

Jackson studied the shopping mall's long corridor, noting haggard mothers pushing loaded pushchairs and the senior citizens group walking the mall both for exercise and conversation. Dressed in a gray pinstriped suit, the stocky Jackson stared intently at the north entrance to the shopping mall. That would no doubt be the one LuAnn would use since the bus stop was right in front. She had, Jackson knew, no other form of transportation. Her live-in boyfriend's truck was in the impoundment lot, the fourth time in as many months. It must be getting a little tedious for her, he thought. The bus stop was on the main road. She would have to walk about a mile to get there, but she often did that. What other choice did she have? The baby would be with her. She would never leave it with the boyfriend, Jackson was certain of that.

While his name always remained Jackson for all of his business schemes, next month his appearance would change dramatically from the hefty middle-aged man he was currently. Facial features of course would again be altered; weight would probably be lost; height added or taken away, along with hair. Male or female? Aged or youthful? Often, the persona would be taken from people whom he knew, either wholly or bits of thread from different ones, sewn together until the delicate quilt of fabrication was complete.

Jackson had received a first-rate education from a prestigious Eastern school. Combining his love of acting with his natural acumen for science and chemistry, he had achieved a rare double subject degree in drama and chemical engineering. Those accomplishments were serving him very well. Indeed, if his classmates could only see him now.

In keeping with today's character – a middle-aged male, overweight and out of shape from leading a sedentary lifestyle – a bead of perspiration suddenly sprouted on Jackson's forehead. His lips curled into a smile. This physical reaction pleased him immensely, aided as it was by the insulation of the padding he was wearing to provide bulky proportions and to conceal his own wiry frame. But it was something more than that too: He took pride in the fact that he became the person totally, as though different chemical reactions took place within him depending on who and what he was pretending to be.

He didn't normally inhabit shopping malls; his personal tastes were far more sophisticated. However, his clientele were most comfortable in these types of surroundings, and comfort was an important consideration in his line of work. His meetings tended to make people quite excited, sometimes in negative ways. Several interviews had become extremely animated, compelling him to think on his feet. These reminiscences brought another smile to Jackson's lips. You couldn't argue with success, though. He was batting a thousand. However, it only took one to spoil his perfect record. His smile quickly faded. Killing someone was never a pleasant experience. Rarely was it justified, but when it was, one simply had to do it and move on. For several reasons he hoped the meeting today would not precipitate such an outcome.

The Winner by David Baldacci

He carefully dabbed his forehead with his pocket handkerchief and adjusted his shirt cuffs. He smoothed down a barely visible tangle in the synthetic fibers of his neatly groomed wig. His real hair was compressed under a latex skullcap.

40 He pulled open the door to the space he had rented in the mall and went inside. The area was clean and orderly – in fact too much so, he thought suddenly as he slowly surveyed the interior. It lacked the look of a true working space.

45 The receptionist seated behind the cheap metal desk in the foyer looked up at him. In accordance with his earlier instructions, she didn't attempt to speak. She had no idea who he was or why she was here. As soon as Jackson's appointment showed up, the receptionist had been instructed to leave. Very soon she would be on a bus out of town, her purse a little fatter for her minimal troubles. Jackson never looked at her; she was a simple prop in his latest stage production.

50 The phone beside her sat silent, the typewriter next to that, unused. Yes, absolutely, too well organized, Jackson decided with a frown. He eyed the stack of paper on the receptionist's desk. With a sudden motion he spread some of the papers around the desk's surface. He then cocked the phone around just so and put a piece of paper in the typewriter, winding it through with several quick spins of the platen knob.

Jackson looked around at his handiwork and sighed. You couldn't think of everything all at once.

55 Jackson walked past the small reception area, quickly hitting the end of the shallow space, and then turned right. He opened the door to the tiny interior office, slipped across the room, and sat down behind the scuffed wooden desk. A small TV sat in one corner of the room, its blank screen staring back at him. He pulled a cigarette from his pocket, lit it, and leaned far back in the chair, trying his best to relax despite the constant flow of adrenaline. He stroked his thin, dark mustache. It too was made of synthetic fiber ventilated on a lace foundation and attached to his skin with spirit gum. His nose had been changed considerably as well: a putty base  
60 highlighted and shadowed, to make his nose's actual delicate and straight appearance bulky and slightly crooked. The small mole resting next to the altered bridge of his nose was also fake: a concoction of gelatin and alfalfa seeds mixed in hot water. His straight teeth were covered with acrylic caps to give them an uneven and unhealthy appearance. All of these illusions would  
65 be remembered by even the most casual observer. Thus when they were removed, he, in essence, disappeared. What more could someone wholeheartedly engaged in illegal activities want?

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**Read lines 1-9.**

A1. List five pieces of information we discover from Jackson about LuAnn. [5]

**Read lines 10-26.**

A2. How does the writer show you a sense of mystery around Jackson and his job [5]

*You must refer to the text to support your answer, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.*

**Read lines 27-38.**

A3. What impressions do you get of Jackson in these lines? How does the writer show you what he is like? [10]

*You must refer to the text to support your answer, using relevant subject terminology.*

**Read lines 39-51.**

A4. How does the writer show you that Jackson likes to have control in these lines? [10]

*You must refer to the text to support your answer, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.*

**To answer this question, you should read lines 54-67 but also consider the passage as a whole.**

A5. "In the final part of this passage, the writer encourages the reader to be suspicious of Jackson."

To what extent do you agree with this view? [10]

You should write about:

- your thoughts and feelings about Jackson as he is presented here **and in the passage as a whole**
- how the writer has created these thoughts and feelings

*You must refer to the text to support your answer.*

**SECTION B: 40 marks**

*In this section you will be assessed for the quality of your **creative prose writing** skills.*

*24 marks are awarded for communication and organisation; 16 marks are awarded for vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation.*

*You should aim to write about 450-600 words.*

Choose **one** of the following titles for your writing:

[40]

- Either,**        (a)    Three wishes.
- Or,**            (b)    The Haunted Tree.
- Or,**            (c)    Write about a time when you were at a celebration.
- Or,**            (d)    Write a story which begins:  
I opened the gate, unsure of what lay ahead ...

*The space below can be used to plan your work.*