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Book Review

Roald Dahl, author of classic children's novels such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* surprises his readers with *Lamb to Slaughter*. How could an author usually associated with light hearted children books write something as dark as *Lamb to Slaughter*? Despite this Lamb to Slaughter is a carefully written short-story full of suspense, mystery, and a dash of horror. Like what Mrs. Maloney says, “Why don't you eat up that lamb that's in the oven? It'll be cooked just right by now.”

While some classify this short story as horror, I see it as a comedic-mystery. Few would agree with me as it takes a certain personality to view death as light-hearted. The lack of certain details adds suspense and mystery such as “And he told her . . . with a kind of dazed horror as he went further and further away”. These delicate details enhance the stories plot. The story retains a classical mystery feel, but also starts off with a generic intro of a horror story. This hybrid is a perfect pairing for this story. The character Mrs. Maloney is an especially bizarre one. She seems to be a considerate and loving wife; rather she is quite the opposite. Mrs. Maloney is an extreme gold digger. Her intentions at first are not quite clear but I am certain she has a demonic soul. Mrs. Maloney knows her way with men. The secret and quickest way to their heart is food and she got that on the spot. Mrs. Maloney character is the most crucial in this story and makes me appreciate it more.

This book makes the reader think and while it did achieve its goal, it did make the reader think enough. The ending is quite straight forward, but it’s clever. Mary Maloney’s giggling, “And in the other room, Mary Maloney began to giggle” Roald Dahl does a fantastic job of keeping interest by giving the reader only enough information to understand the story, but still making them think. Lamb to Slaughter gives readers a totally new perspective on a leg of lamb.