Sweet and Sour

A collection of stories for pleasure and learning
by Antonella Mignani

TEACHER'S BOOK
The Short Story

Study Guide  (page X)

1 A short story is a work of narrative fiction of between 500 and 15,000 words in length. It has a limited number of characters and a single action centred on a single conflict.

2 The recurrent features of all short stories are the setting, the characters, the storyline, the ending, the narrator and the listener or reader.

3 The plot of a short story is the narrative sequence in which the events are arranged and presented by the narrator to the listener or reader.

4 Conflict is an important part of a short story because it is the central moment of crisis around which the plot of the narrative is built up.

5 Narrative style is the way the writer uses language to convey and communicate meaning convincingly to the reader. It mainly regards the way the author uses and combines four narrative modes (report, description, comment and speech).

6 A competent reader is someone who, after responding instinctively to a short story, can describe his/her reading experience using appropriate words.

The Horror Story

The Marble Hands  by Bernard Capes

Part 1 (page 3)

While listening, pay attention to:

1 The two characters are in a churchyard, where they are exploring their surroundings.

2 He asks his friend to go into the graveyard, have a look around and report what he has seen there.

3 The character sees two marble hands on a grave, which seem to move as if in a greeting.

4 The other character does not seem at all impressed by what happens.

Check your understanding

1 The characters are good friends.

2 The two characters, who are probably teenagers, go on a bike trip into the countryside. One is called Heriot; as a child he spent time in the place where the story is set. He stayed there with a relative of his who is now dead. Heriot's friend thinks that the graveyard must have some sort of unpleasant association for Heriot.

3 The place has been described in detail, especially a particular tomb from which two marble hands project. This element of the story is likely to be the most important, given the title.

4 Open answer.

Part 2 (page 5)

While listening, pay attention to:

1 The place reminds Heriot of something that happened to him there when he was seven years old.

2 The author highlights the woman's vanity, frivolity and excessive pride in her appearance, especially her love for her hands.

3 Heriot thinks that he may simply have imagined his adventure; perhaps it was a supernatural experience.

Check your understanding

1 The woman's last wish probably seemed rather blasphemous to the villagers, while it did not disturb Heriot because he liked the woman and was too young to judge an adult's decision.

2 Yes, it is. He remembers every detail of it.

3 Heriot tries to give a rational explanation (he says he probably imagined it) but it does not sound convincing.

Check your competence

1 Part one: 'old churchyard' (l. 4); 'disagreeable' (l. 10); 'the bones ... grass' (ll. 19-20); 'fantastic and gruesome' (ll. 31-2); 'deathly' (l. 36). Part two: 'abominable' (l. 16); 'wicked and unclean' (l. 24); 'dead meat' (l. 48); 'a period of ... bones' (ll. 51-2); 'uncanny' (l. 56).
Open answer. The setting (an isolated country churchyard) is rather traditional, while the marble hands are more unusual. The central event in the narrative (being pulled down into a grave) is found frequently in horror stories.

Open answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main narrative</th>
<th>Narrative within narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>a country churchyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the village, the churchyard, inside the grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>two boys (the narrator and his friend called Heriot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heriot, his aunt Caddie, a woman, her husband, the villagers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>- the boys decide to stop at the churchyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kemels (main events)</td>
<td>- Heriot asks his friend to go inside and have a look around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the narrator sees two marble hands projecting from a grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Heriot tells his friend a strange story that happened to him when he was a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>catalysts (minor events)</td>
<td>- the characters walked around the church before going into the graveyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- afterwards, they stopped in a sunny field miles away from the graveyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the woman was very proud of her hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- she wanted to have them reproduced in marble and put on her grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Heriot often went to see them at the graveyard as they reminded him of the woman's kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- two years later he went back to the village and churchyard. When he touched the hands, they pulled him down into the grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the villagers did not like the woman and did not approve of her last wish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- it was decided to uproot the hands from the woman's grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Heriot is not sure whether his adventure was real or imaginary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure</td>
<td>closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>open because we do not know if Heriot's adventure is real or not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>Heriot's friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heriot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focalisation</td>
<td>internal: the narrator is not the protagonist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>internal: the narrator is the protagonist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The words should be inserted into the text in the following order:
1. young; 2. happened; 3. churchyard; 4. Heriot; 5. place; 6. uneasy; 7. tomb; 8. projected; 9. greeting; 10. experience; 11. unable; 12. what; 13. friends; 14. went; 15. later; 16. story; 17. visit; 18. woman; 19. peculiar; 20. villagers; 21. vain; 22. fascination; 23. hands; 24. photographed; 25. marble; 26. epitaph; 27. used; 28. see; 29. two; 30. removed; 31. considered; 32. went; 33. pull; 34. afterwards; 35. protagonist; 36. memories; 37. know; 38. similar; 39. back; 40. imagination.

Student’s activity.

The Monkey’s Paw by W. W. Jacobs

Part 1 (page 13)

While reading, pay attention to:

1. The characters are in the living room of their house; they are playing chess.
2. Sergeant-Major Morris is a friend of Mr White’s. Mr White hints that he may have worked with him ‘in the warehouse’ (l. 41) twenty-one years previously.
3. The monkey’s paw is a talisman.
4. Mr White takes it and puts it in his pocket, then he uses it to make a wish.

Check your understanding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who put a magic spell on it</th>
<th>an old Fakir, a very holy man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td>he wanted to show that fate controls people’s lives, and that it is very dangerous to interfere with it and try to change the course of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Its special properties</td>
<td>it can grant its owner three wishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Its previous owners</td>
<td>a man and Sergeant Morris himself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. ‘His blotchy face whitened’ (ll. 72-3); ‘his glass tapped against his strong teeth’ (ll. 75-6); ‘his tones were so grave’ (l. 81); ‘with a look of alarm on his face’ (l. 107).
Check your understanding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mood/feelings/ states of mind</th>
<th>Text evidence</th>
<th>Caused by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relief</td>
<td>II. 1-5</td>
<td>his disbelief in the talisman's power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doubt</td>
<td>II. 24-5</td>
<td>the memory of the previous evening's events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deep sorrow</td>
<td>II. 64-7; II. 75-6</td>
<td>the news of Herbert's death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horror</td>
<td>II. 81-5</td>
<td>discovering the sum given by the firm 'as compensation'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happiness</td>
<td>II. 15-17</td>
<td>her mocking attitude towards her husband's credulity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reassurance</td>
<td>II. 6-8; I. 26</td>
<td>her effort to convince her husband he imagined everything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curiosity</td>
<td>II. 29-38</td>
<td>a stranger at the gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anxiety</td>
<td>II. 47-8; I. 53</td>
<td>the news that the stranger is from Maw and Meggins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>momentary relief</td>
<td>II. 56-7</td>
<td>the news that Herbert is 'not in any pain'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desperation</td>
<td>II. 58-9; II. 74-5</td>
<td>the news of Herbert's death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible answer: the fact that the powers of the monkey's paw are probably real and Mr White's wish may come true after all. In this case, the sergeant's warning must be taken into account.

Part 2 (page 19)

While reading, pay attention to:

1. Herbert is killed as the result of a serious accident at work.
2. The Whites' unbearably deep sorrow makes them numb and apparently incapable of any reaction.
3. They are given two hundred pounds 'as compensation'.

Part 3 (page 23)

While reading, pay attention to:

1. Mrs White thinks that the talisman's power could bring Herbert back to life.
2. At first her husband refuses, then he fetches the monkey's paw and makes a wish.
3. Someone knocks at the door.
4. Mr White takes the monkey's paw again and makes his third and final wish.
Check your understanding

1. | Attitude/feelings towards the talisman | Possible reasons for them |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr White</td>
<td>fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>horror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs White</td>
<td>trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and resignation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Mr White’s third wish is that whoever or whatever is at the door will disappear at once. He believes that his dead son’s mutilated corpse is outside, brought back to life in a horrible way by the malicious power of the monkey’s paw. His third wish puts an end to the story and prevents readers from knowing for sure who was at the door.

3. Mrs White thinks that her son Herbert – as she knew him – is outside; Mr White thinks there is a zombie, not his son. He is afraid because he believes that the thing outside may be cruel and violent.

4. The dreadful power of the monkey’s paw is no more, and the road outside has returned to normality.

5. | Language used | State of mind/feelings suggested |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr White</td>
<td>fiercely (l. 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>quaking limbs ... aghast (l. 34-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>quivered (l. 41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>his voice shook (l. 43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he caught his breath ... sweat (l. 52-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>faltered (l. 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fearfully (l. 63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>chilled with the cold (l. 66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sense of relief (l. 70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shaking tones (l. 86); trembling (l. 96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>growing fear and horror</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Correct answers: a/b/c/d.

7. It leaves the true identity and appearance of the mysterious visitor to the reader’s imagination. It increases the sense of curiosity, expectation and wonder.

8. The tension reaches its highest point when the two characters hear the knocks at the door.

Now it’s up to you to summarise the story!

1. | Kemels | Language used | State of mind/feelings suggested |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Moris tells the Whites about the talisman’s powers and warns them of their dangerous nature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mr White decides to wish for two hundred pounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- a man from Maw and Meggins reports the news of Herbert’s death</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- a sum of £200 is offered to the Whites ‘as compensation’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mrs White asks her husband to use the monkey’s paw and make a wish for Herbert’s return</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- at first Mr White refuses, then he agrees and makes the wish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- they hear someone knock at the door</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mr White quickly expresses his third and last wish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the Whites open the door but there is no-one there</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In fairy tales and legends the three wishes are usually granted by a magic agent with positive intentions. Most of these stories have a happy ending where the good characters are rewarded and the evil ones are defeated. In 'The Monkey's Paw' the opposite happens. The power of the talisman is meant to cause sorrow and pain to those who challenge it.

This feature creates suspense and increases expectation, as no explanation of the events is given; the basic ambiguity of the story (has everything happened because of the talisman's evil power or are the events a series of fatal coincidences?) is increased by the narrator's detachment; the reader gets a clearer picture of the characters and events; the reader is not influenced by any character's point of view, so s/he can guess at the meaning of crucial points in the story.

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### The Horror Story

**Study Guide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student's activity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be a competent reader!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 All the suggestions given are acceptable; students should give reasons for their choice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which aspects/details in particular?</th>
<th>Why and how?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The events</td>
<td>The first wish is expressed almost for fun and the power of the talisman is therefore challenged. All the other tragic events are a consequence of this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The characters</td>
<td>Although Morris warns them not to, the three characters mock the talisman's supernatural powers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The setting</td>
<td>The most important events take place at night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The atmosphere</td>
<td>Horrific details create a sense of wonder and mystery. The language used to describe the characters' feelings and reactions to the events makes the readers share their bafflement, anxiety and fear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ending</td>
<td>The characters' first wish has been granted (now they have £200), but in fact the monkey's paw has only caused deep sorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The moral</td>
<td>The Whites should have listened to Morris' words and should not have tried to turn the events in their favour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

3 In fairy tales and legends the three wishes are usually granted by a magic agent with positive intentions. Most of these stories have a happy ending where the good characters are rewarded and the evil ones are defeated. In 'The Monkey's Paw' the opposite happens. The power of the talisman is meant to cause sorrow and pain to those who challenge it.

4 This feature creates suspense and increases expectation, as no explanation of the events is given; the basic ambiguity of the story (has everything happened because of the talisman's evil power or are the events a series of fatal coincidences?) is increased by the narrator's detachment; the reader gets a clearer picture of the characters and events; the reader is not influenced by any character's point of view, so s/he can guess at the meaning of crucial points in the story.

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2 A horror story is a short fictional narrative centred around an unusual experience, designed to shock readers and cause feelings of alarm and fear.

2 Its characteristics are the particularly horrific details that sustain the readers' emotional response, words that appeal to the senses and the strong language used to convey the characters' frightening and unusual experiences.

3 Its origins can be traced back to the end of the 18th century, when interest in the macabre and the occult grew in Britain.

4 Gothic fiction is the 'literature of terror', meant to frighten the readers with its insistence on supernatural elements and its characteristic atmosphere of gloom, mystery and doom.

5 The typical characters of horror stories are devils, vampires, werewolves, mysterious presences and characters with split personalities or acting under the influence of drugs.
The Rivals  by Vivien Alcock

Part 1 (page 35)

While reading, pay attention to:

1. John is short-sighted and wears thick glasses; he has flat feet which tend to smell in hot weather. He is very clever and likes studying. Although he likes getting prizes for his school results, he is modest.
2. He says he does not believe in ghosts because they do not exist.
3. He wishes she were less attractive, then she might consider him.
4. The two children talk about the ghosts that haunt the house where the girl lives. The boy tries to convince her that ghosts do not exist.
5. They plan to spend the night in a room on the top floor of the haunted house.

Check your understanding

1. John has no ability to 'see' things in his mind, he only trusts scientific truth or visible phenomena. This is why he refuses to believe in ghosts.
2. He believes in very small things like atoms or molecules, but he rejects the idea that ghosts are real. This reveals a very 'scientific' mentality and a practical and rational approach to life.
3. He would like to meet a quiet, studious boy like himself, with whom he could go to museums, study scientific topics and discuss mathematics.
4. Lucy says that the ghost is horrible; it wants to frighten her and chase her out of her house. John does not seem very impressed by the girl's words or by her fear.
5. John thinks she is very pretty but rather silly, like most girls of her age.
6. He offers to help because he feels protective towards her and wants to show that he is right and she is wrong.

Part 2 (page 40)

While reading, pay attention to:

1. John is worried about waking up Lucy's parents and having to explain what he and Lucy are doing.
2. The room is empty, dark, very dusty and dirty.
3. Strange noises are heard, and a mysterious lady appears. John does not seem worried, and asks her if she is Lucy's mother.
4. Lucy kisses John to thank him for his help.
5. John becomes rich and famous, but he never marries and remains alone.

Check your understanding

1. John tells Lucy the house is very cold because it is a corner house, and catches draughts of air on both sides. The strange noises that can be heard are cats meowing in the garden downstairs.
2. Lucy: 'Her face was as pale ... shadows' (ll. 3-4); 'She was sitting ... back again' (ll. 33-5); 'Her eyes still ... back again' (ll. 40-1); 'she was cowering ... move' (l. 62).
   John: 'grinning' (l. 32); ... the ghost's appearance, then he is afraid of it but tries to react by repeating to himself that ghosts do not exist.
3. The lady disappears because John refuses to believe she is real. The second and third suggestions explain the words 'even the gods die for want of faith'.
4. Immediately after the ghost disappears, Lucy's attitude changes radically. Now she is relaxed, she dances and shows her happiness. Readers find out that she is a ghost too ('Her feet made ... dust', ll. 102-3), and that she is pleased the other ghost has disappeared because she always scolded and criticised her ('Saying I shouldn't ... than I have', ll. 107-9).
5. John's refusal to believe in her existence has succeeded in making the lady ghost disappear from the house.
6 John starts believing that something really strange is happening when the lady disappears because he refuses to admit she is a real ghost (‘His face ... terrified’, l. 97). He was frightened of the lady before, but he refused to admit it and tried to stick to his rational attitude (‘He was burning ... he managed to say ‘No’, ll. 79-93). When he realises that Lucy is a ghost too, he is openly scared (‘John watched her in terror’, l. 105).

7 Open answer. Possible answer: because since his adventure with Lucy, he has never been able to trust a girl any more, as Lucy ‘used’ him to her advantage.

Check your competence

1. The mysterious setting (a haunted house) and the two ghosts.

2. | Part one: | Part two: |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- All that ... air (ll. 24-5)</td>
<td>- A figure ... blood (ll. 51-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a dark house ... lace (ll. 16-18)</td>
<td>- It drifted ... ashen face (ll. 56-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part two:</td>
<td>- The lady ... dreadful (ll. 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bright moonlight ... light (ll. 15-18)</td>
<td>- Staring at him ... eyes (ll. 68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There was ... Dusty (ll. 21-30)</td>
<td>- Her icy ... cheek (ll. 77-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It was very cold ... summer night (ll. 36-7)</td>
<td>- The boy ... terrified (ll. 96-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A clock ... below (ll. 42-4)</td>
<td>- he felt ... snowflake (ll. 114-5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. In Part one, Lucy is presented as an ordinary girl, though her delicate beauty is highlighted (l. 39, ll. 77-9). Details that may hint at her being a ghost are introduced in Part two (her pallor, her unusual behaviour). On the whole, however, the revelation of her true nature comes as a surprise (ll. 102-10)

4. Open answer. Suggested answer: there is no hint at any rivalry until the very end, which keeps the tension high and maintains the readers' curiosity throughout the narrative.

Check your competence

5. | Character | Methods of characterisation | Dominant aspect | Readers' impression |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>description, thought, action and conversation</td>
<td>cleverness, plain physical appearance, rationality, common sense</td>
<td>slightly negative at first (he sounds too self-confident), then positive (the readers pity him when he is tricked by Lucy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>description, action, conversation, image</td>
<td>beauty</td>
<td>positive at first, then negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lady</td>
<td>report, description, conversation</td>
<td>ugliness, frightening appearance</td>
<td>negative at first, more positive when she disappears because John refuses to admit she is a ghost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Element | The mysterious setting (a haunted house) and the two ghosts |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part one:</td>
<td>Part two:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All that ... air (ll. 24-5)</td>
<td>- A figure ... blood (ll. 51-3)</td>
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<td>- he felt ... snowflake (ll. 114-5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. 1. Part one: ll. 16-19; ll. 24-7; ll. 96-8; Part two: ll. 20-30.
   2. Part two: ll. 51-3; 56-7; l. 60; ll. 77-8; l. 91.
   3. Part one: ll. 6-9; ll. 20-30; ll. 24-7; ll. 96-8; Part two: ll. 20-30.
   4. Part two: ll. 43-4; l. 47.
   5. Part one: ll. 6-9; l. 13; ll. 19-21; ll. 100-2; ll. 104-5; ll. 112-4; Part two: ll. 31-44.
   6. Part two: ll. 60-90; ll. 100-1.
The Highbboy by Alison Lurie

Part 1 (page 51)

While reading, pay attention to:
1. The highboy is a valuable antique piece of furniture with drawers. It has long thin legs and looks rather old-fashioned.
2. The narrator doesn’t like it at all; she thinks it is not particularly attractive.
3. Buffy likes it because it is valuable and has belonged to her family for a very long time.
4. Buffy decides to exchange it for a coffee service with her brother.

Check your understanding

1. They are sisters-in-law, that is, their husbands are brothers.
2. Physical appearance: although Buffy is in her late fifties, she likes wearing coloured sportswear more suited to a younger woman, and has curly blonde hair.
   Habits: she often attributes human qualities, feelings and attitudes to the objects she owns.
   Personality: despite her age, she talks and behaves like a young girl. She likes genuinely valuable objects and usually boasts about her possessions being of a better quality than other people’s.
   Janet’s opinion: even though she thinks Buffy is a bit childish and behaves strangely, she is fond of her as she believes Buffy means no harm.

Part 2 (page 57)

While reading, pay attention to:
1. Buffy seems slightly afraid of the highboy’s reactions, but she still likes it a lot.
2. Janet thinks Buffy’s habit of attributing human feelings and conscious actions to the highboy is going too far.
3. Clark thinks Buffy is simply bored of her daily routine and is trying to add a little interest to her life.
4. They get Buffy elected Secretary of the local Historical Society.

Check your understanding


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode</th>
<th>What happened?</th>
<th>Its consequences</th>
<th>Buffy’s explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Buffy’s husband Bob tried to get some slides out of a drawer, but it would not open, so he shook the highboy violently</td>
<td>when he slammed the drawer, he shut his right thumb inside and badly bruised it. Because of this, he couldn’t play in the golf tournament, which deeply upset him</td>
<td>the highboy reacted as it did because Bob had mistreated it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Buffy asked her grandson Jamie to get some wool from one of the drawers. It was stuck, so he kicked one of the legs</td>
<td>Buffy scolded Jamie very harshly and roughly dragged him away from the highboy. He was scared by this unusual behaviour and started to cry</td>
<td>the highboy is very old and valuable and must be treated very carefully and delicately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Buffy’s granddaughter Betsy Lee was playing with her dolls under the highboy</td>
<td>one of the claw feet scratched the little girl’s leg</td>
<td>she doesn’t know exactly what happened. She implies the highboy has been annoyed by the children’s games lately (ll. 98-100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. She is getting irritated and thinks Buffy is exaggerating things. (‘Really, dear ... furniture’, ll. 34-7; ‘Now, Buffy ... possessions’, ll. 65-7).
Part 3 (page 62)

While reading, pay attention to:

1. Abigail Jones is an expert on antique furniture.
2. It is a really fine piece of furniture which was probably made in Salem, Massachusetts.
3. Buffy thinks the highboy might be haunted.
4. Buffy wants to change her will and leave the highboy to the Historical Society if she dies of natural causes, to her nephew Fred Turner if her death is accidental.

Check your understanding

1. The highboy may have an evil nature, which makes Buffy think it might cause harm. The narrator does not seem to share Buffy's fears about the highboy ('But a piece ... Buffy', ll. 44-6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Buffy does</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>she keeps Janet outside in the garden</td>
<td>to stop the highboy hearing their conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she decides to change her will</td>
<td>to protect herself from the highboy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she tells lies about her husband's nephew Fred and his wife</td>
<td>to frighten the highboy about being badly treated by Fred and Roo and keep it quiet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Open answer.
4. ll. 102-9; ll. 119-122.
5. Open answer.

Part 4 (page 67)

While reading, pay attention to:

1. Fred does not like the highboy and does not want it in the house, so he will give it to a museum right away if he inherits it.
2. At first she wants to warn Buffy about Fred's decision.
3. The narrator feels she would sound ridiculous, so she decides not to do anything.
4. The highboy falls on Buffy and seriously injures her.

Check your understanding

1. Buffy seems to have stopped being afraid of the highboy. Janet thinks Buffy has got tired of her joke or has forgotten her obsession with the highboy because she has found something more interesting to do at the Historical Society.
2. She wants to tell Buffy to be careful because the highboy 'knows' that on Buffy's death - whether natural or accidental - it will go to a museum anyway.
3. Janet thinks it is ridiculous to feel threatened by a chest of drawers. She is also afraid that her phone call might trigger Buffy's obsessive fear of the highboy.
4. Buffy is badly hurt by the highboy when it falls on her. Janet implies that this was not accidental but the highboy did it on purpose, to kill Buffy and go to a museum.
5. Now she seems to think that Buffy was right: the highboy is in fact evil and malignant and it killed poor Buffy.

Now it's up to you to report your ideas!

1. Open answer.

Be a competent reader!

1. The story has an eerie atmosphere caused by its ambiguity. The true nature of the highboy only becomes clear at the end of the story. At first, the incidents it provokes seem to have natural causes. Moreover, only Buffy suspects the truth about it, but nobody takes her seriously. This creates the surprise ending.
In 'classic' ghost stories the writer's main aim was to entertain readers by shocking and frightening them, while modern ghost fiction writers want to explore distorted states of consciousness and investigate the action of mysteriously malignant agents on ordinary people.

In the 19th century ghost stories developed mainly thanks to Edgar Allan Poe, who fused together elements from horror and Gothic fiction, Victorian writers, who attempted to describe the supernatural as part of everyday life, and literary magazines, which greatly contributed to the popularisation of the genre. In the 20th century ghost stories introduced elements of the psychic and the macabre, and focused mainly on the relation between ordinary human beings and mysterious events and creatures beyond any logical explanation.

The setting of a ghost story is important in creating its typical atmosphere of mystery and expectation. Some characters involved in the action may be presented as ordinary, everyday people who turn out to be ghosts, which creates the climax or surprise ending, two characteristic features of the genre.

Victorian ghost stories presented mysterious and highly unusual experiences as if they had actually happened. Most of these stories were extremely convincing and their settings and characters were credible and ordinary. However, the ghosts which haunted them provoked real fear.

### Study Guide (page 74)

1. A ghost story is a short fictional narrative focused on the manifestation of the spirit of a dead person in a place that becomes haunted by its supernatural presence.

2. The setting of a ghost story is important in creating its typical atmosphere of mystery and expectation. Some characters involved in the action may be presented as ordinary, everyday people who turn out to be ghosts, which creates the climax or surprise ending, two characteristic features of the genre.

3. Victorian ghost stories presented mysterious and highly unusual experiences as if they had actually happened. Most of these stories were extremely convincing and their settings and characters were credible and ordinary. However, the ghosts which haunted them provoked real fear.

4. In 'classic' ghost stories the writer's main aim was to entertain readers by shocking and frightening them, while modern ghost fiction writers want to explore distorted states of consciousness and investigate the action of mysteriously malignant agents on ordinary people.

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### The Crime Story

**A Glowing Future** by Ruth Rendell

**Part 1** (page 77)

**While reading, pay attention to:**

1. Maurice and Betsy are in Betsy's flat in London and they are having a row.

2. They used to be lovers and lived together for two years. Now they seem to be on very bad terms.

3. He is going to spend the next three months travelling around Europe, then he is moving to Australia.

4. Patricia is the woman Maurice is going to marry.

5. Betsy decides to put a letter in the trunk, telling Patricia about her relationship with Maurice.

### Check your understanding

1. Open answer.

2. Open answer. Betsy is perhaps presented in a more positive way so that readers tend to sympathise with her rather than Maurice, who appears very selfish and superficial (ll. 39-47; ll. 57-62).

3. Open answer. Possible answer: Betsy thinks she is going to take some kind of revenge on Maurice by telling Patricia the truth about him.
Part 2 (page 82)

While reading, pay attention to:

1 Maurice puts in the trunk all the pretty and valuable things he had left behind in Betsy's flat, such as a painting by Lowry and some fragile objects.

2 Patricia is a customs officer.

3 Betsy feels terrible.

4 Betsy kisses him, but he reacts angrily and pushes her away.

Check your understanding

1 He does not actually intend to make Betsy suffer by writing Patricia's name and address on the trunk, but he is somehow pleased when he realises that he is hurting her feelings because she is still jealous of him.

2 He knows she still loves him and her reactions are therefore unpredictable.

3 Her reaction is probably what Maurice 'feared' might happen, that is, she tries to make love to him to keep him with her.

Part 3 (page 85)

While reading, pay attention to:

1 Maurice takes out Betsy's letter to Patricia and puts in a short note from him to her.

2 Betsy hits him several times on the forehead with a heavy lamp, killing him.

3 Betsy cleans the blood from herself and from the room.

4 Betsy feels she has had her revenge on both him and Patricia.

Check your understanding

1 Betsy has already 'been to the depths' (l. 9). She has suffered so badly that nothing can hurt her any more.

2 Maurice wants to make Betsy suffer.

3 Maurice arouses violent passions of hatred and love in Betsy. In fact, she kills him because she cannot have him any longer.

4 Patricia will find Maurice's decomposing corpse.

Check your understanding

1 Open answer.

2 Maurice's actions and remarks | Betsy's reactions
---|---
Part one:
- I never write letters (l. 36) &lt;-
- I did tell you about Patricia (l. 55) &lt;-
- He winced (l. 57) &lt;-
- You can keep the big stuff (l. 78) &lt;-
- Mind the Lowry ... that (ll. 83-4) &lt;-
- Shut up ... sake (l. 92) &lt;-
- As if I didn't know (l. 38) &lt;-
- Not ... first (l. 56) &lt;-
- She shuddered (l. 71) &lt;-
- She picked ... him (l. 81) &lt;-
- She flung ... fists (ll. 85-6) &lt;-
- She walked about ... Patricia's (ll. 95-9) &lt;-
Part two:
- Maurice ... o'clock (l. 7) &lt;-
- He wrapped ... trunk (ll. 28-31) &lt;-
- Is there anything to eat? (l. 46) &lt;-
- Go away, Betsy, I'm tired (l. 59) &lt;-
- Betsy didn't help him (l. 15) &lt;-
- I hope ... there! (ll. 32-4) &lt;-
- Go ... you! (ll. 47-8) &lt;-
- She threw herself ... knees (ll. 67-70) &lt;-
Part three:
- The men are ... noon (ll. 7-8) &lt;-
- I've got a letter to put in yet (l. 12) &lt;-
- He pulled ... ever (ll. 17-20) &lt;-
- I want that, please (l. 29) &lt;-
- She shrugged ... more (ll. 9-10) &lt;-
- Her head ... letters (ll. 13-4) &lt;-
- How I hate you (l. 21) &lt;-
- Have you ever ... silenced (ll. 30-35) &lt;-

3 Actions and words | Feelings and emotions
---|---
Part one:
- She made ... mouth (ll. 37-8) &lt;-
- Have you ever ... on? (ll. 66-8) &lt;-
- She picked up ... him (l. 81) &lt;-
- She flung ... fists (ll. 85-6) &lt;-
- She sat down to write (ll. 114-15) &lt;-
- frustrated expectations, anger &lt;-
- regret, awareness of being cheated and betrayed &lt;-
- wish to hurt him as he was hurting her &lt;-
- deep sorrow and frustration &lt;-
- jealousy &lt;-
- wish for revenge &lt;-
Part two:
- Go and find ... you (ll. 47-8) &lt;-
- She threw ... knees (ll. 67-70) &lt;-
- - anger &lt;-
- - love, desire, passion, wish to keep him with her &lt;-
- - violent refusal &lt;-
Part three:
- He pulled ... ever (ll. 17-20) &lt;-
- How I hate you (l. 21) &lt;-
- Have ... breathlessly (l. 30) &lt;-
- For a moment ... blood (ll. 39-41) &lt;-
- I loved him ... him (l. 54) &lt;-
- desire to make her suffer &lt;-
- hatred &lt;-
- violent hatred &lt;-
- regret &lt;-
- mixed feelings of love and hatred &lt;-

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While reading, pay attention to:

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Check your understanding

1 Betsy has already 'been to the depths' (l. 9). She has suffered so badly that nothing can hurt her any more.

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Check your understanding

1 Open answer.

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- Shut up... sake (l. 92) &lt;-
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- She shuddered (l. 71) &lt;-
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- I loved him ... him (l. 54) &lt;-
- desire to make her suffer &lt;-
- hatred &lt;-
- violent hatred &lt;-
- regret &lt;-
- mixed feelings of love and hatred &lt;-
The story starts in medias res. The conflict – already open at the beginning of narration – has been caused by Maurice's arrival to collect his things before he leaves for Australia.

Yes, they are. We learn about past events from the characters' conversation.

No, the plot is rather unpredictable because Betsy does not act in a rational or logical way. The major turning points are at ll. 66-70 (Part one) and ll. 30-5 (Part two), leading up to the climax at ll. 36-41 (Part two).

Readers do not know for sure whether Betsy will get away with it all or her crime will be discovered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maurice's viewpoint</th>
<th>Part one: l. 57-62; ll. 86-91</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part two: l. 7-23; ll. 49-57; ll. 66-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part three: ll. 17-20; ll. 26-28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Betsy's viewpoint</th>
<th>Part one: ll. 37-40; ll. 95-123</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part two: ll. 42-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part three: ll. 1-6; ll. 9-10; ll. 30-72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open answer. All suggestions are acceptable.

Open answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the character says</th>
<th>What the character means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was a glowing future (Part one, ll. 90)</td>
<td>a future of happiness with a woman he loves, a good job and a nice house full of the beautiful objects he was now putting into the trunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She thought of the future (Part three, ll. 63-4)</td>
<td>her future revenge, that is, a horrible discovery for poor Patricia in three months' time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of their first meeting</th>
<th>Maurice's viewpoint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the dining room of a seaside hotel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ronald's first reaction to Edyth</th>
<th>she spotted her as his ideal 'next subject'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edyth's first reaction to Ronald</td>
<td>she ignored him</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequences of their first meeting</th>
<th>Maurice's viewpoint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he started a relationship and after a week she was in love with him. Soon after they got married and each made a will in the other's favour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three is a Lucky Number by Margery Allingham

Part 1 (page 93)

While reading, pay attention to:

1. Ronald, a murderer, is in the bathroom of his house.
2. Edyth, a middle-aged woman, is downstairs in the kitchen.
3. They are husband and wife.

Check your understanding

1. Ronald and Edyth have been married six weeks (ll. 43). Ronald is upstairs, getting things ready to carry out his plan to kill Edyth in order to get her money. She is ironing downstairs and hanging clothes in the back garden.
Part 2 (page 98)

While reading, pay attention to:
1. Ronald is going to put an electric heater in Edyth's bath.
2. Edyth does not suspect anything.
3. Everything seems to be going as Ronald has planned.

Check your understanding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ronald's actions</th>
<th>Reasons for his actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- he switches the small electric heater on</td>
<td>- to check it is working properly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- he turns off the main switch in the linen cupboard at the top of the stairs</td>
<td>- to be ready to turn it on when Edyth is in the bath tub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- he puts the heater into the water</td>
<td>- to pretend it has fallen off the shelf accidentally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- he puts bubble bath into the water</td>
<td>- to hide the heater from Edyth's view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- he waits till Edyth is in the tub, then he pulls down the main switch</td>
<td>- to electrocute his wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- he calls out for Edyth</td>
<td>- to make sure she is dead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. ‘He turned ... calm’ (ll. 1-4): nervous
   ‘Ronald paused ... as it always did’ (ll. 30-3): satisfied/pleased
   ‘It was typical ... mildly’ (ll. 43-4): disappointed
   ‘He spoke ... self-assurance’ (ll. 50-2): upset
   ‘A momentary fear ... perfect’ (ll. 68-73): uncertain at first, then happy
   ‘Her hesitation infuriated him’ (l. 81): angry
   ‘The silence ... breath’ (ll. 110-11): hopeful

3. Open answer.

Part 3 (page 103)

While reading, pay attention to:
1. Ronald goes into the bedroom to have a good look at Edyth's private papers.
2. He finds a leather box full of savings certificates and Post Office issues.
3. The police.

Check your understanding

1. a. ‘At first sight ... anticipated’ (ll. 22-3)
   - ‘He opened it ... whistle’ (ll. 27-8)
   - ‘He glanced ... glazed’ (ll. 35-7)
   - ‘He tore ... anxiety’ (ll. 41-2)

   b. ‘The date ... old’ (ll. 48)
   - ‘With ... letter’ (ll. 106-7)

2. Happy, satisfied and surprised when he sees how much money his wife has saved up; confused and puzzled when he realises Edyth has recently withdrawn all her money from the bank; amazed when he finds the letter; terrified when he understands he has been discovered and the police are coming to catch him.

3. The fact that Ronald wanted to marry her so soon after they met, his insistence on making wills on their wedding day and his interest in the bathroom.

4. Open answer.

5. She is sitting in the kitchen of the house next door with Detective Constable Batsford and Policewoman Richards.

6. Open answer.

Now it's up to you to read between the lines!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the text says</th>
<th>What you can infer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part one:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- he had been very careful to choose the right type (l. ll. 47-8)</td>
<td>- he has always chosen a particular type of woman, lonely, shy, reserved and without close relatives or friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- she was to be his next subject (ll. 69-70)</td>
<td>- she is going to be his next victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- he had an eye for stones (l. 77)</td>
<td>- he can tell how rich a woman is by looking at her jewellery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ronald was careful not to let her toes touch the ground (l. 89)</td>
<td>- he does not want Edyth to think too much about how strange it is for a man to fall in love with her at first sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- two things signed her death warrant earlier (l. 103)</td>
<td>- he has decided to kill her earlier than he had initially planned for two reasons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first examples of crime stories were concerned with the complex psychology of criminals. These stories became popular in the 1830s in Britain and were known as 'Newgate Fiction', after a famous London prison. They were Auguste Dupin, a very clever detective, created by Edgar Allan Poe, who gave rational explanations for apparently insoluble mysteries, and Sherlock Holmes, created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who employed a scientific approach to the solution of very complex crimes.

It started in the early 20th century with the publication of Edmund Bentley's Trent's Last Case and culminated in the 20s. In this period the genre flourished thanks to the works of two writers, Agatha Christie, whose numerous works feature the famous detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, and Monsignor Reginald Knox, who wrote crime stories which really challenged the reader's intellect.

Suggested answer: in the US, crime fiction was heavily influenced by British fiction until the 1920s, when the hard-boiled school of American crime fiction emerged. In these stories, the detective is always tough and ruthless and his only aim is to discover and capture the criminal. The most famous writers are Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler.

Contemporary British crime fiction is going in the direction of its American counterpart, and the focus of interest has shifted from the methods of enquiry to the crime itself and the discovery of the criminal.

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**The Humorous Story**

*Shock Tactics* by Saki

**Part 1** (page 115)

*While listening, pay attention to:*

1 Bertie and Ella are close friends and they probably are in love.
2 Bertie has given her some handkerchiefs.
3 Ella liked Bertie's present a lot.
4 Bertie goes to the swimming pool and there he meets his good friend Clovis.
Check your understanding

1. The story takes place in a London park (Kensington Gardens) on a late spring afternoon. The action then moves to a swimming pool.
2. They are all in their late teens.
3. Ella knows that Bertie's mother opens all the letters addressed to him.
4. Bertie has not been able to stop his mother's bad habit yet.
5. Clovis likes joking and being funny, but he sympathises with his friend because he seems to understand how serious Bertie's problem is.
6. They talk about Bertie's problems with his mother.

Part 2 (page 118)

While listening, pay attention to:

1. Some mysterious letters arrive at Bertie's house.
2. Mrs Heasant thinks her son has a dangerous secret relationship with an adventuress called Clotilde, and tells Bertie's sisters about it.
3. Bertie does not pay much attention to either the letters or his mother's curiosity.

Check your understanding

1. Bertie's mother is very nosy and makes a lot of fuss over an evidently absurd situation.
2. She does not allow him any privacy and treats him like a child. He thinks she does not deserve any attention.
3. Open answer.

Part 3 (page 121)

While listening, pay attention to:

1. Clovis has written all the letters to help his friend solve his problem with his mother.
2. Bertie's mother realises how foolish she has been to believe such absurdities.
3. Bertie has the opportunity to make his mother change her attitude towards him.
4. She will never open his letters again.

Check your understanding

1. Open answer. Suggested answers:
   a. because he wanted Bertie to sound sincere and convincing when he swore to his mother he did not know anything about the mysterious letters;
   b. because he was afraid Bertie might tell his mother about the joke and spoil everything.
2. She is ready to pay hush money because if Bertie ever revealed to relatives and friends that she had believed what the letters said, everybody would consider her a very foolish person.
3. Bertie will always be grateful to Clovis.

Check your competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Verbal humour</th>
<th>Part one: - ll. 62-8</th>
<th>Part two: - ll. 40-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situational humour</td>
<td>Part two: - ll. 78-81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural humour</td>
<td>Part two: - ll. 45-7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- ll. 62-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning to learn: collecting data (page 124)

a. events are not presented in chronological order;
   - we get to know some relevant background information about the characters' lives and their relationships;
   - we expect some kind of solution to Bertie's problem.

b. the central conflict is between Bertie and his mother and it is caused by her excessive curiosity;
   - it involves all Bertie's friends as it affects his social life and all his relationships outside the family.

c. the identity of the person who writes the letters. It is hidden to create expectation and keep the reader's curiosity alive;
   - open answer;
   - the ending is closed.
Mrs Bixby and the Colonel’s Coat by Roald Dahl

Part 1 (page 129)

While reading, pay attention to:
1. Mrs Bixby receives a valuable mink coat.
2. The Colonel, her former lover, gives it to her as a farewell gift.
3. She is very excited and happy.

Check your understanding

1. Topic | Where in the text?
---|---
Stories about men, women and lovers | ll. 33-43
A true story about a clever husband | ll. 44-50
The condition of divorced women in the USA | ll. 1-19
The condition of divorced men in the USA | ll. 20-32

2. a True; American women stand to benefit from divorce
b True
c True
d False; see l. 6.
e True
f True

3. | Mrs Bixby | Mr Bixby | The Colonel
---|---|---|---
Character | rather bored of her daily routine, likes dull, happy with his daily routine and proud of his job | rather boring and exciting news | extrovert, cheerful and charming. Rather generous
Place of residence | small flat in new York | small flat in new York | large charming house outside Baltimore
Family situation | married, but has a lover | married | single
Job | housewife | dentist | retired army officer, now a country gentleman
Social status | middle class | middle class | very well off

4. a Mrs Bixby and the Colonel are lovers
b They meet once a month.
c They have known each other eight years.
d He makes her feel important and fascinating.

5. She is bored of him and feels he treats her like a sort of patient, kindly but in a detached way.

6. | What happens to Mrs Bixby | How she feels
---|---|---
Wilkins gives her a big cardboard box | excited
She opens it and finds her present | surprised, speechless, happy
She puts it on | elegant and powerful
She sees the message and reads it | shocked and a bit sad
She has to work out a plan | at first worried and thoughtful, then self-confident, calm and relaxed

7. Open answer.
Part 2 (page 137)

While reading, pay attention to:

1 Mrs Bixby goes to a pawnbroker on Sixth Avenue.
2 She has left her coat at the pawnbroker's.
3 She tells him she found a ticket in the taxi.
4 He decides to go to the pawnbroker's to claim the mysterious article.

Check your understanding

1 Mrs Bixby does not want to be identified. She would have to tell her husband the truth about the mink coat.

2 What Mrs Bixby thinks of ...

| her husband compared to the Colonel | he seems so small compared to the Colonel, who is big and stout. Their smell is different too. Mr Bixby smells of mint and disinfectants while the Colonel smells of horseradish.
| her husband's physical appearance | very unattractive and rather funny, like a caricature with a bony face and a prominent jaw.
| her husband's way of dressing | he usually wears old-fashioned clothes, such as jackets with wide lapels and tightly fitting trousers.
| her husband's sexual attractiveness | he thinks he is very attractive and behaves like an old peacock. In fact, she thinks he is fatuous and vain.

3 Mrs Bixby's plan

| what lie she tells her husband | she says she has found a ticket in the taxi, and pretends she does not know what sort of ticket it is. She hopes it is a lottery ticket.
| what she wants him to do | she wants him to go to the pawnbroker's, get the mink coat and give it to her as a Christmas present.

4 Open answer.

Part 3 (page 146)

While reading, pay attention to:

1 Her expectations appear to be fulfilled at first, but she does not get what she expects.
2 Mr Bixby gives her a mink neckpiece.
3 Mrs Bixby is very disappointed.

Check your understanding

1 He wants to increase her expectation and curiosity to make the present appear more valuable.
2 Upset; furious; angry; frustrated; disappointed.
3 She thinks the pawnbroker has cheated her, by keeping the valuable mink coat to sell it at a higher price. In fact, there was no name on the receipt she was given for the coat.
4 Mr Bixby's secretary is his lover, so he has given her the mink coat, exactly as the Colonel had done with Mrs Bixby. The ending is closed, because Mrs Bixby, who wanted to cheat her husband, is in fact cheated by him.
5 a, c, d are acceptable.
6 Open answer (all the suggestions given are acceptable).

Now it's up to you to collect data!

1 Focus on | Your notes

| The function of the introduction | to provide an orientation for the narrative.
| How the plot begins | the event that starts the story is the Colonel's farewell gift to Mrs Bixby.
| What conflict is introduced | the conflict is inside Mrs Bixby, because she has to find a way to keep the mink coat without making her husband suspicious.
| Which turning points are introduced | Mrs Bixby is given an ugly necklace instead of her valuable mink coat.
| How the surprise ending is created | Mrs Bixby does not expect her husband to have a lover, so she gets a real shock when she sees Miss Pulteney wearing the mink coat.
| What characters there are | there are four characters: Mr and Mrs Bixby and their lovers (Miss Pulteney and the Colonel, who neither speak nor act, but play a very important role in the narrative).
| Whether the story has a moral or conveys a message | do unto others as you would have done to you.

Be a competent reader!

1 Open answer.
The Psychological Story

The Canary by Katherine Mansfield

Part 1 (page 157)

While listening, pay attention to:
1. The narrator is Missus, a middle-aged woman who lives alone.
2. She is speaking about her pet bird, a canary, which is now dead.
3. She remembers how beautifully he sang.
4. She loved him deeply.

Check your understanding
1. The nail reminds her of the canary's cage, so it is associated with memories of past happiness.
2. The narrator's job is not explicitly stated, but the readers can infer she is a landlady because she rents some rooms in her house to earn a living (ll. 52-3). Her daily routine consists of preparing breakfast for her guests (ll. 52-3), cleaning the house (l. 25), doing the washing up (l. 54), sewing (l. 26), and cleaning the knives (l. 70).
3. Nobody can live without loving someone or something, and she had her pet bird to love.
4. Her little house, her garden, flowers and the evening star.
5. Open answer.

Part 2 (page 160)

While listening, pay attention to:
1. The first episode is when she overheard her 'three young men' calling her 'the Scarecrow'; the second is a nightmare she had; the third is the canary's death.
2. She has decided never to have another pet bird in her life.
3. She feels very sad but hopes to overcome this bad moment.
4. Open answer.
5. The three men are probably paying guests. Their relationship with the narrator is quite detached, they call her 'the Scarecrow' and do not pay much attention to her needs (ll. 2-9).
6. She feels very lonely and depressed.
7. Open answer.
8. She misses the canary's company and the comfort he gave her.
9. She does not know exactly. The reader can infer that it is loneliness which makes her sad.
Check your competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missus is ...</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Line reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sensitive</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>II. 39-42 (Part one); II. 14-8 (Part two)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friendly</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>II. 1-2 (Part two)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hopeful</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>II. 31-7 (Part two)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-centred</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>II. 1-6 (Part one); II. 11-12 (Part one); II. 69-72 (Part one); II. 38-58 (Part two)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>melancholic</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>II. 54-67 (Part one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vengeful</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impractical</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheerful</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extrovert</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Which parts of the story take place ... Line reference

| inside the character's mind | Part one | II. 13-16; II. 22-24; II. 32-50; II. 69-72 |
|                            | Part two | II. 1-7; II. 8-16; II. 18-58 |
| outside the character's mind | Part one | II. 1-11; II. 17-22; II. 25-31; II. 50-69 |
|                            | Part two | II. 7-8 (In fact ... Scarecrow); II. 16-18 (My washerwoman ... canary) |
| in the present             | Part one | II. 1-14; I. 22 (I suppose ... you); I. 36 (Does that sound foolish?); II. 49-50; II. 69-70 |
|                            | Part two | II. 14-16; II. 31-2; II. 35-58 |
| in the past                | Part one | II. 14-48; II. 50-72 |
|                            | Part two | II. 1-13; II. 16-30; II. 32-35 |

3 The whole text is a dialogue with herself that unfolds in her mind (Part two, II. 31-58 is clear evidence of this feature). The question she is trying to answer is the reason for her sadness, which is loneliness.

4 Clockwise, from the suggestions given:
- its singing
- love for her pet
- other beloved things (flowers, the evening star)
- memories of life with the pet

- the three young men (‘the Scarecrow’)
- the comfort her pet gave her
- loneliness after her pet’s death
- sadness in the canary’s singing
- the nail outside the door

5 The narrative focus is on the central character (c).

6 Open answer.

7 Open answer.

Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies by Salman Rushdie

Part 1 (page 169)

While listening, pay attention to:

1 The story is set in front of the British Embassy in a town in Pakistan, on the last Tuesday of the month, very early in the morning.

2 Two characters are introduced: a young woman called Miss Rehana, and an old man called Muhammad Ali.

3 Miss Rehana is waiting to go into the Embassy, Muhammad Ali is just watching her and the other women nearby.

4 They meet there for the first time and start a conversation. Muhammad Ali offers to help Miss Rehana.

Check your understanding

1 b/c.

2 | Miss Rehana | Muhammad Ali |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age and physical appearance</td>
<td>young, probably in her early twenties, very beautiful, with large shiny black eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job, social status and family situation</td>
<td>her job is not mentioned but she says she is very poor, unmarried and engaged to Mudafa Dar who lives in England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for being there</td>
<td>she wants to get a permit to live in Britain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 She is very independent, in fact she has come on her own while the other women have all come with some male relative. Moreover, she refuses Muhammad Ali's advice because she does not want to do anything illegal to get her visa.

4 The way she appears is innocent and helpless; the way she really is strong willed and determined. What she apparently wants is to get a permit to live in Britain and get married; what she really wants is to stay in Lahore and continue her life.

5 Muhammad Ali behaves differently because he thinks she is a special person because of her innocence, so now he feels like helping her without getting anything back.

6 She rejects the man's offer because he suggests doing something illegal. This attitude is not surprising because Miss Rehana has been presented as a very straightforward and upright person.

7 No, he probably does not. The tone of his words is bitter and resigned.

Part 2 (page 175)

While listening, pay attention to:
1 Miss Rehana tells him about her past and present life, then about her interview with the British officer.
2 Muhammad Ali is surprised and sympathetic.
3 Miss Rehana is happy because she can return to her usual life.

Check your understanding

1 Her past: her parents died when she was young. Before they died they had arranged her engagement to Mustafa Dar, a man twenty-one years older than her who soon after moved to England and never sent for her. She does not know him, let alone love him.

2 Her life now: she lives in a wealthy household in Lahore where she works as a nanny to three boys. She sounds happy with her life as it is

3 She has taken advantage of Muhammad Ali's advice to fail her interview deliberately, so that her request for a visa will be rejected and she will not have to change her life. Muhammad Ali does not understand that Miss Rehana does not really want to move to Britain, so he thinks that her failure is 'tragedy'. Miss Rehana is aware of the misunderstanding, while Muhammad Ali is still puzzled by her attitude at the end of the story.

4 Open answer. Suggested answer: it is really very difficult to find someone willing to help without expecting anything in return. When this happens it is a real stroke of luck, rare and precious as a ruby.

5 Open answer. No, he probably does not. The tone of his words is bitter and resigned.

6 Open answer. All the suggestions given are possible.

Be a competent reader!

1 The words should be inserted into the text in the following order: 1 Pakistan; 2 Tuesday; 3 immigrant; 4 young; 5 middle-aged; 6 money; 7 tricked; 8 complain; 9 beauty; 10 questions; 11 interview; 12 passport; 13 illegal; 14 nine; 15 thirty; 16 stranger; 17 three; 18 deliberately; 19 sorry; 20 useless; 21 smile.

Now it's up to you to evaluate the story!

1 Student's activity.
The gapped text below is an analysis of the structural and stylistic features of the story. Use the words in the box to complete it.

**1st paragraph:** truth fails third focaliser interview

**2nd paragraph:** Pakistani language personalities narration dialogue description events

**3rd paragraph:** independence turning point aware conflict prototype psychology man

**4th paragraph:** generation conservative independence Western ideas surprise values message humour

The story is told in the .................... person, but one character, the advice expert Muhammad Ali, is the .................... of the action, as he interprets the events and the other character's attitude for the readers. Although in the end he .................... to understand the girl's plan and the true motivation of her behaviour during the ...................., readers can infer the .................... from what he sees and hears, especially the girl's words, her positive attitude and her happy smile.

The story develops partly through narration, partly through description and partly through dialogue. .................... is the predominant mode of telling the story in the first part. It plays an important role as it enables readers to understand background .................... such as what Muhammad Ali really does for a living or the sort of interview Miss Rehana is going to experience. The .................... of the place where the action unfolds makes the setting and the minor characters appear lively and realistic. The .................... between the two characters brings them to life and helps readers interpret their .................... and understand their relationship. The .................... is characterised by the frequent use of Hindi words and expressions, which makes it appropriate to the viewpoint character, a .................... man.

Characterisation is crucial in this story as the .................... of both the protagonists is explored. The focus of the narrative is in fact on the .................... the two characters are living in a particularly significant moment of their life. However, only the girl seems .................... that this experience represents a .................... in her life, as she is now sure she will not leave her country, lose her job or change her lifestyle to marry a man she does not love. The ...................., instead, fails to understand the impact that this event will have on his future. For the first time in his life he has come across .................... and freedom in a woman. The world around him is changing and Miss Rehana is the .................... of the new people who will make the changes possible.

Through the delicate .................... of the .................... ending, the author conveys his final .................... to the readers. Even in a .................... society like Pakistan, based on traditions and strict social conventions, the set of established .................... is not shared by everyone and new .................... of personal self-fulfilment and freedom of choice are slowly creeping in among the new .................... . His new mentality – no longer dependent on .................... models – is the key towards real cultural, political and social .................... .

The words should be inserted into the text in the following order:

**1st paragraph:** third focaliser fails interview truth

**2nd paragraph:** narration events storyline dialogue language Pakistani

**3rd paragraph:** independence turning point man awareness personality prototype psychology

**4th paragraph:** generation conservative independence Western ideas surprise values message humour

**The Psychological Story**

---

1. A psychological story is a short fictional narrative in which the events are filtered through the mind of the thinking character.

2. *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) by Samuel Richardson, in which the main interest lies in the protagonist's feelings and reactions to external events; *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1760) by Laurence Sterne, a deep analysis of the human mind and its foibles; *Portrait of a Lady* (1881) by Henry James, based on its protagonist's journey from innocence to self-awareness.

3. James' novels are not based on events but on the exploration of the conflict between the new American culture and the corruption of old European values. Moreover, in James' novels female characters are given unprecedented psychological depth.

4. Lawrence introduced new and daring themes to the English novel, such as sexual identity, the liberation from taboos and the negative effects of family conditioning.

5. Psychological narrative flourished in the 1920s; in his autobiographical novel *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Marcel Proust attempted to give sense and order to the complexity of experience through a long and painful journey back into memory. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield made the characters' psychological conflicts and their search for the truth of existence the main narrative focus of their works.

6. The contemporary British writer Anita Brookner has revived the genre in her novels, centred on the protagonists' inner lives and complex psychological introspection. Kazuo Ishiguro's masterpiece, *The Remains of the Day*, is centred on the protagonist's failure to understand what is really meaningful and important in life.
The Science Fiction Story

A Boy's Best Friend  by Isaac Asimov

Check your understanding (page 190)

1 The Andersons are talking about the arrival from Earth of a real puppy dog, a present for their son Jimmy.

2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of birth</th>
<th>the Moon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical appearance</td>
<td>tall and very thin, with long agile arms and legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special abilities</td>
<td>he can move around on the moon surface quite well, despite lunar gravity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best friend</td>
<td>Robutt, a robot dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>he likes joking and playing with his dog outside. He is not easily frightened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning of his name</th>
<th>robot mongrel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical appearance</td>
<td>small compact metal body, small head with no mouth, large glass eyes, a bump where his electronic brain is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>friendly and happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special abilities</td>
<td>he can survive outside without a spacesuit and can move around on the lunar surface easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with Jimmy</td>
<td>he is protective and very affectionate towards Jimmy. He likes playing with the boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical</th>
<th>Unusual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He protects Jimmy</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He plays with Jimmy on the crater</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He jumps into Jimmy's arms</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He shows his love for Jimmy</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He loves being sprayed and demonstrates it</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He squeaks to show fear</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He squeaks to show happiness</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Suggested answer: because they want him to have a real animal as a pet, like an ordinary Earthborn kid of his age.

5 He does not seem very happy because he loves Robutt and does not want to part from him.

6 Suggested answer: keeping both Robutt and the real puppy dog would be too expensive for Jimmy's parents; they want him to have a real animal rather than a robot. Jimmy will probably choose Robutt (ll. 91-4).

7 Suggested answer: Jimmy understands how deeply he loves Robutt when he realises he might have to part with him, and Robutt shows feelings and reactions typical of living creatures, as if he were a real dog.

Check your competence

1 Narrative structure
   a The story starts in medias res.
   b Yes, it is Jimmy's unexpected negative reaction to his parents' gift.
   c Jimmy's and his parents' opposing views about the real puppy dog.
   d The ending can be predicted because Jimmy and Robutt's relationship is described as very close. They are obviously fond of each other.
   e It is open, because although readers can infer that Jimmy will keep Robutt as his pet, this is not openly stated in the text.

Characters
   a Although the story is set in the future on the Moon, the human characters are presented as rather ordinary and credible. The only unusual character is Robutt, who in the end turns out to be more similar to a real animal than a robot.
   b Simple, apart from Robutt, who behaves unexpectedly at the end of the narrative. He is a complex character because he has developed feelings and attitudes which surprise readers.
   c Through both telling and showing (although the latter prevails), using description, action, thought and conversation.
   d Jimmy and Robutt are presented extremely positively, so readers tend to sympathise with them rather than the Andersons, who seem insensitive.

Focalisation
   a An external narrator.
   b Internal. Jimmy is the focaliser of the action.
   c Yes, it does, because the readers are led to share Jimmy's feelings for Robutt.

Be a critic: evaluate the story

1 1st paragraph: 'A Boy's Best Friend' is centred on the conflict between Jimmy and his parents. The story opens with the arrival of a real puppy dog from Earth, intended as a gift for the protagonist, a ten-year-old boy called Jimmy. While Jimmy's parents think he will be excited to have a real dog as his new pet, Jimmy does not want it because he is perfectly happy with Robutt, a robot dog. When Mrs Anderson explains to Jimmy why he should have the real dog instead of an electronic imitation, Robutt shows his feelings for Jimmy by squeaking and jumping around. The ending is left open, though the readers can infer that the boy will keep Robutt with him.
2nd paragraph: The story is set in the future on the Moon. The subject of the conversation between the characters at the beginning of the story is the event that starts the story. After this initial scene, focalisation shifts to the protagonist and this allows the readers to understand his relation with Robut better, so that Jimmy's refusal to accept his parents' present does not come as a complete surprise to the readers.

3rd paragraph: Open answer.

### The Science Fiction Story

**Open answer.**

1 A science fiction story is a short narrative based on possible future scientific or technological developments. It includes several subgenres, such as heroic fantasy, modern horror, books on UFOs, the paranormal, utopian and anti-utopian literature.

2 *Frankenstein* is a novel written by Mary Shelley in 1818. It is considered the key work of the genre and inspired a large number of imitations.

3 Jules Verne contributed to the development of science fiction because he combined adventures and exploration with the popularisation of science.

4 Dystopian fiction is also called anti-utopian literature and it is focused on dreadful and terrifying forecasts of possible future disasters involving all mankind.

5 *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a masterpiece of dystopian fiction. It is set in Oceania, an imaginary future totalitarian society where the ruling political party controls people's minds and opposition is impossible.

6 The Paperback Revolution of the 50s is important because it made the genre immensely popular by widening the reading public and greatly increasing the number of publications available at a very low cost.

7 J. R. R. Tolkien is an outstanding science fiction author because he gave a new direction to the genre with his long and complex three-volume novel, *Lord of the Rings* (1954-5). In it the author created an imaginary parallel universe where fantasy, mythology and British folklore coexist. He moved the focus of interest from technology and science to the struggle between good and evil.

8 William Gibson is the inventor of the Cyberpunk movement. His most famous novel, *Neuromancer* (1984), is considered the prototype of the subgenre, whose main interest is the effects of advanced technology on people's lives.

9 Science fiction has recently been used in horror fiction, as shown by the works of the contemporary American writer Stephen King (b. 1947).

### A General Overview (page 197)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>S1</th>
<th>S2</th>
<th>S3</th>
<th>S4</th>
<th>S5</th>
<th>S6</th>
<th>S7</th>
<th>S8</th>
<th>S9</th>
<th>S10</th>
<th>S11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is an introduction which gives background information</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a complicated storyline</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the characters are equally important</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>There is a central conflict</td>
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<td>The ending is left open and the conflict is unsolved</td>
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<td>The ending is surprising</td>
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**b**

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<th>S5</th>
<th>S6</th>
<th>S7</th>
<th>S8</th>
<th>S9</th>
<th>S10</th>
<th>S11</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>The setting helps create atmosphere</td>
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<td>The events take place in chronological order</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**c** Open answer.

**d** Open answer.