

Retelling the Story  
Jody R. Rosen, Students of ENG 2001: Introduction to Fiction: Principles of Narrative

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## **Dedication**

**To readers and storytellers**

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful that these wonderful stories are in the public domain so that we could publish this anthology of the original stories and our retellings.

	Table of Contents	
<b>Retelling the Story</b>		2
Essay #1: Retelling the Story		2
<b>The Story of an Hour</b>		4
The Story of An Hour		4
A Weak Heart		7
An Hour Is All It Takes		11
I'm Her Sister Josephine		16
Knowing that Mrs. Mallard		20
The Joy That Kills		26
Unforeseen Freedom		30
What Is True Love?		34
<b>A Jury of Her Peers</b>		38
A Jury of Her Peers		38
Overly Affectionate Woman		64
The Evidence that Lies		68
Retelling!		75
<b>Young Goodman Brown</b>		79
Young Goodman Brown		79
A Night That Changed Everything		92
The Good Man		96
<b>The Cottagette</b>		101
The Cottagette		101
Are You Mr. Right?		112
Are You Mr. Right?		119
What Some Women Think Men Expect From Them		126
<b>The Yellow Wall-Paper</b>		130
The Yellow Wall-Paper		130
My Dear Wife		151
Through John's Eyes		156
The Yellow Wall Paper Re-narrated by John		160
<b>A Rose for Emily</b>		164
A Rose for Emily		164
A Letter From Tobe		174
On Teatime With Spinster and Drowning Traditions		179
The Day Mr. Grierson Died		193

The Ever Alive Rose	198
The Truth Behind the Rose	203
<b>The Metamorphosis</b>	208
The Metamorphosis	208
Monster	249

## **Retelling the Story**

### **Essay #1: Retelling the Story**

So far this semester, we have examined short stories told in a variety of ways by different kinds of narrators. For our first assignment, we are going to use our creativity to retell one of these stories using a different kind of narrator. Additionally, we are going to write a short essay about the retelling that compares this new version to the original.

#### Part 1: Retelling

Choose one of the stories we have read so far this semester. Identify the narrative style used in that story, and choose a different style that you think would offer readers a different experience with the story. You will need to make decisions about what would change, and you will need to eliminate some details and add in new details. To do so, remain in the world of the story—that is, you can't change the characteristics of any characters.

For example, you could switch from an omniscient narrator to a limited narrator, or to an autodiegetic narrator (remember what that term means?). Or you might switch which character narrates. Consider what new limitations exist when you make that switch. This might change the thoughts or even the rooms the narrator has access to. Give your story an appropriate title.

You can retell either the entire story if it's short enough, or you can choose a particular scene or series of scenes that make sense to retell. This portion of the assignment should be approximately 600-1200 words, or roughly 2-4 pages.

#### Part 2: Thinking about retelling

Imagine that we are collecting our new versions of these stories into an anthology. Attached to each story would be a short essay that provides the readers context for your story. This essay should compare the narration in the original version with the version you have written. The first paragraph of the essay should be the introduction, in which you introduce your topic and texts, and narrow your focus into a thesis statement. The thesis statement for your essay might be something along the lines of *Although the original short story's XYZ narrator conveys 1, 2, and 3, this retelling uses an ABC narrator to highlight 4, 5, and 6*. This is just a

suggestion, but you might think about it as a model.

This essay should be approximately 900-1200 words (roughly 3-4 pages), must use quotations from both the original story and your retelling, and should make it clear to your classmates and anyone else reading the anthology the results of the narratorial choices you made. We will actually collect these texts electronically and make our anthology available on the OpenLab, so make sure you include work you are proud of—that means that it shouldn't be something you write in one sitting and submit without revising, editing, and especially rereading!

Schedule:

Part 1 outline due in class: M 2/25

Part 1 draft due in class: W 2/27

Part 2 outline due in class: W 2/27

Part 2 draft due in class: M 3/4

Parts 1 and 2 due electronically: W 3/6 (details to follow)

Questions? Feel free to ask them here.

## **The Story of an Hour** **The Story of An Hour**

The Story of An Hour

Kate Chopin

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

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

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

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

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

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except

when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

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

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the 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 hte breath: “free, free, free!” The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

“Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister’s importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister’s waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine’s piercing cry; at Richards’ quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of the joy that kills.

[text taken from <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/hour/>]

## A Weak Heart

A Weak Heart

Nicole Romano

My younger sister Louise always had a heart problem since we were young. I spent most of my childhood looking after her until she found a man of the name Brently Mallard who captured my young Louise's heart. They spent many years together and I knew she was in good care, until I found out about his death from his friend Richards. From what Richards told me Brently died in a railroad disaster as he was traveling to work. I was dumbfounded at the thought that my poor Louise would have to face this burden on her weak heart. So it was I who made the decision to be the one who would break the news to her.

Richards and I approached the yellow two-toned farm house and knocked on the door, Louise answered in her calm and soft voice "Josephine-Richards! What brings you here at such a time, you both just missed lunch; do come in!" A lump formed in my throat at the thought of having to bring this bad news upon her. "Louise... there's something I must tell you... there was a train wreck..." and before I knew it tears were pouring down my cheeks. Richard softly grabbed my shoulder and gave a slight squeeze of reassurance, I looked at Louise and her face turned to a look of confusion at first. "Brently...he...the train...is dead." My broken sentences finally registered; the look of confusion quickly turned to disbelief as she automatically registered what I was saying. She covered her mouth to silence her whimper and I rushed to embrace her in my arms. Shaking her head back and forth and crying out loud "This can't be true!" I guided her into the sitting room onto the loveseat; tightly embracing her. We sat there for a while as we both cried in each other's arms.

When her breathing subsided to a steady pace she turned to me and said "I need to spend some time alone" I hesitated at first on letting her go by herself due to her health, I would much rather have her stay near me—yet I knew that having some time to think would be best in this situation; so I watched her slowly walk up the stairs to her bedroom. I went and settled down again sinking my head between my legs. I kept replaying the last time I saw Brently which was not too long ago, we were in the yard discussing Louise's health. He was telling me how recently the doctor came to check up on Louise and said that her heart condition is becoming weaker. He told Brently that she can't handle any more intense moments anymore

or her heart won't be able to handle it. I was apprehensive after what Brently had told me, yet he reassured me that she will be okay since he will take good care of her. She was blessed with a good husband who truly loved her and for that I was genuinely happy.

I silently cried to myself as Richards walked out into the yard through the kitchen. "Oh, how I wish this wasn't true" I whispered under my breath. I heard Louise's cry come from her bedroom and I raised my head and looked up. I left her alone since it was what she asked yet pained me seeing her go through such a hardship. After a few minutes I stopped hearing her cries, so I wiped my tears with ease and walked up the stairs to check on Louise. When I got to her bedroom door I heard her whispering under her breath but I just could not seem to grasp what she was saying. I put my ear to the door and briefly heard her mumble the word "free" to what seemed like the end of a sentence. I knew something was wrong so I knocked on the door and pressed my lips to the keyhole begging her to open up, "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door." She responded by telling me to go away and that she wasn't making herself ill. Yet I had such a bad feeling, all I kept thinking was how she must be making herself over think and cause more stress on her heart, for it hadn't already went through enough. I kept knocking until she finally opened the door.

She seemed different when she opened that door, the look in her eyes weren't ones filled with sorrow but filled with the triumph of waking from a long slumber on a beautiful spring morning. "Let's go make some tea" Louise said to me as she clasped my waist, we both descended down the stairs. Richards was waiting for us looking up at both of us.

I turned and looked past Richards when I noticed someone was opening the front door. I thought to myself "Who could that be?" and in walked Brently Mallard. There wasn't a scratch on that man; it looked as if he wasn't even at the scene of the disaster. My joyful moment turned sour when I turned and looked at Louise grab her heart in astonishment and cascaded down the stairs. I heard a piercing cry and realized it was my own and quickly ran to her. Brently was still standing in the front door puzzled at what had just happened in front of him. I saw Richards immediately went to call the doctors, I kneeled down and cried over the lifeless Louise and I knew that this was the end of my young poor Louise.

Each short story has a unique narration perspective; one example of this is "The Story of An Hour". The story takes place in the nineteenth-century where the protagonist Mrs. Louise Mallard has a heart condition and loses her husband in a train disaster. This is narrated in a

limited third person perspective of Louise in her bedroom. I decided to do my retelling in a different perspective; I chose to narrate in a homodiegetic narration of Josephine–Louise’s sister. I felt that from her point of view you would get a different outlook on what is going on outside the bedroom and how she feels about her sister, and her marriage with Brently.

The original story’s limited third-person perspective shows only Louise in her bedroom struggling to accept her new come feelings about the death of her husband “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 hte breath: ‘free, free, free!’ The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes.” (1) From this quote you can sense how at first Louise did not want to accept the feeling of freedom from being a married woman. She at first felt guilt, but soon realized how she truly felt about her freedom and identity. “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.” (2) Louise than embraces this new feeling of freedom and looks forward to her new future with her husband. The reader than finally understands her true feelings, but unlike Louise, Josephine thought differently in my retelling story.

Not only did I want to show the reader’s a different narrator but I wanted to show Josephine as a caring sister who worries about Louise’s health. Since the original story did not focus of Josephine, I decided to make it from her point of view to show what was going on while Louise was in her bedroom. In one part of the story you see Josephine being a caring sister when she said “When her breathing subsided to a steady pace she turned to me and said “I need to spend some time alone” I hesitated at first on letting her go by herself due to her health, I would much rather have her stay near me—yet I knew that having some time to think would be best in this situation; so I watched her slowly walk up the stairs to her bedroom..” (2) Josephine did not want her sister to leave her side knowing how much she cared for her health. Not only is Josephine a caring sister but she showed a more naïve side when it came to her sister’s marriage as well. In the retold story Josephine looks at her sister’s marriage as something that she is lucky for, she said “I was apprehensive after what Brently had told me, yet he reassured me that she will be okay since he will take good care of her. She was blessed with a good husband who truly loved her and for that I was genuinely happy.”(2) From this you can get a sense of how little Josephine really knew about her sister’s marriage compared to Louise’s health.

Although each story may have different narrators, both Louise and Josephine each have a unique outlook on the marriage after the death of Brently Mallard. The limited third-person narrator in the original “The Story of An Hour” to the homodiegetic narrator in my retold story “A Weak Heart” the reader still gets the same dark tone in the story but from just a different perspective. Also they may have these noticeable differences but even though Louise may have realized her freedom she still loved her husband. “And yet she had loved him—sometimes.”(2) Josephine may have seemed naïve about certain aspects on her sister’s marriage yet she wasn’t entirely wrong neither since Louise still did love her husband.

From third-person to first-person in a short story you may be limited in certain aspects of the story based on the perspective of the character or narrator; because of these limitations you may not know what could be going on outside the world of the character. Although they have these differences between the narrations you still get a sense of an exclusive short story. That is why I chose to do this retelling of “The Story of An Hour.”

## **An Hour Is All It Takes**

“An hour is all it takes”

Joseph Ulloa

My sister could not bear the news that her husband, Brently Mallard, had died. Her husband’s friend, Richards, was the one that told us that his name was leading the list of “killed” in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received. He had made sure with the second telegram that came in, that it was true.

At first, when she heard the story, she started crying her eyes out. Her eyes tearing, watering my shirt as she comes into my arms. I try to sooth her, without words, by stroking her hair back and cleaning the tears as they keep coming down. When she had let it all out, she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

I was left in the living room with Richards alone. The silence struck and there was still grief to be dealt with, for Richards and myself. We were crying from the news as well but then I began to wonder how my sister felt and how this can affect her condition. Hearing about her husband’s death is not an easy task to handle especially with her afflicted heart trouble. I wonder how she is ...

As her sister, I had the urge to run up to her room and be by her side in her time of need, but as I got up, Richards grabbed my arm and says “you should give her some time alone, give

her time to collect herself from the shock she just heard”. “Don’t you know? She has heart problems and who knows what can happen, just from the very news can make her unstable quickly” I say. But I agree with him and decide to give her at most 15 minutes until I can offer some sort of relaxation.

I offer him a drink to help calm ourselves down and we begin to reminisce about my sister’s happy marriage. “Louise lost herself a good man. He really tended to her and she looked happy about being with him. But then, I did notice there were moments where she looked like she needed space, not saying that it was a bad thing but maybe requiring some moments to collect herself from her reality”, I said. Richards says “Was she always like this, even in her young years?” I respond to him saying “She was always an open-minded person, more like free, in a sense where she’s her own person and had no restrictions on her mind but there were instances where it was all too much for her and maybe that is also why she developed the heart problems also. So I guess, yeah – she was. It doesn’t exclude the fact that she did love him, you can tell from her reaction too, that, she did.” He just nods his head.

Richards mentions how Brently used to talk about her, saying how she was the best thing that ever happened to him and would keep making references to her. According to Richards; Brently would say “My wife made me a sandwich just like that one, and it was fantastic” after he had seen Richards sandwich from lunch one day.

I look at the time and frantically get up to check on my sister. I go towards her door and I hear her whispering. I think to myself “Could she have gone mad or insane?” My ear is pressed on the door and then I hear “free! Body and soul free!” I start to tear again, now from wondering what could possibly be going through her mind! I knelt down to the closed door with my lips on the keyhole, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the



door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill” she says. I keep begging for her to come out and after a moment, I stay silent.

It was only yesterday, in which I heard her laugh and perfectly happy, even while she is in ill health. It was only yesterday and I miss that so much from her already.

I hear her get up from where she is at. She has this look in her eyes, like this feverish triumph. Louise came to me walking, did not seem like she has been dwelling on her own husband’s death. She clasped my waist, and together we descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for us at the bottom.

I hear someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. It had seemed he had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. I let out a piercing cry and there, he stood amazed: at Richard’s quick motion to screen him from the view of my sister.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of the joy that kills.

On my road to retelling a story, I chose to retell, “The Story of An Hour” by Kate Coplin with the theme being about freedom from a marriage and confinement from her wanting to be free. The original story was about a woman named Louis Mallard who had just got the news that her husband died in an accident and she ponders upon her new “life” that she has, until she dies at the end. The way I turned it around was that I changed the point of view to Josephine, Louise’s sister, and started from there. The original short story contained a third-person omniscient that conveyed Mrs. Mallard’s thoughts and showed how she was kind of glad that her husband died and enjoys the fact that she is now “free” from her marriage, the retelling uses a first person limited in which I conveyed to Josephine’s thoughts and small background information from what is given by Richards and herself. I chose to portray Josephine to show what happened on the other side of the door from Louise.

I started the story from when Richards had told the news to both sisters, but all of it was from Josephine’s point of view and which she is also the narrator of the story. From where the story began, Josephine had just heard the news from Richards. I collaborated with the original story in which they are in the same time period and same moment but just having Josephine narrate. From the retold story “When she had let it all out, she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.” Mashers in also to what the original third-person said “when the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would no one follow her” is in the same period of time. I had that type of similarity in the retold story to show how clearly it is switched from Louise’s thoughts to her own sister’s thoughts.

Throughout the whole story, I begin to use the word “I” clearly so that the readers can note the difference. Third person omniscient is “the narrative voice that renders information from anywhere, including the thoughts and feelings of any of the characters” taken from “Elements of fiction: The Formal Elements of fiction” by Gary Parks. First person limited allows the audience to see what this one focal character (Josephine) is thinking; it also allows that character to be further developed through his/her own style in telling the story, in which I did not really develop Josephine that hugely for it to be noticed. “As her sister, I had the urge to run up to her room and by her side in her time of need...” that quote shows how it is compared to the original story that had the narrator use imagery to show Mrs. Mallard’s grief and feelings.

Further on, I decided to bring Josephine to talk about her sister’s past and how she was as a young girl that can tie in onto how she feels for her husband and how she might have gotten the heart condition too. I mention “She was always an open-minded person, more like free, in

a sense where she's her own person and had no restrictions on her mind but there were instances where it was all too much for her and maybe that is also why she developed the heart problems also" in hopes of trying to reel in more of an outlook on how Louise is without her thoughts playing any role, from the original story.

I steered away from the original theme of it being about freedom and confinement but still having bits of it when I introduced her young days. From the original story, we have "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!" I showed some resemblance to this by mentioning about her past "She was always an open-minded person, more like free, in a sense where she's her own person.." I continued to say how her husband really loved Louise very much.

I wrote about how Mr. Mallard loved her wife very much, closely related to what the original story had mentioned "She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death... ". In the story retold, I say "Richards mentions how Brently used to talk about her, saying how she was the best thing that ever happened to him and would keep making references to her". Both are very similar because it is from a different point of view to another character but different in narrative style that they contain.

I slowly make my way towards the ending in which all three characters are involved and, both the retold story and the original, are joining in from when Josephine tries to get her sister out the room, to all the way to her sister's death. The ending has pretty much the same take because both sisters are interacting but also, like I said, are different in narration. Switching narrative styles can hugely impact a short story such as this one, because we do not see Louise's thoughts and how it affected her in a positive way from her husband's death. I switch to Josephine to show how the breaking news of the death affected her and Richards. We can explore and create new things with the many possibilities of changing a few details but still remaining in the story, just by changing the narration of the text.

## I'm Her Sister Josephine

I'm Her Sister Josephine

Danny Meneses

I'm her sister Josephine; I'm the one who told her about the accident that has just occurred on the railroad. My sister's friend Richard was here too. He informed me. My sister's husband Brently Mallard's was headed to the train, yet no call, all I can do is worry. She did not hear of the story the way others have, it was I her sister, closest to her who had to find a way to break the news to her. She wept once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in my arms. She then pushed me away would have no one follow her. I couldn't believe this; I felt like I have brought down her whole world and had no way to bring her back. I don't regret what said, I regret the way that I told her, I did it without thinking. None of this would have occurred if I hadn't acted so recklessly.

My sister just stood there facing the open window, on a comfortable, roomy armchair, pressed down by the physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul. I didn't know of what she was thinking, and I was worried of how she may act. The only thing I could think of is the fact that my sister is hurting, and I had no way to save her. This killed me. All of a sudden she got up with a face of no emotion walked to the room and locked the door behind her. From the other window looking in I could see what she did. There were patches of blue sky showing through the clouds facing her window, all my sister seemed to be able to do was sit with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, she didn't need to speak, the emotion she showed was that of one already dead. I felt so horrible for causing this, I wanted to fix things but she was too far gone.

My sister is young, with a calm face, smiles, and always had life in her eyes. Now there was a dull stare in her eyes? There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. But she felt, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, and the color that filled the air. As all these things went through my mind, all I could think of is what is she thinking? What will she do? Unexpectedly she let out a slight movement, not able to be understood. All of a sudden she opens the window and I hear "I'm free! I'm free, never to be bothered again! "The look of terror that had followed it went from her eye. I was terrified; I wasn't able to comprehend what was happening. I feared for my

sister, she was beginning to become delusional, I ran to the door and tried to open the door, I pleaded for her to open. I hear her get close, I hear her breathing and then all when quiet I hear her by the door uttering words not able to be understood. I ask what? She repeats with an understandable tone "I'm free! I'm free, never to be bothered again". A few minutes later she opens the door with a pale white look, cold as ice as I put my arms round her. Those around including me did not stop to ask her if she was okay, that question was clearing answered. She wept again, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked the same after I told her the news of her husband.

My sister's face showed nothing but gray and death. She spread her arms out to them in welcome; this confused me because she hugged herself and said "I'm back" I realized what that meant. My sister became what seems to be "crazy" then after uttering the words "I'm free! I'm free, never to be bothered again" Repeatedly that was when it hit me; she had been trapped in her marriage for so long, never really free to be her true self, bounded by the marriage she voluntarily agreed too, and trapped from the love she used to have. She doesn't know how to be free, the realization that now she really is scares her. I was kneeled before her, I saw her with her lips so blue, eyes so clear, I tried to hug her but she wasn't allowing anyone to come in. My sister finally responds after what felt like forever of pleading for her to say something, when she did she said "Go away" I feared for my sister, I was mad at myself for what I done, I should have waited and spoken to her in a more delicate manner, instead of dumping the load all at once. There was a feverish look to her, my sister clasped in my arms, I picked her up and help her down the stairs.

Richard stood waiting for us at the bottom. Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was my sister's husband who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grips-sack umbrella. He had apparently been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at my piercing cry. He helped me take my sister to the room, the rest followed. He laid her down. We both left to talk about what happen, and I to explain all that happened. After a few minutes we both came back in, I hugged me sister, said I'm so very sorry for hurting her like this I shouldn't have told her the news in the manner the that I did. She gave me her hand pointed for me to come close; as I did she whispered the words "Thank you, you freed me".

Story of an hour is a about a woman named Mrs. Mallard who finds out from her sister Josephine about a terrible accident .Her husband Mr. Mallard may have been a part of involved a train crash, not many survivors. Throughout the story you get an idea to what the

narrator is thinking but you aren't completely sure. When reading the story I feel like the reader was someone outside looking in through the "window" telling us what is going on. The narration of the story is third person limited. Third person limited is the point of view in a method of storytelling in which the narrator knows only the thoughts and feelings of a single character while other characters are presented only externally. Third person limited grants a writer more freedom than first person, but less than third person omniscient. So throughout the story you are able to see how people feel about all that is going but you can't get a good idea of whom is it.

Following the news of the accident Josephine feels that she needs to tell Mrs. Mallard of what has just occurred. She knew that Mrs. Mallard had heart problems. Telling her such news would nearly kill her. Ironically that is exactly what happens but not in the way the reader has lead us to believe. Upon reading the story one is lead to believe that once hearing the news of her "late husband" she would die due to a heart attack or anxiety attack. Yet Mrs. Mallard didn't react exactly how we thought. She was feeling down but more "happy" then sad. She felt free, apparently she had been feeling trapped throughout her marriage. Now notified of the possible death of Mr. Mallard she couldn't help but feel joy and sadness all at once. She began to lash out, act "crazy" she locked herself in the room and wouldn't speak right when talking. She made it hard to understand what she was saying.

I used the narration and how the story was structured to change the narration, and transition to what turned out to be a "new" story. I used first person limited to change narration. I kept the same idea to what was going on, and how the story itself is in general, but what I did change was how the reader can perceive the story. Instead of getting a glimpse to the story from the outside in, I gave the reader the opportunity to actually be inside the mind of a character, in this case I choice Josephine.

The plot line to this version of the story is the same accident that may or may not have caused the death of Mr. Mallard, but now Josephine tells Mrs. Mallard of the news.. I made it so that we feel the guilt she felt after she told the news, and the tremendous pressure she felt just before she notified her of the news. Mrs. Mallard didn't know how to react; she was there but not there at the same time. She felt so much pressure lifted off her shoulders. She was sad and horrified about what has just happened. "I her sister, closest to her who had to find a way too break the news to her. She wept once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in my arms. She then pushed me away would have no one follow her. I couldn't believe this; I felt like I have brought down her whole world and had no way to bring her back. I don't regret what said, I

regret the way that I told her, I did it without thinking. None of this would have occurred if I hadn't acted so recklessly". You are able to see how she feels. Mrs. Mallard began lashing out in ways not imagined, it seemed like she was not only delusional but also possessed by the sprit she lost when married. "She was battling within herself, about herself. She lost who she was, now she lost who she is. She let out a slight movement, not able to be understood. All of a sudden she opens the window and I hear "I'm free! I'm free, never to be bothered again! "The look of terror that had followed it went from her eye. I was terrified; I wasn't able to comprehend what was happening. I feared for my sister, she was beginning to become delusional" Mrs. Mallard very much like the first story exiled herself from the rest. Very much like the original story upon seeing her husband alive walking through that door to everyone's dismay they thought they were looking at a ghost.

Mrs. Mallard died peacefully in this "alternate ending" of story of an hour. I wanted Josephine to not feel guilt for thinking she caused her sister's death. She died in bed. I as the reader feel like not only did Mrs. Mallard die in peace along with giving everyone around relief that she doesn't have to suffer anymore, but also that she died being herself again and happy. . "He laid her down. We both left to talk about what happen, and I to explain all that happened. After a few minutes we both came back in, I hugged me sister, said I'm so very sorry for hurting her like this I shouldn't have told her the news in the manner the that I did. She gave me her hand pointed for me to come close; as I did she whispered the words "Thank you, you freed me."

## Knowing that Mrs. Mallard

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard

Katherine Ferrer

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 has her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences. Mrs. Mallard's husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her sister. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name heading 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.

Josephine was worried. All she could think of before telling her sister the news of the accident was how she would react. It troubled her greatly to think that Louise might get sick upon hearing the bad news.

Louise 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 Josephine's arms. Josephine could not bear the sight of her sister breaking down like this, but she could do nothing except hold her. When the storm of grief had spent itself, Louise went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

That didn't go too well. Hopefully Louise will be well in there, she thought. Josephine and Richards looked at each other, words at the moment weren't necessary. The looks on their face said it all. They didn't know what Louise was doing in her room, and this troubled them.

The news had not been so easy on them either. Mr. Mallard had been a dear friend to all those who knew him. "He was a great man, he would be dearly missed" stated Richards. He had been devastated when he heard the news. Josephine was very sad too. Her brother in law had become very dear to her in the years that he and her sister had been married.

“How could this have happened? He was such a hardworking man. He didn’t deserve to die this way, not in a terrible accident like this one. What would Louise do now?” commented Josephine to Richards. She was still taken aback by the event that was taking place. Richards agreed with her silently, nodding his head to her comment. He didn’t know what would be of Mrs. Mallard either. She was not alone though. She had her sister Josephine, and him.

As they both sat in the living room, she and Richards started to discuss Mrs. Mallard’s reaction to the news of her husbands’ death. She didn’t seem to be as distressed by the news as one would think any women would be when they discover that their husband has died a tragic death. “Do you believe he was happy, Richards?” she asked, gaze fixed on the ground.

He didn’t know what to answer to this question. He had always witnessed them being happy. They were always smiling around each other. Mr. Mallard always gloated about his home to the other workers. He always told us stories about how happy his wife made him, and how he didn’t wish for nothing else in the world but to live happily with his wife as they had lived until now. But her reaction gave way to a different understanding. She seemed a tad calm about everything.

Upstairs, Louise had sat on an armchair that was in the center of the room, facing the window. “Dead,” the word repeated itself over and over in her head. “He was dead!” Her husband was dead! What would she do now, she was all alone. She had no one. The person that she had shared her life with for all those years was gone, and had left her alone. All the thoughts that were now running through her head were beginning to confuse her. Was she alone?

She rose, walking towards the window; her gaze was fixed away on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought. She stood at the base of the window, letting the breeze hit her face slowly. There was something coming to her with the breeze. What was it? She did not know. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, and the color that filled that air.

She became agitated. Her breathing started to quicken. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her. 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!” All of a sudden, she wasn’t so taken aback by this feeling.

She did not stop to ask of it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she had suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

“Free! Body and soul free!” Louise kept whispering.

Josephine became more worried when she noticed that much time had gone by and her sister had still to come down from the bedroom. She and Richards had been commenting on the accident, and what would be of Louise now that her husband had died. “Enough time has passed, let me go to the bedroom and see what is going on,” she said to Richards.

What is happening in that room, she thought? She had to get in there and help her sister. She walked rapidly to the bedroom, and knelt before the closed door with her lips to the key hold, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill,” replied the sister from inside the bedroom. No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she would had thought with a shudder that life might be long. Louise arose at length and opened the door to her sister’s importunity. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of victory. She clasped her

sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

As she held her sister and they walked slowly, Louise stopped suddenly. She stared at the door in disbelief. Her eyes were betraying her. This could not be happening. "What is the meaning of this?" she said. Someone was walking through the front door. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife. But it was all a horrid vision. Louise's eyes started to shut, and she started to slip from her sisters' grip, her body limbleless, all of a sudden.

"Hurry Richards, do something!" shouted Josephine.

But they had been too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of the joy that kills.

In "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin, we are told the story of Mrs. Mallard, a woman that has just discovered that her husband has died in a horrible train accident. Upon discovering this news, she is enjoying this new-found freedom that she has obtained by widowing. The original story is told from a third-person limited narration style. The narrator has access to the thoughts and feelings of the main character; Mrs. Mallard. We know what she is thinking throughout the course of the story, and permitted access to her mind, her thoughts and feelings. In my retelling of "The Story of an Hour," I would like to switch the narration from Mrs. Mallard, to her sister Josephine. Although the original story's third-person limited narration from Mrs. Mallard's point of view offers us a detailed view of the main characters thoughts, this retelling uses a third-person omniscient narration style to give the reader access to the thoughts and feelings of all the characters in the story. In this retelling, we get insight to new details and thoughts that were not accessible to the reader with the original narration style.

Throughout the process of "The Story of an Hour," we are taken through a journey from the eyes of the main character. In my retelling, in addition to still being able to tell what Mrs. Mallard is thinking, we also get to see a lot of the thoughts of the new narrator, Josephine: "Josephine was worried. All she could think of before telling her sister the news of the accident was how she would react. It troubled her greatly to think that Louise might get sick

upon hearing the bad news." Here, we see what Josephine is thinking. She is troubled by the fact that she has to tell her sister such bad news, and she fears her reaction. This offers us a distinct point of view that will give the reader an advantage to understanding the story better. Upon changing our narration style, this switch gives us new access to things in the retelling that the narrator didn't have permission to originally. On top of being able to access the thoughts of all characters, we are also able to roam freely in the setting of the story. This gives the reader a new edge. While being in one room, the narrator can also tell what is going on in another room of the story: "She rose, walking towards the window; her gaze was fixed away on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought." The narrator now has access to a different room than her own, in addition to the thoughts of the character in that room. Our new narrator Josephine can tell us what is happening in the room upstairs, which is an essential part to understanding the story in its entirety. Had we chose to make our new narration third-person limited from Josephine's point of view, we would only see what she is thinking. Therefore, we would not get an insight into the happiness that losing her husband has brought Mrs. Mallard, key element in the story.

Finally, from switching our narration style to third-person omniscient, our new permissions to retelling the story are very beneficial. Something that we didn't have in the original story that we have in the retelling are some thoughts that the characters had of Mr. Mallard. We only hear him be mentioned once in the original and hearing more about him gives the reader a different advantage: "The news had not been so easy on them either. Mr. Mallard had been a dear friend to all those who knew him. 'He was a great man, he would be dearly missed' stated Richards." Here, we get the point of view of a friend of Mr. Mallard, in contrast to only the thoughts of the main character in the original story. Richards who was a great friend of Mr. Mallard is offering the reader his feelings towards the death of his friend, a different approach than the original.

Overall, switching from a third-person limited narration from Mrs. Mallard's point of view to a third-person omniscient narration from Josephine's point of view, in "The Story of an Hour" has given the reader quite a few different advantages as to the way they depict the story. With an omniscient narration style, the author can give the reader something more. The reader not only gets to see and hear what Mrs. Mallard is thinking as the main character, but they can also hear what the other characters in the story are thinking. With the ability to move about in the story's plot and setting, the reader also gets the opportunity to view distinct opinions that help mold how they are able to interpret the story. These are all positive advantages that are obtained by switching from a limited to an omniscient narrator. This switch offers the reader a different understanding of the original "The Story of an Hour" by

Kate Chopin.

## **The Joy That Kills**

### The Joy That Kills

Louise and I were closer than most sisters. I think what made us closer was when she was ill and started having heart problems. That's when our bond grew stronger.

I see Richards, Louise's husband's friend, pacing quickly towards me as I was on my way to work. By the look on his face, I quickly knew he came bearing bad news. I had no clue what to expect as a million thoughts rushed through my mind. He tells me that Brently Mallard, Louise's husband, was leading the list of "killed" in a railroad disaster. He didn't even believe it so he double checked with a second telegram and this time was certain. I blanked out for a second and then couldn't help but think if Louise would be happy or sad. I wanted to believe my sister was happy in her marriage but I thought otherwise.

As Richards and I head over to Louise's house nervously, he tells me that Brently thought his wife was unhappy. I was even more concerned and that made me believe my first instincts. Finally, we arrive at Louise's house. I can smell the fear as she sees me and Richards walk towards her, together, which was odd. The first question she asked was "Is Brently alright?", although she was certain of the answer. I began by saying "There' been an accident..." and she cut me off, screaming and weeping wildly. She thrust herself into my arms and I felt her heart on my chest, beating rapidly.

Before I can even comfort her, she escapes from my hold and run away, into her room and slams the door and locks it. Richard says to me "Give her some time to let it sink in." I was stunned, so Richards gently sat me down in the living room chair. It took every ounce of power in me not to go after my sister because I knew she needed to be alone. I cannot control my thoughts that were jumbled in my mind. I began to think whether i was wrong for believing she would be happy, or I misinterpreted her whole marriage and she actually cared for Brently, judging by her dramatic reaction. Normally, I would think most women do not react right away, as they are in sudden shock, at this point I don't know what to think, but all I had to do was wait. We sat there, quietly and awkwardly as we locked eyes a couple times, maybe we were both thinking how quiet it was upstairs.

A little too quiet. I go upstairs and listen closely through the door as I hear her chanting under her breath “free, free, free!” I thought she had gone mad. I couldn’t help but think that I was right, she didn’t love her husband—sometimes, but her marriage was not that of a good one for sure. It had seemed that my sister was locked away in a whole other space and I could not get to her. Even though the only barrier between us was the door, it felt more than that, and I had no access to what was going on.

I thought that Louise would need a shoulder to cry on, because she always came to me when she was upset, maybe she wasn’t upset for some reason. It’s almost been an hour and I could not take it anymore. I pressed my lips against the key hole and demanded entrance. “Louise, open the door!” I begged. “Open the door- you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heavens sake open the door.” “Go away I am not making myself ill” she yelled. I heard her rise from where she was and turned the door knob. I rushed to her aid. She seemed relaxed and carried herself like a Goddess of Victory. She held my waist as I helped her down the stairs. Richards stood at the bottom of the stairs waiting to be of assistance to Louise. I hear the front door being unlocked and wondered who that could be. It was a confused Brently Mallard, who was supposedly dead. He looked like he had no clue of what happened and was far away from the scene of the accident. It all happened so quickly as Richards reacts to this by screening him from the view of his wife. But, it was too late. When the doctors arrived, they said she had died of heart disease—of the joy that kills.

In the story, “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin, the kind of narrative being used is third-limited narrator. “Story Of An Hour” was written in 1894, and in that time period women had no power and were restricted. They could not give any opinions and their feelings didn’t matter. Some women were “trapped” in their marriage by force. This short story is about a woman named Mrs. Mallard, who receives bad news that her husband had died in a railroad accident. They tell her the news slowly but surely, and she weeps about it then goes into her room and locks herself away. She begins to realize that this so called bad thing isn’t that bad at all, but granted her freedom that she never thought she would get. She starts looking forward to the future instead of dreading it. When Mrs. Mallard finally steps foot out her room, in comes Mr. Mallard who wasn’t dead at all, and when Mrs. Mallard sees him, she dies of a heart attack. Although Chopin uses this kind of narrator to tell this short story that does not limit the protagonist’s view, this retelling uses the first person narrator to highlight the point of view of someone that was close and dear to her. The story begins with

telling the readers more than what Mrs. Mallard knows, which is interesting and catches the readers attention at the start. I chose to say more about Josephine’s point of view from what was going on outside of the room where Louise was.

The use of third-person limited narrative limits us from knowing exactly what Mrs. Mallard is thinking. Her tone was more concerned, tender and sensitive. For example, in this paragraph, “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 of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.” (Paragraph 9) In this paragraph, Chopin makes Mrs. Mallard look innocent and not knowing, saying that it was not Mrs. Mallard’s fault that she feels the way she does. I interpreted Mrs. Mallard’s reaction of the news that was delivered to her of her husband’s death being that of a shock as she did not want to see her husband return.

I changed the story into the first person narrative through the eyes of her sister, Josephine. I retold the story making Josephine close to her sister and being very sympathetic toward her in time of need. When she heard the news about her sister’s husbands death I wanted Josephine to sound like she really cared and told her the news the easiest way. “It wasn’t easy to break the news, as I had told her in broken sentences; in an indirect fashion.” I added more of Josephine’s insight such as “Normally, I would think most women do not react right away, as they are in sudden shock, at this point I don’t know what to think, but all I had to do was wait.” In the original story, the narrator has no access to what she is thinking. In my retelling I put more emotive feelings to change the narration more.

In my version I portrayed Josephine as being more sympathetic towards her sister’s loss. In the original story it said “ 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.” In my retelling I said “Before I can even comfort her, she escapes from my hold and run away, into her room and slams the door and locks it. Richard says to me “Give her some time to let it sink in.” I was stunned, so Richards gently sat me down in the living room chair. It took every ounce of power in me not to go after my sister because I knew she needed to be alone.” I believe this made it more dramatic than in the original story.

Changing the narrator to Josephine instead of Louise changed the story a lot



because you don't get to know what really happened, but what Josephine thinks is going on in her sister's head. In my retelling I mentioned a lot of her thoughts about Louise's marriage such as it being a bad one. "I couldn't help but think that I was right, she didn't love her husband—sometimes, but her marriage was not that of a good one for sure." But in the original it didn't mention how Josephine felt about her sister's marriage.

In the end of the story I emphasized on how Josephine felt seeing Brently Mallard's face as she saw his wife in that way. "I hear the front door being unlocked and wondered who that could be. It was a confused Brently Mallard, who was supposedly dead. He looked like he had no clue of what happened and was far away from the scene of the accident. It all happened so quickly as Richards reacts to this by screening him from the view of his wife." This was more dramatic also showing how Mr. Mallard was so innocent and not knowing anything had happened, or that he "died". Changing who narrates the story did change a lot about the story since the narrator is limited and we can't tell what is going on in the other character's head therefore not knowing the whole truth.

## Unforeseen Freedom

Unforeseen Freedom

By Brian P. Ballie

Here comes Richard and Josephine I haven't seen them in quite some time and they are here together. This is truly weird for they have no reason to visit me today. They came wearing grim faces and portraying sad eyes. In my heart I know that something terrible has happened, I wonder if it has anything to do with the terrible ruckus down at the telegraph station today I swear it was like a complete mad house there. Then they start talking and I can barely believe what I am hearing. "Jessica my sister" she says "I there has been a terrible accident on the rail. It has been most disastrous and families have been thrown into turmoil." "Death has come and we will get through this as best as we can because we are family and that's what family does" she continued to speak but I had long stopped listening to her and came to the horrible realization that he was gone. DEAD for that is what he is dead and gone according to Robert. My poor Brently taken away from me in a disastrous culmination of steel and fire on that beast of iron he worked on. I am blinded by the grief for my eyes have been bathed in the wetness of my tears and I have nothing else but sorrow in my heart. I now weep for he whom I lost the man that I love.

In a fell swoop it is gone I feel nothing and need to be alone, my room beckons calling me into the peaceful abyss of my abode. Gone is the light for the sky has turned dark with rain as if somehow the gods feeling my sorrow wept with me and have become spent. The darkness that is there is dissipating slowly like the sobs wrecking through my body. In this moment I am truly lost but just as quickly clarity comes to me as the light starts peeking through more and more through the sky. I remember a time when I was happy and young and beautiful, a time when life was so simple. Then I realized that I was free to go back to being that girl. I was no longer tied down to the dead man I was "FREE" truly free and I am going to love it.

Ecstasy has set in and my heart is pounding my realization has thrown me for a loop and I have accepted that I am truly free. I no longer need to worry about pleasing the dead man I have only myself to worry about. Pure happiness has filled my once dreary heart I feel like new life has been breathed into me and it is intoxicating. I feel alive more so than I have felt in a long time. I can hear her out there shouting in riotous anger Josephine my sister asking

me to come out and talking to Robert at my conversation but she doesn't understand, neither does he. They can't begin to understand the feelings shooting through my very soul.

I have come to a conclusion that I am better because of his death but at the same time I truly loved that man that wonderful kind man who sheltered me through the years where I was his. I will truly miss him and when I see all that is left of him I will weep again but for now I will relish in my freedom. Because even though he was my love, love was not present all the time and I am happy I am not burdened with loving him anymore. There she is again yelling "Open the door Jessica who are you talking to stop these rambling thoughts before you make yourself sick." Sick what does she know she is no doctor she is a question bathed in mystery to me has been all my life.

I have had enough of her pleading and I care not for her talking. I open the door and in she rushes taking me by the hand and pulling me downstairs gently like I am made of glass and liable to break any time soon. I see Robert standing in the foyer looking expectantly at me as if I were there to present him with something. Then I hear it the jingling of the lock and the rattle of a key and in swings the door. Standing there is a ghost a ghost of my husband. I look again and see it's not a ghost but the real thing. Gone is my freedom gone just as quickly as it came. I am no longer free. There is a pain a stabbing pain in my chest. They are all talking I can tell because their mouths are moving whether from shock I know not. All I hear is the clashing of a bell and the chains dragging me back in he's alive and I am dead.

"She said it over and over under her breath: 'free, free, free'" Freedom is one of the major themes in the short story entitled "The Story of An Hour" by Kate Chopin. This story is about a woman's reaction to the supposed death of her husband. In the original version of this story the narrator is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited narrator. We only have access to some of the thoughts of Mrs. Mallard and what she says while in the room but even that is limited in what we get from it. In my retelling I change it to a first person narrator from the point of view of Mrs. Mallard. I however structured it in the form of an internal monologue. The reality is the narration change drastically changes what we understand about the characters.

The third person narration present in this piece plays a vital role in the development we see of the main character. From this point of view we get to know Mrs. Mallard in a small sense. Learning about her but always wanting more. The limited view of the narrator also takes away from the complete development of the story as we only have a sort of one sided disjointed view into some of what Mrs. Mallard is going through. It paints an image where

we know nothing about the people around her.

In regards to the retelling of the same story from the point of view of a different narration style I took several factors into mind before making my decision. At first I thought of doing the story in the style of a third person omniscient narrator; thereby in fluxing a plethora of new information and ideas into the story. However I didn't feel comfortable changing the story so drastically because in doing so I would have to literally create the bones for the other characters because what we know about them right now is minimal. Then I thought how about first person narration from the point of view of Mr. Mallard would change the story. I realized however that there was no precedent for doing that because we know nothing of what happens during the time of the accident to when he comes home and keeping the story respectful to the original plot would lead to too many new ideas that could be conflicting. I finally decided to do a first person narration from the point of view of Mrs. Mallard in the form of a monologue. This I thought would give me enough to be able to tell it from her perspective talking about all those around her because we know what they were doing there but not what she was thinking when she found out about the death of her husband. Also we get to know her and see a lot about her life but not what bought on her thoughts about being free in this way I was able to create a mind for her and tell her feelings as close to what happened as possible. I was also able to tell what she was thinking when her sister comes to get her to leave the room and even what happened in her mind before she died.

The similarities in this story were vast they both followed the same plot line and had the same characters. The general story was essentially the same however that's about where they stopped and the differences came into light. In the original story Mrs. Mallard is portrayed as a weak person through her sickness. She is seen as someone who can't handle any sort of hardship in life due to a heart ailment. She at first is grief stricken when news of her husband's death reaches her. She reacts like anyone who has lost someone dear to them would by breaking down into a tear sobbing mess. However slowly the grief turns to exuberance as she comes to feel happy about the death of Mr. Mallard. In the retelling Mrs. Mallard is seen as a strong willed woman who knows what she wants and is able to make major decisions about her life on her own. She feels grief but is able to quickly quell that and come to the realization that she has her freedom.

In the retelling Mrs. Mallard comes across as a strong and her sickness or lack of as it is not mentioned is almost a metaphor for her sister treating her differently all her life. In the original story we hear Josephine asking Mrs. Mallard to open the door but she doesn't

instead she says “I am not making myself ill” instead that she is “Drinking in a very elixir of life through the open window”. In the retelling we see into the mind of Mrs. Mallard who thinks to herself “There she is again yelling ‘Open the door Jessica who are you talking to stop these rambling thoughts before you make yourself sick.’ Sick what does she know she is no doctor she is a question bathed in mystery to me has been all my life.” Here we see drastically a change because we now know the type of person Mrs. Mallard. We see that she truly doesn’t understand her sister. Also in the retelling we have a true ending when it comes to the character of Mrs. Mallard we get to see her last thought before death in which she says “All I hear is the clashing of a bell and the chains dragging me back in he’s alive and I am dead.” In comparison to the original story where we get to know that she died of a heart ailment in the retelling she dies from the knowledge that she has lost her freedom.

In the end the change of the narrator had a drastic change on the story. In the original narration we have a view looking in on a woman’s reaction to the death of her husband and then finding out that it was indeed false. In this format we get to see the softer side of the woman who loved her husband but also loved her freedom. In the retelling we have a woman’s view of what happens when she finds out about the death of her husband we get to see her intimate thoughts as she is having an internalized dialogue talking about her feelings as well as her reaction to finding out that the death notice was false. Here she is smart and straightforward person she is soft and hard at the same time in that she quickly comes to the decision that her freedom is amazing and she would much rather be free than married to her husband and thus she dies from the shock of losing the gained freedom.

## What Is True Love?

What Is True Love?

Anwar Uddin

As a sister I can do so much, I tried and tried thus I failed to aid my sister during her sorrows. She was troubled with cardiovascular disease so I tried giving her hints and description of what might have happened, slowly trying to reveal the whole outcome of the tragedy but all attempts failed. My sister’s husband’s friend, Richard had learned about a railroad disaster when he was in the newspaper office and saw Louise’s husband, Brently, on the list of those killed. As I slowly told my sister about Brentley’s death, I can see all the emotions building up in Louise and her eyes gradually turning red and slowly the first drop of tears ran across her cheeks and down her neck. I felt pain and grief run through my body as I told her about the incident it was a painful ache that’s unexplainable. As I tried leaning forward to grab her, Louise ran down the living room and up the stairs not stopping at once as she skipped through two stairs at a time. I followed behind her as she slammed the door in front of me all I can hear at this point is an ache that ran down my ears from the wooden door that Louise had slammed shut. So many things ran across my mind I thought I was going to lose my sister also, as I heard the windows crack open on the other side of this dense wooden door. There was a little opening under the wooden door and I felt a slight puff of air hit my toes. So I knew for sure Louise had opened the window. As I put my ears against the door to listen to what Louise was doing behind door, I heard a little whisper saying “free body and soul free!” then I yelled out “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heavens sake open the door.” I kept banging on the door and I felt flood flow into my arms as I started banging harder and harder slowly my hands started turning red.”Go away. I am not making myself ill.” My sister answered. I felt helpless, here my sister was going through a tough time and all I could do is watch and listen. After waiting and waiting I didn’t know what to do anymore and unexpectedly the wooden door slowly opened and I was ecstatic to see my sister all right. For some reason I saw triumph in Louise’s eyes I was bewildered it was as if she was free again. I wish I knew what was running through my sister’s mind. But I was delighted to see my sister okay and that’s all that mattered. I held my sister as she clasped her arms around my waist and I slowly held her as we walked down the wooden stairs there was silence and I heard my sister breathing hard and the stairs making crackling noises. At the bottom of the stairs Richard was awaiting

our presence. As we finally approached the bottom of the stairs where Richard was standing, someone was trying to open the front door. I heard keys trying to twist and turn trying to open the door and finally the front door had cracked open. It was Brentley Mallard carrying his grip-sack and umbrella, I couldn't believe it I felt a huge burden lift of my back and all I thought to myself was "how?" I was truly pleased to see Brentley safe. I burst out with laughter and cry. Richard had tried unsuccessfully to block Louise from seeing him. My sister Louise had passed away from heart disease, I was speechless nothing can overcome what I have been through all the sorrow and pain.

In the original story, "The Story of an hour" by Kate Chopin the author narrates the story using third person limited narration. We are guided towards the mind of Louise Mallard and we come to learn about Louise's outlook and emotions about her husband Brently Mallard's death when a railroad disaster takes place. Louise's Mallard's sister Josephine is trying very hard to cope with the situation and she's slowly trying to explain to Louise's about the incident that occurred with Brently. Therefore in my narration of "The story of an Hour" I used first person limited narration to take a tour around Josephine's intuition about her perception and thoughts of the incident which took place with Brently and how she might have actually felt trying to explain to her sister that her husband won't be coming back home.

In my telling of "The Story of an Hour" I used first person narration to describe Josephine's thoughts and feelings when she had found out about the railroad disaster that had taken place and how it might have felt to actually tell someone that your loved one won't be returning back home. I described the story through Josephine's perspective and how Josephine may have felt. Therefore I started my story with Josephine's feelings and how she feels helpless and unworthy, "As a sister I can do so much, I tried and tried thus I failed to aid my sister during her sorrows." This portrays Josephine can only do so much to help her sister through her struggles. Also Josephine's sister Louise Mallard was troubled with heart disease therefore she didn't want to go straight to the topic of Brently Mallard's passing away instead she used broken sentences and hints to portray Brently's death. Josephine acknowledged the despair that was building up when she was explaining to Louise about her husband's death as she states, "I can see all the emotions building up in Louise and her eyes gradually turning red and slowly the first drop of tears ran across her cheeks and down her neck." Josephine tried to soothe her by giving her a hug but Louise went up to her room alone. She followed Louise back to her room but Louise wouldn't open the door. Many thoughts were running across Josephine's head as a sister she wanted the best for Louise as we can see she states, "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door you will make yourself ill. What are you doing,

Louise? For heavens sake open the door." Louise had cracked open the windows and Josephine knew something was up, she screamed "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heavens sake open the door." But Louise wouldn't budge therefore she answered "Go away. I am not making myself ill." Josephine didn't want her sister to feel ill therefore she kept banging on the door eventually Louise had opened the door and she came out. Josephine explains that Louise looked very delighted and happy when she walked out of the room, "For some reason I saw triumph in Louise's eyes I was bewildered it was as if she was free again." But to Josephine all that mattered at that point was that her sister was okay. As they grabbed each other and started walking down the stairs Richard was at the bottom of the stairs waiting for them when they reached the bottom of the stairs someone was trying to open the front door and eventually Brently Mallard walked into the house. Josephine couldn't believe it, Brently was alive she was full of joy. Later on we come to a conclusion that Louise had passed away from heart disease.

In the original story of "The story of an hour" by Kate Chopin, she uses Third person limited narration. In the story there is a short description of Josephine's reaction when she first hears the incident that occurred with Brently Mallard. Louise Mallard is heart troubled so she is cautiously informed about her husband's passing away. The description tells us that Josephine uses broken sentences to describe the incident that occurred, as explained in the story "it was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing." Louise's husband's friend Richard, had learned about a railroad disaster that befell when he was in the newspaper office and saw Louise's husband, Brently, on the listing of those wounded and killed. After Josephine had slowly explained to Louise about Brently's death Louise slowly started weeping and she runs upstairs to her room alone. Louise sits down in her room and she looks out an open window. She sees trees, she smells the aroma of approaching rain, and hears someone yelling out what he's trying to sell. She hears somebody singing as well as the sounds of sparrows, and there are fluffy white clouds in the sky as it's stated in the story "She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all a quiver 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." She feels young with lines around her eyes we come to this conclusion because the author explains "she was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength." Still weeping, she looks into the distance. She feels anxious and tries to hold back the building emotions inside her, but she can't. She starts continuously repeating

the word “Free” to herself over and over again. Her heart begins to beat quickly, and she feels awfully warm. Louise knows she’ll sob again when she sees her husband corpse. Louise describes Brently’s hand as tender, and that he constantly looked at her tenderly. But when she starts thinking about the years to come, which belong only to her now, and spreads her arms out ecstatically with eagerness, the author explains “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 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.” Louise will be free on her own without anyone to tell her what to do. She feels as if all men and women oppress one another even if they do it out of affection. Louise often felt love for Brently but she tells herself that none of that matters anymore. She feels happy with her new freedom. Josephine comes to her door and starts knocking, pleading Louise to come out, and telling her that she’ll get sick if she doesn’t. Louise tells Josephine she’ll be fine and for her to go away. Louise thinks about all the days and years to come and how she’ll live a long and healthy life with no stress. Louise eventually opens the door and both sisters start walking down the stairs where Richards is waiting for them at the bottom of the stairs. The front door suddenly opens and Brently Mallard comes in. He wasn’t in the train disaster or even attentive that one had happened. Josephine screams out of delight, and Richards tries to block Louise from seeing him. When the doctors appear they state that Louise died of a heart attack brought on by joy.

In conclusion, the author Kate Chopin describes all the feelings and emotions of how Louise felt when she thought her husband passed away. Kate Chopin used third person limited narration to describe Louise and her thoughts about the whole situation. Louise felt a huge burden lift of her back as she thought her husband passed away. In the story I described I used third person narration with a different character I used Josephine as the character and her described her thoughts and feelings about the whole situation from her point of view.

## **A Jury of Her Peers**

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Susan Glaspell

#### **From *Every Week***

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WHEN Martha Hale opened the storm-door and got a cut of the north wind, she ran back for her big woolen scarf. As she hurriedly wound that round her head her eye made a scandalized sweep of her kitchen. It was no ordinary thing that called her away — it was probably farther from ordinary than anything that had ever happened in Dickson County. But what her eye took in was that her kitchen was in no shape for leaving; her bread all ready for mixing, half the flour sifted and half unsifted.

She hated to see things half done; but she had been at that when the team from town stopped to get Mr. Hale, and then the sheriff came running in to say his wife wished Mrs. Hale would come too — adding, with a grin, that he guessed she was getting scarey and wanted another woman along. So she had dropped everything right where it was.

“Martha!” now came her husband’s impatient voice. “Don’t keep folks waiting out here in the cold.”

She again opened the storm-door, and this time joined the three men and the one woman waiting for her in the big two-seated buggy.

After she had the robes tucked around her she took another look at the woman who sat beside her on the back seat. She had met Mrs. Peters the year before at the county fair, and the thing she remembered about her was that she didn’t seem like a sheriff’s wife. She was small and thin and didn’t have a strong voice. Mrs. Gorman, sheriff’s wife before Gorman went out

and Peters came in, had a voice that somehow seemed to be backing up the law with every word. But if Mrs. Peters didn't look like a sheriff's wife, Peters made it up in looking like a sheriff. He was to a dot the kind of man who could get himself elected sheriff — a heavy man with a big voice, who was particularly genial with the law-abiding, as if to make it plain that he knew the difference between criminals and non-criminals. And right there it came into Mrs. Hale's mind, with a stab, that this man who was so pleasant and lively with all of them was going to the Wrights' now as a sheriff.

"The country's not very pleasant this time of year," Mrs. Peters at last ventured, as if she felt they ought to be talking as well as the men.

Mrs. Hale scarcely finished her reply, for they had gone up a little hill and could see the Wright place now, and seeing it did not make her feel like talking. It looked very lonesome this cold March morning. It had always been a lonesome-looking place. It was down in a hollow, and the poplar trees around it were lonesome-looking trees. The men were looking at it and talking about what had happened. The county attorney was bending to one side of the buggy, and kept looking steadily at the place as they drew up to it.

"I'm glad you came with me," Mrs. Peters said nervously, as the two women were about to follow the men in through the kitchen door.

Even after she had her foot on the door-step, her hand on the knob, Martha Hale had a moment of feeling she could not cross that threshold. And the reason it seemed she couldn't cross it now was simply because she hadn't crossed it before. Time and time again it had been in her mind, "I ought to go over and see Minnie Foster" — she still thought of her as Minnie Foster, though for twenty years she had been Mrs. Wright. And then there was always something to do and Minnie Foster would go from her mind. But *now* she could come.

The men went over to the stove. The women stood close together by the door. Young Henderson, the county attorney, turned around and said, "Come up to the fire, ladies."

Mrs. Peters took a step forward, then stopped. "I'm not — cold," she said.

And so the two women stood by the door, at first not even so much as looking around the kitchen.

The men talked for a minute about what a good thing it was the sheriff had sent his deputy out that morning to make a fire for them, and then Sheriff Peters stepped back from the stove, unbuttoned his outer coat, and leaned his hands on the kitchen table in a way that seemed to mark the beginning of official business. "Now, Mr. Hale," he said in a sort of semi-official voice, "before we move things about, you tell Mr. Henderson just what it was you saw when you came here yesterday morning."

The county attorney was looking around the kitchen.

"By the way," he said, "has anything been moved?" He turned to the sheriff. "Are things just as you left them yesterday?"

Peters looked from cupboard to sink; from that to a small worn rocker a little to one side of the kitchen table.

"It's just the same."

"Somebody should have been left here yesterday," said the county attorney.

"Oh — yesterday," returned the sheriff, with a little gesture as of yesterday having been more than he could bear to think of. "When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy — let me tell you, I had my hands full *yesterday*. I knew you could get back from Omaha by to-day, George, and as long as I went over everything here myself — "Well, Mr. Hale," said the county attorney, in a way of letting what was past and gone go, "tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning."

Mrs. Hale, still leaning against the door, had that sinking feeling of the mother whose child is about to speak a piece. Lewis often wandered along and got things mixed up in a story. She hoped he would tell this straight and plain, and not say unnecessary things that would just make things harder for Minnie Foster. He didn't begin at once, and she noticed that he looked queer — as if standing in that kitchen and having to tell what he had seen there yesterday morning made him almost sick.

"Yes, Mr. Hale?" the county attorney reminded.

"Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes," Mrs. Hale's husband began.

Harry was Mrs. Hale's oldest boy. He wasn't with them now, for the very good reason that those potatoes never got to town yesterday and he was taking them this morning, so he hadn't been home when the sheriff stopped to say he wanted Mr. Hale to come over to the Wright place and tell the county attorney his story there, where he could point it all out. With all Mrs. Hale's other emotions came the fear now that maybe Harry wasn't dressed warm enough — they hadn't any of them realized how that north wind did bite.

"We come along this road," Hale was going on, with a motion of his hand to the road over which they had just come, "and as we got in sight of the house I says to Harry, 'I'm goin' to see if I can't get John Wright to take a telephone.' You see," he explained to Henderson, "unless I can get somebody to go in with me they won't come out this branch road except for a price I can't pay. I'd spoke to Wright about it once before; but he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet — guess you know about how much he talked himself. But I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, and said all the women-folks liked the telephones, and that in this lonesome stretch of road it would be a good thing — well, I said to Harry that that was what I was going to say — though I said at the same time that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John —"

Now, there he was! — saying things he didn't need to say. Mrs. Hale tried to catch her husband's eye, but fortunately the county attorney interrupted with:

"Let's talk about that a little later, Mr. Hale. I do want to talk about that, but I'm anxious now to get along to just what happened when you got here."

When he began this time, it was very deliberately and carefully:

"I didn't see or hear anything. I knocked at the door. And still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up — it was past eight o'clock. So I knocked again, louder, and I thought I heard somebody say, 'Come in.' I wasn't sure — I'm not sure yet. But I opened the door — this door," jerking a hand toward the door by which the two women stood, "and there, in that rocker" — pointing to it — "sat Mrs. Wright."

Every one in the kitchen looked at the rocker. It came into Mrs. Hale's mind that that rocker didn't look in the least like Minnie Foster — the Minnie Foster of twenty years before. It was a dingy red, with wooden rungs up the back, and the middle run was gone, and the chair

sagged to one side.

"How did she — look?" the county attorney was inquiring.

"Well," said Hale, "she looked — queer."

"How do you mean — queer?"

As he asked it he took out a note-book and pencil. Mrs. Hale did not like the sight of that pencil. She kept her eye fixed on her husband, as if to keep him from saying unnecessary things that would go into that notebook and make trouble.

Hale did speak guardedly, as if the pencil had affected him too.

"Well, as if she didn't know what she was going to do next. And kind of — done up."

"How did she seem to feel about your coming?"

"Why, I don't think she minded — one way or other. She didn't pay much attention. I said, 'Ho' do, Mrs. Wright? It's cold, ain't it?' And she said, 'Is it?' — and went on pleatin' at her apron.

"Well, I was surprised. She didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to sit down, but just set there, not even lookin' at me. And so I said: 'I want to see John.'

"And then she — laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh.

"I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said, a little sharp, 'Can I see John?' 'No,' says she — kind of dull like. 'Ain't he home?' says I. Then she looked at me. 'Yes,' says she, 'he's home.' 'Then why can't I see him?' I asked her, out of patience with her now. 'Cause he's dead,' says she, just as quiet and dull — and fell to pleatin' her apron. 'Dead?' says I, like you do when you can't take in what you've heard.

"She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin' back and forth.

"'Why — where is he?' says I, not knowing *what* to say.

“She just pointed upstairs — like this” — pointing to the room above.

“I got up, with the idea of going up there myself. By this time I — didn’t know what to do. I walked from there to here; then I says: ‘Why, what did he die of?’

“‘He died of a rope round his neck,’ says she; and just went on pleatin’ at her apron.”

Hale stopped speaking, and stood staring at the rocker, as if he were still seeing the woman who had sat there the morning before. Nobody spoke; it was as if every one were seeing the woman who had sat there the morning before.

“And what did you do then?” the county attorney at last broke the silence.

“I went out and called Harry. I thought I might — need help. I got Harry in, and we went upstairs.” His voice fell almost to a whisper. “There he was — lying over the — ”

“I think I’d rather have you go into that upstairs,” the county attorney interrupted, “where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story.”

“Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked — ”

He stopped, his face twitching.

“But Harry, he went up to him, and he said, ‘No, he’s dead all right, and we’d better not touch anything.’ So we went downstairs.

“She was still sitting that same way. ‘Has anybody been notified?’ I asked. ‘No,’ says she, unconcerned.

“‘Who did this, Mrs. Wright?’ said Harry. He said it businesslike, and she stopped pleatin’ at her apron. ‘I don’t know,’ she says. ‘You don’t *know*?’ says Harry. ‘Weren’t you sleepin’ in the bed with him?’ ‘Yes,’ says she, ‘but I was on the inside.’ ‘Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him, and you didn’t wake up?’ says Harry. ‘I didn’t wake up,’ she said after him.

“We may have looked as if we didn’t see how that could be, for after a minute she said, ‘I

sleep sound.’

“Harry was going to ask her more questions, but I said maybe that weren’t our business; maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the coroner or the sheriff. So Harry went fast as he could over to High Road — the Rivers’ place, where there’s a telephone.”

“And what did she do when she knew you had gone for the coroner?” The attorney got his pencil in his hand all ready for writing.

“She moved from that chair to this one over here” — Hale pointed to a small chair in the corner — “and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone; and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me — scared.”

At sound of a moving pencil the man who was telling the story looked up.

“I dunno — maybe it wasn’t scared,” he hastened; “I wouldn’t like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr. Lloyd came, and you, Mr. Peters, and so I guess that’s all I know that you don’t.”

He said that last with relief, and moved a little, as if relaxing. Every one moved a little. The county attorney walked toward the stair door.

“I guess we’ll go upstairs first — then out to the barn and around there.”

He paused and looked around the kitchen.

“You’re convinced there was nothing important here?” he asked the sheriff. “Nothing that would — point to any motive?”

The sheriff too looked all around, as if to re-convince himself.

“Nothing here but kitchen things,” he said, with a little laugh for the insignificance of kitchen things.

The county attorney was looking at the cupboard — a peculiar, ungainly structure, half closet



and half cupboard, the upper part of it being built in the wall, and the lower part just the old-fashioned kitchen cupboard. As if its queerness attracted him, he got a chair and opened the upper part and looked in. After a moment he drew his hand away sticky.

“Here’s a nice mess,” he said resentfully.

The two women had drawn nearer, and now the sheriff’s wife spoke.

“Oh — her fruit,” she said, looking to Mrs. Hale for sympathetic understanding. She turned back to the county attorney and explained: “She worried about that when it turned so cold last night. She said the fire would go out and her jars might burst.”

Mrs. Peters’ husband broke into a laugh.

“Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder, and worrying about her preserves!”

The young attorney set his lips.

“I guess before we’re through with her she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about.”

“Oh, well,” said Mrs. Hale’s husband, with good-natured superiority, “women are used to worrying over trifles.”

The two women moved a little closer together. Neither of them spoke. The county attorney seemed suddenly to remember his manners — and think of his future.

“And yet,” said he, with the gallantry of a young politician, “for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies?”

The women did not speak, did not unbend. He went to the sink and began washing his hands. He turned to wipe them on the roller towel — whirled it for a cleaner place.

“Dirty towels! Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?”

He kicked his foot against some dirty pans under the sink.

“There’s a great deal of work to be done on a farm,” said Mrs. Hale stiffly.

“To be sure. And yet” — with a little bow to her — “I know there are some Dickson County farm-houses that do not have such roller towels.” He gave it a pull to expose its full length again.

“Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men’s hands aren’t always as clean as they might be.”

“Ah, loyal to your sex, I see,” he laughed. He stopped and gave her a keen look. “But you and Mrs. Wright were neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too.”

Martha Hale shook her head.

“I’ve seen little enough of her of late years. I’ve not been in this house — it’s more than a year.”

“And why was that? You didn’t like her?”

“I liked her well enough,” she replied with spirit. “Farmers’ wives have their hands full, Mr. Henderson. And then — ” She looked around the kitchen.

“Yes?” he encouraged.

“It never seemed a very cheerful place,” said she, more to herself than to him.

“No,” he agreed; “I don’t think any one would call it cheerful. I shouldn’t say she had the home-making instinct.”

“Well, I don’t know as Wright had, either,” she muttered.

“You mean they didn’t get on very well?” he was quick to ask.

“No; I don’t mean anything,” she answered, with decision. As she turned a little away from him, she added: “But I don’t think a place would be any the cheerfuler for John Wright’s bein’ in it.”

“I’d like to talk to you about that a little later, Mrs. Hale,” he said. “I’m anxious to get the lay of things upstairs now.”

He moved toward the stair door, followed by the two men.

“I suppose anything Mrs. Peters does’ll be all right?” the sheriff inquired. “She was to take in some clothes for her, you know — and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday.”

The county attorney looked at the two women whom they were leaving alone there among the kitchen things.

“Yes — Mrs. Peters,” he said, his glance resting on the woman who was not Mrs. Peters, the big farmer woman who stood behind the sheriff’s wife. “Of course Mrs. Peters is one of us,” he said, in a manner of entrusting responsibility. “And keep your eye out, Mrs. Peters, for anything that might be of use. No telling; you women might come upon a clue to the motive — and that’s the thing we need.”

Mr. Hale rubbed his face after the fashion of a show man getting ready for a pleasantry.

“But would the women know a clue if they did come upon it?” he said; and, having delivered himself of this, he followed the others through the stair door.

The women stood motionless and silent, listening to the footsteps, first upon the stairs, then in the room above them.

Then, as if releasing herself from something strange, Mrs. Hale began to arrange the dirty pans under the sink, which the county attorney’s disdainful push of the foot had deranged.

“I’d hate to have men comin’ into my kitchen,” she said testily — “snoopin’ round and criticizin’.”

“Of course it’s no more than their duty,” said the sheriff’s wife, in her manner of timid acquiescence.

“Duty’s all right,” replied Mrs. Hale bluffly; “but I guess that deputy sheriff that come out to

make the fire might have got a little of this on.” She gave the roller towel a pull. “Wish I’d thought of that sooner! Seems mean to talk about her for not having things slicked up, when she had to come away in such a hurry.”

She looked around the kitchen. Certainly it was not “slicked up.” Her eye was held by a bucket of sugar on a low shelf. The cover was off the wooden bucket, and beside it was a paper bag — half full.

Mrs. Hale moved toward it.

“She was putting this in there,” she said to herself — slowly.

She thought of the flour in her kitchen at home — half sifted, half not sifted. She had been interrupted, and had left things half done. What had interrupted Minnie Foster? Why had that work been left half done? She made a move as if to finish it, — unfinished things always bothered her, — and then she glanced around and saw that Mrs. Peters was watching her — and she didn’t want Mrs. Peters to get that feeling she had got of work begun and then — for some reason — not finished.

“It’s a shame about her fruit,” she said, and walked toward the cupboard that the county attorney had opened, and got on the chair, murmuring: “I wonder if it’s all gone.”

It was a sorry enough looking sight, but “Here’s one that’s all right,” she said at last. She held it toward the light. “This is cherries, too.” She looked again. “I declare I believe that’s the only one.”

With a sigh, she got down from the chair, went to the sink, and wiped off the bottle.

“She’ll feel awful bad, after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer.”

She set the bottle on the table, and, with another sigh, started to sit down in the rocker. But she did not sit down. Something kept her from sitting down in that chair. She straightened — stepped back, and, half turned away, stood looking at it, seeing the woman who had sat there “pleatin’ at her apron.”

The thin voice of the sheriff's wife broke in upon her: "I must be getting those things from the front room closet." She opened the door into the other room, started in, stepped back. "You coming with me, Mrs. Hale?" she asked nervously. "You — you could help me get them."

They were soon back — the stark coldness of that shut-up room was not a thing to linger in.

"My!" said Mrs. Peters, dropping the things on the table and hurrying to the stove.

Mrs. Hale stood examining the clothes the woman who was being detained in town had said she wanted.

"Wright was close!" she exclaimed, holding up a shabby black skirt that bore the marks of much making over. "I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. I s'pose she felt she couldn't do her part; and then, you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively — when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls, singing in the choir. But that — oh, that was twenty years ago."

With a carefulness in which there was something tender, she folded the shabby clothes and piled them at one corner of the table. She looked up at Mrs. Peters, and there was something in the other woman's look that irritated her.

"She don't care," she said to herself. "Much difference it makes to her whether Minnie Foster had pretty clothes when she was a girl."

Then she looked again, and she wasn't so sure; in fact, she hadn't at any time been perfectly sure about Mrs. Peters. She had that shrinking manner, and yet her eyes looked as if they could see a long way into things.

"This all you was to take in?" asked Mrs. Hale.

"No," said the sheriff's wife; "she said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want," she ventured in her nervous little way, "for there's not much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. If you're used to wearing an apron — . She said they were in the bottom drawer of this cupboard. Yes — here they are. And then her little shawl that always hung on the stair door."

She took the small gray shawl from behind the door leading upstairs, and stood a minute looking at it.

Suddenly Mrs. Hale took a quick step toward the other woman.

"Mrs. Peters!"

"Yes, Mrs. Hale?"

"Do you think she — did it?"

A frightened look blurred the other thing in Mrs. Peters' eyes.

"Oh, I don't know," she said, in a voice that seemed to shrink away from the subject.

"Well, I don't think she did," affirmed Mrs. Hale stoutly. "Asking for an apron, and her little shawl. Worryin' about her fruit."

"Mr. Peters says — " Footsteps were heard in the room above; she stopped, looked up, then went on in a lowered voice: "Mr. Peters says — it looks bad for her. Mr. Henderson is awful sarcastic in a speech, and he's going to make fun of her saying she didn't — wake up."

For a moment Mrs. Hale had no answer. Then, "Well, I guess John Wright didn't wake up — when they was slippin' that rope under his neck," she muttered.

"No, it's *strange*," breathed Mrs. Peters. "They think it was such a — funny way to kill a man."

She began to laugh; at sound of the laugh, abruptly stopped.

"That's just what Mr. Hale said," said Mrs. Hale, in a resolutely natural voice. "There was a gun in the house. He says that's what he can't understand."

"Mr. Henderson said, coming out, that what was needed for the case was a motive. Something to show anger — or sudden feeling."

“Well, I don’t see any signs of anger around here,” said Mrs. Hale. “I don’t —”

She stopped. It was as if her mind tripped on something. Her eye was caught by a dish-towel in the middle of the kitchen table. Slowly she moved toward the table. One half of it was wiped clean, the other half messy. Her eyes made a slow, almost unwilling turn to the bucket of sugar and the half empty bag beside it. Things begun — and not finished.

After a moment she stepped back, and said, in that manner of releasing herself:

“Wonder how they’re finding things upstairs? I hope she had it a little more red up up there. You know,” — she paused, and feeling gathered, — “it seems kind of *sneaking*: locking her up in town and coming out here to get her own house to turn against her!”

“But, Mrs. Hale,” said the sheriff’s wife, “the law is the law.”

“I s’pose ’tis,” answered Mrs. Hale shortly.

She turned to the stove, saying something about that fire not being much to brag of. She worked with it a minute, and when she straightened up she said aggressively:

“The law is the law — and a bad stove is a bad stove. How’d you like to cook on this?” — pointing with the poker to the broken lining. She opened the oven door and started to express her opinion of the oven; but she was swept into her own thoughts, thinking of what it would mean, year after year, to have that stove to wrestle with. The thought of Minnie Foster trying to bake in that oven — and the thought of her never going over to see Minnie Foster — .

She was startled by hearing Mrs. Peters say: “A person gets discouraged — and loses heart.”

The sheriff’s wife had looked from the stove to the sink — to the pail of water which had been carried in from outside. The two women stood there silent, above them the footsteps of the men who were looking for evidence against the woman who had worked in that kitchen. That look of seeing into things, of seeing through a thing to something else, was in the eyes of the sheriff’s wife now. When Mrs. Hale next spoke to her, it was gently:

“Better loosen up your things, Mrs. Peters. We’ll not feel them when we go out.”

Mrs. Peters went to the back of the room to hang up the fur tippet she was wearing. A moment later she exclaimed, “Why, she was piecing a quilt,” and held up a large sewing basket piled high with quilt pieces.

Mrs. Hale spread some of the blocks out on the table.

“It’s log-cabin pattern,” she said, putting several of them together. “Pretty, isn’t it?”

They were so engaged with the quilt that they did not hear the footsteps on the stairs. Just as the stair door opened Mrs. Hale was saying:

“Do you suppose she was going to quilt it or just knot it?”

The sheriff threw up his hands.

“They wonder whether she was going to quilt it or just knot it!”

There was a laugh for the ways of women, a warming of hands over the stove, and then the county attorney said briskly:

“Well, let’s go right out to the barn and get that cleared up.”

“I don’t see as there’s anything so strange,” Mrs. Hale said resentfully, after the outside door had closed on the three men — “our taking up our time with little things while we’re waiting for them to get the evidence. I don’t see as it’s anything to laugh about.”

“Of course they’ve got awful important things on their minds,” said the sheriff’s wife apologetically.

They returned to an inspection of the block for the quilt. Mrs. Hale was looking at the fine, even sewing, and preoccupied with thoughts of the woman who had done that sewing, when she heard the sheriff’s wife say, in a queer tone:

“Why, look at this one.”

She turned to take the block held out to her.

“The sewing,” said Mrs. Peters, in a troubled way. “All the rest of them have been so nice and even — but — this one. Why, it looks as if she didn’t know what she was about!”

Their eyes met — something flashed to life, passed between them; then, as if with an effort, they seemed to pull away from each other. A moment Mrs. Hale sat there, her hands folded over that sewing which was so unlike all the rest of the sewing. Then she had pulled a knot and drawn the threads.

“Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?” asked the sheriff’s wife, startled.

“Just pulling out a stitch or two that’s not sewed very good,” said Mrs. Hale mildly.

“I don’t think we ought to touch things,” Mrs. Peters said, a little helplessly.

“I’ll just finish up this end,” answered Mrs. Hale, still in that mild, matter-of-fact fashion.

She threaded a needle and started to replace bad sewing with good. For a little while she sewed in silence. Then, in that thin, timid voice, she heard:

“Mrs. Hale!”

“Yes, Mrs. Peters?”

“What do you suppose she was so — nervous about?”

“Oh, *I* don’t know,” said Mrs. Hale, as if dismissing a thing not important enough to spend much time on. “I don’t know as she was — nervous. I sew awful queer sometimes when I’m just tired.”

She cut a thread, and out of the corner of her eye looked up at Mrs. Peters. The small, lean face of the sheriff’s wife seemed to have tightened up. Her eyes had that look of peering into something. But next moment she moved, and said in her thin, indecisive way:

“Well, I must get those clothes wrapped. They may be through sooner than we think. I wonder where I could find a piece of paper — and string.”

“In that cupboard, maybe,” suggested Mrs. Hale, after a glance around.

One piece of the crazy sewing remained unripped. Mrs. Peters’ back turned, Martha Hale now scrutinized that piece, compared it with the dainty, accurate sewing of the other blocks. The difference was startling. Holding this block made her feel queer, as if the distracted thoughts of the woman who had perhaps turned to it to try and quiet herself were communicating themselves to her.

Mrs. Peters’ voice roused her.

“Here’s a bird-cage,” she said. “Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?”

“Why, I don’t know whether she did or not.” She turned to look at the cage Mrs. Peter was holding up. “I’ve not been here in so long.” She sighed. “There was a man round last year selling canaries cheap — but I don’t know as she took one. Maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.”

Mrs. Peters looked around the kitchen.

“Seems kind of funny to think of a bird here.” She half laughed — an attempt to put up a barrier. “But she must have had one — or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it.”

“I suppose maybe the cat got it,” suggested Mrs. Hale, resuming her sewing.

“No; she didn’t have a cat. She’s got that feeling some people have about cats — being afraid of them. When they brought her to our house yesterday, my cat got in the room, and she was real upset and asked me to take it out.”

“My sister Bessie was like that,” laughed Mrs. Hale.

The sheriff’s wife did not reply. The silence made Mrs. Hale turn round. Mrs. Peters was examining the bird-cage.

“Look at this door,” she said slowly. “It’s broke. One hinge has been pulled apart.”

Mrs. Hale came nearer.

“Looks as if some one must have been — rough with it.”

Again their eyes met — startled, questioning, apprehensive. For a moment neither spoke nor stirred. Then Mrs. Hale, turning away, said brusquely:

“If they’re going to find any evidence, I wish they’d be about it. I don’t like this place.”

“But I’m awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale.” Mrs. Peters put the bird-cage on the table and sat down. “It would be lonesome for me — sitting here alone.”

“Yes, it would, wouldn’t it?” agreed Mrs. Hale, a certain determined naturalness in her voice. She had picked up the sewing, but now it dropped in her lap, and she murmured in a different voice: “But I tell you what I *do* wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I wish — I had.”

“But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale. Your house — and your children.”

“I could’ve come,” retorted Mrs. Hale shortly. “I stayed away because it weren’t cheerful — and that’s why I ought to have come. I” — she looked around — “I’ve never liked this place. Maybe because it’s down in a hollow and you don’t see the road. I don’t know what it is, but it’s a lonesome place, and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now —” She did not put it into words.

“Well, you mustn’t reproach yourself,” counseled Mrs. Peters. “Somehow, we just don’t see how it is with other folks till — something comes up.”

“Not having children makes less work,” mused Mrs. Hale, after a silence, “but it makes a quiet house — and Wright out to work all day — and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?”

“Not to know him. I’ve seen him in town. They say he was a good man.”

“Yes — good,” conceded John Wright’s neighbor grimly. “He didn’t drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass

the time of day with him — .” She stopped, shivered a little. “Like a raw wind that gets to the bone.” Her eye fell upon the cage on the table before her, and she added, almost bitterly: “I should think she would’ve wanted a bird!”

Suddenly she leaned forward, looking intently at the cage. “But what do you s’pose went wrong with it?”

“I don’t know,” returned Mrs. Peters; “unless it got sick and died.”

But after she said it she reached over and swung the broken door. Both women watched it as if somehow held by it.

“You didn’t know — her?” Mrs. Hale asked, a gentler note in her voice.

“Not till they brought her yesterday,” said the sheriff’s wife.

“She — come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself. Real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and — fluttery. How — she — did — change.”

That held her for a long time. Finally, as if struck with a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things, she exclaimed:

“Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don’t you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.”

“Why, I think that’s a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale,” agreed the sheriff’s wife, as if she too were glad to come into the atmosphere of a simple kindness. “There couldn’t possibly be any objection to that, could there? Now, just what will I take? I wonder if her patches are in here — and her things.”

They turned to the sewing basket.

“Here’s some red,” said Mrs. Hale, bringing out a roll of cloth. Underneath that was a box. “Here, maybe her scissors are in here — and her things.” She held it up. “What a pretty box! I’ll warrant that was something she had a long time ago — when she was a girl.”

She held it in her hand a moment; then, with a little sigh, opened it.

Instantly her hand went to her nose.

“Why — !”

Mrs. Peters drew nearer — then turned away.

“There’s something wrapped up in this piece of silk,” faltered Mrs. Hale.

“This isn’t her scissors,” said Mrs. Peters, in a shrinking voice.

Her hand not steady, Mrs. Hale raised the piece of silk. “Oh, Mrs. Peters!” she cried. “It’s — ”

Mrs. Peters bent closer.

“It’s the bird,” she whispered.

“But, Mrs. Peters!” cried Mrs. Hale. “*Look* at it! Its *neck* – look at its neck! It’s all — other side *to*.”

She held the box away from her.

The sheriff’s wife again bent closer.

“Somebody wrung its neck,” said she, in a voice that was slow and deep.

And then again the eyes of the two women met — this time clung together in a look of dawning comprehension, of growing horror. Mrs. Peters looked from the dead bird to the broken door of the cage. Again their eyes met. And just then there was a sound at the outside door.

Mrs. Hale slipped the box under the quilt pieces in the basket, and sank into the chair before it. Mrs. Peters stood holding to the table. The county attorney and the sheriff came in from outside.

“Well, ladies,” said the county attorney, as one turning from serious things to little pleasantries, “have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?”

“We think,” began the sheriff’s wife in a flurried voice, “that she was going to — knot it.”

He was too preoccupied to notice the change that came in her voice on that last.

“Well, that’s very interesting, I’m sure,” he said tolerantly. He caught sight of the bird-cage. “Has the bird flown?”

“We think the cat got it,” said Mrs. Hale in a voice curiously even.

He was walking up and down, as if thinking something out.

“Is there a cat?” he asked absently.

Mrs. Hale shot a look up at the sheriff’s wife.

“Well, *not now*,” said Mrs. Peters. “They’re superstitious, you know; they leave.”

She sank into her chair.

The county attorney did not heed her. “No sign at all of any one having come in from the outside,” he said to Peters, in the manner of continuing an interrupted conversation. “Their own rope. Now let’s go upstairs again and go over it, piece by piece. It would have to have been some one who knew just the — ”

The stair door closed behind them and their voices were lost.

The two women sat motionless, not looking at each other, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they spoke now it was as if they were afraid of what they were saying, but as if they could not help saying it.

“She liked the bird,” said Martha Hale, low and slowly. “She was going to bury it in that pretty box.”

“When I was a girl,” said Mrs. Peters, under her breath, “my kitten — there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes — before I could get there —” She covered her face an instant. “If they hadn’t held me back I would have” — she caught herself, looked upstairs where footsteps were heard, and finished weakly — “hurt him.”

Then they sat without speaking or moving.

“I wonder how it would seem,” Mrs. Hale at last began, as if feeling her way over strange ground — “never to have had any children around?” Her eyes made a slow sweep of the kitchen, as if seeing what that kitchen had meant through all the years. “No, Wright wouldn’t like the bird,” she said after that — “a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that too.” Her voice tightened.

Mrs. Peters moved uneasily.

“Of course we don’t know who killed the bird.”

“I knew John Wright,” was Mrs. Hale’s answer.

“It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale,” said the sheriff’s wife. “Killing a man while he slept — slipping a thing round his neck that choked the life out of him.”

Mrs. Hale’s hand went out to the bird-cage.

“His neck. Choked the life out of him.”

“We don’t *know* who killed him,” whispered Mrs. Peters wildly. “We don’t *know*.”

Mrs. Hale had not moved. “If there had been years and years of — nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful — still — after the bird was still.”

It was as if something within her not herself had spoken, and it found in Mrs. Peters something she did not know as herself.

“I know what stillness is,” she said, in a queer, monotonous voice. “When we homesteaded

in Dakota, and my first baby died — after he was two years old — and me with no other then —”

Mrs. Hale stirred.

“How soon do you suppose they’ll be through looking for the evidence?”

“I know what stillness is,” repeated Mrs. Peters, in just that same way. Then she too pulled back. “The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale,” she said in her tight little way.

“I wish you’d seen Minnie Foster,” was the answer, “when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons, and stood up there in the choir and sang.”

The picture of that girl, the fact that she had lived neighbor to that girl for twenty years, and had let her die for lack of life, was suddenly more than she could bear.

“Oh, I *wish* I’d come over here once in a while!” she cried. “That was a crime! That was a crime! Who’s going to punish that?”

“We mustn’t take on,” said Mrs. Peters, with a frightened look toward the stairs.

“I might ‘a’ *known* she needed help! I tell you, it’s *queer*, Mrs. Peters. We live close together, and we live far apart. We all go through the same things — it’s all just a different kind of the same thing! If it weren’t — why do you and I *understand*? Why do we *know* — what we know this minute?”

She dashed her hand across her eyes. Then, seeing the jar of fruit on the table, she reached for it and choked out:

“If I was you I wouldn’t *tell* her her fruit was gone! Tell her it *ain’t*. Tell her it’s all right — all of it. Here — take this in to prove it to her! She — she may never know whether it was broke or not.”

She turned away.

Mrs. Peters reached out for the bottle of fruit as if she were glad to take it — as if touching a



familiar thing, having something to do, could keep her from something else. She got up, looked about for something to wrap the fruit in, took a petticoat from the pile of clothes she had brought from the front room, and nervously started winding that round the bottle.

“My!” she began, in a high, false voice, “it’s a good thing the men couldn’t hear us! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a — dead canary.” She hurried over that. “As if that could have anything to do with — with — My, wouldn’t they *laugh*?”

Footsteps were heard on the stairs.

“Maybe they would,” muttered Mrs. Hale — “maybe they wouldn’t.”

“No, Peters,” said the county attorney incisively; “it’s all perfectly clear, except the reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing — something to show. Something to make a story about. A thing that would connect up with this clumsy way of doing it.”

In a covert way Mrs. Hale looked at Mrs. Peters. Mrs. Peters was looking at her. Quickly they looked away from each other. The outer door opened and Mr. Hale came in.

“I’ve got the team round now,” he said. “Pretty cold out there.”

“I’m going to stay here awhile by myself,” the county attorney suddenly announced. “You can send Frank out for me, can’t you?” he asked the sheriff. “I want to go over everything. I’m not satisfied we can’t do better.”

Again, for one brief moment, the two women’s eyes found one another.

The sheriff came up to the table.

“Did you want to see what Mrs. Peters was going to take in?”

The county attorney picked up the apron. He laughed.

“Oh, I guess they’re not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out.”

Mrs. Hale’s hand was on the sewing basket in which the box was concealed. She felt that she ought to take her hand off the basket. She did not seem able to. He picked up one of the quilt blocks which she had piled on to cover the box. Her eyes felt like fire. She had a feeling that if he took up the basket she would snatch it from him.

But he did not take it up. With another little laugh, he turned away, saying:

“No; Mrs. Peters doesn’t need supervising. For that matter, a sheriff’s wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs. Peters?”

Mrs. Peters was standing beside the table. Mrs. Hale shot a look up at her; but she could not see her face. Mrs. Peters had turned away. When she spoke, her voice was muffled.

“Not — just that way,” she said.

“Married to the law!” chuckled Mrs. Peters’ husband. He moved toward the door into the front room, and said to the county attorney:

“I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows.”

“Oh — windows,” said the county attorney scoffingly.

“We’ll be right out, Mr. Hale,” said the sheriff to the farmer, who was still waiting by the door.

Hale went to look after the horses. The sheriff followed the county attorney into the other room. Again — for one final moment — the two women were alone in that kitchen.

Martha Hale sprang up, her hands tight together, looking at that other woman, with whom it rested. At first she could not see her eyes, for the sheriff’s wife had not turned back since she turned away at that suggestion of being married to the law. But now Mrs. Hale made her turn back. Her eyes made her turn back. Slowly, unwillingly, Mrs. Peters turned her head until her eyes met the eyes of the other woman. There was a moment when they held each other in a steady, burning look in which there was no evasion nor flinching. Then Martha Hale’s eyes pointed the way to the basket in which was hidden the thing that would make certain the

conviction of the other woman — that woman who was not there and yet who had been there with them all through that hour.

For a moment Mrs. Peters did not move. And then she did it. With a rush forward, she threw back the quilt pieces, got the box, tried to put it in her hand-bag. It was too big. Desperately she opened it, started to take the bird out. But there she broke — she could not touch the bird. She stood there helpless, foolish.

There was the sound of a knob turning in the inner door. Martha Hale snatched the box from the sheriff's wife, and got it in the pocket of her big coat just as the sheriff and the county attorney came back into the kitchen.

“Well, Henry,” said the county attorney facetiously, “at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to — what is it you call it, ladies?”

Mrs. Hale's hand was against the pocket of her coat.

“We call it — knot it, Mr. Henderson.”

[text from <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/GlaJury.html>]

## Overly Affectionate Woman

Overly Affectionate Woman

Urgyen

The most bewildered occupation I ever had was a housekeeping job at John and Madison's rented house. John was a physician. He was practical in the extreme, and had no patience with faith. He scoffed openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures. Madison was an obedient, imaginative and soft woman with overall affection from her husband. “Jennie,” called John. “You must very well take care of Madison while we live here for three months. She has nervous breakdown I want her to take rest as much as she can”. Madison looked fabulous when we entered the old mansion. She would listen to him in every step he told her to follow; after all he was a physician. Her brother was a physician too.

John looked worried but confident that he could help cure Madison from the nervous breakdown through his medical partition. Being John's sister, I would try hard to make them happy. I felt that Madison would recover soon from her nervous breakdown since poor John had tried his every possible option.

All for the benefit of Madison's fast recovery, John brought Madison to this old mansion in order that she could breathe better air and rest as comfortable as she could. There were some legal issues, the mansion was empty for years and John could rent at a cheap rate. The house was three miles away from the village so the place was quite lonely, standing isolated on the far side of the road. It looked calm but not the calmness that any people would want. For the first few weeks, I had difficulty adjusting to the place as most people usually did.

“Jennie, please follow her schedule in case if she gets carried away on her imaginative things.” said John walking hurriedly towards the door. John had scheduled Madison's prescription for each hour of the day. He let her exercise, drink tonics, journey, catch more fresh air and never let her do any sort of work specially writing which he thought would pressure her mind with more fancy ideas. John said I am supposed to keep watch on Madison if she ever touches any paper.

There were many rooms for maids and guests on the ground floor, but they chose to take the

room on the upper floor, the room is big, airy, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, air and sunshine bountiful. The wallpaper had few scratches; maybe previous landlord's children must have played around a lot.

John wanted to repaper the wall, but later dropped the idea because they were only going to be here for few months and if he starts, there will be never ending repairs to be done for three months. He said that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give a way to such fancies.

She felt uncomfortable whenever I entered the room to clean it. When I caught her several times her face changes to flush like a blending style of chameleon. I could see her hand move swiftly to set aside the book. I always look straight forward to grab the book and advice her that it would be detriment for her health.

During the second month, Madison seems physically better. But her eyes looked tired in the morning whenever I serve the breakfast. I could understand that she had not slept well during the night.

Madison always faced the wall that has scratches on it. It seemed like she always meditates on that wall. She does walk around but mostly she concentrate for much longer time as if her soul has been stuck on that fancy wall. When I enter the room in those first weeks, Madison would describe that there's something unique about that wall.

Most of the time, John would come very late. During the day Madison would never come out of her room for hours. In those first two months, she was collaborating with us, following the schedule set by her husband. Those provisions really improved her physically but not mentally. She seems abandoned from the present world and kept herself sticking her eyes to that wall much longer than usual.

Near the last week of third month, I was busy cleaning up and putting back things where they belong in the first place. We took things up and down to embellish the room, rearrange the position but now it's time to move everything back to normal position. Madison would never come out of her room. I noticed in the morning that she had scratched the wall little bit.

Although it's the last day, I heard John scream at the door. "Open the door, my darling!" Madison had locked herself inside. John could not find the key to get inside the room. I

walked up the stairs and let John know that I am available for any help. Madison replied in her gentlest voice. "The key is down by the by the front step, under the plantain leaf" John was very nervous and his body was shaking.

We could hear from outside what was going on inside. She was peeling off all the papers and tearing down whatever she could reach like a cat scratching the couch. John got frustrated looking for some way to break-in. I found the key and he snatched it from my hand. He nervously put the key into the door's lock, the door hesitated to open, but with a final shove he got through.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "For God's sake. What are you doing?" She was still scratching the wall; she looked at John over her shoulder through disheveled hair. John ultimately fainted on the ground. I wondered what had gone through her mind. She was so soft and yet she absorbed everything inside herself.

Although the original short story's narrator, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper", convey the hardship of woman, negligence and unworthy love during 20<sup>th</sup> century. The protagonist first-person omniscient narrator shows us how she felt when she could not express her feelings that made her fall into much deeper misery in her life.

In my retelling, I used Jennie 'the sister' as protagonist and first-person limited narration. The whole theme of the story changes when viewed from another person's angle and switch to limited narration. Jennie was more in favor of her brother rather understanding a woman's (sister-in-law) situation.

Gilman narrated the situation of a woman whose husband had loved her as much as she loved him but the way she expressed made the readers felt that she was over powered by her husband in the ways to express her feelings. "The narrator word 'Then do let us go downstairs, I said, 'there are such pretty rooms there.' Then he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down to the cellar, if I wished, and have it whitewashed into the bargain." Under my retelling the story, Jennie has seen her brother as an overly affectionate towards his wife. Here "Jennie, please follow her schedule in case if she gets carried away on her imaginative things." said John walking hurriedly towards the door." She felt that her brother's wife Madison always stresses herself even though her husband take cares of her well enough.

Next in Gilman's narration, woman was going through lot of imaginative world. She thinks that the rest of the family was trying to bother her yellow wall paper. She thinks that rests are also studying the pattern like her but only she could find the solution. But in my narration, Jennie would describe her as a person who makes herself sick by sticking her eyes to that worthless wallpaper for hours and hours.

In the end, the woman could able to free herself from the bond which was kind of torture to her. "I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!" On the other side of narration, Jennie was more worried about her brother who was frustrated and shivering to get inside the door to find out what was going on.

## The Evidence that Lies

The Evidence that Lies

Tanayer Pegues

As she looks around, the voice of Mrs. Peters' roused her.

"Here's a bird-cage," Mrs. Peters said. "Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?"

"Why, I don't know whether she did or not" She turned to look at the cage Mrs. Peter was holding up, "I've not been here in so long." Her guilt starts to rise, the thought of not seeing Mrs. Wright started to haunt her the more she is at the Wrights house. She began to sulk in and let out a huge sigh. "There was a man round last year selling canaries cheap—but I don't know if Mrs. Wright took one. Maybe she did. Mrs. Wright used to sing real pretty herself"

"Seems kind of funny to think of a bird here" Laughed Mrs. Peters. "But she must have had one—or why would she have a cage"

"I suppose maybe the cat got it," She suggested, still sulking in her dreadful thoughts.

"No, she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. When they brought her to our house yesterday, my cat got in the room, and she was real upset and asked me to take it out."

"My sister Bessie was like that", laughed Mrs. Hale. She was trying to find any reason to make herself feel at ease about not seeing Mrs. Wright; looking for any connection to feel as though some how her being there now was "being there" for Mrs. Wright.

With a sudden silence of Mrs. Peter, she turned as asked "What wrong?"

"Look at the door," said Mrs. Peter. "It's broke. One hinge has been pulled apart"

She came near to examine it herself and says "Looks as if someone must have been—rough with it."

As their eyes met—she could tell Mrs. Peters was questioning what has just been discovered. She felt a startled feeling that was mutual to the feeling Mrs. Peter was giving off. All of a sudden a chill ran down her spine which caused her to turn away, she said brusquely:

“If they’re going to find any evidence, I wish they’d be about it. I don’t like this place”

The guilt started to eat at her again as she says “But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I wish—I had.”

“But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale. Your house — and your children.”

She ignored the comfort Mrs. Peters tried to give her and replied:

“I could’ve come, I stayed away because it weren’t cheerful- — and that’s why I ought to have come. I” — she looked around — “I’ve never liked this place. Maybe because it’s down in a hollow and you don’t see the road. I don’t know what it is, but it’s a lonesome place, and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now”— She did not put into words.

“Well, you mustn’t reproach yourself,” counseled Mrs. Peters. “Somehow, we just don’t see how it is with other folk’s till— something comes up”

“Not having children makes less work,” she said, after a silence, “but it makes a quiet house—and Wright out to work all day —and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?”

“Not to know him. I’ve seen him in town. They say he was a good man.” Said Mrs. Peters.

“Yes— good, he didn’t drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him —.” She stopped, shivered a little. “Like a raw wind that gets to the bone.” Her eye fell upon the cage on the table before her, and she added, almost bitterly: “I should think she would’ve wanted a bird!”

Suddenly she leaned forward, looking intently at the cage. “But what do you s’pose went wrong with it?”

“I don’t know,” returned Mrs. Peters; “unless it got sick and died.”

“You didn’t know — her?” she asked, a gentler note in her voice.

“Not till they brought her yesterday,” said the sheriff’s wife.

“She— come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself, real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and — fluttery. How — she — did — change.”

That held her for a long time. Finally, as if struck with a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things, she exclaimed:

“Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don’t you take a quilt in with you? It might take up her mind”

“Why, I think that’s a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale, there couldn’t possibly be any objection to that could there? Now just what will I take? I wonder if her patches are in here — and her things.” Said Mrs. Peters.

She and Mrs. Peters turned to the sewing basket.

“Here’s some red,” she said, bringing out a roll of cloth, underneath that was a box. “Here, maybe her scissors are in here—and her things.” She held it up. “What a pretty box! I’ll warrant that was something she had a long time ago — when she was a girl.”

She held it in her hand a moment; then, with a little sigh, opened it.

Instantly her hand went to her nose.

“Why- !”

Mrs. Peters drew nearer — then turned away.

“There’s something wrapped up in this piece of silk,” she faltered.

“This isn’t her scissors,” said Mrs. Peters, in a shrinking voice.

Her hand not steady, she raised the piece of silk. “Oh, Mrs. Peters!” she cried “It’s-“

Mrs. Peters bent closer and said “It’s the bird.”

“But, Mrs. Peters!” she cried. “Look at its neck! It’s all –other side to.” She whispered to herself “Dear Lord, who could have done this. Oh, please don’t let this be the work of Minnie” Her thoughts start to race as she went from thinking it was impossible for Mrs. Wright to commit a crime, to maybe she do this horrible crime. Her thoughts were quickly broken by the sudden movement of Mrs. Peters towards the box. She held the box away from her.

The sheriff’s wife again bent closer.

“Somebody wrung its neck,” said Mrs. Peters.

And then again the eyes of the two women met – this time clung together in a look of dawning comprehension, of growing horror. She watched as Mrs. Peters looked from the dead bird to the broken door of the cage. Again their eyes met. And just then there was a sound at the outside door.

“Well ladies,” said the county attorney, as one turning from serious things to little pleasantries, “Have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?”

“We think,” began Mrs. Peters in a flurried voice, “that she was going to — knot it.”

“Well, that’s very interesting, I’m sure,” he said tolerantly. He caught sight of the bird-cage. “Has the bird flown?”

“We think the cat got it,” said she in a voice curiously even.

“Is there a cat?” he asked absently.

She shot a look up at the sheriff’s wife.

“Well, not now,” said Mrs. Peters. “They’re superstitious, you know; they leave.”

Mrs. Hale sank into her chair.

“No sign at all of any one having come in from the outside,” he said to Mrs. Peters, in the manner of continuing an interrupted conversation. “Their own rope. Now let’s go back upstairs again and go over it, piece by piece. It would have to have been someone who knew just the –.”

The stair door closed behind the men and their voices were lost.

The two women sat motionless, not looking at each other, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back.

She said “Mrs. Peters, what we have discovered doesn’t prove anything. We only know that something horrible has happened to that bird.” She stared into space with a deranged look, as though she was trying to convince herself and Mrs. Peters that Mrs. Wright couldn’t possibly hurt the bird.

“So what are you saying? We shouldn’t tell the men about what we found?” asked Mrs. Peters.

“I’m saying since we are not sure ourselves, we should just keep it to ourselves.”

Which title sounds better, *A Jury of Her Peers* or *The Evidence that Lies*? The short story I have chosen to retell is *A Jury of Her Peers* by Susan Glaspell. My reasoning for choosing this story mostly relies on the suspense I felt from reading it and the mystery of not knowing whether Mrs. Wright committed the crime or not. Thus, it’s my turn to possibly change the outcome or the thoughts on whether Mrs. Wright is guilty or not. Third person-omniscient narration is used to tell the story of to tell the original version; I will use third person- limited narration to tell my version, *The Evidence that Lies*, to give more focus on the character who knows Mrs. Wright better than the others, which is Mrs. Hale.

In the original version of *A Jury of Her Peers* the author tells the story from point of view of knowing it all. She expresses the feelings and views of every character by explaining how a character feels after they have spoken. This allows the readers to see the story from every angle, therefore we can see what each person thinks about Mrs. Wright and the murder of her husband. She portrayed the men as being bias by statements like: “Well, can you beat the

women! Held for murder, and worrying about her preserves!”), as said by Mr. Peters or “The young attorney set his lips. ‘I guess before we’re through with her she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about.’” It can be assumed that they think Mrs. Wright is guilty of murder without gathering all the evidence that will convict her. The technique of using third person- omniscient narration sort of swayed the story in the favor that Mrs.

Wright is guilty due to the fact that more people (all the men) thought she was guilty. This differs from my version in the way that the women (mainly Mrs. Hale) point of view is shown more.

In my version, *The Evidence that Lies*, I chose to use the scene where the women find the bird cage and the dead bird. This scene was important to me because this was the most important evidence that the men missed. The women two pieces of evidence that could have possibly proved Mrs. Wright guilty, gave her motive or suggest that the Wright household was far more complex then everyone thought. I decided to make Mrs. Hale the focus of my third person- limited narration. It was obvious to choose her because she knew Mrs. Wright more than any person that walked into the Wrights home. In my version I used the words “she” a lot and “her” to express that Mrs. Hale was the focus of my narration; with the adding of her feelings and thoughts I gave the story insight on how she felt through this process of looking for evidence.

For my process of editing my scene of the bird cage, I took out any statements from the original version that would talk about how the other characters felt. This was significant for me because my point of doing the retelling was to get away from all the other characters and focus on one. “But I’m awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale.” Mrs. Peters put the bird cage on the table and sat down. “It would be lonesome for me – sitting here alone.”; in contrast to my version where I made everything about Mrs. Hale. ““I suppose maybe the cat got it,” She suggested, still sulking in her dreadful thoughts’. In the original version the statement Mrs. Peters made was in there to show how she felt about coming to the house, but I decide that was not relevant to my version because it was not Mrs. Hale feelings.

The end of my version is close to the end of the original version in the sense that, my version leaves you with a thought of “How did they prove she was guilty if that evidence wasn’t submitted?” In the original version at the end of the story the evidence of the bird and bird cage was withheld from men, which I chose to do with my version. I decide to still keep the same suspense that the original version gave me when I found out the men weren’t going to see the bird. My version ended with “So what are you saying? We shouldn’t tell the men

about what we found?” asked Mrs. Peters. ‘I’m saying since we are not sure ourselves, we should just keep it to ourselves.’ By having Mrs. Hale tell Mrs. Peters to keep it to themselves I made the ending of my version and the original version give out the same feeling.

When writing my version I didn’t want to stray away from the concept of the original version, only because I agreed with the suspenseful route the author took. I just wanted my version to pay more attention to which I thought was the most important character (Mrs. Hale) beside Mrs. Wright. By taking out statements based on the other characters I think really pushed what I was trying to accomplish; just like by the author incorporating the emotions and thoughts of the other characters she was able to let her readers know who felt what. Both versions had the same tone, setting and plot, but I’d say mines gave Susan Glaspell’s version a run for its money.

## Retelling!

Retelling!

Kristen Elizabeth

When I opened the storm door and I realized how cold and windy it was, I ran back inside to grab my big wool scarf. While I was putting it on I looked around my kitchen and saw the current condition of it. It was horrible. My kitchen was in no way how a housewife should leave her kitchen in Dickson County. My bread mixture was ready to be mixed, half of my flour was sifted and half was un sifted.

I hated when things were left only half done; but I had been at that when the team from town stopped to get my husband, Mr. Hale, and then the sheriff came running in to say his wife wished I would come too — adding, with a grin, that he guessed she was getting scary and wanted another woman along. So I had dropped everything right where it was.

“My husband in his impatient tone of voice screamed, “Martha, Don’t keep folks waiting out here in the cold.”

I again opened the storm-door, and joined the sheriff, and two other men and the sheriff’s wife who was the one woman in the big two-seated buggy.

After I had the robes tucked around me, I took another look at the Mrs. Peters who was the sheriff’s wife who sat beside me on the back seat. I had met her at the county fair last year and the only thing that I remembered about her was the fact that she didn’t seem like an ideal sheriff’s wife. She was a small and thin woman that didn’t have a strong voice. Mrs. Gorman, who was the sheriff’s wife before Mrs. Peters, had a voice that somehow seemed to be very intimidating. Every word she said backed up the law. And since Mrs. Peters didn’t look like a sheriff’s wife, her husband Mr. Peters made up for it in looking like a sheriff. He was exactly the kind of man who could get himself elected as a sheriff. He was a heavy man with a big voice, who was particularly genial with the law-abiding; as if to make it plain that he knew the difference between criminals and non-criminals. And right there it came into my mind, with a stab, that this man who was so pleasant and lively with all of them was going to the Wrights’ now as a sheriff.

“The country’s not very pleasant this time of year,” Mrs. Peters at last ventured, as if she felt they ought to be talking as well as the men.

I scarcely finished my reply, for they had gone up a little hill and could see the Wright place now and seeing it did not make me feel like talking. It looked very abandoned on this cold March morning. It had always been a lonesome and abandoned looking place. The house was down in a hollow, and the poplar trees around it were lonesome-looking trees. The men were looking at it and talking about what had happened. The county attorney was bending to one side of the buggy, and kept looking steadily at the place as we drove up to it.

“I’m glad you came with me,” Mrs. Peters said nervously to me as we were about to follow the men and walk through the kitchen door.

Even after I had my foot on the door-step and my hand on the door knob, I had a moment of feeling that I could not cross that threshold and enter the house. It seemed I couldn’t cross it because I never crossed it before. Time and time again it had been in my mind that I should go over there and visit Minnie Foster because I still thought of her as Minnie Foster, even though for twenty years she had been Mrs. Wright. And then there was always something to do and Minnie Foster would go from her mind. But *now* she could come.

The men went over to the stove, while us women stood close together by the door. Young Henderson, the county attorney, turned around and said, “Come up to the fire, ladies.”

Mrs. Peters took a step forward, and then stopped. “I’m not — cold,” she said.

And so us women stood by the door, at first not even so much as looking around the kitchen.

The men talked for a minute about what a good thing it was the sheriff had sent his deputy out that morning to make a fire for them, and then Sheriff Peters stepped back from the stove, unbuttoned his outer coat, and leaned his hands on the kitchen table in a way that seemed to mark the beginning of official business. “Now, Mr. Hale,” he said in a sort of semi-official voice, “before we move things about, you tell Mr. Henderson just what it was you saw when you came here yesterday morning.”

A Jury of Her Peers is a story about Minnie Foster or Minnie Wright; however the main character seems to be Mrs. Hale. When I decided to re-write A Jury of Her Peers I chose to



change the narration to first person and told the story through the eyes of Mrs. Hale.

A Jury of Her Peers begins by introducing Mrs. Hale to the reader and explaining a little about her. It begins in Mrs. Hale's kitchen as she waits to be picked up by the sheriff and his wife to take a ride to the Wright household. The author explains that Mrs. Hale is a very neat and orderly person that keeps her life in order. The author explains how she observes things in such a descriptive way. The original version says "As she hurriedly wound that round her head her eye made a scandalized sweep of her kitchen. It was no ordinary thing that called her away — it was probably farther from ordinary than anything that had ever happened in Dickson County. But what her eye took in was that her kitchen was in no shape for leaving; her bread all ready for mixing, half the flour sifted and half unsifted." This shows that Mrs. Hale wanted things to be neat orderly. She doesn't like to leave anything unfinished. Throughout the story Mrs. Hale is able to keep her voice and tone even. She carefully chooses everything that she says.

The women characters in "A Jury of Her Peers" are quiet, looked down upon, and are to be kept in their place as women and nothing more. Since Mrs. Hale is very observant and pays close attention to detail, her actions and observations are that leads to the conclusion of the story. Again just like in the beginning of the story how Mrs. Hale described her kitchen that thinking and her close attention to detail was how she eventually pieced the evidence together to solve what the men could not. Mrs. Hale was not the type of person to leave anything half done and therefore she was able to notice when things were left unfinished or out of place. . "The cover was off the wooden bucket, and beside it was a paper bag half-full."... "She was putting this in there," she said to herself-slowly."

In both versions of the story you can compare Mrs. Hale to Mrs. Peters. Mrs. Hale always seems strong and confident. However, Mrs. Peters always seems a little shy and unsure at times. This is shown also in both versions of the story when it says "She had met Mrs. Peters the year before at the county fair, and the thing she remembered about her was that she didn't seem like a sheriff's wife. She was small and thin and didn't have a strong voice. Mrs. Gorman, sheriff's wife before Gorman went out and Peters came in, had a voice that somehow seemed to be backing up the law with every word. But if Mrs. Peters didn't look like a sheriff's wife, Peters made it up in looking like a sheriff."

In my version of the story, I told it from the view of Mrs. Hale. I told the story from the beginning up until the beginning of the investigation. My story shows an indebt view of Mrs.

Hale through her eyes. If I continued telling this story you could see how people viewed her and how she felt toward that. Women were heavily looked down upon during this time and the fact that the women in this story played such a heavy role in discovering what happened to Mr. Wright before the men did, and the fact that Mrs. Wright was capable of doing what she did even though she was a women who was looked down upon because of her sex was amazing.

## **Young Goodman Brown** **Young Goodman Brown**

Young Goodman Brown

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Young Goodman Brown came forth at sunset, into the street of Salem village, but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap, while she called to Goodman Brown.

“Dearest heart,” whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, “pr’ythee, put off your journey until sunrise, and sleep in your own bed to-night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts, that she’s afraid of herself, sometimes. Pray, tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year!”

“My love and my Faith,” replied young Goodman Brown, “of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done ‘twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married!”

“Then God bless you!” said Faith, with the pink ribbons, “and may you find all well, when you come back.”

“Amen!” cried Goodman Brown. “Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee.”

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way, until, being about to turn the corner by the meeting-house, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him, with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

“Poor little Faith!” thought he, for his heart smote him. “What a wretch am I, to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought, as she spoke, there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done to-night. But, no, no! ‘t would kill

her to think it. Well; she’s a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night, I’ll cling to her skirts and follow her to Heaven.”

With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that, with lonely footsteps, he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude.

“There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree,” said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him, as he added, “What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!”

His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose, at Goodman Brown’s approach, and walked onward, side by side with him.

“You are late, Goodman Brown,” said he. “The clock of the Old South was striking, as I came through Boston; and that is full fifteen minutes ago.”

“Faith kept me back awhile,” replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected.

It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveller was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still, they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and would not have felt abashed at the governor’s dinner-table, or in King William’s court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him, that could be fixed upon as remarkable, was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought, that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain

light.

“Come, Goodman Brown!” cried his fellow-traveller, “this is a dull pace for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary.”

“Friend,” said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, “having kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples, touching the matter thou wot’st of.”

“Sayest thou so?” replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. “Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go, and if I convince thee not, thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest, yet.”

“Too far, too far!” exclaimed the goodman, unconsciously resuming his walk. “My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians, since the days of the martyrs. And shall I be the first of the name of Brown, that ever took this path and kept” —

“Such company, thou wouldst say,” observed the elder person, interrupting his pause. “Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that’s no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem. And it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in king Philip’s war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain be friends with you, for their sake.”

“If it be as thou sayest,” replied Goodman Brown, “I marvel they never spoke of these matters. Or, verily, I marvel not, seeing that the least rumor of the sort would have driven them from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness.”

“Wickedness or not,” said the traveller with the twisted staff, “I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen, of divers towns, make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and

I, too — but these are state-secrets.”

“Can this be so!” cried Goodman Brown, with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. “Howbeit, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with thee, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble, both Sabbath-day and lecture-day!”

Thus far, the elder traveller had listened with due gravity, but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently, that his snake-like staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

“Ha! ha! ha!” shouted he, again and again; then composing himself, “Well, go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but, prithee, don’t kill me with laughing!”

“Well, then, to end the matter at once,” said Goodman Brown, considerably nettled, “there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I’d rather break my own!”

“Nay, if that be the case,” answered the other, “e’en go thy ways, Goodman Brown. I would not, for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us, that Faith should come to any harm.”

As he spoke, he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

“A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse should be so far in the wilderness, at night-fall!” said he. “But, with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods, until we have left this Christian woman behind. Being a stranger to you, she might ask whom I was consorting with, and whither I was going.”

“Be it so,” said his fellow-traveller. “Betake you to the woods, and let me keep the path.”

Accordingly, the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road, until he had come within a staff’s length of the old dame. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so aged a woman,

and mumbling some indistinct words, a prayer, doubtless, as she went. The traveller put forth his staff, and touched her withered neck with what seemed the serpent's tail.

"The devil!" screamed the pious old lady.

"Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?" observed the traveller, confronting her, and leaning on his writhing stick.

"Ah, forsooth, and is it your worship, indeed?" cried the good dame. "Yea, truly is it, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But, would your worship believe it? my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unchangeable witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage and cinque-foil and wolf's-bane" —

"Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe," said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

"Ah, your worship knows the recipe," cried the old lady, cackling aloud. "So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me, there is a nice young man to be taken into communion to-night. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling."

"That can hardly be," answered her friend. "I may not spare you my arm, Goody Cloyse, but here is my staff, if you will."

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian Magi. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveller alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

"That old woman taught me my catechism!" said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveller exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly, that his arguments seemed rather

to spring up in the bosom of his auditor, than to be suggested by himself. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple, to serve for a walking-stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them, they became strangely withered and dried up, as with a week's sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat himself down on the stump of a tree, and refused to go any farther.

"Friend," said he, stubbornly, "my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil, when I thought she was going to Heaven! Is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith, and go after her?"

"You will think better of this by-and-by," said his acquaintance, composedly. "Sit here and rest yourself awhile; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along."

Without more words, he threw his companion the maple stick, and was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished into the deepening gloom. The young man sat a few moments by the road-side, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister, in his morning-walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his, that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the verge of the forest, conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof-tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man's hiding-place; but owing, doubtless, to the depth of the gloom, at that particular spot, neither the travellers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures brushed the small boughs by the way-side, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky, athwart which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tip-toe, pulling aside the branches, and thrusting forth his head as far as he durst, without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of

the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

“Of the two, reverend Sir,” said the voice like the deacon’s, “I had rather miss an ordination-dinner than to-night’s meeting. They tell me that some of our community are to be here from Falmouth and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island; besides several of the Indian powows, who, after their fashion, know almost as much devilry as the best of us. Moreover, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion.”

“Mighty well, Deacon Gookin!” replied the solemn old tones of the minister. “Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground.”

The hoofs clattered again, and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered, nor solitary Christian prayed. Whither, then, could these holy men be journeying, so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree, for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and over-burthened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubting whether there really was a Heaven above him. Yet, there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

“With Heaven above, and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!” cried Goodman Brown.

[47] While he still gazed upward, into the deep arch of the firmament, and had lifted his hands to pray, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith, and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible, except directly overhead, where this black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once, the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of town’s-people of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion-table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine, at Salem village, but never, until now, from a cloud of night. There was one voice, of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating for some favor, which, perhaps, it would grieve her to obtain. And all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

“Faith!” shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying — “Faith! Faith!” as if bewildered wretches were seeking her, all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage, and terror, was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air, and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

“My Faith is gone!” cried he, after one stupefied moment. “There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil! for to thee is this world given.”

And maddened with despair, so that he laughed loud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a rate, that he seemed to fly along the forest-path, rather than to walk or run. The road grew wilder and drearier, and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward, with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds; the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while, sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church-bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and shrank not from its other horrors.

“Ha! ha! ha!” roared Goodman Brown, when the wind laughed at him. “Let us hear which will laugh loudest! Think not to frighten me with your devilry! Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powow, come devil himself! and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fear you!”

In truth, all through the haunted forest, there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew, among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter, as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous, than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the hour of midnight. He paused, in a lull of the tempest that had driven

him onward, and heard the swell of what seemed a hymn, rolling solemnly from a distance, with the weight of many voices. He knew the tune; It was a familiar one in the choir of the village meeting-house. The verse died heavily away, and was lengthened by a chorus, not of human voices, but of all the sounds of the benighted wilderness, pealing in awful harmony together. Goodman Brown cried out; and his cry was lost to his own ear, by its unison with the cry of the desert.

In the interval of silence, he stole forward, until the light glared full upon his eyes. At one extremity of an open space, hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops a flame, their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting. The mass of foliage, that had overgrown the summit of the rock, was all on fire, blazing high into the night, and fitfully illuminating the whole field. Each pendant twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light arose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once.

“A grave and dark-clad company!” quoth Goodman Brown.

In truth, they were such. Among them, quivering to-and-fro, between gloom and splendor, appeared faces that would be seen, next day, at the council-board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly heavenward, and benignantly over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm, that the lady of the governor was there. At least, there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honored husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and fair young girls, who trembled lest their mothers should espy them. Either the sudden gleams of light, flashing over the obscure field, bedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a score of the church-members of Salem village, famous for their especial sanctity. Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, his reverend pastor. But, irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see, that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints. Scattered, also, among their pale-faced enemies, were the Indian priests, or powows, who had often scared their native forest with more hideous incantations than any known to English witchcraft.

“But, where is Faith?” thought Goodman Brown; and, as hope came into his heart, he trembled.

Another verse of the hymn arose, a slow and mournful strain, such as the pious love, but joined to words which expressed all that our nature can conceive of sin, and darkly hinted at far more. Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends. Verse after verse was sung, and still the chorus of the desert swelled between, like the deepest tone of a mighty organ. And, with the final peal of that dreadful anthem, there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconverted wilderness, were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man, in homage to the prince of all. The four blazing pines threw up a loftier flame, and obscurely discovered shapes and visages of horror on the smoke-wreaths, above the impious assembly. At the same moment, the fire on the rock shot redly forth, and formed a glowing arch above its base, where now appeared a figure. With reverence be it spoken, the apparition bore no slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England churches.

“Bring forth the converts!” cried a voice, that echoed through the field and rolled into the forest.

At the word, Goodman Brown stepped forth from the shadow of the trees, and approached the congregation, with whom he felt a loathful brotherhood, by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart. He could have well nigh sworn, that the shape of his own dead father beckoned him to advance, looking downward from a smoke-wreath, while a woman, with dim features of despair, threw out her hand to warn him back. Was it his mother? But he had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought, when the minister and good old Deacon Gookin seized his arms, and led him to the blazing rock. Thither came also the slender form of a veiled female, led between Goody Cloyse, that pious teacher of the catechism, and Martha Carrier, who had received the devil’s promise to be queen of hell. A rampant hag was she! And there stood the proselytes, beneath the canopy of fire.

“Welcome, my children,” said the dark figure, “to the communion of your race! Ye have found, thus young, your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!”

They turned; and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend-worshippers were seen; the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage.

“There,” resumed the sable form, “are all whom ye have revered from youth. Ye deemed them holier than yourselves, and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness, and prayerful aspirations heavenward. Yet, here are they all, in my worshipping assembly! This night it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds; how hoary-bearded elders of the church have whispered wanton words to the young maids of their households; how many a woman, eager for widow’s weeds, has given her husband a drink at bed-time, and let him sleep his last sleep in her bosom; how beardless youths have made haste to inherit their father’s wealth; and how fair damsels — blush not, sweet ones! — have dug little graves in the garden, and bidden me, the sole guest, to an infant’s funeral. By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin, ye shall scent out all the places — whether in church, bed-chamber, street, field, or forest — where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood-spot. Far more than this! It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than human power — than my power, at its utmost! — can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other.”

They did so; and, by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith, and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar.

“Lo! there ye stand, my children,” said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad, with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. “Depending upon one another’s hearts, ye had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream! Now are ye undeceived! — Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome, again, my children, to the communion of your race!”

“Welcome!” repeated the fiend-worshippers, in one cry of despair and triumph.

And there they stood, the only pair, as it seemed, who were yet hesitating on the verge of wickedness, in this dark world. A basin was hollowed, naturally, in the rock. Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? or was it blood? or, perchance, a liquid flame? Herein did the Shape of Evil dip his hand, and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own. The husband cast one look at his pale wife, and Faith at him. What polluted wretches would the next glance show them to each other, shuddering alike at what they disclosed and what they saw!

“Faith! Faith!” cried the husband. “Look up to Heaven, and resist the Wicked One!”

Whether Faith obeyed, he knew not. Hardly had he spoken, when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind, which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp, while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

The next morning, young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard, to get an appetite for breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint, as if to avoid an anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. “What God doth the wizard pray to?” quoth Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine, at her own lattice, catechising a little girl, who had brought her a pint of morning’s milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child, as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting-house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him, that she skipt along the street, and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.

Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest, and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?

Be it so, if you will. But, alas! it was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man, did he become, from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath-day, when the congregation were singing a holy psalm, he could not listen, because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear, and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit, with power and fervid eloquence, and with his hand on the open bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the grey blasphemer and his hearers. Often, awaking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith, and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled, and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave, a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and

children and grand-children, a goodly procession, besides neighbors, not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone; for his dying hour was gloom.

[Text taken from <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/younggoodmanbrown.html>. That text is from the 1846 edition of *Mosses from an Old Manse*, vol. 1., edited by Jack Lynch]

## A Night That Changed Everything

A Night That Changed Everything

heyheihey123

As Faith opened the door for her husband, Goodman Brown, he looked outside and then started crossing the threshold. He turned back and gave her a parting kiss. Faith, the name was aptly named. She thrust her head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons on her cap.

“Dearest heart”, whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, “pr’ythee, put off your journey until sunrise, and sleep in your own bed to-night”. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts, that she is afraid of herself, sometimes. “My dear husband, stay here with me tonight”, said Faith.

“My love and my Faith,” he replied, “of all night in the years, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done ‘twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married!”

“Then God bless you!” she said, “And may you find all well, when you come back.”

“Amen!” he cried. “Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee.”

So they parted; and she saw the shadow of Goodman Brown is fading away and the tears on her face dropped. Then she walked back in to the house and closed the door. The house seemed empty and lonely. She walked into her room with a worried face she sensed that something bad was going to happen to Goodman Brown. She paced to the window and looked outside, “Please my lord, bless on him all the way until he is back home safe.”

There was a tremendous thunder as Goodman Brown was walking toward the ceremony. It was dark in the night, a murder of crows were flying above him. Faith saw her husband walking. She couldn’t see anything except darkness and Goodman’s shadow as he is walking



toward the forest. “Faith, Faith...Help me!” screamed Goodman Brown. Faith saw her husband’s back fading away from her sight.

She woke up and realized it was a nightmare. She cried on her bed. It was raining outside and then she fell back to sleep. She dreamed again. She saw her husband in the forest walking alone. While walking himself alone, she sees that Goodman’s mouth was moving like he was talking to someone, but she saw nobody next to him. Then she saw that he picked a staff that looked evil. The staff bore the likeness of a great black snake that it almost seemed to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. “My love!” she screamed in her dream. She thought Goodman could hear her because she saw that he looked startled when she called his name. She saw that he screamed but she couldn’t hear what he said. Then she saw him disappeared in the forest.

She woke up again; it was the next morning. She was thinking about what the dream was signified. She couldn’t figure out the meaning of the dream. “Was that really my husband in the dream?” she whispered to herself. She got up from her bed and went to wash her face and then prepare the breakfast for Goodman Brown because he is coming back home.

She walked to the street, seeing her husband walking toward the village. She looked happy. But as he came by near her, he looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting. She wondered what happened to her husband, and she was worried. From that day on, he barely spoke to her. He didn’t trust her anymore. On the Sabbath-day, he refused to listen, and thought the people in town all became evil. “He doesn’t love me anymore,” she cried to herself. For the rest of her life, she lived her life as if she was alone. And even after Goodman Brown died, she will never know what happened in the forest that night; the night that changed him forever.

The original story of “Young Goodman Brown” was a third-person limited narration short story. In the story, the narrator was mainly focused on Goodman Brown. It was a limited narration because we didn’t know what happen to his wife Faith while Goodman Brown was attending to the ceremony. In my new version story, “A Night that Changed Everything,” it was also a third-person limited narration but this time the narrator was focused on the wife Faith. Both stories were limited narration but focused on different characters. In this essay, I will compare both stories that will change the way the reader see things differently.

In the story “Young Goodman Brown”, he was a Christian and he is going to attend the evil

ceremony. He left his wife Faith in the house alone for that night. In the story the narrator mostly focused on Goodman Brown so he knows what he does, sees, says and hears. While he was in the forest, he met a man. “But the only thing about him, that could be fixed upon as remarkable, was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake...like a living serpent”. This describes the man he met in the forest was holding an evil-like staff. The man also said he knows Goodman’s father and grandfather. As they nearly getting close to the ceremony, Goodman Brown heard the voice of his wife Faith. He screamed her name out loud in the forest and then he saw the pink ribbon that belongs to Faith flew down from the sky. He took the staff that the man gave him, and it dragged him faster to the ceremony like flying. Once he was in the ceremony, he didn’t see Faith. Goodman saw one of the converts was Faith and he told her to resist the devil. Then suddenly he realized he was alone in the forest. The next morning he returned to Salem Village and as he see his wife Faith. “But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.” At the end he didn’t want to trust anyone even his family and thought they all became evil.

In the new version story, the narrator focused on Faith. In the story, Faith opened the door for her husband to go to an evil ceremony and he has to leave her in the house alone for a night. She requested him to not to go because she worried about him but Goodman Brown insist he must go. As they were apart, Faith went back to her room and prayed that her husband will be back to town safely. At night, she had nightmares that she saw her husband. She saw that he was in the forest alone walking in the rain and murders of crows were flying above him. And she heard he screamed for help from her. In her second dream, she saw him again walking alone and as he was walking, he spoke to himself. She saw Goodman picked up the staff that almost seemed like a living serpent. Then she screamed “My love!” and she saw him startled. She woke up and it was the next morning. She cooked for her husband and knowing that he is coming back home today. As she saw him walking toward the village, he passed by and looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting. And for the rest of her life, he barely spoke to her. Until the day Goodman Brown died, she still didn’t know what happened to him that night in the forest; the night that changed him forever.

In comparison, both stories were 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited narration. Both stories started and ended with same plot that Goodman Brown went off to his journey to the evil ceremony and ended with trusting no one in the town. From the original story, “But the only thing about him, that could be fixed upon as remarkable, was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake...like a living serpent” and new story, “Then she saw that he picked a staff that looked evil. The staff bore the likeness of a great black snake that it almost seemed to twist and

wriggle itself like a living serpent”, both stories happened to showed that Goodman Brown saw a staff that looked like an evil living serpent. In the new story, when Faith screamed “My love!” she saw Goodman startled and in the original story, Goodman Brown heard Faith’s voice in the forest and he screamed her name. This shows that Goodman Brown really did heard Faith’s voice. Also in the end of both stories, Goodman Brown went back to town and looked sternly and sadly into Faith’s face, and passed on without a greeting. And after that night in the forest, he didn’t want to trust anyone in the town or even his family.

One difference in both stories is that in the original story, Goodman Brown thought Faith was in the ceremony because he saw her for a while then he found out himself alone in the forest, but in the new version of the story, Faith was at home alone and she had nightmares that night which hardly for her to sleep. This gives the reader a sense of thinking it might be Goodman Brown who had gone crazy while he was at the ceremony. If the reader didn’t read the original story but read the new version of my story, they might think that he had gone crazy instead of believing the whole town of people and his wife turned into devil. Even though we know that he died later in his life, but his wife still don’t know what happened in the forest; the night that changed him forever.

## The Good Man

The Good Man

Michael Gurevich

In “Young Goodman Brown” the author uses an omniscient narrative style to guide the readers through he story. By selecting a first-person narrative style, the reader is able to understand the character on a much deeper level.

The sun was setting but I knew I would have to make my leave. My wife, Faith, was reluctant to see me go but I see no her words would not be enough to make me stay. I was going for this errand that I knew was wrong but I was a man of my word so this promise I would have to keep. “Dearest heart,” She whispered to me as she pleaded for me to stay. She didn’t want me to go, she was too afraid for my safety and for her own, as well. She told me she was too fearful of spending the night alone but I urged her to remain hopeful and to trust in my words. She she knew of the journey I was embarking on, she would probably never look at me as the man she sees me now. I bid her adieu and went off into the night. I arrived at the forest on a night that seemed darker than any other, I felt this was a sign for me to turn back but I had to keep to my promise, it was only this one time. As I walked along the path I saw the shadow of a figure resting on a downed tree. He called to me in an upset voice “You are late, Goodman Brown”. I chuckled and told him that my wife, Faith, was so worried that I lost track of time as I was leaving. This man was dressed sharply, he didn’t resemble a shadow in the forest but a man who would likely be respected in all parts of life. “Come, Goodman Brown!” he called to me as we went on path. Although he seemed confidant and controlled, the staff that accompanied him was an uncomfortable sight. A twisted walking stick that had a pattern to it that resembled a serpent. With every step we made I could feel his it slither beside us.

I was becoming more and more restless as our journey continued. Not

because of the treacherous path but because of the decisions I made that night. For you see, I come from a long line of good Christen men. I arrived with the light and I was planning to remain with it until my dying day. Tonight, I was planning to descend into the depths of the earth, straight to the devil's lair. As we carried on through the forest I became confused about my decision and decided I should trust my gut instinct. "I'm going back" I told the fellow traveler. "I'm going back for Faith's sake, she needs me". In response, the traveler offered me his staff as though my troubles were merely physical. I declined his offer and decided not to argue with him but to keep on with my promise and follow him through the path. The traveler told me that he must take off but that he would leave his walking stick with me in case I needed it to complete the trip. As he disappeared into the darkness I heard the voice of my beautiful Faith. "Faith!" I cried, as I stood up and lunged forward into the forest. I didn't know in which direction to go so I trust my heart to guide me. Running forward I felt a strong force pulling me, as if the serpent has come alive within the traveler's staff. It pulled me through the forest with such force that I could barely feel the ground below my feet, I was flying toward my love. "Faith!" I yelled out again, "Faith!, faith!".

As I made my way out of the forest I saw a community of people huddled together in a circle, as if in a worship. At this moment I realized this was the event I originally planned to attend. Through the crowd of people I noticed all the familiar faces from my small town. I heard the voice of Deacon Gookin, the minister of our church. Not too far away was Goody Cloyse, the holiest of women. This wasn't the place I wanted to be, nor was this how I imagined these people. They were no longer good loving people, but rather devil worshipers. The people of Salem finally revealed their true colors, colors I would never identify with. As I tried to make haste to flee, I saw my Faith participating with the wretched of men. "Faith!" I yelled out to her, "Look up into the heavens! Don't let your soul be filled with evil!". And as the last breathe carried out those words, I awoke in the forest, confused but rational. I wasn't sure if this ordeal was a dream or not but I knew I had to make my way back to town. Walking

through the streets I saw the faces of all the people who were just moments ago preaching the work of Satan. I passed them by in disgust as they carried on as if clueless to their wretched ways. My faith was home, but I no longer saw her as my loving wife, for her innocence was tainted with the same darkness as the shadows in the forest. The night I left my Faith at home changed my life forever. I could never again look at the people of Salem as I once saw them. I only saw the evil that consumed them. Even if they chose not to reveal it, I still knew.

Although the narration used by the author in "Young Goodman Brown" creates a perfect environment for the plot there is still something missing when it comes to the characters. The lack of first-person narrative leaves the reader scratching their head during the moments of suspense. Retelling the story from a first person perspective helps depict what was going through Goodman Brown's head during his ordeal. The author's focused on using an omniscient narrator to convey the darkness, resentment, and regret that filled Goodman throughout the story, while the retelling using the first-person narrative focuses on a more in-depth look of the character and his surrounding world.

The omniscient narration gives great focus of the environment and characters through imagery. The story begins with the author describing Goodman as he begins his trip, "Goodman Brown came forth at sunset, into the street of Salem Village, but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife." From the start of the conversation between Goodman Brown and his wife the narration depicts the mood in the room by describing the movement of the characters and the reactions they have toward each other. He said, "'Dearest heart,' whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear". Compared to the retelling of the story, the first-person narrative avoids the scenic route by stating how things really are from the perspective of the character present in the room, "'Dearest heart,' She whispered to me as she pleaded for me to stay. She didn't want me to go, she was too afraid for my safety, and for her own, as well. She exclaimed she was

too fearful of spending the night alone but I urged her to remain hopeful and to trust in my words.”

Mid story, as Goodman Brown meets with the traveler, the role of the omniscient narration is worked in in a masterful way. ”It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where those two were journeying.” wrote Nathaniel Hawthorne, the author of the short story, in his attempt to use imagery as the main player in this story. As previously mentioned, “darkness” and “resentment” play a big part in the narration. Throughout the story Goodman Brown is given signs that urge him to abandon his journey. The author goes on to describe the fellow traveler’s walking staff, “But the only thing about him, that could be fixed upon as remarkable, was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought, that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by uncertain light. ”A Good Man”, the retold version of this short story, goes into detail about the traveler’s walking staff as well but with minor focus on creating a mood based around the cane. Goodman described the walking staff as he saw it, “Although he seemed confident and controlled, the staff that accompanied him was an uncomfortable sight. A twisted walking stick that had a pattern to it that resembled a serpent. With every step we made I could feel his it slither beside us.” With this change of narration we’re able to understand directly how Goodman Brown felt about the traveler and the staff he kept on his person.

The use of the first-person narration is most beneficial during the ending of the short story. When Goodman Brown becomes filled with hate and resentment toward his fellow townspeople, he searches inside himself for answers but is unable to rationalize the events that took place. In a last hope of salvation, he closes off to the world and becomes completely submerged in his purity, denying everyone who he once knew any access to his innocence. The retold story ends with this narration from Goodman Brown; “I could never again look at the people of Salem as I once saw them. I only saw the evil that consumed them. Even if they chose not to reveal it, I still knew.”. When we compare this ending with that of the original short story we are able

to see how well the contrast in narration affects story, “And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave, a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grand-children, a goodly procession, besides neighbors, not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone; for his dying hour was gloom.”

There are many advantages to each style of narration, the omniscient narrator can submerge the reader in the world surrounding the character while the first-person narrator is able to give us an inside look through the eyes and heart of the protagonist. There is no wrong way to narrate a story. It’s the author job to carry the readers from the beginning to the end in a smooth and consistent manner, regardless of the narrative style.

## **The Cottagette** **The Cottagette**

The Cottagette

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

“Why not?” said Mr. Mathews “It is far too small for a house, too pretty for a hut, too—unusual—for a cottage.”

“Cottagette, by all means,” said Lois, seating herself on a porch chair. “But it is larger than it looks, Mr. Mathews. How do you like it, Malda?”

I was delighted with it. More than delighted. Here this tiny shell of fresh unpainted wood peeped out from under the trees, the only house in sight except the distant white specks on far off farms, and the little wandering village in the river-threaded valley. It sat right on the turf,—no road, no path even, and the dark woods shadowed the back windows.

“How about meals?” asked Lois.

“Not two minutes walk,” he assured her, and showed us a little furtive path between the trees to the place where meals were furnished.

We discussed and examined and exclaimed, Lois holding her pongee skirts close about her—she needn’t have been so careful, there wasn’t a speck of dust,—and presently decided to take it.

Never did I know the real joy and peace of living, before that blessed summer at “High Court.” It was a mountain place, easy enough to get to, but strangely big and still and far away when you were there.

The working basis of the establishment was an eccentric woman named

Caswell, a sort of musical enthusiast, who had a summer school of music and the “higher things.” Malicious persons, not able to obtain accommodations there, called the place “High C.”

I liked the music very well, and kept my thoughts to myself, both high and low, but “The Cottagette” I loved unreservedly. It was so little and new and clean, smelling only of its fresh-planned boards—they hadn’t even stained it.

There was one big room and two little ones in the tiny thing, though from the outside you wouldn’t have believed it, it looked so small; but small as it was it harbored a miracle—a real bathroom with water piped from mountain springs. Our windows opened into the green shadiness, the soft brownness, the bird-inhabited quiet flower-starred woods. But in front we looked across whole counties—over a far-off river—into another state. Off and down and away—it was like sitting on the roof of something—something very big.

The grass swept up to the door-step, to the walls—only it wasn’t just grass of course, but such a procession of flowers as I had never imagined could grow in one place.

You had to go quite a way through the meadow, wearing your own narrow faintly marked streak in the grass, to reach the town-connecting road below. But in the woods was a little path, clear and wide, by which we went to meals.

For we ate with the highly thoughtful musicians, and highly musical thinkers, in their central boarding-house nearby. They didn’t call it a boarding-house, which is neither high nor musical; they called it “The Calceolaria.” There was plenty of that growing about, and I didn’t mind what they called it so long as the food was good—which it was, and the prices reasonable—which they were.

The people were extremely interesting—some of them at least; and all of them were better than the average of summer boarders.

But if there hadn't been any interesting ones it didn't matter while Ford Mathews was there. He was a newspaper man, or rather an ex-newspaper man, then becoming a writer for magazines, with books ahead.

He had friends at High Court—he liked music—he liked the place—and he liked us. Lois liked him too, as was quite natural. I'm sure I did.

He used to come up evenings and sit on the porch and talk.

He came daytimes and went on long walks with us. He established his workshop in a most attractive little cave not far beyond far beyond us—the country there is full of rocky ledges and hollows, and sometimes asked us over to an afternoon tea, made on a gipsy fire.

Lois was a good deal older than I, but not really old at all, and she didn't look her thirty-five by ten years. I never blamed her for not mentioning it, and I wouldn't have done so, myself, on any account. But I felt that together we made a safe and reasonable household. She played beautifully, and there was a piano in our big room. There were pianos in several other little cottages about—but too far off for any jar of sound. When the wind was right we caught little wafts of music now and then; but mostly it was still—blessedly still, about us. And yet that Calceolaria was only two minutes off—and with raincoats and rubbers we never minded going to it.

We saw a good deal of Ford and I got interested in him, I couldn't help it. He was big. Not extra big in pounds and inches, but a man with big view and a grip—with purpose and real power. He was going to do things. I thought he was doing them now, but he didn't—this was all like cutting steps in the ice-wall, he said. It had to be done, but the road was long ahead. And he took an interest in my work too, which is unusual for a literary man.

Mine wasn't much. I did embroidery and made designs.

It is such pretty work! I like to draw from flowers and leaves and things about me; conventionalize them sometimes, and sometimes paint them just as they are,—in soft silk stitches.

All about up here were the lovely small things I needed; and not only these, but the lovely big things that make one feel so strong and able to do beautiful work.

Here was the friend I lived so happily with, and all this fairy land of sun and shadow, the free immensity of our view, and the dainty comfort of the Cottagette. We never had to think of ordinary things till the soft musical thrill of the Japanese gong stole through the trees, and we trotted off to the Calceolaria.

I think Lois knew before I did.

We were old friends and trusted each other, and she had had experience too.

“Malda,” she said, “let us face this thing and be rational.” It was a strange thing that Lois should be so rational and yet so musical—but she was, and that was one reason I liked her so much.

“You are beginning to love Ford Mathews—do you know it?”

I said yes, I thought I was.

“Does he love you?”

That I couldn't say. “It is early yet,” I told her. “He is a man, he is about thirty I believe, he has seen more of life and probably loved before—it may be nothing more than friendliness with him.”

“Do you think it would be a good marriage?” she asked. We had often talked of love and marriage, and Lois had helped me to form my views—hers were very clear and strong.

“Why yes—if he loves me,” I said. “He has told me quite a bit about his family, good western farming people, real Americans. He is strong and well—you can read clean living in his eyes and mouth.” Ford’s eyes were as clear as a girl’s, the whites of them were clear. Most men’s eyes, when you look at them critically, are not like that. They may look at you very expressively, but when you look at them, just as features, they are not very nice.

I liked his looks, but I liked him better.

So I told her that as far as I knew it would be a good marriage—if it was one.

“How much do you love him?” she asked.

That I couldn’t quite tell,—it was a good deal,—but I didn’t think it would kill me to lose him.

“Do you love him enough to do something to win him—to really put yourself out somewhat for that purpose?”

“Why—yes—I think I do. If it was something I approved of. What do you mean?”

Then Lois unfolded her plan. She had been married,—unhappily married, in her youth; that was all over and done with years ago; she had told me about it long since; and she said she did not regret the pain and loss because it had given her experience. She had her maiden name again—and freedom. She was so fond of me she wanted to give me the benefit of her experience—without the pain.

“Men like music,” said Lois; “they like sensible talk; they like beauty of course, and all that,—”

“Then they ought to like you!” I interrupted, and, as a matter of fact they did. I knew several who wanted to marry her, but she said “once

was enough.” I don’t think they were “good marriages” though.

“Don’t be foolish, child,” said Lois, “this is serious. What they care for most after all is domesticity. Of course they’ll fall in love with anything; but what they want to marry is a homemaker. Now we are living here in an idyllic sort of way, quite conducive to falling in love, but no temptation to marriage. If I were you—if I really loved this man and wished to marry him, I would make a home of this place.”

“Make a home?—why it is a home. I never was so happy anywhere in my life. What on earth do you mean, Lois?”

“A person might be happy in a balloon, I suppose,” she replied, “but it wouldn’t be a home. He comes here and sits talking with us, and it’s quiet and feminine and attractive—and then we hear that big gong at the Calceolaria, and off we go stopping through the wet woods—and the spell is broken. Now you can cook.” I could cook. I could cook excellently. My esteemed Mama had rigorously taught me every branch of what is now called “domestic science;” and I had no objection to the work, except that it prevented my doing anything else. And one’s hands are not so nice when one cooks and washes dishes,—I need nice hands for my needlework. But if it was a question of pleasing Ford Mathews—

Lois went on calmly. “Miss Caswell would put on a kitchen for us in a minute, she said she would, you know, when we took the cottage. Plenty of people keep house up here,—we, can if we want to.”

“But we don’t want to,” I said, “we never have wanted to. The very beauty of the place is that it never had any house-keeping about it. Still, as you say, it would be cosy on a wet night, we could have delicious little suppers, and have him stay—”

“He told me he had never known a home since he was eighteen,” said Lois.

That was how we came to install a kitchen in the Cottagette. The men put it up in a few days, just a lean-to with a window, a sink and two

doors. I did the cooking. We had nice things, there is no denying that; good fresh milk and vegetables particularly, fruit is hard to get in the country, and meat too, still we managed nicely; the less you have the more you have to manage—it takes time and brains, that’s all.

Lois likes to do housework, but it spoils her hands for practicing, so she can’t; and I was perfectly willing to do it—it was all in the interest of my own heart. Ford certainly enjoyed it. He dropped in often, and ate things with undeniable relish. So I was pleased, though it did interfere with my work a good deal. I always work best in the morning; but of course housework has to be done in the morning too; and it is astonishing how much work there is in the littlest kitchen. You go in for a minute, and you see this thing and that thing and the other thing to be done, and your minute is an hour before you know it.

When I was ready to sit down the freshness of the morning was gone somehow. Before, when I woke up, there was only the clean wood smell of the house, and then the blessed out-of-doors: now I always felt the call of the kitchen as soon as I woke. An oil stove will smell a little, either in or out of the house; and soap, and—well you know if you cook in a bedroom how it makes the room feel differently? Our house had been only bedroom and parlor before.

We baked too—the baker’s bread was really pretty poor, and Ford did enjoy my whole wheat, and brown, and especially hot rolls and gems. it was a pleasure to feed him, but it did heat up the house, and me. I never could work much—at my work—baking days. Then, when I did get to work, the people would come with things,—milk or meat or vegetables, or children with berries; and what distressed me most was the wheelmarks on our meadow. They soon made quite a road—they had to of course, but I hated it—I lost that lovely sense of being on the last edge and looking over—we were just a bead on a string like other houses. But it was quite true that I loved this man, and would do more than this to please him. We couldn’t go off so freely on excursions as we used, either; when meals are to be prepared someone has to be there, and to take in things when they come. Sometimes Lois stayed in, she always asked to,

but mostly I did. I couldn’t let her spoil her summer on my account. And Ford certainly liked it.

He came so often that Lois said she thought it would look better if we had an older person with us; and that her mother could come if I wanted her, and she could help with the work of course. That seemed reasonable, and she came. I wasn’t very fond of Lois’s mother, Mrs. Fowler, but it did seem a little conspicuous, Mr. Mathews eating with us more than he did at the Calceolaria.

There were others of course, plenty of them dropping in, but I didn’t encourage it much, it made so much more work. They would come in to supper, and then we would have musical evenings. They offered to help me wash dishes, some of them, but a new hand in the kitchen is not much help, I preferred to do it myself; then I knew where the dishes were.

Ford never seemed to want to wipe dishes; though I often wished he would.

So Mrs. Fowler came. She and Lois had one room, they had to,—and she really did a lot of the work, she was a very practical old lady.

Then the house began to be noisy. You hear another person in a kitchen more than you hear yourself, I think,—and the walls were only boards. She swept more than we did too. I don’t think much sweeping is needed in a clean place like that; and she dusted all the time; which I know is unnecessary. I still did most of the cooking, but I could get off more to draw, out-of-doors; and to walk. Ford was in and out continually, and, it seemed to me, was really coming nearer. What was one summer of interrupted work, of noise and dirt and smell and constant meditation on what to eat next, compared to a lifetime of love? Besides—if he married me—I should have to do it always, and might as well get used to it.

Lois kept me contented, too, telling me nice things that Ford said about my cooking. “He does appreciate it so,” she said.



One day he came around early and asked me to go up Hugh's Peak with him. It was a lovely climb and took all day. I demurred a little, it was Monday, Mrs. Fowler thought it was cheaper to have a woman come and wash, and we did, but it certainly made more work.

"Never mind," he said, "what's washing day or ironing day or any of that old foolishness to us? This is walking day—that's what it is." It was really, cool and sweet and fresh,—it had rained in the night,—and brilliantly clear.

"Come along!" he said. "We can see as far as Patch Mountain I'm sure. There'll never be a better day."

"Is anyone else going?" I asked.

"Not a soul. It's just us. Come."

I came gladly, only suggesting—"Wait, let me put up a lunch."

"I'll wait just long enough for you to put on knickers and a short skirt," said he. "The lunch is all in the basket on my back. I know how long it takes for you women to 'put up' sandwiches and things."

We were off in ten minutes, light-footed and happy, and the day was all that could be asked. He brought a perfect lunch, too, and had made it all himself. I confess it tasted better to me than my own cooking; but perhaps that was the climb.

When we were nearly down we stopped by a spring on a broad ledge, and supped, making tea as he liked to do out-of-doors. We saw the round sun setting at one end of a world view, and the round moon rising at the other; calmly shining each on each.

And then he asked me to be his wife.—

We were very happy.

"But there's a condition!" said he all at once, sitting up straight and looking very fierce. "You mustn't cook!"

"What!" said I. "Mustn't cook?"

"No," said he, "you must give it up—for my sake."

I stared at him dumbly.

"Yes, I know all about it," he went on, "Lois told me. I've seen a good deal of Lois—since you've taken to cooking. And since I would talk about you, naturally I learned a lot. She told me how you were brought up, and how strong your domestic instincts were—but bless your artist soul dear girl, you have some others!" Then he smiled rather queerly and murmured, "surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird."

"I've watched you, dear, all summer;" he went on, "it doesn't agree with you.

"Of course the things taste good—but so do my things! I'm a good cook myself. My father was a cook, for years—at good wages. I'm used to it you see.

"One summer when I was hard up I cooked for a living—and saved money instead of starving."

"O ho!" said I, "that accounts for the tea—and the lunch!"

"And lots of other things," said he. "But you haven't done half as much of your lovely work since you started this kitchen business, and—you'll forgive me, dear—it hasn't been as good. Your work is quite too good to lose; it is a beautiful and distinctive art, and I don't want you to let it go. What would you think of me if I gave up my hard long years of writing for the easy competence of a well-paid cook!"

I was still too happy to think very clearly. I just sat and looked at him. “But you want to marry me?” I said.

“I want to marry you, Malda,—because I love you—because you are young and strong and beautiful—because you are wild and sweet and—fragrant, and—elusive, like the wild flowers you love. Because you are so truly an artist in your special way, seeing beauty and giving it to others. I love you because of all this, because you are rational and highminded and capable of friendship,—and in spite of your cooking!”

“But—how do you want to live?”

“As we did here—at first,” he said. “There was peace, exquisite silence. There was beauty—nothing but beauty. There were the clean wood odors and flowers and fragrances and sweet wild wind. And there was you—your fair self, always delicately dressed, with white firm fingers sure of touch in delicate true work. I loved you then. When you took to cooking it jarred on me. I have been a cook, I tell you, and I know what it is. I hated it—to see my wood-flower in a kitchen. But Lois told me about how you were brought up to it and loved it—and I said to myself, ‘I love this woman; I will wait and see if I love her even as a cook.’ And I do, Darling: I withdraw the condition. I will love you always, even if you insist on being my cook for life!”

“O I don’t insist!” I cried. “I don’t want to cook—I want to draw! But I thought—Lois said—How she has misunderstood you!”

“It is not true, always, my dear,” said he, “that the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach; at least it’s not the only way. Lois doesn’t know everything, she is young yet! And perhaps for my sake you can give it up. Can you sweet?”

Could I? Could I? Was there ever a man like this?

[text taken from <http://www.fullbooks.com/The-Forerunner-Volume-1-1909-1910-12.html>]

## Are You Mr. Right?

Are You Mr. Right?

Crystal Lin

Has love ever existed? What is love? I’ve wonder. I, Lois was once a beautiful and sexy girl in the village, and was admired by men, but I picked him, Tom Bucker. Tom was a young and handsome newspaper worker in the village. One day, someone came to ring my door bell, I looked out the window and I saw a young man standing outside, and his face looked fresh to me.

Tom came to me and offered me to be his newspaper topic. He told me he heard about my music talents and he wanted to write a paper on me. Tom was skinny and his clothes didn’t make him look dull but instead more sexy. I fell for him at once but I told myself to keep it inside my heart. We started our interview, sitting by the riverside. Does that count as “Dating?” Ever since then, he came to interview me almost every day, and that was how we got to know each other.

After three months, he proposed to me. It was a rainy day, and neither of us brought an umbrella. He covered me with his jacket while we walked to the tree, and we sat under the tree while waited for the rain to stop. His action really touched my heart because he was so sweet and considerate.

After the rain stopped, we went back to the riverside and then he suddenly bended down and proposed to me.

“I love talking to you and being with you. I enjoyed spending time with you and I do not want this to be just a moment but instead I want it forever. Lois, would you like to be my wife?” He asked.

I was shocked at this action, he was always so humorous, yet quiet. He had surprised me this time, and I love it because I love him very much. Yes, I have to admit we both fell in love during these three months.

“Oh my lord, I feel the same for you. Yes I will be your wife, if you promise me this. As you know I love my music, and I would like to keep it as my career in the future. Therefore, I do not have time to cook – be your kitchen lady.” I said.

“Oh sure dear, I will be your kitchen man. Don’t worry, nothing is going to change. I’m still going to write my newspaper, and you do what you like. I will love you even though you do not cook for me,” he said.

After a month, we got married. It was supposed to be a happy marriage, but it wasn’t. We were fine in the beginning because everything went as we planned. He went to work in the morning and came home at night and cooked while I stayed home and practiced my music. But everything changed after a year of our happy marriage. He started to complain that I didn’t do the job a wife should do, mainly cooking. He told me that he was so jealous at his friend, because his wife cooked and handled house chores perfectly that his friend didn’t have to worry after came back from work. One night, he said to me.

“This is not the life I want, I thought I’m okay with that but as result I ain’t,” he said.

He had forgot what he promised me when he proposed to me that day.

Now, I understood what kind of man he was. He was sweet before he had me, but after he had me everything changed, forget about the love and the promise because all was a lie.

Ever since that night, we didn’t talk to each other nor sleep together. That relationship didn’t last the month, we got divorced and I got my freedom back and lived with my best friend, Malda.

I see Malda as my past, because she is pretty and sexy and she has her own interests. She was good at art and I was good at music. Malda was young and sexy just like I was in the past. One day, Malda told me that she met a writer and he treated her like a sweetheart. And yes, that was how Tom used to treat me, too. I was worried that she would “repeat my mistakes.”

As her best friend I did not want to see her that happen.

“You are beginning to love Ford Mathews—do you know it?” I asked.

“Yes.” She said.

“Does he love you?” I asked.

“It is early yet, he is a man, he is about thirty I believe, he has seem more of life and probably loved before-it may be nothing more than friendliness with him” She answered.

“Do you think it would be a good marriage?” I asked. We had often talked of love and marriage and I told her my past too.

“Why yes—if he loves me. He has told me quite a bit about his family, good western farming people, real Americans. He is strong and well—you can read clean living in his eyes and mouth. “Ford’s eyes were as clear as a girl’s, the whites of them were clear. Most men’s eyes...”

“STOP!” I yelled.

Malda stared at me and I took a deep breath.

“He’s just like my ex-husband Tom Bucker. I know how much you love him. I know what he’s going to offer you when he proposes to you. Just remember one thing “Don’t be foolish, child, this is serious. What they care for most, after all, is domesticity. Of course they’ll fall in love with anything; but what they want to marry is a homemaker. Now we are living here in an idyllic sort of way, quite conducive to falling in love, with no temptation to marriage. If I were you—if I really loved this man and wished to marry him, I would make a home of this place.” I said.

And yet I couldn’t give up my career for Tom, was that because I didnt love him that much like I think I did?

Malda looked serious at me.

“Yes, I’m serious Lois. I know he’s my Mr. Right and I will do anything to please him, because I love him and I’m sure he will do the same too,” she said.

Malda surprised me after our last conversation. She started to cook and although it wasn’t

good, Ford started to come by very often, (of course with me there). He came almost every day and had dinner with us. One night, I decided to talk to Ford about Malda and him. After dinner, I talked to Ford alone while Malda was washing.

“Ford, I know you love Malda, but do you love her enough to change the domesticity society?” I asked.

He looked at me with humorous face “Yes, I do not think that’s the problem, because of where and how I grown up,” he said.

“I hope you will keep your promise forever, because as you know she loves arts and you have to admit she’s good at it too. I want her to have the best.” I said in a serious tone.

One year later, Malda married Ford Mathews and I was happy for her. Malda was willing to change herself to give up her interest and be Ford’s kitchen lady. And yet, Ford was willing to switch the kitchen work with her once a while so she can do her art. And me, sitting by the window and watching the rain thinking about what would happen if I willing to learn to cook for Tom. Would we have had a marriage if I wasn’t that stubborn? I’m starting to wonder if I should give myself another chance and seek for my Mr. Right again?

#### The Cottagette VS. Are You Mr. Right

In the short stories *The Cottagette* and *Are You Mr. Right?* focus on whether women should be live as in domesticity society, where women must do the kitchen and house chores while men work outside, and how love overcome that. The both stories are in first person character narrator but as in different character’s point of view. In the original story *The Cottagette* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is telling from the main character; Malda’s point of view. She is type of girl will give up her interests for her love one. And in the retell story *Are You Mr. Right?*, is telling from Lois’s point of view based on her failed marriage experience, and to show how she qualify to be a marriage adviser. Lois is type of girl that will not change for anyone, even for her love one.

In the story *The Cottagette*, the narrator is focus on Malda’s point of view on her feeling and how she fall in love on Ford Mathews. And yet she didn’t know what man expect from woman, until Lois told her, and after she knows, she’s willing to change herself.

Malda and Lois both have their own interests. Malda is good in art, and Lois is good in music. Malda met a writer Ford Mathews, and she fall in love on him that she’s willing to do anything to please him. And Lois work as Malda’s marriage adviser.

“Then Lois unfolded her plan. She had been married,—unhappily married, in her youth; that was all over and done with years ago; she had told me about it long since; and she said she did not regret the pain and loss because it had given her experience.” (27). Lois was married at her youth, but had an unhappy marriage. But she never feel regret because she learned her lesson. Because of Lois past, she understands what man is looking for and that make her qualify to become Malda’s adviser.

Lois told Malda that all men care are their stomachs, they insisted to find a kitchen lady no matter what even though they love you so much. From the story *Are You Mr. Right?*, “He started to complain that I didn’t do the job a wife should do, mainly cooking. He told me that he was so jealous at his friend, because his wife cooked and handled house chores perfectly that his friend didn’t have to worry after came back from work. One night, he said to me... This is not the life I want, I thought I’m okay with that but as result I ain’t,” he said. Everything went okay until one night Tom came home and complained that Lois didn’t do the job as a wife should do – cooking. He told Lois that he was jealous at his friend because he has a good wife and she’s willing to cook for him. Tom told Lois if she not going to do what a wife should do, then he couldn’t accept it anymore –soon they ended up divorced.

Lois also mention that in the story *The Cottagette*, “A person might be happy in a balloon, I suppose,” she replied, “but it wouldn’t be a home. He comes here and sits talking with us, and it’s quiet and feminine and attractive –and then we hear that big gong at the Calceolaria, and off we go stopping through the wet woods—and the spell is broken. Now you can cook.” (31). Lois is saying that food is the most important thing to a man, they can leave what they were doing and went for the food. Lois also pointing out that in order for this to be a happy marriage, Malda needs to prepare to cook for him. “This is serious. What they care for most after all is domesticity. Of course they’ll fall in love with anything; but what they want to marry is a homemaker. Now we are living here in an idyllic sort of way, quite conducive to falling in love, but no temptation to marriage. If I were you—if I really loved this man and wished to marry him, I would make a home of this place.” (24). Lois is saying that this is serious since they live in domesticity world. Of course man will fall in love on anything, but the most important thing they want is to marry a woman who can cook. Lois said if she is in Malda’s position, she will build a kitchen inside the cottagette and learn to cook if she really

love Ford.

And yet, Malda has no problem with the domesticity world because she know how to cook. “I could cook. I could cook excellently. My esteemed Mama had rigorously taught me every branch of what is now called “domestic science;” and I had no objection to the work, except that it prevented my doing anything else. And one’s hands are not so nice when one cooks and wash dishes,—I need nice hands for my needlework. But if it was a question of pleasing Ford Mathews.” (24). Malda is saying that she can cook because her mother taught her the skill in the past. But she has her work to do, it was hard to work on one hand and wash dishes on another hand. But she is willing to give up her work if cooking for Ford will make him happy. She feels cooking will not be a problem for her but then she will not be able to work on art. Although, she doesn’t like to cook.

From the story Are You Mr. Right?, Lois asked Tom to promise her something before she willing to marry him “Oh my lord, I feel the same for you. Yes I will be your wife, if you promise me this. As you know I love my music, and I would like to keep it as my career in the future. Therefore, I do not have time to cook – be your kitchen lady.” I said. Lois told Tom a heads of time that she will not cook for him because she’s busy with her music work and she wants to find a job in that field in the future. And at that time Tom said, “Oh sure dear, I will be your kitchen man. Don’t worry, nothing is going to change. I’m still going to write my newspaper, and you do what you like. I will love you even though you do not cook for me,” he said. Tom told Lois that she can concentrate on her work, and he will work and cook. He also said that he will still love Lois even though she doesn’t want to cook for him. But later on, Tom felt regret and they started to have arguments and they divorced at the end.

On the other hand from the story The Cottagette, Ford Mathews doesn’t want Malda to cook for him because he wants her to focus more on her art work. He doesn’t want her to give up her interest just for him. “Yes, I know all about it,” he went on, “Lois told me. I’ve seen a good deal of Lois—since you’ve taken to cooking. And since I would talk about you, naturally I learned a lot. She told me how you were brought up, and how strong your domestic instincts were—but bless your artist soul dear girl, you have some others!” Then he smiled rather queerly and murmured, “surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.” (55). Ford is saying that Lois had told him about Malda and her talent as well, he thinks she should continue doing what she like and don’t give up anything for him, he is proud of Malda’s talent. At here, Ford shows consideration on Malda and he willing to accept her as whom she is and doesn’t want her to change her beauty. He love her as who she is.

In conclusion, shifting from another character’s point of view really made the reader to understand better in another way. In the original story “The Cottagette” we get to understand that Malda was young, pretty and open-mind that she willing to change herself and give up her interest for her love one if she has to. She’s the type of girl that will do anything to please her love one. We get to access to Malda’s mind, however we didn’t get to know how Lois being quality as a marriage adviser. We know Lois was married before from the story The Cottagette, but Malda didn’t mention much about that in detail. And in the retell story, I expanded Lois’ past and shows how she understands man better than Malda based on her background and past, which makes her quality as a marriage adviser. Lois has opposite personality than Malda. Lois was young, pretty but stubborn, she will not change herself no matter what and perhaps that was why she doesn’t have a happy marriage. But after she saw Malda and Ford’s marriage, she starts to think differently.

## Are You Mr. Right?

Are You Mr. Right?

Crystal Lin

Has love ever existed? What is love? I've wonder. I, Lois was once a beautiful and sexy girl in the village, and was admired by men, but I picked him, Tom Bucker. Tom was a young and handsome newspaper worker in the village. One day, someone came to ring my door bell, I looked out the window and I saw a young man standing outside, and his face looked fresh to me.

Tom came to me and offered me to be his newspaper topic. He told me he heard about my music talents and he wanted to write a paper on me. Tom was skinny and his clothes didn't make him look dull but instead more sexy. I fell for him at once but I told myself to keep it inside my heart. We started our interview, sitting by the riverside. Does that count as "Dating?" Ever since then, he came to interview me almost every day, and that was how we got to know each other.

After three months, he proposed to me. It was a rainy day, and neither of us brought an umbrella. He covered me with his jacket while we walked to the tree, and we sat under the tree while waited for the rain to stop. His action really touched my heart because he was so sweet and considerate.

After the rain stopped, we went back to the riverside and then he suddenly bended down and proposed to me.

"I love talking to you and being with you. I enjoyed spending time with you and I do not want this to be just a moment but instead I want it forever. Lois, would you like to be my wife?" He asked.

I was shocked at this action, he was always so humorous, yet quiet. He had surprised me this time, and I love it because I love him very much. Yes, I have to admit we both fell in love during these three months.

"Oh my lord, I feel the same for you. Yes I will be your wife, if you promise me this. As you know I love my music, and I would like to keep it as my career in the future. Therefore, I do not have time to cook – be your kitchen lady." I said.

"Oh sure dear, I will be your kitchen man. Don't worry, nothing is going to change. I'm still going to write my newspaper, and you do what you like. I will love you even though you do not cook for me," he said.

After a month, we got married. It was supposed to be a happy marriage, but it wasn't. We were fine in the beginning because everything went as we planned. He went to work in the morning and came home at night and cooked while I stayed home and practiced my music. But everything changed after a year of our happy marriage. He started to complain that I didn't do the job a wife should do, mainly cooking. He told me that he was so jealous at his friend, because his wife cooked and handled house chores perfectly that his friend didn't have to worry after came back from work. One night, he said to me.

"This is not the life I want, I thought I'm okay with that but as result I ain't," he said.

He had forgot what he promised me when he proposed to me that day.

Now, I understood what kind of man he was. He was sweet before he had me, but after he had me everything changed, forget about the love and the promise because all was a lie.

Ever since that night, we didn't talk to each other nor sleep together. That relationship didn't last the month, we got divorced and I got my freedom back and lived with my best friend, Malda.

I see Malda as my past, because she is pretty and sexy and she has her own interests. She was good at art and I was good at music. Malda was young and sexy just like I was in the past. One day, Malda told me that she met a writer and he treated her like a sweetheart. And yes, that was how Tom used to treat me, too. I was worried that she would "repeat my mistakes."

As her best friend I did not want to see her that happen.

"You are beginning to love Ford Mathews—do you know it?" I asked.

“Yes.” She said.

“Does he love you?” I asked.

“It is early yet, he is a man, he is about thirty I believe, he has seem more of life and probably loved before—it may be nothing more than friendliness with him” She answered.

“Do you think it would be a good marriage?” I asked. We had often talked of love and marriage and I told her my past too.

“Why yes—if he loves me. He has told me quite a bit about his family, good western farming people, real Americans. He is strong and well—you can read clean living in his eyes and mouth. “Ford’s eyes were as clear as a girl’s, the whites of them were clear. Most men’s eyes...”

“STOP!” I yelled.

Malda stared at me and I took a deep breath.

“He’s just like my ex-husband Tom Bucker. I know how much you love him. I know what he’s going to offer you when he proposes to you. Just remember one thing “Don’t be foolish, child, this is serious. What they care for most, after all, is domesticity. Of course they’ll fall in love with anything; but what they want to marry is a homemaker. Now we are living here in an idyllic sort of way, quite conducive to falling in love, with no temptation to marriage. If I were you—if I really loved this man and wished to marry him, I would make a home of this place.” I said.

And yet I couldn’t give up my career for Tom, was that because I didnt love him that much like I think I did?

Malda looked serious at me.

“Yes, I’m serious Lois. I know he’s my Mr. Right and I will do anything to please him, because I love him and I’m sure he will do the same too,” she said.

Malda surprised me after our last conversation. She started to cook and although it wasn’t

good, Ford started to come by very often, (of course with me there). He came almost every day and had dinner with us. One night, I decided to talk to Ford about Malda and him. After dinner, I talked to Ford alone while Malda was washing.

“Ford, I know you love Malda, but do you love her enough to change the domesticity society?” I asked.

He looked at me with humorous face “Yes, I do not think that’s the problem, because of where and how I grown up,” he said.

“I hope you will keep your promise forever, because as you know she loves arts and you have to admit she’s good at it too. I want her to have the best.” I said in a serious tone.

One year later, Malda married Ford Mathews and I was happy for her. Malda was willing to change herself to give up her interest and be Ford’s kitchen lady. And yet, Ford was willing to switch the kitchen work with her once a while so she can do her art. And me, sitting by the window and watching the rain thinking about what would happen if I willing to learn to cook for Tom. Would we have had a marriage if I wasn’t that stubborn? I’m starting to wonder if I should give myself another chance and seek for my Mr. Right again?

In the short stories *The Cottagette* and *Are You Mr. Right?* focus on whether women should be live as in domesticity society, where women must do the kitchen and house chores while men work outside, and how love overcome that. The both stories are in first person character narrator but as in different character’s point of view. In the original story *The Cottagette* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is telling from the main character; Malda’s point of view. She is type of girl will give up her interests for her love one. And in the retell story *Are You Mr. Right?*, is telling from Lois’s point of view based on her failed marriage experience, and to show how she qualify to be a marriage adviser. Lois is type of girl that will not change for anyone, even for her love one.

In the story *The Cottagette*, the narrator is focus on Malda’s point of view on her feeling and how she fall in love on Ford Mathews. And yet she didn’t know what man expect from woman, until Lois told her, and after she knows, she’s willing to change herself.

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And yet, Malda has no problem with the domesticity world because she know how to cook. "I could cook. I could cook excellently. My esteemed Mama had rigorously taught me every branch of what is now called "domestic science;" and I had no objection to the work, except that it prevented my doing anything else. And one's hands are not so nice when one cooks and wash dishes,—I need nice hands for my needlework. But if it was a question of pleasing Ford Mathews." (24). Malda is saying that she can cook because her mother taught her the skill in the past. But she has her work to do, it was hard to work on one hand and wash dishes on another hand. But she is willing to give up her work if cooking for Ford will make him happy. She feels cooking will not be a problem for her but then she will not be able to work on art. Although, she doesn't like to cook.

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## What Some Women Think Men Expect From Them

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Techy

Malda met Mr. Ford at the calceolaria, a place where highly thoughtful musicians and highly musical thinkers would gather to eat. Mathews was an ex-newspaper man and a future book writer. He was a passionate man who enjoyed music, and he also like the little place we lived in. Moreover, he liked our company and so did I. Mathews has friends in very high places. However, Most evening he would come and sit on our balcony and we would chat and sometimes we would go hiking during the day. And sometimes he would invite us for an afternoon tea, made on gipsy fire where he organized his workshop.

Malda was a great artist. She designed and did embroidery. She was very talented and her works were extremely attractive. She made drawings from flowers, leaves, and things about her. She was very passionate about her works because that was the thing that completed her. She likes music, nature and every little admirable thing about it. When Malda and I sit and talked about our environment, she would tell me how she sees up here as a place where she gained all the little beautiful things she had desire and all the big things that put joy and confidence in one’s life and can push you to accomplish great and splendid works. Malda and I shared the beautiful and peaceful cottagette. We were happy of the vast size of the view and did not have to worry about anything except when the soft musical thrill of the gong stole through the tree, and we hurried off to the calceolaria.

One thing Malda, Mathews and I had in common was that we were all into music. In fact, I was a pianist, a really good one, and Malda enjoyed watching me played. I was quite older than Malda. Nevertheless, I appeared younger than my actual age.

I have noticed that everyday Malda was getting closer and closer to Mr. Ford. She was starting to fall for him. It was clear to me that she was in love with Mathews but I did not think she knew it herself.

“You beginning to love Ford Mathews –do you know it “? I asked her.

Yes, she replied with little doubts.

“Does he love you?” I asked

“ It is early to predict. She told me “

It was cleared that she did not know how Mr. Ford Mathews really felt about her. Malda and I had a really good relationship. We trusted and liked each other. Therefore, I felt like I was responsible for her. ‘Men would fall for anything’. “They like music, romantic talk and beauty”. Moreover, They will fall for your beauty and your dreams but in the end what they really care about is domesticity. They want to marry someone who can do housework, especially someone who knows her way around the kitchen. ”Trust me it is the truth”. I have been married before, long ago when I was just a girl. It was not the type of marriage a young girl would hope for. There was no happiness. Jerome was a bit older than I was when we got married. Unlike Mr. ford, he was neither into music nor the romantic type. He’s passion was work and spending time at the town local bar. I was more like a servant than a wife to him and sometimes I think that’s what kept him around during the time we spent together. I would cook, wash dishes, do laundries and iron his clothes. All I get in return was nothing. No love, it was plain agony and I have learned from it all.

To have a home, one must have a kitchen. That’s the ideal of a home to me. My mother has taught me how to be a good homemaker. I knew how to cook very well and do other housework. Malda was in love with Mr. Ford Mathews, and a perfect way to get a man to marry you, is to show him you are a good homemaker since all the really care about is domesticity. Therefore, I insisted that we get kitchen in order for Malda to please Mr. Ford Mathews and win his heart.

I have chosen a part of the story “the cottagette” to retell. The narrative style used in the story is the first person narration, which mean the story is focus on one person’s perspective. I have kept the same narrative style, but change the main narrator to another. In the story Malda is a young woman who is attracted to a man name Mr. ford Mathews and her friends Lois is advising her on what she thinks men want in women and what women should do to keep a man happy. Although in the original story the narrator tried to express her point of view in a very understanding way, in the retelling story you get a clearer understanding and a slightly change in Lois thoughts because she is now controlling her thoughts as the narrator instead of having Malda.

Having Lois as the narrator brings more life to her point of view rather than having Malda telling her story. Lois thoughts are slightly different now because she is the one directing her feelings to us now. If we look at the second paragraph of the new version of the story, and from lines 8 to 11 in the original story, there is a minor change in expression in the way Malda described her works and views on things than the way Lois described them in the retelling version. Lois is Malda best friend and roommate; therefore, one can say they are pretty close. Lois sees Malda works in a more profound way than Malda sees them. She is able to realize than Malda works is one thing that put joy in her life and that she was very passionate about what she did. For example, Lois mentioned that Malda works were extremely attractive. Moreover, she likes music, nature, and every little admirable thing that relate to nature. Therefore, one can tell that Lois really admired Malda works, and as a friend, she pays good attention to her friend.

Another good approach on Lois focuses as a narrator as oppose to malda is how she is able to quickly notice her friend falling for Mr. Ford and how she relates things together. In paragraph 3 in the new version, Lois explains how Malda, Mr. ford and herself are all passionate about music, and it is one thing that connected them together. We can conclude that music played a major role in their life as individual and as friends. Lois played the piano really good and Malda really liked to listen to her piece, and Mr. Ford Mathews was someone who enjoyed music a lot. In addition, Lois was able to rapidly draw a conclusion that Malda was falling for Mr. Ford because of how close the two couple have gotten to each other due to a lot of time they have spent together. In the original story Malda mentioned “You beginning to fall for Mr. Ford and you cannot even see it said Lois”. However, there weren’t enough details that showed us how she noticed such thing because as Malda the narrator, she does not have a lot of access to Lois thoughts. Fortunately, the new version provides that information because as Lois the narrator, we get full access in her thoughts. Malda and Mr. Ford would see each other more than often. They would go places together and he was always in the house. As a result, she has gotten very close with him and it lead to her falling for him. Therefore, having Lois as the narrator help us understand her point of view much better than having Malda as the narrator.

In the retelling story, we get more out of Lois’s perspective on what men desire in women and on what she has been through in her past than it is detailed in the original story. Her point of view is more expressive now because she is the one directing to us her thoughts and experience. In the original story, Malda mentioned, “ of course man would fall in love, “but what they want to marry is a home maker, said Lois”. However, it doesn’t say how Lois

came up with such conclusion. In the new version Lois state “trust me I know”; I have been unhappily married long before when I was a young girl. As a result, that is the reason why Lois thinks that without a kitchen you cannot call your place a home. Moreover, in order to get a man to marry you, being able to perform housework is a must. Lois have learned a lot from the past and gained a lot of experience. We can assume that being a homemaker was a major key in Lois’s relationship back then and that the reason why she keep on rejecting every man who revealed his feelings for her

With Lois as the narrator, it is easier to comprehend her feelings and to be able to see how her past experiences has affected her life as an individual. In the retelling story, Lois mentioned, “I was treated more as a servant than a wife”. In her case, domesticity was the key to the relationship. They had nothing in common. She was trapped in his world back then as she is now for thinking being a homemaker will make Malda wins Mr. FORD’S heart. In the original story malda pointed out Lois’s point of view but gave little details because she doesn’t have that access Lois has when she is the one narrating the part. Therefore, having Lois as the narrator gives us a clearer meaning of her perspective toward Malda and Mr. Ford relationship.

## **The Yellow Wall-Paper** **The Yellow Wall-Paper**

The Yellow Wall-Paper

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer.

A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of fate!

Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and PERHAPS—I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—PERHAPS that is one reason I do not get well faster.

You see he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one’s own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.

So I take phosphates or phosphites—whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to “work” until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas.

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

I did write for a while in spite of them; but it DOES exhaust me a good deal—having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.

So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village. It makes me think of English places that you read about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people.

There is a DELICIOUS garden! I never saw such a garden—large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them.

There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.

There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and coheirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years.

That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid, but I don’t care—there is something strange about the house—I can feel it.

I even said so to John one moonlight evening, but he said what I felt was a DRAUGHT, and

shut the window.

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I’m sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition.

But John says if I feel so, I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself—before him, at least, and that makes me very tired.

I don’t like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! but John would not hear of it.

He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another.

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.

I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more.

He said we came here solely on my account, that I was to have perfect rest and all the air I could get. “Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear,” said he, “and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time.” So we took the nursery at the top of the house.

It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine galore. It was nursery first and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls.

The paint and paper look as if a boys’ school had used it. It is stripped off—the paper—in great patches all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life.

One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin.

It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and

provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide—plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions.

The color is repellent, almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight.

It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others.

No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in this room long.

There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word.

We have been here two weeks, and I haven't felt like writing before, since that first day.

I am sitting by the window now, up in this atrocious nursery, and there is nothing to hinder my writing as much as I please, save lack of strength.

John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious.

I am glad my case is not serious!

But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing.

John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no REASON to suffer, and that satisfies him.

Of course it is only nervousness. It does weigh on me so not to do my duty in any way!

I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!

Nobody would believe what an effort it is to do what little I am able,—to dress and entertain, and order things.

It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby!

And yet I CANNOT be with him, it makes me so nervous.

I suppose John never was nervous in his life. He laughs at me so about this wall-paper!

At first he meant to repaper the room, but afterwards he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies.

He said that after the wall-paper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of the stairs, and so on.

“You know the place is doing you good,” he said, “and really, dear, I don't care to renovate the house just for a three months' rental.”

“Then do let us go downstairs,” I said, “there are such pretty rooms there.”

Then he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down to the cellar, if I wished, and have it whitewashed into the bargain.

But he is right enough about the beds and windows and things.

It is an airy and comfortable room as any one need wish, and, of course, I would not be so silly as to make him uncomfortable just for a whim.

I'm really getting quite fond of the big room, all but that horrid paper.

Out of one window I can see the garden, those mysterious deepshaded arbors, the riotous old-fashioned flowers, and bushes and gnarly trees.

Out of another I get a lovely view of the bay and a little private wharf belonging to the estate. There is a beautiful shaded lane that runs down there from the house. I always fancy I see people walking in these numerous paths and arbors, but John has cautioned me not to give way to fancy in the least. He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency. So I try.

I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of

ideas and rest me.

But I find I get pretty tired when I try.

It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work. When I get really well, John says we will ask Cousin Henry and Julia down for a long visit; but he says he would as soon put fireworks in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now.

I wish I could get well faster.

But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it KNEW what a vicious influence it had!

There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down.

I get positively angry with the impertinence of it and the everlastingness. Up and down and sideways they crawl, and those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere. There is one place where two breadths didn't match, and the eyes go all up and down the line, one a little higher than the other.

I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before, and we all know how much expression they have! I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of blank walls and plain furniture than most children could find in a toy store.

I remember what a kindly wink the knobs of our big, old bureau used to have, and there was one chair that always seemed like a strong friend.

I used to feel that if any of the other things looked too fierce I could always hop into that chair and be safe.

The furniture in this room is no worse than inharmonious, however, for we had to bring it all from downstairs. I suppose when this was used as a playroom they had to take the nursery things out, and no wonder! I never saw such ravages as the children have made here.

The wall-paper, as I said before, is torn off in spots, and it sticketh closer than a brother—they must have had perseverance as well as hatred.

Then the floor is scratched and gouged and splintered, the plaster itself is dug out here and there, and this great heavy bed which is all we found in the room, looks as if it had been through the wars.

But I don't mind it a bit—only the paper.

There comes John's sister. Such a dear girl as she is, and so careful of me! I must not let her find me writing.

She is a perfect and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession. I verily believe she thinks it is the writing which made me sick!

But I can write when she is out, and see her a long way off from these windows.

There is one that commands the road, a lovely shaded winding road, and one that just looks off over the country. A lovely country, too, full of great elms and velvet meadows.

This wall-paper has a kind of sub-pattern in a different shade, a particularly irritating one, for you can only see it in certain lights, and not clearly then.

But in the places where it isn't faded and where the sun is just so—I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to skulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design.

There's sister on the stairs!

Well, the Fourth of July is over! The people are gone and I am tired out. John thought it might do me good to see a little company, so we just had mother and Nellie and the children down for a week.

Of course I didn't do a thing. Jennie sees to everything now.

But it tired me all the same.

John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall.

But I don't want to go there at all. I had a friend who was in his hands once, and she says he is just like John and my brother, only more so!

Besides, it is such an undertaking to go so far.

I don't feel as if it was worth while to turn my hand over for anything, and I'm getting dreadfully fretful and querulous.

I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time.

Of course I don't when John is here, or anybody else, but when I am alone.

And I am alone a good deal just now. John is kept in town very often by serious cases, and Jennie is good and lets me alone when I want her to.

So I walk a little in the garden or down that lovely lane, sit on the porch under the roses, and lie down up here a good deal.

I'm getting really fond of the room in spite of the wall-paper. Perhaps BECAUSE of the wall-paper.

It dwells in my mind so!

I lie here on this great immovable bed—it is nailed down, I believe—and follow that pattern about by the hour. It is as good as gymnastics, I assure you. I start, we'll say, at the bottom, down in the corner over there where it has not been touched, and I determine for the thousandth time that I WILL follow that pointless pattern to some sort of a conclusion.

I know a little of the principle of design, and I know this thing was not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that I ever heard of.

It is repeated, of course, by the breadths, but not otherwise.

Looked at in one way each breadth stands alone, the bloated curves and flourishes—a kind of

“debased Romanesque” with delirium tremens—go waddling up and down in isolated columns of fatuity.

But, on the other hand, they connect diagonally, and the sprawling outlines run off in great slanting waves of optic horror, like a lot of wallowing seaweeds in full chase.

The whole thing goes horizontally, too, at least it seems so, and I exhaust myself in trying to distinguish the order of its going in that direction.

They have used a horizontal breadth for a frieze, and that adds wonderfully to the confusion.

There is one end of the room where it is almost intact, and there, when the crosslights fade and the low sun shines directly upon it, I can almost fancy radiation after all,—the interminable grotesques seem to form around a common centre and rush off in headlong plunges of equal distraction.

It makes me tired to follow it. I will take a nap I guess.

I don't know why I should write this.

I don't want to.

I don't feel able.

And I know John would think it absurd. But I MUST say what I feel and think in some way—it is such a relief!

But the effort is getting to be greater than the relief.

Half the time now I am awfully lazy, and lie down ever so much.

John says I musn't lose my strength, and has me take cod liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat.

Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and hates to have me sick. I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him how I wish he would let me go and make

a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia.

But he said I wasn't able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there; and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished.

It is getting to be a great effort for me to think straight. Just this nervous weakness I suppose.

And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me till it tired my head.

He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well.

He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me.

There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy this nursery with the horrid wall-paper.

If we had not used it, that blessed child would have! What a fortunate escape! Why, I wouldn't have a child of mine, an impressionable little thing, live in such a room for worlds.

I never thought of it before, but it is lucky that John kept me here after all, I can stand it so much easier than a baby, you see.

Of course I never mention it to them any more—I am too wise,—but I keep watch of it all the same.

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will.

Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day.

It is always the same shape, only very numerous.

And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder—I begin to think—I wish John would take me away from here!

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so.

But I tried it last night.

It was moonlight. The moon shines in all around just as the sun does.

I hate to see it sometimes, it creeps so slowly, and always comes in by one window or another.

John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wall-paper till I felt creepy.

The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out.

I got up softly and went to feel and see if the paper DID move, and when I came back John was awake.

“What is it, little girl?” he said. “Don't go walking about like that—you'll get cold.”

I thought it was a good time to talk, so I told him that I really was not gaining here, and that I wished he would take me away.

“Why darling!” said he, “our lease will be up in three weeks, and I can't see how to leave before.

“The repairs are not done at home, and I cannot possibly leave town just now. Of course if you were in any danger, I could and would, but you really are better, dear, whether you can see it or not. I am a doctor, dear, and I know. You are gaining flesh and color, your appetite is better, I feel really much easier about you.”

“I don't weigh a bit more,” said I, “nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away!”

“Bless her little heart!” said he with a big hug, “she shall be as sick as she pleases! But now let's improve the shining hours by going to sleep, and talk about it in the morning!”



“And you won’t go away?” I asked gloomily.

“Why, how can I, dear? It is only three weeks more and then we will take a nice little trip of a few days while Jennie is getting the house ready. Really dear you are better!”

“Better in body perhaps—” I began, and stopped short, for he sat up straight and looked at me with such a stern, reproachful look that I could not say another word.

“My darling,” said he, “I beg of you, for my sake and for our child’s sake, as well as for your own, that you will never for one instant let that idea enter your mind! There is nothing so dangerous, so fascinating, to a temperament like yours. It is a false and foolish fancy. Can you not trust me as a physician when I tell you so?”

So of course I said no more on that score, and we went to sleep before long. He thought I was asleep first, but I wasn’t, and lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately.

On a pattern like this, by daylight, there is a lack of sequence, a defiance of law, that is a constant irritant to a normal mind.

The color is hideous enough, and unreliable enough, and infuriating enough, but the pattern is torturing.

You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back-somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you. It is like a bad dream.

The outside pattern is a florid arabesque, reminding one of a fungus. If you can imagine a toadstool in joints, an interminable string of toadstools, budding and sprouting in endless convolutions—why, that is something like it.

That is, sometimes!

There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes.

When the sun shoots in through the east window—I always watch for that first long, straight ray—it changes so quickly that I never can quite believe it.

That is why I watch it always.

By moonlight—the moon shines in all night when there is a moon—I wouldn’t know it was the same paper.

At night in any kind of light, in twilight, candle light, lamplight, and worst of all by moonlight, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be.

I didn’t realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind, that dim sub-pattern, but now I am quite sure it is a woman.

By daylight she is subdued, quiet. I fancy it is the pattern that keeps her so still. It is so puzzling. It keeps me quiet by the hour.

I lie down ever so much now. John says it is good for me, and to sleep all I can.

Indeed he started the habit by making me lie down for an hour after each meal.

It is a very bad habit I am convinced, for you see I don’t sleep.

And that cultivates deceit, for I don’t tell them I’m awake—O no!

The fact is I am getting a little afraid of John.

He seems very queer sometimes, and even Jennie has an inexplicable look.

It strikes me occasionally, just as a scientific hypothesis,—that perhaps it is the paper!

I have watched John when he did not know I was looking, and come into the room suddenly on the most innocent excuses, and I’ve caught him several times LOOKING AT THE PAPER! And Jennie too. I caught Jennie with her hand on it once.

She didn't know I was in the room, and when I asked her in a quiet, a very quiet voice, with the most restrained manner possible, what she was doing with the paper—she turned around as if she had been caught stealing, and looked quite angry—asked me why I should frighten her so!

Then she said that the paper stained everything it touched, that she had found yellow smooches on all my clothes and John's, and she wished we would be more careful!

Did not that sound innocent? But I know she was studying that pattern, and I am determined that nobody shall find it out but myself!

Life is very much more exciting now than it used to be. You see I have something more to expect, to look forward to, to watch. I really do eat better, and am more quiet than I was.

John is so pleased to see me improve! He laughed a little the other day, and said I seemed to be flourishing in spite of my wall-paper.

I turned it off with a laugh. I had no intention of telling him it was BECAUSE of the wall-paper—he would make fun of me. He might even want to take me away.

I don't want to leave now until I have found it out. There is a week more, and I think that will be enough.

I'm feeling ever so much better! I don't sleep much at night, for it is so interesting to watch developments; but I sleep a good deal in the daytime.

In the daytime it is tiresome and perplexing.

There are always new shoots on the fungus, and new shades of yellow all over it. I cannot keep count of them, though I have tried conscientiously.

It is the strangest yellow, that wall-paper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw—not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things.

But there is something else about that paper—the smell! I noticed it the moment we came into the room, but with so much air and sun it was not bad. Now we have had a week of fog and

rain, and whether the windows are open or not, the smell is here.

It creeps all over the house.

I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs.

It gets into my hair.

Even when I go to ride, if I turn my head suddenly and surprise it—there is that smell!

Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like.

It is not bad—at first, and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met.

In this damp weather it is awful, I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me.

It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house—to reach the smell.

But now I am used to it. The only thing I can think of that it is like is the COLOR of the paper! A yellow smell.

There is a very funny mark on this wall, low down, near the mopboard. A streak that runs round the room. It goes behind every piece of furniture, except the bed, a long, straight, even SMOOCH, as if it had been rubbed over and over.

I wonder how it was done and who did it, and what they did it for. Round and round and round—round and round and round—it makes me dizzy!

I really have discovered something at last.

Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out.

The front pattern DOES move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!

Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard.

And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads.

They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside down, and makes their eyes white!

If those heads were covered or taken off it would not be half so bad.

I think that woman gets out in the daytime!

And I'll tell you why—privately—I've seen her!

I can see her out of every one of my windows!

It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight.

I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines.

I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!

I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can't do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once.

And John is so queer now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take another room! Besides, I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself.

I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.

But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time.

And though I always see her, she MAY be able to creep faster than I can turn!

I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind.

If only that top pattern could be gotten off from the under one! I mean to try it, little by little.

I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time! It does not do to trust people too much.

There are only two more days to get this paper off, and I believe John is beginning to notice. I don't like the look in his eyes.

And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give.

She said I slept a good deal in the daytime.

John knows I don't sleep very well at night, for all I'm so quiet!

He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind.

As if I couldn't see through him!

Still, I don't wonder he acts so, sleeping under this paper for three months.

It only interests me, but I feel sure John and Jennie are secretly affected by it.

Hurrah! This is the last day, but it is enough. John is to stay in town over night, and won't be out until this evening.

Jennie wanted to sleep with me—the sly thing! but I told her I should undoubtedly rest better for a night all alone.

That was clever, for really I wasn't alone a bit! As soon as it was moonlight and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her.

I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper.

A strip about as high as my head and half around the room.

And then when the sun came and that awful pattern began to laugh at me, I declared I would finish it to-day!

We go away to-morrow, and they are moving all my furniture down again to leave things as they were before.

Jennie looked at the wall in amazement, but I told her merrily that I did it out of pure spite at the vicious thing.

She laughed and said she wouldn't mind doing it herself, but I must not get tired.

How she betrayed herself that time!

But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me—not ALIVE!

She tried to get me out of the room—it was too patent! But I said it was so quiet and empty and clean now that I believed I would lie down again and sleep all I could; and not to wake me even for dinner—I would call when I woke.

So now she is gone, and the servants are gone, and the things are gone, and there is nothing left but that great bedstead nailed down, with the canvas mattress we found on it.

We shall sleep downstairs to-night, and take the boat home to-morrow.

I quite enjoy the room, now it is bare again.

How those children did tear about here!

This bedstead is fairly gnawed!

But I must get to work.

I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path.

I don't want to go out, and I don't want to have anybody come in, till John comes.

I want to astonish him.

I've got a rope up here that even Jennie did not find. If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!

But I forgot I could not reach far without anything to stand on!

This bed will NOT move!

I tried to lift and push it until I was lame, and then I got so angry I bit off a little piece at one corner—but it hurt my teeth.

Then I peeled off all the paper I could reach standing on the floor. It sticks horribly and the pattern just enjoys it! All those strangled heads and bulbous eyes and waddling fungus growths just shriek with derision!

I am getting angry enough to do something desperate. To jump out of the window would be admirable exercise, but the bars are too strong even to try.

Besides I wouldn't do it. Of course not. I know well enough that a step like that is improper and might be misconstrued.

I don't like to LOOK out of the windows even—there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast.

I wonder if they all come out of that wall-paper as I did?

But I am securely fastened now by my well-hidden rope—you don't get ME out in the road

there!

I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!

It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!

I don't want to go outside. I won't, even if Jennie asks me to.

For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow.

But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way.

Why there's John at the door!

It is no use, young man, you can't open it!

How he does call and pound!

Now he's crying for an axe.

It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!

"John dear!" said I in the gentlest voice, "the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!"

That silenced him for a few moments.

Then he said—very quietly indeed, "Open the door, my darling!"

"I can't," said I. "The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!"

And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it of course, and came in. He stopped short by the door.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "For God's sake, what are you doing!"

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

"I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!"

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!

[text taken from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1952/1952-h/1952-h.htm>]

## My Dear Wife

My Dear Wife

Emmanuel Amoah

It was one sunny afternoon when my wife Missy told me she was sick. I told her there was nothing wrong with her other than temporary nervous depression. I asked her to start packing because I've acquired a colonial mansion for our three months vacation. She asked why it had stood for long untenanted and too cheap to rent the place. I laughed it off as I always do whenever she asks any silly question. Then late in the first night when we had moved in, Missy came to me saying; "it was the most beautiful place and makes her think of English places we read about because it is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people. She said she had never seen such a large and shady garden, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them".

Missy told me she wants to stay in the room downstairs which has an open piazza with roses all over the window with pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings. I refused her request because there was not enough room for two beds and no near room for me. I told her I had to be closer at night because she was not in the right state to be left alone. I realized she was nervous so I prescribed some medication for her so her condition would not get worse. I also let her know we were there solely on her account and that, she has to have as much rest as possible so she will get better.

We had been at this place for some time and Missy had shown signs of improvement. She was more active than she used to be when we got here and I was quite glad about that. Later that day Jennie, my sister told me she sees Missy look at the wall in a strange way and anytime she enters our room she sees her hands under the pillow. Jennie thinks I should ask Missy if there is anything she's hiding but I refused. She also said she once saw Missy holding something that looked like a pen. I asked whether she was sure about what she was saying but her response was shaky. Later that night Jennie woke me up telling me she had some concerns about Missy. I asked her to wait until I return from work the next day so we could talk. She insisted it was important but I told her I had to go back to sleep because I had

to be at the hospital very early in the morning.

Some days later, whilst having dinner Missy started talking about how much she loved the place again. She said she gets a lovely view of the estate. She also said there was a beautiful shaded lane down that runs down there from the house. She added that, she always fancy to see people walking in the numerous paths and arbors around the place. I asked why she fancied the place that much and warned her that, her imaginative power and habit of story making with her nervous weakness could lead to all manner of excited fancies.

Three weeks for us to leave, Jennie told me once more that, she is concerned about the way Missy acts when she sees her. I told her I appreciate her concerns and ask her not to worry about her. I called Missy and asked how she was faring. She said, "John dear, I feel better but I want to go home". I pleaded with her that she should be a little patient because they had not finished the repairs in our house. She understood and all was well after that. I had to spend the night outside a day before we leave this place. When I returned the next morning, I found Missy locked out in the room insisting she was not going to open up until I came. I could hear her screaming and talking about tying up the woman when she comes out of the wall so she will not escape. I asked her to open the door but she said she can't. I pounded on the door and called for an axe. She said in the gentlest voice "John dear, it would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!" the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf" That silenced me for a moment. Then I gently asked her to open the door but she insisted the key was under the leaf so I had to go and see, and I got it of course, and came in. I stopped short by the door. What is the matter? I cried. For God's sake, what are you doing Missy! She kept creeping and looked at me over my shoulder and said "I've got out at last, in spite of you and Jennie. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!" That was all I heard. I opened my eyes and heard Missy's brother ask me whether I was ok. He said I fainted when I saw Missy go crazy.

The "Yellow Wall Paper" and "My Dear Wife" are stories that talks about the decline in the mental stability of a medical doctor's wife. The "Yellow Wall Paper" uses autodiegetic narration to show what John's wife goes through during this period whereas "My Dear wife" uses first person character narration to show John's ignorance and denial of what his wife goes through. The type of narration in each of the stories has an effect on the level of detail available to the reader. The narrative of the original story is very detail and overt and makes readers understand what the writer wants to send across quite easily but the retell "My Dear Wife" on the other hand has little detail and most of it is implied and makes

it quite difficult to understand what the narrator wants to send across to the naratee.

As mentioned, the main difference in both stories is the level of details. The narrative style makes understanding the “Yellow wallpaper” easier compared to “My Dear Wife”. Using autodiegetic narration in the “Yellow Wall Paper” gives a lot of substance to the story, as it the protagonist telling us what experience she had. It makes the story very believable as all the information is from the original source. For example John’s wife at a point in her narration described what she goes through by writing that “You see I have something more to expect, to look forward to, to watch. I really do eat better, and am more quiet than I was. John is so pleased to see me improve! He laughed a little the other day, and said I seemed to be flourishing in spite of my wall-paper. I turned it off with a laugh. I had no intention of telling him it was BECAUSE of the wall-paper—he would make fun of me. He might even want to take me away. I don’t want to leave now until I have found it out”. This is an all inclusive detail that says a lot about her imaginations and is quite central to understanding the direction the story is going. In other words the quotation has a lot of information on the thoughts and reaction of the most important characters in the story. This kind of detail enables the reader put him or herself into the minds of the characters and as a result will make the message well understood. On the other hand the retell, “My Dear Wife” using John as a narrator does not give much detail about what is going on with his wife, the main character in the story. John in his narration gave very few and quite unreliable details about the very few things he thought might have contributed in what became of his wife at the end. The information in his narration was mostly based on what his sister, Jennie suspected rather than what he had seen or suspected. As John tells us that, “Three weeks for us to leave, Jennie told me once more that, she is concerned about the way Missy acts when she sees her. I told her I appreciate her concerns and ask her not to worry about her”. From reading “My Dear Wife”, this is the kind of detail that was available to the reader. This in other words is not information to enough to understand or know the direction the story was going. From reading the original story and knowing what the story is all about this kind of detail does not help in any way to understand what the story is all about. The information provided in the retell does not say much about what was really going on with John or his wife. It only showed the concerns of Jennie about Missy and does not add much to the substance of the story. It only tells us how dismissive and ignorant John was in terms of what was going on with his wife. The level of details provided in either story as mentioned earlier affected the meaning and understanding of each story. As the original story was very detailed and was quite easy to follow through it but the shallowness of the details of the retell affected how it was understood and showed clearly it lacked what was important to understand a story properly.

Notwithstanding the effect the narrative style had on how the stories were understood; the narrative of both stories gives an idea of signs of mental instability of John’s wife at some point. In the “Yellow Wall Paper”, John’s wife at several points in her narration gave an abnormal description of the wall paper in their room. She wrote in her narration that, “There is one marked peculiarity about this paper; a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes. When the sun shoots in through the east window—I always watch for that first long, straight ray—it changes so quickly that I never can quite believe it. That is why I watch it always. By moonlight—the moon shines in all night when there is a moon—I wouldn’t know it was the same paper”. She wrote this to describe the wall paper in their room. What she was “seeing” or imagining was on the wall paper was a form of illusion in her mind’s eye; something that was a sign of mental instability. These continuous habits of imaginations throughout the story attest to the fact that there was something mentally wrong with her. It is a sign of the fact that her idleness is having a direct impact on the way she thinks and sees things. Similarly, the narrative of “My Dear Wife” also showed signs of insanity by John’s wife. There are points in the retell where her utterances clearly showed that her mental stability was declining. For example it is written in the retell that, “whilst having dinner, Missy started talking about how much she loved the place again. She said she gets a lovely view of the estate. She also said there was a beautiful shaded lane down that runs down there from the house. She added that, she always fancy to see people walking in the numerous paths and arbors around the place. I asked why she fancied the place that much and warned her that, her imaginative power and habit of story making with her nervous weakness could lead to all manner of excited fancies”. The way she talked about the place was kind of weird coupled with John’s objection to her continual description of the place in such a manner showed there was something abnormal going on with her. These attitudes Missy exhibited clearly showed there was something mentally wrong with her. Though John warned her to stop those imagination, he was dismissive of that because he thought it was one of those “things”, as he warned her that he habit of story making and imaginations could lead to all manner of excited fantasies. Clearly, it is quite obvious from these details that the mental stability of John’s wife is in serious decline.

Lastly, both the original story the “Yellow Wall Paper” and the retell “My Dear Wife” have clearly shown what became of John’s wife after respecting his judgment as a medical doctor but the narrative style affected the level of details available which in turn affected the measure of the understanding in either story. The original story using the autodiegetic narration showed how John’s wife transitioned in her insanity and the retell on the other hand using a first person character narration showed how ignorant and dismissive John was.

## Through John's Eyes

Through John's Eyes

Star

It is now the summer, John and his wife move to a beautiful home. As they begin to settle down the wife believes that the house is haunted while John believes it's just nonsense. Since John is a physician he took it upon himself to nurse his wife who had taken sick, so it is up to him to use his expertise to help her regain her health as long as she continues to take her phosphates and rests. The use of phosphate will provide her with more energy through the day. Her brother has maintained the same profession as John. He also agrees with him that his sister is not well. John insists that he does not want her writing in that silly little journal she has, it's a big distraction. She begs to differ as "This dead paper and a great relief to my mind" — *perhaps* that is one reason I do not get well faster" (page 1, paragraph 7). Without her writing, there's a big chance she may take longer to recover.

By being stuck in the house all the day, the wife cannot do anything but just wonder as she responds "I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus – but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad" (page 1, paragraph 14). The wife believes that she was more in touch with the world instead of hidden inside a house. John on the other hand believes being worried will make things worse. John seems like he wants only wants the best for her.

The new house they just move into makes the wife very uneasy as she says "there is something strange about the house — I can feel it [‘I even said so to John one moonlight evening but he said what I felt was a *draught*, and shut the window’]" (page 1 paragraph 20-21). It seems as though every time the wife attempts to start a conversation with John, she gets shut down. As John remains as the dominate form in the relationship, the wife must obey him "You may not do any type of work while your ill, I will come check on you after I am finish with work". John takes on the role as the leader of the relationship. But as the famous saying before during the marriage ceremony "for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish" he has been there for his wife and he has stuck to his word.



John may truly love his wife but he will not tolerate a case of foolishness as it states “I don’t like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! But John would not hear of it” (page 1, paragraph 24). Here to improve the house, the wife makes a suggestion that in order for her to even feel comfortable in the house it requires some decorations. John on the other believes it should stay the way it is and doesn’t require change. This issue escalates to where the wife argues “I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes I’m sure I never get used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition” (page 1, paragraph 22). The wife has witness that she is being unfairly but forgives him for the way he is, because her condition seems to be so serious.

In “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1899 is told in a first person autodiegetic narration with the main character that strangely doesn’t have name. Guided by her husband John who believes she is truly sick doesn’t want her to lift a finger in the house. All he wants her to do is rest and take her medication on a daily basis and soon after she will regain her health back. Although in the story the wife is portrayed ill throughout the story by the influence of her husband John his concern for her health is overshadowed by his character of over protectiveness and ability of controlling her. It seems like every time the main character tried to talk to her husband he would just ignore any ideas or objections she had. Though the story is told through the main characters eyes, in the retelling you get a better sense of who John really is, as he does love his wife, but the way he’s dealing with the situation of her writing as a bad thing is the wrong way.

Even though John is a physician the wife escape is through writing as she explains that “this is a dead paper and a great relief to my mind – *perhaps* that is one reason I do not get well faster”( page 1 paragraph 7). Writing in the wife’s eyes is a sense of belonging. That even though she may be “sick” she has something she actually wants to do and that she enjoys it. But, in John’s eyes it seems as a way of rebellion and power. During these times, women rarely got an education, so by her knowing to read and write gave her a sense of independence. But being in a marriage there is no room for independence as the wife and husband is one. Therefore, but telling his wife that she could no longer write, increased his controlling streak as he managed to keep her in the house all day and had her on medication daily.

Going further into the story it seems as the main character and her husband disagree tremendously because just on the page alone every disagreement that has taken place the

husband has won each argument. As the main character starts to express herself “I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes I’m sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition” (page 1 paragraph 22). The main character has finally realized that she hasn’t been getting her way whether it has to do with the wallpaper or the house itself or even trying to change rooms, John has shot down every request she’s had. But then again, she believes that John is just worried about her and starts to believe that she’s actually sick. Once again John has managed to even convince his wife that her writing has her life corrupt and in order to stop the corruption she must stop writing.

As John says “You may not do any type of work while your ill, I will come check on you after I am finish with work”. This shows that he has a job that requires a lot of commitment, meaning he is not home very often, so now the wife is alone at home and she has no connection with the outside world. It seems that John doesn’t want his wife to go anywhere he doesn’t know, it seems that he’s a little afraid of what she may become. It’s obvious that she has potential so I believe he might be threatened.

As the wife remains in the house she observes that “there is something strange around the house – I can feel it/ I even said so to John one moonlight evening but he said what I felt was a *draught*, and shut the window”(page 1 paragraph 20-21). The main character has finally wanted to talk to her husband about a serious issue and he just brushes it off. She expresses her feelings about the house that she felt uncomfortable and he just blames it on the wind that is outside. It seems that John doesn’t take her very seriously as if she were a child.

Another suggestion the wife decides to bring up was “I don’t like out room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! But John would not hear of it” (page 1, paragraph 24). The wife doesn’t like the room because it is very plain so, she believes that it requires some change and she had ideas of how to decorate it to her liking. But, John doesn’t like the idea of change and wants it to stay the same.

Overall, I believe that in the original story most people would see John as a charismatic, hard-working man who is just looking after his wife. But in the retelling some people might change their minds and see the true him which is a controlling and overprotective man who doesn’t let him wife anything that she loves. There is no doubt that John loves his wife in both stories but it seems that he knows exactly how to be a physician but he doesn’t seem that he knows that much on how to be a good husband.

## **The Yellow Wall Paper Re-narrated by John**

The Yellow Wall Paper Re-narrated by John

Yoshiko

My wife hasn't been doing well recently. Not too long ago I rented a colonial mansion in the country so she could get some rest and relaxation while I tended to my real patients. The place is perfectly refreshing. I thought a nice summer vacation would be all she needed to clear her head. At first, I didn't think anything serious was wrong with my wife, perhaps some nervousness or something else that could be reasonably fixed.

Right after we moved in, she told me that there was something strange about the house, and she could feel it. I knew that she was still a bit nervous because she hadn't gotten used to the new environment. It happens to anybody, so I just told her that what she felt was a draft, and shut the window for her. Then she felt completely relieved.

I set her up in a room that was once used as a nursery. It was the most logical room, as my wife needs all the sun and air she can get, and this room is very spacious and open with plenty of air circulating through. Immediately my wife protested and wanted a room closer to the ground floor but as a physician, I let her know this is what's best for her. She immediately had the problem with the wallpaper in the room. I told her I would re-paper it but I got so busy with my real patients that I put it off for a while until I realized if I changed the wallpaper, it would just be something else that would end up getting the best of her and before you know it, I would be remodeling the whole entire mansion and we're only supposed to be here for 3 months, so I let her know it's her nervousness and this is one of the things she has to overcome if she wants to feel better.

Unfortunately, her condition, her nervousness or whatever it is seems to be worsening. She is looking better physically and her diet seems to have improved. There's even a glow in her face now that's been missing since she fell ill. In her own mind however, she thinks she's getting worse. I keep assuring her she's doing better even if she doesn't realize it. I really do think this is what's best for her, letting her overcome her problems by her own control and will.

Last night I woke up in the middle of the night and found my wife fondling the wallpaper. I asked her what was wrong and told her not to go wandering around like that. She told me how she wasn't getting any better and how she wanted to go home immediately. I told her this was not an option. The repairs weren't done on our home and if I truly thought she was in any serious danger, I would take her away from here. I assured her again she was getting better whether she noticed it or not. I told her to get some sleep and we would talk in the morning. She asked if I would be going away by myself and I had to once again assure her I wouldn't be going anywhere and once our lease was up we would be back in our own house after a nice little trip. After some more reassuring, I finally got her to go back to sleep.

I am a confident man, and I know what's best for my wife and whether she likes my practices or not, I really do feel this is the best way for her to sort out the problems she's currently having. Soon she will realize she's actually feeling better and we can leave this time behind us. I really do believe this is a small bump in the road that we will eventually get over and my wife will be back to her old self. Perhaps even at some point we can look back at this time and laugh about how upset she was when she first saw this old tacky wallpaper.

To write the re-narrated version of "The yellow Wall Paper", I intended to make the gap of their perspectives between the protagonist and her husband stand out in complete contrast in the story. The original story is narrated in the first-person point of view of the protagonist, who is John's wife. In first-person narration, what can be shown is limited to his/her observation and thoughts, so it tends to be slanted and conveyed directly to the reader.

Especially in the story, she is restricted from contact with outside society and her living place is limited within the mansion for her treatment: in addition, she is forbidden from imaginative activity such as fantasy and writing. The conditions appear to drive her even more crazy. The story is told in an extremely subjective and distorted way by her abnormal perspective. However, this narration style effectively works to transmit to the reader the creepiness and horror of the story.

Regarding the experimental re-telling assignment, to begin with, I wondered which narrative style would best convey "the Yellow Wall Paper" in another interesting way. At first, I considered what if the story was narrated in third-person omniscient narrator. It would be like, for example, "she thinks the color of the wall is revolting," or "She sees the shadows of women creep all over the house." I thought that the manner of the story would become much less creepy and lost its horrific tone in this style. After consideration I decided to re-tell a

portion of the story from John's point of view in a first-person limited narration. It was a really interesting experiment; because in contrast to his wife, John is a type of person who only takes a practical view. So the story is being shown from a completely opposite point of view. In the original narration, the story features some horrific aspects. However, once the narrator shifts from the wife to John, the re-telling leaves just a common aspect of a story about the husband who is a physician struggling to treat his wife with her sickness, and the horrific and odd features are entirely faded out; because, John is, again, extremely practical and he never trusts anything not to be felt and seen and put down in figures. Through the process of re-telling and comparison of those two, I can reaffirm that the couple would never be able to understand each other.

#### Comparison between the original story and the re-telling

First of all, she describes the mansion as "I would say a haunted house" "there is something queer about it" in the very beginning. While in John's narration, he describes it as "Perfectly refreshing." Also, He strongly believes that her nervousness would be reasonably fixed as long as she follows his advice from his medical opinion. Although those opinions toward her symptoms goes quite wrong and has an opposite effects, but he never doubt his own opinion. She is getting worse and worse but he never listens to her appeal. In the re-telling version, he describes the room as "the most logical", "this is what's best for her." However, she doesn't like the room at all. She describes the wall paper as irritate, repellent, and revolting... etc. Their feelings never mesh with each other. In the original story the wife already feels uneasy about her living quarter but John her always logical husband sees nothing but black and white so he find hers troubles to be nothing to be worry about over the long term.

The segment highlighted in the retold version is the segment where The Wife seems to start slipping away from reality. In the original version of the story The Wife has trouble communicating with her husband with how she feels and once she finally does he attempts to comfort her and she acts like she felt comforted by his words but we as the reader know she doesn't feel comforted and is actually more worried about bothering John than her own condition.

In the retelling however, John is so confident in his practices and beliefs that he doesn't even notice how sick his wife really is. Her sickness is too abstract for him to pick up on, so in his mind he is doing a good job. Again, the contrasting versions of the story show one side as being filled with horror and dread and the other side as a doctor treating his wife the way he

was taught how and seemingly succeeding even if that's not really the case at all.

In Conclusion, changing which person narrates the story drastically changes the reader's perception. On one hand you have a woman losing her mind and not knowing what do about it and on the other hand you have a man trying to care for his wife and thinking he is doing a good job at it because he is so stuck in his ways.

While I personally enjoyed being able to change the perspective of the story, I think ultimately the original perspective from the wife's point of view is the best way to tell a story like this. It does a good job of drawing you in on a personal level because you know exactly what this woman is going through and it's not left as a mystery.

Due to the characteristics of John's personality he is better as a secondary character. There is never a time in the original story where you feel like John is maybe doubting himself and his practices. Overall, I think doing a part of the story from John's point of view was an interesting perspective to visit, but may not be the best way to get the most out of this story.

## **A Rose for Emily** **A Rose for Emily**

A Rose for Emily

by William Faulkner

**I**

WHEN Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one save an old man-servant—a combined gardener and cook—had seen in at least ten years.

It was a big, squarish frame house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and spires and scrolled balconies in the heavily lightsome style of the seventies, set on what had once been our most select street. But garages and cotton gins had encroached and obliterated even the august names of that neighborhood; only Miss Emily's house was left, lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps—an eyesore among eyesores. And now Miss Emily had gone to join the representatives of those august names where they lay in the cedar-bemused cemetery among the ranked and anonymous graves of Union and Confederate soldiers who fell at the battle of Jefferson.

Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town, dating from that day in 1894 when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor—he who fathered the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the streets without an apron—remitted her taxes, the dispensation dating from the death of her father on into perpetuity. Not that Miss Emily would have accepted charity. Colonel Sartoris invented an involved tale to the effect that Miss Emily's father had loaned money to the town, which the town, as a matter of business, preferred this way of repaying. Only a man of Colonel Sartoris' generation and thought could have invented it, and only a woman could have believed it.

When the next generation, with its more modern ideas, became mayors and aldermen, this arrangement created some little dissatisfaction. On the first of the year they mailed her a tax

notice. February came, and there was no reply. They wrote her a formal letter, asking her to call at the sheriff's office at her convenience. A week later the mayor wrote her himself, offering to call or to send his car for her, and received in reply a note on paper of an archaic shape, in a thin, flowing calligraphy in faded ink, to the effect that she no longer went out at all. The tax notice was also enclosed, without comment.

They called a special meeting of the Board of Aldermen. A deputation waited upon her, knocked at the door through which no visitor had passed since she ceased giving china-painting lessons eight or ten years earlier. They were admitted by the old Negro into a dim hall from which a stairway mounted into still more shadow. It smelled of dust and disuse—a close, dank smell. The Negro led them into the parlor. It was furnished in heavy, leather-covered furniture. When the Negro opened the blinds of one window, they could see that the leather was cracked; and when they sat down, a faint dust rose sluggishly about their thighs, spinning with slow motes in the single sun-ray. On a tarnished gilt easel before the fireplace stood a crayon portrait of Miss Emily's father.

They rose when she entered—a small, fat woman in black, with a thin gold chain descending to her waist and vanishing into her belt, leaning on an ebony cane with a tarnished gold head. Her skeleton was small and spare; perhaps that was why what would have been merely plumpness in another was obesity in her. She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue. Her eyes, lost in the fatty ridges of her face, looked like two small pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough as they moved from one face to another while the visitors stated their errand.

She did not ask them to sit. She just stood in the door and listened quietly until the spokesman came to a stumbling halt. Then they could hear the invisible watch ticking at the end of the gold chain.

Her voice was dry and cold. "I have no taxes in Jefferson. Colonel Sartoris explained it to me. Perhaps one of you can gain access to the city records and satisfy yourselves."

"But we have. We are the city authorities, Miss Emily. Didn't you get a notice from the sheriff, signed by him?"

"I received a paper, yes," Miss Emily said. "Perhaps he considers himself the sheriff . . . I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But there is nothing on the books to show that, you see We must go by the—"

"See Colonel Sartoris. I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But, Miss Emily—"

"See Colonel Sartoris." (Colonel Sartoris had been dead almost ten years.) "I have no taxes in Jefferson. Tobe!" The Negro appeared. "Show these gentlemen out."

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## II

So SHE vanquished them, horse and foot, just as she had vanquished their fathers thirty years before about the smell.

That was two years after her father's death and a short time after her sweetheart—the one we believed would marry her—had deserted her. After her father's death she went out very little; after her sweetheart went away, people hardly saw her at all. A few of the ladies had the temerity to call, but were not received, and the only sign of life about the place was the Negro man—a young man then—going in and out with a market basket.

"Just as if a man—any man—could keep a kitchen properly," the ladies said; so they were not surprised when the smell developed. It was another link between the gross, teeming world and the high and mighty Griersons.

A neighbor, a woman, complained to the mayor, Judge Stevens, eighty years old.

"But what will you have me do about it, madam?" he said.

"Why, send her word to stop it," the woman said. "Isn't there a law?"

"I'm sure that won't be necessary," Judge Stevens said. "It's probably just a snake or a rat that nigger of hers killed in the yard. I'll speak to him about it."

The next day he received two more complaints, one from a man who came in diffident deprecation. "We really must do something about it, Judge. I'd be the last one in the world to bother Miss Emily, but we've got to do something." That night the Board of Aldermen

met—three graybeards and one younger man, a member of the rising generation.

“It’s simple enough,” he said. “Send her word to have her place cleaned up. Give her a certain time to do it in, and if she don’t. . .”

“Dammit, sir,” Judge Stevens said, “will you accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad?”

So the next night, after midnight, four men crossed Miss Emily’s lawn and slunk about the house like burglars, sniffing along the base of the brickwork and at the cellar openings while one of them performed a regular sowing motion with his hand out of a sack slung from his shoulder. They broke open the cellar door and sprinkled lime there, and in all the outbuildings. As they recrossed the lawn, a window that had been dark was lighted and Miss Emily sat in it, the light behind her, and her upright torso motionless as that of an idol. They crept quietly across the lawn and into the shadow of the locusts that lined the street. After a week or two the smell went away.

That was when people had begun to feel really sorry for her. People in our town, remembering how old lady Wyatt, her great-aunt, had gone completely crazy at last, believed that the Griersons held themselves a little too high for what they really were. None of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such. We had long thought of them as a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door. So when she got to be thirty and was still single, we were not pleased exactly, but vindicated; even with insanity in the family she wouldn’t have turned down all of her chances if they had really materialized.

When her father died, it got about that the house was all that was left to her; and in a way, people were glad. At last they could pity Miss Emily. Being left alone, and a pauper, she had become humanized. Now she too would know the old thrill and the old despair of a penny more or less.

The day after his death all the ladies prepared to call at the house and offer condolence and aid, as is our custom Miss Emily met them at the door, dressed as usual and with no trace of grief on her face. She told them that her father was not dead. She did that for three days, with the ministers calling on her, and the doctors, trying to persuade her to let them dispose of the body. Just as they were about to resort to law and force, she broke down, and they buried her

father quickly.

We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that. We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will.

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### III

SHE WAS SICK for a long time. When we saw her again, her hair was cut short, making her look like a girl, with a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows—sort of tragic and serene.

The town had just let the contracts for paving the sidewalks, and in the summer after her father’s death they began the work. The construction company came with riggers and mules and machinery, and a foreman named Homer Barron, a Yankee—a big, dark, ready man, with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face. The little boys would follow in groups to hear him cuss the riggers, and the riggers singing in time to the rise and fall of picks. Pretty soon he knew everybody in town. Whenever you heard a lot of laughing anywhere about the square, Homer Barron would be in the center of the group. Presently we began to see him and Miss Emily on Sunday afternoons driving in the yellow-wheeled buggy and the matched team of bays from the livery stable.

At first we were glad that Miss Emily would have an interest, because the ladies all said, “Of course a Grierson would not think seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer.” But there were still others, older people, who said that even grief could not cause a real lady to forget *noblesse oblige*—

without calling it *noblesse oblige*. They just said, “Poor Emily. Her kinsfolk should come to her.” She had some kin in Alabama; but years ago her father had fallen out with them over the estate of old lady Wyatt, the crazy woman, and there was no communication between the two families. They had not even been represented at the funeral.

And as soon as the old people said, “Poor Emily,” the whispering began. “Do you suppose it’s really so?” they said to one another. “Of course it is. What else could . . .” This behind their hands; rustling of craned silk and satin behind jalousies closed upon the sun of Sunday afternoon as the thin, swift clop-clop-clop of the matched team passed: “Poor Emily.”

She carried her head high enough—even when we believed that she was fallen. It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson; as if it had wanted that touch of earthiness to reaffirm her imperviousness. Like when she bought the rat poison, the arsenic. That was over a year after they had begun to say “Poor Emily,” and while the two female cousins were visiting her.

“I want some poison,” she said to the druggist. She was over thirty then, still a slight woman, though thinner than usual, with cold, haughty black eyes in a face the flesh of which was strained across the temples and about the eyesockets as you imagine a lighthouse-keeper’s face ought to look. “I want some poison,” she said.

“Yes, Miss Emily. What kind? For rats and such? I’d recom—”

“I want the best you have. I don’t care what kind.”

The druggist named several. “They’ll kill anything up to an elephant. But what you want is—”

“Arsenic,” Miss Emily said. “Is that a good one?”

“Is . . . arsenic? Yes, ma’am. But what you want—”

“I want arsenic.”

The druggist looked down at her. She looked back at him, erect, her face like a strained flag. “Why, of course,” the druggist said. “If that’s what you want. But the law requires you to tell what you are going to use it for.”

Miss Emily just stared at him, her head tilted back in order to look him eye for eye, until he looked away and went and got the arsenic and wrapped it up. The Negro delivery boy brought her the package; the druggist didn’t come back. When she opened the package at home there was written on the box, under the skull and bones: “For rats.”

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#### IV

So THE NEXT day we all said, “She will kill herself”; and we said it would be the best thing. When she had first begun to be seen with Homer Barron, we had said, “She will marry him.”

Then we said, “She will persuade him yet,” because Homer himself had remarked—he liked men, and it was known that he drank with the younger men in the Elks’ Club—that he was not a marrying man. Later we said, “Poor Emily” behind the jalousies as they passed on Sunday afternoon in the glittering buggy, Miss Emily with her head high and Homer Barron with his hat cocked and a cigar in his teeth, reins and whip in a yellow glove.

Then some of the ladies began to say that it was a disgrace to the town and a bad example to the young people. The men did not want to interfere, but at last the ladies forced the Baptist minister—Miss Emily’s people were Episcopal—to call upon her. He would never divulge what happened during that interview, but he refused to go back again. The next Sunday they again drove about the streets, and the following day the minister’s wife wrote to Miss Emily’s relations in Alabama.

So she had blood-kin under her roof again and we sat back to watch developments. At first nothing happened. Then we were sure that they were to be married. We learned that Miss Emily had been to the jeweler’s and ordered a man’s toilet set in silver, with the letters H. B. on each piece. Two days later we learned that she had bought a complete outfit of men’s clothing, including a nightshirt, and we said, “They are married.” We were really glad. We were glad because the two female cousins were even more Grierson than Miss Emily had ever been.

So we were not surprised when Homer Barron—the streets had been finished some time since—was gone. We were a little disappointed that there was not a public blowing-off, but we believed that he had gone on to prepare for Miss Emily’s coming, or to give her a chance to get rid of the cousins. (By that time it was a cabal, and we were all Miss Emily’s allies to help circumvent the cousins.) Sure enough, after another week they departed. And, as we had expected all along, within three days Homer Barron was back in town. A neighbor saw the Negro man admit him at the kitchen door at dusk one evening.

And that was the last we saw of Homer Barron. And of Miss Emily for some time. The Negro man went in and out with the market basket, but the front door remained closed. Now and then we would see her at a window for a moment, as the men did that night when they sprinkled the lime, but for almost six months she did not appear on the streets. Then we knew that this was to be expected too; as if that quality of her father which had thwarted her woman’s life so many times had been too virulent and too furious to die.

When we next saw Miss Emily, she had grown fat and her hair was turning gray. During the next few years it grew grayer and grayer until it attained an even pepper-and-salt iron-gray, when it ceased turning. Up to the day of her death at seventy-four it was still that vigorous iron-gray, like the hair of an active man.

From that time on her front door remained closed, save for a period of six or seven years, when she was about forty, during which she gave lessons in china-painting. She fitted up a studio in one of the downstairs rooms, where the daughters and granddaughters of Colonel Sartoris' contemporaries were sent to her with the same regularity and in the same spirit that they were sent to church on Sundays with a twenty-five-cent piece for the collection plate. Meanwhile her taxes had been remitted.

Then the newer generation became the backbone and the spirit of the town, and the painting pupils grew up and fell away and did not send their children to her with boxes of color and tedious brushes and pictures cut from the ladies' magazines. The front door closed upon the last one and remained closed for good. When the town got free postal delivery, Miss Emily alone refused to let them fasten the metal numbers above her door and attach a mailbox to it. She would not listen to them.

Daily, monthly, yearly we watched the Negro grow grayer and more stooped, going in and out with the market basket. Each December we sent her a tax notice, which would be returned by the post office a week later, unclaimed. Now and then we would see her in one of the downstairs windows—she had evidently shut up the top floor of the house—like the carven torso of an idol in a niche, looking or not looking at us, we could never tell which. Thus she passed from generation to generation—dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse.

And so she died. Fell ill in the house filled with dust and shadows, with only a doddering Negro man to wait on her. We did not even know she was sick; we had long since given up trying to get any information from the Negro

He talked to no one, probably not even to her, for his voice had grown harsh and rusty, as if from disuse.

She died in one of the downstairs rooms, in a heavy walnut bed with a curtain, her gray head propped on a pillow yellow and moldy with age and lack of sunlight.

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## V

THE NEGRO met the first of the ladies at the front door and let them in, with their hushed, sibilant voices and their quick, curious glances, and then he disappeared. He walked right through the house and out the back and was not seen again.

The two female cousins came at once. They held the funeral on the second day, with the town coming to look at Miss Emily beneath a mass of bought flowers, with the crayon face of her father musing profoundly above the bier and the ladies sibilant and macabre; and the very old men—some in their brushed Confederate uniforms—on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps, confusing time with its mathematical progression, as the old do, to whom all the past is not a diminishing road but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches, divided from them now by the narrow bottle-neck of the most recent decade of years.

Already we knew that there was one room in that region above stairs which no one had seen in forty years, and which would have to be forced. They waited until Miss Emily was decently in the ground before they opened it.

The violence of breaking down the door seemed to fill this room with pervading dust. A thin, acrid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere upon this room decked and furnished as for a bridal: upon the valance curtains of faded rose color, upon the rose-shaded lights, upon the dressing table, upon the delicate array of crystal and the man's toilet things backed with tarnished silver, silver so tarnished that the monogram was obscured. Among them lay a collar and tie, as if they had just been removed, which, lifted, left upon the surface a pale crescent in the dust. Upon a chair hung the suit, carefully folded; beneath it the two mute shoes and the discarded socks.

The man himself lay in the bed.

For a long while we just stood there, looking down at the profound and fleshless grin. The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him. What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay; and upon him and upon the pillow beside him lay that even coating of the



patient and biding dust.

Then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair.

[text taken from [http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/wf\\_rose.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/wf_rose.html)]

## A Letter From Tobe

A Letter from Tobe

Curt

To the Town of Jefferson:

Assuming these thoughts will matter to you now although they seem too late, this release has been a long time coming and hopefully your mind will be as free as mine if you accept what I give. I've struggled everyday of my life after Ms. Emily. Living with Emily was more work for me than the actual work she had me do. Now this is not an implication that she treated me terribly, but getting to understand her psyche was difficult to take in; but it also awakened a big sense of sympathy within me too.

My devotion to Ms. Emily has caused me much loneliness, I've found no reason to laugh or smile. I've never been too fond of conversation anyhow and being Ms. Emily's permanent worker didn't allow me to be very social. Nights were somewhat darker than normal, and the days were always cold even in the high temperatures of summer. One day Ms. Emily had me waiting outside for her and a stranger asked me for directions. I opened my mouth to speak and realized it was not possible. I tried so hard and at that moment I realized that my voice had withered. I could only motion to the stranger, much to my displeasure. I didn't know that it was possible for me to lose my voice from not using it.

I don't even know if Ms. Emily realized that I couldn't speak. I don't know if she would care. She was in her own world. We had never once spoken to each other. She spoke at me and I did what was needed to be done. I was hired by her father, Mr. Grierson, many years before his death. The details of that are not clear now but I clearly remember his intention. He didn't just want me to be a servant to his beloved daughter, but to protect her. There was a mental withdrawal once he passed away. She was not herself for a long time, and who would be? Town folk felt that her father was too protective and careful, but he was a good man, and he was a father to her; a real good father. I was already employed to be her helper but at the time I really wanted to put extra care into anything I did for her. I noticed she was changing. Her demeanor was slightly depressing, and I questioned her habits sometimes.

There were incidents, however where I felt her moments of mental torment had gone to extremes. On a night in the fall a year after her father died she had me go with her to a cemetery. I don't know if she knew or not but it wasn't the same one where her father was buried. She stood in front of a grave site and eventually kneeled in front of the tombstone. I kept my distance from her a bit, but I could see her very clearly. She got closer to the ground and it looked as if she was trying to dig into the ground. I was sure my eyes were deceiving me and I reacted late, I ran toward her but an officer in the distance had noticed her before me and got there quickly. We helped restrain her as she was hysterical and in tears. As we were leaving she blew kisses to the tombstone. That might have been the first detection I had of her necrophilia.

I'm sure you want to know about Homer Barron too. Now there's not much I can tell you about him. I know as much as you know about who he is. Emily loved him, or maybe the idea of him; a male figure she could connect with intimately. She needed that male figure in her life, but in a sense her feelings were unrequited. It was this slight rejection that made her want to do something extreme. She wasn't extreme by habit, but she was more of a cause and effect type of person. Her father not being there was like a missing puzzle piece that she was trying to replace, but instead she ended up jumbling it even more. This was when Emily started doing drastic things like getting arsenic rat poison to kill this man. I was only able to witness the after effects of that. I thought it was impossible to live to bear that scent of the dead man everyday. Often times I would make market trips for no reason just to escape it. Just knowing I was living with a dead person was traumatizing. I was not sure what Ms. Emily was doing with the body but then after a while I figured it out when I had terrible flashbacks of that graveyard incident.

After a while taking care of her got more difficult. We had both aged and she had been very ill. After I discovered she had been sleeping with Homer's body it was hard to even look at her. She had stayed away from it after a while due to being bed-ridden most of the time, but there were times where she still tried. I figured I tried to accept Emily for who she was but there were times where it took it's toll on me and Emily probably never cared. I wonder if she saw me as a human and if she ever thought of how her actions would affect me. When she died I left. I live alone and I write now to not go insane.

I cannot tell the whole story of Emily Grierson, for they would simply be too much to tell. I am sorry that she drove people away and I admit that she was deeply flawed. At the same time, Emily was human. She was insecure and often unhappy. There were many voids within

her and no one could help her, even if she let them. I pity Homer Barron, and myself for living under such conditions. I cared for Ms. Emily and I did my best, but years of caring takes its emotional toll on you. Once I saw that she died I left a rose by the doorstep when I left. It was the only way I could say goodbye.

Signed,

Tobe.

The Story Of Tobe & Emily Grierson.

William Faulkner's "A Rose For Emily" was written as a first person narrative with a distant narrator(s). The narrator never used "I" but instead used "we." Retelling the story from a different perspective could definitely shed a closer light on a character as complex as Emily. The original story had little to no focus on the relationship between Emily and her servant, Tobe and my purpose in the retelling was to change that. The only way to do this was to have someone who was always close to her to tell their story, thus an exploratory first person narrative from the perspective of Tobe.

Tobe's actual name is only mentioned one time in the story when the special meeting of the Board of Aldermen took place. We see that Emily is bothered by the presence of these men and their tax requests in her home and she calls for him to lead them away. "'Tobe!' The Negro appeared. 'Show these gentlemen out.'" In the broader spectrum of this scene, this is where Tobe is first introduced as "the Negro" and he is called that throughout the story, but also that specific scene is the only time when he is spoken to directly. On the surface of this story one can argue that he plays a minor role but I would try to debate that argument by having him tell his version of Emily's story in his own words. Although he might not have directly affected the dynamic of the story as say Homer Barron would, he was still with Emily all the time and was able to see things that might not have been included or noticed by the original narrator.

The information given in the original story about Tobe could work with this idea of revealing what might have been left out. One of the few things that are revealed about him Faulkner's story is his inability to speak. However, a letter from his perspective allows us to get into his mind and see what more he could reveal about Emily and all the events that surround her. An example of this is a particular moment in the original story when the narrator mentions that

there have been failed attempts to get information about Emily out of him. Faulkner writes, “we had long since given up trying to get any information from the Negro. He talked to no one, probably not even her, for his voice had grown harsh and rusty, as if from disuse.”

Tobe writes this letter knowing he has valuable information and thoughts to share, however from that opening sentence he shows a shadow of doubt concerning Emily’s present relevance. He wrote the letter after she died but the narrator of the original implied that they craved for any information on Emily while she was alive. She was the talk of the town every time they noticed something about her. “So THE NEXT day we all said ‘she will kill herself’; and we said it would be the best thing, When she had first begun to be seen with Homer Barron, we had said, ‘She will marry him.’”

An important element of Tobe’s letter is that he gives firsthand account of Emily’s reaction to major events that took place in her life as opposed to just the public reaction and speculation seen in the original. The letter shows that there is that extreme side to Emily that is described in Faulkner’s story but Tobe’s letter gives a bit of insight of what is behind it.

The original story speaks of an incident that occurred right after Mr. Grierson’s death where ministers and the ladies tried reaching out to Emily to help her cope with her grief and also to urge her to bury her father. Initially she denies his death, but then she breaks down and they bury Mr. Grierson’s body quickly. In that section there’s a quote that stuck out to me. “We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that. We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which robbed her, as people will.” This quote in the original shows a major side of Emily’s humanity and I intended for Tobe’s letter to expound on this theme. He writes in his letter that notices visible change in Emily once her father passes. He even gives an anecdote of an incident not mentioned in Faulkner’s story about her bizarre visit to a cemetery a year after Mr. Grierson’s death. Although she was not at her father’s grave site this experience had something to do with the loss of her father, the control he had over her, and I think it bridges the gap between one male figure (Mr. Grierson) to the next (Homer Barron.) According to the letter this scene he introduces Emily’s necrophilia existing because of her antics at the grave site. ”She got closer to the ground and it looked as if she was trying to dig into the ground. I was sure my eyes were deceiving me and I reacted late, I ran toward her but an officer in the distance had noticed her before me and got there quickly. We helped restrain her as she was hysterical and in tears. As we were leaving she blew kisses to the tombstone. That might have been the first detection I had of her necrophilia. ”

Tobe reveals his relationship (or lack thereof) with Emily. In the same quote from the original story that I mentioned earlier that stated that Tobe didn’t even talk to Emily and he confirms that assumption. He writes, “I don’t even know if Ms. Emily realized that I couldn’t speak. I don’t know if she would care. She was in her own world. We had never once spoken to each other. She spoke at me and I did what was needed to be done.”

One thing that isn’t explicit in any of the two tellings is why Tobe and Emily never built a verbal relationship, but some sort of relationship is there. He stayed with Emily through her many phases, antics, and illnesses. He was there until he also grew very old and grey. Even if the relationship between Tobe and Emily was not like a friendship but strictly professional, it was long lasting and it lasted until her death when he leaves. He ends the letter speaking of her death and leaving the rose on a step as he made his final departure. Through this retelling I wanted to bring some significance to the rose mentioned in the original title. This letter doesn’t cover as much historical information as the original story but I aimed to make the letter seem more personal and highlight the servant more and make him seem more human as well. The relationship between him and Emily did hold relevance in my opinion because of the lived experience he had with her and the understanding he had of who she was.

## On Teatime With Spinsters and Drowning Traditions

On Teatime With Spinsters and Drowning Traditions

by Damaris Lliso

And I'll tell you this much, the only reason why I'd ever go down to this rotting town full of the prim living past their prime is because I need to get away.

Chased out of town by some rabble-rousers who had it out for me, I swear, nothing ever stays quiet, even in a big city like Baltimore. Disproportionate retribution is what it was—get into a few disagreements, a shouting match here and there, he said this and I did what? And suddenly they see it fit to back me into a corner so deep I had no choice but to turn my whole damn life upside down.

So now I'm here past the border separating *us* from *them*. It was well known to everyone that I never thought much of the folks down south, but hell, I figure they wouldn't think much of me either, not with my skin or my mannerisms or my family filled to the brim with Union vets. Can't help who I am, and if they refuse to see past that then I can give them just the same. But let's look at the positives: at least I managed to find work.

So I'm not expecting much. I'll get what I get. I just came into town yesterday, and I still haven't been out to see much. Don't quite care to, only problem is work starts the day after tomorrow and I hardly know where the hell I am. Apparently where I'm to meet the others isn't too far from where I'm staying now, but I know I gotta get to exploring this place sooner or later. I'd rather later, but I'll do it now.

The world is damn bright outside, and mighty hot. The roads are dusty and hazy, enough to make a perfectly well man go blind, but I suppose I'm here to fix that now, aren't I? Paving the roads and such. They don't even have paved roads here! But I'm walking down now and folks are still giving me the eye. A few of them nod in acknowledgement and I nod back, but all the same, I have yet to feel too welcome. Bein' looked down upon by folks who ain't even got their roads paved, what a trip.

As I walk along, the road starts emptying out. Up in the distance there's this big house you

can tell once belonged to someone great, someone whose wealth was built upon the backs of others. I get closer and I see there's this woman sitting up on the porch, all alone, looking out into nothin' ... or maybe not, maybe she's seeing it all. Who knows, I'm not inside her head.

But mother of God, is she a beaut. Gorgeous skin, wavy chestnut colored hair and a figure to die for, and I'm wondering wow, does she have a husband? But I already know the answer to that one, cause looker or not, it's obvious she's *just* past her prime, maybe around her early thirties or so. Northern girls marry young—Southern belles, even younger. She's probably already popped out a few kids. She's probably on that porch right now waiting for her husband to come home from work. She's probably got a life wound up so tight that she wouldn't ever give someone like me a second glance.

But it fees like hours that I've been starting at her like this, and occasionally she'll turn her head up towards the sky and her lips will move, almost like she's mumbling up something towards the sky. She bats her eyes like she's half asleep, like her world is a dream and all of us, we're nothing more than what's in it. Her long, bony fingers reach up and she touches her collarbone real delicate. The wind rushes past her.

And she's looking at me. She's looking at me and past me and she smiles in that dreamy way of hers. She drags her fingers through her hair.

Man, oh man, this broad. She'll be the end of me, mark my words.

I'll admit it. I was wrong.

This town is a few types of alright! Everyone here knows everybody else and after work, they all love to follow me down to the bar. And all I gotta do to keep all eyes on me is start reminiscing about Baltimore. North or not, these are the types of folks you can tell have never been anywhere. They love hearing my stories.

Especially the younger guys! They crowd around me and hang off my every word, and some of them I can swear get a little *too* close, if you get what I mean. Not that I have any moral objections, but that's what got me in trouble in the first place. When I came down here I told myself, as much as I would hate it, that I'd have to leave that life in another place and time. Well, they ain't makin' it easy, I'll tell you that much.



So anytime one of those guys comes too close for comfort, I start thinking about that woman on the porch. I've asked around, and apparently her name is Emily. From what I've been told, she *is* as old as she looks, but joy o' joy! she's never been married. Her old man died a couple of years ago, but while he was still alive, he didn't let anyone so much as *look* at his daughter, let alone marry her. I figure her to still be a virgin, still filled with girlhood dreams. Seeing as she's all alone in that huge house of hers, she's probably been aching for some man to come and sweep her off her feet. I've come across spinsters before, and I'll tell you, they're all the same.

So I leave her roses. Every night, late enough so that she has to be asleep, I sneak right on up and tape one to her door. I don't know why I do it. I can't be this girl's savior. I'll never be the marrying type. But it can't hurt to bring a little sunshine into someone's life, right?

Tonight feels different.

I can't quite put my finger on it, but something's off. The air feels different, not the same as always, and I'm trying to write it off but somehow, I just can't. All day it's been like this. Maybe I just stood out too late last night. Yeah, that must be it. Maybe all I need is some rest. I tell the boys down at the bar that I'm leavin' early.

No, Homer, no. Don't go, my temptations say.

But I tell 'em, no boys, I gotta go. They all look so disappointed, but I try and ignore it. This creeping feeling, it's got a grip on me, and I swear if I don't get some peace from it soon I'm likely to start screaming and crashin' around like a madman. Sure, they'd probably just write it off as me being a silly Northerner, but why would I willingly debase my region like that?

So I leave. I start walkin' towards the direction of my place when I remember, damn. Emily. I gotta leave a rose for her. I've made a habit of leaving her one every night for the past few weeks and if I stop, even for tonight only, I know it'll shatter her little heart. This is probably the most attention she's gotten from a man in her whole life. I can't just screw her over by now coming through.

I turn back around and start walking towards Emily's house. The roads are dark and empty, and I can hardly see past my own two feet. I narrow my eyes, try to hone in my senses.



I'm getting close to that one house I always steal my roses from. This older widow with her little lady garden, she never even notices a thing. What she doesn't know can't hurt her, right? As I'm walking past, I snatch up a rose, never breaking stride. The thorns dig into my hand a little, but I ignore it.

I'm getting close to Emily's door. Everything's all dark, all her lights are out. It ain't even past 10 and she's already asleep. Spinsters, sheesh. I get up to the front of her house and, since I got no tape with me, I pick up the doorknocker real gentle and place the rose there. I turn on my heel to leave.

"You're early tonight."

Damn, I nearly jump out of my skin at the sound of that. I turn my head up to where the sound came and there's Emily, sticking her head out the window, leaning up against the frame.

She knew all along. She knew the whole damn time and wow, that's as romantic as it is creepy.

I open my mouth, but no words come out. That creepin' feeling is stronger than ever. I think she may be smiling.

"Would you like some tea?" she waits a moment for me to respond, before deciding for me. "I'll have Tobe make you some tea."

"Your husband?" I ask, all stupid. I know damn well she's never been married, why'd I ask that? But these southern broads, you know, they all have secret lives on the down low. Tobe could be her secret lover-man or something. But *I* couldn't even get away with it up in the city; she'd have to have some backbreaking skill to hide something like that in a place like this.

Despite my speculation, I can almost feel her shaking her head. "He's the help."

He's the help? He's the help! Joy o' joy!

"Give me a moment, I'll be right down," she says.

Spinsters. How desperate can you get?

Emily is such a *trip*.

Silk hiding steel, that's what she is. One hundred percent. She makes it a point not to hide what we've got goin' on, doesn't give any types of damns over it. Every Sunday, we go around town together and this is her, holding her head up high, her nose pointed up in the air like *she's* looking down on everyone else instead of the other way around. I see the way folks look at us. Seeing us together, they can't hardly stand it.

The boys down at work and at the bar, they ask me:

"What you doing with that old spinster, anyway?"

"Don't you know how strange she is?"

"There's a reason why she's alone."

And I tell 'em, none of your business, I know, and because her old man wouldn't entertain the notion of his little girl growing up. Is that all, or...?

I know people talk to her, too, whisper in her ear even worse about me. She never wants to tell me exactly what they say to her, but what she fails to realize is I'm savvier than I let on. I know damn well what they say, that no matter which way they word it, it all leads back to the same deal: I'm from another world, and I'm no good for her. She doesn't care, and hell, the idea of people talking about me doesn't quite make me as mad as it should.

I guess you could say she's my woman now. Always wanted one of those. I always gotta remind myself, women are special and they need a different type of treatment; I can't go treating her like a man, it ain't right.

But I swear, she sure does treat me like a man would treat his broad. Sometimes. At least when it comes to all the gifts she gives me. I stole roses for her, and in return she gives me a buggy, along with a bunch of other things I could never hope to afford on my own. She tells me not to worry about it.

"Money is *no* object," she tells me, with a wink. Her saying that makes me all warm and gets me riled up at the same time, it's the queerest thing. Everything about her makes me topsy-turvy!

What gets to me the most is that she never wants me to leave.

Time marches on, and every day she gets more and more clingy. First, it started off with our Sunday drives: she told me she just wasn't satisfied with only seeing me once a week anymore. To satisfy her, I started skipping out on going to the bar a few times a week so I could go visit her instead. But then a few times a week turned into every loving day of my goddamned life, and when it comes time for me to leave she yells at me to stay, stay, stay, she'll miss me too much! I end up sleeping over more often than not, but then when I try and bed her she says no, no, she's not like that. And that's when I feel like throwing myself on the floor in frustration because this broad wants to have it her way, *always*.

She doesn't seem to realize that I have a life of my own, too. Ain't like we married. I'm starting to think I might wanna leave, but something inside me whispers, *you better not*.

I may be in a bit over my head.

I go over to Emily's, like always, but today is different. She's leaning against the door, her pretty little mouth twisted up into a bitter frown, and right soon as I get up to her she spares all greetings and says, "You mustn't come visit me for the next three days."

Joy o' joy! I finally get a break!

She explains further. "A few of my relatives will be visiting me, and I don't want them seeing you here. If you think the town thinks ill of you for seeing me, ha! You don't want to know how these women will view you."

She keeps talking, but I'm already thinking of how I'm gonna spend these next few days off.

"The pavement gig is almost done..." one of the boy's grunts my way.

He keeps on talking, but I barely hear him. Today's the last day of my vacation, and after two days prowlin' around town, chasing skirts, they decided we should take it slow on this last

day. I suggested we go fishing, something I haven't gotten to do since I was a boy. My old man used to take me. He made his living off of fishing, and thinking back I'm sure he was sick of the water and of tryin' to catch those damn things, but he always made time to take me out to his worksite whenever he had the odd day off. We'd wake up at three in the morning, get all our supplies up and ready, and then we'd spend the whole day out on the open water. And on these trips, we'd take the opportunity to bond and talk about life and its meaning and 'why are we here' and all that garbage that my life's since run out of room for. He made all that nonsense seem so important.

When I wasn't no older than fourteen years old, he got into a physical scuffle with one of the guys he worked with, and the bastard knocked my pops one good on the side of the head, rendering him immobile. And then—*then*—the son of a bitch couldn't just leave it at that. He pushed him over the side of the boat. My old man couldn't swim back to shore. They never found his body.

I wonder what it was like for him, drowning. He had to have seen the reaper coming, had to have known he couldn't get out of it this time. He must've been terrified.

"You listening, Homer?"

"What'd you say?"

"Said the pavement job is almost done. Where you headed off to after this?"

"Don't be stupid," another one of the boys answers. "He's getting' hitched with Emily 'soon as the job is done, ain't ya! Move into that ol' haunted mansion of hers!" he slaps my knee all jolly-like, and it takes everything in my heart, soul and mind not to punch him in the throat.

"Be quiet," I mumble instead.

"What's the matter? You aren't thinking about leaving ol' Emily, are you?"

"Perhaps he's thinking of taking her up to Baltimore."

I shake my head. "I'm ain't goin' back to Baltimore."

"Never?"

"Never." I sigh and pinch the bridge of my nose. "Keep this between us, alright? Emily is... God in heaven, how do I word this? She's—"

"Too clingy?"

"Driving you bonkers?"

"Clinically insane?"

"Tries to murder you every time you try an' leave 'er house?"

"Come now, boys," I grin, "I ain't dead yet."

"If she's really makin' you feel so down, just dump 'er!"

*You better not.*

"That's right. You aren't married, you don't need to forsake your entire life for her. The decision is yours, whether or not to continue this relationship."

*No, it's not.*

I shake my instincts away. "You're right." I spit into the water. "I don't owe Emily a damn thing!"

One of the boys lets out this sad, ornery sounding laugh. "You do owe her *one* thing. You ought to at least break up with her properly, and give her a decent goodbye."

I mull it over in my head. I proper breakup, a decent goodbye. I shrug. "Sure, why the hell not?"

*You're going to wish you hadn't done that.*

I'm walking up to Emily's front door, and I'm expecting to have to knock like I always do, like any decent man living in a sane world, when all of a sudden Emily comes rushing out.

Broad nearly tackles me down with her bear-strength hug of death.

“Homer!” she cries out, all dramatic. “I missed you!”

I pat her on the back. The spinster ain’t gonna make this one easy on me.

She drags me inside, leads me on and on until we’re in the living room. We sit down on one of the couches.

“Tobe! Tobe!” her man-servant comes shufflin’ on in. “Bring us some tea, will you? And brew Homer’s with the special blend I made for him.”

“Right away, Miss Grierson.”

I raise an eyebrow. “Special blend?”

She chuckles and waves me off a bit. “I remember how you told me your back was aching, so I bought some special herbs for you from the market. I don’t want to see you in pain, ever.”

Oh, wow.

She gives me a quick peck on the lips. “How did you spend the three days we were separated? Counting down the minutes, as I was?”

I try and smile. I know it must look painful from her end. “I tried to occupy my mind. Spent some time with the boys and whatnot…”

She frowned, and touched my shoulder. “Are you alright? Something on your mind?”

I take a deep breath—

*You. Better. Not.*

“Emily, my… my work here is almost done…”

She nods. “I’m aware.”

“And you know how it is for men like me. Once the job is done, I gotta get goin’ to the next work site.”

“I know. So…” she took a look around. “I suppose I’ll be able to carry a few of my things with me, perhaps sell the rest.” She looked back at me. “Do you have at least a general idea of where we’ll be headed?”

“What.”

“I’ll need to let my relatives know,” she goes on, like her entire plan is anywhere near okay. “They’ll most likely disown me, but it’ll be alright so long as we’re together—.”

“Emily!” I shout. She stops talking, and now she’s looking at me with those eyes of hers. Damn, damn, damn. “You ain’t comin’ with me. I’m going alone. This… is where the road ends, for you and me.”

Her bottom lip quivers a little. “Please don’t,” she whispers.

“Don’t make this any harder than it’s gotta be.”

“I want to marry you. I want to be with you forever.”

“Emily, I ain’t the marrying type. I can’t be your savior. You gotta let me go, for both our sakes.”

She looks at me for a long time; it feels like hours and hours. Her eyes narrow, just the tiniest bit. She’s looking at me and past me and…

Tobe comes in with the tea. “Here’s yours, Miss Grierson,” he places her mug in front of her, then turns to me. “And for you, Master Barron.”

“That’s alright,” I tell him, getting up from my seat. “I gotta get goin’ anyway.”

“Please, Homer! At least… stay with me these last few moments. One final cup of tea.”

*Run run run run run run run ru—*



“Okay. Just one.”

She smiles in that sweet, wide way of hers and it almost makes me regret what I just did. But I tell myself, I did it for me. I own my life; I have the final say in what happens in it.

I take a sip. It’s bitter as hell. My lips pucker up and Emily laughs, despite the situation.

“Drink it all, sweetie.” Who in the world ever called their ex *sweetie*? “The herbalist told me the faster it’s consumed, the stronger the effect.”

“I never heard anything like that.”

“Trust me.”

I think about it. Trust her? Do I trust Emily? She may be clingy and strange as hell, but the girl never did anything that *really* sent me over the edge. I put the mug to my lips and take two large gulps, swallowing them down before the taste can get to me. She smiles and nods. Go on, go on.

*You’ll get what you get.*

Even as I’m finishing the tea, I’m startin’ to feel a little off. It’s different from the creeping feeling... no, no, this time, the world is *definitely* spinning.

I think Emily might be saying something, I can hear the sound of her voice but I can’t make out... almost... not quite. I try and take a step forward, heading for the door. If I can make it to the door, I’ve made it outside, and from there I can go anywhere. My life is mine. My life is—

I stumble forward and fall straight on my face. Emily is laughing, that I don’t need words for that. There’s something different about her voice now. It’s higher than usual, way higher but more sinister. Almost squeaky. Wholly demonic.

I try and take a deep breath but *woah*, all I can feel is a rushing gurgle running through my chest. I take in about half the amount of air I need. I try again, and it’s even harder, so I cough to get out whatever’s got itself stuck in my chest. Is this what it feels like to drown? My vision’s gone real blurry but I can still make out the bright, bright red of what comes out

of my mouth. I try again. No improvement.

Someone turns me onto my back. I can make out her outline. Tall and willowy, with her gorgeous skin and wavy chestnut hair and a smile that could rip the skin off any living man. She cackles. Makes the same sound and jerking movement over and over and over and over and it’s like my brain is a record gone broke. I try and scream, but all that comes out of my mouth is more of that warm liquid I know with all my soul is a bright ruby red. It trickles down the side of my cheek.

*Was it worth it?*

Another figure comes into my line of vision. Tobe. He takes my arms and starts dragging me away, past the hallway. I turn my head to the side, and there’s the door. It’s closed.

*You’ll never know.*

William Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily” tells the story of a young southern woman in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century who, while leading a rather peculiar life, murders the man that she loves and keeps his body in her home for more than 40 years, in order to keep him with her forever. The story is told through the rarely used 2<sup>nd</sup> person narration (implied to be the collective voice of the community in which the woman lives). And while this offers a unique perspective to how the events of the story play out, it leaves just as many questions as it does answers, concerning both the titular Emily and Homer (the man that she murders). In order to shed some light on the two, for my retelling I chose to shift the narration from 2<sup>nd</sup> person objective to 1<sup>st</sup> person, from Homer Barron’s point of view. Though the original story offers the perspective of the townspeople and sheds some light on what the opinion of the group can drive a young woman to do, this retelling provides both a possible explanation as to why Emily did what she did, as well as an insight into the relationship which existed between Emily and Homer.

Though the works differ in a number of ways, they both tie together similarly in a few key elements. One being the presence of dust: Emily’s home is described as being close off and dank “...they could see that the leather was cracked; and when they sat down, a faint dust rose sluggishly about their thighs” (Faulkner); in the retelling, Homer observes that a layer of dust seems to have settled upon the entire town “The roads are dusty and hazy, enough to make a perfectly well man go blind...”. This transforms the house into a microcosm of the town at



large. Emily's home is dark, dank, dusty, and reeking of decay, while the town itself is not much better (though, the townspeople like to believe the contrary). Another example in which the retelling illuminates a specific detail of the original can be seen in the (rather ambiguous) line regarding Homers perceived preferences: "...Homer himself had remarked—he liked men," (Faulkner) which, though a modern lenses, hints to a sexual preference for the same gender. However, considering the time period in which the original was written, the line can be just as easily interpreted to mean that Homer simply preferred the *plutonic* companionship of men. Through my retelling, I chose to interpret the line through a modern lenses, not to disregard Faulkner's likely intention, but to bring forth a possible explanation as to why Homer is in the south in the first place: "Especially the younger guys! They crowd around me and hang off my every word, and some of them I can swear get a little *too* close, if you get what I mean. Not that I have any moral objections, but that's what got me in trouble in the first place.", the line implying that he did indeed pursue relationships with men, but was discovered and chased away from his community. One more important instance in which both the original and the retelling are the same comes from the buggy that Emily and Homer drive around in on Sundays'. In the original, not much is said about it, but because the retelling is from Homers perspective, a possible explanation can be offered: "I stole roses for her, and in return she gives me a buggy". This makes sense, as Homer, a day laborer and implied drifter, most likely wouldn't have the money to splurge on much of anything, let alone a buggy.

Along with the similarities, several liberties have also been taken to allow for the story to be at it's most believable. One such instance is in how Homer and Emily first meet. It is never explicitly revealed in the original, because the style of narration prevents it. However, now from Homer's point of view, the narrator can say how they met with the utmost certainty "so I leave her roses. Every night, late enough so that she has to be asleep, I sneak right on up and tape one to her door... I turn my head up to where the sound came and there's Emily, sticking her head out the window, leaning up against the frame. She knew all along." This scenario not only provides a possibility, but it also ties back in to the title of the story, adding just a but more to an already symbolically-packed title. Another instance in which the retelling takes some liberties is in Homer describing the way in which his father died: "He pushed him over the side of the boat. My old man couldn't swim back to shore; he died." Though Homers father isn't mentioned in the original story *at all* and therefore has no significance in it, I wanted to tie his father's death back to his own, as they both do end up drowning (the father out at sea, the son in his own blood). And one last significant liberty which is taken the "voices" which Homer hears, his "intuition" which serves to continuously warn him through



the retelling ("*You better not*"). The voices can be interpreted in any number of ways: they're Homer's conscious speaking to him, they could be audio hallucinations, or they could be of supernatural origin. The voices are there to foreshadow Homer's eventual demise.

Though both the original story "A Rose for Emily" provided a work of insight into the workings of a broken southern town past its prime, this retelling provides insight into the workings behind the story which was so greatly influenced by the whims of society. In my efforts to retell the story, I tried to maintain a level of believability, a way for the two stories to be connected in a plausible way. But I also sought to create a level of separation, so that in this retelling, a new dimension could be added to the story proper.

## The Day Mr. Grierson Died

The Day Mr. Grierson Died

Rojan

“Your tea sir ” I placed the tea on the table, Mr. Grierson was still on his bed. Then I gave tea to Miss Emily and went out to the market. I came back from the market and went to clean Mr. Grierson’s room. Tea was still on the table as I left it and Mr. Grierson was still sleeping.

“Sir sir” I called it loud, I ain’t got no response from him. Cold air passed over my head. I nervously shook him “Sir, sir ”, he was still irresponsible.

I quickly ran to Miss Emily, “Miss Emily” breathing heavily I called.

“What happened Tobe? “ She calmly asked.

“Mr. Grierson...”

“What happened to father?” She screamed.

“Mr. Grierson ain’t no responding,” I said in a panic voice.

“Go call the doctor” and she rushed to the room.

Doctor came and announced him dead. “No, my father is not dead” Miss Emily shouted holding Mr. Grierson’s arm. In few hours, the news reached everyone’s ear. One by one people started calling home and some paid their visit as a custom, but Miss Emily answered all of them same “My Father is not dead”. She declined the visitors and telephone calls.

“Tobe, make sure no body disturbs my father, he needs rest. These people don’t understand, my father is sick; he is not dead. He just needs some rest.”

“Sure Miss Emily” I replied her in a shaky voice.

There was nothing I could do; I just followed the orders otherwise stood and watch. I was just

a servant. That whole day she stayed with the dead body of Mr. Grierson. I was worried; she was going crazy. Soon the whole town started talking about Miss Emily. The next day ministers and doctors again tried to convince her but they were unsuccessful. Finally on the third day, town decided to take some action and gathered in front of the house. People started shouting outside and authorities warned Miss Emily.

“Miss Emily please let us enter the house. It’s against the law to keep the dead body. We have to take some action against you if you do not cooperate with us.”

Tears ran through Miss Emily’s cheeks. “She came out of the trauma,” I said to myself. She opened the door and authorities took the body out for the final ritual. As the people were taking out the body from the house, Miss Emily cried out loud, “Don’t take my father, I need him.”

“Don’t take him please”

Her tears didn’t stopped for days. I hadn’t seen Miss Emily so sad. She just sat on the couch and looked through the window. She kept herself alone. She didn’t talk with anybody. I was the only person coming in and out of the house otherwise the house looked lifeless. When I used to go out in the market, people used to ask me about the Miss Emily.

“How is Miss Emily doing Tobe?”

What happened to Miss Emily? Why is she not answering our phone? Is she alright?”

But I ain’t answer no body. I kept quiet, did my thing in the market and returned home. Miss Emily was in great depression. She had lost her support. She was like a half dead body, didn’t ate well, stayed hours on the couch and sometimes hours staring at the empty room of Mr. Grierson. Slowly Miss Emily began to fall sick.

“Miss Emily you need to see a Doctor”

“No Tobe, I am all right. I just need some rest and time for myself.”

Like I said before, there was nothing I could do. Just follow the orders.

In the story “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner, Miss Emily is a mysterious character who displays unbalanced and strange behaviors to the world. Her identity is locked inside the four walls of the house where no one has accessed for more than forty years. She demanded to live her life in her own terms and conditions: She didn’t pay the tax; she refused to put the house number given by federal mailing service and she even denied to give reason for buying poison although it was required by law. At the end of the story when Miss Emily died, a shocking image of her was revealed. She was found living with dead body, which leaves a lot of questions unanswered about her character. The story is narrated in second person objective where the narrator is the collective voice of the town. The narrator of this story does not have access to any of the character’s mind nor he has access inside the house of Miss Emily. So in the story lots of information are missing and questions are unanswered for the readers. This is one of the reasons I choose this mysterious story “A Rose for Emily” to retell. Retelling this original story through a different character of the story would make readers see this story in a different way. The new narration has a different setting and plot for the story. Among the various characters of the story, I selected Tobe (Miss Emily’s servant) to be the narrator of my story. The autodiegetic narration of Tobe has access inside Miss Emily’s house, so this narration includes her reaction on her father’s death and the activities inside the house.

Tobe is a silent character in the story; he never speaks and just appears in a few scenes of the story. But he is a very important character who can put light on the dark side of the story because he is the only person who has access inside the house; he is the connection between the inner and the outer world of Miss Emily. Tobe witnessed everyone’s death inside that house; from the death of Mr. Grierson to the death of Miss Emily he was there. He even lived along the wired life of Miss Emily because I think he cared about Miss Emily. So, he disappeared from the house after the death of Miss Emily.

Retelling the story “A Rose for Emily” and the original story definitely shares the main plot of the storyline but the story by Tobe focuses more inside of the house activities whereas the original story focuses on the activities that took place outside of the house. The main context of the story is to portray Miss Emily but when we do not have access inside the world of Miss Emily, it is very hard to narrow down the points. In the retelling of the story we are able to enter the world of Miss Emily, which helps us to see the story in a different way. No one knew how Miss Emily reacted on her father’s death, how she used to live isolated those many years and how Tobe managed to live in such an abnormal situation. If this was the retelling of the entire story then we could have got the answers for these questions and other unclear statements; but I selected just a small scene from the original story to retell it. I

picked up the scene where Emily’s father dies. I particularly chose this scene to narrate because I think this is the time when everything started falling for Miss Emily. She lost her only support in the world but the original story is unable to give details on her reaction and her feelings. “When her father died, it got about that the house was all that was left to her; and in a way, people were glad. At last they could pity Miss Emily. Being left alone, and a pauper she became humanized.” Tobe retells the same incident in depth where the readers can actually feel the pain of Miss Emily, ““No, my father is not dead” Miss Emily shouted holding Mr. Grierson’s arm.’ Only the sentence “shouted holding Mr. Grierson’s arm” describe the inner pain of Miss Emily, which was missing from the original story. Not only Miss Emily’s reaction but the retold story also adds Tobe’s reaction when he first found Mr. Grierson dead. “Tea was still on the table as I left it and Mr. Grierson was still sleeping. “Sir sir” I called it loud, I ain’t got no response from him. Cold air passed over my head. I nervously shook him “Sir, sir”, he was still irresponsive.” This reaction from Tobe creates an interesting background before they found out about Mr. Grierson. In the original story we are then told that Emily did not have any grief on the face and she declined to give the dead body of her father as she thought her father is not dead. “Miss Emily met them at the door, dressed as usual and with no trace of grief on her face. She told them that her father was not dead. She did that for three days” Reading this sentence it is very hard for us to think why she behaved like this but when we read the same incident from Tobe’s point of view, we can see how she took her father’s death. “Tobe, make sure no one disturbs my father, he needs rest. These people don’t understand, my father is sick; he is not dead. He just needs some rest.” These sentences from Emily’s mouth explain that she is in trauma of her father’s death, so being mentally restless she is not able to face the reality and avoid it. Tobe was the only person who faced the uncomfortable time of Miss Emily very closely but the original narration just did not count him. This skipped part comes out when Tobe describes his thoughts and reaction in his own narration, ““Sure Miss Emily” I replied her in a shaky voice. There was nothing I could do; I just followed the orders otherwise stood and watch. I was just a servant. That whole day she stayed with the dead body of Mr. Grierson. I was worried; she was going crazy.’ Tobe cared about Miss Emily and wanted to help her to recover from trauma but he was unable to do anything for her. He could not even bring out his emotions because he was tied with the title of a servant. So he just kept following the orders.

Just retelling the small scene from the original story somewhat changed the image of Miss Emily. “When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of

curiosity to see the inside of her house” Miss Emily was portrayed as a lifeless human but Tobe’s narration portrayed her as a normal woman who has the feelings like others as she cried and shouted for her father. Now I am very positive that retelling the entire story from Tobe’s point of view would definitely make the story more interesting and less mysterious.

## **The Ever Alive Rose**

The Ever Alive Rose

Sifat sharmin

It has all finished. The good times, the bad times and the worse times everything is over. I’m over. And everyone is very anxious. And for them I gave a well reason to be a mystery. Life has its colors. Just like those china painting I use to do. I use to love painting. I use to love papa and him too. But everyone else , I don’t know . They never cared for me now they are the one aching to know what’s inside my house and that’s not really what they want to know , they want to know about the stuff they can see with open eyes and more the ones they cannot see. I heard people saying I wish I could capture this moment for a life time. I believed in that too. And believed so much in it that I even put that in my life.

Papa loved me no question asked but he never wanted me to met any other men . May be he waned to be the only man to love me till he lives. Though as a form of father daughter love. He never even let anyone near me. Somewhere inside me there was something that use to love that feeling.. I never wanted to let go off papa. I never had any one, no relatives who even cared. All these people who gathered today to see me inside my house more than to bury me they were never around for me. They took everything.

It was late night papa was feeling sick I sat beside him looking through the window wondering to myself “ look how big the sky is and life is bigger than that”. And in this big world the person who would guide me through my big life stop living in that very moment. My papa stopped breathing and my insecurity started to beat its heart. This big old house, a dead body and me. And all of those responsibilities. How funny a moment ago the person whom I thought will guide me through my life just left me with my burden felt like life. But I can never forget that papa will always protect me ass long as he is with me alive or dead it really doesn’t matter. Honestly as long as people don’t get to know that I lost my papa.

Three days have passes I don’t know how I have been sitting beside papa for so long. And my legs are so stuck cant even move. How hurtful can it be to see your papa die and what makes it worse is im sitting there and watching him rot. I wasn’t even done talking to myself I hear the door knocking. Again the world came between what I love and me . They want to

berry papa . I want the same but I don't want him to go away from me . Where I can't smell his affection and be afraid of his punishments. I didn't want to get rid of that feeling no matter how fantasized it is. But in this game I had to loose. They buried papa. Now I'm all alone. Me and this big house ,no money and all the taxes.

They have saved me from my taxes . Said that I don't have to pay them so kind of them. Finally I gathered all my feelings . Everything has its bad side and good side. First I thought that papa left me with nothing but the house but now I realize he left me with something big and that is my freedom. Freedom to do anything that my heart content. The freedom of being a part of Homer' s life.

I love being with him. He is nice and kind and handsome and he is everything I wanted. I wish I could save every moment we have spent together. I wish I could make it a lifetime picture , not only in something only too look at but into something that I can live every day. Just like the way a girl thinks on her wedding day. The way she wishes to life every moment of that day and wish she could live it over and over again. But not everything lasts forever. This world took my father and now it's after my love. They say I can't be with him because he is not up to my level. They don't even know me so when they talk about my life and who I should have in my life it makes me angry and laugh at the same time . Well I love him and I won't let him go .Till my last breath till I live I will live with him .Even if he dies he will live in me and I promised him that . They called my cousin to threaten me that I better not see him anymore. And he left, left for long.

I waited and waited. I drew all my feelings on those china paintings. The bright the dull colors were my expressive feelings for him. I prayed for him to come back not for a while but forever and this time I won't let him go. This time I will capture my best moments with him and live it every day of my life. I will live it every day as it happened for the first and the last time.

He didn't show up. But the people for the taxes did. It was way hard to draw them away. I do the china painting it's my passion not to make money. Labor can be sold but not passion not feelings and every emotion those breaths along with it. And as long as I keep my painting going I will feel my own emotions in many different ways, in many different colors.

Today when I woke up everything felt different. It felt like something good is about to happened . I'm tired of this emptiness of my own .I looked at the window and I saw the most

awaited face. He came to see me , he is here. I opened the door and as quickly as possible he went on his knee and proposed to marry me . There was only word that I knew for that moment in life. Yes. I agreed. I finally will have what I wanted in life no one can take it away from me at least not this time .But what happened if the story changes ,what happens if he leaves me again . I can't lose him. Not this time, not ever. He got me the prettiest wedding gown, the hair bow everything is just the way I dreamt .But we can't get married unless we go to the church. If I do that everyone will see us together and try to put us apart again. I have been hiding him so long I can't let it go wrong. But he wants to marry me with all the rituals. I'm afraid, I don't want to lose this moment from my life, I want to capture it forever. And there is only one way to do it. Only one way to keep him with me in that room, forever. Where everything will be same the wedding environment, my gown , his belongings everything . And even the emotions somehow. If I can do this I will be able to capture these beautiful moments for ever and live then every day like its new, just the way I thought of it.

I went to the room he was getting ready. I offered him a drink with a smiley face . He kissed me and drank it. After this moment everything will be as I wished he will be with me forever. He fell asleep so deep so innocent I lied him down on my bed.

Since that day till today I always walk into that room felling like a bride and embracing him like that's the first time it ever happened. My china paintings lost color. The season came and left, the leaves were painted with green then changed colors. But our love was always green. Picture perfect just the way I have imagined. There might have nothing left in him body but his heart is always there. I can see it beating fulfill with emotions.

Today when they went upstairs and found his body which has been declared to be a skeleton according to them but what is more lively then anything to me right now or ever . He is just sleeping with relief where he is sure he will always be safe in my arms . And no one can put us apart. From today I'll be sure forever too that no one can ever set us apart. Looking from the sky me and Homer hold hands and laugh that they will never figure us out. And we will be together till eternity.

A Rose for Emily a short story by William Faulkner is a very interesting and unusual story to me . Sometimes I even have hard time guessing if it's interesting or unusual. So when I was given an opportunity to re-write a story this was the first one that came to my mind. The way the story is told by the narrator, the timing, the environment, everything was unusual. The story starts from the ending of a real life time story of Emily. So I took a chance of re-writing

this story in my different way which was an honest try to make the story sound a bit different keeping its real essence alive but more interesting .

The narrator in the real story is Omni-limited third person. So the story to me sounds like a tale of someone narrated by someone else. So in my version of the story I put Emily herself as the narrator so this story can be seen from Emily's eyes who had lived those situation. It came to me that no one can explain the causes and the reasoning of an event better than the person who was the center of the event.

The real story begins when Emily dies and everybody has gathered to see her house more than the dead body of her. "When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral ". This starting line of the story sounds very generous that people came for her funeral . But in my version of the story I wanted to show how Emily might have felt about the fact that people came in for her funeral or they came in to see how the house looks after so many years of them kind of being prohibited even to come near to her house . In the real story for the narrator Emily had died and though her story ended but it left the some of the story unspoken , leaving some mysteries untold. But in my version Emily tells what she has done and was her valid excuse for her deed.

In the real version of the story the narrator jumps time, most of the events are not in any kind sequence . In my story I made a sequence so that the events do have clear relation so that the reader does not get confused about when the events took place. In my version of the story every event is put in a sequence starting from Emily's father's death to the tax people then meeting Homer and then his coming and going back and forth to his death an finally her own death. In my story I also started the story from the end like the real version .My reason for keeping it unchanged is because unlike others stories it starts from the ending of a real life story goes all around and comes back to the ending which is the originally the beginning .For me made the story very unusual and I decided to keep it the same .And harm its original beauty.

In the real version of the story it talks about Emily not wanting to give her father's dead body away. Which might seem crazy to the readers. But in my version of the story she explains the reasons why she denied giving the dead body away. She even explains how the death happens and what her emotional reactions about that were.

Emily kills Homer that's how we see the story when we read the real version. Even the

narrator sounds confused in this entire situation .But in my version of the story I put every details and every event that happened related to that event . Why she gave up the china painting classes , why she never let anyone in to her house , why she took the decision to kill Homer , and why she kept his body. About her feelings when, the society didn't want her to be with Homer.

When the narrator narrates in the real story it include what he have seen and what they have heard which most Emily didn't see or hear. But in my version Emily talks about things that she saw, she heard and she faced. So that kind of shifting will be seen in my version of the story. So in my version of the story there might be things that were not on the real version and there might not be stuffs that was on the real version. But the story line is kept the same.

In the real story the narrator talks about Emily's life but from other peoples point of view. They are taking about Emily and the situations she came across in life but it doesn't say how she felt during every event, it doesn't explain how she looked upon the situation when she had to face it. In my version of the story it's all about Emily. She is more like the show man in my story everything that happened she had her own way to explain it. And for that her emotional sides come out in my story.

In this story I tried to make everything to be told from a first person prospective so that the story can be told more clearly. And everything that was unspoken could be revealed in my version of the story. I gave Emily a chance to talk about her life in my version, it was more like giving her a chance to speak herself. But any shifting that have made I tried my best not to harm the true beauty of the real story.

## The Truth Behind the Rose

The Truth Behind the Rose

Jocelyn Vigil

I don't understand why em' white folks coming around now, I'm sure them folks are coming to sneak around Old Miss Emily's home and later on gossip, but I don't blame em', Miss Emily lived her life in secrecy. She never came out and if she did, she ain't speak to any of em' anyway. I remember watching the old women from this town, walking past Miss Emily's home as if they were trying to figure out what's going on, trying to 'help' in anyway, as if their pity can solve Miss Emily's ache. I don't think they really knew how much harm they did with em' critiques Oh, Poor miss Emily. Only if she had someone to her own, since her father died two years prior perhaps is why she kept me here, to accompany her. After her father's death I noticed a change on Miss Emily, She barely went out, her attitude changed, I didn't dare bring up any question to why, but I figured it was for that reason. Miss Emily restricted people going to her home; she ain't want any visitors, probably because she didn't want to remember anything? As time passed, a certain type of smell came about, I had to inform Miss Emily to that smell, but she quickly dismissed it, so I stopped questioning her about it. Every time I went to the market place I would over hear how the women from town would say "Just as if a man—any man —could keep a kitchen properly". Oh Please! It's not like you clean your home yo'self, their servants do all the job! I overheard a neighbor of Miss Emily complaining to the Mayor Judge Stevens about the smell, she wanted Miss Emily out of her home! Mayor Stevens dismissed her idea and suggested it could've been just a dead animal. And as the days went by, the Mayor got several more complaints about the smell.

I figured that they might have kicked Emily out of her house but no, a couple of days later four strange men after midnight went across Miss Emily's Yard to sniff where the smell came from, from what Miss Emily told me. Supposedly they went along the base of the brick wood and the cellar openings, and broke into her cellar and sprinkled lime around that area as if that would work, but apparently it did. I recall Miss Emily mentioning to me that she heard someone creeping around her yard, and that as soon as she heard it, she turned on the candle and sat quietly, but heard no mo'. She figured it might have been the neighbors trying to snoop around her house. I bet it was the men from the Board of Aldermen; those men

couldn't even have the courage to knock on poor Miss Emily's door to figure out that problem. I had wished I found them that night; I would've scared them away! That would have made my night.

I remember how her father used to be, he would always scare away the men that wanted to court her, maybe he loved Miss Emily with all his heart, he wanted to protect her from any man. That man was a strange one, her father, I don't know much about the mother, probably because she wasn't really present at home. She had just turned thirty years old, right after her father died. I saw how saddened she looked that day of her father's death. All that her father had left her was the house, and myself, it was now empty and I can feel the silence. It was only I and Miss Emily. I had left her alone to grief, but as soon as word spread around, all of those annoying, snooping ladies came to give their condolences. Miss Emily quickly denied her father's death,—I would've too! But then the law and the doctors were trying to dispose of the body oh so very quick. Three days later, she had to give in and she broke down as she saw her father being buried. I'd say she was broken and felt like she was lonely, I'd reckon that I would feel the same if my father had just died. I'm glad now that at least I was there for her and I didn't leave her in her lone.

Soon after her father's death, she encountered a man named Homer Barron; he was a foreman of some construction company that came to pave sidewalks in the town. I say it was about time that this town was getting a change. These two were a great pair, I would hear her say to me how happy and full of joy she was. I thought that finally she has found some joy in her life. I'm guessing soon after a couple of months went by, I was told by Miss Emily that I were to go to the drug store and pick up a special delivery and that once I had gotten there I were to go back into her house as fast as I could. I didn't understand at the time, so I figured it was urgent. I did what I was told, I dare not question Miss Emily once, but I thought to myself what this box might have had. As I had gotten back, she quickly opened the box and from afar I saw what seemed like a skull drawn on the side. I figured it was poison for rats, but then I thought to myself that we don't have rats here. A couple of days later, we had received two cousins of Miss Emily's into her home. She was happy to see them, I over-heard them talking about Homer and other family situations, their visit was good for her. In the later days I saw Miss Emily buying a man's toilet set in silver with Homers initials I think, and a complete outfit of men's clothing. I thought these were gifts for Homer, so I thought. I overheard people gossiping that they were finally going to get married, I wasn't sure about this one, probably because Miss Emily would have spoken with me. I felt that something strange was going on, I saw her as if she was hiding something, as a plan was soon



to happen.

Her cousins had left town when Homer came back, everythin' was quiet again as usual. Until Miss Emily came up to me and told me that she need me to go and find Homer and bring him to her, that she had something very important to discuss with him. I went to town that evenin' and brought him into the house through the kitchen because the front door was locked for some odd reason and told him to wait while I fetched Miss Emily to come downstairs. Miss Emily went down stairs and greeted Homer, and went into the kitchen where I was at and told me to listen and do what I'm being told. It was odd for her to speak to me like that, because I always did what she had wanted me to do. But as she was talking to me, she slowly took out arsenic, and whispered "Pour this into this glass of lemonade you've prepared and offer it to Homer, and once you have given this to him do no more and go do your usual hose work, you got that Tobe?" I remember how surprised I was for me to hear this out of Miss Lovely Emily. As the only thing left for me to do, I nodded and said nothing. I took out another glass of lemonade for Miss Emily and poured the arsenic into Homer's cup. As I went to give Miss Emily and Homers lemonade, I felt sad of what was going to happen to that poor man. I gave him his cup and looked into his eyes and saw the innocence of what was going to be of his death.

And that was the last I saw of him, years passed and I wondered why Miss Emily did what she did to Homer. I would still go out to market and buy the groceries as long as Miss Emily let me. It wasn't the same as before, I felt like she had become someone that I did not know anymore. To kill a man and for me to be in it made me sick, I did all of her errands but I did not feel the same where I would speak to her like before. People had stopped asking her about her, because I stopped tellin' em' information. Miss Emily got very ill, and was no longer with health. The day before she had died, she looked at me and with her eyes, looked above, steadily and then silently passed away. I know why she looked up, but I was scared to find out, I did not have the courage to open the upstairs bedroom. So now here I am, never to come back to a tragic home I once worked for. It is my time to walk away, I see no use of me in here nomore, I will leave the townsfolk to find out the truth of Homer Barron and poor Miss Emily.

In the short story of "A Rose for Emily" By William Faulkner, the story is told by a "Third Person Omni-present Narrator". The retelling of A Rose for Emily will be "First Person Limited Narration". In the original story, there was no known character that presented itself; the narrator only knew what was going on with the outside world, but not much on a selected

few like Miss Emily. Tobe will be the known narrator because he was always near Miss Emily and was always in her home than anyone else.

I will be using Tobe as the First person limited narrator because it makes sense that since he lives and works for Miss Emily that he would be able to give a different side view and fill in some reasons of Miss Emily's actions throughout the story. I want to start my narration here with tobe receiving the guests for Miss Emily's funeral, but I want this character to begin his storytelling when Miss Emily's father passed away. I want to write what goes on in Tobe's head and of Miss Emily that hasn't gone out of her home for a very long time. Tobe is first mentioned on section 2 of the story where the third person narrator goes back into the past and says "A few of the ladies had the temerity to call, but were not received and the only sign of life about the place was the Negro man—a young man then—going in and out with a market baske

In section 2, there was a smell developing in Miss Emily's yard, the towns people and her neighbors complained about that smell, there was no action done, until one night some men went to sprinkle lime. I want the readers to know that Miss Emily knew about the smell, and dismisses it quickly. I want to use Tobe's character to question Miss Emily if she knew anything about it, and observe her reaction towards it and their reactions towards the men sneaking around the home. "So the next night, after midnight, four men crossed Miss Emily's lawn and slunk about the house like burglars sniffing along the base of the brickwork and at the cellar openings while one of them performed a regular sowing motion with his hand out of a sack slung from his shoulder. They broke open the cellar door and sprinkled lime there, and in all the outbuildings."

On the bottom of section 2, the original narrator mentions a old memory about Miss Emily's father and how he had driven away all the young men that would have wanted to court her. "We remembered all the young men her father had driven away..." I want to use Tobe to give an insight on how her behavior was after her father died and not having anyone for companionship, being left alone in the home that he father left her. "When her father died, it got about that the house was all that was left to her..." Right after section 3, Miss Emily meets Homer Barron, the townspeople first were glad that she had found an interest after many years but then there were others who were criticizing her for having an interest that was a 'Northerner', a 'day laborer'. In the original narration, we don't get to read on what Miss Emily felt about Homer and the criticism that came with him. In the retelling, there will be a brief moment where the servant knows on Miss Emily's thoughts towards her new interest.

The original narrator does not tell the real reason why Miss Emily goes into the drug store to purchase poison, nor does the narrator tell how she kills Homer Barron. But in my version of the retelling I want to add a bit of my imagination of what went on between her servant Tobe and Miss Emily. In the original story, the narrator only tells that she sent her servant to get the package, and look for Homer; we don't get any more detail on what happens between the times when she receives the package of poison and the time where Homer disappears. "I want some poison, she said to the druggist. I want the best you have. I don't care what kind. "Arsenic" said Miss Emily, I want some arsenic." "The Negro boy brought her the package; the druggist didn't come back. When she opened the package at home, there was written on the box, under the skull bones: "For Rats"." During that lapse of time, i want to add that the servant might have known what was going on with Miss Emily sending him to retrieve the package.

Lastly, the ending of the retelling will be with Tobe spending Miss Emily's last moments alive, where she confesses to her servant where Homer Barron is since his disappearance. I want to end the narration back into the future where he leads the townspeople into Miss Emily's home and walks straight out the house and was never seen again. "The Negro met the first of the ladies at the front door and let them in, with their hushed sibilant voices and their quick curious glances, and then he disappeared. He walked right through the house and out the back and was not seen again."

## **The Metamorphosis**

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The Metamorphosis

Franz Kafka

Translated by David Wyllie

### **I**

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin. He lay on his armour-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections. The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked.

"What's happened to me?" he thought. It wasn't a dream. His room, a proper human room although a little too small, lay peacefully between its four familiar walls. A collection of textile samples lay spread out on the table – Samsa was a travelling salesman – and above it there hung a picture that he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and housed in a nice, gilded frame. It showed a lady fitted out with a fur hat and fur boa who sat upright, raising a heavy fur muff that covered the whole of her lower arm towards the viewer.

Gregor then turned to look out the window at the dull weather. Drops of rain could be heard hitting the pane, which made him feel quite sad. "How about if I sleep a little bit longer and forget all this nonsense", he thought, but that was something he was unable to do because he was used to sleeping on his right, and in his present state couldn't get into that position. However hard he threw himself onto his right, he always rolled back to where he was. He must have tried it a hundred times, shut his eyes so that he wouldn't have to look at the floundering legs, and only stopped when he began to feel a mild, dull pain there that he had never felt before.

"Oh, God", he thought, "what a strenuous career it is that I've chosen! Travelling day in and

day out. Doing business like this takes much more effort than doing your own business at home, and on top of that there's the curse of travelling, worries about making train connections, bad and irregular food, contact with different people all the time so that you can never get to know anyone or become friendly with them. It can all go to Hell!" He felt a slight itch up on his belly; pushed himself slowly up on his back towards the headboard so that he could lift his head better; found where the itch was, and saw that it was covered with lots of little white spots which he didn't know what to make of; and when he tried to feel the place with one of his legs he drew it quickly back because as soon as he touched it he was overcome by a cold shudder.

He slid back into his former position. "Getting up early all the time", he thought, "it makes you stupid. You've got to get enough sleep. Other travelling salesmen live a life of luxury. For instance, whenever I go back to the guest house during the morning to copy out the contract, these gentlemen are always still sitting there eating their breakfasts. I ought to just try that with my boss; I'd get kicked out on the spot. But who knows, maybe that would be the best thing for me. If I didn't have my parents to think about I'd have given in my notice a long time ago, I'd have gone up to the boss and told him just what I think, tell him everything I would, let him know just what I feel. He'd fall right off his desk! And it's a funny sort of business to be sitting up there at your desk, talking down at your subordinates from up there, especially when you have to go right up close because the boss is hard of hearing. Well, there's still some hope; once I've got the money together to pay off my parents' debt to him – another five or six years I suppose – that's definitely what I'll do. That's when I'll make the big change. First of all though, I've got to get up, my train leaves at five."

And he looked over at the alarm clock, ticking on the chest of drawers. "God in Heaven!" he thought. It was half past six and the hands were quietly moving forwards, it was even later than half past, more like quarter to seven. Had the alarm clock not rung? He could see from the bed that it had been set for four o'clock as it should have been; it certainly must have rung. Yes, but was it possible to quietly sleep through that furniture-rattling noise? True, he had not slept peacefully, but probably all the more deeply because of that. What should he do now? The next train went at seven; if he were to catch that he would have to rush like mad and the collection of samples was still not packed, and he did not at all feel particularly fresh and lively. And even if he did catch the train he would not avoid his boss's anger as the office assistant would have been there to see the five o'clock train go, he would have put in his report about Gregor's not being there a long time ago. The office assistant was the boss's man, spineless, and with no understanding. What about if he reported sick? But that would be

extremely strained and suspicious as in fifteen years of service Gregor had never once yet been ill. His boss would certainly come round with the doctor from the medical insurance company, accuse his parents of having a lazy son, and accept the doctor's recommendation not to make any claim as the doctor believed that no-one was ever ill but that many were workshy. And what's more, would he have been entirely wrong in this case? Gregor did in fact, apart from excessive sleepiness after sleeping for so long, feel completely well and even felt much hungrier than usual.

He was still hurriedly thinking all this through, unable to decide to get out of the bed, when the clock struck quarter to seven. There was a cautious knock at the door near his head. "Gregor", somebody called – it was his mother – "it's quarter to seven. Didn't you want to go somewhere?" That gentle voice! Gregor was shocked when he heard his own voice answering, it could hardly be recognised as the voice he had had before. As if from deep inside him, there was a painful and uncontrollable squeaking mixed in with it, the words could be made out at first but then there was a sort of echo which made them unclear, leaving the hearer unsure whether he had heard properly or not. Gregor had wanted to give a full answer and explain everything, but in the circumstances contented himself with saying: "Yes, mother, yes, thank-you, I'm getting up now." The change in Gregor's voice probably could not be noticed outside through the wooden door, as his mother was satisfied with this explanation and shuffled away. But this short conversation made the other members of the family aware that Gregor, against their expectations was still at home, and soon his father came knocking at one of the side doors, gently, but with his fist. "Gregor, Gregor", he called, "what's wrong?" And after a short while he called again with a warning deepness in his voice: "Gregor! Gregor!" At the other side door his sister came plaintively: "Gregor? Aren't you well? Do you need anything?" Gregor answered to both sides: "I'm ready, now", making an effort to remove all the strangeness from his voice by enunciating very carefully and putting long pauses between each, individual word. His father went back to his breakfast, but his sister whispered: "Gregor, open the door, I beg of you." Gregor, however, had no thought of opening the door, and instead congratulated himself for his cautious habit, acquired from his travelling, of locking all doors at night even when he was at home.

The first thing he wanted to do was to get up in peace without being disturbed, to get dressed, and most of all to have his breakfast. Only then would he consider what to do next, as he was well aware that he would not bring his thoughts to any sensible conclusions by lying in bed. He remembered that he had often felt a slight pain in bed, perhaps caused by lying awkwardly, but that had always turned out to be pure imagination and he wondered how his

imaginings would slowly resolve themselves today. He did not have the slightest doubt that the change in his voice was nothing more than the first sign of a serious cold, which was an occupational hazard for travelling salesmen.

It was a simple matter to throw off the covers; he only had to blow himself up a little and they fell off by themselves. But it became difficult after that, especially as he was so exceptionally broad. He would have used his arms and his hands to push himself up; but instead of them he only had all those little legs continuously moving in different directions, and which he was moreover unable to control. If he wanted to bend one of them, then that was the first one that would stretch itself out; and if he finally managed to do what he wanted with that leg, all the others seemed to be set free and would move about painfully. “This is something that can’t be done in bed”, Gregor said to himself, “so don’t keep trying to do it”.

The first thing he wanted to do was get the lower part of his body out of the bed, but he had never seen this lower part, and could not imagine what it looked like; it turned out to be too hard to move; it went so slowly; and finally, almost in a frenzy, when he carelessly shoved himself forwards with all the force he could gather, he chose the wrong direction, hit hard against the lower bedpost, and learned from the burning pain he felt that the lower part of his body might well, at present, be the most sensitive.

So then he tried to get the top part of his body out of the bed first, carefully turning his head to the side. This he managed quite easily, and despite its breadth and its weight, the bulk of his body eventually followed slowly in the direction of the head. But when he had at last got his head out of the bed and into the fresh air it occurred to him that if he let himself fall it would be a miracle if his head were not injured, so he became afraid to carry on pushing himself forward the same way. And he could not knock himself out now at any price; better to stay in bed than lose consciousness.

It took just as much effort to get back to where he had been earlier, but when he lay there sighing, and was once more watching his legs as they struggled against each other even harder than before, if that was possible, he could think of no way of bringing peace and order to this chaos. He told himself once more that it was not possible for him to stay in bed and that the most sensible thing to do would be to get free of it in whatever way he could at whatever sacrifice. At the same time, though, he did not forget to remind himself that calm consideration was much better than rushing to desperate conclusions. At times like this he would direct his eyes to the window and look out as clearly as he could, but unfortunately,

even the other side of the narrow street was enveloped in morning fog and the view had little confidence or cheer to offer him. “Seven o’clock, already”, he said to himself when the clock struck again, “seven o’clock, and there’s still a fog like this.” And he lay there quietly a while longer, breathing lightly as if he perhaps expected the total stillness to bring things back to their real and natural state.

But then he said to himself: “Before it strikes quarter past seven I’ll definitely have to have got properly out of bed. And by then somebody will have come round from work to ask what’s happened to me as well, as they open up at work before seven o’clock.” And so he set himself to the task of swinging the entire length of his body out of the bed all at the same time. If he succeeded in falling out of bed in this way and kept his head raised as he did so he could probably avoid injuring it. His back seemed to be quite hard, and probably nothing would happen to it falling onto the carpet. His main concern was for the loud noise he was bound to make, and which even through all the doors would probably raise concern if not alarm. But it was something that had to be risked.

When Gregor was already sticking half way out of the bed – the new method was more of a game than an effort, all he had to do was rock back and forth – it occurred to him how simple everything would be if somebody came to help him. Two strong people – he had his father and the maid in mind – would have been more than enough; they would only have to push their arms under the dome of his back, peel him away from the bed, bend down with the load and then be patient and careful as he swang over onto the floor, where, hopefully, the little legs would find a use. Should he really call for help though, even apart from the fact that all the doors were locked? Despite all the difficulty he was in, he could not suppress a smile at this thought.

After a while he had already moved so far across that it would have been hard for him to keep his balance if he rocked too hard. The time was now ten past seven and he would have to make a final decision very soon. Then there was a ring at the door of the flat. “That’ll be someone from work”, he said to himself, and froze very still, although his little legs only became all the more lively as they danced around. For a moment everything remained quiet. “They’re not opening the door”, Gregor said to himself, caught in some nonsensical hope. But then of course, the maid’s firm steps went to the door as ever and opened it. Gregor only needed to hear the visitor’s first words of greeting and he knew who it was – the chief clerk himself. Why did Gregor have to be the only one condemned to work for a company where they immediately became highly suspicious at the slightest shortcoming? Were all

employees, every one of them, louts, was there not one of them who was faithful and devoted who would go so mad with pangs of conscience that he couldn't get out of bed if he didn't spend at least a couple of hours in the morning on company business? Was it really not enough to let one of the trainees make enquiries – assuming enquiries were even necessary – did the chief clerk have to come himself, and did they have to show the whole, innocent family that this was so suspicious that only the chief clerk could be trusted to have the wisdom to investigate it? And more because these thoughts had made him upset than through any proper decision, he swung himself with all his force out of the bed. There was a loud thump, but it wasn't really a loud noise. His fall was softened a little by the carpet, and Gregor's back was also more elastic than he had thought, which made the sound muffled and not too noticeable. He had not held his head carefully enough, though, and hit it as he fell; annoyed and in pain, he turned it and rubbed it against the carpet.

"Something's fallen down in there", said the chief clerk in the room on the left. Gregor tried to imagine whether something of the sort that had happened to him today could ever happen to the chief clerk too; you had to concede that it was possible. But as if in gruff reply to this question, the chief clerk's firm footsteps in his highly polished boots could now be heard in the adjoining room. From the room on his right, Gregor's sister whispered to him to let him know: "Gregor, the chief clerk is here." "Yes, I know", said Gregor to himself; but without daring to raise his voice loud enough for his sister to hear him.

"Gregor", said his father now from the room to his left, "the chief clerk has come round and wants to know why you didn't leave on the early train. We don't know what to say to him. And anyway, he wants to speak to you personally. So please open up this door. I'm sure he'll be good enough to forgive the untidiness of your room." Then the chief clerk called "Good morning, Mr. Samsa". "He isn't well", said his mother to the chief clerk, while his father continued to speak through the door. "He isn't well, please believe me. Why else would Gregor have missed a train! The lad only ever thinks about the business. It nearly makes me cross the way he never goes out in the evenings; he's been in town for a week now but stayed home every evening. He sits with us in the kitchen and just reads the paper or studies train timetables. His idea of relaxation is working with his fretsaw. He's made a little frame, for instance, it only took him two or three evenings, you'll be amazed how nice it is; it's hanging up in his room; you'll see it as soon as Gregor opens the door. Anyway, I'm glad you're here; we wouldn't have been able to get Gregor to open the door by ourselves; he's so stubborn; and I'm sure he isn't well, he said this morning that he is, but he isn't." "I'll be there in a moment", said Gregor slowly and thoughtfully, but without moving so that

he would not miss any word of the conversation. "Well I can't think of any other way of explaining it, Mrs. Samsa", said the chief clerk, "I hope it's nothing serious. But on the other hand, I must say that if we people in commerce ever become slightly unwell then, fortunately or unfortunately as you like, we simply have to overcome it because of business considerations." "Can the chief clerk come in to see you now then?", asked his father impatiently, knocking at the door again. "No", said Gregor. In the room on his right there followed a painful silence; in the room on his left his sister began to cry.

So why did his sister not go and join the others? She had probably only just got up and had not even begun to get dressed. And why was she crying? Was it because he had not got up, and had not let the chief clerk in, because he was in danger of losing his job and if that happened his boss would once more pursue their parents with the same demands as before? There was no need to worry about things like that yet. Gregor was still there and had not the slightest intention of abandoning his family. For the time being he just lay there on the carpet, and no-one who knew the condition he was in would seriously have expected him to let the chief clerk in. It was only a minor discourtesy, and a suitable excuse could easily be found for it later on, it was not something for which Gregor could be sacked on the spot. And it seemed to Gregor much more sensible to leave him now in peace instead of disturbing him with talking at him and crying. But the others didn't know what was happening, they were worried, that would excuse their behaviour.

The chief clerk now raised his voice, "Mr. Samsa", he called to him, "what is wrong? You barricade yourself in your room, give us no more than yes or no for an answer, you are causing serious and unnecessary concern to your parents and you fail – and I mention this just by the way – you fail to carry out your business duties in a way that is quite unheard of. I'm speaking here on behalf of your parents and of your employer, and really must request a clear and immediate explanation. I am astonished, quite astonished. I thought I knew you as a calm and sensible person, and now you suddenly seem to be showing off with peculiar whims. This morning, your employer did suggest a possible reason for your failure to appear, it's true – it had to do with the money that was recently entrusted to you – but I came near to giving him my word of honour that that could not be the right explanation. But now that I see your incomprehensible stubbornness I no longer feel any wish whatsoever to intercede on your behalf. And nor is your position all that secure. I had originally intended to say all this to you in private, but since you cause me to waste my time here for no good reason I don't see why your parents should not also learn of it. Your turnover has been very unsatisfactory of late; I grant you that it's not the time of year to do especially good business, we recognise that; but

there simply is no time of year to do no business at all, Mr. Samsa, we cannot allow there to be.”

“But Sir”, called Gregor, beside himself and forgetting all else in the excitement, “I’ll open up immediately, just a moment. I’m slightly unwell, an attack of dizziness, I haven’t been able to get up. I’m still in bed now. I’m quite fresh again now, though. I’m just getting out of bed. Just a moment. Be patient! It’s not quite as easy as I’d thought. I’m quite alright now, though. It’s shocking, what can suddenly happen to a person! I was quite alright last night, my parents know about it, perhaps better than me, I had a small symptom of it last night already. They must have noticed it. I don’t know why I didn’t let you know at work! But you always think you can get over an illness without staying at home. Please, don’t make my parents suffer! There’s no basis for any of the accusations you’re making; nobody’s ever said a word to me about any of these things. Maybe you haven’t read the latest contracts I sent in. I’ll set off with the eight o’clock train, as well, these few hours of rest have given me strength. You don’t need to wait, sir; I’ll be in the office soon after you, and please be so good as to tell that to the boss and recommend me to him!”

And while Gregor gushed out these words, hardly knowing what he was saying, he made his way over to the chest of drawers – this was easily done, probably because of the practise he had already had in bed – where he now tried to get himself upright. He really did want to open the door, really did want to let them see him and to speak with the chief clerk; the others were being so insistent, and he was curious to learn what they would say when they caught sight of him. If they were shocked then it would no longer be Gregor’s responsibility and he could rest. If, however, they took everything calmly he would still have no reason to be upset, and if he hurried he really could be at the station for eight o’clock. The first few times he tried to climb up on the smooth chest of drawers he just slid down again, but he finally gave himself one last swing and stood there upright; the lower part of his body was in serious pain but he no longer gave any attention to it. Now he let himself fall against the back of a nearby chair and held tightly to the edges of it with his little legs. By now he had also calmed down, and kept quiet so that he could listen to what the chief clerk was saying.

“Did you understand a word of all that?” the chief clerk asked his parents, “surely he’s not trying to make fools of us”. “Oh, God!” called his mother, who was already in tears, “he could be seriously ill and we’re making him suffer. Grete! Grete!” she then cried. “Mother?” his sister called from the other side. They communicated across Gregor’s room. “You’ll have to go for the doctor straight away. Gregor is ill. Quick, get the doctor. Did you hear the

way Gregor spoke just now?” “That was the voice of an animal”, said the chief clerk, with a calmness that was in contrast with his mother’s screams. “Anna! Anna!” his father called into the kitchen through the entrance hall, clapping his hands, “get a locksmith here, now!” And the two girls, their skirts swishing, immediately ran out through the hall, wrenching open the front door of the flat as they went. How had his sister managed to get dressed so quickly? There was no sound of the door banging shut again; they must have left it open; people often do in homes where something awful has happened.

Gregor, in contrast, had become much calmer. So they couldn’t understand his words any more, although they seemed clear enough to him, clearer than before – perhaps his ears had become used to the sound. They had realised, though, that there was something wrong with him, and were ready to help. The first response to his situation had been confident and wise, and that made him feel better. He felt that he had been drawn back in among people, and from the doctor and the locksmith he expected great and surprising achievements – although he did not really distinguish one from the other. Whatever was said next would be crucial, so, in order to make his voice as clear as possible, he coughed a little, but taking care to do this not too loudly as even this might well sound different from the way that a human coughs and he was no longer sure he could judge this for himself. Meanwhile, it had become very quiet in the next room. Perhaps his parents were sat at the table whispering with the chief clerk, or perhaps they were all pressed against the door and listening.

Gregor slowly pushed his way over to the door with the chair. Once there he let go of it and threw himself onto the door, holding himself upright against it using the adhesive on the tips of his legs. He rested there a little while to recover from the effort involved and then set himself to the task of turning the key in the lock with his mouth. He seemed, unfortunately, to have no proper teeth – how was he, then, to grasp the key? – but the lack of teeth was, of course, made up for with a very strong jaw; using the jaw, he really was able to start the key turning, ignoring the fact that he must have been causing some kind of damage as a brown fluid came from his mouth, flowed over the key and dripped onto the floor. “Listen”, said the chief clerk in the next room, “he’s turning the key.” Gregor was greatly encouraged by this; but they all should have been calling to him, his father and his mother too: “Well done, Gregor”, they should have cried, “keep at it, keep hold of the lock!” And with the idea that they were all excitedly following his efforts, he bit on the key with all his strength, paying no attention to the pain he was causing himself. As the key turned round he turned around the lock with it, only holding himself upright with his mouth, and hung onto the key or pushed it down again with the whole weight of his body as needed. The clear sound of the lock as it

snapped back was Gregor's sign that he could break his concentration, and as he regained his breath he said to himself: "So, I didn't need the locksmith after all". Then he lay his head on the handle of the door to open it completely.

Because he had to open the door in this way, it was already wide open before he could be seen. He had first to slowly turn himself around one of the double doors, and he had to do it very carefully if he did not want to fall flat on his back before entering the room. He was still occupied with this difficult movement, unable to pay attention to anything else, when he heard the chief clerk exclaim a loud "Oh!", which sounded like the sighing of the wind. Now he also saw him – he was the nearest to the door – his hand pressed against his open mouth and slowly retreating as if driven by a steady and invisible force. Gregor's mother, her hair still dishevelled from bed despite the chief clerk's being there, looked at his father. Then she unfolded her arms, took two steps forward towards Gregor and sank down onto the floor into her skirts that spread themselves out around her as her head disappeared down onto her breast. His father looked hostile, and clenched his fists as if wanting to knock Gregor back into his room. Then he looked uncertainly round the living room, covered his eyes with his hands and wept so that his powerful chest shook.

So Gregor did not go into the room, but leant against the inside of the other door which was still held bolted in place. In this way only half of his body could be seen, along with his head above it which he leant over to one side as he peered out at the others. Meanwhile the day had become much lighter; part of the endless, grey-black building on the other side of the street – which was a hospital – could be seen quite clearly with the austere and regular line of windows piercing its façade; the rain was still falling, now throwing down large, individual droplets which hit the ground one at a time. The washing up from breakfast lay on the table; there was so much of it because, for Gregor's father, breakfast was the most important meal of the day and he would stretch it out for several hours as he sat reading a number of different newspapers. On the wall exactly opposite there was photograph of Gregor when he was a lieutenant in the army, his sword in his hand and a carefree smile on his face as he called forth respect for his uniform and bearing. The door to the entrance hall was open and as the front door of the flat was also open he could see onto the landing and the stairs where they began their way down below.

"Now, then", said Gregor, well aware that he was the only one to have kept calm, "I'll get dressed straight away now, pack up my samples and set off. Will you please just let me leave? You can see", he said to the chief clerk, "that I'm not stubborn and I like to do my

job; being a commercial traveller is arduous but without travelling I couldn't earn my living. So where are you going, in to the office? Yes? Will you report everything accurately, then? It's quite possible for someone to be temporarily unable to work, but that's just the right time to remember what's been achieved in the past and consider that later on, once the difficulty has been removed, he will certainly work with all the more diligence and concentration. You're well aware that I'm seriously in debt to our employer as well as having to look after my parents and my sister, so that I'm trapped in a difficult situation, but I will work my way out of it again. Please don't make things any harder for me than they are already, and don't take sides against me at the office. I know that nobody likes the travellers. They think we earn an enormous wage as well as having a soft time of it. That's just prejudice but they have no particular reason to think better of it. But you, sir, you have a better overview than the rest of the staff, in fact, if I can say this in confidence, a better overview than the boss himself – it's very easy for a businessman like him to make mistakes about his employees and judge them more harshly than he should. And you're also well aware that we travellers spend almost the whole year away from the office, so that we can very easily fall victim to gossip and chance and groundless complaints, and it's almost impossible to defend yourself from that sort of thing, we don't usually even hear about them, or if at all it's when we arrive back home exhausted from a trip, and that's when we feel the harmful effects of what's been going on without even knowing what caused them. Please, don't go away, at least first say something to show that you grant that I'm at least partly right!"

But the chief clerk had turned away as soon as Gregor had started to speak, and, with protruding lips, only stared back at him over his trembling shoulders as he left. He did not keep still for a moment while Gregor was speaking, but moved steadily towards the door without taking his eyes off him. He moved very gradually, as if there had been some secret prohibition on leaving the room. It was only when he had reached the entrance hall that he made a sudden movement, drew his foot from the living room, and rushed forward in a panic. In the hall, he stretched his right hand far out towards the stairway as if out there, there were some supernatural force waiting to save him.

Gregor realised that it was out of the question to let the chief clerk go away in this mood if his position in the firm was not to be put into extreme danger. That was something his parents did not understand very well; over the years, they had become convinced that this job would provide for Gregor for his entire life, and besides, they had so much to worry about at present that they had lost sight of any thought for the future. Gregor, though, did think about the future. The chief clerk had to be held back, calmed down, convinced and finally won over;

the future of Gregor and his family depended on it! If only his sister were here! She was clever; she was already in tears while Gregor was still lying peacefully on his back. And the chief clerk was a lover of women, surely she could persuade him; she would close the front door in the entrance hall and talk him out of his shocked state. But his sister was not there, Gregor would have to do the job himself. And without considering that he still was not familiar with how well he could move about in his present state, or that his speech still might not – or probably would not – be understood, he let go of the door; pushed himself through the opening; tried to reach the chief clerk on the landing who, ridiculously, was holding on to the banister with both hands; but Gregor fell immediately over and, with a little scream as he sought something to hold onto, landed on his numerous little legs. Hardly had that happened than, for the first time that day, he began to feel alright with his body; the little legs had the solid ground under them; to his pleasure, they did exactly as he told them; they were even making the effort to carry him where he wanted to go; and he was soon believing that all his sorrows would soon be finally at an end. He held back the urge to move but swayed from side to side as he crouched there on the floor. His mother was not far away in front of him and seemed, at first, quite engrossed in herself, but then she suddenly jumped up with her arms outstretched and her fingers spread shouting: “Help, for pity’s sake, Help!” The way she held her head suggested she wanted to see Gregor better, but the unthinking way she was hurrying backwards showed that she did not; she had forgotten that the table was behind her with all the breakfast things on it; when she reached the table she sat quickly down on it without knowing what she was doing; without even seeming to notice that the coffee pot had been knocked over and a gush of coffee was pouring down onto the carpet.

“Mother, mother”, said Gregor gently, looking up at her. He had completely forgotten the chief clerk for the moment, but could not help himself snapping in the air with his jaws at the sight of the flow of coffee. That set his mother screaming anew, she fled from the table and into the arms of his father as he rushed towards her. Gregor, though, had no time to spare for his parents now; the chief clerk had already reached the stairs; with his chin on the banister, he looked back for the last time. Gregor made a run for him; he wanted to be sure of reaching him; the chief clerk must have expected something, as he leapt down several steps at once and disappeared; his shouts resounding all around the staircase. The flight of the chief clerk seemed, unfortunately, to put Gregor’s father into a panic as well. Until then he had been relatively self controlled, but now, instead of running after the chief clerk himself, or at least not impeding Gregor as he ran after him, Gregor’s father seized the chief clerk’s stick in his right hand (the chief clerk had left it behind on a chair, along with his hat and overcoat), picked up a large newspaper from the table with his left, and used them to drive Gregor back

into his room, stamping his foot at him as he went. Gregor’s appeals to his father were of no help, his appeals were simply not understood, however much he humbly turned his head his father merely stamped his foot all the harder. Across the room, despite the chilly weather, Gregor’s mother had pulled open a window, leant far out of it and pressed her hands to her face. A strong draught of air flew in from the street towards the stairway, the curtains flew up, the newspapers on the table fluttered and some of them were blown onto the floor. Nothing would stop Gregor’s father as he drove him back, making hissing noises at him like a wild man. Gregor had never had any practice in moving backwards and was only able to go very slowly. If Gregor had only been allowed to turn round he would have been back in his room straight away, but he was afraid that if he took the time to do that his father would become impatient, and there was the threat of a lethal blow to his back or head from the stick in his father’s hand any moment. Eventually, though, Gregor realised that he had no choice as he saw, to his disgust, that he was quite incapable of going backwards in a straight line; so he began, as quickly as possible and with frequent anxious glances at his father, to turn himself round. It went very slowly, but perhaps his father was able to see his good intentions as he did nothing to hinder him, in fact now and then he used the tip of his stick to give directions from a distance as to which way to turn. If only his father would stop that unbearable hissing! It was making Gregor quite confused. When he had nearly finished turning round, still listening to that hissing, he made a mistake and turned himself back a little the way he had just come. He was pleased when he finally had his head in front of the doorway, but then saw that it was too narrow, and his body was too broad to get through it without further difficulty. In his present mood, it obviously did not occur to his father to open the other of the double doors so that Gregor would have enough space to get through. He was merely fixed on the idea that Gregor should be got back into his room as quickly as possible. Nor would he ever have allowed Gregor the time to get himself upright as preparation for getting through the doorway. What he did, making more noise than ever, was to drive Gregor forwards all the harder as if there had been nothing in the way; it sounded to Gregor as if there was now more than one father behind him; it was not a pleasant experience, and Gregor pushed himself into the doorway without regard for what might happen. One side of his body lifted itself, he lay at an angle in the doorway, one flank scraped on the white door and was painfully injured, leaving vile brown flecks on it, soon he was stuck fast and would not have been able to move at all by himself, the little legs along one side hung quivering in the air while those on the other side were pressed painfully against the ground. Then his father gave him a hefty shove from behind which released him from where he was held and sent him flying, and heavily bleeding, deep into his room. The door was slammed shut with the stick, then, finally, all was quiet.



## II

It was not until it was getting dark that evening that Gregor awoke from his deep and coma-like sleep. He would have woken soon afterwards anyway even if he hadn't been disturbed, as he had had enough sleep and felt fully rested. But he had the impression that some hurried steps and the sound of the door leading into the front room being carefully shut had woken him. The light from the electric street lamps shone palely here and there onto the ceiling and tops of the furniture, but down below, where Gregor was, it was dark. He pushed himself over to the door, feeling his way clumsily with his antennae – of which he was now beginning to learn the value – in order to see what had been happening there. The whole of his left side seemed like one, painfully stretched scar, and he limped badly on his two rows of legs. One of the legs had been badly injured in the events of that morning – it was nearly a miracle that only one of them had been – and dragged along lifelessly.

It was only when he had reached the door that he realised what it actually was that had drawn him over to it; it was the smell of something to eat. By the door there was a dish filled with sweetened milk with little pieces of white bread floating in it. He was so pleased he almost laughed, as he was even hungrier than he had been that morning, and immediately dipped his head into the milk, nearly covering his eyes with it. But he soon drew his head back again in disappointment; not only did the pain in his tender left side make it difficult to eat the food – he was only able to eat if his whole body worked together as a snuffling whole – but the milk did not taste at all nice. Milk like this was normally his favourite drink, and his sister had certainly left it there for him because of that, but he turned, almost against his own will, away from the dish and crawled back into the centre of the room.

Through the crack in the door, Gregor could see that the gas had been lit in the living room. His father at this time would normally be sat with his evening paper, reading it out in a loud voice to Gregor's mother, and sometimes to his sister, but there was now not a sound to be heard. Gregor's sister would often write and tell him about this reading, but maybe his father had lost the habit in recent times. It was so quiet all around too, even though there must have been somebody in the flat. "What a quiet life it is the family lead", said Gregor to himself, and, gazing into the darkness, felt a great pride that he was able to provide a life like that in such a nice home for his sister and parents. But what now, if all this peace and wealth and comfort should come to a horrible and frightening end? That was something that Gregor did not want to think about too much, so he started to move about, crawling up and down the room.

Once during that long evening, the door on one side of the room was opened very slightly and hurriedly closed again; later on the door on the other side did the same; it seemed that someone needed to enter the room but thought better of it. Gregor went and waited immediately by the door, resolved either to bring the timorous visitor into the room in some way or at least to find out who it was; but the door was opened no more that night and Gregor waited in vain. The previous morning while the doors were locked everyone had wanted to get in there to him, but now, now that he had opened up one of the doors and the other had clearly been unlocked some time during the day, no-one came, and the keys were in the other sides.

It was not until late at night that the gaslight in the living room was put out, and now it was easy to see that his parents and sister had stayed awake all that time, as they all could be distinctly heard as they went away together on tip-toe. It was clear that no-one would come into Gregor's room any more until morning; that gave him plenty of time to think undisturbed about how he would have to re-arrange his life. For some reason, the tall, empty room where he was forced to remain made him feel uneasy as he lay there flat on the floor, even though he had been living in it for five years. Hardly aware of what he was doing other than a slight feeling of shame, he hurried under the couch. It pressed down on his back a little, and he was no longer able to lift his head, but he nonetheless felt immediately at ease and his only regret was that his body was too broad to get it all underneath.

He spent the whole night there. Some of the time he passed in a light sleep, although he frequently woke from it in alarm because of his hunger, and some of the time was spent in worries and vague hopes which, however, always led to the same conclusion: for the time being he must remain calm, he must show patience and the greatest consideration so that his family could bear the unpleasantness that he, in his present condition, was forced to impose on them.

Gregor soon had the opportunity to test the strength of his decisions, as early the next morning, almost before the night had ended, his sister, nearly fully dressed, opened the door from the front room and looked anxiously in. She did not see him straight away, but when she did notice him under the couch – he had to be somewhere, for God's sake, he couldn't have flown away – she was so shocked that she lost control of herself and slammed the door shut again from outside. But she seemed to regret her behaviour, as she opened the door again straight away and came in on tip-toe as if entering the room of someone seriously ill or even of a stranger. Gregor had pushed his head forward, right to the edge of the couch, and

watched her. Would she notice that he had left the milk as it was, realise that it was not from any lack of hunger and bring him in some other food that was more suitable? If she didn't do it herself he would rather go hungry than draw her attention to it, although he did feel a terrible urge to rush forward from under the couch, throw himself at his sister's feet and beg her for something good to eat. However, his sister noticed the full dish immediately and looked at it and the few drops of milk splashed around it with some surprise. She immediately picked it up – using a rag, not her bare hands – and carried it out. Gregor was extremely curious as to what she would bring in its place, imagining the wildest possibilities, but he never could have guessed what his sister, in her goodness, actually did bring. In order to test his taste, she brought him a whole selection of things, all spread out on an old newspaper. There were old, half-rotten vegetables; bones from the evening meal, covered in white sauce that had gone hard; a few raisins and almonds; some cheese that Gregor had declared inedible two days before; a dry roll and some bread spread with butter and salt. As well as all that she had poured some water into the dish, which had probably been permanently set aside for Gregor's use, and placed it beside them. Then, out of consideration for Gregor's feelings, as she knew that he would not eat in front of her, she hurried out again and even turned the key in the lock so that Gregor would know he could make things as comfortable for himself as he liked. Gregor's little legs whirred, at last he could eat. What's more, his injuries must already have completely healed as he found no difficulty in moving. This amazed him, as more than a month earlier he had cut his finger slightly with a knife, he thought of how his finger had still hurt the day before yesterday. "Am I less sensitive than I used to be, then?", he thought, and was already sucking greedily at the cheese which had immediately, almost compellingly, attracted him much more than the other foods on the newspaper. Quickly one after another, his eyes watering with pleasure, he consumed the cheese, the vegetables and the sauce; the fresh foods, on the other hand, he didn't like at all, and even dragged the things he did want to eat a little way away from them because he couldn't stand the smell. Long after he had finished eating and lay lethargic in the same place, his sister slowly turned the key in the lock as a sign to him that he should withdraw. He was immediately startled, although he had been half asleep, and he hurried back under the couch. But he needed great self-control to stay there even for the short time that his sister was in the room, as eating so much food had rounded out his body a little and he could hardly breathe in that narrow space. Half suffocating, he watched with bulging eyes as his sister unselfconsciously took a broom and swept up the left-overs, mixing them in with the food he had not even touched at all as if it could not be used any more. She quickly dropped it all into a bin, closed it with its wooden lid, and carried everything out. She had hardly turned her back before Gregor came out again from under the couch and stretched himself.

This was how Gregor received his food each day now, once in the morning while his parents and the maid were still asleep, and the second time after everyone had eaten their meal at midday as his parents would sleep for a little while then as well, and Gregor's sister would send the maid away on some errand. Gregor's father and mother certainly did not want him to starve either, but perhaps it would have been more than they could stand to have any more experience of his feeding than being told about it, and perhaps his sister wanted to spare them what distress she could as they were indeed suffering enough.

It was impossible for Gregor to find out what they had told the doctor and the locksmith that first morning to get them out of the flat. As nobody could understand him, nobody, not even his sister, thought that he could understand them, so he had to be content to hear his sister's sighs and appeals to the saints as she moved about his room. It was only later, when she had become a little more used to everything – there was, of course, no question of her ever becoming fully used to the situation – that Gregor would sometimes catch a friendly comment, or at least a comment that could be construed as friendly. "He's enjoyed his dinner today", she might say when he had diligently cleared away all the food left for him, or if he left most of it, which slowly became more and more frequent, she would often say, sadly, "now everything's just been left there again".

Although Gregor wasn't able to hear any news directly he did listen to much of what was said in the next rooms, and whenever he heard anyone speaking he would scurry straight to the appropriate door and press his whole body against it. There was seldom any conversation, especially at first, that was not about him in some way, even if only in secret. For two whole days, all the talk at every mealtime was about what they should do now; but even between meals they spoke about the same subject as there were always at least two members of the family at home – nobody wanted to be at home by themselves and it was out of the question to leave the flat entirely empty. And on the very first day the maid had fallen to her knees and begged Gregor's mother to let her go without delay. It was not very clear how much she knew of what had happened but she left within a quarter of an hour, tearfully thanking Gregor's mother for her dismissal as if she had done her an enormous service. She even swore emphatically not to tell anyone the slightest about what had happened, even though no-one had asked that of her.

Now Gregor's sister also had to help his mother with the cooking; although that was not so much bother as no-one ate very much. Gregor often heard how one of them would unsuccessfully urge another to eat, and receive no more answer than "no thanks, I've had

enough” or something similar. No-one drank very much either. His sister would sometimes ask his father whether he would like a beer, hoping for the chance to go and fetch it herself. When his father then said nothing she would add, so that he would not feel selfish, that she could send the housekeeper for it, but then his father would close the matter with a big, loud “No”, and no more would be said.

Even before the first day had come to an end, his father had explained to Gregor’s mother and sister what their finances and prospects were. Now and then he stood up from the table and took some receipt or document from the little cash box he had saved from his business when it had collapsed five years earlier. Gregor heard how he opened the complicated lock and then closed it again after he had taken the item he wanted. What he heard his father say was some of the first good news that Gregor heard since he had first been incarcerated in his room. He had thought that nothing at all remained from his father’s business, at least he had never told him anything different, and Gregor had never asked him about it anyway. Their business misfortune had reduced the family to a state of total despair, and Gregor’s only concern at that time had been to arrange things so that they could all forget about it as quickly as possible. So then he started working especially hard, with a fiery vigour that raised him from a junior salesman to a travelling representative almost overnight, bringing with it the chance to earn money in quite different ways. Gregor converted his success at work straight into cash that he could lay on the table at home for the benefit of his astonished and delighted family. They had been good times and they had never come again, at least not with the same splendour, even though Gregor had later earned so much that he was in a position to bear the costs of the whole family, and did bear them. They had even got used to it, both Gregor and the family, they took the money with gratitude and he was glad to provide it, although there was no longer much warm affection given in return. Gregor only remained close to his sister now. Unlike him, she was very fond of music and a gifted and expressive violinist, it was his secret plan to send her to the conservatory next year even though it would cause great expense that would have to be made up for in some other way. During Gregor’s short periods in town, conversation with his sister would often turn to the conservatory but it was only ever mentioned as a lovely dream that could never be realised. Their parents did not like to hear this innocent talk, but Gregor thought about it quite hard and decided he would let them know what he planned with a grand announcement of it on Christmas day.

That was the sort of totally pointless thing that went through his mind in his present state, pressed upright against the door and listening. There were times when he simply became too tired to continue listening, when his head would fall wearily against the door and he would

pull it up again with a start, as even the slightest noise he caused would be heard next door and they would all go silent. “What’s that he’s doing now”, his father would say after a while, clearly having gone over to the door, and only then would the interrupted conversation slowly be taken up again.

When explaining things, his father repeated himself several times, partly because it was a long time since he had been occupied with these matters himself and partly because Gregor’s mother did not understand everything the first time. From these repeated explanations Gregor learned, to his pleasure, that despite all their misfortunes there was still some money available from the old days. It was not a lot, but it had not been touched in the meantime and some interest had accumulated. Besides that, they had not been using up all the money that Gregor had been bringing home every month, keeping only a little for himself, so that that, too, had been accumulating. Behind the door, Gregor nodded with enthusiasm in his pleasure at this unexpected thrift and caution. He could actually have used this surplus money to reduce his father’s debt to his boss, and the day when he could have freed himself from that job would have come much closer, but now it was certainly better the way his father had done things.

This money, however, was certainly not enough to enable the family to live off the interest; it was enough to maintain them for, perhaps, one or two years, no more. That’s to say, it was money that should not really be touched but set aside for emergencies; money to live on had to be earned. His father was healthy but old, and lacking in self confidence. During the five years that he had not been working – the first holiday in a life that had been full of strain and no success – he had put on a lot of weight and become very slow and clumsy. Would Gregor’s elderly mother now have to go and earn money? She suffered from asthma and it was a strain for her just to move about the home, every other day would be spent struggling for breath on the sofa by the open window. Would his sister have to go and earn money? She was still a child of seventeen, her life up till then had been very enviable, consisting of wearing nice clothes, sleeping late, helping out in the business, joining in with a few modest pleasures and most of all playing the violin. Whenever they began to talk of the need to earn money, Gregor would always first let go of the door and then throw himself onto the cool, leather sofa next to it, as he became quite hot with shame and regret.

He would often lie there the whole night through, not sleeping a wink but scratching at the leather for hours on end. Or he might go to all the effort of pushing a chair to the window, climbing up onto the sill and, propped up in the chair, leaning on the window to stare out of it. He had used to feel a great sense of freedom from doing this, but doing it now was

obviously something more remembered than experienced, as what he actually saw in this way was becoming less distinct every day, even things that were quite near; he had used to curse the ever-present view of the hospital across the street, but now he could not see it at all, and if he had not known that he lived in Charlottenstrasse, which was a quiet street despite being in the middle of the city, he could have thought that he was looking out the window at a barren waste where the grey sky and the grey earth mingled inseparably. His observant sister only needed to notice the chair twice before she would always push it back to its exact position by the window after she had tidied up the room, and even left the inner pane of the window open from then on.

If Gregor had only been able to speak to his sister and thank her for all that she had to do for him it would have been easier for him to bear it; but as it was it caused him pain. His sister, naturally, tried as far as possible to pretend there was nothing burdensome about it, and the longer it went on, of course, the better she was able to do so, but as time went by Gregor was also able to see through it all so much better. It had even become very unpleasant for him, now, whenever she entered the room. No sooner had she come in than she would quickly close the door as a precaution so that no-one would have to suffer the view into Gregor's room, then she would go straight to the window and pull it hurriedly open almost as if she were suffocating. Even if it was cold, she would stay at the window breathing deeply for a little while. She would alarm Gregor twice a day with this running about and noise making; he would stay under the couch shivering the whole while, knowing full well that she would certainly have liked to spare him this ordeal, but it was impossible for her to be in the same room with him with the windows closed.

One day, about a month after Gregor's transformation when his sister no longer had any particular reason to be shocked at his appearance, she came into the room a little earlier than usual and found him still staring out the window, motionless, and just where he would be most horrible. In itself, his sister's not coming into the room would have been no surprise for Gregor as it would have been difficult for her to immediately open the window while he was still there, but not only did she not come in, she went straight back and closed the door behind her, a stranger would have thought he had threatened her and tried to bite her. Gregor went straight to hide himself under the couch, of course, but he had to wait until midday before his sister came back and she seemed much more uneasy than usual. It made him realise that she still found his appearance unbearable and would continue to do so, she probably even had to overcome the urge to flee when she saw the little bit of him that protruded from under the couch. One day, in order to spare her even this sight, he spent four hours carrying the

bedsheet over to the couch on his back and arranged it so that he was completely covered and his sister would not be able to see him even if she bent down. If she did not think this sheet was necessary then all she had to do was take it off again, as it was clear enough that it was no pleasure for Gregor to cut himself off so completely. She left the sheet where it was. Gregor even thought he glimpsed a look of gratitude one time when he carefully looked out from under the sheet to see how his sister liked the new arrangement.

For the first fourteen days, Gregor's parents could not bring themselves to come into the room to see him. He would often hear them say how they appreciated all the new work his sister was doing even though, before, they had seen her as a girl who was somewhat useless and frequently been annoyed with her. But now the two of them, father and mother, would often both wait outside the door of Gregor's room while his sister tidied up in there, and as soon as she went out again she would have to tell them exactly how everything looked, what Gregor had eaten, how he had behaved this time and whether, perhaps, any slight improvement could be seen. His mother also wanted to go in and visit Gregor relatively soon but his father and sister at first persuaded her against it. Gregor listened very closely to all this, and approved fully. Later, though, she had to be held back by force, which made her call out: "Let me go and see Gregor, he is my unfortunate son! Can't you understand I have to see him?", and Gregor would think to himself that maybe it would be better if his mother came in, not every day of course, but one day a week, perhaps; she could understand everything much better than his sister who, for all her courage, was still just a child after all, and really might not have had an adult's appreciation of the burdensome job she had taken on.

Gregor's wish to see his mother was soon realised. Out of consideration for his parents, Gregor wanted to avoid being seen at the window during the day, the few square meters of the floor did not give him much room to crawl about, it was hard to just lie quietly through the night, his food soon stopped giving him any pleasure at all, and so, to entertain himself, he got into the habit of crawling up and down the walls and ceiling. He was especially fond of hanging from the ceiling; it was quite different from lying on the floor; he could breathe more freely; his body had a light swing to it; and up there, relaxed and almost happy, it might happen that he would surprise even himself by letting go of the ceiling and landing on the floor with a crash. But now, of course, he had far better control of his body than before and, even with a fall as great as that, caused himself no damage. Very soon his sister noticed Gregor's new way of entertaining himself – he had, after all, left traces of the adhesive from his feet as he crawled about – and got it into her head to make it as easy as possible for him

by removing the furniture that got in his way, especially the chest of drawers and the desk. Now, this was not something that she would be able to do by herself; she did not dare to ask for help from her father; the sixteen year old maid had carried on bravely since the cook had left but she certainly would not have helped in this, she had even asked to be allowed to keep the kitchen locked at all times and never to have to open the door unless it was especially important; so his sister had no choice but to choose some time when Gregor's father was not there and fetch his mother to help her. As she approached the room, Gregor could hear his mother express her joy, but once at the door she went silent. First, of course, his sister came in and looked round to see that everything in the room was alright; and only then did she let her mother enter. Gregor had hurriedly pulled the sheet down lower over the couch and put more folds into it so that everything really looked as if it had just been thrown down by chance. Gregor also refrained, this time, from spying out from under the sheet; he gave up the chance to see his mother until later and was simply glad that she had come. "You can come in, he can't be seen", said his sister, obviously leading her in by the hand. The old chest of drawers was too heavy for a pair of feeble women to be heaving about, but Gregor listened as they pushed it from its place, his sister always taking on the heaviest part of the work for herself and ignoring her mother's warnings that she would strain herself. This lasted a very long time. After labouring at it for fifteen minutes or more his mother said it would be better to leave the chest where it was, for one thing it was too heavy for them to get the job finished before Gregor's father got home and leaving it in the middle of the room it would be in his way even more, and for another thing it wasn't even sure that taking the furniture away would really be any help to him. She thought just the opposite; the sight of the bare walls saddened her right to her heart; and why wouldn't Gregor feel the same way about it, he'd been used to this furniture in his room for a long time and it would make him feel abandoned to be in an empty room like that. Then, quietly, almost whispering as if wanting Gregor (whose whereabouts she did not know) to hear not even the tone of her voice, as she was convinced that he did not understand her words, she added "and by taking the furniture away, won't it seem like we're showing that we've given up all hope of improvement and we're abandoning him to cope for himself? I think it'd be best to leave the room exactly the way it was before so that when Gregor comes back to us again he'll find everything unchanged and he'll be able to forget the time in between all the easier".

Hearing these words from his mother made Gregor realise that the lack of any direct human communication, along with the monotonous life led by the family during these two months, must have made him confused – he could think of no other way of explaining to himself why he had seriously wanted his room emptied out. Had he really wanted to transform his room

into a cave, a warm room fitted out with the nice furniture he had inherited? That would have let him crawl around unimpeded in any direction, but it would also have let him quickly forget his past when he had still been human. He had come very close to forgetting, and it had only been the voice of his mother, unheard for so long, that had shaken him out of it. Nothing should be removed; everything had to stay; he could not do without the good influence the furniture had on his condition; and if the furniture made it difficult for him to crawl about mindlessly that was not a loss but a great advantage.

His sister, unfortunately, did not agree; she had become used to the idea, not without reason, that she was Gregor's spokesman to his parents about the things that concerned him. This meant that his mother's advice now was sufficient reason for her to insist on removing not only the chest of drawers and the desk, as she had thought at first, but all the furniture apart from the all-important couch. It was more than childish perversity, of course, or the unexpected confidence she had recently acquired, that made her insist; she had indeed noticed that Gregor needed a lot of room to crawl about in, whereas the furniture, as far as anyone could see, was of no use to him at all. Girls of that age, though, do become enthusiastic about things and feel they must get their way whenever they can. Perhaps this was what tempted Grete to make Gregor's situation seem even more shocking than it was so that she could do even more for him. Grete would probably be the only one who would dare enter a room dominated by Gregor crawling about the bare walls by himself.

So she refused to let her mother dissuade her. Gregor's mother already looked uneasy in his room, she soon stopped speaking and helped Gregor's sister to get the chest of drawers out with what strength she had. The chest of drawers was something that Gregor could do without if he had to, but the writing desk had to stay. Hardly had the two women pushed the chest of drawers, groaning, out of the room than Gregor poked his head out from under the couch to see what he could do about it. He meant to be as careful and considerate as he could, but, unfortunately, it was his mother who came back first while Grete in the next room had her arms round the chest, pushing and pulling at it from side to side by herself without, of course, moving it an inch. His mother was not used to the sight of Gregor, he might have made her ill, so Gregor hurried backwards to the far end of the couch. In his startlement, though, he was not able to prevent the sheet at its front from moving a little. It was enough to attract his mother's attention. She stood very still, remained there a moment, and then went back out to Grete.

Gregor kept trying to assure himself that nothing unusual was happening, it was just a few

pieces of furniture being moved after all, but he soon had to admit that the women going to and fro, their little calls to each other, the scraping of the furniture on the floor, all these things made him feel as if he were being assailed from all sides. With his head and legs pulled in against him and his body pressed to the floor, he was forced to admit to himself that he could not stand all of this much longer. They were emptying his room out; taking away everything that was dear to him; they had already taken out the chest containing his fretsaw and other tools; now they threatened to remove the writing desk with its place clearly worn into the floor, the desk where he had done his homework as a business trainee, at high school, even while he had been at infant school – he really could not wait any longer to see whether the two women’s intentions were good. He had nearly forgotten they were there anyway, as they were now too tired to say anything while they worked and he could only hear their feet as they stepped heavily on the floor.

So, while the women were leant against the desk in the other room catching their breath, he sallied out, changed direction four times not knowing what he should save first before his attention was suddenly caught by the picture on the wall – which was already denuded of everything else that had been on it – of the lady dressed in copious fur. He hurried up onto the picture and pressed himself against its glass, it held him firmly and felt good on his hot belly. This picture at least, now totally covered by Gregor, would certainly be taken away by no-one. He turned his head to face the door into the living room so that he could watch the women when they came back.

They had not allowed themselves a long rest and came back quite soon; Grete had put her arm around her mother and was nearly carrying her. “What shall we take now, then?”, said Grete and looked around. Her eyes met those of Gregor on the wall. Perhaps only because her mother was there, she remained calm, bent her face to her so that she would not look round and said, albeit hurriedly and with a tremor in her voice: “Come on, let’s go back in the living room for a while?” Gregor could see what Grete had in mind, she wanted to take her mother somewhere safe and then chase him down from the wall. Well, she could certainly try it! He sat unyielding on his picture. He would rather jump at Grete’s face.

But Grete’s words had made her mother quite worried, she stepped to one side, saw the enormous brown patch against the flowers of the wallpaper, and before she even realised it was Gregor that she saw screamed: “Oh God, oh God!” Arms outstretched, she fell onto the couch as if she had given up everything and stayed there immobile. “Gregor!” shouted his sister, glowering at him and shaking her fist. That was the first word she had spoken to him

directly since his transformation. She ran into the other room to fetch some kind of smelling salts to bring her mother out of her faint; Gregor wanted to help too – he could save his picture later, although he stuck fast to the glass and had to pull himself off by force; then he, too, ran into the next room as if he could advise his sister like in the old days; but he had to just stand behind her doing nothing; she was looking into various bottles, he startled her when she turned round; a bottle fell to the ground and broke; a splinter cut Gregor’s face, some kind of caustic medicine splashed all over him; now, without delaying any longer, Grete took hold of all the bottles she could and ran with them in to her mother; she slammed the door shut with her foot. So now Gregor was shut out from his mother, who, because of him, might be near to death; he could not open the door if he did not want to chase his sister away, and she had to stay with his mother; there was nothing for him to do but wait; and, oppressed with anxiety and self-reproach, he began to crawl about, he crawled over everything, walls, furniture, ceiling, and finally in his confusion as the whole room began to spin around him he fell down into the middle of the dinner table.

He lay there for a while, numb and immobile, all around him it was quiet, maybe that was a good sign. Then there was someone at the door. The maid, of course, had locked herself in her kitchen so that Grete would have to go and answer it. His father had arrived home. “What’s happened?” were his first words; Grete’s appearance must have made everything clear to him. She answered him with subdued voice, and openly pressed her face into his chest: “Mother’s fainted, but she’s better now. Gregor got out.” “Just as I expected”, said his father, “just as I always said, but you women wouldn’t listen, would you.” It was clear to Gregor that Grete had not said enough and that his father took it to mean that something bad had happened, that he was responsible for some act of violence. That meant Gregor would now have to try to calm his father, as he did not have the time to explain things to him even if that had been possible. So he fled to the door of his room and pressed himself against it so that his father, when he came in from the hall, could see straight away that Gregor had the best intentions and would go back into his room without delay, that it would not be necessary to drive him back but that they had only to open the door and he would disappear.

His father, though, was not in the mood to notice subtleties like that; “Ah!”, he shouted as he came in, sounding as if he were both angry and glad at the same time. Gregor drew his head back from the door and lifted it towards his father. He really had not imagined his father the way he stood there now; of late, with his new habit of crawling about, he had neglected to pay attention to what was going on the rest of the flat the way he had done before. He really ought to have expected things to have changed, but still, still, was that really his father? The

same tired man as used to be laying there entombed in his bed when Gregor came back from his business trips, who would receive him sitting in the armchair in his nightgown when he came back in the evenings; who was hardly even able to stand up but, as a sign of his pleasure, would just raise his arms and who, on the couple of times a year when they went for a walk together on a Sunday or public holiday wrapped up tightly in his overcoat between Gregor and his mother, would always labour his way forward a little more slowly than them, who were already walking slowly for his sake; who would place his stick down carefully and, if he wanted to say something would invariably stop and gather his companions around him. He was standing up straight enough now; dressed in a smart blue uniform with gold buttons, the sort worn by the employees at the banking institute; above the high, stiff collar of the coat his strong double-chin emerged; under the bushy eyebrows, his piercing, dark eyes looked out fresh and alert; his normally unkempt white hair was combed down painfully close to his scalp. He took his cap, with its gold monogram from, probably, some bank, and threw it in an arc right across the room onto the sofa, put his hands in his trouser pockets, pushing back the bottom of his long uniform coat, and, with look of determination, walked towards Gregor. He probably did not even know himself what he had in mind, but nonetheless lifted his feet unusually high. Gregor was amazed at the enormous size of the soles of his boots, but wasted no time with that – he knew full well, right from the first day of his new life, that his father thought it necessary to always be extremely strict with him. And so he ran up to his father, stopped when his father stopped, scurried forwards again when he moved, even slightly. In this way they went round the room several times without anything decisive happening, without even giving the impression of a chase as everything went so slowly. Gregor remained all this time on the floor, largely because he feared his father might see it as especially provoking if he fled onto the wall or ceiling. Whatever he did, Gregor had to admit that he certainly would not be able to keep up this running about for long, as for each step his father took he had to carry out countless movements. He became noticeably short of breath, even in his earlier life his lungs had not been very reliable. Now, as he lurched about in his efforts to muster all the strength he could for running he could hardly keep his eyes open; his thoughts became too slow for him to think of any other way of saving himself than running; he almost forgot that the walls were there for him to use although, here, they were concealed behind carefully carved furniture full of notches and protrusions – then, right beside him, lightly tossed, something flew down and rolled in front of him. It was an apple; then another one immediately flew at him; Gregor froze in shock; there was no longer any point in running as his father had decided to bombard him. He had filled his pockets with fruit from the bowl on the sideboard and now, without even taking the time for careful aim, threw one apple after another. These little, red apples rolled about on the floor, knocking into each other as if they

had electric motors. An apple thrown without much force glanced against Gregor's back and slid off without doing any harm. Another one however, immediately following it, hit squarely and lodged in his back; Gregor wanted to drag himself away, as if he could remove the surprising, the incredible pain by changing his position; but he felt as if nailed to the spot and spread himself out, all his senses in confusion. The last thing he saw was the door of his room being pulled open, his sister was screaming, his mother ran out in front of her in her blouse (as his sister had taken off some of her clothes after she had fainted to make it easier for her to breathe), she ran to his father, her skirts unfastened and sliding one after another to the ground, stumbling over the skirts she pushed herself to his father, her arms around him, uniting herself with him totally – now Gregor lost his ability to see anything – her hands behind his father's head begging him to spare Gregor's life.

### III

No-one dared to remove the apple lodged in Gregor's flesh, so it remained there as a visible reminder of his injury. He had suffered it there for more than a month, and his condition seemed serious enough to remind even his father that Gregor, despite his current sad and revolting form, was a family member who could not be treated as an enemy. On the contrary, as a family there was a duty to swallow any revulsion for him and to be patient, just to be patient.

Because of his injuries, Gregor had lost much of his mobility – probably permanently. He had been reduced to the condition of an ancient invalid and it took him long, long minutes to crawl across his room – crawling over the ceiling was out of the question – but this deterioration in his condition was fully (in his opinion) made up for by the door to the living room being left open every evening. He got into the habit of closely watching it for one or two hours before it was opened and then, lying in the darkness of his room where he could not be seen from the living room, he could watch the family in the light of the dinner table and listen to their conversation – with everyone's permission, in a way, and thus quite differently from before.

They no longer held the lively conversations of earlier times, of course, the ones that Gregor always thought about with longing when he was tired and getting into the damp bed in some small hotel room. All of them were usually very quiet nowadays. Soon after dinner, his father would go to sleep in his chair; his mother and sister would urge each other to be quiet; his mother, bent deeply under the lamp, would sew fancy underwear for a fashion shop; his

sister, who had taken a sales job, learned shorthand and French in the evenings so that she might be able to get a better position later on. Sometimes his father would wake up and say to Gregor's mother "you're doing so much sewing again today!", as if he did not know that he had been dozing – and then he would go back to sleep again while mother and sister would exchange a tired grin.

With a kind of stubbornness, Gregor's father refused to take his uniform off even at home; while his nightgown hung unused on its peg Gregor's father would slumber where he was, fully dressed, as if always ready to serve and expecting to hear the voice of his superior even here. The uniform had not been new to start with, but as a result of this it slowly became even shabbier despite the efforts of Gregor's mother and sister to look after it. Gregor would often spend the whole evening looking at all the stains on this coat, with its gold buttons always kept polished and shiny, while the old man in it would sleep, highly uncomfortable but peaceful.

As soon as it struck ten, Gregor's mother would speak gently to his father to wake him and try to persuade him to go to bed, as he couldn't sleep properly where he was and he really had to get his sleep if he was to be up at six to get to work. But since he had been in work he had become more obstinate and would always insist on staying longer at the table, even though he regularly fell asleep and it was then harder than ever to persuade him to exchange the chair for his bed. Then, however much mother and sister would importune him with little reproaches and warnings he would keep slowly shaking his head for a quarter of an hour with his eyes closed and refusing to get up. Gregor's mother would tug at his sleeve, whisper endearments into his ear, Gregor's sister would leave her work to help her mother, but nothing would have any effect on him. He would just sink deeper into his chair. Only when the two women took him under the arms he would abruptly open his eyes, look at them one after the other and say: "What a life! This is what peace I get in my old age!" And supported by the two women he would lift himself up carefully as if he were carrying the greatest load himself, let the women take him to the door, send them off and carry on by himself while Gregor's mother would throw down her needle and his sister her pen so that they could run after his father and continue being of help to him.

Who, in this tired and overworked family, would have had time to give more attention to Gregor than was absolutely necessary? The household budget became even smaller; so now the maid was dismissed; an enormous, thick-boned charwoman with white hair that flapped around her head came every morning and evening to do the heaviest work; everything else

was looked after by Gregor's mother on top of the large amount of sewing work she did. Gregor even learned, listening to the evening conversation about what price they had hoped for, that several items of jewellery belonging to the family had been sold, even though both mother and sister had been very fond of wearing them at functions and celebrations. But the loudest complaint was that although the flat was much too big for their present circumstances, they could not move out of it, there was no imaginable way of transferring Gregor to the new address. He could see quite well, though, that there were more reasons than consideration for him that made it difficult for them to move, it would have been quite easy to transport him in any suitable crate with a few air holes in it; the main thing holding the family back from their decision to move was much more to do with their total despair, and the thought that they had been struck with a misfortune unlike anything experienced by anyone else they knew or were related to. They carried out absolutely everything that the world expects from poor people, Gregor's father brought bank employees their breakfast, his mother sacrificed herself by washing clothes for strangers, his sister ran back and forth behind her desk at the behest of the customers, but they just did not have the strength to do any more. And the injury in Gregor's back began to hurt as much as when it was new. After they had come back from taking his father to bed Gregor's mother and sister would now leave their work where it was and sit close together, cheek to cheek; his mother would point to Gregor's room and say "Close that door, Grete", and then, when he was in the dark again, they would sit in the next room and their tears would mingle, or they would simply sit there staring dry-eyed at the table.

Gregor hardly slept at all, either night or day. Sometimes he would think of taking over the family's affairs, just like before, the next time the door was opened; he had long forgotten about his boss and the chief clerk, but they would appear again in his thoughts, the salesmen and the apprentices, that stupid teaboy, two or three friends from other businesses, one of the chambermaids from a provincial hotel, a tender memory that appeared and disappeared again, a cashier from a hat shop for whom his attention had been serious but too slow, – all of them appeared to him, mixed together with strangers and others he had forgotten, but instead of helping him and his family they were all of them inaccessible, and he was glad when they disappeared. Other times he was not at all in the mood to look after his family, he was filled with simple rage about the lack of attention he was shown, and although he could think of nothing he would have wanted, he made plans of how he could get into the pantry where he could take all the things he was entitled to, even if he was not hungry. Gregor's sister no longer thought about how she could please him but would hurriedly push some food or other into his room with her foot before she rushed out to work in the morning and at midday, and



in the evening she would sweep it away again with the broom, indifferent as to whether it had been eaten or – more often than not – had been left totally untouched. She still cleared up the room in the evening, but now she could not have been any quicker about it. Smears of dirt were left on the walls, here and there were little balls of dust and filth. At first, Gregor went into one of the worst of these places when his sister arrived as a reproach to her, but he could have stayed there for weeks without his sister doing anything about it; she could see the dirt as well as he could but she had simply decided to leave him to it. At the same time she became touchy in a way that was quite new for her and which everyone in the family understood – cleaning up Gregor’s room was for her and her alone. Gregor’s mother did once thoroughly clean his room, and needed to use several bucketfuls of water to do it – although that much dampness also made Gregor ill and he lay flat on the couch, bitter and immobile. But his mother was to be punished still more for what she had done, as hardly had his sister arrived home in the evening than she noticed the change in Gregor’s room and, highly aggrieved, ran back into the living room where, despite her mother’s raised and imploring hands, she broke into convulsive tears. Her father, of course, was startled out of his chair and the two parents looked on astonished and helpless; then they, too, became agitated; Gregor’s father, standing to the right of his mother, accused her of not leaving the cleaning of Gregor’s room to his sister; from her left, Gregor’s sister screamed at her that she was never to clean Gregor’s room again; while his mother tried to draw his father, who was beside himself with anger, into the bedroom; his sister, quaking with tears, thumped on the table with her small fists; and Gregor hissed in anger that no-one had even thought of closing the door to save him the sight of this and all its noise.

Gregor’s sister was exhausted from going out to work, and looking after Gregor as she had done before was even more work for her, but even so his mother ought certainly not to have taken her place. Gregor, on the other hand, ought not to be neglected. Now, though, the charwoman was here. This elderly widow, with a robust bone structure that made her able to withstand the hardest of things in her long life, wasn’t really repelled by Gregor. Just by chance one day, rather than any real curiosity, she opened the door to Gregor’s room and found herself face to face with him. He was taken totally by surprise, no-one was chasing him but he began to rush to and fro while she just stood there in amazement with her hands crossed in front of her. From then on she never failed to open the door slightly every evening and morning and look briefly in on him. At first she would call to him as she did so with words that she probably considered friendly, such as “come on then, you old dung-beetle!”, or “look at the old dung-beetle there!” Gregor never responded to being spoken to in that way, but just remained where he was without moving as if the door had never even been

opened. If only they had told this charwoman to clean up his room every day instead of letting her disturb him for no reason whenever she felt like it! One day, early in the morning while a heavy rain struck the windowpanes, perhaps indicating that spring was coming, she began to speak to him in that way once again. Gregor was so resentful of it that he started to move toward her, he was slow and infirm, but it was like a kind of attack. Instead of being afraid, the charwoman just lifted up one of the chairs from near the door and stood there with her mouth open, clearly intending not to close her mouth until the chair in her hand had been slammed down into Gregor’s back. “Aren’t you coming any closer, then?”, she asked when Gregor turned round again, and she calmly put the chair back in the corner.

Gregor had almost entirely stopped eating. Only if he happened to find himself next to the food that had been prepared for him he might take some of it into his mouth to play with it, leave it there a few hours and then, more often than not, spit it out again. At first he thought it was distress at the state of his room that stopped him eating, but he had soon got used to the changes made there. They had got into the habit of putting things into this room that they had no room for anywhere else, and there were now many such things as one of the rooms in the flat had been rented out to three gentlemen. These earnest gentlemen – all three of them had full beards, as Gregor learned peering through the crack in the door one day – were painfully insistent on things’ being tidy. This meant not only in their own room but, since they had taken a room in this establishment, in the entire flat and especially in the kitchen. Unnecessary clutter was something they could not tolerate, especially if it was dirty. They had moreover brought most of their own furnishings and equipment with them. For this reason, many things had become superfluous which, although they could not be sold, the family did not wish to discard. All these things found their way into Gregor’s room. The dustbins from the kitchen found their way in there too. The charwoman was always in a hurry, and anything she couldn’t use for the time being she would just chuck in there. He, fortunately, would usually see no more than the object and the hand that held it. The woman most likely meant to fetch the things back out again when she had time and the opportunity, or to throw everything out in one go, but what actually happened was that they were left where they landed when they had first been thrown unless Gregor made his way through the junk and moved it somewhere else. At first he moved it because, with no other room free where he could crawl about, he was forced to, but later on he came to enjoy it although moving about in that the way left him sad and tired to death and he would remain immobile for hours afterwards.

The gentlemen who rented the room would sometimes take their evening meal at home in the

living room that was used by everyone, and so the door to this room was often kept closed in the evening. But Gregor found it easy to give up having the door open, he had, after all, often failed to make use of it when it was open and, without the family having noticed it, lain in his room in its darkest corner. One time, though, the charwoman left the door to the living room slightly open, and it remained open when the gentlemen who rented the room came in in the evening and the light was put on. They sat up at the table where, formerly, Gregor had taken his meals with his father and mother, they unfolded the serviettes and picked up their knives and forks. Gregor's mother immediately appeared in the doorway with a dish of meat and soon behind her came his sister with a dish piled high with potatoes. The food was steaming, and filled the room with its smell. The gentlemen bent over the dishes set in front of them as if they wanted to test the food before eating it, and the gentleman in the middle, who seemed to count as an authority for the other two, did indeed cut off a piece of meat while it was still in its dish, clearly wishing to establish whether it was sufficiently cooked or whether it should be sent back to the kitchen. It was to his satisfaction, and Gregor's mother and sister, who had been looking on anxiously, began to breathe again and smiled.

The family themselves ate in the kitchen. Nonetheless, Gregor's father came into the living room before he went into the kitchen, bowed once with his cap in his hand and did his round of the table. The gentlemen stood as one, and mumbled something into their beards. Then, once they were alone, they ate in near perfect silence. It seemed remarkable to Gregor that above all the various noises of eating their chewing teeth could still be heard, as if they had wanted to show Gregor that you need teeth in order to eat and it was not possible to perform anything with jaws that are toothless however nice they might be. "I'd like to eat something", said Gregor anxiously, "but not anything like they're eating. They do feed themselves. And here I am, dying!"

Throughout all this time, Gregor could not remember having heard the violin being played, but this evening it began to be heard from the kitchen. The three gentlemen had already finished their meal, the one in the middle had produced a newspaper, given a page to each of the others, and now they leant back in their chairs reading them and smoking. When the violin began playing they became attentive, stood up and went on tip-toe over to the door of the hallway where they stood pressed against each other. Someone must have heard them in the kitchen, as Gregor's father called out: "Is the playing perhaps unpleasant for the gentlemen? We can stop it straight away." "On the contrary", said the middle gentleman, "would the young lady not like to come in and play for us here in the room, where it is, after all, much more cosy and comfortable?" "Oh yes, we'd love to", called back Gregor's father

as if he had been the violin player himself. The gentlemen stepped back into the room and waited. Gregor's father soon appeared with the music stand, his mother with the music and his sister with the violin. She calmly prepared everything for her to begin playing; his parents, who had never rented a room out before and therefore showed an exaggerated courtesy towards the three gentlemen, did not even dare to sit on their own chairs; his father leant against the door with his right hand pushed in between two buttons on his uniform coat; his mother, though, was offered a seat by one of the gentlemen and sat – leaving the chair where the gentleman happened to have placed it – out of the way in a corner.

His sister began to play; father and mother paid close attention, one on each side, to the movements of her hands. Drawn in by the playing, Gregor had dared to come forward a little and already had his head in the living room. Before, he had taken great pride in how considerate he was but now it hardly occurred to him that he had become so thoughtless about the others. What's more, there was now all the more reason to keep himself hidden as he was covered in the dust that lay everywhere in his room and flew up at the slightest movement; he carried threads, hairs, and remains of food about on his back and sides; he was much too indifferent to everything now to lay on his back and wipe himself on the carpet like he had used to do several times a day. And despite this condition, he was not too shy to move forward a little onto the immaculate floor of the living room.

No-one noticed him, though. The family was totally preoccupied with the violin playing; at first, the three gentlemen had put their hands in their pockets and come up far too close behind the music stand to look at all the notes being played, and they must have disturbed Gregor's sister, but soon, in contrast with the family, they withdrew back to the window with their heads sunk and talking to each other at half volume, and they stayed by the window while Gregor's father observed them anxiously. It really now seemed very obvious that they had expected to hear some beautiful or entertaining violin playing but had been disappointed, that they had had enough of the whole performance and it was only now out of politeness that they allowed their peace to be disturbed. It was especially unnerving, the way they all blew the smoke from their cigarettes upwards from their mouth and noses. Yet Gregor's sister was playing so beautifully. Her face was leant to one side, following the lines of music with a careful and melancholy expression. Gregor crawled a little further forward, keeping his head close to the ground so that he could meet her eyes if the chance came. Was he an animal if music could captivate him so? It seemed to him that he was being shown the way to the unknown nourishment he had been yearning for. He was determined to make his way forward to his sister and tug at her skirt to show her she might come into his room with her violin, as

no-one appreciated her playing here as much as he would. He never wanted to let her out of his room, not while he lived, anyway; his shocking appearance should, for once, be of some use to him; he wanted to be at every door of his room at once to hiss and spit at the attackers; his sister should not be forced to stay with him, though, but stay of her own free will; she would sit beside him on the couch with her ear bent down to him while he told her how he had always intended to send her to the conservatory, how he would have told everyone about it last Christmas – had Christmas really come and gone already? – if this misfortune hadn't got in the way, and refuse to let anyone dissuade him from it. On hearing all this, his sister would break out in tears of emotion, and Gregor would climb up to her shoulder and kiss her neck, which, since she had been going out to work, she had kept free without any necklace or collar.

“Mr. Samsa!”, shouted the middle gentleman to Gregor's father, pointing, without wasting any more words, with his forefinger at Gregor as he slowly moved forward. The violin went silent, the middle of the three gentlemen first smiled at his two friends, shaking his head, and then looked back at Gregor. His father seemed to think it more important to calm the three gentlemen before driving Gregor out, even though they were not at all upset and seemed to think Gregor was more entertaining than the violin playing had been. He rushed up to them with his arms spread out and attempted to drive them back into their room at the same time as trying to block their view of Gregor with his body. Now they did become a little annoyed, and it was not clear whether it was his father's behaviour that annoyed them or the dawning realisation that they had had a neighbour like Gregor in the next room without knowing it. They asked Gregor's father for explanations, raised their arms like he had, tugged excitedly at their beards and moved back towards their room only very slowly. Meanwhile Gregor's sister had overcome the despair she had fallen into when her playing was suddenly interrupted. She had let her hands drop and let violin and bow hang limply for a while but continued to look at the music as if still playing, but then she suddenly pulled herself together, lay the instrument on her mother's lap who still sat laboriously struggling for breath where she was, and ran into the next room which, under pressure from her father, the three gentlemen were more quickly moving toward. Under his sister's experienced hand, the pillows and covers on the beds flew up and were put into order and she had already finished making the beds and slipped out again before the three gentlemen had reached the room. Gregor's father seemed so obsessed with what he was doing that he forgot all the respect he owed to his tenants. He urged them and pressed them until, when he was already at the door of the room, the middle of the three gentlemen shouted like thunder and stamped his foot and thereby brought Gregor's father to a halt. “I declare here and now”, he said, raising his hand

and glancing at Gregor's mother and sister to gain their attention too, “that with regard to the repugnant conditions that prevail in this flat and with this family” – here he looked briefly but decisively at the floor – “I give immediate notice on my room. For the days that I have been living here I will, of course, pay nothing at all, on the contrary I will consider whether to proceed with some kind of action for damages from you, and believe me it would be very easy to set out the grounds for such an action.” He was silent and looked straight ahead as if waiting for something. And indeed, his two friends joined in with the words: “And we also give immediate notice.” With that, he took hold of the door handle and slammed the door.

Gregor's father staggered back to his seat, feeling his way with his hands, and fell into it; it looked as if he was stretching himself out for his usual evening nap but from the uncontrolled way his head kept nodding it could be seen that he was not sleeping at all. Throughout all this, Gregor had lain still where the three gentlemen had first seen him. His disappointment at the failure of his plan, and perhaps also because he was weak from hunger, made it impossible for him to move. He was sure that everyone would turn on him any moment, and he waited. He was not even startled out of this state when the violin on his mother's lap fell from her trembling fingers and landed loudly on the floor.

“Father, Mother”, said his sister, hitting the table with her hand as introduction, “we can't carry on like this. Maybe you can't see it, but I can. I don't want to call this monster my brother, all I can say is: we have to try and get rid of it. We've done all that's humanly possible to look after it and be patient, I don't think anyone could accuse us of doing anything wrong.”

“She's absolutely right”, said Gregor's father to himself. His mother, who still had not had time to catch her breath, began to cough dully, her hand held out in front of her and a deranged expression in her eyes.

Gregor's sister rushed to his mother and put her hand on her forehead. Her words seemed to give Gregor's father some more definite ideas. He sat upright, played with his uniform cap between the plates left by the three gentlemen after their meal, and occasionally looked down at Gregor as he lay there immobile.

“We have to try and get rid of it”, said Gregor's sister, now speaking only to her father, as her mother was too occupied with coughing to listen, “it'll be the death of both of you. I can see it coming. We can't all work as hard as we have to and then come home to be tortured

like this, we can't endure it. I can't endure it any more." And she broke out so heavily in tears that they flowed down the face of her mother, and she wiped them away with mechanical hand movements.

"My child", said her father with sympathy and obvious understanding, "what are we to do?"

His sister just shrugged her shoulders as a sign of the helplessness and tears that had taken hold of her, displacing her earlier certainty.

"If he could just understand us", said his father almost as a question; his sister shook her hand vigorously through her tears as a sign that of that there was no question.

"If he could just understand us", repeated Gregor's father, closing his eyes in acceptance of his sister's certainty that that was quite impossible, "then perhaps we could come to some kind of arrangement with him. But as it is ..."

"It's got to go", shouted his sister, "that's the only way, Father. You've got to get rid of the idea that that's Gregor. We've only harmed ourselves by believing it for so long. How can that be Gregor? If it were Gregor he would have seen long ago that it's not possible for human beings to live with an animal like that and he would have gone of his own free will. We wouldn't have a brother any more, then, but we could carry on with our lives and remember him with respect. As it is this animal is persecuting us, it's driven out our tenants, it obviously wants to take over the whole flat and force us to sleep on the streets. Father, look, just look", she suddenly screamed, "he's starting again!" In her alarm, which was totally beyond Gregor's comprehension, his sister even abandoned his mother as she pushed herself vigorously out of her chair as if more willing to sacrifice her own mother than stay anywhere near Gregor. She rushed over to behind her father, who had become excited merely because she was and stood up half raising his hands in front of Gregor's sister as if to protect her.

But Gregor had had no intention of frightening anyone, least of all his sister. All he had done was begin to turn round so that he could go back into his room, although that was in itself quite startling as his pain-wracked condition meant that turning round required a great deal of effort and he was using his head to help himself do it, repeatedly raising it and striking it against the floor. He stopped and looked round. They seemed to have realised his good intention and had only been alarmed briefly. Now they all looked at him in unhappy silence. His mother lay in her chair with her legs stretched out and pressed against each other, her

eyes nearly closed with exhaustion; his sister sat next to his father with her arms around his neck.

"Maybe now they'll let me turn round", thought Gregor and went back to work. He could not help panting loudly with the effort and had sometimes to stop and take a rest. No-one was making him rush any more, everything was left up to him. As soon as he had finally finished turning round he began to move straight ahead. He was amazed at the great distance that separated him from his room, and could not understand how he had covered that distance in his weak state a little while before and almost without noticing it. He concentrated on crawling as fast as he could and hardly noticed that there was not a word, not any cry, from his family to distract him. He did not turn his head until he had reached the doorway. He did not turn it all the way round as he felt his neck becoming stiff, but it was nonetheless enough to see that nothing behind him had changed, only his sister had stood up. With his last glance he saw that his mother had now fallen completely asleep.

He was hardly inside his room before the door was hurriedly shut, bolted and locked. The sudden noise behind Gregor so startled him that his little legs collapsed under him. It was his sister who had been in so much of a rush. She had been standing there waiting and sprung forward lightly, Gregor had not heard her coming at all, and as she turned the key in the lock she said loudly to her parents "At last!"

"What now, then?", Gregor asked himself as he looked round in the darkness. He soon made the discovery that he could no longer move at all. This was no surprise to him, it seemed rather that being able to actually move around on those spindly little legs until then was unnatural. He also felt relatively comfortable. It is true that his entire body was aching, but the pain seemed to be slowly getting weaker and weaker and would finally disappear altogether. He could already hardly feel the decayed apple in his back or the inflamed area around it, which was entirely covered in white dust. He thought back of his family with emotion and love. If it was possible, he felt that he must go away even more strongly than his sister. He remained in this state of empty and peaceful rumination until he heard the clock tower strike three in the morning. He watched as it slowly began to get light everywhere outside the window too. Then, without his willing it, his head sank down completely, and his last breath flowed weakly from his nostrils.

When the cleaner came in early in the morning – they'd often asked her not to keep slamming the doors but with her strength and in her hurry she still did, so that everyone in the

flat knew when she'd arrived and from then on it was impossible to sleep in peace – she made her usual brief look in on Gregor and at first found nothing special. She thought he was laying there so still on purpose, playing the martyr; she attributed all possible understanding to him. She happened to be holding the long broom in her hand, so she tried to tickle Gregor with it from the doorway. When she had no success with that she tried to make a nuisance of herself and poked at him a little, and only when she found she could shove him across the floor with no resistance at all did she start to pay attention. She soon realised what had really happened, opened her eyes wide, whistled to herself, but did not waste time to yank open the bedroom doors and shout loudly into the darkness of the bedrooms: “Come and ‘ave a look at this, it’s dead, just lying there, stone dead!”

Mr. and Mrs. Samsa sat upright there in their marriage bed and had to make an effort to get over the shock caused by the cleaner before they could grasp what she was saying. But then, each from his own side, they hurried out of bed. Mr. Samsa threw the blanket over his shoulders, Mrs. Samsa just came out in her nightdress; and that is how they went into Gregor’s room. On the way they opened the door to the living room where Grete had been sleeping since the three gentlemen had moved in; she was fully dressed as if she had never been asleep, and the paleness of her face seemed to confirm this. “Dead?”, asked Mrs. Samsa, looking at the charwoman enquiringly, even though she could have checked for herself and could have known it even without checking. “That’s what I said”, replied the cleaner, and to prove it she gave Gregor’s body another shove with the broom, sending it sideways across the floor. Mrs. Samsa made a movement as if she wanted to hold back the broom, but did not complete it. “Now then”, said Mr. Samsa, “let’s give thanks to God for that”. He crossed himself, and the three women followed his example. Grete, who had not taken her eyes from the corpse, said: “Just look how thin he was. He didn’t eat anything for so long. The food came out again just the same as when it went in”. Gregor’s body was indeed completely dried up and flat, they had not seen it until then, but now he was not lifted up on his little legs, nor did he do anything to make them look away.

“Grete, come with us in here for a little while”, said Mrs. Samsa with a pained smile, and Grete followed her parents into the bedroom but not without looking back at the body. The cleaner shut the door and opened the window wide. Although it was still early in the morning the fresh air had something of warmth mixed in with it. It was already the end of March, after all.

The three gentlemen stepped out of their room and looked round in amazement for their

breakfasts; they had been forgotten about. “Where is our breakfast?”, the middle gentleman asked the cleaner irritably. She just put her finger on her lips and made a quick and silent sign to the men that they might like to come into Gregor’s room. They did so, and stood around Gregor’s corpse with their hands in the pockets of their well-worn coats. It was now quite light in the room.

Then the door of the bedroom opened and Mr. Samsa appeared in his uniform with his wife on one arm and his daughter on the other. All of them had been crying a little; Grete now and then pressed her face against her father’s arm.

“Leave my home. Now!”, said Mr. Samsa, indicating the door and without letting the women from him. “What do you mean?”, asked the middle of the three gentlemen somewhat disconcerted, and he smiled sweetly. The other two held their hands behind their backs and continually rubbed them together in gleeful anticipation of a loud quarrel which could only end in their favour. “I mean just what I said”, answered Mr. Samsa, and, with his two companions, went in a straight line towards the man. At first, he stood there still, looking at the ground as if the contents of his head were rearranging themselves into new positions. “Alright, we’ll go then”, he said, and looked up at Mr. Samsa as if he had been suddenly overcome with humility and wanted permission again from Mr. Samsa for his decision. Mr. Samsa merely opened his eyes wide and briefly nodded to him several times. At that, and without delay, the man actually did take long strides into the front hallway; his two friends had stopped rubbing their hands some time before and had been listening to what was being said. Now they jumped off after their friend as if taken with a sudden fear that Mr. Samsa might go into the hallway in front of them and break the connection with their leader. Once there, all three took their hats from the stand, took their sticks from the holder, bowed without a word and left the premises. Mr. Samsa and the two women followed them out onto the landing; but they had had no reason to mistrust the men’s intentions and as they leaned over the landing they saw how the three gentlemen made slow but steady progress down the many steps. As they turned the corner on each floor they disappeared and would reappear a few moments later; the further down they went, the more that the Samsa family lost interest in them; when a butcher’s boy, proud of posture with his tray on his head, passed them on his way up and came nearer than they were, Mr. Samsa and the women came away from the landing and went, as if relieved, back into the flat.

They decided the best way to make use of that day was for relaxation and to go for a walk; not only had they earned a break from work but they were in serious need of it. So they sat at

the table and wrote three letters of excusal, Mr. Samsa to his employers, Mrs. Samsa to her contractor and Grete to her principal. The cleaner came in while they were writing to tell them she was going, she'd finished her work for that morning. The three of them at first just nodded without looking up from what they were writing, and it was only when the cleaner still did not seem to want to leave that they looked up in irritation. "Well?", asked Mr. Samsa. The charwoman stood in the doorway with a smile on her face as if she had some tremendous good news to report, but would only do it if she was clearly asked to. The almost vertical little ostrich feather on her hat, which had been a source of irritation to Mr. Samsa all the time she had been working for them, swayed gently in all directions. "What is it you want then?", asked Mrs. Samsa, whom the cleaner had the most respect for. "Yes", she answered, and broke into a friendly laugh that made her unable to speak straight away, "well then, that thing in there, you needn't worry about how you're going to get rid of it. That's all been sorted out." Mrs. Samsa and Grete bent down over their letters as if intent on continuing with what they were writing; Mr. Samsa saw that the cleaner wanted to start describing everything in detail but, with outstretched hand, he made it quite clear that she was not to. So, as she was prevented from telling them all about it, she suddenly remembered what a hurry she was in and, clearly peeved, called out "Cheerio then, everyone", turned round sharply and left, slamming the door terribly as she went.

"Tonight she gets sacked", said Mr. Samsa, but he received no reply from either his wife or his daughter as the charwoman seemed to have destroyed the peace they had only just gained. They got up and went over to the window where they remained with their arms around each other. Mr. Samsa twisted round in his chair to look at them and sat there watching for a while. Then he called out: "Come here, then. Let's forget about all that old stuff, shall we. Come and give me a bit of attention". The two women immediately did as he said, hurrying over to him where they kissed him and hugged him and then they quickly finished their letters.

After that, the three of them left the flat together, which was something they had not done for months, and took the tram out to the open country outside the town. They had the tram, filled with warm sunshine, all to themselves. Leant back comfortably on their seats, they discussed their prospects and found that on closer examination they were not at all bad – until then they had never asked each other about their work but all three had jobs which were very good and held particularly good promise for the future. The greatest improvement for the time being, of course, would be achieved quite easily by moving house; what they needed now was a flat that was smaller and cheaper than the current one which had been chosen by Gregor, one that was in a better location and, most of all, more practical. All the time, Grete was becoming

livelier. With all the worry they had been having of late her cheeks had become pale, but, while they were talking, Mr. and Mrs. Samsa were struck, almost simultaneously, with the thought of how their daughter was blossoming into a well built and beautiful young lady. They became quieter. Just from each other's glance and almost without knowing it they agreed that it would soon be time to find a good man for her. And, as if in confirmation of their new dreams and good intentions, as soon as they reached their destination Grete was the first to get up and stretch out her young body.

[text taken from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5200/5200-h/5200-h.htm>]

## Monster

Monster

Submarine.

Everyone has off days. Days where we aren't ourselves. Your days always recap in your dreams, if not the same, differently, but they seem to always relate to each other. I'm having a bad dream. "Wake up Gregor! Wake up!" I keep repeating it to myself, over and over. After eternal seconds, I wake, only to wish I didn't. Is it just a chain of nightmares? Is my mind playing games with me? I think to myself, "I need glasses," and, "I may be under the weather." But after a few seconds and minutes pass by, the only words repeating again are, "wake up."

*Click. Click. Click.* My skin is no longer skin. *Click. Click. Click.* My stomach is now slightly domed and hard. "Wake up," I repeat. *Click. Click. Click.* Some of my senses are now determined by these brown and fuzzy antennae. This cold weather and snow outside the windows don't make the shaking any better. Brown stiff sections cover my stomach, I dared not look at my legs. I try to lift them: small, skinny, fuzzy, multiple. My voice, like an alien; unrecognizable. What has happened?! How can I explain this to everyone at work? No one would believe me. My 15 years of service at my job, and never have I missed, but everyone would get suspicious. How embarrassing! Everyone will notice me. I already missed my train, but may catch the next one. What the hell do I do now?

I can't let my parents see me, especially not my mom, her poor little heart won't be able to cope with the fact that her young boy has turned into an ugly creature. A monster. It's almost funny how fast people change. Funny how we take our hands and feet for granted on a daily basis. No, not funny at all.

It is now a quarter after 7. The door knocks and out comes my mother's voice, "Gregor! Are you alright sweetheart? Are you feeling under the weather? Is there something that I can get you?" She hasn't heard my voice until now. "I'm fine mom!," I replied, and I felt her vibe: concerned. She tells me that the chief clerk has arrived to my house to see how I'm progressing. I tell him that I'm doing better, that I'm just getting ready to get the 8 o'clock train, and to not worry about me. But who am I kidding? I'm befuddled. My present state

of mind is completely off the charts.

My goal was to go to work. I open the door and allow them to see my present state. I am no longer human, but a vermin. "MY GOODNESS!", says the chief clerk. Mother starts to weep, while father holds her and steps back, as if I am a monster. My sister in shock: blank face, eyes popping, jaw dropping. The painful quietness filling up everyone's ears.

Everyone's fear radiates the hallway. I feel everyone's eyes on me, except for my poor mother. Her eyes red, I'm no longer her good boy, I am the family burden.

The family burden I remained. For the following two weeks, my own parents didn't come into my room. I didn't leave it. My room has become the shell that never comes off the turtles' backs. I am my own company. My little sister, Grete, is the only one who is capable of coming into my room, but it isn't to see me. Grete has grown dramatically, and has tried to take over the role I played in the family. She cleans and fixes my room and cleans the debris I leave behind. Property is destroyed from the acidity of my bodily fluids. They make this horribly disgusting sound, almost like a huge wet tongue covered in thick saliva, except it's a thousand times louder. My mom still doesn't dare to see me.

Grete was my only hope to having contact with society, and not just talking to myself all the time. As a man, I had a responsibility of working and providing for the family. I am no longer the provider in the family, which is a shame, almost as if I am stripped from my manhood. I am no longer a man. I am less than a person: a waste of life. You see, I thought Grete was a good child, covering for me while I am ill, but it wasn't the case.

With the door always closed, outside sounds sound hollow: deep. I overheard Grete talking to my parents about me being too much to handle. I thought she was different, my little sister, has now turned her back on me and not taking care and responsibilities on me. I rue the day this all started. My family and friends are nothing but stranger now and it's painful. Sometimes my brain goes on overload. There's not much I can do when I'm by myself surrounded by four walls and the shaking sound of my antennae. I will go to sleep now, sleep makes everything better.

In "Metamorphosis" by Franz Kafka, the story of a man who converted into a vermin is told in a third-person narration. The whole story focused a lot on how his life affected everyone around him, rather than the effect it had on him. While reading the story, I felt it was a lot more important to show how it affected him rather than everyone else, because, after all, the

change did happen to him, and not anyone else. In my retelling of the story, I change the narration from third-person, to first-person. In the short story, “Monster,” my version of “Metamorphosis,” I allow the reader to get a glimpse of what it was like for Gregor Samsa after becoming a vermin.

As a person living in a big city in the 21st century, I felt like the whole story symbolized a lot of the problems that we have now. In my eyes, I felt it was something that our society has not accepted yet, and is seen as a monster to everyone else but themselves and alike-people. I felt like the Gregor’s mother represented society’s lack of acceptance towards the situation. Towards the end, Gregor dies, and everyone is relieved, which in my eyes, it interpreted as a suicide of the unaccepted group in our society, because society, up until now, kills what they don’t like. In my retelling, I managed to focus on the pain and neglect that Gregor went through after being transformed.

In the beginning of “Metamorphosis,” Gregor wakes up from a chain of nightmares, and it’s the point in the story where he realizes he is no longer human. In my interpretation of the story, I felt like it was still that lack of acceptance, and this is the point where he starts to think of how it would be like when the problem is faced in reality. “What has happened?! How can I explain this to everyone at work? No one would believe me. [...] How embarrassing,” (second para...Monster). I made Gregor’s character panic more than the original version just to emphasize the drastic changes and how hard it is for him to deal with something like that. In all situations in real life, one has to accept things first in order for others to take you seriously. I felt like his character didn’t do that because his parents and sister would walk all over him and neglect him, so I made him a lot weaker in order for that to stand out later on in the story where Grete’s character turns on him.

“Metamorphosis” kept relating to society, in my eyes, and I felt like some examples of social issues we have had or still have today are things such as blacks versus whites, and straights versus gays. In both issues, the ones who don’t accept, is the monster in the other’s eyes. When one is not accepted by the other, they tried to strip them from as many rights as possible in order to eliminate them as a whole because they aren’t viewed as a “person.” Gregor was being punished by removing his prized possessions.

“Gregor kept trying to assure himself that nothing unusual was happening, it was just a few pieces of furniture being moved after all [...]. He was forced to admit to himself that he could not stand all of this much longer. They were emptying his room out; taking away everything

that was dear to him [...].” (Kafka 15)

I felt Gregor was being stripped from his manhood once he didn’t take the responsibility of providing for the family. I felt like everyone thought it was his fault that he turned into a bug, and that he could have prevented it from happening, so they wanted to take away things because they felt he didn’t deserve. In the story, Grete thinks that the furniture “was of no use to him at all,” although it was true, Gregor clearly states that he felt like crap when Grete was taking the furniture out of his room, although he wanted to help, they wouldn’t let him and he felt they didn’t care what he wanted to do, they just wanted him out of their way. In my story, I used the fact that he could not go back to his job as a way to explain the responsibilities that he had to take care of as a man in the house, and how he is being frowned upon because he can no longer be the one who provides in the house and he is now being rejected from his family and now is a family burden. “My room has become the shell that never comes off the turtles’ backs. I am my own company. [...] I am no longer a man. I am less than a person: a wasted of life.”

At the end of the story, Gregor dies and everyone is relieved because they can get a break from him and working. I felt like they didn’t really care for their loss and were content with the outcome. In our society, people would do anything to end something they don’t like. In this case, Gregor’s family wanted nothing to do with him; they wanted to get rid of him, especially Grete. He knew they didn’t want him in their lives anymore. She says, “[...] we can’t carry on like this. Maybe you can’t see it, but I can. I don’t want to call this monster my brother, all I can say is: we have to try and get rid of it” (Kafka 22). In my story, he dies almost like with a suicide. He felt the rejection and he felt it was best to just sleep. My ending is almost like he forced himself to die to make others happy.

I felt it was a lot more important to tell the story through the main character’s eyes. If society saw things through everyone’s eyes, a lot more things would be accepted. And if everyone knew Gregor’s true emotions and the crap everyone put him through for something that he couldn’t change or even picked to be, they wouldn’t treat him as badly as they did in the story.





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Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci — Horace