

# ARABY

JAMES JOYCE

1882-1941

## FOCUS:

Religious symbols and references

- Epiphany (Twelfth Night, Jan. 6)

## OBJECTIVES:

1. Recognize an epiphany
2. Analyze Joyce's attitude toward the narrator
3. Appreciate image-making words
4. Write an extended conversation

## VOCABULARY:

imperturbable

litany

garrulous

deride

running the gantlet (not 'gauntlet')

## "INTO"

Anticipation and reality

Think of an event that you looked forward to for a long time. Think specifically of your feelings of anticipation. How did the imagined event and the real event differ?

## "THROUGH"

1. Watch for and record five or six words or phrases to describe the main character so that you may understand the self-revelation that he experiences at the end.
2. Watch for the role epiphany plays in the story.

3. Watch for the play of light and shadow. "Araby" begins and ends in darkness. Trace the various images of light and shadow through the story and show how they define the boy's feelings at each point. (HB 88)

## "QUESTIONS

### (Understanding)

1. What kind of childhood did the narrator have? About how old are the boys in the story?
2. What effect does Mangan's sister have on the boys? How is this effect related to their age?
  1. (Interpreting)
  2. Why does Joyce choose a first-person narrator? How would the story differ if it had been told in the third person?
  3. What effect might living in the same house with a priest might have on the narrator? Watch for indications as the story develops.
4. Image: Why does Joyce choose the word 'litanies' to describe the shouting of boys in the market? Skim the paragraph for other words that have church-related connotations. How does this imagery affect the mood of "Araby"? What do the words tell you about the narrator and his feeling for Mangan's sister?
5. What is ironic that results from the difference between where Mangan's sister wants to go that Saturday and where she will in fact be?
6. How might the narrator's first meeting with Mangan's sister be a foreshadowing of his epiphany at the end of the story?

7. What does the narrator think about this romantic version of himself as he recalls this incident?
8. Contrast the attitude of his aunt and uncle toward the bazaar with the narrator's feelings about it. How might their attitudes serve as a foreshadowing of the outcome of the story?
9. The narrator still uses religious imagery to express his romantic feelings, this time comparing the bazaar to a church. What is the irony of this comparison?
10. How does the bazaar differ from the narrator's expectations? What side of the bazaar--and life—did the boy confront that night? What does this confrontation make him realize?
11. How does the narrator's moment of epiphany make him feel at the time? How does it make him feel as he recalls it? What does this story tell you about the nature of literary epiphanies?
12. Important details of setting and personality are given in the first two paragraphs of the story. (A) How does the description of North Richmond Street and its houses convey the emotional life of the inhabitants? (B) What do the priest's books reveal about him? (C) Was the priest really "charitable"?
13. (A)How does the narrator's trip to the market with his aunt contribute to his feeling of separation from real life? (B)Which words in this paragraph reinforce the contrast between Dublin life and the boy's desire for romance?
14. Explain how Joyce reveals the restrictions in the lives of the narrator, the uncle, Mangan's sister, and the dead priest.
15. (A)What exotic associations does the bazaar have for the narrator? Contrast these associations with what he finds at the bazaar. (B)What do you think is the purpose of the dialogue between the woman and the two men?
16. (A)What does the narrator come to realize about himself at the end of the story? Do you think he is being too harsh in his judgment?

17. The musty books found in the back room include a romantic novel by Sir Walter Scott, a religious tract written by a friar, and a memoir attributed to a French detective of the early nineteenth century--three very different kinds of literature. The boy's overall impression of these books, however, is a romantic one; his preference for "The "Memoirs "of "Vidocq has nothing to do with its contents. "I liked the last because its leaves were yellow." Find several other examples in the story of the contrast between an actual object and the boy's perception of it. Then discuss how these differences help develop the theme of the story.

[questions 13-18: from Harcourt Brace '88]

## **"BEYOND"**

### **(Application)**

### **COMMENTARY**

"Araby" puts clearly before us the disproportion between our passionate dreams as children and the world that denies those dreams. It may be pointed out that the dream of this story was in one way realized. The child who bore his chalice "safely through a throng of foes" is also the young artist conscious of the vessel of his powers which he must guard. But the movement of the story is not to such a symbolic conclusion. The little boy makes a brave offer of a present to the girl, and he succeeds in his effort to visit the bazaar with the mysterious and wonderful name. But all ends in dull and meaningless talk as the hall is darkened; no trace of the exotic lingers. The splendid bazaar is simply a place that is closing, a place where small boys aren't welcome. "Araby" vanishes, and the child is beset by "anguish and anger."

The uncle in this story is a version of Joyce's own father; there actually was such an oriental bazaar in Dublin; one of the houses in which Joyce lived was on north Richmond Street; and there was in fact such a girl, the sister of Joyce's friend--but it is astonishing how little all this matters. What does matter is the power to order and choose out of the welter of the past. Only that power turns the past to rich account.

(Harcourt Brace)