

Section A: Reading

Read the text below.

This is an extract from a short story. Lord Arthur has met a fortune teller, Mr Podgers, at a party. Mr Podgers has looked at Lord Arthur's hand (to tell his fortune), but has refused to say what he can see.

'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime': Oscar Wilde

Suddenly Mr Podgers entered the room. When he saw Lord Arthur he started, and his coarse, fat face became a sort of greenish-yellow colour. The two men's eyes met, and for a moment there was silence.

5 'The Duchess has left one of her gloves here, Lord Arthur, and has asked me to bring it to her,' said Mr Podgers finally.

'Ah, I see it on the sofa! Good evening.'

'Mr Podgers, I must insist on your giving me a straightforward answer to a question I am going to put to you.'

'Another time, Lord Arthur, but the Duchess is anxious. I am afraid I must go.'

10 'You shall not go. The Duchess is in no hurry.'

'Ladies should not be kept waiting, Lord Arthur,' said Mr Podgers, with his sickly smile. 'The fair sex is apt to be impatient.'

15 Lord Arthur's finely chiselled lips curved in petulant disdain. The poor Duchess seemed to him of very little importance at that moment. He walked across the room to where Mr Podgers was standing, and held his hand out.

'Tell me what you saw there,' he said. 'Tell me the truth. I must know it. I am not a child.'

20 Mr Podgers's eyes blinked behind his gold-rimmed spectacles, and he moved uneasily from one foot to the other, while his fingers played nervously with a flash watch-chain.

'What makes you think that I saw anything in your hand, Lord Arthur, more than I told you?'

'I know you did, and I insist on your telling me what it was. I will pay you. I will give you a cheque for a hundred pounds.'

25 The green eyes flashed for a moment, and then became dull again.

'Guineas?' said Mr Podgers at last, in a low voice.

'Certainly. I will send you a cheque tomorrow. What is your club?'

'I have no club. That is to say, not just at present. My address is _____, but allow me to give you my card;' and producing a bit of gilt-edged pasteboard

30 from his waistcoat pocket, Mr Podgers handed it, with a low bow to Lord Arthur, who read on it,

Mr. SEPTIMUS R. PODGERS

Professional Cheiromantist¹

103a West Moon Street

35 'My hours are from ten to four,' murmured Mr Podgers mechanically, 'and I make a reduction for families.'

'Be quick,' cried Lord Arthur, looking very pale, and holding his hand out.

Mr Podgers glanced nervously round, and drew the heavy portiere² across the door.

40 'It will take a little time, Lord Arthur you had better sit down.'

'Be quick, sir,' cried Lord Arthur again, stamping his foot angrily on the polished floor. Mr Podgers smiled, drew from his breast-pocket a small magnifying glass, and wiped it carefully with his handkerchief.

'I am quite ready,' he said.

45 Ten minutes later, with face blanched by terror, and eyes wild with grief, Lord Arthur Savile rushed from Bentinck House, crushing his way through the crowd of fur-coated footmen that stood around the large striped awning, and seeming not to see or hear anything. The night was bitter cold, and the gas lamps around the square flared and flickered in the keen wind; but his hands were hot with fever, and his forehead burned like fire. On and on he went, almost with the gait of a drunken man. A policeman looked curiously at him as he passed, and a beggar, who slouched from the archway to ask for alms, grew frightened, seeing misery greater than his own. Once he stopped under a lamp, and looked at his hands. He thought he could detect the stain of blood

50 already upon them, and a faint cry broke from his trembling lips.

55 Murder! That is what the cheiromantist had seen there. Murder! The very night seemed to know it, and the desolate wind to howl it in his ear. The dark corners of the streets were full of it. It grinned at him from the roofs of the houses.

60 First he came to the Park, whose sombre woodland seemed to fascinate him. He leaned wearily up against the railings, cooling his brow against the wet metal, and listening to the tremulous silence of the trees. 'Murder! Murder!' he kept repeating, as though iteration could dim the horror of the word.

Glossary

¹cheiromantist: fortune teller

²portiere: curtain covering the door

Question 1:

From lines 1 to 6, identify the reason which Mr Podgers uses to explain why he is in the room.

Question 2:

From lines 7 to 17, give two ways in which Lord Arthur's behaviour shows that he feels that he is more important than Mr Podgers.
You may use your own words or quotations from the text.

Question 3:

From lines 18 to 44, how does the writer use language and structure to show the change in both Mr Podgers's and Lord Arthur's moods?
Support your views with reference to the text.