The Tell Tale Heart – Edgar Alan poe

This passage is the opening of *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe. The narrator, in a desperate attempt to prove his sanity, insists that he is not mad, despite exhibiting clear signs of paranoia and mental instability. He claims that his nervousness has heightened his senses rather than impaired them, particularly his sense of hearing, which allows him to perceive supernatural sounds from heaven, earth, and even hell. The contradiction between his claims of sanity and his irrational behavior sets the stage for the eerie, suspenseful confession of a crime that follows.

In this passage from *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe, the narrator describes how an obsessive idea took hold of his mind—his irrational hatred of the old man's "vulture eye." He insists that he had no logical reason to harm the old man; there was no anger, insult, or greed involved. Yet, the sight of the old man's pale blue eye filled him with an unbearable sense of dread, pushing him toward murder. This passage highlights the narrator's descent into madness, showing how paranoia and obsession can drive a person to commit a horrifying act without rational motive.

In this passage from *The Tell-Tale Heart*, the narrator continues to insist that he is not mad. He argues that a madman would not be able to plan and execute a crime so carefully. He describes how, for a whole week before killing the old man, he was extra kind to him to avoid suspicion.

Each night at midnight, he would slowly and quietly open the old man's door. He was extremely careful, moving very slowly so he wouldn't wake him. He even took an entire hour just to place his head inside the room. Then, he would slightly open his lantern so that only a thin ray of light shone on the old man's "vulture eye." However, every night the eye was closed, and since it was the eye that disturbed him—not the old man himself—he couldn't bring himself to commit the murder yet.

In the mornings, he would act completely normal, greeting the old man in a friendly way so that he wouldn't suspect anything. The narrator believes his cleverness and patience prove that he is sane, but his obsession with the eye and his sneaky behavior suggest otherwise.

On the eighth night, the narrator was even more careful than before when opening the old man's door. He moved so slowly that even the minute hand of a watch seemed to move faster than him. He felt powerful and clever, proud of how well he was executing his plan. The idea that the old man had no clue about his secret thoughts or actions filled him with excitement, and he even let out a small laugh.

However, the old man heard this faint sound and suddenly moved in his bed, as if startled. But instead of getting scared and pulling back, the narrator remained calm. Since the room

was completely dark—because the shutters were tightly closed to keep out robbers—he knew the old man couldn't see the door opening. So, he kept pushing it open slowly and steadily, without stopping.

As the narrator was about to open his lantern to shine a small ray of light on the old man's eye, his thumb accidentally slipped on the metal latch, making a noise. The old man immediately woke up and sat up in bed, calling out, **"Who's there?"**

The narrator stayed completely silent and didn't move at all. He remained still for an entire hour, waiting patiently. During this time, he never heard the old man lie back down. The old man was still sitting up in bed, listening carefully in fear—just like the narrator had done many nights before when he anxiously listened to quiet sounds, like the ticking of insects inside the walls.

The narrator hears the old man let out a quiet, fearful groan—not a sound of pain or sadness, but a deep, helpless noise that comes from pure terror. The narrator understands this sound well because he himself has felt the same kind of fear many times before, especially at midnight when everything is silent, and his own anxious thoughts overwhelmed him.

He realizes that the old man has been lying awake since he first heard the small noise earlier. The old man's fear has been growing, even though he keeps trying to convince himself that it's just the wind, a mouse, or a cricket. He wants to believe there is nothing to be afraid of, but deep inside, he knows something is wrong.

The narrator believes that "Death" is already looming over the old man, casting a dark shadow over him. Even though the old man cannot see or hear anything unusual, he *feels* that someone is there in the darkness—without knowing that the narrator's head is already inside his room, watching him.

The narrator waits patiently for a long time, listening carefully. Since the old man has not laid back down, he decides to slowly, very carefully, open a tiny slit in the lantern. He is extremely cautious, and finally, a thin beam of dim light, as delicate as a spider's thread, shines through the opening—directly onto the old man's "vulture eye."

To the narrator's horror, the eye is **wide open**. Seeing it fills him with rage. He describes it in detail: a dull, pale blue eye with a cloudy film over it, which makes him shudder. He doesn't see the rest of the old man's face or body because he has focused the lantern's light only on the eye, as if by instinct.

At that moment, the narrator hears a faint, muffled, quick sound—like a watch ticking inside cotton. He immediately recognizes it as the old man's heartbeat. As he listens, the sound grows louder and faster. The increasing heartbeat makes the narrator even more furious, just like a war drum pushes a soldier to charge into battle.

But he still controls himself, staying completely still, barely even breathing. He holds the lantern steady, keeping the thin ray of light focused on the old man's eye. Meanwhile, the heartbeat grows louder and faster, beating wildly in fear. The old man must be absolutely terrified! The narrator listens as the sound grows more intense, fueling his madness.

The narrator describes how the sound of the old man's heartbeat grows **louder and louder** with each passing moment. He reminds the reader that he is nervous by nature, and in the **dead silence of the night**, in that old, eerie house, the strange and growing sound fills him with uncontrollable fear.

He tries to stay calm, standing still for a few more minutes, but the beating keeps getting louder. He starts to panic, thinking that if it continues, a neighbor might hear it. He decides that **the time has come**—he must act now.

With a **loud yell**, he suddenly **throws open the lantern** and **jumps into the room**. The old man lets out **one single scream**, but before he can do anything else, the narrator **grabs him, drags him to the floor, and pulls the heavy bed over him** to smother him.

Once the deed is done, the narrator **smiles happily**, pleased that everything has gone according to plan. However, for several minutes after, he can still **hear the heart beating** faintly under the bed. He isn't worried this time—it's too muffled to be heard through the walls. Finally, the **sound stops**, and the narrator is sure that the old man is **dead**.

To make absolutely certain, he **removes the bed and checks the body**, placing his hand on the old man's chest for several minutes. **No heartbeat.** He is now completely sure—**the old man is "stone dead."** And with that, his **hated eye will never trouble him again.**

The narrator, still trying to prove that he is not mad, explains the **"wise precautions"** he took to hide the body. As the night went on, he worked quickly but quietly.

First, he **cut the corpse into pieces**, removing the head, arms, and legs. Then, he **lifted three floorboards in the old man's room and carefully hid the body parts underneath the floor.** After placing everything inside, he **replaced the boards so perfectly** that no one—not even the old man's sharp eye—would have been able to notice anything unusual.

He proudly points out that there was **no blood left behind** because he had been extremely careful. A **tub had caught all the blood**, so there were **no stains, no mess, nothing suspicious** left behind.

By the time he finished hiding the body, it was **4 o'clock in the morning**—but still dark like midnight. Just as the bell struck the hour, there was **a knock at the door.**

Feeling **completely confident and without fear**, he went to open it. At the door stood **three police officers**, who introduced themselves politely. They explained that **a neighbor had heard a scream during the night** and reported it to the police. Since there was suspicion of something bad happening, the officers had been **sent to search the house.**

At first, the narrator is completely **confident and unafraid**. He smiles as he welcomes the police officers inside, feeling in control of the situation. He calmly explains that the **shriek** the neighbor heard was **his own, from a bad dream** and that the old man was simply **away in the countryside.**

To prove that nothing suspicious has happened, he **allows the officers to search the entire house freely**. He even leads them to the old man's room, showing them that everything remains untouched and undisturbed. Feeling **so triumphant and overconfident**, he goes a step further—he **brings chairs into the room and invites the officers to sit down and rest.** In an act of bold arrogance, he **places his own chair directly over the hidden corpse beneath the floorboards.**

At first, the police believe him. They are **completely convinced by his calm behavior**, and they casually sit and chat. However, as time passes, the narrator starts feeling **uneasy.** He becomes **pale** and suddenly **wants the officers to leave.** His head starts to **ache**, and he begins to hear a **faint ringing in his ears.**

But the officers **keep talking, unaware of his growing distress.** The **ringing sound becomes louder and more distinct**, and no matter how much he tries to distract himself by talking more freely, the noise only gets **worse and worse, pushing him toward breaking point.**

As the ringing sound becomes **clearer and more distinct**, the narrator **realizes that it is not just in his ears**—it is coming from **somewhere else**. His panic grows, and he becomes **pale**, but he tries to hide his fear by **talking even faster and louder**.

However, the **sound keeps getting louder**—a steady, **dull, quick noise**, like a **watch ticking inside cotton.** He struggles to breathe but notices that the police officers **don't seem to hear anything**.

Desperate to drown out the sound, he **talks faster and more forcefully**, raising his voice. But **the noise does not stop—it only grows louder**. He **gets up, paces the room, gestures wildly, and speaks in an exaggerated manner**—yet **the sound continues to build**.

He starts to think, **"Why won't they leave?"** His frustration turns to **rage**. He **stomps around the room, fuming, swearing, and swinging his chair**, scraping it against the floorboards. But **nothing works—the noise only grows louder, overwhelming everything else.**

Meanwhile, the officers **continue chatting and smiling calmly**, completely unaware of the narrator's torment. This drives him to the edge—he becomes convinced that **they can hear the sound, they suspect the truth, and they are mocking him.**

Unable to bear the **agony of their smiles and indifference**, the narrator reaches his breaking point. The sound keeps growing **louder, louder, louder!** In sheer desperation, he feels that he must **either scream or die.**

In the final moment of *The Tell-Tale Heart*, the narrator **completely loses control.** Overwhelmed by the sound of the old man's heartbeat—growing unbearably **loud in his mind**—he reaches **his breaking point.**

Believing that the police officers **already know the truth and are mocking him**, he can **no longer endure the pressure.** In a **fit of hysteria**, he **screams** at them, calling them **villains** and demanding that they **stop pretending** (**"dissemble no more!"**).

He **confesses to the murder**, admitting **his crime on the spot.** In his madness, he **orders the officers to tear up the floorboards**, revealing that **the old man's body is hidden underneath.**

The final **irony** of the story is that there was **no actual sound**—it was all in his head, a result of his **guilt and paranoia.** The noise he believed was the old man's heart **beating from beyond the grave** was actually **his own conscience destroying him.**

The postmaster by Rabindranath Tagore

Do you think the postmaster is responsible for Ratan's misery towards the end of the story?

The postmaster is partly responsible for Ratan's misery at the end of the story. While he never explicitly encouraged her to depend on him emotionally, his kindness and companionship made her feel deeply connected to him. He taught her to read, shared his thoughts about his family, and allowed her to care for him when he was sick. These small gestures, though seemingly insignificant to him, created a strong emotional bond for Ratan, who had no one else in the world.

However, when the postmaster decided to leave, he failed to acknowledge or even recognize how much Ratan had grown attached to him. His dismissal of her request to go with him—laughing it off instead of addressing her feelings with sensitivity—shows his lack of understanding of her emotions. His final attempt to offer her money further proves how little he grasped the depth of her sorrow.

Although the postmaster did not intentionally mean to hurt Ratan, his detachment, privilege, and failure to see beyond his own struggles made him unaware of how his departure would devastate her. In contrast, Ratan, who had found a sense of belonging with him, was left alone once again, heartbroken and clinging to the false hope of his return.

What are the many things that divide the characters of the postmaster and Ratan, and what is common between them?

The postmaster and Ratan are divided by social class, education, and life experiences. The postmaster is from Calcutta, well-educated, and accustomed to urban life, which makes him feel isolated and out of place in the rural village of Ulapur. In contrast, Ratan is an orphan, uneducated, and deeply rooted in the village, accustomed to hardship and survival. While the postmaster sees his stay in Ulapur as temporary and suffocating, Ratan finds purpose and comfort in the small world around her, especially in caring for him.

Despite these differences, they share a common loneliness. The postmaster, far from his family, finds solace in Ratan’s presence, while Ratan, who has no family, finds companionship in serving him. They both seek human connection, but in different ways—he treats Ratan as someone to talk to, while she sees him as a father figure or guardian.

This shared emotional bond makes their final separation all the more heartbreaking. The postmaster, privileged enough to leave and move on, treats their connection as something fleeting, whereas Ratan, with no one else in her life, is left behind with nothing but false hope and pain.

Examine the character and plight of Ratan in the light of the following statement: ' O poor unthinking heart! Error will not go away, logic and reason are slow to penetrate..' in 200 words

Ratan, the orphaned village girl in *The Postmaster*, embodies the innocence, devotion, and emotional vulnerability captured in the statement, *"O poor unthinking heart! Error will not go away, logic and reason are slow to penetrate."* Throughout the story, Ratan's deep attachment to the postmaster grows from her role as his caretaker, listener, and student. Her affection is pure and selfless, as she finds a sense of belonging in serving him. However, she mistakes this companionship for permanence, failing to realize that his presence in her life is temporary.

When the postmaster decides to leave, Ratan's hope for a lasting connection is shattered. Despite his indifference, she clings to the false hope that he may return or take her with him. Her desperate plea, *"Will you take me home with you?"* is met with laughter, exposing the stark contrast between her emotional investment and his detachment.

Even after his departure, she remains near the post office, grieving and waiting, unable to accept reality. The final lines emphasize her emotional naivety—how the human heart refuses to accept painful truths, leading to continued suffering. Ratan's plight illustrates the tragic nature of blind hope, where emotions overpower reason, leaving her lost and heartbroken.

Describe briefly if there is conflict in the story

The Postmaster contains **both internal and external conflict**, driving the emotional depth of the story.

The **external conflict** arises from the **postmaster's struggle to adapt** to life in the rural village. Coming from **Calcutta**, he finds **Ulapur dull and isolating**, unable to connect with the local people. His longing for the **comforts of city life** fuels his **decision to leave**, creating a **conflict between him and Ratan**, who has grown emotionally attached to him.

The **internal conflict** is more profound, especially in **Ratan's emotional turmoil**. She **mistakes the postmaster's kindness for lasting affection**, clinging to **false hope** that he might stay or take her with him. When he announces his departure, she faces **a painful struggle between hope and reality**, unable to accept that she has been abandoned.

Even the **postmaster experiences a fleeting moment of internal conflict** as he sails away. Seeing **Ratan's grief**, he briefly considers returning for her, but ultimately **rationalizes his decision with philosophical detachment**, choosing to move on.

This **clash between emotional attachment and practical detachment** defines the story's **central conflict**, leaving **Ratan heartbroken** and the **postmaster resigned to life's inevitable separations.**

A Little Cloud – James Joyce

This passage comes from *A Little Cloud*, a short story by **James Joyce** in his collection *Dubliners*. It introduces **Little Chandler**, a timid and refined man, as he prepares to meet his old friend **Ignatius Gallaher**, who has become a successful journalist in **London**.

Eight years earlier, Little Chandler had **bid farewell to Gallaher at the North Wall**, wishing him well as he left for greater opportunities. Now, Gallaher has **"got on" in life**, evident from his **confidence, worldliness, and elegant appearance**. Despite his success, Little Chandler still believes that Gallaher remains a **good-hearted** friend who truly deserves his achievements.

Little Chandler, by contrast, is a **small, delicate, and reserved man**. Though not much shorter than average, his **fragile frame, soft voice, and careful grooming** make him seem **"little" in spirit as well as in stature**. He has spent years in Dublin, working as a clerk at **King's Inns**, where he finds his job dull and uninspiring.

As he gazes out of his office window at the autumn sunset, he reflects on **how much has changed in the past eight years**. The golden light of the evening falls on the **old men and nurses in the park**, creating a nostalgic atmosphere. This moment foreshadows Little Chandler's growing sense of **regret, longing, and dissatisfaction with his own life**, especially in contrast to Gallaher's bold and exciting career abroad.

As he **watches the world outside his office window**, he sees **children playing, people walking, and life continuing as usual**. However, instead of feeling joy, he feels **a familiar sadness**, a **gentle melancholy** that always comes when he reflects on life. He believes that **fate is unchangeable**, and struggling against it is useless—an idea he sees as **ancient wisdom passed down through generations**.

His thoughts then turn to **his love for poetry**. He owns **books of poetry at home**, purchased before he was married, but he has never had the **courage to read them aloud to his wife**. His **shyness and self-consciousness** have always held him back, so the books remain untouched on the shelves. Instead, he **silently repeats lines to himself**, which brings him **a small personal comfort**, even though he cannot share this part of himself with anyone.

When the **workday ends**, he leaves his office formally and precisely, walking through the **historic streets of Dublin**. He moves quickly through **Henrietta Street**, a neighborhood filled with **poor children** playing in the streets and **abandoned, decaying mansions** that once belonged to Dublin's aristocracy. Yet, none of this affects him—his **mind is focused on the joy of meeting Gallaher.**

As he approaches **Corless's**, an upscale café he has never entered, he reflects on its **reputation as a glamorous and sophisticated place**, where people go after the theatre to

drink liqueurs and eat oysters. He has heard that the **waiters speak French and German**, which makes it feel even more foreign and prestigious to him. He remembers passing by at night, seeing **well-dressed women stepping out of carriages**, their **faces powdered, their dresses lifted slightly as they hurried inside**.

Little Chandler has always avoided looking at such places, walking quickly and nervously past them. His **reserved nature and insecurity** make him **fear the unknown, the foreign, and the grand world beyond his own.** Yet, at times, he also **deliberately seeks out the eerie, shadowy streets of Dublin, tempting his fears**. In these dark alleys, he feels unsettled by the **silent figures and the occasional sound of distant laughter**, which make him **tremble like a leaf.** This contradiction—his **desire to escape his dull life yet his fear of the unknown**—is at the heart of his character.

As Little Chandler walks towards **Capel Street**, he reflects on **Gallaher's unexpected success** in the London Press. Eight years ago, no one would have believed Gallaher would achieve such fame, yet in hindsight, Little Chandler recalls signs of his **bold personality and talent**. Gallaher had always been seen as **wild and reckless**, known for his drinking, borrowing money, and even getting caught up in **a mysterious financial scandal** that led to his departure. However, despite his **flaws**, there was something **charismatic and impressive** about him—his ability to maintain **confidence and boldness even in hard times.**

Little Chandler feels a **strange sense of pride** remembering one of Gallaher's sayings, *"Half-time now, boys! Where's my considering cap?"* This playful and carefree attitude, even when facing difficulties, was part of what made Gallaher admirable. For a brief moment, **Little Chandler himself feels inspired**, walking faster, and for the first time, he **feels superior to the ordinary people around him.**

Suddenly, **he resents the dullness of Dublin**, especially the lifeless atmosphere of **Capel Street**, which now seems to him **uninspiring and unworthy.** He becomes convinced that **success is only possible if you leave Dublin**—that staying there means being trapped in mediocrity.

As he crosses **Grattan Bridge**, he looks down at the **dingy, neglected houses along the river**, imagining them as **a group of old tramps**, waiting in the dust and soot for nightfall to force them away. This **poetic image** sparks something in him—**could he write a poem about it?** Perhaps Gallaher could even help him get published in a **London newspaper**.

For the first time in a long while, **he feels hope stirring inside him**, an **infant dream** of becoming a poet, of escaping his dull, unremarkable life. Every step he takes toward his meeting with Gallaher **feels like a step closer to London, to a more artistic and exciting existence.** He reassures himself that he is still young—only **thirty-two**—and that he might still have a chance to **express his thoughts and emotions in poetry.** He even **tries to assess his own soul**, wondering if he truly possesses **the heart of a poet.**

However, despite this **momentary inspiration**, the reader can sense a **tragic irony**—Little Chandler **dreams of poetic greatness but lacks the boldness and courage** that made Gallaher successful. His **passivity and self-doubt** suggest that these aspirations may remain **unfulfilled fantasies.**

Little Chandler's Poetic Fantasy

As he walks, **Little Chandler continues daydreaming about becoming a poet.** He reflects that **melancholy** is the dominant trait of his personality, but it is **softened by moments of faith, resignation, and simple joys.** He fantasizes about **publishing a book of poetry**, believing that while he may never become widely popular, he could **find a small audience of intellectuals who appreciate his work**.

He even imagines how **English critics would describe his writing**—as having **"a wistful sadness"** or embodying **"The Celtic note"**, referring to the sentimental, melancholic tone associated with Irish literature. **He obsesses over his name**, believing that **"Thomas Malone Chandler" or "T. Malone Chandler"** might make him sound more distinctly Irish and literary. He plans to **ask Gallaher's opinion**, seeing his old friend as a link to the literary world he dreams of entering.

Reality Interrupts the Fantasy

So caught up in his **daydream**, **Little Chandler absentmindedly walks past his street** and has to turn back. But as he **approaches Corless's bar**, his earlier **excitement turns into nervousness**. His **anxiety resurfaces**, and he hesitates outside the door. Finally, he **forces himself to enter.**

Inside, the **bright lights and noisy atmosphere** overwhelm him. The **glare of the red and green wine glasses** confuses his vision, and he momentarily feels **as if the whole room is watching him.** He quickly **looks around, trying to appear serious and composed**, but he soon realizes that **nobody is paying attention to him.**

Meeting Ignatius Gallaher

Then, he **spots Gallaher, standing confidently with his back against the counter**, feet **planted wide apart**—a stance that immediately signals **his bold, dominant personality**.

Gallaher **greets him loudly and cheerfully**, calling him **"Tommy, old hero,"** a casual and somewhat condescending nickname. He immediately **takes charge of the situation**, ordering whisky for both of them, **boasting about its quality**, and dismissing the idea of adding soda or mineral water because it would **"spoil the flavor."**

Gallaher's tone is confident and self-assured, immediately contrasting with **Little Chandler's timidity and unease.** He speaks in a way that suggests he is **in control, worldly, and accustomed to luxury.**

Gallaher's Appearance

Physically, **Gallaher has changed significantly** since their last meeting. He **removes his hat, revealing a closely cropped head**—suggesting **a tough, no-nonsense personality.**

His **face is pale and heavy**, showing signs of **a hard life**, possibly from his indulgent lifestyle. His **bluish slate-colored eyes** are the only **lively feature in his otherwise dull, unhealthy complexion**. However, he wears **a vivid orange tie**, a flashy detail that suggests **a sense of vanity or a need to stand out.** His **long, shapeless, colorless lips** further contribute to an image of a man who has lived a rough and excessive life, but one who still carries a certain **charisma and confidence**.

Contrast Between Little Chandler and Gallaher

This passage highlights **the contrast between the two men**—Little Chandler, **a timid dreamer, hesitant and overwhelmed by new experiences**, and Gallaher, **a loud, confident, and worldly figure who dominates the conversation.**

Little Chandler, who **fantasized about poetry and an artistic life**, now finds himself in a **lively, intimidating environment**, confronted by a friend who **embodies a life of excitement, success, and indulgence—everything Chandler secretly longs for but is too afraid to pursue.**

Gallaher's Confidence vs. Chandler's Reserve

As they drink together, **Gallaher takes control of the conversation**, boasting about the pressures of his career in journalism. He describes **"press life"** as a relentless cycle of **hurrying, chasing stories, and dealing with deadlines, proofs, and printers.** However, despite these challenges, he expresses **relief and joy at being back in Dublin**, referring to it affectionately as **"dear, dirty Dublin."** His attitude suggests that **even with his success and fast-paced life in London, he still finds comfort in returning home for a break.**

Meanwhile, **Little Chandler is much more reserved.** When Gallaher pours their drinks, Chandler **dilutes his whisky heavily with water**, showing his **cautious and modest nature.** Gallaher, in contrast, **drinks his whisky "neat"** and chides Chandler for not knowing **"what's good for him."**

Chandler defends himself, saying he **drinks only occasionally, and even then, only in the company of old friends.** This subtle remark suggests that he is **a man of restraint, possibly even repressed, in contrast to Gallaher's indulgent and carefree lifestyle.**

Their Toast and Discussion of Old Friends

They **clink glasses and drink a toast** to **"old times and old acquaintance,"** reminiscing about their shared past. This moment briefly bridges the gap between them, showing their shared history despite their differing paths.

Gallaher then mentions having met some of their old friends and asks about **O'Hara**, who, according to **Little Chandler, has "gone to the dogs."** This phrase implies that **O'Hara has**

fallen on hard times, likely due to **alcoholism and other vices.** Gallaher, amused but not particularly concerned, assumes it must be because of **"booze,"** to which Chandler vaguely responds, **"Other things, too."** This **short and serious reply** suggests Chandler's disapproval and unwillingness to indulge in Gallaher's casual attitude toward their friend's downfall.

Gallaher's Teasing and Chandler's Inexperience

Gallaher **laughs and teases Chandler**, saying he is **"the very same serious person"** as before. He recalls how Chandler used to **lecture him on Sundays when he was suffering from hangovers**, painting Chandler as someone who has always been **reserved, responsible, and perhaps overly cautious.** Gallaher suggests that Chandler **needs to experience more of the world**, asking if he has ever traveled.

Chandler's response—**"I've been to the Isle of Man"**—is almost comically inadequate. Compared to Gallaher's experiences in London and beyond, a trip to the **Isle of Man, a small island near Ireland, seems insignificant and provincial.** Gallaher's question was likely meant to spark an exciting conversation about travel and adventure, but Chandler's answer only reinforces how **narrow and limited his experiences have been.**

Gallaher's Worldliness vs. Chandler's Limited Experience

Gallaher **laughs dismissively** when Chandler mentions his **only travel experience—the Isle of Man**. He scoffs at it as insignificant and encourages Chandler to **visit London or Paris, choosing Paris as the better option.**

Chandler, **who has only heard of Paris through books and romanticized descriptions**, is eager to know **if it is truly as beautiful as people say.** However, Gallaher's answer surprises him. Instead of praising **Paris's beauty**, Gallaher focuses on its **"life"—the energy, excitement, and indulgence it offers.** He describes it as a city of **gaiety, movement, and thrill**, painting a picture that is more about pleasure and decadence than art or history.

Chandler's Growing Discomfort

As Gallaher speaks, **Chandler finishes his whisky** and, after some hesitation, **orders another drink**, showing that he is **slowly getting caught up in the moment.** Meanwhile, Gallaher continues, boasting about his experiences at the **Moulin Rouge and the Bohemian cafés**—places associated with **drinking, entertainment, and a free-spirited, indulgent lifestyle.** He even teases Chandler, saying these places are **"hot stuff" and "not for a pious chap like you, Tommy."**

Chandler remains **silent**, listening but feeling **increasingly uneasy.** As the barman clears their glasses, he **toasts Gallaher again**, but **his excitement is fading**. He starts to notice something **vulgar** in Gallaher's manner—his way of speaking, his casual bragging about nightlife and pleasure. **This is not the Gallaher he remembers from eight years ago.**

However, Chandler **tries to justify it** to himself, thinking that perhaps **Gallaher's crude way of speaking is simply a result of his life in London**, where he has been shaped by the competitive, aggressive world of journalism. **Underneath his flashy new persona, Chandler believes the old charm of his friend still remains.** But at the same time, **he cannot ignore the deep contrast between their lives.**

Gallaher's Celebration of Parisian Indulgence

Gallaher **continues glorifying Paris**, describing it as a place where people truly **"believe in enjoying life."** He argues that **the French have the right idea—one should embrace pleasure and entertainment.**

He also claims that **the Parisians have great admiration for the Irish**—boasting that when they found out he was from Ireland, they were **"ready to eat him"** (a dramatic way of saying they embraced him warmly). His statement suggests that he **felt important, valued, and accepted in a way he never did in Dublin.**

Chandler's Hesitant Curiosity About Parisian Morality

Chandler, though **quiet and uncomfortable**, is still **curious.** He takes **several sips of his drink**, gathering the courage to ask **a more serious question**—whether Paris is as **"immoral"** as people say.

Instead of answering directly, **Gallaher dismisses the concern with a "catholic gesture"**—perhaps a wave of his arm or a shrug, **implying that morality is not something to be concerned with.**

This moment **reveals an important difference** between the two men:

- **Chandler still sees morality as something important.** He is **cautious and hesitant** about embracing the world Gallaher describes.
- **Gallaher, on the other hand, is dismissive of such concerns.** He has **fully embraced a life of pleasure, travel, and indulgence**, without worrying about morality or propriety.

The Growing Divide Between Them

At this point, **Little Chandler's admiration for Gallaher is wavering.** At first, he envied Gallaher's **success and worldliness**, but now he sees **another side of his friend—a man who seems boastful, crude, and morally careless.**

This passage marks **a turning point** in Chandler's emotions. He **still envies Gallaher's experiences**, but he is also beginning to **question whether this lifestyle is truly something to admire.** The contrast between his own quiet, restricted life and Gallaher's **fast, indulgent, and uninhibited world** is becoming **more unsettling**—making him feel both **small and superior at the same time.**

Gallaher's Dismissive Attitude Toward Morality

When Chandler, still hesitant, insists on asking whether Paris is truly **an immoral city**, Gallaher shrugs it off, saying **"every place is immoral."** He then describes the **wild student balls in Paris**, where **cocottes**—a slang term for **prostitutes or women of loose morals**—begin to behave **freely and openly.** This crude and carefree description makes it clear that **Gallaher sees vice and debauchery as part of life's excitement, rather than something shameful or concerning.**

Little Chandler, in contrast, remains **tentative and unsure**. He has only **"heard of"** such things, which confirms his **naivety and lack of real-world experience.**

Gallaher's Confidence and Pressure to Drink

Gallaher **drinks his whisky confidently and shakes his head**, emphasizing his **world-weariness and experience.** He declares that **no woman compares to the Parisienne**, describing them as stylish, lively, and full of energy—further reinforcing his **idealization of foreign indulgence and pleasure.**

But **Chandler is not satisfied.** He still seeks **a moral comparison between cities**, asking if Paris is **worse** than London or Dublin. Gallaher **laughs off the question**, saying that **London is just as bad**, and he brags that he once showed their old friend **Hogan** a wild time there.

At this point, Gallaher starts **pressuring Chandler to drink more,** telling him not to **"make punch"** out of his whisky (i.e., not to dilute it too much). Though Chandler hesitates, he **eventually gives in and agrees** to another drink. This moment subtly highlights **Chandler's weakness and insecurity**—he **does not have the confidence to refuse or stand firm against Gallaher's influence.**

Gallaher then **offers him a cigar**, reinforcing the image of his **carefree indulgence.** The two sit in silence, smoking and drinking, as if the momentary conversation about morality has been pushed aside in favor of **a mood of leisure and consumption.**

Gallaher's "Worldly Wisdom" and Cynicism

After some time, **Gallaher emerges from a cloud of cigar smoke** to share his **philosophical opinion on life**, bluntly stating: **"It's a rum world."** This phrase encapsulates his **cynical, worldly view**—he sees the world as full of vice, corruption, and indulgence, and **he does not judge it harshly, only observes it.**

He then begins to **boast about his personal knowledge of immorality**, claiming that he has not only **heard of but personally witnessed shocking cases of vice.** In his mind, he is **a worldly historian**, exposing the corruption in religious institutions, high society, and major European cities. He even **ranks them** in terms of immorality, suggesting that Berlin might be the worst.

Gallaher's stories are meant to impress Chandler, **positioning himself as an insider in a world of knowledge, experience, and scandal.** He wants to show that he has seen **things that Chandler, a timid, sheltered man, could never imagine.**

Little Chandler's Growing Disillusionment

For **Little Chandler**, however, this conversation is deeply unsettling. At first, he admired **Gallaher's success** and saw him as a friend who had **"made it"** in the world. But now, as Gallaher speaks **more crudely and cynically about vice and corruption**, Chandler's **illusion of admiration begins to crumble.**

At this moment, **Chandler starts to see the flaws in Gallaher.** He realizes that his old friend's **"worldly success"** is not built on deep wisdom or artistic achievement, but rather on **cynicism, indulgence, and reckless living.** Instead of feeling inspired, he begins to feel **even smaller and more out of place.**

The Contrast Between Their Perspectives

This passage reinforces the **fundamental contrast between the two men**:

- **Gallaher embraces a world of excess and sees vice as part of life's excitement.** His stories reflect a **cynical and hedonistic worldview**, where morality is an illusion and pleasure is what truly matters.
- **Chandler, though curious, remains deeply uneasy.** He **wants to believe** in a more moral and structured life, yet he **also envies Gallaher's experiences.** He is caught between **judgment and admiration, longing and fear.**

This **internal conflict** is what makes *A Little Cloud* such a powerful story. **Chandler is both drawn to and repelled by Gallaher's world**, and this struggle will continue to haunt him as the story progresses.

In this passage, **Ignatius Gallaher continues boasting** about his worldly experiences, contrasting them with **the quiet, uneventful life of Dublin.** He mockingly calls it **"old jog-along Dublin,"** implying that the city is dull and out of touch with the excitement of the wider world.

Little Chandler, feeling increasingly **inferior and disillusioned**, remarks that **Gallaher must find Dublin boring after all the places he has seen.** Gallaher, however, **shrugs it off**, saying that coming back is **a "relaxation"**—a temporary break from his fast-paced life. Despite his success, he admits to having a **sentimental attachment** to Ireland, as if it's part of **"human nature"** to feel connected to one's homeland.

Shifting the focus, Gallaher **asks about Chandler's personal life**, bringing up his **marriage** after hearing about it from their friend Hogan. Chandler **blushes and smiles modestly**, confirming he has been married for a little over two years. Gallaher **congratulates him in a**

casual, exaggerated manner, shaking his hand and wishing him **"tons of money"** and a long life.

When Gallaher asks if he has children, Chandler **blushes again** and admits he has **a little boy.** Gallaher **slaps him on the back**, loudly praising him. Chandler, however, looks **awkward and self-conscious**, staring at his glass and nervously biting his lip—a clear sign that he is **uncomfortable with Gallaher's brashness** and, perhaps, feeling **uncertain about his own choices in life.**

In this passage, **Little Chandler invites Gallaher to his home**, hoping his wife would be delighted to meet him and that they could enjoy an evening of music. However, **Gallaher declines**, saying he has prior plans for a **card party with another companion.**

Chandler, though **disappointed**, accepts it, and Gallaher **lightly reassures him** that he might visit again next year, calling it **"only a pleasure deferred."** They **agree to meet in the future**, though Gallaher's tone suggests it is more of a polite dismissal than a genuine promise.

To **"seal the deal,"** Chandler suggests **one last drink.** Gallaher checks his **gold watch**—a symbol of his success—and asks if it will truly be the last, mentioning that he has an **appointment (a.p.).** Chandler insists it will be, and Gallaher **humorously orders a "deoc an doirus"** (a farewell drink in Irish).

As they drink, **Chandler starts feeling the effects of alcohol**. Being a **light drinker and not used to strong cigars**, he **becomes warm, flushed, and slightly intoxicated.** The **excitement of the evening**, the **bright lights, the noise, and Gallaher's stories of adventure**, make Chandler feel **overwhelmed and out of place.**

Most of all, he **feels the stark contrast between his dull, routine life and Gallaher's exciting, carefree existence**, deepening his **internal dissatisfaction and longing for something more.**

In this passage, **Little Chandler's admiration for Gallaher turns into resentment.** He suddenly feels that **Gallaher is actually his inferior**—in **birth, education, and talent**—and believes that he could achieve **something greater than "tawdry journalism"** if only given the chance. He realizes that his biggest obstacle is **his own timidity**, which has held him back.

Chandler also sees through **Gallaher's patronizing attitude**—both toward **him** and toward **Ireland.** Gallaher's **friendliness feels superficial**, just like his visit to Dublin, which seems more like **a casual amusement than a heartfelt return.**

Determined to assert himself, **Chandler boldly hints at Gallaher getting married**, suggesting that by next year, he might be congratulating **"Mr. and Mrs. Ignatius Gallaher."** Gallaher **reacts with a dismissive smirk**, making it clear that he has no interest in settling down anytime soon. **He wants to enjoy life first and avoid "putting his head in the sack" (getting tied down in marriage).**

Chandler **insists that everyone eventually settles down**, but Gallaher **laughs off the idea,** saying that if he ever does marry, it will be for **money, not love.** His vision of marriage is purely **pragmatic—his future wife must have a "fat bank account."**

This moment further highlights the **stark contrast between the two men**:

- **Chandler values love and domestic life**, despite feeling trapped in it.
- **Gallaher is purely self-serving**, seeking wealth and pleasure, dismissing romance altogether.

For Chandler, this **reinforces his doubts and frustrations**—not just with Gallaher, but with his own **constrained, ordinary life.**

Gallaher's Dismissive View on Marriage

Gallaher **boasts about his ability to marry into wealth whenever he chooses**, claiming that **rich German and Jewish families** would be eager to **give their daughters and money to him.** He sees marriage as nothing more than **a strategic move, a business deal rather than a commitment of love.**

However, he **laughs off the idea of settling down anytime soon**, insisting that he doesn't want to be **"tied down"** to one woman. He even **mocks the idea of marriage** by making a wry face, implying that **a lifelong relationship would become stale and dull.**

His attitude further highlights **his self-serving and materialistic worldview**, in stark contrast to Chandler, who, despite his dissatisfaction, is **a man of duty and family responsibility.**

Little Chandler's Reality

The scene abruptly shifts from **Gallaher's loud, carefree world to Little Chandler's quiet home, where he is left holding his sleeping child.** This immediate shift in setting and tone emphasizes **Chandler's confinement in domestic life**, in contrast to **Gallaher's unrestricted freedom.**

Chandler's wife, **Annie**, is **in a bad mood** because he came home late and forgot to buy coffee. Her **short, cold responses** make him feel small and unimportant. Eventually, she **goes out herself to buy tea and sugar**, leaving Chandler alone with their baby.

As he sits in the dimly lit room, his eyes fall on **a framed photograph of Annie.** The details in the picture—the **tight lips** and **the blouse he once nervously bought her**—remind him of **his timid, anxious nature and the small, ordinary struggles of his life.**

The **memory of buying the blouse** brings back his **deep insecurity and social awkwardness**—how he waited for the store to be empty, struggled to stay composed, and even **forgot to take his change out of nervousness.** These small humiliations highlight **his timid, restrained personality**, which is **so different from Gallaher's boldness and confidence.**

At this moment, Chandler **realizes just how different their lives have become**, and the **contrast feels overwhelming.**

Resentment Toward His Marriage

He recalls how Annie **reacted to the blouse he bought her**—first **criticizing the price, then loving it** once she tried it on. This memory now feels empty to him. As he **stares coldly at her photograph**, he finds her face **pretty yet lacking passion**—too **"ladylike," too composed.** He compares her to the **exotic, passionate women Gallaher had described,** questioning why he married **a woman with such lifeless eyes.**

Frustration with His Life

His **resentment spreads** to the **furniture**, which he now sees as **"mean" and "prim"**—a reflection of Annie and the **small, ordinary life they built together.** He longs for **escape**, wondering if it's **too late to start over like Gallaher.** But **his responsibilities—his home, his debts—hold him back.**

A Moment of Artistic Longing

Seeking **comfort in poetry**, he opens a **volume of Byron** and reads a melancholic poem. For a moment, he feels inspired, imagining himself writing about **his emotions and the sensations he felt earlier on Grattan Bridge. Could he become a poet and break free?**

Reality Interrupts the Dream

Just as he begins to **immerse himself in artistic thought, his child wakes up crying.** He turns from the poetry to **soothe the baby, but it refuses to be hushed.** This sudden shift **symbolizes his entrapment**—his literary dreams and ambitions are **constantly interrupted by the demands of his mundane life.**

Little Chandler's Breaking Point

As **Little Chandler struggles to read his poetry**, the **baby's wailing becomes unbearable.** The crying **pierces his ears**, drowning out his thoughts. **He feels completely trapped, powerless to escape his life.**

In **a sudden fit of frustration, he snaps**—bending down and **shouting at the child to stop.** The baby, startled, pauses for a moment before **screaming even louder.** Chandler, now alarmed, paces the room, trying to calm it, but the sobbing **grows worse, turning into desperate, breathless gasps. Fear grips him—what if the baby dies?**

Annie's Fury and Chandler's Shame

At that moment, **Annie bursts into the room**, **panicked and breathless.** The child, hearing its mother's voice, **cries even harder.**

Seeing the distress, **Annie snatches the baby away**, glaring at Chandler with **fury and suspicion.** For a brief second, **he meets her gaze and sees nothing but hatred in her eyes.** His heart **tightens**—this **is not love, not warmth, but pure resentment.**

Chandler **stammers helplessly**, trying to explain himself, but Annie **ignores him.** She **soothes the baby with tender words**, showering it with love while **completely shutting Chandler out.**

Overwhelmed by Guilt and Defeat

As the baby's sobs **gradually fade**, Chandler **retreats into the shadows, overcome with shame.** He watches as **his wife comforts the child—her world, her priority—while he stands, unwanted, on the sidelines.** Tears of **remorse fill his eyes.**

In this moment, **he fully realizes his failure**—as a **husband, father, and poet.** He is **trapped, defeated, and invisible in his own home.**

In a "Little Cloud" which was discussed above (much earlier) James Joyce deftly traces the emotions of jealously and frustration in little Chandler through a series of of events which give rise to an epiphantic moment. Discuss and illustrate in about 200-300 words.

In *A Little Cloud*, James Joyce masterfully portrays **jealousy and frustration** through the character of **Little Chandler**, a timid Dublin clerk who reunites with his old friend, **Ignatius Gallaher**, a successful journalist in London. The story follows Chandler's growing **discontent with his monotonous life**, particularly in contrast to Gallaher's **vibrant, adventurous existence.**

As the two converse, Chandler initially **idolizes Gallaher's success**, longing for a similar escape. However, as the meeting progresses, **resentment begins to surface.** Gallaher's **boastful descriptions of London and Paris** make Chandler feel **small and unaccomplished**, especially when his **literary ambitions remain unfulfilled**. This growing bitterness is further fueled when **Gallaher dismisses marriage and family life**, something Chandler himself is bound to.

The **epiphanic moment** comes later, when Chandler **returns home to his wife and child.** Feeling trapped in his **domestic routine**, he attempts to read poetry—an act that symbolizes his **unrealized dreams.** However, when his **infant son begins crying**, his frustration boils over, leading him to **shout at the child in a moment of suppressed rage.** His wife's **accusatory glare** and the baby's **helpless sobs** bring Chandler **face-to-face with his reality**—he is **not a poet, nor a free man like Gallaher, but a prisoner of his own fears and choices.**

This **moment of realization**—that his **literary dreams are unattainable and his resentment misplaced**—marks a true **Joycean epiphany.** However, unlike traditional epiphanies that bring enlightenment, Chandler's **only deepens his despair,** highlighting Joyce's theme of **paralysis and unfulfilled aspirations.**

Father's Help – R.K. Narayan

Swami's Monday Morning Struggles

In this passage from *Father's Help* by **R.K. Narayan**, **Swami dreads going to school on Monday morning.** It feels like the weekend **passed in an instant**, and he **wishes for an earthquake** to destroy the school, but Albert Mission School has **stood firm for over a century.**

At **9 o'clock**, Swami **tries to escape school** by **pretending to have a headache.** His **mother sympathizes**, suggesting he take a **jutka (a horse-drawn cart)** to school, but Swami **dramatically refuses**, complaining about **how rough and uncomfortable the ride would be.**

When she asks if he has **important lessons**, Swami sarcastically responds that **his geography teacher has been repeating the same lesson for a year** and that arithmetic means **getting beaten by the teacher.** Seeing his reluctance, **his mother suggests he stay home.**

At **9:30**, when Swami **should be in school for prayers,** he is instead **lying comfortably at home.** However, his **father soon notices and questions him.** When Swami repeats his **headache excuse,** his father **immediately dismisses it as nonsense and orders him to get dressed for school.**

Swami's Failed Excuses and Father's Unexpected Reaction

Swami's **father dismisses his headache excuse**, telling him that if he **loafed around less on Sundays, he wouldn't feel sick on Mondays.** Realizing his father **won't budge**, Swami **tries a new excuse**, saying it's **too late to go now.**

However, **his father refuses to let him off the hook**, insisting that **it's Swami's own fault for not asking permission earlier.** Swami then **fears being punished for arriving late** and tries to scare his father by describing **his teacher, Samuel, as a violent man** who **mercilessly beats students.**

Swami **exaggerates the punishments**, claiming Samuel **canes boys until they bleed** and **forces them to press their wounds to their foreheads like a religious mark.** He hopes this **will convince his father to let him stay home.**

But **his plan backfires.** Instead of sympathy, his father **gets angry at the teacher** and decides to **send Swami to school as a challenge.** Worse, he writes **a letter to the headmaster, complaining about Samuel's cruelty.**

Swami **protests, but his father won't listen.** By the time he's dressed, the **sealed letter is ready**, and Swami, **now anxious,** nervously asks **what his father has written.**

Swami's Guilt and Dilemma

Swami's **father refuses to tell him exactly what's in the letter** but hints that **Samuel could be dismissed or even arrested** once the headmaster reads it. This fills Swami with **overwhelming guilt**—he **knows he exaggerated Samuel's cruelty** but is now **powerless to undo the damage.**

As he walks to school, his **conscience torments him.** He **struggles to recall real instances of Samuel's harshness** but finds none. The only **violent story about Samuel** is an old rumor that **no one had actually witnessed**, yet **it had persisted for years among students.**

Swami starts to **panic**—what if **Samuel loses his job or goes to jail because of his lies?** The thought of **ruining his teacher's life** makes him feel like **an executioner.** He briefly **considers throwing the letter away** but **fears his father's anger.**

Swami's "Solution"

As he reaches school, Swami comes up with a **plan**—he will **delay delivering the letter until the end of the day.** This gives him time to **see if Samuel actually does something to deserve the complaints.** This small act of defiance **lets him feel a sense of control** while still obeying his father.

Samuel's Unexpected Reaction

Swami enters class, **expecting Samuel to punish him for being late**, hoping it will **justify the letter.** But **Samuel simply looks at him calmly** and asks, **"Are you just coming to class?"**—a **completely ordinary response.**

Swami **realizes with dread that Samuel is not the monster he described.** His **plan is already failing**, and his **guilt deepens.**

Swami's Growing Guilt and Confusion

As **Swami stands before Samuel**, he **hopes for punishment**, even **prays for it**, so he can justify **the complaints in his father's letter.** But Samuel remains **calm and reasonable.**

When Samuel **asks why he is late**, Swami almost blurts out that it's **to test him**, but instead, he gives **the excuse of a headache.** Surprisingly, **Samuel does not get angry**—instead, he **praises Swami's father for insisting he attend class.** This **shocks and confuses Swami** even more.

As **Swami watches Samuel in class, he realizes that the teacher is not at all cruel.** The usual **scenes of violence and harsh punishments** do not happen. **Samuel barely uses his cane, never flings notebooks, and allows boys to stand for only a few minutes.**

Swami's Last Attempt to Provoke Samuel

Swami, **desperate for something to prove Samuel's cruelty**, deliberately **admits he hasn't done his homework.** Normally, this would invite **punishment**, but **Samuel simply asks if it was because of the headache and lets him sit down.**

Swami **feels completely lost and defeated.** Samuel's unexpected kindness **deepens his guilt**, making him realize **his accusations were false.** The **day is ending, and he still has no excuse to justify giving the letter.**

Swami's Desperate Attempts to Provoke Samuel

Swami, **realizing time is running out**, grows **desperate to make Samuel appear cruel** before the end of the day.

First Attempt – Questioning Columbus

As Samuel **teaches about Vasco da Gama**, Swami suddenly **shouts a random question** about why Columbus didn't come to India. Samuel **calmly responds**, but Swami **argues unnecessarily**, claiming it's **"unbelievable"** that Columbus lost his way.

Samuel, **annoyed but still composed**, **tells Swami to stop shouting**. Swami **insists he is speaking normally**, trying to provoke a harsher reaction. However, **Samuel only tells him to sit down.**

Second Attempt – Interrupting the Lesson

When another student asks a question, Swami **shouts an answer from the back**, drawing **more suspicion from Samuel** and the rest of the class. Again, Samuel simply **warns him to stop shouting**.

Third Attempt – Giving a Wrong Answer Loudly

As the teacher quizzes the class, Swami **shouts out an incorrect date (1648 instead of 1498)** in an exaggerated manner. Samuel **calls him an idiot but still does not punish him severely.**

Final Attempt – Forcing the Cane Punishment

Now, **with only minutes left**, Swami **stands up again on purpose**, forcing Samuel to **threaten him with a cane.** Swami, however, **feels thrilled at being called an idiot and promised a caning.**

When Samuel asks a **final history question**, Swami **gets up again**—this time directly **disobeying the teacher's warning.**

Samuel asks, **"What did I say I'd do if you got up again?"**
Swami **boldly reminds him**, **"You said you would cane me and peel the skin off my…"**

At this point, Swami is **pushing as hard as he can, hoping Samuel will finally snap**—but Samuel still has not punished him harshly enough to justify the complaints in the letter.

Swami's Plan Backfires Completely

After **deliberately provoking Samuel**, Swami **finally gets the punishment he was hoping for.** The teacher **angrily canes him six times on each palm**, but Swami **doesn't flinch**—he even **holds out his hand for more.**

When the **school bell rings**, Swami **jumps down from the platform, feeling victorious**, even though his hands are smarting. Now that **Samuel has punished him,** Swami feels justified in delivering the **complaint letter** to the headmaster.

A Twist of Fate – The Headmaster is Absent

Swami rushes to the **headmaster's office** only to find that **the door is locked**. The peon informs him that **the headmaster is on leave for a week** and suggests that Swami hand over the letter to **the assistant headmaster—who turns out to be Samuel himself!**

Terrified, Swami **immediately flees the school**, realizing that if Samuel reads the letter, he will **know that Swami lied about him.**

Swami's Father is Furious

When Swami returns home **with the letter undelivered**, his **father immediately calls him a coward** for not handing it over. Swami tries to explain that **the headmaster is on leave**, but his father **doesn't believe him**.

In frustration, **Swami offers to deliver the letter later**, but his father **snatches it, tears it up, and throws it away**. He angrily warns Swami **never to ask for help again, even if Samuel mistreats him in the future.**

The Irony of the Ending

In the end, Swami's **entire plan collapses**—he **endures a caning, ruins his father's trust, and still fails to deliver the letter.** His attempt to **escape school led to more trouble than if he had just gone in the first place.** The irony is that **Samuel was never the cruel monster Swami described**—yet **Swami still got punished, just as he feared.**

This humorous yet **thought-provoking ending** highlights **Swami's childish exaggeration, his father's rigid authority, and the unintended consequences of dishonesty.**

A Work Of Art by Anton Chekhov

Detailed Explanation of the Passage from *A Work of Art* by Anton Chekhov

This passage introduces **Sasha Smirnov**, a young man who enters **Dr. Koshelkov's consulting-room** with **a wrapped package** and an **overly sentimental expression.** His manner suggests that he is about to present something important and emotional.

Sasha's Overly Dramatic Gratitude

Sasha **greets the doctor with deep emotion**, emphasizing how much he and his **mother** appreciate the doctor **saving his life**. He repeatedly **refers to himself as "the only son of my mother"**, trying to **evoke sympathy and heighten the drama.** His mannerisms and repetition of phrases indicate that he is **trying too hard to sound sincere,** which makes his actions seem exaggerated.

The Gift – An "Antique Bronze"

Sasha insists that because **he and his mother are poor**, they **cannot repay the doctor financially** but wish to offer **a precious antique bronze candelabra** instead. He describes it as **a rare work of art**, passed down from his deceased father, **who was a dealer in antique bronzes.** This story **adds weight** to the supposed value of the gift, making it seem like an item of **great importance and heritage.**

The Doctor's Hesitation

When Sasha presents the **candelabra**, **Dr. Koshelkov is initially hesitant** to accept it, expressing concern: **"You shouldn't! What's this for?"** The doctor feels uncomfortable accepting a gift of **such supposed value**, especially from **a poor family.** However, Sasha **insists that refusing would offend both him and his mother,** making it difficult for the doctor to reject it outright.

The Candelabra's Scandalous Appearance

As Sasha **unpacks the gift and places it on the table**, the doctor finally **gets a full look at it**—and is **shocked** by what he sees.

- The **candelabra is a bronze sculpture** featuring **two female figures.**
- These figures are **nude (described as wearing the "costume of Eve")** and posed in **suggestive, coquettish attitudes.**
- Their expressions and body language suggest that **if they were not holding up the candlestick, they might leap off the pedestal and engage in something even more inappropriate.**

- The narrator hints that their posture and design **imply an orgy-like scene**, so scandalous that he refuses to describe it in detail.

The Doctor's Reaction – Discomfort and Embarrassment

Dr. Koshelkov, upon seeing the **risqué nature of the artwork**, is visibly uncomfortable.

- He **scratches behind his ear, clears his throat, and blows his nose**—all signs of **unease and awkwardness.**
- He acknowledges that the candelabra is **"a fine thing"** but struggles to **find the right words** to express his feelings about its **inappropriate nature.**
- He says it is **"not quite for family reading"**, meaning **it is far too indecent to be displayed in a home, especially one with women and children.**
- He tries to **soften his criticism** but finally admits that it is **not just revealing (décolleté) but completely inappropriate ("beyond anything, dash it all").**

Sasha's Innocence or Manipulation?

Sasha, seemingly unaware of why the doctor is hesitating, **asks in confusion**: **"How do you mean?"** This question could be interpreted in **two ways**:

1. **Sasha is genuinely unaware** of the scandalous nature of the candelabra and believes it to be a true work of art.
2. **Sasha is playing innocent** to avoid admitting that he knowingly presented an inappropriate object as a gift.

Detailed Explanation of the Passage from *A Work of Art* by Anton Chekhov

The Doctor's Strong Reaction to the Candelabra

Upon seeing the **indecent candelabra**, **Dr. Koshelkov reacts with outrage and shock.** He declares that **even the devil himself could not have created anything worse**, likening it to something utterly **scandalous and offensive**. He calls it a **"phantasmagoria"**, meaning an illusion or dreamlike scene, reinforcing how **grotesque and inappropriate** he finds it. He even goes so far as to say that **placing it on his table would "defile the whole flat,"** showing how deeply he believes it is unsuitable for his household.

Sasha's Defense of the Candelabra

Sasha, on the other hand, is **offended by the doctor's response** and insists that the candelabra is **a masterpiece of art**. He passionately argues that **true art transcends morality or social norms** and that its **beauty and elegance should inspire reverence, not disgust.**

- He describes it as so stunning that it **"fills one's soul with reverence"** and **"brings a lump into one's throat"**, implying that it evokes deep emotions, much like great works of art.
- He urges the doctor to appreciate **its movement, atmosphere, and expression**, trying to convince him that the sculpture **is not inappropriate but a work of high artistic value.**

The Doctor's Pragmatic Concern

Despite Sasha's **artistic defense**, the doctor remains **firm in his refusal.**

- He reminds Sasha that **he is a family man, with children and women frequently visiting his home**—suggesting that displaying such an **indecent** piece would be **embarrassing and inappropriate.**
- He does not argue against its artistic merit but insists that **practical concerns outweigh aesthetic appreciation.**

Sasha's Manipulative Tactics

Realizing that **his artistic argument has failed**, Sasha **shifts tactics**, using **emotional manipulation.**

- He tells the doctor that by rejecting the gift, he will **hurt both him and his mother**—playing once again on **his "only son of my mother" routine** to gain sympathy.
- He emphasizes that they are **offering something incredibly precious**, **the most valuable thing they have**, making it seem like a grand sacrifice.
- He even **expresses regret that he cannot give the doctor the matching pair**, making it sound like the doctor is receiving only part of a great treasure.

Faced with Sasha's **persistent pressure**, the doctor **reluctantly agrees** to keep it, **but not because he wants to**—he simply realizes **there is no way to refuse without offending Sasha.**

The Doctor's Dilemma

Once Sasha leaves, the doctor **immediately regrets his decision.**

- He **stares at the candelabra**, deep in thought, **scratching behind his ear—a gesture of uncertainty.**
- He **recognizes its artistic quality** but remains convinced that it **is impossible to keep in his home.**
- He struggles with the question: **What should he do with it?**

Realizing that **he cannot keep it**, he considers his options:

1. **Throwing it away** – But this would be a waste, as he acknowledges **its craftsmanship.**
2. **Gifting it to someone else** – But who would accept such an item?

The Perfect Recipient – Lawyer Uhov

After some **careful thought**, the doctor **settles on his friend Uhov, a lawyer.**

- **Uhov had helped the doctor with legal matters**, so the doctor feels that giving him a gift **would be a good way to return the favor.**
- The doctor reasons that **Uhov is a bachelor and easy-going**, meaning he **might not mind owning such an item.**

The Doctor Passes on the Problem

Without further hesitation, the doctor **grabs the candelabra, puts on his coat, and heads straight to Uhov's home.**

- **He acts quickly**, eager to rid himself of the embarrassing object.
- When he arrives, he **pretends to be enthusiastic** about the gift, **thanking Uhov for his help and presenting the candelabra as a token of appreciation.**

Uhov's Unexpected Delight

Upon seeing the bronze candelabra, **Uhov reacts with immense joy and excitement.**

- He is **completely captivated by it**, showing **"indescribable delight."**
- This starkly contrasts with the doctor's horror, highlighting **how differently people perceive the same object.**

Uhov's Initial Delight and Hesitation

When the doctor presents the **candelabra to Uhov, the lawyer**, he is **initially thrilled.**

- He **laughs in amazement**, admiring the **boldness and artistry** of the piece.
- He refers to the creators as **"the devils"**, implying that **they must have had wild imaginations to conceive such an object.**
- He describes it as **"exquisite! Ravishing!"**, showing that, on some level, he appreciates its craftsmanship.

However, **his excitement quickly fades** as he realizes that **keeping such an object is impractical**.

- He looks **nervously toward the door**, worried that **someone might see it.**
- He **immediately refuses to keep it**, citing reasons similar to the doctor's:

    - **His mother visits at times.**
    - **His clients come to his office.**
    - **Even his servants might see it, which would be embarrassing.**

The Doctor's Manipulative Tactics

Just as **Sasha pressured the doctor**, now **the doctor uses the same tactics on Uhov.**

- He **dismisses Uhov's concerns as nonsense**, insisting that rejecting the gift would be **"piggish"** and offensive.
- He **repeats Sasha's argument**, emphasizing the candelabra's artistic value:
    - **"What movement! What expression!"**
- He **ignores Uhov's discomfort**, leaves the candelabra behind, and **rushes out before Uhov can protest further.**
- **The doctor feels relieved**, thinking he has successfully **rid himself of the burden.**

Uhov's Dilemma and Decision

Once the doctor leaves, **Uhov finds himself in the same predicament.**

- He **examines the candelabra carefully**, appreciating its artistic value but realizing that it is **too scandalous to keep.**
- He **considers throwing it away but feels that would be wasteful.**
- He **comes up with an idea**—he will **pass it on as a gift to someone else.**

Shashkin, the Comedian, Receives the Candelabra

Uhov decides to **give the candelabra to his friend, Shashkin, a comedian**, during his **benefit performance.**

- He knows that **Shashkin has a taste for such bold and eccentric objects** and believes he might appreciate it.
- He **wraps it carefully** and presents it as a gift.

The Comedian's Dressing Room – A Scene of Hilarity

When Shashkin **receives the candelabra**, it **becomes the center of attention in his dressing room.**

- **Many men gather around, laughing loudly and admiring it.**
- **The enthusiasm fills the room**, creating a noise **"like the neighing of horses."**

- **The actresses are kept away**, as Shashkin, knowing the candelabra's scandalous nature, insists:
    - **"No, no, my dear, I am not dressed!"**
    - This is a clever **double entendre**, as he is actually trying to **keep them from seeing the inappropriate sculpture.**

Shashkin's Dilemma and Attempt to Get Rid of It

After the performance, **Shashkin realizes the problem.**

- **He laughs but is unsure what to do with the candelabra.**
- **He lives in a private flat**, meaning he has **nowhere to discreetly keep such an object.**
- **Actresses visit him**, so displaying it would be **embarrassing.**
- He complains that **it's not something small that he can just put in a drawer**, meaning **he can't hide it easily.**

The Hairdresser's Advice – Sell It

As Shashkin sits in confusion, his **hairdresser gives him a practical solution.**

- He suggests **selling the candelabra** to an **old woman who deals in antique bronzes.**
- He **mentions the name Madame Smirnov**, the very person who originally owned the candelabra!

The Ironic Full Circle – Sasha Brings the Candelabra Back to the Doctor

Taking the hairdresser's advice, **Shashkin unknowingly returns the candelabra to its original seller, Madame Smirnov.**

- **Madame Smirnov recognizes it** and resells it—**likely to another unsuspecting customer.**
- **Two days later, Sasha Smirnov reappears at the doctor's office, glowing with excitement.**
- He is **radiant with joy**, **beaming with happiness**, and **breathless with excitement.**

The Final Twist – The "Missing Pair" is Found

Sasha **dramatically announces** that he has **found the matching pair to the doctor's candelabra!**

- He presents it **wrapped in newspaper**, just like the original.
- He **thanks the doctor again**, repeating the **same exaggerated speech about his mother and his gratitude.**

- The doctor is **speechless**—he **tries to respond but cannot say a word.**

What is the theme of the story and the irony?

The central theme of *A Work of Art* by Anton Chekhov revolves around **social obligation, hypocrisy, and the subjectivity of art.** The story humorously explores how people accept unwanted gifts out of politeness and then struggle to discreetly pass them on to someone else. It highlights how individuals are **trapped by societal expectations**, reluctant to offend others even at their own discomfort. The **irony** lies in the **cycle of rejection**—each recipient admires the candelabra's artistic quality but finds it **too scandalous to keep**, so they eagerly **pass it on, only to end up in the same dilemma.** The ultimate **situational irony** occurs when the doctor, who desperately got rid of the first candelabra, finds himself **receiving its "missing pair" from Sasha**, bringing the story full circle. This comic yet sharp commentary on human nature emphasizes how **people often prioritize appearances and social decorum over personal preference.**

The Open Window by Saki

Detailed Explanation of the Passage from *The Open Window* by Saki (in simpler words)

The story begins with Framton Nuttel, a nervous man, visiting a country house as part of his nerve cure (a treatment for his anxiety). His sister, worried that he would become too isolated, had given him letters of introduction to some people in the area, hoping socializing would help him.

As Framton arrives at Mrs. Sappleton's house, he is greeted by her 15-year-old niece, Vera, who is described as “self-possessed”, meaning confident and calm. She tells Framton that her aunt will be down soon, and in the meantime, he will have to talk to her.

Framton, being a reserved and anxious man, tries to respond politely, but deep down, he doubts whether these social visits will actually help his nerves. He is already feeling uneasy, and Vera’s bold personality makes him feel even more out of place.

Vera starts a conversation by asking him if he knows many people in the area. Framton admits that he knows almost no one and that he has come here only because his sister stayed in the village a few years ago and introduced him to a few people. However, he already regrets this arrangement because he is uncomfortable meeting strangers.

Noticing his discomfort, Vera seizes the opportunity to tell him a story. She asks if he knows anything about her aunt, Mrs. Sappleton. Framton replies that he only knows her name and address but nothing about her personal life.

Vera then tells him that a terrible tragedy occurred three years ago—which, according to her, happened after his sister had last visited the village. This makes Framton even more curious, as the peaceful countryside does not seem like a place where tragedies happen.

She then draws his attention to a large open window in the room, a French window that leads to the garden. She hints that this open window is connected to the tragedy.

This sets the stage for the eerie and deceptive tale that Vera is about to tell, manipulating Framton’s imagination and anxiety.

Framton Nuttel, feeling nervous and uncomfortable, tries to make small talk with **Vera**, the niece, by commenting on the warm weather. However, he is still **curious about the open window** and asks her whether it is connected to the **tragedy** she mentioned earlier.

Vera’s Story – The "Tragedy"

Vera, maintaining a **serious and dramatic tone**, tells him that **three years ago, on this exact day**, her **aunt’s husband and two younger brothers** left **through that very window** to go on a **hunting trip**. However, according to Vera, they **never came back** because they got **trapped in a deadly bog (a soft, muddy area of land).**

She explains that the **summer that year had been extremely wet**, and areas that were usually **safe to walk on** had suddenly become **dangerous and unstable**. The three men, along with their **brown spaniel dog**, **sank into the bog and were never found again.** She emphasizes how terrifying it was that **their bodies were never recovered**, making the tragedy even worse.

As Vera continues, she **pretends to be emotional**, her voice **faltering as if she is genuinely upset.** She then tells Framton that her **aunt has never accepted their deaths** and still **believes they will return one day**. That is why she **keeps the window open every evening**, hoping that they will **walk back in the way they always used to**.

To make her story even more **realistic and eerie**, Vera adds **specific details**. She says that her aunt always remembers:

- **Her husband** carrying a **white waterproof coat** over his arm.
- **Her youngest brother, Ronnie**, teasing her by singing the song *"Bertie, why do you bound?"* because she always said it annoyed her.
- On **quiet evenings like this**, Vera herself gets a **creepy feeling** that the men might actually **return through the window.**

At this point, **Framton is completely convinced** by Vera's story. He **feels disturbed and uneasy**, believing he has arrived on the **anniversary of a terrible tragedy.**

Mrs. Sappleton Enters the Room

Just as Vera finishes her story, her **aunt, Mrs. Sappleton**, enters the room, full of **energy and cheerfulness**. She **apologizes** for making Framton wait and **casually asks if Vera has been keeping him entertained.** Framton, still **shaken by Vera's story**, replies that she has been **very interesting** (though he does not reveal how disturbed he actually feels).

Mrs. Sappleton then **casually mentions the open window**, but **in a completely different context!** She **cheerfully explains** that her **husband and brothers will be coming home soon** from their **hunting trip**, and they **always enter through that window** instead of using the door.

This **completely contradicts Vera's tragic story**, but Framton is too **anxious and confused** to notice the contradiction. Instead, he **believes that Mrs. Sappleton is mentally unstable**, still **expecting dead people to return home**.

While Mrs. Sappleton continues to **chatter happily** about **hunting, the scarcity of birds, and winter plans**, Framton **feels trapped in a nightmare**. He is horrified that she **seems unaware of the tragedy** and **talks about her dead relatives as if they are still alive!**

Framton's Panic Grows

As he listens, **Framton becomes more and more uncomfortable**. He **tries to change the subject** to something less disturbing, but Mrs. Sappleton only **half-listens** to him. She keeps **glancing at the open window**, as if she is actually **waiting for her dead husband and brothers to return**.

This makes Framton **incredibly nervous**, and he **believes he has walked into a house of madness**. He also remembers that his **doctors advised him to avoid anything stressful**—but this **visit is turning into a nightmare!**

At this moment, Framton **is completely convinced that Vera's story is true**, and **his anxiety is about to reach its peak**.

Detailed Explanation of the Passage (in Simple Words)

At this point in the story, **Framton Nuttel** is **trying to talk** to Mrs. Sappleton, but he is so **nervous and uncomfortable** that he **starts talking about his illnesses** in great detail. He wrongly assumes that **people are interested in hearing about his health issues**, but Mrs. Sappleton is **barely paying attention** to him. She only **politely responds** but is clearly **bored** and uninterested in his complaints.

Suddenly, **her expression changes**—she becomes **excited and alert**. However, she is **not interested in Framton at all**; instead, she **looks towards the open window** and exclaims:

"Here they are at last! Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!"

Framton's Shock and Horror

Framton **freezes in fear**. He looks at **Vera**, expecting **some reassurance**, but instead, he sees her **staring at the window with an expression of pure terror**. Her eyes look **horrified and dazed**, as if she has seen something **impossible and terrifying**.

Feeling a **cold chill** run through him, **Framton turns to look at the window**.

To his **absolute shock**, he sees **three figures walking towards the house through the garden**.

- They are carrying **guns**, just as Vera had described.
- One of them has a **white coat draped over his shoulder**—exactly how Vera had described her uncle before he went missing.
- A **tired brown spaniel** is walking behind them—again, just as Vera had said.
- And then, suddenly, one of the figures **sings the exact song** that Vera said her **youngest uncle used to sing before leaving for the hunt**:
  "I said, Bertie, why do you bound?"

At this moment, **Framton's mind completely breaks down**.

He truly believes that he is seeing ghosts.

Framton's Dramatic Escape

Framton **panics completely**. He **grabs his hat and walking stick** and **runs out of the house in pure terror**.

He **does not stop**—he **rushes through the hall, down the gravel driveway, and out the front gate**, not daring to look back. He is so **hysterical with fear** that he **almost crashes into a cyclist on the road**, forcing the cyclist to swerve into a **hedge** to avoid him.

The Truth is Revealed

After Framton **runs away**, the **man in the white coat enters the house**, looking **surprised**. He greets Mrs. Sappleton and asks:

"Who was that who bolted out as we came up?"

Mrs. Sappleton, still **confused**, explains that **it was a man named Mr. Nuttel**. She finds his behavior **very strange**. She tells her husband that:

- **Framton only talked about his illnesses** during their conversation.
- When he saw them arriving, **he ran away without even saying goodbye**.
- She jokes that **he ran away as if he had seen a ghost** (which, ironically, is exactly what Framton believed had happened!).

Vera's Final Lie

Just as the family is wondering **why Framton reacted so strangely**, Vera calmly **creates another false story** to explain his actions.

She tells them:

"I expect it was the spaniel. He told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make anyone lose their nerve."

- Vera **effortlessly lies** again, making up **another dramatic and believable story** to explain Framton's panic.
- She speaks **so confidently and smoothly** that the family **immediately believes her**.
- Nobody realizes that **she had tricked Framton earlier with the fake ghost story**.

The **final line of the story** reveals Vera's **true nature**:

"Romance at short notice was her speciality."

This means that Vera is **an expert at making up dramatic and exciting stories on the spot**—and she enjoys doing it!

Final Irony and Conclusion

- **Framton thought he was witnessing ghosts**, but in reality, **Vera had lied to him**. The men **never died**—they were just returning home from their hunting trip.
- Vera, despite **seeming innocent**, is actually **a mischievous storyteller** who enjoys playing tricks on people.
- The **family never realizes what really happened**, and **Vera successfully fools them as well**.

The story ends with a sense of **humor and irony**, as Framton's **nervous nature and Vera's clever storytelling** combine to create **a comical misunderstanding**.