

Corrigé de l'extrait #1

Letter from Juliet to Sidney:

4/ Juliet expresses her problem in two ways: 1st: despair: (l.6 + l. 11)

2nd: humour when she talks of bunnies, Beatrix Potter and people demonstrating against bunnies, which sounds ridiculous (=ludicrous). (l.8....10)

From the very beginning, we have an illustration of the way the story is written: it is both very serious, (and even hopeless), and full of humour at the same time. The story is **balanced** between these two elements.

5/ cf photocopy literary references. (B. Potter's famous character: Peter Rabbit)

6/ key elements for writing humour: l. 15 you need "a sense of proportion **or balance**". She says she can't write, and yet, she still manages to make jokes, as we have seen in question 4/.

7/ 8/ cf literary references (Isaac B.), + Izzy B. : Juliet's "nom de plume", or pen name. cf letter of 3rd February 1946: we learn that she wrote a weekly column under that name in the Spectator during the war. She chose that name to relate to Jonathan Swift and later Joseph Addison who invented this character (Isaac B.) as a sort of joke (a hoax with a fake astrologer).

9/ cf literary references+ "l. 17 : "it relieves...". That time, she tried to write a serious book, but she completely failed. She was more successful writing comedy in her weekly columns. So we may conclude that she is a failure as an intellectual writer, she might be unable to write serious literature, since her Anne B.'s biography was a complete flop.

10/11/ cf Literary references. + l.20 in her PS: she uses strong words to qualify this writer: "dismal woman", she found her very scornful and unfair to Jane Carlyle: **Jane Welsh Carlyle** (14 January 1801 – 21 April 1866, née Jane Baillie Welsh in [Haddington Scotland](#)) was the wife of [essayist Thomas Carlyle](#) and has been cited as the reason for his fame and fortune. She was most notable as a [letter-writer](#). In 1973, G.B. Tennyson (a famous poet) described her as:

"One of the rare Victorian wives who are of literary interest in their own right...to be remembered as one of the great letter writers (in some respects her husband's superior) of the nineteenth century is glory beyond the dreams of avarice." (Wikipedia)

Juliet reacts violently at Mrs Montagu's disparaging words: "I hope Jane spat at her". l.22. It shows that from the first letter, we can imagine her personality: she says openly what she thinks, and she can be quite vehement... and a little violent! She can't bear injustice.

12/ All these references foreshadow the strong link this novel has with literature, and the love of literature... Both the main characters' love of books but also the real authors' same love. (both authors had and still have close ties with the world of books).

Letter from Sidney to Juliet:

Global understanding:

1/ S. Scott must be working for public relations for the publishers "Stark and Stephens". She organises "literary luncheons" (1st letter l.3). She organizes special events for the release of Juliet's new book (a collection of all the column she wrote during the war, as "Izzy B."). l. 7. She will have a key role later on in the story (discovering about the theft of O. Wilde's letters, and keeping in touch with Juliet throughout the novel, especially when Sidney is absent).

2/Sidney is trying to reassure Juliet who feels guilty and disappointed about her last book, A. Brontë's biography. What's more, she feels she has no inspiration, she may think her career is over, so S's role is to stand by her, and give her confidence back. It's also in his personal and financial interest that she keeps on writing, since he is his publisher...

3/ He stands for the big brother figure. He is the brother Juliet doesn't have, since she is an only child and she lost her parents at a young age. As she was an orphan, Sophie and Sidney have become her only family. (proof of this: the ending of their letters)

Detailed understanding:

1/ To a relationship between "a drunkard" and "rum". (l.1). The effect of this comparison is funny. S; seems to share the same sense of humour as Juliet. It also show the sort of relationship these characters may have.

2/l.2: "please stop worrying... I have no doubt of your success..." l.4 "I know..." l11: "the sales figures.... are excellent..."

3/ As a child she got angry at the audience during a performance she was doing and as a consequence, she decided to throw a book at the public...This episode shows once more the type of character Juliet has. She is decidedly strong-willed. She has character. On the one hand it is a positive aspect of her character because she is quite frank, but on the other hand, it can be negative, because she becomes violent, she can't control herself. (as we'll see later in the novel, this type of reaction will occur again in other circumstances (episode of the teapot thrown at a journalist).

5/ Sophie "misses you [Juliet] terribly" l.9 + l.8 "S is agitating for an extension of the tour into Scotland" 'where she lives, so she can see her best friend, who is like a sister to her.

6/ Sidney's personality: full of humour, but also very mature and responsible. He behaves as a big brother: "'I've told her in my infuriating older-brother manner..." l. 8/9.

7/ His invitation could be mistaken for a date, but it also shows how close they are. They seem to be getting along very well.

8/ His postscript is a humorous answer to Juliet's own ps. He compares her to Jane Carlyle, which is quite interesting, since this novel is an epistolary novel mostly composed of her

letters. he also compares himself to Mrs Montagu, in order to irritate and amuse Juliet. She might feel like spitting on him!

To conclude, we can say that they both share the same type of humour, and they have a very close friendship.

9/common elements: Susan Scott; food and rum; money , royalties and sales figures; English Foibles and bunnies; lack of inspiration, and new sources of inspirations; and eventually, the reference to Mrs Montagu's words.(remember to quote the letters)

From the first pages of the novel, we can see that letters answer each other. Most of the book is written in that way. This structure forms a great part of the frame of is novel.