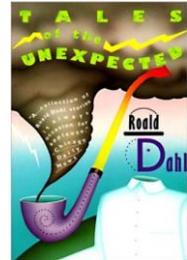


# Close Reading Organizer - Lamb to the Slaughter

**Directions:** Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.

## Themes Key

- 1 Gender and Marriage
- 2 Role Reversals
- 3 Food/Consumption
- 4 Betrayal



Summary	Theme Tracker				Your Analysis
<p>The scene is warm and cozy. There are two lamps, two chairs, and two glasses on the table, and drinks and fresh ice ready to be mixed. <b>Mary Maloney</b> is at home alone, sitting across from an empty chair and waiting for <b>her husband</b> to return from work.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>Six months pregnant and happy with her life, <b>Mary</b> works on her sewing and eagerly awaits her husband's arrival. She is described in bodily terms — in terms of her body: the position of her head is "curiously tranquil," her skin translucent, her mouth soft, her eyes placid, large, and dark.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>When <b>her husband</b> arrives home, <b>Mary</b> greets him with a kiss and an endearment, hangs his coat up for him, and prepares drinks for them both, a strong one for him and a weaker one for herself, before returning to her sewing as he sits down with his whiskey.</p>	1	2	3	4	

<p>For <b>Mary</b>, this post-work ritual is “blissful,” despite <b>her husband’s</b> silence, which she accommodates and mirrors. She has been home alone all day and she “loved to luxuriate in the presence of this man, and to feel—almost as a sunbather feels the sun—that warm male glow that came out of him to her when they were alone together.”</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>Contrary to their usual ritual, <b>the husband</b> downs half his glass in one swallow and goes to get more, ordering <b>Mary</b> to sit down when she tries to help him. When he returns, his glass has even more whiskey than before. Mary tries to sympathize with the difficulty of his job as a detective, but he ignores her.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p><b>Mary</b> repeatedly asks <b>her husband</b> if he would like something to eat, offering suggestions and insisting that he eat. He refuses every time, telling her again to sit down when she gets up to fetch the food. While he stares down at his now empty glass, <b>Mary</b> waits nervously and scrutinizes him as he prepares to tell her something.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The narrator leaves out the details of the conversation, but allows the reader to discern that <b>Mary’s husband</b> is leaving her. The husband acknowledges that “it’s kind of a bad time,” promising to provide for her financially, but asks her not to make any “fuss,” as it would be bad for his job.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p><b>Mary</b>, shocked and unwilling to believe what her <b>husband</b> has told her, decides to act as if nothing has happened. Absently, she goes down</p>	1	2	3	4	

to the cellar and grabs a frozen <b>leg of lamb</b> for dinner. When she returns, her husband tells her not to bother, as he is leaving.					
Without warning, <b>Mary</b> walks up to her <b>husband</b> and bashes the back of his head with the frozen <b>leg of lamb</b> , which the narrator notes is as effective as a steel club. The husband's body sways in the air for a few seconds before crashing to the floor.	1	2	3	4	
The noise brings <b>Mary</b> out of shock as she recognizes that her <b>husband</b> is dead. She quickly realizes that she would get the death penalty if discovered, and thinks that this would be a "relief" if not for her unborn child. Unsure of the consequences for her baby, she resolves to cover up the crime.	1	2	3	4	
To do so, <b>Mary</b> puts the murder weapon, the <b>leg of lamb</b> , into the oven and lets it cook. She then washes her hands, fixes her appearance, and practices speaking to and smiling at an imaginary <b>Sam</b> (the local grocer), trying to appear as normal as possible.	1	2	3	4	
After she has rehearsed enough, <b>Mary</b> goes outside to a grocery shop and chats briefly and casually with <b>Sam</b> , the grocer, pretending that she is gathering food for her husband's dinner and speaking about <b>Patrick</b> (her husband) as if he is still alive. On her way back home, <b>Mary</b> decides to act as if everything is normal, rehearsing her actions and reactions in her mind, telling herself to "keep things absolutely natural and there'll be no need for any	1	2	3	4	

<p>acting at all.” When she gets back, she does exactly that, calling for her <b>husband</b>, becoming shocked at his dead body, crying, and calling for the police.</p>					
<p>Two policemen, <b>Jack Noonan</b> and <b>O’Malley</b>, both former colleagues and friends of <b>Patrick</b>, arrive. Still crying, <b>Mary</b> tells them that she went out to the grocer and came back to find him dead. More policemen, a doctor, a photographer, and a fingerprint expert arrive, asking Mary questions but also treating her kindly. Mary recounts her story but mentions more detail, such as Patrick’s tiredness, her sewing, how the meat is in the oven, and which grocer she talked to. One of the detectives goes out and confirms her story with <b>Sam</b>.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>After <b>Patrick</b>’s body is removed and the doctor, photographer, and fingerprint expert leave, the policemen, still “exceptionally nice to her,” try to make <b>Mary</b> more comfortable by offering her the company of her sister or Noonan’s wife. Mary refuses, and the policemen allow her to stay while they search for more evidence.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p><b>Jack Noonan</b> occasionally speaks to <b>Mary</b>, explaining how <b>Patrick</b> was killed. He says that the murder weapon was probably a heavy piece of metal, and they are still searching for the weapon, which is crucial to catching the murderer: “Get the weapon, and you’ve got the man.” Later, another detective asks Mary about potential weapons, and she suggests they look in the garage.</p>	1	2	3	4	

<p>After nearly three hours of searching, the four remaining policemen have had no success finding the weapon. It is late, and they are now tired, frustrated, and hungry. <b>Mary</b> asks <b>Sergeant Jack Noonan</b> for a drink, and he complies, pouring her a glass of whiskey. Mary insists that he also have some whiskey, and he agrees, but acknowledges that it's against the rules. The rest of the men are also persuaded to have a drink, and though they are uncomfortable, they try to console Mary.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p><b>Sergeant Noonan</b> notices that the <b>lamb</b> is still in the oven and offers to turn it off for her. <b>Mary</b> then asks him and the others for a "small favour" — that they eat the lamb as a reward for being friends of <b>Patrick</b> and for helping to catch his killer. After some hesitation, the men agree and go into the kitchen to eat the lamb.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>"The woman," as the narrator calls her, stays in the other room, listening to the men eat the <b>lamb</b> and talk about the murder weapon. When the men speculate that it is "right here on the premises," "right under our very noses," <b>Mary</b> giggles to herself.</p>	1	2	3	4	