

### Lapses in Memory

Jane suddenly found herself sitting at a desk in a dull room. She was still dazed from the flashing lights and could only remember fragments of the last 2 hours. She looked at the desk and realized it was hers: on the desk was her stained coffee mug, pictures of her loving husband and daughter, and the bland welcome message that greeted her every day, *Welcome, Jane*.

A whoosh of compressed air escaped the door down the hall. Jane turned to face the door. Abel pushed the door open with his little chihuahua in his arms and gave a slight wave. *Right*, Jane realized, *I teleported to work*.

It seemed almost like magic - teleporters were finally here and had transformed the entire world: from the stars to the bazaars. The experience was surreal: one could enter the quiet, metallic machine and after a flash of red, one could be anywhere, regardless of the distance. No one quite knew how the teleporters worked, just that the experience was ephemerally unpleasant.

Jane looked over at her daughter's picture - frozen in time in that happy moment - and then at her pocket mirror. She remarked on the overuse of her mascara. Paula, her neighbour, couldn't control her dog from barking last night and it completely ruined Jane's schedule. No matter how many times Jane approached Paula, she always seemed to deny the racket her dog made each night.

*I'll have to do something about that dog.*

She continued working, hoping not to anger her manager, Theseus. Right before turning to leave, Theseus called Jane to his office with a steeled, disappointed look on his face.

*Look at all the mistakes you've made - fix these before the end of the day.*

After apologizing profusely, Jane went back to her desk while consoling herself that this wouldn't happen again. *If only that dog would let me sleep, I wouldn't be so tired at work!*

After correcting her mistakes, Jane made her way toward the teleporter room, still a little apprehensive about the experience. The machine lit up and proceeded to scan her. After what seemed like an eternity, the machine finally bathed her in a soft white light.

George, her husband, had just finished reading their daughter a bedtime story. Exhausted, he flopped onto his bed, snoring. Jane grabbed a sandwich from the kitchen before turning on the Holo-News.

*Only 0.001% of Talon Teleporter users experience side effects! It's a very successful product launch.*

While not completely reassured, Jane went to bed more worried about how she'd focus at work tomorrow. Then, just as she started to enter the deeper stages of restful sleep, she heard that unpleasant bark.

For the next few mornings, a tired and irritated Jane got ready for work. She might stub her toe one day or bruise her elbow another and she always ended up late. Jane's patience and temperament worsened each day until she finally decided to have a frank conversation with Paula.

Paula was fumbling with her lock when Jane arrived, her dog yipping and yapping at anyone in the hall.

"Paula, you need to control your dog," Jane began, "It keeps barking at night."

"Excuse me!" Paula's squeaky voice joined her dog's yips before disappearing into her unit, "I don't like your tone!"

Jane stepped into her flat and took her shoes off. She slumped down on the couch and turned on the Holo News.

A bark came through the wall. Jane scowled. *The wretched dog began its orchestra early tonight.*

And the cycle continued for another week: Jane would complain and yet her slumber would be ruined. Jane's hair became dishevelled, her nails irregular, her eyes baggy, her clothes stained and

unkempt. More importantly, she was sleeping at work. Theseus not only noted this but sent a disciplinary message to Jane suggesting she fix her behaviour or risk losing the job.

Jane realized she had no choice but to confront Paula again. This time, however, Paula was unapologetic. Jane's voice rose to match her desperation and Paula reciprocated.

"This dog simply can not live here!"

Their argument had gotten so heated, so intense that glass would have shattered. She would have continued if she hadn't heard a loud thud coming from her apartment. Jane rushed to find the source of the sound. Jane was shocked to see her daughter on the ground clutching her ears. *What happened?! It's too loud!* Jane consoled her daughter with trembling hands. She could neither contain her anger nor properly console her fragile daughter. She felt her throat suffocate, having already run out of tears. The feeling was unbearable! Later that night, she stepped out and approached Paula's unit.

The dull lights above each room cast harsh shadows against the rest of the hall. Jane stepped towards Paula's room, her thoughts interrupted by the dog's bark. Her room was as dark as obsidian and just as impenetrable. Every step required conscious effort. Jane knew Paula couldn't see the opening of her door so she kept pushing it steadily. Jane slipped into the room and the door shut softly behind her. Jane silently crept towards the whimpering dog, the cold blade heavy in her hands.

Inside the dog's cage was an automatic feeder. *Of course, Paula's too lazy to care for the dog.* She slowly unfastened the cage, being incredibly careful not to wake the dog, lest she set it on its nightly routine. She knelt down until she felt fur and a heartbeat. It was fast and lively. She brought the knife closer to the dog's throat and in a single motion, slit its throat. A smile crept upon her face, but she wasn't satisfied. She repeatedly stabbed it, her anger venting in all its various forms. Her motions eventually became clean and precise. Finally, she wrapped the mangled corpse in a plastic bag and took it to the incendiary station.

That night, she slept more soundly than she had had for weeks.

The next morning, a rested Jane woke up. She got out of bed and slipped on her favourite slippers. She walked into the hallway and briskly walked past Paula's open room. She caught a glimpse of blue and knew that the police had to be there asking questions.

Officers also showed up at her work, calling various employees for private discussions. Jane kept her eyes lowered when walking past them and generally avoided them. Finally, they pointed toward her and called a few other policemen. Jane panicked - *had they found out?*

Jane adjusted her feet in her shoes. She got up and arduously made her way to the washroom. She thought about camping in the washroom until the policemen were gone but her thoughts were interrupted by a short knock. She scrambled to make an excuse: *I'm still busy.*

*Maam, we need to talk to you.* She could hear the decisiveness in his voice, how certain he was in his duty. *They already knew. They're just toying with me now!* She adjusted her face and gingerly unlocked the door. Her heart beat out of her chest.

The same police officer who first pointed at her stood at the doorway and opened his mouth to speak, but Jane cut him off.

*IT WAS ME! IT WAS ME! I KILLED THE DOG!*

The police officer's expression shifted for a second, but he regained his composure. He slowly grabbed handcuffs from his back pocket and cuffed Jane. He led her across the office and into the long hallway where she had always come to work. The police officer pressed his wrist against the door's portal, and Jane vanished.

As she finally lay her head down on the bare metal frame, she heard that frenzied familiar bark one more time.

### Short Story Rubric

Writing Mark 74.5/80 marks

Name: Dhrumil

| Criteria  | Level 4   | Level 3  | Level 2  | Level 1  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Central Action - C</b><br>There is a clear moment of central action that unites ideas. You demonstrate understanding of pacing to slow down the moment of critical action. (5 marks) <b>4.5</b>  | The central action thoughtfully unites the ideas. Smooth pacing to highlight the critical moment.   | Story has a central action. Almost all of the details are united by this. The pacing of the story makes sense.   | The central action of the story unites some of the ideas. The central action is rushed or too slow.  | The essay has a central action but it is incongruent with the details of the story. Limited evidence of understanding pacing.  |
| <b>Short Story Details &amp; Structure – C</b><br>You've carefully selected the details you need to ensure that your story is complete, is understandable, and is vivid. All details are on topic and interesting. A story structure exists that enhances the telling of the story. It is well-developed, logical, and flows for the reader. (15 marks) <b>14</b> | Details are sophisticated and vivid. Your story is thoughtful, complete and makes sense. There is an element of reflection. You've experimented with structure – used flashbacks, circular structure, or even hypothetical situations. It is well-developed, logical, and flows for the reader. | Details are vivid. Your story is complete and makes sense. A story structure exists that enhances the telling of the story. It is well-developed, logical, and flows for the reader. | Details are at times off topic or aren't specific enough. The story seems incomplete. Your reader is left with unanswered questions. Your short story has a clear start and finish but the organization of information in the middle is confusing. | Details are often off topic or vague. The story is incomplete. Your reader has many questions. Your organization of information confuses the reader. There are clear parts to the story but no logical order of ideas. |
| <b>Character Development or Revelation – C</b><br>You've shown me versus having told me what you're talking about. Vivid description or dialogue is used throughout. You haven't overly relied on adjectives and adverbs. (20 marks) <b>19</b>  | You brought the story to life with vivid description.   | You used description in your story. Occasionally you rely on telling me versus showing me your ideas.  | You still rely heavily on adjectives to describe. You tell me instead of showing me your ideas.  | Very few sensory details are used for description. Your story therefore lacks specific ideas and details.  |
| <b>Introduction – C</b><br>It captures the readers' attention with a hook and uses devices to make the writing "pop". (5 marks) <b>5</b>  | It captures the readers' attention with a hook and uses multiple devices to make the writing "pop".   | It captures the readers' attention with a hook and uses devices to make the writing "pop".   | The hook is evident but isn't strong. A device may have been used, but the writing is ordinary.  | The intro lacks a hook and few devices have been used. You haven't caught the reader's attention.  |
| <b>Conclusion – C</b><br>The narrative ends with a strong statement or idea. A  | The narrative ends with a strong statement or idea  | The narrative ends with a strong statement or idea.  | The story ends. The idea isn't particularly  | The ending is confusing. It  |

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| device or diction leaves the reader with a memory of your piece. (5 marks) <b>4</b>   | that is reflective. A device or diction leaves a lasting impression.                | A device or diction leaves the reader with a memory of your piece.                | thoughtful or interesting. It has been repeated in the text.   | doesn't tie up loose ends.   |
| <b>Rhetorical Devices – C</b><br>Varied devices are used successfully throughout your writing. They aid in making your writing interesting and in clearly communicating your ideas.<br><br>Devices include literary devices, voice, tone, POV, etc.<br><br>(20 marks) <b>18</b> | Many varied devices are used successfully throughout your writing.                  | Varied devices are used successfully throughout your writing.                     | Some devices are used throughout your writing. Or you tend to rely on using the same device over and over. | Few devices are used throughout your writing.                                      |
| <b>Writing Conventions – A</b><br>You've applied your knowledge of writing conventions covered in class so that your writing is clear. There are no errors. If there are errors, they don't impede understanding. (10 marks) <b>10</b>  | There are fewer than two errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation in your essay. | There are fewer than 5 errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation in your essay. | There are fewer than 10 errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation in your essay.                         | There are fewer than 15 errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation in your essay. |

\*\* Students will receive marks that are below level one when standards aren't met.

Dhrumil - I really enjoyed reading your story! Not only do you have a piece that flows well, and that's been edited for clarity, but you've also experimented with devices. I'm impressed.

I have a few curiosities and questions. This is the story of a woman who kills a dog. But you've added the teleportation element. And I'm wondering if the stories relate because it wasn't super clear to me. Is she hearing the dog barking (or is it amplified) because this turns out to be a side-effect of the teleportation? Is this why her daughter is screaming/pounding the floor too? You keep adding in news reports - are these the clues? Is this why she hears the dog's bark at the end? If she could teleport, could she have teleported into Paula's room? If you add teleportation to the story, and if I'm off track in my wonderings above, then you need to find a way for teleportation to serve the story with the dog. If I'm right, above, can you make it really clear that it was a side-effect. Maybe through a news report at the end?

Let me know if this doesn't make sense! Overall, a great concept and an enjoyable read!