

## **JEANETTE WINTERSON *WHY BE HAPPY WHEN YOU COULD BE NORMAL?***

CHAPTERS 9-11; and INTERMISSION:

### CHAPTER 9: ENGLISH LITERATURE A-Z

- 1) What does Winterson mean re her opening comments on Shakespeare, do you think?
- 2) Why might Winterson employ parentheses (brackets) on the first page of the chapter?
- 3) Down the bottom of the opening page, Winterson states 'I didn't even have a room of my own'. How does this connect with the title of the chapter?
- 4) What realisation does Winterson come to on page 117?
- 5) What points might Winterson be making as regards genre on page 118?
- 6) What imagery does Winterson employ to describe her mother on page 119-120?
- 7) Discuss the significance of Winterson's two English teachers, the wildman and Mrs Ratlow. (pp 122-123)
- 8) As previously, the title of this chapter proves significant. Trace the references to the title throughout the chapter. Why is it so important and what does it tell us about the young Jeanette?

### CHAPTER 10: THIS IS THE ROAD

- 1) How and why does Winterson create continuity between this chapter and the previous one?
- 2) At the beginning of this chapter, what point is Winterson making about the position of women at this historical moment?
- 3) Why does Winterson say she will 'never forget' Mrs Ratlow's comment at the top of page 132?

- 4) What political observations does Winterson make on pages 133-138?
- 5) What shift has occurred in Winterson's political stance by the end of the chapter?
- 6) Why does Winterson employ the present tense in the concluding moments of this chapter?

#### CHAPTER 11: ART AND LIES

- 1) What is significant about the tutor's comments and behaviour at the opening of this chapter?
- 2) Highlight the use of figurative device designed to demonstrate Winterson's new-found sense of belonging on page 144.
- 3) What is Winterson suggesting re the nature of prejudice and a certain British ignorance that may have existed at this time? (pages 146-147)
- 4) How does Winterson create humour when relating the anecdote of her return Christmas visit to Accrington with Vicky? (pages 147-149)
- 5) What is striking about the conclusion of this chapter?

#### INTERMISSION

The use of the Intermission section in Winterson's autobiography is an interesting and unusual narrative technique. Consider the following points:

- 1) Why is this section so short in comparison to the main chapters of the text?
- 2) Why does Winterson employ this title?
- 3) Why does she open this section with a philosophical reflection on the nature of time?
- 4) How do we as the reader react to an omission of twenty-five years of our author's life and why does she conclude with the words 'Maybe later...'?