

## 1.3b Short Story Analysis: Paragraph Exemplar

**Assignment:** How does the author use one short story element to develop the EQ?

**Element Selected:** Symbolism

**EQ Selected:** How do people's choices and actions influence the direction of their lives?

**Text selected:** Geeta Kothari's short story, "The Spaces Between Stars"

This exemplar would earn a mark of *Proficient*. It starts with a strong thesis, but there is some vagueness:

- What aspects are referred to in the comment "all aspects of her life?"
- What did choices did she make that made her "American"?
- What were some "poor choices and actions" of the past?
- What is a specific example of what's happening that makes her "unhappy."

Geeta Kothari's short story "The Spaces Between Stars" uses three symbols (a fish, a storm, and stars) to show that people's choices and actions can bring them struggles or peace. Maya's childhood and her choices as a teenager and an adult impact her life as a grown married woman. Kothari uses the symbol of the catching of a fish and its struggle to live to represent Maya's own struggles with feelings of loneliness and isolation. A fish is out of place on land; Maya feels out of place due to cultural differences. The "thunder rolling in" at the beginning of the story symbolizes Maya's poor choices and actions in the past. She is experiencing a "storm" of conflict as a direct result of her not adhering to her parents' values and traditions from their homeland of India. She made choices in her teen and young adult years to be "American." These choices are making her incredibly and increasingly unhappy, affecting all aspects of her life. She begins to deal with this conflict when she makes the choice to add "her own stars to the cluster directly above her side of the bed." It is her attempt to put her stars or her own unique mark on the universe, something that is a blend of India, America, and herself. When the language changes from "dreary...struggle...death" to "full of promise", the reader senses

that the storms in Maya's life will soon end. The story closes with the approach of a "monsoon," symbolizing Maya's peace and acceptance of herself now that she recognizes that she can be comfortable shining her own unique light right alongside the many other "stars."