Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ms. Carota/English

Literary Devices in Practice

Irony

**DIRECTIONS**: As you read the passage, annotate and identify both dramatic and situational irony. Then answer the questions below.

1 Old Mrs. O’Hara was a good woman, if a frugal\* one. Her husband and children had

died years ago, leaving her with a grandson whom she loved dearly. Mrs. O’Hara longed to

leave her grandson something to help him after she died. She worked long, hard hours and made more money than her grandson realized. He didn’t know about the money she made because she

5 she put most of it into her mattress for safekeeping.

*When I die*, she thought to herself, *he will have this money to live off of and keep him*

*comfortable*. Because Mrs. O’Hara never counted the money, she never knew how wealthy she

was. There was a great deal of cash stuffed into that old mattress.

Mrs. O’Hara’s grandson, Jimmy, was cut from a different cloth than his grandmother.

10 Arrogant and ambitious, Jimmy hated the modest house he was raised in. He hated the poor neighbors and their wild children, the very children who should have been his friends. But Jimmy shunned them, preferring to play on his own and plot his future. When Jimmy’s grandmother said, “Don’t worry about the future, I’ve taken care of it,” Jimmy paid no attention. He thought his grandmother was a useless old woman. Didn’t she work long, hard hours and for no return?

15 Not me, said Jimmy to himself, kicking a can on the sidewalk. I’m going to make money and live the good life. He looked with disgust at the kids around him as they played in the street, creating toys for themselves out of the garbage around them.

When Jimmy was 18, Mrs. O’Hara died. Jimmy was not with her in her final illness. He was away in the city, where he had been spending more and more time since he had turned

20 sixteen.

“Tell Jimmy…” said Mrs. O’Hara, with her dying breath to the kindly neighbor who was attending her, “Tell Jimmy… the mattress....”

When Jimmy returned for the funeral, the neighbor passed on the message. But Jimmy paid no attention. He used the house now as little more than a way station. Most of his time was

25 spent in the city. No one in the old neighborhood knew what he did there but every time he came home, he had flashier clothes and a more expensive car.

Finally, the day came when Jimmy decided to sell the little house. He sold all of the furniture, except his grandmother’s mattress. It was in terrible condition, lumpy and worn. He took it out and dumped in a nearby alley. The next day, he left the neighborhood for good. Two

30 weeks later, he was arrested in the city.

Meanwhile, the neighborhood children began using the old mattress as a trampoline. Right around the time of Jimmy’s arrest, some of the kids were jumping on it when it burst open. A cloud of green bills exploded upward. The children stared at each other in astonishment. Then, with whoops and hollers, they began to collect the money.

\*thrifty; penny-pinching

1. Using specific text evidence, identify an example of dramatic irony in the passage and explain what the author is emphasizing with its use.

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2. Using specific text evidence, identify an example of situational irony in the passage and explain what the author is emphasizing with its use.

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