

A Kiss Before Dying by Ira Levin**PART ONE: DOROTHY****1**

The young man knows that Dorothy's father divorced his wife. He divorced her when he found out that she'd had an affair, although he found out about this eight years after the affair ended. The young man knows that Mr Kinship is a hard man. He never forgives people if he thinks that they've done something wrong.

2

There are hundreds of Pharmacy students at the college, and there are three large third-year Pharmacy classes. No student can know *all* the other students. The young man is holding the tall green final-year textbook, and he is standing in a corridor in the Pharmacy building, reading the papers on the students' bulletin board. He will *look* like a Pharmacy student to anybody who sees him and nobody would guess that he is not one.

3

- (a) He wants Dorothy to write something that people will understand as a suicide note. The passage he asks her to translate *could* be understood as a suicide note.
- (b) He does not want Dorothy to write her translation note on the back of his note to her. If she does that, nobody will believe that her translation is really a suicide note.

4

Because he has planned to kill Dorothy by pushing her off the top of the building. He thinks that, if she only falls two stories, she might not die.

PART TWO: ELLEN**1**

Dorothy was pregnant when she died. Ellen has realized that her sister died wearing "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue". These are things that brides sometimes wear on their wedding day to bring them luck. The building that Dorothy fell from is the building where people who want to get married go to get a marriage license. Dorothy fell from the roof at a time when the bureau was closed for lunch. Ellen thinks that the person who made Dorothy pregnant took her to this building, having promised to marry her. She thinks that he took Dorothy there when the bureau was closed for lunch and that he took her up to the roof to wait until it opened again. She thinks that he pushed Dorothy from the roof into the air

shaft. She thinks that the letter did *not* mean that Dorothy was going to kill herself—it could have been an apology for marrying without telling her family. *The student could also mention that* Ellen thinks that Dorothy would not have borrowed a belt from a friend if she was going to kill herself.

2

Dorothy is looking for a handsome, blond male student who was in Dorothy's English class the previous year. There were about 40 students in the class, but only 17 of them were male. The photos in their files show that only five of these have blond hair. Three of these five are not handsome, so there were only two handsome, blond male students in that English class. Ellen writes both their names in her notebook because she will have to speak to both of them.

3

She still thinks that Dwight is Dorothy's killer. He has told her that he had known a girl named Dorothy, who was in one of his classes. He has also told her that she (Ellen) reminded him of this other girl because she looked like her.

4

She has not realized that at the time of her death, Dorothy was no longer friends with the student from her English class—Dwight Powell. When she died, in April 1950, Dorothy was the girlfriend of a student in a different class. Ellen does not know this because she did not speak to, or hear from, Dorothy after Christmas 1949.

PART THREE: MARION**1**

Student should explain that, No, it is not true. Bud did not know who Charles Demuth was until he learned about Marion's tastes from Ellen. Even then, Bud was not sure about the spelling of the artist's name.

2

- (a) Gordon knows that Bud is going to marry Marion Kingship and that he was previously the boyfriend of her sister Ellen. He thinks that Bud has probably been more interested in Leo Kingship's money than in the girls themselves. So he wonders whether Bud had been Dorothy's boyfriend too. He wants to find out if Dorothy could have known Bud at Stoddard University.

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2

(b) The reader should *not* be surprised. Bud has learned about Marion's tastes from Ellen and now he pretends to share her tastes.

3

Student's own answer. The student might suggest that Marion had wanted to believe that somebody wanted to marry her because he loved her, not because her father was rich. She has always wanted to be loved. Her father has never loved her, and her mother was forced to leave her when she was still young. She feels that nobody can understand how unhappy she is that she was wrong about Bud. She believes that nobody could know how much she wanted to be loved.