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ENG-361

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Part 1 Analyzing Place in Short Stories

In my class, Multicultural Literature, we read a story by Franz Kafka called "The Metamorphosis." The main character, Gregor, was turned into a giant bug, and he has to adjust to his new reality. I chose this story because most of the story takes place inside the house and Gregor's room. With Gregor being such a massive part of his family as the primary source of income, the family also had to make adjustments. The family could afford the lovely apartment because Gregor was able to make enough money to afford it. After a time, the rest of the family had to go out and get jobs or do work to afford the apartment. Also, Gregor transformed into a bug, the condo and Gregor himself had become such a burden that when Gregor dies, the family is happy to leave the house for once to enjoy themselves. The apartment was an essential part of the story but not as much as the characters themselves. I think the condo represented the family's status amongst the rest of their neighbors and friends. As I said before, it also started to describe the burden that began to form over the family's head. Even though the family would have probably been better off moving and getting rid of the house, they couldn't because Gregor could not leave his room. The apartment was also where everyone would interact and have most of their memories as a family. The dad didn't work, and neither did the mother; the sister was in school, so Gregor was everything to the family. There is a scene where the sister started to play

her violin, and Gregor left his room to see her play. This story is very tragic because you can see that everyone got so used to Gregor providing everything that they got complacent, and once he could no longer provide, the family struggled. It is almost like they were taking advantage of him, but he loved taking care of his family and wanted to provide his sister with an excellent opportunity to go to a good school. I truly enjoyed reading this story, and hopefully, I didn't completely miss the mark on this portion.

Reference

Kafka, F. "The Metamorphosis." *The Complete Stories*, Edited by Nahum N. Glazer, Schocken Books, 1971, p. 89. https://www.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Kafka_Metamorphosis.pdf

Part 2 Short Story

Growing up in the Mississippi Delta was great, with all of the histories it can bring with it and all of the tragedy. I grew up in Leland, MS, with all of 5,000 people living there. So I can sit here and complain about where I grew up and all of the opportunities I missed because it was small and MS. But if I'm being honest, I wouldn't have it any other way. The home of Muddy Waters, the Blues, and Jim Henson. Now, Jim Henson lived just outside of Leland in this small village called Stoneville; he would go to the Creek close to him a play. That Creek is called Deer Creek, and that's where Henson's imagination ran wild and created the character he would call Kermit. I know that was a long, little introduction to say that I am from

Leland, and so is Jim Henson, but then to say, not really. But we have to establish the importance of this Creek that runs right down the middle of Leland.

All of my memories as a kid involve that Creek in some way. I remember going to the Creek and feeding the ducks as they swim along the Creek. We would sit there for hours until it was just before dark. I remember the yellow glow of the lightning bugs floating in the air and right above the water. I can hear my dad saying, "Come on, boy, we can come back tomorrow. Momma has supper ready." So, we would walk the two blocks back to our house, never too far or too close to the Creek. I would also gauge just how much I had grown by how far my mom and dad would let me get away from my house. The crazy thing is they would let me walk to the Shop N Stop to get a couple of things for supper but, "Do not cross that street over to the creek side of the road until you get to the bridge. I don't want you getting too close to that water, I know you can't swim", my mom would say. The store was less than a mile from my house, and there was zero crime, plus everybody knew everybody.

The days and months would pass, but the trips to Deer Creek were part of our family tradition. Anytime family visited, we would take them to the Creek to feed the ducks; it was the highlight of any visit, for me anyway. Well, you know as they say the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. I would never have thought the same would be for our beloved Creek. As I said, I loved that Creek, and most of my fond memories involve that Creek. Be that as it may, with any fond memory, there is always that one that you never want to recall but can't seem to get out of your mind.

I was at home alone one day, this would often happen as my mom work just down the street and my dad was a truck driver. Well, I figured I had just turned 14, I should be able to go down to the Creek by myself. I jumped on my bike and rode down to the Creek. I carefully

crossed the road to the creek and started to walk down the bank. I sat down and watched the ducks pass by. I looked around and found rocks to skip. I found this nice and flat one, perfect for getting maximum skips on the flat surface of the Creek. I thought, "I know I can get to the other side of the creek with this rock." I pulled my arm back to my side to get the rock at the perfect angle, and I threw it with all of my might. One skip, two skips, three.... Thunk. The rock had hit something in the middle of the Creek. The object began to spin clockwise in the water, and whatever it was, it was getting closer to me. It looked like a large doll with red hair and a white dress. "Man, I bet some poor girl sure is missing this doll; I bet if I can get it and take it home, my mom would know how to get it to who owns it," I thought. So, as it was coming closer, I grabbed a stick to make sure I could grab it, and it wouldn't get away. As it was getting closer, I noticed the color of the arms and legs was off. Not thinking anything much of it, I pulled as hard as I could and reached out with my right hand to grab the arm of the doll. I grabbed the arm, it felt squishy, and it made me drop the arm and pull back in fear. I then knew that this was not a doll at all; I grabbed it again and pulled it up onto the bank. The body rolled over and fell half in the water and half out. It was the daughter of a neighbor that lives right next to the Creek. She couldn't be any more than eight years old. I had just seen them together yesterday in this very spot playing with ducks. She must've fallen in without her parents around. I backed up the bank of the river and jumped on my bike. I rode as fast as I could to get back home to call my mom. I approached my house, and in one fell swoop, I jumped from my bike, threw it down, and ran up the front steps of my house. I called my mom but no answer. I called again, and this time her coworker answered the phone. "Hello, Sterling Brothers?" she said. I frantically said, "Hello, I need my mom. Where is she!?!?" She answered, "Who is this?" She asked. "This is Daniel, Mrs. Conners, and I need my mom, hurry," I answered. "Daniel, what is it you want? I am busy here;

you know that," my mom said, sounding aggravated. "Mom, I went to the creek, and I found something, I found," I said. My mom cut me off, "What were you doing at the creek? You know you aren't supposed to go without me." "But mom, I found Sara. I need you to come home," I said. "Boy, don't play with me that's not funny." "Mom, it's not a joke. Come home, please she needs help." "Ok, I'll be there in a minute." You could tell she sounded worried then. It must've taken her five minutes to get home, but it felt much longer. She parked the car on the side of the road, and she told me to get into the car. "Show me where she is at," she demanded. I jumped into the car, and we sped down the road to the Creek. Once she got close to the Creek, I grabbed for the handle. I was already getting out when she stopped. I started running across the road, and my mom reached out and grabbed me just before my foot hit the road. A car rushed past me as I was pulled back. "Watch where you are going. We don't need anything else to happen," She yelled. This time I looked down both lanes before I crossed. I quickly reached the bank of the Creek, and I saw the haunting eyes staring up at me. "Right there," I said, pointing at Sara's lifeless body. "Oh, my word," my mom said as she started down the bank. She grabbed me and said, "Daniel, Daniel." She grabbed my face and turned it away from Sara. "Daniel, go to that house right there and knock on the door and ask for help." I knew my mom was strong, but at that moment, she was superhuman. As I went to the closest house, she walked down the creek bank and pulled Sara into her arms. She carried her up the bank and to a flat spot next to the road. My mom knew that it was too late, but she tried to help anyway. My mom did CPR for 25 minutes until the ambulance came and told her to stop. She was exhausted. I do not remember when Sara's parents got there, but you could hear her mom sobbing at the sight of her baby girl lifeless. I heard that the babysitter fell asleep, and the front door was left open to let the summer breeze pass through. Sara pushed past the screen door and made her way to the Creek, where she

would see a duck and try to pet it. Once she fell in, she never had a chance. Their house was right down from where I was at; how could I have not seen her? Those questions haunt me to this day. As great a life that Creek has given me, it can also take it away.