

The Test

Analysis Notes

Marian

**CHARACTERISATION: THROUGH
DESCRIPTION/REACTIONS**

POINT (Context/ Understanding)	EVIDENCE (Quote)	EXPLANATION (Analysis/Evaluation/Personal Response)
<p>When Marian speaks for the first time in reaction to Mrs Ericson's insinuation (that her cousin's chatty presence was the reason Marion failed her first test) we realise she is not from the South.</p>	<p>"soft, unaccented voice"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Word choice - what does the word 'soft' reveal about Marian's nature and attitude? 2. 'Unaccented' - what does this suggest about her education?
<p>Mrs Ericson does not agree with Marian's suggestion that it was because her cousin was black that she failed. 'I don't think it's THAT.' Mrs Ericson backs down when she sees Marian's physical reaction to this comment. Marian's reaction reveals a lot about her character</p>	<p>"set profile"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does Marian's reaction to Mrs Ericson's explanation reveal about her as a person? 2. Is Marian convinced by Mrs E's reply? 3. Why does Mrs E 'subside' with her point on seeing Marian's reaction?

POINT (Context/ Understanding)	EVIDENCE (Quote)	EXPLANATION (Analysis/Evaluation/Personal Response)
Mrs Ericson looks at Marian's hands as she drives and the narration of Mrs Ericson's thoughts reveal her attitude towards Marian.	"dark, competent hands"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does Mrs Ericson feel about Marian as a person? 2. What does this reveal about Marian's driving? 3. Why does Mrs Ericson automatically put the words 'dark, competent' side by side?
Marian begins to lose her composure when she reads a road sign and the Instructor reacts with surprise at the fact she can read.	"Her voice was not quite steady"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does reveal about how Marian is feeling at this point?
Mrs Ericson discovers Marian has failed her test for the second time, 'Oh, Marian, again?' Marian's reaction reveals a change in her attitude.	at end - "she slid over to the right-hand side of the car"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does Marian's movement 'slid' suggest about how she is feeling? 2. What image does the word 'slid' create in your mind?

The Inspector

**CHARACTERISATION: THROUGH
DESCRIPTION/REACTIONS**

POINT (Context/ Understanding)	EVIDENCE (Quote)	EXPLANATION (Analysis/Evaluation/Personal Response)
<p>When they arrive at the test centre, Marian sees two instructors the "very brisk and military" stocky, self-important man" who failed her before whose appearance would appear to match his personality while, the another man's appearance would suggest he is a friendly man.</p>	<p>"genial, middle-aged man who grinned broadly"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think Marian makes a judgement call based on the way the man appears? 2. As the test begins, what does 'The Test' suggest about judging by appearance?
<p>As the test begins the Instructor begins to show a side of his character that is deeply unpleasant through his reactions. He makes a suggestive comment of why she might want to drive (to meet a boyfriend).</p>	<p>"He laughed." He also reacts in same manner when Marian tells him she has a degree. "The Inspector burst out laughing" "wiping his eyes"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the instructor doing here? 2. What do you think the Instructor's intentions are in laughing at Marian as she attempts to concentrate on her test?

POINT (Context/ Understanding)	EVIDENCE (Quote)	EXPLANATION (Analysis/Evaluation/Personal Response)
<p>Marian reacts to the Inspectors racist suggestion that because she is black that she must be from the South (suggesting she is like a slave or works on a plantation). She corrects him by saying she is from Pennsylvania.</p>	<p>...“The Inspector feigned astonishment”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Word choice: what does the word 'feigned' suggest about the inspector? Does he actually know already that Marian is not from the South? 2. So why does suggest she is from the South?
<p>An early description of the inspector suggests he is a likeable and fun loving man, YET by the end of the story- when she turns on him, his true self emerges.</p>	<p>“The inspector lost his joviality in an instant” “The inspector jumped out and brushed past her, his face purple”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Under his friendly 'veneer' what is he really like? 2. What does the word choice describing the inspector reveal about him here?

Marian

**CHARACTERISATION: THROUGH
DIALOGUE:**

POINT (Context/ Understanding)	EVIDENCE (Quote)	EXPLANATION (Analysis/Evaluation/Personal Response)
Marian is aware that the presence of her cousin Bill was a factor in her failing her test previously, but makes Mrs Ericson understand she knows it's not for the reason she alludes to.	"They probably do like it better if a white person...."	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does Marian recognise that Mrs Ericson doesn't? 2. What is the difference in awareness of both Marian and Mrs E. 3. What does this reveal about their characters?
When the inspector asks her where she learned to read, she points to the fact she has more than a basic education.	"I sat for my college degree last year"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does this reveal about Marian? 2. What does Marian hope to gain by mentioning she is well educated? 3. Do you think it had the desired effect?
In the end Marian loses her temper at the instructor by swearing at him.	"Damn you!"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What effect does this have on the reader? 2. Although Marian has failed the driving test (and her own personal test), what positive aspect does this reveal about Marian?

Mrs Ericson

**CHARACTERISATION: THROUGH
DIALOGUE:**

POINT (Context/ Understanding)	EVIDENCE (Quote)	EXPLANATION (Analysis/Evaluation/Personal Response)
When Marion suggests the real reason she failed her test, Mrs Ericson disagrees.	"Oh I don't think it's that!" (racism)	1. What does reveal about Mrs Ericson's character? 2. Is she unaware of racism towards Marion, or is she just in denial and ignoring all the facts?
Mrs Ericson again ignores Marian's explanation that she failed her test by making one mistake when you need four to fail, reveals a lot about her own character and sense of morality.	"they only want you to slip them a little something"	1. Why is Mrs Ericson unable to accept Marian's explanation of the reason why she failed? 2. Mrs Ericson suggests giving a bribe but Marian rejects this idea. What does this reveal about each character?
Despite Mrs Ericson's apparent lack of awareness of the prejudice Marian faces, it is clear Mrs Ericson has a high regard for Marian.	"It will be marvellous to have someone dependable...." "	1. Although Mrs Ericson is complimentary about Marian and sees her as an ideal Nanny, does this suggest the real motivation behind Mrs Ericson getting Marian to sit 'The Test?' 2. What do Mrs Ericson's motivations reveal about her character?

POINT (Context/ Understanding)	EVIDENCE (Quote)	EXPLANATION (Analysis/Evaluation/Personal Response)
Mrs Ericson again is complimentary of Marian's abilities as a nanny.	"if only I could pay you half of what you're worth"	1. Does this show that despite her admiration for Marian, Mrs Ericson is patronising towards Marian and looks down on her?
The real climax of the story. Mrs Ericson's reaction to Marian failing her test reveals a great deal to the reader of her true character	"Oh, Marion, AGAIN?"	1. What does the capital letters reveal about Mrs Ericson's feelings at this point? 2. Do you think Mrs Ericson blames Marian for failing? 3. Why does Marian not tell her what happened? What does this suggest about Mrs Ericson?