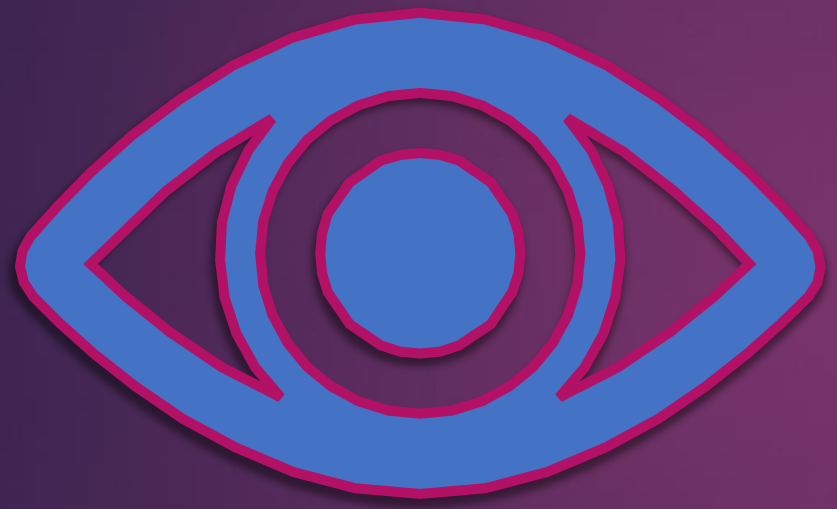
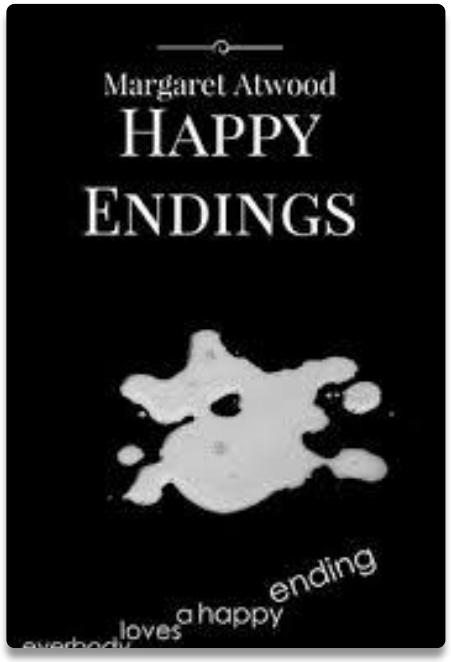


The Visual Diary - Happy Endings

KIARA OWEN

The poem I have picked

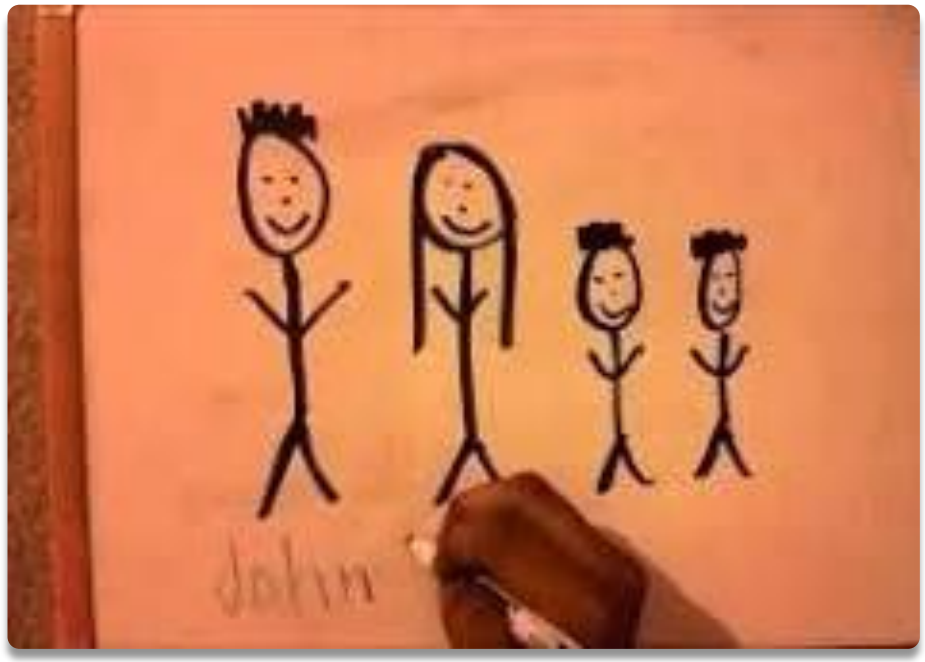


- Happy Endings by Margaret Atwood

In her short story "Happy Endings", Margaret Atwood portrays the lives of ordinary people facing different scenarios in a series of various situations and obstacles listed from "A" to "F", in which each scenario leads to the same ending - death. Even though the individual stories show multiple differences between the beginnings and middles they all have the same endings, everyone dies regardless of the choices they made or how they lived their lives. The overall importance for "Happy Endings" was for Margaret Atwood to help readers understand the importance of "how and why" a conclusion is reached not what the conclusion itself is contained of since all stories end in death.

My ideas

- I only really had one idea after reading the poem, and that was to take pictures from different stages in life.
- Holdings Hands
- Ring (Marriage.)
- House keys. (moving in together.)
- Child. (having children together.)
- Death. (Dead flowers).



Research

- Different scenarios of a relationship
- Developing a story but always leading back to the same ending.
- Something bad can lead to a happy ending.
- Everyone dies anyways.
- Different Stages of a relationships leading to death.
- Different types of scenarios A-F.

- "Atwood helps people to realize that they can live life however they want to because it does not matter whether you are a saint and stay with the same person your entire life or experiment with different people to find your true love, in the end we as people will each end up right next to Mary, John, Madge, James, and Fred. The ending can never be changed, no matter how the beginnings of our stories are written or how we tell the middle; the same fate is perpetual for everyone. Whether it's a true love story, a twisted relationship, a tragic murder and suicide, or a love story that survives a natural disaster only to be ripped apart by a human illness; no matter how it is spun death will always come for you in the end."
- "Atwood intentionally plays with the relationship between story and plot, offering up different stock scenarios, characters, and developments, usually consisting of romance and marriage, in order to illustrate the ways in which storytelling tropes are thoughtlessly perpetuated."
- "The narrator emphasizes that no matter what complications are added to the plot, the ending is always the same, namely, death. Any story that does not end in death is dishonest about the true ending."

Forms of language used

- Atwood uses imagery:
  - Part B -

Simile: “This other John will emerge like a butterfly from a cocoon, a Jack from a box, a pit from a prune...”

  - Part C -

Simile: “Finally he’s middle-aged, in two years he’ll be as bald as an egg..”

  - Part D -

Personification: "Fred and Madge have no problems...and one day a tidal wave approaches...The rest of the story is about what caused the tidal wave and how they escape from it."

  - Part E -

Irony: "If you like, it can be like 'Madge','cancer','guilty and confused,' and bird watching.' "

  - Part F -

Sarcasm: "If you think this is all too bourgeois, make John a revolutionary and Mary a counterespionage agent.“

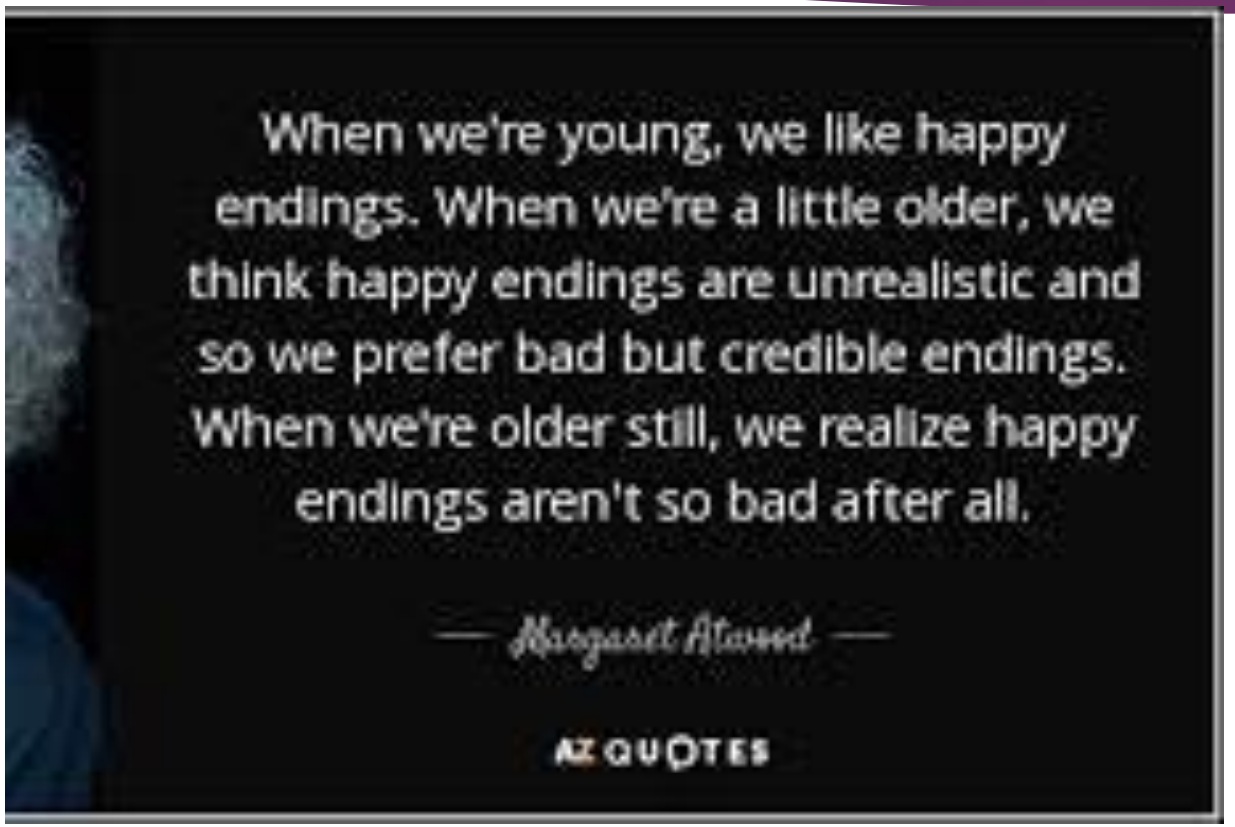
- What is a Metafiction?
  - A story that addresses specific conventions of a story (Plot).
  - It reminds readers that they are reading a story as opposed to letting them get lost in the story (Story C).
  - The author directly addresses the reader (Story F/Closing).

What is imagery?

Imagery is when a writer uses vivid, figurative or descriptive langauge to:

1. **appeal to the reader’s senses**
2. **help the reader create a picture in their mind**
3. **add depth to their work**
4. **help the reader feel present in the moment**
5. **communicate the world of the text to the reader**

Illustrations etc.



Critical analysis

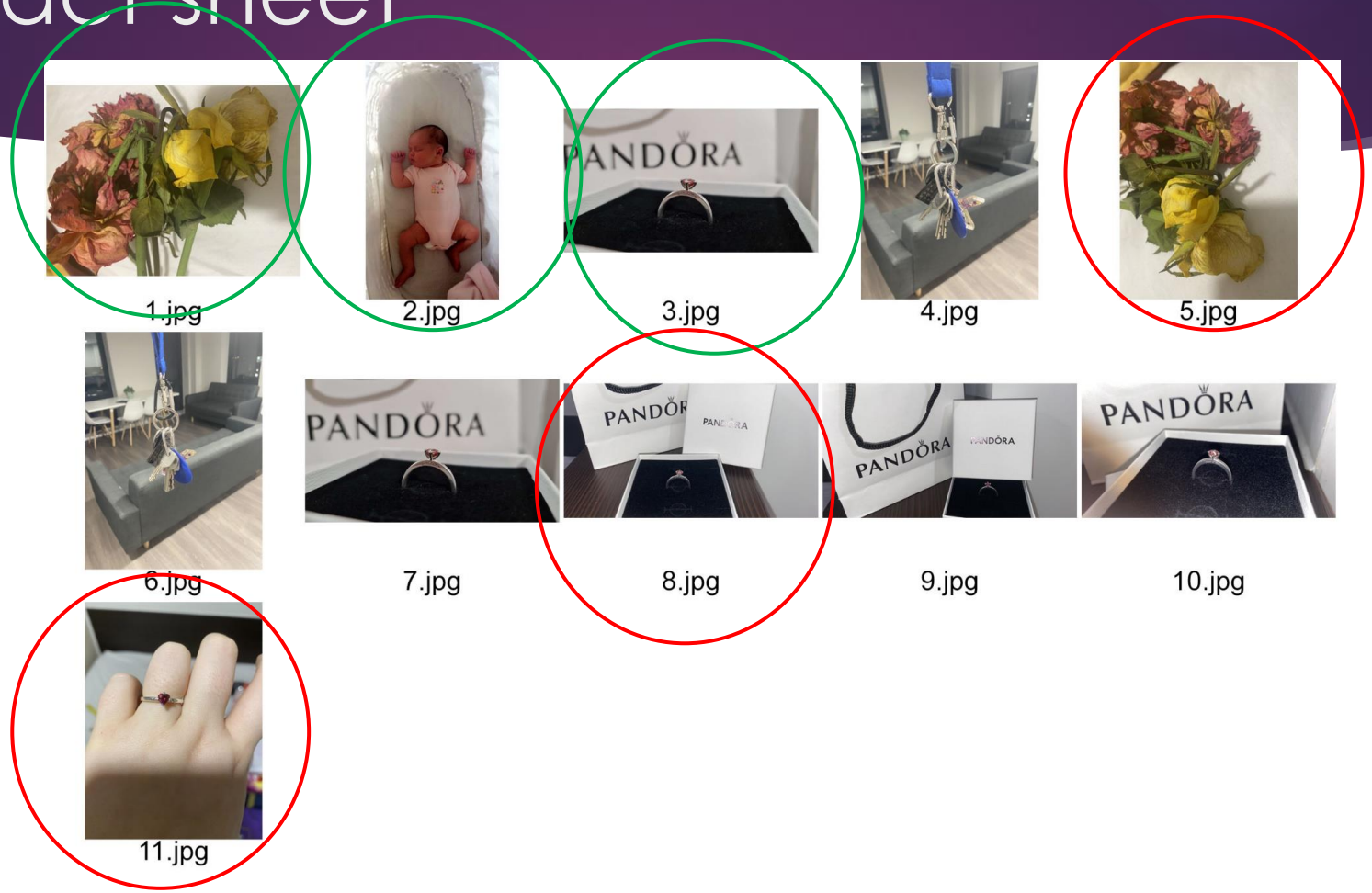
- “Margaret Atwood’s “Happy Endings” is a fictional short story which adopts an ingenious narrative structure to convey a different kind of message. Through utilizing a mixture of second and third person omniscient narrative point of view, Atwood achieves a detached, emotionless narrative which is self-reflective in nature. It ultimately becomes a satirical commentary on its own genre, yet conveys a warming message that it is not the end point that matters in a relationship, but the process.”
- Version A is the one Atwood refers to as the "happy ending." In this version, it’s the typical happy life, nothing unexpected happening, and leads to the happy ending.
- Version B is a little messier than A. Although, Mary loves John, John "merely uses her body for selfish pleasure and ego gratification of a tepid kind.“
- Version C, John is "an older man" who falls in love with Mary, 22. She doesn’t really love him, but she sleeps with him because she "feels sorry for him because he's worried about his hair falling out." Mary really loves James, also 22, who has "a motorcycle and a fabulous record collection.“
- Version D, Fred and Madge get along well and have a lovely life. But their house is destroyed by a tidal wave and thousands are killed. Fred and Madge survive and live as the characters in A.
- Version E is filled with complications, then a "bad heart." Fred dies, and Madge dedicates herself to charity work but still leads back to version A.
- Version F, Every version of the at some point leads back to version A—the "happy ending." As Atwood says, no matter what the details are, “you'll still end up with A."

Paul Mullins

- Paul works with large format (4x5 view camera) using a 144 megapixel Betterlight scanner that is tethered to a laptop computer the Hasselblad H3DII 39 megapixel medium format camera as well as the Nikon D800e. Photographs are printed as limited editions using ultrachrome inks on 100% cotton photo rag archival papers, a state of the art printing method widely recognized for its rich color quality, archival pigment permanence, and superlative sharpness and detail.
- Paul has inspired me because he tells a story in multiple images which is what I aim to do..

Contact sheet

The 3 images with green circles, are the images I will be using as part of my final images. This is because I think they are of better quality, and show more detail in a way I want for my poem.



The 3 images with red circles, are the images I definitely wont be using for my final images as I think they are of poor quality due to shadows, and little detail being shown etc.

Analysis of development of my idea

- My initial ideas were the ideas I went for due to me thinking they fit the poem well for my response.
- I would say that my weaknesses are I prefer not to do any planning, rather than planning and showing what I'm going to be doing. I prefer to just get things done, have no before or any explanation towards it and just be happy that I did it. Usual I am well prepared and know what I'm doing and typically have it done, leading up to the deadline. However, this time I procrastinated and left my work to the very last minute to complete. Although, this was the case I'm still happy with my response.

Analysis of choice of media.

I have used my iPhone 11 pro max as my camera, these are the specs for the 3 cameras.

- **Optical Image Stabiliser-** Dual OIS (Optical Image Stabilisation)
- **Lens Type-** Wide-angle lens
- **Lens Aperture-** F/1.8
- **Lens Construction-** 6-element
- **Focus Adjustment-** Automatic
- **Optical Zoom-** 2
- **Digital Zoom-** 10
- **Camera Modes-** Burst mode, Panorama, night mode, low-light shots, Live Photos, Portrait mode with advanced bokeh and Depth Control, Portrait Lighting
- **Face Detection-** Face detection
- **Light Source-** True Tone LED flash
- **Video Resolutions-** 1920 x 1080 (1080p) at 30 fps, 1920 x 1080 (1080p) at 60 fps, 1280 x 720 (720p) at 30 fps, Slo-mo video 1920 x 1080 (1080p) at 120 fps, 3840 x 2160 (4K) at 30 fps, 3840 x 2160 (4K) at 60 fps, 3840 x 2160 (4K) at 24 fps, Slo-mo video 1920 x 1080 (1080p) at 240 fps
- **Features-** Cinematic video stabilisation, Zero Shutter Lag, Cinematic video stabilisation, Playback zoom, geotagging, Stereo Recording, Continuous autofocus video, 8MP still photos recording 4K video, Time-lapse video with stabilisation, Slow Sync, wide colour capture for photos and Live Photos, Advanced red-eye correction, Optical image stabilization for video, Extended dynamic range for video, HEIF image capture, Audio zoom, 100% Focus Pixels

- Second Rear Camera
- **Lens Type-** Ultra wide-angle lens
- **Lens Aperture-** F/2.4
- **Min Focal Length-** 26 mm
- **Field of View (FoV)-** 120 degree(s)
- **Features-** 5-piece lens.

- Third Rear Camera
- **Lens Type-** Telephoto lens
- **Lens Aperture-** F/2.0
- **Features-** OIS (Optical Image Stabilization), 52 mm focal length, Optical image, stabilisation for video, 6-piece lens

Analysis of chosen media

- I will be using actual images to present my work as I think using gifs or different forms of presentation could ruin the quality.
- I will be presenting my images in a certain order to represent the course of a life leading to a 'happy ending.'
- It will go from the start of a relationship, leading to death which I have portrayed through dead flowers.
- I will be using photoshop to edit my images to deepen tones, and highlight areas I think need to be more detailed.

Evaluation - 300 words minimum

- I struggled with this task, purely because I couldn't find the motivation to read the poems or get the work done. But when I eventually came around to doing the work, I personally think my idea for a response is a well thought out idea and links really well to the poem "Happy Endings." I used the different images to portray a different stage in a relationship like Atwood uses different scenarios in her poem. I think my images were well thought out, and overall executed well. However, I do think there were certain things I could change and adapt to make a different atmosphere if I wanted to. Also, I definitely think that I could've pursued more detail within the images, or expressed my feelings through different editing or in black and white etc. I personally think by researching the poem beforehand definitely led to the clarification I needed for my idea as a response. I think this because when I read the poem, I had the idea but was unsure whether it would work. Then, with some research and other peoples input along with my personal, critical thinking it reassured me that my idea would work well. When actually completing the visual diary, I struggled the most because although I knew what to include, I didn't know what to include at the same time because I was uncertain of what medias to include, and references as I couldn't find any that would really be beneficial for me. However, after getting the basic foundation done, I focused and knew what to add in then. I definitely found it hard to respond to a poem because I didn't know whether my response would be right because there's already a base text and I was just building off of that and it just made me doubt every idea of what my images would entail, and even my visual diary. But, overall, I think I did well once I concentrated and decided what my idea would explore, and what my visual diary would include.

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