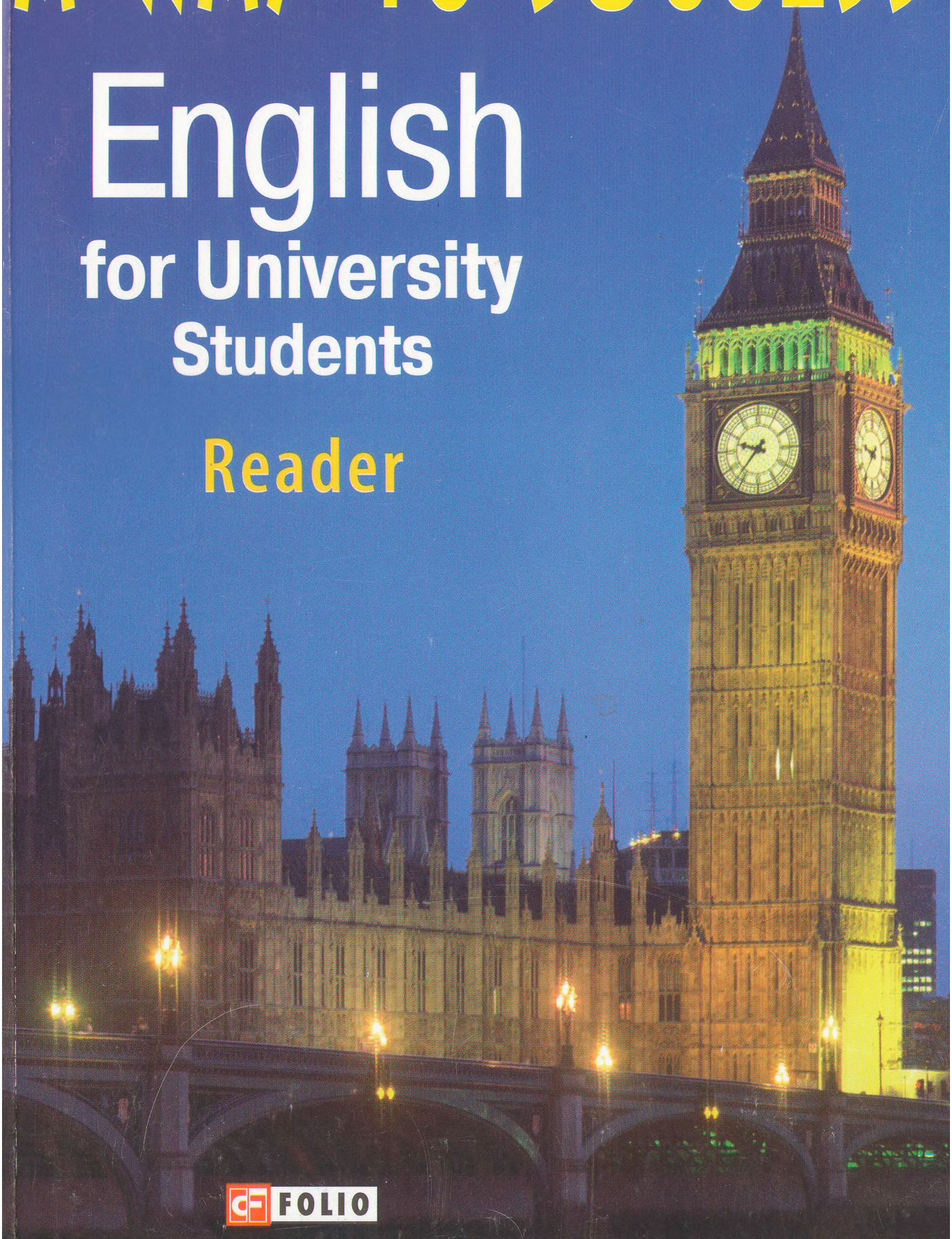
A WAY TO SUCCESS

English

for University Students

Reader



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Харків
ФОЛІО
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Т92

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У запропонованому підручнику надаються тексти англомовних авторів і завдання для перевірки їх засвоєння. Підручник призначений для формування навичок усної мови, розширення лексичного запасу. Його можна використовувати для домашнього індивідуального читання, а також у навчальному процесі для вдосконалення знань учнів загальноосвітніх навчальних закладів і студентів вузів, які мають поглиблений рівень володіння англійською мовою.

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PREFACE

READER is a part of "A WAY TO SUCCESS" multi-skill course for first-year university students. It is aimed at developing students' home reading skills and is based on authentic stories written by English-speaking authors. Stories vary as to their genre (adventure stories, detectives, psychological dramas, humorous stories etc.) and as to their authorship which includes both such famous writers as Agatha Christie or Somerset Maugham and less known authors. Some of the stories are well known to Ukrainian readers and some are quite new but the topics of all of them are invariably challenging and interesting for young people.

Like the main book of the course, Reader includes tasks and materials that correspond to B1+ level of the Common European Framework of Reference and the Curriculum for English Language Development in Universities and Institutes (Kyiv, 2001). The texts are not adapted but sometimes they are abridged to match the level of difficulty and studying purposes. Some words and phrases are commented upon or translated. The texts and tasks to them are organized according to the topics of the Curriculum and the principle of progressing complexity.

The tasks include global comprehension activities (true/false statements or answering questions), comprehension in detail (sentence completion, gap-filling, matching, interpretation activities) and in-depth comprehension (characterization of some personages, discussing some facts and statements etc.). Based on the belief that home reading is a powerful way of enlarging students' vocabulary, each unit comprises vocabulary activities that include commenting upon some vocabulary units in context, matching and cloze bank activities.

Since the course is a multi-skill one, each Reader unit comprises activities aimed at developing students' speaking skills (both in dialogue and monologue forms). Speaking tasks presuppose group and whole-class discussions of the stories and the problems touched upon in them.

Though being part of the course, Reader can also be used independently as a book for home reading for the students of the appropriate level of language proficiency and anyone interested in the literature of the English-speaking world.

Roald Dahl
THE UMBRELLA MAN

I'm going to tell you about a funny thing that happened to my mother and me yesterday evening. I am twelve years old and I'm a girl. My mother is thirty-four but I am nearly as tall as her already.

Yesterday afternoon, my mother took me up to London to see the dentist. He found one hole. It was in a back tooth and he filled it without hurting me too much. After that, we went to a cafe. I had a banana split and my mother had a cup of coffee. By the time we got up to leave, it was about six o'clock.

When we came out of the cafe it had started to rain. 'We must get a taxi,' my mother said. We were wearing ordinary hats and coats, and it was raining quite hard.

'Why don't we go back into the cafe and wait for it to stop?' I said. I wanted another of those banana splits. They were gorgeous.

'It isn't going to stop,' my mother said. 'We must get home.'

We stood on the pavement in the rain, looking for a taxi. Lots of them came by but they all had passengers inside them. 'I wish we had a car with a chauffeur,' my mother said.

Just then, a man came up to us. He was a small man and he was pretty old, probably seventy or more. He raised his hat politely and said to my mother, 'Excuse me. I do hope you will excuse me...' He had a fine white moustache and bushy white eyebrows and a wrinkly pink face. He was sheltering under an umbrella which he held high over his head.

'Yes?' my mother said, very cool and distant.

'I wonder if I could ask a small favour of you,' he said. 'It is only a very small favour.'

I saw my mother looking at him suspiciously. She is a suspicious person, my mother. She is especially suspicious of

two things — strange men and boiled eggs. When she cuts the top off a boiled egg, she pokes around inside it with her spoon as though expecting to find a mouse or something. With strange men, she has a golden rule which says, 'The nicer the man seems to be, the more suspicious you must become.' This little old man was particularly nice. He was polite. He was well-spoken. He was well-dressed. He was a real gentleman. The reason I knew he was a gentleman was because of his shoes. 'You can always spot a gentleman by the shoes he wears,' was another of my mother's favourite sayings. This man had beautiful brown shoes.

'The truth of the matter is,' the little man was saying, 'I've got myself into a bit of a scrape. I need some help. Not much, I assure you. It's almost nothing, in fact, but I do need it. You see, madam, old people like me often become terribly forgetful...'

My mother's chin was up and she was staring down at him along the full length of her nose. It is a fearsome thing, this frosty-nosed stare of my mother's. Most people go to pieces completely when she gives it to them. I once saw my own headmistress begin to stammer and simper like an idiot when my mother gave her a really foul frosty-noser. But the little man on the pavement with the umbrella over his head didn't bat an eyelid. He gave a gentle smile and said, 'I beg you to believe, madam, that I am not in the habit of stopping ladies in the street and telling them my troubles.'

'I should hope not,' my mother said.

I felt quite embarrassed by my mother's sharpness. I wanted to say to her, 'Oh, mummy, for heaven's sake, he's a very-very old man, and he's sweet and polite, and he's in some sort of trouble, so don't be so beastly to him.' But I didn't say anything.

The little man shifted his umbrella from one hand to the other. 'I've never forgotten it before,' he said.

'You've never forgotten what?' my mother asked sternly.

'My wallet,' he said. 'I must have left it in my other jacket. Isn't that the silliest thing to do?'

'Are you asking me to give you money?' my mother said.

'Oh, good gracious me, no!' he cried. 'Heaven forbid I should ever do that!'

'Then what *are* you asking?' my mother said. 'Do hurry up. We're getting soaked to the skin standing here.'

'I know you are,' he said. 'And that is why I'm offering you this umbrella of mine to protect you, and to keep forever, if ... — if only...'

'If only what?' my mother said.

'If only you would give me in return a pound for my taxi-fare just to get me home.'

My mother was still suspicious. 'If you had no money in the first place,' she said, 'then how did you get here?'

'I walked,' he answered. 'Every day I go for a lovely long walk and then I summon a taxi to take me home. I do it every day of the year.'

'Why don't you walk home now?' my mother asked.

'Oh, I wish I could,' he said. 'I do wish I could. But I don't think I could manage it on these silly old legs of mine. I've gone too far already.'

My mother stood there chewing her lower lip. She was beginning to melt a bit, I could see that. And the idea of getting an umbrella to shelter under must have tempted her a good deal.

'It's a lovely umbrella,' the little man said.

'So I've noticed,' my mother said.

'It's silk,' he said.

'I can see that.'

'Then why don't you take it, madam,' he said. 'It cost me over twenty pounds, I promise you. But that's of no importance so long as I can get home and rest these old legs of mine.'

I saw my mother's hand feeling for the clasp on her purse. She saw me watching her. I was giving her one of my *own* frosty-nosed looks this time and she knew exactly what I was telling her. Now listen, mummy, I was telling her, you simply *mustn't* take advantage of a tired old man in this way. It's a rotten thing to do. My mother paused and looked back at me. Then she said to the little man, 'I don't think it's quite right that I should take a silk umbrella from you worth twenty pounds. I think I'd just better *give* you the taxi-fare and be done with it.'

'No, no, no!' he cried. 'It's out of the question! I wouldn't dream of it! Not in a million years! I would never accept money

from you like that! Take the umbrella, dear lady, and keep the rain off your shoulders!'

My mother gave me a triumphant sideways look. There you are, she was telling me. You're wrong. He wants me to have it.

She fished into her purse and took out a pound note. She held it out to the little man. He took it and handed her the umbrella. He pocketed the pound, raised his hat, gave a quick bow from the waist, and said, 'Thank you, madam, thank you.' Then he was gone.

'Come under here and keep dry, darling,' my mother said. 'Aren't we lucky. I've never had a silk umbrella before. I couldn't afford it.'

'Why were you so horrid to him in the beginning?' I asked.

'I wanted to satisfy myself he wasn't a trickster,' she said. 'And I did. He was a gentleman. I'm very pleased I was able to help him'.

'Yes, mummy,' I said.

'A *real* gentleman,' she went on. 'Wealthy, too, otherwise he wouldn't have had a silk umbrella. I shouldn't be surprised if he isn't a titled person. Sir Harry Goldsworthy or something like that.'

'Yes, mummy.'

'This will be a good lesson to you,' she went on. 'Never rush things. Always take your time when you are summing someone up. Then you'll never make mistakes.'

'There he goes,' I said. 'Look.'

'Where?'

'Over there. He's crossing the street. Goodness, mummy, what a hurry he's in.'

We watched the little man as he dodged nimbly in and out of the traffic. When he reached the other side of the street, he turned left, walking very fast.

'He doesn't look very tired to me, does he to you, mummy?' My mother didn't answer.

'He doesn't look as though he's trying to get a taxi, either,' I said.

My mother was standing very still and stiff, staring across the street at the little man. We could see him clearly. He was

in a terrific hurry. He was bustling along the pavement, sidestepping the other pedestrians and swinging his arms like a soldier on the march.

'He's up to something,' my mother said, stony-faced.

'But what?'

'I don't know,' my mother snapped. 'But I'm going to find out. Come with me.' She took my arm and we crossed the street together. Then we turned left.

'Can you see him?' my mother asked.

'Yes. There he is. He's turning right down the next street.'

We came to the corner and turned right. The little man was about twenty yards ahead of us. He was scuttling along like a rabbit and we had to walk fast to keep up with him. The rain was pelting down harder than ever now and I could see it dripping from the brim of his hat on to his shoulders. But we were snug and dry under our lovely big silk umbrella.

'What *is* he up to?' my mother said.

'What if he turns round and sees us?' I asked.

'I don't care if he does,' my mother said. 'He lied to us. He said he was too tired to walk any further and he's practically running us off our feet! He's a barefaced liar! He's a crook!'

'You mean he's *not* a titled gentleman?' I asked.

'Be quiet,' she said.

At the next crossing, the little man turned right again. Then he turned left. Then right.

'I'm not giving up now,' my mother said. 'He's disappeared!' I cried. 'Where's he gone?' 'He went in that door!' my mother said.

'I saw him! Into that house! Great heavens, it's a pub!'

It was a pub. In big letters right across the front it said THE RED LION.

'You're not going in, are you, mummy?'

'No,' she said. 'We'll watch from outside.'

There was a big plate-glass window along the front of the pub, and although it was a bit steamy on the inside, we could see through it very well if we went close.

We stood huddled together outside the pub window. I was clutching my mother's arm. The big raindrops were

making a loud noise on our umbrella. 'There he is,' I said. 'Over there.'

The room we were looking into was full of people and cigarette smoke, and our little man was in the middle of it all. He was now without his hat or coat, and he was edging his way through the crowd towards the bar. When he reached it, he placed both hands on the bar itself and spoke to the barman. I saw his lips moving as he gave his order. The barman turned away from him for a few seconds and came back with a smallish tumbler filled to the brim with light brown liquid. The little man placed a pound note on the counter.

'That's my pound!' my mother hissed. 'By golly, he's got a nerve!'

'What's in the glass?' I asked.

'Whisky,' my mother said. 'Neat whisky.'

The barman didn't give him any change from the pound.

'That must be a treble whisky,' my mother said.

'What's a treble?' I asked.

'Three times the normal measure,' she answered.

The little man picked up the glass and put it to his lips. He tilted it gently. Then he tilted it higher ... and higher ... and higher ... and very soon all the whisky had disappeared down his throat in one long pour.

'That was a jolly expensive drink,' I said.

'It's ridiculous!' my mother said. 'Fancy paying a pound for something you swallow in one go!'

'It cost him more than a pound,' I said. 'It cost him a twenty-pound silk umbrella.'

'So it did,' my mother said. 'He must be mad.'

The little man was standing by the bar with the empty glass in his hand. He was smiling now, and a sort of golden glow of pleasure was spreading over his round pink face. I saw his tongue come out to lick the white moustache, as though searching for the last drop of that precious whisky.

Slowly, he turned away from the bar and edged back through the crowd to where his hat and coat were hanging. He put on his hat. He put on his coat. Then, in a manner so superbly cool and casual that you hardly noticed anything at all, he lifted from the coat-rack one of the many wet umbrellas hanging there, and off he went.

'Did you see that!', my mother shrieked. 'Did you see what he did!'

'Ssshh!' I whispered. 'He's coming out!'

We lowered the umbrella to hide our faces, and peeped out from under it.

Out he came. But he never looked in our direction. He opened his new umbrella over his head and scurried off down the road the way he had come.

'So that's his little game!' my mother said.

'Neat,' I said. 'Super.'

We followed him back to the main street where we had first met him, and we watched him as he proceeded, with no trouble at all, to exchange his new umbrella for another pound note. This time it was with a tall thin fellow who didn't even have a coat or hat. And as soon as the transaction was completed, our little man trotted off down the street and was lost in the crowd. But this time he went in the opposite direction.

'You see how clever he is!' my mother said. 'He never goes to the same pub twice!'

'He could go on doing this all night,' I said.

'Yes,' my mother said. 'Of course. But I'll bet he prays like mad for rainy days.'

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true or false. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. The girl and her mother went to London to visit a doctor.

2. The filling was rather painful and to sooth the daughter the mother took her to a cafe.

3. They had a substantial meal in a cafe.

4. The girl and her mother wanted to take a taxi because they were very tired and it was rather late.

5. While the girl and her mother were waiting for a taxi they were approached by a small middle-aged man who was holding an umbrella over his head.

6. The girl's mother wasn't inclined to a conversation with the old man.

7. The old man made a favourable impression on the girl.
8. The girl didn't like the way her mother spoke to the old man.
9. The old man wanted to help the girl and her mother catch a taxi.
10. The girl's mother didn't want to give a pound for the umbrella because it was worth more.
11. The old man declined the girl's mother's offer to give him the taxi-fare.
12. The girl and her mother decided to follow the man because his behaviour surprised them.
13. The girl and her mother followed the old man and saw him enter a big restaurant.
14. The girl and her mother could hardly see what the old man was doing inside through the window.
15. The old man emptied his glass, put on his coat and hat and, making sure that no one could see him, took an umbrella from the coat-rack and quickly went out.
16. The girl and her mother saw the old man find another person to make his little dishonest deal.
17. The old man's new target was a tall thin fellow who had no protection from the rain.
18. After exchanging his new umbrella for another pound note the old man hurried to the same pub.

TASK 2. Who did that?

1. Who wanted another of those banana splits?
2. Who looked at the man suspiciously?
3. Who had beautiful brown shoes?
4. Who got himself/herself into a bit of a scrape?
5. Who had a frosty-nosed stare?
6. Who began to stammer and simper like an idiot?
7. Who didn't bat an eyelid?
8. Who felt quite embarrassed by someone else's sharpness?
9. Who was getting soaked to the skin standing there?
10. Who left the wallet at home?
11. Who was beginning to melt a bit?
12. Who gave a triumphant sideways look?
13. Who gave a quick bow from the waist?

14. Who wanted to satisfy herself. Wasn't he a trickster?
15. Who dodged nimbly in and out of the traffic?
16. Who prayed like mad for rainy days?

TASK 3. Explain how you understand words and phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 4. Match the adjectives and the nouns from the story and remember the situations they were used in.

1. back	a) hats and coats
2. suspicious	b) gentleman
3. fearsome	c) rule
4. favourite	d) thing
5. gentle	e) liar
6. silk	f) whisky
7. barefaced	g) person
8. golden	h) tooth
9. titled	i) saying
10. neat	j) umbrella
11. ordinary	k) smile

TASK 5. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. It was _____ a back tooth and he filled it _____ hurting me too much.
2. The room we were looking _____ was full _____ people and cigarette smoke, and our little man was _____ it all.
3. 'Why don't we go back _____ the cafe and wait _____ it to stop?
4. We watched the little man as he dodged nimbly _____ and _____ the traffic.
5. But the little man _____ the pavement _____ the umbrella _____ his head didn't bat an eyelid.
6. She fished _____ her purse and took _____ a pound note.
7. The little man was standing _____ the bar _____ the empty glass _____ his hand.

8. He opened his new umbrella _____ his head and scurried off _____ the road.

9. When she cuts the top _____ a boiled egg, she pokes around _____ it _____ her spoon.

10. I could see the rain dripping _____ the brim _____ his hat _____ his shoulders.

TASK 6. Answer the questions below.

1. Who are the main characters of the story?
2. Where did the events take place?
3. What did the girl and her mother do there?
4. How does the narrator describe the old man? What details are given to characterize him?
5. What was the first reaction of the girl's mother to the old man's request and why?
6. What were the mother's golden rules of social behaviour?
7. What made the woman and the girl follow the old man?
8. What was the point of the old man's trick?

TASK 7. Supply arguments from the text supporting the statements below.

1. The girl didn't want to leave the cafe.
2. The girl and her mother needed a taxi.
3. The old man looked respectable.
4. The girls mother didn't trust strangers.
5. The girl didn't approve of her mother's manner of speaking to the old man.
6. The old man' trick was a complete surprise to the girl and her mother.

TASK 8. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. Which of the characters do you like (dislike, feel sorry for)? Say why.
2. What words and expressions does the author use to create the comic situation in the story?
3. What message does the author want to convey to his readers?
4. Find in the story some details that describe the British way of life.

5. How far do you agree with the girl's mother who said: 'The nicer the man seems to be, the more suspicious you must become.' 'You can always spot a gentleman by the shoes he wears.'

6. What would you do if the old man from the story asked you for help?

TASK 9. Imagine that you are:

a) the girl telling her friend about the old man and their adventure in London;

b) the girl's mother telling her friend about the old man and their adventure in London;

c) the old man telling about his adventure in London.

Somerset Maugham

JANE

I remember very well the occasion on which I first saw Jane Fowler. It is indeed only because the details of the glimpse I had of her then are so clear that I trust my recollection at all, for, looking back, I must confess that I find it hard to believe that it has not played me a fantastic trick. I had lately returned to London from China and was drinking a dish of tea with Mrs. Tower. Mrs. Tower had been seized with the prevailing passion for decoration; and with the ruthlessness of her sex had sacrificed chairs in which she had comfortably sat for years, tables, cabinets, ornaments, on which her eyes had dwelt in peace since she was married, pictures that had been familiar to her for a generation; and delivered herself into the hands of an expert. Nothing remained in her drawing-room with which she had any association, or to which any sentiment was attached; and she had invited me that day to see the fashionable glory in which she now lived. Everything that could be pickled was pickled and what couldn't be pickled was painted. Nothing matched, but everything harmonized.

'Do you remember that ridiculous drawing-room suite that I used to have?' asked Mrs Tower.

The curtains were sumptuous yet severe; the sofa was covered with Italian brocade; the chair on which I sat was in *petit point.* The room was beautiful, opulent without garishness and original without affectation; yet to me it lacked something; and while I praised with my lips I asked myself why I so much preferred the rather shabby chintz of the despised suite, the Victorian water-colours that I had known so long, and the ridiculous Dresden china[1] that had adorned the chimney-piece. I wondered what it was that I missed in all these rooms that the decorators were turning out with a profitable industry. Was it heart? But Mrs Tower looked about her happily.

'Don't you like my alabaster lamps?' she said. 'They give such a soft light.'

'Personally I have a weakness for a light that you can see by,' I smiled.

'It's so difficult to combine that with a light that you can't be too much seen by,' laughed Mrs Tower.

I had no notion what her age was. When I was quite a young man she was a married woman a good deal older than I, but now she treated me as her contemporary. She constantly said that she made no secret of her age, which was forty, and then added with a smile that all women took five years off. She never sought to conceal the fact that she dyed her hair (it was *a* very pretty brown with reddish tints), and she said she did this because hair was hideous while it was going grey; as soon as hers was white she would cease to dye it.

'Then they'll say what a young face I have.'

Meanwhile it was painted, though with discretion, and her eyes owed not a little of their vivacity to art. She was a handsome woman, exquisitely gowned, and in the somber glow of the alabaster lamps did not look a day more than the forty she gave herself.

'It is only at my dressing-table that I can suffer the naked brightness of a thirty-two-candle electric bulb,' she added with smiling cynicism. 'There I need it to tell me first the hideous truth and then to enable me to take the necessary steps to correct it.'

We gossiped pleasantly about our common friends and Mrs Tower brought me up to date in the scandal of the day. After roughing it here and there it was very agreeable to sit in a comfortable chair, the fire burning brightly on the hearth, charming tea-things set out on a charming table, and talk with this amusing, attractive woman. She treated me as a prodigal returned from his husks and was disposed to make much of me. She prided herself on her dinner-parties; she took no less trouble to have her guests suitably assorted than to give them excellent food; and there were few persons who did not look upon it as a treat to be bidden to one of them. Now she fixed a date and asked me whom I would like to meet.

'There's only one thing I must tell you. If Jane Fowler is still here I shall have to put it off.'

'Who is Jane Fowler?' I asked.

Mrs Tower gave a rueful smile.

'Jane Fowler is my cross.'

'Oh!'

'Do you remember a photograph that I used to have on the piano before I had my room done, of a woman in a tight dress with tight sleeves and a gold locket, with her hair drawn back from a broad forehead and her ears showing and spectacles on a rather blunt nose? Well, that was Jane Fowler.'

'You had so many photographs about the room in your unregenerate days,' I said, vaguely.

'It makes me shudder to think of them. I've made them into a huge brown-paper parcel and hidden them in an attic.'

'Well, who is Jane Fowler?' I asked again, smiling.

'She's my sister-in-law. She was my husband's sister and she married a manufacturer in the north. She's been a widow for many years, and she's very well-to-do.'

'And why is she your cross?'

'She's worthy, she's dowdy, she's provincial. She looks twenty years older than I do and she's quite capable of telling anyone she meets that we were at school together. She has an overwhelming sense of family affection, and because I am her only living connection she's devoted to me. When she comes to London it never occurs to her that she should stay anywhere but here — she thinks it would hurt my feelings — and she'll pay me visits of three or four weeks. We sit here and she knits and reads. And sometimes she insists on taking me to dine at Claridge's[2] and she looks like a funny old charwoman and everyone I particularly don't want to be seen by is sitting at the next table. When we are driving home she says she loves giving me a little treat. With her own hands she makes me tea-cosies that I am forced to use when she is here and doilies and centerpieces for the dining-room table.'

Mrs Tower paused to take breath.

'I should have thought a woman of your tact would find a way to deal with a situation like that.'

'Ah, but don't you see, I haven't a chance. She's so immeasurably kind. She has a heart of gold. She bores me to death, but I wouldn't for anything let her suspect it.'

'And when does she arrive?' 'Tomorrow.'

But the answer was hardly out of Mrs Tower's mouth when the bell rang. There were sounds in the hall of a slight commotion and in a minute or two the butler ushered in an elderly lady.

'Mrs Fowler,' he announced.

'Jane,' cried Mrs. Tower, springing to her feet, 'I wasn't expecting you today.'

'So your butler has just told me. I certainly said today in my letter.'

Mrs Tower recovered her wits.

'Well, it doesn't matter. I'm very glad to see you whenever you come. Fortunately I'm doing nothing this evening.'

'You mustn't let me give you any trouble. If I can have a boiled egg for my dinner, that's all I shall want.'

A faint grimace for a moment distorted Mrs Tower's handsome features. A boiled egg!

'Oh, I think we can do a little better than that.'

I chuckled inwardly when I recollected that the two ladies were contemporaries. Mrs Fowler looked a good fifty-five. She was a rather big woman; she wore a black straw hat with a wide brim and from it a black lace veil hung over her shoulders, a cloak that oddly combined severity with fussiness, a long black dress, voluminous as though she wore several petticoats under it, and stout boots. She was evidently short-sighted, for she looked at you through large gold-rimmed spectacles.

'Won't you have a cup of tea?' asked Mrs Tower.

'If it wouldn't be too much trouble, I'll take off my mantle.'

She began by stripping her hands of the black gloves she wore, and then took off her cloak. Round her neck was a solid gold chain from which hung a large gold locket in which I felt certain was a photograph of her deceased husband. Then she took off her hat and placed it neatly with her gloves and cloak on the sofa corner. Mrs Tower pursed her lips. Certainly those garments did not go very well with the austere but sumptuous beauty of Mrs Tower's redecorated drawing-room. I wondered where on earth Mrs Fowler had found the extraordinary clothes she wore. They were not old, and the materials were expensive. It was astounding to think that dressmakers still made things that had not been worn for a quarter of a century. Mrs Fowler's grey hair was very plainly done, showing all her forehead and

her ears, with a parting in the middle. It had evidently never known the tongs of Monsieur Marcel[3]. Now her eyes fell on the tea-table with its teapot of Georgian silver and its cups in old Worcester.[4]

'What have you done with the tea-cosy I gave you last time I came up, Marion?' she asked. 'Don't you use it?'

'Yes, I used it every day, Jane,' answered Mrs Tower glibly. 'Unfortunately we had an accident with it a little while ago. It got burnt.'

'But the last one I gave you got burnt.' 'I'm afraid you'll think us very careless.'

'It doesn't really matter,' smiled Mrs Fowler. 'I shall enjoy making you another. I'll go to Liberty's tomorrow and buy some silks.' Mrs Tower kept her face bravely.

'I don't deserve it, you know. Doesn't your vicar's wife need one?'

'Oh, I've just made her one,' said Mrs Fowler brightly.

I noticed that when she smiled she showed white, small, and regular teeth. They were a real beauty. Her smile was certainly very sweet.

But I felt it high time for me to leave the two ladies to themselves, so I took my leave.

Early next morning Mrs Tower rang me up, and I heard at once from her voice that she was in high spirits.

'I've got the most wonderful news for you,' she said. 'Jane is going to be married.' 'Nonsense.'

'Her fiancé is coming to dine here tonight to be introduced to me, and I want you to come too.'

'Oh, but I shall be in the way.'

'No, you won't. Jane suggested herself that I should ask you. Do come.'

She was bubbling over with laughter. 'Who is he?'

'I don't know. She tells me he's an architect. Can you imagine the sort of man Jane would marry?'

I had nothing to do and I could trust Mrs Tower to give me a good dinner.

When I arrived, Mrs Tower, very splendid in a tea-gown a little too young for her, was alone.

'Jane is putting the finishing touches to her appearance. I'm longing for you to see her. She's all in a flutter. She says he

adores her. His name is Gilbert and when she speaks of him her voice gets all funny and tremulous. It makes me want to laugh.'

'I wonder what he's like.'

'Oh, I'm sure I know. Very big and massive, with a bald head and an immense gold chain across an immense tummy. A large, fat, clean-shaven, red face and a booming voice.'

Mrs Fowler came in. She wore a very still black silk dress with a wide skirt and a train. At the neck it was cut into a timid V and the sleeves came down to the elbows. She wore a necklace of diamonds set in silver. She carried in her hands a long pair of black gloves and a fan of black ostrich feathers. She managed (as so few people do) to look exactly what she was. You could never have thought her anything in the world but the respectable relict of a North-country manufacturer of ample means.

'You've really got quite a pretty neck, Jane,' said Mrs Tower with a kindly smile.

It was indeed astonishingly young when you compared it with her weather-beaten face. It was smooth and unlined and the skin was white. And I noticed then that her head was very well placed on her shoulders.

'Has Marion told you my news?' she said, turning to me with that really charming smile of hers as if we were already old friends.'

'I must congratulate you,' I said.

'Wait to do that till you've seen my young man.'

'I think it's too sweet to hear you talk of your young man,' smiled Mrs Tower.

Mrs Fowler's eyes certainly twinkled behind her preposterous spectacles.

'Don't expect anyone too old. You wouldn't like me to marry a decrepit old gentleman with one foot in the grave, would you?'

This was the only warning she gave us. Indeed there was no time for any further discussion, for the butler flung open the door and in a loud voice announced:

'Mr Gilbert Napier.'

There entered a youth in a very well-cut dinner jacket. He was slight, not very tall, with fair hair in which there was a hint of a natural wave, clean-shaven and blue-eyed. He was not

particularly good-looking, but he had a pleasant, amiable face. In ten years he would probably be wizened and sallow; but now, in extreme youth, he was fresh and clean and blooming. For he was certainly not more than twenty-four. My first thought was that this was the son of Jane Fowler's fiancé (I had not known he was a widower) come to say that his father was prevented from dining by a sudden attack of gout. But his eyes fell immediately on Mrs Fowler, his face lit up, and he went towards her with both hands outstretched. Mrs Fowler gave him hers, a demure smile on her lips, and turned to her sister-in-law.

'This is my young man, Marion,' she said.

He held out his hand.

'I hope you'll like me, Mrs Tower,' he said. 'Jane tells me you're the only relation she has in the world.'

Mrs Tower's face was wonderful to behold. I saw then to admiration how bravely good breeding and social usage could combat the instincts of the natural woman. For the astonishment and then the dismay that for an instant she could not conceal were quickly driven away, and her face assumed an expression of affable welcome. But she was evidently at a loss for words. It was not unnatural if Gilbert felt a certain embarrassment, and I was too busy preventing myself from laughing to think of anything to say. Mrs Fowler alone kept perfectly calm.

'I know you'll like him, Marion. There's no one enjoys good food more than he does.' She turned to the young man. 'Marion's dinners are famous.'

'I know,' he beamed.

Mrs Tower made some quick rejoinder and we went downstairs. I shall not soon forget the exquisite comedy of that meal. Mrs Tower could not make up her mind whether the pair of them were playing a practical joke on her or whether Jane by wilfully concealing her fiancé's age had hoped to make her look foolish. But then Jane never jested and she was incapable of doing a malicious thing. Mrs Tower was amazed, exasperated and perplexed. But she had recovered her self-control, and for nothing would she have forgotten that she was a perfect hostess whose duty it was to make her party go. She talked vivaciously; but I wondered if Gilbert Napier saw how hard and vindictive was the expression of her eyes behind the mask of friendliness that she turned to him. She was measuring him. She was seeking

to delve into the secret of his soul. I could see that she was in a passion, for under her rouge her cheeks glowed with an angry red.

'You've got a very high colour, Marion,' said Jane, looking at her amiably through great round spectacles.

'I dressed in a hurry. I daresay I put on too much rouge.'

'Oh, is it rouge? I thought it was natural. Otherwise I shouldn't have mentioned it.' She gave Gilbert a shy little smile. 'You know, Marion and I were at school together. You would never think it to look at us now, would you? But of course I've lived a very quiet life.'

I do not know what she meant by these remarks; it was almost incredible that she made them in complete simplicity; but anyhow they goaded Mrs Tower to such a fury that she flung her own vanity to the winds. She smiled brightly.

'We shall neither of us see fifty again, Jane,' she said.

If the observation was meant to discomfit the widow, it failed.

'Gilbert says I mustn't acknowledge to more than forty-nine for his sake,' she answered blandly.

Mrs Tower's hands trembled slightly, but she found a retort.

'There is of course a certain disparity of age between you,' she smiled.

'Twenty-seven years,' said Jane. 'Do you think it's too much?' Gilbert says I'm very young for my age. I told you I shouldn't like to marry a man with one foot in the grave.'

I was really obliged to laugh, and Gilbert laughed too. His laughter was frank and boyish. It looked as though he were amused at everything Jane said. But Mrs Tower was almost at the end of her tether, and I was afraid that unless relief came she would for once forget that she was a woman of the world. I came to the rescue as best I could.

'I suppose you're very busy buying your trousseau,' I said.

'No. I wanted to get my things from the dressmaker in Liverpool I've been to ever since I was first married. But Gilbert won't let me. He's very masterful, and of course he has wonderful taste.'

She looked at him with a little affectionate smile, demurely, as though she were a girl of seventeen.

Mrs Tower went quite pale under her make-up.

'We're going to Italy for our honeymoon. Gilbert has never had a chance of studying Renaissance architecture, and of course it's important for an architect to see things for himself. And we shall stop in Paris on the way and get my clothes there.'

'Do you expect to be away long?'

'Gilbert has arranged with his office to stay away for six months. It will be such a treat for him, won't it? You see, he's never had more than a fortnight's holiday before.'

'Why not?' asked Mrs Tower in a tone that no effort of will could prevent from being icy.

'He's never been able to afford it, poor dear.' 'Ah!' said Mrs Tower, and into the exclamation put volumes.

Coffee was served and the ladies went upstairs. Gilbert and I began to talk in the desultory way in which men talk who have nothing whatever to say to one another; but in two minutes a note was brought in to me by the butler. It was from Mrs Tower and ran as follows:

Come upstairs quickly and then go as soon as you can. Take him with you. Unless I have it out with Jane at once I shall have a fit.

I told a facile lie.

'Mrs Tower has a headache and wants to go to bed. I think if you don't mind we'd better clear out.'

'Certainly,' he answered.

We went upstairs and five minutes later were on the doorstep. I called a taxi and offered the young man a lift.

'No, thanks,' he answered. 'I'll just walk to the corner and jump on a bus.'

Mrs Tower sprang to the fray as soon as she heard the front door close behind us.

'Are you crazy, Jane?' she cried.

'Not more than most people who don't habitually live in a lunatic asylum, I trust,' Jane answered blandly.

'May I ask why you're going to marry this young man?' asked Mrs Tower with formidable politeness.

'Partly because he won't take no for an answer. He's asked me five times. I grew positively tired of refusing him.'

'And why do you think he's so anxious to marry you?'

'I amuse him.'

Mrs Tower gave an exclamation of annoyance.

'He's an unscrupulous rascal. I very nearly told him so to his face.'

'You would have been wrong, and it wouldn't have been very polite.'

'He's penniless and you're rich. You can't be such a besotted fool as not to see that he's marrying you for your money.'

Jane remained perfectly composed. She observed her sister-in-law's agitation with detachment.

'I don't think he is, you know,' she replied. 'I think he's very fond of me.'

'You're an old woman, Jane.'

'I'm the same age as you are, Marion,' she smiled.

'I've never let myself go. I'm very young for my age. No one would think I was more than forty. But even I wouldn't dream of marrying a boy twenty years younger than myself.'

'Twenty-seven,' corrected Jane.

'Do you mean to tell me that you can bring yourself to believe that it's possible for a young man to care for a woman old enough to be his mother?'

'I've lived very much in the country for many years.

I daresay there's a great deal about human nature that I don't know. They tell me there's a man called Freud[5], an Austrian, I believe —'

But Mrs Tower interrupted her without any politeness at all.

'Don't be ridiculous, Jane. It's so undignified. It's so ungraceful. I always thought you were a sensible woman. Really you're the last person I should ever have thought likely to fall in love with a boy.'

'But I'm not in love with him. I've told him that. Of course I like him very much or I wouldn't think of marrying him. I thought it only fair to tell him quite plainly what my feelings were towards him.'

Mrs Tower gasped. The blood rushed to her head and her breathing oppressed her. She had no fan, but she seized the evening paper and vigorously fanned herself with it.

'If you're not in love with him why do you want to marry him?'

'I've been a widow a very long time and I've led a very quiet life. I thought I'd like a change.'

'If you want to marry just to be married why don't you marry a man of your own age?'

'No man of my own age has asked me five times. In fact no man of my own age has asked me at all.'

Jane chuckled as she answered. It drove Mrs Tower to the final pitch of frenzy.

'Don't laugh, Jane. I won't have it. I don't think you can be right in your mind. It's dreadful.'

It was altogether too much for her and she burst into tears. She knew that at her age it was fatal to cry, her eyes would be swollen for twenty-four hours and she would look a sight. But there was no help for it. She wept. Jane remained perfectly calm. She looked at Marion through her large spectacles and reflectively smoothed the lap of her black silk dress.

'You're going to be so dreadfully unhappy,' Mrs Tower sobbed, dabbing her eyes cautiously in the hope that the black on her lashes would not smudge.

'I don't think so, you know,' Jane answered in those equable, mild tones of hers, as if there were a little smile behind the words. 'We've talked it over very thoroughly. I always think I'm a very easy person to live with. I think I shall make Gilbert very happy and comfortable. He's never had anyone to look after him properly. We're only marrying after mature consideration. And we've decided that if either of us wants his liberty the other will place no obstacles in the way of his getting it.'

Mrs Tower had by now recovered herself sufficiently to make a cutting remark.

'How much has he persuaded you to settle on him?'

'I wanted to settle a thousand a year on him, but he wouldn't hear of it. He was quite upset when I made the suggestion. He says he can earn quite enough for his own needs.'

'He's more cunning than I thought,' said Mrs Tower acidly.

Jane paused a little and looked at her sister-in-law with kindly but resolute eyes.

'You see, my dear, it's different for you,' she said. 'You've never been so very much a widow, have you?'

Mrs Tower looked at her. She blushed a little. She even felt slightly uncomfortable. But of course Jane was much too simple to intend an innuendo. Mrs Tower gathered herself together with dignity.

'I'm so upset that I really must go to bed,' she said. 'We'll resume the conversation tomorrow morning.'

'I'm afraid that won't be very convenient, dear. Gilbert and I are going to get the licence tomorrow morning.'

Mrs Tower threw up her hands in a gesture of dismay, but she found nothing more to say.

The marriage took place at a registrar's office. Mrs Tower and I were witnesses. Gilbert in a smart blue suit looked absurdly young and he was obviously nervous. It is a trying moment for any man. But Jane kept her admirable composure. She might have been in the habit of marrying as frequently as a woman of fashion. Only a slight colour on her cheeks suggested that beneath her calm was some faint excitement. It is a thrilling moment for any woman. She wore a very full dress of silver grey velvet, in the cut of which I recognized the hand of the dressmaker in Liverpool (evidently a widow of unimpeachable character), who had made her gowns for so many years; but she had so far succumbed to the frivolity of the occasion as to wear a large picture hat covered with blue ostrich feathers. Her gold-rimmed spectacles made it extraordinarily grotesque. When the ceremony was over the registrar (somewhat taken aback, I thought, by the difference of age between the pair he was marrying) shook hands with her, tendering his strictly official congratulations; and the bridegroom, blushing slightly, kissed her. Mrs Tower, resigned but implacable, kissed her; and then the bride looked at me expectantly. It was evidently fitting that I should kiss her too. I did. I confess that I felt a little shy as we walked out of the registrar's office past loungers who waited cynically to see the bridal pairs, and it was with relief that I stepped into Mrs Tower's car. We drove to Victoria Station[6], for the happy couple were to go over to Paris by the two o'clock train, and Jane had insisted that the wedding-breakfast should be eaten at the station restaurant. She said it always made her nervous not to be on the platform in good time. Mrs Tower, present only from a strong sense of family

duty, was able to do little to make the party go off well; she ate nothing (for which I could not blame her, since the food was execrable, and anyway I hate champagne at luncheon) and talked in a strained voice. But Jane went through the menu conscientiously.

'I always think one should make a hearty meal before starting out on a journey,' she said.

We saw them off, and I drove Mrs Tower back to her house.

'How long do you give it?' she said. 'Six months?'

'Let's hope for the best,' I smiled.

'Don't be so absurd. There can be no "best". You don't think he's marrying her for anything but her money, do you? Of course it can't last. My only hope is that she won't have to go through as much suffering as she deserves.'

I laughed. The charitable words were spoken in such a tone as to leave me in small doubt of Mrs Tower's meaning.

'Well, if it doesn't last you'll have the consolation of saying: "I told you so",' I said.

'I promise you I'll never do that.' 'Then you'll have the satisfaction of congratulating yourself on your self-control in not saying: "I told you so".'

'She's old and dowdy and dull.'

'Are you sure she's dull?' I said. 'It's true she doesn't say very much, but when she says anything it's very much to the point.'

'I've never heard her make a joke in my life.'

I was once more in the Far East when Gilbert and Jane returned from their honeymoon, and this time I remained away for nearly two years. Mrs Tower was a bad correspondent and though I sent her an occasional picture-postcard I received no news from her. But I met her within a week of my return to London; I was dining out and found that I was seated next to her. It was an immense party — I think we were four-and-twenty like the blackbirds in the pie[7] — and, arriving somewhat late, I was too confused by the crowd in which I found myself to notice who was there. But when we sat down, looking round the long table I saw that a good many of my fellow-guests were well known to the public from their photographs in the illustrated

papers. Our hostess had a weakness for the persons technically known as celebrities, and this was an unusually brilliant gathering. When Mrs Tower and I had exchanged the conventional remarks that two people make when they have not seen one another for a couple of years I asked about Jane.

'She's very well,' said Mrs Tower with a certain dryness.

'How has the marriage turned out?'

Mrs Tower paused a little and took a salted almond from the dish in front of her.

'It appears to be quite a success.'

'You were wrong, then?'

'I said it wouldn't last and I still say it won't last. It's contrary to human nature.

'Is she happy?'

'They're both happy.'

'I suppose you don't see very much of them.'

'At first I saw quite a lot of them. But now ...' Mrs Tower pursed her lips a little. 'Jane is becoming very grand.'

'What do you mean?' I laughed.

'I think I should tell you that she's here to-night.'

'Here?'

I was startled. I looked round the table again. Our hostess was a delightful and an entertaining woman, but I could not imagine that she would be likely to invite to a dinner such as this the elderly and dowdy wife of an obscure architect. Mrs Tower saw my perplexity and was shrewd enough to see what was in my mind. She smiled thinly.

'Look on the left of our host.'

I looked. Oddly enough the woman who sat there had by her fantastic appearance attracted my attention the moment I was ushered into the crowded drawing-room. I thought I noticed a gleam of recognition in her eye, but to the best of my belief I had never seen her before. She was not a young woman, for her hair was iron-grey; it was cut very short and clustered thickly round her well-shaped head in tight curls. She made no attempt at youth, for she was conspicuous in that gathering by using neither lipstick, rouge, nor powder. Her face, not a particularly handsome one, was red and weather-beaten; but because it owed nothing to artifice it had a naturalness that was very pleasing. It contrasted oddly with the whiteness of her

shoulders. They were really magnificent. A woman of thirty might have been proud of them. But her dress was extraordinary. I had not seen often anything more audacious. It was cut very low, with short skirts, which were then the fashion, in black and yellow; it had almost the effect of fancy-dress and yet so became her that though on anyone else it would have been outrageous, on her it had the inevitable simplicity of nature. And to complete the impression of an eccentricity in which there was no pose and of an extravagance in which there was no ostentation she wore, attached by a broad black ribbon, a single eye-glass.

'You're not going to tell me *that* is your sister-in-law,' I gasped.

'That is Jane Napier,' said Mrs Tower icily.

At that moment she was speaking. Her host was turned towards her with an anticipatory smile. A baldish white-haired man, with a sharp, intelligent face, who sat on her left, was leaning forward eagerly, and the couple who sat opposite, ceasing to talk with one another, listened intently. She said her say and they all, with a sudden movement, threw themselves back in their chairs and burst into vociferous laughter. From the other side of the table a man addressed Mrs Tower: I recognized a famous statesman.

'Your sister-in-law has made another joke, Mrs Tower,' he said.

Mrs Tower smiled.

'She's priceless, isn't she?'

'Let me have a long drink of champagne and then for heaven's sake tell me all about it,' I said.

Well, this is how I gathered it had all happened. At the beginning of their honeymoon Gilbert took Jane to various dressmakers in Paris and he made no objection to her choosing a number of "gowns" after her own heart; but he persuaded her to have a "frock" or two made according to his own design. It appeared that he had a knack for that kind of work. He engaged a smart French maid. Jane had never had such a thing before. She did her own mending and when she wanted "doing up" she was in the habit of ringing for the housemaid. The dresses Gilbert had devised were very different from anything she had worn before; but he had been careful not to go too far too quickly, and because

it pleased him she persuaded herself, though not without misgivings, to wear them in preference to those she had chosen herself. Of course she could not wear them with the voluminous petticoats she had been in the habit of using, and these, though it cost her an anxious moment, she discarded.

'Now, if you please,' said Mrs Tower, with something very like a sniff of disapproval, 'she wears nothing but thin silk tights. It's a wonder to me she doesn't catch her death of cold at her age.'

Gilbert and the French maid taught her how to wear her clothes, and unexpectedly enough, she was very quick at learning. The French maid was in raptures over Madame's arms and shoulders. It was a scandal not to show anything so fine.

'Wait a little, Alphonsine,' said Gilbert. 'The next lot of clothes I design for Madame we'll make the most of her.'

The spectacles of course were dreadful. No one could look really well in gold-rimmed spectacles. Gilbert tried some with tortoise-shell rims. He shook his head.

'They'd look all right on a girl,' he said. 'You're too old to wear spectacles, Jane.' Suddenly he had an inspiration. 'By George, I've got it. You must wear an eye-glass.'

'Oh, Gilbert, I couldn't.'

She looked at him, and his excitement, the excitement of the artist, made her smile. He was so sweet to her she wanted to do what she could to please him.

'I'll try,' she said.

When they went to an optician and, suited with the right size, she placed an eye-glass jauntily in her eye Gilbert clapped his hands. There and then, before the astonished shopman, he kissed her on both cheeks.

'You look wonderful,' he cried.

So they went down to Italy and spent happy months studying Renaissance and Baroque architecture. Jane not only grew accustomed to her changed appearance but found she liked it. At first she was a little shy when she went into the dining-room of a hotel and people turned round to stare at her — no one had ever raised an eyelid to look at her before — but presently she found that the sensation was not disagreeable. Ladies came up to her and asked her where she got her dress.

'Do you like it?' she answered demurely. 'My husband designed it for me.'

'I should like to copy it if you don't mind.'

Jane had certainly for many years lived a very quiet life, but she was by no means lacking in the normal instincts of her sex. She had her answer ready.

'I'm so sorry, but my husband's very particular and he won't hear of anyone copying my frocks. He wants me to be unique.'

She had an idea that people would laugh when she said this, but they didn't; they merely answered:

'Oh, of course I quite understand. You *are* unique.'

But she saw them making mental notes of what she wore, and for some reason this quite "put her about". For once in her life when she wasn't wearing what everybody else did, she reflected, she didn't see why everybody else should want to wear what she did.

'Gilbert,' said she, quite sharply for her, 'next time you're designing dresses for me I wish you'd design things that people *can't* copy.'

'The only way to do that is to design things that only you can wear.'

'Can't you do that?'

'Yes, if you'll do something for me.'

'What is it?'

'Cut off your hair.'

I think this was the first time that Jane jibbed. Her hair was long and thick, and as a girl she had been quite vain of it; to cut it off was a very drastic proceeding. This really was burning her boats behind her. In her case it was not the first step that cost so much, it was the last; but she took it ('I know Marion will think me a perfect fool, and I shall *never* be able to go Liverpool again[8],' she said), and when they passed through Paris on their way home Gilbert led her (she felt quite sick, her heart was beating so fast) to the best hairdresser in the world. She came out of his shop with a jaunty, saucy, impudent head of crisp grey curls. Pygmalion had finished his fantastic masterpiece: Galatea was come to life.

'Yes,' I said, 'but that isn't enough to explain why Jane is here to-night amid this crowd of duchesses, cabinet ministers and such like; nor why she is sitting on one side of her host with an admiral of the Fleet on the other.'

'Jane is a humorist,' said Mrs Tower. 'Didn't you see them all laughing at what she said?'

There was no doubt now of the bitterness in Mrs Tower's heart.

'When Jane wrote and told me they were back from their honeymoon I thought I must ask them both to dinner. I didn't much like the idea, but I felt it had to be done. I knew the party would be deadly and I wasn't going to sacrifice any of the people who really mattered. On the other hand I didn't want Jane to think I hadn't any nice friends. You know I never have more than eight, but on this occasion I thought it would make things go better if I had twelve. I'd been too busy to see Jane until the evening of the party. She kept us all waiting a little — that was Gilbert's cleverness — and at last she sailed in. You could have knocked me down with a feather. She made the rest of the women look dowdy and provincial. She made me feel like a painted old trollop.'

Mrs Tower drank a little champagne.

'I wish I could describe the frock to you. It would have been quite impossible on anyone else, on her it was perfect. And the eye-glass! I'd known her for thirty-five years and I'd never seen her without spectacles.'

'But you knew she had a good figure.'

'How should I? I'd never seen her except in the clothes you first saw her in. Did *you* think she had a good figure? She seemed not to be unconscious of the sensation she made but to take it as a matter of course. I thought of my dinner and I heaved a sigh of relief. Even if she was a little heavy in hand[9], with that appearance it didn't so very much matter. She was sitting at the other end of the table and I heard a good deal of laughter; I was glad to think that the other people were playing up well; but after dinner I was a good deal taken aback when no less than three men came up to me and told me that my sister-in-law was priceless, and did I think she would allow them to call on her. I didn't quite know whether I was standing on my head or my heels. Twenty-four hours later our hostess of tonight rang me up and said she had heard my sister-in-law was in London and she was priceless and would I ask her to luncheon to meet her? She has an infallible instinct, that woman: in a month everyone was talking about Jane. I am here tonight, not because I've known our hostess for twenty years

and have asked her to dinner a hundred times, but because I'm Jane's sister-in-law.'

Poor Mrs Tower. The position was galling, and though I could not help being amused, for the tables were turned on her with a vengeance, I felt that she deserved my sympathy.

'People never can resist those who make them laugh,' I said, trying to console her.

'She never makes *me* laugh.'

Once more from the top of the table I heard a guffaw and guessed that Jane had said another amusing thing.

'Do you mean to say that you are the only person who doesn't think her funny?' I asked, smiling.

'Had it struck *you* that she was a humorist?'

'I'm bound to say it hadn't.'

'She says just the same things as she's said for the last thirty-five years. I laugh when I see everyone else does because I don't want to seem a perfect fool, but I am not amused.'

'Like Queen Victoria,'[10] I said.

It was a foolish jest and Mrs Tower was quite right sharply to tell me so. I tried another tack.

'Is Gilbert here?' I asked, looking down the table,

'Gilbert was asked because she won't go out without him, but tonight he's at a dinner of the Architects' Institute[11] or whatever it's called.'

'I'm dying to renew my acquaintance with her.'

'Go and talk to her after dinner. She'll ask you to her Tuesdays.'

'Her Tuesdays?'

'She's at home every Tuesday evening. You'll meet there everyone you ever heard of. They're the best parties in London. She's done in one year what I've failed to do in twenty.'

'But what you tell me is really miraculous. How has it been done?'

Mrs Tower shrugged her handsome but adipose shoulders.

'I shall be glad if you'll tell me,' she replied.

After dinner I tried to make my way to the sofa on which Jane was sitting, but I was intercepted and it was not till a little later that my hostess came up to me and said:

'I must introduce you to the star of my party. Do you know Jane Napier? She's priceless. She's much more amusing than your comedies.'

I was taken up to the sofa. The admiral who had been sitting beside her at dinner was with her still. He showed no sign of moving, and Jane, shaking hands with me, introduced me to him.

'Do you know Sir Reginald Frobisher?'

We began to chat. It was the same Jane as I had known before, perfectly simple, homely and unaffected, but her fantastic appearance certainly gave a peculiar savour to what she said. Suddenly I found myself shaking with laughter. She had made a remark, sensible and to the point, but not in the least witty, which her manner of saying and the bland look she gave me through her eye-glass made perfectly irresistible. I felt light-hearted and buoyant. When I left her she said to me:

'If you've got nothing better to do, come and see us on Tuesday evening. Gilbert will be so glad to see you.'

'When he's been a month in London he'll know that he *can* have nothing better to do,' said the admiral.

So, on Tuesday but rather late, I went to Jane's. I confess I was a little surprised at the company. It was quite a remarkable collection of writers, painters and politicians, actors, great ladies and great beauties: Mrs Tower was right, it was a grand party; I had seen nothing like it in London since Stafford House[12] was sold. No particular entertainment was provided. The refreshments were adequate without being luxurious. Jane in her quiet way seemed to be enjoying herself; I could not see that she took a great deal of trouble with her guests, but they seemed to like being there, and the gay, pleasant party did not break up till two in the morning. After that I saw much of her. I not only went often to her house, but seldom went out to luncheon or to dinner without meeting her. I am an amateur of humour and I sought to discover in what lay her peculiar gift. It was impossible to repeat anything she said, for the fun, like certain wines, would not travel. She had no gift for epigram. She never made a brilliant repartee. There was no malice in her remarks nor sting in her rejoinders. There are those who think that impropriety, rather than brevity, is the soul of wit; but she never said a thing that could have brought a blush to a Victorian[13] cheek. I think her humour was unconscious and I am sure it was unpremeditated. It flew like a butterfly from flower to

flower, obedient only to its own caprice and pursuivant of neither method nor intention. It depended on the way she spoke and on the way she looked. Its subtlety gained by the flaunting and extravagant appearance that Gilbert had achieved for her; but her appearance was only an element in it. Now of course she was the fashion and people laughed if she but opened her mouth. They no longer wondered that Gilbert had married a wife so much older than himself. They saw that Jane was a woman with whom age did not count. They thought him a devilish lucky young fellow. The admiral quoted Shakespeare to me: 'Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety.'[14] Gilbert was delighted with her success. As I came to know him better I grew to like him. It was quite evident that he was neither a rascal nor a fortune-hunter. He was not only immensely proud of Jane but genuinely devoted *to* her. His kindness to her was touching. He was a very unselfish and sweet-tempered young man.

'Well, what do you think of Jane now?' he said to me once, with boyish triumph.

'I don't know which of you is more wonderful,' I said. 'You or she.'

'Oh, I'm nothing.'

'Nonsense. You don't think I'm such a fool as not to see that it's you, and you only, who've made Jane what she is.'

'My only merit is that I saw what was there when it wasn't obvious to the naked eye,' he answered.

'I can understand your seeing that she had in her the possibility of that remarkable appearance, but how in the world have you made her into a humorist?'

'But I always thought the things she said a perfect scream. She was always a humorist.'

'You're the only person who ever thought so.'

Mrs Tower, not without magnanimity, acknowledged that she had been mistaken in Gilbert. She grew quite attached to him. But notwithstanding appearances she never faltered in her opinion that the marriage could not last. I was obliged to laugh at her.

'Why, I've never seen such a devoted couple,' I said.

'Gilbert is twenty-seven now. It's just the time for a pretty girl to come along. Did you notice the other evening at Jane's

that pretty little niece of Sir Reginald's? I thought Jane was looking at them both with a good deal of attention, and I wondered to myself.'

'I don't believe Jane fears the rivalry of any girl under the sun.'

'Wait and see,' said Mrs Tower.

'You gave it six months.'

'Well, now I give it three years.'

When anyone is very positive in an opinion it is only human nature to wish him proved wrong. Mrs Tower was really too cocksure. But such a satisfaction was not mine, for the end that she had always and confidently predicted to the ill-assorted match did in point of fact come. Still, the fates seldom give us what we want in the way we want it, and though Mrs Tower could flatter herself that she had been right, I think after all she would sooner have been wrong. For things did not happen at all in the way she expected.

One day I received an urgent message from her and fortunately went to see her at once. When I was shown into the room Mrs Tower rose from her chair and came towards me with the stealthy swiftness of a leopard stalking his prey. I saw that she was excited.

'Jane and Gilbert have separated,' she said.

'Not really? Well, you were right after all.'

Mrs Tower looked at me with an expression I could not understand.

'Poor Jane,' I muttered.

'Poor Jane!' she repeated, but in tones of such derision that I was dumbfounded.

She found some difficulty in telling me exactly what had occurred.

Gilbert had left her a moment before she leaped to the telephone to summon me. When he entered the room, pale and distraught, she saw at once that something terrible had happened. She knew what he was going to say before he said it.

'Marion, Jane has left me.'

She gave him a little smile and took his hand.

'I knew you'd behave like a gentleman. It would have been dreadful for her for people to think that *you* had left her.'

'I've come to you because I know I could count on your sympathy.'

'Oh, I don't blame you, Gilbert,' said Mrs Tower, very kindly. 'It was bound to happen.'

He sighed.

'I suppose so. I couldn't hope to keep her always. She was too wonderful and I'm a perfectly commonplace fellow.'

Mrs Tower patted his hand. He was really behaving beautifully.

'And what is going to happen now?'

'Well, she's going to divorce me.'

'Jane always said she'd put no obstacle in your way if ever you wanted to marry a girl.'

'You don't think it's likely I should ever be willing to marry anyone else after being Jane's husband,' he answered.

Mrs Tower was puzzled.

'Of course you mean that *you've* left Jane.'

'I? That's the last thing I should ever do.'

'Then why is she divorcing you?'

'She's going to marry Sir Reginald Frobisher as soon as the decree is made absolute.'

Mrs Tower positively screamed. Then she felt so faint that she had to get her smelling salts.

'After all you've done for her?'

'I've done nothing for her.'

'Do you mean to say you're going to allow yourself to be made use of like that?'

'We arranged before we married that if either of us wanted his liberty the other should put no hindrance in the way.'

'But that was done on your account. Because you were twenty-seven years younger than she was.'

'Well, it's come in very useful for her,' he answered bitterly.

Mrs Tower expostulated, argued, and reasoned; but Gilbert insisted that no rules applied to Jane, and he must do exactly what she wanted. He left Mrs Tower prostrate. It relieved her a good deal to give me a full account of this interview. It pleased her to see that I was as surprised as herself, and if I was not so indignant with Jane as she was she ascribed that to the criminal lack of morality incident to my sex. She was still in a state of

extreme agitation when the door was opened and the butler showed in — Jane herself. She was dressed in black and white as no doubt befitted her slightly ambiguous position, but in a dress so original and fantastic, in a hat so striking, that I positively gasped at the sight of her. But she was as ever bland and collected. She came forward to kiss Mrs Tower, but Mrs Tower withdrew herself with icy dignity.

'Gilbert has been here,' she said.

'Yes, I know,' smiled Jane. 'I told him to come and see you. I'm going to Paris tonight and I want you to be very kind to him while I am away. I'm afraid just at first he'll be rather lonely and I shall feel more comfortable if I can count on your keeping an eye *on* him.'

Mrs Tower clasped her hands.

'Gilbert has just told me something that I can hardly bring myself to believe. He tells me that you're going to divorce him to marry Reginald Frobisher.'

'Don't you remember, before I married Gilbert you advised me to marry a man of my own age. The admiral is fifty-three.'

'But, Jane, you owe everything to Gilbert,' said Mrs Tower indignantly. 'You wouldn't exist without him. Without him to design your clothes, you'll be nothing.'

'Oh, he's promised to go on designing my clothes,' Jane answered blandly.

'No woman could want a better husband. He's always been kindness itself to you.'

'Oh, I know he's been sweet.'

'How *can* you be so heartless?'

'But I was never in love with Gilbert,' said Jane. 'I always told him that. I'm beginning to feel the need of the companionship of a man of my own age. I think I've probably been married to Gilbert long enough. The young have no conversation.' She paused a little and gave us both a charming smile. 'Of course I shan't lose sight of Gilbert. I've arranged that with Reginald. The admiral has a niece that would just suit him. As soon as we're married we'll ask them to stay with us at Malta — you know that the admiral is to have the Mediterranean Command — and I shouldn't be at all surprised if they fell in love with one another.'

Mrs Tower gave a little sniff.

'And have you arranged with the admiral that if you want your liberty neither should put any hindrance in the way of the other?'

'I suggested it,' Jane answered with composure. 'But the admiral says he knows a good thing when he sees it and he won't want to *marry* anyone else, and if anyone wants to marry me — he has eight twelve-inch guns on his flagship and he'll discuss the matter at short range.' She gave us a look through her eye-glass which even the fear of Mrs Tower's wrath could not prevent me from laughing at. 'I think the admiral's a very passionate man.'

Mrs Tower indeed gave me an angry frown.

'I never thought you funny, Jane,' she said, 'I never understood why people laughed at the things you said.'

'I never thought I was funny myself, Marion,' smiled Jane, showing her bright, regular teeth. 'I am glad to leave London before too many people come round to our opinion.'

'I wish you'd tell me the secret of your astonishing success,' I said.

She turned to me with that bland, homely look I knew so well.

'You know, when I married Gilbert and settled *in* London and people began to laugh at what I said no one was more surprised than I was. I'd said the same things for thirty years and no one ever saw anything to laugh at. I thought it must be my clothes or my bobbed hair or my eye-glass. Then I discovered it was because I spoke the truth. It was so unusual that people thought it humorous. One of these days someone else will discover the secret, and when people habitually tell the truth of course there'll be nothing funny in it.'

'And why am I the only person not to think it funny?' asked Mrs Tower.

Jane hesitated a little as though she were honestly searching for a satisfactory explanation.

'Perhaps you don't know the truth when you see it, Marion dear,' she answered in her mild good-natured way.

It certainly gave her the last word. I felt that Jane would always have the last word. She *was* priceless.

NOTES:

1. **Dresden china** — fine china made in Saxony, Germany.

2. **Claridge's** — a fashionable hotel restaurant in London.

3. **Monsieur Marcel** — a famous French hairdresser.

4. **With its teapot of Georgian silver and its cups in old Worcester** — silver relating to the reign of one of the kings of the Georgian era in Great Britain; Worcester china or porcelain made at Worcester, England, from 1751.

5. **Freud** — Sigmund Freud, an Austrian physician and psychoanalyst, the creator of reactionary doctrines of psychoanalysis.

6. **Victoria Station** — a railway station in London.

7. **Four-and-twenty like the blackbirds in the pie** — words from a nursery rhyme:

Sing a song of sixpence,
A pocket and twenty blackbirds,
Baked in a pie.
(Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book).

8. **to go to Liverpool again** — to return to her provincial standard in dressing.

9. **to be heavy in/on hand** — to be a bore.

Queen Victoria — queen of Great Britain and Ireland (1837—1901); empress of India.

10. **to smile like Queen Victoria** — to smile showing that one disapproves the joke (a reference to the famous words of Q.V. "We are not amused.")

11. **Architects' Institute** — the Royal Institute of British Architects founded in 1834.

12. **Stafford House** — a fashionable hotel in London; formerly one of the finest private mansions in the West End of London, the residence of the Duke of Sutherland, famous for its Picture Gallery.

13. **Victorian** — relating to the reign of Queen Victoria and having the characteristics usually attributed to the Victorians, such as narrow-mindedness, prudishness, fastidiousness. The implication is that even a prude (a person who affects extreme or exaggerated modesty in speech, behaviour or dress) would not find a hint of anything objectionable in Jane's speech.

14. **Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale infinite variety** — a quotation from "Anthony and Cleopatra" by Shakespeare.

TASK 1. Answer the questions below.

1. Who are the main characters of the story?
2. What does Mrs Tower look like? What kind of woman is she?
3. How are Jane and Mrs Tower related to each other?
4. What had the narrator learnt about Jane before he saw her first?
5. What was his first impression of Jane?
6. How did Mrs Tower imagine Jane's fiancé?
7. What did Gilbert look like in reality?
8. What was Mrs Tower's first reaction to Gilbert?
9. What did Mrs Tower feel speaking to Jane at dinner?
10. How did Jane behave at dinner?
11. What was unusual in Jane and Gilbert's alliance?
12. Why did Jane agree to marry Gilbert?
13. What was Mrs Tower's attitude to Jane's wedding and her future husband?
14. What was the wedding ceremony like?
15. How did Jane change after she'd married Gilbert? Who made her change?
16. Why was Jane so popular in London?
17. What was Gilbert's attitude to Jane?
18. Why did Jane and Gilbert separate in the end?

TASK 2. Say if the statements are true or false. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. One of the obsessions of Mrs Tower was decoration.
2. She chose only bright lamps for her rooms.
3. Mrs Tower never made any secret of her age.
4. Mrs Tower always enjoyed Jane's company.
5. Jane's clothes were stylish and fashionable when the narrator saw her first.
6. No one believed in the sincerity of Gilbert's love to Jane.
7. Mrs Tower found Jane and Gilbert's match ill-assorted.

8. Jane and Gilbert's marriage was unhappy and didn't last long.

9. When the narrator saw Jane three years later, she looked extraordinary.

10. It was Gilbert who decided to leave Jane.

11. Jane intended to leave London after her divorce.

TASK 3. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 4.

a) Match the adjectives from the story with their synonyms.

1. cocksure	a) not attractive or fashionable
2. malicious	b) a slightly yellow colour that doesn't look healthy
3. affable	c) very expensive and looking very impressive
4. demure	d) very unkind and cruel, and deliberately behaving in a way that is likely to upset or hurt someone
5. sallow	e) confident
6. dowdy	f) modest
7. sumptuous	g) friendly, pleasant to talk to

b) Fill in the gaps with the adjectives from the table.

1. Miss Simms took a _____ pleasure in other people's misfortunes.

2. The teachers wanted their pupils to be _____ and disciplined.

3. There is also a _____ leather-chaired billiard room.

4. He is easy-going and _____ continuously talking and joking.

5. Berton was a powerful personality, a _____ businessman.

6. She is a _____ woman, because she is not attractive and wears dull and unfashionable clothes.

7. He was seriously ill lying in bed, constantly coughing, with beads of sweat on his _____ face.

c) Match the English verbs used in the story with their Ukrainian equivalents.

1. ascribe	a) вагатися, перебувати в нерішучості
2. flaunt	b) вражати, бентежити
3. falter	c) роздратовувати, обурювати, доводити до нестями
4. goad	d) приписувати
5. exasperate	e) підбурювати, підбивати
6. jest	f) виставляти себе напоказ
7. discomfit	g) жартувати, насміхатися

d) Fill in the gaps using the verbs from Task 4c. Make all necessary changes.

1. Kathy _____ him into telling her what he had done but he refused.
2. It _____ me to hear such a blatant lie like that.
3. Would I _____ about something so important?
4. She _____ for a moment not knowing what to say.
5. He's very rich, but he doesn't like to _____ his wealth or waste his money.
6. Her long silence _____ him.
7. She _____ her success to hard work.

TASK 5. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. Mrs. Tower had been seized with the prevailing passion for decoration; ... tables, cabinets, ornaments, ... pictures that had been familiar ___ her for a generation;
2. She prided herself ___ her dinner-parties;
3. She has an overwhelming sense of family affection, and because I am her only living connection she's devoted ___ me.
4. And sometimes she insists ____ taking me to dine at Claridge's.
5. I'm longing ___ you to see her.
6. My first thought was that this was the son of Jane Fowler's fiancé ... come to say that his father was prevented ___ dining by a sudden attack of gout.

7. Mrs Tower could not make up her mind whether the pair of them were playing a practical joke ___ her.

8. It looked as though he were amused ___ everything Jane said.

9. I grew positively tired ___ refusing him.

10. 'Do you mean to tell me that ...it's possible for a young man to care ___ a woman old enough to be his mother?

11. It was altogether too much for her and she burst ___ tears.

12. ...but she had so far succumbed ___ the frivolity of the occasion as to wear a large picture hat covered with blue ostrich feathers.

13. Then you'll have the satisfaction of congratulating yourself ___ your self-control in not saying: "I told you so".

14. She said her say and they all ... threw themselves back in their chairs and burst ___ vociferous laughter.

15. At the beginning of their honeymoon Gilbert took Jane to various dressmakers in Paris and he made no objection ___ her choosing a number of "gowns" after her own heart;

16. It depended ___ the way she spoke and on the way she looked.

17. I'm afraid ... he'll be rather lonely and I shall feel more comfortable if I can count on your keeping an eye ___ him.

TASK 6. Questions for deeper understanding.

A)

1. How does the interior of the house characterize Mrs Tower?

2. In what tone does the author describe Mrs Tower's appearance?

3. How does Jane's behaviour reflect her personality?

4. How does the author describe Jane's appearance and character? Does it differ from Mrs Tower's description? What way?

5. Which of the characters do you sympathize with/ disapprove? Why?

6. What tone does the author use describing Gilbert?

7. How do the author's remarks characterize Mrs Tower, Jane and Gilbert?

8. How do the dialogues help the author to develop (reveal) the main characters?

9. Do you find Jane priceless? If yes/no, why?

10. Find the places in the story where the author's tone describing the characters and their actions sounds humorous, ironic, sympathetic, scornful or sarcastic?

11. How does the author point out the difference between Mrs Tower, Jane and Gilbert? Are there any similarities between them?

12. Find the words describing different manners of speaking of the characters of the story.

B)

1. How far do you agree with the following statements taken from the story?

"People never can resist those who make them laugh."

"...impropriety rather than brevity is the soul of wit."

The wedding day is "a trying moment for any man" and "a thrilling moment for any woman."

2. What makes Jane attractive? Rank the following features in order of importance for you:

— her clothes;
— her behaviour;
— her age;
— her appearance;
— her sincerity and naturalness.

Can you add any other features to the list?

TASK 7. Imagine that you are:

a) Jane and tell about your wedding;

b) Gilbert and tell about your family life with Jane;

c) Mrs Tower and tell about your impression of Gilbert and your first meeting.

Lucille Lewis

THE MAN WHO TALKED WITH BOOKS

Old Mr. Spry tiptoed down the hall, listened carefully, then eased open the door to Miss Pringle's room.

He wasn't concerned about Katie, the maid, who was noisily running the sweeper over the spacious floor; he just didn't enjoy Mrs. Terboven, the landlady, ordering him about when not too long ago he'd owned his own home. But that was when his wife Mary was alive, the three boys were little, and everything was different.

Through a bay window which looked out on a garden, morning light revealed crowded bookshelves lining the walls. Mr. Spry felt betrayed. A month ago when he'd come to look at the room, Mrs. Terboven had assured him that his own books would soon adorn the shelves as Miss Pringle would be leaving. But Miss Pringle had stayed on, and Mr. Spry wanted the room more than he'd ever wanted anything in his whole seventy years.

He couldn't expect Mrs. Terboven to understand the importance of this room. He was a collector, psychologist, student of crime — and even more important, a retired librarian; and his catalogued library was enormous. With Mary gone, and the boys all married, he had done all he could to make room for the huge collection, but books had overflowed everywhere.

Mr. Spry hesitated, then stepped gingerly into the room and ran a practiced finger over the book titles, muttering endearments. The haphazard arrangement offended his professional eye— everything from Black *Beauty* to Euclidean geometry.

The books certainly didn't fit Miss Pringle's personality. Or anyone's. After a lifetime of observation as a public librarian, he knew with certainty what type of book would be owned by what kind of person. Miss Pringle remained the rare exception,

and for a month he'd pondered the mystery of the motley collection.

"Come out of that room, Mr. Spry. I have to tell you that every day." Mrs. Terboven loomed in the doorway.

"Miss Pringle gave strict orders—nobody's to touch those books. She even dusts them herself."

"My family would be so happy if they could see me living in this lovely room," Mr. Spry murmured.

"Well, all you have to do," Mrs. Terboven said airily, "is to think up some way to get Miss Pringle out."

Mr. Spry squeezed into his tiny room, sat on the bed, and patted a book carton lovingly. Getting Miss Pringle out was a tempting idea. But how? He weighed the problem. Miss Pringle must get married and move away. But married to whom? He considered those eligible — the other boarders in the house. Mr. Uhl was even older then he was; Mr. Denton was attached to a wispy little wife who lived with him in his stark room. Mr. Abbott?

Getting Miss Pringle and Mr. Abbott together would be just about as difficult as wrapping two watermelons, as a matter of fact. Drab and morose, they didn't merit a second look from anybody, not even from each other.

And yet, he had the strange feeling that somehow they did belong together. The idea disturbed him because usually everything in Mr. Spry's life was neatly catalogued, ready at an instant's notice, and now he couldn't name the source of the absurd idea.

As a collector and student of crime, he began to scissor police stories from a stack of old newspapers while one corner of the psychologist's mind dealt with the problem of Miss Pringle and Mr. Abbott. He remembered a movie he'd seen recently where two mousy people found each other and lived happily ever after. He paused in his clipping. Miss Pringle and Mr. Abbott must find each other. He'd see to that.

Across the dinner table that night he studied Miss Pringle with keen interest. She was hopeless. Dull hair pinned severely away from a face devoid of makeup, her eyes obscured by heavy, bone-rimmed glasses. But in the movies he'd seen greater transformations take place. The hero usually looked at the girl

with a more perceptive eye than others and said, "Why, you're lovely!" And she immediately became so.

But Mr. Abbott was no hero. Above a blank, pasty face a bald head gleamed, and he seemed too puny to contemplate making any such remark.

Later that evening Mr. Spry, the psychologist, rummaged through a carton and emerged with a text on the behavior of the abnormally shy.

The next morning at breakfast he launched his campaign. "Why, Miss Pringle, your hair is red. I'd never have noticed if Mr. Abbott hadn't mentioned it."

The effect on Miss Pringle was more than Mr. Spry had hoped for. A dull red, matching the roots of her hair, flooded her face. Wordless, she snatched her purse and gloves and streaked from the dining room.

Mr. Spry knew he was on the right track. Miss Pringle was merely afraid of her true self, as the book said.

With jaunty self-confidence Mr. Spry fell into step beside Mr. Abbott, who ate breakfast later downtown.

"If I had your looks, young fellow, I'd dress up to them," Mr. Spry said. "Miss Pringle told me she thought you were a most unusual looking man. Wear a gray flannel suit — a pink shirt, grow a moustache..."

"Any particular color?" Mr. Abbott snarled, his face ashen.

"No—er—that is, no." Mr. Spry gaped as Mr. Abbott hurled himself into the subway entrance.

At dinner that evening, Miss Pringle and Mr. Abbott, who had formerly ignored each other, threw such looks of hatred at one another and at Mr. Spry that they forced Mr. Spry to go to his room earlier than usual. He felt hurt and a little ridiculous at such fury; he was only trying to help them to a rich, full life.

The vision of the back room, so bright that morning, faded. Instead, his gaze met the stack of newspapers. Disheartened, he began clipping crime stories.

He settled back comfortably to review a three-month-old story of the upper-Manhattan bank robbery, but he couldn't keep his attention on the printed page. Besides, he knew the story by heart; how the holdup had been so perfectly timed that

no one suspected the tall, well-dressed woman who had engaged the bank guard in conversation while her male companion had forced the teller to surrender the cash. Mr. Spry forced his attention back to the newspaper. The bank teller remembered the dapper little man: well-tailored, well-barbered, with a neat mustache; the bank guard recalled the tall woman's red hair and regal figure.

In the silence of his tiny room Mr. Spry could hear the sound of his heart beating, and it was a terrifying sound. Mr. Abbott and the mustache, Miss Pringle and the red hair—the details he had selected because he'd read this story before and his memory had been trying to tell him that they belonged together.

And the money? The books with their ill-assorted titles suddenly made sense.

The next morning Mr. Spry, librarian, was calmly measuring empty bookshelves in Miss Pringle's room, despite the crowd of detectives, policemen, and photographers. Two detectives were still examining the remaining books, rifling the pages and extracting twenty-dollar bills which they added to the stacks on the floor.

"What a hiding place!" One detective, with a puzzled frown, turned to Mr. Spry. "What made you think of the books?"

Mr. Spry studied his tape measure. "I didn't think of them—they told me," he murmured absently.

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true, false or not stated in the text. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. Mr. Spry had owned the whole house before Mrs. Terboven bought it from him.
2. Mr. Spry had been renting a room in Mrs. Terboven's house for at least a decade.
3. Mr. Spry used to sneak into Miss Pringle's room when nobody was in it.
4. Mr. Spry resented that Mrs. Terboven did not keep her promise about Miss Pringle's room.
5. Mr. Spry was a widower with two little children to look after.

6. Though not young Mr. Spry continued studying to become a detective.

7. Every time Mr. Spry came into Miss Pringle's room he enjoyed admiring her wonderful collection of rare books.

8. Mrs. Terboven implanted in Mr. Spry's head the idea of marrying Miss Pringle to Mr. Abbott.

9. Neither Miss Pringle nor Mr. Abbott impressed Mr. Spry as being interesting and easy-going.

10. Mr. Spry could not guess what united Miss Pringle and Mr. Abbott.

11. The compliment Mr. Spry paid to Miss Pringle about her hair did not impress her much.

12. Mr. Abbott was rather enthusiastic about Mr. Spry's suggestion to grow a moustache.

13. Mr. Spry's plan of getting Miss Pringle and Mr. Abbott together turned out a complete fiasco.

14. Mr. Spry found the answer to his problem in a book on psychology.

15. It was Miss Pringle and Mr. Abbott's strange behaviour that helped to solve the crime.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 3. Match the words below with their synonyms.

1. to mutter	a) hidden
2. haphazard	b) dull
3. motley	c) to consider, to think
4. eligible	d) chaotic
5. drab	e) to look for
6. morose	f) mixed
7. obscured	g) suitable
8. puny	h) cheerful
9. to contemplate	i) to murmur
10. to rummage	j) to search quickly
11. jaunty	k) pale
12. ashen	l) weak
13. to rifle through	m)gloomy

TASK 4. Match the words with their definitions.

1. devoid of smth.	a) to appear, to come out of some enclosed place
2. stark	b) to stare at smth/smb with your mouth open because you are surprised
3. betrayed	c) to think over smth, to consider smth carefully
4. to squeeze	d) completely lacking in smth
5. to emerge	e) typical of a king or queen and therefore impressive
6. to hurl	f) very silly or unreasonable
7. to gape	g) without any colour or decoration
8. to ponder	h) to force smth/smb/oneself into or through a small place
9. ridiculous	i) hurt by smb's being not loyal or faithful
10. regal	j) to throw smth/smb/oneself violently in a particular direction

TASK 5. Fill in the gaps with the words and phrases from the left columns of Tasks 3 and 4. Make all necessary changes.

1. She _____ at him, horrified.
2. The letter was _____ warmth and feeling.
3. Nobody laughed at my own_____ attempts at humour.
4. His pockets contained a_____ collection of coins, old movie tickets and candies.
5. She dismissed him with a _____ gesture.
6. Don't be _____! You can't pay 80 dollars for a T-shirt.
7. Looks like someone been _____ in my desk: all the papers are out of place.
8. If you move forward a little, I can _____ past.
9. In this weather the city looked _____ and colourless to me.

10. The hooligan _____a brick through the window.

11. They _____ whether the money could be better used elsewhere.

12. He is an_____ bachelor — rich, attractive and not married.

13. I think the policemen had no plan: the search was done in a _____ fashion.

14. He did not keep his promise and she felt _____.

15.He wanted some soft drink badly and _____ through his pockets for a coin.

TASK 6. Answer the questions below.

1. Why did Mr. Spry have to rent a room?

2. On what condition did he agree to rent a room in Mrs. Terboven's house?

3. Why do you think Mr. Spry found Miss Pringle's collection of books unusual?

4. What plan did Mr. Spry think of to make Miss Pringle move from Mrs. Terboven's house?

5. What information did he try to find in his books on psychology?

6. Now when you know the end of the story, can you explain Miss Pringle's and Mr. Abbott's reaction to Mr. Spry's suggestions?

7. What do you think made Mr. Spry leave the dinner table earlier than usual?

8. What did Mr. Spry mean by saying "I didn't think of them — they told me."?

9. The end of the story is not very clear. What, in your opinion, might have happened?

a) Mr. Spry informed the police about Miss Pringle's and Mr. Abbott's true identity and the robbers were arrested.

b) The robbers became afraid of Mr. Spry's revelations and fled. Mr. Spry informed the police about Miss Pringle's and Mr. Abbott's true identity.

c) _____

_____

_____ (your version)

TASK 7. Though the story is rather small, there is a lot of information about the three characters: Mr. Spry, Miss Pringle and Mr. Abbott. Fill in the chart below with the facts you learnt about them.

Mr. Spry	Miss Pringle	Mr. Abbott
1. ...	1. ...	1. ...
2. ...	2. ...	2. ...
3. ...	3. ...	3. ...

TASK 8. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. When did you first suspect the real reason of Miss Pringle and Mr. Abbot's strange behaviour? Why?
2. What genre does this story belong to? Why?
3. Are you a keen reader of this genre? Why?
4. What famous detectives do you know? Are they amateurs or professionals?
5. What personal and professional qualities should, in your opinion, a good detective have?

TASK 9. Imagine you are a talk-show host. Act out an interview with Mr. Spry as if he were your guest.

Somerset Maugham
A FIGHT TO THE DEATH

Dr Lennox was small, brisk and genial. He was a good enough doctor, an excellent business man, and an enthusiastic fisherman. When the fishing season began he was inclined to leave the care of his patients to his assistants; the patients grumbled a little, but were glad enough to eat the young salmon he brought back to vary their meals. He was fond of talking, and now, standing at the end of Ashenden's bed, he asked him, in his broad Scots, whether he had got into conversation with any of the patients that afternoon. Ashenden told him the nurse had introduced him to McLeod. Dr Lennox laughed.

"The oldest living inhabitant. He knows more about the sanatorium and its inmates than I do. How he gets his information I haven't an idea, but there's not a thing about the private lives of anyone under this roof that he doesn't know. There's not an old maid in the place with a keener nose for a bit of scandal. Did he tell you about Campbell?"

"He mentioned him."

"He hates Campbell, and Campbell hates him. Funny, when you come to think of it, those two men, they've been here for seventeen years and they've got about one sound lung between them. They loathe the sight of one another. I've had to refuse to listen to the complaints about one another that they come to me with. Campbell's room is just below McLeod's and Campbell plays the fiddle. It drives McLeod wild. He says he's been listening to the same tunes for fifteen years, but Campbell says McLeod doesn't know one tune from another. McLeod wants me to stop Campbell playing, but I can't do that, he's got a perfect right to play so long as he doesn't play in the silence hours. I've offered

to change McLeod's room, but he won't do that. He says Campbell only plays to drive him out of the room because it's the best in the house, and he's damned if he's going to have it. It's queer, isn't it, that two middle-aged men should think it worth while to make life hell for one another. Neither can leave the other alone. They have their meals at the same table, they play bridge together; and not a day passes without a row. Sometimes I've threatened to turn them both out if they don't behave like sensible fellows. That keeps them quiet for a bit. They don't want to go. They've been here so long, they've got no one any more who cares a damn for them, and they can't cope with the world outside. Campbell went away for a couple of months' holiday some years ago. He came back after a week; he said he couldn't stand the racket, and the sight of so many people in the streets scared him." Ashenden made the acquaintance of Campbell. He was a long, big-boned fellow with a bald head, so thin that you wondered how his limbs held together; and when he sat crumpled in an arm-chair he gave you the uncanny impression of a manikin in a puppet-show. He was brusque, touchy and bad-tempered. The first thing he asked Ashenden was:

"Are you fond of music?"

"Yes."

"No one here cares a damn for it. I play the violin. But if you like it, come to my room one day and I'll play to you." "Don't you go," said McLeod, who heard him. "It's torture."

"How can you be so rude?" cried Miss Atkin. "Mr. Campbell plays very nicely."

"There's no one in this beastly place that knows one note from another", said Campbell.

With a derisive chuckle McLeod walked off. Miss Atkin tried to smooth things down.

"You mustn't mind what Mr. McLeod said."

"Oh, I don't. I'll get back on him all right."

He played the same tune over and over again all that afternoon. McLeod banged on the floor, but Campbell went on. He sent a message by a maid to say that he had a headache and would Mr. Campbell mind not playing; Campbell replied

that he had a perfect right to play and if Mr. McLeod didn't like it he could lump it. When next they met high words passed.

Though McLeod and Campbell were always at odds they played bridge together because, till Templeton came, they were the best players in the sanatorium. They bickered incessantly, their post-mortems were endless, but after so many years each knew the other's game perfectly and they took a keen delight in scoring off one another. As a rule Templeton refused to play with them; though a fine player he preferred to play with Ivy Bishop. But one afternoon, since Ivy was staying in her room with a headache, Templeton consented to play with Campbell and McLeod. Ashenden was the fourth. Though it was the end of March there had been heavy snow for several days, and they played, in a veranda open on three sides to the wintry air, in fur coats and caps, with mittens on their hands. The stakes were too small for a gambler like Templeton to take the game seriously and his bidding was overbold, but he played so much better than the other three that he generally managed to make his contract or at least to come near it. But there was much doubling and redoubling. The cards ran high, so that an inordinate number of small slams were bid; it was a tempestuous game, and McLeod and Campbell lashed one another with their tongues. Half past five arrived and the last rubber was started, for at six the bell rang to send everyone to rest. It was a hard-fought rubber, with sets on both sides, for McLeod and Campbell were opponents and each was determined that the other should not win. At ten minutes to six it was game all and the last hand was dealt. Templeton was McLeod's partner and Ashenden Campbell's. The bidding started with two clubs from McLeod; Ashenden said nothing; Templeton showed that he had substantial help, and finally McLeod called a grand slam. Campbell doubled and McLeod redoubled. Hearing this, the players at other tables who had broken off gathered round and the hands were played in deadly silence to a little crowd of onlookers. McLeod's face was white with excitement and there were beads of sweat on his brow. His hands trembled. Campbell

was very grim. McLeod had to take two finesses and they both came off. He finished with a squeeze and got the last of the thirteen tricks. There was a burst of applause from the onlookers. McLeod, arrogant in victory, sprang to his feet. He shook his clenched fist at Campbell.

"Play that off on your blasted fiddle," he shouted. "Grand slam doubled and redoubled. I've wanted to get it all my life and now I've got it. By God. By God."

He gasped. He staggered forward and fell across the table. A stream of blood poured from his mouth. The doctor was sent for. Attendants came. He was dead.

He was buried two days later, early in the morning so that the patients should not be disturbed by the sight of a funeral. A relation in black came from Glasgow to attend it. No one had liked him. No one regretted him. At the end of a week so far as one could tell, he was forgotten. The Indian Civilian took his place at the principal table and Campbell moved into the room he had so long wanted.

"Now we shall have peace," said Dr Lennox to Ashenden. "Believe me, one has to have patience to run a sanatorium. And to think that after all the trouble he's given me he had to end up like that!"

"It was a bit of a shock, you know," said Ashenden.

"He was a worthless fellow and yet some of the women have been quite upset about it. Poor little Miss Bishop cried her eyes out."

"I suspect that she was the only one who cried for him and not for herself."

But presently it appeared that there was one person who had not forgotten him. Campbell went about like a lost dog. He wouldn't play bridge. He wouldn't talk. There was no doubt about it, he was moping for McLeod. For several days he remained in his room, having his meals brought to him, and then went to Dr Lennox and said he didn't like it as well as his old one and wanted to be moved back. Dr Lennox lost his temper, and told him he had been pestering him to give him that room for years and now he could stay there or get out of the sanatorium. He returned to it and sat gloomily brooding.

"Why don't you play your violin?" the matron asked him at length. "I haven't heard you play for a fortnight."

"I haven't."

"Why not?"

"It's no fun any more. I used to get a kick out of playing because I knew it maddened McLeod. But now nobody cares if I play or not. I shall never play again."

Nor did he for all the rest of the time that Ashenden was at the sanatorium. It was strange, now that McLeod was dead, life had lost its savour for him. With no one to quarrel with, no one to infuriate, he had lost his incentive and it was plain that it would not be long before he followed his enemy to the grave.

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true, false or not stated in the text. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. The first patient that Ashenden met in the sanatorium was Campbell.
2. Campbell was not fond of fishing.
3. Both McLeod and Campbell came to the sanatorium for a fishing season.
4. McLeod and Campbell were the best card players in the sanatorium.
5. Campbell was a rather ugly-looking person.
6. All the patients in the sanatorium disliked Campbell's playing the violin.
7. McLeod and Campbell shared the room and had meals at the same table.
8. McLeod dreamed of having grand slam all his life.
9. McLeod's relatives often visited him in the sanatorium.
10. After McLeod's death Campbell's life changed for worse.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 3. Match the words with their definitions.

1. to grumble 2. genial 3. to be inclined to 4. to loathe 5. a racket 6. brusque 7. to lump 8. to bicker 9. to lash 10. to stagger 11. uncanny 12. to pester	a) to be likely to do smth b) to complain, express dissatisfaction c) rough and abrupt d) very strange and difficult to explain e) to walk or move unsteadily f) to criticise someone angrily g) friendly and happy h) to accept a situation or decision i) to annoy someone j) to hate very much k) to argue about unimportant things l) a loud noise

TASK 4. Fill in the gaps with the words and phrases from the left column of Task 3. Make all necessary changes.

1. The beggars _____ the tourists for money.
2. The drunken man _____ to the door.
3. He _____ by most of his staff because of his unfairness and ruthlessness.
4. I'm not going to turn my radio off. You'll just have _____ it.
5. The reporter _____ the drug dealers in his article.
6. Stop making such _____. I can't sleep.
7. In their childhood the two sons always _____ over their toys.
8. She _____ about the company's refusal to increase her pay.
9. I was offended by his _____ manners.
10. Jane has some strange ideas, but on this occasion I _____ agree with her.

TASK 5. Paraphrase the sentences using these idioms.

to have a nose for — to be at odds
to lose one's temper — to get a kick out of smth
to know one thing from another

1. The editor is good at newspaper stories.
2. Mark disagrees with his colleagues.
3. At what age do children start to understand the difference between right and wrong?
4. He suddenly became angry beyond control.
5. Gerald enjoys snowboarding.
6. The two politicians disagreed about what was the truth.
7. I really enjoyed the clown's juggling act.

TASK 6. Fill in the gaps with the suitable phrasal verbs in the correct form.

to walk off	to get back at (on) smb
to score off	to break off
to come off	to play off

1. The two equal winners had _____ an additional game to decide the winner of the whole competition.
2. Let's _____ and have a cup of tea.
3. It was a bold idea, but it _____.
4. We said goodbye; then he turned and _____ without another word.
5. It's not difficult _____ Jim in an argument, because he can never think of the right thing to say.
6. If the two top teams reach the same result, they will have _____ next week.
7. The attempt did not _____ as well as we had hoped.
8. He'll probably go out with her just _____ _____ me.

TASK 7. What characters of the story do these phrases refer to?

small, brisk and genial; an enthusiastic fisherman; fond of talking; the oldest living inhabitant; a long, big-boned fellow with a bald head; brusque, touchy and bad-tempered.

TASK 8. Answer the questions below.

1. What was Dr Lennox's attitude to his patients? Find the facts in the text to support your answer.

9. Why did McLeod and Campbell hate each other? What did they quarrel about?

10. Do you think they derived some secret pleasure from their rows?

11. Why did McLeod and Campbell like playing bridge together, although they really hated each other?

12. Did the other inmates grieve much over McLeod's death? Find the facts in the text to support your answer.

13. Do you think Campbell feel happier after McLeod's death?

14. Did, in your opinion, Campbell then feel free to play the violin as often as he pleased?

8. Can you understand why Campbell moped for McLeod after his death?

9. Somerset Maugham spent five years as a medical student at a London hospital. Is this evident from this story?

10. Some critics reproach Maugham with cynicism. Others think that he aims at being a perfectly impartial observer. The author himself says that 'really to know men you must be interested in them for their own sake rather than for yours'. Which of these three views seems best justified by this story?

TASK 9. Tell the story from Dr Lennox' point of view and from the viewpoint of one of the patients of the sanatorium.

Shirley Jackson
THE LOVELY NIGHT

Natalie Waite leaned her chin on both her hands and looked thoughtfully at the clerk selling soda: What would happen if she went over very casually, smiling, and asked him to marry her? Or run off with her to Italy? Would he stare at her blankly, or would he, possibly, conceivably smile and say, "Sure"? Suppose, worst of all, she went over very casually, smiling and hardly looking at him at all, very casually indeed, and asked him to take her to the informal dance at the high school? She shivered, and closed her eyes suddenly; it was horrible. ("How would you like to take me to the informal dance tonight? No one else seems to ask me, and it's getting pretty late.") Horrible.

"What on earth are you thinking about?" Natalie opened her eyes. "Nothing," she said. She tried very hard not to look impartially on her companions; almost constant companions they were, by now, and any clear look at them gave Natalie such a look at herself that she was helplessly depressed, and almost frightened. Doris, on her right, was the sort of girl who invariably finds her own level in any group of people so loosely interrelated as the student body of a small high school; Doris was fat, and badly dressed, and stupid. She was the center of a little group of girls who did things by themselves, went to movies and had excruciating parties which they referred to as "hen" parties, went swimming in the summer, in a cheerfully chattering body whose animation never quite concealed the fact that they were unattractive and unpopular.

Ginny, on Natalie's other side, was pale, without distinguishable colour in eyes or skin or hair; she played sentimental tunes very poorly on the piano, and was given to giggling flirtation with her teachers; she seemed incapable of admiring the pleasanter side of anything or anybody; incapable, indeed, of believing that anything or anybody had a pleasanter side.

When Natalie sat in the drugstore with Doris and Ginny she knew that she was marked, just as irremediably as though they had all worn distinctive uniforms, as one of the little group around Doris, the aggressively sociable outsiders.

"What are you moping about?" Doris said again, insistently. "You thinking or something?" She and Ginny began to laugh the more uproariously because there were other people in the drugstore: women at the next table drinking coffee after an afternoon's shopping; two girls at the counter drinking Cokes and talking to each other in quick, low voices; the clerk.

"Honestly" Doris said, and their laughter rose.

'Why am I here,' Natalie thought miserably, 'what made me be here, marked out by these girls as their friend, instead of off somewhere by myself, or sitting somewhere with people I like? Why am I here?' She smiled defensively at Doris and Ginny. "I don't know," she said ineffectually and they laughed harder.

"Listen," Doris said to Ginny, suddenly serious, "listen, you've got to be ready at eight, remember. None of this waiting around."

"I'm always ready," Ginny said, loudly for the benefit of anyone who might be listening. "Never-late Ginny, that's what they call me."

"You be ready, too," Doris said, turning her heavy eyes on Natalie. "We'll come and get you, Ginny and me, about five after."

"What for?" said Natalie blankly. She looked at Doris and then at Ginny; they were grinning at her.

"Doesn't hear a word," Doris told Ginny.

"Deaf as a post," Ginny told Doris.

Doris pushed Natalie's hand on the table. "The dance, stupid. Didn't you know we were all going to the dance?"

Natalie frowned, uncomprehending, and Doris said easily, "I guess in the high school you come from they don't have dances like this. This is a kind of a dance they have a lot here. You don't need a date to go."

"It's not as though they had a real band," Ginny put in quickly. "We go all the time."

"Sure," Doris said. "We all go and we have fun."

"Fun" was one of the things that Doris and her friends kept having. Natalie smiled, to seem polite, and said, "I couldn't possibly go. Really, I can't."

"Don't be silly," Doris said, and Ginny said, "We're all going. Don't be scared."

"You mean just anybody goes?" Natalie said.

"I guess in your old high school..."

Doris began, and Natalie said hastily, "I went to a girls' high school. A sort of private school. We only had a couple of special dances each year."

"Well, that's why, then," Doris said, greatly relieved. "This is a different kind."

"I was hoping —" Natalie began; she was about to say that she had been hoping that someone — anyone — would ask her to the dance, but she stopped herself suddenly. Doris and Ginny would only answer that they had just asked her; perhaps, after all, if it really was an occasion to meet people, and people did do it all the time, and it certainly wasn't possible to ask the soda clerk if he ...

She smiled to herself, and Doris said loudly, "Well, that's settled, then. You coming?" She referred, this time, to their leaving the drugstore, which was done with so much noise and laughter and dropping of coins and exclamations over the counter display of compacts and lipsticks that Natalie held back, reluctant, until Doris' bold shout across the store brought her hurrying. "Hey, Nat, you coming?" Doris shouted, and Ginny added piercingly, "Got to rush home and get ready for the dance."

They don't care about anything, Natalie thought, feeling the contemptuous eyes of the shopping women, the two girls at the counter, and the clerk; they don't care what they sound like, and they think I don't care either...

She wanted to leave them quickly, outside on the sidewalk, but there it would be worse; the three of them standing in a hesitating little group in the middle of the people moving past, talking loudly, laughing, pushing one another. Doris always talked back to people who pushed against her in a crowd and Ginny seconded her. Better, Natalie told herself grimly, as she had fifty times before, better to walk along with them and say good-bye on some neutral street corner, better to have the neighbors see me with them than try to get away in public.

"Honestly," Doris said loudly as they pushed their way through the crowds of people on the streets; it was just after

five, and everyone was hurrying. "Honestly, I can't wait." She nudged Natalie significantly. "Wait till you get there," she said. "Honestly."

"Who do you dance with?" Natalie asked timidly, low-voiced, for fear someone passing might hear her talking to Ginny and Doris about a dance, as though they, of all people, could tell her.

"Well, really," Doris said. She laughed loudly. "Listen," she said to Ginny, and people passing them glanced up quickly and then away, "she wants to know who we dance with."

Ginny laughed too, and Natalie, between them and helpless, walked as rapidly as she could.

Ten minutes' walking with their frequent pauses before shop windows, Ginny's turning to look after men, and her audible comments, brought them to the corner where Natalie left them; they lived next door to each other not more than two blocks away from Natalie. When Natalie saw her own front door from the corner, she grew more restless and nervous.

"Don't dress up much," Ginny assured Natalie before they parted. "It's not that much of a dance, see?"

"But we'll have fun," Doris promised.

"Just don't get all dressed up as though you expected something special," Ginny said.

"Really," Natalie said, encouraged by being so close to her own home, "I don't think I'd better go."

"Honestly," Doris said. She turned and regarded Natalie coldly.

"If you never want to have any fun," Ginny said.

"Listen." Doris said to Ginny, "she's just scared. She wants to go, but she's scared. In that high school she came from —"

"It's nothing terribly fancy, this dance," Ginny said.

In order to escape from them at all Natalie had to promise that she would go with them; to herself, she modified her promise into going with them as far as the door. I'll see what it's like, she thought, and then — I can always say I've got a headache, or I've got something to do at home. Maybe if I don't dress up at all, don't even change my clothes, no one will think I intended to go to the dance at all.

Doris and Ginny progressed slowly up the street toward their own homes, stopping to turn back and call, "Be ready,

now," with much laughter, and, in case someone might be listening, in loud voices, "Honestly, Nat, we can't wait!"

When they were far enough away for her to ignore, safely, their waves and shouts, Natalie turned and hurried down her own street; she was almost late for dinner. Being late would be bad enough if her mother and father minded it; it would be worse if they were gratified, supposing that she was late because she had been having such a gay time with her new friends, the pleasant young people she had met, become close to, so readily in this new high school.

Natalie went into the house. In the dining room, the dinner table was set, her own napkin ring where it had always been, the coffee pot ready to plug in by her mother's place, the carving knife readied for her father. The one quick look she gave her own dinner table effectively dislocated Natalie from Doris and Ginny; it was completely impossible that any girl coming home to dinner at a table like that should have spent the afternoon being frightened, bullied, shamed, by Doris and Ginny.

In the living room Natalie could hear the low voices of her mother and father, waiting for her, waiting for the pleasant dinner that found them nightly around the table together, the three of them beautifully close to one another in love and understanding. Natalie hesitated in the doorway to the living room, waiting for the last echo of Doris' voice to clear out of her head before she spoke to her parents.

"Natalie," her mother said with pleasure, and her father looked up and smiled.

Natalie smiled back. "I'm so glad to see you," she said, as though she had not parted from them only that morning.

At dinner, with some hesitation, Natalie told them about the dance. "You see," she said, trying to explain and yet not wanting to identify Doris and Ginny too clearly, not wanting to confess to her mother and father that she was hopelessly entangled with the wrong people. "You see, it's just that I don't know very many people yet, and girls going to a dance alone sounds wrong, somehow."

"Take you myself if I could still dance," her father said.

"He can waltz," her mother confided to Natalie. "He never learned anything else, so far as I know."

"I'd even only waltz," Natalie said earnestly.

"I know exactly what you mean," her mother said. "My mother used to make the boy next door take me. She'd call his mother." Natalie's mother made a rueful face, remembering. "Sometimes he'd try to get out of it," she added, "and we'd hear him arguing with his mother, all the way over at our house."

"Lucky you got me finally," Natalie's father observed.

They can't really see it seriously, Natalie thought without criticism; it's so far back, and so mixed up with everything that's happened to them since, that they've really forgotten. They're trying hard to cheer me up. "But shall I go?" she asked her mother. "What shall I do?"

"Natalie dear," her mother said gently, "if it frightens you, don't go. Don't let these girls, whoever they are, talk you into doing anything you don't really want to do. But just remember this." Natalie's mother put down her coffee cup and leaned toward Natalie. "The only way to be friendly with people is to want to know them. And probably the best way to get to know people is to go where they are. Isn't that true?"

"I suppose," Natalie said, confused; somehow her mother's words had nothing to do with Doris and Ginny.

"And listen to this, too," her mother said. "Perhaps there is some boy, some specially nice boy, who's never noticed you particularly in school, perhaps because he sees you every day in the same old surroundings, or perhaps because you've never done anything to stand out in his mind — oh, any one of a dozen reasons for not noticing a girl particularly. But then, if that same boy sees you — tonight, for instance — in a different setting, a more cheerful atmosphere — well." Her mother sat back and spread her hands eloquently.

Natalie's father nodded. "You're a pretty girl," he said to Natalie.

Natalie felt herself blushing. Anyone's mother and father can think she's pretty, she told herself, it doesn't mean anything; but she continued to blush. Her mother laughed.

"The way you describe it," she said, "it can't be much of a dress-up affair. You might wear your new blue sweater. You look very nice in that."

Just as her mother and father were a refuge from Doris and Ginny, and from all the troubles outside, so Natalie's own room

was a refuge from her mother and father and their wealth of affection. When Natalie came into her own room after dinner, she sat down at the chair before the desk and told herself over and over, "If it could be possible to keep your children from hating growing up, surely my mother and father would do it for me."

When she lifted her head, quieted somewhat, and perhaps a little braver, it was twenty to eight; there was only just time to dress and get outside if she hoped to head off Doris and Ginny before they rang her front doorbell. They were, she knew from horrible experience, dismayingly, brutally punctual, not liking to miss a minute of their fun.

She put on the blue sweater her mother had recommended, and combed her hair carefully. Although she did not admit it to herself, her mother's suggestion that someone — some nice boy — might notice her under new circumstances stayed in her mind, and she combed her hair to make it slightly different, almost blushing to herself in the mirror when she remembered her father's odd notion that she was pretty.

As she hurried, at last, down the stairs, her mother was standing at the bottom, waiting for her. Natalie checked herself, embarrassed, and her mother smiled at her. "Chin up," her mother said, and touched Natalie's shoulder lightly.

"Good night, Dad," Natalie said at the door of the living room.

Her father winked at her and blew her a kiss. "Have a fine time," he said.

Outside she was barely in time to catch Doris and Ginny before they started up the front walk. "Honestly" Doris said. "We really thought you'd back out, didn't we, Ginny?"

"We were all set for an argument," Ginny said. "We were going to keep at you till you came. You didn't dress up much, did you?"

Ginny had chosen to array herself in a sleazy silk dress; Doris was wearing a particularly unfortunate blouse and skirt combination and gaudy costume jewelry. They eyed Natalie and her blue sweater dubiously. "Listen," Ginny said, "aren't you going to wear anything better than that?"

Natalie stopped herself before she spoke; if she wore anything but a school sweater, went all dressed up to the dance, it would

look as though — would look, at any rate, very strange if she carried through her now decided plan of leaving them at the door.

"I thought I'd wear this," she said inadequately.

Ginny snickered, but she and Doris were too pleased with themselves to trouble more about Natalie. On the way up to the high school Ginny hummed and did small dance steps on the sidewalk; Doris nudged Natalie and giggled excitedly.

"Place is all lighted up like a Christmas tree," Ginny observed as they came in sight of the high school.

Natalie was staring at the high school; it was so familiar to her in its everyday aspect that seeing it by night was a shock. Instead of being dark and forsaken, the way it should be when classes were over and all the students gone, it was lighted and noisy. The lights from the windows of the gym shone onto the lawns and the sidewalks; the only dark windows she could see were on the second floor, in rooms she knew so well, where she read Shakespeare and fumbled her algebra, and pounded doggedly away at French.

It was like her first day at the high school, Natalie thought, when she had come timidly up the walk, longing to be back in the safe small class at Miss Lang's, desperately afraid of these knowledgeable boys and girls who walked so assuredly along the halls. I won't go in, she told herself tonight, as she had told herself the month before when she'd come for the first time; I'll tell them I don't feel well and have to go home, or I'll wait till no one's looking and just run.

As she had done a month before, however, so she did tonight. She walked with fear up to the doors and inside. This time, with Doris on one side and Ginny on the other, she had no choice. Her first impression was that all the lights for basketball games, for gym classes, for special performances, were on and that everyone, the whole roomful of people, was laughing at her.

"See?" Doris said, so loudly that Natalie cringed. "See, it's just a regular dance. You'll love it, honestly."

"It's fun." Ginny squeezed Natalie's arm on the other side. "Let's look around first and see who's here," she said to Doris.

Arm in arm, the three of them made their uneasy way around the outside of the gym floor. Natalie, hardly looking to

right or left, was sure by what she saw from the corners of her eyes that she was being stared at with smiles and snickers. It's your imagination, she told herself fiercely, you always think people are staring at you when you feel uncomfortable. No one's even noticed you.

Doris and Ginny, giggling, pushing their way, sometimes pinching Natalie in their excitement, were carrying on their usual loud conversation.

"It's a swell dance," Doris announced, apparently for the benefit of the entire assembly. "There's Helen Rockwood," Ginny announced. "Dancing with John Grover. She's in our English class, Nat, see her?"

Still out of the corner of her eye, Natalie saw a laughing face turned to her, a blue sweater much like her own. Helen was certainly laughing at her, and Helen's partner was laughing, too.

They came closer and Helen said, still laughing, "Hi, Natalie."

Miserably, without lifting her head, Natalie said, "Hello."

"Come on," Doris said jubilantly to Natalie. "You want to dance?"

If anything could have increased Natalie's misery, it was the realization that in Doris and Ginny's group, the girls danced with one another. It was something that Natalie had dimly known from the moment they had suggested the dance, but the thought of moving out onto the dance floor with Doris, under the eyes of Helen Rockwood and the others, made Natalie shiver.

"Not now," she said confusedly. "I don't think I want to dance, not right away."

Doris shrugged and laughed, and she and Ginny went out onto the floor together. Natalie stood alone by the wall, wishing she did not now have to go halfway around the gym to get to the door and the welcome darkness outside. After a few minutes, when no one came near her or spoke to her, she gathered courage to look up at the dancers, and saw with surprise that no one was staring at her, or laughing; they were all completely and satisfactorily intent on their own business.

She could follow the course of Doris and Ginny around the dance floor, partly by watching for Doris' showy blouse, partly

by the little wake of confusion they left behind them. Wherever they had passed through the crowd of people dancing, there were stares and laughter, occasionally an expression of annoyance from a couple Doris and Ginny had blundered into, a general murmur of comment. None of it seemed to have any perceptible effect on Doris and Ginny: they moved on, apparently oblivious of the quality of attention they drew, talking loudly and swinging each other around in wild gaiety.

But don't they know? Natalie thought, watching them across the room. She was so far separated from them now, she could see them for a minute divorced from herself and they seemed to her infinitely pathetic: a large clumsy girl and a small noisy girl who were attracting unpleasant attention to themselves because they so terribly, desperately wanted attention of any kind, secured in any manner — anything at all, if it could save them from being forgotten or overlooked. Why? Natalie thought, not aware that she saw them clearly, apart from her own fear, for the first time; they're not unkind or mean or anything — all they want is for someone to notice them.

She was suddenly overwhelmed with the weight of Doris and Ginny as they swung into her and against the wall.

"Come on, Nat," Doris said, breathlessly.

Natalie shook her head. "Maybe later."

Then, as they moved away again, she was acutely aware of standing alone. She glanced quickly around the gym and could not see any other girl standing by herself, although across the hall there was a group of boys, laughing and talking with great gestures, their backs to the dancers.

If only one of them would come and ask me to dance, Natalie thought, and then the idea of being spoken to by a stranger filled her with fear again, and she looked pointedly away from the group of boys, praying that none of them had noticed her glancing toward them, and hoping that no one at all, ever under any circumstances, would think that she wanted to dance. She felt herself putting on a look of disdain, of indifference toward the dance and the dancers — the look of someone who would never dream of dancing at a dance and would have laughed at herself if she had not been so miserable.

A boy passed her, a boy she remembered slightly, although in her panic she could not remember in which class she had

seen him; he was coming directly toward her, with a determined look on his face, and for a dreadful moment it seemed that he might speak to her. When at the last minute he turned and stopped a couple dancing near her, Natalie was first filled with relief and then with anger. He could have asked me, she thought; after all, it's only common politeness to ask a girl who's not dancing. Doesn't he think I came here to dance? She dropped her look of disdain and put on a smile of interest, as of a girl who was a really good dancer and was only resting between partners. Then she realized that her smile was directed at the boy who had come near her, and she canceled the smile, and frowned fiercely instead.

Doris and Ginny came close to her again, and Doris waved and Ginny pointed significantly at the floor, asking if Natalie wanted to dance. Natalie, relieved that they did not shout at her, shook her head violently, and she could see Ginny shrug, and hear her voice beginning, "Some people —"

When she glanced, as though in meditation, at the big clock at the end of the gym, Natalie was shocked to find that it was nine-thirty. She had been at the dance for over an hour. What does everyone think of me, she wondered, seeing me stand here all by myself all this time.

It was too much, and she fled; behind her she heard Ginny's voice calling out, "Nat, where you going?" and she ducked into the first place she could find, which was the girls' room. There, in this room to which the girls flocked after gym class, she found a refuge; it was, somehow, a link with the world she had partly conquered the first day she took a deep breath and walked into the school, and where (studying Shakespeare, worrying away at algebra) she could at least hold her own.

Wretchedly she sat on the window sill, and wondered what to do. Doris and Ginny were not going to let her step out quietly. It was impossible to get across the gym and outside without their seeing her, and Natalie knew that she didn't have the courage necessary to resist them, with everyone in the gym watching their antics.

She turned her head quickly to the window when the door opened, and saw in the glass the reflection of Helen Rockwood, who, after a brief glance at Natalie, turned to the mirror with her comb. "Hi," Natalie said into the window.

Helen glanced around. "Having a good time?"

"Wonderful," Natalie said.

Helen turned to face Natalie, as though she had come to a sudden decision. Her voice was curious, but not unkind, when she said, "How come you're here with those" — she hesitated — "those girls?" she finished finally.

Natalie wanted to say, "Because no one else asked me," but what she actually said was, "I don't know."

"It's not my affair, of course," Helen said. "I know you're new around here, and maybe —" She finished, this time, with a helpless gesture.

"It's hard to make friends in a new place," Natalie said. She wanted to say more, but did not dare to.

"I know," Helen said. She turned again to the mirror and began to apply her lipstick. "I was new here last year," she added.

She smiled at Natalie in the mirror, slipped her lipstick and comb into her pocket and said, "Have a nice time, anyway," before she went to the door and out again, leaving Natalie alone.

For a minute Natalie sat perfectly still, wondering what Helen had perhaps wanted to say and, like Natalie, had not dared. And suddenly it all fell into place — what her mother had meant, telling her about the boy next door, what her father had tried to say, actually, when he could only manage to tell her she was pretty, what Helen meant by saying it wasn't her affair, she had been new herself last year.

'I've got to do it by myself', Natalie thought, surprised when she heard herself speak aloud; 'it's no good waiting for other people to take care of me — I've got to do it myself. Everyone else is too busy taking care of himself'.

She did not know yet what she was going to do, but she stood up with determination, and went over to the mirror and combed her hair and put on lipstick just as Helen Rockwood had done. Then, boldly, her hair newly combed, she opened the door of the girls' room and stepped out. She was no longer part of the dance, neither desiring nor fearing partners, and she looked around unafraid. Everyone seemed to be having a good time, she noticed, and those two unfortunate girls were still creating a stir wherever they went.

Mr. Brandt, the chemistry teacher, was dancing with a pretty young woman who was probably his new wife; the chemistry class had greeted him with a cheer when he came back to school after his honeymoon. Helen Rockwood went by, in the blue sweater so much like Natalie's own, and she smiled and Natalie smiled back. There was a boy standing with his back to her, leaning against the wall not ten feet away. He was watching the dancers as though he had stopped momentarily and was resting for a minute before dancing again.

Resolutely Natalie walked over to him and touched his arm. He turned and Natalie said, without looking to see if he were surprised or not, "I want to ask a favor of you, please. Will you walk with me as far as the door? I want to go home."

He did not speak, and Natalie realized that she had undoubtedly surprised him. "I know it sounds silly," she said, her voice weakening, "but it's important to me. If you wouldn't mind."

"Of course not," he said. Natalie saw with relief that he had been recollecting his manners, that even if he would never think of asking her to dance, his mother had certainly taught him not to be rude. For some reason Natalie felt a swift thankful joy for her own mother, and then she said, "Please, can we go right now?"

"Of course," he said, and with solemn formality offered her his arm.

Just as solemnly, Natalie put her hand through his arm, and they walked sedately toward the door at the farther end. Natalie felt that if she tried to speak, she would spoil her enormous dignity with a giggle, and perhaps the strange boy felt the same way, because they walked in strict, careful silence along the aisle between the dancers and the wall; once a dancing couple blundered into them, and Natalie's escort moved her out of the way, nodding at the excuse offered by the dancers.

Again someone waved at him and called, and he waved back, and for a minute Natalie was afraid that he might abandon her, but he walked on beside her,

They had nearly reached the door when Natalie found Doris and Ginny standing in front of them. Doris looked sullen and angry; Ginny had her hands on her hips, and she looked Natalie and her escort up and down and said, "Pretty quick to snub her old friends, isn't she?"

"Some people," Doris agreed. "Of all the nerve!"

'It's the dragon on the road', Natalie thought hysterically — 'can my knight get me past?' He had stopped, and looked from Natalie to Doris and Ginny in confusion.

"Listen here," Ginny began shrewishly, "if you think ..."

She was cut off, suddenly, by Helen Rockwood and her partner, who swept quickly between Natalie and Doris and Ginny, and Helen took Natalie by the arm. "You two leaving so early?", Helen said; her glance included the knight as well as Natalie. "Do you really have to go, Natalie?"

"Yes, I have to go home," Natalie said; she was incapable of saying more.

Helen turned and made an elaborate display of looking at the clock.

"You're probably right," she said. "I have to go pretty soon myself." Doris' "Well, of all things," and Ginny's "Some people think they're pretty smart," were lost before Helen's voice.

At the door, Helen's smile touched Natalie quickly and Natalie smiled back.

"Good night, Natalie," Helen said politely.

"Good night, Helen," Natalie said politely. She walked out through the door, accompanied by the strange boy. Once outside, she released the arm she had been clinging to, and said weakly, "Thank you very much."

He glanced back at the lighted doorway and then at Natalie, hesitated, and then said, "I better come a little farther with you. It's pretty late."

Bless his mother, Natalie thought, and almost laughed. "No, thanks," she said. "I only needed to get across the gym. I don't want to keep you from the dance."

"That's all right," he said. "I think I ought to take you home. It's pretty late."

'He's going to go on saying that', Natalie thought, 'until he manages to think of something else to say.' It made her feel more assured to know that he was conversationally helpless, so she said, "Thank you," and they turned and began to walk down the path. Natalie debated briefly whether to tell him about Doris and Ginny, decided it was not really important, after all, and finally said pleasantly, "Are you in my French class?"

"I think so," the boy said. "You're Natalie Waite, aren't you?"

"Yes." She was absurdly pleased to recall that the French class — formerly one of her greater terrors — met three times a week.

"I'm Bob Lennox," he said.

Natalie placed him immediately; he sat in the middle row, usually, and his French was almost as weak as hers.

"Irregular verbs," she said, and shuddered.

"Golly," he said, and they both laughed.

They turned the corner and Natalie could see the lights in the living room of her own house. Her mother and father were still up waiting for her, to see what kind of time she had had. When they came to her house, she was going to invite Bob in, and she knew already that he would accept, politely and awkwardly. Her mother and father would like him, Natalie thought.

Walking along in the pleasant darkness, with the sound of his footsteps echoing hers, Natalie rehearsed happily their entrance into the house.

"Mother, Dad," she was going to say, "I want you to meet Bob Lennox. A friend of mine."

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true or false. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. Doris was the heart and soul of the student body of a small high school.
2. Ginnie was rather a pessimistic person.
3. In the drugstore the three girls behaved like aggressively sociable outsiders.
4. Natalie was embarrassed with the way her new friends behaved in the street.
5. Natalie accepted their invitation to a school party with great enthusiasm.
6. Doris and Ginny warned Natalie that everyone at the party would be dressed smartly.
7. Natalie didn't feel better at home with her parents than in the company of her two friends.

8. Natalie's parents encouraged their daughter to go to the party.

9. Natalie decided to come out of her house and meet Doris and Ginny outside because she didn't want to be late for the party.

10. Doris and Ginny did not expect Natalie to keep her word about going to the party with them.

11. While coming up to her new high school Natalie felt that she was not yet used to it.

12. Natalie did not mind dancing with the girls.

13. The other dancers' attitude towards Doris and Ginny was not very favourable.

14. Natalie's only purpose of going to the girls' room was to have a short rest and to comb her hair.

15. Natalie's conversation with Helen in the girls' room gave her courage to come up to the boy to ask him to dance.

16. The boy did not show any surprise at Natalie's request.

17. Doris and Ginny were offended by Natalie's behaviour.

18. Helen Rockwood helped Natalie to leave the party without having a scandal with her former friends.

TASK 2. Who did that?

1. Who was the center of a little group of girls who did things by themselves?

2. Who used to begin practically every phrase with the word 'Honestly'?

3. Who was never late?

4. Who nudged Natalie significantly?

5. Who could waltz?

6. Who had chosen to array herself in a sleazy silk dress?

7. Who was wearing a particularly unfortunate blouse and skirt combination and gaudy costume jewelry?

8. Who fumbled her algebra, and pounded doggedly away at French?

9. Who was shocked to find that it was nine-thirty?

10. Who was dancing with a pretty young woman who was probably his new wife?

11. Who spoke curiously, but not unkindly?

12. Who walked sedately toward the door at the farther end?

13. Who looked sullen and angry?

14. Who had her hands on her hips?
15. Who made an elaborate display of looking at the clock?
16. Who was conversationally helpless?
17. Who was as weak in French as Bob Lennox?
18. Who would be pleased to see Bob Lennox?

TASK 3. Explain how you understand words and phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 4. Match the verbs and adverbs from the story and remember the situations in which they were used.

1. smiled	a) timidly
2. added	b) excitedly
3. asked	c) slightly
4. giggled	d) shrewishly
5. said	e) jubilantly
6. remembered	f) violently
7. frowned	g) piercingly
8. shook head	h) resolutely
9. sat	i) wretchedly
10. walked	j) sedately
11. began	k) fiercely
12. walked	l) defensively

TASK 5. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. The girls desperately wanted attention _____ any kind, if it could save them _____ being forgotten or overlooked.

2. What does everyone think _____ me, she wondered, seeing me stand here all _____ myself all this time.

3. Once a dancing couple blundered _____ them, and Natalie's escort moved her ___ ___ the way, nodding _____ the excuse offered _____ the dancers.

4. _____dinner, _____ some hesitation, Natalie told them _____ the dance.

5. He had stopped, and looked _____ Natalie ___ Doris and Ginny _____confusion.

6. The lights _____ the windows_____ the gym shone _____ the lawns and the sidewalks

7. They walked sedately _____ the door _____ the farther end.

8. She smiled _____ Natalie _____ the mirror and slipped her lipstick and comb _____ her pocket.

9. She stood up _____ determination, and went over _____ the mirror and combed her hair and put _____ lipstick.

10. He was coming directly _____ her, _____ a determined look _____ his face.

11. She had been _____ the dance _____ over an hour.

12. Natalie's own room was a refuge _____ her mother and father and their wealth _____ affection.

TASK 6. Find arguments supporting the statements below in the text.

1. Natalie was a timid and modest girl.
2. Natalie felt embarrassed in Doris and Ginny's company.
3. Natalie's parents loved and understood their daughter.
4. Natalie didn't like being the center of attention.
5. Helen didn't approve of Doris and Ginny's behaviour.
6. Helen helped Natalie at the party.
7. Natalie understood the reason of Doris and Ginny's riotous behaviour.

TASK 7. Find in the story details that describe the American way of life, its concepts and values.

TASK 8. Answer the questions below.

1. Who is the main character of the story?
2. What have you learnt about her occupation, age and features of character from the story?
3. What do you know about Natalie's past?
4. Where do the events of the story take place?
5. List the other characters who make their appearance in the story adding the information you can get about them.
6. How does the author characterize Doris and Ginny's behaviour and their manner of speech?
7. What does the author tell the reader about Natalie's family? What details are given to characterize the atmosphere and relationships in her family?

8. Why did Natalie decide to go to the dance party in the end?

9. How did she prepare for the party?

10. How does the author describe Natalie's emotional state at the party?

TASK 9. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. Which of the characters do you like (dislike, feel sorry for)? Say why.

2. Despite all the differences between Natalie and Doris and Ginny, what do they have in common?

3. Can you predict the further development of the events in Natalie's life?

4. What did the author mean by giving the story the title "That lovely night"? Can you think of another title for this story?

5. There is a modern term 'peer pressure'. How do you understand it? What does it have to do with the story you've just read?

6. How far do you agree with Natalie's mother who said: "The only way to be friendly with people is to want to know them. And probably the best way to get to know people is to go where they are."?

TASK 10. Imagine that you are:

a) Natalie's parents. Act out a dialogue speaking about your daughter after she went to the party;

b) Natalie's schoolmates at the party. Comment on Doris and Ginny's behaviour;

c) Natalie. Tell your parents about the party.

James Joyce

ARABY

NORTH RICHMOND STREET being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbours in a square ground. The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces.

The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing-room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp: The Abbot, by Walter Scott, The Devout Communnicant and The Memoirs of Vidocq. I liked the last best because its leaves were yellow. The wild garden behind the house contained a central apple-tree and a few straggling bushes under one of which I found the late tenant's rusty bicycle-pump. He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister.

When the short days of winter came, dusk fell before we had well eaten our dinners. When we met in the street the houses had grown sombre. The space of sky above us was the colour of ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the cottages, to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where odours arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from the buckled harness. When we returned to the street, light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle

was seen turning the corner we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea we watched her from our shadow peer up and down the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go in and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he obeyed and I stood by the railings looking at her. Her dress swung as she moved her body and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlour watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my eye and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her. This happened morning after morning. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a come-all-you about O'Donovan Rossa[1], or a ballad about the troubles[2] in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.

One evening I went into the back drawing-room in which the priest had died. It was a dark rainy evening and there was no sound in the house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: "O love! O love!" many times.

At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked me was I going to Araby. I forgot whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar, she said she would love to go.

"And why can't you?" I asked.

While she spoke she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist. She could not go, she said, because there would be a retreat that week in her convent. Her brother and two other boys were fighting for their caps and I was alone at the railings. She held one of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

"It's well for you," she said.

"If I go," I said, "I will bring you something."

What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and the page I strove to read. The syllables of the word Araby were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped it was not some Freemason[3] affair. I answered few questions in class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could not call my wandering thoughts together. I had

hardly any patience with the serious work of life which, now that it stood between me and my desire, seemed to me child's play, ugly monotonous child's play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hallstand, looking for the hat-brush, and answered me curtly:

"Yes, boy, I know."

As he was in the hall I could not go into the front parlour and lie at the window. I left the house in bad humour and walked slowly towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw and already my heart misgave me.

When I came home to dinner my uncle had not yet been home. Still it was early. I sat staring at the clock for some time and when its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below the dress.

When I came downstairs again I found Mrs. Mercer sitting at the fire. She was an old garrulous woman, a pawnbroker's widow, who collected used stamps for some pious purpose[4]. I had to endure the gossip of the tea-table. The meal was prolonged beyond an hour and still my uncle did not come. Mrs. Mercer stood up to go: she was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was after eight o'clock and she did not like to be out late as the night air was bad for her. When she had gone I began to walk up and down the room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

"I'm afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord."

At nine o'clock I heard my uncle's latchkey in the halldoor. I heard him talking to himself and heard the hallstand rocking when it had received the weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs. When he was midway

through his dinner I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

"The people are in bed and after their first sleep now," he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

"Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him late enough as it is."

My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he believed in the old saying: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." He asked me where I was going and, when I had told him a second time he asked me did I know The Arab's Farewell to his Steed[5]. When I left the kitchen he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.

I held a florin tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my journey. I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train.

After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous house and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance and, fearing that the bazaar would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girdled at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognised a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the centre of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over which the words Cafe Chantant were written in coloured lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the fall of the coins.

Remembering with difficulty why I had come I went over to one of the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

"O, I never said such a thing!"

"O, but you did!"

"O, but I didn't!"

"Didn't she say that?"

"Yes. I heard her."

"O, there's a ... fib!"

Observing me the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

"No, thank you."

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went back to the two young men. They began to talk of the same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger.

NOTES

1. **O'Donovan Rossa** — Jeremiah O'Donovan (1831–1915), nicknamed Dynamite Rossa; an Irish revolutionary.

2. **the troubles** — a euphemism for Irish civil unrest.

3. **Freemason** — an international secret society having as its principles brotherliness, charity, and mutual aid. Many Dublin Roman Catholics were hostile to Freemasons, who were generally Protestants.

4. **collected used stamps for some pious purpose** — selling used postage stamps to collectors to raise money for charity.

5. **The Arab's Farewell to His Steed** — a poem by Irish poet Caroline Norton (1808–77).

TASK 1. Answer the questions below.

1. Who does the young adolescent narrator live with?
2. Where do they live?
3. Who had been the former tenant of the house with the garden?
4. Who is the narrator in love with?
5. What did he talk about with the girl one day?
6. Why couldn't she go to the bazaar?
7. Why was the boy waiting for his uncle?
8. Why did the uncle come home late on Saturday night?
9. Why does the narrator want to go to the bazaar?
10. Why does he arrive so late?
11. Why doesn't he buy anything for Mangan's sister?

TASK 2. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 3. Find words and phrases with the similar meaning. Remember the situations the words in the left column were used in.

1. imperturbable	a) becoming wider
2. diverge	b) calm
3. flaring	c) crowd
4. throng	d) do smth that is not important
5. impinge	e) feel annoyed
6. turnstile	f) gate at the entrance that turns
7. chafe	g) have a noticeable effect
8. salver	h) large metal plate
9. anguish	i) pain, suffering
10. fuss	j) separate
11. garrulous	k) talkative

TASK 4. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. He had been a very charitable priest; _____ his will he had left all his money _____ institutions and the furniture _____ his house _____ his sister.

2. Her dress swung as she moved her body and the soft rope _____ her hair tossed _____ side _____ side.

3. ___ night in my bedroom and ___ day in the classroom her image came _____ me and the page I strove to read.

4. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead _____ the cool glass, I looked over _____ the dark house where she lived.

5. . Mrs. Mercer stood _____ to go: she was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was _____ eight o'clock and she did not like to be ___ late as the night air was bad _____ her.

6. When she had gone I began to walk _____ and _____ the room, clenching my fists.

7. I sat staring _____ the clock _____ some time and when its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room.

8. "I'm afraid you may put _____ your bazaar _____ this night of Our Lord."

9. The sight _____ the streets thronged _____ buyers and glaring _____ gas recalled to me the purpose _____ my journey.

10. Remembering _____ difficulty why I had come I went _____ to one of the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets.

TASK 5. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. Judging from the games the boys play, how old do you think the narrator is?

2. What is the mood of the story? How does Joyce establish it in the first few pages?

3. What is the nature of the boy's relationship with Mangan's sister? Would you describe the narrator's feelings toward Mangan's sister as realistic or romantic? Explain.

4. What purpose might Joyce have had in choosing not to mention the object of the narrator's affections until the middle of the third paragraph? Describe the context into which she is introduced. In what ways is she part of the world of North Richmond Street?

5. Why does the word Araby contain so much meaning for the narrator? Discuss the possibilities the word represents to him.

6. How are the results of the trip to Araby foreshadowed?

7. What does the description of the setting in the beginning of the story suggest about the nature of the boy's world?

8. Consider the meaning of the statement, "I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes."

9. What role do the aunt and uncle play in the story? Why did Joyce make the narrator in "Araby" parentless? Why is it important that the boys live with an aunt and uncle rather than a father and mother?

10. What does Araby symbolize to the boy, and how is the conflict of the story resolved when he goes there? What, if anything, does he learn or gain at the end?

11. Enumerate the activities taking place at Araby. To what extent do they sustain its "magical name"?

12. What had the narrator expected to find at Araby? What was the basis of his expectation?

13. Find patterns in the story that show relevance to "light," "vision," and "beauty."

TASK 6. Comment on the following.

1. North Richmond Street is described metaphorically and presents the reader with his first view of the boy's world.

2. "Araby" is about escaping into the world of fantasy.

3. Find examples of imagery of light and darkness. What does the author create with them?

4. At the end of the story the boy is no longer young and naive; he has grown up and become disillusioned with life.

5. "Araby" is a story about a boy's first love.

6. The background or world of blindness extends from a general view of the street and its inhabitants to the boy's personal relationships.

7. The use of symbolic description of the dead priest and his belongings suggests a sense of a dead past, the spiritual and intellectual stagnation of the present.

8. A lot of auditory imagery (the description of the sound) in "Araby" helps to enhance the meaning of the story.

Somerset Maugham

A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

I left Bangkok on a shabby little ship of four or five hundred tons. I had gone on board early in the morning and soon discovered that I was thrown amid the oddest collection of persons I had ever encountered. There were two French traders and a Belgian colonel, an Italian tenor, the American proprietor of a circus with his wife, and a retired French official with his.

The French official had been accompanied on board by the French minister at Bangkok, one or two secretaries and a prince of the royal family. He was evidently a person of consequence. I had heard the captain address him as Monsieur le Gouverneur.

Monsieur le Gouverneur was a little man, well below the average height, and smally made, with a very ugly little face and thick, almost negroid features; and he had a bushy grey head, bushy grey eyebrows and a bushy grey moustache. He did look a little like a poodle and he had the poodle's soft, intelligent and shining eyes.

The Governor's wife was a large woman, tall and of a robust build, of fifty-five perhaps, and she was dressed somewhat severely in black silk. On her head she wore a huge round topee. Her features were so large and regular, her form so statuesque, that you were reminded of the massive females who take part in processions. She would have admirably suited the role of Columbia or Britannia in a patriotic demonstration. She towered over her diminutive husband like a skyscraper over a shack. He talked incessantly, with vivacity and wit, and when he said anything amusing her heavy features relaxed into a large, fond smile.

In such a small ship having once made the acquaintance of my fellow passengers, it would have been impossible, even had

I wished it, not to pass with them every moment of the day that I was not in my cabin. Talking of one thing and another we watched the day decline, we dined, and then we sat out again on deck under the stars. The two traders played piquet in the hot saloon, but the Belgian colonel joined our little group. He was shy and fat and opened his mouth only to utter a civility. Soon, influenced perhaps by the night the Italian tenor, accompanying himself on his guitar, began to sing, first in a low tone, and then a little louder, till presently, his music captivating him, he sang with all his might. He had the real Italian voice and he sang the Neapolitan songs and fragments from *La Boheme,* and *Traviata* and *Rigoletto.* He sang for an hour, perhaps, and we all fell silent.

I saw that the little French Governor had been holding the hand of his large wife and the sight was absurd and touching.

'Do you know that this is the anniversary of the day on which I first saw my wife?' he said, suddenly breaking the silence which had certainly weighed on him, for I had never met a more talkative creature. 'It is also the anniversary of the day on which she promised to be my wife. And, which will surprise you, they were one and the same.'

'*Voyons, mon ami*[1],' said the lady, 'you are not going to bore our friends with that old story. You are really quite insupportable.'

But she spoke with a smile on her large, firm face, and in a tone that suggested that she was quite willing to hear it again.

'But it will interest them, *mon petit chou*[2].' It was in this way that he always addressed his wife and it was funny to hear this imposing and even majestic lady thus addressed by her small husband. 'Will it not, monsieur?' he asked me. 'It is a romance and who does not like romance, especially on such a night as this?'

I assured the Governor that we were all anxious to hear and the Belgian colonel took the opportunity once more to be polite.

'You see, ours was a marriage of convenience pure and simple.'

'*C'est vrai*[3],' said the lady. 'It would be stupid to deny it. But sometimes love comes after marriage and not before, and then it is better. It lasts longer.'

I could not but notice that the Governor gave her hand an affectionate little squeeze.

You see, I had been in the navy, and when I retired I was forty-nine. I was strong and active and I was very anxious to find an occupation. I looked about; I pulled all the strings I could. Fortunately I had a cousin who had some political importance. And presently I was sent for by the Minister to the Colonies and offered the post of Governor in a certain colony. It was a very distant spot that they wished to send me to and a lonely one, but I had spent my life wandering from port to port, and that was not a matter that troubled me. I accepted with joy. The minister told me that I must be ready to start in a month. I told him that would be easy for an old bachelor who had nothing much in the world but a few clothes and a few books.

'You are a bachelor?' he cried.

'Certainly,' I answered. 'And I have every intention of remaining one.'

'In that case I am afraid I must withdraw my offer. For this position it is essential that you should be married.'

'It is too long a story to tell you, but the gist of it was that owing to the scandal my predecessor, a bachelor, had caused by having native girls to live in the Residency and the complaints of the white people, planters and the wives of functionaries, it had been decided that the next Governor must be a model of respectability. I expostulated. I argued. Nothing would serve. The minister was adamant.

'But what can I do?' I cried with dismay.

'You can marry,' said the minister.

'I do not know any women. I am not a ladies' man and I am forty-nine. How do you expect me to find a wife?'

'Nothing is more simple. Put an advertisement in the paper.'

I was confounded. I did not know what to say.

'Well, think it over,' said the minister. 'If you can find a wife in a month, you can go, but no wife no job. That is my last word.' He smiled a little, to him the situation was

not without humour. 'And if you think of advertising I recommend the Figaro.'

I walked away from the ministry with death in my heart. I knew the place to which they desired to appoint me and I knew it would suit me very well to live there; the climate was tolerable and the Residency was spacious and comfortable, the salary was not to be despised. Suddenly I made up my mind. I walked to the offices of the *Figaro,* composed an advertisement and handed it in for insertion. You will never believe it, but I had four thousand three hundred and seventy-two replies. It was an avalanche. I had expected half a dozen; I had to take a cab to take the letters to my hotel. My room was swamped with them. There were four thousand three hundred and seventy-two women who were willing to share my solitude and be a Governor's lady. It was staggering. They were of all ages from seventeen to seventy. There were maidens of the highest culture, there were unmarried ladies who had made a little slip at one period of their career and now desired to regularize their situation; there were widows whose husbands had died in the most harrowing circumstances; and there were widows whose children would be a relief to my old age. They were blonde and dark, tall and short, fat and thin; some could speak five languages and others could play the piano. Some offered me love and some craved for it; some could only give me a solid friendship but mingled with esteem; some had a fortune and others golden prospects. I was overwhelmed. I was bewildered. At last I lost my temper, for I am a passionate man, and I got up and I stamped on all those letters and all those photographs and I cried: I will marry none of them. It was hopeless, I had less than a month now and I could not see over four thousand aspirants to my hand in that time. I gave it up as a bad job. I went out of my room hideous with all those photographs and littered papers and to drive care away went on to the boulevard and sat down at the Cafe de la Paix. After a time I saw a friend passing and he nodded to me and smiled. I tried to smile but my heart was sore. My friend stopped and coming up to me sat down.

'What is making you look so glum?' he asked me.

I was glad to have someone in whom I could confide my troubles and told him the whole story. He laughed. Controlling his mirth as best he could, he said to me:

'But, my dear fellow, do you really want to marry?' At this I entirely lost my temper.

'You are completely idiotic,' I said. 'If I did not want to marry, and what is more marry at once, within the next fortnight, do you imagine that I should have spent three days reading love letters from women I have never set eyes on? '

'Calm yourself and listen to me,' he replied. 'I have a cousin who lives in Geneva. She is Swiss. Her morals are without reproach, she is of a suitable age, a spinster, for she has spent the last fifteen years nursing an invalid mother who has lately died, she is well educated and she is not ugly.'

'It sounds as though she were a paragon,' I said.

'I do not say that, but she has been well brought up and would become the position you have to offer her.'

'There is one thing you forget. What reason would there be for her to give up her friends and her accustomed life to accompany in exile a man of forty-nine who is by no means a beauty?'

When I made this remark to my friend he replied: 'One can never tell with women. There is something about marriage that wonderfully attracts them. There would be no harm in asking her. After all it is regarded as a compliment by a woman to be asked in marriage. She can but refuse.'

'But I do not know your cousin and I do not see how I am to make her acquaintance. I cannot go to her house, ask to see her and when I am shown into the drawing-room say: *Voila,* I have come to ask you to marry me. She would think I was a lunatic and scream for help. Besides, I am a man of an extreme timidity, and I could never take such a step.'

'I will tell you what to do,' said my friend. 'Go to Geneva and take her a box of chocolates from me. She will be glad to have news of me and will receive you with pleasure. You can have a little talk and then if you do not like the look of her you take your leave and no harm is done. If on the other hand you do, we can go into the matter and you can make a formal demand for her hand.'

I was desperate. It seemed the only thing to do. We went to a shop at once and bought an enormous box of chocolates and that night I took the train to Geneva. No sooner had I arrived than I sent her a letter to say that I was the bearer of a gift from her cousin. Within an hour I received her reply to the effect that she would be pleased to receive me at four o'clock in the afternoon. I spent the interval before my mirror and seventeen times I tied and retied my tie. As the clock struck four I presented myself at the door of her house. She was waiting for me. Her cousin said she was not ugly. Imagine my surprise to see a young woman with the dignity of Juno, the features of Venus, and in her expression the intelligence of Minerva.'

'You are too absurd,' said Madame. 'But by now these gentlemen know that one cannot believe all you say.'

'I swear to you that I do not exaggerate. I was so taken aback that I nearly dropped the box of chocolates. We talked for a quarter of an hour. And then I said to her:

'Mademoiselle, I must tell you that I did not come here merely to give you a box of chocolates.'

She smiled and remarked that evidently I must have had reasons to come to Geneva of more importance than that.

'I came to ask you to do me the honour of marrying me.' She gave a start.

'But, monsieur, you are mad,' she said.

'I beg you not to answer till you have heard the facts,' I interrupted, and before she could say another word I told her the whole story. I told her about my advertisement in the *Figaro* and she laughed till the tears ran down her face. Then I repeated my offer.

'You are serious?' she asked.

'I have never been more serious in my life.'

'I will not deny that your offer has come as a surprise. I had not thought of marrying, I have passed the age; but evidently your offer is not one that a woman should refuse without consideration. I am flattered. Will you give me a few days to reflect?'

'Mademoiselle, I am absolutely desolated,' I replied. 'But I have not time. If you will not marry me I must go back to Paris and resume my perusal of the fifteen or eighteen hundred letters that still await my attention.'

'It is quite evident that I cannot possibly give you an answer at once. I had not set eyes on you a quarter of an hour ago. I must consult my friends and my family.'

'What have they got to do with it? You are of full age. The matter is pressing. I cannot wait. I have told you everything. You are an intelligent woman. What can prolonged reflection add to the impulse of the moment?'

'You are not asking me to say yes or no this very minute? That is outrageous.'

'That is exactly what I am asking. My train goes back to Paris in a couple of hours.'

She looked at me reflectively.

'You are quite evidently a lunatic.'

'Well, which is it to be?" I said. 'Yes or no?'

She shrugged her shoulders. She waited a minute and I was on tenterhooks.

"Yes."

The Governor waved his hand towards his wife.

'And there she is. We were married in a fortnight and I became Governor of a colony. I married a jewel, my dear sirs, a woman of the most charming character, one in a thousand, a woman of a masculine intelligence and a feminine sensibility, an admirable woman.'

He turned to the Belgian colonel.

'Are you a bachelor? If so I strongly recommend you to go to Geneva. It is a nest of the most adorable young women. You will find a wife there as nowhere else. Geneva is besides a charming city. Do not waste a minute, but go there and I will give you a letter to my wife's nieces.'

It was she who summed up the story.

'The fact is that in a marriage of convenience you expect less and so you are less likely to be disappointed. You do not look for perfection and so you are tolerant to one another's faults. Passion is all very well, but it is not a proper foundation for marriage. For two people to be happy in marriage they must be able to respect one another, they must be of the same condition and their interests must be alike; then if they are decent people and are willing to give and take, to live and let live, there is no reason why their union should not be as happy as ours.' She paused 'But, of course, my husband is a very, very remarkable man.'

NOTES

1. **Voyons, mon ami** (франц.) — Подивіться, мій друже.
2. **mon petit chou** (франц.) — душенько (розмовне, дослівно: моя маленька капустинко).
3. **C'est vrai** (франц.) — Вірно.

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true, false or not stated in the text. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. All people the author met on the ship were ordinary ones, of little importance.
2. The Governor had a monstrous appearance but his eyes were smart and alive.
3. His wife was a slim and slender woman.
4. The day the Governor told his story was the anniversary of his wedding.
5. The Governor had to marry according to the law of his country.
6. He got half a dozen of letters from aspirants to his hand and he was excited by their amount.
7. His friend's cousin was considered to be a model to follow.
8. The Governor was nervous before his date.
9. When he saw her he fell in love at first sight.
10. She didn't want to accept his proposal because she was under age.
11. Time was pressing because he had to go back to the colony.
12. She was given a minute to think over his proposal.
13. According to the hero, his wife had a masculine personality.
14. The Governor advised to the Belgian colonel to go to Switzerland to find a wife.
15. According to the narrator, a happy marriage is not based on passion.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand the highlighted phrases containing some words used not in their common meaning.

TASK 3. Match the words and phrases with their definitions.

1. man of consequence 2. acquaintance 3. anniversary 4. bachelor 5. avalanche 6. spinster 7. paragon 8. dignity 9. jewel 10. accompany 11. lose one's temper 12. shabby 13. encounter 14. crave for	a) celebration of a date; b) a single man; c) a very important person; d) slight friendship; e) a precious stone; f) to meet by chance; g) a very large number of things; h) a single lady; i) in bad condition; j) a perfect person; k) the sense of your own value and importance; l) to have an extremely strong desire; m)to go somewhere with somebody; n) to become angry

TASK 4. Find words and phrases similar in meaning.

Nurse; take aback; lunatic; proprietor; take care of; gift; surprise; owner; madman; confused; outrageous; robust; present; confide; passionate; insupportable; strong and healthy; bewildered; very shocking; hot-blooded; entrust; intolerable.

TASK 5. Fill in the gaps with the phrases from Tasks 2, 3, 4. Make all necessary changes.

1. He accepted his defeat with quiet _____.
2. The piece of awful news published by the respectable newspaper looked particularly _____.
3. He was completely _____by the news of their divorce. They seemed happy together.
4. We cannot introduce any radical changes into the shop we hire. We have to ask _____ first.
5. The young girl _____ love but her parents did not understand her.
6. Her clothes always looked _____ as her family had no money and could not afford to buy new ones.

7. I do not believe that he has no defects at all. In your words he sounds like a real _____.

8. She felt hurt because her husband did not remember the date and had forgotten about their _____.

9. Mother was away for three days only and on coming home she found _____ of dirty dishes in the sink.

10. I do not like his brother. He is a mean and unkind person. No wonder that he had never married and remained _____.

11. She never meant to find him and was surprised when she _____ him by mere chance.

12. He was totally _____by her sudden change of the topic.

13. He made _____ of several musicians around the table.

14. Strong winds are often _____ by heavy rain.

15. He never displayed any emotions and some believed that he was not _____ man.

TASK 6. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. I do not know where your umbrella is, I have never set eyes _____ it.

2. They have been seeing each other for three years but he has not made a formal demand _____ her hand yet.

3. She decided to switch _____ the musical centre to drive care _____.

4. She was not thin. On the contrary, she was _____ robust build.

5. The young boy waited for the bus with real impatience; he definitely was_____ tenterhooks.

6. I understood that he was no ordinary person but a man _____ consequence.

7. I believe that such an egotist can never make anyone happy _____ marriage.

8. She is a spinster and nobody ever asked her _____ marriage.

9. I'll answer the phone and will be with you ___ a couple _____ minutes.

10. Nobody believed _____ their mutual love. Theirs was definitely a marriage _____ convenience.

11. Passion alone cannot make foundation _____ happy marriage.

12. Jack was much taller than Jane. He towered _____ her and they looked funny together.

13. She was a woman _____ great dignity and her behaviour has always been _____ reproach.

TASK 7. Express your own opinion about the following statements from the story.

1. But sometimes love comes after marriage and not before, and then it is better. It lasts longer.

2. One can never tell with women. There is something about marriage that wonderfully attracts them.

3. For two people to be happy in marriage they must be able to respect one another, and their interests must be alike...'

TASK 8. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. Why had not the Governor ever married before? Why did he decide to get married all of a sudden?

2. Why did the lady from Genea accept a proposal of marriage?

3. What do you think of the main characters of the story? Was it really a marriage of convenience?

TASK 9. Retell the Governor's story:

a) in the third person;

b) from his wife's point of view;

c) from her friend's point of view.

Robert Richard
DEAR NORMAN

Dear Norman,

Thank you so much for your letter which arrived just before lunch.

It came as quite a surprise when you left with all of your possessions this morning. We did not know why you had gone out at the back door. Now we understand that it was because you have gone to live in you tree-house.

I am sure that your decision to leave our family is a serious one. Therefore I would like to wish you all the best for the exciting new life you are starting on your own. Please do keep in touch from the back garden.

Love,

Dad

Dear Norman,

You are very sweet to take the time to write. Thank you for explaining a few of our mistakes in such detail. Your father and I will find your advice very useful as your sister grows up.

I hope that life in your tree-house is calming down since you moved in earlier today. I could see from the dining-room window how difficult it was to carry all your things up that long, steep ladder by yourself.

How did you manage to get the big television set up there? It certainly was clever. Now how will you manage to get electricity for it? I'll bet you have another clever idea!

Did you see those sweet, busy bees swarming around below your tree-house's porch this afternoon? I suppose they could have been hornets or wasps building a nest, but they looked to me more like jolly little bumble-bees.

No doubt you took plenty of food with you up into your tree-house. I'm afraid I didn't plan the day as well as you, so I have this extra cheese sandwich and a chocolate bar. I am

sending them up your message rope with this letter in hope that you can use them in some way.

If you think of any other mistakes your father and I made, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Meanwhile, lots of love from

Mum

Dear Norman,

Mum and Dad say I can have your room. Ha ha.

Beth

Dear Sir/Madam,

The book you recently ordered, How to Negotiate, has now arrived.

We will hold it for you in our shop for seven days.

Thank you for your order.

The Parkville Book Shop

Dear Norman,

I understand from your parents that I should not expect to see you in school for some time due to changes in your personal life. Please take as much time as you feel you need.

Perhaps school no longer seems important now that you live in a tree-house behind your family's home. That makes sense. Geography. Music. History: which of the lessons you missed this morning would be useful in a tree-house? None, probably.

What you need are different skills — skills useful for life in the wild: how to keep a small, safe fire burning for light and warmth; how to tell good berries, nuts and mushrooms from deadly ones; which animals you will compete with for territory. Unfortunately, we don't study any of these as Parkville School. You will have to do most of your learning on your own now, Norman.

If you decide to continue any of your studies with us, please send me a note. I cannot send you all of the fun and friendship from our class here, but I can certainly send you the homework!

All the best wishes from me and from all of your classmates in Room 214.

Mrs Bouquet

Norm,

You don't know me very well but I've seen you around. My message is: go for it. Don't let them push you around. Stay up in that tree-house until you get what you want.

Your fan,

Daniel Barleycorn

Dear Norman,

Thank you for sending me your photograph. You look like a typical American boy. Here is my photograph. Maybe I look like a typical Japanese girl?

I am glad we are pen-pals. Now I can practise my English. Do you want to practise your Japanese? Ha ha.

I am also glad that writing letters is your favourite hobby. What luck for me!

Your pen-pal,

Mariko

Dear Norman,

I hope you don't mind me putting this message on your rope. I am the guy who has come to fix your family's refrigerator (that's my blue and white van in the drive). Although we have never met I am writing you this note because I moved into my own tree-house once when I was a kid. I can't remember the reason.

Anyway, I want you to know that you have my support.

Darryl, Refrigerator Engineer, 38 years old

Hey, Kid

Pull yourself together. You are making a fool of yourself. Surrender now.

They'll take you back. Trust me.

Signed,

Anonymous

Dear Norman,

I hope you are well and not spending too much time worrying about your lonely old grandmother. I'm fine most of the time. I do have bad days when none of my grandchildren have visited or telephoned, but I try to remain cheerful.

Your mother says you have been acting strange lately. Stop it; that's not polite.

Next time you speak to my son (your father), please tell him from me (his mother) that it's high time he wrote a letter to his mother (me).

I'm so glad you liked the sweater I sent for your birthday. I had to spend half the day crossing town to get it, and of course, it was not cheap. Still, it was worth it if you appreciate it so much.

I can't wait to see all of you next weekend. You are what keeps me happy!

Love,

Grandma

Hey Norm,

What's this about your living in your tree-house now? Totally cool! Does this mean you can eat whatever you want? Stop taking showers? Stop brushing your teeth? Are you going to wear the same clothes every day for a year? Just think, you can spend the whole day playing with your Gameboy! You can stay up there for months. You can go on strike! This is so cool. I wish I had thought of it.

Alfred

P.S. Can I have your bike?

Dear Occupant,

I am writing to you today with a very special offer.

We at Family Publications would like to send you the next 12 months of *Good Boy* magazine for only £4.99. What a deal! That's only 42p per issue!

For only 42p you get *Good Boy* magazine very month. Each issue is packed with ideas to help you become the perfect son and brother: How to help your sister do the dishes; Cleaning up your room before mum asks; Enjoying garden chores.

Plus there are our regular features: "The Polite Crossword", "Thank-You Letter of the Month", and "Table Manners".

Do your entire family a big favour — order today. Don't miss another month's issue of *Good Boy* magazine!

But wait! That's not all! If you order now, we will also send you — absolutely free of charge — the *Good Boy* baseball cap. Wear it and all your friends will know what a Good Boy you are!

Why not be a Good Boy today? Order now.
Yours sincerely,
The Marketing Department

Good Boy Magazine

Dear Norman,

Your pest of a sister told me on the bus today that you have moved into your tree-house and aren't coming to school any more. How are we going to sit together in the bus and meet in the corridor if you don't come to school? Daniel Barleycorn wants to go out with me. I said no because I'm going out with you. Now I'm not so sure. If you and I can't talk on the bus and meet at lunch, there is nothing left of our friendship. Will you be installing a telephone in you tree? A fax? I doubt it.

I think our relationship has reached a turning point. This is curtains.

I am truly sorry.

I will always love you.

Eileen XXX

Dear Norman,

You are invited to a birthday party for Alison Child, the most beautiful girl in our school.

Refreshments & possible kisses.

Saturday, 11 May, 5pm. RSVP

Dear Norman,

Thank you for your letter explaining why you do not want any pocket money this week. It made your mother and me wonder how much we would save if you continue this practice for the remainder of your childhood: Question

10 years × 52 weeks per year × £2 per week pocket money = £1,040 total savings. (You might want to check our maths).

Isn't it amazing the way it adds up?

Love,

Dad

Dear Norman,

Congratulations!

Your essay, "Peace Now", has won Firsts Prize in the Parkville Gazette's Solving the World's Problems contest!

The judges were especially impressed by the section, "Peace Begins in Your Own Back Yard".

As you know, the Firsts Prize in the Solving the World's Problems contest is a trip to Washington DC where you will visit the White House and actually discuss your essay with the President of the United States. You will be able to take one member of you family with you on this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

Please ask a parent or guardian to contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements for the trip.

And congratulations once again on your wise essay!

Best wishes,

The Editor
The Parkville Gazette

Norman,

Dad said I should write. I miss you. I think you should move back into your house. I don't think you should be on strike against everything any more. It's boring.

I haven't decided yet about letting you have your room back. We can negotiate.

Yours sincerely,

Your sister,

Beth

Dear Norman,

Thank you for your letter. I understand your feelings. It will be OK just to move back into the house. Don't forget to wipe your feet.

Love,

Mum

TASK 1. Here is a list of people who wrote letters to Norman.

1. Mum
2. Dad
3. Beth, Norman's sister
4. The Parkville Book Shop
5. Mrs. Bouquet, Norman's school teacher

6. Daniel Barleycorn, Norman's fan
7. Mariko, Norman's pen-pal
8. Eileen XXX
9. Grandma
10. Alfred, Norman's close friend
11. Darryl, Refregirator engineer
12. Anonymous
13. The Marketing Department of the "Good Boy Magazine"
14. The Editor of the Parkville Gazette

Here is a list of quotations from the letters. Decide which of them was written by each of Norman's correspondents.

A. You are making a fool of yourself.
B. Stay in that tree-house until you get what you want.
C. I moved into my own tree-house when I was a kid.
D. Stop it; that's not polite.
E. Can I have your bike?
F. I think our relationship has reached a turning point.
G. Order now.
H. And congratulations once again on your wise essay!
I. Dad said I should write.
J. Don't forget to wipe your feet.
K. I am sure that your decision to leave our family is a serious one.
L. We will hold it for you in our shop for several days.
M. You will have to do most of your learning on your own now, Norman.
N. I am so glad that writing letters is your favourite hobby.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the text.

TASK 3. Fill in the gaps in the sentences below with the correct form of one of the words given in the box. Make all necessary changes.

to surrender	to swarm	to negotiate	a ladder
steep	an occupant	to appreciate	to install
entire	a chore	remainder	a guardian
	to go out		

1. That was a very busy season; tourists _____ all over the island.

2. The path grew _____ and _____ as we climed higher.

3. To climb through the bedroom window the burglars used the _____ they found in the garden shed.

4. At the end of the day the police successfully _____ the release of the hostages.

5. The hijackers eventually _____ themselves to the police.

6. All these bills should be paid by the previous _____ of the house.

7. Washing up is not that bad; ironing is a real _____ for me, I hate it!

8. The disease threatened to wipe out the _____ population of the island.

9. How long have Tom and Kate been _____ together?

10. I need some help _____ the new software into my computer.

11. Divide 2 into 7, and the answer is 3, _____ 1.

12. A person who is legally responsible for the care of another person, especially a child whose parents are dead, is called a _____.

13. Thanks for coming to see me, I really _____ it.

TASK 4. Match halves of the phrases used in the story.

1. to wish someone	a) in some way
2. to keep	b) own
3. in such	d) around
4. to build	e) a nest
5. to use something	f) all the best
6. to make	g) detail
7. on one's	h) with someone
8. to push someone	i) in touch
9. free	j) money
10. to go out	k) of charge
11. pocket	l) for the trip
12. to make arrangements	m)a fool of oneself
13. to wipe	n) one's feet
14. pull oneself	o) together

TASK 5. Complete the sentences below using one of the expressions from Task 4.

1. Did you pay any money for this brochure? — No, I got it _____.
2. The other day I bought a funny doormat with an inscription 'Please be neat and _____'.
3. How did you manage not to burst into tears in that awful situation? — I just _____ and thought that it was not the end of the world.
4. Stop _____, the other guests may think that you have no manners.
5. What did you write your former boy-friend in the farewell note? — I _____.
6. How much _____ did your parents give you when you were a child? — Not much.
7. Don't forget to write, _____.
8. Has your sister finished _____ her wedding ? — Not yet, but I'm helping her, she will never manage everything _____.
9. What I hate about our monitor is that he really enjoys _____ people _____, he is too bossy.
10. Most people are like birds, as soon as they get married they start _____ for their family.
11. Boris told us about that event _____ that we had an impression that we were there with him and saw everything with our own eyes.
12. How long have you been _____ Simon? — Since last September.
13. There is some chocolate cream left from the cake I made in the morning. I wonder if you can _____?

TASK 6. Answer the questions below.

1. What aim was Norman trying to achieve?
2. What is the main message of the story?
3. How does epistolary genre contribute to deeper understanding of the conflict? What was the conflict? Who was the conflict between?
4. Analyse different reactions to the boy's decision as shown in the letters.

5. What role do the letters play for developing the plot? Why did the writer tell us about so many different letters from so different people?

6. Do you approve of his parents' behaviour? Would the reaction of your parents be the same or different?

7. What decision in terms of changing his life did Norman make? What were possible reasons for it?

8. What could Norman's tree-house look like? What was it made of? What was its interior?

TASK 7. Which of Norman's correspondents can be characterized as:

A. a conceited person?
B. a conservative person?
C. an arrogant person?
D. a stingy person?
E. a person who likes to complain?
F. an envious person?
G. an insincere person?
H. a witty person?
I. a person who has a fit of nostalgia?

Use the story to prove it.

TASK 8. What is the tone of Norman's father's first letter? Choose from the options given below:

a. serious
b. angry
c. moralistic
d. humorous
e. irritated
f. sarcastic
g. respectful
h. _____
_____ (your own description)

TASK 9. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. Why did Norman's mother flatter her son about 'being clever'?

2. Why did she ask her son about the insects he saw swarming around his new home in the afternoon?

3. What is in your opinion the relationship between Norman and his sister? Do you think Beth is his younger or elder sister?

4. Why did Norman order a book about negotiating?

5. What is your opinion about Mrs. Bouquet's letter? What kind of teacher is she?

6. Do you think Norman was enthusiastic about Mrs.Bouquet's suggestion of sending him homework?

7. What made Daniel Barleycorn write a letter to Norman?

8. Why can't Darryl remember the reason why he moved to his own tree-house when he was a kid?

9. Who could be the author of the anonymous letter?

10. How close is Norman's grandmother with her children and grandchildren?

11. What does Alfred hate most of all about his life at home?

12. Who do you think sent Norman an invitation to Alison Child's birthday party?

13. Why did Norman's father raise the question of his son's pocket money?

14. What did Norman's mother mean by writing, 'Don't forget to wipe your feet.'?

15. What reason or whose letter do you think made Norman in the end change his mind about staying in his tree-house any longer?

TASK 10. What letter would you write to Norman if you were:

a) his friend;

b) his brother/sister;

c) his teacher.

TASK 11. Describe Norman's life in the tree-house using as much information from the letters as possible.

Agnes Repplier

SIN

I was twelve years old, and very happy in my convent school. I did not particularly mind studying my lessons, and I sometimes persuaded the less experienced nuns to accept a retentive memory as a substitute for intelligent understanding, with which it has nothing to do. I "got along" with other children, and I enjoyed my friends; and of such simple things is the life of a child composed. Then came a disturbing letter from my mother, a letter which threatened the heart of my content. It was sensible and reasonable, and it said very plainly and very kindly that I had better not make an especial friend of Lilly Milton; "not an exclusive friend," wrote my mother, "not one whom you would expect to see intimately after you leave school."

I knew what all that meant. I was as innocent as a kitten; but divorces were not common in those conservative years, and Mrs. Milton had as many to her credit as if she were living—a highly esteemed and popular lady—today. I regretted my mother's tendency to confuse issues with unimportant details (a mistake which grown-up people often made), and I felt sure that if she knew Lilly—who was also as innocent as a kitten, and was blessed with the sweetest temper that God ever gave a little girl—she would be delighted that I had such an excellent friend. So I went on happily enough until ten days later, when Madame Rayburn, a nun for whom I cherished a very warm affection, was talking to me upon a familiar theme—the diverse ways in which I might improve my class work and my general behavior. The subject did not interest me deeply,—repetition had staled its vivacity,— until my companion said the one thing that had plainly been uppermost in her mind: "And Agnes, how did you come to tell Lilly Milton that your mother did not want you to go with her? I never thought you could have been so deliberately unkind."

This brought me to my feet with a bound. "Tell Lilly!" I cried. "You could not have believed such a thing. It was Madame Bouron who told her."

A silence followed this revelation. The convent discipline was as strict for the nuns as for the pupils, and it was not their custom to criticize their superiors. Madame Bouron was mistress general, ranking next to the august head, and of infinitely more importance to us. She was a cold, severe, sardonic woman, and the general dislike felt for her had shaped itself into a cult. I had accepted this cult in simple good faith, having no personal grudge until she did this dreadful thing; and I may add that it was the eminently unwise custom of reading all the letters written to or by the pupils which stood responsible for the trouble. The order of nuns was a French one, and the habit of surveillance, which did not seem amiss in France, was ill-adapted to America. I had never before wasted a thought upon it. My weekly home letter and the less frequent but more communicative epistles from my mother might have been read in the market place for all I cared, until this miserable episode proved that a bad usage may be trusted to produce, sooner or later, bad results.

It was with visible reluctance that Madame Rayburn said after a long pause: "That alters the case. If Madame Bouron told Lilly, she must have had some good reason for doing so."

"There was no good reason," I protested. "There couldn't have been. But it doesn't matter. I told Lilly it wasn't so, and she believed me."

Madame Rayburn stared at me aghast. "You told Lilly it was not so?" she repeated.

I nodded. "I could not find out for two days what was the matter," I explained; "but I got it out of her at last, and I told her that my mother had never written a line to me about her. And she believed me."

"But my dear child," said the nun, "you have told a very grievous lie. What is more, you have borne false witness against your neighbor. When you said to Lilly that your mother had not written that letter, you made her believe that Madame Bouron had lied to her."

"She didn't mind believing that," I observed cheerfully, "and there was nothing else that I could say to make her feel all right."

"But a lie is a lie," protested the nun. "You will have to tell Lilly the truth."

I said nothing, but my silence was not the silence of acquiescence. Madame Rayburn must have recognized this fact, for she took another line of attack. When she spoke next, it was in a low voice and very earnestly. "Listen to me," she said. "Friday is the first of May. You are going to confession on Thursday. You will tell Father O'Harra the whole story just as you have told it to me, and whatever he bids you do, you must do it. Remember that if you go to confession and do not tell this you will commit the very great sin of sacrilege; and if you do not obey your confessor you will commit the sin of open disobedience to the Church."

I was more than a little frightened. It seemed to me that for the first time in my life I was confronted by grown-up iniquities to which I had been a stranger. The thought sobered me for two days. On the third I went to confession, and when I had finished with my customary offenses —which, as they seldom varied, were probably as familiar to the priest as they were to me—I told my serious tale. The silence with which it was received bore witness to its seriousness. No question was asked me; I had been too explicit to render questions needful. But after two minutes (which seemed like two hours) of thinking my confessor said: "A lie is a lie. It must be retracted. Tomorrow you will do one of two things. You will tell your friend the truth, or you will tell Madame Bouron the whole story just as you told it to me. Do you understand?"

"Yes," I said in a faint little voice, no louder than a sigh.

"And you will do as I bid you?"

"Yes," I breathed again.

"Then I will give you absolution, and you may go to Communion. But remember, no later than tomorrow. Believe me, it will get no easier by delay."

Of that I felt tolerably sure, and it was with the courage of desperation that I knocked the next morning at the door of Madame Bouron's office. She gave me a glance of wonderment (I had never before paid her a voluntary call), and without pause or preamble I told my tale, told it with such bald uncompromising verity that it sounded worse than ever. "So Lilly thinks I lied to her," she said at last.

"Yes," I answered.

"And suppose I send for her now and undeceive her."

"You can't do that," I said. "I should tell her again my mother did not write the letter, and she would believe me."

"If you told another such lie, you would be sent from the school."

"If I were sent home, Lilly would believe me. She would believe me all the more."

The anger died out of Madame Bouron's eyes, and a look of bewilderment came into them. I am disposed to think that, despite her wide experience as nun and teacher, she had never before encountered an *idee fixe,*' and found out that the pyramids are flexible compared to it. "You know," she said uncertainly, "that sooner or later you will have to do as your mother desires."

I made no answer. The "sooner or later" did not interest me at all. I was living now.

There was another long pause. When Madame Bouron spoke again it was in a grave and low voice. "I wish I had said nothing about your mother's letter," she said. "I thought I could settle matters quickly that way, but I was mistaken, and I must take the consequences of my error. You may go now. I will not speak to Lilly, or to anyone else about this affair."

I did not go. I sat stunned, and asking myself if she knew all that her silence would imply. Children seldom give adults much credit for intelligence. "But," I began feebly —

"But me no buts," she interrupted, rising to her feet. "I know what you are going to say; but I have not been the head of a school for years without bearing more than one injustice."

Now when I heard these words sadly spoken something broke up inside of me. It did not break gently, like the dissolving of a cloud; it broke like the bursting of a dam. Sobs shook my lean little body as though they would have torn it apart. Tears blinded me. With difficulty I gasped out three words. "You are good," I said.

Madame Bouron propelled me gently to the door, which I could not see because of my tears. "I wish I could say as much for you," she answered, "but I cannot. You have been very bad. You have been false to your mother, to whom you owe respect and obedience; you have been false to me; and you have been false to God. But you have been true to your friend."

She put me out of the door, and I stood in the corridor facing the clock. I was still shaken by sobs, but my heart was light as a bird. And, believe it or not, the supreme reason for my happiness was—not that my difficulties were over, though I was glad of that; and not that Lilly was safe from hurt, though I was glad of that; but that Madame Bouron, whom I had thought bad, had proved herself to be, according to the standards of childhood, as good as gold. My joy was like the joy of the blessed saints in Paradise.

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true or false. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. In Agnes's opinion her memory was better than intelligence when she was in her convent school.
2. Agnes was on friendly terms with all her schoolmates.
3. Agnes didn't have particularly close friends.
4. The letter Agnes got from her mother was demanding and threatening.
5. Agnes didn't know anything about Mrs. Milton's divorce.
6. The letter didn't change Agnes's attitude towards her friend.
7. Madame Rayburn was one of the nuns the girl disliked.
8. Agnes was genuinely concerned about improving her class work and her general behavior.
9. Agnes told Lily about the content of her mother's letter.
10. Madame Bouron's position at convent was inferior to Madame Rayburn's.
11. Madame Bouron was disliked by all the school.
12. The nuns of the convent censured all the pupils' correspondence.
13. Letter surveillance was practiced with equal success both in French and American convent schools.
14. Agnes's letters were longer and more detailed than her mother's ones.
15. Lily behaved strangely for three days after her conversation with Madame Bouron.
16. Lily preferred to believe her friend rather than her teacher.

17. The pupils had to speak with their confessor every day.
18. The confessor didn't give Agnes a choice.
19. Madame Bouron was surprised by Agnes's visit.
20. Though obstinate, Agnes turned out to be very argumentative.
21. Madame Bouron regretted her action about the letter and admitted that she was wrong.
22. Agnes cried because Madame Bouron scolded her.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand the following phrases from the story. Try to remember when, why and in what circumstances they were used.

1. ... I sometimes persuaded the less experienced nuns to accept a retentive memory as a substitute for intelligent understanding, with which it has nothing to do.
2. Then came a disturbing letter from my mother, a letter which threatened the heart of my content.
3. ... divorces were not common in those conservative years, and Mrs. Milton had as many to her credit as if she were living — a highly esteemed and popular lady — today.
4. This brought me to my feet with a bound.
5. Madame Bouron was mistress general, ranking next to the august head, and of infinitely more importance to us.
6. She was a cold, severe, sardonic woman, and the general dislike felt for her had shaped itself into a cult.
7. You will tell Father O'Harra the whole story just as you have told it to me, and whatever he bids you do, you must do it.
8. The silence with which it was received bore witness to its seriousness.
9. I had been too explicit to render questions needful.
10. I am disposed to think that, despite her wide experience as nun and teacher, she had never before encountered an *idee fixe,*' and found out that the pyramids are flexible compared to it.
11. I know what you are going to say; but I have not been the head of a school for years without bearing more than one injustice.
12. Madame Bouron propelled me gently to the door, which I could not see because of my tears.

TASK 3. In the story these nouns and adjectives go together. Match them and tell what they were about.

1. experienced	a) affection
2. retentive	b) details
3. intelligent	c) friend
4. disturbing	d) grudge
5. exclusive	e) letter
6. conservative	f) lie
7. unimportant	g) memory
8. sweet	h) nuns
9. warm	i) reluctance
10. personal	j) temper
11. visible	k) understanding
12. grievous	l) years

TASK 4. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepotitions.

1. This brought me _____ my feet ____ a bound.
2. Madame Rayburn stared _____ me aghast.
3. It was _____ visible reluctance that Madame Rayburn said _____ a long pause.
4. But I got it _____ of her at last, and I told her that my mother had never written a line _____ me _____ her.
5. You are going _____ confession _____ Thursday.
6. If you do not obey your confessor, you will commit the sin _____ open disobedience _____ the Church.
7. The silence _____ which it was received bore witness _____ its seriousness.
8. She listened _____ first _____ amazement, then _____ anger.
9. "So Lilly thinks I lied _____ her," she said _____ last.
10. "But me no buts," she interrupted, rising _____ her feet.

TASK 5. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. Do you agree with the author that grown-up people often make a mistake of confusing issues with unimportant details? Why? Why not?
2. 'The convent discipline was as strict for the nuns as for the pupils, and it was not their custom to criticize their

superiors.' What do you think of this custom, is it wise in your opinion?

3. Do you approve of the little girl's lie which she told to calm her friend down?

4. What do you think could be the little girl's 'customary offenses' that she confessed of every week?

5. What do you think about the confessor's decision? Is it wise in your opinion?

6. Do you agree with Father O'Harra that the more you delay telling the truth, the more difficult it gets?

7. Do you agree with the author that 'Children seldom give adults much credit for intelligence.'? Why? Why not?

8. What do you think Madame Bouron meant when she said, "I must take the consequences of my error"?

9. Do you agree with Madame Bouron's accusation, "You have been very bad. You have been false to your mother, to whom you owe respect and obedience; you have been false to me; and you have been false to God. But you have been true to your friend."?

10. The narrator tells about herself, "I was as innocent as a kitten." Do you think her behavior supports or denies this self-assessment?

TASK 6. Describe the life of a convent school. Use as much information from the text as you can.

TASK 7. Speak about different understanding of lie by the characters of the story.

TASK 8. Act out possible dialogues between:

a) Agnes and Lilly Milton;
b) Agnes and Madame Rayburn, a nun;
c) Agnes and Father O'Harra;
d) Agnes and Madame Bouron.

TASK 9. Speak about each of the main characters of the story giving factual information and your personal point of view on their personalities and deeds.

Agatha Christie
VILLAGE MURDERS

Miss Politt took hold of the knocker and rapped politely on the cottage door. After a discreet interval she knocked again. The parcel under her left arm shifted a little as she did so, and she readjusted it. Inside the parcel was Mrs. Spenlow's new green winter dress, ready for fitting. From Miss Politt's left hand dangled a bag of black silk, containing a tape measure, a pincushion, and a large, practical pair of scissors.

Miss Politt was tall and gaunt, with a sharp nose, pursed lips, and meager iron-grey hair. She hesitated before using the knocker for the third time. Glancing down the street, she saw a figure rapidly approaching. Miss Hartnell, jolly, weather-beaten, fifty-five, shouted out in her usual loud bass voice, "Good afternoon, Miss Politt!"

The dressmaker answered, "Good afternoon, Miss Hartnell." Her voice was excessively thin and genteel in its accents. She had started life as a lady's maid. "Excuse me," she went on, "but do you happen to know if by any chance Mrs. Spenlow isn't at home?"

"Not the least idea," said Miss Hartnell.

"It's rather awkward, you see. I was to fit on Mrs. Spenlow's new dress this afternoon. Three-thirty, she said."

Miss Hartnell consulted her wrist watch. "It's a little past the half-hour now."

"Yes. I have knocked three times, but there doesn't seem to be any answer, so I was wondering if perhaps Mrs. Spenlow might have gone out and forgotten. She doesn't forget appointments as a rule, and she wants the dress to wear the day after tomorrow."

Miss Hartnell entered the gate and walked up the path to join Miss Politt outside the door of Laburnam Cottage.

"Why doesn't Gladys answer the door?" she demanded. "Oh, no, of course, it's Thursday — Gladys's day out. I expect Mrs. Spenlow has fallen asleep. I don't expect you've made enough noise with this thing."

Seizing the knocker, she executed a deafening rat-a-tat-tat and, in addition, thumped upon the panels of the door. She also called out in a stentorian voice, "What ho, within there!"

There was no response.

Miss Politt murmured, "Oh, I think Mrs. Spenlow must have forgotten and gone out. I'll call round some other time." She began edging away down the path. "Nonsense," said Miss Hartnell firmly. "She can't have gone out. I'd have met her. I'll just take a look through the windows and see if I can find any signs of life." She laughed in her usual hearty manner, to indicate that it was a joke, and applied a perfunctory glance to the nearest windowpane — perfunctory because she knew quite well that the front room was seldom used, Mr. and Mrs. Spenlow preferring the small back sitting room.

Perfunctory as it was, though, it succeeded in its object. Miss Hartnell, it is true, saw no signs of life. On the contrary, she saw, through the window, Mrs. Spenlow lying on the hearthrug — dead.

"Of course," said Miss Hartnell, telling the story afterward, "I managed to keep my head. That Politt creature wouldn't have had the least idea of what to do. 'Got to keep our heads,' I said to her. 'You stay here and I'll go for Constable Palk.' She said something about not wanting to be left, but I paid no attention at all. One has to be firm with that sort of person. I've always found they enjoy making a fuss. So I was just going off when, at that very moment, Mr. Spenlow came round the corner of the house."

Here Miss Hartnell made a significant pause. It enabled her audience to ask breathlessly, "Tell me, how did he look?" Miss Hartnell would then go on, "Frankly, I suspected something at once! He was far too calm. He didn't seem surprised in the least. And you may say what you like, it isn't natural for a man to hear that his wife is dead and display no emotion whatever."

Everybody agreed with this statement.

The police agreed with it too. So suspicious did they consider Mr. Spenlow's detachment that they lost no time in ascertaining how that gentleman was situated as a result of his wife's death. When they discovered that Mrs. Spenlow had been the moneyed partner, and that her money went to her husband under a will made soon after their marriage, they were more suspicious than ever.

Miss Marple, that sweet-faced (and some said vinegar-tongued) elderly spinster who lived in the house next to the rectory, was interviewed very early -within half an hour of the discovery of the crime. She was approached by Police Constable Palk, importantly thumbing a notebook. "If you don't mind, ma'am, I've a few questions to ask you."

Miss Marple said, "In connection with the murder of Mrs. Spenlow?"

Palk was startled. "May I ask, madam, how you got to know of it?"

"The fish," said Miss Marple.

The reply was perfectly intelligible to Constable Palk. He assumed correctly that the fishmonger's boy had brought it, together with Miss Marple's evening meal.

Miss Marple continued gently, "Lying on the floor in the sitting room, strangled - possibly by a very narrow belt. But whatever it was, it was taken away."

Palk's face was wrathful. "How that young Fred gets to know everything..."

Miss Marple cut him short adroitly. She said, "There's a pin in your tunic."

Constable Palk looked down, startled. He said, "They do say: 'See a pin and pick it up, all the day you'll have good luck.'"

"I hope that will come true. Now, what is it you want me to tell you?"

Constable Palk cleared his throat, looked important, and consulted his notebook. "Statement was made to me by Mr. Arthur Spenlow, husband of the deceased. Mr. Spenlow says that at two-thirty, as far as he can say, he was rung up by Miss Marple and asked if he would come over at a quarter past three, as she was anxious to consult him about something. Now, ma'am, is that true?"

"Certainly not," said Miss Marple.

"You did not ring up Mr. Spenlow at two-thirty?"

"Neither at two-thirty nor any other time."

"Ah," said Constable Palk, and sucked his moustache with a good deal of satisfaction.

"What else did Mr. Spenlow say?"

"Mr. Spenlow's statement was that he came over here as requested, leaving his own house at ten minutes past three; that on arrival here he was informed by the maidservant that Miss Marple was 'not at 'ome.'"

"That part of it is true," said Miss Marple. "He did come here, but I was at a meeting at the Women's Institute."

"Ah," said Constable Palk again.

Miss Marple exclaimed, "Do tell me, Constable, do you suspect Mr. Spenlow?"

"It's not for me to say at this stage, but it looks to me as though somebody, naming no names, had been trying to be artful."

Miss Marple said thoughtfully, "Mr. Spenlow?"

She liked Mr. Spenlow. He was a small, spare man, stiff and conventional in speech, the acme of respectability. It seemed odd that he should have come to live in the country; he had so clearly lived in towns all his life. To Miss Marple he confided the reason. He said, "I have always intended, ever since I was a small boy, to live in the country someday and have a garden of my own. I have always been very much attached to flowers. My wife, you know, kept a flower shop. That's where I saw her first."

A dry statement, but it opened up a vista of romance. A younger, prettier Mrs. Spenlow, seen against a background of flowers.

Mr. Spenlow, however, really knew nothing about flowers. He had no idea of seeds, of cuttings, of bedding out, of annuals or perennials. He had only a vision — a vision of a small cottage garden thickly planted with sweet-smelling, brightly colored blossoms. He had asked, almost pathetically, for instruction and had noted down Miss Marple's replies to questions in a little book.

He was a man of quiet method. It was, perhaps, because of this trait that the police were interested in him when his wife

was found murdered. With patience and perseverance they learned a good deal about the late Mrs. Spenlow — and soon all St. Mary Mead knew it too.

The late Mrs. Spenlow had begun life as a betweenmaid in a large house. She had left that position to marry the second gardener and with him had started a flower shop in London. The shop had prospered. Not so the gardener, who before long had sickened and died.

His widow had carried on the shop and enlarged it in an ambitious way. She had continued to prosper. Then she had sold the business at a handsome price and embarked upon matrimony for the second time — with Mr. Spenlow, a middle-aged jeweler who had inherited a small and struggling business. Not long afterward they had sold the business and come down to St. Mary Mead.

Mrs. Spenlow was a well-to-do woman. The profits from her florist's establishment she had invested — "under spirit guidance," as she explained to all and sundry. The spirits had advised her with unexpected acumen.

All her investments had prospered, some in quite a sensational fashion. Instead, however, of this increasing her belief in spiritualism, Mrs. Spenlow basely deserted mediums and sittings and made a brief but wholehearted plunge into an obscure religion with Indian affinities which was based on various forms of deep breathing. When, however, she arrived at St. Mary Mead, she had relapsed into a period of orthodox Church-of-England beliefs. She was a good deal at the Vicarage and attended church services with assiduity. She patronized the village shops, took an interest in the local happenings, and played village bridge.

A humdrum, everyday life. And — suddenly — murder.

Colonel Melchett, the chief constable, had summoned Inspector Slack.

Slack was a positive type of man. When he made up his mind, he was sure. He was quite sure now. "Husband did it, sir," he said.

"You think so?"

"Quite sure of it. You've only got to look at him. Never showed a sign of grief or emotion. He came back to the house knowing she was dead."

"Wouldn't he at least have tried to act the part of the distracted husband?"

"Not him, sir. Too pleased with himself. Some gentlemen can't act. Too stiff. As I see it, he was just fed up with his wife. She'd got the money and, I should say, was a trying woman to live with — always taking up some 'ism' or other. He cold-bloodedly decided to do away with her and live comfortably on his own."

"Yes, that could be the case, I suppose."

"Depend upon it, that was it. Made his plans careful. Pretended to get a phone call..."

Melchett interrupted him: "No call been traced?"

"No, sir. That means either that he lied or that the call was put through from a public telephone booth. The only two public phones in the village are at the station and the post office. Post office it certainly wasn't. Mrs. Blade sees everyone who comes in. Station it might be. Train arrives at two twenty-seven and there's a bit of bustle then. But the main thing is he says it was Miss Marple who called him up, and that certainly isn't true. The call didn't come from her house, and she herself was away at the Institute."

"You're not overlooking the possibility that the husband was deliberately got out of the way — by someone who wanted to murder Mrs. Spenlow?"

"You're thinking of young Ted Gerard, aren't you, sir? I've been working on him — what we're up against there is lack of motive. He doesn't stand to gain anything."

"He's an undesirable character, though. Quite a pretty little spot of embezzlement to his credit."

"I'm not saying he isn't a wrong 'un. Still, he did go to his boss and own up to that embezzlement. And his employers weren't wise to it."

"An Oxford Grouper," said Melchett.

"Yes, sir. Became a convert and went off to do the straight thing and own up to having pinched money. I'm not saying, mind you, that it mayn't have been astuteness—he may have thought he was suspected and decided to gamble on honest repentance."

"You have a skeptical mind, Slack," said Colonel Melchett. "By the way, have you talked to Miss Marple at all?"

"What's she got to do with it, sir?"

"Oh, nothing. But she hears things, you know. Why don't you go and have a chat with her. She's a very sharp old lady."

Slack changed the subject. "One thing I've been meaning to ask you, sir: that domestic-service job where the deceased started her career — Sir Robert Abercrombie's place. That's where the jewel robbery was — emeralds — worth a packet. Never got them. I've been looking it up — must have happened when the Spenlow woman was there, though she'd have been quite a girl at the time. Don't think she was mixed up in it, do you, sir? Spenlow, you know, was one of those little tuppenny-ha'penny jewelers — just the chap for a fence."

Melchett shook his head. "Don't think there's anything in that. She didn't even know Spenlow at the time. I remember the case. Opinion in police circles was that a son of the house was mixed up in it — Jim Abercrombie — awful young waster. Had a pile of debts, and just after the robbery they were all paid off — some rich woman, so they said, but I don't know — old Abercrombie hedged a bit about the case — tried to call the police off."

"It was just an idea, sir," said Slack.

Miss Marple received Inspector Slack with gratification, especially when she heard that he had been sent by Colonel Melchett.

"Now, really, that is very kind of Colonel Melchett. I didn't know he remembered me."

"He remembers you, all right. Told me that what you didn't know of what goes on in St. Mary Mead isn't worth knowing."

"Too kind of him, but really I don't know anything at all. About this murder, I mean."

"You know what the talk about it is."

"Of course — but it wouldn't do, would it, to repeat just idle talk?"

Slack said, with an attempt at geniality, "This isn't an official conversation, you know. It's in confidence, so to speak."

"You mean you really want to know what people are saying? Whether there's any truth in it or not?"

"That's the idea."

"Well, of course, there's been a great deal of talk and speculation. And there are really two distinct camps, if you understand me. To begin with, there are the people who think that the husband did it. A husband or a wife is, in a way, the natural person to suspect, don't you think so?"

"Maybe," said the inspector cautiously.

"Such close quarters, you know. Then, so often, the money angle. I hear that it was Mrs. Spenlow who had the money and therefore Mr. Spenlow does benefit by her death. In this wicked world I'm afraid the most uncharitable assumptions are often justified."

"He comes into a tidy sum, all right."

"Just so. It would seem quite plausible, wouldn't it, for him to strangle her, leave the house by the back, come across the fields to my house, ask for me and pretend he'd had a telephone call from me, then go back and find his wife murdered in his absence — hoping, of course, that the crime would be put down to some tramp or burglar."

The inspector nodded. "What with the money angle — and if they'd been on bad terms lately..."

But Miss Marple interrupted him: "Oh, but they hadn't."

"You know that for a fact?"

"Everyone would have known if they'd quarreled! The maid, Gladys Brent — she'd have soon spread it round the village."

The inspector said feebly, "She mightn't have known," and received a pitying smile in reply.

Miss Marple went on: "And then there's the other school of thought. Ted Gerard. A good-looking young man. I'm afraid, you know, that good looks are inclined to influence one more than they should. Our last curate but one — quite a magical effect! All the girls came to church — evening service as well as morning. And many older women became unusually active in parish work — and the slippers and scarves that were made for him! Quite embarrassing for the poor young man."

"But let me see, where was I? Oh yes, this young man, Ted Gerard: Of course, there has been talk about him. He's come down to see her so often. Though Mrs. Spenlow told

me herself that he was a member of what I think they call the Oxford Group. A religious movement. They are quite sincere and very earnest, I believe, and Mrs. Spenlow was impressed by it all."

Miss Marple took a breath and went on: "And I'm sure there was no reason to believe that there was anything more in it than that, but you know what people are. Quite a lot of people are convinced that Mrs. Spenlow was infatuated with the young man and that she'd lent him quite a lot of money. And it's perfectly true that he was actually seen at the station that day. In the train — the two twenty-seven down train. But of course it would be quite easy, wouldn't it, to slip out of the other side of the train and go through the cutting and over the fence and round by the hedge and never come out of the station entrance at all? So that he need not have been seen going to the cottage. And of course people do think that what Mrs. Spenlow was wearing was rather peculiar."

"Peculiar?"

"A kimono. Not a dress." Miss Marple blushed. "That sort of thing, you know, is, perhaps, rather suggestive to some people."

"You think it was suggestive?"

"Oh no, I don't think so. I think it was perfectly natural."

"You think it was natural?"

"Under the circumstances, yes." Miss Marple's glance was cool and reflective.

Inspector Slack said, "It might give us another motive for the husband. Jealousy."

"Oh no, Mr. Spenlow would never be jealous. He's not the sort of man who notices things. If his wife had gone away and left a note on the pincushion, it would be the first he'd know anything of that kind."

Inspector Slack was puzzled by the intent way she was looking at him. He had an idea that all her conversation was intended to hint at something he didn't understand. She said now, with some emphasis, "Didn't you find any clues, Inspector — on the spot?"

"People don't leave fingerprints and cigarette ash nowadays, Miss Marple."

"But this, I think," she suggested, "was an old-fashioned crime..."

Slack said sharply, "Now what do you mean by that?"

Miss Marple remarked slowly, "I think, you know, that Constable Palk could help you. He was the first person on the — on the 'scene of the crime,' as they say."

Mr. Spenlow was sitting in a deck chair. He looked bewildered. He said, in his thin, precise voice, "I may, of course, be imagining what occurred. My hearing is not as good as it was. But I distinctly think I heard a small boy call after me, 'Yah, who's a Crippen?' It — it conveyed the impression to me that he was of the opinion that I had — had killed my dear wife."

Miss Marple, gently snipping off a dead rose head, said, "That was the impression he meant to convey, no doubt."

"But what could possibly have put such an idea into a child's head?"

Miss Marple coughed. "Listening, no doubt, to the opinions of his elders."

"You — you really mean that other people think that also?"

"Quite half the people in St. Mary Mead."

"But, my dear lady, what can possibly have given rise to such an idea? I was sincerely attached to my wife. She did not, alas, take to living in the country as much as I had hoped she would do, but perfect agreement on every subject is an impossible ideal. I assure you I feel her loss very keenly."

"Probably. But if you will excuse my saying so, you don't sound as though you do."

Mr. Spenlow drew his meager frame up to its full height. "My dear lady, many years ago I read of a certain Chinese philosopher who, when his dearly loved wife was taken from him, continued calmly to beat a gong in the street — a customary Chinese pastime, I presume — exactly as usual. The people of the city were much impressed by his fortitude."

"But," said Miss Marple, "the people of St. Mary Mead react rather differently. Chinese philosophy does not appeal to them."

"But you understand?"

Miss Marple nodded. "My uncle Henry," she explained, "was a man of unusual self-control. His motto was 'Never display emotion.' He, too, was very fond of flowers."

"I was thinking," said Mr. Spenlow with something like eagerness, "that I might, perhaps, have a pergola on the west side of the cottage. Pink roses and, perhaps, wisteria. And there is a white starry flower, whose name for the moment escapes me..."

In the tone in which she spoke to her grand-nephew, aged three, Miss Marple said, "I have a very nice catalog here, with pictures. Perhaps you would like to look through it — I have to go up to the village."

Leaving Mr. Spenlow sitting happily in the garden with his catalog, Miss Marple went up to her room, hastily rolled up a dress in a piece of brown paper, and, leaving the house, walked briskly up to the post office. Miss Politt, the dressmaker, lived in rooms over the post office.

But Miss Marple did not at once go through the door and up the stairs. It was just two-thirty, and, a minute late, the Much Benham bus drew up outside the post-office door. It was one of the events of the day in St. Mary Mead. The postmistress hurried out with parcels, parcels connected with the shop side of her business, for the post office also dealt in sweets, cheap books, and children's toys.

For some four minutes Miss Marple was alone in the post office.

Not till the postmistress returned to her post did Miss Marple go upstairs and explain to Miss Politt that she wanted her own grey crepe altered and made more fashionable if that were possible. Miss Politt promised to see what she could do.

The chief constable was rather astonished when Miss Marple's name was brought to him. She came in with many apologies. "So sorry — so very sorry to disturb you. You are so busy, I know, but then you have always been so very kind, Colonel Melchett, and I felt I would rather come to you instead of to Inspector Slack. For one thing, you know, I should hate Constable Palk to get into any trouble. Strictly speaking. I suppose he shouldn't have touched anything at all."

Colonel Melchett was slightly bewildered. He said, "Palk? That's the St. Mary Mead constable, isn't it? What has he been doing?"

"He picked up a pin, you know. It was in his tunic. And it occurred to me at the time that it was quite probable he had actually picked it up in Mrs. Spenlow's house."

"Quite, quite. But, after all, you know, what's a pin? Matter of fact, he did pick the pin up just by Mrs. Spenlow's body. Came and told Slack about it yesterday—you put him up to that, I gather? Oughtn't to have touched anything, of course, but, as I said, what's a pin? It was only a common pin. Sort of thing any woman might use."

"Oh no, Colonel Melchett, that's where you're wrong. To a man's eye, perhaps, it looked like an ordinary pin, but it wasn't. It was a special pin, a very thin pin, the kind you buy by the box, the kind used mostly by dressmakers."

Melchett stared at her, a faint light of comprehension breaking in on him. Miss Marple nodded her head several times eagerly.

"Yes, of course, it seems to me so obvious. She was in her kimono because she was going to try on her new dress, and she went into the front room, and Miss Politt just said something about measurements and put the tape measure round her neck — and then all she'd have to do was to cross it and pull — quite easy, so I've heard. And then of course she'd go outside and pull the door to and stand there knocking as though she'd just arrived. But the pin shows she'd already been in the house."

"And it was Miss Politt who telephoned to Spenlow?"

"Yes. From the post office at two-thirty — just when the bus comes and the post office would be empty."

Colonel Melchett said, "But, my dear Miss Marple, why? In heaven's name, why? You can't have a murder without a motive."

"Well, I think, you know, Colonel Melchett, from all I've heard, that the crime dates from a long time back. It reminds me, you know, of my two cousins, Antony and Gordon. Whatever Antony did always went right for him, and with poor Gordon it was just the other way about: race horses went lame,

and stocks went down, and property depreciated. ... As I see it, the two women were in it together."

"In what?"

"The robbery. Long ago. Very valuable emeralds, so I've heard. The lady's maid and the tweeny. Because one thing hasn't been explained — how, when the tweeny married the gardener, did they have enough money to set up a flower shop?

"The answer is, it was her share of the — the swag, I think is the right expression. Everything she did turned out well. Money made money.

"But the other one, the lady's maid, must have been unlucky. She came down to being just a village dressmaker. Then they met again. Quite all right at first, I expect, until Mr. Ted Gerard came on the scene.

"Mrs. Spenlow, you see, was already suffering from conscience and was inclined to be emotionally religious. This young man no doubt urged her to 'face up' and to 'come clean,' and I daresay she was strung up to do so. But Miss Politt didn't see it that way. All she saw was that she might go to prison for a robbery she had committed years ago. So she made up her mind to put a stop to it all. I'm afraid, you know, that she was always rather a wicked woman. I don't believe she'd have turned a hair if that nice, stupid Mr. Spenlow had been hanged."

Colonel Melchett said slowly, "We can — er — verify your theory — up to a point. The identity of the Politt woman with the lady's maid at the Abercrombies', but..."

Miss Marple reassured him.

"It will be all quite easy. She's the kind of woman who will break down at once when she's taxed with the truth. And then, you see, I've got her tape measure. I — er — abstracted it yesterday when I was trying on. When she misses it and thinks the police have got it — well, she's quite an ignorant woman and she'll think it will prove the case against her in some way."

She smiled at him encouragingly. "You'll have no trouble, I can assure you." It was the tone in which his favorite aunt had once assured him that he could not fail to pass his entrance examination into Sandhurst.

And he had passed.

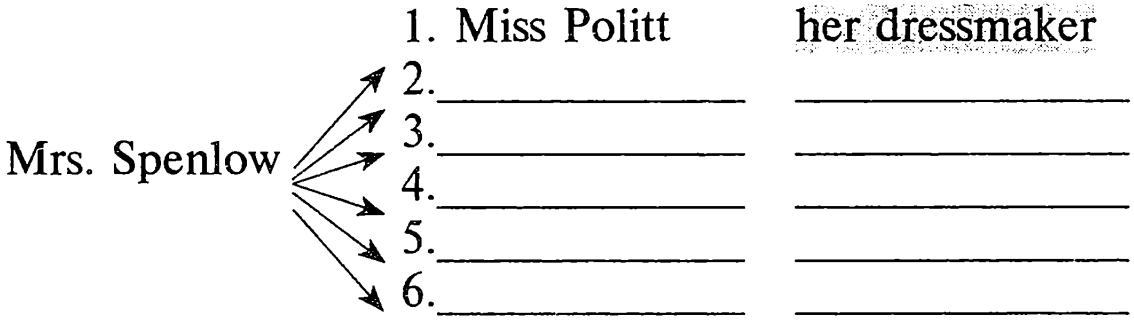
TASK 1. Answer the questions below.

1. What reason did Miss Politt give Miss Hartnell for being at Laburnam Cottage?
2. What was her profession?
3. Do you think Miss Politt was an attractive woman?
4. Why did the maid, Gladys Brent, fail to respond to Miss Politt's knocking?
5. How did Miss Hartnell explain why Mrs Spenlow didn't open the door?
6. What was Miss Politt's guess?
7. Who discovered the dead body? How did it happen?
8. How did Miss Hartnell, Miss Politt and Mr. Spenlow react to Mrs. Spenlow's death?
9. What sound reasons did the police have for suspecting Mr. Spenlow?
10. Why did Police Constable Palk pay a visit to Miss Marple?
11. What facts about Mrs. and Mr. Spenlow did the police soon find out?
12. Why did Mrs. Spenlow stop going to spiritual sittings?
13. How many public phones were there in the village and where?
14. Were the police able to trace the call to Mr.Spenlow?
15. What information does the author give readers about Ted?
16. What crime could Mrs Spenlow be mixed up in according to Slack's theory?
17. Did Colonel Melchett agree to consider it further?
18. What village gossips did Miss Marple tell to Inspector Slack?
19. What did Mr Spenlow try to explain to Miss Marple by telling her a story of one Chinese philosopher?
20. Why do you think Miss Marple went to the post and stayed there while the postmistress was busy outside?
21. Why did Miss Marple go to Miss Politt after that? Did the latter live a long way from the post?
22. What important piece of information did Miss Marple give Colonel Melchett about Constable Palk? What was special about the thing Palk picked up?

23. How was Mrs. Spenlow murdered? Who killed her and why?

24. What makes Miss Marple believe that Miss Politt will readily confess her guilt?

TASK 2. How are the characters of the story related to Mrs. Spenlow? Complete the table.



TASK 3. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 4. Find words and phrases with the opposite meaning.

1. to take hold of	a) to be disinherited
2. perfunctory	b) careful, attentive
3. to be on bad terms	c) to close smth down
4. to make a fuss	d) to deny committing a crime
5. to keep one's head	e) to feel pains of conscience
6. acumen	f) to have a good relationship with smb
7. to call off	g) to let smth go
8. to come into a tidy sum	h) to lose one's temper
9. to set up smth	i) to neglect
10. not to turn one's hair	j) to order to attack or to search
11. to break down	k) to read thoroughly
12. to thumb a notebook	l) stupidiry

TASK 5. Fill in the gaps with one of the phrases from the left column of Task 4. Make all necessary changes.

1. It's difficult to confuse him. He always _____.

2. It was a close escape, he was nearly run over by a car. But to my surprise he did _____.

3. He_____ his dogs when he saw an approaching figure of the girl.

4. He never dreamt of a sum more than 100 dollars, but after the death of his great aunt he _____. It was a great surprise to him as he had always been ____ ____ with her.

5. When mother looked at her son sternly, he _____ immediately and admitted breaking the vase.

6. He has neither commercial nor financial _____ .

7. In fact they never did their best. They only made a _____ effort.

8. After getting bad news from his home, the young man couldn't concentrate on his notes and was just _____.

TASK 6. Find phrases with similar meaning.

1. adroit	a) to be bored with
2. to be fed up with	b) to be madly in love with
3. to do away with	c) to become less valuable
4. to depreciate	d) to confess
5. to put the crime down to smb	e) to put an end to
6. to be infatuated with	f) to shift one's fault on smb
7. to own up to smth	g) skillful and clever

TASK 7. Complete the sentences with the phrases given below.

1. He was so _____ music that his parents decided to buy him a violin.

2. I'm _____ all this monotonous work. I'm going to look for something more challenging.

3. Old models of computers _____ as soon as new ones appear in the market.

4. He _____ pick pocketing after the police threatened to put him to prison.

5. The boy stole money from the cupboard and made a plan how _____ his younger brother.

6. He managed to settle the problems of the contract only because he was a very _____ negotiator.

1. *owned up to;* 2. *to put the crime down to;* 3. *infatuated with;* 4. *adroit;* 5. *fed up with;* 6. *depreciate.*

TASK 8. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. Miss Hartnell entered the gate and walked _____ the path.
2. She was _____ her kimono because she was going to try _____ her new dress.
3. Mrs. Spenlow was already suffering _____ conscience.
4. She smiled _____ him encouragingly.
5. But Miss Marple did not ____ once go _____ the door and _____ the stairs.
6. She came in _____ many apologies.
7. Perfunctory as it was, though, it succeeded _____ its object.
8. "Oh, no, of course, it's Thursday — Gladys's day _____."
9. Had a pile _____ debts, and just after the robbery they were all paid _____.
10. But of course it would be quite easy, wouldn't it, to slip _____ of the other side of the train and go _____ the cutting and _____ the fence and round by the hedge and never come _____ of the station entrance at all?
11. I have a very nice catalog here, _____ pictures. Perhaps you would like to look _____ it?
12. I hear that it was Mrs. Spenlow who had the money and therefore Mr. Spenlow does benefit _____ her death.
13. He had an idea that all her conversation was intended to hint _____ something he didn't understand.
14. It was, perhaps, because _____ this trait that the police were interested _____ him when his wife was found murdered.
15. Mr. Spenlow says that _____ two-thirty, as far as he can say, he was rung up _____ Miss Marple and asked if he would come _____ at a quarter past three, as she was anxious to consult him _____ something.

TASK 9. a) Describe the background and interests of Mr. Spenlow. b) Describe the background and interests of his late wife. c) Why was Mrs. Spenlow never accused of stealing emeralds from her former employer?

TASK 10. Agatha Christie artfully describes her characters. The characters of the story give their opinions about each

other. Read the text again and analyse who gives information or characteristics of the main characters of the story and if it is positive or negative. What circumstantial evidence makes the reader think that each of the main characters can be tied to Mrs. Spenlow's murder?

TASK 11. Explain the significance of each of the following clues in enabling Miss Marple to solve the crime:

a) a pin;
b) the post office;
c) Ted Gerard;
d) a flower shop;
e) a kimono.

TASK 12. Act out the dialogues between:

a) Miss Politt and Miss Hartnell while knocking at the door of Mrs. Spenlow;
b) Miss Marple and Constable Palk;
c) Miss Marple and Mr. Spenlow.

TASK 13. Imagine that each of the main characters are trying to tell you the truth about themselves and the murder in the village and explain why he/she was under suspicion. What would they say?

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings
A MOTHER IN MANNVILLE

The orphanage is high in the Carolina mountains. Sometimes in winter the snowdrifts are so deep that the institution is cut off from the village below, from all the world. Fog hides the mountain peaks, the snow swirls down the valleys, and a wind blows so bitterly that the orphanage boys who take the milk twice daily to the baby cottage reach the door with fingers stiff in an agony of numbness.

"Or when we carry trays from the cookhouse for the ones that are sick," Jerry said, "we get our faces frostbit, because we can't put our hands over them. I have gloves," he added. "Some of the boys don't have any." He liked the late spring, he said. The rhododendron was in bloom, a carpet of color, across the mountainsides, soft as the May winds that stirred the hemlocks. He called it laurel.

"It's pretty when the laurel blooms," he said. "Some of it's pink and some of it's white."

I was there in the autumn. I wanted quiet, isolation, to do some troublesome writing. I wanted mountain air to blow out the malaria from too long a time in the subtropics. I was homesick, too, for the flaming of maples in October, and for corn shocks and pumpkins and black-walnut trees and the lift of hills. I found them all, living in a cabin that belonged to the orphanage, half a mile beyond the orphanage farm. When I took the cabin, I asked for a boy or man to come and chop wood for the fireplace. The first few days were warm, and I found what wood I needed about the cabin; no one came, and I forgot the order.

I looked up from my typewriter one late afternoon, a little startled. A boy stood at the door, and my pointer dog, my companion, was at his side and had not barked to warn me. The boy was probably twelve years old, but undersized. He wore

overalls and a torn shirt, and was barefooted. He said, "I can chop some wood today."

I said, " But I have a boy coming from the orphanage."

"I'm the boy."

"You? But you're small."

"Size don't matter, chopping wood," he said. "Some of the big boys don't chop good. I've been chopping wood at the orphanage a long time." I visualized mangled and inadequate branches for my fires. I was well into my work and not inclined to conversation. I was a little blunt. "Very well. There's the ax. Go ahead and see what you can do." I went back to work, closing the door. At first the sound of the boy dragging brush annoyed me. Then he began to chop. The blows were rhythmic and steady; and shortly I had forgotten him, the sound no more of an interruption than a consistent rain. I suppose an hour and a half passed, for when I stopped and stretched, and heard the boy's steps on the cabin stoop, the sun was drooping behind the farthest mountain and the valleys were purple.

The boy said, "I have to go to supper now. I can come again tomorrow evening."

I said, "I'll pay you now for what you've done," thinking I should probably have to insist on an older boy. "Ten cents an hour?" "Anything is all right."

We went together back of the cabin. An astonishing amount of solid wood had been cut. There were cherry logs and heavy roots of rhododendron, and blocks from the waste pine and oak left from the building of the cabin.

"But you've done as much as a man," I said. "This is a splendid pile." I looked at him, actually, for the first time. His hair was the color of the corn shucks, and his eyes, very direct, were like the mountain sky when rain is pending — gray, with a shadowing of that miraculous blue. As I spoke, a light came over him — as though the setting sun had touched him with the same suffused glory with which it touched the mountains. I gave him a quarter.

"You may come tomorrow," I said, "and thank you very much." He looked at me, and at the coin, and seemed to want to speak, but could not, and turned away.

"I'll split kindling tomorrow," he said over his thin ragged shoulder. "You'll need kindling and medium wood and logs

and backlogs." At daylight I was half wakened by the sound of chopping. Again it was so even in texture that I went back to sleep. When I left my bed in the cool morning, the boy had come and gone; and a stack of kindling was neat against the cabin wall. He came again after school in the afternoon and worked until time to return to the orphanage. His name was Jerry; he was twelve years old, and he had been at the orphanage since he was four. I could picture him at four, with the same grave gray-blue eyes and the same — independence? No, the word that comes to me is "integrity."

The word means something very special to me, and the quality for which I use it is a rare one. My father had it — there is another of whom I am almost sure — but almost no man of my acquaintance possesses it with the clarity, the purity, the simplicity of a mountain stream. But the boy Jerry had it. It is bedded on courage, but it is more than brave. It is honest, but it is more than honesty. The ax handle broke one day. Jerry said the woodshop at the orphanage would repair it. I brought money to pay for the job and he refused it.

"I'll pay for it," he said. "I broke it. I brought the ax down careless."

"But no one hits accurately every time," I told him. "The fault was in the wood of the handle. I'll see the man from whom I bought it." It was only then that he would take the money. He was standing back of his own carelessness. He was a free-will agent and he chose to do careful work; and if he failed, he took the responsibility.

And he did for me the unnecessary thing, the gracious thing, that we find done only by the great of heart. Things no training can teach; for they are done on the instant, with no predicated experience. He found a cubbyhole beside the fireplace that I had not noticed. There, of his own accord, he put kindling and "medium" wood, so that I might always have dry fire material ready in case of sudden wet weather. A stone was loose in the rough walk to the cabin. He dug a deeper hole and steadied it, although he came, himself, by a short cut over the bank. I found that when I tried to return his thoughtfulness with such things as candy and apples he was wordless. "Thank you" was, perhaps, an expression for which he had no use, for his courtesy was instinctive. He only looked at the gift and at

me, and a curtain lifted so that I saw deep into the clear well of his eyes; and gratitude was there, and affection, soft over the firm granite of his character.

He made simple excuses to come and sit with me. I could no more have turned him away than if he had been physically hungry. I suggested once that the best time for us to visit was just before supper, when I left off my writing. After that he waited always until my typewriter had been some time quiet. One day I worked until nearly dark. I went outside the cabin, having forgotten him. I saw him going up over the hill in the twilight toward the orphanage. When I sat down on my stoop, a place was warm from his body where he had been sitting.

He became intimate, of course, with my pointer, Pat. There is a strange communion between a boy and a dog. Perhaps they possess the same singleness of spirit, the same kind of wisdom. It is difficult to explain, but it exists. When I went across the state for a week end, I left the dog in Jerry's charge. I gave him the dog whistle and the key to the cabin, and left sufficient food. He was to come two or three times a day and let out the dog, and feed and exercise him. I should return Sunday night, and Jerry would take out the dog for the last time Sunday afternoon and then leave the key under an agreed hiding place. My return was belated, and fog filled the mountain passes so treacherously that I dared not drive at night. The fog held the next morning, and it was Monday noon before I reached the cabin. The dog had been fed and cared for that morning. Jerry came early in the afternoon, anxious.

"The superintendent said nobody would drive in the fog," he said. " I came just before bedtime last night and you hadn't come. So I brought Pat some of my breakfast this morning. I wouldn't have let anything happen to him."

"I was sure of that. I didn't worry."

"When I heard about the fog, I thought you'd know."

He was needed for work at the orphanage, and he had to return at once. I gave him a dollar in payment, and he looked at it and went away. But that night he came in the darkness and knocked at the door. "Come in, Jerry," I said, "if you're allowed to be away this late." "I told maybe a story," he said. "I told them I thought you would want to see me."

"That's true," I assured him, and I saw his relief. "I want to hear about how you managed with the dog."

He sat by the fire with me, with no other light, and told me of their two days together. The dog lay close to him, and found a comfort there that I did not have for him. And it seemed to me that being with my dog, and caring for him, had brought the boy and me, too, together, so that he felt that he belonged to me as well as to the animal.

"He stayed right with me," he told, "except when he ran in the laurel. He likes the laurel. I took him up over the hill and we both ran fast. There was a place where the grass was high and I lay down in it and hid. I could hear Pat hunting for me. He found my trail and he barked. When he found me, he acted crazy; and he ran around and around me, in circles."

We watched the flames.

"That's an apple log," he said. "It burns the prettiest of any wood." We were very close.

He was suddenly impelled to speak of things he had not spoken of before, nor had I cared to ask him.

"You look a little bit like my mother," he said. "Especially in the dark, by the fire."

"But you were only four, Jerry, when you came here. You have remembered how she looked, all these years?"

"My mother lives in Mannville," he said.

For a moment, finding that he had a mother shocked me as greatly as anything in my life has ever done; and I did not know why it disturbed me. Then I understood my distress. I was filled with a passionate resentment that any woman should go away and leave her son. A fresh anger added itself. A son like this one — the orphanage was a wholesome place; the executives were kind, good people; the food was more than adequate; the boys were healthy; a ragged shirt was no hardship, nor the doing of clean labor. Granted, perhaps, that the boy felt no lack, what about the mother? At four he would have looked the same as now. Nothing, I thought, nothing in life could change those eyes. His quality must be apparent to an idiot, a fool. I burned with questions I could not ask. "Have you seen her, Jerry — lately?"

"I see her every summer. She sends for me."

I wanted to cry out, "Why are you not with her? How can she let you go away again?"

He said, "She comes up here from Mannville whenever she can. She doesn't have a job now."

His face shone in the firelight.

"She wanted to give me a puppy, but they can't let any one boy keep a puppy. You remember the suit I had on last Sunday?" He was plainly proud. "She sent me that for Christmas. The Christmas before that" — he drew a long breath, savoring the memory — "she sent me a pair of skates."

"Roller skates?"

My mind was busy, making pictures of her, trying to understand her. She had not, then, entirely deserted or forgotten him. But why, then I thought, "I must not condemn her without knowing." "Roller skates. I let the other boys use them. They're always borrowing them. But they're careful of them."

What circumstances other than poverty —

"I'm going to take the dollar you gave me for taking care of Pat," he said, "and buy her a pair of gloves."

I could only say, "That will be nice. Do you know her size?"

"I think it's eight and a half," he said.

He looked at my hands.

"Do you wear eight and a half ?" he asked.

"No. I wear a smaller size, a six."

"Oh! Then I guess her hands are bigger than yours."

I hated her. Poverty or no, there was other food than bread; and the soul could starve as quickly as the body. He was taking his dollar to buy gloves for her big, stupid hands, and she lived away from him, in Mannville, and contented herself with sending him skates.

"She likes white gloves," he said. "Do you think I can get them for a dollar?"

"I think so," I said.

I decided that I should not leave the mountains without seeing her and knowing for myself why she had done this thing.

The human mind scatters its interests as though made of thistledown, and every wind stirs and moves it. I finished my work. It did not please me, and I gave my thoughts to another field. I should need some Mexican material.

I made arrangements to close my Florida place. Mexico immediately, and doing the writing there, if conditions were

favorable. Then, Alaska with my brother. After that, heaven knew what or where.

I did not take time to go to Mannville to see Jerry's mother, nor even to talk with the orphanage officials about her. I was a trifle abstracted about the boy, because of my work and plans. And after my first fury at her — we did not speak of her again — his having a mother, any sort at all, not far away, in Mannville, relieved me of the ache I had had about him. He did not question the anomalous relation. He was not lonely. It was none of my concern.

He came every day and cut my wood and did small helpful favors and stayed to talk. The days had become cold, and often I let him come inside the cabin. He would lie on the floor in front of the fire, with one arm across the pointer; and they would both doze and wait quietly for me. Other days they ran with a common ecstasy through the laurel; and since the asters were now gone, he brought me back vermilion maple leaves and chestnut boughs dripping with imperial yellow.

I was ready to go. I said to him, "You have been my good friend, Jerry. I shall often think of you and miss you. Pat will miss you too. I am leaving tomorrow."

He did not answer. When he went away, I remember that a new moon hung over the mountains and I watched him go in silence up the hill. I expected him the next day, but he did not come. The details of packing my personal belongings, loading my car, arranging the bed over the seat — where the dog would ride — occupied me until late in the day. I closed the cabin and started the car, noticing that the sun was in the west and I should do well to be out of the mountains by nightfall. I stopped by the orphanage and left the cabin key and money for my light bill with Miss Clark.

"And will you call Jerry for me to say good-by to him?"

"I don't know where he is," she said. "I'm afraid he's not well. He didn't eat his dinner this noon. One of the other boys saw him going over the hill into the laurel. He was supposed to fire the boiler this afternoon. It's not like him; he's unusually reliable."

I was almost relieved; for I knew I should never see him again, and it would be easier not to say good-by to him.

I said, "I wanted to talk with you about his mother — why he's here — but I'm in more of a hurry than I expected to be. It's out of the question for me to see her now, too. But here's some money I'd like to leave with you to buy things for him at Christmas and on his birthday. It will be better than for me to try to send him things. I could so easily duplicate — skates, for instance."

She blinked her honest eyes.

"There's not much use for skates here," she said.

Her stupidity annoyed me.

"What I mean," I said, "is that I don't want to duplicate things his mother sends him. I might have chosen skates if I didn't know she had already given them to him."

She stared at me.

"I don't understand," she said. "He has no mother. He has no skates."

TASK 1. Answer the questions below.

1. This entire story is seen through the eyes of a single person. Who is this person? Is it the main character of the story? If not, who is it centered upon?
2. Where does the action of the story take place? What brought the story-teller there?
3. What was the story-teller tired of and what did she long for in terms of natural surroundings?
4. How did the story-teller get to know Jerry? What was her first overall impression of him? Did it prove to be right or wrong?
5. What was the quality that the story-teller particularly admired in Jerry?
6. What was that "strange communion" that existed between Jerry and the story-teller's dog?
7. How did Jerry manage with taking care of Pat while the story-teller was away for a weekend?
8. In what way did the relationship between Jerry and the story-teller change?

9. What did Jerry reveal about his life on the night the story-teller returned? What feelings was the story-teller overcome with during this conversation?

10. The story-teller's first impulse was to find Jerry's mother. Why didn't she do so?

11. What did the story-teller find out from Miss Clark on the day of her departure?

TASK 2. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. The best time to visit the rose garden is in late May and June when roses are _____ bloom.

2. Jane never really liked traveling. Whenever she found herself away from home, she always felt homesick _____ her cosy kitchen, her rocking chair in the living room and, of course, her garden.

3. Accessible only by air, the town is often cut _____ _____ the rest of the country, especially during the season of monsoons.

4. Parents tend to believe that money matters should be discussed when children are not around as they are none ____ _____ their concern.

5. Mr. Simpson decided to hire a secretary who would relieve him _____ some of the paperwork.

6. Emma's fury _____ her parents was completely understandable because they had refused to pay for her education and told her to start looking for a good husband instead of wasting her precious time at university.

7. When Jacob was well _____ his work, he never answered the phone and didn't even make any breaks for a cup of tea or coffee.

8. — How did you manage to talk your husband into going to the opera with you? What did you bribe him with?

— I did nothing of the sort! He decided to go _____ his own accord.

9. When I have to go on a business trip for a few days, I leave my cat _____ my neighbour's charge. It's very convenient.

10. Our teacher insists _____ reading the task at least twice before getting round to doing it.

TASK 3. The story contains quite a few expressions and words describing weather and seasonal changes in the landscape. Write out as many words and phrases as you can under the headings suggested below and translate them into your native language:

a) weather conditions;
b) names of trees and plants;
c) changes in the landscape.

TASK 4.

Never once is the reader told what goes on in Jerry's mind, yet in the end you know quite a bit about his thoughts and feelings. He's a curious fellow, undersized and very quiet, but with a certain independence about him, a certain integrity. You can learn about a character in a story or novel chiefly in three ways: (1) by what he says about himself; (2) by what others say about him; (3) by what he does, or how he acts in particular situations. Build up your understanding of Jerry, the main character here, by noting all of these ways of character portrayal.

TASK 5. Answer the following questions about Jerry.

1. Pat, the dog, fails to bark when Jerry first knocks at the door; later he "found a comfort" in lying close to Jerry, a comfort his owner could not give him. What do these facts tell us about Jerry?
2. In the first part of the story Jerry is pictured as a boy who had great integrity of character. What did Jerry do that supports this estimation of him?
3. At the end of the story we discover that Jerry had lied about having a mother and about receiving presents from her. Does this contradict the picture we have of him as a person of integrity?
4. What, in your opinion, was Jerry's reason for making up the story about the "mother in Mannville "? Do you think that Jerry would have been as likely to have told the story to a person whom he didn't like as much as the writer? Why or why not?
5. What do you believe were the writer's reactions when she learned that Jerry had lied to her about having a mother. Do you think she liked Jerry less?

TASK 6.

The author used these comparisons in describing the boy: "His hair was the color of the corn shucks and his eyes, very direct, were like the mountain sky when rain is pending — gray, with shadowing of that miraculous blue."

What effect do these words have in creating your idea of the boy? What other comparisons do you find in the description of Jerry? What are they used for?

TASK 7.

a) Retell the story from the person of one of Jerry's friends at the orphanage or Miss Clark.

b) Imagine you are Jerry and you are keeping a diary. Describe the weekend you (Jerry) have spent taking care of Pat. Write the diary entry of the day Jerry learns that the story-teller is leaving the next day.

Ila D. Hodgson

MY MOTHER ISN'T HOME YET

I let myself into the dim and quiet apartment, hating to walk into empty rooms. When Mother was home — life wasn't too bad. There were just the two of us, doing things we wanted to do, but during the four days she worked, home could be lonely.

I turned on the foyer light right away and then went into the dining area and turned on those lights because I can't stand for everything to be dark. Going into the kitchen, I was suddenly struck by a thought and turned back to look.

Mother had left her sewing strewn clear across the dinette table, where a dress pattern was pinned on and partly cut out. Her sewing box was on one of the chairs, and scraps of the bright print material were on another chair. The scissors were on the table where a sleeve of the dress was half cut out.

Of course, it wasn't *too* unusual for Mother to suddenly realize she was late for work and then dash off, leaving any number of things half done. Mother and I are both like that. We have a townhouse apartment — three floors — filled with half-finished projects.

My current project consists of writing a mystery about a private eye. I have been reading dozens of detective stories and making up a card file on helpful things like poisons, guns, famous murder trials, and such.

As I helped myself to a handful of cashews, I decided that I actually get a lot of detective practice in my humdrum, everyday life. I can tell just what Mother's morning activities have been by the evidence that she leaves when she goes to work an hour before I get home from school. She's a registered nurse and works the three to eleven o'clock shift on third floor pediatrics at St. Mary's.

I started detecting. The breakfast dishes were a sloppy mess, half in the sink and half on top of the dishwasher. Mother

would rather sew than clean the kitchen. A peek in the living room revealed coffee cups, newspapers, and magazines in the same disarray we had left the night before. Upstairs, Mother's bed had not been made.

I lay down on my fluffy blue bedspread and picked up my purple stuffed bear for inspiration. As I saw it, Mother had left unexpectedly — early, perhaps, or otherwise, she would have made her bed, at least, and straightened the living room. So — when she started sewing, she had expected to have more time to straighten up the house — but then she had stopped sewing right in the middle of cutting out a sleeve. I stroked Teddy's purple fuzz. Mother's activities were beginning to look mysterious.

She must have left early and abruptly, but why? Perhaps there was a phone call or something in the mail but, as usual, I had forgotten to check both. I went back downstairs. There were no messages on the telephone pad, but the phone rang right then. It was Tippi Jones, my best and most faithful friend. "Come on over, Luann," she said excitedly. "I stopped and bought the most terrific album on the way home from school. Besides, you haven't heard *any* of my new records yet."

I peered over the telephone at the scattered mess in the kitchen and dining area.

"Well, I have to get this place spruced up, but I suppose I could come over for a bit. See you."

Mother and I have a sort of agreement on housework. Each of us does about half of what needs to be done — depending on what seems necessary. I could easily handle the housework before dinner if I left my homework till after dinner. Besides, I hate to stay alone in our apartment the entire time from after school until Mother gets home.

I left on a couple of lights so I wouldn't come home to complete darkness, and I headed for Tippi's.

Her father was home. He is a traveling salesman and is sometimes away for a terrifically long time. Other times, he stays home for several days or maybe comes home early in the afternoon. He's a character.

"Hi, Sherlock! What's the word from Scotland Yard?" Tippi's father asked me.

"I'll bet that when I'm an extremely rich and famous mystery writer you'll take me seriously," I told him in a very nice way.

"I thought last year you were going to be a poor and suffering paleontologist," he countered.

"Oh, Daddy!" said Tippi. "That's just because she went to Dinosaur National Monument last summer. Come on, Luann, let's go listen to records."

I was a little miffed that Tippi took my dinosaur venture so lightly, although it *was* only another half-finished project. I had charts of dinosaurs with the Ages and places they lived and lots of pamphlets from the National Monument, and I had read Colbert's *Men and Dinosaurs.* For a while I really was intrigued with the idea of being a vertebrate paleontologist, but then I decided to write mysteries instead.

People tend to sympathize with me because I am an only child and my parents got divorced two years ago. I hated the divorce, although things are a lot more peaceful with Daddy gone. He lives in Colorado now, and that's why I went to the Dinosaur Monument. Daddy gets me for three weeks a year, and this summer he's going to take me to the Grand Canyon. He's married again now. I wonder if I'll like his new wife.

Anyway, out of sympathy, Tippi's mother invited me to stay for dinner.

"It's getting dark," I said after dinner, which was late. "I guess I'll go along home now."

"Gets kind of scary writing mysteries all alone at night, doesn't it?" teased Tippi's father.

"Certainly not," I lied. "Writing is going to be my life's work."

Still, I wished he hadn't said that. I had only four short blocks to walk home, right past the police station, but I felt kind of squeamish. That's one reason I decided to make a study of crime. I am so unreasonably frightened to be home alone — surrounded by other tenants. Probably the ordinary person wouldn't find this a reasonable cause for alarm.

As I slipped my key into the door I always keep locked, I heard the phone ringing. I hurried in to answer but did not get there in time. I hoped it wasn't Mother, but she seldom calls because she gets only half an hour to eat.

I straightened up the house and started the dishwasher. While it made a friendly thump and whirr sound in the empty apartment, I started my homework. It was deadly. I had an English assignment to write; I had to write a theme about one of our national holidays. I scoured my crime card file for anything on crime that I could work into a holiday theme.

I soon found myself dozing over the cards, so I had decided to tackle another subject for a change when the phone rang again.

"Hello, young lady. Is your mother home?"

Boy, I detest calls like this. "Not right now. Who's calling, please?"

"Don't you recognize my voice?"

Oh, for heaven's sake! A grown man at that! But I wasn't going to tell an unknown soul that Mother wouldn't be home till after eleven. "I'm afraid not."

"Say, isn't this 399-4070?"

"No, it isn't."

"Sorry, wrong number!"

The call made me nervous because I hate wrong numbers or someone who fools around and doesn't say right off who he is.

I decided that my history text would calm my nerves. It's very good for that sort of thing. Most history textbooks are — very calming, that is. I started to read about the French Revolution.

When I woke up, I had that scary feeling that you sometimes get when you can't recall for the life of you where you are — or even who you are. I blinked my eyes and finally brought the living room into focus. My history book was on the floor. There was that ominous late-at-night silence when you know it is much later than you think. I sat up on the couch, where I had fallen asleep during the French Revolution, and looked at my watch. Two thirty! Suddenly I was wide awake.

"Mother?" I called out tentatively.

No answer. I got up to look around, and the first thing I saw unnerved me completely. When I had dashed in to answer the phone, I had forgotten to lock the door. Belatedly, I pushed in the lock and secured the chain latch. Nothing would satisfy me unless I immediately looked all over the apartment to see if Mother — or anyone else — had slipped in.

My heart pounding, I started in the basement and left on all the lights as I flipped the switches. There was nothing more sinister there than the washer, dryer, and ironing board. Upstairs, our bedrooms were empty. Only my purple teddy bear looked balefully from where I'd tossed him earlier.

I scurried into Mother's room and grabbed the upstairs telephone. The number of the police station was in the cradle, and I dialed it with shaking fingers.

"My mother isn't home yet," I told the man who answered. "She gets off work at eleven and ought to have been home hours ago."

"Well, we'll see what we can do," said the calm voice. "Let me ask you a few questions."

I could hardly tolerate all the questions because as far as I could imagine, they had simply nothing to do with the fact that Mother wasn't home yet. He asked where we lived and what Mother did and about Daddy and the divorce and even Daddy's new wife. He inquired about many unrelated things, and time was passing all too fast.

"Aren't you going to start looking for her?" I asked.

"We have to have a clue to *where* to start looking," answered the voice. "Couldn't she have gone out on a date?"

"No."

"Doesn't she ever have dates after work?"

"Well, sometimes on weekends."

"It's not so terribly late," said the voice. "If she had a date, she might not get in until later."

"But she'd have told me!" I protested. "She'd have called."

"Let's give her a little time," said the voice. "Why don't you go to bed and get some sleep?"

His voice indicated what he thought about some people's mothers, but he *had* instilled doubts in my mind. Mother had never done such a thing before, but she had seemed a little depressed since Daddy got married again. She had begun to have more dates, but still — she would have called!

I hardly ever call St. Mary's. Everyone is busy there, and no one likes to be disturbed with personal calls, but maybe Mother had said something when she went off duty. It was almost three o'clock, but I would wait until three thirty, although I was frantic. When Mother did go out after work, she

came home first to change and to see how I was doing, and she never stayed out later than about one thirty.

Even the French Revolution couldn't calm my nerves, so I did my math. I had slept almost five hours and was really wide awake now. Finally, I dialed the hospital and asked for third floor pediatrics. When the night supervisor answered, she spoke coldly and became even more frosty when I told her who I was.

"Your mother didn't come in to work today," she said. "There were several calls made to your home to see why she didn't report, but no one ever answered."

I thought of all the time I'd spent at Tippi's, not realizing that Mother had never even gone to work. She'd been missing all this time, and I hadn't known.

The police would just have to listen now. Over twelve hours, and no one knew about Mother. I could hardly dial — my hand shook so, and tears were running down my face.

"Please," I begged. "Please, you've just got to help me. My mother isn't home yet."

When the door chimes rang, I looked through the peek hole to assure myself that a police officer actually stood there. Then I opened the door as far as the chain permitted and asked to see his credentials. I have read too many mysteries to be taken in by a phony uniform.

Lieutenant Gregg — his I.D. seemed in order.

"All right," I said, removing the chain. "Come in."

My hands were still shaking, and my eyes felt hot and swollen.

"Now, Luann, I want to hear everything you can relate about your mother's activities today."

As I sat across from him at the dinette table, I noticed that he was rather nice-looking.

As well as I could, I explained my detective work concerning Mother's activities — her unmade bed, her sewing stopped in the middle of a pattern piece, the unusual clutter in the living room. "I can usually figure out just what Mother has been doing and why," I finished. "That's why I know that she left suddenly and earlier than she had planned, so there's no telling how long she's been gone! She might have left even at ten in the morning."

He nodded sympathetically. "Do you know what she is wearing?"

For the first time, the thought occurred to me that she might not be in uniform. "I'll go look in her closet."

I peered into her closet and laundry hamper and counted uniforms. No, they were all there. I pawed through her dresses and found that her new yellow dress was gone, and her yellow shoes. What a way to go out on a working day! She must have planned to come back home and change clothes before she left for the hospital.

I reported to the lieutenant, and he made notes.

"Were there any unusual phone messages or anything extraordinary in the mail?"

"No, I looked."

Then it registered. There were no phone messages, but Tippi had called, so I had not looked at the mail. I went to check the table in the foyer.

"Here's the mail," I said, "and there's just one thing that's been opened."

It was an ordinary white envelope with Mother's name, but no return address. A corner of a child's writing tablet had been folded into it. I unfolded the note and read:

"How would you like to lose your only child? If you don't want to risk it, meet me in front of the post office at noon today. M. J."

The lieutenant retrieved it from my trembling hands.

"What could that be?" I demanded. "What is that about losing a child?" "Sit down," he instructed me. "I want to call headquarters."

As far as I could determine, the conversation had nothing whatsoever to do with Mother at first. Then he relayed the note into the phone, and there was a long silence.

Then he said, "Her daughter is here alone. Shall I have her arrange for someone to stay here?"

He hung up, turned back to me, and said, "We have an idea of where to start the investigation on her disappearance. Can you get a neighbor to come and stay with you?"

"I'd rather not bother any of our neighbors. Can't I come with you?"

"I'm afraid not." He hesitated and looked sympathetic. "Well, come along to headquarters for now, if you want. Maybe

you could stay there for a while, anyway, because we don't want you to stay alone."

I tried to find out what was going on, but the lieutenant was trying to find out things, too. He avoided telling me anything — he just asked questions.

"Does your mother ever discuss her patients with you?"

"Never. She's afraid she might say something she shouldn't. She sometimes tells me about the other nurses, their families, things they do, but nothing about the patients."

"Have you ever heard about a little girl named Patsy Johnson, or maybe recall reading about her in the newspaper?"

I don't read a lot in the newspapers because I have too much homework. Then I thought guiltily — and too much television, too many records, too much time on the telephone. I never realized what was going on in the world half the time. I could swear I had no knowledge of Patsy Johnson, and Lieutenant Gregg did not tell me about her. At the station, there was some argument about whether I should have been brought there, but I was permitted to stay.

The man at the desk peered over his glasses at me and asked, "How about school?"

"I can't go to school until you find my mother."

"No, I guess not."

Lieutenant Gregg had disappeared to some office in back and did not return.

I curled up on a wooden bench and listened to police calls.

For the second time, I woke up and did not know where I was. Sunlight was streaming in, and there was a lot of activity. The shift was changing, and people were coming and going. I was stiff and uncomfortable. I remembered that the nightmarish night was real, and I woke up completely.

The man at the desk was leaving.

"Wait!" I called after him. "What about my mother?"

"Are you awake already?" He looked amazed. "Want to come home with me and have some breakfast?"

My stomach felt terrible — I was hungry, but the mere thought of food made me feel nauseous.

"I always cook ham or sausages, eggs, and toast when I get off my shift," he continued.

The thought of sausages and eggs sickened me. "I'd rather stay here. Haven't they found my mother?"

I was really getting panicky now. What had happened to her and who was the M. J. that sent her the note? What was anyone doing? I suddenly realized I was babbling incoherently.

The sergeant who had left the desk looked unhappily at the man who was now replacing him — a much older man, a man who looked like somebody's kindly grandfather. He seemed concerned and said, "I'll talk to her."

He beckoned for me to come near the desk. Two officers were leaving, and they looked at me sympathetically. All this sympathy. What had happened?

"They located your mother a short while ago," the sergeant at the desk told me.

"Is she — is she all right?"

He nodded agreeably and said, "She's just fine, and we're doing everything possible to keep her that way. You know the note she got in the mail yesterday?"

I nodded while tears flooded down my face, and knew that if only I had looked at that stupid mail, I'd have been suspicious immediately. Mother repeatedly told me to check the mail and the telephone messages as soon as I got home. How long had I let the mail stay where it was? It had been twelve hours. If anything happened to Mother, it would be my fault.

"The man who wrote it has been under a restraining order from the court ever since his child was taken away from him because of brutal treatment. The little girl was in pediatrics at St. Mary's and the guards were alerted not to let her father into the hospital. The child has been moved now, but the father didn't know it, so he's got a grudge against St. Mary's."

So some man thought it was my mother's fault that his daughter had been taken away. He had to be mad. I mean, there is no other explanation for a man who mistreats a child.

"He's mad, isn't he?" I asked. "He's insane, and he has my mother! Where are they?"

I realized I was shouting, but I continued for a while longer.

"Lieutenant Gregg, who brought you here, is still negotiating to get your mother out safely. The man is simply keeping her in his house."

"Why? What is he going to do with her? Why did he kidnap her? His little girl isn't even a patient in St. Mary's anymore."

Recalling the note, I thought I knew. The man was determined to get even for the loss of *his* daughter with someone else's daughter. He had some crazy idea that involved *me,* and that's why Mother had gone with him in the first place.

"What is anyone *doing?"* I demanded. *"What* is Lieutenant Gregg doing?"

"The Johnson house is completely surrounded by our men," said the grandfatherly sergeant. "In situations like this, when hours have gone by with no violence, the chances are that patience will accomplish what we want. Lieutenant Gregg has been talking to Mr. Johnson through the latched door, and we think it's only a matter of hours before the man will open the door and surrender."

A matter of hours. How many hours had Mother already been with that man? How many hours, and what had he done to her?

There were several calls just then, and the sergeant at the desk seemed to have forgotten me, so I trudged back to the wooden bench, thinking dismal thoughts. Mother had often reprimanded me for my carelessness in neglecting phone messages and things like that, and she was right. Was I like the person Mother had accused Daddy of being — always careless and thoughtless of others? A great detective and a great, reliable daughter I was turning out to be!

"Young lady!"

I came out of my thoughts to see the sergeant beckoning to me.

"Good news — they have the Johnson man in custody and your mother is all right. She'll be here in just a few minutes — completely unharmed."

And she was — she really was!

"Oh, Mother!"

I threw myself at her as I used to when I was a child.

"Everything's all right, honey," she assured me. "We're going home now, and Lieutenant Gregg says he'll come and have breakfast with us since he's really been working overtime."

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true or false. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. Luann enjoyed staying at home alone.
2. Luann was a very observant girl.
3. Luann's mother left the dress she was making practically finished.
4. Luann's and her mother's attitude to work is very much alike.
5. Luann didn't eat anything after she came home from school.
6. Luann's mother always worked at the same time.
7. Luann was sensible enough to first spruce up the apartment and then go to her friend.
8. Luann always switched off the light when she left home.
9. Tippi's father spent more time away than at home.
10. Neither Tippi nor her father took Luann's hobbies seriously.
11. Luann declined Tippi's mother's offer to stay for dinner.
12. The theme for Luann's English assignment was crime during national holidays.
13. Luann was usually indifferent to wrong numbers or someone who fooled around and didn't say right off who he was.
14. Luann dozed twice while doing her homework.
15. As soon as Luann saw that she had forgotten to lock the door, she phoned the police.
16. Luann thought that the questions the policeman asked her on the phone were a waste of time.
17. It was not unusual for Luann's mother to go on a date right after work.
18. The night supervisor's voice in St. Mary's hospital was sympathetic and encouraging.

19. Luann felt remorse about going to Tippi's.

20. Luann did not approve of the clothes her mother had put on that day.

21. The opened letter was from Luann's mother's patient.

22. Lieutenant Gregg didn't want to bother Luann's neighbours so he took her to the police station with him.

23. Luann's mother told her daughter about her colleagues.

24. Mr. Johnson kidnapped Luann's mother as he wanted to take revenge on St. Mary's hospital.

25. After her rescue Luann's mother invited Lieutenant Gregg to breakfast.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand the following phrases from the story. Try to remember when, why and in what circumstances they were used.

1. "There were several calls made to your home to see why she didn't report, but no one ever answered."

2. The number of the police station was in the cradle, and I dialed it with shaking fingers.

3. "Couldn't she have gone out on a date?"

4. Then I opened the door as far as the chain permitted and asked to see his credentials. I have read too many mysteries to be taken in by a phony uniform.

5. I peered into her closet and laundry hamper...

6. I pawed through her dresses...

7. Then it registered. (about the unchecked mail)

8. A corner of a child's writing tablet had been folded into it.

9. The lieutenant retrieved it from my trembling hands.

10. The shift was changing, and people were coming and going.

11. He beckoned for me to come near the desk.

12. "The man who wrote it has been under a restraining order from the court ever since his child was taken away from him because of brutal treatment.'

13. The little girl was in pediatrics at St. Mary's and the guards were alerted not to let her father into the hospital.

14. "... but the father didn't know it, so he's got a grudge against St. Mary's."

15. "Lieutenant Gregg, who brought you here, is still negotiating to get your mother out safely.

16. ... so I trudged back to the wooden bench, thinking dismal thoughts.

TASK 3. Find pairs of synonyms.

a detective, a foyer, a private eye, a project, a venture, abruptly, an entrance hall, careless, disarray, disorder, evidence, evil, faithful, frightening, humdrum, ominous, proof, routine, scary, sinister, sloppy, suddenly, threatening, to ask, to be annoyed, to be frantic, to be miffed, to be worried, to clean, to dash, to detest, to hate, to inquire, to relate, to reveal, to rush, to show, to straighten, to tackle, to tell, to undertake, true.

TASK 4. Who or what are these questions about?

1. Who couldn't stand the darkness?
2. Who left her sewing strewn clear across the dinette table?
3. Who used to leave halffinished projects?
4. Who preferred doing something else to cleaning the kitchen?
5. Who had left coffee cups, newspapers, and magazines in a disarray the night before?
6. Who had a fluffy blue bedspread?
7. Who used to straighten the living room before leaving the house?
8. What looked balefully?
9. What was deadly?
10. Who was very systematic in her work?
11. Who was a character?
12. Who had a new album and records at home?
13. Who instilled doubts in Luann's mind?
14. Who seemed a little depressed since Daddy got married again?
15. Who didn't like to be disturbed with personal calls?
16. Who was rather nice looking?
17. Who relayed the note into the phone?

TASK 5. Match the words from the story with their definitions. Make sentences of your own with each of them.

1. a clue	a) not bright
2. clutter	b) to run with quick short steps
3. dim	c) a piece of evidence that helps the police to solve the crime
4. in custody	d) to look closely and carefully, especially when you cannot see clearly
5. to doze	e) to admit that you have been defeated and stop fighting
6. to fool around	f) to walk slowly with heavy steps
7. to get even	g) under arrest
8. to peek	h) to search a place or thing thoroughly in order to find something
9. to peer	i) a lot of things in an untidy state, especially those that are unnecessary or not often used
10. to reprimand	j) to laugh at smb or make jokes about them either in a friendly way or in order to annoy or embarrass them
11. to scour	k) to tell smb that you do not approve of them or their actions
12. to scurry	l) to steal a look
13. to surrender	m)to sleep lightly for a short time
14. to tease	n) around to waste time instead of doing something that you should be doing
15. to trudge	o) to cause smb the same amount of trouble or harm they have caused you

TASK 6. Answer the questions below.

1. Can you decide if this story is written by an English or an American author? Play the role of a detective and find clues to prove your point of view.

2. What do you think about Luann and her mother's agreement on housework?

3. What clues did Luann find about her Mother's morning activities?

4. Which of these clues made Luann suspicious about her mother's absence?

5. What questions did the policeman ask Luann and why? Do you agree with Luann that he inquired about many unrelated things?

6. Was Luann's family happy when they all lived together?

7. What homework assignments did Luann try to do?

8. Why was the police reluctant to begin any investigation the first time Luann called the station?

9. What precautions did Luann take before she opened the door to a policeman?

10. Why do you think Luann felt guilty about the time she spent visiting with Tippi?

11. Do you agree with Luann's mother that she was 'careless and thoughtless of others'?

12. Was Luann's help important to the police in their investigation? Why or why not?

TASK 7. Tell everything you can about:

a) mother;

b) the girl.

TASK 8. Find proves in the text that the girl was getting more and more worried.

TASK9. Make up a list of things you like and dislike about the way Luann's mother brought her daughter up. Which do you think you could borrow when you bring up your own children?

TASK 10. Imagine that you are:

1. a) the girl. Tell your mother what happened;
   b) mother. Tell the police officer what happened.
2. Make any predictions of what could happen after they returned home. Begin with the last sentence of the story.

TASK 11. Act out the dialogue between the girl and her mother after her return.

Try to imagine what they could speak about.

Jeffrey Archer
A LA CARTE

Arthur Hapgood was demobbed on November 3, 1946. Within a month he was back at his old workplace on the shop floor of the Triumph factory on the outskirts of Coventry.

Although he did not want to go back to the work he had done for five years before war had been declared, that of fitting wheels on cars, he reluctantly, after six weeks on the dole, went to see his former works' manager at Triumph.

"The job's yours if you want it, Arthur," the works' manager assured him.

"And the future?"

"The car's no longer a toy for the eccentric rich or even just a necessity for the businessman," the works' manager replied. "In fact," he continued, "management are preparing for the 'two-car family.'"

"So they'll need even more wheels to be put on cars," said Arthur sadly.

"That's the ticket."

Arthur signed on within the hour and it was only a matter of days before he was back into his old routine. After all, he often reminded his wife, it didn't take a degree in engineering to screw four knobs onto a wheel a hundred times a shift.

Arthur soon accepted the fact that he would have to settle for second best. However, second best was not what he planned for his son.

Mark had celebrated his fifth birthday before his father had even set eyes on him, but from the moment Arthur returned home he lavished everything he could on the boy.

Arthur was determined that Mark was not going to end up working on the shop floor of a car factory for the rest of his life. He put in hours of overtime to earn enough money to ensure that the boy could have extra tuition in math, general

science and English. He felt well-rewarded when the boy passed his eleven-plus and won a place at King Henry VIII Grammar School, and that pride did not falter when Mark went on to pass five O-levels and two years later added two A-levels.

Arthur tried not to show his disappointment when, on Mark's eighteenth birthday, the boy informed him that he did not want to go to university.

"What kind of career *are* you hoping to take up then, lad?" Arthur inquired.

"I've filled in an application form to join you on the shop floor just as soon as I leave school."

"But why would you—"

"Why not? Most of my friends who're leaving this term have already been accepted by Triumph, and they can't wait to get started."

"You must be out of your mind."

"Come off it, Dad. The pay's good and you've shown that there's always plenty of extra money to be picked up with overtime. And I don't mind hard work."

"Do you imagine I spent all those years making sure you got a first-class education just to let you end up like me, putting wheels on cars for the rest of your life?" Arthur shouted.

"That's not the whole job and you know it, Dad."

"You go there over my dead body," said his father. "I don't care what your friends end up doing, I only care about you. You could be a solicitor, an accountant, an army officer, even a schoolmaster. Why should you want to end up at a car factory?"

"It's better paid than schoolmastering for a start," said Mark. "My French master once told me that he wasn't as well off as you."

"That's not the point, lad—"

"The point is, Dad, I can't be expected to spend the rest of my life doing a job I don't enjoy just to satisfy one of your fantasies."

"But I'm not going to allow you to waste the rest of your life," said Arthur, getting up from the breakfast table. "The first thing I'm going to do when I get in to work this morning is see that your application is turned down."

"That isn't fair, Dad. I have the right to—"

But his father had already left the room, and did not utter another word to the boy before leaving for the factory.

For over a week father and son didn't speak to each other. It was Mark's mother who was left to come up with the compromise. Mark could apply for any job that met with his father's approval and as long as he completed a year at that job he could, if he still wanted to, reapply to work at the factory. His father for his part would not then put any obstacle in his son's way.

Arthur nodded. Mark also reluctantly agreed to the compromise.

"But only if you complete the full year," Arthur warned him solemnly.

During those last days of the summer holiday Arthur came up with several suggestions for Mark to consider, but the boy showed no enthusiasm for any of them. Mark's mother became quite anxious that her son would end up with no job at all until, while helping her slice potatoes for dinner one night, Mark confided to his mother that he thought hotel management seemed the least unattractive proposition he had considered so far.

"At least you'd have a roof over your head and be regularly fed," his mother said.

"Bet they don't cook as well as you, Mum," said Mark as he placed the sliced potatoes on the top of the Lancashire hot-pot. "Still, it's only a year."

During the next month Mark attended several interviews at hotels around the country but they all sensed his lack of enthusiasm. But when his father discovered that his old company sergeant was head porter at the Savoy, Arthur started to pull a few strings.

"If the boy's any good," Arthur's old comrade-in-arms assured him over a pint, "he could end up as a head porter, even a hotel manager." Arthur seemed well satisfied, even though Mark was still assuring his friends that he would be joining them a year to the day.

On September 1, 1959, Arthur and Mark Hapgood traveled together by bus to Coventry station. Arthur shook hands with the boy and promised him, "Your mother and I will make sure it's a special Christmas this year when they give you your first

leave. And don't worry, you'll be in good hands with 'Sarge.' He'll teach you a thing or two. Just remember to keep your nose clean."

Mark said nothing and gave his father a thin smile as he boarded the train. "You'll never regret it..." were the last words Mark heard him say as the train pulled out of the station.

Mark regretted it from the moment he set foot in the hotel. As a junior porter his day started at six in the morning and ended at six in the evening. He was entitled to a fifteen-minute midmorning break, a forty-five-minute lunch break and another fifteen-minute break around midafternoon. After the first month had passed he could not recall when he had been granted all three breaks on the same day, and he quickly learned that there was no one to whom he could protest. His duties consisted of carrying guests' cases up to their rooms, then lugging them back down again the moment they wanted to leave. With an average of three hundred people staying in the hotel each night the process was endless. The pay turned out to be half what his friends were getting back home, and as he had to hand over all his tips to Sergeant Crann the head porter, however much overtime Mark put in, he never saw an extra penny. On the only occasion he dared to mention it to the head porter he was met with the words, "Your time will come, lad."

It did not worry Mark that his uniform didn't fit or that his room was six foot by six foot and he didn't get a share of the tips; but it did worry him that there was nothing he could do to please the head porter — however clean he kept his nose.

At the end of each day Mark would return to his little box-room with its small bed, smaller chair and tiny chest of drawers to collapse exhausted. The only picture in the room — of the Laughing Cavalier — was on a calendar that hung above Mark's bed. The date of September I, I960, was circled in red to remind him when he would be allowed to rejoin his friends on the factory floor. Each night before falling asleep he would cross out the offending day like a prisoner making scratch marks on a wall.

At Christmas Mark returned home for a four-day break, and when his mother saw the general state of the boy she tried to talk his father into allowing their only son to give up the job early, but Arthur wouldn't agree.

"We made an agreement. I can't be expected to get him a job at the factory if he isn't responsible enough to keep to his part of a bargain."

During that short holiday Mark waited for his friends outside the factory gate until their shift had ended and listened to their stories of weekends spent watching football, drinking at the pub and dancing to Elvis Presley. They all sympathized with his problem and looked forward to him joining them in September. "It's only a few more months," one of them reminded him cheerfully.

Far too quickly, Mark was on the journey back to London, where he continued unwillingly to hump cases up and down the hotel corridors for month after month.

Once the English rain had subsided the usual influx of American tourists began. Mark liked the Americans, who treated him as an equal and often tipped him a shilling when others would have given him only sixpence. But whatever the amount Mark received Sergeant Crann would still pocket it with the inevitable, "Your time will come, lad."

One such American for whom Mark ran around diligently every day during his fortnight's stay ended up presenting the boy with a ten-bob note as he left the front entrance of the hotel.

Mark said, "Thank you, sir," and turned round to see Sergeant Crann standing in his path.

"Hand it over," demanded Crann as soon as the American visitor was well out of earshot.

"I was going to the moment I saw you," said Mark, passing the note to his superior.

"Not thinking of pocketing what's rightfully mine, was you?"

"No, I wasn't," said Mark. "Though God knows I earned it."

"Your time will come, lad," said Sergeant Crann without much thought.

"Not while someone as mean as you is in charge," replied Mark sharply.

"What was that you said, lad?" asked the head porter.

"You heard me the first time, Sarge."

The clip across the ear took Mark by surprise.

"You, lad, have just lost your job. Nobody, but nobody, talks to me like that." Sergeant Crann turned and set off smartly in the direction of the manager's office.

The hotel manager, Gerald Drummond, listened to the head porter's version of events before asking Mark to report to his office immediately. "You realize I have been left with no choice but to sack you," were his first words as the door was closed.

Mark looked up at the tall, elegant man in his long, black coat, white collar and black tie. "Am I allowed to tell you what actually happened, sir?" he asked.

Mr. Drummond nodded, then listened without interruption as Mark gave his version of what had taken place that morning, and also disclosed the agreement he had entered into with his father. "Please allow me to complete my final ten weeks," Mark ended, "or my father will only say I haven't kept to my end of our bargain."

"I haven't got another job vacant at the moment," protested the manager. "Unless you're willing to peel potatoes for ten weeks."

"Anything," said Mark.

"Then report to the kitchen at six tomorrow morning. I'll tell the third chef to expect you. Only if you think the head porter is a tyrant just wait until you meet Jacques, our *maître chef de cuisine.* He won't clip your ear, he'll cut it off."

Mark didn't care. He felt confident that for just ten weeks he could face anything, and at five thirty the following morning he exchanged his dark blue uniform for a white top and blue and white check trousers before reporting for his new duties. To his surprise the kitchen took up almost the entire basement of the hotel, and was even more of a bustle than the lobby had been.

The third chef put him in the corner of the kitchen, next to a mountain of potatoes, a bowl of cold water and a sharp knife. Mark peeled through breakfast, lunch and dinner, and fell asleep on his bed that night without even enough energy left to cross another day off his calendar.

For the first week he never actually saw the fabled Jacques. With seventy people working in the kitchen Mark felt confident he could pass his whole period there without anyone being aware of his existence.

Each morning at six he would start peeling, then hand over the potatoes to a tall and clumsy youth called Terry, who in turn would dice or cut them according to the third chef's

instructions for the dish of the day. Monday sautй, Tuesday mashed, Wednesday French-fried, Thursday sliced, Friday roast, Saturday croquette... Mark quickly worked out a routine which kept him well ahead of Terry and therefore out of any trouble.

Having watched Terry do his job for over a week Mark felt sure he could have shown the young apprentice how to lighten his workload quite simply, but he decided to keep his mouth closed: opening it might only get him into more trouble, and he was certain the manager wouldn't give him a second chance.

Mark soon discovered that Terry always fell badly behind on Tuesday's shepherd's pie and Thursday's Lancashire hot-pot. From time to time the third chef would come across to complain and then would glance over at Mark to be sure that it wasn't him who was holding the process up. Mark made certain that he always had a spare tub of peeled potatoes by his side so that he would escape censure.

It was on the first Thursday morning in August (Lancashire hot-pot) that Terry sliced off the top of his forefinger. Blood spurted all over the sliced potatoes and onto the wooden table as the lad began yelling hysterically.

"Get him out of here!" Mark heard the *maîre chef de cuisine* bellow above the noise of the kitchen as he stormed toward them.

"And you," he said, pointing at Mark, "clean up mess and start slicing rest of potatoes. I 'ave eight hundred hungry customers still expecting to feed."

"Me?" said Mark in disbelief. "But—"

"Yes, you. You couldn't do worse job than idiot who calls himself trainee chef and cuts off finger." The chef marched away, leaving Mark to move reluctantly across to the table where Terry had been working. He didn't want to argue while the calendar was there to remind him that he was down to his last twenty-five days.

Mark started doing a task he had carried out for his mother many times. The clean, neat cuts were delivered with a skill Terry would never learn to master. By the end of the day, although exhausted, Mark did not feel quite as tired as he had in the past.

At eleven that night the *maotre chef de cuisine* threw off his hat and barged out of the swing doors, a sign to everyone else they could also leave the kitchen when everything that was their responsibility had been cleared up. A few seconds later the door swung back open and the chef burst in. He stared round the kitchen as everyone waited to see what he would do next. Having found what he was looking for, he headed straight for Mark.

"Oh, my God," thought Mark. "He's going to kill me."

"How is your name?" the chef demanded.

"Mark Hapgood, sir," he managed to splutter out.

"You waste on 'tatoes, Mark Hapgood," said the chef. "You start on vegetables in morning. Report at seven. If that *cretin* with half finger ever returns, put him to peeling 'tatoes."

The chef turned on his heel even before Mark had the chance to reply. He dreaded the thought of having to spend three weeks in the middle of the kitchen, never once out of the *maître chef de cuisine's* sight, but he accepted there was no alternative.

The next morning Mark arrived at six for fear of being late and spent an hour watching the fresh vegetables being unloaded from Covent Garden market.

The *maître chef de cuisine* appeared a few minutes before seven thirty, checked the menus and told Mark to score the Brussels sprouts, trim the French beans and remove the coarse outer leaves of the cabbages.

"But I don't know how," Mark replied honestly. He could feel the other trainees in the kitchen edging away from him.

"Then I teach you," roared the chef. "Perhaps only thing you learn is if hope to be good chef, you able to do everyone's job in kitchen, even 'tato peeler's."

"But I'm hoping to be a ..." Mark began and then thought better of it The chef seemed not to have heard Mark as he took his place beside the new recruit. Everyone in the kitchen stared as the chef began to show Mark the basic skills of cutting, dicing and slicing.

"And remember other idiot's finger," the chef said on completing the lesson and passing the razor-sharp knife back to Mark. "Yours can be next."

Mark started delicately and carefully dicing the carrots, then the Brussels sprouts, removing the outer layer before cutting a firm cross in the stalk. Next he moved on to trimming and slicing the beans. Once again he found it fairly easy to keep ahead of the chef's requirements.

At the end of each day, after the head chef had left, Mark stayed on to sharpen all his knives in preparation for the following morning, and would not leave his work area until it was spotless.

On the sixth day, after a curt nod from the chef, Mark realized he must be doing something half-right. By the following Saturday he felt he had mastered the simple skills of vegetable preparation and found himself becoming fascinated by what the chef himself was up to. Although Jacques rarely addressed anyone as he marched round the acre of kitchen except to grunt his approval or disapproval—the latter more commonly—Mark quickly learned to anticipate his needs. Within a short space of time he began to feel that he was part of a team—even though he was only too aware of being the novice recruit.

The day before chef's day off the following week Mark was allowed to arrange the cooked vegetables in their bowls and spent some time making each dish look attractive as well as edible. The chef not only noticed but actually muttered his greatest accolade—*Bon.*"

During his last three weeks at the Savoy, Mark did not even look at the calendar above his bed.

One Thursday morning a message came down from the undermanager that Mark was to report to his office as soon as was convenient. Mark had quite forgotten that it was August 31 — his last day. He cut ten lemons into quarters, then finished preparing the forty plates of thinly sliced smoked salmon that would complete the first course for a wedding lunch. He looked with pride at his efforts before folding up his apron and leaving to collect his papers and final wage packet.

"Where you think you're going?" asked the chef, looking up.

"I'm off," said Mark. "Back to Coventry."

"See you Monday then. You deserve day off."

"No, you don't understand. I'm going home for good," said Mark.

The chef stopped checking the cuts of rare beef that would make up the second course of the wedding feast.

"Going?" he repeated as if he didn't comprehend the word.

"Yes. I've finished my year and now I'm off home to work."

"I hope you found first-class hotel," said the chef with genuine interest.

"I'm not going to work in a hotel."

"A restaurant, perhaps?"

"No, I'm going to get a job at Triumph."

The chef looked puzzled for a moment, unsure if it was his English or whether the boy was mocking him.

"What is—Triumph?"

"A place where they manufacture cars."

"You will manufacture cars?"

"Not a whole car, but I will put the wheels on."

"You put cars on wheels?" the chef said in disbelief.

"No," laughed Mark. "Wheels on cars."

The chef still looked uncertain.

"So you will be cooking for the car workers?"

"No. As I explained, I'm going to put the wheels on the cars," said Mark slowly, articulating each word.

"That not possible."

"Oh yes it is," responded Mark. "And I've waited a whole year to prove it."

"If I offered you job as commis chef[1], you change mind?" asked Jacques quietly.

"Why would you do that?"

"Because you 'ave talent in those fingers. In time I think you become chef, perhaps even good chef."

"No, thanks. I'm off to Coventry to join my mates."

The head chef shrugged. *"Tant pis,"* he said, and without a second glance returned to the carcass of beef. He glanced over at the plates of smoked salmon. "A wasted talent," he added after the swing door had closed behind his potential protйgй.

Mark locked his room, threw the calendar in the wastepaper basket and returned to the hotel to hand in his kitchen clothes to the housekeeper. The final action he took was to return his room key to the undermanager.

"Your wage packet, your cards and your PAYE[2]. Oh, and the chef has phoned up to say he would be happy to give you a reference," said the undermanager. "Can't pretend that happens every day."

"Won't need that where I'm going," said Mark. "But thanks all the same."

He started off for the station at a brisk pace, his small battered suitcase swinging by his side, only to find that each step took a little longer. When he arrived at Euston he made his way to Platform 7 and began walking up and down, occasionally staring at the great clock above the booking hall. He watched first one train and then another pull out of the station bound for Coventry. He was aware of the station becoming dark as shadows filtered through the glass awning onto the public concourse. Suddenly he turned and walked off at an even brisker pace. If he hurried he could still be back in time to help chef prepare for dinner that night.

Mark trained under Jacques le Renneu for five years. Vegetables were followed by sauces, fish by poultry, meats by patisserie.

After eight years at the Savoy he was appointed second chef, and had learned so much from his mentor that regular patrons could no longer be sure when it was the *maître chef de cuisine*'s day off. Two years later Mark became a master chef, and when in 1971 Jacques was offered the opportunity to return to Paris and take over the kitchens of the George Cinq, Jacques agreed, but only on condition that Mark accompanied him.

"It is wrong direction from Coventry," Jacques warned him, "and in any case they sure to offer you my job at the Savoy."

"I'd better come along. Otherwise those Frogs will never get a decent meal."

"Those Frogs," said Jacques, "will always know when it's my day off."

"Yes, and book in even greater numbers," suggested Mark, laughing.

It was not to be long before Parisians were flocking to the George Cinq, not to rest their weary heads but to relish the cooking of the two-chef team.

When Jacques celebrated his sixty-fifth birthday the great hotel did not have to look far to appoint his successor.

"The first Englishman ever to be *maître chef de cuisine* at the George Cinq," said Jacques, raising a glass of champagne at his farewell banquet. "Who would believe it? Of course, you will have to change your name to Marc to hold down such a position."

"Neither will ever happen," said Mark.

"Oh yes it will, because I 'ave recommended you."

"Then I shall turn it down."

"Going to put cars on wheels, *peut-être?"* asked Jacques mockingly.

"No, but I have found a little site on the Left Bank. With my savings alone 1 can't quite afford the lease, but with your help..."

Chez Jacques opened on the rue du Plaisir on the Left Bank on May 1,1982, and it was not long before those customers who had taken the George Cinq for granted transferred their devotion.

Mark's reputation spread as the two chefs pioneered "nouvelle cuisine,"[3] and soon the only way anyone could be guaranteed a table at the restaurant in under three weeks was to be a film star or a Cabinet Minister.

The day Michelin gave Chez Jacques their third star Mark, with Jacques's blessing, decided to open a second restaurant. The press and customers then quarreled amongst themselves as to which was the finer establishment. The booking sheets showed clearly the public felt there was nothing to pick between them.

When in October 1986 Jacques died, at the age of seventy-one, the restaurant critics wrote confidently that standards were bound to fall. A year later the same journalists had to admit that one of the five great chefs of France had come from a town in the British Midlands they could not even pronounce.

Jacques's death only made Mark yearn for his homeland, and when he read in the *Daily Telegraph* of a new development to be built in Covent Garden he called the site agent to ask for more details.

Mark's third restaurant was opened in the heart of London on February 11, 1987.

Over the years Mark Hapgood had often traveled back to Coventry to see his parents. His father had retired long since but Mark was still unable to persuade either parent to take

the trip to Paris and sample his culinary efforts, But now he had opened in the country's capital he hoped to tempt them.

"We don't need to go up to London," said his mother, laying the table. "You always cook for us whenever you come home, and we read of your successes in the papers. In any case, your father isn't so good on his legs nowadays."

"What do you call this, son?" his father asked a few minutes later as noisette of lamb surrounded by baby carrots was placed in front of him.

"Nouvelle cuisine."

"And people pay good money for it?"

Mark laughed and the following day prepared his father's favorite, Lancashire hot-pot.

"Now that's a real meal," said Arthur after his third helping. "And I'll tell you something for nothing, lad. You cook it almost as well as your mother."

A year later Michelin announced the restaurants throughout the world had been awarded their coveted third star. *The Times* let its readers know on its front page that Chez Jacques was the first English restaurant ever to be so honored.

To celebrate the award Mark's parents finally agreed to make the journey down to London, though not until Mark had sent a telegram saying he was reconsidering the job at British Leyland. He sent a car to fetch his parents and had them installed in a suite at the Savoy. That evening he reserved the most popular table at Chez Jacques in their name.

Vegetable soup followed by steak and kidney pie with a plate of bread and butter pudding to end on were not the table d'hôte that night, but they were served for the special guests on Table 17.

Under the influence of the finest wine, Arthur was soon chatting happily to anyone who would listen and couldn't resist reminding the head waiter that it was his son who owned the restaurant.

"Don't be silly, Arthur," said his wife. "He already knows that."

"Nice couple, your parents," the head waiter confided to his boss after he had served them with their coffee and supplied Arthur with a cigar. "What did your old man do before he retired? Banker, lawyer, schoolmaster?"

"Oh no, nothing so grand," said Mark quietly. "He spent the whole of his working life putting wheels on cars."

"But why would he waste his time doing that?" asked the waiter incredulously.

"Because he wasn't lucky enough to have a father like mine," Mark replied.

NOTES

1. **commis chef** – the second chef.
2. **PAYE stands for pay as you earn** – a system for paying tax in which tax is taken from workers' wages and paid directly to the government.
3. **Nouvelle cuisine** — a style of cooking from France where simple and healthy food is served in an attractive way, usually in small amounts on a big plate.

TASK I. Say if the statements are true or false in the text. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. After the war Arthur willingly returned to the factory where he had worked before.
2. His work demanded a lot of creativity.
3. Arthur wanted his son to achieve more than he did.
4. Arthur was proud of Mark's school success.
5. He spoiled his son in different ways.
6. Mark's main argument for the factory was the possibility to earn extra money working overtime.
7. The reason for the quarrel between Arthur and Mark was that father turned down his son's application for work.
8. According to agreement between father and son the latter had to work whenever he wanted for a year.
9. After several interviews Mark managed to find a job of a junior porter in a hotel himself.
10. Mark's main concern in the hotel was to please Sarge.
11. Mark liked the Americans because they always tipped him a shilling.
12. He tried to defend his rights arguing with the head porter but it cost him a redundancy.
13. Mark was quite content with his routine in the kitchen.
14. Working as a kitchen hand was much easier than as a porter.

15. Mark got a promotion because Terry cut himself badly.
16. The chef himself was able to do everyone's job in the kitchen.
17. Mark did his best at the kitchen because he wanted to be noticed and praised by chef.
18. Mark was so fascinated by his new job in the kitchen that he didn't notice when his last day came.
19. The chef didn't get Mark correctly when he said he was off.
20. Mark was appointed maotre chef de cuisine at the George Cinq restaurant.
21. Mark proposed that Jacques should become his partner.
22. You need to be a film star or a Cabinet Minister to book a table at their restaurant.
23. Jacques' death made Mark homesick.
24. Mark's parents were special guests in the restaurant Chez Jacques to celebrate the award.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 3. Match the words and phrases with their definitions.

1. fetch 2. storm 3. covet 4. blessing 5. mock 6. under- (noun, prefix) 7. tempt 8. sign on 9. clip 10. demob 11. share 12. confide	a) to tell somebody secrets and personal information b) to release smb from military service c) a quick hit d) to agree to a job by filling in a contract e) to want very much f) to go quickly in a noisy and angry way g) to go and bring smth./smb. back h) part of smth. i) approval and permission of something j) to do smth. in a laughing and often copying way k) lower in rank l) to attract smb even when they know that this is not good;

TASK 4. Find the words and/or phrases similar in meaning.

1. to think better of smth	a) to hurry
2. to give smb a reference	b) to refuse
3. to inquire	c) to answer
4. to reply	d) far away
5. solemnly	e) in disbelief
6. incredulously	f) permanently
7. to walk at a brisk pace	g) to change one's mind
8. to turn down	h) to ask
9. out of earshot	i) very seriously
10. fascinated	j) immediately
11. for good	k) very interested
12. at once	l) to recommend in writing

TASK 5. Fill in the gaps with the necessary words and phrases from the left columns of Tasks 3 and 4. Make all necessary changes.

1. He was so puzzled the he just stared back _____.
2. You always laugh at me and _____ my French accent.
3. Though the cake _____ her she _____ _____ his proposal saying that she was on a diet.
4. Naturally, if you still decide to change your job we shall agree and, moreover, we shall _____.
5. I could not believe that she had left without saying a word to anyone. But the fact is that she is gone _____.
6. They waited till John was _____ then started discussing the problem.
7. They got married without her parents' _____ and she suffered from that all her life.
8. The award was prestigious and no wonder _____ in cinematographic circles.
9. Being angry he _____ into the room, found nobody there and _____ to the garden.
10. After demobilization he found nothing better than return home and _____, though he did not like his former job very much.
11. It was very hot and she asked him _____ some lemonade.
12. Having heard the news, she decided to talk to him at once but then _____ it.

TASK 6. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. Vegetable soup followed_____ steak and kidney pie _____ a plate of bread and butter pudding to end on were not the table d'hфte that night.
2. We read _____ your successes _____ the papers.
3. Special dishes were served _____ the special guests _____ Table 17.
4. The next morning Mark arrived _____ six _____ fear of being late.
5. When he arrived _____ Euston he made his way _____ Platform 7 and began walking up and down.
6. The chef informed her that she would start _____ vegetables the next morning.
7. _____ a short space of time he began to feel that he was part _____ a team.
8. He dreaded the thought _____ having to spend three weeks _____ the kitchen.
9. The sergeant turned and set off smartly ___ the direction _____ the manager's office.
10. That evening he reserved the most popular table _____ the restaurant _____ their name.
11. The waiter supplied them _____ cigars and smiled when he was tipped _____ a shilling.
12. No matter how hard he tried he could not keep ahead _____ their requirements.
13. He did not expect a clip _____ the ear and edged away _____ her.
14. She confided _____ him that she had reapplied _____ her former job.

TASK 7. Answer the questions below.

1. Why did Arthur come back to work in the car factory after the war?
2. What did he really mean giving the last piece of advice to Mark when he saw him to the railway station?
3. How did Mark feel working as a junior porter? Describe his daily routine.
4. How did he happen to work in the kitchen?
5. How did the manager characterise the chef?

6. What detail suggests that Mark was overtired working in the kitchen?

7. According to Jacques what should a person learn in order to be a good chef?

8. What was the turning point in Mark's career as a chef?

TASK 8. Questions for deeper understandind.

1. What might have happened to Mark if he had obeyed his father and gone to the University?

2. Think of five character traits that are crucial for a person to make a successful career. Arrange them in the order of importance. Which of them does Mark possess?

3. What did Mark really mean by his last words?

4. Jeffrey Archer repeats the phrase "to put wheels on cars" and its synonymous equivalents several times. Recollect the situations in which it is mentioned and analyse whether it is just an ordinary repetition or it obtains additional (figurative) meaning by the end of the story.

5. Here are some age-old folk wisdoms:

- Hell is paved with good intentions.
- An unfortunate event may become a godsend.
- No pain, no gain.
- Don't trouble trouble until trouble troubles you.
- Success is never blamed.

Which of them can be used to summarize the main idea of the story? Explain your choice.

TASK 9. Imagine that you are:

a) Mark;

b) Mark's father;

c) Jacque.

Retell the story of Mark's success.

Erma Bombeck

GET OFF YOUR CUSP AND LIVE

I could never get too choked up about Astrology. Mr. Steve meant well, but he didn't know what a loser I was. My sun never rose on my sign. My planets were always conspiring behind my back. And my destiny always read like it had been out in the natal sun too long.

Maybe I was just bitter, but it always seemed like other people got the good signs. Their horoscopes always read "Popularity and untold wealth will haunt you. There is no getting away from it. You are irresistible to every sign in the zodiac. Give in and enjoy."

Not mine. It was always an ominous warning like "Watch your purse." "Your high-school acne was only in remission, and will return the fifteenth of the month." "Don't become discouraged by your friends who will take advantage of you."

Somehow, I always felt if Mother had held on a little longer—a good month and a half— things would have been different for me.

Oh, I had faith in the predictions. It was just that my interpretation of my sign was not always the way it turned out. For example:

Prediction: "You get a chance today to provide guidance and inspiration."

Fact: I chaperoned thirty fourth-graders on a tour of a meat-packing plant.

Prediction: "One you thought had abandoned you is back in the picture."

Fact: We found a roach under the sink.

Prediction: "Married or single, this is a 'power' time for you!"

Fact: The heat went off for four hours.

Prediction: "You have a unique way of expressing yourself, and you could gain much satisfaction by writing."

Fact: I wrote a check to have the septic tank cleaned. Mr. Steve didn't tell me that keeping up with my stars was a full-time job. The daily forecast in the paper was brief and scanty. I had to buy a magazine to find out my food forecast, one for my love forecast, one for my fashion predictions, another for my travel, and still another for my decoration sense, color selection, and perfume.

I wanted to clean out my refrigerator one day but didn't dare because my sign said avoid the color green.

I canceled trips, put off foot surgery, didn't invite Virgos to my party, and on the advice of my horoscope, did not handle money for an entire month. (If it hadn't been for my charge card, I'd have died.) There was so much to learn about myself. I was absolutely fascinating. I discovered women born under my sign were dynamic, confident, and into asparagus. I was an orange person, trusting, French provincial with boundless energy, and long-waisted.

One evening at a jewelry party, one of the brownies I was serving dropped on the carpet. I reached over, picked it off the floor, popped it in my mouth, and said, "A fuzzy brownie never hurt anyone."

A woman I knew only as Nicky looked deep into my eyes and nodded knowingly. "Only a Pisces on the cusp would say that."

I asked her how she knew. She said certain traits belonged to certain signs. According to my birth date, I was born on a rising sign which made my destiny special. I was a wonderful homemaker, excellent cook, and fine seamstress. That wasn't a destiny. It was a sentence!

There had to be something wrong. What happened to dynamic, confident, and asparagus?

"You're on the rise," she said, "and the sun and the moon are in the direct line with the tides."

I felt like my tide had just gone out.

A cook?

Everyone knew I always threatened my children with "If you don't shape up, you go to bed *with* dinner."

A homemaker?

I wanted for Christmas what Phyllis Diller always wanted — an oven that flushed.

A seamstress?

I always considered a fallen button as God's way of telling us the shirt was wrong.

"You're born under a wonderful sign," Nicky gushed. "You are gentle and expect to have the least and the last. You end up with the bent fork, but you never complain. You buy a three-piece weekender outfit with a skirt and a pair of slacks and burn a hole in the jacket, but you don't care. You always come out of the restroom dragging a piece of toilet tissue on your shoe, but you don't mind."

"Why don't I mind?" I asked.

"Because it's your nature. Why, I know of one woman born under your natal sign who had a son at camp. On parents' visitation day, she had flu and was seven months pregnant, but she drove the two hundred miles along a dusty road. She had a flat tire and lost her way twice. But she kept going. She made it to the camp, and when all the boys were introducing their parents, her son—who was going through a difficult time of his life relating to parents—said, 'My Mom couldn't come.' Do you know what she did?"

"She killed him," I said hopefully.

"She just shrugged and said, 'I could have predicted it because my sun is on the rise and I am on the cusp.' My dear, people under your sign inherit the earth."

I didn't want the earth. I wanted dynamic. Instead, I had fallen heir to the Klutzism Sign. Stumbling around life fifty-two weeks out of every year rubbing stains off my sweater, putting the wrong dates on checks, and never being able to trust myself to run the course in Better China with a shoulder bag.

What kind of a future did I have to look forward to? I locked all the doors in the car and left the top down. Broke my tooth on a marshmallow and got sucked up in my son's hair dryer and sprained my shoulder.

I liked me better when I didn't know who I was, what I was, or where I was going. Besides, my daughter had gone off to school taking with her all the small appliances, furniture, linens, bedding, TV set, typewriter, and staples.

My husband noticed it right away. "You let her pack off everything we've worked thirty years to accumulate?"

I shrugged. "What can I tell you? My sun is on the rise."

I found myself spending more time in the kitchen. Maybe I was creative and there was something in my personality I had overlooked. I bought a food processor and shredded myself to death. I bought a microwave oven and stood by helplessly while my son's space maintainer turned to liquid when he left it in a sandwich I was reheating. I got out of the kitchen before I hurt myself.

I bought a sewing machine that did everything but answer the door, and decided to make a jacket. The darts faced the wrong way, the buttonholes were ahead of their time (no button had been manufactured for it yet). The lining grew each evening as I slept. It had been laundered three times and never been worn.

In stitching up new curtains one afternoon for my daughter's vacated bedroom, a book fell to the floor. It was called Far Out and Far East by Edith Marishna. On the cover was a picture of a woman sitting cross-legged, her turban-covered head tilted backward, staring toward the sky.1 knew my daughter was fascinated with Transcendental Meditation. In fact, she had even taken me to the Golden Temple of Zucchini one day for lunch. It was one of those pure-food restaurants near the local college campus where everything was either freshly squeezed or grown before your eyes. We ordered the organic bean sprouts jammed between two hydroponic tomatoes. "I think I'm going to go crazy and order a cranberry malt," I said.

A man with a turban appeared at our table and elevated the malt over his head as if it were a chalice. I felt positively sanctified until I discovered my lunch contained 1200 calories.

I had never meditated. Oh, once when I paid thirty dollars for a Halston scarf I slipped into a slight hypnotic state. But I had never meditated like the girl on the cover. The book jacket said everyone needed to create an organically oriented womb of tranquility in which to grow spiritually and pull your life together. It said I could have inner peace by controlling my own destiny. It was in my hands. I could be in control of myself

by taking a few minutes out of each day and reciting a special word over and over again. The word was called a mantra.

At dinner that night my husband's fork poised over a bowl of green slime. "What's this?" he asked.

"It's pureed lettuce. I put the wrong setting on the food processor. It's easier if you eat it with a spoon."

"Do you have-any idea how long it has been since we have eaten anything whole? I never see whole food any more. If I am not going to see whole food, the least you can do is to label it. Isn't there a federal law that you have to label what you are eating?"

"You don't have to shout."

"Someone should shout around here. Patterns all over the table every night, needles everywhere. Appliances whirring day and night. Weird things growing restless in the refrigerator. It's driving me crazy."

As I sat there listening to him rant, a thought occurred to me. He wasn't meek. He wasn't gentle. He wasn't resigned to pain. He certainly wasn't domestic and didn't have a long waist. AND OUR BIRTHDAY WAS ONLY TWO DAYS APART. WE WERE BORN UNDER THE SAME SIGN!

On my way to bed I picked up Far Out and Far East and turned on the bedside light.

It was time to get off my cusp and start controlling my own life. I was going to have inner peace if I had to break a few heads to do it.

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true, false or not stated in the text. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. The narrator was usually very upset about her sign predictions.
2. The narrator believed that all other people have better forecasts.
3. Facts and predictions never coincided in the narrator's life.
4. She could find all the forecasts in one and the same paper.

5. Al women born under that sign were dynamic, confident and liked oranges.

6. According to the prediction the narrator was good about the house.

7. The narrator never came out of the toilet with a piece of tissue stuck to her shoe.

8. The narrator seemed to attract trouble.

9. There was nothing in her personality that the narrator did not know.

10. The narrator was afraid of modern cooking electric appliances and never bought any.

11. Her sewing machine was of the latest model and did everything,

12. There was always some dirty lining in the narrator's house.

13. The book the author found in her son's room was about Eastern meditation.

14. At the restaurant her daughter took her to they served only meat.

15. Her husband was enthusiastic about pureed lettuce,

16. The narrator and her husband were different as they had different natal signs.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand words and phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 3. Match the adjectives and the nouns from the story and remember the situations they were used in.

1. green	a) warning
2. flat	b) forecast
3. fuzzy	c) button
4. weird	d) energy
5. fallen	e) brownie
6. boundless	f) college
7. natal	g) word
8. local	h) fork
9. daily	i) tire
10. bent	j) thing
11. ominous	k) slime
12. special	l) sign

TASK 4. Match the words with their definitions.

1. meek	a) someone who drops things and falls easily (AE)
2. rant	b) the period of time where one sign ends and another begins
3. destiny	c) to plan smth. harmful or illegal secretly together
4. dart	d) to improve your behaviour or work
5. stitch up	e) very quiet and gentle, afraid to argue
6. klutz	f) a punishment a judge gives to smb. guilty
7. conspire	g) to sew smth., to fasten parts of cloth or a wound
8. chaperone	h) a small fold put into a piece of clothing for better fit
9. choke up	i) the power that some people believe, things you cannot control
10. shape up	j) to watch somebody going out somewhere
11. sentence	k) to talk or complain in a loud, excited and somewhat confused way
12. cusp	l) to be very upset about smth.

TASK 5. Fill in the gaps with the words and phrases from the left columns of Tasks 3 and 4. Make all necessary changes.

1. She and Mark broke up last week and she's pretty _____ _____ about it.
2. If you don't _____, I'll have to contact your parents.
3. She _____ the cut and left it to heal.
4. He'd never stand up for himself, he's too _____ and mild.
5. Jane accepted her _____ without complaint.
6. He was worried and _____ about the way his boss treated him.
7. She was found guilty and all waited for her _____.
8. I do not believe in _____ signs, do you?

9. He cannot stand people _____ behind his back. He prefers straight talk.

10. I cannot sew at all, so _____ or a _____ button would be a real problem to me.

TASK 6. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. You are irresistible _____ every sign _____ the zodiac.

2. It's easier if you eat it _____ a spoon."

3. _____ my way _____ bed I picked up the book and turned _____ the bedside light.

4. I could be _____ control of myself _____ taking a few minutes _____ each day and reciting a special word over and over again.

5. In stitching up new curtains one afternoon _____ my daughter's vacated bedroom, a book fell _____ the floor.

6. My husband could not understand how I let her pack _____ everything we've worked thirty years to accumulate.

7. The narrator was so unlucky that she broke her tooth _____ a marshmallow and got sucked up _____ her son's hair dryer.

8. The author stumbling _____ life fifty-two weeks _____ every year rubbing stains _____ her sweater and putting the wrong dates _____ checks.

9. The sun and the moon are _____ the direct line _____ the tides.

10. I chaperoned thirty fourth-graders _____ a tour _____ a meat-packing plant.

TASK 7. The narrator tells you many things about herself, but you also learn about her from her actions. Find an action to support each of the following statements:

a) She accepts her destiny.

b) She has a sense of humour.

c) She is not a good housewife.

TASK 8. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. Does the narrator have faith in astrology? Find in the text the facts that prove your opinion.

2. What do we know about the narrator and the members of her family? Characterize them as they appear in the text.

3. Do you believe that the narrator's troubles were because she was Pisces on the cusp? Why ?

4. What is the main idea of the story? What message does the author want to tell to his readers?

5. Why is the text entitled like that? Can your think of another title for it?

TASK 9. Imagine that you are:

a) the narrator's husband;

b) the narrator's son;

c) a friend of the narrator.

Retell the story from their points of view.

Alan Milne
NEARLY PERFECT

"Kindness doesn't always pay," said Coleby, "and I can tell you a very sad story that proves it."

"Kindness is its own reward," I said. I knew that somebody else would say it if I didn't.

"The reward in this case was the hangman's rope. Which is what I was saying."

"Is it a murder story?"

"Very much so."

"Good."

"What was the name of the kind gentleman?" asked Sylvia.

"Julian Crayne."

"And he was hanged?"

"Very unfairly, or so he thought. And if you will listen to the story instead of asking silly questions, you can say whether you agree with him."

"How old was he?"

"About thirty."

"Good-looking?"

"Not after he was hanged. Do you want to hear this story, or don't you?"

"Yes!" said everybody.

So Coleby told us the story.

Julian Crayne (he said) was an unpleasantly smooth young man who lived in the country with his Uncle Marius. He should have been working, but he disliked work. He disliked the country, too, but a suggestion that Julian should help the export drive in London — with the aid of a handsome allowance from Marius — met with an unenthusiastic response even when Julian threw in an offer to come down regularly for weekends and bring some of his friends with him. Marius didn't particularly

like his nephew, but he liked having him about. Rich, elderly bachelors often become bores, and bores prefer to have somebody at hand who cannot escape. Marius did not intend to let Julian escape. To have nobody to talk to through the week, and then to have a houseful of rowdy young people at the weekend, none of whom wanted to listen to him, was not his idea of pleasure. He had the power over his nephew that money gives, and he preferred to use it.

"It will all come to you when I die, my boy," he said, "and until then you won't grudge a sick old man the pleasure of your company."

"Of course not," said Julian. "It was only that I was afraid you were getting tired of me."

If Marius had really been a sick old man, any loving nephew such as Julian might have been content to wait. But Marius was a sound sixty-five, and in that very morning's newspaper there had been talk of somebody at Runcorn who had just celebrated his hundred-and-fifth birthday. Julian didn't know where Runcorn was, but he could add forty years to his own age, and ask himself what the devil would be the use of this money at seventy; whereas now, with £150,000 in the bank, and all life to come — Well, you can see for yourself how the thing would look to him.

I don't know if any of you have ever wondered about how to murder an uncle — an uncle whose heir and only relation you are. As we all know, the motives for murder are many. Revenge, passion, gain, fear, or simply the fact that you have seen the fellow's horrible face in the paper so often that you feel it to be almost a duty to eliminate it. The only person I have ever wanted to murder is...

Well, I won't mention names, because I may do it yet. But the point is that the police, in their stolid, unimaginative way, always look first for the money motive, and if the money motive is there, you are practically in the bag.

So you see the very difficult position in which Julian was placed. He lived alone with his uncle, he was his uncle's heir, and his uncle was a very rich man. However subtly he planned, the dead weight of that £150,000 was against him. Any other man might push Marius into the river, and confidently wait for a verdict of accidental death; but not Julian. Any other man

might place a tablet of some untraceable poison in the soda-mint bottle, and look for a certificate of "Death from Natural Causes"; but not Julian. Any other man might tie a string across the top step of the attic stairs. But I need not go on. You see, as Julian saw, how terribly unfair it was. The thing really got into his mind. He used to lie awake night after night thinking how unfair it was, and how delightfully easy it would be if it weren't for that £150,000.

The trouble was that he had nobody in whom to confide. He wished now, and for the first time, that he were married. With a loving wife to help him, how blithely they could have pursued, hand in hand, the search for the foolproof plan. What a stimulant to his brain would have been some gentle, fair-haired creature of the intelligence of the average policeman, who would point out the flaws and voice the suspicions the plan might raise. In such a delicate matter as this, two heads were better than one, even if the other head did nothing but listen with its mouth slightly ajar. At least he would then have the plan out in the open and be able to take a more objective view of it.

Unfortunately, the only person available was his uncle.

What he had to find — alone, if so it must be — was an alternative suspect to himself; somebody, in the eyes of the police, with an equally good motive. But what other motive could there be for getting rid of such an estimable man as Marius Crayne? A bore, yes; but would the average Inspector recognize boredom as a reasonable motive? Even if he did, it would merely be an additional motive for Julian. There was, of course, the possibility of "framing" somebody, a thing they were always doing in detective stories. But the only person in a position to be framed was old John Coppard, the gardener, and the number of footprints, fingerprints, blunt instruments, and blood-stained handkerchiefs with the initials J.C. on them that would be necessary to offset the absence of motive was more than Julian cared to contemplate.

I have said that Uncle Marius was a bore. Bores can be divided into two classes: those who have their own particular subject, and those who don't need a subject. Marius was in the former, and less offensive class. Shortly before his retirement (he was in the tea business), he had brought off a remarkable

double. He had filled in his first football-pool form "just to see how it went," distributing the numbers and the crosses in an impartial spirit, and had posted it "just for fun." He followed this up by taking over a lottery ticket from a temporarily embarrassed but rather intimidating gentleman whom he had met on a train. The result being what it was, Marius was convinced that he had a flair — as he put it, "a nose for things." So when he found that through the long winter evenings — and, indeed, during most of the day — there was nothing to do in the country but read detective stories, it soon became obvious to him that he had a nose for crime.

Well, it was this nose poor Julian had had to face. It was bad enough, whenever a real crime was being exploited in the papers, to listen to his uncle's assurance that once again Scotland Yard was at fault, as it was obviously the mother-in-law who had put the arsenic in the gooseberry tart; it was much more boring when the murder had taken place in the current detective story, and Marius was following up a confused synopsis of the first half with his own analysis of the clues.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you, this fellow — I forget his name for a moment — Carmichael, something like that — had met the girl, Doris — I mean Phyllis — had met Phyllis accidentally in Paris some years before — well, a year or two, the exact time doesn't matter — it was just that she and this fellow, what did I call him, Arbuthnot?.."

And it was at just such a moment as this that Julian was suddenly inspired.

"You know, Uncle Marius," he said, "you ought to write a detective story."

Marius laughed self-consciously, and said he didn't know about that.

"Of course you could! You're just the man. You've got a flair for that sort of thing, and you wouldn't make the silly mistakes all these other fellows make."

"Oh, I dare say I should be all right with the deduction and induction and so on — that's what I'm really interested in — but I've never thought of myself as a writer. There's a bit of a knack to it, you know. More in'your line than mine, I should have thought."

"Uncle, you've said it!" cried Julian. "We'll write it together. Two heads are better than one. We can talk it over every evening and criticize each other's suggestions. What do you say?"

Marius was delighted with the idea. So, of course, was Julian. He had found his collaborator.

Give me a drink, somebody.

Yes (went on Coleby, wiping his mouth), I know what you are expecting. Half of you are telling yourselves that, ironically enough, it was Uncle who thought of the foolproof plan for murder that Nephew put into execution; and the rest of you are thinking what much more fun it would be if Nephew thought of the plan, and, somewhat to his surprise, Uncle put it into execution. Actually, it didn't happen quite like that.

Marius, when it came to the point, had nothing much to contribute. But he knew what he liked. For him, one murder in a book was no longer enough. There must be two, the first one preferably at a country house party, with plenty of suspects. Then, at a moment when he is temporarily baffled, the Inspector receives a letter inviting him to a secret rendezvous at midnight, where the writer will be waiting to give him important information. He arrives to find a dying man, who is just able to gasp out "Horace" (or was it Hoxton?) before expiring in his arms. The murderer has struck again!

"You see the idea, my boy? It removes any doubt in the reader's mind that the first death was accidental, and provides the detective with a second set of clues. By collating the two sets..."

"You mean," asked Julian, "that it would be taken for granted that the murderer was the same in the two cases?"

"Well, of course, my dear boy, of course!" said Marius, surprised at the question. "What else? The poacher, or whoever it was, had witnessed the first murder but had foolishly given some hint of his knowledge to others — possibly in the bar of the local public house. Naturally the murderer has to eliminate him before the information can be passed on to the police."

"Naturally," said Julian thoughtfully. "Yes... Exactly... You know" — and he smiled at his uncle — "I think something might be done on those lines."

For there, he told himself happily, was a foolproof plan. First, commit a completely motiveless murder, of which he could not possibly be suspected. Then, which would be easy, encourage Uncle Marius to poke his "nose for things" into the case, convince him that he and he alone had found the solution, and persuade him to make an appointment with the local inspector. And then, just before the Inspector arrives, "strike again." It was, as he was accustomed to say when passing as a Battle of Britain pilot in Piccadilly bars, a piece of cake.

It may seem to some of you that in taking on this second murder Julian was adding both to his difficulties and his moral responsibility. But you must remember that through all these months of doubt he had been obsessed by one thing only, the intolerable burden of motive, so that suddenly to be rid of it, and to be faced with a completely motiveless killing, gave him an exhilarating sense of freedom in which nothing could go wrong. He had long been feeling that such a murder would be easy. He was now persuaded that it would be blameless.

The victim practically selected himself, and artistically, Julian liked to think, was one of whom Uncle Marius would have approved. A mile or two away at Birch Hall lived an elderly gentleman by the name of Corphew. Not only was he surrounded by greedy relations of both sexes, but in his younger days he had lived a somewhat mysterious life in the East. It did not outrage credibility to suppose that, as an innocent young man, he might have been mixed up in some Secret Society, or, as a more experienced one, might have robbed some temple of its most precious jewel. Though no dark men had been seen loitering in the neighborhood lately, it was common knowledge that Sir George had a great deal of money to leave and was continually altering or threatening to alter his will. In short, his situation fulfilled all the conditions Uncle Marius demanded of a good detective story.

At the moment Julian had no personal acquaintance with Sir George. Though, of course, they would have to be in some sort of touch with each other at the end, his first idea was to remain discreetly outside the family circle. Later reflection, however, told him that in this case he would qualify as one of those mysterious strangers who were occasionally an alternative

object of suspicion for the police — quite effectively, because Julian was of a dark, even swarthy, complexion. It would be better, he felt, to be recognized as a friendly acquaintance; obviously harmless, obviously with nothing to gain, even something to lose, by Sir George's death.

In making this acquaintance with his victim, Julian was favored by fortune. Rejecting his usual method of approach to a stranger (an offer to sell him some shares in an oil well in British Columbia), he was presenting himself at the Hall as the special representative of a paper interested in Eastern affairs, when he heard a cry for help from a little coppice that bordered the drive. Sir George, it seemed, had tripped over a root and sprained his ankle. With the utmost good will, Julian carried him up to the house. When he left an hour later, it was with a promise to drop in on a bedridden Sir George the next day, and play a game of chess with him.

Julian was no great chess player, but he was sufficiently intimate with the pieces to allow Sir George the constant pleasure of beating him. Between games, he learned all he could of his host's habits and the family's members. There seemed to him to be several admirable candidates for chief suspect, particularly a younger brother of sinister aspect called Eustace, who had convinced himself that he was to be the principal legatee. Indeed, the possibility of framing Eustace did occur to him, but he remembered in time that a second framing for the murder of Marius would then be necessary, and might easily be impracticable. Let them sort it out. The more suspects the better. Any morbid expectations you may now have of a detailed account of the murder of Sir George Corphew will not be satisfied. It is enough to say that it involved the conventional blunt instrument, and took place at a time when at least some of the family would not be likely to have an alibi. Julian was not at this time an experienced murderer, and he would have been the first to admit that he had been a little careless about footprints, fingerprints, and cigarette ashes. But as he would never be associated with the murder, this did not matter.

All went as he had anticipated. A London solicitor had produced a will in which all the family was heavily involved,

and the Inspector had busied himself with their alibis, making it clear that he regarded each one with the liveliest suspicion. Moreover, Uncle Marius was delighted to pursue his own line of investigation, which, after hovering for a moment round the Vicar, was now rapidly leading to a denunciation of an undergardener called Spratt.

"Don't put anything on paper," said Julian kindly. "It might be dangerous. Ring up the Inspector, and ask him to come in and see you tonight. Then you can tell him all about it."

"That's a good idea, my boy," said Marius. "That's what I'll do."

But, as it happened, the Inspector was already on his way. A local solicitor had turned up with a new will, made only a few days before. "In return for his kindness in playing chess with an old man," as he put it, Sir George had made Julian Crayne his sole legatee.

TASK 1. Answer the why-questions on the text.

1. Why did Julian live in the country though he disliked it?
2. Why didn't Marius let Julian leave his house though he didn't particularly love his relative?
3. Why couldn't Julian sleep at nights?
4. Why was Marius thought to have a nose for things?
5. Why did Julian suggest his uncle to write a detective story?
6. Why was Marius delighted to have a collaborator?
7. Why did Julian select Sir George Corphew as the perfect victim?
8. Why when committing the murder Julian was careless about footprints, fingerprints, and cigarette ashes?
9. Why did he decide to make friends with Sir George instead of remaining outside the family circle?
10. Why did Julian want Marius to call the Inspector?
11. Why was the Inspector already on his way?

TASK 2. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 3. Match the words with their definitions.

1. rowdy 2. foolproof 3. estimable 4. blunt 5. contemplate 6. collate 7. obsessed 8. loiter 9. frame 10. flair 11. poacher	a) a person who illegally hunts animals b) deserving respect c) hang around d) making a lot of noise e) natural ability f) not sharp g) produce false evidence against an innocent person h) put information together to examine and compare it i) think about j) thinking only about one thing k) well designed so it cannot fail

TASK 4. Fill in the gaps with the words from Task 3. Make all necessary changes.

1. It was impossible to cut the fabric with _____ scissors.
2. The film was about a forester who devoted his life to protect wild animals from _____.
3. He has a _____ for languages. He has mastered German, Spanish and Chinese at proficiency level only in 3 years.
4. He is _____ with his desire to visit Rome. I think nothing will stop him from going there sooner or later.
5. It was a _____ plan with no risk and no victims.
6. Instead of _____ away your time you'd better read an English book and learn more new words.
7. She never _____ marrying before twenty-nine.
8. He says he had been _____ and sent to prison for 5 years.
9. To find the reason for what happened you'll have to _____ all information about these people.
10. There were some _____ young men at the restaurant, who immediately produced the impression of troublemakers on the waiter serving on them.

TASK 5. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. Marius didn't particularly like his nephew, but he liked having him _____.

2. It was only that I was afraid you were getting tired _____ me."

3. As we all know, the motives _____ murder are many.

4. Any other man might push Marius _____ the river, and confidently wait _____ a verdict _____ accidental death; but not Julian.

5. Bores can be divided _____ two classes: those who have their own particular subject, and those who don't need a subject.

6. Once again Scotland Yard was _____ fault.

7. Marius was delighted _____ the idea.

8. Not only was he surrounded _____ greedy relations _____ both sexes, but _____ his younger days he had lived a somewhat mysterious life _____ the East.

9. The possibility of framing Eustace did occur _____ him.

10. It is enough to say that it took place _____ a time when _____ least some _____ the family would not be likely to have an alibi.

11. In making this acquaintance _____ his victim, Julian was favored _____ fortune.

12. But, as it happened, the Inspector was already _____ his way.

13. A local solicitor had turned _____ with a new will, made only a few days before.

TASK 6. Find in the text all words and expressions connected with the topic CRIME.
Use them in giving a short summary of the text.

TASK 7. Use as many adjectives as you can to characterize:
a) Julian;
b) Marius.

TASK 8. The author several times shows his irony. Find the sentences written with irony in the text. Why do they make you smile?

TASK 9. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. Who is the narrator of this story? Who are the main characters?

2. At the beginning of the story, the narrator says, "Kindness doesn't always pay." How does Julian's "kindness" backfire on him?

3. The opening paragraphs of this story tell you that Julian is caught and hanged. Did knowing this ruin the story for you or did it make the story more exciting? Why?

4. What do you think was Julian's plan judging by his words: "Don't put anything on paper. It might be dangerous. Ring up the Inspector, and ask him to come in and see you tonight. Then you can tell him all about it."

5. Why is the story entitled like that?

6. How do the last four lines of the story explain everything?

TASK 10. Imagine that during the trial Uncle Marius and Eustace are to tell everything they know about Julian and give their opinion of his personality. Act out their speeches in the court.

TASK 11. Act out a possible dialogue between Julian and the policeman who came to arrest him.

Shirley Jackson

ONE ORDINARY DAY, WITH PEANUTS

Mr. John Philip Johnson shut his front door behind him and came down his front steps into the bright morning with a feeling that all was well with the world on this best of all days, and wasn't the sun warm and good, and didn't his shoes feel comfortable after the resoling, and he knew that he had undoubtedly chosen the precise very tie which belonged with the day and the sun and his comfortable feet, and, after all, wasn't the world just a wonderful place? In spite of the fact that he was a small man, and the tie was perhaps a shade vivid, Mr. Johnson irradiated this feeling of well-being as he came down the steps and onto the dirty sidewalk, and he smiled at people who passed him, and some of them even smiled back. He stopped at the newsstand on the corner and bought his paper, saying "Good morning" with real conviction to the man who sold him the paper and the two or three other people who were lucky enough to be buying papers when Mr. Johnson skipped up. He remembered to fill his pockets with candy and peanuts, and then he set out to get himself uptown. He stopped in a flower shop and bought a carnation for his buttonhole, and stopped almost immediately afterward to give the carnation to a small child in a carriage, who looked at him dumbly, and then smiled, and Mr. Johnson smiled, and the child's mother looked at Mr. Johnson for a minute and then smiled too.

When he had gone several blocks uptown, Mr. Johnson cut across the avenue and went along a side street, chosen at random; he did not follow the same route every morning, but preferred to pursue his eventful way in wide detours, more like a puppy than a man intent upon business. It happened this morning that halfway down the block a moving van was parked, and the furniture from an upstairs apartment stood half on the sidewalk, half on the steps, while an amused group of people

loitered, examining the scratches on the tables and the worn spots on the chairs, and a harassed woman, trying to watch a young child and the movers and the furniture all at the same time, gave the clear impression of endeavoring to shelter her private life from the people staring at her belongings. Mr. Johnson stopped, and for a moment joined the crowd, and then he came forward and, touching his hat civilly, said, "Perhaps lean keep an eye on your little boy for you?"

The woman turned and glared at him distrustfully, and Mr. Johnson added hastily, "We'll sit right here on the steps." He beckoned to the little boy, who hesitated and then responded agreeably to Mr. Johnson's genial smile. Mr. Johnson brought out a handful of peanuts from his pocket and sat on the steps with the boy, who at first refused the peanuts on the grounds that his mother did not allow him to accept food from strangers; Mr. Johnson said that probably his mother had not intended peanuts to be included, since elephants at the circus ate them, and the boy considered, and then agreed solemnly. They sat on the steps cracking peanuts in a comradely fashion, and Mr. Johnson said, "So you're moving?"

"Yep," said the boy.

"Where you going?"

"Vermont."

"Nice place. Plenty of snow there. Maple sugar, too; you like maple sugar?"

"Sure."

"Plenty of maple sugar in Vermont. You going to live on a farm?"

"Going to live with Grandpa."

"Grandpa like peanuts?"

"Sure."

"Ought to take him some," said Mr. Johnson, reaching into his pocket. "Just you and Mommy going?"

"Yep."

"Tell you what," Mr. Johnson said. "You take some peanuts to eat on the train."

The boy's mother, after glancing at them frequently, had seemingly decided that Mr. Johnson was trustworthy, because she had devoted herself wholeheartedly to seeing that the movers did not—what movers rarely do, but every housewife believes

they will—crack a leg from her good table, or set a kitchen chair down on a lamp. Most of the furniture was loaded by now, and she was deep in that nervous stage when she knew there was something she had forgotten to pack—hidden away in the back of a closet somewhere, or left at a neighbor's and forgotten, or on the clothesline—and was trying to remember under stress what it was.

"This all, lady?" the chief mover said, completing her dismay.

Uncertainly, she nodded. "Want to go on the truck with the furniture, sonny?" the mover asked the boy, and laughed. The boy laughed too and said to Mr. Johnson, "I guess I'll have a good time at Vermont."

"Fine time," said Mr. Johnson, and stood up. "Have one more peanut before you go," he said to the boy.

The boy's mother said to Mr. Johnson, "Thank you so much; it was a great help to me."

"Nothing at all," said Mr. Johnson gallantly. "Where in Vermont are you going?"

The mother looked at the little boy accusingly, as though he had given away a secret of some importance, and said unwillingly, "Greenwich."

"Lovely town," said Mr. Johnson. He took out a card, and wrote a name on the back. "Very good friend of mine lives in Greenwich," he said. "Call on him for anything you need. His wife makes the best doughnuts in town," he added soberly to the little boy. "Swell," said the little boy. "Goodbye," said Mr. Johnson. He went on, stepping happily with his new-shod feet, feeling the warm sun on his back and on the top of his head. Halfway down the block he met a stray dog and fed him a peanut.

At the corner, where another wide avenue faced him, Mr. Johnson decided to go on uptown again. Moving with comparative laziness, he was passed on either side by people hurrying and frowning, and people brushed past him going the other way, clattering along to get somewhere quickly. Mr. Johnson stopped on every corner and waited patiently for the light to change, and he stepped out of the way of anyone who seemed to be in any particular hurry, but one young lady came too fast for him, and crashed wildly into him when he

stooped to pat a kitten which had run out onto the sidewalk from an apartment house and was now unable to get back through the rushing feet.

"Excuse me," said the young lady, trying frantically to pick up Mr. Johnson and hurry on at the same time, "terribly sorry."

The kitten, regardless now of danger, raced back to its home. "Perfectly all right," said Mr. Johnson, adjusting himself carefully. "You seem to be in a hurry."

"Of course I'm in a hurry," said the young lady. "I'm late."

She was extremely cross and the frown between her eyes seemed well on its way to becoming permanent. She had obviously awakened late, because she had not spent any extra time in making herself look pretty, and her dress was plain and unadorned with collar or brooch, and her lipstick was noticeably crooked. She tried to brush past Mr. Johnson, but, risking her suspicious displeasure, he took her arm and said, "Please wait."

"Look," she said ominously. "I ran into you and your lawyer can see my lawyer and I will gladly pay all damages and all inconveniences suffered there from but please this minute let me go because I am late."

"Late for what?" said Mr. Johnson; he tried his winning smile on her but it did no more than keep her, he suspected, from knocking him down again.

"Late for work," she said between her teeth. "Late for my employment. I have a job and if I am late I lose exactly so much an hour and I cannot really afford what your pleasant conversation is costing me, be it ever so pleasant." "I'll pay for it," said Mr. Johnson. Now these were magic words, not necessarily because they were true, or because she seriously expected Mr. Johnson to pay for anything, but because Mr. Johnson's flat statement, obviously innocent of irony, could not be, coming from Mr. Johnson, anything but the statement of a responsible and truthful and respectable man.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I said that since I am obviously responsible for your being late I shall certainly pay for it."

"Don't be silly," she said, and for the first time the frown disappeared. "I wouldn't expect you to pay for anything —

a few minutes ago I was offering to pay you. Anyway," she added, almost smiling, "it was my fault."

"What happens if you don't go to work?"

She stared. "I don't get paid."

"Precisely," said Mr. Johnson.

"What do you mean, precisely? If I don't show up at the office exactly twenty minutes ago I lose a dollar and twenty cents an hour, or two cents a minute or..." She thought. "... Almost a dime for the time I've spent talking to you."

Mr. Johnson laughed, and finally she laughed, too. "You're late already," he pointed out. "Will you give me another four cents worth?"

"I don't understand why."

"You'll see," Mr. Johnson promised. He led her over to the side of the walk, next to the buildings, and said, "Stand here," and went out into the rush of people going both ways. Selecting and considering, as one who must make a choice involving perhaps whole years of lives, he estimated the people going by. Once he almost moved, and then at the last minute thought better of it and drew back. Finally, from half a block away, he saw what he wanted, and moved out into the center of the traffic to intercept a young man, who was hurrying, and dressed as though he had awakened late, and frowning.

"Oof," said the young man, because Mr. Johnson had thought of no better way to intercept anyone than the one the young woman had unwittingly used upon him. "Where do you think you're going?" the young man demanded from the sidewalk.

"I want to speak to you," said Mr. Johnson ominously.

The young man got up nervously, dusting himself and eying Mr. Johnson. "What for?" he said. "What'd/do?"

"That's what bothers me most about people nowadays," Mr. Johnson complained broadly to the people passing. "No matter whether they've done anything or not, they always figure someone's after them. About what you're going to do," he told the young man.

"Listen," said the young man, trying to brush past him, "I'm late, and I don't have any time to listen. Here's a dime, now get going."

"Thank you," said Mr. Johnson, pocketing the dime. "Look," he said, "what happens if you stop running?"

"I'm late," said the young man, still trying to get past Mr. Johnson, who was unexpectedly clinging.

"How much do you make an hour?" Mr. Johnson demanded.

"A communist, are you?" said the young man. "Now will you please let me---"

"No," said Mr. Johnson insistently, "how much?"

"Dollar fifty," said the young man. "And now will you —"

"You like adventure?"

The young man stared, and, staring, found himself caught and held by Mr. Johnson's genial smile; he almost smiled back and then repressed it and made an effort to tear away. "I got to hurry," he said.

"Mystery? Like surprises? Unusual and exciting events?"

"You selling something?"

"Sure," said Mr. Johnson. "You want to take a chance?"

The young man hesitated, looked longingly up the avenue toward what might have been his destination and then, when Mr. Johnson said, "I'll pay for it," with his own peculiar and convincing emphasis, turned and said, "Well, okay. But I got to see it first, what I'm buying."

Mr. Johnson, breathing hard, led the young man over to the side where the girl was standing; she had been watching with interest Mr. Johnson's capture of the young man and now, smiling timidly, she looked at Mr. Johnson as though prepared to be surprised at nothing. Mr. Johnson reached into his pocket and took out his wallet. "Here," he said, and handed a bill to the girl. "This about equals your day's pay."

"But no," she said, surprised in spite of herself. "I mean, I couldn't."

"Please do not interrupt," Mr. Johnson told her. "And here," he said to the young man, "this will take care of you." The young man accepted the bill dazedly, but said, "Probably counterfeit" to the young woman out of the side of his mouth. "Now," Mr. Johnson went on, disregarding the young man, "what is your name, miss?"

"Kent," she said helplessly. "Mildred Kent."

"Fine," said Mr. Johnson. "And you, sir?"

"Arthur Adams," said the young man stiffly.

"Splendid," said Mr. Johnson. "Now, Miss Kent, I would like you to meet Mr. Adams. Mr. Adams, Miss Kent."

Miss Kent stared, wet her lips nervously, made a gesture as though she might run, and said, "How do you do?"

Mr. Adams straightened his shoulders, scowled at Mr. Johnson, made a gesture as though he might run, and said, "How do you do?"

"Now this," said Mr. Johnson, taking several bills from his wallet, "should be enough for the day for both of you. I would suggest, perhaps, Coney Island — although I personally am not fond of the place — or perhaps a nice lunch somewhere, and dancing, or a matinee, or even a movie, although take care to choose a really good one; there are 50 many bad movies these days. You might," he said, struck with an inspiration, "visit the Bronx Zoo, or the Planetarium. Anywhere, as a matter of fact," he concluded, "that you would like to go. Have a nice time."

As he started to move away Arthur Adams, breaking from his dumbfounded stare, said, "But see here, mister, you can't do this. Why — how do you know — I mean, we don't even know — I mean, how do you know we won't just take the money and not do what you said?"

"You've taken the money," Mr. Johnson said. "You don't have to follow any of my suggestions. You may know something you prefer to do—perhaps a museum, or something."

"But suppose I just run away with it and leave her here?"

"I know you won't", said Mr. Johnson gently, "because you remembered to ask me that. Goodbye," he added, and went on.

As he stepped up the street, conscious of the sun on his head and his good shoes, he heard from somewhere behind him the young man saying, "Look, you know you don't have to if you don't want to," and the girl saying, "But unless you don't want to..." Mr. Johnson smiled to himself and then thought that he had better hurry along; when he wanted to he could move very quickly, and before the young woman had gotten around to saying, "Well, I will if you will," Mr. Johnson was several blocks away and had already stopped twice, once to help a lady lift several large packages into a taxi and once to hand

a peanut to a seagull. By this time he was in an area of large stores and many more people and he was buffeted constantly from either side by people hurrying and cross and late and sullen. Once he offered a peanut to a man who asked him for a dime, and once he offered a peanut to a bus driver who had stopped his bus at an intersection and had opened the window next to his seat and put out his head as though longing for fresh air and the comparative quiet of the traffic. The man wanting a dime took the peanut because Mr. Johnson had wrapped a dollar bill around it, but the bus driver took the peanut and asked ironically, "You want a transfer, Jack?"

On a busy corner Mr. Johnson encountered two young people — for one minute he thought they might be Mildred Kent and Arthur Adams — who were eagerly scanning a newspaper, their backs pressed against a storefront to avoid the people passing, their heads bent together. Mr. Johnson, whose curiosity was insatiable, leaned onto the storefront next to them and peeked over the man's shoulder; they were scanning the "Apartments Vacant" columns.

Mr. Johnson remembered the street where the woman and her little boy were going to Vermont and he tapped the man on the shoulder and said amiably, "Try down on West Seventeen. About the middle of the block, people moved out this morning."

"Say, what do you —" said the man, and then, seeing Mr. Johnson clearly, "Well, thanks. Where did you say?"

"West Seventeen," said Mr. Johnson. "About the middle of the block." He smiled again and said, "Good luck."

"Thanks," said the man.

"Thanks," said the girl as they moved off.

"Goodbye," said Mr. Johnson.

He lunched alone in a pleasant restaurant, where the food was rich, and only Mr. Johnson's excellent digestion could encompass two of their whipped — cream — and — chocolate — and — rum — cake pastries for dessert. He had three cups of coffee, tipped the waiter largely, and went out into the street again into the wonderful sunlight, his shoes still comfortable and fresh on his feet. Outside he found a beggar staring into the windows of the restaurant he had left and, carefully looking through the money in his pocket, Mr. Johnson approached the

beggar and pressed some coins and a couple of bills into his hand. "It's the price of the veal cutlet lunch plus tip," said Mr. Johnson. "Goodbye."

After his lunch he rested; he walked into the nearest park and fed peanuts to the pigeons. It was late afternoon by the time he was ready to start back downtown, and he had refereed two checker games and watched a small boy and girl whose mother had fallen asleep and awakened with surprise and fear which turned to amusement when she saw Mr. Johnson. He had given away almost all of his candy, and had fed all the rest of his peanuts to the pigeons, and it was time to go home. Although the late-afternoon sun was pleasant, and his shoes were still entirely comfortable, he decided to take a taxi downtown.

He had a difficult time catching a taxi, because he gave up the first three or four empty ones to people who seemed to need them more; finally, however, he stood alone on the corner and — almost like netting a frisky fish — he hailed desperately until he succeeded in catching a cab which had been proceeding with haste uptown and seemed to draw in toward Mr. Johnson against its own will.

"Mister," the cab driver said as Mr. Johnson climbed in, "I figured you was an omen, like. I wasn't going to pick you up at all."

"Kind of you," said Mr. Johnson ambiguously.

"If I'd of let you go it would of cost me ten bucks," said the driver.

"Really?" said Mr. Johnson,

"Yeah," said the driver. "Guy just got out of the cab, he turned around and gave me ten bucks, said take this and bet it in a hurry on a horse named Vulcan, right away."

"Vulcan?" said Mr. Johnson, horrified. " fire sign on a A Wednesday?"

"What?" said the driver. "Anyway, I said to myself if I got no fare between here and there I'd bet the ten, but if anyone looked like they needed the cab I'd take it as an omen and I'd take the ten home to the wife."

"You were very right," said Mr. Johnson heartily. 'This is Wednesday, you would have lost your money. Monday, yes, or

even Saturday. But never never never a fire sign on a Wednesday. Sunday would have been good, now."

"Vulcan don't run on Sunday," said the driver.

"You wait till another day," said Mr. Johnson. "Down this street, please, driver. I'll get off on the next corner."

"He told me Vulcan, though," said the driver.

"I'll tell you," said Mr. Johnson, hesitating with the door of the cab half open. "You take that ten dollars and I'll give you another ten dollars to go with it, and you go right ahead and bet that money on any Thursday on any horse that has a name indicating ... let me see, Thursday ... well, grain. Or any growing food."

"Grain?" said the driver. "You mean a horse named, like Wheat or something?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Johnson. "Or, as a matter of fact, to make it even easier, any horse whose name includes the letters C, R, L. Perfectly simple."

"Tall Corn?" said the driver, a light in his eye. "You mean a horse named, like, Tall Corn?"

"Absolutely," said Mr. Johnson. "Here's your money."

"Tall Corn," said the driver. "Thank you, mister."

"Goodbye," said Mr. Johnson.

He was on his own corner and went straight up to his apartment. He let himself in and called "Hello?" and Mrs. Johnson answered from the kitchen, "Hello, dear, aren't you early?"

"Took a taxi home," Mr. Johnson said. "I remembered the cheesecake, too. What's for dinner?"

Mrs. Johnson came out of the kitchen and kissed him; she was a comfortable woman, and smiling as Mr. Johnson smiled. "Hard day?" she asked.

"Not very," said Mr. Johnson, hanging his coat in the closet. "How about you?"

"So-so," she said. She stood in the kitchen doorway while he settled into his easy chair and took off his good shoes and took out the paper he had bought that morning. "Here and there," she said.

"I didn't do so badly," Mr. Johnson said. "Couple young people."

"Fine," she said. "I had a little nap this afternoon, took it easy most of the day. Went into a department store this morning and accused the woman next to me of shoplifting, and had the store detective pick her up. Sent three dogs to the pound—you know, the usual thing. Oh, and listen," she added, remembering.

"What?" asked Mr. Johnson.

"Well," she said, "I got onto a bus and asked the driver for a transfer, and when he helped someone else first I said that he was impertinent, and quarreled with him. And then I said why wasn't he in the army, and I said it loud enough for everyone to hear, and I took his number and I turned in a complaint. Probably got him fired."

"Fine," said Mr. Johnson. "But you do look tired. Want to change over tomorrow?"

"I would like to," she said. "I could do with a change."

"Right," said Mr. Johnson. "What's for dinner?"

"Veal cutlet."

"Had it for lunch," said Mr. Johnson.

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true, false or not stated in the text. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. Mr Johnson liked walking very much.
2. He liked walking the same way every morning.
3. The young lady with the boy felt nervous.
4. All the people in the street were in a hurry.
5. Miss Kent obviously did not get up early that morning.
6. Mr Johnson picked a young man for Mildred Kent in no time.
7. The young couple was reading the newspaper very carefully.
8. Mr Jonson had a lunch with a beggar on that day.
9. Mr Johnson gave all the money he had about him.
10. Mr Johnson observed two chess games in the park.
11. Mr Johnson fed all his peanuts to children and pigeons.
12. Mr Johnson's day was the same as his wife's.

TASK 2. Match halves of the phrases.

1. to fill the pockets	a) doing something
2. to bet 10 dollars	b) out of the side of one's mouth
3. to pay	c) between one's eyes
4. to take off	d) a taxi downtown
5. to take out	e) with something
6. to take	f) something (everything) easy
7. to press some coins	g) one's shoes
8. to take	h) from a dumbfounded stare
9. to have a difficult time	j) with candy and peanuts
10. to be buffeted	i) from either side
11. to run away	k) the paper one bought
12. to break (somebody)	l) into one's hand
13. to say something	m)on somebody
14. a frown	n) all damages and inconveniences
15. to try a smile	o) on a horse

TASK 3. Fill in the gaps with the phrases from task 2. Make all necessary changes.

1. He had a permanent _____ as he was constantly worrying about money.
2. There were so many people in the street that he _____ _____.
3. She decided _____ him as she was lost for any other arguments.
4. Though disapproving of gambling, he had nothing to do but _____.
5. He had a habit of _____ while coming to see them.
6. He was an amiable man and his motto was: _____ _____.
7. Trying not to be heard by the people around _____ _____.
8. The boy pocketed the candy and happily _____ _____.

9. I _____ my math homework.
10. His lawyer admitted his fault and promised _____ _____.
11. Mrs Smith got surprised by his note and started when the telephone rang and _____.
12. She felt pity for the boy and_____.

TASK 4. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 5. Find in the text all sentences describing how Mr. Johnson was feeling during the day and explain why.

TASK 6. Find in the text the adjectives used to describe people's personalities. What does the choice of adjectives tell the reader?

TASK 7. Find in the text how different people reacted to Mr Johnson's smile first and try to explain why. Was the attitude of the grown ups and the children the same? Why?

TASK 8. Find in the text the words used to describe Mr. Johnson's appearance and personality. Was his disposition the same all day long?

TASK 9. Find the synonyms from the text to the following phrases and remember the situations they were used in:
a) to observe somebody;
b) to mind a child;
c) to have a difficulty to do something;
d) to say something unobserved;
e) to be pushed by the passers by;
f) to help somebody to get up;
g) to take somebody as a passenger;
h) to sleep a little;
i) to avoid something being done to somebody.

TASK 10. Describe in brief the days of Mr Johnson and his wife.

TASK 11. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. Where does the story take place? Cite specific details to support your answer.

2. What evidence in the story indicates when it takes place?

3. What role did the peanuts play in the story? Why is the story entitled like that?

4. In what ways has this been "one ordinary day" for (a) Mr. Johnson; (b) the people he met during the course of the day?

6. Is this story believable? Does anyone actually act the way the Johnsons do?

7. What do you suppose was the author's purpose in writing this story?

Molly Picon

I'LL GIVE YOU LAW!

When I read the newspaper, there is always a must section in it that I never pass by. This is the lost and found advertisements usually buried in the back pages. This is a habit I picked up from my grandmother. She always took a keen interest in who had lost what, and who was honestly reporting on items found. She could people a whole colony from just a couple of advertisements.

"Lost — one black puppy with a white patch around its eye. Answers to the name 'Spot.' Please call Beaver 6-5000. Reward."

From this my grandmother would draw for me a picture of a child sobbing itself to sleep at night, of parents out searching the streets anxiously, calling in hopeless voices, "Spot. Here, Spot. Come on, Spot. Here, boy."

The picture was so visual to both of us we used to sit there with tears in our eyes, willing Spot to answer, wanting the child to cry with joy and not in sorrow.

"Lost—a white platinum ring, inscribed 'To J. from W., forever thine.' Ring not valuable but of sentimental value. Reward."

My grandmother would analyze the situation for me.

"What kind of a woman is she to lose a ring like that?" Grandma would cry sternly. "In the first place, how could it fall off her finger?"

"Maybe it was loose?" I would suggest helpfully.

"Loose? Why should it be loose?" Grandma was not going to accept any of my flimsy excuses. "She didn't have a little string in the house she could wind around the ring so it could fit? Don't give me such stones."

"Maybe she took it off in a washroom when she was washing her hands, and then she forgot it," I would then suggest.

"A ring like that you don't take off, and if you take it off, you don't forget it. I'm only sorry for that W., whoever he is. A bargain he hasn't got in her, believe me."

"But, Bubba, how do we know that J. is a woman and W. is a man? Maybe J. is the man and W. is the woman, and she gave him the ring."

My grandmother was openly amused at such innocence.

"A lady to give a man a ring?" Absolutely out of the question. My grandmother wouldn't accept it even as an idea.

"Maybe it was a wedding ring," I argued. "Sometimes people have double ring ceremonies."

For the sake of argument, Grandma would concede.

"All right. So J. is the man. So it was a wedding ring. So what kind of a man loses his wedding ring? A good-for-nothing loafer. So what does she need him for? She should let him go with the ring together."

In no time at all, my grandmother would get into a rage at the low character of this man, who thought so little of his marriage vows that he didn't have the decency to hang on to his wedding band.

We thought about all the lost items with equal interest. We wondered about the found items as well, visualizing the happy claimants, and the honest finders handsomely rewarded. At such moments, God was in Heaven, and all was right with the world.

And then one day, we moved swiftly from the land of fantasy to a world of realities. My grandmother found something!

"What is it? What is it?" I asked, hopping with excitement.

"A lavaliere! A necklace made up of a pendant on a chain."

My grandmother was absolutely overwhelmed. She had never found anything in her life, and now, here in her hand, was this magnificent lavaliere.

"It must be very expensive," I said, running my fingers over it.

"A fortune," my grandmother said positively. She held it up against her. "A regular fortune," she breathed.

"Are you going to keep it?" I asked.

She gave me a sharp look. If the thought entered her mind, she wasn't going to admit it to me.

"Am I going to keep it,' " she asked. "Such a question." She threw her shawl over her head.

"Where are you going?" I asked. "Can I go, too?"

"I'm going to the police station. Let them worry about it. You can't come," she added firmly. "A police station is not respectable."

At the police station, the property clerk informed her politely that if the lavaliere was not claimed within ninety days, the police department would turn the jewelry over to her, and she would be its rightful and legal owner. He took her name and address and wrote it down. They would let her know, he said indifferently.

"Oh, I hope nobody claims it," I said fervently. "Oh, Bubba, I hope whoever lost it doesn't even know they lost it."

Such a dilemma for my grandmother. If ever she yearned for anything, it was for this lavaliere. On the other hand, her active imagination conjured up for her such tearful scenes that she couldn't wait for the loser to come and claim her property.

She could not compromise with her stern standards. She advertised in the local paper, running the advertisement for three days. Then she had to abandon this, because money spent for anything but food was both wasteful and sinful. During that three-day period, we waited with our hearts in our mouths. Every time there was a knock at the door, we could see the lavaliere leaving us forever. Meanwhile, my grandmother took to haunting the police station and the property clerk. How are you, she would ask, and how is the family? In the beginning he would dismiss this with a curt "fine we haven't heard don't call on us we'll let you know" attitude. But my grandmother began to take a personal interest in the policemen at the precinct. After all, she visited them daily. It wasn't like they were strangers, she would tell me. She knew their names and the names of their wives and the names of their children. She knew at any given moment what child was suffering from what childhood disease, how hard it was to make ends meet on a policeman's salary, what policeman was going to night school to study law and improve his station in life, what policeman was smarting at being passed over when promotions were handed out. Only the property clerk held out. When he would look up and see my grandmother, he would mutter and groan.

"Mrs. Ostrow," he would say, "don't you have anything to do at home?"

"Why don't I have something to do at home?" my grandmother would regard him scornfully. "You think I like to come here day after day?"

"So why do you come?" he would ask logically.

"To see what I have to see," she would tell him. And then she would demand to see the lavaliere with "my own eyes." And then she would subject him to a searching questioning. Who had come today, and what had they claimed, and wasn't it possible the lavaliere had belonged to one of the people who had come, and had he told anybody about it, and if he was keeping it such a big secret, how could anybody know he had it in the first place?

As hard as I prayed that no one would show up, he prayed that someone—anyone—would.

"Ninety days," he would cry, clutching his hair. "I'll never survive it."

"Bubba," I once asked, "why do you go there every day? Don't you trust him?"

"Trust him?" My grandmother smiled at such innocence.

"But he's a policeman. And he's right in the police station," I protested. "What could he do?"

My grandmother didn't want to fill my mind with stories of what could happen to a policeman in a police station. After all, he might have been an officer, but at the same time he was only a man. Man is weak, and temptation is strong. My grandmother could not visualize a man so strong-minded as to be able to resist the golden lure presented by such a collection of lost treasures.

I never knew that ninety days could last so long. But eventually the ninetieth day arrived, bringing with it much excitement and expectation. My grandmother and I dressed as though we were going to a party. She was going to allow me to go with her for the presentation. On the way we discussed her immense good fortune.

"When I die," she said to me, "I want you to have it."

"Please, Bubba," I said, uncomfortably. It seemed like a grim note to inject in an otherwise cloudless day.

"No," she insisted seriously. "I want you to have it. It will be like a—what is the word I want, Malkele?"

"An heirloom?"

"That's the word." She pounced on it with satisfaction. "And when you die, your children will have it."

In two sentences, my grandmother had disposed of us both.

At the police station, my grandmother was greeted with happy smiles, even from the property clerk. I should say, especially from the property clerk. It was the happiest day of his life.

When my grandmother finally held the lavaliere in her hand, her eyes misted over. She couldn't speak, but she nodded her head tremulously at the policemen.

"Don't be a stranger," they urged her. "Don't wait till you find something before you drop in."

"Such nice boys," my grandmother said, as we left the station. She touched her eyes with her handkerchief. "Such good boys, even him," she said, referring to the property clerk. "He had his eye on it, but out of respect, he didn't touch it." I believed my grandmother. I didn't see how that property clerk could have looked at that lavaliere for ninety days and so nobly fought off temptation.

When we got home, my grandmother promptly put the lavaliere on.

"I'll wear it night and day," she vowed. "I'll never take it off." For a week she was as good as her word.

Then one day there came a knock at the door, and tragedy swept in, escorted by an embarrassed and harassed property clerk from the police station.

"Where is it?" cried the woman he had brought to the door. She looked at my grandmother. "My lavaliere she's wearing," she cried in horror, pointing to my grandmother.

My grandmother looked at both of them, appalled. Her hand went up automatically to clutch the lavaliere.

"It's mine," she said. "You told me, after ninety days ..."

"That's right," the property clerk said promptly. "Legally it is yours. That's what I've been trying to tell this lady. She didn't claim it in ninety days, and the law says..."

"I'll give you law," the lady shouted vigorously, pounding him on the arm. "Does the law ask me where was I the past ninety days? Does the law say after ninety days thieves and murderers can do whatever they want? Law! I'll give you law!"

"Please, lady," the property clerk pleaded. "Let's try to be calm."

"Calm!" she took up the cry. "I'll give you calm!"

My grandmother entered the fray briskly.

"So much commotion," she said. "You want the neighbors to think we're killing you on the doorstep. Come inside." She urged them in and closed the door. "So if you'll stop talking and tell me where you were," she said, guiding the distracted woman to a seat, "we'll listen and we'll be the same good friends."

"Where was I?" the woman said, shaking her head. "My daughter was having her baby, so she says to me, 'Ma,' she says, 'if you don't come, I won't have it, that's all.' Scared to death with the first child. Wait till she's had six, like me."

"I had eleven," my grandmother topped her quietly.

"Eleven! So I don't have to tell you," the woman continued. "So I had to go to Scranton yet—a husband takes it into his head to — make a living in Scranton," she added in a note of disbelief. "With all the children I had to go. One month in advance, just in case. And then, with God's help, the baby comes. Now she's afraid to hold it, it might break. And she's afraid to wash it. It might come apart in the water. And she's afraid to feed it. It throws up on her. One month. Two months. Finally I say to her, 'Rebeccah,' I say, 'enough is enough already. Whatever you'll do, you'll do.'"

My grandmother was already making tea for everybody, bustling about the kitchen, putting crackers and jam on the table.

"The young people today," she commented.

"So when I come back, I first realized my lavaliere is gone. I'm not hung with jewelry, and between you and me and the lamppost," she added confidentially to my grandmother, "I need a lavaliere like I need a hole in the head. But when I need a little extra money in an emergency, that lavaliere saves my life."

"How does it save your life?" I asked, intrigued.

She made a face, lifting her eyebrows eloquently to the grown-ups present.

"I bring it to the pawnshop and whatever few pennies he gives me ..."

"The pawnshop!" I was indignant. "She doesn't even wear it, Bubba," I said passionately. "Don't give it back. You don't have to. The law says you don't have to."

"That's right," the property clerk said instantly. He was on his second cup of tea and using my grandmother's jam as if the jar had an endless bottom.

The woman opened her mouth to protest, but my grandmother stopped her by holding up her hand for silence.

"Malkele," she said gently, "there is a law here, too." She laid her hand tenderly on my heart. "Look in your heart and tell me. Suppose it was your lavaliere. Suppose you lost it and somebody else found it. Ninety days, a thousand days... how would you feel?"

"I would want it back," I answered honestly, "no matter how."

She spread her hands out eloquently.

"So?" she asked me.

"That's not fair," I burst out.

"Fair? Who said anything about fair?" She reached up and took off the lavaliere. She fondled it for a moment, and then handed it over to the woman.

"Why should I complain?" she asked no one in particular and shrugged. "For three months I lived in a dream, and for five days I lived like a queen. Is that bad?"

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true, false or not stated in the text. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. Grandmother liked reading.
2. Grandma could imagine a whole story behind the lines of the advertisement.
3. Sometimes Grandma had to accept some argument for the sake of arguing.
4. The find of the lavaliere scared Grandmother to death.
5. She went to the police station with her niece at finding the lost property.
6. There was only one policeman at the station.
7. After finding the lavaliere Grandmother went to the police station every day.
8. Everyone at the police station enjoyed Grandmother's visits.
9. Both Grandmother and her granddaughter dressed well to claim the lavaliere.
10. The owner could not claim her property as she was not in town.

11. Grandmother asked the policeman and the lady to come in as she wanted the child to hear their argument.

12. Both the policeman and the lady behaved unfriendly from the start.

13. Grandmother could not know much about the childbirth as she had given the birth to one child only.

14. The lady who had lost the lavaliere was not rich.

15. The girl wanted the property to be returned to their visitor at once.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand the highlighted phrases containing some words used not in their common meaning.

TASK 3. There are a lot of phraseological units in the story. Explain the meaning of the underlined phrases.

TASK 4. Match the words with their definitions.

1. heirloom	a) a ring of gold used at the wedding and worn to show one's marital status
2. stern	b) made laugh or smile by smth. funny
3. decency	c) feeling or showing horror or disgust
4. to concede	d) appearing rude because too laconic or too quick
5. flimsy	e) to do smth. adding a particular quality to it
6. pawnshop	f) to admit unwillingly that something is right
7. to inject	g) honest, polite, accepted behaviour
8. to throw up	h) to demand smth. that legally belongs
9.amused	i) feeling a strong emotional effect
10. to claim	j) a valuable object that has belonged to the same family for many years
11. appalled	k) too transparent, difficult to believe
12. curt	l) a place where they lend people money for valuable objects
13. overwhelmed	m)to vomit
14. band	n) strict in a very serious and usually unpleasant way

TASK 5. Find words and phrases similar in meaning.

To miss; to come apart; to cry; to look for; to yearn for smth; a loser; to sob; to abandon; to become angry; to mutter; every day; to want something strongly; to stop; to pass by; station in life; to search; to hold out; to take a personal interest; promptly; a good-for-nothing loafer; to become personally interested; a social status; to continue to do smth.; to say something in a low voice; quickly; to break; at once; daily; briskly; to get into a rage.

TASK 6. Fill in the gaps with the suitable words and phrases from Tasks 3, 4, 5. Make all necessary changes.

1. It's common _____ to let someone know if you are going to arrive late.
2. He left, _____ something about having to see a client.
3. They had _____ playing the game due to bad weather.
4. The rich nations never _____ the same status to the poorer countries.
5. Hannah _____ for a child for years..
6. They hoped that the adoption of a child _____ a new life into their marriage.
7. Lost property can _____ between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.
8. Margo _____ about the unfairness of the situation.
9. The evidence against him is extremely _____ _____.
10. He was _____ by the thought that they were talking about him at the very moment.
11. We watched _____ as the child ran in front of the car.
12. There are groups who believe in _____ measures for children discipline offences.
13. Josie stormed of the room and flung herself on the bed, _____.
14. His reply was _____ and unfriendly.
15. He felt completely _____ by their kindness.

TASK 7. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. I never pass _____ the articles by this journalist.
2. It is from my grandmother that I picked _____ a habit to keep a diary.
3. He was so tired that he forgot to take _____ his jacket before lying down.
4. Though she understood his arguments she tried to hang _____ _____ her own point of view.
5. The couple cried _____ joy seeing their first-born.
6. Her eyes got misted _____ reading her son's letter.
7. Her friend took _____doing the homework _____ math immediately.
8. The child tried not to show that she was scared _____ death.
9. At their first meeting he was subjected _____ strict questioning _____ his future mother-in-law.
10. Though there were a few chocolates left in the box he decided to fight _____ the temptation.
11. The child felt awful and sobbed himself _____ sleep.
12. Doctors hold _____ little hope _____ her recovering.
13. Rain swept _____ through the broken windows.
14. An accident is holding _____ the traffic.

TASK 8. Find in the text all sentences describing how grandmother was feeling and explain why.

TASK 9. The narrator tells you many things about Grandma, but you also learn about her from her actions. Find an action to support each of the following statements:

a) Grandma is honest;
b) Grandma is imaginative;
c) Grandma doesn't have much money.

TASK 10. Questions for deeper understanding.

1. Who is the narrator of this story? Who is the main, or most important, character?
2. Why does Grandma enjoy reading the lost and found advertisements?
3. Why does the find of a lavaliere create a dilemma for her?

4. Because the narrator was young at the time of this story, she accepts without question many of Grandma's evaluations. Do you think the lavaliere really was worth "a regular fortune"? Do you think the property clerk really "had his eye on" the lavaliere? Why or why not?

5. Although Grandma is the legal owner, she decides to give the lavaliere back to its original owner. Why? Do you think Grandma made the right decision?

TASK 11. Retell the incident with the lavaliere as you were a lost property clerk and as if you were the girl's grandmother.

Katherine Anne Porter

THE JILTING OF GRANNY WEATHERALL

She flicked her wrist neatly out of Doctor Harry's pudgy careful fingers and pulled the sheet up to her chin. The brat ought to be in knee breeches. Doctoring around the country with spectacles on his nose! "Get along now, take your schoolbooks and go. There's nothing wrong with me."

Doctor Harry spread a warm paw like a cushion on her forehead where the forked green vein danced and made her eyelids twitch. "Now, now, be a good girl, and we'll have you up in no time."

"That's no way to speak to a woman nearly eighty years old just because she's down. I'd have you respect your elders, young man."

"Well, Missy, excuse me." Doctor Harry patted her cheek. "But I've got to warn you, haven't I? You're a marvel, but you must be careful or you're going to be good and sorry."

"Don't tell me what I'm going to be. I'm on my feet now, morally speaking. It's Cornelia. I had to go to bed to get rid of her."

Her bones felt loose, and floated around in her skin, and Doctor Harry floated like a balloon around the foot of the bed. He floated and pulled down his waistcoat and swung his glasses on a cord. "Well, stay where you are, it certainly can't hurt you."

"Get along and doctor your sick," said Granny Weatherall. "Leave a well woman alone. I'll call for you when I want you... Where were you forty years ago when I pulled through milk-leg1 and double pneumonia? You weren't even born. Don't let Cornelia lead you on," she shouted, because Doctor Harry appeared to float up to the ceiling and out. "I pay my own bills, and I don't throw my money away on nonsense!"

She meant to wave good-bye, but it was too much trouble. Her eyes closed off themselves, it was like a dark curtain drawn

around the bed. The pillow rose and floated under her, pleasant as a hammock in a light wind. She listened to the leaves rustling outside the window. No, somebody was swishing newspapers: no, Cornelia and Doctor Harry were whispering together. She leaped broad awake, thinking they whispered in her ear.

"She was never like this, *never* like this!" "Well, what can we expect?" "Yes, eighty years old. . . ."

Well, and what if she was? She still had ears. It was like Cornelia to whisper around doors. She always kept things secret in such a public way. She was always being tactful and kind. Cornelia was dutiful; that was the trouble with her. Dutiful and good: "So good and dutiful," said Granny, "that I'd like to spank her." She saw herself spanking Cornelia and making a fine job of it.

"What'd you say, Mother?"

Granny felt her face tying up in hard knots.

"Can't a body think, I'd like to know?"

"I thought you might want something."

"I do. I want a lot of things. First off, go away and don't whisper,"

She lay and drowsed, hoping in her sleep that the children would keep out and let her rest a minute. It had been a long day. Not that she was tired. It was always pleasant to snatch a minute now and then. There was always so much to be done, let me see: tomorrow.

Tomorrow was far away and there was nothing to trouble about. Things were finished somehow when the time came; thank God there was always a little margin over for peace: then a person could spread out the plan of life and tuck in the edges orderly. It was good to have everything clean and folded away, with the hair brushes and tonic bottles sitting straight on the white embroidered linen: the day started without fuss and the pantry shelves laid out with rows of jelly glasses and brown jugs and white stone-china jars with blue whirligigs and words painted on them: coffee, tea, sugar, ginger, cinnamon, allspice: and the bronze clock with the lion on top nicely dusted off. The dust that lion could collect in twenty-four hours! The box in the attic with all those letters tied up, well, she'd have to go through that tomorrow. All those letters — George's letters and John's letters and her letters to them both—lying around for

the children to find afterward made her uneasy. Yes, that would be tomorrow's business. No use to let them know how silly she had been once.

While she was rummaging around she found death in her mind and it felt clammy and unfamiliar. She had spent so much time preparing for death there was no need for bringing it up again. Let it take care of itself now. When she was sixty she had felt very old, finished, and went around making farewell trips to see her children and grandchildren, with a secret in her mind: This is the very last of your mother, children! Then she made her will and came down with a long fever. That was all just a notion like a lot of other things, but it was lucky too, for she had once for all got over the idea of dying for a long time. Now she couldn't be worried. She hoped she had better sense now. Her father had lived to be one hundred and two years old and had drunk a noggin of strong hot toddy on his last birthday. He told the reporters it was his daily habit, and he owed his long life to that. He had made quite a scandal and was very pleased about it. She believed she'd just plague Cornelia a little.

"Cornelia! Cornelia!" No footsteps, but a sudden hand on her cheek. "Bless you, where have you been?"

"Here, Mother."

"Well, Cornelia, I want a noggin of hot toddy."

"Are you cold, darling?"

"I'm chilly, Cornelia. Lying in bed stops the circulation. I must have told you that a thousand times."

Well, she could just hear Cornelia telling her husband that Mother was getting a little childish and they'd have to humor her. The thing that most annoyed her was that Cornelia thought she was deaf, dumb, and blind. Little hasty glances and tiny gestures tossed around her and over her head saying, "Don't cross her, let her have her way, she's eighty years old," and she sitting there as if she lived in a thin glass cage. Sometimes Granny almost made up her mind to pack up and move back to her own house where nobody could remind her every minute that she was old. Wait, wait, Cornelia, till your own children whisper behind your back!

In her day she had kept a better house and had got more work done. She wasn't too old yet for Lydia to be driving eighty miles for advice when one of the children jumped the track,

and Jimmy still dropped in and talked things over: "Now, Mammy, you've a good business head, I want to know what you think of this?..." Old Cornelia couldn't change the furniture around without asking. Little things, little things! They had been so sweet when they were little. Granny wished the old days were back again with the children young and everything to be done over. It had been a hard pull, but not too much for her. When she thought of all the food she had cooked, and all the clothes she had cut and sewed, and all the gardens she had made —well, the children showed it. There they were, made out of her, and they couldn't get away from that. Sometimes she wanted to see John again and point to them and say, "Well, I didn't do so badly, did I?" But that would have to wait. That was for tomorrow. She used to think of him as a man, but now all the children were older than their father, and he would be a child beside her if she saw him now. It seemed strange and there was something wrong in the idea. Why, he couldn't possibly recognize her. She had fenced in a hundred acres once, digging the post holes herself and clamping the wires with just a boy to help. That changed a woman. John would be looking for a young woman with the peaked Spanish comb in her hair and the painted fan. Digging post holes changed a woman. Riding country roads in the winter when women had their babies was another thing: sitting up nights with sick horses and sick children and hardly ever losing one. John, I hardly ever lost one of them! John would see that in a minute, that would be something he could understand, she wouldn't have to explain anything!

It made her feel like rolling up her sleeves and putting the whole place to rights again. No matter if Cornelia was determined to be everywhere at once, there were a great many things left undone on this place. She would start tomorrow and do them. It was good to be strong enough for everything, even if all you made melted and changed and slipped under your hands, so that by the time you finished you almost forgot what you were working for. What was it I set out to do? she asked herself intently, but she could not remember. A fog rose over the valley, she saw it marching across the creek swallowing the trees and moving up the hill like an army of ghosts. Soon it would be at the near edge of the orchard, and then it was time to go in and light the lamps. Come in, children, don't stay out in the night air.

Lighting the lamps had been beautiful. The children huddled up to her and breathed like little calves waiting at the bars in the twilight. Their eyes followed the match and watched the flame rise and settle in a blue curve, then they moved away from her. The lamp was lit, they didn't have to be scared and hang on to Mother any more. Never, never, never more. God, for all my life I thank Thee. Without Thee, my God, I could never have done it. Hail, Mary, full of grace.

I want you to pick all the fruit this year and see that nothing is wasted. There's always someone who can use it. Don't let good things rot for want of using. You waste life when you waste good food. Don't let things get lost. It's bitter to lose things. Now, don't let me get to thinking, not when I am tired and taking a little nap before supper...

The pillow rose about her shoulders and pressed against her heart and the memory was being squeezed out of it: oh, push down the pillow, somebody, it would smother her if she tried to hold it. Such a fresh breeze blowing and such a green day with no threats in it. But he had not come, just the same. What does a woman do when she has put on the white veil and set out the white cake for a man and he doesn't come? She tried to remember. No, I swear he never harmed me but in that. He never harmed me but in that... and what if he did? There was the day, the day, but a whirl of dark smoke rose and covered it, crept up and over into the bright field where everything was planted so carefully in orderly rows. That was hell, she knew hell when she saw it. For sixty years she had prayed against remembering him and against losing her soul in the deep pit of hell, and now the two things were mingled in one and the thought of him was a smoky cloud from hell that moved and crept in her head when she had just got rid of Doctor Harry and was trying to rest a minute. Wounded vanity, Ellen, said a sharp voice in the top of her mind. Don't let your wounded vanity get the upper hand of you. Plenty of girls get jilted. You were jilted, weren't you? Then stand up to it. Her eyelids wavered and let in streamers of blue-gray light like tissue paper over her eyes. She must get up and pull the shades down or she'd never sleep. She was in bed again and the shades were not down. How could that happen? Better turn over, hide from the light, sleeping in the light gave you nightmares. "Mother,

how do you feel now?" and a stinging wetness on her forehead. But I don't like having my face washed in cold water!

Hapsy? George? Lydia? Jimmy? No, Cornelia, and her features were swollen and full of little puddles. "They're coming, darling, they'll all be here soon." Go wash your face, child, you look funny.

Instead of obeying, Cornelia knelt down and put her head on the pillow. She seemed to be talking but there was no sound. "Well, are you tongue-tied? Whose birthday is it? Are you going to give a party?"

Cornelia's mouth moved urgently in strange shapes. "Don't do that, you bother me, daughter."

"Oh, no, Mother. Oh, no..."

Nonsense. It was strange about children. They disputed your every word. "No what, Cornelia?"

"Here's Doctor Harry."

"I won't see that boy again. He just left five minutes ago."

"That was this morning, Mother. It's night now. Here's the nurse."

"This is Doctor Harry, Mrs. Weatherall. I never saw you look so young and happy!"

"Ah, I'll never be young again—but I'd be happy if they'd let me lie in peace and get rested."

She thought she spoke up loudly, but no one answered. A warm weight on her forehead, a warm bracelet on her wrist, and a breeze went on whispering, trying to tell her something. A shuffle of leaves in the everlasting land of God, He blew on them and they danced and rattled. "Mother, don't mind, we're going to give you a little hypodermic." "Look here, daughter, how do ants get in this bed? I saw sugar ants yesterday." Did you send for Hapsy too?"

It was Hapsy she really wanted. She had to go a long way back through a great many rooms to find Hapsy standing with a baby on her arm. She seemed to herself to be Hapsy also, and the baby on Hapsy's arm was Hapsy and himself and herself, all at once, and there was no surprise in the meeting. Then Hapsy melted from within and turned flimsy as gray gauze and the baby was a gauzy shadow, and Hapsy came up close and said, "I thought you'd never come," and looked at her very

searchingly and said, "You haven't changed a bit!" They leaned forward to kiss, when Cornelia began whispering from a long way off, "Oh, is there anything you want to tell me? Is there anything I can do for you?"

Yes, she had changed her mind after sixty years and she would like to see George. I want you to find George. Find him and be sure to tell him I forgot him. I want him to know I had my husband just the same and my children and my house like any other woman. A good house too and a good husband that I loved and fine children out of him. Better than I hoped for even. Tell him I was given back everything he took away and more. Oh, no, oh, no, there was something else besides the house and the man and the children. Oh, surely they were not all? What was it? Something not given back. ... Her breath crowded down under her ribs and grew into a monstrous frightening shape with cutting edges; it bored up into her head, and the agony was unbelieveable: Yes, John, get the Doctor now, no more talk, my time has come.

When this one was born it should be the last. The last. It should have been born first, for it was the one she had truly wanted. Everything came in good time. Nothing left out, left over. She was strong, in three days she would be as well as ever. Better. A woman needed milk in her to have her full health.

"Mother, do you hear me?"

"I've been telling you —"

"Mother, Father Connolly's here."

"I went to Holy Communion only last week. Tell him I'm not so sinful as all that."

"Father just wants to speak to you." He could speak as much as he pleased. It was like him to drop in and inquire about her soul as if it were a teething baby, and then stay on for a cup of tea and a round of cards and gossip. He always had a funny story of some sort, usually about an Irishman who made his little mistakes and confessed them, and the point lay in some absurd thing he would blurt out in the confessional showing his struggles between native piety and original sin. Granny felt easy about her soul. Cornelia, where are your manners? Give Father Connolly a chair. She had her secret comfortable understanding with a few favorite saints who cleared a straight road to God for her. All as surely signed and sealed as the papers for the new

Forty Acres. Forever . . . heirs and assigns forever. Since the day the wedding cake was not cut, but thrown out and wasted. The whole bottom dropped out of the world, and there she was blind and sweating with nothing under her feet and the walls falling away. His hand had caught her under the breast, she had not fallen, there was the freshly polished floor with the green rug on it, just as before. He had cursed like a sailor's parrot and said, "I'll kill him for you." Don't lay a hand on him, for my sake leave something to God. "Now, Ellen, you must believe what I tell you. ..."

So there was nothing, nothing to worry about any more, except sometimes in the night one of the children screamed in a nightmare, and they both hustled out shaking and hunting for the matches and calling, "There, wait a minute, here we are!" John, get the doctor now, Hapsy's time has come. But there was Hapsy standing by the bed in a white cap. "Cornelia, tell Hapsy to take off her cap. I can't see her plain."

Her eyes opened very wide and the room stood out like a picture she had seen somewhere. Dark colors with the shadows rising toward the ceiling in long angles. The tall black dresser gleamed with nothing on it but John's picture, enlarged from a little one, with John's eyes very black when they should have been blue. You never saw him, so how do you know how he looked? But the insisted the copy was perfect, it was very rich and handsome. For a picture, yes, but it's not my husband. The table by the bed had a lineal cover and a candle and a crucifix. The light was blue from Cornelia's silk lampshades. No sort of light at all, just frippery. You had to live forty years with kerosene lamps to appreciate honest electricity. She felt very strong and she saw Doctor Harry with a rosy nimbus around him.

"You look like a saint, Doctor Harry, and I vow that's as near as you'll ever come to it."

"She's saying something."

"I heard you, Cornelia. What's all this carrying-on?"

"Father Connolly's saying —"

Cornelia's voice staggered and bumped like a cart in a bad road. It rounded corners and turned back again and arrived nowhere. Granny stepped up in the cart very lightly and reached for the reins, but a man sat beside her and she knew him by

his hands, driving the cart. She did not look in his face, for she knew without seeing, but looked instead down the road where the trees leaned over and bowed to each other and a thousand birds were singing a Mass. She felt like singing too, but she put her hand in the bosom of her dress and pulled out a rosary, and Father Connolly murmured Latin in a very solemn voice and tickled her feet. Will you stop that nonsense? I'm a married woman. What if he did run away and leave me to face the priest by myself? I found another a whole world better. I wouldn't have exchanged my husband for anybody except St. Michael himself, and you may tell him that for me with a thank you in the bargain.

Light flashed on her closed eyelids, and a deep roaring shook her. Cornelia, is that lightning? I hear thunder. There's going to be a storm. Close all the windows. Call the children in... "Mother, here we are, all of us." "Is that you, Hapsy?" "Oh, no, I'm Lydia. We drove as fast as we could." Their faces drifted above her, drifted away. The rosary fell out of her hands and Lydia put it back. Jimmy tried to help, their hands fumbled together, and Granny closed two fingers around Jimmy's thumb. Beads wouldn't do, it must be something alive. She was so amazed her thoughts ran round and round. So, my dear Lord, this is my death and I wasn't even thinking about it. My children have come to see me die. But I can't, it's not time. Oh, I always hated surprises. I wanted to give Cornelia the amethyst set—Cornelia, you're to have the amethyst set, but Hapsy's to wear it when she wants, and, Doctor Harry, do shut up. Nobody sent for you. Oh, my dear Lord, do wait a minute. I meant to do something about the Forty Acres, Jimmy doesn't need it and Lydia will later on, with that worthless husband of hers. I meant to finish the altar cloth and send six bottles of wine to Sister Borgia for her dyspepsia. I want to send six bottles of wine to Sister Borgia, Father Connolly, now don't let me forget.

Cornelia's voice made short turns and tilted over and crashed. "Oh, Mother, oh, Mother, oh, Mother..."

"I'm not going, Cornelia. I'm taken by surprise. I can't go."

You'll see Hapsy again. What about her? "I thought you'd never come." Granny made a long journey outward, looking for Hapsy. What if I don't find her? What then? Her heart sank down and down, there was no bottom to death, she couldn't

come to the end of it. The blue light from Cornelia's lampshade drew into a tiny point in the center of her brain, it flickered and winked like an eye, quietly it fluttered and dwindled. Granny lay curled down within herself, amazed and watchful, staring at the point of light that was herself; her body was now only a deeper mass of shadow in an endless darkness and this darkness would curl around the light and swallow it up. God, give a sign!

For the second time there was no sign. Again no bridegroom and the priest in the house. She could not remember any other sorrow because this grief wiped them all away. Oh, no, there's nothing more cruel than this—I'll never forgive it. She stretched herself with a deep breath and blew out the light.

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true or false. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. The story is about the last few days of Granny Weatherall's life.
2. Granny was happy in her marriage.
3. Granny liked doctors and often called them.
4. All Granny's children live with her.
5. Granny was a good housekeeper and liked to have everything in order.
6. When Granny was sixty she went around making farewell trips to her relatives because she liked traveling.
7. Children understood Granny's needs and thought her behaviour was only natural for an eighty-year-old woman.
8. Granny felt proud that her children often asked her for advice.
9. Granny Weatherall hadn't changed much over the years and thought her husband would easily recognize her.
10. Granny was very glad to see Father Connolly.
11. Granny had managed to make a will before she died.
12. Granny's children, Lydia and Jimmy, came just in time to say good bye to their mother.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 3. Match the following words and expressions from the text with their definitions.

1. to be (to come) down with smth	a) respect for God and religion
2. to huddle up (to smbd)	b) to be moved along by the air; to move somewhere slowly or gradually
3. (the) twilight	c) a string of beads used especially by Roman Catholics for counting prayers
4. to jilt smbd	d) to be/to get ill
5. to get the upper hand	e) to say something suddenly and without thinking
6. to blurt out	f) to suddenly end a close romantic relationship with someone in a way that upsets them (often before the wedding)
7. piety	g) to stand or sit closely together because of being cold or frightened
8. a rosary	h) not to expect smth and feel strange when it suddenly happens
9. to be taken by surprise	i) to have or get more power than someone else, so that you are able to control a situation
10. to drift (above smth; away)	j) the time between day and night when the sky starts to become dark, or the pale light at this time

TASK 4. Find phrasal verbs and prepositional phrases in the text that would match with the meanings below.

1. to leave because it's time and/or you have smth else to do (spoken).
2. to start trying to do something, or to deliberately intend to do something.
3. to make a decision.
4. to visit someone when you have not arranged to come at a particular time.
5. to deceive smbd.
6. very soon or quickly.
7. to discuss all the details of something before making a decision about it.

8. to refuse to accept unfair treatment or situation and resist.

9. to stay alive after a serious injury or illness (informal).

10. to continue to do smth after the time when people can leave (e.g. to do a job or to study).

TASK 5. Paraphrase the words and expressions in italics below using phrasal verbs and prepositional phrases from Task 4.

1. When Sheila learned that one of her best friends from high school was in town, she called her up and said: "Why don't you *visit me* one evening?"

2. "How far is your office from the neighbourhood where you live?" "Oh, it's only about 10 miles. So, if there isn't much traffic, we'll be there *very soon*."

3. I hate shopping for clothes! I choose too many things I like and then I can never *decide* which of them to buy.

4. He's very upset. He thought Jane loved him and even wanted to marry her, but in fact it turned out that she *was just deceiving him.*

5. Last year he had a terrible car accident. Doctors even doubted if he would make it, but *he somehow survived*, amazingly enough.

6. Susan is a typical workaholic. She barely finishes one project and immediately *starts preparing for* a new one.

7. The Bakers' housewarming party was so boring that I decided *to leave* as soon as the clock struck nine.

8. When young people choose a career and decide on a university, they usually *discuss all the details with* their parents first.

9. A boss respects his employees more if they *refuse to accept unfair treatment from him.*

10. Mr. Smith resigned as Chairman, but *continued working* as a consultant.

TASK 6. Answer the following questions about Granny Weatherall. Quote the text where possible to back up your opinion.

1. Why does she get impatient with Cornelia? What are Cornelia and Doctor Harry doing that annoys her?

2. What had happened to her sixty years before that she has prayed to forget? When she changes her mind, what does she want to tell George?

3. What would she want to say to her husband, John?

4. How does Granny feel about the way her children turned out? Is she proud of them?

5. How does Granny feel about the "old days" and her accomplishments? Was her life hard or easy? Does she have any regrets?

6. What are Granny's happy memories? What are her thoughts about the lighting of the lamps?

7. Why doesn't Granny feel she needs the ministrations of Father Connolly?

8. How do Lydia and Jimmy still depend upon her? Why would Lydia need the "Forty Acres"?

9. Who do you think is driving the cart when Granny reaches for the reins?

10. Who is at her bedside when death comes? What had she failed to do before death overtook her?

TASK 7. Because present and past, reality and dreams fuse throughout the story, the reader is unsure about certain details. Discuss the following, proving your ideas with the text.

1. What do we understand about Hapsy?

2. How old would Granny's husband have been when he died?

3. How important was the jilting in Granny's life? In the end does she find it in her heart to forgive George? How can we tell?

4. What evidence can we find that proves Granny has a good sense of humour and retains it to the last moments of her life?

TASK 8. Write a descriptive essay on Granny's character. Before you begin writing, decide what her outstanding personality traits are. Support your opinions with incidents or evidence from the story. The following advice may help you.

Through being able to see into Granny's mind and follow the pattern of her thoughts (to achieve this, one technique used by writers is that of allowing the reader to witness the random

flow of a character's thoughts, however chaotic, jumpy, rambling, or illogical they become; this is known as *stream of consciousness*), as well as watching her respond to those around her, the reader comes to know a great deal about Granny Weatherall. Take a few minutes to look back over the story, rereading any passages or sections that hold particular interest for you. Close your eyes and visualize Granny as she is first introduced, fussing at Doctor Harry and Cornelia, and as she reviews her life for you in her churning flow of memories, associations, and feelings.

TASK 9.

a) Give the account of Granny's last few hours from the viewpoint of her daughter Cornelia.

b) Imagine you are Lydia or Jimmy and tell about your childhood and the brightest memories from that time.

c) Imagine that Cornelia discovers a journal Granny kept in her youth. What would she read in it?

d) Imagine that Cornelia discovers George's and John's letters to Granny and her letters to them in the attic. Write a letter that Granny could have written to George after he jilted her or a letter from John to Granny in which he proposed to her.

William Saroyan

A NICE OLD-FASHIONED ROMANCE, WITH LOVE, LYRICS AND EVERYTHING

My cousin Arak was a year and a half younger than me, round-faced, dark, and exceptionally elegant in manners. It was no pretense with him. His manners were just naturally that way, just as my manners were bad from the beginning. Where Arak would get around any sort of complication at school with a bland smile that showed his front upper teeth, separated, and melted the heart of stone of our teacher, Miss Daffney, I would go to the core of the complication and with noise and vigor prove that Miss Daffney or somebody else was the culprit, not me, and if need be, I would carry the case to the Supreme Court and prove my innocence.

I usually got sent to the office. In some cases I would get a strapping for deathly good at debates. The minute I got him cornered he got out his strap.

Arak was different; he didn't care to fight for justice. He wasn't anywhere near as bright as me, but even though he was a year and a half younger than me, he was in the same grade. That wouldn't be so bad if the grade wasn't the fifth. I usually won all my arguments with my teachers, but instead of being glad to get rid of me they refused to promote me, in the hope, I believe, of winning the following semester's arguments and getting even. That's how it happened that I came to be the oldest pupil in the fifth grade.

One day Miss Daffney tried to tell the world I was the author of the poem on the blackboard that said she was in love with Mr. Derringer, and ugly. The author of the poem was my cousin Arak, not me. Any poem I wrote wouldn't be about Miss Daffney, it would be about something worthwhile. Nevertheless, without mentioning any names, but with a ruler in her hand, Miss Daffney stood beside my desk and said, I am going to find out who is responsible for this horrible outrage on the blackboard and see that he is properly punished.

He? I said. How do you know it's a boy and not a girl?

Miss Daffney whacked me on the knuckles of my right hand. I jumped out of my seat and said, You can't go around whacking me on the knuckles. I'll report this.

Sit down, Miss Daffney said.

I did. She had me by the right ear which was getting out of shape from being grabbed hold of by Miss Daffney and other teachers.

I sat down and quietly, almost inaudibly, said, You'll hear about this.

Hold your tongue, Miss Daffney said, and although I was sore as the devil, I stuck out my tongue and held it, while the little Mexican, Japanese, Armenian, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, and plain American boys and girls in the class, who looked to me for comedy, roared with laughter. Miss Daffney came down on my hand with the ruler, but this time the ruler grazed my nose. This to me was particularly insulting, inasmuch as my nose then, as now, was large. A small nose would not have been grazed, and I took Miss Daffney's whack as a subtle comment on the size of my nose.

I put my bruised hand over my hurt nose and again rose to my feet.

You told me to hold my tongue, I said, insisting that I had done no evil, had merely carried out her instructions, and was therefore innocent, utterly undeserving of the whacked hand and the grazed nose.

You be good now, Miss Daffney said. I won't stand any more of your nonsense.

I took my hand away from my nose and began to be good. I smiled like a boy bringing her a red apple. My audience roared with laughter and Miss Daffney dropped the ruler, reached for me, fell over the desk, got up, and began to chase me around the room.

There I go again, I kept saying to myself while Miss Daffney chased me around the room. There I go again getting in a mess like this that's sure to end in murder, while my cousin Arak, who is the guilty one, sits there and smiles. There's no justice anywhere.

When Miss Daffney finally caught me, as I knew she would unless I wanted even more severe punishment from

Mr. Derringer, there was a sort of free-for-all during which she tried to gouge my eyes out, pull off my ears, fingers, and arms, and I, by argument, tried to keep her sweet and lady-like.

When she was exhausted, I went back to my seat, and the original crime of the day was taken up again: Who was the author of the love lyric on the blackboard?

Miss Daffney straightened her hair and her clothes, got her breath, demanded and got silence, and after several moments of peace during which the ticking of the clock was heard, she began to speak.

I am going to ask each of you by name if you wrote this awful — poem — on the blackboard and I shall expect you to tell the truth. If you lie, I shall find out anyway and your punishment will be all the worse.

She began to ask each of the boys and girls if they'd written the poem and of course they hadn't. Then she asked my cousin Arak and he also said he hadn't. Then she asked me and I said I hadn't, which was the truth.

You go to the office, she said. You liar.

I didn't write any poem on any blackboard, I said. And I'm not a liar.

Mr. Derringer received me with no delight. Two minutes later Susie Koko-moto arrived from our class with a message describing my crime. In fact, quoting it. Mr. Derringer read the message, made six or seven faces, smiled, snapped his suspenders, coughed and said, What made you write this little poem?

I didn't, I said.

Naturally, he said, you'd say you didn't, but why did you?

I *didn't* write it, I said.

Now don't be headstrong, Mr. Derringer said. That's a rather alarming rumor to be spreading. How do you *know* Miss Daffney's in love with me?

Is *she?* I said.

Well, Mr. Derringer said, that's what it says here. What gave you that impression? Have you noticed her looking at me with admiration or something?

I haven't noticed her looking at you with anything, I said. Are *you* in love with *her* or something?

That remains to be seen, Mr. Derringer said. It isn't a bad poem, up to a point. Do you really regard Miss Daffney as ugly?

I didn't write the poem, I said. I can prove it. I don't write that way.

You mean your handwriting isn't like the handwriting on the blackboard? Mr, Derringer said.

Yes, I said, and I don't write that kind of poetry either.

You *admit* writing poetry? Mr. Derringer .said.

I write poetry, I said, but not *that* kind of poetry.

A rumor like that, Mr. Derringer said. I hope you know what you're about.

Well, I said, all I know is I didn't write it.

Personally, Mr. Derringer said. I think Miss Daffney is not only not ugly, but on the contrary attractive.

Well, that's all right, I said. The only thing I want is not to get into a lot of trouble over something I didn't do.

You *could* have written that poem, Mr. Derringer said.

Not *that* one, I said. I could have written a good one.

What do you mean, *good?* Mr. Derringer said. Beautiful? Or insulting?

I mean beautiful, I said, only it wouldn't be about Miss Daffney.

Up to this point, Mr. Derringer said, I was willing to entertain doubts as to your being the author of the poem, but no longer. I am convinced you wrote it. Therefore I must punish you.

I got up and started to debate.

You give me a strapping for something I didn't do, I said, and you'll hear about it.

So he gave me a strapping and *the whole school* heard about it. I went back to class limping. The poem had been erased. All was well again. The culprit had been duly punished, the poem effaced, and order reestablished in the fifth grade. My cousin Arak sat quietly admiring Alice Bovard's brown curls.

First thing during recess I knocked him down and sat on him.

I got a strapping for that, I said, so don't write any more of them.

The next morning, however, there was another love lyric on the blackboard in my cousin Arak's unmistakable hand, and in his unmistakable style, and once again Miss Daffney wanted to weed out the culprit and have him punished. When I came into the room and saw the poem and the lay of the land,

I immediately began to object. My cousin Arak was going too far. In Armenian I began to swear at him. He, however, had become stone deaf, and Miss Daffney believed my talk was for her. Here, here, she said. Speak in a language everybody can understand if you've got something to say.

All I've got to say is I didn't write that poem, I said. And I didn't write yesterday's either. If I get into any more trouble on account of these poems, somebody's going to hear about it.

Sit down, Miss Daffney said.

After the roll call, Miss Daffney filled a whole sheet of paper with writing, including the new poem, and ordered me to take the message to the office.

Why *me?* I said. I didn't write the poem.

Do as you're told, Miss Daffney said.

I went to her desk, put out my hand to take the note, Miss Daffney gave it a whack, I jumped back three feet and shouted, I'm not going to be carrying love-letters for you.

This just naturally was the limit. There was a limit to everything. Miss Daffney leaped at me. I in turn was so sore at my cousin Arak that I turned around and jumped on him. He pretended to be very innocent, and offered no resistance. He was very deft, though, and instead of getting the worst of it, he got the least, while I fell all over the floor until Miss Daffney caught up with me. After that it was all her fight. When I got to the office with the message, I had scratches and bruises all over my face and hands, and the love-letter from Miss Daffney to Mr. Derringer was crumpled and in places torn.

What's been keeping you? Mr. Derringer said. Here, let me see that message. What mischief have you been up to now?

He took the message, unfolded it, smoothed it out on his desk, and read it very slowly. He read it three or four times. He was delighted, and, as far as I could tell, in love. He turned with a huge smile on his face and was about to reprimand me again for saying that Miss Daffney was ugly.

I didn't write the poem, I said. I didn't write yesterday's either. All I want is a chance to get myself a little education and live and let live.

Now, now, Mr. Derringer said.

He was quite pleased.

If you're in love with her, I said, that's your affair, but leave me out of it.

All I say is you could be a little more gracious about Miss Daffney's appearance, Mr. Derringer said. If she seems plain to you, perhaps she doesn't seem plain to someone else.

I was disgusted. It was just no use.

All right, I said. Tomorrow I'll be gracious.

Now that's better, Mr. Derringer said. Of course, I must punish you.

He reached for the lower drawer of his desk where the strap was.

Oh, no, I said. If you punish me, then I won't be gracious.

Well, what about today's poem? Mr. Derringer said. I've got to punish you for that. Tomorrow's will be another story.

No, I said. Nothing doing.

Oh, all right, Mr. Derringer said, but see that you're gracious.

I will, I said. Can I go back now?

Yes, he said. Yes. Let me think this over.

I began to leave the office.

Wait a minute, he said. Everybody'll know something fishy's going on somewhere unless they hear you howl. Better come back here and howl ten times, and then go back.

Howl? I said. I can't howl unless I'm hurt.

Oh, sure you can, Mr. Derringer said. Just give out a big painful howl. You can do it.

I don't think I can, I said.

I'll hit this chair ten times with the strap, Mr. Derringer said, and you howl.

Do you think it'll work? I said.

Of course it'll work, he said. Come on.

Mr. Derringer hit the chair with the strap and I tried to howl the way I had howled yesterday, but it didn't sound real. It sounded fishy, somewhere.

We were going along that way when Miss Daffney herself came into the office, only we didn't know she'd come in, on account of the noise.

On the tenth one I turned to Mr. Derringer and said, That's ten.

Then I saw Miss Daffney. She was aghast and mouth-agape.

Just a few more, son, Mr. Derringer said, for good measure.

Before I could tell him Miss Daffney was in the office, he was whacking the chair and I was howling.

It was disgusting.

Miss Daffney coughed and Mr. Derringer turned and saw her — his beloved.

Miss Daffney didn't speak. She *couldn't.* Mr. Derringer smiled. He was very embarrassed and began swinging the strap around.

I'm punishing the boy, he said.

I understand, Miss Daffney said.

She didn't either. Not altogether anyway-I'll not have any pupil of this school being impertinent, Mr. Derringer said.

He was madly in love with her and was swinging the strap around and trying to put over a little personality. Miss Daffney, however, just didn't think very much of his punishing the boy by hitting a chair, while the boy howled, the man and the boy together making a mockery of justice and true love. She gave him a very dirty look.

Oh! Mr. Derringer said. You mean about my hitting the chair? We were just rehearsing weren't we, son?

No, we weren't, I said.

Miss Daffney, infuriated, turned and fled, and Mr. Derringer sat down.

Now look what you've done, he said.

Well, I said, if you're going to have a romance with her, have it, but don't mess me up in it.

Well, Mr. Derringer said, I guess that's that. He was a very sad man.

All right, he said, go back to your class.

I want you to know I didn't write the poems, I said.

That's got nothing to do with it, Mr. Derringer said.

I thought you might want to know, I said.

It's too late now, he said. She'll never admire me any more.

Why don't you write a poem to her yourself? I said.

I can't write poems, Mr. Derringer said.

Well, I said, figure it out some way.

When I went back to class Miss Daffney was very polite. So was I. She knew I knew and she knew if she got funny I'd either ruin the romance or make her marry him, so she was very

friendly. In two weeks school closed and when school opened again Miss Daffney didn't show up. Either Mr. Derringer didn't write her a poem, or did and it was no good; or he didn't tell her he loved her, or did and she didn't care; or else he proposed to her and she turned him down, because I knew, and got herself transferred to another school so she could get over her broken heart.

Something like that.

TASK 1. Say if the statements are true or false. Correct the false statements and expand on the true ones.

1. The storyteller was the youngest student in the fifth grade.
2. The storyteller was in the same grade with his cousin.
3. The storyteller and his cousin were not alike in character.
4. Miss Daffney was the storyteller's favourite teacher.
5. Everyone in the class found the situation with the poem funny.
6. Miss Daffney wanted the storyteller to be strictly punished.
7. Mr. Derringer did not like the poem because everything it said was true.
8. Mr. Derringer believed the storyteller the first time and let him off with a simple warning.
9. The second poem was a lot better than the first one and Miss Daffney was flattered by it.
10. Mr. Derringer did not give the storyteller a real strapping because they had made a deal.
11. Miss Daffney had a great sense of humour and found the whole story quite funny.
12. This incident changed Miss Daffney's attitude to the storyteller for the better.
13. The storyteller was very polite with Miss Daffney after the incident.
14. The following year Miss Daffney did not show up because she had got married to Mr. Derringer.

TASK 2. Explain how you understand phrases highlighted in the story.

TASK 3. Match the following adjectives from the text with their definitions. Then remember who or what they describe and in what circumstances.

1. subtle	a) informal seeming bad or dishonest
2. headstrong	b) rude and not showing respect
3. stone deaf	c) suddenly feeling or looking shocked
4. sore (at smb) (not before noun)	d) not easy to notice or understand unless you pay careful attention (opposite: obvious)
5. deft	e) polite, kind, and generous; beautiful
6. gracious	f) upset, angry, and annoyed, especially because you have not been treated fairly
7. fishy	g) very determined to do what you want
8. aghast (not before noun)	h) with your mouth wide open, especially because you are surprised or shocked
9. mouth-agape (not before noun)	i) quick and skilful
10. impertinent	j) informal physically unable to hear anything at all

TASK 4. Find phrasal verbs and prepositional phrases in the text that would match with the meanings below.

1. to find a way of dealing with a problem, usually by avoiding it.

2. throw away, sell smth you do not want so that you do not have it any longer.

3. because of.

4. to come up from behind someone or something and reach the same point; to reach the same standard or level as someone or something else.

5. to be doing something secretly, especially something that you should not do.

6. to make smb involved in smth without their agreement.
7. to understand something or someone after thinking about :hem.
8. to arrive somewhere.
9. to become healthy again after being ill, or to feel better after a bad experience.
10. to because you hope that something will happen.

TASK 5. Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.

1. She's an odd character — I really can't figure her _____.
2. The coach was mad because Bill showed _____ late for the game.
3. The doctor said it will take a couple of weeks to get _____ the infection.
4. He keeps looking behind him. I'm sure he's _____ to something.
5. At first he was bottom of the class, but he soon caught _____.
6. My mom always walks so fast that I practically have to run to catch _____ _____ her.
7. Businesses are looking for ways to get _____ the tax laws.
8. Several people are late _____ account _____ the train strike.
9. Before going shopping for clothes you should try to get rid _____ some of the old stuff.
10. Susan took her laptop on vacation with her _____ the hope _____ having enough time to finish writing her new recipe book.

TASK 6. Answer the questions below.

1. What is the genre of the extract you have read?
2. What do you think is the attitude of the author to the events he described? Does he find them funny, tragic? How does he want the reader to feel?
3. How would you characterize the storyteller? What are his positive traits and his faults?

4. Why did Miss Daffney think at once that the storyteller was the author of the poem written on the blackboard?

5. Why didn't the storyteller tell her or Mr. Derringer that it was his cousin who had written the poem?

6. How can you prove that the storyteller was not afraid of Miss Daffney, knew his rights and was even ready to protect them?

7. What arguments did the storyteller use to persuade Mr. Derringer that he was not the person who had written the poems?

8. Why do you think Miss Daffney reacted so badly to the poems? Was she really in love with Mr. Derringer?

9. Why did Mr. Derringer make a deal with the storyteller? What did he expect to get out of it?

10. What should Mr. Derringer have done after Miss Daffney found him and the storyteller "making a mockery of justice and true love" in order to make amends?

11. How did the relationship between Miss Daffney and the storyteller change after the incident with the poems? What was it that they both "knew" about each other?

12. Why did Miss Daffney get transferred to another school the following year?

TASK 7. Act out the following situations.

a) Miss Daffney discovers the first poem, conducts her little investigation in class, accuses the storyteller and sends him to the Principal's office;

b) Mr. Derringer and the storyteller negotiate after the appearance of the second poem and make a deal, Miss Daffney catches them at it;

c) the storyteller has an argument with his cousin after class and makes him promise not to do such things again;

d) Miss Daffney phones the storyteller's mother/father and tells them about the incident with the poems at school;

e) the storyteller has to explain his behaviour to his parents who are very upset and naturally tired of the trouble he is always getting into at school;

f) Mr. Derringer is trying to apologise to Miss Daffney, but is having a hard time explaining everything and expressing his feelings. She does not forgive him and announces that she will not be working in his school the following year.

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KEY

Roald Dahl
THE UMBRELLA MAN

TASK 1.

1. — T; 2. — F; 3. — F; 4. — F; 5. — F; 6. — T; 7. — T; 8. — T; 9. — F; 10. — T; 11. — T; 12. — T; 13. — F; 14. — F; 15. — F; 16. — T; 17 — T; 18 — F.

TASK 2.

1. the daughter
2. the mother
3. the old man
4. the old man
5. the mother
6. the girl's headmistress
7. the old man
8. the girl
9. the mother and the daughter
10. the old man
11. the mother
12. the mother
13. the old man
14. the mother
15. the old man
16. the old man

TASK 4.

1. — h; 2. — g; 3. — d ; 4. — i; 5. — k; 6. — j; 7. — e; 8. — c; 9. — b; 10. — f; 11. — a.

TASK 5.

1. in / without; 2. into / in the middle; 3. over / for; 4. in / out of; 5. on / with / over; 6. out; 7. by / with; 8. into / down; 9. off / inside / with; 10. from / of / on to.

Somerset Maugham
JANE

TASK 2.

1. — T; 2. — F; 3. — F; 4. — F; 5. — F; 6. — T; 7. — T; 8. — F; 9. — T; 10. — T; 11. — F.

TASK 4.

a) 1. — e; 2. — d; 3. — g.; 4. — f; 5. — b; 6. — a; 7. — c.

b) 1. malicious; 2. demure; 3. sumptuous; 4. affable; 5. cocksure; 6. dowdy; 7. sallow.

c) 1. — d; 2. — f; 3. — a; 4. — e; 5. — c; 6. — g; 7. — b.

d) 1. goaded; 2. exasperates(ed); 3. jest; 4. faltered; 5. flaunt; 6. discomfited; 7. ascribed.

TASK 5.

1. to; 2. on; 3. to; 4. on; 5. for; 6. from; 7. on; 8. at; 9. of; 10. for; 11. into; 12. to; 13. on; 14. into; 15. to; 16. on; 17. on.

Lucille Lewis
THE MAN WHO TALKED WITH BOOKS

TASK 1.

1. — F; 2. — F; 3. — T; 4. — T; 5. — F; 6. — F; 7. — F; 8. — F; 9. — T; 10. — T; 11. — F; 12. — F; 13. — T; 14. — F; 15. — T.

TASK 3.

1. — i; 2. — d; 3. — f; 4. — g; 5. — b; 6. — m; 7. — a; 8. — l; 9. — c; 10. — e; 11. — h; 12. — k; 13. — j.

TASK 4.

1. — d; 2. — g; 3. — I; 4. — h; 5. — a; 6. — j; 7. — b; 8. — c; 9. — f; 10. — e.

TASK 5.

1. gaped
2. devoid of
3. puny
4. motley
5. regal
6. ridiculous
7. rummaging
8. squeeze
9. drab
10. hurled
11. are pondering
12. eligible
13. haphazard
14. betrayed
15. rifled

Somerset Maugham
A FIGHT TO THE DEATH

TASK 1.

1. — F; 2. — NS; 3. — F; 4. — F; 5. — T; 6. — F; 7. — F; 8. — T; 9. — F; 10. — T.

TASK 3.

1. — b; 2. — g; 3. — a; 4. — j; 5. — l; 6. — c; 7. — h; 8. — k; 9. — f; 10. — e; 11. — d; 12. — i.

TASK 4.

1. pestered
2. staggered
3. loathed
4. to lump
5. lashed
6. a racke
7. were bickering (always bickered)
8. grumbled
9. brusque
10. am inclined

TASK 5.

1. The editor knows a good newspaper story from another.
2. Mark is at odds with his colleagues.
3. At what age do children start to know right from wrong?
4. He suddenly lost his temper.
5. Gerald gets a kick out of snowboarding.
6. The two politicians were at odds about what was the truth.
7. I really got a kick out of the clown's juggling act.

TASK 6.

1. to play off; 2. break off; 3. came off; 4. walked off; 5. to score off; 6. to play off; 7. come off; 8. to get back at.

Shirley Jackson
THE LOVELY NIGHT

TASK 1.

1. — F; 2. — T; 3. — F; 4. — T; 5. — F; 6. — F; 7. — F; 8. — T; 9. — F; 10. — T; 11 — T; 12 — F; 13 — T; 14 — F; 15 — F;16 — T; 17 — T; 18 — T.

TASK 2.

1. Doris
2. Doris
3. Ginny
4. Doris
5. Natalie's father
6. Ginny
7. Doris
8. Natalie
9. Natalie
10. the chemistry teacher
11. Helen
12. Natalie and the boy (Bob Lennox)
13. Doris
14. Ginny
15. Helen
16. the boy (Bob Lennox)
17. Natalie
18. Natalie's parents

TASK 4.

1. — l; 2. — g; 3. — a; 4. — b; 5. — e; 6. — c; 7. — k; 8. — f; 9. — i; 10. — j; 11. — d; 12. — h.

TASK 5.

1. of / from; 2. of / by; 3. into / out of / by; 4. at / with / about (of); 5. from / to / in; 6. from / of /onto; 7. at; 8. at / in / into; 9. with / to / on; 10. toward (to) / with / on; 11. at / for; 12. from.

James Joyce
ARABY

TASK 3.

1. — b; 2. — j; 3. — a; 4. — c; 5. — g; 6. — f; 7. — e; 8. — h; 9. — i; 10. — d; 11. — k.

TASK 4.

1. in / to / of / to
2. of / from / to
3. At / by / between
4. against / at
5. up / after / out / for
6. up / down
7. at / for
8. off / for
9. of / with / with / of
10. with / over

Somerset Maugham
A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

TASK 1.

1. — F; 2. — T; 3. — F; 4. — F; 5. — F; 6. — F; 7. — T; 8. — T; 9. — T; 10. — F; 11. — F; 12. — T; 13. — F; 14. — T; 15. — T.

TASK 3.

1. — c; 2. — d; 3. — a; 4. — b; 5. — g; 6. — h; 7. — j; 8. — k; 9. — e; 10. — m; 11. — n; 12. — i; 13. — f; 14. — l.

TASK 4.

nurse — take care of
take aback — surprise
lunatic — madman
proprietor — owner

confused — bewildered
gift — present
outrageous — very shocking
robust — strong and healthy
confide — entrust
passionate — hot-blooded
unsupportable — intalerable

TASK 5.

1. dignity
2. outrageous
3. taken aback
4. the proprietor
5. craved for
6. shabby
7. paragon
8. anniversary
9. an avalanche
10. a bachelor
11. encountered
12. bewildered
13. an acquaintance
14. accompanied
15. a passionate

TASK 6.

1. on; 2. for; 3. on / away; 4. of; 5. on; 6. of; 7. in; 8. in; 9. in; 10. in / of; 11. for; 12. over; 13. with / without.

Robert Richard
DEAR NORMAN

TASK 1.

A. — 12; B. — 6; C. — 11; D. — 9; E. — 10; F. — 8; G. — 13; H. — 14; I. — 3; J. — 1; K. — 2; L. — 4; M. — 5; N. — 7.

TASK 3.

1. were swarming / swarmed
2. steeper and steeper
3. ladder
4. negotiated
5. surrended
6. occupants
7. chore
8. entire
9. going out
10. installing / to install
11. remainder
12. guardian
13. appreciate

TASK 4.

1. — f; 2. — i; 3. — g; 4. — e; 5. — a; 6. — m; 7. — b; 8. — d; 9. — k; 10. — h; 11. — j; 12. — l; 13. — n; 14. — o.

TASK 5.

1. free of charge
2. wipe your feet
3. pulled myself together
4. making a fool of yourself
5. wished him all the best
6. pocket money
7. keep in touch
8. making arrangements for on her own
9. pushing *people* around
10. building a nest
11. in such detail
12. going out with
13. use it in some way

TASK 7.

a) Alison Child
b) Norman's grandmother
c) Eileen XXX
d) Norman's grandmother
e) Norman's grandmother
f) Alfred
g) Eileen XXX
h) Norman's father and mother
i) Daryll, Refrigerator Engineer

Agnes Repplier
SIN

TASK 1.

1. — T; 2. — T; 3. — F; 4. — F; 5. — F; 6. — T; 7. — F; 8. — F; 9. — F; 10. — F; 11. — T; 12. — T; 13. — F; 14. — F; 15. — F; 16. — T; 17. — F; 18. — F; 19. — T; 20. — T; 21. — T; 22. — F.

TASK 3.

1. — h; 2. — g; 3. — k; 4. — e; 5. — c; 6. — l; 7. — b; 8. — j; 9. — a; 10. — d; 11. — i; 12. — f.

TASK 4.

1. to / with; 2. at; 3. with / after; 4. out / to / about; 5. to / on; 6. of / to; 7. with / to; 8. at / in / in; 9. to / at; 10. to.

Agatha Christie
VILLAGE MURDERS

TASK 4.

1. — g; 2. — b; 3. — f; 4. — i; 5. — h; 6. — l; 7. — j; 8. — a; 9. — c; 10. — e; 11. — d; 12. — k.

TASK 5.

1. keeps his head
2. not turn his hair
3. called off
4. came into a tidy sum
   on bad terms
5. broke
6. acumen
7. perfunctory
8. thumbing his notebook

TASK 6.

1. — g; 2. — a; 3. — e; 4. — c; 5. — f; 6. — b; 7. — d.

TASK 8.

1. up; 2. in / on; 3. from; 4. at; 5. at / through / up; 6. with; 7. in; 8. out; 9. of / off; 10. out / through / over / out; 11. with / through; 12. by; 13. at; 14. of / in; 15. at / by / over / about.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings
A MOTHER IN MANNVILLE

TASK 1.

1. This entire story is seen through the eyes of a single person, a woman who takes a cabin in the mountains so that she can find time to write — but the story is not about the woman. It is, rather, centered upon a boy named Jerry who does odd jobs for her.

2. The story — teller was living in a cabin that belonged to an orphanage, half a mile beyond the orphanage farm high in the Carolina mountains. She wanted quiet, isolation, to do some troublesome writing.

3. She wanted mountain air to blow out the malaria from too long a time in the subtropics. She was homesick, too, for the flaming of maples in October, and for corn shocks and pumpkins and black — walnut trees and the lift of hills.

4. She had arranged for a boy to come from the orphanage and chop wood for her fireplace. She thought Jerry was too small ("undersized") and wouldn't do a very good job with the wood. However, she was wrong as Jerry had cut "an astonishing amount of solid wood".

5. It was his "integrity" which Jerry possessed "with the clarity, the purity, the simplicity of a mountain stream". The story — teller described it in the following way: "It is bedded on courage, but it is more than brave. It is honest, but it is more than honesty."

6. Jerry and the story — teller's dog, Pat, became close friends ("intimate") which wasn't surprising because boys and dogs usually "possess the same singleness of spirit, the same kind of wisdom."

7. He did a fine job. Knowing that because of the fog the story — teller was being delayed he even came on Monday morning and shared his own breakfast with the dog.

8. They became very close.

9. Jerry said that the story — teller reminded him of his mother who lived in Mannville and sent for him every summer. He also told her about the gifts he had got from his mother for Christmas (a suit and a pair of roller skates). The story — teller was furious with that woman she had never met for having deserted such a wonderful child. She was trying hard to understand but did not manage to find any reasonable excuse for it.

10. She was too busy with her work and planning her nearest future.

11. She learned that Jerry had lied to her: he had no mother and no skates.

TASK 2.

1. in; 2. for; 3. off from; 4. of; 5. of; 6. at; 7. into; 8. on; 9. in.

TASK 3.

a) Weather conditions: "the snowdrifts are so deep..."; "Fog hides the mountain peaks"; "the snow swirls down the valleys"; "a wind blows so bitterly that"; "we get our faces frostbit"; "the late spring"; "fog filled the mountain passes so treacherously that"; "The fog held the next morning";

b) Names of trees and plants: cherry, rhododendron, corn shucks, walnut trees, pumpkins, chestnut, maple, asters, laurel,...

c) Changes in the landscape: "The rhododendron was in bloom, a carpet of color, across the mountainsides, soft as the May winds that stirred the hemlocks"; "It's pretty when the laurel blooms," he said. " Some of it's pink and some of it's white.""; "flaming of maples in October, and for corn shocks and pumpkins and black — walnut trees and the lift of hills"; "the mountain sky when rain is pending — gray, with a shadowing of that miraculous blue."; "fog filled the mountain passes so treacherously that"; "since the asters were now gone, he brought me back vermilion maple leaves and chestnut boughs dripping with imperial yellow.".

TASK 6.

"his eyes, very direct, were like the mountain sky when rain is pending — gray, with a shadowing of that miraculous blue";

"As I spoke, a light came over him — as though the setting sun had touched him with the same suffused glory with which it touched the mountains.";

"No, the word that comes to me is "integrity." The word means something very special to me, and the quality for which I use it is a rare one. My father had it — there is another of whom I am almost sure — but almost no man of my acquaintance possesses it with the clarity, the purity, the simplicity of a mountain stream."

Ila D. Hodgson
MY MOTHER ISN'T HOME YET

TASK 1.

1. — F; 2. — T; 3. — F; 4. — T; 5. — F; 6. — T; 7. — F; 8. — F; 9. — T; 10. — F; 11. — F; 12. — F; 13. — F; 14. — T; 15. — F; 16. — T; 17. — T; 18. — F; 19. — T; 20. — T; 21. — F; 22. — F; 23. — T; 24. — T; 25. — T.

TASK 3.

1. a foyer	a) an entrance hall
2. to dash	b) to rush
3. a private eye	c) a detective
4. humdrum	d) dull routine
5. evidence	e) proof
6. sloppy	f) careless
7. to reveal	g) to show
8. disarray	h) disorder
9. to straighten	i) to clean
10. abruptly	j) suddenly
11. faithful	k) close, true
12. to be miffed	l) to be annoyed
13. a venture	m) a project
14. scary	n) frightening
15. an assignment	o) a task
16. to tackle	p) to undertake
17. to detest	q) to hate
18. ominous	r) threatening
19. sinister	s) evil
20. to inquire	t) to ask
21. to be frantic	u) to be worried
22. to relate	v) to tell

TASK 4.

1. Luann
2. the mother
3. both the mother and the daughter
4. the mother
5. both the mother and the daughter
6. Luann
7. the mother
8. Luann's teddy bear
9. H/w in English
10. Luann
11. Tippi's father
12. Tippi Jones
13. the policeman
14. the mother
15. the staff in St. Mary's hospital
16. Lieutenant Gregg
17. Lieutenant Gregg

TASK 5.

1. — c; 2. — i; 3. — a; 4. — g; 5. — m; 6. — n; 7. — o; 8. — l; 9. — d; 10. — k; 11. — h; 12. — b; 13. — e; 14. — j; 15. — f.

Jeffrey Archer
A LA CARTE

TASK 1.

1. — F; 2. — F; 3. — T; 4. — T; 5. — f; 6. — T; 7. — F; 8. — F; 9. — F; 10. — T; 11. — F; 12. — F; 13. — T; 14. — F; 15. — T; 16. — T; 17. — F; 18. — T; 19. — F; 20. — F; 21. — T; 22. — F; 23. — T; 24. — T.

TASK 3.

1. — g; 2. — f; 3. — e; 4. — i; 5. — j; 6. — k; 7. — l; 8. — d; 9. — c; 10. — b; 11. — h; 12. — a.

TASK 4.

1. — g; 2. — l; 3. — h; 4. — c; 5. — i; 6. — e; 7. — a; 8. — b; 9. — d; 10. — k; 11. — f; 12. — j.

TASK 5.

1. incredulously
2. mock
3. tempted / turned down
4. give you a reference
5. for good
6. out of earshot
7. blessing
8. coveted
9. stormed
10. signed on
11. to fetch
12. thought better.

TASK 6.

1. by / with; 2. of (about) / in; 3. for / on; 4. at / for; 5. at / to; 6. on 7. within (in) / of; 8. in the middle of (in); 9. in / of; 10. at / in; 11. with / with; 12. of; 13. across (on) / from; 14. to / to.

Erma Bombeck
GET OFF YOUR CUSP AND LIVE

TASK 1.

1. — T; 2. — T; 3. — T; 4. — F; 5. — F; 6. — T; 7. — NS; 8. — T; 9. — F; 10. — F; 11. — NS; 12. — T; 13. — F; 14. — F; 15. — F; 16. — F.

TASK 3.

1. — k; 2. — i; 3. — e; 4. — j; 5. — c; 6. — d; 7. — l; 8. — f; 9. — b; 10. — h; 11. — a; 12. — g.

TASK4.

1. — e; 2. — i; 3. — k; 4. — h; 5. — g; 6. — a; 7. — c; 8. — j; 9. — l; 10. — d; 11. — f; 12. — b.

TASK 5.

1. choked up
2. shape up
3. stitched up
4. meek
5. destiny
6. ranted
7. sentence
8. natal
9. conspire
10. darts / fallen

TASK 6.

1. to / in; 2. with; 3. on / to / on; 4. in / by / out of; 5. for / to; 6. off; 7. on / in; 8. around / out of / off / on; 9. in / with; 10. on / of.

Alan Milne
NEARLY PERFECT

TASK 3.

1. — d; 2. — k; 3. — b; 4. — f; 5. — i; 6. — h; 7. — j; 8. — c; 9. — g; 10. — e; 11. — a.

TASK 4.

1. blunt
2. poachers
3. flair
4. obsessed
5. fool proof
6. coistering
7. contemplated
8. framed
9. collate
10. rowdy

TASK 5.

1. about; 2. of; 3. for; 4. into / for / of; 5. into; 6. at; 7. with; 8. by / of/ in / in; 9. to; 10. at / at /of; 11. with / by; 12. on; 13. up.

Shirley Jackson
ONE ORDINARY DAY, WITH PEANUTS

TASK 1.

1. — T; 2. — F; 3. — T; 4. — F; 5. — T; 6. — F; 7. — F; 8. — F; 9. — not stated; 10. — F; 11. — F; 12. — F.

TASK 2.

1. to fill the pockets with candy and peanuts
2. to bet 10 dollars on a horse
3. to pay all damages and inconveniences
4. to take off one's shoes
5. to take out the paper one bought
6. to take something easy
7. to take a taxi downtown
8. to press some coins into one's hand
9. to have a difficult time doing something
10. to be buffeted from either side
11. to run away with something
12. to break (somebody) from a dumbfounded stare
13. to say something/it out of the side of one's mouth
14. a frown between one's eyes
15. to try a smile on somebody

TASK 3.

1. frown between his eyes
2. buffeted from either side
3. to try her smile on
4. bet ten dollars on a horse
5. filling the pockets with peanuts and candy
6. 'Take everything easy'
7. she said it out of the side of her mouth
8. ran away with it
9. I had a difficult time doing
10. to pay all damages and inconveniences
11. broke her from a dumbfounded stare
12. pressed some coins into his hand

TASK 9.

a) to watch smb
b) to keep an eye on a child
c) to have a difficult time doing smth
d) to say smth out beside one's mouth
e) to be buffeted from either side
f) to pick up smb
g) to pick up smb
h) to take a nap
i) to keep smb from doing smth.

Molly Picon
I'LL GIVE YOU LAW!

TASK 1.

1. — NS; 2. — T; 3. — T; 4. — F; 5. — F: 6. —F; 7. — T; 8. — F; 9. —T; 10. — T; 11. — F; 12. — F; 13. — F; 14. — T; 15. — F.

TASK 4.

1. — j; 2. — n; 3. — g; 4. — f; 5. — k; 6. — l; 7. — e; 8. — m; 9. — b; 10. — h; 11. — c; 12. — d; 13. — i; 14. — a.

TASK 5.

to miss — to pass by
to cry — to sob
to look for — to search
a loser — a good — for — nothing loafer
to become angry — to get into a rage
to want strongly — to yearn for smth
to stop — to abandon
to become personally interested — to take a personal interest
every day — daily
a social status — station in life
to continue to do smth. — to hold out
to say smth. in a low voice — to mutter
quickly — briskly
to break — to come apart
promptly — at once

TASK 6.

1. decency
2. muttering
3. to abandon
4. conceded
   (will never concede)
5. has yearned
6. would inject
7. be claimed
8. got into a rage
9. flimsy
10. amused
11. appalled
12. stern(er)
13. sobbing
14. curt
15. overwhelmed

TASK 7.

1. — by; 2. — up; 3. — off; 4. — on to; 5. — with; 6. — over; 7. — to / in; 8. — to; 9. — to / by; 10. —off; 11. — to; 12. — out / of; 13. — in; 14. — up.

Katherine Anne Porter
THE JILTING OF GRANNY WEATHERALL

TASK 1.

1. — F; 2. — T; 3. — F; 4. — F; 5. — T; 6. — F; 7. — T; 8. — T; 9.— F; 10. — F; 11. — T; 12. — T.

TASK 3.

1. — d; 2. — g; 3. — j; 4. — f; 5. — i; 6. — e; 7. — a; 8. — c; 9. — h; 10. — b.

TASK 4.

1. to get along
2. to set out to do smth
3. to make up one's mind
4. to drop in
5. to lead smbd on
6. in no time
7. to talk smth over
8. to stand up to smth
9. to pull through
10. to stay on

TASK 5.

1. drop in
2. in no time
3. make up my mind as to...
4. was just leading him on
5. pulled through
6. sets out to do...
7. to get along
8. talk it over with...
9. stand up to him
10. stayed on

William Saroyan
A NICE OLD — FASHIONED ROMANCE, WITH LOVE, LYRICS AND EVERYTHING

TASK 1.

1. — F; 2. — T; 3. — T; 4. — F; 5. — F; 6. — T; 7. — F; 8. — F; 9. — F; 10. — T; 11. — F; 12. — T; 13. — T; 14. — F.

TASK 3.

1. — d; 2. — g; 3. — j; 4. — f; 5. — i.; 6. — e; 7. — a; 8. — c; 9. — h; 10. — b.

TASK 4.

1. to get around
2. to get rid of
3. on account of
4. to catch up with
5. to be up to smth
6. to mess smb up in smth
7. to figure smth/smb out
8. to show up
9. to get over smth
10. in the hope of smth/that

TASK 5.

1. out; 2. up; 3. over; 4. up; 5. up; 6. up / with; 7. around; 8. on / of; 9. of; 10. in / of.