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## Lamb To The Slaughter: Comparison Of The Book And The Movie

When one does not receive the same unconditional love that is given, revenge is often seemingly a fit solution. In many cases, one is misguided by emotions that overpower one's ability to make sensible decisions. However, in instances where someone who is in a presumably loving relationship murders their husband, irony makes it evident that there is always more to a story than what meets the eye. Undoubtedly, the irony is demonstrated in Roald Dahl's "Lamb to the Slaughter" when Mary Maloney is blinded by grief and shock and decides to murder her husband with an unlikely weapon; a leg of lamb. This unexpected turn in the storyline illustrates the bone-chilling mood through irony. In both versions of "Lamb to the Slaughter" by Alfred Hitchcock and Roald Dahl, it is evident that irony is portrayed through facial expressions and word choice to produce a chilling mood.

The mood in "Lamb to the Slaughter" is chilling because of the word choice the author chose to use. After Mr. Maloney comes home unusually exhausted and delivers a shocking message to Mrs. Maloney, she mercilessly murders him. To cover up her crime, Mrs. Maloney creates a supposedly true story that states that he is still alive and well and that she just needs to buy some vegetables for him. The text explicitly states, " 'Patrick's decided he's tired and doesn't want to eat out tonight,' she told him. 'We usually go out on Thursday, you know, and now he's caught me without any vegetables in the house.' 'Then how about meat, Mrs. Maloney' 'No, I've got meat, thanks. I got a nice leg of lamb, from the freezer.'"(7) Roald Dahl utilizes his influential word choice to display a chilling mood through verbal irony to show that Mrs. Maloney uses her knowledge from her husband's cases to fabricate her serious offenses. Hence, the words "tired" and "usually" are notable. These words suggest a typical mood in which Mr. Maloney is experiencing the feeling of tiredness and the word usually shows that nothing out of the ordinary has happened. Therefore, supporting the verbal irony because, in reality, Mr. Maloney was not tired, he was dead and the incident was not at all common. Roald Dahl decided to add this because it illustrated a very chilling atmosphere. Traditionally, a normal housewife would not have this much knowledge on how to successfully cover up a murder. The reader perceives this as a chilling mood because of the way Mrs. Maloney veils her true qualities. This occurrence has a major impact on the reader's perception of the rest of the story. The reader will keep this in mind and connect this to when the investigation starts. The reader will remember how cunning she is and will be able to predict what her desperation leads her to. Even though both the text and film describe a chilling mood, this mood is especially striking in the film through countless examples of irony. For example, towards the end of the film, Mary Maloney laughs and has a grim expression on her face. Patrick Maloney's colleagues are investigating the crime scene and end up eating the leg of lamb in Mary's hospitality that she used to kill her husband, Patrick. Mary then laughs when the police officers say that they think that the weapon is tight under their noses. Moreover, since Mary knows that the weapon is literally under their noses, she giggles creepily. Her facial expressions render an alarming mood because of how her head bent down and cast a shadow on her face. This shows that she is someone who is lurking behind the shadows and how is a dangerous criminal. On that account, this moment makes one think of how Mary Maloney must have felt guilty and almost childish of how impulsive she acted. Or rather, how selfish and sudden her actions were before. Accordingly, Hitchcock added this in to leave the reader thinking deeply about how her actions

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might affect how she takes care of her baby and how fast her personality changed from her first interaction with her husband. Likewise, watching this leaves the reader thinking about why she was not scared of the repercussions. This shows how in reality, humans can change their way of thought based on real-life situations. All in all, word choice and facial expressions created a memorable chilling mood.

Times, where irony is brought to life, are apparent in other sections of the text and film. After being informed by Mrs. Maloney of the crime, the officers conduct a thorough investigation to establish a conclusion on what the weapon was. According to the author, "Her husband, he told her, had been killed by a blow on the back of the head administered with a heavy blunt instrument, almost certainly a large piece of metal. They were looking for the weapon. The murderer may have taken it with him, but on the other hand, he may have thrown it away or hidden it somewhere on the premises." Roald Dahl implements distinct word choices in this to demonstrate how the police officers are completely blind when it comes to Mrs. Maloney's true intentions. The word choice masks her intentions by dramatically exaggerating the matter at hand. In addition, the words "hidden" and "large" suggest that the perpetrator was very clever. However, the reader knows that the weapon was not metal and was, in fact, a piece of lamb. Additionally, it helps to describe the weapon in a more vague way. This gives the reader the idea that the cops are smart, but not intelligent enough to realize that the weapon was a leg of lamb. Subsequently, Roald Dahl used distinctive word choice because it is a unique way to illustrate a petrifying mood. Word choice also makes the meaning more impactful, as the right words could convey a more theatrical scene. The reader perceives this as a blood-curdling mood because of how high the chances are that Mrs. Maloney will get away with this brutal murder since the officers are so clueless. To conclude, the reader can take this and apply this to moments where the cops are mindlessly exploring the possibilities of this crime. The irony helps the reader realize how cunning Mrs. Maloney is and can predict what she will do next and if she will regret it. Similarly, the reader can identify examples of situational irony in the film. For instance, after knocking her husband on the ground with a bizarre weapon, Mrs. Maloney is startled by her actions. Ordinarily, one would have tried to sort out the disagreement with words instead of immediately resorting to physically solving the issue. Mary normally would not have hit her husband as she is defined as a devoted wife. Accordingly, Mary's facial expressions display that she was surprised by the irony of her abnormal action. To elaborate, this can make the audience think of how Mary Maloney must have been astonished by the fact that she was capable of such a thing. It can also make one think of how Mary Maloney might act stupidly, but this time out of panic and shock in order to solve her new dilemma. Equally important, Alfred Hitchcock chose to add these facial expressions into the movie because it clearly shows that Mrs. Maloney was surprised. It also shows that she is thinking of what she should do next. Ultimately, this assists the reader when upcoming situations might result in Mary getting caught because her panic will alter her ability to make the right decisions. Both mediums clearly show irony through facial expressions and specific word choices.

In both variants of "Lamb to the Slaughter" by Roald Dahl and Alfred Hitchcock, it is clear that irony is illustrated using facial expressions and word choice to develop a spooky mood. Facial expressions and word choice develop a chilling mood through various types of irony. Mary leaves us all thinking if there is potential that she will resort to killing times in times of despair again.