

“When I think about how I understand my role as a citizen, setting aside being president...the most important stuff I’ve learned I think I’ve learned from novels.” Barack Obama

20

BOOK STUFF

A moral dilemma: Do as I say, not as I do?

Irena Janus was preparing her presentation on the impact of flying on global warming. She would tell her audience that commercial flights pump more of the major greenhouse gas CO₂ into the atmosphere in one year than all of Africa does. She would tell them how one long-haul flight is more polluting than twelve months of car travel. If we want to save the Earth, she would conclude, we must do more to reduce the number of flights we take and encourage people to either travel less or use other forms of transport.

Just as she was imagining the rapturous reception her talk would receive, she was interrupted by the air stewardess offering her some wine. Hypocrisy? Not as Janus saw it. For she also knew full well that the impact of her own flights on the environment was negligible. If she refused to fly, global warming would not be delayed by more than a second. What was needed was mass change. Her work, which involved flying around the world advocating this, could thus be part of the solution. Refusing to fly would simply be a hollow gesture.

Janus is doing the opposite of what she advocates. Hypocrisy or necessary double think?

From Julian Baggini, *The Pig that Wants to be Eaten, and 99 other thought experiments*

Poem of the week

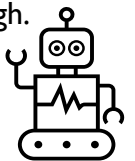
Alexa, what is there to know about love?

Alexa, what is there to know about love?
What is there to know about love?
A glove is a garment that covers the hand for protection from the cold or dirt and –
Alexa, how does a human heart work?
How does a human heart work?
Blood is first received in the right atrium via two veins, the vena cava superior and inferior –

Alexa, where do we go to when we die?
Where do we go to when we die?
Activating Google Maps. Completed activation.
Would you like to start from your current location?

Alexa, what does it mean to be alone?
What does it mean to be alone?
It is the silence left by words unsaid,
the cold expanse of half a bed.
It is the endless stretching of the hours,
the needless tending of plastic flowers.
It is an echo unanswered in a cave,
the fateful ping of the microwave.
It is the fraying of a worn shirt cuff,
and the howl – Stop, Alexa. That’s enough.

Brian Bilston



Great love stories

Match the books with their authors



- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| i. <i>Jane Eyre</i> | Boris Pasternak |
| ii. <i>Love Story</i> | Audrey Niffenegger |
| iii. <i>Anna Karenina</i> | Eric Segal |
| iv. <i>Dr Zhivago</i> | Charlotte Bronte |
| v. <i>The Time Traveler’s Wife</i> | Leo Tolstoy |

Name the two lead actors in these films

- vi. *Titanic*
- vii. *Carol*
- viii. *Casablanca*
- ix. *Brokeback Mountain*
- x. *Pretty Woman*

Try these great quiz questions from Joyce Rothschild's *Joyce's Quiz Vol 2 (2020)*

Countries ending in A

1. Has the largest elephant population on the continent
2. The largest of the Caribbean islands
3. You can see the sun rise on the Pacific and set on the Atlantic
4. A perfect world (but the word in fact means 'no place')
5. The word shampoo comes from here



Take one away

The answer to each clue is two words where the second word differs by the removal of a single letter. For example: Travelled in the air / not many = flew / few

6. can be sticky / primate
7. much trod / ingested
8. talon / statute
9. slightly wet / in the greatest quantity
10. in debt to / fin that produces lift

A story with a sting?

Love Poem

He has written her a St Valentine's Day love poem. It is very beautiful, it expresses, embodies a passionate, genuine emotion, emotion of a sort he hardly realised himself capable of, tenderness that is like the tenderness of a better man. At the same time, the imagery is hard, diamond clear, the form intricate yet unobtrusive. He says the poem out loud to himself over and over. He cannot believe it, it is so good. It is the best poem he has ever written.

He will mail it to her tonight. She will open it as soon as it arrives, cleverly timed, on St Valentine's Day. She will be floored, she will be blown away by its beauty and passion. She will put it away with his other letters, loving him for it, as she loves him for his other letters. She will not show it to anyone, for she is a private person, which is one of the qualities he loves in her.

After he has mailed the poem to her, written out in his interesting hand, he types up a copy for his own files. He decides to send a copy to one of the more prestigious literary magazines, one into which he has not yet been admitted. He hesitates about the dedication, which could lead to embarrassment, among other things, with his wife. In the end he omits the dedication. In the end he decides to give a copy also to his wife. In the end he sends a copy also to a woman he knows in England, a poet who really understands his work. He writes out a copy for her, dedicated to her initials. It will reach her a few days late, she will think of him thinking of her a few days before St Valentine's Day.

Lon Otto

ANSWERS - Great Love Stories

Books with authors

- i. Charlotte Bronte
- ii. Eric Segal
- iii. Leo Tolstoy
- iv. Boris Pasternak
- v. Audrey Niffenegger

Lead actors

- vi. Kate Winslet / Leonardo DiCaprio
- vii. Cate Blanchett / Rooney Mara
- viii. Humphrey Bogart / Ingrid Bergman
- ix. Heath Ledger / Jake Gyllenhaal
- x. Julia Roberts / Richard Gere

ANSWERS – Joyce's Quiz

Countries ending in A

1. Botswana
2. Cuba
3. Panama
4. Utopia
5. India

Take one away

6. Tape / Ape
7. Beaten / Eaten
8. Claw / Law
9. Moist / Most
10. Owing / Wing