

LIVE! At the Wet Market

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Summary

Gita & Ramani both help their parents at the wet market every weekend. Whilst Ramani is proud of it, Gita is embarrassed. In a bid to curry favour with a popular girl from school, she attempts to play a horrifying prank on Ramani. Alas, it backfires, and tests the strength of their friendship.

CHARACTERISATION

RAMANI → Uncomplicated, hardworking, humble & unpretentious, loyal, intelligent, wise and mature.

GITA → Immature, attention-seeking, unwise, easily-swayed, has low self-confidence, foolish, spoilt.

THEME : TRANSITION

Do you find yourself in a similar position? In what way? →

→ The two girls are in a very unique position: they are students in a very modern city, whilst still having one foot in the past.

- * Whilst Singapore is ever-evolving, hurtling towards the future, some elements of our yesteryears maintain their relevance.
- * For e.g. the importance and maintenance of wet markets despite the mass presence and convenience of supermarkets, specialty butchers, etc.
- * Pg 66: Some women were followed by their helpers and had luxury keyring fobs dangling from well-manicured fingers. The well-dressed women carried little purses adorned with interlocking Es or Cs or the more common LV.

vs.

Across the main lane, the fishmonger was pulling back the gills of a recently deceased fish to show off its red gills.

By Juxtaposing the opulent, clean and modern description of the clientele with the dirty, messy, laborious Imagery of wet market life, the writer makes the wet market Anachronistic → this Perspective is further emphasised by Gita.

→ Whilst Gita struggles with reconciling the two worlds that she finds herself torn between, Ramani has somehow found a way to balance the demands and expectations of both societies.

- * She achieves this by choosing what is important to her: her parents, Gita, Gita's parents, and tradition.
- * That's not to say that she is a dinosaur and out-of-touch with reality. She is active on social media - she even wants to use it to share about the work her parents do - and watches livestreams during her breaks.
- * Rather, she has the wisdom to give modernity its undeniable place in her life whilst upholding the things she values.

→ Note: this short story does not seek to demonise change or progress.

- * Pg 79: 'Ramani had her phone out. "Smile." Gita heard a click.'
- * Pg 80: 'His eyes sparkled when Ramani showed him the picture.'
- * Pg 80: "Will you let me post the picture? Show everyone in school what wet market life is about." [...] In the background were the empty meat fridges and her unfailingly hardworking parents.'
- * The Conflict that Gita experiences is not so much Self vs. Self. Rather, it is Self vs. Others, like Eileen. (Even Eileen's mother admires G and R.)

→ But, the story does remind us to protect the things that truly matter, even during times of transition. Like our family, our real friends, and our traditions.

So, How should we live next?

How can we reconcile the various worlds we find ourselves in?

But, work still comes first.

Uses modern tech to educate.

Uses modern tech to make him happy.

Both biological & adopted.

The cloth and its symbolic importance.