

The Geranium

by Patricia Grace

After the kids had gone to school, Marney started on the work. She did the dishes, washed the tea towels and hung them out. She wiped down the table and the bench, and the windowsill and the frame of the window. She cleaned the window and the fireplace, and took the ash-pan out and emptied it where she'd been digging. She wiped the hearth with a damp cloth. Then she put the mat outside so she could sweep and mop out. She liked the mat which was new. Bob had come home with it the week before and she'd put it in the centre of the room where it wouldn't get marked. She thought Bob might get another mat for by the door, not a flashy one, just a little rope mat to step on. She began sweeping, moving from the kitchen to the bedrooms. She was sorry the kids were all at school now, and she thought about having a job. She swept, getting into the corners with a dustpan and brush. Some of the women had kitchen jobs or did part-time cleaning or did machining down at Hayes.

When she'd finished sweeping, she got a bucket of water and a mop and mopped out. She scrubbed the back step and mopped the porch, then opened the window and door to let the breeze blow through, hoping that the floor would dry out quickly before Sandra and Joey came. She was looking forward to mid-morning when Sandra and Joey and theirs might call in on their way to the shops. Before they came she would put on her cardigan to hide her arm.

She went out into the washhouse and began rubbing the clothes that were soaking in the tub. If she had a job she'd get her a washing machine. Not a dear one, just a second-hand.

She'd seen washing machines advertised in the *Wanted to Sell* column of the paper that came on Wednesday. Tomorrow – at about two o'clock every Wednesday the woman came with the papers – tomorrow there'd be another paper. And when it arrived she'd stop what she was doing and have a read, sometimes reading right up to the time the kids came home from school. But she didn't read everything on the Wednesday.

There were all sorts of things to read: stories about people of the district, or about some new building going up. A picture of their street had been in once, showing one of the Works' trucks loaded with shrubs that were being given out to each house. She liked reading about sports and the different things that people did and there was a cooking section and sometimes a special section about gardens.

The public notices took up two pages and told about meetings and raffles, or where you could buy firewood or coal or an Inclinator. Or you could read about garage sales and Jumble sales, and where to send clothes and household goods that you didn't want. Sometimes there were notices of market days advertising produce, crafts, Jumble, quick-fire raffles, white elephants, lucky dips and knickknacks. Sometimes there were auctions with everything going cheap.

If you wanted to join a club you could read through the notices and find the one you liked, and anyone could join. The notices and things like "Enroll Now", "Special Welcome to New Members", "All Welcome!", "Intending Members Welcome!" and there was one big ad that always had "WE NEED YOU" in extra large print.

There were a lot of church notices telling the times of the services and where you could ring for further enquiries. There were notices about where you could get advice to do with money or marriage or the law.

The schools put their notices there when they were having elections or fundraising or when it was time for the kids to enroll. Or people could enroll at dancing school to learn ballet, tap or jazz. They could do Tae Kwan Do, aerobics or collect spoons – just about anything. They could learn something, like swimming or ceramics or floral art.

She likes flowers. She had looked after her shrub and it was starting to grow. Sometimes she'd thought about having a few bulbs and poking them in round underneath the shrub. Or a geranium. She thought about having a geranium which could be red or pink. She liked red, but pink was alright too.

There were three pages about houses in the paper, where it told you about each house, how many bedrooms, what sort of fireplace, if there was a carpet, whether there was a garage or a double garage. Some of the houses were great for kids, some were close to shops or schools, or only a step to the railway station. Some had fabulous views. There were photos of a lot of the houses, and she liked counting the windows and looking to see if there was a chimney or two chimneys, or no chimney at all.

It was good looking at all the advertisements to do with things for the house. And there were clothes – adverts about fashion frocks, fashion jerseys, fashion sweat-tops. And baby knits, fleece and super fleece, flexiwool, polywool, wonderwool.

There were pictures of nightwear and shoes and slippers, and the ads told the sizes and colours you could get. Sometimes you could get "All Sizes, All Colours".

Then there were the grocery and meat ads, which had the prices of everything and told you which were special and how much off, or how much for two, and there were coupons and competitions, and how to put money aside for Christmas.

And there were jobs advertised too – jobs for all sorts of tradespeople – for office workers, sales people, machinists, cleaners, and kitchen hands. Sometimes people advertised for someone to mind children after school, or to do house cleaning for a few hours each week.

She liked the page where people put in what they wanted to buy or sell like beds, bikes, lawnmowers, pianos, washing machines, TV sets or aerials, highchairs, freezers, fridges, pheones, vacuum cleaners.

But she didn't read everything on the Wednesday. She saved some of the reading for the next day, and the day after that. She always hid the paper away when she'd finished reading it so that it wouldn't get put in the fire.

When she'd finished washing and rinsing the clothes, she wrung them out and put as many as she could into the bucket ready to take out. She went inside for her cardigan and saw that the floor was nearly dry. If Sandra and Joey came before it had dried properly she'd put paper down, or she could mop again afterwards, just in the places where they'd walked.

The tea towels she'd put out earlier were dry, so she took them down and began pegging the clothes, returning to the washhouse every now and again to refill the bucket. There weren't enough pegs for all the washing and she had to drape the towels over the line without pegging them. She thought she might mention about the pegs.

When the women and kids came she was pleased and put some water on the stove to boil. She buttered some biscuits and put jam on some and cheese on some.

"You do this every day?" Sandra said, stepping on the papers.

"Yeh, what for?" said Joey, carrying the pushchair in so that it wouldn't make marks.

"You kids want a biscuit?" Marney asked.

"Take one and go outside," Sandra said.

"Take two, one on top. And you come in after, I'll give you a banana."

"they don't need a banana, tell them to get out and stay out."

"Yes," Joey said. "Keep the bananas for your kids, these ones have been stuffing their faces all morning."

She poured the tea, then they talked about the curtains some people were getting. There was a curtain bug going round has just about everyone was getting new curtains. They knew who it was taking the milk money too, and it was the kids from the next street. That skin-and-bone one with the asthma was one of them.

Everyone was getting sick too. All the kids had runny noses and coughs. But not as bad as the one over the road from Sandra who ended up in hospital, but no wonder: spaghetti, baked beans, spaghetti, baked beans.

Then they talked about some t-shirts they were going to buy for the kids, and about the kids growing out of their clothes. They were going to sort some of the stuff out to give to someone. Some of it was had it and would have to be chucked out.

Then Sandra and Joey thought they'd better get going.

"Good cup of tea, Marney," Sandra said. "You coming?"

"Not today."

"How come? You're always sticking home."

"Bob does our shopping..."

"But a walk won't hurt."

"Yeah, come for a stretch."
 "Well, I'm a bit busy."
 "Busy my foot. What else you got?"
 "Ironing..."
 "Jesus, it can wait. Be back in an hour... a few minutes' walk, have a look around and home again..."
 "And I might do a bit more... out in the back..."
 "Dead loss, all right. Why not let your old man dig? Anyway, what for? It's all rock, nothing grows."
 "I'll look after the kids if you like."
 "Fat chance, they've got money for lollies."
 "What about baby?"
 "I could leave bubby. Yes, good, I'll leave her and ... better get going, otherwise we'll never get. You kids coming?"
 "We want a banana."
 "Look..."
 "Let them have a banana, there's plenty..."
 "Well, I don't buy bananas, they never last in our house the way they stuff their faces. In and out, in and out, wanting, asking. I go to the shop today and just about all gone next day. But you ... you always seem to have..."
 "It's Bob, always bringing stuff."
 "Mmm. Not like my old man. Hers too. All they bring home is a skinful of booze, one's as bad as the other. Well look, we better ... You leaving bubby, Joey?"
 "Well..."
 "Yes it's all right, leave her. When she wakes up I'll mash a banana, make some custard."
 "You sure?"
 "Yes."
 "And sure you don't want to..."
 "Nah. Some other time."
 "Okay then. There's a nappy in the bag, and her bottle."
 "Good, see you on the way back."
 Marney washed the cups and wiped the table down. The floor was dry and she collected up the paper and brought the mat in. She put milk into a pot to make custard for Jemmy.
 By the time the women came back she'd changed and fed Jemmy, washed the nappy and hung it on the line. She'd taken Jemmy outside to play for a little while and Jemmy had toddled about on the rough ground, laughing and pointing, and occasionally sitting down with a bump.
 "She didn't cry," Marney said. "Not even when she first woke up."
 "She's good like that," Joey said. "Likes everybody. Eazy to leave."
 "Here, we brought you a bit of geranium. Joey's got a bit. I've got a bit. They reckon you can grow it from a bit like that."
 "Good. Good, I was thinking about a geranium. Red too. It's just what I was thinking."
 But she was worried about the geranium, and after the women had gone she thought she might get rid of it. Then she decided to put it in a jar of water and put it on the kitchen windowsill.
 After that she went out to do some more of the digging, working quickly to make up for the time she'd spent talking or playing with Jemmy.
 When the kids got home she went in and put the tea on.
 By then the clothes were dry and she took them in to iron.
 The children had had tea and she'd almost finished the ironing when she heard the truck stop and heard Bob calling to the driver. After a while he came in and put the bag of groceries on the bench.
 "So you been digging?" he said.
 "Yes."
 "What else?"
 "It's hard ... quite rocky ..."
 "I said, what else?"
 "The... the house..."
 "What did you do this morning?"

"I got the kids off to school..."
 "Well, come on. Did they have breakfast, did they have a wash?"
 "Yes. The kids got up just before you left and they had a wash. Then they got dressed while I was getting their lunches read. I got them their breakfast..."
 "Late, I suppose."
 "No, plenty of time. They went about quarter past."
 "And who was here?"
 "No one..."
 "I said, who was here?"
 "No one. Just me. Just the kids."
 "Then what?"
 "I did the dishes, then I wiped down the table, the bench, round the window, cleaned the window. Then I swept out and mopped out and... started the washing..."
 "What else?"
 "I went and hung it out."
 "And?"
 "I needed a few more pegs."
 He reached out and gripped her arm. She could feel his fingers bruising her. "Stop changing the subject," he said.
 "I wasn't... I just thought...when you get the shopping..."
 "Stop grizzling about the pegs. If I want to get the pegs, I'll get pegs."
 "What then?"
 "Sandra and Joey called in."
 "Just called, on the way to the shops."
 "So you all went off to the shops, I suppose?"
 "Not me."
 "How do I know?"
 "No, not me. I looked after Jemmy while Joey..."
 "Is that all you got to do?"
 "No, but..."
 "No but, no but. You better not be lying, that's all."
 "They came and got Jemmy and..."
 "Who's they?"
 "Sandra and Joey."
 "Who else?"
 "No one... No one else... Only Sandra's two kids but they ran on home. It was just Joey who came in; Sandra waited out."
 "So first you said Sandra and Joey, then you say just Joey. Can't you make up your mind?"
 "Joey came in, Sandra waited for her."
 "I better not find out different."
 "And after that was when I did the garden. When the kids came home I started the tea. I brought the clothes in and I've been ironing..."
 "So, what else have you got to grizzle about?"
 "No, I wasn't..."
 "And what's that?"
 "What's..."
 "That's just a geranium."
 "Where from?"
 "Sandra gave..."
 "Sandra hasn't got geraniums."
 "She did, Sandra. She got it when she went to the shop..."
 "Shop? What shop? I haven't seen any shop with those."
 "I mean she got it, from somewhere."
 "Changing your mind again?"

"No. It's what I meant. She got it, pinched it off someone's bush... or... spoke to someone and they gave it."

"You don't know what you're talking about." His grip tightened even more, on her arm, he was beginning to twist.

"She said to put it... in water... and it might grow."

Then suddenly he let go and sat down at the table. So she went over to the stove, took a plate from the warming tray and began to dish up food. Her arm hurt. She piled the plate high and put it down in front of him.

"Chuck that thing out," he said, so she took the geranium and put it into the scrap bucket. She could hear him chewing the meat, sucking at the bones and shifting about in his chair as she waited for water to boil for the tea.

And as she waited she thought about the next day when Sandra and Joey might call in. She remembered that tomorrow was the day the woman came with the paper. There would be new stories and she wondered what they could be about. She wondered what there would be to look at in the pictures of clothes and things for the house.

When she had poured his tea she began stacking the dishes into the sink. She squirted dishwashing liquid over the plates and let the water run.

There would be the week's grocery specials to look at telling about prices down and cut prices, and with crosses over the old prices and the new prices shown in in big print. Some of the pictures of the houses would be the same as for last week, but there'd be some new ones too, close to shops, great outlooks, good for kids. And there would be some new jobs but not very many.

She remembered that this was the time of the year that clubs put notices in about meetings, with special welcomes to new members and intending members. There could be new clubs with some different things for people to learn and do.

Then she thought about *Wanted to Sell, Wanted to Buy*, the page she liked best, where you could read about all the things, where you could read about all the things people had for sale or would like to buy. Sometimes she read that page first, but sometimes she kept it until last to read. And she always read it slowly and carefully so that she wouldn't finish it too soon.

Behind her she heard him sucking his teeth and shifting his chair. She pulled the plug and watched the sink emptying, watched the water turning, heard it rushing in the drain.

Comprehension Exercises:

- Work with a partner to explain the meaning/importance of the underlined words.
- Find definitions for the bold words. First, read the sentence and try to guess the meaning. Then, check your guess with a dictionary.

The Geranium:

Notes

Setting	Characters	Plot	Themes	Voice	Symbols
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bob & Marney's house Anywhere in the world (domestic violence happens everywhere) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marney Bob Sandra Joey Jemmy Joey's other kids Marney's children 	<p>Marney reads the newspaper & dreams about a better life. She works hard all day cleaning & gardening. Sandra & Joey visit & ask her to go out with them. She stays home & watches Jemmy. She cleans quickly to make up for the visit. Bob comes home, interrogates her, and twists her arm. She feeds him and does the dishes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> domestic violence power the victim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3rd person omniscient We see mostly Marney's actions, words & thoughts Mood: sad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> geranium – a survivor newspaper – outside world drain – wasted life

Setting

- only a few details given
 - "Bob" and "Marney" are English names, but they could live anywhere
 - no real cultural or economic background
 - probably not rich
 - Marney dreams of a washing machine
 - Why? No money? Bob wants her to do work?
- they could be any couple from any culture
 - P. Grace is making a point
 - domestic violence happens everywhere – In all cultures, communities, & situations – and we don't usually know who the victims & wrongdoers are
 - serious problem, not just a small fight
 - not just "their problem" – we all must face up to it
 - the vague setting shows universality of the issue
 - forces us to look to our own communities
 - How many "Marneys" and "Bobs" are there hidden behind veils of silence and fear?
 - P. Grace wants to increase awareness & make it hard for abusive men to hide

Plot

Marney is a housewife and mother who spends her whole day cleaning. To get through each exhausting day, she daydreams about reading the weekly newspaper. She dreams of the world it shows, the world outside her home and out of her husband Bob's reach. It's a world of cheap goods,

houses for sale, and clubs that welcome new members. She dreams of having a flower in her garden, wishing for a red geranium.

Two friends of hers, Sandra and Joey, come by with their children for a visit. Marney enjoys their company and is kind to the children but refuses their invitation to join them on a shopping outing. The women leave the baby while they shop, but bring a geranium for Marney when they return. When the visitors all leave, Marney must make up for the time she spent with them, working to clean up after them in addition to her usual housework.

We discover why Marney acts so strangely when Bob comes home in the evening. He immediately interrogates her about her day, and it seems this is something he does regularly. Marney is obviously terrified of her husband, and can only speak in fragments of sentences. We see why she covered her arms when visitors came – she was hiding bruises Bob gave her – and why she didn't join her friends in going shopping – Bob doesn't allow her to go anywhere. Even when he isn't there, Marney is too afraid of him to disobey him.

As if that weren't enough, Bob strengthens his power over Marney by forcing her to throw the geranium out, strengthening his power over her. He totally runs her life and abuses her emotionally and physically. In the end, Marney does the only thing she can: she washes the dishes and dreams of reading the newspaper the next day.

Themes

Domestic Violence (cruel fighting at home)

- a personal view of the problem & the victim (Marney)
 - helps reader to see damage it causes
 - sensitive portrayal & character development of Marney
- not just physical abuse (causing bodily harm)
 - also emotional abuse (causing painful feelings and thoughts)
 - Bob belittles Marney
 - Bob denies Marney simple things
 - he totally controls her life
- can occur anywhere & people usually don't know
 - the setting is "anywhere"
 - domestic violence is a problem of all cultures & economic backgrounds
 - Joey and Sandra don't know their friend is being abused
 - hard to see because victims keep the secret, like Marney
 - hides her bruises
 - gives Bob credit for "always bringing stuff"
 - doesn't tell her good friends of her troubles

Power

- related to domestic violence
 - abusers (like Bob) act like that because it gives them power
- Bob is a bully
 - like all bullies, he picks on someone weaker than himself
 - uses fear to control his victim
 - uses threats to control her, too

- he destroys Marney's freedom, emotions, and thoughts to prove he is "the boss"
- he makes her work all day
- doesn't let her keep even the geranium
- Bob's power is a secret
 - this is why he tries to keep visitors out and Marney in
 - he doesn't want others to know the truth
- actions based on prejudiced belief that men are better than men
 - Marney is a possession he can control and mistreat

The Victim

- also related to domestic violence (effect of domestic violence on the victim)
 - story told from victim's point of view
 - we see her pain, fear, sadness, emptiness, her boring life... (her only joy is dreaming about something as pathetic as a free newspaper)
 - it hurts emotionally (spiritually), not only physically (bodily)
 - why doesn't Marney leave?
 - not well educated?
 - has children
 - no job/money
 - she's AFRAID of what might happen & USED TO this life
 - Marney doesn't fight back — she's used to being hurt
 - her spirit is broken
 - she feels she's worthless as a person
 - she thinks this is her life & she has no choice
 - Bob has beaten the life out of her
 - her whole day, everything, is controlled by her fear of Bob
 - worried when she gets the geranium
 - worried visitors will make a mess
 - worried Bob will be upset if she leaves the house
 - worried Bob will be angry about every little thing
 - reasonable fears — If he gets so mean about little things, how does he act when she does something really "bad"?
 - fear is a powerful weapon
 - dominates other feelings
 - makes us forget other thoughts
 - only a small part of the victim remains
 - Marney is just a shell with a tiny pearl of herself — her dreams
 - she keeps her dream (to live a different, simple life) hidden from everyone

Geranium

- like Marney

simple but tough plant that can survive anywhere (a weed) Symbols

- not respected; looked at as a burden

- not cared for,
- what Marney can't have
 - this flower is the simplest and cheapest of things, like Marney's dreams (washing machine, a job...) but Bob denies her it
 - shows Bob's complete control over her life

Newspaper

- the outside world Marney dreams of and is denied (by Bob)
 - acts as a window to the world she's not allowed to enter
 - shows how little she has and how sad her life is
 - she treasures even the smallest detail
 - other people spend only minutes reading the paper and then chuck it out
- a means of escape from her boring, sad life
 - gives her a chance to dream about things she can't buy, meetings she can't attend
 - when reading it, she can pretend she's like everyone else for a brief time

Water Going Down the Drain

- Marney's life is "going down the drain" too
 - she's trapped, going down, spinning out of control
 - she's been used (like the dirty dishwasher) for her ability to clean, then discarded
 - shows feeling of hopelessness and helplessness of Marney's life
 - happens right after Bob has hurt her
 - final image of the story, leaving us sad and hopeless, like Marney feels about her life
 - abused women feel trapped in their lives
 - damaged strengths and self-confidence (not just their bodies)
 - breaks people so they can't easily escape

Style

It's important to see things through Marney's eyes. The reader develops a relationship with Marney this way. Grace spends a lot of time trying to make us identify with Marney and feel her pain and fear so we can begin to understand the effects of abuse. Bob is destroying Marney's life and we come to realize how powerful domestic violence is.

By making us relate so strongly to Marney, Grace is making us experience a little bit of what it's like to be a victim of domestic violence ourselves; we share the experience with Marney. And when we actually experience something ourselves, we learn to care about and understand it better. We have a stronger response. In this case, we become deeply and personally against domestic violence.

Structure and Language

There are two types of sentences seen in this story: (1) long, complex sentences and (2) short, simple sentences. We see the latter (2) when Marney is afraid. She can't finish her thoughts; she stammers and pauses while trying to prevent Bob from getting angry. Still, he attacks everything she says, only making her shorten her sentences more. In Bob's case, these short sentences are violent and mean; almost like verbal punches.

We see the former types of sentences when Marney feels safe. Lengthy phrases tell us of her duties; the times when Bob is away and she has some small bit of freedom. Long, dreamy sentences describe her mind wandering while thinking of the newspaper and the outside world — the world in which she would be safe.

The Other Women

Joey and Sandra, like the newspaper, highlight how sad Marney's life is. They are ordinary, simple women going shopping, visiting their friends, complaining about their husbands and children. They pick and plant geraniums without a second thought.

Without this reminder of things most of us take for granted, it would be easy to forget how much Bob has taken from Marney. She has to work in the house and the garden all day (and it's still not enough), hide her bruises, keep Bob's secrets.

The women also illustrate how good abusers and victims are at keeping domestic violence a secret and pretending to the world.

The Ending

The story ends on a sad note. There is no resolution after the climax (Bob twisting Marney's arm and forcing her to throw out the geranium). Nothing has changed. Marney is still suffering; Bob is still abusing her. She is still the victim and he is still the bully.

The only resolution we have is Marney's return to daydreams. She gets beaten, which seems like a common occurrence, and watches the water (and her wasted life) go down the drain. But despite all the sadness, she has a safe place – thoughts of tomorrow's newspaper. This method of coping offers her escape.

The depressing, nearly hopeless ending draws attention to the problems that come with trying to stop domestic violence. It's a draining problem with no simple solution. The victims feel they can't escape or that they deserve the abuse. But in Marney's survival is a small ray of hope. Despite her freedom, her happiness and her life being taken, she is still a kind woman. And she has kept part of her safe, wrapped in the dreams of a simple, ordinary, out-of-reach life.

ADVERTISEMENT

Headline

- ☛ catches reader's attention
- ☛ holds the main idea of the advert
- ☛ the biggest print, often in bold

Body Copy

- ☛ makes reader want to buy the product
- ☛ gives detailed information
- ☛ small font; most of the text in the ad
- ☛ NB: many ads have details (e.g., address) in tiny print at the bottom of the page

Sub-Head

- ☛ makes reader want to continue reading
- ☛ extends/develops/answers the headline
- ☛ the 2nd-biggest print, often in bold
- ☛ not all adverts have this

The Three Main Parts of an Advertisement

Most advertisements (a.k.a., ads or adverts) have three main parts: (1) a headline, (2) a sub-head(line), and (3) the body copy. In order to make their adverts more effective, advertisers include many visual and verbal features, such as images, logos, slogans, and slang.

Use of Colour

- ☛ use of bright/bold colors to attract attention (e.g., red for Coke[®])
- ☛ Use contrasting colors to make something stand out (e.g., a headline)
- ☛ Use colors related to emotion to create a tone/mood (e.g., blue for sadness, black for fear, pink for romance)
- ☛ Use of negative images (i.e., white on black)

Symbols

- ☛ common signs
- ☛ ☒ = mail
- ☛ ☠ = pirates
- ☛ ☪ = church
- ☛ ♥ = love
- ☛ ☮ = peace

Images

- ☛ often, there is an image of the product to show readers what to look for when they are shopping
- ☛ illustrations, photos, cartoons, pictures...

Borders

- ☛ draw people's eyes in
- ☛ occasionally used to show cultural symbols

Lettering

- ☛ the size, colour, style, and placement of words indicates their importance
- ☛ size: the larger the word, the more important it is; highlights main ideas (e.g., the headline)
- ☛ colour: makes words stand out or fade away
- ☛ style [**bold/italics/font**]: makes words stand out (e.g., *italics*) or reinforce a tone/mood (e.g., *romantic, serious, Old-fashioned, funny*)

Dominant Image

- ☛ the main picture, usually large and centered
- ☛ relates to and reinforces main idea

Layout

- ☛ All things are carefully placed on the page to highlight certain ideas
- ☛ Empty space is also important and planned

Visual Features

things you can see in the advertisement

Logos

- ☛ small symbols that represent a company (e.g., Nike's logo: )
- ☛ easy to recognize
- ☛ show the image the company wants to portray

Emotive Words

- * words with strong emotional ties (e.g., "home" instead of "house")
- * used to attach positive feelings to a product

Puns

- * words/phrases with a double meaning; often humorous
- * designed to interest readers; encourages people to read on and see what is really meant

Statistics + Facts

- * scientific data, often including numbers
- * designed to make the product seem well-researched and its makers experts in their fields

Verbal Features

words and meaning of an advert ads' styles tend to be informal

Alliteration

- * repetition of the beginning sounds of words (e.g., *baby buggy bumpers*)
- * like repetition, often used to highlight key words
- * designed to make words and ideas memorable

Jargon +

Technical/Scientific Words

- * special words associated with a particular subject (e.g., "bytes", "RAM", and "hard drive" are computer-related jargon)
- * used to make the sellers seem like experts in their field

Second- Person Pronouns

- * i.e., "you"
- * designed to seem like a personal message, like the advertiser is speaking directly to the reader

Minor Sentences

- * understandable but incomplete (no verb) sentences with main ideas (e.g., "fast and reliable")
- * used to make adverts easy to read

Superlatives

- * words that indicate something is the top (e.g., best, fastest, most useful)
- * used to make a product seem like it's the best

Listing

- * stating all options (e.g., "Our hotel has a restaurant, a pool, three bars, a gym...")
- * designed to show all the options not provided by other products

Acronyms

- * the first letters of each word (e.g., ANZAC)
- * shorter
- * simpler
- * easier
- * more informal

Superlatives

- * words that indicate something is the most (e.g., best, worst, most beautiful, fastest)
- * designed to make a product seem as though it is in the top of the range, or a problem seem unmanageable

Slogan

- * a short, easily remembered phrase
- * used repeatedly in connection with a product (e.g., Nike's "Just do it.")

Rhyme

- * repetition of the ending sounds of words
- * like alliteration, often used to highlight key words
- * used to make words and ideas memorable

Repetition

- * stating key words over and over
- * designed to reinforce key ideas
- * often, the product name is repeated throughout the advertisement

Rhetorical Questions

- * unanswerable questions or questions with an obvious answer
- * designed to make readers focus on certain ideas and think a certain way

Slang

- * informal words, "street talk" understood by most or only by certain groups, like teenagers in gangs
- * used to make reader feel like one of their peers is speaking

Personal/Celebrity Endorsements

- * a famous person supporting a product
- * for people who admire the celebrity

Use of Adjectives

- * using describing words
- * often, several adjectives are strung together in long adjective phrases
- * designed to show all positive aspects of a product with a small number of words

Neologisms

- * new words, often made by combining two existing words (e.g., Greenpeace) or parts of existing words (e.g., Sedacap - sedative + capsules)

Commands (Imperatives)

- * phrases that tell you what to do or how to act
- * designed to make you do things the advertiser wants
- * often found at the end of ads

ADVERTISING FEATURES

Advertising Language is characterised by the use of the following features to *attract, inform, and persuade*.

- **Hyperbole:** exaggeration, often by use of adjectives and adverbs.
 - **Long noun phrases:** frequent use of pre- and post-modifiers like adjectives and adverbs for descriptions
 - A limited range of **evaluative adjectives** (e.g., new, clean, white, real, fresh, right, natural, big, great, slim, soft, wholesome, improved)
 - **Neologisms**¹ (new words made by the advertiser) may have novelty impact, (e.g., Beanz Meanz Heinz, Cookability, Schwepervescence, Tangoed, Wonderfuel).
 - **Short sentences** for impact on the reader. This impact is especially clear at the beginning of a text, often using bold or large type for the "Headline" or "slogan" to capture the attention of the reader.
 - **Ambiguity** (unclear meaning): This may make a phrase memorable and re-readable. Ambiguity may be syntactic (the grammatical structure) or semantic (puns, for example).
 - **Weasel words** are often used. These are words which suggest a meaning without actually being specific. One type is the open comparative: "Brown's Boots Are Better" (posing the question "better than what?"); another type is the bogus superlative: "Brown's Boots are Best" (posing the question "rated alongside what?")
- Look out for the following Weasel words:

helps	like	virtually
enriched	worth	fresh
tested	guaranteed	scientific
traditional	home-made	organic

- Use of **Imperatives** (commands): "Buy Brown's Boots Now!"
- **Euphemisms:** to avoid mentioning unpleasant things. (e.g., "Clean Round the Bend" for a toilet cleaner, "B.O" for "body odour" (in itself a euphemism for "smelly person"))
- **Avoidance of negatives:** advertising normally emphasises the positive side of a product
- **Simple and Colloquial language:** "It ain't half good" to appeal to ordinary people, though it is in fact often complex and deliberately ambiguous.
- **Familiar language:** use of second person pronouns (*you*) to address an audience and suggest a friendly attitude.
- **Present tense** is used most commonly, though nostalgia is summoned by the simple past
- **Simple vocabulary** is most common, (e.g., my mate Marmite) with the exception of technical vocabulary to emphasise the scientific aspects of a product (computers, medicines, cars, and hair and cleaning products) which often comes as a complex noun phrase, the new four wheel servo-assisted disc brakes.
- **Repetition** of the brand name and the slogan, both of which are usually memorable by virtue of
 - **Alliteration:** repeating of initial sound (e.g., finger of fudge, the best four by four by far)
 - **Rhyme:** repeating the ending sounds (e.g., mean machine, the cleanest clean it's ever been)
 - **Rhythm:** the beat (e.g., drinka pinta milka day)
 - **Syntactic parallelism:** repeating patterns (e.g., stay dry, stay happy)
 - **Association** (e.g., fresh as a mountain stream)
- **Humour:** verbal or visual, aims to show the product positively. Verbal Puns like "wonderfuel" and graphic juxtapositions are common.
- **Glamorisation** is probably the most common technique of all. It happens with adjectives (e.g., Old houses become "charming", "full of character", "olde worlde" or "unique". Small houses become "compact", "cozy", "snug" or "manageable". Houses on a busy road become "convenient for transport.") and nouns (e.g., a café with a pavement table becomes a "trattoria", moving up market aspires to be a "restaurant", and if it's too cramped it becomes a "bistro". If the menu is national food it is likely to be "traditional", "home-baked" or "homemade"; if the menu is French the cake will be "gateau", the potted meat "paté", and bits of toast in your soup will be "croutons"; the "decor" will be probably "chic", possibly "Provençal".
- Finally **potency.** David Ogilvy identifies the following words as giving **news value, novelty** and **immediacy** to a piece of copy.

free	now	how to
suddenly	announcing	introducing
It's here	just arrived	important development
improvement	amazing	sensational
remarkable	revolutionary	startling
miracle	magic	offer
quick	easy	wanted
challenge	advice to	compare
bargain	hurry	last chance

SPELLING IN ADVERTISING

In the twentieth century, spelling has undergone few changes. The dictionary, accepted as the guide to intelligent usage, has given a fixed spelling to virtually all our words.

American English has given us some uses such as *program* (in place of *programme*) which have been adopted together with their American spelling, into British English.

Some words take -ise and others -ize, while in some cases either can be used. Look at advertise, surprise, synchronize and criticize.

Words using ligatures such as "æ" have recently been simplified into *encyclopedia* and *medieval*.

Trade and product names, however, are not held back by the dictionary and frequently demonstrate creative spelling and blending of words.

Here are some words recently found in a Yellow Pages directory.

- What conclusions do you draw from reading these words?
- What kind of products or market is being targeted?
- Are these **neologisms** effective?
- What linguistic devices do these names use for their effect?

while-u-wait	Eye Spy Security Services	Glazztek (car windows)
Kwik Fit	Excell (cellnet telephones)	Easiclean
Fast-Fit	Bettacars	Dur-a-clean
kleeneezee	luxicabs	Duracell
fish 'n' chips	Fenphones	techniflo
spud-u-like	U-Drive	Ecowater
Toys r Us	Mobiloo	Morvend (vending materials)
Grin 'n' wear It (tattoos)	Rentaloo	Signrite
BBQ	Budjet (cut price air flights)	Walkrite
Bar BQ	Klearvu	Xpress
Oz-Icicle (Australian-made container for cooling drinks)	Geoff's Plaice (fish and chip shop)	

¹ Word Roots: neo = new, logo = word

FEATURES OF SHORT STORIES

TITLE : The title of a Short Story is a vital way into the text. The opening paragraph sets the scene and mood succinctly. - (expressed briefly and clearly/concise).

CHARACTERS : The focus is on one or at the most two main characters. Any other characters, are there only to reveal the main character and the author's main idea.

In Short Stories, the characters are conveyed in a much more economical way than in a novel. Only characteristics pertinent. - (to the point/relevant) to the author's intent are mentioned. Every detail about a character is important. Take particular note of adjectives, figurative language and the connotation. (what is suggested, in addition to the simple or literal meaning/imply) of the imagery associated with the main character.

PLOT : Short stories require careful close reading to gain the nuance (shade of feeling/meaning) Many s/s are a slice of life. The plot is a series of incident which combine to leave us with a single impression (idea) about the main character.

- what is important is that something does always happen.

- It might be an internal change in a character rather than an external event, but The plot of a short story is carefully crafted to have a beginning, development, conclusion.
- often much is left out of the plot and it may work by suggestion rather than by having every detail described.

SETTING : Usually there is only time for one setting in a S/S. Only pertinent details of that setting are mentioned. Consider not only the physical setting but also the time period and the social setting.

TOPE : The tone or mood created in a S/S reveals much about what the writer wants to convey about a character or idea. Is the mood light-hearted, sombre, ironic, satirical? The mood is suggested through language choice. How the setting is described can also convey a particular mood.

STYLE : The term style covers the way a story is written and encompasses the point of view, the structure and the language choices made.

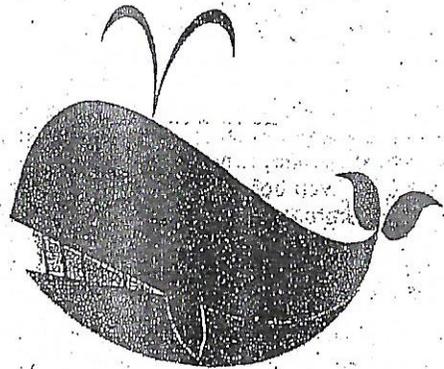
STRUCTURE : When considering the STRUCTURE, the organisation of the story is being examined. The story could be told chronologically (arranged in the order in which the events happened, as a flashback, or as a series of incidents or impressions. It is important to look at the connections between the beginning at the end and where the climax occurs.

POINT OF VIEW : The point of view refers to who is telling the story and whether it is first-person point of view or third-person point of view, consider whether the writer allies (unite) him or herself with the narrator and whether the narrator's viewpoint is the only one in the story.

THEME : The S/S will have a single idea or purpose that everything in the story combines to convey. The theme will not be usually be started explicitly (clearly expressed) but will be suggested through the characters and how they react to the situation. Consider what the writer's purpose is and how it is communicated.

THE WHALE

by Witi Ihimaera



ITIL VVI IALL

by Witi Ihimaera

He sits, this old **kaumatua**, in the darkness of the meeting-house. He has come to this place because it is the only thing remaining in his dying world.

In this **whanau**, this old one is the last of his generation. All his family, they have died: parents, brothers, sisters, relations of his generation, all gone. **Rua**, his wife, she's been dead many years. His friends, there are none. Children, **mokopuna**, yes, there are many of those. But of his time, only he and the meeting house remain.

The meeting house...

This old one, he sighs, and the sound fills the darkness. He looks upon the carved panels, the **tukutuku** reed work, the swirling red and black **kowhaiwhai** designs, and he remembers he awoke to life here. That was long ago, another world ago, when this meeting house and whanau, this village, brimmed over with happiness and **aroha**.

Always he has lived here. This meeting house has been his heart, his strength. He has never wished to leave it. In this place lie his family and memories. Some are happy, others are sad. Some are like dreams, so beautiful that they seem never to have existed. But his dreams died long ago. With each **tangi**, each funeral, they have died. And he is the last of the dreamers.

This **kaumatua**, his eyes dim, in this falling afternoon he has come to visit the meeting house for the last time. He knows it is the last time. Just as the sun falls and the shadows lengthen within the meeting house, so too is his life closing. Soon his photograph will be placed along the wall with those of his other friends, relations and **tipuna** - his ancestors. He will be glad to join them there. The world has changed too much and it is sad to see his world decaying.

This village was once a proud place, ringing with joy. Its people were a proud people, a family. One great family, clustered around this meeting house. Ae, they quarreled sometimes, but it is only the happiness that this old one remembers.

But now many of the houses lie deserted. The fields are choked with weeds. The gorse creeps over the graveyard. And the sound of children laughing grows smaller each year.

Even the **aroha**, it is disappearing from this place. That is the most heartbreaking thing of all. Once the **manawa**, the heart, throbbed with life and the whanau gave it life. But over the years more and more of its children left and the family began to break apart. Of those that went few returned. And the heartbeat is weaker now.

He sighs again, this **kaumatua**. He will be glad to die, yet sad to leave. His people they will weep for him. Hera, his niece, she will cry very much. But in the end, she will remember...

"Hera, don't you be too sad when I'm gone. If you are, you come to this meeting house. I'll be here, Hera. You come and share your aroha with me. You talk to me; I will listen."

He'd told her that when she was a little girl. Even then the world had been changing. Hera, she'd been one of the few of his mokopuna who'd been interested in the Maori of the past. The rest, they'd felt the pull of the Pakeha world, like fish too eager to grab at a dangling hook. Only in Hera had he seen the spark, the hope that she might retain her Maoritanga. And he had taught her all he knew.

"Hera, this is not only a meeting house; it is also the body of a tipuna, an ancestor. The head is at the top of the meeting house, above the entrance. That is called the koruru. His arms are the maihi, the boards sloping down from the koruru to form the roof. See the tahuhu, ridgepole? That long beam running from the front to the back along the roof? That is the backbone. The rafters, the heke, they are the ribs. And where we are standing, this is the heart of the house. Can you hear it beating?"

And Hera, she had listened and heard. She had clutched him, afraid. "Nanny! The meeting house, it lives!"

"The meeting house, it won't hurt you, Hera," he had told her. "You are one of its children. Turi turi now."

And he had lifted the veils from the photographs of all her family dead and told her about them.

"That's your Nanny Whiti. He was a brave man. This is my auntie Hira, she was very beautiful, ay? She's your auntie too. This man, he was a great rangatira..."

Later, they had sat in the middle of the meeting house, he on a chair, she sitting on the floor next to him, and he had told her its history.

"This meeting house, it is like a book, Hera. All the carvings, they are the pages telling the story of this whanau. The Pakeha, he says they're legends. But for me they are history.

"That is Pou, coming from Hawaiki¹ on the back of a giant bird. He brought the kumara to Aotearoa. This is Palkea, riding a whale² across the sea to Aotearoa. He was told not to let the whale touch the land. But he was tired after the long journey, and he made the whale come to shore. It touched the sand, and became an island. You will see it, near Whangara³... See the tukutuku work on the walls? All the weavings, they represent the stars and they sky..."

And Hera, her eyes had glittered with excitement.

"Really, Nanny, really?"

"Ae, Hera. You remember..."

This old one, he closes his eyes to try to keep the sadness away. But closed eyes cannot hide the memory that even Hera had changed as she grew older. She too, like many of the other young people, had gone away to the city. And when she had returned for a visit, this old one could see that the Pakeha life had proved too strong for her. He had tried to lead her back to his world, and she had quarreled with him.

"Don't, Nanny! The world isn't Maori anymore. But it's the world I have to live in. You dream too much. Your world is gone. I can't live it for you. Can't you see?"

But he was stubborn, this kaumatua. He'd always been stubborn. If she would not come back to his world, then she would take it to the city with her.

"Come, Hera. I want to show you something."

"No, Nanny..."

"These books, in them is your whakapapa, your ancestry. All the names, they are your family who lived long ago, traced back to the Takitimu canoe. You take them with you when you go back."

"Nanny..."

"No, you take them. And see this space? You put my name there when I die. You do that for me. You keep this whakapapa safe. And don't you ever forget who you are. You're Maori, understand? You are Maori..."

His voice had broken with grief then. And Hera had embraced him to comfort him.

"Nanny, you gave me too much love," she had whispered. "You taught me too well to be Maori. But you didn't teach me about the Pakeha world..."

He opens his eyes, this old one, but he still hears his Hera's whisper. Ae, he had taught her well. And one day her confusion would pass and she would understand why. He'd known his world had died. But the spirit of his people, he didn't want that to die too. That's why he had taught her well. That's why.

For a moment he mourns to himself, this old one. Sadly, he recalls an ancient saying. How old it is he does not know. Perhaps it had come with the Maori when he journeyed across the sea to Aotearoa. From Hawaiki. From Tawhiti-roa, Tawhiti-nui, Tawhiti-pamamao, the magical names for the first home of the Maori. No matter... Even before the Pakeha had come to this land, his coming had been foretold.

*Kei muri te awe kapara he tangata ke,
mana tea o he ma.*

Shadowed behind the tattooed face a stranger stands,
he who owns the earth, and he is white.

And with his coming, the tattooed face had changed. That was the way of things, relentless and unalterable. But the spirit of the Maori, did that need to change as well? Ae, even in his own day, Maoritanga had been dying. But not the spirit, not the joy or aroha. Now...

He cannot help it, this kaumatua, but the tears fall.

The Maori language has almost gone from this whanau. The respect for Maori customs and Maori tapu, that too was disappearing. No more did people take their shoes off before coming into this meeting house. The floor is scuffed with shoe marks. The tukutuku work is pitted with cigarette burns. And even the gods and tipuna, they have been defaced. A name has been chipped into a carved panel. Another panel bears a deep scratch. And a paua eye has been prised from a carved figure, a **whetu**.

This meeting house, it had once been noble. Now, the red ochre is peeling from the swirling kowhaiwhai designs. And the floor is stained

¹ Hawaiki refers to the mythical land to which some Polynesian cultures trace their origins. It may also refer to an underworld in many Maori stories, and in Mangata in the Cook Islands.

² The whale has an important role in Maori society and history. Palkea, one of the first to visit Aotearoa, travelled on a whale's back.

with the pīrau, the beer, for even that has been brought into this meeting house.

So too have the Maori fallen from nobility. They do not come to this meeting house with respect, nor with aroha. They look with blind eyes at the carvings and do not see the beauty and strength of spirit which is etched in every whorl, every bold and sweeping spiral. They too are the strangers behind the tattooed face.

This old one, he has seen too many of his people come as strangers. The Maori of this time is different from the Maori of his own time. The whanau, the family, and the aroha, which binds them together as one heart, is breaking, slowly loosening. The children of the whanau seek different ways to walk in this world. Before, there was a sharing of aroha with one another. No matter how far away some of the children went there was still the aroha which bound them closely to this meeting house and village. But the links are breaking. The young grow apart from each other. They look with shame at their meeting house and this village because it is decaying. They walk away and do not come back. That is why the manawa beats so loud with agony, that is why this meeting house is dying. When Maori aroha dies, when the Maori walks away into another life, the meeting house weeps...

"Aue! Aue!"

This kaumatua, he fills the meeting house with the sound of his grief.

"Aue! Aue!"

And from his grief springs a memory which adds to his despair. Of a time not long ago, when people from all Aotearoa gathered at this meeting house to celebrate the wedding of a child of this whanau.

The visitors, they had come from the Taranaki, from the Waikato, from the many parts of the Te Ika a Maui, even from Te Waipounamu – the South Island. They had arrived for the hui throughout the day. By car, by bus, by train they had come, and the manawa of this whanau had beaten with joy at their gathering together.

It had been like his own time, this old one remembers. The children laughing and playing around the meeting house. The men and women renewing their friendships. The laughing and the weeping. The sweet smell of the hangi, and the sudden clouds of steam as the kai was taken from the earth. The girls swaying past the young men, eyeing the ones they wanted. The boys standing together, both bold and shy, but hiding their shyness beneath their jokes and bantering. The kulas gossiping in the cookhouse. The big wedding kai, and the bride and groom pretending not to hear the jokes about their first night to be spent together. The singing of the old songs... the cooks coming into the hall in their gumboots and old clothes to sing with the guests...



Karangatia ra! Karangatia ra!
Powhiriatia ra, nga iwi o te motu
Ki runga o Turanga. Haere mai!

Call them! Call them!
Welcome them, the people of the land
coming onto this marae, Turanga⁴. Welcome!

Ae, it had indeed been like the old times. The laughter and the joy had sung throughout the afternoon into the night. And he had sat with the other old men, watching the young people dancing in the hall.

Then it had happened. Late in the night. Raised voices. The sound of quarrelling.

"Nanny! Come quick!"

A mokopuna had grabbed his hand and pulled him outside, along the path to the dining room. More visitors had arrived. They had come from the Whangarei⁵, and they were tired and hungry. He saw their faces in the light. But people of his whanau, they were quarrelling with the visitors. They would not open the door to the storeroom. It was locked now. There would be no kai for these visitors. They had come too late. Heart was locking out heart.

He had been stunned, this old one. Always there was food, always aroha, always open heart. That was the Maori way. Aroha.

And he had said to his mokopuna:

"Te toki. Homai te toki... the axe. Bring me the axe."

The crowd had heard his whispered fury. They parted for him. His tokotoko, his walking stick, it supported him as he approached the door. The music stopped in the hall. The kanikani, the dancing stopped. People gathered. His fury gathered. The axe in his hand. He lifted it and...

"Aue..."

The first blow upon the locked door.

"Aue..."

His tears streaming from his face.

"Aue..."

The wood splintering beneath the blade.

"Aue..."

His heart splintering too.

He gave his anger to the axe. He gave his sorrow to the blows upon the door. The axe rose and fell, rose and fell, and it flashed silver from the light. And people began to weep with him.

Then it was done. The door gave way. Silence fell. Weeping, he turned to the visitors. His voice was strained with agony.

"Haere mai, e te manuhiri. Haere mai. Haere mai. Come, visitors come. Enter."

He had opened his arms to them. Then, trembling, he had pointed at the splintered door.

"Ka nui te whakama o toku iwi ki a au. Anel ra toku whakama... My people shame me. See? This is my shame..."

⁴ Turanga: a city on the northern coast of the northern island of Northern New Zealand

⁵ Whangarei is a city on the N North Island, New Zealand, on the Pacific Ocean.

Then he walked away, not looking back. Away from the light into the darkness. His heart, it was breaking. And he wished only to die and not see the shame.

This kaumatua, the memory falls away from him. He sees the darkness gathering quickly in the meeting house. How long has he been here, mourning? A long time. He sighs. Better to die than to see this changing world. He is too old for it. He is stranded here.

This old one, he grips his tokotoko and stands. Aue, he has lingered too long. One last look at this meeting house. The carved panels glint in the darkness. The kowhaiwhai designs flash with the falling sun: the evening wind flutters in the black veils which hang upon the photographs of his dead. Soon he will join them. Soon his name will fill a space in the whakapapa of this whanau. Soon...

So still he stands, this kaumatua, that he seems to merge into the meeting house and become a carved figure himself. Then his lips move. One last whisper to this meeting house, and he turns and walks away.

"No wai te he?"

He walks along the dusty road, through the village. The houses are clustered close together but closed to one another. Some are deserted, lifeless. A truck speeds past him, and he coughs with the choking dust.

"No wai te he?"

He hears a gramophone blaring loudly from one of the houses. He sees into a lighted window, where the walls are covered with glossy pictures that have been carefully cut out of magazines. A group of young people are gathered around another house, laughing and singing party songs. They wave the pirau at him, and beckon him to come and join them. He turns away.

"No wai te he?"

Down the path from the village he goes, to where his own house lies on the beach, apart from the village. Through the manuka⁶, down the cliff to the sand he walks. The sea is calm, the waves softly rippling. And far away the sun is setting, slowly drowning in the water.

"No wai te he?"

Then he sees a cloud of gulls blackening the sky. Their guttural screams fill the air. They dive and swoop and cluster upon a dark mound, moving feebly in the eddying water.

And as the old one approaches, he sees that it is a whale, stranded in the breakwater, thrashing in the sand, already stripped of flesh by the falling gulls. The water is washed with red, the foam flecked with blood.

He cries out then, this kaumatua.

The gulls shriek and wheel away from him. And in their claws they clasp his shouted words, battling and circling against one another with a flurry of black wings.

"No wai te he... Where lies the blame... the blame."

And the whale lifts a fluke of its giant tail to beat the air with its dying agony.

THE WHALE: ACTIVITIES

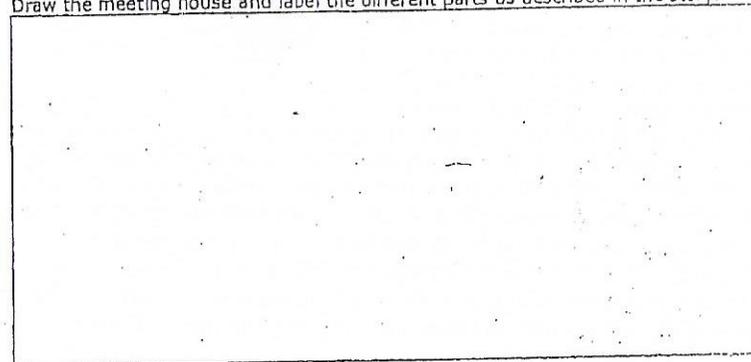
1. Find the meaning of the following Maori words by using **context clues** in the story.

kaumatua	_____	Pakeha	_____
whanau	_____	Maoritanga	_____
mokopuna	_____	whakapapa	_____
tukutuku	_____	pirau	_____
kowhaiwhai	_____	hui	_____
aroha	_____	hangi	_____
tangi	_____	kai	_____
tipuna	_____	tokotoko	_____
manawa	_____	kanikani	_____

2. List all the changes in the meeting house and the Maori people mentioned in the story.

Changes in the Meeting House	Changes in the Maori People

3. Draw the meeting house and label the different parts as described in the story.



⁶ In Māori tradition, Mānuka was one of the great ocean-going, voyaging canoes that was used in the migrations that settled New Zealand.

Plot

An old man (kaumatua) is sitting in the village meeting house. He, the last of the elders in the village, believes he will soon die and has come to say goodbye. To him, this building, despite its age, is the heart of the community because it holds all that is important: photos of ancestors, carvings, weavings, gods, and memories).

As he sits in the meeting house, he reminisces about the way things used to be. He observes the deterioration of the building's carvings and designs that told the story of the tribe, a result of the younger generation not looking after it. He sees the changes to the meeting house as reflective of larger changes in his village and believes the traditional ways are being lost as the young people are pulled into the Western (Pakeha) culture.

One of those young people is his niece, Hera. When she was young, she was one of the few young people who valued the Maori ways and teaching her about her ancestry. He explained the cultural significance of the meeting house and how it was the body of an ancestor to her. But she has gotten older and moved to the city. He is confident that she will not completely forget the Maori way, however.

He remembers a wedding feast where latecomers were not offered food. He had chopped down the door to the storage with an axe and cried with shame that his tribe should act in such a way, without aroha (open heart).

He walks through the village, past many things that have changed, and wonders who is to blame for the death of his way of life. At the shore, a beached whale is being attacked by seagulls. He chases the gulls (symbols of Pakeha life) away, but the whale (symbolic of the Maori way) still dies.

Setting

The setting is important to the story because it is not only the place and the time, but also a symbol of the message. The building represents the changes happening to Maori culture over the lifetime of the old man. Once, the culture was strong and vibrant, like the meeting house. However, they are both dying now. "...the manawa, the heart, throbb[ed] with life, but now the meeting house is falling to bits."

PLACE: A small, unnamed, coastal village on the North Island of New Zealand (lack of a name implies that it could be any Maori village)

Most of the story takes place in the meeting house, the heart of the village for Maori people. It is where important events are held (funerals, weddings, etc.) and is more than just a building – it is alive with the spirit and culture of the tribe. Carvings tell the story of ancestors and photos of the ancestors decorate the walls.

TIME: The story takes place over the course of one day at the present time. Towards the end of the story, the light fades and darkness begins to set in – an aspect of setting that enhances the mood of sadness and loss. The story also includes flashbacks to the old man's younger days.

In the present, the meeting house is no longer the heart of the tribe; it's deserted, the gods are defaced, the floor is scratched and stained with beer, and the tukutuku panels are full of cigarette holes. Respect for the Maoritanga is disappearing along with the Maori language, respect for taboo, and aroha. Urban-rural migration means that children's laughter is harder to find because they've moved to the cities, and the Pakeha ways have been embraced even in the village.

Characters

The main character is the kaumatua, the old man, whose eyes the story is told through. He isn't given a name and could be any Maori elder. He is proud of and an expert in the Maori culture and traditions. He believes the young must keep their Maori identity even though they live in the Pakeha world. He is sad because he sees his culture is dying and it hurts him, like it would any Maori kaumatua. He is dying and the last of his generation

left in the village. He had tried to find someone (his niece, Hera) to teach about the Maori ways in order to keep the stories alive even after he died. He was a "nanny" to many descendants, but only Hera was special.

The only real minor character is Hera, his niece who grew up in the village with him. She was special to him because she was one of the few of her generation who really took an interest in the Maori culture and history. When she was young, the kaumatua had hoped that she would take over for him and keep the Maori ways going. However, she moved to the city and told him she lives in the Pakeha world. He still hopes that, one day in the future, after he is gone, she will realize the importance of her culture to her identity and her interest in Maoritanga will be revived. When this day comes, he makes sure she will have the stories and the books she needs.

Hera is a symbol of all the young Maori. She's leaving the culture and turning to Pakeha ways, not by choice, but by necessity, to get a job and to survive. It's hard for her to tell the old man this – to abandon him despite her love for the Maori ways – but she feels it's impossible to live the old way in this Pakeha world. The kaumatua believes she's wrong, that you *can* keep your cultural identity even in the modern world, and hopes she will realize this when she gets older.

Themes

The Loss of Culture: The old man is sad and heartbroken, watching his culture die. The older members of the tribe, the people of his generation, have all died and many of the Maori youth have moved to the city. The village is like a ghost town.

Those who go to the city have left their culture behind, preferring to follow the Pakeha ways. Even Hera, the one young person the old man had taught and had great hopes for continuing on with the Maori way, is drawn to the Pakeha life in the end. She says to the old man, "Your world is gone. I can't live it for you."

The young ones who stay in the village are losing their culture as well. This is shown in the way they treat the meeting house (e.g., wearing shoes inside, drinking and smoking inside). It is obvious that the meeting house is no longer valued as the heart of the village. The way people treat each other has also changed and aroha is disappearing. The old man is angry, sad, and ashamed when his people refuse to see their visitors simply because they had arrived late to the feast.

The old man feels helpless because no one else seems interested in preserving the Maori culture. He passes the book of ancestors (whakapapa) to Hera with the hope that one day she will realize its importance to her identity as a Maori and that her strength and spirit came from her culture.

Death: This is a story about dying. The culture is dying. The old man is dying. And the meeting house and the whale are dying.

The culture is being lost to Pakeha ways and, despite the old man's efforts to save it, is disappearing. The meeting house, a symbol of the Maori culture, is being destroyed by cigarette burns, shoes worn inside, beer spilt on the floor, and simple carelessness. It is the body of an ancestor, but the youth treat it as just another building. The whale, also a symbol of the Maori ways and history (the whale became their island long ago), is dying as well. It is being attacked by gulls, symbolizing Pakeha ways, and is stranded on the beach, unable to move elsewhere.

The old man knows his time is near, which is why he visits the meeting house one last time. His dying, however, is different than the other deaths in the story; he is happy to die. Watching his culture fade away and the meeting house decay hurts him deeply. He tries to save it, but begins to feel sad and helpless. For him, death is a release from a changing, sad, and lonely world.

Social Change: Change of family/cultural values augmented by rural-urban migration

Colonization: Western ways (the gulls) conflict with & conquer Maori ways (the whale)

Style

The style is formal, using few contractions except in conversation, and poetic, using a lot of figurative language. This is a very creatively written story, full of symbolism, metaphors and similes. Witi Ihimaera chose to write the story in this style because it is a story of feelings and emotions.

The old man's pain and sadness at the loss of his culture is expressed through these creative words and ideas. The repetition of words like "dying," "crying," and sighs ("ae," "aue," and "No wai te he?") emphasize the theme of loss. He uses Maori words to give the reader a sense of the Maori culture – to show them a small piece of the important things that are being lost to the Pakeha world.

Throughout the story, we see many metaphors, like that of the meeting house as an ancestor and a locked door as locked hearts, and similes, like the dimming light as his dimming life, his memories being like dreams, and the pull of the Pakeha world being like a fisherman's hook.

Examples:

- "Hera, this is not only a meeting house; it is also the body of a tipuna, an ancestor. The head is at the top of the meeting house, above the entrance. That is called the koruru. His arms are the maihi, the boards sloping down from the koruru to form the roof. See the tahuhu, ridgepole? That long beam running from the front to the back along the roof? That is the backbone. The rafters, the heke, they are the ribs. And where we are standing, this is the heart of the house. Can you hear it beating?"
- "They would not open the door to the storeroom. It was locked now ... They had come too late. Heart was locking out heart."
- "Just as the sun falls and the shadows lengthen within the meeting house, so too is his life closing."
- "In this place lie his family and memories. Some are happy, others are sad. Some are like dreams, so beautiful that they seem never to have existed."
- "Hera, she'd been one of the few of his mokopuna who'd been interested in the Maori of the past. The rest, they'd felt the pull of the Pakeha world, like fish too eager to grab at a dangling hook."

The extensive use of symbolism in the story is used to express the old man's feelings, especially about the importance of his culture and the meeting house. *The meeting house* symbolizes the heart of the people and the Maori culture. It is the life, the aroha of the people – it tells their story. It is even said to be the body of an ancestor.

One of the strongest moments of symbolism is at the end of the story, when the author describes *the whale* dying – a powerful and violent description that relates to what the author sees as a tragic and violent destruction of his culture. The whale is a fitting symbol for the culture because it was once a great thing and is now being destroyed by small, seemingly insignificant things. The gulls destroying the whale represent the Pakeha ways that have started to take over the Maori lifestyle.

Examples:

- "Then he sees a cloud of gulls blackening the sky."
- "...a whale, stranded in the breakwater, thrashing in the sand, already stripped of flesh by the falling gulls. The water is washed with red, the foam flecked with blood."
- "...in [the gulls'] claws they clasp [the old man's] shouted words, battling and circling against one another with a flurry of black wings."

The tone or mood of the story is sad, serious, slow, regretful, and touching. The reader feels sad after reading the story – a feeling created by the author using a variety of methods. He uses *characters* to show the mood by telling us the old man is weak, old, dying, the last of his generation, and helpless. Ihimaera uses *setting* to show the mood by placing the story in the meeting house, which is full of shoe marks, beer stains, cigarette burns, and receives no respect. He uses the *themes* to show the mood by emphasizing the ideas of death and the loss of culture. We see the mood through the *incidents* of the villagers refusing to share food with visitors who arrived late, followed by the old man smashing in the storeroom door with an axe. Finally, we feel the mood of sadness through the *symbols* used in the story: the meeting house, which represents the Maori culture and the changes it is seeing, and the gulls tearing the whale's flesh, which represents the Pakeha ways ripping the Maori culture apart.

THE WHALE

BY WITI IHIMAERA

<p>CHARACTERS</p> <p>The Old Kaumatua – sad, lonely Maori elder afraid of the disappearing <i>Maoritanga</i> <i>"Better to die than seeing this changing world."</i> <i>"No wai te hei!"</i> (Who is to blame?)</p> <p>Hera – the kaumatua's great niece; once interested in Maori ways, now moved to the city <i>"Your world is gone. I can't live it for you."</i></p>	<p>SETTING</p> <p>Time – present Place – coastal Maori village, North Island of NZ</p>
<p>PLOT</p> <p>The old kaumatua visits the meeting house and decries the changes he sees; the youth don't treat it with respect. He walks through the villages and is sad at the empty houses and fields. Even Hera, who used to be interested in Maoritanga, has been _____ by the Pakeha ways. He remembers "<i>heart locking out heart</i>" at a wedding years ago. The old man walks to the sea and sees a whale being killed by seagulls.</p>	<p>THEMES</p> <p>Loss of Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth move to the city (even Hera) Changes in the meeting house, which is like a <i>tipuna</i> (ancestor) to the Maori <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Pirau</i> stains, wearing shoes, gods & <i>tipuna</i> defaced, cigarette burns Symbol of the seagulls (Pakeha ways) attacking & killing the whale (Maori ways) <p>Death</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kaumatua about to die; his friends are already dead The whale's (Maoritanga) dying, killed by seagulls (Pakeha ways) The culture's dying; no youth want to carry it on
<p>STYLE</p> <p>Figurative Language (Lots!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simile – The youth chased Pakeha ways "<i>like a fish too eager to grasp at a dangling hook</i>" Personification – "<i>the fields are choked with weeds</i>" (even the land is dying) Symbolism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting house (the village's <i>tipuna</i>, the <i>manawa</i>/heart of the Maori) being disrespected, destroyed, and not cared for by youth Whale (Maori culture) killed by seagulls (Pakeha ways); tearing at its flesh (the culture's most important, living parts) <p>Sound Devices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repetition – "<i>dying</i>" and "<i>crying</i>" helps emphasize themes and set the mood Alliteration – "<i>This village was once a proud place, ringing with joy. Its people were a proud people, a family.</i>" (emphasizes the good) Maori words – It's like the story itself is trying to save the culture by using Maori words <p>Tone / Mood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sad, regretful 	<p>OTHER NOTES</p>

The Whale Activities

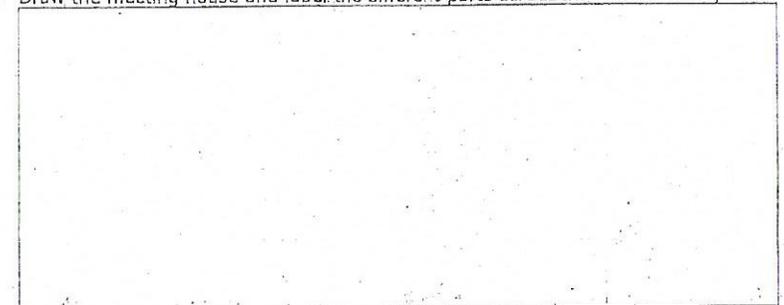
1. Find the meaning of the following Maori words by using **context clues** in the story.

kaumatua _____	Pakeha _____
whanau _____	Maoritanga _____
mokopuna _____	whakapapa _____
tukutuku _____	pirau _____
kowhaiwhai _____	hui _____
aroa _____	hangi _____
tangi _____	ka _____
tipuna _____	tokotoko _____
manawa _____	kanikani _____

2. List all the changes in the meeting house and the Maori people mentioned in the story.

Changes in the Meeting House	Changes in the Maori People

3. Draw the meeting house and label the different parts as described in the story.



4. Find evidence for each of the following claims about the kaumatua.

The old man...	Supporting Evidence/Quote from the Story
Is proud of his culture.	
Is old and believes he is dying	
Is willing to die because (1) he sees his culture is dying and it hurts him, & (2) he is the last of the old people left in the village	
Is an elder and leader of the village	
Is an expert in the Maori culture and traditions	
believes the young must keep their Maori identity even though they live in the Pakeha world	
tries to find someone to keep the information about the past after he dies	

5. Answer the following short-answer, comprehension questions.

1. What does the opening paragraph tell us about the main character? How about the setting?
2. Paragraph one also talks about "his dying world" What world is dying and why?
3. Describe the meeting house.
4. Explain the simile "like fish too eager to grab at a dangling hook" (pg. 2, ¶ 2).
5. What are some of the negative changes that distress the old man?
6. How does the old man try to resist or stop the changes in society?
7. Why was the kaumatua so angry at the wedding?
8. Give three quotes that show the old man will die soon.
9. The story says the old man "is stranded here" (p. 6, ¶ 2). Explain what this means. The whale at the end of the story is also stranded. What could this symbolize?
10. What is the mood of this story? How is the mood created?
11. Look at the sentence structure. When are very short sentences used? What effect does that have?
12. There are two flashbacks used in the story. What incidents do they describe?
13. Both English and Maori words are used in the story. Why?

Name: _____ Form: 6__

The Whale Notes

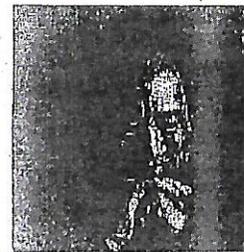
Maori Words Used in the Story

<i>kaumatua</i>	old one	<i>rangatira</i>	Maori chief
<i>whanau</i>	tribe, village	<i>Aotearoa</i>	New Zealand
<i>mokopuna</i>	descendants	<i>whakapapa</i>	family tree
<i>tukutuku</i>	weaving	<i>tapu</i>	taboo
<i>kowhaiwhai</i>	traditional designs*	<i>paua</i>	edible sea snail
<i>aroha</i>	open heart; unconditional love	<i>whēku</i>	New Zealand bird
<i>tangi</i>	funeral	<i>pirau</i>	beer
<i>tipuna</i>	ancestors	<i>hui</i>	assembly
<i>manawa</i>	heart	<i>hangi</i>	feast
<i>Pakeha</i>	palangi, Westerner	<i>kai</i>	food
<i>Maorilanga</i>	the Maori way	<i>kuia</i>	female elder
<i>kumara</i>	kumala, sweet potato	<i>marae</i>	meeting area
<i>koruru</i>	above the entrance of a bldg.	<i>tokotoko</i>	walking stick
<i>mailhi</i>	boards sloping from the <i>koruru</i>	<i>kunikani</i>	dancing
<i>tahuhu</i>	ridgepole		
<i>heke</i>	rafters		
<i>turi turi</i>	hush		



* example of a kowhaiwhai design

Witi Ihimaera



Witi Ihimaera (1944–), New Zealand writer is best known for his novels and short stories that portray the Maori people and their customs, as well as the constant struggle to maintain their community against often destructive Western influences. His works are written in English, but often include Maori words and phrases in order to give a sense of Maori culture.

Ihimaera was born in Gisborne, New Zealand. He was educated at the University of Auckland from 1962 to 1966 and received his bachelor's degree from Victoria University of Wellington in 1970. In 1973, Ihimaera began working as a diplomatic officer for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Wellington. In 1993, he began teaching in the English department at the University of Auckland.

"Ihimaera, Witi," *Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 99*. © 1993–1998 Microsoft Corporation.