What if life had a \textbf{RESET} button?

Explore the question by asking students what actions people often regret.

**What’s the Connection?**

Lead students in a discussion of how people take and show pride in their environment.

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See resources on the Teacher One Stop DVD-ROM and on thinkcentral.com.

- **RESOURCE MANAGER UNIT 4**
  - Plan and Teach, pp. 11–18
  - Summary, pp. 19–20 †
  - Text Analysis and Reading Skill, pp. 21–24†
  - Vocabulary, pp. 25–27†
- **BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT**
  - Word Squares, p. E10
  - Open Mind, p. D9
- **TECHNOLOGY**
  - Teacher One Stop DVD-ROM
  - Student One Stop DVD-ROM
  - Audio Anthology CD
  - ExamView Test Generator on the Teacher One Stop

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**SUMMARIES**

“Marigolds” Lizabeth lives during the Depression. Her family’s difficulties frustrate and frighten her, and she vents her stress by destroying a cherished marigold garden. Years later, she still regrets the act, but from it she has learned about compassion.

“Sowing Change” Donna Freedman’s article explains how neighbors worked together to turn a barren lot into a garden.

**Book Cover** The cover of *In Our Hands*, a book about social change, shows a pair of hands holding a green seedling.

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**Marigolds**

Short Story by Eugenia Collier

**Sowing Change**

Newspaper Article by Donna Freedman

**In Our Hands**

Book Cover

It’s a terrible thing to drop your grandmother’s prized china vase on the kitchen floor. And did you really have to be so mean to your little brother yesterday? At one time or another, we’ve all done or said something that makes us cringe with regret. We wish we could turn back the clock by a minute or a day and just do the whole thing over.

**What’s the Connection?**

The literary text that follows will explore not only regret but other concepts that shape the way we see and experience the world—poverty, pride, and beauty, to name a few. After you read “Marigolds,” you’ll read a nonfiction text and a visual that explore similar topics.
**TEXT ANALYSIS: THEME AND SETTING**

"Marigolds" takes place in a rural African-American community during the 1930s—a time of racial segregation, poverty, and limited opportunity. This setting offers important clues about the development of the story's theme, or underlying message. For example, the figurative, or nonliteral, description of “futile waiting” as “the sorrowful background music of our impoverished little community” powerfully describes the setting and hints at the hopelessness of the narrator’s situation. As you read the story, think about how the setting influences the narrator’s experiences and the conflicts she faces. What message do those experiences teach us about life?

**READING SKILL: DRAW CONCLUSIONS**

A conclusion is a logical judgment based on information in the text and on your own experience and prior knowledge. As you read “Marigolds,” create a graphic organizer like the one shown. Include information from the text and your thoughts about the information. Then record your conclusions.

**VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT**

In your Reader/Writer Notebook, create a chart like the one below and place the following words in the chart according to your knowledge of them. Then write a brief definition of each word you know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD LIST</th>
<th>bravado</th>
<th>impotent</th>
<th>poignantly</th>
<th>retribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>degradation</td>
<td>nostalgia</td>
<td>reversion</td>
<td>squalor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exuberance</td>
<td>ostensibly</td>
<td>stoicism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>futile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Know Well | Think I Know | Don’t Know

Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

**Meet the Author**

Eugenia Collier

born 1928

Respect for Education

Eugenia Collier grew up in the segregated part of Baltimore, Maryland, the city where she still lives today. From her parents, a doctor and a teacher, Collier learned the value of education at a young age. This led her to graduate with high honors from Howard University. She then received a master of arts from Columbia University.

Award-Winning Teacher and Writer

After working for five years as a caseworker for the Baltimore Department of Public Welfare, Collier became a college professor and started her writing career. She credits her African-American heritage as her inspiration. “The fact of my blackness is the core and center of my creativity.” “Marigolds,” one of her first stories, won the Gwendolyn Brooks Award for fiction in 1969. Since then, her stories, poems, and essays have appeared in many anthologies and magazines. She was selected as an outstanding educator from 1972–75 and won a Distinguished Writers Award in 1984.

**BACKGROUND TO THE STORY**

Hard Times

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, millions of Americans suffered from unemployment. Government programs, such as the unemployment insurance available today, did not yet exist to help people get through the tough times. Although many Americans suffered, African Americans were particularly hard hit. In an age of racial segregation and prejudice, black people generally had fewer job opportunities and experienced higher unemployment rates.

**Model the Skill: Theme and Setting**

Read aloud this example:

Lakeside was a town of mansions and luxury cars. Its residents spoke of wealth but never of wisdom or regret.

Discuss how the setting might be connected to a theme. Point out that the setting suggests rich residents; the theme might be their materialism or arrogance.

GUIDED PRACTICE Have students name settings and themes from other stories.

**Model the Skill: Draw Conclusions**

Use the information about the author to model drawing conclusions.

- The Depression affected African Americans quite severely.
- Collier’s parents were a doctor and a teacher, and therefore less likely to be unemployed than other workers.
- Collier probably did not suffer as much as other African-American children did.

GUIDED PRACTICE Discuss how the Meet the Author subheads express conclusions about the text.

**RESOURCE MANAGER—Copy Master**

Draw Conclusions p. 23 (for student use while reading the selection)

**VOCABULARY SKILL**

**VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT**

DIAGNOSE VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE Have all students complete Vocabulary in Context. Check their definitions against the following:

- **bravado** (bra-vā’dō) n. a false show of courage or defiance
- **degradation** (dēg’rā-dā’shan) n. condition of being brought to a lower level; humiliation
- **exuberance** (i-gō’ər-bər-əns) n. condition of unrestrained joy
- **futile** (fyōōt’il) adj. having no useful result
- **impotent** (im’pa-tənt) adj. powerless; lacking strength or vigor
- **nostalgia** (nō-stā’jə) n. bittersweet longing for things from the past
- **ostensibly** (ō-stēn’sə-bli) adv. seemingly; to all outward appearances
- **poignantly** (pō’nī-ant-lē) adv. in a profoundly moving manner
- **retribution** (rē-tro’byōo’shən) n. something given in repayment, usually as a punishment
- **squalor** (skwō’lər) n. a filthy, shabby, and wretched condition, as from poverty
- **stoicism** (stō’tĭ-sĭ’əm) n. indifference to pleasure or pain; a lack of visible emotion

PRETEACH VOCABULARY Use the copy master to help students predict the meaning of each boldfaced word in the copy master, using context clues.

**RESOURCE MANAGER—Copy Master**

Vocabulary Study p. 25
When I think of the home town of my youth, all that I seem to remember is dust—the brown, crumbly dust of late summer—arid, sterile dust that gets into the eyes and makes them water, gets into the throat and between the toes of bare brown feet. I don’t know why I should remember only the dust. Surely there must have been lush green lawns and paved streets under leafy shade trees somewhere in town; but memory is an abstract painting—it does not present things as they are, but rather as they feel. And so, when I think of that time and that place, I remember only the dry September of the dirt roads and grassless yards of the shanty-town where I lived. And one other thing I remember, another incongruency of memory—a brilliant splash of sunny yellow against the dust—Miss Lottie’s marigolds.

Whenever the memory of those marigolds flashes across my mind, a strange nostalgia comes with it and remains long after the picture has faded. I feel again the chaotic emotions of adolescence, illusive as smoke, yet as real as the potted geranium before me now. Joy and rage and wild animal gladness and shame become tangled together in the multicolored skein of 14-going-on-15 and as I recall that devastating moment when I was suddenly more woman than child, years ago in Miss Lottie’s yard. I think of those marigolds at the strangest times; I remember them vividly now as I desperately pass away the time waiting for you, who will not come.

I suppose that futile waiting was the sorrowful background music of our Depression that gripped the nation was no new thing to us, for the black workers of rural Maryland had always been depressed. I don’t know what it was that we were waiting for; certainly not for the prosperity that was “just around the corner,” for those were white folks’ words, which we never believed. Nor did we wait for hard work and thrift to pay off in shining success as the American Dream promised, for we knew better than that, too. Perhaps we waited for a miracle,
Comparing Texts

REVISIT THE BIG QUESTION
What if life had a RESET button?
Discuss Which words and phrases in lines 12–20 suggest that the narrator feels some regret about the past? Possible answer: The narrator’s reference to her nostalgia as “strange” (lines 12–13) may hint at regret. The negative terms “chaotic emotions” (line 14) and “rage” (line 15) are stronger, and they lead to the most telling word: “shame” (line 16). The connection between shame and the “devastating moment” that she recalls (line 17) suggests a strong sense of regret about the past—specifically, about some past action.

Analyze Visuals
Possible answer: The bright colors of the flowers create a cheerful mood. The fact that a spittoon is used as a flowerpot for the blooms also adds to the upbeat feeling.

About the Art If students have read “A Christmas Memory” in Unit 3, they already have met North Carolina artist Bob Timberlake (born 1933). Known for his realistic style, Timberlake has painted many scenes of the rural South. The bright marigolds in this painting help students envision this story’s title and the description of Miss Lottie’s marigolds as “a brilliant splash of sunny yellow” (lines 10–11).

troubled adolescence.
• What time in her life is the narrator recalling? How can you tell? (lines 14–17)
• Why was her life difficult at that time? (lines 22–24)
• What details suggest that Miss Lottie and her marigolds will be important in the story that the narrator is about to tell? (lines 9–13)

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/PRE–AP
Explore Cultural Context Have students research different aspects of the Depression and present their findings to the class. Possible topics include:
• Governmental action and inaction that may have exacerbated the crisis at first
• Programs created under the New Deal that are still in place today
• Maryland’s or their own state’s specific economic problems and solutions
amorphous in concept but necessary if one were to have the grit to rise before
dawn each day and labor in the white man’s vineyard until after dark, or to
wander about in the September dust, offering one’s sweat in return for some
meager share of bread. But God was chary with miracles in those days, and so
we waited—and waited.

We children, of course, were only vaguely aware of the extent of our poverty.
Having no radios, few newspapers, and no magazines, we were somewhat
unaware of the world outside our community. Nowadays we would be called
“culturally deprived” and people would write books and hold conferences
about us. In those days everybody we knew was just as hungry and ill-clad as
we were. Poverty was the cage in which we all were trapped, and our hatred
of it was still the vague, undirected restlessness of the zoo-bred flamingo
who knows that nature created him to fly free.

As I think of those days I feel most poignantly the tag-end of summer, the
bright dry times when we began to have a sense of shortening days and the
imminence of the cold.

By the time I was 14 my brother Joey and I were the only children left at our
house, the older ones having left home for early marriage or the lure of the city,
and the two babies having been sent to relatives who might care for them better
than we. Joey was three years younger than I, and a boy, and therefore vastly
inferior. Each morning our mother and father trudged wearily down the dirt
road and around the bend, she to her domestic job, he to his daily unsuccessful
quest for work. After our few chores around the tumbledown shanty, Joey and I
were free to run wild in the sun with other children similarly situated.

For the most part, those days are ill-defined in my memory, running
together and combining like a fresh water-color painting left out in the rain.
I remember squatting in the road drawing a picture in the dust, a picture that
Joey gleefully erased with one sweep of his dirty foot. I remember fishing for
minnows in a muddy creek and watching sadly as they eluded my cupped
hands, while Joey laughed uproariously. And I remember, that year, a strange
restlessness of body and of spirit, a feeling that something old and familiar was
ending, and something unknown and therefore terrifying was beginning.

One day returns to me with special clarity for some reason, perhaps because
it was the beginning of the experience that in some inexplicable way marked
the end of innocence. I was loafing under the great oak tree in our yard, deep
in some reverie which I have now forgotten except that it involved some secret,
secret thoughts of one of the Harris boys across the yard. Joey and a bunch of
kids were bored now with the old tire suspended from an oak limb which had
kept them entertained for a while.

“Hey, Lizabeth,” Joey yelled. He never talked when he could yell. “Hey,
Lizabeth, let’s us go somewhere.”

2. chary (chär’ë) sparing or stingy

DRAW CONCLUSIONS
Based on what you’ve read so far, what conclusions can you draw
about the narrator’s life? Cite details to support your answer.

poignantly
(poin’tant-ë) adv.
in a profoundly
moving manner

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Language: Pronoun References Explain the usage of one in lines 28–32. There, one is the
formal equivalent of the informal you or the impersonal someone. Reinforce the concept
by discussing the use of one and one’s in lines 307–308.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/PRE–AP
Analyze Figurative Language [paired-activity option] Eugenia Collier uses two linked
metaphors in this statement: “Poverty was the cage in which we all were trapped, and
our hatred of it was still the vague, undirected restlessness of the zoo-bred flamingo
who knows that nature created him to fly free” (lines 39–41). Have students analyze the
metaphors and explain why the metaphors are effective.

OWN THE WORD
poignantly: Ask students if they have
poignant memories of a summer or of a
special holiday celebrated with friends or
family. What about the event make the
memories poignant?
I came reluctantly from my private world. “Where you want to go? What you want to do?”

The truth was that we were becoming tired of the formlessness of our summer days. The idleness whose prospect had seemed so beautiful during the busy days of spring now had degenerated to an almost desperate effort to fill up the empty midday hours.

“Let’s go see can we find some locusts on the hill,” someone suggested.

Joey was scornful. “Ain’t no more locusts there. Y’all got ‘em all while they was still green.”

The argument that followed was brief and not really worth the effort.

Hunting locust trees wasn’t fun any more by now.

“Tell you what,” said Joey finally, his eyes sparkling. “Let’s go over to Miss Lottie’s.”

The idea caught on at once, for annoying Miss Lottie was always fun. I was still child enough to scamper along with the group over rickety fences and through bushes that tore our already raggedy clothes, back to where Miss Lottie lived. I think now that we must have made a tragicomic spectacle, five or six kids of different ages, each of us clad in only one garment—the girls in faded dresses that were too long or too short, the boys in patchy pants, their sweaty brown chests gleaming in the hot sun. A little cloud of dust followed our thin legs and bare feet as we tramped over the barren land.

When Miss Lottie’s house came into view we stopped, ostensibly to plan our strategy, but actually to reinforce our courage. Miss Lottie’s house was the most ramshackle of all our ramshackle homes. The sun and rain had long since faded its rickety frame siding from white to a sullen gray. The boards themselves seemed to remain upright not from being nailed together but rather from leaning together like a house that a child might have constructed from cards. A brisk wind might have blown it down, and the fact that it was still standing implied a kind of enchantment that was stronger than the elements. There it stood, and as far as I know is standing yet—a gray rotting thing with no porch, no shutters, no steps, set on a cramped lot with no grass, not even any weeds—a monument to decay.

In front of the house in a squeaky rocking chair sat Miss Lottie’s son, John Burke, completing the impression of decay. John Burke was what was known as “queer-headed.” Black and ageless, he sat, rocking day in and day out in a mindless stupor, lulled by the monotonous squeak-squawk of the chair. A battered hat atop his shaggy head shaded him from the sun. Usually John Burke was totally unaware of everything outside his quiet dream world. But if you disturbed him, if you intruded upon his fantasies, he would become enraged, strike out at you, and curse at you in some strange enchanted language which only he could understand. We children made a game of thinking of ways to disturb John Burke and then to elude his violent retribution.
But our real fun and our real fear lay in Miss Lottie herself. Miss Lottie seemed to be at least a hundred years old. Her big frame still held traces of the tall, powerful woman she must have been in youth, although it was now bent and drawn. Her smooth skin was a dark reddish-brown, and her face had Indian-like features and the stern stoicism that one associates with Indian faces. Miss Lottie didn’t like intruders either, especially children. She never left her yard, and nobody ever visited her. We never knew how she managed those necessities that depend on human interaction—how she ate, for example, or even whether she ate. When we were tiny children, we thought Miss Lottie was a witch and we made up tales, that we half believed ourselves, about her exploits. We were far too sophisticated now, of course, to believe the witch-nonsense. But old fears have a way of clinging like cobwebs, and so when we sighted the tumble-down shack, we had to stop to reinforce our nerves.

“Look, there she is,” I whispered, forgetting that Miss Lottie could not possibly have heard me from that distance. “She’s fooling with them crazy flowers.”

“Yeh, look at ‘er.”

Miss Lottie’s marigolds were perhaps the strangest part of the picture. Certainly they did not fit in with the crumbling decay of the rest of her yard. Beyond the dusty brown yard, in front of the sorry gray house, rose suddenly and shockingly a dazzling strip of bright blossoms, clumped together in enormous mounds, warm and passionate and sun-golden. The old black witch-woman worked on them all summer, every summer, down on her creaky knees, weeding and cultivating and arranging, while the house crumbled and John Burke rocked. For some perverse reason, we children hated those marigolds. They interfered with the perfect ugliness of the place; they were too beautiful; they said too much that we could not understand; they did not make sense. There was something in the vigor with which the old woman destroyed the weeds that intimidated us. It should have been a comical sight—the old woman with the man’s hat on her cropped white head, leaning over the bright mounds, her big backside in the air—but it wasn’t comical, it was something we could not name. We had to annoy her by whizzing a pebble into her flowers or by yelling a dirty word, then dancing away from her rage, reveling in our youth and mocking her age. Actually, I think it was the flowers we wanted to destroy, but nobody had the nerve to try it, not even Joey, who was usually fool enough to try anything.

“Y’all git some stones,” commanded Joey now, and was met with instant giggling obedience as everyone except me began to gather pebbles from the dusty ground. “Come on, Lizabeth.”

“I just stood there peering through the bushes, torn between wanting to join the fun and feeling that it was all a bit silly. “You scared, Lizabeth?”

“I cursed and spat on the ground—my favorite gesture of phony bravado. “Y’all children get the stones; I’ll show you how to use ‘em.”
Comparing Texts

I said before that we children were not consciously aware of how thick were the bars of our cage. I wonder now, though, whether we were not more aware of it than I thought. Perhaps we had some dim notion of what we were, and how little chance we had of being anything else. Otherwise, why would we have been so preoccupied with destruction? Anyway, the pebbles were collected quickly, and everybody looked at me to begin the fun.

“Come on, y’all.”

We crept to the edge of the bushes that bordered the narrow road in front of Miss Lottie’s place. She was working placidly, kneeling over the flowers, her...
dark hand plunged into the golden mound. Suddenly “zing”—an expertly-aimed stone cut the head off one of the blossoms.

“Who out there?” Miss Lottie’s backside came down and her head came up as her sharp eyes searched the bushes. “You better git!”

We had crouched down out of sight in the bushes, where we stifled the giggles that insisted on coming. Miss Lottie gazed warily across the road for a moment, then cautiously returned to her weeding. “Zing”—Joey sent a pebble into the blooms, and another marigold was beheaded.

Miss Lottie was enraged now. She began struggling to her feet, leaning on a rickety cane and shouting, “Y’all git! Go on home!” Then the rest of the kids let loose with their pebbles, stirring the flowers and laughing wildly and senselessly at Miss Lottie’s impotent rage. She shook her stick at us and started shakily toward the road crying, “Git ’long! John Burke! John Burke, come help!”

Then I lost my head entirely, mad with the power of inciting such rage, and ran out of the bushes in the storm of pebbles, straight toward Miss Lottie chanting madly, “Old witch, fell in a ditch, picked up a penny and thought she was rich!” The children screamed with delight, dropped their pebbles and joined the crazy dance, swarming around Miss Lottie like bees and chanting, “Old lady witch!” while she screamed curses at us. The madness lasted only a moment, for John Burke, startled at last, lurched out of his chair, and we dashed for the bushes just as Miss Lottie’s cane went whizzing at my head.

I did not join the merriment when the kids gathered again under the oak in our bare yard. Suddenly I was ashamed, and I did not like being ashamed. The child in me sulked and said it was all in fun, but the woman in me flinched at the thought of the malicious attack that I had led. The mood lasted all afternoon. When we ate the beans and rice that was supper that night, I did not notice my father’s silence, for he was always silent these days, nor did I notice my mother’s absence, for she always worked until well into evening.

Joey and I had a particularly bitter argument after supper; his exuberance got not notice my father’s silence, for he was always silent these days, nor did I notice my mother’s absence, for she always worked until well into evening. Joey and I had a particularly bitter argument after supper; his exuberance got not notice my father’s silence, for he was always silent these days, nor did I notice my mother’s absence, for she always worked until well into evening.

When I awoke, somewhere in the middle of the night, my mother had returned, and I vaguely listened to the conversation that was audible through the thin walls that separated our rooms. At first I heard no words, only voices.

My mother’s voice was like a cool, dark room in summer—peaceful, soothing, quiet. I loved to listen to it; it made things seem all right somehow. But my father’s voice cut through hers, shattering the peace.

“Twenty-two years, Maybelle, twenty-two years,” he was saying, “and I got nothing for you, nothing, nothing.”

“It’s all right, honey, you’ll get something. Everybody’s out of work now, you know that.”

“It ain’t right. Ain’t no man ought to eat his woman’s food year in and year out, and see his children running wild. Ain’t nothing right about that.”

**Vocabulary**

- **impotent** (im’pa-tant) adj. powerless; lacking strength or vigor

**Language Coach**

**Etymology** Possible answers: malicious; malcontent, maladjusted, malformed Have students use the root and context to define malicious. Possible answer: with bad intent
“Honey, you took good care of us when you had it. Ain’t nobody got
nothing nowadays.”

“I ain’t talking about nobody else, I’m talking about me. God knows I try.”
My mother said something I could not hear, and my father cried out louder,
“What must a man do, tell me that?”

“Look, we ain’t starving. I git paid every week, and Mrs. Ellis is real nice
about giving me things. She gonna let me have Mr. Ellis’ old coat for you
this winter——”

“Damn Mr. Ellis’ coat! And damn his money! You think I want white folks’
leavings? Damn, Maybelle”—and suddenly he sobbed, loudly and painfully,
and cried helplessly and hopelessly in the dark night. I had never heard a man
cry before. I did not know men ever cried. I covered my ears with my hands
but could not cut off the sound of my father’s harsh, painful, despairing sobs.
My father was a strong man who would whisk a child upon his shoulders and
and go singing through the house. My father whittled toys for us and laughed so
loud that the great oak seemed to laugh with him, and taught us how to fish
and hunt rabbits. How could it be that my father was crying? But the sobs
went on, unstifled, finally quieting until I could hear my mother’s voice, deep
and rich, humming softly as she used to hum to a frightened child.

The world had lost its boundary lines. My mother, who was small and soft,
was now the strength of the family; my father, who was the rock on which
the family had been built, was sobbing like the tiniest child. Everything
was suddenly out of tune, like a broken accordion. Where did I fit into this
crazy picture? I do not now remember my thoughts, only a feeling of great
bewilderment and fear.

Long after the sobbing and the humming had stopped, I lay on the palette,
still as stone with my hands over my ears, wishing that I too could cry and
be comforted. The night was silent now except for the sound of the crickets
and of Joey’s soft breathing. But the room was too crowded with fear to allow
me to sleep, and finally, feeling the terrible aloneness of 4

I was out the window and halfway down the road before Joey caught
up with me.

HELP STUDENTS USE CONTEXT CLUES TO FIGURE OUT
THE MEANING OF “MADLY” (LINE 181); “THIN” (LINE
199); “CRIED” (LINE 212); “WHISK” (LINE 222); “RICH”
(LINE 227); AND “SOFT” (LINES 228 AND 237, WITH
DIFFERENT MEANINGS).

TARGETED PASSAGE [LINES 218–245]
This passage establishes Lizabeth’s emotional state, which will lead her to
take an important action.

• In what ways has Lizabeth’s world “lost its
boundary lines”? (Line 228)
• What does she wish for? (Lines 235–236)
• Why does Lizabeth awaken Joey? (Lines
237–245)
“Wait, Lizabeth, where you going?”

I was running as if the Furies3 were after me, as perhaps they were—running silently and furiously until I came to where I had half-known I was headed: to Miss Lottie’s yard.

The half-dawn light was more eerie than complete darkness, and in it the old house was like the ruin that my world had become—foul and crumbling, a grotesque caricature.4 It looked haunted, but I was not afraid because I was haunted too.

“Lizabeth, you lost your mind?” panted Joey.

I had indeed lost my mind, for all the smoldering emotions of that summer swelled in me and burst—the great need for my mother who was never there, the hopelessness of our poverty and degradation, the bewilderment of being neither child nor woman and yet both at once, the fear unleashed by my father’s tears. And these feelings combined in one great impulse toward destruction.

3. Furies: In Greek and Roman mythology, the Furies were three goddesses of vengeance, or revenge.

4. a grotesque caricature (grō-tesk’ kär’-ti-ka-chor’): a bizarre and absurdly exaggerated representation of something.

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I had indeed lost my mind, for all the smoldering emotions of that summer swelled in me and burst—the great need for my mother who was never there, the hopelessness of our poverty and degradation, the bewilderment of being neither child nor woman and yet both at once, the fear unleashed by my father’s tears. And these feelings combined in one great impulse toward destruction.
"Lizabeth!"
I leaped furiously into the mounds of marigolds and pulled madly, trampling and pulling and destroying the perfect yellow blooms. The fresh smell of early morning and of dew-soaked marigolds spurred me on as I went tearing and mangling and sobbing while Joey tugged my dress or my waist crying, "Lizabeth stop, please stop!"
And then I was sitting in the ruined little garden among the uprooted and ruined flowers, crying and crying, and it was too late to undo what I had done. Joey was sitting beside me, silent and frightened, not knowing what to say. Then, "Lizabeth, look..."

I opened my swollen eyes and saw in front of me a pair of large calloused feet; my gaze lifted to the swollen legs, the age-distorted body clad in a tight cotton night dress, and then the shadowed Indian face surrounded by stubby white hair. And there was no rage in the face now, now that the garden was destroyed and there was nothing any longer to be protected.

"M-miss Lottie!" I scrambled to my feet and just stood there and stared at her, and that was the moment when childhood faded and womanhood began. That violent, crazy act was the last act of childhood. For as I gazed at the immobile face with the sad, weary eyes, I gazed upon a kind of reality that is hidden to childhood. The witch was no longer a witch but only a broken old woman who had dared to create beauty in the midst of ugliness and sterility. She had been born in squalor and lived in it all her life. Now at the end of that life she had nothing except a falling-down hut, a wrecked body, and John Burke, the mindless son of her passion. Whatever verve there was left in her, whatever was of love and beauty and joy that had not been squeezed out by life, had been there in the marigolds she had so tenderly cared for.

Of course I could not express the things that I knew about Miss Lottie as I stood there awkward and ashamed. The years have put words to the things I knew in that moment, and as I look back upon it, I know that that moment marked the end of innocence. People think of the loss of innocence as meaning the loss of virginity, but this is far from true. Innocence involves an unseeing acceptance of things at face value, an ignorance of the area below the surface. In that humiliating moment I looked beyond myself and into the depths of another person. This was the beginning of compassion, and one cannot have both compassion and innocence.

The years have taken me worlds away from that time and that place, from the dust and squalor of our lives and from the bright thing that I destroyed in a blind childish striking out at God-knows-what. Miss Lottie died long ago and many years have passed since I last saw her hut, completely barren at last, for despite my wild contrition she never planted marigolds again. Yet, there are times when the image of those passionate yellow mounds returns with a painful poignancy. For one does not have to be ignorant and poor to find life barren as the dusty yards of one’s town. And I too have known in that moment, and as I look back upon it, I know that that moment marked the end of innocence. People think of the loss of innocence as meaning the loss of virginity, but this is far from true. Innocence involves an unseeing acceptance of things at face value, an ignorance of the area below the surface. In that humiliating moment I looked beyond myself and into the depths of another person. This was the beginning of compassion, and one cannot have both compassion and innocence.

For English Language Learners

Vocabulary

squalor (skwəlˈər) n. a filthy, shabby, and wretched condition, as from poverty

Targeted Passage

squalor

Common Core RL 4

Paraphrase

Paraphrase the narrator’s thoughts about innocence and compassion in lines 295–300.

Questions

For Struggling Readers

Targeted Passage [Lines 276–300]

This passage presents the moment at which Lizabeth’s perspective changes and she begins thinking like an adult.

- As she looks at Miss Lottie, what does Lizabeth see instead of a witch? (lines 285–286)
- What does Lizabeth realize about the marigolds’ importance to Miss Lottie? (lines 289–291)

- Why does Lizabeth see this moment as the end of her innocence? (lines 295–300)

Draw Conclusions

Possible answer: The realization of what she has done, the purging of her pent-up emotions, and the shock of her encounter with Miss Lottie have enabled Lizabeth to see "a kind of reality that is hidden to childhood" (lines 284–285).

Have students go back through the story and note the other instances of fairy-tale metaphors that are used to describe Miss Lottie. Ask students how these metaphors compare to fairy tales they know.

Paraphrase

Possible answer: In its truest form, innocence means accepting things as they appear to be on the surface, without thought or question. Compassion, however, involves looking beneath the surface.

Selection Wrap-Up

Read With a Purpose

Now that students have read the story, ask them how the narrator must have changed between the time described in the story and the time at which she narrates it. Possible answer: She has risen out of poverty and ignorance. How has she not changed? Possible answer: She still remembers and regrets her actions.

Critique

Ask students what parts of the story they liked most. Why? What parts did they like least? Why?
Comprehension
1. Recall How old is the narrator in the story?
2. Recall What is unusual about Miss Lottie’s marigolds?
3. Summarize What does the narrator do that she later regrets?

Text Analysis
4. Understand the Influence of Setting Note the most prominent features of the story’s setting and the figurative language the narrator often uses to describe them. How do they affect the narrator’s outlook on life?
5. Draw Conclusions Review the chart you made as you read. What leads the young Lizabeth to destroy Miss Lottie’s marigolds? Support your conclusions with evidence from the story.
6. Analyze Climax Identify the climax of the story. What change does this turning point initiate in the narrator? in Miss Lottie? Cite evidence to support your answers.
7. Analyze Symbolism Miss Lottie’s marigolds are central to the story. What do they symbolize? To help you interpret their meaning, create a chart like the one shown to record descriptions of the marigolds and the ideas you associate with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Marigolds</th>
<th>Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“a brilliant splash of sunny yellow” (lines 10–11)</td>
<td>“sunny yellow”, like the sun, gives energy and life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Analyze Theme and Setting The narrator and Miss Lottie respond to their impoverished surroundings in very different ways. What message does the story convey about the impact of poverty on people’s lives? What other themes does the story impart?
9. Evaluate Ideas Reread the next-to-last paragraph (lines 292–300). Do you agree with what the narrator says about innocence and compassion? Use evidence from the story as well as your own experiences to explore your answer.

Text Criticism
10. Social Context Can “Marigolds” be considered social commentary on racial segregation? Cite evidence to support your opinion.

What if life had a RESET button?
If you had another chance, what in your past would you do differently?

9. Students may agree or disagree but should support their responses with thoughtful, well-supported reasons.

Text Criticism
Possible answer:
10. Students should recognize that the strongest indication of segregation lies in the parents’ job situations. Opinions will vary but should be clearly stated and reasonably defended.
Vocabulary in Context

▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Decide whether the words in each pair are similar or different in meaning.

1. perverse/agreeable
2. squalor/splendor
3. exuberance/enthusiasm
4. retribution/retaliation
5. nostalgia/homesickness
6. futile/effective
7. poignantly/indifferently
8. bravado/timidity
9. degradation/humiliation
10. ostensibly/apparently
11. impotent/powerless
12. stoicism/emotionalism

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

- context
- interpret
- reveal
- significant
- tradition

Marigolds play a significant role in the lives of both Miss Lottie and the narrator. Think of one thing—it could be an object or a place—that has been significant in your life. Write a paragraph expressing what you feel about it and why you feel that way. Use at least one Academic Vocabulary word in your paragraph.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: THE SUFFIX -OR

Many words have endings called suffixes that can help you determine a word’s meaning. For example, the word squalor ends with -or, a noun suffix derived from Latin meaning “state or condition of.” You may recognize squalor as similar to the word squalid, meaning “very dirty or filthy.” These two insights can help you conclude that squalor means “a filthy condition.” Recognizing this suffix in other unfamiliar words can provide clues to the meanings of those words.

PRACTICE Use each numbered word in a sentence. Then use your knowledge of the suffix -or to figure out the meaning of each word. Use a dictionary to check your work.

1. terror
2. furo
3. candor
4. stupor
5. fervor
6. pallor

Possible definitions:
1. condition of great fear
2. furious state or condition
3. candid condition or expression
4. condition of dulled sense
5. state of intense feeling
6. pale condition

CLASSROOM TIPS

Encourage students to use context in combination with suffix clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words.

ANSWERS

Vocabulary in Context

▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

1. different
2. different
3. similar
4. similar
5. similar
6. different
7. different
8. different
9. similar
10. similar
11. different
12. different

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

Allow students to use concept webs to help them brainstorm different items and examples of their significance.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: THE SUFFIX -OR

Encourage students to use context in combination with suffix clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Possible definitions:
1. condition of great fear
2. furious state or condition
3. candid condition or expression
4. condition of dulled sense
5. state of intense feeling
6. pale condition

Differentiated Instruction

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Vocabulary: Prefixes and Suffixes Have students work in small groups to review the Word List. Group members should teach each other the prefixes and suffixes whose meanings they know, using a dictionary for confirmation. They should then use the dictionary to explore the meanings of word parts that are unfamiliar to them.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/PRE–AP

Vocabulary Practice Ask students to use five pairs of words in sentences that compare or contrast people, places, or events. Have students compare the uses that they found for these words.

Assess and Reteach

Assess

DIAGNOSTIC AND SELECTION TESTS

Selection Test A, B/C pp. 115–116, 117–118

Interactive Selection Test on thinkcentral.com

Reteach

Level Up Online Tutorials on thinkcentral.com