

Mother and Son

Opening:

His clothes were dripping as he came in. The water was streaming down his cheeks, a little reddened by the wind and the rain. He shook back his long hair and threw his jacket on the bed post, then abruptly remembering, he looked through the pockets for a box of matches. The house was in partial darkness, for, though the evening was not dark, the daylight was hooded by thick yellow curtains which were drawn across the width of the window.

Comment [BH1]: The title of this story is a comment on the relationship between the two – the reader may expect more love or respect, typically, than they read about.

Comment [BH2]: Shows the extent of the bad weather

Comment [BH3]: Ambiguous – shows bad weather but indicative of sadness, like tears

Comment [BH4]: Rosy cheeks – immaturity. Also shows weather-beaten

Comment [BH5]: Unkempt or rugged

Comment [BH6]: Careless or carefree?

Comment [BH7]: Sets a sombre and gloomy mood

Comment [BH8]: Hooded seems sinister and as though the daylight was in hiding

Comment [BH9]: Gives the impression of old, yellow colour of decay

Ending

He would show her, avenge her insults with his unintelligent hands. There was the bed, there was his mother. He walked over. She was asleep, curled up in the warmth with the bitter, bitter smile upon her face. He stood there for a long moment while an equally bitter smile curled up the edge of his lips. Then he walked to the door, opened it, and stood listening to the rain.

Comment [BH10]: Petulant defiance, shows his immaturity

Comment [BH11]: A blunt threat – as if he would show her exactly what his hands could do

Comment [BH12]: Short sentences to contrast ideas – a form of antithesis

Comment [BH13]: Soft, likeable description – almost like a pet or an animal

Comment [BH14]: In contrast to last statement. Repetition of bitter for emphasis

Comment [BH15]: He is becoming just like her – sneering almost. Not a pleasant smile.

Comment [BH16]: If the rain is like a benediction (previous paragraph) then he is listening for divine intervention.

The Telegram

Opening

The two women – one fat and one thin – sat at the window of the thin woman's house drinking tea and looking down the road which ran through the village. They were like two birds, one a fat domestic bird perhaps, the other more aquiline, more gaunt, or, to be precise, more like a buzzard.

Comment [BH17]: As the title of the story, the telegram is given the utmost importance – in particular, the Telegram that the Elder was handling.

Comment [BH18]: Parenthesis to distinguish the women's backgrounds instantly through physical appearance

Comment [BH19]: Clearly being nosy!

Comment [BH20]: 'the' road indicates that this village was not a large one – single road

Comment [BH21]: Extended imagery here introduced as a simile. Birds are beady-eyed and always alert.

Comment [BH22]: Like a turkey – something plump and used to festivities!

Comment [BH23]: Haggard looking and like a bird of prey – waiting to swoop on any scraps that may appear

Ending

He was walking along not knowing where he was going when later he was stopped half way to the next village. Perhaps he was going in search of his son. Altogether he had walked six miles. The telegram was crushed in his fingers and so sweaty that they could hardly make out the writing.

Comment [BH24]: He is lost – he has no purpose any more.

Comment [BH25]: He would have kept going if left to his own devices

Comment [BH26]: An addition by the author here to make the reader feel empathy for the Elder

Comment [BH27]: Six miles is half way to the next village – shows that this is a rural community

Comment [BH28]: Tried to destroy the thing that has just destroyed him

Comment [BH29]: A physical manifestation of the emotion – anger perhaps that the Elder has experienced while on his walk.

Comment [BH30]: ICS uses the door as the title, giving it strength as a symbol for the hope and the uplifting message this story ultimately delivers.

The Red Door

Opening

When Murdo went out after Halloween and went out into the cold air to see whether anything was stirring in the world around him, he discovered that his door which had formerly been painted green was now painted red. He stared at it for a long time, scratching his head slowly as if at first he didn't believe that it was his own door. In fact he went into the house again and had a look at his frugally prepared breakfast – porridge, scones, and tea – and even studied the damp patch on the wall before he convinced himself that it was his own house.

Comment [BH31]: Is there potential for this to have been a trick?

Comment [BH32]: We instantly know that the world around him is generally very quiet

Comment [BH33]: Red – connotations of fire, anger, passion, love...

Comment [BH34]: Gives the impression that he isn't the most intelligent or quick-witted.

Comment [BH35]: He is not affluent – or he does not spoil himself

Comment [BH36]: Depiction of a miserable setting - damp, dreary and run down. Not well maintained.

Comment [BH37]: It was so quiet he could hear them – an intrusion amongst nature

Comment [BH38]: Magical description – glittery and enticing.

Comment [BH39]: Untouched. Does this image transfer onto either of the characters? Or is it because it is uncharted territory for him to be doing this.

Comment [BH40]: Purity expressed again here

Comment [BH41]: Magical imagery expressed again. Almost like in a dream state – teary eyed could be another interpretation.

Comment [BH42]: Self-reflection

Comment [BH43]: The warmth and courage contrasts with the cold frost, reassuring him

Comment [BH44]: The warmth and courage contrasts with the drab scenery as well

Comment [BH45]: Clear that the door represents him and his pride and spirit

Ending

His wellingtons creaked among the sparkling frost. Its virginal new diamonds glittered around him, millions of them. Before he knocked on her door he looked at his own door from a distance. It shone bravely against the frost and the drab patches without frost or snow. There was pride and spirit about it. It had emerged out of the old and

the habitual, brightly and vulnerably. It said "please let me live my own life". He knocked on the door.

Home

Opening

The black polished car drew up outside the brown tenement and he rested for a moment, his hands still on the wheel. He was a big man with a weatherbeaten red-veined face and a strong jaw. On one finger of his right hand was a square red ring. He looked both competent and hard.

Ending

With a piercing stab of pain he recalled Africa, the drinkers on the veranda, the sky large and open and protective, the place where one knew where one was, among Europeans like oneself.

To have found one's true home was important after all. He sniffed his whisky, swirling it around in the goblet, golden and clear and thin and burningly pure.

Comment [BH46]: He had broken free from habit and the old constraints of village life

Comment [BH47]: A look at how much he is putting himself out there, and how much he stands to potentially lose

Comment [BH48]: A plea directly from the heart of Murdo

Comment [BH49]: Short sentence, cliff-hanger. For dramatic effect. What is the moral of this story? Does the reader want Murdo to have a happy ending or a sad one?

Comment [BH50]: This title is ambiguous as you read the story. Where does it refer to?

Comment [BH51]: Symbol of wealth, masculinity, power

Comment [BH52]: Poverty, clearly run down

Comment [BH53]: Used to spending time abroad – clearly had a lot of life experience

Comment [BH54]: Has physical prowess and stature.

Comment [BH55]: Square- masculine cut. Red – ruby? Symbol of status and power.

Comment [BH56]: Like he could control a situation but you wouldn't want to mess with him

Comment [BH57]: Homesickness kicking in – true emotion shown as a piercing stab isn't just a little bit.

Comment [BH58]: Juxtaposition – how can something be large and open but also protective?

Comment [BH59]: Ironic – Europeans do not belong in Africa – so his status shows a side to his character that is not pleasant.

Comment [BH60]: Further irony explored – he is infiltrating other people's homes really.

Comment [BH61]: Irony – alludes to his Scottish roots, where whisky actually comes from.

Comment [BH62]: Luxurious imagery, shows his sense of self-worth is very high

Comment [BH63]: A positive and negative word put together. Burningly pure – metaphorically the experience he has had in the story revisiting his home is raw and painful, exacerbated by the whisky which is also from home.