

ALL THAT GLISTERS

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Plot Summary

The story follows **Clare**, a young Glasgow girl, whose father is dying from **asbestosis**. At school she discovers **glitter pens**, which become a symbol of colour, life, and hope in contrast with the bleak reality of illness. She uses the pens to make him cards and pictures, convinced the glitter brings everything “tae life.” After his death, Clare defies social expectations by wearing **bright red** — her dad’s favourite colour — to the funeral.

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Themes

Life vs Death

- Clare represents *life and colour*; her father symbolises deteriorating health.
- Glitter pens “make things bright and colourful” and contrast with death.

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Love & Father–Daughter Relationship

- Close bond shown through bedside talks, shared jokes, and sentimental memories.
- She respects his values (e.g., honesty about stealing).

Hope & Resilience

- Glitter becomes a coping mechanism — Clare finds joy amid grief.
- Her red funeral outfit is an act of love rather than disrespect.

Conflict

- Clare vs Aunt Pauline, who insists on tradition.

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Key Character: Clare

- Innocent, creative, imaginative.
 - Uses colour metaphors constantly.
 - First-person Scots narration makes her authentic and sympathetic.
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Symbols

- **Glitter pens:** life, hope, brightness, memory.
 - **Red clothes:** love and vitality; honouring her dad's wishes.
 - **White asbestos dust:** foreshadows death, contrasts glitter.
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Key Quotations

- "the glitter jist brought everythin tae life" [\[collegesidekick.com\]](https://collegesidekick.com)
- Description of father as a "white ghost" (foreshadowing)
- "subtle" — important word linking glitter to father's encouragement