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ENGLISH
BOOK I

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(September 28, 1947, Karachi)

Quaid-e-Azam
Muhammad Ali Jinnah
Founder of Pakistan

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ENGLISH BOOK – I

FOR

INTERMEDIATE CLASSES

(Short Stories)

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LESSON 1

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.

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"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

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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."

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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?"

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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?"

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"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 —

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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

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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.

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x. Why didn't Norma take the consent of her husband to comply with the instructions of Mr. Steward?

a) He couldn't understand the idea.

b) He would share the offer.

c) He considered it a murder.

d) He considered it immoral to kill some unknown person for the sake of money.

2. Mark the statements true or false.

i. Norma found the carton in front of her door as she arrived home.

ii. Norma believed that Mr. Steward was a guest.

iii. Mr. Steward took out a key and opened the box for Arthur.

iv. Arthur and Norma have the same reaction to Mr. Steward's proposition.

v. Norma could not resist calling Mr. Steward back.

vi. Norma did not agree with Mr. Steward to have the button unit brought back.

vii. Arthur said he believed that Mr. Steward's offer was a genuine one.

viii. Norma wants Arthur to understand that she is interested in the proposition because the money would help the two of them.

ix. Arthur could accept participating along with Norma if they were part of a research project.

x. Norma called Mr. Steward after she learned of Arthur's death.

3. Answer the following questions.

i. Why did Norma consider the tone and attitude of Mr. Steward offensive?

ii. Why did Arthur disagree with his wife?

iii. Why did Norma try to persuade her husband to agree with her?

iv. What were the reasons Norma gave to her husband to accept the offer?

v. Why did Mr. Steward continue persuading Norma?

vi. What was the message Norma received on pushing the button?

vii. What is the significance of Arthur's life-insurance policy?

viii. 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.

i. Write a note on the character of Arthur.

ii. Why didn't Norma remain true to her husband?

iii. Do you agree with Norma's assertion that the death of someone you have

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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.

LESSON 2

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

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"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

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"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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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LESSON 3

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

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"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.

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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?"

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"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."

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"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

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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	lacking 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

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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.

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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

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LESSON 4

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?"

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"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.

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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.

****

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

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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

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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?

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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

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LESSON 5

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 drumbeater 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

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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.

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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

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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 drumbeater?

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?

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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?

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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 drumbeater 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 drumbeater?

iii. Who was the owner of the lost pocketbook?

iv. Where was the pocketbook lost?

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LESSON 6

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.'

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'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

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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LESSON 7

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

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"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

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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.

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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

1. Choose the correct answer.

i. Who is 'I' 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.

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iii. The doctor was impressed

a) by the beauty of the child.

b) by the patience of the child.

c) by the patience of the parents.

d) by the picture of the child he had seen in Sunday's paper.

iv. The doctor took a 'trial shot of it' means

a) he made a wild guess to begin with.

b) he gave her a shot (injection).

c) he took parents to task.

d) he examined the girl carefully.

v. The doctor feared that the child might be suffering from diphtheria.

a) from the appearance of the child

b) The parents told him so.

c) from the examination of the child

d) He guessed because there had been such cases in the local school.

vi. The child did not respond to the doctor's instructions because

a) she was afraid of the doctor.

b) she was a stubborn child.

c) her parents had tried to open her mouth.

d) she was angry.

vii. The doctor ground his teeth in anger because

a) the child did not respond.

b) the mother told the girl, "he would not hurt you".

c) the parents did not let him handle the child.

d) the child had knocked his glasses.

viii. The doctor had almost succeeded in opening the mouth of the girl but failed to see because

a) the child resisted strongly.

b) the parental love made the father release her at the last moment.

c) the rough handling hurt the child.

d) the mother stopped him.

2. Mark the sentences true or false.

i. The story is about a sick child.

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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.

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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.

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LESSON 8

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

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"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 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.

"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.

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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LESSON 9

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

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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!"

****

(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	morbid swelling in thyroid gland (in the neck)
mallet	hammer with a wooden head

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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

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ix. Why did the quack return to the camel-men instead of continuing his profession?

a) to befool them

b) to enquire the cause of death of an old woman

c) to blame them

d) to get his luggage

x. Who was proved stupid?

a) the camel-men b) old woman

c) the quack d) a villager

2. Mark the sentences true or false.

i. With the blow of mallet the melon broke in the throat of the camel.

ii. The camel swallowed the broken melon and felt all right.

iii. The quack cured the old woman.

iv. The quack was compelled to dig the grave.

v. The villagers of next village refused to get the old man treated.

vi. The quack returned to the camel-men to tell them that they had shown the right way to cure the disease.

vii. The camel can bear the blow of a mallet but not the old man.

viii. There was little effect of the blow of a whip on the camel.

3. Answer the following questions.

i. What is a clump of trees?

ii. What was stuck in the camel's throat?

iii. What did the quack pretend to cure?

iv. What did the quack do with the old woman?

v. What was the result of the cure?

vi. What was the punishment inflicted upon the quack by the villagers?

vii. For whom did the quack dig the grave?

viii. What did the quack do in the next village?

ix. Why didn't the villagers let the old man get cured?

x. Why did the quack come back to the camel-men?

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

i. How did the camel-men cure their camel?

ii. How did the quack try to cure the old woman?

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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?

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LESSON 10

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 acrid 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

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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 just

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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
acrid	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.

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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?

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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

LESSON 11

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

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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

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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.

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iii. This nation will live out the true meaning of its creed:

a) Negroes will leave the country.

b) they will come up to the level of others.

c) they will prove their worth.

d) they will remain a minority.

iv. What is the dream?

a) equality of high and low b) rule of the blacks

c) negation of whites d) the practice of brotherhood

v. Which one is a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression?

a) Georgia b) Mississippi

c) Alabama d) Virginia

vi. What does the governor of Alabama do?

a) creates interferences b) makes interruptions

c) uses sweet words d) helps the blacks

vii. What will be exalted?

a) hill b) mountain

c) valley d) river

viii. Every hill and mountain shall be made low means that

a) all high and low will become equal.

b) hills and mountains will be leveled.

c) there will be no distinction of classes.

d) the low classes will rise up.

ix. The glory of whom shall be revealed?

a) President b) Governor

c) Lord d) Mayor

x. What is the beautiful symphony of brotherhood?

a) a violin

b) a guitar

c) the beautiful song of brotherhood

d) musical composition of brotherhood

2. Mark the sentences true or false.

i. Some of you have come from the areas where you lived happily

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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.

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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?

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LESSON 12

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

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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."

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"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

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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

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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?

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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?

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LESSON 13

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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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 grownup."

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

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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 Almightly 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)

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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.

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LESSON 14

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."

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"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.

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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.

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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 togged 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

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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?

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iv. When the young man visited the music shop what did he find?

a) There were musical instruments in the shop.

b) There was nothing in the shop.

c) He found many people in the shop.

d) 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?

a) rupees 200 only

b) only six annas and a few pies

c) Nothing was found in his pocket.

d) 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?

a) He was in a very precarious state.

b) He was in a stable state.

c) He was in a normal state.

d) 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.

i. What was the colour of the overcoat of the young man?

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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?

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LESSON 15

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."

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"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.

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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

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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.

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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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