



News of the Engagement

First Time Reading

1. Give a summary of the story in 50 words or fewer.

2. Why is the story called *News of the Engagement*?

3. What emotions does the central character, Philip, go through in the story?

4. What is the effect of the story being written in first person?

Closer Reading

5. The first paragraph of the story is very lengthy. Why do you think the author created such an extended explanation at the beginning? What does it prepare us for?



6. The narrator describes his mother as 'my little plump mother'. What do you think of this description given what happens later in the story?

7. What do you think is meant by 'Mothers are kittle cattle'?

8. When do you start to suspect that the mother is waiting for someone or has some news of her own? Give evidence from the text to support your assumptions.

9. Mr Nixon says 'Come and sit down. Have a weed.' Based on the context of the surrounding sentences, what is a 'weed'?



10. At the end of the story, Mr Nixon outlines his plans to marry Philip's mother and Philip says: 'I laughed. I could not help it.' Why does he laugh? What is the effect of Mr Nixon's previous words?

11. Why do you think the story is structured so that the uncle explains his plans for marriage in the last moments of the story?
