

От автора

Современное образовательное пространство характеризуется большим разнообразием учебного и дидактического материала для изучения иностранного языка. Тем не менее проблема привлечения обучающихся к глубокому осмысленному чтению иноязычной литературы остается крайне актуальной.

Настоящее пособие разработано на основе многолетней практики автора в системе дополнительного образования. Генеральная цель пособия — усиление кластера досугового чтения, а также чтения для удовольствия. Посредством специально выстроенной системы заданий чтение текстов на английском языке становится понятным, интересным, а значит мотивирующим читателя к накоплению читательского опыта и совершенствованию своей читательской компетенции.

Методология работы с пособием предполагает как групповые, так и индивидуальные формы обучения. На первых этапах разбор представленных текстов проводится под контролем учителя/педагога. Когда учебный алгоритм усваивается обучающимся, он может работать с текстами самостоятельно.

Оригинальность данного пособия обусловлена набором рубрик для работы с текстами, а также содержанием

вопросов и идей, затрагиваемых автором и предлагаемых для обсуждения. Ведь осмысленности в чтении можно достичь, только размышляя, обдумывая прочитанное. Данная задача с успехом решается с помощью правильно подобранного текстового материала.

Авторская разработка апробирована в течение нескольких лет работы в «возрастных классах» по программе обучения английскому языку граждан пенсионного возраста на базе центра социального обслуживания ГБУ ТЦСО «Проспект Вернадского», г. Москва. Методика одобрена слушателями, также на нее получены положительные отзывы специалистов в области высшего филологического образования.

С искренними пожеланиями интересного чтения!

Read at leisure, learn with pleasure!

Елена Борисовна Шулекина

Story 1

The Best Time for Apples

The children were at a lesson at a country school. The lesson was about the seasons of the year.

“There are four seasons in a year,” said the teacher. “They are: spring, summer, autumn and winter. In spring it is warm and the trees are green.

In summer it is hot, and there are a lot of flowers in the fields, in the parks and in the gardens.

In autumn there are a lot of apples. They are red and sweet and good for eating. In winter it is cold and it snows...”

Suddenly the teacher stopped and looked at John.

“John, stop talking! Now, answer my question! Can you tell us when is the best time for apples?”

“Yes, I can. It is when the farmer is not at home and there is no dog in the garden,” said John.

Words to the text:

- *seasons*
- *a field*
- *it snows*
- *good for eating*

Questions to the text:

1. What was the lesson about at a small school?
2. Why did the teacher ask John a question?
3. Did the teacher tell the pupils a lot about the seasons?
4. Who liked apples?

Questions for discussion:

1. Why was John talking at the lesson?
2. Where did John take apples?
3. What answer did the teacher want to hear?
4. How did John know that there was not anybody in the garden?
5. What mark do you think the teacher gave John?

Tasks for independent work:

- Copy out the sentences with there is / there are from the text and translate them.

Story 2

A Good Lesson

Once a rich English woman called Mrs. Johnson decided to have a birthday party. She invited a lot of guests and a singer. The singer was poor, but he had a very good voice.

The singer got to Mrs. Johnson's house at exactly six o'clock as he had been asked to do, but when he went in, he saw through a door that the dining-room was already full of guests, who were sitting round a big table in the middle of the room. The guests were eating, joking, laughing, and talking loudly. Mrs. Johnson came out to him, and he thought she was going to ask him to join them, when she said, "We're glad, sir, that you have come. You will be singing after dinner, I'll call you as soon as we're ready to listen to you. Now will you go into the kitchen and have dinner, too, please?"

The singer was very angry, but said nothing. At first he wanted to leave Mrs. Johnson's house at once, but then he changed his mind and decided to stay and teach her and her rich guests a good lesson. When the singer went into the kitchen, the servants were having dinner, too. He joined them. After dinner, the singer thanked everybody and said, "Well, now I'm going to sing to you, my good friends." And he sang them some beautiful songs.

Soon Mrs. Johnson called the singer.

“Well, sir, we're ready.”

“Ready?” asked the singer. “What are you ready for?”

“To listen to you,” said Mrs. Johnson in an angry voice.

“Listen to me? But I have already sung, and I’m afraid I shan’t be able to sing any more tonight.”

“Where did you sing?”

“In the kitchen. I always sing for those I have dinner with.”

Words to the text:

- *to be hired*
- *an employer*
- *fee*
- *arrogant*
- *pride*

Questions to the text:

1. Who invited a singer to the party?
2. Was the singer rich or was he poor?
3. What was the singer invited to the party for?
4. When did Mrs. Johnson ask him to sing?
5. Where did the singer have dinner?
6. Why did the singer refuse to sing?

Questions for discussion:

1. Did Mrs. Johnson pay the singer?
2. Do you think the singer will show his pride next time?

3. Explain the title of the text. Who received a good lesson in your opinion?

4. Did you enjoy reading this story? Why?

Tasks for independent work:

- Find and copy out the sentences in Continuous Tenses from the text.

Story 3

Old Man's Story

One evening several tourists who were staying at a hotel in Manchester were having dinner in the hotel restaurant.

Fish was brought and while they were eating it, some of them told interesting stories about finding rings and other things inside fish. An old man who had only listened to their stories and never spoken a word, suddenly said that he would like to tell them an interesting story, too.

And this is what he told them:

“When I was a young man, I lived in New York and was going to marry a beautiful young girl whose name was Alice. About two months before our marriage I was sent to England for a fortnight. I went to say goodbye to Alice and gave her a ring. She gave me hers and said that she would be waiting for me. But I had to stay in England six months, and not a fortnight as I had planned. Late in September my work was done at last and I was able to leave for New York.

Next morning, when I was already aboard the steamer, I was looking through the morning newspaper, and what do you think I saw? Alice was going to marry another man! I couldn't believe my eyes, but it was true. I was so angry that I

threw her ring into the sea. I was having dinner at a restaurant in New York a few days later, and while I was eating the fish, I bit on something hard. What do you think it was?"

"The ring!" all the listeners cried out at once.

"No," said the old man sadly, "it was a fish-bone".

Words to the text:

- *a fortnight*
- *to look through*
- *to bite*

Questions to the text:

1. What were the tourists talking about while they were eating fish in the hotel restaurant?
2. Who told them his interesting story?
3. When did the old man's story happen?
4. Did the young people get married?
5. Why did he throw the ring into the sea?
6. Did the reading end the way you predicted?

Questions for discussions:

1. Why did the old man tell his story?
2. What caused the breaking off the young people's engagement?
3. What did the old man want to say by his story?
4. Do you believe in miracles?

5. What extraordinary event happened in your life?
6. Did you predict the end of the story?

Explain the English proverb:

Out of sight out of mind.

Tasks for independent work:

- Copy out the sentences in Past Continuous Tense.

Story 4

The Shoebox

A man and woman had been married for more than 60 years. They had shared everything. They had talked about everything. They had kept no secrets from each other except that the little: the old woman had a shoebox in the top of her closet that she had cautioned her husband never to open or ask her about.

For all of these years, he had never thought about the box, but one day the little old woman got very sick and the doctor said she would not recover.

In trying to sort out their affairs, the little old man took down the shoebox and took it to his wife's bedside. She agreed that it was time that he should know what was in the box. When he opened it, he found two knitted dolls and a stack of money totaling \$95,000.

He asked her about the contents.

"When we were to be married," she said, "my grandmother told me the secret of a happy marriage was to never argue. She told me that if I ever got angry with you, I should just keep quiet and knit a doll."

The little old man was so moved; he had to fight back tears. Only two precious dolls were in the box. She had only

been angry with him two times in all those years of living and loving. He almost burst with happiness.

“Honey,” he said, “that explains the dolls, but what about all of this money? Where did it come from?”

“Oh,” she said, “that’s the money I made from selling the dolls.”

Words to the text:

- *a closet*
- *caution*
- *knitted*
- *stack*

Questions to the text:

1. What secret did the woman have?
2. What made the old man burst with happiness?
3. How did the old woman answer her husband’s question about the large sum of money in the box?

Questions for discussion:

1. Why did the woman follow her grandmother’s advice?
2. Can a wife and a husband have their own secrets?
3. Was the woman happy living with her husband?
4. What do you do when you got angry? Are there any other ways of struggling against anger?

5. Who is responsible for a happy marriage?

6. Do you agree with the English proverbs?

Explain the English proverbs:

A good wife makes a good husband.

A good husband and a good wife make good marriage.

Story 5

The Perfect Wife

I once met a man who said he was looking for the perfect wife. He told me that he needed to find someone who was beautiful, kind, loving, and very spiritually oriented. And yes, he had found such a woman. But it did not work out. He said she was so spiritual that she could not easily relate to the practical things in the material world.

Then he found someone who was perfect. She was beautiful, kind, loving, intelligent, organized and practical in material affairs. She was just what he was looking for. But he said that also did not work out. Why? Because she was so practical that she really did not need him so much, and ended up being a bit of a nag, always telling him what he should do. So he still looked for the perfect woman.

Then he found the perfect wife. She was beautiful, kind, loving, intelligent, organized, practical in material affairs, as well as spiritually inclined. A perfect balance. No one could be better. She would make just what he was looking for — the perfect wife.

So I asked him if they got married. No. Why not? Because she was also looking for the perfect husband.

Words to the text:

- *spiritually oriented*
- *a nag*

Questions to the text:

1. What features was the man looking for in women?
2. Why didn't it work when he found such women?
3. Why didn't they get married when he had found a perfect balance?

Questions for discussion:

1. What do you think a perfect wife should be?
2. Was the man a perfect husband himself?
3. Can we use the English proverb "Tastes are differ" to this story?

Explain the English proverbs:

Every Jack has his Jill.

A good Jack makes a good Jill.

Every man to his taste.

Many men, many minds.

Story 6

A Salty Coffee

He met her on a party. She was so outstanding, many guys chasing after her, while he was so normal, nobody paid attention to him. At the end of the party, he invited her to have coffee with him, she was surprised, but due to being polite, she promised. They sat in a nice coffee shop, he was too nervous to say anything, she felt uncomfortable, she thought, please, let me go home. Suddenly he asked the waiter:

“Would you please give me some salt? I’d like to put it in my coffee.”

Everybody stared at him, so strange! His face turned red, but, still, he put the salt in his coffee and drank it.

She asked him curiously: “Why you have this hobby?”

He replied: “When I was a little boy, I was living near the sea, I liked playing in the sea, I could feel the taste of the sea, just like the taste of the salty coffee. Now every time I have the salty coffee, I always think of my childhood, think of my hometown, I miss my home town so much, I miss my parents who are still living there”.

While saying that tears filled his eyes. She was deeply touched.

That's his true feeling, from the bottom of his heart. A man who can tell out his homesickness, he must be a man who loves home, cares about home, has responsibility of home. Then she also started to speak, spoke about her far-away hometown, her childhood, her family.

That was a really nice talk, also a beautiful beginning of their story. They continued to date. She found that actually he was a man who meets all her demands; he had tolerance, was kind hearted, warm, careful. He was such a good person but she almost missed him!

Thanks to his salty coffee! Then the story was just like every beautiful love story, the princess married to the prince, then they were living the happy life. And every time she made coffee for him, she put some salt in the coffee, as she knew that's the way he liked it.

After 40 years, he passed away, left her a letter which said: "My dearest, please forgive me, forgive my whole life lie. This was the only lie I said to you — the salty coffee. Remember the first time we dated? I was so nervous at that time, actually I wanted some sugar, but I said salt. It was hard for me to change so I just went ahead.

I never thought that could be the start of our communication! I tried to tell you the truth many times in my life, but I was too afraid to do that, as I have promised not to lie to you for anything.

Now I'm dying, I'm afraid of nothing so I tell you the truth: I do not like the salty coffee, what a strange bad taste. But I have had the salty coffee for my whole life! Since I knew you, I never feel sorry for anything I do for you. Having you with me is my biggest happiness for my whole life. If I can live for the second time, still want to know you and have you for my whole life, even though I have to drink the salty coffee again".

Her tears made the letter totally wet.

Some day, someone asked her: "What's the taste of salty coffee?" "It's sweet" She replied.

Words to the text:

- *outstanding*
- *to chase after somebody*
- *to date*
- *to miss somebody*
- *to go ahead*

Questions to the text:

1. Is it unusual to put some salt in coffee?
2. Why did the young man invent the story about his childhood?
3. What made the girl believe him?
4. How did the young man's mistake affect their future relations?

5. What kind of husband was he?
6. Why was he afraid to tell his wife the truth?
7. Did his wife appreciate her husband's sacrifice?
8. What would happen if the man confessed earlier?
9. Does the English proverb suit this story? "He that once deceives is ever suspected".

Tasks for independent work:

- Copy out the adjectives from the text which describe a person.
- Choose antonyms to these adjectives: *unknown, calm, unkind, careless, cold, uneasy, cool, extraordinary, rude, unpopular, heartless, unique.*

Story 7

A Wife's Promise

There was a man who had worked all his life and had saved all his money. He was a real miser when it came to his money. He loved money more than just about anything.

And just before he died, he said to his wife, "Now listen, when I die, I want you to take all my money and place it in the casket with me. I wanna take my money to the afterlife."

So he got his wife to promise him with all her heart that when he died, she would put all the money in the casket with him.

Well, one day he died. He was stretched out in the casket, and the wife was sitting there in black next to her closest friend. When they finished the ceremony, just before the undertakers got ready to close the casket, the wife said "Wait just a minute!"

She had a shoe box with her. She came over with the box and placed it in the casket.

Then the undertakers locked the casket down and rolled it away.

Her friend said, "I hope you weren't crazy enough to put all that money in the casket."

She said, "Yes, I promised. I'm a good person. I can't lie. I promised him that I was going to put that money in that casket with him."

“You mean to tell me you put every cent of his money in the casket with him?”

“I sure did,” said the wife. “I got it all together, put it into my account and I wrote him a check.”

Words to the text:

- *a miser*
- *a casket*

Questions to the text:

1. What kind of person was the husband?
2. Why did he ask his wife to put his money in the casket with him?
3. Who was worried about the money?
4. Was the woman happy with her husband?
5. What did she do not to break her promise?

Questions for discussion:

1. Do you remember the famous picture “Mesalliance” by V. Pukirev?
2. Do the characters of this story look like the persons in the picture?
3. What do you think the woman will do with her husband’s money?

Tasks for independent work:

- Write down the adjectives which characterize the woman and her husband.

Story 8

The Saddest Story in the World

There was a blind girl who hated herself because she was blind. She hated everyone, except her loving boyfriend. He was always there for her. She told her boyfriend, "If I could only see the world, I will marry you."

One day, someone donated a pair of eyes to her. When the bandages came off, she was able to see everything, including her boyfriend.

He asked her, "Now that you can see the world, will you marry me?"

The girl looked at her boyfriend and saw that he was blind.

The sight of his closed eyelids shocked her. She hadn't expected that. The thought of looking at them the rest of her life led her to refuse to marry him. Her boyfriend left in tears and days later wrote a note to her saying: "Take good care of your eyes, my dear, for before they were yours, they were mine".

Words to the text:

- *to donate*
- *bandages*

Questions to the text and discussion:

• About the girl:

1. Did the girl say that she loved her boyfriend?
2. Why did she agree to marry him only when she could see?
3. Did she ask her boyfriend to donate a pair of eyes to her?
4. Was she ready to see her boyfriend blind?
5. Why did she refuse to marry him?
6. Was the girl truthful?

• About the boyfriend:

1. Did he love the girl very much?
2. Why did he want to marry the girl by all means?
3. Did he predict the result?
4. Would it be right if the girl married him without love?

Explain the English proverb:

In every beginning think of the end.

Story 9

The Pack of Biscuits

(by Stephan Knapp)

One night there was a woman at the airport who had to wait for several hours before catching her next flight. While she waited she bought a book and a pack of biscuits to spend the time. She looked for a place to sit and waited. She was deep into her book, when suddenly she realized that there was a young man sitting next to her who was stretching his hand, with no concern whatsoever, and grabbing the pack of cookies lying between them. He started to eat them one by one. Not wanting to make a fuss about it she decided to ignore him. The woman, slightly bothered, ate the cookies and watched the clock, while the young and shameless thief of biscuits was also finishing them. The woman started to get really angry at this point and thought, "If I wasn't such a good and educated person, I would have given this daring man a black eye by now." Every time she ate a biscuit, he had one too. The dialogue between their eyes continued and when only one biscuit was left, she wondered what he was going to do. Softly and with a nervous smile, the young man grabbed the last biscuit and broke it in two. He offered one half to the woman while he

ate the other half. Briskly she took the biscuit and thought, "What an insolent man! How uneducated! He didn't even thank me!" She had never met anybody so fresh and sighed relieved to hear her flight announced. She grabbed her bags and went towards the boarding gate refusing to look back to where that insolent thief was seated. After boarding the plane and nicely seated, she looked for her book which was nearly finished by now. While looking into her bag she was totally surprised to find her pack of biscuits nearly intact. If my biscuits are here, she thought feeling terribly, those others were his and he tried to share them with me. Too late to apologize to the young man, she realized with pain, that it was her who had been insolent, uneducated and a thief, and not him!

Words to the text:

- *to stretch*
- *concern*
- *to grab*
- *shameless*
- *to give a black eye*
- *what so ever*
- *to make a fuss*
- *to bother*
- *briskly*

- *insolent*
- *sigh*
- *intact*

Questions to the text:

1. What did the woman buy to spend the time?
2. Who started to eat biscuits one by one?
3. Why didn't she want to make a fuss?
4. When did the woman start to get really angry?
5. What was her opinion about the young man?
6. What happened in the plane?

Questions for discussion:

1. Who turned out to be an insolent person?
2. Why did the author write this text?
3. What would you do if you were the young man?

Explain the English proverbs:

First think, then speak.

Story 10

Nails in the Fence

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there."

A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one. Friends are very rare jewels, indeed. They make you smile and encourage

you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share words of praise and they always want to open their hearts to us.

Show your friends how much you care. Send this to everyone you consider a FRIEND, even if it means sending it back to the person who sent it to you. If it comes back to you, then you'll know you have a circle of friends.

Words to the text:

- *to dwindle*
- *a scar*
- *a wound*

Questions to the text:

1. How did a father teach his little son to control his anger?
2. What did the boy discover during the lessons?
3. What was the second part of the lessons?

Questions for discussion:

1. Why is it important to hold one's temper?
2. Who do we consider a real friend?
3. How do you care about your friends?
4. What does this text teach us?

Tasks for independent work:

- Find and copy out modal verbs from the text. Explain the usage of them.

Story 11

An Office Boy

A jobless man applied for the position of an “office boy” at a very big company.

The employer interviewed him, then a test: clean the floor.

“You are hired” — the employer said. “Give me your e-mail address, and I’ll send you the application to fill, as well as when you will start.”

The man replied, “I don’t have a computer, neither an e-mail.”

“I’m sorry,” said the employer, “if you don’t have an e-mail you cannot have the job.”

The man left with no hope. He didn’t know what to do, with only \$10 in his pocket.

He then decided to go to the supermarket, bought a 10 kg tomato crate, then sold the tomatoes door to door. In less than two hours, he succeeded and doubled his capital. He repeated the operation 3 times and returned home with \$60. The man realized that he could survive by this way, and started to go every day earlier, and returned late. Thus, his money doubled or tripled every day. Shortly later, he bought a cart, then a truck, and then he had his own fleet of delivery vehicles.

Five years later, the man's company was one of the biggest food retailers. He started to plan his family's future, and decided to have a life insurance. He called an insurance broker and chose a protection plan. When the conversation was concluded, the broker asked him his email. The man replied: "I don't have an e-mail."

The broker replied curiously, "You don't have an email, and yet have succeeded to build an empire. Do you imagine what position you could have if you had an e-mail?"

The man paused for a while and replied: "An office boy!"

Don't be discouraged if something is not in your favor today. Better opportunities are always waiting ahead.

Words to the text:

- *to apply*
- *to be hired*
- *an application*
- *to survive*
- *a fleet*
- *a life insurance*

Questions to the text:

1. Where did a jobless man want to get a job?
2. Why didn't he get a job?
3. What did the man decide to do?

4. Why was his work successful?
5. What did the insurance agent ask the man?
6. Do you agree with the words “Better opportunities are always waiting ahead”?

Questions for discussion:

1. Why didn't the man buy a computer?
2. What things make us successful?
3. What did the author want to say by this story?
4. How do you handle an adversity?
5. In what ways is this story like anything else you have read?

Tasks for independent work:

Think whether the English proverbs “God helps them that help themselves” and “Where there's a will there's a way” are suitable here.

Story 12

The Three Questions

King John was the King of England. He did not like anyone else to look richer than himself. The Abbot of Canterbury was rich. He was enjoying luxurious life. The King did not like the Abbot. He was in great anger. He sent his soldiers to bring the Abbot. The soldiers brought him before the King. The King asked, "Who is greater? The King or an Abbot? Then how bold of you to enjoy much better than the king? You are plotting to become the King of England. It is a crime. Therefore you must die."

The Abbot was greatly frightened. He said very humbly. "Your Majesty, I have never used others' money for my use. Is it a crime to spend my own money for my needs?"

"Yes," replied the King. Then he added, "It is a crime to live grander than the King."

The Abbot trembled in fear.

The King continued. "But I will give you a chance to get pardon. Answer my three questions correctly to my satisfaction."

Then he gave out the three questions.

1. Tell me how much I am worth.
2. How long will it take for me to go around the world?
3. What I am thinking now?

The Abbot listened. His confusion and fear increased rapidly. He could not speak. Finally he begged for time to answer. Three weeks were given. The Abbot left the palace in a dejected mood.

On the way, he went into Oxford University and Cambridge University. He met great professors and learned men. He asked them for answers to these three questions. They were not able to find the suitable answers. He was returning home safely. On the way he met his shepherd boy.

The shepherd asked the Abbot, "Why are you looking so sad, my master?"

"My dear shepherd, the King has set three questions for me. I have to find answers to his satisfaction, or else die for plotting against the King. The questions are difficult. I have only three days more," replied the Abbot.

The shepherd said, "My Lord, let me go in your place. I will meet the King. I will answer the three questions to his satisfaction." Then he added, "People say I look very much like you. Therefore permit me to wear your dress. The king will not be able to find out."

The Abbot agreed.

Immediately the shepherd put on the Abbot's dress. He exactly looked like the Abbot. He then went to meet the King.

The King had not expected the Abbot so soon. He was not able to find the difference. He said, "I am happy, Abbot. You have kept your promises. Now are you ready with the answers?"

The shepherd in the Abbot's dress replied, "Yes, Your Majesty. I will try to answer to the best of my ability."

The King asked, "What am I worth? I am the King of England."

"Your Majesty," replied the shepherd, "according to the Bible, Jesus, the King of Heaven and Earth, was sold for thirty pence. Your worth must be one pence less. It should be twenty nine pence."

The King had a sense of humor. He started laughing. After some time, he gave out second question. "How soon can I ride around the world?"

The shepherd said, "Your Majesty, you must rise with the Sun, ride with it the whole night. In this way, you will be able to go round the world in twenty four hours."

Again the King had a merry laugh. Then he looks seriously at the shepherd. He said, "Tell me quickly. What am I thinking now?"

"Sire, you are thinking I am the Abbot. But I am not the Abbot. I am only his poor shepherd. I have come to ask pardon

for the Abbot and for myself.” Then he quickly removed the Abbot’s dress. Now he looked like a shepherd. He knelt down before the King for pardon.

The King was not at all angry. He started laughing. And he laughed for a long time. Finally he said, “I am pleased with your intelligence. I will make you the Abbot.”

But the shepherd said, “Your Majesty. I can not read and write. I can not become an Abbot.”

The King said, “Then you will receive a pound a week as long as you live. Go home and tell the Abbot. I have forgiven him.”

Words to the text:

- *a luxurious life*
- *bold*
- *to plot*
- *humbly*
- *a dejected mood*
- *a shepherd*

Tasks for independent work:

• Find the sentences with Present Perfect in the text. Put the right verb into each gap:

1. I _____ never _____ other’s money for my use.
2. The King _____ _____ three questions for me.

3. You _____ your promises.

4. I _____ to ask pardon for the Abbot and for myself.

5. I _____ him.

• Write down the adjectives in the Comparative from the text.

Questions to the text:

1. What did the King value?

2. Why didn't the Abbot find the answers to the King's satisfaction?

3. Who went to the King instead of the Abbot? Why?

4. Why did the King like the boy's answers?

5. How much was the shepherd worth?

Questions for discussion:

1. Did the King expect the shepherd's answers?

2. Can be a person valued? What are the criteria?

3. What does this story teach us?

Story 13

Be Careful of What You Plant...

An emperor in the Far East was growing old and knew it was time to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or his children, he decided something different.

He called young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, "It is time for me to step down and choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you."

The kids were shocked! But the emperor continued. "I am going to give each one of you a seed today. One very special seed... I want you to plant the seed, water it and come back here after one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring and the one I choose will be the next emperor!"

One boy named Ling was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the story. She helped him get a pot and planting soil and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks, some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow.

Ling kept checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. 3 weeks, 4 weeks, 5 weeks went by. Still nothing. By now,

others were talking about their plants but Ling didn't have a plant, and he felt like a failure. Six months went by, still nothing in Ling's pot. He just knew he had killed his seed.

Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Ling didn't say anything to his friends. However he just kept waiting for his seed to grow.

A year finally went by and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot. But be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace. When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other youths.

They were beautiful in all shapes and sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor and many of the other kinds laughed at him. A few felt sorry for him and just said, "Hey nice try."

When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. "What great plants, trees and flowers you have grown," said the emperor. Today, one of you will be appointed the next emperor: "All of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified... "The emperor knows I'm a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!"

When Ling got to the front, the Emperor asked his name. “My name is Ling,” he replied.

All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling and then announced to the crowd, “Behold your new emperor... His name is Ling!”

Ling couldn’t believe it. Ling couldn’t even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor?

Then the emperor said, “One year ago today, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers, when you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor.”

If you plant honesty, you will reap trust.

If you plant goodness, you will reap friends.

If you plant humility, you will reap greatness.

If you plant perseverance, you will reap victory.

If you plant consideration, you will reap harmony.

If you plant hard work, you will reap success.

If you plant forgiveness, you will reap reconciliation.

If you plant openness, you will reap intimacy.

If you plant patience, you will reap improvements.

If you plant faith, you will reap miracles.

But

If you plant dishonesty, you will reap distrust.

If you plant selfishness, you will reap loneliness.

If you plant pride, you will reap destruction.

If you plant envy, you will reap trouble.

If you plant laziness, you will reap stagnation.

If you plant bitterness, you will reap isolation.

If you plant greed, you will reap loss.

If you plant gossip, you will reap enemies.

If you plant worries, you will reap wrinkles.

If you plant sin, you will reap guilt.

Remember your graves because your way passes over it.

You will be dealt with as you deal with others, you will reap what you sow and what you send today will meet you tomorrow.

So be careful what you plant now, it will determine what you will reap tomorrow. The seeds you now scatter, will make life worse or better, your life or the ones who will come after. Yes, someday, you will enjoy the fruits or you will pay for the choices you plant today.

Words to the text:

- *a successor*
- *a seed*
- *a pot*
- *to survey*
- *to substitute*
- *to reap*
- *to scatter*

Questions to the text:

1. How did the emperor in the Far East decided to choose his successor?
2. Why did Ling feel like a failure when there was nothing in the pot?
3. Did he hope to grow a plant? Why?
4. Who made Ling go to the palace with the empty pot?
5. What did he see in other pots?
6. Was Ling the only boy who failed to grow a plant?
7. Why was Ling announced to be a new emperor?

Questions for discussion:

1. How did the emperor check the honesty and the courage of the future emperor?
2. Why is it important to have such an emperor?
3. Did you predict the end of the story?

4. What did the story teach us?

5. Did you like the story? Why?

Tasks for independent work:

- Write down abstract nouns from the text and give their antonyms.

Explain the English proverb:

Honesty is the best policy.

Story 14

What's The Miracle's Cost?

Tess was eight years old. One day she heard that her Mom and Dad were talking about her little brother, Andrew. All she knew was that he was very ill and they were completely out of money. They were moving to an apartment complex the following month because Daddy didn't have the money for the doctor bills and the house. Only a very costly surgery could save him now and there was no-one to loan them the money. She heard Daddy say to her tearful Mother, "Only a miracle can save him now."

Tess went to her bedroom and pulled a glass jar from the closet. She poured all the change out on the floor and counted it carefully. Three times, even. The total had to be exactly perfect. No chance here for mistakes. She carefully put the coins back in the jar and she slipped out the back door and made her way to Rexall's Drug Store.

She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention but he was talking to another man. Tess twisted her feet to make a noise. Nothing. She cleared her throat with a disgusting sound. No good. Finally she took a quarter from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it!

“And what do you want?” the pharmacist asked in an annoyed tone of voice. “I’m talking to my brother from Chicago. I haven’t seen him in ages,” he said without waiting for a reply to his question.

“Well, I want to talk to you about my brother,” Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. “He’s really, really sick... and I want to buy a miracle.”

“I beg your pardon?” said the pharmacist.

“His name is Andrew and he has something bad growing inside his head and my Daddy says only a miracle can save him now. So how much does a miracle cost?”

“We don’t sell miracles here, little girl. I’m sorry but I can’t help you,” the pharmacist said.

“Listen, I have the money to pay for it. If it isn’t enough, I will get the rest. Just tell me how much it costs.”

The pharmacist’s brother was a well dressed man. He stooped down and asked the little girl, “What kind of a miracle does your brother need?”

“I don’t know,” Tess replied. There were tears in her eyes. “I just know he’s really sick and Mommy says he needs an operation. But my Daddy can’t pay for it, so I want to use my money.

“How much do you have?” asked the man from Chicago.

“One dollar and eleven cents,” Tess answered. “And it’s all the money I have, but I can get some more if I need to.”

“Well, what a coincidence,” smiled the man. “A dollar and eleven cents — the exact price of a miracle for little brothers.” He took her money in one hand and with the other hand he took her hand and said, “Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let’s see if I have the kind of miracle you need.”

That well dressed man was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon, specializing in neuro-surgery. The operation was completed without charge and it wasn’t long until Andrew was home again and doing well. Mom and Dad were happily talking about this event. “That surgery,” her mom whispered, “was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost.” Tess smiled. She knew exactly how much a miracle cost... one dollar and eleven cents... plus the faith of a little child.

Words to the text:

- *a surgery*
- *to loan*
- *to slip out*
- *patiently*
- *a disgusting sound*
- *an annoyed tone*
- *a coincidence*

Questions to the text:

1. How old was Tess?
2. What did Tess's parents talk about one day?
3. Why did Tess go to the Drug Store?
4. What happened in the Drug Store?
5. Who helped Tess and her Family?

Questions for discussion:

1. Why did Tess believe that a miracle can be bought?
2. Where was she going to buy a miracle? Why?
3. Why did the surgeon help Tess?
4. Is a dollar and eleven cents the exact price of a miracle?

Tasks for independent work:

- Explain why people believe in miracles.

Story 15

Post Haste

(by Colin Howard)

“I say, I’m pleased to see you”? said the little man standing by the letter-box.

“Oh, hallo”, I said, stopping. “Simpson, isn’t it”? The Simpsons were newcomers to the town, and my wife and I had only met them once or twice.

“Yes, that’s right”, answered Simpson.

“I wonder if you could lend me some money”. I put my hand into my pocket. “You see”, he continued, “my wife gave me a letter to post, and I’ve just noticed it isn’t stamped. It must go tonight — it really must! And I don’t think the post-office will be open at this time of night, do you”?

It was about eleven o’clock and I agreed that it wouldn’t. “I thought, you see, I’d get stamps out of the machine”, explained Simpson, “only I find I have no small change about me”.

“I’m sorry, but I’m afraid I haven’t either”, I said.

“Oh, dear, dear” he said.

“Maybe somebody else has” I said.

“There isn’t anyone else”.

We both looked up and down the street, but there was nobody to be seen.

“Yes, well” I said, intending to move off. But he looked so unhappy standing there with the blue unstamped envelope, that I really couldn’t leave him alone.

“I’ll tell you what” I said, “You’d better walk along with me to my place — it’s only a few streets off — and I’ll try to find some change for you there”.

“It’s really very good of you” said Simpson.

At home, we managed to find the money he needed. He thanked me and left.

I watched him take several steps up the street and then return to me.

“I say, I’m sorry to trouble you again” he said. “The fact is we’re still quite strangers round here and — well, I’m rather lost, to tell you the truth. Will you tell me the way to the post-office”?

I did my best. It took me several minutes to explain to him where the post-office was. At the end of that time I felt as lost as Simpson and decided to go along with him. I led the way to the post-office. Simpson put a penny into the automatic stamp-machine. The coin passed through the machine, but with no result. “It’s empty” I explained.

Simpson was so nervous that he dropped the letter on the ground and when he picked it up there was a large black spot on its face.

“Dear me” he said. “My wife told me to post the letter tonight. After all it’s not so important but you don’t know my wife. I had better post it now”.

Suddenly I remembered that I had a book of stamps at home. “It will be posted”, I said. “But we’d better hurry, or we’ll miss the midnight collection”.

It took rather a long time to find the book of stamps. But when we found it, we saw after all that it was empty. The last thing I could advise him to do was to post the letter unstamped. “Let the other man pay double postage on it in the morning”.

I took him firmly by the arm and accompanied him to the post-office in time for the midnight collection. He dropped in his letter, and then, to finish off my job, I took him home.

“I’m so grateful to you, really” he said when we reached his home. “That letter — it’s only an invitation to dinner to Mr. ... Dear me”!

‘Why, what’s the matter’?

“Nothing. Just something I’ve remembered”.

“What”?

But he didn’t tell me. He just opened his eyes and his mouth at me like a wounded goldfish, hurriedly said “Good-night”, and went inside.

All the way home I was wondering what it was he had remembered.

But I stopped wondering the next morning, when I had to pay the postman double postage for a blue envelope with a large black spot on its face.

Words to the text:

- *haste*
- *wounded*
- *unstamped*

Questions to the text:

1. Why did Simpson make haste to post the letter?
2. Who was helping him?
3. What problems did they meet?
4. How many different ways did the author offer to post the letter ?
5. Why didn't Simpson tell the reason of his embarrassment?
6. What did the author think when he received a letter in the morning?

Questions for discussion:

1. Did you like the humor the author wrote this story with?
2. What would you do if you were in that situation?

Tasks for independent work:

- Is the English proverb suitable here? "The road to hell is paved with good intentions".

Story 16

Tildy's Moment

(by O. Henry)

Bogle's Family Restaurant on Eighth Avenue is not a famous place, but if you need a large cheap meal, then Bogle's is the place for you. There are twelve tables in the room, six on each side. Bogle himself sits at the desk by the door and takes the money. There are also two waitresses and a Voice. The Voice comes from the kitchen.

At the time of my story, one of the waitresses was called Aileen. She was tall, beautiful and full of life. The name of the other waitress was Tildy. She was small, fat and was not beautiful.

Most of the people who came to eat at Bogle's were men, and they loved the beautiful Aileen. They were happy to wait a long time for their meals because they could look at her. Aileen knew how to hold a conversation with twelve people and work hard at the same time. And all the men wanted to take Aileen dancing or give her presents. One gave her a gold ring and one gave her a little dog.

And poor Tildy?

In the busy, noisy restaurant men's eyes did not follow Tildy. Nobody laughed and talked with her. Nobody asked her

to go dancing, and nobody gave her presents. She was a good waitress, but when she stood by the tables, the men looked round her to see Aileen.

But Tildy was happy to work with no thanks, she was happy to see the men with Aileen, she was happy to know that the men loved Aileen. She was Aileen's friend. But deep inside, she, too, wanted a man to love her.

Tildy listened to all Aileen's stories. One day Aileen came in with a black eye. A man hit her because she did not want to kiss him. "How wonderful to have a black eye for love!" Tildy thought.

One of the men who came to Bogle's was a young man called Mr. Seeders. He was a small, thin man, and he worked in an office. He knew that Aileen was not interested in him, so he sat at one of Tildy's tables, said nothing, and ate his fish.

One day when Mr. Seeders came in for his meal, he drank too much beer. He finished his fish, got up, put his arm round Tildy, kissed her loudly, and walked out of the restaurant.

For a few seconds Tildy just stood there. Then Aileen said to her, "Why, Tildy! You bad girl! I must watch you. I don't want to lose my men to you!"

Suddenly Tildy's world changed. She understood now that men could like her and want her as much as Aileen. She, Tildy, could have a love-life, too. Her eyes were bright, and her

face was pink. She wanted to tell everybody her secret. When the restaurant was quiet, she went and stood by Bogle's desk.

"Do you know what a man in the restaurant did to me today?" she said. "He put his arm round me and he kissed me!"

"Really!" Bogle answered. This was good for business. "Next week you'll get a dollar a week more."

And when, in the evening, the restaurant was busy again, Tildy put down the food on the tables and said quietly, "Do you know what a man in the restaurant did to me today? He put his arm round me and kissed me!"

Some of the men in the restaurant were surprised; some of them said, "Well done!" Men began to smile and say nice things to her. Tildy was very happy. Love was now possible in her grey life.

For two days Mr. Seeders did not come again, and in that time Tildy was a different woman. She wore bright clothes, did her hair differently, and she looked taller and thinner. Now she was a real woman because someone loved her. She felt excited, and a little afraid. What would Mr. Seeders do the next time he came in?

At four o'clock in the afternoon of the third day, Mr. Seeders came in. There were no people at the tables, and Aileen and Tildy were working at the back of the restaurant. Mr. Seeders walked up to them.

Tildy looked at him, and she could not speak. Mr Seeders' face was very red, and he looked uncomfortable.

"Miss Tildy," he said, "I want to say that I'm sorry for what I did to you a few days ago. It was the drink, you see. I didn't know what I was doing. I'm very sorry."

And Mr. Seeders left.

But Tildy ran into the kitchen, and she began to cry. She could not stop crying. She was no longer beautiful. No man loved her. No man wanted her. The kiss meant nothing to Mr. Seeders. Tildy did not like him very much, but the kiss was important to her — and now there was nothing.

But she still had her friend, and Aileen put her arm round Tildy. Aileen did not really understand, but she said, "Don't be unhappy, Tildy. That little Seeders has got a face like a dead potato! He's nothing. A *real* man never says sorry!"

Words to the text:

- *a waitress*
- *to be interested in somebody*
- *a love-life*

Questions to the text:

1. Where did Tildy and her friend Aileen work?
2. Who was popular among the visitors?
3. What did Tildy look like?

4. What happened one day?
5. How did Mr.Seeders's kiss affect Tildy?
6. Why was Mr.Seeders sorry for his kiss?
7. What did Mr.Seeders's kiss mean for Tildy?

Questions for discussion:

1. Can you compare this story with the story "The Kiss" by Kate Chopin?

Tasks for independent work:

- Describe Tildy before and after Mr. Seeders's kiss.

Story 17

The Patient Cat

(by Laura Richards)

When the spotted cat first found the nest, there was nothing in it, for it was only just finished. So she said "I will wait!" for she was a patient cat and the summer was before her. She waited a week, and then she climbed up again to the top of the tree, and peeped into the nest. There lay two lovely blue eggs, smooth and shining.

The spotted cat said, "Eggs may be good, but young birds are better. I will wait." So she waited; and while she was waiting, she caught mice and rats, and washed herself and slept, and did all that a spotted cat should do to pass the time away.

When another week had passed, she climbed the tree again and peeped into the nest. This time there were five eggs. But the spotted cat said again, "Eggs may be good, but young birds are better. I will wait a little longer!"

So she waited a little longer and then went up again to look. Ah! There were five tiny birds, with big eyes and long necks, and yellow beaks wide open. Then the spotted cat sat down on the branch, and licked her nose and purred, for she was very happy. "It is worth while to be patient!" she said.

But when she looked again at the young birds, to see which one she should take first, she saw that they were very thin, — oh, very, very thin they were! The spotted cat had never seen anything so thin in her life.

“Now,” she said to herself, “if I were to wait only a few days longer, they would grow fat. Thin birds may be good, but fat birds are much better. I will wait!”

So she waited; and she watched the father-bird bringing worms all day long to the nest, and said, “Aha! They must be fattening fast! They will soon be as fat as I wish them to be. Aha! What a good thing it is to be patient.”

At last, one day she thought, “Surely, now they must be fat enough! I will not wait another day. Aha! How good they will be!”

So she climbed up the tree, licking her chops all the way and thinking of the fat young birds. And when she reached the top and looked into the nest, it was empty!!

Then the spotted cat sat down on the branch and spoke thus, “Well, of all the horrid, mean, ungrateful creatures I ever saw, those birds are the horridest, and the meanest, and the most ungrateful! Mi-a-u-ow!!!!”

Words to the text:

- *spotted*
- *to peep*

- *to lick*
- *to purr*

Questions to the text:

1. What did the cat discover in the tree one day?
2. What was the cat's plan?
3. How many times did she peep into the nest?
4. Why was the cat patient so long?
5. Who did she call mean things?
6. Why didn't the cat's plan come up to her expectations?

Questions for discussion:

1. Who do you think this story was written for?
2. Could the cat predict the end of the story?
3. Why isn't always wise to wait?
4. Would the cat be patient if the situation repeated?

Tasks for independent work:

- Do you remember any English proverbs suitable for this story? For example: "If you cannot have the best, make the best of what you have".

Story 18

Journey's End

(by Jan Carew)

Tom Smith was a nice young man. He wanted a job, but he couldn't find one. Many people wanted to work, and there weren't many jobs. Tom felt sad because he never had money for clothes or the cinema.

When he was younger, Tom wanted to be a footballer. He was good at football, and at tennis, too. He was good at every sport. But there were other, better players.

Now Tom had a new idea. He thought, "Perhaps I can find a job in a sports shop. I'll be happy then and I'll have money." But it was only an idea. It never happened.

He tried hard to find a job. He looked in the newspapers every day and he wrote letters for jobs — a lot of letters. But he never found a job.

One day he saw something in the newspaper about a fair in the park near his house.

"That will be interesting," he thought. "It's next Saturday. I think I'll go. Yes, I'll go. I'm not doing anything this weekend, and it won't cost much."

On Saturday Tom walked to the park and bought a ticket for the fair. It was a warm summer day. The sky was blue, and

the park was very pretty. There were a lot of flowers — blue, yellow and red. Tom felt happy when he saw them.

The fair was good, too. There were a lot of people there, and many different games. Tom played some games. He won a box of fruit and a book about sport. Then he bought an ice-cream because he was hot and thirsty,

“I’m having a good day!” he thought. He sat down and ate his ice-cream. “Now, what shall I do next?”

Suddenly he saw, in large letters¹:



Tom Smith thought very hard. “Shall I go in?” he thought. “Why not? I’m not afraid of the future. Perhaps it will be interesting. Yes, I’ll go in and have a conversation with Madame Zelda.”

¹ <https://englishfox.ru/tekst-journeys-end-by-jan-carew.html>

So he went in. It was very dark inside. An old woman with grey hair and a kind face smiled at Tom.

“Hello, young man!” she said. “Sit down and I will tell you about your future.”

Tom sat down. The old woman looked at some cards on the table.

“Take three cards,” she said.

Tom took the cards and gave them to her. The woman looked at the cards for a long time. Then she spoke. She didn’t smile now.

“Listen!” she said. “I have to tell you something VERY important.

Do not go anywhere next Friday. Make a journey next Friday, and you will never arrive! Something will happen on the way. Don’t forget now. I can tell you nothing more. Be careful, young man.”

Tom left. The sun was very hot on his face. He had no more money, and he wanted to go home. “I’m not afraid,” he thought. ‘I don’t go on journeys. I won’t go anywhere next Friday. Every day is the same to me. I haven’t got a job, so I don’t go anywhere.’”

But on Thursday Tom had a letter. It was an answer to one of his letters! There was a job in a town thirty kilometres

away. It was in a sports shop. The boss wanted to meet Tom the next day.

Tom felt very happy. "I'll have to take a train there," he thought. "I can't walk thirty kilometres."

Suddenly he remembered the old woman at the fair, and he felt afraid. "Do not go anywhere next Friday," she told him.

"But what can I do?" Tom thought sadly. "I can't lose this job. It's too important to me. I'll have to take the train tomorrow. And what can an old woman know about the future? Nothing!"

But he wasn't very happy about it. And he didn't sleep well that night.

The next day was Friday, and Tom went to the station. He bought a ticket at the ticket office. The train arrived, and he climbed on it.

An old man sat down next to Tom. His face was intelligent under his white hair. He had a bad leg, and Tom felt sorry for him.

The train left the station and went through the country. A waiter came round with some food and the old man bought a sandwich. Then he smiled at Tom and said, "Are you thirsty? I've got some tea with me. Would you like some?"

He took out a cup and gave Tom some tea, "He's a kind man!" Tom thought. "I really like him."

He smiled at the old man and said, 'Thank you. I'm Tom Smith. Are you going a long way?'

But the old man couldn't answer. Suddenly there was a very loud noise and the train stopped. What was wrong? The people on the train were afraid. They all looked out of the windows, but they couldn't see anything.

"Don't be afraid," Tom told his new friend. "I'll go and see. Perhaps it's an accident. Stay here and you'll be OK."

The old man smiled. "Thank you, my young friend," he said. "I will stay here. My old legs are very weak."

Tom found the guard. "What's wrong?" he asked him. "Why did we stop?"

The guard looked at Tom unhappily. "There's a large tree in front of the train," he said. "We'll have to move it, but we can't do it quickly. So this is the end of the journey for you. You'll have to get off the train and walk."

"Walk where?" Tom asked.

The guard looked at a map. "There's a village near here. You can go there and perhaps find a restaurant or a cafe. I have to stay here with the train. I'm very sorry about your journey. But you'll get your money back."

Tom thought, "The money isn't important. I really wanted that job!" And he felt very sad.

Tom didn't say anything about the job to the old man. He helped his friend off the train and carried his case to the village.

"Thank you very much," the old man said to Tom. 'I know that my case is heavy. There's a computer in it, and there are a lot of papers.'

Tom smiled. "It's all right," he said. But inside he was very sad. "I was stupid," he thought. "I didn't listen to the old woman, but she was right. I won't get that job now."

The old man saw Tom's sad face and asked him, "What's wrong, my young friend?"

So Tom told him the story about the job in the sports shop.

Then a strange thing happened. The old man smiled, and then he laughed! Why did he laugh? Tom didn't know and he felt a little angry. The old man was his friend, but this was a bad day for Tom. It wasn't funny!

Tom couldn't speak or smile. The old man saw this and he stopped laughing. Then he said, "Listen to me, Tom, and don't be sad. I'm a rich man. I've got a lot of shops in different towns, and they're all sports shops. I want an intelligent young man to work in my new shop. It's also my biggest shop! Will you work for me? I think I know you now. You were very kind to me on the train. You're the right person for the job. What's your answer?"

“This is wonderful,” Tom said with a happy smile. “This is the best day of my life, not the worst!”

Words to the text:

- *to be good at something*
- *a fair*
- *a fortune-teller*
- *an accident*

Questions to the text:

1. What job did Tom want to have?
2. Where did Tom go on Saturday?
3. Why did Tom decide to visit Madame Zelda?
4. What important thing did Madame Zelda tell him?
5. Why didn't Tom follow her advice?
6. Who was Tom's new friend?
7. What happened during the journey?
8. Why did Tom think that it was the best day of his life?

Questions for discussion:

1. What would happen if Tom listened to Madame Zelda?
2. Did Tom predict the end of his journey?
3. Why did the author entitle his story “Journey's End”?
4. Do you believe in fortune-telling?

Tasks for independent work:

- Explain the English proverb “There is no flying from fate”.

Story 19

Soapy's Choice

(by O. Henry)

Soapy sat on a seat in Madison Square, New York, and looked up at the sky. A dead leaf fell onto his arm. Winter was coming, and Soapy knew that he must make his plans. He moved unhappily on his seat.

He wanted three months in a nice, warm prison, with food and good friends. This was how he usually spent his winters. And now it was time, because, at night on his seat in the square, three newspapers did not keep out the cold.

So Soapy decided to go to prison, and at once began to try his first plan. It was usually easy. He ate dinner in an expensive restaurant. Then he told them he had no money and they called a policeman. Nice and easy, with no trouble.

So Soapy left his seat, and walked slowly along the street. Soon he came to a bright restaurant on Broadway. Ah! This was all right. He just had to get to a table in the restaurant and sit down. That was all, because, when he sat down, people could only see his coat and his shirt, which were not very old. Nobody could see his trousers. He thought about the meal — not too expensive, but good.

But when Soapy went into the restaurant, the waiter saw Soapy's dirty old trousers and terrible shoes.

Strong hands turned him round and helped him out into the street again.

So now he had to think of something different. Soapy walked away from Broadway and soon he found himself on Sixth Avenue. He stopped in front of a shop window and looked at it. It was nice and bright, and everybody in the street could see him. Slowly and carefully he picked up a stone and threw it at the window. The glass broke with a loud noise. People ran round the corner and Soapy was happy, because the man in front was a policeman. Soapy did not move. He stood there with his hands in his pockets, and he smiled. "I'll soon be in prison now," he thought.

The policeman came up to Soapy. "Who did that?" he asked.

"Perhaps I did," Soapy replied.

But the policeman knew that people who break windows do not stop to talk to policemen. They run away. And just then the policeman saw another man, who was running to catch a bus. So the policeman ran after him. Soapy watched for a minute. Then he walked away. No luck again! He began to feel cross.

But on the opposite side of the road he saw a little restaurant. "Ah, that'll be all right," he thought, and he went in.

This time nobody looked at his trousers and his shoes. He enjoyed his meal, and then he looked up at the waiter, smiled and said, "I haven't got any money, you know. Now, call the police. And do it quickly. I'm tired!"

"No police for you!" the waiter answered. "Hey! Jo!"

Another waiter came, and together they threw Soapy out into the cold street. Soapy lay there, very angry. With difficulty, he stood up. His nice warm prison was still far away, and Soapy was very unhappy. He felt worse because a policeman, who was standing near, laughed and walked away.

Soapy moved on, but he walked for a long time before he tried again. This time it looked easy.

A nice young woman was standing in front of a shop window. Not very far away there was also a policeman. Soapy moved nearer to the young woman. He saw that the policeman was watching him. Then he said to the young woman, with a smile, "Why don't you come with me, my dear? I can give you a good time."

The young woman moved away a little and looked more carefully into the shop window. Soapy looked at the policeman. Yes, he was still watching. Then he spoke to the young woman again. In a minute she would call the policeman. Soapy could almost see the prison doors. Suddenly, the young woman took hold of his arm.

“OK,” she said happily. “If you buy me a drink. Let’s go before that policeman sees us.”

And poor Soapy walked away with the young woman, who still held on to his arm. He was very unhappy.

At the next corner he ran away from the woman. Suddenly he was afraid. “I’m never going to get to prison,” he thought.

Slowly, he walked on and came to a street with a lot of theatres. There were a lot of people there, rich people in their best clothes. Soapy had to do something to get to prison. He did not want to spend another night on his seat in Madison Square. What could he do? Then he saw a policeman near him, so he began to sing and shout and make a lot of noise. This time they must send him to prison. But the policeman turned his back to Soapy and said to a man who was standing near, “He’s had too much to drink, but he’s not dangerous. We’ll leave him alone tonight.”

What was the matter with the police? Soapy was really unhappy now, but he stopped making a noise. How could he get to prison? The wind was cold, and he pulled his thin coat around him.

But, just then, inside a shop, he saw a man with an expensive umbrella. The man put his umbrella down near the door, and took out a cigarette. Soapy went into the shop,

picked up the umbrella, and, slowly, he began to walk away. The man came quickly after him.

“That’s my umbrella,” he said.

“Oh, is it?” Soapy replied. “Then why don’t you call a policeman? I took it, and you say it’s your umbrella. Go on, then. Call a policeman! Look! There’s one on the corner.’

The umbrella man looked unhappy. “Well, you know, perhaps I’ve made a mistake. I took it from a restaurant this morning. If it’s yours, well, I’m very sorry...”

“Of course it’s my umbrella,” Soapy said.

The policeman looked at them — and the umbrella man walked away. The policeman went to help a beautiful young girl to cross the road.

Soapy was really angry now. He threw the umbrella away and said many bad things about policemen. Just because he wanted to go to prison, they did not want to send him there. He could do nothing wrong!

He began to walk back to Madison Square and home — his seat.

But on a quiet corner, Soapy suddenly stopped. Here, in the middle of the city, was a beautiful old church. Through one purple window he could see a soft light, and sweet music was coming from inside the church. The moon was high in the sky and everything was quiet. For a few seconds it was like

a country church and Soapy remembered other, happier days. He thought of the days when he had a mother, and friends, and beautiful things in his life.

Then he thought about his life now — the empty days, the dead plans. And then a wonderful thing happened. Soapy decided to change his life and be a new man. “Tomorrow,” he said to himself, “I’ll go into town and find work. My life will be good again. I’ll be somebody important. Everything will be different. I’ll...”

Soapy felt a hand on his arm. He jumped and looked round quickly — into the face of a policeman!

“What are you doing here?” asked the policeman.

“Nothing,” Soapy answered.

“Then come with me,” the policeman said.

“Three months in prison,” they told Soapy the next day.

Words to the text:

- *a prison*
- *expensive*
- *dangerous*

Questions to the text:

1. Why did Soapy want to go to prison?
2. What plans did he invent to get to prison?
3. Why was Soapy unlucky?

4. When did he decide to change his life?

5. Did his dream come true?

Questions for discussion:

1. Why did the author write about Soapy's fate with irony?

Tasks for independent work:

- Remember some English proverbs about fate.

Story 20

The Adventure of My Aunt

(by Washington Irving)

My aunt was a big woman, very tall, with a strong mind and will. She was what you may call a very manly woman. My uncle was a thin, small man, very weak, with no will at all. He was no match for my aunt. From the day of their marriage he began to grow smaller and weaker. His wife's powerful mind was too much for him; it undermined his health, and very soon he fell ill.

My aunt took all possible care of him: half the doctors in town visited him and prescribed medicine for him enough to cure a whole hospital. She made him take all the medicines prescribed by the doctors, but all was in vain. My uncle grew worse and worse and one day she found him dead.

My aunt was very much upset by the death of her poor dear husband. Perhaps now she was sorry that she had made him take so much medicine and felt, perhaps, that he was the victim of her kindness. Anyhow, she did all that a widow could do to honour his memory. She spent very much money on her mourning dress, she wore a miniature of him about her neck as large as a small clock; and she had a full-length portrait of him always hanging in her bedroom. All the world praised her

conduct. "A woman who did so much to honour the memory of one husband, deserves soon to get another," said my aunt's friends.

Some time passed, and my aunt decided to move to Derbyshire where she had a big country house. The house stood in a lonely, wild part of the country among the grey Derbyshire hills.

The servants, most of whom came with my aunt from town, did not like the sad-looking old place. They were afraid to walk alone about its half-empty black-looking rooms. My aunt herself seemed to be struck with the lonely appearance of her house. Before she went to bed, therefore, she herself examined the doors and the windows and locked them with her own hands. Then she carried the keys from the house, together with a little box of money and jewels, to her own room. She always saw to all things herself.

One evening, after she had sent away her maid, she sat by her toilet-table, arranging her hair. For, in spite of her sorrow for my uncle, she still cared very much about her appearance. She sat for a little while looking at her face in the glass first on one side, then on the other. As she looked, she thought of her old friend, a rich gentleman of the neighborhood, who had visited her that day, and whom she had known since her girlhood.

All of a sudden she thought she heard something move behind her. She looked round quickly, but there was nothing to be seen. Nothing but the painted portrait of her poor dear husband on the wall behind her. She gave a heavy sigh to his memory as she always did whenever she spoke of him in company, and went on arranging her hair. Her sigh was re-echoed. She looked round again, but no one was to be seen.

“Oh, it is only the wind,” she thought and went on putting her hair in papers, but her eyes were still fixed on her own reflection and the reflection of her husband's portrait in the looking glass. Suddenly it seemed to her that in the glass she saw one of the eyes of the portrait move. It gave her a shock.

“I must make sure,” she thought and moved the candle so that the light fell on the eye in the glass. Now she was sure that it moved. But not only that, it seemed to give her a wink exactly as her husband used to do when he was living. Now my aunt got really frightened... Her heart began to beat fast. She suddenly remembered all the frightful stories about ghosts and criminals that she had heard.

But her fear soon was over. Next moment, my aunt who, as I have said, had a remarkably strong will, became calm. She went on arranging her hair. She even sang her favourite song in a low voice and did not make a single false note. She again moved the candle and while moving it she overturned her

work-box. Then she took the candle and began without any hurry to pick up the articles one by one from the floor. She picked up something near the door, then opened the door, looked for a moment into the corridor as if in doubt whether to go and then walked quietly out.

She hurried down the stairs and ordered the servants to arm themselves with anything they could find. She herself caught up a red-hot poker and, followed by her frightened servants, returned almost at once. They entered the room. All was still and exactly in the same order as when she had left it. They approached the portrait of my uncle.

“Pull down that picture,” ordered my aunt. A heavy sigh was heard from the portrait. The servants stepped back in fear.

“Pull it down at once,” cried my aunt impatiently. The picture was pulled down and from a hiding-place behind it, they dragged out a big, black-bearded fellow with a knife as long as my arm, but trembling with fear from head to foot. He confessed that he had stolen into my aunt’s room to get her box of money and jewels, when all the house was asleep. He had once been a servant in the house and before my aunt’s arrival had helped to put the house in order. He had noticed the hiding-place when the portrait had been put up. In order to see what was going on in the room he had made a hole in one of the eyes of the portrait.

My aunt did not send for the police. She could do very well without them: she liked to take the law into her own hands. She had her own ideas of cleanliness also. She ordered the servants to draw the man through the horse pond in order to wash away his crimes, and then to dry him well with a wooden “towel”.

But though my aunt was a very brave woman, this adventure was too much even for her. She often used to say, “It is most unpleasant for a woman to live alone in the country.” Soon after she gave her hand to the rich gentleman of the neighborhood.

Words to the text:

- *to prescribe*
- *a victim*
- *a mourning dress*
- *to deserve*
- *a wink*
- *neighborhood*
- *to drag*
- *to confess*

Questions to the text:

1. What did the author’s aunt look like?
2. Why did her husband die very early?

3. What did the aunt do to honour the memory of her husband?

4. Where did the aunt move after her husband's death?

5. What did she have in her bedroom?

6. What thing gave her a shock one night?

7. Who was found in the hiding-place behind the picture?

8. How did the aunt punish the robber?

Questions for discussion:

1. Why does the author call his aunt a brave woman?

2. Can we also call her a clever and a resourceful woman?

Tasks for independent work:

• Copy out the sentences in the Past Perfect tense from the text.

Story 21

He Overdid It

(by O. Henry)

Miss Posie Carrington had begun life in the small village of Cranberry Corners. Then her name had been Posie Boggs. At the age of eighteen she had left the place and become an actress at a small theatre in a large city, and here she took the name of Carrington. Now Miss Carrington was at the height of her fame, the critics praised her, and in the next season she was going to star in a new play about country life. Many young actors were eager to partner Miss Posie Carrington in the play, and among them was a clever young actor called Highsmith.

“My boy”, said Mr. Goldstein, the manager of the theatre, when the young man went to him for advice, “take the part if you can get it. The trouble is Miss Carrington won’t listen to any of my suggestions. As a matter of fact she has turned down a lot of the best imitators of a country fellow already, and she says she won’t set foot on the stage unless her partner is the best that can be found. She was brought up in a village, you know, she won’t be deceived when a Broadway fellow goes on the stage with a straw in his hair and calls himself a village boy. So, young man, if you want to play the part, you’ll have to convince Miss Carrington. Would you like to try”?

“I would with your permission”, answered the young man. “But I would prefer to keep my plans secret for a while”. Next day Highsmith took the train for Cranberry Corners. He stayed three days in that small and distant village. Having found out all he could about the Boggs and their neighbours Highsmith returned to the city...

Miss Posie Carrington used to spend her evenings at a small restaurant where actors gathered after performances. One night when Miss Posie was enjoying a late supper in the company of her fellow-actors, a shy, awkward young man entered the restaurant. It was clear that the lights and the people made him uncomfortable. He upset one chair, sat in another one, and turned red at the approach of a waiter. “You may fetch me a glass of beer”, he said in answer to the waiter’s question. He looked around the place and then seeing Miss Carrington, rose and went to her table with a shining smile.

“How’re you, Miss Posie”? he said. “Don’t you remember me — Bill Summers — the Summerses that used to live next door to you? I’ve grown up since you left Cranberry Corners. They still remember you there. Eliza Perry told me to see you in the city while I was here. You know Eliza married Benny Stanfield, and she says —”

“I say”, interrupted Miss Carrington brightly, “Eliza Perry married. She used to be so stout and plain”. “Married in June”

smiled the gossip. "Old Mrs Blither sold her place to Captain Spooner; the youngest Waters girl ran away with a music teacher". "Oh"! Miss Carrington cried out. "Why, you people, excuse me a while — this is an old friend of mine — Mr. — what was it? Yes, Mr. Summers — Mr. Goldstein, Mr. Ricketts. Now, Bill, come over here and tell me some more". She took him to a vacant table in a corner. "I don't seem to remember any Bill Summers", she said thoughtfully, looking straight into the innocent blue eyes of the young man. "But I know the Summerses all right, and your face seems familiar when I come to think of it. There aren't many changes in the old village, are there? Have you seen any of my people"?

And then Highsmith decided to show Miss Posie his abilities as a tragic actor. "Miss Posie" said Bill Summers, "I was at your people's house just two or three days ago. No, there aren't many changes to speak of. And yet it doesn't look the same place that it used to be". "How's Ma"? asked Miss Carrington. "She was sitting by the front door when I saw her last" said Bill. "She's older than she was, Miss Posie. But everything in the house looked just the same. Your Ma asked me to sit down. 'William' said she. 'Posie went away down that road and something tells me she'll come back that way again when she gets tired of the world and begins to think about her old mother. She's always been a sensible girl'".

Miss Carrington looked uncomfortable. “Well”, she said, “I am really very glad to have seen you, Bill. Come round and see me at the hotel before you leave the city”. After she had left, Highsmith, still in his make-up, went up to Goldstein. “An excellent idea, wasn’t it”? said the smiling actor. “The part is mine, don’t you think? The little lady never once guessed”. “I didn’t hear your conversation”, said Goldstein, “but your make-up and acting were perfect. Here’s to your success. You’d better visit Miss Carrington early tomorrow and see how she feels about you”.

At 11.45 the next morning Highsmith, handsome and dressed in the latest fashion, sent up his card to Miss Carrington at her hotel. He was shown up and received by the actress’s French maid. “I am sorry”, said the maid, “but I am to say this to everybody. Miss Carrington has canceled all engagements on the stage and has returned to live in that — what do you call that place? — Cranberry Corners”!

Words to the text:

- *to praise*
- *a permission*
- *awkward*

Questions to the text:

1. Where was Miss Carrington from?
2. What was her profession?

3. Why had she turned down a lot of imitators of a country fellow?

4. Why did Highsmith decide to convince Miss Carrington?

5. What was his plan?

6. What happened at the restaurant one night?

7. Why did Highsmith speak about the actress's village in details?

8. What made Miss Carrington leave the stage?

Questions for discussion:

1. Why did Highsmith fail to play the part?

2. Did he predict the result of his acting?

3. Would Miss Carrington play with Highsmith if she leant the truth?

4. Do you think that Highsmith was a gifted actor and a good psychologist?

Tasks for independent work:

• Copy out the sentences with would/won't from the text and translate them.

Story 22

The Kiss

(by Kate Chopin)

It was still quite light out of doors, but inside with the curtains drawn and the smouldering fire sending out a dim, uncertain glow, the room was full of deep shadows.

Brantain sat in one of these shadows; it had overtaken him and he did not mind. The obscurity lent him courage to keep his eyes fastened as ardently as he liked upon the girl who sat in the firelight.

She was very handsome, with a certain fine, rich coloring that belongs to the healthy brunette type. She was quite composed, as she idly stroked the satiny coat of the cat that lay curled in her lap, and she occasionally sent a slow glance into the shadow where her companion sat. They were talking low, of indifferent things which plainly were not the things that occupied their thoughts. She knew that he loved her — a frank, blustering fellow without guile enough to conceal his feelings, and no desire to do so. For two weeks past he had sought her society eagerly and persistently. She was confidently waiting for him to declare himself and she meant to accept him. The rather insignificant and unattractive Brantain

was enormously rich; and she liked and required the entourage which wealth could give her.

During one of the pauses between their talk of the last tea and the next reception the door opened and a young man entered whom Brantain knew quite well. The girl turned her face toward him. A stride or two brought him to her side, and bending over her chair — before she could suspect his intention, for she did not realize that he had not seen her visitor — he pressed an ardent, lingering kiss upon her lips.

Brantain slowly arose; so did the girl arise, but quickly, and the newcomer stood between them, a little amusement and some defiance struggling with the confusion in his face.

“I believe,” stammered Brantain, “I see that I have stayed too long. I — I had no idea — that is, I must wish you good-bye.” He was clutching his hat with both hands, and probably did not perceive that she was extending her hand to him, her presence of mind had not completely deserted her; but she could not have trusted herself to speak.

“Hang me if I saw him sitting there, Nattie! I know it’s deuced awkward for you. But I hope you’ll forgive me this once — this very first break. Why, what’s the matter?”

“Don’t touch me; don’t come near me,” she returned angrily. “What do you mean by entering the house without ringing?”

“I came in with your brother, as I often do,” he answered coldly, in self-justification. “We came in the side way. He went upstairs and I came in here hoping to find you. The explanation is simple enough and ought to satisfy you that the misadventure was unavoidable. But do say that you forgive me, Nathalie,” he entreated, softening.

“Forgive you! You don’t know what you are talking about. Let me pass. It depends upon — a good deal whether I ever forgive you.”

At that next reception which she and Brantain had been talking about she approached the young man with a delicious frankness of manner when she saw him there.

“Will you let me speak to you a moment or two, Mr. Brantain?” she asked with an engaging but perturbed smile. He seemed extremely unhappy; but when she took his arm and walked away with him, seeking a retired corner, a ray of hope mingled with the almost comical misery of his expression. She was apparently very outspoken.

“Perhaps I should not have sought this interview, Mr. Brantain; but — but, oh, I have been very uncomfortable, almost miserable since that little encounter the other afternoon. When I thought how you might have misinterpreted it, and believed things” — hope was plainly gaining the ascend-

ancy over misery in Brantain's round, guileless face — "Of course, I know it is nothing to you, but for my own sake I do want you to understand that Mr. Harvy is an intimate friend of long standing. Why, we have always been like cousins —like brother and sister, I may say. He is my brother's most intimate associate and often fancies that he is entitled to the same privileges as the family. Oh, I know it is absurd, uncalled for, to tell you this; undignified even," she was almost weeping, "but it makes so much difference to me what you think of me." Her voice had grown very low and agitated. The misery had all disappeared from Brantain's face.

"Then you do really care what I think, Miss Nathalie? May I call you Miss Nathalie?" They turned into a long, dim corridor that was lined on either side with tall, graceful plants. They walked slowly to the very end of it. When they turned to retrace their steps Brantain's face was radiant and hers was triumphant.

Harvy was among the guests at the wedding; and he sought her out in a rare moment when she stood alone.

"Your husband," he said, smiling, "has sent me over to kiss you".

A quick blush suffused her face and round polished throat. "I suppose it's natural for a man to feel and act generously

on an occasion of this kind. He tells me he doesn't want his marriage to interrupt wholly that pleasant intimacy which has existed between you and me. I don't know what you've been telling him," with an insolent smile, "but he has sent me here to kiss you."

She felt like a chess player who, by the clever handling of his pieces, sees the game taking the course intended. Her eyes were bright and tender with a smile as they glanced up into his; and her lips looked hungry for the kiss which they invited.

"But, you know," he went on quietly, "I didn't tell him so, it would have seemed ungrateful, but I can tell you. I've stopped kissing women; it's dangerous."

Well, she had Brantain and his million left. A person can't have everything in this world; and it was a little unreasonable of her to expect it.

Words to the text:

- *a smouldering fire*
- *obscurity*
- *ardently*
- *guile*
- *blustering*
- *to declare himself*
- *entourage*

- *stride*
- *a lingering kiss*
- *to perceive*
- *deuced*
- *to perturb*
- *to weep*
- *radiant*

Questions to the text:

1. Who was sitting in a dim room talking of indifferent things?
2. What did they expect of each other?
3. What happened next?
4. Why did Harvy kiss Nathalie?
5. How did she behave after the incident?
6. Did Mr. Brantain believe in her explanation?
7. What kind of woman was Nathalie?
8. Why did she choose Mr. Brantain?
9. Did she regret that she lost Harvy's love?

Questions for discussion:

1. What was the main aim for Nathalie?
2. When was the story written? Is it important?
3. Do you think this story can happen the present day?

Tasks for independent work:

- Explain the English proverb "All covet, all lose".

Story 23

Beginning New Year

(by Arnold Bennett)

We are slow, silent people, we of the Five Towns. Perhaps it is because we make pottery, which is slow, silent work. There are many stories about us and how slow and silent we are. These stories often surprise the rest of the world very much, but we just laugh at them. Here is an example.

Toby Hall was born in Turnhill, the smallest of the Five Towns. Last New Year's Eve he was travelling by train from Crewe to Derby, which was now his home town. He got out of the train at Knype, in the centre of the Five Towns, for a quick drink. The station was busy and he had to wait for his drink. When he returned to the train, it was already moving. Toby was not a young man; he couldn't jump on the train, so he missed it.

He went to speak to the man in the station office. "Young man," he asked. "When's the next train to Derby?"

"There isn't one before tomorrow."

Toby went and had another drink.

"I'll go to Turnhill," he said to himself slowly, and he paid for his drink.

This was his first visit to the Five Towns for twenty-three years, but Knype station was still the same, and so were the times of the trains to Turnhill. The train was the same, too.

In twenty minutes he was leaving Turnhill station and walking into the town. He walked past a number of fine new buildings. In the town centre almost everything was different.

He walked on, into smaller streets, and at last came to Child Row. The old houses here were the same as always, and he looked at one small house very carefully. The light was on, so there was somebody at home.

He crossed the street to the house. It was a special house for him (Number 11 it was — and is) because twenty-four years ago it was his home.

Twenty-four years ago, Toby Hall married Miss Priscilla Bratt, a quiet woman of twenty-three. The house belonged to her. The two young people were perhaps not really in love, but they liked one another. Their only problem was the house. Priscilla often said that the house belonged to her. Toby knew that. Everybody in Turnhill knew that. She didn't have to say it so often. Toby asked her not to, but she didn't stop. He was happy to live in his wife's house, but he didn't want to hear about it every day. And after a year it was too much. One day he put some things in a bag, put on his hat, and went to the door.

“Where are you going?” asked Priscilla.

He stopped for a minute then answered, "America."

And he went. It was not difficult for Priscilla. She did not think that Toby was a very good husband. She could live without him; she had her house and some money.

Toby went to the bank and got all his money, and sailed off to New York on the Adriatic. From New York he went to Trenton, New Jersey, which was the Five Towns of America. Toby was a good potter, and he found work easily. After a year, he asked a friend to write to Priscilla, and tell her that he was dead. He wanted to be a free man, and it was only fair for her to be a free woman.

After a few years he returned to England. He changed his name from Hall, and started work as a potter in Derby. He did well — the money was good, and he didn't have much to spend it on. He lived quietly, working all week and going fishing at the weekends.

And now, because of a visit to Crewe, a train, and a drink, he was in Child Row, and crossing the street to Number 11. He knocked on the door.

Many doors in the Five Towns open slowly and carefully — and so did this one. It opened a few centimetres, and a woman looked out at Toby.

"Is this Mrs. Hall's?" he asked.

“No. It’s not Mrs. Hall’s. It’s Mrs. Tansley’s.”

“I thought...”

The door opened a little more.

“Is that you, Toby?”

“It is,” answered Toby, smiling a little.

‘Well, well!’ said the woman. ‘Well, well!’ The door opened a little more. ‘Are you coming in, Toby?’

“Yes,” said Toby.

And he went in.

“Sit down,” said his wife. “I thought you were dead. Someone wrote to me.”

“Yes!” said Toby. “But I’m not dead.” He sat down in a comfortable chair by the fire. He knew the chair, and he knew the fire. He put his hat on the table. Priscilla locked the door again and sat down herself. Her dress was black and, like Toby, she was getting a little fat.

“Well, well,” she said. “So you’ve come back.”

“Yes.”

They were both silent for a minute. “The weather’s cold, isn’t it?” he said.

“Yes. It’s been a cold winter.”

Another silence. What were they thinking and feeling? Perhaps they weren’t thinking anything very much.

“And what’s the news?” he asked.

“News? Oh, nothing special.”

There was a picture above the fire. It was a picture of Priscilla when she was young. It surprised Toby.

“I don’t remember that picture,” he said.

“What?”

“That!” He looked up at the picture.

“Oh! That! That’s my daughter.”

“Oh!” Now Toby was surprised.

“I married Job Tansley,” said Priscilla. “He died four years ago. She’s married,” she said, looking up at her daughter’s photograph. “She married young Gibson last September.”

“Well, well!”

They were silent again.

“That’s a good fire,” said Toby, looking at it.

“Yes, it is.”

“Good coal.”

“Seventy pence a tonne.”

Again they were silent.

“Is Ned Walklate still at the pub?” Toby asked.

“I think so,” said Priscilla.

“I think I’ll go round and have a drink,” said Toby, standing up.

He was unlocking the door when Priscilla said:

“You’ve forgotten your hat, Toby.”

“No,” he answered. “I haven’t forgotten it. I’m coming back.” They looked at one another, speaking without words.

“That’ll be all right,” she said. “Well, well!”

“Yes!”

And he walked round to the pub.

Words to the text:

- *pottery*

Questions to the text:

1. Why do people of the Five Towns laugh at their stories?
2. What happened at the station and how does it relate to Toby’s arrival to his native town?
3. Is it only chance that made Toby return home?
4. What things surprised Toby?
5. What was the Halls’s only problem?
6. How did they live apart from each other?
7. When did Toby decide that he would stay with his wife?
8. Why did his wife let him stay with her?

Questions for discussion:

1. Do you think that it’s a funny story?
2. What is the sense of the title of the story?

Tasks for independent work:

- Explain the English proverbs: “Better late than never” and “It is never late to mend”.

Story 24

The White Heron

(by Sarah Jewett)

Part 1

The forest was full of shadows as a little girl hurried through it one summer evening in June. It was already 8 o'clock and Sylvie wondered if her grandmother would be angry with her for being so late.

Every evening Sylvie left her grandmother's house at 5:30 to bring their cow home. The old animal spent her days out in the open country eating sweet grass. It was Sylvie's job to bring her home to be milked. When the cow heard Sylvie's voice calling her, she would hide among the bushes.

This evening it had taken Sylvie longer than usual to find her cow. The child hurried the cow through the dark forest, following a narrow path that led to her grandmother's home. The cow stopped at a small stream to drink. As Sylvie waited, she put her bare feet in the cold, fresh water of the stream.

She had never before been alone in the forest as late as this. The air was soft and sweet. Sylvie felt as if she were a part of the gray shadows and the silver leaves that moved in the evening breeze.

She began thinking how it was only a year ago that she came to her grandmother's farm. Before that, she had lived with her mother and father in a dirty, crowded factory town. One day, Sylvie's grandmother had visited them and had chosen Sylvie from all her brothers and sisters to be the one to help her on her farm in Vermont.

The cow finished drinking, and as the 9-year-old child hurried through the forest to the home she loved, she thought again about the noisy town where her parents still lived.

Suddenly the air was cut by a sharp whistle not far away. Sylvie knew it wasn't a friendly bird's whistle. It was the determined whistle of a person. She forgot the cow and hid in some bushes. But she was too late.

"Hello, little girl", a young man called out cheerfully. "How far is it to the main road"? Sylvie was trembling as she whispered "two miles". She came out of the bushes and looked up into the face of a tall young man carrying a gun.

The stranger began walking with Sylvie as she followed her cow through the forest. "I've been hunting for birds" he explained, "but I've lost my way. Do you think I can spend the night at your house"? Sylvie didn't answer. She was glad they were almost home. She could see her grandmother standing near the door of the farm house.

When they reached her, the stranger put down his gun and explained his problem to Sylvie's smiling grandmother.

"Of course you can stay with us" she said. "We don't have much, but you're welcome to share what we have. Now Sylvie, get a plate for the gentleman"!

After eating they all sat outside. The young man explained he was a scientist, who collected birds. "Do you put them in a cage"? Sylvie asked. "No", he answered slowly, "I shoot them and stuff them with special chemicals to preserve them. I have over 100 different kinds of birds from all over the United States in my study at home".

"Sylvie knows a lot about birds, too" her grandmother said proudly. "She knows the forest so well, the wild animals come and eat bread right out of her hands".

"So, Sylvie knows all about birds. May be she can help me then", the young man said. "I saw a white heron not far from here two days ago. I've been looking for it ever since. It's a very rare bird, the little white heron. Have you seen it, too"? He asked Sylvie.

But Sylvie was silent. "You would know it if you saw it", he added. "It's a tall, strange bird with soft white feathers and long thin legs. It probably has its nest at the top of a tall tree".

Sylvie's heart began to beat fast. She knew that strange white bird! She had seen it on the other side of the forest.

The young man was staring at Sylvie. "I would give \$10 to the person who showed me where the white heron is".

That night Sylvie's dreams were full of all the wonderful things she and her grandmother could buy for ten dollars.

Sylvie spent the next day in the forest with the young man. He told her a lot about the birds they saw. Sylvie would have had a much better time if the young man had left his gun at home. She could not understand why he killed the birds he seemed to like so much. She felt her heart tremble every time he shot an unsuspecting bird as it was singing in the trees.

But Sylvie watched the young man with eyes full of admiration. She had never seen anyone so handsome and charming. A strange excitement filled her heart, a new feeling the little girl did not recognize... love.

Words to the text:

- *bushes*
- *a stream*
- *a whistle*
- *to tremble*
- *to stuff*
- *to preserve*
- *a heron*
- *rare*

- *a nest*
- *to stare at*
- *admiration*
- *excitement*

Part 2

At last evening came. They drove the cow home together. Long after the moon came out and the young man had fallen asleep Sylvie was still awake. She had a plan that would get the \$10 for her grandmother and make the young man happy. When it was almost time for the sun to rise, she quietly left her house and hurried through the forest. She finally reached a huge pine tree, so tall it could be seen for many miles around. Her plan was to climb to the top of the pine tree. She could see the whole forest from there. She was sure she would be able to see where the white heron had hidden its nest.

Sylvie's bare feet and tiny fingers grabbed the tree's rough trunk. Sharp dry branches scratched at her like cat's claws. The pine tree's sticky sap made her fingers feel stiff and clumsy as she climbed higher and higher.

The pine tree seemed to grow taller, the higher that Sylvie climbed. The sky began to brighten in the east. Sylvie's face was like a pale star when, at last, she reached the tree's highest branch. The golden sun's rays hit the green forest. Two

hawks flew together in slow-moving circles far below Sylvie. Sylvie felt as if she could go flying among the clouds, too. To the west she could see other farms and forests.

Suddenly Sylvie's dark gray eyes caught a flash of white that grew larger and larger. A bird with broad white wings and a long slender neck flew past Sylvie and landed on a pine branch below her. The white heron smoothed its feathers and called to its mate, sitting on their nest in a nearby tree. Then it lifted its wings and flew away.

Sylvie gave a long sigh. She knew the wild bird's secret now. Slowly she began her dangerous trip down the ancient pine tree. She did not dare to look down and tried to forget that her fingers hurt and her feet were bleeding. All she wanted to think about was what the stranger would say to her when she told him where to find the heron's nest.

As Sylvie climbed slowly down the pine tree, the stranger was waking up back at the farm. He was smiling because he was sure from the way the shy little girl had looked at him that she had seen the white heron.

About an hour later Sylvie appeared. Both her grandmother and the young man stood up as she came into the kitchen. The splendid moment to speak about her secret had come. But Sylvie was silent. Her grandmother was angry with her. Where had she been? The young man's kind eyes looked

deeply into Sylvie's own dark gray ones. He could give Sylvie and her grandmother \$10. He had promised to do this, and they needed the money. Besides, Sylvie wanted to make him happy.

But Sylvie was silent. She remembered how the white heron came flying through the golden air and how they watched the sun rise together from the top of the world. Sylvie could not speak. She could not tell the heron's secret and give its life away.

The young man went away disappointed later that day. Sylvie was sad. She wanted to be his friend. He never returned. But many nights Sylvie heard the sound of his whistle as she came home with her grandmother's cow.

Were the birds better friends than their hunter might have been? Who can know?

Words to the text:

- *drove*
- *to fall asleep*
- *to be awake*
- *to grab*
- *to scratch*
- *a flash*
- *to smooth*

- *to bleed*
- *to appear*
- *disappointed*
- *sticky sap*

Questions to the text:

1. Where did Sylvie live?
2. Who did she meet in the forest?
3. What was the man looking for in the forest?
4. What could Sylvie receive for her secret?
5. Who wanted Sylvie to speak about her secret?
6. Why was the young man sure that Sylvie would show him a heron's nest?

Questions for discussion:

1. What choice did Sylvie have to make?
2. Why did she decide to save the herons?
3. What does this story teach us?

Tasks for independent work:

- Copy out modal verbs from the text and explain their usage.

Story 25

The Broken Boot

(the original text by John Galsworthy)

The actor, Gilbert Caister, who had been “out” for six months, emerged from his east-coast seaside lodging about noon in the day, after the opening of “Shooting the Rapids”², on tour, in which he was playing Dr Dominick in the last act. A salary of four pounds a week would not, he was conscious, remake his fortunes, but a certain jauntiness had returned to the gait and manner of one employed again at last.

Fixing his monocle, he stopped before a fishmonger’s and, with a faint smile on his face, regarded a lobster. Ages since he had eaten a lobster! One could long for a lobster without paying, but the pleasure was not solid enough to detain him. He moved up street and stopped again, before a tailor’s window. Together with the actual tweeds, in which he could so easily fancy himself refitted, he could see a reflection of himself, in the faded brown suit wangled out³ of the production of “Marmaduke Mandeville” the year before the war. The sunlight in this damned town was very strong, very

² The title of a play.

³ To wangle out.

hard on seams and buttonholes, on knees and elbows⁴! Yet he received the ghost of aesthetic pleasure from the reflected elegance of a man long fed only twice a day, of an eyeglass well rimmed out from a soft brown eye, of a velour hat salvaged from the production of “Educating Simon” in 1912; and in front of the window he removed that hat, for under it was his new phenomenon, not yet quite evaluated, his *mèche blanche*⁵. Was it an asset, or the beginning of the end? It reclined backwards on the right side, conspicuous in his dark hair, above that shadowy face always interesting to Gilbert Caister. They said it came from atrophy of the — something nerve, an effect of the war, undernourished tissue. Rather distinguished, perhaps, but —!

He walked on, and became conscious that he had passed a face he knew. Turning, he saw it also turn on a short and dapper figure — a face rosy, bright, round, with an air of cherubic knowledge, as of a getter-up of amateur theatricals.

Bryce-Green, by George!

“Caister? It is! Haven't seen you since you left the old camp. Remember what sport we had over ‘Gotta-Grampus’⁶? By Jove! I am glad to see you. Doing anything with yourself? Come and have lunch with me.”

⁴ The sunlight... mercilessly exposed all the shabbiness of his suit.

⁵ *Mèche blanche* (Fr.) — a lock of white hair.

⁶ The title of a play.

Bryce-Green, the wealthy patron, the moving spirit of entertainment in that south-coast convalescent camp⁷. And drawling slightly, Caister answered:

“I shall be delighted.” But within him something did not drawl: “By God, you’re going to have a feed, my boy!”

And — elegantly thread bare, round about and dapper — the two walked side by side.

“Know this place? Let’s go in here! Phyllis, cocktails for my friend Mr. Caister and myself, and caviar on biscuits. MrCaister is playing here; you must go and see him.”

The girl who served the cocktails and the caviar looked up at Caister with interested blue eyes. Precious⁸! — he had been “out” for six months!

“Nothing of a part,” he drawled, “took it to fill a gap.” And below his waistcoat the gap echoed: “Yes, and it’ll take some filling.”

“Bring your cocktail along, Caister, we’ll go into the little further room, there’ll be nobody there. What shall we have — a lobster?”

And Caister murmured: “I love lobsters.”

“Very fine and large here. And how are you, Caister? So awfully glad to see you — only real actor we had.”

⁷ Convalescent — returning to health after illness; convalescent camp — лагерь для выздоравливающих военнослужащих.

⁸ Precious! (coll) — here: an exclamation.

“Thanks,” said Caister, “I’m all right.” And he thought: “He’s a damned amateur, but a nice little man.”

“Sit here. Waiter, bring us a good big lobster and a salad; and then—er—a small fillet of beef with potatoes fried crisp, and a bottle of my special hock! Ah! And a rum omelet—plenty of rum and sugar. Twig⁹?”

And Caister thought: “Thank God, I do.”

They had sat down opposite each other at one of two small tables in the little recessed room.

“Luck!” said Bryce-Green.

“Luck!” replied Caister; and the cocktail trickling down him echoed: “Luck!”

“And what do you think of the state of the drama?” Oh! Ho! A question after his own heart. Balancing his monocle by a sweetish smile on the opposite side of his mouth, Caister drawled his answer: “Quite too bally awful¹⁰!”

“Hm! Yes,” said Bryce-Green; “nobody with any genius, is there?”

And Caister thought: “Nobody with any money.”

“Have you been playing anything great? You were so awfully good in ‘Gotta-Grampus’!”

⁹ Twig? (sl.) — See? Understand?

¹⁰ Quite too bally awful (sl.) — too bad, terrible.

“Nothing particular, I’ve been—er—rather slack.” And with their feel around his waist his trousers seemed to echo: “Slack!”

“Ah!” said Bryce-Green. “Here we are! Do you like claws?”

“Thanks. Anything!” To eat—until warned by the pressure of his waist against his trousers! What a feast! And what a flow of his own tongue suddenly released— on drama, music, art; mellow and critical, stimulated by the round eyes and interjections of his little provincial host.

“By Jove, Caister! You’ve got a meche blanche. Never noticed. I’m awfully interested in meches blanches. Don’t think me too frightfully rude — but did it come suddenly?”

“No, gradually.”

“And how do you account for it?”

“Try starvation,” trembled on Caister’s lips.

“I don’t,” he said.

“I think it’s ripping¹¹. Have some more omelet? I often wish I’d gone on the regular stage myself. Must be a topping life, if one has talent, like you.”

Topping?

“Have a cigar. Waiter! Coffee, and cigars. I shall come and see you tonight. Suppose you’ll be here a week?”

¹¹ Ripping, topping (coll.) — splendid, excellent.

Topping! The laughter and applause — “Mr. Caister’s rendering left nothing to be desired; its — and its — are in the true spirit of —!”

Silence recalled him from his rings of smoke. Bryce-Green was sitting, with cigar held out and mouth a little open, and bright eyes round as pebbles, fixed — fixed on some object near the floor, past the corner of the tablecloth. Had he burnt his mouth? The eyelids fluttered; he looked at Caister, licked his lips like a dog, nervously and said:

“I say, old chap, don’t think me a beast, but are you at all — er — er — rocky¹²? I mean — if I can be of any service, don’t hesitate! Old acquaintance, don’t you know, and all that —”

His eyes rolled out again towards the object, and Caister followed them. Out there above the carpet he saw it — his own boot. It dangled slightly, six inches off the ground — split-right across, twice, between lace and toecap. Quite¹³! He knew it. A boot left him from the role of Bertie Carstairs, in ‘The Dupe’, just before the war. Good boots. His only pair, except the boots of Dr. Dominick, which he was nursing. And from the boot he looked back at Bryce-Green, sleek and concerned.

¹² Are you rocky? (coll.) — here: Are you in difficult circumstances?; a rocky situation — a difficult situation, a situation full of problems.

¹³ Quite! — here: Of course! Absolutely!

A drop, black when it left his heart, suffused his eye behind the monocle; his smile curled bitterly; he said:

“Not at all, thanks! Why?”

“Oh, n-n-nothing. It just occurred to me.” His eyes — but Caister had withdrawn the boot. Bryce-Green paid the bill and rose.

“Old chap, if you’ll excuse me; engagement at half past two. So awfully glad to have seen you. Good-bye!”

“Good-bye!” said Caister. “Thanks.” He was alone. And, chin on hand, he stared through his monocle into an empty coffee cup. Alone with his heart, his boot, his life to come... “And what have you been in lately, MrCaister?” “Nothing very much lately. Of course I’ve played almost everything.” “Quite so. Perhaps you’ll leave your address; can’t say anything definite, I’m afraid.” “I — I should — er — be willing to rehearse on approval; or — if I could the part?” “Thank you, afraid we haven’t got as far as that.” “No? Quite! Well, I shall hear from you, perhaps.” And Caister could see his own eyes looking at the manager. God! What a look!.. A topping life! Cadging — cadging — cadging for work! A life of draughty waiting, of concealed beggary, of terrible depressions, of want of food¹⁴!

¹⁴ A life of draughty waiting – a life full of waiting in draughty corridors and waiting rooms.

The waiter came skating round as if he desired to clear. Must go! Two young women had come in and were sitting at the other table between him and the door. He saw them look at him, and his sharpened senses caught the whisper.

“Sure—in the last act. Don’t you see his meche blanche?”

“Oh! Yes — of course! Isn’t it — wasn’t he —!”

Caister straightened his back; his smile crept out, he fixed his monocle. They had spotted his Dr. Dominick!

“If you've quite finished, sir, may I clear?”

“Certainly. I’m going.” He gathered himself and rose. The young women were gazing up, elegant, with a faint smile, he passed them close, so that they could not see, managing — his broken boot.

Words to the text:

- *on tour*
- *to be hard on somebody/ (something)*
- *to have sport (fun)*
- *to fill a gap*
- *it’ll take some filling.*
- *after one’s own heart*
- *to account for*
- *to go on the stage*
- *to leave nothing to be desired*

- *to leave much to be desired*
- *to be of service*

Questions to the text:

1. When was the story written?
2. Who is this story about?
3. What was Caister's condition?
4. How was he dressed?
5. What special thing attracted people's attention to him?
6. Who invited Caister to have breakfast with him?
7. Why did Bryce-Green offer his help?
8. What did Caister remember when Bryce-Green left him?

Questions for discussion:

1. Why did the actor refuse Bryce-Green's help?
2. What do we need to survive in difficult situation?

Tasks for independent work:

- Compare Soapy (the story "Soapy's Choice") and actor Caister.

Story 26

Mr. Know-All

(by W. S. Maugham)

I was prepared to dislike Max Kelada even before I knew him. The war had just finished and the passenger traffic in the ocean-going liners was heavy. Accommodation was very hard to get and you had to put up with whatever the agents chose to offer you. You could not hope for a cabin to yourself and I was thankful to be given one in which there were only two berths. But when I was told the name of my companion my heart sank. It suggested closed portholes and the night air rigidly excluded. It was bad enough to share a cabin for fourteen days with anyone (I was going from San Francisco to Yokohama, but I should have looked upon it with less dismay if my fellow passenger's name had been Smith or Brown. When I went on board I found Mr. Kelada's luggage already below. I did not like the look of it; there were too many labels on the suit-cases, and the wardrobe trunk was too big. He had unpacked his toilet things, and I observed that he was a patron of the excellent Monsieur Coty; for I saw on the washing-stand his scent, his hair-wash and his brilliantine. Mr. Kelada's brushes, ebony with his monogram in gold, would have been all the better for a scrub. I did not at all like Mr. Kelada.

I made my way into the smoking-room. I called for a pack of cards and began to play patience. I had scarcely started before a man came up to me and asked me if he was right in thinking my name was so and so. "I am Mr. Kelada," he added, with a smile that showed a row of flashing teeth, and sat down. "Oh, yes, we're sharing a cabin, I think." "Bit of luck, I call it. You never know who you're going to be put in with. I was jolly glad when I heard you were English. I'm all for us English sticking together when we're abroad, if you understand what I mean." I blinked. "Are you English?" I asked, perhaps tactlessly. "Rather. You don't think I look like an American, do you? British to the backbone, that's what I am." To prove it, Mr. Kelada took out of his pocket a passport and airily waved it under my nose. King George has many strange subjects. Mr. Kelada was short and of a sturdy build, clean-shaven and dark-skinned, with a fleshy hooked nose and very large, lustrous and liquid eyes. His long black hair was sleek and curly. He spoke with a fluency in which there was nothing English and his gestures were exuberant. I felt pretty sure that a closer inspection of that British passport would have betrayed the fact that Mr. Kelada was born under a blue sky than is generally seen in England. "What will you have?" he asked me. I looked at him doubtfully. Prohibition was in force and to all appearance the ship was bone-dry. When I am

not thirsty I do not know which I dislike more, ginger ale or lemon squash. But Mr. Kelada flashed an oriental smile at me. "Whisky and soda or a dry martini, you have only to say the word." From each of his hip pockets he fished a flask and laid it on the table before me. I chose the martini, and calling the steward he ordered a tumbler of ice and a couple of glasses. "A very good cocktail," I said. "Well, there are plenty more where that came from, and if you've got any friends on board, you tell them you've got a pal who's got all the liquor in the world."

Mr. Kelada was chatty. He talked of New York and of San Francisco. He discussed plays, pictures, and politics. He was patriotic. The Union Jack is an impressive piece of drapery, but when it is nourished by a gentleman from Alexandria or Beirut, I cannot but feel that it loses somewhat in dignity. Mr. Kelada was familiar. "I do not wish to put on airs, but I cannot help feeling that it is seemly in a total stranger to put 'mister' before my name when he addresses me". Mr. Kelada, doubtless to set me at my ease, used no such formality. I did not like Mr. Kelada.

I had put aside the cards when he sat down, but now, thinking that for this first occasion our conversation had lasted long enough, I went on with my game. "The three on the four," said Mr. Kelada. There is nothing more exasperating

when you are playing patience than to be told where to put the card you have turned up before you have had a chance to look for yourself. "It's coming out, it's coming out," he cried. "The ten on the knave." With rage and hatred in my heart I finished. Then he seized the pack. "Do you like card tricks?" "No, I hate card tricks," I answered. "Well, I'll just show you this one." He showed me three. Then I said I would go down to the dining-room and get my seat at table. "Oh, that's all right," he said. "I've already taken a seat for you. I thought that as we were in the same state-room we might just as well sit at the same table."

I did not like Mr. Kelada. I not only shared a cabin with him and ate three meals a day at the same table, but I could not walk round the deck without his joining me. It was impossible to snub him. It never occurred to him that he was not wanted. He was certain that you were as glad to see him as he was to see you. In your own house you might have kicked him downstairs and slammed the door in his face without the suspicion dawning on him that he was not a welcome visitor. He was a good mixer, and in three days knew everyone on board. He ran everything. He managed the sweeps, conducted the auctions, collected money for prizes at the sports, got up quoit and golf matches, organized the concert and arranged the fancy-dress ball. He was everywhere and always. He was certainly the best haled man in the ship.

We called him Mr. Know-All, even to his face. He took it as a compliment. But it was at mealtimes that he was most intolerable. For the better part of an hour then he had us at his mercy. He was hearty, jovial, loquacious and argumentative. He knew everything better than anybody else, and it was an affront to his overweening vanity that you should disagree with him. He would not drop a subject, however unimportant, till he had brought you round to his way of thinking. The possibility that he could be mistaken never occurred to him. He was the chap who knew.

We sat at the doctor's table. Mr. Kelada would certainly have had it all his own way, for the doctor was lazy and I was frigidly indifferent, except for a man called Ramsay who sat there also. He was as dogmatic as Mr. Kelada and resented bitterly the Levantine's cocksureness. The discussions they had were acrimonious and interminable. Ramsay was in the American Consular Service and was stationed at Kobe. He was a great heavy fellow from the Middle West, with loose fat under a tight skin, and he bulged out of this really-made clothes. He was on his way back to resume his post, having been on a flying visit to New York to retell his wife who had been spending a year at home.

Mrs. Ramsay was a very pretty little thing, with pleasant manners and a sense of humour. The Consular Service is

ill-paid, and she was dressed always very simply; but she knew how to wear her clothes. She achieved an effect of quiet distinction. I should not have paid any particular attention to her but that she possessed a quality that may be common enough in women, but nowadays is not obvious in their demeanour. You could not look at her without being struck by her modesty. It shone in her like a flower on a coat.

One evening at dinner the conversation by chance drifted to the subject of pearls. There had been in the papers a good deal of talk about the culture pearls which the cunning Japanese were making, and the doctor remarked that they must inevitably diminish the value of real ones. They were very good already; they would soon be perfect. Mr. Kelada, as was his habit, rushed the new topic. He told us all that was to be known about pearls. I do not believe Ramsay knew anything about them at all, but he could not resist the opportunity to have a fling at the Levantine, and in five minutes we were in the middle of a heated argument. I had seen Mr. Kelada vehement and voluble before, but never so voluble and vehement as now. At last something that Ramsay said stung him, for he thumped the table and shouted: "Well, I ought to know what I am talking about. I'm going to Japan just to look into this Japanese pearl business. I'm in the trade and there's not a man in it who won't tell you that what I say about pearls goes. I know

all the best pearls in the world, and what I don't know about pearls isn't worth knowing." Here was news for us, for Mr. Kelada, with all his loquacity, had never told anyone what his business was. We only knew vaguely that he was going to Japan on some commercial errand.

He looked round the table triumphantly. "They'll never be able to get a culture pearl that an expert like me can't tell with half an eye." He pointed to a chain that Mrs. Ramsay wore. "You take my word for it, Mrs. Ramsay, that chain you're wearing will never be worth a cent less than it is now." Mrs. Ramsay in her modest way flushed a little and slipped the chain inside her dress. Ramsay leaned forward. He gave us all a look and a smile flickered in his eyes. "That's a pretty chain of Mrs. Ramsay's, isn't it?" "I noticed it at once," answered Mr. Kelada. "Gee, I said to myself, those are pearls all right." "I didn't buy it myself, of course. I'd be interested to know how much you think it cost." "Oh, in the trade somewhere round fifteen thousand dollars. But if it was bought on Fifth Avenue shouldn't be surprised to hear that anything up to thirty thousand was paid for it." Ramsay smiled grimly. "You'll be surprised to hear that Mrs. Ramsay bought that siring at a department store the day before we left New York, for eighteen dollars." Mr. Kelada flushed. "Rot. It's not only real, but it's as fine a siring for its size as I've ever seen." "Will you bet on

it? I'll bet you a hundred dollars it's imitation." "Done." "Oh, Elmer, you can't bet on a certainty," said Mrs. Ramsay. She had a little smile on her lips and her tone was gently deprecating. "Can't I? If I get a chance of easy money like that I should be all sorts of a fool not to take it." "But how can it be proved?" she continued. "It's only my word against Mr. Kelada's." "Let me look at the chain, and if it's imitation I'll tell you quickly enough. I can afford to lose a hundred dollars," said Mr. Kelada. "Take it off, dear. Let the gentleman look at it as much as he wants." Mrs. Ramsay hesitated a moment. She put her hands to the clasp. "I can't undo it," she said. "Mr. Kelada will just have to take my word for it." I had a sudden suspicion that something unfortunate was about to occur, but I could think of nothing to say. Ramsay jumped up. "I'll undo it." He handed the chain to Mr. Kelada. The Levantine took a magnifying glass from his pocket and closely examined it. A smile of triumph spread over his smooth and swarthy face. He handed back the chain. He was about to speak.

Suddenly he caught sight of Mrs. Ramsay's face. It was so white that she looked as though she were about to faint. She was staring at him with wide and terrified eyes. They held a desperate appeal; it was so clear that I wondered why her husband did not see it. Mr. Kelada stopped with his mouth open. He flushed deeply. You could almost see the effort he

was making over himself. "I was mistaken," he said. "It's a very good imitation, but of course as soon as I looked through my glass I saw that it wasn't real. I think eighteen dollars is just about as much as the damned thing's worth." He took out his pocket book and from it a hundred-dollar bill. He handed it to Ramsay without a word.

"Perhaps that'll teach you not to be so cocksure another time, my young friend," said Ramsay as he took the note. I noticed that Mr. Kelada's hands were trembling. The story spread over the ship as stories do, and he had to put up with a good deal of chaff that evening. It was a fine joke that Mr. Know-All had been caught out. But Mrs. Ramsay retired to her state-room with a headache.

Next morning I got up and began to shave. Mr. Kelada lay on his bed smoking a cigarette. Suddenly there was a small scraping sound and I saw a letter pushed under the door. I opened the door and looked out. There was nobody there. I picked up the letter and saw that it was addressed to Max Kelada. The name was written in block letters. I handed it to him. "Who's this from?" He opened it. "Oh!" He took out of the envelope, not a letter, but a hundred-dollar bill. He looked at me and again he reddened. He tore the envelope into little bits and gave them to me. "Do you mind just throwing them out of the porthole?" I did as he asked, and then I looked at him with

a smile. "No one likes being made to look a perfect damned fool," he said. "Were the pearls real?" "If I had a pretty little wife I shouldn't let her spend a year in New York while I stayed at Kobe," said he. At that moment I did not entirely dislike Mr. Kelada. He reached out for his pocket book and carefully put in it the hundred-dollar note.

Words to the text:

- *berth*
- *porthole*
- *to exclude*
- *dismay*
- *flashing teeth*
- *exuberant*
- *acrimonious interminable*
- *demeanour*
- *to diminish*
- *voluble*
- *vehement*
- *to deprecate*

Questions to the text:

1. Why did the author's heart sink when he heard the name of his companion?

2. What made the author think that Mr. Kelada was not English?

3. Why was Mr. Kelada called Mr. Know-All in the ship?

4. When did the passengers learn about Mr. Kelada's business?

5. Why was Mr. Ramsay sure that the chain was imitation?

6. What was about to occur when the chain was closely examined?

7. Was it only once when Mr. Kelada was mistaken?

Questions for discussion:

1. What would happen if Mr. Kelada said the truth?

2. Why did Mr. Kelada sacrifice his reputation and one hundred dollars?

3. Do you appreciate Mr. Kelada's action?

Tasks for independent work:

• Find Russian equivalent to the English proverb "All truths are not to be told".

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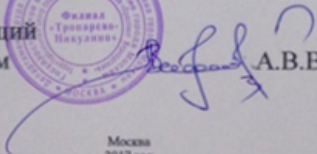
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за многолетний совместный труд,
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Москва
2017 год

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Ответственный редактор *А. Иванова*
Верстальщик *Е. Новопольцева*

Издательство «Директ-Медиа»
117342, Москва, ул. Обручева, 34/63, стр. 1
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