

Love in Infant Monkeys Study Guide

Love in Infant Monkeys by Lydia Millet

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Plot Summary

Love in Infant Monkeys is a compilation of short stories by Lydia Millet. The book was a Pulitzer Prize finalist. The author tells 10 stories, all sharing an animal motif, that involve people or places that exist or have occurred and combines them with fictional elements. It is difficult to tell where the fact stops and the fiction begins. The stories include:

Chapter 1: Sexing the Pheasant

Chapter 2: Girl and Giraffe

Chapter 3: Sir Henry

Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov

Chapter 5: Tesla and Wife

Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys

Chapter 7: Chomsky, Rodents

Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit

Chapter 9: The Lady and the Dragon

Chapter 10: Walking Bird



Chapter 1: Sexing the Pheasant

Summary

Using third person limited point a view, a narrator told the story of Madonna's first pheasant kill during a hunt on her English estate. The bird fell from the sky and landed on her foot. The image of the dead bird upset her; she had not expected to see blood squirting from its beak. Until this moment, Madonna had not ever really paid attention to birds of any kind. She remembered that her closest contact with a bird previously was a music reviewer's comparison of her to a screeching harpy. She recalled that she had to go to the library to look up the comparison, discovering that it was a monster that had the head of a woman and the claws of a bird.

Her mind wandered while the bird lay dying on her boot. She recalled telling Larry King on his talk show that she preferred the term "performance artist" to "pop star." She watched the bird flap feebly and wondered where Guy, her husband, was when she needed him to handle this situation. They were hunting together with a group of his friends. She was not crazy about his friends, so she separated from them; but she expected she was still within viewing distance.

While waiting for Guy, Madonna thought about her life: she was the American ideal, a self-made person. She was the English ideal, too, a snobby aristocrat. She remembered that magazines referred to Guy as "Mr. Madonna" and that she once referred to him as "laddish" in a magazine interview, which - unknown to her - was considered as an insult in England.

The thought crosses her mind that she should step on the pheasant's head and crunch it, but her boots were Prada. She thought about shooting it again, but she couldn't stand the thought of it now that it was close and she would have to see more blood.

Her mind wandered again. She revealed that she walked away from Guy and his friends because they were getting drunk while hunting. She thought that her body was a hallowed temple and his must have been a bordello/sewer. She believed Guy was acting out because of a recent Mr. Madonna reference made by the media. She believed he needed to work on his self-esteem because her self-esteem was fine. Bored with hunting at that point, Madonna thought she was wasting time with Guy and his "idiot friends" in the woods, and she wanted to go home to lift weights. She was proud of her abs, but her quads needed work. She knew that when the men caught up with her, they would put the pheasant out of its misery. "What were men good for it not to crush the last spark of life out of a small helpless creature?" she thought.

She recalled a rabbi hinting that it was better not to kill animals for sport. Until that moment, she had never shot anything other than clay pigeons and that was fun. She also liked dressing for the hunt and thought guns were an excellent, powerful prop for a



woman. She had liked shooting until she actually killed the pheasant. She mused about how Guy looked carrying his gun, a 12-bore. She thought he looked sexy with the gun.

She looked at the bird again and felt a wince in her throat. It was still struggling and she realized that not as much time had passed as she thought. She realized she must have stepped back because the pheasant was no longer on her boot. She noted that the bird had leaves sticking to its bloody side, and probably a broken leg and wing. "Madonna, marksman," she thought. She envisioned a Renaissance-style painting of a Duccio or Davinci painting of the Madonna, mother of God, who, instead of holding the Christ child, would be holding an AK-47. She noted to consider that image for her next album cover.

Madonna reflected that "Madge, marksman" also worked. Madge was the nickname given to her by the British press. She said receiving a nickname meant they accepted you as one of their own. She reflected that the British once ruled the world, but were only left with a better accent. She thought they wore the accent well, though. She thought that Great Britain was quaint and was impressed that there were fewer obese people there as compared to the United States. She began contemplating on whether or not she could wear her favorite tweed clothing without actually being a hunter.

As she stood there still waiting for the bird to die, Madonna realized she was cold. She thought that if her fans knew she was cold, they would give her the coats off their backs, even though their coats would "suck."

She wished the bird would finally die. She said it fell to earth like David Bowie did in that 1970s movie, then mentally corrected herself to think "film" instead of movie. She thought that Bowie was like Jesus in the movie, if Jesus was an alien. She mused along that line of thought: what if Jesus was an alien? What if Christians were ancient UFO theorists and the Jews were the debunkers, she thought. She thought that Christians were hopeful about the past, a trait that made them basically insane. She said their faith seemed to give them the idea that they deserved to sit at the right hand of God. She thought they were selfish. Jews were more reasonable, she thought. She believed that they focused on encouraging people to be nice on earth at the present. Kabbalah was the belief that God was in you. Her thought turned back to the pheasant again.

What if it had eggs somewhere? As a mother to Lola and Rocco, she worried that this pheasant might also be a mother. She realized the bird was graceful, even after being shot - more graceful than she could be if shot. The horrible thought made her reach out to knock on wood. There was a thin tree nearby, did it count as wood? She knew the tree was wood, but didn't know if counted for luck purposes. Then she pondered that if she was shot in the right place, she might look great and would fall into a kind of martyr concept.

Again, Madonna's thoughts returned to the bird. The thought crossed her mind that it might be a rooster, which she reminded herself was a male pheasant; a hen was a female. She congratulated herself on remembering the terminology. Unfortunately, she did not know how to tell the difference. Sexing a pheasant was not as simple as looking



between the creature's legs as one could do for a dog or horse. She said their sex was determined by plumage. Even though Madonna was reported by a British publication to be a breeder of pheasants and partridges, she only managed the breeding. She'd hired people to do that and she delegated work to them all. She actually did nothing with the birds.

Madonna's thoughts returned to herself. She believed she was chosen by God, which explained her quick rise to fame and her continued success. She believed she exemplified "exceptional brilliance" (10) and talent and cited mention of her name along with other entertainers like Elvis and Marilyn Monroe as proof. Her name, Madonna, meant "chosen to embody" and she believed that was what she was chosen.

She thought about the occasional crazy fans who asked if she was the second coming of Christ. She would not go as far as to agree with their comments, but she did say she was at a point in her career where her success could no longer be defined as luck. She worried that if the public knew she thought of her success in this way, she would end up like Tom Cruise. She understood Cruise's Scientology interest and identified with him because the media made fun of her and Guy for Kabbalah and Richard Gere for his Dali Lama.

Madonna revealed that she considered herself to be very humble and that there was nothing wrong with seeing God in oneself -- anyone could do that. She read a lot of holy books, classical plays and literature to help grow her intelligence. She called herself a seeker who never gives up.

Drifting back to the bird again, Madonna remembered that there was some kind of bird that would sit on another bird's eggs. Maybe one of those birds would become the surrogate to hatch any pheasant eggs left behind if the one she killed was a mama bird. Madonna recalled a Vogue magazine interview in which she explained that a pigeon she had seen was a reincarnation of Cecil Beaton. Madonna's thoughts then drift to the homosexual population of Great Britain. She compared American men to those in Great Britain, and made notes to herself about some slang to use in moderation in reference to homosexual men. Her husband Guy was not gay, but had an edge of anger. She mused that the British men who were not gay were often angry about it.

The bird finally died. One of Guy's friends came up behind her, startling her. He gave Madonna the creeps. She told him she felt bad about killing the pheasant because it struggled and suffered so much. He made fun of her, saying that the bird could not have suffered much since it had a brain the size of a peanut. She realized this man had no respect for her or her superstar status. She realized that Guy's friends gave her a glimpse at what life would be like as a regular person. She recalled it was rare to meet people who didn't get star struck or tongue-tied. In her thoughts, she made a reference to children with Down Syndrome, referring to them as "retards" (14). She recalled a time when an entertainment journalist accustomed to interviewing stars passed out and soiled himself upon meeting her. She referred to Guy's friends as the lager louts, and felt sorry for their wives and girlfriends.



Guy's friend reached down to move the bird and Madonna told him just to leave it because she didn't want to desecrate the corpse. He said it defeated the purpose of the hunt. She asked him if it was a hen or rooster, and he told her rooster. She felt some relief that there were no stray eggs or chicks that would suffer from their mother's death. After Guy's friend left, she reached down and touched the bird. She felt its feathers and the little warm body beneath them.

Madonna saw the beauty of the bird, but thought it was prettier before it was killed. She thought the same was not true with U.S. President John F. Kennedy or former Beatle John Lennon. She said their deaths matured them and made them better, like a fine wine. She thought that people who die of old age only die for living; but people who got shot died for something.

She thought of herself again, and how she consistently reinvented herself to maintain megastardom. If novelty was only skin deep, that was okay with her because, she pointed out, skin is the biggest organ in the human body.

She began to reason that shooting the pheasant was actually a mercy killing because, left on its own, it could have died of starvation. She noted that life is not fair or equal for everyone. She mused that the English don't pretend to be equal and that a drive through Alabama in the U.S. would quickly show that there is not really equality there, either.

Madonna thought about class struggle through history. She recalled that Lenin said history was always about class struggle. She decided to pray for the pheasant. She bent down and touched its feathers again while praying for the bird. During her prayer, Madonna's mind continued to wander. She thought about how Guy needed to understand her on a more spiritual level. She revealed that while Guy was dealing with the Mr. Madonna name and feeling demasculated by the situation, she was really a little girl inside. She wanted him to see that about her, too. She realized that the pheasant once ate worms, and would soon feed the worms with its dead carcass. The bird was a giving vessel and life would go on. She had killed the bird and was very sorry for doing so. She did not want to have violence in her heart. She told the bird that she loved it.

She heard Guy and his friends behind her and thought she saw their arms go up in the air. She thought they were greeting her, but instead they were raising silver flasks to drink more. She was annoyed but forgiving, because they were small. She felt sorry for them for being so small.

Analysis

This story encapsulates Madonna's thoughts during a pheasant hunt in which she has shoots her first bird. Her thoughts, revealed by the author in the third person limited point of view using the stream of consciousness technique, jump from silly to serious, materialistic to spiritual as she ponders the hunt, life and death. It is important to



remember that these thoughts are those of an author and is a work of fiction, even though some aspects of the story may have some truth to them.

Until this hunt, Madonna had only shot clay discs at shooting practice. She is shocked at the appearance of death, and when she sees it, she must deal with being the one who took the bird's life. While she trivializes many things during her thinking process, the bird's life is never one of them. Through the death of the bird, the reader sees that Madonna has struggles in her marriage due to her fame. A tabloid's decision to refer to her husband as "Mr. Madonna" has created strife between the couple, despite her efforts to assure him that he is the man of the family.

Since the hunt takes place in the couple's English estate, Madonna compares and contrasts English and American culture quite often. She compares equality, social status, various religions, Guy's drunken friends to American frat boys, and even homosexuality between the two countries.

There are many examples of metaphors in this story. In discussing guns, Madonna thinks that a woman holding a gun is symbolic of a man in girl's clothing with an external phallic symbol. She thinks of herself as a martyr and calls a bird that adopts another bird's eggs to hatch "the Mia Farrow of nature" (12).

The chapter also uses similes for creating comparisons. Madonna says that a man holding a gun is like a man with two penises -- one had the power to create life and the other had the power to end it, like yin and yang. In another example, one thought likens Madonna's open-mouth gaping fans to children with Down Syndrome. In a nicer comparison, the author has Madonna liken birds to air.

The author also reveals a number of generalizations in Madonna's thoughts. She thinks that U.S. men are "basically rapists" while uptight English men were emotionless homosexuals and refers to children with Down Syndrome as "retards" (14).

While the last line of this story is "It was hard to be so small," (19) a more accurate theme is that it is hard to be so big. The story demonstrates the struggles of a megastar who, while striving for success also strives for the little things that make everyone else happy, such as love and a solid spiritual life. She longs for a closer relationship with her husband, but realizes during this hunt that he does not know her inner self. She wants to be common enough to fit in with his friends, but cannot bring herself to their level of drinking because it is a sin against her body. She also realizes that their love of hunting does not fit with her spiritual beliefs.

While this story is fictional and the thoughts expressed are not those actually of the singer Madonna, it does have some correlation to real life. Madonna has stated to the media in the past that she enjoys hunting and the time for meditation in provides with her husband, Guy Ritchey on their English estate.



Discussion Question 1

What effect does the term "Mr. Madonna" have on Guy and why is Madonna concerned about it?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss one of the struggles between the material and spiritual that Madonna reflects upon in this story.

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Madonna's opinions of guns in this story.

Vocabulary

transvestite, tabloid, ascended, manor, cornfed, righteous, frat, prop, wince, debunk, tweed, obese, frequently, legitimate, delegation, humble, embody, genuflect, journalist, lout, transformation, luminous, emanations, cherished, being



Chapter 2: Girl and Giraffe

Summary

This story, told from the omniscient point of view, is about George Adamson's experiences with African wildlife. Adamson lived in a thatch-roofed tent in the African bush. His wife, Joy, was the author of the book *Born Free*. She was stabbed to death a few years before this story takes place. At the time of her death, they were not living together. He continued studying and raising lions, but she became interested in leopards. Lions and leopards cannot live together, so the couple split up to continue their work, hundreds of miles apart.

The narrator explains that Adamson adopted two "children," named Girl and Boy. The lions were brought in among a group of 24 lions as cubs for roles in the movie, *Born Free*. After the movie, most of the lions were sent to zoos, but Adamson became attached to Girl and Boy and was allowed to keep them. He took them to Meru and made a camp with them. Meru was inhabited by giraffes, zebras, ostriches, a rhino and an old elephant named Rudkin.

Both Girl and Boy were fed all their lives, but after moving to Meru, Girl enjoyed the hunt. Her first kill was a baboon. Boy did not hunt; he fed off the animals his sister killed. Girl became a wild lion, but Boy did not. He stayed near Adamson's camp and visited often. Once, when Adamson had visitors, Boy bit the arm of a 7-year-old boy who was in a Jeep. An execution order was issued for Boy.

Before Adamson could carry out Boy's execution, Boy was discovered with a porcupine quill in one eye and had a broken leg. Adamson had the option of killing Boy on the spot or moving him. He waited with Boy for a veterinarian to arrive. Adamson arranged for Boy to be airlifted to another facility for treatment, then he and Boy would live on Joy's private estate while the animal was rehabilitated.

As Adamson and Boy were traveling on a truck to the airstrip, Girl came out of the wild and jumped onto the back of the truck by her brother. She could not be lured away, so she was allowed to ride beside her brother. She finally jumped off the truck and left her brother's side when she saw a young giraffe on the side of the road. It was the last time Adamson saw Girl, even though when he returned to Meru, he searched for her.

Boy's treatment included surgery to put a steel rod in his leg. After his surgery, Boy became irritable. Two years after his surgery, Boy attacked a man named Stanley who had cared for him during his illness and recovery. Boy bit Stanley deep in the shoulder. Adamson shot Boy in the heart then tended to Stanley, who bled to death in about 10 minutes. The narrator pointed out that Boy's end-of-life was detailed greatly in Adamson's autobiography, but Girl's was invisible -- "Happy endings often are." (26)



A visitor who saw Adamson at his camp a year before his murder shared an unpublished story about Girl. The visitor was Stefan Juncker from Tübingen, Germany. He visited Adamson at his Kenyan camp in the late 1980s. According to Juncker's story, the two talked by the fire one night. Adamson recalled the old days when his wife and brother, Terence, were still living. Adamson told Juncker about Terence's talent for divining. Adamson said his brother could swing a pendulum over a map to determine the location of something that had been lost or something for which they were searching, like water, people or lions. Adamson said his brother was correct about 60% of the time. While Adamson was not one to believe in magic, his brother's talent had given him better results than radio-based tracking. Terence died of a blood clot two years prior to Juncker's visit.

Adamson pointed out Terence's grave to Juncker; it was by a flower bush just a short distance away. Boy was buried under a tree nearby. Adamson explained that he buried the lion himself, but others had dug it up to make sure the lion had actually died. Juncker was silently bothered that Adamson would bury his brother so close to Boy, a killer.

Adamson revealed a secret to Juncker about one of Girl's early hunts. Adamson said he was proud when Girl took off after her first giraffe. The heard of giraffes ran away except one foal that was too young and inexperienced to realize it should run. Girl charged it, but stopped. She and the foal looked at each other. Girl remained crouched, and the foal began eating. Adamson watched from the bushes, wondering why she did not pounce on her prey. He could not see her face to determine her expression. He pondered if she sensed the giraffe was sick, or if she was waiting for it to run. He was surprised when Girl relaxed, sniffed the foal's legs, then lay on a log.

The giraffe kept eating and even dipped its head down near Girl, who was lying on the log. As Adamson continued his story, Juncker began to feel annoyed. His flight in was rough and all he got out of it was time spent around a fire with an old alcoholic with poor hygiene, he thought. Juncker was inspired to visit because he saw the movie *Born Free* when he was eight years old. His wife disapproved of Juncker's trip and chalked it up to a midlife crisis. She went on her own vacation.

Adamson continued his story about Girl and the foal. Girl waited on the log and sunned all day while the foal grazed near her. It was almost dark when the giraffe made its way back to Girl and bent its head down to touch the lion. Girl stirred. The giraffe lay down by the log. Adamson said giraffes rarely laid down and he theorized that the foal did this intentionally. Girl got off the log and stretched like a common house cat, then leaned over and sunk her teeth into the foal. Adamson described the movement as gentle and the foal's only "struggle" was actually reflexive muscle jerks. Adamson said he believed that Girl and the giraffe had come to an understanding that day, that Girl gave the young creature a full day to enjoy life. The giraffe was free to enjoy its past and present and free of its future.



Analysis

The narrator uses the omniscient point of view to share stories from two characters, George Adamson and Stefan Juncker. Most of the story is told in a matter-of-fact manner, such as George's family information, how he acquired Boy and Girl, and descriptions of the camps and regions in which Adamson lived. The narrator shares Adamson's thoughts on animals primarily. For example, Adamson thinks camels are not suited for long-term relationships and he feels a little pity for them.

The narrator does not delve into Adamson's thoughts often, but does examine Juncker's as he listens to Adamson's stories. There are several possibilities for the author's choice in this regard. Perhaps it is Juncker's thoughts with which most readers can relate; most have never lived in the African bush with wild animals. Readers might likely identify with Juncker's disappointment when finally meeting the man he had idolized since childhood. Many readers can also identify with Juncker's desire to get away from the rat race and his bourgeois surroundings. To him, Born Free and Adamson represented true beauty as much as freedom although he loses sight of his ideal when he regrets not vacationing with his wife instead of making the pilgrimage to meet Adamson.

The story personifies Girl and Boy because Adamson does so. Even though they are wild animals that he attempts to adapt to the wild, he still views them as his children. Adamson develops deep relationships with Boy, even choosing to move him from his original camp, to avoid having to euthanize him after the animal bites a child. He even buries Boy near his brother. The author also uses personification techniques for the sun, saying that it is "glancing across the nape of the lion's neck" (30).

The author does not use obvious literary devices such as similes and metaphors in this story, however readers may see a symbolic connection between Adamson and his wife. Simply known as Boy and Girl, the names of the lions make an obvious reference to gender. Along this line of thought, compare Adamson to Boy and his wife, Joy, to Girl. Boy stayed near camp and never fully adopted the wild, just like Adamson maintained his loyalty to the study of lions. Joy, however, tired of lions and eventually settled on the study of leopards, which could not live with lions. She was drawn in by the wild life, just like Girl. In the story about Girl jumping on the back of the truck to be with her injured brother en route to the airlift, the author reveals that Girl only leaves Boy when she is distracted by another animal. This happened metaphorically to Adamson when he and his wife separated to pursue their own interests. Joy was with Adamson until she became distracted by another animal.

Following through on the theme of relationships, Juncker is ironically vacationing separately from his wife during the story. She is on a luxury vacation while he is building a campfire with a drunk, lonely eccentric. Perhaps it is Adamson's loneliness that accentuates Juncker's regret for not vacationing with his wife. The visit with Adamson gives Juncker a chance to see that wildlife and people make choices that affect their relationships.



While this story is fiction, there are elements of it that are fact. George and Joy Adamson were conservationists. Joy chronicled their experience of raising lion cubs in the book *Born Free*. A movie was made from the book. A Mau Mau uprising also really happened, resulting in the deaths of thousands of people.

Discussion Question 1

Compare and contrast Boy to George Adamson. Why does Adamson feel such a connection to this lion?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think Girl waited to eat the giraffe foal in the "secret" story Adamson related to Juncker?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the theme of relationships and how it relates to both human and wildlife in this story.

Vocabulary

homespun, primate, fathom, insistent, reprieve, frankly, massed, leaden, scrub, flask, midlife, languidly, heartily, complacent, hygiene, quarry, copse, predator, indignant

Chapter 3: Sir Henry

Summary

Chapter 3 uses the third person limited point of view to tell the story of an unnamed dog walker who prefers dogs to people. Sir Henry was a dachshund that belonged to American actor David Hasselhoff. The dog walker took Sir Henry for walks in the park three times daily. While contemplating that people often laughed at Sir Henry's bouncy gait and long ears, the dog walker considered that the dog actually had a very serious and dignified nature.

The dog walker took his job very seriously and only hired subcontractors who were veterinarian assistants to help with his business. He recalled witnessing a college girl who was talking on her cell phone while trying to walk seven dogs of very different sizes. The leashes tangled around her hand and caused two of her fingers to be ripped off. The dog walker witnessed the accident and called 911. He said the accident was not the fault of the dogs. Instead, it was her fault for not recognizing the territorial tension between two of the dogs and not paying proper attention to the job with which she was entrusted. Two of the dogs were also injured in the incident.

The dog walker made an excellent living with his job. He treated the dogs like humans. If they deserved respect, he gave it to them. He enjoyed dogs that exemplified dignity like Sir Henry. Sir Henry's owner is not revealed until the end of the story. Initially, the narrator explains that the owner is an actor who travels a lot and who visits the gym when he is home. Other than the owner, the family's children seemed to lose interest in Sir Henry after he was no longer a puppy. The dog walker became like a second parent to Sir Henry and all his dog clients.

The dog walker liked to walk Sir Henry with a miniature poodle named Blackie. The dogs enjoyed each other and even had a system for marking territory -- Blackie marked first, then Sir Henry. Both dogs liked listening to the dog walker and responding to his commands. While the dogs were eager to please the dog walker, he viewed them as customers that he must please.

During his time in the dog walking business, the walker developed a set of rules that he set for himself and all employees. After a flighty heiress gave her dog away without warning, the dog walker was heartbroken over the matter. The dog was shipped to Africa and the dog walker did not even have a chance to say goodbye. The dog walker vowed then not to accept clients who were not the type of people to keep a dog long-term.

During a dog walk, the walker saw Blackie's owner in the park. He took the dog over to visit his owner, a terminally ill famous violinist, who was accompanied by an assistant. The walker gave the assistant Blackie's leash and the dog hopped into his owner's lap. As the violinist petted the dog, he asked the dog walker if he will take in the dog upon



his death, and told him that he would establish a trust for the care of the dog. The assistant had a desperate look on her face and she explained that she could not take it because her husband had severe allergies. The dog walker agreed to think about it overnight and explained that if he began taking in all the dogs he cared about, he would have a shelter instead of a walking business. The owner handed the leash back and the walker continued on through the park with the dogs.

Throughout their walk, the dog walker considered the offer. He thought about how well the two dogs walked together and how much they enjoyed walking with each other. If he kept Blackie, this could continue for the sake of Sir Henry. David Hasselhoff strolled by, talking on his cell phone, but bent down to fondly chuck Sir Henry's chin. The dog walker thought about the clients whose dogs he walked. Hasselhoff was certainly in physical shape to walk his own dog, but was too busy to do so. His daughters and wife did not walk him either. They did not spend time with the dog. Then he realized that the violinist was different. He appreciated his dog and even insisted on walking him while undergoing strong treatments for his illness. He actually met the violinist on a dog walk. The violinist was struggling to keep up with Blackie. He helped the old man and became his dog walker from that moment.

The dog walker also pondered health and quality of life issues in dogs versus that in humans. The violinist was in bad shape; dogs in that shape are often euthanized. He thought about how much more dignity was available for dogs that were terminally ill. Upon returning Blackie home, the assistant met the dog walker at the penthouse door. She said she felt bad that she could not keep Blackie in the family. At that point, the dog walker realized that she was not merely a paid assistant or nursemaid; she was the violinist's daughter. He told her he was going to sleep on the request.

As the dog walker and Sir Henry ride back downstairs in an empty mirrored elevator, the dog walker concentrates on their reflections as he reflects on the decision he must make regarding Blackie.

Analysis

The narrator tells the dog walker's story using third person limited point of view and uses a lot of comparisons of dogs to people throughout the story. The narrator states, then demonstrates, that the dog walker prefers dogs to people. Through this characteristic, the narrator personifies dogs, although in the mind of the dog walker, that would be an insult. The dog walker cares very little about the people who own the dogs. For years, he has seen the violinist's "assistant" and never conversed enough to know that she was actually his daughter.

The theme of this story is order. The dog walker admires order and recognizes that Sir Henry and Blackie appreciate order, too. While it is the dogs' pleasure to serve, the dog walking is quick to point out that he did not want the dogs to serve him. Instead, they serve to maintain order. Even when the walker sits on a bench, he notices that both



dogs sit at his feet with their paws together, watching passersby with their heads turning in unison.

The story also makes a comment on humanity. The dog walker's clients were very wealthy. The fees that they pay to have their dogs walked are greater than some rental prices in Brooklyn. People are willing to pay the price for his trustworthiness and his professionalism. The dog walker also compares Blackie's owner, the violinist, to Sir Henry's owner, actor David Hasselhoff. Do their career choices impact the respect or love they show their animals? Hasselhoff sometimes portrays characters that appear shallow. Perhaps the author is commenting that a shallow person who pays to work out at a gym but pays someone else to walk his/her dog is incapable of giving the dog its deserved respect. Along this idea, the violinist represents respect and order. Music notes must follow order, practice must follow order, and the violinist is less concerned about his own health when he continues to walk Blackie even after his illness is very serious.

The story also makes a comment about the dog walker. He makes excellent money walking dogs for his wealthy clientele, however the notion of a trust fund to help him care for Blackie is never considered. This shows that it is not really about the money at all. The dog walker genuinely respects and loves the dogs he walks and he wants to be known as a person who has principles. The problem is that the violinist's request shakes his principle about not taking in dogs. He has no dogs of his own so he can concentrate on the dogs of his clients. Even as he considers the idea of taking in Blackie, he considers doing so for the sake of the other dog, Sir Henry. Of course, the story ends without the dog walker announcing his decision.

Although this story is fictional, David Hasselhoff is a real actor is known to have had a dog named Henry. It is likely the violinist and his dog Blackie were made up for the story though.

Discussion Question 1

The story ends without announcing what the dog walker's decision is regarding taking in Blackie. What do you believe he will decide, and why?

Discussion Question 2

Why does the author not share the dog walker's name?

Discussion Question 3

Why is the story titled after Sir Henry when the dog walker's decision is actually about Blackie?

Vocabulary

gait, giddy, charges, curt, approbation, physique, acutely, bigilance, loco parentis, spontaneous, malnutrition, succumbing, squalor, famine, scrabbling, minarets, terrace, penthouse, stigmatize, taunted, myopia, moral. bereft



Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov

Summary

The story in Chapter 4 discusses theories about Thomas Edison's sexuality that are centered around correspondence from his assistant, Vasil Golakov. Golakov's firing was sudden and some scholars hypothesized years later that Edison was homosexual. One scholar suggested that Golakov's sexual advance to Edison got him fired. Another scholar suggested that Edison fired the assistant because his sexual attraction to the young man was growing too strong and that he was in denial of his own homosexuality. The narrator discusses a translation of letters from Golakov to his sister that actually show no proof of either situation. An altercation or confrontation of some sort did happen on the day of Golakov's firing, and it all started with the execution of an elephant in 1903.

Desperate to gain some credibility for the use of DC electrical current which he invented, Edison offered to use AC electricity to execute Topsy the elephant even though he opposed the death penalty. AC electricity had proven to be safer than DC, so he hoped to use the elephant to demonstrate AC's deadliness. Topsy had killed three men who cared for her and abused her. She was a circus and work animal on Coney Island. Tesla's AC current was proven more effective harnessing of electricity in 1896, but Edison thought that his current could be used lethally to carry out the death penalty. From a public relations standpoint, he decided the best way to show off its power would be to kill the elephant. The elephant owners, Thompson and Dundy of Coney Island's Luna Park, decided to make a spectacle of the event; simply shooting the animal to put it down was not flashy enough and agreed to Edison's electrocution. They saw the elephant's execution as his punishment for breaking a law, which prescribed to the animal human characteristics of morals and knowing right from wrong. Before electrocution, they owners tried poisoning and would have tried hanging, but the ASPCA objected.

Edison arranged for the execution to be filmed, but could not be there himself. The year was 1903 and quality of the black and white film was not the best. The technicians attached electrodes to the elephant's body and strapped some on sandals that they also put on the elephant. Captured on a filmstrip that still exists today, Topsy was shown lumbering to her execution spot, then was engulfed by white fire all around her body. She collapsed dead onto her side.

Golakov never mailed the letters he wrote to his sister, so they were discovered in boxes of household documents after Edison's death. According to those letters, Edison was obsessed with that filmstrip and even carried on conversations with the elephant. The letters stated that some of Edison's talks to the elephant were about business or technology. Over a period of several months, the conversations went from one-sided



ramblings about technology to argumentative exchanges with the elephant on film. Golakov recorded one conversation about women. He said Edison told the elephant that all women were selfish and worthless because they cannot invent. He said they were all harlots. When the elephant "interrupts" Edison's rant, he tells the filmed elephant that he should have killed her three times. He responds to her disappointment with an apology, then asks if the fields in her afterlife are green and if the sun is bright.

In another conversation overheard between Edison and the elephant on film, Golakov said Edison debated man's destiny and commonality with Topsy. According to the letters, Edison's relationship with the elephant changed and eventually, the animal became a sort of deity for Edison. He often worshiped it by kneeling to pray during the film and asking for forgiveness. The narrator stated that Edison began to speak about inventing machines to communicate with the dead around 1920. In his early career, he felt religion was foolish, late in life he became religious. Edison's second wife, Mina, was a strict Methodist. The narrator did not believe the wife had anything to do with Edison's conversion, because he had so little respect for the intellect of women. It was unlikely, in the narrator's opinion, that Edison would be swayed by a mere female.

The narrator said that Golakov's eavesdropping was most likely the reason for his firing. After long-term stealing of Edison's cocaine toothache drops, he began mixing them with his own heroine cough medicine to get high. In one of the letters, he recommended this to his sister for creating euphoria and calming anxiety. He was hiding and drinking in Edison's closet that had a slatted door on the night he was fired. He saw Edison sprawl himself out on the floor in submission to the elephant on film. Edison said, "A thousand times you have died, a thousand and a thousand. I have seen it, like the millions of stars in the sky. And still you speak to me: You hold me in your dead eyes. I know your terrible power." (69). He held back tears as he called the elephant the Savoir and said she did not forgive him. In his dialog, he "heard" the elephant say that it was Edison who would not forgive himself, and that his inability to do so was his gift to her. When Edison began crying, Golakov jumped out of the closet to comfort the man. However, Edison was startled and fainted. Golakov had to pick him up off the floor. Golakov left the next day and was never allowed to return.

The final letter Golakov wrote to his sister, according to the narrator, implied that it was he and not Edison who was losing his mind. In his last letter, Golakov wrote that Edison said when he looked into the elephant's eyes, he saw a place where man was no longer cruel and no longer sought retribution for cruelty; he saw peace. He said that when man ceased to exist, he was emancipated into the grace for which he longed.

The narrator closed with a reminder that no one really knew if the letters were true. The narrator pointed out that the same elephant could have different symbolism to different people. The scholars could choose to see it as a symbol of heterosexual denial or repressed homosexuality, whereas Edison seemed to see it as a savior,

Analysis

The theme of this story is symbolism. While the other chapters in the book start with an image that closely depicts the title (a drawing of a pheasant in Chapter 1: Sexing the Pheasant; a lion in Chapter 2: Girl and Giraffe [where Girl is the proper name of a Lion]; and a dachshund for Chapter 3: Sir Henry [a dog]), this chapter is named for two men but shows the image of an elephant. The elephant symbolizes both men in different ways. For Edison, the symbolism is direct as he makes an alleged mental connection with an elephant who is executed on film. The elephant symbolizes his regret about killing the animal and grows to symbolize his eventual belief in religion and an afterlife. In the mind of a scientist, he can only communicate with the dead animal if there is actually an afterlife. The elephant becomes his "savior" by introducing him to spirituality and afterlife.

For Golakov, the elephant's symbolism is more abstract. The elephant, due to its size, is often affiliated with strength and loyalty. Remember, Topsy only killed the men who abused her. As an assistant to Edison, Golakov should exhibit both characteristics, but he does not. He is not strong enough to avoid addiction to cocaine and heroine, both legal substances at the time. The letters to his sister prove a lack of loyalty to his boss.

The story is written in the third person point of view with an analytical attempt to consider evidence regarding the scholars' claims of homosexuality and to support the author's thesis that the relationship can be proven to be nothing more than platonic. This point of view gives the reader the illusion of objectivity, but the author's clearly leans more toward persuasion to prove the thesis that there is not enough proof in Golakov's letters to determine he was fired for reasons associated with sexuality.

Ironically, the story begins with Edison offering to execute the elephant as a public relations attempt to regain some credibility. He loses the battle of his alternate current (AC) electricity to Nikola Tesla's direct current (DC). The reference to AC-DC hints toward bisexuality, a slang term associated with bisexuality since the 1940s when appliances that could work with either current were tagged as AC-DC. In another example of irony, Edison kills the elephant to regain credibility for his life's work with electricity. He later loses that credibility in the 1920s when he begins talking about building an apparatus to communicate with the dead.

The conflict of this story is not really between Edison and his assistant, man versus man, as the title of the chapter implies. The conflict is actually man versus self. Edison grapples with his opposition to the death penalty after offering to execute the elephant. As he watches the filmed version of the event over and over again, he grows remorseful. If Golakov's letters are true, Edison cannot get any relief from his guilt and all he can do is ask the elephant for forgiveness. The conversations Edison has with the elephant on film are actually conversations with his conscious as he struggles to deal with his participation in the elephant's death.

By executing the elephant for killing three men, the public personified the animal, assuming it had the ability to rationalize right from wrong and the moral agent to do so.



The public held the elephant accountable for its actions by punishing it in a public way. It could have been exterminated or euthanized as with other animals that must be put down.

As with the other stories in this book, this is fiction based on some factual aspects. For example, in reality, Edison and Tesla were contemporaries, both experimenting with electricity. Topsy the elephant really was executed by electrocution, but the degree to which Edison was actually involved is questionable. Vasil Golakov is believed to be a fictional character created for this story.

Discussion Question 1

Execution and euthanization both end in death. Discuss how they differ.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the savior-like, or Christ-like, qualities of the elephant Topsy.

Discussion Question 3

Discuss why Topsy's public execution is important to Edison initially and compare those reasons to Topsy's importance to Edison at the end of the story.

Vocabulary

abrupt, hypothesis, platonic, rapport, perverse, lethal, captivity, unsavory, technician, condemned, disgruntled, snuff, voluminous, disquisitions, rebuttal, interpose, copulation, celluloid, elucidating, humanism, berated



Chapter 5: Tesla and Wife

Summary

One of Tesla's housekeepers tells the story of the inventor and his "wife," a pigeon, in Chapter 5. Tesla lived in the Hotel New Yorker. He was famous for his inventions, including alternating current electricity, but had little money. All those years spent inventing were for the technology; he did not care about money. The housekeeper worked at the Hotel New Yorker and met Tesla in his 80s.

The narrator had a friend named Pia who was also a housekeeper at the hotel. Pia loved Tesla. She said he let companies and contemporaries steal his ideas and they got rich from them. Pia said that important people occasionally visited the man. One day, Pia said, Tesla told her he was inventing a death beam for the government. She said that while the United States was fighting the Germans, the FBI and war department wanted the death beam.

The narrator says the housekeepers were only allowed to clean his room after he became afraid of germs. Before that, he wanted solitude. He kept his pigeons in the room with him. He had nesting baskets and custom-made cages created for them and even provided them with a curtained shower for their use. The housekeepers cleaned feathers and bird droppings each time they entered the room and they could hear cooing in the shadows. Tesla kept a photograph of a pigeon that had died 20 or so years previously. He called her the "white dove" and told the housekeepers that she was his one true love. He told the narrator that the pigeon made him happy and that he stayed with her when she was sick and dying. Tesla told her that when his "wife" died, a light shone around her that was so bright it hurt his eyes. He said he knew then that his work on Earth was finished.

Some people mocked Tesla for loving a pigeon, the narrator says, but she felt sorry for him and did not laugh. She rationalized that people loved their pets but tried to trivialize it so they were not ashamed. Tesla, she said, loved unashamedly. Pia loved Tesla as much as he loved that pigeon. She likened Tesla to God and said that he had too much knowledge to pretend to be mere mortal. She said that was why he never got rich and had wives to serve his needs -- he was burdened with great, supernatural knowledge. Pia said that God sent his son to die for humanity's repentance because He could not come down from Heaven Himself. He would not have known how to talk to regular people, Pia reasoned. She said Tesla also could not speak to regular people and he was very kind to them all. Tesla made her feel important while all her life she dealt with a birth defect (harelip) that made her feel less than normal. He made her feel special even though he simply called all the housekeepers "Mees."

The housekeeper narrating said she was disgusted by Tesla's room at first. When Tesla started talking with her, she gained a new understanding. He explained the aptitude of pigeons to her and other interesting facts about the birds. He also talked with her about



his personal life. He said he chose not to marry because he had to use all his passion for inventing. Pia said Tesla could not be tempted.

Pia said she had never seen a woman in Tesla's room, other than herself and other housekeepers. The narrator revealed that Pia was married to an abusive husband. He beat her so badly that she lost hearing in one ear and cut a nick out of her eyelid with a knife. One day Pia went to work limping after her husband kicked her hard in the knee. Tesla asked her to go with him to the park. The narrator covered for Pia so she could go. Tesla and Pia were gone for a couple of hours. When they returned, Pia looked happy. The narrator thought the fresh air must have done her some good. When asked how her time with Tesla went, Pia smiled a little but said nothing. The narrator recalled things Tesla had told them previously - that he believed women were just as smart as men and someday would be just as educated. He also predicted that some day people would carry little telephones without wires in their pockets.

Three days after the walk with Pia, the narrator went to Tesla's suite to drop off his bird feed. The do-not-disturb sign had been on his door longer than usual and he did not answer when she knocked. Using her key to enter the room, the narrator found Tesla dead, with pigeons flocked around him. He was 86 years old.

The hotel staff watched from the end of the hall as government officials removed all the items from Tesla's suite. They took every stick of furniture and none of the men removed their hats when entering the building. They even extinguished their cigarettes on the indoor carpet. Once everything was removed and the housekeepers were allowed back in, there was so much bird feces on the walls that the wallpaper had to be stripped.

Tesla's funeral was held at St. John the Divine. Pia and the narrator could not take off work to go, so Pia prayed and lit a candle in his honor. The narrator said that Pia had no use for a world without Tesla in it. The next time the narrator saw Pia was when she went to visit her in jail.

At prison, Pia told the housekeeper that when she got home from work the day of Tesla's funeral, her husband berated her and made her iron clothes for him to go out to meet women like he did every Thursday and Friday night. The yelling made her miss Tesla and his quiet nature. When he was showering, she made her husband a drink and slipped rat poison into it. He drank it but did not die right away. He died on the subway at the feet of two older ladies. The police went to their apartment to give her the bad news, and she confessed right away. The narrator asked why she confessed; she might have gotten away with it. She said it did not matter because she had already seen the white dove. Pia explained that during their walk in the park, Tesla showed her where the white dove used to stand. It's absence there allowed her to see it, she explained.

The narrator did not see Pia again after this visit. They corresponded by letter, but the last one sent was not answered by Pia. The last the narrator heard, Pia was sick with an infection that set in after a prison riot. Two prisons said she had been transferred.



The narrator moved on. She saved her money and started secretarial school. She worked nights as a waitress and had no time for friends or a social life. She was inspired by the dream of owning a home with a flower garden. She and Pia both loved Tesla and his love for that pigeon. While Pia's love was deeper, under the feathers, the narrator said her love was only for feathers, nothing beneath that layer. Even though she did not talk to Pia again, she recalled the words she shared about her walk with Tesla: life and death were one and the same. Pia said Jesus was the world and the sun was God's eye. The oceans were his body and rivers were veins. All of creation was Jesus, who had died, and God, the creator.

Analysis

An unnamed housekeeper is the narrator of this story, using first person point of view to explain a little about Tesla in his later years. The story evolves into a story about Pia and the housekeeper after Tesla's death. The use of first person point of view sets a conversational and comfortable tone, as though one is hearing the story from a friend.

While there are several competing story lines -- the pigeons, Tesla, and Pia -- the conflict of this story is actually man versus self and the focus is on the narrator. The narrator does not talk much about herself, but the reader can follow contextual clues to realize she is pondering her own choices. First of all, she realizes that Tesla and Pia both have traits for which they are mocked -- Tesla's love for a pigeon wife and Pia's harelip birth defect. The narrator looks within herself to discover that she believes other people love their animals just as much as Tesla does, but are afraid to admit doing so. The narrator gets past Pia's hair lip and focuses instead on what a hard worker she is. The narrator wishes she could work as hard and as focused as Pia. When Pia kills her husband, the narrator asks why she confessed because she could have gotten away with it. She immediately feels sad upon asking this question, knowing that killing is wrong and knowing that her friend will be very old before she gets out of prison. In the end, the narrator says her love has only been feathers, implying that she feels like she is not as deep as either Tesla or Pia. She feels that dreaming of financial goals like a house with a flower garden are superficial. Perhaps one can understand her train of thought, but she is overlooking the fact that she has worked and saved money to attend school so she can earn a good living herself.

Pia's life exemplifies irony. Pia's work is like home, nurturing and caring. Her home is like work because her husband is demanding and not supportive at all, the kind of behavior one might expect from a work situation in which superiors have no relationship with employees or coworkers.

Pia's life also mirrors that of Tesla. Other people took things like knowledge and inventions away from Tesla and claimed them as their own, depriving him of the glory and riches he deserved. When the government representatives leave their hats on upon entry to Tesla's suite, the housekeepers take note. While they practice etiquette upon entering a room, it seems very different that the government officers do not do the same. Even upon his death, the government simply wants what he has to offer without



showing the common respect of removing their hats. The same is true with Pia. Her husband's verbal abuse takes away Pia's dignity and her happiness. Neither of them are shown much respect toward the people who need them most.

The theme of this story is determination. Pigeons often symbolize determination, evidenced by their homing nature. Carrier pigeons often have many obstacles, but they stay on course. While the narrator thinks she is shallow compared to Tesla and Pia, she is actually on course with the theme. The narrator is focused on a dream. Her first dream is to get an education. She worked to be able to afford school. Now that she's in school, her dream changes to a house with a garden. The narrator sets her sights on something and moves toward her goal. While she admires Pia for being such a hard worker, the narrator has also become a hard worker. The narrator's determination was also inspired by Tesla, who gave her encouragement to dream of expanding her education. Her determination to follow her dream is a tribute to the beliefs he shared with the housekeepers, that women can be educated and are just as smart as men. The narrator also lives her life much as he did, saving all her passion for her goal of learning and earning her dream home. Tesla leaves her with one last image the day she finds him dead in his suite. She does not see a bright light as he did when his beloved pigeon wife died, but she does see a warmly lit house. Part of the narrator died that day, and she began a new life working toward the dream of home ownership, a very big dream for a woman in the 1940s.

This is a work of fiction, but there are elements of truth to it. Tesla was an inventor and died a poor man while living in a hotel. He also claimed to love a particular pigeon and told people when she died that the love of his life had passed. There is no supporting evidence to support the story of Pia or the narrator, so the reader can assume these characters are fictionalized.

Discussion Question 1

What does the narrator mean when she says Tesla was kind to the staff "when he remembered to be" (75)? What does this statement say about Tesla, and what other examples throughout the story support your response?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the motivation of Tesla, Pia, and the narrator in terms of their own goals.

Discussion Question 3

What does Pia tell Tesla of the injuries she receives from her abusive husband? Discuss her reasoning for these explanations. Do you believe he knows the truth? Why or why not?



Vocabulary

ancient, shabby, roosted, cask, emanated, harelip, bellhop, downy, eulogy, strychnine, tenement, predictions

Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys

Summary

Chapter 6 is written in the third person limited point of view and focuses on the psychological studies performed by Harry Harlow. Harlow studied the effects of separation anxiety and withholding love by separating infant monkeys from their mothers shortly after birth. Harlow believed mothers were useful in terms of psychological development of children. Until his studies began in the 1950s, the common child-rearing thought was that too much affection would create a needy, weak child. To study the effects of love on child rearing, Harlow had to first remove love and nurturing and record results regularly.

Harlow seldom left his lab and devoted his life to his studies. He did not mind damaging the lives of a few monkeys if it meant that he saved the lives of human children. He was a high-functioning alcoholic. His surname was Israel at birth, but he changed it to Harlow at the encouragement of his mentor who thought the name sounded Jewish. Harlow was not Jewish and he admired the Jews for their intellect and education, but knew at the time it would be difficult for him to get a job if mistaken for Jewish. He saw the name change as a minor adjustment.

One experiment Harlow used was to take a newborn monkey away from its mother and never give it back. He put the baby monkey in a bare box and observed. First the monkey trembled and shook; then it screamed. A wire mannequin was put into the cage to hold a milk bottle to see if the baby identified it as Mother. When the baby monkey did not, Harlow removed the milk but wrapped the mannequin in terry cloth. The infant monkeys clung to the draped, milkless mannequin. This was done with many infant monkeys and notations were carefully made of each reaction.

The second experiment put infant monkeys in isolation for 30 days. They saw no one, including the researchers except their hands when food and bedding was changed. When the infants were removed, two infants starved themselves to death. The experiment was repeated with longer periods of isolation of six and 12 months. Some monkeys had to be force fed upon removal from isolation. In the 12 month time frame, monkeys got to the point that they no longer moved. The only sign of life was breath and pulse.

A third experiment attempted to breed more monkeys for research. When there was no mating, females were artificially inseminated. The mothers who were isolated longest during their experiment killed their babies by chewing off fingers or toes or crushing the baby's head with their teeth.

A fourth experiment created bad mother surrogates that featured spikes and blasts of cold air. When baby monkeys were put with them, the baby monkeys continued to return, leading Harlow to the conclusion that a bad mother was better than none at all.



Harlow surprised co-workers by attending a party. Usually he stayed in the lab to work. He was already drunk before he arrived at the party. As he makes his way to the party, driving there drunk, his thoughts turned back to the monkeys. One experiment withheld serotonin and the monkeys were listless.

As he had a brief exchange with another party-goer, the narrator revealed that Harlow's second wife, Peggy, was dying of cancer. He considered that maybe he should be home with Peggy more while she was dying. The depression of the situation was weighing heavily on him and he opted to work to try to get away from it. Working so much was making him tired. The night before, he fell asleep at his desk with a cigarette and burned a stack of papers and half of his eyebrow. He entered the party and immediately asked the host if he could lie down somewhere. He was drunk and his thoughts reflected that. He thought she resembled a water buffalo and was upset when she asked about Peggy's condition. When she led him to a room to lie down, he quietly said "No buffalos" as he closed the door (103). He awoke long after the party was over. He went to the kitchen, splashed water on his face and gargled from a used glass. He was thirsty and needed a drink. With his hangover headache a little more bearable, he went back to the lab to monitor a little monkey that he called Minestrone. She did not move. She had no spark remaining; she had been broken. Harlow took a big swig of alcohol he had in a flask in his file cabinet.

The narrator revealed that Harlow has had nightmares where he was standing by the isolation boxes he had designed. In it, he mistook each infant monkey for a beloved soul. He saw each baby monkey in the heart of its mother. The mothers knew what he was doing when he took away their infants. They were forced to watch their babies waste away. It was always the mother monkeys Harlow faced in his dream. The mothers were wild and desperate to protect their babies, but they were caged and could do nothing. He knew that feeling of loss would last with the mothers until they died.

Analysis

This chapter is written in the third person limited point of view and uses a unique technique to show the difference between the narrator's comments and Harlow's thoughts. Since he is a scientist, his remarks or thoughts are made in brief matter-of-fact statements resembling an annotation or a written recording of data. The sentences are abbreviated, or sometimes are fragments, depicting a type of stream of consciousness for the scientist. Whether it is in the party situation or monitoring his experiments, Harlow thinks in short, scientific-like fragments. Another reason the author may choose to represent Harlow's thoughts in this style is that it shows that he uses clinical processes for his emotions as well as for his studies.

The theme of this story is love, or withholding love. The foremost scientist that studies the affects of love cannot show this emotion to his dying wife. He uses work as an excuse to avoid dealing with, or helping her deal with, her illness. While initially it sounds like avoidance of Peggy's cancer may be to blame for his alcoholism, the reader learns near the end of the story that he is often tormented by nightmares based on his



experiments. What sounds like a curt statement about saving human children by harming monkey children (95), may actually be Harlow's way of justifying the damage he knows he is doing to the monkeys. He tries to emotionally distance himself from both his test subjects and his wife.

While Harlow's work concentrates on the importance of love to children within the family unit, it is ironic that he has no problem symbolically separating himself from his own family unit. As a doctoral candidate, he changes his family name at the drop of a hat to please a professor who believes it sounds too Jewish. Fearing he might never find work, Harlow changes his last name. His coping with Peggy's illness also demonstrates that he once again separated himself from his family. He even has two sets of children that he never sees. Some may see this as a result of being either an alcoholic or a workoholic, but perhaps Harlow is punishing himself for his treatment of monkeys. He has kept them from nurturing love, so now he does the same to himself and those he loves. Maybe this abstinence from love is based on a thought made by the narrator early in the story: "To know how love works, a scientist must study its absence" (95).

The conflict of this story is man versus man. Harlow is an emotionally distant alcoholic. The nightmares he has related to work torture him and drive him to more alcohol and make him more emotionally distant. He lacks social skills as seen when he enters the party, makes as little small talk as possible, then asks for a room in which to lie down.

The imagery of this story is effective. Clinical descriptions of the monkey isolation chambers and cages show a void of emotion, allowing the reader to feel the emptiness experienced by the test monkeys. There is little use of other literary devices such as metaphors, similes, or other figures of speech because they would not fit with the clinical nature of this story.

As with the other stories in this book, this is a fictional story that has some elements of truth. Harlow was born in 1905 and died in 1981, directing at least part of his career toward testing the importance of physical contact for infants with monkeys. He did change his name to Harlow (his father's middle name) around 1930 to avoid anti-Semitic discrimination. Margaret "Peggy" Kuenne was his second wife. They married in 1946 and she died in 1970.

Discussion Question 1

Is Harlow's testing animal cruelty? Explain why or why not.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss why it is always the mother monkey Harlow faces in his nightmare.



Discussion Question 3

Explain and discuss the meaning of this statement: "He knew the feeling of loss that would last till she died" (105). Discuss it in context and its bigger meaning to the story.

Vocabulary

coddling, rearing, withered, iconoclast, academia, inseminate, notation, reserpine



Chapter 7: Chomsky Rodents

Summary

A woman tells the story in Chapter 7 from the first person point of view, even though the bulk of the story is actually her retelling of her husband's experience at a community dump. The woman said she and her husband had seen a number of famous intellectuals in their town of Wellfleet, but Linguist and activist Noam Chomsky was the only one either of them ever saw at the community dump.

The narrator explained that the town has no garbage pick-up so everyone goes to the dump about once a week. Community residents buy a sticker to put on their windshield that gains them admittance to the dump. Within the dump is a small shack where residents deposit items still of good use that other users may choose to take free of charge. It was in the building that the narrator's husband, K, saw and spoke with Chomsky. Chomsky, approximately 80 years old, had a little girl with him, presumably his granddaughter. He was in the shed, trying to find a taker for a plastic gerbil condo he was donating. The crowd in the shed consisted of K, some uninterested teens, and a cranky old woman. No one wanted it, but K feigned interest to get to talk with Chomsky. K surmised that the condo had belonged to the granddaughter for a recently-deceased gerbil. Chomsky had little interest in talking about himself and continued to point out the good qualities of the gerbil condo. The little girl revealed that her brother had a hamster. The two had a brief conversation about the gerbil condo and K. considered taking it for the sake of owning something previously owned by Chomsky. When K told Chomsky that his family traveled frequently, Chomsky seemed less interested in giving him the item because he said hamsters or gerbils required consistent care.

A young woman with an infant strapped to her in a sling entered the shed. She ignored Chomsky's attempt to give away the gerbil condo and went straight for a stack of baby items. K grinned and told the woman that she could sell the gerbil condo on eBay since it belonged to Chomsky and it might sell for hundreds or thousands. She ignored his teasing and cursed because the baby spit up all over her shirt. K held her bag open for her so she could find wipes to clean up the baby. The woman talked about how tired she was as the mother of a baby. K said he could understand because he had a toddler himself. The woman lamented that he did not really understand because he was not the mother. She said it was different for fathers because they were not primary caregivers. K tried to appear empathetic, but she noticed the woman was talking to Chomsky, not him. She referred to Chomsky by his first name in their exchanges. She ranted about how much work a mother does. Chomsky pointed out that there are rewards to motherhood and she agreed, but continued to lament. Chomsky suggested that she did not have to do all the things she did in order to be a good mother. K agreed that his wife also put too much stress on herself for perfection.

The woman got irate and cursed loudly when she realized a bouncy seat that she drove there from another town to get was gone because someone was going to save it for her.



The cranky old woman told the young mother that someone in a BMW took the seat shortly before her arrival. The old lady asked the young one if she had a sticker for the dump when she said she was not a resident. The young woman said, yes, but that it was really none of her business. The little girl saw a dart board and begged Chomsky to tell her mother she could have it and real darts. He did not respond.

On her way out the door, the young woman accidentally gouged her ankle on a rusty wire hanger and she began to bleed. This startled the little girl and she dropped the gerbil house and cracked it. The young woman was hysterical and asked K if he thought she would need a Tetanus shot. Chomsky replied to her: "For Chrissake, you'll be fine, Melinda" (120). At this point K realized the two knew each other.

Melinda said she was exhausted because the baby was up half the night and her husband was out of town. She asked if she could have a little sympathy for the situation. Chomsky said he was tired of everything being an emergency and said he felt like she exaggerated a lot. He told her crisis was big, but the problems she was talking about were trivial in the context of life. He suggested she channel her emotion into a more positive direction. She told him that mothers realize they are mammals and that it took hard work, dirt, danger and bile to be an animal. "Oh, please," (122) was his response. The young woman stormed out of the shed, leaving just Chomsky, his granddaughter and K. Chomsky pointed out to his granddaughter the crack in the gerbil condo. She said the gerbils would not mind the crack and he agreed. Chomsky said that no human would take the condo now because it appeared damaged, even though it was perfectly good enough for an animal. The two walked out and dump the gerbil condo in the landfill as K watched from inside the shed.

Analysis

The first person narration of a story told second-hand gives a realistic touch to this story; it sounds like gossip. As if it is not enough to meet linguist and American dissident Noam Chomsky in person, the opportunity to meet him at the community dump is one that is very rare. Seeing Chomsky at the dump desperately trying to find a good home for a used rodent cage gives K insight into the intellectual man's life.

The bulk of the story focuses on the verbal exchange between the young woman in the shed, Melinda, and Chomsky. Before the exchange is finished, K has a clear idea that the two know each other. Melinda barges right past Chomsky, seemingly ignoring him, then primarily addresses Chomsky during what K thought was his conversation with her. Melinda lives out of town, but she has a residential sticker for the dump, giving her some sort of connection to the community. Checking the factual references in this fictional story, there is no mention of a daughter named Melinda, although Chomsky did have two daughters and a son. Did the author simply create this character to be Chomsky's daughter? One of Chomsky's contemporaries later in his career is Melinda Sinclair, who published "The Rationality of Chomsky's Linguistics as Instantiated by the Development of Binding Theory." Does the author insert this fellow linguist into the story? The author leaves Melinda's identity for the reader to decide.



Perfection is the theme of this story. Melinda is stressed while trying to be the perfect mother. Many obstacles are in her way, yet she continues to stress over being perfect. She says that mothers are animals in terms of raising their young -- that they are expected to work hard and endure dirt and bile as this animal. Her comparison of mothers to animals is quite different from Chomsky's idea of animals. In another example of perfection, Chomsky tosses the damaged gerbil condo into the landfill after it gets cracked. The little girl with him says the hamsters won't mind, but he explains that humans will overlook it since it is damaged. Melinda says animals strive for perfection; Chomsky says humans do. Even before the condo gets cracked, Chomsky himself ironically offers an example of perfection. Instead of dropping off the item in the shed like others do, Chomsky looks for the perfect second owner of the item. He points out its good qualities to appeal their their own ideals of perfection. Chomsky's decision to throw the gerbil condo into the landfill represents his understanding of human thinking and his own disappointment that the item is no longer perfect. By making the comparison of perfect to imperfect, he accepts that he cannot escape it. Once the gerbil condo is broken, he must give up on finding the perfect owner for it, much like he advises Melinda to stop trying to be the perfect mother.

The author's choice to use "Chrissake" (120) instead of Christ's sake is a dialog technique in which she writes as the masses talk. The author also uses a play on words when Melinda rants about the duties of being an animal and brings a secondary theme of sexism into the story. Melinda likens motherhood to the adrenaline rush men get after great sex or brutally beating someone -- animal behaviors. Women in their role of mothers must be mammals. Emphasis on the word mammal by the use of Italics in the text imply the word ma'am, which is associated with women, and mammary glands which produce milk to allow mothers to feed their infants.

Following up on the secondary theme of sexism, why is it that the author tells the story second-hand through K wife instead of having K tell it? The story, since it happened to her husband and she is retelling it, gives the appearance that the narrator is gossiping. While gossip is not a gender-specific activity, it has widely been associated with women. Since the author does not give clues as to the time frame of this story, cultural references to the role of women during its time are not possible to make. Melinda also speaks of gender inequality when she mentions that fathers' lives do not change as much as those of mothers after the birth of a child.

Discussion Question 1

Who is Melinda? Support your answer with evidence from the chapter.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss K's assistance to Melinda when the baby spits up on her. What does it say about Chomsky or their relationship that he does not help her since they have some kind of connection?



Discussion Question 3

Explain what Chomsky means by "the texture of living" (121).

Vocabulary

dissident, grotesque, precariously, homeliness, scavenger, harried, tetanus, texture, subdued, outstretched



Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit

Summary

The narrator tells this story from first person point of view. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter stopped by to visit an old friend at his business office shortly after leaving the presidency. After Secret Service members issue clearance, Carter was able to talk to his friend, Bobby, who is now a psychologist who is narrator of this story. Carter asked Bobby if they could speak privately so the two went up to the rooftop where Bobby poured them both glasses of wine. As boys, the two attended church and school together. Bobby was the cool one and Carter was the geeky bookworm who took his Baptist religion seriously. Despite their differences, they often ended up playing together in their small hometown of Plains, Georgia. Bobby, who told the story from his point of view, said his family moved away after a community incident.

Carter said he was not there as a client, but the psychologist assumed Carter was in denial. Carter said he was taking a deep look at himself past and present to determine his future. He wanted to make a moral reckoning. Carter made small talk for a short time, then apologized for letting him take all the blame for something that happened in their childhood. Bobby excused himself and went to the bathroom to take some codeine pain reliever for his headache. While in the bathroom, he regrouped and reminded himself that the successful practice he built was founded on the principle of looking forward, not backward. He reminded himself that he had counseled many Fortune 500 leaders who were very successful using his focus on future technique.

When Bobby returned to the rooftop, Carter wasted no time getting back on topic. He apologized for an incident that got Bobby's family run out of town. Bobby deflected by telling Carter that he went by Robert now and Carter corrected himself. He said it wasn't right for him and the other boys to let Robert take all the blame. Carter apologized again for not speaking up and for letting Robert take all the blame for this unmentioned incident. Robert deflected in his own mind that Carter must really be there to talk about the end of his presidency which was riddled with low points. Then it struck him that Carter must be there to talk about the swamp rabbit incident.

Robert explained that during a 1979 fishing trip back in Georgia, Carter was startled by a swimming swamp rabbit that seemed to be headed straight for his boat. He splashed water with his oar to get the animal to change its course. When the media reported it, they made jokes about it because they did not know rabbits could swim. When the White House photographer produced pictures of the moment, Carter's oar splashing made him look feeble and weak against an attacking water rabbit. The media and comedians had a heyday with the story. Robert believed that Carter went to him seeking counseling on the killer swamp rabbit incident because it threatened his manhood.

Carter was telling him that he never thought of Robert as a bully, just as an insistent kid who did not know his own strength. Robert interrupted and told him he knew he was



there to discuss the killer rabbit. Carter shook his said and reiterated that he where there to talk to Robert about how the other boys were wrong to allow him to take all the blame for the childhood incident. Robert was relentless in his insistence that Carter was there to discuss the rabbit incident. Carter said he would gladly tell him the story if he wanted to hear it; so, he did. Carter noted that out of Georgia's four species of rabbits, only the cottontail could not swim. He said at first he toyed with the idea that the Republicans might have planned the situation to make him look ridiculous, but in the end, he knew it was just something that happened and was blown out of proportion. Together, they laughed about the incident. Robert thought Carter was laughing to hide the pain of embarrassment that still lingered from the rabbit incident and probably even made him physically impotent.

Robert realized he had already had a great deal of wine from the bottle and that Carter had barely sipped from his first glass. Robert revealed in his thoughts that he liked drinking away from home because his wife was in a 12-step program for substance abusers and if he drank at home, she called him an enabler. Robert shifted thoughts from himself back to the rabbit and asked Carter if he wished he had hit the rabbit instead of missing it. Carter stared at him with his mouth dropped. Robert said if he had hit it, it would have made a better story. Robert posed a theory that Carter was afraid the rabbit incident would stigmatize his weakness forever, a symbol of impotence. Carter could not speak. Robert went on to say that if Carter had hit the rabbit, perhaps he would have been perceived as stronger and would not have lost to Regan and could have gotten the Iran hostages back.

After a long pause, Carter told Robert he didn't try to hit the rabbit. He just splashed to divert it. At that moment, the notion of Carter's rabbit faded and was replaced in Robert's mind with an image of old Mullins' cat, strung up and skinned. The animal only had two and a half legs and Mullins used to pull it around on a little cart. Robert recalled that Al Jr., Travis, J.C. and himself cornered the cat. Robert could hear Carter's voice in the distance, apologizing again for letting Robert take all the blame. He said the mob mentality in Georgia at the time took a toll on all the kids. He said he would always be repentant for what the boys did to the cat. Robert imagined that Carter was deflecting his rabbit problem by bringing up the cat incident. Robert thought about the cat often during quite times and thought about how brave it must have been. Carter never hit the cat. Carter tried to stop the whole thing and Robert knocked him down as he tried to grab the bat out of his hands. He realized that Carter was looking at him with a very sad look. Robert thought he must have been moved by his eloquent words about the rabbit incident. Robert asked Carter what he was going to do with the rabbit situation now that he had admitted it was a problem. Carter stared at him, perplexed. Carter paused for a good while, then finally said since swamp rabbits don't live more than two years on average, he was just going to forget about it.

As Carter said goodbye, Robert realized he had helped the former president. As years went by, Carter rebuilt his character and was seen as a strong, respected statesman again, Robert said, due to his one day of counseling. He said that behind-the-scenes men like himself were needed to shore up people in position and those people of power were avatars representing all those people behind-the-scenes.



Even after Carter left, thoughts of the cat stayed with Robert. He considered that he was the fall guy in the cat incident for doing what had to be done to put the cat out of its misery. He bore the weight of the other boys' hesitation.

Analysis

The theme of this story is denial. When Carter appears at Robert's office and says he is not there as a client, Robert immediately thinks Carter is in denial of his need of services. Carter's mere appearance startles Robert; he drops a glass and heads quickly for a second drink. The reader initially can surmise that he is nervous about meeting the former president of the United States. The inciting force of the story, when Carter tells Robert he wants to look into his character all the way back and apologizes for all he and some other boys put Robert through, triggers many examples of denial.

Upon mention of the past incident, Robert immediately excuses himself to the restroom. He takes a codeine pain reliever after his third glass of wine and decides not to let Carter talk about the past, foreshadowing that Carter's story will lead to a devastating story from their childhood. Robert tries to deny the incident by pointing out his adult name to Carter. It was Bobby who did some horrible childhood incident, not Robert. The psychologist deflects the bad memory onto his childhood and continues trying to divert attention away from himself and back to Carter.

Robert brings up the swamp rabbit story so much that Carter thinks he will be satisfied if Carter tells him the story first-hand. Of course, Robert's diversion attempts do not stop. In an example of irony, Robert thinks that Carter is still trying to hide the pain from the rabbit incident, when it is he trying to hide the pain from the cat incident. It is also ironic that Robert prides himself on building strong characters because Carter points out that Robert was strong and mistaken for bully as a young boy because he did not know his own strength.

Carter is there to apologize for an event in which he did not take part. Robert recalls that Carter never hit the cat and even tried to stop him from doing so. Carter tried to get them to stop the whole thing, but he apologizes for not speaking up on Robert's behalf. Perhaps if Robert acknowledges Carter's apology, he will have to own up to the event again and face the troubles of his own childhood all over again. Instead, he finds it easier to suppress the past.

Two conflicts are present in this story -- man versus man and man versus self. In a mild - yet confusing - man versus man conflict. Carter versus Robert who seemingly refuses to recall the event for which Carter wants to apologize. No matter how much he tries, Robert keeps turning Carter's apology into a remark about the former president's media nightmare of the swamp rabbit. In the stronger man versus self conflict, Carter enters the story with his conflict resolved. After soul-searching, he knows he must apologize to Robert. Robert, however, is still hiding his conflict from himself. Still living in denial, Robert thinks he killed the cat to put it out of its misery because the others were too weak to do it.



Robert's first person narration is key to this story because it allows the reader to see the full effect of his ego and his denial. Third person limited would have missed the first-hand experience style of the story and omniscient would have been too detailed. Told as a first-hand account from Robert, the story is very believable. It seems as though the move to a new town when he was young gave Robert a chance to re-invent himself and to find confidence. In his own practice, he chooses not to look back at a person's childhood and to just move forward from where they are. This symbolizes his own reluctance to deal with his childhood.

How much of this story is based on fact? Carter's religious nature was no secret during his presidency. He was raised as a Baptist in Plains, Georgia and served one term as president. Ronald Reagan succeeded him in office and American hostages that had been held in Iran were released on the day of Reagan's inauguration. The swamp rabbit incident did actually occur, and it did inspire a good deal of editorial cartoons and articles.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss Robert's ideas on manliness, including what makes a man strong and what makes a man weak.

Discussion Question 2

How does one look to the future without considering his/her past? What are the pros and cons of doing this?

Discussion Question 3

Why is it that Carter continues to apologize even when Robert obviously is not paying close attention to him?

Vocabulary

gaggle, limpet, conjugal, impotent, jargon, culled, codependent, enabling, sentimentalist, vintner, connoisseur, goblet, yapped, velocity



Chapter 9: The Lady and the Dragon

Summary

The first person unnamed narrator starts this story with expository information regarding actress Sharon Stone and her ex-husband Phil Bronstein. The couple was getting a private tour of the Los Angeles Zoo and Bronstein wanted a close-up visit with a Komodo dragon. The zookeeper allowed, but suggested Bronstein remove his white shoes fearing the reptile would confuse the shoes with the mice zookeepers fed it. Ironically, the Komodo dragon bit into Bronstein's bare foot, damaging his big toe and making reconstructive surgery necessary. The couple was cool about the event and even made light of it in the media. The Komodo dragon became a popular exhibit at the zoo.

When the public lost interest, the reptile was sent to a Singapore zoo for breeding. Then, he was sent to another zoo. There, he was purchased by an Indonesian billionaire named Rajaputra. He had a large habitat designed for the reptile so his visitors could observe it while they partied at the billionaire's home. He stopped feeding the reptile small animals and made it hunt its own baby goats that were released into the habitat. Rajaputra and his friends watched with delight as the Komodo dragon killed its prey.

The narrator worked as a large animal veterinarian for Rajaputra who was a huge fan of Sharon Stone. Stone and Bronstein were divorced by the time Rajaputra bought the reptile. He was an eccentric narcissist who was a short but nice looking bisexual. He thought his wealth, good looks, and the lizard would be enough to win Sharon Stone's heart if he only had the chance to meet her. He instructed his secretaries Suandi and Yang to fly Sharon Stone to his estate. They feared calling because neither of the secretaries spoke fluent English so they emailed requests. Yang learned later that some emails were deleted and some landed them on a potential stalker list. Rajaputra began putting more pressure on the secretaries regarding Stone's visit. During a trip to Las Vegas, Yang made arrangements with a Sharon Stone look-alike to play the role of the actress at the estate. She agreed to visit the billionaire for three weeks while her Las Vegas revue was on break.

Right away, Rajaputra noticed Sharon Stone weighed more in person than on screen. She explained that was part of the illusion of movies. Rajaputra was certain that he and Sharon Stone were hitting it off and would be married in no time. He took her to the exhibit to see the Komodo dragon and she panicked when she saw the reptile rip out a goat's intestines. The incident reminded her of the time her drug-addicted father disemboweled the family dog, which she revealed to Yang and the narrator later. She began screaming and cried for a while, but finally pulled herself together. After the incident, Rajaputra found the narrator and instructed him to shoot the lizard in the head immediately. The narrator suggested euthanizing it instead. Rajaputra said he thought Sharon Stone would appreciate that more and told the narrator to do it right away and to



have him two pairs of pants and a pair of boots made from the hide. The narrator conspired with the chief animal keeper on a plan for the lizard.

About a week into her visit, Rajaputra presented Sharon Stone a diamond ring that he had chefs tuck into a Marie Callender's chicken pot pie. He was convinced that pot pie was an American delicacy that she would appreciate. The chef refused to cook something so mundane and simply ordered the pies online. Sharon Stone refused the ring because it too closely resembled an engagement ring. Rajaputra told her that her option was whether to get married in four or six weeks. She explained that she had career obligations back home and a son that needed her. He said he would give her better sons instead, but finally agreed that she could bring her son to the mansion as well. With no other way to argue out of the situation, Sharon Stone set the wedding for late November. That night she begged Yang to get her home.

Yang and the narrator smuggled Sharon Stone out of the mansion at 3 a.m. They walked to a beach where she was placed onto a yacht and sent below the deck in case Rajaputra called his police friends to search for her. The room was dark inside but she found a foam mattress and fell asleep. A nasty smell awakened her early. She saw the Komodo dragon in a cage just a few feet away. She held back a cry of fear, but she was happy to see that it had not been killed because of her outburst. Getting a chance to see the lizard up close and caged, she said she liked its sturdiness. When a sailor brought her a tray of food, she put some of her rice noodles in the lizard's cage to share. He did not eat them. When the next sailor entered, she asked if the lizard was going to the airport, too. He explained that the lizard was being released into a natural habitat, then began talking with her about her movie career. She tried telling him that she was just a look-alike, but he did not believe her. When they released the Komodo dragon into his new habitat, a national park where he would be protected, Sharon Stone asked if she could watch. As he was released, she admired the lizard's posture and demeanor. It was graceful, antagonistic, humble, and ugly all at the same time. From that day forward, she began seeking those qualities in men and married a man that fit the description.

The staff told Rajaputra that Sharon Stone had to leave overnight to tend to her sick child, but that she would return. He seemed unaffected and began looking at pictures of Britney Spears printed from a website. Within a few weeks, he forgot all about Sharon Stone. When the snakeskin pants and boots arrived, presumably from his Komodo dragon, he gave the items to a kitchen boy he fancied.

Analysis

The story seems like it is going to be told in the third person point of view until the narrator introduces himself four pages into the story. The first three pages are expository information needed to tie the story together later, when an eccentric billionaire buys the Komodo dragon. The story has a comedic tone from the beginning, even though it starts with a zoo tragedy when the lizard bites Sharon Stone's husband. This event is factual despite some of the story's fictionalization. Stone and husband Phil



Bronstein handled the event well and even made light of it in the media. The introduction of a fake Sharon Stone to the billionaire adds additional comedy to the story as does his insistence on hiding her engagement ring in a frozen chicken pot pie.

There are two competing themes within this story. The first theme is that people who are very famous or very wealthy can make some rather ridiculous requests. Bronstein wanted to be pictured with a Komodo dragon, which led to his accident. He accepted full responsibility for his decision. He realizes that suing the zoo would adversely affect its financial well-being and the work it is able to do with animals. Rajaputra, however, never realizes how ridiculous his requests are. He never considers others affected by his demands. He is perfectly willing to abandon Sharon Stone's son and to kill the Komodo dragon at will.

The second theme is respect. Bronstein respects the work of the zoo; Rajaputra has no respect for animals and uses them solely for his entertainment. The narrator respects the lizard and finds a way to send it to a national park wildlife refuge. Even the fake Sharon Stone grows to respect the lizard. When she sees the creature for its magnificent qualities, she is prompted to search for the same qualities in men with whom she wants to build long-lasting relationships.

While Bronstein and Stone are real-life people who do exist, there is no reference to a billionaire named Rajaputra. Instead, Rajaputra has symbolic meaning. As an improper noun, rajaputra is a Hindu term for prince, or son of king. In the story, Rajaputra certainly has a monarch mentality and is accustomed to living quite a kingly life.

The author utilizes literary devices sparsely in this story. Early in the story, the narrator refers to the lizard as a proxy for Sharon Stone, foreshadowing the exact idea of a proxy for the actress. The fact that the narrator refers to Sharon Stone by first and last name when Yang announces she will be coming to visit foreshadows that something fishy is going on with the plans. He does not use any other typical description to refer to her, such as Hollywood actress or simply Sharon. To the narrator's credit, he did not lie. She is not a Hollywood actress, although she is a Vegas one. She is also not actually Sharon or Ms. Stone. The woman was hired to play the role of Sharon Stone and that is exactly how those in the know refer to her.

The main crisis in this story is man versus man. The narrator and the staff strive to please Rajaputra's crazy requests. When they cannot get the real Sharon Stone to visit, they get the next best thing. When he wants the lizard killed, the narrator thinks quickly to remove the lizard to a safe place. When Sharon Stone wants to bring her child to the mansion, he finally relents. Readers can argue that man versus nature is a secondary crisis. Bronstein's accident when he insisted on being photographed with a Komodo dragon was the inciting force behind the whole story. He used the animal to meet his whim, but the animal defeated him in the end. Rajaputra demonstrates a man versus nature crisis. He expects the animal to put on a show for Sharon Stone that will woo her; instead she ends up crying. The man orders the lizard to be killed right away. Luckily, the narrator was on the lizard's side and made arrangements instead for him to be relocated to a national refuge. The fake Sharon Stone has her own brief man versus



nature encounter. She is frightened when she sees the lizard rip out goat intestines but has a chance to re-examine her fears when she is in close quarters with the caged lizard on during their escape. After having a chance to really study it, she gains a new respect for the Komodo dragon from her crisis.

Discussion Question 1

Is it good that the fake Sharon Stone looks for the same qualities in a man that she found in the lizard? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the idea of using wild animals for entertainment purposes. Is it right or wrong? Explain your answer using excerpts and references from the story.

Discussion Question 3

Compare and contrast the different kinds of habitats and foods the Komodo dragon experiences throughout the story. Which is better and why?

Vocabulary

derision, proxy, litigation, sanguine, virile, narcissistic, bestiary, flamboyant, moribund, feculence (155), sumptuous, befuddlement, demeanor, pugnacious, humble, putative



Chapter 10: The Walking Bird

Summary

A father, mother, and young daughter sit inside the zoo aviary. The little girl is taken by a bird with an injured leg. At first, her parents watch her watch the bird. Finally, the mother recalls a problem at the house and begins talking with the father about it. The girl asked a zookeeper why the bird did not simply fly instead of hobble on its injured leg. The keeper told her it was a bird that walked more than it flew. She asked if the bird could fly if it wanted and the keeper replied, "Probably" and left. The little girl followed the bird and tried to no avail to get its attention. The father remembered that he had work at the office to tend to and told the girl it was time to go. She wanted to stay. The father grabbed her arm and yelled for her to come one. The mother intervened and the father went to wait in the car.

Once the mother had comforted the girl, they realized all the birds were gone. In the whole aviary, there was not a single bird remaining. They looked and listened and could not find the birds. Since the zoo was closing, they left the aviary. Before they were even out of the zoo, the little girl was already forgetting her special lame bird. As they made their way to the turnstiles, the mother noticed that all the people exiting the zoo in front of them were all limping. She wondered if they were all injured or had some disability; possibly they were just finally able to make it back to the gates for closing time and all the healthy people had left long ago.

The limping people went out ahead of them and disappeared. The mother noticed that all the cages on the way out had also seemed empty. She looked into the sky and saw nothing but airplanes and the sun. She reached down and took her little girl's hand while choking back tears and wondering why she was sad after they'd had such a great day.

Analysis

The Walking Bird is the shortest story in the compilation and is written in the omniscient point of view. While it is set in a zoo, the zoo is also a metaphor for humanity. People often refer to the world with a phrase, "It's a jungle out there." This story points out the world's zoo-like qualities. The family is watching the birds until they become distracted. Once distracted, it is difficult to find the birds again. The same is true with life. People can enjoy the little things in life, but once they become distracted with problems or desires, it is difficult to recapture that exact moment in time before the distraction. The little girl was able to maintain her innocent focus on the birds until the physical touch of a distracted adult, her father, metaphorically pulled her out of the setting. She was so upset by him grabbing her that she lost sight of the joy and wonder she was experiencing. Sometimes adults push their stress onto their children without meaning to do so. At first the mother's comfort to the daughter was predominantly to calm her down, then to explain her father's actions. What happened in addition, though is that the



mother sees that they imposed their problems onto the little girl when they diverted their attention from her and when the father grabbed her arm when she refused to go.

The mother is addled by the fact that all the people leaving the zoo are limping like the little lame bird had. The only explanation she has for the phenomenon is that the limping people are last to leave because they are too slow. She is equally concerned that as they leave the gates, they seem to disappear. She desperately grasps for her daughter's hand because she realizes time never stands still and moments cannot be recaptured.

Another interpretation of the story is that it makes a statement about the impact of human expansion into animal habitats. As populations expand and more land is used to construct housing, the wildlife populations are affected. The reader sees this exemplified in the aviary. The little girl pretends to be a bird to get the lame bird's attention, but it never loses focus on its walk. It isn't until the father causes a commotion that the birds disappear. Human commotion caused the animals to retreat. They were no longer one with the family; they were threatened by the noise.

Perhaps that explains all the late limping people trying to exit the zoo at the end of the day. It is possible that they are tired from a fit their child threw to stay. It is possible that the commotion caused by all these humans caused the animals to retreat inside their exhibits instead of staying in the public's eye.

Along this line of interpretation, the mother sees the changes humanity has made to the world when she can no longer look at the sky because of all the human-made airplanes. The reflection hurts her eyes. She wants to cry because she realizes the carbon footprint society is leaving behind is changing nature.

Discussion Question 1

What does the father's decision to wait in the car say about him and the situation?

Discussion Question 2

Why does the girl notice the bird limping and her mother notices the people limping?

Discussion Question 3

Was the girl tormenting the bird by following it and trying to get its attention? Explain your answer with references from the story.

Vocabulary

perimeter, doggedly, gait, converse, grubby, lame, aviary, turnstile, stragglers, misery



Characters

Madonna

Madonna is the megastar who shoots and kills a pheasant in "Chapter 1: Sexing the Pheasant." While waiting for the bird to die, she has many thoughts run through her head and in the end is sorry for killing the bird.

George Adamson

George Adamson is a wildlife conservationist living in Africa while studying and advocating for lions in Chapter 2: "Girl and the Giraffe." He becomes attached to two lion cubs while on the set of a movie filmed in Africa that was based on his wife's book.

Joy Adamson

Joy Adamson is mentioned in "Chapter 2: Girl and the Giraffe." She is the late wife of George Adamson and was stabbed to death. She is dead at the time the story "Girl and Giraffe" takes place. She wrote a book called *Born Free* based on her and George's experience of raising and rehabilitating lion cubs. A movie was filmed, based on the book.

Stefan Juncker

Stefan Juncker is a vacationing tourist who visits George Adamson in "Chapter 2: Girl and the Giraffe." Juncker saw the movie "Born Free" when he was only eight years old and it has been his lifelong dream to meet Adamson. Upon meeting Adamson, Juncker sees that he is just a lonely, eccentric drunk man like anyone else. Juncker then regrets not vacationing with his wife instead.

The Dog Walker

In "Chapter 3: Sir Henry," the dog walker cares for dogs owned by very wealthy people. Some, like Sir Henry's owner, are quite capable of walking their own dogs but choose not to do so. Others, like Blackie's owner, love and respect the dog but are not physically able to tend to its needs. The dog walker prefers dogs to humans because they prefer order.



The Violinist

The violinist in "Chapter 3: Sir Henry," is terminally ill and his condition is worsening. He asks the dog walker to assume custody of his dog Blackie upon his passing and offers to establish a trust fund to maintain care for the dog.

David Hasselhoff

David Hasselhoff is an actor. In "Chapter 3: Sir Henry," he is Sir Henry's owner and hires the dog walker to walk his dog. In the story, Hasselhoff chooses to work out in the gym instead of walking his own dog.

Edison

Edison appears in "Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov," having discovered and developed electrical direct current, also known as DC. Unfortunately, Tesla's alternating current, AC, was determined to be safer. Edison decided to show how lethal the AC current was by electrocuting an elephant with it.

Vasil Gorakov

Vasil Gorakov is an assistant to Edison in "Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov," who is fired after stealing cocaine cough drops and spying on his boss. Gorakov writes letters to his sister claiming that Edison is crazy for repeatedly watching a film of an executed elephant and talking to it.

Tesla

Tesla dies at age 86 surrounded by his pet pigeons. The inventor, and developer of alternating electrical current, others have taken credit for his work, leaving him almost penniless. He tells people his one true love was a white pigeon that died 20 years before the Chapter 5 story, "Tesla and Wife," takes place.

Pia

Pia is a harelip housekeeper at the Hotel New Yorker where Tesla was living when he died in "Chapter 5: Tesla and Wife," She is jailed after confessing to poisoning her abusive husband.



K

In "Chapter 7: Chompsky Rodents," K meets American linguist and dissident Noam Chomsky at a dump and talks with him about a gerbil condo that Chomsky is trying to give away to a good home. K also helps a young mother with her diaper bag after her baby spits up on her.

Noam Chomsky

Chomsky is an world-famous linguist and American dissident. He lives in Wellfleet in "Chapter 7: Chompsky Rodents," and tries to give away a used gerbil condo.

Melinda

Melinda is a young mother who argues with Noam Chomsky in "Chapter 7: Chompsky Rodents." She likens mothers to mammals and implies that men are more like animals.

Jimmy Carter

Jimmy Carter was President of the United States. In "Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit," he visits an old neighborhood friend and apologizes for not standing up for him after several boys beat and skinned a cat. Carter was with the boys but did not participate in the action. He actually tried to stop it.

Robert (Bobby)

Robert (Bobby) is a psychologist who gets an apology from former President Jimmy Carter in "Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit." A small group of boys were present when Robert skinned a cat and the neighborhood ran his family out of town. Robert is in denial about the event and believes he did the cat a favor by putting it out of its misery.

Yang

In "Chapter 9: The Lady and the Dragon," Yang arranges for a Las Vegas showgirl who looks like a famous actress to visit his billionaire boss' house. When the girl wants to leave, Yang arranges for her secret departure and gets her safely back home.

Rajaputra

Rajaputra is a billion in "Chapter 9: The Lady and the Dragon," who buys a Komodo dragon to impress actress Sharon Stone. He is egotistical and takes does not take no for an answer when he proposes to a woman he thinks is Sharon Stone.



Little girl

A little girl in "Chapter 10: The Walking Bird" spots a bird with a bandaged leg at the zoo aviary. She is fascinated by the hopping bird and wants to know why he does not simply fly. A zookeeper tells her he is the kind of bird that walks more than he flies. When it is time to leave, the little girl cries because she does not want to leave the bird.

Mother

The mother in "Chapter 10: The Walking Bird" comforts her crying daughter when her father tries to make her leave the zoo by grabbing her arm. The mother notices that everyone leaving the zoo is limping.

Father

While sitting in the zoo aviary in "Chapter 10: The Walking Bird," the father of a little girl decides he needs to go back to work and tells his daughter it is time to leave. He grabs her arm out of frustration and she begins to cry. He goes to wait in the car while the mother comforts the daughter.



Symbols and Symbolism

Pheasant

The pheasant shot by Madonna in Chapter 1 symbolizes the circle of life. Before she shot it, it lived by eating worms. After its death, it would become food for the worms.

Girl

Girl, the female lion in "Chapter 2: Girl and the Giraffe" symbolizes desire. Girl desires to eat, so she takes off after a roadside giraffe instead of staying with her brother when he is injured. Joy, another female mentioned in the book, desired to focus her studies on leopards when she tired of lions. She moved to another area to do so, leaving her husband behind to pursue her new desire. Kirsten, only mentioned once by name in "Chapter 2: Girl and the Giraffe" is Juncker's wife. She desired a luxury vacation and took it while Juncker went on his own journey.

In these same instances, Girl may also represent freedom. In all cases, the females had the freedom to do as they chose, even though instinct may have driven the lion more so than the women.

Dogs

In "Chapter 3: Sir Henry," dogs symbolize order, a trait that the dog walker appreciates. He believes most humans have less respect for order. The dogs symbolize order as they walk in unison together on their leashes and when they establish a regular system for marking territory. They also exhibit order when they sit for a break at the feet of the dog walker.

Topsy

Topsy the elephant in "Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov" symbolizes different things to different characters: To Edison, Topsy is a savior, a martyr that is crucified so that he might believe in the afterlife. For Golakov, the elephant represents characteristics he lacks -- strength and loyalty. Topsy also symbolizes man's attempt to strive for retribution. She was killed because she killed, even though the people she killed were her taunters and abusers. It is man's desire for retribution that requires Topsy's death to be a public spectacle. In realizing this, Edison is finally free from such thinking because in the end, death is death and freedom from the search for retribution.



Pigeons

Pigeons in "Chapter 5: Tesla and Wife" symbolize determination. Homing pigeons always return to their starting point, no matter what obstacles they face along the way. This characteristic is what draws Tesla to them. The fact that they always return also makes them loyal creatures. For a man who had no friends other than people who wanted to use him, the pigeons became his best friends due to their loyalty.

Isolation chamber

The isolation chambers used for test monkeys in "Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys" symbolizes the metaphorical isolation chamber Harlow develops for himself out of guilt for the testing and as a coping mechanism to deal with his wife's terminal illness.

Gerbil condo

The gerbil condo in "Chapter 7: Chompsky Rodents" symbolizes the human idealization of perfection. Ironically, Chomsky seeks the perfect recipient of the item while advising a young mother that she's stressing too hard to be a perfect mother. When the condo cracks, Chomsky realizes that the item is perfectly fine for rodents, but humans will pass it by because of its visual imperfection.

Swamp rabbit

In "Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit," the rabbit represents acceptance. When the swamp rabbit was speeding toward Carter's boat, he splashed to make it go away. He accepted the fact that he shared the pond water with the swamp rabbit. After considering a Republican conspiracy theory, Carter finally went on to accept that the incident was not planned; it was just a force of nature. He respectfully shoed it away by splashing water at it with his oar.

Mullins' cat

Mullins' two and a half legged cat represents denial. Every time Carter tries to apologize to Robert in "Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit," the psychologist shifts thoughts in denial. Robert convinces himself he did the cat a favor by beating and skinning it to put it out of its misery.

Komodo dragon

The Komodo dragon in "Chapter 9: The Lady and the Dragon" is a symbol of power embraced by powerful people and by those who want to be empowered. Prominent newspaperman Phil Bronstein (who was actress Sharon Stone's husband at the time)



wanted to have his photo made with the lizard. Since he was a prominent, powerful person, he was allowed to do so. The dragon bit his big toe. Rajaputra was a billionaire and wanted the dragon to entertain his powerful friends and to attract Sharon Stone. In the end, the fake Sharon Stone takes charge of her dating life by modeling her ideal man after characteristics she finds in the Komodo dragon.

Limping

A bird limping in "Chapter 10: The Walking Bird" is suddenly gone and people limping their way out of the zoo seem to disappear, making limping an ironic reminder that just because something is slow, doesn't mean it lasts forever or that it cannot get away from us. The mother realizes this and holds her daughter's hand to grasp a special moment.



Settings

English countryside

Madonna and Guy Ritchie buy an estate in the English countryside and host pheasant hunts there in "Chapter 1: Sexing The Pheasant."

Meru

George Adamson took two cubs from the movie set of Born Free to raise in Meru, an African town, as described in "Chapter 2: Girl and the Giraffe."

Park

The dog walker in "Chapter 3: Sir Henry" takes his charges for walks in the park three times daily.

Coney Island

Topsy the Elephant is a Coney Island show and work animal until she kills people and is killed for it in "Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov."

The New Yorker Hotel

Tesla lives in the New Yorker Hotel, where he is very kind to the staff and housekeepers in "Chapter 5: Tesla and Wife."

Isolation Chambers

Psychologist Harry Harlow places infant monkeys in chambers of solitude for varying lengths of time to study the results of the absence of motherly love and contact in "Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys."

Dump

Noam Chomsky takes a used animal container to the dump to find a new owner for it in "Chapter 7: Chompsky Rodents."



Plains, Georgia

In "Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit," Jimmy Carter, his friend Bobby (Robert), and some other boys got into trouble as children in Plains, Georgia, but Bobby took the blame for it.

Los Angeles Zoo

A Komodo dragon bites a high-profile newsman allowed in his cage at the Los Angeles Zoo in "Chapter 9: The Lady and the Dragon."

Aviary

A little girl and her parents watch an injured bird hop around in an aviary in "Chapter 10: The Walking Bird."



Themes and Motifs

Animal Abuse

The author brings the reader's attention to animal abuse in several short stories compiled in *Love in Infant Monkeys*, portraying the idea that it is immoral and worthy of much more consideration than it sometimes gets. The reader sees Madonna's struggle with the realization that she killed a harmless creature for sport in Chapter 1: Sexing the Pheasant. In the dog walker's opinion in Chapter 2: Sir Henry, many of his clients neglected their dogs by not making time for them. In Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov, a filmed image of an executed elephant torments Edison. Harlow in Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys is also haunted by images of animals in his nightmares.

While these stories all show examples of animal abuse or neglect, they also show the reader that humans use animals for their own purposes, often without considering the animal's needs. The story that many readers can identify with is Chapter 2: Sir Henry. In it, the dog walker wonders why people want to have pets if they do not want to spend time with them or cannot dedicate time to their proper care. Most people have either owned a pet or know someone who does. This story strives to make people appreciate their pets more and encourages those without pets not to get one if they do not have time to properly care for it.

What about hunting? Is it necessary in today's society? For some people, it may be, but it is relatively safe to say that Madonna's next meal was not dependent on her killing a pheasant. She did not even take it in; she left it to rot back into the earth. The author leaves readers to decide several questions: How do they feel about hunting for sport? Is it wasteful or disrespectful? What about the safety of drinking while hunting with guns? With what social class does Madonna associate this

Most readers have never executed an elephant or conducted social experiments with monkeys, but the reader clearly sees the affects of both in Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov and Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys. In Chapter 4, Edison took the elephant's life for his own purpose -- retaliation and a business stunt. In *Love in Infant Monkey's*, Harlow sacrificed the mother-child bond of monkeys to improve those of humans. The author wants the reader to stop and ask, what gives humans the right to make those decisions for other creatures?

Personification of Animals

The author of stories compiled in *Love in Infant Monkeys* points out that although treating animals with respect is the right thing to do, those who do so are often criticized for it. Several stories in the collection showed main characters who did just that. in Chapter 2: Girl and Giraffe, George Adamson grows to love a lion cub like a family



member. Adamson shows respect for the lion when he tries to rehabilitate the animal into the wild. When the lion does not take to the wild, Adamson tends to his needs and even buries the lion near his own brother.

Tesla takes the concept of respect and love of animals a little farther in Chapter 5: Tesla and His Wife. Tesla loved a pigeon so much that he refers to her as his soulmate. Even though she has been dead 20 years, he still keeps a photo of her that he shows to people. The housekeepers who work at the hotel where Tesla lives love the purity of his love for the pigeon.

In the case of these two characters, Adamson and Tesla, their love and respect for animals garners them a reputation for being eccentric. A tourist visiting with Adamson regrets his visit when the old man starts recounting a story about a female lion and a giraffe. Adamson's tale shows he was enamored with the animal's adventure because of his fascination with wildlife. The visitor, however, just sees Adamson as an eccentric drunk (33).

In Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit, the narrator (who suggests the general public shares his view) sees the former president as a weak person because he did not treat an animal with the respect he would give a human. Instead of hitting a rabbit that was swimming toward his boat, Carter splashes water at it to redirect the animal. The narrator's perception is that it is more manly to kill an animal than to dodge it.

Instinct versus Intent

In several stories compiled in *Love in Infant Monkeys*, animal instinct is treated as intent. While the author wants the reader to treat animals with the same respect they would treat other humans, she reminds that humans must also remember that animals act instinctively.

In Chapter 2: Girl and Giraffe, it is instinct that leads the lioness to take to the hunt. In Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov, Topsy the elephant kills her handlers when she instinctively reacts to their abuse. The infant monkeys in Chapter 6: *Love in Infant Monkeys*, instinctively desire the touch of their mother. In Chapter 9: The Lady and the Dragon, the Komodo dragon instinctively bites a reporter who went into the cage barefoot near feeding time.

Humans also act out of instinct, so the author believes it is intent that separates humankind from the animal kingdom. Instinct is a pure reaction but intent implies a decision must be made.

The author also uses the theme to point out how human intentions adversely affect animals. In Chapter 3: Sir Henry, several stars intend to be dog owners, but after the cute puppy stage ends, they no longer make time for their pets. Luckily, the dog walker's clients can afford to hire walking services for their pets, but what happens to regular people who get pets then no longer enjoy them after the puppy phase?



In the name of scientific research, Harlow's intent in Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys is to disprove a long-time theory that children do not need physical touch to thrive. The author presents the story so readers will question whether or not it is okay to harm animals if humans can be helped.

Supernatural

The author suggests animals can be more than animal or human in three stories that feature a supernatural theme. In each of the three stories, the supernatural element is presented as either comforting, tormenting, or a combination of both comfort and torment.

In Chapter 4: Edison and Vasil Golakov, Edison uses the opportunity to execute an elephant to save his reputation and his business. This metaphorical savior becomes his religious savior by the story's end. The elephant was Christlike to Edison in many ways -- it died to save his business. The sparks of energy formed around the elephant's body like an aura around a painted image of Christ. Edison even asks the elephant image for forgiveness and comfort after praying to it. The elephant does not grant him forgiveness, however, leaving Edison tormented forever despite the usual comfort associated with a savior figure.

In Chapter 5, Tesla and Wife, something supernatural occurs at the death of Tesla's wife, a white pigeon. He refers to her as his soulmate, which implies a supernatural connection between him and the bird. But upon her death, a bright light shines from her and signifies to Tesla the end of his earthly endeavors. This supernatural light comforts Tesla as he watches the pigeon die, knowing he was with his one true love to the very end. He is also comforted to know he has completed his life's work upon her passing.

In Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys, Harlow is tormented by nightmares that feature mother monkeys who know that he is taking their babies from them and they are helpless. The nightmare is supernatural in the way that it manifests Harlow's deep-rooted guilt through his subconscious. At the conscious level, Harlow justifies the experiments by noting the good they provided for humans, but this is not enough to stifle the nightmares which torment him to the point of alcoholism.

Birds

The author uses a bird motif in Chapter 10: Walking Bird to point out the irony of human's technology in nature: there are winged birds who cannot fly, while humans (without wings) are able to fly in airplanes they have built.

Birds generally symbolize freedom, but the birds in this story are kept in a zoo's aviary. They may fly freely, but are restricted to the aviary. How free are restricted birds? Even in their confined space, the birds find a way to flee and hide when the commotion between the father and daughter begin. Even after the commotion ends, the birds do not return.



When leaving, the mother notices how the light from the sun is bright and shining against many airplanes. With the invention of airplanes, people have the ability to fly like birds. She also notices there are no birds in the sky; just airplanes. The author is saying that technology and humanity's desire to fly like birds have made a negative impact on the environment. Not only are birds shying away from the sky and people now have to see birds in the confinement of an aviary. That restriction occurs because humans impose themselves into the birds' environment. The author wants readers to consider whether technology, represented by "terrible silver," (177) restricts humanity instead of freeing it.

Styles

Point of View

The point of view varies from story to story, but the change is easily detected by the reader. For instance, the reader learns Madonna's thoughts throughout Chapter 1: Sexing the Pheasant, but receives additional general knowledge from the narrator, indicating a third person limited point of view. The same point of view technique is used in Chapter 3: Sir Henry, when the narrator gives insight into the dog walker's thoughts. Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys also utilizes a third person limited point of view and gives the reader access to Harlow's thoughts.

Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov is narrated in the third person point of view, but the narration is treated differently than the third person limited chapters discussed previously. In this chapter, the author uses third person narration to create analysis. Facts are presented, but not in an omniscient fashion, and analyzed by the narrator.

Chapter 2: Girl and Giraffe is written in the omniscient point of view. The narrator scatters thoughts belonging to the main character, George Adamson, throughout the story, adding thoughts from a visitor near the end. The author makes the transition between the two characters easy to follow by sandwiching general information in the middle. Chapter 10: Walking Bird is also told in the omniscient point of view. While recounting the story of a family's zoo trip, the narrator slips into the mindset of both the mother and father. The narrator does not attempt sharing the thoughts of the young daughter because she is vocal about her feelings, causing the mother and father to contemplate their reactions.

The remaining stories were told in the first person point of view. In Chapter 7: Chomsky Rodents, the story is told second-hand from the first person point of view. In it, a wife tells a story about an event that happened to her husband. The point of view makes this story very believable because it seems like gossip, something with which everyone can identify.

Two chapters are told in first person by characters who witnessed the events in their story. Chapter 5: Tesla and Wife is narrated by a housekeeper who gets to know the famous inventor. She shares what she and other housekeepers have witnessed. Chapter 9: The Lady and the Dragon is told in much the same way. The reader gets the story from an animal caregiver that witnessed most of the story first-hand, but background information is shared as common knowledge.

In Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit, the narrator is a childhood friend of former president Jimmy Carter. The use of first person point of view allows the reader to see how two men are tormented by the same childhood event and how both choose to deal with it.



Language and Meaning

Throughout the collection of short stories, the author uses common vernacular in dialog to create a more conversational feel. Each story has its own tone and language to reflect that tone.

In Chapter 1: Sexing the Pheasant, the reader sees Madonna's thoughts and they shift back and forth between American and British vernacular. In some instances, she compares the two and seemingly makes mental notes of when to use the vernacular in her own speech. These linguistic notes are usually identified in the text in italics, brackets or parenthesis.

The language in Chapter 2: Girl and Giraffe is straight-forward with no hidden meanings. Descriptions of the wildlife and their actions are descriptive, because those details are important to the main character, George Adamson, and are reflective of the omniscient point of view when it pertains to Adamson. The other character in the story, a German tourist, is bored with the detailed descriptions and theories, but they are not labor-intensive for the reader.

Language choices in Chapter 3: Sir Henry show the dog walker's disdain for humans and for dogs that lacked discipline. The narrator shows the reader that the dog walker is not interested in controlling the dogs. Instead, he develops a mutual respect with them. That respect is clearly missing from the dog walker's clients, with the exception of one famous violinist who is too ill to continue caring for his dog. The dialog shared between the dog walker and humans is strained, characterized by sentence fragments.

The author uses a number of techniques regarding language and meaning in Chapter 4: Thomas Edison and Vasil Golakov. The narrator examines a scholarly claim that Edison and Golakov were homosexual, then bases the predominant story in the chapter around Edison's work with alternating and direct current. Edison harnessed direct current (DC), while his rival Tesla developed alternating current (AC). These currents are often used interchangeably today and are indicted by the symbol AC/DC which means the appliance or electric device is suitable for both currents. In slang usage, AC/DC has come to imply bisexuality. The narrator also discusses the use of morphine and cocaine in this chapter. While those substances are either highly controlled or illegal today, they were included in common medications in Edison's time. The language that depicts Edison's thoughts on women, while appearing very chauvinistic today, was not uncommon in his era.

In Chapter 5: Tesla and wife, the language is very conversational and well-suited to the chapter's first person point of view. The narrator's language demonstrates an education gap between her and another housekeeper named Pia. While both women are happy to be Tesla's housekeepers and find him intriguing, Pia's lack of education led her to assign God-like qualities to the man.

Fragmented sentences provide a telling look into Harlow's problems in Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys. These fragments work in two different ways. When talking with



people outside the laboratory, the sentence fragments are curt ways of dealing with his problems. When asked about his dying wife, he replies, "Brave girl, Peggy," and dodges dealing with the issue publicly and mentally. When fragments are used during his time in the lab, they denote the use of scientific notation.

Chapter 7: Chomsky Rodents reads like a gossip column because the narrator chooses to refer to her husband as K. It implies that she is using his initial instead of name to protect his identity from the gossipy story she is telling. The dialog she retells is easy to read and very conversational. Spellings are changed to make it read more conversationally. For instance "Chrissake" instead of Christ's sake (120). A conversation between Chomsky and Melinda takes on a more educated tone when they stop talking about personal matters and begin talking about crisis theory.

Language usage in Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit is straight forward and easy to follow. When Robert realizes Carter has come to bring up an old issue from their childhood, his mind wanders as struggles to find diversions to forget the matter. To spot the mind wanderings in the text, look for quotes from Carter. The thoughts that follow are Robert's conscious searching for diversions to the conversation.

Structure

This is a compilation of short stories that all share an animal motif and have a variety of themes woven throughout. They do not seem to be compiled in a certain order; one story does not lead into the next in any way.

The shortest story in the book is Chapter 10: Walking Bird. Even though it is only six pages in length, it gives the reader plenty to consider about humanity and the effects of the world's growing dependence on technology. The longest story is Chapter 9: The Lady and the Dragon. At 21 pages, it is only slightly longer than the others that range from 14 to 20 pages in length.

Within each story, the author uses sentence structure to convey character traits such as depression in Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys and mania in Chapter 8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit. Throughout all the stories, sentence structure in dialog mirrors a common tone with which readers can easily understand and relate.



Quotes

A woman with a gun was kind of a man in girls' clothes, a transvestite with an external dildo.

-- Madonna (Chapter 1: Sexing the Pheasant paragraph 1)

Importance: The character struggles with shooting the bird by considering the importance and relevance of guns. While she's having a spiritual crisis after shooting the bird, her thoughts still turn to material things, like the fashion side of guns and the power they have in an image.

She had killed it, but she was also sorry. In the end, that was all that mattered. Do not have violence in your heart.

-- Madonna (Chapter 1: Sexing the Pheasant paragraph 4)

Importance: Madonna feels guilty for killing the pheasant. She was excited to go on the hunt, but is surprised by the negative feelings she experiences when the bird she shoots falls to her feet and dies before her eyes. During the brief time it suffers, she feels many emotions and does much soul searching.

After years in the bush he saw all animals as predators or prey.

-- Narrator (Chapter 2: Girl and Giraffe paragraph 2)

Importance: This quote carries over into the story's theme of relationships. Classified as animals, Adamson also sees humans as either predators or prey. Humans either achieve, or they fail. They remain in a relationship, or go away, as his wife did and as Girl left her brother.

Dogs were the martyrs of the human race.

-- The dog walker (Chapter 3: Sir Henry paragraph 3)

Importance: The dog walker has respect for dogs and prefers them to humans. While pondering his decision about whether or not to take in Blackie upon the violinist's death, he realizes that the dog cannot voice an opinion in the matter. Dogs, who respect and desire order more than most humans in his opinion, have no voice and are completely at the will of their owners.

I have seen in the paradox of her suffering the last end of man...yes, she was a murderer, but so are we.

-- Edison (Chapter 4: Edison and Vasil Golakov paragraph 3)

Importance: Edison realizes that the search for retribution is wrong. The elephant was killed because she killed someone. Her death did not bring back those she killed, nor did it punish her because she was free from cruelty. This points to the old adage "Two wrongs don't make a right."



Dead and alive, they were exactly the same.

-- Narrator (Chapter 5: Tesla and Wife paragraph 2)

Importance: This thought is pondered by the narrator in "Chapter 5: Tesla and Wife" who is trying to decipher a belief Tesla taught Pia. The statement refers to a common belief in Christianity. According to Christian belief, God sent Jesus to Earth to die for the redemption of man's sins. His death allowed mankind to live. If one views the world symbolically, seeing the sun (or Son) as God's eye and the rivers as his veins, Jesus is still living although he is dead.

He knew the feeling of loss that would last till she died.

-- Narrator, regarding Harlow's thoughts (Chapter 6: Love in Infant Monkeys paragraph 3)

Importance: Harlow, the scientist, identifies with the monkeys he uses for testing. They know the loss of their infant and will feel that loss until they die. He knows the loss of his wife and will feel that loss until she dies. He is depressed and distances himself from his terminally ill wife whom he already feels as though he has lost.

Crisis is not this daily, trivial texture of living.

-- Noam Chomsky (Chapter 7: Chomsky, Rodents paragraph 7)

Importance: Chomsky reminds that not all hiccups in plans or obstacles in one's path create an emergency. Instead, these nicks and bumps just form the texture of life.

Quiet times brought on sentimentality.

-- Robert (8: Jimmy Carter's Rabbit paragraph 2)

Importance: In this thought, Robert admits that he cannot escape the childhood incident that got him and his family kicked out of town. When he is not busy or drunk, the memory of the cat comes back to him. He tries to push it aside by telling his clients to push away their pasts and just move forward from the future.

Just living was success enough. She was the luckiest woman in the world.

-- Sharon Stone (Fake) (Chapter 9: The Lady and the Dragon paragraph 1)

Importance: The fake Sharon Stone accepted the acting job for the money. In addition to being paid well, she traveled first class and received many gifts from Rajaputra, who thought she was the real actress. When she realizes she may be trapped there with him, she is happy to have members of the staff help smuggle her to safety and to get her back home. She and the dragon were actually both lucky to be alive. That's when she realizes she is not so different from the lizard and begins to appreciate him.

As they left the aviary the little girl was already forgetting the bird. She would never think of the bird again.

-- Little Girl (Chapter 10: Walking Bird paragraph 6)



Importance: The little girl is very interested in the lame bird and even calls it "her" bird until the conflict with her father. She loses interest in the bird until her mother calms her, but now the bird is gone. Already the little girl forgets, a reminder that time passes quickly and should be enjoyed by the minute because those lost moments can never be recaptured again.

The sky and the world were all gleaming terrible silver.

-- Mother (Chapter 10: Walking Bird paragraph 3)

Importance: The mother notices that technology, symbolized by all the silver the mother sees, is replacing nature. There is less nature to enjoy outside the confines of a zoo.