Unit 1: Short Stories Study Guide

Stories: “Lamb to the Slaughter” by Roald Dahl; “In a Grove” by Ryunosuke Akutagawa; “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson; “Hills Like White Elephants” by Ernest Hemingway; “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe; excerpts from Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell

“Lamb to the Slaughter” by Roald Dahl

1. Characters – Mary Maloney (wife); Patrick (husband, police officer); Sam (grocer); Jack (other popo)
2. Setting – Maloney house & grocery store; 1950s, one evening
3. Plot – P. arrives home, drinks, tells M. bad news (leaving her); **she kills him**; goes grocery shopping; feeds murder weapon to popo

Questions –

1. Mary went to the grocery store b/c she needed an alibi.
2. M. kills P. with a leg of lamb.
3. Mary was sewing when he came home.
4. P drank 2 drinks.
5. BONUS: What was the main detective’s names? JACK NOONAN.

“In a Grove” by Ryunosuke Akutagawa

1. Characters
   1. Main – Takehiko (husband), Masago (wife, short), Tajomaru (thief, rapist)
   2. Secondary – Woodcutter, Priest, Masago’s mom, Medium
2. Setting -- Japan 🡪 Yamashina 🡪 in a grove (woods)
3. Plot – Who murdered Takehiko? Conflicting stories from multiple people.

QUESTIONS

1. Buddhist priest saw the couple on the road.
2. FLASHBACK is a major part of the story.
3. AMBIGUITY is a major part of the story.
4. Takehiko main PROTAGONIST.

“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson

1. Characters
   1. Main – Tessie Hutchinson, Bill (husband); Mr. Summers; Old Man Warner
   2. Secondary – Mr. Graves; Bill Jr, Nancy, Davey; Ms. Dunbar; Ms. Delacroix
2. Setting – 10 AM, June 27, 1948; small village in New England
3. Plot – Village meets in town square; black box w/slips; Tessie Hutchinson is chosen; she gets stoned.

QUESTIONS

1. Jack Watson was nervous b/c his dad has died from a previous lottery.
2. SYMBOLISM – black dot – death/sin
3. FORESHADOWING – boys stacking stones at the beginning
4. Explain why Tessie probably did NOT forget what day it was.

“Hills Like White Elephants” by Ernest Hemingway

1. Characters – Jig (girl); man (American); bartender (woman)
2. **Setting – Post-WWI; Spain 🡪 btwn Madrid and Barcelona/Ebro valley; train station & bar**
3. Plot – Bar: couple are drinking, arguing, facing a big decision.

QUESTIONS

1. The girl’s nickname is Jig.
2. Pregnant Jig drinks a beer.
3. Consider the SYMBOLISM of the hills & train tracks (straightforward)

“The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe

1. Characters – Montresor (killer, protagonist?) Fortunato (victim, **wine dude**) Luchesi (never meet, bait)
2. Setting – Carnival season (February); Venice, Italy; streets, catacombs
3. Plot – M wants revenge on F; gets him drunk, down into catacombs, buries him alive.

QUESTIONS

1. Fortunato is buried alive behind a brick wall.
2. Luchesi was not involved in the actual murder.
3. M. gives F. credit as a good wine connoisseur, but, generally, hates him.

BONUS: describe the Montresor family coat of arms.

Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell (intro – chapter 3)