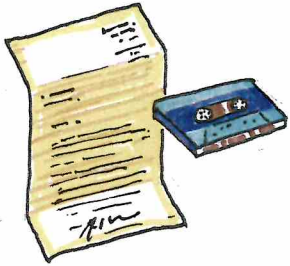
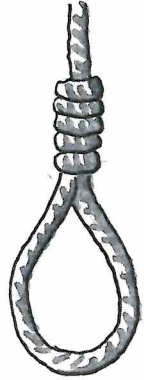




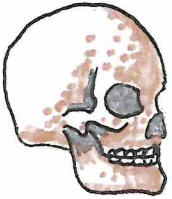
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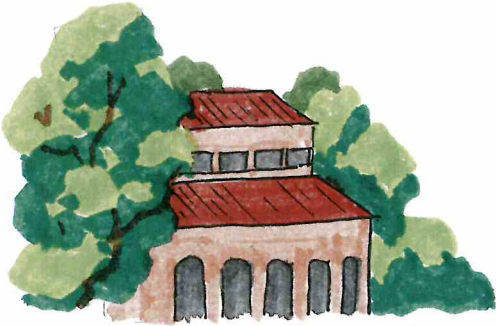
CRIME



EXTRACTS



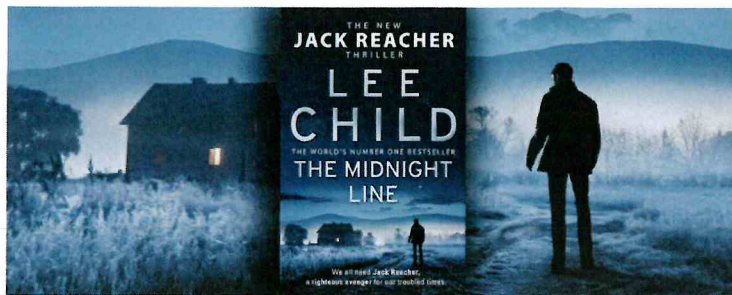
ANALYSED



# Teacher Notes - 10

## Unseen Crime Extracts





Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Lee Child Christie has shaped meanings. [25 marks]

Jack Reacher is back in *The Midnight Line* – the new thriller by Lee Child that sees our hero set on a simple quest for justice.

Jack Reacher takes an aimless stroll past a pawn shop in a small Midwestern town. In the window he sees a West Point class ring from 2005. It's tiny. It's a woman cadet's graduation present to herself. Why would she give it up?

### *The Midnight Line* by Lee Child

Jack Reacher and Michelle Chang spent three days in Milwaukee. On the fourth morning she was gone. Reacher came back to the room with coffee and found a note on his pillow. He had seen such notes before. They all said the same thing. Either directly or indirectly. Chang's note was indirect. And more elegant than most. Not in terms of presentation. It was a ballpoint scrawl on motel notepaper gone wavy with damp. But elegant in terms of expression. She had used a simile, to explain and flatter and apologize all at once. She had written, *You're like New York City. I love to visit, but I could never live there.*

- blunt style

He did what he always did. He let her go. He understood. No apology required. He couldn't live anywhere. His whole life was a visit. Who could put up with that? He drank his coffee, and then hers, and took his toothbrush from the bathroom glass, and walked away, through a knot of streets, left and right, towards the bus depot. She would be in a taxi, he guessed. To the airport. She had a gold card and a cell phone.

- obsessive behaviour

At the depot he did what he always did. He bought a ticket for the first bus out, no matter where it was going. Which turned out to be an end-of-the-line place way north and west, on the shore of Lake Superior. Fundamentally the wrong direction. Colder, not warmer. But rules were rules, so he climbed aboard. He sat and watched out the window. Wisconsin flashed by, its hayfields baled and stubbly, its pastures worn, its trees dark and heavy. It was the end of summer.

- pathetic fallacy?

It was the end of several things. She had asked the usual questions. Which were really statements in disguise. She could understand a year. Absolutely. A kid who grew up on bases overseas, and was then deployed to bases overseas, with nothing in between except four years at West Point, which wasn't exactly known as a leisure-heavy institution, then obviously such a guy was going to take a year to travel and see the sights before he settled down. Maybe two years. But not more. And not permanently. Face it. The pathology meter was twitching.

All said with concern, and no judgement. No big deal. Just a two-minute conversation. But the message was clear. As clear as such messages could be. Something about denial. He asked, denial of what? He didn't secretly think his life was a problem.

That proves it, she said.

So he got on the bus to the end-of-the-line place, and he would have ridden it all the way, because rules were rules, except he took a stroll at the second comfort stop, and he saw a ring in a pawn shop window.

what are the 'rules'?

The second comfort stop came late in the day, and it was on the sad side of a small town. Possibly a seat of county government. Or some minor part of it. Maybe the county police department was headquartered there. There was a jail in town. That was clear. Reacher could see bail bond offices, and a pawn shop. Full service, right there, side by side on a run-down street beyond the restroom block.

He was stiff from sitting. He scanned the street beyond the restroom block. He started walking towards it. No real reason. Just strolling. Just loosening up. As he got closer he counted the guitars in the pawn shop window. Seven. Sad stories, all of them. Like the songs on country radio. Dreams, unfulfilled. Lower down in the window were glass shelves loaded with smaller stuff. All kinds of jewellery. Including rings. Including class rings. All kinds of high schools. Except one of them wasn't. One of them was West Point 2005.

It was a handsome ring. It was a conventional shape, and a conventional style, with intricate gold filigree, and a black stone, maybe semi-precious, maybe glass, surrounded by an oval hoop that had West Point around the top, and 2005 around the bottom. Old-style letters. A classic approach. Either respect for bygone days, or a lack of imagination. West Pointers designed their own rings. Whatever they wanted. An old tradition. Or an old entitlement, because West Point class rings were the first class rings of all.

It was a very small ring.

ominous?

Reacher wouldn't have gotten it on any of his fingers. Not even his left-hand pinky, not even past the nail. Certainly not past the first knuckle. It was tiny. It was a woman's ring. Possibly a replica for a girlfriend or a fiancée. That happened. Like a tribute or a souvenir.

But possibly not.

drama

violence / tension

Reacher opened the pawn shop door. He stepped inside. A guy at the register glanced up. He was a big bear of a man, scruffy and unkempt. Maybe in his middle thirties, dark, with plenty of fat over a big frame anyway. With some kind of cunning in his eyes. Enough to calibrate a response to his sudden six-five two-fifty visitor. Driven purely by instinct. He wasn't afraid. He had a loaded gun under the counter. Unless he was an idiot. Which he didn't look. All the same, the guy didn't want to risk sounding aggressive. But he didn't want to sound obsequious, either. A matter of pride.

So he said, 'How's it going?'

Not well, Reacher thought. To be honest. Chang would be back in Seattle by then. Back in her life.

back to the beginning - full circle

## Teacher Notes on the extract:

Third person omniscient narrator, although focalised through Jack

Cliché of protagonist have trouble maintaining relationships – idea of a backdrop of being haunted by a broken relationship, the shadow of the past – Crime writing conventions

Cliché of the protagonist as maverick, outsider – “he couldn’t live anywhere” – the cliché of the outsider

Use of short, simple sentences to create a direct style of delivery which we might link to a more hard boiled, “cold” school of writing – “Face it” “No Big Deal” – staccato style, blunt, direct

Convention of the protagonist having a military background – adds to the macho physicality that is stereotypical of the hard boiled school. This links in to idea of discipline, routine and detail consciousness which is also a common characteristic. He is “Six five, two fifty” - powerful presence, intimidating

Although 3<sup>rd</sup> person we get a mimicking of the interior monologue – “his whole life was a visit” as we are invited into Jack’s thought processes through Free Indirect Discourse method.

The idea of the detective as rootless, restless – he “walked away”

The use of the enigmatic device – the “ring in the pawn shop window” to act as the narrative hook and the catalyst for the protagonist’s “quest”

Setting: Protagonist in the heart of “small town America” – “the sad side of a small town”. Location is deliberately low-key and indistinct. We could be anywhere – very normal, mundane locale typical of the authenticity, believability and “down to earth” nature of settings in much crime writing. Not glamorous or distinctive. Identifiable.

Obsessive detail on the ring is typical ingredient of crime – the enigmatic “clue” with its own “backstory”. Element of coincidence – The West Point shared experience?

We are very much part of Jack’s random, quite poetic thoughts – seven guitars in the window, “Sad stories, all of them.....Dreams, unfulfilled”. The OBSERVANT detective – typical.

Shop owner suggests violence is part of this environment – “a loaded gun under the counter” – a casual, normalising of violence, suggesting desensitisation towards guns, firearms

A spare, blunt, basic, unemotional style of delivery – little imagery or use of elaborate description

Powerful use of narrative hook – allusion to possible female “victim” – typical of crime – “it was a very small ring”, the use of the enigmatic, ominous: “But possibly not.” To create enigma

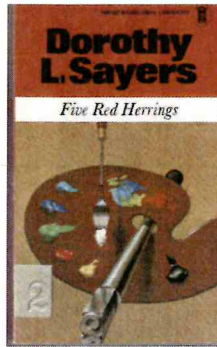
“It was the end of summer” – suggestion of an encroaching darkness? Pathetic fallacy – “Colder, not warmer” – reflects emotions as well as weather?

Protagonist driven to resolve “puzzles” and seek “justice” - obsessive

Setting: Lots of typical American crime locations – Jail, bond offices, pawn shop – could be anywhere, non-specific, faceless place. BUT: personification “sad side of a small town” and pathetic fallacy – “colder, not warmer”, trees “dark and heavy” bring setting to life at times.

Reacher has own system for living his life – “rules were rules”, “he bought a ticket for the first bus out, no matter where it was going” – eccentric, driven, obsessive, disturbed?

Pleasure of Crime: The idea of a “quest” and a mysterious object creating enigma. The idea of retribution and justice, offering catharsis for the reader



Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Dorothy L Sayers has shaped meanings. [25 marks]

In the extract Lord Peter Wimsey hears about a mysterious death while he is in Scotland. He decides to investigate further.

## CAMPBELL DEAD

"Did ye hear about Mr. Campbell?" said Mr. Murdoch of the McClellan Arms, polishing a glass carefully as a preparation for filling it with beer.

"Why, what further trouble has he managed to get into since last night?" asked Wimsey. He leaned an elbow on the bar and prepared to relish anything that might be offered to him.

"He's deid," said Mr. Murdoch.

*use of dialect for 'colour' / character*

"Deid?" said Wimsey, startled into unconscious mimicry.

Mr. Murdoch nodded.

"Och, ay; McAdam's juist brocht the news in from Gatehouse. They found the body at 2 o'clock up in the hills by Newton-Stewart."

"Good heavens!" said Wimsey. "But what did he die of?"

*upper class - typical of protagonist "Golden Age"*

"Juist tumbled intae the burn," replied Mr. Murdoch, "an' drooned himself, by what they say. The pollis'll be up there now tae bring him doon."

"An accident, I suppose."

*— details*

"Ay, imph'm. The folk at the Borgan seed him pentin' there shortly after 10 this morning on the wee bit high ground by the brig, and Major Dougal gaed by at 2 o'clock wi' his rod an' spied the body liggin' in the burn. It's slippery there and fou o' broken rocks. I'm thinkin' he'll ha' climbed doon tae fetch some watter for his pentin', mebbe, and slippit on the stanes."

"He wouldn't want water for oil-paints," said Wimsey, thoughtfully, "but he might have wanted to mix mustard for his sandwiches or fill a kettle or get a drop for his whiskey. I say, Murdoch, I think I'll just toddle over there in the car and have a look at him. Corpses are rather in my line, you know. Where is this place exactly?"

*— light, satirical tone*

"Ye maun tak' the coast-road through Creetown to Newton-Stewart," said Mr. Murdoch, "and turn to the richt over the brig and then to the richt again at the signpost along the road to Bargrennan and juist follow the road till ye turn over a wee brig on the richt-hand side over the Cree and then tak' the richt-hand road."

"In fact," said Wimsey, "you keep on turning to the right. I think I know the place. There's a bridge and another gate, and a burn with salmon in it."

"Ay, the Minnoch, whaur Mr. Dennison caught the big fish last year. Well, it'll be juist afore ye come to the gate, away to your left abune the brig."

Wimsey nodded.

— playful

"I'll be off then," he said, "I don't want to miss the fun. See you later, old boy. I say--I don't mind betting this is the most popular thing Campbell ever did. Nothing in life became him like the leaving it, eh, what?"

---

It was a marvellous day in late August, and Wimsey's soul purred within him as he pushed the car along. The road from Kirkcudbright to Newton-Stewart is of a varied loveliness hard to surpass, and with a sky full of bright sun and rolling cloud-banks, hedges filled with flowers, a well-made road, a lively engine and the prospect of a good corpse at the end of it, Lord Peter's cup of happiness was full. He was a man who loved simple pleasures.

— dark humour?

He passed through Gatehouse, waving a cheerful hand to the proprietor of the Anwoth Hotel, climbed up beneath the grim blackness of Cardoness Castle, drank in for the thousandth time the strange, Japanese beauty of Mossyard Farm, set like a red jewel under its tufted trees on the blue sea's rim, and the Italian loveliness of Kirkdale, with its fringe of thin and twisted trees and the blue Wigtownshire coast gleaming across the bay. Then the old Border keep of Barholm, surrounded by white-washed farm buildings; then a sudden gleam of bright grass, like a lawn in Avalon, under the shade of heavy trees. The wild garlic was over now, but the scent of it seemed still to hang about the place in memory, filling it with the shudder of vampire wings and memories of the darker side of Border history. Then the old granite crushing mill on its white jetty, surrounded by great clouds of stone-dust, with a derrick sprawled across the sky and a tug riding at anchor. Then the salmon-nets and the wide semi-circular sweep of the bay, rosy every summer with sea-pinks, purple-brown with the mud of the estuary, majestic with the huge hump of Cairnsmuir rising darkly over Creetown.

Wimsey pulled up as he came to the second bridge and the rusty gate, and drew the car on to the grass. There were other cars there, and glancing along to the left he saw a little group of men gathered on the edge of the burn forty or fifty yards from the road. He approached by way of a little sheep-track, and found himself standing on the edge of a scarp of granite that shelved steeply down to the noisy waters of the Minnoch. Beside him, close to the edge of the rock, stood a sketching easel, with a stool and a palette. Down below, at the edge of a clear brown pool, fringed with knotted hawthorns, lay something humped and dismal, over which two or three people were bending.

A man, who might have been a crofter, greeted Wimsey with a kind of cautious excitement.

"He's doon there, sir. Ay, he'll juist ha' slippit over the edge. Yon's Sergeant Dalziel and Constable Ross, mekin' their investigation the noo."

There seemed little doubt how the accident had happened. On the easel was a painting, half, or more than half finished, the paint still wet and shining. Wimsey could imagine the artist getting up, standing away to view what he had done--stepping farther back towards the treacherous granite slope. Then the scrape of a heel on the smooth stone, the desperate effort to recover, the slither of leather on the baked short grass, the stagger, the fall, and the bump, bump, bump of the tumbling body, sheer down the stone face of the ravine to where the pointed rocks grinned like teeth among the chuckling water.

— poetic style

## **Teacher Notes on the extract:**

**Typical Golden Age extract - Upper class protagonist, character driven (usually involving a range of “types”), strong sense of location, vivid description**

**Use of dialect to create colourful “Scottish” characters**

**Mysterious death in interesting remote location**

**Sayers is typical of Golden Age genre in that she is highly descriptive of PLACE**

**Golden Age tend to avoid explicit violence in favour of more sedate or “original” deaths like the one here**

**Protagonist is again typical of the Golden Age mentality – the death is an intellectual challenge, not an emotionally draining cathartic experience**

**The tone is light, even jaunty – this is not going to be an emotionally intense narrative. The pleasures of the Golden Age are intellectual, not visceral or particularly cathartic. The death is a riddle, past of a “parlour game” ambience, typical of Golden Age**

**Note the remote, distant mind set of protagonist – “a lively engine and the prospect of a good corpse at the end of it, Lord Peter's cup of happiness was full” – presented with an atmosphere of caustic, black humour**

**Humorous supporting characters presented via exaggerated dialect to add humour and warmth**

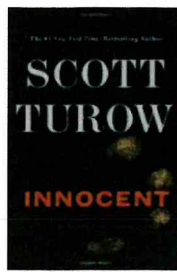
**Sayers use of a poetic style of writing – “where the pointed rocks grinned like teeth among the chuckling water.”**

**Humorous presentation of protagonist: “I think I'll just toddle over there in the car and have a look at him. Corpses are rather in my line, you know” – light, frothy mood, despite the death**

**Pleasures of Crime: Vivid setting, rich characters and a witty, urbane protagonist. Golden Age did not aim for realism – rather it offered escape to a generation that had experienced enough real life horror and death in the trenches. Therefore the mood is light, escapist. Upper class characters dominate and add escapism and glamour to Golden Age in general. Compare the coolly distanced third person omniscient narrative here with more first person direct, brutal style of the later hard boiled school**

**“Crime” as an intellectual battle of wits**





Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Scott Turow has shaped meanings. [25 marks]

In the extract the narrator, Chief Judge Sabich is presiding over a case of alleged poisoning.

From the elevated walnut bench a dozen feet above the lawyers' podium, I bang the gavel and call the last case of the morning for oral argument.

"People versus John Harnason," I say, "fifteen minutes each side."

The stately appellate courtroom, with its oxblood pillars rising two stories to a ceiling decorated with rococo gildings, is largely empty of spectators, save for Molly Singh, the Tribune's courthouse reporter, and several young deputy PAs, drawn by a difficult case and the fact that their boss, the acting prosecuting attorney, Tommy Molto, will be making a rare appearance up here to argue in behalf of the State. A ravaged-looking warhorse, Molto sits with two of his deputies at one of the lustrous walnut tables in front of the bench. On the other side, the defendant, John Harnason, convicted of the fatal poisoning of his roommate and lover, waits to hear his fate debated, while his lawyer, Mel Tooley, advances toward the podium. Along the far wall, several law clerks are seated, including Anna Vostic, my senior clerk, who will leave the job on Friday. At my nodding direction, Anna will ignite the tiny lights atop counsel's podium, green, yellow, and red, to indicate the same things they do in traffic.

"May it please the Court," says Mel, the time-ingrained salutation of lawyers to appellate judges. At least seventy pounds overweight these days, Mel still insists on wearing bold pin-striped suits as snug as sausage casings--enough to instill vertigo--and the same lousy rug, which looks as though he skinned a poodle. He begins with an oily grin, as if he and I, and the two judges who rank me on the three-judge panel that will decide the appeal, Marvin Hamlin and George Mason, are all the best of friends. I have never cared for Mel, a bigger snake than usual in the nest of serpents that is the criminal defence bar.

"First," says Mel, "I can't start without briefly wishing Chief Judge Sabich a happy birthday on this personal milestone."

I am sixty years old today, an occasion I have approached with gloom. Mel undoubtedly gleaned this tidbit from the gossip column on page two of today's Trib, a daily drumbeat of innuendo and leaks. It concludes routinely with birthday greetings to a variety of celebrities and local notables, which this morning included me: "Rusty Sabich, Chief Judge of the State Court of Appeals for the Third Appellate District and candidate for the state Supreme Court, 60." Seeing it in boldface was like taking a bullet.

"I hoped no one had noticed, Mr. Tooley," I say. Everyone in the courtroom laughs. As I discovered long ago, being a judge somehow makes your every joke, even the lamest, side splitting. I beckon Tooley to proceed.

The work of the appellate court in its simplest terms is to make sure that the person appealing got a fair trial. Our docket reflects justice in the American style, divided evenly between the rich, who are usually contesting expensive civil cases, and the poor, who make up most of the criminal appellants and face significant prison terms. Because the state supreme court reviews very few matters, nine times out of ten the court of appeals holds the final word on a case.

Jargon typical of courtroom drama crime genre

ICON

technical jargon

present tense

Jargon

The issue today is well-defined: Did the State offer enough evidence to justify the jury's murder verdict against Harnason? Appellate courts rarely reverse on this ground; the rule is that the jury's decision stands unless it is literally irrational. But this was a very close case. Ricardo Millan, Harnason's roommate and business partner in a travel-packaging enterprise, died at the age of thirty-nine of a mysterious progressive illness that the coroner took for an undiagnosed intestinal infection or parasite. There things might have ended were it not for the doggedness of Ricardo's mother, who made several trips here from Puerto Rico. She used all her savings to hire a private detective and a toxicologist at the U who persuaded the police to exhume Ricardo's body. Hair specimens showed lethal levels of arsenic.

— technical detail

Poisoning is murder for the underhanded. No knife, no gun. No Nietzschean moment when you confront the victim and feel the elemental thrill of exerting your will. It involves fraud far more than violence. And it's hard not to believe that what sunk Harnason before the jury is simply that he looks the part. He appears vaguely familiar, but that must be from seeing his picture in the paper, because I would recall somebody so self-consciously odd. He is wearing a garish copper-coloured suit. On the hand with which he is furiously scribbling notes, his nails are so long that they have begun to curl under like some Chinese emperor's, and an abundance of unmanageable orangey knots covers his scalp. In fact, there is too much reddish hair all over his head. His overgrown eyebrows make him resemble a beaver, and a gingery moustache droops over his mouth. I have always been baffled by folks like this. Is he demanding attention or does he simply think the rest of us are boring?

← vivid

Aside from his looks, the actual evidence that Harnason murdered Ricardo is spotty. Neighbours reported a recent episode in which a drunken Harnason brandished a kitchen knife on the street, screaming at Ricardo about his visits with a younger man. The State also emphasized that Harnason went to court to prevent exhuming Ricardo's body, where he maintained that Ricky's mother was a kook who'd stick Harnason with the bill for another burial. Probably the only piece of substantial proof is that the detectives found microscopic traces of arsenic oxidant poison in the shed behind the house that Harnason inherited from his mother. The product had not been manufactured for at least a decade, leading the defence to maintain that the infinitesimal granules were merely a degraded leftover from the mother's time, whereas the real perpetrator could have purchased a more reliably lethal form of arsenic oxide from several vendors on the Internet. Despite the familiarity of arsenic as a classic poison, such deaths are a rarity these days, and thus arsenic is not covered in routine toxicological screenings performed in connection with autopsies, which is why the coroner initially missed the cause of death.

— technical language

All in all, the evidence is so evenly balanced that as chief judge, I decided to order Harnason freed on bail pending his appeal. That does not happen often after a defendant is convicted, but it seemed unfair for Harnason to start doing time in this razor-thin case before we passed on the matter.

As soon as the argument is over, the other two judges and I adjourn without our clerks to a conference room adjoining the courtroom, where we will discuss the morning's cases and decide their outcome, including which of the three of us will write each opinion for the court. This is an elegant chamber that looks like the dining room in a men's club, right down to the crystal chandelier. A vast Chippendale table holds enough high-backed leather chairs to seat all eighteen judges of the court on the rare occasion that we sit together en banc, as it is known, to decide a case.

"Affirm," says Marvina Hamlin, as if there is no point for discussion, once we get to Harnason. Marvina is your average tough black lady with plenty of reason to be that way. She was ghetto raised, had a son at sixteen, and still worked her way through school, starting as a legal secretary and ending up as a lawyer--and a good one, too. She tried two cases in front of me when I was a trial judge years ago. On the other hand, after sitting with Marvina for a decade, I know she will not change her mind. She has not heard another human being say anything worth considering since her mother told her at a very early age that she had to watch out for herself. "Who else could have done it?" demands Marvina.

## Teacher Notes on the extract:

Genre is the “Courtroom”, legal, thriller/drama

Pleasures of the genre: Able to access a “secret” world which most of us will not experience – ie “the court room”; exposure to interesting technical terms, jargon and court procedures which are fascinating; cathartic immersion in the case itself as we hear evidence and await the verdict.

Writer spends a lot of time explaining how this “secret” world works – lots of exposition and explanation: “As soon as the argument is over, the other two judges and I adjourn without our clerks to a conference room adjoining the courtroom, where we will discuss the morning’s cases and decide their outcome, including which of the three of us will write each opinion for the court”

Readers expect legal jargon and verisimilitude from the writer – authenticity and believability is key – a procedural style is adopted with a fair amount of technical background

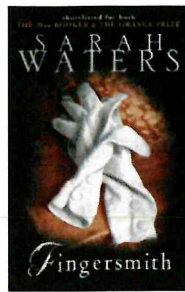
Author uses first person, present tense style to involve audience with likably “gruff” narrator within a sense of “immediacy” offered by the present tense narrative

Lots of technical terms and exposition/explanation of American legal terms – “toxicological screening”, “coroner”, “autopsy” “Third Appellate District” “criminal appellants”, “en banc”

The jargon might create a dry, technical style so author varies tone with a narrator/protagonist with sense of humour via some comical interior monologue moments: “Mel still insists on wearing bold pin-striped suits as snug as sausage casings--enough to instill vertigo--and the same lousy rug, which looks as though he skinned a poodle”, “His overgrown eyebrows make him resemble a beaver”, “His nails are so long that they have begun to curl under like some Chinese emperor’s” – some comical and colourful hyperbole,. This creates vivid characters, within a tone of cynical observation

Narrator is clearly experienced/cynical/matter of fact regarding crime and criminals – he is the expert to our “novices”: Eg “Poisoning is murder for the underhanded. No knife, no gun. No Nietzschean moment when you confront the victim and feel the elemental thrill of exerting your will. It involves fraud far more than violence.

Lots of technical detail on the poisoning to act as the novel’s “hook”/enigma/puzzle as we are drawn into the “mystery”



Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Sarah Waters has shaped meanings. [25 marks]

In the 1860s, the Borough in London - the shanty town at the wrong end of Southwark Bridge - is a place of petty thieves and criminals, of poverty, "mean little dodges" and scams. In the extract we meet Susan and learn more of her life.

— 1st person

— historical crime fiction genre

My name, in those days, was Susan Trinder. People called me Sue. I know the year I was born in, but for many years I did not know the date, and took my birthday at Christmas. I believe I am an orphan. My mother I know is dead. But I never saw her, she was nothing to me. I was Mrs Sucksby's child, if I was anyone's; and for father I had Mr Ibbs, who kept the locksmith's shop, at Lant Street, in the Borough, near to the Thames.

This is the first time I remember thinking about the world and my place in it.

— child narrator

There was a girl named Flora, who paid Mrs Sucksby a penny to take me begging at a play. People used to like to take me begging then, for the sake of my bright hair; and Flora being also very fair, she would pass me off as her sister. The theatre she took me to, on the night I am thinking of now, was the Surrey, St George's Circus. The play was Oliver Twist. I remember it as very terrible. I remember the tilt of the gallery, and the drop to the pit. I remember a drunken woman catching at the ribbons of my dress. I remember the flares, that made the stage very lurid; and the roaring of the actors, the shrieking of the crowd. They had one of the characters in a red wig and whiskers: I was certain he was a monkey in a coat, he capered so. Worse still was the snarling, pink-eyed dog; worst of all was that dog's master—Bill Sykes, the fancy-man. When he struck the poor girl Nancy with his club, the people all down our row got up. There was a boot thrown at the stage. A woman beside me cried out,

child-like style

'Oh, you beast! You villain! And her worth forty of a bully like you!'

I don't know if it was the people getting up—which made the gallery seem to heave about; or the shrieking woman; or the sight of Nancy, lying perfectly pale and still at Bill Sykes's feet; but I became gripped by an awful terror. I thought we should all be killed. I began to scream, and Flora could not quiet me. And when the woman who had called out put her arms to me and smiled, I screamed out louder. Then Flora began to weep—she was only twelve or thirteen, I suppose. She took me home, and Mrs Sucksby slapped her.

'What was you thinking of, taking her to such a thing?' she said.

'You was to sit with her upon the steps. I don't hire my infants out to have them brought back like this, turned blue with screaming. What was you playing at?'

She took me upon her lap, and I wept again. 'There now, my lamb,' she said. Flora stood before her, saying nothing, pulling a strand of hair across her scarlet cheek. Mrs Sucksby was a devil with her dander up. She looked at Flora and tapped her slippered foot upon the rug, all the time rocking in her chair—that was a great creaking wooden chair, that no-one sat in save her—and beating her thick, hard hand upon my shaking back. Then, 'I know your little rig,' she said quietly.

She knew everybody's rig.

'What you get? A couple of wipers, was it? A couple of wipers, and a lady's purse?'

— criminal language  
secret world  
Argot

Flora pulled the strand of hair to her mouth, and bit it. 'A purse,' she said, after a second. 'And a bottle of scent.'

'Show,' said Mrs Sucksby, holding out her hand. Flora's face grew darker. But she put her fingers to a tear at the waist of her skirt, and reached inside it; and you might imagine my surprise when the tear turned out to be not a tear at all, but the neck of a little silk pocket that was sewn inside her gown. She brought out a black cloth bag, and a bottle with a stopper on a silver chain. The bag had

threepence in it, and half a nutmeg. Perhaps she got it from the drunken woman who plucked at my dress. The bottle, with its stopper off, smelt of roses. Mrs Sucksby sniffed.

'Pretty poor poke,' she said, 'ain't it?' *jargon*

Flora tossed her head. 'I should have had more,' she said, with a look at me, 'if she hadn't started up with the sterics.'

Mrs Sucksby leaned and hit her again.

'If I had known what you was about,' she said, 'you shouldn't have had none of it at all. Let me tell you this now: you want an infant for prigging with, you take one of my other babies. You don't take Sue. You hear me?'

Flora sulked, but said she did. Mrs Sucksby said, 'Good. Now hook it. And leave that poke behind you, else I shall tell your mother you've been going with gentlemen.'

Then she took me to her bed—first, rubbing at the sheets with her hands, to warm them; then stooping to breathe upon my fingers, to warm me. I was the only one, of all her infants, she would do that for. She said, 'You ain't afraid now, Sue?'

But I was, and said so. I said I was afraid the fancy-man would find me out and hit me with his stick. She said she had heard of that particular fancy-man: he was all bounce. She said, 'It was Bill Sykes, wasn't it? Why, he's a Clerkenwell man. He don't trouble with the Borough. The Borough boys are too hard for him.'

I said, 'But, oh, Mrs Sucksby! You never saw the poor girl Nancy, and how he knocked her down and murdered her!'

'Murdered her?' she said then. 'Nancy? Why, I had her here an hour ago. She was only beat a bit about the face. She has her hair curled different now, you wouldn't know he ever laid his hand upon her.'

I said, 'Won't he beat her again, though?'

She told me then that Nancy had come to her senses at last, and left Bill Sykes entirely; that she had met a nice chap from Wapping, who had set her up in a little shop selling sugar mice and tobacco.

She lifted my hair from about my neck and smoothed it across the pillow. My hair, as I have said, was very fair then—though it grew plain brown, as I got older—and Mrs Sucksby used to wash it with vinegar and comb it till it sparked. Now she smoothed it flat, then lifted a tress of it and touched it to her lips. She said, 'That Flora tries to take you on the prig again, you tell me—will you?'

I said I would. 'Good girl,' she said. Then she went. She took her candle with her, but the door she left half-open, and the cloth at the window was of lace and let the street-lamps show. It was never quite dark there, and never quite still. On the floor above were a couple of rooms where girls and boys would now and then come to stay: they laughed and thumped about, dropped coins, and sometimes danced. Beyond the wall lay Mr Ibbs's sister, who was kept to her bed: she often woke with the horrors on her, shrieking. And all about the house—laid top-to-toe in cradles, like sprats in boxes of salt—were Mrs Sucksby's infants. They might start up whimpering or weeping any hour of the night, any little thing might set them off. Then Mrs Sucksby would go among them, dosing them from a bottle of gin, with a little silver spoon you could hear chink against the glass.

*naive  
narrator*

*evocative image  
of poverty*

## Teacher Notes on the extract:

Example of “historical crime” genre – set in Dickensian England. Key characteristics of this sub-genre – authenticity, research, detail

Use of first person naïve/child narrator which offers an unusual perspective and is untypical of crime novels

However, this is a tale told by an adult, filtered through childhood, so we have a mixture of contemporary “child” responses and, later, more mature “adult” comments: “My hair, as I have said, was very fair then”, “My name, in those days”

Use of authentic criminal language which we could call “argot” – “rig”, “poke”, “takes you on the prig”

Use of dialect to create authentic working class characters - “Now hook it. And leave that poke behind you”

Narrator’s naivety means readers can read between the lines of her innocent, ingénue persona – “On the floor above were a couple of rooms where girls and boys would now and then come to stay: they laughed and thumped about, dropped coins” – audience might discern this implies a brothel but innocent world view of narrator means we have to read between the lines

Pleasures of this genre: authenticity, believability, vividness, historical detail, research into Victorian life/ethics. Differing attitudes to crime than our own?

Reference to a stage play of Dickens’s “Oliver Twist” feels ironic, almost intertextual, especially as Mrs Sucksby refers to them as “real” people

Vivid, poetic descriptions of the “crèche” – “laid top-to-toe in cradles, like sprats in boxes of salt” is very evocative and adds to the pathos of this description of poverty

The “crime” here seems to be begging and “pickpocketing”

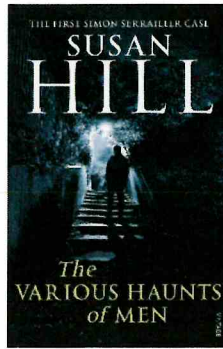
Vivid description of the theatre scene

Strong sense of pathos evoked by child narrator

Idea of story being told in hindsight

Believable use of dialect to evoke character

Strong focus on character development



## ***The Various Haunts of Men* by Susan Hill**

Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Lee Child has shaped meanings. [25 marks]

*The Various Haunts of Men* is the first in the Chief Inspector Simon Serrailler series. People are going missing. Only one thing links their cases. They all disappear on the hill. Young policewoman Freya Graffham and Chief Inspector Simon Serrailler are given the task of unravelling the mystery

The various haunts of men  
Require the pencil, they defy the pen.

George Crabbe, *The Borough*

The Tape

artefact cliché

ususual  
P.O.V.

Last week I found a letter from you. I didn't think I had kept any of them. I thought I had destroyed everything from you. But this one had somehow been overlooked. I found it among some tax returns which were more than seven years old and so could be thrown away. I wasn't going to read it. As soon as I saw your handwriting, I felt revulsion. I threw it in the bin. But later I retrieved it and read it. You complained several times that I never told you anything. 'You haven't told me anything at all since you were a little boy,' you wrote.

If only you knew how little I had told you even then. You never knew one quarter of it.

Once I had read your letter, I began to think and to realise that now I can tell you things. I need to tell you. It will be good to make some confessions at last. I have held on to some secrets for far too long.

After all, you cannot do anything about them now. Since I found your letter, I have spent a good deal of time sitting quietly, remembering, and making notes. It feels as if I am about to tell a story.

So let me begin.

} story  
within story

confessions /  
secrets  
typical tropes

The first thing I must tell you is that very early on I learned how to lie. There may have been other things I lied about but the first I remember is that I lied about the pier. I went there, when I told you that I had not, and not just once. I went often. I saved money, or else I found it in the gutter. I was always looking in gutters, just in case. A few times, if there was no other way, I stole the money; a pocket, a purse, a handbag – they were generally lying about. I am still ashamed of having done that. There are few things more despicable than stealing money.

But, you see, I had to keep going back to watch the Execution. I couldn't keep away for long. When I had watched it, I was satisfied for a few days, but then the need to see it began again, like an itch.

*- involves audience*

You remember that peep show, don't you? The coin went into the slot and rolled down until it hit the hidden shutter that made the whole thing start. First, the light went on. Then, the three little figures came jerking into the execution chamber: the parson with his surplice and book, the hangman and, between them, the condemned man. They stopped. The parson's book jerked up and his head nodded up and down, and, after that, the noose dropped down and the executioner jerked forward; his arms went up and took the noose and put it round the man's neck. Then the trapdoor opened beneath his feet and he dropped and swung there for a few seconds, before the light snapped off and it was over.

*↳ gruesome 'tale'*

I have no idea how many times I went to watch it, but if I did know, I would tell you, because I mean to tell you everything now.

It only stopped when they took the machine away. One day I went down to the pier and it just wasn't there. I want to explain how I felt. Angry – yes, I was certainly angry. But I also felt a sort of desperate frustration, which went on boiling inside me for a long time. I didn't know how to get rid of it.

*↳ "obsessive" voice - typical ingredient*

It has taken me all these years to find out.

Does it seem strange to you that I have never seen the point of money, since then, never had much use for it beyond what is merely necessary? I earn quite a lot but I don't care for it. I give much of it away. Perhaps you knew all along that I disobeyed and went down to the pier, because you once said, 'I know everything.' I hated that. I needed secrets, things that were mine only and never yours.

But now, I like talking to you. I want you to know things and if I still have secrets – and I do – I want to share them, just with you. And now, I can choose to tell you and how much I tell you and when. Now, I am the one who decides.

*mysterious address - talking to whom?*



## **Teacher Notes on the extract:**

**First person narrator, BUT, interesting use of second person pronoun to address the reader or suggest the use of an artefact/found footage – i.e. a “tape” – i.e. are we listening to this voice via an audio tape as suggested by the chapter title, “The Tape”?**

**Tapes are common ingredients of crime fiction and true crime – during the Yorkshire Ripper case in late 1970’s there was a hoax audio tape purported to have been from the killer – use of tapes/artefacts is fairly common device – has the element of authenticity as links to real crime cases**

**Creation of mystery and enigma by author withholding information – “As soon as I saw your handwriting, I felt revulsion” for e.g. – we don’t know why or whether the narrator is “good” or “bad”**

**Idea of dark secrets and confessions are typical crime tropes – “It will be good to make some confessions at last. I have held on to some secrets for far too long”. The concept of being haunted by the past – typical crime cliché?**

**Ominous, mystery, enigma – “After all, you cannot do anything about them now” – is the “recipient” in prison, dead?**

**Interesting idea to use a narrative frame – a story within a story**

**Rather ghoulish anecdote of the “execution” – dark and twisted mind-set is typical of the criminal mind**

**Location is indistinct but author offers a few clues – the “pier” suggests a seaside location for example**

**Author withholds information to develop the mystery and intrigue**

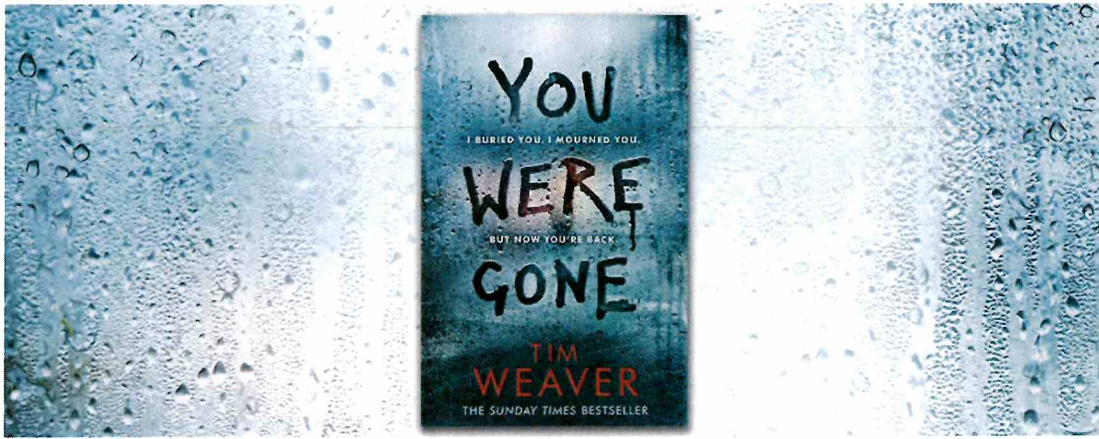
**Use of emphatic stand-alone paragraphs to add dramatic power: “It has taken me all these years to find out.” For example**

**Deliberate use of rhetorical questions and second person pronoun involve the reader in the narrative. The mystery of this one sided “conversation” is interesting**

**Lots of deliberate vagueness about detail – lack of detailed description, apart from the “execution” story which is described in obsessive, disturbing detail.**

**Idea of the twisted, obsessive first person narrator: “And now, I can choose to tell you and how much I tell you and when. Now, I am the one who decides.” Is the “recipient” trapped and “forced” to listen – unusual narrative point of view**

**Pleasure of Crime: allows reader to experience strange mind-sets from a distance, vicarious pleasures.**



Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Tim Weaver has shaped meanings. [25 marks]

Three days after Christmas, a woman walks into a police station. She has no phone and no ID, just a piece of paper with the name of investigator David Raker on it. She tells officers that Raker is her husband. When he turns up at the station, Raker is stunned. His wife has been dead for eight years.

### *You Were Gone* by Tim Weaver Day One

After it was all over, they let me watch the footage of her entering the police station. She seemed small, almost curved, in her green raincoat and dark court shoes, as if her spine was arched or she was in pain. The quality of the surveillance film was poor, the frame rate set low, which made it disorientating, a series of jerky movements played out against the stillness of the station's front desk.

She paused at the entrance, holding the main door ajar so that light leaked in across the tiled floor and seemed to bleach one side of her face. The faded colours of the film didn't help, reducing blacks to greys and everything else to pastels, and even when she let the door go again and it snapped shut behind her, her features remained indistinct. Her gaze was a shadowy blob, her blonde hair appeared grey. I couldn't see anything of the slight freckling that passed from one cheek to the other, crossing the bridge of her nose, nor the blue and green flash of her eyes. Under the glare of the camera, she may as well have been just another visitor to a police station.

A stranger, nothing else.

Once she let the door go, she headed across the room to the front desk. On the timecode in the corner I could see it was just before 8 a.m. An officer was standing behind the counter, engaged in conversation with someone else, a kid in his teens with a black eye and bloodied cheek. The woman waited patiently behind the teenager until the desk officer told her to take a seat. She did so reluctantly, her head down, her feet barely seeming to carry her to a bank of chairs.

← focus on film draws reader/viewer in

← mystery

writer with olding  
details to add suspense  
✓

Ten minutes passed. The angle of the camera made it hard to see her, her head bowed, her hands knotted together in her lap, but then, after the desk officer finished with the teenager and told him to take a seat, she beckoned the woman back to the counter. I met the desk officer when I turned up at the station in the hours after: she had short black hair flecked with grey and a scar high on her left cheek, but on the film I couldn't see the detail in either.

The woman stopped at the counter.

The desk officer bent slightly, so that her head was level with the woman's, and even though the film's frame rate was low and it didn't record her lip movements in real time, I could still tell what she'd asked the woman.

*'You all right, love?'*

The woman didn't respond immediately. Instead, she reached into the pocket of her coat and started looking for something. It began as a slow movement, but then became more frantic when she couldn't find what she was looking for. She checked one pocket, then another, and in the third she found what she was after.

As she unfolded the piece of paper, she finally responded to the officer.

*'Hello.'*

frustrates the reader

I couldn't tell what the woman said after that, the frame rate making it all but impossible to follow the patterns of her mouth, but she shifted position and, because the camera was fixed to the wall about a foot and a half above her, I could see more of her, could see there was just a single line on the piece of paper. Under the pale rinse of the room's strip lights, her hair definitely looked blonde now, not grey, and it had been tied into a loose ponytail. Despite that, it was messy and unkempt, stray strands everywhere, at her collar, across her face, and even within the confines of the film, the way it twitched and jarred between frames, it was easy to tell that she was agitated.

Finally, her eyes met the officer's and the woman held up the piece of paper and started to talk. I could see the teenager look up from his mobile phone, as if sparked into life by what the woman was saying. They told me afterwards that the woman had been crying, that it had been difficult to understand what she'd been talking about, that her voice, the things she'd been saying, had been hard to process. I watched the desk officer lean towards her, holding a hand up, telling the woman to calm down. She paused, her body swaying slightly, her shoulders moving up and down, and gestured to the piece of paper again.

This time I could read her lips clearly.

*'Find him.'*

— dramatic

## Teacher Notes on the extract:

### First person narrator

Idea of surveillance - narrator is watching a video playback of a person at a police station. Use of such evidence is typical of crime novels where events are captured on film and then analysed. Fascinating way to “pull in” the reader.

Lots of focus on the film itself: “within the confines of the film, the way it twitched and jarred between frames” “The quality of the surveillance film was poor, the frame rate set low” “The faded colours of the film didn’t help, reducing blacks to greys”. This involves the reader as we “watch” the film played back, like the narrator and involves us in the “viewing” process

Lots of physical description of the woman to paint a picture as her identity is the key “twist” in the story. Her shape and posture etc. are gradually revealed to us – adding to the mystery – “because the camera was fixed to the wall about a foot and a half above her, I could see more of her” – idea of gradual revelation of the image

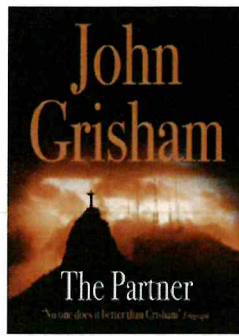
Location is typical of crime novels – police station – emphasis on “normality”, “believability” etc.

Use of stand-alone two word paragraph at the end of the extract to create climax – “find him” - and to add drama

Film has no audio and is of poor quality – writer deliberately makes the identification process torturous and delayed in order to heighten the revelation. The idea is that the picture gradually develops and we experience the realisation with the narrator from the initial indistinctiveness: “Her gaze was a shadowy blob, her blonde hair appeared grey.”

Crime elements: Missing persons/video evidence/identification

Pleasures of Crime: Sense of mystery and enigma, delayed revelation, gradual description as parts of visual “jigsaw” come together slowly - puzzling



Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that John Grisham has shaped meanings. [25 marks]

The extract describes the search for Danilo, near the border of Paraguay

repetition  
They found him in Ponta Porã, a pleasant little town in Brazil, on the border of Paraguay, in a land still known as the Frontier.

They found him living in a shaded brick house on Rua Tiradentes, a wide avenue with trees down the centre and barefoot boys dribbling soccer balls along the hot pavement.

They found him alone, as best they could tell, though a maid came and went at odd hours during the eight days they hid and watched.

They found him living a comfortable life but certainly not one of luxury. The house was modest and could've been owned by any local merchant. The car was a 1983 Volkswagen Beetle, manufactured in Sao Paulo with a million others. It was red and clean, polished to a shine. Their first photo of him was snapped as he waxed it just inside the gate to his short driveway.

They found him much thinner, down considerably from the two hundred and thirty pounds he'd been carrying when last seen. His hair and skin were darker, his chin had been squared, and his nose had been slightly pointed. Subtle changes to the face. They'd paid a steep bribe to the surgeon in Rio who'd performed the alterations two and a half years earlier.

They found him after four years of tedious but diligent searching, four years of dead ends and lost trails and false tips, four years of pouring good money down the drain, good money chasing bad, it seemed.

— emphatic/obsessive tone

But they found him. And they waited. There was at first the desire to snatch him immediately, to drug him and smuggle him to a safe house in Paraguay, to seize him before he saw them or before a neighbour became suspicious. The initial excitement of the finding made them consider a quick strike, but after two days they settled down and waited. They loitered at various points along Rua Tiradentes, dressed like the locals, drinking tea in the shade, avoiding the sun, eating ice cream, talking to the children, watching his house. They tracked him as he drove downtown to shop, and they photographed him from across the street as he left the pharmacy. They eased very near him in a fruit market and listened as he spoke to the clerk. Excellent Portuguese, with the very slight accent of an American or a German who'd studied hard. He moved quickly downtown, gathering his goods and returning home, where he locked the gate behind him. His brief shopping trip yielded a dozen fine photos.

He had jogged in a prior life, though in the months before he disappeared his mileage shrunk as his weight ballooned. Now that he teetered on the brink of emaciation, they were not surprised to see him running again. He left his house, locking the gate behind him, and began a slow trot down the sidewalk along Rua Tiradentes. Nine minutes for the first mile, as the street went perfectly straight and the houses grew farther apart. The pavement turned to gravel on the edge of town, and halfway into the second mile his pace was down to eight minutes a mile and Danilo had himself a nice sweat. It was midday in October, the temperature near eighty, and he gained speed

as he left town, past a small clinic packed with young mothers, past a small church the Baptists had built. The roads became dustier as he headed for the countryside at seven minutes a mile.

The running was serious business, and it pleased them mightily. Danilo would simply run into their arms.

The day after the first sighting, a small unclean cottage on the edge of Ponta Porã was rented by a Brazilian named Osmar, and before long the rest of the pursuit team poured in. It was an equal mix of Americans and Brazilians, with Osmar giving the orders in Portuguese and Guy barking in English. Osmar could handle both languages, and had become the official interpreter for the team.

Guy was from Washington, an ex-government type who'd been hired to find Danny Boy, as he'd been nicknamed. Guy was considered a genius at some levels and immensely talented at others, and his past was a black hole. He was well into his fifth one-year contract to find Danny Boy, and there was a nice bonus for snagging the prey. Though he hid it well, Guy had been slowly cracking under the pressure of not finding Danny Boy.

Four years and three and a half million dollars, with nothing to show for it.

But now they'd found him.

Osmar and his band of Brazilians had not the slightest hint of Danny Boy's sins, but a fool could see that he'd disappeared and taken a trainload of money. And, although he was very curious about Danny Boy, Osmar had learned quickly not to ask questions. Guy and the Americans had nothing to say on the subject.

The pictures of Danny Boy were enlarged to eight by tens, and tacked along a wall in the kitchen of the dirty little cottage where they were studied by grim men with hard eyes, men who chain-smoked strong cigarettes and shook their heads at the photos. They whispered among themselves and compared the new photos to the old ones, the ones from his previous life. Smaller man, odd chin, different nose. His hair was shorter and his skin darker. Was it really him?

They had been through this before, in Recife, on the north-eastern coast, nineteen months earlier when they'd rented an apartment and looked at photos on the wall until the decision was made to grab the American and check his fingerprints. Wrong prints. Wrong American. They pumped some more drugs in him and left him in a ditch.

They were afraid to dig too deeply into the current life of Danilo Silva. If he was in fact their man, then he had plenty of money. And cash always worked wonders with the local authorities. For decades, cash had bought protection for Nazis and other Germans who'd smuggled themselves into Ponta Porã.

Osmar wanted to grab him. Guy said they'd wait. He vanished on the fourth day, and the dirty little cottage was in chaos for thirty-six hours.

They saw him leave home in the red Beetle. He was in a hurry, came the report. He raced across town to the airport, jumped on a small commuter at the last moment, and was gone. His car was parked in the only lot, and they watched it every second of every hour. The plane was headed in the general direction of Sao Paulo, with four stops in between.

There was instantly a plan to enter his home and catalogue everything. There had to be records. The money had to be tended to. Guy dreamed of finding bank statements, wire transfer reports, account summaries; all sorts of documents arranged in a neat portfolio which would lead him directly to the money.

the  
'outsider'  
'man  
with no  
past'  
stereotype

Ambiguous about the  
morality of  
the  
"searchers"

disturbing lack of  
ethics

technical  
details add  
authenticity

## Teacher Notes on the extract:

Third person omniscient narrator, but focalised through the men searching for “Danny Boy”

Creation of mystery as we do not know whether the searchers are “good guys” i.e. police, or criminals. Suggestion is that they are at best morally ambiguous: “They had been through this before, in Recife, on the north-eastern coast, nineteen months earlier when they’d rented an apartment and looked at photos on the wall until the decision was made to grab the American and check his fingerprints. Wrong prints. Wrong American. They pumped some more drugs in him and left him in a ditch.”

Lots of short sentences and repetition, typical of American hard boiled school: “They found him” starts each of the first 6 paragraphs – creates an emphatic, obsessive tone to try to suggest the feverish activity of a manhunt

Two different police forces are involved with different mind-sets – typical of crime to have arguing divisions or a clash of cultures – hawks versus doves etc. Guy and the Americans versus Osmar and the Brazilians

Guy’s “past was a black hole” – clichéd idea of the “cop” (?) as outsider, rootless, man of mystery and enigma

Use of photos as evidence, tacked against a wall is a crime convention: “The pictures of Danny Boy were enlarged to eight by tens, and tacked along a wall in the kitchen of the dirty little cottage”

Short sentences, short dramatic paragraphs add a staccato, obsessive tone to the writing:

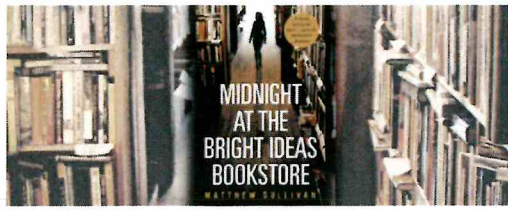
“Four years and three and a half million dollars, with nothing to show for it.

But now they’d found him.”

Idea of pressure: “He was well into his fifth one-year contract to find Danny Boy, and there was a nice bonus for snagging the prey” but again the writer is deliberately unclear as to whether we should be supporting the “searchers” – creates an ambivalent tone, particularly with emotive words like “prey”.

Idea of “trailing”, “tracking”, observation and surveillance are key ingredients in crime fiction – the idea of the manhunt. The twist here is the ambiguity in the way the “hunters” are presented to us

Detailed mention of “evidence” adds to authenticity and detail of the extract, a key element of crime writing: “bank statements, wire transfer reports, account summaries; all sorts of documents arranged in a neat portfolio which would lead him directly to the money.”



Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Matthew Sullivan has shaped meanings. [25 marks]

Lydia Smith is a clerk the Bright Ideas Bookstore, where she keeps a meticulously crafted existence among her beloved books, eccentric colleagues, and the BookFrogs—the lost and lonely regulars who spend every day marauding the store’s overwhelmed shelves. But when Joey Molina, a young, beguiling BookFrog, kills himself in the bookstore, Lydia’s life comes unglued

*Midnight at the Bright Ideas Bookstore* by Matthew Sullivan <sup>repeated motif</sup>  
— original image grabs attention

Lydia heard the distant flap of paper wings as the first book fell from its shelf. She glanced up from the register, head tilted, and imagined that a sparrow had flown through an open window again and was circling the store’s airy upper floors, trying to find its way out.

A few seconds later another book fell. This time it thudded more than flapped, and she was sure it wasn’t a bird. <sup>crime clichés</sup>

It was just past midnight, the bookstore was closing, and the final customers were checking out. Lydia was alone at the register, scanning a stack of paperback parenting books being bought by a teenage girl with pitted cheeks and peeling lips. The girl paid in cash and Lydia smiled at her but didn’t say anything, didn’t ask what the girl was doing alone at a bookstore this late on a Friday night, didn’t ask when she was due. When the girl got her change, she met Lydia’s eyes for a moment, then rushed out without any bookmarks. <sup>late night woman alone etc</sup>

Another book fell, definitely somewhere upstairs.

One of Lydia’s comrades, a balding guy named Ernest who walked like a Muppet but always looked sad, was standing by the front door, guiding the night’s final customers into Lower Downtown.

“Are you hearing that?” Lydia said from across the store, but her voice was too quiet and anyway Ernest was occupied. She watched him unlock the door he’d just locked to let in a clubbing couple who looked drunk.

“They need to pee,” Ernest said, shrugging in Lydia’s direction. Outside, a few scruffy BookFrogs lingered on the flagstone sidewalk, zipping up backpacks and duffels, drinking from gallon jugs of water they’d refilled in the bathroom. One had a pulp crime paperback crammed in his back pocket. Another had a pencil on a string tied to his belt loop. They stood together but none of them spoke, and one by one they slumped separately into the city, off to sleep in a run-down basement in Capitol Hill, or on a bench in Union Station, or in the sticky cold of Denver’s alleys.

Lydia heard another faint flapping. Definitely a falling book, followed by a few more in rapid succession: flap-flap-flap. The store was otherwise quiet. <sup>“wing” motif revisited</sup>

“Upstairs empty?” she said to Ernest.

“Just Joey,” Ernest said, but his eyes were fixed on the corner of zines and pamphlets that flanked the bathrooms where the drunk couple had just disappeared. “Do you think they’re screwing in there?”

“He knows we’re closed?”

“Joey?” he said. “You never know what Joey knows. He asked after you earlier, by the way. It may have been the longest conversation we’ve ever had. ‘Seen Lydia?’ I was touched.” <sup>ominous?</sup>



Most days Lydia made a point of tracking Joey down wherever he'd settled into the store—a corner table in the coffee shop, or the former church pew in the Spirituality section, or even under the Story Tree in Kids—to see what he was reading and how he was feeling and whether any odd jobs had come his way. She had a soft spot for the guy. But tonight she'd gotten caught in the store's after-dinner rush and never tracked him down. Lydia crossed the store's gritty floors and headed up the wide, tiered staircase that reached through the building like a fattened spine. Ernest had gone through earlier and turned off most of the overhead lights upstairs, so she felt as if she were climbing into an attic. The second floor was quiet, shelf upon shelf of books standing still. She continued to the third.

"Joey?"

Joey was the youngest of the BookFrogs, and by far Lydia's favourite. This wouldn't be the first time that she or one of her bookselling comrades had done a final sweep at closing and found Joey knocking books off the shelves, searching for a title that may or may not have actually existed. His glossy hair would be draped over his eyes, and he'd be wearing black jeans and a black knit sweater with the collar just low enough to see the top of his tattooed chest. The wooden floors around his feet would be spread with books about subjects as far-reaching as his thoughts: Sasquatch sightings and the Federal Reserve, Masonic rites and chaos theory. He was a shattered young man, Lydia often thought, haunted but harmless—a dust bunny blowing through the corners of the store. She liked having him around.

visualising / humanising detail

"Joey?"

The third floor was dim and peaceful. Lydia stepped into a familiar warren of tall wooden shelves and followed their angles and branches into different alcoves and sections, each holding a chair or a couch, a table or a bench: Psychology, Self-Help, Religion, Travel, History.

humanising "back story" to involve reader "Joey"

Something squeaked.

2 word paragraph: tension

"Last call, Joey."

When she stepped into the Western History alcove, she could feel her eyes trying to shut out what she was seeing: Joey, hovering in the air, swinging like a pendulum. A long ratcheted strap was threaded over a ceiling beam and looped around his neck. Lydia's body sprung with terror, but instead of running away she was suddenly running toward him, toward Joey, and hugging his lanky legs and trying to hoist him up. She heard someone's scream curdle through the store and realized it was her own.

idea of dissociation

Lydia's cheek pressed into Joey's thigh and his jeans were warm with urine. A lump in his pocket smelled of chocolate and she assumed it was a knot of melted Kisses, swiped from the bowl on the coffee shop counter. His hands were clenched into quiet fists and she could see the masking-tape bandages on three or four of his fingertips, but she wouldn't look up again at the popped purple sockets of his eyes, nor the foamy saliva rolling down his chin, nor the blue swelling of his lips.

metaphor repeated motif gruesome details

She could see the cemetery of books that had flapped to the floor as Joey had climbed the shelves, and the others he'd shoved aside to create footholds as he threaded the strap through the ceiling, and still others that had dropped as he'd tried to kick his feet back to stop himself from dying. By now she'd locked her hands together on the far side of his thighs and was trying to lift him up, but her sneakers kept slipping on the wooden floor, and each time she slipped the ratcheted strap cinched tighter around his neck. She must have stopped screaming because a ringing silence suddenly swallowed everything when she saw, a few inches from her face, poking up from Joey's front pocket, a folded photograph of her.

Lydia.

As a child.

look at layout / mysterious twist

## Teacher Notes on the extract:

Third person omniscient narrator, although focalised through Lydia

Crime conventions: Late night urban location, isolated, alone protagonist: "It was just past midnight, the bookstore was closing, and the final customers were checking out. Lydia was alone at the register"

Interesting opening line: "Lydia heard the distant flap of paper wings as the first book fell from its shelf"  
- Unusual poetic line

The falling books present a recurring motif which writer sprinkles through the text, gradually building up the sense of mystery about what is occurring. "Lydia heard another faint flapping. Definitely a falling book, followed by a few more in rapid succession: flap-flap-flap." – continues motif of flapping "wings"

A gradually more unsettling atmosphere is created within a location that we might feel is quite "dull" or "uneventful"

Introduction of enigmatic character, "Joey", who had asked for Lydia earlier (ominous?) and is upstairs alone in the store.

Joey is given a little backstory and the "bookfrogs" concept is explained. Joey fits profile of clichéd "troubled" character in a crime novel, perhaps a vulnerable victim: "He was a shattered young man, Lydia often thought, haunted but harmless". The use of the backstory, plus Lydia's sympathy, ensures reader has some emotional involvement in what subsequently happens to Joey. Adds to pathos/shock effect

Notice how author visualises Joey to add to the pathos of his grim demise: "His glossy hair would be draped over his eyes, and he'd be wearing black jeans and a black knit sweater with the collar just low enough to see the top of his tattooed chest". Note use of conditional tense – "would be" "he'd"

Two word paragraph – creates tension: "Something squeaked."

Author delays revelation of the sight: "she could feel her eyes trying to shut out what she was seeing:"

Idea of being disassociated from your surroundings: "She heard someone's scream curdle through the store and realised it was her own."

Typical crime ingredient: death in opening chapter

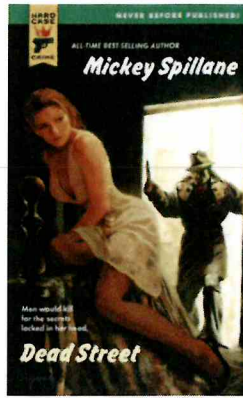
Gruesome forensic detail of the hanged man: "she wouldn't look up again at the popped purple sockets of his eyes, nor the foamy saliva rolling down his chin, nor the blue swelling of his lips." – Violence and physical realism typical of the genre – body horror details, one of the gruesome pleasures of crime?

Extract finishes with twist of the photo of the protagonist. This creates unease. Is this a murder not a suicide, with the body serving as a message or warning? How did Joey get the photo? Various enigmas act as narrative hooks and draw in the reader into the story:

"she saw, a few inches from her face, poking up from Joey's front pocket, a folded photograph of her.

Lydia.

As a child."



Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Mickey Spillane has shaped meanings. [25 marks]

In the extract our protagonist is meeting a Doctor who reveals some secrets that happened 20 years ago

"Dead Street" by Mickey Spillane

first person  
hard boiled  
"noir" style

barely  
contained  
violence:  
tension

He was staring back at me now. I knew my eyes were growing colder.

I laid the bagel on the plate and under the table my fingers were interlaced, each hand telling the other not to reach for the gun on my belt. I didn't wear the shoulder holster with the old .45 Colt automatic snugged in it anymore. I was a civilian now. Still authorized by the state of New York to pack a firearm. But I wasn't on the Job any more. Caution, I kept telling myself. Easy. Play this hand carefully.

Something was going down.

And the doctor was reading me. His hands stayed on the table top.

For several seconds his eyes watched mine, but they were encompassing every feature of my face. Then Dr. Thomas Brice broke the ice. It didn't tinkle like a dropped champagne glass—it crashed like a piece from a glacier. "Long time ago, you were in love with a woman named Bettie..."

A pair of tiny muscles twitched alongside my spine. It wasn't a new sensation at all. Twice before I had felt those insidious little squirms and both times I had been shot at right afterward.

He was saying, "She was abducted and stuffed into a van but an alert had gone out minutes before and a police car was in pursuit. The chase led to the bridge over the Hudson River where the driver lost control, went through the guardrails and over the fencing and fell a hundred and thirty feet into the water."

My hand was on the .45 now. My thumb flipped off the leather snap fastener and eased the hammer back. If this was a pathetic jokester he was about to die at this last punch line.

Softly, I said, "There was an immediate search party on the site. They located the wreckage. The driver was dead. There was no other body recovered."

The doctor's expression never changed, the eyes behind the lenses unblinking. He let a moment pass and told me, "Correct, Captain, no other body."

Something seemed to jab into my heart. I waited, my forefinger curling around the trigger.

He added, "The next morning, right after dawn, one of the dogs in the cages at a veterinary clinic began whimpering strangely. It awakened the doctor—"

"A doctor named Brice?"

"Yes. But not this Brice—my late father. I was around, but not a vet yet. May I continue?"

I nodded.

"Anyway, my father got up to see what the trouble was. The animal was fine, but it was whimpering toward the rear lawn that bordered on the Hudson River. My father didn't quite know what was going on, but went with that dog's sensitivity and walked out the back."

Somehow, Dr. Brice read my expression. He knew that if there was a downside on his story, he was never going to finish it....

"There was a young girl there. Alive."

Alive!

"staccato  
hard boiled" prose

sense  
of  
threat/  
danger

"One arm was gripped fiercely around an inflated inner tube."

He must have seen my arm move. Somehow he knew there was no tense finger around the hammer of a deadly .45 automatic any longer.

"The night before, we had heard about the altercation in the city, and we both knew at once that this girl was the one who had been abducted. The late news mentioned that it was a mob snatch, as they called it, because sources within the NYPD indicated she had information that could seriously damage a major Mafia group."

technical terms

"So you didn't report it," I stated.

"Fortunately not," he answered quickly. "My father checked with one of his friends on the local police force, who told him that the heat was on like never before and whatever that girl had could break up crime outfits from the city to Las Vegas."

"But nothing ever happened," I said. Something had rasped my voice. It sounded low and scratchy.

"Wouldn't have mattered," Brice told me.

"Why not?"

He let a few seconds pass before he said, "Because the girl...and she was a girl, twenty, twenty-one...had no memory at all of anything that had happened before the car crash."

And it was my turn to take a deep breath. "Nothing."

Dr. Brice shook his head.

I felt like vomiting. "Damn!"

"And that's not the only thing," he added.

"Oh?"

The eyes narrowed behind the lenses. "More than her memory was gone, Captain—she was blind. A terrible blow to her head had rendered her totally sightless. She would never be able to identify anybody...or be able to remember her past."

"So she was no threat to the mob...."

"Come on, Captain. You know different. Until an identifiable body turned up, those people would never stop looking."

"That was more than twenty years ago," I reminded him.

Brice nodded slowly, his eyes on mine.

Before he could say anything, I let the words out slowly. "Where is she?"

He didn't tell me. He simply said, "That's why I'm here."

I knew there was a quiver in my voice when I asked, "Is she still alive?"

He nodded a yes and my pulse rate went up ten points.

She was alive! My Bettie was alive! I didn't care how she looked or how she remembered things, what she could see or couldn't see; my Bettie was alive and that's all that counted.

lots of dramatic issues here!

the 'driven' obsessive on the 'quest' for justice

narrative hook: "quest"

## **Teacher Notes on the extract:**

**First person, “hard boiled” noir style fiction: violent, often cynical and with “damaged” characters struggling in a post war world**

**Very dialogue heavy – reads like a film script**

**A spare, unadorned style of writing typical of the harder end of the genre – less descriptive, less smart than , say, Chandler, more “gritty”**

**Use of hyperbole to generate a tense atmosphere: “Then Dr. Thomas Brice broke the ice. It didn’t tinkle like a dropped champagne glass—it crashed like a piece from a glacier.”**

**Spillane makes encounter tense and unpredictable – the protagonist is clearly dangerous and emotional: “My hand was on the .45 now. My thumb flipped off the leather snap fastener and eased the hammer back. If this was a pathetic jokester he was about to die at this last punch line.”**

**Idea of protagonist as “haunted” by the past: death, relationships, women, etc. – a typical convention of Noir fiction**

**Protagonist as “maverick” and amoral – willing to break rules and do whatever it takes – fits into American Dream notion of the “Rugged Individual” ignoring rules when seeking justice and retribution.**

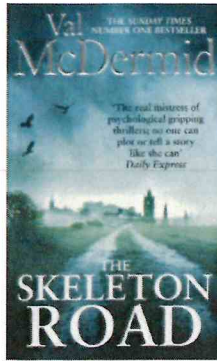
**Very emotional and cathartic writing, enhanced by first person narrative: “She was alive! My Bettie was alive! I didn’t care how she looked or how she remembered things, what she could see or couldn’t see; my Bettie was alive and that’s all that counted.”**

**Hard boiled Crime clichés: car crash, lost memories, loss of sight, references to organised crime – “the mob”, “mafia”, which reflected American fears of crime rackets during the period, with “tough guy” protagonists offering cathartic solutions, however ethically or morally questionable their methods might be**

**Pleasures of Crime: “Tough guy” Mike Hammer narrator offering an attractive role model to male readers – escapism, glamour, violence, rule breaking, strong sense of moral justice**

**Short sentences create tension: “Caution, I kept telling myself. Easy. Play this hand carefully. Something was going down.”**

**The idea of a dangerous, rebellious protagonist living on the edge of acceptable behaviour – typical characteristics of the genre’s protagonists: haunted, obsessed, driven, dealing with a dark past, amoral, outsiders, loners, psychotic (?).**



Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Val Macdermid has shaped meanings. [25 marks]

Set in Edinburgh, *The Skeleton Road* centres on a Cold Case investigation – i.e. a very old case that has “gone cold”. A skeleton is discovered, hidden at the top of a soon-to-be renovated Gothic building. This extract takes in the last part of the prologue, and then the start of the next chapter. In the second part, Fraser Jardine, an engineer, is inspecting the roof of an old building. undefined / “shadowy” figure

The watcher slips into the building behind him and silently climbs the stairs in his wake. Stealth is second nature in this line of work and tonight is no exception. A blade slides from its sheath without a sound. Sits balanced in the hand, waiting. So sharp it could split a sheet of paper. The man stops in front of the door to his apartment, key already in hand, prepared for a quick entry. He slots the key into the lock and turns it, pushing the door open. He’s about to step across the threshold when a voice indecently close to him says a name he hasn’t heard in years. Shocked, he begins to turn around, backing into his flat as he goes.

But he’s too late. Without hesitation, the blade moves in a gleaming arc and slices the man’s throat from ear to ear. Blood gushes and spurts, splashing a different red over the door and the walls and the floor.

By the time he’s finished dying, his assassin is back among the tourists, heading for a bar and a well-deserved drink. A seven-star Metaxa, perhaps. And a toast to the single death that doesn’t begin to atone for all those other deaths.

violence

suggestion that killing was ‘justified’? Act of revenge?

He’d never liked heights. As a child, he’d done his best to avoid the tall slide in the park. The vertiginous stairs that clanged like some ominous tolling bell with every step. The cold rail clammy under his sweating palm. The smell of sweat and metal that made him feel he was going to throw up. (And how terrible that would have been, projecting a rain of multi-coloured vomit over the kids and parents below.) But sometimes there had been no escape. He’d stood on the tiny metal platform at the top, a melting sensation in his bladder, the knowledge that wetting his pants was too close for comfort. Then he’d shut his eyes, drop on to his backside and hurtle down, refusing to look again till he shut-tled off the end of the shiny metal strip into the hard-packed sand beyond. Skinning his knees felt like a blessing; it meant he was back in touch with solid ground.

humour?

That lifelong terror of high places had been his only reservation when he’d been considering his choice of career. Surely a demolition quantity surveyor couldn’t avoid going out on roofs from time to time? You couldn’t ignore the fact that some structures might pose dangers for the crew itself or add extra costs to the job. He wasn’t stupid; he’d asked about it specifically at the careers fair. The man representing the building trade had made light of it, claiming it was a rare occurrence. Fraser had been three months into his training period before he’d understood the careers advisor hadn’t had a clue what he was talking about. But the job market was crap, especially if you were a young man with a moderate degree from an indifferent university. So he’d bitten the bullet and stayed put.

irony / humour

back-story

Over the past six years he’d become adept at figuring out which upcoming jobs would present the worst prospects, then neatly managing to sidestep them. Too busy with another assessment; a

shift in tone → lighter character back story / quite mundane detail

dental appointment for a troublesome molar; a training course he needed to attend. He'd turned avoidance into a fine art and, as far as he was aware, nobody had noticed.

But that morning – and a Saturday morning too, just to add insult to injury – his boss had sprung this on him. A rush job for a new client they wanted to impress. And everybody else already committed elsewhere. The job of checking out the Victorian Gothic battlements, turrets and pinnacles of the John Drummond School had dropped on Fraser's steel-capped toes.

Dry-mouthed, hands slippery with sweat inside his work gloves, he crab-walked cautiously down the steep pitch of the slates. 'It could be worse,' he said aloud as he automatically checked out the state of the roof, noting gaps where slates had slipped from their moorings or disappeared altogether. 'It could be much worse. It could be raining. It could be like a bloody fucking ice rink.' The fake cheer wouldn't have fooled his two-year-old daughter. It certainly didn't fool Fraser.

The trick was to keep breathing, slow and steady. That, and not to look down. Never to look down. He gained the relative safety of the shallow lead-lined gutter behind the crenelated perimeter wall and concentrated on the task before him. 'It's only a wall. It's only a wall,' he muttered. 'A pretty fucking crappy wall,' he added as he noted the crumbling mortar. The pressure on his bladder increased as he contemplated how weather-weakened the structure had become. There was no way of detecting that damage from below. What else was lying in wait for him on this decaying bloody roof?

Fraser had driven past the John Drummond countless times, marvelling at the fact that from a distance it still looked as impressive as ever, even after standing empty for the best part of twenty years. It was an Edinburgh landmark, its elaborate facade impressively dominating what amounted to a small park beside one of the southbound arterial roads. For years, the sheer scale of any redevelopment of the abandoned private school had daunted developers. But the exponential expansion of the city's student population had created more pressure on accommodation and more profits for developers with the nerve to go for major projects. And so Fraser was stuck on this decaying roof on a cold Saturday morning. He began making his tentative way round the perimeter, dividing his attention between the parapet and the roof, dictating occasional notes into the voice-activated recorder clipped to his hi-vis tabard. When he came to the first of the tall mock-Gothic pinnacles that stood at each corner of the roof, he paused, assessing it carefully.

He lay down in the gutter, switched on the head torch on his hard hat and edged forward. Once his head was inside, he was able to make a surprisingly good assessment of the interior. The floor was covered with herringbone brick; the interior walls were brick, sagging slightly in places where the mortar had crumbled away, but held in place by the weight pressing down from above. A bundle of feathers in one corner marked where a pigeon had lost the battle with its own stupidity. The air was tainted with an acrid whiff that Fraser attributed to whatever vermin had visited the building. Rats, bats, mice. Whatever.

The third pinnacle loomed like a place of safety. Still on his hands and knees, Fraser switched on the head torch again and thrust his head inside the access arch. This time, what he saw made him rear up so abruptly that he smacked his head on the back of the arch, sending his hard hat tumbling across the floor, the beam of light careering around madly before it finally rocked itself still. Fraser whimpered. At last he'd found something on a roof that was scarier than the height. Grinning at him across the brickwork was a skull, lying on a scatter of bones that had clearly once been a human being.

character  
is humanised +  
made  
sympathetic

writer delays revelation of the body.

## Teacher Notes on the extract:

Typical violent “prologue” with mysterious, ill-defined characters to create mystery – the “watcher” and the nameless victim

Trademark violence and motif of blood is a common crim convention: “slices the man’s throat from ear to ear. Blood gushes and spurts, splashing a different red over the door and the walls and the floor.”

“By the time he’s finished dying, his assassin is back among the tourists, heading for a bar and a well-deserved drink. A seven-star Metaxa, perhaps. And a toast to the single death that doesn’t begin to atone for all those other deaths.” – suggestion of a typically cold assassin, but also the suggestion of a “justified” killing – “begin to atone”

Use of present tense to suggest immediacy

Writer then abruptly shifts tone to a lighter, more human environment with plenty of backstory and character development to contrast with the blank ciphers of the prologue: “(And how terrible that would have been, projecting a rain of multi-coloured vomit over the kids and parents below.)” – note the use of brackets to infer a more intimate, conversational “aside” as part of the backstory

Comical and ironic link between a fear of heights and a demolition quantity surveyor

Detailed backstory humanises the character as we get to know him better: “But the job market was crap, especially if you were a young man with a moderate degree from an indifferent university. So he’d bitten the bullet and stayed put.”

Free indirect discourse method allows access to thought processes: “The trick was to keep breathing, slow and steady. That, and not to look down. Never to look down.”

Fraser talks to himself to increase tension within the scene and to involve the reader. His perilous climb shifts from mildly comical to more tense: “. ‘It’s only a wall. It’s only a wall,’ he muttered. ‘A pretty fucking crappy wall,’ he added as he noted the crumbling mortar”. A likeable character to start the novel – someone we can identify with.

Setting is important here – the aged building provides an interesting backdrop and again contrasts with the very “modern” prologue. We associate old buildings with secrets, hauntings, and artefacts

Writer delays revelation of gruesome “discovery”: “Grinning at him across the brickwork was a skull, lying on a scatter of bones that had clearly once been a human being.”

“Grinning” is a macabre touch and adds visual detail

Pleasures of Crime: The violent introduction, satisfying crime fans’ desire for gore and violence; the set-up of the enigma/mysterious artefact