

What do you observe about the organization and after you've finished reading?

Throughout "*Long Short Short Long*" by Pasha Malla, the story juxtaposes past events with the present as the story is told from the perspectives of the fourth-grader Bogdan and unnamed teacher "Miss". The story begins almost in medias res with very little explanation about core plot details. As the story continues, the juxtaposed scenes develop characters and reveal latent characteristics that motivate future actions: Bogdan is called "Short Long" because of the haircut his mother gives him while listening (and dancing) to *Sticky Fingers* and Miss' annoyance towards the children in her classes has crept into her life outside of teaching. The scenes later in the story allude to previous elements of the story: the music that plays while Bogdan gets a haircut later completely occupies his mind as he cuts Trish's hair the way his mom cuts his hair and Miss' behaviour mirrors that of the children in her class as she watches Bogdan forcefully cut Trish's hair.

What do you observe about the craft and pacing of each scene? When and how does the author slow down time to reveal what's important?

"Long Short Short Long", a clear allusion to morse code, is used prolifically throughout the story to represent different aspects of Bogdan's life throughout the story: the nickname used to ostracize him, his haircut, a description of a song, and the form of his revenge for Trish. Each scene experimented with progression as scenes with repeated elements (Bogdan spitting in the face of the "Arab child") explained fewer details, allowing the scene to pass by faster. The most important scenes used music for pacing, progressing slowly through the music to emphasize each action. This progression was best seen in the final scene, where *Sticky Fingers* drowns Bogdan's thoughts as he slowly steps towards Trish. Extra attention is given to the thoughts of the characters in these scenes to make it seem as if the scene is unfolding in slow-motion.

How is the text making you feel? What has the author done to make you feel this way?

The text, like many others, genuinely makes me dislike almost every character in the story. Bogdan may be the subject of the class' ostracizing, but grossly and physically assaults the "Arab child" for no apparent reason. Despite Bogdan's clear abuse, the other child shows sympathy, which makes him perhaps the most mature and resilient character in the entire story. I feel sympathy for Miss but am also annoyed by her as she starts as an inexperienced teacher struggling to contain her class and later seems like more of a child who doesn't understand how to use power as she lets her teaching life occupy her mind outside of work, insulting the kids. Furthermore, she simply watches as Bogdan harasses Trish and needs another boy to break up their fight.

Throughout the text: how is the organization of the text allowing you to predict the central action? At the end of the text: identify the central action. What was the motivation for the action and how is it developed?

The organization of the text helps to develop the characters' motivations until the reader can immediately point to both clashing motivations and is only waiting for an

opportunity for the central action. In the story, the reader learns, after many juxtaposed scenes of the past, that Miss is resigned to simply fulfilling basic duties to hold a job as a teacher, while Bogdan feels more and more powerful as he faces less resistance in pushing his will onto others (spitting on the "Arab child"). In the final scene, readers can easily point to a frustrated Bogdan, a dismissive Miss, and a classroom with no lesson. It's clear that Bogdan cutting Trish's hair is the central action. His hatred for Trish develops from her leading the class to ostracize him as well as her clever method of both starting and stopping the riot against the teacher, for who he feels sympathy.