Big Sleep Essay, Research Paper

Big Sleep Carmen Sternwood and Vivian ReganRaymond Chandler, the author of The Big Sleep, portrays General Sternwood sdaughters as beautiful, abrupt, yet untamable young ladies. Carmen Sternwood s bold andimmodest behavior gets her into many undesirable situations. Because she does notconsider the consequences of her actions, she often makes rash decisions. Conversely, Vivian carefully thinks out situations before she acts upon them. Vivian s ruthless andpretentious attitude allow her to be painfully blunt to anyone she comes in contact with. The two ladies appear to be alike, but a contrast in levels of intelligence and behavior causethem to differ. As the daughter s of a wealthy businessman, Carmen Sternwood and Vivian Reganare accustomed to getting what they want. However, their father s money could not buy aCarmen a night with Detective Marlowe. After finding Carmen naked in his bed, PhilipMarlowe says, I ll give you three minutes to get dressed and out of here. If you re not outby then, I ll throw you out-by force. (Pg. 147) Vivian used her fathers money to heradvantage. After learning about her husband s death, Vivian abruptly pays Eddie Mars todispose the body. Vivian says to Philip Marlowe, I did it. I did just what you said. Iwent to Eddie Mars. (Pg. 214)Carmen and Vivian Sternwood possess animalistic qualities. In their first meeting,Marlowe notices Carmen s teeth. She came over near me and smiled with her mouth andThe had little sharp predatory teeth, as white as fresh orange pith and as shiny asporcelain. (Pg. 3) Philip Marlowe compares Vivian Regan s facial expressions as to those

of puppy. When I looked back she had her lip between her teeth and was worrying it likea puppy at the fringe of a rug. (Pg. 17)The level s of intelligence the ladies have, cause them to contrast. Carmen, unlikeVivian, base her decisions solely on her feelings and not by the facts. When Carmenconfronts Eddie Mars about her photos she says, I want my pictures Joe. (Pg. 79) Thelittle revolver Carmen pointed at Joe Brody s face proved she meant business. In contrast,Vivian allows herself time to thoroughly think a situation through before she acts upon it. When Vivian received a letter demanding five thousand dollars for nude photos of hersister, she knew it was in Carmen s best interest to pay off Joe Brody. The woman saidthere was a police jam connected with it and I d better lay it on the line fast, or I d betalking to my little sister through a wire screen. (Pg. 53)Both Vivian and Carmen act abruptly, but the reasons for their behavior differ. Carmen s actions appear blunt because she is daring and indecisive. During Carmen andPhilip Marlowe s first encounter Carmen say s, You re cute, . . . I m cute too. (Pg. 4) Vivian s cruel disposition allows her to be abrupt. In an argument between Vivian andMarlowe she declares in rage, My God, you big handsome Brute! I ought to throw a Buickat you. (Pg. 16)Vivian and Carmen s characters are of a strong and controlling nature. The ladiesappear to be similar, but when it comes down to their decision making skills andintelligence, looks are deceiving. by melissabo@hotmail.com