

What the Heart Leaves Behind

Evaluate how two authors give objects meaning at the end of a story.

12.T.T.1.a “Evaluate how different authors develop and use narrative techniques (including archetypes, multiple perspectives, plot structure, and symbolism) across texts, using textual evidence. (I)”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the editorial context, then the two literary excerpts. In each excerpt, underline any one detail about the heart. Circle who judges or observes the remains. Keep claims tied to the printed selections.

Two Fairy-Tale Endings

- ① **Editorial context.** In Oscar Wilde's “The Happy Prince,” a speaking statue gives its jewels and gold to poor people through a Swallow, who stays through winter and dies. The statue's lead heart breaks; city officials remove the now-plain statue to melt it. In Hans Christian Andersen's “The Steadfast Tin Soldier,” a living toy loves a paper Dancer. A boy throws him into a stove. The excerpts below come near the endings of these literary fairy tales. Foundry means a metal-casting workplace; tinsel is a shiny decoration. Bracketed dots mark omitted words; original paragraph breaks are combined.
- ② **Text A · Oscar Wilde, “The Happy Prince.”** “What a strange thing!” said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry. “This broken lead heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away.” So they threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying. “Bring me the two most precious things in the city,” said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird. “You have rightly chosen,” said God, “for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me.”

③ **Text B · Hans Christian Andersen, “The Steadfast Tin Soldier.”** The Tin Soldier stood now in a blaze of red light. The heat he felt was terrible, but whether it proceeded from the fire or from the love in his heart, he did not know. [...] Then suddenly the door flew open; the wind caught the Dancer, and she flew straight into the stove to the Tin Soldier, flashed up in a flame, and was gone! The Tin Soldier melted into a lump; and in the ashes the maid found him next day, in the shape of a little tin heart, while of the Dancer nothing remained save the tinsel rose, and that was burned as black as a coal.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

① How does Wilde's contrast between the foundry overseer and the divine judgment shape the heart's meaning? Cite both judgments.

② How does Andersen connect feeling to physical change without explaining the heart's final meaning directly? Use two details from B.

③ Compare how the narrators guide interpretation. Which excerpt leaves more for readers to infer, and why?

- 4** Evaluate one effect and one limitation of each ending for readers considering what survives loss.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 120–160 word comparative evaluation of the two printed excerpts. Make a claim about how symbolism and narrative perspective work together. Use at least one precise detail from each author, explain the effect on readers, and judge which ending more effectively serves a purpose you name. Consider one limitation of your choice. You may favor either author; use the excerpts rather than an unsupplied text.

Comparative evaluation

Write 120–160 words, grounding the judgment in both excerpts.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Read the editorial context, then the two literary excerpts. In each excerpt, underline any one detail about the heart. Circle who judges or observes the remains. Keep claims tied to the printed selections. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Wilde's contrast between the foundry overseer and the divine judgment shape the heart's meaning? Cite both judgments.	The overseer dismisses the heart because it will not melt and throws it away. God calls the selected heart and bird precious and approves the Angel's choice. The contrast separates practical or material usefulness from moral worth.
2	How does Andersen connect feeling to physical change without explaining the heart's final meaning directly? Use two details from B.	The Soldier cannot distinguish heat from love, linking sensation and emotion. After he melts, the maid finds a heart shape beside the burned rose; the narrator shows these remains without having the maid declare what they mean.
3	Compare how the narrators guide interpretation. Which excerpt leaves more for readers to infer, and why?	A supplies opposing explicit judgments and ends with divine approval. B gives access to the Soldier's uncertainty, then reports the remains without an explicit moral judgment. B therefore leaves more room to infer the emotional meaning; accept supported qualifications.
4	Evaluate one effect and one limitation of each ending for readers considering what survives loss.	A offers a clear reversal of value: discarded remains are precious, but its explicit approval can narrow interpretation. B leaves a heart and burned rose as suggestive evidence, inviting reflection but offering less certainty about consolation. Accept other supported strengths and limitations.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Both endings make a metal heart outlast a character, but their narrators guide readers differently. Wilde lets the overseer dismiss the broken heart before God calls the selected remains precious. That explicit reversal turns discarded material into evidence of a value the workers overlook. Andersen first connects the Soldier's heart with his uncertain feelings, then leaves a heart shape and a burned rose in the ashes. The maid finds them but does not explain them. For readers considering how love survives loss, I find Andersen's restraint more effective because the remains invite an emotional interpretation without settling it. Its limitation is that the burned rose can also suggest destruction rather than comfort. Wilde offers stronger reassurance, though the divine approval gives readers less room to decide what the heart means.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

Accept either author if the judgment names a purpose, compares symbolism and narrator guidance, uses both printed excerpts and considers a limitation. Do not require agreement with the model or treat the stories' supernatural events as scientific claims. Sources: Oscar Wilde, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (first published 1888; Charles Robinson illustrated edition, 1913/1920), closing scene; Hans Andersen's *Fairy Tales, First Series*, edited by J. H. Stickney (1914 edition), pp. 75-76. Public-domain excerpts; omissions marked, paragraph breaks combined and typographic quotation marks normalized. The context and questions are editorial writing.