

Hands actions:

to hover, to stroke, to pat, to insert, to give, to paint, to peel, to hold, to open, to imprint,
to fold, to press, to release, to smooth, to twist around,

Vocabulary:

I **took** **aback** her by my decision to take a day off.

I have **affection** for organised people.

* Despite ^{winnings} that he won a **stupendous** amount of money; he didn't give his children a penny.

He is **puffing** and **panting** because he has run ^{a long distance}.

The lamp **emitted** light on my opened book.

He **moistened** his finger and turned the page of the book.

She **dipped** her chips into ketchup.

His phone was a bit **sloppy** so he put it into a bowl of rice. ? NO idea

They cook an **exquisite** salmon there.

Take aback (transitive phrasal verb)
has 3 possible structures:
1/ take Peter aback (Noun) inside
2. take aback Peter (Noun) outside
3. take him aback (pronoun) inside

but never.
~~Take aback him~~
Pronoun outside

Questions & Answers:

Why does Nabokov focus on Mademoiselles' hands?

Nabokov tries to remember his Mademoiselle, after a long time, I suppose, since the text is from his memoir. Besides, wealthier parents with a good social status, such as the Nabokov's parents, often paid ^{for} their children ^{to have} the services of Mademoiselles, French-speaking female teachers, in nowadays Russia. I think that Mademoiselle's hands serve as a distinctive mark for her character in Nabokov's memory. He was probably fascinated by all her old-fashion rituals and activities (or mannerisms as he said) involving hands.

agree with all of this; however, the reason for his use of her hands in his description is given in the 1st sentence: an adult's hands is on a child's line of vision (para. 1/2)

How old is Mademoiselle? Give evidence for your speculations from text.

Based on the text, I think she was much older than Nabokov because he describes her hands as "unpleasant" having "the froggy gloss" and "tight skin"; moreover, he mentions "patting [his] cheek in sign of spontaneous affection" which grandmas usually do.

How would you characterize her? Is she a good teacher? Bad? Or....? Why?

To be honest, it is hard to describe her character and ability to teach because the text presents only Nabokov's (young) perspective which can be distorted by his memories. However, based on that, I would say she was nice in general, but her style of teaching was a bit old-fashioned (which seems funny to judge from today's view), and relatively pedantic.

Nice work. .
see comments -
Thanks, J.

good

50: "despite winning & ..."
Not "that + subject verb"

pre-revolutionary