

## EXPLANATION AND QUASI-MIRACLES IN NARRATIVE UNDERSTANDING: THE CASE OF POETIC JUSTICE

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David Lewis introduced the idea of a quasi-miracle to overcome a problem in his initial account of counterfactuals. Here we put the notion of a quasi-miracle to a different and new use, showing that it offers a novel account of the phenomenon of poetic justice, where characters in a narrative get their due by happy accident (for example, when the murderer of King Mityls happens to be crushed by a falling statue of Mityls). The key to understanding poetic justice is to see what makes poetically just events remarkable coincidences. We argue that remarkable coincidence is to be understood in terms of a distinctive type of experience quasi-miracles offer. Cases of poetic justice offer a dual awareness of the accidental nature of the events and of a non-accidental process, involving intention, which it appears would explain them. We also extend this account to incorporate how we might experience magic tricks. An account of poetic justice as quasi-miraculous allows us to account for the experience of encounters with poetic justice, as involving the incongruity of seeing design in accident.