READING FOR DISCUSSION

(Short Stories for Advanced Learners of English)

ԵՐԵՎԱՆԻ Վ.ԲՐՅՈՒՍՈՎԻ ԱՆՎԱՆ ՊԵՏԱԿԱՆ
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Ընթերցենք և քննարկենք:
(Ձեռնարկ բարձր կուրսերի ուսանողների համար)

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FOREWORD:

Any work of literature should be entertaining to read. What gives a piece of literature permanent value is its ability not only to entertain but also to say something that makes us pause—perhaps it makes us wonder about our own lives, our society, etc. Studying a work of literature should not detract you from enjoying the work but should further your understanding and thus enhance that enjoyment. To understand any work takes more than one reading. You only make an acquaintance with a work during a first reading, but hopefully the work grabs your interest and makes you want to read on. A second reading allows you to look at a work in a new way, simply because you already know the outcome, and you are now able to see the author's craft in molding the work to its conclusion.

ԱՌԱՋԱԲԱՆ

Գեղարվեստական գրականության լավագույն նմուշները անցնում են ժամանակի փորձությունը, եթե դրանք արծարծում են մարդկությանը մտահոգող համընդհանուր թեմաներ՝ ստիպելով մարդուն մտորել իր սեփական կյանքի և հասարակության խնդիրների շուրջ և որոշակի լուծումներ որոնել: Գրական արժեք ներկայացնող ստեղծագործությունների ներմուծումը ուսուցման գործընթացում անշուշտ կարող է նպաստել ուսանողների քննադատական մտածողության զարգացմանը:

Տվյալ ձեռնարկը, որը նախատեսված է օտար լեզուների բաժնի բարձր կուրսերի /3-րդ և 4-րդ/ ուսանողների համար, նպատակ ունի զարգացնել ուսանողների քննադատական մտածողությունը՝ անգլո-ամերիկյան գրականությունից ընտրված պատմվածքների վերլուծության և քննարկման միջոցով:

Ձեռնարկում ընդգրկված են 19-րդ և 20-րդ դարերի անգլո-ամերիկյան հայտնի գրողների 16 ստեղծագործություններ, որոնցից տասներկուսը նախատեսված են մանրամասն վերլուծության, իսկ չորսը՝ թռուցիկ ընթերցանության համար:

Ձեռնարկի սկզբում տրվում են պատմվածքների բովանդակության, թեմայի, կերպարների և մի շարք ոճական հնարների մասին որոշակի տեղեկություններ, որոնք դյուրին կդարձնեն տեքսի ըմբռնումը:

Ներկայացված յուրաքանչյուր պատմվածքի հաջորդում է բառերի և արտահայտությունների շարք՝ քննարկման ընթացքում պարտադիր օգտագործման համար: Մանրամասն մշակված հարցաշարը նախ և առաջ նպատակ ունի զարգացնել տեքստի վերարտադրման և ըմբռնման, ինչպես նաև պատմվածքի կառուցվածքային առանձնահատկությունների, հեղինակի կողմից կիրառված տարբեր հնարների վերհանման կարողությունները: Այնուհետև, առաջադրվում են պատմվածքում առաջ քաշված թեմաների շուրջ հարցեր, որոնք մեծապես կնպաստեն ուսանողների քննադատական մտքի և ազատ խոսքի զարգացմանը:

Պատմվածքներից քաղված են հետաքրքրություն ներ-

կայացնող կամ վիճարկելի դատողություններ, որոնց շուրջ կարելի է քննարկում կազմակերպել:

Բացի բանավոր խոսքի հմտությունից, ձեռնարկը նախատեսում է զարգացնել նաև մտքերը գրավոր կերպով արտահայտելու հմտությունը: Յուրաքանչյուր պատմվածքի քննարկումից հետո առաջադրվում են թեմաներ՝ շարադրության կամ ակնարկի /essay/ ձևով զարգացնելու համար:

Հաշվի առնելով այն փաստը, որ գեղարվեստական գրականության մեջ հաճախ հանդիպում են հոմանիշներ, որոնց օգտագործումը կարող է դժվարություն ներկայացնել, կազմվել են հատուկ վարժություններ՝ ուղղված դրանց իմաստային նրբերանգների տարբերակմանը և ճիշտ օգտագործմանը: Նշված վարժությունները ներկայացված են ձեռնարկի հավելյալ բաժնում՝ Activate Your Vocabulary խորագրի ներքո, և կարող են կիրառվել դասախոսի հայեցողությամբ:

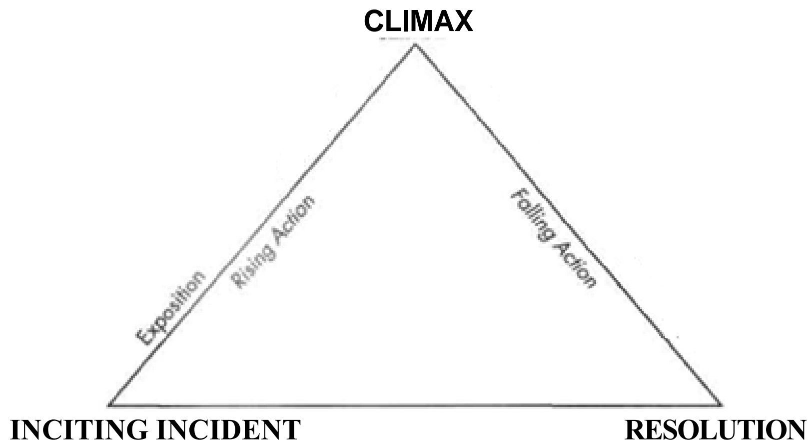
Before You Start

A **narrative** is any work that tells a story, such as a short story, a novel, a drama, or a narrative poem. To understand a narrative work, a reader must first understand its plot.

Plot

Plot is defined as an author's careful arrangement of incidents in a narrative to achieve a desired effect. These incidents are related by cause and effect, or causality and form a sequence of events with a beginning, middle and end. In short, plot is what happens and how it happens in a narrative.

Plot structure
A standard plot may be represented in diagram form as follows:



Thus, parts of a plot are:

Exposition–refers to the explanatory information a reader needs to understand the situation in a story. Exposition establishes the setting, the major characters and perhaps some minor ones, and any necessary background information about what happened before the

story began.

Inciting incident–is the event that changes the situation established in the exposition and sets the conflict in motion, i.e. gives rise to the conflict.

Rising action–comprises the various episodes that develop, complicate or intensify the conflict.

Climax–is the moment of highest interest and the turning point in a story.

Falling action–comprises the events following the climax of a story.

Resolution or denouement–is the final resolving or the conclusion of the plot. Denouement is made up of the events that take place after the resolution. In this section the writer answers any questions about the plot that remain in the reader's mind.

Flashback–is a section of a story that interrupts the normal sequence of events to provide important information that happened in the past.

Foreshadowing–gives hints or clues that suggest the reader what is to come.

Suspense–is the feeling of anxious anticipation, expectation or uncertainty that creates tension and maintains the reader's interest. A writer achieves it by raising questions in the reader's mind about what will happen next.

Surprise ending–is a conclusion to a story that the reader does not expect.

Setting

The setting of a literary work is the time and the place in which the action occurs. Setting is revealed by details that describe furniture, scenery, customs, transportation, clothing, dialects, weather, time of

day and time of year. Writers use images of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell to create vivid settings.

Settings may serve several purposes:

To create a mood: A description of an open wagon traveling across a huge expanse of windy prairie creates a lonely mood. Details about a sunny, fragrant field of flowers might create a happy, carefree mood.

To show a different way of life: For example, through details about customs, furniture, and transportation, a reader can get a sense of what life was like in a different time in history or of how people live in a foreign country.

To symbolize an idea: For example, the ocean might symbolize the immense power of nature as compared to the puny strength of one person, or a springtime setting might symbolize new life and growth.

To be the source of the conflict, or struggle: A character fighting a snowstorm, the heat of a desert, or a high mountain is in conflict with an element of the setting.

Conflict

Traditionally, plots grow out of a conflict–an internal or an external struggle between the main character and an opposing force.

External conflict occurs between the central character and another character or society or natural forces, including fate.

Internal conflict occurs when the main character is in conflict with himself or herself.

Types of Character

The people and animals who take part in the action of a literary work are called characters. Some characters play very important roles in the plot. These are the major characters. Normally a narrative

focuses on the actions of a single **major** character, the **protagonist**. The protagonist is generally the most fully developed character, who arouses the reader's concern and sympathy–even if he/she does not understand or like him or her. The opposing force or character is the **antagonist**. Other characters play lesser roles and are known as **minor** characters.

Another way of classifying characters is to label them as **active** (or dynamic) or **static**. An active character is one who changes because of what happens in the plot. Static character is the same at the end of the story as at the beginning.
A writer reveals what a character is like and how the character changes through the process of characterization. There are two primary methods of characterization: **direct** and **indirect**. In direct characterization, the writer simply tells the reader what the character looks like or what kind of person he or she is.
In indirect characterization, the writer shows what a character is like by telling what the character says or does, and by telling what other characters say about and do in response to the character. Some of these methods of characterization are very subtle. Tiny details that the writer provides about a character may contain important clues to the character's personality.

Point of View

The writer of a narrative creates a voice to tell the story. This voice is the narrator. The type of narrator a story has determines the story's point of view.
Point of view is the perspective from which a narrative is told. There are two main points of view: first person (I) and third person (he, she, they).
The "I" narrator is not the author. Instead, the author creates a persona or mask through which he or she tells the story. While there may be some or even many autobiographical details in a story, it is never safe to assume this. The first-person narrator may be a main character in the story or a minor one. Alternatively the "I" narrator may be merely an observer and not a character in the story at all.
It should be noted that a story told from the first person point of

view is almost always limited. The narrator knows only what is going on inside his or her own mind. A first-person limited narrator can report the words and actions of the other characters but not their thoughts or feelings.
A story told from the third-person point of view can also be limited. A third-person limited narrator can tell the reader what one of the characters is thinking and feeling but only what the other characters say or do.
A third-person narrator who knows what every character is thinking is called **omniscient** or “**all-knowing**”. A story told from this point of view will include details not only about the words and actions of all its characters but also about their thoughts and feelings.

Tone and Mood

Tone in writing is the author’s attitude toward the characters, the topic, or the readers, as expressed by the narrator.
Tone in writing can be, among other things, serious, introspective, satirical, sad, ironic, playful, condescending, formal, or informal. Tone is achieved through descriptive details of setting and character, through dialogue, and through a narrator’s direct comment. An author’s tone is not necessarily the same throughout a work, although in a short story, the same tone is usually maintained throughout.
The terms tone and mood are sometimes confused. While tone conveys the author’s attitude, **mood** refers to the atmosphere in a story. Atmosphere may be mysterious, horror-filled, or serene, for example. The mood of a story is not necessarily the same throughout. The climax may bring about a change from despair to triumph, or from anxiety to relief, or from any mood to another.

Theme

The central idea or insight into life provided by a literary work is called its theme. The theme usually reveals an important point about human beings or about life. A statement of theme is a sentence that

tells what message a writer wants to convey through a work.
In some cases a writer simply states the theme of a work. For example, in a short story, a character may make a statement that expresses the theme. A theme that is stated directly is said to be **explicit**.
In other cases, there is no statement of theme included in the work itself. The reader must infer the theme from clues in the work, such as what happens to the characters and how the conflicts are resolved. A theme that is not stated directly is **implicit**, or implied.

It is not easy to discover an implicit theme in a literary work. The following list contains questions about several elements of a work that will help you to identify the theme.

1. **Title:** What does the title mean? Does it contain a clue to the theme of the work?
2. **Characters**: What is each of the characters like? What happens to each of the characters as a result of his or her personality or actions? What does each character learn from his or her experiences? What can the reader learn from the experiences of the characters?
3. **Conflict**: How is the central conflict in the work resolved? Does the resolution contain a message about a particular moral or ethical issue?

Frank O’Connor (1903- 1966)

Born Michael Francis O’Donovan in Cork, Ireland, Frank O’Connor was the only child of an Irish family too poor to provide him with much formal education. By the age of twelve, O’Connor had written a collection of poems, biographies and essays about history. O’Connor observed later, “I was intended by God to be a painter, but I was very poor and pencil and paper were the cheapest.”

At sixteen, O’Connor joined the Irish Republic Army and fought in the civil war from 1919 to 1921. Although a 1921 treaty ended English occupation, O’Connor was imprisoned for continuing the fight. When his first collection of short stories “Guests of the Nation” (1931) was published, O’ Connor–concerned that his political past would be held against him-adopted his beloved mother’s maiden name as his pen name.

Best known today for his short stories that capture both the voice and soul of Ireland, O’Connor also wrote poetry, biography, literary criticism, two autobiographies, travel books, various translations of Irish poetry and tales, and several books of history. For his varied and extensive output, O’Connor is often considered one of Ireland’s premier writers.

First Confession

All the trouble began when my grandfather died and my grand-mother-my father's mother-came to live with us. Relations in the one house are a strain at the best of times, but, to make matters worse, my grandmother was a real old countrywoman and quite unsuited to the life in town. She had a fat, wrinkled old face, and, to Mother's great indignation, went round the house in bare feet-the boots had her **crippled**, she said. For dinner she had a jug

of porter[1] and a pot of potatoes with–sometimes-a bit of salt fish, and she poured out the potatoes on the table and ate them slowly, **with great relish**, using her fingers by way of a fork.

Now, girls are supposed to be **fastidious**, but I was the one who suffered most from this. Nora, my sister, just sucked up to the old woman for the penny she got every Friday out of the old-age pension, a thing I could not do. I was too honest, that was my trouble; and when I was playing with Bill Connell, the sergeant-major's son, and saw my grandmother steering up the path with the jug of porter sticking out from beneath her shawl, I was mortified. I made excuses not to let him come into the house, because I could never be sure what she would be up to when we went in.

When Mother was at work and my grandmother made the dinner I wouldn't touch it. Nora once tried to make me, but I hid under the table from her and took the bread-knife with me for protection. Nora let on to be very indignant (she wasn't, of course, but she knew Mother **saw through her**, so she **sided with** Gran) and came after me. I **lashed out** at her with the bread-knife, and after that she left me alone. I stayed there till Mother came in from work and made my dinner, but when Father came in later, Nora said in a shocked voice: "Oh, Dadda, do you know what Jackie did at dinnertime?" Then, of course, it all came out; Father gave me a flaking[2]; Mother interfered, and for days after that he didn't speak to me and Mother barely spoke to Nora. And all because of that old woman! God knows, I was **heart-scalded**[3].

Then, **to crown my misfortunes**, I had to make my first confession[4] and communion[5]. It was an old woman called Ryan who prepared us for these. She was about the one age with Gran; she was

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[1] Porter: short for *porter's ale*; a strong, dark-brown beer

[2] Flaking: beating.

[3] Heart-scalded: disgusted.

[4] Confession - (especially in the Roman Catholic Church) a private statement to a priest about the bad things that you have done.

[5] Communion - (also Communion, Holy Communion) - a ceremony in the Christian Church during which people eat bread and drink wine in memory of the last meal that Christ had with his disciples. **First Communion—**a ceremony when someone receives Holy Communion for the first time.

well-to-do, lived in a big house on Montenotte, wore a black cloak and bonnet, and came every day to school at three o'clock when we should have been going home, and talked to us of hell. She may have mentioned the other place as well, but that could only have been by accident, for hell had the first place in her heart.

She lit a candle, took out a new half-crown[1], and offered it to the first boy who would hold one finger, only one finger!–in the flame for five minutes by the school clock. Being always very ambitious I was tempted to volunteer, but I thought it might look greedy. Then she asked were we afraid of holding one finger-only one finger!–in a little candle flame for five minutes and not afraid of burning all over in roasting hot furnaces for all eternity. “All eternity! Just think of that! A whole lifetime goes by and it's nothing, not even a drop in the ocean of your sufferings.” The woman was really interesting about hell, but my attention was all fixed on the half-crown. At the end of the lesson she put it back in her purse. It was a great disappointment; a religious woman like that, you wouldn't think she'd bother about a thing like a half-crown.

Another day she said she knew a priest who woke one night to find a fellow he didn't recognize leaning over the end of his bed. The priest was a bit frightened, naturally enough but he asked the fellow what he wanted, and the fellow said in a deep, **husky** voice that he wanted to go to confession. The priest said it was an awkward time and wouldn't it do in the morning, but the fellow said that last time he went to confession, there was one sin he kept back, being ashamed to mention it, and now it was always on his mind. Then the priest knew it was a bad case, because the fellow was after making a bad confession and committing a mortal sin. He got up to dress, and just then the cock crew in the yard outside, and lo and behold[2]!– when the priest looked round there was no sign of the fellow, only a smell of burning timber, and when the priest looked at his bed didn't he see the print of two hands burned in it? That was because the fellow had made a bad confession. This story made a shocking impression on me.

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[1] Half-crown: a coin worth two shillings and sixpence; no longer used.

[2] Lo and behold: used for calling attention to a surprising or an annoying thing.

But the worst of all was when she showed us how to examine our conscience. Did we take the name of the Lord, our God, in vain? Did we honour our father and our mother? (I asked her did this include grandmothers and she said it did.) Did we love our neighbours as ourselves? Did we **covet** our neighbour's goods? (I thought of the way I felt about the penny that Nora got every Friday.) I decided that, between one thing and another, I must have broken the whole ten commandments, all on account of that old woman, and so far as I could see, so long as she remained in the house, I had no hope of ever doing anything else.

I was scared to death of confession. The day the whole class went, I let on to have a toothache, hoping my absence wouldn't be noticed, but at three o'clock, just as I was feeling safe, along comes a chap with a message from Mrs. Ryan that I was to go to confession myself on Saturday and be at the chapel for communion with the rest. To make it worse, Mother couldn't come with me and sent Nora instead.

Now, that girl had ways of tormenting me that Mother never knew of. She held my hand as we went down the hill, smiling sadly and saying how sorry she was for me, as if she were bringing me to the hospital for an operation.

"Oh, God help us!" she moaned. "Isn't it a terrible pity you weren't a good boy? Oh, Jackie, my heart bleeds for you! How will you ever think of all your sins? Don't forget you have to tell him about the time you kicked Gran on the shin."

"Lemme go!" I said, trying to drag myself free of her. "I don't want to go to confession at all."

"But sure, you'll have to go to confession, Jackie," she replied in the same regretful tone. "Sure, if you didn't, the parish priest would be up to the house, looking for you. 'Tisn't, God knows that I'm not sorry for you. Do you remember the time you tried to kill me with the bread-knife under the table? And the language you used to me? I don't know what he'll do with you at all, Jackie. He might have to send you up to the bishop."

I remember thinking bitterly that she didn't know the half of what I had to tell–if I told it. I knew I couldn't tell it, and understood perfectly why the fellow in Mrs. Ryan's story made a bad confession; it seemed to me a great shame that people wouldn't stop criticising him.

I remember that steep hill down to the church, and the sunlit hillsides beyond the valley of the river, which I saw in the gaps between the houses like Adam's last glimpse of Paradise.

Then, when she had manoeuvred me down the long flight of steps to the chapel yard, Nora suddenly changed her tone. She became the raging malicious devil she really was.

“There you are,” she said with a yelp of triumph, hurling me through the church door. “And I hope he'll give you the penitential psalms, you dirty little caffler[1].”

I knew then I was lost, given up to eternal justice. The door with the coloured-glass panels swung shut behind me, the sunlight went out and gave place to deep shadow, and the wind whistled outside so that the silence within seemed to crackle like ice under my feet. Nora sat in front of me by the confession box. There were a couple of old women ahead of her, and then a miserable-looking poor devil came and **wedged** me **in** at the other side, so that I couldn't escape even if I had the courage. He joined his hands and rolled his eyes in the direction of the roof, muttering aspirations in an anguished tone, and I wondered had he a grandmother too. Only a grandmother could account for a fellow behaving in that heartbroken way, but he was better off than I, for he at least could go and confess his sins; while I would make a bad confession and then die in the night and be continually coming back and burning people's furniture.

Nora's turn came, and I heard the sound of something slamming, and then her voice **as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth**, and then another slam, and out she came. God, the **hypocrisy** of women! Her eyes were lowered, her head was bowed, and her hands were joined very low down on her stomach, and she walked up the aisle to the side altar looking like a saint. You never saw such an exhibition of devotion; and I remembered the devilish **malice** with which she had tormented me all the way from our door, and wondered were all religious people like that, really. It was my turn now. With the fear of damnation in my soul I went in, and the confessional door closed of itself behind me.

It was pitch-dark and I couldn't see priest or anything else. Then I really began to be frightened. In the darkness it was a matter between

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[1] Caffler: mocker, one who jeers. A variant of the verb *to cavil*.

God and me, and He **had all the odds**. He knew what my intentions were before I even started; I had no chance. All I had ever been told about confession got mixed up in my mind, and I knelt to one wall and said: "Bless me, father, for I have sinned; this is my first confession." I waited for a few minutes, but nothing happened, so I tried it on the other wall. Nothing happened there either. He had me **spotted** all right.

It must have been then that I noticed the shelf at about one height with my head. It was really a place for grown-up people to rest their elbows, but in my distracted state I thought it was probably the place you were supposed to kneel. Of course, it was on the high side and not very deep, but I was always good at climbing and managed to get up all right. Staying up was the trouble. There was room only for my knees, and nothing you could get a grip on but a sort of wooden moulding a bit above it. I held on to the moulding and repeated the words a little louder, and this time something happened all right. A slide was slammed back; a little light entered the box, and a man's voice said "Who's there?"

"Tis me, father," I said for fear he mightn't see me and go away again. I couldn't see him at all. The place the voice came from was under the moulding, about level with my knees, so I took a good grip of the moulding and swung myself down till I saw the astonished face of a young priest looking up at me. He had to put his head on one side to see me, and I had to put mine on one side to see him, so we were more or less talking to one another upside-down. It struck me as a queer way of hearing confessions, but I didn't feel it my place to criticise.

"Bless me, father, for I have sinned; this is my first confession," I **rattled off** all in one breath, and swung myself down the least shade more to make it easier for him.

"What are you doing up there?" he shouted in an angry voice, and the strain the politeness was putting on my hold of the moulding, and the shock of being addressed in such an uncivil tone, were too much for me. I lost my grip, **tumbled**, and hit the door an unmerciful wallop before I found myself flat on my back in the middle of the aisle. The people who had been waiting stood up with their mouths open. The priest opened the door of the middle box and came out, pushing his biretta[1] back from

[1]Biretta: a stiff, square ca] with three or four upright projecting ridges.

his forehead; he looked something terrible. Then Nora came **scampering** down the aisle.

"Oh, you dirty little caffler!" she said. "I might have known you'd do it. I might have known you'd disgrace me. I can't leave you out of my sight for one minute."

Before I could even get to my feet to defend myself she bent down and gave me a clip across the ear. This reminded me that I was so stunned I had even forgotten to cry, so that people might think I wasn't hurt at all, when in fact I was probably **maimed** for life. I gave a roar out of me.

"What's all this about?" the priest hissed, getting angrier than ever and pushing Nora off me. "How dare you hit the child like that, you little vixen?"

"But I can't **do my penance** with him, father," Nora cried, **cocking an** outraged **eye** up at him.

"Well, go and do it, or I'll give you some more to do," he said, giving me a hand up. "Was it coming to confession you were, my poor man?" he asked me.

"'Twas, father," said I with a sob.

"Oh," he said respectfully, "a big **hefty** fellow like you must have terrible sins. Is this your first?"

"'Tis, father," said I.

"Worse and worse," he said gloomily. "The crimes of a lifetime. I don't know will I get rid of you at all today. You'd better wait now till I'm finished with these old ones. You can see by the looks of them they haven't much to tell."

"I will, father," I said with something approaching joy.

The relief of it was really enormous. Nora stuck out her tongue at me from behind his back, but I couldn't even be bothered **retorting**. I knew from the very moment that man opened his mouth that he was intelligent above the ordinary. When I had time to think, I saw how right I was. It only stood to reason that a fellow confessing after seven years would have more to tell than people that went every week. The crimes of a lifetime, exactly as he said. It was only what he expected, and the rest was the cackle of old women and girls with their talk of hell, the bishop, and the penitential psalms. That was all they knew. I started to make my examination of conscience, and barring the one bad business of my grandmother, it didn't seem so bad.

The next time, the priest steered me into the confession box himself and left the shutter back, the way I could see him get in and sit down at the further side of the grille from me.

"Well, now," he said, "what do they call you?"

"Jackie, father," said I.

"And what's a-trouble to you, Jackie?"

"Father," I said, feeling I might as well get it over while I had him in good humour, "I had it all arranged to kill my grandmother."

He seemed a bit shaken by that, all right, because he said nothing for quite a while.

"My goodness," he said at last, "That'd be a shocking thing to do. What put that into your head?"

"Father," I said, feeling very sorry for myself, "she's an awful woman.

"Is she?" he asked. "What way is she awful?"

"She takes porter, father," I said, knowing well from the way Mother talked of it that this was a mortal sin, and hoping it would make the priest take a more favourable view of my case.

"Oh, my!" he said, and I could see he was impressed.

"And snuff, father," said I.

"That's a bad case, sure enough, Jackie," he said.

"And she goes round in her bare feet, father," I went on in a rush of self-pity, "and she knows I don't like her, and she gives pennies to Nora and none to me, and my da sides with her and flakes me, and one night I was so heart-scalded I made up my mind I'd have to kill her."

"And what would you do with the body?" he asked with great interest.

"I was thinking I could chop that up and carry it away in a barrow I have," I said.

"Begor[1], Jackie," he said, "do you know you're a terrible child?"

"I know, father," I said, for I was just thinking the same thing myself. "I tried to kill Nora too with a bread-knife under the table, only I missed her."

"Is that the little girl that was beating you just now?" he asked.

"'Tis, father."

"Someone will go for her with a bread-knife one day, and he won't miss her," he said rather **cryptically**. "You must have great courage. Between ourselves, there's a lot of people I'd like to do the same to, but I'd never have the nerve. Hanging is an awful death."

"Is it, father?" I asked with the deepest interest-I was always very **keen on** hanging. "Did you ever see a fellow hanged?"

"Dozens of them," he said solemnly. "And they all died roaring."

"Jay!" I said.

"Oh, a horrible death!" he said with great satisfaction. "Lots of the fellows I saw killed their grandmothers too, but they all said 'twas never worth it."

He had me there for a full ten minutes talking, and then walked out the chapel yard with me. I was genuinely sorry to part with him, because he was the most entertaining character I'd ever met in the religious line. Outside, after the shadow of the church, the sunlight was like the roaring of waves on a beach; it **dazzled** me; and when the frozen silence melted and I heard the screech of trams on the road, my heart soared. I knew now I wouldn't die in the night and come back, leaving marks on my mother's furniture. It would be a great worry to her, and the poor soul had enough.

Nora was sitting on the railing, waiting for me, and she put on a very sour puss when she saw the priest with me. She was mad jealous because a priest had never come out of the church with her.

"Well," she asked coldly, after he left me, "what did he give you?"

"Three ***Hail Marys***[2]," I said.

"Three Hail Marys," she repeated incredulously. "You mustn't

[1] Begor: Irish form of the English exclamation *begad*, or "By God." Also, *begorra* or *begorrah*.

[2] **Hail Mary** - a Roman Catholic prayer to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

have told him anything."

"I told him everything," I said confidently.

"About Gran and all?"

"About Gran and all."

(All she wanted was to be able to go home and say I'd made a bad confession.)

"Did you tell him you went for me with the bread-knife?" she asked with a frown.

"I did to be sure."

"And he only gave you three Hail Marys?"

"That's all."

She slowly got down from the railing with a baffled air. Clearly, this was beyond her. As we mounted the steps back to the main road, she looked at me suspiciously.

"What are you sucking?" she asked.

"Bullseyes[1]."

"Was it the priest gave them to you?

"'Twas."

"Lord God," she wailed bitterly, "some people have all the luck! 'Tis no advantage to anybody trying to be good. I might just as well be a sinner like you."

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. When did all the trouble in Jackie's family begin?
2. What relations did Jackie have with each of his parents?
3. How do you account for Nora's treatment of her brother? What lies behind a sibling conflict?

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[1] Bullseyes: round, hard candies.

4. Speak on the role of the two old women in the events that constitute the rising action.
5. What does Jackie's observation "…and talked to us of hell. She may have mentioned the other place as well, but that could only have been an accident, for hell had the first place in her heart."/p. 15/ reveal about Mrs. Ryan?
6. As Nora and Jackie walked to the chapel, Jackie compared the "sunlit hillsides beyond the valley of the river" to "Adam's last glimpse of Paradise." Why is the comparison particularly appropriate?
7. Why was Jackie puzzled at seeing Nora come out of the confession box? Comment on his contemplations.
8. Describe Jackie's a) first, b) second experience in the confession box.
9. What is the role of the priest in the resolution of the conflict?
10. Follow the change in Nora's tone and her attitude towards her brother throughout the story.
11. At the end of the story Nora came to the following conclusion: "Lord God, some people have all the luck! "Tis no advantage to anybody trying to be good**.** I might just as well be a sinner like you." /p.22 /.How does this statement characterize Nora?
12. What seems to be the most likely moment of climax in the story and why?
13. Did the author succeed in making the story suspenseful?
14. The story is written from the point of view of a seven-year-old child. What effect is achieved by it? Where does the child's voice become most evident, making the story humorous?
15. What is the main conflict in the story?

C: Comment on:

Relations in the one house are a strain at the best of times…/p.13 /.

D: Suggestions for Writing

1. Is confession necessary? What makes it good or bad?
2. Should children be given religious instruction in the family or at school?

Dorothy Parker (1893-1967)

Dorothy Parker (1893-1967), an American poet and short-story writer was born in West End (now part of Long Branch), N.J., and spent most of her life in New York City. Parker began her literary career in 1916 as a writer for the women's magazine "Vogue". In 1925, she became one of the New Yorker magazine's first regular contributors. During the 1920s Parker belonged to the Algonquin Round Table, a group of famous writers who met regularly at the Algonquin hotel in New York City. In 1927 her book of light verse, "Enough Rope", was a bestseller. In 1929 she won an O. Henry prize for "Big Blonde."

Dorothy Parker won fame for her witty conversation and literary criticism. Most of Parker's verse and stories express a humorous but cynical disappointment with life. She often wrote in a biting, ironic style about the loss of love and idealism. Her precise use of language gives her writing a crisp, conversational tone.

The Standard of Living

Annabel and Midge came out of the tea room with the arrogant slow **gait** of the leisured, for their Saturday afternoon stretched ahead of them. They had lunched, as was their **wont**, on sugar, starches, oils, and butter-fats. Usually they ate sandwiches of spongy new white bread greased with butter and mayonnaise; they ate thick wedges of cake lying wet beneath ice cream and whipped

cream and melted chocolate **gritty** with nuts. As alternates, they ate patties, sweating beads of inferior oil, containing bits of bland meat bogged in pale, stiffening sauce; they ate pastries, limber under rigid icing, filled with an indeterminate yellow sweet stuff, not still solid, not yet liquid, like salve that has been left in the sun. They chose no other sort of food, nor did they consider it. And their skin was like the petals of wood anemones[1], and their bellies were as flat and their **flanks** as lean as those of young Indian braves.

Annabel and Midge had been best friends almost from the day that Midge had found a job as stenographer with the firm that employed Annabel. By now, Annabel, two years longer in the stenographic department, had worked up to the wages of eighteen dollars and fifty cents a week; Midge was still at sixteen dollars. Each girl lived at home with her family and paid half her salary to its support.

The girls sat side by side at their desks, they lunched together every noon; together they set out for home at the end of the day's work. Many of their evenings and most of their Sundays were passed in each other's company. Often they were joined by two young men, but there was no steadiness to any such quartet; the two young men would give place, unlamented, to two other young men, and **lament** would have been inappropriate, really, since the newcomers were scarcely distinguishable from their **predecessors**. Invariably the girls spent the fine idle hours of their hot-weather Saturday afternoons together. Constant use had not worn ragged the fabric of their friendship.

They looked alike, though the resemblance did not lie in their features. It was in the shape of their bodies, their movements, their style, and their **adornments**. Annabel and Midge did, and completely, all that young office workers are **besought** not to do. They painted their lips and their nails, they darkened their lashes and lightened their hair, and scent seemed to shimmer from them. They wore thin, bright dresses, tight over their breasts and high on their legs, and tilted slippers, fancifully strapped. They looked

[1] Anemones: delicate plants in the buttercup family with slender stems and cup-shaped flowers.

conspicuous and cheap and charming.

Now, as they walked across to Fifth Avenue with their skirts **swirled** by the hot wind, they received **audible** admiration. Young men grouped lethargically about newsstands awarded them murmurs, exclamations, even—the ultimate **tribute**—whistles. Annabel and Midge passed without the **condescension** of hurrying their pace; they held their heads higher and set their feet with exquisite precision, as if they stepped over the necks of peasants.

Always the girls went to walk on Fifth Avenue on their free afternoons, for it was the ideal ground for their favorite game. The game could be played anywhere, and indeed, was, but the great shop windows stimulated the two players to their best form.

Annabel had invented the game; or rather she had **evolved** it from an old one. Basically, it was no more than the ancient sport of what-would-you-do-if-you-had-a-million-dollars? But Annabel had drawn a new set of rules for it, had narrowed it, pointed it, made it stricter. Like all games, it was the more absorbing for being more difficult.

Annabel's version went like this: You must suppose that somebody dies and leaves you a million dollars, cool. But there is a condition to the **bequest**. It is stated in the will that you must spend every nickel of the money on yourself.

There lay the **hazard** of the game. If, when playing it, you forgot and listed among your expenditures the rental of a new apartment for your family, for example, you lost your turn to the other player. It was astonishing how many—and some of them among the experts, too—would **forfeit** all their innings by such slips.

It was essential, of course, that it be played in passionate seriousness. Each purchase must be carefully considered and, if necessary, supported by argument. There was no **zest** to playing it wildly. Once Annabel had introduced the game to Sylvia, another girl who worked in the office. She explained the rules to Sylvia and then offered her the gambit[1]. “What would be the first thing you'd do?” Sylvia had not shown the **decency** of even a second of hesitation. “Well,” she said, “the first thing I'd do, I'd go out and hire

[1] Gambit: the opening move in a game.

somebody to shoot Mrs. Gary Cooper[1], and then . . ." So it is to be seen that she was no fun.

But Annabel and Midge were surely born to be comrades, for Midge played the game like a master from the moment she learned it. It was she who added the touches that made the whole thing cozier. According to Midge's innovations, the eccentric who died and left you the money was not anybody you loved, or, for the matter of that, anybody you even knew. It was somebody who had seen you somewhere and had thought, "That girl ought to have lots of nice things. I'm going to leave her a million dollars when I die." And the death was to be neither untimely nor painful. Your **benefactor**, full of years and comfortably ready to depart, was to slip softly away during sleep and go right to heaven. These embroideries permitted Annabel and Midge to play their game in the luxury of peaceful consciences.

Midge played with a seriousness that was not only proper but extreme. The single **strain** on the girls' friendship had followed an announcement once made by Annabel that the first thing she would buy with her million dollars would be a silver-fox coat. It was as if she had struck Midge across the mouth. When Midge recovered her breath, she cried that she couldn't imagine how Annabel could do such a thing—silver-fox coats were so common! Annabel defended her taste with the retort that they were not common, either. Midge then said that they were so. She added that everybody had a silver-fox coat. She went on, with perhaps a slight toss of head, to declare that she herself wouldn't be caught dead in silver fox.

For the next few days, though the girls saw each other as constantly, their conversation was careful and infrequent, and they did not once play their game. Then one morning, as soon as Annabel entered the office, she came to Midge and said she had changed her mind. She would not buy a silver-fox coat with any part of her million dollars. Immediately on receiving the **legacy**, she would select a coat of mink.

Midge smiled and her eyes shone. "I think," she said, "you're

[1] Gary Cooper: (1901-1961), a popular American movie star best known for his portrayal of Western heroes.

doing absolutely the right thing."

Now, as they walked along Fifth Avenue, they played the game anew. It was one of those days with which September is repeatedly cursed; hot and glaring, with slivers of dust in the wind. People **drooped** and **shambled**, but the girls carried themselves tall and walked a straight line, as befitted young heiresses on their afternoon promenade. There was no longer need for them to start the game at its formal opening. Annabel went direct to the heart of it.

"All right," she said. "So you've got this million dollars. So what would be the first thing you'd do?"

"Well, the first thing I'd do," Midge said, "I'd get a mink coat." But she said it mechanically, as if she were giving the memorized answer to an expected question.

"Yes," Annabel said. "I think you ought to. The terribly dark kind of mink." But she, too, spoke as if **by rote**. It was too hot; fur, no matter how dark and **sleek** and **supple**, was horrid to the thoughts.

They stepped along in silence for a while. Then Midge's eye was caught by a shop window. Cool, lovely gleamings were there set off by **chaste** and elegant darkness.

"No," Midge said, "I take it back. I wouldn't get a mink coat the first thing. Know what I'd do? I'd get a string of pearls. Real pearls."

Annabel's eyes turned to follow Midge's.

"Yes," she said, slowly. "I think that's a kind of a good idea. And it would make sense, too. Because you can wear pearls with anything."

Together they went over to the shop window and stood pressed against it. It contained but one object-a double row of great, even pearls clasped by a deep emerald around a little pink velvet throat.

"What do you suppose they cost?" Annabel said.

"Gee[1], I don't know," Midge said. "Plenty, I guess."

"Like a thousand dollars?" Annabel said.

"Oh, I guess like more," Midge said. "**On account of** the emerald."

"Well, like ten thousand dollars?" Annabel said.

"Gee, I wouldn't even know," Midge said.

The devil nudged Annabel in the ribs. "Dare you to go in and price them," she said.

"Like fun!" Midge said.

"Dare you," Annabel said.

"Why, a store like this wouldn't even be open this afternoon," Midge said.

"Yes, it is so, too," Annabel said. "People just came out. And there's a doorman on. Dare you."

"Well," Midge said. "But you've got to come too."

They **tendered** thanks, icily, to the doorman for **ushering** them into the shop. It was cool and quiet, a broad, gracious room with paneled walls and soft carpet. But the girls wore expressions of bitter **disdain**, as if they stood in a sty.

A slim, **immaculate** clerk came to them and bowed. His neat face showed no astonishment at their appearance.

"Good afternoon," he said. He implied that he would never forget it if they would grant him the favor of accepting his soft-spoken greeting.

"Good afternoon," Annabel and Midge said together, and in like freezing accents.

"Is there something—?" the clerk said.

"Oh, we're just looking," Annabel said. It was as if she flung the words down from a dais[2].

The clerk bowed.

"My friend and myself merely happened to be passing," Midge said, and stopped, seeming to listen to the phrase. "My friend here and myself," she went on, "merely happened to be wondering how much are those pearls you've got in your window."

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[1] Gee: a word that some people use to show that they are surprised, impressed or annoyed

[2] Dais: a raised platform for a throne.

"Ah, yes," the clerk said. "The double rope. That is two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, Madam."

"I see," Midge said.

The clerk bowed. "An exceptionally beautiful necklace," he said. "Would you care to look at it?" "

"No, thank you," Annabel said.

"My friend and myself merely happened to be passing," Midge said.

They turned to go; to go, from their manner, where the tumbrel[1] awaited them. The clerk sprang ahead and opened the door. He bowed as they swept by him.

The girls went on along the Avenue and disdain was still on their faces.

"Honestly!" Annabel said. "Can you imagine a thing like that?"

"Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars!" Midge said. "That's a quarter of a million dollars right there!"

"He's got his nerve!" Annabel said.

They walked on. Slowly the disdain went, slowly and completely as if **drained** from them, and with it went the regal carriage and tread. Their shoulders dropped and they dragged their feet; they bumped against each other, without notice or apology, and caromed away[2] again. They were silent and their eyes were cloudy.

Suddenly Midge straightened her back, flung her head high, and spoke, clear and strong.

"Listen, Annabel," she said. "Look. Suppose there was this terribly rich person, see? You don't know this person, but this person has seen you somewhere and wants to do something for you. Well, it's a terribly old person, see? And so this person dies, just like going to sleep, and leaves you ten million dollars. Now, what would be the first thing you'd do?

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[1] Tumbrel: a cart used during the French Revolution to take prisoners to the guillotine.

[2] Carom away: jump aside or back.

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. What do we learn about Annabel and Midge from the first five paragraphs?
   a. Speak on their occupation and their background.
   b. What kind of food did the girls indulge in and what does this choice suggest?
   c. Describe the girls' appearance. What made them look "conspicuous and cheap and charming"?
   d. Find the stylistic devices /par-s 1-5/ and state what picture they help to create.
2. How did Annabel and Midge spend their leisure time?
3. What game did the girls invent? Describe the rules of the game.
4. Which were the "touches" that Midge added to the game. What effect is achieved by the use of stylistic devices (metaphors, euphemisms) in the passage /p.27/?
5. How do the rules of the game and the further innovations help to characterize the girls?
6. How serious were the girls when playing the game? Is it just a game or a way of living? Did they really expect their dreams to come true?
7. What "purchase" suddenly interrupted the game? How was the conflict resolved?
8. What shift did the game take one afternoon?
9. Describe their experience in the shop and the way they were received? How does the author achieve expressiveness?
10. How did the price of the necklace affect the girls' mood? Follow the change in their behavior.
11. What solution did Midge find? Did they change their "standard of living"?

12. Do you observe any irony in the discrepancy between the way the girls see themselves and the way the author portrays them? Find passages in the story to support your answer.
13. Are you asked to form an attitude towards the main characters?
14. Which is the prevailing method of characterization in the story?
15. Why does the author place repetition at the end of the story? What effect is achieved by it?
16. Comment on the title of the story.

C: Suggestions for Writing.

What are the benefits and hazards of living on dreams? What does daydreaming reveal about a person? Is daydreaming different from ambition?

Kate Chopin (1851-1904)

Kate Chopin, born in St. Louis came from a respectable, prosperous family. She was well-educated, fluent in three languages and loved to read and write.

Kate Chopin managed to raise six children and also make time for herself, often going for long walks and streetcar rides and befriending people of all classes.

She started writing in her late thirties, usually on a lapboard with her children around her. In little more than a decade, Chopin produced over a hundred short stories (among them "Desiree's Baby", "The Story of an Hour," "The Storm"), a large body of poetry and also two novels, including her well-known "The Awakening" (1899). Chopin was the first American female novelist to write frankly about women's feelings toward their roles as wives and mothers.

Criticized in her day for her bold exploration of female experience, Kate Chopin is now admired for her pioneering contribution to American fiction.

A Pair of Silk Stockings

Little Mrs. Sommers one day found herself the unexpected possessor of fifteen dollars. It seemed to her a very large amount of money, and the way in which it stuffed and **bulged** her worn old porte-monnaie[1] gave her a feeling of importance such as she had not enjoyed for years.

The question of investment was one that occupied her greatly. For a day or two she walked about apparently in a dreamy state, but really **absorbed in** speculation and calculation. She did not wish to act hastily, to do anything she might afterward regret. But it was during the still hours of the night when she lay awake revolving plans in her mind that she seemed to see her way clearly toward a proper and judicious use of the money.

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[1] Porte-monnaie: purse.

A dollar or two should be added to the price usually paid for Janie's shoes, which would insure their lasting an appreciable time longer than they usually did. She would buy so and so many yards of percale[1] for new shirt waists for the boys and Janie and Mag. She had intended to make the old ones do by skilful patching. Mag should have another gown. She had seen some beautiful patterns, veritable **bargains** in the shop windows. And still there would be left enough for new stockings-two pairs apiece-and what darning that would save for a while! She would get caps for the boys and sailor-hats for the girls. The vision of her little brood looking fresh and **dainty** and new for once in their lives excited her and made her restless and wakeful with anticipation.

The neighbors sometimes talked of certain “better days” that little Mrs. Sommers had known before she had ever thought of being Mrs. Sommers. She herself **indulged in** no such **morbid** retrospection. She had no time-no second of time to devote to the past. The needs of the present absorbed her every faculty. A vision of the future like some dim, **gaunt** monster sometimes **appalled** her, but luckily to-morrow never comes.

Mrs. Sommers was one who knew the value of bargains; who could stand for hours making her way inch by inch toward the desired object that was selling below cost. She could **elbow her way** if need be; she had learned to clutch a piece of goods and hold it and stick to it with persistence and determination till her turn came to be served, no matter when it came.

But that day she was a little faint and tired. She had swallowed a light luncheon-no! when she came to think of it, between getting the children fed and the place righted, and preparing herself for the shopping bout, she had actually forgotten to eat any luncheon at all!

She sat herself upon a revolving stool before a counter that was comparatively deserted, trying to gather strength and courage to charge through an eager multitude that was **besieging** breastworks of shirting and figured lawn[2]. An all-gone **limp** feeling had come over her and she rested her hand aimlessly upon the counter. She wore no gloves. By degrees she grew aware that her hand had encountered

[1] Percale: fine, closely woven cotton cloth.
[2] Lawn: a fine cotton or linen fabric used for making clothes.

something very **soothing**, very pleasant to touch. She looked down to see that her hand lay upon a pile of silk stockings. A placard near by announced that they had been reduced in price from two dollars and fifty cents to one dollar and ninety-eight cents; and a young girl who stood behind the counter asked her if she wished to examine their line of silk hosiery. She smiled, just as if she had been asked to inspect a tiara of diamonds with the ultimate view of purchasing it. But she went on feeling the soft, sheeny luxurious things-with both hands now, holding them up to see them glisten, and to feel them glide serpent-like through her fingers.

Two hectic blotches came suddenly into her pale cheeks. She looked up at the girl.

"Do you think there are any eights-and-a-half among these?"

There were any number of eights-and-a-half. In fact, there were more of that size than any other. Here was a light-blue pair; there were some lavender, some all black and various shades of tan and gray. Mrs. Sommers selected a black pair and looked at them very long and closely. She pretended to be examining their texture, which the clerk assured her was excellent.

"A dollar and ninety-eight cents," she mused aloud. "Well, I'll take this pair." She handed the girl a five-dollar bill and waited for her change and for her parcel. What a very small parcel it was! It seemed lost in the depths of her shabby old shopping-bag.

Mrs. Sommers after that did not move in the direction of the bargain counter. She took the elevator, which carried her to an upper floor into the region of the ladies' waiting-rooms. Here, in a retired corner, she exchanged her cotton stockings for the new silk ones which she had just bought. She was not going through any acute mental process or reasoning with herself, nor was she striving to explain to her satisfaction the motive of her action. She was not thinking at all. She seemed for the time to be taking a rest from that laborious and fatiguing function and to have **abandoned herself to** some mechanical impulse that directed her actions and freed her of responsibility.

How good was the touch of the raw silk to her flesh! She felt like lying back in the cushioned chair and **reveling** for a while **in** the luxury of it. She did for a little while. Then she replaced her shoes, rolled the cotton stockings together and thrust them into her bag.

After doing this she crossed straight over to the shoe department and took her seat to be fitted.

She was fastidious. The clerk could **not make her out**; he could not **reconcile** her shoes **with** her stockings, and she was not too easily pleased. She held back her skirts and turned her feet one way and her head another way as she glanced down at the polished, pointed-tipped boots. Her foot and ankle looked very pretty. She could not realize that they belonged to her and were a part of herself. She wanted an excellent and stylish fit, she told the young fellow who served her, and she did not mind the difference of a dollar or two more in the price so long as she got what she desired.

It was a long time since Mrs. Sommers had been fitted with gloves. On rare occasions when she had bought a pair they were always "bargains," so cheap that it would have been **preposterous** and unreasonable to have expected them to be fitted to the hand.

Now she rested her elbow on the cushion of the glove counter, and a pretty, pleasant young creature, delicate and **deft** of touch, drew a long-wristed "kid" over Mrs. Sommers's hand. She smoothed it down over the wrist and buttoned it neatly, and both **lost themselves** for a second or two **in** admiring contemplation of the little symmetrical gloved hand. But there were other places where money might be spent.

There were books and magazines piled up in the window of a stall a few paces down the street. Mrs. Sommers bought two high-priced magazines such as she had been accustomed to read in the days when she had been accustomed to other pleasant things. She carried them without wrapping. As well as she could she lifted her skirts at the crossings. Her stockings and boots and well fitting gloves had **worked marvels** in her bearing-had given her a feeling of assurance, a sense of belonging to the well-dressed multitude.

She was very hungry. Another time she would have **stilled** the cravings for food until reaching her own home, where she would have brewed herself a cup of tea and taken a snack of anything that was available. But the impulse that was guiding her would not suffer her to entertain any such thought.

There was a restaurant at the corner. She had never entered its doors; from the outside she had sometimes caught glimpses of

spotless damask[1] and shining crystal, and soft-stepping waiters serving people of fashion.

When she entered her appearance created no surprise, no **consternation**, as she had half feared it might. She seated herself at a small table alone, and an attentive waiter at once approached to take her order. She did not want a **profusion**; she craved a nice and tasty bite--a half dozen blue-points[2], a plump chop with cress, a something sweet-a crème-frappée[3], for instance; a glass of Rhine wine, and after all a small cup of black coffee.

While waiting to be served she removed her gloves very leisurely and laid them beside her. Then she picked up a magazine and glanced through it, cutting the pages with a blunt edge of her knife. It was all very **agreeable**. The damask was even more spotless than it had seemed through the window, and the crystal more sparkling. There were quiet ladies and gentlemen, who did not notice her, lunching at the small tables like her own. A soft, pleasing strain of music could be heard, and a gentle breeze was blowing through the window. She tasted a bite, and she read a word or two, and she **sipped** the amber wine and **wiggled** her toes in the silk stockings. The price of it made no difference. She counted the money out to the waiter and left an extra coin on his tray, whereupon he bowed before her as before a princess of royal blood.

There was still money in her purse, and her next temptation presented itself in the shape of a matinee poster.

It was a little later when she entered the theatre, the play had begun and the house seemed to her to be packed. But there were vacant seats here and there, and into one of them she was ushered, between brilliantly dressed women who had gone there to kill time and eat candy and display their **gaudy** attire. There were many others who were there solely for the play and acting. It is safe to say there was no one present who bore quite the attitude which Mrs. Sommers did to her surroundings. She gathered in the whole--stage and players and people in one wide impression, and absorbed it and enjoyed it.

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[1] Damask: lustrous fabric, often of linen, cotton, or silk.
[2] Blue-points: small oysters.
[3] Crème- frappe: whipped cream dessert.

She laughed at the comedy and wept--she and the gaudy woman next to her wept over the tragedy. And they talked a little together over it. And the gaudy woman wiped her eyes and sniffled on a tiny square of **filmy**, perfumed lace and passed little Mrs. Sommers her box of candy.

The play was over, the music ceased, the crowd **filed out**. It was like a dream ended. People **scattered** in all directions. Mrs. Sommers went to the corner and waited for the cable car.

A man with keen eyes, who sat opposite to her, seemed to like the study of her small, pale face. It puzzled him **to decipher** what he saw there. In truth, he saw nothing-unless he were **wizard** enough to detect a **poignant** wish, a powerful longing that the cable car would never stop anywhere, but go on and on with her forever.

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. What is Mrs. Sommers's life like? What was it like before she got married?
2. Has she reconciled herself to such a life?
3. What disturbed Mrs. Sommers's routine one day?
4. How did she intend to distribute the "large" sum of money she unexpectedly got?

5. How did she actually invest the money? Describe each purchase in detail.
6. Observe how Mrs. Sommers changed from a humble woman into a fastidious one when making her purchases.
7. Describe her exultation in the restaurant and in the theatre. Did she feel out of place?
8. Did Mrs. Sommers account for her actions? What drove her to make such reckless steps?
9. Why did she want the cable car never to stop?
10. The author leaves the outcome of the story to the reader's guess. How do you think Mrs. Sommers's short journey will end?
11. What conflict does Mrs. Sommers face throughout the story? Is it internal or external?
12. Is the author sympathetic toward Mrs. Sommers? Substantiate your answer.
13. What does the author mean when he calls her "little"?
14. What is your attitude to Mrs. Sommers? Do you approve of her actions?
15. What is the message of the story?
16. Does the story follow the common pattern of the plot structure /see p.7/.

C: Suggestions for Writing.

What is the role of the mother in the family? Should she be fully absorbed in her daily chores becoming oblivious of her own pleasures and wishes?

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)

Aldous Huxley-an English writer-was born in Godalming in the country of Surrey He was educated at Eton and at Balliol College, Oxford. Later, during the late1930's Huxley moved to the United States and spent the rest of his life there.

Aldous Huxley had one of the most varied literary careers of his time. Though best known as a novelist he was also a prolific writer of essays, biography, drama and verse. Huxley is chiefly remarkable for his acute and far-ranging intelligence, his graceful style and mocking, at times, outrageous humour. Among his most famous novels are "Crome Yellow" (1921), "Antic Hay" (1923), "Those Barren Leaves" (1925), "Point Counter Point" (1928).

Through his novels Huxley functions as an examiner and sometimes critic of social norms and ideals, literary and bohemian coteries of the time. Another satirical novel "Brave New World" (1932) describes a totalitarian society that disregards individual dignity and worships science and machines. He died on November 22, 1963, in Los Angeles, California.

Fard[1]

They had been quarrelling now for nearly three quarters of an hour. Muted and **inarticulate**, the voices **floated** down the corridor, from the other end of the flat. **Stooping** over her sewing, Sophie wondered, without much curiosity, what it was all about this time. It was Madame's voice that she heard most often. Shrill with anger and indignant with tears, it burst out in gusts, in gushes. Monsieur was more self- controlled, and his deeper voice was too softly pitched **to penetrate** easily the closed doors and to carry along the passage. To Sophie, in her cold little room, the quarrel sounded, most of the time, like a series of monologues by Madame, interrupted by strange and **ominous** silences. But every now and then Monsieur seemed to lose his temper outright, and then there was no silence between the gusts, but a harsh, deep, angry shout. Madame kept up her loud shrillness continuously and without flagging; her voice had even in anger, a curious, level monotony. But Monsieur spoke now loudly, now softly, with emphasis and modulations and sudden outbursts, so that his contributions to the **squabble**, when they were audible, sounded

[1] Fard: a type of powder that you put on your face in order to make it look smoother and to give it more colour.

like a series of separate explosions. Bow, wow, wow-wow-wow, wow-a dog barking rather slowly.

After a time Sophie **paid no more heed to** the noise of quarrelling. She was mending one of Madame's camisoles, and the work required all her attention. She felt very tired, her body ached all over. It had been a hard day: so had yesterday, so had the day before. Every day was a hard day, and she wasn't so young as she had been. Two years more and she'd be fifty. Every day had been a hard day ever since she could remember. She thought of the sacks of potatoes she used to carry when she was a little girl in the country. Slowly, slowly she was walking along the dusty road with the sack over her shoulder. Ten steps more; she could manage that. Only it never was the end; one always had to begin again.

She looked up from her sewing, moved her head from side to side, **blinked**. She had begun to see lights and spots of colour dancing before her eyes; it often happened to her now. A soft yellowish bright worm was wriggling up towards the right- hand corner of her field of vision; and though it was always moving upwards, upwards, it was always there in the same place. And there were stars of red and green that snapped and brightened and faded all around the worm. They moved between her and her sewing; they were there when she shut her eyes. After a moment she went on with her work; Madame wanted her camisole most particularly to-morrow morning. But it was difficult to see round the worm.

There was suddenly a great increase of noise from the other end of the corridor. A door had opened; words articulated themselves.

"... bien tort, mon ami, si tu crois que je suis ton esclave. Je ferai ce que je voudrai."[1]

---

[1] "You are mistaken, my friend, if you think I am your slave. I'll do what I want."

"Moi aussi."[1] Monsieur uttered a harsh, dangerous laugh. There was the sound of heavy footsteps in the passage, a rattling in the umbrella stand; then the front door banged.

Sophie looked down again at her work. Oh, the worm, the coloured stars, the aching fatigue in all her limbs! If one could only spend a whole day in bed-in a huge bed, feathery, warm, and soft, all the day long…

The ringing of the bell startled her. It always made her jump. That furious wasp-like buzzer. She got up, put her work down on the table, smoothed her apron, set straight her cap, and stepped out into the corridor. Once more the bell buzzed furiously. Madame was impatient.

"At last, Sophie. I thought you were never coming."

Sophie said nothing, there was nothing to say. Madame was standing in front of the open wardrobe. A bundle of dresses hung over her arm, and there were more of them lying in a heap on the bed.

"Une beaute´ à la Rubens," her husband used to call her when he was in an **amorous** mood. He liked these massive, splendid, great women. None of your flexible drain-pipes for him. *"He´lène Fourmont"*[2] was his pet name for her.

"Some day," Madame used to tell her friends, "some day I really must go to the Louvre and see my portrait by Rubens, you know. It's extraordinary that one should have lived all one's life in Paris and never have seen the Louvre. Don't you think so?"

She was superb to-night. Her cheeks were flushed, her blue eyes shone with an unusual brilliance between their long lashes; her short, red-brown hair had **broken** wildly **loose**.

Portrait of Hélène Fourment

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[1] "So will I"

[2] In 1630 four years after the death of his first wife, the 53-year-old Rubins married 16-year-old Hélène Fourment. Hélène inspired the voluptuous figures in many of his paintings from the 1630s.

“To-morrow, Sophie,” she said dramatically, “we start for Rome. To-morrow morning.” She unhooked another dress from the wardrobe as she spoke, and threw it on to the bed. With the movement her dressing-gown flew open, and there was a vision of ornate underclothing and white **exuberant** flesh “We must pack at once.”

“For how long, Madame?”

“A fortnight, three months--how should I know?’

“It makes a difference, Madame.”

“The important thing is to get away. I shall not return to this house, after what has been said to me to-night, till I am humbly asked to.”

“We had better take the large trunk, then, Madame; I will go and fetch it.”

The air in the box-room was sickly with the smell of dust and leather. The big trunk was jammed in a far corner. She had to bend and **strain at** it in order to pull it out. The worm and the coloured stars **flickered** before her eyes; she felt **dizzy** when she straightened herself up. “I’ll help you to pack, Sophie,” said Madame, when the servant returned, dragging the heavy trunk after her. What a death’s-head the old woman looked nowadays! She hated having old, ugly people near her. But Sophie was so efficient; it would be madness to get rid of her.

“Madame need not trouble.” There would be no end to it, Sophie knew, if Madame started opening drawers and throwing things about. “Madame had much better go to bed. It’s late.”

No, no. She wouldn’t be able to sleep. She was to such a degree **enervated**. These men… What an embeastment! One was not their slave. One would not be treated in this way.

Sophie was packing. A whole day in bed, in a huge, soft bed, like Madame’s. One would doze, one would wake up for a moment, one would doze again.

“His latest game,” Madame was saying indignantly, “is to tell me he hasn’t got any money. I’m not to buy any clothes, he says. Too **grotesque**. I can’t go about naked, can I?” She threw out her hands. “And as for saying he can’t afford, that’s simply nonsense. He can, perfectly well. Only he’s mean, mean, horribly mean. And if he’d only do a little honest work, for a change, instead of writing

silly verses and publishing them at his own expense, he'd have plenty and to spare." She walked up and down the room. "Besides." She went on, "there's his old father. What's he for, I should like to know? `You must be proud of having a poet for a husband, he says." She made her voice **quaver** like an old man's. "It's all I can do not to laugh in his face.' And what beautiful verses Hégésippe writes about you! What passion, what fire! "Thinking of the old man, she **grimaced**, wobbled her head, shook her finger, doddered on her legs. "And when one reflects the poor Hégésippe is bald, and dyes the few hairs he has left". She laughed. "As for the passion he talks so much about in his beastly verses," she laughed-"that's all pure invention. But my good Sophie, what are you thinking of? Why are you packing that **hideous** old green dress?"

Sophie pulled out the dress without saying anything. Why did the woman choose this night to look so terribly ill? She had a yellow face and blue teeth. Madame shuddered; it was too horrible. She ought to send her to bed. But, after all, the work had to be done. What could one do about it? She felt more than ever **aggrieved**.

"Life is terrible." Sighing she sat down heavily on the edge of the bed. The buoyant springs rocked her gently once or twice before they settled to rest. "To be married to a man like this. I shall soon be getting old and fat. And never once unfaithful. But look how he treats me." She got up again and began to wander aimlessly about the room. "I won't stand it though," she burst out. She had **halted** in front of the long mirror, and was admiring her own splendid tragic figure. No one would believe, to look at her, that she was over thirty. Behind the beautiful tragedian she could see in the glass a thin, miserable, old creature, with a yellow face and blue teeth, **crouching** over the trunk. Really, it was too **disagreeable**. Sophie looked like one of those beggar women one sees on a cold morning, standing in the gutter. Does one hurry past, trying not to look at them? Or does one stop, open one's purse and give them one's copper and nickel - even as much as a two-franc note, if one has no change? But whatever one did, one always felt uncomfortable, one always felt apologetic for one's furs. That was what came of walking. If one had a car-but that was another of Hégésippe's meannesses-one wouldn't, rolling along behind closed windows, have **to be conscious of** them at all. She turned away from the glass.

"I won't stand it," she said, trying not to think of the beggar women, of blue teeth in a yellow face; "I won't stand it." She dropped into a chair.

But think of a lover with a yellow face and blue, uneven teeth! She closed her eyes, shuddered at the thought. It would be enough to make one sick. She felt **impelled** to take another look: Sophie's eyes were the colour of greenish lead, quite without life. What was one to do about it? The woman's face was a reproach, an accusation. And besides, the sight of it was making her feel positively ill. She had never been so profoundly enervated.

Sophie rose slowly and with difficulty from her knees; an expression of pain crossed her face. Slowly she walked to the chest of drawers, slowly counted out six pairs of silk stockings. She turned back towards the trunk. The woman was a walking corpse!

"Life is terrible," Madame repeated with **conviction**, "terrible, terrible, terrible."

She ought to send the woman to bed. But she would never be able to get her packing done by herself. And it was so important to get off tomorrow morning. She had told Hégésippe she would go, and he had simply laughed; he hadn't believed it. She must give him a lesson this time. In Rome she would see Luigino. Such a charming boy, and a marquis, too. Perhaps…But she could think of nothing but Sophie's face; the leaden eyes, the bluish teeth, the yellow, wrinkled skin.

"Sophie," she said suddenly; it was with difficulty that she prevented herself screaming, "look on my dressing- table. You'll see a box of rouge, the Dorin number twenty-four. Put a little on your cheeks. And there's a stick of lip salve in the right-hand drawer."

She kept her eyes resolutely shut while Sophie got up-with a horrible creaking of the joints!–walked over to the dressing-table, and stood there, rustling faintly, through what seemed an eternity. What a life, my God, what a life! Slow footsteps trailed back again. She opened her eyes. Oh, that was far better, far better.

"Thank you, Sophie. You look much less tired now." She got up briskly. "And now we must hurry." Full of energy, she ran to the wardrobe. "Goodness me," she exclaimed, throwing up her hands, "you've forgotten to put in my blue evening dress. How could you be so stupid, Sophie?"

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. How are the main characters (Madame and Sophie) introduced into the story?
2. Describe the quarrel between the husband and the wife. How does their way of speaking characterize them?
3. From whose point of view is the quarrel presented? Do you find the choice of the point of view effective?
4. Is this the first squabble between Madame and her husband? Prove your answer referring to the story.
5. Speak on the relations of the husband and the wife. What was the main reason for their conflict? What, do you think, could have brought them together?
6. What can you say about Sophie's life and background? Describe her physical state.
7. What scene opened before Sophie's eyes when she entered Madame's room? In what mood did she find the latter?
8. Why was Madame enervated at the sight of her maid? From whose point of view is Sophie described?
9. The description of the main characters is based on contrast. Find instances where it is most evident.
10. Who was Madame mostly concerned about? What did she imply by saying: "life is terrible"? What makes this statement ironic?
11. What solution to the problem did Madame find? Do you approve of it?
12. Give the character sketch of Madame. Is she a static or a dynamic character?
13. The author never refers to Madame by name. Give reasons for this.
14. Which method of character-drawing prevails in the story? Back up your answer with evidence from the story.

15. Do you find the title appropriate? What meaning does the author conceal behind it?
16. What is the theme of the story?

C. Comment on.

Sophie looked like one of those beggar women one sees on a cold morning, standing in the gutter. Does one hurry past, trying not to look at them? Or does one stop, open one's purse and give them one's copper and nickel-even as much as a two-franc note, if one has no change? But whatever one did, one always felt uncomfortable, one always felt apologetic for one's furs. That was what came of walking. If one had a car ... one wouldn't, rolling along behind closed windows, have to be conscious of them at all./p.44 /

D: Suggestions for Writing.

What harm can an egoist do himself and the people surrounding him?

Pearl S. Buck (1892- 1973)

Pearl Sydenstricker was born in Hillsboro, W.Va.. She grew up in China, where her parents were missionaries. She attended college in the US but returned to China to teach. In 1917 she married John Buck and wrote under her married name though she divorced him in 1935.

Pearl Buck's first book of fiction, "East Wind: West Wind" was published when she was 38. From that time until her death, she wrote more than 65 books, hundreds of short stories and essays. Many of her works urged greater understanding between the peoples of Asia and the West.

Buck's best-known novel "The Good Earth" (1931) won the 1932 Pulitzer Prize. The book is the first in a series of three novels called "The House of Earth", which also includes "Sons" (1932) and "A House Divided" (1935). In 1938 Pearl Buck was awarded the coveted Nobel Prize for Literature, becoming the first American woman to be so honoured.

The Man Called Dead

Drake Forrester woke on Monday morning with more than his usual **reluctance**. On Saturdays and Sundays his agent closed his office and for two days he knew he could not ask the question or receive the answer. The question was always the same, and so was the answer. "Have you heard of anything, Nick?"

"No, Drake, sorry, not yet, I have all sorts of lines out, as I told you, but no fish."

The next two sentences were likewise always the same.

"Thanks Nick. If there is the slightest chance-"

"I know, I know, old man. I'd be on your doorstep in five minutes."

There might or might not follow the next hesitating words.

"Had I better tell you where I'll be today?"

"No, no, it's not that close, old man."

He was never anywhere but in his one-room apartment in this third-rate apartment house, unless he went out for a walk or a cheap meal somewhere. He was finished, he was through, the early promise had never been fulfilled, the parts he had played so brilliantly, almost up to

the lead in the last play, had not led anywhere. He was not too old yet, barely forty-five, but the big chance had never come. He had made the most of opportunity, but the lead part, the humorous, **sophisticated**, delightful part that he knew he could do was simply not popular any more. Playwrights weren't interested. They wrote about raw brutal **lustful** boys. That he was not and that he could not be. He was born out of his time, too late or too early. The civilizing influence of the old world was gone and the new American civilization had not yet arrived, that was how he excused himself. There was no place for him.

It was fortunate indeed that he had never married, that he and Sara had agreed to wait. Then she had married another man, someone he did not know. He did not blame her, five years was too long to wait, and there was nothing in prospect, even then. Years ago that was, twelve years and three months and two days. He had not even seen her picture in the papers since her husband died two years, four months and six days ago, and he did not write to her.

He got up unwillingly and went to the door for the morning paper. The moment of greatest comfort in his **dreary** day was when he crept back into his still warm bed with the morning paper. This morning his bed was an especial **refuge**. It was raining, he saw, as he shut the window against the raw spring air. At least he had the shelter of this room, this bed, and he had been wise enough so that he would not starve. One meal a day and the **meager** rent were assured. There was no particular joy in the barren security, but it meant that he could be indifferent about getting up and going out on a bad day.

He piled the two thin pillows under the wall bedlight, opened the paper, turned to the theater page and read it closely and thoroughly. No news there. The season's plays were probably settled by now and his only chance was with the summer playhouse. He must talk with Nick about that and urge him, Nick was getting careless, the old bonds of friendship and past success were **wearing down**. Yet he dared not go to another agent, if indeed one would take him

on. Nick knew him, at least. He did not have to explain what he could do.

At this moment the bedlight, always uneasy upon the plaster wall, chose to fall from its hook. He threw down the paper in sudden anger and sprang up to set it back, when he saw his name leap at him from the scattered pages.

DRAKE FORRESTER FOUND DEAD IN HIS APARTMENT

It was a small headline on the back page. He seized the paper and took it to the window, and read his own **obituary**. “Drake Forrester, an actor, was found dead in his bed this morning by an elevator man, who brought him his usual morning paper. Mr. Forrester was well known in former years in successful Broadway plays. He received offers from Hollywood which he did not accept, preferring to remain on the legitimate stage. In recent years—”

The paper fell from his hand. He rushed to the telephone to call up Nick. This had to be contradicted immediately, Nick must send out a **press release**, he would **sue** the newspaper.

A nasal voice replied, “Nicholas Jansen Agency.”

“Oh yes,” he said, stammering as he always did when he was upset, “is Mr. Jansen in?”

“Mr. Jansen won't be in today.”

“Oh-do you know where he can be reached?”

“He can't be reached. He is spending the weekend in the country with an important client.”

“Oh -”

He hesitated and then not knowing what else to say to the cold voice he muttered thanks and hung up and after another moment he went back to bed, covered himself up and shut his eyes. The paper fell on the floor and he **gave himself up to** loneliness.

Who cared whether it was true or not? Nobody had cared for a long time. His sister he had not heard from in years. She was married and lived in Texas. His parents had died when he was in his twenties, thank God, at the time it had seemed he would inevitably be famous. The theater was wickedly **consuming**, one had no life outside it, family and friends had **fallen away**.

He might as well be dead.

It was a strange feeling this being dead. Though he breathed and was awake in this room where he had lived so long, he was dead. His

dramatic mind began to stir. He had read stories, he had even once seen a play on this very situation, and the man who was called dead had begun a new and completely free life, all the old debts cancelled, the failures **erased.** He might so welcome his freedom, he might do something entirely new, even take a new name and disappear from all he had known. He saw himself roaming about the world, a different person in one city or another, London, Paris, Venice, or even just Chicago or San Francisco.

There was no difficulty. He did not want to do anything except theater. Whatever else he attempted it would all end in a room like this somewhere, an agent trying to find him a job, and would an agent even try to find an unknown man a job? At least Drake Forrester had been somebody once, there was a memory.

It had been a long time since he had wept, but he wept now, only a few tears and not exactly for himself, but for anybody like him anywhere. He was not unique, of course. There was no use fooling himself. He had a little **flair**, a tiny talent that, combined with youth and extreme good looks-oh, he had been good-looking, still was-enough to carry him a little beyond the average, but it had not been enough and would never be enough for more than that.

So why not die? It would be easy, he had thought of it as anyone alone and unsuccessful thinks of it, not as something he would ever do, but still a possibility. He had thought of it sometimes at night when he took his sleeping pills. He held death in the palm of his hand, he had mused, gazing down on the white pellets, not with any reality in his mind, but with his little flair for drama, thinking that if he should so choose, he could do it.

Now someone else had done it for him, someone with his name. He took up the paper and read again. No reason was given for his death. It was simply announced with the few details about his former success on the stage and his gradual retirement. It was quite **dignified**, and if he died now, actually, the effect would be spoiled. This shabby room, his continual hounding of Nick, the ragged shirts and torn pajamas, the disgusting private details which he could keep hidden while he lived, but dead he must reveal. He ought really to be grateful that someone had died so nicely in his place. They had the address right, this street, this house.

He grinned, his lips twisted, and suddenly he felt hungry. He would get up, he would make his coffee and toast over the gas ring and he would

never call Nick up again. He might leave here, he might go west tomorrow, saunter into Hollywood, later, quite on his own, and get any kind of a job around the sets, even a janitor's job. Nothing mattered, since his name was dead.

While he was drinking his coffee at his bedside table, the telephone rang suddenly. He got up and went to it. An unknown voice, a woman's voice, cried out, “Who is this, please?”

His name flew to his tongue and he **checked** it. “Whom do you want?” he growled.

“I've just seen the paper. I used to know Drake Forrester, years ago. We were in the same cast of a play. He was a good actor and I've often wondered-and now he's dead!”

He hesitated and then he said firmly, in the same deep voice, “Sorry, Madame, you have the wrong number." He hung up and sat down on his bed. But it was wonderful, nevertheless. Who could she have been? He was a good actor, she had not forgotten. He sat staring at the blank wall, trying to place the voice, and not being able to. Well, one person remembered. He felt cheered by so much and looked out of the window to see if it was still raining. On clear mornings he usually took a walk down the street.

It was still raining and he went back to bed and had scarcely settled himself when he heard a knock on the door. He got up again and opened it and there stood the janitor, looking **surly** and holding a small box of flowers.

“Oh, thanks,” Drake said. “Wait a minute.”

He went to his trousers hung over the chair and took out a dime. “Thanks a lot,” he said.

The door shut and he opened the box of flowers. They were white roses and snapdragons with asparagus fern. There was an envelope and in it a card, “In memory of a **swell** time” the card said, and under it were signed seven names. He remembered them, people who had had bit parts in *The Red Circle,* the year it was almost a hit. It had been a mystery play, and he was just the husband of the murdered woman, not the lead. Still the run had been good and he had saved his money, thinking still that he and Sara would be married. That was the year she had married Harrison Page. It did not matter now. If he had been successful he would probably have been married to someone.

He put the flowers into the tin wastepaper basket, half filled it with

water and set it in the window. He decided not to go back to bed, but to get up and go out. It was April and the sky was beginning to clear. He took a shower in the bathroom down the hall and came back and dressed carefully, and by the time he reached the street the clouds were white and ragged and scraps of blue sky were showing.

He took his usual walk around six blocks and since nobody knew him by name nobody was surprised to see him. He bought a copy of a small theatrical magazine, wondered if it were too cold yet to sit on a park bench and read, and decided it was and went back to his room. Not to call Nick gave him nothing at all to do, but he had made up his mind. He was not going to call Nick. When he felt like it he would consider further the question of where he would go, and maybe he would not go anywhere.

When he reached his room an envelope was stuck under his door, a telegram. He picked it up, tore it open and saw it was from Nick, a **frantic appeal**. “For heaven's sake, call me up. Been trying to get you for hours. Took the first train to town.”

He sat down, his hat still on his head. Did this mean Nick knew he was dead or did not? Probably he had seen the news and did not believe it. Or maybe he thought someone was with him, he had never revealed to Nick the way he lived, and Nick supposed he had a friend. Nick knew he had some money but he did not know how little. He decided again not to call Nick up. Without taking his hat off he put the telegram beside the flowers and went out again.

Back on the park bench, he read the magazine **from cover to cover**. Then he sat awhile looking thoughtfully about at other men on the park benches. He recognized several of them, and he supposed they recognized him but they had never spoken to each other and there was no reason why they should do so now. It was about noon and he decided that he would get some lunch in an automat nearby and then go back to his room and sleep. He felt tired with the uncertainty of his emotions. It was an experience to be dead, he thought, and grinned again to himself.

When he went into the old apartment house the janitor came shambling out. “Must be your birthday or something,” he said. “Two more boxes of flowers come while you was gone, and three telegrams.”

“It's an anniversary,” Drake said. He **fumbled for** another dime and gave it to the janitor and loaded himself with the boxes, put the telegrams in his pocket and went upstairs. This was getting funny, his room full of flowers and telegrams. It was like being back in the theater in his dressing room. Congratulations on being dead!

But he was touched, for all that. He had thought himself completely forgotten, and now he knew he was not. He opened the flowers and put them into the tin wastepaper basket with the others, pale yellow roses and white spirea[1] from the director of his first play, and spring flowers from the star in *The Red Circle,* the man who murdered the wife. The telegrams were from members of the casts of his other plays and from a girl who used to work in Nick's office, who he knew well enough had once dreamed about him, only in those days he was still **getting over** Sara. The card was handwritten, “In fondest memory, Louise.” But he had always called her Miss Silverstein.

The room looked **festive** and cheerful. He had not made the bed, often he did not make it, but just got into it again the way he had left it, but now he made it carefully and found an old handkerchief and dusted the table, the window sill and the bureau. After some thought he took the yellow roses and spirea and put them in a milk bottle and set them on the bureau.

Then the telephone began to ring and kept on ringing until either he had to go out again or answer it. He took up the receiver cautiously.

“Hello,” he said in a voice not at all like his own. But it was not Nick. It was a woman and her voice was gentle.

“Hello, is this where Drake Forrester used to live?”

“It is,” he answered. Then he recognized the voice. His heart gave a fierce leap. It was Sara! She had the loveliest voice he had ever heard.

“I have only just read the dreadful news,” the gentle voice said. “Will you tell me where the services are to be? I used to know him years ago. I loved him very much, and I still do, though now I can never tell him.”

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[1] spirea: any of a large genus /nealy 100 species/ of flowering shrub in the rose family

He could not speak. What could he say? Then silly words burst from him. “Why didn't you tell him?”

She was surprised. “Are you his friend?”

“In a way. He told me about you.”

“Oh, did he-he didn't forget?”

“Never!”

He was shocked at what was going on. He was **weaving a new web**, **entangling himself** beyond rescue.

“Oh, would you come and tell me about him?” she pleaded.

“Where are you?”

She gave him a street number far uptown, a long journey from where he stood. “I don’t know just when--” So he began.

“Oh, come now,” she begged. “I must know everything. Then I can explain to you why-you see, I lost him, I mean, after my husband died I didn't know where to turn. Besides, I never saw his name anywhere until this morning, and then I knew really that I meant all along to find him. I suppose I just kept dreaming.”

“I'll come,” he promised. He hung up the receiver. Though he had **committed himself**, he might yet break his promise, but he knew where she was and sooner or later, however much he delayed, he knew as he knew himself that he would be on her threshold, ringing the bell, waiting for the moment of her recognition. He had to come back to life.

The telephone was ringing and on the chance that it might be her again he took it up impulsively and was caught. “Hello!” he cried too eagerly.

It was Nick, **exasperated**. “Of all the nonsense! Where have you been all morning? I knew you weren't dead.”

“How did you know it?” he demanded. He felt injured. Did Nick think he hadn’t the courage-

“For a while I thought maybe it was true, you old fake,” Nick said. “Then I read the news item again and saw it couldn't be you. They had you sixty-five-didn't you notice?”

“No,” Drake said.

“You never could remember figures,” Nick said impatiently. “They had you born in 1887. I knew you weren't born then. I've done too much publicity for you. I've been busy all morning. The newspaper is going to correct the error tomorrow. Seems some fellow down in Virginia had your name and the newspaper mixed him up with you and used your obituary

from the files. Well, it's done you a lot of good anyway. I've got you a part."

"A part?"

"Yeah, a good one, not starring, but a solid part. New play, *South Side of the Moon,* looks good too. Summer tryouts, of course, then probably Broadway. Producer says he used to know you, he called me up to tell me he was sorry he hadn't kept up with you, says he could have used you, if he'd known, so I said to give me a few minutes. You come right up here, Drake, and I'll have the contract ready. We'll sew things up. I'm not going **to let any grass grow**, not from now on."

Drake **wavered**. He could not be in two places at once. Either he went to Sara first, or he went to Nick first. The decision was close, he was always an actor, and he had not for a long time been a lover. Could the old role be **revived**? His dramatic imagination leaped ahead. He saw himself in Sara's hall, or perhaps in her living-room, waiting for her, and then she came down the stairs, looking as beautiful as ever. He would stand perfectly still, waiting, and then when she saw him she would cry out.

"Oh Drake, darling—but how is this?-"

"Somebody else died, Sara, not me."

He closed his eyes to kiss her and felt her soft lips. Sara was one of those soft women-the sweetest lips he had ever kissed.

"Hey, you asleep?" Nick **bellowed** in his ear.

"I can't come right away, Nick. I have an important engagement."

"What engagement?" Nick said indignantly. "What's more important than a contract?"

"Just this engagement," Drake said gaily. "But hold the contract, Nick. I'll get there sometime, today, tomorrow, one of these days."

He hung up and stood still, dreaming. He'd get there today, of course. When he and Sara had sat down on the sofa side by side, when he had kissed her again and again, when they had lunched together and told each other everything, he would glance at his watch and cry out.

"By gad, darling, I have an important engagement-I entirely forgot. You make me forget everything."

A play, Drake?"

"Yes. *South Side of the Moon,* a new thing-it looks good."

"Come back soon." That is what she would say. "I'm so proud of you, Drake." That is what she would say.

"I'll come back," he would promise. "We'll dine together, shall

we? We'll make our plans."

"I'll be waiting for you." That was what she would say, in her soft voice. It was softer than it used to be.

He **bustled about** the room, getting himself ready. He had one new shirt. He always kept one new shirt, just in case he might get an interview with a casting director. He began all over with another shower and a shave and then the new shirt and his better suit. He always kept one better suit. Then he hesitated. What about taking her something? He looked about the room at his few books, his small mementos, and then cried out aloud, **snapping his thumb and finger**, "Of course, the flowers!" He swept them all together, recovered a box he had thrown in the corner, packed them into it and tied the string carefully. Then he reached into his closet and took out a cane which he had not used for years, a slender bamboo cane tipped with imitation ivory which he had carried as the husband in the play. Pausing at the mirror he looked into it and saw someone he had not seen for a long time, a tall thin fellow whose pale face was alert and smiling, whose dark eyes were bright, a debonair sort of fellow, after all.

He smiled at the face, pleased at the **resurrection**. It was not bad, considering how dead he had been.

"Greetings," he said pleasantly to the face, and putting on his hat he tilted it slightly to one side and left the room.

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. Describe the life Drake Forrester led.
   What made it more unbearable at weekends?
2. What does he put down his failures to? What would you put them down to?
3. Speak on Drake Forrester's first reaction to his own obituary in the newspaper. What advantages did he find in this new situation after a little consideration?
4. Follow the change in Drake Forrester's spirits as he started getting messages from the people from his past happy life.
5. What sudden perspectives opened before Drake Forrester after the two important calls? Do you think they could really change his life?
6. Drake always put stage first and his personal life second. What made him reconsider his priorities?
7. What method of characterization does the author employ in the story? Is Drake Forrester a static or a dynamic character?
8. Find instances of non-personal direct speech in the story and comment on their role in revealing the psychological state of the character.
9. Is the conflict Drake Forrester faced external or internal?
10. Do you find Drake Forrester's situation ironical, ridiculous, or tragic?
11. Could such a story have really happened? What other events can cause a similar radical change in a person's life?

C: Suggestions for Writing.

1. How much does a person's success depend on his being enterprising?
2. Talented people are often forgotten during their lifetime and are valued only after their death. Why, according to you, does this happen?
3. Solitude made Drake Forrester's existence almost unbearable, while essayist Henry David Thoreau wrote: "I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude". What is solitude for you?

Ray Bradbury (born 1920)

Ray Bradbury was born in Waukegan, Illinois, to a Swedish immigrant family. His family settled in Los Angeles in 1934 when Ray was thirteen. Bradbury graduated from Los Angeles High School in 1938 but chose not to attend college. Instead, he sold newspapers in the street. He continued to educate himself at the local library, and having been influenced by science fiction heroes, he began to publish science fiction stories in 1938. His first book, "Dark Carnival" a collection of short stories was published in 1947. Among his best known novels are "The Martian Chronicles" (1950), "Fahrenheit 451" (1953), "Something Wicked This Way Comes" (1962), and many others. He is also the author of many short stories, plays, and poems. It's interesting to note that despite writing about spaceships and interplanetary travel, Ray Bradbury has never driven a car. He attributes it to having seen a gruesome car accident when he was young. Besides his fiction work, Bradbury has written many short essays on the arts and culture, attracting the attention of critics in this field.

On November 17, 2004 , Bradbury received the National Medal of Arts, presented by President George W. Bush and Laura Bush. Bradbury has also received the World Fantasy Award life achievement, Stoker Award life achievement, SFWA Grand Master, SF Hall of Fame Living Inductee, and First Fandom Award. He received an Emmy Award for his work on "The Halloween Tree". On April 16, 2007, Bradbury received a special citation from The Pulitzer Board, "for his distinguished, prolific, and deeply influential career as an unmatched author of science fiction and fantasy."

The Happiness Machine

On Sunday morning Leo Auffmann moved slowly through his garage, expecting some wood, a curl of wire, a hammer or wrench to leap up crying, " Start here! " But nothing leaped, nothing cried for a beginning.

Should a Happiness Machine, he wondered, be something you can carry in your pocket?

Or, he went on, should it be something that carries you in *its* pocket?

"One thing I absolutely *know,*" he said aloud. "It should be *bright!*"

He set a can of orange paint in the center of the workbench, picked up a dictionary, and wandered into the house.

"Lena?" He glanced at the dictionary. "Are you 'pleased, contented, joyful, delighted'? Do you feel 'lucky, fortunate'? Are things 'clever and fitting,' 'successful and suitable' for you?"

Lena stopped slicing vegetables and closed her eyes. "Read me the list again, please," she said.

He shut the book.

"What have I done, you got to stop and think an hour before you can tell me? All I ask is a simple yes or no! You're *not* contented, delighted, joyful?"

"Cows are contented, babies and old people in second childhood are delighted, God help them," she said. "As for 'joyful,' Leo? Look how I laugh **scrubbing** out the sink…"

He **peered** closely **at** her and his face relaxed. "Lena, it's true. A man doesn't appreciate. Next month, maybe, we'll get away."

"I'm not complaining!" she cried. "I'm not the one comes in with a list saying, 'Stick out your tongue.' Leo, do you ask what makes your heart beat all night? No! Next will you ask, What's marriage? Who knows, Leo? Don't ask. A man who thinks like that,

how it runs, how things work, falls off the trapeze in the circus, **chokes** wondering how the muscles work in the throat. Eat, sleep, breathe, Leo, and stop staring at me like I'm something new in the house! "

Lena Auffmann froze. She sniffed the air.

"Oh, my God, look what you done!"

She yanked the oven door open. A great cloud of smoke poured through the kitchen.

"Happiness!" she wailed. "And for the first time in six months we have a fight! Happiness, and for the first time in twenty years it's not bread, it's charcoal for supper!"

When the smoke cleared, Leo Auffmann was gone.

The fearful **clangor**, the **collision** of man and inspiration, the flinging about of metal, lumber, hammer, nails, T square, screwdriver, continued for many days. On occasion, defeated, Leo Auffmann loitered out through the streets, nervous, **apprehensive**, **jerking** his head at the slightest sound of distant laughter, listened to children's jokes, watching what made them smile. At night he sat on neighbors' crowded porches, listening to the old folks weigh and balance life, and at each explosion of merriment Leo Auffmann quickened like a general who has seen the forces of darkness **routed** and whose strategy has been reaffirmed. On his way home he felt triumphant until he was in his garage with the dead tools and the inanimate **lumber**. Then his bright face fell away in a pale funk, and to cover his sense of failure he banged and crashed the parts of his machine about as if they really did make sense. At last it began to shape itself and at the end of ten days and nights, trembling with fatigue, self-dedicated, half-starved, fumbling and looking as if he had been **riven by** lightning, Leo Auffmann wandered into his house.

The children, who had been screaming horribly at each other, fell silent as if the Red Death[1] had entered at the **chiming** of the clock.

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[1] Red Death: an expression meaning a ghastly sight alluding to Edgar Allan Poe's tale of horror, the Masque of the Red Death."

“The Happiness machine’’ husked Leo Auffmann, “is ready.”

“Leo Auffmann,” said his wife, “has lost fifteen pounds. He hasn’t talked to his children in two weeks, they are nervous, they fight, listen! His wife is nervous, she’s gained ten pounds, she’ll need new clothes, look! Sure-the machine is ready. But happy? Who can say? Leo, leave off with the clock you’re building. You’ll never find a cuckoo big enough to go in it! Man was not made **to tamper with** such things. It’s not against God, no, but it sure looks like it’s against Leo Auffmann. Another week of this and we’ll bury him in his machine!”

But Leo Auffmann was too busy noticing that the room was falling swiftly up.

How interesting, he thought, lying on the floor.

Darkness closed in a great wink on him as someone screamed something about that Happiness Machine, three times.

The first thing he noticed the next morning was dozens of birds **fluttering** around in the air stirring up **ripples** like colored stones thrown into an incredibly clear stream, gonging the tin roof of the garage softly.

A pack of multibred dogs pawfooted one by one into the yard to peer and whine gently through the garage door; four boys, and two girls, and some men hesitated in the driveway and then edged along under the cherry trees.

Leo Auffmann, listening, knew what it was that had reached out and called them all into the yard.

The sound of Happiness Machine.

It was the sort of sound that might be heard coming from a giant’s kitchen on a summer day. There were all kinds of hummings, low and high, steady and then changing. Incredible foods were being baked there by a host of whirring golden bees as big as teacups. The giantess herself, humming contentedly under her breath, might **glide** to the door, as vast as all summer, her face a huge peach-colored moon gazing calmly out upon smiling dogs, corn-haired boys and flour-haired old men.

“Wait,” said Leo Auffmann out loud. “I didn’t turn the machine on this morning! Saul!”

Saul, standing in the yard below, looked up.

“Saul, did you turn it on?”

"You told me to warm it up half an hour ago!"

"All right, Saul, I forgot. I'm not awake." He fell back in bed.

His wife, bringing his breakfast up, paused by the window, looking down at the garage.

"Tell me", she said quietly. "If that machine is like you say, has it got an answer to making babies in it somewhere? Can that machine make seventy-year-old people twenty?" Also, how does death look when you hide in there with all that happiness? "

"Hide!"

"If you died from overwork, what should I do today, climb in that big box down there and be happy? Also tell me, Leo, how is our life? You know how our house is. Seven in the morning, breakfast, the kids; all of you gone by eight-thirty and it's just me and washing and me and cooking and socks to be darned, weeds to be dug, or I run to the store or polish silver. Who's complaining? I'm just reminding you how the house is put together, Leo, what's in it! So now answer: How do you get all those things I said in one machine?"

"That's not how it's built!"

"I'm sorry. I got no time to look, then."

And she kissed his cheek and went from the room and he lay smelling the wind that blew from the hidden machine below, rich with the odor of those roasted chestnuts that sold in the autumn streets of a Paris he had never known…

A cat moved unseen among the hypnotized dogs and boys to purr against the garage door, in the sound of snow-waves **crumbling** down a faraway and rhythmically breathing shore.

Tomorrow, thought Leo Auffmann, we'll try the machine, all of us, together.

Late that night he awoke and knew something had wakened him. Far away in another room he heard someone crying.

"Saul?" he whispered, getting out of bed.

In his room, Saul wept, his head buried in his pillow. "No… no…" he sobbed. "Over… over…"

"Saul, you had a nightmare? Tell me about it, son."

But the boy only wept.

And sitting there on the boy's bed, Leo Auffmann suddenly thought to look out the window. Below, the garage doors stood open.

He felt the hairs rise along the back of his neck.

When Saul slept again, uneasily, whimpering, his father went downstairs and out to the garage where, not breathing, he put his hand out.

In the cool night the Happiness Machine's metal was too hot to touch.

So, he thought, Saul was here tonight.

Why? Was Saul unhappy, in need of the machine? No, happy, but wanting to hold onto happiness always. Could you blame a boy wise enough to know his position who tried to keep it that way? No! And yet…

Above, quite suddenly, something white was exhaled from Saul's window. Leo Auffmann's heart thundered. Then he realized the window curtain had blown out into the open night. But it had seemed as intimate and shimmering a thing as a boy's soul escaping his room. And Leo Auffmann had flung up his hands as if **to thwart** it, push it back into the sleeping house.

Cold, shivering, he moved back into the house and up to Saul's room where he seized the blowing curtain in and locked the window tight so the pale thing could not escape again. Then he sat on the bed and put his hand on Saul's back.

"A Tale of Two Cities? Mine. *The Old Curiosity Shop?* Ha, that's Leo Auffmann's all right! *Great Expectations*? That *used* to be mine. But let *Great Expectations* be his, now!"

"What's this?" asked Leo Auffmann, entering.

"This," said his wife, "is sorting out the community property[1]! When a father scares his son at night it's time to chop everything in half! Out of the way, Mr. Black House, Old Curiosity Shop. In all these books, no mad scientist lives like Leo Auffmann, none!"

"You're leaving, and haven't even tried the machine!" he protested. "Try it on, you'll unpack, you'll stay!"

"Tom Swift and His Electric Annihilator- " whose is that? She asked. "Must I *guess?"*

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[1] Community property: property accumulated by a couple in the course of their marriage and divided equally between them in the case of divorce.

Snorting, she gave *Tom Swift* to Leo Auffmann.

Very late in the day all the books, dishes, clothes, linens had been stacked one here, one there, four here, four there, ten here, ten there. Lena Auffmann, dizzy with counting, had to sit down. “All right,” she **gasped**. “Before I go, Leo, prove you don’t give nightmares to innocent sons!”

Silently Leo Auffmann led his wife into the twilight. She stood before the eight-foot-tall, orange-colored box

“That’s *happiness*?” she said. “Which button do I press to be overjoyed, grateful, contented, and much obliged?”

The children had gathered now.

“Mama” said Saul, “don’t!”

“I got to know what I’m yelling about, Saul.” She got in the machine, sat down, and looked out at her husband, shaking her head. “It’s not me needs this, it’s you, a nervous **wreck**, shouting.”

“Please” he said, “you’ll see!”

He shut the door.

“Press the button!” he shouted in at his unseen wife.

There was a click. The machine shivered quietly, like a huge dog dreaming in its sleep.

“Papa!” said Saul, worried.

“Listen!” said Leo Auffmann.

At first there was nothing but the **tremor** of the machine’s own secretly moving cogs and wheels.

“Is Mama all right?” asked Naomi.

“All right, she’s fine! There now …there!”

And inside the machine Lena Auffmann could be heard saying,” Oh!” and then again, “Ah!” in a startled voice. “Look at that!” said his hidden wife. “Paris!” and later, “London! There goes Rome! The Pyramids! The Sphinx!”

“The Sphinx, you hear, children?” Leo Auffmann whispered and laughed.

“Perfume!” cried Lena Auffmann surprised.

Somewhere a phonograph played “The Blue Danube”[1] faintly.

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[1] “The Blue Danube”: the name of a famous waltz by Johann Strauss.

"Music! I'm dancing!"

"Only *thinks* she's dancing," the father **confided to** the world.

"Amazing!" said the unseen woman.

Leo Auffmann blushed. "What an understanding wife".

And then inside the Happiness Machine, Lena Auffmann began to weep.

The inventor's smile faded.

"She's crying," said Naomi.

"She can't be!"

"She is," said Saul.

"She simply can't be crying!" Leo Auffmann, blinking, pressed his ear to the machine. "But … yes… like a baby…"

He could only open the door.

"Wait." There his wife sat, tears rolling down her cheeks. "Let me finish." She cried some more.

Leo Auffmann turned off the machine, stunned.

"Oh, it's the saddest thing in the world!" she wailed. "I feel awful, terrible." She climbed out through the door. "First, there was Paris…"

"What's wrong with Paris?"

"I never even *thought* of being in Paris in my life. But now you got me thinking: Paris! So suddenly I want to be in Paris and I know I'm not!"

"It's almost as good, this machine."

"No. Sitting in there. I knew. I thought, it's not real!"

"Stop crying, Mama."

She looked at him with great dark wet eyes. "You had me dancing. We haven't danced in twenty years."

"I'll take you dancing tomorrow night!"

"No, no! It's not important, it *shouldn't* be important! But your machine says it's important! So I believe! It'll be all right, Leo, after I cry some more."

"What else?"

"What else? The machine says, 'You're young.' I'm not. It lies, that Sadness machine!"

"Sad in what way?"

His wife was quieter now. "Leo, the mistake you made is you forgot some hour, some day, we all got to climb out of that thing and

go back to dirty dishes and beds not made. While you're in that thing, sure, a sunset lasts forever almost, the air smells good, the temperature is fine. All the things you want to last, last. But outside, the children wait on lunch, the clothes need buttons. And then let's be frank, Leo, how long can you *look* at a sunset? Who *wants* a sunset to last? Who wants perfect temperature? Who wants air smelling good always? So after a while, who would notice? Better, for a minute or two, a sunset. After that, let's have something else. People are like that, Leo. How could you forget?"

"Did I?"

"Sunsets we always liked because they only happen once and go away."

"But Lena, that's sad."

"No, if the sunset stayed and we got bored, that would be a real sadness. So two things you did you should never have. You made quick things go slow and stay around. You brought things faraway to our backyard where they don't belong, where they just tell you, 'No, you'll never travel, Lena Auffmann, Paris you'll never see! Rome you'll never visit. 'But I always knew that, so why tell me? Better to forget and make do, Leo, make do, eh?"

Leo Auffmann leaned against the machine for support. He snatched his burned hand away, surprised.

"So now what, Lena?" he said.

"It's not for me to say. I know only so long as this thing is here I'll want to come out, or Saul will want to come out like he did last night, and against our judgment sit in it and look at all those places so far away and every time we will cry and be no fit family for you."

"I don't understand," he said, "how I could be so wrong. Just let me check to see what you say is true." He sat down inside the

machine. “You won’t go away?”

His wife nodded. “We’ll wait, Leo.”

He shut the door. In the warm darkness he hesitated, pressed the button, and was just relaxing back in color and music, when he heard someone screaming.

“Fire, Papa! The machine’s on fire!”

Someone hammered the door. He leaped up, bumped his head, and fell as the door gave way and the boys dragged him out. Behind him he heard a **muffled** explosion. The entire family was running now. Leo Auffmann turned and gasped, “Saul, call the fire department!”

Lena Auffmann caught Saul as he ran. “Saul,” she said. “Wait.”

There was a gush of flame, another muffled explosion. When the machine was burning very well indeed, Lena Auffmann nodded.

“All right, Saul,” she said. “Run call the fire department.”

Everybody who was anybody came to the fire. There was Grandpa Spaulding and Douglas and Tom and most of the boarders and some of the old men from across the ravine and all the children from six blocks around. And Leo Auffmann’s children stood out front, proud of how fine the flames looked jumping from the garage roof.

Grandfather Spaulding studied the smoke ball in the sky and said, quietly, “Leo, was that it? Your Happiness Machine?”

“Some year,” said Leo Auffmann, “I’ll **figure** it and tell you.”

Lena Auffmann, standing in the dark now, watched as the fireman ran in and out of the yard; the garage, roaring, settled upon itself.

“Leo,” she said, “it won’t take a year to figure. Look around. Think.Keep quiet a little bit. Then come tell me. I’ll be in the house, putting books back on shelves, and clothes back in closets, fixing supper, supper’s late, look how dark. Come, children, help Mama.”

When the firemen and the neighbors were gone, Leo Auffmann was left with Grandfather Spaulding and Douglas and Tom, **brooding over** the **smoldering** ruin. He stirred his foot in the wet ashes and slowly said what he had to say.

“The first thing you learn in life is you’re a fool. In one hour, I’ve done a lot of thinking. I thought, Leo Auffmann is blind!

…You want to see the *real* Happiness Machine? The one they patented a couple of thousand years ago, it still runs, not good all the time, no! but it runs. It's been here all along."

"But the fire"-said Douglas.

"Sure, the fire, the garage! But like Lena said, it don't take a year to figure; what burned in the garage don't count!"

They followed him up the front-porch steps.

"Here," whispered Leo Auffmann, "the front window. Quiet, and you'll see it."

And there, in small warm pools of lamplight, you could see what Leo Auffmann wanted you to see. There sat Saul and Marshall, playing chess at the coffee table. In the dining room Rebecca was laying out the silver. Naomi was cutting paper-doll dresses. Ruth was painting watercolors. Joseph was running his electric train. Through the kitchen door, Lena Auffmann was sliding a pot roast from the steaming oven. Every hand, every head, every mouth made a big or little motion. You could hear someone singing in a high sweet voice. You could smell bread baking, too, and you knew it was real bread that would soon be covered with real butter. Everything was there and it was working.

Grandfather, Douglas, and Tom turned to look at Leo Auffmann, who gazed serenely through the window, the pink light on his cheeks.

"Sure," he murmured. "There it is." And he wanted with now-gentle sorrow and now-quick delight, and at last quiet acceptance as all the bits and pieces of this house mixed, stirred, settled, **poised**, and ran steadily again. "The Happiness Machine," he said. "The Happiness Machine."

A moment later he was gone.

Inside, Grandfather, Douglas, and Tom saw him tinkering, make a minor adjustment here, eliminate friction there, busy among all those warm, wonderful, infinitely delicate, forever mysterious, and ever-moving parts.

Then smiling, they went down the steps into the fresh summer night.

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the f words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. What caused the argument between Leo and Lena Auffmann in the opening scene of the story?
2. Leo used a dictionary to find answers to the questions that were troubling his mind. What does it suggest about his character?
3. What did Leo take into consideration while constructing the Happiness Machine?
4. How did the Happiness machine work and what effect did it have on the neighborhood. Find the stylistic devices /p. 62/ and state what picture they help to create.
5. Why didn't Lena Auffmann approve of her husband's efforts? What problems did she expect the Happiness Machine to solve?
6. How did the night incident with Saul affect his father?
7. What made Lena decide to leave her husband after twenty years of marriage?
8. While dividing the community property Lena started sorting out the books as well. Do the titles of the books mentioned imply anything?
9. Describe the feeling Lena Auffmann was overwhelmed by in the Happiness Machine.
10. Why did she call her husband's invention "Sadness Machine"? What did she think Leo failed to take into consideration while constructing the machine?
11. Where is the climax of the story?
12. How did Leo's perception of a real Happiness machine change?

13. At the end of the story Leo Auffmann saw his family as a mechanism or a machine. Pick out all the stylistic devices employed to build that picture.
14. What is the message of the story? Is it explicitly or implicitly stated?
15. What do you make of Leo as a/ an inventor, b/ a husband, c/ a father?
16. Throughout the story Lena mentioned several times that she wasn't complaining. Do you think she is a narrow-minded, nagging woman or what she cares for is vital for feeling happy?
17. Which way of character drawing did Ray Bradbury employ in the story? Do you find it effective?
18. What changes do you see in the main characters of the story? Who is a more dynamic character-Leo or Lena?
19. Comment on the use of italics in the story.
20. Find quotations on happiness. Comment on them and give your own definition of happiness.

C: **Comment on.**

1. "A man who thinks like that, how it runs, how things work, falls off the trapeze in the circus, chokes wondering how the muscles work in the throat."/p.60-61/
2. "Sunsets we always liked because they only happen once and go away."/p.67/

D: Suggestions for Writing.

1. "Could or should a Happiness Machine ever be built?"
2. What is your own perception of happiness?

John Steinbeck (1902-1968)

John Steinbeck, born in Salinas, California came from a family of moderate means. He attended Stanford University between 1919 and 1923, but never received a degree. In 1925 he went to New York where he tried for a few years to establish himself as a free-lance writer, but he failed and returned to California.

After publishing some novels and short stories, Steinbeck first became widely known with “Tortilla Flat” (1935), a story about Monterey peasants. After the rough and earthy humour of “Tortilla Flat”, he moved on to more serious fiction, often aggressive in its social criticism, to a “Dubious Battle” (1936) which deals with the strikes of the migratory fruit pickers on California plantations. This was followed by “Of Mice and Men” (1937), the story of the imbecile giant Lennie, and a series of admirable short stories collected in the volume “The Long Valley” (1938). In 1939 he published one of his best and most famous works, “The Grapes of Wrath”, which tells the story of the Joads, a poor Oklahoma farming family who move to California in search of a better life. “The Grapes of Wrath” won the 1940 Pulitzer Prize and a successful movie version of the novel was also made. John Steinbeck received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962.

Steinbeck’s novels can all be classified as social novels dealing with the economic problems of rural people and their constant struggle for survival. Among his later works should be mentioned “East of Eden” (1952), “The Winter of Our Discontent” (1961), and “Travels with Charley”(1962), a travelogue in which Steinbeck wrote about his impressions during a three-month tour in a truck that led him through forty American states. In his later years he traveled extensively and worked as a journalist as well as a fiction writer.

He died in New York City in 1968.

Molly Morgan

Molly Morgan got off the train in Salinas and waited three quarters of an hour for the bus. The big automobile was empty except for the driver and Molly.

“I've never been to the Pastures of Heaven, you know,” she said. “Is it far from the main road?”

“About three miles,” said the driver.

"Will there be a car to take me into the valley?"
"No, not unless you're met."
"But how do people get in there?"

The driver ran over the flattened body of a jack rabbit with apparent satisfaction. "I only hit 'em when they're dead," he apologized. "In the dark, when they get caught in the lights, I try to miss 'em."

"Yes, but how am I going to get into the Pastures of Heaven?"

"I dunno. Walk, I guess. Most people walk if they ain't met."

When he set her down at the entrance to the dirt side road, Molly Morgan grimly picked up her suitcase and marched toward the draw in the hills. An old Ford truck **squeaked** up beside her.

"Goin' into the valley, ma'am?"

"Oh-yes, yes, I am."

"Well, get in, then. Needn't be scared. I'm Pat Humbert. I got a place in the Pastures."

Molly **surveyed** the grimy man and acknowledged his introduction. "I'm the new schoolteacher. I mean, I think I am. Do you know where Mr. Whiteside lives?"

"Sure, I go right by there. He's clerk of the board. I'm on the

school board myself, you know. We wondered what you'd look like." Then he grew embarrassed at what he had said, and flushed under his coating of dirt. "Course I mean what you'd *be* like. Last teacher we had gave a good deal of trouble. She was all right, but she was sick-I mean, sick and nervous. Finally quit because she was sick."

Molly picked at the finger tips of her gloves. "My letter says I'm to call on Mr. Whiteside. Is he all right? I don't mean that. I mean-is he-what kind of a man is he?"

"Oh, you'll get along with him all right. He's a fine old man. Born in that house he lives in. Been to college, too. He's a good man. Been clerk of the board for over twenty years."

When he put her down in front of the big old house of John Whiteside, she was really frightened. "Now it's coming," she said to herself. "But there's nothing to be afraid of. He can't do anything to me." Molly was only nineteen. She felt that this moment of interview for her first job was a tremendous inch in her whole existence.

The walk up to the door did not reassure her, for the path lay between tight little flower beds hedged in with clipped box, seemingly planted with the **admonition**, "Now grow and multiply, but don't grow too high, nor multiply too greatly, and above all things, keep out of this path!" There was a hand on those flowers, a guiding and a correcting hand. The large white house was very dignified. Venetian blinds of yellow wood were tilted down to keep out the noon sun. Halfway up the path she came in sight of the entrance. There was a veranda as broad and warm and welcoming as an embrace. Through her mind flew the thought, "Surely you can tell the hospitality of a house by its entrance. Suppose it had a little door and no porch." But in spite of the welcoming of the wide steps and the big doorway, her **timidities** clung to her when she rang the bell. The big door opened, and a large, comfortable woman stood smiling at Molly.

"I hope you're not selling something," said Mrs. Whiteside. "I never want to buy anything, and I always do, and then I'm mad."

Molly laughed. She felt suddenly very happy. Until that moment she hadn't known how frightened she really was. "Oh, no," she cried. "I'm the new schoolteacher. My letter says I'm to interview Mr. Whiteside. Can I see him?"

"Well, it's noon, and he's just finishing his dinner. Did you

have dinner?”

“Oh, of course. I mean, no.”

Mrs. Whiteside chuckled and stood aside for her to enter. “Well, I'm glad you're sure.” She led Molly into a large dining room, lined with mahogany, glass-fronted dish closets. The square table was littered with the dishes of a meal. “Why, John must have finished and gone. Sit down, young woman. I'll bring back the roast.”

“Oh, no. Really, thank you, no. I'll just talk to Mr. Whiteside and then go along.”

“Sit down. You'll need nourishment to face John.”

“Is-is he very stern, with new teachers, I mean?”

“Well,” said Mrs. Whiteside. “That depends. If they haven't had their dinner, he's a regular bear. He shouts at them. But when they've just got up from the table, he's only just fierce.”

Molly laughed happily. “You have children,” she said. “Oh, you've raised lots of children-and you like them.”

Mrs. Whiteside **scowled**. “One child raised me. Raised me right through the roof. It was too hard on me. He's out raising cows now, poor devil. I don't think I raised him very high.”

When Molly had finished eating, Mrs. Whiteside threw open a side door and called, “John, here's someone to see you.” She pushed Molly through the doorway into a room that was a kind of a library, for big bookcases were loaded with thick, old comfortable books, all filigreed in gold. And it was a kind of a sitting room. There was a fireplace of brick with a mantel of little red tile bricks and the most extraordinary vases on the mantel. Hung on a nail over the mantel, slung really, like a rifle on a shoulder strap, was a huge meerschaum pipe in the Jaeger[1] fashion. Big leather chairs, with leather tassels hanging to them, stood about the fireplace, all of them patent rocking chairs with the kind of springs that chant when you rock them. And lastly, the room was a kind of an office, for there was an old-fashioned roll-top desk, and behind it sat John Whiteside. When he looked up, Molly saw that he had at once the kindest and the sternest eyes she had ever seen, and the whitest hair, too. Real blue-white,

[1] Jaeger: literally, a huntsman; here, a German-style pipe.

silky hair, a great duster of it.

"I am Mary Morgan," she began formally.

"Oh, yes, Miss Morgan, I've been expecting you. Won't you sit down?"

She sat down in one of the big rockers, and the springs cried with sweet pain. "I love these chairs," she said. "We used to have one when I was a little girl." Then she felt silly. "I've come to interview you about this position. My letter said to do that."

"Don't be tense, Miss Morgan. I've interviewed every teacher we've had for years. And," he said, smiling, "I still don't know how to go about it."

"Oh-I'm glad, Mr. Whiteside. I never asked for a job before. I was really afraid of it."

"Well, Miss Mary Morgan, as near as I can figure, the purpose of this interview is to give me a little knowledge of your past and of the kind of person you are. I'm supposed to know something about you when you've finished. And now that you know my purpose, I suppose you'll be self-conscious and anxious to give a good impression. Maybe if you just tell me a little about yourself, everything'll be all right. Just a few words about the kind of girl you are, and where you came from."

Molly nodded quickly. "Yes, I'll try to do that, Mr. Whiteside," and she dropped her mind back into the past.

*There was the old, **squalid**, unpainted house with its wide back porch and the round washtubs leaning against the rail. High in the great willow tree her two brothers, Joe and Tom, crashed about crying, "Now I'm an eagle." "I'm a parrot." "Now I'm an old chicken." "Watch me!"*

The screen door on the back porch opened, and their mother leaned tiredly out. Her hair would not lie smoothly no matter how much she combed it. Thick strings of it hung down beside her face. Her eyes were always a little red, and her hands and wrists painfully cracked. "Tom, Joe," she called. "You'll get hurt up there. Don't worry me so, boys! Don't you love your mother at all?" The voices in the tree were hushed. The shrieking spirits of the eagle and the old chicken were drenched in self-reproach. Molly sat in the dust, wrapping a rag around a stick and doing her best to imagine it a tall

lady in a dress. “Molly, come in and stay with your mother. I'm so tired today.”

Molly stood up the stick in the deep dust. “You, miss,” she whispered fiercely. “You'll get whipped when I come back.” Then she obediently went into the house.

Her mother sat in a straight chair in the kitchen, “Draw up, Molly. Just sit with me for a little while. Love me, Molly! Love your mother a little bit. You are mother's good little girl, aren't you?” Molly ***squirmed*** *on her chair. “Don't you love your mother, Molly?”*

The little girl was very miserable. She knew her mother would cry in a moment, and then she would be compelled to stroke the ***stringy*** *hair. Both she and her brothers knew they should love their mother. She did everything for them, everything. They were ashamed that they hated to be near her, but they couldn't help it. When she called to them and they were not in sight, they pretended not to hear, and crept away, talking in whispers.*

“Well, to begin with, we were very poor,” Molly said to John Whiteside. “I guess we were really poverty-stricken. I had two brothers a little older than I. My father was a traveling salesman, but even so, my mother had to work. She worked terribly hard for us.”

About once in every six months a great event occurred. In the morning the mother crept silently out of the bedroom. Her hair was brushed as smoothly as it could be; her eyes sparkled, and she looked happy and almost pretty. She whispered, "Quiet, children! Your father’s home.”

Molly and her brothers sneaked out of the house, but even in the yard they talked in excited whispers. The news traveled quickly about the neighborhood. Soon the yard was filled with whispering children. “They say their father's home.” “Is your father really home?” “Where's he been this time?” By noon there were a dozen children in the yard, standing in expectant little groups, cautioning one another to be quiet.

About noon the screen door on the porch sprang open and whacked against the wall. Their father leaped out. “Hi,” he yelled. “Hi, kids!” Molly and her brothers flung themselves upon him and hugged his legs, while he plucked them off and hurled them into the air like kittens.

Mrs. Morgan fluttered about, ***clucking*** *with excitement.*

"Children, children. Don't muss your father's clothes."

The neighbor children threw handsprings and wrestled and shrieked with joy. It was better than any holiday.

"Wait till you see," their father cried. "Wait till you see what I brought you. It's a secret now." And when the hysteria had quieted a little, he carried his suitcase out on the porch and opened it. There were presents such as no one had ever seen, mechanical toys unknown before-tin bugs that crawled and astounding steam shovels that worked in sand. There were superb glass marbles with bears and dogs right in their centers. He had something for everyone, several things for everyone. It was all the great holidays packed into one.

Usually it was midafternoon before the children became calm enough not to shriek occasionally. But eventually George Morgan sat on the steps, and they all gathered about while he told his adventures. This time he had been to Mexico while there was a revolution. Again he had gone to Honolulu, had seen the volcano, and had himself ridden on a surfboard. Always there were cities and people, strange people; always adventures and a hundred funny incidents, funnier than anything they had ever heard. It couldn't all be told at one time. After school they had to gather to hear more and more. Throughout the world George Morgan tramped, collecting glorious adventures.

"As far as my home life went," Miss Morgan said, "I guess I almost didn't have any father. He was able to get home very seldom from his business trips."

John Whiteside nodded gravely.

Molly's hands rustled in her lap and her eyes were dim.

One time he brought a dumpy, woolly puppy in a box.

"What kind of a dog is it?" Tom asked in his most sophisticated manner.

Their father laughed loudly. He was so young! He looked twenty years younger than their mother. "It's a dollar and a half dog," he explained. "You get an awful lot of kinds of dog for a dollar and a half. It's like

this. . . . Suppose you go into a candy store and say, 'I want a nickel's worth of peppermints and gumdrops and licorice and raspberry chews,' Well, I went in and said, 'Give me a dollar and a half's worth of mixed dog.' That's the kind it is. It's Molly's dog; and she has to name it."

"I'm going to name it George," said Molly.

Her father bowed strangely to her, and said, "Thank you, Molly." They all noticed that he wasn't laughing at her, either.

Molly got up very early the next morning and took George about the yard to show him the secrets. She opened the hoard where two pennies and a gold policeman's button were buried. She hooked his little front paws over the back fence so he could look down the street at the schoolhouse. Lastly she climbed into the willow tree, carrying George under one arm. Tom came out of the house and sauntered under the tree. "Look out you don't drop him," Tom called, and just at that moment the puppy squirmed out of her arms and fell. He landed on the hard ground with a disgusting little thump. One leg bent out at a crazy angle, and the puppy screamed long, horrible screams, with sobs between breaths. Molly scrambled out of the tree, dull and stunned by the accident. Tom was standing over the puppy, his face white and twisted with pain, and George, the puppy, screamed on and on.

"We can't let him," Tom cried. "We can't let him." He ran to the woodpile and brought back a hatchet. Molly was too stupefied to look away, but Tom closed his eyes and struck. The screams stopped suddenly. Tom threw the hatchet from him and leaped over the back fence. Molly saw him running away as though he were being chased.

At that moment Joe and her father came out of the back door. Molly remembered how ***haggard*** *and thin and gray her father's face was when he looked at the puppy. It was something in her father's face that started Molly to crying. "I dropped him out of the tree, and he hurt himself and Tom hit him, and then Tom ran away." Her voice sounded sulky. Her father hugged Molly's head against his hip.*

"Poor Tom!" he said. "Molly, you must remember never to say anything to Tom about it, and never to look at him as though you remembered." He threw a gunny sack over the puppy. "We must have a funeral," he said. "Did I ever tell you about the Chinese

funeral I went to, about the colored paper they throw in the air, and the little fat roast pigs on the grave?" Joe edged in closer and even Molly's eyes took on a gleam of interest. "Well, it was this way. ..."

Molly looked up at John Whiteside and saw that he seemed to be studying a piece of paper on his desk. "When I was twelve years old, my father was killed in an accident," she said.

The great visits usually lasted about two weeks. Always there came an afternoon when George Morgan walked out into the town and did not come back until late at night. The mother made the children go to bed early, but they could hear him come home, stumbling a little against the furniture, and they could hear his voice through the wall. These were the only times when his voice was sad and discouraged. Lying with held breaths, in their beds, the children knew what that meant. In the morning he would be gone, and their hearts would be gone with him.

They had endless discussions about what he was doing. Their father was a glad argonaut[1]*, a silver knight. Virtue and Courage and Beauty-he wore a coat of them. "Sometime," the boys said, "sometime when we're big, we'll go with him and see all those things."*

"I'll go, too," Molly insisted.

"Oh, you're a girl. You couldn't go, you know."

"But he'd let me go, and you know he would. Sometime he'll take me with him. You see if he doesn't."

When he was gone their mother grew ***plaintive*** *again, and her eyes reddened.* ***Querulously*** *she demanded their love, as though it were a package they could put in her hand.*

One time their father went away, and he never came back. He had never sent any money, nor had he ever written to them, but this time he just disappeared for good. For two years they waited, and then their mother said he must be dead. The children shuddered at the thought, but they refused to believe it, because no one so beautiful and fine as their father could be dead. Some place in the world he was having adventures. There was some good reason why he couldn't come back to them. Some day when the reason was gone,

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[1] Argonaut: wanderer. The Argonauts of Greek mythology sailed in the ship Argo in search of the Golden Fleece.

he would come. Some morning he would be there with finer presents and better stories than ever before. But their mother said he must have had an accident. He must be dead. Their mother was distracted. She read those advertisements which offered to help her make money at home. The children made paper flowers and shamefacedly tried to sell them. The boys tried to develop magazine routes, and the whole family nearly starved. Finally when they couldn't stand it any longer, the boys ran away and joined the navy. After that Molly saw them as seldom as she had seen her father, and they were so changed, so hard and ***boisterous****, that she didn't even care, for her brothers were strangers to her.*

"I went through high school, and then I went to San Jose and entered Teachers' College. I worked for my board and room at the home of Mrs. Allen Morit. Before I finished school my mother died, so I guess I'm a kind of an orphan, you see."

"I'm sorry," John Whiteside murmured gently.

Molly flushed. 'That wasn't **a bid for** sympathy, Mr. Whiteside. You said you wanted to know about me. Everyone has to be an orphan some time."

"Yes," he agreed. "I'm an orphan too, I guess."

Molly worked for her board and room. She did the work of a full-time servant, only she received no pay. Money for clothes had to be accumulated by working in a store during summer vacation. Mrs. Morit trained her girls. "I can take a green girl, not worth a cent," she often said, "and when that girl's worked for me six months, she can get fifty dollars a month. Lots of women know it, and they just snap up my girls. This is the first schoolgirl I've tried, but even she shows a lot of improvement. She reads too much though. I always say a servant girl should be asleep by ten o'clock, or else she can't do her work right."

Mrs. Morit's method was one of constant criticism and ***nagging****, carried on in a just, firm tone. "Now, Molly, I don't want to find fault, but if you don't wipe the silver drier than that, it'll have streaks."—"The butter knife goes this way, Molly. Then you can put the tumbler here."*

"I always give a reason for everything," she told her friends.

In the evening, after the dishes were washed, Molly sat on her bed and studied, and when the light was off, she lay on her bed and

thought of her father. It was ridiculous to do it, she knew. It was a waste of time. Her father came up to the door, wearing a cutaway coat, and striped trousers and a top hat. He carried a huge bouquet of red roses in his hand. "I couldn't come before, Molly. Get on your coat quickly. First we're going down to get that evening dress in the window of Prussia's, but we'll have to hurry. I have tickets for the train to New York tonight. Hurry up, Molly! Don't stand there ***gawping****." It was silly. Her father was dead. No, she didn't really believe he was dead. Somewhere in the world he lived beautifully, and sometime he would come back.*

Molly told one of her friends at school, "I don't really believe it, you see, but I don't disbelieve it. If I ever knew he was dead, why it would be awful. I don't know what I'd do then. I don't want to think about knowing he's dead."

When her mother died, she felt little besides shame. Her mother had wanted so much to be loved, and she hadn't known how to draw love. Her ***importunities*** *had bothered the children and driven them away.*

"Well, that's about all," Molly finished. "I got my diploma, and then I was sent down here,"

"It was about the easiest interview I ever had," John Whiteside said.

"Do you think I'll get the position, then?"

The old man gave a quick, twinkly glance at the big meerschaum hanging over the mantel.

"That's his friend," Molly thought. "He has secrets with that pipe."

"Yes, I think you'll get the job. I think you have it already. Now, Miss Morgan, where are you going to live? You must find board and room some place."

Before she knew she was going to say it, she had **blurted**, "I want to live here."

John Whiteside opened his eyes in astonishment. "But we never take boarders, Miss Morgan."

"Oh, I'm sorry I said that. I just liked it so much here, you see."

He called, "Willa," and when his wife stood in the half-open door, "This young lady wants to board with us. She's the new

teacher.”

Mrs. Whiteside frowned. “Couldn't think of it. We never take boarders. She's too pretty to be around that fool of a Bill. What would happen to those cows of his? It'd be a lot of trouble. You can sleep in the third bedroom upstairs,” she said to Molly. “It doesn't catch much sun anyway.”

Life changed its face. All of a sudden Molly found she was a queen. From the first day the children of the school adored her, for she understood them, and what was more, she let them understand her. It took her some time to realize that she had become an important person. If two men got to arguing at the store about a point of history or literature or mathematics, and the argument **deadlocked**, it ended up, “Take it to the teacher! If she doesn't know, she'll find it.” Molly was very proud to be able to decide such questions. At parties she had to help with the decorations and to plan refreshments.

“I think we'll put pine boughs around everywhere. They're pretty, and they smell so good. They smell like a party.” She was supposed to know everything and to help with everything, and she loved it.

At the Whiteside home she slaved in the kitchen under the mutterings of Willa. At the end of six months, Mrs. Whiteside grumbled to her husband, “Now if Bill only had any sense. But then,” she continued, "“if *she* has any sense—” and there she left it.

At night Molly wrote letters to the few friends she had made in Teachers' College, letters full of little stories about her neighbors, and full of joy. She must attend every party because of the social prestige of her position. On Saturdays she ran about the hills and brought back ferns and wildflowers to plant about the house.

Bill Whiteside took one look at Molly and scuttled back to his

cows. It was a long time before he found the courage to talk to her very much. He was a big, simple young man who had neither his father's balance nor his mother's humor. Eventually, however, he trailed after Molly and looked after her from distances.

One evening, with a kind of feeling of thanksgiving for her happiness, Molly told Bill about her father. They were sitting in canvas chairs on the wide veranda, waiting for the moon. She told him about the visits, and then about the disappearance. “Do you see what I have, Bill?” she cried. “My lovely father is someplace. He's mine. You think he's living, don't you, Bill?”

“Might be,” said Bill. “From what you say, he was a kind of an irresponsible cuss, though. Excuse me, Molly. Still, if he's alive, it's funny he never wrote.”

Molly felt cold. It was just the kind of reasoning she had successfully avoided for so long. “Of course,” she said stiffly, “I know that. I have to do some work now, Bill.”

The year wheeled around. Pussywillows had their kittens, and wildflowers covered the hills. Molly found herself wanted and needed in the valley. She even attended school board meetings. There had been a time when those secret and **august** conferences were held behind closed doors, a mystery and a terror to everyone. Now that Molly was asked to step into John Whiteside's sitting room, she found that the board discussed crops, told stories, and circulated mild gossip.

Bert Munroe had been elected early in the fall, and by the springtime he was the most energetic member. He it was who planned dances at the schoolhouse, who insisted upon having plays and picnics. He even offered prizes for the best report cards in the school. The board was coming to rely pretty much on Bert Munroe.

One evening Molly came down late from her room. As always, when the board was meeting, Mrs. Whiteside sat in the dining room. “I don't think I’II go in to the meeting," Molly said. “Let them have one time to themselves.”

“You go on in, Molly! They can't hold a board meeting without yon. They're so used to you, they'd be lost.”

Obediently Molly knocked on the door and went into the sitting room. Bert Munroe paused politely in the story he was narrating. “I was just telling about my new farm hand, Miss

Morgan. I’ll start over again, 'cause it's kind of funny. You see, I needed a hay hand, and I picked this fellow up under the Salinas River bridge. He was pretty drunk, but he wanted a job. Now I've got him, I find he isn't worth a cent as a hand, but I can't get rid of him. That son of a gun has been every place. You ought to hear him tell about the places he's been. My kids wouldn't let me get rid of him if I wanted to. Why, he can take the littlest thing he's seen and make a fine story out of it. My kids just sit around with their ears spread, listening to him. Well, about twice a month he walks into Salinas and goes on a bust. He's one of those dirty, periodic drunks. The Salinas cops always call me up when they find him in a gutter, and I have to drive in to get him. And you know when he comes out of it, he's always got some kind of present in his pocket for my kid Manny. There's nothing you can do with a man like that. He disarms you. I don't get a dollar's worth of work a month out of him.”

Molly felt a sick **dread** rising in her. Then men were laughing at the story. “You're too soft, Bert. You can't afford to keep an entertainer on the place. I'd sure get rid of him quick.”

Molly stood up. She was dreadfully afraid someone would ask the man's name. “I'm not feeling very well tonight,” she said. “If you gentlemen will excuse me, I think I'll go to bed.” The men stood up while she left the room. In her bed she buried her head in the pillow. “It's crazy,” she said to herself. “There isn't a chance in the world. I'm forgetting all about it right now.” But she found **to her dismay** that she was crying.

The next few weeks were agonizing to Molly. She was reluctant to leave the house. Walking to and from school she watched the road ahead of her. “If I see any kind of a stranger I'll run away. But that's foolish. I'm being a fool.” Only in her own room did she feel safe. Her terror was making her lose color, was taking the glint out of her eyes.

“Molly, you ought to go to bed,” Mrs. Whiteside insisted. “Don't be a little idiot. Do I have **to smack** you the way I do Bill to make you go to bed?” But Molly would not go to bed. She thought too many things when she was in bed.

The next time the board met, Bert Munroe did not appear. Molly felt reassured and almost happy at his absence.

“You're feeling better aren't you, Miss Morgan?”

“Oh, yes. It was only a little thing, a kind of a cold. If I'd gone to bed I might have been really sick.”

The meeting was an hour gone before Bert Munroe came in. “Sorry to be late,” he apologized. “The same old thing happened. My so-called hay hand was asleep in the street in Salinas. What a mess! He's out in the car sleeping it off now. I'll have to hose the car out tomorrow.”

Molly's throat closed with terror. For a second she thought she was going to faint. “Excuse me, I must go,” she cried, and ran out of the room. She walked into the dark hallway and steadied herself against the wall. Then slowly and automatically she marched out of the front door and down the steps. The night was filled with whispers. Out in the road she could see the black mass that was Bert Munroe's car. She was surprised at the way her footsteps plodded down the path **of their own volition**. “Now I'm killing myself,” she said. “Now I'm throwing everything away. I wonder why.” The gate was under her hand, and her hand flexed to open it. Then a tiny breeze sprang up and brought to her nose the sharp foulness of vomit. She heard a blubbering, drunken snore. Instantly something whirled in her head. Molly **spun** around and ran frantically back to the house. In her room she locked the door and sat stiffly down, panting with the effort of her run. It seemed hours before she heard the men go out of the house, calling their good nights. Then Bert's motor started, and the sound of it died away down the road. Now that she was ready to go, she felt paralyzed.

John Whiteside was writing at his desk when Molly entered the sitting room. He looked up questioningly at her. “You aren't well, Miss Morgan. You need a doctor.”

She planted herself woodenly beside the desk. “Could you get a substitute teacher for me?” she asked.

“Of course I could. You pile right into bed and I'll call a doctor.”

“It isn't that, Mr. Whiteside. I want to go away tonight.”

“What are you talking about? You aren't well.”

“I told you my father was dead. I don't know whether he's dead or not. I'm afraid —I want to go away tonight.”

He stared intently at her. “Tell me what you mean,” he said

softly.

"If I should see that drunken man of Mr. Munroe's—" she paused, suddenly terrified at what she was about to say.

John Whiteside nodded very slowly.

"No," she cried. "I don't think that. I'm sure I don't."

"I'd like to do something, Molly."

"I don't want to go, I love it here—But I'm afraid. It's so important to me."

John Whiteside stood up and came close to her and put his arm about her shoulders. "I don't think I understand, quite," he said. "I don't think I want to understand. That isn't necessary," He seemed to be talking to himself. "It wouldn't be quite **courteous**-to understand."

"Once I'm away I'll be able not to believe it," Molly whimpered.

He gave her shoulders one quick squeeze with his encircling arm. "You run upstairs and pack your things, Molly," he said. "I'll get out the car and drive you right into Salinas now."

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. How is Molly first introduced in the story? What is the aim of her journey?
2. Describe Molly's feelings on her way to the Pastures of Heaven?
3. "You could tell the hospitality of a house by its entrance", thought Molly standing on the Whitesides' threshold. Did the reception she was given come up to her expectations?
4. What information about her background did Molly give at the interview with Mr. Whiteside? What technique is used to build the complete picture of Molly's past?

5. What recollections of her parents did Molly have? Speak on their roles in the children's life.
6. What made Molly's father a romantic figure, even though he was obviously a failure as a provider for his family?
7. The story tells us, "Their father was a glad Argonaut, a silver knight. Virtue and Courage and Beauty–he wore a coat of them."/p.80/ Do you think that the author intends this as irony? Why or why not?
8. How does the episode with the puppy characterize Molly, Tom and their father? What does it symbolize?
9. Describe Molly's life after her father's disappearance.
10. "It was about the easiest interview I ever had," John Whiteside said. Was it an easy one for Molly, too?
11. Account for Molly's wild wish to stay with the Whitesides. Why did Mr. Whiteside appeal to Molly? Contrast his character with that of her father.
12. Do you think the name Pastures of Heaven fits the place it denotes? How did "life change its face" as Molly settled in the Pastures of Heaven? How did these changes affect her self-esteem?
13. What spoiled Molly's pastoral "holiday" in the valley?
14. Explain Molly's abrupt decision to flee from the valley. How does this step characterize her?
15. What did Mr. Whiteside mean by saying "I don't think I understand. That isn't necessary. It wouldn't be quite courteous–to understand."?/p.87/ Why didn't he keep Molly from escaping?
16. Point out the climax of the story.
17. Does the story have a surprise ending?
18. Explain the theme of the story. Is it of social or personal significance?

C: Suggestions for Writing.

Some people choose to look the problem in the face, while others think that escaping the gloomy reality is the best solution to their problem. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these two attitudes?

John Cheever (1912-1982)

John Cheever, an American short story writer and novelist, was born in 1912 in Massachusetts, USA. He was educated in England.

John Cheever's first short story was published when he was sixteen. Later he published five collections of short stories and some satirical novels. The first of his novels, "The Wapshot Chronicle", received the National Book Award in 1958; "The Wapshot Scandal", published early in 1964, was an immediate critical success. He won the 1940 Pulitzer Prize for fiction for "The Stories of John Cheever"(1978).

Cheever's typical characters are the descendants of genteel old American families or the inhabitants of comfortable, upper middle-class suburbia. He wrote about these people in a style that is both lyrical and slightly ironic. He often created characters that attempt to disrupt their seemingly tranquil lives to pursue some kind of personal satisfaction. Their attempts end partly in defeat and partly in success.

The Enormous Radio

Jim and Irene Westcott were the kind of people who seem to strike that satisfactory average of income, **endeavor**, and respectability that is reached by the statistical reports in college alumni bulletins. They were the parents of two young children, they had been married nine years, they lived on the twelfth floor of an apartment house near Sutton Place[1], they went to the theatre on an average of 10.3 times a year, and they hoped some day to live in Westchester[2]. Irene Westcott was a pleasant, rather plain girl with soft brown hair and a wide, fine forehead upon which nothing at all had been written and in the cold weather she wore a coal of fitch skins dyed to resemble mink. You could not say that Jim Westcott looked younger than he was, but you could at least say of him that lie

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[1] Sutton Place—a street on the East Side of New York city where many wealthy people reside

[2] Westchester—a county southeast of New York, the residence of the rich and fashionable

seemed to feel younger. He wore his graying hair cut very short, he dressed in the kind of clothes his class had worn at Andover; and his manner was earnest, **vehement**, and intentionally naive. The Westcotts differed from their friends, their classmates, and their neighbors only in an interest they shared in serious music. They went to a great many concerts — although they seldom mentioned this to anyone — and they spent a good deal of time listening to music on the radio.

Their radio was an old instrument, sensitive, unpredictable, and beyond repair, neither of them understood the mechanics of radio —or of any of the other appliances that surrounded them-and when the instrument **faltered**, Jim would strike the side of the cabinet with his hand. This sometimes helped. One Sunday afternoon, in the middle of a Schubert quartet, the music faded away altogether. Jim struck the cabinet repeatedly, but there was no response; the Schubert was lost to them forever. He promised to buy Irene a new radio, and on Monday when he came home from work he told her that he had got one. He refused to describe it, and said it would be a surprise for her when it came.

The radio was delivered at the kitchen door the following afternoon, and with the assistance of her maid and the handyman Irene uncrated it and brought it into the living room. She was struck at once with the physical ugliness of the large gumwood cabinet. Irene was proud of her living room, she had chosen its furnishings and colours as carefully as she chose her clothes, and now it seemed to her that the new radio stood among her intimate possessions like an aggressive intruder. She was **confounded** by the number of dials and switches on the instrument panel, and she studied them thoroughly before she put the plug into a wall socket and turned the radio on. The dials flooded with a **malevolent** green light and in the distance she

heard the music of a piano quintet. The quintet was in the distance for only an instant; it **bore down upon** her with a speed greater than light and filled the apartment -with the noise of music **amplified** so mightily that it knocked a china ornament from a table to the floor. She rushed to the instrument and reduced the volume. The violent forces that were **snared** in the ugly gumwood cabinet made her uneasy. Her children came home from school then, and she took them to the Park. It was not until later in the afternoon that she was able to return to the radio.

The maid had given the children their suppers and was supervising their baths when Irene turned on the radio, reduced the volume, and sat down to listen to a Mozart quintet that she knew and enjoyed. The music came through clearly. The new instrument had a much purer tone, she thought, than the old one. She decided that tone was most important and that she could conceal the cabinet behind a sofa. But as soon as she had **made her peace with** the radio, the interference began. A crackling sound like the noise of a burning powder fuse began to accompany the singing of the strings. Beyond the music, there was a rustling that reminded Irene unpleasantly of the sea, and as the quintet progressed, these noises were joined by many others. She tried all the dials and switches but nothing dimmed the interference, and she sat down, disappointed and bewildered, and tried to trace the flight of the melody. The elevator shaft in her building ran beside the living room wall, and it was the noise of the elevator that **gave her a clue to** the character of the static. The rattling of the elevator cables and the opening and closing of the elevator doors were reproduced in her loudspeaker, and realizing that the radio was sensitive to electrical currents of all sort, she began **to discern** through the Mozart the ringing of telephone bells, the dialing of phones, and the lamentation of a vacuum cleaner. By listening more carefully, she was able to distinguish doorbells, elevator bells, electric razors, and Waring mixers,[1] whose sounds had been picked up from the apartments that surrounded hers and transmitted through her loudspeaker. The powerful and ugly instrument, with its mistaken sensitivity to

[1] Waring mixers—the trade name of utensils for mixing cooking ingredients

discord, was more than she could hope to master, so she turned the thing off and went into the nursery to see her children.

When Jim Westcott came home that night, he went to the radio confidently and worked the controls. He had the same sort of experience Irene had had. A man was speaking on the station Jim had chosen, and his voice swung instantly from the distance into a force so powerful that it shook the apartment. Jim turned the volume control and reduced the voice. Then, a minute or two later, the interference began. The ringing of telephones and doorbells set in, joined by the rasp of the elevator doors and the whir of cooking appliances. The character of the noise had changed since Irene had tried the radio earlier; the last of the electric razors was being unplugged, the vacuum cleaners had all been returned to their closets, and the static reflected that change in pace that overtakes the city after the sun goes down. He **fiddled with** the knobs but couldn't get rid of the noises, so he turned the radio off and told Irene that in the morning he'd call the people who had sold it to him and **give them hell**.

The following afternoon, when Irene returned to the apartment from a luncheon date, the maid told her that a man had come and fixed the radio. Irene went into the living room before she took off her hat or her furs and tried the instrument. From the loudspeaker came a recording of the "Missouri Waltz". It reminded her of the thin, scratchy music from an old-fashioned phonograph that she sometimes heard across the lake where she spent her summers. She waited until the waltz had finished, expecting an explanation of the recording, but there was none. The music was followed by silence, and then the plaintive and scratchy record was repeated. She turned the dial and got a satisfactory burst of Caucasian music-the thump of bare feet in the dust and the rattle of coin jewelry-but in the background she could hear the ringing of bells and a confusion of voices. Her children came home from school then, and she turned off the radio and went to the nursery.

When Jim came home that night, he was tired, and he took a bath and changed his clothes. Then he joined Irene in the living room. He had just turned on the radio when the maid announced dinner, so he left it on, and he and Irene went to the table.

Jim was too tired **to make** even **a pretense of** sociability,

and there was nothing about the dinner to hold Irene's interest, so her attention wandered from the food to the deposits of silver polish on the candlesticks and from there to the music in the other room. She listened for a few moments to a Chopin prelude and then was surprised to hear a man's voice break in. “For Christ's sake, Kathy,” he said, “do you always have to play the piano when I get home?” The music stopped abruptly. “It's the only chance I have,” a woman said. “I'm at the office all day.” “So am I,” the man said. He added something **obscene** about an upright piano, and slammed a door. The passionate and melancholy music began again.

“Did you hear that?” Irene asked.

“What?” Jim was eating his dessert.

“The radio. A man said something while the music was still going on-something dirty.”

“It's probably a play.”

“I don't think it is a play,” Irene said.

They left the table and took their coffee into the living room. Irene asked Jim to try another station. He turned the knob. “Have you seen my garters?” a man asked. “Button me up,” a woman said. “Have you seen my garters?” the man said again. “Just button me up and I'll find your garters,” the woman said. Jim shifted to another station. “I wish you wouldn't leave apple cores in the ash-trays,” a man said. “I hate the smell.”

“This is strange,” Jim said.

“Isn't it?” Irene said.

Jim turned the knob again. “On the coast of Coromandel where the early pumpkins blow,”[1] a woman with a pronounced English accent said, “in the middle of the woods lived the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo: Two old chairs, and half a candle, one old jug without a handle...”

“My God!” Irene cried. “'That's the Sweeneys' nurse.”

“These were all his worldly goods,” the British voice

[1] “On the Coast of Coromandel… one old jug without a handle…”—here and further the Sweeneys ' nurse is reading a few stanzas from the “Courtship of the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo”, a poem by Edward Lear (1812-1888), English poet, famous for his “ Book of Nonsense”

continued.

"Turn that thing off," Irene said. "Maybe they can hear us."

Jim switched the radio off. "That was Miss Armstrong, the Sweeneys' nurse," Irene said. "She must be reading to the little girl. They live in 17-B. I've talked with Miss Armstrong in the Park. I know her voice very well. We must be getting other people's apartments."

"That's impossible," Jim said.

"Well, that was the Sweeneys' nurse," Irene said hotly. "I know her voice. I know it very well. I'm wondering if they can hear us."

Jim turned the switch. First from a distance and then nearer, nearer, as if borne on the wind, came the pure accents of the Sweeneys' nurse again: "*Lady Jingly! Lady Jingly!*" she said, "Sitting *where the pumpkins blow, will you come and be my wife,* **s**aid the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo..."

Jim went over to the radio and said "Hello" loudly into the speaker.

"I am tired of living singly," the nurse went on, "*on this coast so wild and shingly, I'm a-weary of my life; if you'll come and be my wife, quite serene would be my life..."*

"I guess she can't hear us," Irene said. "Try something else."

Jim turned to another station, and the living room was filled with the uproar of a cocktail party that had **overshot its mark**. Someone was playing the piano and singing the Whiffenpoof Song, and the voices that surrounded the piano were vehement and happy. "Eat some more sandwiches," a woman shrieked. There were screams of laughter and a dish of some sort crashed to the floor.

"Those must be the Fullers, in 11-E," Irene said. "I knew they were giving a party this afternoon. I saw her in the liquor store. Isn't this too **divine**? Try something else. See if you can get those people in 18-C."

The Westcotts overheard that evening a monologue on salmon fishing in Canada, a bridge game, running comments on home movies of what had apparently been a fortnight at Sea Island, and a bitter family quarrel about an **overdraft** at the bank. They turned off their radio at midnight and went to bed, weak with laughter. Sometimes in the night, their son began to call for a glass of water

and Irene got one and took it to his room. It was very early. All the lights in the neighbourhood were extinguished, and from the boy's window she could see the empty street. She went into the living room and tried the radio. There was some faint coughing, a moan, and then a man spoke. “Are you all right, darling?” he asked. “Yes,” a woman said **wearily**. “Yes, I'm all right, I guess,” and then she added with great feeling, “but, you know, Charlie, I don't feel like myself any more. Sometimes there are about fifteen or twenty minutes in the week when I feel like myself. I don't like to go to another doctor, because the doctor's bills are so awful already, but I just don’t feel like myself, Charlie. I just never feel like myself.” They were not young, Irene thought. She guessed from the timbre of their voices that they were middle-aged. The restrained melancholy of the dialogue and the draft from, the bedroom window made her shiver, and she went back to bed.

The following morning, Irene cooked breakfast for the family-the maid didn't come up from her room in the basement-until she **braided her daughter's hair**, and waited at the door until her children and her husband had been carried away in the elevator. Then she went into the living room and tried the radio. “I don't want to go to school,” a child screamed. “I hate school. I won't go to school. I hate school.” “You will go to school,” an enraged woman said. “We paid eight hundred dollars to get you into that school and you'll go if it kills you.” The next number on the dial produced the worn record of the “Missouri Waltz”. Irene shifted the control and **invaded the privacy** of several breakfast tables. She overheard demonstrations of indigestion, carnal love, abysmal vanity, faith, and despair. Irene's life was nearly as simple and sheltered as it appeared to be, and the forthright and sometimes brutal language that came from the loudspeaker that morning astonished and troubled her. She continued to listen until her maid came in. Then she turned off the radio quickly, since this insight, she realized, was a **furtive** one.

Irene had a luncheon date with a friend that day, and she left her apartment at a little after twelve. There were a number of women in the elevator when it stopped at her floor. She stared at their handsome and **impassive** faces, their furs, and the cloth flowers in their hats. Which one of them had been to Sea Island, she wondered.

Which one had **overdrawn her bank account**? The elevator stopped at the tenth floor and a woman with a pair of Skye terriers joined them. Her hair was rigged high on her head and she wore a mink cape. She was humming the “Missouri Waltz”.

Irene had two Martinis at lunch, and she looked searchingly at her friend and wondered what her secrets were. They had intended to go shopping after lunch, but Irene excused herself and went home. She told the maid that she was not to be disturbed; then she went into the living room, closed the doors, and switched on the radio. She heard, in the course of the afternoon, the halting conversation of a woman entertaining her aunt, the hysterical conclusion of a luncheon party, and a hostess briefing her maid about some cocktail guests. “Don't give the best Scotch to anyone who hasn't white hair,” the hostess said. “See if you can get rid of that liver paste before you pass those hot things, and could you lend me five dollars? I want to tip the elevator man.”

As the afternoon **waned**, the conversation increased in intensity. From where Irene sat, she could see the open sky above the East River. There were hundreds of clouds in the sky, as though the south wind had broken the winter into pieces and were blowing it north, and on her radio she could hear the arrival of cocktail guests and the return of children and businessmen from their schools and offices. “I found a good-sized diamond on the bathroom floor this morning,” a woman said. “It must have fallen out of that bracelet Mrs. Dunston was wearing last night.” “We'll sell it,” a man said. “Take it down to the jeweller on Madison Avenue and sell it. Mrs. Dunston won't know the difference, and we could use a couple of hundred bucks...” “Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St. Clement's,” the Sweeneys' nurse sang. “Half-pence and farthings, say the bells of St. Martin's. When will you pay me? say the bells at Old Bailey...” “It's not a hat,” a woman cried, and at her back roared a cocktail party. “It's not a hat, it's a love affair. That's what Walter Florell said. He said it's not a hat, it's a love affair,” and then, in a lower voice, the same woman added, “Talk to somebody, for Christ's sake, honey, talk to somebody. If she catches you standing here not talking to anybody, she'll take us off her invitation list, and I love these parties.”

The Westcotts were going out for dinner that night, and when

Jim came home, Irene was dressing. She seemed sad and vague, and he brought her a drink. They were dining with friends in the neighbourhood, and they walked to where they were going. The sky was broad and filled with light. It was one of those splendid spring evenings that excite memory and desire, and the air that touched their hands and faces felt very soft. A Salvation Army band was on the corner playing “Jesus Is Sweeter”. Irene drew on her husband's arm and held him there for a minute, to hear the music. “They're really such nice people, aren't they?” she said. “They have such nice faces. Actually, they're so much nicer than a lot of the people we know.” She took a bill from her purse and walked over and dropped it into the tambourine. There was in her face, when she returned to her husband, a look of radiant melancholy that he was not familiar with. And her conduct at the dinner party that night seemed strange to him, too. She interrupted her hostess rudely and stared at the people across the table from her with an intensity for which she would have punished her children.

It was still mild when they walked home from the party, and Irene looked up at the spring stars. “How far that little candle throws its beams,” she exclaimed. “So shines a good deed in a naughty world.” She waited that night until Jim had fallen asleep, and then went into the living room and turned on the radio.

Jim came home at about six the next night. Emma, the maid, let him in, and he had taken off his hat and was taking off his coat when Irene ran into the hall. Her face was shining with tears and her hair was disordered. “Go up to 16-C, Jim!” she screamed. “Don’t take off your coat. Go up to 16-C. Mr. Osborn's beating his wife. They've been quarrelling since four o'clock, and now he's hitting her. Go up and stop him.”

From the radio in the living room, Jim heard screams, **obscenities**, and thuds. “You know you don't have to listen to this sort of thing,” he said. He strode into the living room and turned the switch. “It's indecent,” he said. “It's like looking in windows. You knew you don't have to listen to this sort of thing. You can turn it off.”

“Oh, it's so horrible, it's so dreadful,” Irene was sobbing. “I've been listening all day, and it's so depressing.”

“Well, if it's so depressing, why do you listen to it? I bought

this damned radio to give you some pleasure," be said. "I paid a great deal of money for it. I thought it might make you happy. I wanted to make you happy."

"Don't, don't, don't, don't quarrel with me," she moaned, and laid her head on his shoulder. "All the others have been quarrelling all day. Everybody's been quarrelling. They're all worried about money. Mrs. Hutchinson's mother is dying of cancer in Florida and they don't have enough money to send her to the Mayo Clinic. At least, Mr. Hutchinson says they don't have enough money. And some woman in this building is having an affair with the handyman-with that hideous handyman. It's too disgusting. And Mrs. Melville has heart trouble and Mr. Hendricks is going to lose his job in April and Mrs. Hendricks is horrid about the whole thing and that girl who plays the "Missouri Waltz" is a whore, a common whore, and the elevator man has tuberculosis and Mr. Osborn has been beating Mrs. Osborn." She wailed, she trembled with grief and checked the stream of tears down her face with the heel of her palm.

"Well, why do you have to listen?" Jim asked again. "Why do you have to listen to this stuff if it makes you so miserable?"

"Oh, don't, don't, don't," she cried. "Life is too terrible, too **sordid** and awful. But we've never been like that, have we, darling? Have we? I mean we've always been good and decent and loving to one another, haven't we? And we have two children, two beautiful children. Our lives aren't sordid, are they, darling? Are they?" She flung her arms around his neck and drew his face down to hers. "We're happy, aren't we, darling? We are happy, aren't we?"

"Of course we're happy," he said tiredly. He began **to surrender to his resentment**. "Of course we're happy. I'll have that damned radio fixed or taken away tomorrow." He **stroked** her soft hair. "My poor girl," he said.

"You love me, don't you?" she asked. "And we're not hypocritical or worried about money or dishonest, are we?"

"No, darling," he said.

A man came in the morning and fixed the radio. Irene turned it on cautiously and was happy to hear a California-wine commercial and a recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, including Schiller's "Ode to Joy". She kept the radio on all day and nothing untoward came from the speaker.

A Spanish suite was being played when Jim came home. “Is everything all right?” he asked. His face was pale, she thought. They had some cocktails and went in to dinner to the “Anvil Chorus” from “Il Trovatore”. This was followed by Debussy's “La Mer”[1].

“I paid the bill for the radio today,” Jim said. “It cost four hundred dollars. I hope you'll get some enjoyment out of it.”

“Oh, I'm sure I will,” Irene said.

“Four hundred dollars is a good deal more than I can afford,” he went on. “I wanted to get something that you'd enjoy. It's the last extravagance we'll be able to indulge in this year. I see that you haven't paid your clothing bills yet. I saw them on your dressing table.” He looked directly at her. “Why did you tell me you'd paid them? Why did you lie to me?”

“I just didn't want you to worry, Jim,” she said. She drank some water. “I'll be able to pay my bills out of this month's allowance. There were the slip-covers last month, and that party.”

“You've got to learn **to handle the money** I give you a little more intelligently, Irene,” he said. “You've got to understand that we won't have as much money this year as we had last. I had a very sobering talk with Mitchell today. No one is buying anything. We are spending all our time promoting new issues, and you know how long that takes. I'm not getting any younger, you know. I'm thirty-seven. My hair will be gray next year. I haven't done as well as I'd hoped to do. And I don't suppose things will get any better.”

“Yes, dear,” she said.

“We've got to start cutting down,” Jim said. “We've got to think of the children. To be perfectly frank with you, I worry about money a great deal. I'm not at all sure of the future. No one is. If anything should happen to me, there's the insurance, but that wouldn't go very far today. I've worked awfully hard to give you and the children a comfortable life,” he said bitterly. “I don't like to see

[1] “Anvil chorus” from “Il Trovatore” (It.). *The Troubador* is an opera by Guiseppe Verdi (1813-1901), Italian composer. “Anvil chorus”, or “Gypsy Chorus, is from the second act of the opera”. “La Mer” (Fr.)--a piece of music for orchestral performance by Claude Debussy (1862-1918), a French composer, pianist and conductor.

all of my energies, all of my youth, wasted on fur coats and radios and slip-covers and –"

"Please, Jim," she said. "Please. They'll hear us."

"Who'll hear us? Emma can't hear us."

"The radio."

"Oh, I'm *sick!*" he shouted. "I'm sick to death of your apprehensiveness. The radio can't hear us. Nobody can hear us. And what if they can hear us? Who cares?'"

Irene got up from the table and went into the living room. Jim went to the door and shouted at her from there. "Why are you so Christly all of a sudden? What's turned you overnight into a convent girl? You stole your mother's jewelry before they **probated her will**. You never gave your sister a cent of that money that was intended for her-not even when she needed it. You made Grace Howland's life miserable, and where was all, your **piety** and your **virtue** when you went to that abortionist? I'll never forget how cool you were. You packed your bag and went off to have that child murdered as if you were going to Nassau[1]. If you'd had any reasons, if you'd had any good reasons –"

Irene stood for a minute before the hideous cabinet, disgraced and sickened, but she held her hand on the switch before she extinguished the music and the voices, hoping that the instrument might speak to her kindly, that she might hear the Sweeneys' nurse. Jim continued to shout at her from the door. The voice on the radio was **suave** and noncommittal. "An early morning railroad disaster in Tokyo," the loudspeaker said, "killed twenty-nine people. A fire in a Catholic hospital near Buffalo for the care of blind children was extinguished early this morning by nuns. The temperature is forty-seven. The humidity is eighty-nine."

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[1] as if you were going to Nassau—as if it were the easiest and most pleasant thing in the world (Nassau, the capital of the Bahama Islands, is a popular holiday centre)

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. Describe the Westcotts. What is your first impression of this family?
2. Speak on Irene's first "experience" with her new radio.
3. What "opportunity" did the intrusive radio offer?
4. What did Irene learn about the private life of her neighbours? How did it affect her? Follow the change in her emotional state and behavior within the next 3 days of eavesdropping.
5. Irene was too much concerned about her neighbours' problems. What is the real cause of her agitation?
6. Find the place where the events reach the climax.
7. What did the husband's outburst of emotions reveal about their family life?
8. Does the story have a surprise ending or is it foreshadowed in any way? Did your initial opinion of this family change after their heated argument?
9. Give the character sketch of a) Irene, b) Jim. What method of character-drawing is employed by the author?
10. Comment on the role of the radio in the story. What does the author imply by calling it enormous?
11. What is the central conflict in the story? Is it internal or external?
12. Is the story written to amuse the reader or does it cast a light on human nature?

C: Suggestions for Writing.

Give your perception of an ideal family. Is an ideal family the one that has no problems or the one that deals with the problems unitedly trying to find a sensible solution?

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in Salem, Massachusetts. In his mid-teens, he began reading eighteenth-century novelists and developed writing ambitions of his own. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825. While attending Bowdoin, he became a friend of future U.S. President Franklin Pierce. For twelve years after college, he worked diligently as a writer. It was years, however, before Hawthorne became a recognized author. He earned critical success in 1837 with the publication of his story collection "Twice-Told Tales". The collection explored psychological themes that would characterize his writing throughout his career–the inevitability of sin; the consequences of deceit, pride, and guilt.

Between 1825 and 1850 Hawthorne wrote more than 100 tales and sketches for periodicals. Most of these works were collected in "Twice-Told Tales" (1837, 1842, 1851).

His well-known novels "The Scarlet Letter" and "The House of the Seven Gables", published respectively in 1850 and 1851, brought him international fame. However, he found that he could not make a living as an author and entered politics. In 1853, President Pierce appointed Hawthorne to a four-year term as U.S. consul in Liverpool, England. Through this post, he was able to save enough money to return to his literary career.

Unlike most fiction writers of his time he was not primarily interested in stirring the reader by sensational or sentimental effects. Hawthorne called his writing romance, which he defined as a method of showing "the depths of our common nature". To Hawthorne, romance meant confronting reality, rather than evading it.

The Ambitious Guest

One September night a family had gathered round their **hearth**, and piled it high with the driftwood of mountain streams, the dry cones of the pine, and the **splintered** ruins of great trees that had come crashing down the **precipice**. Up the chimney roared the fire, and brightened the room

with its broad blaze. The faces of the father and mother had a sober gladness; the children laughed; the eldest daughter was the image of Happiness at seventeen; and the aged grandmother, who sat knitting in the warmest place, was the image of Happiness grown old. They had found the "herb, heart's-ease," in the **bleakest** spot of all New England. This family were situated in the Notch of the White Hills[1], where the wind was sharp throughout the year, and pitilessly cold in the winter,-giving their cottage all its fresh inclemency before it descended on the valley of the Saco. They dwelt in a cold spot and a dangerous one; for a mountain towered above their heads, so steep, that the stones would often **rumble** down its sides and startle them at midnight.

The daughter had just uttered some simple jest that filled them all with **mirth**, when the wind came through the Notch and seemed to pause before their cottage-rattling the door, with a sound of wailing and **lamentation**, before it passed into the valley. For a moment it saddened them, though there was nothing unusual in the tones. But the family were glad again when they perceived that the latch was lifted by some traveller, whose footsteps had been unheard amid the dreary blast which **heralded** his approach, and wailed as he was entering, and went moaning away from the door.

Though they dwelt in such a **solitude**, these people held daily converse with the world. The romantic pass of the Notch is a great artery, through which the life-blood of internal commerce is continually **throbbing** between Maine[2], on one side, and the Green Mountains[3] and the shores of the St. Lawrence[4], on the other. The stage-coach always drew up before the door of the cottage. The wayfarer, with no companion but his staff, paused here to exchange a word, that the sense of loneliness might not utterly overcome him ere he could pass through the cleft of the mountain, or reach the first house in the valley. And here the teamster, on his way to Portland market, would put up for the night; and, if a bachelor, might sit an

[1] The Notch of the White Hills: a deep, narrow mountain pass in the White Mountains of northern New Hampshire.
[2] Maine: a stae in the New England region of the northeastern US.
[3] Green Mountains: a mountain range in the US state of Vermont.
[4] St. Lawrence: a large river in the middle latitudes of North America.

hour beyond the usual bedtime, and steal a kiss from the mountain maid at parting. It was one of those primitive taverns where the traveller pays only for food and lodging, but meets with a homely kindness beyond all price. When the footsteps were heard, therefore, between the outer door and the inner one, the whole family rose up, grandmother, children, and all, as if about to welcome someone who belonged to them, and whose fate was linked with theirs.

The door was opened by a young man. His face at first wore the melancholy expression, almost despondency, of one who travels a wild and bleak road, at nightfall and alone, but soon brightened up when he saw the kindly warmth of his reception. He felt his heart spring forward to meet them all, from the old woman, who wiped a chair with her apron, to the little child that held out its arms to him. One glance and smile **placed the stranger on a footing** of innocent familiarity **with** the eldest daughter.

“Ah, this fire is the right thing!” cried he; “especially when there is such a pleasant circle round it. I am quite **benumbed**; for the Notch is just like the pipe of a great pair of bellows; it has blown a terrible blast in my face all the way from Bartlett.”

“Then you are going towards Vermont?” said the master of the house, as he helped to take a light knapsack off the young man's shoulders.

“Yes; to Burlington, and far enough beyond,” replied he. “I meant to have been at Ethan Crawford's to-night; but a pedestrian **lingers** along such a road as this. It is no matter; for, when I saw this good fire, and all your cheerful faces, I felt as if you had **kindled** it on purpose for me, and were waiting my arrival. So I shall sit down among you, and make myself at home.”

The frank-hearted stranger had just drawn his chair to the fire when something like a heavy footstep was heard without, rushing down the steep side of the mountain, as with long and rapid strides, and taking such a leap in passing the cottage as to strike the opposite precipice. The family held their breath, because they knew the sound, and their guest held his by instinct.

“The old mountain has thrown a stone at us, for fear we should forget him, said the landlord, recovering himself.” He sometimes nods his head and threatens to come down; but we are old neighbors, and agree together pretty well upon the whole. Besides we have a sure

place of refuge hard by if he should be coming **in good earnest**."

Let us now suppose the stranger to have finished his supper of bear's meal; and, by his natural **felicity** of manner, to have placed himself on a footing of kindness with the whole family, so that they talked as freely together as if he belonged to their mountain brood. He was of a proud, yet gentle spirit-haughty and reserved among the rich and great; but ever ready to stoop his head to the lowly cottage door, and be like a brother or a son at the poor man's fireside. In the household of the Notch he found warmth and simplicity of feeling, the pervading intelligence of New England, and a poetry of native growth, which they had gathered when they little thought of it from the mountain peaks and **chasms**, and at the very **threshold** of their romantic and dangerous abode. He had travelled far and alone; his whole life, indeed, had been a solitary path; for, with the lofty caution of his nature, he had kept himself apart from those who might otherwise have been his companions. The family, too, though so kind and hospitable, had that consciousness of unity among themselves, and separation from the world at large, which, in every domestic circle, should still keep a holy place where no stranger may intrude. But this evening a prophetic sympathy impelled the **refined** and educated youth **to pour out his heart** before the simple mountaineers, and **constrained** them to answer him with the same free confidence. And thus it should have been. Is not the **kindred** of a common fate a closer tie than that of birth?

The secret of the young man's character was a high and abstracted ambition. He could have borne to live an undistinguished life, but not to be forgotten in the grave. Yearning desire had been transformed to hope; and hope, long **cherished**, had become like certainty, that, obscurely as he journeyed now, a glory was to beam on all his pathway,—though not, perhaps, while he was treading it. But when **posterity** should gaze back into the gloom of what was now the present, they would trace the brightness of his footsteps, brightening as meaner glories faded, and confess that a gifted one had passed **from his cradle to his tomb** with none to recognize him.

"As yet," cried the stranger—his cheek glowing and his eye flashing with enthusiasm —"as yet, I have done nothing. Were I to vanish from the earth tomorrow, none would know so much of me as you: that a nameless youth came up at nightfall from the valley of

the Saco, and opened his heart to you in the evening, and passed through the Notch by sunrise, and was seen no more. Not a soul would ask, 'Who was he? Whither did the wanderer go?' But I cannot die till I have achieved my destiny. Then, let Death come! 1 shall have built my monument!"

There was a continual flow of natural emotion, gushing forth amid abstracted **reverie**, which enabled the family to understand this young man's sentiments, though so foreign from their own. With quick sensibility of the **ludicrous**, he blushed at the **ardor** into which he had been betrayed.

"You laugh at me," said he, taking the eldest daughter's hand, and laughing himself. "You think my ambition as nonsensical as if I were to freeze myself to death on the top of Mount Washington, only that people might spy at me from the country round about. And, truly, that would be a noble pedestal for a man's statue!"

"It is better to sit here by this fire," answered the girl, blushing, "and be comfortable and contented, though nobody thinks about us."

"I suppose," said her father, after a fit of musing, "there is something natural in what the young man says; and if my mind had been turned that way, I might have felt just the same. It is strange, wife, how his talk has set my head running on things that are pretty certain never to come to pass."

"Perhaps they may," observed the wife. "Is the man thinking what he will do when he is a widower?"

"No, no!" cried he, **repelling** the idea with reproachful kindness. "When I think of your death, Esther, I think of mine, too. But I was wishing we had a good farm in Bartlett, or Bethlehem, or Littleton, or some other township round the White Mountains; but not where they could tumble on our heads. I should want to stand well with my neighbors and be called Squire[1], and sent to General Court for a term or two; for a plain, honest man may do as much good there as a lawyer. And when 1 should be grown quite an old man, and you an old woman, so as not to be long apart, 1 might die happy enough in my bed, and leave you all crying around me. A slate gravestone would suit me as well as a marble one-with just my

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[1] Squire: in the US, a justice of the peace or local judge.

name and age, and a verse of a hymn, and something to let people know that I lived an honest man and died a Christian."

"There now!" exclaimed the stranger; "it is our nature to desire a monument, be it slate or marble, or a pillar of granite, or a glorious memory in the universal heart of man."

"We're in a strange way, to-night," said the wife, with tears in her eyes. "They say it's a sign of something, when folks' minds go a wandering so. Hark[1] to the children!"

They listened accordingly. The younger children had been put to bed in another room, but with an open door between, so that they could be heard talking busily among themselves. One and all seemed to have caught the infection from the fireside circle, and were outvying[2] each other in wild wishes, and childish projects of what they would do when they came to be men and women. At length a little boy, instead of addressing his brothers and sisters, called out to his mother.

"I'll tell you what I wish, mother," cried he. "I want you and father and grandma'm, and all of us, and the stranger too, to start right away, and go and take a drink out of the basin of the Flume!"

Nobody could help laughing at the child's notion of leaving a warm bed, and dragging them from a cheerful fire, to visit the basin of the Flume,-a brook, which tumbles over the precipice, deep within the Notch. The boy had hardly spoken when a wagon rattled along the road, and stopped a moment before the door. It appeared to contain two or three men, who were cheering their hearts with the rough chorus of a song, which resounded, in broken notes, between the cliffs, while the singers hesitated whether to continue their journey or put up here for the night.

"Father," said the girl, "they are calling you by name."

But the good man doubted whether they had really called him, and was unwilling to show himself too **solicitous of** gain by inviting people to patronize his house. He therefore did not hurry to the door; and the lash being soon applied, the travellers plunged into the Notch, still singing and laughing, though their music and mirth came back drearily from the heart of the mountain.

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[1] Hark: (arch.) to listen

[2] Outvying: outdoing, competing.

"There, mother!" cried the boy, again. "They'd have given us a ride to the Flume."

Again they laughed at the child's pertinacious[1] fancy for a night ramble. But it happened that a light cloud passed over the daughter's spirit; she looked gravely into the fire, and drew a breath that was almost a sigh. It forced its way, in spite of a little struggle to repress it. Then starting and blushing, she looked quickly round the circle, as if they had caught a glimpse into her bosom. The stranger asked what she had been thinking of.

"Nothing," answered she, with a downcast smile. "Only I felt lonesome just then."

"Oh, I have always had a gift of feeling what is in other people's hearts," said he, half seriously. "Shall I tell the secrets of yours? For I know what to think when a young girl shivers by a warm hearth, and complains of lonesomeness at her mother's side. Shall I put these feelings into words?"

"They would not be a girl's feelings any longer if they could be put into words," replied the mountain nymph, laughing, but avoiding his eye.

All this was said apart. Perhaps a germ of love was springing in their hearts, so pure that it might blossom in Paradise, since it could not be matured on earth; for women worship such gentle dignity as his; and the proud, contemplative, yet kindly soul is oftenest captivated by simplicity like hers. But while they spoke softly, and he was watching the happy sadness, the lightsome shadows, the shy yearnings of a maiden's nature, the wind through the Notch took a deeper and drearier sound. It seemed, as the fanciful stranger said, like the choral strain of the spirits of the blast, who in old Indian times had their dwelling among these mountains, and made their heights and recesses a sacred region. There was a wail along the road, as if a funeral were passing. To chase away the gloom, the family threw pine branches on their fire, till the dry leaves crackled and the flame arose, discovering once again a scene of peace and humble happiness. The light **hovered** about them fondly, and caressed them all. There were the little faces of the

[1] Pertinacious: stubbornly persistent.

children, peeping from their bed apart, and here the father's frame of strength, the mother's subdued and careful mien[1], the high-browed youth, the budding girl, and the good old grandam, still knitting in the warmest place. The aged woman looked up from her task, and, with fingers ever busy, was the next to speak.

"Old folks have their notions," said she, "as well as young ones. You've been wishing and planning; and letting your heads run on one thing and another, till you've set my mind a wandering too. Now what should an old woman wish for, when she can go but a step or two before she comes to her grave? Children, it will haunt me night and day till I tell you."

"What is it, mother?" cried the husband and wife at once.

Then the old woman, with an air of mystery which drew the circle closer round the fire, informed them that she had provided her grave-clothes some years before,-a nice linen shroud, a cap with a muslin ruff, and everything of a finer sort than she had worn since her wedding day. But this evening an old superstition had strangely **recurred** to her. It used to be said, in her younger days, that if anything were amiss with a corpse, if only the ruff were not smooth, or the cap did not set right, the corpse in the coffin and beneath the clods would strive to put up its cold hands and arrange it. The bare thought made her nervous.

"Don't talk so, grandmother!" said the girl, shuddering.

"Now,"-continued the old woman, with singular earnestness, yet smiling strangely at her own folly,-"I want one of you, my children-when your mother is dressed and in the coffin-I want one of you to hold a looking-glass over my face. Who knows but I may take a glimpse at myself, and see whether all's right?"

"Old and young, we dream of graves and monuments," murmured the stranger youth. "I wonder how mariners feel when the ship is sinking, and they, unknown and undistinguished, are to be buried together in the ocean-that wide and nameless sepulchre?"

For a moment, the old woman's ghastly conception so **engrossed the minds** of her hearers that a sound abroad in the night,

[1] Mien: air, bearing.

rising like the roar of a blast, had grown broad, deep, and terrible, before the fated group were conscious of it. The house and all within it trembled; the foundations of the earth seemed to be shaken, as if this awful sound were the peal of the last trump[1]. Young and old exchanged one wild glance, and remained an instant, pale, affrighted, without utterance, or power to move. Then the same shriek burst simultaneously from all their lips.

"The Slide! The Slide!"

The simplest words must intimate, but not portray, the unutterable horror of the catastrophe. The victims rushed from their cottage, and sought refuge in what they deemed a safer spot-where, in contemplation of such an emergency, a sort of barrier had been reared. Alas! They had quitted their security, and fled right into the pathway of destruction. Down came the whole side of the mountain, in a cataract of ruin. Just before it reached the house, the stream broke into two branches-shivered not a window there, but overwhelmed the whole **vicinity**, blocked up the road, and annihilated everything in its dreadful course. Long ere the thunder of the great Slide had ceased to roar among the mountains, the mortal agony had been endured, and the victims were at peace. Their bodies were never found.

The next morning, the light smoke was seen stealing from the cottage chimney up the mountain side. Within, the fire was yet smouldering on the hearth, and the chairs in a circle round it, as if the

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[1] The last trump, the last trumpet: according to *Revelation* 8:6, the sign that the end of the world had come.

inhabitants had but gone forth to view the devastation of the Slide, and would shortly return, to thank Heaven for their miraculous escape. All had left separate **tokens,** by which those who had known the family were made **to shed a tear** for each. Who has not heard their name? The story has been told far and wide, and will forever be a legend of these mountains. Poets have sung their fate.

There were circumstances which led some to suppose that a stranger had been received into the cottage on this awful night, and had shared the catastrophe of all its inmates. Others denied that there were sufficient **grounds for** such a **conjecture**. Woe for the high-souled youth, with his dream of Earthly Immortality! His name and person utterly unknown; his history, his way of life, his plans, a mystery never to be solved, his death and his existence equally a doubt! Whose was the agony of that death moment?

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. Give the description of the happy family. Why is the word “Happiness” capitalized? Explain: “They had found the “herb, heart’s-ease” in the bleakest spot of all New England”/p. 103/.
2. What was dangerous about the location of the cottage?
3. What brought the wayfarer to the cottage? How was he received?
4. How do the following lines describe the young man? “He was of a proud, yet gentle spirit-haughty and reserved among the rich and great; but ever ready to stoop his head to the lowly cottage door, and be like a brother or a son at the poor man's fireside.”/p.105/

5. What impelled him to pour out his heart? Speak on the hopes he cherished and the idea he dreaded.
6. What did the father of the family see as his destination in life? Compare it with that of the young man.
7. Whose path of life sounded more attractive to the children? Speak on the "wild wishes" the conversation provoked in the children and the grandmother.
8. What sudden disaster befell the family and the guest? Could they have escaped it? Is such an end foreshadowed? Back up your answer with evidence from the story.
9. Find the climax of the story.
10. What was the terrible irony of the guest's fate, of the family's fate? Whose was the agony of the death moment?
11. What is the message of the story? Is it implicitly or explicitly expressed?
12. What is the prevailing mood in the story? Pick out sound and sight images creating that mood.
13. Explain why the mountain is personified.

C: Comment on.

1. Is not the kindred of a common fate a closer tie than that of birth./p. 105/
2. ... it is our nature to desire a monument, be it slate or marble, or a pillar of granite, or a glorious memory in the universal heart of man./p. 107/

D: Suggestions for Writing.

1. "…it is our nature to desire a monument, be it slate or marble, or a pillar of granite, or a glorious memory in the universal heart of man", stated the young man. Which is, in your opinion, the best memory that a person can leave to its posterity?
2. Do you think it is fate that determines our path of life, or are we the shapers of our own destiny?

Thomas Raddall (1903-1994)

Thomas Raddall was born in Kent, England, and moved with his parents to Canada in 1913. His father, a British Army captain, was killed in France in 1918 during World War I, prompting Raddall to leave his Halifax, Nova Scotia, school in the tenth grade and enlist as a wireless operator. He went to work as a bookkeeper in a wood-pulp mill in 1923, and his first short story appeared in *Maclean's* magazine in 1928. He became a full-time writer ten years later.

He completed eight novels, six collections of short stories, and several volumes of history. His interest in local and eighteenth-century history is evident in many of his works, which include *His Majesty's Yankees* (1929), *Roger Sudden* (1944), *The Wedding Gift and Other Stories* (1947), and *The Nymph and the Lamp* (1950). He won the Governor-General's Award for the best Canadian fiction book of the year in 1944 for *The Pied Piper of Dipper Creek and Other Tales,* and in 1949 and 1958 he won the same award for nonfiction. *In My Time* (1976) is the title of his autobiography.

The Wedding Gift

Nova Scotia, in 1794. Winter. Snow on the ground. Two feet of it in the woods, less by the shore, except in drifts against Port Marriott's barns and fences; but enough to set sleigh bells ringing through the town, enough to require a multitude of paths and burrows from doors to streets, to carpet the wharves and the decks of the shipping, and to trim the ships' yards with tippets of ermine. Enough to require fires roaring in the town's chimneys, and blue wood smoke hanging low over the roof tops in the still December air. Enough to squeal under foot in the trodden places and to muffle the step everywhere else. Enough for the hunters, whose snowshoes now could overtake the **floundering** moose and caribou. Even enough for the

always-complaining loggers, whose ox sleds now could haul their cut from every part of the woods. But not enough, not nearly enough snow for Miss Kezia Barnes, who was going to Bristol Creek to marry Mr. Hathaway.

Kezia did not want to marry Mr. Hathaway. Indeed she had told Mr. and Mrs. Barclay in a tearful voice that she didn't want to marry anybody. But Mr. Barclay had taken snuff and said “Ha! Humph!” in the severe tone he used when he was displeased; and Mrs. Barclay had sniffed and said it was a very good match for her, and revolved the cold blue eyes in her fat moon face, and said Kezia must not be a little fool.

There were two ways of going to Bristol Creek. One was by sea, in one of the fishing sloops. But the preacher objected to that. He was a **pallid** young man lately sent out from England by Lady Huntingdon's Connexion[1], and seasick five weeks on the way. He held Mr. Barclay in some awe, for Mr. Barclay had the best pew in the meetinghouse and was the chief **pillar of** godliness in Port Marriott. But young Mr. Mears was firm on this point. He would go by road, he said, or not at all. Mr. Barclay had retorted “Ha! Humph!” The road was twenty miles of horse path through the woods, now deep in snow. Also the path began at Harper's Farm on the far side of the harbor, and Harper had but one horse.

“I shall walk,” declared the preacher calmly, “and the young woman can ride.”

Kezia had prayed for snow, storms of snow, to bury the trail and keep anyone from crossing the cape to Bristol Creek. But now they were setting out from Harper's Farm, with Harper's big brown horse, and all Kezia's prayers had gone **for naught**. Like any anxious lover, busy Mr. Hathaway had sent Black Sam overland on foot to find out what delayed his wedding, and now Sam's day-old tracks marked for Kezia the road to marriage.

She was a **meek** little thing, as became an orphan brought up as househelp in the Barclay home; but now she looked at the preacher and saw how young and helpless he looked so far from his native Yorkshire, and how ill-clad for this bitter trans-Atlantic

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[1] Connexion: the British spelling for ‘connection.” In the context of the story, it means “religious denomination.”

weather, and she spoke up.

"You'd better take my shawl, sir. I don't need it. I've got Miss Julia's old riding cloak. And we'll go ride-and-tie."

"Ride and what?" murmured Mr. Mears.

"I'll ride a mile or so, then I'll get down and tie the horse to a tree and walk on. When you come up to the horse, you mount and ride a mile or so, passing me on the way, and you tie him and walk on. Like that. Ride-and-tie, ride-and-tie. The horse gets a rest between."

Young Mr. Mears nodded and took the proffered shawl absently. It was a black thing that matched his sober broadcloth coat and smallclothes[1], his black woollen stockings and his round black hat. At Mr. Barclay's suggestion he had borrowed a pair of moose-hide moccasins for the journey. As he walked a prayer-book in his coat-skirts bumped the back of his legs.

At the top of the ridge above Harper's pasture, where the narrow path led off through gloomy hemlock woods, Kezia paused for a last look back across the harbor. In the morning sunlight the white roofs of the little lonely town resembled a tidal wave flung up by the sea and frozen as it broke against the dark pine forest to the west. Kezia sighed, and young Mr. Mears was surprised to see tears in her eyes.

She rode off ahead. The saddle was a man's, of course, awkward to ride modestly, woman-fashion. As soon as she was out of the preacher's sight she rucked her skirts and slid a leg over to the other stirrup. That was better. There was a pleasant sensation of freedom about it, too. For a moment she forgot that she was going to Bristol Creek, in finery second-hand from the Barclay girls, in a new linen shift and drawers that she had sewn herself in the light of the kitchen candles, in white cotton stockings and a bonnet and shoes from Mr. Barclay's store, to marry Mr. Hathaway.

The Barclays had done well for her from the time when, a skinny weeping creature of fourteen, she was taken into the Barclay household and, as Mrs. Barclay so often said, "treated more like one

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[1] Smallclothes: men's close-fitting knee breeches worn in the eighteenth century.

of my own than a bond-girl from the poorhouse." She had first choice of the clothing cast off by Miss Julia and Miss Clara. She was permitted to sit in the same room, and learn what she could, when the schoolmaster came to give private lessons to the Barclay girls. She waited on table, of course, and helped in the kitchen, and made beds, and dusted and scrubbed. But then she had been taught to spin and to sew and to knit. And she was permitted, indeed encouraged, to sit with the Barclays in the meetinghouse, at the convenient end of the pew, where she could worship the Barclays' God and assist with the Barclay wraps at the beginning and end of the service. And now, to complete her rewards, she had been granted the hand of a rejected Barclay **suitor**.

Mr. Hathaway was Barclay's agent at Bristol Creek, where he sold rum and gunpowder and corn meal and such things to the fishermen and hunters, and bought split cod-fresh, pickled, or dry-and ran a small sawmill, and cut and shipped firewood by schooner to Port Marriott, and managed a farm, all for a salary of fifty pounds, Halifax currency, per year. Hathaway was a most capable fellow, Mr. Barclay often acknowledged. But when after fifteen capable years he came seeking a wife, and **cast a sheep's eye** first **at** Miss Julia, and then at Miss Clara, Mrs. Barclay observed with a sniff that Hathaway was looking a bit high.

So he was. The older daughter of Port Marriott's most prosperous merchant was even then receiving polite attentions from Mr. Gamage, the new collector of customs, and a connection of the Halifax Gamages, as Mrs. Barclay was fond of pointing out. And Miss Clara was going to Halifax in the spring to learn the gentle art of playing the pianoforte, and incidentally to display her charms to the naval and military young gentlemen who **thronged** the Halifax drawingrooms. The dear girls laughed behind their hands whenever long solemn Mr. Hathaway came to town aboard one of the Barclay vessels and called at the big house under the elms. Mrs. Barclay bridled at Hathaway's **presumption**, but shrewd Mr. Barclay narrowed his little black eyes and took snuff and said "Ha! Humph!"

It was plain to Mr. Barclay that an emergency had arisen. Hathaway was a good man-in his place; and Hathaway must be kept content there, to go on making profit for Mr. Barclay at a cost of only £50 a year. 'Twas a pity Hathaway couldn't satisfy himself with

one of the fishermen's girls at the Creek, but there 'twas. If Hathaway had **set his mind on** a town miss, then a town miss he must have; but she must be the right kind, the sort who would content herself and Hathaway at Bristol Creek and not go nagging the man to remove and try his capabilities elsewhere. At once Mr. Barclay thought of Kezia-dear little Kezia. A colorless little creature but quiet and well-mannered and **pious**, and only twenty-two.

Mr. Hathaway was nearly forty and far from handsome, and he had a rather cold, seeking way about him-useful in business of course-that **rubbed women the wrong way**. Privately Mr. Barclay thought Hathaway lucky to get Kezia. But it was a nice match for the girl, better than anything she could have expected. He impressed that upon her and introduced the suitor from Bristol Creek. Mr. Hathaway spent two or three evenings courting Kezia in the kitchen-Kezia in a quite good gown of Miss Clara's, gazing out at the November moon on the snow, murmuring now and again in the tones of someone in a rather **dismal** trance, while the kitchen help listened behind one door and the Barclay girls giggled behind another.

The decision, reached mainly by the Barclays, was that Mr. Hathaway should come to Port Marriott aboard the packet schooner on December twenty-third, to be married in the Barclay parlor and then take his bride home for Christmas. But an unforeseen circumstance had changed all this. The circumstance was a ship, "from Mogador in Barbary"[1] as Mr. Barclay wrote afterwards in the salvage claim, driven off her course by gales and wrecked at the very entrance to Bristol Creek. She was a valuable wreck, laden with such queer things as goatskins in pickle, almonds, wormseed[2], pomegranate skins, and gum arabic, and capable Mr. Hathaway had lost no time in salvage for the benefit of his employer.

As a result he could not come to Port Marriott for a wedding or anything else. A storm might blow up at any time and demolish this fat prize. He dispatched a note by Black Sam, urging Mr. Barclay to send Kezia and the preacher by return. It was not the

[1] "from Mogador in Barbary": Mogador is a seaport in Morocco, one of the former Barbary States, which were once a refuge for pirates.
[2] Wormseed: a tropical American plant yielding an oil.

orthodox note of an impatient sweetheart, but it said that he had moved into his new house by the Creek and found it "extreme empty lacking a woman," and it suggested delicately that while his days were full, the nights were dull.

Kezia was no judge of distance. She rode for what she considered a reasonable time and then slid off and tied the brown horse to a maple tree beside the path. She had brought a couple of lamp wicks to tie about her shoes, to keep them from coming off in the snow, and she set out afoot in the big splayed tracks of Black Sam. The soft snow came almost to her knees in places and she lifted her skirts high. The path was no wider than the span of a man's arms, cut out with axes years before. She stumbled over a concealed stump from time to time, and the huckleberry bushes dragged at her cloak, but the effort warmed her. It had been cold, sitting on the horse with the wind blowing up her legs.

After a time the preacher overtook her, riding awkwardly and holding the reins in a nervous grip. The stirrups were too short for his long black-stockinged legs. He called out cheerfully as he passed, "Are you all right, Miss?" She nodded, standing aside with her back to a tree. When he disappeared ahead, with a last flutter the of black shawl tassels in the wind, she picked up her skirts and went on. The path climbed and dropped monotonously over a succession of wooded ridges. Here and there in a hollow she heard water running, and the creak of frosty poles underfoot, and knew she was crossing a small stream, and once the trail ran across a wide swamp on half-rotten corduroy[1], wind-swept and bare of snow.

She found the horse tethered clumsily not far ahead, and the tracks of the preacher going on. She had to lead the horse to a stump so she could mount, and when she passed Mr. Mears again she called out, "Please, sir, next time leave the horse by a stump or a rock so I can get on." In his quaint old-country accent he murmured, "I'm very sorry," and gazed down at the snow. She forgot she was riding astride until she had passed him, and then she flushed, and gave the indignant horse a cut of the switch. Next time she remembered and swung her right leg back where it should be, and tucked the skirts

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[1] Corduroy: a road made of logs laid down crosswise.

modestly about her ankles; but young Mr. Mears looked down at the snow anyway, and after that she did not trouble to shift when she overtook him.

The ridges became steeper, and the streams roared under the ice and snow in the swales. They emerged upon the high tableland between Port Marriott and Bristol Creek, a gusty wilderness of young hardwood scrub struggling up amongst the gray snags of an old forest fire, and now that they were out of the gloomy softwoods they could see a stretch of sky. It was blue-gray and **forbidding**, and the wind whistling up from the invisible sea felt raw on the cheek. At their next meeting Kezia said, “It's going to snow.”

She had no knowledge of the trail but she guessed that they were not much more than halfway across the cape. On this high barren the track was no longer straight and clear, it **meandered** amongst the meager hardwood clumps where the path-makers had not bothered to cut, and only Black Sam's footprints really marked it for her unaccustomed eyes. The preacher nodded vaguely at her remark. The woods, like everything else about his chosen mission field, were new and very interesting, and he could not understand the alarm in her voice. He looked confidently at Black Sam's tracks.

Kezia tied the horse farther on and began her spell of walking. Her shoes were solid things, the kind of shoe*s* Mr. Barclay invoiced as “a Common Strong sort, for women, Five Shillings”; but the snow worked into them and melted and **saturated** the leather. Her feet were numb every time she slid down from the horse and it took several minutes of stumbling through the snow to bring back an aching warmth. Beneath her arm she clutched the small bundle which contained all she had in the world-two flannel nightgowns, a shift of linen, three pairs of stout wool stockings-and of course Mr. Barclay's wedding gift for Mr. Hathaway.

Now as she **plunged** along she felt the first sting of snow on her face and, looking up, saw the stuff borne on the wind in small hard pellets that fell amongst the bare hardwoods and set up a whisper everywhere. When Mr. Mears rode up to her the snow was thick in their faces, like flung salt.

“It's a nor-easter!” she cried up to him. She knew the meaning of snow from the sea. She had been born in a fishing village down

the coast.

“Yes,” mumbled the preacher, and drew a fold of the shawl about his face. He disappeared. She struggled on, gasping, and after what seemed a tremendous journey came upon him standing alone and bewildered, looking off somewhere to the right.

“The horse!” he shouted. “I got off him, and before I could fasten the reins some snow fell off a branch-startled him, you know-and he ran off, over that way.” He gestured with a mittened hand. “I must fetch him back,” he added confusedly.

“No!” Kezia cried. “Don't you try. You'd only get lost. So would I. Oh, dear! This is awful. We'll have to go on, the best we can.”

He was doubtful. The horse tracks looked very plain. But Kezia was looking at Black Sam's tracks, and **tugging** his arm. He gave in, and they struggled along for half an hour or so. Then the last trace of the old footprints vanished.

“What shall we do now?” the preacher asked, astonished.

“I don't know,” whispered Kezia, and leaned against a dead pine stub in an attitude of weariness and indifference that dismayed him.

“We must keep moving, my dear, mustn't we? I mean, we can't stay here.”

“Can't stay here,” she echoed.

“Down there-a hollow, I think. I see some hemlock trees, or are they pines?-I'm never quite sure. Shelter, anyway.”

“Shelter,” muttered Kezia.

He took her by the hand and like a pair of lost children they dragged their steps into the deep snow of the hollow. The trees were tall spruces, a thick bunch in a ravine, where they had escaped an old fire. A stream thundered amongst them somewhere. There was no wind in this place, only the fine snow whirling thickly down between the trees like a sediment from the storm overhead.

“Look!” cried Mr. Mears. A hut loomed out of the whiteness

before them, a small structure of moss-chinked logs with a roof of poles and birch-bark. It had an abandoned look. Long streamers of moss hung out between the logs. On the roof shreds of birch-bark wavered gently in the drifting snow. The door stood half open and a thin drift of snow lay along the split-pole floor. Instinctively Kezia went to the stone hearth. There were old ashes sodden with rain down the chimney and now frozen to a cake.

"Have you got flint and steel?" she asked. She saw in his *eyes* something dazed and **forlorn**. He shook his head, and she was filled with a sudden anger, not so much at him as at Mr. Barclay and that-that Hathaway, and all the rest of menkind. They ruled the world and made such a sorry mess of it. In a small fury she began to **rummage** about the hut.

There was a crude bed of poles and brushwood by the fireplace-brush wood so old that only a few brown needles clung to the twigs. A rough bench whittled from a pine log, with round birch sticks for legs. A broken earthenware pot in a corner. In another some ash-wood frames such as trappers used for stretching skins. Nothing else. The single window was covered with a stretched moose-bladder, cracked and dry-rotten, but it still let in some daylight while keeping out the snow.

She scooped up the snow from the floor with her mittened hands, throwing it outside, and closed the door carefully, dropping the bar into place, as if she could shut out and bar the cold in such a fashion. The air inside was frigid. Their breath hung visible in the dim light from the window. Young Mr. Mears dropped on his wet knees and began to pray in a loud voice. His face was pinched with cold and his teeth rattled as he prayed. He was a pitiable object.

"Prayers won't keep you warm," said Kezia crossly.

He looked up, amazed at the change in her. She had seemed such a meek little thing. Kezia was surprised at herself, and surprisingly she went on, "You'd far better take off those wet moccasins and stockings and shake out the snow of your clothes." She set the example, vigorously shaking out her skirts and Miss Julia's cloak, and she turned her small back on him and took off her own shoes and stockings, and pulled *on* dry stockings from her bundle. She threw him a pair.

“Put those on.”

He looked at them and at his large feet, hopelessly.

“I'm afraid they wouldn't go on.”

She tossed him one of her flannel nightgowns. “Then take off your stockings and wrap your feet and legs in that.”

He obeyed, in an embarrassed silence. She rolled her eyes upward, for his modesty's sake, and saw a bundle on one of the low rafters— the late owner's bedding, stowed away from mice. She stood on the bench and pulled down three bearskins, marred with bullet holes. A rank and **musty** smell arose in the cold. She considered the find gravely.

“You take them,” Mr. Mears said gallantly. “I shall be quite all right.”

“You'll be dead by morning, and so shall I,” she answered vigorously, “if you don't do what I say. We've got to roll up in these.”

“Together?” he cried in horror.

“Of course! To keep each other warm. It's the only way.”

She spread the skins on the floor, hair uppermost, one overlapping another, and dragged the flustered young man down beside her, clutched him in her arms, and rolled with him, over, and over again, so that they became a single shapeless heap in the corner farthest from the draft between door and chimney.

“Put your arms around me,” commanded the new Kezia, and he obeyed.

“Now,” she said, “you can pray. God helps those that help themselves.”

He prayed aloud for a long time, and privately called upon heaven to witness the purity of his thoughts in this strange and shocking situation. He said “Amen” at last; and “Amen,” echoed Kezia, piously.

They lay silent a long time, breathing on each other's necks and hearing their own hearts-poor Mr. Mears' fluttering in an agitated way, Kezia's steady as a clock. A delicious warmth crept over them. They relaxed in each other's arms. Outside, the storm hissed in the spruce tops and set up an occasional cold moan in the cracked clay chimney. The down-swirling snow brushed softly

against the bladder pane.

“I'm warm now,” murmured Kezia. “Are you?” “Yes. How long must we stay here like this?”

“Till the storm's over, of course. Tomorrow, probably. Nor'easters usually blow themselves out in a day and a night, 'specially when they come up sharp, like this one. Are you hungry?”

“No.”

“Abigail–that's the black cook at Barclay's-gave me bread and cheese in a handkerchief. I've got it in my bundle. Mr. Barclay thought we ought to reach Bristol Creek by supper time, but Nabby said I must have a bite to eat on the road. She’s a good kind thing, old Nabby. Sure you're not hungry?”

“Quite. I feel somewhat fatigued but not hungry.”

“Then we'll eat the bread and cheese for breakfast. Have you got a watch?”

“No, I'm sorry. They cost such a lot of money. In Lady Huntingdon's Connexion we -”

“Oh well, it doesn't matter. It must be about four o'clock-the light's getting dim. Of course, the dark comes very quick in a snow-storm.”

“Dark,” echoed young Mr. Mears drowsily. Kezia's hair, washed last night for the wedding journey, smelled pleasant so close to his face. It reminded him of something. He went to sleep dreaming of his mother, with his face snug in the curve of Kezia's neck and shoulder, and smiling, and muttering words that Kezia could not catch. After a time she kissed his cheek. It seemed a very natural thing to do.

Soon she was dozing herself, and dreaming, too; but her dreams were full of forbidding faces-Mr. Barclay's, Mrs. Barclay's, Mr. Hathaway's; especially Mr. Hathaway's. Out of a confused darkness Mr. Hathaway's hard **acquisitive** gaze searched her **shrinking** flesh like a cold wind. Then she was shuddering by the kitchen fire at Barclay's, accepting Mr. Hathaway's courtship and wishing she was dead. In the midst of that sickening **wooing** she wakened sharply.

It was quite dark in the hut. Mr. Mears was breathing quietly against her throat. But there was a sound of heavy steps outside,

muffled in the snow and somehow felt rather than heard. She shook die young man and he wakened with a start, clutching her convulsively.

“Sh-h-h!” she warned. “Something's moving outside.” She felt him stiffen.

“Bears?” he whispered.

Silly! thought Kezia. People from the old country could think of nothing but bears in the woods. Besides, bears holed up in winter. A caribou, perhaps. More likely a moose. Caribou moved inland before this, to the wide mossy bogs up the river, away from the coastal storms. Again the sound.

“There!” hissed the preacher. Their hearts beat rapidly together.

“The door-you fastened it, didn't you?”

“Yes,” she said. Suddenly she knew.

“Unroll, quick!” she cried . . . “No, not this way-your way.”

They unrolled, ludicrously, and the girl scrambled up and across the floor in her stockinged feet, and fumbled with the rotten door-bar. Mr. Mears attempted to follow but he **tripped over** the nightgown still wound about his feet, and fell with a crash. He was up again in a moment, catching up the clumsy wooden bench for a weapon, his bare feet slapping on the icy floor. He tried to shoulder her aside, crying “Stand back! Leave it to me!” and waving the bench uncertainly in the darkness.

She laughed excitedly. “Silly!” she said. “It's the horse.” She flung the door open. In the queer ghostly murk of a night filled with snow they beheld a large dark shape. The shape whinnied softly and thrust a long face into the doorway. Mr. Mears dropped the bench, astonished.

“He got over his fright and followed us here somehow,” Kezia said, and laughed again. She put her arms about the snowy head and laid her face against it.

“Good horse! Oh, good, good horse!”

“What are you going to do?” the preacher murmured over her shoulder. After the warmth of their nest in the furs they were shivering in this icy atmosphere.

“Bring him in, of course. We can't leave him out in the storm.”

She caught the bridle and urged the horse inside with expert clucking sounds. The animal hesitated, but fear of the storm and a desire for shelter and company decided him. In he came, tramping ponderously on the split-pole floor. The preacher closed and barred the door.

“And now?” he asked.

“Back to the furs. Quick! It's awful cold.”

Rolled in the furs once more, their arms went about each other instinctively, and the young man's face found the comfortable **nook** against Kezia's soft throat. But sleep was difficult after that. The horse whinnied gently from time to time, and stamped about the floor. The decayed poles crackled dangerously under his hoofs whenever he moved, and Kezia trembled, thinking he might break through and frighten himself, and flounder about till he tumbled the crazy hut about their heads. She called out to him “Steady, boy! Steady!”

It was a long night. The pole floor made its irregularities felt through the thickness of fur; and because there seemed nowhere to put their arms but about each other the flesh became cramped, and spread its protest along the bones. They were stiff and sore when the first light of morning stained the window. They unrolled and stood up thankfully, and tramped up and down the floor, thrashing their arms in an effort to fight off the gripping cold. Kezia undid her bundle in a corner and brought forth Nabby's bread and cheese, and they ate it sitting together on the edge of the brushwood bed with the skins about their shoulders. Outside the snow had ceased.

“We must set off at once,” the preacher said. “Mr. Hathaway will be anxious.”

Kezia was silent. She did not move, and he looked at her curiously. She appeared very fresh, considering the hardships of the previous day and the night. He passed a hand over his cheeks and thought how unclean he must appear in her eyes, with this stubble on his pale face.

“Mr. Hathaway-“ he began again.

“I'm not going to Mr. Hathaway,” Kezia said quietly.

“But-the wedding!”

“There'll be no wedding. I don't want to marry Mr. Hathaway. 'Twas Mr. Hathaway's idea, and Mr. and Mrs. Barclay's. They

wanted me to marry him."

"What will the Barclays say, my dear?"

She shrugged. "I've been their bond-girl ever since I was fourteen, but I'm not a slave like poor black Nabby, to be handed over, body and soul, whenever it suits."

"Your soul belongs to God," said Mr. Mears **devoutly**.

"And my body belongs to me."

He was a little shocked at this **outspokenness** but he said gently, "Of course. To give oneself in marriage without true affection would be an offense in the sight of heaven. But what will Mr. Hathaway say?"

"Well, to begin with, he'll ask where I spent the night, and I'll have to tell the truth. I'll have to say I bundled with you in a hut in the woods."

"Bundled?"

"A custom the people brought with them from Connecticut when they came to settle in Nova Scotia. Poor folk still do it. Sweethearts, I mean. It saves fire and candles when you're courting on a winter evening. It's harmless-they keep their clothes on, you see, like you and me-but Mr. Barclay and the other Methody people are terrible set against it. Mr. Barclay got old Mr. Mings-he's the Methody preacher that died last year-to make a sermon against it. Mr. Mings said bundling was an invention of the devil."

"Then if you go back to Mr. Barclay-"

"He'll ask me the same question and I'll have to give him the same answer. I couldn't tell a lie, could I?" She turned a pair of round blue eyes and met his embarrassed gaze.

"No! No, you mustn't lie. Whatever shall we do?' he murmured in a dazed voice. Again she was silent, looking modestly down her small nose.

"It's so very strange," he floundered. "This country-there are so many things I don't know, so many things to learn. You–I-we shall have to tell the truth, of course. Doubtless I can find a place in the Lord's service somewhere else, but what about you, poor girl?"

"I heard say the people at Scrod Harbor want a preacher."

"But-the tale would follow me, wouldn't it, my dear? This-er-bundling with a young woman?"

“'Twouldn't matter if the young woman was your wife.”

“Eh?” His mouth fell open. He was like an astonished child, for all his preacher's clothes and the new beard on his jaws.

“I'm a good girl,” Kezia said, inspecting her foot. “I can read and write, and know all the tunes in the psalter. And-and you need someone to look after you.”

He considered the truth of that. Then he murmured uncertainly, “We'd be very poor, my dear. The Connexion gives some support, but of course-“

“I've always been poor,” Kezia said. She sat very still but her cold fingers **writhed** in her lap.

He did something then that made her want to cry. He took hold of her hands and bowed his head and kissed them.

“It's strange-I don't even know your name, my dear.”

“It's Kezia-Kezia Barnes.”

He said quietly. “You're a brave girl, Kezia Barnes, and I shall try to be a good husband to you. Shall we go?”

“Hadn't you better kiss me, first?” Kezia said faintly.

He put his lips awkwardly to hers; and then, as if the taste of her clean mouth itself provided strength and purpose, he kissed her again, and firmly. She threw her arms about his neck.

“Oh, Mr. Mears!”

How little he knew about everything! He hadn't even known enough to wear two or three pairs of stockings inside those roomy moccasins, nor to carry a pair of dry ones. Yesterday's wet stockings were lying like sticks on the frosty floor. She showed him how to knead the hard-frozen moccasins into softness, and while he worked at the stiff leather she tore up one of her wedding bed-shirts and wound the flannel strips about his legs and feet. It looked very queer when she had finished, and they both laughed.

They were **chilled to the bone** when they set off, Kezia on the horse and the preacher walking ahead, holding the reins. When they regained the slope where they had lost the path, Kezia said, “The sun rises somewhere between east and southeast, at this time of year. Keep it on your left shoulder a while. That will take us back towards Port Marriott.”

When they came to the green timber she told him to shift the

sun to his left eye.

"Have you changed your mind?" he asked cheerfully. The exercise had warmed him.

"No, but the sun moves across the sky."

"Ah! What a wise little head it is!"

They came over a ridge of mixed hemlock and hardwood-and looked upon a long swale full of bare hackmatacks.

"Look!" the girl cried. The white slot of the axe path showed clearly in the trees at the foot of the swale, and again where it entered the dark mass of the pines beyond.

"Praise the Lord!" said Mr. Mears.

When at last they stood in the trail, Kezia slid down from the horse.

"No!" Mr. Mears protested.

"Ride-and-tie," she said firmly. "That's the way we came, and that's the way we'll go. Besides, I want to get warm."

He climbed up clumsily and smiled down at her.

"What shall we do when we get to Port Marriott, my dear?"

"Get the New Light preacher to marry us, and catch the packet for Scrod Harbor."

He nodded and gave a pull at his broad hat brim. She thought of everything. A splendid helpmeet for the world's wilderness. He saw it all very humbly now as a dispensation of Providence.

Kezia watched him out of sight. Then, swiftly, she undid her bundle and took out the thing that had lain there (and on her conscience) through the night—the tinderbox[1]—Mr. Barclay's wedding gift to Mr. Hathaway. She

[1] Tinderbox: a metal box for holding tinder, some highly inflammable substance, such as decayed wood or burnt cloth, used to make a fire. A tinderbox usually also holds flint and steel with which to strike a spark to ignite the tinder.

flung it into the woods and walked on, skirts lifted, in the track of the horse, humming a psalm tune to the silent trees and the snow.

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. When and where did the actions of the story develop? What aspect of the setting is most important to the story—the year, the season, or the country? What expressive means are employed by the writer to create the mood of the story?
2. Describe Kezia's life with the Barclays.
3. Which were the Barclays' reasons to marry Kezia off to Mr. Hathaway?
4. Do you share Kezia's reluctance to marry Mr. Hathaway or do you find him a good match for her?
5. Describe Kezia and the preacher's passage from Port Marriott to Bristol Creek. What is the author's aim in giving the detailed account of their journey?
6. What sudden turning did their journey take?
7. What gave Kezia advantage over Mears from the very beginning?
8. When do you observe the first change in Kezia? Follow her transformation from a "meek, little thing" to "the new Kezia".
9. When did the idea to marry the preacher occur to Kezia—before or after bundling with him?
10. Is the resolution foreshadowed in any way or is it a surprise?
11. Enumerate all the circumstances that favored Kezia's escape from the undesirable marriage.

12. Why did Kezia prefer the preacher to Mr. Hathaway? What made him a better match?
13. The author discloses what the wedding gift is at the very end of the story. Does this fact weaken or strengthen the story?
14. Did the last paragraph change your opinion of Kezia? Do you think the end justifies the means?
15. The main character faced both an internal and an external conflict. Which one was more difficult for her to overcome?
16. Which method of characterization is used in the story? Are the main characters static or dynamic?

C: **Comment on.**

1. He shook his head, and she was filled with **a** sudden anger, not so much at him as at Mr. Barclay and that—that Hathaway, and all the rest of *menkind.* They ruled the world and made such a sorry mess of it./p.121 /
2. God helps those that help themselves./p.122 /
3. She thought of everything. A splendid helpmeet for the world's wilderness. He saw it all very humbly now as a dispensation of Providence./p.128 /

D: Suggestions for Writing.

They say, "The end justifies the means". Is this belief acceptable in all situations?

David H. Lawrence (1885-1930)

David Herbert Lawrence, the fourth child born to a virtually illiterate coal-miner and his educated, pious wife, was one of England's most controversial men of letters.

In 1901, Lawrence left high school to work as a clerk in a factory. In 1908 he started teaching in Davidson Road School, London.There he began writing his first novel, "The White Peacock" (1911). Later he decided to give up teaching in order to become a full time author.

Among his best-known works are "Sons and Lovers", "The Rainbow", "Women in Love" and others. His fiction shows deep concern for the complicated, often tortured relationships between men and women. Many of his works deal with people torn by the need for both love and independence. His heated and sometimes nervous style was one of the most original contributions to the art of fiction.

Although best known for his novels Lawrence wrote almost eight hundred poems, most of them relatively short. Lawrence's belief that the writer should have the fullest artistic freedom worried his publishers and disturbed the censors. Despite this, critics generally acknowledge his genius, especially in his short stories.

"The Rocking-Horse Winner" begins like a typical fable, lacking only the "Once upon a time" opening, but the story deals with serious psychological and sociological issues—family relationships, materialism, the nature of love.

The Rocking-Horse Winner

There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantages, yet she had no luck. She married for love, and the

love turned to dust. She had bonny children, yet she felt they had been thrust upon her, and she could not love them. They looked at her coldly, as if they were finding fault with her. And hurriedly she felt she must cover up some fault in herself. Yet what it was that she must cover up she never knew. Nevertheless, when her children were present, she always felt the centre of her heart go hard. This troubled her, and in her manner she was all the more gentle and anxious for her children, as if she loved them very much. Only she herself knew that at the centre of her heart was a hard little place that could not feel love, no, not for anybody. Everybody else said of her: "She is such a good mother. She adores her children." Only she herself, and her children themselves, knew it was not so. They read it in each other's eyes.

There was a boy and two little girls. They lived in a pleasant house, with a garden, and they had **discreet** servants, and felt themselves superior to anyone in the neighbourhood.

Although they lived in style, they felt always an anxiety in the house. There was never enough money. The mother had a small income, and the father had a small income, but not nearly enough for the social position which they had to keep up. The father went into town to some office. But though he had good prospects, these prospects never materialized. There was always the **grinding sense** of the shortage of money, though the style was always kept up.

At last the mother said: "I will see if I can't make something." But she did not know where to begin. She **racked her brains** and tried this thing and the other, but could not find anything successful. The failure made deep lines come into her face. Her children were growing up, they would have to go to school. There must be more money, there must be more money. The father, who was always very handsome and expensive in his tastes, seemed as if he never *would* be able to do anything worth doing. And the mother, who had a great belief in herself, did not succeed any better, and her tastes were just as expensive.

And so the house came to be haunted by the unspoken phrase: There *must* be more money! There *must* be more money! The children could hear it all the time, though nobody said it aloud. They heard it at Christmas, when the expensive and splendid toys filled the nursery. Behind the shining modern rocking horse, behind the smart

doll's-house, a voice would start whispering: "There *must* be more money! There *must* be more money!" And the children would stop playing, to listen for a moment. They would look into each other's eyes, to see if they had all heard. And each one saw in the eyes of the other two that they too had heard. "There *must* be more money! There *must* be more money!"

It came whispering from the springs of the still-swaying rocking horse, and even the horse, bending his wooden, **champing** head, heard it. The big doll, sitting so pink and **smirking** in her new pram, could hear it quite plainly, and seemed to be smirking all the more self-consciously because of it. The foolish puppy, too, that took the place of the teddy-bear, he was looking so extraordinarily foolish for no other reason but that he heard the secret whisper all over the house: "There *must* be more money!"

Yet nobody ever said it aloud. The whisper was everywhere, and therefore no one spoke it. Just as no one ever says: "We are breathing!" in spite of the fact that breath is coming and going all the time.

"Mother," said the boy Paul one day, "why don't we keep a car of our own? Why do we always use uncle's, or else a taxi?"

"Because we're the poor members of the family," said the mother.

"But why *are* we, mother?"

"Well-I suppose," she said slowly and bitterly, "it's because your father has no luck."

The boy was silent for some time.

"Is luck money, mother?" he asked, rather timidly.

"No, Paul. Not quite. It's what causes you to have money."

"Oh!" said Paul vaguely. "I thought when Uncle Oscar said *filthy lucre,* it meant money."

"Filthy lucre does mean money," said the mother. "But it's lucre, not luck."

"Oh!" said the boy. "Then what is luck, mother?"

"It's what causes you to have money. If you're lucky you have money. That's why it's better to be born lucky than rich. If you're rich, you may lose your money. But if you're lucky, you will always get more money."

"Oh! Will you? And is father not lucky?"
"Very unlucky, I should say," she said bitterly.
The boy watched her with unsure eyes.
"Why?" he asked.
"I don't know. Nobody ever knows why one person is lucky and another unlucky."
"Don't they? Nobody at all? Does nobody know?"
"Perhaps God. But He never tells."
"He ought to, then. And aren't you lucky either, mother?"
"I can't be, if I married an unlucky husband."
"But by yourself, aren't you?"
"I used to think I was, before I married. Now I think I am very unlucky indeed."
"Why?"
"Well—never mind! Perhaps I'm not really," she said.
The child looked at her, to see if she meant it. But he saw, by the lines of her mouth, that she was only trying to hide something from him.
"Well, anyhow," he said stoutly, "I'm a lucky person."
"Why?" said his mother, with a sudden laugh.
He stared at her. He didn't even know why he had said it. "God told me," he **asserted**, **brazening** it **out**.
"I hope He did, dear!" she said, again with a laugh, but rather bitter.
"He did, mother!"
"Excellent!" said the mother, using one of her husband's exclamations.
The boy saw she did not believe him; or, rather, that she paid no attention to his assertion. This angered him somewhat, and made him want to compel her attention.
He went off by himself, vaguely, in a childish way, seeking for the clue to "luck." Absorbed, **taking no heed of** other people, he went about with a sort of stealth, seeking inwardly for luck. He wanted luck, he wanted it, he wanted it. When the two girls were playing dolls in the nursery, he would sit on his big rocking horse, charging madly into space, with a **frenzy** that made the little girls

peer at him uneasily. Wildly the horse careered, the waving dark hair of the boy **tossed**, his eyes had a strange glare in them. The little girls dared not speak to him.

When he had ridden to the end of his mad little journey, he climbed down and stood in front of his rocking horse, staring fixedly into its lowered face. Its red mouth was slightly open, its big eye was wide and glassy-bright.

“Now!” he would silently command the snorting steed. “Now, take me to where there is luck! Now take me.”

And he would **slash** the horse on the neck with the little whip he had asked Uncle Oscar for. He *knew* the horse could take him to where there was luck, if only he forced it. So he would mount again, and start on his furious ride, hoping at last to get there. He knew he could get there.

“You'll break your horse, Paul!” said the nurse.

“He's always riding like that! I wish he'd leave off!” said his elder sister Joan.

But he only glared down on them in silence. Nurse gave him up. She could **make nothing of** him. Anyhow he was growing beyond her.

One day his mother and his Uncle Oscar came in when he was on one of his furious rides. He did not speak to them.

“Hallo, you young jockey! Riding a winner?” said his uncle.

“Aren't you growing too big for a rocking horse? You're not a very little boy any longer, you know,” said his mother.

But Paul only gave a blue glare from his big, rather close-set eyes. He would speak to nobody when he was **in full tilt**. His mother watched him with an anxious expression on her face.

At last he suddenly stopped forcing his horse into the mechanical gallop, and slid down. “Well, I got there!” he announced fiercely, his blue eyes still flaring, and his sturdy long legs straddling apart.

“Where did you get to?” asked his mother.

“Where I wanted to go,” he flared back at her.

“That's right, son!” said Uncle Oscar. “Don't you stop till you get there. What's the horse's name?”

"He doesn't have a name," said the boy.

"Gets on without all right?" asked the uncle.

"Well, he has different names. He was called Sansovino last week."

"Sansovino, eh? Won the Ascot[1]. How did you know his name?"

"He always talks about horse races with Bassett," said Joan.

The uncle was delighted to find that his small nephew was posted with all the racing news. Bassett, the young gardener, who had been wounded in the left foot in the war and had got his present job through Oscar Cresswell, whose batman[2] he had been, was a perfect blade of the "turf." He lived in the racing events, and the small boy lived with him.

Oscar Cresswell got it all from Bassett.

"Master Paul comes and asks me, so I can't do more than tell him, sir," said Bassett, his face terribly serious, as if he were speaking of religious matters.

"And does he ever put anything on a horse he fancies?"

"Well-I don't want **to give him away**-he's a young sport, a fine sport, sir. Would you mind asking him himself? He sort of takes a pleasure in it, and perhaps he'd feel I was giving him away, sir, if you don't mind."

Bassett was serious as a church.

The uncle went back to his nephew, and took him off for a ride in the car.

"Say, Paul, old man, do you ever put anything on a horse?" the uncle asked.

The boy watched the handsome man closely.

"Why, do you think I oughtn't to?" he parried.

"Not a bit of it! I thought perhaps you might **give me a tip** for the Lincoln."

The car sped on into the country, going down to Uncle Oscar's

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[1] Ascot: a famous race course where every June the best English horses run; the English equivalent of the Kentucky Derby.

[2] Batman: an enlisted man assigned as an orderly (assistant) to an officer. (British)

place in Hampshire[1].

"Honour bright?" said the nephew.

"Honour bright, son!" said the uncle.

"Well, then. Daffodil."

"Daffodil! I doubt it, sonny. What about Mirza?"

"I only know the winner," said the boy. "That's Daffodil."

"Daffodil, eh?"

There was a pause. Daffodil was an **obscure** horse comparatively.

"Uncle!"

"Yes, son?"

"You won't let it go any further, will you? I promised Bassett."

"Bassett be damned, old man! What's he got to do with it?"

"We're partners. We've been partners from the first. Uncle, he lent me my first five shillings, which I lost. I promised him, honour bright, it was only between me and him; only you gave me that ten-shilling note I started winning with, so I thought you were lucky. You won't let it go any further, will you?"

The boy gazed at his uncle from those big, hot, blue eyes, set rather close together. The uncle stirred and laughed uneasily.

"Right you are, son! I'll keep your tip private. Daffodil, eh! How much are you putting on him?"

"All except twenty pounds," said the boy. "I keep that in reserve."

The uncle thought it a good joke.

"You keep twenty pounds in reserve, do you, you young romancer? What are you betting, then?"

"I'm betting three hundred," said the boy gravely. "But it's between you and me, Uncle Oscar! Honour bright?"

The uncle burst into a roar of laughter. "It's between you and me all right, you young Nat Gould[2]," he said, laughing. "But where's your three hundred?"

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[1] Hampshire: a coastal county southwest of London.

[2] Nat Gould: Gould (1857-1919) was a journalist who wrote novels about horse racing.

"Bassett keeps it for me. We're partners."

"You are, are you! And what is Bassett putting on Daffodil?"

"He won't go quite as high as I do, I expect. Perhaps he'll go a hundred and fifty."

"What, pennies?" laughed the uncle.

"Pounds," said the child, with a surprised look at his uncle. "Bassett keeps a bigger reserve than I do."

Between wonder and amusement Uncle Oscar was silent. He pursued the matter no further, but he determined to take his nephew with him to the Lincoln races.

"Now son," he said, "I'm putting twenty on Mirza, and I'll put five for you on any horse you fancy. What's your pick?"

"Daffodil, uncle."

"No, not the fiver on Daffodil!"

"I should if it was my own fiver," said the child.

"Good! Good! Right you are! A fiver for me and a fiver for you on Daffodil."

The child had never been to a race meeting before, and his eyes were blue fire. He pursed his mouth tight, and watched. A Frenchman just in front had put his money on Lancelot. Wild with excitement, he flayed his arms up and down, yelling *"Lancelot! Lancelot!"* in his French accent.

Daffodil came in first, Lancelot second, Mirza third. The child flushed and with eyes blazing, was curiously serene. His uncle brought him four five-pound notes, four to one.

"What am I to do with these?" he cried, waving them before the boy's eyes.

"I suppose we'll talk to Bassett," said the boy. "I expect I have fifteen hundred now; and twenty in reserve; and this twenty."

His uncle studied him for some moments.

"Look here, son!" he said. "You're not serious about Bassett

and that fifteen hundred, are you?"

"Yes, I am. But it's between you and me, uncle. Honour bright!"

"Honour bright all right, son! But I must talk to Bassett."

"If you'd like to be a partner, uncle, with Bassett and me, we could all be partners. Only, you'd have to promise, honour bright, uncle, not to let it go beyond us three. Bassett and I are lucky, and you must be lucky, because it was your ten shillings I started winning with. ..."

Uncle Oscar took both Bassett and Paul into Richmond Park[1] for an afternoon, and there they talked.

"It's like this, you see, sir," Bassett said. "Master Paul would get me talking about racing events, spinning yarns, you know, sir. And he was always keen on knowing if I'd made or if I'd lost. It's about a year since, now, that I put five shillings on Blush of Dawn for him-and we lost. Then the luck turned, with that ten shillings he had from you, that we put on Singhalese. And since that time it's been pretty steady, all things considering. What do you say, Master Paul?"

"We're all right when we're sure," said Paul. "It's when we're not quite sure that we go down."

"Oh, but we're careful then," said Bassett.

"But when are you *sure?"* smiled Uncle Oscar.

"It's Master Paul, sir," said Bassett, in a secret, religious voice. "It's as if he had it from heaven. Like Daffodil, now, for the Lincoln. That was as sure as eggs."

"Did you put anything on Daffodil?" asked Oscar Cresswell.

"Yes, sir. I made my bit."

"And my nephew?"

Bassett was obstinately silent, looking at Paul.

"I made twelve hundred, didn't I, Bassett? I told uncle I was putting three hundred on Daffodil."

"That's right," said Bassett, nodding.

"But where's the money?" asked the uncle.

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[1] Richmond Park: a 2,000-acre park, west of central London and south of the Thames.

"I keep it safe locked up, sir. Master Paul he can have it any minute he likes to ask for it."

"What, fifteen hundred pounds?"

"And twenty! And *forty,* that is, with the twenty he made on the course."

"It's amazing!" said the uncle.

"If Master Paul offers you to be partners, sir, I would if I were you; if you'll excuse me," said Bassett.

Oscar Cresswell thought about it.

"I'll see the money," he said.

They drove home again, and sure enough, Bassett came round to the garden-house with fifteen hundred pounds in notes. The twenty pounds reserve was left with Joe Glee, in the Turf Commission deposit.

"You see, it's all right, uncle, when I'm *sure!* Then we go strong, for all we're worth. Don't we, Bassett?"

"We do that, Master Paul."

"And when are you sure?" said the uncle, laughing.

"Oh, well, sometimes I'm *absolutely* sure, like about Daffodil," said the boy; "and sometimes I have an idea; and sometimes I haven't even an idea, have I, Bassett? Then we're careful, because we mostly go down."

"You do, do you! And when you're sure, like about Daffodil, what makes you sure, sonny?"

"Oh, well, I don't know," said the boy uneasily. "I'm sure, you know, uncle; that's all."

"It's as if he had it from heaven, sir," Bassett reiterated.

"I should say so!" said the uncle.

But he became a partner. And when the Leger was coming on, Paul was "sure" about Lively Spark, which was a quite inconsiderable horse. The boy insisted on putting a thousand on the horse, Bassett went for five hundred, and Oscar Cresswell two hundred. Lively Spark came in first, and the betting had been ten to one against him. Paul had made ten thousand.

"You see," he said, "I was absolutely sure of him."

Even Oscar Cresswell had cleared two thousand.

"Look here, son," he said, "this sort of thing makes me

nervous.”

“It needn't, uncle! Perhaps I shan't be sure again for a long time.”

“But what are you going to do with your money?” asked the uncle.

“Of course,” said the boy, “I started it for mother. She said she had no luck, because father is unlucky, so I thought if *I* was lucky, it might stop whispering.”

“What might stop whispering?”

“Our house. I *hate* our house for whispering.”

“What does it whisper?”

“Why-why”-the boy **fidgeted**-“why, I don't know. But it's always short of money, you know, uncle.”

“I know it, son, I know it.

“You know people send mother writs, don't you, uncle?”

“I'm afraid I do,” said the uncle.

“And then the house whispers, like people laughing at you behind your back. It's awful, that is! I thought if I was lucky ...”

“You might stop it,” added the uncle.

The boy watched him with big blue eyes, that had an **uncanny** cold fire in them, and he said never a word.

“Well, then!” said the uncle. “What are we doing?”

“I shouldn't like mother to know I was lucky,” said the boy.

“Why not, son?”

“She'd stop me.”

“I don't think she would.”

“Oh!”-and the boy writhed in an odd way-“I *don't* want her to know, uncle.”

“All right, son! We'll manage it without her knowing.”

They managed it very easily. Paul, at the other's suggestion, handed over five thousand pounds to his uncle, who deposited it with the family lawyer, who was then to inform Paul's mother that a relative had put five thousand pounds into his hands, which sum was to be paid out a thousand pounds at a time, on the mother's birthday, for the next five years.

“So she'll have a birthday present of a thousand pounds for five successive years,” said Uncle Oscar. “I hope it won't make it all

the harder for her later."

Paul's mother had her birthday in November. The house had been "whispering" worse than ever lately, and, even in spite of his luck, Paul could not **bear up against** it. He was very anxious to see the effect of the birthday letter, telling his mother about the thousand pounds.

When there were no visitors, Paul now took his meals with his parents, as he was beyond the nursery control. His mother went into town nearly every day. She had discovered that she had an odd **knack of** sketching furs and dress materials, so she worked secretly in the studio of a friend who was the chief "artist" for the leading drapers. She drew the figures of ladies in furs and ladies in silk and sequins for the newspaper advertisements. This young woman artist earned several thousand pounds a year, but Paul's mother only made several hundreds, and she was again dissatisfied. She so wanted to be first in something, and she did not succeed, even in making sketches for drapery advertisements.

She was down to breakfast on the morning of her birthday. Paul watched her face as she read her letters. He knew the lawyer's letter. As his mother read it, her face hardened and became more expressionless. Then a cold, determined look came on her mouth. She hid the letter under the pile of others, and said not a word about it.

"Didn't you have anything nice in the post for your birthday, mother?" said Paul.

"Quite moderately nice," she said, her voice cold and absent.

She went away to town without saying more.

But in the afternoon Uncle Oscar appeared. He said Paul's mother had had a long interview with her lawyer, asking if the whole five thousand could not be advanced at once, as she was in debt.

"What do you think, uncle?" said the boy.

"I leave it to you, son." "Oh, let her have it, then! We can get some more with the other," said the boy.

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, laddie!" said Uncle Oscar.

"But I'm sure to *know* for the Grand National; or the

Lincolnshire; or else the Derby[1]. I'm sure to know for *one* of them," said Paul.

So Uncle Oscar signed the agreement, and Paul's mother touched the whole five thousand. Then something very curious happened. The voices in the house suddenly went mad, like a chorus of frogs on a spring evening. There were certain new furnishings, and Paul had a tutor. He was *really* going to Eton[2], his father's school, in the following autumn. There were flowers in the winter, and a blossoming of the luxury Paul's mother had been used to. And yet the voices in the house, behind the sprays of mimosa and almond blossom, and from under the piles of **iridescent** cushions, simply trilled and screamed in a sort of ecstasy. "There *must* be more money! Oh-h-h; there *must* be more money! Oh, now, now-w! Now-w-w—there *must* be more money!—more than ever! More than ever!"

It frightened Paul terribly. He studied away at his Latin and Greek with his tutors. But his intense hours were spent with Bassett. The Grand National had gone by: he had not "known," and had lost a hundred pounds. Summer was at hand. He was in agony for the Lincoln. But even for the Lincoln he didn't "know," and he lost fifty pounds. He became wild-eyed and strange, as if something were going to explode in him.

"Let it alone, son! Don't you bother about it!" urged Uncle Oscar. But it was as if the boy couldn't really hear what his uncle was saying.

"I've got to know for the Derby! I've got to know for the Derby!" the child **reiterated**, his big blue eyes blazing with a sort of madness.

His mother noticed how **overwrought** he was.

"You'd better go to the seaside. Wouldn't you like to go now to the seaside, instead of waiting? I think you'd better," she said, looking down at him anxiously, her heart curiously heavy because of

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[1] Grand National … Lincolnshire … Derby: three famous horse races.
[2] Eton: Founded in 1440 by King Henry VI, Eton College is an elite secondary boys school located west of London near Windsor Castle.

him.

But the child lifted his uncanny blue eyes.

"I couldn't possibly go before the Derby, mother!" he said. "I couldn't possibly!"

"Why not?" she said, her voice becoming heavy when she was opposed. "Why not? You can still go from the seaside to see the Derby with your Uncle Oscar, if that's what you wish. No need for you to wait here. Besides, I think you care too much about these races. It's a bad sign. My family has been a gambling family, and you won't know till you grow up how much damage it has done. But it has done damage. I shall have to send Bassett away, and ask Uncle Oscar not to talk racing to you, unless you promise to be reasonable about it; go away to the seaside and forget it. You're all nerves!

"I'll do what you like, mother, so long as you don't send me away till after the Derby," the boy said.

"Send you away from where? Just from this house?"

"Yes," he said, gazing at her.

"Why, you curious child, what makes you care about this house so much, suddenly? I never knew you loved it."

He gazed at her without speaking. He had a secret within a secret, something he had not **divulged**, even to Bassett or to his Uncle Oscar.

But his mother, after standing undecided and a little bit **sullen** for some moments, said:

"Very well, then! Don't go to the seaside till after the Derby, if you don't wish it. But promise me you won't let your nerves go to pieces. Promise you won't think so much about horse racing and *events* as you call them!"

"Oh, no," said the boy casually. "I won't think much about them, mother. You needn't worry. I wouldn't worry, mother, if I were you."

"If you were me and I were you," said his mother, "I wonder what we *should* do!"

"But you know you needn't worry, mother, don't you?" the boy repeated.

"I should be awfully glad to know it," she said wearily.

"Oh, well, you *can,* you know. I mean, you *ought* to know you needn't worry," he insisted.

"Ought I? Then I'll see about it," she said.

Paul's secret of secrets was his wooden horse, that which had no name. Since he was emancipated from a nurse and a nursery-governess, he had his rocking-horse removed to his own bedroom at the top of the house.

"Surely, you're too big for a rocking horse!" his mother had remonstrated.

"Well, you see, mother, till I can have a *real* horse, I like to have *some* sort of animal about," had been his quaint answer.

"Do you feel he keeps you company?" she laughed.

"Oh, yes! He's very good, he always keeps me company, when I'm there," said Paul.

So the horse, rather shabby, stood in an arrested prance in the boy's bedroom.

The Derby was drawing near, and the boy grew more and more tense. He hardly heard what was spoken to him, he was very **frail**, and his eyes were really uncanny. His mother had sudden strange **seizures** of uneasiness about him. Sometimes, for half-an-hour, she would feel a sudden anxiety about him that was almost anguish. She wanted to rush to him at once, and know he was safe.

Two nights before the Derby, she was at a big party in town, when one of her rushes of anxiety about her boy, her first-born, gripped her heart till she could hardly speak. She fought with the feeling, **might and main**, for she believed in common sense. But it was too strong. She had to leave the dance and go downstairs to telephone to the country. The children's nursery-governess was terribly surprised and startled at being rung up in the night.

"Are the children all right, Miss Wilmot?"

"Oh, yes, they are quite all right."

"Master Paul? Is he all right?"

"He went to bed as right as a trivet. Shall I run up and look at him?"

"No," said Paul's mother reluctantly. "No! Don't trouble. It's all right. Don't sit up. We shall be home fairly soon." She did not want her son's **privacy intruded upon**.

"Very good," said the governess.

It was about one o'clock when Paul's mother and father drove

up to their house. All was still. Paul's mother went to her room and slipped off her white fur cloak. She had told her maid not to wait up for her. She heard her husband downstairs, mixing a whiskey-and-soda.

And then, because of the strange anxiety at her heart, she stole upstairs to her son's room. Noiselessly she went along the upper corridor. Was there a faint noise? What was it?

She stood, with arrested muscles, outside his door, listening. There was a strange, heavy, and yet not loud noise. Her heart stood still. It was a soundless noise, yet rushing and powerful. Something huge, in violent, hushed motion. What was it? What in God's name was it? She ought to know. She felt that she knew the noise. She knew what it was.

Yet she could not place it. She couldn't say what it was. And on and on it went, like a madness.

Softly, frozen with anxiety and fear, she turned the door handle.

The room was dark. Yet in the space near the window, she heard and saw something plunging to and fro. She gazed in fear and amazement.

Then suddenly she switched on the light, and saw her son, in his green pajamas, madly surging on the rocking horse. The blaze of light suddenly lit him up, as he urged the wooden horse, and lit her up, as she stood, blonde, in her dress of pale green and crystal, in the doorway.

"Paul!" she cried. "Whatever are you doing?"

"It's Malabar!" he screamed, in a powerful, strange voice. "It's Malabar!"

His eyes blazed at her for one strange and senseless second, as he ceased urging his wooden horse. Then he fell with a crash to the ground, and she, all her tormented motherhood flooding upon her, rushed to gather him up.

But he was unconscious, and unconscious he remained, with some brain-fever. He talked and tossed, and his mother sat stonily by his side.

"Malabar! It's Malabar! Bassett, Bassett, I *know!* It's Malabar!"

So the child cried, trying to get up and urge the rocking horse that gave him his inspiration.

"What does he mean by Malabar?" asked the heart-frozen mother.

"I don't know," said the father stonily.

"What does he mean by Malabar?" she asked her brother Oscar.

"It's one of the horses running for the Derby," was the answer.

And, in spite of himself, Oscar Cresswell spoke to Bassett, and himself put a thousand on Malabar: at fourteen to one.

The third day of the illness was critical: they were waiting for a change. The boy, with his rather long, curly hair, was tossing ceaselessly on the pillow. He neither slept nor regained consciousness, and his eyes were like blue stones. His mother sat, feeling her heart had gone, turned actually into a stone.

In the evening, Oscar Cresswell did not come, but Bassett sent a message, saying could he come up for one moment, just one moment? Paul's mother was very angry at the intrusion, but on second thought she agreed. The boy was the same. Perhaps Bassett might bring him to consciousness.

The gardener, a shortish fellow with a little brown moustache, and sharp little brown eyes, tiptoed into the room, touched his imaginary cap to Paul's mother, and stole to the bedside, staring with glittering, smallish eyes, at the tossing, dying child.

"Master Paul!" he whispered. "Master Paul! Malabar came in first all right, a clean win. I did as you told me. You've made over seventy thousand pounds, you have; you've got over eighty thousand. Malabar came in all right, Master Paul."

"Malabar! Malabar! Did I say Malabar, mother? Did I say Malabar? Do you think I'm lucky, mother? I knew Malabar, didn't I? Over eighty thousand pounds! I call that lucky, don't you, mother? Over eighty thousand pounds! I knew, didn't I know I knew? Malabar came in all right. If I ride my horse till I'm sure, then I tell you, Bassett, you can go as high as you like. Did you go for all you were worth, Bassett?"

"I went a thousand on it, Master Paul."

"I never told you, mother, that if I can ride my horse, and *get* there, then I'm absolutely sure—oh, absolutely! Mother, did I ever

tell you? I *am* lucky!"

"No, you never did," said the mother.

But the boy died in the night.

And even as he lay dead, his mother heard her brother's voice saying to her: "My God, Hester, you're eighty-odd thousand to the good, and a poor devil of a son to the bad. But, poor devil, poor devil, he's best gone out of a life where he rides his rocking horse to find a winner."

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. Describe the lifestyle of Paul's family. Why didn't it come up to his mother's expectations?
2. The mother supposedly "had no luck". Who did she blame for it?
3. In what way might the mother-child relationship presented in the story be considered abnormal?
4. What was the impact of the tense domestic atmosphere on the children? How does the author's use of personification contribute to creating that atmosphere?
5. What solution did Paul find to hush the whispers in the house? How would you explain his wild desire to be lucky?
6. Why did the boy insist on the birthday present being anonymous? What did Uncle Oscar think of the idea? Explain what he meant by "I hope it won't make it all the harder for her later."/p.142/
7. What was the mother's reaction to the present? How did the situation in the house change after the mother's birthday?
8. What was Paul's secret within a secret?
9. Comment on the mother's sudden seizures of anxiety about her son. What does it speak of?

10. Was Paul's death inevitable? Motivate your answer.
11. Consider the title of the story. Was Paul really a winner?
12. Why did D. H. Lawrence include the character of Uncle Oscar? Compare it with that of Paul's father and assess the importance of these characters to the plot and theme.
13. What is the role of the opening paragraph in understanding the story?
14. Which way of characterization prevails in the story? Motivate your answer.
15. Summarize the main problems discussed in the story.
16. Find in the story expressive means (words, expressions, SD-s) used to describe Paul's emotional state.
17. Explain the implied meaning of the play of words in the expression *filthy lucre.*
18. Comment on the words in italics. What effect is achieved by this device?

C: Comment on.

"If you are lucky you have money. That's why it's better to be born lucky than rich. If you are rich, you may lose your money. But if you're lucky, you will always get more money"/p.133/.

D: Suggestions for Writing.

1. What is your own understanding of luck and a lucky person?
2. Give your own view of mother-child relationship.
3. Discuss Henry Fielding's statement in an essay: "Money is the fruit of evil as often as the root of it."

Mary E. Wilkins Freeman (1852-1930)

Mary E. Wilkins Freeman was born in Randolph, Massachusetts. At fifteen Freeman moved with her family to Vermont, where she graduated from high school. She attended Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary, but left it after a year because of the school's pressure on its students to publicly express their commitment to Christianity. Later she resumed her education in West Brattleboro.

Freeman's best known works include the short story collections "A Humble Romance" and "A New England Nun and Other Stories" and the Novels "Pembroke" and The Shoulders of Atlas"

In her short stories Freeman accurately and sensitively portrays the economic hardships of rural New England life during the late 1800s. Freemen's works reflect her Puritan religious background and often deal with matters of conscience. The central character in several stories is a woman in conflict with her family, village society, or a suitor.

The Revolt of "Mother"

"Father!"

"What is it?"

"What are them men diggin' over there in the field for?"

There was a sudden dropping and enlarging of the lower part of the old man's face, as if some heavy weight had settled therein; he shut his mouth tight, and went on **harnessing** the great bay mare. He hustled the collar on to her neck **with a jerk**.

"Father!"

The old man slapped the saddle upon the mare's back.

"Look here, father, I want to know what them men are diggin' over in the field for, an' I'm goin' to know."

"I wish you'd go into the house, mother, an' 'tend to your own affairs," the old man said then. He ran his words together, and his speech was almost as inarticulate as a **growl.**

But the woman understood; it was her most native tongue. "I ain't goin' into the house till you tell me what them men are doin' over there in the field," said she.

Then she stood waiting. She was a small woman, short and straight-waisted like a child in her brown cotton gown. Her forehead was mild and **benevolent** between the smooth curves of gray hair; there were meek downward lines about her nose and mouth; but her eyes, fixed upon the old man, looked as if the meekness had been the result of her own will, never of the will of another.

They were in the barn, standing before the wide open doors. The spring air, full of the smell of growing grass and unseen blossoms, came in their faces. The deep yard in front was littered with farm wagons and piles of wood; on the edges, close to the fence and the house, the grass was a vivid green, and there were some dandelions.

The old man glanced doggedly at his wife as he tightened the last buckles on the harness. She looked as immovable to him as one of the rocks in his pasture-land, bound to the earth with generations of blackberry vines. He slapped the reins over the horse, and started forth from the barn.

"Father!" said she.

The old man pulled up. "What is it?"

"I want to know what the men are diggin' over there in that field for."

"They're diggin' a cellar, I s'pose, if you've got to know."

"A cellar for what?"

"A barn."

"A barn? You ain't goin to build a barn over there where we was goin' to have a house, father?"

The old man said not another word. He hurried the horse into the farm wagon, and clattered out of the yard, jouncing as sturdily on his seat as a boy.

The woman stood a moment looking after him, then she went out of the barn across a corner of the yard to the house. The house,

standing at right angles with the great barn and a long reach of sheds and out-buildings, was infinitesimal compared with them. It was scarcely as commodious for people as the little boxes under the barn eaves were for doves.

A pretty girl's face, pink and delicate as a flower, was looking out of one of the house windows. She was watching three men who were digging over in the field which bounded the yard near the road line. She turned quietly when the woman entered.

“What are they digging for, mother?” said she. “Did he tell you?”

“They're diggin' for-a cellar for a new barn.”

“Oh, mother, he ain't going to build another barn?”

“That's what he says.”

A boy stood before the kitchen glass combing his hair. He combed slowly and painstakingly, arranging his brown hair in a smooth hillock over his forehead. He did not seem to pay any attention to the conversation.

“Sammy, did you know father was going to build a new barn?” asked the girl.

The boy combed assiduously.

“Sammy!”

He turned, and showed a face like his father's under his smooth crest of hair. “Yes, I s'pose I did,” he said, reluctantly.

“How long have you known it?” asked his mother.

“Bout three months, I guess.”

“Why didn't you tell of it?”

“Didn't think 't would do no good.”

“I don't see what father wants another barn for,” said the girl, in her sweet, slow voice. She turned again to the window, and stared out at the digging men in the field. Her tender, sweet face was full of a gentle distress. Her forehead was as bald and innocent as a baby's, with the light hair strained back from it in a row of curl-papers. She was quite large, but her soft curves did not look as if they covered muscles.

Her mother looked sternly at the boy. “Is he goin' to buy more cows?” said she.

The boy did not reply; he was tying his shoes.

“Sammy, I want you to tell me if he's goin' to buy more

cows."

"I s'pose he is."

"How many?"

"Four, I guess."

His mother said nothing more. She went into the pantry and there was a clatter of dishes. The boy got his cap from a nail behind the door, took an old arithmetic from the shelf, and started for school. He was lightly built, but clumsy. He went out of the yard with a curious spring in the hips, that made his loose home-made jacket tilt up in the rear.

The girl went to the sink, and began to wash the dishes that were piled up there. Her mother came promptly out of the pantry, and **shoved** her aside. "You wipe 'em," said she; "I'll wash. There's a good many this mornin'."

The mother plunged her hands vigorously into the water, the girl wiped the plates slowly and dreamily. "Mother," said she, "don't you think it's too bad father's going to build that new barn, much as we need a decent house to live in?"

Her mother scrubbed a dish fiercely. "You ain't found out yet we're women-folks, Nanny Penn," said she. "You ain't seen enough of men-folks yet to. One of these days you'll find it out, an' then you'll know that we know only what men-folks think we do, so far as any use of it goes, an' how we'd ought to reckon men-folks in with Providence, an' not complain of what they do any more than we do of the weather."

"I don't care; I don't believe George is anything like that, anyhow," said Nanny. Her delicate face flushed pink, her lips **pouted** softly, as if she were going to cry.

"You wait an' see. I guess George Eastman ain't no better than other men. You hadn't ought to judge father, though. He can't help it, 'cause he don't look at things jest the way we do. An' we've been pretty comfortable here, after all. The roof don't leak-ain't never but once-that's one thing. Father's kept it shingled right up."

"I do wish we had a parlor."

"I guess it won't hurt George Eastman any to come to see you in a nice clean kitchen. I guess a good many girls don't have as good a place as this. Nobody's ever heard me complain."

"I ain't complained either, mother."

"Well, I don't think you'd better, a good father an' a good home as you've got. S'pose your father made you go out an' work for your livin'? Lots of girls have to that ain't no stronger an' better able to than you be."

Sarah Penn washed the frying-pan with a conclusive air. She scrubbed the outside of it as faithfully as the inside. She was a masterly keeper of her box of a house. Her one living-room never seemed to have in it any of the dust which the friction of life with inanimate matter produces. She swept, and there seemed to be no dirt to go before the broom; she cleaned, and one could see no difference. She was like an artist so perfect that he has apparently no art. To-day she got out a mixing bowl and a board, and rolled some pies, and there was no more flour upon her than upon her daughter who was doing finer work. Nanny was to be married in the fall, and she was sewing on some white cambric[1] and embroidery. She sewed industriously while her mother cooked, her soft milk-white hands and wrists showed whiter than her delicate work.

"We must have the stove moved out in the shed before long," said Mrs. Penn. "Talk about not havin' things, it's been a real blessin' to be able to put a stove up in that shed in hot weather. Father did one good thing when he fixed that stove-pipe out there."

Sarah Penn's face as she rolled her pies had that expression of meek **vigor** which might have characterized one of the New Testament saints. She was making mince-pies. Her husband, Adoniram Penn, liked them better than any other kind. She baked twice a week. Adoniram often liked a piece of pie between meals. She hurried this morning. It had been later than usual when she began, and she wanted to have a pie baked for dinner. However deep a resentment she might be forced to hold against her husband, she would never fail in **sedulous** attention to his wants.

Nobility of character manifests itself at loop-holes when it is not provided with large doors. Sarah Penn's showed itself to-day in flaky dishes of pastry. So she made the pies faithfully, while across the table she could see when she glanced up from her work, the sight that **rankled** in her patient and steadfast soul—the digging of the

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[1] Cambric: white linen fabric.

cellar of the new barn in the place where Adoniram forty years ago had promised her their new house should stand.

The pies were done for dinner. Adoniram and Sammy were home a few minutes after twelve o'clock. The dinner was eaten with serious haste. There was never much conversation at the table in the Penn family. Adoniram asked a blessing, and they ate promptly, then rose up and went about their work.

Sammy went back to school, taking soft sly lopes out of the yard like a rabbit. He wanted a game of marbles before school, and feared his father would give him some **chores** to do. Adoniram hastened to the door and called after him, but he was out of sight.

"I don't see what you let him go for, mother," said he. "I wanted him to help me unload that wood."

Adoniram went to work out in the yard unloading wood from the wagon. Sarah put away the dinner dishes, while Nanny took down her curl-papers and changed her dress. She was going down to the store to buy some more embroidery and thread.

When Nanny was gone, Mrs. Penn went to the door. "Father!" she called.

"Well, what is it!"

"I want to see you jest a minute, father."

"I can't leave this wood nohow. I've got to git it unloaded an' go for a load of gravel afore two o'clock. Sammy had ought to helped me. You hadn't ought to let him go to school so early."

"I want to see you jest a minute."

"I tell ye I can't, nohow, mother,"

"Father, you come here." Sarah Penn stood in the door like a queen; she held her head as if it bore a crown; there was that patience which makes authority royal in her voice. Adoniram went.

Mrs. Penn led the way into the kitchen, and pointed to a chair. "Sit down, father," said she; "I've got somethin' I want to say to you."

He sat down heavily; his face was quite **stolid**, but he looked at her with **restive** eyes. "Well, what is it, mother?"

"I want to know what you're buildin' that new barn for, father?"

"I ain't got nothin' to say about it."

"It can't be you think you need another barn?"

"I tell ye I ain't got nothin' to say about it, mother; an' I ain't

goin' to say nothin'."

"Be you goin' to buy more cows?"

Adoniram did not reply; he shut his mouth tight.

"I know you be, as well as I want to. Now, father, look here"-Sarah Penn had not sat down; she stood before her husband in the humble fashion of a Scripture woman-"I'm goin' to talk real plain to you; I never have sence I married you, but I'm goin' to now. I ain't never complained, an' I ain't goin' to complain now, but I'm goin' to talk plain. You see this room here, father; you look at it well. You see there ain't no carpet on the floor, an' you see the paper is all dirty, an' droppin' off the walls. We ain't had no new paper on it for ten year, an' then I put it on myself an' it didn't cost but ninepence a roll. You see this room, father; it's all the one I've had to work in an' eat in an' sit in sence we was married. There ain't another woman in the whole town whose husband ain't got half the means you have but what's got better. It's all the room Nanny's got to have her company in; an' there ain't one of her mates but what's got better, an' their fathers not so able as hers is. It's all the room she'll ever have to be married in. What would you have thought, father, if we had had our weddin' in a room no better than this? I was married in my mother's parlor, with a carpet on the floor, an' stuffed furniture, an' a mahogany card-table. An' this is all the room my daughter will have to be married in. Look here, father!"

Sarah Penn went across the room as though it were a tragic stage. She flung open a door and disclosed a tiny bedroom, only large enough for a bed and bureau, with a path between. "There, father," said she-"there's all the room I've had to sleep in forty year. All my children were born there-the two that died, an' the two that's livin'. I was sick with a fever there."

She stepped to another door and opened it. It led into the small, ill-lighted pantry. "Here," said she, "is all the buttery[1] I've got-every place I've got for my dishes, to set away my victuals in, an' to keep my milk-pans in. Father, I've been takin' care of the milk of six cows in this place, an' now you're goin' to build a new barn, an' keep more cows, an' give me more to do in it."

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[1] Buttery: pantry for storing food and dishes.

She threw open another door. A narrow crooked flight of stairs wound upward from it. “There, father,” said she, “I want you to look at the stairs that go up to them two unfinished chambers that are all the places our son an' daughter have had to sleep in all their lives. There ain't a prettier girl in town nor a more ladylike one than Nanny, an' that's the place she has to sleep in. It ain't so good as your horse's stall; it ain't so warm an' tight.”

Sarah Penn went back and stood before her husband. “Now, father,” said she, “I want to know if you think you're doin' right an' accordin' to what you **profess**. Here, when we was married, forty year ago, you promised me faithful that we should have a new house built in that lot over in the field before the year was out. You said you had money enough, an' you wouldn't ask me to live in no such place as this. It *is* forty year now, an' you've been makin' more money, an' I've been savin' of it for you ever since, an' you ain't built no house yet. You've built sheds an' cow-houses an' one new barn, an' now you're goin' to build another. Father, I want to know if you think it's right. You're lodgin' your dumb beasts better than you are your own flesh an' blood. I want to know if you think it's right.” “I ain't got nothin' to say.”

“You can't say nothin' without ownin' it ain't right, father. An' there's another thing-I ain't complained; I've got along forty year, an' I s'pose I should forty more, if it wa'n't for that-if we don't have another house. Nanny she can't live with us after she's married. She'll have to go somewheres else to live away from us, an' it don't seem as if I could have it so, noways, father. She wa'n't ever strong. She's got considerable color, but there wa'n't never any backbone to her. I've always took the heft of everything off her, an' she ain't fit to keep house an' do everything herself. She'll be all worn out inside of a year. Think of her doin' all the washin' an' ironin' an' bakin' with them soft white hands an' arms, an' sweepin'! I can't have it so, noways, father.”

Mrs. Penn's face was burning; her mild eyes gleamed. She had pleaded her little cause like a Webster[1]; she had ranged from severity

[1] Webster: Freement may be referring to Daniel Webster (1782-1852), an American lawyer famous for his oratory; or she may have in mind the popular Webster reading books used by American frontier children.

to pathos; but her opponent employed that obstinate silence which makes **eloquence futile** with mocking echoes. Adoniram arose clumsily.

"Father, ain't you got nothin' to say?" said Mrs. Penn. "I've got to go off after that load of gravel. I can't stan' here talkin' all day." "Father, won't you think it over, an' have a house built there instead of a barn?" "I ain't got nothin' to say."

Adoniram shuffled out. Mrs. Penn went into her bedroom. When she came out, her eyes were red. She had a roll of unbleached cotton cloth. She spread it out on the kitchen table, and began cutting out some shirts for her husband. The men over in the field had a team to help them this afternoon; she could hear their halloos. She had a **scanty** pattern for the shirts; she had to plan and piece the sleeves.

Nanny came home with her embroidery, and sat down with her needlework. She had taken down her curl-papers, and there was a soft roll of fair hair like an aureole[1] over her forehead; her face was as delicately fine and clear as porcelain. Suddenly she looked up, and the tender red flamed all over her face and neck. "Mother" said she.

"What say?"

"I've been thinking-I don't see how we're goin' to have any-wedding in this room. I'd be ashamed to have his folks come if we didn't have anybody *else."*

"Mebbe we can have some new paper before then; I can put it on. I guess you won't have no call to be ashamed of your belongin's."

"We might have the wedding in the new barn," said Nanny, with gentle **pettishness**. "Why, mother, what makes you look so?"

Mrs. Penn had started, and was staring at her with a curious expression. She turned again to her work, and spread out a pattern carefully on the cloth. "Nothin'," said she.

Presently Adoniram clattered out of the yard in his two-wheeled dump cart, standing as proudly upright as a Roman charioteer. Mrs. Penn opened the door and stood there a minute looking out; the halloos of the men sounded louder.

It seemed to her all through the spring months that she heard

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[1] aureole: a halo.

nothing but the halloos and the noises of saws and hammers. The new barn grew fast. It was a fine edifice for this little village. Men came on pleasant Sundays, in their meeting suits and clean shirt bosoms, and stood around it admiringly. Mrs. Penn did not speak of it, and Adoniram did not mention it to her, although sometimes, upon a return from inspecting it, he bore himself with injured dignity.

"It's a strange thing how your mother feels about the new barn," he said, confidentially, to Sammy one day.

Sammy only grunted after an odd fashion for a boy; he had learned it from his father.

The barn was all completed ready for use by the third week in July. Adoniram had planned to move his stock in on Wednesday; on Tuesday he received a letter which changed his plans. He came in with it early in the morning. "Sammy's been to the post-office," said he, "an' I've got a letter from Hiram." Hiram was Mrs. Penn's brother, who lived in Vermont.

"Well," said Mrs. Penn, "what does he say about the folks?"

"I guess they're all right. He says he thinks if I come up country right off there's a chance to buy jest the kind of a horse I want." He stared reflectively out of the window at the new barn.

Mrs. Penn was making pies. She went on clapping the rolling-pin into the crust, although she was very pale, and her heart beat loudly.

"I dun' know but what I'd better go," said Adoniram. "I hate to go off jest now, right in the midst of hayin', but the ten-acre lot's cut, an' I guess Rums an' the others can git along without me three or four days. I can't get a horse round here to suit me, nohow, an' I've got to have another for all that wood-haulin' in the fall. I told Hiram to watch out, an' if he **got wind of** a good horse to let me know. I guess I'd better go."

"I'll get out your clean shirt an' collar," said Mrs. Penn calmly.

She laid out Adoniram's Sunday suit and his clean clothes on the bed in the little bedroom. She got his shaving-water and razor ready. At last she buttoned on his collar and fastened his black cravat[1].

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[1] Cravat: tie, band, or scarf worn around the neck.

Adoniram never wore his collar and cravat except on extra occasions. He held his head high, with a rasped[1] dignity. When he was all ready, with his coat and hat brushed, and a lunch of pie and cheese in a paper bag, he hesitated on the threshold of the door. He looked at his wife, and his manner was defiantly apologetic. "If them cows come to-day, Sammy can drive 'em into the new bam," said he; "an' when they bring the hay up, they can pitch it in there."

"Well," replied Mrs. Penn.

Adoniram set his shaven face ahead and started. When he had cleared the door-step, he turned and looked back with a kind of nervous solemnity. "I shall be back by Saturday if nothin' happens," said he.

"Do be careful, father," returned his wife.

She stood in the door with Nanny at her elbow and watched him out of sight. Her eyes had a strange, doubtful expression in them; her peaceful forehead was contracted. She went in, and about her baking again. Nanny sat sewing. Her wedding-day was drawing nearer, and she was getting pale and thin with her steady sewing. Her mother kept glancing at her.

"Have you got that pain in your side this mornin'?" she asked.

"A little."

Mrs. Penn's face, as she worked, changed, her perplexed forehead smoothed, her eyes were steady, her lips firmly set. She formed a maxim for herself, although **incoherently** with her unlettered thoughts. "**Unsolicited** opportunities are the guide-posts of the Lord to the new roads of life," she repeated in effect, and she made up her mind to her course of action.

"S'posin' I *had* wrote to Hiram," she muttered once, when she was in the pantry-"s'posin' I had wrote, an' asked him if he knew of any horse? But I didn't, an' father's goin' wa'n't none of my doin'. It looks like a providence." Her voice rang out quite loud at the last.

"What you talkin' about, mother?" called Nanny.

"Nothin'."

Mrs. Penn hurried her baking; at eleven o'clock it was all done. The load of hay from the west field came slowly down the cart track, and drew up at the new barn. Mrs. Penn ran out. "Stop!" she

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[1] Rasped: harsh or grating.

screamed-“stop!”

The men stopped and looked; Sammy upreared from the top of the load, and stared at his mother.

“Stop!” she cried out again. “Don't you put the hay in that barn; put it in the old one.”

“Why, he said to put it in here,” returned one of the hay-makers, wonderingly. He was a young man, a neighbor's son, whom Adoniram hired by the year to help him on the farm.

“Don't you put the hay in the new barn; there's room enough in the old one, ain't there?” said Mrs. Penn.

“Room enough,” returned the hired man, in his thick, rustic tones. “Didn't need the new barn, nohow, far as room's concerned. Well, I s'pose he changed his mind.” He took hold of the horses' bridles.

Mrs. Penn went back to the house. Soon the kitchen windows were darkened, and a fragrance like warm honey came into the room.

Nanny laid down her work. “I thought father wanted them to put the hay into the new barn?” she said, wonderingly.

“It's all right,” replied her mother.

Sammy slid down from the load of hay, and came in to see if dinner was ready.

“I ain't goin' to get a regular dinner to-day, as long as father's gone,” said his mother. “I've let the fire go out. You can have some bread an' milk an' pie. I thought we could get along.” She set out some bowls of milk, some bread, and a pie on the kitchen table. “You'd better eat your dinner now,” said she. “You might jest as well get through with it. I want you to help me afterward.”

Nanny and Sammy stared at each other. There was something strange in their mother's manner. Mrs. Penn did not eat anything herself. She went into the pantry, and they heard her moving dishes while they ate. Presently she came out with a pile of plates. She got the clothes-basket out of the shed, and packed them in it. Nanny and Sammy watched. She brought out cups and saucers, and put them in with the plates.

“What you goin' to do, mother?” inquired Nanny, in a timid voice. A sense of something unusual made her tremble, as if it were a ghost. Sammy **rolled his eyes** over his pie.

“You'll see what I'm goin' to do,” replied Mrs. Penn. “If you're

through, Nanny, I want you to go up-stairs an' pack up your things; an' I want you, Sammy, to help me take down the bed in the bedroom."

"Oh, mother, what for?" gasped Nanny.

"You'll see."

During the next few hours a feat was performed by this simple, pious New England mother which was equal in its way to Wolfe's[1] storming of the Heights of Abraham. It took no more genius and audacity of bravery for Wolfe to cheer his wondering soldiers up those steep precipices, under the sleeping eyes of the enemy, than for Sarah Penn, at the head of her children, to move all their little household goods into the new barn while her husband was away.

Nanny and Sammy followed their mother's instructions without a murmur; indeed, they were **overawed**. There is a certain uncanny and superhuman quality about all such purely original undertakings as their mother's was to them. Nanny went back and forth with her light loads, and Sammy sagged with sober energy.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the little house in which the Penns had lived for forty years had emptied itself into the new barn.

Every builder builds somewhat for unknown purposes, and is in a measure of **prophet**. The architect of Adoniram Penn's barn, while he designed it for the comfort of four-footed animals, had planned better than he knew for the comfort of humans. Sarah Penn saw at a glance its possibilities. Those great box-stalls, with quilts hung before them, would make better bedrooms than the one she had occupied for forty years, and there was a tight carriage-room. The harness-room, with its chimney and shelves, would make a kitchen of her dreams. The great middle space would make a parlor, by-and-by, fit for a palace. Up stairs there was as much room as down. With partitions and windows, what a house would there be! Sarah looked at the row of stanchions[2] before the

[1] Wolfe: James Wolfe (1727-1759) was a British soldier who defeated Canadian General Montcalm, making Canada a British territory.

[2] Stanchion: an upright post used to secure a cow in a stall.

allotted space for cows, and reflected that she would have her front entry there.

At six o'clock the stove was up in the harness-room, the kettle was boiling, and the table set for tea. It looked almost as home-like as the abandoned house across the yard had ever done. The young hired man milked, and Sarah directed him calmly to bring the milk to the new barn. He came gaping, dropping little blots of foam from the brimming pails on the grass. Before the next morning he had spread the story of Adoniram Penn's wife moving into the new barn all over the little village. Men assembled in the store and talked it over, women with shawls over their heads scuttled into each other's houses before their work was done. Any **deviation** from the ordinary course of life in this quiet town was enough to stop all progress in it. Everybody paused to look at the staid, independent figure on the side track. There was a difference of opinion with regard to her. Some held her to be insane; some, of a lawless and rebellious spirit.

Friday the minister went to see her. It was in the forenoon, and she was at the barn door shelling peas for dinner. She looked up and returned his salutation with dignity, then she went on with her work. She did not invite him in. The saintly expression of her face remained fixed, but there was an angry flush over it.

The minister stood awkwardly before her, and talked. She handled the peas as if they were bullets. At last she looked up, and her eyes showed the spirit that her meek front had covered for a lifetime.

“There ain't no use talkin', Mr. Hersey,” said she. “I've thought it all over an' over, an' I believe I'm doin' what's right. I've made it the subject of prayer, an' it's betwixt me an' the Lord an' Adoniram. There ain't no call for nobody else to worry about it.”

“Well, of course, if you have brought it to the Lord in prayer, and feel satisfied that you are doing right, Mrs. Penn,” said the minister, helplessly. His thin gray-bearded face was pathetic. He was a sickly man; his youthful confidence had cooled; he had **to scourge himself up to** some of his pastoral duties as **relentlessly** as a Catholic ascetic[1], and then he was **prostrated** by the smart.

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[1] Catholic ascetic: a member of the Catholic church who leads a life of

“I think it's right jest as much as I think it was right for your forefathers to come over from the old country 'cause they didn't have what belonged to 'em,” said Mrs. Penn. She arose. The barn threshold might have been Plymouth Rock[1] from her bearing. “I don't doubt you mean well, Mr. Hersey,” said she, “but there are things people hadn't ought to interfere with. I've been a member of the church for over forty year. I've got my own mind an' my own feet, an' I'm going to think my own thoughts an' go my own ways, an' nobody but the Lord is goin' to dictate to me unless I've a mind to have him. Won't you come in an' set down? How is Mis' Hersey?”

“She is well, 1 thank you,” replied the minister. He added some more perplexed apologetic remarks; then he retreated.

He could **expound** the **intricacies** of every character study in the Scriptures, he was competent to grasp the Pilgrim Fathers and all historical innovators, but Sarah Penn was beyond him. He could deal with primal cases, but parallel ones worsted him. But, after all, although it was aside from his province, he wondered more how Adoniram Penn would deal with his wife than how the Lord would. Everybody shared the wonder. When Adoniram's four new cows arrived, Sarah ordered three to be put in the old barn, the other in the house shed where the cooking-stove had stood. That added to the excitement. It was whispered that all four cows were domiciled in the house.

Towards sunset on Saturday, when Adoniram was expected home, there was a knot of men in the road near the new barn. The hired man had milked, but he still hung around the premises. Sarah Penn had supper all ready. There were brown-bread and baked beans and a custard pie; it was the supper that Adoniram loved on a Saturday night. She had on a clean calico, and she bore herself imperturbably. Nanny and Sammy **kept close at her heels**. Their eyes were large, and Nanny was full of nervous tremors. Still there was to them more pleasant excitement than anything else. An inborn

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extreme self-denial and self-mortification.

[1] Plymouth Rock: site where the Pilgrims are supposed to have first landed in 1620.

confidence in their mother over their father asserted itself.

Sammy looked out of the harness-room window. “There he is,” he announced, in an awed whisper. He and Nanny peeped around the casing. Mrs. Penn kept on about her work. The children watched Adoniram leave the new horse standing in the drive while he went to the house door. It was fastened. Then he went around to the shed. That door was seldom locked, even when the family was away. The thought how her father would be confronted by the cow flashed upon Nanny. There was a hysterical sob in her throat. Adoniram emerged from the shed and stood looking about in a dazed fashion. His lips moved; he was saying something, but they could not hear what it was. The hired man was peeping around a corner of the old barn, but nobody saw him.

Adoniram took the new horse by the bridle and led him across the yard to the new barn. Nanny and Sammy **slunk** close to their mother. The barn doors rolled back, and there stood Adoniram, with the long mild face of the great Canadian farm horse looking over his shoulder.

Nanny kept behind her mother, but Sammy stepped suddenly forward, and stood in front of her.

Adoniram stared at the group. “What on airth you all down here for?” said he. “What's the matter over to the house?”

“We've come here to live, father,” said Sammy. His shrill voice quavered out bravely.

“What”-Adoniram sniffed-“what is it smells like cookin?” said he. He stepped forward and looked in the open door of the harness-room. Then he turned to his wife. His old bristling face was pale and frightened. “What on airth does this mean, mother?” he gasped.

“You come in here, father,” said Sarah. She led the way into the harness-room and shut the door. “Now, father,” said she, “you needn't be scared. I ain't crazy. There ain't nothin' to be upset over. But we've got jest as good a right here as new horses an' cows. The house wa'n't fit for us to live in any longer, an' I made up my mind I wa'n't goin' to stay there. I've done my duty by you forty year, an' I'm goin' to do it now; but I'm goin' to live here. You've got to put in some windows and partitions; an' you'll have to buy some furniture.”

“Why, mother!” the old man gasped.

“You'd better take your coat off an' get washed-there's the wash-basin-an' then we'll have supper.”

"Why, mother!"

Sammy went past the window, leading the new horse to the old barn. The old man saw him, and shook his head speechlessly. He tried to take off his coat, but his arms seemed to lack the power. His wife helped him. She poured some water into the tin basin, and put in a piece of soap. She got the comb and brush, and smoothed his thin gray hair after he had washed. Then she put the beans, hot bread, and tea on the table. Sammy came in, and the family drew up. Adoniram sat looking dazedly at his plate, and they waited.

"Ain't you goin' to ask a blessin', father?" said Sarah.

And the old man bent his head and mumbled.

All through the meal he stopped eating at intervals, and stared **furtively** at his wife; but he ate well. The home food tasted good to him, and his old frame was too sturdily healthy to be affected by his mind. But after supper he went out, and sat down on the step of the smaller door at the right of the barn, through which he had meant his Jerseys to pass in stately file, but which Sarah designed for her front house door, and he leaned his head on his hands.

After the supper dishes were cleared away and the milk-pans washed, Sarah went out to him. The twilight was deepening. There was a clear green glow in the sky. Before them stretched the smooth level of field; in the distance was a cluster of hay-stacks like the huts of a village; the air was very cool and calm and sweet. The landscape might have been an ideal one of peace.

Sarah bent over and touched her husband on one of this thin, **sinewy** shoulders. "Father!"

The old man's shoulders heaved: he was weeping.

"Why, don't do so, father," said Sarah.

"I'll-put up the-partitions, an'-everything you-want, mother."

Sarah put her apron up to her face; she was overcome by her own triumph.

Adoniram was like a fortress whose walls had no active resistance, and went down the instant the right besieging tools were used. "Why, mother," he said, hoarsely, "I hadn't no idee you was so set on't as all this comes to."

A: Vocabulary Study.

Give the definitions and the Armenian equivalents of the words and expressions in bold type. Use them when answering the questions for discussion.

B: Questions for Discussion.

1. What effect does the author achieve by starting the story with a dialogue? What does it reveal about the main characters and their relationship?
2. What were Adoniram's plans? Why did he hold them back from his wife?
3. Speak on Sarah's reaction to her husband's new undertaking.
4. Describe Sarah as a housewife and a mother. Support your answer with evidence from the story.
5. The author portrayed Sarah as a scripture woman. Which of her qualities made her saintlike? What stylistic devices are used by the author to characterize her?
6. Give the gist of Sarah's pleading to her husband. What arguments did she bring to support her request? Do you find them convincing?
7. Throughout the story Adorinam pursued the policy of keeping obstinate silence. Was it an effective one? How does it characterize him?
8. When did the idea of moving into the new barn first occur to Sarah? When did she start to fulfill it?
9. How did the villagers react to Sarah's undertaking? Do you find her actions outrageous?
10. What features in Sarah's character suggest that she might be capable of great boldness?
11. Describe Adorinam's return. What provision did Sarah make to prevent her husband's anger?
12. Point out the climax of the story.
13. How was the conflict resolved?
14. Do you approve of Sarah's course of actions or do you

think she could have won more easily had she employed the method of direct confrontation?

15. What way of character drawing prevails in the story? Which of the characters is more dynamic?
16. Find words, expressions and stylistic sevices that the author used to create the atmosphere of concealed war between the spouses?
17. What is the major conflict discussed in the story? Does it exist in our society?

C: Comment on.

1. “You ain't found out yet we're women-folks, Nanny Penn,” said she. “You ain't seen enough of men-folks yet to. One of these days you'll find it out, an' then you'll know that we know only what men-folks think we do, so far as any use of it goes, an' how we'd ought to reckon men-folks in with Providence, an' not complain of what they do any more than we do of the weather.”/p.153/

2. “Unsolicited opportunities are the guide-posts of the Lord to the new roads of life”./p.160/

D: Suggestions for Writing.

1. Should the principle of headship be always observed in the family?
2.Do you agree with Oscar Wilde’s statements?
  a. “Discontent is the first step in progress of a man or a nation.”
  b. **“**Disobedience in the eyes of anyone who has read history is man's original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made-through disobedience and through rebellion.”

Stories for Supplementary Reading

The Loser
by Toshio Mori

Think Before You Read:

How do you behave when you lose things?
Is losing things a "tragedy" or a mere trifle for you?

Ordinarily she wouldn't think of walking fourteen blocks for anything but today she was punishing herself. She could have easily borrowed carfare from her son and saved some time. Halfway to the bus station she stopped to catch her breath. She was gasping and perspiration dripped from her face and neck. What a fool. "What made me forget my handbag?" she said to herself again and again. She had clutched it to her side all the way from Los Angeles and relaxing like a fool at the station she had laid it on the bench. The thought of her lifesavings in the bag gnawed her insides, and she picked up her brisk pace unseeming for her age. She counted the money in her mind-$3510 in bills and a few coins.

If I'd only find it. If it's still there, she thought. The money was the only reminder of her hardworking years. Thirty years of houseworking, forgoing necessary items, had built up the saving, and now in a foolish slip of a moment she had lost it.

The bus station came into view and her hope rose. She remembered sitting at the edge of the last row. There was no one near her bench. Maybe it was still there unnoticed. She fairly ran the last block and made straight for the bench. She almost stopped breathing to realize that the handbag was gone. After a moment of relapse she scrambled about, looking under the bench and asking people standing about. The handbag had disappeared.

Dashing to the clerk at the counter she told him of her loss. The clerk was sympathetic but had no knowledge of the missing bag. He was busy directing the traffic but noticing the crestfallen figure of the old woman he said. "I'll do what I can. I'll notify the police."

He took her name and address, the description of the bag and its contents. As she waited for the clerk to contact the police, she thought of her imminent situation. She would now be a burden to her son. She wished so to be independent. She had counted on her savings to see her through the rest of her life. If I had the money back again, she thought, I'd give half of the amount to the finder. She wondered if there were any honest people left in the world.

Then she heard the clerk calling her. He was holding the line as he explained the good news to her. A man had just come to the police station with her bag and money. "Tell the police to hold the man," she cried happily. "I want to reward him for his honesty."

In her excitement she forgot to thank the clerk for his trouble. She hurried toward the address of the police station. I'll give him five hundred, she thought. I'm lucky that an honest man found my handbag.

Her legs began to tire now and the ache in her left ankle reminded her of the past year. It had bothered her last winter, costing her two hundred in doctor bills and layoffs. She wondered if the ankle would give her trouble this winter which would mean added expenses. Perhaps she ought to give the honest man a hundred and keep the rest for safekeeping.

As she neared the City Hall which was her destination, she began to think of her son and his family. He wasn't doing so well in his grocery business so she should pay her room rent. One hundred dollars would almost cover a year's rent for her. In her mind she rolled over and over the amount. Yes, a hundred would be too much for a reward- even for an honest man. Twenty dollars would do.

Walking up the steps of the building, she chuckled with glee, relief written over her face. The money was safely hers now with the police holding it for her. After several inquiries she went to the right office. On the way, however, she heard police calls which reminded her that she must get herself a small radio for her room. She should not, she reasoned, use her savings for luxuries but a radio she could not do without. Finally she made up her mind. The man will be rewarded ten dollars. He shouldn't be expecting a reward from an old woman. Ten dollars would express her thought as much as a twenty.

The police and the man were waiting for her. After she correctly identified her handbag, the police released it to her custody. Immediately she began counting the money, partly to reward the man and to see if all of her savings were there. She counted twice to see if she had made a mistake. After the second counting, she gazed at the man who had found her bag. The man was smiling but he appeared to her as the kind who was too smart.

"Where did you find the bag?" she asked the man.

"On the street, ma'am–San Pablo." Noticing the woman's troubled expression, the man said, 'Anything wrong?"

"There's ten dollars missing. I had $ 3510 and a few coins when I lost the bag. Are you sure you didn't look inside my handbag?"

Patiently the man admitted, "I looked inside the bag, yes, but I didn't take any of your money. I just looked for your name and address."

She was insistent, "But ten dollars is missing."

The man shrugged his shoulders, "And I didn't take it."

The officer said, "Look, lady. Aren't you glad enough to get the bulk of the money back?"

"Ten dollars is missing," she said. Now the man, to her, was the kind who would take the money. "Officer, he should be arrested for stealing."

The officer said, "Lady, there's no proof that he took the money."

"I'd like to have him searched, officer," she said.

The man laughed but his face was serious. "Okay," he said. He emptied all his pockets, turning them inside out, and put its contents on the desk. There was the usual wallet, keys, cards, matches, and a pen. The man opened his wallet and took out the bills. "I have three dollars and fifty-eight cents, and they're mine."

A moment later the police dismissed the case. All the way back to her son's house, she kept thinking about the man who had found her handbag. She was certain that the man had stolen her missing ten dollars. Now she would have to forgo, she realized, the luxury of new reading glasses to relieve her of headache.

Questions for Discussion.

1. Do you find the old woman's reaction to the loss of the bag natural?
2. The woman has very kind intentions to thank the finder of the bag at the beginning of the story. How do her intentions gradually change on her way to the police station? What reasons does she find to justify her decisions?
3. Are her final actions foreshadowed in any way? How do they characterize the old woman?
4. Why is there such a wide gap between her intentions and her actions?
5. Who is the real loser in the story—the old woman or the man? Is it possible to predict how a person will behave when money is concerned?
6. Which of the human vices does the author discuss in the story?

Like The Sun
by R.K.Narayan

Think Before You Read:

Can a person always tell the truth?
Can lying ever be justified?

Truth, Sekhar reflected, is like the sun. I suppose no human being can ever look it straight in the face without blinking or being dazed. He realized that, morning till night, the essence of human relationships consisted in tempering truth so that it might not shock. This day he set apart as a unique day—at least one day in the year we must give and take absolute Truth whatever may happen. Otherwise life is not worth living. The day ahead seemed to him full of possibilities. He told no one of his experiment. It was a quiet resolve, a secret pact between him and eternity.

The very first test came while his wife served him his morning meal. He showed hesitation over a titbit, which she had thought was her culinary masterpiece. She asked, “Why, isn't it good?” At other times he would have said, considering her feelings in the matter, “I feel full-up, that's all.” But today he said, “It isn't good. I'm unable to swallow it.” He saw her wince and said to himself, Can't be helped. Truth is like the sun.

His next trial was in the common room when one of his colleagues came up and said, “Did you hear of the death of so and so? Don't you think it a pity?” “No,” Sekhar answered. “He was such a fine man—” the other began. But Sekhar cut him short with: “Far from it. He always struck me as a mean and selfish brute.”

During the last period when he was teaching geography for Third Form A, Sekhar received a note from the headmaster: “Please see me before you go home.” Sekhar said to himself: It must be about these horrible test papers. A hundred papers in the boys' scrawls; he had shirked this work for weeks, feeling all the time as if a sword were hanging over his head.

The bell rang and the boys burst out of the class.

Sekhar paused for a moment outside the headmaster's room to button up his coat; that was another subject the headmaster always sermonized about.

He stepped in with a very polite “Good evening, sir.”

The headmaster looked up at him in a very friendly manner and asked, “Are you free this evening?”

Sekhar replied, “Just some outing which I have promised the children at home—”

“Well, you can take them out another day. Come home with me now.” “Oh . . . yes, sir, certainly . . . ” And then he added timidly, “Anything special, sir?”

“Yes,” replied the headmaster, smiling to himself. . . “You didn't
know my weakness for music?”

“Oh, yes, sir . . .”

“I've been learning and practicing secretly, and now I want you to hear me this evening. I've engaged a drummer and a violinist to accompany me—this is the first time I'm doing it full-dress and I want your opinion. I know it will be valuable.”

Sekhar's taste in music was well known. He was one of the most dreaded music critics in the town. But he never anticipated his musical inclinations would lead him to this trial. . . . “Rather a surprise for you, isn't it?” asked the headmaster. “I've spent a fortune on it behind closed doors. ...” They started for the headmaster's house. “God hasn't given me a child, but at least let him not deny me the consolation of music,” the headmaster said, pathetically, as they walked. He incessantly chattered about music: how he began one day out of sheer boredom; how his teacher at first laughed at him, and then gave him hope; how his ambition in life was to forget himself in music.

At home the headmaster proved very ingratiating. He sat Sekhar on a red silk carpet, set before him several dishes of delicacies, and fussed over him as if he were a son-in-law of the house. He even said, “Well, you must listen with a free mind. Don't worry about these test papers.” He added half humorously, “I will give you a week's time.”

“Make it ten days, sir,” Sekhar pleaded.

“All right, granted,” the headmaster said generously. Sekhar felt really relieved now—he would attack them at the rate of ten a day and get rid of the nuisance.

The headmaster lighted incense sticks. “Just to create the right atmosphere,” he explained. A drummer and a violinist, already seated on a Rangoon mat, were waiting for him. The headmaster sat down between them like a professional at a concert, cleared his throat, and began an alapana[1], and paused to ask, “Isn't it good Kalyani?” Sekhar pretended not to have heard the question. The headmaster went on to sing a full song composed by Thyagaraja and followed it with two more. All the time the headmaster was singing, Sekhar went on commenting within himself, He croaks like a dozen frogs. He is bellowing like a buffalo. Now he sounds like loose window shutters in a storm.

The incense sticks burnt low. Sekhar's head throbbed with the medley of sounds that had assailed his ear-drums for a couple of hours now. He felt half stupefied. The headmaster had gone nearly hoarse, when he paused to ask, “Shall I go on?” Sekhar replied, “Please don't, sir, I think this will do. . . .” The headmaster looked stunned. His face was beaded with perspiration. Sekhar felt the greatest pity for him. But he felt he could not help it. No judge delivering a sentence felt more pained and helpless. Sekhar noticed that the headmaster's wife peeped in from the kitchen, with eager curiosity. The drummer and the violinist put away their burdens with an air of relief. The headmaster removed his spectacles, mopped his brow, and asked, “Now, come out with your opinion.”

“Can't I give it tomorrow, sir?” Sekhar asked tentatively.

“No. I want it immediately-your frank opinion. Was it good?”

“No, sir . . .” Sekhar replied.

“Oh! ... Is there any use continuing my lessons?”

“Absolutely none, sir ...” Sekhar said with his voice trembling. He felt very unhappy that he could not speak more soothingly. Truth, he reflected, required as much strength to give as to receive.

All the way home he felt worried. He felt that his official life

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[1] Alapana: in south Indian music, an introduction to a song.

was not going to be smooth sailing hereafter. There were questions of increment and confirmation and so on, all depending upon the headmaster's goodwill. All kinds of worries seemed to be in store for him. . . . Did not Harischandra[1] lose his throne, wife, child, because he would speak nothing less than the absolute Truth whatever happened?

At home his wife served him with a sullen face. He knew she was still angry with him for his remark of the morning. Two casualties for today, Sekhar said to himself. If I practice it for a week, I don't think I shall have a single friend left.

He received a call from the headmaster in his classroom next day. He went up apprehensively.

"Your suggestion was useful. I have paid off the music master. No one would tell me the truth about my music all these days. Why such antics at my age! Thank you. By the way, what about those test papers?"

"You gave me ten days, sir, for correcting them."

"Oh, I've reconsidered it. I must positively have them here tomorrow. . . ."A hundred papers in a day! That meant all night's sitting up! "Give me a couple of days, sir . . ."

"No. I must have them tomorrow morning. And remember every paper must be thoroughly scrutinized."

"Yes, sir," Sekhar said, feeling that sitting up all night with a hundred test papers was a small price to pay for the luxury of practicing Truth.

Questions for Discussion.

1. What experiment did Sekhar resolve to carry out one day?
2. What challenges did he face?
3. Why did Sekhar's wife and the head-master resent the truth? How would you react if you were in their place?
4. Find sentences where Sekhar's reflections on the truth are stated. Comment on them.

[1] Harischandra: (1850-1885), an Indian poet, critic, and journalist.

5. Explain what tempering the truth means. Is it possible to tell the truth and yet remain tactful?
6. Sekhar compares the truth with the sun while the Bible gives the following perception of the truth: “Your word is a lamp to my foot and a light to my roadway” (Psalm 119:105). Explain the difference between these two interpretations of the truth. What would you compare it with?
7. Keep a journal for several days in which you record the cases when you tempered the truth so that it might not shock.

The Far and the Near
by Thomas Wolfe

Think Before You Read:

"Not everything is gold that glitters."
In what situations can this proverb be used?
Relate it to the theme of the story.

ON THE OUTSKIRTS of a little town upon arise of land that swept back from the railway there was a tidy little cottage of white boards, trimmed vividly with green blinds. To one side of the house there was a garden neatly patterned with plots of growing vegetables, and an arbor for the grapes which ripened late in August. Before the house there were three mighty oaks which sheltered it in their clean and massive shade in summer, and to the other side there was a border of gay flowers. The whole place had an air of tidiness, thrift, and modest comfort.

Every day, a few minutes after two o'clock in the afternoon, the limited express between two cities passed this spot. At that moment the great train, having halted for a breathing space at the town nearby, was beginning to lengthen evenly into its stroke, but it had not yet reached the full drive of its terrific speed. It swung into view deliberately, swept past with a powerful swaying motion of the engine, a low smooth rumble of its heavy cars upon pressed steel, and then it vanished in the cut. For a moment the progress of the engine could be marked by heavy bellowing puffs of smoke that burst at spaced intervals above the edges of the meadow grass, and finally nothing could be heard but the solid clacking tempo of the wheels receding into the drowsy stillness of the afternoon.

Every day for more than twenty years, as the train had approached this house, the engineer had blown on the whistle, and every day, as soon as she heard this signal, a woman had appeared on the back porch of the little house and waved to him. At first she had a small child clinging to her skirts, and now this child had grown to full womanhood, and every day she, too, came with her mother to the porch and waved.

The engineer had grown old and gray in service. He had driven his great train, loaded with its weight of lives, across the land ten thousand times. His own children had grown up and married, and four times he had seen before him on the tracks the ghastly dot of tragedy converging like a cannon ball to its eclipse of horror at the boiler head-a light spring wagon filled with children, with its clustered row of small stunned faces; a cheap automobile stalled upon the tracks, set with the wooden figures of people paralyzed with fear; a battered hobo walking by the rail, too deaf and old to hear the whistle's warning; and a form flung past his window with a scream—all this the man had seen and known. He had known all the grief, the joy, the peril and the labor such a man could know; he had grown seamed and weathered in his loyal service, and now, schooled by the qualities of faith and courage and humbleness that attended his labor, he had grown old, and had the grandeur and the wisdom these men have.

But no matter what peril or tragedy he had known, the vision of the little house and the women waving to him with a brave free motion of the arm had become fixed in the mind of the engineer as something beautiful and enduring, something beyond all change and ruin, and something that would always be the same, no matter what mishap, grief or error might break the iron schedule of his days.

The sight of the little house and of these two women gave him the most extraordinary happiness he had ever known. He had seen them in a thousand lights, a hundred weathers. He had seen them through the harsh bare light of wintry gray across the brown and frosted stubble of the earth, and he had seen them again in the green luring sorcery of April.

He felt for them and for the little house in which they lived such tenderness as a man might feel for his own children, and at length the picture of their lives was carved so sharply in his heart that he felt that he knew their lives completely, to every hour and moment of the day, and he resolved that one day, when his years of service should be ended, he would go and find these people and speak at last with them whose lives had been so wrought into his own.

That day came. At last the engineer stepped from a train onto the station platform of the town where these two women lived. His years upon the rail had ended. He was a pensioned servant of his

company, with no more work to do. The engineer walked slowly through the station and out into the streets of the town. Everything was as strange to him as if he had never seen this town before. As he walked on, his sense of bewilderment and confusion grew. Could this be the town he had passed ten thousand times? Were these the same houses he had seen so often from the high windows of his cab? It was all as unfamiliar, as disquieting as a city in a dream, and the perplexity of his spirit increased as he went on.

Presently the houses thinned into the straggling outposts of the town, and the street faded into a country road-the one on which the women lived. And the man plodded on slowly in the heat and dust. At length he stood before the house he sought. He knew at once that he had found the proper place. He saw the lordly oaks before the house, the flower beds, the garden and the arbor, and farther off, the glint of rails.

Yes, this was the house he sought, the place he had passed so many times, the destination he had longed for with such happiness. But now that he had found it, now that he was here, why did his hand falter on the gate; why had the town, the road, the earth, the very entrance to this place he loved turned unfamiliar as the landscape of some ugly dream? Why did he now feel this sense of confusion, doubt, and hopelessness?

At length he entered by the gate, walked slowly up the path and in a moment more had mounted three short steps that led up to the porch, and was knocking at the door. Presently he heard steps in the hall, the door was opened, and a woman stood facing him.

And instantly, with a sense of bitter loss and grief, he was sorry he had come. He knew at once that the woman who stood there looking at him with a mistrustful eye was the same woman who had waved to him so many thousand times. But her face was harsh and pinched and meager; the flesh sagged wearily in sallow folds, and the small eyes peered at him with timid suspicion and uneasy doubt. All the brave freedom, the warmth and the affection that he had read into her gesture, vanished in the moment that he saw her and heard her unfriendly tongue.

And now his own voice sounded unreal and ghastly to him as he tried to explain his presence, to tell her who he was and the reason he had come. But he faltered on, fighting stubbornly against the

horror of regret, confusion, disbelief that surged up in his spirit, drowning all his former joy and making his act of hope and tenderness seem shameful to him.

At length the woman invited him almost unwillingly into the house, and called her daughter in a harsh shrill voice. Then, for a brief agony of time, the man sat in an ugly little parlor, and he tried to talk while the two women stared at him with a dull, bewildered hostility, a sullen, timorous restraint.

And finally, stammering a crude farewell, he departed. He walked away down the path and then along the road toward town, and suddenly he knew that he was an old man. His heart, which had been brave and confident when it looked along the familiar vista of the rails, was now sick with doubt and horror as it saw the strange and unsuspected visage of an earth which had always been within a stone's throw of him, and which he had never seen or known. And he knew that all the magic of that bright lost way, the vista of that shining line, the imagined corner of that small good universe of hope's desire, was gone forever, could never be got back again.

Questions for Discussion.

1. What was there about the cottage and its dwellers that aroused the engine driver’s warm feelings and interest for years?
2. The engineer faced many dangers in his service. What helped him overcome all these troubles?
3. What dream did he cherish all those years?
4. What feelings was he overwhelmed with on his way to the cottage?
5. How can you account for the abrupt change in his emotional state when he was standing on the threshold?
6. Contrast the first paragraph of the story with the last paragraph. Why does the engineer suddenly feel old and “sick with doubt and horror”?
7. How would you characterize the tone of the story?
8. Relate the title to the message of the story.

The Fly
by Katherine Mansfield

Think Before You Read:

Some people call years of old age "golden years," others-years of misery.
What is your attitude to old age, the old?

Y'are very snug in here," piped old Mr. Woodifield, and he peered out of the great, green leather armchair by his friend the boss's desk as a baby peers out of its pram. His talk was over; it was time for him to be off. But he did not want to go. Since he had retired, since his . . . stroke, the wife and the girls kept him boxed up in the house every day of the week except Tuesday. On Tuesday he was dressed up and brushed and allowed to cut back to the City for the day. Though what he did there the wife and girls couldn't imagine. Made a nuisance of himself to his friends, they supposed.. . . Well, perhaps so. All the same, we cling to our last pleasures as the tree clings to its last leaves. So there sat old Woodifield, smoking a cigar and staring almost greedily at the boss, who rolled in his office chair, stout, rosy, five years older than he, and still going strong, still at the helm. It did one good to see him.

Wistfully, admiringly, the old voice added, "It's snug in here, upon my word!"

"Yes, it's comfortable enough," agreed the boss, and he flipped the *Financial Times* with a paperknife. As a matter of fact he was proud of his room; he liked to have it admired, especially by old Woodifield. It gave him a feeling of deep, solid satisfaction to be planted there in the midst of it in full view of that frail old figure in the muffler.

"I've had it done up lately," he explained, as he had explained for the past-how many?-weeks. "New carpet," and he pointed to the bright red carpet with a pattern of large white rings. "New furniture," and he nodded toward the massive bookcase and the table with legs like twisted treacle. "Electric heating!" He waved almost exultantly

toward the five transparent, pearly sausages glowing so softly in the tilted copper pan.

But he did not draw old Woodifield's attention to the photograph over the table of a grave-looking boy in uniform standing in one of those spectral photographers' parks with photographers' storm clouds behind him. It was not new. It had been there for over six years.

“There was something I wanted to tell you,” said old Woodifield, and his eyes grew dim remembering. “Now what was it? I had it in my mind when I started out this morning.” His hands began to tremble, and patches of red showed above his beard.

Poor old chap, he's on his last pins, thought the boss. And, feeling kindly, he winked at the old man, and said jokingly, “I tell you what. I've got a little drop of something here that'll do you good before you go out into the cold again. It's beautiful stuff. It wouldn't hurt a child.” He took a key off his watch chain, unlocked a cupboard below his desk, and drew forth a dark, squat bottle. “That's the medicine,” said he. “And the man from whom I got it told me on the strict Q.T. it came from the cellars at Windsor Castle.”

Old Woodifield's mouth fell open at the sight. He couldn't have looked more surprised if the boss had produced a rabbit.

“It's whisky, ain't it?” he piped, feebly.

The boss turned the bottle and lovingly showed him the label. Whisky it was.

“D'you know,” said he, peering up at the boss wonderingly, “they won't let me touch it at home.” And he looked as though he was going to cry.

“Ah, that's where we know a bit more than the ladies,” cried the boss, swooping across for two tumblers that stood on the table with the water bottle, and pouring a generous finger into each. “Drink it down. It'll do you good. And don't put any water with it. It's sacrilege to tamper with stuff like this. Ah!” He tossed off his, pulled out his handkerchief, hastily wiped his mustache, and cocked an eye at old Woodifield, who was rolling his in his chaps.

The old man swallowed, was silent a moment, and then said faintly, “It's nutty!”

But it warmed him; it crept into his chill old brain-he remembered.

“That was it,” he said, heaving himself out of his chair. “I

thought you'd like to know. The girls were in Belgium last week having a look at poor Reggie's grave, and they happened to come across your boy's. They're quite near each other, it seems."

Old Woodifield paused, but the boss made no reply. Only a quiver in his eyelids showed that he heard.

“The girls were delighted with the way the place is kept,” piped the old voice. “Beautifully looked after. Couldn't be better if they were at home. You've not been across, have yer?”

“No, no!” For various reasons the boss had not been across.

“There's miles of it,” quavered old Woodifield, “and it's all as neat as a garden. Flowers growing on all the graves. Nice broad paths.” It was plain from his voice how much he liked a nice broad path.

The pause came again. Then the old man brightened wonderfully.

“D'you know what the hotel made the girls pay for a pot of jam?” he piped. “Ten francs! Robbery, I call it. It was a little pot, so Gertrude says, no bigger than a half-crown. And she hadn't taken more than a spoonful when they charged her ten francs. Gertrude brought the pot away with her to teach 'em a lesson. Quite right, too; it's trading on our feelings. They think because we're over there having a look around we're ready to pay anything. That's what it is.” And he turned toward the door.

“Quite right, quite right!” cried the boss, though what was quite right he hadn't the least idea. He came round by his desk, followed the shuffling footsteps to the door, and saw the old fellow out. Woodifield was gone.

For a long moment the boss stayed, staring at nothing, while the gray-haired office messenger, watching him, dodged in and out of his cubbyhole like a dog that expects to be taken for a run. Then: “I'll see nobody for half an hour, Macey,” said the boss. “Understand? Nobody at all.”

“Very good, sir.”

The door shut, the firm heavy steps re-crossed the bright carpet, the fat body plumped down in the spring chair, and leaning forward, the boss covered his face with his hands. He wanted, he intended, he had arranged to weep. . . .

It had been a terrible shock to him when old Woodifield sprang that remark upon him about the boy's grave. It was exactly as though

the earth had opened and he had seen the boy lying there with Woodifield's girls staring down at him. For it was strange. Although over six years had passed away, the boss never thought of the boy except as lying unchanged, unblemished in his uniform, asleep forever. “My son!” groaned the boss. But no tears came yet. In the past, in the first months and even years after the boy's death, he had only to say those words to be overcome by such grief that nothing short of a violent fit of weeping could relieve him. Time, he had declared then, he had told everybody, could make no difference. Other men perhaps might recover, might live their loss down, but not he. How was it possible? His boy was an only son. Ever since his birth the boss had worked at building up this business for him; it had no other meaning if it was not for the boy. Life itself had come to have no other meaning. How on earth could he have slaved, denied himself, kept going all those years without the promise forever before him of the boy's stepping into his shoes and carrying on where he left off?

And that promise had been so near being fulfilled. The boy had been in the office learning the ropes for a year before the war. Every morning they had started off together; they had come back by the same train. And what congratulations he had received as the boy’s father! No wonder; he had taken to it marvelously. As to his popularity with the staff, every man jack of them down to old Macey couldn't make enough of the boy. And he wasn't in the least spoiled. No, he was just his bright, natural self, with the right word for everybody, with that boyish look and his habit of saying, “Simply splendid!”

But all that was over and done with as though it never had been. The day had come when Macey had handed him the telegram that brought the whole place crashing about his head. “Deeply regret to inform you ...” And he had left the office a broken man, with his life in ruins.

Six years ago, six years ... How quickly time passed! It might have happened yesterday. The boss took his hands from his face; he was puzzled. Something seemed to be wrong with him. He wasn't feeling as he wanted to feel. He decided to get up and have a look at the boy's photograph. But it wasn't a favorite photograph of his; the expression was unnatural. It was cold, even stern looking. The boy

had never looked like that.

At that moment the boss noticed that a fly had fallen into his broad inkpot and was trying feebly but desperately to clamber out again. Help! help! said those struggling legs. But the sides of the inkpot were wet and slippery; it fell back again and began to swim. The boss took up a pen, picked the fly out of the ink, and shook it onto a piece of blotting paper. For a fraction of a second it lay still on the dark patch that oozed round it. Then the front legs waved, took hold, and, pulling its small sodden body up, it began the immense task of cleaning the ink from its wings. Over and under, over and under, went a leg along a wing, as the stone goes over and under the scythe. Then there was a pause, while the fly, seeming to stand on the tips of its toes, tried to expand first one wing and then the other. It succeeded at last, and, sitting down, it began, like a minute cat, to clean its face. Now one could imagine that the little front legs rubbed against each other lightly, joyfully. The horrible danger was over; it had escaped; it was ready for life again.

But just then the boss had an idea. He plunged his pen back into the ink, leaned his thick wrist on the blotting paper, and as the fly tried its wings down came a great heavy blot. What would it make of that? What indeed! The little beggar seemed absolutely cowed, stunned, and afraid to move because of what would happen next. But then, as if painfully, it dragged itself forward. The front legs waved, caught hold, and, more slowly this time, the task began from the beginning.

He's a plucky little devil, thought the boss, and he felt a real admiration for the fly's courage. That was the way to tackle things; that was the right spirit. Never say die; it was only a question of ... But the fly had again finished its laborious task, and the boss had just time to refill his pen, to shake fair and square on the new-cleaned body yet another dark drop. What about it this time? A painful moment of suspense followed. But behold, the front legs were again waving; the boss felt a rush of relief. He leaned over the fly and said to it tenderly, “You artful little b . . .” And he actually had the brilliant notion of breathing on it to help the drying process. All the same, there was something timid and weak about its efforts now, and the boss decided that this time should be the last, as he dipped the pen into the inkpot.

It was. The last blot on the soaked blotting paper, and the draggled fly lay in it and did not stir. The back legs were stuck to the

body; the front legs were not to be seen.

“Come on,” said the boss. “Look sharp!” And he stirred it with his pen-in vain. Nothing happened or was likely to happen. The fly was dead.

The boss lifted the corpse on the end of the paperknife and flung it into the wastepaper basket. But such a grinding feeling of wretchedness seized him that he felt positively frightened. He started forward and pressed the bell for Macey.

“Bring me some fresh blotting paper,” he said, sternly, “and look sharp about it.” And while the old dog padded away he fell to wondering what it was he had been thinking about before. What was it? It was ... He took out his handkerchief and passed it inside his collar. For the life of him he could not remember.

Questions for Discussion.

1. Compare and contrast the two old people /the boss and Woodifield/ pointing out major similarities and differences in their characters.
2. Both the boss and Woodifield have suffered a tragedy in their life. Note how differently hey have coped with the burden of the grief.
3. What is the role of Woodsfield’s character? Why is it introduced in the story?
4. The boss never visited his son's grave. What does it suggest about his character?
5. The boss is never mentioned by the name. What is the effect of this omission?
6. Why did the boss start to torture the fly? Account for the feelings he is seized with during the “fly-torturing” incident and after it.
7. The fly incident may seem unrelated to Woodsfield’s visit. Do you see any connection between the two parts of this story?

8. Katherine Mansfield's best stories have been praised for their presentation of “moments of revelation.” What was the revelation the boss made in the story? How did it affect him?
9. Link the fly incident to the message of the story. What does the fly symbolize?

Appendix

Activate Your Vocabulary

First Confession
by Frank O'Connor

Study the following synonyms and write sentences to illustrate their differences in meaning.

b) *self-conscious, uncomfortable, awkward, sheepish, mortified*
c) *puzzled, baffled, perplexed, bewildered*

The Standard of Living
by Dorothy Parker

I. Find out the difference between the words *bequest* and *legacy.* Use them in sentences of your own.

II. Combine the words in column A with those in Column B to make as many word-combinations as possible.

A	B
Bar of	bread
Cube of	chocolate
Slice of	cheese
Hunk of	dust
Speck of	jam
Pinch of	lemon
Squeeze of	sand
Dollop of	salt
Grain of	soap

Wedge of	cake
Block of	sugar
Chunk of	dirt
Lump of	pepper
	cream
	butter
	ice

III. a) What part of your body do you use to do the actions denoted by the following verbs?

To nudge, to pinch, to tickle, to rub, to squeeze, to shove, to scratch, to stroke, to frisk

b) Complete the sentences with a suitable verb from the list above.

1. As I went through the security check at the airport a guard … me, but he didn't find anything.
2. My cat … my hand. She's got sharp claws and she drew blood.
3. As she sat down next to me she accidentally … my elbow and made me spill my drink.
4. He … every last bit of toothpaste out of the tube.
5. The old lady ignored the queue and jumped onto the bus … everyone aside.
6. When David Beckham walked into the office I had to … myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming.
7. "Ouch' he said, and … his arm where the ball had hit him.
8. When I was little my older brother would … me till tears ran down my face.
9. He reached out and … her cheek tenderly.

A Pair of Silk Stockings
by Kate Chopin

I. Find in the story words denoting mental activity (e.g. *to contemplate, to speculate...).* **Use them in sentences of your own.**

II. Consult a dictionary to fill in the blank spaces with a suitable verb.

to mend; to patch up; to darn

1. We managed … the roof enough to stop it leaking.
2. Sore eyes I may have, but at least I am not blind and can still … my own stockings.
3. My father used to … our shoes.
4. I had so little to do that I spent all my time fussing over my hair and … my clothes.

III. a) Match the verbs in Column A with their definitions in Column B. Use a dictionary if necessary.

A

1. to strive
2. to crave
3. to long
4. to yearn
5. to hanker

B

b. to want something so much that you do not feel happy or complete without it

c. to try hard to achieve something, especially when this is difficult

d. to want something that you are unlikely to get very much, especially secretly, and over a long period of time

e. to want as much of something as you can get, especially food, attention, or a drug
f. to very much want to have something or do something, especially when this used to happen or exist in the past, or when it may do in the future

b) Complete the sentences with a suitable verb from column A.

1. I've always … love and acceptance.
2. He … for the good old days when teachers were shown respect.
3. Paula had always … after a traditional white wedding.
4. Toni has been … to achieve musical recognition for the past ten years.
5. The people … for peace, and the chance to rebuild their shattered lives.
6. I had a good job and a nice apartment, but I still … for the country life.
7. Hannah … for a child, and felt desperately sad whenever she saw other women with their babies.
8. This may cause smokers to awaken in the middle of the night … a smoke.
9. The company must constantly … for greater efficiency.
10. He was … for everyone to leave, so that he could think in peace about what had happened that day.

Fard
by Aldous Huxley

I. Consult a dictionary to fill in the blank spaces with a suitable verb.

to wriggle; to wobble; to dodder

1. I had expected Gillis to be long since dead or at best a ... ninety-year-old.

2. Tom stopped, … from the weight of his load.
3. Stop … and let me put your T-shirt on.
4. The chair … under her weight and then fell over.
5. He … in his jacket to make a more comfortable fit.

II. a) Match the verbs in Column A with their definitions in Column B. Use a dictionary if necessary.

A

1. to glow
2. to gleam
3. to blaze
4. to flash
5. to flicker
6. to blink

B

a. to shine with an extremely bright light
b. to burn or shine with an unsteady light that goes on and off quickly, so that it seems to be soon going to stop shining
c. to make a warm soft steady light that is not very bright
d. to burn or shine with an unsteady light that goes on and off quickly, especially in order to make you notice something
e. to shine brightly for a very short time, or make something do this
f. to shine brightly, especially by throwing back light off a very smooth surface

b) Complete the sentences with a suitable verb from Column A.

1. A Rolls Royce was parked outside … in the sunshine.
2. A police car sped through the intersection, lights ….
3. The windows were … with a warm, yellow light.
4. The candle … a few times and then went out.
5. When I got in, the message light on my answering machine was ….

6. The midday sun … down on us.
7. Lightning … across the sky.
8. The floors gleamed, and the house smelled sweetly of soap and fresh air.
9. Lights …in every room in the house.
10. The neon lights on the theater … red and blue.

The Man Called Dead
by Pearl S. Buck

I. Consult a dictionary to fill in the blank spaces with a suitable verb.

a) to saunter, to roam, to wander, to loiter

1. They are … around the country shooting at anything that moves.
2. I … into the garden, where some friends were chatting near the barbecue.
3. Unemployed young men … at the entrance of the factory.
4. For an hour and a half we … around the old city, totally lost.
5. He came … down the road with his hands in his pockets.
6. Tourists love … about the old town.
7. I'll … around the mall for half an hour.
8. Don't … on the way home, there's heavy snow forecast.

b) *to beg; to plead; to urge*

1. The wife of one of the hostages appeared on TV last night to … for her husband's life.
2. He said he wouldn't give me the money unless I got down on my knees and … him.
3. They … their students to see the parallels between the lives they are studying and their own.
4. The lady … with her daughter to come back home.
5. They … parliament to approve plans for their reform program.

6. It's the same old story-one night he beats her up, and the next day he … her for forgiveness

The Happiness Machine
by Ray Bradbury

I. Match the verbs in Column A with their definitions in Column B. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1) to chop	a) to cut a large piece of cooked meat into pieces
2) to slice	b) to cut food, especially vegetables with leaves, into long thin pieces
3) to carve	c) to cut something such as vegetables or meat into small pieces
4) to mince	d) to cut food such as bread, meat, or vegetables into thin flat pieces
5) to shred	e) to cut food, especially raw vegetables, into small square pieces
6) to dice	f) to cut raw meat into very small pieces, usually in a machine

II. Consult a dictionary to fill in the blank spaces with a suitable word.

a) *to weep, to sob, to whimper, to wail*

1. But Jane was shaking now and … so she could not speak.
2. The baby started … in his cradle, but he stopped the moment he saw his mother's smiling face.
3. He started … and crying and pulling at the corpses and had to be dragged away.
4. His mother … bitterly and his father sat grim-faced.
5. Pat … with the pain of the wound in his shoulder.
6. She wanted to laugh and … all at once.
7. The child covered her face with her hands and started to …

uncontrollably.
8. The old women began to … in mourning when his coffin was put into the hole.

Find in the story other words denoting sounds produced by animals and tools.

b) contented, joyful, delighted

1. He seems to be getting more … as he gets older.
2. When she saw the new car, she was ….
3. The streets of the city were filled with … crowds celebrating the New Year.
4. I'm … that we have settled down the matter.
5. William realized that he should feel … with his lot, but he was not.
6. After their election victory, party members seemed positively …

Molly Morgan
by John Steinbeck

I. Fill in the blank spaces with a suitable verb.

a) to chase; to trail/track

1. The police … the gang to their hideout.
2. He said nothing to waiting journalists who … after him when he left.
3. The dogs … the wolf to its lair.
4. The farmer … the children across the field.
5. Undercover agents have been … him for weeks.

b) to plod, to tramp; to scramble; to scuttle

1. Their feet made loud paddling noises as they … over to the burn.
2. Tourists were … over the rocks looking for the perfect camera angle.
3. The rain sent people … for shelter.
4. Labourers … home through the muddy fields.
5. She … down the tree as quickly as she could.
6. She … back up the hill, loaded down with heavy bags of groceries.
7. Two very small children … away in front of them.

II. Study the meaning and connotation of the adjective *poverty–stricken* and find other compounds with the component *–stricken*.

The Enormous Radio
by John Cheever

I. a) Match the nouns in Column A with their definitions in Column B. Use a dictionary if necessary.

A

1. bang
2. thud
3. crack
4. crash
5. clatter
6. thump

B

a. a loud sudden very sharp sound like the sound of a stick being broken
b. the loud sound produced when a lot of hard things hit against each other or hit a hard surface
c. a loud sound caused especially when something hard or heavy hits something else or falls on a surface

d. the low dull sound produced when something heavy but soft hits something else or falls on a surface
e. the dull, fairly loud sound produced when something heavy suddenly hits something else or falls hard on a surface
f. the very loud sound produced when something hard such as metal or glass hits something else or falls on a surface, especially when damage is caused

b) Complete the sentences with a suitable noun from Column A.

1. The whole tray of dishes fell to the floor with a ….
2. A suitcase toppled off the top of the wardrobe and landed on the floor with a ….
3. Small children are often frightened of fireworks that make a ….
4. The … in the kitchen told me that Mum was already up.
5. There was a loud … of thunder as the storm began.
6. A snowball hit her on the back of the neck with a soft ….
7. Just then there was the … of hooves on the road outside.
8. As I hit the floor, I heard a loud … in my arm.
9. There was a loud … as the bomb exploded.
10. He fell off the ladder and hit the ground with a dull ….

II. a) Match the verbs in Column A with their definitions in Column B. Use a dictionary if necessary.

A

1. to rattle
2. to patter
3. to rustle
4. to hum
5. to whirr
6. to whine
7. to crackle
8. to roar

B

a. to make a continuous quiet sound like papers, leaves, or clothes moving or rubbing against each other
b. to make a repeated sharp sounds like those made when dry sticks burn
c. to make a fairly quiet, regular sound like something turning very quickly and beating against the air
d. to make a very loud noise when near full power (of a car, plane, etc engine)
e. to make quick light tapping sounds, like the sound of rain falling or quick, light steps
f. to make short sharp sound quickly, one after another, to shake while making these sounds
g. to make a soft, low continuous sound like the sound (of some electric or electronic equipment)
h. to make an unpleasant long high sound (especially of an engine or vehicle)

b) Complete the sentences with a suitable verb from Column A.

1. The refrigerator … softly in the corner.
2. Outside the rain … lightly on the window, and in the room there was a great sense of tranquility.
3. He put logs on the fire and the flames … up.
4. There was the sound of a siren and several police cars … past.
5. Already the plane's propellers were … into action.
6. Monday's earthquake … windows and woke residents.
7. The Ferrari … and shot off down the road.
8. The sky was filled with the … and … of bombers.
9. Sewing machines … on the factory floor
10. A gentle breeze blew through the windows, lightly … the curtains.
11. There was a sound of stir all over the house, … of feet in the corridors.

The Ambitious Guest
by Nathaniel Hawthorne

I. Consult a dictionary to find out the difference between the words *dwelling, lodging* and *abode*. Write sentences of your own to illustrate their use.

II. Consult a dictionary to fill in the blank spaces with a suitable word.

a) to annihilate; to devastate; to obliterate

1. Just one of these bombs could … a city the size of New York.
2. Frequent flooding eventually … all traces of the community that used to live there.
3. A huge explosion … the downtown area last night.
4. Their nuclear warheads are enough to … the world several times over.
5. The virus had … all the people in the region.
6. The country has been devastated by floods.

b) t*o ruin, to wreck, to demolish*

1. A storm moved directly over the island, … buildings and flooding streets.
2. Entire villages have been washed away. Roads and bridges have been destroyed and crops ….
3. He came home drunk again, threatening to … the apartment.
4. The island has been … by tourism.
5. Bulldozers were brought in to … the tents and shacks that protesters had put up
6. When they … the church, a cave was discovered beneath it.

c) *destruction, devastation, demolition, ruin/ruins*

1. Four days and nights of continuous bombing had left the city in ….
2. Building the new freeway is going to mean the … of an entire housing complex.
3. The … of forests for timber, fuel, and charcoal increased during the 18th century.
4. The scene after the explosion was one of utter ….
5. The project required the total … of the old bridge.
6. The president flew in to look at the … caused by the earthquake.
7. Even in … the Colosseum is a magnificent edifice of great structural interest and aesthetic splendour.
8. A huge bomb blast brought chaos and … to the centre of Belfast yesterday.

III. a) Match the adjectives in Column A with their definitions in Column B. Use a dictionary if necessary.

A

1. haughty
2. arrogant
3. conceited
4. vain
5. pompous
6. lofty
7. highbrow

B

a. trying to sound important, especially by using very long or formal words
b. too proud of one's own achievements or abilities, in a way that annoys other people
c. behaving in a proud and very unfriendly way, as if one thinks other people are completely unimportant
d. interested in serious or complicated ideas and subjects
e. seeming to think one is better than other people
f. behaving in an unpleasant or rude way because one thinks he or she is more important than other people

g. too proud of one’s good looks, abilities, or position

b) Complete the sentences with a suitable adjective from Column A.

1. Men can be just as … as women.
2. I don't want to sound …, but we are the experts here.
3. She flicked him a … smile, then strode briskly on.
4. The head teacher gave a … speech about 'the values of learning'.
5. Throughout the trial, the defendants were off-hand and ….
6. … critics sniff that the programme was “too sophisticated” to appeal to most viewers.
7. She resented his … disregard for other people's opinions.
8. People thought of him as being … and difficult to talk to.

The Wedding Gift
by Thomas Raddal

I. Consult a dictionary to fill in the blank spaces with a suitable word.

a) span; spell

1. Over a … of ten years, the company has made great progress.
2. He began to suffer from dizzy ….
3. Captivity vastly reduces the life … of whales.
4. Most 2-year-olds have a very short attention ….
5. Water the young plants carefully during dry ….
6. He's had a … of bad luck recently.

b) *to stumble; to slip; to trip*

1. As the boys went down the path they … on the wet leaves.

2. Pick up that box-someone might … over it.
3. In her hurry, Eva … and dropped the tray she was carrying.
4. Her medical problems began when she … on a rug and broke her hip.
5. Mason headed towards the house … on the rough ground.
6. She …on the icy sidewalk and grabbed Will's arm to steady herself.

c) s*plit; shred; crack; splinter*

1. She sucked so hard that she drew the … of wood out of her finger.
2. The … in the bedroom wall seems to be widening.
3. There were nothing but … of leaves, gnawed stems, and barren shoots.
4. She was patching up the long … in the sleeve of his coat.
5. There were several small … in the glass.
6. The clothes were ripped to … and covered in blood.
7. We suddenly noticed there was a … in the side of the tent.
8. The window smashed and … of glass flew everywhere.

II. Study the meaning of the word *ill-clad* and find other words with the prefix *ill-*.

The Rocking-Horse Winner
by David H. Lawrence

I. Study the following synonyms and write sentences to illustrate their differences in meaning.

a) *weak; frail, feeble; fragile*

b) *sturdy; robust; hardy; tough; resilient, hefty*.

II. a) Match the verbs in Column A with their definitions in Column B. Use a dictionary if necessary.

A

1. to stare
2. to gaze
3. to gape
4. to eye
5. to glare

B

1. to look at someone or something for a long time, especially with your mouth open, because you are very surprised or shocked
2. to look at someone or something with interest or because you do not trust them
3. to look angrily at someone
4. to look directly at someone or something for a long time, without moving your eyes
5. to look at something or someone for a long time, especially with a feeling of love or great pleasure

b) Complete the sentences with a suitable verb from column A.

1. She … at the page for several minutes, trying to understand.
2. She stood there … at me, too shocked to speak.
3. The two teams … each other warily, waiting for the game to begin.
4. He sat there in silence, … angrily.
5. Ruth … down at the sleeping child.
6. People stopped … as she walked down the street in a see-through mini-dress.
7. I paused a moment … at the rapidly changing color of the sky.
8. He …you suspiciously before going back to sorting cards.

The Revolt of "Mother"
by Mary E.Wilkins Freeman

I. Study the adjectives *comfortable; snug/cozy; commodious; luxurious*. Write sentences to illustrate their differences in meaning.

II. Match the nouns in Column A with their definitions in Column B. Use a dictionary if necessary.

A

1. revolution
2. rebellion
3. revolt
4. uprising
5. mutiny

B

a. a sudden unplanned, and often unsuccessful attempt to change the government or other authority, using violence
b. a successful attempt by the people of a country to change or destroy the government, often by using violence
c. an organized attempt by a group of people in the army or navy to take power from their officers by refusing to obey their orders and using violence
d. an attempt, especially one that only continues for a short time, to change the government by using violence
e. an organized attempt to change the government or other authority, often by using violence

III. a) Match the adjectives in Column A with their definitions in Column B. Use a dictionary if necessary.

A

1. painstaking
2. scrupulous
3. conscientious

4. meticulous
5. assiduous
6. fastidious

B

b. very carefully making sure that every detail is exactly right, so that it cannot be criticized
c. having a serious attitude to one's work or duties and trying hard to do everything one has been asked to do in the way that it should be done
d. very careful and thorough, and taking a lot of time and effort
e. very careful about small details in one's appearance, work etc
f. very careful to make sure that something is done properly or completely
g. paying a lot of attention to every detail in order to make sure that everything is done correctly

b) Complete the sentences with a suitable adjective from Column A.

1. She was a very … student and attended all her lectures.
2. This beautiful piece of jewellery is the work of a … craftsman.
3. They began the long and … task of compiling a bibliography.
4. A cat is a … animal that washes itself frequently.
5. He was … in his attendance at church.
6. … cleanliness is necessary when preparing food in a restaurant.
7. Our accountant is very … about his work. I can't imagine him ever making a mistake.
8. This involved a … search of the paper dictionary to find examples of each of the special characters.
9. His previous employer describes him as honest, hard-working and ….
10. The investigation was carried out with … fairness.
11. Each patient had three or four attendants that night devoted to providing him or her the most … service.
12. People who are … about personal hygiene and appearance.

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Համակարգչային ձևավորումը՝ Վ.Բրյուսովի անվան ԵրՊԼՀ-ի համակարգչային կենտրոն (ղեկավար՝ դոց. Վ.Վ.Վարդանյան)

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Ս.Վ.Առաքելյան

Ստորագրված է տպագրության՝
Հանձնված է տպագրության՝

Տպաքանակ՝

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