hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes.'

'Oh, shut up and get something to read,' George said. He was reading again.

His wife was looking out of the window. It was quite dark now and still raining in the palm trees.

'Anyway, I want a cat,' she said. 'I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can't have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat.'

George was not listening. He was reading his book. His wife looked out of the window where the light had come on in the square.

Someone knocked at the door.

'Avanti,' George said. He looked up from his book.

In the doorway stood the maid. She held a big tortoiseshell-cat pressed tight against her and swung down against her body.

'Excuse me,' she said,' the padrone asked me to bring this for the Signora.'

The setting of a short story tells you when and where it takes place. What details in the first paragraph suggest a pleasant setting?

Hemingway mentions a war monument and rain several times, so we think it must be important. What could be the symbolic function of the war monument?

In what way does the rain contribute to the atmosphere of the story?

See diagram.

Some of George's reactions suggest that he cares for her, others reveal lack of interest and one even irritation. List these reactions in the diagram.

What can you conclude about their relationship?

When she passes the padrone's desk for the second time, what is it that the padrone gives her which George doesn't?

George's relationship with his wife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>he cares for her</th>
<th>he is not interested in her</th>
<th>she irritates him</th>
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Living Apart Together 109
3a
'I get so tired of looking like a boy'. What is the woman really saying here?

3b
'I want to have a kitty'. What does this tell you about the woman's deeper desire?

3c
The woman says she wants it to be spring. What is the connection between this desire and the one referred to in question 3b?

3d
'And I want ...... clothes'. The husband thinks that his wife is behaving like a spoilt child. Do you agree with him. Explain.

4
How does the padrone prove to have understood what the American woman wants?
The Lie
Raymond Carver (1938-1988)

This American author is mainly known as a short story writer. With a few words he sets a plot in motion which often reveals a sense of loneliness. He has an ear for dialogue and colloquial language. Read: The Stories of Raymond Carver.

1 'It's a lie,' my wife said. 'How could you believe such a thing? She's jealous, that's all.' She tossed her head and kept staring at me. She hadn't yet taken off her hat and coat. Her face was flushed from the accusation. 'You believe me, don't you?'

Surely you don't believe that?

2 I shrugged. Then I said, 'Why should she lie? Where would it get her? What would she have to gain by lying?' I was uncomfortable. I stood there in my slippers opening and closing my hands, feeling a little ridiculous and on display in spite of the circumstances. 'I'm not cut out to play the inquisitor.' I wish now it had never reached my ears, that everything could have been as before. 'She's supposed to be a friend,' I said. 'A friend to both of us.'

'She's a bitch, is what she is! You don't think a friend, however poor a friend, even a chance acquaintance, would tell a thing like that, such an outright lie, do you? You simply can't believe it.' She shook her head at my folly. Then she unpinned her hat, pulled off her gloves, laid everything on the table. She removed her coat and dropped it over the back of the chair.

'I don't know what to believe any more,' I said. 'I want to believe you.'

'Then do!' she said. 'Believe me – that's all I'm asking. I'm telling you the truth. I wouldn't lie about something like that. There now. Say it isn't true, darling. Say you don't believe it.'

I love her. I wanted to take her in my arms, hold her, tell her I believed her. But the lie, if it was a lie, had come between us. I moved over to the window.

'You must believe me,' she said. 'You know this is stupid. You know I'm telling you the truth.'

I stood at the window and looked down at the traffic moving slowly below. If I raised my eyes, I could see my wife's
reflection in the window. I'm a broad-minded man, I told myself. I can work this through. I began to think about my wife, about our life together, about truth versus fiction, honesty opposed to falsehood, illusion and reality. I thought about that movie Blowup we'd recently seen. I remembered the biography of Leo Tolstoy that lay on the coffee table, the things he says about truth, the 'splash' he'd made in old Russia. Then I recalled a friend from long ago, a friend I'd had in my junior and senior years of high school. A friend who could never tell the truth, a chronic, 'unmitigated' liar, yet a pleasant, well-meaning person and a true friend for two or three years during a difficult period in my life. I was overjoyed with my discovery of this 'habitual' liar from out of my past, this precedent to draw upon for aid in the present crisis in our - up to now - happy marriage. This person, this spirited liar, could indeed 'bear out' my wife's theory that there were such people in the world. I was happy again. I turned around to speak. I knew what I wanted to say: Yes, indeed, it could be true, it is true - people can and do lie, uncontrollably, perhaps unconsciously, 'pathologically' at times, without thought to the consequences. Surely my informant was such a person. But just at that moment my wife sat down on the sofa, covered her face with her hands and said, 'It's true, God forgive me. Everything she told you is true. It was a lie when I said I didn't know anything about it.'

'Is that true?' I said. I sat down in one of the chairs near the window.

She nodded. She kept her hands over her face.
I said, 'Why did you deny it, then? We never lie to one another. Haven't we always told each other the truth?'
'I was sorry,' she said. She looked at me and shook her head. 'I was ashamed. You don't know how ashamed I was. I didn't want you to believe it.'

'I think I understand,' I said.
She kicked off her shoes and leaned back on the sofa. Then she sat up and tugged her sweater over her head. She patted her hair into place. She took one of the cigarettes from the tray. I held the lighter for her and was momentarily astonished by the sight of her slim, pale fingers and her well-manicured nails. It was as if I were seeing them in a new and
somehow revealing way.

She drew on the cigarette and said, after a minute, 'And
how was your day today, sweet? Generally speaking, that is.
You know what I mean.' She held the cigarette between her
lips and stood up for a minute to step out of her skirt. 'There,'
she said.

'It was so-so,' I answered. 'There was a policeman here in
the afternoon, with a warrant, believe it or not, looking for
someone who used to live down the hall. And the apartment
manager himself called to say the water would be shut off for a
half-hour between three and three-thirty while they made
repairs. In fact, come to think of it, it was just during the time
the policeman was here that they had to shut off the water.'

'Is that so?' she said. She put her hands on her
hips and stretched. Then she closed her eyes, yawned, and shook her
long hair.

'And I read a good portion of the Tolstoy book today,' I
said.

'Marvelous.' She began to eat cocktail nuts, tossing them
one after the other with her right hand into her open mouth,
while still holding the cigarette between the fingers of her left
hand. From time to time she stopped eating long enough to
wipe her lips with the back of her hand and draw on the
cigarette. She'd slipped out of her underthings by now. She
doubled her legs under her and settled into the sofa. 'How is it?' she said.

'He had some interesting ideas,' I said. 'He was quite a
character.' My fingers tingled and the blood was beginning to
move faster. But I felt weak, too.

'Come here my little muzhik,' she said.

'I want the truth,' I said faintly, on my hands and knees
now. The plush, springy softness of the carpet excited me.
Slowly I crawled over to the sofa and rested my chin on one of
the cushions. She ran her hand through my hair. She was still
smiling. Grains of salt glimmered on her full lips. But as I
watched, her eyes filled with a look of inexpressible sadness,
though she continued smiling and stroking my hair.

'Little Pasha,' she said. 'Come up here, dumpling. Did it
really believe that nasty lady, that nasty lie? Here, put your
head on mommy's breast. That's it. Now close your eyes.
There. How could it believe such a thing? I'm disappointed in you. Really, you know me better than that. Lying is just a sport for some people.

1 Why did the narrator feel 'a little ridiculous and on display' (l.9)?

2 By what arguments did his wife try to convince him that their friend had been lying?

3 Why was the narrator 'overjoyed' with his recollection of a friend from long ago (l.44)?

4 'We never lie to one another. Haven't we always told each other the truth?' (l.61-62) Comment on these two sentences.

5a 'Generally speaking, that is.' What was the woman implying by this addition to 'And how was your day today, sweet? (l.74-75)?

5b Show from the text that she was in no way interested in his answer.

6 Explain the ambiguity (double meaning) in 'How is it?' (l.97-98)

7a The woman's victory was a sexual conquest, of course. Where did it start?

7b Where was it continued?

8 What could be the significance of the woman's use of the word 'it' to refer to her husband (l.111 and 114)?

9 Explain the last sentence of the story.
1a What details are given to describe the setting of this story?

1b To what event in European history do these details refer?

2a What does the text tell you about the two men in the company of Charlie's father?

2b So, what is their job?

2c Why are they with Mr. Stowe?

2d One of them says: 'While there's life...'. What does this suggest about Mr. Stowe's future?

2e What could be the reason that he uses a proverb (spreukwoord) at this moment?

2f 'The wife will sell out, I suppose. Else the neighbours'll be wrecking it.' What is Charlie's father guilty of, do you think? Account for your answer.

3a See diagram.

What does the text tell you about the relationship between Charlie and his father? Don't forget the last paragraph of the story!

3b See diagram.

And what does it say about the relationship between Charlie and his mother?

4a Would you have expected Charlie to think that it would have pleased him to go down to his father and tell him that he loved him? Account for your answer.

4b What, ironically, has brought him closer to his father?

5a A collar is mentioned twice in the text. Where?

5b Why does the writer repeat this detail, do you think?

5c What emotion does it express?

3 Charlie and his parents

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