


Relationships

This compendium includes a number of text which all have in common that they touch upon the topic of relationships. It covers important aspects of relationships, such as love, family, friends, etc. . It shows how different contexts influence love and relationships. We are dealing with English and American literature, and the primary purpose is to allow you to show your analytical skills in dealing with these texts.





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YOGURT

They were fighting more than usual lately, or perhaps fighting had just become usual, he thought, as they walked home from Yogurt Express along the dark side street. There was no moon, and in the darkness the houses loomed huge and unfamiliar.

He was thinking about earlier in the week, at the grocery, when they'd fought over the sugar cereal. He'd tossed it into the cart, and she'd taken it out, reprimanding him.

"I don't want you buying this crap," she'd said.

"Jesus," he'd replied, wheeling off cockeyed down the aisle. "What are you anyway, my mother?"

These petty clashes rankled him more and more, and he held on to them for days, replaying every nuance and detail, running his mind over them like a tongue on a sore tooth.

Now, as they walked along the quiet street, not touching, he thought what it would be like to live alone, all that freedom. The idea of a separation—he with his own space, his own time, his own decisions—increasingly gave him pleasure. There were, of course, the complications of the kids, the house, the two cars, the bank account, the country property, but was that any reason to stay together?

A rapid slap of feet on pavement just behind them brought him up short, and, as he turned, startled, a cup of cold yogurt slashed into his face, blinding him.

"Hey!" he shouted.

A dark shape scurried past, turning the corner. "I hate couples!" it snarled and disappeared.

He felt weak, his breath uneven. "What was *that*?" he said, wiping yogurt from his eyes and chin.

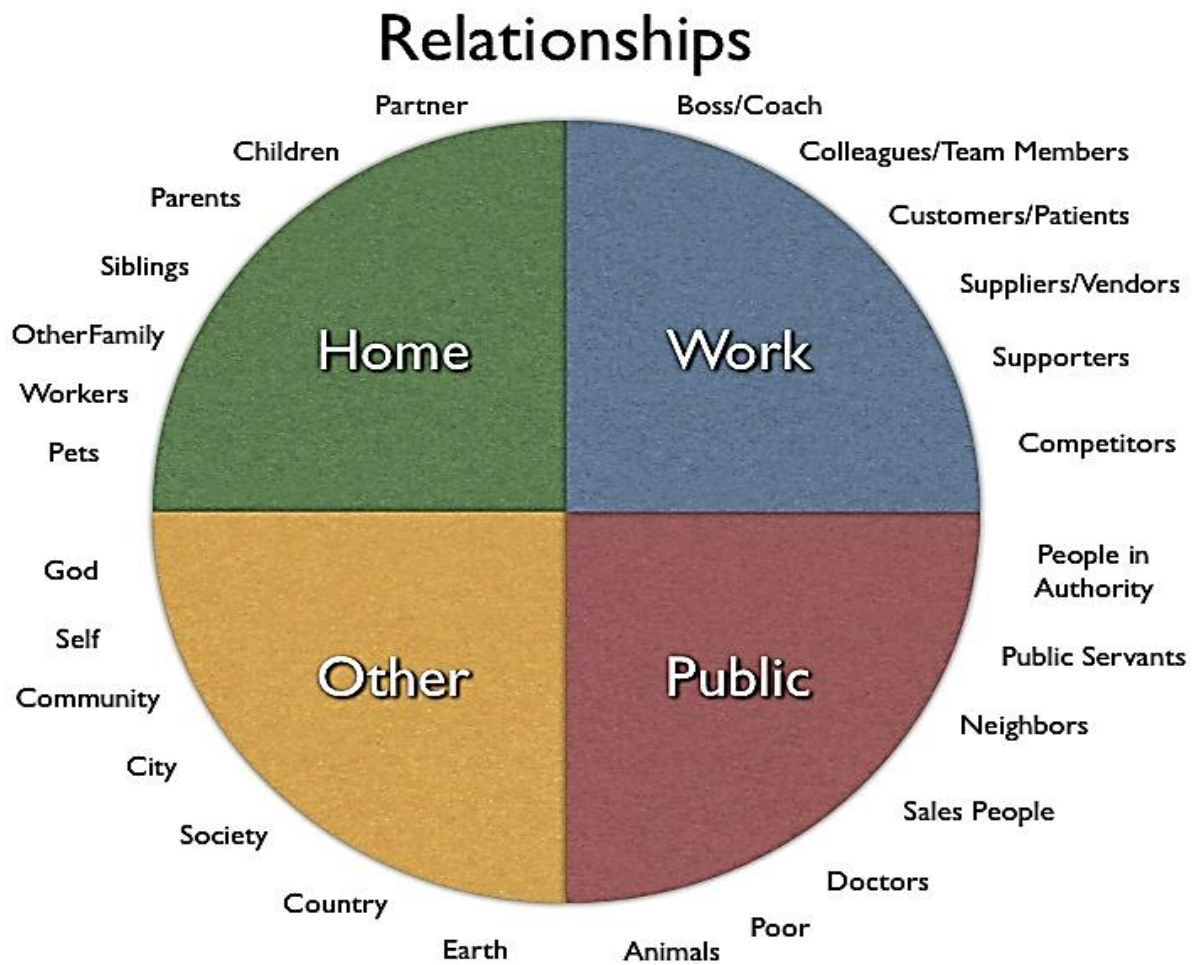
She was silent a moment, and then, "I've seen him before," she said. "In the daytime. He wears a skullcap, and sort of slinks around. I thought he was harmless."

"Jesus, it's such a . . . a . . ."

"Violation?" She gave him the word he was looking for.

"Yes, a violation. I wonder if we should report him. Warn the children. Lock our doors."

They had reached the corner, but no one was there. In the light of the street lamp, she looked serene, and, he thought, well, *valuable*. He put his arm around her and drew her close. Slowly, she put her arm around him.



Brainstorming 1: What is a “relationship” anyway?

⌚ 5 minutes: Creative writing exercise.

The word “relationship” means that ...

5

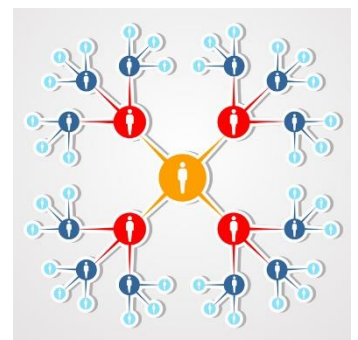
Make a mindmap of your relationships!

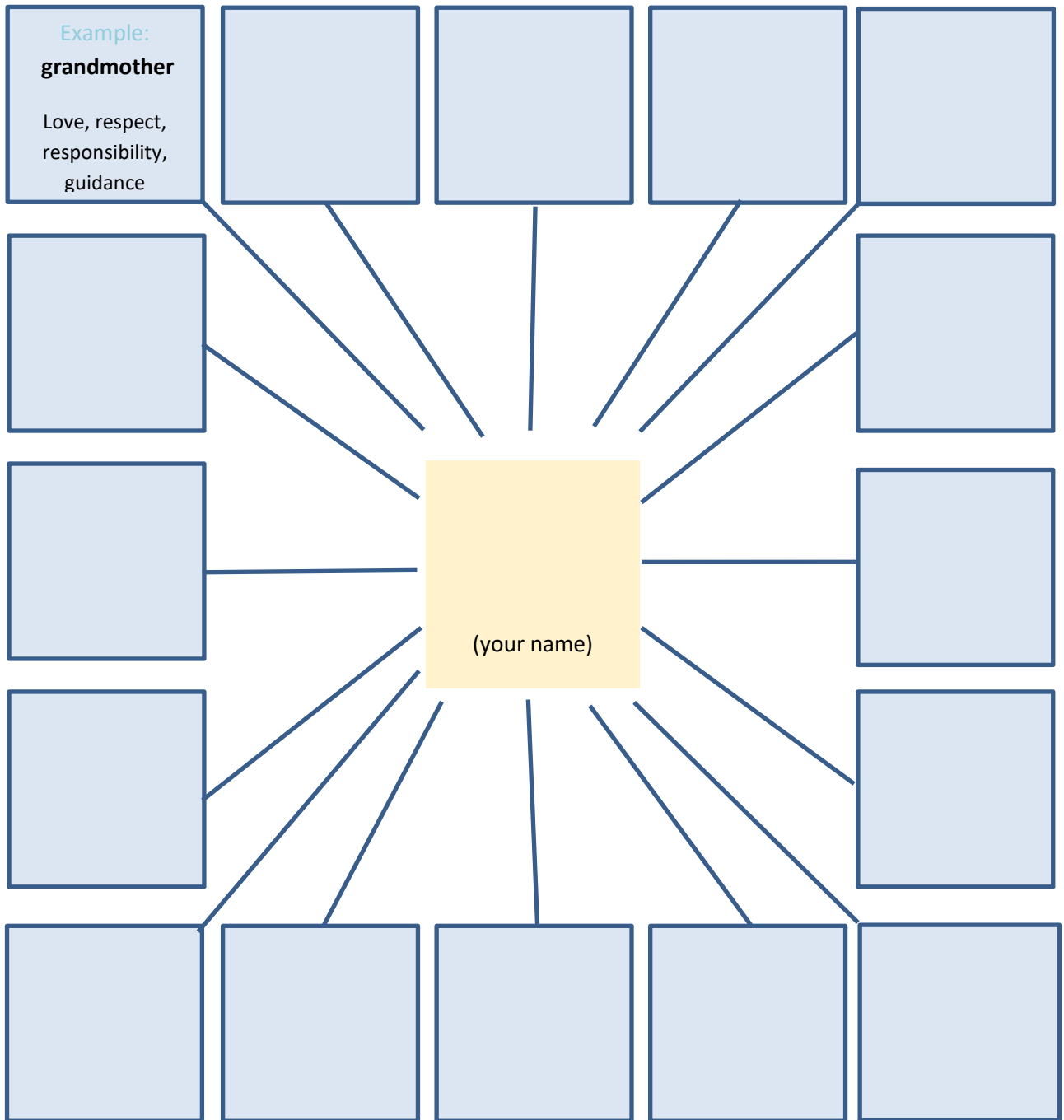
a) Write down the **name of the person** you have a relationship with.

This can be a connection by blood (family), law (marriage, work, ...), a professional connection (work), any emotional connection (friendship, love, affair...):

Try to **describe** the relationship with that person **in a few keywords** (e.g. love, respect, love-hate, admiration, responsibility ...)

10





Could It Be Forever¹

By Nina Stibbe

5

It was the 1970s, I was 11 and this is a true story.

My sister and her friend Celia had something important to tell me and it came out breathlessly. Celia's American cousin, aged nearly 13, had been staying with Celia over the Whitsun² break and though he'd gone home now – to Alice Springs – he'd seen me going about my daily life in the village and had fallen head-over-heels in love with me. This cousin of Celia's was called Dave Cassidy – which sounded very like David Cassidy³. He even had the middle name "Bruce" and hated tomatoes but not ketchup, just like David. I knew a lot about David Cassidy.

Cousin Dave and his family had had outings with Celia's family – to Twycross⁴ Zoo, and a farm where you could stroke sheep and get a scone, and they'd seen a historical pageant⁵ in Bradgate Park with live peacocks and someone playing the lute. But the highlight of Dave's holiday had been me.

"But, when did he see me?" I asked.

"You were pushing your bike up Station Hill," said my sister.

"I don't remember pushing my bike up Station Hill," I said.

"Well, you did, and your face was bright red and that's when Dave fell in love with you," said my sister, and Celia agreed.

"Why didn't he speak to me then?" I asked.

"We just zoomed past in my mum's Mini on the way back from the re-enactment of Lady Jane Grey's nine-day reign," said Celia.

"Plus, he was dazed," my sister intervened, "and his feelings for you only really dawned on him once he was at Luton airport buying sweets for the long flight home and he experienced a sudden sense of regret at not approaching you."

"That's the way love is," said Celia, with a shrug.

"Especially with men," said my sister.

"Did he enjoy the re-enactment of the reign of Lady Jane Grey?" I asked.

"He bloody loved it," said my sister. "He loves English history."

It was strange – but undeniably exciting – to think of this American cousin of Celia's, Dave Cassidy, falling in love with me and now back home in Alice Springs wishing he'd approached me. I felt changed, loved, in love.

¹ *Could It Be Forever*: sang (1972) med David Cassidy

² pinse

³ *David Cassidy*: (f. 1950) amerikansk skuespiller og sanger

⁴ by i det centrale England

⁵ festspil

My sister could tell me all about him. First and foremost, he looked exactly like David Cassidy – in his shorter-haired phase, which was good to hear, because I'd never liked that long, flicky bit at the back he sometimes had. Also, he loved ponies and respected dogs, was a good singer and part of a huge, bustling family of musicians who loved making up songs on the spur of the moment.

5 “How come you know so much about him?” I asked my sister.

“Celia has told me everything,” she said.

“Yes,” said Celia.

Dave Cassidy seemed perfect, especially him being in love with me just from seeing me pushing my bike up a hill. He was the first person ever to fall in love with me – that I knew of, anyway. And, of course, he looked exactly like David Cassidy. I felt a bit sorry for my sister, actually. Dave had fallen in love with me, even though he was more her age, and it sounded as though she really admired him.

10 “Anyway, the point is, Dave wants to know if you'd like to exchange letters,” my sister said, nudging Celia. “Doesn't he?”

“Oh, yes, I forgot that,” said Celia.

15 “Yes,” I said, “I definitely would.”

Letter writing was a thing I liked a lot. I was always on the look-out for someone to write to without seeming mad, and here I was being asked by a David Cassidy lookalike to be a transatlantic pen-pal. Dave was bound to enjoy my letters, which would be all about dogs, ponies, England and myself – all things he loved. I already had an exciting English thing to write about. It had just been announced on the Nine O'Clock News that Princess Anne had become engaged to an army soldier and would be getting married in the autumn – all being well.

I was to give my letters to Celia to give to her mum to post along with her own letters, to Dave's mum, to save on the postage which was very expensive – Alice Springs being a thousand miles away in America [...].

25 Though I don't remember exactly what I wrote in my first letter, I do know it was long, neat and beautifully illustrated, and the envelope sealed with a precious Snoopy sticker. I didn't mention Dave's alleged⁶ love for me, but I seem to recall reporting on the romantic horseback meeting between Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips at the Munich Olympics. Him saying, “I bet your horse wins, your Highness.” And her replying, “I bet yours does, Captain.” And swishing off.

30 I told my mum I had a new pen-pal. “This one's a boy and he lives in Alice Springs, near California,” I told her.

“Alice Springs is in Australia,” my mum said.

“There's also an Alice Springs in California,” I said.

“I don't think so,” she said.

35 I remember having butterflies in my stomach as I passed the first letter to Celia and watched her stuff it into her back pocket, and then kept imagining Dave lying on his bed reading it, smiling, chuckling and maybe wiggling his foot.

A few days later I got a reply from Dave. It was shockingly lovey-dovey and very affecting.

40 “I love you very much,” he wrote. “Will you be my girlfriend?” and it didn't say much more than that, though there was a little photograph glued to the page – God, he looked so

much like David Cassidy, it could easily have been snipped straight out of a magazine, I thought.

⁶ påståede

I wrote back that I'd be a sort of girlfriend-type-pen-pal and went on with another long letter. I wrote a short essay about Lady Jane Grey, explaining that she spoke five languages and wasn't interested in anything except learning more and more complicated things and that she signed herself "Jane the Quene" in the old-fashioned spelling and that that had got her into a lot of trouble (not the spelling but the actual writing it at all).
5 And that our mother's feet had gone bright green from mowing the lawn with no shoes on and that a neighbour had asked her to button her shirt up or put a bra on. I sealed it with a Snoopy sticker (the letter) and passed it to Celia to give to her mum to put it in with her letter to her sister, etc.

I felt so funny being in love. I kept doing the strangest things, like sharing my sweets, speaking to myself in the mirror and laughing at the telly even when it wasn't funny. I even wrote DAVE in the grime on
10 our car bonnet and got a telling off.

Very soon, my sister passed on Dave's reply that had come via Celia's mum. "That was quick." I said. "Yeah, Airmail's unbelievably quick," she said. In this very short letter Dave asked straight out how I felt about him. "Do you love me (or not?)" he wrote. "Please write about your feelings for me, I'm not interested in much else." He wrote. "PS I really hope you love me as much as I love
15 you."

I was annoyed. Did we really have to ruin our love by mentioning it all the time? Was Princess Anne going to have to put up with Captain Mark trotting up to her the whole time asking if she loved him? I didn't want that kind of pen-pal. I wanted to write (and read) about the wonders of the world and add a few I love
20 yous in the PS.

I wrote a short letter back. I hadn't much to say, it being so soon after my last letter, which had gone into great detail about everyone and everything. I told him only that I'd made bread rolls in the shape of hedgehogs⁷ and that I liked him a lot but couldn't be 100% sure I loved him because I'd never actually met him and his letters were short and lacking in detail. I hoped this would provoke a longer letter. I sealed the letter with a Snoopy sticker and gave it to my sister to give to Celia.

25 The reply from Dave came quickly. Too quickly. But I didn't really notice. I did notice that Dave was a bit cross⁸.

"Please stop being so shy, I want to know how you feel about me – do you love me?" He wrote, "PS Could it be Forever?"

I wrote back. "Dear Dave. I do love you and I suppose it could be forever." And I didn't bother with
30 any little illustrations or anecdotes. I just sealed it with a Snoopy sticker and a heart and passed it to my sister to give to Celia to give to her mum to send to the Cassidy family in Alice Springs.

I told my sister of my frustration. "Dave Cassidy is getting on my nerves a bit, to be honest," I said. "He's not a very good letter writer and never tells me anything interesting about his family or California."

35 "God!" she said. "You're so un-fucking-grateful."

Dave was even crosser in his next letter. He wrote something along the lines of, "I hear you don't like my letters very much. I'm sorry to be such a let down⁹," and, "I'm finishing the relationship because your letters are so boring."

I couldn't believe it. I read it over and over. I was heartbroken. Tears welled up in my eyes. I was furious
40 with myself. I'd ruined my chance of love by not being loving enough. I was a failure. Was this how love was going to be for me?

⁷ pindsvin

⁸ tvær

⁹ a let down: en skuffelse

I went to my sister's room, called myself an idiot in the mirror and flopped on to her bed. I lay staring at Marc Bolan's¹⁰ glittery top hat, probably crying, or at least trying to cry, and somewhere there, maybe under a pillow or on the bedside table, I came across a little bundle of papers decorated with Snoopy stickers.

They were my letters to Dave Cassidy. I read them. The first one, quite formal, the second, full of charming detail and fun. The third, short and sharp, and the final one bare of any illustration and in plain black pen, "Dear Dave, I do love you and I suppose it could be forever."

I couldn't work out how my sister had got hold of them. I found her eventually, with Celia. They laughed. "Me and Cee made him up," said my sister.

"Made him up?" I cried.

"Yes. He doesn't exist," said my sister.

"I'm devastated," I said.

"Why? You didn't love him," said Celia.

"I did," I said, "and I do more than ever, now it's over." "Always the way," said Celia, with a shrug that I hated.

None of us said anything for a while.

Though it was a relief in a way – knowing that I hadn't failed in my first love affair by being unromantic – I had to put my fingertips to my forehead while it all settled in my mind. But I couldn't concentrate and kept watching an ant rushing around. So I closed my eyes and silently told myself Dave was gone and that suddenly seemed so utterly tragic and unlivable with, I began to cry. "Don't be silly," said Celia.

"But Dave's gone," I sobbed.

"It's your own fault," she said. "You didn't make him feel loved enough." "Look on the bright side, though, at least he didn't snuff it¹¹," said my sister.

"Yes, he was going to get run over by a taxi, doing his Christmas shopping," said Celia. "Imagine that!"

(2015)

Synonyms for relationships

1. dependence, alliance, kinship.

2. affinity, consanguinity.

Relationship, kinship refer to connection with others by blood or by marriage.

Relationship can be applied to connection either by birth or by marriage: relationship to a ruling family.

Kinship generally denotes common descent and implies a more intimate connection than relationship: the ties and obligations of kinship.

¹⁰ Marc Bolan: (1947-77) engelsk rockstjerne

¹¹ snuff it: kradse af (dø)

Individual work

1. **Pick four words** that you learned today. Translate them into Danish. You may also want to use the dictionary in order to make notes about how to use the word in sentences.

New word	Translation	How to use the word
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Take turns in pairs

- Describe a perfect date.
- Describe the physical appearance of the person you would like to date.
- Describe the personality of the person you would like to date.
- What are some places you could go on a first date?
- Is the first impression important? Is the place important? Why?

Sunday in the Park

Bel Kaufman

5 It was still warm in the late-afternoon sun, and the city noises came muffled through the trees in the park. She put her book down on the bench, removed her sunglasses, and sighed contentedly. Morton was reading the Times Magazine section, one arm flung around her shoulder; their three-year-old son, Larry, was playing in the sandbox: a faint breeze fanned her hair softly against her cheek. It was five-thirty of a Sunday afternoon, and the small playground, tucked away in a corner of the park, was all but deserted. The swings and seesaws stood motionless and abandoned, the slides were empty, 10 and only in the sandbox two little boys squatted diligently side by side. How good this is, she thought, and almost smiled at her sense of well-being. They must out in the sun more often; Morton was so city-pale, cooped up all week inside the gray factorylike university. She squeezed his arm affectionately and glanced at Larry, delighting in the pointed little face frowning in concentration

over the tunnel he was digging. The other boy suddenly stood up and with a quick, deliberate swing of his chubby arm threw a spadeful of sand at Larry. It just missed his head. Larry continued digging; the boy remained standing, shovel raised, stolid and impassive.

5 “No, no, little boy.” She shook her finger at him, her eyes searching for the child’s mother or nurse. “We musn’t throw sand. It may get in someone’s eyes and hurt. We must play nicely in the nice sandbox.” The boy looked at her in unblinking expectancy. He was about Larry’s age but perhaps ten pounds heavier, a husky little boy with none of Larry’s quickness and sensitivity in his face. Where was his mother? The only other people left in the playground were two women and a little girl on roller skates leaving now through the gate, and man on a bench a few feet away.
10 He was a big man, and her seemed to be taking up the whole bench as he held the Sunday comics close to his face. She supposed he was the child’s father. He did not look up from his comics, but spat one deftly out of the corner of his mouth. She turned her eyes away.

At that moment, as swiftly as before, the fat little boy threw another spadeful of sand at Larry. This time some of it landed on his hair and forehead. Larry looked up at his mother, his mouth
15 tentative; her expression would tell him whether to cry or not.

Her first instinct was to rush to her son, brush the sand out of his hair, and punish the other child, but she controlled it. She always said that she wanted Larry to learn to fight his own battles.

20 “Don’t do that, little boy,” she said sharply, leaning forward on the bench. “You musn’t throw sand!”

The man on the bench moved his mouth as if to spit again, but instead he spoke. He did not look at her, but at the boy only.

“You go right ahead, Joe,” he said loudly. “Throw all you want. This here is a public sandbox.”

25 She felt a sudden weakness in her knees as she glanced at Morton. He had become aware of what was happening. He put his Times down carefully on his lap and turned his fine, lean face toward the man, smiling the shy, apologetic smile he might have offered a student in pointing out an error in his thinking. When he spoke to the man, it was with his usual reasonableness.

“You’re quite right,” he said pleasantly, “but just because this is a public place....”

30 The man lowered his funnies and looked at Morton. He looked at him from head to foot, slowly and deliberately. “Yeah?” His insolent voice was edged with menace. “My kid’s got just as good right here as yours, and if he feels like throwing sand, he’ll throw it, and if you don’t like it, you can take your kid the hell out of here.”

The children were listening, their eyes and mouths wide open, their spades forgotten in small fists. She noticed the muscle in Morton’s jaw tighten. He was rarely angry; he seldom lost his temper. She was suffused with a tenderness for her husband and an impotent rage against the man for involving him in a situation so alien and so distasteful to him.

“Now, just a minute,” Morton said courteously, “you must realize....”

“Aw, shut up,” said the man.

Her heart began to pound. Morton half rose; the Times slid to the ground. Slowly the other man stood up. He took a couple of steps toward Morton, then stopped. He flexed his great arms, waiting. She pressed her trembling knees together. Would there be violence, fighting? How dreadful, how incredible....She must do something, stop them, call for help. She wanted to put her hand on her husband's sleeve, to pull him down, but for some reason she didn't.

Morton adjusted his glasses. He was very pale. "This is ridiculous," he said unevenly. "I must ask you...."

"Oh, yeah?" said the man. He stood with his legs spread apart, rocking a little, looking at Morton with utter scorn. "You and who else?"

For a moment the two men looked at each other nakedly. Then Morton turned his back on the man and said quietly, "Come on, let's get out of her." He walked awkwardly, almost limping with self-consciousness, to the sandbox. He stooped and lifted Larry and his shovel out.

At one Larry came to life; his face lost its rapt expression and he began to kick and cry. "I don't want to go home, I want to play better, I don't want any supper, I don't like supper...." It became a chat as they walked, pulling their child between them, his feet dragging on the ground. In order to get to the exit gate they had to pass the bench where the man sat sprawling again. She was careful not to look at him. With all the dignity she could summon, she pulled Larry's sandy, perspiring little hand, while Morton pulled the other. Slowly and with head high she walked with her husband and child out of the playground.

Her first feelings was one of relief that a fight had been avoided, that no one was hurt. Yet beneath it there was a layer of something else, something heavy and inescapable. She sensed that it was more than just an unpleasant incident, more than defeat of reason by force. She felt dimly it had something to do with her and Morton, something acutely personal, familiar, and important.

Suddenly Morton spoke. "It wouldn't have proved anything."

"What?" she asked.

"A fight. It wouldn't have proved anything beyond the fact that he's bigger than I am."

"Of course," she said.

"The only possible outcome," he continued reasonably, "would have been—what? My glasses broken, perhaps a tooth or two replaced, a couple of days' work missed – and for what? For justice? For truth?"

"Of course," she repeated. She quickened her step. She wanted only to get home and to busy herself with her familiar tasks; perhaps then the feeling, glued like heavy plaster on her heart, would be gone. Of all the stupid, despicable bullies, she thought, pulling harder on Larry's hand. The child was still crying. Always before she had felt a tender pity for his defenseless little body, the frail arms, the narrow shoulders with sharp winglike shoulder blades, the thin and unsure legs, but now her mouth tightened in resentment.

"Stop crying," she said sharply. "I'm ashamed of you!" She felt as if all three of them were tracking mud along the street. The child cried louder.

If there had been an issue involved, she thought, if there had been something to fight for.... But what else could her possibly have done? Allow himself to be beaten? Attempt to educate

the man? Call a policeman? “Officer, there’s a man in the park who won’t stop his child from throwing sand one mine....” The whole thing was as silly as that, and not worth thinking about.

“Can’t you keep him quiet, for Pete’s sake?” Morton asked irritably.

“What do you suppose I’ve been trying to do?” she said.

Larry pulled back, dragging his feet.

“If you can’t discipline this child, I will,” Morton snapped, making a move toward the boy.

But her voice stopped him. She was shocked to hear it, thin and cold and penetrating with contempt. “Indeed?” she heard herself say. “You and who else?”.

Picture task

Write a text (75 words) to match the photo and include all the words/ phrases from the list below. You are not allowed to change the form of the words.

Reflection – soulmate – love – identity – destiny – belief – one – two souls one thought
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Brainstorming 2: What makes a good relationship?



Everyone's relationship is unique, and people come together for many different reasons.

But there are some things that good relationships have in common. What are these things?

Create your own "recipe for a good relationship"!

Recipe
for a good relationship between
classmates

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

Vocabulary related to the topic “Relationships”

relationship (noun)

1. a connection, association, or involvement.
2. a connection between persons by blood or marriage.
3. an emotional or other connection between people:
4. a sexual involvement; affair.

Synonyms

connection; friendship; affair, communication, contact, exchange, liaison, link, marriage, relation, tie, dependency, hookup, interrelation, kinship, nearness, network, parallel, similarity, correlation, conjunction, affinity, alliance, association, bond

Antonyms

divorce, difference, disconnection, dissimilarity, division, imbalance, opposition, separation

the way in which two people, groups, or countries behave towards each other or deal with each other

❖ relationship (between A and B)

The relationship between the police and the local community has improved.

❖ relationship (with somebody)

*She has a very **close relationship** with her sister.*

*I have established a good **working relationship** with my boss.*

a master-servant relationship

a love-hate relationship

❖ relationship (between A and B) | in a relationship (with somebody)

a loving and/or sexual friendship between two people

Their affair did not develop into a lasting relationship.

*Are you **in a relationship**?*

the way in which two or more things are connected

❖ relationship (between A and B)

the relationship between mental and physical health

❖ relationship (to something)

*This comment **bore no relationship to** the subject of our conversation.*

*People alter their voices **in relationship to** background noise.*

an inverse relationship

the way in which a person is related to somebody else in a family

❖ a father-son relationship

❖ a relationship between A and B

I'm not sure of the exact relationship between them—I think they're cousins

Talking about relationships – examples

Jim: Do you see your friends very often?

*Louisa: Yes, we meet up most weekends. We all **get on really well** and **have a lot in common** so we're always happy doing the same things and going to the same places.*

John: That's nice! What do you like about your close friends?

Anna: I think we **enjoy each other's company**! We **see eye-to-eye on** most things so we rarely **fall out with** each other.

Joe: Have you known each other long?

Amy: Most of them, yes. Except for my closest friend Carrie. We **struck up a relationship** at college and **got on like a house on fire**. But yes, my other friendships **go back years** to when we were at school.

Describing a person you are very close to - examples

You should say, who this person is, when you met them, where you met them and what it is about them you like so much.

Julia: I'd like to talk about my boyfriend Jose. We **got to know** each other at University almost 4 years ago. We were in the same department. Initially, we were **just good friends** and used to go out in a group with our other friends. When Jose went back to Spain for the holidays we would **keep in touch with** each other. Then one year he invited me to come to Spain with him, and that's when we **fell for** each other I think. So you couldn't really say it was **love at first sight** as it had been over a year since we'd met. But we really **hit it off** and by the time we got back to university in September we were able to tell all our friends that we were **in a relationship**. What do I like about Jose? Well, he's very kind, very funny, and very supportive – and we're really **well matched** in our interests. He hasn't **popped the question** yet though. We've talked about getting married and I think we're both ready **to settle down** and have children. We'll just have to wait and see ...

Talking about marriage - examples

Robin: Do you think marriage is still as important as ever?

Christine: Yes, it certainly is in my country. I think the problem for some people is a lack of commitment. All relationships **have their ups and downs**, but some people prefer to **break up** rather than **working at** the relationship.

Larry: What do you think is the ideal time to get married?

Terry: Personally, I think you should wait until you've found yourself first, until you have decided if you want a career, and perhaps you should do some travelling. You should do this before **tying the knot**.

However, if you **fall head over heels in love** plans like these can easily be forgotten.

Max: Is it important to keep in contact with our friends when we're in a relationship?

Maria: Absolutely. It's so easy to **drift apart** from your friends when you **fall in love**. But I think both partners should try not to **lose touch with** their friends. That's the best way to have a **healthy relationship** with your partner.

Useful phrases and definitions

- **to break up**: to end a romantic relationship
- **to drift apart**: to become less close to someone
- **to enjoy someone's company**: to like spending time with someone
- **to fall for**: to fall in love
- **to fall head over heels in love**: to start to love someone a lot
- **to fall out with**: to have a disagreement and stop being friends
- **to get on like a house on fire**: to like someone's company very much indeed
- **to get on well with**: to understand someone and enjoy similar interests
- **to get to know**: to begin to know someone
- **to go back years**: to have known someone for a long time
- **to have a lot in common**: to share similar interests
- **to have ups and downs**: to have good and bad times
- **a healthy relationship**: a good, positive relationship
- **to hit it off**: to quickly become good friends with
- **to be in a relationship**: to be romantically involved with someone
- **to be just good friends**: to not be romantically involved
- **to keep in touch with**: to keep in contact with
- **to lose touch with**: to not see or hear from someone any longer
- **love at first sight**: to fall in love immediately you meet someone
- **to pop the question**: to ask someone to marry you
- **to see eye to eye**: to agree on a subject
- **to settle down**: to give up the single life and start a family
- **to strike up a relationship**: to begin a friendship
- **to tie the knot**: to get married
- **to be well matched**: to be similar to
- **to work at a relationship**: to try to maintain a positive relationship with someone

get rid of skille sig af med
stuff 'ting'
ac'cumulate samle sammen
'clutter rod
al'lowing tillade
junk skrald, skrammel
chuck out smide ud
jumble sale loppemarked
col'lect (ind)samle
'dustman skraldemand
de'cisive afgørende, beslutsom
mope være forknøyt
Oxfordshire amt (county)
 nordvest for London
'omen varsel
clear out oprydning
un'healthy usundt
cling (to) klynge sig til

Second-hand City (1993)

Maggie Hewitt

And the next day it was all still there. Not that they had thought that it wouldn't be. You can't really get rid of stuff that easily. Not the accumulated clutter of years. For days they had sorted through it, allowing themselves to keep

5 only what was useful in their new life, to remember that there was no point in taking a lot of it anyway. Box by box they carried it out to the front garden and left it there.

"I never could see why you kept so much junk," he said.

"Well I thought it might come in useful."

10 "Just cluttering the place up."

"Well I liked it. I'm only chucking it out because we haven't the space."

"But you could have thrown it away years ago, it'd be just the same."

15 "I think some of it could be useful. It's too good to just throw away. Shall we get a jumble sale to collect it or a dealer?"

"Wait for the dustmen, I'd say."

"I'm not sure I should throw away all my university

20 notes."

"Oh for God's sake, you never look at them. Be decisive for once can't you? Are you going to stand there all day moping? What about this walk then?"

25 They set off for their last London walk before leaving for the Oxfordshire countryside. It seemed like a good omen to be having such a clear out, she thought, the sign of a new life as though without the past cluttering up their lives things would be easier between them. It was bad to hang onto things, unhealthy, too much like clinging to the past.

30 She felt like the snail carrying her past on her back. She needed to think about the future, his new job, their new

house. The strangeness of it all would bring them together, wouldn't it?

Returning invigorated and in a better mood, they could see their garden from a long way off. Where their neighbours grew flowers, they appeared to be growing lampshades with bundles and boxes lined up along the fence like stalls in a market. As they got nearer they could see that someone was in the garden intently examining one of the boxes. So intently that she scarcely noticed the others walking up the path and was suddenly surprised by their arrival. There was an awkward pause. The couple clearly didn't expect a complete stranger to be in their garden closely inspecting objects which until the day before had been part of their possessions, some of them possessions which she at least didn't really want to part with. And yet by throwing them out hadn't they publicly declared they didn't want them, so just what did they feel was wrong? The intruder rallied first.

"Hello," she said, "you've got some really nice stuff. D'you mind if I take it?"

"Help yourself, it's all got to go."

"D'you think you've got a box I could put it in?"

He went indoors and returned with a box, one of the ones they had been saving for the real job of packing when that began.

"Great! I can get a lot in that."

Systematically she began sorting through all the boxes that they had just filled, examining everything carefully and exclaiming as she went.

"This glove is better than the ones I've got. Do you have the other one?"

"I think I did."

She began rummaging too. Why has she thrown those gloves away, she wondered, they were perfectly good ones.

"Moving are you?"

strangeness fremmed-
artet(hed)
in'vigate oplive
'lampshade lampeskærm
bundle bundt, bylt
line up stille på række
fence hegn
stall bod
in'tently optaget, koncentreret
'scarcely næppe, knapt nok
'akward akavet
com'plete fuldstændig
stranger fremmed
in'spect undersøge
'object genstand
pos'session ejendel
(to) part (with) skille sig af med
'publicly offentligt
de'clare erklære, bekendtgøre
in'truder ubuden gæst
rally tage sig sammen, fatte sig
e'xamine undersøge
ex'claim udbryde
glove handske
'rummage rode

disapprove misbillige
hassle 'uro', (egl.) skænderi
'rubbish affald
skip (affalds-)container
sleeping bag sovepose
clasp spænde
com'ment bemærke, kom-
 mentere
fringe cut pandehår
e'vent begivenhed
'glamorous betagende
fancy synes om, have lyst til

"Yes, we're getting out of London."

"Oh," she said disapprovingly, "why's that?"

"Oh, well, you know. It's got such a hassle here – the noise, the traffic, and of course the rubbish."

5 "Like this lot you mean." She laughed.

"Well, no."

"Me, I love it. Never buy anything if I can help it. You can get just about everything from skips or jumble sales. These gloves are much better than mine. You don't mind if I leave mine instead?"

10 She came into the house bringing back into it a pair of gloves, a damaged sleeping bag, a coat, and an old address book with a clasp.

"This is great!" she said. "I've always wanted one like this. I'll have to get the coat dyed. I only wear black or red. I've got a friend I think will like the address book. D'you have any coffee?"

They sat round talking.

"Look, I hope you don't mind me commenting but your hair would look better with the fringe cut. I'll cut it for you if you like. I won't make a mess of it. I know what I'm doing."

And somehow she did.

No, she wouldn't stay to eat.

25 "I like the idea but not the event," she said and left.

"What a strange person."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"I mean she seemed so ..."

"So at home. I suppose she did."

30 "You know she looked rather good in that coat. I rather wished I'd not thrown it away."

"It didn't look like that on you."

"Like what?"

"Well, she is rather glamorous."

35 "So you did fancy her then?"

“I didn’t say that.”

“Well, did you?”

Next morning they were lying in bed relaxing in the warm glow of a Sunday morning when the bell rang. Slowly
5 he got up to answer it, stubbed his toe on the bed, swore and groped round to find his dressing gown. Wrapping the belt clumsily round him he shuffled to the door.

“Who is it?” she said when he came back.

“It’s Belinda. She’s come back for some things she
10 couldn’t manage yesterday. She’s brought you some flowers. She says she got them from a garden up the road. I hope it’s no one we know. She’s got her bike this time. D’you mind if she brings it in while she sorts the stuff through? I’ve invited her in for coffee ...”

15 Turning over in the bed she moved across towards the other side where the warm patch was already cooling fast.

re'lax slappe af
swear bande
grobe gribe efter
'dressing gown morgen-
kåbe
wrap vikle
bike cykel
patch plet

Reunion (John Cheever)

The last time I saw my father was in Grand Central Station. I was going from my grandmother's in the Adirondacks to a cottage on the Cape that my mother had rented, and
5 I wrote my father that I would be in New York between trains for an hour and a half, and asked if we could have lunch together. His secretary wrote to say that he would meet me at the information booth at noon, and at twelve o'clock sharp I saw him coming through the crowd.

10 He was a stranger to me -- my mother divorced him three years ago and I hadn't been with him since -- but as soon as I saw him I felt that he was my father, my flesh and blood, my future and my doom. I knew that when I was grown I would be something like him; I would have to plan my campaigns within his limitations. He was a big, good-looking man, and I was terribly happy to see him again. He struck me on the back and shook my hand.

15 "Hi, Charlie," he said, "Hi, boy. I'd like to take you up to my club, but it's in the Sixties, and if you have to catch an early train I guess we'd better get something to eat around here." He put his arm around me, and I smelled my father the way my mother sniffs a rose. It was a rich compound of whiskey and aftershave lotion, shoe polish, woolens, and the rankness of a mature male. I hoped that someone would see us together. I wished that we could be photographed. I wanted some record of our having been together.

20 We went out of the station and up a side street to a restaurant. It was still early, and the place was empty. The bartender was quarreling with a delivery boy, and there was one very old waiter in a red coat down by the kitchen floor. We sat down and my father hailed the waiter in a loud voice.

"*Kellner!*" he shouted. "*Garcon*¹²! *Cameriere*¹³! *You!*"

25 His boisterousness in the empty restaurant seemed out of place.

"Could we have a little service here?" he shouted. "Chop-chop." Then he clapped his hands. This caught the waiter's attention, and he shuffled over to our table.

"Were you clapping your hands at me?" he asked.

¹² (In French) a waiter

¹³ (In French) a waiter

"Calm down, calm down, *Sommelier*¹⁴," my father said. "If it isn't too much to ask of you, if it wouldn't be too much above and beyond the call of duty, we would like a couple of Beefeater Gibsons¹⁵."

"I don't like to be clapped at," the waiter said.

5 "I should have brought my whistle," my father said. "I have a whistle that is audible only to the ears of old waiters. Now, take out your little pad and your little pencil and see if you can get this straight: two Beefeater Gibsons. Repeat after me: two Beefeater Gibsons."

"I think you'd better go somewhere else," the waiter said quietly.

10 "That," said my father, "is one of the most brilliant suggestions I have ever heard. C'mon, Charlie, let's get the hell out of here."

I followed my father out of that restaurant and into another. He was not so boisterous this time. Our drinks came, and he cross-questioned me about the baseball season. He then struck the edge of his empty glass with his knife and began shouting again.

"*Garcon! Kellner! Cameriere!* You! Could we trouble you to bring us two more of the same?"

15 "How old is the boy?"

"That is none of your God damned business."

"I'm sorry, sir," the waiter said, "but I won't serve the boy another drink."

20 "Well, I have some news for you," my father said. "I have some very interesting news for you. This doesn't happen to be the only restaurant in New York. They've opened another on the corner. C'mon, Charlie."

He paid the bill, and I followed him out of that restaurant into another. Here the waiters wore pink jackets like hunting coats, and there was a lot of horse tack on the walls. We sat down, and my father began to shout again.

25 "Master of the hounds! Tallyhoo and all that sort of thing. We'd like a little something in the way of a stirrup cup. Namely, two Bibson Geefeaters."

"Two Bibson Geefeaters?" the waiter asked, smiling.

¹⁴ (In French) the waiter who is responsible for wine

¹⁵ a mixed drink made with gin and dry vermouth, and often garnished with a pickled onion

"You know damned well what I want," my father said angrily. "I want two Beefeater Gibsons, and make it snappy. Things have changed in jolly old England. So my friend the duke tells me. Let's see what England can produce in the way of a cocktail."

"This isn't England," the waiter said.

5 "Don't argue with me," my father said. "Just do as you're told."

"I just thought you might like to know where you are," the waiter said.

"If there is one thing I cannot tolerate," my father said, "it is an impudent domestic. C'mon, Charlie."

The fourth place we went to was Italian.

10 "*Buon giorno*,"¹⁶ my father said. "*Per favore, possiamo avere due cocktail americani, forti, forti. Molto gin, poco vermut.*"¹⁷

"I don't understand Italian," the waiter said.

"Oh, come off it," my father said. "You understand Italian, and you know damned well you do. "*Vogliamo due cocktail Americani. Subito.*"¹⁸

15 The waiter left us and spoke with the captain, who came over to our table and said, "I'm sorry, sir, but this table is reserved."

"All right," my father said. "Get us another table."

"All the tables are reserved," the captain said.

20 "I get it," my father said. "You don't desire our patronage. Is that it? Well, the hell with you. *Vada all' inferno.*"¹⁹ Let's go, Charlie."

"I have to get my train," I said.

"I'm sorry, sonny," my father said. "I'm terribly sorry." He put his arm around me and pressed me against him. "I'll walk you back to the station. If there had only been time to go up to my club." "That's all right, Daddy," I said.

¹⁶ (In Italian) Good morning

¹⁷ (In Italian) Can we have two American cocktails, strong, A lot of gin, a bit of vermouth?

¹⁸ (In Italian) We want two American cocktails. Right away.

¹⁹ (In Italian) Go to hell.

"I'll get you a paper," he said. "I'll get you a paper to read on the train."

Then he went up to a newsstand and said, "Kind sir, will you be good enough to favor me with one of your God damned, no good, ten-cent afternoon papers?" The clerk turned away from him and stared at a magazine cover. "Is it asking too much, kind sir," my father said,
5 "is it asking too much for you to sell me one of your disgusting specimens of yellow journalism?"

"I have to go, Daddy," I said. "It's late."

"Now, just wait a second, sonny," he said. "Just wait a second. I want to get a rise out of this chap."

10 "Goodbye, Daddy," I said, and I went down the stairs and got my train, and that was the last time I saw my father.

Source: John Cheever "Reunion", October 27th, 1962.

https://creativewritinghibbert.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/cheever_reunion.pdf (20-05-2022)

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The Strong Man

by George Garrett

"Cheer up," Harry said, "It isn't really a serious matter."

5 "You don't think so?"

He only smiled. It was a great gift, that smile: sudden, frank, wholly disarming, and, like a child's shaped by secret mischief. It was impossible to talk seriously about anything in the face of such an abrupt and charming defense. She looked at him, studied him as she might have examined a perfect stranger - the close-cut, sandy hair, the small eyes, bland and sad as a dog's, the soft lips and the
10 thrilling brightness of his smile. Harry was almost handsome, certainly, but, she thought, strangely unreal. There was a sense of the alien about him. You never quite thought of him in three dimensions.

"No," he went on, "we'll get over it. And anything you can get over isn't really serious -like the measles."

"Or smallpox."

15 Harry smiled again and poured some beer into her glass. They were sitting in a little trattoria²⁰ beside the Arno²¹. It was twilight, the long gold twilight of Tuscany in late summer, and all of the tables were taken. Along the sidewalks on both sides of the street the bright, close-pressed crowds flowed as slowly as the river. They had just arrived in Pisa that afternoon from Rome.

"We'll stay here a couple of days and rest" he said. "It's a restful place. We can sit by the window
20 in the hotel room and have late breakfasts and see the river. In the morning I'll take you over to see the campanile. It really does lean, you know."

"Does it?" she said. "I'm not sure I'm going to stay with you. I'm not at all sure I ought to."

"Don't be silly," he said. "Of course you'll stay."

"You're so sure of me. Why are you always so sure?"

25 She was fumbling in her pocketbook for matches. She thought for a moment that she was going to cry and she didn't want that to happen. He leaned across the table and lit her cigarette with his lighter.

"Where would you go?"

²⁰ Italian for a pub

²¹ Italian river that runs through Pisa to Firenze

"You bastard," she said.

"No, I'm serious," Harry said. "For once I'm being perfectly serious. Let's try and be rational about this whole thing. Where would you go?"

"Home. I think I'd like to go home."

5 "Out of the question," he said. "What would you do when you got there - get a divorce?"

"Stop it, Harry. I don't know what I'm going to do."

"I want to know," he said quickly. "Do you want a divorce or don't you? It's just that simple. Either - or."

10 "I don't know, Harry. I don't know what to do yet. I'm trying to work all this out in my mind. Will you please stop asking me dumb questions?"

"What about the baby? You ought to think about that. Did you ever stop to think about the baby?"

At last she began to cry. He gave her his handkerchief.

15 "Please," he said. "Even if these people can't understand English, they can't ignore a sobbing woman."

She stiffened a little.

"You care what they think, don't you?"

"There, you see, you've stopped now."

20 "I could say it in Italian," she said. "I could stand up and say it in very simple Italian. This is my husband who is making me cry. My husband is always making me cry. My husband is always sleeping with other women. When I find out about it we leave. We are always leaving places."

"You know what they'd say? They'd say, why don't you leave him? The logical answer."

"You'd like that, wouldn't you?"

"I don't know," Harry said. "I never really thought of it until just now."

25 "You can't even imagine it. After all this time, you can't even conceive of my leaving you. Now that I'm pregnant, you're certain."

"Do we have to go through all this?"

"You can't even imagine my leaving you, can you?"

"No," he said. "To tell you the truth I can't."

"All right," she said. "Suppose I don't. Suppose I just stay. Then what?"

"Everything," he said, smiling wonderfully. "Then everything. We'll begin again. No reason why not. We could go up to Paris. I know some people there."

"Why not home?"

5 "Why not?"

"Are you serious? Would you really go home?"

"I might even go to work," he said. "Idle hands..."²²

"The awful thing," she said, "is that I never know when you're telling the truth. I never know whether I can trust you."

10 He signaled for the waiter.

"I suppose you'll have to," he said. "I suppose you'll just have to take that chance."

They crossed the street and edged into the crowd walking along the bank of the river. It was getting dark now and the mountains to the north were only a bulk of heavy shadows. The mountains were disappearing and the river was dark. She could smell the river and she could hear it, but she could
15 only see it where light fell. She felt dazed, as if not only Harry but the whole world was unreal, vanishing. It gets dark and the mountains go away.

"Where does everything go in the dark?" she had asked when she was a child.

"Things just goes to sleep," the colored nurse had said. "They just curl up and go to sleep."

They moved across the bridge with the crowd and then they were on a narrow cobbled street with
20 cafés and restaurants and movie theaters. They heard a military band playing faintly somewhere and they heard the laughter and the rich syllables of the language all around them. Farther along the street they entered a small square. At the corner there was a tight circle of people around a single figure. The man was very pale under a light, powerfully built, in bathing trunks and sneakers. He stood relaxed, slump-shouldered, while a short fat man, his bald head shining in the lamplight, walked
25 slowly around the circle of viewers displaying a placard with a picture of the man in bathing trunks.

"What is he?" she asked. "A magician?"

Harry laughed. "No," he said. "He's some kind of a strong man. Do you want to watch?"

"I don't know. I've never seen one."

²² Lazy hands – the saying says "The devil makes work for idle hands."

"Let's ."

There was a hush as the man began his performance. He lifted heavy weights over his head, straining, his pale muscles bulging and the sweat glistening all over his body. When he had finished, the short man passed through the crowd taking a few coins in his hat. The strong man leaned against the lamppost breathing heavily. She thought he looked so lonely out there in that zone of light, alone and almost naked. He did not seem to be looking at anyone or anything. He seemed unaware of the crowd. He only rested, breathing hard, tautly aloof ²³like a beast in a cage. She took Harry's hand in hers.

"Let's go," she said. "He's going to do something with ropes."

Two men from the crowd carefully wrapped him in a net of knotted ropes. When they had finished, he could not move his hands or his feet, and they stepped back into the crowd. The strong man remained still for a moment. Then he closed his eyes and began to strain against the ropes. Sweat was slick on his forehead. The large veins in his neck showed blue and swollen against his skin. Very slowly, painfully it seemed, he began a shrugging motion with his shoulders. The ropes left raw red lines where they bit into his flesh. For a desperate moment it seemed to her that he would never be able to free himself, but then he twisted sharply and somehow freed one arm. The crowd clapped, and the short man passed the hat again while the strong man finished wriggling free of the rest of the ropes.

"He's going to try chains next," she said. "Let's see him get out of chains."

"It's just a trick. Don't you see that? Come on."

"I want to see it."

"For Christ's sake!" Harry said. "Oh, all right."

This time he was wrapped tightly in chains. He stood looking blankly into the faces of the crowd while two men wrapped him in chains.

The strong man started with his whole body twisting against the chains. Abruptly he slipped and fell and there was a gasp and the brute sound of iron on stone. He lay as still as a fallen doll on the street.

"Let's go," Harry said.

"I want to watch," she said. "I want you to stay and see it."

"He'll never get loose now. They'll have to set him free.."

²³ Above everyone

"I don't think so."

"This is silly," Harry said. "I can't see any earthly reason why we should have to stand here and watch this."

"Look!" she said. "He's moving now."

5 The strong man began to writhe on the street. He moved along on his back, tense, and fluttering like a fish out of water. He rolled over onto his stomach and now they could see blood on his lips and the glazed, fanatic concentration in his eyes.

"You don't have to look," she said. "Close your eyes if you don't want to look at it."

10 She watched the man in chains and she felt a strange exhilaration. She felt her own body move, tense with the subtle rhythm of his struggle. One arm free, then, slowly, very slowly, the other, and, at last sitting up, he twisted his hurt legs free. While his companion passed the hat, the strong man sat in the street and looked at his legs, smiling a little. She turned away and looked at Harry. Poor Harry would never understand. Whatever she finally decided to do, Harry would never understand.

"Let's go back to the hotel and have dinner," he said.

15 They walked back the way they had come, and as they crossed the bridge over the Arno she saw that there was a new moon and she could see the dark shape of the mountains. They were still there, and she could feel the strength and flow of the river, and she could feel her child, the secret life struggling in her womb.

What is foreshadowing?

- ☐ The use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest what action is to come.
- ☐ Foreshadowing *helps to build suspense* in a story because it suggests what is about to happen.

