Ordeal by cheque

BY WUTHER CRUE

“Ordeal By Cheque” by Walter Crue

Group Members: ________________________________

Part I. Read the Story. On your own, read the checks closely in their numbered order. Don’t worry if you are confused. Now I want you to read it a second time, paying attention to where the checks are going, who is signing them, when each check was written, and how much money is being spent. Do you see any strange parallels? For instance, is there a day in which a lot of checks are written? Or, how about the people receiving the large sums of money? What do you think is happening? Jot down your observations here:

Part II. Character Web. Making Connections. Believe it or not, this is a story with characters, setting, plot, conflict, etc… It is told in a nontraditional way through the checks that are written by two men, Lawrence Exeter, Sr. and Lawrence Exeter, Jr., over a period of years. The task for your group is to piece together what happens based on the story the checks tell. When you are finished, you should be able to tell a part of the story. Each group will present their version of the story.

Read through the checks and create a character web. You may include personality traits, what they do for a living, adjectives to describe; you may also connect characters to the main characters of Lawrence Exeter, Sr. or Lawrence Exeter, Jr., etc…

Part III. Identifying Elements of a Story

1. Identify the setting of the story: Time:_______________ Place:______________
2. What is the story’s conflict?
3. Who is the protagonist?
4. Who is the antagonist?
5. What happens in the very end of the “story”? How can you tell?
6. Did you find this “story” difficult to read/understand? If so, what made it hard?

Part IV. Figuring it out. Now tell the story: Select a series of at least four checks and tell the story you think they tell. You may use Creative Dialogue, Traditional Prose, or A Graphic Novel.

Here’s an example: Creative Writing Dialogue
“We did you the favor!” Peter Ventizzi yelled, as Tony Spagoni held the gun to Lawrence’s head. “Okay, okay,” Lawrence said wearily. “Pay up,” Tony sneered, putting away the gun. Lawrence took out his checkbook and scribbled the information out on the lines, paying the amount of twenty-five dollars. Ripping the check out of the book, he threw it at Tony and made a run for it. “Cash! Where’s the cash?!” Peter Ventizzi screamed at the escaping Lawrence. Peter and Tony slowly made a wobbling run after Lawrence, but their lack of physical fitness (which was visible, to say the least) gave Lawrence an advantage. “The check-” Lawrence screamed, “-all I’ve got! Take it or leave it!” “Who-are-you-” Tony yelled between heavy breaths, “kidding?!” Tony pulled out his pistol and aimed towards Lawrence. A gunshot echoed in the alley and Lawrence fell to the ground.

Lawrence knew he wasn’t dead. But if he wanted to stay alive, he’d have to pretend. He felt his leg throbbing, knowing he had been hit; faint laughter came from the other end of the alley. “Come on, let’s leave,” a mocking voice said from afar. *Who is that? Peter? Tony? They must think I’m dead. Good.* Lawrence thought. The sound of tires screeching against the hot pavement hurt Lawrence’s ears, and everything went black.

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**Part V. Your Turn.** On a separate sheet of paper, tell your *version* of the story based on the four checks you’ve selected.