

A Level

English

Literature

Transition

Pack



A Level English Literature

SECTION A: TYPES OF LOVE

This section provides you with a selection of prose, drama and poetry extracts along the theme of Love Through the Ages – the topic for part of your A level study of English Literature. It will form the basis of your first few lessons in year 12 as well as the standardisation test you will sit within the first two weeks. When you start A level Literature, you will have a series of skills based lessons to help you approach practical criticisms as required in literary study, and you should find that these help consolidate your summer work.

Over the summer, you are expected to read this booklet **IN DETAIL** and make notes on **ALL** texts. Included overleaf is an example to help you do this and give you an idea of what is expected. Following your introductory lessons, you will sit a written test to assess your reading and analytical skills. The more you prepare this booklet, the better you will do on the test: there are no nasty surprises – we promise.

The booklet is split into different kinds of love, but you should not see these as rigid – an extract about friendship could be just as much concerned with sex or the loss of love. If you think about different kinds of love that exist it will help you to approach the extracts in this way.

One final thing: this booklet will not be replaced. You must look after it and bring it to your first lesson after the holidays. This is non-negotiable and you should not even think about trying to come up with an excuse for its non-completion: I will not be open to any discussion about it.

If you have any queries, please contact Miss Bent at zbent@wigstonmat.org, or see your English teacher as soon as term starts. Other than that – enjoy!

Woods indicate Darcy – he too is beautiful. Also shows how grand estate is – Darcy's wealth

Feels anxious about the house and about Darcy – shows she must have feelings for him

Shows Elizabeth is actively looking forward to seeing Pemberley – this is something she wants

Nervous about seeing house? Nervous about Darcy?

Elizabeth, as they drove along, **watched for the first appearance of Pemberley Woods with some perturbation**; and when at length they turned in at the lodge, her **spirits were in a high flutter**.

The park was very large, and contained great variety of ground. They entered it in one of its lowest points, and drove for some time through a **beautiful wood, stretching over a wide extent**.

Mind is overtaken by thoughts of Darcy

Likes what she sees – outstanding house – shows Darcy is outstanding

Elizabeth's mind was **too full** for conversation, but she saw and **admired every remarkable spot** and point of view. They gradually ascended for half a mile, and then found themselves at the top of a **considerable eminence**, where the wood ceased, and **the eye was instantly caught by**

Pemberley, like its owner is beautiful and engaging regardless of who you are

Pemberley House, situated on the opposite side of a valley, into which the road, with some abruptness, wound. It was a **large, handsome**, stone building, **standing well** on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills; -- and in front, a stream of some **natural importance was**

Metaphor for Darcy – He is NATURAL and RELAXED. Not what we've seen – is he a changed man?

swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were **neither formal, nor falsely adorned**. Elizabeth was delighted. **She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste**. They were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment **she felt that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!**

Shows how we are to view Darcy – if his house is like this (natural, beautiful, elegant) then so is he as he hasn't

Makes us think she regret refusal – may change her mind

They descended the hill, crossed the bridge, and drove to the door; and, **while examining the nearer aspect of the house, all her apprehensions of meeting its owner returned**. She dreaded lest

the chambermaid had been mistaken. On applying to see the place, they were admitted into the hall; as they waited for the housekeeper, had leisure to wonder at her being where she was.

Her civility shows the kind of person Darcy gets on with – shows he must also be like her

He employs respectable people = he is respectable

The housekeeper came; a **respectable-looking, elderly woman**, much less fine, and **more civil, than she had any notion of finding her**. They followed her into the dining-parlour. It was a large, well-proportioned room, handsomely fitted up. Elizabeth, after slightly surveying it, went to a **window to enjoy** its prospect. The hill, crowned with wood, from which they had descended, receiving

Nervous at meeting him – concerned he thinks she's spying, but if she didn't care about him, would she care what he thought?

increased abruptness from the distance, was a beautiful object. **Every disposition of the ground was good**; and she looked on the whole scene -- the river, the trees scattered on its banks, and the winding of the valley, as far as she could trace it -- with **delight**. As they passed into other rooms, these objects were taking different positions; but from **every window there were beauties to be seen**. **The rooms were lofty and handsome, and their furniture suitable to the fortune of their proprietor**; but Elizabeth saw, with **admiration** of his taste, that it was neither gaudy nor uselessly

The place, like its owner is flawless – EVERYthing is perfect

Lizzie is KEEN on the place – everything is good, like Darcy

fine; with **less of splendour, and more real elegance**, than the furniture of Rosings.

Like Darcy, he is of high standing (LOFTY) but this is appropriate to his standing – he is a genuine gentleman and behaves as such – indicates Darcy may have been right with his reservations of her?

GREEN indicates really key sentences whilst **YELLOW** shows relevant but more subtle meaning.

Nothing is fake or forced – splendour (falseness) is replaced by REAL beauty and superiority

Romantic Love



Much Ado About Nothing – William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

The play examines the complex relationships within court. Returning from war, Claudio falls in love with the beautiful Hero. Here he explains to his close friend Benedick his love before approaching his commanding officer Don Pedro to request his help in wooing her.

Extract a) – Act 1, Scene I

*Exeunt all except **BENEDICK** and **CLAUDIO***

CLAUDIO: Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

BENEDICK: I noted her not; but I looked on her.

CLAUDIO: Is she not a modest young lady?

BENEDICK: Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

CLAUDIO: No; I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

BENEDICK: Why, i' faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise and too Little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

CLAUDIO: Thou thinkest I am in sport: I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her.

BENEDICK: Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

CLAUDIO: Can the world buy such a jewel?

BENEDICK: Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the Flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder and Vulcan a rare carpenter? Come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song?

CLAUDIO: In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

BENEDICK: I can see yet without spectacles and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much

in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

CLAUDIO: I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

BENEDICK: Is't come to this? In faith, hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion? Shall I never see a bachelor of three-score again? Go to, i' faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away Sundays.

Extract b) – Act 1, Scene I

CLAUDIO: My liege, your highness now may do me good.

DON PEDRO: My love is thine to teach: teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

CLAUDIO: Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

DON PEDRO: No child but Hero; she's his only heir.
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

CLAUDIO: O, my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love:
But now I am return'd and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I liked her ere I went to wars.

DON PEDRO: Thou wilt be like a lover presently
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I will break with her and with her father,
And thou shalt have her. Was't not to this end
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?

CLAUDIO: How sweetly you do minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salved it with a longer treatise.

DON PEDRO: What need the bridge much broader than the flood?

The fairest grant is the necessity.
Look, what will serve is fit: 'tis once, thou lovest,
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night:
I will assume thy part in some disguise
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:
Then after to her father will I break;
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practise let us put it presently.

***Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* – Patrick Süskind (1949-)**

Set in 18th century France, *Perfume* tells the story of Grenouille and his sense of smell. Obsessed with scent, Grenouille's exceptional talent leads him to become a master perfumer, but this is not enough and his quest for the perfect odour leads him to violent and vicious acts. In these extracts, Süskind describes his attempts to capture the perfection of his love interests.

Extract a) – Grenouille smells his first victim

Here he stopped, gathering his forces, and smelled. He had it. He had hold of it tight. The odour came rolling down the rue de Seine like a ribbon, unmistakably clear, and yet as before, very delicate and very fine. Grenouille felt his heart pounding, and he knew that it was not the exertion of running that had set it pounding, but rather his excited helplessness in the presence of this scent. He tried to recall something comparable, but had to discard all comparisons. This scent had freshness, but not the freshness of limes or pomegranates, nor the freshness of myrrh or cinnamon bark or curly mint or birch or camphor or pine needles, nor that of a May rain or a frosty wind or a well of water... and at the same time it had warmth, but not as bergamot, cypress or musk has, or jasmine or narcissi, not as rosewood has or iris... this scent was a blend of both, evanescence and substance, not a blend, but a unity, although slight and frail as well, and yet solid and sustaining, like a piece of thin, shimmering silk... and yet again not like silk, but like pastry soaked in honey-sweet milk – and try as he would he couldn't fit those two together: milk and silk! This scent was inconceivable, indescribable, could not be categorised in any way – it really ought not to exist at all. And yet there it was as plain and splendid as day. Grenouille followed it, his fearful heart pounding, for he suspected that it was not he who followed the scent, but the scent that had captured him and was drawing him irresistibly to it.

He walked up the rue de Seine. No one was on the street. The houses stood empty and still. The people were down by the river watching the fireworks. No hectic odour of humans disturbed him, no biting stench of gunpowder. The street smelled of its usual smells: water, faeces, rats and vegetable matter. But above it hovered the ribbon, delicate and clear,

leading Grenouille on. After a few steps, what little light the night afforded was swallowed on in darkness. He did not need to see. The scent led him firmly.

Fifty yards further on, he turned off to the right up the rue de Marais, a narrow alley hardly a span wide and darker still – if that was possible. Strangely enough, the scent was not much stronger. It was only purer, and in its purity, it took on an even greater power of attraction. Grenouille walked with no will of his own. At one point, the scent pulled him strongly to the right, straight through what seemed to be a wall. A low entryway opened up, leading into a back courtyard. Grenouille moved along the pass like a somnambulist, moved across the courtyard, turned a corner, entered a second, smaller courtyard, and here finally there was light – a space of only a few square feet. A wooden roof hung out from the wall. Beneath it, a candle stuck atop it. A girl was sitting at the table cleaning yellow plums. With her left hand, she took the fruit from the basket, stemmed and pitted it with a knife, and dropped it into a bucket. She might have been thirteen, fourteen years old. Grenouille stood still. He recognised at once the source of the scent he had followed from half a mile away on the other bank of the river: not this squalid courtyard, not the plums. The source was the girl.

For a moment he was so confused that he actually thought he had never in all his life seen anything so beautiful as this girl – although he only caught her from behind in silhouette against the candlelight. He meant, of course, he had never smelled anything so beautiful. But since he knew the smell of humans, knew it thousandfold, men, women, children, he could not conceive of how such an exquisite scent could be emitted by a human being, normally human odour was nothing special, or it was ghastly. Children smelled insipid, men ruinous, all sour sweat and cheese, women smelled of rancid fat and rotting fish. Totally uninteresting, repulsive – that was how humans smelled... and so it happened that for the first time in his life, Grenouille did not trust his nose and had to call on his eyes for assistance if he were to believe what he smelled. This confusion of senses did not last long at all. Actually he required only a moment to convince himself optically – then to abandon himself all the more ruthlessly to olfactory perception. And now he *smelled* that this was a human being, smelled the sweat of her armpits, the oil in her hair, the fishy odour of her genitals, and smelled it all with the greatest pleasure. Her sweat smelled as fresh as the sea breeze, the tallow of her hair as sweet as nut oil, her genitals were as fragrant as the bouquet of water lilies, her skin as apricot blossoms... and the harmony of all these components yielded a perfume so rich, so balanced, so magical, that every perfume that Grenouille had smelled until now, every edifice of odours that he had so playfully created within himself, seemed at once to be utterly meaningless. A hundred thousand odours seemed worthless in the presence of this scent. This one scent was the higher principle, the pattern by which the others must be ordered. It was pure beauty.

Grenouille knew for certain that unless he possessed this scent, his life would have no meaning. He had to understand its smallest detail, to follow it to its last delicate tendril; the mere memory, however complex, was not enough. He wanted to press, to imprint his apotheosis on his black, muddled soul, meticulously to explore it and from this point on, to think, to live, to small only according to the innermost structures of its magical formula.

He slowly approached the girl, closer and closer, stepped under the overhanging roof, and halted one step behind her. She did not hear him.

She had red hair and wore a grey, sleeveless dress. Her arms were very white and her hands yellow with the juice of the halved plums. Grenouille stood bent over her and sucked in the undiluted fragrance of her as it rose from her nape, her hair, from the neckline of her dress. He let it flow into him like a gentle breeze. He had never felt so wonderful. But the girl felt the air turn cool.

She did not see Grenouille. But she was uneasy, sensed a strange chill, the kind one feels when suddenly overcome with some long discarded fear. She felt as if a cold draught had risen up behind her, as if someone had opened a door leading to a vast, cold cellar. And she laid the paring knife aside, pulled her arms to her chest, and turned around.

She was so frozen with terror at the sight of him that he had plenty of time to put his hands to her throat. She did not attempt to cry out, did not budge, did not make the least motion to defend herself. He, in turn, did not look at her, did not see her delicate, freckled face, her red lips, her large sparkling green eyes, keeping his eyes closed tight as he strangled her, for he had only one concern – not to lose the least trace of her scent.

When he was dead he laid her on the ground among the plum pits, tore off her dress, and the stream of scent became a flood that inundated him with its fragrance. He thrust his face to her skin and swept his flared nostrils across her, from belly to breast, to neck, over her face and hair, and back to her belly, down to her genitals, to her thighs and white legs. He smelled her over from head to toe, he gathered up the last fragments of her scent under her chin, in her navel, and in the wrinkles inside her elbow,

And after he had smelled the last faded scent of her, he crouched beside her for a while, collecting himself, for he was brimful with her. He did not want to spill a drop of her scent. First he must seal up his innermost compartments. Then he stood up and blew out the candle.

Extract b) – Having learnt to distil human scent, Grenouille's kills his last victim

Grenouille set to work with professional circumspection. He opened his knapsack, took out the linen, pomade and spatula, spread the cloth over the blanket on which he had lain, and began to brush on the fatty paste. This job took time, for it was important that the oil be applied in thinner or thicker layers depending on what part of the body would end up lying on a particular patch of the cloth. The mouth and armpits, breasts, genitals and feet gave off greater amounts of scent than, for instance shins, back and elbows; the palms more than the backs of the hands; eyebrows more than eyelids, etc. – and therefore needed to be provided with a heavier dose of oil. Grenouille was creating a model, as it were, transferring on to the linen a scent diagram of the body to be treated, and this part of the job was actually the one that satisfied him most, for it was a matter of an artistic technique that incorporated equally one's knowledge, imagination and manual dexterity, while at the same time it anticipated on an ideal plane the enjoyment awaiting one from the final results.

Once he had applied the whole potful of pomade, he dabbed about here and there, removing a bit of oil from the cloth here, adding another there, retouching, checking the greasy landscape he had modelled one last time – with his nose, by the way, not with his eyes, for the whole business was carried on in total darkness, which was perhaps yet another reason for Grenouille's equably cheerful mood. There was nothing to distract him on this night of new moon. The world was nothing but odour and the soft sound of surf from the sea. He was in his element. Then he folded the cloth together like a tapestry, so that the oiled surfaces lay against one another. This was a painful procedure for him, because he knew well that despite the utmost caution certain parts of the sculptured contours would be flattened or shifted. But there was no other way to transport the cloth. After he had folded it up small enough to be carried under his arm without too much difficulty, he tucked spatula, scissors and the little olive-wood club in his pockets and crept out into the night.

The sky was clouded over. There were no lights burning in the inn. The only glimmer on this pitch-dark night was the winking of the lighthouse at the fort on the Île Sainte-Marguerite, over a mile away to the east, a tiny bright needlepoint in a raven-black cloth. A light, fishy wind was blowing from the bay. The dogs were asleep.

Grenouille walked to the back dormer of the threshing shed where a ladder stood propped. He picked the ladder up and, balancing it vertically, three rungs clamped under his free right arm, the rest of it pressed against his right shoulder, he moved across the courtyard until he was under her window. The window stood ajar. As he climbed the ladder, as easily as a set of stairs, he congratulated himself on the circumstances that made it possible for him to harvest the girl's scent here in La Napoule. In Grasse, where the house had barred windows and was tightly guarded, all this would have been much more difficult. She was even sleeping by herself here. He would not have to bother with eliminating the maid.

He pushed up the casement, slipped into the room and laid down his cloth. Then he turned to the bed. The dominant scent came from her hair, for she was lying on her stomach with her head pressed into the pillow and framed by the crook of her arm – presenting the back of her head in an almost ideal position for the blow by the club.

The sound of the blow was a dull, grinding thud. He hated it solely because it was a sound, a sound in the midst of his otherwise soundless procedure. He could bear that gruesome sound only by clenching his teeth, and, after it was all over, standing off to one side stiff and implacable, as if he feared the sound would return from somewhere as a resounding echo. But it did not return, instead stillness returned to the room, an increased stillness in fact, for now even the shuffle of the girl's breathing had ceased. And at once Grenouille's tenseness dissolved (one might have interpreted it more as a posture of reverence or some sort of crabbed moment of silence) and his body fell back to a pliable ease.

He tucked the club away and from here on was all bustle and business. First he unfolded the impregnating cloth, spread it loosely on its back over the table and chairs, taking care that the greased side not be touched. Then he pulled back the bedclothes. The glorious scent of the girl, welling up so suddenly warm and massive, did not stir him. He knew that sense, of course, and would savour it, savour it to intoxication, later on, once he truly possessed it.

But now the main thing was to capture as much of it as possible, let as little of it as possible evaporate; for now the watch-words were concentration and haste.

With a few quick snips of his scissors, he cut open her nightgown, pulled it off, grabbed the oiled linen, and tossed it over her naked body. Then he lifted her up, tugged the overhanging cloth under her, rolled her up in it as a baker rolls strudel, tucking in the corners, enveloping her from toes up to brow. Only her hair still stuck out from the mummy clothes. He cut it off close to the scalp and packed it inside her nightgown, which he then tied up in to a bundle. Finally he took a piece of cloth still dangling free and flapped it over the shaved skull, smoothed down the over-lapping ends, gently pressed it tight with a finger. He examined the whole package. Not a slit, not a hole, not one bulging pleat was left through which the girl's scent could have escaped. She was perfectly packed. There was nothing to do but wait, for six hours, until the grey of dawn.

He took a little armchair on which her clothes lay, dragged it to the bed, and sat down. The gentle breath of her scent still clung to the ample black cloak, blending with the odour of aniseed biscuits she had put in her pocket as a snack for the journey. He put his feet up on the end of the bed, near her feet, covered himself with her dress, and ate aniseed biscuits. He was tired. But he did not want to fall asleep, because it was improper to sleep on the job, even of your job was merely to wait. He recalled nights he had spent distilling in Baldini's workshop: the soot-blackened alembic, the flickering fire, the soft spitting sound the distillate made as it dripped from the cooling tube into the Florentine flask. From time to time you had to tend the fire, pour in more distilling water, change Florentine flasks, replace the exhausted stuff you were distilling. And yet it had always seemed to him that you stayed awake not so that you could take care of these occasional tasks, but because being awake had its own unique purpose. Even here in this bedchamber, where the process of enfleurage was proceeding all on its own, where in fact premature checking, turning or poking the fragrant package could only cause trouble – even here, it seemed to Grenouille, his waking presence was important. Sleep would have endangered the spirit of success.

It was not especially difficult for him to stay awake, despite his weariness. He loved *this* waiting. He had also loved the twenty-four other girls, for it was not a dull waiting-till-it's-over, not even a yearning, expectant waiting, but an attendant, purposeful, in a certain sense active waiting. Something was happening while you waited, the most essential thing was happening. And even if he himself was doing nothing, it was happening through him nevertheless. He had done his best. He had employed all his artistic skill. He had made not one single mistake. His performance had been unique. It would be crowned with success... he need only wait a few more hours. It filled him with profound satisfaction, this waiting. He had never felt so fine in all his life, so peaceful, so steady, so whole and at one with himself – not even back inside the mountain – as during these hours when a craftsman took his rest sitting in the dark of night beside his victim, waiting and watching. They were the only moments when something like cheerful thoughts formed inside his gloomy brain.

Love and Loss



The Keepsake – Fleur Adcock (1934-)

'To Fleur from Pete, on loan perpetual.'

It's written on the flyleaf of the book
I wouldn't let you give away outright:
'Just make it permanent loan' I said - a joke
between librarians, professional
jargon. It seemed quite witty, on a night

when most things passed for wit. We were all hoarse
by then, from laughing at the bits you'd read
aloud - the heaving bosoms, blushing sighs,
demoniac lips. "Listen to this!" you said:
'thus rendered bold by frequent intercourse
I dared to take her hand.' We wiped our eyes.
'Colonel, what mean these stains upon your dress?' "

And then there was Lord Ravenstone
faced with Augusta's dutiful rejection
in anguished prose; or for a change of tone,
a touch of Gothic: Madame la Comtesse
's walled-up lover. An inspired collection.

The Keepsake, 1835: the standard
drawing-room annual, useful as a means
for luring ladies into chaste flirtation
in early 19th century courtship scenes.
I'd never seen a copy; often wondered.
Well, here it was - a pretty compilation

of tales and verses: stanzas by Lord Blank
and Countess this and Mrs That, demure
engravings, all white shoulders, corkscrew hair
and swelling bosoms; stories full of pure
sentiments, in which gentlemen of rank
urged suits upon the noble-minded fair.

You passed the volume round, and poured more wine.
Outside your cottage lightning flashed again:
a Grasmere storm, theatrically right
for stories of romance and terror. Then
somehow, quite suddenly, the book was mine.
The date in its five weeks ago tonight.

'On loan perpetual'. If that implied
some dark finality, some hint of 'nox
perpetua', something desolate and bleak,
we didn't see it then, among the jokes.
Yesterday, walking on the fells, you died.
I'm left with this, a trifling, quaint antique.

You'll not reclaim it now; it's mine to keep:
a keepsake, nothing more. You've changed the 'loan
perpetual' to a bequest by dying.
Augusta, Lady Blanche, Lord Ravenstone -
I've read the lot, trying to get to sleep.

The jokes have all gone flat. I can't stop crying.

***Shadow lands* – William Nicholson (1948-)**

Based on the life of C.S. Lewis and his wife Joy, *Shadowlands* explores the effects of grief, not least in the way in which the loss of his wife to cancer after their short marriage, affects Lewis' relationship with God. Lewis finds himself with her son Douglas whilst struggling to cope with his own emotional turmoil. This scene is from the end of the play.

LEWIS: I love you Joy. I love you so much. You've made me so happy. I didn't know I could be so happy, you're the truest person I've ever known. Sweet Jesus, be with my beloved wife, Joy. Forgive me if I love her too much. Have mercy on us both.

JOY: [*Her eyes open. She speaks very faintly.*] Get some sleep, Jack.

LEWIS: How's the pain?

JOY: Not too good. Only shadows.

LEWIS: Only shadows.

Her eyes close again. LEWIS rises, stoops and kisses her, and walks softly out of the pool of light. The light on JOY fades to black as the screen comes in.

HARRINGTON: Naturally I wouldn't say this to Jack, but better sooner than later. Better quick than slow. After all, there was no question about it. The writing was on the wall.

GREGG: Is he taking it very hard?

HARRINGTON: He's a remarkable man, Jack. Faith solid as a rock

RILEY: Harry, those few well-chosen words at the church – did I hear you correctly? IT seemed to me that you said something like 'All who knew her loved her.'

HARRINGTON: Something like that.

RILEY: Not quite God's own truth, was it?

HARRINGTON: Good grief Christopher, what was I supposed to say? That nobody could stand her?

RILEY: Jack loved her. That's what's true and that's what matters. But I didn't and you didn't.

HARRINGTON: She is dead.

RILEY: Death does not improve the character.

*The screen goes up and they join **WARNIE** and **GREGG**, who are seated at the college high table.*

GREGG: You don't love anyone, Christopher, as far as I can see.

RILEY: That may well be true, but Harry still shouldn't tell whoppers.

HARRINGTON: Jack was standing six feet away.

RILEY: Jack wouldn't have minded. He's changed. She did that. She was a remarkable woman. But I'm damned if I'm going to start liking her just because she's dead.

HARRINGTON: Did you like her Warnie?

WARNIE: Not at first. But oh, yes.

LEWIS *enters. An awkward silence falls as he comes to his place at table.*

LEWIS: I wasn't going to come. Then I thought I would. [*He sits. He sounds perfectly calm.*]

HARRINGTON: Life must go on.

LEWIS: I don't know that it must. But it certainly does.

GREGG: I'm sorry I wasn't able to beat the church.

LEWIS: Not important Alan.

HARRINGTON: My little address, Jack. Was it..?

LEWIS: Please forgive me, Harry. I haven't the slightest idea what you said in church. I didn't hear a word.

HARRINGTON: Fine, fine. Perfectly understandable.

RILEY: Are you alright, Jack?

LEWIS: No.

HARRINGTON: Thank God for your faith Jack. Where would you be without that?

LEWIS: I'd be here drinking my port.

HARRINGTON: What I mean to say, Jack, is that it's only faith that makes any sense of times like this.

LEWIS: [*Puts down his glass.*] No, I'm sorry, Harry, but it won't do. This is a mess, and that's all there is to it.

HARRINGTON: A mess?

LEWIS: What sense do you make of it? You tell me.

HARRINGTON: But Jack – we have to have faith that God knows –

LEWIS: God knows. Yes, God knows. I don't doubt that. God knows. But does God care? Did he care about Joy?

HARRINGTON: Why are you talking like this, Jack? We can't see what's best for us. You know that. We're not the Creator.

LEWIS: No. We're the creatures. We're the rats in the cosmic laboratory. I've no doubt the great experiment is for our own good, eventually, but that still makes God the vivisectionist.

HARRINGTON: This is your grief talking.

LEWIS: What was talking before? My complacency?

HARRINGTON: Please, Jack. Please.

LEWIS: I'm sorry Harry. You're a good man. I don't mean to distress you. But the fact is, I've come up against a bit of an experience recently. Experience is a brutal teacher, but you learn fast. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have come this evening. I'm not fit company. [*He rises.*] Forgive me. [*He leaves the table.*]

WARNIE: Excuse me.

WARNIE follows **LEWIS** to where he stands, frowning, by himself. The screen falls.

LEWIS: Sorry about that, Warnie. Not necessary.

WARNIE: Everybody understands Jack.

LEWIS: I can't see her anymore. I can't remember her face. What is happening to me?

WARNIE: I expect it's shock.

LEWIS: I'm so terribly afraid. Of never seeing her again. Of thinking that suffering is just suffering after all. No cause. No purpose. No pattern. No sense. Just pain, in a world of pain.

WARNIE: I don't know what to tell you, Jack.

LEWIS: Nothing. There's nothing to say.

DOUGLAS enters on the far side of the stage. He is profoundly hurt by his mother's death but is refusing to show it.

WARNIE: Jack.

LEWIS: Yes.

WARNIE: About Douglas.

LEWIS: Yes.

WARNIE: Your grief is your business. Maybe you feel life is a mess. Maybe it is. But he's only a child.

LEWIS: What am I supposed to do about it?

WARNIE: Talk to him.

LEWIS: I don't know what to say to him.

WARNIE: Just talk to him. [**WARNIE** exits.]

LEWIS: [*Walks across the stage to **DOUGLAS**. He speaks to the boy in a matter-of-fact way, as if they are equals.*] When I was your age, my mother dies. That was cancer too. I thought that if I prayed for her to get better, then she wouldn't die. But she did.

DOUGLAS: It doesn't work.

LEWIS: No, it doesn't work.

DOUGLAS: I don't care.

LEWIS: I do. When I'm alone, I star crying. Do you cry?

DOUGLAS: No.

LEWIS: I didn't when I was your age. [*A brief pause*] I loved your mother very much.

DOUGLAS: That's okay.

LEWIS: I loved her too much. She knew that. She said to me, 'Is it worth it?' She knew how it would be later. [*Pause*] It doesn't seem fair, does it? If you want the love, you have to have the pain.

DOUGLAS: I don't see why she had to get sick.

LEWIS: Nor I. [*Pause*] You can't hold on to things. You have to let them go/.

DOUGLAS: Jack?

LEWIS: Yes.

DOUGLAS: Do you believe in heaven?

LEWIS: Yes.

DOUGLAS: I don't believe in heaven.

LEWIS: That's okay.

DOUGLAS: I sure would like to see her again.

LEWIS: Me too.

DOUGLAS *can't take any more. He reaches out for comfort, pressing himself against LEWIS. LEWIS wraps his arms around the boy, and at last his own tears break through, in heart-breaking sobs., unloosing the grief of a lifetime. He is emotion releases the tears that have been waiting in the boy.*

As they fall quiet, DOUGLAS detaches himself and exits. LEWIS turns to face the audience and begins to speak quietly. His words are a version of the talk he has given earlier, now transformed by his own suffering.

LEWIS: We are like blocks of stone, out of which the sculptor carves the forms of men. The blows of his chisel, which hurt us so much, are what make us perfect.
No shadows here. Only darkness, and silence, and the pain that cries like a child. It ends, like all affairs of the heart, with exhaustion. Only so much pain is possible.
Then, rest.

So it comes about that, when I am quiet, when I am quiet, she returns to me. There she is, in my mind, in my memory, coming towards me, and I love her again as I did before., even though I know I will lose her again, and be hurt again. So you can say if you like that Jack Lewis has no answer to the question after all, except this: I have been given the choice twice in my life. The boy chose safety. The man chooses suffering.

He now speaks to her memory.

I went to my wardrobe this morning. I was looking for my old brown jacket, the one I used to wear before – I'd forgotten that you'd carried out one of your purges there. Just before we went to Greece., I think it was. I find I can live with the pain, after all. The pain, now, is part of the happiness, then. That's the deal.
Only shadows, Joy.

Letter to my Father – Fergal Keane (1961-)

Behind the bedroom door you are sleeping. I can hear your snores rattling down the stairs to our ruined sitting-room. Here among the broken chairs, the overturned Christmas tree, we are preparing to leave you. We are breaking away from you, Da.

Last night you crashed through the silence, dead drunk and spinning in your own wild orbit into another year of dreams. This would be the year of the big break – of Hollywood, you said. Oh, my actor father, time was, time was we swallowed those lines, but no longer.

Before leaving I look into the bedroom to where your hand droops out from under the covers, below it the small empty Powers' bottle and I say goodbye. And at seven o'clock on New Year's Day we push the old Ford Anglia down the driveway, my mother, brother and I.

We push because the engine might wake you, and none of us can face a farewell scene.

I don't know what the neighbours think, if anything, when they see a woman and two small boys stealing away in the grey morning, but I don't care, we're heading south with everything we own.

The day I turned 12, which was four days later, you called to say happy birthday. You were, as I remember, halfway sober, but you didn't say much else, except to ask for my mother who would not come to the phone.

In the background I could hear glasses clinking, voices raised, and you said: "Tell her I love her", and then the change ran out, and I began to understand what made love the saddest word in any language.

Christmas that year you had access to the children. We met in Cork station. I remember your new suit, your embarrassed embrace, the money you pressed into our hands, and the smell of whiskey. We found a taxi and the driver stared at us, throwing his eyes to heaven and shaking his head.

What I see now are many such faces: the waitress at the Old Bridge Café where drinks were spilled; the couple who asked for an autograph and watched your shaking hand struggle to write, before they beat a mortified retreat. And on through pubs and bookmakers' shops to one last café where Elvis was crooning 'Love Me Tender, Love Me Sweet' on an ancient radio.

By now, nobody was able to speak. There was a taxi ride home, we children in the back, you in the front, and what lives with me still, always, is the moment of leave-taking, Christmas 1972. Because, as the car drove you away from our lives, I saw through the steamed up windows that your eyes had become waterfalls

I was too young to understand what you knew – that we were lost to you, broken away. Down the years we struggled to find one another but I was growing up and away, and you were drifting closer to darkness. And at the end I gave up writing, gave up calling. I gave up. Until one night my cousin called to say you were gone. It was a few days into the New Year, and your heart simply gave up in a small room in the town in north Kerry where you were born. I remember that you sent me the collected stories of Raymond Carver for Christmas. I had sent you nothing, not even a card. Now I would send you a thousand, but I have no address.

Friendship



Waiting for Godot – Samuel Beckett (1906-1989)

Famously described as the play “where nothing happens... twice”, it is difficult to say what *Waiting for Godot* is actually about. Two friends are in the forest, waiting, and although they bicker, there is a strange interdependence between the two, as in the follow extract.

Estragon's boots front center, heels together, toes splayed. Lucky's hat at same place. The tree has four or five leaves. Enter Vladimir agitatedly. He halts and looks long at the tree, then suddenly begins to move feverishly about the stage. He halts before the boots, picks one up, examines it, sniffs it, manifests disgust, puts it back carefully. Comes and goes. Halts extreme right and gazes into distance off, shading his eyes with his hand. Comes and goes. Halts extreme left, as before. Comes and goes. Halts suddenly and begins to sing loudly.

VLADIMIR: A dog came in–

(Having begun too high he stops, clears his throat, resumes:)

A dog came in the kitchen
And stole a crust of bread.
Then cook up with a ladle
And beat him till he was dead.
Then all the dogs came running
And dug the dog a tomb–

He stops, broods, resumes:

Then all the dogs came running
And dug the dog a tomb
And wrote upon the tombstone
For the eyes of dogs to come:
A dog came in the kitchen
And stole a crust of bread.
Then cook up with a ladle
And beat him till he was dead.
Then all the dogs came running
And dug the dog a tomb–

He stops, broods, resumes:

Then all the dogs came running
And dug the dog a tomb–

He stops, broods. Softly.

And dug the dog a tomb . . .

He remains a moment silent and motionless, then begins to move feverishly about the stage. He halts before the tree, comes and goes, before the boots, comes and goes, halts extreme right, gazes into distance, extreme left, gazes into distance. Enter Estragon right, barefoot, head bowed. He slowly crosses the stage. Vladimir turns and sees him.

VLADIMIR: You again! (*Estragon halts but does not raise his head. Vladimir goes towards him.*) Come here till I embrace you.

ESTRAGON: Don't touch me!

Vladimir holds back, pained.

VLADIMIR: Do you want me to go away? (*Pause.*) Gogo! (*Pause. Vladimir observes him attentively.*) Did they beat you? (*Pause.*) Gogo! (*Estragon remains silent, head bowed.*) Where did you spend the night?

ESTRAGON: Don't touch me! Don't question me! Don't speak to me! Stay with me!

VLADIMIR: Did I ever leave you?

ESTRAGON: You let me go.

VLADIMIR: Look at me. (*Estragon does not raise his head. Violently.*) Will you look at me!

Estragon raises his head. They look long at each other, then suddenly embrace, clapping each other on the back. End of the embrace. Estragon, no longer supported, almost falls.

ESTRAGON: What a day!

VLADIMIR: Who beat you? Tell me.

ESTRAGON: Another day done with.

VLADIMIR: Not yet.

ESTRAGON: For me it's over and done with, no matter what happens. (*Silence.*) I heard you singing.

VLADIMIR: That's right, I remember.

ESTRAGON: That finished me. I said to myself, He's all alone, he thinks I'm gone for ever, and he sings.

VLADIMIR: One is not master of one's moods. All day I've felt in great form. (*Pause.*) I didn't get up in the night, not once!

ESTRAGON: (*sadly*). You see, you piss better when I'm not there.

VLADIMIR: I missed you . . . and at the same time I was happy. Isn't that a strange thing?

ESTRAGON: (*shocked*). Happy?

VLADIMIR: Perhaps it's not quite the right word.

ESTRAGON: And now?

VLADIMIR: Now? . . . (*Joyous*.) There you are again . . . (*Indifferent*.) There we are again. . . (*Gloomy*.) There I am again.

ESTRAGON: You see, you feel worse when I'm with you. I feel better alone too.

VLADIMIR: (*vexed*). Then why do you always come crawling back?

ESTRAGON: I don't know.

VLADIMIR: No, but I do. It's because you don't know how to defend yourself. I wouldn't have let them beat you.

ESTRAGON: You couldn't have stopped them.

VLADIMIR: Why not?

ESTRAGON: There was ten of them.

VLADIMIR: No, I mean before they beat you. I would have stopped you from doing whatever it was you were doing.

ESTRAGON: I wasn't doing anything.

VLADIMIR: Then why did they beat you?

ESTRAGON: I don't know.

VLADIMIR: Ah no, Gogo, the truth is there are things that escape you that don't escape me, you must feel it yourself.

ESTRAGON: I tell you I wasn't doing anything.

VLADIMIR: Perhaps you weren't. But it's the way of doing it that counts, the way of doing it, if you want to go on living.

ESTRAGON: I wasn't doing anything.

VLADIMIR: You must be happy too, deep down, if you only knew it.

ESTRAGON: Happy about what?

VLADIMIR: To be back with me again.

ESTRAGON: Would you say so?

VLADIMIR: Say you are, even if it's not true.

ESTRAGON: What am I to say?

VLADIMIR: Say, I am happy.

ESTRAGON: I am happy.

VLADIMIR: So am I.

ESTRAGON: So am I.

VLADIMIR: We are happy.

ESTRAGON: We are happy. (*Silence.*) What do we do now, now that we are happy?

***Betrayal* – Harold Pinter (1930-2008)**

This play tells a tale of adultery and its unexpected consequences. The play is told in reverse chronology, scene one concluding the play in 1977. In this scene – scene 9 – the action takes place in 1968, when the story begins. Jerry is at his best friend Robert's party and is waiting in the bedroom for Robert's wife Emma.

The room is dimly lit. JERRY is sitting in the shadows. Faint music through the door.

The door opens. Light, Music. EMMA comes in, closes the door. She goes towards the mirror, sees JERRY.

EMMA: Good God.

JERRY: I've been waiting for you.

EMMA: What do you mean?

JERRY: I knew you'd come. [*He drinks*]

EMMA: I've just come in to comb my hair.

He stands.

JERRY: I knew you'd have to. I knew you'd have to comb your hair. I knew you'd have to get away from the party.

She goes to the mirror, combs her hair. He watches her.

You're a beautiful hostess.

EMMA: Aren't you enjoying the party?

JERRY: You're beautiful.

He goes to her.

Listen. I've been watching you all night. I must tell you, I want to tell you, I have to tell you –

EMMA: Please –

JERRY: You're incredible.

EMMA: You're drunk.

JERRY: Nevertheless.

He holds her.

EMMA: Jerry.

JERRY: I was best man at your wedding. I saw you in white, I watched you glide by in white.

EMMA: I wasn't in white.

JERRY: You know what should have happened?

EMMA: What?

JERRY: I should have had you, in your white, before the wedding. I should have blackened you, in your white wedding dress, blackened you in your bridal dress, before ushering you in to your wedding as your best man.

EMMA: My husband's best man. Your friend's best man.

JERRY: No. Your best man.

EMMA: I must get back.

JERRY: You're lovely. I'm crazy about you. All these words I'm using, don't you use, they've never been said before. Can't you use? I'm crazy about you. It's a whirlwind. Have you been to the Sahara Desert? Listen to me. It's true. Listen. You overwhelm me. You're so lovely.

EMMA: I'm not.

JERRY: You're so beautiful. Look at the way you look at me.

EMMA: I'm not ... looking at you.

JERRY: Look at the way you're looking at me. I can't wait for you, I'm bowled over, I'm totally knocked out, you dazzle me, you jewel, my jewel, I can't ever sleep again, no, listen, it's the truth, I won't walk, I'll be a cripple, I'll descend, I'll diminish, in to total paralysis, my life is in your hands, that's what's you're banishing me in to, a state of catatonia? do you? do you? the state of... where the reigning prince is the prince of emptiness, the prince of absence, the prince of desolation. I love you.

EMMA: My husband is at the other side of that door.

JERRY: Everyone knows. The world knows. It knows. But they'll never know, they'll never know, they're in a different world. I adore you. I'm madly in love with you. I can't believe that what anyone is at this moment saying has ever happened has ever happened. Nothing has ever happened. Nothing. This is the only thing that has ever happened. Your eyes kill me. I'm lost. You're wonderful.

EMMA: No.

JERRY: Yes.

He kisses her. She pulls away. He kisses her. Laughter off. She reams away. Door opens.

ROBERT.

EMMA: Your best friend is drunk.

JERRY: As you are my best friend and oldest friend and, in the present instance, my host, I decided to take this opportunity to tell your wife how beautiful she was.

ROBERT: Quite right.

JERRY: It is quite right, to... to face up to the facts... and to offer a token, without blush, a token of one's unalloyed appreciation, no holes barred.

ROBERT: Absolutely.

JERRY: And how wonderful for you that this is so, that this is the case, that her beauty is the case.

ROBERT: Quite right.

***JERRY** moves to **ROBERT** and takes hold of his elbow.*

JERRY: I speak as your oldest friend. Your best man.

ROBERT: You are actually.

*He clasps **JERRY**'s shoulder briefly, turns, leaves the room. **EMMA** moves towards the door. **JERRY** grasps her arm. She stops still. They stand still, looking at each other.*

***Trainspotting* – Irvine Welsh (1996-)**

The novel follows Mark Renton, a habitual heroin addict, and his relationship with his friends Begbie, Spud and Sick Boy. The men have known each other for years and Welsh uses a huge cast of characters to establish the longevity of their friendship and examine the consequences of such relationships. *Trainspotting* is, as I guess you'll notice, written largely in phonetic Scottish.

Extract a) – An old friend Stevie returns to Edinburgh from London for a party

– Happy New Year, ya wee cunt! Franco wrapped his arm around Stevie's head. Stevie felt several neck muscles tear, as stiff, sober and self-conscious, he struggled to go with the flow.

He returned the greeting as heartily as he could. There followed a round of Happy-New-Years; his tentative hands crushed, his stiff back slapped, his tight and unresponsive lips kissed. All he could think of was the phone, London and Stella.

She hadn't phoned. Worse, she hadn't been in when he phoned. Not even at her mother's. Stevie had gone back to Edinburgh and left the field clear for Keith Millard. The bastard would take full advantage. They'd be together right now, just like they probably were last night. Millard was a slag. So was Stevie. So was Stella. It was a bad combination. Stella was also the most wonderful person in the world in Stevie's eyes. That fact made her less of a slag; in fact, not a slag at all.

– Loosen up fir fuck sakes! It's New fuckin Year! Franco not so much suggested, as commanded. That was his way. People would be forced to enjoy themselves if necessary.

It generally wasn't necessary. They were all frighteningly high. It was difficult for Stevie to reconcile this world with the one he's just left. Now he was aware of them looking at him. Who were they these people? What did they want? The answer was that they were his friends, and they wanted him.

A song on the turntable drilled into his consciousness, adding to his misery.

*I loved a lassie, a bonnie, bonnie lassie
She's as sweet as the heather in the glen,
She's as sweet as the heather,
The bonnie purple heather,
Mary, ma Scots bluebell.*

They all joined in with gusto. – Cannae beat Harry Lauder. It New Year, likesay, Dawsie remarked.

In the joy of the faces around him, Stevie gained a measurement of his own misery. The pit of melancholy was a bottomless one, and he was descending fast, falling further away from the good times. Such times often seemed tantalisingly within reach; he could see them,

going on all around him. His mind was like a cruel prison, giving his captive soul a sight of freedom, but no more.

Stevie sipped his can of Export and hoped that he could get through the night without bringing too many people down. Frank Begbie was the main problem. It was his flat, and he was determined that everyone was going to have a good time.

– Ah goat yir ticket fir the match the night, Stevie. Intae they Jambo cunts, Renton said to him.

– Naebody watchin it in the pub? Ah thoat it was oan satellite, likesay. Sick Boy, who'd been chatting up a small, dark-haired girl Stevie didn't know, turned to him.

– Git tae fuck Stevie. You're picking up some bad habits doon in London, ah'm telling ye man. I fucking detest televised football. It's like shagging wi a durex oan. Safe fuckin sex, safe fuckin fitba, safe fuckin everything. Let's all build a nice safe wee world around ourselves, he mocked, his face contorting. Stevies had forgotten the extent of Sick Boy's natural outrage.

Rents agreed with Sick Boy. That was unusual, thought Stevie. They were always slagging each other off. Generally, if one said sugar, the other said shite. – They should ban aw fitba oan the telly, and get the lazy fat fucks oaf their erses and along tae the games.

– Yis talked us intae it, Stevie said in resigned tones,

The unity between Rents and Sick Boy didn't last.

– You kin talk about gittin oaf yir erse. Mister fuckin couch tattie hissel. Keep oaf the H for mair thin ten minutes and ye might make mair games this season thin ye did the last one, Sick Boy sneered.

– You've goat a fuckin nerve ya cunt... Rents turned tae Stevie, then flicked his thumb derisively in Sick Boy's direction. – They wir callin this cunt Boots because ay the drugs he wis cairryin.

They bickered on. Stevie would once have enjoyed this. Now it was draining him.

– Remember Stevie, ah'll be steyin wi ye fir a bit in Februray, Rents said to him. Stevie nodded grimly. He'd been hoping Rents had forgotten all about this, or would drop it. Rents was a mate, but he had a problem with drugs. In London, he'd be back on the gear again, teaming up with tony and Nicksy. They were always sorting out addresses where they could pick up giros from. Rents never seemed to work, but always had money. The same with Sick Boy, but he treated everybody else's cash as his own, and his own in exactly the same way.

– Perty at Matty's eftir the game, his new place in Lorne Street. Be thair sharp, Frank Begbie shouted over at them.

Another party. It was almost like work to Stevie. New Year will go on and on. It'll start to fade about the 4th, when the gaps between the parties start to appear. These gaps get bigger until they become the normal week, with the parties happening at the weekend.

More first foots arrived, the small flat was heaving. Stevie had never seen Franco, the Beggar, so at ease with himself. Rab McLaughlin, or Second Prize, as they called him, hadn't even been assaulted when he'd pished up the back of Begbie's curtains. Second Prize had been incoherently drunk for weeks now. New Year was a convenient camouflage for people like him. His girlfriend, Carol, had stormed off in protest at his behaviour. Second Prize hadn't even realised she was there in the first place.

Extract b) – Rents on Begbie

Ah found masel lyin tae her, tae justify Begbie's behaviour. Fuckin horrible. Ah jist couldnae handle her outrage, n the hassle thit went wi it. It wis easy tae lie, as we all di wi Begbie in our circle. A whole Begbie mythology hud been created by oor lies tae each other n oorsels,. Like us, Begbie believed that bullshit. We played a big part in making him what he was.

Myth: Begbie has a great sense of humour.

Reality: Begbie's sense ay humour is solely activated at the misfortunes, setbacks and weaknesses ay others, usually his friends.

Myth: Begbie is a 'hard man'.

Reality: Ah would not personally rate Begbie that highly in a square-go, without his assortment ay Stanley knives, basebaw bats, knuckledusters, beer glasses, sharpened knitting needles, etc. Masel n maist cunts are too shite-scared tae test this theory, but the impression remains. Tommy once exposed some weakness in Begbie, in a square-go. Gave um a good run for his money, did Tam. Mind you, Tommy's a tidy cunt, n Begbie, it has tae be said, came oot the better ay the two.

Myth: Begbie's mates like him.

Reality: They fear him.

Myth: Begbie would never waste any ay his mates.

Reality: His mates are generally too cagey tae test this proposition and oan the odd occasion they huv done so, huv succeeded in disproving it.

Myth: Begbie backs up his mates.

Reality: Begbie smashes fuck oot ay innocent wee daft cunts whae accidently spill your pint or bump intae ye. Psychopaths who terrorise Begbie's mates usually dae so wi impunity, as they tend tae be closer mates ay Begbie's than the punters he hings aboot wi. He kens thum aw through approved school, prison n the casuals' network, the freemasonaries that bams share.

Anyway, these myths gie us the basis tae rescue the night.

– Look Hazel, ah ken Franco's uptight. It's jist thit they guys pit his brar Joe oan a life-support machine. Thir a close fairlay.

Begbie is like junk, a habit. Ma first day at primary school, the teacher said tae us: - You will sit beside Francis Begbie. It wis the same story at secondary. Ah only did well at school tae git intae O Level class tae git away fae Begbie. Whin Begbie wis expelled n sent tae another school en route tae Polmont, ma performance declined, and ah wis pit back intae the non-certificate stream. Still, nae mair Begbie.

Then, when ah wis apprenticed as a chippy wi a Gorgie builder, ah goes along tae Telford College tae dae ma national certificate modules in joinery. Ah sat doon tae ma chips in the cafeteria, whin whae comes along but that cunt Begbie, wi a couple ay other psychos. They wir oan this specialist course in metalwork fir problem teenagers. The course seemed tae etach them tae manufacture thir ain sharp metal weapons ay destruction rather than have tae buy them fae the Army n Navy stores. Whin ah left ma trade n went tae college fir A Levels, then on tae Aberdeen University, ah half expected tae see Beggars at the freshers ball, beating tae a pulp some four-eyed, middle-class wanker he imagined wis starin at um.

He really is a cunt ay the first order. Nae doubt about that. The big problem is, he's a mate n aw. Whit ken ye dae?

SECTION B: ESSAY QUESTION

This section contains two short stories. You need to read them both and write an essay answering the following question:

Short stories often struggle to convey any real emotion because they simply don't have time to engage the reader.

To what extent is this true of your understanding of the two texts you have read?

The assessment criteria, or what we're looking for, are as follows:

- A01** Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
- A02** Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts
- A03** Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.
- A04** Explore connections across literary texts.
- A05** Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

This essay should be handed to your English teacher at the end of the first week back in year 12. Again, any problems, please email zbent@wigstoncollege.org.

Happy summer!

***The Story of an Hour* (1850) – Kate Chopin**

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a 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 someone 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 color 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 the 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.

Confessing – Guy de Maupassant

The noon sun poured fiercely down upon the fields. They stretched in undulating folds between the clumps of trees that marked each farmhouse; the different crops, ripe rye and yellowing wheat, pale-green oats, dark-green clover, spread a vast striped cloak, soft and rippling, over the naked body of the earth.

In the distance, on the crest of a slope, was an endless line of cows, ranked like soldiers, some lying down, others standing, their large eyes blinking in the burning light, chewing the cud and grazing on a field of clover as broad as a lake.

Two women, mother and daughter, were walking with a swinging step, one behind the other, towards this regiment of cattle. Each carried two zinc pails, slung outwards from the body on a hoop from a cask; at each step the metal sent out a dazzling white flash under the sun that struck full upon it.

The women did not speak. They were on their way to milk the cows. When they arrive, they set down one of their pails and approach the first two cows, making them stand up with a kick in the ribs from wooden-shod feet. The beast rises slowly, first on its forelegs, then with more difficulty raises its large hind quarters, which seem to be weighted down by the enormous udder of livid pendulous flesh.

The two Malivoires, mother and daughter, kneeling beneath the animal's belly, tug with a swift movement of their hands at the swollen teat, which at each squeeze sends a slender jet of milk into the pail. The yellowish froth mounts to the brim, and the women go from cow to cow until they reach the end of the long line.

As soon as they finish milking a beast, they change its position, giving it a fresh patch of grass on which to graze.

Then they start on their way home, more slowly now, weighed down by the load of milk, the mother in front, the daughter behind.

Abruptly the latter halts, sets down her burden, Sits down, and begins to cry.

Madame Malivoire, missing the sound of steps behind her, turns round and is quite amazed.

"What's the matter with you?" she said.

Her daughter Celeste, a tall girl with flaming red hair and flaming cheeks, flecked with freckles as though sparks of fire had fallen upon her face one day as she worked in the sun, murmurs, moaning softly, like a beaten child:

"I can't carry the milk any further."

Her mother looked at her suspiciously.

"What's the matter with you?" she repeated.

"It drags too heavy, I can't," replied Celeste, who had collapsed and was lying on the ground between the two pails, hiding her eyes in her apron.

"What's the matter with you, then?" said her mother for the third time. The girl moaned:

"I think there's a baby on the way." And she broke into sobs.

The old woman now in her turn set down her load, so amazed that she could find nothing to say. At last she stammered:

"You . . . you . . . you're going to have a baby, you clod! How can that be?"

The Malivoires were prosperous farmers, wealthy and of a certain position, widely respected, good business folk, of some importance in the district.

"I think I am, all the same," faltered Celeste.

The frightened mother looked at the weeping girl grovelling at her feet. After a few seconds she cried:

"You're going to have a baby! A baby! Where did you get it, you slut?"

Celeste, shaken with emotion, murmured:

"I think it was in Polyte's coach."

The old woman tried to understand, tried to imagine, to realise who could have brought this misfortune upon her daughter. If the lad was well off and of decent position, an arrangement might be come to. The damage could still be repaired. Celeste was not the first to be in the same way, but it was annoying all the same, seeing their position and the way people talked.

"And who was it, you slut?" she repeated.

Celeste, resolved to make a clean breast of it, stammered:

"I think it was Polyte."

At that Madame Malivoire, mad with rage, rushed upon her daughter and began to beat her with such fury that her hat fell off in the effort.

With great blows of the fist she struck her on the head, on the back, all over her body; Celeste, prostrate between the two pails, which afforded her some slight protection, shielded just her face with her hands.

All the cows, disturbed, had stopped grazing and turned round, staring with their great eyes. The last one mooed, stretching out its muzzle towards the women.

After beating her daughter till she was out of breath, Madame Malivoire stopped, exhausted; her spirits reviving a little, she tried to get a thorough understanding of the situation.

"--- Polyte! Lord save us, it's not possible! How could you, with a carrier? You must have lost your wits. He must have played you a trick, the good-for-nothing!"

Celeste, still prostrate, murmured in the dust:

"I didn't pay my fare!"

And the old Norman woman understood.

Every week, on Wednesday and on Saturday, Celeste went to town with the farm produce, poultry, cream, and eggs.

She started at seven with her two huge baskets on her arm, the dairy produce in one, the chickens in the other, and went to the main road to wait for the coach to Yvetot.

She set down her wares and sat in the ditch, while the chickens with their short pointed beaks and the ducks with their broad flat bills thrust their heads between the wicker bars and looked about them with their round, stupid, surprised eyes.

Soon the bus, a sort of yellow box with a black leather cap on the top, came up, jerking and quivering with the trotting of the old white horse.

Polyte the coachman, a big, jolly fellow, stout though still young, and so burnt up by sun and wind, soaked by rain, and coloured with brandy that his face and neck were brick-red, cracked his whip and shouted from the distance:

"Morning, Mam'selle Celeste. In good health, I hope?"

She gave him her baskets, one after the other, which he stowed in the boot; then she got in, lifting her leg high up to reach the step, and exposing a sturdy leg clad in a blue stocking.

Every time Polyte repeated the same joke: "Well, it's not got any thinner."

She laughed, thinking this funny.

Then he uttered a "Gee up, old girl!" which started off the thin horse. Then Celeste, reaching for her purse in the depths of her pocket, slowly took out fivepence, threepence for herself and twopence for the baskets, and handed them to Polyte over his shoulder.

He took them, saying:

"Aren't we going to have our little bit of sport to-day?"

And he laughed heartily, turning round towards her so as to stare at her at his ease.

She found it a big expense, the half-franc for a journey of two miles. And when she had no coppers she felt it still more keenly; it was hard to make up her mind to part with a silver coin.

One day, as she was paying, she asked:

"From a good customer like me you oughtn't to take more than threepence."

He burst out laughing.

"Threepence, my beauty; why, you're worth more than that."

She insisted on the point.

"But you make a good two francs a month out of me."

He whipped up his horse and exclaimed:

"Look here, I'm an obliging fellow! We'll call it quits for a bit of sport."

"What do you mean?" she asked with an air of innocence.

He was so amused that he laughed till he coughed.

"A bit of sport is a bit of sport, damn it; a game for a lad and a lass, a dance for two without music."

She understood, blushed, and declared:

"I don't care for that sort of game, Monsieur Polyte."

But he was in no way abashed, and repeated, with growing merriment:

"You'll come to it some day, my beauty, a bit of sport for a lad and a lass!"

And since that day he had taken to asking her, each time that she paid her fare:

"Aren't we going to have our bit of sport to-day?"

She, too, joked about it by this time, and replied:

"Not to-day, Monsieur Polyte, but Saturday, for certain!"

And amid peals of laughter he answered:

"Saturday, then, my beauty."

But inwardly she calculated that, during the two years the affair had been going on, she had paid Polyte forty-eight whole francs, and in the country forty-eight francs is not a sum which can be picked up on the roadside; she also calculated that in two more years she would have paid nearly a hundred francs.

To such purpose she meditated that, one spring day as they jogged on alone, when he made his customary inquiry: "Aren't we going to have our bit of sport yet?" She replied:

"Yes, if you like, Monsieur Polyte."

He was not at all surprised, and clambered over the back of his seat, murmuring with a complacent air:

"Come along, then. I knew you'd come to it some day."

The old white horse trotted so gently that she seemed to be dancing upon the same spot, deaf to the voice which cried at intervals, from the depths of the vehicle: "Gee up, old girl! Gee up, then!"

Three months later Celeste discovered that she was going to have a child.

All this she had told her mother in a tearful voice. Pale with fury, the old woman asked:

"Well, what did it cost?"

"Four months; that makes eight francs, doesn't it?" replied Celeste.

At that the peasant woman's fury was utterly unleashed, and, falling once more upon her daughter, she beat her a second time until she was out of breath. Then she rose and said:

"Have you told him about the baby?"

"No, of course not."

"Why haven't you told him?"

"Because very likely he'd have made me pay for all the free rides!"

The old woman pondered awhile, then picked up her milkpails.

"Come on, get up, and try to walk home," she said, and, after a pause, continued:

"And don't tell him as long as he doesn't notice anything, and we'll make six or eight months' fares out of him."

And Celeste, who had risen, still crying, dishevelled and swollen round the eyes, started off again with dragging steps, murmuring:

"Of course I won't say."