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ПРАКТИКА УСТНОЙ И ПИСЬМЕННОЙ РЕЧИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

ПРАКТИЧЕСКОЕ ПОСОБИЕ
для студентов 5 курса
специальности 1- 02 03 06 – 01 – "Английский язык"

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Практическое пособие ставит своей целью формирование навыков и умений интерпретации и анализа художественного текста и адресовано студентам 5 курса специальности "Английский язык".

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Введение

Данное пособие предназначено для обеспечения планомерного руководства самостоятельной (внеаудиторной) и аудиторной деятельностью студентов, направленной на основательное изучение художественных произведений и их обсуждения, а также достижение глубокого понимания произведений – коротких рассказов английских и американских писателей.

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 детального анализа. Все это определило выбор именно коротких рассказов для развития навыков и умений интерпретации художественных произведений.

Предтекстовые вопросы и задания предполагают обсуждение проблемных вопросов по содержанию рассказов и дают возможность читателю осмыслить проблемы, содержащиеся в рассказе и сформировать свою собственную точку зрения, а также определить позицию автора по отношению к действующим лицам, событиям и проблемам рассказа, тем самым подводя читателя к интерпретации всего рассказа, включая его различные элементы. Послетекстовые вопросы и задания направлены непосредственно на толкование текста, раскрытие подтекста, доказательство или опровержение того или иного тезиса, определение отношения читателя к событиям и персонажам и т. д.. Цель этих упражнений – обеспечить восприятие смыслового содержания текста, обратить внимание читателя на несущественные для его понимания детали., факты, позволить глубже проникнуть в его смысловую ткань.

Text 1

While reading the story find the answers to the following questions:

1 Why is the story called "Witches' Loaves"?
2 What theory did Miss Martha want to test and how?
3 What role did the young man (Mr. Blumberger's friend) play in this story?
4 What is the literal and implicit meaning of the following paragraph: "Miss Martha went into the back room. She took off the blue-dotted silk waist and put on the old brown serge…"
5 Who do you sympathize with? What impression did the story produce on you?

Witches' Loaves

O'Henry

Miss Martha Meacham kept the little bakery on the corner (the one where you go up three steps, and the bell tinkles when you open the door).

Miss Martha was forty, her bank-book showed a credit of two thousand dollars, and she possessed two false teeth and a sympathetic heart. Many people have married whose chances to do so were much inferior to Miss Martha's.

Two or three times a week a customer came in in whom she began to take an interest. He was a middle-aged man, wearing spectacles and a brown beard trimmed to a careful point.

He spoke English with a strong German accent. His clothes were worn and darned in places, and wrinkled and baggy in others. But he looked neat, and had very good manners.

He always bought two loaves of stale bread. Fresh bread was five cents a loaf. Stale ones were two for five. Never did he call for anything but stale bread.

Once Miss Martha saw a red and brown stain on his fingers. She was sure then that he was an artist and very poor. No doubt he lived in a garret, where he painted pictures and ate stale bread and thought of the good things to eat in Miss Martha's bakery.

Often when Miss Martha sat down to her chops and light rolls and jam and tea she would sigh and wish that the gentle-mannered artist might share her tasty meal instead of eating his dry crust in that draughty attic. Miss Martha's heart, as you have been told, was a sympathetic one.

In order to test her theory as to his occupation, she brought from her room one day a painting that she had bought at a sale, and set it against the shelves behind the bread counter.

It was a Venetian scene. A splendid marble palazzio (so it said on the picture) stood in the foreground – or rather forewater. For the rest there were gondolas (with the lady trailing her hand in the water), clouds, sky, and chiaro-oscuro in plenty. No artist could fail to notice it.

Two days afterward the customer came in.

"Two loafs of stale bread, if you blease.

"You haf here a fine picture, madam," he said while she was wrapping up the bread.

"Yes?" says Miss Martha, revelling in her own cunning. "I do so admire art and" (no, it would not do to say "artists" thus early)" and paintings," she substituted. "You think it is a good picture?"

"Der balace," said the customer, "is not in good drawing. Der bairspective of it is not true. Goot morning, madam."

He took his bread, bowed, and hurried out.

Yes, he must be an artist. Miss Martha took the picture back to her room.

How gentle and kindly his eyes shone behind his spectacles! What a broad brow he had! To be able to judge perspective at a glance – and to live on stale bread! But genius often has a struggle before it is recognized.

What a thing it would be for art and perspective if genius were backed by two thousand dollars in bank, a bakery, and a sympathetic heart to – But these were day-dreams, Miss Martha.

Often now when he came he would chat for a while across the showcase. He seemed to crave Miss Martha's cheerful words.

He kept on buying stale bread. Never a cake, never a pie, never one of her delicious Sally Lunns.

She thought he began to look thinner and discouraged. Her heart ached to add something good to eat to his meagre purchase, but her courage failed at the act. She did not dare affront him. She knew the pride of artists.

Miss Martha took to wearing her blue-dotted silk waist behind the counter. In the back room she cooked a mysterious compound of quince seeds and borax. Ever so many people use it for the complexion.

One day the customer came in as usual, laid his nickel on the showcase, and called for his stale loaves. While Miss Martha was reaching for them there was a great tooting and clanging, and a fire-engine came lumbering past.

The customer hurried to the door to look, as any one will. Suddenly, inspired, Miss Martha seized the opportunity.

On the bottom shelf behind the counter was a pound of fresh butter that the dairyman had left ten minutes before. With a bread knife Miss Martha made a deep slash in each of the stale loaves, inserted a generous quantity of butter, and pressed the loaves tight again.

When the customer turned once more she was tying the paper around them.

When he had gone, after an unusually pleasant little chat, Miss Martha smiled to herself, but not without a slight fluttering of the heart.

Had she been too bold? Would he take offense? But surely not. There was no language of edibles. Butter was no emblem of unmaidenly forwardness.

For a long time that day her mind dwelt on the subject. She imagined the scene when he should discover her little deception.

He would lay down his brushes and palette. There would stand his easel with the picture he was painting in which the perspective was beyond criticism.

He would prepare for his luncheon of dry bread and water. He would slice into a loaf – ah!

Miss Martha blushed. Would he think of the hand that placed it there as he ate? Would he-

The front door bell jangled viciously. Somebody was coming in, making a great deal of noise.

Miss Martha hurried to the front. Two men were there. One was a young man smoking a pipe – a man she had never seen before. The other was her artist.

His face was very red, his hat was on the back of his head, his hair was wildly rumpled. He clinched his two fists and shook them ferociously at Miss Martha. *At Miss Martha.*

"*Dummkopf!*" he shouted with extreme loudness, and then "*Tausendonfer!*" or something like it in German.

The young man tried to draw him away.

"I will not go," he said angrily, "else I shall told her".

He made a bass drum of Miss Martha's counter.

"You haf shpoilt me," he cried, his blue eyes blazing behind his spectacles. "I vill tell you. You vas *von meddingsome old cat!*"

Miss Martha leaned weakly against the shelves and laid one hand on her blue-dotted silk waist. The younger man took the other by the collar.

"Come on", he said, "you've said enough." He dragged the angry one out at the door to the sidewalk, and then came back.

"Guess you ought to be told, ma'am," he said, "what the row is about. That's Blumberger. He's an architectural draftsman. I work in the same office with him.

"He's been working hard for three months drawing a plan for a new city hall. It was a prize competition. He finished inking the lines yesterday. You know, a draftsman always makes his drawing in pencil first. When it's done he rubs out the pencil lines with handfuls stale bread crumbs. That's better than India rubber.

"Blumberger's been buying the bread here. Well, today – well, you know, ma'am, that butter isn't – well, Blumberger's plan isn't good for anything now except to cut up into railroad sandwiches."

Miss Martha went into the back room. She took off the blue-dotted silk waist and put on the old brown serge she used to wear. Then she poured the quince seed and borax mixture out of the window into the ash can.

Questions for Discussion

Plot Structure and Literary Techniques

1 Does the story contain all the components of the plot structure?

2 Does the title contain an enigma?

3 Is there any setting in the story? What is the function of the setting?

4 What is the basic conflict of the story?

5 What is the climax of the story? What atmosphere does the climax create?

6 Is there any denouement?

Message and Character-Images

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

2 What is the theme and message of the story? What are the means of conveying the message?

3 What is the type of the narrator? Prove it.

4 Comment on how the author uses different representational forms to characterize the protagonist.

5 What methods and means of characterization does the writer employ? What indirect means of characterization are used to characterize the protagonist in the story?

6 What do speech characteristics reveal?

7 How would you characterize the style of the story?

Text 2

As you read the following story, think about the answers to the questions:

1 What did the narrator know about the poet before visiting him? Why did he agree to visit him?

2 What kind of man was the poet? Why was he so popular?

3 Why did the narrator find the poet's vanity a little touching?

4 What does the detailed description of the city and the house create?

5 Why was the narrator sure that the house he entered should belong to the poet?

The Poet

W. Somerset Maugham

I am not much interested in the celebrated and I have never had patience with the passion that afflicts so many to shake

hands with the great ones of the earth. When it is proposed to me to meet some person distinguished above his friends by his rank or his attainments, I seek for a civil excuse that may enable me to avoid the honour; and when my friend Diego Torre suggested giving me an introduction to Santa Aria I declined. But for once[1] the excuse I made was sincere: Santa Aria was not only a great poet but also a romantic figure and it would have amused me to see in his decrepitude a man whose adventures were legendary; but I knew that he was old and ill and I could not believe that it would be anything but a nuisance to him to meet a stranger and a foreigner. Calisto de Santa Aria was the last descendant of the Grand School; in a world unsympathetic to Byronism he had led a Byronic existence and he had narrated his hazardous life in a series of poems. I am no judge of them, for I read them first when I was three-and-twenty[2] and then was enraptured by them; they had a passion, a heroic arrogance and a multi-coloured vitality that swept me off my feet, and to this day, so intermingled are those ringing lines and haunting cadences with the charming memories of my youth, I cannot read them without a beating heart. I am inclined to think that Calisto de Santa Aria deserves the reputation he enjoys among the Spanish-speaking peoples. In those days his verses were on the lips of all young men and friends would talk to me endlessly of his wild ways, his vehement speeches (for he was a politician as well as a poet), his incisive wit, and his amours. He was rebel and sometimes an outlaw, daring and adventurous; but above all he was a lover. We knew all about his passion for this great actress or that divine singer – had we not read till we knew them by heart the burning sonnets in which he described his love, his anguish, and his wrath? – and we were aware that an infanta of Spain, the proudest descendant of the Bourbons, having yielded to his entreaties, had taken the veil[3] when he ceased to love her. When the Philips, her royal ancestors, tired of a mistress, she entered a convent, for it was unfitting that one

whom the King had loved should be loved by another, and was not Calisto de Santa Aria greater than any earthly king? We applauded the lady's romantic gesture; it was credible to her and flattering to our poet.

But all this took many years ago and for a quarter of a century Don Calisto, disdainfully withdrawing from a world that had nothing more to offer, had lived in seclusion in his native town of Ecija. It was when I announced my intention of going there, not because of him, but because it is a charming little Andalusian town with associations that endear it to me, that Diego Torre offered me this introduction. It appeared that Don Calisto allowed the younger men of letters occasionally to visit him and now and then would talk to them with the fire that had electrified his hearers in the great days of his prime.

"What does he look like now?"

"Magnificent"

"Have you a photograph of him?"

"I wish I had. He has refused to face the camera since he was thirty-five. He says he does not wish posterity to know other than young."

I confess that I found this suggestion of vanity not a little touching[4]. I knew that in early manhood he was of extraordinary beauty, and that moving sonnet of his written when he grew conscious that youth had for ever left him shows with what a bitter and sardonic pang he must have watched the passing of those looks that had been so fantastically admired.

But I refused my friend's offer; I was quite satisfied to read once more the poems I had known so well and for the rest I preferred to wander about the silent and sunswept streets of Ecija in freedom. It was with consternation therefore that on the evening of my arrival I received a note from the great man himself. Diego Torre had written to him of my visit, he said, and it would give him great pleasure if I would call on him at eleven next morning. In the circumstances there was nothing

for me to do but to present myself at his house at the appointed hour.

My hotel was in the Plaza[5] and on that spring morning it was animated but as soon as I left it I might have walked in the deserted city. The streets, the tortuous white streets, were empty but for a woman in black now and then who returned with measured steps from her devotions[6]. Ecija is a town of churches and you can seldom go far without seeing a crumbling façade or a tower in which storks have built their nests. Once I paused to watch a string of little donkeys pass by. Their red caparisons were faded and they carried I know not what in their panniers. But Ecija has been a place of consequence in its day and many of these white houses have gateways of stone surmounted by imposing coats of arms, for to this remote spot flowed the riches of the New World and adventurers who had gathered wealth in the Americas[7] spent here their declining years. It was in one of these houses that Don Calisto lived and as I pulled the bell, I was pleased to think that he lived in such a fitting style. Though I heard the bell peal through the house no one answered it and it rang a second and then a third time: at last an old woman came to the gate.

"What do you want?" she said.

She had fine black eyes, but a sullen look, and I supposed that it was she who took care of the old man. I gave her my card.

"I have an appointment with your master".

She opened the iron gateway and bade me enter. Asking me to wait she left me and went upstairs. The patio was pleasantly cool after the street. Its proportions were noble and you surmised that it had been built by some follower of the *conquistadores*; but the paint was tarnished, the tiles on the floor broken, and here and there great flakes of plaster had fallen away. There was about everything an air of poverty but not of squalor. I knew that Don Calisto was poor. Money had

come to him easily at times but he had never attached any importance to it and had spent it profusely. It was plain that he lived now in a penury that he disdained to notice. In the middle of the patio was a table with a rocking-chair on each side of it, and on the table newspapers a fortnight old. I wondered what dreams occupied his fancy as he sat there on the warm summer nights. On the walls under the colonnade were Spanish pictures, dark and bad. By the side of a door hung a pair of old pistols and I had a pleasant fancy that they were the weapons he had used when in the most celebrated of his many duels, for the sake of a dancer (now I suppose, a toothless and raddled hag), he had killed the Duke of Dos Hermanos.

The scene, with its associations which I vaguely divined, so aptly fitted the romantic poet that I was overcome by the spirit of the place. Its noble indigence surrounded him with a glory as great as the magnificence of his youth; in him too there was the spirit of the old *conquistadores*, and it was becoming that he should finish his famous life in that ruined and magnificent house. Thus surely should a poet live and die[8] I had arrived cool enough and somewhat bored at the prospect of my meeting, but now I began to grow a trifle nervous. I lit a cigarette. I had come at the time appointed and wondered what detained the old man. The silence was strangely disturbing. Ghosts of the past thronged the silent patio and an age dead and gone gained a sort of shadowy life for me. The men of that day had a passion and a wildness of spirit that are gone out of the world for ever. We are no longer capable of their reckless deeds or their theatrical heroics.

I heard a sound and my heart beat quickly. I was excited now and when at last I saw him coming slowly down the stairs I caught my breath. He held my card in his hand. He was a tall old man and exceedingly thin, with a skin the colour of old ivory; his hair was abundant and white, but his bushy eyebrows were dark still; they made his great eyes flash with a more somber fire. It was wonderful that at his age those black

eyes should still preserve their brilliance. His nose was aquiline, his mouth close-set. He was dressed in black and in one hand held a broad-brimmed hat. There was in his bearing assurance and dignity. He was as I should have wished him to be and as I watched him I understood how he had swayed men's minds and touched their hearts. He was every inch a poet[9].

He had reached the patio and came slowly towards me. Ha had really the eyes of an eagle. It seemed to me a tremendous moment, for there he stood, the heir of the great old Spanish poets.

I was abashed, it was fortunate for me that had prepared beforehand the phrase with which I meant to greet him.

"It is a wonderful honour, Maestro, for a foreigner such as I to make the acquaintance of so great a poet."

A flicker of amusement passed through those piercing eyes and a smile for an instant curved the lines of that stern mouth.

"I am not a poet, Senor, but a bristle merchant. You have made a mistake, Don Calisto lives next door".

Commentary on the English:

1 *for once:* also, "just for once", and "for once in a way"; a spoken phrase used to say that smth hardly ever happens – "on this occasion", " for a change".

2 *when I was three-and-twenty:* a more poetic way of saying "twenty-three"; another "20" pattern that has an archaic ring and is therefore useful for making a phrase sound highflown or humorous involves "score" (the old word for "twenty") and works more or less along the French lines, with 70 expressed as "three score ten", "80" as "four score", etc. (cf. the French *quatre-vingts-dis* for 90).

3 *had taken the veil:* the male equivalent is "to take monastic vows".

4 *not a little touching:* an instance of litotes, a device

favored by literary E. and occasionally used for humorous effect, where two negatives, as it were, add up to a positive idea; thus, "not a little touching" means "very touching". Students of E. sometimes mistakenly assume the pattern to mean "not at all".

5 the Plaza: E. has adopted this designation of a public square or market place in Spanish-speaking countries to name a cluster of shops and other business buildings in a town ("Central Plaza").

6 devotions: in the plural this otherwise uncountable noun means "prayers and other religious acts".

7 in the Americas: the admirably economical E. way of saying "in North and South America" which, regrettably, cannot be literally reproduced in Russian.

8 Thus surely should a poet live and die: the inverted word order imparts to the sentence a tone of solemnity that would be greatly diminished if all of the predicate were placed after the subject.

9 every inch a poet: an alternative description of a perfect specimen of whatever it may be is "from head to toe/foot" (var. "from top/crown to toe"), occasionally extended to enliven the utterance, e.g. Britton, a Tory from the top of his head to the soles of his boots", not to be confused with "that's smb all over", a spoken phrase meaning "that is typical of smb" ("He was late of course, but that's Tim all over").

Questions for discussion

Plot Structure and Literary Technique

1 What is the purpose of the author's digression?

2 Do the events of the story involve physical or psychological movement, or both?

3 What can you say about the title of the story?

4 Are there any cases of retardation, enigma, foreshadowing or flashbacks? What do they serve to?

5 How successfully is the surprise ending technique used in the story?

6 What is the message of the story? Is it objective or subjective? What means are used to convey the message?

7 What is the prevailing tone of the story? Is it dramatic, romantic or lyric?

Character-Images

1 Is the main character-image related to the message?

2 How is the protagonist described, directly or indirectly? What indirect means are used to characterize the protagonist?

3 Does the writer give his psychological portrayal?

4 Does the setting help to characterize the protagonist?

5 Which of his features are mainly revealed by actions?

Text 3

While reading the text find the answers to the following questions:

1 How does the author catch and hold the reader's interest and curiosity?

2 Why was Madame Beaumont such a guest that the Hotel Lotus loved? What made Madame Beaumont similar to other guests of the Hotel Lotus? Is it difficult to be similar to others?

3 What attracted Harold Farrington to Madame Beaumont? Is it "like draws to like"?

4 What did the author mean saying that "there was a mystic freemansory between the discriminating guests of the Lotus"?

5 Does the title foreshadow the outcome of the events?

Transients in Arcadia

O' Henry

There is a hotel on Broadway that has escaped discovery by the summer-resort promoters. It is deep and wide and cool. Its rooms are finished in dark oak of a low temperature. Home-made breezes and deep-green shrubbery give it the delights without the inconveniences of the Adirondacks. One can mount its broad staircases or glide dreamily upward in its aerial elevators, attended by guides in brass buttons, with a serene joy that Alpine climbers have never attained. There is a chef in its kitchen who will prepare for you brook trout better than the White Mountains ever served, sea food that would turn Old Point Comfort – "by Gad, sah!" – green with envy, and Maine venison that would melt the official heart of the game warden.

A few have found out this oasis in the July desert of Manhattan. During that month you will see the hotel's reduced array of guests scattered luxuriously about in the cool twilight of its lofty dining-room, gazing at one another across the snowy waste of unoccupied tables, silently congratulatory.

Superfluous, watchful, pneumatically moving waiters hover near, supplying every want before it is expressed. The temperature is perpetual April. The ceiling is painted in water colors to counterfeit a summer sky across which clouds drift and do not vanish as those of nature do to our regret.

The pleasing, distant roar of Broadway is transformed in the imagination of the happy guests to the noise of a waterfall filling the woods with its restful sound. At every strange footstep the guests turn an anxious ear, fearful lest their retreat be discovered and invaded by the restless pleasure-seekers who are forever hounding Nature to her deepest lairs.

Thus in the depopulated caravansary the little band of connoisseurs jealously hide themselves during the heated season, enjoying to the uttermost delights of mountain and seashore that art and skill have gathered and served to them.

In this July came to the hotel one whose card that she sent to the clerk for her name to be registered read "Mme. Héloise D'Arcy Beaumont".

Madame Beaumont was a guest such as the Hotel Lotus loved. She possessed the fine air of the élite, tempered and sweetened by a cordial graciousness that made the hotel employées her slaves. Bellboys fought for the honor of answering her ring; the clerks, but for the question of ownership, would have deeded to her the hotel and its contents; the other guests regarded her as the final touch of feminine exclusiveness and beauty that rendered the entourage perfect.

This super-excellent guest rarely left the hotel. Her habits were consonant with the customs of the discriminating patrons of the Hotel Lotus. To enjoy that delectable hostelry one must forego the city as though it were leagues away. By night a brief excursion to the nearby roofs is in order; but during the torrid day one remains in the umbrageous fastnesses of the Lotus as a trout hangs poised in the pellucid sanctuaries of his favorite pool.

Though alone in the Hotel Lotus, Madame Beaumont preserved the state of a queen whose loneliness was of position only. She breakfasted at ten, a cool, sweet, leisurely, delicate being who glowed softly in the dimness like a jasmine flower in the dusk.

But at dinner was Madame's glory at its height. She wore a gown as beautiful and immaterial as the mist from an unseen cataract in a mountain gorge. The nomenclature of this gown is beyond the guess of the scribe. Always pale-red roses reposed against its lace-garnished front. It was a gown that the head-waiter viewed with respect and met at the door. You thought of Paris when you saw it, and maybe of mysterious countesses, and certainly of Versailles and rapiers and Mrs. Fiske and

rouge-et-noir. There was an untraceable rumor in the Hotel Lotus that Madame was a cosmopolite, and that she was pulling with her slender white hands certain strings between the nations in favor of Russia. Being a citizeness of the world's smoothest roads it was small wonder that she was quick to recognize in the refined purlieus of the Hotel Lotus the most desirable spot in America for a restful sojourn during the heat of midsummer.

On the third day of Madame Beaumont's residence in the hotel a young man entered and registered himself as a guest. His clothing – to speak of his points in approved order – was quietly in the mode; his features good and regular; his expression that of a poised and sophisticated man of the world. He informed the clerk that he would remain three or four days, inquired concerning the sailing of European steamships, and sank into the blissful inanition of the nonpareil hotel with the contented air of a traveler in his favorite inn.

The young man – not to question the veracity of the register – was Harold Farrington. He drifted into the exclusive and current of life in the Lotus so tactfully and silently that not a ripple alarmed his fellow-seekers after rest. He ate in the Lotus and of its patronym, and was lulled into blissful peace with the other fortunate mariners. In one day he acquired his table and his waiter and the fear lest the panting chasers after repose that kept Broadway warm should pounce upon and destroy this contiguous but covert haven.

After dinner on the next day after the arrival of Harold Farrington Madame Beaumont dropped her handkerchief in passing out. Mr. Farrington recovered and returned it without the effusiveness of a seeker after acquaintance.

Perhaps there was a mystic freemasonry between the discriminating guests of the Lotus. Perhaps they were drawn one to another by the fact of their common good fortune in discovering the acme of summer resorts in a Broadway hotel. Words delicate in courtesy and tentative in departure from

formality passed between the two. And, as if in the expedient atmosphere of a real summer resort, an acquaintance grew, flowered and fructified on the spot as does the mystic plant of the conjuror. For a few moments they stood on a balcony upon which the corridor ended, and tossed the feathery ball of conversation.

"One tires of the old resorts", said Madame Beaumont, with a faint but sweet smile. "What is the use to fly to the mountains or the seashore to escape noise and dust when the very people that make both follow us there?"

"Even on the ocean", remarked Farrington sadly, "the Philistines be upon you. The most exclusive steamers are getting to be scarcely more than ferry boats. Heaven help us when the summer resorter discovers that the Lotus is further away from Broadway than Thousand Islands or Mackinac".

"I hope our secret will be safe for a week, anyhow," said Madame, with a sigh and a smile. "I do not know where I would go if they should descend upon the dear Lotus. I know of but one place so delightful in summer, and that is the castle of Count Polinski, in the Ural Mountains."

"I hear that Baden-Baden and Cannes are almost deserted this season," said Farrington. "Year by year the old resorts fall in disrepute. Perhaps many others, like ourselves, are seeking out the quiet nooks that are overlooked by the majority."

"I promise myself three days more of this delicious rest," said Madame Beaumont. "On Monday the *Cedric* sails."

Harold Farrington's eyes proclaimed his regret. "I too must leave on Monday," he said, "but I do not go abroad."

Madame Beaumont shrugged one round shoulder in a foreign gesture.

"One cannot hide forever, charming though it may be. The château has been in preparation for me longer than a month. Those house parties that one must give – what a nuisance! But I shall never forget my week in the Hotel Lotus."

"Nor shall I," said Farrington in low voice, "and I shall never *forgive* the *Cedric*."

On Sunday evening, three days afterward, the two sat at little table on the same balcony. A discreet waiter brought ices and small glasses of claret cup.

Madame Beaumont wore the same beautiful evening gown that she had worn each day at dinner. She seemed thoughtful. Near her hand on the table lay a small chatelaine purse. After she had eaten her ice she opened the purse and took out a one-dollar bill.

"Mr. Farrington," she said with the smile that had won the Hotel Lotus, "I want to tell you something. I'm going to leave before breakfast in the morning, because I've got to go back to my work. I'm behind the hosiery counter at Casey's Mammoth Store, and my vacation's up at eight o'clock tomorrow. That paper dollar is the last cent I'll see till I draw my eight dollars salary next Saturday night. You're a real gentleman, and you've been good to me, and I wanted to tell you before I went."

"I've been saving up out of my wages for a year just for this vacation. I wanted to spend one week like a lady if I never do another one. I wanted to get up when I please instead of having to crawl out at seven every morning; and I wanted to live on the best and be waited on and ring bells for things just like rich folks do. Now I've done it, and I've had the happiest time I ever expect to have in my life. I'm going back to my work and my little hall bedroom satisfied fro another year. I wanted to tell you about it, Mr. Farrington, because I – I thought you kind of liked me, and I – I liked you. But, oh, I couldn't help deceiving you up till now, for it was all just like a fairy tale to me. So I talked about Europe and the things I've read about in other countries, and made you think I was a great lady.

"This dress I've got on – it's the only one I have that's fit to wear – I bought from O'Dowd & Levinsky on the instalment plan.

"Seventy-five dollars is the price, and it was made to measure. I paid $10 down, and they're to collect $1 a week till it's paid for. That'll be about all I have to say, Mr. Farrington, except that my name is Mamie Siviter instead of Madame Beaumont, and I thank you for your attentions. This dollar will pay the instalment due on the dress to-morrow. I guess I'll go up to my room now."

Harold Farrington listened to the recital of the Lotus's loveliest guest with an impassive countenance. When she had concluded he drew a small book like a checkbook from his coat pocket. He wrote upon a blank form in this with a stub of pencil, tore out the leaf, tossed it over to his companion and took up the paper dollar.

"I've got to go to work, too, in the morning," he said, "and I might as well begin now. There's a receipt for the dollar instalment. I've been a collector for O'Dowd & Levinsky for three years. Funny, ain't it, that you and me both had the same idea about spending our vacation? I've always wanted to put up at a swell hotel, and I saved up out of my twenty per, and did it. Say, Mame, how about a trip to Coney Saturday night on the boat – what?"

The face of the pseudo Madame Héloise D'Arcy Beaumont beamed.

"Oh, you bet I'll go, Mr. Farrington. The store closes at twelve on Saturdays. I guess Coney'll be all right even if we did spend a week with the swells."

Below the balcony the sweltering city growled and buzzed in the July night. Inside the Hotel Lotus the tempered, cool shadows reigned, and the solicitous waiter single-footed near the low windows, ready at a nod to serve Madame and her escort.

At the door of the elevator Farrington took his leave, and Madame Beaumont made her last ascent. But before they reached the noiseless cage he said: "Just forget that 'Harold Farrington', will you? – McManus is the name – James McManus. Some call Jimmy."

"Good-night, Jimmy," said Madame.

Questions for discussion:

Message, Plot Structure, Setting

1 Through what character is the message of the story conveyed?

2 Do you think the author's intention was to relate the life of Madame Beaumont at the Hotel Lotus or to discuss the main problem of the story?

3 What role does the title play?

4 Is there any denouement? Is it a surprise ending? What is the irony of the end of the story?

5 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 and mood or to reinforce characterization?

6 What is the prevailing tone of the story? What are the indices of the tone? Are there any tone shifts?

Character-Images

1What means of characterization are employed by the author to create the image of Madame Beaumont?

2 What role does the description of her habits, clothes and behavior play in revealing her character?

3 Which of her features are mainly revealed by actions?

4 Can Madame Beaumont be regarded as a foil to Harold Farrington? Is there any difference between them? Would

Harold Farrington have told the truth if Madame Beaumont hadn't told him anything?

5 Does the author penetrate into the mind of the protagonist and describe psychological changes that motivate her actions?

6 Why did the protagonist take the name of Madame Beaumont?

7 Does the final scene reveal the main feature of Madame Beaumont's character?

Text 4

While reading the text find the answers to the following questions:

1 Did the first event arouse your curiosity? How did the narrator happen to become a humorist?

2 What is the reason that in some time quips and droll sayings no longer fell carelessly from John's lips? Why was it difficult for John to catch any ideas? How did he try to do it? What did he think of his actions and behaviour? Was it worth it?

3 What can John's turning to undertaking business after writing humorous stories be accounted for?

Confessions of a Humorist

O'Henry

There was a painless stage of incubation that lasted twenty-five years, and then it broke out on me, and people said I was It.

But they called it humor instead of measles.

The employees in the store bought a silver inkstand for the senior partner on his fiftieth birthday. We crowded into his private office to present it.

I had been selected for spokesman, and I made a little speech that I had been preparing for a week.

It made a hit. It was full of puns and epigrams and funny twists that brought down the house – which was a very solid one in the wholesale hardware line.

Old Marlowe himself actually grinned, and the employees took their cue and roared.

My reputation as a humorist dates from half-past nine o'clock on that morning.

For weeks afterward my fellow clerks fanned the flame of my self-esteem. One by one they came to me, saying what an awfully clever speech that was, old man, and carefully explained to me the point of each one of my jokes.

Gradually I found that I was expected to keep it up. Others might speak sanely on business matters and the day's topics, but from me something gamesome and airy was required.

I was expected to crack jokes about the crockery and lighten up the granite ware with persiflage. I was second bookkeeper, and if I failed to show up a balance sheet without something comic about the footings or could find no cause for laughter in an invoice of plows, the other clerks were disappointed.

Be degrees my fame spread, and I became a local "character". Our town was small enough to make this possible. The daily newspaper quoted me. At social gatherings I was indispensable.

I believe I did possess considerable wit and a facility for quick and spontaneous repartee. This gift I cultivated and improved by practice. And the nature of it was kindly and genial, not running to sarcasm or offending others. People began to smile when they saw me coming, and by the time we had met I generally had the word ready to broaden the smile into a laugh.

I had married early. We had a charming boy of three and a girl of five. Naturally, we lived in a vine-covered cottage, and

were happy. My salary as bookkeeper in the hardware concern kept at a distance those ills attendant upon superfluous wealth.

At sundry times I had written out a few jokes and conceits that I considered peculiarly happy, and had sent them to certain periodicals that print such things. All of them had been instantly accepted. Several of the editors had written to request further contributions.

One day I received a letter from the editor of a famous weekly publication. He suggested that I submit to him a humorous composition to fill a column of space; hinting that he would make it a regular feature of each issue of the work proved satisfactory. I did so, and at the end of two weeks he offered to make a contract with me for a year at a figure that was considerably higher than the amount paid me by the hardware firm.

I was filled with delight. My wife already crowned me in her mind with the imperishable evergreens of literary success. We had lobster croquettes and a bottle of blackberry wine for supper that night. Here was the chance to liberate myself from drudgery. I talked over the matter very seriously with Louisa. We agreed that I must resign my place at the store and devote myself to humor.

I resigned. My fellow clerks gave me a farewell banquet. The speech I made there coruscated. It was printed in full by the *Gazette*. The next morning I awoke and looked at the clock.

"Late, by George!" I exclaimed, and grabbed for my clothes. Louisa reminded me that I was no longer a slave to hardware and contractor's supplies. I was now a professional humorist.

After breakfast she proudly led me to the little room off the kitchen. Dear girl! There was my table and chair, writing pad, ink, and pipe tray. And all the author's trappings – the celery stand full of fresh roses and honeysuckle, last year's calendar

on the wall, the dictionary, and a little bag of chocolates to nibble inspirations. Dear girl!

I sat me to work. The wall paper is patterned with arabesques or odalisks or-perhaps- it is trapezoids. Upon one of the figures I fixed my eyes. I bethought me of humor.

A voice startled me – Louisa's voice.

"If you aren't too busy, dear," it said, "come to dinner."

I looked at my watch. Yes, five hours had been gathered in by the grim scytheman. I went to dinner.

"You mustn't work too hard at first," said Louisa. "Goethe – or was it Napoleon? – said five hours a day is enough for mental labor. Couldn't you take me and the children to the woods this afternoon?"

"I *am* a little tired," I admitted. So we went to the woods.

But I soon got the swing of it. Within a month I was turning out copy as regular as shipments of hardware.

And I had a success. My column in the weekly made some stir, and I was referred to in a gossipy way by the critics as something fresh in the line of humorists. I augmented my income considerably by contributing to other publications.

I picked up the tricks of the trade. I could take a funny idea and make a two-line joke of it, earning a dollar. With false whiskers on it, it would serve up cold as a quatrain, doubling its producing value. By turning the skirt and adding a ruffle of rhyme you would hardly recognize it as *vers se société* with neatly shod feet and a fashion-plate illustration.

I began to save up money, and we had new carpets, and a parlor organ. My townspeople began to look upon me as a citizen of some consequence instead of the merry trifler I had been when I clerked in the hardware store.

After five or six months the spontaneity seemed to depart from my humor. Quips and droll sayings no longer fell carelessly from my lips. I was sometimes hard run for material. I found myself listening to catch available ideas from the conversation of my friends. Sometimes I chewed my pencil

and gazed at the wall paper fro hours trying to build up some gay little bubble of unstudied fun.

And then I became a harpy, a Moloch, a Jonah, a vampire, to my acquaintances. Anxious, haggard, greedy, I stood among them like a veritable killjoy. Let a bright saying, a witty comparison, a piquant phrase fall from their lips and I was after it like a hound springing upon a bone. I dared not trust my memory; but, turning aside guiltily and meanly, I would make a note of it in my ever-present memorandum book or upon my cuff for my own future use.

My friends regarded me in sorrow and wonder. I was not the same man. Where once I had furnished them entertainment and jollity, I now preyed upon them. No jets from me ever bid for their smiles now. They were too precious. I could not afford to dispense gratuitously the means of my livelihood.

I was a lugubrious fox praising the singing of my friends, the crows, that they might drop from their beaks the morsels of wit that I coveted.

Nearly every one began to avoid me. I even forgot how to smile, not even paying that much for the sayings I appropriated.

No persons, places, times, or subjects were exempt from my plundering in search of material. Even in church my demoralized fancy went hunting among the solemn aisles and pillars for spoil.

Did the minister give out the long-meter doxology, at once I began: "Doxology-sockdology-sockdolager-meter-meet her".

The sermon ran through my mental sieve, its precepts filtering unheeded, could I but glean a suggestion of a pun or bon mot. The solemnest anthems of the choir were but an accompaniment to my thoughts as I conceived new changes to ring upon the ancient comicalities concerning the jealousies of soprano, tenor, and basso.

My own home became a hunting ground. My wife is a singularly feminine creature, candid, sympathetic, and

impulsive. Once her conversation was my delight, and her ideas a source of unfailing pleasure. Now I worked her. She was a gold mine of those amusing but lovable inconsistencies that distinguish the female mind.

I began to market those pearls of unwisdom and humor that should have enriched only the sacred precincts of home. With devilish cunning I encouraged her to talk. Unsuspecting, she laid her heart bare. Upon the cold, conspicuous common, printed page I offered it to the public gaze.

A literary Judas, I kissed her and betrayed her. For pieces of silver I dressed her sweet confidences in the pantalettes and frills of folly and made them dance in the market place.

Dear Louisa! Of nights I have bent over her cruel as a wolf above a tender lamb, hearkening even to her soft words murmured in sleep, hoping to catch an idea for my next day's grind. There is worse to come.

God help me! Next my fangs were buried deep in the neck of the fugitive sayings of my little children.

Guy and Viola were two bright fountains of childish, quaint thoughts and speeches. I found a ready sale for this kind of humor, and was furnishing a regular department in a magazine with "Funny Fancies of Childhood". I began to stalk them as an Indian stalks the antelope. I would hide behind sofas and doors, or crawl on my hands and knees among the bushes in the yard to eavesdrop while they were at play. I had all the qualities of a harpy except remorse.

Once, when I was barren of ideas, and my copy must leave in the next mail, I covered myself in a pile of autumn leaves in the yard, where I knew they intended to come to play. I cannot bring myself to believe that Guy was aware of my hiding place, but even if he was, I would be loath to blame him for his setting fire to the leaves, causing the destruction of my new suit of clothes, and nearly cremating a parent.

Soon my own children began to shun me as a pest. Often, when I was creeping upon them like a melancholy ghoul, I

would hear them say to each other: "Here comes papa," and they would gather their toys and scurry away to some safer hiding place. Miserable wretch that I was!

And yet I was doing well financially. Before the first year had passed I had saved a thousand dollars, and we had lived in comfort.

But at what a cost! I am not quite clear as to what a pariah is, but I was everything that it sounds like. I had no friends, no amusements, no enjoyment of life. The happiness of my family had been sacrificed. I was a bee, sucking sordid honey from life's fairest flowers, dreaded and shunned on an account of my sting.

One day a man spoke to me, with a pleasant and friendly smile. Not in months had the thing happened. I was passing the undertaking establishment of Peter Heffelbower. Peter stood in the door and saluted me. I stopped, strangely wrung in my heart by his greeting. He asked me inside.

The day was chill and rainy. We went into the back room, where a fire burned in a little stove. A customer came, and Peter left me alone for a while. Presently I felt a new feeling stealing over me – a sense of beautiful calm and content. I looked around the place. There were rows of shining rosewood caskets, black palls, trestles, hearse plumes, mourning streamers, and all the paraphernalia of the solemn trade. Here was the peace, order, silence, the abode of grave and dignified reflections. Here, on the brink of life, was a little niche pervaded by the spirit of eternal rest.

When I entered it, the follies of the world abandoned me at the door. I felt no inclination to wrest a humorous idea from those sombre and stately trappings. My mind seemed to stretch itself to grateful repose upon a couch draped with gentle thoughts.

A quarter of an hour ago I was an abandoned humorist. Now I was a philosopher, full of serenity and ease. I had found a *refuge* from humor, from the hot chase of the shy quip, from

the degrading pursuit of the panting joke, from the restless reach after the nimble repartee.

I had not known Heffelbower well. When he came back, I let him talk, fearful that he might prove to be a jarring note in the sweet, dirgelike harmony of his establishment.

But, no. He chimed truly. I gave a long sigh of happiness. Never have I known a man's talk to be as magnificently dull as Peter's was. Compared with it the Dead Sea is a geyser. Never a sparkle or a glimmer of wit marred his words. Commonplaces as trite and as plentiful as blackberries flowed from his lips no more stirring in quality than a last week's tape running from a ticker. Quaking a little, I tried upon him one of my best pointed jokes. It fell back ineffectual, with the point broken. I loved that man from then on.

Two or three evenings each week I would steal down to Heffelbower's and revel in his back room. That was my only joy. I began to rise early and hurry through my work, that I might spend more time in my haven. In no other place could I throw off my habit of extracting humorous ideas from my surroundings. Peter's talk left me no opening had I besieged it ever so hard.

Under this influence I began to improve in spirits. It was the recreation from one's labor which every man needs. I surprised one or two of my former friends by throwing them a smile and a cheery word as I passed them on the streets. Several times I dumbfounded my family by relaxing long enough to make a jocose remark in their presence.

I had so long been ridden by the incubus of humor that I seized my hours of holiday with a schoolboy's zest.

My work began to suffer. It was not the pain and burden to me that it had been. I often whistled at my desk, and wrote with far more fluency than before. I accomplished my tasks impatiently, as anxious to be off to my helpful retreat as a drunkard is to get to his tavern.

My wife had some anxious hours in conjecturing where I spent my afternoons. I thought it best not to tell her; women do not understand these things. Poor girl! – she had one shock out of it.

One day I brought home a silver coffin handle for a paper weight and a fine, fluffy hearse plume to dust my papers with.

I loved to see them on my desk, and think of the beloved back room down at Heffelbower's. But Louisa found them, and she shrieked with horror. I had to console her with some lame excuse for having them, but I saw in her eyes that the prejudice was not removed. I had to remove the articles, though, at double-quick time.

One day Peter Heffelbower laid before me a temptation that swept me off my feet. In his sensible, uninspired way he showed me his books, and explained that his profits and his business were increasing rapidly. He had thought of taking in a partner with some cash. He would rather have me than any one he knew. When I left his place that afternoon Peter had my check for the thousand dollars I had in the bank, and I was a partner in his undertaking business.

I went home with feelings of delirious joy, mingled with a certain amount of doubt. I was dreading to tell me wife about it. But I walked on air. To give up the writing of humorous stuff, once more to enjoy the apples of life, instead of squeezing them to a pulp for a few drops of hard cider to make the public feel funny – what a boon that would be!

At the supper table Louisa handed me some letters that had come during my absence. Several of them contained rejected manuscript. Ever since I first began going to Heffelbower's my stuff had been coming back with alarming frequency. Lately I had been dashing off my jokes and articles with the greatest fluency. Previously I had labored like a bricklayer, slowly and with agony.

Presently I opened a letter from the editor of the weekly with which I had a regular contract. The checks for that weekly article were still our main dependence. The letter ran thus:

DEAR SIR:

As you are aware, our contract for the year expires with the present month. While regretting the necessity for so doing, we must say that we do not care to renew same for the coming year. We were quite pleased with your style of humor, which seems to have delighted quite a large proportion of our readers. But for the past two months we have noticed a decided falling off its quality.

Your earlier work showed a spontaneous, easy, natural flow of fun and wit. Of late it is labored, studied, and unconvincing, giving painful evidence of hard toil and drudging mechanism.

Again regretting that we do not consider your contributions available any longer, we are, yours sincerely,

THE EDITOR

I handed this letter to my wife. After she had read it her face grew extremely long, and there were tears in her eyes.

"The mean old thing!" she exclaimed indignantly. "I'm sure your pieces are just as good as they ever were. And it doesn't take you half as long to write them as it did." And then, I suppose, Louisa thought of the checks that would cease coming. "Oh, John," she wailed, "what will you do now?"

For an answer I got up and began to do a polka step around the supper table. I am sure Louisa thought the trouble had driven me mad; and I think the children hoped it had, for they tore after me, yelling with glee and emulating my steps. I was now something like their old playmate as of yore.

"The theatre for us to-night!" I shouted; "Nothing less. And a late, wild, disreputable supper for all of us at the Palace Restaurant. Lumpty-diddle-de-dee-de-dum!"

And then I explained my glee by declaring that I was now a partner in a prosperous undertaking establishment, and that written jokes might go hide their heads in sackcloth and ashes for all me.

With the editor's letter in her hand to justify the deed I had done, my wife could advance no objections save a few mild ones based on the feminine inability to appreciate a good thing such as the little back room of Peter Hef - no, of Heffelbower & Co's, undertaking establishment.

In conclusion, I will say that to-day you will find no man in our town as well liked, as jovial, and full of merry sayings as I. My jokes are again noised and quoted; once more I take pleasure in my wife's confidential chatter without a mercenary thought, while Guy and Viola play at my feet distributing gems of childish humor without fear of the ghastly tormentor who used to dog their steps, notebook in hand.

Our business has prospered finely. I keep the books and look after the shop, while Peter attends to outside matters. He says that my levity and high spirits would simply turn any funeral into a regular Irish wake.

Questions for Discussion

Message, Plot Structure, Literary Technique and Tone

1 What is the function of the title of the story? Does it contain foreshadowing or any implicit meaning that the reader discovers only after reading the story?

2 Does the story contain all the components of the plot structure?

3 What event do the complications begin with? Do the complications include physical or psychological movement of events?

4 What type of conflict is the plot based on?

5 What did the author gain by having the story told by the first-person narrator? How does it contribute to the tone of the story and its atmosphere?

6 What is the irony of the story? Is it created linguistically or extra-linguistically? Provide some evidence from the text to show it.

7 What language means help to create the prevailing tone of the story? Is humor expressed linguistically or extra-linguistically? Provide some evidence from the story.

8 What is the message of the story? How is it related to the theme of the story?

9 What is the climax of the story?

Character-Images

1 What is the main means of characterization employed by the author?

2 Which features of the protagonist's character are mainly revealed?

3 How does the narrator describe his humor?

4 Was John happy when he gained the reputation of a humorist?

5 Did his life changed after he had changed his work?

6 What did he extract humorous ideas from? How did it affect his family?

7 What role did John's visit to the undertaker's establishment play in his life and career? What attracted John to Peter?

8 Does the author reveal the inner state of the character?

9 What do speech characteristics reveal?

Text 5

As you read the story, think of the answers to the following questions:

1 Does the author manage to catch the reader's interest from the start and hold it up to the very end? How does he do it?

2 What was the main problem that Chalmers encountered?

3 What were the poisoned barbs in your opinion? What was the purpose of it?

4 Why was the painter put out of business? Do people like their secrets to be shown up in a picture? Why?

A Madison Square Arabian Night

O'Henry

To Carson Chalmers, in his apartment near the square, Philips brought the evening mail. Besides the routine correspondence there were two items bearing the same foreign postmark.

One of the incoming parcels contained a photograph of a woman. The other contained an interminable letter, over which Chalmers hung, absorbed, for a long time. The letter was from another woman; and it contained poisoned barbs, sweetly dipped in honey, and feathered with innuendoes concerning the photographed woman.

Chalmers tore this letter into a thousand bits and began to wear out his expensive rug by striding back and forth upon it. Thus an animal from the jungle acts when it is caged, and thus a caged man acts when he is housed in a jungle of doubt.

By and by the restless mood was overcome. The rug was not an enchanted one. For sixteen feet he could travel along it: three thousand miles was beyond its power to aid.

Philips appeared. He never entered; he invariably appeared, like a well-oiled genie.

"Will you dine here, sir, or out?" he asked.

"Here, said Chalmers, "and in half an hour." He listened glumly to the January blasts making an Æolian trombone of the empty street.

"Wait," he said to the disappearing genie. "As I came home across the end of the square I saw many men standing there in rows. There was one mounted upon something, talking. Why do those men stand in rows, and why are they there?"

"They are homeless men, sir," said Philips. "The man standing on the box tries to get lodging for them for the night. People come around to listen and give him money. Then he sends as many as the money will pay for to some lodging-house. That is why they stand in rows; they get sent to bed in order as they came."

"By the time the dinner is served," said Chalmers, "have one of those men here. He will dine with me."

"W-w-which –" began Philips, stammering fro the first time during his service.

"Choose one at random," said Chalmers. "You might see that he is reasonably sober – and a certain amount of cleanliness will not be held against him. That is all."

It was an unusual thing for Carson Chalmers to play the Caliph. But on that night he felt the inefficacy of conventional antidotes to melancholy. Something wanton and egregious, something high-flavored and Arabian, he must have to lighten his mood.

On the half hour Philips had finished his duties as a slave of the lamp. The waiters from the restaurant below had whisked aloft the delectable dinner. The dining table, laid for two, glowed cheerily in the glow of the pink-shaded candles.

And now Philips, as though he ushered a cardinal – or held in charge a burglar – wafted in shivering guest who had been haled from the line of mendicant lodgers.

It is a common thing to call such men wrecks; if the comparison can be used here it is the specific one of a derelict come to grief through fire. Even yet some flickering combustion illuminated the drifting hulk. His face and hands had been recently washed – a rite insisted upon by Philips as a memorial to the slaughtered conventions. In the candle light he stood, a flaw in the decorous fittings of the apartment. His face was a sickly white, covered almost to the eyes with a stubble the shade of a red Irish setter's coat. Philips had failed to control the pale brown hair, long matted and conformed to the contour of a constantly worn hat. His eyes were full of hopeless, tricky defiance like that seen in a cur's that is cornered by his tormentors. His shabby coat was buttoned high, but a quarter inch of redeeming collar showed above it. His manner was singularly free from embarrassment when Chalmers rose from his chair across the round dining table.

"If you will oblige me," said the host, "I will be glad to have your company at dinner."

"Me name is Plumer," said the highway guest, in harsh and aggressive tones. "If you are like me, you like to know the name of the party you're dining with."

"I was going on to say," continued Chalmers somewhat hastily, "that mine is Chalmers. Will you sit opposite?"

Plumer, of the ruffled plumes, bent his knee for Philips to slide the chair beneath him. He had an air of having sat at attended boards before. Philips set out the anchovies and olives.

"Good!" barked Plumer; "going to be in courses, is it? All right, jovial ruler of Bagdad, I'm your Scheherezade all the way to the toothpicks. You're the first Caliph with a genuine Oriental flavor I've struck since frost. What luck! And I was forty-third in line. I finished counting, just as your welcome

emissary arrived to bid me to the feast. I had about as much chance of getting a bed to-night as I have of being the next President. How will you have the sad story of my life, Mr. Al Raschid – a chapter with each course or the whole edition with the cigars and coffee?"

"The situation does not seem a novel one to you," said Chalmers with a smile.

"By the chin whiskers of the prophet – no!" answered the guest. "New York's as full of cheap Haroun al Raschids as Bagdad is of fleas. I've been held up for my story with a loaded meal pointed at my head twenty times. Catch anybody in New York giving something for nothing! They spell curiosity and charity with the same set of building blocks. Lots of 'em will stake you to a dime and chop-suey; and a few of 'em will play Caliph to the tune of a top sirloin; but every one of 'em will stand over you till they screw your autobiography out of you with foot notes, appendix and unpublished fragments. Oh, I know what to do when I see victuals coming toward me in little old Bagdad-on-the-Subway. I strike the asphalt three times with my forehead and get ready to spiel yarns for my supper. I claim descent from the late Tommy Tucker, who was forced to hand out vocal harmony for his predigested wheaterina and spoopju."

"I do not ask your story," said Chalmers, "I tell you frankly that it was a sudden whim that prompted me to send for some stranger to dine with me. I assure you you will not suffer through any curiosity of mine."

"Oh, fudge!" exclaimed the guest, enthusiastically tackling his soup, "I don't mind it a bit. I'm a regular Oriental magazine with a red cover and the leaves cut when the Caliph walks abroad. In fact, we fellows in the bed line have a sort of union rate for things of this sort. Somebody's always stopping and wanting to know what brought us down so low in the world. For a sandwich and a glass of beer I tell 'em that drink did it. For corned beef and cabbage and a cup of coffee I give

'em the hard-hearted-landlord -- six months-in-the-hospital-lost-job story. A sirloin steak and a quarter for a bed gets the Wall Street tragedy of the swept-away fortune and the gradual descent. This is the first spread of this kind I've stumbled against. I haven't got a story to fit it. I'll tell you what, Mr. Chalmers, I'm going to tell you the truth for this, if you'll listen to it. It'll be harder for you to believe than the made-up ones."

An hour later the Arabian guest lay back with a sigh of satisfaction while Phillips brought the coffee and cigars and cleared the table.

"Did you ever hear of Sherrard Plumer?" he asked, with a strange smile.

"I remember the name", said Chalmers. "He was a painter, I think, of a good deal of prominence a few years ago."

"Five years," said the guest. "Then I went down like a chunk of lead. I'm Sherrard Plumer! I sold the last portrait I painted for $ 2,000. After that I couldn't have found a sitter for a gratis picture."

"What was the trouble?" Chalmers could not resist asking.

"Funny thing," answered Plumer, grimly. "Never quite understood it myself. For a while I swam like a cork. I broke into the swell crowd and got commissions right and left. The newspapers called me a fashionable painter. Then the funny things began to happen. Whenever I finished a picture people would come to see it, and whisper and look queerly at one another."

"I soon found out what the trouble was. I had a knack of bringing out in the face of a portrait the hidden character of the original. I don't know how I did it – I painted what I saw – but I know it did me. Some of my sitters were fearfully enraged and refused their pictures. I painted the portrait of a very beautiful and popular society dame. When it was finished her husband looked at it with a peculiar expression on his face, and the next week he sued for divorce.

"I remember one case of a prominent banker who sat to me. While I had his portrait on exhibition in my studio an acquaintance of his came in to look at it. 'Bless me,' says he, 'does he really look like that?' I told him it was considered a faithful likeness. 'I never noticed that expression about his eyes before,' said he; 'I think I'll drop downtown and change my bank account.' He did drop down, but the bank account was gone and so was Mr. Banker.

"It wasn't long till they put me out of business. People don't want their secret meanness shown up in a picture. They can smile and twist their own faces and deceive you, but the picture can't. I couldn't get an order for another picture, and I had to give up. I worked as a newspaper artist for a while, and then for a lithographer, but my work with them got me into the same trouble. If I drew from a photograph my drawing showed up characteristics and expressions that you couldn't find in the photo, but I guess they were in the original, all right. The customers raised lively rows, especially the women, and I never could hold a job long. So I began to rest my weary head upon the breast of Old Booze for comfort. And pretty soon I was in the free-bed line and doing oral fiction for hand-outs among the food bazaars. Does the truthful statement weary thee, O Caliph? I can turn on the Wall Street disaster stop if you prefer, but that requires a tear, and I'm afraid I can't hustle one up after that good dinner."

"No, no," said Chalmers, earnestly, "you interest me very much. Did all of your portraits reveal some unpleasant trait, or were there some that did not suffer from the ordeal of your peculiar brush?"

"Some? Yes," said Plumer. "Children generally, a good many women and a sufficient number of men. All people aren't bad, you know. When they were all right the pictures were all right. As I said, I don't explain it, but I'm telling you facts."

On Chalmers' writing-table lay the photograph that he had received that day in the foreign mail. Ten minutes later he had Plumer at work making a sketch from it in pastels. At the end of an hour the artist rose and stretched wearily. "It's done," he yawned. "You'll excuse me for being so long. I got interested in the job. Lordy! But I'm tired. No bed last night, you know. Guess it'll have to be good-night now, O Commandeer of the Faithful!"

Chalmers went as far as the door with him and slipped some bills into his hand.

"Oh! I'll take 'em," said Plumer. "All that's included in the fall. Thanks. And for the very good dinner. I shall sleep on the feathers to-night and dream of Bagdad. I hope it won't turn out to be a dream in the morning. Farewell, most excellent Caliph!"

Again Chalmers paced restlessly upon his rug. But his beat lay as far from the table whereon lay the pastel sketch as the room would permit. Twice, thrice, he tried to approach it, but failed. He could see the dun and gold and brown of the colors, but there was a wall about it built by his fears that kept him at a distance. He sat down and tried to calm himself. He sprang up and rang for Philips.

"There is a young artist in this building," he said – a Mr.Reineman – do you know which is his apartment?"

"Top floor, front, sir," said Philips.

"Go up and ask him to favor me with his presence here for a few minutes."

"Mr. Reineman," said he, "there is a little pastel sketch on yonder table. I would be glad if you will give me your opinion of it as to its artistic merits and as a picture."

The young artist advanced to the table and took up the sketch. Chalmers half turned away, leaning upon the back of a chair.

"How – do – you find it?" he asked, slowly.

"As a drawing," said the artist, "I can't praise it enough. It's the work of a master – bold and fine and true. It puzzles me a little: I haven't seen any pastel work near as good in years."

"The face, man - the subject – the original what would you say of that?"

"The face," said Reineman, "is the face of one of God's own angels. May I ask who –"

"My wife!" shouted Chalmers, wheeling and pouncing upon the astonished artist, gripping his hand and pounding his back. "She is traveling in Europe. Take that sketch, boy, and paint the picture of your life from it and leave the price to me."

Questions for further discussion

Plot structure, Narrative method, Message

1 Does the title of the story serve as a means of foreshadowing or focus the reader's attention on the most relevant characters or details?

2 Does the plot contain all the components of the plot structure?

3 Is the setting described only in the exposition or does it accompany the main event of the story? Is it important for conveying the message?

4 What is the message of the story? How is it conveyed?

5 Does the message penetrate all the elements of the story? What are the implications?

6 Is the story told by the omniscient or by the observer-author?

7 Is the author involved or detached? Provide evidence.

8 What role do the dialogues play in the story?

9 How does the narrative method affect the language of the story and the sequencing of the events?

10 What is the main conflict of the story? How is it revealed?

11 What is the climax? Does it reveal the emotional state of the main character?

Character-Images, Style

1 What means of characterization does the author employ?

2 Are the characters real and convincing? Supply some evidence to support your view.

3 What purpose do the minor characters serve?

4 Does irony help to reveal the contradictions between what people (or things) seem to be and what their real nature is like? Do you think that portraits can reveal the real nature of a person?

5 Does the narrator intend to establish an intimate relationship with the reader?

6 How would you characterize the style? What is the prevailing tone of the story?

Text 6

As you read the story, think of the answers to the following questions:

1 What was the mystery of Christine's past? Why was she so much ashamed of her past?

2 In what relations were Christine and Anna?

3 What happened to Anna's father?

4 Was Christine sorry for what had happened on the night of Anna's birth? What did she do to be forgiven?

5 What helped Anna to return to life? What were the family symbols?

6 What is the author's attitude to Christine?

The Christmas Miracle

Rachel Baker

Anna was tired of being treated like a child. Her mother didn't seem to know the difference between six and sixteen. Christine, Anna's mother, was tired of being treated like the enemy. Why couldn't Anna understand that all she wanted was for her daughter to not experience the pain and heartache she had gone through? Of course, she was too ashamed to tell Anna about her past. Friday night had rolled around again and Anna and Christine were decorating the Christmas tree and arguing about curfew… again.

"Mom! You are so old fashioned. My friends stay out until one."

"Can I ask you a question?" Christine said. "What do you do until one o'clock in the morning? You're not old enough to go to clubs, you can't drink, you can barely even drive…"

"We hang out. Either at the coffee shop or other kids houses." Anna interrupted.

"Are their parents home?" Christine asked.

"Not always. Most of the time though."

"Well," Christine said, "at least you're honest with me."

After a moment of hesitation she added, "I've just experienced some things I don't want you to go through, but I'm going to trust you. You can stay out until one tonight, but absolutely no later! I want your butt in bed at 1:05. That gives you five minutes to get into the house and get in bed."

"Thanks Mom! You're the greatest!" she said, giving her mom a hug. Anna didn't give a second thought to her mom's past. She assumed she was talking about having a child at eighteen. Well, Mom doesn't have anything to worry about, she thought. I can't even find a guy I'm interested in dating.

Anna's best friend, Daphne, was in the driveway at 9:30 pm honking on the horn as usual.

"Can't that girl ever come in and say hello?" Christine said as Anna walked into the room.

"I'll be home at one," Anna said, ignoring her mother's question.

"Thanks again, Mom. I love you." She leaned over and kissed her mom on the cheek.

"I love you, too. Have fun." Anna practically ran out the front door. She's so full of life and energy, Christine thought. And I am not going to sit around all night worrying about her. She popped a movie in and settled down on the couch, looking forward to a quiet, relaxing evening at home.

Anna hopped into the passenger side of Daphne's car with a huge grin on her face.

"What are you so happy about?" Daphne asked.

"Guess who got her curfew extended?"

"You didn't! So did I!" They screamed together the way teenage girls do.

"So, what are we doing tonight?" Anna asked.

"Ethan is having a party. His parents are out of town."

"Cool!" Anna leaned over and turned the radio up. Their favorite song was playing. The two girls belted out every word on the top of their lungs.

Christine had put in a second movie and was finally getting to it when the phone rang. She paused the movie and grabbed the cordless phone off the coffee table. "Hello?...Oh MY GOD!!... No!!... I'll be right there."

Christine pulled up in front of County General Hospital. She'd made it there in record time. This isn't right, she thought as she parked her car and headed for the entrance. I should be coming here for work like I do every day, not to see a patient, not to see my daughter. She rushed up to the nurse's station totally unaware of the tears streaming down her face.

"Can you tell me where they have Anna Fair, please?"

"She's in Rm. 105. Are you her mother?" Christine was headed for the double doors that lead to the ER. "Wait a

second. You can't go in there!" Christine flashed her staff badge and didn't even turn around. She entered Rm. 105 with her heart in her throat. A nurse was leaning over a heart monitor, adjusting the controls. Christine glanced at her daughter. A pale faced, little girl with a bandage on her head laid there in a bed that looked ten times too big for her body. Christine felt her knees give out. A couple of moments later, Christine opened her eyes and tried to remember where she was. Then she saw Anna and it all rushed back to her. The ER nurse on duty turned around when she heard Anna stir.

"I'm so sorry, Christine." It was her good friend, Gabrielle.

"How is she? What's wrong with her?" Christine tried to stand and felt dizzy, so she sat back down. "What happened?"

"They were hit by a drunk driver. He died on impact. Daphne has a couple of broken bones, but otherwise she's okay. Anna's in an induced coma. The other car hit the passenger side. Anna was swelling in her brain. Dr. Harland induced the coma to try and bring the swelling down."

"Oh, my God," Christine sat silent for a moment. "So, what's supposed to happen now?"

"We wait." Gabrielle walked over and gave Christine a long hug. The two women cried on each other's shoulders.

"The doctor will be in in a minute to talk with you. I'm praying for her, Chris."

When Gabrielle had left the room, Christine pulled a chair close to her daughter's bed and held her hand.

"I love you so much, baby." She squeezed her hand three times, their family symbol for 'I love you'. Then she put her head down on the bed and wept. She sat up suddenly when she thought she felt three squeezes back. She did again. There was no response this time, but she knew she had felt it. "I'm right here, baby. Wake up. Wake up, please, wake up."

Christine spent every waking moment with Anna for the next two weeks. Talking to her, singing to her, praying for her, and crying for her. It was Christmas Eve and Christine had

decorated Anna's room with lights and a miniature tree. She turned on the radio and tuned into a station playing Christmas carols. She sat down in the chair next to Anna's bed. "I need to tell you something, honey," she began. "I was eighteen and 9 months pregnant with you. It was 10:00 at night when I started having labor pains. My boyfriend, your father, had been drinking, as always. I woke him up to let him know it was time to go to the hospital. He'd been sleeping for a couple of hours so I assumed he'd slept off his buzz. I asked him anyway. He said he'd never do anything to put our family in danger. Of course, I was thinking, except your drinking every night.

We got all our stuff together and headed for the hospital. It was dark and rainy and the roads were slippery. Not that that's an excuse. I told you the truth when I said that your father died before you were born. We were in an accident that night. He hit another car head on when he swerved into the wrong lane. He killed the other driver."

Christine was crying so hard she was barely able to finish her story.

"Your father was killed as well. The cops and ambulances showed up and they rushed me to the hospital. You were born two hours later. I've never had a better or worse night in my life. You entered it and I lost your father. I've never been able to get over the guilt I've felt for that night. The other driver was a young mother with a baby. Thank God, the baby wasn't with her. I still send apology letters to that woman's husband. He's never answered me, but I believe God forgave me. He gave me you. And now... here you are, lying here. Hit by a drunk driver. Why couldn't it have been anything else, anyone else?" Christine was worn out. She'd never told her daughter that story. She'd always felt too ashamed. It had felt good to let it out. She put her head down on the bed. Her tears were gone for now. All that was left to do was to pray. She held her baby's hand and squeezed it three times.

"I.... love...you...too, Mom," Anna answered. Christine looked up, amazed. God had once again answered her prayers. He did care about her.

"Oh, Anna. You're awake. Oh, baby, I was so scared!"

"I'm okay, Mom," she answered quietly. "I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to get in an accident."

"Oh, honey, it wasn't your fault. I love you so much. I couldn't stand the thought of not having you in my life. You mean so much to me."

"I love you too," Anna answered. "Mom?"

"Yeah, sweetie?"

"I think we should move my curfew back to 11:30." Christine started laughing ...and crying. She had an amazing daughter.

"Anna, I have so much to tell you..."

Questions for further discussion:

Plot Structure, Narrative Method

1 Does the title foreshadow the outcome of the events of the story?

2 How is the story structured? Does the story contain all the components of the plot structure?

3 Do the events involve physical movement of events or psychological, or both?

4 What type of conflict is the plot based on?

5 Are there any cases of presentational sequencing?

6 What narrative type did Rachel Baker resort to? How reliable is the narrator?

7 Comment on the author's skill in writing dialogue, which comprises a large part of the story.

8 What is the setting and its functions? Is it related to the message of the story?

Message, Tonal System

1 What is the theme and message of the story? What is the type of the message? Is it a definite solution, raising a problem or the solution of the problem which is not adequate?

2 How is the message of the story conveyed? Are there any cases of implication in the story? Is it conveyed by parallelism, contrast, recurrence of events or artistic details? What are they?

3 Are there any symbols in the story? What are they?

4 What is the prevailing tone of the story? How is it created?

5 How effectively does the author use words which appeal to the reader's senses – sight, hearing, touch and smell?

6 Do the detailed descriptions of the characters' state of mind create an impression of truth?

Text 7

As you read the story, think of the answers to the following questions:

1 What does the fable of La Fontaine teach? What is its moral?

2 Why did the narrator find it difficult to reconcile with himself to the lesson? Is it common for the human nature?

3 What did the narrator of the story seek to express? Why?

4 Why did Tom leave his family and his office?

5 Why was it difficult for Tom's friends to refuse a loan? Did he return it?

6 Do you think it was fair that Tom became rich after all these years of idleness? Who do you sympathize with?

7 Why did the narrator burst into a shout of laughter when he learned how Tom had become rich?

The Ant and the Grasshopper

W.S. Maugham

When I was a very small I was made to learn by heart certain of the fables of La Fontaine, and the moral of each was carefully explained to me. Among those I learnt was *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, which is devised to bring home to the young the useful lesson that in an imperfect world industry is rewarded and giddiness punished. In this admirable fable (I apologize for telling something which everyone is politely, but inexactly, supposed to know) the ant spends a laborious summer gathering its winter store, while the grasshopper sits on the blade of grass singing to the sun. Winter comes and the ant is comfortably provided for, but the grasshopper has an empty larder: he goes to the ant and begs for a little food. Then the ant gives him her classic answer:

'What were you doing in the summer time?'

'Saving your presence, I sang, I sang all day, all night.'

'You sang. Why, then go and dance.'

I do not ascribe it to perversity on my part, but rather to the inconsequence of childhood, which is deficient in moral sense, that I could never quite reconcile myself to the lesson. My sympathies were with the grasshopper and for some time I never saw an ant without putting my foot on it. In this summary (and as I have discovered since, entirely human) fashion I sought to express my disapproval of prudence and common sense.

I could not help thinking of this fable when the other day I saw George Ramsay lunching by himself in a restaurant. I never saw anyone wear an expression of such deep gloom. He was staring into space. He looked as though the burden of the whole world sat on his shoulders. I was sorry for him: I suspected at once that his unfortunate brother had been causing trouble again. I went up to him and held out my hand.

'How are you?' I asked.

'I am not in a hilarious spirits,' he answered.

'Is it Tom again?'

He sighed.

'Yes, it's Tom again'.

'Why don't you chuck him? You've done everything in the world fro him. You must know by now that he's quite hopeless.'

I suppose every family has a black sheep. Tom had been a sore trial to his for twenty years. He had begun life decently enough: he went into business, married, and had two children. The Ramsays were perfectly respectable people and there was every reason to suppose that Tom Ramsay would have a useful and honourable career. But one day, without warning, he announced that he didn't like work and he wasn't suited for marriage. He wanted to enjoy himself. He would listen to no expostulations. He left his wife and his office. He had a little money and he spent two happy years in the various capitals of Europe. Rumours of his doings reached his relations from time to time and they were profoundly shocked. He certainly had a very good time. They shook their heads and asked what would happen when his money was spent. They soon found out: he borrowed. He was charming and unscrupulous. I have never met anyone to whom it was more difficult to refuse a loan. He made a steady income from his friends and he made friends easily. But he always said that the money you spent on necessities was boring; the money that was amusing to spend was the money you spent on luxuries. For this he depended on his brother George. He did not waste his charm on him. George was a serious man and insensible to such enticements. George was respectable. Once or twice he fell to Tom's promises of amendment and gave him considerable sums in order that he might make a fresh start. On these Tom bought a motor-car and some very nice jewellery. But when circumstances forced George to realize that his brother would never settle down and he washed his hands of him, Tom,

without a qualm, began to blackmail him. It was not very nice for a respectable lawyer to find his brother shaking cocktails behind the bar of his favourite restaurant or to see him waiting on the box-seat of a taxi outside his club. Tom said that to serve in a bar or to drive a taxi was a perfectly decent occupation, but if George could oblige him with a couple of hundred pounds he didn't mind for the honour of the family giving it up. George paid.

Once Tom nearly went to prison. George was terribly upset. He went into the whole discreditable affair. Really Tom had gone too far. He had been wild, thoughtless, and selfish, but he had never before done anything dishonest, by which George meant illegal; and if he were prosecuted he would assuredly be convicted. But you cannot allow your only brother to go to gaol. The man Ton had cheated, a man called Cronshaw, was vindictive. He was determined to take the matter into court; he said Tom was a scoundrel and should be punished. It cost George an infinite deal of trouble and five hundred pounds to settle the affair. I have never seen him in such a rage as when he heard that Tom and Cronshaw had gone off together to Monte Carlo the moment they cashed the cheque. They spent a happy month there.

For twenty years Tom raced and gambled, philandered with the prettiest girls, danced, ate in the most expensive restaurants and dressed beautifully. He always looked as if he had just stepped out of a bandbox. Though he was forty-six you would never have taken him for more than thirty-five. He was a most amusing companion and though you knew he was perfectly worthless you could not but enjoy his society. He had high spirits, an unfailing gaiety, and incredible charm. I never grudged the contributions he regularly levied on me for the necessities of his existence. I never lent him fifty pounds without feeling that I was in his debt. Tom Ramsay knew everyone and everyone knew Tom Ramsay. You could not approve of him, but you could not help liking him.

Poor George, only a year older than his scapegrace brother, looked sixty. He had never taken more than a fortnight's holiday in the year for a quarter of a century. He was in his office every morning at nine-thirty and never left till it till six. He was honest, industrious, and worthy. He had a good wife, to whom he had never been unfaithful even in thought, and four daughters to whom he was the best of fathers. He made a point of saving a third of his income and his plan was to retire at fifty-five to a little house in the country where he proposed to cultivate his garden and play golf. His life was blameless. He was glad that he was growing old because Tom was growing old too. He rubbed his hands and said:

'It was all very well when Tom was young and good-looking, but he's only a year younger than I am. In four years he'll be fifty. He won't find life so easy then. I shall have thirty thousand pounds by the time I'm fifty. For twenty-five years I've said that Tom would end in the gutter. And we shall see how he likes that. We shall see if it really pays best to work or be idle.'

Poor George! I sympathized with him. I wondered now as I sat down beside him what infamous thing Tom had done. George was evidently very much upset.

'Do you know what's happened now?' he asked me.

I was prepared for the worst. I wondered if Tom had got into the hands of the police at last. George could hardly bring himself to speak.

'You're not going to deny that all my life I've been hardworking, decent, respectable, and straightforward. After a life of industry and thrift I can look forward to retiring on a small income in gilt-edged securities. I've always done my duty in that state of life in which it has pleased Providence to place me.'

'True.'

'And you can't deny that Tom has been an idle, worthless, dissolute, and dishonourable rogue. If there were any justice he'd be in the workhouse.'

'True'.

George grew red in the face.

'A few weeks ago he became engaged to woman old enough to be his mother. And now she's died and left him everything she had. Half a million pounds, a yacht, a house in London, and a house in the country.'

George Ramsay beat his clenched fist on the table.

'It's not fair, I tell you, it's not fair. Damn it, it's not fair.'

I could not help it. I burst into a shout of laughter as I looked at George's wrathful face, I rolled in my chair, I very nearly fell on the floor. George never forgave me. But Tom often asks me to excellent dinners in his charming house in Mayfair, and if he occasionally borrows a trifle from me, that is merely from force of habit. It is never more than a sovereign.

Questions for discussion

Plot structure, Narrative method, Message

1 Does the title foreshadow what is to follow or does it serve to convey the author's message? Does it arouse expectation on the part of the reader? Does the title contribute to the message of the story?

2 What is the message of the story? How is it conveyed?

3 What does the digression serve to? Does it help to explain the characters and the message of the story?

4 What narrative method is employed? What does the author gain by using it?

5 What conflict is the plot based on?

6 What time span does the story cover? Does the setting reinforce the characterization or place the reader into a

recognizable realistic environment? How is it achieved?

7 Does the story contain all the components of the plot structure? What event do the complications begin with?

8 What is the climax of the story?

9 Is there any denouement?

Character-images

1 What means of characterization are employed by the writer? How does the image of George contribute to characterize Tom?

2 What are the main features that are accentuated in the characters?

3 What traits of Tom's character are revealed through his actions? Which of his actions reveal his attitude to other people? Who serves as a foil, Tom or George? What is the author's attitude to them?

4 Does the author give a psychological portrayal of characters and analysis of their motives?

5 What makes the characters lifelike and convincing?

6 Are the names of the characters a case of antonomasia?

Text 8

While reading the story find the answers to the following questions:

1 Did the very first event in the story arouse your curiosity?

2 What made the Meadows happy? Why did they deserve happiness as the narrator thinks?

3 What kind of woman was Mrs. Meadows? Why was she the only woman in the family who was called Mrs. Meadows?

4 What was the reason that George Meadows didn't want to return home? Where was George Meadows all these years?

5 What was Mrs. Meadows never quite sure of?

6 Does the story stimulate the reader's imagination? Can you easily imagine or anticipate the events which preceded or will follow the return of George?

Home

W. S. Maugham

The farm lay in a hollow among the Somersetshire hills, an old- fashioned stone house surrounded by barns and pens and out-houses. Over the doorway the date when it was built had been carved in the elegant figures of the period, 1673, and the house, grey and weather-beaten, looked as much a part of the landscape as the trees that sheltered it. An avenue of splendid elms that would have been the pride of many a squire's mansion led from the road to the trim garden. The people who lived here were as stolid, sturdy, and unpretentious as the house; their only boast was that ever since it was built from father to son in one unbroken line they had been born and died in it. For three hundred years they had farmed the surrounding land. George Meadows was now a man of fifty, and his wife was a year or two younger. They were both fine, upstanding people in the prime of life; and their children, two sons and three girls, were handsome and strong. They had no new-fangled notions about being gentlemen and ladies; they knew their place and were proud of it. I have never seen a more united household. They were merry, industrious, and kindly. Their life was partriarchal. It had a completeness that gave it a beauty as definite as that of a symphony by Beethoven or a picture by Titian. They were happy and they deserved their happiness. But the master of the house was not George Meadows (not by a long chalk, they said in the village); it was his mother. She was twice the man her son was, they said. She was a woman of seventy, tall, upright, and dignified, with grey hair, and though her face was much wrinkled, her eyes were

ht and shrewd. Her word was law in the house and on the
n; but she had humour, and if her rule was despotic it was
lso kindly. People laughed at her jokes and repeated them.
She was a good business woman and you had to get up very
early in the morning to best her in a bargain. She was a
character. She combined in a rare degree goodwill with an alert
sense of the ridiculous.

One day Mrs. George stopped me on my way home. She was all in a flutter. (Her mother-in-law was the only Mrs. Meadows we knew; George's wife was only known as Mrs. George).

'Whoever do you think is coming here today?' she asked me. 'Uncle George Meadows. You know, him as was in China.'

'Why, I thought he was dead.'

'We all thought he was dead.'

I had heard the story of Uncle George Meadows a dozen times, and it had amused me because it had the savour of an old ballad; it was oddly touching to come across it in real life. For Uncle George Meadows and Tom, his younger brother, had both courted Mrs. Meadows when she was Emily Green, fifty years and more ago, and when she married Tom, George had gone away to sea.

They heard of him on the China coast. For twenty years now and then he sent them presents; then there was no more news of him; when Tom Meadows died his widow wrote and told him, but received no answer; and at last they came to the conclusion that he must be dead. But two or three days ago to their astonishment they had received a letter from the matron of the sailor's home at Portsmouth. It appeared that for the last ten years George Meadows, crippled with rheumatism, had been an inmate and now, feeling that he had not much longer to live, wanted to see once more the house in which he was born. Albert Meadows, his great-nephew, had gone over to

Portsmouth in the Ford to fetch him and he was to arrive that afternoon.

'Just fancy', said Mrs. George, 'he's not been for more than fifty years. He's never even seen my George, who's fifty-one next birthday.'

'And what does Mrs. Meadows think of it?' I asked.

'Well, you know what she is. She sits there and smiles to herself. All she says is, "He was a good-looking young fellow when he left, but not so steady as his brother." That's why she chose my George's father. "But he's probably quietened down by now," she says."

Mrs. George asked me to look in and see him. With the simplicity of a country woman who had never been further from her home than London, she thought that because we had both been in China we must have something in common. Of course I accepted. I found the whole family assembled when I arrived; they were sitting in the great old kitchen, with its stone floor, Mrs. Meadows in her usual chair by the fire, very upright, and I was amused to see that she had put on her best silk dress, while her son and his wife sat at the table with their children. On the other side of the fireplace sat an old man, bunched up in a chair. He was very thin and his skin hung on his bones like an old suit much too large for him; his face was wrinkled and yellow and he had lost nearly all his teeth.

I shook hands with him.

'Well, I'm glad to see you've got here safely, Mr. Meadows,' I said.

'Captain,' he corrected.

'He walked here,' Albert, his great-nephew, told me. 'When he got to the gate he made me stop the car and said he wanted to walk.'

'And mind you, I've been out of my bed for two years. They carried me down and put me in the car. I thought I'd never walk again, but when I see them elm trees, I remember my father set a lot of store by them elm trees, I felt I could

walk. I walked down that drive fifty-two years ago when I went away and now I've walked back again.'

'Silly, I call it,' said Mrs. Meadows.

'It's done me good. I feel better and stronger than I have for ten years. I'll see you out yet, Emily.'

'Don't you be too sure,' she answered.

I suppose no one had called Mrs. Meadows by her first name for a generation. It gave me a little shock, as though the old man were taking a liberty with her. She looked at him with a shrewd smile in her eyes and he, talking to her, grinned with his toothless gums. It was strange to look at them, these two old people who had not seen one another for half a century, and to think that all that long time ago he had loved her and she had loved another, I wondered if they remembered what they had felt then and what they had said to one another. I wondered if it seemed to him strange now that for that old woman he had left the home of his fathers, his lawful inheritance, and lived an exile's life.

'Have you ever been married, Captain Meadows?' I asked.

'Not me,' he said, in his quavering voice, with a grin. 'I know too much about women for that.'

'That's what you say,' retorted Mrs. Meadows. 'If the truth was known I shouldn't be surprised to hear as how you'd had half a dozen black wives in your day.'

'They're not black in China, Emily, you ought to know better than that, they're yellow.'

'Perhaps that's why you've got so yellow yourself. When I saw you, I said to myself, why, he's got jaundice.'

'I said I'd never marry anyone but you, Emily, and I never have.'

He said this not with pathos or resentment, but as a mere statement of fact, as a man might say, 'I said I'd walk twenty miles and I've done it.' There was a trace of satisfaction in the speech.

'Well, you might have regretted it if you had,' she answered.

I talked a little with the old man about China.

'There's not a port in China that I don't know better than you know your coat pocket. Where a ship can go I've been. I could keep you sitting here all day long for six months and not tell you half the things I've seen in my day.'

'Well, one thing you've not done, George, as far as I can see,' said Mrs. Meadows, the mocking but not unkindly smile still in her eyes, 'and that's to make a fortune.'

'I'm not one to save money. Make it and spend it: that's my motto. But one thing I can say for myself: if I had the chance of going through my life again I'd take it. And there's not many as'll say that.'

'No, indeed,' I said.

I looked at him with admiration and respect. He was a toothless, crippled, penniless old man, but he had made a success of life, for he had enjoyed it. When I left him he asked me to come and see him again next day. If I was interested in China he would tell me all the stories I wanted to hear.

Next morning I thought I would go and ask if the old man would like to see me. I strolled down the magnificent avenue of elm trees and when I came to the garden saw Mrs. Meadows picking flowers. I bade her good morning and she raised herself. She had a huge armful of white flowers. I glanced at the house and I saw that the blinds were drawn: I was surprised, for Mrs. Meadows liked the sunshine.

'Time enough to live in the dark when you're buried,' she always said.

'How's Captain Meadows?' I asked her.

'He always was a harum-scarum fellow,' she answered. 'When Lizzie took him a cup of tea this morning she found he was dead.'

'Dead?'

'Yea. Died in his sleep. I was just picking theses flowers to put in the room. Well, I'm glad he died in that old house. It always means a lot to them Meadows to do that.'

They had had a good deal of difficulty in persuading him to go to bed. He had talked to them of all the things that had happened to him in his long life. He was happy to be back in his old home. He was proud that he had walked up the drive without assistance, and he boasted that he would live for another twenty years. But fate had been kind: death had written the full-stop in the right place.

Mrs. Meadows smelt the white flowers that she held in her arms.

'Well, I'm glad he came back,' she said. 'After I married Tom Meadows and George went away, the fact is I was never quite sure that I'd married the right one.'

Questions for further discussion

Plot structure and Tone

1 What role does the title of the story play?

2 What is the main conflict the story based on?

3 Where is the story set? Does it help to evoke the necessary atmosphere or to reinforce characterization?

4 What event serves to be the climax of the story?

5 Is there any denouement? Does it stimulate the reader to draw his own conclusions and make his own judgement of the Meadows and relationships between them?

6 What is the message of the story? Does the proverb "There is no place like home" convey the message of the story?

7 What means of conveying the message are used in the story?

8 What is the prevailing tone? Is it dramatic or ironic? What is the irony of the end of the story? What are the indices of the tone?

9 What narrative type did W.S. Maugham resort to? Does the author penetrate into the mind of the protagonist and describe psychological changes that motivate his actions?

Character-Images

1 Who is the protagonist in the story?

2 What means of characterization are used to create the image of George Meadows and Mrs. Meadows?

3 Who serves as a foil to George Meadows?

4 What features of George's character are revealed through his actions?

5 What role do all other characters play? Can they be treated as a means of characterizing of the protagonist?

Text 9

While reading the story find the answers to the following questions:

1 What is your attitude to Harold Krebs? Do you approve of his behaviour?

2 Why did Krebs tell lies? Did he change after the war?

3 What is the reason that Krebs became so indifferent even to girls?

4 How was he treated by his relatives and parents? Did Krebs really mean that he didn't love anybody even his mother?

5 Why does the author resort to religion?

6 What did Krebs really learn about the war after reading a book on the war? What do you think?

Soldier's Home

E. Hemingway

Krebs went to the war from a Methodist college in Kansas. There is a picture which shows him among his fraternity brothers, all of them wearing exactly the same height and style collar. He enlisted in the Marines in 1917 and did not return to the United States until the second division returned from the Rhine in the summer of 1919.

There is a picture which shows him on the Rhine with two German girls and another corporal. Krebs and the corporal look too big for their uniforms. The German girls are not beautiful. The Rhine does not show in the picture.

By the time Krebs returned to his home town in Oklahoma the greeting of heroes was over. He came back much too late. The men from the town who had been drafted had all been welcomed elaborately on their return. There had been a great deal of hysteria. Now the reaction had set in. People seemed to think it was rather ridiculous for Krebs to be getting back so late, years after the war was over.

At first Krebs, who had been at Belleau Wood, Soisssons, the Champagne, St. Mihiel and in the Argonne did not want to talk about the war at all. Later he felt the need to talk but no one wanted to hear about it. His town had heard too many atrocity stories to be thrilled by actualities. Krebs found that to be listened to at all he had to lie, and after he had done this twice he, too, had a reaction against the war and against talking about it. A distaste for everything that had happened to him in the war set in because of the lies he had told. All of the times that had been able to make him feel cool and clear inside himself when he thought of them; the times so long back when he had done the one thing, the only thing for a man to do, easily and naturally, when he might have done something else, now lost their cool, valuable quality and then were lost themselves.

Контроль за исполнением решений по ревизии осуществ
следующими способами:

- проверка решений, принятых по результатам других провер
- получение информации от проверяемого объекта;
- назначение специальных, тематических проверок.

Тема 4. Методические приёмы проведения ревизии и реализующие их контрольно-ревизионные процеду

Ключевые слова: метод контроля, документальный ко
формальная проверка, арифметическая проверка, экспертная пр
логическая проверка, экономическая проверка, нормативно-пр
проверка, встречная проверка, контрольное сличение, обратная
куляция, оценка документов по корреспондирующим счетам, ан
ческая проверка, сравнение, инвентаризация, осмотр, обследо
объекта, контрольный запуск сырья в производство, лаборат
анализ, контрольный обмер, контрольные проверки.

Лекция 5. МЕТОДИЧЕСКИЕ ПРИЕМЫ ПРОВЕДЕНИЯ РЕВИЗИИ И РЕАЛИЗУЮЩИЕ ИХ КОНТРОЛЬНО-РЕВИЗИОННЫЕ ПРОЦЕДУРЫ

1. Общая характеристика методов контроля и необходимос получения доказательств в процессе его проведения.
2. Способы и приёмы документального контроля.
3. Способы и приёмы фактического контроля.

1. Общая характеристика методов контроля и необходимост получения доказательств в процессе его проведения

Термин «метод» означает совокупность приемов труда в ка
либо области, способ достижения какой-то цели. Существуют ра
ные приемы, характерные для специалистов разных областей зна
которыми могут пользоваться ревизоры и аудиторы, применяя
зависимости от поставленной задачи. Знание специфики деятельно

...изации в сочетании с приемами, выбранными пра-
...ленной последовательности, позволяют ревизорам и
...эффективно проводить проверки.

...творения интересов пользователей информации о
...тельности предприятия ревизоры и аудиторы должны
...доказательства о достоверности показателей учета, баланса и
...финансовой отчетности. Такие доказательства могут быть получены
...ри проведении специальных аудиторско-ревизионных процедур.

Полная и всесторонняя оценка деятельности предприятия и его
...платежеспособности, достоверности показателей бухгалтерского ба-
...ланса и финансовой отчетности должны базироваться на принципах
...остаточности и убедительности аудиторско-ревизионных доказа-
...тельств.

Эффективность аудиторско-ревизионной работы во многом за-
...исит не только от знания методов проверки, но и от правильного их
...очетания в соответствии с поставленными задачами. Методы доку-
...ентальной проверки применяют не только в различном сочетании, но
...с разными методами фактической проверки, а также с логиче-
...ким исследованием финансово-хозяйственных ситуаций. Кроме того,
...ирокоприменяют на практике специальные методы для экономиче-
...кого анализа.

...ильное применение методов на практике способствует дости-
...кению максимальных результатов в выполнении аудиторами своих
...функций.

2. Способы и технические приёмы документального контроля

Каждая хозяйственная операция оформляется соответствую-
...щими документами, ими же обосновываются записи в регистрах син-
...тетического и аналитического учёта. На основе регистров бухгалтер-
...ского учёта составляются бухгалтерский баланс и отчётность. Поэтому
...для оценки достоверности совершённых хозяйственных операций,
...прежде всего, прибегают к использованию методических приёмов про-
...верки документов и записей в регистрах бухгалтерского учёта.

Без использования методических приёмов проверки первичной
...документации, произведенных записей в учётных регистрах и бухгал-

have them all the time, that he could not go to sleep without them.

That was all a lie. It was all a lie both ways. You did not need a girl unless you thought about them. He learned that in the army. Then sooner or later you always got one. When you were really ripe for a girl you always got one. You did not have to think about it. Sooner or later it would come. He had learned that in the army.

Now he would have liked a girl if she had come to him and not wanted to talk. But here at home it was all too complicated. He knew he could never get through it all again. It was not worth the trouble. That was the thing about French girls and German girls. There was not all this talking. You couldn't talk much and you did not need to talk. It was simple and you were friends. He thought about France and then he began to think about Germany. On the whole he had liked Germany better. He did not want to leave Germany. He did not want to come home. Still, he had come home. He sat on the front porch.

He liked the girls that were walking along the other side of the street. He liked the look of them much better than the French girls or the German girls. But the world they were in was not the world he was in. He would like to have one of them. But it was not worth it. They were such a nice pattern. He liked the pattern. It was exciting. But he would not go through all the talking. He did not want one badly enough. He liked to look at them all, though. It was not worth it. Not now when things were getting good again.

He sat there on the porch reading a book on the war. It was a history and he was reading about all the engagements he had been in. It was the most interesting reading he had ever done. He wished there were more maps. He looked forward with a good feeling to reading all the really good histories when they would come out with good detail maps. Now he was really learning about the war. He had been a good soldier. That made a difference.

One morning after he had been home about a month his mother came into his bedroom and sat on the bed. She smoothed her apron.

"I had a talk with your father last night, Harold," she said, "and he is willing for you to take the car out in the evenings."

"Yeah?" said Krebs, who was not fully awake. "Take the car out? Yeah?"

"Yes. Your father has felt for some time that you should be able to take the car out in the evenings whenever you wished but we only talked it over last night."

"I'll bet you made him," Krebs said.

"No. It was your father's suggestion that we talk the matter over."

"Yeah. I'll bet you made him, "Krebs sat up in bed.

"Will you come down to breakfast, Harold?" his mother said.

"As soon as I get my clothes on," Krebs said.

His mother went out of the room and he could hear her frying something downstairs while he washed, shaved and dressed to go down into the dining-room for breakfast. While he was eating breakfast his sister brought in the mail.

"Well, Hare," she said. "You old sleepy-head. What do you ever get up for?"

Krebs looked at her. He liked her. She was his best sister.

"Have you got the paper?" he asked.

She handed him *The Kansas City Star* and he shucked off it brown wrapper and opened it to the sporting page. He folded *The Star* open and propped it against the water pitcher with his cereal dish to steady it, so he could read while he ate.

"Harold," his mother stood in the kitchen doorway, "Harold, please don't muss up the paper. Your father can't read his *Star* if it's been mussed."

"I don't muss it," Krebs said.

His sister sat down at the table and watched him while he read.

"We're playing indoor over at school this afternoon," she said. "I'm going to pitch."

"Good," said Krebs. "How's the old wing?"

"I can pitch better than lots of the boys. I tell them all you taught me. The other girls aren't much good."

"Yeah?" said Krebs.

"I tell them you're my beau. Aren't you my beau, Hare?"

"You bet."

"Couldn't your brother really be your beau just because he's your brother?"

"I don't know."

"Sure you know. Couldn't you be my beau, Hare, if I was old enough and if you wanted to?"

"Sure. You're my girl now."

"Am I really your girl?"

"Sure."

"Do you love me?"

"Uh, huh."

"Will you come over and watch me play indoor?"

"Maybe."

"Aw, Hare, you don't love me. If you loved me, you'd want to come over and watch me play indoor."

Krebs's mother came into the dining-room from the kitchen. She carried a plate with two fried eggs and some crisp bacon on it and a plate of buckwheat cakes.

"You run along, Helen," she said. "I want to talk to Harold."

She put the eggs and bacon down in front of him and brought in a jug of maple syrup for the buckwheat cakes. Then she sat down across the table from Krebs.

"I wish you'd put down the paper a minute, Harold," she said.

Krebs took down the paper and folded it.

"Have you decided what you are going to do yet, Harold?" his mother said, taking off her glasses.

"No," said Krebs.

"Don't you think it's about time?" His mother did not say in a mean way. She seemed worried.

"I hadn't thought about it," Krebs said.

"God has some work for every one to do," his mother said. "There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom."

"I am not in His Kingdom," Krebs said.

"We are all of us in His Kingdom."

Krebs felt embarrassed and resentful as always.

"I've worried about you so much, Harold," his mother went on. "I know the temptations you must have been exposed to. I know how weak men are. I know what your own dear grandfather, my own father, told us about the Civil War and I have prayed for you. I pray for you all day long, Harold."

Krebs looked at the bacon fat hardening on his plate.

"Your father is worried, too," his mother went on. "He thinks you have lost your ambition, that you haven't got a definite aim in life. Charley Simmons, who is just your age, has a good job and is going to be married. The boys are all settling down; they're all determined to get somewhere; you can see that boys like Charley Simmons are on their way to being really a credit to the community."

Krebs said nothing.

"Don't look that way, Harold," his mother said. "You know we love you and I want to tell you for your own good how matters stand. Your father does not want to hamper your freedom. He thinks you should be allowed to drive the car. If you want to take some of the nice girls out riding with you, we are only too pleased. We want you to enjoy yourself. But you are going to have to settle down to work, Harold. Your father doesn't care what you start in at. All work is honorable as he says. But you've got to make a start at something. He asked me to speak to you this morning and then you can stop in and see him at his office."

"Is that all?" Krebs said.

"Yes. Don't you love your mother, dear boy?"

"No," Krebs said.

His mother looked at him across the table. Her eyes were shiny. She started crying.

"I don't love anybody," Krebs said.

It wasn't any good. He couldn't tell her, he couldn't make her see it. It was silly to have said it. He had only hurt her. He went over and took hold of her arm. She was crying with her head in her hands.

"I didn't mean it," he said. "I was just angry at something. I didn't mean I didn't love you."

His mother went on crying. Krebs put his arm on her shoulder.

"Can't you believe me, mother?"

His mother shook her head.

"Please, please, mother. Please believe me."

"All right," his mother said chokily. She looked up at him. "I believe you, Harold."

Krebs kissed her hair. She put her face up to him.

"I'm your mother," she said. "I held you next to my heart when you were a tiny baby."

Krebs felt sick and vaguely nauseated.

"I know, Mummy," he said. "I'll try and be a good boy for you."

"Would you kneel and pray with me, Harold?" his mother asked.

They knelt down beside the dining-room table and Krebs's mother prayed.

"Now, you pray, Harold," she said.

"I can't," Krebs said.

"Try, Harold."

"I can't."

"Do you want me to pray for you?"

"Yes."

o his mother prayed for him and then they stood up and s kissed his mother and went out of the house. He had so to keep his life from being complicated. Still, none of d touched him. He had felt sorry for his mother and she made him lie. He would go to Kansas City and get a job she would feel all right about it. There would be one more e maybe before he got away. He would not go down to his er's office. He would miss that one. He wanted his life to smoothly. It had just gotten going that way. Well, that was over now, anyway. He would go over to the schoolyard and tch Helen play indoor baseball.

Questions for further discussion

Plot structure, Message

1 Does the story comprise all the components of the plot ucture?

2 What is the function of the title? What is implied by the e of the story? Does it serve to convey the author's ssage?

3 What is the main problem of the story? Formulate the ssage of the story and provide some evidence from the ry to show how it is conveyed.

4 What span of time does the story cover?

5 Is the setting scattered throughout the story? What are the nctions of the setting?

6 What is the climax of the story?

7 Is there any denouement in the story?

8 What conflicts is the story based on?

9 Do the complications involve physical or psychological movement of events or both?

10 Are there any cases of retardation, withholding of information or enigma in the story?

Narrative method, character-images

1 What is the type of the narrator? Do you think it will be reasonable to call the narrator the author's mouthpiece? Why?

2 Are the characters real and convincing? Support your point of view by some examples from the story.

3 Why does the author give the daily routine of Krebs in such details (he was sleeping late..., getting up, eating lunch..., walking down...)?

4 The author repeats one and the same idea several times in the story ("It was not worth it. He didn't want to... He liked... All of the times..., the times so long back..., During this time..., etc). What does it mean?

5 What is implied by the following statements: "He did not want any consequences." "But here at home it was all too complicated."?

6 Is Krebs shown through his actions or does the author give his psychological portrayal? Support your point of view giving some facts from the text.

7 Does the setting serve to reinforce the characterization?

8 What other means of characterization are used to describe Krebs? Give a character sketch of Krebs. Support your view by reference to the text of the story.

Text 10

While reading the text find the answers to the following questions:

1 Who are the ghosts Jim sees?

2 Does Jim prefer going to small shops rather than supermarkets? Why?

3 Does he have many friends? What does he think about the relationships between people?

4 In what relations were Jim and Ellen?

5 What does he blame himself for?

6 What happens at the end of the story?

Old Ghosts

A.J. McKenna

-1-

It is Jim Brennan's birthday. He wakens on this humid August morning, startled by birdsong echoing across the garden outside and, for a long time, he stares in confused remembrance towards where the swelling orange sun is burning the faded floral wallpaper across from his tumbled bed.

'It's my birthday,' he finally realizes. 'I'm seventy-six today. Where did it go?'

Climbing painfully from a sore mattress, standing in striped pyjamas by the window, Jim stares gardenwards. There's much to be done. Later. Much later. These days it's all weed killing, backache and wishes. Outside in the sunrise garden roses are already awake, clematis climbs like a growing child and all the border marigolds are on fire.

'It's my birthday.'

Next door's dog barks. A cat scales a glass sharp wall and drops beside its shadow under an apple tree, stalking anxious sparrows with the first sun. Under the broken birdhouse a mouse plays with a nibble of yesterday's bread. Shadows shrink in bright shyness against all the garden fences and the last star melts into dawnrise. There's heat in the breathless August day already.

Jimmy Brennan, seventy-six, sitting in his kitchen. Silent. The house, holding its breath around him, the roof heavy and oven baked. Jim's thick veined hands brush toast crumbs from the plastic tabletop and when he moves his faded slippered feet dust dances giddily on the sun patched carpet. He listens to the awakening of the new day: the clock on the dresser ticks hurriedly and the letter box snaps awake.

Jim walks to the hall and picks up bills and adds that promise discounts and holidays abroad. Jin has never been out of Ireland, never crossed the sea. His tired eyes examine the envelopes at arm's length. There are no birthday cards to sigh over – these days who would know?

Returning to the familiar kitchen he slides a knife along his letters, slitting out their folded information. It's better than nothing. Even if the electricity is red and overdue. At least they keep in touch. No longer absorbed in his letter opening task Jim looks at the sunlight shining blindly on his glazed, brown teapot and then, laying the bad news aside for the later, he pours more lukewarm tea. He sits and thinks about birthdays back then. Cakes and ale, songs and celebrations and the long dead who cared. Back when.

-2-

'Time flies', he says.

He's talking to himself most days – who else will listen? Up in the still shadowed parlour a clock chimes the hour and Jim rises tiredly and prepares to face the day. When he turns on the wireless the news assaults his soul. The world is littered with dead children and pain. Bad news amuses while the ad men slip in a jingle. The world has gone mad with cruelty and nobody seems to have noticed. He turns a dial and foreign voices cackle urgently in the ether. Talking violence in tongues, telling of the rapes of children, no doubt. The media loves abusing the innocent with their excited updates and urgently breaking stories. It was different back then. It seemed quieter and children could play on the streets. Back when.

Ring – a - ring- a –rosy!

Jim smiles and finds Mozart and the morning is saved by Cherubino. Then he dresses and walks, cane and cloth cap, to the front door and checks the windows and the bolts and all's secure. When the nighttime house creaks with its own age, Jims thinks of burglars and imagined violations and trembles in case they invade him.

What a world!

Jim swings open the front door and sees Ellen Kelly stands there, smiling like sunlight.

'Happy birthday, Jim'.

No longer astonished, Jim smiles back and sighs because Ellen isn't really there.

Ellen Kelly, fourteen last week. He's been seeing Ellen a lot lately. She walked behind him all the way to the hushed library yesterday and when he sat to rest in Carolyn Park she was standing under a tree, waiting in its shade.

'I didn't forget,' Ellen says.

'I know. I know'.

'Will you come out to play?'

'I can't Ellen. You're dead.'

The sun slides down the street and settles on Jim's house and Ellen fades like a startled shadow.

'Poor Ellen,' Jim whispers sadly. 'My poor dead darling'.

Jim avoids the supermarket. It's too complicated. Grim checkout people urgent to get home. Kids breathing asthma. Babes bawling immediate needs. Bald headed young men pushing forward, rings in their ears, rape in their shiftless eyes. Never stare back. Girls demanding more. Car parks cluttered with stress earned money. Housewives hurrying, car exhausts, liberated women with little freedom. The exhaustion of supermarkets and too much choice. Too big, too modern. Too lonely for him.

-3-

He goes to smaller shops, chats with familiar people and gets milk and eggs and a small loaf of fresh bread. Further along, outside the charity shop, Mrs. Barret from number twenty-nine nods an inquisitive greeting.

'How are you keeping?' she asks, looking past him at the bargains in the window.

'Grand, thank God. Yourself?'

'Couldn't be better.'

Life is strangled with polite lies.

Jim walks home through the heating streets towards sanctuary at seventy-six.

In his armchair in the parlour looking out on the road. Hearing the parlour's ten time chime and the long day stretching ahead like a dreadful eternity. The terror of ten a.m. Nothing to do and outside bright girls hurry through the morning, sun on their heads, time on their hands. Feet clattering, black tights, skirts just short of sin. Making promises.

I'm glad I'm not young any more.

Jim despises this time of day. Already too hot for the garden and nothing to fill the mind until making something at lunchtime. Light sustenance for the long afternoon lengthening drearily ahead like an empty road going nowhere. Jim tries to read but even in glasses the words are a blur.

'Ellen,' he whispers and her name rings in his head like a tolling bell.

Ellen Kelly. Ellen Kelly. Ellen Kelly.

Jim plays with her. His eyes close. He becomes delirious with dreaming and hears distantly the brass handle under the Brassoed letterbox clattering once. Jim shuffles down the hall and when he cautiously opens the wide door Ellen is there, fifteen and lovely, framed in the sun like a miracle. Ellen Kelly, budding with womanhood and children happiness.

'Will you not come out to play, Jim?'

From behind, a different ghost in the dark hallway, Jim's mother, smiling.

'He's got to do some shopping for me, Ellen dear.'

Jim, sixteen, between women, inter Ellen's, adolescently happy.

'I'll come along with you, then,' Ellen always agreeable. 'We'll go to the shops together. If that's all right?'

Mother agrees, loving neighbour Ellen like the daughter her grey age longs for.

'Of course it's all right with me, darling.'

Jim and Ellen walking down the path with mama at the or, waving like a mother, waiting until they are beyond the ne, forever worrying about crossing roads and unsuspected ness. Tuberculosis, pneumonia. Polio. Measles. Mumps. You me it. Young people often died young back then.

-4-

Jim and Ellen, heads tilted, magnetic affection drawing em closer, talking, laughing, a pair apart from others. In love. Ellen's raven hair curling around her tiny, elfin ears. Ellen, uiet and reliable as the moon.

'Will you love me forever?' Jim asks.

'Forever and ever,' Ellen assures, squeezing his hand.

On the way back they short cut through the August woods. A long short cut. Still talking, their words tumbling like thistledown on the hot butterflied silence. In the deep green they settle in shade and kiss among fern leafs, innocently. They kissed like that for years.

Life, a summer holiday until seventeen. Then. Jim goes to Cork with his father. A business trip. Magnificent Cork and boat bobbing, cathedraled Cobh and then the Metropole Hotel. Swanky. Dinner and desserts. Black ties, brown cigars. Gin and tonic with a twist of lemon. Now Cork is always dry gin and a twist in Jim's fading memory. Bitter lemon.

Jim with father's friends. A party and the talcum smell of sex. Dad leaves early with a friend. Dad feels only half married. Winking a man's signal. Permission to sin. A bird in the bush.

Jim dancing until dawn with necklace and pearls. Back at her oak roomed upstairs house she says her parents are away and Jim is still not sober.

'Let me help you to bed,' he says, learning the rules of the game and when to cheat.

Sixteen Ellen smelled of love and roses. This girl is twenty and slick with gin. Pearls in her ears, stones in her heart. Bath

naked she drips rich. Jim falls into her and is devoured. Ellen, sweetest sixteen, gave him everything except that. Her tended flesh is reserved for the marriage bed. Jim wanted more. Pearls before swine.

Mea culpa, Ellen – mea maxima culpa!

The blonde one came to Dublin with the snow, passion pursuing Jim all grown up and knowing. Blood on snow. Seventeen Ellen, discarded, like a toy wound down, broken and useless.

'Don't you want me any more?'

'No'.

Tears on Ellen's bitten lips. Eyes red with pain. Soul seared. Ellen goodbye.

'No, I don't want you.'

Jim brave and final, cruel as winter. Abandoned Ellen, quietly waiting for him to mature.

Next year he took the pearly girl away. Holidaying. Not even saying goodbye to pale Ellen, eighteen and alone with sickness teasing her young pink lips, her heart dark with love. Ellen's innocence like petals blowing on grass, dancing rudely away. Crowns of thorns for Ellen's virgin bridehood. Veils of tears.

-5-

Ellen ill.

On Jim's return his mother greets him with rubbing, folded fingers. Wet cheeks.

'Poor Ellen,' mama whispers. Respect for the dead.

Jim matures. Instantly.

Too late.

Ellen's black blood on her spitting lips. The flowers on her grave stiff in frost. Brown leaves tumbling, flying wildly in the frozen air, reburying her. No more warm kisses and a heart soaring with love. Ellen nineteen, never twenty. Mama behind her coffin, mama in her own maternal grave. And rain for fifty long years and more, after that.

My darling gone for evermore!

Clock chime. Ding. One. Ding. Two. Et Cetera.

Jim struggles for a dream speaking her name into the ening shadows.

'Ellen?'

The pitch dark shadows silent as love words from dead uths. Marble graveyard lips, cold as stone. Ivy and moss. emories haunting his present. Jim shivers and steps into the adow sun. Rubs his thick veined hands. Prays. Then he kes lunch. Tomatoes and ham. He dreams the evening away alf out of life. On the radio a woman sings *Four Last Songs*. u don't have to know the language.

Such sweet sorrow. Who said that?

Later, a seat in the garden looking towards the singing nset. There is nothing to see except blackbirds and sparrows; thing to hear except the noise of the butterflies' wings.

Even later, the clock in the parlour chimes twelve artbeats. Night comes hot and bothered.

Climbing into an empty bed, Jim turns off the sidelight and atches the shadows huddling against the floral wallpaper. ars look in at his grey face. A hot August moon in the open ndow. Soft as silence, quiet as apple blossoms falling, gentle Ellen's dimpled smile. Ellen's same sad glad smile standing ere by his bed. Faithful Ellen, waiting.

'Do you want me now?'

Yes! Dear sweet God – yes!

He says 'I can play now, Ellen, if you like. I'm finally, roperly dead.'

'I am glad. I've been waiting for such a long time!'

Jim rising from his bed, leaving his seventy-six years between the laundered sheets. Soaring through the moonlight with Ellen in his arms, the pair of them shooting like comets into Eternity while the clock in the parlour stops.

Forever and forever.

Questions for further discussion

Plot structure, Message and Tonal system

1 What role does the title play? Does it contribute to the message of the story?

2 How is the message conveyed? Are there any artistic details or other cases of implications and presupposition in the story? Is the message conveyed by the image of the old man?

3 Are there any symbols in the story?

4 What do the author's digressions serve to?

5 How is the plot structured?

6 Is it possible to say that "past" and "present" are opposed in the text?

7 What are the basic conflicts in the story?

8 What does the end of the story suggest?

9 Can we define the tone as dramatic and lyrical? What are the indices of the tone?

10 What is the meaning of rhetorical questions and exclamations?

11 Does the author appeal to the reader's senses?

Character-images

1 Who is the protagonist of the story?

2 What means of characterization does the writer employ to create the image of Jim Brennan? What features of character are emphasized by the protagonist's actions?

3 Does the house he lived in serve to characterize him?

4 Does the author give a psychological portrayal of the main character and analysis of his motives?

5 Does Ellen serve as a foil to Jim? Why?

Text 11

As you read the text, think of the answers to the owing questions:

1 What was Elizabeth Willard's dream? What was the son that it didn't come true?

2 What were the relationships between the mother and the , Tom Willard and his son?

3 What did the mother pray for?

4 Why did Tom Willard tell his son to wake up? What did e mean saying it?

5 Whom did Elizabeth Willard want to kill? Why?

6 Do you feel pity or anger towards Tom's mother?

Mother

Sh. Anderson

Elizabeth Willard, the mother of George Willard, was tall nd gaunt and her face was marked with smallpox scars. lthough she was but forty-five, some obscure disease had ken the fire out of her figure. Listlessly she went about the disorderly old hotel looking at the faded wall-paper and the gged carpets and, when she was able to be about, doing the ork of a chambermaid among beds soiled by the slumbers of t traveling men. Her husband, Tom Willard, a slender, graceful man with square shoulders, a quick military step, and a black mustache trained to turn sharply up at the ends, tried to put the wife out of his mind. The presence of the tall ghostly figure, moving slowly through the halls, he took as a reproach to himself. When he thought of her he grew angry and swore. The hotel was unprofitable and forever on the edge of failure and he wished himself out of it. He thought of the old house and the woman who lived there with him as things defeated and done for. The hotel in which he had begun life so

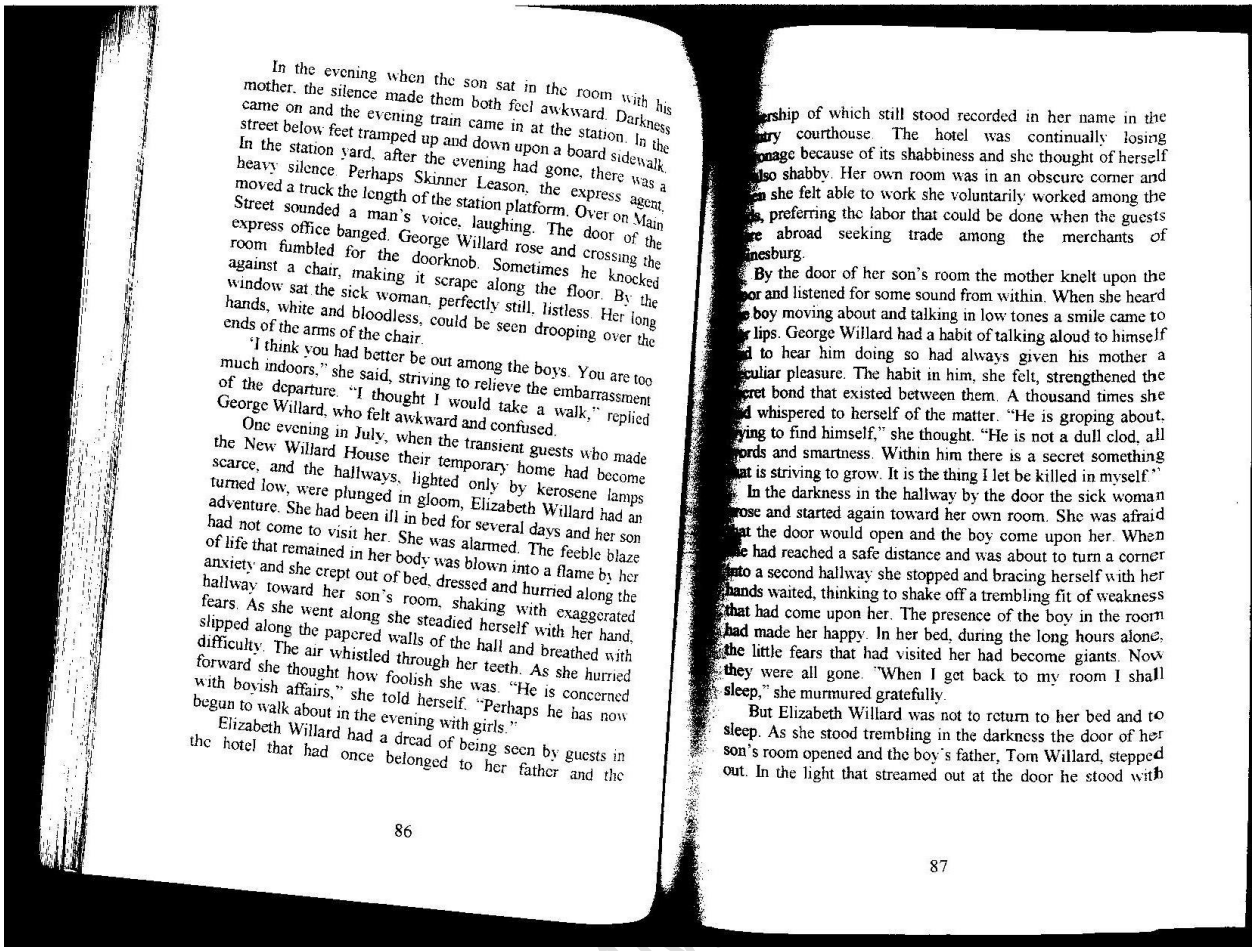
hopefully was now a mere ghost of what a hotel should be. As he went spruce and business- like through the streets of Winesburg, he sometimes stopped and turned quickly about as though fearing that the spirit of the hotel and of the woman would follow him even into the streets. "Damn such a life, damn it!" he sputtered aimlessly.

Tom Willard had a passion for village politics and for years had been the leading Democrat in a strongly Republican community. Some day, he told himself, the tide of things political will turn in my favor and the years of ineffectual service count big in the bestowal of rewards. He dreamed of going to Congress and even of becoming governor. Once when a younger member of the party arose at a political conference and began to boast of his faithful service, Tom Willard grew white with fury. "Shut up, you," he roared, glaring about. "What do you know of service? What are you but a boy? Look at what I've done here! I was a Democrat here in Winesburg when it was a crime to be a Democrat. In the old days they fairly hunted us with guns."

Between Elizabeth and her son George there was a deep unexpressed bond of sympathy, based on a girlhood dream that had long ago died. In the son's presence she was timid and reserved, but sometimes while he hurried about town intent upon his duties as a reporter, she went into his room and closing the door knelt by a little desk, made of a kitchen table, that sat near a window. In the room by the desk she went through a ceremony that was half a prayer, half a demand, addressed to the skies. In the boyish figure she yearned to see something half forgotten that had once been a part of herself re-created. The prayer concerned that. "Even though I die, I will in some way keep defeat from you," she cried, and so deep was her determination that her whole body shook. Her eyes glowed and she clenched her fists. "If I am dead and see him becoming a meaningless drab figure like myself, I will come back," she declared. "I ask God now to give me that

lege. I demand it. I will pay for it. God may beat me with sts. I will take any blow that may befall if but this my boy allowed to express something for us both." Pausing rtainly, the woman stared about the boy's room. "And do let him become smart and successful either," she added uely.

The communion between George Willard and his mother s outwardly a formal thing without meaning. When she was and sat by the window in her room he sometimes went in evening to make her a visit. They sat by a window that oked over the roof of a small frame building into Main reet. By turning their heads they could see through another ndow, along an alleyway that ran behind the Main Street ores and into the back door of Abner Groff's bakery. metimes as they sat thus a picture of a village life presented lf to them. At the back door of his shop appeared Abner roff with a stick or an empty milk bottle in his hand. For a ng time there was a feud between the baker and the grey cat at belonged to Sylvester West, the druggist. The boy and his other saw the cat creep into the door of the bakery and resently emerge followed by the baker, who swore and waved s arms about. The baker's eyes were small and red and his ack hair and beard were filled with flour dust. Sometimes he as so angry that, although the cat had disappeared, he hurled icks, bits of broken glass, and even some of the tools of his ade about. Once he broke a window at the back of Sinning's Hardware Store. In the alley the grey cat crouched behind barrels filled with torn paper and broken bottles above which flew a black swarm of flies. Once when she was alone, and after watching a prolonged and ineffectual outburst on the part of the baker, Elizabeth Willard put her head down on her long white hands and wept. After that she did not look along the alleyway any more, but tried to forget the contest between the bearded man and the cat. It seemed like a rehearsal of her own life, terrible in its vividness.



In the evening when the son sat in the room with his mother, the silence made them both feel awkward. Darkness came on and the evening train came in at the station. In the street below feet tramped up and down upon a board sidewalk. In the station yard, after the evening had gone, there was a heavy silence. Perhaps Skinner Leason, the express agent, moved a truck the length of the station platform. Over on Main Street sounded a man's voice, laughing. The door of the express office banged. George Willard rose and crossing the room fumbled for the doorknob. Sometimes he knocked against a chair, making it scrape along the floor. By the window sat the sick woman, perfectly still, listless. Her long hands, white and bloodless, could be seen drooping over the ends of the arms of the chair.

"I think you had better be out among the boys. You are too much indoors," she said, striving to relieve the embarrassment of the departure. "I thought I would take a walk," replied George Willard, who felt awkward and confused.

One evening in July, when the transient guests who made the New Willard House their temporary home had become scarce, and the hallways, lighted only by kerosene lamps turned low, were plunged in gloom, Elizabeth Willard had an adventure. She had been ill in bed for several days and her son had not come to visit her. She was alarmed. The feeble blaze of life that remained in her body was blown into a flame by her anxiety and she crept out of bed, dressed and hurried along the hallway toward her son's room, shaking with exaggerated fears. As she went along she steadied herself with her hand, slipped along the papered walls of the hall and breathed with difficulty. The air whistled through her teeth. As she hurried forward she thought how foolish she was. "He is concerned with boyish affairs," she told herself. "Perhaps he has now begun to walk about in the evening with girls."

Elizabeth Willard had a dread of being seen by guests in the hotel that had once belonged to her father and the

ership of which still stood recorded in her name in the try courthouse. The hotel was continually losing nage because of its shabbiness and she thought of herself lso shabby. Her own room was in an obscure corner and n she felt able to work she voluntarily worked among the s, preferring the labor that could be done when the guests e abroad seeking trade among the merchants of inesburg.

By the door of her son's room the mother knelt upon the or and listened for some sound from within. When she heard boy moving about and talking in low tones a smile came to lips. George Willard had a habit of talking aloud to himself to hear him doing so had always given his mother a culiar pleasure. The habit in him, she felt, strengthened the cret bond that existed between them. A thousand times she whispered to herself of the matter. "He is groping about, ying to find himself," she thought. "He is not a dull clod, all ords and smartness. Within him there is a secret something at is striving to grow. It is the thing I let be killed in myself."

In the darkness in the hallway by the door the sick woman ose and started again toward her own room. She was afraid at the door would open and the boy come upon her. When e had reached a safe distance and was about to turn a corner nto a second hallway she stopped and bracing herself with her hands waited, thinking to shake off a trembling fit of weakness that had come upon her. The presence of the boy in the room had made her happy. In her bed, during the long hours alone, the little fears that had visited her had become giants. Now they were all gone. "When I get back to my room I shall sleep," she murmured gratefully.

But Elizabeth Willard was not to return to her bed and to sleep. As she stood trembling in the darkness the door of her son's room opened and the boy's father, Tom Willard, stepped out. In the light that streamed out at the door he stood with

knob in his hand and talked. What he said infuriated the woman.

Tom Willard was ambitious for his son. He had always thought of himself as a successful man, although nothing he had ever done had turned out successfully. However, when he was out of sight of the New Willard House and had no fear of coming upon his wife, he swaggered and began to dramatize himself as one of the chief men of the town. He wanted his son to succeed. He it was who had secured for the boy the position on the *Winesburg Eagle*. Now, with a ring of earnestness in his voice, he was advising concerning some course of conduct. "I tell you what, George, you've got to wake up," he said sharply. "Will Henderson has spoken to me three times concerning the matter. He says you go along for hours not hearing when you are spoken to and acting like a gawky girl. What ails you?" Tom Willard laughed good-naturedly. "Well, I guess you'll get over it," he said. "I told Will that. You're not a fool and you're not a woman. You're Tom Willard's son and you'll wake up. I'm not afraid. What you say clears things up. If being a newspaper man had put the notion of becoming a writer into your mind that's all right. Only I guess you'll have to wake up to do that too, eh?"

Tom Willard went briskly along the hallway and down a flight of stairs to the office. The woman in the darkness could hear him laughing and talking with a guest who was striving to wear away a dull evening by dozing in a chair by the office door. She returned to the door of her son's room. The weakness had passed from her body as by a miracle and she stepped boldly along. A thousand ideas raced through her head. When she heard the scraping of a chair and the sound of a pen scratching upon paper, she again turned and went back along the hallway to her own room.

A definite determination had come into the mind of the defeated wife of the Winesburg hotel keeper. The determination was the result of long years of quiet and rather

fectual thinking. "Now," she told herself, "I will act. There mething threatening my boy and I will ward it off." The that the conversation between Tom Willard and his son been rather quiet and natural, as though an understanding ted between them, maddened her. Although for years she hated her husband, her hatred had always before been a e impersonal thing. He had been merely a part of nething else that she hated. Now, and by the few words at door, he had become the thing personified. In the darkness her own room she clenched her fists and glared about. oing to a cloth bag that hung on a nail by the wall she took t a long pair of sewing scissors and held them in her hand e a dagger. "I will stab him," she said aloud. "He has chosen be the voice of evil and I will kill him. When I have killed n something will snap within myself and I will die also. It ill be a release for all of us."

In her girlhood and before her marriage with Tom Willard, lizabeth had borne a somewhat shaky reputation in Vinesburg. For years she had been what is called "stage-truck" and had paraded through the streets with traveling men uests at her father's hotel, wearing loud clothes and urging m to tell her of life in the cities out of which they had come. nce she startled the town by putting on men's clothes and iding a bicycle down Main Street.

In her mind the tall dark girl had been in those days much confused. A great restlessness was in her and it expressed itself in two ways. First there was an uneasy desire for change, for some big definite movement to her life. It was this feeling that had turned her mind to the stage. She dreamed of joining some company and wandering over the world, seeing always new faces and giving something out of herself to all people. Sometimes at night she was quite beside herself with the thought, but when she tried to talk of the matter to the members of the theatrical companies that came to Winesburg and stopped at her father's hotel, she got nowhere. They did

not seem to know what she meant, or if she did get something of her passion expressed, they only laughed. "It's not like that," they said. "It's as dull and uninteresting as this here. Nothing comes of it."

With the traveling men when she walked about with them, and later with Tom Willard, it was quite different. Always they seemed to understand and sympathize with her. On the side streets of the village, in the darkness under the trees, they took hold of her and she thought that something unexpressed in herself came forth and became a part of an unexpressed something in them.

And then there was the second expression of her restlessness. When that came she felt for a time released and happy. She did not blame the men who walked with her and later she did not blame Tom Willard. It was always the same, beginning with kisses and ending, after strange wild emotions, with peace and then sobbing repentance. When she sobbed she put her hand upon the face of the man and had always the same thought. Even though he were large and bearded she thought he had become suddenly a little boy. She wondered why he did not sob also.

In her room, tucked away in a corner of the old Willard House, Elizabeth Willard lighted a lamp and put it on a dressing table that stood by the door. A thought had come into her mind and she went to a closet and brought out a small square box and set it on the table. The box contained material for make-up and had been left with other things by a theatrical company that had once stranded in Winesburg. Elizabeth Willard had decided that she would be beautiful. Her hair was still black and there was a great mass of it braided and coiled about her head. The scene that was to take place in the office below began to grow in her mind. No ghostly worn-out figure should confront Tom Willard, but something quite unexpected and startling. Tall and with dusky cheeks and hair that fell in a mass from her shoulders, a figure should come striding down

stairway before the startled loungers in the hotel office. figure would be silent – it would be swift and terrible. As gress whose cub had been threatened would she appear, ning out of the shadows, stealing noiselessly along and ding the long wicked scissors in her hand.

With a little broken sob in her throat, Elizabeth Willard w out the light that stood upon the table and stood weak and mbling in the darkness. The strength that had been as a racle in her body left and she half reeled across the floor, tching at the back of the chair in which she had spent so ny long days staring out over the tin roofs into the main eet of Winesburg. In the hallway there was a sound of otsteps and George Willard came in at the door. Sitting in a air beside his mother he began to talk. "I'm going to get out here," he said." I don't know where I shall go or what I shall o but I am going away."

The woman in the chair waited and trembled. An impulse me to her. "I suppose you had better wake up," she said. "You think that? You will go to the city and make money, eh? t will be better for you, you think, to be a business man, to be risk and smart and alive?" She waited and trembled.

The son shook his head. "I suppose I can't make you derstand, but, oh, I wish I could," he said earnestly. "I can't even talk to father about it. I don't try. There isn't any use. I don't know what I shall do. I just want to go away and look at people and think."

Silence fell upon the room where the boy and woman sat together. Again, as on the other evenings, they were embarrassed. After a time the boy tried again to talk. "I suppose it won't be for a year or two but I've been thinking about it," he said, rising and going toward the door. "Something father said makes it sure that I shall have to go away." He fumbled with the door knob. In the room the silence became unbearable to the woman. She wanted to cry out with joy because of the words that had come from the lips of her

son, but the expression of joy had become impossible to her. "I think you had better go out among the boys. You are too much indoors," she said. "I thought I would go for a little walk," replied the son stepping awkwardly out of the room and closing the door.

Questions for further discussion

Plot Structure, Message, Tonal System

1 Does the plot contain all the components?
2 Do the complications involve physical or psychological movement of events?
3 Where do the events take place? What are the functions of the setting?
4 What is the crucial moment of the story?
5 What are the basic conflicts of the story?
6 What is the message of the story and means of conveying the message? Is there any presupposition?
7 What role does the title play? Does it contribute to the message of the story?
8 What does the end of the story suggest?
9 Pick out parallel constructions and repetitions and say what they serve to.
10 Is the tone dramatic, lyrical or ironical? What are the indices of the tone?
11 Does the author appeal to the reader's senses?

Character – Images

1 Are the characters real and convincing? Support your point of view by some examples from the story.
2 What means of characterization are used to describe the protagonist?
3 How are the major features developed in the protagonist?

ort it by evidence from the text of the story.
4 Does the author give psychological portrayal of the gonist?
Are there any characters who can serve as foil to the gonist? Why?

Text 12

As you read the text, think of the answers to the wing questions:

1 What was the reason that the taipan didn't care to go e? What made him change his mind later?
2 Why was the taipan happy where he was? Is it only the ney that makes us happy? What makes us happy?
3 Why did he always pass the cemetery with a glow of e? What did he think of his friends and acquaintances? Did ondemn them? Why?
4 Does it depend on the person himself whether to live or Or is it his fate to live or die?
5 Do you think the taipan really saw the coolies digging a e? What was it? Why did he die?

The Taipan

W.S. Maugham

No one knew better than he that he was an important son. He was number one in not the least important branch the most important English firm in China. He had worked way up through solid ability and he looked back with a nt smile at the callow clerk who had come out to China rty years before. When he remembered the modest home he d come from, a little red house in a long row of little red uses, in Barnes, a suburb which, aiming desperately at the nteel, achieves only a sordid melancholy, and compared it

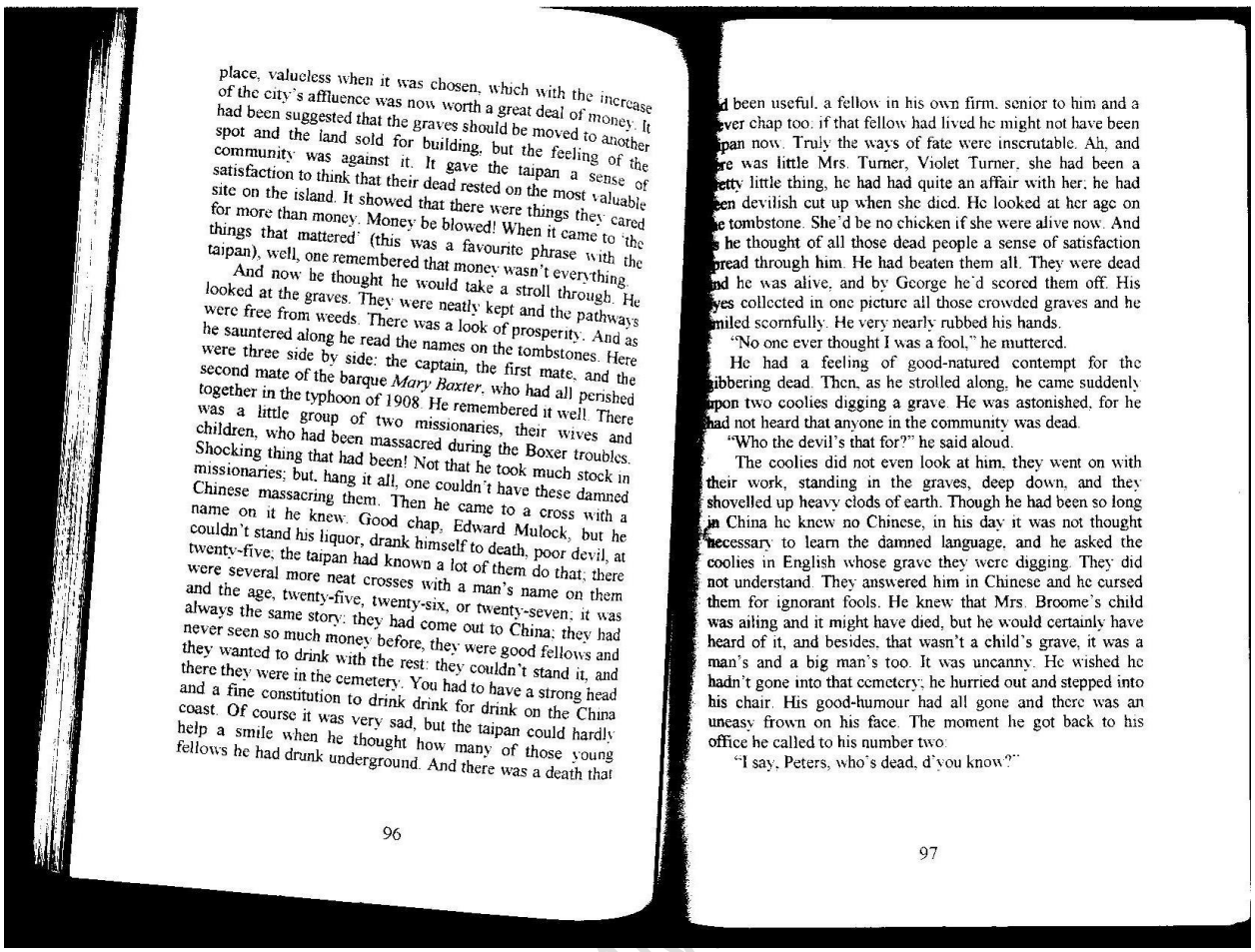
with the magnificent stone mansion, with its wide verandas and spacious rooms, which was at once the office of the company and his own residence, he chuckled with satisfaction. He had come a long way since then. He thought of the high tea to which he sat down when he came home from school (he was at St Paul's), with his father and mother and his two sisters, a slice of cold meat, a great deal of bread and butter and plenty of milk in his tea, everybody helping himself, and then he thought of the state in which now he ate his evening meal. He always dressed and whether he was alone or not he expected the three boys to wait at table. His number one boy knew exactly what he liked and he never had to bother himself with the details of housekeeping; but he always had a set dinner with soup and fish, entrée, roast, sweet, and savoury, so that if he wanted to ask anyone in at the last moment he could. He liked his food and he did not see why when he was alone he should have less good a dinner than when he had a guest.

He had indeed gone far. That was why he did not care to go home now, he had not been to England for ten years, and he took his leave in Japan or Vancouver, where he was sure of meeting old friends from the China coast. He knew no one at home. His sisters had married in their own station, their husbands were clerks and their sons were clerks; there was nothing between him and them; they bored him. He satisfied the claims of relationship by sending them every Christmas a piece of fine silk, some elaborate embroidery, or a case of tea. He was not a mean man and as long as his mother lived he had made her an allowance. But when the time came for him to retire he had no intention of going back to England, he had seen too many men do that and he knew how often it was a failure; he meant to take a house near the racecourse in Shanghai: what with bridge and his ponies and golf he expected to get through the rest of his life very comfortably. But he had a good many years before he need think of retiring. In another five or six Higgins would be going home and then

would take charge of the head office in Shanghai. Meanwhile, he was very happy where he was, he could save money, which you couldn't do in Shanghai, and have a good time into the bargain. This place had another advantage over Shanghai: he was the most prominent man in the community and what he said went. Even the consul took care to keep on the right side of him. Once a consul and he had been at loggerheads and it was not he who had gone to the wall. The Japan thrust out his jaw pugnaciously as he thought of the incident.

But he smiled, for he felt in an excellent humour. He was walking back to his office from a capital luncheon at the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Bank. They did you very well there. The food was first-rate and there was plenty of liquor. He had started with a couple of cocktails, then he had some excellent sauterne, and he had finished up with two glasses of port and some fine old brandy. He felt good. And when he left he did a thing that was rare with him; he walked. His bearers with his chair kept a few paces behind him in case he felt inclined to slip into it, but he enjoyed stretching his legs. He did not get enough exercises these days. Now that he was too heavy to ride it was difficult to get exercise. But if he was too heavy to ride he could still keep ponies, and as he strolled along in the balmy air he thought of the spring meeting. He had a couple of griffins that he had hopes of and one of the lads in his office had turned out a fine jockey (he must see they didn't sneak him away, old Higgins in Shanghai would give a pot of money to get him over there) and he ought to pull off two or three races. He flattered himself that he had the finest stable in the city. He pouted his broad chest like a pigeon. It was a beautiful day, and it was good to be alive.

He paused as he came to the cemetery. It stood there, neat and orderly, as an evident sign of the community's opulence. He never passed the cemetery without a little glow of pride. He was pleased to be an Englishman. For the cemetery stood in a



place, valueless when it was chosen, which with the increase of the city's affluence was now worth a great deal of money. It had been suggested that the graves should be moved to another spot and the land sold for building, but the feeling of the community was against it. It gave the taipan a sense of satisfaction to think that their dead rested on the most valuable site on the island. It showed that there were things they cared for more than money. Money be blowed! When it came to 'the things that mattered' (this was a favourite phrase with the taipan), well, one remembered that money wasn't everything.

And now he thought he would take a stroll through. He looked at the graves. They were neatly kept and the pathways were free from weeds. There was a look of prosperity. And as he sauntered along he read the names on the tombstones. Here were three side by side: the captain, the first mate, and the second mate of the barque *Mary Baxter*, who had all perished together in the typhoon of 1908. He remembered it well. There was a little group of two missionaries, their wives and children, who had been massacred during the Boxer troubles. Shocking thing that had been! Not that he took much stock in missionaries; but, hang it all, one couldn't have these damned Chinese massacring them. Then he came to a cross with a name on it he knew. Good chap, Edward Mulock, but he couldn't stand his liquor, drank himself to death, poor devil, at twenty-five; the taipan had known a lot of them do that; there were several more neat crosses with a man's name on them and the age, twenty-five, twenty-six, or twenty-seven; it was always the same story: they had come out to China; they had never seen so much money before, they were good fellows and they wanted to drink with the rest: they couldn't stand it, and there they were in the cemetery. You had to have a strong head and a fine constitution to drink drink for drink on the China coast. Of course it was very sad, but the taipan could hardly help a smile when he thought how many of those young fellows he had drunk underground. And there was a death that

d been useful, a fellow in his own firm, senior to him and a ever chap too; if that fellow had lived he might not have been ipan now. Truly the ways of fate were inscrutable. Ah, and re was little Mrs. Turner, Violet Turner, she had been a etty little thing, he had had quite an affair with her; he had en devilish cut up when she died. He looked at her age on e tombstone. She'd be no chicken if she were alive now. And s he thought of all those dead people a sense of satisfaction pread through him. He had beaten them all. They were dead nd he was alive, and by George he'd scored them off. His yes collected in one picture all those crowded graves and he miled scornfully. He very nearly rubbed his hands.

"No one ever thought I was a fool," he muttered.

He had a feeling of good-natured contempt for the ibbering dead. Then, as he strolled along, he came suddenly pon two coolies digging a grave. He was astonished, for he had not heard that anyone in the community was dead.

"Who the devil's that for?" he said aloud.

The coolies did not even look at him, they went on with their work, standing in the graves, deep down, and they shovelled up heavy clods of earth. Though he had been so long in China he knew no Chinese, in his day it was not thought necessary to learn the damned language, and he asked the coolies in English whose grave they were digging. They did not understand. They answered him in Chinese and he cursed them for ignorant fools. He knew that Mrs. Broome's child was ailing and it might have died, but he would certainly have heard of it, and besides, that wasn't a child's grave, it was a man's and a big man's too. It was uncanny. He wished he hadn't gone into that cemetery; he hurried out and stepped into his chair. His good-humour had all gone and there was an uneasy frown on his face. The moment he got back to his office he called to his number two:

"I say, Peters, who's dead, d'you know?"

But Peters knew nothing. The taipan was puzzled. He called one of the native clerks and sent him to the cemetery to ask the coolies. He began to sign his letters. The clerk came back and said the coolies had gone and there was no one to ask. The taipan began to feel vaguely annoyed: he did not like things to happen of which he knew nothing. His own boy would know, his boy always knew everything, and he sent for him; but the boy had heard of no death in the community.

"I knew no one was dead," said the taipan irritably. "But what's the grave for?"

He told the boy to go to the overseer of the cemetery and find out what the devil he had dug a grave for when no one was dead.

"Let me have a whisky and soda before you go," he added, as the boy was leaving the room.

He did not know why the sight of the grave had made him uncomfortable. But he tried to put out of his mind. He felt better when he had drunk the whisky, and he finished his work. He went upstairs and turned over the pages of *Punch*. In a few minutes he would go to the club and play a rubber or two of bridge before dinner. But it would ease his mind to hear what his boy had to say and he waited for his return. In a little while the boy came back and he brought the overseer with him.

"What are you having a grave dug for?" he asked the overseer point-blank. "Nobody's dead."

"I no did glave," said the man.

"What the devil do you mean by that? There were two coolies digging a grave this afternoon."

The two Chinese looked at one another. Then the boy said they had been to the cemetery together. There was no new grave there.

The taipan only just stopped himself from speaking.

"But damn it all, I saw it myself," were the words on the tip pf his tongue.

But he did not say them. He grew very red as he choked em down. The two Chinese looked at him with steady eyes. or a moment his breath failed him.

"All right. Get out," he gasped.

But as soon as they were gone he shouted for the boy gain, and when he came, maddeningly impassive, he told him o bring some whisky. He rubbed his sweating face with a andkerchief. His hand trembled when he lifted the glass to his ips. They could say what they liked, but he had seen the grave. Why, he could hear still the dull thud as the coolies threw the padefuls of earth on the ground above them. What did it mean? He could feel his heart beating. He felt strangely ill at ease. But he pulled himself together. It was all nonsense. If here was no grave there it must have been a hallucination. The best thing he could do was to go to the club, and if he ran across the doctor he would ask him to give him a look over.

Everyone in the club looked just the same as ever. He did not know why he should have expected them to look different. It was a comfort. These men, living for many years with one another lives that were methodically regulated, had acquired a number of little idiosyncrasies – one of them hummed incessantly while he played bridge, another insisted on drinking through a straw – and these tricks which had so often irritated the taipan now gave him a sense of security. He needed it, for he could not get out of his head that strange sight he had seen; he played bridge very badly; his partner was censorious, and the taipan lost his temper. He thought the men were looking at him oddly. He wondered what they saw in him that was unaccustomed.

Suddenly he felt he could not bear to stay in the club any longer. As he went out he saw the doctor reading *The Times* in the reading-room, but he could not bring himself to speak to him. He wanted to see for himself whether that grave was really there, and stepping into his chair he told his bearers to take him to the cemetery. You couldn't have a hallucination

twice, could you? And besides, he would take the overseer in with him and if the grave was not there he wouldn't see it, and if it was he'd give the overseer the soundest thrashing he'd ever had. But the overseer was nowhere to be found. He had gone out and taken the keys with him. When the taipan found he could not get into the cemetery he felt suddenly exhausted. He got back into his chair and told his bearers to take him home. He would lie down for half an hour before dinner. He was tired out. That was it. He had heard that people had hallucinations when they were tired. When his boy in to put out his clothes for dinner it was only by an effort of will that he got up. He had a strong inclination not to dress that evening, but he resisted it: he made it a rule to dress, he had dressed every evening for twenty years and it would never do to break his rule. But he ordered a bottle of champagne with his dinner and that made him feel more comfortable. Afterwards he told the boy to bring him the best brandy. When he had drunk a couple of glasses of this he felt himself again. Hallucinations be damned! He went to the billiard-room and practiced a few difficult shots. There could not be much the matter with him when his eye was so sure. When he went to bed he sank immediately into a sound sleep.

But suddenly he awoke. He had dreamed of that open grave and the coolies digging leisurely. He was sure he had seen them. It was absurd to say it was a hallucination when he had seen them with his own eyes. Then he heard the rattle of the night-watchman going his rounds. It broke upon the stillness of the night so harshly that it made him jump out of his skin. And then terror seized him. He felt a horror of the winding multitudinous streets of the Chinese city, and there was something ghastly and terrible in the convoluted roofs of the temples with their devils grimacing and tortured. He loathed the smells that assaulted his nostrils. And the people. Those myriads of blue-clad coolies, and the beggars in their filthy rags, and the merchants and the magistrates, sleek,

iling, and inscrutable, in their long black gowns. They med to press upon him with menace. He hated the country. ina. Why had he ever come? He was panic-stricken now. He st get out. He would not stay another year, another month. hat did he care about Shanghai?

"Oh, my God," he cried, "If I were only safely back in gland."

He wanted to go home. If he had to die he wanted to die in gland. He could not bear to be buried among all these ellow men, with their slanting eyes and their grinning faces. e wanted to be buried at home, not in that grave he had seen hat day. He could never rest there. What did it matter what eople thought? Let them think what they liked. The only thing hat mattered was to get away while he had the chance.

He got out of bed and wrote to the head of the firm and aid he had discovered he was dangerously ill. He must be replaced. He could not stay longer than was absolutely necessary. He must go home at once.

They found the letter in the morning clenched in the taipan's hand. He had slipped down between the desk and the chair. He was stone dead.

Questions for further discussion

Plot Structure, Message, Tonal System

1 Does the plot contain all the components?

2 Do the complications involve physical or psychological movement of events?

3 Where do the events take place? What are the functions of the setting?

4 What is the crucial moment of the story?

5 What are the basic conflicts of the story? Does the author penetrate into the main character's mind? Give some facts from the text to prove it if he does.

6 What is the message of the story and means of conveying the message? Is there any presupposition?

7 What does the end of the story suggest? What did the author want to emphasize by the following sentence: "If he had to die he wanted to die in England"?

8 Pick out parallel constructions and repetitions and say what they serve to.

9 Is the tone dramatic, lyrical or ironical? What are the indices of the tone?

Character – Images

1 Is the character real and convincing? Support your point of view by some examples from the story.

2 What means of characterization are used to describe the protagonist? How does the following sentence characterize the protagonist: "No one knew better than he that he was an important person"?

3 What features of character are emphasized by the protagonist's actions, his attitude to other people, his speech characteristics?

4 Does the author give psychological portrayal of the protagonist?

5 Give a character sketch of the taipan.

Text 13

As you read the text, think of the answers to the following questions:

1 Why didn't Mendoza like Mrs. Burtenshaw from the first minute of their conversation? Did Mendoza change his opinion later on?

2 Was Mrs. Burtenshaw really so respectful to Mendoza while speaking about her son's dream to him? Give the facts from the story.

3 Why did the career of a politician for her son attract Mrs. Burtenshaw so much?

4 What did Mendoza see in Charlie's first picture?

5 Charlie was a born artist, wasn't he? If you agree support your opinion by the facts from the text.

6 When did Mrs. Burtenshaw begin to speak about paying Mendoza?

7 What sum of money were they speaking about at the end of their first meeting? Why didn't a thousand pounds mean much to Mrs. Burtenshaw?

8 When did the Burtenshaws come to Mendoza? Whom was he interested in?

9 What did Mendoza tell Charlie having examined his pictures? Why?

10 How did Charlie feel after his visit to Mendoza?

The Spanish Painter

W. Taine

The clock had just struck ten when Mendoza's servant came into the studio and said to his master: "Mrs. Burtenshaw to see you, sir."

Mendoza said nothing, but his eyes asked a question which the servant immediately understood. "She is a – large lady, sir, with fine clothes and diamonds in her ears. I do not think she has come to buy a painting.

"Well," said Mendoza, "from your description of her, it's clear that she has not come to ask me for money either. As I am not working, I shall receive her."

The servant opened the door and invited the lady in. Mendoza asked her to sit down, and stood waiting. As he looked at her and listened to her, Mendoza decided that he

didn't like her at all. She smiled at him, but there was no kindness in her eyes; she spoke respectfully, but her voice was hard, and there were hard lines round her mouth.

"I am sorry that I had to come to see you so early in the morning," she said. "But I couldn't wait – I simply couldn't. The idea of asking you to help me came to me during the night. I didn't sleep at all, Mr Mendoza, I couldn't close my eyes. Oh, Mr. Mendoza, I am in such a difficult situation! You have never been a mother, you cannot know what I feel, how frightened I am about my son. But you must help me. I am sure you are the only man in the world who can."

"It is true," said Mendoza, "that I have never been a mother. But I know many mothers, and I know that all of them are ready to do anything for their children. Believe me, my dear lady, I shall help you, if I can. Perhaps you will tell me how I can be of service to you?"

"Yes, yes!" she cried. "I understand you are busy. But my story will take only a few minutes. I want to speak to you about my son Charlie, my only child. He is everything to me – " she opened her coat that had cost, perhaps, a thousand pounds –"he is all that I have in the world. His dear father died ten years ago, when Charlie was a little boy of nine. Since then, Charlie has been the main interest of my life, my whole heart. A wonderful boy, until this idea came to him, the idea of going in for art-"

"And have you come to ask me to take your son as a pupil?" Mendoza asked. "Because if that is the purpose of your visit, I am sorry-"

"No, no, my dear Mr Mendoza!" she cried. "I don't want that at all. I want you to tell him come and show you his drawings, and then I want you to tell him that he has no talent. I shall have no rest or peace as long as that boy continues to dream of becoming an artist. We have never had such low ideas or such low people in our family. You must promise to tell him he will never be able to paint."

"I understand," Mendoza said. "Your family is too high nd too proud to have anything to do with painters. But how an I promise you anything until I have seen your son's works? What if he has a really great talent? Such a thing is possible, even in your family."

"Oh!" she cried, and now her eyes were full of tears. "If you refuse to help me, what shall I do? You are the only man who can do this for me, because Charlie admires you more than any other artist. He collects your drawings when they appear in the magazines. He has hundreds of them, if not thousands. One word from you would be more important to him – I am sure of it – than a whole lecture from any other artist. If you tell him honestly that his paintings are no good, I am sure he will not continue his useless study of art. And his mind will be free to think of the fine, useful career that I want for him."

"And what is the fine career?" asked Mendoza.

"Politics, of course!" she said. "What else? Like his dear father," she explained. "Mr Burtenshaw was in Parliament three years before he died. He made wonderful speeches and the most important people were beginning to notice him. His money helped too, of course. I think you can understand now, Mr Mendoza, why I want to see Charles in politics. It is my duty to the memory of his dear father. And I want him to marry well, a girl with money and a good name. If he marries such a girl, it will help him in his career. But if he becomes an artist, what chance will he have to meet a girl of good family? He will never speak to anybody except students and the kind of girls who work in artists' studios – hardly the kind of people that a mother wants her son to meet!"

"And if it is impossible to make him go in for any career except painting, what then?" Mendoza asked.

The pleasant smile on her face disappeared immediately, and her eyes became small and hard. "If he refuses to change his mind," she said, "he will have to take care of himself.

While I live, he has nothing except what I give him. If he comes to me for help, I'll close my door in his face!"

As Mendoza listened to her words and looked at her hard eyes and mouth, he thought to himself, "A man, a gentleman, can't touch a woman, of course, but how I'd like to push her out of the room and tell her never to come back!" But he only said:

"I understand you, Mrs. Burtenshaw. I understand that you want to save your son from the terrible life of an artist, to save him for the high and wonderful ideals of Parliament politics. But how can I tell your boy that he has no talent if I have never seen his work? Can you bring me one or two examples?"

"I have one of his pictures here with me," she answered. "I knew you would ask me for it. You will see immediately that it's hopeless. It's the same with everything he draws: pictures of dirty, vulgar men, never anything nice or pleasant."

Mendoza took the painting from her and examined it carefully. It was a picture of a pirate, in a bright blue coat and a tremendous hat, with a knife in one hand and a gun in the other, and a gold ring in one ear. It was far from a good picture; the hand that had painted it had never received teaching in art. But Mendoza's eyes at once saw the author's great talent.

"My dear lady," he said, "this painting is very interesting. There is humour in it, and it was done with enthusiasm. Enthusiasm and humour are things that we cannot teach. An artist must be born with them, he is lucky if he has them. Anybody can learn to draw, and if your son continues to study, he will be a fine artist. I shall be happy to see more of his work."

Mrs. Burtenshaw took the painting out of his hand. "You don't understand, or perhaps you don't want to understand, that I haven't come here to ask you to encourage my son. I want to tell my son that he will never be an artist, that he is hopeless. Isn't that clear?"

"Yes," Mendoza answered, "clear enough. But can you tell me why I must do anything of the kind? Why must I tell him that he is hopeless?"

A smile slowly appeared on her face. She looked out of the window and said quietly, "You understand, of course, that I am not asking you to work for nothing. I shall be only too glad to pay whatever you ask. My boy's future cannot be a question of money. But you can hardly believe that I will pay anything at all if you are going to help this young idiot to go against his mother!"

Mendoza looked at her without speaking, and now his eyes were half closed. At last he said, "You say you will pay me well. May I ask how much you are thinking of paying?"

She looked at him and met his eye at last.

"Is this business?" she asked.

"It is!" he answered shortly.

"Then," she said, "I have in my mind – perhaps – hm – one hundred pounds."

Mendoza stood up and threw his hands wide.

"My dear lady," he said, "I am afraid you don't understand who are you talking business with. I am Mendoza. Perhaps a hundred pounds means very much to some small artists, but you cannot think it is of any importance to me. If you want me to lie about anything connected with art: if you want me to tell a young man with talent not to give his life, his strength, his young mind and enthusiasm to art, you must pay me not less than a thousand pounds. I won't touch this business for less – not for two hundred pounds, not for three hundred pounds, not for nine hundred and ninety-nine pounds. Take it or leave it – do as you like; but quickly, please. I must begin my own work in five minutes."

To his surprise, she agreed at once. She had not thought of paying so much, but a thousand pounds meant little to a lady as rich as she was – and her Charlie's political career was in danger!

"You understand," she said, "you must allow me to be present when you speak to Charlie about his drawings."

"It is your right," Mendoza answered. "If you pay so much, you have a right to be sure that I shall tell him what you ask and nothing else. But you must allow me to be careful, too. Today is Wednesday. Tomorrow, Thursday, I receive the money. You will come here the day after tomorrow, Friday, with your son. Friday afternoon at three o'clock."

He went to the door and opened it. A minute later, he was alone. He threw open the window. "The air in this room has become bad," he said. Then he went to the telephone and called the number of Crumpton and Company, the well-known lawyers in Bedford Street.

"Freddie," he said. "Are you coming to have dinner with me this evening? Good! Seven-thirty, as usual. I want to speak to you. A small conspiracy. I'll tell you when you come. Good-bye!"

2

The money came on Thursday, and Mrs. Burtenshaw and her son arrived on Friday. Mendoza asked the lady to sit down, but then paid no attention to her: he was interested only in the son. The boy was about nineteen years old, Mendoza thought. He did not look at all like an artist, with his round head and round, almost colourless eyes. Even his nose was round. He was very frightened, and as he came into the studio, he almost fell over his own feet. Mendoza took the drawings that the boy held in his hands, put them down on the table and began to examine them carefully.

The subject of the first drawing was clear: it was a picture of Gulliver when he opened his eyes the first time in the country of the Little People. The man-mountain lay on the ground, with a hundred little people around him, on his arms and legs and one even on his head, looking into his mouth. Not an easy subject: a subject for an artist, for a real master.

Charlie had thought much about it: he had tried – how he had tried! But it was too difficult for him. There were mistakes everywhere, he had lost the battle.

But Mendoza saw something else, besides the bad sky, the wrong colour of the ground. He saw that in the whole picture there was the finest and richest imagination. And there was humour in it too, the same humour that he had seen in the picture of the pirate. The little men did not look like each other. Their clothes were not the same, they did not stand the same way and their faces were not the same, as they pulled and pushed Gulliver. All of them were busy, all of them were funny. The sky and the ground were not important: the people in the picture said – no, shouted – that the person who had created them was an artist with the highest and most powerful talent.

Mendoza examined all the paintings and drawings and then returned them to Charlie. "Mr. Burtenshaw," he said, "I am sorry to say that your work shows very little talent. Of course, you may continue to draw for your own entertainment, art can be an interesting hobby. But you are hopeless as an artist. The best thing for you is to do as your mother says, and go in for politics. I have nothing more to say. Good-bye." He went to the door and opened it.

Charlie jumped up, his eyes full of tears, and without a word ran out of the studio. His mother followed him more slowly. As she passed Mendoza, she said, "I'd like to know what you really think of the pictures."

"Madam," said Mendoza, "I have done what we agreed. I didn't say that I would tell you what I really think."

She laughed and went out. Mendoza opened the window and raised his hand once, and then again. Then he closed the window and went back to his work.

3

The story now takes us to a bench by the river Thames, where young Charlie is sitting with his head in his hands. He

did not go home with his mother, because he did not want to hear the sound of her voice as she laughed at all he had done, and his dreams for the future. He was only nineteen, he thought, and now, after Mendoza's terrible words... "No!" he said to himself. "I will continue, I must: there is nothing else in my life. But what shall I live on? Mother will give me nothing if I refuse to go in for politics. Oh! If I only had my own money – fifty pounds a year is enough for me. But I have nothing – nothing!"

His mind was so full of these unhappy thoughts that at first he didn't notice the man who was standing in front of him. The man spoke to him, but he didn't hear until his name was repeated. "Are you Charles Burtenshaw?" the man asked.

"Yes, I am," Charlie answered. "What do you want?"

"I have a letter for you," the man said. "Read it, please."

Charlie took the letter and read: "If Charles Burtenshaw comes to the office of Crumpton and Company, lawyers, in Bedford Street, he will hear something that is very important to him."

"I have come from Crumpton and Company," the man said, when Charlie raised his eyes from the letter. "Mr.Crumpton asked me to find you and bring you to him at once. Come with me, please."

"What is it about?" Charlie asked. Hope suddenly came to his mind, and his eyes became brighter. "Has somebody left me money?"

"I can't say, sir," the man answered. "Perhaps it will be simpler if you come with me and hear about it yourself. Bedford Street is not far from here."

A quarter of an hour later, Charlie was sitting in the office of Crumpton and Company. Mr. Crumpton was speaking to him: "I can tell you everything in a very few words," he said. "One of our clients has put one thousand pounds into our hands. Don't ask who this client is, or why he or she has done this, because I shall not tell you. All you need to know is, that

the money is for you. You will come to this office every Saturday, to receive four pounds, until you have received the whole thousand pounds. That means you will have four pounds a week for almost five years. You may do whatever you like with the money."

He put four pounds on the table in front of Charlie. "This is your money for the first week," he said. "That is all, I think. Good-bye!"

"But – but –"Charlie began.

"No buts, Mr. Burtenshaw," Mr. Crumpton said. "Our business is over. Henry!" he said to the man who had come to Charlie by the Thames. "Show Mr. Burtenshaw the way out!"

"But – but – " Charlie cried. Henry came to him and took his arm. "This way, sir," he said. Charlie found himself in the corridor. In one hand he held his drawings, in the other hand were his four pounds.

"But – but –" he said, and found himself in the street.

4

Our story begins again four years later. Mendoza's servant has just come into the studio and told him that Mr. Charles Burtendshaw has come and would be glad if Mendoza could receive him. Mendoza went to the door himself and opened it. He held out his hand to Charlie, who was waiting there.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Burtenshaw," he said. "I am very glad to see you. I an afraid I wasn't very friendly to you at our last meeting four years ago, and I hope you are going to give me a chance to be more pleasant."

"I hope you will find it possible to be more pleasant," Charlie answered. "Though I am going to ask you to do the same thing: that is, I want you to look at some of my drawings and tell me if there is anything good in them."

"So you did not go in for political career?"

"No, I didn't. Let me show you what I went in for."

Charlie put a popular magazine on the table and opened it. Mendoza saw before him a full-page drawing of Gulliver,

lying on the ground with a hundred little people around him and on him. A wonderful drawing, with the name "Charles Burtenshaw" in the right-hand corner.

Mendoza examined it carefully. "Yes," he said at last, "I was wrong when I said you would never be an artist. I think that is what you wanted me to say?"

"Yes, it is," said Charles. "So there is something in it?"

"I think," said Mendoza, "that it is a fine piece of work. There is imagination and humour in every line. And you have become a fine technician too; you know that art is not only talent. I am very glad that you didn't allow me to discourage you. The world has a new artist today, perhaps a master. But the next ten years will show what you can really do."

Charles's eyes shone with happiness. "Thank you," he said. "But do you know, four years ago, somebody – I don't know who – believed that I would become an artist, and that person has helped me at this time."

"That's interesting," said Mendoza. "Tell me how it happened."

Charles told him the whole story. "Of course," he said at the end, "it was only four pounds a week, but it was enough to pay for a room and simple food, and I didn't need anything from my mother. I left home and began studying at Monfort's Art School. I tried very hard, and when I saw I could get no more from Monfort, I went to Paris. I have just got back from there. This is my first published drawing, and I still have two hundred pounds in Crumpton's office. My mother says she will leave me nothing when she dies, but I am not worried about that, and I usually don't even think of it. I think more often of the person who helped me. I have asked old Crumpton a thousand times, but he keeps the secret – I can't get anything out of him."

"Crumpton is a lawyer," Mendoza said. "Lawyers don't tell their clients' secrets."

"That's true," Charlie said. "but I'd be glad to know. I'd like to tell that wonderful person what his gift has meant to me."

"I understand," Mendoza told him. "But don't worry about it. It's clear that the person doesn't want you to thank him. Tell me, when I said that you were hopeless as an artist, did it hurt you very much?"

"Of course," said Charles, "but it didn't hurt long. I decided that perhaps you had made a mistake. It didn't matter - I couldn't stop drawing."

"Yes, I see," Mendoza said. "I was sure – no, it doesn't matter now."

Questions for further discussion

Plot structure, Message

1 Does the story comprise all the components of the plot structure?

2 What is the function of the title? Does it serve to convey the author's message?

3 What is the main problem of the story? Formulate the message of the story and provide some evidence from the story to show how it is conveyed.

4 What span of time does the story cover?

5 Is the setting scattered throughout the story? What are the functions of the setting?

6 What is the climax of the story?

7 Is there any denouement in the story?

8 What conflicts is the story based on?

9 Do the complications involve physical or psychological movement of events or both?

10 Are there any cases of retardation, withholding of information or enigma in the story?

Narrative method, Character-images

1 What is the type of the narrator? Is the narrator reliable or not? Give some facts from the story to prove it.

2 Are the characters real and convincing? Support your point of view by some examples from the story.

3 The author repeats one and the same idea several times in the story ("took the painting", "I understand....", "if you want me to lie, if you want to tell a young man...", "Mendoza saw something, he saw...", etc). What does it mean?

4 What is implied by the following statements: "There was humour in it", "She laughed and went out", "I couldn't stop drawing"?

5 Who is the protagonist of the story?

6 Is the protagonist shown through his actions or does the author give his psychological portrayal? Support your point of view giving some facts from the text.

7 What other means of characterization are used to describe the main character? What features of character of Mrs. Burtenshaw are revealed through the speech characteristics?

Text 14

While reading the text find the answers to the following questions:

1 Why did Sir James ask his wife to lunch with the Smithly-Dubbs?

2 What did Lady Drakmanton mean saying that "showing hospitality to the Smithly-Dubbs is carrying Free Food principles to a regrettable extreme" and "all three of them, with their tongues hanging out of their mouths and the six-course look in their eyes"?

3 What did Lady Drakmanton ask Milly for? Why? Did Milly agree to help her?

4 Who was Ellen Niggle? Why was she a catastrophe that the Smithly-Dubbs could not contemplate with any degree of calmness?

5 How did Lady Drakmanton teach the Smithly-Dubbs a lesson?

6 Do you think she ruined her husband's career?

The Phantom Luncheon **H.H. Munro**

"The Smithly-Dubbs are in Town," said Sir James. "I wish you would show them some attention. Ask them to lunch with you at the Ritz or somewhere."

"From the little I've seen of the Smithly-Dubbs I don't think I want to cultivate their acquaintance," said Lady Drakmanton.

"They always work for us at election times," said her husband; "I don't suppose they influence very many votes, but they have an uncle who is on one of my ward committees, and another uncle speaks sometimes at some of our less important meetings. Those sort of people expect some return in the shape of hospitality."

"Expect it!" exclaimed Lady Drakmanton; "the Misses Smithly-Dubbsdo more than that; they almost demand it. They belong to my club, and hang about the lobby just about lunch-time, all three of them, with their tongues hanging out of their mouths and the six-course look in their eyes. If I were to breathe the word 'lunch' they would hustle me into a taxi and scream "Ritz" or "Dieudonné's" to the driver before I knew what was happening."

"All the same, I think you ought to ask them to a meal of some sort," persisted Sir James.

"I consider that showing hospitality to the Smithly-Dubbs is carrying Free Food principles to a regrettable extreme," said Lady Drakmanton; "I've entertained the Joneses and the

Browns and the Snapheimers and the Lubrikoffs, and heaps of others whose names I forget, but I don't see why I should inflict the society of the Misses Smithly-Dubbs on myself for a solid hour. Imagine it, sixty minutes, more or less, of unrelenting gobble and gabble. Why can't *you* take them on, Milly?" she asked, turning hopefully to her sister.

"I don't know them," said Milly hastily.

"All the better; you can pass yourself off as me. People say that we are so alike that they can hardly tell us apart, and I've only spoken to these tiresome young women about twice in my life, at committee-room, and bowed to them in the club. Any of the club page-boys will point them out to you; they're always to be found lolling about the hall just before lunch-time."

"My dear Betty, don't be absurd," protested Milly; "I've got some people lunching with me at the Carlton tomorrow, and I'm leaving Town the day afterwards."

"What time is your lunch tomorrow?" asked Lady Drakmanton reflectively.

"Two o'clock," said Milly.

"Good," said her sister; "the Smithly-Dubbs shall lunch with me tomorrow. It shall be rather an amusing lunch-party. At least, I shall be amused."

The last two remarks she made to herself. Other people did not always appreciate her ideas of humour. Sir James never did.

The next day Lady Drakmanton made some marked variations in her usual toilet effects. She dressed her hair in an unaccustomed manner, and put on a hat that added to the transformation f her appearance. When she had made one or two minor alterations she was sufficiently unlike her usual smart self to produce some hesitation in the greeting which the Misses Smithly-Dubbs bestowed on her in the club lobby. She responded, however, with a readiness which set their doubts at rest.

"What is the Carlton like for lunching in?" she asked breezily.

The restaurant received an enthusiastic recommendation from the three sisters.

"Let's go and lunch there, shall we?" she suggested, and in a few minutes' time the Smithly-Dubb mind was contemplating at close quarters a happy vista of baked meats and approved vintage.

"Are you going to start with caviare? I am," confided Lady Drakmanton, and the Smithly-Dubbs started with caviare. The subsequent dishes were chosen in the same ambitious spirit, and by the time they had arrived at the wild duck course it was beginning to be a rather expensive lunch.

The conversation hardly kept pace with the brilliancy of the menu. Repeated references on the part of the guests to the local political conditions and prospects in Sir James's constituency were met with vague "ahs" and "indeeds" from Lady Drakmanton, who might have been expected to be specially interested.

"I think when the Insurance Act is a little better understood it will lose some of its present unpopularity," hazarded Cecilia Smithly-Dubb.

"Will it? I dare say. I'm afraid politics don't interest me very much," said Lady Drakmanton.

The three Miss Smithly-Dubbs put down their cups of Turkish coffee and stared. Then they broke into protesting giggles.

"Of course, you're joking," they said.

"Not me," was the disconcerting answer; "I can't make head or tail of these bothering old politics. Never could, never want to. I've quite enough to do to manage my own affairs, and that's a fact."

"But," exclaimed Amanda Smithly-Dubb, with a squeal of bewilderment breaking into her voice, "I was told you spoke so

informingly about the Insurance Act at one of our social evenings."

It was Lady Drakmanton who stared now. "Do you know," she said with a scared look around her, "rather a dreadful thing is happening. I'm suffering from a complete loss of memory. I can't even think who I am. I remember meeting you somewhere, and I remember asking me to come and lunch with you here, and that I accepted your kind invitation. Beyond that my mind is a positive blank."

The scared look was transferred with intensified poignancy to the faces of her companions.

"*You* asked *us* to lunch," they exclaimed hurriedly. That seemed a more immediately important point to clear up than the question of identity.

"Oh, no," said the vanishing hostess, "that I do remember about. *You* insisted on my coming here because the feeding was so good, and I must say it comes up to all you said about it. A very nice lunch it's been. What I'm worrying about is, who on earth am I? I haven't the faintest notion."

"You are Lady Drakmanton," exclaimed the three sisters in chorus.

"Now, don't make fun of me," she replied crossly. "I happen to know her quite well by sight, and she isn't a bit like me. And it's an odd thing you should have mentioned her, for it so happens she's just come into the room. That lady in black with the yellow plume in her hat, there over by the door."

The Smithly-Dubbs looked in the indicated direction, and the uneasiness in their eyes deepened into horror. In outward appearance the lady who had just entered the room certainly came rather nearer to their recollection of their Member's wife than the individual who was sitting at table with them.

"Who are *you*, then, if that is Lady Drakmanton?" they asked in panic-stricken bewilderment.

"That is just what I don't know," was the answer; " and you don't seem to know much better than I do."

"You came up to us in the club –"

"In what club?"

"The New Didactic, in Calais Street."

"The New Didactic!" exclaimed Lady Drakmanton with an air of returning illumination; "thank you so much. Of course, I remember now who I am. I'm Ellen Niggle, of the Ladies' Brass-polishing Guild. The Club employs me to come now and then and see to the polishing of the brass fittings. That's how I came to know Lady Drakmanton by sight; she's very often in the Club. And you are the ladies who so kindly asked me out to lunch. Funny how it should all have slipped my memory, all of a sudden. The unaccustomed good food and wine must have been too much for me; for the moment I really couldn't call to mind who I was. Good gracious," she broke off suddenly, "it's ten past two; I should be at a polishing job in Whitehall. I must scuttle off like a giddy rabbit. Thanking you ever so."

She left the room with a scuttle sufficiently suggestive of the animal she had mentioned, but the giddiness was all on the side of her involuntary hostesses. The restaurant seemed to be spinning round them, and the bill when it appeared did nothing to restore their composure. They were as nearly in tears as it is permissible to be during the luncheon hour in a really good restaurant. Financially speaking, they were well able to afford the luxury of an elaborate lunch, but their ideas on the subject of entertaining differed very sharply, according to the circumstances of whether they were dispensing or receiving hospitality. To have fed themselves liberally at their own expense was, perhaps, an extravagance to be deplored, but, at any rate, they had had something for their money; to have drawn an unknown and socially unremunerative Ellen Niggle into the net of their hospitality was a catastrophe that they could not contemplate with any degree of calmness.

The Smithly-Dubbs never quite recovered from their unnerving experience. They have given up politics and taken to doing good.

Questions for further discussion

Plot structure, Message

1 Does the story comprise all the components of the plot structure?

2 What is the function of the title? What is implied by the title of the story? Does it serve to convey the author's message?

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7 Is there any denouement in the story?

8 What conflicts is the story based on?

9 Do the complications involve physical or psychological movement of events or both?

10 Are there any cases of retardation, withholding of information or enigma in the story?

11 What is the literary form of the story?

Narrative method, Character-images

1 What is the type of the narrator?

2 Are the characters real and convincing? Support your point of view by some examples from the story.

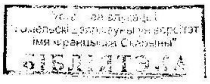
3 What is implied by the following statements: "You can pass yourself off as me." "It will be an amusing lunch-party"?

4Why does the author give some marked variations of Lady Drakmanton in such details (her hair in an unaccustomed manner…, put on a hat…)? How does it characterize the protagonist?

5 The protagonist repeats one and the same idea several times in the story ("I can't even think who I am." "I remember meeting you…" "I remember now who I am", etc.). What's the purpose of it?

6 Is Lady Drakmanton shown through her actions or does the author give her psychological portrayal? Support your point of view giving some facts from the text.

7 What other means of characterization are used to describe the protagonist?



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