

# Passage Analysis – Parts 1 and 2

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Read the sections of text as outlined below and then write a brief discussion in which you answer the following questions:

- What was Colm Toibin suggesting and what conclusion might he have expected the reader to draw?
- What (if any) social, historical and/or cultural values are suggested?
- What different interpretations are possible?

Each discussion should take you no more than 15 minutes.

1. Read pp 4 (line 8) – 6 (line 5)
2. P5 *'I went into that shop once,' Rose said, 'on my way home from mass and she served Mary Delahunt before me. I turned and walked out.'*
3. P5 *Eilis found as the meal went on that she could do an imitation of Miss Kelly's voice that made her sister and mother laugh. She wondered if she was the only one who remembered that Jack, the youngest of her brothers, used to do imitations of the Sunday sermon, the radio sports commentators, the teachers at school and many characters in the town, and they all used to laugh. She did not know if the other two also realized that this was the first time they had laughed at this table since Jack had followed the others to Birmingham. She would have loved to say something about him, but she knew that it would make her mother too sad. Even when a letter came from him it was passed around in silence.*
4. P17 *'We'll get a name for being wallflowers,' Nancy said.  
'You could be called worse,' Eilis said.  
'Oh, you could. You could be called the Courtnacuddy Bus,' Nancy replied.*
5. P20 *...it must be sad for his parents having a pup for a son because he's an only child.*
6. Pp22 (line 9) – 24 (line 12)
7. Pp 26 (line 31) – 27 (line 25)
8. P28 *Now, she felt she was being singled out for something for which she was not in any way prepared, and this, despite the fear it carried with it, gave her a feeling, or more a set of feelings, she thought she might experience in the days before her wedding, days in which everyone looked at her in the rush of arrangements with light in their eyes, days in which she herself was fizzy with excitement but careful not to think too precisely about what the next few weeks would be like in case she lost her nerve.*
9. Pp28-29 *... 'Oh, it will kill me when she goes,' her mother said. Her face wore a dark strained look that Eilis had not seen since the months after their father died. Then, in the moments that followed, the neighbour appearing to have been taken aback by her mother's tone, her mother's expression became almost darker and she had to stand up and walk quietly out of the room. It*

was clear to Eilis that she was going to cry. Eilis was so surprised that, instead of following her mother into the hallway or the dining room, she made small talk with their neighbour, hoping her mother would soon return and they could resume what had seemed like an ordinary conversation.

10. Pp 29 (line 6) – 30 (line 6)
11. P30... Rose was thirty now, and since it was obvious that their mother could never be left to live alone, not merely because her pension was small but because she would be too lonely without any of them, Eilis's going, which Rose had organized so precisely, would mean that Rose would not be able to marry. She would have to stay with her mother, living as she was now, working in Davis's office, playing golf at the weekends and on summer evenings. Rose, she realized, in making it easy for her to go, was giving up any real prospect of leaving this house herself and having her own family. ...It occurred to her also, as she tried on some earrings, that Rose knew all this too, knew that either she or Eilis would have to leave, and had decided to let Eilis go.... Eilis wanted to suggest that that they change places.
12. P30-31 ...Eilis would have given anything to be able to say plainly that she did not want to go, that Rose could go instead, that she would happily stay here and take care of her mother and they would manage somehow...
13. P31...She wondered if her mother too believed that the wrong sister was leaving, and understood what Rose's motives were. She imagined that her mother knew everything. They knew so much, each one of them, she thought, that they could do everything except say out loud what it was they were thinking.
14. P32...Rose had dressed up beautifully for the day, and Eilis had tried to look as well as she could. Rose, merely by smiling at the hotel porter, seemed to be able to make him stand in O'Connell Street to get a taxi for them, insisting that they wait in the lobby. No one who did not have a ticket was allowed beyond a certain point; Rose, however, made an exception of herself with the assistance of the ticket collector, who fetched a colleague to help the ladies with their suitcases. He told Rose she could stay on the boat until half an hour before it was due to sail, when he would locate her, accompany her back and then find someone to keep an eye on her sister for the crossing to Liverpool. Even the people with first-class tickets would not get this treatment, Eilis remarked to Rose, who smiled knowingly and agreed.
15. P32 ... In the early morning when the boat arrived in Liverpool she was helped with her luggage by a porter who was Irish. When she told him she was not sailing to America until later that day, he advised her to take her cases immediately down to a shed where a friend of his worked, close to where the transatlantic liners docked; if she gave the man at the office his name, then she would be free of them for the day. She found herself thanking him in a tone that Rose might have used, a tone warm and private but also slightly distant though not shy either, a tone used by a woman in full possession of herself. It was something she could not have done in the town or in a place where any of her family or friends might have seen her.
16. P33... 'Rose sent me a list of instructions, and they included one that said no kissing and hugging.'
17. P33... 'This is going to take you to America,' Jack said. 'It's like time and patience.'  
'What about time and patience?'  
'Time and patience would bring a snail to America. Did you never hear that?'  
'Don't be so stupid,' she said and nudged him and smiled.  
'Daddy always said that,' he said.  
'When I was out of the room,' she replied.

*'Time and patience would bring a snail to America,' he repeated.*

18. Pp 41(line 1) – 45(line 8)
19. P46... *'Did you not hear them saying it when we were coming on board? It's the worst storm in years. It's always bad down here, but this one is terrible.'*
20. P50 line 7 – end of the chapter.
21. P53... *Mrs Kehoe, who owned the house, was from Wexford town and loved to talk to her about home, about Sunday trips to Curracloe and Rosslare Strand, or hurling matches, or the shops along the Main Street in Wexford town, or characters she remembered.*
22. Pp 54-55... *Before dinner each evening they stood up solemnly and joined their hands and Mrs Kehoe led them in saying grace. As they sat at table, she did not like the girls talking among themselves, or discussing matters she knew nothing about, and she did not encourage any mention of boyfriends. She was mainly interested in clothes and shoes, and where they could be bought and at what price and at what time of the year. Changing fashions and new trends were her daily topic, although she herself, as she often pointed out, was too old for some of the new colours and styles. Yet, Eilis saw, she dressed impeccably and noticed every item each of her lodgers was wearing. She also loved discussing skin care and different types of skin and problems. Mrs Kehoe had her hair done once a week, on a Saturday, using the same hairdresser each time, spending several hours with her so that her hair would be perfect for the rest of the week.*
23. P61... *Eilis did not tell Miss Fortini that she never made mistakes when she did addition. Instead, she worked slowly, as she had been advised, making sure that the figures were correct.*
24. Pp66 (line 6) – 67 (line 22)
25. P68... *But her dream had no screaming women, just a group of silent children, Eilis among them, standing in a line, knowing that they would soon be led away on the orders of the judge. What was strange for her now as she lay awake was that she had seemed to be looking forward to being led away, she had felt no fear of it. Her fear, instead, was of seeing her mother in front of the courthouse. In her dream she found a way of avoiding her mother. She was taken out of the line, and through a side door and then on a car journey that appeared to last as long as she could stay asleep.*
26. P69...*she tried to seem busy, but she found that she could, if she did not stop herself, move easily into a sort of trance, thinking over and over of the same things, about everything she had lost...*
27. Pp70 (line 16) – 71 (line 3)
28. P75 (line 17) – 75 (line 25)
29. P76... *she would try to put those two days behind her. No matter what she dreamed about, no matter how bad she felt, she had no choice, she knew, but to put it all swiftly out of her mind. She would have to get on with her work if it was during the day and go back to sleep if it was during the night. It would be like covering a table with a tablecloth, or closing curtains on a window; and maybe the need would lessen as time went on, as Jack had hinted it would, as Father Flood had suggested. In any case it was what she would have to do.*
30. P79...*there were very few women in her class and no one Irish at all, no one even English.*

31. Pp86 (line 12) – 91 (line 10) *Má bhíonn tú liom, a stoírín mo chroí* translates as: If you are with me my sweet darling.

32.