

Hook and Eye notes

From the creator:

Hello! I spent really long making these notes in sec 3-4 so I really hope that this helps some (struggling?) lit students out there ace their essays :) or you can use this as a guideline/ for inspiration on making your own notes. Good luck!~d

Note: missing notes for what they're doing here, cave man, painting the eye

SOPHIA'S PARTY

THEMES

point	quote	explanation/link
Patriotism - Are SG ppl truly patriotic?	1. "She claimed it was all ironic...wondering whether Singapore's famously monolithic system hadn't left its mark on her after all" 2. "...rows of people wave balloons, oddly blank-faced but apparently determined to have a good time" 3. "...rumours of (tickets) changing hands on Gumtree or Craigslist for hundreds of dollars...but people will buy anything these days" 4. "...the story of Singapore's army, boys leaving for National Service, fathers and sons serving in the same unit" "Brian is fiercely loyal to his unit from National Service, and is perennially disappointed not to be chosen for the parade" 5. "If you don't like it, feel free to leave, says Calvin sourly" "apologising on his behalf rather than defending him" 6. "So many different cultures	1. Despite how much we deny, MOE will make sure you belong to SG (a form of indoctrination, through NE?) 2. Not truly excited for NDP, just there to get their money/time worth, only there for the show and to love SG for 1 day 3. People clamour to buy tickets just for the hype, over-emphasis on one singular event rather than patriotism for Singapore as a whole 4. Suggests that nationalistic feelings can be built through shared hardship and experiences 5. Veneer of cosmopolitan liberalisation is broken, nationalistic lines are drawn as everyone else aligns themselves with the side of the state

	coming together seamlessly...that sums up everything that's special about Singapore" 7. "...spent a few years abroad, and all have returned, the idea of greener pastures seeming not to occur to them at all" 8. "Some of them are already heading for the exits, trying to beat the car park rush" 9. "Hearing Sophia talk about their early days, how they began, makes him feel momentarily hopeful"	6. Over-emphasis and reliance on multiculturalism while trying to sell the image of a perfect nation. There exists multiple other ways Singapore is unique and has a rich identity 7. Ironic because Nicholas is also stuck in SG. suggests that however liberal a Singaporean may become, they would always come back to SG. WHY 8. Between sentimentality and being practical, SG ppl would pick themselves and practicality first 9. Once in a while, SG ppl are not cynical and jaded and start to search for hope (a guide?) in their lives. SG sort of exists as a safety net for them when all else fails.
marginalisation	1. "Their domestic helper Veronica has been given the evening off and instructed not to return before midnight"	1. Very inconvenient for her, insensitive and uncaring mood, as she is treated almost like an inconvenience
Comfort and security	1. "Nicholas she nudges with the heel of her hand and mouths, Pills....ration of immuno-suppressants that keeps him alive" 2. "Looking at his tasteful flat, his beautiful wife, honestly believes at this moment that he does have everything he needs. Some version of health, and more than enough money to keep him from starvation"	1. Singapore exists so that we can live and survive, and we treat it like a safety net 2. In SG, our material means can generally be met. But some ppl just survive and exist, never truly finding self-fulfillment or true happiness. Comfort yes, but what is life? SG ppl chase after material comforts, sometimes forgetting about emotional comfort and fulfillment.

Spectacle	1. "For weeks now...seen the enormous flag drift through the sky every weekend...today, the actual event, seems almost an anti-climax" 1. "They just want it to be perfect...super-embarrassing if someone messes up" 2. "Sophia's national day party is becoming a bit of a ritual" 3. "Diana's perfectly made-up face shifts and tautens just the right amount to connote excitement" 4. "As if they have burst from his fantasy, a convoy of girls in short skirts tumble onto the field, waving pom-poms in complicated unison" 5. "He finds such images discomfiting, mawkish" 6. "The broadcast is handsomely produced, stirring images of young people rehearsing dance steps against the setting sun, of an old man correcting his granddaughter's fingering on the sitar" 7. "Don't you know, they even seed the clouds the week before so it won't rain on the big day?" 8. "Sophia's parties are run with the military precision of	1. Inevitable that aa yearly event has overplayed elements, because a show is only appealing to an extent. After a while, it gets boring and there is need for more change 1. Need to make everything perfect 2. RITUAL 3. Manufactured, scripted, just a performance 4. NDP is a created fantasy (e.g. using only govt schools and specially selecting ppl for their races) and involves idealised version of western culture (local elements fused with western influences) 5. Sentimental in a way that seems exaggerated, making him feel uneasy 6. NDP is aimed to engage and achieve an emotional effect on people, using pathos to make people associate nostalgia with love for SG. this uses the passing on of tradition to portray a romanticised SG. 7. A lot of effort and meticulous planning put in to ensure that everything goes perfectly. 8. A spectacle, need for perfection
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	a parade” 9. “A blandly memorable tune” 10. “They are scrupulously diverse---both boys and girls, two Chinese, one Malay, one Indian, and an indeterminate one who is probably Eurasian.” 11. “A handful of schoolchildren are performing a sketch, over-enunciating every word like they’ve been trained to do. Something about home being where they belong.” 12. “Choreography on such a massive scale must take no less co-ordination than the military parade” “sweetly unthreatening, soft and gauzy” 13. “It is hard to resist the shameless manipulation of expertly-designed proselytising”	9. Contrasting elements (small impact at the time but no lasting impression) 10. NDP is always ethnically diverse, so that it’s politically correct and safe, and can maintain racial harmony (very necessary to include everyone). (CMIO framework, use of racial markers---not really representative of SG, since mixed ppl and immigrants exist). SG is not a multicultural nirvana. CMIO framework - Zero-sum equation, thus loss of some indiv cultural identity 11. Again, manufactured and exaggerated in their delivery of SG’s national story. 12. Portrays a perfect version of SG, uses children to soften their military image and appeal to sentiments of older generations. 13. NDP as an advert for patriotism and getting more ppl to support the govt.
Sense of belonging	1. “The guests separated almost immediately, milk and oil” “what do you expect, they have nothing in common” “his friends that evening came from at least	1. Singaporeans may be more reserved, unwilling to try and integrate foreigners into local community. Too insular/close-minded to accept them

	six different countries” 2. “Nicholas winces at the bad grammar, before reminding himself not to be such a neo-colonialist” 3. “He wonders how much he will ever fit into this country, how much of himself he will have to slough off before he can glide through these occasions without friction” 4. “Multi-racialism, Singapore style ...multi-racial if you’re chinese, malay or indian” 5. “There isn’t a pigeonhole for Nicholas either, but he says nothing” 6. “How long they will stay in this country, and how long they will remain together” “what next? What next for him? ...a second before the fear got overwhelming” 7. “Her eyes wet, her arms wide with welcome”	2. He tries to integrate into the community, even checking himself for any problematic thinking and puts in effort into it 3. Thinks that he has to cut off bits of himself to fit in, sacrifice his own identity for the sake of SG. the other will never truly be part of the community/society. 4. SG’s marketed version of racial harmony is over-compartmentalised, makes everything into pigeon holes. Not inclusive enough for people who don’t fit in. 5. N senses that they don’t truly accept as part of SG, but an outsider/ ang moh 6. There is a sense of uncertainty in whether we truly feel that we are part of SG, or if it just a stepping stone in our lives 7. No matter how long we leave SG for, it will always welcome us back
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RICH MAN COUNTRY

themes	quotes	explanation
Marginalisation - The forgotten - Uncaring society	1. "The nameless and faceless who slipped through the cracks" 2. " 1. "That was what you got in this place of good salary and orderly living. Things were always in place." 2. "He felt his tension ebb. If he had to come to grief, at least he had come to grief in the right place" 3. "Come in under the shadow of this red rock...I will show you fear in a handful of red dust"	1. Motif of the marginalised not being remembered or cared about 1. Suggestion that in RMC, they are not cared for because the work accidents and dangerous work is dissonant amongst the RMC image of security and perfection 2. False sense of reassurance that RMC is different because nothing goes wrong 3. shadow=death, author wants to expose the horrors going on under the nose of RMC
The expendables	1. "Some come out in other ways" "their shack sat in a corner of a large malodorous clearing" "they walked out for an hour to the main road" "anyone ask you anything you say, just ask Ah Bey" 2. "Tok had instructed him. Just say two years" "since then it was yet another dorm, yet another worksite. He never saw Ah Bey or Tok again" "asked for their passports. To make papers" 3. - "to the indifferent stars above, to the wind whipping his skin as the lorry careened and	1. Scammed by Arul. suggests that in life, to each is own, since greed is everywhere and people will exploit you for their personal gain. 2. Very shady things. They are being passed around to avoid people noticing that they are not properly registered.

	plunged.” - “Ah Or, the super, who had been driving like a madman” - “Suddenly the lorry swerved to an abrupt halt, and his body was wracked afresh...Ah Or and Ah Lai were on the roadside yelling at each other” - “the sky had passed from light to dark in the time he had lain catatonic with pain on the charpoy” - “the place was deserted but for Ah Lai and Thiru” - “the lorry shook as its doors were slammed and they lurched off in a crashing of gears” - “what hospital was this, so far away, in a place with no street lights” 4. “They spoke as though to a baby. You ok, you ok.” “You ok, just relax” 5. “Hands haul him, pull him, drag him, and the only sounds, after the thud of his body hitting the ground, are the scrape and rasp of flesh against rubble” 6. “He is pitched forward, and released...but rolls down like a log and comes to a halt with a splash in water smelling of rotting grass and loam and mould”	4. Trying to reassure MC and give him false hope so that he has an easier death. All because they want to reassure themselves that he did not suffer that much, and that his death weighs not as heavy on their consciousness. 5. They manhandled him and treated him like a bag of concrete. Very cruel. 6. They dump him in a ditch of some godforsaken corner of RMC (isolating him). Leave him to die secretly, so that they can wash their hands of his death.
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	7. "That something else is needed from him now by Ah Lai and the super. Something that depends on the night, the rain, his injuries, to achieve." 8. "...the smell of the tiles that was the lorry's last load...his brain was a broken lathe" 9. "His body a bag of shards" "the puddle he made was more pungent. Was he leaking yet again?" "	7. They need him to quietly die, and he gives in to this. 8. He is stripped of his humanity and individuality, as he is seen as mere construction tools.
Dreams and reality	(Arul) 1. "New TV, a second-hand Vespa, and jewellery for his bride Adhita" "His Toshiba TV, Arul emanated a seigneurial air" "Encompassing the room, the TV, the newly tiled floor" "Rolex, signet ring, gold chain" "Arul himself, in the living and prosperous flesh, was proof of nothing ventured, nothing gained" 2. "Loan from an uncle who owned a supermarket in Kattukottai" "because of that loan, arul would soon be building a whole house" (MC) 1. "His own family were all farmers living hand-to-mouth. The agency fees alone cost 93000 rupees. His own father did not bring home more than 1000 rupees a month" "His mother fed them all and squirrelled away what she could	1. Representation of wealth and success, a veritable advert for his recruiting agency 2. Arul not the same as MC, has extra help and assets. Born on unequal standing, has unfair advantage. 1. Impossible to come out to RMC by legal means, from the start he was already doomed. Dreams were already pretty impossible, since he did not receive the same opportunities as arul.

	for her daughters' dowries" "What hope did he have?" 2. "They were already on opposite sides of a chasm. Promise, on arul's side; hopelessness on his" "Arul's burgeoning success a wall between them" 3. "His certificate in technical knowledge..had decimated Ammu's savings"	2. Class difference separates them, since arul already gains unfair advantage. 3. Too poor to afford means to get a better job
Sacrifice	1. "His weekends as a goods packer and delivery man barely fed him. For a year he lived this way" 2. "What was permanent was your priorities, chief of what to remember what you were here for"	1. Tough manual labour just to support his family 2. Determined and pure. His motivations are very strong
Communication	1. "Thiru's unenviable task was to bridge the gulf between them and Ah Lai" 2. "...none of them trusted (Ah Lai). he pretended to be their friend with his pidgin Tamil....found out to their cost that Ah Lai was Ah Or's eyes and ears" 3. "They made it so hard for you to talk to them, even about important things" 4. "He called out, but heard only the sound of his own exhalation" 5. "But in his ears were only the rush of his breath and their hushed words" 6. "His screams are the whispered chuckle of a rill"	

The Moral Support of Presence

Theme

Grief and grieving

Point	Evidence	Explanation
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Everyone goes through different stages of grieving	- "Bereavement, trauma, recovery. But all that came only later. Here beside the empty bed, I just wanted to be absolved of all responsibilities"	- "Don't judge me---you have no idea" - "Scenario A: if the death occurs in a hospital"
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Sincerity

Point	Evidence	explanation
Insincerity of Mun's Dad and Alexa	- "Mun! Why you don't answer my calls?...My father had always enjoyed a bit of drama, and now he took centre stage in front of the casket, waving his arms about" "...black fabric squares, the kind that Chinese mourners wear" - "I took the shiftiness in my father's eyes for grief. The City light group was soon gathered around him" - "Letting him monopolise the small talk" - "Pa reached out in sympathy to hold her hand" - "Alexa seemed reluctant to approach the casket" - "They sat hand in hand at the table" - "Alexa seemed elsewhere; she cracked peanut shells open and arranged the contents in a line on the table without eating" - "Early morning wore on, they dozed occasionally" - "I told you I shouldn't be here! There was nothing I could do for her at the hospital!...I knew she surely come back! That's why I phone the hospital!" - "Who knows whether people	- Hungry of attention, pushes blame for his lateness on Mun, wears Chinese stuff to a christian service (out of touch with Mun and her mom, clear visual reminder of conflict between them) - Insincere, especially at his ex-wife's funeral and to his daughter - What are they even there for? - Only doing it to protect herself, so that she won't be haunted (incredibly insincere) - Rude to Mun's mother

	kee siao (crazy) is different? Come back anyhow and do anything? I'm---you're---we're a new family now. This kind of things must have proper temple rites!"	by calling her crazy, wants everything to come to a nice conclusion and forget about her
Sincerity in the people around her	- "Selene was my congregation member. He sounded crestfallen, almost plaintive" - "Evie sweetly gave me a hug and said that they'd all see me at the crematorium" - "The monk cleared his throat...produced a mobile phone, then excused himself to a corner of the ward to answer it" - "Leaving my mother to God for a standard package with Assurance casket"	- Personal rship, really cares for her (Reverend Ernest Ong) - More sincere than her own father - Insincere about helping others despite being a monk - Like a business transaction (the christian one)
Moral support of presence: don't need to be close to provide comfort	- "Dude..sorry it sucks. You have the moral support of my presence" - "He and his parents had moved to the other side of the globe, thirteen hours behind Singapore" - "...some eight or so people emerged...I recognised only one" - "I wondered if Reverend Ong had brought the group along for moral support, and whether for mine or his" - "Simon had sent me a link to the website featuring bespoke Bali-style villa effigies with sun decks and swimming pools"	- Simple words but contain the care and support he has for Mun (no need to try on purpose to sound sincere) - Very dedicated to his friendship, willing to stay up to support Mun - Might be in close proximity, but does it matter if they don't know you? - Sweet, thoughtful

Mun

Point	Explanation	Evidence
Very close rship to mother, lived independently with her and picked up some of her traits	- “Ma died the same way she did everything else: suddenly and without apparent good reason” “it didn’t make sense, but I was to that with her” - “In the two-bedroom flat that Ma and I shared, nothing was ever out of place” - “MUGS---an army of handles aligned to five o’clock sharp” - “..I’d said without missing a beat” - “But at the beginning when my mother’s military precision was all I knew, I had no inkling that other people’s lives could be differently organised” - “Carnations were her favourite flowers: white for birthdays and other special occasions, pink every Mother’s Day, yellow or orange with coloured edges for no occasion” - “I had settled on one (night for the funeral), to save her the indignity of an embalming” - “I instantly felt sorry for Ma..she had been claustrophobic” - “She had on her favourite green dress...I’d given her... fake ferragamo pumps”	- Very familiar with her mother and personality, esp her unpredictability - Close living space, intimate rship - Very practical and organised - Mun picks up the same habit, so familiar with the arrangement that she can find things without pausing - Everyone else found their behavior odd, but it seemed natural to Mun because of their close rship - Knows her mother inside out, down to the little preferences and difficulties
Other small	- “All these things, and the	- Intelligent even as a kid,

character quirks	houses and cars, are for burning, so that the dead can have a better afterlife” “but what if they want other things?” - “Botched eyebrow piercing” “lit my fourth cigarette” - “...Ma was diagnosed”	aware that there are different desires and possibilities in life and death - Not goody-two-shoes - Went through family difficulties
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The Boy with the Missing Thumb

Themes

Virtual vs reality

point	quotes	Explanation
Gregory	- “..manoeuvring Fan’s kicks and	- Fully absorbed into the

imagines himself as Fan and his gf as Yan-Er, Nick lee as General Lee	swordplay in sync with his other fingers” “he must be experiencing this phantom presence now---a bonus!” - “Yan-Er and his self-worth were on the line” - “His body convulsed in shock, slumping to the gravelly grounds. Blood spurted graphically in all directions from just below his right shoulder” - “Spitting out blood from a cut in his tongue when he had fallen heavily” - “He had never thought it was possible that his body could hold so much blood” - General lee calls him “fat-soh” - “No more cowering, no more shame at his size. He had stood his ground manfully and fought the good fight” - “Till death do us part”, he said in a world-weary voice” - “As she bent down to kiss him, he thought: she was pixel-perfect beautiful” - “Nicholas Wee, I am coming for you” - “A burly man with a thick growth of beard and bulging biceps..” - “General Lee looked a lot like his tormentor in school, especially in his swagger and the fixed, mean gaze of his eyes. Perhaps it was a trick of the light”	game, even excited that his “missing thumb” adds to his gaming ability - His whole sense of self is tied to the game, loss of reality - Massive blurring of lines between the virtual world and his reality - He becomes Fan - Only courageous to face his demons in the virtual world - Used it as a crutch to deal with reality - Completely unrealistic scene with Yan-Er - Poetic death and ending, far cry from his gruesome end - Enemies fusing and becoming the same person
Harsh reality of his life, misplaced priorities and obsession with gaming	- “...rigor mortis had long gate-crashed into every inch of his body which was stiffly contorted at a humanly impossible angle”	- Undignified, gruesome death, and lonely as he had died alone - Big contrast to his in-game death

	- "Around him was the stench of rot, sweat and half-eaten food" - "His eyes, still wide open, were fixed on a vanishing point somewhere beyond the screen" - "All five fingers clutched the game console so tightly they had become fused with the device" - "He was starting to get annoyed. This was not good. It might affect his game later" - "Gregory did not want to tag along because that would mean losing his game momentum" - "...spent the rest of the holiday holed up in the hotel room chasing Pokeballs...way cooler and definitely cheaper" - "His body was twisted at an odd, painful angle and there were so many furrowed lines running riot on his face that Geoff joked he looked like he was about to give birth" - "Back to work" (gaming) - "(Mr Adam) ..gone off on a tangent and downloaded more information into his students than they had the hard drive memory for" - "More importantly, how dexterous he would be now with the console, if only he had 16 fingers"	- He had "achieved" his goal of defeating General Lee, died feeling content - Mirrors the way both his worlds had fused - His thumb was never missing - Misplaced priorities, worries immediately about the game rather than his health - Doesn't know how to appreciate the real and natural world - Ironic, will be how he looks like when he dies - A lot of tension in his games bc he takes them v seriously - Uses virtual knowledge to understand the real world - Too enveloped in digital world - Only thinks about gaming
Why Gregory is the complete opposite of Fan	- "His square jaws, heavy now with sagging fat, felt awfully stiff" - "...his manhood yet to claim ownership of his voice" - "Encouraging a sigh from his bed that had endured all of his 104 kilos the past 64 hours"	- Physically very different - Young, inexperienced compared to Fan

	- “That would have been perfect, sitting on the chamber pot, Xbox control in hand. He could play and shit at the same time without having to lose time” - “A thumb drive containing an illegal download of The Warriors of Butterfly Mountain 4” - “A few copy-and-paste clicks off Google search and it would be a steal” Compared to Fan: - “Long blue hair fluttering in the harsh wind, and bring down soldiers as easily as a hot knife slicing butter” - “He could chop, cleave and cut, without missing a target or beat, till he leapt up the levels to save his beloved, Yan-Er” - “His beloved, Yan-Er” - “Her sun-silky hair framing a heart-shaped face, highlighted by sharp cheekbones and chin, languid eyes and full lips, her bosom perky and inviting” - “...Kpop singers post-surgery” - “Wouldn’t it be cool to have been born an X-man? Superpower at your fingertips. Gregory would get respect without having to do anything to earn it, simply by virtue of being different.”	- Immature, a bit gross because of his lack of care for hygiene - Used a pirated version, not bothered with having proper standards - Inability to understand the world and its rules - Romanticised, unrealistic aspiration to be like Fan - Portrayed in a romantic light despite the violence he commits - Unrealistic expectations of significant other - Only likes fake, manufactured things - Wants all the good things in life but lazy to work for it - Warped sense of reality, because he picks and chooses only the parts that he likes
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Escapism and loss of control

Point	Quote	Explanation
Gregory uses gaming as escapism from the pains of his	- “..idiot-proof games like Donkey Kong and Super Mario Brothers. Not exactly the sort you needed to lose sleep over or brag about in school”	- His inflated sense of self comes from video games

life (to the extremes)	- “Sandwiches tended to taste better anyway in the company of a Gameboy” - “He built his ability in the one area that mattered most to his classmates---the all-conquering The Warriors of Butterfly Mountain video game...his one shot at redemption was beckoning” - “By beating Nick’s score, he would show he was no pushover, that “Fat-soh” was, in fact, worth his weight in gaming points” - “He had trained so hard for this, so many nights alone and lonely, fighting back tears at small defeats and big victories” - “He would at last make Dad proud of him, show that he was no wimp” - “Gregory lay down, still clasping his right arm, sheer exhaustion cutting into his bones, filling spaces in every muscle” - “No more cowering. No more shame at his size. He had stood his ground manfully and fought the good fight”	- Uses food and gaming as coping mechanisms - Tries to use gaming to redeem himself - Desperate to prove his worth - Gaming points worthless irl - Sees himself as a tragic figure, the hero he can never be in his own life - Motivation to keep gaming - Violence he has become accustomed to - Can only face his problems in the virtual world
Loss of control of his life because of his addiction	- “Just make sure you do not end up playing Xbox all weekend” - “... a half quarter-pounder on which a small industry of ants had already begun work (he might dust it off and microwave it as a snack)” - “You have lost your head!...If you are not careful, you will lose the rest of your body too!”	- Family knows that he’s addicted - Unhealthy, disgusting - Foreshadowing, losing his grip on reality and sense of self

	- “Gregory celebrated the return of the prodigal thumb by killing nine soldiers in one fell swoop” - “It was weird, though, to see his own arm, coldly detached and utterly lifeless like a chicken wing or a leg of lamb” - “What would Dad say to him now?” - “The human body was such a wretched deal of inconvenience; it had to eat, drink, sleep urinate and defecate” - “The pinnacle of man’s mastery over machines: the Xbox game control” - “	- Likes gaming for the ease of action (ez) - Wants to be good at something for once - Disassociate, losing touch with sense of reality - Sheer violence - His entire life and motivation is centered around proving his self-worth to his family and schoolmates, but because of the lack of emotional guidance, he chooses to do so via a self-destructive path like gaming addiction. This desire to prove himself eventually consumes him. - Loves the virtual world for the ability to move beyond limitations - Disassociating - Very removed from reality, not in touch with the world
The missing thumb: represents his grip on reality	- “He felt neither pain nor tingle around the stump, just a bored numbness” - “It felt so natural that Gregory began doubting if he had really been born with 10 fingers” - “He was willing to pay for them using his own savings. It was for a good cause after all.” (graft six more fingers) - “..he could have sworn he saw his right thumb in its rightful	- Not rooted in reality, nonchalant about the loss of his thumb - Narcissistic, selfish - Thoughts centered around gaming - Losing sight of reality - Delirious

	place” - “He could suddenly feel the missing thumb” - “Geoff must have taken the thumb with him to the hospital” - “In his right hand, still clenching the sword, was his missing thumb”	- Inability to distinguish between reality and game - His thumb was never missing in reality
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Effects of bullying/ marginalisation

Point	Quote	Explanation
Bullying is a serious issue that causes lifelong effects	- “He was hell-bent on beating Nick’s high score of 9,400,449” - “Nick’s daily taunts of “Fat-soh, Fat-soh” had threatened to unravel Gregory’s sepia-tinged childhood and lead him into the valley of darkness” - “General Lee looked a lot like his tormentor in school, especially in his swagger and the fixed, mean gaze of his eyes. Perhaps it was a trick of the light”	- Sets goals centered around redeeming himself from the bullying - So focused that he remembers the numbers by heart - Emotional scars, psychological harm caused by bullying - Pushes him into unhealthy obsession with gaming - Like how in the game the ultimate goal is to kill the final boss, Gregory’s only goal in life has become overcoming his own bully - No breathing space to develop his own character, life
Lack of moral support from his family	(his fault) - “...when Mom had invited him to join them a week ago” - “He remembered that they had already left for a weekend getaway in Phuket”	- Rejects opportunities to spend time with his family - Take a break from gaming for his mental health

	- "I have lots of homework to clear by the end of the week, he lied" - "I will go crazy, like some of those kids you told me about who jumped down their blocks" - "Didn't he tell her last night he was busy and didn't he swear that he was not gaming? Reaching out, he duly dispatched a busy tone" (Geoff) - "Geoff was 14 years older" - "Incorrigible prankster by night. He would sometimes hide Gregory's things in odd places that became the breeding ground for jokes during family meals" (mom, dad) - "...end up playing Xbox all weekend" - Mom had made this same threat last year but nothing had come of it when he had lined up four Fs" - "...DS and PSP, still being recharged" - "Be a man, son...once you back down, there's no going back" - "He would at least make Dad proud of him, show that he was no wimp"	- Manipulative, duplicitous - Picks up bad character traits because of his addiction - Didn't pick up the call that could have saved his life (??) - Responsible adult, could have checked in on him - Immature - Greg gets no reprieve from taunting, no safe haven from bullying at school - Knew about his addiction but never took concrete steps towards addressing it - Spoiled him further - Enforces toxic masculinity, doesn't allow him an outlet for his emotions and safe space - Wants him to face his issues without any proper tools to do so - Alienates him further by giving him unrealistic expectations
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Identity

Themes

discrimination

Point	Quotes	Explanation
Towards MC because she is a woman	- “Always be patient, my love. You don’t want them to fault my upbringing, do you?” that pleading voice always put things in perspective for her” - “No one else had the patience to shop with the	- Oppressed by sense of duty to her mom, reinforcing the unfair standards placed on MC because of her gender - Horrible ingratitude - Archaic roles enforced in the

	older woman” - “..girls from India are reputed for making fine thosai” - “My mother-in-law used to find fault with that, and your father-in-law hurled plates at me” - “....commanded from the hall: make me some French toast” - “Can’t a man have some peace and quiet on his day off? He shouted back” - “He was always this way: detached from the reality of his family responsibilities: people in this country are all the same” - “Don’t forget that I married a girl from India because I like my wife to be conservative and feminine”	family - Unfair stereotypes of MC because she is from India - Unfair expectations placed on young wives transcends times (passed down over generations) - Demanding, rude towards MC - Inconsiderate husband (MCP) - Lazy, doesn’t bother helping her with their household - Because of bad experiences and trauma from her family, MC discriminates against other Singaporeans - No time to meet other people outside housework - Double standards - MCP
	- “If she had pursued her MSc here in Singapore instead of in Tamil Nadu, her salary would have been thrice or quadruple what she was currently earning” - “...you wouldn’t know anything...her son’s dismissive voice annoyed her” - “You studied in India. You wouldn’t understand a things about Maths in Singapore” - “She was also pained by his disregard of her intelligence, all because she held Indian	- Some corruption in the Indian exam system that she doesn’t see - But still unfair towards her - Judgement uncalled for, being very rude and undermining his mother - Separating MC from SG and the rest of them (alienating her) - Very hurtful to her

	certificates” - “You say you’re a Singaporean. But you don’t know Malay?” - “...scorn in the driver’s voice” - “You come from India? Come to do housework?...From India must mean maid?” - “She indignantly threw the fare onto the seat next to him” - “Her in-laws and husband disdained her ways of rearing the children, openly stating that her “India ways” were not suitable” - “Mum, do you know how truly narrow-minded you are?” - “If i were like you, people would also tease me as a country bumpkin from India	- Pigeonholes her, forces stereotypes on her - Unreasonable judgement call to look down on her - Very rude, judgemental and narrow-minded - MC reciprocates the bad attitude - Hypocritical: wanted an Indian bride, yet picks only bits of her that they want - Strip her of things central to her identity - Looks down on her own mother for the lack of liberal mindset - Unfair standards of dressing placed on girls
Internalised discrimination (mc) based on her nationality and gender	- “After all, had they not brought her from India for this?” - “Am I here only to cook for these people? To prepare different dishes to satisfy their needs and desires?” - “A dark, skinny body. Short hair....do I look like an Indian or Sri Lankan maid?” - “She looked at the reflection with contempt	- Reinforces their expectations on herself - Aware that she is discontent and oppressed in the position she’s in - Huge amount of insecurity in the position she holds in the family - Sense of inferiority, internalises belief that she is not as good because everyone around her enforces this

	and disgust. With her dishevelled hair and face drenched in perspiration, she did look like a maid” - “She wondered if the salon was really necessary. What was the point of wasting her time and money and dressing up?” - “Or have I not adapted to the ways of life here? Are my thoughts, desires, dreams still like those of an Indian and not a Singaporean?”	- Takes enjoyment away from herself, defeatist attitude (self-destructive) - Sad resignation of her place - Makes distinction between herself and SG very clear - Questions herself, gives in to the sad situation that her family have pushed her into
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Displacement and marginalisation

Point	Quotes	Explanation
MC still feels uprooted from India, no relatives in SG or good memories here	- “Over the past fifteen years, she had learnt to shut his voice out of her head” - “Anyway, do I have the luxury of quarrelling with my husband and running home to my mother? Not when she is hundreds of miles away” - “...I wonder how much that converts to in Indian rupees..” - “..she had not touched lipstick till she had started working” - “Do you call what you're wearing a dress? Might as well go out in your underwear. Your skirt is short enough” - “Girls should be refined and sedate. Had I spoken to my mother like this, she would have thrashed me”	- Already in SG for a long time, yet doesn't feel much connection to it - No support base or security base in SG to escape from oppression and conflict in her household - Physical and emotional distance from everything - Still has mindsets of being in India due to ties and links - Different upbringing from her children - Antagonistic tone, talking down to her daughter - Slut-shaming her, implying that she is cheap (old-fashioned mindset) - Echoes MIL - Repeat of terrible cycle of forcing girls into the mould of being quiet and obedient

	- “You want her to also be like you, to swaddle herself in a sari wherever she goes?” - “...husband who had frowned when she had donned jeans in the initial days” - “I like to see you in a sari, with your long hair dressed up in a single plait” - “..weddings she had attended back home in India. What riotous fun!” - “She had no such intimate friends here...weddings in Singapore were no fun” - “..pink Singaporean identity card...it seemed to smile at her smugly” - “I am a Singaporean. How often she proudly said that to anyone who asked about her nationality”	- MC’s husband puts her down because her way of dressing doesn’t fit SG’s norm - Initially tried to dress more suited to her own tastes - Forced to conform to her husband’s wants - Not allowed to dress the way she wants, reflecting her own identity - No life of her own outside of her family - Lonely, deep longing for connections to India that have been severed by physical separation - (personification---taunting) - Weird sense of contention - By taking citizenship, she has severed the connection between her birthplace and herself - Only because her family forces her to repress her identity (might not be the case if she had a nice family)
(marginalisation) no regard for her welfare from family, heavy and unrealistic expectations	- “A whole load of housework awaited her” - (FIL) “breakfast for him always had to be iddili, thosai or some other Indian delicacy, and it had to be homemade...even if it was store-bought, she had to be the one to buy it, with her own money” - “Did she need to pay through her teeth for breakfast? It was only a half-hour job to make it herself” - “It never occurred to her mother-in-law to ever lift a finger and help her with the	- Very unreasonable expectations - Inconsiderate for MC - Unheard of story, because she has no time to make friends or socialise - Ever-busy because of her family - No one to air her grievances to - Stifling family, no identity left outside fulfilling the role of wife, DIL and mother - No room to live her own life

	chores” - “(FIL) expected everything to be at the perfect temperature” - “(husband) barked: why do you always opt for this meal? Like a beggar” - “Why don’t you pay from your salary? She is going to be helping you after all!” “as though he had done his duty, he disappeared” - “she earned \$2000 monthly, but if she were to pay for the maid, would she have enough left over for savings?” - “She had to look after her own needs... she also contributed to the household expenses. There was also the annual vacation to India....there were the hordes of relatives, and everyone needed to have something from Singapore”	
conflicts	- “Her tone laced with anger and irritation” - “.her husband ogling the photos of actresses in the newspaper. Her irritation flared...why am I doing the work all the time?” - “(MIL) pulled out each of the plastic bags her daughter-in-law had so painstakingly put away just a few minutes earlier...looking on in frustration” - “unfazed by her obvious unhappiness...finding fault with every item her	- Repeated irritation, bitterness - Purposely undermining MC, establishing authority over her - Repressed inner thoughts and frustrations - Dictatorial, very entitled attitude

	daughter-in-law had bought” - “.chicken, prawns and brinjal, and placed them on the table” - “Her anger threatened to explode...she dumped the soya bean milk into the sink” - “Tears threatened to spill over” - “(son) not even allowing her a few minutes of self-pity” - “...every adult had a different philosophy on child development” - “His comment triggered the frustration and anger that she had been bottling up the whole day” - He grabbed her by the shoulders and shook her violently” - “..end: in a fight. It was a daily occurrence after all” - “Her legs seemed to walk of their own volition; she reached out and smacked both of them”	- Passive aggressive, deprives herself of the things that would make life more bearable for her (self-destructive) - MC didn’t start off as a violent person, but because she spends so long with her family, she begins to reflect and enact the same violence - Repressed emotions - Aggression - Very conflicted household, no affection for each other
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The Borrowed Boy

Themes

Altruism/ charity

Point	Quotes	Explanation
Junaidah does charity partially to make her feel good about herself	- “She wondered if there were childless couples who borrowed a child from the orphanage on Hari Raya” - “...highlight the void in their lives, a void to be filled by endless gossip” - “She had chosen a boy for	- Selfish perception of charity, it should not matter in this case - More about saving face - Selfish demand

	Haikel's sake" - ...as if she had been elected the sole spokesperson for the boy. She had to stand up for him, to assert his presence. " - "But the boy is mine. I will not start the day by betraying him. - "She would be the first point of contact into the family...she hoped that he would somehow stick by her side for the rest of the day" - "Junaidah had feared having to pass through the faces of children, their hopefulness on her way in, and their disappointment on her way out" - "Perhaps this was a reward for good behaviour, to be hosted by a family for a day" - "...she was flushed with that superior happiness that comes about from making other people happy"	- Actually trying to use the boy to assert dominance on her family (no sense of control/power for her) - Possessive - Air of self-importance - Wants to have the most time with the boy, doing so to make herself feel good and charitable - Condescension, saviour complex - Stereotype that orphans are always miserable - Limited perspective of J - Inflated view of the borrowing scheme, this is not all that the orphans dream of - Vested interest in this scheme
Acts of charity may overlook the true needs of the recipients	- "The boy might not like the colour, but what was important was that it was the same colour as the baju kurung for their other two children. It would make him feel like he was one of the family" - "Junaidah...requested for an eight-year-old boy"	- Not taking him into consideration, (random family) wilful ignorance, double standards - Would only make the boy feel worse (not one of them) - specific , selfish demands under guise of charity (should not matter)

	- “But that would fulfil her own need, instead of the needs of the child. It would have violated a certain spirit of charity. “ - “Junaidah realised that she did not know the boy’s name. All this while, she and her husband had referred to him as the ‘orphan boy’ - “He was wearing his pink satin baju kurung, a colour that clashed with his skin tone” - “..he reached out and slipped his hand into Junaidah’s. She was shocked by the intimacy of the gesture, and thought to herself: he must be impatient to get out of here” - “She considered the possibility that the act of taking her hand was something almost reflexive for him, having been fostered out to different Hari Raya families year after year” - “...a gesture not of animal instinct or need but habit and perhaps even calculation” - “I’m not the first” - MIL: “why don’t you keep him for a week?” - “She was observing the effect the boy’s presence had on Haikel--arousing	- (asked for a girl instead of a boy) - Already violated this ‘spirit’ (no diff btn boy and girl) - So focused on the act of charity that she overlooks the basic human connection between her and the boy - Mydeen was the one loaned out the year before - Experiences different families each year, lack of permanence and consistency - Disregard for emotional impact on the orphans - Saddening to see, J is cynical and jaded - Not used to affection in her family - Mydeen probably just being sweet - Mydeen loaned out on a frequent basis----diminishes his personal value - Very cynical towards Mydeen, there’s not evidence that he’s trying to manipulate her - Unnecessary judgement - Wants to claim first spot to seem special, disappointed - Selfish thoughts, only considering benefits Mydeen will bring for her family - Not about how Mydeen will
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	him in a competitive nature, an eagerness to please” - “Maybe siblings had a mutually tempering effect on each other: Haikel would learn to be more generous, and Mydeen would be drawn out of his shell”	feel
Distance between recipients and participant	- (speaking up on the baju) “she had not even met this boy, and it would not do to become too attached to him” - “Her role today was to be defined by hospitality, not the construction of an intricate fantasy” - “She was not going to pretend that the boy was her son...neither should the boy believe that this family setup was anything more than temporary” - “But she would snap out of it, suddenly reminded that the boy was on loan, and that all this would vanish for him by the next day---the money in his pocket and his baju kurung being the only momentos snuggled out from a dream” - “But she knew she would not go to the orphanage to ask for him” (next year)	- J forcing herself to have distance, not actually good for the boy - Reminding herself to distance - Provides justification - Trying to prevent herself from getting hurt, but in the process this is also harmful for Mydeen - Very aware that the situation is not permanent, so she doesn’t invest that much on Mydeen - Her good deed isn’t that sincere

Point	Quotes	Explanation
Of orphans in the story	- J: he's somebody's child. He was put into our care. What will they say now? Husband: who??? - "But what void in whose life does the missing orphan make? Emptiness upon emptiness, one void seeking union with another. The boy who had held Junaidah's hand would forever be beyond her reach" - "She did not want the boy to turn out as an exhibit. But evidently Mydeen knew his place"	- Husband might see Mydeen as dispensable - Literal, insensitive - J more concerned about the consequences of losing Mydeen than his safety? - Will society never be connected to them as the gap is too big? - Positions that marginalised people play in society - Mydeen is aware of distance between them, just by virtue of him being an orphan
Of Junaidah in her family	- "She was tired of having these two ganging up on her...why was it that Haikel rarely took sides with her? She wondered if it might have been better to have asked for a girl from the orphanage instead"	- Desire to connect better with someone seen in interaction with her and Mydeen

Margarine and the syrian refugee project

Themes

Perspectives and empathy

Point	Evidence	explanation/link
Perspectives can differ from reality	- "Marjorie looked like she could not be bothered" - "It smelled very posh, not like any of the normal deodorant sprays we used" - "Her well-worn sneakers.... I felt self-conscious of my clunky shoes, with their	- All of these are judgement calls made by MC during their first meeting, and hence may be inaccurate - MC ignores the fact that Jo's shoes are old, focusing on the ornaments on them, =perspectives can be selective, we see what information supports

	thick, ungainly soles” - “She hardly took notes. I suspected she wasn’t even listening to the teacher”	our preconceived viewpoints (biased)
Hard to change perspectives of some people due to long-running beliefs that are rooted in society’s mindsets	- “Squatting and staring at a frog in the school pond. The frog was sitting on a rock, staring back at her...it hopped away towards an overturned coconut shell” - “Why, and how, could somebody like Jo end up in our world?” - “It’s not my fault that you don’t have what I do...”	- Frog represents Nabilah. Both sides see each other’s perspectives but are unable to truly understand and accept one another, showing the divide in our current society. - Don’t know much outside the norm, because the norm is perpetuated so much - discount/doesn’t accept N’s lack of options
Perspectives can change	- “Everytime I read the news headlines nowadays about the Syrian refugees, I wonder about Marjorie” - “She held out her hand, and Nabilah slapped it---high-five. They laughed” - “Nabilah suggested meeting again, but at her house this time; she would ask her mom to cook” - “But every time I read about Syria in the news, I wonder about Margarine, and if she thinks about me” - “..all a bunch of self-indulgent, unoriginal narcissists” “the theatre scene is actually not too bad, I admit. It’s one of the better areas of our arts scene”	- Her hindsight proves that she has changed her perspectives about Marjorie - Differences can be bridged through common understandings - Softening of differences, changing perspectives of each other - Proof that the narrator is the one that gains new perspective from her encounters with M - Jo is willing to accept the perspectives of Nabilah, not hard-headed/stubborn

	- "Nabilah was uncharacteristically quiet. I had expected her to rant about Jo, but she just kept looking at the ground" - "...gazed admiringly as her skirt swished coolly with each step she took"	- Starting to realise that Jo also has valid points/perspectives and reflecting on them - No longer bitter or biting, just admiring her from afar
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Privilege and prejudice

Point	Evidence	Explanation/link
Prejudice exists due to preconceived notions/ divisions due to SES in society	- "Bukit Katak Secondary is just as good as Farquhar Girls', okay?" - "Nabilah speculated that she probably had her own private tuition teachers anyway" - "For a farquhar Girls' school student, Mar-jerh-ri took really long toilet breaks" - "Nabilah and I exchanged a look. How rich was this girl? Were there Singaporeans who had drivers? Was her dad a minister?" - "I don't think that anybody who goes to Bukit Katak now, can become like your dad in the future"	- Adults perpetuate the misguided perception that "better" schools look down on neighbourhood schools, one is better than the other - Forces preconceived notions on Jo just bc of the school she came from, bc people from different schools rarely interact and understand each other - Unaware of different possibilities in society, sticking to preconceived notions that they have - Harmful mindsets that are spread in society can demoralise communities, causing them to already feel defeated when there is still a lot of potential
Perspectives and world views can become limited due to difference	- "...it's because our choir won gold at SYF. Farquhar Girls' only won silver last year"	- Frog-in-the-well mentality, can only relate to things she's familiar with

in family backgrounds	- "I know a lot of Singaporeans were studying there..but not Singaporeans like you" - "To you guys ministers probably make a lot of money..there are many other jobs that give you more money" - "You know what it's like to be somebody other than a rich Chinese Singaporean?"	- Nabilah emphasizes class differences between them, causing the gap bwn them to become even wider - Limited understanding of world, economics (not really their fault) - In the end, both N and Jo are the frog in the well, because both have limited perspectives and life experiences
Privilege allows one to have more life options, exposure to worldly matters	- "I don't fit into this education system. I have no choice" - "We stayed at the Four Seasons in Damascus.." - "My Dad brought us there on a family holiday---I guess he was sick of europe?" - "She had two computers, plus we could borrow her brother's laptop as well" - "The boys behind started hissing and guffawing...they lowered their voices but every now and then a screech escaped" - "It's not my fault that you don't have what I do..stop grudging others for what they have and you don't"	- Jo has option of moving to another school to better suit her learning needs, unlike N and MC who cannot afford it - Casual in her mention of the places she can afford to go, hints of how affluent she actually is (takes it for granted?) - More access to learning materials like computers - Not a conducive learning environment, makes it hard for students to actually study well and climb up SES ladder (meritocracy???) - Privileged guilt exists, both sides are products of a system where inequalities persist due to issues in the system allowing rich to get richer and poor to remain in poverty cycle

	- “What is it so difficult about our system that we, who have so little, can cope with, but you, who have so much, cannot?”	- N genuinely trying to understand why, since they have more limitations in life options due to SES
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Class division/marginalisation

Point	Evidence	Explanation
Marginalisation can occur from both sides	- “None of the other girls rebuked the boys, as we normally would when one of us was attacked” - “Nabilah raised her eyebrows and made a face....rich kid” - “...asked if Margy...could join our group for the research project”	- Treat Jo badly/like an outsider just because she’s from a “better/more atas” school - Already hates her despite not knowing Jo well enough - Jo is shunned by both her classmates and teacher
Physically separated by class	- “That’s where people like you live...they put them in a different GRC too” - “Why didn’t her father pay for her to go to some other brand name school where her classmates would have drivers and dogs too”	- Physically segregated away from ‘normal people’, worsening gap in interaction btn them - Rarely see mix btn social classes due to even school system

Characters

Marjorie

Point	Evidence	Quotes
She has the desire to reach out and help but does not have the tools to do so	- “She turned her head and looked at me in the eye, smiled...” - “Gave me that same unsettling smile” - “..Singapore arts scene? They’re all a bunch of	- M is trying to be friendly and make friends with MC, but comes off as cold because of her awkward mannerisms - Misconstrued, says rude things unintentionally

	self-indulgent, unoriginal narcissists” - “Why don’t we do research on something more meaningful?” - “I was amazed that Jo didn’t seem to notice at all; she was practically in her own world” - “Jo frowned and muttered something about dengue” - “You need to have some perspective, Nabs...”	when she’s trying to interact with ppl - Unaware of how she is offending others - Unable to sympathise and understand the aunty’s love for her plants - Mild holier-than-thou attitude, thinks that she’s helping them by comparing them to Syrian refugees while not accepting that their problems are also equally valid
Due to different upbringing and background, she cannot relate to the ppl around her (limited empathy)	- “I think it’s obvious that you’re not as rich as my dad...but compared to the Syrian refugees the average Singapore is really rich” - “The walls were so high that I couldn’t even look into her neighbour’s house, but maybe that was the point” - “We drove past many other formidable mansions, but hardly saw any humans, camouflaged as they must have been in the landscape” - “Jo’s mother seemed to dominate the whole entrance---there she was standing, and sitting, and gazing into the distance, and looking straight at me,	- Acknowledges the difference in the amount of opportunities offered to them due to SES class, but still unable to empathise with them due to limited range of empathy she has - Isolated living environment, making M unaccustomed to interaction with other ppl, hence she lacks the ability to empathise and relate to the ppl around her (MC and Nabilah) - Jo’s mom seems to be cold and a perfectionist, thus explaining why Jo shares the same cold mannerisms and her clothes

	with the same unsettling smile” - “You keep forgetting about the Syrian refugees, how little they have, and how lucky you are..” - “It’s not my fault that you don’t have what I do..” - “I thought you’d be able to step outside yourself and empathise with others--”	- Unable to empathise with those outside her ‘world’ view, i.e. everyone in the local community bc they have diff. Degrees of issues - In saying so, she also forgets that she is unable to accept N’s legitimate issue of lack of options, despite wanting to help
Good person at heart, open-minded, generally receptive, socially aware	- It’s a beautiful country” - “We stayed at the Four seasons in Damascus...I guess your cousin wasn’t staying there too?” - “The theatre scene is actually not too bad, I admit. It’s one of the better areas of the arts scene”	- Has diff. Perspectives, sees past war-torn country (syria) - Aware of differences btn them and acknowledges it - Open to other opinions, willing to accept other viewpoints, also intelligent as she has knowledge of many areas

Nabilah

Point	Evidence	Explanation/link
Loyal to her family and friends, sympathetic	- “Eat your paddle pop...” “Nabilah had to fetch her younger from school on Wednesdays” - “She would call Nabilah for help with spelling and English grammar” - “Nabilah told me all about you...i think it’s very cute. Your real name is too hard for me” - “...how you would be able	- Loving, good older sister - Loving, close-knit family (so she also relates and empathises to those physically close to her) - Feels betrayed and upset

	to leave all your friends..” “why should we care about her, she said, if she doesn’t care about us?” - She didn’t think that she cared about us, or that she even cared about the Syrians----after all, how can somebody who doesn’t care about her friends truly care about people she doesn’t know” - “Her expression had changed, however. I couldn’t read it.” - “Nabilah was uncharacteristically quiet. I had expected her to rant about Jo, but she just kept looking at the ground”	that M doesn’t seem to care about leaving them, uses SES difference as a way to cover up how much she cares for M (attached easily) - Simple friendship issue made to be involved with larger, more complex issue of SES differences - Overall, still able to understand different points of view, but cannot accept some of them (limited empathy)
Self-defeatist attitude, small circle of concern	- “I bet she’s rich” “Nabilah raised her eyebrows and made a face” - “..start seeing her at choir practice?....Nabilah cringed...I hope not” - “..fearing that she would judge me for not reporting the new girl” - “You said it was pair work right” “Nabilah maintained a stubborn silence” - “..said in an unfriendly manner” “Who does she think she is? Do you notice she speaks with an accent? I think she’s so act-cool. Who carries their bag on one shoulder?” - “Yea i will make Jo hold the tape recorder” - “Could I imagine walking on for days, all through Malaysia for an example,” - “I’m interested in Syria too	- Very hostile attitude towards M, makes biting remarks just bc she assumes that Jo looks down on them, supposedly ‘better’ than them - Her judgemental side shows, finds things to pick on just to justify her dislike of Jo - Feels insecure because of Jo’s more expensive-looking things/ societal expectation that ‘elite schools’ have smarter students - Tries to deal with it by criticising Jo - Has to bring issue into a local context to understand them - Cares a lot about what ppl

	okay, I always have been” “people in our class don’t..I didn’t want our project to be boring”	in their class will think of her, more concerned about closer group of acquaintances than global issues
Stubborn, persistent in her views, unable to relate to Jo	- “Nabilah pressed on” “I know a lot of Singaporeans were studying there...but not Singaporeans like you” - “What is it that’s so difficult about our system that we, who have so little,can cope with, but you, who have so much, cannot?”	- Persistent in views, cannot accept things that are out of her norm - Sticks to her preconceived notions of Jo, cannot let it go that diff ppl have diff issues

MC

1. Will be the one to bridge gap between SES classes, something which Nabilah and Jo cannot do
 - Can accept and understand where both sides are coming from
 - Open-minded, willing to learn
 - Less hostile than N
2. Gains the most perspective/change of perspective from time spent with Jo

Link to other stories

- Everest: similar family background to Meena’s family, but SG ppl from different SES classes trying to find a place in each other’s lives
- Cave man: like Alfred, Jo also lacks ability to communicate and form human bonds easily bc of their more isolated lifestyles/upbringing
- What they’re doing here: both stories explore the limitations that SES class bring to people’s lives