PLOT TWISTS: THE WHAT AND THE WHY
What is a plot twist?

- A plot twist is an unsuspected occurrence or turn of events in the story that completely changes the direction or outcome of the plot from the direction it was likely to go.

- Authors achieve this twisting of the plot by providing a huge shock or surprise, that is either completely unexpected, or was perhaps foreshadowed through earlier details or events.

- Plot twists are designed to disrupt things in a story that the audience thinks they already know or have figured out.
Why add plot twists?

- Plot twists are invaluable literary devices. Without them, all stories would be predictable, and therefore sometimes quite boring.

- The value of plot twists lies in how they affect an audience and their experience of a story—after all, plot twists are designed for them.

- What’s more, plot twists can be a signature feature of a storyteller’s work and even sometimes directly lead to their fame and success
  - Example in literature: O. Henry is known for short stories that contain a twist that will throw the story a different way than the reader is expecting.
  - Example in film: film director M. Night Shyamalan is specifically known for the huge twists in each of his stories (like at the end of *The Sixth Sense*).
What to look out for

- As you read a story or watch a film, you mentally start figuring out where the story should go—it’s what we do.
- Pay attention to any hints that the story is going to go a different direction.
- If you thought A would happen, but then B occurs, it is possible you were just hit with a twist.
Thinking back to…

 “The Gift of the Magi”

 Can anyone think what the twist in that story was?