



The Girl in Yellow

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The blue light of my phone shines against my face as I scroll through social media. Suddenly a notification pops up reminding me about the visit to Granny's. I drop my phone and grab all my essentials for the boredom ahead. I swipe my full bag off the ground as the clock ticks in the background continuously reminding me that I should have left a millennia ago. On my way out of the door, I crash into my little sister Jess, being as annoying as possible.

"Mum said you have to play with me on the trip," she says with a large grin plastered over her face. My little sister stares up at me with wide eyes. I roll my eyes in response. I have so much homework to do. I don't have time for little monster's games. I get out my phone and continue scrolling Instagram.

Now on the road, I have a look at my phone. One notification. I check my phone hoping it could give me something to escape this otherwise boring drive. To my right is a hyperactive squirrel babbling nonsense, also known as Jess, and in front are the two most boring people in the world. My parents have no idea what it means to be connected to the world. The notification however is just a weather report and nothing else.

First person **POV**, (allows for empathy and closer understanding of protagonist). A contemporary **setting** established, with the narrator engaged in social media: 'blue light of my phone, 'scroll', 'notification pops up'. Narrative voice is droll, **characterising** a fractious adolescent, with 'the boredom ahead' and reference to little sister Jess being 'as annoying as possible'. **Hyperbole**: 'I should have left a millennia ago' to embed the boredom. **Verb choice** of 'swipe' to pick the bag off the ground referencing technology. 'As the clock ticks in the background' **juxtaposes** analogue surroundings with narrator's tech world. An excellent **orientation** to the world of the 21st century adolescent.

The **characterisation** of the narrator is further developed through descriptions of action, behaviour and attitude. The dynamic between her and her younger sister is made clear, and the first person POV means we are seeing the little sister through the narrator's eyes as a 'little monster'.

Using the short phrase "now on the road", the author gives an economic shift in **setting/change of scene**. This paragraph is very important with regard to the overall **plot** and development of main **theme**: the dominance of the mobile phone in the narrator's life and the feeling of isolation and disconnection within her own family. This is **juxtaposed** with the feeling of being 'connected to the world' through technology. The irrelevant notification could be interpreted as **foreshadowing**.

“Put away the phone. We are here,” Mum reports as we pull up to the house. Granny’s house is covered in vines and is surrounded by farmland. It has a familiar and strangely comforting smell that is a combination of apple pie and compost.

Now inside I lie down, mentally exhausted, craving a break from my sister, who has not shut her mouth the whole drive while she talked to some imaginary friend. Checking my phone again - oh great no bars or Wi-Fi! With one knock at my door, I prepare for the worst.

“Hey Mel, help me make a pillow fort, my friend and I need one. Don’t you think my friend looks pretty today, all in yellow?” my sister remarks with hope.

I reply with “Yeah and the tooth fairy wants to make cupcakes with us.” With that, I slam the door closed.

Alone in my bedroom, I pull my Chromebook out and begin with my homework. It’s long and tedious, but finally, I get to the last assignment. It’s for PC and it’s just a simple question, that’s it. It reads “what gets your imagination running best and why?” With nothing immediately coming to mind, I shut my computer and leave the room hoping I can think of an answer later. I check my phone - still no bars or Wi-Fi!

Despite the size of the house being minuscule, it felt like a castle that never ended. It had lots of tiny nooks, crannies, and small rooms. Tired as a bat during the day, I drag myself over to the couch, flop down, and just lie there.

“Mel, mum said you have to play with me!” My sister stares up at me with wide eyes.

“Fine,” I reply, as I roll my eyes again.

My sister dashes out the door and I follow reluctantly. We go to the backyard where you can see a field stretching for miles with only a single road to cut through the otherwise empty space. My sister runs off doing her best superman impression while making a noise I can only compare to that of a broken-down plane. She yells gibberish and I just sit and watch.

Concise **dialogue** characterises the Mum’s authority and power. The **description** of Granny’s house is evocative, using the sense of smell. **Literary devices** are deftly used, such as **oxymoron** - ‘strangely comforting’, and **juxtaposition** - apple pie and compost. ‘Strangely comforting’ may also be interpreted as **foreshadowing** that things may not be as boringly predictable, on this visit.

Verb choice ‘craving’ characterises narrator’s desperation and exhaustion. The introduction of the sister having an imaginary friend is part of the **plotting**, with a hint of what is to come for the narrator.

There is **rising action** here with the little sister Jess referring to the imaginary friend as ‘all in yellow’, making reference to the title, therefore important to the **plot**. The protagonist (finally named - Mel) continues to be characterised as sarcastic and bored through her response. Even though protagonist’s response is sarcastic, it references whimsical notions, **foreshadowing** Mel’s later change in attitude.

This paragraph echoes the **orientation** and focus on **setting** – that of **stereotypical** present-day adolescent student, referencing devices and homework. There is further **rising action** with the homework question about triggering one’s imagination, which links to the **theme**. The last two sentences continue the **tone** and **mood** of distraction and ennui. **Repetition** is used as the last phrase ‘I check my phone - still no bars or Wi-Fi!’ is an exact repeat from two paragraphs prior.

Higher level **vocabulary** choice in ‘minuscule’ as well as the old fashioned ‘nooks and crannies’, in this case pulled apart and used as individual **word choices**, for effect. The **similes** ‘felt like a castle that never ended’ and ‘tired as a bat during the day’ are original, and bring some light **humour**. ‘Drag’, ‘flop’ and ‘just lie’, are **verbs** that together help cement the **atmosphere** of ennui.

Authentic **dialogue** exchange and more eyerolling **characterisation** of protagonist, through non-verbal gesture. Eyes have become a **motif** in the story. Eyes symbolise awareness, revelation, realisation, vigilance etc.

There is some **exposition (telling)** to describe the **setting** and change of scene, well balanced with **showing** Jess’ behaviour. The author employs the sense of sound with **onomatopoeic** descriptions such as ‘noise...of a broken-down plane’ and word choices such as ‘gibberish’.

I slowly get bored without my phone for entertainment but it is quiet and peaceful. My mind starts drifting off noticing very small details. That cloud looks like a dog, that one looks like a tree, and that one looks like a...

“Oh, look at that cloud! It looks like the yellow girl’s flower crown. . . can you see her?” Jess chirps. I don’t want to disappoint her so I don’t say anything. Jess rests her head on my shoulder and lets out a loud yawn.

I get up, which shocks Jess. I then run off as she follows. I hide, and when she turns the corner, I jump out.

“Boo!” This gets her giggling, bringing back up her spirits; I can’t stand seeing her looking so down. That’s my thing. So, I play along for a while with the games Jess dreams up.

The sky slowly darkens as we are called in by Granny for a dinner of roast chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy. I take one more look around and I notice the scarecrow I made with my best friend Chloe back when I was only ten. I remember that day running around in the sun. My best friend and I collected sticks and twigs. We pretended to be fairies and made potions out of grass and leaves. I let out a controlled breath, my shoulders fall, and I walk out to the scarecrow. Granny continues calling for me but I need to check this one thing first. It’s still there. My half of our friendship necklace. It sways in the breeze as I straighten the scarecrow’s hat.

“You look quite fine, my good sir,” I tell the scarecrow. How silly.

I rush back inside, having the smell of roast chicken invade my nostrils, and the sound of pots and pans, as Granny cleans up. Just the right way to end what became a great day.

Now inside in bed, stomach full, mind at peace. My phone, now discarded in the corner. I look through the window one more time, before I doze off, to see the fine scarecrow, but there is something else. A petite girl sits next to the scarecrow. She wears a flowing yellow flower dress and glows like the sun. There are no streetlights around yet I can see her, clear as day, making a flower crown. The girl in yellow.

A pivotal turning point in the **character arc** of protagonist Mel: her self-awareness reveals a shift in attitude from not being able to live without her phone, to enjoying the peace and quiet. This paragraph does a lot to embed the **theme** of imagination v technology.

These two paragraphs continue to develop **character arc** of Mel, showing she is not only changing her attitude towards her phone, but also towards her younger sister, correlating with her newfound excitement about tapping into her imagination, which continues the **theme**, and her willingness to play imaginatively. They are a great example of **characterising through actions, behaviour and dialogue**, rather than literal descriptions. Again, lots of use of the sense of sound. We have another reference to ‘the girl in yellow’. The importance of referencing the title is that it creates expectation and builds anticipation in the reader.

Pathetic fallacy is used: ‘The sky slowly darkens as we are called in ...’ signalling that the story is coming to a close. Descriptive detail appeals to the senses of smell and sight to create atmosphere. Mel’s **inner monologue** of childhood memories of fairies, potions etc has changed the **tone** of the text from sardonic to whimsical, symbolising the shift from boredom with technology to wonder with imagination, which consolidates the **theme** that the author has set out to explore. It also continues her **character arc**.

This small paragraph does so much: Mel has lost her cynicism and is also self-aware and self-deprecating with ‘How silly’, continuing her **character arc**.

Further **language choices** appealing to the senses of sound and smell. A continuation of the author using the ending of the day as a parallel to bringing the story to a close.

Completion of narrator’s **character arc** and full development of **theme** provides a satisfying **resolution**. Narrator is replete with imagination and whims, contrasting with the opening in which she was deeply mired in ennui and sarcasm. The final phrase is only a fragment, not a complete sentence, but it is acceptable here as it is referencing the **title**: a clever and satisfying **device** to use to complete the story.