

## Reading Ali Smith's Gliff with 'Group Three', Emmaus. Early 2025

At the beginning of a novel every reader has no idea what is happening so your main task is to work out as much as possible. A warning : These chapters were published in a book of short stories that was published in commemoration of Kafka's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, so don't be too surprised if you find it kafkaesque.

You will be able to say something about the five individuals mentioned. Alana is the mother's sister and the others? .....

Where do you think they are?

When do these events take place?

- What does Leif mean when he says: 'And this is what happens to art when you think you can make a hotel out of it?' (p 5)

- What does the narrator mean when 'they say' (neutral gender, not he or she) 'It was like they all had their backs to me, even the ones facing me.' (p. 7)

- The narrator comments that it is interesting that different places you went to could make things be like they were out of a story. We have to talk about this. (p. 10 )

- 'May be this was what it smelled like all the time and we'd stopped noticing'. (p.12) (...rubbish without our mother)

- 'He's moved on, our mother said, someone else'll be chauffeuring him now'.

- the end of the chapter and everything else you think is important.

### Glossary

p. 3

l. 1 docking gate - seems to be where workers clock in (*Uhr stechen?*) but I'm open for other ideas :-)

l. 9 pinafore - something you wear to keep you clean when cooking that covers your front but not your back

l. 16 cloisters are the part of a monastery where the monks used to walk. You are sheltered there, too, almost imprisoned.

p. 4

l. 7 tradespeople - probably 'workmen'. The back entrance to a building is often the 'trade entrance'.

l.10 (We'll talk about : why not 'pointlessly')

p. 5

l.1 limp - no life in them

angle - *Winkel*

l. 9 in touch - she would keep up the contact with them

l. 15 traced - we found, went

p. 6

l 3 ignition - the starter

l 4 give it - here: wait

l. 5 on the line - in danger

spot - see

p. 7

l. 2 automatic - this word is not in the dictionary

l. 28 endurance - *Ausdauer*

The bottom line: they use the pluperfect 'had said'.

p. 8 lute = a medieval stringed instrument to pluck

Chapter 2 : I have put the numbers in the top corner so that I can see them easily later.

p. 9

l. 10 to get at - to criticize

p. 10 a dual carriageway is a road with two lanes going each way

p. 11

l 1 cow parsley is a white fluffy-looking plant at the side of the road in summer

l 6 - shorn = cut back, cut off

l 7 shelf - usually : *Regal* foliage = green leaves

l. 9 rubble - *Schutt*

p 11 bottom - we didn't mind - *es machte uns nichts aus, wir hatten nichts dagegen*

as far as I am concerned - *was mich betrifft*

(lend and borrow is real but also a reference to 'Hamlet': "neither a lender nor a borrower be" that has become a proverb)

p 12

tarmac = tarmadacum, what you put on a road (tar and stones) to make it easy to drive on

p. 13

stray - a dog without a home

l. 6 ours = ?