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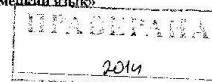
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Т. А. КУЗНЕЦОВА, Т. В. СОКЛАКОВА

ПРАКТИКА УСТНОЙ И ПИСЬМЕННОЙ РЕЧИ  
АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

ПРАКТИЧЕСКОЕ ПОСОБИЕ  
по теме «ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ ТЕКСТА»  
для студентов факультета иностранных языков  
специальности 1-02 03 06 01 «Английский язык»,  
«Немецкий язык»



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текста» является оказание помощи студентам в овладении  
навыками и умениями интерпретации и анализа художествен-  
ного текста. Практическое пособие включает художествен-  
ные тексты, упражнения для их анализа и адресуется студен-  
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## CONTENTS

Введение.....	4
Plot and Plot Structure	
Text 1 A Friend in Need W. S. Maugham .....	5
Text 2 Lamb to the Slaughter R. Dahl .....	9
Text 3 Caged L. E. Reeve.....	19
Means of Characterization	
Text 4 Desiree's Baby K. Chopin.....	22
Text 5 The Promise W. S. Maugham.....	28
Text 6 A Clean Well Lighted Place E. Hemingway.....	34
Narrative Method	
Text 7 Taking the Veil K. Mansfield.....	39
Text 8 Squaring the Circle O'Henry.....	44
Text 9 Case for the Defence G. Green.....	49
Tonal System	
Text 10 The Night the Bed Fell J. Thurber.....	53
Text 11 The Name H. Cecil.....	58
Text 12 The Story Teller Saki (H. H. Munro).....	64
The Message of a Literary Work	
Text 13 The Legacy V. Woolf.....	70
Text 14 The Story of an Hour K. Chopin.....	77
Text 15 Go, Lovely Rose H. E. Bates.....	81
Text 16 The Beginning of Tomorrow C. E. Turner.....	88
Литература.....	92

## ВВЕДЕНИЕ

Целью практического пособия по теме «Интерпретация текста» является оказание помощи студентам в овладении навыками понимания, анализа и интерпретации художественных произведений.

В связи с тем, что короткие рассказы содержат в основном все элементы, характерные для художественного произведения, различные лингвистические средства и больше имплицитной информации, чем роман, они, несомненно, требуют более длительного и подробного анализа. Все это определило выбор именно коротких рассказов для развития навыков и умений интерпретации художественных произведений. Пособие содержит ряд коротких рассказов английских и американских писателей.

В практическое пособие, помимо художественных текстов, входят и послетекстовые задания к ним. Данные задания направлены непосредственно на толкование текста, раскрытие подтекста, доказательство или опровержение того или иного тезиса. Этот вид заданий предполагает обсуждение проблемных вопросов по содержанию рассказов и дает читателю возможность осмыслить их суть и сформулировать свою собственную точку зрения, а также определить позицию автора по отношению к действующим лицам и событиям. Цель разработанных упражнений – обеспечить восприятие смыслового содержания текста, обратить внимание читателя на существенные для его понимания детали, факты, позволить глубже проникнуть в его смысловую ткань.

Данное пособие предназначено для студентов специальности 1 - 02 03 06 01 «Английский язык». «Немецкий язык».

## Plot and Plot Structure

### Text 1 A Friend in Need

William Somerset Maugham

For thirty years now I have been studying my fellow-men. I do not know very much about them. I should certainly hesitate to engage a servant on his face, and yet I suppose it is on the face that for the most part we judge the persons we meet. We draw our conclusions from the shape of the jaw, the look in the eyes, the contour of the mouth. I wonder if we are more often right than wrong. Why novels and plays are so often untrue to life is because their authors, perhaps of necessity, make their characters all of a piece. They cannot afford to make them self-contradictory, for then they become incomprehensible, and yet self-contradictory is what most of us are. We are a haphazard bundle of inconsistent qualities. In books on logic they will tell you that it is absurd to say that fellow is tubular or gratitude heavier than air; but in that mixture of incongruities that makes up the self yellow may very well be a horse and cart and gratitude the middle of next week. I shrug my shoulders when people tell me that their first impressions of a person are always right. I think they must have small insight or great vanity. For my own part I find that the longer I know people the more they puzzle me: my oldest friends are just those of whom I can say that I don't know the first thing about them.

These reflections have occurred to me because I read in this morning's paper that Edward Hyde Burton had died at Kobe. He was a merchant and he had been in business in Japan for many years. I knew him very little, but he interested me because once he gave me a great surprise. Unless I had heard the story from his own lips I should never have believed that he was capable of such an action. It was more startling because both in appearance and manner he suggested a very definite type. Here if ever was a man all of a piece. He was a tiny little fellow, not much more than five feet four in height, and very slender, with white hair, a red face much wrinkled, and blue eyes. I suppose he was about sixty when I knew him. He was always neatly and quietly dressed in accordance with his age and station.

Though his offices were in Kobe, Burton often came down to Yokohama. I happened on one occasion to be spending a few days there, waiting for a ship, and I was introduced to him at the British Club. We played bridge together. He played a good game and a generous one. He did

not talk very much, either then or later when we were having drinks, but what he said was sensible. He had quiet, dry humour. He seemed to be popular at the club and afterwards, when he had gone, they described him as one of the best. It happened that we were both staying at the Grand Hotel and next day he asked me to dine with him. I met his wife, fat, elderly, and smiling, and his two daughters. It was evidently a united and affectionate family. I think the chief thing that struck me about Burton was his kindness. There was something very pleasing in his mild blue eyes. His voice was gentle; you could not imagine that he could possibly raise it in anger; his smile was benign. He was a man who attracted you because you felt in him a real love for his fellows. He had charm. But there was nothing mawkish in him; he liked his game of cards and his cocktail, he could tell with point a good and spicy story, and in his youth he had been something of an athlete. He was a rich man and he had made every penny himself. I suppose one thing that made you like him was that he was so small and frail; he aroused your instincts of protection. You felt that he could not bear to hurt a fly.

One afternoon I was sitting in the lounge of the Grand Hotel. This was before the earthquake and they had leather arm-chairs there. From the windows you had a spacious view of the harbour with its crowded traffic. There were great liners on their way to Vancouver and San Francisco or to Europe by way of Shanghai, Hong-Kong, and Singapore; there were tramps of all nations, battered and sea-worn, junks with their high sterns and great coloured sails, and innumerable sampans. It was a busy, exhilarating scene, and yet, I know not why, restful to the spirit. Here was romance and it seemed that you had but to stretch out your hand to touch it.

Burton came into the lounge presently and caught sight of me. He seated himself in the chair next to mine.

"What do you say to a little drink?"

He clapped his hands for a boy and ordered two gin fizzes. As the boy brought them a man passed along the street outside and seeing me waved his hand.

"Do you know Turner?" said Burton as I nodded a greeting.

"I've met him at the club. I'm told he's a remittance man."

"Yes, I believe he is. We have a good many here."

"He plays bridge well."

"They generally do. There was a fellow here last year, oddly enough a namesake of mine, who was the best bridge player I ever met. I suppose

you never came across him in London. Lenny Burton he called himself. I believe he'd belonged to some very good clubs."

"No, I don't believe I remember the name."

"He was quite a remarkable player. He seemed to have an instinct about the cards. It was uncanny. I used to play with him a lot. He was in Kobe for some time."

Burton sipped his gin fizz.

"It's rather a funny story," he said. "He wasn't a bad chap. I liked him. He was always well-dressed and smart-looking. He was handsome in a way with curly hair and pink-and-white cheeks. Women thought a lot of him. There was no harm in him, you know, he was only wild. Of course he drank too much. Those sort of fellows always do. A bit of money used to come in for him once a quarter and he made a bit more by card-playing. He won a good deal of mine, I know that."

Burton gave a kindly chuckle. I knew from my own experience that he could lose money at bridge with a good grace. He stroked his shaven chin with his thin hand; the veins stood out on it and it was almost transparent.

"I suppose that is why he came when he went broke, that and the fact that he was a namesake of mine. He came to see me in my office one day and asked me for a job. I was rather surprised. He told me that there was no more money coming from home and he wanted to work. I asked him how old he was."

"Thirty-five," he said.

"And what have you been doing hitherto?" I asked him.

"Well, nothing very much," he said.

"I couldn't help laughing."

"I'm afraid I can't do anything for you just yet," I said. "Come back and see me in another thirty-five years, and I'll see what I can do."

"He didn't move. He went rather pale. He hesitated for a moment and then he told me that he had bad luck at cards for some time. He hadn't been willing to stick to bridge, he'd been playing poker, and he'd got trimmed. He hadn't a penny. He'd pawned everything he had. He couldn't pay his hotel bill and they wouldn't give him any more credit. He was down and out. If he couldn't get something to do he'd have to commit suicide."

"I looked at him for a bit. I could see now that he was all to pieces. He'd been drinking more than usual and he looked fifty. The girls wouldn't have thought so much of him if they'd seen him then."



"Well, isn't there anything you can do except play cards?" I asked him.

"I can swim," he said.

"Swim!"

I could hardly believe my ears; it seemed such an insane answer to give.

"I swam for my university."

I got some glimmering of what he was driving at. I've known too many men who were little tin gods at their university to be impressed by it.

"I was a pretty good swimmer myself when I was a young man," I said.

"Suddenly I had an idea."

Pausing in his story, Burton turned to me.

"Do you know Kobe?" he asked.

"No," I said, "I passed through it once, but I only spent a night there."

Then you don't know the Shioya Club. When I was a young man I swam from there round the beacon and landed at the creek of Tarumi. It's over three miles and it's rather difficult on account of the currents round the beacon. Well, I told my young namesake about it and I said to him that if he'd do it I'd give him a job.

"I could see he was rather taken aback."

"You say you're a swimmer," I said.

"I'm not in very good condition," he answered.

I didn't say anything. I shrugged my shoulders. He looked at me for a moment and then he nodded.

"All right," he said. "When do you want me to do it?"

I looked at my watch. It was just after ten.

"The swim shouldn't take you much over an hour and a quarter. I'll drive round to the creek at half past twelve and meet you. I'll take you back to the club to dress and then we'll have lunch together."

"Done," he said.

We shook hands. I wished him good luck and he left me. I had a lot of work to do that morning and I only just managed to get to the creek at Tarumi at half past twelve. But I needn't have hurried; he never turned up.

"Did he funk it at the last moment?" I asked.

"No, he didn't funk it. He started all right. But of course he'd ruined his constitution by drink and dissipation. The currents round the beacon were more than he could manage. We didn't get the body for about three days."

I didn't say anything for a moment or two. I was a trifle shocked. Then I asked Burton a question.

"When you made him that offer of a job, did you know he'd be drowned?"

He gave a little mild chuckle and he looked at me with those kind and candid blue eyes of his. He rubbed his chin with his hand.

"Well, I hadn't got a vacancy in my office at the moment."

### Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1** While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:

- 1 Comment on the title of the story. Why is the second part of the proverb omitted?
- 2 What is the main idea of the beginning (1<sup>st</sup> extract) of the story?
- 3 Why did Mr. Burton interest the author?

**Ex. 2** Analyze the plot structure and literary techniques of the story.

- 1 What did the author achieve by beginning the story with digression?
- 2 Does the story have a frame structure or a complex narrative structure?
- 3 What is the role of the exposition?
- 4 What is the climax of the story?
- 5 Is there a denouement in the story?
- 6 What was the author's attitude to Mr. Burton at the beginning of the story and at the end of it?
- 7 Did the actions of Mr. Burton contradict to the impression he produced?
- 8 Why is the sentence "Burton gave a kindly chuckle" repeated twice?
- 9 What type of conflict is there in the story?

### Text 2 Lamb to the Slaughter

Roald Dahl

The room was warm and clean, the curtains drawn, the two table lamps alight — hers and the one by the empty chair opposite. On the sideboard

behind her, two tall glasses, soda water, whisky. Fresh ice cubes in the Thermos bucket.

Mary Maloney was waiting for her husband to come home from work.

Now and again she would glance up at the clock, but without anxiety, merely to please herself with the thought that each minute gone by made it nearer the time when he would come. There was a slow smiling air about her, and about everything she did. The drop of the head as she bent over her sewing was curiously tranquil. Her skin – for this was her sixth month with child – had acquired a wonderful translucent quality, the mouth was soft, and the eyes, with their new placid look, seemed larger, darker than before.

When the clock said ten minutes to five, she began to listen, and a few moments later, punctually as always, she heard the tyres on the gravel outside, and the car door slamming, the footsteps passing the window, the key turning in the lock. She laid her sewing, stood up, and went forward to kiss him as he came in.

"Hullo, darling," she said.

"Hullo," he answered.

She took his coat and hung it in the closet. Then she walked over and made the drinks, a strongish one for him, a weak one for herself, and soon she was back again in her chair with the sewing, and he in the other, opposite, holding the tall glass with both his hands, rocking to so the ice cubes tinkled against the side.

For her, this was always a blissful time of day. She knew he didn't want to speak much until the first drink was finished, and she, on her side, was content to sit quietly, enjoying the company after the long hours alone in the house. She loved to luxuriate in the presence of this man, and to feel – almost as a sunbather feels the sun – that warm male glow that came out of him to her when they were alone together. She loved him for the way he sat loosely in a chair, for the way he came in a door, or moved slowly across the room with long strides. She loved the intent, far look in his eyes when they rested on her, the funny shape of the mouth, and especially the way he remained silent about his tiredness, sitting still with himself until the whisky had taken some of it away.

"Tired, darling?"

"Yes" he said. "I'm tired." And as he spoke, he did an unusual thing. He lifted his glass and drained it in one swallow although there was still half of it, at least half of it, left. She wasn't really watching him but she knew what he had done because she heard the ice cubes falling back against the

bottom of the empty glass when he lowered his arm. He paused a moment, leaning forward in the chair, then he got up and went slowly over to fetch himself another.

"I'll get it!" she cried, jumping up.

"Sit down," he said.

When he came back, she noticed that the new drink was dark amber with the quantity of whisky in it.

"Darling, shall I get you slippers?"

"No."

She watched him as he began to sip the dark yellow drink, and she could see little oily swirls in the liquid because it was so strong.

"I think it's a shame," she said, "that when a policeman gets to be as senior as you, they keep him walking about on his feet all day long."

He didn't answer, so she bent her head again and went on with her sewing; but each time he lifted the drink to his lips, she heard the ice cubes clinking against the side of the glass.

"Darling," she said. "Would you like me to get you some cheese? I haven't made any supper because it's Thursday."

"No," he said.

"If you're too tired to eat out," she went on, "it's still not too late. There's plenty of meat and stuff in the freezer, and you can have it right here and not even move out of the chair."

Her eyes waited on him for an answer, a smile, a little nod, but he made no sign.

"Anyway," she went on, "I'll get you some cheese and crackers first."

"I don't want it," he said.

She moved uneasily in her chair, the large eyes still watching his face. "But you *must* have supper. I can easily do it here. I'd like to do it. We can have lamb chops: Or pork. Anything you want. Everything's in the freezer."

"Forget it," he said.

"But, darling, you *must* eat! I'll fix it anyway, and then you can have it or not, as you like."

She stood up and placed her sewing on the table by the lamp.

"Sit down," he said. "Just for a minute, sit down."

It wasn't till then that she began to get frightened.

"Go on," he said. "Sit down."

She lowered herself back slowly into the chair, watching him all the time with those large, bewildered eyes. He had finished the second drink and was staring down into the glass, frowning.

"Listen," he said. "I've got something to tell you."

"What is it, darling? What's the matter?"

He had become absolutely motionless, and he kept his head down so that the light from the lamp beside him fell across the upper part of his face, leaving the chin and mouth in shadow. She noticed there was a little muscle moving near the corner of his left eye.

"This is going to be a bit of a shock to you, I'm afraid," he said. "But I've thought about it a good deal and I've decided the only thing to do is tell you right away. I hope you won't blame me too much."

And he told her. It didn't take long, four or five minutes at most, and she sat very still through it all, watching him with a kind of dazed horror as he went further and further away from her with each word.

"So there it is," he added. "And I know it's kind of a bad time to be telling you, but there simply wasn't any other way. Of course I'll give you money and see you're looked after. But there needn't really be any fuss. I hope not anyway. It wouldn't be very good for my job."

Her first instinct was not to believe any of it, to reject it all. It occurred to her that perhaps he hadn't even spoken, that she herself had imagined the whole thing. Maybe, if she went about her business and acted as though she hadn't been listening, then later, when the sort of woke up again, she might find none of it had ever happened.

"I'll get the supper," she managed to whisper, and this time he didn't stop her.

When she walked across the room she couldn't feel anything at all – except a slight nausea and a desire to vomit. Everything was automatic now – down the stairs to the cellar, the light switch, the deep freeze, the hand inside the cabinet taking hold of the first object it met. She lifted it out, and looked at it. It was wrapped in paper, so she took off the paper and looked at it again.

A leg of lamb.

All right then, they would have lamb for supper. She carried it upstairs, holding the thin bone-end of it with her hands, and as she went through the living-room, she saw him standing over by the window with his back to her, and she stopped.

"For God's sake," he said, hearing her, but not turning round. "Don't make supper for me. I'm going out."

At that point, Mary Maloney simply walked up behind him and without any pause she swung the big frozen leg of lamb high in the air and brought it down as hard as she could on the back of his head.

She might just as well have hit him with a steel club.

She stepped back a pace, waiting, and the funny thing was that he remained standing there for at least four or five seconds, gently swaying. Then he crashed to the carpet.

The violence of the crash, the noise, the small table overturning, helped bring her out of the shock. She came out slowly, feeling cold and surprised, and she stood for a while blinking at the body, still holding the ridiculous piece of meat tight with both hands.

All right, she told herself. So I've killed him.

It was extraordinary, now, how clear her mind became all of a sudden. She began thinking very fast. As the wife of a detective, she knew quite well what the penalty would be. That was fine. It made no difference to her. In fact, it would be a relief. On the other hand, what about the child? What were the laws about murders with unborn children? Did they kill them both – mother and child? Or did they wait until the tenth month? What did they do?

Mary Maloney didn't know. And she certainly wasn't prepared to take a chance.

She carried the meat into the kitchen, placed it in a pan, turned the oven on high, and shoved it inside. Then she washed her hands and ran upstairs to the bedroom. She sat down before the mirror, tidied her face, touched up her lips and face. She tried a smile. It came out rather peculiar. She tried again.

"Hullo Sam," she said brightly, aloud.

The voice sounded peculiar too.

"I want some potatoes please, Sam. Yes, and I think a can of peas."

That was better. Both the smile and the voice were coming out better now. She rehearsed it several times more. Then she ran downstairs, took her coat, went out the back door, down the garden, into the street.

It wasn't six o'clock yet and the lights were still on in the grocery shop.

"Hullo Sam," she said brightly, smiling at the man behind the counter.

"Why, good evening, Mrs. Maloney. How're you?"

"I want some potatoes please, Sam. Yes, and I think a can of peas."

The man turned and reached up behind him on the shelf for the peas.

"Patrick's decided he's tired and doesn't want to eat out tonight," she told him. "We usually go out Thursdays, you know, and now he's caught me without any vegetables in the house."

"Then how about meat, Mrs. Maloney?"

"No, I've got meat, thanks. I got a nice leg of lamb, from the freezer."

"Oh."

"I don't much like cooking it frozen, Sam, but I'm taking a chance on it this time. You think it'll be all right?"

"Personally," the grocer said, "I don't believe it makes any difference. You want these Idaho potatoes?"

"Oh yes, that'll be fine. Two of those."

"Anything else?" The grocer cocked his head on one side, looking at her pleasantly. "How about afterwards? What are you going to give him for afterwards?"

"Well — what would you suggest, Sam?"

The man glanced around the shop. "How about a nice big slice of cheesecake? I know he likes that."

"Perfect," she said. "He loves it."

And when it was all wrapped and she had paid, she put on her brightest smile and said, "Thank you, Sam. Good night."

"Good night, Mrs. Maloney. And thank you."

And now, she told herself as she hurried back, all she was doing now, she was returning home to her husband and he was waiting for his supper; and she must cook it good, and make it as tasty as possible because the poor man was tired; and if, when she entered the house, she happened to find anything unusual, or tragic, or terrible, then naturally it would be a shock and she'd become frantic with grief and horror. Mind you, she wasn't expecting to find anything. She was just going home with the vegetables. Mrs. Patrick Maloney going home with the vegetables on Thursday evening to cook supper for her husband.

That's the way, she told herself. Do everything right and natural. Keep things absolutely natural and there'll be no need for any acting at all.

Therefore, when she entered the kitchen by the back door, she was humming a little tune to herself and smiling.

"Patrick!" she called. "How are you, darling?"

She put the parcel down on the table and went through into the living-room; and when she saw him lying there on the floor with his legs doubled up and one arm twisted back underneath his body, it really was rather a shock. All the old love and longing for him welled up inside her, and she

ran over him, knelt down beside him, and began to cry her heart out. It was easy. No acting was necessary.

A few minutes later she got up and went to the phone. She knew the number of the police station, and when the man at the other end answered, she cried to him, "Quick! Come quick! Patrick's dead!"

"Who's speaking?"

"Mrs. Maloney. Mrs. Patrick Maloney."

"You mean Patrick Maloney's dead?"

"I think so," she sobbed. "He's lying on the floor and I think he's dead."

"Be right over," the man said.

The car came very quickly, and when she opened the front door, two policemen walked in. She knew them both — she knew nearly all the men at that precinct — and she fell right into Jack Noonan's arms, weeping hysterically. He put her gently into a chair, then went over to join the other one, who was called O'Malley, kneeling by the body.

"Is he dead?" she cried.

"I'm afraid he is. What happened?"

Briefly she told her story about going out to the grocer and coming back to find him on the floor. While she was talking, crying and talking, Noonan discovered a small patch of congealed blood on the dead man's head. He showed it to O'Malley who got up at once and hurried to the phone.

Soon, other men began to come into the house. First a doctor, then two detectives, one of whom she knew by name. Later, a police photographer arrived and took pictures, and a man who knew about fingerprints. There was a great deal of whispering and muttering beside the corpse, and the detectives kept asking her a lot of questions. But they always treated her kindly. She told her story again, this time right from the beginning, when Patrick had come in, and she was sewing, and he was tired, so tired he hadn't wanted to go out for supper. She told how she'd put the meat in the oven — "it's there now, cooking" — and how she'd slipped out to the grocer for vegetables, and come back to find him lying on the floor.

"Which grocer?" one of the detectives asked.

She told him, and he turned and whispered something to the other detective who immediately went outside into the street.

In fifteen minutes he was back with a page of notes, and there was more whispering, and through her sobbing she heard a few of the whispered phrases — "... acted quite normal ... very cheerful ... wanted to give him a good supper ... peas ... cheesecake ... impossible that she ..."

After a while, the photographer and the doctor departed and two other men came in and took the corpse away on a stretcher. Then the fingerprint man went away. The two detectives remained, and so did the two policemen. They were exceptionally nice to her, and Jack Noonan asked if she wouldn't rather go somewhere else, to her sister's house perhaps, or to his own wife who would take care of her and put her up for the night.

No, she said. She didn't feel she could move even a yard at the moment. Would they mind awfully if she stayed just where she was until she felt better? She didn't feel too good at the moment, she really didn't.

Then hadn't she better lie down on the bed? Jack Noonan asked.

No, she said, she'd like to stay right where she was, in this chair. A little later perhaps, when she felt better, she would move.

So they left her there while they went about their business, searching the house. Occasionally one of the detectives asked her another question. Sometimes Jack Noonan spoke to her gently as he passed by. Her husband, he told her, had been killed by a blow on the back of the head administered with a heavy blunt instrument, almost certainly a large piece of metal. They were looking for the weapon. The murderer may have taken it with him, but on the other hand he may've thrown it away or hidden it somewhere on the premises.

"It's the old story," he said. "Get the weapon, and you've got the man."

Later, one of the detectives came up and sat beside her. Did she know, he asked, of anything in the house that could've been used as the weapon? Would she mind having a look around to see if anything was missing – a very big spanner, for example, or a heavy metal vase.

They didn't have any heavy metal vases, she said.

"Or a big spanner?"

She didn't think they had a big spanner. But there might be some things like that in the garage.

The search went on. She knew that there were other policemen in the garden all around the house. She could hear their footsteps on the gravel outside, and sometimes she saw the flash of a torch through a chink in the curtains. It began to get late, nearly nine she noticed by the clock on the mantel. The four men searching the rooms seemed to be growing weary, a trifle exasperated.

"Jack", she said, the next time Sergeant Noonan went by. "Would you mind giving me a drink?"

"Sure I'll give you a drink. You mean this whisky?"

"Yes, please. But just a small one. It might make feel me better."

He handed her the glass.

"Why don't you have one yourself," she said. "You must be awfully tired. Please do. You've been very good to me."

"Well," he answered. "It's not strictly allowed, but I might take just a drop to keep me going."

One by one the others came in and were persuaded to take a little nip of whisky. They stood around rather awkwardly with the drinks in their hands, uncomfortable in her presence, trying to say consoling things to her. Sergeant Noonan wandered into the kitchen, came out quickly and said, "Look, Mrs. Maloney. You know that oven of yours is still on, and the meat still inside."

"Oh, dear me!" she cried. "So it is!"

"I better turn it off for you, hadn't I?"

"Will you do that, Jack. Thank you so much."

When the sergeant returned the second time, she looked at him with her large, dark, tearful eyes. "Jack Noonan," she said.

"Yes?"

"Would you do me a small favour – you and these others?"

"We can try, Mrs. Maloney."

"Well," she said. "Here you all are, and good friends of dear Patrick's too, and helping to catch the man who killed him. You must be terrible hungry by now because it's long past your supper time, and I know Patrick would never forgive me, God bless his soul, if I allowed you to remain in his house without offering you decent hospitality. Why don't you eat up that lamb that's in the oven? It'll be cooked just right by now."

"Wouldn't dream of it," Sergeant Noonan said.

"Please," she begged. "Please eat it. Personally I couldn't touch a thing, certainly not what's been in the house when he was here. But it's all right for you. It'd be a favour to me if you'd eat it up. Then you can go on with your work again afterwards."

There was a good deal of hesitating among the four policemen, but they were clearly hungry, and in the end they were persuaded to go into the kitchen and help themselves. The woman stayed where she was, listening to them through the open door, and she could hear them speaking among themselves, their voices thick and sloppy because their mouths were full of meat.

"Have some more, Charlie?"

"No. Better not finish it."

"She wants us to finish it. She said so. Be doing her a favour."

"Okay then. Give me some more."  
 "That's the hell of a big club the guy must've used to hit poor Patrick," one of them was saying. "The doc says his skull was smashed all to pieces just like from a sledge-hammer."  
 "That's why it ought to be easy to find."  
 "Exactly what I say."  
 "Whoever done it, they're not going to be carrying a thing like that around with them longer than they need."  
 One of them belched.  
 "Personally, I think it's right here on the premises."  
 "Probably right under our very noses. What you think, Jack?"  
 And in the other room Mary Maloney began to giggle.

### Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:**

- 1 What kind of the story is it? What helps you to define it before reading the story itself? Is it a criminal or a detective story?
- 2 What is the common meaning of the expression "lamb to the slaughter"? And what is its real one in the story?
- 3 Do you justify Mrs. Maloney? Does your attitude to the main character change in the course of reading?

**Ex. 2 Analyze the plot structure and the literary techniques of the story.**

- 1 Is the plot of the structure incomplete?
- 2 What is the climax of the story?
- 3 What is the major conflict based on?
- 4 What are the functions of the setting?
- 5 What atmosphere is created in the exposition?
- 6 What did the husband tell Mrs. Maloney?
- 7 By which technique do you learn more about the characters – by what they say or do, or by what the narrator tells about them?
- 8 Would the story lend itself well to dramatic presentation as a film or a stage-production?
- 9 Why did Mrs. Maloney giggle?
- 10 What ending does the story suggest?

### Text 3 Caged

L. E. Reeve

Purcell was a small, fussy man; red cheeks and a tight melonlike stomach. Large glasses so magnified his eyes as to give him the appearance of a wise and kind owl.

He owned a pet shop. He sold cats and dogs and monkeys; he dealt in a fish food and bird seed, prescribed remedies for ailing canaries, on his shelves there were long rows of gilded cages. He considered himself something of a professional man.

There was a constant stir to life in his dusky shop – whispered twitters, rustling, squeals, cheeps, and sudden squawks. Small feet scamped in frantic circles; frightened, bewildered, blindly seeking. Across the shelves pulsed this endless flicker of life. The place smelled of confined flesh. But the customers who came in said:

"Aren't they cute! Look at that little monkey! They're sweet."

And Mr. Purcell himself would smile and rub his hands and nod his head.

Each morning, when the routine of opening his shop was completed, it was the proprietor's custom to perch on a high stool, behind the counter, unfold his morning paper, and digest the day's news. As he read he would smile, frown, purse his lips, knowingly lift his eyebrows, nod in grave agreement. He read everything, even advice to the lovelorn and the detailed columns of want ads.

It was a raw, wintry day. Wind gusted against the high, plateglass windows. Having completed his usual tasks, Mr. Purcell again mounted the high stool and unfolded his morning paper. He adjusted his glasses, and glanced at the day's headlines. Hopping feet, chirping and squeaking and mewing, the soft frantic stir of life, vibrated all around him; yet Mr. Purcell heard it more than he would have heard the monotonous ticking of a familiar clock.

There was a bell over the door that rang whenever a customer entered. This morning, however, for the first time Mr. Purcell could recall, it failed to ring. Simply he glanced up, and there was the stranger, standing just inside the door, as if he had materialized out of thin air.

The storekeeper slid off his stool. From the first instant he knew instinctively, unreasonably, that the man hated him; but out of habit he rubbed his hands, smiled and nodded.

"Good morning," he beamed. "What can I do for you?"

The man's shiny shoes squeaked forward. His suit was cheap, ill-fitting, but obviously new. A gray pallor deadened his pinched features. He had a shutting glance and close-cropped hair. Ignoring Purcell for the moment, he looked around the shadowy shop.

"A nasty morning," volunteered the shopkeeper. He clasped both hands across the melonlike stomach, and smiled importantly. "I see by the paper we're in for a cold snap. Now what was it you wanted?"

The man stared closely at Purcell, as though just now aware of his presence. He said, "I want something in a cage."

"Something in a cage?" Mr. Purcell was a bit confused. "You mean – some sort of pet?"

"I mean what I said!" snapped the man. "Something in a cage. Something alive that's in a cage."

"I see," hastened the store keeper, not at all certain that he did. His eyes narrowed gravely and he pursed his lips. "Now let me think. A white rat, perhaps? I have some very nice white rats."

"No!" said the man. "Not rats. Something with wings. Something that flies."

"A bird!" exclaimed Mr. Purcell.

"A bird's all right." The customer pointed suddenly to a suspended cage which contained two snowy birds. "Doves? How much for those?"

"Five-fifty," came the prompt answer. "And a very reasonable price. They are a fine pair."

"Five-fifty?" The sallow man was obviously disappointed. He hesitantly produced a five-dollar bill. "I'd like to have those birds. But this is all I've got. Just five dollars."

Mentally, Mr. Purcell made a quick calculation, which told him that at a fifty cent reduction he could still reap a tidy profit. He smiled kindly "My dear man, if you want them that badly, you can certainly have them for five dollars."

"I'll take them." He laid his five dollars on the counter. Mr. Purcell unhooked the cage, and handed it to his customer. The man cocked his head to one side, listening to the constant twittering, the rushing scurry of the shop. "That noise!" he said suddenly. "Doesn't it get on your nerves?"

"Noise? What noise?" Mr. Purcell looked surprised. He could hear nothing unusual.

The customer glared. "I mean all this caged stuff. Drives you crazy, doesn't it?"

Purcell drew back. Either the man was insane, or drunk. He said hastily: "Yes, yes. Certainly. I guess so."

"Listen." The staring eyes came closer. "How long d'you think it took me to make that five dollars?"

The merchant wanted to order him out of the shop. But oddly enough, he couldn't. He heard himself dutifully asking, "Why – why, how long did it take you?"

The other laughed. "Ten years! At hard labor. Ten years to earn five dollars. Fifty cents a year."

It was best, Purcell decided, to humor him. "My, my! Ten years. That's certainly a long time. Now –"

"They give you five dollars," laughed the man, "and a cheap suit, and tell you not to get caught again."

Mr. Purcell mopped his sweating brow. "Now, about the care and feeding of your doves. I would advise –"

"Bah!" The sallow man swung around, and stalked abruptly from the store.

Purcell sighed with sudden relief. He waddled to the window and stared out. Just outside, his peculiar customer had halted. He was holding the cage shoulder-high, staring at his purchase. Then, opening the cage, he reached inside and drew out one of the doves. He tossed it into the air. He drew out the second and tossed it after the first. They rose like windblown balls of fluff and were lost in the smoky gray of the wintry city. For an instant the liberator's silent and lifted gaze watched them. Then he dropped the cage. A futile, suddenly, forlorn figure, he shoved both hands deep in his trouser pockets, hunched down his head and shuffled away...

The merchant was perplexed. So desperately had the man desired the doves that he had let him have them at a reduced price. And immediately he had turned them loose. "Now why," Mr. Purcell muttered, "did he do that?" He felt vaguely insulted.

### Questions for Discussion

Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:

- 1 Why did Purcell dislike the stranger?
- 2 Why did the stranger let the doves free?

**Ex. 2 Analyze the plot structure and the literary techniques of the story.**

- 1 How is the story structured? Are there all the components of plot structure?
- 2 To what extent does the title prepare the reader to what is to follow?
- 3 By which technique do you learn more about the characters – by what they say and do, by what the author tells about them?
- 4 What makes the description of the shop more vivid?
- 5 What is the role of the dialogue on the complications?
- 6 Where is the climax of the story?
- 7 Comment on the name of the owner of the shop. Who is he compared with?
- 8 What conflicts are there in the story?
- 9 How does the reader learn about the previous life of the stranger?
- 10 What does dove symbolize?

**Means of Characterization**

**Text 4 Desiree's Baby**

**Katherine Chopin**

As the day was pleasant, Madame Valmonde drove over to L'Abri to see Desiree and the baby.

It made her laugh to think of Desiree with a baby. Why, it seemed but yesterday that Desiree was little more than a baby herself; when Monsieur in riding through the gateway of Valmonde had found her lying asleep in the shadow of the big stone pillar.

The little one awoke in his arms and began to cry for "Dada." That was as much as she could do or say. Some people thought she might have strayed there of her own accord, for she was of the toddling age. The prevailing belief was that she had been purposely left by a party of Texans, whose canvas-covered wagon, late in the day, had crossed the ferry that Coton Mais kept, just below the plantation. In time Madame Valmonde abandoned every speculation but the one that Desiree had been sent to her by a beneficent Providence to be the child of her affection, seeing that she was without child of the flesh. For the girl grew to be beautiful and gentle, affectionate and sincere – the idol of Valmonde.

Aubigny riding by and seeing her there, had fallen in love with her. That was the way all the Aubignys fell in love, as if struck by a pistol shot. The wonder was that he had not loved her before; for he had known her since his father brought him home from Paris, a boy of eight, after his mother died there. The passion that awoke in him that day, when he saw her at the gate, swept along like an avalanche, or like a prairie fire, or like anything that drives headlong over all obstacles.

Monsieur Valmonde grew practical and wanted things well considered: that is, the girl's obscure origin. Armand looked into her eyes and did not care. He was reminded that she was nameless. What did it matter about a name when he could give her one of the oldest and proudest in Louisiana? He ordered the corbeille from Paris, and contained himself with what patience he could until it arrived; then they were married.

2

Madame Valmonde had not seen Desiree and the baby for four weeks. When she reached L'Abri she shuddered at the first sight of it, as she always did. It was a sad looking place, which for many years had not known the gentle presence of a mistress, old Monsieur Aubigny having married and buried his wife in France, and she having loved her own land too well ever to leave it. The roof came down steep and black like a cowl, reaching out beyond the wide galleries that encircled the yellow stuccoed house. Big, solemn oaks grew close to it, and their thick-leaved, far-reaching branches shadowed it like a pall. Young Aubigny's rufé was a strict one, too, and under it his negroes had forgotten how to be gay, as they had been during the old master's easy-going and indulgent lifetime.

The young mother was recovering slowly, and lay full length, in her soft white muslins and laces, upon a couch. The baby was beside her, upon her arm, where he had fallen asleep, at her breast. The yellow nurse woman sat beside a window fanning herself.

Madame Valmonde bent her portly figure over Desiree and kissed her, holding her an instant tenderly in her arms. Then she turned to the child.

"This is not the baby!" she exclaimed, in startled tones. French was the language spoken at Valmonde in those days.

"I knew you would be astonished," laughed Desiree, "at the way he has grown. The little cochon de lait! Look at his legs, mamma, and his hands and fingernails – real finger-nails. Zandrine had to cut them this morning. Isn't it true, Zandrine?"



The woman bowed her turbaned head majestically, "Mais si, Madame."  
"And the way he cries," went on Desiree, "is deafening. Armand heard him the other day as far away as La Blanche's cabin."

Madame Valmonde had never removed her eyes from the child. She lifted it and walked with it over to the window that was lightest. She scanned the baby narrowly, then looked as searchingly at Zandrine, whose face was turned to gaze across the fields.

"Yes, the child has grown, has changed," said Madame Valmonde, slowly, as she replaced it beside its mother. "What does Armand say?" Desiree's face became suffused with a glow that was happiness itself.

3

"Oh, Armand is the proudest father in the parish, I believe, chiefly because it is a boy, to bear his name; though he says not - that he would have loved a girl as well. But I know it isn't true. I know he says that to please me. And mamma," she added, drawing Madame Valmonde's head down to her, and speaking in a whisper, "he hasn't punished one of them - not one of them - since baby is born. Even Negrillon, who pretended to have burnt his leg that he might rest from work - he only laughed, and said Negrillon was a great scamp. Oh, mamma, I'm so happy; it frightens me."

What Desiree said was true. Marriage, and later the birth of his son had softened Armand Aubigny's imperious and exacting nature greatly. This was what made the gentle Desiree so happy, for she loved him desperately. When he frowned she trembled, but loved him. When he smiled, she asked no greater blessing of God. But Armand's dark, handsome face had not often been disfigured by frowns since the day he fell in love with her.

When the baby was about three months old, Desiree awoke one day to the conviction that there was something in the air menacing her peace. It was at first too subtle to grasp. It had only been a disquieting suggestion; an air of mystery among the blacks; unexpected visits from far-off neighbors who could hardly account for their coming. Then a strange, an awful change in her husband's manner, which she dared not ask him to explain. When he spoke to her, it was with averted eyes, from which the old love-light seemed to have gone out. He absented himself from home; and when there, avoided her presence and that of her child, without excuse. And the very spirit of Satan seemed suddenly to take hold of him in his dealings with the slaves. Desiree was miserable enough to die.

She sat in her room, one hot afternoon, in her peignoir, listlessly drawing through her fingers the strands of her long, silky brown hair that hung about her shoulders. The baby, half naked, lay asleep upon her own

great mahogany bed, that was like a sumptuous throne, with its satin-lined half-canopy. One of La Blanche's little quadroon boys - half naked too - stood fanning the child slowly with a fan of peacock feathers. Desiree's eyes had been fixed absently and sadly upon the baby, while she was striving to penetrate the threatening mist that she felt closing about her. She looked from her child to the boy who stood beside him, and back again; over and over. "Ah!" It was a cry that she could not help; which she was not conscious of having uttered. The blood turned like ice in her veins, and a clammy moisture gathered upon her face.

4

She tried to speak to the little quadroon boy; but no sound would come, at first. When he heard his name uttered, he looked up, and his mistress was pointing to the door. He laid aside the great, soft fan, and obediently stole away, over the polished floor, on his bare tiptoes. She stayed motionless, with gaze riveted upon her child, and her face the picture of fright.

Presently her husband entered the room, and without noticing her, went to a table and began to search among some papers which covered it.

"Armand," she called to him, in a voice which must have stabbed him, if he was human. But he did not notice. "Armand," she said again. Then she rose and tottered towards him. "Armand," she panted once more, clutching his arm, "look at our child. What does it mean? Tell me."

He coldly but gently loosened her fingers from about his arm and thrust the hand away from him. "Tell me what it means!" she cried despairingly.

"It means," he answered lightly, "that the child is not white; it means that you are not white."

A quick conception of all that this accusation meant for her nerved her with unwonted courage to deny it. "It is a lie; it is not true, I am white! Look at my hair, it is brown; and my eyes are gray, Armand, you know they are gray. And my skin is fair," seizing his wrist. "Look at my hand; whiter than yours, Armand," she laughed hysterically.

"As white as La Blanche's," he returned cruelly; and went away leaving her alone with their child.

When she could hold a pen in her hand, she sent a despairing letter to Madame Valmonde.

"My mother, they tell me I am not white. Armand has told me I am not white. For God's sake tell them it is not true. You must know it is not true. I shall die. I must die. I cannot be so unhappy, and live."

The answer that came was brief:

"My own Desiree: Come home to Valmonde; back to your mother who loves you. Come with your child."

When the letter reached Desiree she went with it to her husband's study, and laid it open upon the desk before which he sat. She was like a stone image: silent, white, motionless after she placed it there.

5

In silence he ran his cold eyes over the written words.

He said nothing. "Shall I go, Armand?" she asked in tones sharp with agonized suspense.

"Yes, go."

"Do you want me to go?"

"Yes, I want you to go."

He thought Almighty God had dealt cruelly and unjustly with him; and felt, somehow, that he was paying Him back in kind when he stabbed thus into his wife's soul. Moreover he no longer loved her, because of the unconscious injury she had brought upon his home and his name.

She turned away like one stunned by a blow, and walked slowly towards the door, hoping he would call her back.

"Good-by, Armand," she moaned.

He did not answer her. That was his last blow at fate.

Desiree went in search of her child. Zandrine was pacing the sombre gallery with it. She took the little one from the nurse's arms with no word of explanation, and descending the steps, walked away, under the live-oak branches.

It was an October afternoon; the sun was just sinking. Out in the still fields the negroes were picking cotton.

Desiree had not changed the thin white garment nor the slippers which she wore. Her hair was uncovered and the sun's rays brought a golden gleam from its brown meshes. She did not take the broad, beaten road which led to the far-off plantation of Valmonde. She walked across a deserted field, where the stubble bruised her tender feet, so delicately shod, and tore her thin gown to shreds.

She disappeared among the reeds and willows that grew thick along the banks of the deep, sluggish bayou; and she did not come back again.

Some weeks later there was a curious scene enacted at L'Abri. In the centre of the smoothly swept back yard was a great bonfire. Armand Aubigny sat in the wide hallway that commanded a view of the spectacle; and it was he who dealt out to a half dozen negroes the material which kept this fire ablaze.

A graceful cradle of willow, with all its dainty furbishings, was laid upon the pyre, which had already been fed with the richness of a priceless layette. Then there were silk gowns, and velvet and satin ones added to these; laces, too, and embroideries; bonnets and gloves; for the corbeille had been of rare quality.

6

The last thing to go was a tiny bundle of letters; innocent little scribbles that Desiree had sent to him during the days of their espousal. There was the remnant of one back in the drawer from which he took them. But it was not Desiree's; it was part of an old letter from his mother to his father. He read it. She was thanking God for the blessing of her husband's love:

"But above all," she wrote, "night and day, I thank the good God for having so arranged our lives that our dear Armand will never know that his mother, who adores him, belongs to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery."

### Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:**

- 1 How is the theme of men's superiority over women in the society of those days revealed in the story?
- 2 What shows that all of the characters descend from French immigrants?
- 3 What prejudice is in the centre of attention of the author?

**Ex. 2 Analyze the message of the story and its character-images.**

- 1 Who are the main characters of the story?
- 2 Speak about the main traits of Armand's character. In what way are they revealed through his actions? his speech?
- 3 Compare Armand's behaviour towards Desiree and his father's to his wife. Whose love was a "conditional" one?
- 4 Why is Desiree a victim in this story?
- 5 Are the names of the story speaking ones?

**Ex. 3 Analyze plot structure and literary techniques.**

- 1 What conflicts are involved in the story? Which one prevails?

- 2 Where is the story set? How is the setting specified? Is the reader placed in a recognizable realistic environment? How? Does the setting help to evoke the necessary atmosphere?
- 3 What is the climax of the story? What makes it a striking one?
- 4 Is there any denouement?
- 5 Are the events arranged in chronological order?
- 6 Is it possible to say that "past" and "present" are interconnected in this story?

### Text 5 The Promise

**William Somerset Maugham**

My wife is a very unpunctual woman, so when, having arranged to lunch with her at Claridge's, I arrived there ten minutes late and did not find her I was not surprised. I ordered a cocktail. It was the height of the season and there were but two or three vacant tables in the lounge. Some of the people after an early meal were drinking their coffee, others like myself were toying with a dry Martini; the women in their summer frocks looked gay and channing and the men debonair; but I could see no one whose appearance sufficiently interested me to occupy the quarter of an hour I was expecting to wait. There were slim and pleasant to look upon, well dressed and carelessly at ease, but they were for the most part of a pattern and I observed them with tolerance rather than with curiosity. But it was two o'clock and I felt hungry. My wife tells me that she can wear neither a turquoise nor a watch, for the turquoise turns green and the watch stops; and this she attributes to the malignity of fate. I have nothing to say about the turquoise, but I sometimes think the watch might go if she wound it. I was engaged with these reflections when an attendant came up and with that hushed significance that hotel attendants affect (as though their message held a more sinister meaning than their words suggested) told me that a lady had just telephoned to say that she had been detained and could not lunch with me.

I hesitated. It is not very amusing to eat in a crowded restaurant by oneself, but it was late to go to a club and I decided that I had better stay where I was. I strolled into the dining-room. It has never given me any particular satisfaction (as it appears to do to so many elegant persons) to be known by name to the head waiters of fashionable restaurants, but on this occasion I should certainly have been glad to be greeted by less stony an

eye. *The maître d'hôtel* with a set and hostile face told me that every table was occupied. I looked helplessly round the large and stately room and on a sudden to my pleasure caught sight of someone I knew. Lady Elizabeth Vermont was an old friend. She smiled and noticing that I was alone I went up to her.

"Will you take pity on a hungry man and let me sit with you?" I asked.

"Oh, do. But I've nearly finished."

She was at a little table by the side of a massive column and when I took my place I found that notwithstanding the crowd we sat almost in privacy.

"This is a bit of luck for me," I said. "I was on the point fainting from hunger."

She had a very agreeable smile; it did not light up her face suddenly, but seemed rather to suffuse it by degrees with charm. It hesitated for a moment about her lips and then slowly travelled to those great shining eyes of hers and there softly lingered. No one surely could say that Elizabeth Vermont was cast in the common mould. I never knew her when she was a girl, but many have told me that then she was so lovely, it brought the tears to one's eyes, I could well believe it; for now, though fifty, she was still incomparable. Her ravaged beauty made the fresh and blooming comeliness of youth a trifle insipid. I do not like these painted faces that look all alike; and I think women are foolish to dull their expression and obscure their personality with powder, rouge, and lipsticks. But Elizabeth Vermont painted not to imitate nature, but to improve it; you did not question the means but applauded the result. The flaunting boldness with which she used cosmetics increased rather than diminished the character of that perfect face. I suppose her hair was dyed; it was black and sleek and shining. She held herself upright as though she had never learned to loll and she was very slim. She wore a dress of black satin, the lines and simplicity of which were admirable, and about her neck was a long rope of pearls. Her only other jewel was an enormous emerald which guarded her wedding-ring and its somber fire emphasized the witness of her hand. But it was in her hands with their reddened nails that she most clearly betrayed her age; they had none of a girl's soft and dimpled roundness; and you could not but look at them with a certain dismay. Before very long they would look like the talons of a bird of prey.

Elizabeth Vermont was a remarkable woman. Of great birth, for she was the daughter of the seventh Duke of St Erth, she married at the age of eighteen a very rich man and started at once upon a career of astounding

extravagance, lewdness, and dissipation. She was too proud to be cautious, too reckless to think of consequences, and within two years her husband in circumstances of appalling scandal divorced her. She married then one of the three co-respondents named in the case and eighteen months later ran away from him. Then followed a succession of lovers. She became notorious for the profligacy. Her startling beauty and her scandalous conduct held her in the public eye and it was never very long but that she gave the gossips something to talk about. Her name stank in the nostrils of decent people. She was a gambler, a spendthrift, and a wanton. But though unfaithful to her lovers she was constant to her friends and there always remained a few who would never allow, whatever she did, that she was anything but a very nice woman. She had candour, high spirits, and courage. She was never a hypocrite. She was generous and sincere. It was at this period of her life that I came to know her; for great ladies, now that religion is out of fashion, when they are very much blown upon take a flattering interest in the arts. When they receive the cold shoulder from members of their own class they condescend sometimes to the society of writers, painters, and musicians. I found her an agreeable companion. She was one of those blessed persons who say quite fearlessly what they think (thus saving useful time), and she had a ready wit. She was always willing to talk (with a diverting humour) of her lurid past. Her conversation, though uninstructed, was good, because, notwithstanding everything, she was an honest woman.

Then she did a very surprising thing. At the age of forty, she married a boy of twenty-one. Her friends said that it was the maddest act of all her life, and some who had stuck to her through thick and thin, now for the boy's sake, because he was nice and it seemed shameful thus to take advantage of his inexperience, refused to have anything more to do with her. It really was the limit. They prophesied disaster, for Elizabeth Vermont was incapable of sticking to any man for more than six months, nay, they hoped for it, since it seemed the only chance for the wretched youth that his wife should behave so scandalously that he must leave her. They were all wrong. I do not know whether time was responsible for a change of heart in her, or whether Peter Vermont's innocence and simple love touched her, but the fact remains that she made him an admirable wife. They were poor, and she was extravagant, but she became a thrifty housewife; she grew on a sudden so careful of her reputation that the tongue of scandal was silenced. His happiness seemed her only concern. No one could doubt that she loved him devotedly. After being the subject

of so much conversation for so long Elizabeth Vermont ceased to be talked about. It looked as though her story were told. She was a changed woman, and I amused myself with the notion that when she was a very old lady, with many years of perfect respectability behind her, the past, the lurid past, would seem to belong not to her but to someone long since dead whom once she had vaguely known. For women have an enviable faculty of forgetting.

But who can tell what the fates have in the store? In the twinkling of an eye all was changed. Peter Vermont, after ten years of an ideal marriage, fell madly in love with a girl called Barbara Canton. She was a nice girl, the youngest daughter of Lord Robert Canton who was at one time Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and she was pretty in a fair and fluffy way. Of course she was not for a moment to be compared with Lady Elizabeth. Many people knew what had happened, but no one could tell whether Elizabeth Vermont had any inkling of it, and they wondered how she would meet a situation that was so foreign to her experience. It was always she who had discarded her lovers; none had deserted her. For my part I thought she would make short work of little Miss Canton; I knew her courage and her adroitness. All this was in my mind now while we chatted over our luncheon. There was nothing in her demeanour, as gay, charming, and frank as usual, to suggest that anything troubled her. She talked as she always talked, lightly but with good sense and a lively perception of the ridiculous, of the various topics which the course of conversation brought forward. I enjoyed myself. I came to the conclusion that by some miracle she had no notion of Peter's changed feelings, and I explained this to myself by the supposition that her love for him was so great, she could not conceive that his for her might be less.

We drank our coffee and smoked a couple of cigarettes, and she asked me the time.

"A quarter to three."

"I must ask for my bill."

"Won't you let me stand you lunch?"

"Of course," she smiled.

"Are you in a hurry?"

"I'm meeting Peter at three."

"Oh, how is he?"

"He's very well."

She gave a little smile, that tardy and delightful smile of hers, but I seemed to discern in it a certain mockery. For an instant she hesitated and she looked at me with deliberation.

"You like curious situations, don't you?" she said. "You'd never guess the errand I'm bound on. I rang up Peter this morning and asked him to meet me at three. I'm going to ask him to divorce me."

"You're not," did I cried. I felt myself flush and not know what to say. "I thought you got on so well together."

"Do you think it's likely that I shouldn't know what all the world knows? I'm really not such a fool as all that."

She was not a woman to whom it was possible to say what one did not believe and I could not pretend that I did not know what she meant. I remained silent for a second or two.

"Why should you allow yourself to be divorced?"

"Robert Canton is a stuffy old thing. I very much doubt if he'd let Barbara marry Peter if I divorced him. And for me, you know, it isn't of the smallest consequence: one divorce more or less..."

She shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"How do you know he wants to marry her?"

"He's head over ears in love with her."

"Has he told you so?"

"No. He doesn't even know that I know. He's been so wretched, poor darling. He's been trying so hard not to hurt my feelings."

"Perhaps it's only a momentary infatuation," I hazarded. "It may pass."

"Why should it? Barbara's young and pretty. She's quite nice. They're very well suited to one another. And besides, what good would it do if it did pass? They love each other now and the present love is all that matters. I'm nineteen years older than Peter. If a man stops loving a woman old enough to be his mother do you think he'll ever come to love her again? You're a novelist, you must know more about human nature than that."

"Why should you make this sacrifice?"

"When he asked me to marry him ten years ago I promised him that when he wanted his release he should have it. You see there was so great a disproportion between our ages I thought that was only fair."

"And are you going to keep a promise that he hasn't asked you to keep?"

She gave a little flutter of those long thin hands of hers and now I felt that there was something ominous in the dark glitter of that emerald.

"Oh, I must, you now. One must behave like a gentleman. To tell you the truth, that's why I'm lunching here today. It was at this able that he proposed to me; we were dining together, you know, and I was sitting just where I am now. The nuisance is that I'm just as much in love with him now as I was then." She paused for a minute and I could see that she clenched her teeth. "Well, I suppose I ought to go. Peter hates one to keep him waiting."

She gave me a sort of little helpless look and it struck me that she simply could not bring herself to rise from her chair. But she smiled and with an abrupt gesture sprang to her feet.

"Would you like me to come with you?"

"As far as the hotel door," she smiled.

We walked through the restaurant and the lounge and when we came to the entrance a porter swung round the revolving doors. I asked if she would like a taxi.

"No, I'd sooner walk, it's such a lovely day." She gave me her hand. "It's been so nice to see you. I shall go abroad tomorrow, but I expect to be in London all the autumn. Do ring me up."

She smiled and nodded and turned away. I watched her walk up Davies Street. The air was still bland and springlike, and above the roofs little white clouds were sailing leisurely in a blue sky. She held herself very erect and the poise of her head was gallant. She was a slim and lovely figure so that people looked at her as they passed. I saw her bow graciously to some acquaintance who raised his hat, and I thought that never in a thousand years would it occur to him that she had a breaking heart. I repeat, she was a very honest woman.

### Questions for Discussion

Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:

- 1 Judging by the title what kind of story do you expect it to be? Does it foreshadow any events?
- 2 S. Maugham is considered to be a master of psychological stories. Can we say it on reading this story?

Ex. 2 Analyze the major character of the story.

- 1 What is Lady Elizabeth's age, social position?
- 2 What facts of her life are given? What is the purpose of it?

- 3 What is the narrator's attitude towards the protagonist? What admires him in her?
- 4 What is the protagonist's idea of love and happiness?

**Ex. 3 Analyze plot structure and literary techniques of the story.**

- 1 What are the functions of the setting?
- 2 Do the events involve physical movement or psychological movement or both?
- 3 What is the climax of the story?
- 4 Which type of the conflict prevails: external or internal?

**Ex. 4 Discover message of the story.**

- 1 Which sentences express the main idea of the story?
- 2 Does the title contribute to the message?
- 3 What is the theme of the story?

**Text 6 A Clean, Well-Lighted Place**

**E. Hemingway**

It was late and every one had left the café except an old man who sat in the shadow the leaves of the tree made against the electric light. In the daytime the street was dusty, but at night the dew settled the dust and the old man liked to sit late because he was deaf and now at night it was quiet and he felt the difference. The two waiters inside the café knew that old man was a little drunk, and while he was a good client they knew that if he became too drunk he would leave without paying, so they kept watch on him.

"Last week he tried to commit suicide," one waiter said.

"Why?"

"He was in despair."

"What about?"

"Nothing."

"How do you know it was nothing?"

"He has plenty of money."

They sat together at a table that was close against the wall near the door of the café and looked at the terrace where the tables were all empty except

where the old man sat in the shadow of the leaves of the tree that moved slightly in the wind. A girl and a soldier went by in the street. The street light shone on the brass number on his collar. The girl wore no head covering and hurried beside him.

"The guard will pick him up," one waiter said.

"What does it matter if he gets what he's after?"

"He had better get off the street now. The guard will get him. They went by five minutes ago."

The old man was sitting in the shadow rapped on his saucer with his glass. The younger waiter went over to him.

"What do you want?"

The old man looked at him. "Another brandy," he said.

"You'll be drunk," the waiter said. The old man looked at him. The waiter went away.

"He'll stay all night," he said to his colleague. "I'm sleepy now. I never get into bed before three o'clock. He should have killed himself last week."

The waiter took the brandy bottle and another saucer from the counter inside the café and marched out to the old man's table. He put down the saucer and poured the glass full of brandy.

"You should have killed yourself last week," he said to the deaf man. The old man motioned with his finger. "A little more," he said. The waiter poured on into the glass so that the brandy slopped over and ran down the stem into the top saucer of the pile. "Thank you," the old man said. The waiter took the bottle back inside the café. He sat down at the table with his colleague again.

"He's drunk now," he said.

"He's drunk every night."

"What did he want to kill himself for?"

"How should I know?"

"How did he do it?"

"He hung himself with a rope."

"Who cut him down?"

"His niece."

"Why did he do it?"

"Fear for his soul."

"How much money has he got?"

"He's got plenty."

"He must be eighty years old."

"Anyway I should say he was eighty."

"I wish he would go home. I never get to bed before three o'clock. What kind of hour is that to go to bed?"

"He stays up because he likes it."

"He's lonely. I'm not lonely. I have a wife waiting in bed for me."

"He had a wife once too."

"A wife would be no good to him now."

"You can't tell. He might be better with a wife."

"His niece looks after him."

"I know. You said she cut him down."

"I wouldn't want to be that old. An old man is a nasty thing."

"Not always. This old man is clean. He drinks without spilling. Even now, drunk. Look at him."

"I don't want to look at him. I wish he would go home. He has no regard for those who must work."

The old man looked from his glass across the square, then over at the waiters.

"Another brandy," he said, pointing to his glass. The waiter who was in a hurry came over.

"Finished," he said, speaking with that omission of syntax stupid people employ when talking to drunken people or foreigners. "No more tonight. Close now."

"Another," said the old man.

"No. Finished." The waiter wiped the edge of the table with a towel and shook his head.

The old man stood up, slowly counted the saucers, took a leather coin purse from his pocket and paid for the drinks, leaving half a peseta tip.

The waiter watched him go down the street, a very old man walking unsteadily but with dignity.

"Why didn't you let him stay and drink?" the unhurried waiter asked. They were putting up the shutters. "It's not half-past two."

"I want to go home to bed."

"What is an hour?"

"More to me than to him."

"An hour is the same."

"You talk like an old man yourself. He can buy a bottle and drink at home."

"It's not the same."

"No, it is not," agreed the waiter with a wife. He did not wish to be unjust. He was only a hurry.

"And you? You have no fear of going home before your usual hour?"

"Are you trying to insult me?"

"No, hombre,\* only to make a joke."

"No," the waiter who was in a hurry said, rising from pulling down the metal shutters. "I have confidence. I am all confidence."

"You have youth, confidence, and a job," the older waiter said. "You have everything."

"And what do you lack?"

"Everything, but work."

"You have everything I have."

"No. I have never had confidence and I am not young."

"Come on, Stop talking nonsense and lock up."

"I am of those who like to stay late at the café," the older waiter said.

"With all those who need a light for the night."

"I want to go home and into bed."

"We are of two different kinds," the older waiter said. He was now dressed to go home. "It is not only a question of youth and confidence although those things are very beautiful. Each night I am reluctant to close up because there may be someone who needs the café."

"Hombre, there are bodegas open all night long."

"You do not understand. This is clean and pleasant café. It is well lighted. The light is very good and also, now, there are shadows of the leaves."

"Good night," said the younger waiter.

"Good night," the other said. Turning off the electric light he continued the conversation with himself. It is the light of course but it is necessary that the place be clean and pleasant. You do not want music. Certainly you do not want music. Nor can you stand before a bar with dignity although that is all that is provided for these hours. What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanliness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it all was nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada.\* Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee. He smiled and stood before a bar with a shining steam pressure coffee machine.

"What's yours?" asked the barman.

"Nada."

"Otro loco mas,"\* said the barman and turned away.

"A little cup," said the waiter.

The barman poured it for him.

"The light is very bright and pleasant but the bar is unpolished," the waiter said.

The barman looked at him but did not answer. It was too late at night for conversation.

"You want another copita?"\* the barman asked.

"No, thank you," said the waiter and went out. He disliked bars and bodegas. A clean, well lighted café was a very different thing. Now, without thinking further, he would go home to his room. He would lie in the bed and finally, with daylight, he would go to sleep. After all, he said to himself, it is probably only insomnia. Many must have it.

\*hombre – парень, старина (исп.)

\*nada у pues nada у nada у pues nada (исп.) – ничто и только ничто, ничто и только ничто. Дальше официант, продолжая разговор с самим собой, как бы читает молитву – «Отче наш, иже еси на небеси...», заменяя половину слов испанским словом «nada», т.е. «ничто».

\*Otro loco mas(исп.) – Еще один сумасшедший.

\*copita – рюмочка.

### Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:**

- 1 Who is the major character of the story?
- 2 What is the main means of characterization used by the author?

**Ex. 2 Analyze the major character of the story.**

- 1 What is the age, occupation and social position of the café's customer?
- 2 Was the old man satisfied with his life?
- 3 Did he have a wife or any relatives?
- 4 What is the role of minor characters? Compare the attitude of the waiters to the old man. Do they represent three generations?

38

5 Which of the waiters didn't feel any compassion and respect to the old man? Support your point of view by the text.

6 How do understand the sentence "This old man is clean?" Does the word "clean" mean anything more than its direct meaning?

7 Why was the old man unhappy, though he had a lot of money? Why did he drink?

**Ex. 3 Analyze the plot structure of the story.**

- 1 What are the functions of the exposition in this story?
- 2 Does the story have all the components of plot structure?
- 3 What is the climax of the story?

**Ex. 4 Discover the message of the story.**

- 1 What role does the setting play in conveying the message of the story?
- 2 Does the title contribute to the message?
- 3 What do the repeated words "darkness" and "well lighted place" signify?

### Narrative Method

#### Text 7 Taking the Veil

**Katherine Mansfield**

It seemed impossible that anyone should be unhappy on such a beautiful morning. Nobody was, decided Edna, except herself. The windows were flung wide in the houses. From within there came the sound of pianos, little hands chased after each other and ran away from each other, practicing scales. The trees fluttered in the sunny gardens, all bright with spring flowers. Street boys whistled, a little dog barked; people passed by, walking so lightly, so swiftly, they looked as though they wanted to break into a run. Now she actually saw in the distance a parasol, peach-coloured, the first parasol of the year.

Perhaps even Edna did not look quite as unhappy as she felt. It is not easy to look tragic at eighteen, when you are extremely pretty, with the cheeks and lips and shining eyes of perfect health. Above all, when you are wearing a French blue frock and your new spring hat trimmed with

39



cornflowers. True, she carried under her arm a book bound in horrid black leather. Perhaps the book provided a gloomy note, not only by accident; it was the ordinary Library building. For Edna had made going to the Library an excuse for getting out of the house to think, to realize what had happened, to decide somehow what was to be done now.

An awful thing had happened. Quite suddenly, at the theatre last night, when she and Jimmy were seated side by side in the dress-circle, without a moment's warning – in fact, she had just finished a chocolate almond and passed the box to him again – she had fallen in love with an actor. But – fallen – in – love...

The feeling was unlike anything she had ever imagined before. It wasn't in the least pleasant. It was hardly thrilling. Unless you can call the most dreadful sensation of hopeless misery, despair, agony and wretchedness, thrilling. Combined with the certainty that if that actor met her on the pavement after, while Jimmy was fetching their cab, she would follow him to the ends of the earth, at a nod, at a sign, without giving another thought to Jimmy or her father and mother or her happy home and countless friends again...

The play had begun fairly cheerfully. That was at the chocolate almond stage. Then the hero had gone blind. Terrible moment! Edna had cried so much she had to borrow Jimmy's folded, smooth-feeling handkerchief as well. Not that crying mattered. Whole rows were in tears. Even the men blew their noses with a loud trumpeting noise and tried to peer at the programme instead of looking at the stage. Jimmy, most mercifully dry-eyed – for what would she have done without his handkerchief? – squeezed her free hand, and whispered "Cheer up, darling girl!" And it was then she had taken a last chocolate almond to please him and passed the box again. Then there had been that ghastly scene with the hero alone on the stage in a deserted room at twilight, with a band playing outside and the sound of cheering coming from the street. He had tried – ah! How painfully, how pitifully! – to grope his way to the window. He had succeeded at last. There he stood holding the curtain while one beam of light, just one beam, shone full on his raised sightless face, and the band faded away into the distance...

It was – really, it was absolutely – oh, the most – it was simply – in fact, from that moment Edna knew that life could never be the same. She drew her hand away from Jimmy's, leaned back, and shut the chocolate box for ever. This at last was love!

Edna and Jimmy were engaged. She had had her hair up for a year and a half, they had been publicly engaged for a year. But, they had known they were going to marry each other ever since they walked in the Botanical Gardens with their nurses, and sat on the grass with a wine biscuit and a piece of barley-sugar each for their tea. It was so much an accepted thing that Edna had worn a wonderfully good imitation of an engagement-ring out of a cracker all the time she was at school. And up till now they had been devoted to each other.

But now it was over. It was so completely over that Edna found it difficult to believe that Jimmy did not realize it too. She smiled wisely, sadly, as she turned into the gardens of the Convent of the Sacred Heart and mounted the path that led through them to Hill Street. How much better to know it now than to wait until after they were married! Now it was possible that Jimmy would get over it. No, it was no use deceiving herself; he would never get over it! His life was wrecked, was ruined; that was inevitable. But he was young... Time, people always said, Time might make a little, just a little difference. In forty years when he was an old man, he might be able to think of her calmly – perhaps. But she, – what did the future hold for her?

Edna had reached the top of the path. There under a new-leaved tree, hung with little bunches of white flowers, she sat down on a green bench and looked over the Convent flowerbeds. In the one nearest to her there grew tender stocks, with a border of blue, shell-like pansies, with at one corner a clump of creamy freesias, their light spears of green criss-crossed over the flowers. The Convent pigeons were tumbling high in the air, and she could hear the voice of Sister Agnes who was giving a singing lesson. *Ah-me*, sounded the deep tones of the nun, and *Ah-me*, they were echoed...

If she did not marry Jimmy, of course she would marry nobody. The man she was in love with, the famous actor – Edna had far too much common-sense not to realize that would never be. It was very odd. She didn't even want it to be. Her love was too intense for that. It had to be endured, silently; it had to torment her. It was, she supposed, simply that kind of love.

"But, Edna!" cried Jimmy. "Can you never change? Can I never hope again?"

Oh, what sorrow to have to say it, but it must be said. "No, Jimmy, I will never change."

Edna bowed her head; and a little flower fell on her lap, and the voice of Sister Agnes cried suddenly *Ah-no*, and the echo came, *Ah-no*...

At that moment the future was revealed. Edna saw it all. She was astonished; it took her breath away at first. But, after all, what could be more natural? She would go into a convent... Her father and mother do everything to dissuade her, in vain. As for Jimmy, his state of mind hardly bears thinking about. Why can't they understand? How can they add to her suffering like this? The world is cruel, terribly cruel! After a last scene when she gives away her jewellery and so on to her best friends – she so calm, they so brokenhearted – into a convent she goes. No, one moment. The very evening of her going is the actor's last evening at Port Willin. He receives by a strange messenger a box. It is full of white flowers. But there is no name, no card. Nothing? Yes, under the roses, wrapped in a white handkerchief, Edna's last photograph with, written underneath,

"The world forgetting, by the world forgot."

Edna sat very still under the trees; she clasped the black book in her fingers as though it were her missal. She takes the name of Sister Angela. Snip! Snip! All her lovely hair is cut off. Will she be allowed to send one curl to Jimmy? It is contrived somehow. And in a blue gown with a white headband Sister Angela goes from the convent to the chapel, from the chapel to the convent with something unearthly in her look, in her sorrowful eyes, and in the gentle smile with which they greet the little children who run to her. A saint! She hears it whispered as she paces the chill, wax-smelling corridors. A saint! And visitors to the chapel are told of the nun whose voice is heard above the other voices, of her youth, her beauty, of her tragic, tragic love. "There is a man in this town whose life is ruined..."

A big bee, a golden furry flower, crept into a freesia, and the delicate flower leaned over, swung, shook; and when the bee flew away it fluttered still as though it were laughing. Happy, careless flower!

Sister Angela looked at it and said, "Now it is winter." One night, lying in her icy cell, she hears a cry. Some stray animal is out there in the garden, a kitten or a lamb or – well, whatever little animal might be there. Up rises the sleepless nun. All in white, shivering but fearless, she goes and brings it in. But next morning, when the bell rings for matins, she is found tossing in high fever... in delirium... and she never recovers. In three days all is over. The service has been said in the chapel, and she is buried in the corner of the cemetery reserved for the nuns, where there are plain little crosses of wood. Rest in Peace, Sister Angela...

Now it is evening. Two old people leaning on each other come slowly to the grave and kneel down sobbing, "Our daughter! Our only

daughter!" Now there comes another. He is all in black; he comes slowly. But when he is there and lifts his black hat, Edna sees to her horror his hair is snow-white. Jimmy! Too late, too late! The tears are running down his face; he is crying now. Too late, too late! The wind shakes leafless trees in the churchyard. He gives one awful bitter cry. Edna's black book fell with a thud to the garden path. She jumped up, her heart beating. My darling! No, it's not too late. It's all been a mistake, a terrible dream. Oh, that white hair! How could she have done it? She has not done it. Oh, heavens! Oh, what happiness! She is free, young, and nobody knows her secret. Everything is still possible for her and Jimmy. The house they have planned may still be built, the little solemn boy with his hands behind his back watching them plant the standard roses may still be born. His baby sister... But when Edna got as far as his baby sister, she stretched out her arms as though the little love came flying through the air to her, and gazing at the garden, at the white sprays on the tree, at those darling pigeons blue against the blue, and the Convent with its narrow windows, she realized that now at last for the first time in her life – she had never imagined any feeling like it before – she knew what it was to be in love, but – in – love!

#### Questions for Discussion

Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:

- 1 Judging by the title who do you expect the story to be about?
- 2 Is the situation described in the story typical of young people?

Ex. 2 Discover the narrative method and the plot structure of the story.

- 1 What narrative method does K. Mansfield choose to tell this story? What does she gain by it?
- 2 How is the story structured? Does the author gain or lose by leaving out the exposition?
- 3 What is the role of the description of nature in the story?
- 4 What is the basic conflict in the story?
- 5 What is contrasted in the story? Support your ideas by the text.
- 6 What is the climax of the story?

**Ex. 3 Analyze the means of characterization of the story, its tone and mood.**

- 1 Which means of characterization are employed by the writer?
- 2 How does the author manage to show all emotions and subtle changes in Edna's state of mind?
- 3 What helped Edna to solve the main conflict in her heart?
- 4 How does the author reflect the tone and mood of the story?
- 5 What makes the character real and convincing?
- 6 What impression does the story produce?

**Text 8 Squaring the Circle**

**O. Henry**

At the hazard of wearying youth this tale of vehement emotions must be prefaced by a discourse on geometry.

Nature moves in circles; Art in straight lines. The natural is rounded; the artificial is made up of angles. A man lost in the snow wanders, in spite of himself, in perfect circles; the city man's feet, denaturalized by rectangular streets and floors, carry him ever away from himself.

The round eyes of childhood typify innocence; the narrow line of the flirt's optic proves the invasion of art. The horizontal mouth is the mark of determined cunning; who has not read Nature's most spontaneous lyric in lips rounded for the candid kisses?

Beauty is Nature in perfection; circularity is its chief attribute. Behold the fool moon, the enchanting gold ball, the domes of splendid temples, the huckleberry pie, the wedding ring, the circus ring, the ring for the waiter, and the "round" of drinks.

On the other hand, straight lines show that Nature has been deflected. Imagine Venus's girdle transformed into a "straight front!"

When we began to move in straight lines and turn sharp corners our natures begin to change. The consequence is that Nature, being more adaptive than Art, tries to conform to its sterner regulations. The result is often a rather curious product – for instance: A prize chrysanthemum, wood alcohol whiskey, a Republican Missouri, cauliflower *au gratin*, and a New Yorker.

Nature is lost quickest in a big city. The cause is geometrical, not moral. The straight lines of its streets and architecture, the rectangularity of its

laws and social customs, the undeviating pavements, the hard, severe, depressing, uncompromising rules of all its ways – even of its recreation and sports – coldly exhibit a sneering defiance of the curved line of Nature.

Wherefore, it may be said that the big city has demonstrated the problem of squaring the circle. And it may be added that this mathematical introduction precedes an account of the fate of a Kentucky feud that was imported to the city that has a habit of making its importations conform to its angles.

The feud began the Cumberland Mountains between the Folwell and the Harkness families. The first victim of the homespun vendetta was a 'possum dog belonging to Bill Harkness. The Harkness family evened up this dire loss by laying out the chief of the Folwell clan. The Folwells were prompt at repartee. They oiled up their squirrel rifles and made it feasible for Bill Harkness to follow his dog to a land where the 'possums come down when treed without the stroke of an ax.

The feud flourished for forty years. Harkness were short at the plough, through their lamp-lit cabin windows, coming from camp-meetings, asleep, in duello, sober and otherwise, singly and in family groups, prepared and unprepared. Folwells had the branches of their family tree lopped off in similar ways, as the traditions of their country prescribed and authorized.

By and by the pruning left out a single member of each family. And then Cal Harkness, probably reasoning that further pursuance of the controversy would give a too decided personal flavor to the feud, suddenly disappeared from the relieved Cumberlands, baulking the avenging hand of Sam, the ultimate opposing Folwell.

A year afterward Sam Folwell learned that his hereditary, unsuppressed enemy was living in New York City. Sam turned over the big iron washpot in the yard, scrapped off some of the soot, which he mixed with lard and shined his boots with the compound. He put on his store clothes of butternut dyed black, a white shirt and collar, and packed a carpet-sack with Spartan *lingerie*. He took his squirrel rifle from its hooks, but put it back again with a sigh. However ethical and plausible the habit might be in the Cumberlands, perhaps New York would not swallow his pose of hunting squirrels among the skyscrapers along the Broadway. An ancient but reliable Colt's revolver that he resurrected from a bureau drawer seemed to proclaim itself the pink of weapons for metropolitan adventure and vengeance. This and a hunting-knife in a leather sheath, Sam packed in the carpet-sack. As he started, muleback, for the lowland railroad station the last Folwell turned in his saddle and looked grimly at the little cluster

of white-pine slabs in the clump of cedars that marked the Folwell burying-ground.

Sam Folwell arrived in New York in the night. Still moving and living in the free circles of nature, he did not perceive the formidable, pitiless, restless, fierce angels of the great city waiting in the dark to close about the rotundity of his heart and brain and mould him to the form of its millions of reshaped victims. A cabby picked him out of the whirl, as Sam himself had often picked a nut from a bed of wind-tossed autumn leaves, and whisked him away to a hotel commensurate to his boots and carpet-sack.

On the next morning the last of the Folwells made his sortie into the city that sheltered the last Harkness. The Colt was thrust beneath his coat and secured by a narrow leather belt; the hunting-knife hung between his shoulder-blades, with the half an inch below his coat collar. He knew this much — that Cal Harkness drove an express wagon somewhere in that town, and that he, Sam Folwell, had come to kill him. And as he stepped upon the sidewalk the red came into his eye and the feud-hate into his heart.

The clamor of the central avenues drew him thitherward. He had half expected to see Cal coming down the street in his shirt-sleeves with a jug and a whip in his hand, just as he would have seen him in Frankfort or Laurel City. But an hour went by and Cal did not appear. Perhaps he was waiting in ambush, to shoot him from a door or a window. Sam kept a sharp eye on doors and windows for a while.

About noon the city tired of playing with its mouse and suddenly squeezed him with its straight lines.

Sam Folwell stood where two great, rectangular arteries of the city cross. He looked four ways, and saw the world hurled from its orbit and reduced by spirit level and tape to an edged and cornered plane. All life moved on tracks, in grooves, according to system, within boundaries, by rote. The root of life was a cube root; the measure of existence was square measure. People streamed by in straight rows; the horrible din and crash stupefied him.

Sam leaned against the sharp corner of a stone building. Those faces passed him by thousands, and not one of them were turned toward him. A sudden foolish fear that he had died and was a spirit, and that they could not see him, seized him. And then the city smote him with loneliness.

A fat man dropped out of the stream and stood a few feet distant, waiting for his car. Sam crept to his side and shouted above the tumult into his ear:

"The Rankinses' hogs weighed more'n oorn a whole passel, but the mast in thar neighborhood was a fine chance better than what it was down—"

The fat man moved away unostentatiously, and bought roasted chestnuts to cover his alarm.

Sam felt the need of a drop of mountain dew. Across the street men passed in and out through swinging doors. Brief glimpses could be had of a glistening bar and its bedeckings. The feudist crossed and essayed to enter. Again had Art eliminated the familiar circle. Sam's hand found no door-knob — it slid, in vain, over a rectangular brass plate and polished oak with nothing even so large as a pin's head upon which his fingers might close.

Abashed, reddened, heartbroken, he walked away from the bootless door and sat upon a step. A locust club tickled him in the ribs.

"Take a walk for yourself," said the policeman. "You've been loafing around here long enough."

At the next corner a shrill whistle sounded in Sam's ear. He wheeled around and saw a black-browed villain scowling at him over peanuts heaped on a steaming machine. He started across the street. An immense engine, running without mules, with the voice of a bull and the smell of a smoky lamp, whizzed past, grazing his knee. A cab-driver bumped him with a hub and explained to him that kind words were invented to be used on other occasions. A motorman clanged the bell wildly and, for once in his life, corroborated a cab-driver. A large lady in a changeable silk waist dug an elbow into his back, and a newsy pensively pelted him with banana rinds, murmuring, "I hates to do it — but if anybody seen me let it pass!"

Cal Harkness, his day's work over and his express wagon stabled, turned the sharp edge of the building that, by the cheek of architects, is modelled upon a safety razor. Out of the mass of hurrying people his eye picked up, three yards away, the surviving bloody and implacable foe of his kith and kin.

He stopped short and wavered for a moment, being unarmed and sharply surprised. But the keen mountaineer's eye of Sam Folwell had picked him out.

There was a sudden spring, a ripple in the steam of passers-by and the sound of Sam's voice crying:

"Howdy, Cal! I'm durned glad to see ye."

And in the angles of Broadway, Fifth Avenue, and Twenty-third Street the Cumberland feudist shook hands.

## Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1** While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:

- 1 What words are repeated in the story? What is the meaning of it?
- 2 What is the time-span of the story?
- 3 What symbolizes Good and Evil?

**Ex. 2** Discover the narrative method of the story.

- 1 What is the role of the digression, the so-called "geometrical discourse" at the beginning of the story? Are there other digressions in the story?
- 2 What does the writer gain by giving the narrator's vision of the characters and events?
- 3 What literary representational forms are there in the story?
- 4 What is implied in the contrast between the natural, circular and the artificial, rectangular?
- 5 What is the message of the story?
- 6 Why did the author personify New York? Find examples in the story.

**Ex. 3** Analyze the means of characterization and the plot structure of the story.

- 1 What means of characterization are employed by the writer?
- 2 What made two young men feuds?
- 3 What struck Sam Folwell in the big city?
- 4 Why was he so glad to see Cal Harkness, though he had come to New York to kill him?
- 5 Why the names of streets are given in the last sentence of the story?
- 6 What conflicts are there in the story?
- 7 What are the functions of the setting?
- 8 What is the climax of the story? What changes in the psychological state of the main character let to it?
- 9 Is the problem raised on the story actual nowadays?

## Text 9 The Case for the Defence

Graham Green

It was the strangest murder trial I ever attended. They named it the Peckham murder in the Headlines, though Northwood Street, where the old woman was found battered to death, was not strictly speaking in Peckham. This was not one of those cases of circumstantial evidence in which you feel the jurymen's anxiety – because mistakes *have* been made – like domes of silence muting the court. No, this murderer was all but found with the body: no one present when the Crown counsel outlined his case believed that the man in the dock stood any chance at all.

He was a heavy stout man with building bloodshot eyes. All his muscles seemed to be in his thighs. Yes, an ugly customer, one you wouldn't forget in a hurry – and that was an important point because the Crown proposed to call four witnesses who hadn't forgotten him, who had seen hurrying him away from the little red villa in Northwood Street. The clock had just struck two in the morning.

Mrs. Salmon in 15 Northwood Street had been unable to sleep: she heard a door click shut and thought it was her own gate. So she went to the window and saw Adams (that was his name) on the steps of Mrs. Parker's house. He had just come out and he was wearing gloves. He had a hammer in his hand and she saw him drop it into the laurel bushes by the front gate. But before he moved away, he had looked up – at her window. The fatal instinct that tells a man when he is watched exposed him in the light of a street-lamp to her gaze – his eyes suffused with horrifying and brutal fear, like an animal's when you raise a whip. I talked afterwards to Mrs. Salmon, who naturally after the astonishing verdict went in fear herself. As I imagine did all the witnesses – Henry MacDougall, who had been driving home from Benfleet late and nearly ran Adams down at the corner of Northwood Street. Adams was walking in the middle of the road looking dazed. And old Mr. Wheeler, who lived next door to Mrs. Parker, at No. 12, and was wakened by a noise – like a chair falling – through the thin-as-paper villa wall, and got up and looked out of the window, just as Mrs. Salmon had done, saw Adams's back and, as he turned, those bulging eyes. In Laurel Avenue he had been seen by yet another witness – his luck was badly out; he might as well have committed the crime in broad daylight.

"I understand," the counsel said, "that the defence purposes to plead mistaken identity. Adams's wife will tell you that he was with her at two in the morning on February 14, but after you have heard the witnesses for the

Crown and examined carefully the features of the prisoner, I do not think you will be prepared to admit the possibility of a mistake."

It was all over, you would have said, but the hanging.

After the formal evidence had been given by the policeman who had found the body and the surgeon who examined it, Mrs. Salmon was called. She was the ideal witness, with the slight Scotch accent and her expression of honesty, care and kindness.

The counsel for the Crown brought the story gently out. She spoke very firmly. There was no malice in her, and no sense of importance at standing there in the Central Criminal Court with a judge in scarlet hanging on her words and the reporters writing them down. Yes, she said, and then she had gone downstairs and rung up the police station.

"And do you see the man here in court?"

She looked straight at the big man in the dock, who stared hard at her with his pekingese eyes without emotion.

"Yes," she said, "there he is."

"You are quite certain?"

She said simply, "I couldn't be mistaken, sir."

It was all as easy as that.

"Thank you, Mrs. Salmon."

Counsel for the defence rose to cross-examine. If you had reported as many murder trials as I have, you would have known beforehand what line he would take. And I was right, up to a point.

"Now, Mrs. Salmon, you must remember that a man's life may depend on your evidence."

"I do remember it, sir."

"Is your eye-sight good?"

"I have never had to wear spectacles, sir."

"You are a woman of fifty-five?"

"Fifty-six, sir."

"And the man you saw was on the other side of the road?"

"Yes, sir."

"And it was two o'clock in the morning. You must have remarkable eyes, Mrs. Salmon?"

"No, sir. There was moonlight, and when the man looked up, he had the lamplight on his face."

"And you have no doubt whatever that the man you saw is the prisoner?"

I couldn't make out what he was at. He couldn't have expected any other answer than the one he got.

"None whatever, sir. It isn't a face one forgets."

Counsel took a look round the court for a moment. Then he said, "Do you mind, Mrs. Salmon, examining again the people in court? No, not the prisoner. Stand up, please, Mr. Adams," and there at the back of the court with thick stout body and muscular legs and a pair of bulging eyes, was the exact image of the man in the dock. He was even dressed the same – tight blue suit and striped tie.

"Now think very carefully, Mrs. Salmon. Can you still swear that the man you saw drop the hammer in Mrs. Parker's garden was the prisoner – and not this man, who is his twin brother?"

Of course she couldn't. She looked from one to the other and didn't say a word.

There the big brute sat in the dock with his legs crossed, and there he stood too at the back of the court and they both stared at Mrs. Salmon. She shook her head.

What we saw then was the end of the case. There wasn't a witness prepared to swear that it was the prisoner he'd seen. And the brother? He had his alibi, too; he was with his wife.

And so the man was acquitted for lack of evidence. But whether – if he did the murder and not his brother – he was punished or not, I don't know. That extraordinary day had an extraordinary end. I followed Mrs. Salmon out of court and we got wedged in the crowd who were waiting, of course, for the twins. The police tried to drive the crowd away, but all they could do was keep the road-way clear for traffic. I learned later that they tried to get the twins to leave by a back way, but they wouldn't. One of them – no one knew which – said, "I've been acquitted, haven't I?" and they walked bang out of the front entrance. Then it happened. I don't know how, though I was only six feet away. The crowd moved and somehow one of the twins got pushed on to the road right in front of a bus.

He gave a squeal like a rabbit and that was all; he was dead, his skull smashed just as Mrs. Parker's had been. Divine vengeance? I wish I knew. There was the other Adams getting on his feet from beside the body and looking straight over at Mrs. Salmon. He was crying, but whether he was the murderer or the innocent man nobody will ever be able to tell. But if you were Mrs. Salmon could you sleep at night?

## Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:**

- 1 Was this murder a well-known one? Has it aroused great public interest?
- 2 Does the title prompt you the theme of the story?
- 3 How do you understand the saying "Crime never pays"?

**Ex. 2 Analyze the character-images of the story.**

- 1 What have you learnt about the murder and the murderer?
- 2 What alibi did Mr. Adams try to give?
- 3 Who gave formal evidence before the witnesses were asked?
- 4 Who was the main character compared with? Find the lines in the story.
- 5 Why was Mrs. Salmon called an ideal witness?
- 6 What fact did the counsel for the defence insist on while putting questions to Mrs. Salmon?
- 7 Comment on the sentences: "He might as well have committed the crime in broad daylight."; "That extraordinary day had an extraordinary end."

**Ex. 3 Discover the plot structure.**

- 1 Does the story begin with the enigma? How is it created?
- 2 What span of time does the story cover?
- 3 What atmosphere does the setting create?
- 4 What is the climax of the story? How is it intensified?
- 5 Comment on the rhetorical question at the very end of the story.

**Ex. 4 Analyze the narrative method of the story.**

- 1 What does the writer attain by a first-person narration?
- 2 What role does the narrator play in the story?
- 3 What form is the story presented in: dramatic or pictorial, or both?
- 4 What speech forms does the author resort to? What does he gain by them?

## Tonal System

### Text 10 The Night the Bed Fell

**James Thurber**

I suppose that the high-water mark of my youth in Columbus, Ohio, was the night the bed fell on my father. It makes a better recitation (unless, as some friends of mine have said, one has heard it five or six times) than it does a piece of writing, for it is almost necessary to throw furniture around, shake doors, and bark like a dog, to lend the proper atmosphere and verisimilitude to what is admittedly a somewhat incredible tale, it did take place.

It happened, then, that my father had decided to sleep in the attic one night, to be away where he could think. My mother opposed the notion strongly because, she said, the old wooden bed up there was unsafe — it was wobbly and the heavy headboard would crash down on father's head in case the bed fell, and kill him. There was no dissuading him, however, and at a quarter past ten he closed the attic door behind him and went up the narrow twisting stairs. We later heard ominous creakings as he crawled into bed. Grandfather, who usually slept in the attic bed when he was with us, had disappeared some days before. (On these occasions he was usually gone six or seven days and returned glowing and out of temper, with the news that the federal Union was run by a passel of blockheads and that the Army of the Potomac didn't have any more chance than a fiddler's bitch.)

We had visiting us at this time a nervous first cousin of mine named Briggs Beall, who believed that he was likely to cease breathing when he was asleep. It was his feeling that if he were not awakened every hour during the night, he might die of suffocation. He had been accustomed to setting an alarm clock to ring at intervals until morning, but I persuaded him to abandon this. He slept in my room and I told him that I was such a light sleeper that if anyone quit breathing in the same room with me, I would wake instantly. He tested me the first night—which I had suspected he would—by holding his breath after my regular breathing had convinced him I was asleep. I was not asleep, however, and called to him. This seemed to allay his fears a little, but he took the precaution of putting a glass of spirits of camphor on a little table at the head of his bed. In case I didn't arouse him until he was almost gone, he said, he would sniff the camphor, a powerful reviver.

Briggs was not the only member of his family who had his crotchets. Old Aunt Clarissa Beall (who could whistle like a man, with two fingers in her mouth) suffered under the premonition that she was destined to die on South High Street, because she had been born on South High Street and married on South High Street. Then there was Aunt Sarah Shoaf, who never went to bed at night without the fear that a burglar was going to get in and blow chloroform under her door through a tube. To avert this calamity—for she was in greater dread of anesthetics than of losing her household goods—she always piled her money, silverware, and other valuables in a neat stack just outside her bedroom, with a note reading: "This is all I have. Please take it and do not use your chloroform, as this is all I have." Aunt Gracie Shoaf also had a burglar phobia, but she met it with more fortitude. She was confident that burglars had been getting into her house every night for forty years. The fact that she never missed anything was to her no proof to the contrary. She always claimed that she scared them off before they could take anything, by throwing shoes down the hallway. When she went to bed she piled, where she could get at them handily, all the shoes there were about her house. Five minutes after she had turned off the light, she would sit up in bed and say "Hark!" Her husband, who had learned to ignore the whole situation as long ago as 1903, would either be sound asleep or pretend to be sound asleep. In either case he would not respond to her tugging and pulling, so that presently she would arise, tiptoe to the door, open it slightly and heave a shoe down the hall in one direction and its mate down the hall in the other direction. Some nights she threw them all, some nights only a couple of pairs.

But I am straying from the remarkable incidents that took place during the night that the bed fell on father. By midnight we were all in bed. The layout of the rooms and the disposition of their occupants is important to an understanding of what later occurred. In the front room upstairs (just under father's attic bedroom) were my mother and my brother Herman, who sometimes sang in his sleep, usually "Marching Through Georgia" or "Onward, Christian Soldiers." Briggs Beall and myself were in a room adjoining this one. My brother Roy was in a room across the hall from ours. Our bull terrier, Rex, slept in the hall.

My bed was an iron cot, one of those affairs which are made wide enough to sleep on comfortably only by putting up, flat with the middle section, the two sides which ordinarily hang down like the sideboards of a drop-leaf table. When these sides are up, it is perilous to roll too far toward the edge, for then the cot is likely to tip completely over, bringing the

whole bed down on top of one with a tremendous banging crash. This, in fact, is precisely what happened, about two o'clock in the morning. (It was my mother who, in recalling the scene later, first referred to it as "the night the bed fell on your father.")

Always a deep sleeper, slow to arouse (I had lied to Briggs), I was at first unconscious of what had happened when the iron cot rolled me onto the floor and toppled over on me. It left me still warmly bundled up and unhurt, for the bed rested above me like a canopy. Hence I did not wake up, only reached the edge of consciousness and went back. The racket, however, instantly awakened my mother, in the next room, who came to the immediate conclusion that her worst dread was realized: the big wooden bed upstairs had fallen on father. She therefore screamed, "Let's go to your poor father!" It was this shout, rather than the noise of my cot falling, that awakened my brother Herman, in the same room with her. He thought that mother had become, for no apparent reason, hysterical. "You're all right, mamma!" he shouted, trying to calm her. They exchanged shout for shout for perhaps ten seconds: "Let's go to your poor father!" and "You're all right!" That woke up Briggs. By this time I was conscious of what was going on, in a vague way, but did not yet realize that I was under my bed instead of on it. Briggs, awakening in the midst of loud shouts of fear and apprehension, came to the quick conclusion that he was suffocating and that we were all trying to "bring him out." With a low moan, he grasped the glass of camphor at the head of his bed and instead of sniffing it poured it over himself. The room reeked of camphor. "Ugh, ugh!" choked Briggs, like a drowning man, for he had almost succeeded in stopping his breath under the deluge of pungent spirits. He leaped out of bed and groped toward the open window, but he came up against one that was closed. With his hand, he beat out the glass, and I could hear it crash and tinkle in the alleyway below. It was at this juncture that I, in trying to get up, had the uncanny sensation of feeling my bed above me! Foggy with sleep, I now suspected, in my turn, that the whole uproar was being made in a frantic endeavor to extricate me from what must be an unheard-of and perilous situation. "Get me out of this!" I bawled. "Get me out!" I think I had the nightmarish belief that I was entombed in a mine. "Ugh!" gasped Briggs, floundering in his camphor.

By the time my mother, still shouting, pursued by Herman, still shouting, was trying to open the door to the attic, in order to go up and get my father's body out of the wreckage. The door was stuck, however, and wouldn't yield. Her frantic pulls on it only added to the general banging



and confusion. Roy and the dog were now up, the one shouting questions, the other barking.

Father, farthest away and soundest sleeper of all, had by this time been awakened by the battering on the attic door. He decided that the house was on fire. "I'm coming, I'm coming!" he wailed in a slow, sleepy voice—it took him many minutes to regain full consciousness. My mother, still believing he was caught under the bed, detected in his "I'm coming!" the mournful, resigned note of one who is preparing to meet his Maker. "He's dying!" she shouted.

"I'm all right!" Briggs yelled, to reassure her. "I'm all right!" He still believed that it was his own closeness to death that was worrying mother. I found at last the light switch in my room, unlocked the door, and Briggs and I joined the others at the attic door. The dog, who never did like Briggs, jumped for him—assuming that he was the culprit in whatever was going on—and Roy had to throw Rex and hold him. We could hear father crawling out of bed upstairs. Roy pulled the attic door open, with a mighty jerk, and father came down the stairs, sleepy and irritable but safe and sound. My mother began to weep when she saw him. Rex began to howl. "What in the name of God is going on here?" asked father.

The situation was finally put together like a gigantic jigsaw puzzle. Father caught a cold from prowling around in his bare feet but there were no other bad results. "I'm glad," said mother, who always looked on the bright side of things, "that your grandfather wasn't here."

### Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:**

- 1 Does J. Thurber exhibit an excellent feel for humour? Which part of the story is the most humorous?
- 2 How is the humour achieved? Does it depend much on the language?

**Ex. 2 Discover the means of characterization of the story.**

- 1 Who are the major characters?
- 2 Which of the characters seem to be eccentric and funny? Why?
- 3 What means of characterization did the author use in developing the major character?

- 4 Who are the minor characters? What makes them amusing?
- 5 Are the characters well-developed, complex or simple?

**Ex. 3 Analyze the attitude and the tone of the story.**

- 1 Does the author ridicule social vices? Or does he poke fun at absurd situations which people take too much to learn?
- 2 Does the tone accord with the homely theme of the story?
- 3 Do the stylistic devices contribute to the familiar tone or not?
- 4 How effectively did the author use words which appeal to the senses—sight, hearing, touch and smell?
- 5 Does the narrator often resort to direct speech? What effect does it produce? Does it intrude with his narrative?
- 6 What do the emotionally coloured words add to the humour of the story?
- 7 What stylistic devices produce a humorous tone?
- 8 Is the humour of the story developed through ridiculous situations and comical personages?
- 9 Does the author amuse the reader by giving the situations unexpected absurd turns?

**Ex. 4 Define the narrative method and the plot structure used in the story.**

- 1 What did the author gain by having the story told by a first-person narrator?
- 2 Did he manage to turn the limitations of the narrative type into an advantage? How?
- 3 Is the sequencing of events in the narrative chronological?
- 4 What effect do the digressions from the narrative produce?
- 5 What makes the narrative sound credible, as a first-hand testimony?
- 6 What other devices did the author use to create verisimilitude?
- 7 What is the exposition of the story?
- 8 What started the uproar in the family?
- 9 What did the mother think had happened?
- 10 What various events complicated the situation?
- 11 What is the climax of the story?

## Text 11 The Name

Henry Cecil

"GEORGE ELEPHANT!" called the Clerk in Court Number One; and a small man with glasses was brought.

"Are you George Elephant?" asked the Clerk.

"I am."

"You are charged with murder: that you at Golders Green in the 19<sup>th</sup> day of January 1948 murdered Jane Elephant. How say you, George Elephant, are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty."

"Very well," said the Judge. "You may sit down."

Except for a few remarks on the curious name of the prisoner, few people were interested in the case. The facts as stated were very simple. On the 20<sup>th</sup> January the prisoner had walked into a police station, "I have cut my wife's throat," he said. "She's quite dead."

It seemed true enough. Her throat seemed to have been cut down with a razor which was near her body.

No defence was put forward at the police court. It seemed a clear case. The prisoner was, however, later defended by Sir Gordon Macintosh, who seldom accepted facts as they seemed. He never accepted more than one case at a time and he went into that case very thoroughly indeed. These are the facts that he discovered about George Elephant.

George was born of ordinary middle-class parents at the end of the nineteenth century. There was no sign of madness in the family. On leaving school George had gone into his father's business, and after that he had married and settled down to an ordinary life. Jane was not a particularly attractive wife. Although she was pretty, she grew fat as she grew older. She took a good deal of pleasure in laughing at George, and one of the subjects of which she never seemed to get tired was his last name. George was a little ashamed of his name, but he had never had the courage to change it.

I have known a man called Sidebottom very reasonably change his name to Edgedale when he had grown impatient of the telephone calls of jokers.

Usually, however, the owners of unfortunate names just bear them. George had certainly suffered a great deal. When the first went to school and was asked his name in front of the other boys, he replied "George Elephant."

"Olliphant?" said the master.

"No, sir, Elephant."

"What, Elephant? Like the animals?"

"Yes, sir, like the animals."

After that at school he was called by the names of all known, and some unknown, animals. George was modest, and boys at school are merciless. He was not happy there and was thankful when he left. But his troubles did not end when he left school. Like Mr. Sidebottom, he received many calls from the people who have nothing better to do than to use the telephone as a means of annoyance.

You Smiths and Robinsons, who have never suffered in this way, may smile. These unwelcome attentions from impolite strangers may seem to you unimportant. But change your name to a foolish one – even for two weeks – and see what happens to you. Some of the Elephant family did, in fact, change their name to Olliphant; but George's father said that what was good enough for his father was also good enough for him. He kept the name Elephant.

George, indeed, had no pride in his name but, for no exact reason, was unwilling to change it. So he suffered the smiles of shopgirls when he gave his name, and the continual jokes of the people on the telephone. He even thought of giving up the telephone, but he needed it and so he kept it.

When he married Jane he had hoped she would make his difficulties lighter. But Jane did not mind being called Elephant; in fact she told everyone her new name, particularly if her husband was near. Even when she was being loved she used to call him "my elephant boy", and so he was not allowed to forget.

When Sir Gordon Macintosh had discovered these facts, he had no doubt at all of the proper defence to raise in the court. He immediately had George examined by famous doctors. He claimed that either the prisoner had been driven mad by his early sufferings and his wife's behaviour; or that he had entirely lost control of himself.

In putting forward the defence of madness he did not say that the prisoner had imagined he was really an elephant. He simply said that the man's mind had given way. It was proved that George was a quiet little man who had never offered violence to anyone. Relations and friends said that his behaviour towards his wife was without fault.

"Why," said Sir Gordon, "should this mild little man kill his wife unless he was mad? I listened to all your names as they were read out in court. You will pardon me if I say that they were all ordinary names. How happy

you must be that they are. I do not, however, ask you to find the prisoner not guilty out of thankfulness or pity. I ask you to listen to the words of famous doctors. They will tell you that the mind of the prisoner has been affected from his earliest childhood by this extraordinary name. These doctors have discovered that the boy's nurses and teacher used to make him angry by laughing at his name. At that time he probably did not know the fact, but the effect on his mind was increased by the boys at school, by those whom he met in business, by jokers, and finally by his unfortunate wife. These doctors are ready to say that, in their opinion, the mind of the accused man may have been in such a state that he was not, at the time when he killed his wife, fully responsible for his actions."

Sir Gordon said much more of the same kind and then called his witnesses. The doctors said that the accused was not mad, but that his mind was very much affected by jokes about his name. They thought that he would not have killed his wife if a policeman had been in the room at the time. They agreed that he realized that it was wrong to kill a wife. But the doctors for the defence said that the prisoner might have been made so angry by his wife's jokes that he could not control himself.

George was not found guilty of murder, but he was sent to prison with hard labour for seven years. That, however, was not the end of the matter, because the case by this time caused great public interest.

A law was suggested to make it a serious offence to use the telephone for making jokes about names. Letters were written to the newspapers by those who had unusual names. Doctors wrote articles, and the case of George Elephant became quite famous. In the end, so much sympathy was shown for George and so much pressure was put on the Government, that George's time in prison was reduced from seven years to three. This meant that George would be set free after a little more than two years if he behaved himself well.

Two years later, just before he was let out, a priest arrived at the prison where George was. He had a talk with George.

"Before you leave," said the visitor, "would you like to say anything to me in secret, so that you may feel, when you leave these walls, that you are starting life again with a clean soul?"

George hesitated. "You can trust me, you know," said the man. "And I feel that there may be something – even something quite small – that is a load on your mind. Perhaps you would like to lay down the load, and perhaps I can help you. Start telling me in your own words the story of your crime; for although there may have been an excuse for it, it was a

crime. Tell me, for example, what was it that actually led you to kill your wife?"

"Well, as a matter of fact," said George, "I was fond of another woman."

### Questions for Discussion

#### Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following

##### questions:

- 1 Why did it seem a clear case and why wasn't any defence put at the police court?
- 2 Why was George unwilling to change his name?
- 3 Why did people laugh at his last name?
- 4 Do you share the idea that a "foolish" name can spoil the whole life?

#### Ex. 2 Define the attitude and the tone of the story.

- 1 What atmosphere is created in the story? How does the setting help in this?
- 2 What specific words and phrases convey the atmosphere?
- 3 Are there any examples of humour or irony? Prove your opinion by the text.
- 4 Does the reader feel the author's attitude to the main problem raised in the story?

#### Ex. 3 Analyze the message and the means of characterization given in the story.

1. What is the message of the story and through what character is it conveyed?
2. What means of characterization are used in the story?
3. Why are all the letters of the main character's name and surname capitalized?
4. How do you characterize George Elephant by the fact that he was unwilling to change his name?
5. Can you give any other speaking names in the story?

#### Ex. 4 Analyze the plot structure and the narrative method of the story.

- 1 Are all the components of the plot structure preserved in the story? If not, give reasons for their omission.
- 2 Is the end of the story unpredictable? Were you impressed by it?
- 3 Are there any digressions in the story and what is their role?
- 4 Is there any enigma in the story?
- 5 What type of the narrator is used in the story?
- 6 What does the author gain by using such type of the narrator?

**Ex. 5 Read the following article and answer the following questions:**

- 1 What do you expect the article to be judging by its title?
- 2 What opinions concerning the role of a name are expressed in the article?
- 3 What do you think of the role of a name in a person's life?
- 4 Does the main idea of the story "The Name" coincide with the ideas expressed in the article?

#### **All in the Name**

The 54-year-old undertaker isn't merely being friendly when he tells the bereaved to call him by his first name. Cramer J. Stiff is a licensed cemetery, certified grief counselor and marketing director for Mount Rose Cemetery in York, Pa.

"Most people think of me as Mr. Cramer," he says. "Some people never know."

What's in a name? Plenty, if it turns out to be your lot in life. Business ought to be brisk for a hair-dresser named Barbara Trimmer or for a chef named Susan Spicer. Life should be a song for Daniel Harp, who teaches music.

But no. Talk to some of the aptly named — people like Bob Crooks, a used-car salesman in Illinois — and you discover that being saddled with a vocationally appropriate or, in Crook's case, a slyly judgmental name, isn't necessarily a blessing.

"Consciously or subconsciously, they've got the essence of branding," says Alan Brew, a partner in a corporate-brand consulting firm.

C. Martin Lawyer, III, a legal-aid in Tampa, Fla, tries to deflect the inevitable question before clients can even ask it: "Yes, I am an attorney. And, yes, Lawyer is my real name."

Even with that prologue, some clients still don't get it. One called his office demanding to speak to her attorney. When the secretary asked for a name, the annoyed woman said: "He won't tell me his real name. He makes me call him Mr. Lawyer."

Chris Roach, an inspector with Terminix, the pest-control company, recalls the time a customer accused him of lying about his name. She told the Sterling, Va., man that he'd "better be on the level" and bring identification, or he would be greeted by a vicious dog and a shotgun.

For Roach, however, the main occupational hazard is lame humour. "People are always asking if I'm bringing the problem," he says. "I say if you have to deal with a roach my size, you need a net."

R. Bruce Money, a business professor at the University of South Carolina and a former banker, says he doesn't use his first name, Richard, because people might start calling him Rich Money. "Everyone asks me how to spell it," he says. "And I ask, how do you spell money? It's money as in bread, dough — that stuff in your wallet!"

Is it tempting to legally change a troublesome name?

No way, sniffs John M. Hamburger, who says his family name predates the sandwich. But it is his fate to be president of a restaurant-consulting and publishing firm in Roseville, Minn. And though he can trace his lineage back several generations to Germany, some people still break into nervous giggles when he makes business calls on restaurant companies.

Are people with unusual monikers drawn to professions that suit their names? Lewis P. Lipsitt, a child psychologist and Brown University professor whose hobby is collecting names that fit, says he believes something is at work subconsciously. Beginning in childhood, having an unusual last name "could easily become a repeated reminder of an interest that, by golly, could eventually become yours," Lipsitt says.

But over and over again, people say their careers are just a coincidence. Larry Bone, an orthopedic surgeon, and Shawn Buckless, a university fund-raiser, both agree that their names didn't influence what they chose to do for a living.

Roach says the name-job connection might seem fishy, but it's just a fluke. Still, both his mother and his brother also work for Terminix. "Destiny," he says, "works in strange ways."

*(Taken from Reader's Digest)*

## Text 12 The Story-Teller

Saki (H. H. Munro)

It was a hot afternoon, and the railway carriage was correspondingly sultry, and the next stop was at Templecombe, nearly an hour ahead. The occupants of the carriage were a small girl, and a smaller girl, and a small boy. An aunt belonging to the children occupied one corner seat, and the further corner seat on the opposite side was occupied by a bachelor who was a stranger to their party, but the small girls and the small boy emphatically occupied the compartment. Both the aunt and the children were conversational in a limited, persistent way, reminding one of the attentions of a housefly that refused to be discouraged. Most of the aunt's remarks seemed to begin with "Don't," and nearly all of the children's remarks began with "Why?" The bachelor said nothing out loud.

"Don't Cyril, don't," exclaimed the aunt, as the small boy began smacking the cushions of the seat, producing a cloud of dust at each blow.

"Come and look out of the window," she added.

The child moved reluctantly to the window. "Why are those sheep being driven out of that field?" he asked.

"I expect they are being driven to another field where there is more grass," said the aunt weakly.

"But there is lots of grass in that field," protested the boy; "There's nothing else but grass there. Aunt, there's lots of grass in that field."

"Perhaps the grass in the other field is better," suggested the aunt fatuously.

"Why is it better?" came the swift, inevitable question.

"Oh, look at those cows!" exclaimed the aunt. Nearly every field along the line had contained cows or bullocks, but she spoke as though she were drawing attention to a rarity.

"Why is the grass in the other field better?" persisted Cyril.

The frown on the bachelor's face was deepening to a scowl. He was a hard, unsympathetic man, the aunt decided in her mind. She was utterly unable to come to any satisfactory decision about the grass in the other field.

The smaller girl created a diversion by beginning to recite "On the Road to Mandalay." She only knew the first line, but she put her limited knowledge to the fullest possible use. She repeated the line over and over again in a dreamy but resolute and very audible voice; it seemed to the bachelor as though someone had had a bet with her that she could not

repeat the line aloud two thousand times without stopping. Whoever it was who had made the wager was likely to lose his bet.

"Come over here and listen to a story," said the aunt, when the bachelor had looked twice at her and once at the communication cord.

The children moved listlessly towards the aunt's end of the carriage. Evidently her reputation as a story-teller did not rank high in their estimation.

In a low, confidential voice, interrupted at frequent intervals by loud, petulant questions from her listeners, she began an unenterprising and deplorably uninteresting story about a little girl who was good, and made friends with everyone on account of her goodness, and was finally saved from a mad bull by a number of rescuers who admired her moral character.

"Wouldn't they have saved her if she hadn't been good?" demanded the bigger of the small girls. It was exactly the question that the bachelor had wanted to ask.

"Well, yes," admitted the aunt lamely, "but I don't think they would have run quite so fast to help her if they had not liked her so much."

"It's the stupidest story I've ever heard," said the bigger of the small girls, with immense conviction.

"I didn't listen after the first bit, it was so stupid," said Cyril.

The smaller girl made an actual comment on the story, but she had long ago recommenced a murmured repetition of her favourite line.

"You don't seem to be a success as a story-teller," said the bachelor suddenly from his corner.

The aunt bristled in instant defense of this unexpected attack.

"It's very difficult thing to tell stories that children can both understand and appreciate," she said stiffly.

"I don't agree with you," said the bachelor.

"Perhaps *you* would like to tell them a story," was the aunt's retort.

"Tell us a story," demanded the bigger of the small girls.

"Once upon a time," began the bachelor, "there was a little girl called Bertha, who was extraordinary good."

The children's momentarily-aroused interest began at once to flicker; all stories seemed dreadfully alike, no matter who told them.

"She did all that she was told, she was always truthful, she kept her clothes clean, ate milk puddings as though they were jam tarts, learned her lessons perfectly, and was polite in her manners."

"Was she pretty?" asked the bigger of the small girls.

"Not as pretty as any of you," said the bachelor, "but she was horribly good."

There was a wave of reaction in favour of the story; the word *horrible* in connection with goodness was a novelty that commended itself. It seemed to introduce a ring of truth that was absent from the aunt's tales of infant life.

"She was so good," continued the bachelor, "that she won several medals for goodness, which she always wore, pinned on to her dress. There was a medal for obedience, another medal for punctuality, and a third for good behaviour. They were large metal medals and they clicked against one another as she walked. No other child in the town where she lived had as many as three medals, so everybody knew that she must be an extra good child."

"Horribly good," quoted Cyril.

"Everybody talked about her goodness, and the Prince of the country got to hear about it, and he said that as she was very good she might be allowed once a week to walk in his park, which was just outside the town. It was a beautiful park, and no children were ever allowed in it, so it was a great honour for Bertha to be allowed to go there."

"Were there any sheep in the park?" demanded Cyril.

"No," said the bachelor, "there were no sheep."

"Why weren't there any sheep?" came the inevitable question arising out of the answer.

The aunt permitted herself a smile, which might almost have been described as a grin.

"There were no sheep in the park," said the bachelor, "because the Prince's mother had once had a dream that her son would either be killed by a sheep or else by a clock falling on him. For that reason the Prince never kept a sheep in his park or a clock in his palace."

The aunt suppressed a gasp of admiration.

"Was the Prince killed by a sheep or by a clock?" asked Cyril.

"He is still alive so we can't tell whether the dream will come true," said the bachelor unconcernedly; "anyway, there were no sheep in the park, but there were lots of little pigs running all over the place."

"What colour were they?"

"Black with white faces, white with black spots, black all over, grey with white patches, and some were white all over."

The story-teller paused to let a full idea of the park's treasures sink onto the children's imaginations; then he resumed:

"Bertha was rather sorry to find that there were no flowers in the park. She had promised her aunts, with tears in her eyes, that she would not pick any of the kind Prince's flowers, and she had meant to keep her promise, so of course it made her feel silly to find that there were no flowers to pick."

"Why weren't there any flowers?"

"Because the pigs had eaten them all," said the bachelor promptly. "The gardeners had told the Prince that you couldn't have pigs and flowers, so he decided to have pigs and no flowers."

There was a murmur of approval at the excellence of the Prince's decision; so many people would have decided the other way.

"There were lots of other delightful things in the park. There were ponds with gold and blue and green fish in them, and trees with beautiful parrots that said clever things at a moment's notice, and humming birds that hummed all the popular tunes of the day. Bertha walked up and down and enjoyed herself immensely, and thought to herself: 'If I were not so extraordinarily good I should not have been allowed to come into this beautiful park and enjoy all that there is to be seen in it,' and her three medals clinked against one another as she walked and helped to remind her how very good she really was. Just then an enormous wolf came prowling into the park to see if it could catch a fat little pig for its supper."

"What colour was it?" asked the children, amid an immediate quickening of interest.

"Mud-colour all over, with a black tongue and pale grey eyes that gleamed with unspeakable ferocity. The first thing that it saw in the park was Bertha; her pinafore was so spotless white and clean that it could be seen from a great distance. Bertha saw the wolf and saw that it was stealing towards her, and she began to wish that she had never been allowed to come into the park. She ran as hard as she could, and the wolf came after her with huge leaps and bounds. She managed to reach a shrubbery of myrtle bushes and she hid herself in one of the thickets of the bushes. The wolf came sniffing among the branches, its black tongue lolling out of its mouth and its pale grey eyes glaring with rage. Bertha was terribly frightened, and thought to herself: 'If I had not been so extraordinarily good I should have been safe in the town at this moment.' However, the scent of the myrtle was so strong that the wolf could not sniff out where Bertha was hiding, and the bushes were so thick that he might have hunted about in them for a long time without catching sight of her, so he thought he might as well go off and catch a little pig instead. Bertha was trembling

very much at having the wolf prowling and sniffing so near her, and as she trembled the medal for obedience clinked against the medal for good conduct and punctuality. The wolf was just moving away when he heard the sound of the medals clinking and stopped to listen; they clinked again in a bush quite near him. He dashed into the bush, his pale grey eyes gleaming with ferocity and triumph, and dragged Bertha out and devoured her to the last morsel. All that were left of her were her shoes, bits of clothing, and the three medals for goodness."

"Were any of the little pigs killed?"

"No, they all escaped."

"The story began badly," said the smaller of the small girls, "but it had a beautiful ending."

"It is the most beautiful story that I ever heard," said the bigger of the small girls, with immense decision.

"It is the *only* beautiful story I have ever heard," said Cyril.

A dissentient opinion came from the aunt.

"A most improper story to tell to young children! You have undermined the effect of years of careful teaching."

"At any rate," said the bachelor, collecting his belongings preparatory to leaving the carriage, "I kept them quiet for ten minutes, which was more than you were able to do."

"Unhappy woman!" he observed to himself as he walked down the platform of Templecombe station; "for the next six months or so those children will assail her in public with demands for an improper story!"

### Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1** While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:

- 1 How do the tales of the two story-tellers differ? What motives are behind each tale? How do the motives differ from each other?
- 2 Although Saki calls this story "The Story-Teller", two people within it tell stories. Which of the two do you think is the story-teller of the title? Why do you think so?
- 3 Saki's story, like bachelor's, is meant to amuse its audience. Do you think that, like the aunt, Saki also hopes to teach his readers something? If you do, what do you think this something might be?

### Ex. 2 Describe the tonal system of the story.

- 1 Is this a humorous or moralizing story? How is the humour developed?
- 2 Comment on the linguistic means that create the humorous tone.
- 3 Can you find any trace of irony in the story?
- 4 What stylistic devices produce a humorous tone?
- 5 Does the narrator often resort to direct speech?

### Ex. 3 Analyze the narrative method and the plot structure of the story.

- 1 What type of the narrator is the story told by?
- 2 What did the author gain by using this type of the narrator?
- 3 How is the story structured?
- 4 What is the exposition of the story? What are the functions of the setting?
- 5 Do you anticipate somehow an end?
- 6 Why did the aunt consider this story to be "improper" to be told to young children? Do you agree with her?

### Ex. 4 Denote the means of characterization and the message of the story.

- 1 Who are the major characters?
- 2 Who is a good story-teller and why?
- 3 Do you think the aunt was really interested in children? Support your idea by the text.
- 4 Comment on the last passage of the story.
- 5 How can you characterize the children? Was their behaviour in the carriage typical?
- 6 Why did the aunt dislike the bachelor?
- 7 Why did the author leave the main characters without names?
- 8 What is the message of the story?

## The Message of a Literary Work

### Text 13 The Legacy

Virginia Woolf

"For Sissy Miller." Gilbert Clandon, taking up the pearl brooch that lay among a litter of rings and brooches on a little table in his wife's drawing-room, read the inscription: "For Sissy Miller, with my love."

It was like Angela to have remembered even Sissy Miller, her secretary. Yet how strange it was, Gilbert Clandon thought once more, that she had left everything in such order – a little gift of some sort of every one of her friends. It was as if she had foreseen her death. Yet she had been in perfect health when she left the house that morning, six weeks ago; when she stepped off the kerb in Piccadilly and the car had killed her.

He was waiting for Sissy Miller. He had asked her to come; he owed her, he felt, after all the years she had been with them, this token of consideration. Yes, he went on, as he sat there waiting, it was strange that Angela had left everything in such order. Every friend had been left some little token of her affection. Every ring, every necklace, every little Chinese box – she had a passion for little boxes – had a name on it. And each had some memory for him. This he had given her; this – the enamel dolphin with the ruby eyes – she had pounced upon one day in a back street in Venice. He could remember her little cry of delight. To him, of course, she had left nothing in particular, unless it were her diary. Fifteen little volumes, bound in green leather, stood behind him on her writing table. Every since they were married, she had kept a diary. Some of their very few – he could not call them quarrels, say tiffs – had been about that diary. When he came in and found her writing, she always shut it or put her hand over it. "No, no, no," he could hear her say, "after I'm dead – perhaps." So she had left it him, as her legacy. It was the only thing they had not shared when she was alive. But he had always taken it for granted that she would outlive him. If only she had stopped one moment, and had thought what she was doing, she would be alive now. But she had stepped straight off the kerb, the driver of the car had said at the inquest. She had given him no chance to pull up... Here the sound of voices in the hall interrupted him.

"Miss Miller, Sir," said the maid.

She came in. He had never seen her alone in his life, nor, of course, in tears. She was terribly distressed, and no wonder. Angela had been much more to her than an employer. She had been a friend. To himself, he

thought, as he pushed a chair for her and asked her to sit down, she was scarcely distinguishable from any other woman of her kind. There were thousands of Sissy Millers – drab little women in black carrying attaché cases. But Angela, with her genius for sympathy, had discovered all sorts of qualities in Sissy Miller. She was the soul of discretion; so silent; so trustworthy, one could tell her anything, and so on.

Miss Miller could not speak at first. She sat there dabbing her eyes with her pocket handkerchief. Then she made an effort.

"Pardon me, Mr. Clandon," she said.

He murmured. Of course he understood. It was only natural. He could guess what his wife had meant to her.

"I've been so happy here," she said, looking around. Her eyes rested on the writing table behind him. It was here they worked – she and Angela. For Angela had her share of the duties that fall to the lot of a prominent politician's wife. She had been the greatest help to him in his career. He had often seen her and Sissy sitting at that table – Sissy at the typewriter, taking down letters from her dictation. No doubt Miss Miller was thinking of that, too. Now all he had to do was to give her the brooch his wife had left her. A rather incongruous gift it seemed. It might have been better to have left her a sum of money, or even the typewriter. But there it was – "For Sissy Miller, with my love." And, taking the brooch, he gave it her with the little speech that he had prepared. He knew, he said, that she would value it. His wife had often worn it... And she replied, as she took it almost as if she too had prepared a speech, that it would always be a treasured possession... She had, he supposed, other clothes upon which the pearl brooch would not look quite so incongruous. She was wearing the little black coat and skirt that seemed the uniform of her profession. Then he remembered – she was in mourning, of course. She, too, had had her tragedy – a brother, to whom she was devoted, had died only a week or two before Angela. In some accident was it? He could not remember – only Angela telling him. Angela, with her genius for sympathy, had been terribly upset. Meanwhile Sissy Miller had risen. She was putting on her gloves. Evidently she felt that she ought not to intrude. But he could not let her go without saying something about her future. What were her plans? Was there any way in which he could help her?

She was gazing at the table, where she had sat at her typewriter, where the diary lay. And, lost in her memories of Angela, she did not at once answer his suggestions that he should help her. She seemed for a moment not to understand. So he repeated:



"What are your plans, Miss Miller?"

"My plans? Oh that's right, Mr. Clandon," she exclaimed. "Please don't bother yourself about me."

He took her to mean that she was in no need of financial assistance. It would be better, he realized, to make any suggestion of that kind in a letter. All he could do now was to say as he pressed her hand, "Remember, Miss Miller, if there's any way in which I can help you, it will be a pleasure..." Then he opened the door. For a moment, on the threshold, as if, a sudden thought had struck her, she stopped.

"Mr. Clandon," she said, looking straight at him for the first time, and for the first time he was struck by the expression, sympathetic yet searching, in her eyes. "If at any time," she continued "there's anything I can do to help you, remember, I shall feel it, for your wife's sake, a pleasure..."

With that she was gone. Her words and the look that went with them were unexpected. It was almost as if she believed, or idea occurred to him as he returned to his chair. Could it be, that during all those years when he had scarcely noticed her, she, as the novelists say, had entertained a passion for him? He caught his own reflection in the glass as he passed. He was over fifty; but he could not help admitting that he was still, as the looking-glass showed him, a very distinguished-looking man.

"Poor Sissy Miller!" he said, half laughing. How he would have liked to share that joke with his wife! He turned instinctively to her diary. "Gilbert," he read, opening it at random, "looked so wonderful..." It was as if she had answered his question. Of course, she seemed to say, you're very attractive to women. Of course Sissy Miller felt that too. He read on. "How proud I am to be his wife!" And he had always been very proud to be her husband. How often, when they dined out somewhere, he had looked at her across the table and said to himself, 'She is the loveliest woman here!' He read on. That first year he had been standing for Parliament. They had toured his constituency. "When Gilbert sat down the applause was terrific. The whole audience rose and sang: 'For he's a jolly good fellow.' I was quite overcome." He remembered that, too. She had been sitting on the platform beside him. He could still see the glance she cast at him, and how she had tears in her eyes. And then? He turned the pages. They had gone to Venice. He recalled that happy holiday after the election. "We had ices at Florians." He smiled - she was still such a child; she loved ices. "Gilbert gave me a most interesting account of the history of Venice. He told me that the Doges..." she had written it all out in her

school-girl hand. One of the delights of travelling with Angela had been that she was so eager to learn. She was so terribly ignorant, she used to say, as if that were not one of her charms. And then - he opened the next volume - they had come back to London. "I was so anxious to make a good impression. I wore my wedding dress." He could see her now sitting next old Sir Edward; and making a conquest of that formidable old man, his chief. He read on rapidly, filling in scene after scene from her scrappy fragments. "Dined at the House of Commons... To an evening party at the Lovegroves. Did I realize my responsibility, Lady L. asked me, as Gilbert's wife?" Then, as the years passed - he took another volume from the writing table - he had become more and more absorbed in his work. And she, of course, was more often alone... It had been a great grief for her, apparently, that they had had no children. "How I wish," one entry read, "that Gilbert had a son!" Oddly enough he had never much regretted that himself. Life had been so full, so rich as it was. That year he had been given a minor post in the government. A minor post only, but the comment was: "I am quite certain now that he will be Prime Minister!" Well, if things had gone differently, it might have been so. He paused here to speculate upon what might have been. Politics was a gamble, he reflected; but the game wasn't over yet. Not at fifty. He cast his eyes rapidly over more pages, full of the little trifles, the insignificant, happy, daily trifles that had made up her life.

He took up another volume and opened it at random. "What a coward I am! I let the chance slip again. But it seemed selfish to bother him with my own affairs, when he was so much to think about. And we seldom have an evening alone." What was the meaning of that? Oh, here was the explanation - it referred to her work in the East End. "I plucked up courage and talked to Gilbert at last. He was so kind, so good. He made no objection." He remembered that conversation. She had told him that she felt so idle, so useless. She wished to have some work of her own. She wanted to do something - she had blushed so prettily, he remembered, as she said it, sitting in that very chair - to help others. He had bantered her a little. Hadn't she enough to do looking after him, after her home? Still, if it amused her, of course he had no objection. What was it? Some district? Some committee? Only she must promise not to make herself ill. So it seemed that every Wednesday she went to Whitechapel. He remembered how he hated the clothes she wore on those occasions. But she had taken it very seriously, it seemed. The diary was full of references like this: "Saw Mrs. Jones... She has ten children... Husband lost his arm in an accident..."

Did my best to find a job for Lily." He skipped on. His own name occurred less frequently. His interest slackened. Some of the entries conveyed nothing to him. For example: "Had a heated argument about socialism with B. M." Who was B. M.? He could not fill the initials; some woman, he supposed, that she had met on one of her committees. "B. M. made a violent attack upon the upper classes..." I walked back after the meeting with B. M. and tried to convince him. But he is so narrow-minded." So B. M. was a man – no doubt one of those "intellectuals", as they call themselves, who are so violent, as Angela said, and so narrow-minded. She had invited him to come and see her apparently. "B. M. came to dinner. He shook hands with Minnie!" That note of exclamation gave another twist to his mental picture. B. M., it seemed, wasn't used to parlourmaids; he had shaken hands with Minnie. Presumably he was one of those tame working men who air their views in ladies' drawing-rooms. Gilbert knew the type, and had no liking for this particular specimen, whoever B. M. might be. Here he was again. "Went with B. M. to the Tower of London..." He said revolution is bound to come... He said we live in a Fool's Paradise." That was just the kind of thing B. M. would say – Gilbert could hear him. He could also see him quite distinctly – a stubby little man, with a rough beard, red tie, dressed as they always did in tweeds, who had never done an honest day's work in life. Surely Angela had the sense to see through him. He read on. "B. M. said some very disagreeable things about –". The name was carefully scratched out. "I told him I would not listen to any more abuse of –". Again the name was obliterated. Could it have been his own name? Was that why Angela covered the page so quickly when he came in? The thought added to his growing dislike of B. M. He had had the impertinence to discuss him in this very room. Why had Angela never told him? It was very unlike her to conceal anything; she had been the soul of candour. He turned the pages, picking out every reference to B. M. "B. M. told me the story of his childhood. His mother went out charring.... When I think of it, I can hardly bear to go on living in such luxury.... Three guineas for one hat!" If only she had discussed the matter with him, instead of puzzling her poor little head about questions that were much too difficult for her to understand! He had lent her books. *Karl Marx, The Coming Revolution*. The initials B. M., B. M., B. M., recurred repeatedly. But why never the full name? There was an informality, an intimacy in the use of initials that was very unlike Angela. Had she called him B. M. to his face? He read on. "B. M. came unexpectedly after dinner. Luckily, I was alone." That was only a year ago. "Luckily" – why luckily? – "I was

alone." Where had he been that night? He checked the date in his engagement book. It had been the night of the Mansion House dinner. And B. M. and Angela had spent the evening alone! He tried to recall that evening. Was she waiting up for him when he came back? Had the room looked just as usual? Were there glasses on the table? Were the chairs drawn close together? He could remember nothing – nothing whatever, nothing except his own speech at the Mansion House. It became more and more inexplicable to him – the whole situation: his wife receiving an unknown man alone. Perhaps the next volume would explain. Hastily he reached for the last of the diaries – the one she had left unfinished when she died. There, on the very first page, was that cursed fellow again. "Dined alone with B. M. ... He became very agitated. He said it was time we understood each other..." I tried to make him listen. But he would not. He threatened that if I did not ... the rest of the page was scored over. She had written "Egypt. Egypt. Egypt," over the whole page. He could not make out a single word, but there could be only one interpretation: the scoundrel had asked her to become his mistress. Alone in his room! The blood rushed to Gilbert Clandon's face. He turned the pages rapidly. What had been her answer? Initials had ceased. It was simply "he" now. "He came again. I told him I could not come to any decision..." I implored him to leave me." He had forced himself upon her in this very house. But why hadn't she told him? How could she have hesitated for an instance? Then: "I wrote him a letter." Then pages were left blank. Then there was this: "No answer to my letter." Then more blank pages; and then this: "He has done what he threatened." After that – what came after that? He turned page after page. All were blank. But there, on the very day before her death, was this entry: "Have I the courage to do it too?" That was the end.

Gilbert Clandon left the book slide to the floor. He could see her in front of him. She was standing on the kerb in Piccadilly. Her eyes stared; her fists were clenched. Here came the car...

He could not bear it. He must know the truth. He strode to the telephone.

"Miss Miller!" There was silence. Then he heard someone moving in the room.

"Sissy Miller speaking" – her voice at last answered him.

"Who," he thundered, "is B. M.?"

He could hear the cheap clock ticking on her mantelpiece; then a long drawn sigh. Then at last she said:

"He was my brother."

He was her brother; her brother who had killed himself. "Is there," he heard Sissy Miller asking, "anything that I can explain?" "Nothing!" he cried. "Nothing!" He had received his legacy. She had told him the truth. She had stepped off the kerb to rejoin her lover. She had stepped off the kerb to escape from him.

### Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:**

- 1 Did the very first event in the story arouse your curiosity? Did Angela act as if she had foreseen her death?
- 2 Why is the story called *The Legacy*?

**Ex. 2 Denote the character-images of the story.**

- 1 Who is the major character: Angela or Gilbert?
- 2 Is V. Woolf more concerned with the emotional state of the characters rather than with their actions? What is the main means of characterization?
- 3 Comment on how skillfully the author uses different representational forms (inner represented speech, inner monologue, direct speech) to characterize her protagonists.
- 4 Who do you lay the blame on for Angela's suicide?
- 5 Trace Gilbert's state of mind. Does the author reflect all the subtle changes in his mood and his shock at discovering the mystery of Angela's suicide?
- 6 What emotions were struggling within Angela?
- 7 Did Angela really care for Gilbert? Was she a compassionate woman by nature?
- 8 Why didn't Angela destroy her diary? Did she wish to revenge herself on her husband?
- 9 Who so you sympathize with?

**Ex.3 Analyze the message of the story.**

- 1 Do you think the author's intention was to relate the lifestory of Angela, or rather to describe the effect that Angela's diary produced on Gilbert?

76

2 Are the events subordinated to rendering the impression they made on Gilbert?

3 Does the narrative method employed by the author allow the reader to see what was going on in the minds of both Gilbert and Angela? How does it add to the effectiveness of the story?

4 What is the basic conflict in the story?

5 What role does the title play?

6 What does the word "legacy" imply (see the last paragraph of the story)? Does it frame the story? Is it a symbol or an artistic detail? Does it acquire the ironic ring?

7 What role do the minor characters play in the story?

8 Are all the elements that make up the story subordinated to conveying its message?

9 Did the story produce a profound and vivid impression on you, the reader?

### Text 14 The Story of an Hour

**Katherine Chopin**

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed". He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by the second telegram, and had listened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

77

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which someone was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will – as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under the breath: “free, free, free!” The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to

impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him – sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

“Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door – you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister’s importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister’s waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little traveled-stained, composedly carrying his gripsack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine’s piercing cry; at Richard’s quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease – of the joy that kills.

### Questions for Discussion

Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:

- 1 The first sentence of the story makes the whole paragraph. Why is it so important?
- 2 Why did Mrs. Mallard die?

**Ex. 2 Denote the character-images of the story.**

- 1 Who is the main character? Is it a flat or a complex image? Why do you think so?
- 2 What have you learnt about the life of this woman? Was she happy in her marriage? Did her husband love her? Prove your thoughts by the text.
- 3 What is the main means of characterization?
- 4 Trace the change of emotions and thoughts in the mind of the main character. What feelings does she experience?
- 5 Why are there so many exclamatory sentences in the text?
- 6 How does the description of nature help to reveal the inner state of the main character?
- 7 Comment on the name of the main character.
- 8 Does the repetition of the word "free" reflect the greatest desire of the main character? What other words are repeated in the story? Why?
- 9 Was Mrs. Mallard a weak or a strong woman?

**Ex. 3 Analyze the style and the message of the story.**

- 1 Does the narrative method which Katherine Chopin chose to tell the story enable her to trace all the subtle changes in the mind of the main character?
- 2 What is the message of the story?
- 3 Does the title of the story in any way contribute to the message of the story?
- 4 What artistic details or symbols did you find in the story? What other means of implication are used in the story?
- 5 What is the irony of the end of the story?
- 6 Compare the beginning and the end of the story.
- 7 Comment on the illustration to the story. How does it reveal the main idea of the story?

**Ex. 4 Make a comparative analysis of two stories.**

- 1 Compare the stories "The Legacy" and "The Story of an Hour" in terms of theme and message.
- 2 What similarities and distinctions do you trace in the major character-images? Are the means of characterization alike in both stories?
- 3 What emotional response does each story evoke in the reader?

80

- 4 Which of the two stories impressed you more? Account for your choice.

5 Compare the stories in terms of techniques conveying implication. Which techniques do Virginia Woolf and Katherine Chopin resort to?

- 6 Compare the functions of the titles on the two stories. How is each title related to the message? What role does the title play in each of the story?

7 How is the author's message conveyed in each of the compared stories? Do the writers employ identical means of conveying the message? Support your view in each case by specific references to the text of both the stories.

- 8 What type of conflict is each story based on?

- 9 Compare the plot structure of the both stories.

**Text 15 Go, Lovely Rose**

**Herbert Ernest Bates**

"He is the young man she met on the aeroplane," Mrs. Carteret said. "Now go to sleep."

Outside the bedroom window, in full moonlight, the leaves of the willow tree seemed to be slowly swimming in delicate but ordered separation, like shoals of grey-green fish. The thin branches were like bowed rods in the white summer sky.

"This is the first I heard that there was a young man on the aeroplane," Mr. Carteret said.

"You saw him," Mrs. Carteret said. "He was there when we met her. You saw him come with her through the customs."

"I can't remember seeing her with anybody."

"I know very well you do because you remarked on his hat. You said what a nice colour it was. It was a sort of sage-green one with a turn-down brim —"

"Good God," Mr. Carteret said. "That fellow? He looked forty or more. He was as old as I am."

"He's twenty-eight. That's all. Have you made up your mind which side you're going to sleep?"

"I'm going to stay on my back for a while," Mr. Carteret said. "I can't get off. I heard it strike three a long time ago."

"You'd get off if you'd lie still," she said.

81

Sometimes a turn of humid air, like the gentlest of currents, would move the entire willow tree in one huge soft fold of shimmering leaves. Whenever it did so Mr. Carteret felt for a second or two that it was a sound of an approaching car. Then when the breath of wind suddenly changed direction and ran across the night landscape in a series of leafy echoes, stirring odd trees far away, he knew always that there was no car and that it was only, once again, the quiet gasp of midsummer air rising and falling dying away.

"Where are you fussing off to now?" Mrs. Carteret said.

"I'm going down for a drink of water."

"You'd better by half shut your eyes and lie still in one place," Mrs. Carteret said. "Haven't you been off at all?"

"I can never sleep in moonlight," he said. "I don't know how it is. I never seem to settle properly. Besides it's too hot."

"Put something on your feet," Mrs. Carteret said, "for goodness sake."

Across the landing, on the stairs and down in the kitchen the moonlight and the white starkness of a shadowless glare. The kitchen floor was warm to his bare feet and the water warmish as it came from the tap. He filled a glass twice and then emptied it into the sink and then filled it again before it was cold enough to drink. He had not put on his slippers because he could not remember where he had left them. He had been too busy thinking of Sue. Now he suddenly remembered that they were still where he had dropped them in the coal-scuttle by the side of the stove.

After he had put them on he opened the kitchen door and step outside and stood in the garden. Distinctly, with astonishingly pure clearness, he could see the colours of all the roses, even those of the darkest red. He could even distinguish the yellow from the white and not only in the still standing blooms but in all the fallen petals, thick everywhere on dry earth after the heat of the July day.

He walked until he stood in the centre of the lawn. For a time he could not discover a single star in the sky. The moon was like a solid opaque electric bulb, the glare of it almost cruel, he thought, as it poured down on the green darkness of summer trees.

Presently the wind made its quickening watery turn of sound among the leaves of the willow and ran away over the nightscape, and again he thought it was the sound of a car. He felt the breeze move coolly, almost coldly, about the pyjama legs and he ran his fingers in agitation once or twice through the pillow tangles of his hair.

Suddenly he felt helpless and miserable.

"Sue," he said. "For God's sake where on earth have you got to? Susie, Susie - this isn't like you."

His pet term for her, Susie. In the normal way, Sue. Perhaps in rare moments of exasperation, Susan. He had called her Susie a great deal on her nineteenth birthday, three weeks before, before she had flown to Switzerland for her holiday. Everyone thought, that day, how much she had grown, how firm and full she was getting, and how wonderful it was that she was flying off alone. He only thought she looked more delicate and girlish than ever, quite thin and childish in the face in spite of her lipstick, and he was surprised to see her drinking what he thought were too many glasses of sherry. Nor, in contrast to himself, did she seem a bit nervous about the plane.

Over towards the town a clock struck chimes for a half hour and almost simultaneously he heard the sound of a car. There was no mistaking in this time. He could see the swing of its headlights too as it made the big bend by the packing station down the road, a quarter of a mile away.

"And quite time too, young lady," he thought. He felt sharply vexed, not miserable any more. He could hear the car coming fast. It was so fast that he began to run back to the house across the lawn. He wanted to be back in bed before she arrived and saw him there. He did not want to be caught like that. His pyjama legs were several inches too long and were wet with the dew of the grass and he held them up, like skirts, as he ran.

What a damn ridiculous situation, he thought. What fools children could make you look sometimes. Just about as exasperating as they could be.

At the kitchen door one of the slippers dropped off and as he stopped to pick it up and listen again for the sound of the car he discovered that now there was no sound. The headlights too had disappeared. Once again there was nothing at all but the enormous noiseless glare, the small folding echoes of wind dying away.

"Damn it, we always walked home from dances," he thought. "That was part of the fun."

Suddenly he felt cold. He found himself remembering with fear the long bend by the packing station. There was no decent camber on it and if you look it in slightest bit too fast you couldn't make it. Every week there were accidents there. And God, anyway what did he know about this fellow? He might be the sort who went round making pick-ups. A married man or something. Anybody. A crook.

All of a sudden he had a terrible premonition about it all. It was exactly the sort of feeling he had had when he saw her enter the plane, and again

when the plane lifted into sky. There was an awful sense of doom about it: he felt sure she was not coming back. Now he felt in some curious way that his blood was separating itself into single drops. The drops were freezing and dropping with infinite systematic deadlines through the veins, breeding cold terror inside him. Somehow he knew that there had been a crash.

He was not really aware of running down through the rose-garden to the gate. He simply found himself somehow striding up and down in the road outside, tying his pyjama cord tighter in agitation.

My God, he thought, how easily the thing could happen. A girl travelled by plain or train or even bus or something and before you knew where you were it was the beginning of something ghastly.

He began to walk up the road, feeling the cold precipitation of blood take drops of terror down to his legs and feet. A pale yellow suffusion of the lower sky struck into him the astonishing fact that it was almost day. He could hardly believe it and he broke miserably into run.

Only a few moments later, a hundred yards away, he had the curious impression that from the roadside a pair of yellow eyes were staring back at him. He saw then that they were the lights of a stationary car. He did not know what to do about it. He could not very well go up to it and tap on the window and say, in tones of stern fatherhood, "Is my daughter in there? Susan, come home." There was always the chance that it would turn out to be someone else's daughter. It was always possible that it would turn out to be a daughter who liked what she was doing and strongly resented being interrupted in it by a prying middle-aged stranger in pyjamas.

He stopped and saw the lip of daylight widening and deepening its yellow on the horizon. It suddenly filled him with the sobering thought that he ought to stop being a damn fool and pull himself together.

"Stop acting like a nursemaid," he said. "Go home and get into bed. Don't you trust her?" It was always when you didn't trust them, he told himself, that trouble really began. That was when you asked for it. It was a poor thing if you didn't trust them.

"Go home and get into bed, you poor sap," he said. "You never fussed this much even when she was little."

He had no sooner turned to go back than he heard the engine of the car starting. He looked round and saw the light coming towards him down the road. Suddenly he felt more foolish than ever and there was no time for him to do anything but press himself quickly through the gap in the hedge by the roadside. The hedge was not very tall at that point and he found himself crouching down in a damp jungle of cow parsley and grass and

nettle that wetted his pyjamas as high as the chest and shoulders. By this time the light in the sky had grown quite golden and all the colours of day were becoming distinct again and he caught the smell of honeysuckle rising from the dewiness of the hedge.

He lifted his head a second or so too late as the car went past him. He could not see whether Susie was in it or not and he was in a state of fresh exasperation as he followed it down the road. He was uncomfortable because the whole of his pyjamas were sopping with dew and he knew that now he would have to change and get himself a good rub-down before he got back into bed.

"God, what awful fools they make you look," he thought, and then, a second later, "hell, it might not be her. Oh! Hell, supposing it isn't her?"

Wretchedly he felt his legs go weak and cold again. He forgot the dew on his chest and shoulders as the slow freezing precipitation of his blood began. From somewhere the wrenching thought of a hospital made him feel quite faint with a nausea that he could not fight away.

"Oh! Susie, for Jesus' sake don't do this any more to us. Don't do it any more—"

Then he was aware that the car had stopped by the gates of the house. He was made aware of it because suddenly, in the fuller dawn, the red rear light went out.

A second or two later he saw Susie. She was in her long heliotrope evening dress and she was holding it up at the skirt, in her delicate fashion, with both hands. Even from that distance he could see how pretty she was. The air too was so still in the birdless summer morning silence that he heard her distinctly, in her nice fluty voice, so girlish and friendly, call out:

"Good-bye. Yes: lovely. Thank you."

The only thing now, he thought, was not to be seen. He had to keep out of sight. He found himself scheming to get in by the side gate. Then he could slip up to the bathroom and get clean pyjamas and perhaps even a shower.

Only a moment later he saw that the car had already turned and was coming back towards him up the road. This time there was no chance to hide and all he could do was to step into the verge to let it go past him. For a few wretched seconds he stood there as if naked in full daylight, trying with nonchalance to look the other way.

In consternation he heard the car pull up a dozen yards beyond him and then a voice called:

"Oh! sir. Pardon me. Are you Mr. Carteret, sir?"

"Yes," he said.

There was nothing for it now, he thought, but to go back and find out exactly who the damn fellow was.

"Yes, I'm Carteret," he said and he tried to put up into his voice what he thought was a detached, unstuffy, coolish sort of dignity.

"Oh! I'm Bill Jordan, sir." The young man had fair, smooth-brushed hair that looked extremely youthful against the black of the dinner jacket. "I'm sorry we're so late. I hope you haven't been worried about Susie?"

"Oh! no. Good God, no."

"It was my mother's fault. She kept us."

"I thought you'd been dancing?"

"Oh! no, sir. Dinner with my mother. We did dance a few minutes on the lawn but then we played canasta till three. My mother's one of those canasta fanatics. It's mostly her fault, I'm afraid."

"Oh! that's all right. So long as you had a good time."

"Oh! we had a marvelous time, sir. It was just that I thought you might be worried about Susie—"

"Oh! great heavens, no."

"That's fine, then, sir." The young man had given several swift looks at the damp pyjamas and now he gave another and said: "It's been a wonderful warm night, hasn't it?"

"Awfully close. I couldn't sleep."

"Sleep—that reminds me." He laughed with friendly, expensive well-kept teeth made him look more youthful than ever and more handsome. "I'd better go home or it'll be breakfast-time. Good night, sir."

"Good night."

The car began to move away. The young man lifted one hand in farewell and Carteret called after him:

"You must come over and have dinner with us one evening—"

"Love to. Thank you very much, sir. Good night."

Carteret walked down the road. Very touching, the sir business. Very illuminating and nice. Very typical. It was touches like that which counted. In relief he felt a sensation of extraordinary self-satisfaction.

When he reached the garden gate the daylight was so strong that it showed with wonderful freshness all the roses that had unfolded in the night. There was one particularly beautiful crimson one, very dark, almost black, that he thought for a moment of picking and taking upstairs to his wife. But finally he decided against it and left it where it grew.

By the time the moon was fading and everywhere the birds were taking over the sky.

### Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:**

- 1 Who is the main character of the story and what have you learnt about him?
- 2 Is the situation described in the story typical of many families?

**Ex. 2 Denote the message and the means of characterization of the story.**

- 1 What "eternal" problem is raised in the story?
- 2 Through what character is the message of the story conveyed?
- 3 Which scene in the story shows that the problem is solved? What tradition symbol is used to do it?
- 4 All the words in the title are capitalized. How can the word "Rose" be interpreted?
- 5 Does the title of the story contribute to the message? What type of sentence is it?
- 6 Does the description of nature play an important role in the story? Which one?
- 7 What is Mr. Carteret's nervousness revealed through?
- 8 Why was Susan's mother much calmer than her father?
- 9 Which scenes in the story are really touching?
- 10 Which sentences at the end of the story show that Mr. Carteret liked the young man?

**Ex. 3 Analyze the plot structure and the narrative method of the story.**

- 1 Is the story told by the omniscient author? How do the thoughts of the character help to reveal the message of the story?
- 2 Does the story have all the components of plot structure? If not, which one is omitted and why?
- 3 What is the implication of Mr. Carteret's recollections of Susan's birthday party?
- 4 What kinds of conflict are there in the story?



- 5 Are there any digressions in the story?  
6 Is the situation described in the story familiar to you?

#### Text 16 The Beginning of Tomorrow

Charles E. Turner

Jennifer Page was halfway down the stairs, her hand trailing lightly along the banister, when she turned and went back to the door of the room. Though she knew it all by heart, she wanted to take one last look. Good-bye, room... She lingered over the soft and faded quilt that lay folded at the foot of the bed... the window curtains tied back, framing a view of the elm top... Oh, the wide-awake dreams that had often drifted through her head as she gazed out that window.

Not that she was sentimental about such things. Not now. She couldn't afford to be. Certainly there was no reluctance in her farewell. It was like the brief pause at the ending of a chapter in a good book, and she was eager to turn the page. All spring she had waited for this day. Longer than that, really. Finishing high school and going away to school was so much *more* than just going away to school...

Jennifer went down the stairs again to where her mother and father, strangely quiet, were waiting. Mother was sitting on the little chair that no one ever sat on, her head tilted to one side, and Dad was just standing there with his hands thrust into his trouser pockets. The best parents in the world – she knew it – if you didn't consider the few occasions when they were completely unreasonable about some small matter. Sometimes she wondered if they loved her *too* much. A twinge of guilt stirred deep within her when she admitted to herself how longingly she had looked forward to getting "out from under".

"It seems like only yesterday you were starting to kindergarten," her mother said.

Jennifer had heard those words at last half dozen times a day in the last week. "Mother, do you realize how many times you've said that lately?" she asked.

"I may say it again before you're on the train," her mother said. "I can't promise that I won't, dear."

"Be patient with your mother," Dad said, winking. "It isn't every day she loses a daughter to higher education and a career."

Jennifer smiled in acknowledgement and then paused in front of the hall mirror for a quick glance. The dark cotton dress looked just right – appropriate for a warm day, serious enough for someone who was going to be a nurse. Jennifer wished she had known before this last semester of high school that she was going to want to get a degree in nursing – then she could have taken the science courses she needed. Instead, she'd be spending her vacation at summer school catching up, getting the credits necessary for entrance. But both her guidance counselor and her parents had been encouraging and, of course, it was true that now she'd be studying with more *purpose*.

Her raincoat lay across the luggage stacked beside the front door. "I keep asking myself if we've forgotten anything," her mother said. "I know, the camera! I want a snapshot of you getting on the train."

"I thought of that," her father announced proudly. "I put it in the car last night. Just to be sure."

"Honestly, you'd think I was going around the world or something," Jennifer said. "You'd think I was really setting sail." And in a way – when she thought about it – she was setting sail.

As they were going out the front door, her mother said, "Around the world would only be a trip... This is a milestone, Jenny."

Dad put the suitcases in the back of the car, and then came forward to hold the front door open. "Sit in the middle, dear," her mother suggested, touching Jennifer's arm gently, and Jennifer noticed her mother was wearing one of those sad-looking smiles. Her mother had enjoyed *talking* about all of it – the school catalogue, how lucky Jennifer was to have only one roommate in the dormitory, which clothes to take along. But in the last few days, as the time drew nearer, she had reflected less and less of her early enthusiasm. In fact, Jennifer was afraid her mother might even get weepy at the station.

Her father pulled out of their driveway and Jennifer turned for the last look at the house.

"Do you know what just came to my mind?" her mother said. "The hanky. Do you remember when you were in kindergarten, all the children were supposed to wear a handkerchief pinned to their clothes?"

"Oh, *Mother!*" Then she caught her mother's teasing glance and she had to laugh. She kissed her mother on the cheek, then leaned her head back against the seat. "You know something?" she said. "I love you both very much."

They pulled up at the station then, and suddenly there was no more time. They walked across the gravel to the platform. Dad checked the luggage and placed the ticket in Jennifer's hand. The train was coming. There were last-minute reminders and questions... last minute words of advice... and then last-minute embraces.

"Well, I'm on my way," Jennifer said brightly.

When her father snapped the picture, she noticed her mother wasn't weepy at all – the smile on her face wasn't even sad-looking.

Through the window, Jennifer held them with her eyes as the train moved slowly from the station. They were standing close together, and somehow it brought back the memory of that day when she was seven... maybe eight – when she had persuaded them to let her ride the big county-fair Ferris wheel "all by myself." They had stood the same way then, close together, waiting... and she had sat rigidly still in the exact middle of the seat, but certain that even if she fell, even if the Ferris wheel itself tumbled, even if... she had *known* would catch her.

And now they began to blur before they were out of sight. "Jennifer Paige, wouldn't you know you'd bawl," she whispered, fumbling for a tissue. She wiped her eyes and thought: Isn't this the weirdest thing? The beginning of something bright and wonderful and she was crying. Tomorrow was shining ahead of her. She wiped her eyes one last time, and, when she looked again, her parents were out of sight.

### Questions for Discussion

**Ex. 1 While reading the story, find the answers to the following questions:**

- 1 What is implied in the title of the story?
- 2 What type of conflict is the plot based on?

**Ex. 2 Define the total effect of the story.**

- 1 Is the story based on one or more conflicts? Which?
- 2 Describe Jennifer's mood. Pick out the words and phrases which express her sadness at leaving home. At the same time, is Jennifer full of hopes and expectations? How is that expressed?
- 3 How is the parents' mood conveyed? Are there artistic details which reveal their state of mind? Does their speech reveal their strain?
- 4 What is implied in the following words and phrases: "like the brief pause at the end of a chapter", "to turn the page", getting "out from under",

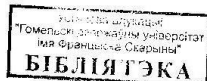
"to lose a daughter", "was setting sail", "a milestone"? What artistic effect do they produce?

**Ex. 3 Make a comparative analysis of two stories.**

- 1 Compare the stories "The Beginning of Tomorrow" and "Go, Lovely Rose" in terms of the raised problem and the way it is solved.
- 2 What implications in both stories help to reveal the message?
- 3 Are the titles of the stories symbolic and why?
- 4 Compare the relations in the families in both stories.
- 5 Which of the two stories impressed you more?

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## NOTES

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94

95

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