

DOCUMENT A

1 Forty-three years old now, my parents, on this historic night, lie sound asleep. Milton's snores
2 make the bed rattle; also, the wall connecting to my room, where I'm asleep myself in a grownup
3 bed. And something else is rattling beneath Milton's pillow, a potentially dangerous situation
4 considering what the object is. Under my father's pillow is the .45 automatic he brought back from
5 the war.
6 Chekhov's* first rule of playwriting goes something like this: "If there's a gun on the wall in act one,
7 scene one, you must fire the gun by act three, scene two." I can't help thinking about that
8 storytelling precept as I contemplate the gun beneath my father's pillow. [...] And there are bullets
9 in the gun and the safety is off . . .
10 Detroit, in the stifling* summer of 1967, is bracing for race riots. Watts* had exploded two summers
11 earlier. Riots had broken out in Newark* recently. In response to the national turmoil, the all-white
12 Detroit police force has been raiding after-hours bars in the city's black neighborhoods. The idea is
13 to make preemptive strikes against possible flashpoints.
[...]
14 At 6:23 a.m., the Princess telephone in my bedroom rang and I picked it up. It was Jimmy Fioretos,
15 who in his panic mistook my voice for my mother's. "Tessie, tell Milt to get down to the restaurant.
16 The coloreds are rioting!"
17 "Stephanides residence," I continued politely, as I'd been taught. "Callie speaking."
18 "Callie? Jesus. Honey, let me speak to your father?"
19 "Just one minute please." I put down the pink phone, walked into my parents' bedroom, and shook
20 my father awake.
21 "It's Mr. Fioretos."
22 "Jimmy? Christ, what does he want?" He lifted his cheek, in which could be discerned the imprint
23 of a gun barrel.

Jeffrey Eugenides. « *Middlesex* », 2002

Chekhov, Anton (1860–1904) : Russian dramatist and short-story writer.

stifling : very hot; suffocating

Watts : a district in southern Los Angeles in California, home to much of the black population of the city.

Newark : near New York; the largest city in New Jersey.

DOCUMENT B

1 Black day in July
2 Motor city madness has touched the countryside
3 And through the smoke and cinders*
4 You can hear it far and wide
5 The doors are quickly bolted*
6 And the children locked inside
7 Black day in July
8 Black day in July
9 And the soul of Motor City is bared across the land
10 As the book of law and order is taken in the hands
11 Of the sons of the fathers who were carried to this land

12 Black day in July
13 Black day in July
14 In the streets of Motor City is a deadly silent sound
15 And the body of a dead youth lies stretched upon the ground
16 Upon the filthy* pavement
17 No reason can be found



Grand River near 12th Street during the 1967 riot in Detroit.

“*Black Day In July* “ (extract), written and performed by Gordon Lightfoot , 1967

cinders : cendres

bolted : secured; locked; fastened

filthy : dirty; unclean

COMPREHENSION

DOCUMENT A

The characters

1. Excluding Jimmy Fioretos, there are 3 main characters in the text; give their names and explain how they are related. /3
2. What is the name of this family? /1

Place and time

3. Where does the scene take place? (Give as many details as possible). /1
4. Pick out 3 elements from the text which refer to the TIME of the event. /3

True or false.

5. Are these statements true or false? Justify by quoting the text. (indicate the line) /3
 - a. At the beginning of the scene, the whole (entire) family is awake.
 - b. The family is equipped with a firearm.
 - c. The narrator predicts violence in his house could happen at any time.

The events.

6. What do the places mentioned (Detroit, Watts and Newark) have in common (l.10-11)? /1
7. What is the cause of the disorder in Detroit? /1
8. What does Jimmy Fioretos and the father's attitude reveal about their racial background and their feeling about the events. /2

DOCUMENT B

Type of document

9. What type of document is **document B**? Justify your answer. /3

The events.

10. Using elements from the text, show that **document B** refers to the same TIME and PLACE as **document A**. /1
11. The following statements are TRUE. Quote from the text to justify. /4
 - a. Parents are worried.
 - b. There is injustice and unrest in the city.
12. What racial minority does the sentence below refer to? /1

“the sons of the fathers who were carried to this land“ (line 11)

13. What tragic turn of event is referred to from line 15 to line 17? /2

DOCUMENTS A AND B

14. In your opinion what is the theme common to **document A** and **document B**? Justify. /4
 - a. Poverty and inequality in Detroit.
 - b. Racial tensions in Detroit.
 - c. Gun violence in US cities.
 - d. Detroit's industrial decline