

## **Dear Santa by Anne Donovan**

*In this extract the narrator, Alison, is a young girl who is writing her letter to Santa Claus.*

Christmas Eve ah'm sittin on the bed in ma pyjamas wi a pad of blue lined paper and a Biro. The room is daurk but the wee bedside lamp makes a white circle that lights up the page ah'm starin at. It's hard tae find the words.

*Dear Santa,*

5 *Please could you*

*I would like*

*If it's no too much bother*

But what is it ah'm trying tae say? Could you make ma mammy love me? That's no Santa's job, he's there tae gie oot sweeties and toys tae weans wanst a year, so  
10 there's nae point in askin him. If there is a Santa. Ah look oot the windae; the sky's dirty grey and ah don't think we'll huv a white Christmas somehow. The door opens and ma mammy comes in. The hall light's on and her hair sticks oot all roon her heid, fuzzy and soft. A cannae see her face.

15 *Are you no asleep yet? It's nine o'clock. Ah'm writin ma letter tae Santa.*

*Santa doesnae come if yer no sleepin. Look, there's Katie, soond.*

She bends ower Katie's bed, where she's !yin wi wan airm stickin oot fae under the covers. Ma mammy lifts the bedclothes over her, then turns tae me.

*Hurry up and finish that letter, Alison. Ah'll pit in fronty the fire and Santa'll get it when he comes.*

20 Ma mammy sits on the bed beside me while ah take a clean bit of paper and write dead slow so it's ma best writin.

*Dear Santa,*

*Please could I have a Barbie doll and a toy dog, I am a good girl.*

*Love*

25 *Alison*

Ah fold the paper twice, print SANTA on the front, then gie it tae ma mammy. She pits it in her pocket and lifts the covers fur me tae get inside. Ah coorie, watchin her hair glowin like a halo against the blackness of the room. Ah love stroking her hair, it's that soft and fuzzy but she cannae be bothered wi that and jerks her heid  
30 away, sayin *don't, you'll mess it up*, just lik she does when ma daddy tries tae touch it. But it's that quiet and still and she's in a good mood so ah lift ma haun and touch her hair, just a wee bit.

*Mammy, how come you've got fair hair and Katie's got fair hair and mine's is broon? You take efter yer daddy and Katie takes efter me.*

*Ah wisht ah had fair hair.*

35 *How? There's nothing wrang wi broon hair.*

*Ah wisht ah had hair like yours.*

Ma mammy smiles and the lines roon her eyes get deeper but she looks at me mair soft like. *Go tae sleep, hen, or Santa'll no come.*

40 She bends ower and kisses me, a dry kiss, barely grazin ma cheek, and before ah have time tae *kiss* her back she's switched off the bedside light, stood up and moved tae the door.

*Night, Alison. Night, Mammy.*

She goes oot, nearly closing the door, but leavin a wee crack of light fallin across the bedclothes.

## Questions

1. Summarise what happens in this extract from the short story. Make at least **three** key points.
2. Look at lines 1-11. What is the mood of the narrator and how does the writer use language to convey this mood?
3. Look at lines 12-36. Show how any **two** examples of the writer's use of language convey the relationship between Alison and her mother.
4. Look at lines 37-44. In your opinion how does Alison feel at the end of the story? Quote and comment to support your answer.
5. By referring to this extract and the story *Dear Santa* as a whole, explain how the ideas/language are similar OR different to at least **one** other story by Anne Donovan that you have read.