**Fairy Tale Transformation Task**

**Original Fairy Tale**

***The Scorpion and the Turtle***

One lazy afternoon day a turtle was swimming happily along a lake. As the turtle was nearing land he heard a scorpion hail it from the muddy shore. A scorpion, being a very poor swimmer, asked the turtle if he would carry him on his back across the lake. The turtle thought it was the craziest thing he ever heard, “Why would I carry *you* on my back?” he boomed, ‘You’ll sting me while I’m swimming and I’ll drown.”
“My dear turtle friend,” laughed the scorpion, “if I were to sting you, you would drown and I would go down with you and drown as well. Now where is the logic in that?”
The turtle pondered this for a moment, and eventually saw the logic in the scorpion’s statement. “You’re right!” said the turtle with a smile. “Hop on!” So the scorpion climbed aboard and the turtle paddled his big fins in the water. Halfway across the lake the scorpion gave the turtle a big sting, and he started to drown. As they both sank into the water the turtle turned to the scorpion with a tear in his eye. “My dear scorpion friend, why did you sting me? Now we are both going to drown…” the turtle was gasping for air. “Where is the… logic in that?”
“It has nothing to do with logic” the scorpion sadly replied, “it’s just my nature.”

**Adaptation**

***Human Nature***

A mother tells her

impressionable young child

never to trust a stranger.

They’ll hurt you, scare you, whisk you away,

torture you, poison you, lock you up

in a place you can never escape.

Don’t trust the kind eyed smiles,

promises too good to be true,

their glimmering façades

mask a terrible truth.

But this one was kind,

charismatic and witty,

intelligent and funny

and oh, so charming.

He spoke of movies,

colours, politics, food,

conversations lasted hours.

When he told you he loved you

you were on cloud nine,

but he placed rose coloured glasses over your eyes.

You didn’t notice the first drops of poison,

the snide remarks and thunderstorm anger,

the sacrifices you made;

your friends, your career, your independence,

you believed it was all worth it.

Eventually you noticed the noxious venom,

seething and writhing through every vein,

turning a heart once red with passion

as black as the one who poisoned it.

But it was too late.

You had swum too deep,

drowning in the depths

of his tumultuous sea,

held down by his iron grip.

But there is no one left to listen,

you pushed them all away,

he is all you have and you know it.

You have no proof,

his scars left no mark.

No one will believe you

over a man so charming.

Do you miss her?

The smart, happy, ambitious

girl you left behind?

He didn’t take that from you.

You can’t blame your naivety on him.

At least, that’s what they say.

You can’t poke the bear

and expect it not to bite,

You can’t walk into a lion’s den

and expect it not to pounce,

you can’t let a scorpion climb on your back

and expect it not to sting.

After all,

it’s just their nature.

**Writer’s Statement**

My poem Human Nature transforms the fairy tale The Scorpion and the Turtle, about a scorpion that asks a turtle to carry it across a river; when halfway across, it defies all logic and stings the turtle, causing them both to drown. When the turtle asks the scorpion why it would do such a thing, it replies, "It has nothing to do with logic… it's just my nature". The fable blames the death of both characters on the turtle's naivety and aims to tell its readers to be cautious of who they trust.

Human Nature takes these ideas and transforms the setting, characters and scenario. Instead of a turtle, a young woman makes the mistake of trusting a "stranger" (the scorpion), and they both get hurt. At face value, Human Nature blames the situation on the woman, telling her, "You can't blame your naivety on him," and that "he didn't take" anything from you. However, the message is not that it is the woman's fault; instead, it speaks to the all-too-common situation of domestic abuse in modern society and how, often, the victim is not believed. Despite changing the setting and scenario, I tried incorporating as many structural elements from the source story as possible. The man begins as "kind, charismatic and witty," much like the scorpion. In addition, he does not inject his "noxious venom" until the persona "had swum too deep," leaving them both to drown "in the depths of his tumultuous sea."

Human Nature transforms the fable from prose to poem; thus, its devices are quite different. Like many fairy tales, The Scorpion and the Turtle is in the third person, distancing the readers from the characters so that rather than sympathising, the reader can easily discern the mistake made by the turtle and, consequently, interpret the story's message. I chose to do the opposite in Human Nature, writing in the second person to bring the readers as close to the persona as possible. The second person feels as if scolding the reader, telling them, "You pushed them all away," and "you had swum too deep." I put the reader in the persona's position and give them a glimpse into what it would be like to be trapped under the "iron grip" of a nightmare "no one will believe."

As the fable targets children, it uses simple language, yet Human Nature targets a more mature audience. The fable's characters, an anthropomorphic scorpion and turtle, are more appealing to a younger demographic and help convey the message. We view scorpions as dangerous and turtles as peaceful, calm creatures - evil and good. My poem is not aimed at children, I chose not to use devices such as anthropomorphism and blatant contrast between the characters to convey my message more subtly.

Metaphors describe how the persona was treated, relating how the antagonist placed "rose-coloured glasses" over the persona's eyes. Here, I show how the antagonist uses love and charm to blind his partner to his deplorable actions. Colour symbolism represents a turning point for the persona when she realises that the "charming" and "witty" man she once knew had turned "a heart once red with passion as black as the one who poisoned it." Red, symbolising love, passion, and ambition, contrasts with black, and shows how much the persona has changed due to the relationship's "noxious venom" took the "smart, happy, ambitious girl" she once was away.

Moreover, descriptive language conveys the persona's anguish, comparing her relationship to "poison", "seething and writhing through every vein." Here, the persona has realised the position she is in and how difficult it will be for her to get out. Consequently, this device encourages reader sympathy with the persona. The active verbs "seething" and "writhing" suggest movement, almost as if the poison is alive and parasitically taking her over. The poem is also structured with relatively short stanzas and long, flowing lines emphasising the persona feels trapped in the relationship. She is "drowning in the depths of his tumultuous sea" with no end in sight, her suffering dragging on like the poem's lines that, through enjambment, run over several lines.

Furthermore, repetition emphasises points. 'You' is repeated in "they'll hurt you, scare you, whisk you away…" The repetition of the personal pronoun 'you' in the persona's mother's list of potential threats emphasises how serious she is about her child "never" trusting "a stranger." The second example is in the final stanza, where "you can't…" and "expect it not to…" repeatedly connect to stereotypically dangerous creatures. These reinforce the poem's main idea – much like you "can't let a scorpion climb on your back and expect it not to sting," you can't trust other people not to hurt you, which links to the poem's final blunt lines 'After all, / it's just their nature."

**Fairytale Transformation**

**KU1**

*Detailed knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives explored in a diverse range of texts.*

The student engaged with the central idea of the fable, a cautionary tackle about trust and human nature, and worked to convey a similar idea in their own piece. They show awareness of the context of the two pieces, the instructional nature of the fable, the social issue (domestic violence) raised in the contemporary poem, and how this affects how ideas are presented.

**KU2**

*Extensive knowledge and understanding of the variety of language features, stylistic features, and conventions authors use to make meaning.*

The student uses a wide range of poetic and structural devices in their poem to help convey their message and evoke reader sympathy. They also show awareness of the form and features of the source text.

**AN2**

*Insightful analysis of how language features, stylistic features, and conventions combine to influence readers in various text types.*

In their statement, they provide a detailed analysis of the effects of devices. They bring in examples and unpack their effect, also connecting their analysis back to the intention of the piece and the idea/message.

**GRADE: A**