

Opening lines

- 1** She was born with a sense of theatre, of carefully choreographed exits and entrances, an eagerly awaited baby, who arrived an improbable six weeks late in Southampton Hospital, Long Island, on 28 July 1929.
- 2** Until he was four years old, James Henry Trotter had a happy life. He lived peacefully with his mother and father in a beautiful house beside the sea.
- 3** It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.
- 4** When all is said and done, killing my mother came easily. Dementia, as it descends, has a way of revealing the core of the person affected by it. My mother's core was rotten like the brackish water at the bottom of a weeks-old vase of flowers.
- 5** I could hear a roll of muffled drums. But I could see nothing but the lacing on the bodice of the lady standing in front of me, blocking my view of the scaffold.
- 6** God, I wish I were thin. I wish I were thin, gorgeous, and could get any man I want. You probably think I'm crazy, I mean here I am, sitting at work on my own with a massive double-decker club sandwich, but I'm allowed to dream, aren't I?