

The mist in the mirror- ending

To what extent do you agree?

A student says, **"This part of the extract makes me think that the narrator feels isolated and vulnerable"**

To an extent, I agree with the student's statement because the library accompanied with the growing darkness traps and isolates the narrator, which leaves him vulnerable to the suspected company that has been following him throughout the extract.

For me, the initial setting that he has walked into has consequently isolated him from any escape, leaving him extremely vulnerable from the claustrophobia; "the gallery was dark, high and narrow, with only a foot or two of passage between the book stacks, and the wooden rail." The gallery of the library instantly creates the feeling of isolation, away from the main area. Usually, height is feared from the intimidation it creates, however here the narrator has ventured into more danger by isolating himself from the main escapes. The "wooden rail" described emphasizes the need for protection from the obvious danger of falling or being pushed from the gallery. Accompanied with the writer's use of a three part list with adjectives that exemplifies the confinement, with the "dark" colours and furniture like "book stacks" swamping the narrator into claustrophobia, disguising any light. The height and "narrow" pathway symbolise the instability of his situation as if everything encloses the narrator the more he travels. There is a clear sense of abandonment due to the distance from any civilisation, with no protection or help nearby. The writer has chosen the location of the gallery for the climatic point of the extract to isolate the narrator in the darkness, concealing the reader from any events and making them fear for his safety.

Furthermore, the atmosphere in the gallery traps the vulnerable narrator further with the deathly air, foreshadowing his potential fate; "the air up here was colder, but at the same time oddly dead, as though the dust of years, was packed tightly, excluding any freshness". The writer uses a simile to describe the vast amount of dust present in the air, as though the library has been carefully sealed and air tight to preserve its secrets or beings from the outside world. The adjectives "cold" implies the narrator has noticed the ghostly sensation as though the "dead" have lowered the temperature of the room from not emitting heat, warning him of the possible threats in the library. With the noun "freshness" symbolising the living, almost comparing it to the temporary nature of food, like any life that enters the library will decay and rot as the air has. The air symbolises the confinement within the library, reinforced by the adverb "tightly" showing the room has strangled all life away, to suggest the death and lifelessness within the room, making the narrator extremely vulnerable.

The narrator's vulnerability is shown through panic and doubt as he realises he may be trapped within the library; "I should be terrified by nothing, by my own fears, by soft breathing, by the creek of a board, by the very atmosphere". The asyndetic list with anaphora of the preposition "by" shows the fear from isolation that the narrator has from realising his fate, shown by the lack of connectives. The disjointed pausing of the sentence suggests the breathlessness like the life is slowly being tortured from the narrator by the darkness of the room, or the room is breathing whilst waiting to attack him. This is also shown in the "soft breathing" believed to be heard following his path, with the adjective "soft" symbolising the calmness of the narrator's company, as though the presence knows the fate of the narrator. He begins to doubt his own mind with the constant sounds echoing around him that is giving the impression of another presence in the library. The whole atmosphere is panicking him as he feels isolated by the darkness and his location in the gallery, all of this evidence makes him vulnerable to the cause of his fear.