

From *The Danger of a Single Story*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Adichie, a successful novelist, delivered this speech at a TED conference. She speaks about the power of storytelling and the danger of a single view.

5 I'm a storyteller. And I would like to tell you a few personal stories about what I like to call "the danger of the single story." I grew up on a university campus in eastern Nigeria. My mother says that I started reading at the age of two, although I think four is probably close to the truth. So I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books.

10 I was also an early writer, and when I began to write, at about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obligated to read. I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading: all my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out.

Now, this despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria. I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to. ...

15 What this demonstrates, I think, is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books by their very nature had to have foreigners in them and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify. Now, things changed when I discovered African books. There weren't many of them available, and they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books.

20 But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the colour of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized.

25 Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: it saved me from having a single story of what books are.

30 I come from a conventional, middle-class Nigerian family. My father was a professor. My mother was an administrator. And so we had, as was the norm, live-in domestic help, who would often come from nearby rural villages. So, the year I turned eight, we got a new house boy. His name was Fide. The only thing my mother told us about him was that his family was very poor. My mother sent yams and rice, and our old clothes, to his family. And when I didn't finish my dinner, my mother would say, "Finish your food! Don't you know? People like Fide's family have nothing." So I felt enormous pity for

tucked the hood over her head. There was a brief intimation of a thin, angular skull under her feathers, of an alien brain fizzing and fusing with terror, then I drew the braces closed. We checked the ring numbers against the form.

It was the wrong bird. This was the younger one. The smaller one. This was not my hawk.

So we put her back and opened the other box, which was meant to hold the larger, older bird. And dear God, it did. Everything about this second hawk was different. She came out like a Victorian melodrama: a sort of madwoman in the attack. She was smokier and darker and much, much bigger, and instead of twittering, she wailed; great, awful gouts of sound like a thing in pain, and the sound was unbearable. This is my hawk, I was telling myself and it was all I could do to breathe. She too was bareheaded, and I grabbed the hood from the box as before. But as I brought it up to her face I looked into her eyes and saw something blank and crazy in her stare. Some madness from a distant country. I didn't recognise her. This isn't my hawk. The hood was on, the ring numbers checked, the bird back in the box, the yellow form folded, the money exchanged, and all I could think was, But this isn't my hawk. Slow panic. I knew what I had to say, and it was a monstrous breach of etiquette. 'This is really awkward,' I began. 'But I really liked the first one. Do you think there's any chance I could take that one instead ...?' I tailed off. His eyebrows were raised. I started again, saying stupider things: 'I'm sure the other falconer would like the larger bird? She's more beautiful than the first one, isn't she? I know this is out of order, but ... Could I? Would it be all right, do you think?' And on and on, a desperate, crazy barrage of incoherent appeals.

I'm sure nothing I said persuaded him more than the look on my face as I said it. A tall, white-faced woman with wind-wrecked hair and exhausted eyes was pleading with him on a quayside, hands held out as if she were in a seaside production of Medea. Looking at me he must have sensed that my stuttered request wasn't a simple one. That there was something behind it that was very important. There was a moment of total silence.

|||

Anonymous
Promans referring to
other veterans not
just himself

ion of voices suggests
he's the only person
can hear them - maybe
are voices in his head

Remembering
his youth

Disabled - metonym, replaces his personality / identify
he's been forgotten despite fighting for his country

He has PTSD
he's a war veteran
background

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,
And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,
Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park
Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,
Voices of play and pleasures after day,
Till gathering sleep had mothered them from him.

About this time Town used to swing so gay

When glow-lamps budded in the light blue trees,
And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew dim -

In the old times, before he threw away his knees.
Now he will never feel again how slim
Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands;
All of them touch him like some queer disease.

There was an artist silly for his face,
For it was younger than his youth, last year.

Now, he is old; his back will never brace;
He's lost his colour very far from here,
Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry,
And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race,
And leap of purple spouted from his thigh.

One time he liked a blood-smear down his leg,
After the matches, carried shoulder-high.
It was after football, when he'd drunk a peg,
He thought, "I'll have a better join." - He wonders why.
Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts,
That's why; and maybe, too, to please his Meg;
Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts;
He asked to join. He didn't have to beg;

Smiling they wrote his lie, aged nineteen years.
Germans he scarcely thought of; all their guilt,
And Austria's, did not move him. And no fears
Of Fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts
For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;
And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;
Esprit de corps; and hints for young recruits;
And soon he was drafted out with drums and cheers.

Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer Goal;
Only a solemn man who brought him fruits
Thanked him, and then inquired about his soul.

Now, he will spend a few sick years in Institutes,
And do what things the rules consider wise,
And take whatever pity they may dole;
Tonight he noticed how the women's eyes
Passed from him to the solid men that were whole.

They were quick
to draft him

metaphor shows
how he
lost his life

soiled cloth as your gaze turns towards her. Or the old and dying man who keeps his hoe next to the mat with which, one day soon, they will shroud his corpse, as if he means to go out and till the soil once all this is over.

I saw that face for only a few seconds, a fleeting meeting of eyes before the face turned away, as its owner retreated into the darkness of another hut. In those brief moments there had been a smile, not from me, but from the face. It was not a smile of greeting, it was not a smile of joy — how could it be? — but it was a smile nonetheless. It touched me in a way I could not explain. It moved me in a way that went beyond pity or revulsion.

What was it about that smile? I had to find out. I urged my translator to ask the man why he had smiled. He came back with an answer. 'It's just that he was embarrassed to be found in this condition,' the translator explained. And then it clicked. That's what the smile had been about. It was the feeble smile that goes with apology, the kind of smile you might give if you felt you had done something wrong.

Normally inured³ to stories of suffering, accustomed to the evidence of deprivation, I was unsettled by this one smile in a way I had never been before. There is an unwritten code between the journalist and his subjects in these situations. The journalist observes, the subject is observed. The journalist is active, the subject is passive. But this smile had turned the tables on that tacit agreement. Without uttering a single word, the man had posed a question that cut to the heart of the relationship between me and him, between us and them, between the rich world and the poor world. If he was embarrassed to be found weakened by hunger and ground down by conflict, how should I feel to be standing there so strong and confident?

I resolved there and then that I would write the story of Gufgaduud with all the power and purpose I could muster. It seemed at the time, and still does, the only adequate answer a reporter can give to the man's question.

I have one regret about that brief encounter in Gufgaduud. Having searched through my notes and studied the dispatch that the BBC broadcast, I see that I never found out what the man's name was. Yet meeting him was a seminal moment in the gradual collection of experiences we call context. Facts and figures are the easy part of journalism. Knowing where they sit in the great scheme of things is much harder. So, my nameless friend, if you are still alive, I owe you one.

From The Explorer's Daughter, Kari Herbert

As a small child, Herbert lived, with her family, among the Inughuit people (sometimes called Inuits, or Eskimos) in the harsh environment of the Arctic. In 2002 she revisited the area, staying near Thule, a remote settlement in North Greenland. In this passage she writes about her experience of watching a hunt for the narwhal, a toothed whale, and what she thought and felt about it.

Two hours after the last of the hunters had returned and eaten, narwhal were spotted again, this time very close. Within an hour even those of us on shore could with the naked eye see the plumes of spray from the narwhal catching the light in a spectral play of colour. Two large pods¹ of narwhal circled in the fjord², often looking as if they were going to merge, but always slowly, methodically passing each other by. Scrambling back up to the lookout I looked across the glittering kingdom in front of me and took a sharp intake of breath. The hunters were dotted all around the fjord. The evening light was turning butter-gold, glinting off man and whale and catching the soft billows of smoke from a lone hunter's pipe. From where we sat at the lookout it looked as though the hunters were close enough to touch the narwhal with their bare hands and yet they never moved. Distances are always deceptive in the Arctic, and I fell to wondering if the narwhal existed at all or were instead mischievous tricks of the shifting light. ...

The narwhal rarely stray from High Arctic waters, escaping only to the slightly more temperate waters towards the Arctic Circle in the dead of winter, but never entering the warmer southern seas. In summer the hunters of Thule are fortunate to witness the annual return of the narwhal to the Inglefield Fjord, on the side of which we now sat.

The narwhal ... is an essential contributor to the survival of the hunters in the High Arctic. The mattak or blubber³ of the whale is rich in necessary minerals and vitamins, and in a place where the climate prohibits the growth of vegetables or fruit, this rich source of vitamin C was the one reason that the Eskimos have never suffered from scurvy⁴. ... For centuries the blubber of the whales was also the only source of light and heat, and the dark rich meat is still a valuable part of the diet for both man and dogs (a single narwhal can feed a team of dogs for an entire month). Its single ivory tusk, which can grow up to six feet in length, was used for harpoon tips and handles for other hunting implements (although the ivory was found to be brittle and not hugely satisfactory as a weapon), for carving protective tupilaks⁵, and even as a central beam for their small ancient dwellings. Strangely, the tusk seems to have little use for the narwhal itself; they do not use the tusk to break through ice as a breathing hole, nor will they use it to catch or attack prey, but rather the primary use seems to be to disturb the top of the sea bed in order to catch Arctic halibut for which they have a particular predilection⁶. Often the ends of their tusks are worn down or even broken from such usage.

The women clustered on the knoll of the lookout, binoculars pointing in every direction, each woman focusing on her husband or family member, occasionally spinning round at a small gasp or jump as one of the women saw a hunter near a narwhal. ... Each wife knew her husband instinctively and watched their progress intently; it was crucial to her that her husband catch a narwhal — it was part of their staple diet, and some of the

¹ pods: small groups of whales

² fjord: a long, narrow inlet of the sea with steep sides

³ mattak or blubber: the fatty skin of the whale

⁴ scurvy: a painful, weakening disease caused by a lack of vitamin C

⁵ tupilaks: figures with magical powers, charms

From A Passage to Africa, George Alagiah

Alagiah writes about his experiences as a television reporter during the war in Somalia, Africa in the 1990s. He won a special award for his report on the incidents described in this passage.

I saw a thousand **hungry, lean, scared and betrayed** faces as I criss-crossed Somalia between the end of 1991 and December 1992, **but there is one I will never forget.**

Hypertrophic and listing = emphasizes isolation

I was in a little hamlet just outside Gufgaduud, a village in **the back of beyond**, a place the aid agencies had yet to reach. In my notebook I had jotted down instructions on how to get there. **'Take the Badale Road for a few kilometres till the end of the tarmac, turn right on to a dirt track, stay on it for about forty-five minutes – Gufgaduud. Go another fifteen minutes approx. – like a ghost village.'** ...

In the **ghoulish** manner of journalists on the **hunt** for the most striking pictures, my cameraman ... and I **tramped** from one hut to another. What might have appalled us when **we'd started** our trip just a few days before **no longer impressed us much**. The search for the shocking **is like the craving for a drug**; you require heavier and more frequent doses the longer you're at it. Pictures that stun the editors one day are written off as the same **old stuff** the next. This sounds callous, but it is just a fact of life. It's how we collect and compile the images that so move people in the **comfort** of their sitting rooms back home.

Dismissive = dehumanizes the subjects of those images

There was Amina Abdirahman, who had gone out that morning in search of wild, edible roots, leaving her two young girls lying on the dirt floor of their hut. They had been sick for days, and were reaching the final, **enervating** stages of terminal hunger. Habiba was ten years old and her sister, Ayaan, was nine. By the time Amina returned, she had only one daughter. **Habiba had died. No rage, no whimpering**, just a passing away – that **simple, frictionless, motionless deliverance** from a state of **half-life** to death itself. It was, as I said at the time in my dispatch, a vision of 'famine away from the headlines, a famine of quiet suffering and lonely death'.

Simple sentence = clinician

There was the old woman who lay in her hut, abandoned by relations who were too weak to carry her on their journey to find food. It was the smell that drew me to her doorway: the smell of decaying flesh. Where her shinbone should have been there was a festering wound the size of my hand. She'd been shot in the leg as the retreating army of the deposed dictator ... took revenge on whoever it found in its way. The shattered leg had fused into the **gentle** V-shape of a boomerang. **It was rotting; she was rotting.** You could see it in her sick, yellow eyes and smell it in the putrid air she recycled with every struggling breath she took.

Appeal to senses

Language choice

And then there was the face I will never forget.

My reaction to everyone else I met that day was a mixture of pity and **revulsion**¹. Yes, **revulsion**. The degeneration of the human body, sucked of its natural vitality by the twin evils of hunger and disease, is a disgusting thing. We never say so in our TV reports. [It's a taboo that has yet to be breached. To be in a feeding centre is to hear and smell the excretion of fluids by people who are beyond controlling their bodily functions. To be in a feeding centre is surreptitiously² to wipe your hands on the back of your trousers after you've held the clammy palm of a mother who has just cleaned vomit from her child's mouth.]

One sentence paragraph = importance

Asks

There's pity, too, because even in this state of utter despair they aspire to a dignity that is almost impossible to achieve. An old woman will cover her shrivelled body with a

¹ revulsion: disgust

² surreptitiously: secretly

From *H Is for Hawk*, Helen Macdonald

When Macdonald's father died suddenly of a heart attack, Macdonald was devastated. An experienced falconer, she adopted a goshawk to distract her from her grief. In this extract Macdonald meets her hawk for the first time.

'We'll check the ring numbers against the Article 10s,' he explained, pulling a sheaf of yellow paper from his rucksack and unfolding two of the official forms that accompany captive-bred rare birds throughout their lives. **'Don't want you going home with the wrong bird.'**

We noted the numbers. We stared down at the boxes, at their parcel-tape handles, their doors of thin plywood and hinges of carefully tied string. Then he knelt on the concrete, untied a hinge on the smaller box and squinted into its dark interior. A sudden **thump** of feathered shoulders and the box **shook** as if someone had **punched it, hard**, from within.

'She's got her hood off,' he said, and **frowned**. That **light, leather hood** was **to keep the hawk from fearful sights. Like us.**

Another hinge untied. Concentration. Infinite caution. Daylight irrigating the box.

Scratching talons, **another thump**. And another. **thump**. The air turned syrupy, slow, flecked with dust. **The last few seconds before a battle.** And with the last bow pulled

free, he reached inside, and amidst a whirring, **chaotic clatter** of wings and feet and

talons and a high-pitched twittering and it's all happening at once, the man pulls an

enormous, **enormous** hawk out of the box and in a strange coincidence of world and

deed **a great flood of sunlight drenches us and everything is brilliance and fury. The**

hawk's wings, barred and beating, the sharp fingers of her dark-tipped primaries cutting

the air, her feathers raised like the scattered quills of a fretful porpentine¹. Two

enormous eyes. **She is a conjuring trick. A reptile. A**

Something bright and

distant, like gold falling through water. A broken marionette³ of wings, legs and light-

splashed feathers. She is wearing jesses⁴, and the man holds them. For one awful, long

moment she is hanging head-downward, wings open, like a turkey in a butcher's shop,

only her head is turned right-way-up and she is seeing more than she has ever seen

before in her whole short life. **Her world was an aviary no larger than a living room.** Then

it was a box. But now it is this; and she can see everything: the point-source glitter on

the waves, a diving cormorant a hundred yards out; pigment flakes under wax on the

lines of parked cars; far hills and the heather on them and miles and miles of sky where

the sun spreads on dust and water and illegible things moving in it that are white scraps

of gulls. Everything startling and new-stamped on her **entirely astonished brain.**

Through all this the man was perfectly calm. He gathered up the hawk in one practised

movement, folding her wings, **anchoring** her broad feathered back against his chest,

gripping her scaled yellow legs in one hand. 'Let's get that hood back on,' he said **tautly.**

There was concern in his face. It was born of care. This hawk had been hatched in an

incubator, had broken from a frail bluish eggshell into a humid perspex box, and for the

first few days of her life **this man had fed her with scraps of meat held in a pair of**

tweezers, waiting patiently for the lumpen, fluffy chick to notice the food and eat, her

new neck wobbling with the effort of keeping her head in the air. All at once **I loved this**

man, and fiercely. I grabbed the hood from the box and turned to the hawk. **Her beak**

was open, her hackles raised; her wild eyes were the colour of sun on white paper, and

they stared because the whole world had fallen into them at once. One, two, three. I

couldn't see.

¹ porpentine: a type of porcupine animal

² bestiary: a (medieval) descriptive passage on various kinds of animals

³ marionette: a puppet worked by strings

⁴ jesses: a short leather strap fastened to the leg

And so he told Lydia that he came from Auror, had worked in the Baryn sawmill until it closed two years ago, and since then he'd found no work at all and his family – his mother, his five-year-old daughter and he – had lived off the money his mother made selling jewellery manufactured from tin.

'Oh,' said Lydia. 'I think that's very resourceful, to make jewellery from tin.'

'Sure,' said Lev. 'But it isn't enough.' → desperate

Tucked into his boot was a small flask of vodka. He extracted the flask and took a long swig. Lydia kept eating her rye bread. Lev wiped his mouth with the red handkerchief and saw his face reflected in the coach window. He looked away. Since the death of Marina, he didn't like to catch sight of his own reflection, because what he always saw in it was his own guilt at still being alive.

'Why did the sawmill at Baryn close?' asked Lydia.

'They ran out of trees,' said Lev.

'Very bad,' said Lydia. 'What other work can you do?'

Lev drank again. Someone had told him that in England vodka was too expensive to drink. Immigrants made their own alcohol from potatoes and tap water, and when Lev thought about these industrious immigrants, he imagined them sitting by a coal fire in a tall house, talking and laughing, with rain falling outside the window and red buses going past and a television flickering in a corner of the room. He sighed and said: 'I will do any work at all. My daughter Maya needs clothes, shoes, books, toys, everything. England is my hope.'

Towards ten o'clock, red blankets were given out to the coach passengers, some of whom were already sleeping. Lydia put away the remnants of her meal, covered her body with the blanket and switched on a fierce little light above her under the baggage rack and began reading a faded old paperback, printed in English. Lev saw that the title of her book was *The Power and the Glory*. His longing for a cigarette had grown steadily since he'd drunk the vodka and now it was acute. He could feel the yearning in his lungs and in his blood, and his hands grew fidgety and he felt a tremor in his legs. How long before the next gas stop? It could be four or five hours. Everyone on the bus would be asleep by then, except him and one of the two drivers. Only they would keep a lonely, exhausting vigil, the driver's body tensed to the moods and alarms of the dark, unravelling road; his own aching for the comfort of nicotine or oblivion – and getting neither.

He envied Lydia, immersed in her English book. Lev knew he had to distract himself with something.... In desperation, he took from his wallet a brand new British twenty-pound note and reached up and switched on his own little reading light and began to examine the note. On one side, the frumpy Queen, E II R, with her diadem, her face grey on a purple ground, and on the other, a man, some personage from the past, with a dark drooping moustache and an angel blowing a trumpet above him and all the angel's radiance falling on him in vertical lines. 'The British venerate their history,' Lev had been told in his English class, 'chiefly because they have never been subjected to Occupation. Only intermittently do they see that some of their past deeds were not good.'

The indicated lifespan of the man on the note was 1857–1934. He looked like a banker, but what had he done to be on a twenty-pound note in the twenty-first century? Lev stared at his determined jaw, squinted at his name written out in a scrawl beneath the wing collar, but couldn't read it. He thought that this was a person who would never have known any other system of being alive but Capitalism. He would have heard the names Hitler and Stalin, but not been afraid – would have had no need to be afraid of anything except a little loss of capital in what Americans called the Crash, when men in New York had jumped out of windows and off roofs. He would have died safely in his bed in London, before Europe was torn apart. Right to the end of

Whistle and I'll Come to You (from *The Woman in Black*) ||

Simple sentence and pathetic fallacy - suspense

First person present - protagonist

During the night the wind rose. As I had lain reading I had become aware of the stronger gusts that blew every so often against the casements. But when I awoke abruptly, in the early hours it had increased greatly in force. The house felt like a ship at sea, battered by the gale that came roaring across the open marsh. Windows were rattling everywhere and there was the sound of moaning down all the chimneys of the house and whistling through every nook and cranny.

onomatopoeia
discouraging

Asyndeton shows abject fear

At first I was alarmed. Then, as I lay still, gathering my wits, I reflected on how long Eel Marsh House had stood here, steady as a lighthouse, quite alone and exposed, bearing the brunt of winter after winter of gales and driving rain and sleet and spray. It was unlikely to blow away tonight. And then, those memories of childhood began to be stirred again and I dwelt nostalgically upon all those nights when I had lain in the warm and snug safety of my bed in the nursery at the top of our family house in Sussex, hearing the wind rage round like a lion, howling at the doors and beating upon the windows but powerless to reach me. I lay back and slipped into that pleasant, trance-like state somewhere between sleeping and waking, recalling the past and all its emotions and impressions vividly, until I felt I was a small boy again.

Then from somewhere, out of that howling darkness, a cry came to my ears, catapulting me back into the present and banishing all tranquillity.

Simple sentence and minor sentence edges tentative movements

I listened hard. Nothing. The tumult of the wind, like a banshee, and the banging and rattling of the window in its old, ill-fitting frame. Then yes, again, a cry, that familiar cry of desperation and anguish, a cry for help from a child somewhere out on the marsh.

Repetition creates a haunting atmosphere

There was no child. I knew that. How could there be? Yet how could I lie here and ignore even the crying of some long-dead ghost?

Supernatural elements

'Rest in peace,' I thought, but this poor one did not, could not.

After a few moments I got up. I would go down into the kitchen and make myself a drink, stir up the fire a little and sit beside it, trying, trying to shut out that calling voice for which I could do nothing, and no one had been able to do anything for...

years? -> Rhetorical question creates intrigue

Repetition

clips

As I went out onto the landing, Spider the dog following me at once, two things happened together. I had the impression of someone who had just that very second before gone past me on their way from the top of the stairs to one of the other rooms, and, as a tremendous blast of wind hit the house so that it all but seemed to rock at the impact, the lights went out. I had not bothered to pick up my torch from the bedside table and now I stood in the pitch blackness, unsure for a moment of my bearings.

Personification

And the person who had gone by, and who was now in this house with me? I had seen no one, felt nothing. There had been no movement, no brush of a sleeve against mine, no disturbance of the air, I had not even heard a footstep. I had simply the absolutely certain sense of someone just having passed close to me and gone away down the corridor. Down the short narrow corridor that led to the nursery whose door had been so firmly locked and then, inexplicably, opened.

Dark atmosphere adds to our sense of foreboding

Repetition of conjunctions

For a moment, I actually began to conjecture¹ that there was indeed someone - another human being - living here in this house, a person who hid themselves away in that mysterious nursery and came out at night to fetch food and drink and to take the air.

Parenthesis reveals internal monologue

Perhaps it was the woman in black? Had Mrs Drablow harboured some reclusive old sister or retainer, had she left behind her a mad friend that no one had known about? My brain spun all manner of wild, incoherent thoughts as I tried desperately to provide a rational explanation for the presence I had been so aware of. But then they ceased. There was no living occupant of Eel Marsh House other than myself and Samuel Daily's

¹ conjecture: an opinion formed on the basis of incomplete information

She became used to heavy domestic work and all kinds of ghastly kitchen chores. She washed dishes, wearing down her pink nails on the greasy pots and saucepans. She washed the dirty sheets, shirts, and floorcloths by hand and hung them up to dry on a line; each morning she took the rubbish down to the street and carried the water up, pausing for breath on each landing. And, dressed like any working-class woman, she shopped at the fruiterer's, the grocer's, and the butcher's, with a basket over her arm, haggling, frequently abused and always counting every penny.

Contrasts to her dream

Each month they had to settle some accounts, renew others, and bargain for time.

Her husband worked in the evenings doing accounts for a shopkeeper and quite frequently sat up into the early hours doing copyling work at five sous¹ a page.

They lived like this for ten years.

By the time ten years had gone by, they had repaid everything, with not a penny outstanding, in spite of the extortionate conditions and including the accumulated interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had turned into the battling, hard, uncouth housewife who rules working-class homes. Her hair was untidy, her skirts were askew, and her hands were red. She spoke in a gruff voice and scrubbed floors on her hands and knees. But sometimes, when her husband had gone to the office, she would sit by the window and think of that evening long ago when she had been so beautiful and so admired.

Description contrasts with the glamorous evening

still daydreaming

Questions - reflective/regretful

What might not have happened had she not lost the necklace? Who could tell? Who could possibly tell? Life is so strange, so fickle! How little is needed to make or break us!

One Sunday, needing a break from her heavy working week, she went out for a stroll on the Champs-Élysées². Suddenly she caught sight of a woman pushing a child in a pram. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, and still attractive.

Madame Loisel felt apprehensive. Should she speak to her? Yes, why not? Now that she had paid in full, she would tell her everything. Why not? She went up to her.

'Hello, Jeanne.'

The friend did not recognize her and was taken aback at being addressed so familiarly by a common woman in the street. She stammered: 'But... I'm sorry... I don't know... There's some mistake.'

'No mistake. I'm Mathilde Loisel.'

Her friend gave a cry: 'But my poor Mathilde, how you've changed!'

'Yes, I've been through some hard times since I saw you, very hard times. And it was all on your account.'

'On my account? Whatever do you mean?'

'Do you remember that diamond necklace you lent me to go to the reception at the Ministry?'

'Yes. What about it?'

'Well I lost it.'

'Lost it? But you returned it to me.'

'No, I returned another one just like it. And we've been paying for it these past ten years. You know, it wasn't easy for us. We had nothing. ... But it's over and done with now, and I'm glad.'

Irony/contrast of living conditions before and after finding out the necklace was false

(I want to sleep)

¹ sous: a coin of very small value
² Champs-Élysées: a famous street in Paris

given up for lost. Marina had immersed her body obediently in the scummy water, lain there looking at a female stork returning to its high nest, and said to Lev: 'If only we were storks.' → Symbol eternal life

55 'Why d'you say that?' Lev had asked.

'Because you never see a stork dying. It's as though they didn't die.'

If only we were storks.

On the woman's knee a clean cotton napkin was spread and her white hands smoothed and she unwrapped rye bread and a twist of salt.

60 'My name is Lev,' said Lev.

'My name is Lydia,' said the woman. And they shook hands, Lev's hand holding the scrunched-up kerchief, and Lydia's hand rough with salt and smelling of egg, and then Lev asked: 'What are you planning to do in England?' and Lydia said: 'I have some interviews in London for jobs as a translator.'

65 'That sounds promising.'

'I hope so. I was a teacher of English at School 237 in Yarbl, so my language is very colloquial.'

Lev looked at Lydia. It wasn't difficult to imagine her standing in front of a class and writing words on a blackboard. He said: 'I wonder why you're leaving our country when you had a good job at School 237 in Yarbl?'

70 'Well,' said Lydia. 'I became very tired of the view from my window. Every day, summer and winter, I looked out at the school yard and the high fence and the apartment block beyond, and I began to imagine I would die seeing these things, and I didn't want this. I expect you understand what I mean?'

75 Lev took off his leather cap and ran his fingers through his thick grey hair. He saw Lydia turn to him for a moment and look very seriously into his eyes. He said: 'Yes, I understand.'

Then there was a silence, while Lydia ate her hard-boiled egg. She chewed very quietly. When she'd finished the egg, Lev said: 'My English isn't too bad. I took some classes in Baryn, but my teacher told me my pronunciation wasn't very good. May I say some words and you can tell me if I'm pronouncing them correctly?'

80 'Yes, of course,' said Lydia.

Lev said: 'Lovely. Sorry. I am legal. How much please. Thank you. May you help me.'

'May I help you,' corrected Lydia.

'May I help you,' repeated Lev.

85 'Go on,' said Lydia.

'Stork,' said Lev. 'Stork's nest. Rain. I am lost. I wish for an interpreter. Bee-and-bee.'

'Be-and-be?' said Lydia. 'No, no. You mean "to be, or not to be".'

'No,' said Lev. 'Bee-and-bee. Family hotel, quite cheap.'

'Oh, yes, I know. B & B.'

90 Lev could now see that darkness was falling outside the window and he thought how, in his village, darkness had always arrived in precisely the same way, from the same direction, above the same trees, whether early or late, whether in summer, winter or spring, for the whole of his life. This darkness – particular to that place, Auror – was how, in Lev's heart, darkness would always fall.

dog. Whatever was about, ^{Repetition of possessive pronoun adds intrigue} whoever I had seen, and heard rocking, and who had passed me by just now, ^{Repetition of possessive pronoun} whoever had opened the locked door was not 'real'. ^{Minor sentence changes pace of the text} (No) But what was 'real'? ^{Repetition of first person pronoun} At that moment I began to doubt my own reality.

The first thing I must have was a light and I groped my way back across to my bed, reached over it and got my hand to the torch at last, took a step back, stumbled over the dog who was at my heels and dropped the torch. It went spinning away across the floor and fell somewhere by the window with a crash and the faint sound of breaking glass. I cursed but managed, by crawling about on my hands and knees, to find it again and to press the switch. No light came on. The torch had broken.

For a moment I was as near to weeping tears of despair and fear, frustration and tension, as I had ever been since my childhood. But instead of crying I drummed my fists upon the floorboards, in a burst of violent rage, until they throbbed.

It was Spider who brought me to my senses by scratching a little at my arm and then by licking the hand I stretched out to her. We sat on the floor together and I hugged her warm body to me, glad of her, thoroughly ashamed of myself, calmer and relieved, while the wind boomed and roared without, and again and again I heard that child's terrible cry borne on the gusts towards me.

Susan Hill

They looked at each other in dismay. Finally Loisel got dressed again. 'I'm going to go back the way we came,' he said, 'to see if I can find it.' He went out. She remained as she was, still wearing her evening gown, not having the strength to go to bed, sitting disconsolately on a chair by the empty grate, her mind a blank.

Her husband returned at about seven o'clock. He had found nothing.

He went to the police station, called at newspaper offices where he advertised a reward, toured the cab companies, and tried anywhere where the faintest of hopes led him. She waited for him all day long in the same distracted condition, thinking of the appalling catastrophe which had befallen them.

Loisel came back that evening, hollow-cheeked and very pale. He had not come up with anything.

'Look,' he said, 'you'll have to write to your friend and say you broke the catch on her necklace and you are getting it repaired. That'll give us time to work out what we'll have to do.'

She wrote to his dictation.

A week later they had lost all hope.

Loisel, who had aged five years, said: 'We'll have to start thinking about replacing the necklace.'

The next day they took the case in which it had come and called on the jeweller whose name was inside. He looked through his order book.

'It wasn't me that sold the actual necklace. I only supplied the case.'

After this, they trailed round jeweller's shops, looking for a necklace just like the other one, trying to remember it, and both ill with worry and anxiety.

In a shop in the Palais Royal they found a diamond collar which they thought was identical to the one they were looking for. It cost forty thousand francs. The jeweller was prepared to let them have it for thirty-six.

They asked him not to sell it for three days. And they got him to agree to take it back for thirty-four thousand if the one that had been lost turned up before the end of February.

Loisel had eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. He would have to borrow the rest.

He borrowed the money, a thousand francs here, five hundred there, sometimes a hundred and as little as sixty. He signed notes, agreed to pay exorbitant rates of interest, resorted to usurers and the whole tribe of moneylenders. He mortgaged the rest of his life, signed papers without knowing if he would ever be able to honour his commitments, and then, sick with worry about the future, the grim poverty which stood ready to pounce, and the prospect of all the physical privation and mental torture ahead, he went round to the jeweller's to get the new necklace with the thirty-six thousand francs which he put on the counter.

When Madame Loisel took it round, Madame Forestier said in a huff: 'You ought really to have brought it back sooner. I might have needed it.'

She did not open the case, as her friend had feared she might. If she had noticed the substitution, what would she have thought? What would she have said? Would she not have concluded she was a thief?

Then began for Madame Loisel the grindingly horrible life of the very poor. But quickly and heroically, she resigned herself to what she could not alter: their appalling debt would have to be repaid. She was determined to pay. They dismissed the maid. They moved out of their apartment and rented an attic room.

150

his days, the angel's radiance had probably shone on this man's brow and on his fusty clothes, because it was known across the world: the English were lucky. Well, thought Lev, I'm going to their country now and I'm going to make them share it with me: their infernal luck. I've left Auror and that leaving of my home was hard and bitter, but my time is coming.

Rose Tremain

Question 1

How does the writer present the character of Lev in significant paragraphs?

In your answer you should write about:

- Lev's thoughts and feelings about home
- Lev's thoughts and feelings about the future
- The use of language and structure → through out your answer
- Reference to extract + brief quotations

Character of Lev:

- Introduction
 - * Uncertainty / doubt / unsure about prospects if only that world could be found
 - * Discomfort, not being able to smoke; the way he has to sleep
- Addictive character; but trying to give up what he loves for what's more important - emotionally mature
- He feels the British have 'infernal luck' he is driven and ambitious, hoping to attain some of that luck, conveys his character as a hard working ambitious man.
- Feelings of marginalization from British society, contrast between him and Lydia; knowledge of culture, language & stereotypical views of London, naive; quiet & careful about others' views of him
- Thoughts + feelings (home)
 - * He has been forced (through circumstance) to leave home. 'clutched' & shows anxiety + nervousness a symbol of clinging on to his culture.
 - * The use of symbolism to convey the character of Lev.
 - * Feeling of nostalgia, recalling his father sleeping up night; death of wife, his daughter.
 - * Flashback
 - * Thoughts about how hard life is back home
 - * Feeling of guilt (survivors guilt)
 - * Feeling of pride (line 27)
- Thoughts + feelings (the future)

up. She fastened it around her throat over her high-necked dress and sat looking at herself in rapture. Then, diffidently, apprehensively, she asked: 'Can you lend me this? Nothing else. Just this.'

'But of course.'

Dramatic change in demeanour reveals her fickleness
She ~~threw~~ *threw* her arms around her friend, kissed her extravagantly, and then ran home, taking her treasure with her.

The day of the reception arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. She was the prettiest woman there, elegant, graceful, radiant, and wonderfully happy. All the men looked at her, enquired who she was, and asked to be introduced. All the cabinet secretaries and under-secretaries wanted to waltz with her. She was even noticed by the Minister himself.

She danced ecstatically, wildly, intoxicated with pleasure, giving no thought to anything else, swept along on her victorious beauty and glorious success, and floating on a cloud of happiness composed of the homage, admiration, and desire she evoked and the kind of complete and utter triumph which is so sweet to a woman's heart.

She left at about four in the morning. Since midnight her husband had been dozing in a small, empty side-room with three other men whose wives were having an enjoyable time.

He helped her on with her coat which he had fetched when it was time to go, a modest everyday coat, a commonplace coat violently at odds with the elegance of her dress. It brought her down to earth, and she would have preferred to slip away quietly and avoid being noticed by the other women who were being arrayed in rich furs. But Loisel grabbed her by the arm: 'Wait a sec. You'll catch cold outside. I'll go and get a cab.'

But she refused to listen and ran quickly down the stairs. When they were outside in the street, there was no cab in sight. They began looking for one, hailing all the cabbies they saw driving by in the distance.

They walked down to the Seine in desperation, shivering with cold. There, on the embankment, they at last found one of those aged nocturnal hackney cabs which only emerge in Paris after dusk, as if ashamed to parade their poverty in the full light of day. It bore them back to their front door in the rue des Martyrs, and they walked sadly up to their apartment. For her it was all over, while he was thinking that he would have to be at the Ministry at ten.

Standing in front of the mirror, she took off the coat she had been wearing over her shoulders, to get a last look at herself in all her glory. Suddenly she gave a cry. The necklace was no longer round her throat.

Her husband, who was already half undressed, asked: 'What's up?'

She turned to him in a panic: 'I ... I ... Madame Forestier's necklace ... I haven't got it!'

He straightened up as if thunderstruck: 'What? ... But ... You can't have lost it!'

They looked in the pleats of her dress, in the folds of her coat, and in her pockets. They looked everywhere. They did not find it.

'Are you sure you still had it when you left the ballroom?' he asked.

'Yes, I remember fingering it in the entrance hall.'

'But if you'd lost it in the street, we'd have heard it fall. So it must be in the cab.'

'That's right. That's probably it. Did you get his number?'

'No. Did you happen to notice it?'

Short sentence
make/built
tension

- 50 after them; they're very much in demand and not many are handed out to us clerks. You'll be able to see all the big nob's there.'

She looked at him irritably and said shortly: 'And what am I supposed to wear if I do go?'

- He had not thought of that. He blustered: 'What about the dress you wear for the theatre? It looks all right to me ...' The words died in his throat. He was totally disconcerted and dismayed by the sight of his wife who had begun to cry. Two large tears rolled slowly out of the corners of her eyes and down towards the sides of her mouth.

'What's up?' he stammered. 'What's the matter?'

- 60 Making a supreme effort, she controlled her sorrows and, wiping her damp cheeks, replied quite calmly: 'Nothing. It's just that I haven't got anything to wear and consequently I shan't be going to any reception. Give the invite to one of your colleagues with a wife who is better off for clothes than I am.' melodramatic

He was devastated. He went on: 'Oh come on, Mathilde. Look, what could it cost to get something suitable that would do for other occasions, something fairly simple?'

She thought for a few moments, working out her sums but also wondering how much she could decently ask for without drawing an immediate refusal and pained protests from her husband who was careful with his money. Finally, after some hesitation, she said: 'I can't say precisely, but I daresay I could get by on four hundred francs.'

- 70 He turned slightly pale, for he had been setting aside just that amount to buy a gun and finance hunting trips the following summer in the flat landscape around Nanterre with a few friends who went shooting larks there on Sundays. But he said: 'Very well. I'll give you your four hundred francs. But do try and get a decent dress.'

- The day of the reception drew near and Madame Loisel appeared sad, worried, anxious. Yet all her clothes were ready. One evening her husband said: 'What's up? You haven't half been acting funny these last few days.'

She replied: 'It vexes me that I haven't got a single piece of jewellery, not one stone, that I can put on. I'll look like a church mouse. I'd almost as soon not go to the reception.'

- 80 'Wear a posy,' he said. 'It's all the rage this year. You could get two or three magnificent roses for ten francs.'

She was not convinced. 'No. ... There's nothing so humiliating as to look poor when you're with women who are rich.'

preoccupied with appearances

- But her husband exclaimed: 'You aren't half silly! Look, go and see your friend, Madame Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewellery. You know her well enough for that.'

She gave a delighted cry: 'You're right! I never thought of that!'

The next day she called on her friend and told her all about her problem. Madame Forestier went over to a mirror-fronted wardrobe, took out a large casket, brought it over, unlocked it, and said to Madame Loisel: 'Choose whatever you like.'

- 90 At first she saw bracelets, then a rope of pearls and a Venetian cross made of gold and diamonds admirably fashioned. She tried on the necklaces in the mirror, and could hardly bear to take them off and give them back. She kept asking: 'Have you got anything else?' Question reveals insatiable desire

'Yes, of course. Just look. I can't say what sort of thing you'll like best.'

All of a sudden, in a black satinwood case, she found a magnificent diamond necklace and her heart began to beat with moderate desire. Her hands shook as she picked it

Irony

NS now showed up → Eastern European cultural link
 source of comfort and nostalgia
Significant Cigarettes (from The Road Home)
 Cut self off / antisocial

On the coach, Lev chose a seat **near the back** and he sat **huddled against the window**, staring out at the land he was leaving: at the fields of **sunflowers scorched by the dry wind**, at the pig farms, at the quarries and rivers and at the wild **garlic growing green** at the edge of the road.
 Harsh life
 Alliteration - rural scenery

Lev wore a **leather jacket and jeans and a leather cap pulled low over his eyes** and his handsome face was **grey-toned from his smoking** and in his hands he **clutched** an old red cotton handkerchief and a dented pack of **Russian cigarettes**. He would soon be forty-three.
 Indication of addiction/hard life
 Clinging onto culture / source of comfort
 Sense of nervousness

After some miles, as the sun came up, Lev took out a cigarette and stuck it between his lips, and the woman sitting next to him, a plump, contained person with moles like **splashes of mud on her face**, said quickly: **'I'm sorry, but there is no smoking allowed on this bus.'**

Lev knew this, had known it in advance, had tried to prepare himself mentally for the long agony of it. But **even an unlit cigarette was a companion** - something to **hold on to**, something **that had promise in it** - and all he could be bothered to do now was to nod, just to show the woman that he'd heard what she'd said, reassure her that he wasn't going to cause trouble; because there they would have to sit for **fifty hours or more**, side by side with their separate aches and dreams, **like a married couple**. They would hear **each other's snores and sighs**, smell the food and drink each had brought with them, **note the degree to which each was fearful or unafraid**, make short forays into **conversation**. And then later, when they finally arrived in London, they would probably **separate** and or a look, walk out into a rainy morning, **each alone and** **Lev thought how all of this was odd but necessary and already** **world he was travelling to, a world in which he would break his** **work could be found**. He would hold himself **apart from other** people, find corners and shadows in which to sit and smoke, demonstrate that he **didn't need to belong**, that his heart remained in his own country.
 Metaphor highlights loneliness
 Simile - uncomfortable situation
 A syncretic list mirrors the long journey
 Shared experience
 Alliteration draws attention to hardship told ahead
 Repetition - alien to him
 Diction reveals sense of separation - marginalisation of immigrants

There were two coach-drivers. These men would take turns to drive and to sleep. There was an on-board lavatory, so the only stops the bus would make would be for gas. At gas stations, the passengers would be able to clamber off, walk a few paces, **see wild flowers on a verge**, **soiled paper among bushes**, sun or rain on the road. They might stretch up their arms, put on dark glasses against the onrush of nature's light, **look for a clover leaf**, smoke and stare at the cars rushing by. Then they would be herded back onto the coach, resume their old attitudes, **arm themselves** for the next hundred miles, for the **stink of another industrial zone**, or the sudden gleam of a lake, for rain and sunset and the approach of darkness on silent marshes. **There would be times when the journey would seem to have no end.**
 Dash highlights sense of uncertainty

Sleeping upright was not something Lev was practised in. The old seemed to be able to do it, but forty-two was not yet old. Lev's father, Stefan, sometimes used to sleep upright, in summer, on a hard wooden chair in his lunch break at the **Barn sawmill**, with the hot sun falling onto the slices of sausage wrapped in paper on his knee and onto his flask of tea. Both Stefan and Lev could sleep **lying down on a mound of hay or on the mossy carpet of a forest**. Often, **Lev had slept on a rag rug beside his daughter's bed**, when she was ill or afraid. And when his wife, **Marina, was dying**, he'd **lain for five nights** on an area of linoleum flooring no wider than his outstretched arm, between Marina's **hospital bed** and a curtain patterned with pink and purple daisies, and sleep had come and gone in a mystifying kind of way, painting strange pictures in Lev's brain that had never completely vanished.
 Flashbacks - life of hard

Towards evening, after two stops for gas, the mole-flecked woman unwrapped a hard-boiled egg. She peeled it silently. The smell of the egg reminded Lev of the sulphur springs at Jor, where he'd taken Marina. **Just in case nature could cure what man had** → depression

1111 The **Necklace** | about an object

She was one of those **pretty**, delightful girls who, apparently by some error of fate, get themselves born the daughters of **very minor civil servants**. She had **no dowry, no expectations, no means of meeting some rich, important man** who would understand, love, and marry her. So she went along with a proposal made by a **junior clerk** in the Ministry of Education.

She dressed simply, being unable to afford anything better, but she was every whit as unhappy as any daughter of good family who has come down in the world. Women have neither rank nor class, and **their beauty, grace, and charm do service for birthright and connections**. Natural guile, instinctive elegance, and adaptability are what determines their place in the hierarchy, and a girl of no birth to speak of may easily be the equal of any society lady. *Triplets indicate focus on surface attributes*

She was unhappy all the time, for she felt that she was intended **for a life of refinement and luxury**. She was made unhappy by the run-down apartment they lived in, the **peeling walls**, the **battered chairs**, and the **ugly curtains**. Now all this, which any other woman of her station might never even have noticed, was **torture** to her and made her very **angry**. The spectacle of the **young Breton peasant girl** who did the household chores stirred sad regrets and impossible fancies. **She dreamed** of silent antechambers hung with oriental tapestries, lit by tall, bronze candelabras, and of **two tall footmen** in liveried breeches asleep in the huge armchairs, dozing in the **heavy heat** of a stove. **She dreamed of** great drawing-rooms dressed with old silk, filled with fine furniture which showed off trinkets beyond price, and of pretty little parlours, filled with **perfumes** and just made for intimate talk at five in the afternoon with one's closest friends who would be the most famous and sought-after men of the day whose attentions were much coveted and desired by all women.

When she sat down to dinner at the round table spread with a **three-day-old cloth**, facing her husband who always lifted the lid of the soup-tureen and declared delightedly: **'Ah! Stew! Splendid! There's nothing I like better than a nice stew...'**, she dreamed of elegant dinners, gleaming silverware, and tapestries which peopled the walls with **mythical characters** and strange birds in **enchanted forests**; she dreamed of exquisite dishes served on fabulous china plates, of pretty compliments whispered into willing ears and received with Sphinx-like smiles over the pink flesh of a trout or the wings of a hazel hen.

She had no fine dresses, no jewellery, nothing. And that was all she cared about; **she felt that God had made her for such things**. She would have given anything to be popular, envied, attractive, and in demand.

She had a friend who was rich, a friend from her convent days, on whom she never called now, for she was always so unhappy afterwards. Sometimes, for days on end, she would weep tears of **sorrow, regret, despair, and anguish**. *→ listing - melodramatic*

One evening her husband came home looking **highly pleased with himself**. In his hand he brandished a large envelope.

'Look,' he said, 'I've got something for you.'

She tore the paper flap eagerly and extracted a printed card bearing these words:

'The Minister of Education and Madame Georges Ramponneau request the pleasure of the company of Monsieur and Madame Loisel at the Ministry Buildings on the evening of 18 January.'

Instead of being delighted as her husband had hoped, she **tossed the invitation peevishly** onto the table and **muttered**: 'What earthly use is that to me?'

'But darling I thought you'd be happy. You never go anywhere and it's an opportunity, splendid opportunity! I had the dickens of a job getting hold of an invite. Everybody's

Madame Forestier stopped. 'You mean you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?'

35 'Yes. And you never noticed the difference, did you? They were exactly alike.' And she smiled a proud, innocent smile.

Madame Forestier looked very upset and, taking both her hands in hers, said:

'Oh, my poor Mathilde! But it was only an imitation necklace. It couldn't have been worth much more than five hundred francs! ...'

Pride derived from
something of
substance;
hand work
CONTRAST

Plot twist stresses the importance
of honesty

Guy de Maupassant

11

The Story of an Hour

knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were [redacted] showing here and there through [redacted] that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with [redacted] back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, [redacted] itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

The Bright Lights of Sarajevo

Reference to the siege of Sarajevo (capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina) from 1992-1996 in the Bosnian War

After the hours that Sarajevans **pass** **queuing** with **empty** canisters of **gas** to get the refills they wheel home in prams, or **queuing** for the **precious** **meagre** grams of bread they're **rationed** to each day, and often dodging **snipers** on the way, or **struggling** up sometimes eleven flights of stairs with water, then **you'd** think that the nights of Sarajevo would be totally devoid of people walking **streets** **Serb** **shells** destroyed, **but** tonight in Sarajevo that's just not the case - The young go walking at stroller's pace, **black** **shapes** **impossible** **to** **mark** as **Muslim**, **Serb** **or** **Croat** in such **dark**. In unlit streets you can't distinguish who **calls** **bread** **hleb** **or** **hleb** **or** **calls** **it** **krup**. All take the evening air with stroller's stride, no torches guide them, but they don't collide except as one of the **flirtatious** **plays** when a girl's dark shape is **fanned** by a boy's. Then the **tender** radar of the tone of voice shows by its signals she approves his choice. Then **match** **or** **lighter** to a cigarette to check in her eyes if he's made progress yet. And I see a pair who've certainly progressed beyond the tone of voice and match-flare test and he's about, I think, to take her hand and lead her away from where they stand on two **shell** **scars**, where, in **92** Serb **mortars** massacred the breadshop queue and **blood-dunked** **crusts** **of** **shredded** **bread** lay on this pavement with the broken dead. And at their feet in holes made by the **mortar** that caused the massacre, **now** full of **water** from the rain that's poured down half the day, though now even the **smallest** clouds have cleared away, leaving the **Sarajevo** **star-filled** evening sky ideally **bright** **and** **clear** for bomber's eye, in those two rain-full shell-holes the boy sees fragments of the splintered **Pleiades** sprinkled on those **death-deep**, **death-dark** wells splashed on the pavement by Serb mortar shells. The **dark** **boy** **shape** leads **dark** **girl** **shape** away to share one **coffee** **in** **a** **candlelit** **cafe** until the curfew, and he holds her hand behind **AID** **flour** **sacks** refilled with sand.

Tony Harrison

|||

Still I Rise

→ second person First person

Declarative statement shows some people have the power to define her history

You may write me down in history

Misrepresentation of African Americans - Justification of slavery

With your bitter, twisted lies,

You may tread me in the very dirt

Pre-modifiers show historically people have mistreated African Americans

But still, like dust, I'll rise,

→ Metaphor for historical oppression - Slavery, Jim Crow and segregation

Does my sassiness upset you?

Why are you beset with gloom?

→ Rhetorical question is playful but also sarcastic

'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells

Pumping in my living room,

→ Rhetorical question shows some people are hateful - especially when they see her confident - reference to wealth of tycoons

Just like moons and like suns,

With the certainty of tides,

Just like hopes springing high,

Still I'll rise.

→ Celestial imagery shows her love for her heritage and her skin colour

Did you want to see me broken?

Bowed head and lowered eyes?

→ Rhetorical question addresses her oppressor

Shoulders falling down like teardrops,

Weakened by my soulful cries,

→ Simile references dejection and hopelessness

Does my haughtiness offend you?

Don't you take it awful hard

→ Semantic field of sadness

'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines

Diggin' in my own backyard.

→ Simile and alliteration shows she feels wealthy - her heritage is rich and she feels very blessed

You may shoot me with your words,

You may cut me with your eyes,

You may kill me with your hatefulness,

But still, like air, I'll rise.

→ Rule of three shows how society is to ostracise her and make her feel uncomfortable in her skin she faces discrimination

Does my sexiness upset you?

Does it come as a surprise

That I dance like I've got diamonds

At the meeting of my thighs?

→ Simile emphasises she takes change of her own resilience and adaptability

Out of the huts of history's shame

I rise

Up from a past that's rooted in pain

I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

35 Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear

I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

40 I am the dream and the hope of the slave

I rise

I rise

I rise

Repetition of second person pronoun adds a bitter edge to her tone
Simile emphasises her strength, resilience and self-assurance

Personification and alliteration
Shows she is persistent - her hopes can never be taken away

15 Repetition shows she repeats this mantra to herself

Verbs emphasise subconscience

Imperative sentence
Orders her oppressor - she is taking back her power

Semantic field of violence - reference to systemic racist oppression

Alliteration references to how the fuller African figure is seen as repulsive

111

Still I Rise

Defensive statement shows some people have the power to define her history

You may write me down in history

With your bitter, twisted lies,

You may tread me in the very dirt

But still, like dust, I'll rise,

Does my sassiness upset you?

Why are you beset with gloom?

'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells

Pumping in my living room,

Just like moons and like suns,

With the certainty of tides,

Just like hopes springing high,

Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?

Bowed head and lowered eyes?

Shoulders falling down like teardrops,

Weakened by my soulful cries,

Does my haughtiness offend you?

Don't you take it awful hard

'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines

Digging in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,

You may cut me with your eyes,

You may kill me with your hatefulness,

But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?

Does it come as a surprise

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Misrepresentation of African Americans - Justification of slavery

Pre-modifiers show historically people have mistreated African Americans

Metaphor for historical oppression - slavery, Jim Crow and segregation

Rhetorical question is playful but also sarcastic

Rhetorical question shows some people are hateful - especially when they see

Simile shows her bold gait - she is confident - reference to wealth of tycoons

Celestial imagery shows her love for her heritage and her skin colour

Rhetorical question addresses her oppressor

Simile references dejection and hopelessness

Simile and alliteration shows she feels wealthy - her heritage is rich and she feels very blessed

Rule of three shows how society is to ostracise her and make her feel uncomfortable in her skin - she faces discrimination

Simile emphasises her resilience and adaptability

Simile and alliteration shows her unbridled and joyful energy

Repetition of second person pronoun adds a bitter edge to her tone

Simile emphasises her strength, resilience and self-assurance

Personification and alliteration

Shows she is persistent - her hopes can never be taken away

Repetition shows she repeats this mantra to herself

Verbs emphasise subservience

Imperative sentence

unders her oppression - she is taking back her power

Semantic field of violence - reference to systemic racist oppression

Alliteration references to how the fuller African figure is seen as repulsive

|||

An Unknown Girl

The title is intriguing - we wonder who this poem is about

In the evening **bazaar** → Traditional Arabic Market

studded with neon → Colour is a contrast to the traditional

an unknown girl → Enjambment emphasises it is a story of consciousness - dramatic monologue

is hennaing¹ my hand. Alliteration emphasises soft, fluid movement

She squeezes a wet brown line from a nozzle. Present-continuous verb describes the action

She is icing my hand, like icing a cake

which she steadies with hers on her **satin-peach knee.** This could symbol for how the girl is giving the speaker a sense of her identity

In the evening bazaar for a few rupees

an unknown girl → anaphoric reference

is hennaing my hand.

As a little air catches → Personification of air shows the outside world is encroaching

my shadow-stitched kameez² → Metaphor - reference to how colourful her culture is

a peacock spreads its lines across my palm.

Colours leave the street → Personification highlight how dark it is getting - it's becoming less and less vibrant

float up in balloons.

Dummies in shop-fronts tilt and stare

with their Western perms. → Verbs hint that outsiders or Westerners stare at her if she is dressed in her cultural attire

Banners for Miss India 1993, → Westernisation

for curtain cloth

and sofa cloth

canopy me. → Declarative sentence shows the unknown girl has thought her more about her culture and her identity

I have new brown veins.

In the evening bazaar very **deftly** → Adverb shows her skillful and practised movements

an unknown girl

is hennaing my hand. → Present-continuous verb

I am clinging → Adjective shows she is gaining a firmer identity

to these firm peacock lines

like people who cling

to the sides of a train.

Now the furious streets → Personification - busy Indian streets and roads

are hushed.

I'll scrape off → We wonder if she is shedding and chipping away at her identity

the dry brown lines

before I sleep,

reveal soft as a snail trail → Simile shows how fragile her identity is

the amber bird beneath.

It will fade in a week.

When India appears and reappears

I'll lean across a country → Hyperbole

with my hands outstretched

longing for the unknown girl → Anaphora

on the neon bazaar.