**A Handful of Dates…by Tayeb Saleh**

This short story is by a famous Sudanese author, Tayeb Saleh. It is about a young boy who idols his grandfather as a God. The boy thinks that his grandpa is ‘pure’, and wants to grow up and be just like him. Their neighbor Masood has inherited a large land from his father, and is forced to sell a part of it to the grandfather every time he gets married. However, the grandfather wants the whole land. As a result, the boy is depressed, feels disgust to his idol because of his greed and hostility towards the neighbor.

The **rising action** in the story is when the boy notices that Masood is not eating any of the dates from his own property during the harvesting time. While the **climax** is when the boy realized how selfish his grandfather is, and his idolization turns to hatred. The **falling action** is clear when the boy sees Masood in a state of pain, and wants to reach out to touch him. Masood is frustrated after being informed about the dept by the grandfather. The story **concludes** with the boy puking out the dates in the river.

The **main three characters** are: the unnamed boy and the favorite grandson; the grandfather is overwhelmed with jealousy towards Masood the neighbor; Masood is the real owner of the land, and is forced to give it up to the grandfather.

**The main conflict** in the story is human vs. human as between the grandfather and Masood. But also between the grandfather and the grandson. The **main theme** here is money changes people, and power makes them go crazy losing their humanity. This is clearly illustrated through the grandfather’s actions which makes the boy in a total despair.

There are some **literary devices** in the story:

**Simile** as in “his beard…..as white as cotton wool”

**Symbolism** “I put my finger into my throat and spewed up the dates”

**Flashback** “I must have been very young at the time”

**A Closed Path…..a poem by Tagore**

Tagore was born in 1861 in Calcutta, India to affluent family. His mother has died when he was a young boy. He began composing poetry at eight. His first collection became at the age of 17 which was published by one of his friends as a gift. He wrote in the common dialects of the locals than the Indian traditional language.

In this poem, the narrator tells the reader about his life journey, its ups and downs, its trials, and the triumphs and victories that he achieved. However, towards the end of the journey, the narrator finds that the path is completely closed. Yet, he thinks that God knows that there will be a new journey to a new life after death.

He realizes that every man has a pre-determined path by a divine power beyond his own understanding. So, even if at some point of life finds that there is a powerful obstacle, he needs not to fear for God always provide an alternative way out.

This poem is written in trochaic pentameter. It consists of two stanzas and nine lines. The rhyme scheme is aaaxxxbbx. It is full of punctuation marks, using lexical repetition to emphasize a significant image.

Tagore published this poem in 1912, exploring the emotions of the narrator when approaching the end of his life. The essence of the text addresses adversity, and how one can draw strength from faith, from being rooted in something. The poem exposes the poet’s wisdom in the later years of his life

**Trifles…… by Susan Glaspell**

Trifles is a one-act play by the American novelist, journalist and actress, Susan Glaspell. In this play, John Wright has been strangled to death in his farmhouse. The main suspect of the crime is his wife Minnie. The country attorney, the Sheriff, and a neighboring farmer investigate the house for clues. The real sleuths who crack the case are Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peter, the canary is in its broken cage with its neck wrung. The two ladies put the mystery together. They both know the harsh attitude of Mr. Wright and expected that he who snapped the canary’s neck, the wife in return gives him a lesson in letting him taste what her bird got. These two ladies hide the evidence from the male authorities who think that all these are trifles. They hide it to avoid a conviction against Mrs. Wright, and to set her free from prison.

The play is told and acted through **a dialogue** and **does not have any** **narrator.** The setting is in the Wright’s farmhouse, mainly in the messy kitchen which is a bad sign on how Mrs. Wright runs her house. This piece of drama is a **mystery** because the husband is strangled in bed, and the wife is sleeping soundly in the same bed and feels nothing.

The **main themes** are:

**Justice**: the two ladies hide the evidence after realizing how the husband abuses his wife, believing that he deserves such a punishment.

**Isolation:** Minnie- the wife- lives in a remote farmhouse far away from friends and family, and just under her controlling abusive husband.

**Gender inequality**: females suffer many inequalities in life such as spousal abuse, marital expectation, patriarchal structure and isolation.

The play ends with many open questions about females and their roles, and the oppressive conditions they live.