***Sympathy towards the characters and the situations.***

The Iain Crichton Smith Stories, are sad and show conformity to a living standard or living in a small village. Such as Murdo in ‘The Red Door’ not being like his other villagers but tries to live the way they do to hide himself.

In the ‘Telegram’, two women, one fat and one thin are sitting by a window drinking tea, waiting to see if they will get the news of a loss via a Telegram by the village Elder. Both woman’s sons are fighting during WW2. The elder Macleod is walking down the street with the yellow letter, both woman are feeling anxious as he’s getting closer, praying that the telegram isn’t for them.

 The fat woman reveals her sympathy towards the thin woman as she realises that the thin woman has sacrificed everything for her son over the last few years and she’s being getting judged ever since. “the number of times then thin woman had been ill and people had said that she was weak and useless” this implies how much the thin woman has done for her son, she has pushed herself away from the villagers as she’s always doing stuff for her son. Also the thin women went hungry and without any good and warm clothes for so long to send her son to university to support him in education: ‘she remembered how thin and unfed and pale the thin women had always looked’. The readers feel sympathy for the thin women because she gave up everything to allow her son an education, even if it meant starving herself.

 When the elder has only one house left and it is thin woman’s we began to feel the worry for her. The elder then continued to walk to the bridge as he had passed every house, the readers are confused on why the Elder has not delivered the Telegram to any of the villagers until in a shock reveal it turns out to be his son that’s passed during the war “ The elder had a telegram directed to himself, to tell him of the drowning of his own son”. The readers and other characters feel sympathy for the elder as her has went to work ready to deliver the news to someone about their son dying in the war, but as he arrives to deliver the telegrams he reads out on his own that it is his own son that has passed during the war and cannot face telling his wife so he continues to walk instead of returning home.

In ‘Mother and Son’ we feel sympathy for the son (John) who had to give up his childhood and adulthood to look after his ill mother who has been in bed for 10 years. John feels lonely and isolated as he has no friends and works a job that he hates, this makes the readers feel sympathy as his is alone and has no one to talk to due to his mum being harsh and cruel for not letting him go out and socialise with the ‘fellows’: ‘I’m going to get a job where the other fellows are!’. This shows that John doesn’t want to stay at home and continue to look after his mother who is horrible and depressive towards him.

It is also seen that his mother does not want to let him leave and uses him as a servant for her needs such as making tea, coffee and sandwiches, which makes the readers feel sympathy as John comes back from his boring job that he hates and has provide for his mother who can’t get out of bed: ‘Why don’t you hurry up with that tea?’. This shows that the mother has no intention of him leaving and has every need to make him stay and play slave to her until she rests. Which makes the readers feel sympathy as John is still young and has other things to be achieving.

In ‘The Red Door’ we feel sympathy Murdo as when he was growing he was isolated from the other children due to having a speaking problem. This makes us feel sympathy as it impacts his life as he grows older: ‘he lisped excitedly’. After opening up to his classmates he was later bullied as he had a problem with speaking like the rest of them. Which then made him feel on edge to express himself in the village and conform to the social norms of the community.

We also feel sympathy for Murdo when the readers realise that he has nobody in the village that he really cares about. It is seen that he is alone and isolated from his fellow villagers as he is not like them. Murdo realises this himself when he states: ‘After all, I have nothing to get up for really’. This shows the he is withdrawn and miserable in his community as he has no company and lives by himself.

In ‘Home’ we feel pity for Mr Jackson as he wants to reminisce on his memories when he lived in Glasgow, after travelling back from South Africa he realises that Glasgow is not what it used to be and has changed drastically from when he lived there: ‘The Lovers Lane has disappeared. The park seemed to have lost its atmosphere of pastoral carelessness and was being decorated for the visitors with literate slogans in flowers’. This shows that since living in Glasgow, Mr and Mrs Jackson can see that the city they knew was different and vandalised. The children of Glasgow were reckless and didn’t appreciate the culture and community of the city.

Also, the readers feel sympathy for Mr Jackson when he has faith and confidence that their valuables and possessions will be safe in an unlocked car as before they moved they were able to leave their doors unlocked and nothing would be stolen. Mrs Jackson aware that this isn’t the case anymore and reassures Mr Jackson to lock the car: ‘She smiled disdainfully’. This implies that Mrs Jackson does not see Glasgow as a safe environment anymore but Mr Jackson has a nostalgic feeling about Glasgow as he spent his young years living there.

In conclusion, the readers feel pity and sympathy for all four of the main characters during the stories, as all live such difficult and non-realistic lives. This is because Murdo is isolated from his community and feels lonely and miserable to be living on his own, the thin women went years without food to prepare her son for a life of luxury, John is living a depressing life due to his mum being the controller and making him a lifelong slave and Mr Jackson not feeling the connection to his hometown anymore as he has been away in South Africa for so long that everything is different. All stories make the readers feel great sympathy for all the characters and what they have gone through in their lives and how it is unadaptable.