

# Analysis of chapter two- a handful of dust

Business



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

1. What is the significance of Polly Cockpurse's name? Polly Cockpurse is a social climber whose smartness is graced by neither elegance nor dignity.

Filling her days with gossip and a never ending quest for novelty: new restaurants, new 'bonesetters', new scandals and most significantly, new lovers. Polly is known to mean 'caring and loyal friend', and this is ironic when it is in fact Polly who encourages Brenda's 'walkout'; '... with the exception of her sister's, opinion was greatly in favour of Brenda's adventure.

The morning telephone buzzed with news of her... The choice of Beaver raised a whole escapade into a realm of poetry for Polly...

'This poses the question- is Polly really a caring and loyal friend as her name suggests? Waugh is demonstrating the irony, as Polly seems only interested in gossip, and does not have Brenda's best interests at heart. Her last name suggests promiscuity, and is considerable as she too is a lurid lady who we know has many affairs. 2. Why does Jenny call Tony Teddy? Jenny insists on calling Tony Teddy in order to be more personal and intimate and therefore abolishes all formalities of surnames so instead of Mr Last, she is able to call him by what she believes is his first name, this is amusing as in fact, she has mistaken his name. Tony feels awkward, and due to Waugh focusing heavily on speech, as readers we feel Tony's discomfort, as he is hesitant to answer her questions and when he does, we sense his discomfort; his use of contradictory language 'No..

. yes. I mean I know very little about it', demonstrates this. Jenny gives Tony no time to respond to her question-'D'you know, Mr Last, I'm going to call

<https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-chapter-two-a-handful-of-dust/>

you Teddy right away. You don't think that very fresh of me?' and as readers we almost feel sorry for Tony as he is given no choice in the matter- he may feel embarrassed to correct her, or he may even think she has created a personal, flirty nickname for him.

If Brenda's plan works, and Jenny ends up with Tony, we can foreshadow the negative effects the relationship will have on Tony, as he does not assert his authority. Ultimately however, Jenny's plan of trying to be close to Tony backfires and it is a relief to him when John Andrews was brought in,' and it is John Andrews in fact who asks Jenny ' Why do you call daddy Teddy?', a question both the readers and Tony want answered. Jenny tells John ' Because I hope we are going to be great friends,' a child friendly and more subtle answer to what Brenda in fact has in mind- for Jenny and Tony to have a intimate relationship, as Jenny would act as a replacement for Brenda. 3. What informality does Jenny insist Tony adopt? Jenny tells Tony to call her Jenny, as ' princess is so formal.' As previously said, it is both Jenny's and Brenda's motive to have a more personal relationship with Tony.

4. Identify where the form of the novel changes in this sectionWhen Tony and Jenny first meet, Waugh reduces narration in favour of speech in order to highlight Jenny's assertive nature, and as readers we are able to feel Tony's embarrassment and discomfort through his limited and awkward speech, therefore no narration is needed as we are able to feel his emotion through his words. Waugh is also demonstrating how much effort Jenny is putting in trying to communicate with Tony; constantly changing the subject to try and get Tony to talk about something he is interested in and can continue discussing. He however provides limited answers, and does not respond as

<https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-chapter-two-a-handful-of-dust/>

Jenny may have liked or expected. As Jenny is introduced to John Andrews, the speech continues, however the vibrant and enthusiastic attitude of John is a great contrast to how Tony reacted to Jenny; a deliberate technique used by Waugh to demonstrate the differing opinion.

John Andrews telling nanny how 'beautiful' Jenny is, is suddenly followed by Jenny telling Brenda how 'sympathetic and gently' Tony is, and this speech is followed again by Tony telling Brenda Jenny 'is just a joke.' Waugh structure of speech make it a more real scenario- this juxtaposition and difference in opinion the characters have on each other makes the situation seem more real as it is a something that often occurs in real life, therefore speech is a more effective way of demonstrating this than narration would be. 5. What is the comedy/ irony of this scene? It is ironic that Jenny is really enjoying Tony's company, however he is not and is desperate to get away from her at every chance 'Tony looked about him desperately in search of help.' Brenda's plan is failing, and it is in fact John Andrews who is 'mad about her.

'Jenny has mistaken Tony's name, and this may be a contributing factor to why Tony does not seem so keen; however Brenda decides not to correct Jenny. Despite Brenda's protests for Tony to 'be nice' to Jenny, Tony does not make a huge effort, and this is comical as even though the ladies are trying their utmost in encouraging Tony, it is John Andrews who is infatuated with Jenny, and the structure on pages 91-92 demonstrate this difference in opinion- Jenny tells Brenda how much she is enjoying Tony's company, and this is followed with Tony telling Brenda how 'awful' he thinks Jenny is, and this is once more contrasted as John Andrews wakes up and his first thought

<https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-chapter-two-a-handful-of-dust/>

is of seeing the ' Princess.'6. Look at how the text is sectioned on page 93 into scenes. What is the effect of form and structure here? The form is in juxtaposition with 2 events happening simultaneously. Brenda and Polly are talking about Tony and Jenny's visit to the Church together, and the next ' scene' shows Tony returning home alone, as Jenny has been lead away by John Andrews.

This is ironic as it is in fact Tony who is suppose to be spending time with Jenny and getting to know her better, whereas it is John Andrews who is displaying interest for Jenny; and this is shown once more on pages 92-93, as immediately after John Andrews awakes, he is eager to see Jenny, and asks her to spend the day with him. The ' scene' immediately after this is the conversation between Polly and Brenda who are debating Tony's interest in Jenny, and Brenda is adamant that Tony is not really into her, which is agreed by Tony as in the final ' scene' on page 93 John remains fixed at Jenny's side, with Tony not seeming too fussed he returned home alone. The scenes on page 93 clearly demonstrate how one thing can be interpreted differently, just as John and Tony interpret Jenny differently, Polly interprets Tony and Jenny's relationship as blossoming, where as Brenda has an entirely different opinion. Waugh is representing how speech is a useful tool, as if narration was used here, these differing opinions would not have been as distinct, and amusing to us as readers.