you argue that vaccination causes autism, you need to do more than indicate that your friend’s brother was diagnosed autistic a month after he was vaccinated for whooping cough. This is the *post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy*, unless the argument is sustained by a body of credible evidence. (It is also another logical fallacy, a hasty generalization, in that it draws a conclusion from only one case.)

Practice and Practise

In American English, the word “practise” does not really exist. The same spelling applies to both the noun and the verb form of the word. You can practice your three-point shot at basketball practice. In British English, the verb form of the word is practise. You can practise your three-point shot at basketball practice. Canadians get to choose either.

Preposition

A word which typically begins a phrase that ends with a noun or a pronoun, to form a prepositional phrase. Common prepositions are for, with, up, down, near, in, on, like, beside, under, around, through, of, off, to. They may begin a phrase, which ends with a noun or a pronoun—for example:

- for him
- with me
- down the street
- up the ladder
- near the window
- in a leather jacket
- on the table
- like a virgin
- beside the white chickens
- under the chair
- around the corner
- through the door

- of the race
- off your rocker
- to the movie

There is controversy over some words that some consider prepositions, others consider subordinate conjunctions, and others accept as both. Consider this sentence: She's not that tall for a basketball player, but she is certainly taller than me. Here, "than" is used as a preposition and "me" is its object. Some will argue that "than" is a subordinate conjunction, introducing a clause, in which the verb, in this case "am" is understood, so the sentence should end with the subjective case of the pronoun—taller than I (am). Most teachers grading papers will overlook minor flaws in usage.

Preposition at End of a Sentence

As a rule, it is not wise to end a sentence with a preposition, but common sense and sentence flow may overturn the rule. Choose the more effective between these pairs of sentences.

At the end of the story the family is reunited, realizing they have much to be grateful for.

At the end of the story the family is reunited, realizing they have so much for which to be grateful.

The review in the *Times* gave the Chalet one star, so that is one restaurant we won't be eating at.

The review in the *Times* gave the Chalet one star, so that is one restaurant where we won't be eating.

The reporter from the *Times* stopped in mid-sentence, when she realized she was not the one the Governor was talking to.

The reporter from the *Times* stopped in mid-sentence, when she realized she was not the one to whom the Governor was talking.

In the middle pair, the preposition "at" at the end of the sentence is seems unrefined; the second sentence is better.

In the first pair, the preposition "for" at the end of the sentence and, in the third pair, the preposition "to" at the end of the sentence do not seem solipsistic. However, if the instructor/professor marking your essay is in the grammar police, avoid using a preposition at the end of a sentence.

In some cases, a preposition may be considered part of a verb, in which case its terminal appearance is always fine: The game was rained out.

Prepositional Phrase

A word group which begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or a pronoun or a gerund, and which functions in a sentence as an adjective or an adverb. Consider this sentence:

Under certain conditions, the smart phone manufactured by that company, and on sale now in all the electronics stores, has been known to overheat to such an extent that smoke arises from it.

This sentence contains six prepositional phrases.

"Under certain conditions" is an adverb phrase, modifying the verb "has been known."

"by that company" is an adverb phrase, modifying the verb "manufactured."

"on sale" is an adjective phrase, modifying the noun "phone."

"in all the electronics stores" is an adjective phrase, modifying the noun "phone."

“to such an extent” is an adverb phrase, modifying the verb “overheat.”
 “from it” is an adverb phrase, modifying the verb “arises.”

Present Participle

A word, formed from a verb, always ending in “ing” and functioning as an adjective.

The delegate sneaking away from the meeting early is going to consult with her ambassador.
Expecting opposition, the ambassador will try to table the resolution.

The other nations, knowing Chad’s reputation for obstruction and delay, will try to get the resolution passed.

Present Tense

Form of the verb which indicates habitual action or action occurring at the same time the speaker or writer is observing or experiencing that action.

The French drink a glass or two of wine at dinner.
 She walks in beauty, like the night of cloudless climes and starry skies.

Use present tense, if you are writing about a literary work or a work of art.

Gatsby knows Daisy won’t leave Tom, but he still takes the blame for the accident.

Process Assignment

An essay-length account of the unfolding of an event or situation from start to finish. Describe the process of photosynthesis. How is red wine made? How do you create a blog?

A common assignment in many college/university courses.

Pronoun

A word that replaces a noun and refers to the noun it replaces, which noun is called the antecedent.

Consider these sentences:

Coffee can be expensive, but it is one of the most popular beverages in the country.

The principal is in her office but she has a bad cold, so she won’t tutor students, who will be disappointed because they always learn so much from her.

In the first sentence “it” is a pronoun, the antecedent of which is “coffee.”

In the second sentence “her” and “she” are pronouns, the antecedent of which is “principal.”

In the second sentence, “who” and “they” are also pronouns, the antecedent of which is “students.”

Pronouns come in different forms—pronoun “case,” as the forms are called—and rules, many with exceptions—govern which pronoun case to use in various rhetorical circumstances.

Subjective case pronouns are I, you, she, he, it, we, they, and who. They replace nouns (the first

word in this sentence is an example) that act as the subject of a verb: I admire Emily Dickinson. She writes excellent poetry.

Objective case pronouns are me, you, him, her, it, us, them, whom. They replace nouns that function as the objects (see p. xx) of verbs—Emily likes me and I like her—or of prepositions—Emily gave the book to me she knows I like poems written by her.

Possessive case pronouns are my (mine), your (yours), his, her, hers, it, its, our, ours, their, theirs, whose. They signal ownership. That is my book; that book is mine.

Pronouns are small words, but they can cause big problems. They are usually harmless, when they are used alone. We know intuitively, native English speakers, especially, that “her writes excellent poetry” or “she gave the book to I” are incorrect.

The one pronoun that causes some grief, when it is used alone, is its. It is already in possessive case, so it never needs an apostrophe to indicate possession. It’s is widely used in English, of course, but only as a contraction for “it is,” never as a possessive pronoun. This sentence illustrates the difference: It’s missing one of its pages. It’s pages is incorrect.

Errors can also occur when a noun and a pronoun or when two pronouns are used together. Such errors are rare, when the two pronouns are subjects: John and I (not me) are roommates; She (not Her) and I (not me) are roommates; He and they (not them) all live together in a large house near the university.

When that noun/pronoun or pronoun/pronoun combination are used as objects, however, errors can occur. It is as if a pattern becomes established in the language region of our minds. “John and I are both friends with her” becomes “She is friends with both John and I.” But because “with” is a preposition, it requires the objective case of the pronoun: “She is friends with both John and me.” The correct objective case “me” is clearly apparent when that first noun disappears: “She is friends with me” (not “I”). The presence of the noun “John” does not change the case of the pronoun: “She is friends with both John and [with] me.”

The same rule applies to the object of a verb. It requires the objective case of the pronoun, even if the pronoun teams up with a noun. “The principal caught Betty and I smoking in bleachers” might sound better than “The principal caught Betty and me smoking in the bleachers,” but the latter is correct. Again, re-envision the sentence without that noun, and the correct pronoun becomes more apparent: The principal caught me smoking in the bleachers.

The use of the possessive case before a gerund can also cause problems.

His (not Him) leaving so early was a sure sign he would pan the play in his review.

But in this sentence:

I saw him leaving—“him” is correct because “leaving” is a present participle (see p. x) not a gerund.

Pronoun Antecedent Agreement

Rule of English grammar, which governs pronoun choice, based upon the number (singular or plural) and the gender of the noun to which it refers—its antecedent.

Pronoun antecedent agreement is usually straightforward, as these sentences indicate:

Mozart wrote many of his greatest operas, while he was living in Vienna.

Queen Elizabeth I often feuded with her closest advisors, but they remained loyal to her.

However, thousands of nouns do not signal gender. Back in the day, the convention was to use the masculine pronoun to refer to a singular noun, that does not signal gender.

A doctor will always wash his hands before he examines a patient.

A good vice president will express publicly his support for the president, even if he disagrees with his decisions.

An important role of a center is to get the puck to his wingers, so they can score.

In the wake of the feminist movement, many women began to object, rightly so, to sexist language, which excluded them. A woman can be a doctor, a president, a hockey player. By excluding the feminine pronoun, the pronoun-antecedent agreement rule discriminated against women and helped create the impression that women were excluded from practicing certain professions or participating in some sports.

The rule changed, becoming more inclusive, as the feminine form of the pronoun was added, when the antecedent was a gender neutral noun:

Stairway Pharmaceuticals is looking for a new CEO. He or she must have an MBA and a degree in pharmacy.

A boxer is not going to win many fights, if he or she does not have fast hands.

The successful applicant does not require an honors degree from a university with an elite engineering program, but if he or she is not willing to relocate to Saudi Arabia, our firm will not hire him or her.

The last sentence illustrates the problem with the use of inclusive pronouns. There is annoying repetition which mars the rhythm and flow of the sentence. It is sometimes possible to overcome this problem by changing the singular gender-neutral noun to a plural noun, which allows the use of the plural pronoun—they, them, their—which do not signal gender: Doctors will always wash their hands before they examine a patient. But if the sense is clearly singular—there is only one “successful applicant”—then you may have to use both pronouns.

Help is on the way, in the form of the singular they, which is gaining wider spread acceptance. This sanctions the use of the plural pronoun—they, them, their—even if the antecedent is clearly singular.

Stairway Pharmaceuticals is looking for a new CEO. They must have an MBA and a degree in pharmacy.

A boxer is not going to win many fights, if they do not have fast hands.

The successful applicant does not require an honors degree from a university with an elite engineering program, but if they are not willing to relocate to Saudi Arabia, our firm will not hire them.

There is some precedent, in that the plural pronoun has been widely used—if still not accepted in some circles—when its antecedent is an indefinite pronoun—everyone, anybody, no one, who, someone—even though indefinite pronouns are usually singular: No one is coming; who knows; somebody cares.

Only a zealous grammar cop would insist on changing the plural pronouns in these sentences to singular pronouns:

Someone on the upper car deck left their lights on.

Who is bringing their children with them?

That last sentence, especially, sounds confusing and strange, if the plural pronouns are changed to agree with the singular “Who.”

Who is bringing his or her children with him or her?

There have been some attempts to introduce new word into the English language, a gender neutral singular pronoun, but these attempts have yet to gain traction: A doctor must wash eir hands before E examines a patient.

Most instructors will overlook or not notice an essay in which a plural pronoun is used to refer to a singular indefinite pronoun: No one in their right mind believes the government engineered the disaster. Many will not penalize the use of the singular they or their—No child of mine will ever doubt they are loved. Every baby boomer who participated in the study was concerned as much with their emotional as their physical well being.

Pronoun in a Comparison

When comparing the qualities of two individuals or entities, and when the second is referenced by a pronoun, the choice of pronoun can cause problems.

If both items in the comparison are nouns, there is rarely a problem.

Wendy's has better fries than McDonald's.

Edgar is an award-winning journalist and a better debater than Stanley.

But he is not as smart as Gillian.

But if the second item is expressed as a pronoun, the choice of pronoun may be less certain.

Wendy's has better fries than (they, them).

Edgar is an award-winning journalist and a better debater than (he, him).

But he is not as smart as (she, her, I, me).

Here is the dilemma: If the words, “than” and “as” are prepositions, then the objective case—them, him, her—is correct. Prepositions begin a phrase which ends with a noun or pronoun, the object of the preposition.

But if “than” and “as” are subordinate conjunctions then the pronoun is the subject of the clause and hence the pronouns they, he, she, and I are correct. The verb is missing but understood to be there.

Wendy's has better fries than they have.

Edgar is an award-winning journalist and a better debater than he is.

But he is not as smart as she is or I am.

The Grammar police will insist that “as” and “than” are subordinate conjunctions, and, hence, the subjective case is needed. But “as” and “than” are also widely used as prepositions now, so instructors/professors should not give you grief if you write She is a better candidate than him, instead of She is a better candidate than he.

Pronoun Reference

A pronoun is a short word which replaces a noun. Jane/she likes John/him.

Be careful to make sure that the pronoun which replaces a noun is in the correct form. Be sure your pronoun references are correct.

The senator and I voted in favor—but The district elected the senator and me (object form after a verb).

They voted for the senator and me (object form for object of preposition “for”).

Use both pronouns in reference to a gender-neutral noun. The singular they is also now widely accepted. A professional athlete who has a good agent can usually renegotiate his or her contract, based upon outstanding performance. A professional athlete who has a good agent can usually renegotiate their contract, based upon outstanding performance.

Pun

A word that is deliberately used out of its proper lexical, auditory, or semantic context to create a clever or an amusing effect.

The gardener who calls his business the Lawn Ranger and the restaurateur who calls his waterfront Chinese restaurant Wok on Water are using puns.

In academic writing, it is advisable to use puns sparingly, if at all, as they can undermine the more staid voice appropriate for an academic style, and they can make a grader cringe, not in a good way.

Quotation Marks

In academic writing, quotation marks serve three functions:

1. To indicate that a writer is quoting directly from a source: Estimates differ significantly. Willers claims “the pipeline construction will create about 28,000, well-paying jobs” (37), while Sedin cites studies indicating that “only temporary workers, and fewer than 10,000 of them, will be needed to help build a 500-mile pipeline” (61).
Note the placement of the commas and the period after the page numbers.
Remember that longer quotes from secondary sources are indented and are not enclosed in quotation marks, unless there are quotation marks used in the source.
2. For a minor title—of a poem, a short story, an article. In “The Transcendence of Death in the Poetry and Prose of Edgar Allan Poe,” Oswald compares and contrasts the themes and style of “The Raven” and “The Masque of the Red Death.”
Remember that the works within which short stories, articles, and poems appear are major titles, which are italicized. “The Transcendence of Death in the Poetry and Prose of Edgar Allan Poe” is from *The Journal of Gothic American Literature*. “The Raven” is from *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. “The Masque of the Red Death” is from *An Anthology of 19th Century American Short Stories*.
3. To highlight a word or phrase, perhaps to indicate the writer is using sarcasm: He claims he is going to “work” late tonight; or to indicate the use of slang (p. x): It was what college students might describe as a “booty call.”

Direct speech or dialogue is less common in academic writing, but enclose it in quotation marks, if you do use it:

“You wilfully misunderstand me,” Colonel Sartoris said.

Emily replied, “I’m not paying my taxes.”

“You refuse”? the Colonel continued.

Emily was angry now: “I most certainly do!” she exclaimed.

Note the punctuation. The comma and the period come before the terminal quotation mark. The question mark and the exclamation mark come after, as would a semi-colon.

Note that foreign words and phrases are italicized not enclosed in quotation marks. It is a *faux pas*.

Note that for a word or a phrase which requires quotation marks but which is already within a phrase or clause which also requires quotation marks, you use single quote marks for the quote within the quote: Dunedin notes that there “is a biographical imperative in both *Women in Love* and ‘The Odor of Chrysanthemums,’ which Lawrence acknowledged” (251).

Note that in British English, this convention is reversed. Single quote marks are used where, in American English, double quotation marks are used, and double quotation marks are used for the quote within the quote.

Red Herring

A logical fallacy which avoids the real issue under discussion by changing the subject or the direction of the original proposition.

If the original proposition is that chocolate is bad for you and you should eliminate it from your diet and you refuse, arguing that nutritional science is inexact or that you have already eliminated cheese from your diet, your argument is fallacious. The denunciation of nutritional science and the ban on cheese are red herrings, not relevant to the original proposition. Cite studies indicating the presence of healthy anti-oxidants in chocolate and your argument is sound.

Reflexive Pronoun

Special form of the subjective case of a pronoun, ending in self or selves. The subjective case pronoun “I” becomes the reflexive pronoun “myself”; “he” becomes “himself”; “they” becomes “themselves.”

The reflexive pronoun has two uses.

1. It can be the antecedent of its subjective case form: She is under censure because she bought herself a new Mercedes with campaign donations.
2. It can be used for emphasis: She must recuse herself because she is herself under censure for misappropriating campaign funds. In this form, it may be called an intensive pronoun.

Reflexive pronouns are sometimes used incorrectly as the object of a verb or a preposition: This sentence—His father deserted his mother and himself; my own father is estranged from my sister and myself—should be His father deserted his mother and him; my own father is estranged from my sister and me.

He bought that ring for myself should be He bought that ring for me. He bought that ring for himself is fine, because “himself,” even though it is the object of a preposition, is reflexive.

Relative Pronoun

A word which introduces an adjective or a noun clause.

The Baden Report, which criticizes the excessive spending in the Ministry of External Affairs, will not be released until February. It’s the only report that really matters. Who wrote the Report? I don’t know where to find it.

Make certain the adjective clause is attached to a main clause, to avoid a sentence fragment: The Baden Committee wrote that report. Which criticizes excessive spending in the Ministry of External Affairs.

Some instructors/professors might insist on drawing distinction between that and which as follows:

That is used to begin a restrictive clause, which is essential to the meaning of the sentence. It is not enclosed in commas.

It's the only report that really matters to the future of the Minister.

Which is used to begin a non-restrictive clause, which is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. It is enclosed in commas.

The Baden Report, which criticizes the excessive spending in the Ministry of External Affairs, will not be released until February.

That and which can also be demonstrative pronouns: Which report; that report.

Rubric

A rubric is a set of criteria, usually presented in the form of a table or a grid, which explains the reasons why a student project, often a written text, is graded, evaluated, assessed as it is.

If your instructors do not provide you with a rubric for a writing assignment, ask them if they can or if they can, at least, provide some general guidelines they will use for evaluating your work. Students who are aware of the criteria instructors will use to evaluate their work usually produce better work than students who are not aware of the evaluative criteria their instructors will use. If your instructors do not provide you with a scoring guide, adapt the one below which best matches the genre and purpose of your assignment.

A good rubric will be adapted to the assignment the rubric is to help evaluate. The genre of the assignment and the time given to complete it will help determine the nature of the rubric. The rubric for a research paper will be different from a rubric for an in-class essay. The values of the instructor or the program under which he or she works will also affect the rubric. One instructor might be more of a stickler for good grammar than another, and this preference might be reflected in the rubrics each creates. Some rubrics are very detailed; others are more general.

There are several types of rubrics for college essays. A holistic rubric provides general reasons why a written text has received the grade it has. An analytic rubric adds a further dimension to the holistic rubric by subdividing qualities of good writing into several, typically four, categories, ranging from excellent to poor. A checklist rubric simply lists criteria for an excellent essay; students are to consult the checklist while they work their way through the paper and, in some cases, check a box when they believe their essay has met that criterion, and, perhaps, turn the checklist in with the finished draft.

Below are examples of a holistic rubric for assessing an expository essay, a holistic rubric for assessing an argument essay, an analytic rubric for assessing an expository essay, an analytic rubric for assessing an argument essay, a checklist rubric for an expository essay, and a checklist rubric for an argument. They are fairly general in nature, but they will be similar in content to most rubrics your instructors will provide you with, and, if your instructor does not provide you with a rubric, you can adapt one of the ones below to help you understand what you need to do to get an excellent grade and why got the grade you did.

Holistic Rubric for Assessing an Expository Essay

Grade	Percentage	Description
A+	90 – 100	Paper is perfect: ideas and insights compelling, enlightening, and convincing; supported by valid and reliable sources, properly cited; thesis robust; paragraph topic sentences relevant and completely developed; perfectly clear because so well-structured, cohesive, free from errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, figurative language perfect for intended reader(s).
A	85 – 89	Paper is nearly perfect: ideas and insights compelling, enlightening, and convincing; supported by valid and reliable sources, properly cited; thesis strong; paragraph topic sentences relevant and well-developed; clear due to strong structure, cohesive ties, excellent grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, figurative language right for intended reader(s).
A-	80 – 84	Paper is excellent: ideas and insights compelling, enlightening, and convincing; supported by valid and reliable sources, properly cited; thesis is solid; paragraph topic sentences relevant and developed; clear due to solid structure, cohesive ties, good grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, figurative language right for intended reader(s).
B+	76 – 79	Paper is very good: ideas and insights less than compelling but do develop thesis; supported by valid and reliable sources, properly cited; thesis strong; paragraph topic sentences relevant and developed; clear due to structure, cohesive ties, sound though not completely error-free grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, figurative language appropriate for intended reader(s).
B	72 – 75	Paper is good: ideas and insights ordinary but do develop thesis; supported by valid and reliable sources, though some errors in citation; thesis ok; paragraph topic sentences relevant and well-developed; mostly clear due to strong structure and cohesive ties though an error or two in grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, figurative language ok for intended reader(s).
B-	68 – 71	Paper is quite good: ideas and insights bland but do develop thesis; the validity and reliability of a source might be questionable and incorrectly cited; a paragraph may lack clear topic sentence or be inadequately developed; fairly clear though structure/cohesion imperfect; a few errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary uninspired though acceptable for intended reader(s).
C+	64 – 67	Paper is average: ideas and insights less than inspired but do support thesis; the validity and reliability of a source or two might be questionable and cited incorrectly; thesis present; paragraph may be missing or have unclear topic sentence or be underdeveloped; structure/cohesive ties present if not always effective; a few errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation; sentence structure/vocabulary could be more varied, given intended reader(s).
C	60 – 63	Paper is average: ideas and insights less than inspired but do support thesis; the best secondary sources not used, nor are they always cited correctly; thesis present; two paragraphs may be missing or have unclear topic sentences or be underdeveloped; organizational structure somewhat weak/unclear as cohesive ties not always present; several errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary bland for intended reader(s).

Grade	Percentage	Description
C-	55 – 59	Paper is below average: ideas and insights uninspired and thesis somewhat vague; unsupported by sources; two or three paragraph may be missing or have unclear topic sentences and lack development; clarity impaired by weak structure, absent cohesive ties, and more than four errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, bland for intended reader(s).
D	50 – 54	Paper is weak: ideas and insights insipid; unsupported by sources; thesis vague; most paragraphs missing or have unclear topic sentences, poorly developed; lacks clarity because organizational structure chaotic and cohesive ties barely present; more than five errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence structure variety, vocabulary weak and insipid and not suitable for intended reader(s).
F	0 – 49	Paper is very poor: ideas and insights absent; thesis barely present, if at all; ideas are not sourced; paragraphs lack topic sentences and are not developed; organizational structure unclear; cohesive ties absent; many errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence structure completely inappropriate for intended reader(s).

Holistic Rubric for Assessing an Argument Essay

Grade	Percentage	Description
A+	90 – 100	Paper is perfect: ideas/insights/argument completely compelling, enlightening, logical, and convincing; supported by valid and reliable sources, cited perfectly; thesis robust; paragraph topic sentences relevant and completely developed; perfectly clear because so well-structured, cohesive, free from errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, figurative language perfect for intended reader(s). Writer acknowledges and refutes opposing point of view very convincingly. Strong evidence of ability to think critically and independently.
A	85 – 89	Paper is nearly perfect: ideas/insights/arguments compelling, enlightening, logical, and convincing; supported by valid and reliable sources, properly cited; thesis strong; paragraph topic sentences relevant and well-developed; clear due to strong structure, cohesive ties, excellent grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, figurative language right for intended reader(s). Writer acknowledges and refutes opposing point of view convincingly. Clear evidence of ability to think critically and independently.
A-	80 – 84	Paper is excellent: ideas/insights/arguments compelling, enlightening, logical, and convincing; supported by valid and reliable sources, properly cited; thesis is solid; paragraph topic sentences relevant and developed; clear due to solid structure, cohesive ties, good grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, figurative language right for intended reader(s). Writer acknowledges and refutes opposing point of view. Evidence of ability to think critically and independently.
B+	76 – 79	Paper is very good: ideas/insights/arguments less than compelling but do develop thesis; supported by valid and reliable sources, with minor errors in citation; thesis strong; paragraph topic sentences relevant and developed; clear due to structure, cohesive ties, sound though not completely error-free grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, figurative language appropriate for intended reader(s). Writer acknowledges and refutes opposing point of view. Some evidence of ability to think critically and independently.
B	72 – 75	Paper is good: ideas/insights/arguments ordinary but do develop thesis; supported by valid and reliable sources, with minor errors in citation; thesis ok; paragraph topic sentences relevant and well-developed; mostly clear due to strong structure and cohesive ties though an error or two in grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, figurative language ok for intended reader(s). Writer acknowledges and refutes opposing point of view somewhat perfunctorily. Some evidence of ability to think critically and independently.
B-	68 – 71	Paper is quite good: ideas/insights/arguments bland but do develop thesis; the validity and reliability of a source might be questionable and several are cited incorrectly; a paragraph may lack clear topic sentence or be inadequately developed; fairly clear though structure/cohesion imperfect; a few errors in grammar/ spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary uninspired though acceptable for intended reader(s). Writer acknowledges and refutes opposing point of view perfunctorily. Minimal evidence of ability to think critically and independently.

Grade	Percentage	Description
C+	64 – 67	Paper is average: ideas/insights/arguments less than inspired but do support thesis; the validity and reliability of a source or two might be questionable and some cited incorrectly; thesis present; paragraph may be missing or have unclear topic sentence or be underdeveloped; structure/cohesive ties present if not always effective; a few errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation; sentence structure/vocabulary could be more varied, given intended reader(s). Writer unenthusiastic about acknowledging and refuting opposing point of view. Minimal evidence of ability to think critically and independently.
C	60 – 63	Paper is average: ideas/insights/arguments less than inspired but do support thesis; the best secondary sources not used, nor are they cited consistently correctly; thesis present; two paragraphs may be missing or have unclear topic sentences or be underdeveloped; organizational structure somewhat weak/unclear as cohesive ties not always present; several errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary bland for intended reader(s). Writer barely acknowledges and refutes opposing point of view. Little-to-no evidence of ability to think critically and independently.
C-	55 – 59	Paper is below average: ideas/insights/arguments uninspired and thesis somewhat vague; unsupported by sources; two or three paragraph may be missing or have unclear topic sentences and lack development; logical fallacies present; clarity impaired by weak structure, absent cohesive ties, and more than four errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence variety, vocabulary, bland for intended reader(s). Writer apathetic about acknowledging and refuting opposing point of view. No evidence of ability to think critically and independently.
D	50 – 54	Paper is weak: ideas/insights/arguments insipid; unsupported by sources; thesis vague; most paragraphs missing or have unclear topic sentences, poorly developed; logical fallacies mar force of argument; lacks clarity because organizational structure chaotic and cohesive ties barely present; more than five errors in grammar/ spelling/punctuation; style, sentence structure variety, vocabulary weak and insipid and not suitable for intended reader(s). Writer indifferent about acknowledging and refuting opposing point of view. No evidence of ability to think critically and independently.
F	0 – 49	Paper is very poor: ideas/insights/arguments/thesis barely present, if at all; ideas are not sourced; paragraphs lack topic sentences and are not developed; organizational structure unclear; cohesive ties absent; ideas illogical; many errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation; style, sentence structure completely inappropriate for intended reader(s). Writer fails to acknowledge opposing point of view. No evidence of ability to think critically and independently.

Analytic Rubric for Assessing Expository Essay

Level	Excellent 4	Good 3	Satisfactory 2	Unsatisfactory 1
Ideas and Insights	Thesis and points in support of thesis are clear, strong, and enlightening, likely unique and creative.	Thesis and points in support of thesis are solid, if not unique and creative.	Thesis and points in support of thesis are present but one of the points weak or unclear.	Thesis and points in support of thesis are insipid or absent.
Content and Substance	Excellent development of points in support of thesis; excellent sources properly cited; clear and strong topic sentences, well-developed, the author in control of a variety of rhetorical strategies for developing ideas in body paragraphs.	Good development of points in support of thesis; good sources with just few errors in citation; clear topic sentences, well-developed, the writer in control of good range of rhetorical strategies for developing ideas in body paragraphs.	Average development of points in support of thesis; some sources but many citation errors; topic sentences present though one or two topic sentences not developed in enough detail in body paragraphs.	Weak development of points in support of thesis; no or very few sources used; several paragraphs missing or have unclear topic sentences, poorly developed.
Clarity of Expression	Writing clear due to robust structure, exemplary use of cohesive ties, and excellent grammar/spelling/punctuation.	Writing clear due to strong structure and good use of cohesive ties, though some minor errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation present.	Organizational structure somewhat weak/unclear as cohesive ties not always present; significant number of errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation.	Lacks clarity because organizational structure chaotic and cohesive ties barely present; more than five errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation.
Efficacy of Style	Excellent sentence variety, achieved largely through subordination; diction / vocabulary, figurative language effective for intended reader(s).	Good sentence variety, achieved largely through subordination; diction / vocabulary, figurative language fine for intended reader(s).	Limited use of subordination adversely affects sentence variety; diction / vocabulary bland, not right for intended reader(s).	Sentence structure elementary; diction / vocabulary too basic and insipid for intended reader(s).

Analytic Rubric for Assessing Argument Essay

Level	Excellent 4	Good 3	Satisfactory 2	Unsatisfactory 1
Ideas and Insights	Thesis and points in support of thesis promise a clear, logical, compelling, and interesting argument; clear evidence of independent and critical thinking.	Ideas/arguments ordinary but do develop thesis; thesis strong; good evidence of independent and critical thinking.	Arguments less than inspired but do support thesis; thesis present; some evidence of independent and critical thinking.	Ideas/arguments insipid; thesis vague or absent entirely; superficial evidence of independent and critical thinking.
Content and Substance	Paragraph topic sentences relevant and well-developed, the author using a variety of rhetorical strategies for developing ideas; good use of sources, properly cited; opposing point of view acknowledged and refuted convincingly.	Paragraph topic sentences relevant and fairly well-developed, the author using a variety of rhetorical strategies; sources quite good and only few citation errors; opposing point of view acknowledged and refuted.	One or two paragraphs may be missing topic sentences or have unclear or underdeveloped topic sentences, developed with limited rhetorical strategies; sources weak and often cited incorrectly; opposing point of view acknowledge and refuted though barely.	Several paragraphs missing or have unclear topic sentences, poorly developed; no or very few sources used; opposing point of view not acknowledged or acknowledged but refuted ineffectually.
Clarity of Expression	Writing clear due to robust structure, effective control of cohesive ties, excellent grammar/spelling/punctuation.	Writing mostly clear due to strong structure and decent control of cohesive ties, though some errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation present.	Organizational structure somewhat weak/unclear as cohesive ties not always present; significant number of errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation.	Lacks clarity because organizational structure chaotic and cohesive ties barely present; more than five errors in grammar/spelling/punctuation.
Efficacy of Style	Excellent sentence variety, achieved largely through subordination; diction / vocabulary, figurative language just right for intended reader(s).	Good sentence variety, achieved largely through subordination; diction / vocabulary, figurative language fine for intended reader(s).	Limited use of subordination adversely affects sentence variety; diction / vocabulary bland, and possibly too elementary for intended reader(s).	Sentence structure elementary; diction / vocabulary too basic and insipid for intended reader(s).

Checklist for Expository Essay

You will get a top mark on this assignment, if

- you have a clear and robust thesis;
- your introduction provides appropriate context for your thesis;
- your points in support of your thesis are well-developed in unified and coherent body paragraphs;
- your conclusion establishes a clear sense of closure;

your essay is well-edited, with minimal errors in grammar, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation;

your sentence structure is varied;

your diction and vocabulary are appropriate for your intended readers;

your sources are valid and reliable and cited correctly.

Checklist for Argument Essay

You will get a top mark on this assignment, if

you have a clear and robust thesis;

your introduction provides appropriate context for your thesis;

your points in support of your thesis are well-developed in unified and coherent body paragraphs;

your conclusion establishes a clear sense of closure;

you acknowledge and refute the opposing point of view;

your argument is not based upon logical fallacies;

your essay is well-edited, with minimal errors in grammar, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation;

your sentence structure is varied;

your diction and vocabulary are appropriate for your intended readers;

your sources are valid and reliable and cited correctly.

Run-On Sentence

Two sentences joined together incorrectly.

A comma, for example, is not a strong enough pause to form a break between two sentences. This is a run-on sentence:

In Quebec, cheese curds and gravy are often added to French fries, creating a dish called poutine, it is becoming popular in other parts of Canada and even in places in the U.S.

The comma between “poutine” and “it” is not strong enough to separate the two complete sentences.

There are usually five ways to correct a run-on sentence:

1. Replace the comma with a semi-colon. Usually a semi-colon is appropriate when the two sentences are closely related, as the two in the example above are.
2. Replace the comma with a period. In this case, it might be advisable to replace the “it” with “Poutine,” which may be somewhat redundant but which does clarify the reference of the pronoun “it.”
3. Add a coordinate conjunction—and, but, or or—after the comma. This run-on sentence—Poutine is not a healthy snack food, it is still very popular in Quebec—could be corrected by adding the word “but” after the comma.

Note that conjunctive adverbs such as however, nevertheless, and moreover are not the same as coordinate conjunctions, and, for this reason, they are usually preceded by a semi-colon, when they are the link between two sentences. Poutine is not a healthy snack food; however, it is still very popular in Quebec. If the adverb is not the link between the two sentences, but within a sentence, then it is usually enclosed in commas: Poutine is not a healthy snack food,

Poutine is, however, a popular dish in Quebec and other parts of Canada and the U.S.

4. Change one of the two sentences to a subordinate clause. This is a run-on sentence: In Quebec, cheese curds and gravy are often added to French fries, creating a dish called poutine, this dish is becoming popular in other parts of Canada and even in places in the U.S. Here it is corrected by changing the second sentence to a clause: In Quebec, cheese curds and gravy are often added to French fries, creating a dish called poutine, which is becoming popular in other parts of Canada and even in places in the U.S.
5. Reduce one of the sentences to a phrase. This is a run-on sentence: In Quebec, cheese curds and gravy are often added to French fries, this process creates a dish called poutine. This sentence corrects the run-on by reducing the second sentence to a participial phrase: In Quebec, cheese curds and gravy are often added to French fries, creating a dish called poutine.

Semi-Colon (;)

A punctuation mark which signals a break in a text, a pause within a sentence, stronger than a comma but weaker than a period, though it can replace a period, under certain circumstances.

A semi-colon is also used to separate phrases or clauses in a series, whenever there are commas, even just one, within the phrases or clauses.

Rule One: a semi-colon usually comes before a conjunctive adverb (see p. xx), which joins together two sentences. Study these sentences, all of which are punctuated correctly.

1. A semi-colon is used within a sentence, but it can signal the end of a sentence and the beginning of a related sentence.
2. A semi-colon is used within a sentence; however, it can signal the end of a sentence and the beginning of a related sentence.
3. A semi-colon is used within a sentence. It can, however, signal the end of a sentence and the beginning of a related sentence.
4. A semi-colon is used within a sentence; it can, however, signal the end of a sentence and the beginning of a related sentence.

In sentence one, the two sentences are linked together with a comma and the coordinate conjunction (see p. xx) “but.”

In sentence two, the two sentences are linked together with a semi-colon and the conjunctive adverb (see p. xx) “however.” Note that a comma here would not be correct; it would create a run-on sentence (see p. xx). The use of a comma before a conjunctive adverb linking two sentences together is a common error.

However, in sentence three and sentence four, there is a comma before “however.” This is because in these sentences it does not link together two sentences.

Rule Two: a semi-colon comes between phrases or clauses in a series, within which there are commas.

Example: During the winter holidays, they skied in Fernie, near the Alberta border; Rossland, in the West Kootenays; and Whistler, north of Vancouver.

Sentence

A sentence is a unit of language, consisting of a single subject and a single verb—Birds sing—though capable of sustaining several subject-verb thought units: When birds sing early in the morning, we know spring has arrived, and the time has come to spend more time in the great outdoors. It is synonymous with an independent or main clause.

An English sentence will come in one of four forms:

A simple sentence has one subject and at least one verb: Jesus wept. Jesus wept and prayed.

A compound sentence has two subjects and at least two verbs, joined together appropriately: Jesus wept, and the disciples prayed. Jesus wept; his disciples prayed.

A complex sentence consists of one main/independent clause and one or more subordinate/dependent clauses: Jesus wept because one of his disciples betrayed him.

A compound-complex sentence consists of a compound sentence plus one or more subordinate/dependent clauses: Jesus wept, and his disciples hung their heads in shame, because one of their own had betrayed him.

Errors in sentence construction—sentence fragment, run-on sentence, dangling modifier, misplaced modifier, faulty parallelism—may be overlooked in casual and informal writing, but in academic writing they are often penalized with a reduced grade.

Sentence Fragment

An error in sentence structure, consisting of a group of words, punctuated as a sentence, but not forming a complete sentence.

There are two kinds of sentence fragment:

1. A word group missing either a subject or a verb but punctuated as a sentence.
The credit cards we use today often require only a pin number. Or merely a light tap on a credit card terminal. The first sentence is fine; the second is a fragment because it does not contain a verb. In more casual writing, a sentence fragment is acceptable, when it is used for an effect, for emphasis, for example: The credit cards we use today often require only a pin number or merely a light tap on a credit card terminal. So convenient! In an academic writing assignment, it is best to avoid such sentence fragments.
2. A word group that does contain a subject and a verb but that is not a complete sentence, because it begins with a subordinate conjunction or a relative pronoun.

Consider these sentences:

- a. There were many errors in sentence structure in the essays I just graded.
- b. Which is why the average grade was a C minus.
- c. The average grade in the essays I just returned to my students was a C minus.
- d. Because my students made so many errors in sentence structure.

Sentences a and c are correct.

Examples b and d are sentence fragments. They do contain subjects and verbs—“the average grade

was” and “my students made”—but the relative pronoun “which” and the subordinate conjunction “Because” transition signals which indicate the beginning of a subordinate/dependent clause.

Sentence Variety

Effective academic writing employs all forms of sentences: simple, compound, complex, compound-complex, periodic, loose (see separate listings for each of these terms) to achieve an appropriate writing style. A succession of simple sentences is generally considered a solecism in academic writing. This passage is clear, but no instructor/professor evaluating a writing assignment would condone it:

Simple Sentence

A word group consisting of one subject and one verb: Hemingway uses many simple sentences in his stories. The subject is “Hemingway” and the verb is “uses.” There are other words in the sentence but only one subject and one verb.

Note that the subject or the verb might be doubled or “compound”: Hemingway and Chopin use many simple sentences in their stories; they write and revise their stories many times. Those are still simple sentences.

Note that a simple sentence is the same as an independent or main clause.

Singular They/Their/Them

Refers to the use of the plural pronoun “they” or “their” or “them” in a singular context, especially as a means of avoiding tiresome repetition of he/his and her/hers. Editors of major publications are increasingly accepting the singular they/their. They would not object to changing this sentence—A surgeon puts his or her patients at risk if he or she operates more than twice in one day—to A surgeon puts their patients at risk if they operate more than twice in one day.

Changing the singular subject to plural is also an option—Surgeons put their patients at risk if they operate more than twice a day—though the switch to plural does alter the connotative meaning somewhat.

The use of the singular they/their can increase ambiguity. In this sentence—A surgeon puts their patients at risk if they are sleep deprived—the plural “they” might seem to refer to the patients.

There seems to be more resistance to the use of the singular “them”: When the tow truck driver arrives, tell them you suspect the problem is with your alternator. The dilemma is whether to use just “him” instead or “him or her.”

Check with your English instructor to see if he or she (or they) will accept the use of the singular they/their/them. This book does have a bias towards avoiding the singular they.

Note that the use of “they” to refer to someone who does not identify as either gender is also gaining acceptance.

Slang

Casual, informal speech and writing, often associated with the language used by young adults but to be avoided in academic writing.

Slippery Slope

A logical fallacy, which suggests that one condition or circumstance will lead to another similar condition or circumstance: If the government legalizes marijuana, it is just a matter of time before it legalizes cocaine. More and better evidence is required to make such an argument.

Split Infinitive

The infinitive is the base form of a verb, the form preceded by “to”: to speak, to drive, to recover. Opinion differs about modifiers that worm their way between the two words, modifiers that split the infinitive apart. Some argue the infinitive is sacrosanct and should never be split apart. They cringe when they hear the *Star Trek* intro, which includes the clause, with the infamous split infinitive “to boldly go where no man has gone before.” Others argue that a split infinitive is unworthy of so much grammar police grief. A compromise is to tolerate one adverb splitting an infinitive but only one. To gradually recover is ok, but to slowly and gradually recover is a bit much.

Standard English

The dominant form or dialect of written and spoken language, the form whose rules for spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, and syntax are considered most appropriate for speech and written communication in journalism, business, law, government, and education. Business reports, magazine and newspaper articles, government documents, and academic texts and assignments are written in Standard English.

There is some controversy over the primacy of Standard English. It is the dialect of the establishment, of those with social and economic power. As such, it is considered by some to be racist and oppressive, another barrier to middle-class prosperity for those—ethnic minorities, especially—not raised in an environment that privileged Standard English.

Despite the controversy, most instructors/professors still expect students to use Standard English in writing assignments.

This book is written in and promotes the use of Standard English.

Straw Man

A logical fallacy which attempts to advance an argument by insisting opponents lack substance—are made of straw: Liberals oppose the bill, but they are too brainwashed to accept capital punishment as a deterrent to other potential offenders.

Subject

Essential component of a sentence, the noun or pronoun which performs the action, indicated by the verb: Kim was robbed. They stole her jewelry.

A gerund, as a semi-noun, can also act as a subject: Living is easy, with eyes closed.

A noun clause can also act as a subject: Who among you who is without sin may cast the first stone.

Subject Complement

Some verbs, called linking verbs or copula verbs, do not take objects. Compare these two sentences:

Jim saw the governor.
Jim is the governor.

In the first sentence, “governor” is the object of the verb “saw.”

But in the second sentence, the verb links together two identities of one person. “governor” complements the subject “Jim.”

See also “Linking Verb.”

Subjective Case of Pronoun

The form or case of a pronoun, which performs the action identified by the verb: I wish, she wishes, he wishes, they wish, who wishes. These pronouns are all subjects of the verb “wish.”

Subject-Verb Agreement

The subject of a sentence is the agent performing the action, indicated by the verb: The visitors have arrived. The verb must be in the same “number” (singular or plural) as the subject. A singular subject takes a singular verb—the plot thickens (not thicken); a plural subject takes a plural verb—the stories are (not is) great. When the numbers match, subject-verb agreement is attained.

Subject-verb agreement is not often a source of error for English-as-a-first-language speakers, because the correct usage is embedded; hence incorrect usage can sound like a joke: I knows I is right.

It is more challenging for ESL/EAL students. Remember that a letter “s” at the end of a verb does not signal plural, as it does for a noun. In fact, plural nouns often take a verb without an “s,” while singular nouns need a verb which ends in “s.” In this store a balloon pops every second. Balloons pop constantly in this store.

However, there are some subject-verb agreement rules which can stymie even native English speaking college/university students.

When a prepositional phrase comes between the subject and the verb

A verb agrees with its subject, but sometimes when a prepositional phrase comes between a subject and a verb, the object of that prepositional phrase is mistaken for the subject. Study this sentence:

The chips in that glass adversely affect the taste of the wine.

The subject of the sentence is “chips” not “glass.” “Glass” is the object of the preposition “in.” “Glass” cannot be a subject. “Chips” is the subject, with which the verb “affect” must agree. Chips affect the taste. If the singular “glass” were the subject, then the verb would be singular: A dirty glass adversely affects the taste of the wine.

It would be incorrect to write “Only one of the witnesses claim to have seen the crime being committed” because “one” not “witnesses” is the subject. It would be correct to write “Only one of the witnesses claims to have seen the crime being committed.”

Two subjects joined together by “and” or “or”

When two subjects are joined together by the coordinate conjunction (p. x) “and” the verb is plural, but when two subjects are joined together by the coordinate conjunction “or” the verb agrees with the subject that most closely precedes it. Free trade and immigration are (not is) on the agenda for the cabinet meeting today. Free trade or immigration is (not are) on the agenda for the cabinet meeting today. Three congressmen or one senator is (not are) always in attendance. One senator or three congressmen are always in attendance.

The “or” rule also applies to “either/or” and “neither/nor” construction: Neither his wife nor his children were on the plane. Neither his children nor his wife was on the plane. Either his wife or his children are joining him later. Either his children or his wife is joining him later.

A collective noun as subject

Collective nouns identify a genderless group: crew, committee, press, team, orchestra, group, employees...

A collective noun will usually take a singular verb: Our team is losing again; the committee meets once a month; the orchestra is playing a Mozart symphony.

In American English, a plural verb might be used with a collective noun, if the individuals who comprise the collective noun are not acting in unison. The press are not in accord about the significance of Russian influence. It is often advisable to use a regular noun in such cases, to avoid confusion. The members of the press are not in accord. Instead of writing “The orchestra are tuning up their instruments,” write “The musicians in the orchestra are tuning up their instruments.”

Nouns such as “physics” and “news” are not exactly collective nouns, but they are plural nouns which function as singular nouns because they are a collective entity: My physics class meets three times a week; the news is on. Heroes are made, not born; Heroes is a great sports bar.

There are context-dependent exceptions: Measles is a serious disease, and measles are contagious.

Indefinite pronouns and numbers as subjects

Indefinite pronouns, such as everyone, all, any, no one, everybody usually take a singular verb: Everyone is happy; no one comes to choir practice; all is forgiven.

However, in contravention of the prepositional rule, discussed above, context provided by the object of the preposition might determine the verb choice: All of the money is missing, but all of the students are accounted for.

Similarly, numbers as subjects, can be singular—eight is enough—or plural—eight of my children are coming—depending upon context provided elsewhere in the sentence.

Subject following a verb

A subject usually precedes a verb, but a subject might come after a verb, when a sentence begins with an adverb such as “here” and “there.” The verb always agrees with the noun, never with an adverb, even if it precedes the verb: not here is the two main reasons but here are the two main reasons; not there is a lion and a tiger in my yard, but there are a lion and a tiger in my yard.

Subordinate Clause

A group of words which begins with a subordinate conjunction, contains a subject and a verb, but cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. Instead, a subordinate clause will act as an adverb, usually in support of the verb in the main clause. The subordinate clauses in the following sentences are underlined.

1. Universal peace is a possibility when the moon is in the seventh house.
2. Some grammarians will object if you end a sentence with a preposition.
3. Although her spring collection was well reviewed, the clothes did not sell well.

Remember that a subordinate clause is not a sentence. If you put a period at the end of a subordinate clause, you have a sentence fragment, a common error in student academic writing, one which will often fall victim to the red-pen rebuke and might even lower your grade.

You create a sentence fragment. If you punctuate a subordinate clause, as if it is a sentence.

Subordinate Conjunction

A word, which is a conjunction, in that it links two clauses together, but subordinate, in that it begins a group of words which cannot stand alone as a sentence. Common subordinate conjunctions are because, if, when, since, before, after, although, whenever, unless, until.

Men do not get many matches on dating sites if they are unemployed.

She did not get many matches on dating sites because she admitted she has eight children.

A word which is subordinate, insofar as it begins a word group that is less than a sentence, and a conjunction, insofar as it links two clauses together.

Some subordinate conjunctions introduce adverb clauses: The barbeque was canceled, because of the storm.

Syntax

The order of words in a phrase, a clause, a sentence and the effect that order has on meaning and response.

In poetry, syntax is often deliberately eccentric to create an effect. Conventional syntax would phrase this sentence, as follows:

The west wind will blow her clarion over the dreaming earth, drive sweet buds like flocks to feed in air, and fill plain and hill with living hues and odours.

But, in his poem “Ode to the West Wind,” Shelley writes the west wind shall blow

Her clarion o’er the dreaming earth and fill
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
 With living hues and odours plain and hill.

The inverted syntax maintains the rhythm and rhyme of the poem and draws attention to the imagery, in a way conventional syntax could not.

In oratory, syntax might be unconventional, as a way to impress listeners and hold their attention: “But one penny more in taxes I will not pay, until the government reverses its position.”

In academic writing, conservative syntax is usually preferable.

Thesis/Thesis Statement

The main or controlling idea of a school/college/university writing assignments, usually expressible as a single sentence. The presence of a clear thesis, stated explicitly or implied in the text's introduction, is highly valued and generally considered an essential component of a school/college/university writing assignment. The content of a writing assignment develops, supports, augments the thesis. Each paragraph topic sentence should reference the thesis, for an essay/report to have unity.

There are four types of thesis statements:

1. A general thesis states the controlling idea of the text, without embellishment. Here are two examples:
There is no evidence to suggest there is intelligent life elsewhere in the universe.
There is much circumstantial, but compelling evidence to suggest there is life elsewhere in the universe.
2. A blueprint thesis includes words or phrases which telegraph the point the writer will develop in support of the thesis:
Circumstantial evidence based upon mathematical probability, UFO sightings, and otherwise inexplicable signals from outer space, suggest that there is intelligent life elsewhere in the universe.
3. A thesis as question frames the text's main idea as a question, which the rest of the text answers:
Is there enough evidence to suggest that there is intelligent life elsewhere in the universe?
4. An implied thesis is embedded in the introduction of a text, but it is not expressed in a single sentence or a question. Implied theses are common in professional writing, among journalists, for example, but more common in academic writing. Teachers usually want to see a clear thesis in the introduction of an academic assignment.

Topic Sentence

The sentence in the paragraph of an academic text which states the subject of the paragraph. Other sentences in the paragraph develop, augment, explain, elucidate the topic sentence. The topic sentence may occur anywhere in the paragraph. It is often the first sentence or, if the first sentence establishes transition from the previous paragraph, the topic sentence may come second. But it can be anywhere, and it is often implied rather than explicitly presented as a single sentence. A paragraph has unity when its content connects with the topic sentence.

Transition

As a rhetorical term refers to the links within and between sentences in paragraphs and paragraphs within an essay or report, needed to help create the sense of unity and coherence essential to an effective text.

Transition is usually achieved in one or both of two ways:

1. Through the use of transitional expressions, such as in addition, also, however, but, moreover, second.

...Some two hundred statues, of biblical and other Christian figures, line the walls but seem poised to walk calmly into the sanctuary. The stained-glass windows are also stunning, and they, too, depict stories from the Bible in series of panels drawn and painted by the best craftsmen of the day. Another marvel of the Duomo is its altar, which...

2. By the repetition of a key word or the use of a pronoun which refers to the key word.
Determined to impress the nobility of France and Germany, and, of course, their Pope, the dukes of Milan commissioned the construction of the Duomo Cathedral. They did, indeed, impress, engineering the construction of the fourth largest cathedral in Europe. The Renaissance dome was the architectural centerpiece of cathedrals begun in the fourteenth century, but the Milanese dukes decided to go all out gothic. The exterior of the Duomo is all pointed arches and spires, interspersed with the inevitable whimsical gargoyles, soaring hundreds of feet into the heavens. The dukes eschewed ordinary stone, choosing instead to use the pink marble, which gives the cathedral that unearthly glow, at sunset, especially. Inside, the Duomo Cathedral is equally spectacular....

Unity

Important attribute of academic writing, achieved when all paragraphs in an academic text sustain the thesis and all sentences in a paragraph sustain the topic sentence.

When an instructor/professor notes in the margin of your essay or report “you are off topic here” or “not relevant to your topic sentence,” you are likely violating the unity principle.

Note that the content of a body paragraph marked as lacking unity may belong in your essay or report but not in the paragraph where it appears. The solution might simply be to begin a new paragraph or to integrate the content flagged as lacking unity into the relevant paragraph.

Unnecessary Comma

A simple sentence with a compound verb does not need a comma.

She was elected governor in November and impeached the following June.

It’s confusing because a compound sentence does need a comma before the coordinate conjunction.

She was elected governor in November, and she was impeached the following June.

A restrictive (essential to meaning) word, phrase, or clause does not need commas around it.

In the Liberal Party, Members of Parliament who deny the evidence of global warming are asked to resign.

Commas are reserved for non-restrictive (not essential to meaning) words, phrases, and clauses.

Our Member of Parliament, who happens to be the son of a former Prime Minister, will be reelected with a large majority.

Usage

Refers to the conventionally acceptable use of language within most social institutions.

“Conventionally acceptable” is not always the same as grammatically correct. “No one is filing their income tax early this year” may not be grammatically correct because “one” is clearly a singular subject and “their” is a plural pronoun. But an unspoken consensus condones such use, snubbing the pedant who insists the sentence should read “No one is filing his or her income tax early this year,” or the antediluvian who writes “No one is filing his income tax early this year.”

These unspoken rules of usage do not, however, condone grosser errors in grammar—In the third quarter, the fund performed good; investors seen an increase of 15%.

Nor do the unspoken rules of language used within most social institutions accept slang, profanity, sexist language, or email acronyms, LOL.

Vague Pronoun Reference

An error in usage, which usually comes in one of three forms:

1. An ambiguous personal pronoun:

The senator accused the general of negligence, but he could not have foreseen the consequences of his actions.

The “he” is ambiguous because the reader cannot tell if its antecedent is “senator” or “general.”

3. A confusing relative pronoun:

The committee was composed entirely of women and recommended equal pay for work of equal value, which the stockholders resented.

“Which” is ambiguous because it could refer to the make-up of the committee or to their recommendation.

4. An ambiguous use of the pronoun “it.”

Nutritionists recommend three servings of fresh fruit and three servings of fresh vegetables a day, but most Americans don’t do it.

Change “it” to “follow this advice.”

Valuable / Invaluable

Both of these words mean having significant worth. The difference between them lies in the ability to quantify. Something valuable is usually quantifiable—My Rolex is valuable. Something invaluable has more intrinsic, personal worth. The advice my father gave me is invaluable.

Verb

A word in a clause which describes or explains the nature of the action or state of being of its subject.

To the subject the sun, we can add many forms of the verb “to shine,” all of which convey a different shade (!) of meaning.

The sun shines.
 The sun shone.
 The sun will shine.
 The sun is shining.
 The sun was shining.
 The sun will be shining.

Verb Phrase

A main verb plus auxiliary verbs, formed to define the action of the subject of the verb as accurately as possible. To the verb “falls” in this sentence—

A tree falls in the forest—

we could add auxiliary verbs which refine, augment, and clarify the nature of the action of the verb and, hence, the entire sentence.

A tree will fall in the forest.
 A tree might fall in the forest.
 A tree should fall in the forest.
 A tree would fall in the forest.
 A tree can fall in the forest.
 A tree may fall in the forest.

Verb Tense

Tense establishes the temporal relationship between a noun and its action. Negotiations continue today. They stalled yesterday. They will resume tomorrow.

In academic writing, accurate verb tense is essential. It is usually not a problem for native English speakers though it can be a challenge for English as a Second/English as an Alternate Language students, especially those whose native language does not contain the wide range of tenses English does.

There are twelve verb tenses in the English language.

1. Present tense indicates current action, in the here and now: I think; therefore, I am. Present tense also indicates recurring, habitual action: I think about you every day; I am always happy.
2. Past tense indicates action that has occurred at a point in time earlier than the time when the writer writes or the speaker speaks: She thought about it, then decided against it.
3. Future tense indicates action that will occur later in time: I will think about it.
4. Present progressive tense indicates ongoing current action, in the here and now. The sun is shining; she is baking bread. Its signature is the ing suffix. It is similar to simple present tense: The sun shines; she bakes bread. Progressive tense can signal a more causal

relationship: Stockbrokers make a lot of money; stockbrokers are making a lot of money, now that unemployment is so low.

5. Past progressive tense indicates ongoing past action, which is eventually terminated: she was scoring more goals; they were winning more games.
6. Future progressive tense indicates action that will be ongoing later in time, under certain circumstances: The employees will all be flying first class, if business continues to soar.
7. Present perfect tense indicates a past action that prevails in the present: He has signed the bill into law. Perfect tense always uses a form of the verb “to have” as an auxiliary verb.
8. Past perfect tense indicates some condition which affects past action: They were too late: he had signed the bill into law. The distinction between simple past tense and past perfect tense can be subtle. He (signed, had signed) the bill into law, before Congress had a chance to study it. “Had signed” is correct, determined by adverb clause following the comma. Past perfect is, in a sense, a past past verb tense. Consider the subtle differences among these past and past perfect sentences. Notice how context determines tense: The Queen has a bad cold; the Queen had a bad cold; the Queen has had a bad cold, for the past two weeks; the Queen had had a bad cold, but she was better by Christmas.
9. Future perfect tense indicates an action to occur in the future, as determined by another action which has taken place already. The PM will have prorogued parliament by the time the Leader of the Opposition has recovered.
10. Present perfect progressive tense matches a verb with the progressive “ing” suffix with the present tense of the verb “to have.” She has always been more than willing to work with the Speaker of the House.
11. Past perfect progressive tense matches a verb with the progressive “ing” suffix with the past tense of the verb “to have.” She had always been more than willing to work with the Speaker of the House, before he broke his promise. Note how context determines tense.
12. Future perfect progressive tense matches a verb with the progressive “ing” suffix with the future tense of the verb “to have.” If she continues to work cooperatively with the Speaker of the House for the rest of the year, she will have been working cooperatively with him for the past three years. Note how context determines tense.

Here is one more example of a verb expressed in all 12 tenses.

My roommate studies.

My roommate studied.

My roommate will study.

My roommate is studying.

My roommate was studying.

My roommate will be studying.

My roommate has studied.

My roommate had studied.

My roommate will have studied.

My roommate has been studying.

My roommate had been studying.

My roommate will have been studying.

Take care with that distinction between past tense and past perfect tense. Otherwise, verb tense does not often cause problems for native English speakers.

If English is your second or alternate language, you may often need to review your work for accurate tense

Voice and Style

The level of formality in speech and writing, as indicated by word choice and sentence structure. The “voice” of a written text might be light-hearted or casual or terse or ornate or angry or playful or pedantic or contemplative or sardonic. You write your texts and emails to your friend in a casual voice, with little regard for grammar, spelling, sentence structure. You write your academic reports and essays in a more formal voice, intent on using proper grammar and careful sentence structure.

Academic voice presupposes correct grammar and sophisticated sentence structure, but there is some latitude within these basic boundaries. Your chemistry teacher will want the voice your lab report to be formal, prescribed, correct, straightforward. Your humanities teacher might permit, even prefer, a somewhat more casual voice, as long as it stays appropriate to its academic context.

Voice of Verbs

Signals the syntactic relationships among subject verb, and object in a sentence. In the English language, there are two verb voices.

In a sentence in active voice, the subject is performing an action, identified by its verb.

The Governor reads a dozen newspapers every day.

In a sentence in passive voice, that active voice subject becomes the object and the active voice object becomes the subject.

A dozen newspapers are read by the Governor every day.

Both sentences are grammatically correct, but the active voice sentence is more effective. It is smoother and, at 8 words compared to the passive voice 10 words, it is more concise.

Generally speaking, the active voice style is better than the passive voice. However, a verb’s subject is often indeterminate—Smoking is forbidden—and here the passive voice is better.

The passive voice is common in some academic writing. A social scientist would likely write “The subjects were weighed carefully before and after their time spent in the sweat lodge,” rather than “We weighed the subjects carefully...” A chemistry student would likely write, in her lab report, “Two milliliters of iodine were added to this mixture,” rather than “I added two milliliters...”

Humanities teachers and professors tend to prefer assignments written in active voice: “Hester’s beauty and serenity frustrate and perplex the women in the Puritan city of Boston,” rather than “The women in the Puritan city of Boston were frustrated and perplexed...”

Who, Whom

Relative pronouns which introduce a noun clause or an adjective clause and which often cause usage errors.

The difference between them is that “who” is a subjective case pronoun, and “whom” is an objective case pronoun.

As the object of a preposition, the use of “whom” is familiar enough:

To whom it may concern...

With whom are you going?

For whom the bell tolls.

Note that the rule stays the same when the preposition comes at the end of the clause, though the enforcement of the rule is typically less strict. “Whom are you going with” may be, strictly speaking, grammatically correct, but “Who are you going with” will pass by many editors and essay graders with impunity.

It is as the subject of the verb in the clause or the object of the verb in the clause that the distinction between who and whom causes more confusion. The rule is if the verb in the clause which begins with who/whom already has a subject then the beginning pronoun is whom because that is the needed objective case.

Here is an example, illustrating the use of whom and who at the beginning of a noun clause.

The manager knows exactly whom she wants to appoint as her assistant.

The verb “wants” already has a subject “she” so it needs the object “whom.”

The manager knows exactly who is getting fired.

“Who” is the subject of the verb “is getting fired.”

Here is an example, illustrating the use of whom and who at the beginning of an adjective clause.

Senator Evans, who is running for president for the third time, has won the Iowa caucus.

“Who” is the subject of the verb “is running.”

Senator Evans, whom the governor has never met, has won the Iowa caucus.

“Whom” is required, as the object of the verb of the verb “has (never) met.”

Here is another example:

Any reporter who is opposed to the prime minister’s policy will not be invited to the press conference.

Any reporter whom the president dislikes will not be invited to the press conference.

In the first sentence, the verb “is opposed” needs a subject, so the subjective case of the relative pronoun is used. In the second sentence the verb “dislikes” already has a subject, “president” so the objective case of the relative pronoun is used.

There can be confusion in the use of “whoever” or “whomever” following a preposition. The “whom” form of the pronoun typically follows a preposition—to whom it may concern, for whom the bell tolls—so writers reason that “whomever” should also follow a preposition. Consider these two sentences.

She will flirt with whomever she wants.

She will flirt with whoever catches her eye.

The first one is correct because the verb “wants” needs an object; “wants” already has a subject, “she.” The second one is correct because “catches” needs a subject. Yes, the pronoun “with” needs an object, but its object is the entire noun clause (see p. x) “whoever catches her eye.

Here are more examples. All of these sentences are correct.

Put your faith in whomever you trust the most

Put your faith in whoever is the most trustworthy.

The prize goes to whomever the judges choose.

The prize goes to whoever wins the race.

Alex, whom I taught last year and who is an excellent student, is at UBC now.

Note, finally, that to some, insisting on the correct use of who and whom is unnecessarily pedantic, and even some of your college instructors and professors will not flag or punish errors in the misuse of these pronouns.

Wordiness

A common flaw in academic writing, occurring when an author uses more words than necessary to convey meaning.

Wrong Word

A common error in college student writing, an error usually resulting from a failure to distinguish between

1. Words with the same sounds but different meanings (homonyms), such as principal/principle; stationary/stationery; affect/effect;
2. Words which are incorrect but sound similar to the correct word (malapropisms), such as for all “intensive” purposes, instead of all “intents and” purposes; should of, instead of should have;
3. Words with similar denotations (literal meaning) but different connotations (associative meaning), such as young woman/girl/chick/lass/damsel; fat/obese/chubby/overweight/plump/stout/hefty.

If you are in doubt about your word choice, consult a dictionary.

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Appendix B: Glossary of Literary Terms

Adage A traditional or proverbial saying.

Allegory A story, poem, or painting in which the characters, events, or images extend beyond the confines of the work to reveal deeper meanings, usually moral or political. Well-known works such as Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96) and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress from This World, to That Which is To Come* (1678) are good examples of sustained allegory. For an extended definition of the term as it applies to various works of literature, consult a good dictionary of literary terms such as M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*; or *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, J.A. Cuddon.

Alliteration The repetition of a consonant sound – “storm strewn sea.”

Anapaest The anapaestic meter consists of a series of two unstressed sounds followed by a single stressed sound – “The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold” (Lord Byron).

Antagonist Character whose dramatic role is to oppose the protagonist (q.v.).

Archetype Also known as universal symbol, an archetype may be a character (the intrepid hero, damsel in distress, party animal), a theme (the triumph of good over evil), a symbol, or even a setting. Many literary critics are of the opinion that archetypes, which have a common and recurring representation in a particular human culture or entire human race, shape the structure and function of a literary work.

Archetypal plot A sequence of events forming a type of story that has recurred throughout the history of a civilization, and with which most people are familiar; for example, a battle between good and evil.

Assonance The repetition of vowel sounds, as in “rapid rattle” (Wilfred Owen).

Aural Describes how a poem appeals to our sense of sound, hearing.

Ballad A narrative poem, usually written in quatrains with abcb rhyme scheme (q.v.).

Blank verse Unrhymed iambic pentameter (q.v.) poetry.

Blocking agents In drama, characters who try to prevent other characters from achieving their goals.

Catharsis The purging of audience emotion in tragedy, the release of emotion, and final feeling of relief.

Comedy Form of drama characterized by some sense of optimism, fellowship, love, and good humour.

Conceit A metaphor that is unusually ingenious or elaborate. Common feature in work of metaphysical poets, such as John Donne.

Contextual symbol A symbol that has a non-literal meaning only within the context of the work of art in which it is found.

Dactyl The dactylic meter is the opposite of the anaepestic. It consists of a series of single hard-stressed sounds followed by two soft-stressed sounds – “Just for a handful of silver he left us” (Robert Browning).

Deconstruction An interpretive movement in literary theory that reached its apex in the 1970s. Deconstruction rejects absolute interpretations, stressing ambiguities and contradictions in literature. Deconstruction grew out of the linguistic principles of De Saussure who noted that many Indo-European languages create meaning by binary opposites. Verbal oppositions such as good/evil, light/

dark, male/female, rise/fall, up/down, and high/low show a human tendency common transculturally to create vocabulary as pairs of opposites, with one of the two words arbitrarily given positive connotations and the other word arbitrarily given negative connotations.

Dramatic monologue A poem which is “dramatic” because it is a speech presented to an audience (usually of only one person) and a “monologue” because no other character does any talking.

Dynamic character Sometimes referred to as a round character, a dynamic character is one whose values, attitudes, and/or ideals change as a result of the experience the character undergoes throughout the story.

Elegy A poem written to commemorate the death of a person who played a significant role in the poet’s life.

Epic An epic in its most specific sense is a genre of classical poetry. It is a poem that is a long narrative about a serious subject, told in an elevated style of language, focused on the exploits of a hero or demi-god who represents the cultural values of a race, nation, or religious group, in which the hero’s success or failure will determine the fate of that people or nation. Usually, the epic has a vast setting and covers a wide geographic area, it contains superhuman feats of strength or military prowess, and gods or supernatural beings frequently take part in the action. The poem begins with the invocation of a muse to inspire the poet and, the narrative starts in medias res. The epic contains long catalogues of heroes or important characters, focusing on highborn kings and great warriors rather than peasants and commoners.

Epiphany A change, sudden insight or awareness revealed to the main character.

Eye rhyme Words that look as if they should rhyme but do not – for example “good” and “mood.” Also known as sight rhyme.

Fable A short and traditional story, involving archetypal characters and ending with a moral.

Feminism and literature Feminist critics aim to examine the relationships between the male and female characters and the distribution of power within those relationships.

Fiction Prose text in the form of a story that is primarily a product of human imagination.

First-person major-character narrator This type of narrator tells a story in which he or she is the main character, or main focus of attention.

First-person minor-character narrator This narrator is typically a gossip. He or she observes the actions of another person, often a friend, and then tells what that friend did, when, and to whom.

Flashback The technique of narrating an event that occurred before the point in the story to which the narrator has advanced.

Flat character A character, also known as a static character, who is offered the chance for positive change but who, for one reason or another, fails to embrace it.

Free verse Poetry without a set rhyme scheme or rhythm pattern.

Full rhyme The use of words that rhyme completely, such as “good” and “wood.”

Genre A major literary form, such as drama, poetry, and the novel.

Haiku The Japanese haiku is a brief poem, consisting of a single image. The haiku consists of three lines of five, seven, and five syllables, respectively.

Half rhyme Describes words that almost rhyme such as “time” and “mine.”

Hamartia A term from Greek tragedy that literally means “missing the mark.” Originally applied to an archer who misses the target, a hamartia came to signify a tragic flaw, especially a misperception, a lack of some important insight, or some blindness that ironically results from one’s own strengths and abilities.

Horatian satire Named after the Roman poet, Horace, this is a fairly gentle type of satire used to poke fun at people and their failings or foibles.

Hyperbole A metaphor that bases its comparison on the use of exaggeration, for example, “I’d walk a million miles for one of your smiles” (Al Jolson).

Iambic The iambic rhythm pattern in poetry consists of one unstressed sound or beat, followed by one stressed sound or beat – “The cúrfew tólls the knéll of pártíng dáy” (Thomas Gray).

Iambic diameter A line with two beats – “I can’t.”

Iambic pentameter A line with five beats – “I have been one acquainted with the night” (Robert Frost).

Iambic tetrameter A line with four beats – “I wandered lonely as a cloud” (William Wordsworth).

Iambic trimeter A line with three beats – “The only news I know/Is bulletins all day” (Emily Dickinson).

Imagery In literature, an image is a word picture. It can be a phrase, a sentence, or a line. It is used to enhance the reader’s appreciation of the figurative more than the literal meaning of a poem, story, or play – “The fog comes/on little cat feet” (Carl Sandberg).

Imagists A group of poets whose aim between 1912 and 1917 was to write poetry that accented imagery (q.v.) or, their preferred term, “imagism” to communicate meaning.

In media res Latin for “in the middle of the action,” the point at which an epic, such as “The Odyssey,” typically opens.

Irony Cicero referred to irony as “saying one thing and meaning another.” Irony comes in many forms. Verbal irony is a trope in which a speaker makes a statement in which its actual meaning differs sharply from the meaning that the words ostensibly express. Dramatic irony involves a situation in a narrative in which the reader knows something about present or future circumstances that the character does not know. In that situation, the character acts in a way we recognize to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or the character expects the opposite of what the reader knows that fate holds in store, or the character anticipates a particular outcome that unfolds itself in an unintentional way. Probably the most famous example of dramatic irony is the situation facing Oedipus in the play Oedipus Rex. Situational irony is a trope in which accidental events occur that seem oddly appropriate, such as the poetic justice of a pickpocket getting his own pocket picked.

Juvenalian satire Named after the Roman poet Juvenal, this form of satire uses bitter sarcasm more than humour, and is often tinged with cruelty.

Limited omniscient narrator A narrator who limits himself or herself to relaying to readers the thoughts and actions of the main character only.

Litotes The deliberate use of understatement, usually to create an ironic or satiric effect – “I am not as young as I used to be.”

Malapropism A blunder in diction, grotesquely substituting one word with a similar sound for the proper word. Mrs. Malaprop, (Fr. Mal à propos), a character in R. B. Sheridan’s comedy *The Rivals*, was famously guilty of such errors in diction: e.g., “As headstrong as an allegory [alligator] on the banks of the Nile”; Shakespeare’s *Mistress Quickly* in *2 Henry IV* (Falstaff “is indicted to dinner”); and Capt. Jack Boyle in O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock* (“The whole world’s in a state of chassis” [chaos]) are earlier and later characters given to malapropisms.

Marxist literary theory Like feminist critics, Marxist critics examine the imbalance of power relationships among characters in literature, in terms of social class.

Metaphor A comparison intended to clarify or intensify the more complex of the objects of the comparison.

Metonymy A form of metaphor in which a phrase is understood to represent something more; for example, to use the phrase “sabre rattling” to mean “threatening war.”

Meter A term used to describe the rhythm and measure of a line of poetry.

Narrative The storyline in a literary work.

Narrator Storyteller.

Naturalism A view that accident and chance determine all that occurs in the world; a pessimistic, fatalistic, and deterministic view of life and of life's ironies. See Stephen Crane's "Blue Hotel". For a very thorough discussion of naturalism, see the [website by Prof. Paul Reuben, Perspectives in American Literature](#) (PAL).

Non-sequential plot One in which the author holds back an important incident that occurred before the chronological ending of the story, typically to create suspense.

Novel A narrative work of fiction typically involving a range of characters and settings, linked together through plot and sub-plots.

Novella A short work of fiction that falls in length somewhere between the novel and the short story.

Objective narrator The objective narrator establishes setting in a precise but rather detached style, and then lets the conversation tell the story, using an objective point of view.

Octave An eight-line stanza.

Ode A long formal poem that typically presents a poet's philosophical views about such subjects as nature, art, death, and human emotion.

Omniscient narrator A narrator capable of telling readers the thoughts of all the characters and the actions of all the characters at any time. An omniscient narrator is like a god who can provide readers with all the information they could ever want.

Onomatopoeia A word or phrase usually found in a poem the sound of which suggests its meaning – "bang," "thwack."

Oral Describes a spoken as opposed to written literary tradition.

Paradox A phrase which seems self-contradictory but, in fact, makes powerful sense despite its lack of logic – "I must be cruel only to be kind" (Shakespeare).

Pastoral Relating to the countryside, especially in an idealized form.

Pastoral elegy A form of elegy that typically contrasts the serenity of the simple life of a shepherd with the cruel world which hastened the death of the poet's friend.

Personification A form of metaphor that compares something non-human with something that is human – "Two Sunflowers/Move in the Yellow Room" (William Blake).

Petrarchan sonnet A sonnet with a rhyme scheme: abbaabbacdecde.

Plot In a literary fiction work, "plot" refers to the events, the order in which they occur, and the relationship of the events to each other.

Poetry One of the major literary genres, usually written in a series of discrete lines which highlight the artistic use of language.

Point of view The stance from which the storyteller or narrator tells the story.

Prose The written text of fiction and non-fiction, as distinct from poetry.

Protagonist The main character in a literary work. See also antagonist.

Quatrain A four-line stanza.

Reader response theory A theory of literature that asserts that the reader creates meaning and that, because all people are different, all readings will be different.

Regular verse A literary work written in lines that have the same rhythm pattern and a regular rhyme scheme.

Rhyme scheme The rhyming pattern of a regular-verse poem.

Rhyming couplet A two-line stanza in which the last words in each line rhyme.

Satire A literary form in which a writer pokes fun at those aspects of his society, especially those people and those social institutions that the author thinks are corrupt and in need of change.

Scapegoat A person who is banished or sacrificed in the interests of his or her community. The term is often applied to a tragic hero.

Sequential plot One in which the events are narrated in the order in which they occurred in time.

Sestet A six-line stanza.

Shakespearean sonnet A sonnet with a rhyme scheme: ababcdcdefefgg.

Short story A prose fiction narrative that usually occurs in a single setting and concerns a single main character.

Sight rhyme Words that look as if they should rhyme but do not – for example “mood” and “good.” Also known as eye rhyme.

Simile A type of metaphor that makes the comparison explicit by using either the word “like” or the word “as” – “Elderly American ladies leaning on their canes listed toward me like towers of Pisa” (Nabokov).

Sonnet A 14-line regular-verse poem, usually written in iambic pentameter.

Spondee A double-hard-stressed phrase such as “shook foil” (Gerard Manley Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur”).

Static character A static character, also known as a flat character, is one who is offered the chance for positive change but who, for one reason or another, fails to embrace it.

Stereotype A recognizable type of person rather than a fully developed character. A stereotypical character is one who can be identified by a single dominant trait; for example, the braggart soldier, the country bumpkin.

Symbolism The use within a literary work of an element that has more than a literal meaning – “All the world’s a stage” (Shakespeare).

Synecdoche The use of a part to represent a whole, as in the expression “lend me a hand.”

Tercet A three-line stanza.

Theatre of the absurd A phrase used to describe a group of plays written during and after the 1950s. The term “absurd” is used because the plots and the characters (though not the themes) are unconventional when examined in the context of conventional tragedy and comedy.

Theme The message or insight into human experience that an author offers to his or her readers. Broad themes might include family, love, war, nature, death, faith, time, or some aspects of these.

Tone The attitude or personality that a literary work projects; for example, serious and solemn, or lighthearted and amusing.

Tragedy A play that tells the story of a significant event or series of events in the life of a significant person.

Tragic hero The main character in a Greek or Roman tragedy. In contrast with the epic hero (who embodies the values of his culture and appears in an epic poem), the tragic hero is typically an admirable character who appears as the focus in a tragic play, but one who is undone by a hamartia—a tragic mistake, misconception, or flaw. That hamartia leads to the downfall of the main character.

Trochaic The opposite of iambic. The rhythm of the lines of a trochaic poem consist not of a series of soft-stressed-hard-stressed sounds, but a series of hard-stressed-soft-stressed sounds – “There they are my fifty men and women” (Robert Browning).

Utopia and dystopia Thomas More coined the word “utopia” for his satiric prose work *Utopia* (1516), based on the two Greek words “ou” (no) and “topos” (“place”), but also suggesting the homonym “eu” (“good”). Thus, he was playing with the idea that the good place is imaginary or no place. Since More’s time, many authors have created imaginary good societies, which they imagined in fictional works. Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels, Book II and IV* have been described as “utopias”. The heyday of the utopian genre was the 19th century, which saw many utopias published, among the best-known and most influential of which was the novel *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* by the American activist author Edward Bellamy (1850-1898). H.G. Wells (1866-1946) published a number of utopian novels, including *A Modern Utopia* (1905) and *Men Like Gods* (1924). Aldous Huxley initially set out

to parody *Men Like Gods* in his *Brave New World* (1932), a classic dystopia. A dystopia—from Gr. *dys* (“bad”) + *topos* (place) is a fictional work that describes a thoroughly bad society, such as George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1950).

Valediction Bidding farewell to someone or something.

Verse A unit of a varying number of lines with which a poem is divided. Also called a stanza.

Villanelle A 19-line poem divided into five tercets and one quatrain. Probably the most famous English villanelle is Dylan Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night.”

Appendix C: Writing an Analysis of a Poem, Story, or Play

If you are taking a literature course, it is important that you know how to write an analysis—sometimes called an interpretation or a literary analysis or a critical reading or a critical analysis—of a story, a poem, and a play. Your instructor will probably assign such an analysis as part of the course assessment. On your mid-term or final exam, you might have to write an analysis of one or more of the poems and/or stories on your reading list. Or the dreaded “sight poem or story” might appear on an exam, a work that is not on the reading list, that you have not read before, but one your instructor includes on the exam to examine your ability to apply the active reading skills you have learned in class to produce, independently, an effective literary analysis. You might be asked to write instead of, or, in addition to, an analysis of a literary work, a more sophisticated essay in which you compare and contrast the protagonists of two stories, or the use of form and metaphor in two poems, or the tragic heroes in two plays.

You might learn some literary theory in your course and be asked to apply theory—feminist, Marxist, reader-response, psychoanalytic, new historicist, for example—to one or more of the works on your reading list. But the seminal assignment in a literature course is the analysis of the single poem, story, novel, or play, and, even if you do not have to complete this assignment specifically, it will form the basis of most of the other writing assignments you will be required to undertake in your literature class. There are several ways of structuring a literary analysis, and your instructor might issue specific instructions on how he or she wants this assignment done. The method presented here might not be identical to the one your instructor wants you to follow, but it will be easy enough to modify if your instructor expects something a bit different, and it is a good default method if your instructor does not issue more specific guidelines.

You want to begin your analysis with a paragraph that provides the context of the work you are analyzing and a brief account of what you believe to be the poem or story or play’s main theme. At a minimum, your account of the work’s context will include the name of the author, the title of the work, its genre, and the date and place of publication. If there is an important biographical or historical context to the work, you should include that, as well. Try to express the work’s theme in one or two sentences. Theme, you will recall, is that insight into human experience the author offers to readers, usually revealed as the content, the drama, the plot of the poem, story, or play unfolds and the characters interact. Assessing theme can be a complex task. Authors usually show the theme; they don’t tell it. They rarely say, at the end of the story, words to this effect: “and the moral of my story is...” They tell their story, develop their characters, provide some kind of conflict—and from all of this theme emerges. Because identifying theme can be challenging and subjective, it is often a good idea to work through the rest of the analysis, then return to the beginning and assess theme in light of your analysis of the work’s other literary elements.

Here is a good example of an introductory paragraph from Ben’s analysis of William Butler Yeats’ poem, “Among School Children”:

“Among School Children” was published in Yeats’ 1928 collection of poems *The Tower*. It was inspired by a visit Yeats made in 1926 to school in Waterford, an official visit in his capacity as a senator of the Irish Free State. In the course of the tour, Yeats reflects upon his own youth and the experiences that shaped the “sixty-year old, smiling public man” (line 8) he has become. Through his reflection, the theme of the poem emerges: a life has meaning when connections among apparently disparate experiences are forged into a unified whole.

In the body of your literature analysis, you want to guide your readers through a tour of the poem, story, or play, pausing along the way to comment on, analyze, interpret, and explain key incidents, descriptions, dialogue, symbols, the writer's use of figurative language—any of the elements of literature that are relevant to a sound analysis of this particular work. Your main goal is to explain how the elements of literature work to elucidate, augment, and develop the theme. The elements of literature are common across genres: a story, a narrative poem, and a play all have a plot and characters. But certain genres privilege certain literary elements. In a poem, for example, form, imagery and metaphor might be especially important; in a story, setting and point-of-view might be more important than they are in a poem; in a play, dialogue, stage directions, lighting serve functions rarely relevant in the analysis of a story or poem.

The length of the body of an analysis of a literary work will usually depend upon the length of work being analyzed—the longer the work, the longer the analysis—though your instructor will likely establish a word limit for this assignment. Make certain that you do not simply paraphrase the plot of the story or play or the content of the poem. This is a common weakness in student literary analyses, especially when the analysis is of a poem or a play.

Here is a good example of two body paragraphs from Amelia's analysis of "Araby" by James Joyce:

Within the story's first few paragraphs occur several religious references which will accumulate as the story progresses. The narrator is a student at the Christian Brothers' School; the former tenant of his house was a priest; he left behind books called *The Abbot* and *The Devout Communicant*. Near the end of the story's second paragraph the narrator describes a "central apple tree" in the garden, under which is "the late tenant's rusty bicycle pump." We may begin to suspect the tree symbolizes the apple tree in the Garden of Eden and the bicycle pump, the snake which corrupted Eve, a stretch, perhaps, until Joyce's fall-of-innocence theme becomes more apparent.

.....

The narrator must continue to help his aunt with her errands, but, even when he is so occupied, his mind is on Mangan's sister, as he tries to sort out his feelings for her. Here Joyce provides vivid insight into the mind of an adolescent boy at once elated and bewildered by his first crush. He wants to tell her of his "confused adoration," but he does not know if he will ever have the chance. Joyce's description of the pleasant tension consuming the narrator is conveyed in a striking simile, which continues to develop the narrator's character, while echoing the religious imagery, so important to the story's theme: "But my body was like a harp, and her words and gestures were like fingers, running along the wires."

The concluding paragraph of your analysis should realize two goals. First, it should present your own opinion on the quality of the poem or story or play about which you have been writing. And, second, it should comment on the current relevance of the work. You should certainly comment on the enduring social relevance of the work you are explicating. You may comment, though you should never be obliged to do so, on the personal relevance of the work.

Here is the concluding paragraph from Dao-Ming's analysis of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*:

First performed in 1895, *The Importance of Being Earnest* has been made into a film, as recently as 2002 and is regularly revived by professional and amateur theatre companies. It endures not only because of the comic brilliance of its characters and their dialogue, but also because its satire still resonates with contemporary audiences. I am still amazed that I see in my own Asian mother a shadow of Lady Bracknell, with her obsession with finding for her daughter a husband who will maintain, if not, ideally, increase the family's social status. We might like to think we are more liberated and socially sophisticated than our Victorian ancestors, but the starlets and eligible bachelors who star in current reality television programs illustrate the

extent to which superficial concerns still influence decisions about love and even marriage. Even now, we can turn to Oscar Wilde to help us understand and laugh at those who are earnest in name only.

Dao-Ming’s conclusion is brief, but she does manage to praise the play, reaffirm its main theme, and explain its enduring appeal. And note how her last sentence cleverly establishes that sense of closure that is also a feature of an effective analysis.

You may, of course, modify the template that is presented here. Your instructor might favour a somewhat different approach to literary analysis. Its essence, though, will be your understanding and interpretation of the theme of the poem, story, or play and the skill with which the author shapes the elements of literature—plot, character, form, diction, setting, point of view—to support the theme.

A Model Analysis

Now read the short poem by Siegfried Sassoon, “[Base Details](#),” and then read the sample essay with comments.

First let’s try to determine who is the speaker, the “I” of the poem. Notice that the speaker speculates: “If I were fierce, and bald, and short of breath...” Might we assume he is none of the three adjectives? So how old would he be? Start with a hypothesis and stick with it unless further details make your guess seem untenable. Then try a different hypothesis. For now let’s assume that the speaker is young. What is his rank? Is he an officer? Unlikely, probably an unlisted man, since his tone toward the majors is angry and sarcastic.

He calls them “scarlet.” What is the denotation of “scarlet”? What are some connotations of “scarlet”? What does “petulant” mean? Why are the faces of the majors described as “puffy”? What is the main meaning here of “scrap”? Are other meanings intended?

What is the purpose of the poem? Look up the brief [biographical details for Sassoon](#) herein the First World War Poetry Digital Archive.

After reading the poem three times (you should print a copy of the poem from Project Bartleby), have a look at the following student essay on diction in “Base Details.”

Student Essay: The Diction of “Base Details”

(Adapted from Edward J. Gordon, *Writing About Imaginative Literature*, Harbrace: 1973).

Old men make and run wars; young men fight and die in them. In “Base Details,” Siegfried Sassoon reveals through his diction a bitterness toward the fact that young men die in wars while the officers live safely behind the lines. The speaker in the poem is an ordinary soldier talking about the majors at the army base. By pretending what he would be like if he were an officer, he condemns war.

Through his choice of words, the soldier expresses an attitude of contempt for the officers behind the lines who “speed glum heroes up the line to death.” He speaks with sarcasm of their fierceness and goes on to describe them as “bald, and short of breath.” If he were a major, he, too, would have a “puffy petulant face,/Guzzling and gulping in the best hotel.” The connotations of these words suggest men who are overweight and out of shape from drinking and eating too much. The reference to “scarlet Majors” recalls the red dress uniforms of British officers and the colour of blood.¹

The speaker then goes on to describe the attitude toward soldiers that is held by the officers. One

1. Coherence would be even better here if the student could perhaps go on to point out explicitly how the majors figuratively have blood on their hands—the blood of the young soldiers under their command. One brief sentence would do.

speaks of losing many men in “this last scrap.” The understatement of that last word contrasts sharply with the mention in the same line of a heavy loss in battle.² In the last two lines of the poem, a further contrast is set up between “youth stone dead” and the officer who will “toddle safely home and die—in bed.”³

When the entire poem is read, the title becomes ambiguous. The apparent meaning refers to the details of a military base. But “base” can also mean low and contemptible. “Detail” also has two meanings. It can mean a detachment of men sent out on a particular mission—“speed glum heroes up the line”—but it can also mean a minor matter, as if sending people off to die is not important to the officers. So the apparent meaning that we see as we begin reading turns into a second meaning when we finish reading the poem.

The diction, then, makes a comment on the theme of the poem: old men who direct wars at a safe distance behind the lines seem to have little understanding of what it means to die in battle and appear on “the Roll of Honor.”

2. Here the student should state the other meanings of “scrap” and point out their thematic significance.

3. Here the student could improve the essay by discussing the connotations of the verb “toddle” and then relating the diction to theme.

Appendix D: Brave New World Casebook



Biography: Aldous Huxley

Aldous Huxley was descended from two eminent Victorian families—he was the grandson of noted biologist and writer on science, Thomas Henry Huxley, grandnephew of Matthew Arnold, and nephew of Victorian novelist Mary Augusta Ward (who wrote under her married name Mrs. Humphry Ward), Arnold’s niece. His unusual Christian name commemorates a major character, Aldous Raeburn, in the novel *Marcella*, which Mrs. Ward published in the year of Huxley’s birth, 1894.

Born in Godalming, Surrey, England, he received his first schooling from his mother, Julia Arnold Huxley. He then moved on to Hillside Preparatory School, Eton, and eventually, Balliol College, Oxford, taking a first in English in 1916. Two early blows—the death of his mother when he was only nine, and an attack of keratitis while he was a student at Eton, which left him nearly blind for the rest of his life—may have sharpened his tendency toward introversion. Certainly the latter affliction precluded a career in science, paving the way for a life in letters.

In the course of his long literary career, Aldous Huxley published poetry collections, plays, essays, short fiction, travel narratives, biography, and criticism, but, like George Orwell, author of *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*, he is best remembered as the author of a hugely influential utopian satire. Both men used the genre more than once. *Brave New World* began, like Orwell’s *Coming Up for Air*, as a response to H.G. Wells’s utopia, *Men Like Gods* (1923), and Huxley later wrote two more utopian-dystopian novels: *Ape and Essence* (1948) and *Island* (1962).

Although Huxley felt that he was not a “born novelist, but an essayist who writes novels,” he became an innovative fictional stylist, effectively using cinematic montage technique for the purpose of exposition in the third chapter of *Brave New World*, thereby sparing the reader from that major defect of most utopian novels—the tedious guided tour of utopian schools, hospitals, and factories. With his

use of montage and intertextuality, Huxley did for the novel what Eliot had done for modern poetry in *The Waste Land* 10 years earlier. Like Eliot, Huxley often uses multiple references to canonical works. In *Brave New World*, his 50 allusions to Shakespeare help develop theme. He also incorporates ideas of fashionable Freudians, such as Ernest Jones and his interpretation of *Hamlet* to deepen the sense of the Savage’s sexual repression. At opportune moments, he echoes key lines from Gray’s “Elegy” and “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton” to underscore the ignorance-is-bliss theme and key images that recall the utilitarian schoolroom in Dickens’s *Hard Times*. Nor does he hesitate to use bathos: the deliberate contrasting of high culture with popular culture. Excerpts from fictional advertising jingles and popular 1920s-era romances, such as Elinor Glyn’s *Three Weeks*, satirize the contemporary lowering of musical and literary standards.

One notes a gradually emerging social conscience in Huxley at the time of his writing *Brave New World*. In fact, his satiric description of the reified workers in a dystopian factory was based on his visit to a Lucas automotive parts factory in Birmingham the previous spring.

In *Brave New World*, the novel’s most sympathetic character, Helmholtz Watson, like Wordsworth on Westminster Bridge, finds the silence of the sleeping metropolis to be eloquent: the very absence of the numinous in the wholly materialistic state begins, paradoxically, to suggest a presence. Watson is one of the first in what becomes a steady string of protagonists in his future novels who advocate what Huxley called “the great central technique, which traces the art of obtaining freedom from the fundamental human disability of egotism ... repeatedly described by the mystics of all ages and countries.” His final utopian novel, *Island* (1962), is, in fact, Huxley’s final word on the subject of how to construct the good society. He died in Hollywood on November 22, 1963, the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

Brave New World

Here is where you can read the full text of [Brave New World](#).

Activities

Brave New World

Sir Thomas More coined the word “utopia” in his fictional work *Utopia*, first published in Latin in 1516. He created the word by combining the Greek prefixes “ou” and “eu” with the suffix “topos.” Define the two Greek prefixes and the Greek suffix, and then show how the concept of utopia is inherently playing with two different places.

Epigraph—What is an epigraph? Huxley uses the following quotation from Nicolas Berdiaeff, *Un nouveau moyen age* 1927, p. 262:

Les utopies apparaissent comme bien plus réalisable qu’on ne le croyait autrefois. Et nous nous trouvons actuellement devant une question bien autrement angoissante: Comment éviter leur réalisation définitive? Les utopies sont réalisables. La vie marche vers les utopies. Et peut-être un siècle nouveau commence-t-il, un siècle où

les intellectuels et la classe cultivée rêveront au moyens d'éviter les utopies et de retourner à une société non utopique, moins "parfaite" est plus libre.

[English translation: Utopias appear to be more realizable than we used to believe. And we now find ourselves facing a deeply troubling question: How to avoid their definitive realization? Life marches towards utopia. And maybe a new century will begin, a century where the intellectuals and cultivated classes will dream of ways to avoid utopias and to return to a non-utopian society, less perfect and more free.]

Chapter 1

1. Notice the two sentence fragments with which Huxley begins the novel. If a thirty-four-storey building is described as "squat," then what kind of irony is Huxley using here?
2. Look up the word "identity" in a good dictionary. What aspect of the word is central to the world state's philosophy?
3. Compare Huxley's use of colour imagery in this chapter with that of Dickens in the second chapter of *Hard Times*.
4. Do Alphas and Betas undergo Bokanovsky's technique?
5. Describe how the government of the brave new world resembles that of H.G. Wells's [A Modern Utopia \(1905\)](#) or that of [Men Like Gods \(1923\)](#).
6. Write a brief essay in which you speculate that Huxley borrowed ideas from Wells, especially Chapters 14, 15, and 20 from his dystopia [The Sleeper Awakes](#).

Chapter 2

1. What kind of **irony** does Huxley use when he gives the following line to the D.H.C.: "The greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time"?
2. What is the status of the English language in A.F. 632? French?
3. Compare the first two chapters of Dickens's [Hard Times](#) ("The One Thing Needful" and "Murdering the Innocents") with the first two chapters of *Brave New World*. How is Henry Foster like Bitzer? What values do they share? Which kind of education do both dystopias—i.e., the brave new world and Dickens's Coketown—prefer: particular or general education? Or, in other words, vocational or liberal education?

Chapter 3

1. What is the world's population in 632 A.F.?
2. *Brave New World*, like T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, uses montage technique as in film. This device is especially evident in Chapter 3, where settings and character shift with no transition devices being offered to the reader. Scenic cuts become faster as the chapter advances. In the first two and a half pages of Scene 1, in Chapter 3, we observe the D.H.C. and his students outside the Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, watching the children at play—first, Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy, then erotic play; followed by the introduction of the World Controller, Mond; then to indicate a shift of scene and character, comes a double space. Then we see Henry Foster snubbing Bernard Marx at the embryo store as Lenina enters. Scenes shift between the D.H.C. and Mond's

history lesson and the dialogue between Foster, the Assistant Predestinator. Try placing an M for Mond at the beginning of each of his scenes, L for Lenina's, as they counterpoint, and notice how gradually the interval between Mond's words and Lenina's gets reduced. Sometimes only one line intervenes until Mond or Lenina/Fanny take up their lines.

3. Give one example of Mond's being depicted as an ironic Christ figure—it occurs near the end of the chapter. How is Mond an ironic Christ figure?
4. How is Mond like one of H.G. Wells's samurai in his [A Modern Utopia](#)?
5. In a brief essay, compare Huxley and Eliot's use of juxtaposition of past versus present.
6. After reading Mond's history lesson in Chapter 3, give the chief reason for the creation of the brave new world.
7. The utopian society of the brave new world apparently minimizes the problems associated with old age through hormone treatments (Violent Passion Surrogates, gonadal hormones). Look up the scientists Serge Voronoff (1866–1951) and Eugen Steinach (1861–1944). Huxley refers throughout the novel to ductless glands, adrenals, pituitary glands, internal and external secretions, and gonads. He is almost certainly referring to the rejuvenation theories of Steinach and Voronoff. (Interestingly, late in his life, W.B. Yeats underwent such rejuvenation therapy and reported positive results.) By 1929, the Marx Brothers famously alluded to this rejuvenation fad in their song “Monkey Doodle-Do” in their film *The Cocoanuts*: “Let me take you by the hand / Over to the jungle band / If you're too old for dancing / Get yourself a monkey gland / And then let's go, my little dearie, there's the Darwin theory...”
8. You might consider writing an essay on Huxley's use of rejuvenation therapy in *BNW*.

Chapter 4

1. List the uniform colour for Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons.
2. Why is Community Singing encouraged in the brave new world?
3. Notice the special meaning for the word “Corporation.” List a few examples and then clarify what a Corporation is. What European state was known as a “corporate state” between the wars? Is the brave new world a “corporate state”?
4. Before her date with Bernard, Lenina rushes to meet Henry Foster, fearing her lateness will annoy Henry, who is a stickler for punctuality. His efficiency-expert attention to time introduces the satire on industrial rationalization as championed by [F.W. Taylor](#), a time-and-motion engineer, dubbed “the father of scientific management,” and whose books greatly influenced Ford. See first Then, look at the following article: [“Sophistication of Mass Production”](#).

Chapter 5

1. The chapter begins with several allusions to Thomas Gray's [“Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.”](#) Read the poem, especially the first 50 lines.
2. Make a list of words that Huxley borrows from Gray here. Write a brief essay on the thematic use Huxley makes of the contrast between Gray's poem and the novel.

Chapter 6

1. Contrast what Henry Foster expects from his relationship with Lenina with what Bernard Marx wants from her.
2. What is the main conflict in this chapter? Between which characters?
3. A key symbol is the electric fence separating “civilization from savagery”: Uphill and down, across the deserts of salt or sand, through forests, into the violet depth of canyons, over crag and peak and table-topped mesa, **the fence marched on and on, irresistibly the straight line, the geometrical symbol of triumphant human purpose.** And at its foot, here and there, a mosaic of white bones, a still unrotted carcass dark on the tawny ground marked the place where deer or steer, puma or porcupine or coyote, or the greedy turkey buzzards drawn down by the whiff of carrion and fulminated as though by a poetic justice, had come too close to the destroying wires. “They never learn,” said the green-uniformed pilot, pointing down at the skeletons on the ground below them. “And they never will learn,” he added and laughed, as though he had somehow scored a personal triumph over the electrocuted animals. This image needs to be examined carefully. Typically, the straight line symbolizes human reason, science. Notice that man has conquered nature, and that the animals are killed by the voltage in the man-made fence. Just before he was writing *Brave New World*, Huxley was highly critical of Le Corbusier, the famous French/Swiss architect. Look up [Le Corbusier on Wikipedia](#). In his foreword to *Urbanisme* (English translation, *The City of Tomorrow*) (1929), he said, **“A curved road is a donkey path; a straight road is a road for men.”** One thinks here of the myth of Pandora’s box and of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden for eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Pride is the common denominator in both myths. Look at the “Forays into Urbanism 1922–1929” section of the site mentioned above. Pay particular attention to the photo of Le Corbusier’s sketch of a city for three million people, with its 60-storey buildings, rooftop helipads, etc. Note also that Le Corbusier hoped that politically minded industrialists in France would lead the way with their efficient Taylorist and Fordist strategies adopted from American models to reorganize society. In this new industrialist spirit, Le Corbusier began a new journal called *L’Esprit Nouveau* that advocated the use of modern, industrial techniques and strategies to transform society into a more efficient environment with a higher standard of living on all socioeconomic levels. He forcefully argued that this transformation was necessary to avoid the spectre of revolution that would otherwise shake society. His dictum “Architecture or Revolution,” developed in his articles in this journal, became his rallying cry for the book *Vers une architecture* (“Towards an Architecture,” translated into English as *Towards a New Architecture*), which comprised selected articles from *L’Esprit Nouveau* between 1920 and 1923. Huxley had a long-standing aversion to Le Corbusier’s urban style, calling him “an enemy of privacy,” and *BNW* is an attack on his kind of futuristic city. Is Huxley warning against human pride here, our tendency to try to dominate nature, to improve upon it as Henry Foster is so eager to demonstrate?
4. You might consider writing an essay on Huxley’s critique of modernist architects such as Le Corbusier.

Chapter 7

1. The expression “Cleanliness is next to godliness” is not from the Bible. Who popularized the adage?
2. What is John’s mother Linda’s relationship to nature and technology?

3. Explain how Linda's allusion to the Chelsea Abortion Centre is an example of **bathos**. Note that Sir Christopher Wren's classically designed Chelsea Hospital has now become an abortion centre.
4. What key information concerning the D.H.C. is divulged in this chapter?

Chapter 8

1. How does young John react to the relationship between his mother and Popé, the man who gave John a tattered copy of Shakespeare's complete works?
2. John learns to read, but the only book he reads besides Linda's technical manuals is *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Immediately, the descriptions in *Hamlet* and other plays provide John with the negative vocabulary and another perspective with which to view Popé and Linda's sexual behaviour: "Nay, but to live / In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed, / Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love / Over the nasty sty." (*Hamlet*, 3.4.91–94).
3. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare depicts women as either **madonnas** (innocents like Ophelia before she falls out of Hamlet's favour) or else **whores** (Gertrude with Claudius or Ophelia after her rejection of Hamlet's love). John will soon begin to idealize Lenina, who is so unlike his aging mother. John had earlier loved the Indian maid Kiakimé, but at age 16, his heart was broken as she married another—a young, full-blooded Zuñi man, not an outsider like John. John was also an outsider to the rites and mysteries discussed in the kiva, so the essence of John's experience is rejection. He will be an outsider in both communities, because of his different race in the reserve, and because of his different values in the brave new world.
4. Notice Freud's articulation of the [whore–madonna theory](#).
5. Look up Ernest Jones, Freud's biographer. Then read this article titled "[The Sphinx of Modern Literature](#)", which explains how Jones interpreted Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in light of the Freudian Oedipus complex.

Chapter 9

1. Why do you think Mond allows John and Linda to come with Bernard and Lenina to "civilization"?
2. What is the attitude to romantic love in the brave new world?

Chapter 10

1. What is the significance of the perfectly synchronized clocks in all 4,000 rooms of the Centre? How does this image link to F.W. Taylor?
2. In what ways does the brave new world resemble a beehive or ant colony?

Chapter 11

1. What scene causes John to repeat Miranda's famous phrase "O, brave new world," and how is his meaning different from the first time he says this at the end of Chapter 8? In what later chapter does John utter these lines yet again? Clarify the irony with respect to John's three separate

quotations of Miranda's words.

2. Why is it more difficult, according to Miss Keate, to educate upper-caste, one-egg, one-adult students?

Chapter 12

1. What is the central paradox in the poem Helmholtz writes? In what way does it resemble William Wordsworth's sonnet "[Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802](#)"?
2. What does it have in common with T.S. Eliot's "[Preludes](#)"?
3. In a brief essay, analyze Helmholtz's 24-line poem, beginning "Yesterday's committee..."

Chapter 13

1. Discuss the significance of the promising Alpha-minus administrator's dying of trypanosomiasis. Try to relate it to one of the main hypnopaedic maxims of *BNW*.
2. What does John Savage mean when he says "some kinds of baseness are nobly undergone"?
3. In what way is Lenina atavistic?
4. When Lenina grabs John and kisses him, what does he experience and why?
5. Describe the change in the image patterns found in the poetic lines that John suddenly starts to quote from Shakespeare. Account for the sudden change in the kinds of images.

Chapter 14

1. What is the earliest entry in the Oxford English Dictionary for the word "television"?
2. Whose name does Linda call out when John visits her in the hospital?

Chapter 15

1. How does the historic *soma* and its use differ from the *soma* of *BNW*?

Chapter 16

1. "Chapter 16 shows Bernard Marx at his worst." Do you agree or disagree?
2. What was the Cyprus experiment?
3. In the discussion scene between Mond and John, it is hard not to think of another poem by Thomas Gray here, "[Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College](#)." In that poem, Gray contrasts the thoughtless days of youth before the pain of adulthood are known. "Regardless of their doom / The little victims play! / No sense have they of ills to come, / Nor care beyond today." (ll. 51–54). As Mond knows, and as John must learn, the brave new world eliminates all the ills that Gray attributes to adulthood: the Passions of Anger, Fear, Shame, pining Love, Jealousy, Envy, Care, Despair, Sorrow, Ambition, Death, Poverty, and slow consuming age. The inhabitants of Mond's stable, controlled society, unlike men, are not "condemned alike to groan." How can Mond's

position be partly summed up by the last stanza (lines 91–100)?

Chapter 17

Huxley was indebted to Dostoevsky's famous Grand Inquisitor chapter from *The Brothers Karamazov* in Chapters 16 and 17, with John resembling Dostoevsky's Christ figure, and Mond representing his [Grand Inquisitor](#).

The essence of the conflict between John and Mond is whether happiness (Mond's goal) is the chief goal in human society or whether it is some form of heightened consciousness/freedom for each person (John's goal). Dostoevsky used Satan's triple temptation of Christ in the wilderness as his starting point. [See Matthew: ch. 4]

1. In the context of the Grand Inquisitor, why do you think Mond encourages the Fordian religion? Why does the brave new world bother with religion at all?

Chapter 18

1. Do you consider Bernard Marx a static or a dynamic, changing character? That is, does he grow or change during the novel? Is he any different in his final appearance in Chapter 18?
2. Who is Darwin Bonaparte and who might be his modern equivalent?
3. In the last scene, what might the references to the compass points suggest?

Overview

- The 1980s film version of *Brave New World* (three hours). All rights reserved. This film is a reasonably good adaptation of the novel, if rather long. The script was written by Robert E. Thompson, who received an Oscar nomination for his scenario of the film *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/provinciaenglish/?p=235#oembed-1>

- [BBC Radio Brave New World documentary](#) (forty-five minutes). An outstanding discussion of numerous aspects of the novel with three world experts on 20th-century British literature. You must download the audio file to listen.
- [BBC Radio Modern Utopias podcast](#) (forty-five minutes).
- [Brave New World Wikipedia entry](#). An excellent overview of plot, character, and contexts.
- [Margaret Atwood's essay on Brave New World](#). This is substantially the same essay as her

introduction to *Brave New World* in the Vintage edition.

Disciplinary Readings

History Concentration

Ford, Henry. *My Life and Work*. 1922. Retrieved from <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/gutbook/lookup?num=7213>

Huxley, Aldous. "Sight Seeing in Alien Enclaves." *Nash's Pall Mall Magazine*. June. 1931.

This is a companion essay to *Brave New World* in which Huxley describes his visits to Alfred Mond's chemical factory in the north of England, Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), and to the Lucas Electrical Parts factory in Birmingham.

Meckier, Jerome. "[Aldous Huxley's Americanization of the 'Brave New World' Typescript.](http://somaweb.org/w/sub/Americanization.html)" *Twentieth Century Literature* vol. 48.4, 2002, pp. 427-460. <http://somaweb.org/w/sub/Americanization.html>

Primarily a historical approach to the novel.

[MIRANDA: a hypertext of Huxley's Brave New World](http://www.huxley.net/miranda/history.html) *Huxley.net*. Web. 2010, <http://www.huxley.net/miranda/history.html>

Links to political figures important to *BNW*.

René Fülöp-Miller. *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*. G. P. Putnam S Sons Ltd. London, 1927, <https://archive.org/details/mindandfaceofbol015704mbp>

Huxley reviewed this anti-communist book shortly before he wrote *BNW*. It is an important source for the satire on communism.

Sexton, James. "[Aldous Huxley's Bokanovsky](https://www.depauw.edu/sfs/notes/notes47/notes47.html)" *Science Fiction Studies* Science Fiction Studies, vol. 16, no. 1, 1989, <https://www.depauw.edu/sfs/notes/notes47/notes47.html>

A short essay on the source of the name "Bokanovsky." Click on "Notes and correspondence"

Sexton, James. "[Brave New World and the Rationalization of Industry \[PDF\]](https://opentextbc.ca/provincialenglish/wp-content/uploads/sites/297/2019/08/brave-new-world-and-the-rationalization-of-industry-3.pdf)." *English Studies in Canada* 12, 1986, pp. 424-436, <https://opentextbc.ca/provincialenglish/wp-content/uploads/sites/297/2019/08/brave-new-world-and-the-rationalization-of-industry-3.pdf>

This paper discusses Huxley's satire on communism and capitalism in the novel. It would be useful for research focusing on history and/or business.

Sexton, James. "['Brave New World,' The Feelies, and Elinor Glyn. \[PDF\]](http://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2014/09/RevdBrave-New-World-The-Feelies-and-Elinor-Glyn.pdf)" *English Languages Notes*, vol 35, No. 1, Sept 1997, pp. 35-38, <http://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2014/09/RevdBrave-New-World-The-Feelies-and-Elinor-Glyn.pdf>

Discusses the uses Huxley made of various sources, such as Shakespeare's *Othello* and Elinor Glyn's novel *It*.

Sexton, James. [Dickens' *Hard Times* and *Dystopia*](http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/hardtimes/sexton1.html). *The Victorian Web*. 8 June 2007. <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/hardtimes/sexton1.html>

This essay discusses Charles Dickens' "condition of England" novel *Hard Times* as a source for *Brave New World*.

Psychology Concentration

Newman, Bobby. "[Brave new world revisited revisited: Huxley's evolving view of behaviorism.\[PDF\]](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2733409/pdf/behavan00027-0062.pdf)" *The Behavior analyst* vol. 15, no. 1, 1992, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2733409/pdf/behavan00027-0062.pdf>

Valuable discussion of Huxley's changing attitude to behaviorism in *BNW* and later works. Psychology

Real, Willie. "[Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* as a Parody and Satire of Wells, Ford, Freud and Behaviourism \[PDF\]](https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2014/06/WReal-BNW-as-satire-Ford-freud-watson-wellsaha8Real2.pdf)" *AHA* 8, <https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2014/06/WReal-BNW-as-satire-Ford-freud-watson-wellsaha8Real2.pdf>

A wide-ranging discussion of Huxley's satire on the ideas of key figures in psychology.

Biology Concentration

Congdon, Brad. "["Community, Identity, Stability": The Scientific Society and the Future of Religion in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*](https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/esc/index.php/ESC/article/view/24890)." *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, vol. 37 no. 3, 2011, pp. 83-105. <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/esc/index.php/ESC/article/view/24890>

This paper is quite wide-ranging but will be particularly helpful for students wanting to concentrate their research on biological aspects of the novel. N.B. Type "congdon" in author box once at the ESC site.

Haldane, J. B. S. 1892-1964. [Daedalus, Or, Science and the Future: A Paper Read to the Heretics, Cambridge, on February 4th, 1923](https://archive.org/details/Daedalus-OrScienceAndTheFuture). K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, London, 1925, <https://archive.org/details/Daedalus-OrScienceAndTheFuture>

This paper by noted biologist Prof. Haldane, a friend of Huxley's, discusses concepts such as ectogenesis and others topics central to *Brave New World*.

Huxley, Julian. "[The Tissue-Culture King](http://www.revolutionsf.com/fiction/tissue/)." *Cornhill Magazine* vol. 60 (New Series), no. 358, April 1926, <http://www.revolutionsf.com/fiction/tissue/>

A science-fiction story by Huxley's brother, Sir Julian Huxley, written in 1927. This story discusses scientific ideas also found in *Brave New World*.

Anthropology Concentration

Espinosa, Aurelio. "[Los Hermanos Penitentes](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11635c.htm)." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 11. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911. 22 July, 2019, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11635c.htm>

Franklin, Benjamin. "[Remarks on the Savages of North America](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11635c.htm)." *The Bagatelles from Passy*. Ed.

Lopez, Claude A. New York: Eakins Press. 1967, http://mith.umd.edu/eada/html/display.php?docs=franklin_bagatelle3.xml

Hare, John Bruno. "[The Zuñi Religion](https://web.archive.org/web/20230317224630/https://sacred-texts.com/nam/zuni/)." *Internet Sacred Text Archive*, 2010, <https://web.archive.org/web/20230317224630/https://sacred-texts.com/nam/zuni/>

Huxley used some of the Smithsonian reports from Frank Cushing for background source material for *Brave New World*.

Hough, Walter. [Moki Snake Dance](https://archive.org/details/mokisnake00houg). Passenger department, The Santa Fe, 1901, <https://archive.org/details/mokisnake00houg>

N.B. "Moki" was an early synonym for "Hopi". Huxley read this pamphlet in 1930 before writing *Brave New World*. Despite his limited time visiting Aboriginal reservations in the U.S. states of Arizona and New Mexico, he was able to gain further background details for the "Savage Reservation" chapters in the novel by using this and other publications as source material. The Cushing, Hough and the Higdon essays are particularly useful for students wishing to do research with emphasis on Anthropology.

Leon, David Higdon. "[Huxley's Hopi Sources \[PDF\]](http://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2014/06/Hopi-Sources-with-fnsecond-version.pdf)", The 4th International Aldous Huxley Conference, 31 July – 2 August 2008, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. Paper presentation. <http://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2014/06/Hopi-Sources-with-fnsecond-version.pdf>

Meckier, Jerome. "[Brave New World and the Anthropologists-primitivism in A.F. 632.\[PDF\]](http://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2014/07/latestmeckier-bnw-anthroroughdraft.pdf)" *Alternative Futures* 1.1 1978, pp. 51-69. <http://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2014/07/latestmeckier-bnw-anthroroughdraft.pdf>

Philosophy Concentration

American Academy of Arts and Letters, "[Utopias, Positive and Negative. Aldous Huxley \[PDF\]](http://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?attachment_id=455)" *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Second Series*. New York, 1963. http://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?attachment_id=455

Dostoevsky, Fyodor Mikailovich, "[The Grand Inquisitor](https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8578)" *The Brothers Karamazov*, 1880, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8578>

This will be useful for students wishing to focus on Chapters 16 and 17 in *Brave New World*, particularly the philosophy of the Grand Inquisitor.

Fremantle, Anne. "[A Summary of 'The Grand Inquisitor' \[PDF\]](http://web.pdx.edu/~tothm/religion/Summary%20of%20The%20Grand%20Inquisitor.pdf)" *Introduction to 'The Grand Inquisitor'*, New York : Ungar, 1956, <http://web.pdx.edu/~tothm/religion/Summary%20of%20The%20Grand%20Inquisitor.pdf>

Lewicki, Grzegorz. "[Dostoyevsky Extended: Aldous Huxley On The Grand Inquisitor, Specialisation and The Future of Science](https://www.academia.edu/218384/Dostoyevsky_extended_Aldous_Huxley_on_Grand_Inquisitor_Specialisation_and_Future_of_Science)." 2008, https://www.academia.edu/218384/Dostoyevsky_extended_Aldous_Huxley_on_Grand_Inquisitor_Specialisation_and_Future_of_Science

Matter, William W. "[The Utopian Tradition and Aldous Huxley](http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/6/matter6art.htm)." *Science Fiction Studies* 1975, pp. 146-151. <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/6/matter6art.htm>

As the title suggests, this essay discusses *Brave New World* within a context of previous utopian works, including Plato's *Republic*. Click on "Notes and Correspondence" to download the article.

[MIRANDA: a hypertext of Huxley's Brave New World](#) *Huxley.net*. Web. 2010

Contains numerous sources for *Brave New World* in downloadable format.

Sexton, James. "[Utopias Positive and Negative Afterword \[PDF\]](#)" http://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?attachment_id=454

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Appendix E: The Turn of the Screw Casebook

General Resource

[“A Closer Look at the ‘Turn of the Screw’” the Lamar University Critical Edition.](http://www.turnofthescrew.com/) Weebly.com, <https://acloserlookattheturnofthescrew.weebly.com/>

Research Essay 1

Is the Governess inventing the ghosts or is the reader to see them as real? (Known as the Apparitionist versus Non-Apparitionist Controversy)

Suggested length (1,500-2,500 words).

Resources:

- Parkinson, Edward J. [“The Turn of the Screw” A History of Its Critical Interpretations 1898 – 1979](http://www.turnofthescrew.com/), 9 June 2010, <http://www.turnofthescrew.com/>

Chapter 3 (and 4) will make excellent starting points for this topic. Parkinson provides invaluable discussion of the Apparitionist versus Non-Apparitionist debate.
- Sexton, James. [“A Non-apparitionist reading of The Turn of Screw \[PDF\]”](#), 1976
- Siota, Raúl Valiño. [“The Role of the Governess in The Turn of the Screw, \[PDF\]”](#) *Odisea* n° 11: Revista de estudios ingleses 11, 2010, pp. 207-221
- Al-Qurani, Shonayfa Mohammed. [“Hallucinations or Realities: The Ghosts in Henry James’s The Turn of the Screw.”](#) *Studies in Literature and Language*, vol 6, no. 2, 2013, <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/j.sll.1923156320130602.3255>
- Heilman, Robert B. [“The Freudian Reading of the Turn of the Screw.”](#) *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 62, no. 7, 1947, pp. 433–445. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2909426.

[JSTOR. Your B.C. college library provides free access. If you do not have library access to JSTOR, a read-only version can be accessed online free of charge. See JSTOR “register and read.”]
- Waldock, A. J. A. [“Mr. Edmund Wilson and the Turn of the Screw.”](#) *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 62, no. 5, 1947, pp. 331–334. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2908817.
- Silver, John. [“A Note on the Freudian Reading of ‘The Turn of the Screw.’”](#) *American Literature*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1957, pp. 207–211. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2922108.
- Mao, Weiqiang. [“Give the Screw Another Turn—A Cultural Re-Reading of the Turn of the Screw.”](#) (2010). DOI:10.4304/jltr.1.1.44-49

Research Essay 2

Compare and contrast any two of the following film adaptations of *The Turn of the Screw*, stating your preference and why.

(Suggested length) 1,500 words

Resources:

- [“The Turn of the Screw \(1974\)”](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0072328/) *IMBD*. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0072328/>
- [“The Turn of the Screw \(1999\)”](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0209440/) *IMBD*. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0209440/>
- [“The Turn of the Screw \(TV Movie, 2009\)”](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1577883/) *IMBD*. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1577883/>
 - [“The Turn of the Screw \(2009\)”](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00pk76h) *BBC One*, 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00pk76h>
- *Starting Point*: After viewing your choice of the two videos, read Dennis Tredy’s detailed article (link below). It discusses Dan Curtis’s 1974 version in detail, see Part II of the essay. Unfortunately, he only gives a paragraph [45] to the Ben Bolt version and, of course, is silent about the 2009 version.
 - Tredy, Dennis., [Shadows of Shadows – Techniques of Ambiguity in Three Film Adaptations of “The Turn of the Screw”: J. Clayton’s The Innocents \(1961\), D. Curtis’s The Turn of the Screw \(1974\), and A. Aloy’s Presence of Mind \(1999\), The Reception of Henry James in Text and Image](http://erea.revues.org/550), 2005, <http://erea.revues.org/550>

Research Essay 3

After consulting two or more good dictionaries of literary terms, such as Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*; Cuddon, J.A. *Dictionary of Literary Terms*; or *A Handbook to Literature*, Holman, Harmon, discuss why *The Turn of the Screw* is a good example of Gothic fiction.

Suggested length: 1,500 words.

Resources:

- W.W. Norton and Company, [“The Romantic Period – The Gothic Overview”](https://wnorton.com/college/english/nael/romantic/topic_2/welcome.htm) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2019, https://wnorton.com/college/english/nael/romantic/topic_2/welcome.htm
- Duperray, Max. [“Déjà vu in The Turn of the Screw”](https://books.openedition.org/obp/826) *Henry James’s Europe* pp. 147-154, <https://books.openedition.org/obp/826>
- Kramer, Kyra., [“Raising Veils and other Bold Acts: The Heroine’s Agency in Female Gothic Novels \[PDF\]”](http://studiesingothicfiction.weebly.com/uploads/2/2/8/8/22885250/sgf_oct_10.pdf) *Studies in Gothic Fiction*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2011, Pages 23-36. http://studiesingothicfiction.weebly.com/uploads/2/2/8/8/22885250/sgf_oct_10.pdf
- [“The Gothic”](https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/videos/the-) *The British Library*, <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/videos/the->

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Appendix F: Exercises and Tutorials on Grammar and MLA/APA Documentation

You will find the following links useful when reviewing most of the grammar and documentation units in *Composition and Literature*:

1. [OWL Exercise](#)
A very helpful set of grammar and usage exercises with answers from Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL)
2. [MLA Style Center](#)
The Modern Language Association maintains this site. This is your starting point for all topics dealing with MLA documentation. We particularly recommend the [sample research essays](#)—one for a second-year African American studies course; the other, for a fourth-year English literature course.
3. [UBC APA Citation Style Guide](#)
A thorough guide to documentation using the American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines from the University of British Columbia Library.
4. [APA General Format](#)
Another helpful site from the Purdue University, (OWL) for help using APA. The OWL also maintains an online MLA guide.

About the Authors

James Sexton



James Sexton has doctorates in English from the University of Oregon (1980) and the University of Victoria (1997). He has been teaching a wide variety of English courses at universities and colleges in Canada, the U.S., and France since 1971. A former Adjunct Professor and SSHRC Research Fellow at the University of Victoria, his teaching specialties are modern literature, utopian-dystopian fiction, and Shakespeare. As a visiting lecturer at UBC, he continues his research and has been teaching extension courses there (*Ageless Pursuits*) and at Simon Fraser University (Liberal Arts 55+). He also teaches part-time online in the English Department at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario. He has published numerous books and articles on Aldous Huxley and his circle and a scholarly edition of two novellas by Graham Greene. He remains active in the preparation of online learning resources, including his earlier open textbook [English Literature: Victorians and Moderns](#) (2014), available at no charge in the [B.C. Open Textbook Collection](#).

Derek Soles



Derek Soles has a PhD in Language Arts Education and more than thirty years experience as a teacher and a professor of English and English education. He has taught at several colleges and universities in Canada and the U.S. He is the author of many academic articles and several textbooks, most recently *The Essentials of Academic Writing*. He is currently the Head of the English Department at Alexander College.

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Versioning History

This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.01. If the edits involve substantial updates, the version number increases to the next full number.

The files posted by this book always reflect the most recent version. If you find an error in this book, please fill out the [Report an Error](#) form.

Version	Date	Change	Details
1.00	August 29, 2019	Book published.	
1.01	July 15, 2020	Edits to “MLA Citation Method” in Appendix A.	Edits included adding hanging indents to all Works Cited examples, adding a link to the MLA Style Center website, and adding links to two examples of MLA essays with Works Cited pages.
1.02	November 5, 2021	Spelling corrections in William Dempsey Valgardson (1939–)	Changed multiple instances of the word “chat” to “that,” along with a few other spelling issues.
1.03	December 7, 2023	Fixing broken links.	Checked the entire book for broken links and replaced with alternative sources or archived versions of the page.