

## Exercise 3.3

# Tension and contradiction in stories

Foundation  
 Yes  
 Short



Read this story which conveys the uncertainty, ambivalence and contradictory state that Monica is living in through having to adapt to significant changes in her lifestyle due to her changing health needs.

### The Path Divides

I'm Monica, I live alone and I'm also the oldest one in the room, I think? I'm 86 and I'm in a house and I feel as though I'm at the stage where my lifestyle might have to change a little bit. I was recently in hospital with flu and it was caused by my asthma plus the flu and it makes you rethink things and I think I may have to change my life a little bit.

So, I'm getting someone in to help me with the housework. I don't really like this because it's a change that I'm having to accept and I find it difficult to accept that. I usually cut my own lawns, so, am I going to be able to get the lawn mower out? In a couple of weeks' time, all being well, I will start on the lawns or, again, I might have to get someone to do that? So, I'm having a problem accepting the difference in my lifestyle but if I want to stay in the house and if I want to keep my life, the way it is now, I then have to accept some of these things so I must get the acceptance.

I'm doing well after coming home after the flu. I've been home for three weeks and I was in isolation for six days and everyone was masked up, saying I had the flu. I was slowly walking so my dog had to go and stay with someone for three weeks and I slowly started walking around. Normally, I do aerobics twice a week and I did half an aerobics class on Tuesday and I might try half a one today and I'm going to try half a one tomorrow. So, I'm trying to get back into that.

I do a charity shop shift and I've done half-shifts. I'm also a volunteer at the local cinema and I'm a tour guide. Now, I don't know if that might have to change because of the stairs? Also, I'm talking for an hour and I want to see how that affects me. Again, these are changes that I don't want to give up but might have to.

So, there's a difficult time going on here, changing my mind-set. So, as I say, I live alone, I haven't got any children. I've got cousins but one's in Spain but the other one comes. So, not a great deal of support that way but I don't think I need a great deal of support, I'm going to manage. Anyway, I think that's enough about me.

### 3.3.1

In the first column of the table below, write down the words, particular contradictory phrases and images or metaphors, that convey this difficult transition and the tension that Monica conveys.

How will this tension affect her choices and desires?

What might be said or done to help Monica manage this? Note down some ideas in the table below.

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Words, contradictory phrases, images, metaphors that convey tension

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What might be said/done to help manage this?

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