

Task for *The Natural Way of Things*

Chapter Summaries

Section 1 – First chapter

This first section is called “Part one: Summer”. There is a drawing of a horse under the title. I’m not sure what the significance of the title or the drawing might be. Presumably this will become clearer later on. The first chapter in Part one introduces a character called Yolanda Kovacs. We learn a fair bit about this character straight away including that she has a beloved brother called Darren who has betrayed her in some way. It’s possible that Yolanda will be a **focalising** character because the **narrator** presents her thoughts, feelings, observations and memories as a way of introducing the world of the novel. There are mysteries here: Why has Yolanda been brought to this place? Why has Darren betrayed her? Is she mad and is she in a lunatic asylum? (Yolanda considers this possibility. Why?) **The central problem** of the novel is not yet clear but the fact that Darren ‘let them bring her here’ suggests that Yolanda has been imprisoned somewhere against her will. The references to bird calls and to stars could be important later.

A focalising character? The omniscient narrator may use this character to establish a point of view in the story

Will the motif of the lunatic asylum be important?

If the central problem is, as it seems, that this character has been brought to a prison then the likely conflict starts to emerge. The mystery of why she has been imprisoned will give the story momentum.

Section 2 – Second chapter

This chapter is focused on another woman character, Verla. There’s something sinister going on. The ‘girls’ have been drugged and abducted ‘right into the middle of the nineteen fucking fifties’ (suggesting that the novel is actually set in contemporary time.) Is this going to be a crime drama? A thriller? It’s hard to know yet what genre the author is using to tell her story. The two women seem to be in an institution; a prison? An asylum? Verla also seems to be a focalising character since the narrator uses the interior consciousness of this character to advance the story. Two focalising characters? Will they each see the situation that they are in in the same way? Verla considers the possibility that her recollections of being brought to this place are in fact a dream or hallucination. Significant???

Another focalising character?

What is the genre? Once the reader knows this a likely plot will unfold.

Telling the story through the thoughts of the main characters can create a point of view and suggest a preferred reading.