

0 4

Focus this part of your answer on the second half of the Source from line 16 to the end.

A student said 'This part of the story, set during breakfast time, shows that Alex is struggling to cope with his mother's illness.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of Alex
- evaluate how the writer shows that Alex is struggling to cope
- support your response with references to the text.

[20 marks]

~~The~~ With this statement I would agree that Alex is struggling to cope as it says that he was angry. The writer says "Alex was angry with his father, his sister, life in general - even with his mother for getting". This suggests that he can not cope with his mother's illness as he is very angry.

The writer also ~~wasn't~~ says "how enormous her presence

had been<sup>the</sup> this  
suges t that  
he is missing  
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cannot cope very  
well.

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[20 marks]

I fully agree that Alex is struggling to cope with his mother's illness.

I think that ~~the~~ <sup>Alex</sup> Alex is a character of passion and hatred, when something ~~is~~ gets him mad he doesn't just blame that one thing, he starts blaming everyone and everything. The writer shows this by the ~~phrase~~ saying "Alex was angry with his father, his sisters, life in general - even his mother for getting sick"

One reason why I think he is struggling to cope is through his ~~use of~~ speech on how things are different now that she's ill. The writer includes a list of all

the things he misses ~~about~~  
 about her, for example it  
 says 'he missed her music, her  
 flowers, the once familiar fragrance  
 of fresh baked cookies. This  
 suggests that from his day to  
 day life all he does is ~~think~~  
 think about her and what  
 he misses about her. This links  
 back to the beginning of  
 line 16 as it's saying how  
 he 'was not in the mood to  
 applaud his father's efforts' implying  
 that he is falling into a  
 depression state where little  
 things like that ~~are~~ don't seem  
 to matter anymore.

Another piece of evidence is  
 when Nicole asks "when's  
 mamma going to get better?"  
 Alex's sudden response is  
 "shut up, Nicole" suggesting  
 he refuses to talk ~~about~~  
 about it and as it goes  
 on further to talk about  
 how they think she is

going to die, Alex rushes out of the kitchen without breakfast & suggesting he's lost his appetite from the conversation.

An argument against this would be that if it really was affecting him he would have also been aggressive towards his father, however it says that "his children didn't want to hurt his feelings" therefore showing that despite the struggling he is trying to cope.

However I can argue that he still isn't coping well as it says "Alex was angry at his father" showing he had zero tolerance at all for the situation he was in at that moment in time, he didn't want to talk about it and he was in a complete state of denial.

Overall I think that Alex isn't coping well with the state and that his mothers in a sense flip out on his sisters for bringing up the topic.

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I agree with this, firstly because ~~Max's~~ the writer shows that Alex's emotions vary on the topic of his mother, yet all show that he is struggling to cope.

"Alex was angry with his father, his sisters, wife in general - even with his mother for getting sick" shows that ~~at~~ Alex's ~~first~~ instinct is to be angry due to the adjective "angry" in the quotation. "even with his mother for getting sick" shows that Alex appears to be struggling to cope with ~~+~~ her illness as he is blaming even his mother, showing that ~~her~~ ~~needs~~ ~~name~~ Alex's character is one which needs a constant emotional outlet. Alex also feels pained later in the text, as he thinks about "how painful her <sup>absence</sup> ~~absence~~ is now". This however, ~~is~~ due to the time being "now", suggests that Alex didn't always feel pained, showing again a sense of emotional instability in Alex's character.

I also agree because ~~the~~ the text explicitly states that Alex misses his mother, as "He missed her easy laughter and her affection, even her discipline." The verb "missed" shows that Alex wants his mother well again and cannot cope with her absence. The fact ~~in~~ that Alex is described to miss "even her discipline" shows that even features that he disliked before are now appealing features that he misses, showing that Alex wants nothing more than for things to return to how they were before, as he goes to extremes to miss and feel nostalgic about.

~~I also agree because the writer's semantic field of negativity ~~in~~ that is often used to ~~describe~~ describe Alex is suggested to be a result of his mother's illness. The fact that "Her <sup>carries</sup> ~~character~~ ~~was~~ ~~then~~ ~~was~~ ~~going~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~a~~ ~~terrible~~ ~~day~~ ~~to~~ ~~have~~ ~~had~~ been a lot of days since that since his mother got sick" shows that Alex's constant depression and the miserable manner in which she acts is a result of the illness, showing that Alex has an inability to cope with his current situation. ~~However~~~~

The verb "decided" shows that Alex chooses when his days are miserable and terrible, and the fact that he chooses his depressive state also suggests that he is struggling to cope as he feels



unable to be happy due to the state of his mother. It also appears like he is punishing himself for the current situation, and giving himself partial blame, by ~~not~~ not allowing himself happiness. This coincides with his ~~angry~~ anger towards his other family members, as ~~therefore~~ it could be inferred that he also feels anger at himself, again proving that he has an inability to cope with his mother's sickly state.

I also agree because the writer's ~~the~~ semantic field of negativity is often hinted to be as a result of Alex's mother's illness. "Her convales, ~~and~~ ~~explanations~~ which once were explosions of colour" suggests that since she became ill, Alex's life has greyed as a result. This shows that Alex ~~feels that~~ can no longer experience ~~happy~~ happiness or feel excitement, or have a colourful perspective on the world, as things that were once coloured have now become greyed and depressing. This also shows that Alex cannot cope with his mother's illness, as he doesn't appear to allow himself to find joy, instead letting others get on without him, showing that he may also feel angry at himself, coinciding with how he feels towards his father and ~~the~~ sisters. It appears to that Alex blames himself, reinforcing the idea that Alex is emotionally ~~and~~ unstable and therefore needs to find an output in

the form of a ~~mult~~ multitude of different things -  
mainly people.

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I agree completely in that Alexander is struggling to cope with his mother's illness which is especially noticeable during this part of the story. This is evident during Alexander's outburst at his sister's predictions about his mother dying where he says "You two are just kids. You don't know what you're talking about!" which shows a sense of denial from Alexander. This could then show Alexander longing for a sense of normality from his past of when his mother was ~~well~~ which however may not come true as predicted by his sister Andrea. It could be said that this inevitability <sup>of this</sup> prediction is similar to the storm as it is impossible to stop a storm by simply denying its existence as Alexander is trying to do with his mother's illness. Also the storm could also represent the inevitable chaos within the house if his mother dies as there is already a chaotic structure in the Cold household where they "cut off them at whenever and whatever they pleased" and even goes so far as referring to the situation as "almost like a party".

Also in the last paragraph, Alex reflects on his memories of his mother before the illness which furthermore portrays his sense of longing for his mother ~~back~~ and the lifestyle of order that he was used to. By listing ~~with~~ the aspects of his life before his mother's illness such as "her flowers, the once-familiar fragrance of fresh-baked cookies and the smell of paint" and then going on to describe his mother as "little more than a silent ghost" creates this sense of change and helps the ~~so~~ reader to imagine the vast impact this illness has had on not only Alexander's mother, but Alexander's whole world as well.