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## Introduction to The Address

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"The Address" by Marga Minco is a poignant short story that explores the psychological impact of war on individuals, especially through the eyes of a young woman. Set during World War II, the story reflects the experiences of Jews in Holland who faced persecution under Nazi occupation. Many Jews fled or were imprisoned in concentration camps. The narrator and her mother had to leave their home, entrusting their belongings to a woman named Mrs. Dorling for safekeeping.

After the war, the narrator returns to reclaim her mother's possessions but faces denial and rejection from Mrs. Dorling, who refuses to acknowledge her or return the belongings. The story delves into themes of loss, betrayal, memory, and the emotional scars left by war.

### Key Elements

- **Setting:** Holland during and after World War II
- **Characters:** The narrator (daughter of Mrs. S), Mrs. Dorling, Mrs. Dorling's daughter
- **Themes:** War and its aftermath, loss and memory, betrayal, identity
- **Literary Devices:** Symbolism (belongings representing past and identity), irony, imagery

### Textual Evidence

The narrator's visit to Mrs. Dorling's house and the refusal to return the belongings highlight the betrayal and loss experienced. The use of the mother's cardigan by Mrs. Dorling symbolizes the appropriation of the narrator's past.

## Practice Set

- **Level 1:** Who is Mrs. Dorling and what role does she play in the story?
- **Level 2:** Explain the significance of the narrator's belongings in the story.
- **Level 3:** Discuss how the story portrays the psychological effects of war on individuals.

## Answer Key

- Mrs. Dorling is the woman who was entrusted with the narrator's mother's belongings during the war but later denies knowing the narrator or returning the items.
- The belongings symbolize the narrator's past, identity, and connection to her mother. Their loss represents the emotional and physical devastation caused by war.
- The story shows the trauma, loss, and betrayal experienced by individuals during war, emphasizing the lasting psychological scars.

## Quick Reference

- Author: Marga Minco
- Theme: Loss and betrayal during war
- Setting: Holland, World War II

## Glossary

- **Concentration camps:** Places where large numbers of people, especially political prisoners or persecuted minorities, are confined during wartime.
- **Psychological:** Relating to the mind or mental processes.
- **Symbolism:** Use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities.

## Summary of The Address

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The story begins with the narrator returning to her hometown after World War II to visit Mrs. Dorling, the woman who was entrusted with her mother's belongings during the war. The narrator introduces herself as the daughter of Mrs. S and requests the return of her mother's possessions.

Mrs. Dorling reacts with surprise and denies knowing anyone named Mrs. S, hiding behind the door. The narrator doubts if she has come to the right place but confirms it upon seeing Mrs. Dorling wearing her mother's cardigan.

Mrs. Dorling closes the door, refusing to acknowledge the narrator. As the narrator walks away, she recalls her past, remembering that her mother had trusted Mrs. Dorling to keep their valuables safe during the war. She also recalls seeing Mrs. Dorling leaving with a heavy suitcase.

Determined, the narrator returns to Mrs. Dorling's house a second time. This time, Mrs. Dorling's daughter opens the door and invites her in. The narrator notices that her mother's belongings, including tablecloths, pewter plates, and silver cutlery, are being used carelessly and arranged without respect.

The narrator feels disgusted seeing her mother's possessions treated so callously. She realizes that these items, once precious and connected to her past, have lost their value. She leaves without reclaiming anything and consoles herself by thinking she now lives in a small rented apartment with no space for those things.

Finally, she decides to forget the address and the painful memories associated with it, considering this loss easier to bear than others.

### Key Elements

- **Plot:** The narrator's two visits to Mrs. Dorling to reclaim her mother's belongings and the rejection she faces.
- **Characters:** The narrator, Mrs. Dorling, Mrs. Dorling's daughter
- **Themes:** Loss, memory, betrayal, the impact of war
- **Literary Devices:** Flashback, symbolism, irony

## Textual Evidence

"The lady is surprised to see the narrator and hides herself behind the door, denying knowing anybody by the name of Mrs. S." This shows Mrs. Dorling's denial and betrayal.

"She feels disgusted to see her things being used and arranged in a tasteless and callous manner." This reflects the narrator's emotional pain and loss.

## Practice Set

- **Level 1:** What does the narrator find missing when she returns home after the war?
- **Level 2:** Describe Mrs. Dorling's behavior during the narrator's visits.
- **Level 3:** Analyze the significance of the narrator's decision to forget the address.

## Answer Key

- The narrator finds some belongings missing and learns that Mrs. Dorling was supposed to keep them safe.
- Mrs. Dorling denies knowing the narrator and refuses to return the belongings, showing betrayal and selfishness.
- The narrator's decision to forget the address symbolizes her attempt to move on from the painful past and accept loss.

## Quick Reference

- Plot centers on reclaiming lost belongings

- Mrs. Dorling represents betrayal
- Story ends with acceptance of loss

## Glossary

- **Flashback:** A scene set in a time earlier than the main story.
- **Callous:** Showing or having an insensitive and cruel disregard for others.
- **Denial:** Refusal to accept reality or truth.

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