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## Auszug aus:

*Short stories - mehrschrittige Interpretationen im Paket*

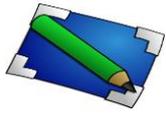
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<b>Titel:</b>	<b>Fördern und Fordern: „An Outpost of Progress“ von Joseph Conrad</b>
<b>Bestellnummer:</b>	<b>56605</b>
<b>Kurzvorstellung:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Die hier vorliegenden Arbeitsblätter helfen lernschwächeren Schülern, die Kurzgeschichte Schritt für Schritt zu interpretieren, während schnelleren Schülern weiterführende Fragestellungen an die Hand gegeben werden.</li><li>• Ein Kompetenzcheck, Musterlösungen sowie eine ausführliche Interpretation helfen den Schülern, sich einschätzen zu lernen und verbessern zu können.</li><li>• Das Material ist auf Binnendifferenzierung hin konzipiert und entspricht so den Anforderungen eines modernen, schülergerechten Unterrichts.</li></ul>
<b>Inhaltsübersicht:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arbeitsblätter zur mehrschrittigen Interpretation der Kurzgeschichte</li><li>• Kompetenzcheck</li><li>• Lösungen und Musterinterpretation</li><li>• Weiterführende Fragestellungen</li></ul>
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# Sheet 1 - Sample Solution

## Introduction

An interpretation of a short story consists of three different parts: introduction, main part and conclusion.

This sheet helps you to work out the information given in the introduction of a short story. Moreover, you ought to note down further elements that could become important when interpreting the short story.

### Solutions:

1. What is the title of the short story?

The title of the story is “An Outpost of Progress“.

2. Who is the author of the short story?

The story was written by Joseph Conrad.

3. When was the short story written?

It was written in 1896.

4. What is the short story about? (*One sentence is fine here.*)

The story is about two white men who are in charge of a deserted trading station in Africa and terribly fail with their mission.

5. Describe the plot of the short story.

Two white men are in charge of a deserted trading station in Africa. Although the two men Kayerts and Carlier trade with different goods they also have another basic purpose: they are to bring ‘civilization’ from Europe to Africa. There is also another man working there, a ‘native’ named Makola. He is some kind of foreman for ten natives who also work there. One day Makola sells these ten natives to a slave-trader for lots of ivory. It seems that this incident changes everything. The other native tribes keep themselves away from the trading station and Kayerts and Carlier, who were good friends before, become alienated from each other; they begin to hate each other and to lose their moral principles. As a consequence, one day Kayerts shoots Carlier after having had a ridiculous dispute with him. After that, he kills himself.

## Solutions

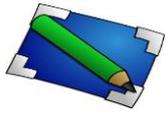
1. When does the mood in the short story definitely change? What consequences come along with that?

The incident that causes a change in the mood of the story is introduced by strangers that come to the station one day. They are armed and Kayerts and Carlier are startled and alarmed by the way they behave. They do not understand their language and ask Makola where they come from and what they say. But Makola seems different and very excited and does not answer: “[...] Makola, who seemed to be standing on hot bricks [...]” (l. 342) Makola and the strangers go to Makola’s hut and Kayerts and Carlier become more and more sceptical and also afraid; they begin to realize something really important: “They both, for the first time, became aware that they lived in conditions where the unusual may be dangerous, and that there was no power on earth outside of themselves to stand between them and the unusual.” (ll. 356- 369) So Kayerts and Carlier begin to realize that the unusual might be dangerous. In the afternoon the strangers leave, but there is a riot in the night and Kayerts and Carlier cannot sleep very well: “Carlier and Kayerts slept badly. They both thought they had heard shots fired during the night--but they could not agree as to the direction. In the morning Makola was gone somewhere. He returned about noon with one of the yesterday’s strangers, and eluded all Kayerts’ attempts to close with him: had become deaf apparently.” (ll. 388-393) Obviously, there is something going on there, and Makola and the strangers have some secret in common. As already mentioned before, there are also ten natives working at the station and being supervised by Makola. Makola tells Kayerts and Carlier also that the strangers are very bad men: “They fight with people, and catch women and children. They are bad men, and got guns. There is a great disturbance in the country.” (ll. 442- 444) After that he offers Kayerts and Carlier to get some ivory for them and he already seems to have a plan: “You leave it to me, and keep indoors, sir. I think you better give some palm wine to our men to make a dance this evening.” (ll. 452- 454) Some men of Gobila’s tribe are also to come. But during the night, a riot comes up, and in the next morning the ten native workers are gone and Kayerts and Carlier find out that Makola has sold them to the strangers, who evidently are slave-traders, in order to get some ivory from them: “They brought the ivory and gave it to me. I told them to take what they most wanted in the station. It is a beautiful lot. No station can show such tusks. Those traders wanted carriers badly, and our men were no good here. No trade, no entry in books: all correct.” (ll. 508- 512)

From this moment, some kind of distrust and trouble arises between Makola and the two white men. They also find out that the strangers have shot down one man from Gobila’s tribe. Kayerts and Carlier are in a very bad mood and talk about the evils of slavery and both agree on the fact that “[s]lavery is an awful thing.” (l. 562) But it becomes clear that they do not know what they are talking about: “Everybody shows a respectful deference to certain sounds that he and his fellows can make. But about feelings people really know nothing.



<b>Titel:</b>	<b>Fördern und Fordern:</b>  „Good Advice is Rarer Than Rubies“ von Salman Rushdie
<b>Bestellnummer:</b>	<b>56062</b>
<b>Kurzvorstellung:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Die hier vorliegenden Arbeitsblätter helfen lernschwächeren Schülern, die Kurzgeschichte Schritt für Schritt zu interpretieren, während schnelleren Schülern weiterführende Fragestellungen an die Hand gegeben werden.</li><li>• Ein Kompetenzcheck, Musterlösungen sowie eine ausführliche Interpretation helfen den Schülern, sich einschätzen zu lernen und verbessern zu können.</li><li>• Das Material ist auf Binnendifferenzierung hin konzipiert und entspricht so den Anforderungen eines modernen, schülergerechten Unterrichts.</li></ul>
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# Sheet 1 - Sample Solution

## Introduction

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This sheet helps you to work out the information given in the introduction of a short story. Moreover, you ought to note down further elements that could become important when interpreting the short story.

### Solutions:

1. What is the title of the short story?

The title of the story is "Good Advice is Rarer Than Rubies".

2. Who is the author of the short story?

The story was written by Salman Rushdie.

3. When was the short story written?

It was written in 1994.

4. What is the short story about? (*One sentence is fine here.*)

The story is about a young Pakistani woman who turns to a swindler for advice how to immigrate to Britain, but finally she uses his advice in a different way to avoid an arranged marriage.

5. Describe the plot of the short story.

Miss Rehana, a young Pakistani woman, arrives at the gates of the British Embassy on the dawn bus. She is very beautiful and, in contrast to most of the other women, she is without a male companion. The "advice expert" Muhammad Ali is at once smitten by her beauty and approaches her, offering his advice. At first, he demands payment, but when Rehana refuses, saying that she is poor, Muhammad for the first time in his life offers free advice.

Rehana plans to apply for a passport to go to Bradford in England, where her fiancé is living. Muhammad warns Rehana of the many traps she can fall into during the interview in the embassy and paints a vivid picture of the many shockingly intimate questions the officers are going to ask her. Actually, Muhammad tries convince Rehana to use his services to get a passport. He claims that for only a small fee all the necessary documents can be delivered and be authentically sealed.

## Interpretation of the short story „Good Advice is Rarer Than Rubies“

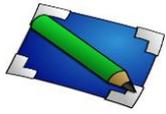
The short story „Good Advice is Rarer Than Rubies“, written by Salman Rushdie in 1994 is about a young Pakistani woman who turns to a swindler for advice how to immigrate to Britain, but finally she uses his advice in a different way to avoid an arranged marriage.

Miss Rehana, a young Pakistani woman, arrives at the gates of the British Embassy on the dawn bus. She is very beautiful and, in contrast to most of the other women, she is without a male companion. The “advice expert” Muhammad Ali is at once smitten by her beauty and approaches her, offering his advice. At first, he demands payment, but when Rehana refuses, saying that she is poor, Muhammad for the first time in his life offers free advice. Rehana plans to apply for a passport to go to Bradford in England, where her fiancé is living. Muhammad warns Rehana of the many traps she can fall into during the interview in the embassy and paints a vivid picture of the many shockingly intimate questions the officers are going to ask her. Actually, Muhammad tries to convince Rehana to use his services to get a passport. He claims that for only a small fee all the necessary documents can be delivered and be authentically sealed. She could be sure that, following his advice, there would be absolutely no obstacles in her departure for Britain. In reality, though, Muhammad is a swindler, making his living by selling people fake passports. Muhammad is so smitten with Rehana that he actually offers her a passport for free. Rehana, though, is appalled at the idea of committing a crime and declines his offer. When they meet again later, after she has had her interview in the embassy, she appears very calm and relaxed. Muhammad believes that Rehana has been successful. She apologizes for her earlier rudeness and buys him pakora, in order to thank him for his advice. It turns out that she has been turned down, having made all the mistakes Muhammad had warned her about. She then tells him her story. Her fiancé is considerably older than she is, the marriage had been arranged by her parents when she was only nine years old. Her parents wanted to make sure that Rehana was well cared for once they had died. Rehana does not know the man at all, though, and has no desire to leave her good job and her life in Pakistan in order to live in Britain with a total stranger.

Miss Rehana is a very beautiful young woman. Her beauty even causes the bus driver to help her off the bus and the usually very rude lala in front of the embassy is uncharacteristically almost polite to her. Also, she seems to be a very polite person, as she even makes the bus driver compliments on his beautiful bus. Rehana is very polite to Muhammad as well,



<b>Titel:</b>	<b>Fördern und Fordern:</b>  <b>Die englische Kurzgeschichte „A Pair of Jeans“ von Qaisra Shahraz</b>
<b>Bestellnummer:</b>	<b>56020</b>
<b>Kurzvorstellung:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Die hier vorliegenden Arbeitsblätter helfen lernschwächeren Schülern, die Kurzgeschichte Schritt für Schritt zu interpretieren, während schnelleren Schülern weiterführende Fragestellungen an die Hand gegeben werden.</li><li>• Ein Kompetenzcheck, Musterlösungen sowie eine ausführliche Interpretation helfen den Schülern, sich einschätzen zu lernen und verbessern zu können.</li><li>• Das Material ist auf Binnendifferenzierung hin konzipiert und entspricht so den Anforderungen eines modernen und schülergerechten Unterrichts.</li></ul>
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# Sheet 1 - Sample Solution

## Introduction

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This sheet will help you to work out the information given in the introduction of a short story. Moreover, you ought to note down further elements that could become important when interpreting the short story

### Solutions:

1. What is the title of the short story?

The title of the story is "A Pair of Jeans".

2. Who is the author of the short story?

The short story was written by Qaisra Shahraz.

3. When was the short story written?

It was written in 1988.

4. What is the short story about? (*One sentence is fine here.*)

The story illustrates the clash between first and second generations of Muslim immigrants that leads to conflicts between modern English views and traditional Pakistani values.

5. Describe the plot of the short story.

The story "A Pair of Jeans" is divided into three parts. The first part is set in Miriam's home. The characters and the central conflict of the story are introduced. During the middle part the tension rises, this part takes place at Miriam's prospective parents-in-law's house. The last part, again at Miriam's home, contains the climax and the ending of the story.

The story begins with Miriam, a college student, coming home from a fieldtrip to the hills. Miriam waves good-bye to her friends on the bus in a cheerful manner, but inwardly she is worried. She is late and she also feels uncomfortable as she is dressed in her jeans and a short leather jacket. During the trip she had felt good in these clothes because they are practical and they are what all the other college girls wear. In the vicinity of her home, though, Miriam feels inappropriately dressed.

Her worst fear comes true when she arrives at her home in the same moment that her prospective parents-in-law, Ayub and Begum, arrive. Miriam is engaged to their son and that night they have come to her parents to make final arrangements regarding the wedding. When the couple sees Miriam, though, they can hardly hide their shock. Miriam herself feels horrible, because she can imagine their horror seeing her not dressed in traditional clothes.

changes: “All of a sudden she felt odd in her clothing. Yet they were just the type of clothes she needed to wear today; [...]. Somehow here, however, in the vicinity of her home she felt different.” The fact that the traditional Pakistani role is an inherent part of Miriam also becomes obvious when she goes down to the living room in her shalwar kameeze and “moves[s] around the room with ease, in a manner that she could never have done in a hundred years in a pair of jeans amongst these people.” She is in control of herself in the traditional clothes. The pair of jeans represents the aspects of Miriam’s life in the university environment among her college friends, where she blends in with other young women. By the way in which she swaps identities in her bedroom before going downstairs to meet her in-laws, the way that her mother looks at her and the thoughts that Begum has about her, the reader gets glimpses of the other side of Miriam’s personality. Even though Miriam feels quite at home in both worlds, the constant switching is not very easy for her. The problem of having to balance the two faces of her personality is described in some detail: “Perhaps those views were right, and there were two sides to her character. A person who spontaneously switched from one scene to another, from one mode of dress into another. Now, dressed as she was, she was part and parcel of another world; part of a Muslim Asian environment. She was now on home ground, and her thoughts, actions and feelings had altered accordingly.” As there are two alternative endings to the story, Miriam’s character cannot be analysed with reasonable certainty. In the first possible ending, Miriam gives in to the Pakistani part of herself and rejects the modern English part of her personality because she blames it for the failure of her engagement. In the second ending, though, Miriam undergoes a development, which has been initiated by Begum and Ayub’s rejection. She ultimately makes herself more independent from her parents and her in-laws. Breaking with the traditional Pakistani role, she takes action and phones Farook.

Begum is Miriam’s future mother-in-law. She lives her life as a traditional Muslim wife to her husband Ayub. Their family is coined by patriarchal patterns and, like her husband, Begum believes in the importance of a woman upholding and representing the family honour with her behaviour. Begum succumbs to her husband’s opinion and wishes, she even agrees with him that Miriam is not an appropriate wife for Farook due to her way of dressing, which is why she cannot be trusted to uphold the family honour. On the inside, though, Begum is torn between her dislike of Miriam’s Western clothing and her emotional attachment to Miriam and her mother Fatima. She is quite surprised to have seen Miriam in such a state, but she has



**Titel:**

**Fördern und Fordern:**

**Die Kurzgeschichte "August 2026: There Will Come Soft Rains" von Ray Bradbury**

**Bestellnummer:**

**55960**

**Kurzvorstellung:**

- Die hier vorliegenden Arbeitsblätter helfen lernschwächeren Schülern, die Kurzgeschichte Schritt für Schritt zu interpretieren, während schnelleren Schülern weiterführende Fragestellungen an die Hand gegeben werden.
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**Inhaltsübersicht:**

- Arbeitsblätter zur mehrschrittigen Interpretation der Kurzgeschichte
- Kompetenzcheck
- Lösungen und Musterinterpretation
- Weiterführende Fragestellungen

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## Sheet 2 - Sample Solution

### Characters

The main part of an analysis focuses on different aspects of the short story. The characters are one aspect.

#### Solutions:

#### 1. What can be said about the characters in the short story? Who are they?

It is significant about this short story that there are no humane characters involved in the conventional sense. The only people mentioned are dead. The family who has lived in the house has died from a nuclear bomb. Only a few animals seem so have survived like "whining cats", "lonely foxes" and a dog that manages to get into the house. But the dog does not get attention from the house, it could have even saved the dog by feeding it, but it stopped the dog from entering the kitchen. However, one could argue that the house and the various technical devices in it function as characters, because they talk through speakers, e.g. the voice clock, and define the action e.g. the robots. Although the house is an inanimate object, it serves the function of the protagonist of this short story.

#### 2. In the story the author applies the literary technique of **anthropomorphism** by transferring human characteristics on technical objects or on forces of nature. Explain how this is done in the story and give examples.

Technical objects seem to have emotions, e.g. the cleaning mice are angry having to clean the mud the dog carries in: "Behind it whirred angry mice, angry at having to pick up mud, angry at inconvenience". Although the house is not alive, it somehow has a survival instinct: "The house tried to save itself". Only living beings can die, which is why the author evokes the impression that the house is alive by stating: "At ten o'clock the house began to die." It seems to be capable of feeling fear e.g. it "quivered" when animals approached the house and it "shuddered" as the fire spreaded. The way that the mechanical kitchen is described towards the end of the story suggests that it feels panic: "In the kitchen (...) the stove could be seen making breakfasts at a psychopathic rate (...) started the stove working again, hysterically hissing!" Also the fire as a force of nature is featured with attributes connotated humane,, which for instance is expressed by the sentence "But the fire was clever".

## Interpretation of the short story „There Will Come Soft Rains“

The short story "August 2026: There Will Come Soft Rains", written by Ray Bradbury in 1950, is about how mankind has destroyed itself by a nuclear war and how machines control the world.

The story is set in Allendale, California in a deserted mechanical house on August 4th 2026. The technical devices in the house automatically execute daily routines like making breakfast or cleaning the house, although the former inhabitants have already died due to the causes of a nuclear bomb. A dog enters the house but eventually dies and is cleaned away by robots. Regardless of the absence of people, the mechanical house runs entertainment programs for the family and reads out the Poem "There will come soft rains". In the evening hours the house is hit by a storm and it catches fire. The fire destroys almost the entire house except for a last wall and an automatic voice keeps repeating the date.

The story is told by a third-person narrator. The perspective is limited to the location inside and outside the house. The narrator reports about the events happening on the 4th August 2026 and the plot is structured into certain time periods. Every time a new time of day is mentioned, a new event begins. The story starts in the empty house with the wake-up call from the voice-clock at seven o'clock. In the beginning of the story, one can assume that the house is only temporarily empty and that the inhabitants would come back any time. But later the reader is told that the house is the only house left in the city: "The house stood alone in a city of rubble and ashes. This was the one house left standing. At night the ruined city gave off a radioactive glow which could be seen for miles." The only hints to the family who lived in the house before are traces on the house wall. These are nuclear shadows that resemble the silhouettes of a man, a woman and two children during the moment the bomb exploded. The action rises when a dog enters the house in search for food but eventually dies. As the reader puts oneself in the position of the last living being, this has a powerful effect on the reader. As part of an entertainment program a speaker voice reads out the poem "There will come soft rains". The content of the poem fits to the plot in the story, because both refer to a situation where "mankind perished" and no one would notice that humanity has gone. Shortly after the poem a force of nature attacks the house in form of a fire and it continues in an on-going battle until the tension reaches a climax at the end of the story.



<b>Titel:</b>	<b>Fördern und Fordern:</b>  <b>Die englische Kurzgeschichte „My Son the Fanatic“ von Hanif Kureishi</b>
<b>Bestellnummer:</b>	<b>55285</b>
<b>Kurzvorstellung:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Die hier vorliegenden Arbeitsblätter helfen lernschwächeren Schülern, die Kurzgeschichte Schritt für Schritt zu interpretieren, während schnelleren Schülern weiterführende Fragestellungen an die Hand gegeben werden.</li><li>• Ein Kompetenzcheck, Musterlösungen sowie eine ausführliche Interpretation helfen den Schülern, sich einschätzen zu lernen und verbessern zu können.</li><li>• Das Material ist auf Binnendifferenzierung hin konzipiert und entspricht so den Anforderungen eines modernen, schülergerechten Unterrichts.</li></ul>
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## Sheet 2 - Sample Solution

### Characters

The main part of an analysis focuses on different aspects of the short story. The characters are one aspect. On this sheet you are supposed to characterise Parvez and his son Ali.

#### Lösungen:

#### 1. Which information does the short story give about Parvez and his son Ali?

The main protagonist of the story is Parvez, who functions as the narrator of the story. Parvez has come to England many years ago with the dream of improving his lifestyle and creating fair chances for his family. He has worked quite hard but nonetheless has always stayed a taxi driver. His dreams have therefore been projected onto his son, who has been training for a career in accountancy for a number of years. Parvez is shattered when he realizes that Ali rejects all opportunities of the life Parvez has offered him.

Parvez is not religious at all, due to the humiliation he had to suffer as a young boy. His teacher attached a string to the ceiling which was tied to his hair in order to prevent him from falling asleep over reading the Koran. When Ali first starts to preach to him about the Koran's rules when they have supper in the restaurant, Parvez only shrugs to show his indifference to religion. Nevertheless, Parvez is willing to accept Ali's newly discovered religiousness, despite his growing worries about the boy. He is even prepared to pray with Ali, if that is what it takes for him to understand his son and not lose him completely.

Parvez also seems to have a drinking problem, which becomes evident in the beginning of the story: "he went more to the whisky bottle, even when he was at work"<sup>1</sup>. The prostitute Bettina is a very important person to him. In the story she appears several times, whereas his wife is mentioned only once. Bettina is the only person Parvez really opens himself up to. Even towards his friends and colleagues, who are male and from Pakistan as well, he remains inhibited when it comes to discussing problems. He is not ashamed of anything when talking to Bettina, which might be because she is a prostitute. Judging by her profession, she is not a very delicate person but there are also indicators that Parvez has slightly more than just friendly feeling towards her. This might be the final straw that drives Parvez into his son's room to beat him up at the end of the story. Parvez seems to beat Ali because the latter insulted Bettina.

The second important character in the story is Ali, Parvez' son. Ali seems to be in his late teens. He has always done well academically and in sports and Parvez has frequently bragged about him in the past. Ali also used to have an English girlfriend and a couple of friends but since he became religious he has broken up with the girl and stopped communicating with his old friends.

The reason for Ali to have turned fanatically religious is not given in the story, but he preaches to his father about the contents of his new-found belief. Western civilization is evil in his eyes. It is supposed to be full of corruption, which triggered his decision to give up accounting; western people are "hypocrites, adulterers, homosexuals, drug-takers and prostitutes."<sup>2</sup> to him. Ali presents his arguments very fluently to his father, as if he had given the same speech several times before. The sincerity of his religiousness is revealed when he tells Parvez that he would even give his life for his belief to ensure the Islam will rule the world. Ali identifies with the Islam and disregards the English culture in which he has grown up, even though he has never even left the country.

<sup>1</sup> Kureishi, Hanif. *The Word and The Bomb*. London: Faber and Faber, 2005. p. 63

<sup>2</sup> Kureishi, p. 69

## Solutions

1. Parvez, the main protagonist of the story, is a Pakistani. The official name of the country he comes from is *The Islamic Republic of Pakistan*. Pakistan is defined as an Islamic nation, but guarantees freedom of religion. 97% of the population are Muslims. The most commonly used language in official or governmental contexts is English.

After 1947, when India and Pakistan became independent, their citizens could migrate more or less boundlessly into the UK. They were guaranteed British citizenship upon their arrival. In 1962, the Commonwealth Immigration Act was passed. This was an Act of Parliament of the UK. The act imposed stronger regulations on the immigration procedure as a reaction to the heavy increase of immigration. The act had a significant effect on the immigration patterns. Before the act had been passed, mostly men had come to Britain in order to earn money; afterwards, mostly families immigrated into the UK planning to stay permanently.

Today, most of the Pakistani population in the UK is of British nationality. Researchers claim that about 65% of them were born in Britain.

The religion of Islam demands total submission to Allah, who is accepted as the one and only God. Muhammad is believed to be Allah's prophet and the Koran is the word of Allah and therefore of utmost importance to the Muslim religion. Muslims are supposed to live in peace with themselves and their environment. This peace is achieved by strict obedience to Allah's commandments. Muslims believe in a kind of after-world in which every human will be held responsible for their deeds in life. Therefore living in peace is of utmost importance because those who have lived rightfully will be rewarded with eternal bliss, whereas those who have not lived in the right way will be punished.

The commandment of living in peace stands in contrast to the chapter in the Koran about "jihad", which is commonly translated as "holy war". Jihad allows the Muslims to resort to violence in order to defend their basic human rights, their faith and the general welfare of the Muslim community.

The Islam asks a lot of its followers. There are a number of duties the faithful Muslim has to perform; such as the daily prayers, the Zakat (which means that one donates some of one's possessions to those who own less), the Ramadan and the Hajj, the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Koran strictly forbids any kinds of drugs, including alcohol in order to protect the person from moral corruption. Also, Muslims are not allowed to eat pork.<sup>4</sup>

2. In his speech at the restaurant, Ali shows there is evidently a distinct line between him and his father. When he talks about "the cause" and his religion, he says "My people have taken enough"<sup>5</sup>,

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<sup>4</sup> [www.al-islam.org/beliefs/index.html](http://www.al-islam.org/beliefs/index.html)

[www.islam.de/?site=virtuelle\\_bibliothek/wasistislam](http://www.islam.de/?site=virtuelle_bibliothek/wasistislam) (beide abgefragt am 20.12.2007)

<sup>5</sup> Kureishi, p.69



**Titel:**

**Fördern und Fordern:**

**Die englische Kurzgeschichte „The Black Madonna“  
von Muriel Spark**

**Bestellnummer:**

**55022**

**Kurzvorstellung:**

- Die hier vorliegenden Arbeitsblätter helfen lernschwächeren Schülern, die Kurzgeschichte Schritt für Schritt zu interpretieren, während schnelleren Schülern weiterführende Fragestellungen an die Hand gegeben werden.
- Ein Kompetenzcheck, Musterlösungen sowie eine ausführliche Interpretation helfen den Schülern, sich einschätzen zu lernen und verbessern zu können.
- Das Material ist auf Binnendifferenzierung hin konzipiert und entspricht so den Anforderungen eines modernen, schülergerechten Unterrichts.

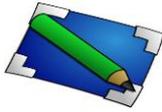
**Inhaltsübersicht:**

- Arbeitsblätter zur mehrschrittigen Interpretation der Kurzgeschichte
- Kompetenzcheck
- Lösungen und Musterinterpretation
- Weiterführende Fragestellungen

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## Sheet 2 - Sample Solution

### Characters

The main part of an analysis focuses on different aspects of the short story. The characters are one aspect. On this sheet you are supposed to characterise the couple Lou and Raymond.

#### Lösungen:

1. Which information gives the short story about Lou and Raymond? Who are they? How can you describe their relationship to each other, to their environment and to religion?

Lou and Raymond are the main characters in the short story. They are a couple close to middle age. The reader learns that Lou is thirty-seven years old, but does not get to know Raymond's age. The two have been married for fifteen years, but have remained childless. Raymond and Lou live in a community-housing flat, but despite their not-quite middle-class background they have developed somewhat higher-class tastes, such as going to the cinema for only choice movies and reading a lot instead of watching vast amounts of television. Notwithstanding her low-class background - her family is a low-class Liverpool family and her sister lives in a very shabby London neighbourhood - Lou is a snob. She tries in every way to maintain a higher-class appearance, which even goes so far as not to introduce certain groups of friends, so that the ones Lou considers higher-class might not think that Lou was low-class due to her lower-class friends. Raymond is more good-natured and less scheming. He even manages to oversee his wife's obvious character faults and easily pacifies himself by telling himself that she is "not a snob, only sensible"<sup>1</sup>.

Both of them are deeply religious to a degree which borders on superstition. This becomes obvious when Lou starts praying to the black Madonna for various reasons, being supported by Raymond in her prayers for a child. Here, again, Raymond proves to be more down-to-earth than Lou, when he asks her if she really means to have a child. His warning that one must be careful what one wishes for can even be seen as a foreboding.

2. What kind of stereotypes do they represent?

Lou and Raymond represent stereotypes of a middle-aged, conservative couple, which becomes apparent on page 55<sup>2</sup>, where their most defining characteristics are listed. These characteristics are not very defining, though, because they might apply to many people. For the story, their most important characteristics are their Catholicism and their conservatism, even though they pride themselves of being open-minded and forward-thinking. They actually vote Labour, not the Conservative party, but over the course of the story the reader realizes their narrow-mindedness and conservatism.

<sup>1</sup> p. 57

<sup>2</sup> p. 55

## Interpretation of the short story „The Black Madonna“

The short story „The Black Madonna“, written by Muriel Spark in 1958, is about a middle-aged couple that desperately wishes for a child and finds their dream fulfilled.

The protagonists of the story, Lou and Raymond, desperately wish for a child. The couple becomes friends with two Jamaican men and they learn that their prayers to the black Madonna for them are heard. Henry returns back to religion and Oxford leaves the couple in peace. Because Lou realizes that the black Madonna obviously works miracles, she ultimately asks her for a baby and she gets pregnant soon. Having given birth to the baby, Lou and Raymond are shocked by the fact that its skin colour is dark and thus does not seem to be Raymond's child at first glance. Though they find out that there is a dark skinned ancestor in Lou's family, they are afraid of gossip and rumours about an illegitimate baby, which is why the couple decides to put the girl up for adoption.

Lou and Raymond are the main characters in the short story. They are a couple close to middle age. The reader learns that Lou is thirty-seven years old, but does not get to know Raymond's age. The two have been married for fifteen years, but have remained childless. Raymond and Lou live in a community-housing flat, but despite their not-quite middle-class background they have developed somewhat higher-class tastes, such as going to the cinema for only choice movies and reading a lot instead of watching vast amounts of television. Notwithstanding her low-class background - her family is a low-class Liverpool family and her sister lives in a very shabby London neighbourhood - Lou is a snob. She tries in every way to maintain a higher-class appearance, which even goes so far as not to introduce certain groups of friends, so that the ones Lou considers higher-class might not think that Lou was low-class due to her lower-class friends. Raymond is more good-natured and less scheming. He even manages to oversee his wife's obvious character faults and easily pacifies himself by telling himself that she is “not a snob, only sensible”<sup>7</sup>.

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