

Ministry of Education
Secondary Engagement Programme
September 2020

WEEK FOURTEEN: Lesson Three

Subject: English Language

Grade: Eleven

Topic: Short Story Writing

Sub-topic: Plot Development

Objectives: At the end of the lesson students will effectively in writing stories based on the stimulus provided.

Concept: The plot is based on the image provided

Content:

When writing stories on a picture stimulus one must study the images carefully before attempting to write the events that will transpire throughout the story. Study the picture and the students' responses given below.

NB.

- ❖ Dialect may be used in conversations
- ❖ Record each speaker in a separate paragraph
- ❖ Use sensory detail
- ❖ At best, make your characters seem like every day persons

The story is based on the photograph below



I stared at the postcard in my hand, a sudden warmth, then coldness, pervading my body. Scarcely noticing the postman as he gave me a casual wave, I stood there, in the driveway, like a woman gone mad. Then I was stumbling, the world a blur through my tears, pushing open the front door and bolting it. Sinking to the floor, I buried my head in my hands and wept, miserably, for what I held was the evidence of what my marriage was, a sham.

What was the use, I thought, of being married to a successful lawyer and having the picture-perfect life? What was the use of marrying someone who did not love you?

I stared at the words again. How clever it was! Wish you were here! Indeed, I thought, I wish I was there, to punch you in the face. No longer was I crying, I felt a rage within me and my anger gave me strength. How could I have been so blind? Why did I not see the tell-tale signs?

You fool! I thought. I cursed myself for my ignorance. Look what he had the nerve to send you. The image and the words were more than a slap in the face. It was as though

Mark had taken my entire life and just cruelly, happily flung it back at me. I hate him! I hate him! I shook my head trying to clear the words but it was to no avail.

On second thought, we'll call you! One sentence, only one, but, by God, it meant so very much.

An urgent business conference, he had said. What a smooth liar! Of course, it was natural for him to take his very young and beautiful secretary. What a change from his plain, quiet wife!

I stood in front of the kitchen sink. Never a more beautiful day for sadness. Blue sky, golden Caribbean sunshine and only a few cirrus clouds in the distance. Oh, Mark must be enjoying himself. What was he doing now? I wondered.

The rage returned, but fleetingly. Remember, I told myself, he's coming home today. "Yes!", a little voice echoed in my ear, "and we'll have a surprise for him!"

He walked in through the door, smiles all around.

"Happy Valentine's Day!"

I gave him a tight, forced smile.

"Something wrong?"

Ah! He really was a good actor. He would even dare to ask me this, today on a day when people are supposed to be exchanging vows of love.

I felt the cold metal of the gun strapped to my leg and it gave me courage. I opened my mouth, the words of confrontation straining to leap out like hounds pulling against a leash. Could I do it? Yes, I must! I started to reach down.

His cell phone rang. I let out the held breath slowly. I was vaguely aware of him talking on the phone. He hung up.

"Oh, that was my Mom. She wanted to know if we got her postcard. You know, she and Dad were on their second honeymoon trip..." His voice trailed off at my suddenly pale face.

It was all clear – I had never even read the card. My God, I had almost killed my husband!

by Angelina Outar, President's College, Guyana

The story was based on the picture below.

As my bare feet trudged through the sludge of human and animal waste, a terrible stench permeated the air. The putrid stench of garbage, faeces, and dead animals clung even to my clothes; the stench of poverty and despair went deep inside me, wrapping



around my lungs so that I could barely breathe.

I took a good long look at the pathetic shack I had called home for all of my sixteen years on this wretched earth. Broken bricks of concrete lay on the ground with no real purpose. Perhaps they had been

bought with no real purpose. Perhaps they had been bought with the real intention of one day building a home; now they remained as simply bricks, the cruel symbol of a broken dream, a foundation that was never built.

The shack was wooden; the sinews and tired etchings of the wood told a story of their own. The galvanized door screeched and swung with the wind - my welcome home. Jagged edges of wood were everywhere, protruding out above the galvanized door, projecting out and above the four square holes that were supposed to be windows. Even the light that streamed in seemed reluctant to enter. The beams of sunlight were not rays of

hope; they were merely citizens under the law of physics which governed them, demanding that they illuminate the damp dirt that formed the floor of my home. The light only drew attention to the deep darkness that lay everywhere.

I closed my eyes and stifled a scream. I was barren even of tears to shed. I did not want to live here. Surely God had created me for a purpose other than to enjoy the destitution of poverty or appreciate the squalor that surrounded me. I had to believe that God was good, that He was on my side. I had no one else. My father would be returning soon. Every day I prayed that he would never return. God never seemed to hear my prayers.

Would he be returning with another man? Another ogling lusty buffoon who would try to touch me ... who would start ripping at the little cloth I wore? Would he flash the money and bring rum as payment to my father? That was the moment I made my decision. Contemplating another night of fighting and screaming and running, yet another night of knowing the weight of my father's blows; contemplating that made me decide to leave. The only thing that had held me back was the single promise I had made to my dying mother - to take care of him to make sure that my father and my brother did not starve.

I went to the corner of the shack where the angel of my life, my four year old brother, lay sleeping. I gently touched his shoulders. He awakened instantly. "Nathan", I said, "wake up. We're leaving." His unquestioning response indicated that he knew my meaning. We packed our few things and left. I washed him as best as I could with the river water that lay nearby. I then cleaned myself, wiping away the surface dirt and donning my only other item of clothing, a simple black dress.

Together we walked, with bare feet, along the gravel of the road that led to life. I held my brother's hand and smiled. I wondered what he was thinking. His tiny hand squeezed mine tightly. "It's okay, Edwina," he whispered quietly. "I trust you."

by Venessa Chee, St Joseph's Convent, Port-of-Spain

Discussion:

In your notebook write what you have learnt from studying these stories and discuss it with your respective teachers and fellow classmates.

Activity:

Study the image below. In 400-450 words write a short story based on it.

(Hint: What do you see? What are they doing? Who's in the lead? Will there be a tie? Why are they racing? What are the spectators's reaction? Who is the crowd's favourite?)

