In a scene from his novel *Kiss & Tell*, British novelist Alain de Botton humorously depicts the relationship between a set of socially oblivious, rather crass parents and their embarrassed adult daughter Isabel. Using believable dialogue, detailed, vivid characterization, and an absurd situation, de Botton creates a scene that brings comic delight out of the universal experience of a child's humiliation by her parents.

Isabel, on a date to *Kiss & Tell*, spies her parents across the crowded theater and immediately reveals her mother's indiscretions: "I hope she didn't come with one of her gentleman friends," acutely foreshadowing absurdities to come. As Isabel continues to bemoan her parents' behavior, the helpless narrator, she lets out a family secret after another: "With any luck, they'll be too busy arguing to glance up here. This is prime argument territory," and then: "He'll [Dad] get flustered because he dropped it [the parking ticket] in the bin." Ironically, Isabel's relaying of her parents' less flattering characteristics always makes her seem so similar she is to them in essence.

De Botton's most humorous moments come, however, after Isabel's parents spot her and begin making "the vigorous hand gesture of a man waiting off a departing cruise ship." This witty simile underscores the ridiculousness both of Isabel's parents and of the situation itself: two couples seeing a play by Lorca yet hardly
conscious at all of their manners, nor of their effect on those around them. Just as Isabel's parents disregard "the presence of four hundred people in an auditorium" as "an impediment to her desire to shout 'Isabel' at top pitch," Isabel, turning "a beetroot shade, I'm unaware of her date or simply lacks the grace needed to handle the situation properly, simply whimpering: "Please let them shut up."

With Isabel and her parents' meowing at the bar de Bottom brings her comedy to a climax. The mother insists on commenting that to Isabel, "Pity you don't have more cleavage" while the father refers to her as "bean," a childhood nickname humorously incongruous with the very grown-uporca play. Mrs. Rogers goes on to reassure the narrator that Isabel is a "lovely girl really," and Mr. Rogers, as it turns out, has indeed lost the parking ticket, just as Isabel predicted. "They're so fiddly these days, they fall right out of one's hands.

Mrs. Rogers' slights wither dialogue and lack of social grace, a revelation at once painful and extremely amusing. The universal experience of humiliation by parents, vividly drawn in this except, is, by its nature, extremely painful agonizing, but it also can be a source of great comedy.
There are few people who can't identify with a parent's embarrassing behavior, and fewer people still who do not laugh when they see another in such a predicament. In this passage from "Kiss and Tell" by Alain de Botton a humorous scene is depicted through selection of detail, diction, and the familiarity one has with embarrassing parents. When Isabel first spots her parents, an entreaty to God is made and Isabel begins to critique her mother's appearance and potential company. "What's that dress? It looks like a willow tree... I hope she didn't come with one of her gentlemen friends. She's really too old for that." Isabel's distress is made plain with diction such as "gasped", "Oh my God", and "Careful, don't look." There is a good deal of humor in Isabel's narration of her parents' actions across the theater. Isabel even does the sneeze sound effects, "And he's about to sneeze. Look, there we go, aahhh hacking." There is also an irony in this because one can imagine that Isabel is making almost as big a scene as her parents are over by the pillar. Some more ironic irony becomes evident when luck leaves Isabel and her father waves at her, "So that she might cease to dwell in ignorance." His arm motions are so "vigorous" that they resemble "a man waving off a departing cruise ship." Isabel's father at this point is characterized as a "maniac" making anything further he does all the more looney. The mother also appears to feel as
though she was left on a pier in the wake of a cruise ship because she begins to shout Isabela's name quite loudly with "all the excitement of a long-lost friend on the deck of an incoming cruise ship." Isabela's distress is again made clear by a description of Isabela after her parent's outburst, "beetroot shade" and "panicked diution". After the play, the Mother's embarrassment of Isabela makes the reader giggle still further. While commenting on the loveliness of Isabela's dress, her mother sees fit to comment on her breast size in front of her new boyfriend. "...pity you can't have more of a cleavage for it, but that's your father's fault. You know what all the women in his family are like." Her father's actions are then depicted as he is walking around staring straight upward at the light fixtures. Irony. Mrs. Rogers then makes a somewhat ironic statement, "She's a lovely girl really", as though apologizing for Isabela's behavior. This familiar situational humor, irony and nutty actions of the parental persons provide a delightful comic effect that makes the reader giggle.

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In this excerpt from the British novel Kiss and Tell by Alan Nicolson, the reader is presented with a humorous situation concerning Isabel Rogers and her parents, Christopher and "Mum", whose name is unknown. In this particular passage, the author's use of his characters' descriptions, especially his choice of point of view, as well as his and his diction effectively produces a comic effect.

"Isabel is immediately introduced in this passage: "Oh my God."

"Oh my God, I think my mum, that's my mum over there." This comment from Isabel immediately gives readers a feeling about how Isabel feels about her parents being there which strikes one as funny. Isabel goes on to discuss her mother's "willow tree" dress and her mother's "gentlemen friends." The fact that Isabel makes loosely comments on these things, especially the latter of the two, shows reader's that Isabel's lack of taking her mother seriously. The "gentlemen friends" suggest that her mother is an actress, which would ordinarily be viewed as looked down upon. The fact that Isabel appears not to particularly care about such a situation creates a dark humor casts a "dark humor" on this passage.

Isabel also makes a couple of accurate predictions about her father. The text reads:

[Handwritten text continues here.]
Question 7

Kerchief incident, for instance, is described move by move. As Isabel clues this description, the reader's initial interpretation of it becomes obvious that Isabel doesn't take her father seriously as well. Because of this, readers become inclined to laugh at this situation.

Isabel later in the excerpt.

Isabel also predicts that her father will lose the car park tickets, which is later learned to be the truth. It becomes apparent that Mr. Rogers guesses things of this nature frequently, and that assumption adds to the comedy of this piece. Isabel trivializes her parents' actions throughout this excerpt, which allows readers to derive a comical situation.

The author also chooses Isabel's boyfriend's point of view. The outsider character is ideal for this situation because of his ability to relate the whole situation objectively toward it which proves effective because an objective point of view allows readers to interpret the level of comedic value more readily.

Alain de Botton's Kiss and Tell depicts a humorous & family incident in a humorous light. Because of the author's appropriate use of certain comments, words, and
Question 1

An objective point of view, he easily produces a comic effect.