

HEARTS AND PARTNERS REVISION NOTES

THE BEGGAR WOMAN

Gentleman out hunting sees beggar woman and suggests they go somewhere together, she agrees. He is pleased with himself thinking she has agreed to have sex with him in an 'unfrequented place'. Once there, the woman tricks him into taking her baby and leaves them both suggesting he looks after the baby for a year or two before fathering another.

HE wants sex, sees woman as 'game' (prey or plaything), and has power in the relationship. Is free and moves through life with ease (symbolically 'ambles on before').

SHE 'trots behind' and is 'hindered' on their journey and in life. Once she has tricked him her actions reflect her quick thinking ('dextrous', 'speed incredible'). At the end, their situations are reversed - she is free and he's tied. RELATIONSHIP is based on sex and control over the situation, no love or respect. He pursues her and feels that as a man with wealth, he can hunt the woman as 'game'. Once out of sight, he is confident (I have the matter sure) but she controls the situation.

TONE - Despite the abandonment of an infant, the tone of the poem is not serious - the rhyming (heroic) couplets and regular rhythm reflects this. The dialogue is light-hearted exchanges and reflects social status of both.

STRUCTURE - conventional of its time. Rhyming couplets, regular stanzas, narrative.

LANGUAGE - courtship of woman is compared to hunting, baby is tied to his back 'like a cross' (suggestion of condemned carrying their crosses before crucifixion). Formal English.

OUR LOVE NOW

A conversation between two people. Alternate stanzas are written in the first person and a woman (I said, she said). There is nothing in the poem to say that the first person is a man but it is suggested (to me) by the fact that the poet is a man and it is written in the first person. Also, of course, there is still an assumption that couples are male/female unless we are told otherwise!

HE recognises that the relationship is damaged, but feels that this is temporary, 'the breach ... can be mended'. SHE feels that their relationship is dead, not just damaged.

THE RELATIONSHIP is seen in two different ways, the first person suggests metaphors to show her that all can be forgotten but she looks at the images in a different way to represent her own feelings.

TONE - His stanzas are hopeful and reassuring, HERS are depressed and certain. Her first three stanzas end with 'Such is our love now' but the final stanza of the poem is hers and ends 'Such is our love' suggesting that it will always be dead to her - never any hope of the repair he speaks of.

STRUCTURE - Regular stanzas, the first four are his and her four follow but on the page they are set out in two columns so hers are replies to his. Stanzas begin with 'I said' or 'She said' with five more lines except their final stanzas, which have another six lines. The form is balanced but she has the last word. Each pair of stanzas has its own metaphor for the damage, pain, loss and rage that has affected the relationship.

LANGUAGE - use of metaphors to describe the damage to the relationship,

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|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A WOUND | heals and becomes whole | appears cured but scar remains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A SCAB | will disappear | pain goes but numbness is left |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A HAIRCUT | regrows, feels complete again | changes occur, never exactly the same |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STORM | frightening but soon forgotten | damage irreparable |

HE feels that the pain of the past can be healed and will be forgotten, SHE feels that her feelings have been changed by whatever has happened and that they will only APPEAR to be the same again.

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

A man is persuading a woman to have sex ('let us sport us while we may') but reminding her that life is short and you're a long time dead so you should enjoy life while you can. Her side of the story is not given.

HE starts by saying that **if** time were infinite he would be happy use the time to worship her and wait. He then moves on to say **but** he is aware that time is not infinite and that as time passes, death is ever closer. He ends by saying that, **therefore** they should live for today and repeats the word 'now'.

SHE is referred to as coy and beautiful but he suggests that her virginity is 'long - preserved' and her honour is 'quaint' suggesting that he doesn't take her views seriously.

THE RELATIONSHIP is a traditional man seducing a reluctant woman. He presents his wishes as the best for both of them.

TONE - The poem starts with the use of hyperbole when he flatters her by exaggerating how much he worships her beauty. By the middle of the poem the tone of the poem is more serious, almost cruel when he tells her that her virginity and honour will mean nothing when she turns to food for worms and dust.

STRUCTURE - written with a regular rhythm and in rhyming couplets, the regularity reflecting the persistent development of an argument. He begins his argument by seeming to acknowledge her point of view, then argues against it and finally dismissing it.

LANGUAGE - many metaphors, similes in this poem, for example:

Religious - He will love her until 'the conversion of the Jews' (forever)

Time - travels on a 'winged chariot' (passes quickly)

Death - is 'vast deserts of eternity' (immeasurable years of nothing)

He wants - 'like amorous birds of prey' (passion, untamed etc) compared to (what she wants?) alternative 'languish(ing) in his slow-chapped power' (dull, existing rather than living).

RAPUNSTILTSKIN

Unconventional narrative using stories of Rapunzel and Rumpelstiltskin. Written in third person but from point of view of maiden in tower. Although hopeful at first, she realises that her prince is not much of an alternative to being trapped in her tower.

HE is content with the relationship ('in and out ... as though he owned the place') but she finds him superficial (talks in clichés, takes her for granted). He tries to guess at what she wants but does not take her seriously (he grinned).

SHE realises he is wrong for her as soon as she sees him ('absolutely all the wrong answers) but has been brought up (as girls are?) to accept second best and is won over by his looks. Once he is visiting her regularly for sex she realises that her escape from the tower isn't going to just happen. She ends up destroying herself.

THE RELATIONSHIP is, for her, shallow and a trap. She wants more but he cannot see what she wants from her. Because she is trapped, he visits her - she has little power in the relationship.

TONE - the use of colloquial expressions, quirky use of & and the Prince's use of clichés gives the poem a comic tone.

STRUCTURE The poem begins with '& just when ...' giving the impression that it is beginning in the middle of the story. Because of the language the poem seems like a monologue (use of 'Of course ...', 'So there she was ...').

The poem hurries along with short sentences and phrases or longer sentences broken with commas.

IMAGES - The image of a maiden in her tower suggests that the woman (or women?) is trapped without a man but that rescue is illusory. Their relationship is characterised by her encouraging him ('throwing him ... lifelines'. letting down her hair, giving him time and clues) and him giving little in return (in and out as if he owns the place). He brings sex manuals which suggests he visits for sex and this (and the skeins of silk!) is supposed to be what she needs to be free. Their relationship is compared to a game show host giving clues to a hapless contestant who can only guess at the correct answers. She (the quizmaster) knows the answers all along.

Realising how hopeless her situation is, the woman tears herself in two - destroyed by wanting what she cannot have?

i wanna be yours

Meant to be performed (as 'Rapunstiltskin') this is written like a pop song and uses no punctuation. HE is the narrator of the poem trying to persuade the woman he is addressing that he wants to belong to her. He refers to another woman (i don't wanna be hers) which suggests that he is in an unsatisfactory relationship. SHE is addressed but not referred to - he offers to be all things to her and insists that he is devoted to her but there is no suggestion of her response.

THE RELATIONSHIP is hoped for - HE offers everything but asks for nothing in return other than to belong. He makes no demands ('you call the shots').

TONE is relentless persuasion, there is no coercion, just pleading (repetition of 'let me').

STRUCTURE three stanzas of 'let me be', the third stanza is extended by repeated reference to deep devotion. All three stanzas begin with 'let me be ...' and end with 'i wanna be yours'. Regular rhyme scheme and rhythm.

LANGUAGE - full of images of everyday items, no romantic associations (flowers, chocolates) but things that offer warmth (heater, coffee pot), protection (raincoat), comfort (teddy bear) etc. References to pop songs by Elvis ('let me be your teddy bear'), Bob Dylan ('i don't wanna be hers, i wanna be yours') and the repetition of deep reminds me of the backing singers on 'Walk on the Wild Side' by Lou Reed.

ONE FLESH

Written in the first person but describing her parents so that all but the last line is written in the third person. HE and SHE are described separately in the first stanza but the poem is about them as a couple, as parents, rather than as individuals.

THE RELATIONSHIP is referred to as cold. The second stanza suggests things were different ('former passion').

TONE - the language (cold, cool, silence, gently) gives the poem a quiet and sad feeling.

STRUCTURE - conventional with regular stanzas and rhyme scheme (varied in final stanza).

LANGUAGE - first stanza emphasises separateness, they are almost unaware of each other. There is a suggestion of silence (he with a book, she dreaming) and being in their own worlds (his book unread and her dreaming). In the second stanza they are compared to flotsam as if they are damaged parts of something once complete.

Their separateness is not temporary but their destination. In the final stanza, the silence between them is compared to a thread (simile) that will not be wound in to bring them close again.

COMPARING THE POEMS

The Beggar Woman

Rapunstiltskin - Man pursuing woman for sex and finding out that she wants something different.

Women similar in that they see the relationship for what it is and realise that it will not improve their lives.

Similar tone but different form. Conventional language and structure of 'Beggar Woman' compared to informal language of 'Rapunstiltskin'.

One Flesh - not so easy to compare to either of the pre 1900 poems but both relationships involve people with little in common except sex, either desired or a part of their past.

To His Coy Mistress

i wanna be yours - man trying to persuade a woman to see things his way, compare structure and language (especially choice of imagery).

Our Love Now - also man trying to persuade his partner. Again uses imagery to develop his argument.

In this poem, the woman gets the opportunity to interpret these images in her way. In the Andrew Marvell poem, the mistress doesn't have a voice.

All of the poems are about a relationship involving two people. Remember to discuss what the poet has done, give an example and explain the effect this has. For example, if you identify a metaphor, explain what it suggests to you and how this relates to the rest of the poem or its themes. If you mention that a poem has three stanzas, try to sum up what happens in each and why the poem has been divided in this way. If you are asked which poem you prefer or find most effective, say why.