

## Comparative Study

### 2007 Examination

The second text I have chosen for my comparative study is the film 'Inside I'm Dancing' directed by Damien O'Donnell.

I believe that the villain of this film is not one individual, but is the collective body of the Independent Living Board (ILB). The panel which judges first Rory and then Michael's applications for independent living does not seem to be motivated so much by a genuine desire to help the pair as to ensure that their own criteria are adhered to. **Like Alicia Moore**, their wishes are paramount and they appear to have little real interest in or understanding of those whose needs they are meant to serve. However, **unlike Alicia Moore**, the members of the ILB are not completely heartless, nor do they actively seek to cause pain or suffering in others. **Neither do they have the sort of devastating influence on Michael or Rory that Alicia Moore has on Alec.** For these reasons, I consider the ILB to be **less villainous than** Alicia Moore.

One of the principal **differences between the ILB and Alicia Moore** is that the former has no dealings with Rory or Michael until both characters are old enough to seek independent living. They play no part in the formation of the characters from early childhood onwards, **unlike Alicia Moore**. As a result, they are **less intimidating than** Alicia Moore, as she has never allowed Alec to develop to a point where he is secure enough to stand up to her.

We are first introduced to the ILB when Rory brings Michael with him to help plead his case. From the moment we first see the ILB, we are predisposed to view the members as the villains of the piece. They sit complacently behind their long desk, and the camera angles in this scene emphasise the distance between them and those being interviewed. Rory and Michael look small and vulnerable in the rather grand setting of the well-appointed room. It soon becomes clear that the board has no intention of granting Rory his allowance, and that this whole meeting is simply a formality. In this, the ILB is **similar to Alicia Moore** who **also** refuses to allow Alec to plead his case properly, whether it is about his reluctance to accompany her to Europe or his determination not to go to war. **In both texts** the villains have already made up their minds in advance and are not to be swayed from their decision. However, the ILB is **less villainous** than Alicia Moore for two reasons. First, the panel members have good reason to be sceptical of Rory's claim to be mature and responsible, and second, there is a considerable difference between denying someone an independent living allowance and sending someone off to war. **Unlike the ILB**, Alicia Moore has no reason to

deny Alec the chance to live his own life. She is motivated purely by her own selfishness, **which cannot be said** of the ILB.

Although the ILB may not be motivated by selfishness, **they do share with Alicia** a lack of real care for those over whom they have power. They tell Rory that six months is not a long time to wait for a new hearing, but of course it is an unbearably long time for someone suffering from Rory's condition. The ILB should be aware of the fact that Rory is unlikely to live for very long, and should not be so thoughtless. Still, this uncaring **attitude is nothing like as appalling as** Alicia Moore's callous decision to send her only son off to war. **The ILB may be thoughtless, but Alicia Moore is heartless.**

One of the **similarities between** Alicia Moore and the ILB is that **both appear in an increasingly poor light as the text progresses**. Rory and Michael approach the ILB a second time, but on this occasion they are better prepared. It is Michael who will plead his case this time, while Rory simply plays the part of interpreter. The board members make little effort to hide their disapproval of Rory, which seems inappropriate. They should not, we feel, be motivated by personal dislike of any applicant. The smugness with which the chairman tells Rory that they will not need him to interpret further erodes any sympathy we may have for the board members. They seem arrogant and unpleasant. Therefore, we are delighted to see their obvious dismay and discomfort when Rory leaves and it becomes clear that they cannot understand a word Michael is saying. Rory is brought back in, and now the young men have the upper hand. **This never occurs in HMMTB**. Alicia Moore retains the upper hand throughout her dealings with Alec while he lives at home, and he is unable to outwit her. Yet again, we see that the ILB are **nothing like as powerful an antagonistic force as** Alicia Moore. This impression is further strengthened when we see that Michael is able to impress the board members and get his independent living allowance by quoting their own brochure back to them. This makes the ILB appear very foolish indeed and shows that the members can be manipulated quite easily. **This is most certainly not the case with** Alicia Moore. She is a **far cleverer, far more dangerous villain** than the ILB could ever be.

Alicia Moore is an unredeemed villain, but **that cannot be said of** the ILB. They are short-sighted, smug, arrogant and so caught up with their own agenda that they have lost sight of the true goal of independent living, but they are not motivated by the desire to hurt others. They are simply overly-controlling and are only willing to grant an allowance to those who intend to live the sort of life the members deem suitable. **Similarly**, Alicia Moore wants Alec to conform to her ideas of a perfect young man, but when he does not live up to these expectations, her response is **infinitely more cruel than** the ILB's response to

Rory's failure to meet their requirements. She sacrifices Alec to the war effort in a bid to gain some glory for herself as the mother of a brave soldier. **Unlike** Alicia Moore, the ILB are not deliberately cruel to Rory. This can be seen in their reaction to Michael's appeal on the dying Rory's behalf. The ILB shows sympathy for Rory's condition, and the members are clearly moved by Michael's speech. They grant Rory the allowance he has longed for, even if it is too late. **This redeems the board somewhat in our eyes. Nothing redeems Alicia Moore.**

In conclusion, I believe that the ILB is **far less of a villain** than the cold-hearted, ruthless Alicia Moore. At the end of the day, the ILB does what it can to mend any hurt caused to Rory, and the members show that, although they may be slightly pompous and foolish, they are not evil.