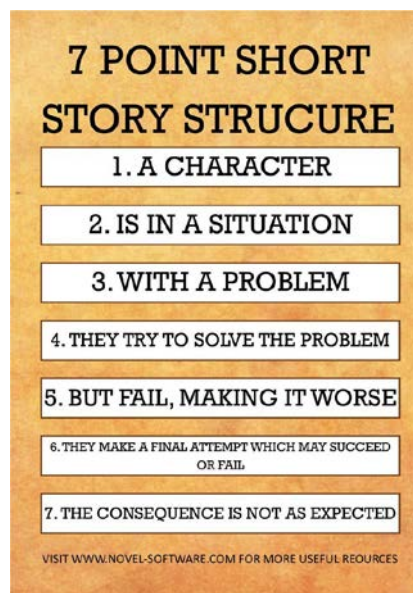


**A+ College Ready English  
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Gaining basic knowledge of literary  
elements through Short Story analysis



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## How to Read a Short Story

### Before

Look at the story's title. What *might* this story be about?

Use and develop your background knowledge about this subject. If the title is "The Lesson," (by Toni Cade Bambara) ask yourself what kind of lessons there are, what lessons you have learned, and so on.

Establish a purpose for reading this story. "Because my teacher told me to" is one obvious purpose, but not a very useful one. Try to come up with your own question, one based perhaps on the title or an idea your teacher recently discussed in class. How about, "Why do we always have to learn the hard way?" if the story is titled "The Lesson"? Of course, you should also be sure you know what your teacher expects you to do and learn from this story; this will help you determine what is important while you read the story.

Orient yourself. Flip through the story to see how long it is. Take a look at the opening sentences of different paragraphs, and skim through the opening paragraph; this will give you a sense of where the story is set, how difficult the language is, and how long you should need to read the story.

### During

Identify the main characters. By "main" I mean those characters that make the story happen or to whom important things happen. Get to know what they are like by asking such questions as "What does this character want more than anything else—and *why*?"

Identify the plot or the situation. The plot is what happens: The sniper from one army tries to shoot the sniper from the other army ("The Sniper"). Some writers prefer to put their characters in a situation: a famous hunter is abandoned on an uncharted island where, it turns out, he will now be hunted ("The Most Dangerous Game").

Pay attention to the setting. Setting refers not only to where the story takes place, but when it happens. It also includes details like tone and mood. What does the story sound like: a sad violin playing all by itself or a whole band charging down the road? Does the story have a lonely feeling—or a scary feeling, as if any minute something will happen?

Consider the story's point of view. Think about why the author chose to tell the story through this person's point of view instead of a different character; why in the past instead of the present; in the first instead of the third person.

Pay attention to the author's use of time. Some short story writers will make ten years pass by simply beginning the next paragraph, "Ten years later...." Look for any words that signal time passed. Sometimes writers will also use extra space between paragraphs to signal the passing of time.

Find the crucial moment. Every short story has some conflict, some tension or element of suspense in it. Eventually something has to give. This is the moment when the character or the story suddenly changes direction. A character, for example, feels or acts differently than before.

Remember why you are reading this story. Go back to the question you asked when you began reading this story. Double-check your teacher's assignment, too. These will help you to read more closely and better evaluate which details are important when you read. You might also find your original purpose is no longer a good one; what is the question you are now trying to answer as you read the story?

### After

Read first to understand...then to analyze. When you finish the story, check to be sure you understand what happened. Ask: WHO did WHAT to WHOM? If you can answer these questions correctly, move on to the next level: WHY? Why, for example, did the character in the story lie?

Return to the title. Go back to the title and think about how it relates to the story now that you have read it. What does the title refer to? Does the title have more than one possible meaning?

### Terms to Know

- character
- conflict
- conventions
- imagery
- metaphor
- mood
- motif
- plot
- repetition
- structure
- suspense
- symbol
- theme(s)
- tone

### Why Read Ray Bradbury?

..."I'm working to prevent a future where there's no education,' Bradbury said from his Los Angeles home. 'The system we have has gone to hell, so I'm trying to encourage teachers and parents to rebuild it. We're not teaching kids to read and write and think.'

The author of "Fahrenheit 451" reaches back to his most famous novel for his coup de grace.

'There's no reason to burn books if you don't read them.'

...'I see 'Fahrenheit' all over the place, these days,' Bradbury said. 'Programs like 'Jeopardy' and 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire' are ridiculous. They're the stupidest shows in history. They're making us dumber. They don't give us information, they give us facts, factoids. You don't learn who Napoleon was and how he was motivated. You learn what year he was born, and when he died. That's useless.'

'Millionaire' gives you questions that are so dumb that I can't believe they're going to give anyone a million dollars for telling me where Poughkeepsie is.'

...The Internet's free flow of information may make it harder for dictators to suppress and inhibit access to that information. But, as Bradbury points out, the ephemeral nature of Net data-alterable, erasable-could render the truth something just as fluid.

But Bradbury remains, as always, the optimist. He says he remains an ever-hopeful student of human nature and an idealist at heart."

"About Ray Bradbury." *About Ray Bradbury*. Web. 20 Mar. 2016. <[http://www.raybradbury.com/articles\\_peoria.html](http://www.raybradbury.com/articles_peoria.html)>.

#### "August 2026: There Will Come Soft Rains" (1950) by Ray Bradbury

1 In the living room the voice-clock sang, *Tick-tock, seven o'clock, time to get up, time to get up, seven o'clock!* as if it were afraid that nobody would. The morning house lay empty. The clock ticked on, repeating and repeating its sounds into the emptiness. *Seven-nine, breakfast time, seven-nine!*

2 In the kitchen the breakfast stove gave a hissing sigh and ejected from its warm interior eight pieces of perfectly browned toast, eight eggs sunnyside up, sixteen slices of bacon, two coffees, and two cool glasses of milk.

3 "Today is August 4, 2026," said a second voice from the kitchen ceiling, "in the city of Allendale, California." It repeated the date three times for memory's sake. "Today is Mr. Featherstone's birthday. Today is the anniversary of Tilita's marriage. Insurance is payable, as are the water, gas, and light bills."

4 Somewhere in the walls, relays clicked, memory tapes glided under electric eyes.

5 *Eight-one, tick-tock, eight-one o'clock, off to school, off to*

What is unusual about the opening of this story? What kind of images are invoked by the diction and syntax of the "voice-clock"? What is suggested by the sentence "The morning house lay empty"?

What is suggested by the stove making so much food for a house that "lay empty"?

What kind of information does the house give its occupants?

How does the word "somewhere" add to the reader's sense of uneasiness?

*work, run, run, eight-one!* But no doors slammed, no carpets took the soft tread of rubber heels. It was raining outside. The weather box on the front door sang quietly: "Rain, rain, go away; rubbers, raincoats for today..." And the rain tapped on the empty house, echoing.

6 Outside, the garage chimed and lifted its door to reveal the waiting car. After a long wait the door swung down again.

7 At eight-thirty the eggs were shriveled and the toast was like stone. An aluminum wedge scraped them into the sink, where hot water whirled them down a metal throat which digested and flushed them away to the distant sea. The dirty dishes were dropped into a hot washer and emerged twinkling dry.

8 *Nine-fifteen*, sang the clock, *time to clean*.

9 Out of warrens in the wall, tiny robot mice darted. The rooms were acrawl with the small cleaning animals, all rubber and metal. They thudded against chairs, whirling their mustached runners, kneading the rug nap, sucking gently at hidden dust. Then, like mysterious invaders, they popped into their burrows. Their pink electric eyes faded. The house was clean.

10 *Ten o'clock*. The sun came out from behind the rain. The house stood alone in a city of rubble and ashes. This was the one house left standing. At night the ruined city gave off a radioactive glow which could be seen for miles.

11 *Ten-fifteen*. The garden sprinklers whirled up in golden founts, filling the soft morning air with scatterings of brightness. The water pelted windowpanes, running down the charred west side where the house had been burned evenly free of its white paint. The entire west face of the house was black, save for five places. Here the silhouette in paint of a man mowing a lawn. Here, as in a photograph, a woman bent to pick flowers. Still farther over, their images burned on wood in one titanic instant, a small boy, hands flung into the air; higher up, the image of a thrown ball, and opposite him a girl, hands raised to catch a ball which never came down.

12 The five spots of paint—the man, the woman, the children, the ball—remained. The rest was a thin charcoaled layer.

13 The gentle sprinkler rain filled the garden with falling light.

14 Until this day, how well the house had kept its peace. How carefully it had inquired, "Who goes there? What's the password?" and, getting no answer from lonely foxes and whining cats, it had shut up its windows and drawn shades in an old maidenly preoccupation with self-protection which bordered on a mechanical paranoia.

15 It quivered at each sound, the house did. If a sparrow

Once again, what kind of image is suggested by the tone of the "voice-clock"?

Where are the people? Why does the house continue to function if there are no humans to be served?

What kind of descriptive diction is applied to the house's actions of cleaning?

How is situational irony used in this paragraph?

Note how Bradbury indirectly reveals to the reader what happened to the occupants and the city. What is the contrast between the opening of paragraph 10 and what is revealed further in the paragraph? Note he continues this in the opening of paragraph 11 and in paragraph 13. Why? What is the effect?

Why is the house "afraid"?

<p>brushed a window, the shade snapped up. The bird, startled, flew off! No, not even a bird must touch the house!</p> <p>16 The house was an altar with ten thousand attendants, big, small, servicing, attending, in choirs. But the gods had gone away, and the ritual of the religion continued senselessly, uselessly.</p> <p>17 <i>Twelve noon.</i></p> <p>18 A dog whined, shivering, on the front porch.</p> <p>19 The front door recognized the dog voice and opened. The dog, once huge and fleshy, but now gone to bone and covered with sores, moved in and through the house, tracking mud. Behind it whirred angry mice, angry at having to pick up mud, angry at inconvenience.</p> <p>20 For not a leaf fragment blew under the door but what the wall panels flipped open and the copper scrap rats flashed swiftly out. The offending dust, hair, or paper, seized in miniature steel jaws, was raced back to the burrows. There, down tubes which fed into the cellar, it was dropped into the sighing vent of an incinerator which sat like evil Baal in a dark corner.</p> <p>21 The dog ran upstairs, hysterically yelping to each door, at last realizing, as the house realized, that only silence was here.</p> <p>22 It sniffed the air and scratched the kitchen door. Behind the door, the stove was making pancakes which filled the house with a rich baked odor and the scent of maple syrup.</p> <p>23 The dog frothed at the mouth, lying at the door, sniffing, its eyes turned to fire. It ran wildly in circles, biting at its tail, spun in a frenzy, and died. It lay in the parlor for an hour.</p> <p>24 <i>Two o'clock</i>, sang a voice.</p> <p>25 Delicately sensing decay at last, the regiments of mice hummed out as softly as blown gray leaves in an electrical wind.</p> <p>26 <i>Two-fifteen.</i></p> <p>27 The dog was gone.</p> <p>28 In the cellar, the incinerator glowed suddenly and a whirl of sparks leaped up the chimney.</p> <p>29 <i>Two thirty-five.</i></p> <p>30 Bridge tables sprouted from patio walls. Playing cards fluttered onto pads in a shower of pips. Martinis manifested on an oaken bench with egg-salad sandwiches. Music played.</p> <p>31 But the tables were silent and the cards untouched.</p> <p>32 At four o'clock the tables folded like great butterflies back through the paneled walls.</p> <p>33 <i>Four-thirty.</i></p> <p>34 The nursery walls glowed.</p> <p>35 Animals took shape: yellow giraffes, blue lions, pink antelopes, lilac panthers cavorting in crystal substance. The</p>	<p>Why the use of a “religious” metaphor?</p> <p>How is the dog symbolic of what happened to its masters?</p> <p>The reference to “evil Baal” becomes an extended metaphor. Why?</p> <p>What is implied by the house continuing to pump out pancakes, but not tend to the starving dog?</p> <p>Why does Bradbury use so much language referring to decay and dying?</p> <p>What does the use of the words “sprouted”, “fluttered”, “shower”, and “butterflies” suggest? How do they contrast with other actions of the house?</p> <p>What is the paradox of the artificial nature being brought into this technologically superior house?</p>
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<p>walls were glass. They looked out upon color and fantasy. Hidden films docked through well-oiled sprockets, and the walls lived. The nursery floor was woven to resemble a crisp, cereal meadow. Over this ran aluminum roaches and iron crickets, and in the hot still air butterflies of delicate red tissue wavered among the sharp aroma of animal spoor! There was the sound like a great matted yellow hive of bees within a dark bellows, the lazy bumble of a purring lion. And there was the patter of okapi feet and the murmur of a fresh jungle rain, like other hoofs, falling upon the summer-starched grass. Now the walls dissolved into distances of parched weed, mile on mile, and warm endless sky. The animals drew away into thorn brakes and water holes.</p> <p>36 It was the children's hour.</p> <p>37 <i>Five o'clock.</i> The bath filled with clear hot water.</p> <p>38 <i>Six, seven, eight o'clock.</i> The dinner dishes manipulated like magic tricks, and in the study a click. In the metal stand opposite the hearth where a fire now blazed up warmly, a cigar popped out, half an inch of soft gray ash on it, smoking, waiting.</p> <p>39 <i>Nine o'clock.</i> The beds warmed their hidden circuits, for nights were cool here.</p> <p>40 <i>Nine-five.</i> A voice spoke from the study ceiling:</p> <p>41 "Mrs. McClellan, which poem would you like this evening?"</p> <p>42 The house was silent.</p> <p>43 The voice said at last, "Since you express no preference, I shall select a poem at random." Quiet music rose to back the voice. "Sara Teasdale. As I recall, your favorite....</p> <p>44 "There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground, And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;  And frogs in the pools singing at night, And wild plum trees in tremulous white;  Robins will wear their feathery fire, Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;  And not one will know of the war, not one Will care at last when it is done.  Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree, If mankind perished utterly;  And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn Would scarcely know that we were gone."</p>	<p>How does Bradbury utilize "white space" in the story?</p> <p>How does the language begin change here? Note "hot", "fire", "blazed", "ash", "warmed". What is being suggested?</p> <p>Is the poem chosen really "random"?</p> <p>The poem opens the same as the story. Why? What are other similarities between the poem and the story?</p> <p>Describe the language used in first three stanzas. What "divides" the poem—where is the shift?</p> <p>How does the language change in the last three stanzas? Why?</p> <p>What hints have we been given</p>
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<p>45 The fire burned on the stone hearth and the cigar fell away into a mound of quiet ash on its tray. The empty chairs faced each other between the silent walls, and the music played.</p> <p>46 At ten o'clock the house began to die.</p> <p>47 The wind blew. A failing tree bough crashed through the kitchen window. Cleaning solvent, bottled, shattered over the stove. The room was ablaze in an instant!</p> <p>48 "Fire!" screamed a voice. The house lights flashed, water pumps shot water from the ceilings. But the solvent spread on the linoleum, licking, eating, under the kitchen door, while the voices took it up in chorus: "Fire, fire, fire!"</p> <p>49 The house tried to save itself. Doors sprang tightly shut, but the windows were broken by the heat and the wind blew and sucked upon the fire.</p> <p>50 The house gave ground as the fire in ten billion angry sparks moved with flaming ease from room to room and then up the stairs. While scurrying water rats squeaked from the walls, pistoled their water, and ran for more. And the wall sprays let down showers of mechanical rain.</p> <p>51 But too late. Somewhere, sighing, a pump shrugged to a stop. The quenching rain ceased. The reserve water supply which had filled baths and washed dishes for many quiet days was gone.</p> <p>52 The fire crackled up the stairs. It fed upon Picassos and Matisse in the upper halls, like delicacies, baking off the oily flesh, tenderly crisping the canvases into black shavings.</p> <p>53 Now the fire lay in beds, stood in windows, changed the colors of drapes!</p> <p>54 And then, reinforcements.</p> <p>55 From attic trapdoors, blind robot faces peered down with faucet mouths gushing green chemical.</p> <p>56 The fire backed off, as even an elephant must at the sight of a dead snake. Now there were twenty snakes whipping over the floor, killing the fire with a clear cold venom of green froth.</p> <p>57 But the fire was clever. It had sent flames outside the house, up through the attic to the pumps there. An explosion! The attic brain which directed the pumps was shattered into bronze shrapnel on the beams.</p> <p>58 The fire rushed back into every closet and felt of the clothes hung there.</p> <p>59 The house shuddered, oak bone on bone, its bared skeleton cringing from the heat, its wire, its nerves revealed as if a surgeon had torn the skin off to let the red veins and capillaries quiver in the scalded air. Help, help! Fire! Run, run!</p>	<p>about the ending of the story?</p> <p>Why drop the use of <i>italics</i> with the times? How has the natural world finally intruded?</p> <p>How does the diction used to describe the fire give it a life of its own?</p> <p>What other natural force assists the fire?</p> <p>What do the verb choices in paragraph 53 suggest? What is the effect of the "reinforcements"?</p> <p>What are the sequence of events in paragraph 57? What has happened to the house?</p> <p>How does Bradbury intensify the personification of the house? What is happening to the house?</p>
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Heat snapped mirrors like the brittle winter ice. And the voices wailed Fire, fire, run, run, like a tragic nursery rhyme, a dozen voices, high, low, like children dying in a forest, alone, alone. And the voices fading as the wires popped their sheathings like hot chestnuts. One, two, three, four, five voices died.

60 In the nursery the jungle burned. Blue lions roared, purple giraffes bounded off. The panthers ran in circles, changing color, and ten million animals, running before the fire, vanished off toward a distant steaming river....

61 Ten more voices died. In the last instant under the fire avalanche, other choruses, oblivious, could be heard announcing the time, playing music, cutting the lawn by remote-control mower, or setting an umbrella frantically out and in the slamming and opening front door, a thousand things happening, like a clock shop when each clock strikes the hour insanely before or after the other, a scene of maniac confusion, yet unity; singing, screaming, a few last cleaning mice darting bravely out to carry the horrid ashes away! And one voice, with sublime disregard for the situation, read poetry aloud in the fiery study, until all the film spools burned, until all the wires withered and the circuits cracked.

62 The fire burst the house and let it slam flat down, puffing out skirts of spark and smoke.

63 In the kitchen, an instant before the rain of fire and timber, the stove could be seen making breakfasts at a psychopathic rate, ten dozen eggs, six loaves of toast, twenty dozen bacon strips, which, eaten by fire, started the stove working again, hysterically hissing!

64 The crash. The attic smashing into kitchen and parlor. The parlor into cellar, cellar into sub-cellar. Deep freeze, armchair, film tapes, circuits, beds, and all like skeletons thrown in a cluttered mound deep under.

65 Smoke and silence. A great quantity of smoke.

66 Dawn showed faintly in the east. Among the ruins, one wall stood alone. Within the wall, a last voice said, over and over again and again, even as the sun rose to shine upon the heaped rubble and steam:

67 "Today is August 5, 2026, today is August 5, 2026, today is..."

Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1985), 166-172.

How does the syntax change in these paragraphs? What is the effect of phrase after phrase joined together? How is the syntax different from the opening of the story? Why such a change here?

In paragraph 65, why does Bradbury use fragments?

How did the Teasdale poem end? How does the end of the story parallel the poem?



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First published in 1879 as “Mark Twain as a Presidential Candidate.”

A Presidential Candidate	My Notes
<p>I have pretty much made up my mind to run for President. What the country wants is a candidate who cannot be injured by investigation of his past history, so that the enemies of the party will be unable to rake up anything against him that nobody ever heard of before. If you know the worst about a candidate, to begin with, every attempt to spring things on him will be checkmated. Now I am going to enter the field with an open record. I am going to own up in advance to all the wickedness I have done, and if any Congressional committee is disposed to prowl around my biography in the hope of discovering any dark and deadly deed that I have secreted, why—let it prowl.</p> <p>In the first place, I admit that I treed a rheumatic grandfather of mine in the winter of 1850. He was old and inexpert in climbing trees, but with the heartless brutality that is characteristic of me I ran him out of the front door in his night-shirt at the point of a shotgun, and caused him to bowl up a maple tree, where he remained all night, while I emptied shot into his legs. I did this because he snored. I will do it again if I ever have another grandfather. I am as inhuman now as I was in 1850. I candidly acknowledge that I ran away at the battle of Gettysburg. My friends have tried to smooth over this fact by asserting that I did so for the purpose of imitating Washington, who went into the woods at Valley Forge for the purpose of saying his prayers. It was a miserable subterfuge. I struck out in a straight line for the Tropic of Cancer because I was scared. I wanted my country saved, but I preferred to have somebody else save it. I entertain that preference yet. If the bubble reputation can be obtained only at the cannon's</p>	

mouth, I am willing to go there for it, provided the cannon is empty. If it is loaded my immortal and inflexible purpose is to get over the fence and go home. My invariable practice in war has been to bring out of every fight two-thirds more men than when I went in. This seems to me to be Napoleonic in its grandeur.

My financial views are of the most decided character, but they are not likely, perhaps, to increase my popularity with the advocates of inflation. I do not insist upon the special supremacy of rag money or hard money. The great fundamental principle of my life is to take any kind I can get.

The rumor that I buried a dead aunt under my grapevine was correct. The vine needed fertilizing, my aunt had to be buried, and I dedicated her to this high purpose. Does that unfit me for the Presidency? The Constitution of our country does not say so. No other citizen was ever considered unworthy of this office because he enriched his grapevines with his dead relatives. Why should I be selected as the first victim of an absurd prejudice?

I admit also that I am not a friend of the poor man. I regard the poor man, in his present condition, as so much wasted raw material. Cut up and properly canned, he might be made useful to fatten the natives of the cannibal islands and to improve our export trade with that region. I shall recommend legislation upon the subject in my first message. My campaign cry will be: "Desiccate the poor workingman; stuff him into sausages."

These are about the worst parts of my record. On them I come before the country. If my country don't want me, I will go back again. But I recommend myself as a safe man—a man who starts from the basis of total depravity and proposes to be fiendish to the last.

Long Walk to Forever by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.	My Notes
<p>1 They had grown up next door to each other, on the fringe of a city, near fields and woods and orchards, within sight of a lovely bell tower that belonged to a school for the blind.</p> <p>2 Now they were twenty, had not seen each other for nearly a year. There had always been playful, comfortable warmth between them, but never any talk of love.</p> <p>3 His name was Newt. Her name was Catharine. In the early afternoon, Newt knocked on Catharine's front door.</p> <p>4 Catharine came to the door. She was carrying a fat, glossy magazine she had been reading. The magazine was devoted entirely to brides. "Newt!" she said. She was surprised to see him.</p> <p>5 "Could you come for a walk?" he said. He was a shy person, even with Catharine. He covered his shyness by speaking absently, as though what really concerned him were far away—as though he were a secret agent pausing briefly on a mission between beautiful, distant, and sinister points. This manner of speaking had always been Newt's style, even in matters that concerned him desperately.</p> <p>6 "A walk?" said Catharine.</p> <p>7 "One foot in front of the other," said Newt, "through leaves, over bridges—"</p> <p>8 "I had no idea you were in town," she said.</p> <p>9 "Just this minute got in," he said.</p> <p>10 "Still in the Army, I see," she said.</p> <p>11 "Seven more months to go," he said. He was a private first class in the Artillery. His uniform was rumpled. His shoes were dusty. He needed a shave. He held out his hand for the magazine. "Let's see the pretty book," he said.</p> <p>12 She gave it to him. "I'm getting married, Newt," she said.</p> <p>13 "I know," he said. "Let's go for a walk."</p> <p>14 "I'm awfully busy, Newt," she said. "The wedding is only a week away."</p> <p>15 "If we go for a walk," he said, "it will make you rosy. It will make you a rosy bride." He turned the pages of the magazine. "A rosy bride like her—like her—like her," he said, showing her rosy brides.</p> <p>16 Catharine turned rosy, thinking about rosy brides.</p> <p>17 "That will be my present to Henry Stewart Chasens," said Newt. "By taking you for a walk, I'll be giving him a rosy bride."</p> <p>18 "You know his name?" said Catharine.</p> <p>19 "Mother wrote," he said. "From Pittsburgh?"</p> <p>20 "Yes," she said. "You'd like him."</p> <p>21 "Maybe," he said.</p> <p>22 "Can—can you come to the wedding, Newt?" she said.</p> <p>23 "That I doubt," he said.</p>	<p>What details does the author use to create a tranquil mood in paragraph 1?</p> <p>What can you infer from the writer's description of Newt in paragraph 5?</p> <p>What details does the author use to characterize Newt in paragraph 11? What can you infer about Newt from these details?</p>

<p>24 "Your furlough isn't for long enough?" she said.  25 "Furlough?" said Newt. He was studying a two-page ad for flat silver. "I'm not on furlough," he said.  26 "Oh?" she said.  27 "I'm what they call A.W.O.L.," said Newt.  28 "Oh, Newt! You're not!" she said.  29 "Sure I am," he said, still looking at the magazine.  30 "Why, Newt?" she said.  31 "I had to find out what your silver pattern is," he said. He read names of silver patterns from the magazine. "Albermarle? Heather?" he said. "Legend? Rambler Rose?" He looked up, smiled. "I plan to give you and your husband a spoon," he said.  32 "Newt, Newt—tell me really," she said.  33 "I want to go for a walk," he said.  34 She wrung her hands in sisterly anguish. "Oh, Newt—you're fooling me about being A.W.O.L.," she said.  35 Newt imitated a police siren softly, raised his eyebrows.  36 "Where—where from?" she said.  37 "Fort Bragg," he said.  38 "North Carolina?" she said.  39 "That's right," he said. "Near Fayetteville—where Scarlet O'Hara went to school."  40 "How did you get here, Newt?" she said.  41 He raised his thumb, jerked it in a hitchhike gesture. "Two days," he said.  42 "Does your mother know?" she said.  43 "I didn't come to see my mother," he told her.  44 "Who did you come to see?" she said.  45 "You," he said.  46 "Why me?" she said.  47 "Because I love you," he said. "Now can we take a walk?" he said. "One foot in front of the other—through leaves, over bridges—"    48 They were taking the walk now, were in a woods with a brown-leaf floor.  49 Catharine was angry and rattled, close to tears. "Newt," she said, "this is absolutely crazy."  50 "How so?" said Newt.  51 "What a crazy time to tell me you love me," she said. "You never talked that way before." She stopped walking.  52 "Let's keep walking," he said.  53 "No," she said. "So far, no farther. I shouldn't have come out with you at all," she said.  54 "You did," he said.  55 "To get you out of the house," she said. "If somebody walked in</p>	<p>What is Catharine's reaction when she learns that Newt is A.W.O.L.? (absent without leave)</p> <p>What is ironic in paragraph 31?</p> <p>What details lead to suspect that Newt does not really want to buy Catharine and Henry a spoon?</p> <p>What can you infer from paragraph 43?</p> <p>Why does Newt repeat this phrase from paragraph 7?</p> <p>Why does the writer include extra space here?</p> <p>Do you think Catherine's</p>
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<p>and heard you talking to me that way a week before the wedding—”</p> <p>56 “What would they think?” he said.</p> <p>57 “They’d think you were crazy,” she said.</p> <p>58 “Why?” he said.</p> <p>59 Catharine took a deep breath, made a speech. “Let me say that I’m deeply honored by this crazy thing you’ve done,” she said. “I can’t believe you’re really A.W.O.L., but maybe you are. I can’t believe you really love me, but maybe you do. But—”</p> <p>60 “I do,” said Newt.</p> <p>61 “Well, I’m deeply honored,” said Catharine, “and I’m very fond of you as a friend, Newt, extremely fond—but it’s just too late.” She took a step away from him. “You’ve never even kissed me,” she said, and she protected herself with her hands. “I don’t mean you should do it now. I just mean this is all so unexpected. I haven’t got the remotest idea of how to respond.”</p> <p>62 “Just walk some more,” he said. “Have a nice time.”</p> <p>63 They started walking again.</p> <p>64 “How did you expect me to react?” she said.</p> <p>65 “How would I know what to expect?” he said. “I’ve never done anything like this before.”</p> <p>66 “Did you think I would throw myself into your arms?” she said.</p> <p>67 “Maybe,” he said.</p> <p>68 “I’m sorry to disappoint you,” she said.</p> <p>69 “I’m not disappointed,” he said. “I wasn’t counting on it. This is very nice, just walking.”</p> <p>70 Catharine stopped again. “You know what happens next?” she said.</p> <p>71 “Nope,” he said.</p> <p>72 “We shake hands,” she said. “We shake hands and part friends,” she said. “That’s what happens next.”</p> <p>73 Newt nodded. “All right,” he said. “Remember me from time to time. Remember how much I loved you.”</p> <p>74 Involuntarily, Catharine burst into tears. She turned her back to Newt, looked into the infinite colonnade of the woods.</p> <p>75 “What does that mean?” said Newt.</p> <p>76 “Rage!” said Catharine. She clenched her hands. “You have no right—”</p> <p>77 “I had to find out,” he said.</p> <p>78 “If I’d loved you,” she said, “I would have let you know before now.”</p> <p>79 “You would?” he said.</p> <p>80 “Yes,” she said. She faced him, looked up at him, her face quite red. “You would have known,” she said.</p> <p>81 “How?” he said.</p> <p>82 “You would have seen it,” she said. “Women aren’t very clever at hiding it.”</p> <p>83 Newt looked closely at Catharine’s face now. To her</p>	<p>real reason is just to get him out of the house? Why?</p> <p>What characteristics does Catherine's speech in paragraph 59 reveal about her?</p> <p>What conflict does Catharine's speech reveal? How does the writer reveal Catharine's affection for Newt?</p> <p>How would you describe Newt's approach to pursuing Catherine? What does this reveal about him?</p> <p>Catherine feels that her tears are caused by rage. What other emotions might be causing her outburst?</p> <p>What are the context clues for the word "consternation"?</p>
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<p>             consternation, she realized that what she had said was true, that a woman couldn't hide love.              84 Newt was seeing love now.              85 And he did what he had to do. He kissed her.           </p> <p>             86 "You're hell to get along with!" she said when Newt let her go.              87 "I am?" said Newt.              88 "You shouldn't have done that," she said.              89 "You didn't like it?" he said.              90 "What did you expect," she said—"wild, abandoned passion?"              91 "I keep telling you," he said, "I never know what's going to happen next."              92 "We say good-bye," she said.              93 He frowned slightly. "All right," he said.              94 She made another speech. "I'm not sorry we kissed," she said. "That was sweet. We should have kissed, we've been so close. I'll always remember you, Newt, and good luck."              95 "You too," he said.              96 "Thank you, Newt," she said.              97 "Thirty days," he said.              98 "What?" she said.              99 "Thirty days in the stockade," he said—"that's what one kiss will cost me."              100 "I—I'm sorry," she said, "but I didn't ask you to go A.W.O.L."              101 "I know," he said.              102 "You certainly don't deserve any hero's reward for doing something as foolish as that," she said.              103 "Must be nice to be a hero," said Newt. "Is Henry Stewart Chasens a hero?"              104 "He might be, if he got the chance," said Catharine. She noted uneasily that they had begun to walk again. The farewell had been forgotten.              105 "You really love him?" he said.              106 "Certainly I love him!" she said hotly. "I wouldn't marry him if I didn't love him!"              107 "What's good about him?" said Newt.              108 "Honestly!" she cried, stopping again. "Do you have an idea how offensive you're being? Many, many, many things are good about Henry! Yes," she said, "and many, many, many things are probably bad too. But that isn't any of your business. I love Henry, and I don't have to argue his merits with you!"              109 "Sorry," said Newt.              110 "Honestly!" said Catharine.              111 Newt kissed her again. He kissed her again because she wanted him to.           </p>	<p>Why does the writer include extra space again?</p> <p>What important change does the writer begin to reveal to the reader?</p> <p>What can you infer from the fact that Catharine continues to walk?</p> <p>Describe Catharine's feelings toward Henry.</p> <p>Why the white space?</p>
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<p>112 They were now in a large orchard.  113 "How did we get so far from home, Newt?" said Catharine.  114 "One foot in front of the other—through leaves, over bridges," said Newt.  115 "They add up—the steps," she said.  116 Bells rang in the tower of the school for the blind nearby.  117 "School for the blind," said Newt.  118 "School for the blind," said Catharine. She shook her head in drowsy wonder. "I've got to go back now," she said.  119 "Say good-bye," said Newt.  120 "Every time I do," said Catharine, "I seem to get kissed."  121 Newt sat down on the close-cropped grass under an apple tree. "Sit down," he said.  122 "No," she said.  123 "I won't touch you," he said.  124 "I don't believe you," she said.  125 She sat down under another tree, 20 feet away from him. She closed her eyes.  126 "Dream of Henry Stewart Chasens," he said.  127 "What?" she said.  128 "Dream of your wonderful husband-to-be," he said.  129 "All right, I will," she said. She closed her eyes tighter, caught glimpses of her husband-to-be.  130 Newt yawned.  131 The bees were humming in the trees, and Catharine almost fell asleep. When she opened her eyes she saw that Newt really was asleep.  132 He began to snore softly.  133 Catharine let Newt sleep for an hour, and while he slept she adored him with all her heart.  134 The shadows of the apple tree grew to the east. The bells in the tower of the school for the blind rang again.  135 "Chick-a-dee-dee-dee," went a chickadee.  136 Somewhere far away an automobile starter nagged and failed, nagged and failed, fell still.  137 Catharine came out from under her tree, knelt by Newt.  138 "Newt?" she said.  139 "H'm?" he said. He opened his eyes.  140 "Late," she said.  141 "Hello, Catharine," he said.  142 "Hello, Newt," she said.  143 "I love you," he said.  144 "I know," she said.  145 "Too late," he said.  146 "Too late," she said.  147 He stood, stretched groaningly. "A very nice walk," he said.  148 "I thought so," she said.</p>	<p>Why does Newt repeat this from paragraph 7 again?</p> <p>Why the repetition of "school for the blind"?</p> <p>Why does Newt tell Catherine to dream of Henry?</p> <p>Why does the writer have Newt yawn in paragraph 130?</p> <p>What are paragraphs 132-137 mostly about? What is the significance of the "starter" in paragraph 136?</p> <p>What is the significance of the short lines beginning with paragraph 138?</p>
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<p>149 "Part company here?" he said. 150 "Where will you go?" she said. 151 "Hitch into town, turn myself in," he said. 152 "Good luck," she said. 153 "You, too," he said. "Marry me, Catharine?" 154 "No," she said. 155 He smiled, stared at her hard for a moment then walked away quickly. 156 Catharine watched him grow smaller in the long perspective of shadows and trees, knew that if he stopped and turned now, if he called to her, she would run to him. She would have no choice. 157 Newt did stop. He did turn. He did call. "Catharine," he said. 158 She ran to him, put her arms around him, could not speak.</p> <p>Long Walk to Forever," from WELCOME TO THE MONKEY HOUSE by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., copyright © 1961 by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.</p>	<p>What characteristic of Newt does paragraph 153 reveal?</p> <p>Why does the writer use short sentences in paragraph 157?</p>
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A word cloud featuring terms associated with the 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, tilted at various angles. The terms include: "alert-eyed", "number", "intelligence service", "classification", "educational", "oraine", "Government", "youngster", "father", "mother", "quotient", "intelligence", "classification", "educational", "oraine", "Government", "youngster", "father", "mother", "quotient". The words are rendered in a variety of colors including purple, blue, green, and brown.

***Examination Day*** by Henry Seslar

The Jordans never spoke of the exam, not until their son, Dickie, was twelve years old. It was on his birthday that Mrs. Jordan first mentioned the subject in his presence, and the anxious manner of her speech caused her husband to answer sharply.

"Forget about it," he said. "He'll do all right."

They were at breakfast table, and the boy looked up from his plate curiously. He was an alert-eyed youngster with flat blond hair and a quick, nervous manner. He didn't understand what the sudden tension was about, but he did know that today was his birthday, and he wanted harmony above all. Somewhere in the little apartment there were wrapped, beribboned packages waiting to be opened, and in the tiny wall-kitchen something warm and sweet was being prepared in the automatic stove. He wanted the day to be happy, and the moistness of his mother's eyes, the scowl on his father's face, spoiled the mood of fluttering expectation with which he had greeted the morning.

"What exam?" he asked.

His mother looked at the tablecloth. "It's just a sort of Government intelligence test they give children at the age of twelve. You'll be taking it next week. It's nothing to worry about."

"You mean a test like in school?"

"Something like that," his father said, getting up from the table. "Go and read your comics, Dickie." The boy rose and wandered towards that part of the living room which had been "his" corner since infancy. He fingered the topmost comic of the stack, but seemed uninterested in the colourful squares of fast-paced action. He wandered towards the window, and peered gloomily at the veil of mist that shrouded the glass.

"Why did it have to rain today?" he said. "Why couldn't it rain tomorrow?"

His father, now slumped into an armchair with the Government newspaper rattled the sheets in vexation. "Because it just did, that's all. Rain makes the grass grow."

"Why, Dad?"

"Because it does, that's all."

Dickie puckered his brow. "What makes it green, though? The grass?"

"Nobody knows," his father snapped, then immediately regretted his abruptness.

Later in the day, it was birthday time again. His mother beamed as she handed over the gaily-coloured packages, and even his father managed a grin and a rumple-of-the-hair. He kissed his mother and shook hands gravely with his father. Then the birthday cake was brought forth, and the ceremonies concluded.

An hour later, seated by the window, he watched the sun force its way between the clouds.

"Dad," he said, "how far away is the sun?"

"Five thousand miles," his father said.

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Dickie sat at the breakfast table and again saw moisture in his mother's eyes. He didn't connect her tears with the exam until his father suddenly brought the subject to light again.

"Well, Dickie," he said, with a manly frown, "you've got an appointment today."

"I know Dad. I hope —"

"Now, it's nothing to worry about. Thousands of children take this test every day. The Government wants to know how smart you are, Dickie. That's all there is to it."

"I get good marks in school," he said hesitantly.

"This is different. This is a — special kind of test. They give you this stuff to drink, you see, and then you go into a room where there's a sort of machine —"

"What stuff to drink?" Dickie said.

"It's nothing. It tastes like peppermint. It's just to make sure you answer the questions truthfully. Not that the Government thinks you won't tell the truth, but it makes sure."

Dickie's face showed puzzlement, and a touch of fright. He looked at his mother, and she composed her face into a misty smile.

"Everything will be all right," she said.

"Of course it will," his father agreed. "You're a good boy, Dickie; you'll make out fine. Then we'll come home and celebrate. All right?"

"Yes sir," Dickie said.

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They entered the Government Educational Building fifteen minutes before the appointed hour. They crossed the marble floors of the great pillared lobby, passed beneath an archway and entered an automatic lift that brought them to the fourth floor.

There was a young man wearing an insignia-less tunic, seated at a polished desk in front of Room 404. He held a clipboard in his hand, and he checked the list down to the Js and permitted the Jordans to enter.

The room was as cold and official as a courtroom, with long benches flanking metal tables. There were several fathers and sons already there, and a thin-lipped woman with cropped black hair was passing out sheets of paper.

Mr. Jordan filled out the form, and returned it to the clerk. Then he told Dickie: "It won't be long now. When they call your name, you just go through the doorway at the end of the room." He indicated the portal with his finger.

A concealed loudspeaker crackled and called off the first name. Dickie saw a boy leave his father's side reluctantly and walk slowly towards the door.

At five minutes to eleven, they called the name of Jordan.

“Good luck, son,” his father said, without looking at him. “I’ll call for you when the test is over.”

Dickie walked to the door and turned the knob. The room inside was dim, and he could barely make out the features of the grey-tunicked attendant who greeted him.

“Sit down,” the man said softly. He indicated a high stool beside his desk. “Your name’s Richard Jordan?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Your classification number is 600-115. Drink this, Richard.”

He lifted a plastic cup from the desk and handed it to the boy. The liquid inside had the consistency of buttermilk, tasted only vaguely of the promised peppermint. Dickie downed it, and handed the man the empty cup.

He sat in silence, feeling drowsy, while the man wrote busily on a sheet of paper. Then the attendant looked at his watch, and rose to stand only inches from Dickie’s face. He unclipped a penlike object from the pocket of his tunic, and flashed a tiny light into the boy’s eyes.

“All right,” he said. “Come with me, Richard.”

He led Dickie to the end of the room, where a single wooden armchair faced a multi-dialed computing machine. There was a microphone on the left arm of the chair, and when the boy sat down, he found its pinpoint head conveniently at his mouth.

“Now just relax, Richard. You’ll be asked some questions, and you think them over carefully. Then give your answers into the microphone. The machine will take care of the rest.”

“Yes, sir.”

“I’ll leave you alone now. Whenever you want to start, just say ‘ready’ into the microphone.”

“Yes, sir.”

The man squeezed his shoulder, and left.

Dickie said, “Ready.”

Lights appeared on the machine, and a mechanism whirred. A voice said: “Complete this sequence. One, four, seven, ten, ...”

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Mr. and Mrs. Jordan were in the living room, not speaking, not even speculating.

It was almost four o’clock when the telephone rang. The woman tried to reach it first, but her husband was quicker.

“Mr. Jordan?”

The voice was clipped: a brisk, official voice.

“Yes, speaking.”

“This is the Government Educational Service. Your son, Richard M. Jordan, Classification 600-115 has completed the Government examination. We regret to inform you that his intelligence quotient has exceeded the Government regulation, according to Rule 84 Section 5 of the New Code.”

Across the room, the woman cried out, knowing nothing except the emotion she read on her husband’s face.

“You may specify by telephone,” the voice droned on, “whether you wish his body interred by the Government, or would you prefer a private burial place? The fee for Government burial is ten dollars.”

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**Instructions:** After reading “Examination Day” by Henry Slesar, revisit the story and answer the following questions. Your answers must be written in complete sentences in order to receive full marks. Use the question given when phrasing your response and incorporate as much as **evidence** from the story as you can.

**Example:**

Q: Who is the protagonist of the story?

A: The protagonist of the short story “Examination Day” is Dickie Jordan.

1. How would you describe the mood of Mr. and Mrs. Jordan at the opening of the story? How do you know? Use evidence to support what you think.

2. Why do you think Mr. and Mrs. Jordan are in this mood?

3. What evidence is there in the first section of the story that Dickie is quite intelligent? What evidence is there to support your answer?

4. What is the “stuff” that Dickie is given to drink before the exam? Why is he given it?

5. “Thousands of children take this test every day. The Government wants to know how smart you are.” Why do you think the “Government” would want to know about the intelligence of its citizens?

6. Do you think that tests are a good thing in school? Should teachers test you to make sure you are learning, or should you not have to bother? Why or why not? Support your answer with evidence from your own experience.

7. Why did Dickie fail the test, what happened to him, and do you think this was fair? Why or why not?

8. Compare the written story to the televised version observed in class. Note the similarities and the differences. Which version had a greater impact for you. Why?

<p><i>Thank You, Ma'am</i> (by Langston Hughes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. She was a large woman with a large purse that had everything in it but hammer and nails. It had a long strap, and she carried it slung across her shoulder. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind her and tried to snatch her purse. The strap broke with the single tug the boy gave it from behind. But the boy's weight and the weight of the purse combined caused him to lose his balance so, instead of taking off full blast as he had hoped, the boy fell on his back on the sidewalk, and his legs flew up. the large woman simply turned around and kicked him right square in his blue-jeaned sitter. Then she reached down, picked the boy up by his shirt front, and shook him until his teeth rattled.</li> <li>2. After that the woman said, "Pick up my pocketbook, boy, and give it here." She still held him. But she bent down enough to permit him to stoop and pick up her purse. Then she said, "Now ain't you ashamed of yourself?"</li> <li>3. Firmly gripped by his shirt front, the boy said, "Yes'm."</li> <li>4. The woman said, "What did you want to do it for?"</li> <li>5. The boy said, "I didn't aim to."</li> <li>6. She said, "You a lie!"</li> <li>7. By that time two or three people passed, stopped, turned to look, and some stood watching.</li> <li>8. "If I turn you loose, will you run?" asked the woman.</li> <li>9. "Yes'm," said the boy.</li> <li>10. "Then I won't turn you loose," said the woman. She did not release him.</li> <li>11. "I'm very sorry, lady, I'm sorry," whispered the boy.</li> <li>12. "Um-hum! And your face is dirty. I got a great mind to wash your face for you. Ain't you got nobody home to tell you to wash your face?"</li> <li>13. "No'm," said the boy.</li> <li>14. "Then it will get washed this evening," said the large woman starting up the street, dragging the frightened boy behind her.</li> <li>15. He looked as if he were fourteen or fifteen, frail and willow-wild, in tennis shoes and blue jeans.</li> <li>16. The woman said, "You ought to be my son. I would teach you right from wrong. Least I can do right now is to wash your face. Are you hungry?"</li> <li>17. "No'm," said the being dragged boy. "I just want</li> </ol>	<p><b>My Notes and Questions</b></p> <p>What can you infer about the woman and/or the boy from the opening paragraph? List facts about both of them. What is the effect of the use of urban dialect (colloquial dialogue)? Is this a story about African-Americans or a broader topic? Explain your answer.</p> <p>What is the effect of the use of alliteration?</p> <p>Is the boy being honest? Supply evidence to prove your judgement. Does he change as you proceed to paragraphs 9-11? Why?</p> <p>Why does the tone of the language change here?</p>
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you to turn me loose.”

18. “Was I bothering you when I turned that corner?” asked the woman.

19. “No’m.”

20. “But you put yourself in contact with me,” said the woman. “If you think that that contact is not going to last awhile, you got another thought coming. When I get through with you, sir, you are going to remember Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones.”

21. Sweat popped out on the boy’s face and he began to struggle. Mrs. Jones stopped, jerked him around in front of her, put a half-nelson about his neck, and continued to drag him up the street. When she got to her door, she dragged the boy inside, down a hall, and into a large kitchenette-furnished room at the rear of the house. She switched on the light and left the door open. The boy could hear other roomers laughing and talking in the large house. Some of their doors were open, too, so he knew he and the woman were not alone. The woman still had him by the neck in the middle of her room.

22. She said, “What is your name?”

23. “Roger,” answered the boy.

24. “Then, Roger, you go to that sink and wash your face,” said the woman, whereupon she turned him loose—at last. Roger looked at the door—looked at the woman—looked at the door—*and went to the sink.*

25. Let the water run until it gets warm,” she said. “Here’s a clean towel.”

26. “You gonna take me to jail?” asked the boy, bending over the sink.

27. “Not with that face, I would not take you nowhere,” said the woman. “Here I am trying to get home to cook me a bite to eat and you snatch my pocketbook! Maybe, you ain’t been to your supper either, late as it be. Have you?”

28. “There’s nobody home at my house,” said the boy.

29. “Then we’ll eat,” said the woman, “I believe you’re hungry—or been hungry—to try to snatch my pocketbook.”

30. “I wanted a pair of blue suede shoes,” said the boy.

31. “Well, you didn’t have to snatch my pocketbook to get some suede shoes,” said Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones. “You could of asked me.”

32. “M’am?”

33. The water dripping from his face, the boy looked at her. There was a long pause. A very long pause. After he had dried his face and not knowing what else to do

dried it again, the boy turned around, wondering what next. The door was open. He could make a dash for it down the hall. He could run, run, run, run, run! things I could not get.”

34. The woman was sitting on the day-bed. After a while she said, “I were young once and I wanted things I could not get.”

35. There was another long pause. The boy’s mouth opened. Then he frowned, but not knowing he frowned.

36. The woman said, “Um-hum! You thought I was going to say *but*, didn’t you? You thought I was going to say, *but I didn’t snatch people’s pocketbooks*. Well, I wasn’t going to say that.” Pause. Silence. “I have done things, too, which I would not tell you, son—neither tell God, if he didn’t already know. So you set down while I fix us something to eat. You might run that comb through your hair so you will look presentable.”

37. In another corner of the room behind a screen was a gas plate and an icebox. Mrs. Jones got up and went behind the screen. The woman did not watch the boy to see if he was going to run now, nor did she watch her purse which she left behind her on the day-bed. But the boy took care to sit on the far side of the room where he thought she could easily see him out of the corner of her eye, if she wanted to. He did not trust the woman not to trust him. And he did not want to be mistrusted now.

38. “Do you need somebody to go to the store,” asked the boy, “maybe to get some milk or something?”

39. “Don’t believe I do,” said the woman, “unless you just want sweet milk yourself. I was going to make cocoa out of this canned milk I got here.”

40. “That will be fine,” said the boy.

41. She heated some lima beans and ham she had in the icebox, made the cocoa, and set the table. The woman did not ask the boy anything about where he lived, or his folks, or anything else that would embarrass him. Instead, as they ate, she told him about her job in a hotel beauty-shop that stayed open late, what the work was like, and how all kinds of women came in and out, blondes, red-heads, and Spanish. Then she cut him a half of her ten-cent cake.

42. “Eat some more, son,” she said.

43. When they were finished eating she got up and said, “Now, here, take this ten dollars and buy yourself some blue suede shoes. And next time, do not make the mistake of latching onto my pocketbook nor nobody



else's—because shoes come by devilish like that will burn your feet. I got to get my rest now. But I wish you would behave yourself, son, from here on in."

45. She led him down the hall to the front door and opened it. "Good-night! Behave yourself, boy!" she said, looking out into the street.

46. The boy wanted to say something else other than "Thank you, m'am" to Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones, but he couldn't do so as he turned at the barren stoop and looked back at the large woman in the door. He barely managed to say "Thank you" before she shut the door. And he never saw her again.

*A Victim Treats His Mugger Right*

**npr.org/** Opinion

March 28, 2008

STEVE INSKEEP, host:

And on this Friday morning, it's time once again for StoryCorps, the project that records Americans talking about their lives.

Today we hear the story of 31-year-old Julio Diaz. He's a social worker from the Bronx in New York City and he has a daily routine. Every night he ends his hour-long subway commute to the Bronx one stop early just so he can eat at his favorite diner. But one night last month as Mr. Diaz stepped off the train and onto a nearly empty platform his evening took an unexpected turn.

Mr. JULIO DIAZ (Social Worker): So I get off the train and I'm walking towards the stairs and this young teenager pulls out a knife. He wants my money, so I just gave him my wallet and told him here you go.

He starts to leave and as he's walking away I'm like, hey, wait a minute, you forgot something. If you're gonna be robbing people for the rest of the night you might as well take my coat to keep you warm.

So, you know, he's looking at me like, what's going on here, you know. And he asked me, well, why are you doing this? And I'm like, well, I don't know, man, if you're willing to risk your freedom for a few dollars, then I guess you must really need the money. I mean all I wanted to do was go get dinner and if you really want to join me, hey, you're more than welcome. But I'm like, look, you can follow me if you want. You know, I just felt like maybe he really needs help.

So, you know, we go into the diner where I normally eat. We sit down in a booth and the manager comes by, the dishwashers come by, the waiters come by to say hi, you know. So the kid is like, man, you know everybody here. Do you own this place? I'm like, no, I just eat here a

lot. He said, but you're even nice to the dishwasher.

I'm like, well, haven't you been taught you should be nice to everybody. So he's like, yeah, but I didn't think people actually behaved that way. So I just asked him, I'm like, you know, what is it that you want out of life? He just had almost a sad face. Either he couldn't answer me or he didn't want to.

The bill came and I looked at him and I'm like, look, I guess you're gonna have to pay for this bill 'cause you have my money and I can't pay for this, so if you give me my wallet back, I'll gladly treat you. He didn't even think about it. He's like, yeah, okay, here you go.

So I got my wallet back. And I gave, you know, I gave him \$20 for, you know, I figure maybe it will help him, I don't know. And when I gave him the \$20 I asked him to give me something in return, which was his knife. And he gave it to me.

You know, it's funny 'cause when I told my mom about what happened, you know, no mom wants to hear this, but with her she was like, well, you know, you're the type of kid that always if someone asked you for the time, you gave them your watch.

I don't know, I figure, you know, you treat people right, you can only hope that they treat you right. It's as simple as it gets in this complicated world.

INSKEEP: That's Julio Diaz at StoryCorps in New York City. His interview will be archived along with all the others at the American Folk Life Center at the Library of Congress. Copyright © 2008 NPR. All rights reserved.

URSULA K. LEGUIN

## The Wife's Story

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He was a good husband, a good father. I don't understand it. I don't believe in it. I don't believe that it happened. I saw it happen but it isn't true. It can't be. He was always gentle. If you'd have seen him playing with the children, anybody who saw him with the children would have known that there wasn't any bad in him, not one mean bone. When I first met him he was still living with his mother, over near Spring Lake, and I used to see them together, the mother and the sons, and think that any young fellow that was that nice with his family must be one worth knowing. Then one time when I was walking in the woods I met him by himself coming back from a hunting trip. He hadn't got any game at all, not so much as a field mouse, but he wasn't cast down about it. He was just larking along enjoying the morning air. That's one of the things I first loved about him. He didn't take things hard, he didn't grouch and whine when things didn't go his way. So we got to talking that day. And I guess things moved right along after that, because pretty soon he was over here pretty near all the time. And my sister said — see, my parents had moved out the year before and gone south, leaving us the place — my sister said, kind of teasing but serious, "Well! If he's going to be here every day and half the night, I guess there isn't room for me!" And she moved out — just down the way. We've always been real close, her and me. That's the sort of thing doesn't ever change. I couldn't ever have got through this bad time without my sis.

Well, so he come to live here. And all I can say is, it was the happiest year of my life. He was just purely good to me. A hard worker and never lazy, and so big and fine-looking. Everybody looked up to him, you know, young as he was. Lodge Meeting nights, more and more often they had him to lead the singing. He had such a beautiful voice, and he'd lead off strong, and the others following and joining in, high voices and low. It brings the shivers on me now to think of it, hearing it, nights when I'd stayed home from meeting when the children was babies — the singing coming up through the trees there, and the moonlight, summer nights, the full moon shining. I'll never hear anything so beautiful. I'll never know a joy like that again.

It was the moon, that's what they say. It's the moon's fault, and the blood. It was in his father's blood. I never knew his father, and now I wonder what become of him. He was from up Whitewater way, and had no kin around here. I always thought he went back there, but now I don't know. There was some talk about him, tales that come out after what happened to my husband. It's something runs in the blood, they say, and it may never come out, but if it does, it's the change of the moon that does it. Always it happens in the dark of the moon, when everybody's home and asleep. Something comes over the one that's got the curse in his blood, they say, and he gets up because he can't sleep, and goes out into the glaring sun, and goes off all alone — drawn to find those like him.

And it may be so, because my husband would do that. I'd half rouse and say, "Where you going to?" and he'd say, "Oh, hunting, be back this evening," and it wasn't like him, even his voice was different. But I'd be so sleepy, and not wanting to wake the kids, and he was so good and responsible, it was no call of mine to go asking "Why?" and "Where?" and all like that.

So it happened that way maybe three times or four. He'd come back late and worn out, and pretty near cross for one so sweet-tempered — not wanting to talk about it. I figured everybody got to bust out now and then, and nagging never helped anything. But it did begin to worry me. Not so much that he went, but that he come back so tired and strange. Even, he smelled strange. It made my hair stand up on end. I could not endure it and I said, "What is that — those smells on you? All over you!" And he said, "I don't know," real short, and made like he was sleeping. But he went down when he thought I wasn't noticing, and washed and washed himself. But those smells stayed in his hair, and in our bed, for days.

And then the awful thing. I don't find it easy to tell about this. I want to cry when I have to bring it to my mind. Our youngest, the little one, my baby, she turned from her father. Just overnight. He come in and she got scared-looking, stiff, with her eyes wide, and then she begun to cry and try to hide behind me. She didn't yet talk plain but she was saying over and over, "Make it go away! Make it go away!"

The look in his eyes; just for one moment, when he heard that. That's what I don't want-ever to remember. That's what I can't forget. The look in his eyes looking at his own child.

I said to the child, "Shame on you, what's got into you!" — scolding, but keeping her right up close to me at the same time, because I was frightened too. Frightened to shaking.

He looked away then and said something like, "Guess she just waked up dreaming," and passed it off that way. Or tried to. And so did I. And I got real mad with my baby when she kept on acting crazy scared of her own dad. But she couldn't help it and I couldn't change it.

He kept away that whole day. Because he knew, I guess. It was just beginning dark of the moon.

It was hot and close inside, and dark, and we'd all been asleep some while, when something woke me up. He wasn't there beside me. I heard a little stir in the passage, when I listened. So I got up, because I could bear it no longer. I went out into the passage, and it was light there, hard sunlight coming in from the door. And I saw him standing just outside, in the tall grass by the entrance. His head was hanging. Presently he sat down, like he felt weary, and looked down at his feet. I held still, inside, and watched — I didn't know what for.

And I saw what he saw. I saw the changing. In his feet, it was, first. They got long, each foot got longer, stretching out, the toes stretching out and the foot getting long, and fleshy, and white. And no hair on them.

The hair begun to come away all over his body. It was like his hair fried away in the sunlight and was gone. He was white all over then, like a worm's skin. And he turned his face. It was changing while I looked, it got flatter and flatter, the mouth flat and wide, and the teeth grinning flat and dull, and the nose just a knob of flesh with nostril holes, and the ears gone, and the eyes gone blue — blue, with white rims around the blue — staring at me out of that flat, soft, white face.

He stood up then on two legs.

I saw him, I had to see him. My own dear love, turned in the hateful one.

I couldn't move, but as I crouched there in the passage staring out into the day I was trembling and shaking with a growl that burst out into a crazy awful howling. A grief howl and a terror howl. And the others heard it, even sleeping, and woke up.

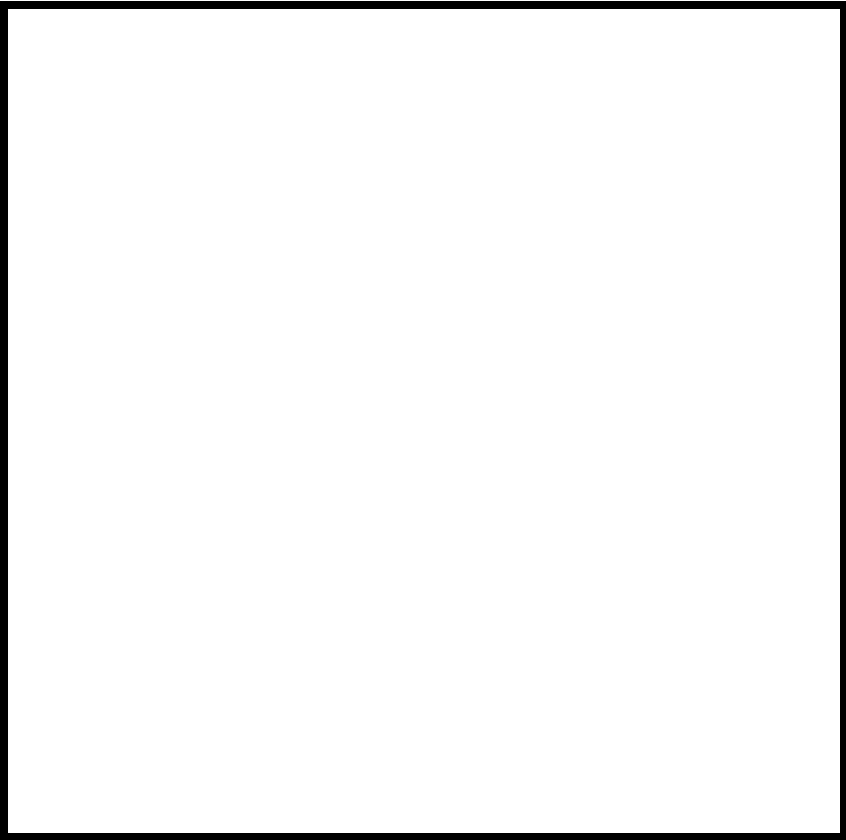
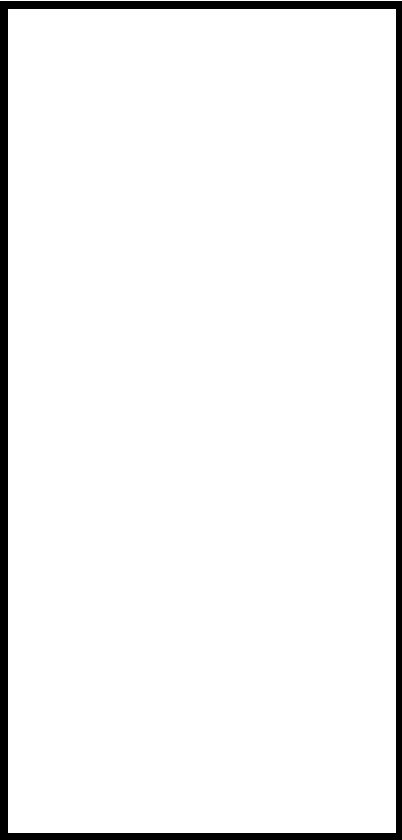
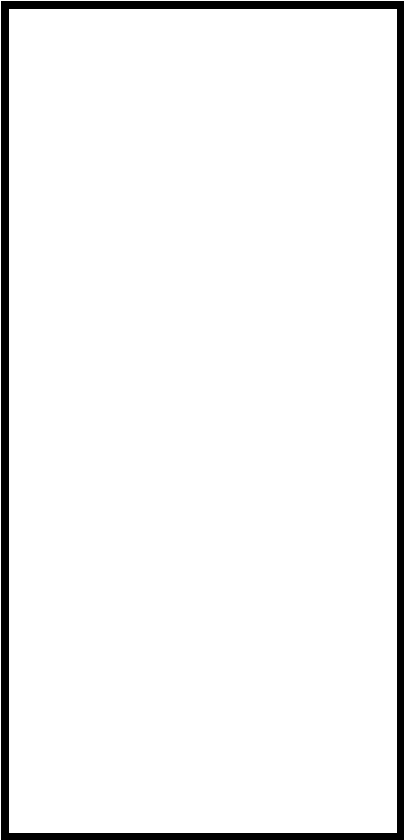
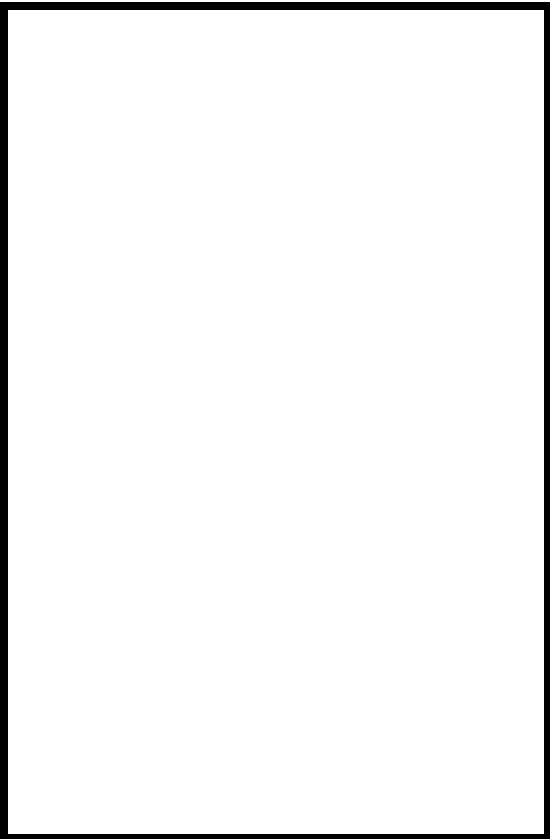
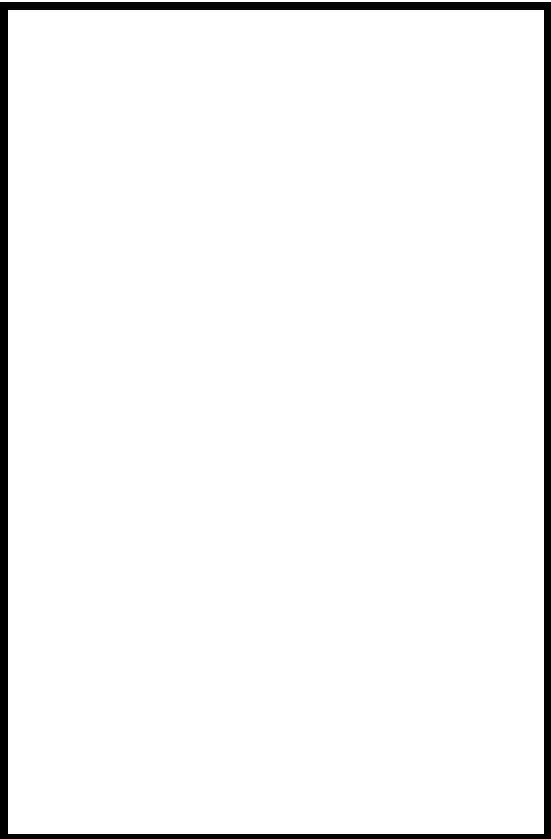
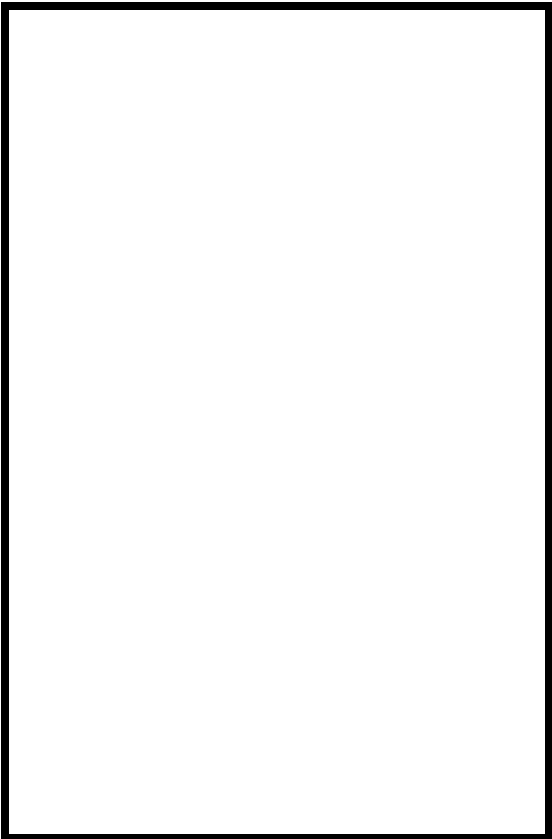
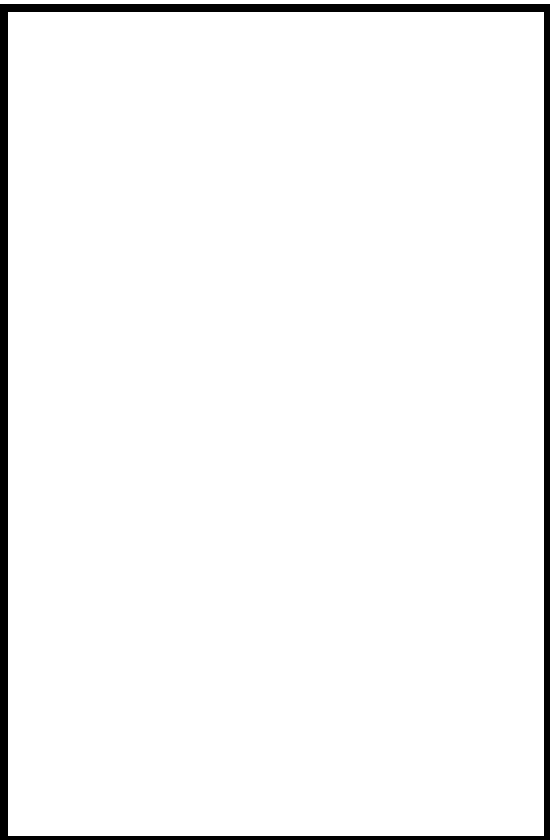
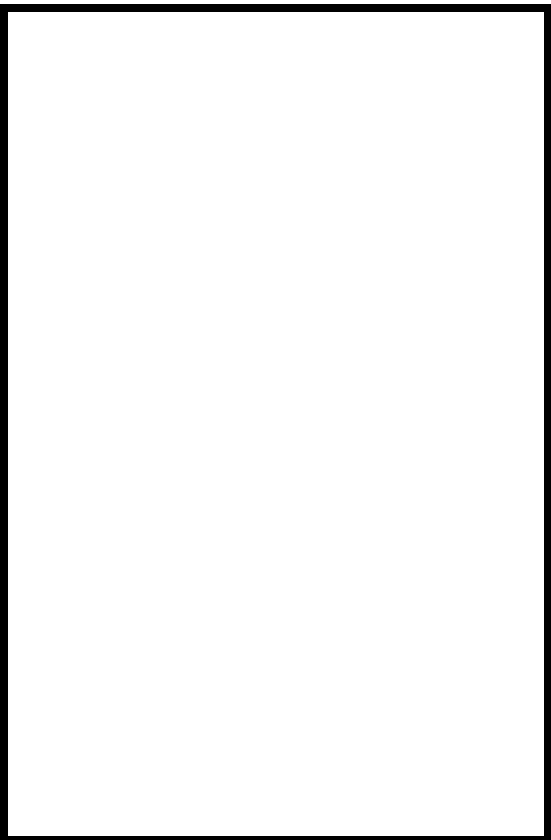
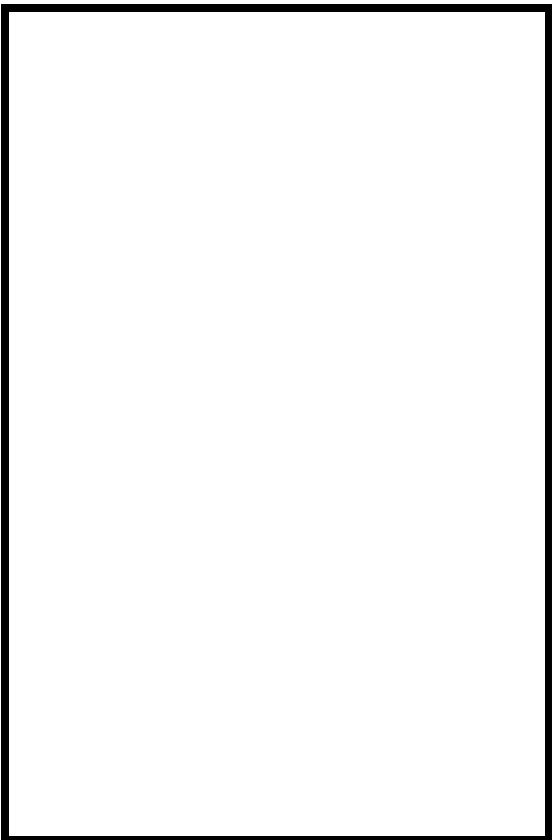
It stared and peered, that thing my husband had turned into, and shoved its face up to the entrance of our house. I was still bound by mortal fear, but behind me the children had waked up, and the baby was whimpering. The mother anger come into me then, and I snarled and crept forward.

The man thing looked around. It had no gun, like the ones from the man places do. But it picked up a heavy fallen tree branch in its long white foot, and shoved the end of that down into our house, at me. I snapped the end of it in my teeth and started to force my way out, because I knew the man would kill our children if it could. But my sister was already coming. I saw her running at the man with her head low and her mane high and her eyes yellow as the winter sun. It turned on her and raised up that branch to hit her. But I come out of the doorway, mad with the mother anger, and the others all were coming answering my call, the whole pack gathering, there in that blind glare and heat of the sun at noon.

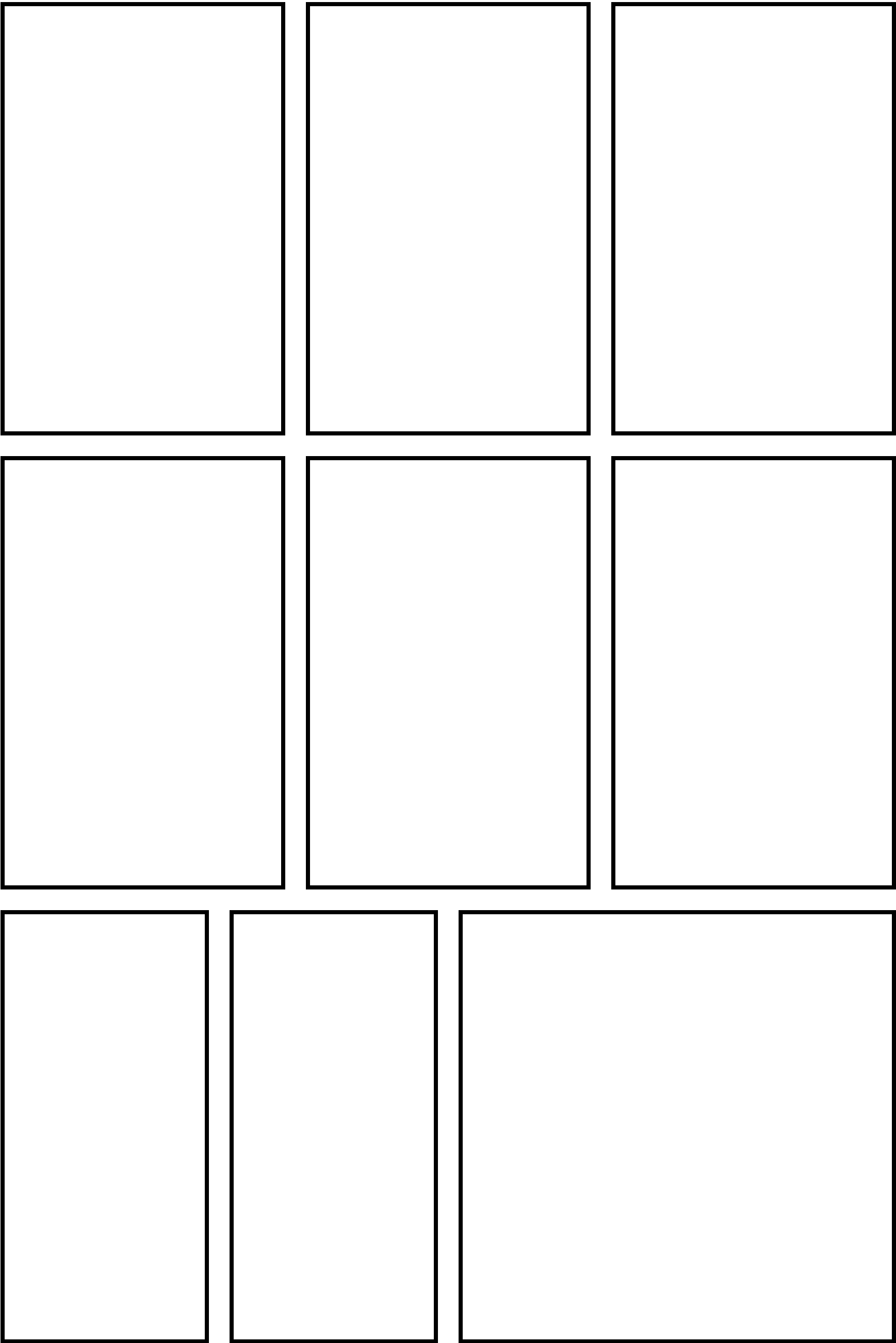
The man looked round at us and yelled out loud, and brandished the branch it held. Then it broke and ran, heading for the cleared fields and plowlands, down the mountainside. It ran, on two legs, leaping and weaving, and we followed it.

I was last, because love still bound the anger and the fear in me. I was running when I saw them pull it down. My sister's teeth were in its throat. I got there and it was dead. The others were drawing back from the kill, because of the taste of the blood, and the smell. The younger ones were cowering and some crying, and my sister rubbed her mouth against her fore legs over and over to get rid of the taste. I went up close because I thought if the thing was dead the spell, the curse must be done, and my husband could come back — alive, or even dead, if I could only see him, my true love, in his true form, beautiful. But only the dead man lay there white and bloody. We drew back and back from it, and turned and ran back up into the hills, back to the woods of the shadows and the twilight and the blessed dark.

Elements of Fiction	
ELEMENT	How does the author use these elements to <u>develop</u> the central idea? Give examples and page numbers to support your assertion. You will be writing about the author's technique and using <u>text</u> to support your assertion.
PLOT/CONFLICT	(example) The author uses plot/conflict to express (convey, articulate, etc.) the theme ( <u>state the theme</u> ) by ( <u>type of technique</u> ). This can be seen on page ( <u>#</u> ), where ( <u>example from the text</u> ).
CHARACTER	
SETTING	
POINT OF VIEW	
STYLE	
TONE, IMAGERY AND SYMBOL	







# Story Pyramid

Use a story pyramid to describe important information from a story, such as the main character, the setting, and the major events in the plot. Carefully choose your words in order to provide a precise description. You may wish to use a dictionary and a thesaurus.

Here are the directions for writing a story pyramid:

Capitalize the first word in each line.

**Line 1** — *one word, stating the name of main character*

**Line 2** — *two words, describing the main character*

**Line 3** — *three words, describing the setting*

**Line 4** — *four words, stating the problem*

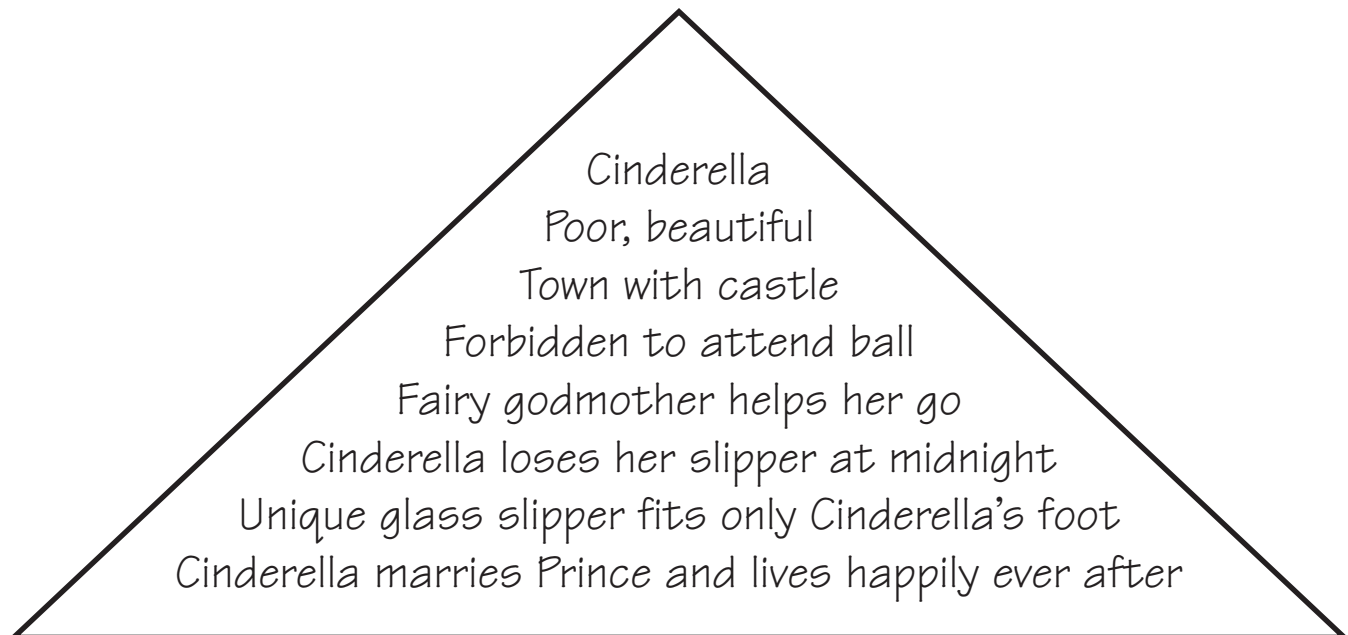
**Line 5** — *five words, describing one event*

**Line 6** — *six words, describing a second event*

**Line 7** — *seven words, describing third event*

**Line 8** — *eight words, stating the solution to the problem*

Here is an example of a story pyramid:



Create your own story pyramid using the example above as a guide. On a separate piece of paper, make a large pyramid shape. In the shape, write a story pyramid for a book you have read. If you wish, fill the area around the outside of the pyramid with an illustration representing the subject of the story pyramid.

**Short Story Countdown: 5-4-3-2-1**

**5. Write a summary in five sentences.**

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.) \_\_\_\_\_

**4. List four important characters. Why are they important in the story?**

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.) \_\_\_\_\_

**3. List three quotations (page #s in parenthesis) from the story and explain their significance.**

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Locate two literary devices used. Write down the quotations and location (page #s in parenthesis). What devices are they? Why are they used?**

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_

**1. What is one symbol used in the story? Write down any quotations and their locations (page #s in parenthesis). Why is the symbol used? Why is it effective?**

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_

**Use the back of this paper if you need more room to write your answers.**