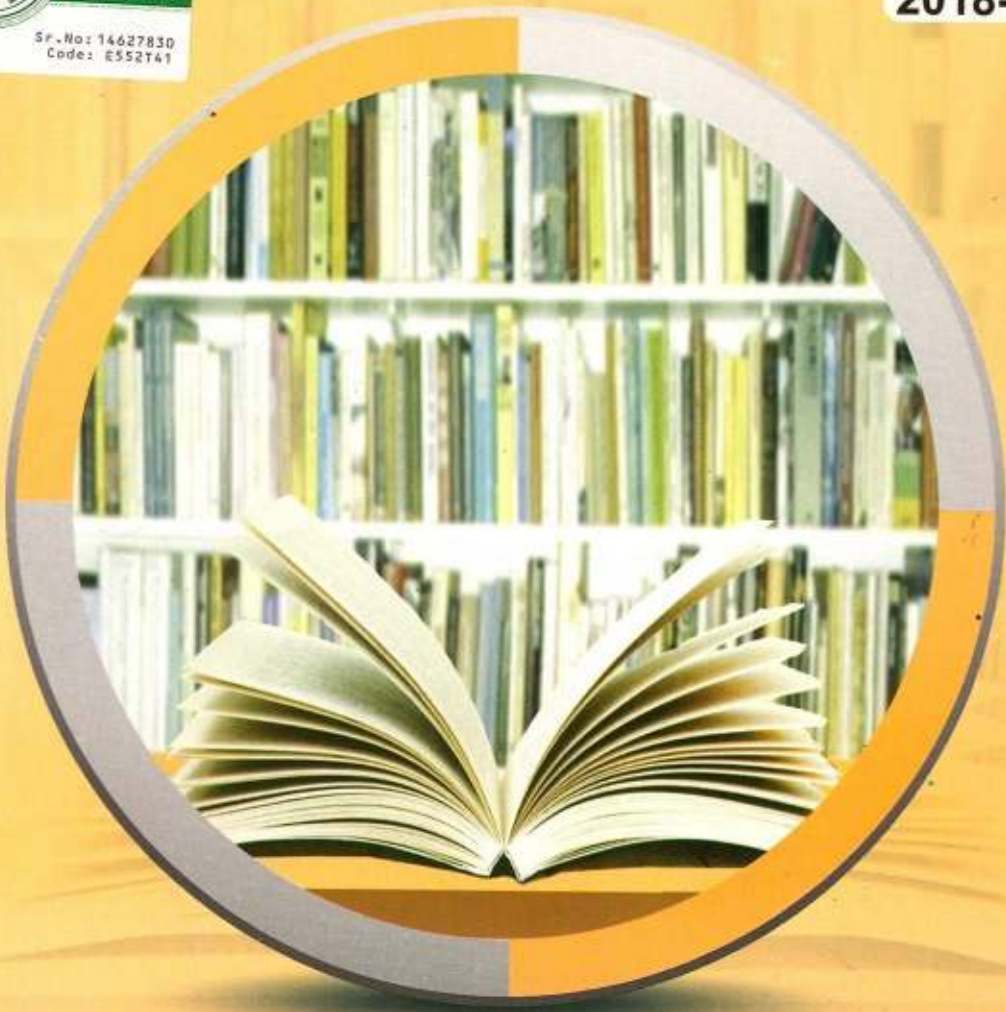


# ENGLISH

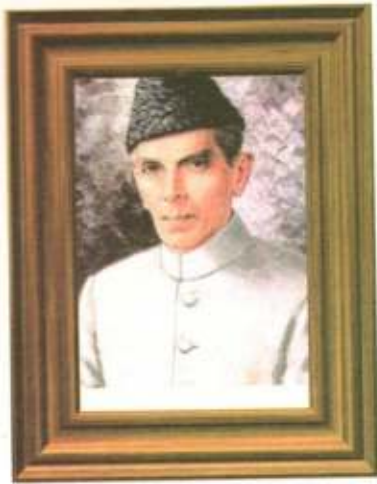
## BOOK I

11

2018-19



PUNJAB CURRICULUM AND  
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"Education is a matter of life and death for Pakistan. The world is progressing so rapidly that without requisite advance in education, not only shall we be left behind others but may be wiped out altogether."

(September 26, 1947, Karachi)

Quaid-e-Azam  
Muhammad Ali Jinnah  
Founder of Pakistan



## قومی ترانہ

پاک سرزمین شاد باد      کشورِ حسین شاد باد  
 ٹونشانِ عزمِ عالی شان      ارضِ پاکستان  
 مرکزِ یقین شاد باد  
 پاک سرزمین کا نظام      قوتِ اخوتِ عوام  
 قوم، نلک، سلطنت      پایندہ تابندہ باد  
 شاد باد منزلِ مراد  
 پرچم ستارہ و ہلال      رہبرِ ترقی و کمال  
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# ENGLISH BOOK – I

FOR

INTERMEDIATE CLASSES

(Short Stories)



**PUNJAB CURRICULUM AND  
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Prepared and published vide **NOC No. F7- 8/2003-English**,  
Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Education (Curriculum Wing), Islamabad.

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PUBLISHED BY: TAXATION LAW BOOK PUBLISHERS, LAHORE  
PRINTED BY: QUDRAT ULLAH PRINTERS, LAHORE

DATE OF PRINTING	EDITION	IMPRESSION	NO OF COPIES	PRICE
APRIL 2018	1 <sup>ST</sup>	20 <sup>TH</sup>	18,000	41/-

## Button, Button

(Richard Matheson)

The package was lying by the front door – a cube-shaped carton sealed with tape, their name and address printed by hand: “Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lewis, 217-E, Thirty-seventh Street, New York, New York 10016.” Norma picked it up, unlocked the door, and went into the apartment. It was just getting dark.

After she had put the lamb chops in the broiler, she sat down to open the package.

Inside the carton was a push-button unit fastened to a small wooden box. A glass dome covered the button. Norma tried to lift it off, but it was locked in place. She turned the unit over and saw a folded piece of paper scotch-taped to the bottom of the box. She pulled it off: “Mr. Steward will call on you at 8.00 P.M.”

Norma put the button unit beside her on the couch. She reread the typed note, smiling.

A few moments later, she went back into the kitchen to make the salad.

The doorbell rang at eight o'clock. “I’ll get it,” Norma called from the kitchen. Arthur was in the living room, reading.

There was a small man in the hallway. He removed his hat as Norma opened the door. “Mrs. Lewis?” he inquired politely.

“Yes?”

“I’m Mr. Steward.”

“Oh, Yes.” Norma repressed a smile. She was sure now it was a sales pitch.

“May I come in?” asked Mr. Steward.

“I’m rather busy,” Norma said.

“Don’t you want to know what it is?”

Norma turned back. Mr. Steward’s tone had been offensive. “No. I don’t think so,” she replied.

“It could prove very valuable,” he told her.

“Monetarily?” she challenged.

Mr. Steward nodded, “Monetarily,” he said.

Norma frowned. She didn’t like his attitude. “What are you trying to sell?” she asked.

“I’m not selling anything,” he answered.

Arthur came out of the living room. “Something wrong?”

Mr. Steward introduced himself.

“Oh, the—” Arthur pointed toward the living room and smiled.

“What is that gadget, anyway?”

"It won't take long to explain," replied Mr. Steward. "May I come in?"

"If you're selling something—," Arthur said.

Mr. Steward shook his head. "I'm not."

Arthur looked at Norma. "Up to you," she said.

He hesitated. "Well, why not?" he said.

They went into the living room and Mr. Steward sat in Norma's chair. He reached into an inside coat pocket and withdrew a small sealed envelope. "Inside here is a key to the bell-unit dome," he said. He set the envelope on the chair side-table. "The bell is connected to our office."

"What's it for?" asked Arthur.

"If you push the button," Mr. Steward told him, "somewhere in the world someone you don't know will die. In return for which you will receive a payment of \$50,000."

Norma stared at the small man. He was smiling.

"What are you talking about?" Arthur asked him.

Mr. Steward looked surprised. "But I've just explained," he said.

"Is this a practical joke?" asked Arthur.

"Not at all. The offer is completely genuine."

"You aren't making sense," Arthur said. "You expect us to believe —"

"Who do you represent?" demanded Norma.

Mr. Steward looked embarrassed. "I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to tell you that," he said. "However, I assure you, the organization is of international scope."

"I think you'd better leave," Arthur said, standing.

Mr. Steward rose. "Of course."

"And take your button unit with you."

"Are you sure you wouldn't care to think about it for a day or so?"

Arthur picked up the button unit and the envelope and thrust them into Mr. Steward's hands. He walked into the hall and pulled open the door.

"I'll leave my card," said Mr. Steward. He placed it on the table by the door.

When he was gone, Arthur tore it in half and tossed the pieces onto the table.

Norma was still sitting on the sofa. "What do you think it was?" she asked.

"I don't care to know," he answered.

She tried to smile but couldn't. "Aren't you curious at all?"

"No." He shook his head.

After Arthur had returned to his book, Norma went back to the kitchen and finished washing the dishes.

"Why won't you talk about it?" Norma asked.

Arthur's eyes shifted as he brushed his teeth. He looked at her reflection in the

bathroom mirror.

“Doesn't it intrigue you?”

“It offends me,” Arthur said.

“I know, but” — Norma rolled another curler in her hair — “doesn't it intrigue you, too?”

“You think it's a practical joke?” she asked as they went into the room.

“If it is, it's a sick one.”

Norma sat on her chair and said after a moment.

“May be it's some kind of psychological research.”

Arthur shrugged. “Could be.”

“Maybe some eccentric millionaire is doing it.”

“Maybe.”

“Wouldn't you like to know?”

Arthur shook his head.

“Why?”

“Because it's immoral,” he told her.

Norma slid beneath the covers. “Well, I think it's intriguing,” she said.

Arthur turned off the lamp. “Good night,” he said.

Norma closed her eyes. “Fifty thousand dollars,” she thought.

In the morning, as she left the apartment, Norma saw the card halves on the table. Impulsively, she dropped them into her purse. She locked the front door and joined Arthur in the elevator.

While she was on her coffee break, she took the card halves from her purse and held the torn edges together. Only Mr. Steward's name and telephone number were printed on the card.

After lunch, she took the card halves from her purse again and scotch-taped the edges together. “Why am I doing this?” she thought.

Just before five, she dialed the number.

“Good afternoon,” said Mr. Steward's voice.

Norma almost hung up but restrained herself. She cleared her throat.

“This is Mrs. Lewis,” she said.

“Yes, Mrs. Lewis,” Mr. Steward sounded pleased.

“I'm curious.”

“That's natural,” Mr. Steward said.

“Not that I believe a word of what you told us.”

“Oh, it's quite authentic,” Mr. Steward answered.

“Well, whatever —” Norma swallowed. “When you said someone in the world

would die, what did you mean?"

"Exactly that," he answered. "It could be anyone. All we guarantee is that you don't know them. And, of course, that you wouldn't have to watch them die."

"For \$50,000," Norma said.

"That is correct."

She made a scoffing sound. "That's crazy."

"Nonetheless, that is the proposition," Mr. Steward said. "Would you like me to return the button unit?"

Norma stiffened. "Certainly not." She hung up angrily.

The package was lying by the front door; Norma saw it as she left the elevator. Well, of all the nerve, she thought. She glared at the carton as she unlocked the door. I just won't take it in, she thought. She went inside and started dinner.

Later, she went into the front hall. Opening the door, she picked up the package and carried it into the kitchen, leaving it on the table.

She sat in the living room, looking out the window. After a while, she went back into the kitchen to turn the cutlets in the broiler. She put the package in a bottom cabinet. She'd throw it out in the morning.

"May be some eccentric millionaire is playing games with people," she said.

Arthur looked up from his dinner. "I don't understand you."

"What does that mean?"

"Let it go," he told her.

Norma ate in silence. Suddenly, she put her fork down. "Suppose it's a genuine offer?" she said.

Arthur stared at her.

"Suppose it's a genuine offer?"

"All right, suppose it is?" He looked incredulous. "What would you like to do? Get the button back and push it? Murder someone?"

Norma looked disgusted. "Murder."

"How would you define it?"

"If you don't even know the person?" Norma said.

Arthur looked astounded, "Are you saying what I think you are?"

"If it's some old Chinese peasant ten thousand miles away? Some diseased native in the Congo?"

"How about some baby boy in Pennsylvania?" Arthur countered. "Some beautiful little girl on the next block?"

"Now you're loading things."

"The point is, Norma," he continued. "What's the difference who you kill? It's still



murder.”

“The point is,” Norma broke in, “if it’s someone you’ve never seen in your life and never will see, someone whose death you don’t even have to know about, you still wouldn’t push the button?”

Arthur stared at her, appalled. “You mean you would?”

“Fifty thousand dollars, Arthur.”

“What has the amount —”

“Fifty thousand dollars, Arthur,” Norma interrupted. “A chance to take that trip to Europe we’ve always talked about.”

“Norma, no.”

“A chance to buy that cottage on the island.”

“Norma, no.” His face was white.

She shuddered. “All right, take it easy,” she said. “Why are you getting so upset? It’s only talk.”

After dinner, Arthur went into the living room. Before he left the table, he said, “I’d rather not discuss it anymore, if you don’t mind.”

Norma shrugged, “Fine with me.”

She got up earlier than usual to make pancakes, eggs, and tea for Arthur’s breakfast.

“What’s the occasion?” he asked with a smile.

“No occasion.” Norma looked offended. “I wanted to do it, that’s all.”

“Good,” he said. “I’m glad you did.”

She refilled his cup. “Wanted to show you I’m not —,” she shrugged.

“Not what?”

“Selfish.”

“Did I say you were?”

“Well” — she gestured vaguely — “last night” . . .

Arthur didn’t speak.

“All that talk about the button,” Norma said. “I think you — well, misunderstood me.”

“In what way?” His voice was guarded.

“I think you felt” — she gestured again — “that I was only thinking of myself.”

“Oh.”

“I wasn’t.”

“Norma —”

“Well, I wasn’t. When I talked about Europe, a cottage on the Island —”

“Norma, why are we getting so involved in this?”

“I’m not involved at all.” She drew in a shaking breath. “I’m simply trying to indicate that —.”

“What?”

“That I’d like for us to go to Europe. Like for us to have a cottage on the island. Like for us to have a nicer apartment, nicer furniture, nicer clothes, a car.”

“Norma, we will,” he said.

“When?”

He stared at her in dismay.

“Norma—”

“When?”

“Are you” —he seemed to draw back slightly — “are you really saying —”

“I’m saying that they’re probably doing it for some research project!” she cut him off. “That they want to know what average people would do under such a circumstance! That they’re just saying someone would die, in order to study reactions, see if there would be guilt, anxiety, whatever! You don’t really think they’d kill somebody, do you?”

Arthur didn’t answer. She saw his hands trembling. After a while, he got up and left.

When he’d gone to work, Norma remained at the table, staring into her coffee. I’m going to be late, she thought. She shrugged. What difference did it make?

While she was stacking dishes, she turned abruptly, dried her hands, and took the package from the bottom cabinet. Opening it, she set the button unit on the table. She stared at it for a long time before taking the key from its envelope and removing the glass dome. She stared at the button. How ridiculous, she thought. All this furore over a meaningless button.

Reaching out, she pressed it down. For us, she thought angrily.

She shuddered. Was it happening? A chill of horror swept across her.

In a moment, it had passed. She made a contemptuous noise. Ridiculous, she thought. To get so worked up over nothing.

She threw the button unit, dome, and key into the wastebasket and hurried to dress for work.

She had just turned over the supper steaks when the telephone rang. She picked up the receiver. “Hello?”

“Mrs. Lewis?”

“Yes?”

“This is the Lenox Hill Hospital.”

She felt unreal as the voice informed her of the subway accident — the shoving crowd, Arthur pushed from the platform in front of the train. She was conscious of shaking her head but couldn’t stop.

As she hung up, she remembered Arthur’s life-insurance policy for \$25,000, with double indemnity for —

“No.” She couldn’t seem to breathe. She struggled to her feet and walked into the kitchen numbly. Something cold pressed at her skull as she removed the button unit from the

wastebasket. There were no nails or screws visible. She couldn't see how it was put together.

Abruptly, she began to smash it on the sink edge, pounding it harder and harder, until the wood split. She pulled the sides apart, cutting her fingers without noticing. There were no transistors in the box, no wires or tubes.

The box was empty.

She whirled with a gasp as the telephone rang. Stumbling into the living room, she picked up the receiver.

"Mrs. Lewis?" Mr. Steward asked.

It wasn't her voice shrieking so; it couldn't be. "You said I wouldn't know the one that died!"

"My dear lady," Mr. Steward said. "Do you really think you knew your husband?"

\*\*\*\*\*

## Theme

Mr. Steward an agent of an international organization gave Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lewis a temptation of \$50,000 if they pushed the button of a mechanism that would kill some unknown person anywhere in the world. Arthur opposed the idea and considered it a murder. But his wife Norma found it beneficial for improving the lifestyle by purchasing a cottage on the island and having a chance to take a trip to Europe. Norma, overcome by the temptation, pushed the button in the absence of her husband and got him killed in an accident.

## Reading Notes

frowned	an expression of displeasure
gadget	small fitting in machinery
curious	eager to learn, inquisitive
intrigue	carry on underhand plot
shrugged	raised shoulders to express helplessness
eccentric	odd
impulsively	spontaneously
swallowed	took in
scoffing	taunting
glared	gazed, looked at it without blinking
appalled	terrified, dismayed
stacking	piling up in frame for drying
furor	excitement

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. Where did Norma put the lamb chops?
- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| a) in the oven    | b) in the broiler |
| c) in the freezer | d) in the basket  |
- ii. There was a small man
- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| a) in the porch. | b) in the room.    |
| c) at the door.  | d) in the hallway. |
- iii. Where was the key to the bell-unit dome?
- |                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| a) in the box             | b) in the drawer |
| c) in the sealed envelope | d) in the pocket |
- iv. What was the reward for pushing the button?
- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| a) \$25,000 | b) \$50,000 |
| c) \$5,000  | d) \$2,500  |
- v. What was the question of Norma that made Mr. Steward embarrassed?
- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Where do you live? | b) How do you do?        |
| c) What do you sell?  | d) Who do you represent? |
- vi. What could have happened by pushing the button?
- |  |
|--|
| a) Somewhere in the world a bird would die.              |
| b) Someone would die in the neighbourhood.               |
| c) Some songs would be heard.                            |
| d) Somewhere in the world some unknown person would die. |
- vii. Why didn't Arthur agree to the offer of Mr. Steward for pushing the button?
- |   |
|---|
| a) He considered it a practical joke.                   |
| b) He didn't rely on him.                               |
| c) He considered death of some unknown person a murder. |
| d) He didn't believe him.                               |
- viii. Why was the offer of \$50,000 attractive for Norma?
- |   |
|---|
| a) She had a plan to improve her life.                                      |
| b) She felt no harm in helping someone to conduct a psychological research. |
| c) She wanted to purchase a set of jewellery.                               |
| d) She wanted to buy a new house.   |
- ix. Who in Norma's opinion, was the researcher?
- |                             |               |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| a) a psychiatrist           | b) a doctor   |
| c) an eccentric millionaire | d) a murderer |

- x. Why didn't Norma take the consent of her husband to comply with the instructions of Mr. Steward?
- He couldn't understand the idea.
  - He would share the offer.
  - He considered it a murder.
  - He considered it immoral to kill some unknown person for the sake of money.

**2. Mark the statements true or false.**

- Norma found the carton in front of her door as she arrived home.
- Norma believed that Mr. Steward was a guest.
- Mr. Steward took out a key and opened the box for Arthur.
- Arthur and Norma have the same reaction to Mr. Steward's proposition.
- Norma could not resist calling Mr. Steward back.
- Norma did not agree with Mr. Steward to have the button unit brought back.
- Arthur said he believed that Mr. Steward's offer was a genuine one.
- Norma wants Arthur to understand that she is interested in the proposition because the money would help the two of them.
- Arthur could accept participating along with Norma if they were part of a research project.
- Norma called Mr. Steward after she learned of Arthur's death.

**3. Answer the following questions.**

- Why did Norma consider the tone and attitude of Mr. Steward offensive?
- Why did Arthur disagree with his wife?
- Why did Norma try to persuade her husband to agree with her?
- What were the reasons Norma gave to her husband to accept the offer?
- Why did Mr. Steward continue persuading Norma?
- What was the message Norma received on pushing the button?
- What is the significance of Arthur's life-insurance policy?
- Did Norma remain normal on hearing the news of the accident of her husband?

**4. Write down the answers to the following questions in 100 – 150 words.**

- Write a note on the character of Arthur.
- Why didn't Norma remain true to her husband?
- Do you agree with Norma's assertion that the death of someone you have never seen is not important?
- Write the story in your own words.

v. What moral lesson does the story teach?

5. **Connect a sentence of Column I with the relevant sentence in Column II.**

Column I	Column II
She sat down to open	genuine.
She saw a folded piece of paper	the package.
Arthur came out of	by the door.
It won't take long	in the bathroom mirror.
The offer is completely	the living room.
The organization is of	scotch-taped to the bottom of the box.
Are you sure you wouldn't	care to think about it for a day or so?
He placed it on the table	to explain.
He looked at her reflection	from her purse.
She took the card halves	international scope.

6. **Use the correct forms of the verbs given in brackets.**

- i. Norma (unlock) the door, and (go) into the apartment.
- ii. She (turn) the unit over.
- iii. She (reread) the typed note smilingly.
- iv. He (remove) his hat as Norma (open) the door.
- v. Mr. Steward (look) surprised.

7. **Punctuate the following lines.**

mr steward looked embarrassed i m afraid i m not at liberty to tell you that he said however i assure you the organization is of international scope

8. **Write down the following lines in indirect narration.**

- i. "Don't you want to know about it?" the salesman asked the customer.
- ii. "I hope everything goes well with you," said Asif to his friend.
- iii. "Where shall we meet tomorrow, at my home or at yours?" the lawyer asked his client.
- iv. "All is well that ends well!" said the father when he had finished the story.

## Clearing in the Sky

*(Jesse Stuart)*

"This is the way, Jess," said my father, pointing with his cane across the deep valley below us. "I want to show you something you've not seen for many years!"

"Isn't it too hot for you to do much walking?" I wiped the streams of sweat from my face to keep them from stinging my eyes.

I didn't want to go with him. I had just finished walking a half mile uphill from my home to his. I had carried a basket of dishes to Mom. There were two slips in the road and I couldn't drive my car. And I knew how hot it was. It was 97 in the shade. I knew that from January until April my father had gone to eight different doctors. One of the doctors had told him not to walk the length of a city block. He told my father to get a taxi to take him home. But my father walked home five miles across the mountain and told Mom what the doctor had said. Forty years ago a doctor had told him the same thing. And he had lived to raise a family of five children. He had done as much hard work in those years as any man.

I could not protest to him now. He had made up his mind. When he made up his mind to do a thing, he would do it if he had to crawl. He didn't care if it was 97 in the shade or 16 below zero. I wiped more sweat from my face as I followed him down the little path between the pasture and the meadow.

Suddenly he stopped at the edge of the meadow, took his pocket knife from his pocket, and cut a wisp of alfalfa. He held it up between him and the sun.

"Look at this, Jess!" he bragged. "Did you ever see better alfalfa grow out of the earth?"

"It's the best looking hay I've ever seen any place," I said, "I've not seen better looking alfalfa even in the Little Sandy River bottoms!"

"When I bought this little farm, everybody around here said I'd end up with my family at the country poor farm if I tried to make a living here," he bragged again. "It took me thirty years to improve these old worn-out acres to make them do this!"

"I like these woods, Jess," my father said. "Remember when we used to come here to hunt for squirrels? Remember when we sat beneath these hickories and the squirrels threw green hickory shells down at us? The morning wind just at the break of day in August was so good to breathe. I can't forget those days. And in October when the rabbits were ripe and the frosts had come and the hickory leaves had turned yellow and when the October winds blew they rustled the big leaves from the trees and they fell like yellow rain drops to the ground! Remember," he said, looking at me with his pale blue eyes. "How our hounds, Rags and Scout, would make the rabbits circle! These were good days, Jess! That's why I remember this mountain."

"Is that what you wanted to show me?" I asked.

"Oh, no, no," he said as he began to climb the second bluff that lifted abruptly from the flat toward the sky. The pines on top of the mountain above us looked as if the fingers of their long boughs were fondling the substance of a white cloud. Whatever my father wanted me to see was on top of the highest point of my farm. And with the exception of the last three years, I had been over this point many times. I had never seen anything extraordinary upon this high point of rugged land. I had seen the beauty of many wild flowers, a few rock cliffs, and many species of hard and soft-wood trees.

"Why do you take the path straight up the point?" I asked. "Look at these other paths! What are they doing here?"

Within the distance of a few yards, several paths left the main path and circled around the slope, gradually climbing the mountain.

"All paths go to the same place," he answered.

"Then why do you take the steep one?" I asked.

"I'll explain later," he spoke with half-breaths.

He rested a minute to catch his second wind while I managed to stand on the path by holding to a little sapling, because it was too steep for my feet to hold unless I braced myself.

Then my father started to move slowly up the path again, supporting himself with his cane. I followed at his heels. Just a few steps in front of him a fox squirrel crossed the path and ran up a hickory tree.

"See that, Jess!" he shouted.

"Yes, I did," I answered.

"That brings back something to me," he said, "brings back the old days to see a fox squirrel but this won't bring back as much as something I'm goin' to show you."

My curiosity was aroused. I thought he had found a new kind of wild grass, or an unfamiliar herb, or a new kind of tree. For I remembered the time he had found a coffee tree in our woods. It is, as far as I know, the only one of its kind growing in our country.

Only twice did my father stop to wipe the sweat from his eyes as he climbed the second steep bluff toward the fingers of the pines. We reached the limbless trunks of these tall straight pines whose branches reached toward the blue depth of the sky, or the white cloud was now gone. I saw a clearing, a small clearing of not more than three-fourths of an acre in the heart of this wilderness right on the mountain top.

"Now, you're comin' to something, son," he said as he pushed down the top wire so he could cross the fence. "This is something I want you to see!"

"Who did this?" I asked. "Who cleared this land and fenced it? Fenced it against what?"

"Stray cattle if they ever get out of the pasture," he answered me curtly. "I cleared this land. And I fenced it!"

"But why did you ever climb to this mountain top and do this?" I asked him. "Look at the fertile land we have in the valley!"



"Fertile," he laughed as he reached down and picked up a double handful of leaf-rot loam. "This is the land, son! This is it. I've tried all kinds of land!"

Then he smelled the dirt. He whiffed and whiffed the smell of this wild dirt into his nostrils.

"Just like fresh air," he said as he let the dirt run between his fingers. "It's pleasant to touch, too," he added.

"But, Dad—" I said.

"I know what you think," he interrupted. "Your mother thinks the same thing. She wonders why I ever climbed this mountain top to raise my potatoes, yams, and tomatoes! But, Jess," he almost whispered, "anything grown in new ground like this has a better flavor. Wait until my tomatoes are ripe. You'll never taste sweeter tomatoes in your life."

"They'll soon be ripe, too," I said as I looked at the dozen or more rows of tomatoes on the lower side of the patch.

Then above the tomatoes were a half-dozen rows of yams. Above the yams were, perhaps, three dozen rows of potatoes.

"I don't see a weed in this patch," I laughed. "Won't they grow here?"

"I won't let em," he said. "Now this is what I've been wanting you to see!"

"This is the cleanest patch I've ever seen," I bragged. "But I still don't see why you climbed the top of this mountain to clear this patch. And you did all this against your doctor's orders!"

"Which one?" he asked, laughing.

Then he sat down on a big oak stump and I sat down on a small black-gum stump near him. This was the only place on the mountain where the sun could shine to the ground. And on the lower side of the clearing there was a rim of shadow over the rows of dark stalwart plants loaded with green tomatoes.

"What is the reason for your planting this patch up here?" I asked.

"Twenty times in my life," he said, "a doctor has told me to go home and be with my family as long as I could. Told me not to work. Not to do anything but to live and enjoy the few days I had left with me. If the doctors have been right," he said, winking at me, "I have cheated death many times! Now, I've reached the years the Good Book allows to man in his lifetime upon this earth! Three score years and ten!"

He got up from the stump and wiped the raindrops of sweat from his red-wrinkled face with his big blue bandanna.

"And something else, Jess," he said, motioning for me to follow him to the upper edge of the clearing, "you won't understand until you reach three score and ten! After these years your time is borrowed. And when you live on that kind of time, something goes back. Something I cannot explain. You go back to the places you knew and loved. See this steep hill slope." He pointed down from the upper rim of the clearing toward the deep valley below. "Your mother and I, when she was nineteen and I was twenty-two cleared this mountain

slope together. We raised corn, beans, and pumpkins here," he continued, his voice rising with excitement – he talked with his hands, too. "Those were the days. This wasn't the land one had to build up. It was already here as God had made it and we had to do was to clear the trees and burn the bush. I ploughed this mountain with cattle the first time it was ever ploughed. And we raised more than a barrel of corn to the shock. That's why I came back up here. I went back to our youth. And this was the only land left like that was."

"And, Jess," he bragged, "regardless of my three score years and ten, I ploughed it. Ploughed it with a mule! I have, with just a little help, done all the work. It's like the land your mother and I used to farm here when I brought my gun to the field and took home a mess of fox squirrels every evening."

I looked at the vast mountain slope below where my mother and father had farmed. And I could remember, years later, when they farmed this land. It was on this steep slope that my father once made me a little wooden plough. That was when I was six years old and they brought me to the field to thin corn. I lost my little plough in a furrow and I cried and cried until he made me another plough. But I never loved the second plough as I did the first one.

Now, to look at the mountain slope, grown up with tall trees, many of them big enough to have sawed into lumber at the mill, it was hard to believe that my father and mother had cleared this mountain slope and had farmed it for many years. For many of the trees were sixty feet tall and the wild vines had matted their tops together.

"And, Jess," he almost whispered, "the doctors told me to sit still and to take life easy. I couldn't do it. I had to work. I had to go back. I had to smell this rich loam again. This land is not like the land I had to build to grow alfalfa. This is real land. I had to come back and dig in it. I had to smell it, sift it through my fingers again. And I wanted to taste yams, tomatoes, and potatoes grown in this land."

From this mountain top I looked far in every direction over the rugged hills my father and mother had cleared and farmed corn, maize, and cane. The one slope they hadn't cleared was the one from which my father had cleared his last, small patch.

I followed him from his clearing in the sky, down a new path, toward the deep valley below.

"But why do you have so many paths coming from the flat up the steep second bluff?" I asked, since he had promised that he would explain this to me later.

"Oh, yes," he said. "Early last spring, I couldn't climb straight up the steep path. That was when the doctor didn't give me a week to live. I made a longer, easier path so I wouldn't have to do so much climbing. Then, as I got better," he explained. "I made another path that was a little steeper. And as I continued to get better, I made steeper paths. That was one way of knowing I was getting better all the time!"

I followed him down the path that wound this way and that, three times the length of the path we had climbed.

## Theme

The author's father has a weak heart. For forty years the doctors have been telling him to be careful – forbidding him to work on his farm because he hasn't long to live. Now, in spite of their prediction, he's lived to be seventy years old, and he wants to show his son something important on the top of the mountain. In this simple story, the son reflects his father's deep love of nature and the strength of the human spirit.

## Reading Notes

97 in the shade	temperature of 97°F
protest	oppose
a wisp of alfalfa	a thin stem of leafy green hay, used to feed horses and cows
brag	boast, praise oneself
sapling	a young tree
brace	support, reinforce
bluff	headland with a broad and steep face
curtly	hardly polite
loam	a rich soil consisting of clay, silt and sand
whiff	smell, inhale the odor of something
yam	orange coloured vegetable root, somewhat resembling a sweet potato
stalwart	strong and vigorous in body, mind or spirit
The Good Book	The Bible
three score years and ten	seventy years
bandanna	a large figured handkerchief made of dyed cloth
black gum	a tree having light but tough wood
mess of fox squirrels	a quantity of fox squirrels enough to cook for a meal.

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. The old man wanted to show his son
- |                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| a) his farm.          | b) his land. |
| c) patch of clearing. | d) river.    |

- ii. The day was  
 a) hot. b) pleasant.  
 c) rainy. d) humid.
- iii. How many years ago did the doctor advise the old man to take rest?  
 a) ten b) twenty  
 c) thirty d) forty
- iv. How many children did the old man have?  
 a) three b) four  
 c) five d) seven
- v. What did the old man cut with his pocket knife?  
 a) a sapling b) a flower  
 c) a wisp of alfalfa d) a tomato
- vi. In how many years did the old man improve the land?  
 a) twenty b) thirty  
 c) forty d) sixty
- vii. Why did the old man hunt for the squirrels?  
 a) to sell b) to kill  
 c) to cook for meal d) to pet
- viii. What type of special tree was found by the old man?  
 a) cherry b) apple  
 c) orange d) coffee
- ix. The clearing on the top was not more than  
 a) three acres. b) four acres.  
 c) two acres. d) three-fourths of an acre.
- x. The land was fenced by  
 a) the son. b) the mother.  
 c) the old man. d) the brother of the old man.

2. Some of the statements below are true and some are false. Mark the true or false statements.

- i. Jess's father was a weak man.
- ii. The old man followed his doctors' advice all his life.
- iii. The old man invited his son to take a walk up a mountain path.
- iv. When the old man reached seventy, he wanted to go back to farming land that had never been touched.
- v. Thirty years' labour of the old man proved futile.

- vi. The old man took the easy path to go to the top.
- vii. The old man took rest twice while climbing up the steep bluff.
- viii. The old man did not have trust in God.
- ix. The old man felt relieved of the fruit of his toil.
- x. The vegetables that the old man grew in his secret garden were better flavored because of the sunshine in the clearing.

3. **Answer the following questions. (in one or two sentences)**

- i. Why didn't the old man follow the advice of the doctors?
- ii. What had the doctors told the old man?
- iii. Where did the old man take his son?
- iv. Had the son ever been there before?
- v. What were the names of the vegetables the old man grew on his farm?
- vi. Why did the old man take the steep path?
- vii. Why did the son at the age of six cry?
- viii. What were the feelings of the old man at the age of seventy?
- ix. Why had the old man planted his secret garden?

4. **Write the answers to the following questions in 50 - 100 words.**

- i. Describe the physical appearance of the old man.
- ii. How did the old man feel about the land?
- iii. What did the son remember from his childhood? Were these good memories?
- iv. Write the story in your own words.
- v. What moral lesson does the story teach?

5. **Use the correct forms of the verbs given in brackets.**

- i. I (carry) a basket of dishes to Mom.
- ii. I (know) how hot it was.
- iii. I (follow) him down the little path.
- iv. I (buy) this little farm around here.
- v. Is that what you (want) to show me?

6. **Punctuate the following lines.**

now youre coming to something son he said as he pushed down the top wire so that he could cross the fence this is something i want you to see

## Dark They were, and Golden-Eyed

(Ray Bradbury)

The rocket metal cooled in the meadow winds. Its lid gave a bulging pop. From its clock interior stepped a man, a woman, and three children. The other passengers whirled away across the Martian meadow, leaving the man alone among his family.

The man felt his hair flutter and the tissues of his body draw tight as if he were standing at the center of a vacuum. His wife, before him, seemed almost to whirl away in smoke. The children, small seeds, might at any instant be sown to all the Martian climes.

The children looked up at him, as people look to the sun to tell what time of their life it is. His face was cold.

"What's wrong?" asked his wife.

"Let's get back on the rocket."

"Go back to the Earth?"

"Yes! Listen!"

The wind blew as if to flake away their identities. At any moment the Martian air might draw his soul from him, as marrow comes from a white bone. He felt submerged in a chemical that could dissolve his intellect and burn away his past.

They looked at the Martian hills that time had worn with a crushing pressure of years. They saw the old cities, lost in their meadows, lying like children's delicate bones among the blowing lakes of grass.

"Chin up, Harry," said his wife. "It's too late. We've come over sixty million miles."

The children with their yellow hair hollered at the deep dome of the Martian sky. There was no answer but the racing hiss of wind through the stiff grass.

He picked up the luggage in his cold hands. "Here we go," he said – a man standing on the edge of a sea, ready to wade in and be drowned.

They walked into town.

Their names were Bittering – Harry and his wife Cora, Dan, Laura, and David. They built a small white cottage and ate good breakfasts there, but the fear was never gone. It lay with Mr. and Mrs. Bittering, a third unbidden partner at every midnight talk, at every dawn awakening.

"I feel like a salt crystal," he said, "in a mountain stream, being washed away. We don't belong here. We're Earth people. This is Mars. It was meant for the Martians. For heaven's sake, Cora, let's buy tickets for home!"

But she only shook her head. "One day the atom bomb will fix the Earth. Then we'll be safe here."

"Safe and insane!"

"Nonsense!" Mr. Bittering looked out of the windows. "We're clean, decent people." He looked at his children. "All dead cities have some kind of ghosts in them. Memories, I mean." He stared at the hills. "You see a staircase and you wonder what the Martians looked like climbing it. You see the Martian paintings and you wonder what the painter was like. You make a little ghost in your mind, a memory. It's quite natural. Imagination." He stopped. "You haven't been prowling up in those ruins, have you?"

"No, Papa," David looked at his shoes.

"See that you stay away from them. Pass the jam."

"Just the same," said little David, "I bet something happens."

Something happened that afternoon.

Laura stumbled through the settlement, crying. She dashed blindly onto the porch.

"Mother, Father – the war, Earth!" she sobbed. "A radio flash just came. Atom bombs hit New York! All the space rockets have blown up. No more rockets to Mars, ever!"

"Oh, Harry!" The mother held onto her husband and daughter.

"Are you sure, Laura?" asked the father quietly.

Laura wept. "We're stranded on Mars, forever and ever!"

For a long time there was only the sound of the wind in the late afternoon. Alone, thought Bittering. Only a thousand of us here. No way back. No way. No way. Sweat poured out from his face and his hands and his body; he was drenched in the hotness of his fear. He wanted to strike Laura, cried, "No, you're lying! The rockets will come back!" Instead, he stroked Laura's head against him and said, "The rockets will get through someday."

"Father, what will we do?"

"Go about our business, of course. Raise crops and children. Wait, keep things going until the war ends and the rockets come again."

The two boys stepped out onto the porch.

"Children," he said, sitting there, looking beyond them, "I've something to tell you."

"We know," they said.

He looked with dismay at their house. "Even the house. The wind's done something to it. The air's burned it. The fog at night. The boards, all warped out of shape. It's not an Earthman's house any more."

"Oh, your imagination!"

He put on his coat and tie. "I'm going into town. We've got to do something now. I'll be back."

"Wait, Harry!" his wife cried.

But he was gone.

In town on the shadowy step of the grocery store, the men sat with their hands on

their knees, conversing with great leisure and ease.

Mr. Bittering wanted to fire a pistol in the air.

What are you doing, you fools! he thought. Sitting here! You've heard the news – we're stranded on this planet. Well, move! Aren't you frightened? Aren't you afraid? What are you going to do?

"Hello, Harry," said everyone.

"Look," he said to them. "You did hear the news, the other day, didn't you?"

They nodded and laughed. "Sure. Sure, Harry."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Do, Harry, do? What can we do?"

"Build a rocket, that's what!"

"A rocket, Harry? To go back to all that trouble? Oh, Harry!"

"But you must want to go back. Have you noticed the peach blossoms, the onions and the grass?"

"Why, yes, Harry, seems we did," said one of the men.

"Doesn't it scare you?"

"Can't recall that it did much, Harry."

"Idiots!"

"Now, Harry."

Bittering wanted to cry, "You've got to work with me. If we stay here, we'll all change. The air. Don't you smell it? Something in the air. A Martian virus, may be; some seed, or a pollen. Listen to me!"

They stared at him.

"Sam," he said to one of them.

"Yes, Harry?"

"Will you help me build a rocket?"

"Harry, I got a whole load of metal and some blueprints. You want to work in my metal shop on a rocket you're welcome. I'll sell you that metal for five hundred dollars. You should be able to construct a right pretty rocket, if you work alone, in about thirty years."

Everyone laughed.

"Don't laugh."

Sam looked at him with quite good humor.

"Sam," Bittering said, "Your eyes –"

"What about them, Harry?"

"Didn't they use to be grey?"

"Well, now, I don't remember."



"They were, weren't they?"

"Why do you ask, Harry?"

"Because now they're kind of yellow-colored."

"Is that so, Harry?" Sam said, casually.

"And you're taller and thinner –"

"You might be right, Harry."

"Sam, you shouldn't have yellow eyes."

"Harry, what color of eyes have you got?" Sam said.

"My eyes? They're blue, of course."

"Here you are, Harry." Sam handed him a pocket mirror. "Take a look at yourself."

Mr. Bittering hesitated, and then raised the mirror to his face.

There were little, very dim flecks of new gold captured in the blue of his eyes.

"Now look what you've done," said Sam a moment later. "You've broken my mirror."

Harry Bittering moved into the metal shop and began to build the rocket. Men stood in the open door and talked and joked without raising their voices. Once in a while they gave him a hand on lifting something. But mostly they just idled and watched him with their yellowing eyes.

"It's supper time, Harry," they said.

His wife appeared with his supper in a wicker basket.

"I won't touch it," he said. "I'll eat only food from our deep-freeze. Food that came from the Earth. Nothing from our garden."

His wife stood watching him. "You can't build a rocket."

"I worked in a shop once, when I was twenty. I know metal. Once I get it started, the others will help," he said, not looking at her, laying out the blueprints.

"Harry, Harry," she said, helplessly.

"We've got to get away, Cora. We've got to!"

Summer burned the canals dry. Summer moved like flame upon the meadows. In the empty Earth settlement, the painted houses flaked and peeled. Rubber tires upon which children had swung in back yards hung suspended like stopped clock pendulums in the blazing air.

At the metal shop, the rocket frame began to rust.

In the quiet autumn Mr. Bittering stood, very dark now, very golden-eyed, upon the slope above his villa, looking at the valley.

"It's time to go back," said Cora.

"Yes, but we're not going," he said quietly. "There's nothing any more."

"Your books," she said. "Your fine clothes."

"The town's empty. No one's going back," he said. "There's no reason to, none at all."

The daughter wove tapestries and the sons played songs on the ancient flutes and pipes, their laughter echoing in the marble villa.

Mr. Bittering gazed at the Earth settlement far away in the low valley. "Such odd, such ridiculous houses the Earth people built."

"They didn't know any better," his wife mused. "Such ugly people. I'm glad they've gone."

They both looked at each other, startled by all they had just finished saying. They laughed.

"Where did they go?" he wondered. He glanced at his wife. She was golden and slender like his daughter. She looked at him, and he seemed almost as young as their eldest son.

"I don't know," she said.

"We'll go back to town may be next year, or the year after, or the year after that," he said, calmly. "Now – I'm warm. How about taking a swim?"

They turned their backs to the valley. Arm in arm they walked silently down a path of clear-running spring water.

Five years later a rocket fell out of the sky. It lay steaming in the valley. Men leaped out of it, shouting.

"We have won the war on the Earth! We're here to rescue you! Hey!"

But the American-built town of cottages, peach trees, and theaters was silent. They found a flimsy rocket frame rusting in an empty shop.

The rocket men searched the hills. The captain established headquarters in an abandoned bar. His lieutenant came back to report.

"The town's empty, but we found the native life in the hills, sir. Dark people. Yellow eyes. The Martians. Very friendly. We talked a bit, not much. They learn English fast. I'm sure our relations will be most friendly with them, sir."

"Dark, eh?" mused the captain. "How many?"

"Six, eight hundred, I'd say, living in those marble ruins in the hills, sir. Tall, healthy. Beautiful women."

"Did they tell you what became of the men and women who built this Earth settlement, Lieutenant?"

"They hadn't the foggiest notion of what happened to this town or its people."

"Strange. You think those Martians killed them?"

"They look surprisingly peaceful. Chances are a plague did this town in, sir."

"Perhaps. I suppose this is one of those mysteries we'll never solve. One of those mysteries you read about."

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## Theme

The Bittering family are emigrants who join the other Earth people to escape from nuclear war on the planet Earth; they flee to the planet Mars in a space rocket. When they arrive, they find that all the Martian towns are deserted, empty and quiet. There are, however, ghosts – or memories – that still remain in the dead cities. And there is something that brings changes in the Earth people who have come to live there. Harry Bittering is determined to cling to his Earth ways, to make an Earth life for himself and his family on Mars, to work and wait until he can return to his Earth home. But, gradually, he realizes that they, too, are beginning to change in strange ways, to lose their Earthliness ....

## Reading Notes

bulging pop	irregular short, sharp, explosive sound
whirl away	move or travel rapidly
flake away their identities	losing the knowledge of who they were, lose their identities
marrow	soft, fatty substance that fills the hollow parts of bones
chin up, Harry	be brave; don't be afraid, Harry
holler	(colloquial) yell and shout
the atom bomb will fix the earth	the bomb will permanently destroy the Earth
prowling up	going about
stumble	strike the foot against something and almost fall
stranded	in a difficult position
drenched	made wet all over
the Martian virus	a microbe or disease germ found on Mars
flecks	small spots or patches
tapestries	decorations, embroideries
leaped out of it	jumped out of it

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. The man felt his hair flutter and the tissues of his body draw tight as if he were
  - a) sick.
  - b) happy.
  - c) feeling sad.
  - d) standing at the center of a vacuum.
- ii. At any moment the Martian air might
  - a) bring relief.
  - b) draw his soul from him.
  - c) kill him.
  - d) become pleasant.

- iii. What did they see on the Martian hills?  
 a) the old cities                      b) flower beds  
 c) stream of fresh water              d) a deep valley
- iv. What did they do after building a cottage?  
 a) decorated it                      b) furnished it  
 c) ate good breakfasts              d) arranged a feast
- v. What was the news Laura told to her parents?  
 a) the war on the Earth              b) the death of the people  
 c) the arrival of a rocket              d) the fall of a rocket
- vi. Which one of the cities was attacked?  
 a) Texas                                  b) Virginia  
 c) New York                              d) New Jersey
- vii. What did they feel on Mars after the attack on the Earth?  
 a) drenched                              b) stranded  
 c) secluded                              d) surrendered
- viii. What were the men doing in town on the shadowy step of the grocery store?  
 a) quarrelling                          b) conversing with great leisure and ease  
 c) playing                                d) buying the grocery
- ix. How many dollars did he demand to sell the metal?  
 a) two hundred                        b) three hundred  
 c) four hundred                        d) five hundred
- x. In which season did Mr. Bittering stand very golden-eyed?  
 a) winter                                b) summer  
 c) autumn                                d) spring

**2. Some of the statements below are true and some are false. Mark the statements true or false.**

- i. The rocket metal burned in the meadow winds.
- ii. He felt submerged in a chemical that could enhance his intellect.
- iii. He felt like a salt crystal in a mountain stream.
- iv. All the space rockets flew up.
- v. He was drenched in the hotness of his fear.
- vi. Harry suggested to build a rocket.
- vii. Men helped Harry in building a rocket.
- viii. The daughter wove tapestries.
- ix. Harry seemed almost as young as his eldest son.
- x. Six years later a rocket fell out of the sky.

**3. Answer the following questions.**

- i. Why did Harry want to go back to the Earth?
- ii. Why did he want to stay?
- iii. What climate did they face?
- iv. What was the condition of the Bittering family on hearing the news of the war on the Earth?
- v. What did they want to grow?
- vi. What was the condition of their house?
- vii. What was the advice Harry gave to the people?
- viii. How dangerous can a Martian virus be?

**4. Write the answers to the following questions in 100-150 words.**

- i. What circumstance did the Bittering family face?
- ii. How social were the people of Mars?
- iii. How did the life change finally? Was this better or worse?
- iv. Write the story in your own words.
- v. What differences can you point out in the life style of the people of two different planets?

**5. Use the correct forms of the verbs given in brackets.**

- i. The man (feel) his hair flutter.
- ii. They (see) the old cities.
- iii. They (look) at their children.
- iv. Laura (stumble) through the settlement.
- v. He (drench) in the hotness of his fear.
- vi. All the boards (warp) out of shape.
- vii. Harry (move) into the metal shop.
- viii. His wife (appear) with his supper in a wicker basket.
- ix. The sons (play) songs on the ancient flutes.
- x. They (turn) their backs to the valley.

**6. Punctuate the following lines.**

the towns empty but we found native life in the hills sir dark people yellow eyes the  
martians very friendly we talked a bit not much they learn english fast

# Thank you, M'am

(Langston Hughes)

She was a large woman with a large purse that had everything in it but a hammer and nails. It had a long strap, and she carried it slung across her shoulder. It was about eleven o'clock at night, dark, and she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind her and tried to snatch her purse. The strap broke with a sudden single tug the boy gave it from behind. But the boy's weight and the weight of the purse combined caused him to lose his balance. Instead of taking off full blast as he had hoped, the boy fell on his back on the sidewalk and his legs flew up. The large woman simply turned around and kicked him right square in his blue jeaned sitter. Then she reached down, picked the boy up by his shirt front, and shook him until his teeth rattled.

After that the woman said, "Pick up my pocketbook, boy, and give it here."

She still held him tightly. But she bent down enough to permit him to stoop and pick up her purse. Then she said, "Now ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

Firmly gripped by his shirt front, the boy said, "Yes'm."

The woman said, "What did you want to do it for?"

The boy said, "I didn't aim to."

She said, "You a lie!"

By that time two or three people passed, stopped, turned to look, and some stood watching.

"If I turn you loose, will you run?" asked the woman.

"Yes'm," said the boy.

"Then I won't turn you loose," said the woman. She did not release him.

"Lady, I'm sorry," whispered the boy.

"Um-hum! your face is dirty. I got a great mind to wash your face for you. Ain't you got no body home to tell you to wash your face?"

"No'm," said the boy.

"Then it will get washed this evening," said the large woman, starting up the street, dragging the frightened boy behind her.

He looked as if he were fourteen or fifteen, frail and willow-wild, in tennis shoes and blue jeans.

The woman said, "You ought to be my son. I would teach you right from wrong. Least I can do right is to wash your face. Are you hungry?"

"No'm," said the being dragged boy. "I just want you to turn me loose."

"Was I bothering you when I turned that corner?" asked the woman.

"No'm."

"But you put yourself in contact with me," said the woman. "If you think that that contact is not going to last awhile, you got another thought coming. When I get through with you, sir, you are going to remember Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones."

Sweat popped out on the boy's face and he began to struggle. Mrs. Jones stopped, jerked him around in front of her, put a half nelson about his neck, and continued to drag him up the street. When she got to her door, she dragged the boy inside, down a hall, and into a large kitchenette-furnished room at the rear of the house. She switched on the light and left the door open. The boy could hear other roomers laughing and talking in the large house. Some of their doors were open, too, so he knew he and the woman were not alone. The woman still held him by the neck in the middle of her room.

She said, "What is your name?"

"Roger," answered the boy.

"Then, Roger, you go to that sink and wash your face," said the woman, whereupon she turned him loose – at last. Roger looked at the door – looked at the woman – looked at the door – and went to the sink.

"Let the water run until it gets warm," she said. "Here's a clean towel."

"You gonna take me to jail?" asked the boy, bending over the sink.

"Not with that face, I would not take you nowhere," said the woman. "Here I am trying to get home to cook me a bite to eat, and you snatch my pocketbook! Maybe you ain't been to your supper either, late as it be. Have you?"

"There's nobody home at my house," said the boy.

"Then we'll eat," said the woman. "I believe you're hungry – or been hungry – to try to snatch my pocketbook!"

"I want a pair of blue suede shoes," said the boy.

"Well, you didn't have to snatch my pocketbook to get some suede shoes," said Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones. "You could have asked me."

"M'am?"

The water was dripping from his face, the boy looked at her. There was a long pause. A very long pause. After he had dried his face, and not knowing what else to do, dried it again, the boy turned around, wondering what next. The door was open. He could make a dash for it down the hall. He could run, run, run, run!

The woman was sitting on the daybed. After a while she said, "I were young once and I wanted things I could not get."

There was another long pause. The boy's mouth opened. Then he frowned, not knowing he frowned.

The woman said, "Um-hum! You thought I was going to say but, didn't you? You thought I was going to say, but I didn't snatch people's pocketbooks. Well, I wasn't going to

say that." Pause. Silence. "I have done things, too, which I would not tell you, son. Everybody's got something in common. So you sit down while I fix up something to eat. You might run that comb through your hair so you will look presentable."

In another corner of the room behind a screen was a gas plate and an icebox. Mrs. Jones got up and went behind the screen. The woman did not watch the boy to see if he was going to run now, nor did she watch her purse, which she had left behind her on the daybed. But the boy took care to sit on the far side of the room, away from the purse, where he thought she could easily see him out of the corner of her eye if she wanted to. He did not trust the woman not to trust him. And he did not want to be mistrusted now.

"Do you need somebody to go to the store?" asked the boy, "may be to get some milk or something?"

"Don't believe I do," said the woman, "unless you just want sweet milk yourself. I was going to make cocoa out of this canned milk I got here."

"That will be fine," said the boy.

She heated some lima beans and beef she had in the icebox, made the cocoa, and set the table. The woman did not ask the boy anything about where he lived, or his folks, or anything else that would embarrass him. Instead, as they ate, she told him about her job in a hotel beauty shop that stayed open late, what the work was like, and how all kinds of women came in and out, blondes, redheads, and Spanish. Then she cut him a half of her ten-cent cake.

"Eat some more, son," she said.

When they were finished eating, she got up and said, "Now here, take this ten dollars and buy yourself some blue suede shoes. And next time, do not make the mistake of latching onto my pocketbook nor anybody else's - because shoes got by devilish ways will burn your feet. I got to get my rest now. But from here on in, son, I hope you will behave yourself."

She led him down the hall to the front door and opened it. "Good night! Behave yourself, boy!" she said, looking out into the street as he went down the steps.

The boy wanted to say something other than, "Thank you, m'am," to Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones, but although his lips moved, he couldn't even say that as he turned at the foot of the barren stoop and looked up at the large woman in the door. Then she shut the door.

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## Theme

A woman taught a wicked boy right from wrong when he tried to snatch her purse late at night. The boy lost his balance and fell on the sidewalk. She caught the boy by his neck and gave him some jerks, and dragged him to her house where she directed him to wash his dirty face. Then she offered him a cake to eat and ten dollars to buy a new pair of suede shoes. The boy became very much impressed by the good conduct of the lady and promised to be a good boy.



## Reading Notes

slung	(past of sling) looped round
taking off full blast	running away at full speed
rattled	make short, sharp sounds quickly
stoop	bend the body forward and downward
frail	weak
willow-wild	thin that can easily be bent like willow-wild (a kind of shrub)
popped out	came out quickly
suede	a kind of soft leather made from the skin of goat
frowned	draw the eyebrow to show puzzlement
embarrass	make to feel ashamed
latching onto	cling to, getting possession of

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. What was the woman carrying?
  - a) a rod
  - b) a bag
  - c) a hammer
  - d) a large purse
- ii. From where was she coming?
  - a) factory
  - b) hotel beauty shop
  - c) office
  - d) college
- iii. What had happened to her?
  - a) a boy made a request for help
  - b) a boy tried to help her
  - c) a boy begged ten dollars
  - d) a boy tried to snatch her purse
- iv. The boy washed his face on the direction of
  - a) the police officer.
  - b) his father.
  - c) the woman.
  - d) his uncle.

- v. The boy was in his  
a) teens. b) twenties.  
c) forties. d) thirties.
- vi. What was the full name of the woman?  
a) Luella b) Bates  
c) Washington Jones d) Luella Bates Washington Jones
- vii. The boy was dragged into a  
a) living room. b) kitchenette-furnished room.  
c) hall. d) dining room.
- viii. What did she suggest to the boy to look presentable?  
a) to wash his face b) to dress properly  
c) to polish the shoes d) to comb his hair
- ix. The woman cooked the food and asked the boy  
a) to serve. b) to help.  
c) to set the table. d) to eat.
- x. What did the boy want to say to the woman?  
a) thank you, m'am b) thankful to you  
c) grateful to you d) something other than,  
"Thank you, m'am"

**2. Mark the statements true or false.**

- i. A large woman was carrying a large purse containing a hammer and nails.
- ii. The boy offered his help to carry the purse.
- iii. The woman firmly gripped the boy by his shirt front.
- iv. The woman dragged the boy to her home.
- v. She asked the boy to bring some food from the store.
- vi. The boy was punished by the other members of the house.
- vii. The boy stole the pocketbook to buy some food.
- viii. The boy was afraid of going to jail.
- ix. The boy did not trust the woman not to trust him.
- x. The woman advised the boy not to make the mistake of latching onto her pocketbook.

**3. Answer the following questions.**

- i. What was the time when the boy tried to snatch the purse of the woman?
- ii. What happened to the boy when he tried to snatch the purse?
- iii. What was the reaction of the woman?

- iv. What was the conduct of the people when they saw the incident?
- v. How did the boy look physically?
- vi. What was the condition of the boy when the woman gave him a few jerks?
- vii. Why did the woman ask the boy to wash his face?
- viii. Why didn't the boy run from the house of the woman?
- ix. Why didn't the woman watch the boy while preparing a dish?
- x. What was the nature of the woman's job?

**4. Write the answers to the following questions in 100 - 150 words.**

- i. Write the incident in your own words.
- ii. What was the effect of the behaviour of the woman on the boy?
- iii. Why did she treat the boy nicely in her home after punishing him in the street?

**5. Use the correct form of the verb in each sentence.**

- i. She (carry) the purse slung across her shoulder.
- ii. The boy (fall) on his back on the sidewalk.
- iii. Some people (turn) to look.
- iv. She (drag) the boy inside, down a hall.
- v. Mrs. Jones (get) up and went behind the screen.
- vi. The boy (take) care to sit on the far side of the room.
- vii. She (make) the cocoa, and set the table.
- viii. A hotel beauty shop (stay) open late.
- ix. She (lead) him down the hall to the front door.
- x. The boy (want) to say something.

**6. Punctuate the following lines.**

well you didnt have to snatch my pocketbook to get some suede shoes said mrs luella bates washington jones you could have asked me

**7. Use the following prepositions in your own sentences.**

in, across, off, up, around

## The Piece of String

(Guy de Maupassant)

At the end of market day, the rich people with vehicles of all kinds, carts, gigs, wagons, dumpcarts gathered at a great big hall for a great meal.

There were chickens, pigeons and legs of mutton in the roast and an appetizing odour of roast, beef. Leaf and gravy dripping over the browned skin, which increased the appetite and made everybody's mouth water. Everyone told his affairs, his purchases and sales. The diners discussed the crops and the weather which was favourable for the green things but not for wheat. Suddenly, at the sound of drumbeat in the court everybody rose from the seats except a few ones who still had the food in their hands. After the drumbeat had ceased, the drummer called out to the people who were now attentive and impatiently waiting for him to call out the public announcement. "It is hereby made known to the inhabitants of this place and in general to all persons in the market that a black leather pocketbook containing five hundred shillings and some business papers was lost on the road between 9.00 and 10.00 in the morning. The finder is requested to return the same to the mayor's office or to Mr. James, the caretaker of this public hall. There will be a reward of 20 shillings".

After the meal had concluded the Chief of the police appeared on the scene. He inquired, "Is Mr. Hubert here?" Mr. Hubert seated at another end of the table replied, "Here I am." The police officer went up to him and said, "Mr. Hubert, will you please accompany me to the mayor's office, the mayor would like to talk to you." Mr. Hubert surprised and disturbed, followed the police officer. The mayor, a stout serious man, was waiting for Hubert. "Mr. Hubert," he said, "you were seen this morning to pick up the pocketbook lost by Mr. James." Mr. Hubert, the simple countryman looked at the mayor astounded and already terrified by the suspicion resting on him. "Why, Me? Me? Me picked up the pocketbook?" "Yes, you yourself." "By my word of honour I never heard of it." "But you were seen."

"I was seen with the pocketbook? Who saw me?" "Mr. Manana, the harness man saw you pick up the pocketbook."

Mr. Hubert, the old man, remembered, understood and flushed with anger.

"O, him! Yes! He saw me pick up this string here." And as he said so, he drew out the little piece of string from his pocket.

But the mayor shook his head and said. "You will not make me believe that Mr. Manana, who is a man of worthy credence, mistook the cord for a pocketbook."

Mr. Hubert, the peasant furiously lifted his hand, spat at one side to attest his honour, and said in the most exasperating tone, "It is, nevertheless, truth of the good God, the sacred truth. I repeat it on my soul and my salvation."

"After picking up the object, you stood there, looking a long while in the mud to see if any money had fallen out."

The good soul, Mr. Hubert, choked with indignation and fear.

“How any one can tell such lies to take away an honest man's reputation. How can any one .....

There was no use of Mr. Hubert's protesting, for nobody believed him. Mr. Manana repeatedly maintained that Hubert had picked up the pocketbook. For an hour both men abused each other. Then at his own request, Mr. Hubert was searched. Nothing was found on him.

Finally the mayor discharged Hubert with warning that he would consult the public prosecutor and ask for further orders.

As he left the mayor's office, people surrounded and questioned him with serious curiosity. Nobody believed his story of the string. Instead people laughed at him.

Mr. Hubert went along stopping his friends giving them his statement and presentation, turning his pocket inside out to prove that he had nothing. All they said was, “you old rascal! Get out of here!”.

Mr. Hubert went to the village telling every man he knew about his adventure, but he only met with incredulity. It all made him ill. The next day in the afternoon a man named George returned the pocketbook and its contents to Mr. James the owner of the pocketbook.

George claimed to have found the pocketbook on the road to the village market, but not knowing how to read he had given it to his employer.

The news spread like fire in the neighbourhood. Mr. Hubert was also informed. He was in triumph.

“What grieved me as much was not the thing itself – as the lying. There is nothing so shameful as to be called a liar.”

Whatever reasons he gave, people were not willing to believe him. “Those are lying excuses.” They said behind his back.

Hubert felt this shame and disgrace to his self-esteem and character. He consumed his heart over this and wasted away before the very eyes of the people.

People started to tell the story of the string to amuse themselves and told it in a manner of soldier who had been on a campaign and told about his battles. Hubert's mind touched to the depth, began to weaken day by day.

Towards the end of the month he took to his bed. He died in the first week of the following month.

In the delirium of his death struggles he kept claiming his innocence, reiterating:

“A piece of string, a piece of string! By my word of honour I did not lie.”

And he died.

It is said that a great flood in its great wrath carried away the people and all their belongings.

The grave of Hubert withstood the havoc of the flood.

It was engraved on his tomb stone, years after his death, "Here lies a man who told nothing but truth. Here lies the man who would not prove his innocence, but the flood proved it-!"

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### Theme

One of the author's favourite ways of telling a story is to tell it as though he had personally been involved in it. The teller of the story has no part in the events, but telling it in this way helps make it real. "The Piece of String" depicts the hard facts of life. It is written in a simple way, understandable for the common reader. It is a story of the rural life where cow and calf can be seen.

The main character in the story, Hubert was very economical and he was of the view that every useful thing ought to be picked up. He took the bit of thin cord, which led him to trouble and no one believed him that he had picked up the string. He died in agony.

The main theme of the story is that protecting your innocence makes most people, believe you are guilty.

### Reading Notes

appetizing	to make feel hungry
stout	very healthy
astounded	shocked
exasperating	irritating
indignation	annoyance
public prosecutor	legal official of the state
curiosity	eagerness
rascal	a knave
havoc	destruction

## EXERCISES

### 1 Choose the correct answer.

- i. The rich people gathered at a big hall
  - a) to watch a show.
  - b) for a discussion.
  - c) to hear a lecture.
  - d) for a great meal.
- ii. What was the public statement made by the drummer?
  - a) loss of the black leather pocketbook containing money and business paper
  - b) open invitation for dinner
  - c) to enjoy a concert
  - d) sale of a building
- iii. Mr. Hubert was surprised and disturbed when the police officer asked him to accompany him to
  - a) the police station.
  - b) the mayor's office.
  - c) the court.
  - d) the airport.
- iv. "By my word of honour I never heard of it." means
  - a) that he never saw it.
  - b) being an honourable man he didn't pick up the lost object.
  - c) an honourable person never thought of picking up a lost object.
  - d) he never heard of the lost object.
- v. What did Hubert say in the most exasperating tone?
  - a) He never stole the pocketbook.
  - b) He picked up a piece of string.
  - c) It is, nevertheless, truth of the good God, the sacred truth.
  - d) "O, him! Yes! He saw me pick up this string here."
- vi. What were the feelings of Hubert when he was informed of the recovery of the lost object? He felt
  - a) disgusted.
  - b) triumphed.
  - c) indifferent.
  - d) concerned.
- vii. "But he only met with incredulity." means that he was believed
  - a) telling the truth.
  - b) lying.
  - c) showing his faith.
  - d) gentleman.
- viii. What did the people say behind his back?
  - a) Those are lame excuses.
  - b) He is innocent.
  - c) He is unreliable.
  - d) a man of loose character

- ix. What did Hubert feel?  
a) a grace of personality  
b) shame and disgrace to his self-esteem and character  
c) truthful  
d) trustworthy
- x. What were the last words Hubert uttered before his death?  
a) "A piece of string! a piece of string!"  
b) By my word of honour I did not lie.  
c) I picked up a pocketbook.  
d) I handed over the pocketbook to its owner.

**2. Mark the sentences true or false.**

- i. Everybody's mouth was watered on the sight of wealth.  
ii. The finder of the pocketbook will be rewarded.  
iii. He drew out the little pocketbook from his pocket.  
iv. Mr. Hubert was pleased to hear the allegation.  
v. The people greeted Hubert when he came out of the office of the Mayor.  
vi. George found the pocketbook and gave it to Hubert.  
vii. The people believed the reason Hubert gave to prove his innocence.  
viii. The people started to tell the story of the string to amuse themselves.  
ix. A great flood carried away the people.  
x. Nothing but the flood proved Hubert's innocence.

**3. Answer the following questions.**

- i. Why did Manana accuse Hubert of picking the lost pocketbook?  
ii. What did the people think of Hubert when they heard the return of the pocketbook by some other person?  
iii. Why did George give the pocketbook to his employer?  
iv. What made Hubert shameful?  
v. Why did the people make fun of his innocence?  
vi. Why did he keep claiming his innocence before his death?

**4. Answer the following questions in 100 - 150 words.**

- i. Write down a note on the character of Hubert.  
ii. Write ten lines on the mentality of the people who did not believe Hubert.  
iii. Why did the Mayor not believe the innocence of Hubert?  
iv. Was it necessary for Hubert to continue pleading his innocence?  
v. What suggestions can you give to Hubert to save him from such a



humiliating situation?

5. **Fill in the correct preposition (on, to, of, at, from).**

- i. He was walking \_\_\_\_\_ the public square.
- ii. Then he pretended to be looking \_\_\_\_\_ something \_\_\_\_\_ the ground.
- iii. They had decided \_\_\_\_\_ purchase.
- iv. The finder is requested \_\_\_\_\_ return the same.
- v. George claimed \_\_\_\_\_ have found the pocketbook.

6. **Punctuate the following lines.**

i was seen with the pocketbook who saw me mr manana the harness man saw you pick up the pocketbook

7. **Use the following words in your sentences.**

purchase, attentive, surprised, astounded, shook

8. **Read the passage and answer the questions given at the end.**

Suddenly, at the sound of drumbeat in the court everybody rose from the seats except a few ones who still had the food in their hands. After the drumbeat had ceased, the drummer called out to the people who were now attentive and impatiently waiting for him to call out the public announcement. "It is hereby made known to the inhabitants of this place and in general to all persons in the market that a black leather pocketbook containing five hundred shilling and some business papers was lost on the road between 9.00 and 10.00 in the morning. The finder is requested to return the same to the mayor's office or to Mr. James, the caretaker of this public hall. There will be a reward of 20 shillings."

- i. Did all the people rise on hearing the sound of drumbeat?
- ii. What was the announcement made by the drummer?
- iii. Who was the owner of the lost pocketbook?
- iv. Where was the pocketbook lost?

## The Reward

(Lord Dunsany)

Our talk at the Club one day was of opportunity and determination. Some said opportunity was required for success, and millions never had it; other that only determination was needed. And then Jorkens joined in, all for determination. If a man was determined to get anything, and stuck to it long enough, he got it, said Jorkens.

'Anything?' asked Terbut.

'Anything,' Jorkens replied, 'so long as he sticks to it, and sticks to it hard enough and long enough. Anything whatever.'

Terbut disagreed.

'Life is like a race,' Jorkens went on, 'in which they tire after a while and sit down, or get interested in something else instead. The man who keeps on wins the race.'

'And suppose a man wanted to be skating champion of the Sahara,' said Terbut, 'and couldn't afford the money to get there.'

'He'd make the money,' said Jorkens. 'And he'd build a skating-rink in the Sahara and organize a competition there. He'd be skating champion all right, if he really gives all his time to it.'

'Could you tell us a case like that?' asked one of us.

'As a matter of fact, I can,' said Jorkens, 'a very similar case.'

'Let's hear it,' said Terbut.

'There was a young fellow,' said Jorkens, 'to whom his parents probably used to say the very things that we have been saying now; and very likely he, as many young fellows do, may have wanted to prove them wrong. I don't know: it was a long time ago. But, whatever his motive was, he hit on a most extraordinary ambition, and stuck to it. It was nothing less than to be appointed Court acrobat.'

'What?' said Terbut.

'Acrobat,' Jorkens went on, 'to the Court of the country in which he lived.'

'What kind of country was that?' asked Terbut.

'Never mind what country it was,' said Jorkens. 'And as a matter of fact its customs weren't so silly as you suppose. They had no post of Court acrobat, and never had had. But that didn't stop young Gorgios. That was his name. He was a good athlete when he came by his wild idea at about the age of sixteen, and had won the high jump and the hurdles and the hundred yards at his school.'

'Well, there was opportunity,' argued Terbut, 'if he was born a good athlete.'

'But wait a moment,' said Jorkens. 'You don't remain an athlete all your life, and he still had to get the post created.'

'How did he do that?' asked Terbut.

'Simply by sticking to it,' said Jorkens. 'He went into politics. They all do in that country. But he went into them harder than anyone else, and never gave up his ambition. Of course he made speeches, and fine ones, on many other subjects; but all the while he stuck to his one idea. The years went by, and the day came when he had power enough to preach his ambition openly, and he told them how the glory of their country and of its ancient throne would be increased if the post of Court acrobat were created. He gave examples of other Courts and greater ones. Of course many opposed him: that is politics. Of course it took a long time: that is politics too. But as the years went by he wore down opposing arguments, till he had taught people what a lesson it would be to all the nations to have a young athlete at Court exhibiting perfect physical fitness, and how such an example would strengthen their soldiers and enable them finally to win the just rights of the nation in victorious battle against their accursed neighbours. And so the idea caught on; and to make a very long story short, the post of Court acrobat was duly created.'

'Both parents of Gorgios were by then long dead. By then, little remained to be done: he had only to stick for a few more days to that wild idea of his, and then, when the question arose of choosing an athlete to fill the newly-made post, whom could they choose but the man who had worked for it all those years?'

'So Gorgios was appointed acrobat to the Court, and learned so late in life, what always takes time, that his parents were right after all. It only remained then to inaugurate him. And that is where I came on the scene, wandering about Europe as I used to do in those days when food used to be cheap and I was young and could easily walk long distances. I came to that country and they were wonderfully friendly, and they let me see the great ceremony, which took place as soon after the creation of the post as Gorgios's uniform could be got ready. And very magnificent clothing it was, a tight-fitting suit of red velvet, all gay with gold buttons and shining with lines of gold lace that wound and twisted about it. The great throne-room had been turned into a kind of gymnasium, with the members of the Royal House seated along a raised platform at one end, and the principal officers standing beside and behind them. Great curtains of red and gold were hung along the walls, and the high swings of acrobats hung down with gilded ropes from the ceiling, and a row of neat hurdles was arranged on the polished floor: like the ones over which Gorgios had won his race when at school. Lights glittered, a band in pale green and gold played softly, and it was indeed a splendid scene. I will not describe it to you, because everything there, the uniforms and the ladies' brilliant dresses, was utterly put in the shade by the moment when the doors opened with a flood of golden light, and the old man in his brilliant uniform appeared between them for the crowning of his life's work. His white hair and the red uniform of the Court acrobat showed each other off to perfection, and his thin figure worn with age was made all the more melancholy by the tight-fitting uniform. As though tired by his long patience and the work of a lifetime, he walked slowly in his pointed shoes and leaned on a gilded stick. He came to the hurdles that he remembered, over which once he had won so easy a victory. As he came to the first he looked up for a moment with a slightly sad expression towards the royal platform, as

though he asked some question with his eyes. Whatever the question was it was at once understood: royal smiles were directed towards him, and gentle applause broke out from every hand, which he understood at once, and the old bent form moved on away from the hurdle. Once he raised a hand to touch the lowest of the swings that were hung from the ceiling. But again the applause broke out, assuring him that no actual activity was expected of him. And so; having made his bows, he was led to a seat, his life's ambition achieved. It must have taken him more than sixty years to do it, since first he came by that strange ambition of his. But he did it. Not many stick to a thing for so long.'

And Jorkens uttered a quiet sigh, so clearly mourning over some lost ambition that he himself had given up, that not even Terbut asked him what it was.

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### About the Author

Lord Dunsany (1878 – 1957) like James Joyce was an Irishman. He has been described as one of the most charming of modern Irish writers of stories and plays. He was educated at Eton, one of England's most famous public schools, and at Sandhurst Military College. He is considered the narrator of fantastic adventures. "The Reward" is an example of such stories.

### Theme

The story is a fantastic adventure of a young man, Gorgios, a good athlete of his age. He hit on a wild idea of becoming a Court acrobat. He worked for it and stuck to it long enough, and remained determined in his mission. He ultimately succeeded in achieving his ambition in more than sixty years without using any short cut or becoming frustrated. A person who remains determined and keeps on his struggle wins his ambition.

### Reading Notes

skating-rink	a place made for skating
hit on	thought of
just rights, accursed neighbours	one's own country is always right, and its enemies are always wrong.
inaugurate him	appoint him officially
wound	(past tense of wind) move in curves
in pale green and gold	in pale green uniforms with gold lace on them
was put in the shades	seemed less brilliant by comparison
the crowning	the supreme moment, the reward
from every hand	from every side

## EXERCISES

## 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. Jorkens said that a man who wanted to succeed had to be  
a) an athlete. b) a determined person.  
c) a lucky man. d) a hardworking person.
- ii. The man who keeps on wins  
a) the reward. b) the race.  
c) the shield. d) the trophy.
- iii. He'd be skating champion if he really gave  
a) some money. b) his passion.  
c) all his time to it. d) his energies.
- iv. He hit on a most extraordinary ambition, to be appointed  
a) an inspector. b) a magistrate.  
c) a clerk. d) a Court acrobat.
- v. At the age of sixteen he won the  
a) high jump. b) the hurdles.  
c) the hundred yards race. d) high jump, the hurdles and the hundred yards.
- vi. Gorgios probably wanted to  
a) make his country powerful. b) prove his parents wrong.  
c) wear a splendid uniform. d) create a post of Court acrobat.
- vii. When Gorgios was inaugurated, the people applauded because he  
a) had achieved his ambition.  
b) looked splendid in his uniform.  
c) performed on the hurdles and swings.  
d) defeated his enemies.
- viii. The great throne-room had been turned into a kind of  
a) swimming pool. b) gymnasium.  
c) stadium. d) race track.
- ix. Terbut  
a) asked Jorkens what his own ambition was?  
b) believed Jorkens' story. c) disagreed with Jorkens.  
d) improved Jorkens' story.
- x. Gorgios achieved his ambition by  
a) building a skating-rink. b) going into politics.  
c) getting an opportunity. d) winning the hundred yards.

2. **Mark the sentences true or false.**

- i. They talked of money and determination.
- ii. Gorgios wanted to prove his parents wrong.
- iii. He went into politics to persuade them.
- iv. The creation of a post of Court acrobat would increase the glory of the country.
- v. It would inspire them to win the just rights.
- vi. Many athletes competed for the post of a Court acrobat.
- vii. The magnificent uniform of Gorgios impressed them all.
- viii. Everyone was sad on the inauguration.
- ix. The band played softly.
- x. Gorgios looked up with a slightly sad expression towards the royal platform.

3. **Answer the following questions. (in one or two sentences).**

- i. What was the subject discussed at the Club?
- ii. What did Terbut think of Jorkens' argument?
- iii. How did Jorkens convince that a man can become a skating champion of the Sahara?
- iv. How did Gorgios persuade his people to make his country strong?
- v. What was the viewpoint of the parents of Gorgios?
- vi. What were the arrangements made for the function of inauguration?
- vii. Describe the scene of inauguration. Write five sentences.
- viii. What were the feelings of Gorgios on the occasion?
- ix. Did Gorgios use any short cut to achieve his ambition?
- x. How long had Gorgios to stick to get his ambition achieved?

4. **Answer the following questions in 50 - 100 words.**

- i. Discuss the political views of Jorkens.
- ii. How did Gorgios achieve his ambition?
- iii. Do you agree or disagree with the viewpoint of the writer? Give five reasons.
- iv. Why were the brilliant dresses put in the shade at the inauguration?
- v. What is the lesson that the story teaches?

5. **Connect part of Column I with the relevant part of Column II.**

Column I	Column II
Some said opportunity was	ambition openly.
He was a good athlete when	few more days to that wild idea.
He went into them harder	food used to be cheap.
He had power to preach his	showed each other off to perfection.
He had only to stick for a	than sixty years to do it.
I used to do in those days when	than anyone else.
His white hair and the red uniform	he came by his wild idea.
It must have taken him more	required for success.

**6. Punctuate the following lines.**

life is like a race jorkens went on in which they tire after a while and sit down or get interested in something else instead the man who keeps on wins the race

**7. Complete these sentences with the correct forms of the verbs in brackets.**

- i. Jorkens said that if a man (be) determined to get anything, and (stick) to it long enough, he (get) it.
- ii. If a man (want) to be a skating champion of the Sahara, and (can) not afford the money to get there, he'd (make) the money.
- iii. He (be) skating champion if he really (give) all his time to it.
- iv. It was thought that the glory of the country (be) increased if the post of Court acrobat (be) created.
- v. It was decided that if a good athlete (can) be found, they (make) him Court acrobat.

**8. Use the following phrasal verbs in your sentences.**

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| a) get in | b) get out |
| c) get on | d) get off |

**9. Read the passage and answer the questions given at the end.**

'Simply by sticking to it,' said Jorkens. 'He went into politics. They all do in that country. But he went into them harder than anyone else, and never gave up his ambition. Of course he made speeches, and fine ones, on many other subjects; but all the while he stuck to his one idea. The years went by, and the day came when he had power enough to preach his ambition openly, and he told them how the glory of their country and of its ancient throne would be increased if the post of Court acrobat were created. He gave examples of other Courts and greater ones. Of course many opposed him: that is politics. Of course it took a long time: that is politics too. But as the years went by he wore down the opposing arguments, till he had taught people what a lesson it would be to all the nations to have a young athlete at Court exhibiting perfect physical fitness and how such an example would strengthen their soldiers and enable them finally to win the just rights of the nation in victorious battle against their accursed neighbours. And so the idea caught on; and to make a very long story short, the post of Court acrobat was duly created.'

- a) Who joined the politics?
- b) How can the glory of the country be increased?
- c) How was the post of a Court acrobat created?
- d) Write down the main idea of the paragraph.

## The Use of Force

(William Carlos Williams)

"Please come down as soon as you can, my daughter is very sick."

When I arrived, I was met by the mother, a big startled looking woman, very clean and apologetic who merely said, "Is this the doctor?" and let me in. She added, "You must excuse us, doctor, we have her in the kitchen where it is warm. It is very damp here sometimes."

The child was fully dressed and sitting on her father's lap near the kitchen table. He tried to get up, but I motioned for him not to bother. I could see that they were all very nervous, eyeing me up and down distrustfully. As often, in such cases, they weren't telling me more than they had to, it was up to me to tell them; that's why they were spending three dollars on me.

The child was fairly eating me up with her cold, steady eyes, and no expression on her face whatever. She did not move and seemed, inwardly, quiet; an unusually attractive little thing, and as strong as a heifer in appearance. But her face was flushed, she was breathing rapidly, and I realized that she had a high fever. She had magnificent blonde hair, in profusion. One of those picture children often reproduced in advertising leaflets and the photogravure sections of the Sunday papers.

"She's had a fever for three days," began the father, "and we don't know what it comes from. My wife has given her things, you know, like people do, but it doesn't do any good. And there's been a lot of sickness around. So we tho't you'd better look her over and tell us what the matter is."

As doctors often do, I took a trial shot at it as a point of departure. "Has she had a sore throat?"

Both parents answered me together, "No.... No, she says her throat doesn't hurt her."

"Does your throat hurt you?" added the mother to the child. But the little girl's expression didn't change nor did she move her eyes from my face.

"Have you looked?"

"I tried to," said the mother, but I couldn't see.

"As it happens we had been having a number of cases of diphtheria in the school to which this child went during that month and we were all, quite apparently thinking of that, though no one had as yet spoken of the thing".

"Well," I said, "suppose we take a look at the throat first. I smiled in my best professional manner and asking for the child's first name I said, come on, Mathilda, open your mouth and let's take a look at your throat."

"Nothing doing."



"Aw, come on," I coaxed, "just open your mouth wide and let me take a look." "Look," I said opening both hands wide, "I haven't anything in my hands. Just open up and let me see."

"Such a nice man," put in the mother. "Look how kind he is to you. Come on, do what he tells you to. He won't hurt you."

At that I ground my teeth in disgust. If only they wouldn't use the word "hurt" I might be able to get somewhere. But I did not allow myself to be hurried or disturbed but speaking quietly and slowly I approached the child again.

As I moved my chair a little nearer, suddenly with one catlike movement, both her hands clawed instinctively for my eyes and she almost reached them too. In fact she knocked my glasses flying and they fell, though unbroken, several feet away from me on the kitchen floor.

Both the mother and father almost turned themselves inside out in embarrassment and apology. "You bad girl," said the mother, taking her and shaking her by one arm. "Look what you've done. The nice man...."

"For Heaven's sake," I broke in. "Don't call me a nice man to her. I'm here to look at her throat on the chance that she might have diphtheria and possibly die of it." But that's nothing to her. "Look here," I said to the child, "we're going to look at your throat. You're old enough to understand what I'm saying. Will you open it now by yourself or shall we have to open it for you?"

Not a move. Even her expression hadn't changed. Her breaths, however, were coming faster and faster. Then the battle began. I had to do it. I had to have a throat culture for her own protection. But first I told the parents that it was entirely up to them. I explained the danger but said that I would not insist on a throat examination so long as they would take the responsibility.

"If you don't do what the doctor says you'll have to go to the hospital," the mother admonished her severely.

"Put her in front of you on your lap," I ordered, "and hold both her wrists."

But as soon as he did the child let out a scream. "Don't, you're hurting me. Let go off my hands. Let them go I tell you." Then she shrieked terrifyingly, hysterically. "Stop it! You're killing me!"

"Do you think she can stand it, doctor?" said the mother.

"You get out," said the husband to his wife. "Do you want her to die of diphtheria?"

"Come on now, hold her," I said.

Then I grasped the child's head with my left hand and tried to get the wooden tongue depressor between her teeth. She fought, with clenched teeth, desperately! But now I also had grown furious – at a child. I tried to hold myself down but I couldn't. I know how to expose a throat for inspection. And I did my best. When finally I got the wooden spatula behind the last teeth and just the point of it into the mouth cavity, she opened up for an instant

but before I could see anything she came down again and gripped the wooden blade between her molars. She reduced it to splinters before I could get it out again.

“Aren't you ashamed,” the mother yelled at her. “Aren't you ashamed to act like that in front of the doctor?”

“Get me a smooth-handled spoon of some sort,” I told the mother, “We're going through with this.” The child's mouth was already bleeding. Her tongue was cut and she was screaming in wild hysterical shrieks. Perhaps I should have desisted and come back in an hour or more. No doubt it would have been better. But I have seen, at least, two children lying dead in bed of neglect in such cases, and feeling that I must get a diagnosis now or never I went at it again. But the worst of it was that I too had got beyond reason. I could have torn the child apart in my own fury and enjoyed it. It was a pleasure to attack her. My face was burning with it.

In the final unreasoning assault I overpowered the child's neck and jaws. I forced the heavy silver spoon back of her teeth and down her throat till she gagged. And there it was - both tonsils covered with membrane. She had fought valiantly to keep me from knowing her secret. She had been hiding that sore throat for three days at least and lying to her parents in order to escape just such an outcome as this.

Now truly she was furious. She had been on the defensive before but now she attacked. Tried to get off her father's lap and fly at me while tears of defeat blinded her eyes.

\*\*\*\*\*

## About the Author

William Carlos Williams (1883 - 1963) practised medicine in Rutherford, New Jersey, the factory town in which he was born. *Selected Poems* appeared in 1949, *Collected Later Poetry* (1950), and *Collected Poems* (1951). His long epic poem, *Paterson*, won the National Book Award for poetry in 1950. *Desert Music* appeared in 1954, *Journey to love* in 1955. He has also written novels, *White Mule* (1937) and *In the Money* (1940); short stories, *Life Along the Passic* (1938) *Selected Essays* (1954); and an *Autobiography* (1951). He received the *Bollingen Award* for poetry in 1953. The simple and direct language in this short story heightens the intensity of the feelings of the doctor, the parents, and the child.

## Theme

The use of force, in certain conditions, when sick children resist to get themselves examined, becomes necessary to save their lives. Otherwise, there is every likelihood of the danger of their death for not getting medically treated. The doctor, while examining a sick child suffering from high fever, first behaved gently. But when the sick child resisted to open her mouth, the doctor had no choice but to overpower her, and forced her to open the mouth by placing the heavy silver spoon at the back of her teeth, and saw the tonsils covered with membrane - the real cause of her illness.

## Reading Notes

startled	shocked
motioned for him not to bother	directed him to remain in that position
distrustfully	not trusting or believing
eating me up	looking angrily
heifer	young cow
tho't	thought
diphtheria	acute infectious disease with inflammation of throat
coaxed	get somebody to do something with kindness and patience
embarrassment	to make feel ashamed or awkward
admonished	gave a mild warning
contemptible	deserving or provoking contempt
hysterically	with violent motion
clenched	tightly shut (closed)
furious	angry
spatula	tool with a wide blade
splinters	pieces, bits

## EXERCISES

### I. Choose the correct answer.

- i. Who is 'T' in the story?
  - a) the father
  - b) the doctor
  - c) the mother
  - d) the sick child
- ii. The parents were nervous because
  - a) they did not want to tell the doctor anything.
  - b) they did not know what to say.
  - c) they wanted the doctor to tell them everything.
  - d) the child did not tell anything.

- iii. The doctor was impressed
- by the beauty of the child.
  - by the patience of the child.
  - by the patience of the parents.
  - by the picture of the child he had seen in Sunday's paper.
- iv. The doctor took a 'trial shot of it' means
- he made a wild guess to begin with.
  - he gave her a shot (injection).
  - he took parents to task.
  - he examined the girl carefully.
- v. The doctor feared that the child might be suffering from diphtheria.
- from the appearance of the child
  - The parents told him so.
  - from the examination of the child
  - He guessed because there had been such cases in the local school.
- vi. The child did not respond to the doctor's instructions because
- she was afraid of the doctor.
  - she was a stubborn child.
  - her parents had tried to open her mouth.
  - she was angry.
- vii. The doctor ground his teeth in anger because
- the child did not respond.
  - the mother told the girl, "he would not hurt you".
  - the parents did not let him handle the child.
  - the child had knocked his glasses.
- viii. The doctor had almost succeeded in opening the mouth of the girl but failed to see because
- the child resisted strongly.
  - the parental love made the father release her at the last moment.
  - the rough handling hurt the child.
  - the mother stopped him.

**2. Mark the sentences true or false.**

- The story is about a sick child.
- The parents take the child to the doctor.
- The doctor is impressed by the innocent beauty of the child.

- iv. The doctor thinks that the girl may be suffering from diphtheria.
- v. The doctor makes a guess because there have been some diphtheria cases in the local school.
- vi. The girl refuses to open her mouth for examination.
- vii. Parents joined the doctor in opening her mouth.
- viii. They succeeded in opening her mouth.

**3. Answer the following questions.**

- i. What was the condition of the parents on the arrival of the doctor?
- ii. What was the behaviour of the child towards the doctor?
- iii. She had a fever for three days, hadn't she?
- iv. Did the girl change her expression when the doctor said, "Does your throat hurt you?"
- v. Why did the doctor call the sick girl by her first name?
- vi. Did the sick girl promptly respond to the instruction of the doctor?
- vii. Why did the parents rebuke her?
- viii. What was the threat of the doctor to the child if she did not show her throat?
- ix. Why did she break the wooden blade?
- x. What was the condition of the tonsils of the sick girl?

**4. Answer the following questions in 50 - 100 words.**

- i. How did the child look by appearance?
- ii. Why did the parents keep the sick child in the kitchen?
- iii. How did the doctor succeed in examining her throat?
- iv. Describe the feelings of the doctor in his struggle to diagnose the disease.
- v. Compare and contrast the conduct of a healthy child and a sick child.
- vi. Under what circumstances can the use of force be justified?

**5. Write down the correct form of the verb in each sentence.**

- i. When I (arrive) I (meet) my mother.
- ii. I (motion) for him not to bother.
- iii. I (move) my chair a little nearer.
- iv. She (knock) my glasses flying and they (fall).
- v. I (explain) the danger.
- vi. They (grow) more and more (crush).
- vii. Then she (shriek) terrifyingly.
- viii. Then I (grasp) the child's head with my left hand.

- ix. She (open) up her mouth for an instant.
- x. She (reduce) it to splinters before I (can) get it out again.

**6. Punctuate the following lines.**

does your throat hurt you added the mother to the child but the little girls expression didn't change nor did she move her eyes from my face

**7. Use the following words in your sentences.**

start, motion, trust, magnificent, leaflet

**8. Fill in the blanks.**

- i. I mentioned it \_\_\_\_\_ her.
- ii. It was \_\_\_\_\_ to me to tell them.
- iii. I took a trial shot \_\_\_\_\_ it.
- iv. We were all quite thinking \_\_\_\_\_ that.
- v. I haven't anything \_\_\_\_\_ my hands.

**9. Use the following phrasal verbs in your sentences.**

- i. sit on
- ii. sit in
- iii. come from
- iv. come off

**10. Answer the questions given at the end of the paragraph.**

Then I grasped the child's head with my left hand and tried to get the wooden tongue depressor between her teeth. She fought, with clenched teeth, desperately! But now I also had grown furious – at a child. I tried to hold myself down but I couldn't. I know how to expose a throat for inspections. And I did my best. When finally I got the wooden spatula behind the last teeth and just the point of it into the mouth cavity, she opened up for an instant but before I could see anything she came down again and gripped the wooden blade between her molars. She reduced it to splinters before I could get it out again.

- i. Why did the doctor become furious?
- ii. What instrument did the doctor use to open her mouth?
- iii. Why did she grip the wooden blade between her molars?
- iv. Write down the main idea of the paragraph.

## The Gulistan of Sa'di

(Sheikh Sa'di)

Sheikh Sa'di was a great storyteller. He speaks to all nations and is perpetually modern, said Emerson. He thought of the Gulistan as one of the bibles of the world, for he found in it the universality of moral law. The Gulistan translated in Latin and English, became love for the people. It is interesting to note that English scholars used Sa'di's translated parables in their divine books till it was discovered to be an English translation of a Latin version of Persian origin. Edwin Arnold has aptly described Gulistan in culinary terms as "an intellectual pilaf, a literary curry; a kebab of a versatile genius". The readers are sure to enjoy these parables as food for thought.

### I

Once a king and a Persian slave were sailing in the same boat. The slave had never been at sea, and never experienced any calamity. After sometime the boat was hit by a storm and started tossing. It was very inconvenient for the passengers. All remained quiet except the slave who in fear of being drowned began to cry and tremble, and created inconvenience for the others. The others tried to pacify him by kindness and affection but he didn't hear anybody. When the uneasiness lasted longer the king also became displeased.

In that boat there happened to be a sergeant, who said, "With your permission, may I quieten him."

"It will be a great favour," the king said. The sergeant ordered the slave to be thrown into the water, so that he could have experienced the true danger of life. Two persons threw him in the sea and when he was about to be drowned they pulled him back to the boat, and he clung the stern with both of his hands. Then he sat down and remained quiet. This appeared strange to the king, who could not comprehend the wisdom in the action taken by the sergeant, and he asked for it. The sergeant replied:

"Before he had experienced the danger of being drowned, he knew not about the safety of the boat. A man does not realize the worth of safety from the misfortune until he has tasted it."

### II

It is related that while a deer was being roasted for Nushirvan, a king of Persia, famous for his justice, no salt could be found. A boy was sent to a village to bring some salt. The boy brought it and presented it to the king who asked whether he had paid for it.

"No," said the boy.

"Pay for the salt," said the king, "lest it should become a custom and the village be ruined."

Having been asked what harm could arise from such a trifling demand.

“The foundation of oppression was small in the world,” said the king.

“Whoever enlarged it, so that it reached its present magnitude, is at fault. If the king eats one apple from the garden of a subject, his slaves will pull down the whole tree. For five eggs, which the king allows to be taken by force, the people belonging to his army will put a thousand fowls on the spit.”

A tyrant does not remain in the world, but the curse on him abides for ever!

### III

A king fell seriously ill and all hopes of his recovery vanished. The more the disease was cured the more it became painful. At last the physicians agreed that this disease could not be cured except by means of bile of a person endowed with certain qualities. Orders were issued to search for an individual of this kind. A son of a farmer was discovered to possess the qualities mentioned by the doctors. The king summoned the father and mother of the boy, whose consent he got by giving them a huge amount of wealth. The Qazi issued a decree to shed the blood of a person for the health of the king. The boy was brought to the altar and the executioner was directed to slaughter the boy. When all was ready the boy looked toward the sky and smiled.

“Why do you laugh in such a position?”, the king asked.

“A son looks to the affection of his parents,” said the boy. “If they fail, they are expected to bring the case before the Qazi to seek justice. But in the present case, the parents have agreed to get my blood shed for the trash of this world. The Qazi has issued a decree to kill me. The king thinks he will recover his health only through slaying me and I see no other refuge besides Allah Almighty. To whom shall I complain against your brutality, if I am to seek justice from your hand?”

The king felt disturbed and on hearing these words he could not control his tears and said, “It is better for me to die than to shed the blood of an innocent boy.” He kissed the head and eyes of the boy and presented him with a lot of wealth. It is said that the king also recovered within a week.

### About the Author

Sheikh Sa'di (1184–1292), like Homer and Shakespeare, was a great storyteller. He belonged to Persia. He travelled from India in the East to Tripoli in the West and wrote *Gulistan*, the great work of all times. The translations of *Gulistan* soon won the admiration of the European scholars.

### Theme

The morals and virtues of the kings affect their people a lot. The more unjust the king is, the more troubled his country will be. The prosperity of the people depends upon the virtues of the ruler.



## Reading Notes

perpetually	forever
parable	simple story designed to teach
appreciated	admired
culinary	of cooking or of kitchen
versatile	interested in and clever at many different things; having various uses
calamity	great and serious misfortune or disaster
tossing	shaking
inconvenient	causing discomfort, troublesome
pacify	calm and quieten
affection	fondness / attachment
afflicts	causes bodily or mental trouble
trifling	ordinary, small
tyrant	cruel or unjust ruler
brutality	cruelty, savagery

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. The slave had never experienced any
  - a) pleasure.
  - b) calamity.
  - c) rule.
  - d) war.
- ii. The boat started tossing means that the boat
  - a) remained peaceful.
  - b) started flying.
  - c) started shaking.
  - d) sank.

- iii. The slave began to cry and tremble
- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| a) in joy of getting a reward. | b) in fear of being drowned.                |
| c) by seeing others crying.    | d) by the punishment inflicted by the king. |
- iv. The slave was thrown into water
- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| a) to catch a fish.                       | b) to drink water. |
| c) to experience the true danger of life. | d) to swim.        |
- v. Who was Nushirvan?
- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| a) a slave       | b) a sergeant       |
| c) an accountant | d) a king of Persia |
- vi. The king was famous for his
- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| a) cruelty.   | b) justice.    |
| c) injustice. | d) wickedness. |
- vii. "The foundation of oppression was small in the world" means
- |  |
|--|
| a) the condition of being ruled unjustly was found in the world. |
| b) the foundation of the building was small.                     |
| c) the oppression was not deep rooted.                           |
| d) there was little cruelty in the world.                        |
- viii. The king fell seriously ill and all hopes of his recovery
- |                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| a) enlightened.   | b) went out of existence. |
| c) were expected. | d) faded.                 |
- ix. For what purpose did the parents give consent to kill their son?
- |  |
|--|
| a) for reputation                            |
| b) for money                                 |
| c) to get rid of the naughty boy             |
| d) to escape the duty of bringing up the boy |
- x. On hearing the words of the boy the king could not control his
- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| a) army. | b) people. |
| c) rule. | d) tears.  |
- xi. The boy saved his life by praying to
- |             |                    |
|-------------|--------------------|
| a) Qazi.    | b) king.           |
| c) parents. | d) Allah Almighty. |

**2. Mark the sentences true or false.**

- i. A Persian slave was not sailing in a king's boat.

- ii. The slave was used to voyaging.
- iii. All the passengers remained quiet except the slave.
- iv. He was pacified by the sergeant.
- v. The king punished the sergeant for throwing the slave into the water.
- vi. The king of Persia was famous for his justice.
- vii. The boy paid the price of salt.
- viii. The king got the consent of the parents by giving them a huge amount of wealth.
- ix. The boy looked towards the king and smiled.
- x. The king shed the blood of the innocent boy.

**3. Answer the following questions.**

- i. What was the advice given by Nushirvan to his people?
- ii. What was the remedy suggested by the physicians for the disease of the king?
- iii. Why did the boy look towards the sky and smile?
- iv. What should be the role of a Qazi?
- v. Why did the king weep?
- vi. How did the king recover?

**4. Answer the following questions in 50 - 100 words.**

- i. Write a note on the character of Nushirvan.
- ii. What should be the role of a king?
- iii. Can an unjust king flourish?
- iv. What moral lesson do you get from the second tale?
- v. Compare and contrast the three tales.
- vi. Describe an event in which the trouble of one person affects the others.

**5. Fill in the blanks from the words given below.**

(by, of, at, to, in, more, through, for)

- i. The slave had never been \_\_\_\_\_ sea.
- ii. The others tried to pacify him \_\_\_\_\_ kindness.
- iii. A man does not realize the worth \_\_\_\_\_ safety.
- iv. A boy was sent to a village \_\_\_\_\_ bring salt.
- v. The foundation of oppression was small \_\_\_\_\_ the world.
- vi. The more the disease cured the \_\_\_\_\_ it became painful.
- vii. Why do you laugh \_\_\_\_\_ such a position?

- viii. The parents have agreed to get my bloodshed \_\_\_\_\_ the trash of this world.  
 ix. He will recover his health only \_\_\_\_\_ slaying me.  
 x. The king presented a lot \_\_\_\_\_ wealth.

6. Use the following words in your sentences.

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| a) calamity   | b) inconvenience |
| c) permission | d) drowned       |
| e) enlarge    | f) executioner   |

7. Use the following phrasal verbs in your sentences.

- |            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| a) hit by  | b) hit upon  |
| c) ask for | d) ask after |

8. Punctuate the following lines.

if they fail they are expected to bring the case before the qazi to seek justice but in the present case the parents have agreed to get my bloodshed for the trash of this world

9. Read the passage and answer the questions given at the end.

A king fell seriously ill and all hopes of his recovery vanished. The more the disease was cured the more it became painful. At last the physicians agreed that this disease cannot be cured except by means of bile of a person endued with certain qualities. Orders were issued to search for an individual of this kind. A son of a farmer was discovered to possess the qualities mentioned by the doctors. The King summoned the father and mother of the boy, whose consent he got by giving them a huge amount of wealth. The Qazi issued a decree to shed the blood of a person for the health of the king. The boy was brought to the altar and the executioner was directed to slaughter the boy. When all was ready the boy looked toward the sky and smiled.

1. What was the cure suggested by the physicians for the ailment of the king?
2. How did the king get the consent of the parents of the boy?
3. Why did the Qazi issue a decree to shed the blood of a boy?
4. Why did the boy look toward the sky?
5. Give the main idea of the passage.

## The Foolish Quack

(Folk Tale)

One evening, as the sun was setting, some travellers stayed to rest under a clump of trees, and, loosening their camels, set them to graze. It happened that one of the animals entered a melon-field, and that a melon stuck in its throat. The owner, seeing this and fearing to lose the animal, tied a blanket round its throat, and then struck the place with all his might. Instantly the melon broke in the throat of the camel, and it was then easily swallowed.

A certain man who had just come up, looking on and observing this proceeding, shouldered his bundle, and, going to the next village, pretended that he was a doctor.

"But what can you cure?" asked the villagers.

"I can cure the goitre," answered the quack.

An old woman, whose throat was swollen to a frightful size, exclaimed: "O my son, if you could only cure my goitre, I would bless you for evermore!"

"Certainly," answered the man, "here, bring me a blanket and a good-sized mallet."

As soon as they were brought, he tied up the woman's throat, and struck the swollen part with so much force that the poor old creature instantly expired.

"Ah," cried the people, "this fellow is a villain!"

So they seized him, being minded to carry him before the king. One of them, however, said: "She was a very old woman, who must have died shortly in any case. Let us therefore compel the wretch to dig her grave, and then we can beat him and let him go." So they took him and set him to work, but the ground was so stiff and hard that he made slow progress.

"If you do not dig it," said they, "before the king you shall go, and then you will be hanged."

Thus exhorted the unfortunate man, in the greatest fear, laboured away with all his might; and at last, when the villagers saw that he had finished his task and buried the victim of his mistaken treatment, they beat him well and let him go.

Uninfluenced by the severity of his punishment, the man mounted his camel and went on to the next village, and again gave himself out as a great doctor.

"And what can you cure?" said someone.

"I can cure goitre," answered he.

This time it was an old man who offered himself for treatment. But the pretended doctor said: "Look here, good people. I shall do my best to cure this case; but remember, if I am so unfortunate as to kill him, I am not to be compelled to dig the man's grave."

"A pretty sort of doctor you must be!" cried they, "before you begin your treatment,

you are talking of digging the patient's grave! Away with you; we shall have nothing to do with you."

Hearing this, the pretended doctor began to say to himself: "What an extraordinary thing this is! My best plan surely is to return to the camel-men and tell them they have not shown me the right way to cure this disease. Perhaps they will advise me."

When he had overtaken them, he cried: "What foolish men you must be! I met an old woman who suffered from goitre just like your camel, and I tied a blanket round her neck and struck her with a mallet, but, instead of recovering like your camel, she died, and instead of getting a fee I was compelled to dig her grave!"

"It is not we who are stupid," answered the camel-men, "but you. We are not stupid at all. These animals are camels of prodigious size and strength. How was a feeble old woman to stand the blow of a mallet? No; it is you, and you only, who are stupid."

One of the men now stepped forward, saying to his friends: "You remain quiet, and leave this fellow to me." Then, addressing himself to the newcomer, he cried: "Hear you, sir, these men do not understand the matter at all. I can set it all right for you in a minute." Saying this, he lifted a heavy stick, bound with iron rings, and struck a camel which was feeding off the leaves of a wild plum-tree. The stolid creature, scarcely feeling the blow, merely moved a step or two forward. "You observe," said the man, "the effect of this treatment on the camel. Now observe its effect on a human being!" He then struck the man himself a similar blow, which felled him to the earth like a log. When consciousness returned, this bewildered victim inquired: "Why, sir, this cruel usage?"

"Do you not perceive?" answered the camel-man. "I wished to show you that what is good for camels is not good for poor old men and women."

"Ah," said the wretched man, "I now begin to see my error. Never, never again shall I set myself up for a doctor!"

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(Translated by Rev. Charles Swynnerton, F.S.A. author of 'The Adventures of Raja Rasalu'.)

### Theme

What is good for camels is not good for old men and women. The story reveals the foolishness of a quack that applied the cure of a camel to an old woman who died instantly and he got the punishment.

### Reading Notes

goitre	morbidity swelling in thyroid gland (in the neck)
mallet	hammer with a wooden head
being minded	with the intention

stiff	hard
exhorted	urged
prodigious	enormous

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. Where did the travellers stay?
  - a) in an inn
  - b) in a jungle
  - c) in a haveli
  - d) under a clump of trees
- ii. Why did the camel fall ill?
  - a) by heat stroke
  - b) by infection
  - c) when a melon stuck in its throat
  - d) by poison
- iii. What did a quack claim to cure?
  - a) fever
  - b) goitre
  - c) headache
  - d) injury
- iv. What had happened to the throat of an old woman?
  - a) infectious
  - b) swollen
  - c) wounded
  - d) paining
- v. What punishment did the villagers propose on the death of the old woman?
  - a) to pay the damages
  - b) to be persecuted
  - c) to dig her grave
  - d) to be imprisoned
- vi. How was the quack treated when he had dug the grave?
  - a) honoured
  - b) rewarded
  - c) beaten well
  - d) fined
- vii. What was the effect of punishment on the quack?
  - a) uninfluenced
  - b) influenced
  - c) left the profession
  - d) returned disgusted
- viii. What was the condition the quack suggested before treating an old man?
  - a) to lay the old man on the bed
  - b) not to be compelled to dig the grave
  - c) not to be made responsible for the death of the man
  - d) to have the fee first

- ix. Why did the quack return to the camel-men instead of continuing his profession?
- to befool them
  - to enquire the cause of death of an old woman
  - to blame them
  - to get his luggage
- x. Who was proved stupid?
- the camel-men
  - old woman
  - the quack
  - a villager

**2. Mark the sentences true or false.**

- With the blow of mallet the melon broke in the throat of the camel.
- The camel swallowed the broken melon and felt all right.
- The quack cured the old woman.
- The quack was compelled to dig the grave.
- The villagers of next village refused to get the old man treated.
- The quack returned to the camel-men to tell them that they had shown the right way to cure the disease.
- The camel can bear the blow of a mallet but not the old man.
- There was little effect of the blow of a whip on the camel.

**3. Answer the following questions.**

- What is a clump of trees?
- What was stuck in the camel's throat?
- What did the quack pretend to cure?
- What did the quack do with the old woman?
- What was the result of the cure?
- What was the punishment inflicted upon the quack by the villagers?
- For whom did the quack dig the grave?
- What did the quack do in the next village?
- Why didn't the villagers let the old man get cured?
- Why did the quack come back to the camel-men?

**4. Answer the following questions in 50 - 100 words.**

- How did the camel-men cure their camel?
- How did the quack try to cure the old woman?
- How did the quack come to realize his error?
- How did the camel-man prove the stupidity of the quack?



v. What lesson does the story teach?

**5. Use the correct forms of the verbs (given in brackets) in the following sentences.**

i. Some travellers (stay) to rest under a clump of trees.

ii. The owner (see) this and (fear) to lose the animal.

iii. A man (look) on and (observe) the proceeding.

iv. He (tie) up the woman's throat.

v. They (seize) him to carry him before the king.

vi. The man (labour) away with all his might.

vii. He (finish) his task and (bury) the victim.

viii. The man (mount) his camel and (go) to the next village.

ix. I (meet) an old woman who (suffer) from goitre.

x. When consciousness (return), this bewildered victim (inquire).

**6. Use the following phrasal verbs in your sentences.**

i. break in

ii. break out

iii. break off

iv. break down

**7. Punctuate the following lines.**

do you not perceive answered the camel-man i wished to show you that what is good for camels is not therefore good for poor old men and women

**8. Read the passage and answer the questions given at the end.**

One of the men now stepped forward, saying to his friends: "You remain quiet, and leave this fellow to me." Then, addressing himself to the newcomer, he cried: "Hear you, sir, these men do not understand the matter at all. I can set it all right for you in a minute." Saying this, he lifted a heavy stick, bound with iron rings, and struck a camel which was feeding off the leaves of a wild plum-tree. The stolid creature, scarcely feeling the blow, merely moved a step or two forward. "You observe," said the man, "the effect of this treatment on the camel. Now observe its effect on a human being!" He then struck the man himself a similar blow, which felled him to the earth like a log. When consciousness returned, this bewildered victim inquired: "Why, sir, this cruel usage?"

i. Who addressed the newcomer?

ii. With what did he strike the camel and what was the effect of it?

iii. What was the effect of the same act on the man?

iv. What lesson do you get from the passage?

## A Mild Attack of Locusts

(Doris Lessing)

“Look, look, there they are!”

Out ran Margaret to join them, looking at the hills. Out came the servants from the kitchen. They all stood and gazed. Over the rocky levels of the mountain was a streak of rust coloured air, Locusts. There they came.

At once Richard shouted at the cookboy. Old Stephen yelled at the houseboy. The cookboy ran to beat the old ploughshare, hanging from a tree branch, that was used to summon labourers at moments of crisis. The houseboy ran off to the store to collect tin cans, any old bit of metal. The farm was ringing with the clamour of the gong; and they could see the labourers come pouring out of the compound, pointing at the hills and shouting excitedly. Soon they had all come up to the house, and Richard and old Stephen were giving them orders – hurry, hurry, hurry.

And off they ran again, the two white men with them and in a few minutes Margaret could see the smoke of fires rising from all around the farmlands. Piles of wood and grass had been prepared there. There were seven patches of bared soil, yellow colour and pink, where the new mealies were just showing, making a film of bright green; and around each drifted up thick clouds of smoke. They were throwing wet leaves on to the fires now, to make it acid and black. Margaret was watching the hills. Now there was a long, low cloud advancing, rust colour still, swelling forward and out as she looked. The telephone was ringing. Neighbours – quick, quick, there come the locusts. Old Smith had had his crop eaten to the ground. Quick, get your fires started. For of course, while every farmer hoped the locusts would overlook his farm and go on to the next, it was only fair to warn each other; one must play fair. Everywhere, fifty miles over the countryside, the smoke was rising from myriads of fires. Margaret answered the telephone calls, and between calls she stood watching the locusts. The air was darkening. A strange darkness, for the sun was blazing – it was like the darkness of a veldt fire, when the air gets thick with smoke. The sunlight comes down distorted, a thick, hot orange. Oppressive it was, too, with the heaviness of a storm. The locusts were coming fast. Now half the sky was darkened. Behind the reddish veils in front, which were the advance guards of the swarm, the main swarm showed in dense black cloud, reaching almost to the sun itself.

Margaret was wondering what she could do to help. She did not know. Then up came old Stephen from the lands. “We’re finished, Margaret, finished! Those beggars can eat every leaf and blade off the farm in half an hour! And it is only early afternoon – if we can make enough smoke, make enough noise till the sun goes down, they’ll settle somewhere else perhaps....” And then: “Get the kettle going. It’s thirsty work, this.”

Looking out, all the trees were queer and still, clotted with insects, their boughs

weighed to the ground. The earth seemed to be moving, locusts crawling everywhere, she could not see the lands at all, so thick was the swarm. Toward the mountains it was like looking into driving rain – even as she watched, the sun was blotted out with a fresh onrush of them. It was a half-night, a perverted blackness. Then came a sharp crack from the bush – a branch had snapped off. Then another. A tree down the slope leaned over and settled heavily to the ground. Through the hail of insects a man came running.

“All the crops finished. Nothing left,” he said.

But the gongs were still beating, the men still shouting, and Margaret asked: “Why do you go on with it, then?”

“The main swarm isn't settling. They are heavy with eggs. They are looking for a place to settle and lay. If we can stop the main body settling on our farm, that's everything. If they get a chance to lay their eggs, we are going to have everything eaten flat with hoppers later on.” He picked a stray locust off his shirt and split down with his thumbnail – it was clotted inside with eggs. “Imagine that multiplied by millions. You ever seen a hopper swarm on the march? Well, you're lucky.”

“Is it very bad?” asked Margaret fearfully, and the old man said emphatically: “We're finished. This swarm may pass over, but once they've started, they'll be coming down from the North now one after another. And then there are the hoppers – it might go on for two or three years.”

“For the Lord's sake,” said Margaret angrily, still half-crying, “what's here is bad enough, isn't it?” For although the evening air was no longer black and thick, but a clear blue, with a pattern of insects whizzing this way and that across it, everything else – trees, buildings, bushes, earth – was gone under the moving brown masses.

But Margaret preferred not even to think of them. After the midday meal the men went off to the lands. Everything was to be replanted. With a bit of luck another swarm would not come traveling down just this way. But they hoped it would rain very soon, to spring some new grass, because the cattle would die otherwise – there was not a blade of grass left on the farm. As for Margaret, she was trying to get used to the idea of three or four years of locusts. Locusts were going to be like a bad weather, from now on, always imminent. She felt like a survivor after war – if this devastated and mangled countryside was not ruin, well, what then was ruin?

But the men ate their supper with good appetites.

“It could have been worse,” was what they said. “It could be much worse.”

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## Theme

The attack of locusts is a natural calamity that makes the human beings helpless in saving the crops, an asset and a source of living for an agriculturist. The farmers did their best to save their crops from the attack of locusts. They burnt big fires to drift up thick clouds of smoke and made loud noise by beating the tin cans to keep the insects away from their fields.

But all their attempts failed, and the insects ate every blade of their crops leaving the fields to give a look of a devastated landscape. However they did not take the loss to their hearts, and remained calm. They endured what they could not cure.

### Reading Notes

gazed	looked
clamour of gong	sharp sound of a metallic disc
swelling	increasing in size
drifted up	carried along by air or water
acid	sharp, biting (smell, taste)
myriads	very great number
veldt	open grazing land in Africa
snapped off	broken away, making a sharp sound
hoppers	young locusts
mangled	damaged
devastated	destroyed

### EXERCISES

#### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. Why did the cookboy run?
  - a) to kill the insects
  - b) to summon the labourers
  - c) to inform the landlady
  - d) to see the locusts
- ii. Why did the houseboy run off to the store?
  - a) to shut the door
  - b) to cover the store
  - c) to collect any bit of metal
  - d) to burn fire
- iii. Why did they throw wet leaves on to the fire?
  - a) to make the smoke acrid and black
  - b) to extinguish the fire
  - c) to burn the leaves
  - d) to burn the insects
- iv. "And they neither went bankrupt nor got very rich" means that they were
  - a) hand to mouth.
  - b) just pulling on their lives.
  - c) enjoying a moderate living.
  - d) penniless.
- v. How did the locusts attack the crops?
  - a) one by one
  - b) in groups
  - c) in swarms
  - d) in formations

- vi. Why did the people beat the tin cans?  
 a) to let the insects enjoy music      b) to keep the insects away  
 c) to kill the insects                      d) to fill the cans with insects
- vii. What did the farmers do at the time of attack?  
 a) They ran away from the place.  
 b) They took precautionary measures to keep the locusts away.  
 c) They covered their crops.  
 d) They shut themselves in their houses.
- viii. Locusts attack in the area of  
 a) one mile.                                      b) ten miles.  
 c) fifty miles.                                    d) a hundred miles.
- ix. What made the boughs of trees weighed to the ground?  
 a) fruit    b) locusts  
 c) birds    d) wind storm
- x. How did the land look after the locusts had moved to the south?  
 a) all green                                        b) barren  
 c) beautiful                                        d) a devastated landscape

**2. Mark the sentences true or false.**

- i. The servants looked happy.  
 ii. The old ploughshare was hanging.  
 iii. There were eleven patches of bared soil.  
 iv. The locusts were coming slowly.  
 v. The earth seemed to be motionless.  
 vi. The insects are heavy with eggs.  
 vii. Margaret preferred to think of the locusts.  
 viii. Everything was saved.  
 ix. There was not a blade of grass left on the farm.  
 x. Locusts were going to be like bad weather.

**3. Answer the following questions.**

- i. What are locusts?  
 ii. Why did the farmers throw wet leaves on fire?  
 iii. What was the desire of every farmer?  
 iv. Did Margaret know what to do to keep the locusts away?  
 v. What was the condition of trees?  
 vi. How did old Stephen treat the stray locust which he found on his shirt?  
 vii. Are the hoppers different from the locusts?  
 viii. Did Margaret lose heart on the loss of crops?

- ix. Why are the locusts compared with bad weather?
- x. Why did the men eat their supper with good appetites?

**4. Answer the following questions in 50 - 100 words.**

- i. How did the farmers try to prevent the main swarm of locusts from landing on their farms?
- ii. Why, even after all the crops were destroyed, did the men continue to fight the swarm?
- iii. What was the condition of the land when the locusts had moved to the south?
- iv. What are the measures the farmers should have taken to save their crops? Give five suggestions.
- v. Write a note on the character of Margaret.

**5. Write down the correct form of the verb in each sentence.**

**Example:** The servants came out and (gaze).

The servants came out and gazed.

- i. Stephen (yell) at the house boy.
- ii. Margaret (see) the smoke of fire rising all around.
- iii. Old Smith had (has) his crops eaten to the ground.
- iv. The sunlight (come) down distorted.
- v. The earth (seem) to be moving.

**6. Punctuate the following lines.**

all the crops finished nothing left he said but the gongs were still beating the men still shouting and margaret asked why do you go on with it then

**7. Fill in the blanks by using the preposition given in bracket.**

(at, on, off, in, over)

- i. They could see the labourers pointing \_\_\_\_\_ the hills.
- ii. Every farmer hoped the locusts would go \_\_\_\_\_ to the next.
- iii. The main swarm showed \_\_\_\_\_ dense black cloud.
- iv. Those beggars can eat every leaf \_\_\_\_\_ the farm.
- v. A tree down the slope leaned \_\_\_\_\_ the ground.

**8. Read the following passage and answer the questions given at the end.**

Margaret was wondering what she could do to help. She did not know. Then up came old Stephen from the lands. "We're finished, Margaret, finished! Those beggars can eat every leaf and blade off the farm in half an hour! And it is only early afternoon – if we can make enough smoke, make enough noise till the sun goes down, they'll settle somewhere else perhaps...." And then: "Get the kettle going. It's thirsty work, this."

- i. Why did Margaret wonder?      ii. What did old Stephen say?
- iii. What did he desire?

# I Have a Dream

(Martin Luther King)

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from the areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free

one day. This will be the day when all of us will be able to sing with new meaning.

My country, 'tis of thee,

Sweet land of liberty,

Of thee I sing:

Land where my fathers died,

Land of the pilgrims' pride,

From every mountain side

Let freedom ring.

(Note: It's a song in praise of one's country. My country is a sweet land of liberty. I sing for this land where my fathers died. It is a land of the pilgrims' pride and let the freedom ring from every side of it.)

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and Molehill of Mississippi. From every mountain side, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of us, black men and white men, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God, we are free at last!"

**Note:**

1. Rockies of Colorado, peaks of California, Stone Mountain of Georgia, Mountain of Tennessee and Mole-hill of Mississippi are the names of mountains of those states.
2. Negro spiritual is a religious song of a type originally sung by the Negro slaves in America. Words are as above.

**About the Author**

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 - 1968) was the most charismatic leader of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s until his assassination in 1968. He led sit-ins and demonstrations throughout the South and was the President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference as well as Pastor of a large congregation in Atlanta. This speech, delivered in front of the Lincoln Memorial at a centennial celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation, moves us as deeply on paper today as it did when it was delivered with Martin Luther King's powerful skills of oratory. It points the way to a world free from the burden of racism.



## Theme

The emphasis is on the negation of racial segregation in the society. A nation cannot enjoy the glory of democracy without treating all the sections of community, rich and poor, high and low equally; and is judged not by the colour of their skin but by the contents of their character.

## Reading Notes

persecution	undeserved oppressions
veteran	a soldier of a great experience
redemptive	rescue from evil ways, serving to rescue
ghettos	sections of town for under-privileged classes
wallow	roll about (in mud, dirt, water)
frustrations	disappointments
interposition	making interruptions
hew out	cut out with great labour
prodigious	huge

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. "You have come here out of great trials and tribulations" means that you have come here after
  - a) attending a fair.
  - b) facing great persecutions and grief.
  - c) great honour.
  - d) great travels.
- ii. "You have been the veterans of creative suffering" means that you have been the
  - a) experienced soldiers of intellectual suffering.
  - b) assets of a nation.
  - c) vanguard of a country.
  - d) army personnel.

- iii. This nation will live out the true meaning of its creed:
- Negroes will leave the country.
  - they will come up to the level of others.
  - they will prove their worth.
  - they will remain a minority.
- iv. What is the dream?
- equality of high and low
  - rule of the blacks
  - negation of whites
  - the practice of brotherhood
- v. Which one is a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression?
- Georgia
  - Mississippi
  - Alabama
  - Virginia
- vi. What does the governor of Alabama do?
- creates interferences
  - makes interruptions
  - uses sweet words
  - helps the blacks
- vii. What will be exalted?
- hill
  - mountain
  - valley
  - river
- viii. Every hill and mountain shall be made low means that
- all high and low will become equal.
  - hills and mountains will be leveled.
  - there will be no distinction of classes.
  - the low classes will rise up.
- ix. The glory of whom shall be revealed?
- President
  - Governor
  - Lord
  - Mayor
- x. What is the beautiful symphony of brotherhood?
- a violin
  - a guitar
  - the beautiful song of brotherhood
  - musical composition of brotherhood

**2. Mark the sentences true or false.**

- Some of you have come from the areas where you lived happily.
- Stop working with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.
- Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

- iv. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.
- v. Son of a slave will live with the son of a slave owner.
- vi. In future every hill and mountain shall be made low.
- vii. A stone of hope is a coal.
- viii. My country is a sweet land of liberty.
- ix. My country is not a pride of pilgrims.
- x. All the people, black and white, are treated equally.

**3. Answer the following questions.**

- i. What was the cause of Negroes' discontentment?
- ii. What are the qualities of the veterans of creative suffering?
- iii. What is the dream of Martin Luther King Jr.?
- iv. What should be the faith of Negroes?
- v. What was the necessity of pleading the case of the Negroes' freedom?
- vi. What should be the criterion of judgement for a person?
- vii. Do the Negroes enjoy liberty in all the parts of their country?
- viii. From which part of the country did the Negroes gather there?
- ix. Write down the song in your own words.
- x. What is the effect of the repetition of words?

**4. Answer the following questions in 100 - 150 words.**

- i. Write a note on the struggle of Martin Luther King Jr. for the Negroes.
- ii. What was the condition of the Negroes in his days?
- iii. Write ten lines on racial discrimination.
- iv. Write the summary of the speech.
- v. What are the measures you can take to ensure justice with all the sections of the society?

**5. Join the sentence in Column I with the relevant sentence in Column II.**

Column I	Column II
It came as a joyous day break	men would be guaranteed the rights.
The life of the Negroes is still	rightful place we must not do wrongs.
This note was a promise that all	fresh from narrow jail cells.
Now is the time to make	rooted in the American dream.
In the process of gaining our	to end the long night of captivity.

There are those who are asking	of the mountain of despair.
Some of you have come	will be able to join hands.
It is a dream deeply	sadly crippled.
We will be able to hew out	real the promise of democracy.
When all of us	the devotees of civil rights.

**6. Use the correct forms of the verbs given in brackets.**

- i. The architects of our republic (write) the magnificent words.
- ii. All men (guarantee) the unalienable rights of life.
- iii. We (come) to this hollow spot.
- iv. Continue (work) with the faith.
- v. Former slave owners (sit) down together.
- vi. Every valley (exalt) to see my dream (realize).
- vii. We (be) free one day.
- viii. Let freedom (ring) from the mighty mountains.
- ix. The black men and white men (join) hands.
- x. This selection (design) as an oration.

**7. Punctuate the following lines.**

i have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal

**8. Use the following phrasal verbs in your sentences.**

- a) come out      b) come off  
c) come in      d) come down

**9. Read the passage and answer the questions given at the end.**

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

- a) What is the faith with which he returns to the South?
- b) What will be the effect of the faith?
- c) What will they be able to do with this faith?

## The Gift of the Magi

(O. Henry)

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. She had put it aside, one cent and then another and then another, in her careful buying of meat and other food. Della counted it three times. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was nothing to do but fall on the bed and cry. So Della did it.

Only \$1.87 to buy a gift for Jim. Her Jim. She had had many happy hours planning something nice for him. Something nearly good enough. Something almost worth the honor of belonging to Jim.

The James Dillingham Youngs were very proud of two things which they owned. One thing was Jim's gold watch. It had once belonged to his father. And, long ago, it had belonged to his father's father. The other thing was Della's hair.

If a queen had lived in the rooms near theirs, Della would have washed and dried her hair where the queen could see it. Della knew her hair was more beautiful than any queen's jewels and gifts.

If a king had lived in the same house, with all his riches, Jim would have looked at his watch every time they met. Jim knew that no king had anything so valuable.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, shining like a falling stream of brown water. It reached below her knee. It almost made itself into a dress for her.

And then she put it up on her head again, nervously and quickly. Once she stopped for a moment and stood still while a tear or two ran down her face.

She put on her old brown coat. She put on her old brown hat. With the bright light still in her eyes, she moved quickly out of the door and down to the street.

Where she stopped, the sign said: "Mrs. Sofronie. Hair Articles of all Kinds."

Up to the second floor Della ran, and stopped to get her breath.

Mrs. Sofronie, large, too white, cold-eyed, looked at her.

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Mrs. Safronie. "Take your hat off and let me look at it."

Down fell the brown waterfall.

"Twenty dollars," said Mrs. Safronie, lifting the hair to feel its weight.

"Give it to me quickly," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours seemed to fly. She was going from one shop to another, to find a gift for Jim.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and for no one else. There was no

other like it in any of the shops, and she had looked in every shop in the city.

It was a gold watch chain, very simply made. Its value was in its rich and pure material. Because it was so plain and simple, you knew that it was very valuable. All good things are like this.

It was good enough for the watch.

As soon as she saw it, she knew that Jim must have it. It was like him. Quietness and value – Jim and the chain both had quietness and value. She paid twenty-one dollars for it. And she hurried home with the chain and eighty-seven cents.

With that chain on his watch, Jim could look at his watch and learn the time anywhere he might be. Though the watch was so fine, it never had a fine chain. He sometimes took it out and looked at it only when no one could see him do it.

When Della arrived home, her mind quietened a little. She began to think more reasonably. She started to try to cover the sad marks of what she had done. Love and large-hearted giving, when added together, can leave deep marks. It is never easy to cover these marks, dear friends – never easy.

Within forty minutes her head looked a little better. With her short hair, she looked wonderfully like a schoolboy. She stood at the looking-glass for a long time.

“If Jim doesn't like me,” she said to herself, “before he looks at me a second time, he'll say I look like a girl who works for money. But what could I do – oh! What could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?”

At seven, Jim's dinner was ready for him.

Jim was never late. Della held the watch chain in her hand and sat near the door where he always entered. Then she heard his steps in the hall and her face lost color for a moment. She often said little prayers quietly, about simple everyday things. And now she said: “Please God, make him think I'm still pretty.”

The door opened and Jim stepped in. He looked very thin and he was not smiling. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two – and with a family to take care of! He needed a new coat and he had nothing to cover his cold hands.

Jim stopped inside the door. He was as quiet as a hunting dog when it is near a bird. His eyes looked strangely at Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not understand. It filled her with fear. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor anything else she had been ready for. He simply looked at her with the strange expression on his face.

Della went to him.

“Jim, dear,” she cried, “don't look at me like that. I had my hair cut off and sold it. I couldn't live through Christmas without giving you a gift. My hair will grow again. You won't care, will you? My hair grows very fast. It's Christmas, Jim. Let's be happy. You don't know what a nice – what a beautiful nice gift I got for you.”

“You've cut off your hair?” asked Jim slowly. He seemed to labour to understand what had happened. He seemed not to feel sure he knew.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me now? I'm me, Jim. I'm the same without my hair."

Jim looked around the room.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said.

"You don't have to look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you – sold and gone, too. It's the night before Christmas, boy. Be good to me, because I sold it for you. May be the hairs of my head could be counted," she said, "but no one could ever count my regard for you. Shall we eat dinner, Jim?"

Jim folded his arms before him. For ten seconds let us look in another direction. Eight dollars a week or a million dollars a year – how different are they? Someone may give you an answer, but it will be wrong. The Magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. My meaning will be explained soon.

From inside his coat, Jim took something tied in paper. He threw it upon the table.

"I want you to understand me, Dell," he said. "Nothing like a haircut could make me careless for you. But if you'll open that, you may know what I felt when I came in."

White fingers pulled off the paper. And then a cry of joy; and then a change to tears.

For there lay the combs – the combs that Della had seen in a shop window and loved for a long time. Beautiful combs, with jewels, perfect for her beautiful hair. She had known they cost too much for her to buy them. She had looked at them without the least hope of owning them. And now they were hers, but her hair was gone.

But she held them to her heart, and at last, was able to look up and say:

"My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then she jumped up and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful gift. She held it out to him in her open hand. The gold seemed to shine softly as if with her own warm and loving spirit.

"Isn't it perfect, Jim? I hunted all over the town to find it. You'll have to look at your watch a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how they look together."

Jim sat down and smiled.

"Della," said he, "let's put our Christmas gifts away and keep them a while. They're too nice to use now. I sold the watch to get the money to buy the combs. And now I think we should have our dinner."

The Magi, as you know, were wise men – wonderfully wise men – who brought gifts to the newborn Christ-child. They were the first to give Christmas gifts. Being wise, their gifts were doubtlessly wise ones. And here I have told you the story of two children who were not wise. Each sold the most valuable thing he owned in order to buy a gift for the other. But let me speak the last word to the wise of these days: Of all who give gifts, these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the most wise. Everywhere they are the wisest ones. They are the Magi.

## About the Author

O. Henry was the pen-name of William Sydney Porter (1862 – 1910), one of the most famous American short story writers. He lived in extreme poverty in New York, writing short stories to support himself. His tragic life gave him a profound knowledge of human character, especially of dwellers in big cities whose life is full of misfortunes. As a storyteller he is remarkable for his ingenuity in the use of ironical coincidences and for his skillful plots. In 1918 the American Society of Letters honoured his name by founding the O. Henry Memorial Award, which gives an annual prize for the best American short story.

## Theme

Della and Jim had great love for each other and could not think of celebrating Christmas without presenting the gifts. But they had no money so they sold their most beautiful and valuable things to buy gifts, which proved too nice to use on the occasion. The story reveals that exchange of gifts on the holy occasions makes life most lovable.

## Reading Notes

Christmas	yearly celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, December 25
made itself into a dress for her	can cover her whole body
nervously	excitedly
seemed to fly	looked in hurry
quietness and value	sober and precious
large-hearted	generous

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. James Dillingham Youngs had two valuable things
  - a) a house and a car.
  - b) a necklace and a clock.
  - c) TV and VCR.
  - d) Jim's gold watch and Della's hair.
- ii. Della's hair was more beautiful than any
  - a) painting.
  - b) palace.
  - c) queen's jewels and gifts.
  - d) scene.
- iii. Della's hair reached below her
  - a) neck.
  - b) back.
  - c) feet.
  - d) knees.



- iv. "Down fell the brown waterfall" means
- |                            |                                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a) the stream flowed down. | b) the brown waterfall fell down. |
| c) Della's hair fell down. | d) the brown water fell down.     |
- v. What did she buy for Jim?
- |              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| a) a watch   | b) a gold watch chain |
| c) a necktie | d) a shirt            |
- vi. What was common in Jim and the watch chain?
- |               |                        |
|---------------|------------------------|
| a) simplicity | b) quietness           |
| c) value      | d) quietness and value |
- vii. With her short hair, she looked wonderfully like a
- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| a) young girl. | b) school boy. |
| c) dame.       | d) woman.      |
- viii. What did Della pray?
- |                                  |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) may he think her still pretty | b) may she live long     |
| c) may she had long hair again   | d) may she remain pretty |
- ix. No one can count Della's
- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| a) feelings. | b) love.   |
| c) hair.     | d) jewels. |
- x. Jim bought a gift of
- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| a) a watch. | b) shoes.     |
| c) clips.   | d) the combs. |

**2. Mark the sentences true or false.**

- i. The gold watch belonged to Jim's father.
- ii. Jim knew that no king had anything so valuable as the gold watch.
- iii. Della sold her hair for twenty dollars.
- iv. For three hours she seemed to fly from shop to shop to find a gift.
- v. She could not do anything with a dollar and eighty-seven cents.
- vi. Jim took his dinner at eight.
- vii. Jim was paid 20 dollars a week.
- viii. Both couldn't live through Christmas without exchanging gifts.
- ix. She refused to have the gift of the combs.
- x. The gifts were too nice to use on Christmas.

**3. Answer the following questions.**

- i. How much did she save for Christmas?
- ii. Why did she feel proud in the beauty of her hair?
- iii. Why did she sell her hair?
- iv. Why did Jim sell the gold watch?

- v. Why did they want to exchange the gifts?
- vi. Why did she feel sad on losing her hair?
- vii. Why did Jim not welcome her when he stepped in?
- viii. What did he bring out of his coat?
- ix. How beautiful was the gold watch chain?
- x. What was the wisdom in selling the most valuable things?

4. **Answer the following questions in 50 - 100 words.**

- i. How did the Magi want to celebrate their Christmas?
- ii. How much were they attached to each other in the story?
- iii. Why did they sell their beautiful valuable things?
- iv. Describe the story in your own words.
- v. What is the moral of the story?

5. **Connect the sentence in Column I with the relevant sentence in Column II.**

Column I	Column II
She had had many happy hours	into a dress for her.
It had once belonged	me look at it.
It almost made itself	rich and pure material.
She stood still while	strange expression on his face.
Take your hat off and let	the chain and eighty-seven cents.
Its value was in its	a tear or two ran down her face.
She hurried home with	planning something nice for him.
He simply looked at her with the	to his father.

6. **Punctuate the following lines.**

i want you to understand me Dell he said nothing like a haircut could make me careless for you but if you ll open that you may know what i felt when i came in

7. **Read the passage and answer the questions given at the end.**

The Magi, as you know, were wise men – wonderfully wise men – who brought gifts to the newborn Christ-child. They were the first to give Christmas gifts. Being wise, their gifts were doubtlessly wise too. And here I have told you the story of two children who were the wisest. Each sold the most valuable thing he owned in order to buy a gift for the other. But let me speak the last word to the wise of these days. Of all who give gifts, these two were the wisest. Of all who give gifts, such as they are, the wisest. Everywhere they are the wise ones. They are the Magi.

- i) Who were the wise men?
- ii) Who were the first to give Christmas gifts?
- iii) Were these two the wisest?
- iv) Write the main idea of the passage.

## God be Praised

(Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi)

BEFORE HIS MARRIAGE, Maulvi Abul Barkat, alias Abul, used to live in comfort, even pomp. On his head, he wore a light brown turban known as Mashadi lungi, because it originally came from Mashad in Iran. The gilded tip of his cap used to shine brightly above the turban. He always carried a walking stick, a sort of scepter with decorative bands of brass and gilt. For his hair, he used fragrant oil. Its sweet pungent smell lingered in the village lanes whenever he walked through them.

Maulvi Abul had slightly bulging eyes. On his fingers he wore silver rings with large turquoise stones. These rings came off his fingers five times a day before ablutions, and yet no change was ever observed in the order in which they were worn.

Every Eid, after his sermon, whenever the cotton bag containing from 150 to 200 rupees collected from the devotees happened to fall with a thud, he distributed 40 to 50 rupees in the presence of the worshippers among the needy and the poor of the village. After each such act, he used to say: "Please don't pray for me. Remember the Benevolent Almighty Allah. If He creates insects in stones, He supplies their food there too. Please do not bless me. What has He not blessed me with? Health, peace of mind, freedom from care; I have everything one can desire. I don't need anything more from His unlimited treasure of divine blessings."

Like the children who came in quick succession, the times, too, had changed fast. A pair of shoes for his first born, Mehrunnisa, had cost him one rupee. For his youngest daughter, he was now asked to pay six rupees for a pair. When he complained, the shoemaker said: "Maulviji, I didn't charge more for your sake. Had it been someone else, I could easily have wangled ten rupees. The cost of leather has gone sky-high. Prices have risen so suddenly that it seems as though all the cows and buffaloes in the country have been dispatched to the Mount Caucasus. My cost price is five twelve. Believe me, my profit is only four annas. Come on, Maulviji, don't look disappointed and, pray, don't give me even that four annas bit. I will charge only what I have spent for these dainty shoes. If I am lying, the curse of Allah be on me and may I be drowned in some pond. May I even be deprived of a decent burial!"

If it were possible to get the necessities of life from the heavens through prayers, Maulvi Abul would have prayed to Allah for a pair of shoes for his Umda, the youngest in the family. At night he consulted his wife. But instead of replying, she silently lifted a corner of the quilt to expose Umdatunnisa's small, bare feet. Seeing those dainty feet, Maulvi Abul burst into tears like a child.

Next day, after his morning prayers, he went to the shoemaker and paid him five rupees and twelve annas and bought the shoes. Leaving his shop, he vowed, with Allah as his

witness, never to use the powdered tobacco that he loved.

When Mehrun reached the age of 14, Maulvi Abul's prayers became intense and prolonged. During Ramadan, he led the nightly tarawih prayers as usual. But the same Maulvi Abul who never had made a single mistake, began straying from one Surah of the Holy Quran to another. Sometimes, unconsciously, he repeated the same chapter twice in the same part of prayer.

Once when Chaudhry Fateh Dad, the member of the District Board, reprimanded him for a mistake, Maulvi Abul felt like shouting back at him: "You have a whole row of boys, Chaudhri Sahib. Had you also been blessed with a daughter then you would understand why I repeated a chapter of the Holy Book twice!"

But Chaudhry Fateh Dad's censure was purely religious. Why, he was the same rich, pious Muslim, the Head of the village, who every evening for years had been sending Maulvi Saheb homebaked bread smeared with ghee and an earthen bowl of dal. He was very regular in his offering. If for some reason the daily offering of the evening meal was delayed, Chaudhry Fateh Dad would carry it himself to Maulvi Abul's house and apologise for the delay, saying: "I am terribly sorry, Maulviji. My wife is unwell. So the maid has cooked the food." He, sincerely considered the daily gift to Maulvi Abul a part of his daily worship.

Conscious of the ever increasing responsibilities of her husband, Zaibunnisa too had started teaching young girls of the village the Holy Quran. On Thursday, when each of the girls brought a small portion of sugar on bread, Zaibunnisa would arrange for at least two baskets. These small baskets were used to store morsels of home baked bread.

But, there was yet another problem. Besides bread to fill their bellies, they also needed clothes to cover their bodies. Chaudhri Fateh Dad used to present new clothes to Maulvi Abul once a year after every harvest. Whenever these clothes came, a tailoring shop would spring up in Maulvi Abul's house. Zaibunnisa, with the assistance of Mehrun and Zabda and Shamsun, would cut them into smaller outfits for the younger kids. If he ever received some extra money, this bonus would usually be locked up in a tin box.

With the passage of time, the appetites of the children increased.

Maulvi Abul was caught in the whirl of life. Time had not been kind to him. The hair around his temples had become silvery white. The grip of his teeth on his gums had for long been loose. But his voice remained resonant. However, sometimes that too quivered.

Chaudhri Fateh Dad was the only one who knew the reason. Maulvi Abul had once opened his heart to him about a suitable match for Mehrun. The Chaudhry had carefully considered the eligibility of all the young men of the village.

There were some whom he found suitable. But the trouble was that everyone in the community knew Maulvi Abul well. Chaudhri Fateh Dad tried to negotiate with a couple of elders but all of them drew back as if bees had suddenly sprung from a bed of flowers.

Ultimately Maulvi Abul's and Zaibunnisa's prayers bore fruit. A young man from the village who had gone away, came back and opened a small cloth shop. He called himself Shamim Ahmed.

He was the only son of a Haafiz. After the death of his father, Khudayar, tried to follow his father's footsteps. When he was about 16, he went away to the city, leaving his old mother behind. Later they learnt that he had worked in the house of a head clerk, after which he had managed to open a small shop on a footpath where he began selling cut pieces. After saving some money and gaining experience in the business, he returned to the village. He then begged Maulvi Abul to inaugurate and bless his shop by becoming his first customer.

That day, in order not to disappoint his erstwhile disciple and his aged mother, Maulvi Abul took a momentous decision. He went to his wife and said: "Shamim Ahmed wants me to inaugurate his shop by becoming his first customer. If you agree, let us buy a piece of cloth for Mehrun's suit. In any case we will need it for her dowry. My purchase in the presence of the entire village may impress them."

"May Allah bless you," she blurted out and immediately took out the key which hung in a thread around her neck. She opened the trunk, took out the tin box and placed it before her husband.

As she opened it, her eyes suddenly became bright with unshed tears. Just then Mehrun walked in. Then she turned back with a smile, almost as if she was thinking. I know the secret of Abba's readiness to inaugurate Shamim Ahmed's shop!

Maulvi Abul counted his savings. There were 43 rupees. He put the money into his pocket, stood up slowly and said: If somehow Mehrun can be married, all my worries will disappear. I will feel as light as a feather, at least for some years to come."

When Maulvi Abul reached Shamim Ahmed's new shop, he found a crowd had already assembled there to watch the proceedings. Most of the onlookers were women. They lingered to gaze with wistful longing at the colourful display.

Maulvi Abul inaugurated the shop by first reciting verses from the Holy Quran in his powerful voice. Then he selected a piece of pink cloth with beautiful flowers nestling amidst yellow dots.

"I will need a piece from this for a young lady's suit," he said loudly.

Overjoyed, Shamim Ahmed picked up his yard stick, uttered "In the name of Allah" silently, measured seven yards, picked up the large pair of scissors and cut the cloth. He then folded it neatly and placed it before Maulvi Abul with respect. He almost seemed to be offering it as a gift.

"How much should I pay?" Maulvi Abul asked. Out of respect, Shamim Ahmed hesitated for a moment, rubbed his palms, cleared his throat and replied: "At the rate of six rupees per yard, it will be 42 rupees, sir."

His words fell like a bombshell on Maulvi Abul. Suddenly he felt as if bundle after bundle of cloth from the various shelves had been falling over him. Out of 43 rupees he kept a rupee and quickly paid the rest to Shamim Ahmed.

"Thank you, sir," Shamim said, flushing with happiness. "You have graciously become my first customer, I consider it a good omen. That is why I have not offered you any

concession today. But I am your humble servant, sir. I will, hopefully, compensate you soon in some other way.”

Maulvi Abul placed the bundle of cloth under his arm and got up to leave. He smiled, blessed Shamim Ahmed and began walking slowly home.

One evening, a few days later, someone knocked at the door. He went to the door himself and opened it. A wave of fragrance flowed into the house.

“Assalam-o-Alaikum, sir.” He heard a familiar voice. It was Shamim Ahmed. After the preliminary exchange of greetings, Shamim Ahmed hesitatingly said something private to Maulvi Abdul.

A thrill went through Maulvi Abul's ears. An idea came to him. Instead of listening to Shamim Ahmed's request on his threshold, he turned and shouted: “Arif's mother, I am going out. I will be back soon.” And he started walking towards the mosque. Shamim Ahmed followed him silently.

They went to a room at one end of the mosque. It was dark and usually used for offering special prayers in solitude.

Maulvi Abul went into the room. He put a match to a dry twig and with it lit the earthen lamp. The flame flickered for a while, then became steady. Shamim Ahmed was now looking nervously into the flickering flame.

To put him at ease, Maulvi Abul said softly, “What is it, son?”

Shamim Ahmed lowered his eyes, hesitated for a moment and then replied, “If you allow me, sir, I'll begin.”

“Yes, of course, son. What is it?” To encourage the youth he patted his back.

Shamim felt at ease, but couldn't overcome his embarrassment. Then, finally mustering up courage, he cleared his throat and began in a low voice: “As a matter of fact, my mother should have done this, but she is not well. That's why I have come.” He stopped.

“You did the right thing,” Maulvi Abul said affectionately.”

“My request is, please accept me as your slave. I mean....!” He stopped abruptly, stumbling over the words.

Maulvi Abul could not believe what he had just heard. To make sure, he asked: “What is it, son? I don't quite understand. You wish me to accept you as...?”

“Yes, sir, as your slave!” Shamim Ahmed blurted out in haste, “I mean, if you have no objection, I will send my mother with the marriage proposal. It will be an honour, sir, to be your son....”

In his excitement, fear and confusion, he did not see the tears which had silently rolled down Maulvi Abul's cheeks. In that silence, time almost stood still for both of them. They looked dazed.

Maulvi Abul sighed and wiped the tears from his eyes and his face with the loose end of his turban. In a quivering voice, he said: “O Allah, daughters are your helpless creatures!”

He caught hold of Shamim Ahmed's hand and added: "They are for marriage. You are my dear disciple. Brother Hafiz Abdul Rahim's son is also my son. Come, my son, come!" And he embraced Shamim Ahmed warmly.

Half an hour later, when he reached home, Zaibunnisa asked: "Where are you coming from with this wave of fragrance?"

Mehrun looked up. Before her father could answer, she said: "Yes, Abba, what a sweet perfume. The whole house is full of it."

Seeing him silent, his wife went to him. "What is it?" she enquired softly.

Maulvi Abul looked first towards his eldest daughter, then towards the row of children who had appeared on the scene. They had all clustered around their sister. They looked disappointed, for he had returned empty-handed. They had to be pleased first. So he declared slowly, "Tonight, all my children will get a special treat, a little raw sugar with bread."

This did the trick. Their faces immediately lit up with joy. He then went to another part of the courtyard and sat down on the matted bed.

"Come here, Arif's Mother," Maulvi Abul sounded excited as he called out to his wife. He told her the whole incident. At first Zaibunnisa did not believe him. But when he repeated the story under oath, she began to cry.

"Don't cry, Zaibun," he said softly. He rarely addressed her that way. But today was a special day. "Allah did listen to our prayers. Let us bow our heads to Him."

They were still lost in their newly acquired happiness when suddenly, once again, they heard a knock. Before any of his children could rush and open the door, Maulvi Abul shouted.

"Wait. Let me see." He went to the door and opened it. Chaudhry Fateh Dad was standing there, wrapped in a shawl. He warmly caught Maulvi Abul's hands and embraced him. "Congratulations, sir. At last my efforts have proved fruitful" he said in a low voice.

"Yes, Chaudhry Saheb. I am thankful to you and grateful to Almighty Allah."

"Shamim is a good boy, sir. Please take a decision without delay. Who knows what may happen?" Saying that, he brought out a cotton bag from under his shawl and handed it over to Maulvi Abul. "This is a humble gift. Please give it to my daughter on my behalf," said Chaudhry Fateh Dad.

Gratified and almost dazed, Maulvi Abul went back to his wife. With a thumping heart he opened the bag. Tied neatly in a large silken kerchief were a pair of gold pendants set with large, shining stones and wrapped in a hundred rupee note!

A few days later, the pre-marriage celebrations began. Mehrunnisa, was put in seclusion in a separate room till the auspicious day. Her hands and feet were covered with henna. The gay songs that usually accompany wedding ceremonies were not sung, for after all, this was Maulvi Abul Barkat's residence. Music of any kind could not be allowed in his house. So the village girls simply sat in a circle round the shy bride, and for several nights

sang songs of love and friendship, flowers and their fragrance, and the romantic rainy season which has a special significance for young men and women in the rural Punjab. They also sang sweet songs of the excitement of union and the pangs of separation.

On the other hand, nobody could restrain Shamim Ahmed from celebrating his marriage any way he desired. So he came to marry Mehrun amidst fireworks with musicians playing gay tunes. That night, after a lot of whispering in one corner of the house, many trunks were dragged out and opened. The next morning when the dowry was exhibited in the courtyard, the entire village was stunned by what it saw. People were not impressed much with the colourful clothes, for this was not unusual. But the jewellery! It was incredible. Some secretly believed that the Maulvi had a special amulet whose charm blessed him with secret power to get as much money as he desired from the angels.

In the crowd, there was also a loudmouthed old hag who seemed to have other views. In a loud whisper, she pointed out that several suits in the dowry had once belonged to a woman who had died young. There were others which had been part of Zaibun's dowry. "Even the bracelets and the gold nose-ring are hers," she added with conviction. "But the gold pendants?" She raised her eyes and looked towards the heavens, as if they were a gift from there.

After the ceremonies were over, Mehrun was made to sit in a palanquin: Beautifully decorated, it was covered with a large silken cloth so that the bride could go to the bridegroom's house in strict purdah. As two sturdy villagers carried it away, Maulvi Abul walked a few steps with it. He must have cried silently for his eyes and nose were red and he looked pale. At the same time he looked at peace.

As he went back to his house, Zaibunnisa suddenly appeared from behind the door. She held his hand and burst into tears. "Look at this house," she said, sobbing. "Without Mehrun, doesn't it look like a graveyard?"

Maulvi Abul smiled and consoled her, "Don't be silly, Zaibun. Has Mehrun taken Zabda also with her? What about Shamsun?" Suddenly he remembered something. "Arif's mother, where is Zabda?" he asked in a whisper.

"Inside. Crying," she replied.

"Zabda." Maulvi Abul called her. A few minutes later Zabda came out of the room. She looked sad. There were large dark patches of tears on her new pink head cloth.

The Maulvi said to his wife, "Arif's mother, have you noticed?" he whispered. "This Zabda of ours has suddenly grown up."

There was silence for a while. Then Maulvi Abul said, perhaps to reassure himself more than his wife: "Don't worry. Allah Almighty is kind and benevolent. It's a sin to lose faith."

Oblivious of his surroundings, Maulvi Abul's mind was racing elsewhere. As if in a trance, he had called Shamsun. Slowly, his third daughter came forward and began walking towards them.



A few months after Mehrun's marriage, a primary school for girls was opened in the village.

All these years, Maulvi Abul had two main sources of inspiration, in which he had implicit faith. The first one was Almighty Allah and after Him, Chaudhry Fatehdad. It was certainly Allah's benevolence that sinners like Maulvi Abul and Zaibunnisa were still alive and that all their children were living and Mehrun had been married with such splendour.

\*\*\*\*\*

### About the Author

Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi (1916 – 2006) was a poet and a writer of national repute. He was born in a small village of Anga in Khushab district.

### Theme

In this story he has depicted the life of a village Maulvi and his miseries relating to his domestic life, his low income and the marriages of his daughters and about suitable matches for his daughters.

## EXERCISES

### 1. Answer the following questions.

- i. What was alias Abul's full name?
- ii. What was his turban known as and where did it originally come from?
- iii. What did he always carry with him?
- iv. Describe Maulvi's appearance.
- v. How much did the Maulvi collect on every Eid?
- vi. How much was distributed among the needy and the poor?
- vii. What was the name of his eldest daughter?
- viii. What was the name of the member of the District Board where the Maulvi lived?
- ix. What was the name of his wife?
- x. Write the names of the other two daughters mentioned in the story.

### 2. Read the lesson and tick the correct word. Write the correct sentences in your notebook.

- i. Maulvi Abul had slightly (slanting, bulging, drooping) eyes.
- ii. He wore (silver, gold, platinum) rings with large stones.
- iii. His cotton bag contained 150 to (100, 200, 300) rupees collected from the devotees.
- iv. The name of his first born child was (Zebunnisa, Mehrunnisa, Lutufunnisa)
- v. Ch. Fateh Dad was member of the District (Council, Board, Bar).
- vi. Shamim Ahmed was the (eldest, youngest, only) son of a Haafiz.

- vii. Maulvi Abul had saved (33, 43, 53) rupees only.
- viii. The seven yards of silk that Shamim measured for Maulvi Abul was for (142, 42, 420) rupees.
- ix. A few months after Mehrunnisa's marriage a (secondary, middle, primary) school was opened in the village.
- x. All these years Maulvi Abul had (one, two, three) sources of inspiration.

# Overcoat

(Ghulam Abbas)

One evening in January a well-groomed young man having walked up Davis Road to the Mall turned to Charing Cross. His hair was sleek and shining and he wore side burns. His thin moustache seemed to have been drawn with a pencil. He had put on a brown overcoat with a cream coloured half opened rose in his button hole and a green flat hat which he wore at a rakish angle. A white silk scarf was knotted at his neck. One of his hands was slipped into a pocket of his overcoat while in the other he held a short polished cane which every now and then he twirled jauntily.

It was a Saturday evening in mid-winter. The sharp icy gusts of wind struck like steel, but the young man seemed to be immune to them. So, while others were walking briskly to keep warm, he was ambling along obviously enjoying his promenade in the bitter cold.

He looked such a dandy that tonga-wallas on catching sight of him, even from a distance, whipped up their horses and raced towards him. With a wave of his stick he turned them away. A taxi also drew near him and the driver looked at him enquiringly. He too was turned off. This time with a "No, thank you."

As the evening advanced the cold became more intense. It was a cold that induced people to seek comfort in pleasure. At such times it was not only the profligate who ranged abroad, but even those who were usually content to live with their loneliness, emerged from their hide-outs to join the gaiety of the streets. And so people converged on the Mall where they amused themselves among the variety of hotels, restaurants, cafes and snack bars, each according to his means. Those who could not afford the pleasures inside, were content to gaze at the coloured lights and brilliant advertisements outside. Up and down the main road there was an unending stream of cars, buses, tongas and bicycles while the pavement thronged with pedestrians.

The young man seated on the cement bench was watching with interest the people passing on the pavement before him. Most of them were wearing overcoats which were of every kind from the astrakhan to the rough military khaki such as are found in large bundles at the secondhand clothes' shops.

The overcoat the young man himself was wearing was old, but it was well cut and the material was of good quality. The lapels were stiff and the sleeves well creased. The buttons were of horn, big and shiny. The young man seemed to be very happy in it.

A boy selling pan and cigarettes with a tray of his wares passed by.

"Pan Walla,"

"Yes, sir"

"Have you change for a ten rupee note?"

"No, sir, but I'll get it for you."

"And what if you don't come back?"

"If you don't trust me sir, you can come with me. Anyway, what do you want to buy?"

"Never mind ... Here, I have found one anna. Now give me a good cigarette and be off with you."

As he smoked he seemed to relish every puff.

A small lean white cat shivering with cold rubbed against his legs and mewed. He stroked it and it leapt up onto the bench. Smoothing its fur he muttered:

"Poor little mite."

After a few minutes he got up.

By now it was past seven. He started off again along the Mall. An orchestra could be heard playing in one of the restaurants. Many people had collected outside. Mostly they were passers by, a few drivers of the waiting taxis and tongas, labourers and beggars. Some fruit vendors having sold their fruit were also standing around with their empty baskets. These people outside seemed to be enjoying the music more than those who sat inside, for they were listening in silence though the music was foreign.

The young man also stood and listened for a moment or so, then walked on.

A few minutes later he found himself outside a large Western music shop. Without hesitation he went in. There were musical instruments of different kinds arranged on shelves around the walls. On a long table, attractively displayed, were the latest hit songs. A Spanish guitar was hanging on the wall. He examined it with the air of a connoisseur and studied the price label attached to it. Then a huge German Piano diverted his attention. Lifting the cover of the key-board he played a few notes and closed it again.

One of the salesmen came up.

"Good evening, sir," he said, "Can I help you, sir?"

"No thank you," the young man said with an air of indifference. Then suddenly as if remembering something he called out.

"Oh yes ... Could you let me have a list of this month's gramophone records?"

He slipped the list into one of the pockets of his overcoat and resumed his promenade on the Mall.

He stopped next at a book stall. He picked up one or two magazines and after a hurried glance at the contents carefully replaced them. A few yards further on, a large Persian carpet, which was hanging outside a shop attracted his attention. The owner of the shop, wearing a long robe and a silk turban, greeted him warmly.

"I just wanted to see this carpet" the young man said to the carpet dealer.

"With pleasure, sir."

"Oh, don't bother to take it down. I can see it quite well as it is. How much is it?"

"Fourteen hundred and thirty-two rupees, sir."

The young man frowned as if to suggest, "Oh so much."

"You have only to select, sir," said the carpet dealer amiably, "and we will reduce the price to the minimum."

"Thank you so much," the young man said approvingly. "A fine carpet indeed, I'll come again some time," and he walked away.

The cream colour rose which adorned the lapel of his overcoat had slipped and was about to fall. He adjusted it with a peculiar smile of satisfaction.

He was now walking along the pavement near the High Courts. He had been roaming about for quite a long time, but his spirits were still high; he was neither tired nor bored.

At this part of the Mall the crowd of pedestrians had thinned down and there were quite long stretches of empty pavement between one group and the other. The young man as he went along tried to spin his cane around one finger, but in this attempt he dropped it.

"Oh, sorry," he exclaimed and bending down picked it up.

Meanwhile a young couple who had been walking behind him passed by and went ahead of him. The youth was tall and was wearing black corduroy trousers and a leather jacket with a zip. The girl wore a floppy shalwar of white satin and a green coat. She was short and bulky.

The young man was delighted to watch this spectacle and kept on walking behind them.

So far the young man had found little to interest him among the persons he had observed that evening. He had been, perhaps, too deeply engrossed in himself.

He followed them closely hoping to get a glimpse of their faces and to hear more of their talk.

By now they had reached the big cross-roads near the General Post Office. The pair stopped for a moment, then after crossing the Mall headed toward McLeod Road.

When the couple had walked some hundred yards ahead of him, he hurriedly moved after them. Hardly had he reached half way across the road when a truck full of bricks came from behind like a gust of wind and crushing him down speeded off towards McLeod Road. The driver of the truck had heard a shriek and had actually for a moment slowed down, but realizing that something serious had happened, had taken advantage of the darkness and had sped away into the night. Two or three passers-by who had witnessed the accident shouted: "Stop him ..... take the number," but the truck was no more to be seen.

In a short while quite a large crowd had collected. A traffic inspector on his motor bike stopped. The young man was badly hurt. There was a lot of blood about and he was in a very precarious state. A car was stopped and he was loaded into it and taken to a nearby hospital. When they reached there he was just alive.

On duty that night in the casualty department were assistant surgeon Khan and two young nurses, Shehnaz and Gill. He was still wearing his brown overcoat and the silk scarf. There were large stains of blood all over his clothes. Someone had, out of sympathy, placed

the young man's green felt hat on his chest so that it should not be lost.

"Seems quite well-to-do." Nurse Shehnaz said to Nurse Gill, to which she replied in a lower tone:

"All toggged up for Saturday night, poor chap."

"Did they catch the driver?"

"No he got away."

"What a pity!"

In the operating theatre the assistant surgeon and the two nurses with their faces concealed behind masks, were attending the young man, only their eyes were visible. He was lying on a white marble table. His hair was still smooth against his temples. The strong scented oil with which he had dressed it earlier that evening still gave out a faint odour.

His clothes were now being taken off. The first to be removed was the white silk scarf.

Beneath the scarf there was neither a tie nor a collar .... nor even a shirt. When the overcoat was removed it was found that the young man was wearing underneath only an old cotton sweater which was all in holes. Through these holes one could see the dirty vest which was in an even worse state than the sweater. Layers of dirt covered his body. He could not have had a bath for at least two months. Only the upper part of his neck was clean and well powdered.

The shoes and the socks now came off. The shoes were old but brightly polished. As to the socks, in colour and pattern the one was quite different from the other. There were holes at the heels, and where the flesh showed through the holes it was grimed with dirt. He was by now dead and his life-less body lay on the white marble slab.

The following were the few things which were found in the various pockets of his overcoat:

A small black comb, a handkerchief, six annas and a few pies, a half smoked cigarette, a little diary in which the names and addresses of a few people were noted, a list of gramophone records and a few handbills which distributors had thrust upon him during his evening promenade.

Alas, his little cane, which was perhaps lost at the time of the accident, was not included in the list.

### **About the Author**

Ghulam Abbas was born in 1909. He got associated with the Radio and also worked for the BBC in London for several years. He earned a lasting reputation as a short story writer. He died of heart attack in November 1982.

### **Theme**

This story is about a young man who conceals his poverty by dint of his overcoat. By wearing his overcoat he seems to be a respectable young man going out on the Mall on

Saturday evening but when he's crushed by a truck and dies in the hospital, the doctor and the nurses come to know what a destitute he was.

### Reading Notes

sleek	smooth and glossy
icy gusts	biting cold puffs of wind
ambling	move with gentle gait
promenade	pleasure walk
dandy	fashionable
profligate	recklessly extravagant
lapels	part of either side of coat
well creased	well ironed
mite	very small object
connoisseur	expert, one who can appreciate
amiably	respectfully
thinned down	became less
togged	dress, garment

### EXERCISES

1. **Choose the correct answer.**
  - i. What was the colour of the overcoat of the young man?
    - a) It was red.
    - b) It was brown.
    - c) It was green.
    - d) It was black.
  - ii. What happened when the evening advanced?
    - a) The weather became pleasant.
    - b) The cold became more intense.
    - c) The pleasant air began to blow.
    - d) The sky was covered with clouds and it started raining.
  - iii. What was the condition of the overcoat, which the young man was wearing?
    - a) It was old.
    - b) It was new.
    - c) It was ragged.
    - d) It was full of dust.

- iv. When the young man visited the music shop what did he find?
- There were musical instruments in the shop.
  - There was nothing in the shop.
  - He found many people in the shop.
  - There were books in the shop.
- v. When the young man died in the hospital after the accident what amount of money was discovered on him?
- rupees 200 only
  - only six annas and a few pies
  - Nothing was found in his pocket.
  - only rupees 51
- vi. What were the names of 2 nurses who were on duty in the hospital?
- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| a) Nasreen and Jamila | b) Shehnaz and Gill  |
| c) Zakia and Surraya  | d) Zahida and Kausar |
- vii. What was the owner of the shop wearing on his head?
- |                    |                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a) a cap           | b) silk turban                    |
| c) wearing nothing | d) a handkerchief of green colour |
- viii. After accident when the driver sped away what were the words which were uttered by the passers-by
- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| a) catch him | b) stop him   |
| c) kill him  | d) follow him |
- ix. After the accident what was the state of the young man?
- He was in a very precarious state.
  - He was in a stable state.
  - He was in a normal state.
  - He bled profusely.
- x. After the accident what was the first thing removed from the body of the young man?
- |                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| a) overcoat         | b) shoes and socks       |
| c) white silk scarf | d) an old cotton sweater |

**2. Answer the following questions.**

- What was the colour of the overcoat of the young man?
- How did he look like?
- Why did the people come out on the Mall?



- iv. Who were the people wearing such dress and had come on the Mall?
- v. Why was the cat shivering?
- vi. Why did the driver of the truck speed away after the accident?
- vii. Who took the young man to the hospital?
- viii. What kind of music was played in one of the restaurants?

**3. Answer the following questions in not less than 100 words.**

- i. Give the list of the articles, which were found from the coat of the young man.
- ii. What is the moral of the story?
- iii. Write a gist of the story in ten lines.
- iv. What is the theme of the story?

## The Angel and the Author – and Others

(Jerome K. Jerome)

I had a vexing dream one night, not long ago: it was about a fortnight after Christmas. I dreamt I flew out of the window in my nightshirt. I went up and up. I was glad that I was going up. "They have been noticing me," I thought to myself. "If anything, I have been a bit too good. A little less virtue and I might have lived longer. But one cannot have everything." The world grew smaller and smaller. The last I saw of London was the long line of electric lamps bordering the Embankment. Later nothing remained but a faint luminosity buried beneath darkness. It was at this point of my journey that I heard behind me the slow, throbbing sound of wings.

I turned my head. It was the Recording Angel. He had a weary look; I judged him to be tired.

"Yes," he acknowledged, "it is a trying period for me, your Christmas time."

"I am sure it must be," I returned; "the wonder to me is how you get through it all. You see at Christmas time," I went on, "all we men and women become generous, quite suddenly. It is really a delightful sensation."

"You are to be envied," he agreed.

"It is the first Christmas number that starts me off," I told him; "those beautiful pictures – the sweet child looking so pretty in her furs, giving Bovril with her own dear little hands to the shivering street arab; the good old red-faced squire shovelling out plum pudding to the crowd of grateful villagers. It makes me yearn to borrow a collecting box and go round doing good myself."

"And it is not only me – I should say," I continued; "I don't want you to run away with the idea that I am the only good man in the world. That's what I like about Christmas, it makes everybody good. The lovely sentiments we go about repeating! The noble deeds we do from a little before Christmas upto, say, the end of January! Why noting them down must be a comfort to you."

"Yes," he admitted, "noble deeds are always a great joy to me."

"They are to all of us," I said; "I love to think of all the good deeds I myself have done. I have often thought of keeping a diary – jotting them down each day. It would be so nice for one's children."

He agreed there was an idea in this.

"That book of yours," I said, "I suppose, now, it contains all the good actions that we men and women have been doing during the last six weeks." It was a bulky looking volume.

"Yes," he answered, "they were all recorded in the book." (The author tells of his good deeds.)

It was more for the sake of talking of him than anything else that I kept up with him. I did not really doubt his care and conscientiousness, but it is always pleasant to chat about one's self. "My five shillings subscription to the Daily Telegraph's Sixpenny Fund for the Unemployed – got that down all right?" I asked him.

"Yes," he replied, "it was entered."

"As a matter of fact, now I come to think of it," I added, "it was ten shillings altogether. They spelt my name wrong the first time."

"Both subscriptions had been entered", he told me.

"Then I have been to four charity dinners," I reminded him; "I forget what the particular charity was about. I know I suffered the next morning. He interrupted me with the assurance that my attendance had been noted."

"Last week I sent a dozen photographs of myself, signed, to a charity bazaar."

He said that he remembered my doing so.

"And, of course, you remember my performance of "Talbot Champneys in Our Boys" the week before last, in aid of the Fund for Poor Curates," I went on. "I don't know whether you saw the notice in the Morning Post, but—"

He again interrupted me to remark that what the Morning Post man said would be entered, one way or the other, to the critic of the Morning Post, and had nothing to do with me. "Of course not," I agreed; "and between ourselves, I don't think the charity got very much. Expenses, when you come to add refreshments and one thing and another, mount up. But I fancy they rather liked my Talbot Champneys."

He replied that he had been present at the performance, and had made his own report.

I also reminded him of the four balcony seats I had taken for the monster show at His Majesty's in aid of the Fund for the Destitute British in Johannesburg. Not all the celebrated actors and actresses announced on the posters had appeared, but all had sent letters full of kindly wishes; and the others – all the celebrities one had never heard of – had turned up to a man. Still, on the whole, the show was well worth the money. There was nothing to grumble at.

There were other noble deeds of mine. I could not remember them at the time in their entirety. I seemed to have done a good many. But I did remember the rummage sale to which I sent all my old clothes, including a coat that had got mixed up with them by accident, and that I believe I could have worn again.

And also the raffle I had joined for a motor car.

The Angel said I really need not be alarmed, that everything had been noted, together

with other matters I, may be, had forgotten.

(The Angel appears to have made a slight mistake.)

\*\*\*\*\*

## About the Author

Jerome Klapka Jerome was born on 2nd May 1859. His father's business collapsed and he moved to east of London.

Jerome left school at fourteen and worked as a clerk and also as a school teacher. He travelled widely all over Europe. It was his utmost desire to become a member of the Parliament.

## Theme

In this story the author dreams that he is dead and is going up and up. Now he feels that he has lost all opportunities to do good. He tries to recall whatever good he had done during his life time when he was living in this world. He realizes that he has done no deed of great benevolence during his life time. The angel who records good deeds of people is flying with him. He asks him what deeds of goodness he has recorded for him.

## Reading Notes

vexing	annoying
luminosity	bright, giving out light
throb	the rhythmic beat of the angel's wings
weary	tired
envy	feeling of disappointment and resentment for another with better fortune
shivering	trembling
shovelling out	scooping out with a large tool or a spoon
jot down	to note down
subscribe	to give a sum of money for some cause
charity	help in form of money, food, etc. to the needy
raffle	sale of an article by lottery

## EXERCISES

### 1. Answer the following questions.

- i. At what point of journey in his dream did the author hear the throbbing sound of wings?
- ii. What time of the year was it?
- iii. What does the author like about Christmas?
- iv. Write down the good deeds the author has admitted are a great joy on Christmas.
- v. Why are the noble deeds always a great joy for the author?

### 2. Read the story and fill in the blanks.

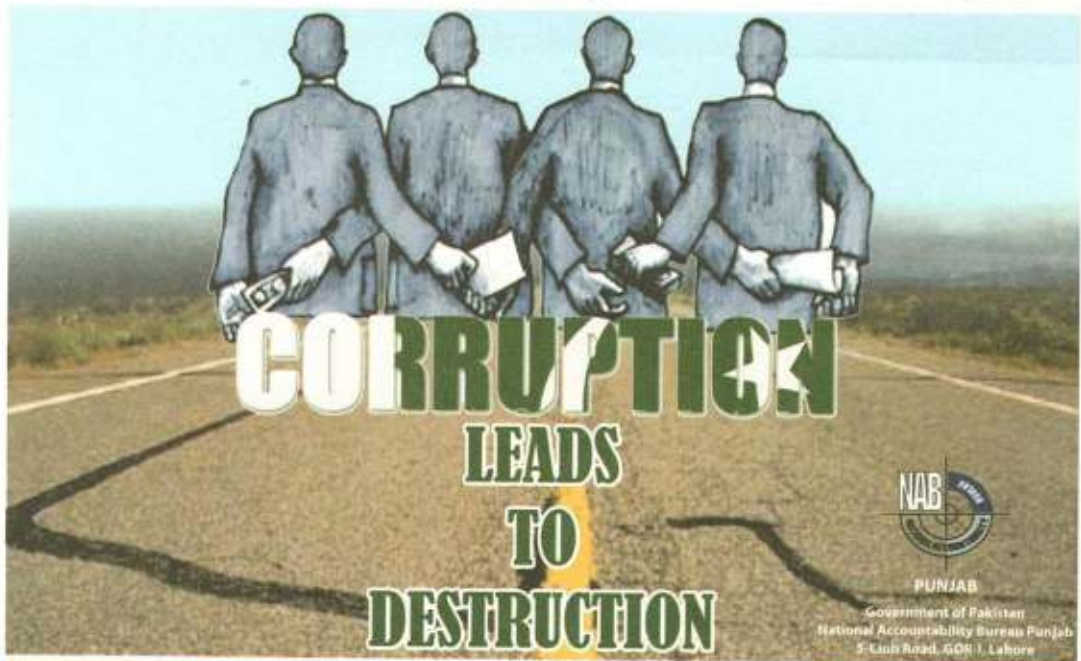
(diary, weary, vexing, deeds, fortnight, recording, good, rummage, money, raffle)

- i. I had a \_\_\_\_\_ dream.
- ii. It was about a \_\_\_\_\_ after Christmas.
- iii. I turned my head to see it was the \_\_\_\_\_ angel.
- iv. He had a \_\_\_\_\_ look.
- v. Noble \_\_\_\_\_ are always a great joy to me.
- vi. I have often thought of keeping a \_\_\_\_\_.
- vii. The author told the angel of his \_\_\_\_\_ deeds.
- viii. The author remembered the \_\_\_\_\_ to which he sent all his old clothes.
- ix. The show was well worth the \_\_\_\_\_.
- x. The author had joined the \_\_\_\_\_ for a motor car.

### 3. Read the lesson and tick the correct word. Write the correct sentences in your notebook.

- i. The author had the dream about a (week, fortnight, month) after Christmas.
- ii. It was the recording (machine, device, Angel) following the author in his dream.
- iii. At (Easter, Christmas, New year) men and women become generous in London.
- iv. The author subscribed (ten, three, five) shillings to the fund for the unemployed.
- v. He had been to (four, five, six) charity dinners.
- vi. The notice appeared in the (Morning, Afternoon and Evening) Post.

- vii. It was a (huge, large, monster) show in aid of the fund for the destitute.
- viii. The (journey, dinner, show) was well worth the money.
- ix. There were many other (big, great, noble) deeds of the author.
- x. The author sent all of his old clothes to the (annual, rummage, grand) sale.



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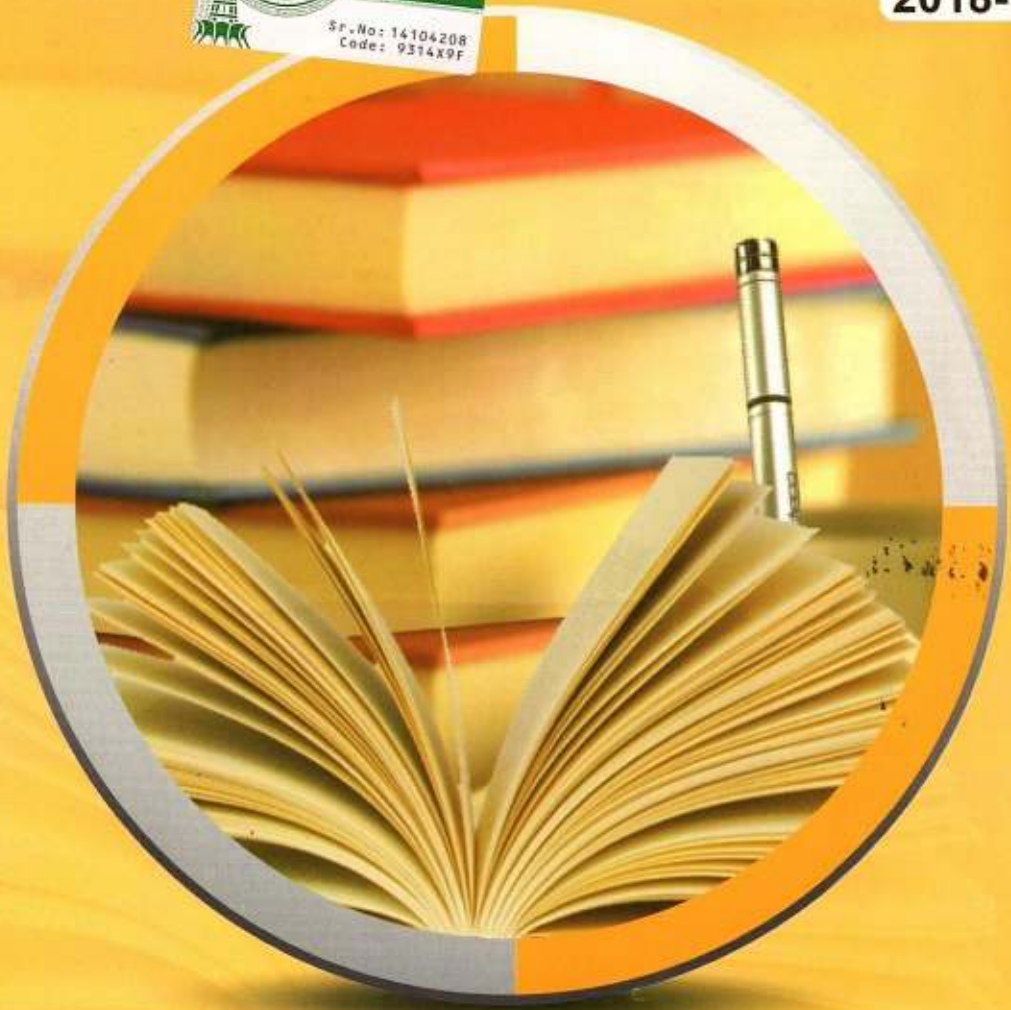
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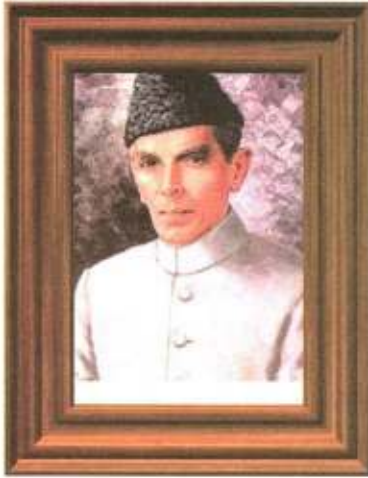
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(September 26, 1947, Karachi)

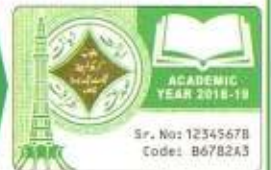
Quaid-e-Azam  
Muhammad Ali Jinnah  
Founder of Pakistan



## قومی ترانہ

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تُو نشانِ عزمِ عالی شان      ارضِ پاکستان  
مرکزِ یقین شاد باد      قوتِ اخوتِ عوام  
پاک سرزمین کا نظام      قوم، ملک، سلطنت  
شاد باد منزلِ مُراد      پایندہ تابندہ باد  
پرچمِ ستارہ و ہلال      رہبرِ ترقی و کمال  
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Prepared and published vide **NOC No. F7- 8/2003-English**,  
Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Education (Curriculum Wing), Islamabad.

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PUBLISHED BY:

MALIK MUHAMMAD AFZAL & SONS, LAHORE

PRINTED BY:

QUDRAT ULLAH PRINTERS, LAHORE

DATE OF PRINTING

APRIL 2018

EDITION

1<sup>ST</sup>

IMPRESSION

20<sup>TH</sup>

NO OF COPIES

18,000

PRICE

40/-

Play No.

1

# Heat Lightning

*(Robert F. Carroll)*

## Characters

**Girl****First Man****Second Man**

## Setting

*The interior of  
a bus station*

## Heat Lightning

### SCENE

*The drab interior of a bus station along a deserted highway somewhere in the midwest. There are two long benches stage Right, back to back; one faces the audience and one faces the rear wall. A door up Center leads out onto the road. It has a single glass pane in the top and the bottom is wooden. Two doors, up Left and down Left. Up Left door reads "Men"; down Left door reads "Women". The room is lighted by an overhanging light with a dull green shade. A large bus schedule on the wall up Right Center. A window is up Right of Center and another at Right.*

*The sound of heavy RAIN can be heard outside. LIGHTNING flashes outside followed by large bursts of THUNDER. With each flash of lightning the light in the room dims almost to the point of going out, but somehow feebly struggles back to its full strength.*

*When the curtain rises the stage is bare. Then a Man enters from the "Men's" room. He is a pleasant looking Man of about thirty-five. He takes off his hat and shakes the water from it; puts it on the bench downstage. He glances at the door up Center. Moves to it and peers out; turns and moves to the Schedule on the wall and reads it. He then moves downstage and sits on the bench facing the audience. He picks up a discarded newspaper that lies on the seat beside him. He glances back at the door, then turns his attention once more to the paper and begins going through it casually.*

*The door up Center suddenly bursts open and a Girl of about twenty-three rushes into the room. She is sobbing and is out of breath. She throws her body against the door, slamming it. The Man turns about quickly. She throws the bolt into place and turns slowly, seeing the Man. The Girl's clothes are wet and muddy. Her hair is dishevelled. She sobs and rushes to the Man quickly.*

**Girl**           *(Hysterically).* Thank God! You're here! Oh, thank God!  
*(She almost falls and the Man catches her.)*

**Man**           My dear! What is it?

**Girl**           Help me. Oh, please—please help me!

**Man**           Good Heavens! You're in a terrible state. What has happened?

**Girl**           Don't let him in. Please. He's after me. Please don't let him in.

**Man**           Who? Who's after you?

**Girl**           He'll be here any minute. Please—help me!

*(The Girl looks to the Center door. The LIGHTNING flashes and the LIGHT dims slowly. The Girl looks at the light and begins sobbing again.)*

**Man**           Please, my dear, try to tell me what happened. You've locked the door. No one

can come in. Now try to calm yourself.

*(The LIGHT has recovered again.)*

**Girl** You're waiting for the bus, aren't you? Oh, don't leave me! *(She rushes into his arms.)*

**Man** There, my dear! Of course I won't leave you!

**Girl** The bus. What time – Oh, tell me it will be here soon.

**Man** The last one's due any time now. The storm has probably slowed it down. Now, listen to me. I shall do whatever I can for you, but you must tell me what has happened.

**Girl** Yes – Yes – I must get hold of myself.

**Man** Here. Sit down. *(He brings her down to the bench facing the audience.)* There, now, that's better, isn't it? Now –

**Girl** I was at a party. I – I could have stayed all night with a friend, but I thought I had enough gas to get home –

**Man** Where do you live?

**Girl** About eight miles from here.

**Man** I see.

**Girl** About a mile from here, I suppose – I don't really know, I ran out of gas – I took my flashlight and locked the car and started walking down the road. There are so few cars this time of the morning, but I thought – anyway – I knew I could get the bus when it came along and then – go back for the car later. *(She breaks off and glances at the door again. She shudders at her own thoughts.)*

**Man** Come on, now. You were doing fine.

**Girl** I must have walked – I don't know – just a little way, when I noticed a car pulled off into a lane. I saw the rear light burning. I wanted to call to them. I thought I'd just call out to them and ask if they could help me – if they might let me have some gas.

**Man** Did you?

**Girl** No – I – I didn't get the chance to. I walked near enough to the car to be heard if I called, but – before I could call out, I saw someone. The front door of the car was open and someone was standing by it. A man – he hadn't heard me – he was – he was pulling something out of the car. I couldn't tell what it was at first – and then the lightning – and I – I saw her hand and then – her head – her hair was light and long and it dragged in the mud.

**Man** This is dreadful!

*(There is a flash of LIGHTNING and a crash of THUNDER.)*

- Girl** He'll be here. He'll be here. I'm scared. Oh, God, I'm scared.
- Man** Did he see you?
- Girl** Maybe my flashlight – maybe I screamed – I don't know – I don't think I screamed. I was too frightened. He looked up – I knew he saw me. I dropped the flashlight and started running. I could hear him behind me. I could hear the water splashing under his feet as he ran. I knew he was behind me – I was afraid I was going to faint. I ran crazy like all over the road – then I ran off the road and into the woods – I circled round and round hoping I'd lose him, but I kept hearing something behind me – I ran until I fell – I knew there was no use – I couldn't keep it up – but then I realized I must have lost him – because I didn't hear him anymore.
- Man** And you came straight here, then?
- Girl** Yes – Yes – Oh, he's still out there – somewhere. He'll be here. Oh, God! I know he will.
- Man** The bus will be here soon and you'll be all right.
- Girl** Yes. Oh, God, please let it come quickly.
- Man** You'll have to get to the police immediately.
- Girl** No – I couldn't. I don't want to – I'm afraid.
- Man** But you must. It's your duty. This is a dreadful thing.
- Girl** I know, but – what could I tell them?
- Man** Tell them what you told me just now.
- Girl** That wouldn't be enough – they'd want me to describe him. Maybe identify him. I couldn't – I just couldn't.
- Man** Are you sure you couldn't think of something that might give them a lead. Anything?
- Girl** I don't even know what he looked like. I couldn't see him very well – I was so frightened.
- Man** Nevertheless you've got to go to the police.
- Girl** I don't know – I –
- Man** They'll ask you a lot of questions, of course, but I'm sure you can answer most of them. After you tell them the story the way you told it to me, there'll be routine questions, but they'll be simple. They'll probably ask you something like – was he wearing a hat? How was he dressed?
- Girl** I don't even know that!
- Man** Or – was he tall? Was he short? How would you describe him generally?
- Girl** I don't know – I swear – I just don't know.
- Man** In the lightning – are you sure you didn't see his face at all?



**Girl** I don't remember. Maybe he was wearing a hat or something. I don't remember seeing his face.

**Man** But you saw the girl.

**Girl** No—I didn't.

**Man** But you said her hair was light—and you saw her hand.

**Girl** Yes, I did. In the lightning, I think—Yes.

**Man** But you don't remember seeing him?

**Girl** No—I don't. *(She begins sobbing.)*

**Man** I'm sorry—I shouldn't be going on like this—you are much too upset to even think any more about it. Don't worry about it anymore. Something will come to you later—that you've forgotten about right now. You'll see.

**Girl** Perhaps.

**Man** Your flashlight—for instance. You could identify that, couldn't you?

**Girl** Yes—but—

**Man** There, you see! Now—look—*(Points to "Women's room.")* Go in there, and dry your eyes and fix yourself up. You'll feel much better.

**Girl** You won't leave, will you?

**Man** Of course not, my dear. I'll be right here!

*(She moves toward the door up Left. There is a brilliant flash of LIGHTNING. The LIGHT begins to dim. The Girl looks toward the Center door. There is a second flash of LIGHTNING illuminating the Center door. The Girl screams. In the flash of lightning, a Man's face can be seen pressed against the glass outside the door. The door rattles viciously. The LIGHT in the room has almost dimmed out.)*

**Man** *(Pushing her toward "Women's room")*. Get in there. Stay until I tell you to come out.

*(The Man pushes her into the room quickly.)*

**Second Man** *(Outside the door. Rattles the door viciously once more)*. Let me in. Open this door. Let me in!

**Man** What do you want?

**Second Man** *(Outside)*. I want to get out of this storm. What the hell do you think I want? What's the idea of locking this door? You think you own this place? *(The Man goes to the door slowly, throws back the bolt and the Second Man enters quickly. He is a nondescript sort of person. Tall, nice-looking and about thirty years of age. He looks about the room as he enters.)* You've got no right to lock that door—keeping people outside in this kind of weather. *(The Second Man moves up to the Schedule on the wall.)* Has there been a bus?

**Man** No – not yet.

**Second Man** Late, huh? Good.

**Man** Why?

**Second Man** Why? I'd have missed it if it were on time – wouldn't I?

**Man** Yes – of course – how stupid of me.

**Second Man** There's someone else here, isn't there?

**Man** What do you mean?

**Second Man** I saw somebody else when I looked in.

**Man** There –

**Second Man** A girl, wasn't it?

*(The two Men look at each other a moment; then the First Man walks to the door where the Girl has gone and knocks on it. The door opens slowly and the Girl enters. When she sees the other man standing in the room, she starts to cry out, but the Man puts his finger to his lip conveying silence to her and then guides her downstage to the bench.)*

**Second Man** I thought you said –

**Man** I didn't say anything.

**Second Man** You tried to tell me there was no one else here. I thought there was –

**Man** Did you?

**Second Man** Yeah, I was sure there was. What was the idea of lying?

**Man** I wasn't conscious of lying about anything.

**Second Man** Yeah? I guess I'm imaginin' things. Oh, well – forget it. How far you going?

**Man** Just into town.

**Second Man** How about you, Miss?

**Girl** Not far.

*(The Second Man starts moving down toward the Girl. She sees him coming, and moves over to the wall, appearing to read the schedule.)*

**Second Man** It's pretty late, isn't it? I was in luck, don't you think? I told that to our friend here, but he didn't get it. *(To First Man)*. I'll bet she's smarter than you are.

**Man** Yes – I suppose she might – be.

**Second Man** *(noticing the Girl's nervousness)*. Say, you look pretty nervous about something. Storm upsets your plans? You can expect storms to slow up buses. If people were smart they wouldn't be out on a night like this. Just try to get somewhere when it storms – can't be done – especially if you're in a hurry.

**Girl** I'm – I'm in no particular hurry.

**Second Man** Well, I'm sure as hell am – but there's nothing I can do about it – I guess.

*(There is another flash of LIGHTNING and the LIGHT dims very low again. The Girl is pressed against the Right window in fear. The LIGHT recovers.)*

**Second Man** Say – you're really upset, aren't you? Has somebody been bothering you? *(The Second Man moves toward her again.)*

**Girl** It's – it's just the storm.

**Second Man** Afraid of storms?

**Girl** Yes – I – am.

*(The Girl seems as if she is about to faint. The First Man pushes ahead of the Second Man and takes her by the arm and leads her down to the bench.)*

**Man** She'll be all right. Why don't you leave her alone?

**Second Man** Yeah! Sure! *(He moves away, watching the Girl.)*

*(There is another brilliant flash of LIGHTNING and a crack of THUNDER. The LIGHT dims slowly and goes out. The Girl lets out a muffled cry.)*

**Man** Here! Have a chewing gum, my dear.

*(The Man opens the packet and gives her one. The Second Man pushes his head between them.)*

**Second Man** Don't mind to have one more, do you?

**Man** No, of course not. *(Gives him one more.)*

*(The LIGHT comes up slowly.)*

**Second Man** Thanks. *(He strolls up toward the Center door.)* God! What a night! Always wonder what brings people out on nights like this. Wouldn't catch me out if it weren't pretty important. *(To Man.)* How about you?

**Man** I have early business in town.

**Second Man** *(To Girl).* And you?

**Girl** I was visiting – with friends. I should have stayed the night.

**Second Man** Oh! You're not together then?

**Man** Er – no –

**Second Man** I see. *(He moves down toward the Girl.)* How far did you say you were going?

**Girl** Not far – about eight miles.

*(The Second Man sits beside her and she moves away suspiciously.)*

**Second Man** I never saw anybody so afraid of a storm.

**Girl** It's the lightning – I –

**Second Man** Lightning. I used to be afraid of it, when I was a kid, but I got over it. All by myself too. *(He takes the Girl's arm.)* Look! Come here. I'll show you. *(He*

*leads her up to the window rear Right.)* Watch the sky the next time there's a big flash. One of the really beautiful sights in this world if you look at it right – like a great big Fourth of July. *(There is now a brilliant flash of LIGHTNING.)* Look! See! What did I tell you? It's just like it was cutting the whole world in two. *(The Girl breaks away and goes Right.)* You wouldn't even watch it. You'll never get over being afraid of things if you won't face them.

**Girl** I can't.

*(There is the hum of a MOTOR in the distance. They All listen. The Second Man goes to the window.)*

**Second Man** I guess that's it – Yep – Looks empty.

**Girl** Empty!

*(There is the sound of BRAKES being applied. Each waits for the other to make the first move.)*

**Second Man** Well – are we going?

**Man** No!

**Second Man** What?

**Man** I'm not going!

**Second Man** Why?

**Man** I don't see that I have to give you a reason for what I do.

**Second Man** No – I guess you don't at that – *(He looks at the Girl, then moves to her, reaching for her arm.)* Well, in that case, I guess we'll just keep each other company, won't we? *(The Girl is stunned. She looks to the First Man, who stands behind the Second Man. The First Man shakes his head "no." There is the sound of a HORN outside.)*

**Girl** *(Backing away from the Second Man.)* No – No – I don't think I'll go either. I'll wait-

**Second Man** I think you'd better come on. We'll have it all to ourselves.

**Girl** No – No – I won't. Leave me alone. I'm going to stay here – with him.

**Second Man** *(Looks from one to the other.)* I get it. Waiting for a bus! *(He laughs.)* No wonder you had the door locked! *(The Second Man exits laughing.)*  
*(The Girl rushes after him, slamming the door and throwing the bolt once more. She listens to the sound of the BUS pulling away. Then she turns quickly to the Man.)*

**Girl** Thank God!

**Man** I tried to tell him you weren't here.

**Girl** But you let him in – In God's name – why?

**Man** He was making such a disturbance out there. Besides there was really no way

to tell for certain that –

**Girl** No – He's gone – He's gone – I guess it wasn't – No – I somehow don't think it was –

**Man** You don't think it was he?

**Girl** No – I – don't –

**Man** Yes – You do! You know that wasn't the man. Why? That's a step to remembering.

**Girl** No – only that he – left. He left –

**Man** Yes, you do! I knew it would come back slowly – that you'd remember something.

**Girl** No!

**Man** First, you would say – That wasn't the man because I remember – and then later – That was the man because I remember. Yes. You would remember!

**Girl** No! *(There is another brilliant flash of LIGHTNING and the LIGHT begins to dim.)* Oh – no – the light – Dear God – No!

**Man** Don't worry, my dear. You'll have light.

*(He has taken a flashlight from his coat pocket. The Girl stares at it as the LIGHTNING crashes again and the already very dim LIGHT dies completely. The piercing light of the flashlight is the only light in the room. The Girl runs up to the Center door and pulls at it. She bolts the door before the Man comes near her. A dog that comes there by chance to save itself from the storm jumps and seizes the Man with its sharp teeth. The light plays over, and highlights the inside of the room. The dog forces the Man to run away and the Girl comes out to pat the dog.)*

## CURTAIN

### Theme

In this play a frightened young woman, running from a killer on a dark and stormy night, thinks that she has found a safe haven in a bus station. The situation of the play is highly emotional right from the moment the curtain rises until it falls. There is terror from the outset, and there are all the components necessary to create a melodrama – a dimly – lit bus station, a storm accompanied by flashes of lightning, and the promise of violent action or emotion.

The scene is tense and highly emotional, and the ingredients of a good thriller are present from the opening speech. As is the case with good melodrama, theme and characterization are secondary. The mood and the suspense of waiting for the development of the plot are the factors that draw the reader / viewer quickly into the final stage of the play.

## Glossary

hysterically	with outbursts of emotion
I must get hold of myself	I must become calm
I had enough gas to get home	I had enough petrol to reach home
ran out of gas	ran out of petrol
breaks	stops speaking
come on	continue, keep speaking
just a little way	only a short distance
I'd lose him	I'd escape from him
give them a lead	provide them with a clue
sobbing	drawing in the breath sharply and with irregularity from sorrow or pain
rattles	knocks sharply
viciously	giving or doing with evil intention
what's the idea of	what's the reason for
nondescript sort of person	uninteresting person
pretty late	quite late
in luck	fortunate
he didn't get it	he didn't understand
I sure as hell am	I am very much sure
suspiciously	showing suspicion
stunned	shocked
I got over it	I recovered from it (the fear)
all by myself	completely alone without any help from someone else.
piercing	going into or through

## EXERCISES

### I. Choose the correct answer.

i. The bus was late due to

a) rush.

b) storm.

c) accident.

d) change in schedule.

- ii. The girl was coming from  
 a) the party. b) a tour.  
 c) a hill station. d) a station.
- iii. The girl was afraid of  
 a) the policeman. b) a friend.  
 c) a killer. d) a person.
- iv. She thought of reaching the house but  
 a) the car broke down. b) the brakes failed.  
 c) the car ran out of gas. d) the road was blocked.
- v. She saw the man dragging out of his car  
 a) the corpse of a woman. b) a sack.  
 c) a statue. d) a dog.
- vi. Why did she circle round and round into the wood?  
 a) to escape from the killer b) to reach a safe place  
 c) to cheat a man d) to save herself
- vii. "You couldn't think of something that might give them a lead" means  
 a) to find a culprit. b) to find a treasure.  
 c) to persecute. d) to get a clue.
- viii. She saw in the flash of lightning  
 a) a dog. b) a bus.  
 c) a car. d) a man's face.
- ix. The difference in the ages of the two men is  
 a) ten years. b) five years.  
 c) two years. d) one year.
- x. If people were smart they wouldn't be out  
 a) on a day like this. b) on a holiday.  
 c) on a tour. d) on a night like this.

## II. Mark the statements true / false.

- The car ran out of gas about two miles from here.
- She was too frightened to tell the details of the incident.
- The Girl went to the police to report the matter.
- Second Man wanted to save himself from the storm.
- First Man wanted to go to town for business.
- They heard the hum of a motor in the distance.

7. She could not remember the description of the killer.
8. She bolted the door before the man came near.

**III. Answer the following questions.**

- (a) Why couldn't the Girl describe the killer?
- (b) What were the circumstances that forced her to leave her car?
- (c) Why did she ask for help from First Man?
- (d) What was the condition of the weather?
- (e) How did Second Man accuse First Man of lying?
- (f) Does the Girl become suspicious of First Man as the play progresses?
- (g) What is her impression about Second Man?
- (h) Why didn't she accompany Second Man?

**IV. Answer the following questions in 100–150 words.**

- (a) Write down the story of the play in your own words.
- (b) Have you had any experience of a similar situation? Write at least ten sentences.
- (c) Why did the Girl consider First Man her helper?
- (d) What are the factors that played a role in saving the Girl?
- (e) How did she realize the truth?

**V. Punctuate the following lines.**

i want to get out of this storm what the hell do you think i want what s the idea of locking this door you think you own this place

**VI. Fill in the blanks using a preposition given in bracket.**

(to, down, along, of, over, in, with)

1. She sobs and rushes \_\_\_\_\_ the Man quickly.
2. He brings her \_\_\_\_\_ to the bench.
3. I could get the bus when it came \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I run like crazy all \_\_\_\_\_ the road.
5. I'm sure you can answer most \_\_\_\_\_ them.
6. I saw somebody else when I looked \_\_\_\_\_.
7. You'll never get over being afraid \_\_\_\_\_ things.
8. The dog jumps and seizes the Man \_\_\_\_\_ its sharp teeth.



Play No.

2

# Visit to a Small Planet

*(Gore Vidal)*

## Characters

**Kreton****Roger Spelding****Ellen Spelding****Mrs. Spelding****John Randolph****General Powers****Aide**

## Visit to a Small Planet

### SCENE

*Stock Shot: The night sky, stars. Then slowly a luminous object arcs into view. As it is almost upon us, dissolves to the living room of the Spelding house in Maryland.*

*Superimpose Card: "THE TIME: THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW"*

*The room is comfortably balanced between the expensively decorated and the homely. ROGER SPELDING is concluding his TV broadcast. He is middle-aged, unctuous, resonant. His wife, bored and vague, knits passively while he talks at his desk. Two technicians are on hand, operating the equipment. His daughter, ELLEN, a lively girl of twenty, fidgets as she listens.*

**Spelding** *(Into microphone)*... and so, according to General Powers ... who should know if anyone does.... the flying object which has given rise to so much irresponsible conjecture is nothing more than a meteor passing through the earth's orbit. It is not, as many believe, a secret weapon of this country. Nor is it a spaceship as certain lunatic elements have suggested. General Powers has assured me that it is highly doubtful there is any form of life on other planets capable of building a spaceship. "If any travelling is to be done in space, we will do it first." And those are his exact words.... Which winds up another week of news. *(Crosses to pose with wife and daughter)*. This is Roger Spelding, saying good night to Mother and Father America, from my old homestead in Silver Glen, Maryland, close to the warm pulsebeat of the nation.

**Technician** Good show tonight, Mr. Spelding.

**Spelding** Thank you.

**Technician** Yes sir, you were right on time.

*Spelding nods wearily, his mechanical smile and heartiness suddenly gone.*

**Mrs. Spelding** Very nice, dear. Very nice.

**Technician** See you next week, Mr. Spelding.

**Spelding** Thank you, boys.

*Technicians go.*

**Spelding** Did you like the broadcast, Ellen?

**Ellen** Of course I did, Daddy.

**Spelding** Then what did I say?

**Ellen** Oh, that's not fair.

**Spelding** It's not very flattering when one's own daughter won't listen to what one says

while millions of people...

- Ellen** I always listen, Daddy, you know that.
- Mrs. Spelding** We love your broadcasts, dear. I don't know what we'd do without them.
- Spelding** Starve.
- Ellen** I wonder what's keeping John?
- Spelding** Certainly not work.
- Ellen** Oh, Daddy, stop it! John works very hard and you know it.
- Mrs. Spelding** Yes, he's a perfectly nice boy, Roger. I like him.
- Spelding** I know. I know: He has every virtue except the most important one: he has no get-up-and-go.
- Ellen** (*Precisely*) He doesn't want to get up and he doesn't want to go because he's already where he wants to be on his own farm which is exactly where I'm going to be when we're married.
- Spelding** More thankless than a serpent's tooth is an ungrateful child.
- Ellen** I don't think that's right. Isn't it "more deadly..."
- Spelding** Whatever the exact quotation is, I stand by the sentiment.
- Mrs. Spelding** Please don't quarrel. It always gives me a headache.
- Spelding** I never quarrel. I merely reason, in my simple way, with Miss Know-it-all here.
- Ellen** Oh, Daddy! Next you'll tell me I should marry for money.
- Spelding** There is nothing wrong with marrying a wealthy man. The horror of it has always eluded me. However, my only wish is that you marry someone hard-working ambitious, a man who'll make his mark in the world. Not a boy who plans to sit on a farm all his life, growing peanuts.
- Ellen** English walnuts.
- Spelding** Will you stop correcting me?
- Ellen** But, Daddy, John grows walnuts...  
(*John enters, breathlessly.*)
- John** Come out! Quick! It's coming this way. It's going to land right here!
- Spelding** What's going to land?
- John** The spaceship. Look!
- Spelding** Apparently you didn't hear my broadcast. The flying object in question is a meteor not a spaceship.  
*John has gone out with Ellen. Spelding and Mrs. Spelding follows.*
- Mrs. Spelding** Oh, my! Look! Something is falling! Roger, you don't think it's going to hit the house, do you?

- Spelding** The odds against being hit by a falling object that size are, I should say, roughly, ten million to one.
- John** Ten million to one or not it's going to land right here, and it's not falling.
- Spelding** I'm sure it's a meteor.
- Mrs. Spelding** Shouldn't we go down to the cellar?
- Spelding** If it's not a meteor, it's an optical illusion... mass hysteria.
- Ellen** Daddy, it's a real spaceship. I'm sure it is.
- Spelding** Or maybe a weather balloon. Yes, that's what it is. **General Powers said only** yesterday...
- John** It's landing!
- Spelding** I'm going to call the police ... the Army. (*Bolts inside.*)
- Ellen** Oh look how it shines!
- John** Here it comes!
- Mrs. Spelding** Right in my rose garden!
- Ellen** May be it's a balloon.
- John** No, it's a spaceship and right in your own backyard.
- Ellen** What makes it shine so?
- John** I don't know but I'm going to find out.  
(*Runs off toward the light.*)
- Ellen** Oh, darling, don't! John, please! John, John come back!  
(*Spelding wide-eyed returns.*)
- Mrs. Spelding** Roger, it's landed right in my rose garden.
- Spelding** I got General Powers. He's coming over. He said they've been watching this thing. They... they don't know what it is.
- Ellen** You mean it's nothing of ours?
- Spelding** They believe it... (*Swallows hard*)... it's from outer space.
- Ellen** And John's down there! Daddy, get a gun or something.
- Spelding** Perhaps we'd better leave the house until the Army gets here.
- Ellen** We can't leave John.
- Spelding** I can. (*Peers nearsightedly*) Why, it's not much larger than a car. I'm sure it's some kind of meteor.
- Ellen** Meteors are blazing hot.
- Spelding** This is a cold one....
- Ellen** It's opening.... The whole side's opening! (*Shouts*) John! Come back! Quick...
- Mrs. Spelding** Why, there's a man getting out of it! (*Sighs*) I feel much better already. I'm

sure if we ask him, he'll move that thing for us. Roger, you ask him.

**Spelding** (*Ominously*) If it's really a man?

**Ellen** John's shaking hands with him (*Calls*) John darling, come on up here...

**Mrs. Spelding** And bring your friend...

**Spelding** There's something wrong with the way that creature looks... if it is a man and not a ... not a monster.

**Mrs. Spelding** He looks perfectly nice to me.

*(John and the visitor appear. The visitor is in his forties, a mild, pleasant looking man with side-whiskers and dressed in the fashion of 1860. He pauses when he sees the three people, in silence for a moment. They stare back at him, equally interested.)*

**Visitor** I seem to've made a mistake. I am sorry. I'd better go back and start over again.

**Spelding** My dear sir, you've only just arrived. Come in, come in. I don't need to tell you what a pleasure this is .... Mister .... Mister ....

**Visitor** Kreton ... This is the wrong costume, isn't it?

**Spelding** Wrong for what?

**Kreton** For the country, and the time,

**Spelding** Well, it's a trifle old-fashioned.

**Mrs. Spelding** But really awfully handsome.

**Kreton** Thank you.

**Mrs. Spelding** (*to husband*). Ask him about moving that thing off my rose bed.

*(Spelding leads them all into living room.)*

**Spelding** Come on in and sit down. You must be tired after your trip.

**Kreton** Yes, I am a little. (*Looking around delightedly*) Oh, it's better than I'd hoped!

**Spelding** Better? What's better?

**Kreton** The house .... That's what you call it? Or is this an apartment?

**Spelding** This is a house in the State of Maryland, U.S.A.

**Kreton** In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century! To think this is really the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I must sit down a moment and collect myself. The real thing!

*(He sits down.)*

**Ellen** You .... You're not an American, are you?

**Kreton** What a nice thought! No, I'm not.

**John** You sound more English.

**Kreton** Do I? Is my accent very bad?

**John** No, It's quite good.

- Spelding** Where are you from, Mr. Kreton?
- Kreton** (*Evasively*) Another place.
- Spelding** On this earth of course.
- Kreton** No, not on this planet.
- Ellen** Are you from Mars?
- Kreton** Oh dear no, not Mars. There's nobody on Mars.... At least no one I know.
- Ellen** I'm sure you're teasing us and this is all some kind of publicity stunt.
- Kreton** No, I really am from another place.
- Spelding** I don't suppose you'd consent to my interviewing you on television?
- Kreton** I don't think your authorities will like that. They are terribly upset as it is.
- Spelding** How do you know?
- Kreton** Well, I ... pick up things. For instance, I know that in a few minutes a number of people from your Army will be here to question me and they ... like you ... are torn by doubt.
- Spelding** How extraordinary!
- Ellen** Why did you come here?
- Kreton** Simply a visit to your small planet. I've been studying it for years. In fact, one might say, you people are my hobby. Especially, this period of your development.
- John** Are you the first person from your planet to travel in space like this?
- Kreton** Oh my no! Everyone travels who wants to. It's just that no one wants to visit you. I can't think, why? I always have. You'd be surprised what a thorough study I've made. (*Recites*) The planet, Earth, is divided into five continents with a number of large islands. It is mostly water. There is one moon. Civilization is only just beginning ...
- Spelding** Just beginning! My dear sir, we have had.
- Kreton** (*Blandly*) You are only in the initial stages, the most fascinating stages as far as I'm concerned ... I do hope I don't sound patronizing.
- Ellen** Well, we are very proud.
- Kreton** I know and that's one of your most endearing primitive traits. Oh, I can't believe I'm here at last!
- (*General Powers, a vigorous product of the National Guard, and his AIDE enter.*)
- Powers** All right folks. The place is surrounded by troops. Where is the monster?
- Kreton** I, my dear General, am the monster.
- Powers** What are you dressed up for, a fancy-dress party?
- Kreton** I'd hoped to be in the costume of the period. As you see I am about a hundred

years too late.

**Powers** Roger, who is this joker?

**Spelding** This is Mr. Kreton ... General Powers. Mr. Kreton arrived in that thing outside. He is from another planet.

**Powers** I don't believe it.

**Ellen** It's true. We saw him get out of the flying saucer.

**Powers** *(To AIDE)* Captain, go down and look at the ship. But be careful. Don't touch anything. And don't let anybody else near it. *(AIDE goes)* So you're from another planet.

**Kreton** Yes. My, that's a very smart uniform but I prefer the ones made of metal, the ones you used to wear, you know: with the feathers on top.

**Powers** That was five hundred years ago ... Are you sure you're not from the Earth?

**Kreton** Yes

**Powers** Well, I'm not. You've got some pretty tall explaining to do.

**Kreton** Anything to oblige.

**Powers** All right, which planet?

**Kreton** None that you have ever heard of.

**Powers** Where is it?

**Kreton** You wouldn't know.

**Powers** This solar system?

**Kreton** No.

**Powers** Another system?

**Kreton** Yes.

**Powers** Look, Buster, I don't want to play games: I just want to know where you're from. The law requires it.

**Kreton** It's possible that I could explain it to a mathematician but I'm afraid I couldn't explain it to you, not for another five hundred years and by then of course you'd be dead because you people do die, don't you?

**Powers** What?

**Kreton** Poor fragile butterflies, such brief little moments in the sun ... You see we don't die.

**Powers** You'll die all right if it turns out you're a spy or a hostile alien.

**Kreton** I'm sure you wouldn't be so cruel.  
*(AIDE returns; he looks disturbed.)*

**Powers** What did you find?

**AIDE** I'm not sure, General.

- Powers** *(Heavily)* Then do your best to describe what the object is like.
- AIDE** Well, it's elliptical, with a fourteen foot diameter. And it's made of an unknown metal which shines and inside there isn't anything.
- Powers** Isn't anything?
- AIDE** There's nothing inside the ship: No instruments, no food, **nothing**.
- Powers** *(To Kreton)* What did you do with your instrument board?
- Kreton** With my what? Oh, I don't have one.
- Powers** How does the thing travel?
- Kreton** I don't know.
- Powers** You don't know. Now look, Mister, you're in pretty serious trouble. I suggest you do a bit of cooperating. You claim you travelled here from outer space in a machine with no instruments ....
- Kreton** Well, these cars are rather common in my world and I suppose, once upon a time, I must've known the theory on which they operate but I've long since forgotten. After all, General, we're not mechanics, you and I.
- Powers** Roger, do you mind if we use your study?
- Spelding** Not at all. Not at all, General.
- Powers** Mr. Kreton and I are going to have a chat. *(To AIDE)* Put in a call to the Chief of Staff.
- AIDE** Yes, General.  
*(Spelding rises, leads Kreton and Powers into next room, a handsomely furnished study, many books and a globe of the world.)*
- Spelding** This way, gentlemen.  
*(Kreton sits down comfortably beside the globe which he twirls thoughtfully. At the door, Spelding speaks in a low voice to Powers). I hope I'll be the one to get the story first, Tom.*
- Powers** There isn't any story. Complete censorship. I'm sorry but this house is under martial law. I've a hunch we're in trouble. *(He shuts the door. Spelding turns and rejoins his family).*
- Ellen** I think he's wonderful whoever he is.
- Mrs. Spelding** I wonder how much damage he did to my rose garden ....
- John** It's sure hard to believe he's really from outer space. No instruments, no nothing ... boy, they must be advanced scientifically.
- Mrs. Spelding** Is he spending the night, dear?
- Spelding** What?
- Mrs. Spelding** Is he spending the night?
- Spelding** Oh yes, yes, I suppose he will be.



- Mrs. Spelding** Then I'd better go make up the bedroom. He seems perfectly nice to me. I like his whiskers. They're so very ... comforting. Like Grandfather Spelding's. She goes.
- Spelding** *(Bitterly)* I know this story will leak out before I can interview him. I just know it.
- Ellen** What does it mean, we're under martial law.
- Spelding** It means we have to do what General Powers tells us to do. *(He goes to the window as a soldier passes by)* See?
- John** I wish I'd taken a closer look at that ship when I had the chance.
- Ellen** Perhaps he'll give us a ride in it.
- John** Travelling in space! Just like those stories. You know: intergalactic drive stuff.
- Spelding** If he's not an impostor.
- Ellen** I have a feeling he isn't.
- John** Well, I better call the family and tell them I'm all right.  
*He crosses to telephone by the door which leads into the hall.*
- AIDE** I'm sorry, sir, but you can't use the phone.
- Spelding** He certainly can. This is my house ....
- AIDE** *(Mechanically)* This house is a military reservation until the crisis is over: Order General Powers. I'm sorry.
- John** How am I to call home to say where I am?
- AIDE** Only General Powers can help you. You're also forbidden to leave this house without permission.
- Spelding** You can't do this!
- AIDE** I'm afraid, sir, we've done it.
- Ellen** Isn't it exciting!  
*(Cut to study.)*
- Powers** Are you deliberately trying to confuse me?
- Kreton** Not deliberately, no.
- Powers** We have gone over and over this for two hours now and all that you've told me is that you're from another planet in another solar system....
- Kreton** In another dimension. I think that's the word you use.
- Powers** In another dimension and you have come here as a tourist.
- Kreton** Up to a point, yes. What did you expect?
- Powers** It is my job to guard the security of this country.
- Kreton** I'm sure that must be very interesting work.

- Powers** For all I know, you are a spy, sent here by an alien race to study us, preparatory to invasion.
- Kreton** Oh, none of my people would dream of invading you.
- Powers** How do I know that's true?
- Kreton** You don't, so I suggest you believe me. I should also warn you: I can tell what's inside.
- Powers** What's inside?
- Kreton** What's inside your mind.
- Powers** You're a mind reader?
- Kreton** I don't really read it. I hear it.
- Powers** What am I thinking?
- Kreton** That I am either a lunatic from the earth or a spy from another world.
- Powers** Correct. But then you could've guessed that. *(Frowns)* What am I thinking now?
- Kreton** You're making a picture. Three silver stars. You're pinning them on your shoulder, instead of the two stars you now wear.
- Powers** *(Startled)* That's right. I was thinking of my promotion.
- Kreton** If there's anything I can do to hurry it along, just let me know.
- Powers** You can. Tell me why you're here.
- Kreton** Well, we don't travel much, my people. We used to but since we see everything through special monitors and re-creators, there is no particular need to travel. However, I am a hobbyist. I love to gad about.
- Powers** *(Taking notes)* Are you the first to visit us?
- Kreton** Oh, no! We started visiting you long before there were people on the planet. However, we are seldom noticed on our trips. I'm sorry to say I slipped up, coming in the way I did ... but then this visit was all rather impromptu. *(Laughs)* I am a creature of impulse, I fear.
- (AIDE looks in.)*
- AIDE** Chief of Staff on the telephone, General.
- Powers** *(Picks up phone).* Hello! yes, sir. Powers speaking. I'm talking to him now. No, sir. No, sir. No, we can't determine what method of power was used. He won't talk. Yes, sir. I'll hold him here. I've put the house under martial law ... belongs to a friend of mine, Roger Spelding, the TV commentator. Roger Spelding, the TV ... What? Oh, no, I'm sure he won't say anything. Who ... oh, yes, sir. Yes, I realize the importance of it. Yes, I will. Good-bye. *(Hangs up)* The President of the United States wants to know all about you.
- Kreton** How nice of him! And I want to know all about him. But I do wish you'd let

- me rest a bit first. Your language is still not familiar to me. I had to learn them all, quite exhausting.
- Powers** You speak all our languages?
- Kreton** Yes, all of them. But then it's easier than you might think since I can see what's inside.
- Powers** Speaking of what's inside, we're going to take your ship apart.
- Kreton** Oh, I wish you wouldn't.
- Powers** Security demands it.
- Kreton** In that case my security demands you leave it alone.
- Powers** You plan to stop us?
- Kreton** I already have ... Listen.  
*(Far-off shouting AIDE rushes into the study.)*
- AIDE** Something's happened to the ship, General. The door's shut and there's some kind of wall all around it, an invisible wall. We can't get near it.
- Kreton** *(To camera)* I hope there was no one inside.
- Powers** *(To Kreton)* How did you do that?
- Kreton** I couldn't begin to explain. Now if you don't mind, I think we should go in and see our hosts.  
*He rises, goes into living room. Powers and AIDE look at each other.*
- Powers** Don't let him out of your sight.  
*(Cut to living room as Powers picks up phone. Kreton is with John and Ellen.)*
- Kreton** I don't mind curiosity but I really can't permit them to wreck my poor ship.
- Ellen** What do you plan to do, now you're here?
- Kreton** Oh, keep busy. I have a project or two ... *(Sighs)* I can't believe you're real.
- John** Then we're all in the same boat.
- Kreton.** Boat? Oh, yes! Well, I should have come ages ago but I ... I couldn't get away until yesterday.
- John** Yesterday? It only took you a day to get here?
- Kreton** One of my days, not yours. But then you don't know about time yet.
- John** Oh, you mean relativity.
- Kreton** No, it's much more involved than that. You won't know about time until ... now let me see if I remember ... no, I don't, but it's about two thousand years.
- John** What do we do between now and then?
- Kreton** You simply go on the way you are, living your exciting primitive lives ... you have no idea how much fun you're having now.
- Ellen** I hope you'll stay with us while you're here.

- Kreton** That's very nice of you. Perhaps I will. Though I'm sure you'll get tired of having a visitor under foot all the time.
- Ellen** Certainly not. And Daddy will be deliriously happy. He can interview you by the hour.
- John** What's it like in outer space?
- Kreton** Dull.
- Ellen** I should think it would be divine!  
*(Powers enters.)*
- Kreton** No, General, it won't work.
- Powers** What won't work?
- Kreton** Trying to blow up my little force field. You'll just plough up Mrs. Spelding's garden.  
*(Powers snarls and goes into study.)*
- Ellen** Can you tell what we're all thinking?
- Kreton** Yes. As a matter of fact, it makes me a bit giddy. Your minds are not at all like ours. You see we control our thoughts while you ... well, it's extraordinary the things you think about!
- Ellen** Oh, how awful you can tell everything we think?
- Kreton** Everything! It's one of the reasons I'm here, to intoxicate myself with your primitive minds ... with the wonderful rawness of your emotions! You have no idea how it excites me! You simply seethe with unlikely emotions.
- Ellen** I've never felt so sordid.
- John** From now on I'm going to think about agriculture.
- Spelding** *(Entering)* You would.
- Ellen** Daddy!
- Kreton** No, no. You must go right on thinking about Ellen. Such wonderfully *purple* thoughts!
- Spelding** Now see here, Powers, you're carrying this martial law thing too far ...
- Powers** Unfortunately, until I have received word from Washington as to the final disposition of this problem, you must obey my orders: no telephone calls, no communication with the outside.
- Spelding** This is unsupportable.
- Kreton** Poor Mr. Spelding! If you like, I shall go. That would solve everything, wouldn't it?
- Powers** You're not going anywhere, Mr. Kreton, until I've had my instructions.
- Kreton** I sincerely doubt if you could stop me. However, I put it up to Mr. Spelding. Shall I go?

- Spelding** Yes! (*Powers gestures a warning*) Do stay, I mean, we want you to get a good impression of us ...
- Kreton** And of course you still want to be the first journalist to interview me. Fair enough. All right, I'll stay on for a while.
- Powers** Thank you.
- Kreton** Don't mention it.
- Spelding** General, may I ask our guest a few questions?
- Powers** Go right ahead, Roger. I hope you'll do better than I did.
- Spelding** Since you read our minds, you probably already know what our fears are.
- Kreton** I do, yes.
- Spelding** We are afraid that you represent a hostile race.
- Kreton** And I have assured General Powers that my people are not remotely hostile. Except for me, no one is interested in this planet's present stage.
- Spelding** Does this mean you might be interested in a later stage?
- Kreton** I'm not permitted to discuss your future. Of course my friends think me perverse to be interested in a primitive society but there's no accounting for tastes, is there? You are my hobby. I love you. And that's all there is to it.
- Powers** So you're just here to look around ... sort of going native.
- Kreton** What a nice expression! That's it exactly. I am going native.
- Powers** (*Grimly*) Well, it is my view that you have been sent here by another civilization for the express purpose of reconnoitering prior to invasion.
- Kreton** That would be your view! The wonderfully primitive assumption that all strangers are hostile. You're almost too good to be true, General.
- Powers** You deny your people intend to make trouble for us?
- Kreton** I deny it.
- Powers** Then are they interested in establishing communication with us? Trade? That kind of thing?
- Kreton** We have always had communication with you. As for trade, well, we do not trade ... that is something peculiar only to your social level. (*Quickly*) Which I'm not criticizing! As you know, I approve of everything you do.
- Powers** I give up.
- Spelding** You have no interest then in .... Well, trying to dominate the earth.
- Kreton** Oh, yes!
- Powers** I thought you just said your people weren't interested in us.
- Kreton** They're not, but I am.
- Powers** You!

- Kreton** Me ... I mean I. You see I've come here to take charge.
- Powers** Of the United States?
- Kreton** No, of the whole world. I'm sure you'll be much happier and it will be great fun for me. You'll get used to it in no time.
- Powers** This is ridiculous. How can one man take over the world?
- Kreton** *(Gaily)* Wait and see!
- Powers** *(To AIDE)* Grab him!
- Powers and AIDE rush Kreton but within a foot of him, they stop, stunned.*
- Kreton** You can't touch me. That's part of the game. *(He yawns)* Now, if you don't mind, I shall go up to my room for a little lie-down.
- Spelding** I'll show you the way.
- Kreton** That's all right. I know the way. *(Touches his brow)* Such savage thoughts! My head is vibrating like a drum. I feel quite giddy, all of you thinking away. *(He starts to the door; he pauses beside Mrs. Spelding)* No, it's not a dream, dear lady. I shall be here in the morning when you wake up. And now, good night, dear, wicked children ...  
*(He goes as we fade out.)*

## CURTAIN

### Visit to a Small Planet

#### About the Author

Gore Vidal, a famous American playwright and novelist, was born on October 3, 1925 in New York. He has written a number of famous plays and novels: *Death in Fifth Position*, *Death Before Bed Time*, *A Star's Progress*. *Visit to a Small Planet* first appeared on Television in 1956 and opened in 1957 on Broadway to enthusiastic reviews. It is a beautiful combination of sheer entertainment and a thought provoking comment on American culture.

#### Theme

The play shows that the people of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are still in the beginning of their civilization as compared with those of the planets of other solar systems. The man of the future will be free from hatred and violence, and feel a sense of pride in the service of humanity.

#### Glossary

luminous	shining, giving out light
unctuous	smooth in speech or manner
resonant	resounding
fidgets	make nervous movements

conjecture	guess, put forward an opinion formed without facts
lunatic	mad person
homestead	farm house
eluded	avoided
walnuts	edible nuts, having a hard crinkled shell
cellar	any underground room for storing different things
hysteria	disturbance of the nervous system with outburst of emotions
meteor	small particle of matter that enters the earth atmosphere from outer space and becomes bright
ominously	threateningly
evasively	trying to evade
blandly	gently or politely
fascinating	having strong charm
fragile	broken, weak
twirls	turns round and round quickly
hunch	thick piece, hump
intergalactic	in between the galaxies
impostor	person pretending to be somebody he is not
gad	go from place to place for pleasure, old fashioned for surprise
impromptu	without preparation
deliriously	wildly excited
intoxicate	cause to lose self-control as a result of taking some drink
sordid	wretched, shabby
reconnoitre	to make a survey of an area, especially for military purposes

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. Who is Roger Spelding?
  - a) a general
  - b) a soldier
  - c) a newscaster
  - d) a technician
- ii. John is a
  - a) merchant.
  - b) farm owner.
  - c) pilot.
  - d) professor.
- iii. Where did the spaceship land?
  - a) on the roof of a building
  - b) in the fields
  - c) on a hill
  - d) in the rose garden of Mrs. Spelding

- iv. Ellen listened to the broadcast of her
- a) daddy. b) fiancé.  
c) mother. d) Kreton.
- v. The visitor was dressed in the fashion of
- a) 1960. b) 1860.  
c) 1900. d) 1850.
- vi. What is the impression of Kreton on seeing the inside of the house?
- a) disgusted b) delightful  
c) callous d) sorrowful
- vii. "I do hope I don't sound patronizing" means that I am
- a) not praising. b) encouraging.  
c) discouraging. d) not appreciating.
- viii. How many years are required to tell the story of travel?
- a) one hundred b) two hundred  
c) five hundred d) seven hundred
- ix. The house of Spelding comes under the
- a) civil law. b) criminal law.  
c) company law. d) martial law.
- x. General Powers was thinking about
- a) his promotion. b) security of the country.  
c) arrest of Kreton. d) murder of the visitor.

2. **Mark the statements true or false.**

- i. Ellen is going to marry John, a farm boy.
- ii. A girl should prefer to marry a hardworking and ambitious boy.
- iii. The space man looked like a monster.
- iv. Kreton cannot read the minds of the people.
- v. Kreton is interested in the study of the civilization of earth.
- vi. There are no instruments in the flying saucer.
- vii. Mrs. Spelding is worried about her rose garden.
- viii. Kreton gives his consent to spend the night.
- ix. General Powers thinks that Kreton is a spy.
- x. The race of Kreton is violent like the human race.

3. **Answer the following questions.**

- i. How does Kreton prove his extraordinary powers? Write five sentences.
- ii. What is the purpose of Kreton's visit?
- iii. How much advanced is the civilization of Kreton than that of the Earth?



- iv. Can the people of the Earth compete with those of Kreton?
- v. How damaging is violence in life? Write five sentences.
- vi. What type of life do you foresee in the year 5000?
- vii. How impressive were the morals of Kreton?
- viii. What is the role of General Powers in the play?
- ix. What is the theme of Kreton's study?
- x. How does Kreton impress General Powers?

**4. Answer the following questions in 100-150 words.**

- i. Write a note on
  - a) Mr. Spelding    b) Mrs. Spelding    c) Ellen
  - d) John            e) General Powers    f) Kreton
- ii. How does the playwright expose the inferiority of the present race to that of the future?
- iii. Describe the arrival of the flying saucer in your own words.
- iv. Compare and contrast the people of the two planets.
- v. Write a story of your visit to a far off place in the north of Pakistan.

**5. Fill in the blanks:**

- i. It's not very flattering when one's own daughter won't listen \_\_\_\_\_ what one says. (for, to)
- ii. He doesn't want to get \_\_\_\_\_. (up, setup)
- iii. There is nothing wrong \_\_\_\_\_ marrying a wealthy man. (with, for)
- iv. There is something wrong \_\_\_\_\_ the way that creature looks. (without, with)
- v. I'm sure you're teasing us and this is \_\_\_\_\_ some kind of publicity stunt. (none, all)
- vi. You'd be surprised what a \_\_\_\_\_ study I've made. (thorough, through)
- vii. As you see I am \_\_\_\_\_ a hundred years too late. (above, about)
- viii. It's possible that I could explain it to a mathematician but I'm afraid I couldn't explain it \_\_\_\_\_ you. (about, to)
- ix. I must've known the theory \_\_\_\_\_ which they operate. (on, at)
- x. I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ damage he did to my rose garden. (many, much)

**6. Use the following phrasal verbs in your own sentences.**

- a) pass on    b) pass through    c) pass over    d) pass down

**7. Punctuate the following lines:**

the odds against being hit by a falling object that size are i should say roughly ten million to one

Play No.

3

# The Oyster and the Pearl

*(William Saroyan)*

## Characters

HARRY VAN DUSEN, a barber.

CLAY LARRABEE, a boy on Saturday.

VIVIAN McCUTCHEON, a new school teacher.

CLARK LARRABEE, Clay's father.

MAN, a writer.

ROXANNA LARRABEE, Clay's sister.

GREELEY, Clay's pal.

JUDGE APPLGARTH, a beach comber.

WOZZECK, a watch repairer.

## The Oyster and the Pearl

### SCENE

Harry Van Dusen's barber shop in O.K.-by-the-Sea, California, population 909. The sign on the window says: HARRY VAN DUSEN, BARBER. It's an old-fashioned shop, crowded with stuff not usually found in barber shops – Harry himself, for instance. He has never been known to put on a barber's white jacket or to work without a hat of some sort on his head: a stovepipe, a derby, a western, a homburg, a skullcap, a beret, or a straw, as if putting on these various hats somewhat expressed the quality of his soul, or suggested the range of it.

On the walls, on shelves, are many odds and ends, some apparently washed up by the sea, which is a block down the street: abalone and other shells, rocks, pieces of driftwood, a life jacket, rope, sea plants. There is one old-fashioned chair.

When the play begins, Harry is seated in the chair. A boy of nine or ten named Clay Larrabee is giving him a haircut. Harry is reading a book, one of many in the shop.

CLAY            Well, I did what you told me, Mr. Van Dusen. I hope it's all right. I'm no barber, though. *(He begins to comb the hair.)*

HARRY        You just gave me a haircut, didn't you?

CLAY        I don't know *what* you'd call it. You want to look at it in the mirror? *(He holds out a small mirror.)*

HARRY        No thanks. I remember the last one.

CLAY        I guess I'll never be a barber.

HARRY        May be not. On the other hand, you may turn out to be the one man hidden away in the junk of the world who will bring merriment to the tired old human heart.

CLAY        Who? Me?

HARRY        Why not?

CLAY        Merriment to the tired old human heart? How do you do that?

HARRY        Compose a symphony, paint a picture, write a book, invent a philosophy.

CLAY        Not me! Did you ever do stuff like that?

HARRY        I did.

CLAY        What did you do?

HARRY        Invented a philosophy.

CLAY        What's that?

HARRY        A way to live.

- CLAY           What way did you invent?
- HARRY         The *Take-it-easy* way.
- CLAY           That sounds pretty good.
- HARRY         All philosophies *sound* good. The trouble with mine was, I kept forgetting to take it easy. Until one day. The day I came off the highway into this barber shop. The barber told me the shop was for sale. I told him all I had to my name was eighty dollars. He sold me the shop for seventy five, and threw in the haircut. I've been here ever since. That was twenty-four years ago.
- CLAY           Before I was born.
- HARRY         Fifteen or sixteen years before you were born.
- CLAY           How old were you then?
- HARRY         Old enough to know a good thing when I saw it.
- CLAY           What did you see?
- HARRY         O.K. by-the-Sea, and this shop – the proper place for me to stop. That's a couplet. Shakespeare had them at the end of a scene, so I guess that's the end of this haircut. (*He gets out of the chair, goes to the hat tree, and puts on a derby.*)
- CLAY           I guess I'd never get a haircut if you weren't in town, Mr. Van Dusen.
- HARRY         Nobody would, since I'm the only barber.
- CLAY           I mean, free of charge.
- HARRY         I give you a haircut free of charge, you give me a haircut free of charge. That's fair and square.
- CLAY           Yes, but you're a barber. You get a dollar a haircut.
- HARRY         Now and then I do. Now and then I don't.
- CLAY           Well, anyhow, thanks a lot. I guess I'll go down to the beach now and look for stuff.
- HARRY         I'd go with you but I'm expecting a little Saturday business.
- CLAY           This time I'm going to find something *real good*, I think.
- HARRY         The sea washes up some pretty good things at that, doesn't it?
- CLAY           It sure does, except money.
- HARRY         What do you want the money for?
- CLAY           Things I need.
- HARRY         What do you need?
- CLAY           I want to get my father to come home again. I want to buy Mother a present.
- HARRY         Now, wait a minute, Clay, let me get this straight. Where is your father?

- CLAY I don't know. He went off the day after I got my last haircut about a month ago.
- HARRY What do you mean, he went off?
- CLAY He just picked up and went off.
- HARRY Did he say when he was coming back?
- CLAY No. All he said was, Enough's enough. He wrote it on the kitchen wall.
- HARRY Enough's enough?
- CLAY Yeah. We all thought he'd be back in a day or two, but now we know we've got to *find* him and *bring* him back.
- HARRY How do you expect to do that?
- CLAY Well, we put an ad in *The O.K.-by-the-Sea Gull*,... that comes out every Saturday.
- HARRY (*opening the paper*). This paper? But your father's not in town. How will he see an ad in this paper?
- CLAY He *might* see it. Anyhow, we don't know what else to do. We're living off the money we saved from the summer we worked, but there ain't much left.
- HARRY The summer you worked?
- CLAY Yeah. Summer before last, just before we moved here, we picked cotton in Kern Country. My father, my mother, and me.
- HARRY (*indicating the paper*). What do you say in your ad?
- CLAY (*looking at it*). Well, I say... Clark Larrabee. Come home. Your fishing tackle's in the closet safe and sound. The fishing's good, plenty of cabazon, perch, and bass. Let bygones be bygones. We miss you. Mama, Clay, Roxanna, Rufus, Clara.
- HARRY That's a good ad.
- CLAY Do you think if my father reads it, he'll come home?
- HARRY I don't know, Clay. I hope so.
- CLAY Yeah. Thanks a lot for the haircut, Mr. Van Dusen.
- [*Clay goes out. Harry takes off the derby, lathers his face, and begins to shave with a straight-edge razor. A pretty girl comes into the shop, closing a colorful parasol. She has long blonde hair.*]
- HARRY Miss America, I presume.
- THE GIRL Miss McCutcheon.
- HARRY Harry Van Dusen.
- THE GIRL How do you do?

- HARRY *(bowing)*. Miss McCutcheon.
- THE GIRL I'm new here.
- HARRY You'd be new anywhere, brand new, I might say. Surely you don't live here.
- THE GIRL As a matter of fact, I do. At any rate, I've been here since last Sunday. You see, I'm the new teacher at the school.
- HARRY You are?
- THE GIRL Yes, I am.
- HARRY How do you like it?
- THE GIRL One week at this school has knocked me for a loop. As a matter of fact, I want to quit and go home to San Francisco. At the same time I have a feeling I ought to stay. What do you think?
- HARRY Are you serious? I mean, in asking me?
- THE GIRL Of course I'm serious. You've been here a long time. You know everybody in town. Shall I go, or shall I stay?
- HARRY Depends on what you're looking for. I stopped here twenty-four years ago because I decided I wasn't looking for anything anymore. Well, I was mistaken. I *was* looking, and I've found exactly what I was looking for.
- THE GIRL What's that?
- HARRY A chance to take my time. That's why I'm still here. What are *you* looking for, Miss McCutcheon!
- THE GIRL Well .....
- HARRY I mean, besides a husband.....
- THE GIRL I'm not looking for a husband. I expect a husband to look for me.
- HARRY That's fair.
- THE GIRL I'm looking for a chance to teach.
- HARRY That's fair too.
- THE GIRL But this town!... The children just don't seem to care about anything, whether they get good grades or bad, whether they pass or fail, or anything else. On top of that, almost all of them are unruly. The only thing they seem to be interested in is games, and the sea. That's why I'm on my way to the beach now. I thought if I could watch them on a Saturday I might understand them better.
- HARRY Yes, that's a thought.
- THE GIRL Nobody seems to have any sensible ambition. It's all fun and play. How can I teach children like that? What can I teach them?

- HARRY English.
- THE GIRL Of course.
- HARRY *(drying his face)*. Singing, dancing, cooking.....
- THE GIRL Cooking? ... I must say I expected to see a much older man.
- HARRY Well! Thank You!
- THE GIRL Not at all.
- HARRY The question is, shall you stay, or shall you go back to San Francisco?.
- THE GIRL Yes.
- HARRY The answer is, go back while the going's good.
- THE GIRL Why? I mean, a moment ago I believed you were going to point out why I ought to stay, and then suddenly you say I ought to go back. Why?
- HARRY *(after a pause)*. You're too good for a town like this.
- THE GIRL I am not!
- HARRY Too young and too intelligent.
- THE GIRL You seem to think all I want is to find a husband.
- HARRY But only to teach. You want to teach him to become a father, so you can have a lot of children of your own to teach.
- THE GIRL *(She sits almost angrily in the chair and speaks very softly.)* I'd like a poodle haircut if you don't mind, Mr. Van Dusen.
- HARRY You'll have to get that in San Francisco, I'm afraid.
- THE GIRL Why? Aren't you a barber?
- HARRY I am.
- THE GIRL Well, this is your shop. It's open for business. I'm a customer. I've got money. I want a poodle haircut.
- HARRY I don't know how to give a poodle haircut, but even if I know how, I wouldn't do it.
- THE GIRL Why not?
- HARRY I don't give women haircuts. The only women who visit this shop bring their small children for haircuts.
- THE GIRL I want a poodle haircut, Mr. Van Dusen.
- HARRY I'm sorry, Miss McCutcheon. In my sleep, in a nightmare, I would *not* cut your hair. *(The sound of a truck stopping is heard from across the street.)*
- THE GIRL *(softly, patiently, but firmly)*. Mr. Van Dusen, I've decided to stay, and the first thing I've got to do is change my appearance. I don't fit into the scenery around here.

- HARRY Oh, I don't know. If I were a small boy going to school, I'd say you look just right.
- THE GIRL You're just like the children. They don't take me seriously, either. They think I'm nothing more than a pretty girl who is going to give up in despair and go home. If you give me a poodle haircut I'll look more, well, plain and simple. I plan to dress differently, too. I'm determined to teach here. You've got to help me. Now, Mr. Van Dusen, the shears, please.
- HARRY I'm sorry, Miss McCutcheon. There's no need to change your *appearance* at all.
- [Clark Larrabee comes into the shop.]
- HARRY You're next, Clark. *(Harry helps Miss McCutcheon out of the chair. She gives him an angry glance.)*
- THE GIRL *(whispering)*. I won't forget this rudeness, Mr. Van Dusen.
- HARRY *(also whispering)*. Never whisper in O.K.-by-the-Sea. People-misunderstand. *(Loudly)* Good day, Miss.
- [Miss McCutcheon opens her parasol with anger and leaves the shop. Clark Larrabee has scarcely noticed her. He stands looking at Harry's junk on the shelves.]
- HARRY Well, Clark, I haven't seen you in a long time.
- CLARK I'm just passing through, Harry. Thought I might run into Clay here.
- HARRY He was here a little while ago.
- CLARK How is he?
- HARRY He's fine, Clark.
- CLARK I been working in Salinas. Got a ride down in a truck. It's across the street now at the gasoline station.
- HARRY You've been home, of course?
- CLARK No, I haven't.
- HARRY Oh?
- CLARK *(after a slight pause)*. I've left Fay, Harry.
- HARRY You got time for a haircut, Clark?
- CLARK No thanks, Harry. I've got to go back to Salinas on that truck across the street.
- HARRY Clay's somewhere on the beach.
- CLARK *(handing Harry three ten-dollar bills)*. Give him this, will you? Thirty dollars. Don't tell him I gave it to you.
- HARRY Why not?



- CLARK I'd rather he didn't know I was around. Is he all right?
- HARRY Sure, Clark. They're *all* O.K. I mean.
- CLARK Tell him to take the money home to his mother. (*He picks up the newspaper, The Gull.*)
- HARRY Sure, Clark. It came out this morning. Take it along.
- CLARK Thanks. (*He puts the paper in his pocket.*) How've things been going with you, Harry?
- HARRY Oh, I can't kick. Two or three haircuts a day. A lot of time to read. A few laughs. A few surprises. The sea. The fishing. It's a good life.
- CLARK Keep an eye on Clay, will you? I mean—well, I *had* to do it.
- HARRY Sure.
- CLARK Yeah, well That's the first money I've been able to save. When I make some more, I'd like to send it here, so you can hand it to Clay, to take home.
- HARRY Anything you say, Clark. (*There is the sound of the truck's horn blowing.*)
- CLARK Well (*He goes to the door.*) Thanks, Harry, thanks a lot.
- HARRY Good seeing you, Clark.
- [*Clark Larrabee goes out. Harry watches him. A truck shifting gears is heard, and then the sound of the truck driving off. Harry picks up a book, changes hats, sits down in the chair and begins to read. A man of forty or so, well-dressed, rather swift, comes in.*]
- THE MAN Where's the barber?
- HARRY I'm the barber.
- THE MAN Can I get a haircut, real quick?
- HARRY (*getting out of the chair*). Depends on what you mean by real quick.
- THE MAN (*sitting down*). Well, just a haircut then.
- HARRY (*putting an apron around the man*). O.K. I don't believe I've seen you before.
- THE MAN No. They're changing the oil in my car across the street. Thought I'd step in here and get a haircut. Get it out of the way before I get to Hollywood. How many miles is it?
- HARRY About two hundred straight down the highway. You can't miss it.
- THE MAN What town is *this*?
- HARRY O.K. *by-the-Sea*.
- THE MAN What do the people do here?
- HARRY Well, I cut hair. Friend of mine named Wozzeck repairs watches, radios, alarm clocks, and sells jewelry.

- THE MAN Who does he sell it to?
- HARRY The people here. It's imitation stuff mainly.
- THE MAN Factory here? Farms? Fishing?
- HARRY No. Just the few stores on the highway, the houses further back in the hills, the church, and the school. You a salesman?
- THE MAN No, I'm a writer.
- HARRY What do you write?
- THE MAN A little bit of everything. How about the haircut?
- HARRY You got to be in Hollywood tonight?
- THE MAN I don't have to be anywhere tonight, but that was the idea. Why?
- HARRY Well, I've always said a writer could step into a place like this, watch things a little while, and get a whole book out of it, or a play.
- THE MAN Or if he was a poet, a sonnet.
- HARRY Do you like Shakespeare's?
- THE MAN They're just about the best in English.
- HARRY It's not often I get a writer in here. As a matter of fact you're the only writer I've had in here in twenty years, not counting Fenton.
- THE MAN Who's he?
- HARRY Fenton Lockhart.
- THE MAN. What's he write?
- HARRY He gets out the weekly paper. Writes the whole thing himself.
- THE MAN Yeah. Well, how about the haircut?
- HARRY O.K.
- [Harry puts a hot towel around the man's head. Miss McCutcheon, carrying a cane chair without one leg and without a seat, comes in. With her is Clay with something in his hand, a smaller boy named Greeley with a bottle of sea water, and Roxanna with an assortment of shells.]*
- CLAY I got an oyster here, Mr. Van Dusen.
- GREELEY Miss McCutcheon claims there *ain't* a big pearl in it.
- HARRY *(looking at Miss McCutcheon)*. Is she willing to admit there's a *little* one in it?
- GREELEY I don't know. I know I got sea water in this bottle.
- MISS McCUTCHEON Mr. Van Dusen, Clay Larrabee seems to believe there's a pearl in this oyster he happens to have found on the beach.

- CLAY I didn't *happen* to find it. I went looking for it. You know Black Rock, Mr. Van Dusen? Well, the tide hardly ever gets low enough for a fellow to get around to the ocean side of Black Rock, but a little while ago it did, so I went around there to that side. I got to poking around and I found this oyster.
- HARRY I've been here twenty-four years, Clay, and this is the first time I've ever heard of anybody finding an oyster on our beach at Black Rock, or anywhere else.
- CLAY Well, *I did*, Mr. Van Dusen. It's shut tight, it's alive, and there's a pearl in it, worth at least three hundred dollars.
- GREELEY A *big* pearl.
- MISS McCUTCHEON Now, you children listen to me. It's never too soon for any of us to face the truth, which is supposed to set us free, not imprison us. The truth is, Clay, you want money because you need money. The truth is also that you have found an oyster. The truth is also that there is no pearl in the oyster.
- GREELEY How do you know? Did you look?
- MISS McCUTCHEON No, but neither did Clay, and in as much as only one oyster in a million has a pearl in it, truth favors the probability that this is not the millionth oyster – the oyster with the pearl in it.
- CLAY There's a *big* pearl in the oyster.
- MISS McCUTCHEON Mr. Van Dusen, shall we open the oyster and show Clay and his sister Roxanna and their friend Greeley that there is no pearl in it?
- HARRY In a moment, Miss McCutcheon. And what's that *you* have?
- MISS McCUTCHEON A chair, as you see.
- HARRY How many legs does it have?
- MISS McCUTCHEON Three of course. I can count to three, I hope.
- HARRY What do you want with a chair with only three legs?
- MISS McCUTCHEON I'm going to bring things from the sea the same as everybody else in town.
- HARRY But everybody else in town *doesn't* bring things from the sea – just the children, Judge Applegarth, Fenton Lockhart, and myself.
- MISS McCUTCHEON In any case, the same as the children, Judge Applegarth, Fenton Lockhart, and you. Judge Applegarth? Who's he?
- HARRY He judged animals at a county fair one time, so we call him Judge.
- MISS McCUTCHEON Dogs or hounds?
- HARRY Hound's a little old-fashioned but I prefer it to dogs, and since both words mean the same thing. Well, I wouldn't care to call a man like Arthur

Applegarth a dog's judge.

MISS McCUTCHEON Did he actually judge dogs, as you prefer to put it, at a county fair one time? Did he even do *that*?

HARRY Nobody checked up. He *said* he did.

MISS McCUTCHEON So that entitled him to be called Judge Applegarth?

HARRY It certainly did.

MISS McCUTCHEON On that basis, Clay's oyster has a big pearl in it because he *says* so, is that it?

HARRY I didn't say that.

MISS McCUTCHEON Are we living in the Middle Ages, Mr. Van Dusen?

GREELEY No, this is 1953, Miss McCutcheon.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Yes, Greeley, and to illustrate what I mean that's water you have in that bottle. Nothing else.

GREELEY *Sea* water.

MISS McCUTCHEON Yes, but there's nothing else in the bottle.

GREELEY No, but there's little things in *the water*. You can't see them now, but they'll show up later. The water of the sea is full of things.

MISS McCUTCHEON Salt, perhaps.

GREELEY No. *Living* things. If I look hard I can see some of them now.

MISS McCUTCHEON You can *imagine* seeing them. Mr. Van Dusen, are you going to help me or not?

HARRY. What do you want me to do?

MISS McCUTCHEON Open the oyster of course, so Clay will see for himself that there's no pearl in it. So he'll begin to face reality, as he should, as each of us should.

HARRY Clay, do you mind if I look at the oyster a minute?

CLAY (*handing the oyster to Harry*). There's a big pearl in it, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY (*examining the oyster*). Clay... Roxanna... Greeley... I wonder if you'd go down the street to Wozzeck's. Tell him to come here the first chance he gets. I'd rather *he* opened this oyster. I might damage the pearl.

CLAY, GREELEY, and ROXANNA O.K., Mr. Van Dusen.

(*They go out.*)

MISS McCUTCHEON What pearl? What in the world do you think you're trying to do to the minds of these children? How am I ever going to teach them the principles of truth with an influence like yours to fight against?

HARRY Miss McCutcheon. The people of O.K.-by-the- Sea are all poor. Most of

them can't afford to pay for the haircuts I give them. There's no excuse for this town at all, but the sea is here, and so are the hills. A few people find jobs a couple of months every year North or South, come back half dead of homesickness, and live on next to nothing the rest of the year. A few get pensions. Every family has a garden and a few chickens, and they make a few dollars selling vegetables and eggs. In a town of almost a thousand people there isn't one rich man. Not even one who is well off. And yet these people are the richest I have ever known. Clay doesn't really want money, as you seem to think. He wants his father to come home, and he thinks money will help get his father home. As a matter of fact his father is the man who stepped in here just as you were leaving. He left thirty dollars for me to give to Clay, to take home. His father and his mother haven't been getting along. Clark Larrabee's a fine man. He's not the town drunk or anything like that, but having four kids to provide for he gets to feeling ashamed of the showing he's making, and he starts drinking. He wants his kids to live in a good house of their own, wear good clothes, and all the other things fathers have always wanted for their kids. His wife wants these things for the kids, too. They don't have these things, so they fight. They had one too many fights about a month ago, so Clark went off – he's working in Salinas. He's either going to keep moving away from his family, or he's going to come back. It all depends on – well, I don't know what. This oyster maybe. Clay maybe. *(Softly)* You and me may be. *(There is a pause. He looks at the oyster. Miss McCutcheon looks at it, too.)* Clay believes there's a pearl in this oyster for the same reason you and I believe whatever *we* believe to keep *us* going.

MISS McCUTCHEON Are you suggesting we play a trick on Clay, in order to carry out your mumbo-jumbo ideas?

HARRY Well, maybe it is a trick. I know Wozzeck's got a few pretty good-sized cultivated pearls.

MISS McCUTCHEON You plan to have Wozzeck pretend he has found a pearl in the oyster when he opens it, is that it?

HARRY I plan to get three hundred dollars to Clay.

MISS McCUTCHEON Do you *have* three hundred dollars?

HARRY Not quite.

MISS McCUTCHEON What about the other children who need money? Do you plan to put pearls in oysters for them, too? Not just here in O.K. by-the-Sea. Every where. This isn't the only town in the world where people are poor, where fathers and mothers fight, where families break up.

HARRY No, it isn't, but it's the only town where I live.

MISS McCUTCHEON I give up. What do you want me to do?

HARRY Well, could you find it in your heart to be just a little less sure about things when you talk to the kids, I mean, the troubled ones? You can get Clay around to the truth easy enough just as soon as he gets his father home.

*[Arthur Applegarth comes in.]*

HARRY Judge Applegarth, may I present Miss McCutcheon?

THE JUDGE *(removing his hat and bowing low)*. An honour, Miss.

MISS McCUTCHEON How do you do, Judge?

HARRY Miss McCutcheon's the new teacher at school.

THE JUDGE We are honored to have you. The children, the parents and the rest of us.

MISS McCUTCHEON Thank you, Judge. *(To Harry, whispering)* I'll be back as soon as I change my clothes.

HARRY *(whispering)*. I told you not to whisper.

MISS McCUTCHEON *(whispering)*. I shall expect you to give me a poodle haircut.

HARRY *(whispering)*. Are you out of your mind?

MISS McCUTCHEON *(aloud)*. Good day, Judge.

THE JUDGE *(bowing)*. Good day, Miss. *Miss McCutcheon goes out. Judge Applegarth looks from the door to Harry.*

THE JUDGE She won't last a month.

HARRY Why not?

THE JUDGE Too pretty. Our school needs an old battleaxe like the teachers we had when we went to school, not a bathing beauty. Well, Harry, what's new?

HARRY Just the teacher, I guess.

THE JUDGE You know, Harry, the beach isn't what it used to be, not at all. I don't mind the competition we're getting from the kids. It's just that the quality of the stuff the sea's washing up isn't good any more. *(He goes to the door.)*

HARRY I don't know. Clay Larrabee found an oyster this morning.

THE JUDGE He did? Well, one oyster does not make a stew, Harry. On my way home I'll drop in and let you see what I find.

HARRY O.K., Judge. *(The Judge goes out. Harry comes to life suddenly and becomes businesslike.)* Now, for the haircut! *(He removes the towel he had wrapped around the writer's head.)*

THE JUDGE. Take your time.

HARRY *(He examines the shears, clippers, and combs.)* Let's see now. *(The writer turns and watches. A gasoline station attendant comes to the door.)*

THE ATTENDANT *(to the writer)*. Just wanted to say your car's ready now.

THE WRITER Thanks. (*The attendant goes out.*) Look. I'll tell you what. How much is a haircut?

HARRY Well, the regular price is a dollar. It's too much for a haircut, though, so I generally take a half or a quarter.

THE WRITER (*getting out of the chair*). I've changed my mind. I don't want a haircut after all, but here's a dollar just the same. (*He hands Harry a dollar, and he himself removes the apron.*)

HARRY It won't take a minute.

THE WRITER I know.

HARRY You don't have to pay me a dollar for a hot towel. My compliments.

THE WRITER That's O.K. (*He goes to the door.*)

HARRY Well, take it easy now.

THE WRITER Thanks. (*He stands a moment, thinking, then turns.*) Do you mind if I have a look at that oyster?

HARRY Not at all.

*[The writer goes to the shelf where Harry has placed the oyster, picks it up, looks at it thoughtfully, puts it back without comment, but instead of leaving the shop he looks around at the stuff in it. He then sits down on a wicker chair in the corner, and lights a cigarette.]*

THE WRITER You know, they've got a gadget in New York now like a safety razor that anybody can give anybody else a haircut with.

HARRY They have?

THE WRITER Yeah, there was a full-page ad about it in last Sunday's *Times*.

HARRY Is that where you were last Sunday?

THE WRITER Yeah.

HARRY You been doing a lot of driving.

THE WRITER I like to drive. I don't know, though those gadgets don't always work. They're asking two – ninety-five for it. You take a big family. The father could save a lot of money giving his kids a haircut.

HARRY Sounds like a great idea.

THE WRITER Question of effectiveness. If the father gives the boy a haircut the boy's ashamed of, well, that's not so good.

HARRY No, a boy likes to get a professional looking haircut all right.

THE WRITER I thought I'd buy one, but I don't know.

HARRY You got a big family?

THE WRITER I mean for myself. But I don't know – there's something to be said for going to a barber shop once in a while. No use putting the barbers out of business.

HARRY Sounds like a pretty good article, though.

THE WRITER (*getting up lazily*). Well, it's been nice talking to you.

[*Wozzeck, carrying a satchel, comes in, followed by Clay, Roxanna, and Greeley.*]

WOZZECK What's this all about, Harry?

HARRY I've got an oyster I want you to open.

WOZZECK That's what the kids have been telling me.

ROXANNA He doesn't believe there's a pearl in the oyster, either.

WOZZECK Of course not! What foolishness!

CLAY There's a *big* pearl in it.

WOZZECK O.K., give me the oyster. I'll open it. Expert watch repairer, to open an oyster!

HARRY How much is a big pearl worth, Louie?

WOZZECK Oh, a hundred. Two hundred, maybe.

HARRY A very *big* one?

WOZZECK Three, maybe.

THE WRITER I've looked at that oyster, and I'd like to buy it. (*To Clay*) How much do you want for it?

CLAY I don't know.

THE WRITER How about three hundred?

GREELEY Three hundred dollars?

CLAY Is it all right, Mr. Van Dusen?

HARRY (*He looks at the writer, who nods.*) Sure it's all right.

[*The writer hands Clay the money.*]

CLAY (*looking at the money and then at the writer*). But suppose there ain't a pearl in it?

THE WRITER There *is*, though.

WOZZECK Don't you want to open it first?

THE WRITER No, I want the whole thing. I don't think the pearl's stopped growing.

CLAY He says there is a pearl in the oyster, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY I think there is, too, Clay; so why don't *you* just go on home and give the money *to* your mother?

CLAY Well... I *knew* I was going to find something good today! (*The children go*



*out. Wozzeck is bewildered.)*

WOZZECK Three hundred dollars! How do you know there's a pearl in it?

THE WRITER As far as I'm concerned, the whole thing's a pearl.

WOZZECK *(a little confused)*. Well, I got to get back to the shop, Harry.

HARRY Thanks for coming by.

*[Wozzeck goes out. The writer holds the oyster in front of him as if it were an egg, and looks at it carefully, turning it in his fingers. As he is doing so, Clark Larrabee comes into the shop. He is holding the copy of the newspaper that Harry gave him.]*

CLARK We were ten miles up the highway when I happened to see this classified ad in the paper. *(He hands the paper to Harry and sits down in the chair.)* I'm going out to the house, after all. Just for the week end of course, then back to work in Salinas again. Two or three months, I think I'll have enough to come back for a long time. Clay came by?

HARRY No, I've got the money here.

CLARK O.K. I'll take it out myself, but first let me have the works-shave, haircut, shampoo, massage.

HARRY *(putting an apron on Clark)*. Sure thing, Clark. *(He bends the chair back, and begins to lather Clark's face. Miss McCutcheon, dressed neatly, looking like another person almost, comes in.)*

MISS McCUTCHEON Well?

HARRY You look fine, Miss McCutcheon.

MISS McCUTCHEON I don't mean that. I mean the oyster.

HARRY Oh, that! There *was* a pearl in it.

MISS McCUTCHEON I don't believe it.

HARRY A *big* pearl.

MISS McCUTCHEON You might have done me the courtesy of waiting until I had come back before opening it.

HARRY Couldn't wait.

MISS McCUTCHEON Well, I don't believe you, but I've come for my haircut. I'll sit down and wait my turn.

HARRY Mr. Larrabee wants the works. You'll have to wait a long time.

MISS McCUTCHEON Mr. Larrabee? Clay's father? Roxanna's father? *(Clark sits up.)*

HARRY Clark, I'd like you to meet our new teacher, Miss McCutcheon.

CLARK How do you do?

MISS McCUTCHEON How do you do, Mr. Larrabee? *(She looks bewildered.)* Well, perhaps some other time, then, Mr. Van Dusen. *(She goes out. Clark sits back. Judge Applegarth stops at the doorway of the shop.)*

THE JUDGE Not one thing on the beach, Harry. Not a blessed thing worth picking up and taking home. *(Judge Applegarth goes on. The writer looks at Harry.)*

HARRY See what I mean?

THE WRITER Yeah. Well... so long. *(He puts the oyster in his coat pocket.)*

HARRY Drop in again any time you're driving to Hollywood.

THE WRITER Or away. *(He goes out.)*

CLARK *(after a moment)*. You know, Harry, that boy of mine, Clay... well, a fellow like that, you can't just go off and leave him.

HARRY Of course you can't, Clark.

CLARK I'm taking him fishing tomorrow morning. How about going along, Harry?

HARRY Sure, Clark. Be like old times again. *(There is a pause.)*

CLARK What's all this about an oyster and a pearl?

HARRY Oh, just having a little fun with the new teacher. You know, she came in here and asked me to give her a poodle haircut? A poodle haircut! I don't remember what a poodle *dog* looks like, even.

## CURTAIN

### Theme

"The Oyster and the Pearl" is a sentimental comedy. The play has humor, a happy ending, and demonstrates faith in the basic goodness of human nature. It reflects the author's attitude toward life and people, whom Saroyan finds eminently fascinating and wonderful, although a little "odd" at times.

Although there is a story line, that is not the author's main concern. He wants the reader/viewer to enjoy, to relax, to "play" as the play progresses. There is no clearly defined plot nor is there an attempt to establish a strong "hero" figure. Saroyan wants to examine the possibilities of life and the people who play a part in it. Yet he also has something serious to say. You, the reader, are to discover what it is.

## Glossary

Some of the idiomatic or colloquial expressions found in the play are explained below, in the order in which they occur.

1. you may turn out to be : you may become
2. stuff : anything; something
3. threw in the haircut : included the haircut free
4. ever since : since that time
5. fair and square : honest; just
6. now and then : sometimes
7. pretty good : quite good; better than average
8. let me get this straight : I need to understand the situation (better), let it be made clear
9. He just picked up and went off. : He simply left home without telling anyone.
10. enough's enough. : that's the end of the matter
11. ain't : isn't; aren't
12. safe and sound : safe from harm, injury, loss, etc.
13. Let bygones be bygones. : forget the past
14. at any rate : in any case; at least
15. has knocked me for a loop : has overwhelmed or defeated me
16. on top of that : in addition
17. while the going's good : while there's still a chance or conditions are favourable
18. thought I might run into : I thought that I would see or meet
19. I'd rather he didn't know I was around. : I prefer that he does not know that I was in the vicinity or area.
20. I can't kick. : I have no reason to complain.
21. keep an eye on : watch over; look after the welfare of
22. get it out of the way : complete the task (job) beforehand
23. He gets out the weekly paper. : He publishes the weekly newspaper.
24. well off : rich; wealthy
25. as a matter of fact : to tell the truth; be truthful
26. mumbo-jumbo : confusing or without meaning
27. Are you out of your mind?: Are you crazy (insane)?
28. old battleaxe : a person who establishes strong discipline (in this case, more

- experienced teacher)
29. drop in : stop by; pay a short visit
  30. gadget : a useful device
  31. yeah : yes; that's right

## Exercises

### I. Write short answers to these questions.

1. Where does the play take place?
2. Why is Harry sitting in the barber's chair?
3. According to Harry, how does one bring merriment to the tired old human heart?
4. What is Harry's philosophy?
5. How much did Harry pay for his barber shop? How long has he been in O.K. by-the-Sea?
6. How many barbers are there in O.K. by-the-Sea?
7. How much does Harry charge for a haircut?
8. Where is Clay going?
9. Why does Clay need money?
10. What has happened to Clay's father?
11. What does Clay want to put in the local newspaper?
12. Who is Miss McCutcheon? How does she feel about her job?
13. What is Miss McCutcheon looking for? How does she feel about the children of the town?
14. What does Harry advise her to do?
15. What kind of haircut does Miss McCutcheon want?
16. Can Harry give a poodle haircut?
17. What does Miss McCutcheon think that a poodle haircut will do for her appearance?
18. Where has Clark Larrabee been? How did he get to O.K. by-the-Sea?
19. What does Clark give Harry? For what purpose?
20. How far is it to Hollywood from O.K. by-the-Sea?
21. What work does the Man do?
22. What did Clay find near Black Rock?

23. What does Clay believe is in the oyster? How much is its worth?
24. Does Miss McCutcheon believe that there is a pearl in the oyster?
25. Why does Miss McCutcheon have a chair with three legs?
26. What kind of judge is Judge Applegarth?
27. What year is it?
28. What does Greeley have in a bottle?
29. Who suggests that they should open the oyster?
30. Why do they want Wozzeck to come?
31. How does Harry describe the inhabitants of O.K. by-the-Sea?
32. How does Miss McCutcheon view Harry's thinking about the pearl in the oyster?
33. Why does the Judge think that Miss McCutcheon will not last as a teacher? What kind of teacher does he think is needed?
34. What is Applegarth's complaint about the sea?
35. What kind of gadget does the writer describe?
36. Who buys the oyster? How much does he pay?
37. Does the writer open the oyster? Why not?
38. Why does Clark Larrabee return?
39. What does the writer do with the oyster?

## II. Questions for discussion

1. Do you think that it is right to allow Clay to believe that there is a pearl in the oyster? Explain briefly.
2. In your opinion, why is the writer willing to buy the pearl? What has he received in return? What does he mean by saying: "As far as I'm concerned, the whole thing's a pearl."
3. What has attracted Harry and other people to O.K. by-the-Sea? Is it the kind of town that appeals to you? Do you think that it resembles an ideal town? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Harry's philosophy is of "Take it easy" (Relax and enjoy life) nature. How does that philosophy appeal to you? Why or why not? Do you think that this philosophy works better in small towns than in large cities? Explain.
5. In your opinion, does the play reveal the author's view of life? If so, what is his view of life?
6. Would you call this play one of "The action plays"? Why or why not? How would you describe the play to a friend?

7. Do you think that this would be a good play to produce? Why or why not?

### III. WHO SAID IT?

#### Who said the following?

1. Identify the speaker.
2. Who said these lines, to whom and on what occasion?
3. Tell something about the speaker's personal appearance or characteristics.
  - a. "At the same time I have a feeling I ought to stay."
  - b. "There's no excuse for this town at all, but the sea is here and so are the hills."
  - c. "...Clay....well, a fellow like that, you can't just go off and leave him."
  - d. "It's shut tight, it's alive, and there's a pearl in it, worth at least three hundred dollars."
  - e. "It's never too soon for any of us to face the truth, which is supposed to set us free, not imprison us."
  - f. "Our school needs an old battleaxe, like the teachers we had when we went to school, not a bathing beauty."

### IV. OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Write a composition of 100 – 150 words explaining why you liked, or did not like, this play.
2. Write a composition describing your ideal town.

Poem No.

1

# The Rain

*(W. H. Davies)*

I hear leaves drinking rain;  
I hear rich leaves on top  
Giving the poor beneath  
Drop after drop;  
'Tis a sweet noise to hear  
These green leaves drinking near.

And when the Sun comes out,  
After this rain shall stop,  
A wondrous light will fill  
Each dark, round drop;  
I hope the Sun shines bright;  
It will be a lovely sight.

## About the Poet

W.H. Davies is an English poet who was born in 1871 at Wales and died in 1940. He left school at a young age, and lived for a number of years as a peddler and a beggar in USA and England. His first attempt of poetry '*The Soul's Destroyer*' (1905) was printed at his own expense. It won the attention of G.B. Shaw. Davies was a prolific poet; his favourite themes were nature and the hardships of the poor.

## Theme

The poem is a musical display of rain, a great phenomenon of nature. It has a symbolic meaning also. The leaves on the upper level get the rain drops first and quench their thirst. Afterwards they pass on the drops to the leaves at the level beneath. These lines may offer a metaphor as well; the rich at the upper level get a golden chance first and whatever remains trickle down to the people at the level beneath. However, the scene of the sunshine afterwards, is lovely, and a source of pleasure to everyone of us.

## Paraphrase

The poet says that he hears the leaves which are full of rain. He says that the rich leaves on top are full of water. The sprinkling of water which falls drop by drop on the leaves below creates a music which is sweet to hear.

When the sun appears again after the rain stops, the wonderful light sparkles each drop. In the end, the poet wishes that the sun shines in full brightness and makes the scene lovely.

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. Who was drinking rain?
  - a) a man
  - b) a bird
  - c) the leaves
  - d) a tree
- ii. What was making the noise sweet?
  - a) a guitar
  - b) a singer
  - c) drops of rain
  - d) drops of rain falling on leaves
- iii. When did the sun come out?
  - a) in the morning
  - b) in the noon
  - c) in the clouds
  - d) when the rain would stop
- iv. The round drops are brightened by
  - a) sunshine.
  - b) colour.
  - c) moonlight.
  - d) starlight.

### 2. Mark the statements true or false.

- i. The poet hears leaves drinking rain.
- ii. The rain drops make the leaves rich.
- iii. The green leaves drinking water create a noise.
- iv. The sunshine darkens the round drops of rain.
- v. The sunshine, after the rain, makes the scene lovely.

### 3. Add two more rhyming words in each line.

- i. leave, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. drop, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. rain, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Write a critical appreciation of the poem.

### 5. How can a rainy day be enjoyed?

### 6. Explain the first stanza with reference to context.



Poem No.

2

# Night Mail

*(W. H. Auden)*

This is the Night Mail crossing the Border,  
Bringing the cheque and the postal order,

Letters for the rich, letters for the poor,  
The shop at the corner, the girl next door.

Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb;  
The gradient's against her, but she's on time.

Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder,  
Shovelling white steam over her shoulder,

Snorting noisily, she passes  
Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.

Birds turn their heads as she approaches,  
Stare from bushes at her blank-faced coaches.

Sheepdogs cannot turn her course;  
They slumber on with paws across.

In the farm she passes; no one wakes,  
But a jug in a bedroom gently shakes.

## About the Poet

W.H. Auden was born in 1907. He was educated at Oxford and taught in England and Scotland for sometime. He wrote poetry and won fame in political and social circles. Among his famous volumes of verse are: *Look Stranger* (1936), *Another Time* (1940), *The Age of Anxiety* (1948). Auden showed a deep interest in language and metaphor, satire and parody

which are often dazzling and sometimes cruel. He is lively and provocative, skilled and ingenious.

### Theme

The poet describes the journey of a coach that travels all night bringing mail which contains letters, postal orders, cheques for people who live in various parts of the land.

Sometimes the journey is a steep upward climb, sometimes it runs steadily on plains.

Whether the railway track is an upward ascent or is a sloping descent, the night mail is always on time and follows the time schedule.

The grass land, cotton fields, moorland and the white clouds above, all pass by quickly and swiftly.

The birds stare at the approaching coach from their nests but the sheepdogs, unmindful of the noise of the mail coach, continue to slumber.

No one wakes up from slumber. Only a jug gently shakes as the coach passes by a farm.

### Glossary

border	boundary
gradient's	ascending or descending with a uniform slope
boulder	rounded stone, small hill
shovelled	threw off
slumber	sleep

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. The Night Mail is
  - a) an express train.
  - b) a passenger train.
  - c) a train that carries mail.
- ii. The Night Mail reaches
  - a) in time.
  - b) on time.
  - c) before time.

- iii On the arrival of Night Mail the birds are
- frightened.
  - pleased.
  - flown away.
- iv. Why do the sheepdogs continue to sleep on the arrival of the train? Because they can't
- attack it.
  - bite it.
  - turn her course.

2. **Mark the statements true or false.**

- The Night Mail travels by day.
- It brings flowers and presents for the people.
- It brings letters for the rich and the poor.
- It snorts noisily like a horse.
- It disturbs the life on farms.
- The children peep from bushes at her blank faced coaches.

3. **Write two more rhyming words in each line.**

e.g. girl, pearl, curl.

- mail, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
- night, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
- letter, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Poem No.

3

## Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now

(A. E. Housman)

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now  
Is hung with bloom along the bough  
And stands about the woodland ride  
Wearing white for Easter tide.

Now, of my three score years and ten  
Twenty will not come again,  
And take from seventy Springs a score,  
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty Springs are little room,  
About the woodland I will go  
To see the cherry hung with snow.

### About the Poet

A.E.Housman (1859-1936) studied at Oxford and published learned articles on classical authors. He spent his life teaching and editing the works of a minor Roman poet. He also wrote scholarly reviews. His poems are in three separate volumes written between 1895 and 1905.

His poems express simple, universal emotions—love of nature, nostalgia for the past, the pathos of man's brief existence—in sense and narratives that are easy to understand. His style is derived from the old ballads and from classical poetry. Together with his pessimism and irony, which can be savage, the formal qualities of his style keep his intense emotion from seeming sentimental.

### Theme

The beauty of nature, especially of cherry is captivating. But life is too short to relish it. Even fifty years are not enough time to enjoy it fully. The poet says that one should not miss any chance of enjoying the bloom of the 'loveliest of trees', the cherry, in the woods in all seasons.

## Paraphrase

Cherry, which is the loveliest of the trees, is now in full bloom and its branches are bending down loaded with flowers. It stands along the path in the woods and is all covered in snow. According to the poet's expression the cherry stands in a white dress in preparation for the celebration of Easter.

The poet says that out of the seventy years of his life, the early twenty years of age will never come again. The rest of his life of fifty years, he claims to have enjoyed the beauty of cherry blossom.

Since fifty years are not long enough to enjoy the beauty of the Spring, coloured and flavoured by the glory of cherry, the poet will avail every chance to go to the woodland to see the exotic beauty of the cherry tree whose flowery boughs are hanging down with snow.

## Glossary

hung with bloom	loaded with flowers
Easter	anniversary of the Resurrection of Christ, observed on the first Sunday after a full moon on or after 21 March
three score years and ten	three sets of twenty and ten are equal to seventy years
little room	short life

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. Cherry is the loveliest in
  - a) winter.
  - b) spring.
  - c) summer.
  - d) autumn.
- ii. Easter is a festival of
  - a) Christians.
  - b) Muslims.
  - c) Hindus.
  - d) Sikhs.
- iii. Cherry is dressed in
  - a) pink.
  - b) red.
  - c) yellow.
  - d) white.
- iv. Three score years and ten are
  - a) forty years.
  - b) fifty years.
  - c) sixty years.
  - d) seventy years.

- v. How many years of poet's life would not come again?  
a) ten                      b) twenty  
c) thirty                    d) forty
- vi. Cherry glorifies  
a) life.                      b) mind and thought.  
c) the city.                d) the environment.
2. **Mark the statements true or false.**
- i. Cherry is a flower and not a fruit.  
ii. Cherry is the loveliest in the Autumn.  
iii. The colour of the flower of cherry is blue.  
iv. Seventy years are sufficient to cherish the beauty of cherry tree.  
v. The cherry blooms in winter.  
vi. Cherry stands about the wood land ride.  
vii. Cherry adds to the glory of Easter.  
viii. "To see the cherry hung with snow" is not worth seeing.  
ix. The cherry turns woodland a haunted land.  
x. The cherry is a feast for eyes.
3. **Add two more rhyming words in each line.**
1. cherry, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
2. hung, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
3. springs, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Explain the first stanza with reference to context.**
5. **What time of the year is mentioned in the first stanza?**
6. **Read the second stanza carefully and write how old is the poet?**
7. **What is the poet trying to say in the last stanza of the poem?**

## Poem No.

4

**O Where are You Going?***(W.H. Auden)*

O where are you going? said reader to rider,  
That valley is fatal when furnaces burn,  
Yonder's the midden whose odours will madden,  
That gap is the grave where the tall return.

O do you imagine, said fearer to farer,  
That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,  
Your diligent looking discover the lacking,  
Your footsteps feel from granite to grass?

O what was that bird, said horror to hearer,  
Did you see that shape in the twisted trees?  
Behind you swiftly the figure comes softly,  
The spot on your skin is a shocking disease?

Out of this house, said rider to reader,  
Yours never will, said farer to fearer,  
They're looking for you, said hearer to horror,  
As he left them there, as he left them there.

**Theme**

The poem is a dialogue between two imaginary persons personified as reader and rider. The rider is a bold and courageous person, ambitious to make his way through thick and thin.

The reader, full of awe and reverence, tells him that the valley beyond is full of dangers and that heaps of dung and rubbish lie on his journey ahead, whose bad smell sickens and maddens the mind.

The opposite force is working to discourage the traveller from going farther and farther. Fear and horror try to discourage the rider from going on his path to the pass.

The way to glory and success is vague and uncertain, but it can be paved through with courage and perseverance.

## Glossary

fatal	causing or ending in death
midden	dung hill, heap of refuse
odour	bad smell
diligent	a hard working
granite	hard rock used in building
dusk	the darker stage of twilight
horror	intense feeling of fear

## EXERCISES

- Summarize the poem in your own words.
- Answer the following questions.
  - What kinds of feelings does the poet create in the minds of his readers?
  - How do you feel after reading the poem?
  - What does the title of the poem signify?
  - Write down the rhyming words in the poem.
  - Explain the third stanza of the poem in your own words.
- Mark the statements true / false.
 

a.	The valley is fatal when the furnaces burn.	T/F
b.	That dusk will not delay on your path to the pass.	T/F
c.	Your footsteps feel from granite to grass.	T/F
d.	The spot on your skin is a shocking disease.	T/F



Poem No.

5

## In the Street of the Fruit Stalls

*(Jan Stallworthy)*

Wicks balance flame, a dark dew falls  
In the street of the fruit stalls  
Melon, guava, mandarin,  
Pyramid-piled like cannon balls,  
Glow red-hot, gold-hot, from within.

Dark children with a coin to spend  
Enter the lantern's orbit; find  
Melon, guava, mandarin—  
The moon compacted to a rind,  
The sun in a pitted skin.

They take it, break it open, let  
A gold or silver fountain wet  
Mouth, fingers, cheek, nose, chin:  
Radiant as lanterns, they forget  
The dark street I am standing in.

### Theme

This is a symbolic poem. The world is threatened with war, misery and poverty. But all these have failed to crush man's love for pleasure. Children enjoy the sweet spray of the juice forgetting all about the misery they live in.

### Paraphrase

It is evening time. It is wet and dark. There is a street of fruit sellers where various fruit are piled up in a conical form. They reflect hot, red and golden colours which in dim lantern light look like bombs. Poor children come there with a coin and stand in the light of the lanterns. They look at melon, guava and other fruit. Their mouths water. They pick up a fruit and break it open. Juice comes out and pours itself into their mouths, and also sticks on their fingers and cheeks. They enjoy the fruit, and are least conscious of their surroundings.

## Glossary

guava	fruit of a tropical tree with a light yellow skin and pink or white edible flesh
mandarin	a type of small orange with a loose skin
rind	the hard outer skin of certain fruits
wick	a piece of cord or tape in a candle, oil lamp, etc.
pyramid	a large stone structure with a flat square or triangular base and sloping sides that meet in a point at the top

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

i. Which fruit has not been mentioned in the poem?

- a) mango                      b) melon  
c) guava                        d) mandarin

ii. The fruit resembled the \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) vegetables                b) cannon balls  
c) bullets                      d) biscuits

iii. It was a \_\_\_\_\_ street.

- a) dark                         b) bright  
c) airy                         d) blind

iv. The children were \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) pale                         b) dark  
c) white                        d) yellow

### 2. Mark the statements true / false.

- i. No fruit has been mentioned in the poem.                      T/F  
ii. The children did not want to buy the fruit.                      T/F  
iii. The children were holding coins in their hands.              T/F  
iv. They ate the fruit with relish.                                        T/F

### 3. Add two more rhyming words to each of the words given below.

- i. falls     , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_  
ii. spend   , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

iii. skin , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

iv. forget , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Write down the missing word in each verse.**

i. Wicks balance flame, a dark dew \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) falls                      b) calls  
c) moves                     d) comes

ii. Pyramid-piled like cannon \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) bullets                    b) balls  
c) guns                      d) spears

iii. The sun in a pitted \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) skin                        b) rim  
c) arm                        d) leg

iv. The dark street I am standing \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) out                         b) in  
c) into                        d) on

**5. Write a critical note on the poem.**

**6. Give a summary of the poem in your own words.**

**7. What are the feelings of the poet standing in the dark?**

**8. Why has the poet used 'cannon balls' to describe the fruit?**

**9. Paraphrase the last stanza in your own words.**

**10. Make a list of fruits described in the poem.**


Poem No.

6

## A Sindhi Woman

(Jan Stallworthy)

Bare foot, through the bazaar,  
 And with the same undulant grace  
 As the cloth blown back from her face,  
 She glides with a stone jar,  
 High on her head  
 And not a ripple in her tread.

Watching her cross erect  
 Stones, garbage, excrement and crumbs  
 Of glass in the Karachi slums,  
 I, with my stoop, reflect:  
 They stand most straight  
 Who learn to walk beneath a weight.

### Theme

This poem is a tribute to a working woman. Work creates rhythm in life. Work keeps a person strong and vigilant. An idle man will soon decay. This poem also portrays realistically the slums of Karachi in a few words. The poet praises and appreciates the working woman who has practically turned her work into an art. The woman walks softly with the delicacy and rhythm of a dancer's feet.

### Paraphrase

A Sindhi woman is going through a bazaar with bare feet. She is walking impressively and there is a rhythm in her movement which can be seen in her swaying body and floating dress. The wind pushes the cloth from her face. She is carrying stone jar on her head. She walks as smoothly as the wave of a stream. She is passing through stones, garbage, pieces of bread and the broken glass. This is the scene of a Karachi slum. The poet meditates and sees his own body that is bent by time. He observes that only those who bear the burden of life and carry its hardships through life are strong and straight.

### Glossary

undulant	wave like motion or look
glide	move along smoothly
tread	walk
garbage	waste, worthless or rubbish
excrement	waste matter expelled from the body

crumbs	small pieces of dry food
slums	a heavily populated area of a city having much poverty, with poor facilities
stoop	bend forward / downwards

## EXERCISES

### 1. Add two more rhyming words in the blanks with each word.

- a) grace \_\_\_\_\_
- b) tread \_\_\_\_\_
- c) crumbs \_\_\_\_\_
- d) weight \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Write down the missing rhyming words in each verse.

- a) High on her \_\_\_\_\_.  
(i) red (ii) head (iii) body (iv) foot
- b) As the cloth blown back from her \_\_\_\_\_.  
(i) mouth (ii) head (iii) face (iv) hair
- c) Watching her cross \_\_\_\_\_.  
(i) bridge (ii) street (iii) road (iv) erect
- d) I, with my stoop, \_\_\_\_\_.  
(i) walk (ii) run (iii) think (iv) reflect

### 3. Give a summary of the poem in your own words.

### 4. What did the poet reflect when he saw the woman?

### 5. What is the main idea of the poem?

### 6. What picture of the Karachi slums do we get after reading the poem?

### 7. Choose the correct answer.

- a) The woman in the poem was passing through the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(i) market (ii) bazaar (iii) crowd (iv) street
- b) She was carrying a \_\_\_\_\_ on her head.  
(i) a bundle of sticks (ii) a stone jar  
(iii) a bundle of books (iv) nothing
- c) Those who carry weight stand \_\_\_\_\_.  
(i) straight (ii) bend (iii) idle (iv) fall
- d) Her walk was \_\_\_\_\_.  
(i) smooth (ii) difficult (iii) slow (iv) fast

### 8. Mark the statements true / false.

- a) She was bare footed. T/F
- b) She had a stone jar on her head. T/F
- c) She was a Baluchi woman. T/F
- d) She did not have a ripple in her walk. T/F

Poem No.

7

# Times

*( From Ecclesiastes, 3, 1-12 )*

To everything there is a season,  
    And a time to every purpose under the heaven;  
A time to be born,  
    And a time to die;  
A time to plant,  
    And a time to pluck up that which is planted....  
A time to break down,  
    And a time to build up;  
A time to weep,  
    And a time to dance;  
A time to cast away stones,  
    And a time to gather stones together;  
A time to embrace,  
    And a time to refrain from embracing;  
A time to get,  
    And a time to lose;  
A time to keep,  
    And a time to cast away;  
A time to rend,  
    And a time to sew;  
A time to keep silence,  
    And a time to speak. ....

## Theme

It is true that everything happens at an appropriate time. There is time when winter sets in and a time when winter is gone and another season sets in.

Nobody is born before time – nor dies before time. There is a time to sow seeds, and a time when their fruits are ripe to be plucked.

The poet says that nothing in this world happens out of place. Everything is scheduled according to a specific time.

## EXERCISES

1. **Explain the message in the first eight lines of the poem in your own words.**
2. **Read the poem and complete the lines.**
  - a) A time to be born  
And a time to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b) A time to break down  
And a time to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c) A time to weep  
And a time to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d) A time to get  
And a time to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e) A time to keep silence  
And a time to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. **Silence is an antonym of speech. Write down the antonyms of these words.**

i. born _____	ii. heaven _____
iii. live _____	iv. lose _____
v. weep _____	vi. break _____
4. **Write in your own words the critical appreciation of the poem.**

Poem No.

8

# Ozymandias

(Percy Bysshe Shelley)

I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert . . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

## About the Poet

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 – 1822) was an English Romantic poet. He wrote some of his finest lyrics, including the "Ode to the West Wind", "To a Skylark" and "The Cloud" in the last years of his life. He died in a storm at sea after visiting Lord Byron, another great poet. Shelley's works show his remarkable lyrical gift, his originality and his hatred for oppression. He was a great revolutionary poet of his time.

## Theme

It is a very ironic poem which describes the pride of a man and the wretched reality of life. Man becomes proud by success. He thinks that he has toppled the world. He forgets that life is merciless. Time brings all luxuries of life to an end, and death is a great leveller. Shelley considers all feelings of superiority in man as only an illusion and self-deception.



## Paraphrase

The poet met a traveller from an ancient country. He told the poet that he saw two huge, bodiless legs made of stone. Those legs were standing in a desert. Near these legs there was lying the broken body of a man half sunk in the sand. His features gave the impression that he was very proud and contemptuous of others. The artist has beautifully recreated these impressions on the face of stone. One could see that he was proud and heartless. At the bottom of the statue were inscribed these words "My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" In the desert there remains nothing except this broken statue.

## Glossary

antique	old and valuable, belonging to the past. very old
trunkless	without the main part of the human body apart from the head arms and legs
visage	a person's face
frown	to show anger, deep thought
wrinkled	having or showing wrinkles
sculptor	a person who makes sculptures
mock	to laugh at, make fun of
pedestal	the base of a statue
colossal	very large, huge; immense
wreck	something damaged, broken

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. The traveller saw a \_\_\_\_\_ in the desert.
  - a) snake
  - b) statue
  - c) camel
  - d) water
- ii. The poet met a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) traveller
  - b) sailor
  - c) beggar
  - d) captain

iii. His name was written on the \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) face                      b) body  
c) pedestal                d) wood

iv. The wreck of the statue was \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) colossal                b) small  
c) big                        d) little

**2. Mark the statements true / false.**

- i. The traveller belonged to an ancient country.                      T/F  
ii. The traveller saw nothing in the desert.                              T/F  
iii. Nothing was written on the pedestal of the statue.                T/F  
iv. Ozymandias was a prince.    T/F

**3. Add two more rhyming words to each word given below.**

- i. land                      \_\_\_\_\_  
ii. stone                    \_\_\_\_\_  
iii. decay                   \_\_\_\_\_  
iv. fed                        \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Write down the missing word in each verse.**

- i. I met a traveller from an antique \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) sand                      b) band  
c) land                        d) hand
- ii. Two vast and trunkless legs of stone stood in the \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) jungle                      b) desert  
c) hill                         d) ground
- iii. My name is Ozymandias, king of \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) state                        b) America  
c) kings                        d) Rome
- iv. Of that colossal wreck, boundless and \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) bare                        b) rare  
c) uncovered                d) head less

**5. Give a summary of the poem.**

**6. What kinds of feelings does the poem create in the reader's mind?**

**7. What did the traveller see in the desert?**

Poem No.

9

# The Feed

(Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi)

Holding a grain of millet in her beak  
 The mother sparrow has come to feed.  
 The young ones are so tiny and small  
 From head to toe they are beaks  
 When they cry.  
 One grain to be fed to the ten young ones

To whom the mother sparrow should feed?  
 Conjoining beak with beak  
 With whom should she solace?  
 Fissuring the atom,  
 You have learnt to weep and wail in a loud tone,  
 Splitting the grain,  
 You have learnt to set life on foot  
 Could you split the grain?  
 One grain to be fed to the ten young ones.

## About the Poet

Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi is a Pakistani poet and he has written several poems in Urdu and also in English. He was born in 1916 in a small village Anga in Khushab District. He started writing poems in the late thirties. He published more than a dozen books. Some of his works have also been translated into foreign languages, winning applause for him in foreign countries.

## Theme

This poem is very simple. Here the poet depicts the love of a mother bird for her young ones who are very small and only a few days old. They are in the nest. The mother sparrow goes out and brings a grain of millet in her beak to feed them. They are ten in number.

## Glossary

millet	a small grain of a cereal
tiny	small
conjoining	joining together

fissuring	breaking
split	break

## EXERCISES

- Answer the following questions.**

  - What does the sparrow hold in her beak?
  - Which line in the first stanza tells us that the young ones have no feathers?
  - How many young ones are to be fed?
  - What has the poet described in the poem?
- Choose the correct answer.**

  - What was the mother sparrow holding in her beak?

a) wheat                      b) rice

c) millet                      d) maize
  - The young ones are tiny and \_\_\_\_\_.

a) big                          b) small

c) white                      d) black
  - How many young ones are there in the nest?

a) three                      b) ten

c) twelve                      d) nine
  - Name the bird that has come to feed her young ones.

a) crow                      b) pigeon

c) sparrow                      d) parrot
- Read the poem and write down the missing word in each line.**

  - From head to toe they are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The mother sparrow has come to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - One grain to be fed to the \_\_\_\_\_ young ones.
- Mark the statements true or false.**

  - The young ones are tiny and small.
  - The mother sparrow holds a grain of rice in her beak.
  - The young ones do not weep and wail in a loud tone.
  - One grain is to be fed to the six young ones.
- Explain the last three lines of this poem with reference to the context.**
- Write a critical appreciation of the poem.**
- What do you feel after reading the poem?**

Poem No.

10

# The Hollow Men

*(T. S. Eliot)*

We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar.

Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
Remember us – if at all – not as lost  
Violent souls, but only  
As the hollow men  
The stuffed men.

## About the Poet

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888 – 1965) was a poet and critic. He settled in Britain. He is well-known for his great poems such as “The Waste Land” and “Four Quartets”. He also wrote plays and contributed many critical essays.

## Theme

The theme of the poem is that human beings have become soulless. They try to depend upon each other but they cannot make a society. All their efforts are like the running of rats or the rustling of grass. We do have shapes but inside there is nothing. We only seem to be walking souls but actually we are not even that.

## Paraphrase

We are worthless men, either puppets or dolls. We try to rest upon each other and our minds are filled with no wisdom. We are not wise men. We live in dreams. We try to speak to each other but convey nothing. All our speech is no more than the voices made by the grass or the rats. We seem to have no form and no colour. We seem to have strength, but it is only the appearance of strength, otherwise we are weak and without motion. Those who have already departed from this life do not know if we are frustrated or not. We seem to be only puppets made of straw.

## Glossary

hollow	having a hole or empty space inside, not solid
stuff	the material or substance out of which anything is or can be made; raw material
headpiece	a covering for the head
whisper	speak softly
cellar	underground room for storing things.

## EXERCISES

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. The poet calls men \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) hungry
  - b) thirsty
  - c) hollow
  - d) cruel
- ii. This poem has been written by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) Keats
  - b) T. S. Eliot
  - c) W. B. Yeats
  - d) Byron
- iii. The title of the poem is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) The Hollow Men.
  - b) The Hollow Man.
  - c) The Hollow Woman.
  - d) The Hollow Women.

- iv. We convey \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) nothing                      b) something  
c) anything                      d) a few words

**2. Mark the statements true / false.**

- i. We are hollow men.                      T/F  
ii. We do not whisper together.                      T/F  
iii. Shape without form, shade with colour.                      T/F  
iv. We do not learn together.                      T/F

**3. Add two more rhyming words to each of the words given below.**

- i. hollow \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_  
ii. glass \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_  
iii. colour \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_  
iv. wind \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Write down the missing words in each verse.**

- i. We are hollow \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) men                      b) boys  
c) women                      d) girls
- ii. Or rats' feet over broken \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) table                      b) chair  
c) glass                      d) mirror
- iii. Remember us, if at all, not as \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) lost                      b) found  
c) unwise                      d) hungry
- iv. Violent souls, but \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) only                      b) really  
c) dead                      d) alive

**5. Write a critical note on the poem.**

**6. Give a summary of the poem.**

**7. Why does the poet call modern men as hollow men?**

**8. What does the poet say in the last stanza of the poem?**

Poem No.

11

# Leisure

*(William Henry Davies)*

What is this life if, full of care  
We have no time to stand and stare?

No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows:

No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile, her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare

## Theme

The poet has based this poem on personal experience. He thinks that one is so busy in coping with daily routine of life that most of the time the beauty and the joys of life are ignored.

One has no time to enjoy and look at the wonders around us. He has mentioned the animals on the pastures, the stars in the sky, the music and smiles around him. According to the poet's point of view, a man's life is so full of worries and care that he cannot even stand and look up at things as they are around him.



**EXERCISES**

1. **Read the poem and complete the lines with rhyming words.**
  - i. What is the life if, full of care  
We have no time to stand and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ii. No time to see in broad day \_\_\_\_\_  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.
  - iii. A poor life this if, full of care  
We have no time to stand and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. **Why do you think the poet has given this title to his poem when he is talking about life full of care with no time to stand and stare. (100 to 150 words)**
3. **What is the poet trying to say in the last two lines of the poem?**
4. **Write down the pairs of all rhyming words in the poem.**

Poem No.

12

## Ruba'iyat

(Allama Muhammad Iqbal)

Faith is like Abraham at the stake: to be  
 Self-honoring and God-drunk, is faith. Hear me,  
 You whom this age's way so captivate!  
 To have no faith is worse than slavery.

Music of strange lands with Islam's fire blends,  
 On which the nation's harmony depends;  
 Empty of concord is the soul of Europe,  
 Whose civilization to no Makkah bends.

Love's madness has departed: in  
 The Muslim's veins the blood runs thin;  
 Ranks broken, hearts perplexed, prayers cold,  
 No feeling deeper than the skin.

## Glossary

stake	strong wooden frame used for tying a person to be burnt alive
captivate	fascinate
concord	harmony, agreement

## Theme

In this modern age of allurements, strong faith like that of Hazrat Abraham (عليه السلام) is required. Though he was thrown in the fire by his opponents, he was saved by his faith in Allah. Muslim harmony depends upon true faith in Islam. The poet addresses the modern man, whom the life style of this age appeals to the core, and tells him that a man without faith is worse than a slave. The national harmony amongst the Muslims depended upon a blend of Islamic strong and basic values with the local feelings. This blend created a national

harmony. The modern European soul is empty of this harmony. They have no resemblance with the Makkan civilization. The spark igniting love has disappeared. The blood running in the veins of the Muslims has thinned and has lost its warmth. As a result of all this the Islamic unity has broken. That is the reason the hearts of all the Muslims are perplexed, the prayers have become artificial and the feelings have become superficial and devoid of love.

## EXERCISE

**Answer the following questions.**

1. Who was Hazrat Abraham (عليه السلام)?
2. What is worse than slavery?
3. Who cannot compete with the civilization of Makkah?
4. What has made the efforts of Muslims fruitless?
5. What is the moral lesson of the poem?
6. What is the present state of the Muslims as given in the last stanza of the poem?
7. Explain the last two lines in the second stanza of the poem.

Poem No.

13

## A Tale of Two Cities

*(John Peter)*

In the storms of the shrills  
Of arms, smoke and the drills  
All were scarred, burnt and afraid  
Powerless and helpless were they made.

Woeful were all the hills  
Wasteful were all the grills  
None to share their moans  
None to lessen their groans.

The flowers, flavours all smashed  
Burnt, crushed and all dashed  
And all passed through the grind  
Leaving there nothing behind.

No eye could look  
The explosion that took  
The lives of two glories  
In the moments of furies.

All was done by a nation  
Who in her wild passion  
Cared not for the human rights  
Nor saved them from deadly fights.

But how much great were they  
Who bore the pains of black day:  
"Ashes are not merely the waste  
They can really create the great."

## Glossary

woeful	grieved
smashed	destroyed

## Theme

The people of the two cities of Japan passed through the most cruel period of their lives when the atomic bombs burst, and destroyed the glory of their culture and civilization. They suffered all the pains and pangs patiently and boldly, and did not lose heart. They, with their great will and determination, again rose to the heights as an economic power from the ashes.

## EXERCISES

1. Why did the people of the two cities look powerless and helpless?
2. Describe the circumstances the victims had to pass through.
3. Describe the scene of devastation.
4. What is the moral lesson of the poem?
5. Write down the rhyming words and use them in your sentences.
6. Write two more rhyming words:
  - i. afraid \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. moans \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. kites \_\_\_\_\_


Poem No.

14

# My Neighbour Friend Breathing His Last!

(Bullah Shah)

My neighbour friend breathing his last!

What should I do, O God! Aghast!

He is to leave, now can't remain,

Companions ready to catch the train.

What should I do, O God! Aghast!

On every side decamping talk,

At every place are shrieks in stock

What should I do, O God! Aghast!

Flare up flames in heart to height,

For, visible is not charming sight.

What should I do, O God! Aghast!

Without His love, Bullah in loss,

Can hardly dwell here or across.

What should I do, O God! Aghast!

Translated by A.R. Luther

## Glossary

aghast	terrified
decamping	going away (secretly)
shrieks	cries
flare up	burst into bright flame



Poem No.

15

# He Came to Know Himself

(Sachal Sarmast)

He came to know Himself  
 Naught else had He in view  
 To be able to realize this  
 He got enmeshed in love  
 He alighted from high heaven  
 To pour a cascade of love  
 Became Mansur to mount the gallows  
 Just to have His head cut off.  
 He treaded the bazaars of Egypt  
 Just to be sold for a slave  
 Sachu speaks the bare Truth  
 To speak of His sojourn on earth.

## Glossary

naught	nothing
enmeshed	entangled
cascade	waterfall
Mansur	a saint
gallows	wooden framework on which criminals are put to death by hanging
sold for a slave	reference to Hazrat Yousaf (عليه السلام) who was sold as a slave in the bazaars of Egypt
sojourn	temporary stay (in a place)



## Theme

One who knows himself and knows also that he is a wonderful thing created by the Creator, Allah, cannot have a view of anything else except Allah Almighty. He starts loving Him, Who blesses him with great love. In such state of affairs every other thing becomes useless to him, and like Mansur, he feels pleased and is willing to be hanged on the gallows to get his head cut off only for the Love of his Beloved, Allah. The poet thinks that a person's stay in this world is temporary. It is better for a man to have been loved and love all of the mankind. The union of one soul with another soul through the alchemy of love is the highest mystic truth.

### EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Why does the poet put emphasis on how to know himself?
2. What makes one entangled in love?
3. Why did Mansur mount the gallows?
4. What is the bare Truth?
5. Explain these lines:  
He alighted from high heaven  
To pour a cascade of love
6. What does the poet say about "His sojourn on earth" in the last line?

Poem No.

16

# God's Attributes

(Jalaluddin Rumi)

God calls Himself 'Seeing' to the end that  
 His eye may scare you from sinning.  
 God calls Himself 'Hearing' to the end that  
 You may close your lips against foul discourse.  
 God calls Himself 'Knowing' to the end that  
 You may be afraid of Him to plot an evil.  
 These are not mere accidental names of God  
 As a negro may be called camphor;  
 So are these names derived from God's attributes,  
 And not mere vain titles of the First Cause.

Translated by Dr. Nicholson

## Glossary

scare	terrify	discourse	talk	camphor	strong smelling substance
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## Theme

The attributes of God are not mere vain titles but are meaningful and effective for character building and guidance. For example, when God calls Himself All Seeing, it restrains a person from doing wrong and when God calls Himself All Hearing, it checks a person from using foul language. Knowing God's attributes makes one afraid of plotting an evil against others.

## EXERCISES

- How many attributes are mentioned in the poem?
- What makes one scared of sinning?
- What are the effects of the attributes of God?
- Mention three more attributes of God.
- How do these attributes help in refining the character of a person?
- Do you think these attributes of God are remembered and kept in mind by us in our daily routine work?
- Make pairs of words similar in sound with the help of the list given below e.g. wait - weight  
 end, scare, may, vain, lips, day, mere, talk, that, dare, bat, sheer, walk, crane, sips, bend

Poem No.

17

## The Delight Song

*(N. Scott Momaday)*

I am a feather on the bright sky  
I am the blue horse that runs in the plain  
I am the fish that rolls, shining, in the water  
I am the shadow that follows a child  
I am the evening light, the luster of meadows  
I am the eagle playing with the wind  
I am a cluster of bright beads  
I am the farthest star  
I am the cold of the dawn  
I am the roaring of the rain  
I am the glitter on the crust of the snow  
I am the long track of the moon in a lake  
I am the flame of four colors  
I am the whole dream of these things.

You see, I am alive, I am alive  
I stand in good relation to the earth  
I stand in good relation to the lords  
I stand in good relation to all that is beautiful  
I stand in good relation to all that is fruitful  
You see, I am alive, I am alive.

### Theme

It is a delightful song in which the poet feels light as a feather in the bright sky. Everything seems to be in harmony with the poet who finds no hurdles or difficulties anywhere in this universe. He has good relations with beauty, living things, nature, the atmosphere and the natural phenomena of stars, wind, dawn, rain, moon and snow.

He is happy and content with the dream of all things, bright and beautiful, all colours that glitter in the rainbow. He is in complete harmony and has a good relation with everything. He is playful and light like the shadow of a child, the cold of dawn, the glitter of snow and the flame of fire.

He is vivacious and full of life. The good relation of man with the earth and the atmosphere keeps him alive and active.

## Glossary

luster	soft reflected light
cluster	closely together
glitter	light, shine

## EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. What do you understand when the poet says, "I am the shadow that follows a child"?
2. How can the crust of the snow glitter?
3. What is the dream of the poet?
4. What is the effect of man's good relation with the earth and the lords?
5. What are the things that keep a person alive?
6. Pessimism and optimism are two attitudes of a human being. They describe/depict the state of a person's mind who is hopeful at one moment and in despair at another. Can you tell which of these two attitudes goes well with this poem?
7. Write down your opinion in a few sentences based on the theme of the poem.

Poem No.

18

## Love – an Essence of All Religions

(Jalaluddin Rumi)

Through love thorns become roses, and  
 Through love vinegar becomes sweet wine,  
 Through love the stake becomes a throne,  
 Through love misfortune becomes good fortune,  
 Through love burning fire becomes pleasing light,  
 Through love stone becomes soft as butter,  
 Through love grief becomes a joy,  
 Through love lions become harmless  
 Through love sickness becomes health,  
 Through love wrath seems to be a mercy,  
 Through love the dead rise to life,  
 Through love the king becomes a slave.

*Translated by Dr. Nicholson*

### Glossary

vinegar	acid liquor used in flavouring food and for pickling
stake	post (to which a person was tied)
wrath	great anger

### Theme

Love is the essence of all religions. It is love that changes the adversities into pleasures. Thorns become roses, vinegar becomes sweet wine, burning fire a pleasing light, sickness becomes health, and the king a slave. Life becomes a success and pleasure because of love, otherwise life is not worth living.

**EXERCISES**

1. **What is the effect of love?**
2. **Is life worth living without love?**
3. **There are a number of antonyms in this poem. Given below are words taken from the poem. Write down the antonyms as given in the poem.**

**Example:**

thorns      roses

misfortune

stone

grief

sickness

wrath

dead

king

4. **Make pairs of rhyming words from the list of the words given below, e.g. fight, light.**

roses, gone, health, fight, throne, poses, joy, wealth, light, toy, thorn, love, horn, dove

Poem No.

19

# A Man of Words and Not of Deeds

*(Charles Perrault 1628-1703)*

A man of words and not of deeds,  
Is like a garden full of weeds.  
And when the weeds begin to grow,  
It's like a garden full of snow.  
And when the snow begins to fall,  
It's like a bird upon the wall.  
And when the bird away does fly,  
It's like an eagle in the sky.  
And when the sky begins to roar,  
It's like a lion at the door.  
And when the door begins to crack,  
It's like a stick across your back.  
And when your back begins to smart,  
It's like a penknife in your heart.  
And when your heart begins to bleed,  
You're dead and dead and dead indeed.

*Translated by Robert Samber*

## Glossary

weed	any wild plant growing where it is not wanted
roar	loud, deep sound as of a lion
smart	feel or cause a sharp pain

## Theme

A man who always talks and boasts and is not involved in any deed is like a garden full of weeds. And when it is once grown it further aggravates the situation like snow in winter. Life passes through different phases and ultimately comes to an end with the death of a person. It is, therefore, necessary that a man must always engage himself in some fruitful activity to make the life pleasant and useful for humanity.

## EXERCISE

1. Paraphrase the poem.
2. How does the life of man pass through different phases?
3. What happens when life is spent with the help of words and not of deeds?
4. What does the garden look like when the weeds start growing?
5. Write down all the rhyming words in the poem and use them in sentences of your own.
6. What is the moral of the poem?



Poem No.

20

# In Broken Images

(Robert Graves)

He is quick, thinking in clear images;

I am slow, thinking in broken images.

He becomes dull, trusting to his clear images;

I become sharp, mistrusting my broken images.

Trusting his images, he assumes their relevance;

Mistrusting my images, I question their relevance.

Assuming their relevance, he assumes the fact;

Questioning their relevance, I question the fact.

When the fact fails him, he questions his senses;

When the fact fails me, I approve my senses.

He continues quick and dull in his clear images;

I continue slow and sharp in my broken images.

He in a new confusion of his understanding;

I in a new understanding of my confusion.

## Glossary

assumes	undertakes
relevance	connection with what is discussed

## Theme

A person should remain inquisitive about the images of life whether they are broken or clear. One, who trusts one's clear images without proof, becomes dull in one's life whereas the other who mistrusts his broken images becomes sharp and intelligent. Nothing should be taken for granted and one should remain thoughtful and considerate about the facts of life.

Inquiry into the nature of things leads one to understand and accept the ground realities of life.

## EXERCISE

**Answer the following questions.**

1. What is the state of two persons, one who trusts clear images and the other who mistrusts the broken images?
2. Why does a person question his senses when the facts fail him?
3. Who is in a new confusion of his understanding?
4. What is the moral lesson of the poem?
5. Rewrite the poem in past tense.
6. Paraphrase the first four lines of the poem in your own words.
7. What conclusion does the poet draw in the last two lines of the poem? Write in detail.

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