

Further math chapter 1 -5 unit 3

[Family](#), [Mother](#)



The first-person speaker of 'When Mr Pirzada Came to Dine' (pp. 23—42) is a ten-year-old girl, Lilia, who finally comes to understand the pain caused by separation from one's family. Mr Pirzada is a Moslem Bangladeshi who is trapped in America when the war of separation breaks out in western India. Each evening he is asked to dine with Lilia's family, who are Indian immigrants. Lilia is caught between the traditions of her parents and American culture. She does not understand her parents' complaints about the unavailability of ingredients for Indian food, or their lament that neighbours 'never dropped by without an invitation' (p. 24). Mr Pirzada is invited to their house simply because he is Indian; or, as her father explains, 'Mr Pirzada is no longer considered Indian' (p. 25), something that 'made no sense' to Lilia (p. 25). Her mother understands that Lilia is American — 'we live here now, she was born here' (p. 26) — and has little understanding of the politics of India and Pakistan. Yet, something still fascinates Lilia about her parents' homeland. Lilia perceives Mr Pirzada as somewhat exotic in his 'ensembles of plums, olives, and chocolate browns' (p. 27). His presence even makes her feel rather 'like a stranger in [her] own home' (p. 29). Every evening he brings her sweets, which she feels are 'inappropriate ... to consume' (p. 29), placing them in a sandalwood box she inherited from a grandmother she 'had never known' (p. 30); an indication of the empty space in her life created by her lack of familial connections. It is through Mr Pirzada's watch 'set to the local time in Dacca' (p. 30) that Lilia comes to realise that, while Mr Pirzada is physically present in America, his experiences there are no more than 'a lagging ghost of where [he] really belonged' (p. 31) — with his family in Dacca.