

Optional English

(Grade 10)



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Curriculum Development Centre
Sanothimi, Bhaktapur

Publisher: Government of Nepal
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Curriculum Development Centre
Sanothimi, Bhaktapur

©Publisher

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any other form or by any means without the written permission of the publisher. However, this does not prohibit making copies of its pages for teacher training or other not-profit making purposes.

First Edition: 2020 AD

Price:

Printed at: Janak Education Materials Centre Ltd.
Sanothimi, Bhaktapur

Send your comments and suggestions to:

Curriculum Development Centre

Phone: 01-6630588

Email: cdc@ntc.net.np

Website: moecdc.gov.np

Preface

The curriculum and curricular materials are developed and revised on a regular basis with the aim of making education objective-oriented, practical, relevant and job oriented. It is necessary to instill the feelings of nationalism, national integrity and democratic spirit in students and equip them with morality, discipline and self-reliance, creativity and thoughtfulness. It is essential to develop in them the linguistic and mathematical skills, knowledge of science, information and communication technology, environment, health and population and life skills. It is also necessary to bring in them the feeling of preserving and promoting arts and aesthetics, humanistic norms, values and ideals. It has become the need of the present time to make them aware of respect for ethnicity, gender, disabilities, languages, religions, cultures, regional diversity, human rights and social values so as to make them capable and responsible citizens. This textbook for grade ten students as an optional English has been developed in line with the Secondary Level Optional English Curriculum, 2074 so as to strengthen knowledge, reading skills (intensive and extensive) on English language and literature and to provide exposure to varieties of literary writings. It is finalized by incorporating the recommendations and feedback obtained through workshops, seminars and interaction programmes.

The textbook is written by Mr. Bishnu Singh Rai, Mrs. Maya Rai and Mr. Madhu Upadhyaya. In Bringing out the textbook in this form, the contribution of the Director General of CDC Mr. Keshav Prasad Dahal and the Section Chief Mr. Tuk Raj Adhikari is highly acknowledged. Similarly, the contribution of Prof. Dr. Bal Mukanda Bhandari, Dr. Ganga Ram Gautam, Dr. Gopal Prasad Pandey, Mr. Purna Bahadur Lamichhane, Mr. Gangadhar Hada, Mr. Mahendra Kumar Shrestha and Mrs. Rani Jha is also remarkable. The content as well as the language of this book was edited by Mr. Nim Prakash Singh Rathaur, Nabin Kumar Khadka and Shankar Adhikari. The illustration as well as the layout design of this book was done by Mr. Khados Sunuwar. The Centre extends sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to developing this textbook. The CDC would also like to acknowledge to all the sources of the materials used in this book.

This book contains literary devices and terms, major features of different ages related to the history of English language and literature and genres of literature with exercises which will help the learners to achieve the competency and learning outcomes set in the curriculum. Efforts have been made to make this textbook as activity-oriented, interesting and learner centered as possible. The teachers, students and all other stakeholders are expected to make constructive comments and suggestions to make it better.

Table of contents

Section 1:	History of English Literature	1-20
Section 2:	Non-fiction	21-99
1.	Can Zoos Offer more than Entertainment (Argumentative Essay)	22
2.	Is Social Media Bad for You? The Evidence and the Unknowns (Article on Social Media)	32
3.	Up Above the World So High Climate Change should Kill some Clouds in the Sky (Blog)	42
4.	Small but Life Changing Move: Becoming Me (Memoir)	49
5.	The Road to Little Dribbling (Prologue)	62
6.	Goodness: A Fundamental Moral Attitude (Moral Value)	71
7.	A Startling Spike on Mars (Newspaper Article)	80
8.	The Yeti: Asia's Abominable Snowman (Live Science)	87
9.	The Upper Mustang: Travel to The Hidden Kingdom (Travelogue)	94
Section 3:	Poetry	100-132
1.	The Ballad of East and West	101
2.	The Ballad of the Landlord	106
3.	Song 1	109
4.	Lyric	111
5.	Holly Sonnet 10	113
6.	On His Blindness (sonnet)	115
7.	The World is too much with us	117
8.	Prelude 1 (Free Verse)	119
9.	Rain (Free Verse)	121
10.	Valentine (Free Verse)	123
11.	Words (Free Verse)	136
12.	Love Your Enemy (Free Verse)	138
13.	Hailkus	131

Section 4: Fiction **133-244**

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 1. | Fingers of Dream (Folktale) | 134 |
| 2. | Kokopelli the Humpbacked Deity of Music (Folktale) | 138 |
| 3. | The Story of Io (Ancient Story) | 144 |
| 4. | The Diamond Necklace | 150 |
| 5. | Ransom of Red Chief | 161 |
| 6. | The Nightingale and the Rose | 167 |
| 7. | A May Night | 176 |
| 8. | A Sound of Thunder | 184 |
| 9. | Folding Beijing (Novella) | 199 |

Section 5: Drama **245-271**

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Yesterday (One Act Play) | 246 |
| 2. | Trifles (One Act Play) | 256 |

SECTION 1

History of English Literature

This section deals with the development of English literature through time. It starts with the Anglo – Saxon period when the English language and literature was in the making, and Beowulf, the first known English poem was written. Then, the Anglo-Norman period began, producing to great masters of English poetry, Langland and Chaucer, who is called to be the ‘Father of English poetry.’

The period which gave birth to the most influential literary personalities was the Elizabethan period also known as the Renaissance Period. Shakespearean drama and sonnets have dominated the English literature till date’. However, Marlow, Spencer, Bacon and Jonson are still read and admired. The journey of English literature, then, moves to the Puritan Age, when such great literary figures as Donne, Milton, and Bunyan contributed to the English literature. The age of restoration or the Neo-classical age which followed the Puritan Age produced such poets, dramatists and prose writers as Dryden, Pope, Defoe, Swift, Johnson and Blake. They stood in between the restoration and the romantic periods. The Romantic period is one of the most fertile periods in terms of poetry and novels. The eminent poets, viz., Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats and novelists, viz., Scott and Jane Austen. Then, the section moves to the Victorian period that opened its eyes and found Tennyson Browning, Arnold with their sublime poems and Dickens with majestic fiction – his novels. The modern period follows the Victorian period. Shaw, Yeats, Eliot, and Joyce made invaluable contribution to the treasure of English literature. The section terminates with the introduction of Becket, Golding, Osborn and many others from the post – modern period.

An outline of English literature

Before you read

- a. How many ages or periods has English literature been grouped into?
- b. Can you name any oldest literary piece/pieces?
- c. Can you name some famous writers of English literature?

Introduction

If we turn the pages of the history of English literature from the earliest to modern times, we find that it has passed through different phases, each having marked characteristics. These phases may be termed as 'Ages' or 'Periods', which are named after the central literary figures or the important rulers of England or after certain important historical periods. Some literary historians have named these phases after the centuries as well. The key concepts and the basic features of each age or period are discussed below.

The Anglo-Saxon or Old-English Period (450-1100)

The initial phase of English literature started with Anglo-Saxon literature of the Angles and Saxons (the ancestors of the English race) much before they occupied Britain. English was the common name and tongue of these tribes. Before they came to Britain, they lived along the coasts of Sweden and Denmark, and the land which they occupied was called Engle-land. These tribes were courageous, adventurous and valiant. They sang at their feasts about battles, gods and their ancestral heroes. It was in these songs of religion, wars, and agriculture that English poetry began in the ancient Engle-land while Britain was still a Roman province.

Though much of the Anglo-Saxon poetry is lost, there are still some parts left. The most important poem of this period is *Beowulf*. It is a tale of adventures of Beowulf, the hero, who is a champion and slayer of monsters; the incidents in it are such as may be found in hundreds of other stories.

After the Anglo-Saxons took on Christianity, the poets took up religious themes as the subject-matter of their poetry. The two important religious poets of the Anglo-Saxon period were Caedmon and Cynewulf. Anglo-Saxon poetry deals with the traditions of an older world and expresses another outlook and way of living.

The Anglo-Saxon period was also marked by the beginning of English prose. In fact, unlike poetry, there was no break in prose of the Anglo-Saxon period, and even

the later prose in England was the continuation of Anglo-Saxon prose. The two great pioneers of English prose were Alfred the Great, the glorious king of Wessex and Aelfric, a priest, who wrote sermons in a sort of poetic prose.

Middle-English or Anglo-Norman Period (1100-1500)

The Normans, who were living in Normandy (France) defeated the Anglo-Saxon King at the Battle of Hastings (1066) and conquered England. The Norman Conquest inaugurated a distinctly new era in the literary as well as political history of England.

The great difference between the two periods—Anglo-Saxon period and Anglo-Norman period, is marked by the disappearance of the old English poetry. For centuries Latin had been more or less spoken or written by the clergy in England. The Conquest determined its more extensive use. As a result of foreign sentiment in court and castle, it caused writings in the English vernacular to be disregarded and established French as the natural speech of the educated and the high-born. In spite of the English language having been thrown into the background, some works were composed in it, though they resounded in the main sentiments and tastes of the French writers, as French then was the supreme mediator of European literary style.

The most popular form of literature during the Middle English period was ‘The Romances’. These romances are notable for their stories. Each story furnished the chief mental recreation of time for the great body of the people. These romances were mostly borrowed from Latin and French sources. They deal with the stories of King Arthur, The War of Troy, the mythical doings of Charlemagne and of Alexander the Great.

The Miracle plays and the Morality plays also flourished in this period. The Miracle plays show the creation of man, his fall and banishment from the Garden of Eden among others, whereas the Morality plays show the struggle between the powers of good and evil for the mastery of the soul of man. The characters were abstract virtues, or vices, each acting and speaking in accordance with his name; and the plot was built upon their contrasts and influences on human nature, with the intent to teach right living and uphold religion.

One of the greatest poets of the Middle Ages was William Langland. His poem *Piers Plowman* (written c. 1370–90) holds an important place in English literature. It is a classic work in English literature.

John Gower also occupies an important place in the development of English poetry.

He is mainly a narrative poet and his most important work is *Confessio Amantis* (1389), an encyclopedia of the art of love and satirizes the vanities of the current time.

It was, in fact, Geoffrey Chaucer who was the real founder of English poetry, and he is rightly called the ‘Father of English Poetry’. Chaucer’s poetry has been read and enjoyed continuously from his own day to this. The most famous work of Chaucer is the *Canterbury Tales*, which is a collection of stories related by the pilgrims on their way to the shrine of Thomas Becket at Canterbury. These pilgrims represent different sections of contemporary English society. The *Canterbury Tales* is a landmark in the history of English poetry. After Chaucer, there was a decline in English poetry for about one hundred years. The years from 1400 to the Renaissance were a period deprived of literature. The main cause of the decline of literature during this period was that no writer of genius was born during those long years. Chaucer’s successors were Occleve, Lydgate, Hawes, Skelton, Henryson, Dunbar and Douglas. They all did little but copy him, and they represent an era of mediocrity in English literature that continues up to the time of the Renaissance.

The Renaissance Period (1500-1600)

The Middle Ages in Europe were followed by the Renaissance, which means the Revival of Learning. It denotes the gradual enlightenment of the human mind. The Renaissance Period in English literature is also called the Elizabethan Period or the Age of Shakespeare.

With the fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. by the invasion of the Turks, the Greek scholars spread all over Europe with their invaluable Greek manuscripts. The flood of Greek literature in Europe revealed a new world of poetry and philosophy. Along with the Revival of Learning, new discoveries took place in several other fields. Vasco da Gama moved around the earth; Columbus discovered America; Copernicus discovered the Solar System and prepared the way for Galileo. Books were printed, and philosophy, science, and art were systematised. The chief characteristic of the Renaissance was its emphasis on Humanism, which became popular during the Elizabethan period. It was in this period when English drama, poetry, and prose flourished in England.

Elizabethan Drama

During this period the most memorable achievement in literature was in the field of drama. The plays written in the later part of the sixteenth century were great. Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson among others are some of

the renowned playwrights of this period.

Marlowe's contributions to the Elizabethan drama were great. He raised the subject-matter of drama to a higher level. He gave coherence and unity to the drama. He has been rightly called "the Father of English Dramatic Poetry."

Shakespeare was the greatest of all Elizabethan dramatists. It was in his hands the Romantic drama reached its climax. Shakespeare wrote 37 plays besides two narrative poems, *Venice and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), and 154 sonnets. His work as a dramatist extended over some 24 years, beginning about 1588 and ending about 1612. He was not only the greatest dramatist of the age, but also the first poet, and one of the greatest literary figures of all times.

Ben Jonson was a contemporary of Shakespeare and a well-known dramatist of his times. He was just the opposite of Shakespeare. In his comedies, he tried to present the true picture of contemporary society. Unlike Shakespeare who remained hidden behind his works, Jonson impressed upon the audience the excellence of his works and the object of his plays. He also made his plays realistic rather than romantic.

Elizabethan Poetry

The poetry of the Elizabethan age opens with publications of a volume known as *Tottel's Miscellany* (1577). This book was the first printed anthology of English poetry. Sir Thomas Wyatt, the Earl of Surrey, Thomas Sackville, Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser are the greatest poets of this age.

The greatest name in non-dramatic Elizabethan poetry is that of Spenser. The *Faerie Queene* (1590) is Spenser's greatest poetic work. It is an epic poem which follows the adventures of a number of medieval knights. Some of his other poems of great merit are *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579) and *Astrophel* (1586). The greatness of Spenser as a poet rests on his artistic excellence. He composed his poems in the spirit of a great painter, a great musician. Above all, he was the poet of imagination. Spenser has been a strong influence on the English poets of all ages.

Elizabethan Prose

The Elizabethan period was also the period of the origin of modern English prose. During the reign of Elizabeth, prose began to be used as a means of various forms of amusement and information. Books on history, travel, adventures, and stories appeared in a large number. Some of the noted prose writers of this era were John Lyly, Sir Philip Sidney, Thomas Malory, and Richard Hakluyt.

Lyly's was the first author who wrote prose in the manner that the Elizabethans wanted. Lyly's *Euphues* (1578), an informative romance, was read and copied by everybody. Its proverbs and phrases were freely quoted in the court and in the market-place.

Sidney's *Arcadia* (1580) is the first English example of prose pastoral romance, which was imitated by various English authors for about two hundred years.

Thomas Malory wrote a great prose romance *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485) dealing with the romantic treasures of the Middle Ages.

Richard Hakluyt's *Voyages and Discoveries* (1599) and other such books describing sea adventures were written in simple and sincere honesty.

The Puritan Age (1600-1660)

The Literature of the Seventeenth Century may be divided into two periods- The Puritan Age or the Age of Milton (1600-1660), which is further divided into the Jacobean and Caroline periods after the names of the ruler James I and Charles I, who ruled from 1603 to 1625 and 1625 to 1649 respectively.

The Seventeenth Century was marked by the decline of the Renaissance spirit. We no longer find great imaginative writers of the reputation of Shakespeare, Spenser, and Sidney. The literary achievements of this age are not of a high order, but it had the honour of producing John Milton, a solitary master of verse. Milton was the noblest and strong representative of the Puritan spirit to which he gave the superior and enduring expression.

Milton was the greatest poet of the Puritan age. He completely identified himself with Puritanism, but he possessed such a strong personality that he cannot be taken to represent anyone but himself. Milton was different from Spenser, Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson as poets. In all his poetry, Milton sings about himself and his own lofty soul. Being a deeply religious man and also endowed with artistic merit of a high degree, he combined in himself the spirits of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

The Restoration Period (1660-1700)

In English literature, the period from 1660 to 1700 is called the period of Restoration, because monarchy was restored in England, and Charles II, the son of Charles I came back to England from his exile in France and became the King.

This period is also called the Age of Dryden because Dryden was the dominating and most representative literary figure of the Age. Charles II and his followers rejected the Puritan ideals and the way of living and demanded that English poetry

and drama should follow the style to which they had become familiar in Paris, France. Instead of having Shakespeare and the Elizabethans as their models, the poets and dramatists of the Restoration period began to copy French writers.

For a time in poetry, drama, and prose nothing was produced which could compare satisfactorily with the great achievements of the Elizabethans, Milton, and even of minor writers of the Puritan age. But then the writers of the period began to evolve something that was characteristic of the times and they made two important contributions to English literature in the form of sensibleness and a tendency to preciseness.

The Restoration writers, under the influence of French writers, gave emphasis to reasoning rather than romantic fancy, and evolved an exact, precise way of writing, consisting of short, clear-cut sentences without any unnecessary word. The Royal Society, which was established during this period instructed all its members to use ‘a close, naked, natural way of speaking and writing, as near the mathematical plainness as they can’. Dryden accepted this rule for his prose, and for his poetry adopted the easiest type of verse-form, the heroic couplet. Under his guidance, the English writers evolved a style - precise, formal and elegant - which is called the classical style, and which dominated English literature for more than a century.

Restoration Poetry

The Restoration poetry was mostly satirical, realistic and written in the heroic couplet, of which John Dryden was the supreme master. He was the dominating figure of the Restoration period, and he made his mark in the fields of poetry, drama, and prose. In the field of poetry, he was, in fact, the only poet worth mentioning. The poetry of Dryden can be conveniently divided under three heads - Political Satires, Doctrinal Poems, and The Fables. Dryden’s greatest contribution to English poetry was his skillful use of the heroic couplet, which became the accepted measure of serious English poetry for many years.

Restoration Drama

No good plays were written from 1642 to 1660. The plays written after 1660 is called the Restoration drama. As the common people who were still under the influence of Puritanism, they had no love for the theatres. The dramatists had to cater to the taste of the upper-class class which was highly fashionable and sophisticated. The Restoration drama neither had a mass appeal nor had its roots in the life of the common people. The most popular form of drama was the Comedy of Manners

which portrayed the sophisticated life of the dominant class of society.

John Dryden's *Wild Gallant* (1663), George Etherege's *The Comical Revenge or Love in a Tub* (1664), William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675) and *The Plain Dealer* (1676) are some of the well-known Restoration comedies.

The most gifted among all the Restoration dramatists was William Congreve. His popular comedies are *Love for Love* (1695) and *The Way of the World* (1700). Congreve is put at the head of the Restoration drama. No English dramatist has even written such fine prose for the stage as Congreve did.

In tragedy, the Restoration period specialised in Heroic Tragedy, which dealt with themes of epic level. The heroes and heroines possessed superhuman qualities. The purpose of this tragedy was to inculcate virtues in the shape of bravery and conjugal love. The chief protagonist and writer of heroic tragedy was John Dryden. Under his leadership the heroic tragedy dominated the stage from 1660 to 1678.

Restoration Prose

The Restoration period was lacking in poetry and drama, but in prose it was not so. It was during the Restoration period that English prose was developed as a means of expressing ones' ideas and feelings clearly and precisely. Like in the fields of poetry and drama, Dryden was the chief leader and practitioner of the new prose. In his greatest critical work *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, Dryden presented a model of the new prose, which was completely different from the prose of Bacon, Milton and Browne. He wrote in a plain, simple and exact style, free from all exaggerations.

Other writers of the period, who came under the influence of Dryden and wrote in a plain but precise style were Sir William Temple, John Tillotson, George Saville and Thomas Sprat. These writers not only wrote under the influence of Dryden but also came up with the new prose style of their own. That is why the prose of the Restoration period is free from monotony.

Next to Dryden, Bunyan was the greatest prose-writer of the period. His greatest work is *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) which has all the basic requirements of the traditional type of English novel. It is a work of superb literary genius, and it is unsurpassed as an example of plain English.

Eighteenth-Century Literature

The Eighteenth Century in England is called the Classical Age or the Augustan

Age in literature. It is also called the Age of Good Sense or the Age of Reason. Though Dryden belonged to the seventeenth century, he is also included in this age because during his time the characteristics of his age had manifested themselves, and he himself represented them to a great extent. Other great literary figures who dominated this age successively were Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson, and as such the Classical Age is divided into three distinct periods - the Ages of Dryden, Pope and Dr. Johnson. (*The Age of Dryden has already been dealt with earlier.*)

The earlier part of the eighteenth century (1700-1744) or the Augustan Age in English literature is called the Age of Pope, because Pope was the dominating figure in that period. Though there were a number of other important writers like Joseph Addison and Jonathan Swift, Pope was the only one who devoted himself completely to literature. Moreover, he represented in himself all the main characteristics of his age, and his poetry served as a model to others. Pope is considered as the greatest poet of the Classical period. The main quality of Pope's poetry is its correctness. Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1712) is in some ways his masterpiece. The great prose writers of the Age of Pope were Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison, Sir Richard Steele and Jonathan Swift. The prose of this period exhibits the Classical qualities - clearness, vigour and direct statement.

The latter half of the eighteenth century (1744-1784), which was dominated by Dr. Samuel Johnson, is called the Age of Johnson. Johnson died in 1784, and from that time the Classical spirit in English literature began to give place to the Romantic spirit. Most of the poets belonging to the Age of Johnson may be termed as the pioneers of the Romantic Revival. That is why the Age of Johnson is also called the Age of Transition in English literature.

The Romantic Age (1798-1824)

The Romantic period is the most fruitful period in the history of English literature. Some of the greatest and most popular English poets like William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats belong to this period.

This period starts from 1798 with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the famous Preface which Wordsworth wrote as a manifesto of the new form of poetry which he and Coleridge introduced in opposition to the poetry of the Classical school.

Wordsworth's naturalism and Coleridge's supernaturalism became the two important

driving forces of the Romantic Movement. Wordsworth's naturalism included love for nature as well for man living in simple and natural surroundings. Coleridge's supernaturalism, on the other hand, established the connection between the visible world and the other world which is unseen.

The prose-writers of the Romantic Revival discarded the shorter and lighter style of the eighteenth century. Much of the prose of the Romantic period was devoted to the critical study of literature, its theory and practice. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Lamb, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt and De Quincey opened up new ways in the study of literature. Anne Radcliffe, Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen are some of the successful prose writers.

The Romantic age was the age of poetry, which was the proper medium for the expression of emotions and imaginative sensibility of the artist. The poets drew inspiration from several sources - mountains and lakes, the dignity of the peasant, the terror of the supernatural, medieval chivalry and literature, the arts and mythology of Greece, the prophecy of the golden age.

The essence of Romanticism was that literature must reflect all that is spontaneous and unaffected in nature and in man, and be free to follow its own fancy in its own way. The glory of the age is the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley and Keats. In fact, poetry was so popular that Southey had to write in verse in order to earn money, what he otherwise would have written in prose. Romantic literature is a genuinely creative literature calling into play the highest creative faculty of man.

The Victorian Age (1832-1900)

In the real sense of the term the Romantic Age ended in 1820, and the Victorian Age started from 1832 with the passing of the first Reform Act, 1832. The years 1820 to 1832 were the years of suspended activity in politics. There was sudden decline of Romantic literature from the year 1820, but the new literature of England, called the Victorian literature, started from 1832 when Tennyson's first important volume, *Poems*, appeared. Accordingly, the Victorian period in literature officially started from 1832. The Victorian age corresponded with the reign of Queen Victoria, which extended from 1837 to 1901, yet literary movements rarely coincide with the exact year of royal accession or death.

The Victorian Age is long and complicated, and the great writers who flourished in

it are many in numbers. Therefore, for the sake of convenience, this age is divided into two periods: Early Victorian Period and Later Victorian Period

- a) Early Victorian Period: This period extended from 1832 to 1870. It was the period of middle-class supremacy, free trade, and unrestricted competition. The great writers of this period were Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, Ruskin Bond, Charles Dickens and William M. Thackeray. All these poets, novelists and prose-writers in spite of individual differences, exhibit the same approach to the contemporary problems and the same literary, moral and social values.
- b) Later Victorian Period: This period extended from 1870 to 1900. The writers who came into fame in this period are Christina Rossetti, Algernon Charles Swinburne and William Morris in the field of poetry, and those in the field of prose are George Eliot, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, Bernard Newman and Walter H. Pater.

The Victorian Age was fundamentally an age of realism rather than of romance because all the great writers of the Victorian Age were motivated by a definite moral purpose. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold wrote with a superb faith in their message, and with the conscious moral purpose to uplift and to instruct. Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot wrote with a definite purpose to sweep away error and reveal the underlying truth of humanity.

The main feature of the early Victorian Age was faith in the reality of progress, and that of the later Victorian Age was doubt, scepticism and questioning.

Twentieth Century Literature

Modern Literature (1900-1961)

The Modern Age in English Literature started from the beginning of the twentieth century, and it followed the Victorian Age. The most important characteristic of Modern Literature is that it opposes to the general attitude to life and its problems adopted by the Victorian writers and the public. The young people during the first decade of the twentieth century regarded the Victorian age as hypocritical, and the Victorian ideals as mean, superficial and stupid. The twentieth century minds did not take anything for granted; they questioned everything.

The Victorians believed in the sanctity of home life, but in the twentieth century the sentiments for the family circle declined. Young men and women considered domestic life as too narrow. Material prosperity had become the basis of social

standing. Moreover, young people who began to earn their living early got greater opportunity of mixing with each other, and to them sex no longer remained a mystery. So, love became much less of a romance and much more of an experience.

Due to the disintegration of values in the twentieth century, the modern writers could no longer write in the old manner. Therefore, they had to cultivate a fresh point of view, and also a fresh technique.

The twentieth century has become the age of machine. Machinery has, no doubt, dominated every aspect of modern life, and it has produced mixed response from the readers and writers. The various scientific appliances confer freedom and enslavement, efficiency and embarrassment. All these ideas are found expressed in modern literature.

The twentieth century literature is unique. It is extremely fascinating and, at the same time, very difficult to evaluate. It is not easy to divide it into school and types. It is full of adventures and experiments peculiar to the modern age which is an age of transition and discovery. Though modern age started as a reaction against 'Victorianism' in the beginning of the twentieth century, it is closely bound up with the new ideas which are agitating the mind of the modern man.

Modern Poetry

T. S. Eliot is the chief representative of modern poetry. He has entirely followed a different tradition of poetry from the Romantic and Victorian tradition. Of the other important poets of the twentieth century Robert Bridges belonged to the transitional period. Gerard Manley Hopkins also exercised a great influence on modern English poetry. However, his poems were not published during his lifetime. His poems became widely known after his friend Robert Bridges edited the collection in 1918. All his poetry is symbolic, and he means more than he says. Alfred Edward Houseman was a great classical scholar. Much of his poetry is full of historic memories and still comparatively free from the fault of materialism. He also wrote a few poems expressing the horrible destruction caused by modern wars, and their utter futility and inhumanity. The poets of this era can be grouped into three different clusters – the Georgian poets, the Imagists, and Trench poets.

The Georgian poets: The poets generally attributed to this group are roughly those whose work was published in the five volumes of Georgian Poetry, dated respectively 1911-12, 1913-15, 1916-17, 1918-19 and 1920-22. The important poets who contributed to these volumes were Walter De la Mare, William Henry

Davies, Laurence Binyon and John Masefield among others. The greatest of them is Walter De La Mare who writes in a simple, pure, lyrical style about beautiful sights and sounds of the country, about children and old people.

The Imagists: The Imagists believed that the function of poetry is not self-expression, but the proper fusion of meaning in language. According to them poems are works of art and not pieces of emotional autobiography or verbal foretelling. The leader of the Imagists was Ezra Pound. The Imagists were greatly influenced by the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Regarding the subject matter of poetry, the Imagists concentrated on expressing the modern consciousness for their own satisfaction and that of their friends.

Trench Poets: The First World War (1914-18) gave rise to war poetry, and the poets who wrote about the war and its horrors especially in the trenches are called the War Poets, or the “Trench Poets.” Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen are notable war poets.

William Butler Yeats was one of the most important of modern poets, who exerted a great influence on his contemporaries as well as successors. He was an Irish, and could never reconcile himself to the English habits and way of thinking. He believed in magic, occult influences and hypnotism.

Thomas Stearns Eliot was the greatest among the modern English poets, and he influenced modern poetry more than any other poet of the twentieth century. He dominated the English poetic scene till 1930; after that a new school of English poets came to the forefront which was headed by Wystan Hugh Auden, and the other leading poets of this group were Stephen Spender and Cecil Day Lewis. They followed the example of Hopkins and made use of the technical achievements of Eliot and Ezra Pound.

Modern Drama

After the death of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, drama in England suffered a decline for about two centuries. Even Congreve in the seventeenth, and Sheridan and Goldsmith in the eighteenth, could not restore drama to the position it held during the Elizabethan Age. It was revived, however, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and then there appeared dramatists who have now given it a respectable place in English literature.

There were two important factors that were responsible for the revival of drama in

1890's. The first was the influence of Henrik Ibsen, the great Norwegian dramatist, under which the English dramatists like Bernard Shaw claimed the right to discuss serious social and moral problems in a calm, sensible way. The second was the pessimistic atmosphere prevailing at that time, which allowed men like Oscar Wilde to treat the moral assumptions of the great Victorian age with unimportance and make polite fun of their conventionality, narrow-mindedness or self-satisfaction. The first factor gave rise to the Comedy of Ideas or Purpose, while the second revived the Comedy of Manners or the Artificial Comedy.

The two important dramatists who took a predominant part in the revival of drama in the last decade of the nineteenth century were George Bernard Shaw, and Oscar Wilde, both Irishmen.

Other modern dramatists who following the example of Bernard Shaw wrote comedies of ideas were Harley Granville Barker, John Galsworthy, James Birdie, Priestley, Sir James M. Barrie and John Masefield, but none of them attained the standard reached by Shaw.

Besides the artificial comedy and the comedy of ideas, another type of drama was developed in England under the influence of the Irish Dramatic Movement whose originators were Lady Gregory and William Butler Yeats. The two important dramatists belonging to this movement are John Millington Synge and Sean O'Casey. There has been the revival of the Poetic Drama in the Twentieth century, whose most important practitioner is Thomas Stearns Eliot. Other modern dramatists who have also written poetic plays are Christopher Fry, Stephen Philips and Stephen Spender. Most of the poetic plays written in modern times have a religious theme, and they attempt to preach the doctrines of Christianity.

The Modern Novel

Novel is the most important and popular literary medium in the modern times. It is the only literary form which can compete for popularity with the film and the radio, and it is in this form that a great deal of distinguished work is being produced.

Modern Novelists have been categorized into three clusters:

- a) **The Ancestors:** The immediate ancestors of the modern English novel, who dominated the earlier part of the twentieth century, were Herbert George Wells, Arnold Bennet, Henry James, Joseph Conard, Rudyard Kipling and Edward Morgan Forster.

- b) The Transitionalists:** From the beginning of the First World War new experiments were made in the field of literature on account of the new forces which resulted from the war, and which broke the old tradition. In fiction James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley and Somerset Maugham played the prominent part.
- c) The Moderns:** Among the moderns the most important novelists are Somerset Maugham, who is equally famous as a dramatist and short story writer and John Boynton Priestley.

Postmodernism

Until the 1920's, the term "modern" was used to mean new or contemporary, but thereafter it came to be used for a particular period, the one between the two World Wars (1914-1945). Then after about half a century there cropped up a magic term, "post-modern," meaning the period after the modern. The period of the "post-modern" is said to date from the mid-sixties - some critics push it even further to the nineteen eighties. Postmodernism is a complicated term that emerged as an area of academic study since the mid-1980s.

Postmodernism is hard to define, because it is a concept that appears in a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study, including art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communications, fashion, and technology.

The influential intellectuals of Postmodernism are Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan and Mikhail Bakhtin. Because of the influences of these intellectuals in the background, the Postmodern literature in the second half of the twentieth century grew to show greater impact of the new ideas.

Postmodern Literature

Postmodern literature is literature characterized by reliance on narrative techniques such as fragmentation, paradox, and the unreliable narrator; and is often defined as a style or a trend which emerged in the post-World War II era.

Here are some examples of stylistic techniques that are often used in post-modern literature.

Pastiche: Pastiche (pronounced pass-TEESH) is a creative work that imitates another author or genre. It's a way of paying respect, or honor, to great works of the past. Pastiche differs from parody in that pastiche isn't making fun of the works it

imitates – however, the tone of pastiche is often humorous.

Intertextuality: Intertextuality is a literary device that creates an 'interrelationship between texts' and generates related understanding in separate works. It is the interconnection between similar or related works of literature that reflect and influence an audience's interpretation of the text. Intertextuality is a literary discourse strategy utilized by writers in novels, poetry, theatre and even in non-written texts (such as performances and digital media).

Metafiction: Metafiction is a form of literature that emphasizes its own constructiveness in a way that continually reminds the reader to be aware that they are reading or viewing a fictional work. It is self-conscious about language, literary form, storytelling, and directly or indirectly draw attention to their status as artifacts. It is frequently used as a form of parody or a tool to undermine literary conventions and explore the relationship between literature and reality, life, and art.

Temporal Distortion: This is a common technique in modernist fiction: fragmentation and non-linear narratives are central features in both modern and postmodern literature. Temporal distortion in postmodern fiction is used in a variety of ways, often for the sake of irony.

Minimalism: Minimalism is a movement in art, dance, music, etc., beginning in the 1960s, in which only the simplest design, structure, forms, etc. are used, often repetitiously, and the artist's individuality is minimized

Maximalism: Maximalism is the opposite of minimalism: a tendency toward excess.

Magical Realism: Magical realism, magic realism, or marvelous realism is a style of fiction that paints a realistic view of the modern world while also adding magical elements. It is often referred to fiction and literature in particular with magic or the supernatural presented in an otherwise real-world or mundane setting.

Some of the notable postmodern writers are as follows:

Novelists: Graham Greene, Anthony Powell, Samuel Beckett, Laurence Durrell, William Golding, Angus Wilson, Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark, Kingsley Amis, John Wain, John Braine, Alan Sillitoe, Anthony Burgess, Doris Lessing, Angela Carter, Margaret Drabble, John Fowles, George Macdonald Fraser, James Gordon Farrell and Paul Scott.

Poets: Dylan Thomas, Philip Larkin, Donald Davie, Robert Conquest, Dennis Joseph Enright, Charles Tomlinson, Ronald Stuart Thomas, Ted Hughes, Tom Gunn, Seamus Heaney and John Osborne

Playwrights: John Arden, Arnold Wesker, Harold Pinter, Joe Orton, Tom Stoppard, Edward Bond and Caryl Churchill.

Glossary

mediator – a person or organisation that tries to get agreement between people or groups who disagree with each other.

valiant – very brave or determined.

ancestral – connected with or that belonged to people who lived a long time ago in your family.

slayer – killer

pioneer – a person who is the first to study and develop a particular area of knowledge, culture, etc. that other people then continue to develop

glorious – deserving or bringing great fame and success.

sermon – a talk on a moral or religious subject.

clergy – the priest or ministers of a religion, especially of the Christian Church

vernacular – the language spoken in a particular area

mythical – existing only in a story of ancient times

banishment – the punishment of being sent away from a place, especially from a country

contemporary – belonging to the same time

mediocrity – the quality of being average or not very good

coherence – the situation in which all the parts of something fit together well

climax – the most exciting or important event or point in time.

anthology – a collection of poems, stories, etc. that have been written by different people and published together in a book.

pastoral – relating to the work of a priest or teacher in giving help and advice on personal matters, not just those connected with religion or education.

exaggeration – a statement or description that makes something seem larger, better, worse or more important than it really is.

trivial – not important or serious; not worth considering

flair – a quality showing the ability to do things in an interesting way that shows imagination.

inculcate – to cause somebody to learn and remember ideas, moral principles, etc., especially by repeating them often.

conjugal – connected with marriage and the relationship between a husband and wife.

precise – clear and accurate

monotony – boring lack of variety.

unsurpassed – better or greater than any other.

manifest – to show something clearly, especially a feeling, an attitude or a quality.

manifesto – a written statement.

predecessor – a person who did a job before somebody else.

chivalry – the medieval knightly system with its religious, moral, and social code.

prophecy – a statement that something will happen in the future, especially one made by somebody with religious or magic powers.

spontaneous – happening naturally, without being made to happen.

realism – a way of seeing, accepting and dealing with situations as they really are without being influenced by your emotions or false hopes.

accession – the act of becoming a ruler of a country

hypocritical – pretending to have moral standards or opinions that you do not actually have

sanctity – the state of being holy

confer – give

enslavement – the act of making somebody/something completely depend on something so that they cannot manage without it.

futility – the fact of having no purpose because there is no chance of success.

occult – connected with magic powers and things that cannot be explained by reason or science.

hypnotism – putting a person into an unconscious state

parody – a piece of writing, music, acting, etc. that deliberately copies the style of somebody/something in order to be amusing

nonlinear – that does not develop from one thing to another in a single smooth series of stages.

mundane – not exciting or interesting

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the text and answer the following questions.

- a. When did the early phase of English literature start?
- b. Name the most important literary piece of the Anglo-Saxon period? What is it all about?
- c. What does Anglo-Saxon poetry deal with?
- d. Why were 'The Romances' known as the most popular form of literature during the Middle English period?
- e. Why is Geoffrey Chaucer called the real founder of English poetry?
- f. The years from 1400 to the Renaissance were a period deprived of literature. Why was it so?
- g. What does Renaissance mean? Why does this period denote the gradual enlightenment of human mind?
- h. Who is father of English dramatic poetry? Why is he called so?
- i. Why is Spenser called the poet of imagination?
- j. How was Milton different from Spenser, Shakespeare and Jonson as poets?
- k. Which period in the English literature is called the Age of Dryden? Why is it called so?
- l. What classical qualities does the prose of the eighteenth-century literature exhibit?
- m. The Victorian Age is long and complicated. Why?
- n. Why could the modern writers no longer write in the old manner in the twentieth century?
- o. What is the most important characteristic of modern literature?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the text again and answer the following questions.

- a. Write short notes on:
 - a. Old English Period
 - b. Middle English Period
 - c. The Renaissance Period

- d. The Romantic Age
 - e. The Twentieth Century Literature
 - f. Post Modernism
- b. Differentiate between the Miracle plays and the Morality plays.
 - c. Why were the literary achievements of the puritan age not of a high order? Explain.
 - d. Give your insights on the eighteenth-century literature.
 - e. The Romantic period is the most fruitful period in the history of English literature. Justify this statement.
 - f. Complete the following table with information from the text above. The first one has been done for you

S.N.	Period/Age	Time	Masterpiece/s	Major writer/s	Major feature/s
1	Old English	450 -1100	Beowulf	Caedmon, Cynewulf, Alfred the Great, Aelfric	marked by the beginning of English prose

C. Leading to Write

- a. The Restoration Period in the history of English literature is also called the age of Dryden. Exemplify.
- b. Compare and contrast the Romantic age and the Victorian age in the history of English Literature.
- c. Trace the origin and development of English drama up-to the period of the Morality plays.
- d. What is the most important characteristic of Modern Literature, and what consequences have this characteristic introduced in the field of English literature?

SECTION 2

Non-fiction

Prose refers to written work that follows a basic grammatical structure. Prose is a form of language that has no formal metrical structure. It applies a natural flow of speech, and ordinary grammatical structure, rather than rhythmic structure. Prose is divided into two big categories: fiction and non-fiction.

Non-fiction refers to literature based in facts. Written works of non-fiction are based in real-world experiences. Non-fiction includes: essays, biographies, histories, memoirs, letters, speeches, diaries, books on business, newspaper articles, blog, travelogue, and even books on writing.

The most common types of non-fiction are narrative, expository, descriptive and persuasive. Narrative non-fiction usually tells a real life story, experience or idea, or it accounts an event. Examples of this kind of non-fiction are autobiographies, memoirs, personal essays and journals. Expository non-fiction refers to a text that informs or explains a subject such as research report. Descriptive non-fiction uses details to help the reader imagine a real place or person. An example of descriptive non-fiction is scientific observation. Persuasive non-fiction is a text that attempts to convince or change the reader's way of thinking by presenting pertinent facts and details. A political speech or an editorial are examples of this kind of non-fiction.

From this section students will learn about Yeti, the mysterious snow-man, and visit the beautiful upper Mustang, with the author. They will also be led to the pros and cons of the use of social media, and be introduced to the causes and dire consequences of the global warming. Students will also enjoy reading a memoir, an autobiography by Michelle Obama. Michelle is gifted in her ability to express her own emotions and to write with utmost insight and sensitivity. On the other hand *The Road to Little Dribbling* deals with the writer's second visit to London and how he was able to acquire the British citizenship. In short, the texts selected from different areas will shower with pleasures of reading as well as inspire the students to write such kinds of prose.

Can Zoos Offer more than Entertainment?

Michael Gross



Michael Gross (born 1963) is a science writer based at Oxford and an honorary research fellow at the School of Crystallography, Birkbeck, University of London. He is a regular contributor to magazines including *Chemistry World*, *Current Biology*, *Spektrum der Wissenschaft*, and *Nachrichten aus der Chemie*. He has authored several books, including *Life on the Edge* (Perseus), *Light and Life* (OUP), and *The Birds, the Bees, and the Platypuses* (Wiley). This essay was published in *Current Biology* 25 (10): R391-R394, in the year 2015. In this essay he talks about how zoos and aquariums are doing good deeds for humans and animals alike, beyond the traditional mission

of just presenting access to wildlife for entertainment.

Before you read

- When did you last visit the zoo? Why did you go there?
- What is the motive behind setting up a zoo?
- Is it good to keep animals in the zoo? If yes/no, why do you think so?

There's always something exciting happening at the zoo - some cute little cub being born or making its first steps, or a gorilla taking selfies. The media love the visitor attractions as much as the schoolchildren who are the core audience - as pictures and video footage of attractive-looking animals are so much easier to obtain when said animals are fenced in.

On the other hand, there is an equal amount of negative headlines. These arise for instance, when spare animals are euthanized just to fit human requirements, or when the entertainment activity at London Zoo extends into the night hours and keeps animals awake and irritated.

Criticism of such perceived abuse of the power that humans hold over their animal 'prisoners' adds weight to the more fundamental arguments of animal rights campaigners who call for these attractions to be banned on the philosophical principle that sentient beings shouldn't be held in captivity for the amusement of others. These arguments are particularly resonant for our closest relatives, the great apes, and for cetaceans that are trained to perform.

This is a debate that circuses have already lost in many places, and zoos and aquariums could follow in their tracks. Unlike circuses, however, zoos and

aquariums claim to make a positive contribution both to biodiversity awareness and to species conservation. As the ongoing man-made extinction will only get worse, this role is bound to get more important and all wildlife attractions may have to adapt to it to demonstrate their ethical credibility.

Education

Facing mounting criticism from the animal rights camp, wildlife attractions often justify their existence with a mission to educate children and adults about important issues, like biodiversity and conservation challenges. But can they prove that a visit to the zoo adds to the understanding of these issues? Until recently, there was virtually no hard evidence to back up these claims.

Eric Jensen from the University of Warwick, UK, recently published the first large-scale impact study evaluating children's knowledge of biodiversity and conservation issues both before and after a visit to London Zoo. Jensen analysed data from 2,839 schoolchildren, some of whom had attended a presentation from the zoo's education officers during their zoo visit, while others relied only on teachers for guidance during their visit.

"The main task used to evaluate learning asked the children to draw their favourite wildlife habitat with all the plants and animals that live there," Jensen explains. "These drawings and children's self-description of the drawings were then analysed for accuracy in terms of the animals' physiology, inclusion of ecologically relevant detail successfully placing animals in the right type of habitat and conceptual sophistication in understanding of the animals' physiology and habitats." Jensen observed significant positive change in 41% of the visits supported by the zoo's education officers and 34% of the visits only guided by teachers.

Given that there are over 700 million visits to accredited wildlife attractions every year, even if only one third of these result in an improved understanding of biodiversity and conservation, that is still a significant contribution. Considering the more modest success rate of the teacher-guided visits, Jensen notes



that perhaps the information provided on signs, screens etc. could benefit from improvements to make all visits more beneficial.

To quantify the claim of educational relevance of zoos more precisely, experimental scientists would perhaps also like to see a control group who get the presentation from the zoo's education officer without the live animals, perhaps backed up with a video instead. So far, zoos have used visitors' surveys mainly to investigate issues of customer satisfaction, access issues, and management. But given the ethical dilemmas surrounding their business, they should really have an interest in providing solid evidence to show they can offer added educational value above and beyond what biology teachers can do with modern media at school.

Similar considerations hold for biodiversity awareness in adults. In a separate study conducted together with Andrew Moss from Chester Zoo, UK, and Markus Gusset from the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), Jensen investigated to what extent wildlife attractions can help to meet the target 1 (one) agreed in the Aichi Biodiversity Convention, which reads: "By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably." WAZA has officially made a commitment to work towards this target.

As in the pupils' study, researchers compared surveys obtained before and after visits to assess how a visit to a wildlife attraction has changed the biodiversity literacy and the knowledge of actions, they can take to protect biodiversity for 5,661 visitors to 26 institutions.

The researchers concluded from their findings that "zoos and aquariums can make a positive contribution because zoos and aquariums are increasing the number of people who understand biodiversity. They are also bolstering the ranks of those who are aware of the steps they can take to conserve and use biodiversity sustainably by improving knowledge of actions to help protect biodiversity."

Detailed analysis showed that the results improved when visitors were shown a film during their visit, which again begs the question for a control experiment using only the film in the absence of the wildlife. Moreover, the learning effect was much less in evidence for visitors who identified as members of conservation or environmental groups, presumably because they already started from a higher level of awareness and better baseline knowledge. This seems to suggest that attractions should consider tiered materials to offer extra learning opportunities for visitors who arrive with previous knowledge.

Wildlife attractions can also play a crucial role in educating the wider public about global issues, such as climate change. The French national aquarium Nausicaa at Boulogne, for instance, has recently launched a well-publicised exhibition on the impact of climate change on the oceans, to lead up to the forthcoming climate summit COP21 at Paris. (*COP stands for Conference of Parties – with 'parties' meaning the countries that ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.*)

Conservation and research

The second, separate claim to moral justification for zoos and aquariums rests on the welfare of the animal species concerned (as opposed to the individuals that animal rights are more concerned about). As Ben Minter and James Collins from Arizona State University at Tempe, USA, have explained in a recent review article, ethical considerations at the species level can conflict with those at the individual level in complex ways and the scientists involved have to find a responsible balance.

Traditionally, research conducted at wildlife attractions was mostly about animal husbandry. Faced with the threats of biodiversity loss and climate change, however, these facilities could play a much bigger role in studying and predicting the effects of global change on animals. For instance, large aquariums could gently wind the clock forwards and simulate the changes in ocean temperature and acidity that are inevitably going to happen in the coming years, and study their effects on parameters such as fertility and behaviour of marine species.

Such research, aiming to find ways of mitigating the effects of climate change on wildlife in its native habitat by studying small numbers of individuals in captivity, in a model habitat, could reduce animal suffering overall and thus offset the ethical qualms about keeping some of them in captivity.

When the worst case happens and a species is heading for extinction in the wild, zoos and aquariums may serve as an ark to ensure their survival. Tigers, for example, are severely threatened in their native habitat, but due to their popularity in zoos and their unproblematic reproduction in captivity, their survival as a species is secured. However, it appears unlikely that they could then be reintroduced into the wild.

Animal rights campaigners object to this claim, highlighting the undue emphasis on charismatic species that are popular with visitors. However, an alternative approach to sheltering threatened species is also emerging. Thus, the Amphibian

Ark helps to coordinate captive rescue of and research with species that are under threat of extinction, including frog species endangered by the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, which has been spread via a range of different human activities and is now threatening species around the globe. The AArk's Conservation Needs Assessment process objectively assesses species for conservation actions both in captivity and in the wild, in order to decide which species should have captive programs established ahead of others, within the possibilities defined by limited resources. Conservation practitioners are then able to focus their efforts and resources on the species and environments that are most in need of help, and are likely to benefit the most from those efforts.

Apart from offering protection while attempts are made to mitigate threats in the wild, Amphibian Ark partners are also attempting to breed animals with resistance traits and consider releasing them to habitats with better survival chances. The ultimate goal of their work is always to return captive-bred animals from these 'assurance' colonies back to the wild and ensure their survival there.

"Zoos, aquariums and other captive breeding centres are playing a vital role in helping to protect some of the world's most threatened amphibian species," says AArk's Kevin Johnson. "A number of species, including the tiny Kihansi spray toad from Tanzania, Australia's charismatic corroboree frog, and one of the world's largest frogs, the mountain chicken from Montserrat and Dominica, are being bred in captivity by zoos and universities, with the offspring subsequently released back into the wild. These species face almost certain extinction without these captive programs."

Minteer and Collins note that, as zoos and aquariums are increasingly challenged to take up research to benefit animal survival in the wild, and as the remaining habitats continue to decrease in size and suffer more human impact thus becoming more zoo-like, the differences between the situation of animals in natural and in artificial habitats (in situ and ex situ, respectively) are beginning to diminish. The authors conclude that "these changes will continue to blur the boundaries of in situ and ex situ conservation programs as a range of management activities are adopted across more or less managed ecological systems increasingly influenced by human activities."

With their experience in accommodating the needs of animals and people, experts from wildlife attractions can also reach out and support conservation projects in situ.

For instance, Lauren Humphrey from the National Marine Aquarium at Plymouth, UK, has coordinated a collaborative conservation project at the Blue Bay Marine Park in Mauritius, together with a local hotel. Much like a zoo, the hotel depends on the wildlife to attract visitors, who in turn should be guided not to disrupt the habitat needs of the animals.

Specifically, Humphrey set up a programme to educate and incentivise members of the hotel staff to look after the conservation needs in the surroundings of the hotel, and to make the business more sustainable and reduce its environmental impact. A ‘Conservation through Tourism Award’ was set up that rewards local hotels and their staff for their engagement with conservation tasks. There are bronze and silver awards for hotels raising conservation and sustainability awareness, as well as gold awards that involve interactions with organisations such as environmental NGOs.

Similar collaborations and conservation outreach programmes are in place elsewhere. The Phoenix Zoo in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, for instance, supports conservation projects in situ with its annual grants launched in 2009. In total, the more than 200 accredited members of the (US) Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) spend over \$160 million each year on in situ conservation initiatives based in countries around the world.



Bristol Zoo (UK) has recently completed a fundraising appeal to save 750 abandoned African penguin chicks, which were then successfully reintroduced into the wild. This species is endangered to the point that saving individual chicks is of crucial importance for its survival. In a press statement, Christoph Schwitzer, Director of Conservation at Bristol Zoological Society, said: “Unless conservation charities such as us intervene, these chicks would starve to death. We wanted to help so we launched an urgent appeal. Recent research shows that penguin chicks hand-reared at the rescue centre in South Africa survive and reproduce just as well as those naturally reared, when reintroduced back into the wild. We would like to say a massive thankyou to all those who supported the appeal — the money raised will literally help to save a species.” In situations like these, captive animals can serve as ambassadors to motivate people to help saving their conspecifics in the wild.

Outlook

Given that wildlife attractions tend to attract not only millions of visitors but also a lot of media attention as well as the critical gaze of just about anybody who worries about the relations between humans and animals, they too may have to adapt to the times of climate change and biodiversity loss. In the future, taxpayers and visitors may demand that the zoos and aquariums prove their claims that they are doing good deeds for humans and animals alike, beyond the traditional mission of just offering access to wildlife for entertainment.

Nobody would want the zoos and aquariums to become repositories of numerous species labelled 'extinct in the wild'. So, the challenge for all these institutions is to find their role in helping the animals that are still wild and free.

Glossary

footage - part of a film showing a particular event.

euthanized - to kill a sick or injured animal or person by giving them drugs so that they die without pain.

abuse - the use of something in a way that is wrong or harmful.

campaigner- a person who leads or takes part in a campaign, especially one for political or social change.

sentient - able to see or feel things through the senses.

captivity - the state of being kept in a confined space.

resonant - having the power to bring images, feelings, memories, etc. into your mind.

cetacean - connected with the group of creatures that includes whales and dolphins.

adapt - to change something in order to make it suitable for a new use or situation.

credibility - the quality that somebody/something has that makes people believe or trust them.

virtually - almost or very nearly, so that any slight difference is not important.

physiology - the way in which a particular living thing functions.

sophistication - the quality of being difficult to understand.

accredited – i. officially approved as being of an accepted quality or standard.
ii. (of a person) officially recognized as something; with official permission to be something.

quantify - describe or express something as an amount or a number.

precisely - accurately; carefully.

ethical - morally correct or acceptable.

dilemma - a situation which makes problems, often one in which you have to make a very difficult choice between things of equal importance.

commitment - the willingness to work hard and give your energy and time to a job or an activity.

assess - make a judgement about the nature or quality of somebody/something.

bolstering - to improve something or make it stronger.

sustainably - in a way that uses natural products and energy without harming the environment, especially by replacing what has been used.

presumably - used to say that you think that something is probably true.

tiered - having a series of rows or levels placed one above the other.

animal husbandry - farming that involves keeping animals to produce food.

simulate - create particular conditions that exist in real life.

parameter - something that decides or limits the way in which something can be done.

marine - connected with the sea and the creatures and plants that live there.

mitigating - having the effect of making something bad less severe, serious, or painful.

qualm - a feeling of doubt or worry about whether what you are doing is right.

charismatic - exercising a compelling charm which inspires others.

ark - a shelter or refuge.

blur - make something become difficult to distinguish clearly.

sustainability - the use of natural products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment.

incentivise - encourage somebody to behave in a particular way by offering them a reward.

intervene - become involved in a situation in order to improve or help.

repositories - places where something is stored in large quantities.

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the essay and answer the following questions.

- a. Mention the exciting things that are found happening at the zoo.
- b. Why are school children called the core audience of the zoo?
- c. What abuse of power do humans hold over animals, according to the essay?
- d. How do zoos and aquariums make a positive contribution to species conservation?
- e. Why are school children taken to the zoo?
- f. What role can wildlife attractions play in the preservation of the animals?
- g. How do zoos, aquariums and other breeding centres help protect the threatened amphibian species?
- h. Why do the animal rights campaigners object to the claim of the researchers?
- i. What changes, according to Minter and Collins, will continue to blur the boundaries of in situ and ex situ conservation programmes?
- j. What has the Bristol Zoo in the UK recently accomplished?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the essay again and answer the following questions.

- a. How does a visit to the zoo add to the understanding of issues like biodiversity and conservation challenges?
- b. What significant change did Jensen observe after analysing data from the school children who visited the London zoo?
- c. How could zoos and aquariums play a bigger role in studying and predicting the effects of global change on animals?
- d. What do you think should be the role of the zoo in education and conservation? Explain.
- e. Do you think zoos are more aimed at entertaining people rather than protecting endangered animals?

- f. Explain, with reference to the context:
 - i. “By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.”
 - ii. Nobody would want the zoos and aquariums to become repositories of numerous species labelled ‘extinct in the wild’.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Do you think it’s just for animals to be confined in closed places as zoos tend to do?
- b. Zoos are the problem, not the solution to animal conservation. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons.
- c. What are your views on the statement, “Zoos are not prisons rather they are places where the lives of animals are improved.”?
- d. Do zoos really teach visitors anything? Elucidate.
- e. There are animal rights activists who are against the act of petting wild animals in zoos. Critic or justify their concerns with suitable examples
- f. Wild animals are supposed to be left in the wild, not tamed in zoos. Discuss.

Is Social Media Bad for you? The Evidence and the Unknowns

Jessica Brown



Jessica Brown is Freelance journalist who writes about whatever interests her. Presently she is writing for @BBC Future, @guardian and @Independent. This article by Jessica Brown is featured in BBC Future's "Best of 2018" collection.

In this article the writer says that social media affects people in a different way, depending on pre-existing conditions and personality traits.

Before you read

- What do you mean by social media?
- Why is social media becoming popular these days?
- What do people do on social media?

Three billion people, around 40% of the world's population, use online social media – and we're spending an average of two hours every day sharing, liking, tweeting and updating on these platforms, according to some reports. That breaks down to around half a million tweets and Snapchat photos shared every minute.

With social media playing such a big part in our lives, could we be sacrificing our mental health and well-being as well as our time? What does the evidence actually suggest?

Since social media is relatively new to us, conclusive findings are limited. The research that does exist mainly relies on self-reporting, which can often be flawed, and the majority of studies focus on Facebook. That said,



this is a fast-growing area of research, and clues are beginning to emerge. BBC Future reviewed the findings of some of the science so far:

STRESS

People use social media to vent about everything from customer service to politics, but the downside to this is that our feeds often resemble an endless stream of stress. In 2015, researchers at the Pew Research Center based in Washington DC sought to

find out if social media induces more stress than it relieves.

In the survey of 1,800 people, women reported being more stressed than men. Twitter was found to be a “significant contributor” because it increased their awareness of other people’s stress.

But Twitter also acted as a coping mechanism – and the more women used it, the less stressed they were. The same effect wasn’t found for men, whom the researchers said had a more distant relationship with social media. Overall, the researchers concluded that social media use was linked to “modestly lower levels” of stress.



MOOD

In 2014, researchers in Austria found that participants reported lower moods after using Facebook for 20 minutes compared to those who just browsed the internet. The study suggested that people felt that way because they saw it as a waste of time.

A good or bad mood may also spread between people on social media, according to researchers from the University of California, who assessed the emotional content of over a billion status updates from more than 100 million Facebook users between 2009 and 2012.

Bad weather increased the number of negative posts by 1%, and the researchers found that one negative post by someone in a rainy city influenced another 1.3 negative posts by friends living in dry cities. The better news is that happy posts had a stronger influence; each one inspired 1.75 more happy posts. Whether a happy post translates to a genuine boost in mood, however, remains unclear.

ANXIETY

Researchers have looked at general anxiety provoked by social media, characterised by feelings of restlessness and worry, and trouble sleeping and concentrating. A study published in the journal *Computers and Human Behaviour* found that people who report using seven or more social media platforms were more than three times as likely as people using 0-2 platforms to have high levels of general anxiety symptoms.

That said, it’s unclear if and how social media causes anxiety. Researchers from Babes-Bolyai University in Romania reviewed existing research on the relationship

between social anxiety and social networking in 2016, and said the results were mixed. They concluded that more research needs to be done.

DEPRESSION

While some studies have found a link between depression and social media use, there is emerging research into how social media can actually be a force for good.



Two studies involving more than 700 students found that depressive symptoms, such as low mood and feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness, were linked to the quality of online interactions. Researchers found higher levels of depressive symptoms among those who reported having more negative interactions.

A similar study conducted in 2016 involving 1,700 people found a threefold risk of depression and anxiety among people who used the most social media platforms. Reasons for this, they suggested, include cyber-bullying, having a distorted view of other people's lives, and feeling like time spent on social media is a waste.

However, scientists are also looking at how social media can be used to diagnose depression, which could help people receive treatment earlier. Researchers for Microsoft surveyed 476 people and analysed their Twitter profiles for depressive language, linguistic style, engagement and emotion. From this, they developed a classifier that can accurately predict depression before it causes symptoms in seven out of 10 cases.

Researchers from Harvard and Vermont Universities analysed 166 people's Instagram photos to create a similar tool last year with the same success rate.

SLEEP

Humans used to spend their evenings in darkness, but now we're surrounded by artificial lighting all day and night. Research has found that this can inhibit the body's production of the hormone melatonin, which facilitates sleep – and blue light, which is emitted by smartphone and laptop screens, is said to be the worst culprit. In other words, if you lie on the pillow at night checking Facebook and Twitter, you're headed for restless slumber.

Last year, researchers from the University of Pittsburgh asked 1,700 18- to

30-year-olds about their social media and sleeping habits. They found a link with sleep disturbances – and concluded blue light had a part to play. How often they logged on, rather than time spent on social media sites, was a higher predictor of disturbed sleep, suggesting “an obsessive ‘checking’”, the researchers said.

The researchers say this could be caused by physiological arousal before sleep, and the bright lights of our devices can delay circadian rhythms. But they couldn’t clarify whether social media causes disturbed sleep, or if those who have disturbed sleep spend more time on social media.

ADDICTION

Despite the argument from a few researchers that tweeting may be harder to resist than cigarettes and alcohol, social media addiction isn’t included in the latest diagnostic manual for mental health disorders.

That said, social media is changing faster than scientists can keep up with, so various groups are trying to study compulsive behaviours related to its use – for example, scientists from the Netherlands have invented their own scale to identify possible addiction.

And if social media addiction does exist, it would be a type of internet addiction – and that is a classified disorder. In 2011, Daria Kuss and Mark Griffiths from Nottingham Trent University in the UK have analysed 43 previous studies on the matter, and conclude that social media addiction is a mental health problem that “may” require professional treatment. They found that excessive usage was linked to relationship problems, worse academic achievement and less participation in offline communities, and found that those who could be more vulnerable to a social media addiction include those dependent on alcohol, the highly extroverted, and those who use social media to compensate for fewer ties in real life.

SELF-ESTEEM

Women’s magazines and their use of underweight and Photo shopped models have been long maligned for stirring self-esteem issues among young women. But now, social media, with its filters and lighting and clever angles, is taking over as a primary concern among some campaigning groups and charities.

Social media sites make more than half of users feel inadequate, according to a survey of 1,500 people by disability charity Scope, and half of 18- to 34-year-olds say it makes them feel unattractive.

A 2016 study by researchers at Penn State University suggested that viewing other people's selfies lowered self-esteem, because users compare themselves to photos of people looking their happiest. Research from the University of Strathclyde, Ohio University and University of Iowa also found that women compare themselves negatively to selfies of other women.

But it's not just selfies that have the potential to dent self-esteem. A study of 1,000 Swedish Facebook users found that women who spent more time on Facebook reported feeling less happy and confident. The researchers concluded: "When Facebook users compare their own lives with others' seemingly more successful careers and happy relationships, they may feel that their own lives are less successful in comparison."

But one small study hinted that viewing your own profile, not others, might offer ego boosts. Researchers at Cornell University in New York put 63 students into different groups. Some sat with a mirror placed against a computer screen, for instance, while others sat in front of their own Facebook profile.

Facebook had a positive effect on self-esteem compared to other activities that boost self-awareness. Mirrors and photos, the researchers explained, make us compare ourselves to social standards, whereas looking at our own Facebook profiles might boost self-esteem because it is easier to control how we're presented to the world.

WELL-BEING

In a study from 2013, researchers texted 79 participants five times a day for 14 days, asking them how they felt and how much they'd used Facebook since the last text. The more time people spent on the site, the worse they felt later on, and the more their life satisfaction declined over time.

But other research has found, that for some people, social media can help boost their well-being. Marketing researchers Jonah Berger and Eva Buechel found that people who are emotionally unstable are more likely to post about their emotions, which can help them receive support and bounce back after negative experiences.

Overall, social media's effects on well-being are ambiguous, according to a paper written last year by researchers from the Netherlands. However, they suggested there is clearer evidence for the impact on one group of people: social media has a more negative effect on the well-being of those who are more socially isolated.

RELATIONSHIPS

If you've ever been talking to a friend who's pulled their phone out to scroll through Instagram, you might have wondered what social media is doing to relationships.

Even the mere presence of a phone can interfere with our interactions, particularly when we're talking about something meaningful, according to one small study. Researchers writing in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* tasked 34 pairs of strangers with having a 10-minute conversation about an interesting event that had happened to them recently. Each pair sat in private booths, and half had a mobile phone on the top of their table.

Those with a phone in eyeshot were less positive when recalling their interaction afterwards, had less meaningful conversations and reported feeling less close to their partner than the others, who had a notebook on top of the table instead.

Romantic relationships aren't immune, either. Researchers at the University of Guelph in Canada surveyed 300 people aged 17-24 in 2009 about any jealousy they felt when on Facebook, asking questions such as, 'How likely are you to become jealous after your partner has added an unknown member of the opposite sex?'.

Women spent much more time on Facebook than men, and experienced significantly more jealousy when doing so. The researchers concluded they "felt the Facebook environment created these feelings and enhanced concerns about the quality of their relationship".

ENVY

In a study involving 600 adults, roughly a third said social media made them feel negative emotions – mainly frustration – and envy was the main cause. This was triggered by comparing their lives to others', and the biggest culprit was other people's travel photos. Feeling envious caused an "envy spiral", where people react to envy by adding to their profiles more of the same sort of content that made them jealous in the first place.

However, envy isn't necessarily a destructive emotion – it can often make us work harder, according to researchers from Michigan University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. They asked 380 students to look at "envy-eliciting" photos and texts from Facebook and Twitter, including posts about buying expensive goods, travelling and getting engaged. But the type of envy the researchers found is "benign envy", which they say is more likely to make a person work harder.

LONELINESS

A study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine last year surveyed 7,000 19- to 32-year-olds and found that those who spend the most time on social media were twice as likely to report experiencing social isolation, which can include a lack of a sense of social belonging, engagement with others and fulfilling relationships.

Spending more time on social media, the researchers said, could displace face-to-face interaction, and can also make people feel excluded.

“Exposure to such highly idealised representations of peers’ lives may elicit feelings of envy and the distorted belief that others lead happier and more successful lives, which may increase perceived social isolation.”

CONCLUSIONS

It’s clear that in many areas, not enough is known yet to draw many strong conclusions. However, the evidence does point one way: social media affects people differently, depending on pre-existing conditions and personality traits.

As with food, gambling and many other temptations of the modern age, excessive use for some individuals is probably inadvisable. But at the same time, it would be wrong to say social media is a universally bad thing, because clearly it brings myriad benefits to our lives.

Glossary

tweet - (also twitter) a message sent using the Twitter social networking service.

conclusive - proving something, and allowing no doubt or confusion

flawed - damaged or spoiled

emerge - to start to exist; to appear or become known

induce - cause

mechanism - a method or a system for achieving something

assess - to make a judgement about the nature or quality of somebody/something

anxiety - the state of feeling nervous or worried that something bad is going to happen

depression - a medical condition in which a person feels very sad and anxious and

often has physical symptoms such as being unable to sleep, etc.

cyber-bullying - the activity of using messages on social networking sites, emails, text messages, etc. to frighten or upset somebody

distorted - twisted or changed facts, ideas, etc. so that they are no longer correct or true

diagnose - to say exactly what the cause of a problem is

vent – to express feelings, especially anger, strongly

genuine – sincere and honest; that can be trusted

inhibit – prevent or prohibit (someone) from doing something

slumber – sleep.

maligned – said bad things about somebody/something publicly

obsessive - thinking too much about one particular person or thing, in a way that is not normal

Circadian rhythms- Circadian rhythms are physical, mental, and behavioral changes that follow a daily cycle. They respond primarily to light and darkness in an organism's environment. Sleeping at night and being awake during the day is an example of a light-related circadian rhythm. Circadian rhythms are found in most living things, including animals, plants, and many tiny microbes. The study of circadian rhythms is called chronobiology.

vulnerable - weak and easily hurt physically or emotionally

compensate - to provide something good to balance or reduce the bad effects of damage, loss, etc.

selfie - a photo of yourself that you take, typically with a smartphone or a webcam, and usually put on a social networking site

self-esteem - a feeling of being happy with your own character and abilities

dent – to damage somebody's confidence, reputation, etc.

ambiguous – not clearly stated or defined

scroll - to move text on a computer screen up or down so that you can read different parts of it

peer - a person who is the same age or who has the same social status as you

elicit – to get information or a reaction from somebody, often with difficulty.

myriad - extremely large in number

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the article and answer the following questions.

- a. How does social media play a big share in our lives?
- b. Why has social media become a fast-growing area of research?
- c. According to the researchers, does social media cause more stress than it relieves?
- d. How do posts on Facebook affect individuals?
- e. It is that social media provoke general anxiety. Do you agree? Give reasons.
- f. What are the real causes of depression on social media users?
- g. Mention the effects of social media addiction.
- h. Why, according to the researchers, do women feel less happy and more stressed by social media than men?
- i. How is relationship being affected by social media?
- j. What is more likely to make a person work harder?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the article again and answer the following questions.

- a. Why does the writer say that the conclusive findings about social media are limited?
- b. How do our feeds on social media resemble an endless stream of stress?
- c. Is there any link between depression and social media? Give reasons.
- d. Why is the blue light emitted by smartphone and laptop screens said to be the worst culprit?
- e. Why do social media sites make more than half of its users feel inadequate?
- f. Analyze some of the challenges that social media poses to the society.
- g. Is social media a universally bad thing? Explain.
- h. Explain, with reference to the context:
 - i. Whether a happy post translates to a genuine boost in mood,

however, remains unclear.

ii. Romantic relationships aren't immune, either.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Analyze and compare the life before and after social media.
- b. Do you think using social networks helps you in your studies by any means? Explain.
- c. Are the friends made through social media trustworthy? Give reasons.
- d. It is essential to use some kind of social networking for today's life? Give reasons.
- e. Highlight the point of a user's privacy on social networks. Is it risky to post individual and intimate information or not?
- f. Does social media improve or spoil family relationship? Elucidate.

Up Above the World So High, Climate Change Could Kill Some Clouds in the Sky

Roxy Mathew

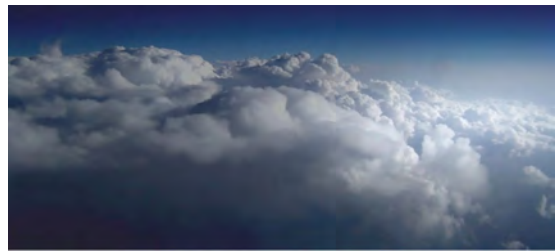


Roxy Mathew Koll is a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, and a lead author of IPCC reports. He is currently a visiting scientist at the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, Seattle. This blog written on Mar 2, 2019 is available at <https://thewire.in/the-sciences/up-above-the-world-so-high-climate-change-could-kill-some-clouds-in-the-sky>. Here the writer talks about what a new study of the impact of global warming on clouds suggests.

Before you read

- How are clouds formed?
- What is the role of the clouds in the atmosphere?
- How many types of clouds are there?

The Bollywood film *Lagaan* (2001) begins with the unfulfilled promise of monsoon clouds over a drought-stricken land and ends with a burst of rains and dancing. If a sequel were made a hundred years from now, it could have fewer clouds and possibly more drought. At least that is what a new study of the impact of global warming on clouds suggests.



Stratocumulus clouds over the midwestern United States

The word ‘cloud’ comes from the Old English ‘clūd’, which originally meant rock. Speakers of Old English named them so because the thick grey clouds over England looked like heavy, dark-grey masses of rock.

But not all clouds are the same. While some look like rocks, others resemble puffy balls of cotton and wispy feathers. Try cloud-watching with kids, you might even spot an elephant in the sky!

The importance of clouds become apparent when humans realised that they cover over 70% of Earth’s surface at any given moment. They are like a (relatively) thin layer of floating ocean, with enough water to cover the planet’s surface with about one inch of rain.

Types of clouds

Essentially, clouds are bundles of water droplets and ice particles suspended in the sky. Even a modestly sized cloud could contain about 600 tonnes of water – the mass of a Boeing 747.

Clouds generally form when warm, moist air moves up, slowly cools and eventually reaches an altitude where it is saturated with moisture. Beyond this point, water starts condensing out of the air to form clouds.

The height at which this happens, together with atmospheric conditions, determines whether the cloud is puffy – aka a cumulus – or feathery – aka a cirrus.

And depending on their type and size, clouds absorb, transmit and reflect solar radiation. Hence, they play a major role in Earth's energy balance and the amount of heat we experience on the ground.

The stratocumulus (Latin for 'layer heap') generally appear as a layer of thin, circular clouds in the upper parts of the planetary boundary layer (generally 1.5-2 km over the tropics), and are occasionally accompanied by weak rains.

More of Earth's surface is covered by stratocumulus clouds than by any other cloud type. This makes them extremely important when evaluating Earth's energy balance. They cover a fifth or so of Earth's surface area: about 23% of the ocean and 12% of land. Over mid-latitude oceans, stratocumulus coverage can exceed 50%.

Stratocumulus clouds strongly reflect incoming solar radiation – to the tune of 30-60%. At the same time, they are effectively transparent to the long-wave radiation coming from Earth's surface. So, they are better at keeping Earth cool than most of the other cloud types.

The 'cloud apocalypse'

Their sensitivity to solar radiation means that even small changes in the thickness and coverage of stratocumulus clouds can produce large changes in the amount of heat gained by Earth. And this is exactly what has become a concern now.

Simulations by Tapio Schneider and his team from the California Institute of Technology has shown that if we keep burning more and more fossil fuels, we could trigger a 'cloud apocalypse'.

Though clouds made of water droplets and ice particles, their microphysical properties and interactions are very complex, so scientists have a hard time studying

them. It's also challenging for scientists to include them in climate models.

This is particularly because some processes within cloud layers occur at the scale of a few metres while state-of-the-art climate models can resolve atmospheric processes at the scale of a few kilometres only. As a result, our simulations are almost never perfect.

Schneider and his colleagues say that this shortcoming adds large uncertainties to future climate projections – including how much warmer Earth could get.

To better incorporate clouds and resolve the climate projection problem, the team used high-performance computers that could simulate the finer details of clouds better.

They started their climate model run with the current atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration levels of 400 ppm, which produced stratocumulus clouds like those we see today. Then they gradually increased the gas's levels in the model to see how the clouds responded.

At 800 ppm – twice the current levels – the tropical ocean temperature increased by 3.6°C, as did the amount of water vapour in the air. The amount of liquid water in the clouds decreased slightly, although the cloud cover stayed the same.

However, when the carbon dioxide level was tripled to 1,200 ppm, the clouds started doing something strange. The stratocumulus clouds started to break up into smaller, and more scattered, cumulus clouds.

In other words: Clouds form when moisture condenses into ice crystals, so as Earth warms, the air becomes too hot for ice crystals to form in the lower atmosphere. This causes stratocumulus clouds to break up.

This precipitates a huge transition in Earth's energy balance because stratocumulus clouds can reduce the amount of solar energy absorbed by about 110 W per sq. m. Scattered cumulus clouds can manage only about 10 W per sq. m. Additionally, most fair-weather cumulus clouds dissipate rather quickly whereas the stratocumulus clouds are more long-lived.

The combined impact of all these changes is colossal. With fewer stratocumulus clouds reflecting sunlight, the oceans rapidly warmed by 8°C in the tropics and by 10°C in the subtropics in Schneider's study.

Such a large increase in temperature could render most of the tropics uninhabitable

for warm-blooded animals.

Then again, Schneider's analysis itself does not completely outrun the imperfections of climate models. While the study simulates patches of cloud at a high-resolution, thus scrutinising them in greater detail, it simplifies the rest of the ocean-atmosphere-land system, reducing the amount of detail there.

As a result, the model may miss some larger-scale climate dynamics and feedback loops that are important when predicting future climate. We do not know how this might work out at present, or if 8-10° C of warming is really in the offing.

However, it is certain that clouds are going to change in the future under increased human emissions.

Likelihood

In fact, if there is going to be over 1,200 ppm of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, a multitude of factors will have a multitude of effects. Together with sea-level rise, warmer oceans, deteriorating marine and land ecosystems and heat waves, the world will be a remarkably different place from what it is today.

And the study shows that the stratocumulus cataclysm could happen if the concentrations of carbon dioxide breach this 1,200-ppm mark. Recently, global levels crossed 410 ppm – a 45% increase since the Industrial Revolution (280 ppm). At the current rate of increase, about 2-3 ppm per year, it will take about 300 years or more to cause the catastrophe.

However, the study's authors speculate that this could also happen within a century. This is because carbon dioxide levels don't increase in a linear manner. One study has shown that, should humankind burn all fossil fuels that are readily available, the gas's concentrations could skyrocket to around 2,000 ppm by the year 2250.

As Raghu Murtugudde, a professor at the University of Maryland, put it, nations are promising change while still holding tightly to bad habits. The wishful expectation is that countries will eventually work together – globally as well as locally – to curb emissions. And lower emissions along with more investment in science and technology can provide more energy-efficient ways to live, eventually keeping carbon dioxide levels from climbing so high.

But one century is not that long a time. With an average lifespan of 80 years, our grandchildren and their children could wake up to a world with fewer clouds.

Glossary

ppm (abbreviation) – part(s) per million

puffy – looking soft, round and white

wispy – consisting of small, thin pieces; not thick

apparent - easy to see or understand

suspend - to float in liquid or air without moving

modestly - moderately sized; not very large, but not small

saturate - to make something completely wet

condensing - changing from a gas into a liquid; making a gas change into a liquid

aka (abbreviation) - also known as

solar radiation - radiant energy emitted by the sun, particularly electromagnetic energy

planetary - relating to a planet or planets

simulation - a situation in which a particular set of conditions is created artificially in order to study or experience something that could exist in reality

trigger - something that is the cause of a particular reaction or development, especially a bad one

apocalypse - a situation causing very serious damage and destruction

microphysical properties - small objects, such as atoms, molecules, nuclei, and elementary particles

precipitate – to suddenly force somebody/something into a particular state or condition

transition - the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another

W per sq. m. – Watt(s) per square metre per

dissipate – to gradually become or make something become weaker until it disappears

colossal – extremely large or great

render - to cause somebody/something to be in a particular state or condition

scrutinising – looking at or examining somebody/something carefully

dynamics - the way in which things behave and react to each other in a particular situation

feedback loops - In climate change, a feedback loop is something that speeds up or slows down a warming trend. A positive feedback accelerates a temperature rise, whereas a negative feedback slows it down.

Scientists have identified several positive feedback loops in the climate system.

emission - the production or sending out of light, heat, gas, etc.

multitude - an extremely large number

deteriorating – becoming worse

cataclysm - a sudden disaster or a violent event that causes change

catastrophe - a sudden event that causes many people to suffer; disaster

speculate – to form an opinion about something without knowing all the details or facts

linear – going from one thing to another in a single series of stages

wishful expectation - the belief that something that you want to happen is happening or will happen, although this is actually not true or very unlikely

curb - to control or limit something, especially something bad

lifespan - the length of time that something is likely to live, continue or function

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the blog and answer the following questions

- a. What does the new study of the impact of global warming on clouds suggest?
- b. How did the cloud get its name?
- c. Why are clouds called the thin layer of floating ocean?
- d. How are clouds formed?
- e. What role do clouds play in the atmosphere?
- f. Why are stratocumulus clouds extremely important when evaluating Earth's energy balance?
- g. In what way do stratocumulus clouds help in keeping the Earth cool?
- h. What would happen if there are small changes in the thickness and coverage of stratocumulus clouds?
- i. Is it good to burn more fossils fuels? Give reason.
- j. Why do scientists find it challenging to include microphysical properties in climate models?
- k. What causes stratocumulus clouds to break up?

- l. Briefly state the effect of the increased amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the blog again and answer the following questions.

- a. Write a short note on each of the following:
 - i. Stratocumulus clouds
 - ii. Cumulus clouds
- b. Why did the writer begin his write up with the mention of the Bollywood film Lagaan (2001)?
- c. State the findings of the study conducted by Schneider and his team.
- d. What could be the effects of stratocumulus catastrophe?
- e. Explain, with reference to the context:
 - i. But not all clouds are the same.
 - ii. Our simulations are almost never perfect.
 - iii. With an average lifespan of 80 years, our grandchildren and their children could wake up to a world with fewer clouds.

C. Leading to Write

- a. What is global warming? Is it different from climate change? Explain.
- b. Why is carbon dioxide the focus of so much attention regarding climate change?
- c. Is global warming a threat to humans? If so, how?
- d. What does global warming have to do with severe weather, like droughts and hurricanes and rising sea levels?
- e. Write an essay on the causes and effects of climate change in about 250 words.

A Small but Life Changing Move: Becoming Me

Michelle Obama (Jan17, 1964 -)



Michelle Obama (Jan17, 1964-) *Becoming Me* is the memoir of former United States first lady Michelle Obama. It was published in 2018. The book has three sections: 'Becoming Me'; 'Becoming Us'; and 'Becoming More'. 'Becoming Me' traces Obama's early life growing up on the South Side of Chicago, through her education at Princeton University and Harvard Law School, to her early career as a lawyer at the law firm Sidley Austin, where she met Barack Obama. 'Becoming Us' departs from the beginning of their romantic relationship and follows their marriage. The section ends with election night in 2008 when Barack Obama was elected President of the United States and 'Becoming More' describes their life as first family. The given text is the abridged version of Chapter 2. Here Obama talks about her days at Elementary school and her life changing experiences. The book *Becoming* is available at

Before you read

- Why is Michelle Obama known as former United States first lady?
- What sort of life do you think Michelle had when she was at Elementary School?
- How was your life when you were studying in the primary level?

I started kindergarten at Bryn Mawr Elementary School in the fall of 1969, showing up with the twin advantages of knowing in advance how to read basic words and having a well-liked second grade brother, Craig, ahead of me. The school, a four-story brick building with a yard in front, sat just a couple of blocks from our house on Euclid. Getting there involved a two-minute walk.

I liked school right away. I liked my teacher, a diminutive white lady named Mrs. Burroughs, who seemed ancient to me but was probably in her fifties. I made friends in my class. I was confident in my ability to read. At home, I'd plowed through the books, and thus was thrilled to hear that our first job as kindergartners would be learning to read new sets of words by sight. We were assigned a list of colors to study, not the hues, but the words themselves — "red," "blue," "green," "black," "orange," "purple," "white." In class, Mrs. Burroughs quizzed us one student at a time, holding up a series of large cards and asking us to read whatever word was printed. I watched one day as the girls and boys I was just getting to know stood up and worked through the color cards, succeeding and failing in varying degrees, and were told to sit back down at whatever point they got confused. This, of course,

was 1969, in a public school on the South Side of Chicago. Nobody was talking about self-esteem or growth mind-sets. If you'd had a head start at home, you were rewarded for it at school, deemed "bright" or "gifted". The two smartest kids in my kindergarten class were Teddy, a Korean American boy, and Chiaka, an African American girl, who both would remain at the top of the class for years to come.

I was driven to keep up with them. When it came my turn to read the words off the teacher's cards, I stood up and gave it everything I had, rattling off "red," "green," and "blue" without effort. "Purple" took a second, though, and "orange" was hard. But it wasn't until the letters W-H-I-T-E came up that I froze altogether, my throat instantly dry, my mouth awkward and unable to shape the sound as my brain glitched madly, trying to dig up a color that resembled "wuh-haaa." It was a straight-up choke. I felt a weird airiness in my knees, as if they might collapse. But before they did, Mrs. Burroughs instructed me to sit back down. And that's exactly when the word hit me in its full and easy perfection. White. Whiiiiite. The word was "white."

Lying in bed that night, I thought only of "white." I spelled it in my head, forward and backward, chastising myself for my own stupidity. The embarrassment felt like a weight, even though I knew my parents wouldn't care whether I'd read every card correctly. I just wanted to achieve. I was sure my teacher had now pegged me as someone who couldn't read or, worse, didn't try. I obsessed over the dime-sized gold-foil stars that Mrs. Burroughs had given to Teddy and Chiaka that day to wear on their chests as a mark of their accomplishment. The two of them, after all, had read every last color card without a hitch.

The next morning in class, I asked for a do-over.

When Mrs. Burroughs said no, cheerily adding that we kindergartners had other things to get to, I demanded it.

Pity the kids who then had to watch me face the color cards a second time, going slower now, pausing deliberately to breathe after I'd pronounced each word, refusing to let my nerves short circuit my brain. And it worked, through "black," "orange," "purple," and especially "white." I was practically shouting the word "white" before I'd even seen the letters on the card. I like to imagine now that Mrs. Burroughs was impressed with this little black girl who'd found the courage to advocate for herself. I didn't know whether Teddy and Chiaka had even noticed. I was quick to claim my trophy, though, heading home that afternoon with my head

up and one of those gold-foil stars stuck on my shirt.

At home, I lived in a world of high drama and intrigue. My preferred way to pass the time between school and dinner was to park myself in the common area outside my room and spread my Barbies across the floor. I rarely chose to join the neighborhood kids, nor did I invite school friends home with me because I was a fastidious kid and didn't want anyone meddling with my dolls. I'd been to other girls' houses and seen the horror-show scenarios - Barbies whose hair had been hacked off or whose faces had been crosshatched with Magic Marker. And one thing I was learning at school was that kid dynamics could be messy. Whatever sweet scenes you might witness on a playground, beneath them lay a tyranny of shifting hierarchies and alliances.

Meanwhile, from my bedroom window, I could observe most of the real-world happenings on our block of Euclid Avenue. Our neighborhood was middle-class and racially mixed. Kids found one another based not on the color of their skin but on who was outside and ready to play.

Craig and I were raised evenly. The blocks surrounding us were home to Jewish families, immigrant families, white and black families, folks who were thriving and some who were not. In general, people tended to their lawns and kept track of their children. My family, in fact, was probably on the poor side of the neighbourhood scale. We were among the few people we knew who didn't own their own home, stuffed as we were into Robbie and Terry's second floor. South Shore hadn't yet tilted the way other neighborhoods had - with the better-off people long departed for the suburbs, the neighborhood businesses closing one by one, the blight setting in - but the tilt was clearly beginning.

We were starting to feel the effects of this transition, especially at school. My second-grade classroom turned out to be a mayhem of unruly kids, which had not been the norm in either my experience or Craig's. Every hour there felt hellish and long. I sat miserably at my desk learning nothing evenly and waiting for the midday lunch break, when I could go home and have a sandwich and complain to my mom.

When I got angry as a kid, I almost always channeled it through my mother. She used to listen placidly, saying things like "Oh, dear" and "Oh, really?" She never indulged my outrage, but she took my frustration seriously. If my mother were somebody different, she might have done the polite thing and said, "Just go and do your best." But she knew the difference between grumbling and actual suffering. Without telling me, she went over to the school and began a weeks-long process of

behind-the-scenes lobbying, which led to me and a couple of other high-performing kids getting quietly pulled out of class, given a series of tests, and about a week later reinstalled permanently into a bright and orderly third-grade class upstairs.

It was a small but life-changing move. I didn't stop to ask myself then what would happen to all the kids who are in the second grade. Now that I'm an adult, I realize that kids know at a very young age when they're being devalued, when adults aren't invested enough to help them learn. Their anger over it can manifest itself as unruliness. It's hardly their fault. They aren't "bad kids." They're just trying to survive bad circumstances. At the time I was just happy to have escaped.

As time went by, my mother started nudging me to go outside and engage with kids in the neighborhood. She was hoping that I'd learn to glide socially the way my brother had. Craig, as I've mentioned, had a way of making hard things look easy. He was by then a growing sensation on the basketball court, high-spirited and agile and quickly growing tall. My father pushed him to seek out the toughest competition he could find, which meant that he would later send Craig across town on his own to play with the best kids in the city.

Basketball, for my brother, seemed to unlock every border. It taught him how to approach strangers. Even the sketchy guys who hung out in front of the corner liquor store lit up when they spotted Craig, calling his name and high-fiving him as we passed by.

"How do you even know them?" I'd ask, incredulous.

"I don't know. They just know me," he'd say with a shrug.

I was ten when I finally mellowed enough to start venturing out myself. It was summer and school was out. Craig and I rode a bus to Lake Michigan every day to go to a rec camp run by the city at a beachfront park, but we'd be back home by four. My dolls were becoming less interesting, and without air-conditioning our apartment got unbearably hot in the late afternoons. And so, I started tailing Craig around the neighborhood, meeting the kids I didn't already know from school. Across the alley behind our house, there was a mini housing community called Euclid Parkway, where about fifteen homes had been built around a common green space. It was a kind of paradise, free from cars and full of kids playing softball and jumping double Dutch or sitting on stoops, just hanging out. But before I could find my way into the fold of girls of my age who hung out at the Parkway, I faced a test. It came in the form of DeeDee, a girl who went to a nearby Catholic school.

DeeDee was athletic and pretty, but she wore her face in a pout and was always ready with an eye roll. She often sat on her family's stoop next to another, more popular girl named Deneen.

Deneen was always friendly, but DeeDee didn't seem to like me. I don't know why. I understood that I had choices. I could continue on as the picked-on new girl, I could give up on the Parkway and just go back to my toys at home, or I could attempt to earn DeeDee's respect. And inside that last choice lay another one: I could try to reason with DeeDee, to win her over with words or some other form of kid diplomacy, or I could just shut her up.

The next time DeeDee made one of her remarks, I lunged for her, summoning everything my dad had taught me about how to throw a punch. The two of us fell to the ground, fists flailing and legs thrashing, every kid in Euclid Parkway instantly clustered in a tight knot around us, their hollers fueled by excitement and grade school bloodlust. I can't remember who finally pulled us apart, whether it was Deneen or my brother or maybe a parent who'd been called to the scene, but when it was done, some sort of silent baptism had taken place. I was officially an accepted member of the neighborhood tribe. DeeDee and I were unharmed, dirt stained and panting and destined never to be close friends, but at least I'd earned her respect.

My parents talked to us like we were adults. They didn't lecture, but rather indulged every question we asked, no matter how juvenile. They never hurried a discussion for the sake of convenience. Our talks could go on for hours, often because Craig and I took every opportunity to grill my parents about things we didn't understand.

As we grew, we spoke more about drugs and life choices, about race and inequality and politics. My parents didn't expect us to be saints. They also never sugarcoated what they took to be the harder truths about life. They had spent almost their entire lives living within a couple of square miles in Chicago, but they had no illusions that Craig and I would do the same. Before they were married, both of them had briefly attended community colleges, but each had abandoned the exercises long before getting a degree. My mother had been studying to become a teacher but realized she'd rather work as a secretary. My father had simply run out of money to pay tuition, joining the Army instead. He'd had no one in his family to talk him into returning to school, no model of what that sort of life looked like. Instead, he served two years moving between different military bases. If finishing college and becoming an artist had been a dream for my father, he quickly redirected his hopes,

using his wages to help pay for his younger brother's degree in architecture instead.

As a family, we sustained ourselves with humble luxuries. When Craig and I got our report cards at school, our parents celebrated by ordering in a pizza from Italian Fiesta, our favorite place. During hot weather, we'd buy hand-packed ice cream - a pint each of chocolate, butter pecan, and black cherry - and make it last for days. Every year for the Air and Water Show, we packed a picnic and drove north along Lake Michigan to the fenced-off peninsula where my father's water filtration plant was located.

Each July, my dad would take a week off from his job tending boilers at the plant, and we'd pile into the Buick with an aunt and a couple of cousins, seven of us in that two-door for hours, taking the Skyway out of Chicago, skirting the south end of Lake Michigan, and driving until we landed in White Cloud, Michigan, at a place called Dukes Happy Holiday Resort. It had a game room, a vending machine that sold glass bottles of pop, and most important to us, a big outdoor swimming pool. We rented a cabin with a kitchenette and passed our days jumping in and out of the water.

My parents barbecued and played cards with my aunt, but my father also took long breaks to join us kids in the pool. He was handsome, my dad, with a mustache that tipped down the sides of his lips like a scythe. His chest and arms were thick and roped with muscle, testament to the athlete he'd once been. During those long afternoons in the pool, he paddled and laughed and tossed our small bodies into the air, his diminished legs suddenly less of a liability.

Every September, when Craig and I showed up back at Bryn Mawr Elementary, we'd find fewer white kids on the playground. Some had transferred to a nearby Catholic school, but many had left the neighborhood altogether. At first it felt as if just the white families were leaving, but then that changed, too. It soon seemed that anyone who had the means to go was now going. Much of the time, the departures went unannounced and unexplained. We'd see a "For Sale" sign in front of the Yacker family's house or a moving van in front of Teddy's and know what was coming.

Perhaps the biggest blow to my mother came when her friend Velma Stewart announced that she and her husband had put a down payment on a house in a suburb called Park Forest. How they afforded a place in the suburbs, I couldn't guess. Park Forest, it turns out, was one of America's first fully planned communities - not just

a housing subdivision, but a full village designed for about thirty thousand people, with shopping malls, churches, schools, and parks. Founded in 1948, it was, in many ways, meant to be the paragon of suburban life, with mass-produced houses and cookie-cutter yards. There were also quotas for how many black families could live on a given block, though by the time the Stewarts got there, the quotas had apparently been abolished.

Not long after they moved, the Stewarts invited us to come visit them on one of my dad's days off. We were excited. For us, it would be a new kind of outing, a chance to glimpse the fabled suburbs. The four of us took the Buick south on the expressway, following the road out of Chicago, exiting about forty minutes later near a sterile-looking shopping plaza. We were soon winding through a network of quiet streets, following Mrs. Stewart's directions, turning from one nearly identical block to the next. Park Forest was like a miniature city of tract homes.

"Now why would anyone want to live all the way out here?" my father asked, staring over the dashboard. I agreed that it made no sense. As far as I could see, there were no big trees like the giant oak that sat outside my bedroom window at home. Everything in Park Forest was new and wide and uncrowded.

Craig would remember our visit there as heavenly, namely because he played ball all day long in the wide-open lots under a blue sky with Stewart's son Donny and his new pack of suburban brethren. My parents had a pleasant enough catch-up with Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, and I followed Mrs. Stewart's daughter Pamela around, gazing at her hair, her fair skin and teenager jewelry. At some point, we all had lunch.

It was evening when we finally said good-bye. Leaving the Stewarts, we walked in the dusk to the curb where my dad had parked the car. Craig was sweaty, dead on his feet after all the running he'd done. I, too, was fatigued and ready to go home. Something about the place had put me on edge. I wasn't a fan of the suburbs, though I couldn't articulate exactly why.

My mother would later make an observation about the Stewarts and their new community, based on the fact that almost all of their neighbors on the street seemed to be white.

"I wonder," she said, "if nobody knew that they're a black family until we came to visit."

She thought that maybe we'd unwittingly outed them, arriving from the South Side with a housewarming gift and our conspicuous dark skin. Even if the Stewarts weren't deliberately trying to hide their race, they probably didn't speak of it one way or another with their new neighbors. Whatever vibe existed on their block; they hadn't overtly disrupted it. At least not until we came to visit.

Was somebody watching through a window as my father approached our car that night? Was there a shadow behind some curtain, waiting to see how things would go? I'll never know. I just remember the way my dad's body stiffened slightly when he reached the driver's side door and saw what was there. Someone had scratched a line across the side of his beloved Buick, a thin ugly gulch that ran across the door and toward the tail of the car. It had been done with a key or a rock and was in no way accidental.

I've said before that my father was a withstander, a man who never complained about small things or big, who cheerily ate liver when it was served to him, who had a doctor give him what amounted to a death sentence and then just carried on. This thing with the car was no different. If there was some way to fight it, if there was some door to pound in response, my dad wouldn't have done it anyway.

"Well, I'll be damned," he said, before unlocking the car.

We rode back to the city that night without much discussion about what had happened. It was too exhausting. In any event, we were done with the suburbs. My father must have had to drive the car to work the next day looking the way it did, and I'm sure that didn't sit well with him. But the gash in his chrome didn't stay for long. As soon as there was time, he took the car over to the body shop at Sears and had it erased.

Glossary

Elementary school– (in the US) a school for children between the ages of about 6 to 12.

Euclid– a city in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, United States

diminutive– very small

plow through- to make slow progress through something difficult, especially a book

quizzed– gave students an informal test

self-esteem- a feeling of being happy with your own character and abilities

glitched– failed to work correctly

choke - unable to speak normally especially because of strong emotion

weird - very strange or unusual and difficult to explain

airiness - lightness

chastising– condemning for doing something wrong

embarrassment- shy, awkward or guilty feelings; a feeling of being embarrassed

pegged - thought of somebody in a particular way

obsessed over – spent too much time worrying about

dime - a coin of the US and Canada worth ten cents

hitch - a problem or difficulty that causes a short delay

do-over - to do something again

short circuit- malfunction or fail

intrigue - the atmosphere of interest and excitement

fastidious- not liking things to be dirty or messy

hacked off- cut off in a rough and violent way

crosshatched- marked or colored something with two sets of parallel lines crossing each other

dynamics - the way in which people or things behave and react to each other in a particular situation

thriving - continuing to be successful, strong, healthy, etc.

suburb - an area where people live that is outside the center of a city

blight - something that has a bad effect on a situation, a person's life, or the environment

transition - the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another

mayhem - confusion and fear, usually caused by violent behavior or by some sudden shocking event

unruly- difficult to control or manage

hellish- extremely unpleasant

placidly– calmly and peacefully

reinstalled- returned to previous position

manifest- show something clearly, especially a feeling, an attitude, or a quality

nudging- pushing gently or gradually in a particular direction
glide- move smoothly
agile- able to think quickly and in an intelligent way
seek out - to look for and find somebody/something, especially when this means using a lot of effort
sketchy - likely to be dangerous
incredulous - not willing or not able to believe something; showing an inability to believe something
shrug - raise your shoulders and then drop them to show that you do not know or care about something
a rec camp- a camp for recreational activities
stoop- a raised area outside the door of a house with steps leading up to it
alley- a narrow passage behind or between buildings
diplomacy - skill in dealing with people in difficult situations without upsetting or offending them
flailing - moving your arms and around without control
lunged - made a sudden, powerful, forward movement, especially in order to attack someone or take hold of something
summoning - trying to obtain
holler - shout loudly
bloodlust - a strong desire to be violent
juvenile - a young person who is not yet an adult
sugarcoated- made an unpleasant situation seemed less unpleasant
exercises - ceremonies; college graduation exercises
Buick- a US make of car produced by General Motors
kitchenette- a small room or part of a room used as a kitchen, for example in a flat/apartment
barbecued- to cook food on a barbecue
testament- a thing that shows that something else exists or is true
miniature- very small; much smaller than usual
ranch- a large farm, especially in the western U.S. or Canada, where cows, horses, sheep, etc. are bred

tract homes- modern houses built on an area of land where a lot of other similar houses have also been built.

brethren- people who are part of the same society as yourself

unwittingly- without being aware of what you are doing or the situation that you are involved in

vibe- a mood or an atmosphere produced by a particular person, thing, or place

gulch- a deep scratch

‘I’ll be damned’ – (informal) an expression used to show that one is very surprised about something

gash- a long deep cut in the surface of something

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the memoir and answer the following questions.

- a. How far was the writer’s school from her residence?
- b. Why does the writer say she was confident in her ability to read?
- c. What sort of students were considered ‘bright’ and ‘gifted’ then?
- d. Why did the writer feel as if her knees are going to collapse?
- e. How did the writer read the word “white” the next time when she read it?
- f. Why was the writer quick in claiming her trophy after having read the words?
- g. How did the writer use to pass the time between school and dinner?
- h. Why was the writer not interested in inviting her school friends home?
- i. How did the writer feel in the classroom with unruly kids?
- j. What did the writer had to go through before getting promoted to third-grade?
- k. Why did the writer’s mother want the writer to go outside and engage with kids in the neighborhood?
- l. Why did the writer start to follow Craig around the neighborhood?

- m. What made the writer an officially accepted member of the neighborhood tribe?
- n. Why couldn't the writer's father fulfil his dream of becoming an artist?
- o. Why didn't the gash in the writer's father's car stay for long?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the memoir again and answer the following questions.

- a. How did Mrs. Burroughs test the students reading ability?
- b. Why did the writer condemn herself for her own stupidity?
- c. What does the writer mean when she says, "the tilt was clearly beginning."?
- d. What had basketball taught Craig? How was he looked at by the boys of his age?
- e. What sort of test did the writer face before she could find her way into the fold of girls of her age who hung out at the Parkway?
- f. Why do you think the writer's parents talked to the writer and her brother as if they were like adults?
- g. How did the writer's parents celebrate the report cards' day?
- h. Why would the writer find fewer white kids in school every September after vacation?
- i. What, according to the writer, was the biggest blow to her mother, and why was it so?
- j. Why do you think someone had scratched a line across the side of the writer's father Buick?
- k. Briefly describe the family background of the writer.
- l. Explain, with reference to the context
 - i. It was a small but life-changing move.
 - ii. I could try to reason with DeeDee, to win her over with words or some other form of kid diplomacy, or I could just shut her up.
 - iii. My parents didn't expect us to be saints.
 - iv. "Now why would anyone want to live all the way out here?"
 - v. "I wonder," she said, "if nobody knew that they're a black family until we came to visit."

C. Leading to Write

- a. What event in your childhood had the most impact on your life as an adult?
- b. Write about the places you have lived. Think about what was unique about each and reflect upon your life at the time.
- c. Where did you go during summer vacations as a child? How did those vacations compare to what you wanted to do at the time? And how do those vacations compare to the vacations you take now?
- d. Make a list of the games you played as a child, as a teenager. Which games have you played the longest? Are the games the same now as they were then? If there are newer editions/versions, have you played them?
- e. Describe a turning point in your life. Explore the past, present, and future around that experience.

The Road to Little Dribbling

Bill Bryson



William ‘Bill’ McGuire Bryson (born December 8, 1951-) is a best-selling American author of humorous books on travel, as well as books on the English language, Science and other non-fiction topics. Born in the United States, he has been a resident of Britain for most of his adult life. He served as the chancellor of Durham University, UK, from 2005 to 2011.

The following text is the prologue from Bryson's hilarious new book *The Road to Little Dribbling* first published in 2015. Twenty years after the publication of *Notes from a Small Island*, Bryson makes another journey around Great Britain to see what has changed. The given extracts talk about his second visit to Britain, and how he acquired the British citizenship.

Before you read

- Where are you originally from?
- How long have you been living in the place where you are living now?
- Have you been to any foreign country? If yes, which one?

I

I first came to England at the other end of my life, when I was still quite young, just twenty.

In those days, for a short but intensive period, a very high proportion of all in the world that was worth taking note of came out of Britain. The Beatles, James Bond, suit jackets without collars, television series like *The Avengers* and *The Prisoner*,



spy novels by John le Carré and Len Deighton, quirky movies, Harold Pinter plays that we didn't get at all and many more—practically everything really.

Advertisements in magazines like the *New Yorker* and *Esquire* were full of British products in a way they never would be again. It was clear that if you wanted quality and suavity in your life, it was British goods that were in large part going to supply it. Not all of this made a great deal of sense even then, it must be said. A popular cologne of the day was called Pub. I am not at all sure what resonances that was

supposed to evoke. I have been drinking in England for forty years and I can't say that I have ever encountered anything in a pub that I would want to rub on my face.

Because of all the attention we gave Britain, I thought I knew a fair amount about the place, but I quickly discovered upon arriving that I was very wrong. I couldn't even speak my own language there. In the first few days, I failed to distinguish between collar and colour, khaki and car key, letters and lettuce, bed and bared, karma and calmer.

Needing a haircut, I ventured into a unisex hairdresser's in Oxford, where the proprietress, a large and vaguely forbidding woman, escorted me to a chair, and there informed me crisply:

'Your hair will be cut by a vet today.'

I was taken aback. 'Like a person who treats sick animals?' I said, quietly horrified.

'No, her name is Yvette,' she replied and with the briefest of glances into my face made it clear that I was the most exhausting idiot that she had encountered in some time.

In a pub I asked what kind of sandwiches they had.

'Ham and cheese,' the man said.

'Oh, yes please,' I said.

'Yes, please what?' he said.

'Yes please, ham and cheese,' I said, but with less confidence.

'No, it's ham or cheese,' he explained.

'You don't do them both together?'

'No.'

'Oh,' I said, surprised, then leaned towards him and in a low, confidential tone said:

'Why not? Too flavourful?'

He stared at me.

'I'll have cheese then, please,' I said contritely.

When the sandwich came, the cheese was extravagantly shredded – I had never seen a dairy product distressed before serving – and accompanied by what I now know was Branston pickle, but what looked to me then like what you find when you stick your hand into a clogged sump.

I nibbled it tentatively and was pleased to discover that it was delicious. Gradually it dawned on me that I had found a country that was wholly strange to me and yet somehow marvellous. It is a feeling that has never left me.

I am constantly at a loss in this new world. Recently I closed my door on a caller because I couldn't think what else to do with him. He was a meter reader. At first, I was pleased to see him. We haven't had a meter reader at our house since Edward Heath was prime minister, so I let him in gladly and even fetched a step- ladder so that he could climb up and get a clear reading. It was only when he departed and returned a minute later that I began to regret our deepening relationship.

'Sorry, I also need to read the meter in the men's room,' he told me.

'I beg your pardon?'

'It says here there is a second meter in the men's room.'

'Well, we don't have a men's room because this is a house, you see.'

'It says here it's a school.'

'Well, it's not. It's a house. You were just in it. Did you see roomfuls of young people?'

He thought hard for a minute.

'Do you mind if I have a look around?'

'I beg your pardon?'

'Just a little look. Won't take five minutes.'

'You think you're going to find a men's room that we have somehow overlooked?'

'You never know!' he said brightly.

'I'm shutting the door now because I don't know what else to do,' I said and shut the door. I could hear him making mild bleatings through the wood. 'Besides I have an important appointment,' I called back through the wood. And it was true. I did have an important appointment – one, as it happens, that has everything to do with the book that follows.

I was about to go to Eastleigh to take a British citizenship test. The irony of this was not lost on me. Just as I was becoming thoroughly remystified by life in modern Britain, I was being summoned to demonstrate that I understood the place.

II

For a long time, there were two ways to become a British citizen. The first, the trickier but paradoxically much the more common method, was to find your way into a British womb and wait for nine months. The other way was to fill out some forms and swear an oath. Since 2005, however, people in the second category have additionally had to demonstrate proficiency in English and pass a knowledge test.

I was excused the language test because English is my native tongue, but no one is excused the knowledge test, and it's tough. No matter how well you think you know Britain, you don't know the things you need to know to pass the Life in Britain Knowledge Test.

To prepare, I ordered the full set of study guides, consisting of a shiny paperback called *Life in the United Kingdom: A Guide for New Residents* and two auxiliary volumes: an Official Study Guide, which tells you how to use the first book, and a volume of Official Practice Questions and Answers, containing seventeen practice tests.

The study guide is an interesting book, nicely modest, a little vacuous at times, but with its heart in the right place. Britain, you learn, is a country that cherishes fair play, is rather good at art and literature, values good manners, and has often shown itself to be commendably inventive, especially around things that run on steam. The people are a generally decent lot who garden, go for walks in the country. They holiday at the seaside, obey the Green Cross Code, queue patiently, vote sensibly, respect the police, venerate the monarch, and practise moderation in all things. Occasionally they go to a public house to drink two units or fewer of good English ale and to have a game of pool or skittles.

At times the book is so careful about being inoffensive that it doesn't actually say anything at all, as in this discussion, given here in full, of the contemporary music scene: 'There are many different venues and musical events that take place across the UK.' Thank you for that rich insight.

And so, after a month's hard study, the day of my test arrived. My instructions were to present myself at the appointed hour at a place called Wessex House in Eastleigh, Hampshire, the nearest testing centre to my home. It is an interestingly unmemorable place – not numbingly ugly but not attractive either; not wretchedly poor but not prosperous; not completely dead in the centre, but clearly not thriving. The bus station was just an outer wall of Sainsbury's with a glass marquee over it,

evidently to give pigeons a dry place to shit.

Like many British towns, Eastleigh has closed its factories and workshops, and instead is directing all its economic energies into the making and drinking of coffee. There were essentially two types of shop in the town: empty shops and coffee shops. Some of the empty shops, according to signs in their windows, were in the process of being converted into coffee shops, and many of the coffee shops, judging by their level of custom, looked as if they weren't far off becoming empty shops again. Eastleigh seemed to be a place where you could either have a cup of coffee or sit and watch pigeons defecate. I had a cup of coffee, then presented myself at Wessex House for my test.

Five of us were present for testing on this particular morning. We were shown to a roomful of desks, each with a computer screen and a mouse sitting on a plain mat, and seated so that we couldn't see anyone else's screen. Once settled, we were given a practice test of four questions to make sure we were comfortably in command of our mouse and mousepad. Because it was a practice test, the questions were encouragingly easy, along the lines of:

Manchester United is: (a) a political party (b) a dance band (c) an English football team

It took about fifteen seconds for four of us to answer the practice questions, but one lady – pleasant, middle-aged, slightly fat, I am guessing from one of those Middle Eastern countries where they eat a lot of sticky sweets – took considerably longer. Twice the supervisor came to see if she was all right. I passed the time discreetly looking in my desk drawers – they were unlocked but empty – and seeing if there was any way to have fun moving a cursor around a blank screen. There isn't.

At length the woman announced that she had finished and the supervisor came to check her work. He bent to her screen and in a tone of quiet amazement said: 'You've missed them all.'

She beamed uncertainly, not sure if this was an achievement.

'Do you want to try them again?' the supervisor asked helpfully. 'You're entitled to try again.'

The woman gave every appearance of having no clear idea of what was going on,

but gamely elected to press on, and so the test began.

The first question was: ‘You’ve seen Eastleigh. Are you sure you want to stay in Britain?’ Actually, I don’t recall what the first question was or any of those that followed. We weren’t allowed to bring anything to the desk, so I couldn’t take notes or tap my teeth thoughtfully with a pencil. The test consisted of twenty- four multiple-choice questions and took only about three minutes. You either know the answers or you don’t. I presented myself at the supervisor’s desk upon completion, and we waited together while the computer checked my answers, a process that took about as long as the test itself, and at last he told me with a smile that I had passed, but he couldn’t tell me exactly how I did. The computer only indicated pass or fail.

‘I’ll just print out your result,’ he said. This took another small age. I was hoping for a smart parchment-like certificate, like you get when you climb Sydney Harbour Bridge or do a cookery course with Waitrose, but it was just a faintly printed letter confirming that I was certified as intellectually fit for life in modern Britain.

I left the building feeling pleased, even a little exhilarated. The sun was shining. Across the way at the bus station, two men in bomber jackets were having a morning aperitif from matching cans of lager. Life in modern Britain, it seemed to me, was pretty good.

Glossary

intensive - involving a lot of work or activity done in a short time

suavity - the quality of being suave (confident, elegant, and polite, sometimes in a way that does not seem sincere) in manner.

cologne - a type of light perfume

resonance - the power to bring images, feelings, etc. into the mind of the person reading or listening; the images, etc. produced in this way

evoke - to bring a feeling, a memory, or an image into your mind

unisex - intended for or used by both men and women

proprietress - a woman who owns a business, hotel, etc.

vaguely - slightly

forbidding - seeming unfriendly and frightening and likely to cause harm or danger

escort - to go with someone to show them the way

be taken aback (by somebody/something) - to be shocked or surprised by

somebody/ something

exhausting - making you feel very tired

confidential - (of a way of speaking) showing that what you are saying is private or secret

flavourful - having a lot of flavor

contrite - very sorry for something bad that you have done

extravagant - using a lot more of something than is necessary

shredded - cut or torn something into small pieces

clogged - blocked

sump - a hole or hollow area in which liquid waste collects

nibbled - took small bites of something, especially food

marvellous - extremely good; wonderful

bleatings - complaints; a weak and complaining way of speaking

remystified - to make (something previously clear) mysterious again

paradoxically - in a way that seems strange, impossible or unlikely because it has two opposite features or contains two opposite ideas

swear - to make a serious promise to do something

oath - a formal promise to do something

proficiency - the ability to do something well because of training and practice

vacuous - showing no sign of intelligence or sensitive feeling

commendably - in a way that deserves praise and approval

inventive - (of ideas) new and interesting

venerate - to have and show a lot of respect

skittles - a game in which players roll a ball at nine skittles and try to knock over as many of them as possible

inoffensive - not likely to offend or upset anyone

contemporary - belonging to the present time

unmemorable - that cannot be remembered because it was not special

marquee - a covered entrance often with a sign on or above it

discreetly - in a careful way, in order to keep something secret or to avoid causing embarrassment or difficulty for somebody

gamely - in a way that seems brave, although a lot of effort is involved

parchment - like -a document written on a piece of a thick yellowish type of paper

exhilarated - made somebody feel very happy and excited

aperitif - a drink, usually one containing alcohol, that people sometimes have just before a meal

lager - a type of light pale beer that usually has a lot of bubbles

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the extract and answer the following questions.

- a. Is this the writer's first visit to Great Britain? How do you know?
- b. Why did the magazines use to be full of British products advertisements?
- c. How did the writer discover that he was wrong about his thought about Britain?
- d. Why was the writer taken aback at the hairdresser's?
- e. How did the writer help the meter reader when he came in the first time?
- f. What did the meter reader return a minute later after his first visit to the writer's apartment?
- g. According to the writer, what were the two ways to become a British citizen?
- h. Why didn't the writer have to sit for the language test?
- i. Explain how the writer prepared for the knowledge test.
- j. What was that the woman had missed them all? Why did she miss them?
- k. How long did the supervisor take to declare the test result?
- l. Did the result sheet come the way as it was expected by the writer? How do you know?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the extract again and answer the following questions.

- a. Why does the writer say that the Official Study Guide is an interesting book?
- b. The writer found the book being so careful about being inoffensive. Why do you think the book was written that way?
- c. Eastleigh, according to the writer, is an interestingly unmemorable place. Do you think it is so? Give reasons.

- d. Were the questions for the practice test difficult? Why were they made so?
- e. Point out the instances of humour in both extracts.
- f. Explain, with reference to the context.
 - i. It is a feeling that has never left me.
 - ii. I am constantly at a loss in this new world.
 - iii. I was becoming thoroughly remystified by life in modern Britain.
 - iv. Thank you for that rich insight.
 - v. Life in modern Britain, it seemed to me, was pretty good.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Write a couple of paragraphs stating the changes that have taken place in your locality over a period of ten years.
- b. What are popular tourist destinations in your country? Have you been to any of them? Which would you recommend if you could only recommend one? Why?
- c. Where are you going to go the next time you travel? When are you going? Who are you going with? How long are you going to go for? What are you going to do there, and What kind of things do you think you will buy?
- d. If you travelled to Great Britain, what countries would you like to visit? Why?

Goodness: A Fundamental Moral Attitude

Richard Alfred



Dietrich Richard Alfred von Hildebrand (1889–1977) was a German Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian. This piece is an extract from *Fundamental Moral Attitudes*, written in German language. It was translated into English by Alice M. Jourdain.

In this text the writer points out what Goodness and Love are, and also tries to justify that Goodness is the core of moral values. He says that Goodness, like every other virtue, is not limited to a particular transitory attitude, but it is an asset of man. It is the breath and fragrance of love.

Before you read

- a. What is goodness?
- b. Why is it important to cultivate good attitude in oneself?
- c. List some important traits that we all should possess to live a moral life.

Goodness is the very heart of the whole reign of moral values. It is by no accident that the term "good" means moral value as such, and also the specific moral quality of goodness. Among the different moral values there is none which embodies more completely the entire reign of moral values, than goodness; in it we find the purest and most typical expression of the general character of moral goodness as such. It is the center of all morality, and at the same time, its most sublime fruit. Its central importance in the moral sphere is, therefore, of a completely different type from that of the fundamental attitudes, such as reverence, fidelity, awareness of responsibility and veracity. For, apart from their own high moral value, these virtues are accepted as a presupposition for the moral life. Goodness, on the contrary, is not a pre supposition, but the fruit of moral life. But not a fruit among others, such as meekness, patience, generosity, but the fruit of fruits, i.e. that in which culminates all morality in a specific way; it is the queen of all virtues.

What is goodness? What do we mean when we say that a man irradiates goodness? We say this of a man when he is disposed to help, when he is kindly, just, when he is ready to make sacrifices for others, when he pardons wrongs done him, when he is generous, when he is full of compassion. All these qualities are specific forms and manifestations of love. This indicates the close connection which exists between love and goodness. Love is, as it were, flowing goodness, and goodness is the breath of love.

The moral life consists in meaningful responses to values which have been grasped, such responses as enthusiasm, admiration, joy, obedience, love. But love is, among all these responses to values, the most complete and the deepest. First of all, one must realize that love is always a most outspoken response to value. When we love somebody, whether it be a friend, a parent, a child, whether it be conjugal love or neighbourly love, the beloved person always stands before us as something precious and noble in himself. As long as someone is merely agreeable to us or only useful for our purposes, we could not love him. This does not mean that we become blind to the faults of the beloved person. But the person as a whole must stand before us as endowed with a sublime value and filled with intrinsic preciousness; yes, that specific individuality which almost every man represents as a unique thought of God must reveal itself before our eyes in all its charm and beauty, if we are to love him.

Love is always a response to value. In love, one responds not only with a specific word, but with the gift of one's heart, with oneself. In love, one conspires with value more closely and more deeply than in any other response, such as, for example, reverence or obedience. In love, a man dwells in the values of the beloved, in a completely different way. Love, in its fullest and proper meaning, addresses itself always to persons, or at least to non-personal entities which we treat as personal (as, for example, one's country). There are responses to values which are directed toward things, attitudes, and events, as well as toward persons, as for example, joy, sorrow, enthusiasm. Other responses to values from their very nature address themselves only to persons, as veneration, gratitude, confidence, obedience and love. In the response of love to the other person two fundamental elements are manifested. The affirmation of the being of the beloved one, the abandoning response to his intrinsic beauty unfolds itself, on the one hand, in a longing to participate in his being, to be united with him; and on the other hand, in the will to bestow happiness on him.

In love, one spiritually hastens toward the other person in order to dwell with him, to partake in him, and, on the other hand, to cover him with a mantle of goodness, to spiritually cherish and protect him. Every love which deserves the name of love possesses these two elements, even though in a specific love, one or the other element will prevail.

The second element, namely, an ultimate interest in the growth and unfoldment of the beloved, in his perfection and his happiness, and in the last account, in his salvation, this envelopment of the beloved in love, is pure flowing goodness. Here

we find goodness in its purest manifestation. Goodness always presupposes a special attitude toward other persons, even to beings of a lower order possessing a certain analogy to persons, such as animals; thus, it is contra-distinguished from truthfulness, which responds to the value of being as such. We say "attitude of response to value toward persons in general," for the goodness of a man does not limit itself to benevolent intentions toward one particular person whom one loves. When we say someone is good, we mean that he continually manifests this open benevolence, that his attitude toward every man has, "a priori," this loving, this generous character. For goodness, like every other virtue, is not limited to a particular momentary attitude, but it is a property of man, a part of his super-actual being, a basic attitude and position.

There are three types of men who embody a specific antithesis to goodness: the indifferent or cold man, the hard-hearted one, and the wicked one. The latter is the man who is an enemy of values: the man who is ruled by a basic attitude of pride, and who lives in an impotent revolt against the world of values. He not only bluntly bypasses them, as does the sensual man, but he assails them; he would like to dethrone the supreme being, he hates the world of goodness and beauty, and all the world of light. He is full of envy and rebellion against the world of values, and against every good and happy man. He is the man who feeds himself upon hatred. His attitude toward other men not only lacks kindness, but is expressly hostile. He wants to hurt his fellowmen, and to wound them with the poison of his hatred. I do not refer to the misanthrope who, having been disillusioned, is at war with humanity as a whole and every individual person; he has rather turned away from mankind than turned against it; this type is more tragic than wicked. I am thinking of the malicious man who would like to pour out his poison everywhere, like Iago in Shakespeare's "Othello," or Pizarro in Beethoven's "Fidelio." A specific variety of this type is the fundamentally cruel man, who enjoys the sufferings of others. Instead of the luminous harmony of goodness, we find here a somber disharmony; instead of the warm diffusing rays of happiness and life radiated by love, one finds virulent and lacerating hatred; instead of clear, free affirmation, one finds a destroying search for nothingness, a being imprisoned in a spasm of negation.

We find another antithesis to goodness in the hard-hearted person. He is the stern, cold man who is never moved by compassion, whose ear is deaf to all petitions, who tramples on everything without consideration, and for whom other men are mere figures placed on the chessboard of his plans. He is not a deliberate enemy of other

people, but completely hard and uncharitable. In no way does this type take into account the natures of other men as spiritual persons, as sensitive and vulnerable creatures. He ignores their rights and claims as personal beings; he treats them as if they were mere objects. He represents a classical type of the pure egoist. Instead of the inner freedom of the charitable man, we find in him an inner compression and hardening of the heart. In place of openness and accessibility to his fellowmen, we find him closed in upon himself and impenetrable. Instead of response to the positive value of the other's happiness and the negative value of his suffering, we find refusal of any response; instead of solidarity with the other person, we find total imprisonment in self, an icy and brutal gaze looking beyond others. Instead of the victorious, selfless superiority of the man who is at the service of all, and never seeks anything for himself, we find the inferiority of the brutal superman, and instead of generous forgiveness of injustices suffered, we find relentless vengeance.

Finally, the antithesis to the good man is the cold, indifferent man. He is the man who by-passes his fellowmen; the man who lives for his own comforts and enjoyments; he, too, is a typical egoist, but he has a different complexion from the hard-hearted man. He is neither hostile toward others, nor brutally and unrelentingly hard, but he is filled with indifference toward his fellowmen. He may be moved by fearful sights, he experiences disgust and horror when facing illness, he cannot bear the sight of blood, but all this is but a nervous reaction to an aesthetically shocking object. For he flees from awful sights and seeks pleasant scenes, while the good man hastens to help.

On the other hand, this type of man is even more cold than the hard-hearted man. The hard-hearted man, it is true, has an icy coldness, he does not know the voice of the heart; he is heartless. Yet he does know the fire of hatred, the cold burning of vengeance, of rage. He is not indifferent. He is not invulnerable. He is familiar with the irritation caused by offenses and humiliations, but he does not know what it means to be wounded to the heart by lack of charity, injustice, and, above all, by the sufferings of our fellowmen, and other objective negative values.

The indifferent man, on the contrary, has not the sternness and brutality of the hard-hearted man; he cannot even be pierced by insults; only that which is disagreeable and uncomfortable bothers him. He is not a superman like the hard-hearted man; he may even be an aesthete. He is unable to share other people's feelings, for he is much too occupied with his own concerns. He is not only selfish, he is above all egocentric, i.e. he is occupied with his own feelings and moods, and his gaze

is centered upon himself. The whole world is there only for his satisfaction. He is therefore incapable of deeper inward emotions; in the end everything leaves him indifferent. Instead of the warmth and ardor of the good man, empty neutrality and cool indifference reign here. We find here no inner riches or inner fecundity, only sterile poverty and fruitless emptiness.

Instead of the openness of the good man, we find him restricted and blind regarding values, and instead of the all-embracing breadth of the good man we find in him a petty narrowness.

Thus, we see the fundamental features of goodness. Luminous harmony, inner freedom and serenity, the victorious superiority of love—which is the secret of eager and ready service—openness to the life of other men, warmth, ardor, meekness and mildness, all-embracing breadth, and the capacity to grasp values. It is above all important to understand that goodness, although it is tender and meek, possesses at the same time the greatest strength. Faced with its irresistible power, with its superior security and freedom, the force of the superman is only miserable weakness and childish pretense. One should not mistake goodness for weak surrender, a surrender without resistance. The truly good man can be immovable when one tries to divert him from the right path, and when the salvation of his neighbor calls imperatively for sternness. He unshakably resists every temptation.

One should beware of confusing goodness with good-nature. The good-natured man is harmless and is an appeaser; because of a certain lassitude and inertia of his nature, he lets himself be badly treated without noticing it. His amiable attitude has its source in a completely unconscious tendency of his nature. Goodness, on the contrary, flows from a conscious response of love; it is "ardent awakenedness" and never "harmless lassitude." It is the most intensive moral life, and not inertia and dullness; it is strength and not weakness. The good man does not allow himself to be made use of because he lacks the strength to resist, but he serves freely and humbles himself willingly.

In goodness there shines a light which bestows on the good person an especial intellectual dignity. The truly good man is never stupid and narrow, even though he may be slow intellectually, and not gifted for intellectual activities. The man who is not good, in any of the fore-mentioned ways, is, in the last account, always limited, even stupid. This is true even if he has produced works of great intellectual power. Goodness, the breath and fragrance of love, is the essence of every truly moral life,

yes, of every true life of the soul. Whereas the other fundamental attitudes, such as reverence, faithfulness, awareness of responsibility and veracity respond to the world of values as a whole, goodness not only responds to this world of values, but is, so to speak, the reflection of the whole world of values in the person. Goodness speaks in the voice and in the name of this world.

What has been said of love applies to goodness as well: "He who does not love abides in death." In its mysterious strength it shakes the world to its very foundations; it bears on its forehead the sign of victory over wickedness and disorder, over all hatred and all unfeeling rudeness.

Glossary

reign – dominating power or influence

morality - principles concerning right and wrong or good and bad behavior

sublime - of very high quality and causing great admiration

reverence – a feeling of great respect or admiration for someone or something

fidelity – the quality of being loyal to someone or something

veracity – the quality of being true; the habit of telling the truth

presupposition - the act of believing that something is true

meekness - the quality of being quiet, gentle, and always ready to do what other people want without expressing your own opinion

generosity - the fact of being generous (= willing to give somebody money, gifts, time or kindness freely)

irradiate – to expose; to shed rays of light on

manifestation – an event, action or thing that is a sign that something exists or is happening

intrinsic – belonging to or part of the real nature of something/somebody

conspire - to act or work together toward the same goal

entity - something that exists separately from other things and has its own identity

manifested - appeared or became noticeable

bestow - to give something to somebody, especially to show how much they are respected

partake - to take part

mantle - a layer

cherish - to love somebody/something very much and want to protect them or it

envelopment - the act of wrapping up

contra - distinguished – to distinguish by contrasting qualities

benevolent – kind, helpful and generous

antithesis – the opposite of something; a contrast between two things.

somber – sad and serious

a priori - using facts or principles that are known to be true in order to decide what the probable effects or results of something will be, for example saying ‘They haven’t eaten anything all day so they must be hungry.’

impotent – powerless; having no power to change things or to influence a situation

bluntly - in a very direct way, without trying to be polite or kind

sensual - connected with physical feelings

assails - attacks violently, either physically or with words

hostile - very unfriendly or aggressive and ready to argue or fight

misanthrope – a person who hates and avoids other people

disillusioned - disappointed because the person you admired or the idea you believed to be good and true now seems without value

malicious - having or showing hatred and a desire to harm somebody or hurt their feelings

virulent - showing strong negative and bitter feelings

lacerating – criticizing somebody very severely

spasm – a sudden strong feeling or reaction that lasts for a short time

trample - to ignore somebody’s feelings or rights and treat them as if they are not important

vulnerable - weak and easily hurt physically or emotionally

impenetrable - impossible to understand

vengeance - the act of punishing or harming somebody in return for what they have done to you, your family or friends

egoist - a person who thinks that he or she is better than other people and who thinks and talks too much about himself or herself

aesthetically – in an artistic way that is beautiful to look at

aesthete – a person who has a love and understanding of art and beautiful things

fecundity – the ability to produce new and useful things, especially ideas

ardor – very strong feelings of enthusiasm or love

awakenedness - the state of being awakened

neutrality - the state of not supporting either side in a disagreement, competition, or war

lassitude – a state of feeling very tired in mind or body; lack of energy

inertia – lack of energy; lack of desire or ability to move or change

amiable – pleasant; friendly and easy to like

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

- a. Define goodness.
- b. What indicates the close connection between love and goodness?
- c. Why is love considered to be the most complete and the deepest among all the values?
- d. How does goodness always presuppose a special attitude towards other persons?
- e. List down the types of men who embody an antithesis to goodness. Which one is an enemy of values? Why?
- f. What type of persons are called hard-hearted persons? Why?
- g. How would you distinguish between a cold man and an indifferent man?
- h. Contrast a cold man and a hardhearted man.
- i. What are the fundamental features of goodness?
- j. Differentiate between goodness and good nature.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the text again and answer the questions that follow.

- a. Why is goodness the very heart of the whole reign of moral values?
- b. What type of man is the fundamentally cruel man? Why is he called so?
- c. Why does the beloved person always stand before us as something precious and noble in himself/herself?

- d. How can you rationalize that goodness is the essence of every truly moral life?
- e. Explain, with reference to the context:
 - i. Goodness is not a pre supposition, but the fruit of moral life.
 - ii. Love is always a response to value.
 - iii. The hard-hearted man, it is true, has an icy coldness, he does not know the voice of the heart; he is heartless.
 - iv. "He who does not love abides in death."

C. Leading to Write

- a. Why is goodness referred to as one of the fundamentals of all moral attitudes?
- b. Is a person responsible for his or her own character? Why so? Or why not?
- c. What values do you think the youth of today lack? Explain.
- d. Goodness is always rewarded. Justify this statement.

A Startling Spike on Mars

Marina Koren



Marina Koren is a staff writer at The Atlantic. Prior to joining The Atlantic in July 2015, she was the news editor at National Journal. She graduated from University of Delaware with a Bachelor's degree in English, psychology, and journalism. In this article Koren writes that the obtainability of Methane gas on Mars is a potential indicator of life on the red planet, but it's proving difficult to track. This article was published on

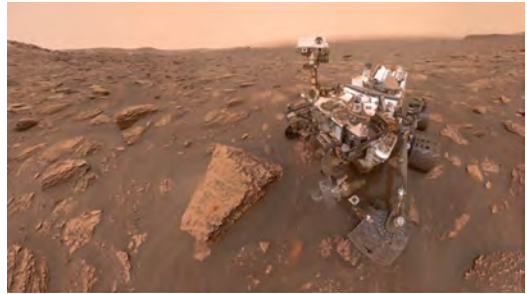
July 3, 2019 and is available at

Before you read

- What is the full form of NASA?
- What is it doing on Mars?
- Why is Mars called the Red Planet?
- Does Mars have a habitable environment?

If humans ever discover life on Mars, this is how it might start: with a breaking-news alert heralding a startling development well beyond Earth.

Of late The New York Times sent a bulletin: “Mars is belching a large amount of methane gas. It’s a sign of possible life on the red planet.”



NASA / JPL-Caltech / MSSS

NASA quickly published a press release acknowledging the detection, which, the Times had reported, marked the largest amount of methane ever registered by the Curiosity rover, a NASA mission that touched down on the red planet in 2012. But after that, the agency went quiet. The news had come from an email between scientists on the Curiosity team that had been leaked to the Times. It wasn't supposed to be known, at least not yet. And there's no room for nuance in a breaking-news alert.

Like the Times, NASA provided an important notice: Many things can produce methane on Mars. Alien life is on that list, but other sources are far more likely.

After decades of exploration, spacecraft haven't found any evidence of life on the surface of Mars. But some scientists say it may lurk beneath the surface, in the form

of tiny organisms. And that's why methane is so noteworthy. On Earth, microbes pump the natural gas into the planet's atmosphere. Perhaps a similar arrangement exists on Mars.

Methane doesn't last forever in the Martian atmosphere, however. Exposure to the sun's radiation, combined with reactions with other gases, breaks down the gas molecules within a few centuries. This chemistry is what makes the spike that Curiosity found so intriguing. If methane is present in the Martian atmosphere right now, it must have been released fairly recently. Detectable quantities might be a sign that something is alive on Mars, capable of replenishing the supply.

Or not. Natural interactions between rock and water can also produce the gas. The methane might have been forged deep beneath the Martian surface escaping into the atmosphere through a narrow crack in the ground. The whiff Curiosity caught might have been billions of years old.

Scientists make sure to point out this dichotomy, as they did in the wake of the Times leak, whenever the question of life on Mars comes up. The story of methane on the red planet is complicated, and the search for the elusive gas was fraught well before Curiosity caught this spike. Ask one camp, and they'll tell you that spacecraft have detected significant amounts of methane more than once. But ask another, and they'll say NASA hasn't found any at all.

The first evidence of methane in the Martian atmosphere came in 2004, from a spacecraft orbiting the planet and ground-based telescopes on Earth. There was debate right away. The scientists behind the discoveries said they were "99 percent confident" that the methane was there. Outside researchers said the signals weren't strong enough. The ground observations, in particular, presented the uncomfortable possibility that molecules in Earth's own atmosphere might have become scrambled in the measurements.

"The ground-based observations had been controversial, to say the least," Paul Mahaffy, the NASA scientist who leads the instrument team on Curiosity that measured the recent uptick, said at a conference in June. "And so, we were going to go to Mars and understand whether it was really there or not."

To settle the debate, and even maybe solve the mystery, they needed to put instruments right inside the atmosphere. In its first year of operations, the Curiosity rover came up empty. But in 2013, it registered a spike. The puff seemed to remain for some weeks before vanishing. Subsequent detections followed the same

pattern—short-lived signals that seemed to coincide with seasonal changes.

These were exciting findings, but some scientists weren't convinced. "All the measurements that have been reported have been very tiny compared to the background signals that they have to sift through," says Kevin Zahnle, a planetary scientist at NASA who studies Mars but isn't part of the agency's rover mission, and the field's most vocal methane skeptic. "None of them really are convincing. But if you're an investigator whose instrument it is, you're much more likely to be convinced."

Detecting methane on Mars is hard, even for a rover in the thick of it. Curiosity can't just hold some litmus paper to the wind until it senses methane and changes color. In one method, the rover ingests some air into an analysis unit and scrubs out all the carbon dioxide, which makes up the majority of the Martian atmosphere. The unit concentrates the gases that remain, amplifying their signals, and teases out the methane.

The latest spike was found this way. It was three times the size of the 2013 detection, and Mahaffy said the team was "dumbfounded." Scientists even scrapped the upcoming days' rover experiments in favor of running the test again. When the data came back, the plume of methane had disappeared. The atmosphere around the rover appeared to have reverted to its usual state, with low background levels of methane. Curiosity scientists now believe that the spike is similar to other promising but short-lived detections.

The Curiosity rover is not equipped to further probe the mystery of methane on Mars, or the question of potential methane-producing beings. Although the rover's instruments are designed to pick up methane, they can't determine its source. NASA's next rover, known for now as Mars 2020, won't carry any methane-detecting instruments; when it arrives in early 2021, it will search for signs of ancient life, and any methane it produced would be long gone. Neither will Europe's planned rover Rosalind Franklin, named for the chemist who helped unlock the secrets of DNA, when it touches down around the same time.

Methane can be detected from above, too, by orbiters circling Mars that study how the gas interacts with sunlight. Mars Express, a European Space Agency orbiter, picked up the same plume Curiosity registered in 2013. The Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO), another European spacecraft, is among the newest on and around Mars, and its instruments might be sensitive enough to provide some information about

the source of a potential methane detection. “TGO may be able, if the gas comes in sufficient high concentration, but it is hard,” says Håkan Svedhem, the mission’s project scientist.

The TGO flew over the crater where Curiosity resides and made the latest detection, but Svedhem and European scientists haven’t responded to questions about whether the orbiter sensed it, too.

One of the best ways to answer the methane question is also one of the most ambitious: Drill deep into the Martian terrain, scoop up some material, and hurl it back toward home. Space agencies are still years away from this kind of sample-return mission, which would involve launching a rocket from the surface of Mars, something no one has ever tried before. And even if methane-releasing bacteria squirm beneath the surface, the most advanced technology might still miss the mark. “The problem with drilling a hole or two is, what if you miss?” says Paul Niles, a planetary geologist at NASA. “The bacteria might be concentrated in one area, and you might miss it if you drilled in the wrong place.”

The next development in the methane story will likely appear in the usual channels: a peer-reviewed paper in a scientific journal. For rover scientists, the results might represent another detection in a growing list. For the skeptics, they might not be worth all the fuss. But ask them all whether we could someday uncover life on Mars, whether methane leads us there or not, and they all invoke the Carl Sagan standard: “Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.” And right now, neither side has it.

Glossary

startling - extremely unusual and surprising

spike - a sudden large increase in something

heralding - being a sign that something is going to happen

belching - sending out large amounts of smoke, flames, etc.; coming out of something in large amounts

methane gas - a gas without colour or smell, that burns easily and is used as fuel. Natural gas consists mainly of methane.

detection - the process of discovering or noticing something; the fact of being noticed

nuance - a very slight difference in meaning, sound, colour or somebody’s feelings

that is not usually very obvious

lurk - to wait somewhere secretly

noteworthy - deserving to be noticed or to receive attention because it is unusual, important or interesting

exposure - the state of being in a place or situation where there is no protection from something harmful or unpleasant

radiation - powerful and very dangerous rays that are sent out from radioactive substances

molecule - the smallest unit, consisting of a group of atoms, into which a substance can be divided without a change in its chemical nature

intriguing - very interesting because of being unusual or not having an obvious answer

replenishing - making something full again by replacing what has been used

reservoirs - a large amount of something that is available to be used

whiff - a slight sign or feeling of something

dichotomy - the separation that exists between two groups or things that are completely opposite to and different from each other

elusive - difficult to find, define or achieve

fraught - filled with something unpleasant

scrambled - lacking order or methodical arrangement or function

controversial - causing a lot of angry public discussion and disagreement

uptick - a small increase in the level or value of something

puff - a small amount of air, smoke, etc. that is blown from somewhere

coincide - to take place at the same time

sift - to examine something very carefully in order to decide what is important or useful or to find something important

skeptic - a person who usually doubts that claims or statements are true, especially those that other people believe in

ingests – takes in

scrubs - brushes

reverted to - returned to a former state

probe - to touch, examine, or look for something, especially with a long thin instrument

plume - a cloud of something that rises and curves upwards in the air

crater - a large hole in the ground

terrain - landscape

scoop - to move or lift somebody/something with a quick continuous movement

hurl - to throw something/somebody violently in a particular direction

squirm - to move around a lot making small twisting movements

fuss - unnecessary excitement, worry or activity

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the article and answer the following questions.

- What does the bulletin sent by The New York Times mean?
- Why did NASA publish a press release soon after The New York Times sent a bulletin?
- What news had come from an email between scientists on the Curiosity team?
- How does the natural gas come into the earth's atmosphere?
- Why doesn't methane last in the Martian atmosphere?
- What did Paul Muffy say at a conference in June?
- The Curiosity registered a spike in 2013? What was it?
- Who is Kevin Zahnle? Why was he not convinced with what has been found on Mars in 2013?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the article again and answer the following questions.

- How would the mission of the rover, known for now as Mars 2020, be different from the mission of the Curiosity rover?
- Is there any evidence of life on the surface of Mars? How do you know?
- How can you say that the story of methane on Mars is complicated?
- Did the evidence of methane in the Mars's atmosphere come only in 2012? How do you know?
- What can be the other ways of knowing the presence of methane on Mars?
- Explain, with reference to the context.

- i. Many things can produce methane on Mars. Alien life is on that list, but other sources are far more likely.
- ii. Scientists make sure to point out this dichotomy whenever the question of life on Mars comes up.
- iii. The latest spike was found this way.
- iv. “Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.”

C. Leading to Write

- a. What are the features of Mars? Could they support some kind of life? Why or why not?
- b. Why is Mars red? Is Mars really red on the surface or is it an optical illusion? What minerals are on Mars that cause it to appear red? Explain.
- c. What have we learned in the various missions to Mars? What were the most significant discoveries? What questions did each successful mission answer and did a later mission prove these wrong?
- d. What does NASA have planned for future Mars missions? Will they be able to build a Mars colony? If so, what will it look like and how are they preparing for it?
- e. How difficult will it be to access the newly-discovered water on Mars using current and developing technologies?

The Yeti: Asia's Abominable Snowman

Benjamin Radford



Benjamin Radford is the Bad Science columnist for Live Science. He is deputy editor of 'Skeptical Inquirer' science magazine and has written, edited or contributed to more than 20 books. His website is www.BenjaminRadford.com. In this text he talks about the history, evidence, search, DNA samples and the opinion of the people who believe on the existence of the mysterious imaginary creature the Yeti.

Before you read

- a. Have you heard about the Yeti? What type of creature is it?
- b. Where is it said to be found?

The Yeti, once better known as the Abominable Snowman, is a mysterious bipedal creature said to live in the mountains of Asia. It sometimes leaves tracks in snow, but is also said to dwell below the Himalayan snow line. Despite dozens of expeditions into the remote mountain regions of Russia, China and Nepal, the existence of the Yeti remains unproven.



The Yeti is said to be muscular, covered with dark grayish or reddish-brown hair, and weigh between 200 and 400 lbs. (91 to 181 kilograms). It is relatively short compared to North America's Bigfoot, averaging about 6 feet (1.8 meters) in height. Though this is the most common form, reported Yetis have come in a variety of shapes.

History of the Yeti

The Yeti is a character in ancient legends and folklore of the Himalaya people. In most of the tales, the Yeti is a figure of danger, author Shiva Dhakal told the BBC. The moral of the stories is often a warning to avoid dangerous wild animals and to stay close and safe within the community.

Alexander the Great demanded to see a Yeti when he conquered the Indus Valley in 326 B.C. But, according to National Geographic, local people told him they were unable to present one because the creatures could not survive at that low an altitude.

In modern times, when Westerners started traveling to the Himalayas, the myth became more sensational, according to the BBC. In 1921, a journalist named Henry Newman interviewed a group of British explorers who had just returned from a Mount Everest expedition. The explorers told the journalist they had discovered some very large footprints on the mountain to which their guides had attributed to "metoh-kangmi," essentially meaning "man-bear snow-man." Newman got the "snowman" part right but mistranslated "metoh" as "filthy." Then he seemed to think "abominable" sounded even better and used this more menacing name in the paper. Thus, a legend was born.

In her book *Still Living? Yeti, Sasquatch, and the Neanderthal Enigma* (1983, Thames and Hudson), researcher Myra Shackley offers the following description, reported by two hikers in 1942 who saw "two black specks moving across the snow about a quarter mile below them." Despite this significant distance, they offered the following very detailed description: "The height was not much less than eight feet ... the heads were described as 'squarish' and the ears must lie close to the skull because there was no projection from the silhouette against the snow. The shoulders sloped sharply down to a powerful chest ... covered by reddish brown hair which formed a close body fur mixed with long straight hairs hanging downward." Another person saw a creature "about the size and build of a small man, the head covered with long hair but the face and chest not very hairy at all. Reddish-brown in color and bipedal, it was busy grubbing up roots and occasionally emitted a loud high-pitched cry."

It's not clear if these sightings were real, hoaxes or misidentifications, though legendary mountaineer Reinhold Messner, who spent months in Nepal and Tibet, concluded that large bears and their tracks had often been mistaken for Yeti. He describes his own encounter with a large, unidentifiable creature in his book *My Quest for the Yeti: Confronting the Himalayas' Deepest Mystery* (St. Martin's, 2001).

In March 1986, Anthony Wooldridge, a hiker in the Himalayas, saw what he thought was a Yeti standing in the snow near a ridge about 500 feet (152 meters) away. It didn't move or make noise, but Wooldridge saw odd tracks in the snow that seemed to lead toward the figure. He took two photographs of the creature, which were later analyzed and proven genuine.

Many in the Bigfoot community seized upon the photos as clear evidence of a

Yeti, including John Napier, an anatomist and anthropologist who had served as the Smithsonian Institution's director of primate biology. Many considered it unlikely Wooldridge could have made a mistake because of his extensive hiking experience in the region. The following year, researchers returned to where Wooldridge had taken the photos and discovered that he had simply seen a dark rock outcropping that looked vertical from his position. It was all a mistake — much to the embarrassment of some Yeti believers.

Yeti evidence

Most of the evidence for the Yeti comes from sightings and reports. Like Bigfoot and the Loch Ness monster, there is a distinct lack of hard proof for the Yeti's existence, though a few pieces of evidence have emerged over the years.

In 1960, Sir Edmund Hillary, the first man to scale Mt. Everest, searched for evidence of the Yeti. He found what was claimed to be a scalp from the beast, though scientists later determined that the helmet-shaped hide was in fact made from a serow, a Himalayan animal similar to a goat.

In 2007, American TV show host Josh Gates claimed he found three mysterious footprints in snow near a stream in the Himalayas. Locals were skeptical, suggesting that Gates — who had only been in the area for about a week — simply misinterpreted a bear track. Nothing more was learned about what made the print, and the track can now be found not in a natural history museum but instead in a small display at Walt Disney World.

In 2010, hunters in China caught a strange animal that they claimed was a Yeti. This mysterious, hairless, four-legged animal was initially described as having features resembling a bear, but was finally identified as a civet, a small cat-like animal that had lost its hair from disease.

A finger once revered in a monastery in Nepal and long claimed to be from a Yeti was examined by researchers at the Edinburgh Zoo in 2011. The finger generated controversy among Bigfoot and Yeti believers for decades, until DNA analysis proved that the finger was human, perhaps from a monk's corpse.

Russian search for Yeti

The Russian government took an interest in the Yeti in 2011, and organized a conference of Bigfoot experts in western Siberia. Bigfoot researcher and biologist John Bindernagel claimed that he saw evidence that the Yeti not only exist but also

build nests and shelters out of twisted tree branches. That group made headlines around the world when they issued a statement that they had "indisputable proof" of the Yeti, and were 95 percent sure it existed based on some grey hairs found in a clump moss in a cave.

Bindernagel may have been impressed, but another scientist who participated in the same expedition concluded that the "indisputable" evidence was hoaxed. Jeff Meldrum, a professor of anatomy and anthropologist at Idaho State University who endorses the existence of Bigfoot, said that he suspected the twisted tree branches had been faked. Not only was there obvious evidence of tool-made cuts in the supposedly "Yeti-twisted" branches, but also the trees were conveniently located just off a well-traveled trail and hardly in a remote area.

DNA samples

In 2013, Oxford geneticist Bryan Sykes put out a call to all Yeti believers and institutions around the world claiming to have a piece of Yeti hair, teeth or tissue taken from a sighting. He received 57 samples, 36 of which were chosen for DNA testing, according to University College London (UCL). These samples were then compared with the genomes of other animals stored on a database of all published DNA sequences.

Most of the samples turned out to be from well-known animals, such as cows, horses and bears. However, Sykes found that two of the samples (one from Bhutan and the other from India) were a 100 percent match for the jawbone of a Pleistocene polar bear that lived sometime between 40,000 and 120,000 years ago — a period of time when the polar bear and closely related brown bear were separating as species, according to BBC. Sykes thought the sample was probably a hybrid of a polar bear and a brown bear.

However, two other scientists, Ceiridwen Edwards and Ross Barnett, conducted a re-analysis of the same data. They said that the sample actually belonged to a Himalayan bear, a rare subspecies of the brown bear. Their study results were published in the Royal Society journal, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.

Another team of researchers, Ronald H. Pine and Eliécer E. Gutiérrez, also analyzed the DNA and also concluded that "there is no reason to believe that Sykes et al.'s two samples came from anything but ordinary brown bears."

And in 2017, yet another team of researchers analyzed nine "Yeti" specimens,

including bone, tooth, skin, hair and fecal samples collected from monasteries, caves and other sites in the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau. They also collected samples from bears in the region and from animals elsewhere in the world.

Of the nine yeti samples, eight were from Asian black bears, Himalayan brown bears or Tibetan brown bears. The ninth was from a dog.

True believers undeterred

The lack of hard evidence despite decades of searches doesn't deter true believers; the fact that these mysterious creatures haven't been found is not taken as evidence that they don't exist, but instead how rare, reclusive, and elusive they are. Like Bigfoot, a single body would prove that the Yeti exist, though no amount of evidence can prove they don't exist. For that reason alone, these animals — real or not — will likely always be with us.

Glossary

bigfoot – (also Sasquatch) a large creature covered with hair like an ape, which some people believe lives in western N. America

bipedal – (of an animal) using only two legs for walking.

dwell – to live

myth – something that many people believe but that does not exist

abominable – extremely unpleasant and causing disgust

menacing – seeming likely to cause you harm or danger

squarish - almost square in shape

silhouette /sɪ-lu-et/ – the dark outline or shape of a person or an object that you see against a light background

grubbing – looking for something, especially by digging

hoaxes – acts intended to make someone believe something that is not true, especially something unpleasant

legendary – (i) very famous and talked about a lot by people, especially in a way that shows admiration

(ii) [only before noun] mentioned in stories from ancient times

ridge - a narrow area of high land along the top of a line of hills; a high pointed area near the top of a mountain

primate – any animal that belongs to the group of mammals that includes humans, apes, and monkeys

loch ness monster – also known informally as Nessie. The monster is thought by some people to be a large animal like a dinosaur (an animal that lived millions of years ago) that spends most of its time underwater.

indisputable – that is true and cannot be disagreed with or denied

genome – the complete set of genes in a cell or living thing

fecal - solid waste material that leaves the body through the anus

reclusive – living alone

elusive – difficult to find, define or achieve

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the text and answer the questions.

- Why is the Yeti said to be an enigmatic bipedal creature?
- The presence of the Yeti still remains unproven. Why is it so?
- Describe the physical appearance of the Yeti.
- What did the local people tell Alexander the Great when he insisted to see the Yeti?
- Write down the detailed explanation about the Yeti given by the two hikers to Myra Shackley.
- Did Anthony Wooldridge, a hiker in the Himalayas, catch sight of the Yeti in the snow near a ridge in the Himalayas? Give details.
- What did the DNA samples prove about the subsistence of the Yeti?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the text again and answer the questions that follow.

- What is the moral of the stories we have about the Yeti?
- When Westerners started traveling to the Himalayas, the myth of the Yeti become more astonishing. Justify this statement.
- How have we come to know about the existence of the Yeti?
- What evidences of the Yeti's existence have materialized over the years?

- e. Do you think the Yeti really exist? Give reasons for your answer.
- f. Why will the animals like the Yeti and Bigfoot always be with us?
- g. Explain, with reference to the context:
 - i. Newman got the "snowman" part right but mistranslated "metoh" as "filthy."
 - ii. It was all a mistake — much to the embarrassment of some Yeti believers.
 - iii. Most of the samples turned out to be from well-known animals, such as cows, horses and bears.
 - iv. Like Bigfoot, a single body would prove that the Yeti exist, though no amount of evidence can prove they don't exist.

C. Leading to Write

- a. *“A legendary, mythical, and mythological creature is an imaginary and supernatural animal, often a hybrid, sometimes part human. Its existence has not or cannot be proved but is described in folklore.”* List down all such creatures you have come to know till date, exclude Bigfoot and the Yeti, and write a couple of paragraphs on any one of them.
- b. For decades’ people have reported seeing an ape-man roaming in the snows of the Himalayas. Is there any truth to the tales? Give details.
- c. Bigfoot is a giant ape-like creature that is said to roam the Pacific Northwest, and the Yeti is a mysterious bipedal creature said to live in the Himalayas. Find about these imaginary creatures on the internet, and write a comparison contrast essay, in about 250 words, on these legendary creatures.

Upper Mustang: Travel to The Hidden Kingdom

Bruno Deceukelier



Bruno Deceukelier is born to be a traveler. He is a Belgian journalist and photographer, writing to promote Nepal as a tourist destination. He loves traveling around the world, and understanding and living in the new culture is what makes him happy. He has worked in Haiti, Brazil, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Morocco and Nepal.

In this travel piece he gives a brief description of Mustang, and talks about his journey to different areas in Mustang.

Before you read

- Which part of Nepal does Mustang lie in?
- Is Mustang a tourist destination? How do you know?
- What is Mustang famous for?

Upper Mustang in a nutshell:

Upper Mustang is the area that used to commercially connect Tibet and India. Originally, it consisted of a number of small kingdoms which were united with the seat in the royal town of Lo Manthang. Since 1790 it is part of Nepal and Mustang's autonomy was abolished in 2008. Upper Mustang remained a restricted demilitarized area, allowing hardly any visitors until 1992 which makes it one of the most preserved regions in the world, with a majority of the population still speaking traditional Tibetic languages.



Upper Mustang officially begins after the central entry point in Kagbeni. Foreign tourists need to obtain an entry permit (at the price of 500 USD, valid for 10 days) as well as be accompanied by an official guide. It offers a very different trekking experience from the rest of Nepal, in sometimes Moonlike landscapes and unfamiliar customs. The trek in Upper Mustang isn't very strenuous, hovering between 3,000 and 4,200 meters. Mustang lies in the rain shadow of the Dhaulagiri massif, creating a ruggedly arid land surrounded by rocks in all kinds of colors and impressive

formations. This barren landscape is dotted with settlements of whitewashed houses, barley fields and prayer flags which add a splash of color to the landscape. Buddhist monasteries and temples along the way provide the whole journey with a pleasant spiritual dimension.



The main hydrographic feature of the Mustang is the Gandaki River. The river runs southward towards Nepal Terai, bisecting Mustang. Routes paralleling the river once served as a major trade route between Tibet and India, especially for salt. If you are lucky and have sharp eyes, you can still find fossils of plants and animals on its banks.

Lift off: the flight from Pokhara to Jomsom

Our experience started with the flight from Pokhara to Jomsom, a 25-minute breathtaking experience flying between the snowy peaks.

The plane passes through the deepest gorge in the world, the Kali Gandaki, which runs between the Dhaulagiri and the Nilgiri mountains. Try to get a seat at the front, so you can enjoy the same view as the pilots.



Our hike

We opted for an eight-day hike, making a loop to avoid coming back the same way. On average, we walked around 5 hours a day. We spend four days going up, one day of rest and exploration in Lo Manthang and then three days back. On Day 1, we walked from Kagbeni to Chele. The next to Syanboche and the third to Dhakmar, which was one of the highlights of our trip with its red cliffs and caves. During the 1950's bands of guerrilla fighters against the Chinese occupation of Tibet allegedly hid in the caves. The fourth day we went from Dhakmar to Lo Manthang, along the way you can find the oldest Tibetan monastery in the world, the Lo Gekar Monastery.

Lo Manthang

The Lo Gekar Monastery was built in the 8th century by the famous Tibetan magician Guru Rinpoche. It is said that he killed a powerful demon and the blood of the demon has painted the rocks around Dhakmar bright red.



Lo Manthang is the capital of the ancient kingdom of Mustang. It offers some interesting Gompas, a royal palace (affected by the 2015 earthquake and not open for visitors), narrow streets and traditional houses. While it is possible to see most of the town in half a day, the surroundings offer activities, even for several days,



depending on how much time you have. We opted to rent bikes to go to the impressive ShijaJhong caves, near Chhoser village, a bit to the north of Lo Manthang. For the way back, we first went to Yara, and then another night in Tangye. From there was the longest day walking, 8 hours to Chussang. After having registered our departure from Upper Mustang in Kagbeni, we made a detour to visit Mukthinath, which has the highest Hindu temple in the world, attracting many Hindu pilgrims both from inside and outside the country.

There are plenty of comfortable guesthouses along the way and no need to carry much. We had wisely opted to hire one porter for the three of us, which meant we could unburden ourselves of 7kg each, which meant we mostly just carried water and a day pack. Different from other trekking routes, one does not climb for several days straight to reach the destination, Lo Manthang in our case, but every day involves going moderately up and down, which means the muscle groups used are rotated, which feels less exhausting. Doing the hike in June was ideal, as Mustang is not affected by the June-September monsoon rains, which render other hiking areas inaccessible. The permit price and remoteness meant we hardly saw other tourists, maybe five during the entire trip and we could wander through these magical places

almost alone. Though with road infrastructures being improved and this region opening up, this might change in the near future so it is best to go quickly.

Glossary

autonomy - a region or an organization to govern itself independently

demilitarized area – an area from where the military forces are removed

Tibetic languages - the Tibetic languages are a cluster of Tibeto-Burman languages descended from Old Tibetan, spoken across a wide area of eastern Central Asia.

strenuous - needing great effort and energy

rain shadow - A rain shadow is an area of land that lies behind a mountain which gets almost no rainfall.

massif - a group of mountains that form a large mass

arid - (of land or a climate) having little or no rain; very dry

splash of color - a small area of bright colour or light that contrasts with the colours around it

spiritual dimension - hope/will to live; belief and faith

hydrographic - of or relating to the characteristic features (such as flow or depth) of bodies of water

fossils - the remains of an animal or a plant which have become hard and turned into rock

breathhtaking - very exciting or impressive (usually in a pleasant way)

gorge - a deep narrow valley with steep sides

loop - a curve or circle

exploration - the act of travelling through a place in order to find out about it or look for something in it

band - a group of people who do something together or who have the same ideas

guerrilla - a member of a small group of soldiers who are not part of an official army and who fight against official soldiers, usually to try to change the government

allegedly - expressed as though something is a fact but without giving any proof

detour - a longer route that you take in order to avoid a problem or to visit a place

porter - a person whose job is carrying people's bags and other loads

exhausting - making you feel very tired

render - make

inaccessible - difficult or impossible to reach

wander - to walk slowly around or to a place, often without any particular sense of purpose or direction

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the travel piece and answer the following questions.

- a. When did Upper Mustang become a part of Nepal?
- b. How can the foreign tourists obtain entry permit of get into Upper Mustang?
- c. What kind of trekking experience does Upper Mustang offer?
- d. Why is the landscape of Mustang barren?
- e. What can the people with strong eyesight find on the bank of the Gandaki river?
- f. Where is the Lo Gekar Monastery? When was it built?
- g. What belief do people hold about the colour of the rocks around Dhakmar?
- h. What does Lo Manthang offer its visitors?
- i. How did the writer travel to ShijaJhong caves from Lo Manthang?
- j. Why, according to the writer, trekking to Lo Manthang is different from other trekking routes?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the travel piece again and answer the following questions.

- a. Write a short note on Upper Mustang.
- b. Why does the writer say flying from Pokhara to Jomsom is a breathtaking experience?
- c. Describe the writer's journey from Kagbeni to Lo Manthang.
- d. Why does the writer conclude his travelogue by saying "it is best to go quickly."?

- e. Explain, with reference to the context
- f. The trek in Upper Mustang isn't very strenuous, hovering between 3,000 and 4,200 meters.
- g. Try to get a seat at the front, so you can enjoy the same view as the pilots.
- h. ...the muscle groups used are rotated, which feels less exhausting.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Write a travelogue about your recent trip to a foreign country or a place in your country. You can concentrate on:
 - i. local customs and traditions
 - ii. cuisine
 - iii. depictions of places of interest, local history, and culture
 - iv. your adventures
 - v. prices and transportation
 - vi. entertainment
- b. Draft a leaflet/brochure about any one of the tourist destinations in our country.
- c. Why do people travel around the world? Make your own list of five reasons for travelling around the world with examples to support your reasons.

SECTION 3

Poetry

Poetry is a type of literature based on the interplay of words and rhythm. It often employs rhyme and meter (a set of rules governing the number and arrangement of syllables in each line). In poetry, words are strung together to form sounds, images, and ideas that might be too complex or abstract to describe directly.

A poem is a work of literature that uses the sounds and rhythms of a language to evoke deeper significance than the literal meaning of words. There are a number of different ways to classify a poem, such as by analyzing its metre; either blank verse or free verse. There are also many different recognized forms in which a poem is composed, such as a sonnet, ode, ballad, lyric, limerick, haiku, etc. There are three main kinds of poetry: narrative, dramatic and lyrical. It is not always possible to make distinction between them. For example, an epic poem can contain lyrical passages, or lyrical poem can contain narrative parts.

Poetry is the most effective way of presenting your view, as you say what you want to say in limited vocabulary. A good poem touches your heart with the emotions it spills, and shakes your brain with the thoughts it contains. It is so important because it helps us understand and appreciate the world around us. While reading a poem, it is not necessary to try to find the hidden meaning as if we are hunting a treasure and have lost our way. It is better to leave that to the critics and scholars. You just read them as they are, and you will enjoy them.

This section has brought the students with different kinds of poems such as lyric, ballad, sonnet, and free verse, etc. They deal with different themes such as love (Rain and Valentine), mourning (Song), social injustice (the Ballad of the Landlord), exploitation (Love your Enemy), ugly aspect of modernization (Prelude 1), death (Holy Sonnet), man and nature (The World is Too Much with us), and so on.

The Ballad of East and West

Rudyard Kipling



Rudyard Kipling (1865 – 1936) was an English journalist, short-story writer, poet, and novelist. He was born in India, which inspired much of his work. Kipling's poems and stories were extraordinarily popular in the late 19th and early 20th century. He travelled widely and wrote hundreds of essays, poems and stories, continuing to write nearly up to his death in 1936. Kipling was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907. In this ballad, an English officer and an Afghan horse-thief Kamal discover friendship by respecting one another's courage and chivalry.

Before you read

- What does the title of the poem suggest? Discuss with your friends.
- Read the poem and find what it is about.

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border side,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride.
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and day
And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away.

Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides
Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal hides? "
Then up and spoke Mohammed Khan, the son of the Ressaldar:
"If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where his pickets are.
"At dusk he harries the Abazai - at dawn he is into Bonair,
"But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare.

"So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,
"By the favour of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the Tongue of Jagai.
"But if he be past the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,
"For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown with Kamal's men.
"There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
"And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen."

The Colonel's son has taken horse, and a raw rough dun was he,
With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell and the head of a gallows-tree.
The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid him stay to eat
Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at his meat.
He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the Tongue of Jagai,
Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon her back,
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the Pistol crack.
He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball went wide.
Ye shoot like a soldier," Kamal said. " Show now if ye can ride!
It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dust-devils go
The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a barren doe.
The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden plays with a glove.
There was rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never a man was seen.

They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs drum up the dawn,
The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a new-roused fawn.
The dun he fell at a water-course - in a woeful heap fell he,
And Kamal. has turned the red mare back, and pulled the rider free.
He has knocked the pistol out of his hand - small room was there to strive,

"Twas only by favour of mine," quoth he, " ye rode so long alive:
 "There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was not a clump of tree,
 "But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked on his knee.
 "If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it low,
 "The little jackals that flee so fast were feasting all in a row.
 "If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it high,
 "The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she could not fly."
 Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "Do good to bird and beast,
 "But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.
 "If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away.
 "Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.
 "They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their men on the garnered grain.
 "The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when all the cattle are slain.
 "But if thou thinkest the price be fair - thy brethren wait to sup,
 "The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn - howl, dog, and call them up!
 "And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear and stack,
 "Give me my father's mare again, and I'll fight my own way back! "

Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.
 "No talk shall be of dogs," said he, "when wolf and grey wolf meet.
 "May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath;
 "What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death?"
 Lightly answered the Colonel's son: " I hold by the blood of my clan:
 Take up the mare for my father's gift - by God, she has carried a man!"
 The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled against his breast;
 "We be two strong men," said Kamal then, " but she loveth the younger best.
 "So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-studded rein,
 "My 'broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrup twain."

The Colonel's son a pistol drew, and held it muzzle-end,
"Ye have taken the one from a foe," said he. " Will ye take the mate from a friend? "
"A gift for a gift," said Kamal straight; "a limb for the risk of a limb.
"Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to him!"
With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest
He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.
"Now here is thy master," Kamal said, "who leads a troop of the Guides,
"And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides.
"Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,
"Thy life is his - thy fate it is to guard him with thy head.
"So, thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,
"And thou must harry thy father's hold for the peace of the Border-line.
"And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power
"Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in Peshawur! "

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault.
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.

The Colonel's son he rides the mare and Kamal's boy the dun,
And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went forth but one.
And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty swords flew clear
There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of the mountaineer.
Ha' done! ha' done! " said the Colonel's son. " Put up the steel at your sides!
Last night ye had struck at a Border thief - to-night 't is a man of the Guides! "

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face though they come from the ends of the earth!

Glossary

twain	= two (old use)
dun	= horse
ressaldar	= (an Urdu word) officer of lower rank
ye	= you (old use)
harry	= to repeatedly demand something
ere	= before
grisly	= extremely unpleasant especially because of blood and death
quoth	= said (old use)
byre	= cow-shed

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the following questions.

- Who is Kamal? What has he done?
- Why does Colonel's son follow Kamal?
- What happens immediately after the Colonel's son finds Kamal?
- According to the poet, the whole region was covered with Kamal's men. Then how could Colonel's son escape them and meet Kamal?
- Write in brief the conversation between the two when they met.
- What happened in the end?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the following questions.

- Summarize the poem.
- Explain with reference the first four lines of the poem.
- What is the theme of the poem? Elaborate.
- Classical ballads are usually written in iambic heptameters. Does this ballad follow the rule? Exemplify.

C. Leading to Write

- Write the story as described in the ballad.
- What are the major differences between the East and the West in your opinion? Write an essay on this topic.

The Ballad of the Landlord

Langston Hughes



Langston Hughes (1902-1967) was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist. Hughes rose out of the Harlem Renaissance, a literary movement of the 1920s, which was characterized by an increase in African-American authorship. Hughes chose to present African-American life in Harlem as he saw it.

In this poem Hughes uses the traditional ballad form, while highlighting the poverty and hardships of black faced. He then smashes the form after the speaker in the poem is arrested.

Before you read

a. Read the title. Do you think the poem has a light or a serious note? Why?

Landlord, landlord,

My roof has sprung a leak.

Don't you 'member I told you about it

Way last week?

Landlord, landlord,

These steps is broken down.

When you come up yourself

It's a wonder you don't fall down

Ten Bucks you say I owe you?

Ten Bucks you say is due?

Well, that's Ten Bucks more'n I'll pay you

Till you fix this house up new.

What? You gonna get eviction orders?

You gonna cut off my heat?

You gonna take my furniture and

Throw it in the street?



Um-huh! You talking high and mighty.
Talk on-till you get through.
You ain't gonna be able to say a word
If I land my fist on you.

Police! Police!
Come and get this man!
He's trying to ruin the government
And overturn the land!

Copper's whistle!
Patrol bell!
Arrest.
Precinct Station.
Iron cell.
Headlines in press:
Man Threatens landlord
Tenant Held Bail
Judge Glives Negro 90 Days In County Jail!

Glossary

member	= remember
buck	= 1 dollar
eviction	= action of forcing someone to move out of a property
copper	= police

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- What does the tenant complain about?
- How much does he have to pay?
- What is the landlord going to do if the tenant doesn't pay?
- Who calls the police and why?

- e. What happens at the end of the poem?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the questions.

- a. “For the most part, the opening stanzas adhered to a traditional ballad form, especially in terms of the rhyme scheme and meter.” Do you agree with this comment on the poem? Give reasons.
- b. Can you call it a protest poem? Give reasons in support of your answer?
- c. This poem is a subtle charge against the racial discrimination in the United States of America. Justify.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Compare the Ballad of East and West by Kipling with The Ballad of the Landlord by Hughes. Which one do you like most? Why?
- b. Racial discrimination, although illegal is still practised in the Nepalese society? Suggest some of the ways you would adopt to eradicate it.
- c. This poem is about the relationship between landlord and tenant. Write a poem about the relationship of any of the following:
shopkeeper – customer boss – employee
doctor – patient teacher – student.

Song 1

W.H. Auden



W H Auden (1907 – 1973) was an English-American poet and one of the leading literary figures of the 20th century. Auden's poetry was noted for its stylistic and technical achievement, its engagement with politics, morals, love, and religion, and its variety in tone, form and content. From 1956 to 1961 he was professor of poetry at Oxford University. He continued to publish poetry including 'The Age of Anxiety' (1947) for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. This poem is number IX in his Twelve Songs, and also sometimes known as 'Funeral Blues'.

Before you read

a. Usually song is about love. Guess whether this is also about love.

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplane circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead,
Put crêpe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

Glossary

crêpe = thin light pancake

dismantle = to take apart in separate pieces

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- a. What is the poem about?
- b. What does the poet ask to do in the first and the second stanzas, and why?
- c. What was the poet \wrong about, and why?
- d. Why does the poet say, “For nothing now can ever come to any good.”?
- e. Suggest an appropriate title for the poem, and justify your suggestion.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the questions.

- a. What kind of poem is this? Justify your answer.
- b. The mood of the poem changes from the third stanza. What’s the change and why?
- c. In the first and the second stanzas, the poet talks about clock, telephone, piano and aeroplane etc., whereas in the third and the fourth stanzas he talks about east and west, the sun and the stars. Why? Elucidate.
- d. Explain with reference the last stanza of the poem.

C. Leading to Write

- a. “W H Auden is one of the most influential voices in 20th Century poetry.” Do research on him and justify the statement.
- b. Imagine yourself as the poet. Write in prose what the poet has said in the poem. Then, give it a suitable title. Write it in the first person.

Lyric

Alfred Lord Tennyson



Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809 – 1892) was a British poet. He was the Poet Laureate of Great Britain and Ireland during much of Queen Victoria's reign and remains one of the most popular British poets. Even his most severe critics have always recognized his lyric gift for sound and cadence, a gift probably unequalled in the history of English poetry, but one so absolute that it has sometimes been mistaken for mere facility. This short lyric forms part of a large epic, 'The Princes'. To know more about him visit:

Before you read

- a. What's a lyric? Describe briefly.

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

Glossary

porphyry = rock

font = large stone bowl that holds water for baptism in a Church

droop = to move downwards

Danaë = in Greek mythology, daughter of king of Argos, and the most beautiful woman in Greece

meteor = falling star

furrow = a long cut

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- a. Paraphrase the first stanza of the poem. What does this kind of setting suggest?
- b. Why has the word 'ghost' been used twice in the second stanza? What image does it create?
- c. Why does the poet make the reference of Danae (Greek Mythology) in the third stanza?
- d. What does the metaphor 'shining furrow' suggest?
- d. Paraphrase the last stanza, and justify the end of the poem with its setting.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the questions.

- a. The poem consists of five stanzas: the first and the last are quatrains, and the rest are couplets. Is this just random, or the poet has some purpose behind it. Elucidate.
- b. Make a critical analysis of the poem?
- c. On what grounds the poem is a romantic poem. Justify.
- d. This poem is the part of a larger poem, 'The Princess', yet it is said to a poem complete in itself. Do you agree? Give reasons for or against the statement.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Find and read 'The Princess' (by Tennyson) from which this short poem has been extracted. Then, write an essay on Tennyson's Love Poems.
- b. This poem is about carnal love of a man and woman. Think of the love between mother and her child. Try to write a poem on mother's love.

Holy Sonnet 10

John Donne



John Donne (1572 – 1631) is considered the pre-eminent representative of the metaphysical poets. His works are noted for their strong, sensual style and include sonnets, love poems, religious poems, Latin translations, epigrams, elegies, songs, satires and sermons. “Holy Sonnet 10” is a devotional lyric that looks at life’s biggest questions in the context of Donne’s religious beliefs.

Before you read

- Do you fear death? Tell briefly your views on death.
- Read the poem and find what the poet thinks about death.

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow
Not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and souls’ delivery.
Thou art slave to Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell’st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more, Death thou shalt die.

Glossary

poppy = a plant from which opium is gained

stroke = a sudden blow or hitting, a sudden illness when blood vessels in the brain burst or blocked that causes death

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- a. What does the title of the poem suggest? Is it relevant to the theme of the poem?
- b. Who is talking to whom? What are they talking about?
- c. The poet says, “Not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.” What does he mean?
- d. “...why swell’st thou then?” Who says this to whom and why? Elaborate.
- e. What figure of speech is used by the poet when he says, “Death, thou shalt die” ? Explain.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the questions.

- a. In its form, the present sonnet is a blending of both Italian and Shakespearean sonnets. How? Exemplify.
- b. The poet compares death with ‘short sleep’. What does this metaphor actually mean? Elaborate.
- c. Explain with reference the last two lines of the poem.
- d. What’s the theme of the poem? Do you agree with the arguments of the poet? Give reasons to support your answer.

C. Leading to Write

- a. How is death viewed in your community/ religion? Compare that view with Donne’s view.
- b. The poem suggest afterlife. Do you believe in life after death? Prepare a debate speech for or against this view.
- c. The poet talks to Death in the poem, but Death does not say anything. Now let your imagination flow and write dialogues between the poet and Death.

On His Blindness

John Milton



John Milton (1608 – 1674) was an English poet. He wrote at a time of religious flux and political upheaval, and is best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667), written in blank verse widely regarded as the greatest epic poem in English. He is considered the most significant English author after William Shakespeare. Milton went blind working for the English Republic. In this sonnet, he writes of his experience of blindness. He asks if God wants him to keep working, in spite of the fact that his job caused him to lose his sight.

Before you read

- Can a blind man compose poem?
- Milton was blind. How could he write his poems?

When I consider how my light is spent,

Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,

And that one talent which is death to hide,

Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent

To serve therewith my maker, and present

My true account, lest he returning chide,

Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?

I fondly ask; but Patience to prevent

That murmur, soon replies, god doth not need

Either man's work or his own gifts, who best

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best, his state

Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed

And post o'er hand and ocean without rest;

They also serve who only stand and wait.

Glossary

Maker = God

chide = to speak to someone severely because they have behaved badly

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- a. What and whose ‘talent’ the poet is talking about in the first stanza, and why is it useless now? Elaborate.
- b. What does the second stanza say? Tell it in simple sentences.
- c. Explain with reference lines 10 and 11. What message does the poet try to give in these lines?
- d. Who does the word ‘They’ (the last line) refer to? Describe the meaning of this line.
- e. Do you like this poem? Why? Why not?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the questions.

- a. Is this a Petrarchan sonnet or Shakespearean sonnet? Give evidence in support of your answer.
- b. According to some critics, Milton has used two powerful poetic devices in this poem, viz. allegory and personification. Find them, and describe how they add the beauty and meaning to the poem.
- c. This sonnet is Italian in form but not in theme. Elaborate.
- d. Write a critical appreciation of the poem.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Milton went blind but he continued composing poems. Do you know that there was another blind poet in the world literature who was as great as Milton? Find out and compare the two.
- b. Milton, a great poet became blind in the later years of his life. But there are people blind by birth and yet they have gained outstanding achievements. Find about them and cite two examples.

The World Is too much with us

William Wordsworth



William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850) was one of the great Romantic poets of 19th-century England. His poems celebrated the glories of nature and the human spirit while using the simple language of the common man. Wordsworth was Britain's poet laureate from 1843 until his death. He wrote this sonnet when he was 32 years old. It was a heartfelt response to the demise of the cottage industry and rural way of life, which had been taken over by mass production and factory work. People were no longer in touch with Nature.

Before you read

- a. What do you think the title of the poem mean?

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The Winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

Glossary

sordid = dirty and unpleasant

pagan = a person who worships nature

forlorn = alone and unhappy

lea = open ground

Optional English : Grade 10

Proteus = God of ocean (Greek mythology)

Triton = a Greek God

horn = conch

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- What does the first line, “The World is too much with us’ actually mean? Explain.
- What does ‘sordid boon’ refer to? Elaborate.
- The second quatrain reflects the change of the poet’s mood. Describe the contrast of mood in the first and the second stanzas.
- What does the wreathéd in the last line of the poem suggest?
- What does the poet wish in the last four lines and why?
- What is the message of the poem?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the questions.

- Read a short biography of Wordsworth, then decide whether he was serious when he wrote that he would rather be a pagan.
- Wordsworth is called ‘the greatest nature poet in English poetry’. Give evidences from this poem in favour of this statement.
- “The World is too much with us” is called a lyric in the form of a sonnet. Elucidate.
- Critically analyse the poem –its form, metre, tone, and the message.

C. Leading to Write

- Write an essay arguing that Wordsworth's theme remains highly relevant today.
- You must have heard the term ‘Echo poetry’ which is written today. Is this different from the poems that deal with nature? Compare and contrast the two.
- In the name of development, forests are being cut down, course of rivers are being changed, and green fields are being replaced with jungle of bricks and cement. Try to write a poem on this theme in a sonnet form.

Prelude 1

T.S. Eliot



Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888 – 1965), "one of the twentieth century's major poets" was also an essayist, publisher, playwright, and literary and social critic. He was not only a great poet but also a great playwright. His poem, "The Waste Land" is the most famous English poem of the 20th century, a landmark meditation on our unease with the modern world. The present poem is the first among the four entitled 'Preludes', which presents the emptiness of urban life.

Before you read

- a. What does the title 'Prelude 1' suggest: prelude to what?

The winter evening settles down
With smell of steaks in passageways.
Six o'clock.
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.
And now a gusty shower wraps
The grimy scraps
Of withered leaves about your feet
And newspapers from vacant lots;
The showers beat
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,
And at the corner of the street
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.
And then the lighting of the lamps.

Glossary

steak	= a thick flat piece of pork or veal
grimy	= dirty
scraps	= small pieces of food that have not been eaten, and thrown away
lot	= an area of land
blind	= window curtain (made of plastic, cloth, etc.) that is pulled or lowered with a string

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- a. What kind of place is the poet describing? Why do you think he chose such place to describe.
- b. What do you see, hear, smell, and feel with the poet as ‘the winter evening settles down?’ Describe.
- c. What does the metaphor ‘burnt-out ends of smoky days’ mean? What effect does it create?
- d. There are quite a few uses of alliteration in the poem. Find them, and describe what effect they add to the poem.
- e. What does the title of the poem suggest? Show its relevance to the poem.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the questions.

- a. This is a poem of loneliness and the impersonal nature of the city, the emptiness of urban life and the often grimy, squalid environment—both physical and mental. Evaluate.
- b. The poem is a series of images such as ‘smell of steaks’, ‘smoky days’, ‘gusty shower’, ‘grimy scraps’, ‘weathered leaves’, ‘vacant lots’, ‘broken blinds’, ‘chimney pots’ and ‘lonely cab-horse’. What does the poet wish to communicate through them?
- c. The poem was written in the early twentieth century but it is still relevant today. Do you agree? Give reasons in support of your answer.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Read all the four Preludes 1-4. Find out how they are related, and write a critical essay on them.
- b. Write an argumentative essay on ‘Modern Life’.

Rain

Danton R. Remoto



Danton R. Remoto (March 25, 1963) is a Filipino writer, essayist, reporter, editor, columnist, and professor. He won various awards such as the CCP literary award for poetry, the ASEAN prize for the essay, the Stirling District Arts Council award for poetry and the short story. As a professor, Remoto teaches English and Journalism at the Ateneo de Manila University. In this poem, he is trying to reach out to the woman he loves across distances.

Before you read

- a. Look at the title of the poem 'Rain'. Does it talk about nature?

This morning, it is raining

In my country.

Water slides down

The leaves.

Like tongue on skin.

The sounds of its falling

Collects

like breath on the lobes

Of ears.

You are a continent away.

There, the leaves are beginning

To turn.

Soon night will steal hours

From day,

And snow will be whirling

In drifts.

But you are here,

In the country

Of my mind,

Wiping away the maps
Of mist
On the windowpanes,
Lying in bed beside me,
As the pulse of the pillows and sheets,
Even the very throb of rain,
Begins to quicken.

Glossary

lobe of the ear - the soft part at the bottom of the ear

drift - a slow steady movement from one place to another

throb – a strong regular beat

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- a. Who is talking to whom?
- b. Where are they? What is the difference between the two places, specially the season, the weather?
- c. What is the poet imagining?
- d. How does the poet feel about the person he is addressing?
- e. What type of poem is this? Do you like it? Why?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the questions.

- a. Identify the similes, metaphors and the personification the poet uses. What effect do they create in the poem?
- b. Note all the instances of assonance and alliteration you can find, and describe their relevance to the poem.
- c. Make a critical analysis of the poem.
- d. Elaborate the theme of the poem.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Imagine that you are the poet. Write the poem in the form of a letter.
- b. Read other poems of the poet, and establish what kind of poet he is.

Valentine

Carol Ann Duffy



Carol Ann Duffy (23 December 1955) is a Scottish poet and playwright. She is a professor of contemporary poetry at Manchester Metropolitan University, and was appointed Britain's Poet Laureate in May 2009. She is the first woman, the first Scot, and the first openly gay or bisexual poet to hold the position. In this poem, she uses her extended metaphor of an onion to generate serious and powerful ideas about the way that we celebrate love.

Before you read

- a. What present would you like to give to your friend, and why?
- b. Now, read the poem and find what gift the poet gives to her friend.

Not a red rose or a satin heart.
I give you an onion,
It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.
It promises light
like the careful undressing of love.

Here.
It will blind you with tears
like a lover.
It will make your reflection
a wobbling photo of grief.

I am trying to be truthful.
Not a cute card or a kissogram.
I give you an onion.
Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,
possessive and faithful
as we are,
for as long as we are.

Take it.

Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding-ring,
if you like.

Lethal.

Its scent will cling to your finger,
cling to your knife.

Glossary

reflection = image

wobbling = shaking

kissogram = a message brought by someone who kisses the person who is receiving it

lethal = able to cause death

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- There are three metaphors used in 1-5 lines. Write them down and explain their purpose within the poem, that is, how they get you to see what is being described.
- Does love make one cry (lines 6-7)? Elaborate.
- Look closely at lines 6-10. How is a particular effect caused by an onion linked to another effect caused by being in love? What would you say its tone, and therefore the poet's feeling about love?
- What justification does the poet give for the onion as her valentine gift? Do you like it?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the questions.

- Onion is the central metaphor in this poem. How is it related to the central theme of the poem? Elucidate.
- Look closely at lines 13-17. Is the tone in this stanza positive or negative? Is it same as line 6-10?
- If the mention of a 'wedding-ring' produces a romantic image, explain why the poet calls it 'lethal'. Describe the poet's attitude to and

presentation of love.

- d. Do you think it is a real love poem? Give reasons in support of your answer.

C. Leading to Write

- a. You have read one love poem 'Rain' by Danton Remoto, and the other 'Valentine' from Carol. Compare and contrast the two poems, and say which one you like most and why?

Words

Ann Sexton



Anne Sexton (1928 – 1974) was an American poet known for her highly personal, confessional verse. She led a very stormy life, with many lovers. She suffered from mental problems, and had to go under therapy several times. She also attempted suicide many times. Later, she found herself totally alone: divorced and cut off from her children. She committed suicide in 1974. She won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1967 for her book *Live or Die*. In this poem she is dealing with the way she feels about words.

Before you read

- a. Can a poem be on words?
- b. What do you think this poem is about?

Be careful of words

even the miraculous ones.

For the miraculous we do our best,

sometimes they swarm like insects

and leave not a sting but a kiss.

They can be as good as fingers.

They can be as trusty as rock

you stick your bottom on.

But they can be both daisies and bruises.

Yet I am in love with words.

They are doves falling out of the ceiling.

They are six holy oranges sitting on my lap.

They are the tress, the legs of the summer,

and the sun, the passionate face.

Yet often they fail me.

I have so much I want to say,

so many stories, images, proverbs, etc.

But the words are not good enough,

the wrong ones kiss me.

Sometimes I fly like an eagle

but the wings of a wren.

But I try to take care
and be gentle to them.
Words and eggs must be handled with care.
Once broken they are impossible
things to repair.

Glossary

miraculous = difficult to believe, very surprising

daisy = a small flower with white petals

wren = a bird

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem, and answer the questions.

- a. The poet says, “But the words aren’t good enough.” What does she mean?
- b. What are the feelings about words? Describe.
- c. What do you think she means when she writes, “But they can be both daisies and bruises”?
- d. Explain with reference the last three lines of the poem.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again, and answer the questions.

- a. What similes and metaphors are used in this poem? Write them down, and describe the beauty they have added to the poem.
- b. What type of poem is this? Is it lyrical, narrative, elegy or what? Give evidence in support of your answer.
- c. Is Sexton fed up with words? What does she do when they fail her?
- d. Do you agree with the poet about her view on words? Why?

C. Leading to Write

- a. You might have felt the same as the poet does when you start writing something and the appropriate words don’t come to you. How do you feel then, and what do you do to handle the situation?
- b. Words are more powerful than swords and guns. Write an essay on this topic.

Love Your Enemy

Yusuf Iman



Yusuf Iman (1933-1987) born in Savannah, Georgia was a poet, singer, director, musician, actor and teacher. He was one of the most significant contributors to the Black Arts and Black Liberation movements in the 60s.

In this poem he raises his voice against the Black exploitation.

Before you read

- a. The title of the poem is 'Love Your Enemy'. Do you think the poet seriously mean it?

Brought you here in slave ships and pitched overboard.

Love your enemy.

Language taken away, culture taken away.

Love your enemy.

Work from sun up to sun down.

Love your enemy.

Work for no pay.

Love your enemy.

Last hired, first fired.

Love your enemy.

Rape your mother.

Love your enemy.

Lynch your father.

Love your enemy.

Bomb your churches.

Love your enemy.

Kill your children.

Love your enemy.

Forced to fight his wars.

Love your enemy.

Pay the highest rent.
Love your enemy.
Sell your rotten food.
Love your enemy.
Sell dope to your children.
Love your enemy.
Forced to live in the slums.
Love your enemy.
Dilapidated schools.
Love your enemy.
Puts you in jail.
Love your enemy.
Bitten by dogs.
Love your enemy.
Water hose you down.
Love your enemy.

Love.

Love.

Love.

Love.

Love.

Love for everybody else.

But when will we love ourselves?

Glossary

fire = to remove from job

lynch = to kill by hanging

dope = illegal drug

dilapidated = old and in poor condition

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- a. Which country do you think the poet is writing about?
- b. Who is the oppressed and who is the oppressor?
- c. There are plenty of negative things happening to people in this poem. Why do you think are they silent?
- d. What is the objective of the poet to write this poem?
- e. Reflect on the title 'Love Your Enemy'. Why should they love their enemies?
- f. Write a brief summary of the poem.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the poem again and answer the questions.

- a. This is a protest poem. What is the poet protesting and why?
- b. What is the key feature he uses to drum into us the irony of the situation of Black people? Elucidate.
- c. What is the tone of the poem? Does it create the desired effect on the readers/audiences?
- d. Explain with reference the last two lines of the poem.
- e. The title of the poem has Biblical reference. (Look at Luke 6: 27-28, and Matthew 5:44 Bible for example.) What is its significance to the poem?

C. Leading to Write

- a. Find more about how Black people were bought and sold. Then write on the topic of Social Injustice on the basis of the poem.
- b. Even though the law doesn't allow there is injustice between the haves and have not, between major and minority groups, between 'high and low' castes, and between men and women. Choose one of these, and write a long essay with examples of injustice, and include its history, causes, and possible remedies.

Haikus

“Haiku” is a traditional form of Japanese poetry. A haiku in English is a very short poem in the English language, following to a greater or lesser extent the form and style of the Japanese haiku. A typical haiku is a three-line observation about a fleeting moment often involving nature.

1

An old silent pond
A frog jumps into the pond
Splash! Silence again.

-Baso

3

Under the lamppost
frozen children huddle together
Paper fire flickers

-Vishnu S Rai

5

Your eyes are fire.
Their image burnt into my soul
scarred by beauty.

-Brandon

2

Mellow, mild May day,
calling children out to play.
Summer’s on her way!

-Patricia L Sisco

4

From across the lake
past the black winter trees
Faint sounds of a flute.

-Richard Wright

6

ground squirrel
balancing its tomato
on the garden fence

-Don Eulert

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the haikus and answer the questions.

- Give a suitable title for each of the haikus.
- What’s the topic or theme of the 2nd haiku. Elaborate.
- What image does the 3rd Haiku create?
- Explain with reference the 5th haiku.
- Which one(s) of the 6 haikus use alliteration? Why?
- Which one of the haikus uses personification? Describe its relevance.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the haikus again and answer the questions.

- a. Many modern western poets do not subscribe to the 5-7-5 haiku pattern, but maintain the core principles, that is, a haiku still focuses on one brief moment in time, employs provocative, colourful imagery, and provides a sudden moment of illumination. Which haikus (out of 6) do not follow the 5-7-5 pattern? On what ground you can say that they are still haikus? Justify.
- b. What sudden moments of illumination or, provocative colourful images do these haikus create? Elucidate.
- c. Make a critical analysis of either 1, 2, 3 haikus or 4, 5, 6 haikus.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Write an essay on the history of haikus along time. Remember that classical haiku writing has been modified in modern age.
- b. Modern haikus do not follow the 5-7-5 pattern. Is this good or bad? Critically comment.
- c. Try to write haikus on any three of the given topics.
 - i. Winter Season
 - ii. Kathmandu
 - iii. Friendship
 - iv. Blindness
 - v. Fewa taal
 - vi. Mt. Everest

SECTION 4

Fiction

Fiction is the dream of the writer, made visible on the page. It is fabricated and based on the author's imagination. It is created out of imagination, not presented fact, though it may be based on a true story or situation. Fictitious characters are presented in a fictitious setting in stories and novels. Short stories, novels, myths, legends, and fairy tales are all considered fiction.

Fiction is broadly categorized into commercial and literary fiction. Commercial fiction attracts a broad audience and may fall into any subgenre such as mystery, romance, crime thriller, science fiction, etc. Literary fiction tends to appeal to a smaller, more intellectual adventurous audience.

Reading a fiction has several mental, emotional and language benefits. It can help people understand others' mental states, a significant skill in developing relationships. Fictions can help us understand the complexities of social life and change their attitude. There is no doubt, fiction readers build their language competency. They are more likely to have a larger vocabulary. Moreover, fiction allows for uncertainty where creativity survives. Most importantly, there is no one who does not find pleasure in reading stories. Reading a fiction certainly makes you happier.

This section contains a few stories, viz. folktales, fantasies, ancient stories, modern short stories and science fiction as well as a novella. It is believed that the students will be familiar with different styles of writing, which will eventually help them to make their own stories and novella. In short, the texts selected from different areas will shower with pleasures of reading as well as inspire the students to write such kinds of prose.

Fingers of Dream

(This story comes from the Ngoongar language group from the south west region of Western Australia. The story of Spirit Fingers as told by Paul Harris.)

Before you read

a. Briefly tell what a folktale is.

In the dream time, the earth lay still. Nothing moved, nothing grew. One day, the Rainbow Serpent awoke from the long sleep under the ground. She travelled all over the world leaving marks in the land she went, creating rivers where she moved and lakes where she slept. She returned to the place where she first woke up and called out to the frogs: "Come out! Come out!" The frogs came out slowly. The frogs came out slowly because they were full of water. The Rainbow Serpent tickled their bellies. The frogs laughed and laughed and let all their water out. Running across the land, the water filled the rivers and lakes. From the water grass and trees grew and animals awoke. They followed the Rainbow Serpent and were happy. Some lived in rocks, some in trees and others in the air. The Rainbow Serpent gave them laws to live by peacefully. Then she went back to her place to rest and asked the Spirits to maintain law and order. Everything was peaceful for the time being. However, some animals became disruptive and caused trouble.

"Those who follow the law will be rewarded and given human forms. Those who break the laws will be turned into stones forever!" Declared the Guiding Spirits.

The lawbreakers were turned into mountains and hills. Those who kept her laws were turned into humans and given the totem of animals they once were. Tribes knew themselves by their totems like kangaroos, emu, carpet snakes and many many more.

To ensure that no one starves, man must not eat from their totem, only of others. That way there is plenty for everyone. The tribes lived together on the land given to them by the Rainbow Serpent and knew the land will always be theirs and no one will ever take it away from them.

However, some inevitable things happened from time to time. One such event took place in western part of the land, home of the Ngoongar speaking people. In this land, great jungle flourished and many creatures lived in harmony with each other. The Ngoongar people who also lived in the jungle enjoyed the bounty the jungle had to offer. They picked berries and cooked small animals to feed themselves. There was abundance of food for the people and creatures. These people sang and

danced, and played games to amuse themselves.

However, the mass flourished too well and there were too many people in the paradise. Because of this, the jungle soon started to die. The Spirits became very unhappy with the people.

"The people are destroying this paradise and all the creatures!" This was their lamentation day and night.

"We should punish the people for their destruction!" said one of the Spirits.

"How shall we punish them?" asked another Spirit. "We cannot kill what the Creator has created."

"I have an idea," replied another Spirit. "This way the people will somewhat suffer but will come to their senses."

That night the Spirits send dreams to all the creatures except the people. The dreams told the creatures to leave and find new places to live. Next day, the creatures started to leave.

The first to leave were the birds. The people could see flocks of birds flying in every direction. They wondered what was happening but thought that the Spirits would protect them.

Next to leave were the dingoes. In great packs! Then the kangaroos and the emus until all the creatures left. After the animals had gone, the jungle was very quiet. Not even an insect remain. People still did not think that anything was going to happen.

That night, the Spirits sent dreams to the people. The jungle disappeared and great mountains were rising up. Punishment had begun! People woke up. They started running away in panic. But they were surrounded by towers of rocks and there was nowhere to run away. However, the Spirits left a small oasis surrounded by trees for the people. After the catastrophe, the Spirits told the people what they had done. The people realized their mistake and were very ashamed. After some time, the Spirits decided that they have learnt their lesson. The Spirits let the mountains fall. The Spirits, however, left some marks to remind them of their punishment. The ruins in the shape of the fingers of the Spirits were left behind to remind them of the wrath that can be brought down on to them.

This is how the pinnacles were created! And they still remain today.

(The Pinnacles are limestone formations within Nambung National Park, near the town of Cervantes, Western Australia.)

Glossary

disruptive = causing trouble and stopping something from being continued

totem = an object that is respected for religious purposes

bounty = great kindness or willingness to give

dingoe = wild dog found in Australia

catastrophe = sudden event that causes great trouble

wrath = extreme anger

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the story and answer the following questions.

- a. Which tribal group does the story represent?
- b. How were the first rivers and lakes created?
- c. How did water fill the rivers and lakes?
- d. Who were given the authority to maintain law and order after the Rainbow Serpent went back to sleep?
- e. What was the importance of the forest?
- f. Which were the first living beings to leave the forest?
- g. Why didn't people find anything strange even when the animals left the forest?
- h. How did people realize that the Spirits were angry?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the story again and answer the questions.

- a. How did people of the Ngoongar Tribe pass their time?
- b. How did the Spirits communicate with the animals and people?
- c. What were the rewards and punishments of the law given by the Rainbow Serpent?
- d. How did the punishment begin for the people?
- e. What did the Spirits do after they realized that the people had learnt their lesson?
- f. Explain, with reference to the context:

- g. This is how the pinnacles were created! And they still remain today.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Dreams are said to be powerful medium for forecasting the future. The signs seen in the dream are translated to either 'good or bad omen'. Is it the same in your culture? Develop materials on any genre: poem, song, skit, drama, cartoon, etc. You can also compare the signs of your culture and one of your friends and find the differences and the similarities reflecting our rich and diverse cultures.
- b. Eco-system is vital for the survival of humans. In every culture there are stories about it. Find similar story in your culture and write story with illustration.
- c. We can see how our eco-system is being abused around us. Prepare to debate for and against the measures our country has taken to rectify it.
- d. Summarize the tale in your own words.

Kokopelli the Humpbacked Deity of Music

Among the Hopi tribes, Kokopelli carries unborn children on his back and distributes them to women. He often takes part in rituals relating to marriage. Kokopelli also presides over the reproduction of game animals, and is often depicted with creatures such as snakes, and insects. Kokopelli's flute-playing chases away the winter and brings about spring. He frequently appears with Paiyatamu, another flutist, in depictions of maize-grinding ceremonies.

Before you read

Look at the picture and guess

- a. What do you see in the picture?
- b. What is the man doing in the picture?
- c. Where do you think he is?

In the beginning, the Native American people lived in the Inner World in which they were created. One day, a child was born who looked very different from the others. He had a large head and grew very tall. His name was Kokopelli. The other children teased him because he looked different.

"Hey, Kokopelli! You really look strange!"

"Here comes the freak!"

"Hey! stranger, where are going? Come and play with us."

"How did you become like this?"

"Are you even one of us?"

Kokopelli tried to avoid them because he felt so ashamed of his appearance. When it was too unbearable for him, he would climb up the hills and cry in solitude. He didn't really want to be different from the others. One night he cried so loudly that he could be heard throughout the universe where the Spiderwoman was hanging in the stars.

"Don't cry Kokopelli. Come to me, dear child," Spiderwoman coaxed him.

"Who are you?" asked Kokopelli looking up at the Spiderwoman in surprise and fear.

"I am Spiderwoman, one of the Guardians of the Universe," she smilingly replied.

"Don't be afraid. I will help you."

"Can you change my appearance? I don't want to look like this. Please help me!" begged Kokopelli in tears.

"I cannot change your appearance but I can help you in other ways so that you will love yourself," promised the Spiderwoman.

So he climbed into the universe. Spiderwoman knew Kokopelli had a good heart and felt sorry for him.

She created a beautiful flute and said, "This is a magic flute and it has the power to charm everything and everyone in the universe. Take it."

"Take these stars as well. They are seeds for making babies who will be as beautiful as the stars," she said to him and he filled his back with stars.

"Now you are not an ordinary being. With these powers you have become a deity. I know you have a good heart and you will use these to help your people."

"I shall never forget your gifts and I promise to serve my people with all my heart," thanked Kokopelli to the Spiderwoman.

Kokopelli returned home and from then on when he played his flute, the music filled people's heart with joy and made them dance. And the sky cried tears of joy, bringing abundant harvest. Each maiden, who catches a star would someday have a baby who will be as beautiful as the star.

One day, something happened in the inner world. The Great Serpent, one of the guardians of the inner world was watching the people. Among them was a humpbacked flute player called Kokopelli who created magical sound with his flute. He gave happiness to people around him. The Great Serpent watched Kokopelli and liked him. So the Great Serpent approached him.

"Kokopelli, take these seeds and find new places for your people to live and prosper," said the Great Serpent and gave him a bowl of sacred seeds of corn.

"Yes, O Great Serpent, I will do as you command. I will lead my people to new lands and look after them well," promised Kokopelli.

Kokopelli swallowed most of the seeds and stored in the hump of his back. That is how Kokopelli became like a locust. The remaining corn seeds, he scattered before him. As he played the flute, the seeds danced with the tune of the flute. The seeds danced from Kokopelli to the people. Some of the people began to gather the seeds while others ignored them.

There were a few seeds that flew past unseen. One of the seeds grew into a giant

corn stalk and Kokopelli played his flute under the stalk. The people without seeds heard Kokopelli play the flute and then saw him climb the giant corn stalk. They followed him and climbed after him. As they climbed higher and higher, the corn stalk below started to disappear in the innermost world. The other people with seeds who remained behind became the inner-world Kachinas.

Kokopelli and his followers journeyed from the first Inner- world to the second and then to the Third- inner world. Kokopelli guided the people on through the Sipapu to the fourth world which is the earth today. Here, they encountered with some mishaps which Kokopelli solved wisely. One of them was the encounter with the Eagle.

When Kokopelli and his followers were migrating to the high mountains, they met an Eagle. Kokopelli was also a shape-shifter and so was his friend. They would transform themselves into katydid or locusts. They were in the form of locusts when the people met the Eagle.

Kokopelli asked the Eagle, "Have you been living here very long?"

"Yes, since the creation of the Fourth World," the Eagle replied.

"We have travelled a long way to reach this land. Would you give us permission to live here with you?" asked Kokopelli.

"Perhaps," said the Eagle. "But I must test you first to see if it is worth living with you."

Drawing out one of the arrows which the Eagle was holding in his claws, he ordered the two locusts to step closer.

To one of them he said, "I am going to poke this arrow into your eyes. If you do not close your eyes, you and your people may live in this land."

Where upon the Eagle poked the arrow so close to the locust's eye, it almost touches his eye. But the locust did not even blink."

"You are a people of great courage and strength," said the Eagle. "But the second test is much harder and I don't believe you will pass it."

"We are ready for the second test," said the two locusts.

The Eagle pull out a bow, cocked an arrow and shot the first locust through the body. The locust, with the arrow sticking out on one side of him, lifted the flute he had brought with him and began to play a sweet and tender melody.

"Well," said the Eagle. "You have more power than I thought." So he shot the second locust with the second arrow. The two locusts who were both pierced with arrows played their flutes more tenderly and sweetly, producing a soothing vibration and uplifted the Spirit which healed their pierced bodies. The Eagle, of course, then gave the people permission to occupy the land.

"Now that you have stood both tests, you may use my feather anytime to talk to our Father's Son, the Creator, and I will deliver your message because I am the conqueror of air and the master of height. I am the only one who has the power of space above for I represent the loftiness of the spirit and can deliver your prayers to the Creator.

Ever since then the people have used the feathers of the Eagle for their prayers feather and sing to the sick child knowing that the sweet power of music will help her to heal. The locust who is known as the humped back flute player, the Kachina named Kokopilla or Kokopelli because he looked like wood. Koko means 'wood' and pilla means 'cleaning hook.' In the hump of his back, he carries seeds of plants and flowers and with the music of his flute sowed them.

On the land given by the Eagle, the first corn seeds for food was planted and to this day corn is passed back and forth through the city. It is the stable food of the Native Americans. As people moved off in their migrations over the continent, they carved pictographs of him on the rocks all the way from the tip of South America to Canada. It was these two blue and green flute players, that the great plains and societies were named. After occupying the land, the people divided it into four groups and each went to four different directions. Every so often this humpback flute player would stop and scatter seeds and then he will march on playing his flute and singing a song.

Kokopelli, with a humpback and antenna like protrusions on his head, is also a Deity for many other symbols. The Native Americans tribes like the Hopi, the Zuni, the Navajo and others in the southwest of the country worship him in many forms. In the hump of his back, Kokopelli stores seeds and stars so he is basically a God of fertility and good fortunes. The Native American tradition says that through ritual the heart finds speech. So for Kokopelli the Wise, playing his flute is a ritual that connects him to the heart of the ancient.

Glossary

freak - a person, event, etc., which extremely unlikely

solitude - the state of being alone

coax - to persuade someone to do something by talking to them in a kind and gentle way
deity - a god or goddess

humpbacked - with a back shaped like a hump

hump - a large lump on the back of a person, caused by an unusual curve in the spine (= *the row of bones in the middle of the back*)

locust - a large insect that lives in hot countries and flies in large groups, destroying all the plants and crops of an area

Kachina - A kachina is a spirit being in the religious beliefs of the Pueblo people, Native American cultures located in the southwestern part of the United States. In the Pueblo culture, kachina rituals are practiced by the Hopi, Zuni, Hopi-Tewa, and certain Keresan tribes, as well as in most Pueblo tribes in New Mexico.

Sipapu - Sipapu is a Hopi word for a small hole or indentation in the floor of a kiva or pithouse. Kivas were used by the Ancestral Puebloans and continue to be used by modern-day Puebloans. The sipapu symbolizes the portal through which their ancient ancestors first emerged to enter the present world.

katydid – an insect related to grasshopper and cricket.

pictograph - a diagram that uses pictures to represent amounts or numbers of a particular thing

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the story and answer the questions.

- In which countries do Native Americans live? What are the indicators?
- Why does Kokopelli have a hump back?
- How did the importance of Kokopelli increase after meeting the Spider?
- What does the Great Serpent represent?
- Why are the flutes of Kokopelli and his companion made of jade?
- What kind of importance is placed on the eagle?

- g. What other form can Kokopelli take?
- h. When does Kokopelli take other forms?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the story again and answer the following questions.

- a. How many levels of heavens must Kokopelli and his followers pass through to come out to the earth?
- b. What do you think these three levels of heaven represent?
- c. What were the conditions given by the Eagle for Kokopelli and his followers to be able to live on the earth?
- d. What did the feather given by the Eagle represent?
- e. What are shape shifters? What shapes could Kokopelli and his friend change into and what do these shapes represent in the Native American culture?

C. Leading to Write

- a. The beginning of mankind is a subject of interest for all cultures and there are also different perceptions about it. Do you have such story about the beginning of mankind in your culture? Write an essay about it. Illustrate your essay if possible.
- b. Kokopelli is known as God of Fertility. I am sure there are God/s in your culture that resembles Kokopelli. Develop an essay/cartoon/ poem or on any genre about it.
- c. Or if you don't have any in your culture, you can explore one in any culture and develop about it.
- d. Kokopelli was unlucky with his friends for being physically different. However, it turned out to be a "blessing in disguise". All of us have come across such situation in our lives. Write about one situation in your life.
- e. There are some animals mentioned in the story like serpent, spider and locust. In every culture, some animals represent important concepts and beliefs. What are they in your culture? Develop a story/drama/ skit or on any genre and present to your class so that different cultures can be better understood.

The Story of Io

James Baldwin



James Arthur Baldwin (1924-1987) was an American novelist, playwright, and activist. His essays, as collected in *Notes of a Native Son*, explore intricacies of racial, sexual, and class distinctions in Western societies, most notably in mid-20th-century America. A novelist and essayist of considerable renown, James Baldwin bore articulate witness to the unhappy consequences of American racial strife.

This story has been extracted from “Old Greek Stories” by James Baldwin. Many of the classic tales from Greek Mythology are included in this full and comprehensive collection. In Greek

mythology, Io was one of the mortal lovers of Zeus. An Argive princess, she was an ancestor of many kings and heroes.

Before you read

- Have you read any old Greek story? Which one?
- What do you think are the subject/subjects of the Greek stories?
- What type of story do you think “The Story of Io” is?

In the town of Argos there lived a maiden named Io. She was so fair and good that all who knew her loved her, and said that there was no one like her in the whole world. When Jupiter, in his home in the clouds, heard of her, he came down to Argos to see her. She pleased him so much, and was so kind and wise, that he came back the next day and the next and the next; and by and by he stayed in Argos all the time so that he might be near her. She did not know who he was, but thought that he was a prince from some far-off land; for he came in the guise of a young man, and did not look like the great king of earth and sky that he was.

But Juno, the queen who lived with Jupiter and shared his throne in the midst of the clouds, did not love Io at all. When she heard why Jupiter stayed away from home so long, she made up her mind to do the fair girl all the harm that she could; and one day she went down to Argos to try what could be done.

Jupiter saw her while she was yet a great way off, and he knew why she had come. So, to save Io from her, he changed the maiden to a white cow. He thought that when Juno had gone back home, it would not be hard to give Io her own form again.

But when the queen saw the cow, she knew that it was Io.

“Oh, what a fine cow you have there!” she said. “Give her to me, good Jupiter, give her to me!”

Jupiter did not like to do this; but she coaxed so hard that at last he gave up, and let her have the cow for her own. He thought that it would not be long till he could get her away from the queen, and change her to a girl once more. But Juno was too wise to trust him. She took the cow by her horns, and led her out of the town.

“Now, my sweet maid,” she said, “I will see that you stay in this shape as long as you live.”

Then she gave the cow in charge of a strange watchman named Argus, who had, not two eyes only, as you and I have, but ten times ten. And Argus led the cow to a grove, and tied her by a long rope to a tree, where she had to stand and eat grass, and cry, “Moo! moo!” from morn till night; and when the sun had set, and it was dark, she lay down on the cold ground and wept, and cried, “Moo! moo!” till she fell asleep.

But no kind friend heard her, and no one came to help her; for none but Jupiter and Juno knew that the white cow who stood in the grove was Io, whom all the world loved. Day in and day out, Argus, who was all eyes, sat on a hill close by and kept watch; and you could not say that he went to sleep at all, for while half of his eyes were shut, the other half were wide awake, and thus they slept and watched by turns.

Jupiter was grieved when he saw to what a hard life Io had been doomed, and he tried to think of some plan to set her free. One day he called sly Mercury, who had wings on his shoes, and bade him go and lead the cow away from the grove where she was kept. Mercury went down and stood near the foot of the hill where Argus sat, and began to play sweet tunes on his flute. This was just what the strange watchman liked to hear; and so he called to Mercury, and asked him to come up and sit by his side and play still other tunes.

Mercury did as he wished, and played such strains of sweet music as no one in all the world has heard from that day to this. And as he played, queer old Argus lay down upon the grass and listened, and thought that he had not had so great a treat in all his life. But by and by those sweet sounds wrapped him in so strange a spell that all his eyes closed at once, and he fell into a deep sleep.

This was just what Mercury wished. It was not a brave thing to do, and yet he drew a long, sharp knife from his belt and cut off the head of poor Argus while he slept.

Then he ran down the hill to loose the cow and lead her to the town.

But Juno had seen him kill her watchman, and she met him on the road. She cried out to him and told him to let the cow go; and her face was so full of wrath that, as soon as he saw her, he turned and fled, and left poor Io to her fate.

Juno was so much grieved when she saw Argus stretched dead in the grass on the hilltop, that she took his hundred eyes and set them in the tail of a peacock; and there you may still see them to this day.

Then she found a great gadfly, as big as a bat, and sent it to buzz in the white cow's ears, and to bite her and sting her so that she could have no rest all day long. Poor Io ran from place to place to get out of its way; but it buzzed and buzzed, and stung and stung, till she was wild with fright and pain, and wished that she were dead. Day after day she ran, now through the thick woods, now in the long grass that grew on the treeless plains, and now by the shore of the sea.

By and by she came to a narrow neck of the sea, and, since the land on the other side looked as though she might find rest there, she leaped into the waves and swam across; and that place has been called Bosphorus—a word which means the Sea of the Cow—from that time till now, and you will find it so marked on the maps which you use at school. Then she went on through a strange land on the other side, but, let her do what she would, she could not get rid of the gadfly.

After a time, she came to a place where there were high mountains with snow-capped peaks which seemed to touch the sky. There she stopped to rest a while; and she looked up at the calm, cold cliffs above her and wished that she might die where all was so grand and still. But as she looked she saw a giant form stretched upon the rocks midway between earth and sky, and she knew at once that it was Prometheus, the young Titan, whom Jupiter had chained there because he had given fire to men.

"My sufferings are not so great as his," she thought; and her eyes were filled with tears.

Then Prometheus looked down and spoke to her, and his voice was very mild and kind.

"I know who you are," he said; and then he told her not to lose hope, but to go south and then west, and she would by and by find a place in which to rest.

She would have thanked him if she could; but when she tried to speak she could only say, "Moo! moo!"

Then Prometheus went on and told her that the time would come when she should

be given her own form again, and that she should live to be the mother of a race of heroes. “As for me,” said he, “I bide the time in patience, for I know that one of those heroes will break my chains and set me free. Farewell!”

Then Io, with a brave heart, left the great Titan and journeyed, as he had told her, first south and then west. The gadfly was worse now than before, but she did not fear it half so much, for her heart was full of hope. For a whole year she wandered, and at last she came to the land of Egypt in Africa. She felt so tired now that she could go no farther, and so she lay down near the bank of the great River Nile to rest.

All this time Jupiter might have helped her had he not been so much afraid of Juno. But now it so chanced that when the poor cow lay down by the bank of the Nile, Queen Juno, in her high house in the clouds, also lay down to take a nap. As soon as she was sound asleep, Jupiter like a flash of light sped over the sea to Egypt. He killed the cruel gadfly and threw it into the river. Then he stroked the cow’s head with his hand, and the cow was seen no more; but in her place stood the young girl Io, pale and frail, but fair and good as she had been in her old home in the town of Argos. Jupiter said not a word, nor even showed himself to the tired, trembling maiden. He hurried back with all speed to his high home in the clouds, for he feared that Juno might waken and find out what he had done.

The people of Egypt were kind to Io, and gave her a home in their sunny land; and by and by the king of Egypt asked her to be his wife, and made her his queen; and she lived a long and happy life in his marble palace on the bank of the Nile. Ages afterward, the great-grandson of the great-grandson of Io’s great-grandson broke the chains of Prometheus and set that mighty friend of mankind free.

The name of the hero was Hercules.

Glossary

guise - a way in which somebody/something appears, often in a way that is different from usual or that hides the truth about them/it

coax - cajole; to persuade somebody to do something by talking to them in a kind and gentle way

grove - a small area of land with fruit trees of particular types on it

sly - acting in a secret or dishonest way, often intending to trick people

strains - the sounds of music being played or sung

queer - (old-fashioned) strange or unusual

wrath - extreme anger

gadfly - any of various flies (such as a horsefly, botfly, or warble fly) that bite or annoy livestock.

frail – physically weak and thin

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the story and answer the questions.

- a. Who was Io, and what was she like?
- b. Who was Jupiter? Who did Io think Jupiter was?
- c. What made Jupiter stay in Argos eventually?
- d. Why did Juno go down to Argos?
- e. How did Jupiter try to save Io from Juno?
- f. Did Mercury manage to help Io? Why?
- g. What did Juno do with the eyes of Argus?
- h. What is Bosphorus?
- i. Where and how did Io settle eventually?
- j. Who freed Prometheus from his captivity?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the story again and answer the following questions.

- a. Why did Juno employ Argus to look after the white cow?
- b. Why couldn't Jupiter turn the white cow back to its true form?
- c. Who is Mercury? Why did Jupiter ask him for help? How did Mercury manage to overcome Argus?
- d. Who was Prometheus? Why was he laying between earth and sky?
- e. What was the prophecy for Io given by Prometheus?
- f. Explain, with reference to the context;
 - i. “Now, my sweet maid,” she said, “I will see that you stay in this shape as long as you live.”
 - ii. She would have thanked him if she could; but when she tried to speak she could only say, “Moo! moo!”

C. Leading to Write

- a. There is a saying: "Out of the frying pan and into the fire." How does this saying apply to Io after Mercury killed Argus?
- b. Even gods and goddesses are not perfect and have "feet of clay". Point out some of the imperfectness of the Gods and Goddess mentioned in the story.
- c. "One good turn deserves the other." How does this saying apply to Io and Prometheus? We each have experienced this in our lives. Write an essay or your story.
- d. The plight of Io was that she was very beautiful and good. Was it justifiable for her to be punished? Why? We have been victims of such situations, whether slight or serious or hilarious. Write about your or anyone you wish to having gone through such experience using any genre i.e. story, cartoon/ caricature with captions, poem etc.

The Diamond Necklace

Guy de Maupassant



Henri René Albert Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) a 19th century French author, was remembered as a master of the short story form, and as a representative of the Naturalist school, who depicted human lives and destinies and social forces in disillusion and often pessimistic terms. His stories are characterized by economy of style and efficient, effortless dénouements.

This short story takes place in France several hundred years ago. The main character, Mathilde Loisel, pays a steep price for her pride.

Before you read

- Read the title and guess what the story is about?
- How do women from an upper class dress?
- How does the daily life of an upper class woman differ from the daily life of a middle class woman?

She was one of those pretty and charming girls born, as though fate had blundered over her, into a family of artisans. She had no marriage portion, no expectations, no means of getting known, understood, loved, and wedded by a man of wealth and distinction; and she let herself be married off to a little clerk in the Ministry of Education. Her tastes were simple because she had never been able to afford any other, but she was as unhappy as though she had married beneath her; for women have no caste or class, their beauty, grace, and charm serving them for birth or family. Their natural delicacy, their instinctive elegance, their nimbleness of wit, are their only mark of rank, and put the slum girl on a level with the highest lady in the land.

She suffered endlessly, feeling herself born for every delicacy and luxury. She suffered from the poorness of her house, from its mean walls, worn chairs, and ugly curtains. All these things, of which other women of her class would not even have been aware, tormented and insulted her. The sight of the little Breton girl who came to do the work in her little house aroused heart-broken regrets and hopeless dreams in her mind. She imagined silent antechambers, heavy with Oriental tapestries, lit by torches in lofty bronze sockets, with two tall footmen in knee-breeches sleeping in large arm-chairs, overcome by the heavy warmth of the stove. She imagined vast saloons hung with antique silks, exquisite pieces of furniture supporting priceless

ornaments, and small, charming, perfumed rooms, created just for little parties of intimate friends, men who were famous and sought after, whose homage roused every other woman's envious longings.

When she sat down for dinner at the round table covered with a three-days-old cloth, opposite her husband, who took the cover off the soup-tureen, exclaiming delightedly: "Aha! Scotch broth! What could be better?" she imagined delicate meals, gleaming silver, tapestries peopling the walls with folk of a past age and strange birds in fiery forests; she imagined delicate food served in marvellous dishes, murmured gallantries, listened to with an inscrutable smile as one trifled with the rosy flesh of trout or wings of asparagus chicken.

She had no clothes, no jewels, nothing. And these were the only things she loved; she felt that she was made for them. She had longed so eagerly to charm, to be desired, to be wildly attractive and sought after.

She had a rich friend, an old school friend whom she refused to visit, because she suffered so keenly when she returned home. She would weep whole days, with grief, regret, despair, and misery.

One evening her husband came home with an exultant air, holding a large envelope in his hand.

"Here's something for you," he said.

Swiftly she tore the paper and drew out a printed card on which were these words:

"The Minister of Education and Madame Ramponneau request the pleasure of the company of Monsieur and Madame Loisel at the Ministry on the evening of Monday, January the 18th."

Instead of being delighted, as her-husband hoped, she flung the invitation petulantly across the table, murmuring:

"What do you want me to do with this?"

"Why, darling, I thought you'd be pleased. You never go out, and this is a great occasion. I had tremendous trouble to get it. Everyone wants one; it's very select, and very few go to the clerks. You'll see all the really big people there."

She looked at him out of furious eyes, and said impatiently: "And what do you suppose I am to wear at such an affair?"

He had not thought about it; he stammered:

"Why, the dress you go to the theatre in. It looks very nice, to me...."

He stopped, stupefied and utterly at a loss when he saw that his wife was beginning to cry. Two large tears ran slowly down from the corners of her eyes towards the corners of her mouth.

"What's the matter with you? What's the matter with you?" he faltered.

But with a violent effort she overcame her grief and replied in a calm voice, wiping her wet cheeks:

"Nothing. Only I haven't a dress and so I can't go to this party. Give your invitation to some friend of yours whose wife will be turned out better than I shall."

He was heart-broken.

"Look here, Mathilde," he persisted. What would be the cost of a suitable dress, which you could use on other occasions as well, something very simple?"

She thought for several seconds, reckoning up prices and also wondering for how large a sum she could ask without bringing upon herself an immediate refusal and an exclamation of horror from the careful-minded clerk.

At last she replied with some hesitation:

"I don't know exactly, but I think I could do it on four hundred francs."

He grew slightly pale, for this was exactly the amount he had been saving for a gun, intending to get a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre with some friends who went lark-shooting there on Sundays.

Nevertheless, he said: "Very well. I'll give you four hundred francs. But try and get a really nice dress with the money."

The day of the party drew near, and Madame Loisel seemed sad, uneasy and anxious. Her dress was ready, however. One evening her husband said to her:

"What's the matter with you? You've been very odd for the last three days."

"I'm utterly miserable at not having any jewels, not a single stone, to wear," she replied. "I shall look absolutely no one. I would almost rather not go to the party."

"Wear flowers," he said. "They're very smart at this time of the year. For ten francs you could get two or three gorgeous roses."

She was not convinced.

"No . . . there's nothing so humiliating as looking poor in the middle of a lot of rich women."

"How stupid you are!" exclaimed her husband. "Go and see Madame Forestier and

ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her quite well enough for that."

She uttered a cry of delight.

"That's true. I never thought of it."

Next day she went to see her friend and told her her trouble.

Madame Forestier went to her dressing-table, took up a large box, brought it to Madame Loisel, opened it, and said:

"Choose, my dear."

First she saw some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian cross in gold and gems, of exquisite workmanship. She tried the effect of the jewels before the mirror, hesitating, unable to make up her mind to leave them, to give them up. She kept on asking:

"Haven't you anything else?"

"Yes. Look for yourself. I don't know what you would like best."

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin case, a superb diamond necklace; her heart began to beat covetously. Her hands trembled as she lifted it. She fastened it round her neck, upon her high dress, and remained in ecstasy at sight of herself.

Then, with hesitation, she asked in anguish:

"Could you lend me this, just this alone?"

"Yes, of course."

She flung herself on her friend's breast, embraced her frenziedly, and went away with her treasure. The day of the party arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. She was the prettiest woman present, elegant, graceful, smiling, and quite above herself with happiness. All the men stared at her, inquired her name, and asked to be introduced to her. All the Under-Secretaries of State were eager to waltz with her. The Minister noticed her.

She danced madly, ecstatically, drunk with pleasure, with no thought for anything, in the triumph of her beauty, in the pride of her success, in a cloud of happiness made up of this universal homage and admiration, of the desires she had aroused, of the completeness of a victory so dear to her feminine heart.

She left about four o'clock in the morning. Since midnight her husband had been dozing in a deserted little room, in company with three other men whose wives were having a good time. He threw over her shoulders the garments he had brought for them to go home in, modest everyday clothes, whose poverty clashed with the

beauty of the ball-dress. She was conscious of this and was anxious to hurry away, so that she should not be noticed by the other women putting on their costly furs.

Loisel restrained her.

"Wait a little. You'll catch cold in the open. I'm going to fetch a cab."

But she did not listen to him and rapidly descended the staircase. When they were out in the street they could not find a cab; they began to look for one, shouting at the drivers whom they saw passing in the distance.

They walked down towards the Seine, desperate and shivering. At last they found on the quay one of those old night prowling carriages which are only to be seen in Paris after dark, as though they were ashamed of their shabbiness in the daylight.

It brought them to their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly they walked up to their own apartment. It was the end, for her. As for him, he was thinking that he must be at the office at ten.

She took off the garments in which she had wrapped her shoulders, so as to see herself in all her glory before the mirror. But suddenly she uttered a cry. The necklace was no longer round her neck!

"What's the matter with you?" asked her husband, already half undressed.

She turned towards him in the utmost distress.

"I . . . I . . . I've no longer got Madame Forestier's necklace. . . ."

He started with astonishment.

"What! . . . Impossible!"

They searched in the folds of her dress, in the folds of the coat, in the pockets, everywhere. They could not find it.

"Are you sure that you still had it on when you came away from the ball?" he asked.

"Yes, I touched it in the hall at the Ministry."

"But if you had lost it in the street, we should have heard it fall."

"Yes. Probably we should. Did you take the number of the cab?"

"No. You didn't notice it, did you?"

"No."

They stared at one another, dumbfounded. At last Loisel put on his clothes again.

"I'll go over all the ground we walked," he said, "and see if I can't find it."

And he went out. She remained in her evening clothes, lacking strength to get into

bed, huddled on a chair, without volition or power of thought.

Her husband returned about seven. He had found nothing.

He went to the police station, to the newspapers, to offer a reward, to the cab companies, everywhere that a ray of hope impelled him.

She waited all day long, in the same state of bewilderment at this fearful catastrophe.

Loisel came home at night, his face lined and pale; he had discovered nothing.

"You must write to your friend," he said, "and tell her that you've broken the clasp of her necklace and are getting it mended. That will give us time to look about us."

She wrote at his dictation.

By the end of a week they had lost all hope.

Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

"We must see about replacing the diamonds."

Next day they took the box which had held the necklace and went to the jewellers whose name was inside. He consulted his books.

"It was not I who sold this necklace, Madame; I must have merely supplied the clasp."

Then they went from jeweller to jeweller, searching for another necklace like the first, consulting their memories, both ill with remorse and anguish of mind.

In a shop at the Palais-Royal they found a string of diamonds which seemed to them exactly like the one they were looking for. It was worth forty thousand francs. They were allowed to have it for thirty-six thousand.

They begged the jeweller not to sell it for three days. And they arranged matters on the understanding that it would be taken back for thirty-four thousand francs, if the first one were found before the end of February.

Loisel possessed eighteen thousand francs left to him by his father. He intended to borrow the rest.

He did borrow it, getting a thousand from one man, five hundred from another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes of hand, entered into ruinous agreements, did business with usurers and the whole tribe of money-lenders. He mortgaged the whole remaining years of his existence, risked his signature without even knowing it he could honour it, and, appalled at the agonising face of the future, at the black

misery about to fall upon him, at the prospect of every possible physical privation and moral torture, he went to get the new necklace and put down upon the jeweller's counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Madame Loisel took back the necklace to Madame Forestier, the latter said to her in a chilly voice:

"You ought to have brought it back sooner; I might have needed it."

She did not, as her friend had feared, open the case. If she had noticed the substitution, what would she have thought? What would she have said? Would she not have taken her for a thief?

Madame Loisel came to know the ghastly life of abject poverty. From the very first she played her part heroically. This fearful debt must be paid off. She would pay it. The servant was dismissed. They changed their flat; they took a garret under the roof.

She came to know the heavy work of the house, the hateful duties of the kitchen. She washed the plates, wearing out her pink nails on the coarse pottery and the bottoms of pans. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and dish-cloths, and hung them out to dry on a string; every morning she took the dustbin down into the street and carried up the water, stopping on each landing to get her breath. And, clad like a poor woman, she went to the fruiterer, to the grocer, to the butcher, a basket on her arm, haggling, insulted, fighting for every wretched half penny of her money.

Every month notes had to be paid off, others renewed, time gained.

Her husband worked in the evenings at putting straight a merchant's accounts, and often at night he did copying at two pence-half penny a page.

And this life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years everything was paid off, everything, the usurer's charges and the accumulation of superimposed interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become like all the other strong, hard, coarse women of poor households. Her hair was badly done, her skirts were awry, her hands were red. She spoke in a shrill voice, and the water slopped all over the floor when she scrubbed it. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down by the window and thought of that evening long ago, of the ball at which she had been so beautiful and so much admired.

What would have happened if she had never lost those jewels. Who knows? Who knows? How strange life is, how fickle! How little is needed to ruin or to save!

One Sunday, as she had gone for a walk along the Champs-Élysées to freshen herself after the labours of the week, she caught sight suddenly of a woman who was taking a child out for a walk. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still attractive.

Madame Loisel was conscious of some emotion. Should she speak to her? Yes, certainly. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all. Why not?

She went up to her.

"Good morning, Jeanne."

The other did not recognise her, and was surprised at being thus familiarly addressed by a poor woman.

"But . . . Madame . . ." she stammered. "I don't know . . . you must be making a mistake."

"No . . . I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry.

"Oh! . . . my poor Mathilde, how you have changed! . . ."

"Yes, I've had some hard times since I saw you last; and many sorrows . . . and all on your account."

"On my account! . . . How was that?"

"You remember the diamond necklace you lent me for the ball at the Ministry?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"How could you? Why, you brought it back."

"I brought you another one just like it. And for the last ten years we have been paying for it. You realise it wasn't easy for us; we had no money. . . . Well, it's paid for at last, and I'm glad indeed."

Madame Forestier had halted.

"You say you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?"

"Yes. You hadn't noticed it? They were very much alike."

And she smiled in proud and innocent happiness.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took her two hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! But mine was imitation. It was worth at the very most five hundred francs! . . . "

Glossary

artisans - people who do skilled work, making things with their hands

delicacy - very careful behavior in a difficult situation so that nobody is offended

elegance - (of people or their behavior) attractive and showing a good sense of style

nimbleness - the quality of being quick and exact either in action or thought

tapestries - pictures or patterns that are made by weaving coloured wool onto heavy cloth

knee-breeches - short pants fastened just below the knee

exquisite - extremely beautiful or carefully made

homage - expression of great respect and honour

Scotch broth - a thick soup containing vegetables and barley (= a type of grain)

inscrutable - if a person or their expression is inscrutable, it is hard to know what they are thinking or feeling, because they do not show any emotion

exultant - feeling or showing great pride or happiness especially because of something exciting that has happened

petulantly - in a bad-tempered and unreasonable way, especially because you cannot do or have what you want

stupefied - surprised or shocked somebody

reckoning - the act of calculating something, especially in a way that is not very exact

gorgeous - very beautiful and attractive; giving pleasure and enjoyment

covetous - having a strong desire for the things that other people have

ecstasy - a feeling or state of very great happiness

anguish - severe pain, mental suffering or unhappiness

frenziedly - with a lot of activity and strong emotions in a way that is often violent or frightening and not under control

quay - a platform in a harbour where boats come in to load, etc.

dumbfounded - unable to speak because of surprise

volition - the power to choose something freely or to make your own decisions

bewilderment - a feeling of being completely confused

catastrophe - an event that causes an individual personal suffering, or that makes difficulties

usurer - a person who lends money to people at unfairly high rates of interest

privation - a lack of the basic things that people need for living

abject - terrible and without hope

garret - a room, often a small dark unpleasant one, at the top of a house, especially in the roof

awry - not in the right position

fickle - changing often and suddenly

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the story and answer the questions.

- a. What kind of fate do pretty and charming rich girls have regarding marriage?
- b. Why was she not happy with her husband?
- c. How does she view her house?
- d. Why did she refuse to visit her old school friend?
- e. How usually would she pass her days when she is filled with regret?
- f. Why did she cry instead of being excited about the invitation?
- g. Why was she not happy even after she had a new dress?
- h. What was Madame Loisel's reaction when she saw the diamond necklace?
- i. Why were the carriages they took only driven at night?
- j. Was Madame Forestier happy when they took back the necklace? Why?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the story again and answer the following questions.

- a. How can poor girls be on a level with the richest girls in the land?
- b. What is a saloon and what is it usually used for?
- c. Did her husband notice that she was not happy with him? Give your reasons.

- d. Was her husband happy with the amount of money she wanted to buy a new dress? Why?
- e. Why was she anxious to hurry away after the party?
- f. How did they manage to buy the diamond necklace eventually?
- g. What price did she have to pay for replacing the necklace?
- h. What is the moral of this story?
- i. Explain, with reference to the context:
 - i. She looked at him out of furious eyes, and said impatiently: "And what do you suppose I am to wear at such an affair?"
 - ii. "Yes, I've had some hard times since I saw you last; and many sorrows . . . and all on your account."

C. Leading to Write

- a. Was Madame Loisel's insistence to look beautiful justifiable at that party? Is this trend universal? Give your reasons.
- b. What is the irony of this story?
- c. Just like in the story, hypocrisy is prevalent in our society. Point out three of them and the reasons why they are so.

The Ransom of Red Chief

O. Henry



William Sydney Porter (1862 – June 5, 1910) known by his pen name O. Henry was an American writer whose short stories are known for wit, wordplay and clever surprise endings. He used his pen name O. Henry, not wanting his readers to know he was in jail. He published 12 stories while in prison. After serving 3 years of the five-year sentence, he was released for good behaviour. His pen never stopped and produced 600 hundred stories.

The present story is also a marvelous example of surprise ending.

Before you read

- a. What do you understand by 'Red Chief'?
- b. Is the story about some bandits?

It looked like a good thing. But wait till I tell you. We were down south, in Alabama – Bill Driscoll and myself – when this kidnapping idea struck us. There was a town down there, as flat as a pancake, and called Summit. Bill and I had about six hundred dollars. We needed just two thousand dollars more for an illegal land deal in Illinois.

We chose for our victim - the only child of an influential citizen named Ebenezer Dorset. He was a boy of ten, with red hair. Bill and I thought that Ebenezer would pay a ransom of two thousand dollars to get his boy back. But wait till I tell you.

About two miles from Summit was a little mountain, covered with cedar trees. There was an opening on the back of the mountain. We stored our supplies in that cave.

One night, we drove a horse and carriage past old Dorset's house. The boy was in the street, throwing rocks at a cat on the opposite fence.

"Hey little boy!" says Bill, "would you like to have a bag of candy and a nice ride?"

The boy hits Bill directly in the eye with a piece of rock.

That boy put up a fight like a wild animal. But, at last, we got him down in the bottom of the carriage and drove away.

We took him up to the cave. The boy had two large bird feathers stuck in his hair. He points a stick at me and says:

"Ha! Paleface, do you dare to enter the camp of Red Chief, the terror of the plains?"

"He's all right now," says Bill, rolling up his pants and examining wounds on his legs. "We're playing Indian. I'm Old Hank, the trapper, Red Chief's captive. I'm going to be scalped at daybreak. By Geronimo! That kid can kick hard."

"Red Chief," says I to the boy, "would you like to go home?"

"Aw, what for?" says he. "I don't have any fun at home. I hate to go to school. I like to camp out. You won't take me back home again, will you?"

"Not right away," say I. "We'll stay here in the cave a while."

"All right!" says he. "That'll be fine. I never had such fun in all my life."

We went to bed about eleven o'clock. Just at daybreak, I was awakened by a series of terrible screams from Bill. Red Chief was sitting on Bill's chest, with one hand holding his hair. In the other, he had a sharp knife. He was attempting to cut off the top of Bill's head, based on what he had declared the night before.

I got the knife away from the boy. But, after that event, Bill's spirit was broken. He lay down, but he never closed an eye again in sleep as long as that boy was with us.

"Do you think anybody will pay out money to get a little imp like that back home?" Bill asked.

"Sure," I said. "A boy like that is just the kind that parents love. Now, you and the Chief get up and make something to eat, while I go up on the top of this mountain and look around."

I climbed to the top of the mountain. Over toward Summit, I expected to see the men of the village searching the countryside. But all was peaceful.

"Perhaps," says I to myself, "it has not yet been discovered that the wolves have taken the lamb from the fold." I went back down the mountain.

When I got to the cave, I found Bill backed up against the side of it. He was breathing hard, with the boy threatening to strike him with a rock.

"He put a red-hot potato down my back," explained Bill, "and then crushed it with his foot. I hit his ears. Have you got a gun with you, Sam?"

I took the rock away from the boy and ended the argument.

"I'll fix you," says the boy to Bill. "No man ever yet struck the Red Chief but what

he got paid for it. You better be careful!"

After eating, the boy takes a leather object with strings tied around it from his clothes and goes outside the cave unwinding it. Then we heard a kind of shout. It was Red Chief holding a sling in one hand. He moved it faster and faster around his head.

Just then I heard a heavy sound and a deep breath from Bill. A rock the size of an egg had hit him just behind his left ear. Bill fell in the fire across the frying pan of hot water for washing the dishes. I pulled him out and poured cold water on his head for half an hour.

Then I went out and caught that boy and shook him.

"If your behavior doesn't improve," say I, "I'll take you straight home. Now, are you going to be good, or not?"

"I was only funning," says he. "I didn't mean to hurt Old Hank. But what did he hit me for? I'll behave if you don't send me home."

I thought it best to send a letter to old man Dorset that day, demanding the ransom and telling how it should be paid. The letter said:

"We have your boy hidden in a place far from Summit. We demand fifteen hundred dollars for his return; the money to be left at midnight tonight at the same place and in the same box as your answer.

If you agree to these terms, send the answer in writing by a messenger tonight at half past eight o'clock. After crossing Owl Creek, on the road to Poplar Cove, there are three large trees. At the bottom of the fence, opposite the third tree, will be a small box. The messenger will place the answer in this box and return immediately to Summit. If you fail to agree to our demand, you will never see your boy again. If you pay the money as demanded, he will be returned to you safe and well within three hours."

I took the letter and walked over to Poplar Cove. I then sat around the post office and store. An old man there says he hears Summit is all worried because of Ebenezer Dorset's boy having been lost or stolen. That was all I wanted to know. I mailed my letter and left. The postmaster said the mail carrier would come by in an hour to take the mail on to Summit.

At half past eight, I was up in the third tree, waiting for the messenger to arrive.

Exactly on time, a half-grown boy rides up the road on a bicycle. He finds the box at the foot of the fence. He puts a folded piece of paper into it and leaves, turning back toward Summit.

I slid down the tree, got the note and was back at the cave in a half hour. I opened the note and read it to Bill. This is what it said:

"Gentlemen: I received your letter about the ransom you ask for the return of my son. I think you are a little high in your demands. I hereby make you a counter-proposal, which I believe you will accept. You bring Johnny home and pay me two hundred and fifty dollars, and I agree to take him off your hands. You had better come at night because the neighbors believe he is lost. And, I could not be responsible for what they would do to anybody they saw bringing him back. Very respectfully, Ebenezer Dorset."

"Great pirates of Penzance!" says I, "of all the nerve..." But I looked at Bill and stopped. He had the most appealing look in his eyes I ever saw on the face of a dumb or talking animal.

"Sam," says he, "what's two hundred and fifty dollars, after all? We've got the money. One more night of this boy will drive me crazy. I think Mister Dorset is making us a good offer. You aren't going to let the chance go, are you?"

"Tell you the truth, Bill," says I, "this little lamb has got on my nerves, too. We'll take him home, pay the ransom and make our get-away."

We took him home that night. We got him to go by telling him that his father had bought him a gun and we were going to hunt bears the next day.

It was twelve o'clock when we knocked on Ebenezer's front door. Bill counted out two hundred and fifty dollars into Dorset's hand.

When the boy learned we were planning to leave him at home, he started to cry loudly and held himself as tight as he could to Bill's leg. His father pulled him away slowly.

"How long can you hold him?" asks Bill.

"I'm not as strong as I used to be," says old Dorset, "but I think I can promise you ten minutes."

"Enough," says Bill. "In ten minutes, I shall cross the Central, Southern and Middle Western states, and be running for the Canadian border."

And, as dark as it was, and as fat as Bill was, and as good a runner as I am, he was a good mile and a half out of Summit before I could catch up with him.

Glossary

influential - having a lot of influence on somebody/something

ransom - money that is paid to somebody so that they will set free a person who is being kept as a prisoner by them

cedar tree - a tall evergreen tree with wide spreading branches

imp - a child who behaves badly, but not in a serious way

sling - a simple weapon made from a band of leather, etc., used for throwing stones; catapult

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the story and answer the questions.

- a. Where did the idea of kidnapping first start?
- b. Why did the two men want the money that badly?
- c. How was the victim chosen?
- d. Why did the boy have two feathers on his head?
- e. What was the reason behind the boy not wanting to go home?
- f. Why couldn't Bill sleep soundly at night?
- g. Was the boy living up to his name of Red Chief? How?
- h. Did the boy follow the kidnappers willingly back home? Why?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the story again and answer the following questions.

- a. How did the two men managed to kidnap the boy?
- b. Describe the boy's character.
- c. Why did the boy's father refuse to pay the ransom?
- d. How did the boy manage to turn the table on to the two men?
- e. What did Red Chief do to exhaust his kidnappers?
- f. How did Red Chief react when the kidnappers handed him to his father?
- g. Summarize the story in your own words.

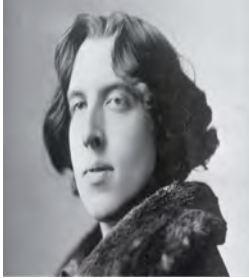
- h. Explain, with reference to the context.
 - i. Then I went out and caught that boy and shook him.
 - ii. When the boy learned we were planning to leave him at home, he started to cry loudly and held himself as tight as he could to Bill's leg. His father pulled him away slowly.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Do you agree that people like Red Chief do exist in the world? Write about your experience on meeting/hearing about such person.
- b. The story is hilarious. Imagine the nightmare of the two men dealing with Red Chief. Elaborate what happened after the kidnappers left him home to give further humorous ending.
- c. The "hunter became the hunted" in this story. We have experienced such situation in our lives. Write an essay, story or any other genre about your experience or someone you know.

The Nightingale and the Rose

Oscar Wilde



Oscar Fingal O' Flahertie Wills Wilde (1854 – 1900) was an Irish poet and playwright. After writing in different forms throughout the 1880s, he became one of London's most popular playwrights in the early 1890s. *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) was his famous play. At the turn of the 1890s, he refined his ideas about the supremacy of art in a series of dialogues and essays, and incorporated themes of decadence, duplicity, and beauty into what would be his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890).

"The Nightingale and the Rose" is a story in *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* by Oscar Wilde published in 1888. It tells about how sacrifices can be made if someone believes in 'pure love'. At the same time 'pure love' can sometimes be just a flight of fancy'.

Before you read

- What is the bird Nightingale known for?
- What flower is a symbol of love?

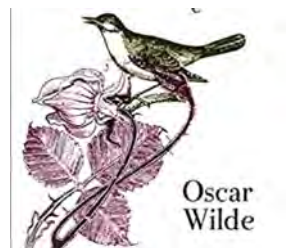
"She said that she would dance with me if I brought her red roses," cried the young student; "but in all my garden there is no red rose."

From her nest in the holm-oak tree the Nightingale heard him, and she looked out through the leaves, and wondered.

"No red rose in all my garden!" he cried, and his beautiful eyes filled with tears. "Ah, on what little things does happiness depend! I have read all that the wise men have written, and all the secrets of philosophy are mine, yet for want of a red rose is my life made wretched."

"Here at last is a true lover," said the Nightingale. "Night after night have I sung of him, though I knew him not: night after night have I told his story to the stars, and now I see him. His hair is dark as the hyacinth-blossom, and his lips are red as the rose of his desire; but passion has made his face like pale ivory, and sorrow has set her seal upon his brow."

"The Prince gives a ball tomorrow night," murmured the young Student, "and my love will be of the company. If I bring her a red rose she will dance with me till dawn. If I bring her a red rose, I shall hold her in my arms, and she will lean her head upon my shoulder, and her hand will be



clasped in mine. But there is no red rose in my garden, so I shall sit lonely, and she will pass me by. She will have no heed of me, and my heart will break."

"Here indeed is the true lover," said the Nightingale. "What I sing of, he suffers—what is joy to me, to him is pain. Surely Love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than emeralds, and dearer than fine opals. Pearls and pomegranates cannot buy it, nor is it set forth in the marketplace. It may not be purchased of the merchants, nor can it be weighed out in the balance for gold."

"The musicians will sit in their gallery," said the young Student, "and play upon their stringed instruments, and my love will dance to the sound of the harp and the violin. She will dance so lightly that her feet will not touch the floor, and the courtiers in their festive dresses will throng round her. But with me she will not dance, for I have no red rose to give her"; and he flung himself down on the grass, and buried his face in his hands, and wept.

"Why is he weeping?" asked a little Green Lizard, as he ran past him with his tail in the air.

"Why, indeed?" said a Butterfly, who was fluttering about after a sunbeam.

"Why, indeed?" whispered a Daisy to his neighbour, in a soft, low voice.

"He is weeping for a red rose," said the Nightingale. "For a red rose?" they cried; "how very ridiculous!" and the little Lizard, who was something of a cynic, laughed outright.

But the Nightingale understood the secret of the Student's sorrow, and she sat silent in the oak-tree, and thought about the mystery of Love.

Suddenly she spread her brown wings for flight, and soared into the air. She passed through the grove like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed across the garden.

In the center of the grass-plot was standing a beautiful Rose-tree, and when she saw it she flew over to it, and lit upon a spray.

"Give me a red rose," she cried, "and I will sing you my sweetest song."

But the Tree shook its head.

"My roses are white," it answered; "as white as the foam of the sea, and whiter than the snow upon the mountain. But go to my brother who grows round the old sundial, and perhaps he will give you what you want."

So the Nightingale flew over to the Rose-tree that was growing round the old sun-dial.

"Give me a red rose," she cried, "and I will sing you my sweetest song."

But the Tree shook its head.

"My roses are yellow," it answered; "as yellow as the hair of the mermaid who sits upon an amber throne, and yellower than the daffodil that blooms in the meadow before the mower comes with his scythe. But go to my brother who grows beneath the Student's window, and perhaps he will give you what you want."

So the Nightingale flew over to the Rose-tree that was growing beneath the Student's window.

"Give me a red rose," she cried, "and I will sing you my sweetest song."

But the Tree shook its head.

"My roses are red," it answered, "as red as the feet of the dove, and redder than the great fans of coral that wave and wave in the ocean-cavern. But the winter has chilled my veins, and the frost has nipped my buds, and the storm has broken my branches, and I shall have no roses at all this year."

"One red rose is all I want," cried the Nightingale, "only one red rose! Is there no way by which I can get it?"

a way," answered the Tree; "but it is so terrible that I dare not tell it to you."

"Tell it to me," said the Nightingale, "I am not afraid." "If you want a red rose," said the Tree, "you must build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with your own heart's-blood. You must sing to me with your breast against a thorn. All night long you must sing to me, and the thorn must pierce your heart, and your life-blood must flow into my veins, and become mine."

"Death is a great price to pay for a red rose," cried the Nightingale, "and Life is very dear to all. It is pleasant to sit in the green wood, and to watch the Sun in his chariot of gold, and the Moon in her chariot of pearl. Sweet is the scent of the hawthorn, and sweet are the bluebells that hide in the valley, and the heather that blows on the hill. Yet Love is better than Life, and what is the heart of a bird compared to the heart of a man?"

So she spread her brown wings for flight, and soared into the air. She swept over the garden like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed through the grove.

The young Student was still lying on the grass, where she had left him, and the tears were not yet dry in his beautiful eyes.

"Be happy," cried the Nightingale, "be happy; you shall have your red rose. I will build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with my own heart's-blood. All that I ask of you in return is that you will be a true lover, for Love is wiser than Philosophy, though she is wise, and mightier than Power, though he is mighty. Flame-coloured are his wings, and coloured like flame is his body. His lips are sweet as honey, and his breath is like frankincense."

The Student looked up from the grass, and listened, but he could not understand what the Nightingale was saying to him, for he only knew the things that are written down in books.

But the Oak-tree understood, and felt sad, for he was very fond of the little Nightingale who had built her nest in his branches.

"Sing me one last song," he whispered; "I shall feel very lonely when you are gone."

So the Nightingale sang to the Oak-tree, and her voice was like water bubbling from a silver jar.

When she had finished her song the Student got up, and pulled a note-book and a lead-pencil out of his pocket.

"She has form," he said to himself, as he walked away through the grove—"that cannot be denied to her; but has she got feeling? I am afraid not. In fact, she is like most artists; she is all style, without any sincerity. She would not sacrifice herself for others. She thinks merely of music, and everybody knows that the arts are selfish. Still, it must be admitted that she has some beautiful notes in her voice. What a pity it is that they do not mean anything, or do any practical good." And he went into his room, and lay down on his little pallet-bed, and began to think of his love; and, after a time, he fell asleep.

And when the Moon shone in the heavens the Nightingale flew to the Rose-tree, and set her breast against the thorn. All nightlong she sang with her breast against the thorn, and the cold crystal Moon leaned down and listened. All night long she sang, and the thorn went deeper and deeper into her breast, and her life-blood ebbed away from her.

She sang first of the birth of love in the heart of a boy and a girl. And on the top-most spray of the Rose-tree there blossomed a marvellous rose, petal following

petal, as song followed song. Pale was it, at first, as the mist that hangs over the river—pale as the feet of the morning, and silver as the wings of the dawn. As the shadow of a rose in a mirror of silver, as the shadow of a rose in a water-pool, so was the rose that blossomed on the topmost spray of the Tree.

But the Tree cried to the Nightingale to press closer against the thorn. "Press closer, little Nightingale," cried the Tree, "or the Day will come before the rose is finished."

So the Nightingale pressed closer against the thorn, and louder and louder grew her song, for she sang of the birth of passion in the soul of a man and a maid.

And a delicate flush of pink came into the leaves of the rose, like the flush in the face of the bridegroom when he kisses the lips of the bride. But the thorn had not yet reached her heart, so the rose's heart remained white, for only a Nightingale's heart's-blood can crimson the heart of a rose.

And the Tree cried to the Nightingale to press closer against the thorn. "Press closer, little Nightingale," cried the Tree, "or the Day will come before the rose is finished."

So the Nightingale pressed closer against the thorn, and the thorn touched her heart, and a fierce pang of pain shot through her. Bitter, bitter was the pain, and wilder and wilder grew her song, for she sang of the Love that is perfected by Death, of the Love that dies not in the tomb.

And the marvelous rose became crimson, like the rose of the eastern sky. Crimson was the girdle of petals, and crimson as a ruby was the heart.

But the Nightingale's voice grew fainter, and her little wings began to beat, and a film came over her eyes. Fainter and fainter grew her song, and she felt something choking her in her throat.

Then she gave one last burst of music. The white Moon heard it, and she forgot the dawn, and lingered on in the sky. The red rose heard it, and it trembled all over with ecstasy, and open edits petals to the cold morning air. Echo bore it to her purple cavern in the hills, and woke the sleeping shepherds from their dreams. It floated through the reeds of the river, and they carried its message to the sea.

"Look, look!" cried the Tree, "the rose is finished now"; but the Nightingale made no answer, for she was lying dead in the long grass, with the thorn in her heart.

And at noon the Student opened his window and looked out.

"Why, what a wonderful piece of luck!" he cried. "Here is a red rose! I have never seen any rose like it in all my life. It is so beautiful that I am sure it has a long Latin name"; and he leaned down and plucked it.

Then he put on his hat, and ran up to the Professor's house with the rose in his hand.

The daughter of the Professor was sitting in the doorway winding blue silk on a reel, and her little dog was lying at her feet.

"You said that you would dance with me if I brought you a red rose," cried the Student. "Here is the reddest rose in all the world. You will wear it tonight next to your heart, and as we dance together it will tell you how I love you."

But the girl frowned.

"I am afraid it will not go with my dress," she answered; "and, besides, the Chamberlain's nephew has sent me some real jewels, and everybody knows that jewels cost far more than flowers."

"Well, upon my word, you are very ungrateful," said the Student angrily; and he threw the rose into the street, where it fell into the gutter, and a cart-wheel went over it.

"Ungrateful!" said the girl. "I tell you what, you are very rude; and, after all, who are you? Only a Student. Why, I don't believe you have even got silver buckles to your shoes as the Chamberlain's nephew has"; and she got up from her chair and went into the house.

"What a silly thing Love is," said the Student as he walked away. "It is not half as useful as Logic, for it does not prove anything, and it is always telling one of things that are not going to happen, and making one believe things that are not true. In fact, it is quite unpractical, and, as in this age to be practical is everything, I shall go back to Philosophy and study Metaphysics."

So he returned to his room and pulled out a great dusty book, and began to read.

Glossary

wretched- very miserable

hyacinth- a plant with a mass of small blue, white or pink flowers with a sweet smell that grow closely together around a thick stem

passion - a very strong feeling of love, hatred, anger, enthusiasm, etc.

lean - to rest on or against something for support

clasp - to hold something tightly in your hand

heed - to pay careful attention to somebody's advice or warning

opal - a white or almost clear semi-precious stone in which changes of colour are seen, used in jewellery

set forth - to present something or make it known

courtiers - (especially in the past) persons who are part of the court of a king or queen

ridiculous – absurd; very silly or unreasonable

throng – to crowd; to congregate

cynic – one who does not believe that something good will happen or that something is important

mystery - something that is difficult to understand or to explain

grove - a small group of trees

spray - a single, slender shoot, twig, or branch with its leaves, flowers, or berries.

sun-dial - an instrument that indicates the time of day by means of the position of the shadow of the sun as it appears on a marked plate or surface

mermaid - (in folklore) a female creature of the sea, having the head and torso of a woman and the tail of a fish

coral - a hard substance that is red, pink or white in colour, and that forms on the bottom of the sea from the bones of very small creatures. Coral is often used in jewellery

cavern - a cave, especially a large one

scythe – a tool with a long curving blade used for cutting grain

hawthorn - a bush or small tree with thorns, white or pink flowers and small dark red berries

heather - a low wild plant with small purple, pink or white flowers, that grows on hills and areas of wild open land

frankincense - a sweet smelling incense

fond – to like or regard something or someone with affection

pallet-bed - a cloth bag filled with straw, used for sleeping on

ebbed - ebbed (away) became gradually weaker or less

crimson - dark red in color

tomb - a large grave, especially one built of stone above or below the ground

girdle - to surround something

lingered - continued to exist for longer than expected

reed - a tall plant like grass with a hollow stem that grows in or near water

frowned - made a serious, angry, or worried expression by bringing your eyebrows closer together so that lines appear on your forehead

Logic - a way of thinking or explaining something

ecstasy - a feeling or state of very great happiness

gutter - a channel at the edge of a road where water collects and is carried away to drains

Chamberlain - an official who managed the home and servants of a king, queen, or important family in past centuries

metaphysics - the study of the ultimate nature of the universe

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the story and answer the following question.

- a. Why did the Student want a red rose so desperately?
- b. There were other creatures who asked about the Student's misery. What were they?
- c. Were the other creatures as sympathetic as the Nightingale about the Student? Why?
- d. How many times did the Nightingale ask for a red rose?
- e. Why did the oak tree ask the Nightingale to sing for him?
- f. What was the rationale of the Nightingale for giving up her life?
- g. What kind of artist did the Student think of the Nightingale?
- h. How did the white moon respond to the last burst of music from the Nightingale?
- i. Why did the girl reject the Student's red rose?
- j. Was the Student responsible for the girl breaking her promise? Why?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the story again and answer the following questions.

- a. Describe the character of the Student.

- b. What did the Student mean when he said 'happiness depends on little things'?
- c. The Nightingale mentioned 4 precious things that cannot buy love. What are they? Which one is an odd man out? Why do you think it was mentioned?
- d. The author has used similes and metaphors to make the meaning clear. Find out how he has used them to describe any four colours.
- e. How can the Nightingale make a red rose according to the rose-tree?
- f. Was the student worthy of the Nightingale's sacrifice? Why?
- g. Explain, with reference to the context.
 - i. You must sing to me with your breast against a thorn.
 - ii, "Here is a red rose! I have never seen any rose like it in all my life. It is so beautiful that I am sure it has a long Latin name"
 - iii. "Well, upon my word, you are very ungrateful," said the Student angrily; and he threw the rose into the street, where it fell into the gutter, and a cart-wheel went over it.

C. Leading to Write

- a. How did the Nightingale describe the Student's appearance? Figurative language changes with time. Sometimes it can be funny or even bizarre. How would you describe him in your contemporary figurative language?
- b. "Love is better than Life" as the Nightingale said. Prepare to debate on the wisdom or the fallacy of this saying.
- c. Just like the Nightingale and the Student's story, we have seen or experienced a waste of sacrifice in our lives. Describe yours using any of the genre: essay, poem/ song, drama/skit, cartoon and others.
- d. Summarize the story in your own words.

A MAY NIGHT

Nikolai Gogol



Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol (1809 – 1852) was a Russian dramatist of Ukrainian origin. Although Gogol was considered by his contemporaries to be one of the preeminent figures of the natural school of Russian literary realism, later critics have found in his work fundamentally romantic sensibility, with strains of surrealism and the grotesque.

'A May Night' is a story about Levko who is in love with Hanna but unable to marry her. He tells her a tragic story behind an old moss covered hut they saw while they were out walking.

Before you read

- a. How do the bachelors in the villages pass their time?
- b. How is marriage arranged in the villages?
- c. Now look at the picture and guess the answers to the following questions:
 - i. Who do you think the people in the picture are?
 - ii. Why do you think they are wearing white gowns?
 - iii. Where are they sitting?



Songs were echoing in the village street. It was just the time when the young men and girls, tired with the work and cares of the day, were in the habit of assembling for the dance. In the mild evening light, cheerful songs blended with mild melodies. A mysterious twilight obscured the blue sky and made everything seem indistinct and distant. It was growing dark, but the songs were not hushed.

A young Cossack, Levko by name, the son of the village headman, had stolen away from the singers, guitar in hand. With his embroidered cap set awry on his head, and his hand playing over the strings, he stepped a measure to the music. Then he stopped at the door of a house half hidden by blossoming cherry-trees. Whose house was it? To whom did the door lead? After a little while he played and sang:

“The night is nigh, the sun is down,
Come out to me, my love, my own!”

“No one is there; my bright-eyed beauty is fast asleep,” said the Cossack to himself as he finished the song and approached the window. “Hanna, Hanna, are you asleep, or won't you come to me? Perhaps you are afraid someone will see us, or will not expose your delicate face to the cold! Fear nothing! The evening is warm, and there is no one near. And if anyone comes I will wrap you in my caftan, fold you in my arms, and no one will see us. And if the wind blows cold, I will press you close to my heart, warm you with my kisses, and lay my cap on your tiny feet, my darling. Only throw me a single glance. No, you are not asleep, you proud thing!” he exclaimed now louder, in a voice which betrayed his annoyance at the humiliation. “You are laughing at me! Good-bye!”

Then he turned away, set his cap jauntily, and, still lightly touching his guitar, stepped back from the window. Just then the wooden handle of the door turned with a grating noise, and a girl who counted hardly seventeen springs looked out timidly through the darkness, and still keeping hold of the handle, stepped over the threshold. In the twilight her bright eyes shone like little stars, her coral necklace gleamed, and the pink flush on her cheeks did not escape the Cossack's observation.

“How impatient you are!” she said in a whisper. “You get angry so quickly! Why did you choose such a time? There are crowds of people in the street.... I tremble all over.”

“Don't tremble, my darling! Come close to me!” said the Cossack, putting down his guitar, which hung on a long strap round his neck, and sitting down with her on the door-step. “You know I find it hard to be only an hour without seeing you.”

“Do you know what I am thinking of?” interrupted the young girl, looking at him thoughtfully. “Something whispers to me that we shall not see so much of each other in the future. The people here are not well disposed to you, the girls look so envious, and the young fellows.... I notice also that my mother watches me carefully for some time past. I must confess I was happier when among strangers.” Her face wore a troubled expression as she spoke.

“You are only two months back at home, and are already tired of it!” said the Cossack. “And of me too perhaps?”

“Oh no!” she replied, smiling. “I love you, you black-eyed Cossack! I love you

because of your dark eyes, and my heart laughs in my breast when you look at me. I feel so happy when you come down the street stroking your black moustache, and enjoy listening to your song when you play the guitar!”

“Oh my Hanna!” exclaimed the Cossack, kissing the girl and drawing her closer to him.

“Stop, Levko! Tell me whether you have spoken to your father?”

“About what?” he answered absent-mindedly. “About my marrying you? Yes, I did.” But he seemed to speak almost reluctantly.

“Well? What more?”

“What can you make of him? The old curmudgeon pretends to be deaf; he will not listen to anything, and blames me for loafing with fellows, as he says, about the streets. But don't worry, Hanna! I give you my word as a Cossack, I will break his obstinacy.”

“You only need to say a word, Levko, and it shall be as you wish. I know that of myself. Often I do not wish to obey you, but you speak only a word, and I involuntarily do what you wish. Look, look!” she continued, laying her head on his shoulder and raising her eyes to the sky, the immeasurable heaven of the Ukraine; “there far away are twinkling little stars—one, two, three, four, five. Is it not true that those are angels opening the windows of their bright little homes and looking down on us? Is it not so, Levko? They are looking down on earth. If men had wings like birds, how high they could fly. But ah! not even our oaks reach the sky. Still people say there is in some distant land a tree whose top reaches to heaven, and that God descends by it on the earth, the night before Easter.”

“No, Hanna. God has a long ladder which reaches from heaven to earth. Before Easter Sunday holy angels set it up, and as soon as God puts His foot on the first rung, all evil spirits take to flight and fall in swarms into hell. That is why on Easter Day there are none of them on earth.”

“How gently the water ripples! Like a child in the cradle,” continued Hanna, pointing to the pool begirt by dark maples and weeping-willows, whose melancholy branches drooped in the water. On a hill near the wood slumbered an old house with closed shutters. The roof was covered with moss and weeds; leafy apple-trees had grown high up before the windows; the wood cast deep shadows on it; a grove of nut-trees spread from the foot of the hill as far as the pool.

“I remember as if in a dream,” said Hanna, keeping her eyes fixed on the house, “a

long, long time ago, when I was little and lived with mother, someone told a terrible story about this house. You must know it—tell me.”

“God forbid, my dear child! Old women and stupid people talk a lot of nonsense. It would only frighten you and spoil your sleep.”

“Tell me, my darling, my black-eyed Cossack,” she said, pressing her cheek to his. “No, you don’t love me; you have certainly another sweetheart! I will not be frightened, and will sleep quite quietly. If you refuse to tell me, that would keep me awake. I would keep on worrying and thinking about it. Tell me, Levko!”

“Certainly it is true what people say, that the devil possesses girls, and stirs up their curiosity. Well then, listen. Long ago there lived in that house an elderly man who had a beautiful daughter white as snow, just like you. His wife had been dead a long time, and he was thinking of marrying again.

“‘Will you pet me as before, father, if you take a second wife?’ asked his daughter.

“‘Yes, my daughter,’ he answered, ‘I shall love you more than ever, and give you yet more rings and necklaces.’

“So he brought a young wife home, who was beautiful and white and red, but she cast such an evil glance at her stepdaughter that she cried aloud, but not a word did her sulky stepmother speak to her all day long.

“When night came, and her father and his wife had retired, the young girl locked herself up in her room, and feeling melancholy began to weep bitterly. Suddenly she spied a hideous black cat creeping towards her; its fur was aflame and its claws struck on the ground like iron. In her terror the girl sprang on a chair; the cat followed her. Then she sprang into bed; the cat sprang after her, and seizing her by the throat began to choke her. She tore the creature away, and flung it on the ground, but the terrible cat began to creep towards her again. Rendered desperate with terror, she seized her father’s sabre which hung on the wall, and struck at the cat, wounding one of its paws. The animal disappeared, whimpering.

“The next day the young wife did not leave her bedroom; the third day she appeared with her hand bound up.

“The poor girl perceived that her stepmother was a witch, and that she had wounded her hand.

“On the fourth day her father told her to bring water, to sweep the floor like a servant-maid, and not to show herself where he and his wife sat. She obeyed him,

though with a heavy heart. On the fifth day he drove her barefooted out of the house, without giving her any food for her journey. Then she began to sob and covered her face with her hands.

“‘You have ruined your own daughter, father!’ she cried; ‘and the witch has ruined your soul. May God forgive you! He will not allow me to live much longer.’

“And do you see,” continued Levko, turning to Hanna and pointing to the house, “do you see that high bank; from that bank she threw herself into the water, and has been no more seen on earth.”

“And the witch?” Hanna interrupted, timidly fastening her tearful eyes on him.

“The witch? Old women say that when the moon shines, all those who have been drowned come out to warm themselves in its rays, and that they are led by the witch's stepdaughter. One night she saw her stepmother by the pool, caught hold of her, and dragged her screaming into the water. But this time also the witch played her a trick; she changed herself into one of those who had been drowned, and so escaped the chastisement she would have received at their hands.

“Let anyone who likes believe the old women's stories. They say that the witch's stepdaughter gathers together those who have been drowned every night, and looks in their faces in order to find out which of them is the witch; but has not done so yet. Such are the old wives' tales. It is said to be the intention of the present owner to erect a distillery on the spot. But I hear voices. They are coming home from the dancing. Good-bye, Hanna! Sleep well, and don't think of all that nonsense.” So saying he embraced her, kissed her, and departed.

“Good-bye, Levko!” said Hanna, still gazing at the dark pine wood.

The brilliant moon was now rising and filling all the earth with splendor. The pool shone like silver, and the shadows of the trees stood out in strong relief.

“Good-bye, Hanna!” she heard again as she spoke, and felt the light pressure of a kiss.

“You have come back!” she said, looking round, but started on seeing a stranger before her.

There was another “Good-bye, Hanna!” and again she was kissed.

“Has the devil brought a second?” she exclaimed angrily.

“Good-bye, dear Hanna!”

“There is a third!”

“Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye, Hanna!” and kisses rained from all sides.

“Why, there is a whole band of them!” cried Hanna, tearing herself from the youths who had gathered round. “Are they never tired of the eternal kissing? I shall soon not be able to show myself on the street!” So saying, she closed the door and bolted it.

Glossary

Cossack - a community (in Russia) with a history of fighting and courage

echoing – repeating by

blended - mixed two or more substances together

twilight - the faint light or the period of time at the end of the day after the sun has gone down

obscured- made it difficult to see

embroidered – decorated with a pattern of stitches usually using coloured thread

awry - not in the right position

nigh - near

caftan - a woman's long, loose dress with long, wide sleeves

humiliation - a feeling of great embarrassment because of a painful loss of pride, self-respect, or dignity

jauntily - cheerfully

threshold - the floor or ground at the bottom of a doorway, considered as the entrance to a building or room

stroking - moving your hand gently over a surface, somebody's hair, etc.

absent-mindedly - in a way that shows you are not thinking about what is around you, but about something else, and that may cause you to forget things

reluctantly - in a way that involves hesitating before doing something because you do not want to do it or because you are not sure that it is the right thing to do

curmudgeon - a bad-tempered person, often an old one

loafing – hanging about; spend your time not doing anything, especially when you should be working

obstinacy - a refusal to change your opinions, way of behaving, etc. when other

people try to persuade you to; behaviour that shows this
involuntarily - suddenly, without intending it or being able to control it
cradle - a small bed for a baby which can be pushed gently from side to side
melancholy - very sad or making you feel sadness
curiosity - a strong desire to know about something
sulky - bad-tempered or not speaking because you are angry about something
hideous - very ugly or unpleasant
chastisement - physical punishment
splendor - grand and impressive beauty

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Answer the questions based on the story

- a. Why were there singing and dancing in the evenings in the village?
- b. Who was Levko singing for?
- c. What made the girl reluctant to come out?
- d. Why couldn't Levko marry the girl?
- e. What made the stepmother sulky?
- f. What does the black cat signify?
- g. Why did Hanna suspect that her stepmother could be the cat?
- h. How long did it take for Hanna to be turned out of her house?
- i. What does the witch's stepdaughter do on the moonlight nights?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the story again and answer the following questions.

- a. What was Hanna's forewarning about her meeting Levko in future?
- b. Why is Hanna in love with Levko? How does she describe her feelings about him?
- c. Why according to Levko are there no ghosts in Easter?
- d. How does Hanna picture the following: i) the twinkling stars ii) ripples in the water iii) something silvery?
- e. How did the witch manage to escape from her stepdaughter's clutch?
- f. Give the character sketch Hanna.
- g. Explain, with reference to the context.

- i. “The night is nigh, the sun is down,
Come out to me, my love, my own!”
- ii. “Stop, Levko! Tell me whether you have spoken to your father?”
- iii. ‘Will you pet me as before, father, if you take a second wife?’
asked his daughter.
- iv. The poor girl perceived that her stepmother was a witch, and that
she had wounded her hand.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Who do you think were the men who came to bid goodnight and kiss Hanna? Why were they doing so?
- b. In most of the western stories stepmothers rather than stepfathers are villains. Women are mostly portrayed as witches. Is it the same in your culture? Do you believe in witches? Is it justifiable? Prepare to debate on how we can rectify the negative and stereotype images of women in our society.
- c. Over imagination sometimes plays a hilarious role in our lives. Tell us about your most hilarious experience through essay, poem, drama/skit, cartoon/caricature or any genre.

A Sound of Thunder

Ray Douglas Bradbury



Ray Douglas Bradbury (1920-2012) was an American author and screenwriter. He worked in a variety of genres, including fantasy, science fiction, horror, and mystery fiction. He has been hailed as master of the science fiction genre. His talent for describing people and events that are far beyond our understanding seems to flow naturally from his words. A Sound of Thunder is a science fiction short story by Ray Bradbury, first published in Collier's magazine in 1952. It is the most re-published science fiction story of all time. The given text is

the abridged version of the original text.

Before you read:

- What is a science fiction?
- Have you read any science fiction? Which one? What is it about?
- Time travel is a good material to be talked about. Is it possible? How?

The sign on the wall read:

TIME SAFARI, INC.

SAFARIS TO ANY YEAR IN THE PAST.

YOU NAME THE ANIMAL.

WE TAKE YOU THERE.

YOU SHOOT IT.

Warm mucus gathered in Eckels' throat; he swallowed and pushed it down. The muscles around his mouth formed a smile as he put a check for ten thousand dollars to the man behind the desk.

"Does this safari guarantee I come back alive?"

"We guarantee nothing," said the official, "except the dinosaurs." He turned. "This is Mr. Travis, your Safari Guide in the Past. He'll tell you what and where to shoot. If he says no shooting, no shooting. If you disobey instructions, there's a stiff penalty of another ten thousand dollars, plus possible government action, on your return."

Eckels looked quickly across the large office. Hundreds of wires snaking together so as to look like a single mass, gave off low continuous sound. Metal boxes gave off ever changing bands of light...now orange, now silver, now blue. There was a

sound like a huge fire burning all of Time, all the years and all the calendars, all the hours piled high and set on fire.

"Unbelievable." Eckels breathed, the light of the Machine on his thin face. "A real Time Machine." He shook his head. "Makes you think, If the election had gone badly yesterday, I might be here now running away from the results. Thank God Keith won. He'll make a fine President of the United States."

"Yes," said the man behind the desk. "We're lucky. If Deutscher had gotten in, we'd have the worst kind of dictatorship. There's an anti-everything man for you, a militarist, anti-religion, anti-human, anti-intellectual. People called us up, you know, joking but not joking. They said if Deutscher became President they wanted to go live in 1492. Of course, it's not our business to conduct Escapes, but to form Safaris. Anyway, Keith's President now. All you got to worry about is..."

"Shooting my dinosaur," Eckels finished it for him.

"A Tyrannosaurus Rex. The King of Dinosaurs, the most amazing monster in history. Sign this form saying that if anything happens to you, we're not responsible. Those dinosaurs are hungry.

"Eckels face turned red. "Are you trying to scare me!" he said angrily.



"To be honest, yes. We don't want anyone going who'll get scared and do something silly at the first sign of danger. Six Safari guides were killed last year, and twelve hunters. We're here to give you the most exciting experience a real hunter ever asked for. Taking you back sixty million years to shoot the biggest game in all of Time. Your personal check's still there. Tear it up."

Mr. Eckels looked at the check. There was a small movement of his fingers.

"Good luck," said the man behind the desk. "Mr. Travis, he's all yours."

"They moved silently across the room, taking their guns with them, toward the Machine, toward the silver metal and the roaring light.

First a day and then a night and then a day and then a night, then it was day-night-day-night. A week, a month, a year, a decade! A.D. 2055. A.D. 2019. 1999! 1957! Gone! The Machine roared.

They put on their oxygen helmets and tested the intercoms.

Eckels moved from side to side on the soft seat, his face white, his mouth closed tightly. He felt his arms shaking and looked down and found his hands tight on the new rifle. There were four other men in the Machine. Travis, the Safari Leader, his assistant, Lesperance, and two other hunters, Billings and Kramer. They sat looking at each other, as the years flew by around them.

"Can these guns kill a dinosaur with one shot?" Eckels felt his mouth saying.

"If you hit them right," said Travis on the helmet radio. "Some dinosaurs have two brains, one in the head, another far down the spinal column. We stay away from those. That's stretching luck. Put your first two shots into the eyes, if you can, blind them, and go back into the brain.

The Machine screamed. Time was a film run backward. Suns went quickly by and ten million moons went by after them. "Think," said Eckels. "Every hunter that ever lived would love to be us today. This makes Africa seem like Illinois."

The Machine slowed; its scream fell to a whisper. The Machine stopped.

The sun stopped in the sky.

The fog that had been around the Machine blew away. They were in an old time, a very old time indeed, three hunters and two Safari guides with their blue metal guns across their knees.

"The first human isn't born yet," said Travis, "The Pyramids are still in the earth, waiting to be cutout and built. Remember that. Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler... none of them exists."

"That" - Mr. Travis pointed - "is the jungle of sixty million two thousand and fifty-five years before President Keith."

He indicated a metal path that struck off into green wilderness, over streaming swamp, among giant ferns and palms.

"And that," he said, "is the Path, laid by Time Safari for your use. It floats six inches above the earth. Doesn't touch so much as one grass blade, flower, or tree. It's an anti-gravity metal. Its purpose is to keep you from touching this world of the past in any way. Stay on the Path. Don't go off it. I repeat. Don't go off. For any reason! If you fall off, there's a penalty. And don't shoot any animal we don't okay.""

Why?" asked Eckels.

They sat in the ancient wilderness. Far birds' cries blew on a wind, and the smell of

tar and an old salt sea, moist grasses, and flowers the color of blood.

"We don't want to change the Future. We don't belong here in the Past. The government doesn't like us here. We have to pay big graft to keep our franchise. A Time Machine is finicky business. Not knowing it, we might kill an important animal, a small bird, a roach, a flower even, thus destroying an important link in a growing species."

"That's not clear," said Eckels.

"All right," Travis continued, "say we accidentally kill one mouse here. That means all the future families of this one particular mouse are destroyed, right?"

"Right"

"And all the families of the families of the families of that one mouse! With a stamp of your foot, you annihilate first one, then a dozen, then a thousand, a million, a billion possible mice!"

"So they're dead," said Eckels. "So what?"

"So what?" answered Travis a little angrily. "Well, what about the foxes that'll need those mice to survive? For want of ten mice, a fox dies. For want of ten foxes a lion dies. For want of a lion, all manner of insects, birds, countless billions of life forms are destroyed. Then, fifty-nine million years later, a caveman, one of only twelve in the whole world, goes hunting wild animals for food. But you, friend, have stepped on all the animals in that region. By stepping on one single mouse. So the caveman does not have enough food and dies. And that caveman, please note, is not just any man. No! He is a future nation. He would have had ten sons, and they would have had one hundred sons, and so on to create a whole race. Destroy this one man, and you destroy a nation and the part of our history that goes with it.

The step of your foot, on one mouse, could start a series of events, the effects of which could shake our earth and future down through Time. With the death of that one caveman, a billion others will die before they are born. Perhaps Rome never rises on its seven hills. Perhaps Europe is forever a dark forest, and only Asia rises, healthy and full of people. Step on a mouse and you pull down the Pyramids. Step on a mouse and you leave your mark, like a Grand Canyon, across all of Time. Queen Elizabeth might never be born, there might never be a United States. So be careful. Stay on the Path. Never step off!"

"I see," said Eckels. "Then it wouldn't pay for us even to touch the grass?"

"Correct. Destroying certain plants could have an effect too small to be seen now. But it could add up bit by bit over sixty million years into a major change. Of course, all this may be wrong."

"Maybe Time can't be changed by us. Or maybe it can be changed only in little ways that no one will notice. A dead mouse here could mean a few too many insects there, but a huge increase in insect populations millions of years later. Crops destroyed over wide areas, millions dead from not having enough food, and finally changes in the social structure of whole countries. Or it could take something even smaller... a soft breath, a whisper, a hair, pollen on the air, such a slight, slight change that unless you looked close you wouldn't see it. Who knows? Who really can say he knows? We don't know. We're guessing. But until we do know for certain whether our messing around in Time can make a big difference to history, we're being careful. This Machine, this Path, your clothing and bodies, were sterilized, as you know, before the journey. We wear these oxygen helmets so we can't introduce our bacteria into the ancient air."

"How do we know which animals to shoot?"

"They're marked with red paint," said Travis. "Today, before our journey, we sent Lesperance here back with the Machine. He came to this particular era and followed certain animals."

"Studying them?"

"Right," said Lesperance. "I follow them through their whole lives, noting which of them lives longest. Very few. How many times they have young? Not often. Life's short. When I find one that's going to die by accident, such as when a tree falls on him, I note the exact hour, minute, and second. I shoot a paint bomb. It leaves a red mark on his side. We can't miss it. Then I plan our journey into the Past so that we meet the Monster not more than two minutes before he would have died anyway. This way, we kill only animals with no future, that are never going to have young again. You see how careful we are?"

"But if you come back this morning in Time," said Eckels excitedly, you must have met us, our Safari! How did it turn out? Was it successful? Did all of us get through... alive?"

Travis and Lesperance gave each other a look.

"That would be a paradox," said Lesperance. "Time doesn't permit that sort of

thing... a man meeting himself. When such things look like happening, Time moves out of the way. Like an airplane hitting an air pocket. You felt the Machine jump just before we stopped? That was us passing ourselves on the way back to the Future. We saw nothing. There's no way of telling if this Safari was a success, if we got our monster, or whether all of us - meaning you, Mr. Eckels - got out alive."

Eckels smiled weakly.

"Enough," said Travis sharply. "Everyone on his feet!"

They were ready to leave the Machine.

The jungle was high and the jungle was broad and the jungle was the whole world forever and forever. Sounds like music and sounds like flying tents filled the sky. Those were pterodactyls flying high above with huge gray wings.

Eckels, standing on the narrow Path, pointed his rifle at one playfully.

"Stop that!" said Travis. "Don't even point your gun at something for fun, you fool! If your guns should go off... "

Eckels looked angry. "Where's our Tyrannosaurus?"

Lesperance checked his watch. "In front of us. We'll meet him in sixty seconds. Look for the red paint! Don't shoot till we give the word. Stay on the Path. Stay on the Path!"

They moved forward in the wind of morning.

"Strange," said Eckels quietly. "In sixty million years, Election Day over. Keith made President. Everyone celebrating. And here we are, a million years lost, and they don't exist. The things we worried about for months, a lifetime, not even born or thought of yet."

"Safety catches off, everyone!" ordered Travis. "You, first shot, Eckels. Second, Billings, Third, Kramer."

"I've hunted tiger, wild pig, buffalo, elephant, but now, this is it," said Eckels. "I'm shaking like a kid."

"Ah," said Travis.

Everyone stopped.

Travis raised his hand. "There," he whispered. "In the mist. There he is. There's His

Royal Majesty now."

The jungle was wide and full of sounds.

Suddenly it all stopped, as if someone had shut a door.

Silence.

A sound of thunder.

Out of the mist, one hundred yards away, came Tyrannosaurus Rex.

"It," whispered Eckels. "It...."

"Sh!" It came on great oiled, powerful legs. It towered thirty feet above half of the trees, a great evil god, holding its small arms close to its oily chest. Each lower leg was like a powerful machine, a thousand pounds of white bone, sunk in thick ropes of muscle, covered in rock-like skin. Each upper leg was a ton of meat and bone, as strong as steel. From the great chest, two tiny arms hung out front. Arms with hands which might pick up and examine men like toys as the snake-like neck made itself ready to eat them. And the head itself, like a ton of shaped stone, lifted easily upon the sky. Its mouth was open, showing a fence of teeth like large, sharp knives. Its huge eyes rolled, empty of all expression except hunger. It closed its mouth in a deathly smile. It ran, its body pushing trees and bushes out of the way as if they were not there. As it moved, its feet dug into the wet earth, leaving foot prints six inches deep wherever it put its weight.

It ran far too smoothly for its ten tons. It moved into an area of sunlight and suddenly stopped, its beautifully reptilian hands feeling the air. "Why, why," said Eckels in wonder, "it could reach up and take hold of the moon."

"Sh!" Travis said angrily. "He hasn't seen us yet."

"It can't be killed," Eckels said quietly, as if there could be no argument. He had weighed the evidence and this was his considered opinion. The rifle in his hands seemed a toy. "We were fools to come. This is impossible."

"Shut up!" whispered Travis.

"Nightmare."

"Turn around," commanded Travis. "Walk quietly to the Machine. We'll give you back half your fee."

"I didn't think it would be this big," said Eckels. "I made a mistake, that's all. And

now I want out."

"It sees us!"

"There's the red paint on its chest!

"The great dinosaur raised itself. Its thick skin shone like a thousand green coins. The coins were covered by a thick, sticky liquid in which tiny insects moved. The whole body seemed to move, even though the monster itself stood still. It breathed out. The terrible smell of dead meat blew down upon them.

"Get me out of here," said Eckels. "It was never like this before. I was always sure I'd come through alive. I had good guides, good safaris, and safety. This time, I got it wrong. I've met my match. This is too much for me to handle."

"Don't run," said Lesperance. "Turn around. Hide in the Machine."

"Yes." Eckels seemed unable to move. He looked at his feet as if trying to make them walk. He gave a cry of helplessness.

"Eckels!"

He looked as if he could not understand what was happening, and took a few small steps.

"Not that way!" The Monster, at the first motion, ran forward with a terrible scream. It covered one hundred yards in six seconds. The rifles lifted and fired. The Monster roared, teeth shining in the sun, and the smell of old blood that came from its mouth was all around them.

The rifles fired again. Their sound was lost in scream and dinosaur thunder. The reptile moved its great tail from side to side. Trees exploded in clouds of leaf and branch. The Monster moved its small hands down toward the men, to break them in half, to push them into its teeth and its screaming throat. Its eyes leveled with the men. They saw themselves mirrored. They fired at the wild black circle in the center of each eye.

Like a mountain avalanche, Tyrannosaurus fell.

Thundering, it held on to trees and pulled them with it. It pulled and tore the metal Path. The men threw themselves back and away. The body hit, ten tons of cold meat and stone. The guns fired. The Monster moved its heavy tail again, made a sudden movement of its neck, and lay still. A fountain of blood shot out from its throat. Somewhere inside, a bag of liquids broke open. Sickening sprays of blood and the

terrible smelling liquid covered the hunters. They stood.

The thunder died away.

The jungle was silent. After the avalanche, a green peace. After the nightmare, morning.

Billings and Kramer sat on the pathway and were sick. Travis and Lesperance stood with smoking rifles, cursing. In the Time Machine, on his face, Eckels lay shaking. He had found his way back to the Path, climbed into the Machine.

Travis came in, looked at Eckels, took some special cloth from a metal box, and returned to the others, who were still sitting on the Path.

"Clean up."

They wiped the blood from their helmets. They began to curse too. The Monster lay, a mountain of solid meat. Within, you could hear sounds as the furthest parts of it died; everything shutting off, closing down forever. It was like standing by the engine of a train that has just crashed. The weight of its body broke the tiny arms, caught underneath. The meat settled, shaking.

Another sound of something breaking. Far above, a giant tree branch broke off and fell. It crashed upon the dead dinosaur with finality.

"There." Lesperance checked his watch. "Right on time. That's the branch that was supposed to fall and kill this animal originally." He looked at the two hunters. "You want a picture?"

"What?"

"We can't take a piece of it back to the Future. The body has to stay right here where it would have died originally, so the insects, birds, and bacteria can get at it, as they were meant to. Everything in balance. The body stays. But we can take a picture of you standing next to it."

The two men tried to think, but gave up, shaking their heads.

They let themselves be led along the metal Path. They sank into their seats in the Machine. They looked back at the dead Monster, where already strange birds and golden insects were busy at the thick skin. A sound on the floor of the Time Machine made them turn. Eckels sat there, shaking.

"I'm sorry," he said at last.

"Get up!" cried Travis.

Eckels got up.

"Go out on that Path alone," said Travis. He had his rifle pointed, "You're not coming back in the Machine. We're leaving you here!"

Lesperance held Travis's arm. "Wait..."

"Stay out of this!" Travis shook his hand away. "This fool nearly killed us. But it isn't that so much, no. It's his shoes! Look at them! He ran off the Path. That could destroy our business! We'll lose thousands of dollars. We have a contract with the government that says no one leaves the Path. He left it. Oh, the fool! I'll have to report it. They might not let us travel anymore. Who knows what he's done to Time, to History!"

"Take it easy, all he did was kick up some dirt."

"How do we know?" cried Travis. "We don't know anything! No one knows! Get out of here, Eckels!"

Eckels felt for his shirt. "I'll pay anything. A hundred thousand dollars!"

Travis looked angrily at Eckels' check book and spat. "Go out there. The Monster's next to the Path. Stick your arms up to your elbows in his mouth. Then you can come back with us."

"That's not fair!"

"The Monster's dead, you fool. The bullets! The bullets can't be left behind. They shouldn't be left in the Past; they might change something. Here's my knife. Dig them out!"

The jungle was alive again, full of the old movements and bird cries. Eckels turned slowly to look at the hill of nightmares and fear. After a long time, like someone walking in their sleep, he walked off slowly along the Path.

He returned, shaking, five minutes later, his arms were covered in blood to the elbows. He held out his hands. Each held a number of steel bullets. Then he fell. He lay where he fell, not moving.

"You didn't have to make him do that," said Lesperance.

"Didn't I? It's too early to tell." Travis pushed the still body with his foot. "He'll live. Next time he won't go hunting game like this. Okay." With a tired movement

of his thumb, he gave the signal to start the Machine. "Switch on," he said. "Let's go home."

1492. 1776. 1812.

They cleaned their hands and faces. They changed their dirty shirts and pants. Eckels was up and moving around again, not speaking. Travis gave him an angry look for a full ten minutes.

"Don't look at me," cried Eckels. "I haven't done anything."

"Who can tell?"

"Just ran off the Path, that's all, a little mud on my shoes... what do you want me to do... get down and pray?"

"We might need it. I'm warning you, Eckels, I might kill you yet. I've got my gun ready."

"I've done nothing wrong. It'll be O.K.!"

1999.2000.2055.

The Machine stopped.

"Get out," said Travis.

The room was there as they had left it. But not the same as they had left it. The same man sat behind the same desk. But the same man did not quite sit behind the same desk. Travis looked around swiftly. "Everything okay here?" he snapped. "Fine. Welcome home!"

Travis did not relax. He seemed to be looking through the one high window.

"Okay, Eckels, get out. Don't ever come back." Eckels could not move.

"You heard me," said Travis. "What're you staring at?"

Eckels stood smelling the air. There was something different about it, a difference so slight that he could not identify it. The colors, white, gray, blue, orange, in the wall, in the furniture, in the sky outside, were not quite right. And there was a strange feel. His body and hands did not feel right. He stood, sensing the oddness in every part of his body. Somewhere, someone must have been blowing one of those whistles that only a dog can hear. His body screamed silence in return. Outside this room, away from this man seated at this desk which are both not quite the same

desk, lay a whole world of streets and people. What sort of world was it now? There was no telling. He could feel them moving out there. But the immediate thing was the sign painted on the office wall, the same sign he had read earlier today on first entering. Somehow, the sign had changed:

TYME SEFARI INC.

SEFARIS TU ANY YEER EN THE PAST.

YU NAIM THE ANIMALL.

WEE TAEK YU THAIR.

YU SHOOT ITT.

Eckels felt himself fall into a chair. He looked at the thick mud on his boots. He broke off a piece of the mud and held it up, shaking, "No, it can't be. Not a little thing like that. No!"

Stuck in the mud was a brightly colored butterfly, very beautiful and very dead."

Not a little thing like that! Not a butterfly!" cried Eckels.

It fell to the floor, more delicate and colorful than anything seen in this world. A small thing that could upset balances and cause small changes and then big changes and then huge changes, all down the years across Time. Eckels mind raced. It couldn't change things. Killing one butterfly couldn't be that important! Could it?

His face was cold. He asked in a frightened voice: "Who... who won the presidential election yesterday?"

The man behind the desk laughed. "You joking? You know very well. Deutscher, of course! Who else? Not that weak fool Keith. We have got an iron man now, a man who isn't afraid of anyone or anything!" The official stopped. "What's wrong?"

Eckels gave out a long, low cry as if in pain. He dropped to his knees. He tried to pick up the green and gold butterfly with shaking fingers. "Can't we," he pleaded to the world, to himself, to the officials, to the Machine, "can't we take it back, can't we make it alive again? Can't we start over? Can't we..."

He did not move. Eyes shut, he waited, shivering. He heard Travis breathe loudly. He heard Travis lift his rifle, click the safety catch, and raise the weapon.

There was a sound of thunder.

Glossary

mucus – a thick liquid that is produced in parts of the body, such as the nose, by a mucous membrane; also known as sputum

safari - a trip to see or hunt wild animals

snaking - going in a particular direction in long twisting curves

penalty – a punishment for breaking a law, rule or contract

dictatorship – government by a dictator; absolute authority in any sphere

militarist - a person who believes that a country should have great military strength in order to be powerful

intercom – a system of communication by telephone or radio inside an office, plane, etc.; the device you press or switch on to start using this system

wilderness – a place that people do not take care of or control

franchise - formal permission given by a company to someone who wants to sell its goods or services in a particular area

finicky – needing great care and attention to detail

sterilize - to kill the bacteria in or on something

ptero-dactyls – flying reptiles that lived millions of years ago

avalanche – a fall of rocks, sand, etc.

fountain – a strong flow of liquid that is forced into the air

sickening - making you feel disgusted or shocked

contract – an official written agreement

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the story and answer the following questions.

- What does the sign say at the beginning of the story?
- Why has Eckels come to the Time Safari office? What does he plan to do?
- What can't the travel agent guarantee to Eckels?
- Before the trip starts, why does the time travel company try to scare Eckels?
- Why are the people happy with the Presidential election's result?
- How are dinosaurs to be killed in the past chosen?

- g. The hunters are allowed to kill only certain creatures in the past. Why do you think they are supposed to do so?
- h. Why is the anti-gravitational path so important to the success of the safari and the future of the world?
- i. What procedures do the safari guides take when time traveling?
- j. How does Eckels react to the Tyrannosaurus?
- k. Why do you think Travis is annoyed with Eckels?
- l. What did Eckels do in the past that has far-reaching consequences?
- m. There is the sound of thunder at the end of the story. What was the reason behind this sound?
- n. Compare and contrast Eckels and Travis.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the story again, and answer the following questions.

- a. How would you characterize the business practices of Time Safari, Inc?
- b. Why do you think there is such a harsh penalty for disobeying the instructions?
- c. How does the story compare to a safari or journey today?
- d. Why does Travis force Eckels to retrieve the steel bullets from the monster's body? How would you have reacted to Travis's demand?
- e. Once everyone returns from the safari, what does Eckles find on the bottom of his shoe? What is the significance of this idea?
- f. How does the butterfly that Eckels steps on contribute to the theme of the story?
- g. When the time travelers return to the world of 2055, how was that setting changed? What details reveal the changes?
- h. What do the recurring thunder and crushed butterfly symbolize in the story?
- i. Explain, with reference to the context.
 - i. Eckels face turned red. "Are you trying to scare me!" he said angrily.
 - ii. "The first human isn't born yet," said Travis.
 - iii. "Turn around. Hide in the Machine."

- iv. "Don't look at me," cried Eckels. "I haven't done anything."
- v. Eckels gave out a long, low cry as if in pain.

C. Leading to Write

- a. What does the change in election results suggest about how American society has been altered because of Eckels's error? Is it believable that Eckels's actions could have such serious consequences?
- b. What is your opinion of the idea that a single event can significantly alter the way we live our lives?
- c. Explain what the "butterfly effect" is? Give an example of your own, and retell how Bradbury used it in "The Sound of Thunder."
- d. Both the short story and movie "A Sound of Thunder" make comments on the dangers of technology. How do they do this?
- e. What different meanings can you give from the title of the story? What do you think are the fears concerning technology? Why do you think so?

Folding Beijing

Hao Jingfang



Hao Jingfang was born in Tianjin, on July 27, 1984. After high school, she studied, then worked, at Tsinghua University, in the area of physics. She is a Chinese science fiction writer. She won the Hugo Award for Best Novelette for *Folding Beijing* at the 2016 Hugo Awards. *Folding Beijing* is an amazing story set in a future China where they have engineered a method for collapsing various segments of Beijing and of putting the inhabitants of these areas to sleep for shorter or longer times each day. This allows them to deal with space

and employment issues in a novel, though by no means egalitarian, way.

Before you read

- a. What does the title 'Folding Beijing' Suggest?
- b. What's a novella?

Chapter I

At ten of five in the morning, Lao Dao crossed the busy pedestrian lane on his way to find Peng Li.

After the end of his shift at the waste processing station, Lao Dao had gone home, first to shower and then to change. He was wearing a white shirt and a pair of brown pants—the only decent clothes he owned. The shirt's cuffs were frayed, so he rolled them up to his elbows. Lao Dao was forty-eight, single, and long past the age when he still took care of his appearance. As he had no one to pester him about the domestic details, he had simply kept this outfit for years. Every time he wore it, he'd come home afterward, take off the shirt and pants, and fold them up neatly to put away. Working at the waste processing station meant there were few occasions that called for the outfit, save a wedding now and then for a friend's son or daughter. Today, however, he was apprehensive about meeting strangers without looking at least somewhat respectable. After five hours at the waste processing station, he also had misgivings about how he smelled.

People who had just gotten off work filled the road. Men and women crowded every street vendor, picking through local produce and bargaining loudly. Customers packed the plastic tables at the food hawker stalls, which were immersed in the aroma of frying oil. They ate heartily with their faces buried in bowls of hot and sour rice noodles, their heads hidden by clouds of white steam. Other stands featured

mountains of jujubes and walnuts, and hunks of cured meat swung overhead. This was the busiest hour of the day—work was over, and everyone was hungry and loud.

Lao Dao squeezed through the crowd slowly. A waiter carrying dishes shouted and pushed his way through the throng. Lao Dao followed close behind.

Peng Li lived some ways down the lane. Lao Dao climbed the stairs but Peng wasn't home. A neighbor said that Peng usually didn't return until right before market closing time, but she didn't know exactly when.

Lao Dao became anxious. He glanced down at his watch: Almost 5:00 AM.

He went back downstairs to wait at the entrance of the apartment building. A group of hungry teenagers squatted around him, devouring their food. He recognized two of them because he remembered meeting them a couple of times at Peng Li's home. Each kid had a plate of chow mein or chow fun, and they shared two dishes family-style. The dishes were a mess while pairs of chopsticks continued to search for elusive, overlooked bits of meat amongst the chopped peppers. Lao Dao sniffed his forearms again to be sure that the stench of garbage was off of him. The noisy, quotidian chaos around him assured him with its familiarity.

"Listen, do you know how much they charge for an order of twice-cooked pork over there?" a boy named Li asked.

"I just bit into some sand," a heavysset kid named Ding said while covering his mouth with one hand, which had very dirty fingernails. "We need to get our money back from the vendor!"

Li ignored him. "Three hundred and forty yuan!" said Li. "You hear that? Three forty! For twice-cooked pork! And for boiled beef? Four hundred and twenty!"

"How could the prices be so expensive?" Ding mumbled as he clutched his cheek. "What do they put in there?"

The other two youths weren't interested in the conversation and concentrated on shoveling food from the plate into the mouth. Li watched them, and his yearning gaze seemed to go through them and focus on something beyond..

Lao Dao's stomach growled. He quickly averted his eyes, but it was too late. His empty stomach felt like an abyss that made his body tremble. It had been a month since he last had a morning meal. He used to spend about a hundred each day on this meal, which translated to three thousand for the month. If he could stick to his

plan for a whole year, he'd be able to save enough to afford two months of tuition for Tangtang's kindergarten.

He looked into the distance: The trucks of the city cleaning crew were approaching slowly.

He began to steel himself. If Peng Li didn't return in time, he would have to go on this journey without consulting him. Although it would make the trip far more difficult and dangerous, time was of the essence and he had to go. The loud chants of the woman next to him hawking her jujube interrupted his thoughts and gave him a headache. The peddlers at the other end of the road began to pack up their wares, and the crowd, like fish in a pond disturbed by a stick, dispersed. No one was interested in fighting the city cleaning crew. As the vendors got out of the way, the cleaning trucks patiently advanced. Vehicles were normally not allowed in the pedestrian lane, but the cleaning trucks were an exception. Anybody who dilly-dallied would be packed up by force.

Finally, Peng Li appeared: His shirt unbuttoned, a toothpick dangling between his lips, strolling leisurely and burping from time to time. Now in his sixties, Peng had become lazy and slovenly. His cheeks drooped like the jowls of a Shar-Pei, giving him the appearance of being perpetually grumpy. Looking at him now, one might get the impression that he was a loser whose only ambition in life was a full belly. However, even as a child, Lao Dao had heard his father recounting Peng Li's exploits when he had been a young man.

Lao Dao went up to meet Peng in the street. Before Peng Li could greet him, Lao Dao blurted out, "I don't have time to explain, but I need to get to First Space. Can you tell me how?"

Peng Li was stunned. It had been ten years since anyone brought up First Space with him. He held the remnant of the toothpick in his fingers—it had broken between his teeth without his being aware of it. For some seconds, he said nothing, but then he saw the anxiety on Lao Dao's face and dragged him toward the apartment building. "Come into my place and let's talk. You have to start from there anyway to get to where you want to go."

The city cleaning crew was almost upon them, and the crowd scattered like autumn leaves in a wind. "Go home! Go home! The Change is about to start," someone called from atop one of the trucks.

Peng Li took Lao Dao upstairs into his apartment. His ordinary, single-occupancy

public housing unit was sparsely furnished: Six square meters in area, a washroom, a cooking corner, a table and a chair, a cocoon-bed equipped with storage drawers underneath for clothes and miscellaneous items. The walls were covered with water stains and footprints, bare save for a few haphazardly installed hooks for jackets, pants, and linens. Once he entered, Peng took all the clothes and towels off the wall-hooks and stuffed them into one of the drawers. During the Change, nothing was supposed to be unsecured. Lao Dao had once lived in a single-occupancy unit just like this one. As soon as he entered, he felt the flavor of the past hanging in the air.

Peng Li glared at Lao Dao. “I’m not going to show you the way unless you tell me why.”

It was already five thirty. Lao Dao had only half an hour left.

Lao Dao gave him the bare outlines of the story: Picking up the bottle with a message inside; hiding in the trash chute; being entrusted with the errand in Second Space; making his decision and coming here for guidance. He had so little time that he had to leave right away.

“You hid in the trash chutes last night to sneak into Second Space?” Peng Li frowned. “That means you had to wait twenty-four hours!”

“For two hundred thousand yuan?” Lao Dao said, “Even hiding for a week would be worth it.”

“I didn’t know you were so short on money.”

Lao Dao was silent for a moment. “Tangtang is going to be old enough for kindergarten in a year. I’ve run out of time.”

Lao Dao’s research on kindergarten tuition had shocked him. For schools with decent reputations, the parents had to show up with their bedrolls and line up a couple of days before registration. The two parents had to take turns so that while one held their place in the line, the other could go to the bathroom or grab a bite to eat. Even after lining up for forty-plus hours, a place wasn’t guaranteed. Those with enough money had already bought up most of the openings for their offspring, so the poorer parents had to endure the line, hoping to grab one of the few remaining spots. Mind you, this was just for decent schools. The really good schools? Forget about lining up—every opportunity was sold off to those with money. Lao Dao didn’t harbor unrealistic hopes, but Tangtang had loved music since she was an eighteen-month-old. Every time she heard music in the streets, her face lit up and she twisted her little body and waved her arms about in a dance. She looked especially cute during

those moments. Lao Dao was dazzled as though surrounded by stage lights. No matter how much it cost, he vowed to send Tangtang to a kindergarten that offered music and dance lessons.

Peng Li took off his shirt and washed while he spoke with Lao Dao. The “washing” consisted only of splashing some drops of water over his face because the water was already shut off and only a thin trickle came out of the faucet. Peng Li took down a dirty towel from the wall and wiped his face carelessly before stuffing the towel into a drawer as well. His moist hair gave off an oily glint.

“What are you working so hard for?” Peng Li asked. “It’s not like she’s your real daughter.”

“I don’t have time for this,” Lao Dao said. “Just tell me the way.”

Peng Li sighed. “Do you understand that if you’re caught, it’s not just a matter of paying a fine? You’re going to be locked up for months.”

“I thought you had gone there multiple times.”

“Just four times. I got caught the fifth time.”

“That’s more than enough. If I could make it four times, it would be no big deal to get caught once.”

Lao Dao’s errand required him to deliver a message to First Space—success would earn him a hundred thousand yuan, and if he managed to bring back a reply, two hundred thousand. Sure, it was illegal, but no one would be harmed, and as long as he followed the right route and method, the probability of being caught wasn’t great. And the cash, the cash was very real. He could think of no reason to not take up the offer. He knew that when Peng Li was younger, he had snuck into First Space multiple times to smuggle contraband and made quite a fortune. There was a way.

It was a quarter to six. He had to get going, now.

Peng Li sighed again. He could see it was useless to try to dissuade Lao Dao. He was old enough to feel lazy and tired of everything, but he remembered how he had felt as a younger man and he would have made the same choice as Lao Dao. Back then, he didn’t care about going to prison. What was the big deal? You lost a few months and got beaten up a few times, but the money made it worthwhile. As long as you refused to divulge the source of the money no matter how much you suffered, you could survive it. The Security Bureau’s agents were only carrying out their assigned routines.

Peng Li took Lao Dao to his back window and pointed at the narrow path hidden in the shadows below.

“Start by climbing down the drain pipe from my unit. Under the felt cloth you’ll find hidden footholds I installed back in the day—if you stick close enough to the wall, the cameras won’t see you. Once you’re on the ground, stick to the shadows and head that way until you get to the edge. You’ll feel as well as see the cleft. Follow the cleft and go north. Remember, go north.”

Then Peng Li explained the technique for entering First Space as the ground turned during the Change. He had to wait until the ground began to cleave and rise. Then, from the elevated edge, he had to swing over and scramble about fifty meters over the cross section until he reached the other side of the turning earth, climb over, and head east. There, he would find a bush that he could hold onto as the ground descended and closed up. He could then conceal himself in the bush. Before Peng had even finished his explanation, Lao Dao was already halfway out the window, getting ready to climb down.

Peng Li held onto Lao Dao and made sure his foot was securely in the first foothold. Then he stopped. “I’m going to say something that you might not want to hear. I don’t think you should go. Over there ... is not so great. If you go, you’ll end up feeling your own life is shit, pointless.”

Lao Dao was reaching down with his other foot, testing for the next foothold. His body strained against the windowsill and his words came out labored. “It doesn’t matter. I already know my life is shit without having gone there.”

“Take care of yourself,” Peng Li said.

Lao Dao followed Peng Li’s directions and groped his way down as quickly as he dared; the footholds felt very secure. He looked up and saw Peng Li light up a cigarette next to the window, taking deep drags. Peng Li put out the cigarette, leaned out, and seemed about to say something more, but ultimately he retreated back into his unit quietly. He closed his window, which glowed with a faint light.

Lao Dao imagined Peng Li crawling into his cocoon-bed at the last minute, right before the Change. Like millions of others across the city, the cocoon-bed would release a soporific gas that put him into deep sleep. He would feel nothing as his body was transported by the flipping world, and he would not open his eyes again until tomorrow evening, forty-hours later. Peng Li was no longer young; he was no longer different from the other fifty million who lived in Third Space.

Lao Dao climbed faster, barely touching the footholds. When he was close enough to the ground, he let go and landed on all fours. Luckily, Peng Li's unit was only on the fourth story, not too far up. He got up and ran through the shadow cast by the building next to the lake. He saw the crevice in the grass where the ground would open up.

But before he reached it, he heard the muffled rumbling from behind him, interrupted by a few crisp clangs. Lao Dao turned around and saw Peng Li's building break in half. The top half folded down and pressed toward him, slowly but inexorably.

Shocked, Lao Dao stared at the sight for a few moments before recovering. He raced to the fissure in the ground, and lay prostrate next to it.

The Change began. This was a process repeated every twenty-four hours. The whole world started to turn. The sound of steel and masonry folding, grating, colliding filled the air, like an assembly line grinding to a halt. The towering buildings of the city gathered and merged into solid blocks; neon signs, shop awnings, balconies, and other protruding fixtures retracted into the buildings or flattened themselves into a thin layer against the walls, like skin. Every inch of space was utilized as the buildings compacted themselves into the smallest space.

The ground rose up. Lao Dao watched and waited until the fissure was wide enough. He crawled over the marble-lined edge onto the earthen wall, grabbing onto bits of metal protruding out of the soil. As the cleft widened and the walls elevated, he climbed, using his hands as well as feet. At first, he was climbing down, testing for purchase with his feet. But soon, as the entire section of ground rotated, he was lifted into the air, and up and down flipped around.

Lao Dao was thinking about last night.

He had cautiously stuck his head out of the trash heap, alert for any sound from the other side of the gate. The fermenting, rotting garbage around him was pungent: Greasy, fishy, even a bit sweet. He leaned against the iron gate. Outside, the world was waking up.

As soon as the yellow glow of the streetlights seeped into the seam under the lifting gate, he squatted and crawled out of the widening opening. The streets were empty; lights came on in the tall buildings, story by story; fixtures extruded from the sides of buildings, unfolding and extending, segment by segment; porches emerged from the walls; the eaves rotated and gradually dropped down into position; stairs extended and descended to the street. On both sides of the road, one black cube after

another broke apart and opened, revealing the racks and shelves inside. Signboards emerged from the tops of the cubes and connected together while plastic awnings extended from both sides of the lane to meet in the middle, forming a corridor of shops. The streets were empty, as though Lao Dao were dreaming.

The neon lights came on. Tiny flashing LEDs on top of the shops formed into characters advertising jujubes from Xinjiang, lapi noodles from Northeast China, bran dough from Shanghai, and cured meats from Hunan.

For the rest of the day, Lao Dao couldn't forget the scene. He had lived in this city for forty-eight years, but he had never seen such a sight. His days had always started with the cocoon and ended with the cocoon, and the time in between was spent at work or navigating dirty tables at hawker stalls and loudly bargaining crowds surrounding street vendors. This was the first time he had seen the world, bare.

Every morning, an observer at some distance from the city—say, a truck driver waiting on the highway into Beijing—could see the entire city fold and unfold.

At six in the morning, the truck drivers usually got out of their cabs and walked to the side of the highway, where they rubbed their eyes, still drowsy after an uncomfortable night in the truck. Yawning, they greeted each other and gazed at the distant city center. The break in the highway was just outside the Seventh Ring Road, while all the ground rotation occurred within the Sixth Ring Road. The distance was perfect for taking in the whole city, like gazing at an island in the sea.

In the early dawn, the city folded and collapsed. The skyscrapers bowed submissively like the humblest servants until their heads touched their feet; then they broke again, folded again, and twisted their necks and arms, stuffing them into the gaps. The compacted blocks that used to be the skyscrapers shuffled and assembled into dense, gigantic Rubik's Cubes that fell into a deep slumber.

The ground then began to turn. Square by square, pieces of the earth flipped 180 degrees around an axis, revealing the buildings on the other side. The buildings unfolded and stood up, awakening like a herd of beasts under the gray-blue sky. The island that was the city settled in the orange sunlight, spread open, and stood still as misty gray clouds roiled around it.

The truck drivers, tired and hungry, admired the endless cycle of urban renewal.

Chapter II

The folding city was divided into three spaces. One side of the earth was First Space, population five million. Their allotted time lasted from six o'clock in the

morning to six o'clock the next morning. Then the space went to sleep, and the earth flipped.

The other side was shared by Second Space and Third Space. Twenty-five million people lived in Second Space, and their allotted time lasted from six o'clock on that second day to ten o'clock at night. Fifty million people lived in Third Space, allotted the time from ten o'clock at night to six o'clock in the morning, at which point First Space returned. Time had been carefully divided and parceled out to separate the populations: Five million enjoyed the use of twenty-four hours, and seventy-five million enjoyed the next twenty-four hours.

The structures on two sides of the ground were not even in weight. To remedy the imbalance, the earth was made thicker in First Space, and extra ballast buried in the soil to make up for the missing people and buildings. The residents of First Space considered the extra soil a natural emblem of their possession of a richer, deeper heritage.

Lao Dao had lived in Third Space since birth. He understood very well the reality of his situation, even without Peng Li pointing it out. He was a waste worker; he had processed trash for twenty-eight years, and would do so for the foreseeable future. He had not found the meaning of his existence or the ultimate refuge of cynicism; instead, he continued to hold onto the humble place assigned to him in life.

Lao Dao had been born in Beijing. His father was also a waste worker. His father told him that when Lao Dao was born, his father had just gotten his job, and the family had celebrated for three whole days. His father had been a construction worker, one of millions of other construction workers who had come to Beijing from all over China in search of work. His father and others like him had built this folding city. District by district, they had transformed the old city. Like termites swarming over a wooden house, they had chewed up the wreckage of the past, overturned the earth, and constructed a brand new world. They had swung their hammers and wielded their adzes, keeping their heads down; brick by brick, they had walled themselves off until they could no longer see the sky. Dust had obscured their views, and they had not known the grandeur of their work. Finally, when the completed building stood up before them like a living person, they had scattered in terror, as though they had given birth to a monster. But after they calmed down, they realized what an honor it would be to live in such a city in the future, and so they had continued to toil diligently and docilely, to meekly seek out any opportunity to remain in the city. It was said that when the folding city was completed, more than

eighty million construction workers had wanted to stay. Ultimately, no more than twenty million were allowed to settle.

It had not been easy to get a job at the waste processing station. Although the work only involved sorting trash, so many applied that stringent selection criteria had to be imposed: The desired candidates had to be strong, skillful, discerning, organized, diligent, and unafraid of the stench or difficult environment. Strong-willed, Lao Dao's father had held fast onto the thin reed of opportunity as the tide of humanity surged and then receded around him, until he found himself a survivor on the dry beach.

His father had then kept his head down and labored away in the acidic rotten fetor of garbage and crowding for twenty years. He had built this city; he was also a resident and a decomposer.

Construction of the folding city had been completed two years before Lao Dao's birth. He had never been anywhere else, and had never harbored the desire to go anywhere else. He finished elementary school, middle school, high school, and took the annual college entrance examination three times—failing each time. In the end, he became a waste worker, too. At the waste processing station, he worked for five hours each shift, from eleven at night to four in the morning. Together with tens of thousands of co-workers, he mechanically and quickly sorted through the trash, picking out recyclable bits from the scraps of life from First Space and Second Space and tossing them into the processing furnace. Every day, he faced the trash on the conveyer belt flowing past him like a river, and he scraped off the leftover food from plastic bowls, picked out broken glass bottles, tore off the clean, thin backing from blood-stained sanitary napkins, stuffing it into the recyclable cans marked with green lines. This was their lot: to eke out a living by performing the repetitive drudgery as fast as possible, to toil hour after

Twenty million waste workers lived in Third Space; they were the masters of the night. The other thirty million made a living by selling clothes, food, fuel, or insurance, but most people understood that the waste workers were the backbone of Third Space's prosperity. Each time he strolled through the neon-bedecked night streets, Lao Dao thought he was walking under rainbows made of food scraps. He couldn't talk about this feeling with others. The younger generation looked down on the profession of the waste worker. They tried to show off on the dance floors of nightclubs, hoping to find jobs as DJs or dancers. Even working at a clothing store seemed a better choice: their fingers would be touching thin fabric instead of

scrabbling through rotting garbage for plastic or metal. The young were no longer so terrified about survival; they cared far more about appearances.

Lao Dao didn't despise his work.

But when he had gone to Second Space, he had been terrified of being despised.

The previous morning, Lao Dao had snuck his way out of the trash chute with a slip of paper and tried to find the author of the slip based on the address written on it.

Second Space wasn't far from Third Space. They were located on the same side of the ground, though they were divided in time. At the Change, the buildings of one space folded and retracted into the ground as the buildings of another space extended into the air, segment by segment, using the tops of the buildings of the other space as its foundation. The only difference between the spaces was the density of buildings. Lao Dao had to wait a full day and night inside the trash chute for the opportunity to emerge as Second Space unfolded. Although this was the first time he had been to Second Space, he wasn't anxious. He only worried about the rotting smell on him.

Luckily, Qin Tian was a generous soul. Perhaps he had been prepared for what sort of person would show up since the moment he put that slip of paper inside the bottle.

Qin Tian was very kind. He knew at a glance why Lao Dao had come. He pulled him inside his home, offered him a hot bath, and gave him one of his own bathrobes to wear. "I have to count on you," Qin Tian said.

Qin was a graduate student living in a university-owned apartment. He had three roommates, and besides the four bedrooms, the apartment had a kitchen and two bathrooms. Lao Dao had never taken a bath in such a spacious bathroom, and he really wanted to soak for a while and get rid of the smell on his body. But he was also afraid of getting the bathtub dirty and didn't dare to rub his skin too hard with the washcloth. The jets of bubbles coming out of the bathtub walls startled him, and being dried by hot jets of air made him uncomfortable. After the bath, he picked up the bathrobe from Qin Tian and only put it on after hesitating for a while. He laundered his own clothes, as well as a few other shirts casually left in a basin. Business was business, and he didn't want to owe anyone any favors.

Qin Tian wanted to send a gift to a woman he liked. They had gotten to know each other from work when Qin Tian had been given the opportunity to go to First Space for an internship with the UN Economic Office, where she was also working. The

internship had lasted only a month. Qin told Lao Dao that the young woman was born and bred in First Space, with very strict parents. Her father wouldn't allow her to date a boy from Second Space, and that was why he couldn't contact her through regular channels. Qin was optimistic about the future; he was going to apply to the UN's New Youth Project after graduation, and if he were to be chosen, he would be able to go to work in First Space. He still had another year of school left before he would get his degree, but he was going crazy pining for her. He had made a rose-shaped locket for her that glowed in the dark: This was the gift he would use to ask for her hand in marriage.

"I was attending a symposium, you know, the one that discussed the UN's debt situation? You must have heard of it... anyway, I saw her, and I was like, Ah! I went over right away to talk to her. She was helping the VIPs to their seats, and I didn't know what to say, so I just followed her around. Finally, I pretended that I had to find interpreters, and I asked her to help me. She was so gentle, and her voice was really soft. I had never really asked a girl out, you understand, so I was super nervous... Later, after we started dating, I brought up how we met... Why are you laughing? Yes, we dated. No, I don't think we quite got to that kind of relationship, but... well, we kissed." Qin Tian laughed as well, a bit embarrassed. "I'm telling the truth! Don't you believe me? Yes, I guess sometimes even I can't believe it. Do you think she really likes me?"

"I have no idea," Lao Dao said. "I've never met her."

One of Qin Tian's roommates came over, and smiling, said, "Uncle, why are you taking his question so seriously? That's not a real question. He just wants to hear you say, 'Of course she loves you! You're so handsome.'"

"She must be beautiful."

"I'm not afraid that you'll laugh at me." Qin Tian paced back and forth in front of Lao Dao. "When you see her, you'll understand the meaning of 'peerless elegance.'"

Qin Tian stopped, sinking into a reverie. He was thinking of Yi Yan's mouth. Her mouth was perhaps his favorite part of her: So tiny, so smooth, with a full bottom lip that glowed with a natural, healthy pink. Her neck sometimes appeared so thin that the tendons showed, but the lines were straight and pretty. The skin was fair and smooth. She was his dream.

Qin Tian's roommate was called Zhang Xian, who seemed to relish the opportunity to converse with Lao Dao.

Zhang Xian asked Lao Dao about life in Third Space, and mentioned that he actually wanted to live in Third Space for a while. He had been given the advice that if he wanted to climb up the ladder of government administration, some managerial experience in Third Space would be very helpful. Several prominent officials had all started their careers as Third Space administrators before being promoted to First Space. If they had stayed in Second Space, they wouldn't have gone anywhere and would have spent the rest of their careers as low-level administrative cadres.

Zhang Xian's ambition was to eventually enter government service, and he was certain he knew the right path. Still, he wanted to go work at a bank for a couple of years first and earn some quick money. Since Lao Dao seemed noncommittal about his plans, Zhang Xian thought Lao Dao disapproved of his careerism.

"The current government is too inefficient and ossified," he added quickly, "slow to respond to challenges, and I don't see much hope for systematic reform. When I get my opportunity, I'll push for rapid reforms: Anyone who's incompetent will be fired." Since Lao Dao still didn't seem to show much reaction, he added, "I'll also work to expand the pool of candidates for government service and promotion, including opening up opportunities for candidates from Third Space."

Lao Dao said nothing. It wasn't because he disapproved; rather, he found it hard to believe Zhang Xian.

While he talked with Lao Dao, Zhang Xian was also putting on a tie and fixing his hair in front of the mirror. He had on a shirt with light blue stripes, and the tie was a bright blue. He closed his eyes and frowned as the mist of hairspray settled around his face, whistling all the while.

Zhang Xian left with his briefcase for his internship at the bank. Qin Tian said he had to get going as well since he had classes that would last until four in the afternoon. Before he left, he transferred fifty thousand yuan over the net to Lao Dao's account while Lao Dao watched, and explained that he would transfer the rest after Lao Dao succeeded in his mission.

"Have you been saving up for this for a while?" Lao Dao asked. "You're a student, so money is probably tight. I can accept less if necessary."

"Don't worry about it. I'm on a paid internship with a financial advisory firm. They pay me around a hundred thousand each month, so the total I'm promising you is about two months of my salary. I can afford it."

Lao Dao said nothing. He earned the standard salary of ten thousand each month.

“Please bring back her answer,” Qin Tian said.

“I’ll do my best.”

“Help yourself to the fridge if you get hungry. Just stay put here and wait for the Change.”

Lao Dao looked outside the window. He couldn’t get used to the sunlight, which was a bright white, not the yellow he was used to. The street seemed twice as wide in the sun as what Lao Dao remembered from Third Space, and he wasn’t sure if that was a visual illusion. The buildings here weren’t nearly as tall as buildings in Third Space. The sidewalks were filled with people walking very fast, and from time to time, some trotted and tried to shove their way through the crowd, causing those in front of them to begin running as well. Everyone seemed to run across intersections. The men dressed mostly in western suits while the women wore blouses and short skirts, with scarves around their necks and compact, rigid purses in their hands that lent them an air of competence and efficiency. The street was filled with cars, and as they waited at intersections for the light to change, the drivers stuck their heads out of the windows, gazing ahead anxiously. Lao Dao had never seen so many cars; he was used to the mass-transit maglev packed with passengers whooshing by him.

Around noon, he heard noises in the hallway outside the apartment. Lao Dao peeked out of the peephole in the door. The floor of the hallway had transformed into a moving conveyor belt, and bags of trash left at the door of each apartment were shoved onto the conveyor belt to be deposited into the chute at the end. Mist filled the hall, turning into soap bubbles that drifted through the air, and then water washed the floor, followed by hot steam.

A noise from behind Lao Dao startled him. He turned around and saw that another of Qin Tian’s roommates had emerged from his bedroom. The young man ignored Lao Dao, his face impassive. He went to some machine next to the balcony and pushed some buttons, and the machine came to life, popping, whirring, grinding. Eventually, the noise stopped, and Lao Dao smelled something delicious. The young man took out a piping hot plate of food from the machine and returned to his room. Through the half-open bedroom door, Lao Dao could see that the young man was sitting on the floor in a pile of blankets and dirty socks, and staring at his wall as he ate and laughed, pushing up his glasses from time to time. After he was done eating, he left the plate at his feet, stood up, and began to fight someone invisible as he faced the wall. He struggled, his breathing labored, as he wrestled the unseen enemy.

Lao Dao's last memory of Second Space was the refined air with which everyone conducted themselves before the Change. Looking down from the window of the apartment, everything seemed so orderly that he felt a hint of envy. Starting at a quarter past nine, the stores along the street turned off their lights one after another; groups of friends, their faces red with drink, said goodbye in front of restaurants. Young couples kissed next to taxicabs. And then everyone returned to their homes, and the world went to sleep.

It was ten at night. He returned to his world to go to work.

Chapter III

There was no trash chute connecting First Space directly with Third Space. The trash from First Space had to pass through a set of metal gates to be transported into Third Space, and the gates shut as soon as the trash went through. Lao Dao didn't like the idea of having to go over the flipping ground, but he had no choice.

As the wind whipped around him, he crawled up the still-rotating earth toward First Space. He grabbed onto metal structural elements protruding from the soil, struggling to balance his body and calm his heart, until he finally managed to scramble over the rim of this most distant world. He felt dizzy and nauseated from the intense climb, and forcing down his churning stomach, he remained still on the ground for a while.

By the time he got up, the sun had risen.

Lao Dao had never seen such a sight. The sun rose gradually. The sky was a deep and pure azure, with an orange fringe at the horizon, decorated with slanted, thin wisps of cloud. The eaves of a nearby building blocked the sun, and the eaves appeared especially dark while the background was dazzlingly bright. As the sun continued to rise, the blue of the sky faded a little, but seemed even more tranquil and clear. Lao Dao stood up and ran at the sun; he wanted to catch a trace of that fading golden color. Silhouettes of waving tree branches broke up the sky. His heart leapt wildly. He had never imagined that a sunrise could be so moving.

After a while, he slowed down and calmed himself. He was standing in the middle of the street, lined on both sides with tall trees and wide lawns. He looked around, and he couldn't see any buildings at all. Confused, he wondered if he had really reached First Space. He pondered the two rows of sturdy gingkoes.

He backed up a few steps and turned to look in the direction he had come from. There was a road sign next to the street. He took out his phone and looked at the

map—although he wasn't authorized to download live maps from First Space, he had downloaded and stored some maps before leaving on this trip. He found where he was as well as where he needed to be. He was standing next to a large open park, and the seam he had emerged from was next to a lake in that park.

Lao Dan ran about a kilometer through the deserted streets until he reached the residential district containing his destination. He hid behind some bushes and observed the beautiful house from a distance.

At eight thirty, Yi Yan came out of the house.

She was indeed as elegant as Qin Tian's description had suggested, though perhaps not as pretty. Lao Dao wasn't surprised, however. No woman could possibly be as beautiful as Qin Tian's verbal portrait. He also understood why Qin Tian had spoken so much of her mouth. Her eyes and nose were fairly ordinary. She had a good figure: Tall, with delicate bones. She wore a milky white dress with a flowing skirt. Her belt was studded with pearls, and she had on black heels.

Lao Dao walked up to her. To avoid startling her, he approached from the front, and bowed deeply when he was still some distance away.

She stood still, looking at him in surprise.

Lao Dao came closer and explained his mission. He took out the envelope with the locket and Qin Tian's letter.

She looked alarmed. "Please leave," she whispered. "I can't talk to you right now." "Uh... I don't really need to talk to you," Lao Dao said. "I just need to give you this letter."

She refused to take it from him, clasping her hands tightly. "I can't accept this now. Please leave. Really, I'm begging you. All right?" She took out a business card from her purse and handed it to him. "Come find me at this address at noon."

Lao Dao looked at the card. At the top was the name of a bank.

"At noon," she said. "Wait for me in the underground supermarket."

Lao Dao could tell how anxious she was. He nodded, put the card away, and returned to hide behind the bushes. Soon, a man emerged from the house and stopped next to her. The man looked to be about Lao Dao's age, or maybe a couple of years younger. Dressed in a dark gray, well-fitted suit, he was tall and broad-shouldered. Not fat, just thickset. His face was nondescript: Round, a pair of glasses, hair neatly combed to one side.

The man grabbed Yi Yan around the waist and kissed her on the lips. Yi Yan seemed to give in to the kiss reluctantly.

Understanding began to dawn on Lao Dao.

A single-rider cart arrived in front of the house. The black cart had two wheels and a canopy, and resembled an ancient carriage or rickshaw one might see on TV, except there was no horse or person pulling the cart. The cart stopped and dipped forward. Yi Yan stepped in, sat down, and arranged the skirt of the dress neatly around her knees. The cart straightened and began to move at a slow, steady pace, as though pulled by some invisible horse. After Yi Yan left, a driverless car arrived, and the man got in.

Lao Dao paced in place. He felt something was pushing at his throat, but he couldn't articulate it. Standing in the sun, he closed his eyes. The clean, fresh air filled his lungs and provided some measure of comfort.

A moment later, he was on his way. The address Yi Yan had given him was to the east, a little more than three kilometers away. There were very few people in the pedestrian lane, and only scattered cars sped by in a blur on the eight-lane avenue. Occasionally, well-dressed women passed Lao Dao in two-wheeled carts. The passengers adopted such graceful postures that it was as though they were in some fashion show. No one paid any attention to Lao Dao. The trees swayed in the breeze, and the air in their shade seemed suffused with the perfume from the elegant women.

Yi Yan's office was in the Xidan commercial district. There were no skyscrapers at all, only a few low buildings scattered around a large park. The buildings seemed isolated from each other but were really parts of a single compound connected via underground passages.

Lao Dao found the supermarket. He was early. As soon as he came in, a small shopping cart began to follow him around. Every time he stopped by a shelf, the screen on the cart displayed the names of the goods on the shelf, their description, customer reviews, and comparison with other brands in the same category. All merchandise in the supermarket seemed to be labeled in foreign languages. The packaging for all the food products was very refined, and small cakes and fruits were enticingly arranged on plates for customers. He didn't dare to touch anything, keeping his distance as though they were dangerous, exotic animals. There seemed to be no guards or clerks in the whole market.

More customers appeared before noon. Some men in suits came into the market, grabbed sandwiches, and waved them at the scanner next to the door before hurrying out. No one paid any attention to Lao Dao as he waited in an obscure corner near the door.

Yi Yan appeared, and Lao Dao went up to her. Yi Yan glanced around, and without saying anything, led Lao Dao to a small restaurant next door. Two small robots dressed in plaid skirts greeted them, took Yi Yan's purse, brought them to a booth, and handed them menus. Yi Yan pressed a few spots on the menu to make her selection and handed the menu back to the robot. The robot turned and glided smoothly on its wheels to the back.

Yi Yan and Lao Dao sat mutely across from each other. Lao Dao took out the envelope.

Yi Yan still didn't take it from him. "Can you let me explain?"

Lao Dao pushed the envelope across the table. "Please take this first."

Yi Yan pushed it back.

"Can you let me explain first?"

"You don't need to explain anything," Lao Dao said. "I didn't write this letter. I'm just the messenger."

"But you have to go back and give him an answer." Yi Yan looked down. The little robot returned with two plates, one for each of them. On each plate were two slices of some kind of red sashimi, arranged like flower petals. Yi Yan didn't pick up her chopsticks, and neither did Lao Dao. The envelope rested between the two plates, and neither touched it. "I didn't betray him. When I met him last year, I was already engaged. I didn't lie to him or conceal the truth from him on purpose... Well, maybe I did lie, but it was because he assumed and guessed. He saw Wu Wen come to pick me up once, and he asked me if he was my father. I... I couldn't answer him, you know? It was just too embarrassing. I..."

Yi Yan couldn't speak any more.

Lao Dao waited a while. "I'm not interested in what happened between you two. All I care about is that you take the letter."

Yi Yan kept her head down, and then she looked up. "After you go back, can you... help me by not telling him everything?"

"Why?"

“I don’t want him to think that I was just playing with his feelings. I do like him, really. I feel very conflicted.”

“None of this is my concern.”

“Please, I’m begging you... I really do like him.”

Lao Dao was silent for a while.

“But you got married in the end?”

“Wu Wen was very good to me. We’d been together several years. He knew my parents, and we’d been engaged for a long time. Also, I’m three years older than Qin Tian, and I was afraid he wouldn’t like that. Qin Tian thought I was an intern, like him, and I admit that was my fault for not telling him the truth. I don’t know why I said I was an intern at first, and then it became harder and harder to correct him. I never thought he would be serious.”

Slowly, Yi Yan told Lao Dao her story. She was actually an assistant to the bank’s president and had already been working there for two years at the time she met Qin Tian. She had been sent to the UN for training, and was helping out at the symposium. In fact, her husband earned so much money that she didn’t really need to work, but she didn’t like the idea of being at home all day. She worked only half days and took a half-time salary. The rest of the day was hers to do with as she pleased, and she liked learning new things and meeting new people. She really had enjoyed the months she spent training at the UN. She told Lao Dao that there were many wives like her who worked half-time. As a matter of fact, after she got off work at noon, another wealthy wife worked as the president’s assistant in the afternoon. She told Lao Dao that though she had not told Qin Tian the truth, her heart was honest.

“And so”—she spooned a serving of the new hot dish onto Lao Dao’s plate—“can you please not tell him, just temporarily? Please... give me a chance to explain to him myself.”

Lao Dao didn’t pick up his chopsticks. He was very hungry, but he felt that he could not eat this food.

“Then I’d be lying, too,” Lao Dao said.

Yi Yan opened her purse, took out her wallet, and retrieved five 10,000-yuan bills. She pushed them across the table toward Lao Dao. “Please accept this token of my appreciation.”

Lao Dao was stunned. He had never seen bills with such large denominations or needed to use them. Almost subconsciously, he stood up, angry. The way Yi Yan had taken out the money seemed to suggest that she had been anticipating an attempt from him to blackmail her, and he could not accept that. This is what they think of Third Spacers. He felt that if he took her money, he would be selling Qin Tian out. It was true that he really wasn't Qin Tian's friend, but he still thought of it as a kind of betrayal. Lao Dao wanted to grab the bills, throw them on the ground, and walk away. But he couldn't. He looked at the money again: The five thin notes were spread on the table like a broken fan. He could sense the power they had on him. They were baby blue in color, distinct from the brown 1,000-yuan note and the red 100-yuan note. These bills looked deeper, most distant somehow, like a kind of seduction. Several times, he wanted to stop looking at them and leave, but he couldn't.

She continued to rummage through her purse, taking everything out, until she finally found another fifty thousand yuan from an inner pocket and placed them together with the other bills. "This is all I have. Please take it and help me." She paused. "Look, the reason I don't want him to know is because I'm not sure what I'm going to do. It's possible that someday I'll have the courage to be with him."

Lao Dao looked at the ten notes spread out on the table, and then looked up at her. He sensed that she didn't believe what she was saying. Her voice was hesitant, belying her words. She was just delaying everything to the future so that she wouldn't be embarrassed now. She was unlikely to ever elope with Qin Tian, but she also didn't want him to despise her. Thus, she wanted to keep alive the possibility so that she could feel better about herself.

Lao Dao could see that she was lying to herself, but he wanted to lie to himself, too. He told himself, I have no duty to Qin Tian. All he asked was for me to deliver his message to her, and I've done that. The money on the table now represents a new commission, a commitment to keep a secret. He waited, and then told himself, Perhaps someday she really will get together with Qin Tian, and in that case I'll have done a good deed by keeping silent. Besides, I need to think about Tangtang. Why should I get myself all worked up about strangers instead of thinking about Tangtang's welfare? He felt calmer. He realized that his fingers were already touching the money.

"This is... too much." He wanted to make himself feel better. "I can't accept so much."

“It’s no big deal.” She stuffed the bills into his hand. “I earn this much in a week. Don’t worry.”

“What... what do you want me to tell him?”

“Tell him that I can’t be with him now, but I truly like him. I’ll write you a note to bring him.” Yi Yan found a notepad in her purse; it had a picture of a peacock on the cover and the edges of the pages were golden. She ripped out a page and began to write. Her handwriting looked like a string of slanted gourds.

As Lao Dao left the restaurant, he glanced back. Yi Yan was sitting in the booth, gazing up at a painting on the wall. She looked so elegant and refined, as though she was never going to leave.

He squeezed the bills in his pocket. He despised himself, but he wanted to hold on to the money.

Chapter IV

Lao Dao left Xidan and returned the way he had come. He felt exhausted. The pedestrian lane was lined with a row of weeping willows on one side and a row of Chinese parasol trees on the other side. It was late spring, and everything was a lush green. The afternoon sun warmed his stiff face, and brightened his empty heart.

He was back at the park from this morning. There were many people in the park now, and the two rows of ginkgoes looked stately and luscious. Black cars entered the park from time to time, and most of the people in the park wore either well-fitted western suits made of quality fabric or dark-colored stylish Chinese suits, but everyone gave off a haughty air. There were also some foreigners. Some of the people conversed in small groups; others greeted each other at a distance, and then laughed as they got close enough to shake hands and walk together.

Lao Dao hesitated, trying to decide where to go. There weren’t that many people in the street, and he would draw attention if he just stood here. But he would look out of place in any public area. He wanted to go back into the park, get close to the fissure, and hide in some corner to take a nap. He felt very sleepy, but he dared not sleep on the street.

He noticed that the cars entering the park didn’t seem to need to stop, and so he tried to walk into the park as well. Only when he was close to the park gate did he notice that two robots were patrolling the area. While cars and other pedestrians passed their sentry line with no problems, the robots beeped as soon as Lao Dao

approached and turned on their wheels to head for him. In the tranquil afternoon, the noise they made seemed especially loud. The eyes of everyone nearby turned to him. He panicked, uncertain if it was his shabby clothes that alerted the robots. He tried to whisper to the robots, claiming that his suit was left inside the park, but the robots ignored him while they continued to beep and to flash the red lights over their heads. People strolling inside the park stopped and looked at him as though looking at a thief or eccentric person. Soon, three men emerged from a nearby building and ran over. Lao Dao's heart was in his throat. He wanted to run, but it was too late.

"What's going on?" the man in the lead asked loudly.

Lao Dao couldn't think of anything to say, and he rubbed his pants compulsively.

The man in the front was in his thirties. He came up to Lao Dao and scanned him with a silver disk about the size of a button, moving his hand around Lao Dao's person. He looked at Lao Dao suspiciously, as though trying to pry open his shell with a can opener.

"There's no record of this man." The man gestured at the older man behind him. "Bring him in."

Lao Dao started to run away from the park.

The two robots silently dashed ahead of him and grabbed onto his legs. Their arms were cuffs and locked easily about his ankles. He tripped and almost fell, but the robots held him up. His arms swung through the air helplessly.

"Why are you trying to run?" The younger man stepped up and glared at him. His tone was now severe.

"I..." Lao Dao's head felt like a droning beehive. He couldn't think.

The two robots lifted Lao Dao by the legs and deposited his feet onto platforms next to their wheels. Then they drove toward the nearest building in parallel, carrying Lao Dao. Their movements were so steady, so smooth, so synchronized, that from a distance, it appeared as if Lao Dao was skating along on a pair of rollerblades, like Nezha riding on his Wind Fire Wheels.

Lao Dao felt utterly helpless. He was angry with himself for being so careless. How could he think such a crowded place would be without security measures? He berated himself for being so drowsy that he could commit such a stupid mistake. It's all over now, he thought. Not only am I not going to get my money, I'm also

going to jail.

The robots followed a narrow path and reached the backdoor of the building, where they stopped. The three men followed behind. The younger man seemed to be arguing with the older man over what to do with Lao Dao, but they spoke so softly that Lao Dao couldn't hear the details. After a while, the older man came up and unlocked the robots from Lao Dao's legs. Then he grabbed him by the arm and took him upstairs.

Lao Dao sighed. He resigned himself to his fate.

The man brought him into a room. It looked like a hotel room, very spacious, bigger even than the living room in Qin Tian's apartment, and about twice the size of his own rental unit. The room was decorated in a dark shade of golden brown, with a king-sized bed in the middle. The wall at the head of the bed showed abstract patterns of shifting colors. Translucent, white curtains covered the French window, and in front of the window sat a small circular table and two comfortable chairs. Lao Dao was anxious, unsure of who the older man was and what he wanted.

"Sit, sit!" The older man clapped him on the shoulder and smiled. "Everything's fine."

Lao Dao looked at him suspiciously.

"You're from Third Space, aren't you?" The older man pulled him over to the chairs, and gestured for him to sit.

"How do you know that?" Lao Dao couldn't lie.

"From your pants." The older man pointed at the waist of his pants. "You never even cut off the label. This brand is only sold in Third Space; I remember my mother buying them for my father when I was little."

"Sir, you're...?"

"You don't need to 'Sir' me. I don't think I'm much older than you are. How old are you? I'm fifty-two."

"Forty-eight."

"See, just older by four years." He paused, and then added, "My name is Ge Daping. Why don't you just call me Lao Ge?"

Lao Dao relaxed a little. Lao Ge took off his jacket and moved his arms about to stretch out the stiff muscles. Then he filled a glass with hot water from a spigot in

the wall and handed it to Lao Dao. He had a long face, and the corners of his eyes, the ends of his eyebrows, and his cheeks drooped. Even his glasses seemed about to fall off the end of his nose. His hair was naturally a bit curly and piled loosely on top of his head. As he spoke, his eyebrows bounced up and down comically. He made some tea for himself and asked Lao Dao if he wanted any. Lao Dao shook

“I was originally from Third Space as well,” said Lao Ge. “We’re practically from the same hometown! So, you don’t need to be so careful with me. I still have a bit of authority, and I won’t give you up.”

Lao Dao let out a long sigh, congratulating himself silently for his good luck. He recounted for Lao Ge his experiencing of going to Second Space and then coming to First Space, but omitted the details of what Yi Yan had said. He simply told Lao Ge that he had successfully delivered the message and was just waiting for the Change to head home.

Lao Ge also shared his own story with Lao Dao. He had grown up in Third Space, and his parents had worked as deliverymen. When he was fifteen, he entered a military school, and then joined the army. He worked as a radar technician in the army, and because he worked hard, demonstrated good technical skills, and had some good opportunities, he was eventually promoted to an administrative position in the radar department with the rank of brigadier general. Since he didn’t come from a prominent family, that rank was about as high as he could go in the army. He then retired from the army and joined an agency in First Space responsible for logistical support for government enterprises, organizing meetings, arranging travel, and coordinating various social events. The job was blue collar in nature, but since his work involved government officials and he had to coordinate and manage, he was allowed to live in First Space. There were a considerable number of people in First Space like him—chefs, doctors, secretaries, housekeepers—skilled blue-collar workers needed to support the lifestyle of First Space. His agency had run many important social events and functions, and Lao Ge was its director.

Lao Ge might have been self-deprecating in describing himself as a “blue collar,” but Lao Dao understood that anyone who could work and live in First Space had extraordinary skills. Even a chef here was likely a master of his art. Lao Ge must be very talented to have risen here from Third Space after a technical career in the army.

“You might as well take a nap,” Lao Ge said. “I’ll take you to get something to eat

this evening.”

Lao Dao still couldn’t believe his good luck, and he felt a bit uneasy. However, he couldn’t resist the call of the white sheets and stuffed pillows, and he fell asleep almost right away.

When he woke up, it was dark outside. Lao Ge was combing his hair in front of the mirror. He showed Lao Dao a suit lying on the sofa and told him to change. Then he pinned a tiny badge with a faint red glow to Lao Dao’s lapel—a new identity.

The large open lobby downstairs was crowded. Some kind of presentation seemed to have just finished, and attendees conversed in small groups. At one end of the lobby were the open doors leading to the banquet hall; the thick doors were lined with burgundy leather. The lobby was filled with small standing tables. Each table was covered by a white tablecloth tied around the bottom with a golden bow, and the vase in the middle of each table held a lily. Crackers and dried fruits were set out next to the vases for snacking, and a long table to the side offered wine and coffee. Guests mingled and conversed among the tables while small robots holding serving trays shuttled between their legs, collecting empty glasses.

Forcing himself to be calm, Lao Dao followed Lao Ge and walked through the convivial scene into the banquet hall. He saw a large hanging banner: The Folding City at Fifty.

“What is this?” Lao Dao asked.

“A celebration!” Lao Ge was walking about and examining the set up. “Xiao Zhao, come here a minute. I want you to check the table signs one more time. I don’t trust robots for things like this. Sometimes they don’t know how to be flexible.”

Lao Dao saw that the banquet hall was filled with large round tables with fresh flower centerpieces.

The scene seemed unreal to him. He stood in a corner and gazed up at the giant chandelier as though some dazzling reality was hanging over him, and he was but an insignificant presence at its periphery. There was a lectern set up on the dais at the front, and, behind it, the background was an ever-shifting series of images of Beijing. The photographs were perhaps taken from an airplane and captured the entirety of the city: The soft light of dawn and dusk; the dark purple and deep blue sky; clouds racing across the sky; the moon rising from a corner; the sun setting behind a roof. The aerial shots revealed the magnificence of Beijing’s ancient symmetry; the modern expanse of brick courtyards and large green parks that had

extended to the Sixth Ring Road; Chinese style theatres; Japanese style museums; minimalist concert halls. And then there were shots of the city as a whole, shots that included both faces of the city during the Change: The earth flipping, revealing the other side studded with skyscrapers with sharp, straight contours; men and women energetically rushing to work; neon signs lighting up the night, blotting out the stars; towering apartment buildings, cinemas, nightclubs full of beautiful people.

But there were no shots of where Lao Dao worked.

He stared at the screen intently, uncertain if they might show pictures during the construction of the folding city. He hoped to get a glimpse of his father's era. When he was little, his father had often pointed to buildings outside the window and told him stories that started with "Back then, we..." An old photograph had hung on the wall of their cramped home, and in the picture his father was laying bricks, a task his father had performed thousands, or perhaps hundreds of thousands of times. He had seen that picture so many times that he thought he was sick of it, and yet, at this moment, he hoped to see a scene of workers laying bricks, even if for just a few seconds.

He was lost in his thoughts. This was also the first time he had seen what the Change looked like from a distance. He didn't remember sitting down, and he didn't know when others had sat down next to him. A man began to speak at the lectern, but Lao Dao wasn't even listening for the first few minutes.

"... advantageous for the development of the service sector. The service economy is dependent on population size and density. Currently, the service industry of our city is responsible for more than 85 percent of our GDP, in line with the general characteristics of world-class metropolises. The other important sectors are the green economy and the recycling economy." Lao Dao was paying full attention now. "Green economy" and "recycling economy" were often mentioned at the waste processing station, and the phrases were painted on the walls in characters taller than a man. He looked closer at the speaker on the dais: An old man with silvery hair, though he appeared hale and energetic. "... all trash is now sorted and processed, and we've achieved our goals for energy conservation and pollution reduction ahead of schedule. We've developed a systematic, large-scale recycling economy in which all the rare-earth and precious metals extracted from e-waste are reused in manufacturing, and even the plastics recycling rate exceeds eighty percent. The recycling stations are directly connected to the reprocessing plants..."

Lao Dao knew of a distant relative who worked at a reprocessing plant in the technopark far from the city. The technopark was just acres and acres of industrial buildings, and he heard that all the plants over there were very similar: The machines pretty much ran on their own, and there were very few workers. At night, when the workers got together, they felt like the last survivors of some dwindling tribe in a desolate wilderness.

He drifted off again. Only the wild applause at the end of the speech pulled him out of his chaotic thoughts and back to reality. He also applauded, though he didn't know what for. He watched the speaker descend the dais and return to his place of honor at the head table. Everyone's eyes were on him.

Lao Dao saw Wu Wen, Yi Yan's husband.

Wu Wen was at the table next to the head table. As the old man who had given the speech sat down, Wu Wen walked over to offer a toast, and then he seemed to say something that got the old man's attention. The old man got up and walked with Wu Wen out of the banquet hall. Almost subconsciously, a curious Lao Dao also got up and followed them. He didn't know where Lao Ge had gone. Robots emerged to serve the dishes for the banquet.

Lao Dao emerged from the banquet hall and was back in the reception lobby. He eavesdropped on the other two from a distance and only caught snippets of conversation.

"... there are many advantages to this proposal," said Wu Wen. "Yes, I've seen their equipment... automatic waste processing... they use a chemical solvent to dissolve and digest everything and then extract reusable materials in bulk... clean, and very economical... would you please give it some consideration?"

Wu Wen kept his voice low, but Lao Dao clearly heard "waste processing." He moved closer.

The old man with the silvery hair had a complex expression. Even after Wu Wen was finished, he waited a while before speaking, "You're certain that the solvent is safe? No toxic pollution?"

Wu Wen hesitated. "The current version still generates a bit of pollution but I'm sure they can reduce it to the minimum very quickly."

Lao Dao got even closer.

The old man shook his head, staring at Wu Wen. "Things aren't that simple. If I

approve your project and it's implemented, there will be major consequences. Your process won't need workers, so what are you going to do with the tens of millions of people who will lose their jobs?"

The old man turned away and returned to the banquet hall. Wu Wen remained in place, stunned. A man who had been by the old man's side—a secretary perhaps—came up to Wu Wen and said sympathetically, "You might as well go back and enjoy the meal. I'm sure you understand how this works. Employment is the number one concern. Do you really think no one has suggested similar technology in the past?"

Lao Dao understood vaguely that what they were talking about had to do with him, but he wasn't sure whether it was good news or bad. Wu Wen's expression shifted through confusion, annoyance, and then resignation. Lao Dao suddenly felt some sympathy for him: He had his moments of weakness, as well.

The secretary suddenly noticed Lao Dao.

"Are you new here?" he asked.

Lao Dao was startled. "Ah? Um..."

"What's your name? How come I wasn't informed about a new member of the staff?"

Lao Dao's heart beat wildly. He didn't know what to say. He pointed to the badge on his lapel, as though hoping the badge would speak or otherwise help him out. But the badge displayed nothing. His palms sweated. The secretary stared at him, his look growing more suspicious by the second. He grabbed another worker in the lobby, and the worker said he didn't know who Lao Dao was.

The secretary's face was now severe and dark. He grabbed Lao Dao with one hand and punched the keys on his communicator with the other hand.

Lao Dao's heart threatened to jump out of his throat, but just then, he saw Lao Ge.

Lao Ge rushed over and with a smooth gesture, hung up the secretary's communicator. Smiling, he greeted the secretary and bowed deeply. He explained that he was shorthanded for the occasion and had to ask for a colleague from another department to help out tonight. The secretary seemed to believe Lao Ge and returned to the banquet hall. Lao Ge brought Lao Dao back to his own room to avoid any further risks. If anyone really bothered to look into Lao Dao's identity, they'd discover the truth, and even Lao Ge wouldn't be able to protect him.

"I guess you're not fated to enjoy the banquet." Lao Ge laughed. "Just wait here.

I'll get you some food later."

Lao Dao lay down on the bed and fell asleep again. He replayed the conversation between Wu Wen and the old man in his head. Automatic waste processing. What would that look like? Would that be a good thing or bad?

The next time he woke up, he smelled something delicious. Lao Ge had set out a few dishes on the small circular table, and was taking the last plate out of the warming oven on the wall. Lao Ge also brought over a half bottle of baijiu and filled two glasses.

"There was a table where they had only two people, and they left early so most of the dishes weren't even touched. I brought some back. It's not much, but maybe you'll enjoy the taste. Hopefully you won't hold it against me that I'm offering you leftovers."

"Not at all," Lao Dao said. "I'm grateful that I get to eat at all. These look wonderful! They must be very expensive, right?"

"The food at the banquet is prepared by the kitchen here and not for sale, so I don't know how much they'd cost in a restaurant." Lao Ge already started to eat. "They're nothing special. If I had to guess, maybe ten thousand, twenty thousand? A couple might cost thirty, forty thousand. Not more than that."

After a couple of bites, Lao Dao realized how hungry he was. He was used to skipping meals, and sometimes he could last a whole day without eating. His body would shake uncontrollably then, but he had learned to endure it. But now, the hunger was overwhelming. He wanted to chew quicker because his teeth couldn't seem to catch up to the demands of his empty stomach. He tried to wash the food down with baijiu, which was very fragrant and didn't sting his throat at all.

Lao Ge ate leisurely, and smiled as he watched Lao Dao eat.

"Oh." Now that the pangs of hunger had finally been dulled a bit, Lao Dao remembered the earlier conversation. "Who was the man giving the speech? He seemed a bit familiar."

"He's always on TV," Lao Ge said. "That's my boss. He's a man with real power—in charge of everything having to do with city operations."

"They were talking about automatic waste processing earlier. Do you think they'll really do it?"

"Hard to say." Lao Ge sipped the baijiu and let out a burp. "I suspect not. You have

to understand why they went with manual processing in the first place. Back then, the situation here was similar to Europe at the end of the twentieth century. The economy was growing, but so was unemployment. Printing money didn't solve the problem. The economy refused to obey the Phillips curve."

He saw that Lao Dao looked completely lost, and laughed. "Never mind. You wouldn't understand these things anyway."

He clinked glasses with Lao Dao and the two drained their baijiu and refilled the glasses.

"I'll just stick to unemployment. I'm sure you understand the concept," Lao Ge continued. "As the cost of labor goes up and the cost of machinery goes down, at some point, it'll be cheaper to use machines than people. With the increase in productivity, the GDP goes up, but so does unemployment. What do you do? Enact policies to protect the workers? Better welfare? The more you try to protect workers, the more you increase the cost of labor and make it less attractive for employers to hire people. If you go outside the city now to the industrial districts, there's almost no one working in those factories. It's the same thing with farming. Large commercial farms contain thousands and thousands of acres of land, and everything is automated so there's no need for people. This kind of automation is absolutely necessary if you want to grow your economy—that was how we caught up to Europe and America, remember? Scaling! The problem is: Now you've gotten the people off the land and out of the factories, what are you going to do with them? In Europe, they went with the path of forcefully reducing everyone's working hours and thus increasing employment opportunities. But this saps the vitality of the economy, you understand?"

"The best way is to reduce the time a certain portion of the population spends living, and then find ways to keep them busy. Do you get it? Right, shove them into the night. There's another advantage to this approach: The effects of inflation almost can't be felt at the bottom of the social pyramid. Those who can get loans and afford the interest spend all the money you print. The GDP goes up, but the cost of basic necessities does not. And most of the people won't even be aware of it."

Lao Dao listened, only half grasping what was being said. But he could detect something cold and cruel in Lao Ge's speech. Lao Ge's manner was still jovial, but he could tell Lao Ge's joking tone was just an attempt to dull the edge of his words and not hurt him. Not too much.

“Yes, it sounds a bit cold,” Lao Ge admitted. “But it’s the truth. I’m not trying to defend this place just because I live here. But after so many years, you grow a bit numb. There are many things in life we can’t change, and all we can do is to accept and endure.”

Lao Dao was finally beginning to understand Lao Ge, but he didn’t know what to say.

Both became a bit drunk. They began to reminisce about the past: The foods they ate as children, schoolyard fights. Lao Ge had loved hot and sour rice noodles and stinky tofu. These were not available in First Space, and he missed them dearly. Lao Ge talked about his parents, who still lived in Third Space. He couldn’t visit them often because each trip required him to apply and obtain special approval, which was very burdensome. He mentioned that there were some officially sanctioned ways to go between Third Space and First Space, and a few select people did make the trip often. He hoped that Lao Dao could bring a few things back to his parents because he felt regret and sorrow over his inability to be by their side and care for them.

Lao Dao talked about his lonely childhood. In the dim lamplight, he recalled his childhood spent alone wandering at the edge of the landfill.

It was now late night. Lao Ge had to go check up on the event downstairs, and he took Lao Dao with him. The dance party downstairs was about to be over, and tired-looking men and women emerged in twos and threes. Lao Ge said that entrepreneurs seemed to have the most energy, and often danced until the morning. The deserted banquet hall after the party looked messy and grubby, like a woman who took off her makeup after a long, tiring day. Lao Ge watched the robots trying to clean up the mess and laughed. “This is the only moment when First Space shows its true face.”

Lao Dao checked the time: Three hours until the Change. He sorted his thoughts: It’s time to leave.

Chapter V

The silver-haired speaker returned to his office after the banquet to deal with some paperwork, and then got on a video call with Europe. At midnight, he felt tired. He took off his glasses and rubbed the bridge of his nose. It was finally time to go home. He worked till midnight on most days.

The phone rang. He picked up. It was his secretary.

The research group for the conference had reported something troubling. Someone had discovered an error with one of the figures used in the pre-printed conference declaration, and the research group wanted to know if they should re-print the declaration. The old man immediately approved the request. This was very important, and they had to get it right. He asked who was responsible for this, and the secretary told him that it was Director Wu Wen.

The old man sat down on his sofa and took a nap. Around four in the morning, the phone rang again. The printing was going a bit slower than expected, and they estimated it would take another hour.

He got up and looked outside the window. All was silent. He could see Orion's bright stars twinkling against the dark sky.

The stars of Orion were reflected in the mirror-like surface of the lake. Lao Dao was sitting on the shore of the lake, waiting for the Change.

He gazed at the park at night, realizing that this was perhaps the last time he would see a sight such as this. He wasn't sad or nostalgic. This was a beautiful, peaceful place, but it had nothing to do with him. He wasn't envious or resentful. He just wanted to remember this experience. There were few lights at night here, nothing like the flashing neon that turned the streets of Third Space bright as day. The buildings of the city seemed to be asleep, breathing evenly and calmly.

At five in the morning, the secretary called again to say that the declaration had been re-printed and bound, but the documents were still in the print shop, and they wanted to know if they should delay the scheduled Change.

The old man made the decision right away. Of course they had to delay it.

At forty minutes past the hour, the printed declarations were brought to the conference site, but they still had to be stuffed into about three thousand individual folders.

Lao Dao saw the faint light of dawn. At this time during the year, the sun wouldn't have risen by six, but it was possible to see the sky brightening near the horizon.

He was prepared. He looked at his phone: only a couple more minutes until six. But strangely, there were no signs of the Change. Maybe in First Space, even the Change happens more smoothly and steadily.

At ten after six, the last copy of the declaration was stuffed into its folder.

The old man let out a held breath. He gave the order to initiate the Change.

Lao Dao noticed that the earth was finally moving. He stood up and shook the numbness out of his limbs. Carefully, he stepped up to the edge of the widening fissure. As the earth on both sides of the crack lifted up, he clambered over the edge, tested for purchase with his feet, and climbed down. The ground began to turn.

At twenty after six, the secretary called again with an emergency. Director Wu Wen had carelessly left a data key with important documents behind at the banquet hall. He was worried that the cleaning robots might remove it, and he had to go retrieve it right away.

The old man was annoyed, but he gave the order to stop the Change and reverse course.

Lao Dao was climbing slowly over the cross section of the earth when everything stopped with a jolt. After a moment, the earth started moving again, but now in reverse. The fissure was closing up. Terrified, he climbed up as fast as he dared. Scrabbling over the soil with hands and feet, he had to be careful with his movements.

The seam closed faster than he had expected. Just as he reached the top, the two sides of the crack came together. One of his lower legs was caught. Although the soil gave enough to not crush his leg or break his bones, it held him fast and he couldn't extricate himself despite several attempts. Sweat beaded on his forehead from terror and pain. Has he been discovered?

Lao Dao lay prostrate on the ground, listening. He seemed to hear steps hurrying toward him. He imagined that soon the police would arrive and catch him. They might cut off his leg and toss him in jail with the stump. He couldn't tell when his identity had been revealed. As he lay on the grass, he felt the chill of morning dew. The damp air seeped through collar and cuffs, keeping him alert and making him shiver. He silently counted the seconds, hoping against hope that this was but a technical malfunction. He tried to plan for what to say if he was caught. Maybe he should mention how honestly and diligently he had toiled for twenty-eight years and try to buy a bit of sympathy. He didn't know if he would be prosecuted in court. Fate loomed before his eyes.

Fate now pressed into his chest. Of everything he had experienced during the last forty-eight hours, the episode that had made the deepest impression was the conversation with Lao Ge at dinner. He felt that he had approached some aspect of truth, and perhaps that was why he could catch a glimpse of the outline of fate. But the outline was too distant, too cold, too out of reach. He didn't know what

was the point of knowing the truth. If he could see some things clearly but was still powerless to change them, what good did that do? In his case, he couldn't even see clearly. Fate was like a cloud that momentarily took on some recognizable shape, and by the time he tried to get a closer look, the shape was gone. He knew that he was nothing more than a figure. He was but an ordinary person, one out of 51,280,000 others just like him. And if they didn't need that much precision and spoke of only 50 million, he was but a rounding error, the same as if he had never existed. He wasn't even as significant as dust. He grabbed onto the grass.

At six thirty, Wu Wen retrieved his data key. At six forty, Wu Wen was back in his home.

At six forty-five, the white-haired old man finally lay down on the small bed in his office, exhausted. The order had been issued, and the wheels of the world began to turn slowly. Transparent covers extended over the coffee table and the desk, securing everything in place. The bed released a cloud of soporific gas and extended rails on all sides; then it rose into the air. As the ground and everything on the ground turned, the bed would remain level, like a floating cradle.

The Change had started again.

After thirty minutes spent in despair, Lao Dao saw a trace of hope again. The ground was moving. He pulled his leg out as soon as the fissure opened, and then returned to the arduous climb over the cross-section as soon as the opening was wide enough. He moved with even more care than before. As circulation returned to his numb leg, his calf itched and ached as though he was being bitten by thousands of ants. Several times, he almost fell. The pain was intolerable, and he had to bite his fist to stop from screaming. He fell; he got up; he fell again; he got up again. He struggled with all his strength and skill to maintain his footing over the rotating earth.

He couldn't even remember how he had climbed up the stairs. He only remembered fainting as soon as Qin Tian opened the door to his apartment.

Lao Dao slept for ten hours in Second Space. Qin Tian found a classmate in medical school to help dress his wound. He suffered massive damage to his muscles and soft tissue, but luckily, no bones were broken. However, he was going to have some difficulty walking for a while.

After waking up, Lao Dao handed Yi Yan's letter to Qin Tian. He watched as Qin Tian read the letter, his face filling up with happiness as well as loss. He said nothing. He knew that Qin Tian would be immersed in this remote hope for a long time.

Returning to Third Space, Lao Dao felt as though he had been traveling for a month. The city was waking up slowly. Most of the residents had slept soundly, and now they picked up their lives from where they had left off the previous cycle. No one would notice that Lao Dao had been away.

As soon as the vendors along the pedestrian lane opened shop, he sat down at a plastic table and ordered a bowl of chow mein. For the first time in his life, Lao Dao asked for shredded pork to be added to the noodles. Just one time, he thought. A reward.

Then he went to Lao Ge's home and delivered the two boxes of medicine Lao Ge had bought for his parents. The two elders were no longer mobile, and a young woman with a dull demeanor lived with them as a caretaker.

Limping, he slowly returned to his own rental unit. The hallway was noisy and chaotic, filled with the commotion of a typical morning: brushing teeth, flushing toilets, arguing families. All around him were disheveled hair and half-dressed bodies.

He had to wait a while for the elevator. As soon as he got off at his floor he heard loud arguing noises. It was the two girls who lived next door, Lan Lan and Ah Bei, arguing with the old lady who collected rent. All the units in the building were public housing, but the residential district had an agent who collected rent, and each building, even each floor, had a subagent. The old lady was a long-term resident. She was thin, shriveled, and lived by herself—her son had left and nobody knew where he was. She always kept her door shut and didn't interact much with the other residents. Lan Lan and Ah Bei had moved in recently, and they worked at a clothing store. Ah Bei was shouting while Lan Lan was trying to hold her back. Ah Bei turned and shouted at Lan Lan; Lan Lan began to cry.

"We all have to follow the lease, don't we?" The old lady pointed at the scrolling text on the screen mounted on the wall. "Don't you dare accuse me of lying! Do you understand what a lease is? It's right here in black and white: In autumn and winter, there's a ten percent surcharge for heat."

"Ha!" Ah Bei lifted her chin at the old lady while combing her hair forcefully. "Do you think we are going to be fooled by such a basic trick? When we're at work, you turn off the heat. Then you charge us for the electricity we haven't been using so you can keep the extra for yourself. Do you think we were born yesterday? Every day, when we get home after work, the place is cold as an ice cellar. Just because

we're new, you think you can take advantage of us?"

Ah Bei's voice was sharp and brittle, and it cut through the air like a knife. Lao Dao looked at Ah Bei, at her young, determined, angry face, and thought she was very beautiful. Ah Bei and Lan Lan often helped him by taking care of Tangtang when he wasn't home, and sometimes even made porridge for him. He wanted Ah Bei to stop shouting, to forget these trivial things and stop arguing. He wanted to tell her that a girl should sit elegantly and quietly, cover her knees with her skirt, and smile so that her pretty teeth showed. That was how you got others to love you. But he knew that that was not what Ah Bei and Lan Lan needed.

He took out a 10,000-yuan bill from his inner pocket and handed it to the old lady. His hand trembled from weakness. The old lady was stunned, and so were Ah Bei and Lan Lan. He didn't want to explain. He waved at them and returned to his home.

Tangtang was just waking up in her crib, and she rubbed her sleepy eyes. He gazed into Tangtang's face, and his exhausted heart softened. He remembered how he had found Tangtang at first in front of the waste processing station, and her dirty, tear-stained face. He had never regretted picking her up that day. She laughed, and smacked her lips. He thought that he was fortunate. Although he was injured, he hadn't been caught and managed to bring back money. He didn't know how long it would take Tangtang to learn to dance and sing, and become an elegant young lady.

He checked the time. It was time to go to work.

Glossary

frayed - (of a fabric) unraveled or became worn at the edge, typically through constant rubbing.

apprehensive - anxious or fearful that something bad or unpleasant will happen.

jujube - the edible berrylike fruit of a Eurasian plant, formerly taken as a cure for coughs.

stench - a strong and very unpleasant smell

yuan - the basic monetary unit of China, equal to 10 jiao or 100 fen.

avert - prevent or ward off (an undesirable occurrence).

abyss - a deep or seemingly bottomless gulf.

jowl - the lower part of a person's or animal's cheek, especially when it is fleshy or drooping.

grumpy - bad-tempered and irritable.

thrash chute - a large tube that is used to move trash to a central collection point.

faucet – (North American) a tap.

glint - a small flash of light, especially a reflected one.

contraband - goods that have been imported or exported illegally.

dissuade - persuade (someone) not to take a particular course of action.

divulge - make known (private or sensitive information).

cleave - split or sever, especially along a natural line.

soporific - tending to induce drowsiness or sleep.

crevice - a narrow opening.

inexorably - in a way that is impossible to stop or prevent.

prostrate - lying stretched out on the ground with one's face downwards.

fissure - a long, narrow opening or line of breakage made by cracking or splitting, especially in rock or earth.

pungent - having a sharply strong taste or smell.

submissively - in a way that allows oneself to be controlled by other people

emblem - a thing serving as a symbol of a particular quality or concept.

foreseeable - able to be predicted.

wreckage - the remains of something that has been badly damaged or destroyed.

grandeur - splendor and impressiveness, especially of appearance or style.

docile - ready to accept control or instruction; submissive.

stringent - (of regulations, requirements, or conditions) strict, precise, and exacting.

fetor - a strong, foul smell.

drudgery - hard menial or dull work.

internship - the position of a student or trainee who works in an organization, sometimes without pay, in order to gain work experience or satisfy requirements for a qualification.

peerless - unequalled; unrivalled.

elegance - the quality of being graceful and stylish in appearance or manner.

reverie - a state of being pleasantly lost in one's thoughts; a daydream.

relish – enjoy greatly.

ossified - unwilling to change or compromise.

maglev - a transport system in which trains glide above a track, supported by

magnetic repulsion and propelled by a linear motor.

azure - bright blue in colour like a cloudless sky.

silhouette - the dark shape and outline of someone or something visible in restricted light against a brighter background.

gingko - a deciduous Chinese tree related to the conifers, with fan-shaped leaves and yellow flowers. It has a number of primitive features and is similar to some Jurassic fossils.

canopy-umbrella - like part of a carriage, made of silk or nylon.

suffused - gradually spread through or over.

merchandise - goods to be bought and sold.

exotic - attractive or striking because colorful or out of the ordinary.

plaid - a twilled woolen fabric with a checkered pattern.

symposium - a conference or meeting to discuss a particular subject.

seduction - a tempting or attractive thing.

rummage - search unsystematically and untidily through something.

belying - failing to give a true impression.

spigot - a tap.

self – deprecating-modest about or critical of oneself, especially humorously so.

lapel - the part on each side of a coat or jacket immediately below the collar which is folded back on either side of the front opening.

Burgundy - a deep red colour.

chandelier - a large, decorative hanging light with branches for several light bulbs or candles.

entirety - the whole of something.

lectern - tall stand with a sloping top to hold a book or notes, from which someone, typically a preacher or lecturer, can read while standing up.

desolate - (of a place) uninhabited and giving an impression of bleak emptiness.

eavesdrop - secretly listen to a conversation.

snippet - a small piece or brief extract.

pang - a sudden sharp pain or painful emotion.

baijiu - A clear, Chinese distilled alcoholic beverage, generally about 40-60% alcohol by volume, usually distilled from sorghum.

jovial - cheerful and friendly.

stinky - having a strong or unpleasant smell.

burdensome - difficult to carry out or fulfil; taxing.

landfill - the disposal of waste material by burying it, especially as a method of filling in and reclaiming excavated pits.

resentful - feeling or expressing bitterness or indignation at having been treated unfairly.

extricate - free (someone or something) from a constraint or difficulty.

momentarily - for a very short time.

retrieve - get or bring (something) back from somewhere.

arduous - involving or requiring strenuous effort; difficult and tiring.

demeanor - outward behaviour or bearing.

surcharge - an additional charge or payment.

brittle - hard but liable to break easily.

trivial - of little value or importance.

Exercises

Chapter I

A. Literal Comprehension

Read Chapter I and answer the following questions

- What consisted the only decent clothes for Lao Dao and why was it so?
- Why did he have misgivings about how he smelled?
- Looking at the scene of crowded street what could be the economic status of the people?
- What could be the occupation of the majority of the people?
- Why were the people in a hurry to eat rather than engaged in conversation?
- How much would Lao Dao have to earn to enable Tangtang to study for a whole year?
- Why was no one interested in fighting the city cleaning crew?
- What was the purpose of Lao Dao for meeting Peng Li so urgently?
- What is meant by "During the Change, nothing was supposed to be unsecured? Why was it so?"

- j. Why are beds "cocoon"?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read Chapter I again and answer the following questions

- a. What did Lao Dao had to do to enter Second Space? Why was he going to Second Space despite the danger of the task?
- b. How could the education system be best described according to the text?
- c. For what purpose did Peng Li sneak into the First Circle?
- d. Give three reasons why crossing over Spaces is difficult?
- e. How long will the occupants of Third Space sleep and why?
- f. How does the earth change from one Space to another?
- g. Why were the truck drivers usually the only ones to see the endless cycle of urban renewal?

C. Leading to Write

- a. What do you think Peng Li meant when he said, "If you go, you'll end up feeling your own life is shit, pointless?"
- b. In our lives we have at some point faced this despair. Develop an essay, poem, skit, drama or any genre about your experience or if you don't have one, write about any one you know who have experienced it.
- c. There are some notable differences between Lao Dao's world and the world he has just entered? Do you see this divide in the society where you live? Prepare to debate about such differences as to whether they are justifiable.
- d. The penalty for crossing from one Space to another without authority is very severe? Yet Lao Dao is ready to undertake it. In our lives we take such risks especially if the situation compels us. Write an essay or short story based on your own experience or other people who have undertaken.

Chapter II

A. Literal Comprehension

Read Chapter II and answer the following questions.

- a. Was Lao Dao disappointed with himself when he compared the opulence of First Space? Why?

- b. What was the irony of the completed works by the builders of the Third Space?
- c. How did the builders react after they had calmed down?
- d. Who was Qin Tian? Why was he kind to Lao Dao?
- e. How does Qin describe the girl he loved?
- f. Why did Lao Dao laugh when Qin told him that he had dated the girl?
- g. What gave Qin the motivation to pursue the girl from the First Space?
- h. What is the desired path to being a successful administrator of the First Space?
- i. Many things differ in the Third Space compared to other spaces. What was one natural element that Lao Dao can never find Third Space?
- j. What could the room-mate of Qin Tian be doing while "staring at the wall and wrestling the unseen enemy"?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read Chapter II again and answer the following questions.

- a. Often the image of beauty varies from culture to culture. What attributes are considered 'peerless elegance' by most of the Chinese.
- b. As can be seen from the text that the First Space is less populated than the Second and Third Spaces. How is the balance maintained?
- c. What is the opinion of people of the First Circle regarding the system of balance?
- d. Why did Lao Dao find Zhang Xian's enthusiasm for radical change hard to believe? Do you agree with Lao Dao? Give your reasons.
- e. What was the irony of the completed works by the builders in the Third Space? How did they react after they calmed down?
- f. Why did Lao Dao refer to the 'refined air' of the Second Space before the Change? Compare and contrast the situation just before the change of both Third and Second Space

C. Leading to Write

- a. What does the allocation of time in each Space denote? How can each

Space be interpreted in terms of the modern world today? Give reasons.

- b. What is the difference between the young generation and the older generation regarding the Third Space? Could the younger generation be living in the "fools paradise"? Give your opinion based on the text.
- c. How could the Chinese education system be best described according to the text? Do you see the similarity in Nepal? Prepare to debate based on the actual system of Nepal.
- d. Often the discrepancies in wages signify the lack of egalitarian system. Do you agree? Prepare to debate based on a factual information occurring in your country or the workplace you are familiar with

Chapter III

A. Literal Comprehension

Read Chapter III and answer the following questions.

- a. How did Lao Dao hope to travel from the First Space to the Third Space?
- b. Why did he wish he could avoid the flipping ground to get the First Space?
- c. Why didn't Yi Yan accept the letter and the locket?
- d. What understanding could Lao Dao have reached when he saw the man with Yi Yan?
- e. What does the two wheeled car remind you of?
- f. Why do you think the streets and large parks look isolated?
- g. Why were there no tall buildings in the First Space?
- h. Why do you think Lao Dao did not eat the food despite being hungry?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read Chapter III again and answer the following questions.

- a. Compare the market place of the Third and the First Space pointing out three scenes.
- b. Although Lao Dao was reluctant to accept the money at first, he eventually accepted it. What was his rationale? Do you agree with his rationale?

- c. Do you think Yi Yan not telling the truth to Qin was justifiable? What does it tell of human nature?
- d. How does the author describe the people of the First Space? Why?
- e. Why do people like Yi Yan to work even though there was no need?

C. Leading to Write

- a. How and why did Lao Dao behave the way he did regarding the sun? Have you ever had that kind of reaction in your life regarding the excitement of that particular moment? Write an essay about it
- b. There are certain cultural norms regarding the class and age between man and woman when it comes to relationship. From the conversation between Yi Yan and Lao Dao, what do you think they are in the Chinese culture. What are in yours? Write an essay / dialogue / satire/ play / draw cartoon or any genre.
- c. You have seen the efficiency of the robots in the café. Do you think robots could replace humans in efficiency? Prepare to debate on the pros and cons of robots over humans.

Chapter IV

A. Literal Comprehension

Read Chapter IV and answer the following questions.

- a. Why is Lao Dao's face stiff and his heart empty?
- b. What kind of blue-color people could make it to the First Space?
- c. To what extent did a person's background play a significant role in getting a job as well as promotion?
- d. Can green economy be possible without recycling economy?
- e. Why did the workers in the techno parks feel like the "last survivors"?
- f. Why did Wu Wen 's proposal catch Lao Dao's interest for him to eavesdropped on the conversation between Wu Wen and the old man?
- g. How does Lao Ge's justify his saying: "There are many things in life we can't change, and all we can do is to accept and endure."?
- h. Even though Lao Ge is well off now, what are the foods that he likes but can never buy in his space and why?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read again and answer the following questions.

- a. Compare the "gatherings" of the First Space and the Third Space based on Lao Dao's observation.
- b. In English there is an expression: "Stood out like sore thumb". Lao Dao was just that as he got caught by the robots. What did he do or not do for him to stand out like a 'sore thumb'?
- c. Why couldn't Lao Ge go higher than a Brigadier General in the Army? Does the situation exist in your society and in the world? In which areas do they predominantly influence?
- d. In the ever-shifting images of Beijing displayed in the banquet hall what image was missing and why do you think so?
- e. Why was the old man dead against Wu Wen's proposal?
- f. What does "heart threatened to jump out of his throat" signify? In the text there is another mention of "heart". Is the meaning of both the same or different?
- g. Why do you think Lao Dao was not fully aware of the rationale of how to tackle inflation? Give reasons.

C. Leading to Write

- a. The robots are powerful symbols of the future. Image what would be the role of the entire human population if robots took over the works. Prepare an oratory competition on the topic. Vote on the most popular one.
- b. Since the author Hao Jingfang is a Chinese, she has used symbol like "Nezha riding his Wind Fire Wheels". Surf the internet about this symbol and compare it to your culture or any cultural communities of Nepal. Is there any similarity, even distantly similar, with it? Write about it and if possible, provide illustrations as well.
- c. Ge Daping looked comical according Lao Dao. Even though it is subjective, there are certain common features and behaviours shared in every culture. Share yours in writing, pictures, cartoons, caricature or any genre.
- d. According to Lao Ge, blooming economy does not necessarily eradicate

unemployment. Do you agree? Prepare to debate. However, you have to give examples/precedents from the national data or any authentic source?

Chapter V

A. Literal Comprehension

Read Chapter V and answer the following questions.

- a. What is "conference declaration" according to the story and why is it necessary?
- b. What is Orion?
- c. Why was Lao Dao skeptical about Qin Tian meeting his beloved?
- d. Ah Bei was angry with the old lady. Was her claim justifiable?
- e. What did Lao Dao want Ah Bei to do instead of shouting to the landlady? Where do you think he got such idea?
- f. Why did Lao Dao give the old lady 10,000 yuan?
- g. Who was Tangtang? What was she like?
- h. Why did Lao Dao take the dangerous journey for Tangtang?
- i. Why did Lao Dao give the old lady 10,000 yuan?
- j. Who was Tangtang? What was she like?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read Chapter V again and answer the following questions.

- a. Lao Dao had several narrow escapes. Each time there was someone to help him. Who were they?
- b. Why wasn't Lao Dao 'envious or resentful' towards the First Space with all its splendor?
- c. More than the pain in his leg, he was more concerned about being found. Why?
- d. 'The Change was delayed twice.' What does it tell us? Give the advantages and disadvantages of having the system in future.
- e. A reward for different people in the story means different things. Point out what they are for Lao Dao, Qin Tian and Lao Ge's parents.
- f. How does Lao Dao justify for taking the dangerous journey for Tangtang?

C. Leading to Write

- a. Sometimes we come across people who are kind and their kindness surpass our expectation of ordinary people. Write an essay, poem, play or on any genre of such people you have met, heard of or read about.
- b. “This is the only moment when First Space shows its true face.” What do you think Lao Dao meant by it? Also it is evident in our society. Prepare an oratory based on true facts. Class will choose the three best ones to display.
- c. The whole story revolves around the economic and human issues of the future brought about by mechanization. Prepare to debate on the issues projecting your image of the world similar to that of "Folding Beijing".
- d. "Survival of the fittest" is aptly described in the story of Lao Dao's world. Point out the indicators for such feat. You can see the same scenario in our cities / countries. Prepare an oratory based on the actual events that have taken place in your communities/ cities / countries.

SECTION 5

Drama

Drama is a mode of fictional representation through dialogue and performance. It is one of the literary genres, which is an imitation of some action. Drama is also a type of a play written for theater, television, radio, and film. It contains conflict of characters, particularly the ones who perform in front of audience on the stage. The person who writes drama for stage directions is known as a “dramatist” or “playwright.” The literary elements of drama include setting, plot, characters, conflict, theme, suspense and atmosphere.

Comedy, tragedy, farce, melodrama and musical drama are major types of drama. Comedies are lighter in tone than ordinary works, and provide a happy conclusion. The intention of dramatists in comedies is to make their audience laugh. Hence, they use quaint circumstances, unusual characters, and witty remarks. Tragic dramas use darker themes, such as disaster, pain, and death. Protagonists often have a tragic flaw a characteristic that leads them to their downfall. Generally, a farce is a nonsensical genre of drama, which often overacts or engages slapstick humor. Melodrama is an exaggerated drama, which is sensational and appeals directly to the senses of the audience. Just like the farce, the characters are of a single dimension and simple, or may be stereotyped. In musical dramas, dramatists not only tell their stories through acting and dialogue, but through dance as well as music. Often the story may be comedic, though it may also involve serious subjects.

A one-act play is distinct from plays that occur over several acts. One-act plays may consist of one or more scenes. In recent years, the 10-minute play has emerged as a popular subgenre of the one-act play, especially in writing competitions.

The importance of drama can hardly be exaggerated. In fact, as Shakespeare said, “Life is a drama, we are actors, and the world is stage where we perform our acts.” Every day we see drama being played at home, in the street, in school, in the office- everywhere. Students learn to trust their ideas and abilities which develop their self-confidence. Understanding characters, roles encourages students to show compassion and tolerance for others. Furthermore, reading a drama encourages cooperation among students as the best outcome is possible only through combining ideas and abilities of all the participants. Above all, it seems obvious to say that drama, theatre and performing arts enable verbal and non-verbal communication, improve motivation and reduce stress and brings joy into your life.

This section has presented two one act plays, one a romantic comedy (Yesterday) and the other a crime tragedy (Trifles). It is expected that students will not only read one act plays but also get the real pleasure by performing them.

Yesterday

Colin Campbell Clements



Colin Campbell Clements (25 February, 1894 - 29 January, 1948) an American playwright published his first book, "The Touchstone and Other Plays", in 1919, followed by "Seven Plays of Old Japan" in 1920, and then several others. Clements plays were very popular among amateur theatre groups from around the country. 'Yesterday' is a light hearted comedy with a romantic touch.

Characters

SHE: A Certain Lady of Quality

HE: A British Officer, late of the Indian Army

Before you read

- What's a comedy?
- What's a romantic comedy?

A secluded nook off the ballroom of a London house. Almost hidden by palm trees is a long comfortable divan piled with colored cushions. The nook in question is the sort of hide-and-seek place one has around one's house for young lovers. How Lady A--for she is something past sixty, ever came to be in the place, is more than we can understand. But there she is, just entering from the back and walking toward the divan when the curtain rises. Perhaps Cupid--oh no, the idea is preposterous, for, as I said before, Lady A--is past sixty (*of course she doesn't look it--no woman ever does*), and besides, she's dreadfully--er--Victorian.] A British Officer, late of the Indian Army

SHE: [*Sinking down into the cushions on the divan she leans back and closes her eyes.*] Oh, dear. Oh, dear me! How things have changed. [*She's thinking of the debutantes with their absurd coiffures, their ridiculous gowns, their outrageous manners and their preposterous way of dancing.*] How things have changed! I should never have believed it possible! [*An immaculately groomed old gentleman in uniform comes stumbling toward the divan.*]

HE: Rot ... silly rot ... idiots! What is the world coming-- [*He sees the lady.*] Oh, I beg your pardon. I beg your pardon. I thought I was quite alone.

SHE: You were referring to the dancing?

HE: Quite right, quite right. My word, it's preposterous, isn't it?

SHE: [*Raising her eyebrows*] You mean so unconventional?

HE: That's a--hardly the word for it. [*He begins nervously to search for his eyeglass.*] Hardly the word for it.

SHE: These coming-out parties are not what they used to be when--

HE: Coming out--coming out; my word, nobody seems to be in these days!

SHE: [*Who is slow at seeing jokes*] The young ladies, I mean--the young ladies.

HE: [*Who has found his eyeglass, and by a series of fantastic muscular contractions succeeds in fixing it firmly in his right eye*] Exactly, exactly! Yes, the young ladies. 'Pon my word, there doesn't seem to be much left for them to come out of. Egad, they seem to be all arms and legs--ahem--limbs.

SHE: Won't you sit down, Colonel?

HE: [*Petulantly*] Genral, Madam. General.

SHE: [*Lifting her lorgnette*] General--pardon my mistake. Oh, yes, we were speaking of the dancing. You see the world moves so fast nowadays, and I suppose the dances must keep up with the world.

HE: The world--running away with itself!

SHE: [*Toying with her white feather fan; when she speaks there is just the slightest quiver in her voice*] It was different when we were young, but we must be tolerant. We are old people now.

HE: [*The eyeglass snaps from his eye*] Old? I beg your pardon! Not old, Madam, not really old. Middle-aged, perhaps, yes, middle-aged--but not old.

SHE: [*Looking up out of the corners of her eyes which twinkle kindly*] Yes, that's it, middle-aged.

HE: [*Moving over to the divan, and, with some difficulty, sitting down; he rubs his knee cautiously. From somewhere behind the palms comes the din of a modern, ultra-modern "Jazz" orchestra*] There goes that unspeakable music again, that infernal racket! It's like the tom-toms one hears in Africa! Much worse, in fact.

Awful! [He pauses] Yes, I dare say you are right, quite right; times do change. But we seem to be going backward rather than forward. But we must accept the facts.

SHE: *[With a sigh]* Unfortunately.

HE: I had hoped-- *[There is a crash in the music]* I had hoped, when I accepted the invitation for this ball tonight, that I would find something--something to remind me, even remotely, of my youth, but 'pon my word, they've even done over the house!

SHE: *[Leaning forward]* Oh! You have been here before? May I ask--

HE: Yes, yes; done over the house! And in this horrible modern way, too!

SHE: No--you see, I know this house quite well. I believe nothing has been changed, nothing.

HE: Nothing changed? Really? Well, it seems changed; yes, it seems changed. Perhaps it is I who have--er--changed. *[He is looking for his eyeglass again]* Perhaps it is I who have changed.

SHE: *[Turning suddenly]* Perhaps; you know when one grows old--

HE: *[Turning suddenly]* Old, Madam, old?

SHE: I should say, middle-aged; when one reaches--

HE: Middle-aged! Why, I'm just in the prime of my life ... just in the prime! Don't feel a day over twenty, not a day. *[He slaps his knee, and immediately wishes he hadn't. Confidentially.]* Why, at the War Office, they still call me "Richard."

SHE: *[In a whisper]* Richard?

HE: *[Good-naturedly]* Yes. And at the East Indian United Service they call me--they call me "Dick"! Not to my face, mind you. But they do call me "Dick."

SHE: *[She has turned and is looking up into his face]* Richard? East Indian United Service Club? May I ask--

HE: Yes, yes, that's it. *[He chuckles.]* That's it! So you see I'm not so old, Madam. *[His chest expands perceptibly.]* Of course, I have accomplished a great deal during the short time I have been in Her Maj-- *[He coughs nervously]* that is, His Majesty's

service. It's forty-one years ago tomorrow that I went out, and I've seen service, my word, for a young chap, I have seen service!

SHE: Forty-one years ... forty-one years ago?

HE: Yes, yes, quite right. And, as I was saying, I had hoped to find something of my youth here, some of the old corners and nooks and faces. *[He pauses for a moment and looks up at the ceiling.]* Some of the old familiar faces. One in particular.

SHE: *[Stretching out her hand]* Then you--

HE: Oh, dear, yes, very much so. I suppose every youngster is--until he gets sense. Oh, I was very much in love at the time, foolishly so. Couldn't live without her, and all that sort of thing. She was a snappy little thing ... clever, pretty, very pretty, as I remember--blue eyes and golden hair--that sort of girl.

SHE: *[Nervously toying with her fan]* And you--you quite forgot her when you went away?

HE: *[Looking up quickly]* Yes, yes ... I quite forgot her, quite forgot her. Life in the service is strenuous, you know. Besides, there's hunting, polo, and that sort of thing.

SHE: *[In a low whisper]* And--and married someone else?

HE: *[Exploding]* Never! Oh, I beg your pardon. *[He relaxes again]* No -- no, I never married. Hadn't the time, matter of fact.

SHE: And--and the young lady?

HE: *[Shrugging his shoulders]* I dare say she is the mother of a large family now. Oh, dear me, how times do change. As I was saying, I was very much in love with her, at the time--at the time, you understand. But the family--her family, you understand, rather objected to me, so I--I broke off the whole affair, joined the Indian service *[He leans far back and takes a deep breath]* --and I've been quite content, quite.

SHE: Yes? And you--you haven't tried to see--the--young lady since you returned to England?

HE: See her? See her? Oh, dear, no. It might be--er--rather, rather embarrassing for both of us. *[He closes his eyes]* You see, we were practically engaged at the time. That is, I hadn't come right down to asking, but you know how some things are

understood, so to speak.

SHE: *[Quickly]* But you went away and left--

HE: Not exactly left her; let me see, let me see, as I recall it, I believe I did ask her to marry me.

SHE: And she refused?

HE: Let me see, did she refuse? *[He taps his head absent-mindedly]* Did she refuse? Ah, now I remember! She said we would have to think it all over very carefully. Yes, that's it, her very words, "very carefully"! I remember how she wrinkled up her little snub nose and--

SHE: *[Throwing back her head and staring coldly at the man beside her]* Sir, that is--

HE: *[Good-naturedly]* Yes, yes, her little snub nose. *[He looks up suddenly.]* Oh, mind you, it was a nice little nose!

SHE: And did you think it over carefully, "very carefully"?

HE: Not at all! I was a bit of a wild dog in those days, you know ... like most young men. My pride was hurt. *[He chuckles softly]* I was a proud young fellow ... like most young men, you understand. Of course I expected her to fall in my arms--and live there happily ever after--that is, not in my arms, you know, but--

SHE: As your wife. I understand.

HE: As my wife? Oh, yes, yes.

SHE: You were a romantic youth.

HE: Very, very--exceedingly so. I believe I must have been reading Disraeli's novels at the time. Rubbish!

SHE: But you, you--quite lost all trace of the--young lady?

HE: Quite. *[He pauses a moment]* Oh, I was a conceited young ass.... Like most young men, you know. Wouldn't have written for worlds! Several years afterward I read in the Times that Ann--

SHE: *[Turning away quickly]* Ann?

HE: Yes, Ann, Ann. Pretty name, isn't it? I was always fond of the name. As I was saying, several years afterward, I read in the Times that she had gone with her father to Florence; since then--nothing.

SHE: And so your romance ended?

HE: It will never--yes, yes, quite so. It ended.

SHE: *[After a long pause]* You never married?

HE: No, hadn't the time, always busy. Oh, I did think of it now and then, not often, mind you, but now and then. Life in the service does get lonely at times, when the hunting season is off, especially.

SHE: Oh--

HE: But I don't mind saying that a man should get married. Yes, indeed ... yes, indeed. My word, I did need some one to take care of me, some one to--

SHE: You've outgrown that need?

HE: *[Looking up suspiciously]* Yes, quite, oh, quite--my man is vary capable. Quite. *[The stillness is broken by harsh laughter and the sound of crashing, ear-splitting music.]* There goes that infernal music again.

SHE: Why, it's a waltz. *[They both sit in silence listening to the music; she quickly brushes a tear from her cheek.]* Yes--a waltz. Ah, what happy days those were! Music brings back so many memories. And the young people are happy. Ah, forty-two years ago I, too, could dance and laugh as they, but--

HE: *[Fumbling for his eyeglasses]* You--really?

SHE: Yes--in this very house, forty-two years ago.

HE: *[Through his glass he gazes at the lady next to him.]* Forty-two years ago; 'pon my word, so long ago as that?

SHE: Is it so long ago?

HE: Forty-two years, forty-two years-- *[He jerks back his head suddenly.]* I say, we must have known each other--then.

SHE: Perhaps--perhaps.

HE: Do you know, I believe I didn't catch your name. Awfully stupid of me-- awfully. I have the pleasure of--

SHE: Yes, perhaps we did know each other then, and again, perhaps we didn't.

HE: Quite right. And--you've lived in England ever since?

SHE: No, after you-- *[She coughs.]* That is, I've lived out of England a great deal. I have a small villa near Florence.

HE: Have you really? Delightful place, Florence.

SHE: Yes, though a bit lonely at times.

HE: Is it really? You know, I had always thought of it as quite gay. That only goes to show how mistaken one can be.

SHE: *[Her thoughts far away]* Yes ... yes.

HE: But--but I suppose you have your children about you, and all that sort of thing.

SHE: No, I never married.

HE: That's a bit unusual, isn't it?

SHE: *[Without looking up]* Is it?

HE: *[Sliding away to the farthest end of the divan]* And, I suppose you never will?

SHE: No ... no.

HE: *[Looking up at her through half-closed eyes]* You know-- *[There is a crash in the music.]* There goes that infernal music again!

SHE: Yes. Perhaps we had better join the company, Colonel--er--General Farrington.

HE: *[Puzzled]* General Sir Richard Farrington.

SHE: Oh, I beg your pardon!

HE: And may I have the pleasure of knowing to whom I am indebted for a very pleasant half-hour--may I have the pleasure of knowing to whom I have been speaking?

SHE: *[After a rather awkward pause]* Why--yes--I am Lady Ann Trevers.

HE: Lady Ann Trevers? *[Sir Richard stumbles in trying to get to his feet]* Not Lady Ann of--

SHE: Yes, Sir Richard.

HE: 'Pon my word! God bless my soul! Ann Trevers ... Ann Trevers! I might have known you the moment I saw you--but I must admit I don't see so well as I used, that is, not quite so well. Ann Trevers! And to think that after all these years and in this very house--

SHE: Yes, Richard.

HE: *[Now trembling with excitement]* Ann! You said you never married?

SHE: Never married. No.

HE: 'Pon my word, but I thought--

SHE: You were mistaken. It was you--I loved then.

HE: *[Somehow he has got hold of Lady Ann's hand and is, a bit awkwardly, but ardently, pressing it to his lips.]* And when you said, "We must think it all over very carefully," you really meant--

SHE: Yes, I really meant--

HE: Now isn't that just like a woman! *[He leans far back and scratches his head doubtfully.]* Isn't that just like a woman!

SHE: Is it? *[From somewhere a waltz is heard. A great golden moon has risen out of the East and is peeping in at the windows.]*

HE: Ah me, what happy days those were.

SHE: What happy days.

HE: Yes ... yes. *[He looks up suddenly.]* My word, isn't that a waltz they're playing?

SHE: Yes--a waltz.

HE: Ann, will you finish this waltz with me?

SHE: Yes, Richard. *[Lady Ann holds out her hand, he takes it, and draws her to him.]*

Glossary

secluded = away from people and hard to reach

divan = a long comfortable seat without back and arms

preposterous = very silly

debutantes = a rich young woman who, especially in the past in Britain, went to a number of social events as a way of being introduced to other young people of high social rank

coiffure = a male hairdresser especially for women

Egad = used as a mild oath

petulantly = easily annoyed and rude like a child

lorgnette = a very old-fashioned pair of glasses with long handle

infernal = very bad, like hell

racket = unpleasant loud noise

snappy = immediately effective in getting people's attention

strenuous = needing a lot of effort and energy

conceited = too proud of oneself

ardently = showing strong feelings

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the play and answer the questions.

- What do He and She think of the dance and music of the party? Why?
- Why does He disagree with She, when He is referred as 'old'?
- Do they know each other?
- What do they talk about?
- After how many years have they met in this party?
- Why is He surprised when She addresses him by his full name?
- What do they eventually find out about each other?
- Write the summary of the play.

B. Understanding and Interpretation

Read the play again and answer the questions.

- What does the title 'Yesterday' suggest?

- b. It is a comedy with a romantic touch. Elucidate.
- c. Would you agree that the theme of the play is love? Give reasons in support of your answer.
- d. The playwright has shown great craftsmanship to write this play. How?
- e. How do you visualize the male character? Write his character sketch.

C. Leading to Write

- a. Old people always think that the past was better than the present. Why do they think so? Write an essay on this generation gap.
- b. The play ends with him holding her hands and taking her to dance. What might have happened after that? Let your imagination flow, and continue writing the next scene of the play.

Trifles

Susan Glaspell



Susan Glaspell (1876 - 1948) co-founded the first modern American theatre company, the Provincetown Players, and was a Pulitzer prize-winning playwright, actress, novelist, and journalist. Most of her nine novels, fourteen plays and over fifty short stories are set in Iowa, where she was raised. *Trifles* (1916), her one-act play based on the murder trial she covered as a young reporter, is considered one of the great works in American theatre as well as an important piece of feminist literature.

Characters

GEORGE HENDERSON: County Attorney

HENRY PETERS: Sheriff

LEWIS HALE: A Neighbouring Farmer

MRS. PETERS

MRS. HALE

Before you read

- Does the title ‘Trifles’ suggest that this play is about trifle things? Or
- Does it have an ironical meaning?

[The kitchen in the now abandoned farmhouse of JOHN WRIGHT, a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the bread-box, a dish-towel on the table—other signs of incompleted work. At the rear the outer door opens and the SHERIFF comes in followed by the COUNTY ATTORNEY and HALE. The SHERIFF and HALE are men in middle life, the COUNTY ATTORNEY is a young man; all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove. They are followed by two women—the SHERIFF's wife first; she is a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face. MRS HALE is larger and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door.]

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*rubbing his hands*) This feels good. Come up to the fire, ladies.

MRS PETERS: *(after taking a step forward)* I'm not—cold.

SHERIFF: *(unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove as if to mark the beginning of official business)* Now, Mr Hale, before we move things about, you explain to Mr Henderson just what you saw when you came here yesterday morning.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: By the way, has anything been moved? Are things just as you left them yesterday?

SHERIFF: *(looking about)* It's just the same. When it dropped below zero last night I thought I'd better send Frank out this morning to make a fire for us—no use getting pneumonia with a big case on, but I told him not to touch anything except the stove—and you know Frank.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Somebody should have been left here yesterday.

SHERIFF: Oh—yesterday. When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy—I want you to know I had my hands full yesterday. I knew you could get back from Omaha by today and as long as I went over everything here myself—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Well, Mr Hale, tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning.

HALE: Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place and as I got here I said, 'I'm going to see if I can't get John Wright to go in with me on a party telephone.' I spoke to Wright about it once before and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Let's talk about that later, Mr Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.

HALE: I didn't hear or see anything; I knocked at the door, and still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up, it was past eight o'clock. So I knocked again, and I thought I heard somebody say, 'Come in.' I wasn't sure, I'm not sure yet, but I opened the door—this door *(indicating the door by which the two women are still*

standing) and there in that rocker—(*pointing to it*) sat Mrs Wright.

[They all look at the rocker.]

COUNTY ATTORNEY: What—was she doing?

HALE: She was rockin' back and forth. She had her apron in her hand and was kind of—pleating it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And how did she—look?

HALE: Well, she looked queer.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: How do you mean—queer?

HALE: Well, as if she didn't know what she was going to do next. And kind of done up.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: How did she seem to feel about your coming?

HALE: Why, I don't think she minded—one way or other. She didn't pay much attention. I said, 'How do, Mrs Wright it's cold, ain't it?' And she said, 'Is it?'—and went on kind of pleating at her apron. Well, I was surprised; she didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to sit down, but just sat there, not even looking at me, so I said, 'I want to see John.' And then she—laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: 'Can't I see John?' 'No', she says, kind o' dull like. 'Ain't he home?' says I. 'Yes', says she, 'he's home'. 'Then why can't I see him?' I asked her, out of patience. 'Cause he's dead', says she. 'Dead?' says I. She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin' back and forth. 'Why—where is he?' says I, not knowing what to say. She just pointed upstairs—like that (*himself pointing to the room above*) I got up, with the idea of going up there. I walked from there to here—then I says, 'Why, what did he die of?' 'He died of a rope round his neck', says she, and just went on pleatin' at her apron. Well, I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—need help. We went upstairs and there he was lyin'—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I think I'd rather have you go into that upstairs, where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story.

HALE: Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked ... (*stops, his face twitches*) ... but Harry, he went up to him, and he said, 'No, he's dead all right, and we'd better not touch anything.' So we went back down stairs. She was still sitting that same way. 'Has anybody been notified?' I asked. 'No', says she unconcerned.

'Who did this, Mrs Wright?' said Harry. He said it business-like—and she stopped pleatin' of her apron. 'I don't know', she says. 'You don't know?' says Harry. 'No', says she. 'Weren't you sleepin' in the bed with him?' says Harry. 'Yes', says she, 'but I was on the inside'. 'Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him and you didn't wake up?' says Harry. 'I didn't wake up', she said after him. We must 'a looked as if we didn't see how that could be, for after a minute she said, 'I sleep sound'. Harry was going to ask her more questions but I said maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the coroner, or the sheriff, so Harry went fast as he could to Rivers' place, where there's a telephone.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And what did Mrs Wright do when she knew that you had gone for the coroner?

HALE: She moved from that chair to this one over here (*pointing to a small chair in the corner*) and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me—scared, (*the COUNTY ATTORNEY, who has had his notebook out, makes a note*) I dunno, maybe it wasn't scared. I wouldn't like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr Lloyd came, and you, Mr Peters, and so I guess that's all I know that you don't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*looking around*) I guess we'll go upstairs first—and then out to the barn and around there, (*to the SHERIFF*) You're convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive.

SHERIFF: Nothing here but kitchen things.

[*The COUNTY ATTORNEY, after again looking around the kitchen, opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky.*]

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Here's a nice mess. [*The women draw nearer.*]

MRS PETERS: (*to the other woman*) Oh, her fruit; it did freeze, (*to the LAWYER*) She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break.

SHERIFF: Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about.

HALE: Well, women are used to worrying over trifles.

[The two women move a little closer together.]

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(with the gallantry of a young politician)* And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies? *(the women do not unbend. He goes to the sink, takes a dipperful of water from the pail and pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. Starts to wipe them on the roller-towel, turns it for a cleaner place)* Dirty towels! *(kicks his foot against the pans under the sink)* Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?

MRS HALE: *(stiffly)* There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: To be sure. And yet *(with a little bow to her)* I know there are some Dickson county farmhouses which do not have such roller towels. *(He gives it a pull to expose its length again.)*

MRS HALE: Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Ah, loyal to your sex, I see. But you and Mrs Wright were neighbours. I suppose you were friends, too.

MRS HALE: *(shaking her head)* I've not seen much of her of late years. I've not been in this house—it's more than a year.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And why was that? You didn't like her?

MRS HALE: I liked her all well enough. Farmers' wives have their hands full, Mr Henderson. And then—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Yes—?

MRS HALE: *(looking about)* It never seemed a very cheerful place.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No—it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct.

MRS HALE: Well, I don't know as Wright had, either.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: You mean that they didn't get on very well?

MRS HALE: No, I don't mean anything. But I don't think a place'd be any cheerfuller

for John Wright's being in it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I'd like to talk more of that a little later. I want to get the lay of things upstairs now. *(He goes to the left, where three steps lead to a stair door.)*

SHERIFF: I suppose anything Mrs Peters does'll be all right. She was to take in some clothes for her, you know, and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Yes, but I would like to see what you take, Mrs Peters, and keep an eye out for anything that might be of use to us.

MRS PETERS: Yes, Mr Henderson. *[The women listen to the men's steps on the stairs, then look about the kitchen.]*

MRS HALE: I'd hate to have men coming into my kitchen, snooping around and criticising. *[She arranges the pans under sink which the LAWYER had shoved out of place.]*

MRS PETERS: Of course it's no more than their duty.

MRS HALE: Duty's all right, but I guess that deputy sheriff that came out to make the fire might have got a little of this on. *(gives the roller towel a pull)* Wish I'd thought of that sooner. Seems mean to talk about her for not having things slicked up when she had to come away in such a hurry.

MRS PETERS: *(who has gone to a small table in the left rear corner of the room, and lifted one end of a towel that covers a pan)* She had bread set. *(Stands still.)*

MRS HALE: *(eyes fixed on a loaf of bread beside the bread-box, which is on a low shelf at the other side of the room. Moves slowly toward it)* She was going to put this in there, *(picks up loaf, then abruptly drops it. In a manner of returning to familiar things)* It's a shame about her fruit. I wonder if it's all gone. *(gets up on the chair and looks)* I think there's some here that's all right, Mrs Peters. Yes—here; *(holding it toward the window)* this is cherries, too. *(looking again)* I declare I believe that's the only one. *(gets down, bottle in her hand. Goes to the sink and wipes it off on the outside)* She'll feel awful bad after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer.

[She puts the bottle on the big kitchen table, center of the room. With a sigh, is

about to sit down in the rocking-chair. Before she is seated realizes what chair it is; with a slow look at it, steps back. The chair which she has touched rocks back and forth.]

MRS PETERS: Well, I must get those things from the front room closet, *(she goes to the door at the right, but after looking into the other room, steps back)* You coming with me, Mrs Hale? You could help me carry them.

[They go in the other room; reappear, MRS PETERS carrying a dress and skirt, MRS HALE following with a pair of shoes.]

MRS PETERS: My, it's cold in there. *[She puts the clothes on the big table, and hurries to the stove.]*

MRS HALE: *(examining the skirt)* Wright was close. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in?

MRS PETERS: She said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want, for there isn't much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. She said they was in the top drawer in this cupboard. Yes, here. And then her little shawl that always hung behind the door. *(opens stair door and looks)* Yes, here it is. *[Quickly shuts door leading upstairs.]*

MRS HALE: **(abruptly moving toward her)** Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Yes, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: Do you think she did it?

MRS PETERS: *(in a frightened voice)* Oh, I don't know.

MRS HALE: Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. Worrying about her fruit.

MRS PETERS: *(starts to speak, glances up, where footsteps are heard in the room above. In a low voice)* Mr Peters says it looks bad for her. Mr Henderson is awful sarcastic in a speech and he'll make fun of her sayin' she didn't wake up.

MRS HALE: Well, I guess John Wright didn't wake when they was slipping that

rope under his neck.

MRS PETERS: No, it's strange. It must have been done awful crafty and still. They say it was such a—funny way to kill a man, rigging it all up like that.

MRS HALE: That's just what Mr Hale said. There was a gun in the house. He says that's what he can't understand.

MRS PETERS: Mr Henderson said coming out that what was needed for the case was a motive; something to show anger, or—sudden feeling.

MRS HALE: *(who is standing by the table)* Well, I don't see any signs of anger around here, *(she puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the table, stands looking down at table, one half of which is clean, the other half messy)* It's wiped to here, *(makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at loaf of bread outside the breadbox. Drops towel. In that voice of coming back to familiar things.)* Wonder how they are finding things upstairs. I hope she had it a little more red-up up there. You know, it seems kind of sneaking. Locking her up in town and then coming out here and trying to get her own house to turn against her!

MRS PETERS: But Mrs Hale, the law is the law.

MRS HALE: I s'pose 'tis, *(unbuttoning her coat)* Better loosen up your things, Mrs Peters. You won't feel them when you go out.

[MRS PETERS takes off her fur tippet, goes to hang it on hook at back of room, stands looking at the under part of the small corner table.]

MRS PETERS: She was piecing a quilt. *[She brings the large sewing basket and they look at the bright pieces.]*

MRS HALE: It's log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn't it? I wonder if she was goin' to quilt it or just knot it?

[Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs. The SHERIFF enters followed by HALE and the COUNTY ATTORNEY.]

SHERIFF: They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it! *[The men laugh, the women look abashed.]*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(rubbing his hands over the stove)* Frank's fire didn't do much up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up. *(The*

men go outside.)

MRS HALE: (*resentfully*) I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. (*she sits down at the big table smoothing out a block with decision*) I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

MRS PETERS: (*apologetically*) Of course they've got awful important things on their minds. [*Pulls up a chair and joins MRS HALE at the table.*]

MRS HALE: (*examining another block*) Mrs Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about!

[*After she has said this they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant MRS HALE has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing.*]

MRS PETERS: Oh, what are you doing, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: (*mildly*) Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good. (*threading a needle*) Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

MRS PETERS: (*nervously*) I don't think we ought to touch things.

MRS HALE: I'll just finish up this end. (*suddenly stopping and leaning forward*) Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Yes, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

MRS PETERS: Oh—I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired. (*MRS HALE starts to say something, looks at MRS PETERS, then goes on sewing*) Well I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think, (*putting apron and other things together*) I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string.

MRS HALE: In that cupboard, maybe.

MRS PETERS: (*looking in cupboard*) Why, here's a bird-cage, (*holds it up*) Did she have a bird, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: Why, I don't know whether she did or not—I've not been here for so

long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I don't know as she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.

MRS PETERS: (*glancing around*) Seems funny to think of a bird here. But she must have had one, or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it.

MRS HALE: I s'pose maybe the cat got it.

MRS PETERS: No, she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. My cat got in her room and she was real upset and asked me to take it out.

MRS HALE: My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain't it?

MRS PETERS: (*examining the cage*) Why, look at this door. It's broke. One hinge is pulled apart.

MRS HALE: (*looking too*) Looks as if someone must have been rough with it.

MRS PETERS: Why, yes. [*She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table.*]

MRS HALE: I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd be about it. I don't like this place.

MRS PETERS: But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

MRS HALE: It would, wouldn't it? (*dropping her sewing*) But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I—(*looking around the room*)—wish I had.

MRS PETERS: But of course you were awful busy, Mrs Hale—your house and your children.

MRS HALE: I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's why I ought to have come. I—I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I dunno what it is, but it's a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—(*shakes her head*)

MRS PETERS: Well, you mustn't reproach yourself, Mrs Hale. Somehow we just don't see how it is with other folks until—something comes up.

MRS HALE: Not having children makes less work—but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. Did you

know John Wright, Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Not to know him; I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man.

MRS HALE: Yes—good; he didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—(*shivers*) Like a raw wind that gets to the bone, (*pauses, her eye falling on the cage*) I should think she would 'a wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went with it?

MRS PETERS: I don't know, unless it got sick and died. [*She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again, both women watch it.*]

MRS HALE: You weren't raised round here, were you? (*MRS PETERS shakes her head*) You didn't know—her?

MRS PETERS: Not till they brought her yesterday.

MRS HALE: She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change. (*silence; then as if struck by a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things*) Tell you what, Mrs Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.

MRS PETERS: Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs Hale. There couldn't possibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her patches are in here—and her things.

[*They look in the sewing basket.*]

MRS HALE: Here's some red. I expect this has got sewing things in it. (*brings out a fancy box*) What a pretty box. Looks like something somebody would give you. Maybe her scissors are in here. (*Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose*) Why—(*MRS PETERS bends nearer, then turns her face away*) There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

MRS PETERS: Why, this isn't her scissors.

MRS HALE: (*lifting the silk*) Oh, Mrs Peters—it's—

[*MRS PETERS bends closer.*]

MRS PETERS: It's the bird.

MRS HALE: (*jumping up*) But, Mrs Peters—look at it! It's neck! Look at its neck! It's all—other side to.

MRS PETERS: Somebody—wrung—its—neck.

[Their eyes meet. A look of growing comprehension, of horror. Steps are heard outside. MRS HALE slips box under quilt pieces, and sinks into her chair. Enter SHERIFF and COUNTY ATTORNEY. MRS PETERS rises.]

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*as one turning from serious things to little pleasantries*) Well ladies, have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?

MRS PETERS: We think she was going to—knot it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Well, that's interesting, I'm sure. (*seeing the birdcage*) Has the bird flown?

MRS HALE: (*putting more quilt pieces over the box*) We think the—cat got it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*preoccupied*) Is there a cat?

[MRS HALE glances in a quick covert way at MRS PETERS.]

MRS PETERS: Well, not now. They're superstitious, you know. They leave.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*to SHERIFF PETERS, continuing an interrupted conversation*) No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let's go up again and go over it piece by piece. (*they start upstairs*) It would have to have been someone who knew just the—

[MRS PETERS sits down. The two women sit there not looking at one another, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now it is in the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they can not help saying it.]

MRS HALE: She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box.

MRS PETERS: (*in a whisper*) When I was a girl—my kitten—there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes—and before I could get there—(*covers her face an instant*) If they hadn't held me back I would have—(*catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly*)—hurt him.

MRS HALE: (*with a slow look around her*) I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around, (*pause*) No, Wright wouldn't like the bird—a thing

that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too.

MRS PETERS: (*moving uneasily*) We don't know who killed the bird.

MRS HALE: I knew John Wright.

MRS PETERS: It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him.

MRS HALE: His neck. Choked the life out of him.

[Her hand goes out and rests on the bird-cage.]

MRS PETERS: (*with rising voice*) We don't know who killed him. We don't know.

MRS HALE: (*her own feeling not interrupted*) If there'd been years and years of nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still, after the bird was still.

MRS PETERS: (*something within her speaking*) I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then—

MRS HALE: (*moving*) How soon do you suppose they'll be through, looking for the evidence?

MRS PETERS: I know what stillness is. (*pulling herself back*) The law has got to punish crime, Mrs Hale.

MRS HALE: (*not as if answering that*) I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. (*a look around the room*) Oh, I wish I'd come over here once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?

MRS PETERS: (*looking upstairs*) We mustn't—take on.

MRS HALE: I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing, (*brushes her eyes, noticing the bottle of fruit, reaches out for it*) If I was you, I wouldn't tell her her fruit was gone. Tell her it ain't. Tell her it's all right. Take this in to prove it to her. She—she may never know whether it was broke or not.

MRS PETERS: (*takes the bottle, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins*

winding this around the bottle. In a false voice) My, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us. Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with—with—wouldn't they laugh!

[The men are heard coming down stairs.]

MRS HALE: *(under her breath)* Maybe they would—maybe they wouldn't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No, Peters, it's all perfectly clear except a reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing. Something to show—something to make a story about—a thing that would connect up with this strange way of doing it—

[The women's eyes meet for an instant. Enter HALE from outer door.]

HALE: Well, I've got the team around. Pretty cold out there.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I'm going to stay here a while by myself, *(to the SHERIFF)* You can send Frank out for me, can't you? I want to go over everything. I'm not satisfied that we can't do better.

SHERIFF: Do you want to see what Mrs Peters is going to take in?

[The LAWYER goes to the table, picks up the apron, laughs.]

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Oh, I guess they're not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out. *(Moves a few things about, disturbing the quilt pieces which cover the box. Steps back)* No, Mrs Peters doesn't need supervising. For that matter, a sheriff's wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Not—just that way.

SHERIFF: *(chuckling)* Married to the law. *(moves toward the other room)* I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(scoffingly)* Oh, windows!

SHERIFF: We'll be right out, Mr Hale.

[HALE goes outside. The SHERIFF follows the COUNTY ATTORNEY into the other room. Then MRS HALE rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at MRS PETERS, whose eyes make a slow turn, finally meeting MRS HALE's. A moment MRS HALE holds her, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is

concealed. Suddenly MRS PETERS throws back quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is wearing. It is too big. She opens box, starts to take bird out, cannot touch it, goes to pieces, stands there helpless. Sound of a knob turning in the other room. MRS HALE snatches the box and puts it in the pocket of her big coat. Enter COUNTY ATTORNEY and SHERIFF.]

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*facetiously*) Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it, ladies?

MRS HALE: (*her hand against her pocket*) We call it—knot it, Mr Henderson.

CURTAIN

Glossary

trifle = something of little value or importance

sheriff = an elected law officer of a county

wiry = thin but strong

rockers = pieces of wood under a rocking chair

coroner = an official who examines the reasons of a person's death

preserve = a food made from fruit and vegetables boiled with sugar and water until it becomes a firm sauce

gallantly = in a polite and kind way, bravely

tippet = a small piece of cloth worn over the shoulders

abashed = embarrassed

fidgety = making continuous small movements that are annoying

reproach = to criticize

hatchet = a small axe

scoff = to talk or laugh about a person in a way that shows that you think them stupid or silly

facetiously = not serious about a serious subject

Exercises

A. Literal Comprehension

Read the play and answer the following questions.

- a. Who has been murdered and how?
- b. Why did Mr. Hale go to Mr. White's house, and what did he find?

- c. What is strange in Mr. Hale's tale of the incident?
- d. What kind of person was Mr. White? Draw his character sketch.
- e. Where is Mrs. White, and why is she there?
- f. Why does Mrs. Hale put the box in the pocket of her big pocket?
- g. The three men are looking for motive of the murder. Do they find it? Why? Why Not?
- h. Who is the actual murderer, and why did s/he commit this heinous crime?

B. Understanding and Interpretation

- a. What's the significance of the dead bird in this play? Elaborate.
- b. The title of the play has a double-meaning: it refers, satirically, to the 'trifling' way some men perceive women, and it also acts as an ironic gesture to the fact that women are not as 'trifling' as these men make them out to be. Elucidate.
- c. The setting is 'the kitchen in the now abandoned farmhouse of John Wright' where 'signs of uncompleted works' appear as 'signs of incompetent' housekeeping to the men but as signs 'of a disturbed consciousness' to the women. How?
- d. The play is a subtle advocacy of feminism. Give reasons in support of your answer.

C. Leading to Write

- a. You read two plays. Which one did you like most and why?
- b. What is the difference between when
 - i. a soldier shoots the enemy of his country
 - ii. a terrorist bombs people
 - iv. a jealous husband kills his wife's lover
 - v. a paid assassin shoots a businessman
- 3. Which one(s) would you call a murder and which one(s) not? Why?
- 4. Why do most men look down on women as inferiors? Write an argumentative essay on the topic.