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## Year 12 English Communications: Text Production

### Narrative

**Task :** Write a narrative in any form you choose, paying attention to the features of that form.

We will be visiting the Art Gallery during our double lesson and you will get the chance to look at many artworks. In this task I wish you to choose one and write a text stemming from that painting or sculpture in some way.

### The 27 Club

One, two, three, four, five, and including herself, six. Six of them. They're seated in a circle, well not quite a perfect circle, but Bennett doesn't complain. She can't exactly remember how long they've been sitting there: five minutes, an hour, eternity, who knows? They're an odd bunch, Bennett catches herself; they *have* to be an odd bunch to end up here. That's the point of them being in this circle, quite simply, they *are* odd. Bennett herself is odd, she isn't much of a conversationalist, but she likes to count, she likes to observe. So, she continues to observe those around her. They are all so quiet, each of them lost in their own fantasies.

Number one is Jimmi. Jimmi is built like a lamppost. He is tall and skinny, with a great head of black hair that sticks out, as if he shoved his finger in an electrical socket. Bennett sometimes wonders if he actually did, because one would think from his glazed expression that his brains are fried. Sometimes his expression isn't glazed though, sometimes it's pained, because sometimes Jimmi doubles over into a raucous bout of rib shattering coughs that leaves him wheezing for air. Bennett wonders if he is asthmatic. Maybe it's lung cancer. If his breathe gives any clues, he is a smoker. Jimmi sat next to number two.

Number two is Janis. Jimmi's sister. Well, Bennet is fairly sure that they're siblings, they do look awfully alike. They speak alike too. With dreamy, husky voices, that drip from their tongues. Bennett often thinks in colours, she is a painter after all, and Jimmy and Janis are all the colours of the rainbow. When they speak, she saw droplets of orange, swirling into spirals, interwoven with reds and blues, splattered over a hazy purple. This is what oozed from their mouths; psychedelic patterns that make Bennett's head spin.

Janis is definitely crazy. People who wear sunglasses indoors are always crazy. Janis is sprawled across her chair, head lolling, face fracturing into a mega-watt grin, and huge circular sunglasses shrouding her eyes. The sight is almost jovial. Almost, except for the fact that Janis looks like a skeleton wrapped in skin. With dark, protruding veins that make bruised mountain ranges on her forearms. Bennett sometimes wonders if she would be able to see the blood running through her veins if she looks close enough. But then again, that is assuming there is any blood running through Janis' veins at all. Bennett curses herself; those thoughts are dangerous. Her internal debate is disturbed however, she glances up, the Scarecrow is singing again. The Scarecrow is number four. She couldn't possibly go out of order. She'd have to come back to him.

Number three is the King. His name is far too long, complicated, and French, for Bennett to remember exactly what it is, so she calls him the King. There is no particular reason, he just seems ethereally regal. From the colours encrusted into his fingernails, Bennett knows he is a painter as well. When the King speaks, she sees earthy colours and laughing skulls. She sees jumbles of words, symbols, and letters. She hears drums beating away, pulsating the heartbeat of a bustling metropolis. The King's crown is his dreaded hair, which sticks up like a stitched doll. The Raggedy King with a voice that conjures entire cities in her head. She likes the King, but she is also fearful of him. Like Janis, he is an animated corpse. Sometimes Bennett wondered if her mind is playing tricks on her, and if he really is a rag doll, slumped on a thin metal chair. Pushing the thought out of her head, she looks at number four. The Scarecrow.

The Scarecrow, so named because, well, he looks like a scarecrow. When she first came here, lord knows how long ago, the Scarecrow frightened her. He yelled, and sang, making as much noise as possible, Bennett would only see red and black then, but after a while, she realised, he isn't an angry at all, he's just sad. The reds and blacks are hiding blues of every

shade. The Scarecrow isn't scary anymore, he is pitiful, melancholy, and Bennett senses he has a good reason to be.

Number five is Amy. Bennett likes Amy a lot. Granted, she has a little trouble with impulse control, she is a little unstable, and she swears like a boatful of sailors, but when she sings, Bennett can only see beauty. Her voice fills the room with deep purples and swirling metallic colours of brass, silver and gold. Amy may be many things, but her voice is the richest.

Bennett sits there, observing these people, counting them, trying to paint pictures in her head. That's how she spends her days, painting their voices. That's all she really can do when she is trapped in these whitewashed walls and sticky tiles, imprisoned in this institute like Susanna goddamn Kaysen. Sometimes it makes her angry. Nevertheless, she always has this niggling voice at the back of her head, telling her something is up. She could never put her finger on it. Like a dot to dot with missing numbers.

Bennett often sits, for what feels like an eternity, puzzling herself with question upon question. Why are the clocks stopped? Why are there no nurses and orderlies? Why is there a dusty, deteriorating, 'Happy 27<sup>th</sup> Birthday' banner, forever hanging above their desolate little coterie? Why, for the life of her, can she not remember anything about her life before this circle?

Not a single. damned. thing.

And why, why, why, is it that every time she places her index and middle finger on her delicate wrist, where she should feel the invigorating *thump-thump* of her beating pulse, there is nothing there? Just a limp, lifeless, dead, *nothing*. But on the wall across from her is the greatest mystery of them all; eight words, scratched into the plaster by some unknown vandal:

*'If only I had made it to 28'.*

(1005)