***Question 1 - Write a character sketch of each of the three women characters: the girl from Grande Marina, Assunta, and the young girl [ the first wife]in Maupassant's story. Which character do you think is most completely drawn? Give a reason for your choice.***

*The girl from Grande Marina was pretty, she had eyes like forest pools and held herself like the daughter of the Caesars. She was affianced to Salvatore before he left for his military service and joined the navy of King Victor Emmanuel. the girl was very bold and straight forward which is evident from the fact that she told Salvatore that she could not marry him because of his illness. Instead of softening her tone she told Salvatore on his face that she would not marry a man who could never work like a man or provide her with her needs. This also shows us that her parents had given her all the happiness and comfort which they could give and to maintain that standard she wanted to marry a man who could fulfil all her demands and provide her with the same comfort and necessities which she got from her parents.*

*Assunta was quite a bit older than Salvatore, about twenty-four or five. The first remarks about Assunta given by Salvatore were “she is ugly as the devil”. Assunta was a practical woman and knew her needs and desires . She fell in love with Salvatore when she saw him in the  festa. She had some money of her own, with which she and Salvatore could buy their own boat and they could also take a small vineyard which by happenstance was  without a tenant at that moment. She was a “grim-visaged” woman, with decided features and looked older than she was. She was blessed with a generous heart. She hates the girl whom Salvatore loved because of her inconsiderate nature. She always cursed her and hated that Salvatore never spoke ill about her. Whenever they had a discussion regarding the girl, Salvatore felt that it was his fault.*

*Monsieur Lantin’s first wife was the daughter of the provisional tax collector, who had been dead for several years. She and her mother came to Paris, where her mother, who made the acquaintance of some of the families in her neighborhood, tried to find her daughter a husband. She had very moderate means, which were honourable, gentle, and quiet. The young girl was a perfect type of the virtuous woman in whose hands every sensible young man dreamt of entrusting his happiness. Her simple beauty bore the charm of angelic modesty, and imperceptible smile which hovered about her lips and seemed to be the*

*reflection of pure and lovely soul. she ran his household with such clever economy that it seemed as if they lived in luxury. She was young but was very clever, knew how to handle money in away way very people often felt that they lived a luxurious life, even though her husband’s salary was less compared to their current lifestyle.*

*According to me, among the three characters in the two stories W. Somerset Maugham’s Assunta has been describe completely and wholly. We know that Assunta loved Salvatore with the whole of her heart although he did dislike her at first. When Salvatore married her, she did not care about Salvatore’s impression of her. The other two women in the stories were not completely drawn. The first wife of Monsieur Lenin was not completely described, as after her death Monsieur Lantin could not find out from where she was getting all the “gifts” which were very expensive and costlier than what his salary could afford. The girl from Grande Marina was left hanging as we did not know that who she finally married, and it was possible that she was forced by her parents, to leave Salvatore for a more accomplished man.*

***Question 2 - Compare the three characters. If you had to be one, which one would you be and why?***

*All the three women in the stories were completely different , in personality, characters, physical appearance and all other aspects of a human being. The girl form Grande Marina was physically attractive, she has been told to have - had eyes like forest pools and held herself like the daughter of the Caesar’s. Although she was shown to be physically attractive her heart was not as pure as some of the others in the stories. When she heard that Salvatore was ill, she did not want to marry him anymore and her reason was, “that he will never be a man enough to provide for her”. This just shows us how materialistic she was and all she cared was about was her life and the comforts in her life. She had been pampered throughout her life by her parents and they wanted that she would get the same, if not better treatment after marriage. On the other hand, Assunta from the same story was described as a dull woman, physically. She was, according to Salvatore “as ugly as the devil”. She loved Salvatore from the first sight, right from the time she saw him in the fiesta. She, unlike the girl from Grande Marina, did not care that Salvatore had rheumatism and would not be strong like before. She loved Salvatore and not his body, strength, or appearance. After being rejected by the girl from Grande Marina, he married Assunta. Salvatore was heart-broken, and Assunta helped him get over that tough phase of his life. Before marriage Salvatore called Assunta many things such as “as ugly as the devil”. This did not affect her love for him, and she did not hold any grudge. All this goes to show that Assunta’s heart was nothing but as pure as the Madonna. The first wife of Monsieur Lantin from Guy de Maupassant’s story was a young and clever woman. She could run Monsieur Lantin’s household even with the extremely low salary which he used to get. She was gentle, quiet, and loving. To put it into simple words she was the perfect girl, or dream girl of every man. Her beauty was beyond praise, one could easily say that her beauty was angelic. She ran his household so wisely that it seemed as if they lived in luxury. Although later in the story, when she dies, we get to know that she used to get expensive “gifts” from somewhere or someone.*

*If it were up to me, I would be Assunta. Though she might not be wealthy in the materialistic sense, she was wealthier than most other people as she had a heart of gold. She was very loving and was fortunate to be blessed with a husband like Salvatore, who, just like her was pure and full of goodness. He fulfilled his responsibilities of being a husband and a father. He kept Assunta happy. Even though he suffered from rheumatism, he worked hard to sustain his family. He used to work throughout the day in the vineyard and spent the night catching profitable cuttlefish with his brothers. He was the father of two young children, Salvatore loved them and spent time with them. When he used to give them a bath, he used to hold them as tenderly and delicately as “they were like flowers.” He used to laugh with them, and they all enjoyed it. "His laugh was like the laughter of an angel. His eyes then were as candid as his child”. According to me she was very fortunate to get a truly loving husband and a partner who truly loved her, since true love is one of the rarest find in this universe and having been blessed with that makes Assunta even more special.*

***Question 3- Compare the relationship of Salvatore and the two women with Monsieur Lantin and his two wives. If you had a choice, would you be Salvatore or Monsieur Lantin? Give a reason for your choice.***

*If we compare both short stories presented to us, we will get a lot of similarities between the two women respectively from each story. We could compare Monsieur Lantin’s first wife from the False Gems to Assunta from Salvatore and Monsieur Lantin’s second wife to the girl from Grande Marina. Monsieur Lantin’s first wife from The False Gems was a woman who was a dream for many smart young men to be their wife. She was gentle, quiet and honourable. She ran Monsieur Lantin’s household with clever means and made so that they lived in luxury, even though, Lantin did not have a very lavish salary in the Ministry of Interior. Assunta from Salvatore was a girl who was from Salvatore’s hometown and had fallen in love with him after she saw him at the Festa. At first Salvatore blatantly refused to marry her as he was already in love with a girl from Grande Marina but when she refused to marry him, he settled with Assunta. She did not hold any rancour against him and loved him with the whole of her heart. She did not care about the fact that Salvatore had rheumatism and he will never be able to earn a lot of money for her. She was happy with whatever Salvatore could give her. She had fallen in love with Salvatore and not all outer, materialistic means that Salvatore possessed. The second woman that Monsieur Lantin married after the death of his first wife was very virtuous and had high moral standards but was very violent. Her personality was left very incomplete as she was only described to be “virtuous” and “violent” in nature. Even with the lack of information, we could make out that she certainly did not bring happiness to Monsieur Lantin as his first wife did. She instead brought sorrow and sadness with her. We could compare this woman to the girl from Grande Marina as she also brought sorrow to Salvatore by breaking his heart by refusing to marry him due to rheumatism. She said that he will not be strong enough to provide for her pampered self. This shows that she fell in love with Salvatore’s outer-being instead of his inner-nature or soul.*

*If I were given a choice to become either Salvatore or Monsieur Lantin, I would certainly choose Salvatore with pleasure. He surely did not have a lot of money or materialistic means but surely did have all the intellectual means. He had a wife who loved him dearly and two beautiful children. Even though he had been rejected by his love of his life he had ended up with an appealing family. It is often enough said that “All's well that ends well.” This is a perfect example for it. Even with his rough past of bad health and love life he settled down and ended up with a good family. When he is compared to what Monsieur Lantin ended up with, it has no comparison. Monsieur Lantin had a good life till his first wife was alive but when his second wife came in his life was full of sorrow and sadness. He ended up with a very bad wife who was possibly rude to him and violent toward him.*