Higher Secondary Course

Part III

English Literature

STANDARD XII

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2015

PLEDGE

India is my country. All Indians are my brothers and sisters. I love my country, and I am proud of its rich and varied heritage. I shall always strive to be worthy of it. I shall give my parents, teachers and all elders respect, and treat everyone with courtesy.

To my country and my people, I pledge my devotion. In their well-being and prosperity alone lies my happiness.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Jana-gana-mana-adhinayaka, jaya he
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata.
Punjab-Sindh-Gujarat-Maratha
Dravida-Utkala-Banga
Vindhya-Himachala-Yamuna-Ganga
Uchchala-Jaladhi-taranga.
Tava shubha name jage,
Tava shubha asisa mage,
Gahe tava jaya gatha,
Jana-gana-mangala-dayaka jaya he
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata.
Jaya he, jaya he, jaya he,
Jaya jaya jaya, jaya he!

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Standard XII
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Dear learners

The English Literature Coursebook for Standard XII has been designed with a view to developing literary taste, critical reading skills, skills in expressing your ideas both in the spoken and written forms and reference skills. The learning of any language inevitably involves the learning of its rich and varied literature. The selections in this book represent authors from different cultures ranging from W B Yeats to Sugathakumari and Salwa Bakr to Leopoldo Lugones. It also brings in a variety of literary genres like poetry, short story, one-act play and non-fiction.

You can enjoy reading the texts and think creatively once you enter the world of letters that the authors create for you. I hope you will make use of this book to hone your English language skills. The variety of activities presented in the book, I am sure, will provide ample opportunities for you to use the language in different contexts. Your teacher will guide you in your efforts to interact with the texts and do the activities in the book.

Learn literature in all its vigour, variety and vivacity.

Wish you all the best.

Dr S. Raveendran Nair
Director
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Section 1
Poetry

Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty in words.

- Edgar Allan Poe

Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words.

- Robert Frost

Preface

Modern poetry indulges in a lot of experimentation and innovation and has a wider canvas of choice of themes. The poems prescribed for study, delve deep into the intricacies of modern life with all its perplexities, confusions and the resultant anarchy. In these poems you may come across unflinching realism, pessimism, humanitarianism, mysticism and psychological profundity. This section intends to introduce you to different genres of poetry as well as poets of different nationalities and literary tastes.

Learning Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

- identify the confusions and perplexities of modern life which were characteristic of 20th century poetry.
- analyse poems and recognize new trends in modern poetry.
- elucidate the socio-cultural and historical background of the period and its impact on poetry.
- apply critical reading to identify the context, theme, message, mood, tone, emotions and language of the poems.
- bring out the implied meanings of the text.
- interpret the attitudes and feelings of the poet.
- demonstrate awareness of ecological issues and the after-effects of war.
- demonstrate knowledge of literary and figurative elements.

William Butler Yeats (1865 - 1939)

Born in 1865 in Dublin, W. B. Yeats is considered as one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century. Although he spent his childhood in London, Yeats' poems reflect his deep emotional attachment to his native land, Ireland. Being a staunch supporter of Irish nationalism, he devoted himself to native subjects - writing poems, plays, short stories and novels with Irish characters and setting. Many of his writings reveal a dreamlike nostalgia. He was a modernist who experimented with free verse and a symbolist who used allusive images and symbols throughout his career. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923.

In the poem 'The Wild Swans at Coole', Yeats laments the loss of his youth.

The Wild Swans at Coole

THE TREES are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight, the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine and fifty swans.

The nineteenth Autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count;
I saw, before I had well finished,

1. What does the poet mean by 'autumn beauty'?

2. How does the poet describe the autumn scene ?

3. How is 'nineteen years' connected with the swans?

Coole : a national park near Dublin in Ireland

All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trod with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold,
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;

4. What did the swans do suddenly?

5. What change has come over the poet now?

6. Pick out two words that denote the movement of the swans.

7. What remains with the swans wherever they go?

8. List some of the adjectives used by the poet to describe the swans.

Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes, when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

clamorous: noisy
mount: to get upon
paddle: to swim with short movements
sore: grieved
trod: walked heavily or laboriously
wheeling: moving in large circles

Understanding the Text

1. In the first stanza, the poet expresses his delight at the sight of the swans. Does he remain happy throughout the poem? Why does the mood of the poet change?
2. Yeats says that everything has changed at Coole Park. What do you think he is talking about - the scenery or his own life?
3. The poet visits Coole Park in autumn and at twilight. Does this give any clue about the theme of the poem? What is its significance?
4. The paths in the wood are dry. Can you attribute any deeper meaning to the word 'dry'?
5. The poet says that the swans took off suddenly as he was counting them. Yet he says that there are fifty nine swans. How does he know that? What may be the intention of the poet in choosing fifty nine as the number of swans?
6. What do the swans symbolise?
7. The poet creates a poignant and calm atmosphere in the poem. How does it support the theme of the poem?

8. What is the prevailing tone in the poem? You may notice an interplay of varying tones at different places. Pick out lines which reflect the following tones.

   a. calm/serene : _____

   b. full of admiration : _____

   c. regretful : _____

9. In the poem, the poet contrasts the 'dry paths' with the 'brimming lakes'. What other things are contrasted in the poem?

10. How does the last stanza contribute to the theme of the poem?

11. The poem contains a beautiful imagery of nature. It also contains images of the poet's ageing self. List down these images.

12. Identify and explain the figure of speech used in lines 3 and 4.

13. In stanza 4, the poet makes 'passion' and 'conquest' to attend the swans. Identify the figure of speech employed here.

14. A synecdoche is a literary device that uses a part of something to refer to the whole. (For example, 'wheels' can refer to a car.) Pick out lines from the third stanza in which this figure of speech is used.

15. Find out the lines which are examples for 'alliteration', 'assonance' and 'consonance' from the poem.

16. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

Writing about the Text

1. Write an essay on the theme, language and literary devices of the poem.

2. Describe the reflections of the poet at the sight of the swans.

3. 'The Wild Swans at Coole' portrays the regret and sentiments of a man on the verge of old age. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Here is a poem written by D. H. Lawrence.

Beautiful Old Age

It ought to be lovely to be old
to be full of the peace that comes of experience
and wrinkled ripe fulfilment.

The wrinkled smile of completeness that follows a life
lived undaunted and unsoured with accepted lies
they would ripen like apples, and be scented like pippins
in their old age.

Soothing, old people should be, like apples
when one is tired of love.
Fragrant like yellowing leaves, and dim with the soft
stillness and satisfaction of autumn.
And a girl should say:

It must be wonderful to live and grow old.
Look at my mother, how rich and still she is! -
And a young man should think: By Jove
my father has faced all weathers, but it's been a life!

Attempt a comparative study of the attitudes of D. H. Lawrence and W. B. Yeats towards old age.

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Jeffares, A Norman. ***W. B. Yeats: A New Biography***. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.1989

Pritchard, William H. ***W. B. Yeats: A Critical Anthology***. Penguin.1972

Vendler, Helen. ***Our Secret Discipline: Yeats and Lyric Form***. Harvard University Press.2007

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907–1973)

W. H. Auden was an Anglo-American poet, who is regarded as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. His work is noted for its stylistic and technical achievement. The central themes of his poetry are love, politics and citizenship, religion and morals, intricate human relationships and the anonymous, impersonal world of nature. He was also a prolific writer of essays and reviews on literary, psychological and religious subjects and he worked on documentary films, poetic plays and other forms of performance.

The poem 'The Unknown Citizen' is a satire on modern society where an individual is reduced to a numerical factor.

The Unknown Citizen

(To JS/07 M 378

This Marble Monument

Is Erected by the State)

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be

One against whom there was no official complaint,

And all the reports on his conduct agree

That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,

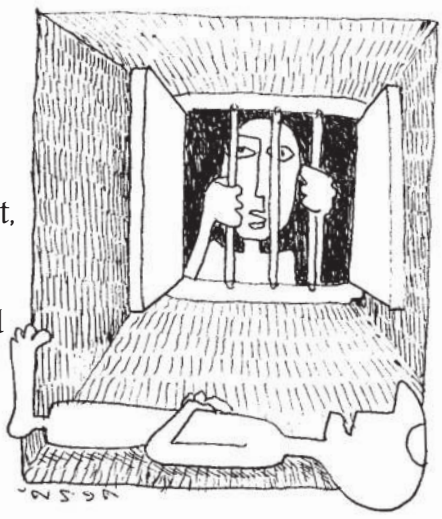
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.

Except for the War till the day he retired

He worked in a factory and never got fired,

But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.

Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,



1. Why does the poet remark that 'he was a saint'?

For his Union reports that he paid his dues,
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)

And our Social Psychology workers found

That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.

The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day

And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.

Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,

And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.

Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare

He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan

And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.

Our researchers into Public Opinion are content

That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;

When there was peace, he was for peace: when there was war, he went.

He was married and added five children to the population,

Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation.

And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.

Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:

Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

2. How do we know that his employer and the trade union were satisfied?

3. What was the conviction the Press had about the unknown citizen?

4. Why does the poet say that the unknown citizen had everything necessary for the Modern Man?

5. Which lines indicate that he was an opportunist?

6. Why are the questions posed in the poem 'absurd'?

Eugenist : a specialist who tries to improve the human race by encouraging reproduction by persons having desirable traits

frigidaire : a brand of electric refrigerator

scab : a worker who refuses to join a strike

Understanding the Text

1. The epitaph gives the dead person the identity of a code number. What does it imply?
2. Who is the speaker in the poem? Is he/she a single person? Does he/she symbolise anything more? Discuss.
3. The poet lists many accomplishments by the unknown citizen. But they are all phrased in the negative sense. Comment.
4. Does the unknown citizen's passivity mean that he was really happy and content? Explain.
5. Though the dead man is called an unknown citizen, he had been thoroughly investigated by different agencies of the State. Could this be a prophetic warning about the future of modern man? Elucidate.
6. What is the message of the poem?
7. Identify and discuss the rhyme scheme of the poem.
8. Some critics consider the poem as a satirical elegy. Does the treatment of the theme, tone and diction support this view? Elaborate.
9. The poem is considered as an allegory. Justify this statement.

Writing about the Text

1. Though the poem was written in 1930, the theme of the poem is relevant even today. Substantiate.
2. Consider 'The Unknown Citizen' as a satire on a modern welfare state, where a human being is reduced to a numerical factor.
3. 'The Unknown Citizen' is a typical modern poem. Comment.

References

Carpenter, Humphrey. ***W H Auden: A Biography***. London: George Allen & Unwin. 1981.
Fuller, John. ***W H Auden: A Commentary***. London: Faber and Faber. 1998.
Hewett, Ronald. ***A Choice of Poets***. London: Harrap. 1968.

James Falconer Kirkup (1918 - 2009)

James Kirkup (1918 – 2009) was a prolific English poet, translator and travel writer. He wrote over thirty books, including his autobiography, novels and plays. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1962. His collection of poems include *Refusal to Conform*, *A Correct Compassion* etc. His works offer a different perspective on modern life, its brutality and ruggedness. He won many awards like *The Atlantic Award for Literature* in 1950, *P.E.N. Club Prize for Poetry* in 1965 and *The Japan Festival Foundation Award* in 1997.

The poem is an outright plea to realise the level of devastation that war causes and it strives to conjure up anti-war emotions in the reader.

No More Hiroshimas

At the station exit, my bundle in my hand,
Early the winter afternoon's wet snow
Falls thinly round me, out of a crudded sun
I had forgotten to remember where I was
Looking about, I see it might be anywhere–
A station, a town like any other in Japan,
Ramshackle, muddy, noisy, drab, a cheerfully
Shallow permanence, peeling concrete, litter, 'Atomic
Lotion, for hair fall-out, a flimsy department-store
Racks and towers of neon, flashy over tiled and tilted waves
Of little roofs, shacks cascading lemons and persimmons,
Oranges and dark-red apples, shanties awash with rainbows

1. Comment on the time, place and climate of the setting from the opening lines.

2. What are the things that the poet sees in the department store?

Of squid and octopus, shellfish, slabs of tuna, oysters, ice,

Ablaze with fans of soiled nude-picture books

Thumbed abstractedly by schoolboys, with second-hand looks

3. Which line tells us that the town of Hiroshima does not want to move forward in time?

The river remains unchanged, sad, refusing rehabilitation

In this long, wide, empty, official boulevard

The new trees are still small, the office blocks

Barely functional, the bridge a slick abstraction

But the river remains unchanged, sad, refusing rehabilitation

4.Why does the poet say 'a kind of life goes on'?

In the city centre, far from the station's lively squalor
A kind of life goes on, in cinemas and hi-fi coffee bars,
In the shuffling racket of pin-table palaces and parlours,
The souvenir-shops piled with junk, kimonoed kewpie-dolls,
Models of the bombed Industry Promotion Hall, memorial ruin
Tricked out with glitter-frost and artificial pearls

5. How does society commercialise even death and destruction?

Set in an awful emptiness, the modern tourist hotel is trimmed
With jaded Christmas frippery, flatulent balloons; in the hall,
A giant dingy iced cake in the shape of a Cinderella coach
Deserted, my room an overheated morgue, the bar in darkness
Punctually, the electric chimes ring out across the tidy waste
Their doleful public hymn – the tune unrecognizable, evangelist
Here atomic peace is geared to meet the tourist trade
Let it remain like this, for all the world to see
Without nobility or loveliness, and dogged with shame
That is beyond all hope of indignation. Anger, too, is dead
And why should memorials of what was far
From pleasant have the grace that helps us to forget?

6. What is the 'tidy waste' that the poet is referring to?

7. Why does the poet remark that the memorials have the grace to help forget everything?

In the dying afternoon, I wander dying round the Park of Peace

It is right, this squat, dead place, with its left-over air

Of an abandoned International Trade and Tourist Fair

The stunted trees are wrapped in straw against the cold

The gardeners are old, old women in blue bloomers, white aprons

Survivors weeding the dead brown lawns around the Children's Monument

8. What are the relics of the catastrophe presented in the poem?

A hideous pile, the Atomic Bomb Explosion Centre, freezing cold,

'Includes the peace Tower, a museum containing

Atomic-melted slates and bricks, photos showing

What the Atomic Desert looked like, and other

Relics of the catastrophe

The other relics

The ones that made me weep;

The bits of burnt clothing

The stopped watches, the torn shirts

The twisted buttons

The stained and tattered vests and drawers

The ripped kimonos and charred boots

The white blouse polka-dotted with atomic rain, indelible

The cotton summer pants the blasted boys crawled home in, to bleed

And slowly to die

9. 'Remember only these. They are the memorials we need.' Why does the poet say so?

Remember only these

They are the memorials we need.

Park of Peace: Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park is a park in Hiroshima dedicated to the legacy of Hiroshima as the first city to suffer a nuclear attack.

bloomers : a woman's dress, long loose trousers gathered at the ankles

cascading : tremble down like a waterfall

catastrophe : a sudden event that causes many people to suffer

chimes : a ringing sound

crudded sun : a partially visible sun through winter fog

dingy : discoloured and dirty

drab : dull and boring (jaded)

flatulent : filled with gas

flimsy : badly maintained

frippery : decorations

hideous : devilish

indignation : a feeling of anger and surprise

junk : discarded articles; here, articles of less value

kewpie dolls : a trademark for small chubby dolls with a top-knot of hair

morgue : a place where dead bodies are kept before burial

persimmons : a tropical fruit like an orange

pin table : a game equipment on which pin-ball is played

ramshackle : in a very bad condition

slick : slippery

squalor : dirty condition

trim : to decorate

Understanding the Text

1. Consider Hiroshima as a symbol. What is the significance of the title?
2. A 'paradox' is a self-contradictory statement which is difficult to believe, or which goes against the generally accepted opinion. Find out the paradox in the first stanza. How far does it emphasise the message of the poem?
3. Identify the adjectives and metaphors in the first stanza. What do they imply?
4. What is the tone of the first stanza and how does it contrast with the other stanzas of the poem?
5. In which stanza does the tone of the poem change? What is the significance of the change in the tone of the poem?
6. Why does the poet repeat the line 'the river remains unchanged, sad, refusing rehabilitation'?
7. Identify the figures of speech used in the second stanza.
8. What is the poetic device used in the third stanza? What is its purpose?

9. Pick out words associated with emptiness in the first four stanzas. What effect does the imagery have?

10. How does the poet's comment on what he has found in Hiroshima explain the negative imagery of the first four stanzas? Discuss.

11. How often does the poet repeat the idea of death while describing the 'Park of Peace'? What is the significance of this repetition?

12. There is a reference to the items found in the museum. What are they? What do they signify?

13. 'Lively squalor' is an oxymoron used to create greater poetic effect. Pick out other examples of oxymoron in the poem.

14. Does the poem have any regular rhyme scheme or rhythm? Why?

15. 'Here, atomic peace is geared to meet the tourist trade.' Why does the poet say so?

Writing about the Text

1. The first stanza of the poem presents a vivid picture of a station in Hiroshima. Does the picture serve as a preface to the rest of the poem? Explain.

2. Trace the change in the attitude of the poet as the poem progresses.

3. What is the general tone of the poem?

4. What message does the poem put across?

5. Does the poem stir anti-war emotions in the reader? Prepare the script of a speech on the topic 'The Need to Abandon Wars in Future' in the light of your reading of the poem.

5. Critically evaluate the poem and prepare a review of it.

Now, read the poem given below and answer the questions.

Glory of Women

You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,

Or wounded in a mentionable place

You worship decorations; you believe

That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace

You make us shells. You listen with delight,

By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.

You crown our distant ardours while we fight,

And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed.

You can't believe that British troops retire

When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run,

Trampling the terrible corpses - blind with blood.

O German mother dreaming by the fire,

While you are knitting socks to send your son

His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

Siegfried Sassoon

1. Who are the 'you' and 'we' referred to in the poem?
2. How do women romanticise war?
3. The last lines give a powerful ending to the poem with a striking word picture. What is its significance?

Reference

Clifford Dyment, Roy Fuller and Montagu Slater (ed.) ***New Poems 1952***.

T S Eliot (1888 - 1965)

Thomas Stearns Eliot, the British-American essayist, playwright, social and literary critic, was one of the stalwarts of 20th century literature. He has influenced the course and future of modern poetry more than any other poet of the modern era. Most of his poems reveal his distress at the moral degradation and corruption that was rampant in the contemporary European Society. He is chiefly remembered for his much acclaimed poem *The Waste Land*, which symbolises the breakdown of faiths and values in the life of the Europeans.

The poem testifies the influence of religion on the poet, especially his change of faith to the Anglican Church of England in 1927. It reflects the poet's search for a solution to the human dilemma in the modern world.

The Journey of the Magi

'A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey.
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.'
And the camels galled, sorefooted, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.

The Magi : the three wise men who had come to Bethlehem to pay their respects to infant Jesus Christ presenting him with gifts of gold, myrrh, and frankincense

Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices.
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

1. Why does the speaker say that it is 'the worst time' for a journey?

2. What did they regret during their travel?

3. Why did the Magi prefer to travel at night?

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arriving at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you might say) satisfactory.

4. What did the Magi see in the temperate valley?

5. Why did they decide to continue the journey?

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down

This: were we led all that way for

Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly

We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,

But had thought they were different; this Birth was

Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,

But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,

With an alien people clutching their gods.

I should be glad of another death.

6. Whose birth is referred to here?

an old white horse: (here) a metaphor for the rebirth of Christ and the defeat of pagan beliefs

galled: annoyed

grumbling: expressing discontent

running stream: a stream that flows (symbolic of life's change)

six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver: betrayal of Christ by Judas

temperate valley: valley of mild climate

the old dispensation: the old way of life, the old religion

three trees: stands for the three crosses at Calvary

water-mill beating the darkness: symbolic of the extinction and renewal

vine leaves over the lintel: refers to the water that Christ transformed into wine

wine- skin: a leather bag used to hold wine

Understanding the Text

1. Who is the speaker of the poem?
2. What are the difficulties faced by the Magi at the beginning of the journey?
3. Find out the significance of the first line which is a quote from Lancelot Andrew's 'A Prominent Clergyman and Scholar'.
4. Why did the camel men rebel?
5. What picture of the life and times of the people do you get in the first stanza of the poem?

6. How did the birth of Christ influence the life in the West?
7. How is the theme of death presented in the poem?
8. How are the themes of birth and death combined in the poem?
9. How does the Magi become alienated?
10. What are the symbols used in the second stanza? What do they signify?
11. Why does the speaker desire for death towards the end of the poem?
12. Where does the poet link the spiritual and the physical death in the poem? How?
13. Anachronism refers to the erroneous dating of an event, circumstance or object. An example for anachronism can be seen in the quotation from 'Lancelot Andrews' 'A Prominent Clergyman and Scholar' which was published in 1622. Find out other instances of anachronism from the poem.
14. Comment on the poet's use of imagery in the poem.

Writing about the Text

1. Attempt a critical evaluation of the poem 'The Journey of the Magi'.
2. Comment on the symbols used in the poem.
3. Analyse the confessional elements in the poem.
4. Trace the psychological changes that the Magi underwent towards the end of their journey.
5. How does the birth of Christ become a hard and bitter agony for the Magi?
6. Comment on the Biblical allusions in the poem.
7. 'The Magi's fear as revealed in the poem is an example of the innate fear of the human being facing changes.' Discuss.
8. 'The Journey of the Magi' is regarded by many as a 'conversion narrative'. Do you think that the poem is autobiographical? How do the lines relate to the poet's life?

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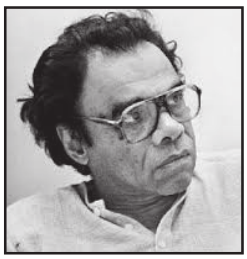
Attipet Krishnaswami Ramanujan (1929 - 1993)



A.K. Ramanujan was an Indian writer who wrote in both English and Kannada. He was a poet, folklorist, translator and a linguist. He was born and brought up in Mysore. He taught at many universities in South India. In 1962 he joined the University of Chicago as a Professor of Linguistics. Ramanujan's poetry is deeply rooted in Indian culture and mythology. He used the Indian backdrop to deal with themes that were familiar to the western world. Ramanujan's poetry reflects the Indian ethos and its pertinence to life. In 1976, he was honoured with the *Padmasree* award. He was also awarded the *Sahitya Akademi Award* posthumously in 1999.

The poem 'Ecology' taken from Ramanujan's collection of poems titled *Second Sight* depicts the reverence and affinity with which Indians regard Mother Nature.

Ecology

The day after the first rain,
for years, I would come home
in a rage, for I could see from a mile away
our three Red Champak trees
had done it again
had burst into flower and given Mother
her first blinding migraine
of the season
with their street-long heavy- hung
yellow pollen fog of a fragrance
no wind could sift.

1. Why did the poet come home in a rage the day after the first rain?

no door could shut out from our black
pillared house whose walls had ears
and eyes,
scales, smells, bone-creaks, nightly
visiting voices, and were porous
like us,
but mother, flashing her temper
like her mother's twisted silver,
grandchildren's knickers
wet as the cold pack on her head,
would not let us cut down
a flowering tree

almost
as old as her, seeded,
she said, by a passing bird's
providential droppings

to give her gods and her daughters
and daughter's daughters basketfuls
of annual flower
and for one line of cousins
a dower of migraines in season.

2. How does the poet describe his house?

3. What did the poet's mother do to lessen her pain?

4. How did the tree sprout in the poet's courtyard?

5. Why does the poet's mother insist on retaining the Champak trees?

dower : (here) gift
fragrance : a pleasant smell
migraine : a severe splitting headache
porous : small holes that allow water or air to pass through slowly
providential : pertaining to the divine

Understanding the Text

1. Why does the poet want to cut the trees?
2. Ramanujan depicts the cultural beliefs of the Indian people through the character of his mother. Substantiate the statement with reference to the reasons given by his mother for not cutting the tree.
3. How do the last two lines add a note of discord to the mother's arguments? Do these lines support the cutting of the tree? Discuss.
4. How is the title 'Ecology' connected to the theme of the poem? Does it imply any underlying idea?
5. Comment on the feelings of the poet's mother to those of Mother Earth?
6. In line 18, the mother's flashing temper is compared to 'the flash of twisted silver'. Identify the figure of speech employed here. Find another line in which the same device is used.
7. The description of the poet's house is a fine example of sarcasm. Identify another instance of the same poetic device in the poem.
8. A.K. Ramanujan makes appropriate use of imagery to convey the theme effectively. List these images and categorise them as visual, auditory, etc.

Writing about the Text

1. The poetry of Ramanujan mirrors Indian tradition in all its grandeur. Prepare a write-up on the depiction of Indian culture in the poem.
2. The poem depicts how reverence for nature is an intrinsic part of the Indian psyche. Write a note on the poem with reference to the above statement.
3. Prepare a critical review of the poem.
4. Imagine that the poet's mother is the speaker in the poem. Write a paragraph on the ideas presented in the poem as narrated by her.

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David Malouf (1934 -)

David George Joseph Malouf is an Australian poet and novelist of Lebanese and English descent whose works reflect his ethnic background as well as his Queensland childhood and youth. His major volumes of poetry include *Bicycle and Other Poems* (1970), *Wild Lemons* (1980) and *Typewriter Music* (2007). He was awarded the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 2000, the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award in 1996 and the inaugural Australia-Asia Literary Award in 2008.

The poem 'Bicycle' evokes in us a heightened sense of awareness about the insecurities of modern life and man's excessive dependence on machines.

Bicycle

for Derek Peat

Since Thursday last, the bare living-room
of my flat's been occupied
by a stranger from the streets, a light-limbed traveller.

pine-needle spokes, bright rims, the savage downward
curve (like polished horns) of its handlebars, denote

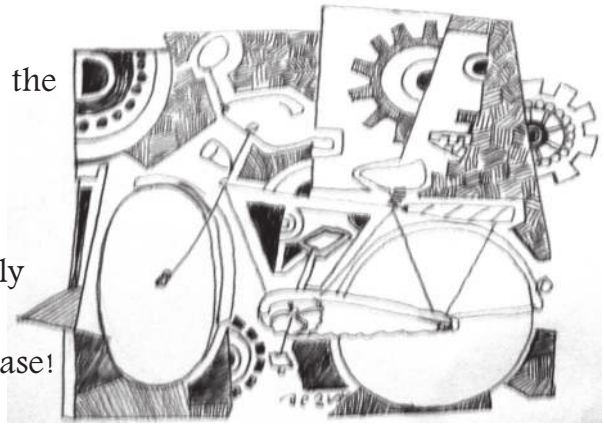
some forest deity, or deity of highway
and sky, has incognito set up residence—the godhead
invoked in a machine.

1. To whom is the poem dedicated?

2. What does the expression 'the bare living - room' signify?

3. What features of the machine give it the appearance of a forest deity?

To the other inmates of the room, a bookcase,
two chairs, its horizontals speak
of distance, travelling light. Only the mirror



remains unruffled—holding
its storm of light unbroken, calmly accepting
all traffic through its gaze. Appease! Appease! Even

this tall metallic insect,
this horizontal angel
of green. So much for mirrors!…As for myself,

I hardly dare look in. What should I offer
a bicycle? Absurd
to lay before its savage iridescence—

grease-drops' miraculous resin,
blue mist of stars,
a saucer of cold sweat…

Now time yawns and its messengers appear
like huge stick-insects, wingless, spoked with stars,
they wheel through the dusk towards us,

the shock-wave of collision still lifting
their locks, who bear our future
sealed at their lips like urgent telegrams.

4. What does the machine speak to the other inmates of the room?

5. How is the mirror of the machine described?

6. What are the things which the poet can offer the bicycle?

7. How are 'the messengers of time' described?

8. Who bears our future like urgent telegrams?

appease : to make someone calm, to satisfy

deity : god or goddess

incognito : with one's name or identity kept secret

iridescence : showing changing colours as light falls on

resin : a sticky liquid produced by trees used for making varnish, medicines, etc.

spokes : bars which connect the centre of the wheel to its outer edge

Understanding the Text

1. What is the theme of the poem?
2. Why is the bicycle called 'a stranger from the streets'?
3. How did the bicycle set up residence in the poet's home?
4. What are the things to which the bicycle is compared in the poem?
5. What is the 'machine' referred to in the poem?
6. What do the expressions 'grease-drops' 'miraculous resin', 'blue mist of stars' and 'a saucer of cold sweat' mean? Why does the poet say that all these are absurd?
7. What does the expression 'our future sealed at their lips like urgent telegrams' mean?

Writing about the Text

1. Comment on the style and metaphoric language of the poem.
2. The poem expresses the anxieties, dangers and insecurities of the age of machines. Elaborate.

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Maya Angelou (1928-2014)

Marguerite Annie Johnson, popularly known as Maya Angelou, was a celebrated American author who showed her multiple talents as poet, dancer, actress, screenwriter, singer and civil rights activist. She is particularly known for her 1969 memoir *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. As an Afro-American, she had a first-hand experience of racial prejudices and discrimination.

'Million Man March' is a poem which reflects the poet's deep antipathy towards the apartheid system. It is a protest march of African-Americans in Washington D.C. on Oct 16, 1995 led by Louis Farrakhan.

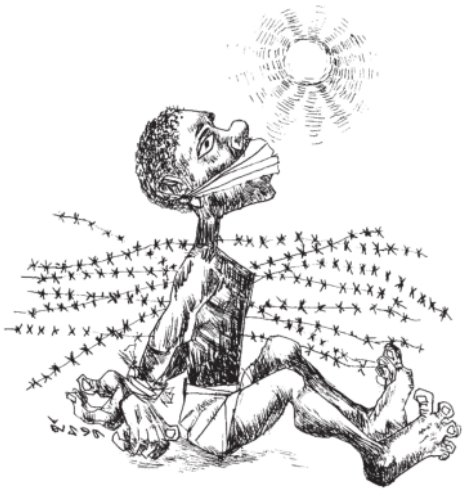
Million Man March

The night has been long,
The wound has been deep,
The pit has been dark,
And the walls have been steep.

Under a dead blue sky on a distant beach,
I was dragged by my braids just beyond your reach.
Your hands were tied, your mouth was bound,
You couldn't even call out my name.
You were helpless and so was I,
But unfortunately throughout history
You've worn a badge of shame.
I say, the night has been long,

1. How is the helplessness of the race presented?

The wound has been deep,
The pit has been dark
And the walls have been steep.



But today, voices of old spirit sound
Speak to us in words profound,
Across the years, across the centuries,
Across the oceans, and across the seas.
They say, draw near to one another,
Save your race.
You have been paid for in a distant place,
The old ones remind us that slavery's chains
Have paid for our freedom again and again.

2. What do the old ones remind the new generation?

The night has been long,
The wound has been deep,
The pit has been dark,
And the walls have been steep.

The hells we have lived through and live through still,
Have sharpened our senses and toughened our will.
The night has been long.
This morning I look through your anguish
Right down to your soul.
I know that with each other we can make ourselves whole.
I look through the posture and past your disguise,
And see your love for family in your big brown eyes.

3. What have sharpened their senses?

4. 'I look through the posture and past your disguise,' - What does the poet see?

I say, clap hands and let's come together in this meeting ground,

I say, clap hands and let's deal with each other with love,

I say, clap hands and let us get from the low road of indifference,

Clap hands, let us come together and reveal our hearts,

Let us come together and revise our spirits,

Let us come together and cleanse our souls,

Clap hands, let's leave the preening

And stop impostering our own history.

Clap hands, call the spirits back from the ledge,

Clap hands, let us invite joy into our conversation,

Courtesy into our bedrooms,

Gentleness into our kitchen,

Care into our nursery.

5. What does the poet like to invite into their conversation, bedrooms, kitchens and nursery?

The ancestors remind us, despite the history of pain

We are a going-on people who will rise again.

And still we rise.

6. Which important aspect of the Afro-Americans is stressed by the ancestors?

braid : a weave of three or more strands of hair

preening : a bird tidying its own feathers (here) admiring oneself

profound : deep

posture : to pretend to be somebody

imposter : a person who pretends to be somebody else in order to trick others

Understanding the Text

1. What are the images employed by the poet to describe the suppression of her race? What do they signify? Why are these images repeated and emphasized?
2. Who does the poet address? What is the plight of the poet and the addressee?
3. What are the allusions used by the poet? What do they indicate?
4. What was the condition of the Blacks in the past?
5. The repetition of a line or a part of a line of a poem is called a refrain. Usually this repetition occurs at the end of each stanza. Pick out an example of refrain from the poem. What purpose does it serve in the poem?
6. What do the words 'years', 'centuries', 'oceans' and 'seas' evoke in the reader?
7. What do the old ones claim? What do they demand in return?
8. What did the African-American race gain from their slavery through the years?
9. What does the phrase 'clap hands' signify? Why does the poet repeatedly use this phrase?
10. What are the poet's exhortations to her people?
11. The poem ends on a positive note. What does this indicate?

Writing about the Text

1. 'Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings....' How far does this definition of William Wordsworth suit 'Million Man March'*?*

(***Hints**: emotions of pain, love and understanding - apartheid - sacrifice -fight against injustice*)

2. Write a critical appreciation of 'Million Man March' highlighting its theme and its relevance in the contemporary world. Also comment on its tone, rhyme scheme and poetic devices.

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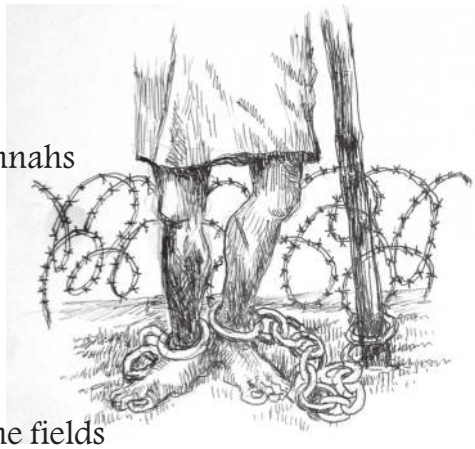
David Diop (1927 - 1960)

David Diop was one of the most promising French-West African poets of the 1950s, whose short career ended in an air-crash off Dakar in 1960. Diop lived an uprooted life, moving frequently between France and West Africa. While in Paris, Diop joined the literary movement, Negritude, which championed and celebrated the uniqueness of black experience and heritage.

The poem 'Africa' reflects the poet's hatred towards colonial rulers and his hope for an independent Africa.

Africa



Africa my Africa
Africa of proud warriors in ancestral savannahs
Africa of whom my grandmother sings
On the banks of the distant river
I have never known you
But your blood flows in my veins
Your beautiful black blood that irrigates the fields
The blood of your sweat
The sweat of your work
The work of your slavery
Africa, tell me Africa
Is this your back that is unbent
This back that never breaks under the weight of humiliation

1. Who is addressed in the poem?

2. What does the poet's grandmother sing about?

This back trembling with red scars
And saying no to the whip under the midday sun
But a grave voice answers me
Impetuous child that tree, young and strong
That tree over there
Splendidly alone amidst white and faded flowers
That is your Africa springing up anew
springing up patiently, obstinately
Whose fruit bit by bit acquires
The bitter taste of liberty.

3. What according to the poet is the colour of his blood?

4. Pick out lines which speak of the tolerance of the people of Africa.

5. How is the tree described?

6. Why does the fruit taste bitter?

grave : serious
impetuous : hasty; thoughtless
obstinate : refusing to change one's opinions, way of behaviour, etc.
savannah : flat grasslands without trees
splendid : excellent; very good

Understanding the Text

1. How does the poet describe the onslaught of slavery and colonisation in Africa?
2. Why does the poet say that Africa's back is never broken under the weight of humiliation?
3. What does the expression 'young and strong' in the poem mean?
4. The poet creates an image of a tree surrounded by white flowers. How is the tree contrasted with the flowers? What is the implied meaning of this contrast?
5. What do the words 'patiently' and 'obstinately' contribute to the gradual growth of Africa in the poem?
6. Why does the poet think that the fruit of liberty will taste bitter?
7. The poet considers Africa's blood as 'beautiful black blood that irrigates the field.' Comment on the attitude, workmanship and submissiveness of the African people on the basis of this expression.
8. What is the tone at the beginning of the poem? What change in tone do you notice towards the end?

Writing about the Text

1. How does the poem picturise the past, the present and the future of Africa?
2. Prepare a critical review of the poem considering it as a typical post-colonial poem.

Now, read the following poem and compare it with the poem 'Africa'.

A poem by an African Shakespeare

Dear white fella
Couple things you should know
When I born, I black
When I grow up, I black
When I go in sun, I black
When I cold, I black
When I scared, I black
When I sick, I black
And when I die, I black.

You white fella
When you born, you pink
When you grow up, you white
When you go in sun, you red
When you cold, you blue
When you scared, you yellow
When you sick, you green
And when you die, you grey.

And you have the cheek to call me coloured?

- **Anonymous**

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Sugathakumari (1934 -)

One of the foremost writers in Malayalam, Sugathakumari is noted for her philosophical and perceptive poems. She is also a renowned environmental and social activist. Her poetry is noted for its emotional empathy, humanist sensitivity and moral alertness. Her poems reflect a quest for a woman's identity and integration, a deep reverence for nature and a profound understanding of the liberating power of love. She received the *Sahithya Akademi Award* in 1968 for her work *Pathirapookal* (Flowers of Midnight). *Rathrimazha* (Night Rain) won the *Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award* in 1978. She also won the *Odakkuzhal Award* in 1982 and the *Vayalar Award* in 1984. This was followed by the *Asan Smaraka Award* for her collection of poems *Kurinjipookal* (Kurinji Flowers). Other major honours bestowed on her include the *Asan Prize* (1991), *Vallathol Award* (2003), *Ezhuthachan Award* (2009) etc.

'Night Rain' is a poem that portrays the loneliness, dejection and despondency of a woman through the image of rain.

Night Rain

Night rain,
Like some young madwoman
Weeping, laughing, whimpering,
For nothing
Muttering without a stop,
And sitting huddled up
Tossing her long hair.

1. Which words suggest the sounds made by the rain?

Night rain,
Pensive daughter of the dusky dark
Gliding slowly like a long wail,
Into this hospital,
Extending her cold fingers
Through the window
And touching me.

Night rain,
When groans and shudders
And sharp voices
And the sudden anguished cry of a mother
Shake me, and I put my hand to my ears
And sob, tossing on my sick bed
You, like a dear one
Coming through the gloom with comforting words.
Somebody said,
The diseased part can be cut and removed
But what can be done with the poor heart
More deeply diseased?

Night rain,
Witness to my love,
Who lulled me to sleep
On those auspicious nights long ago,
Giving more joy than the white moonlight
Which made me thrill with joy
And laugh.

2. Where is the poem set?

3. Why does the poet put her hand to her ears?

4. How does the rain become a soothing experience to the poet?

5. How did the night rain comfort the poet on 'those auspicious nights'?

Night rain,
Now witness to my grief
When on my sweltering sickbed
In the sleepless hours of night
Alone I reel with pain,
Forgetting even to weep
And freeze into stone.

6. What effect does the pain exert on the poet?

Let me tell you,
Night rain,
I know your music, kind and sad,

7. How does the music of the night rain sound to the poet?

Your pity and your suppressed rage,
Your coming in the night,
Your sobbing and weeping when all alone;

8. What does the rain do at night?

And when it is dawn
Your wiping your face and forcing a smile,
Your hurry and your putting on an act:

9. What does night rain do when it is dawn?

How do I know all this?
My friend, I, too, am like you
Like you, rain at night.

10. What does 'rain at night' mean?

Translated by ***B. Hridayakumari***

anguish: extreme pain

auspicious: promising, favourable

huddle: to sit with the legs curled up to the chest

pensive: thoughtful

reel: to roll

sweltering: hot and humid

wail: a prolonged cry

whimper: to cry with a low and broken voice

Understanding the Text

1. Who is the speaker of the poem? What details about the speaker do we get from stanzas 2, 3 & 5?
2. The night rain is compared to a mad woman. How apt is this comparison? Comment.
3. How does the poet describe the night rain in the second stanza?
4. Describe how the poet creates the gloomy and painful atmosphere of the hospital in the poem.
5. Why does the poet say that her heart is 'more deeply diseased'?
6. Find out instances where the night rain assumes the role of a friend and a nurse in the speaker's life.
7. How does the poet describe the feelings of the night rain in the last stanza?
8. How is rain related to a woman's life as suggested in the last stanza? What picture of a woman does the poet evoke through the description of rain?
9. List some of the images used by the poet.
10. Read the poem carefully and complete the given table:

Poetic device	Lines from the poem
Simile	…… …… ……
Metaphor	……
Personification	…… …… …… …… …… ……
Hyperbole	……

Writing about the Text

1. Sugathakumari's poetry 'makes an odyssey into the very essence of womanhood.' Write a review of the poem in the light of the above statement.
2. Write a paragraph on the deep bonding between nature and women as expressed in 'Night Rain'.
3. Prepare a short note on Sugathakumari's use of imagery in the poem.

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Know your text

- Analyse the features of twentieth century poetry and prepare a write-up.
- Prepare an article on the socio- cultural issues that culminated in the development of war poetry and eco-poetry.
- Write an essay on the social evils of marginalisation and discrimination as presented in the poems you have studied linking it with the Indian context.

Let's conclude

In this unit we have identified the essential socio-cultural aspects depicted in poetry from different parts of the world.

Now, let's examine how these aspects are addressed in another important genre, namely, short fiction.

Section 2
Short Stories

Preface

The disintegration of life and erosion of traditional values find expression in the short story which emerged as a popular genre of the 20th century. Each short story included in this unit is distinct for its plot, characterisation, theme and narrative techniques. These stories portray the harsh realities of life, giving an insight into the language and style of different authors from varied socio-cultural backgrounds.

Learning Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

• identify the features of literary works belonging to different cultures.

• apply close and critical reading of different texts.

• demonstrate the knowledge of literary and figurative elements and how they influence the development of the thought and the emotions depicted.

• analyse how the point of view, language, style and theme differ with reference to the author's socio-cultural background.

• demonstrate an awareness about the abundance of literary contribution from different nations of the Asian and African continents.

• explain the multiplicity of voices, especially, the emergence and importance of Dalit writing as a genre of literature.

• analyse the social circumstances that resulted in the emergence of Dalit writing.

• criticise social evils like marginalisation and discrimination rampant in the society at various levels.

• explain the implied meaning and elevated thoughts in the stories.

Salwa Bakr (1949-)

A major Egyptian short story writer and novelist, Salwa Bakr rose to fame after the publication of her much acclaimed novel and short stories under the title of *Atiyya's Shrine* (1986). Though Bakr's writings are characterised by her Egyptian experience, her deep understanding of the human nature and insightful handling of themes have lent a universal outlook to them.

The story *Doves on the Wing* presents a theft in a moving bus and showcases the pathetic condition of the Egyptian society and politics.

Doves on the Wing

They carried out their plan very efficiently. The first one, the one with the deep scar on his short neck, boarded the bus at the main terminal. Then, after the bus had made its way through the central shopping area, creeping along like a tortoise because of the masses of cars and people and the merchandise spilling out over the pavements and onto the streets, the second one leapt on the bus the moment it slowed down at the first stop in the old district – where buildings now vied with one another to soar into the sky, stifling the lovely gardens that had slumbered peacefully there such a short time before. The third, sharp-eyed, with a lean, straight body translating itself easily into sudden lithe movements, clung to the bar fixed to the rear door as the bus set off from the stop at the public garden, which separates the old district from the other districts. Every district had its distinct identity, reflected in the street lighting (sometimes faint, most often non-existent), the broken pavements and the regular potholes in the street, to which the bodies of the

1. The story opens with a vivid picture of the streets. List their peculiarities.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Identify the humour in Bakr's description of the pavements and the movement of the passengers inside the bus.

passengers responded by going up and down, or left and right, whenever the bus landed in one of them or the driver tried to go around them. The moment the third man boarded the bus and made sure his two partners were there too – the first one standing at the front, behind the driver, the second sitting in the last seat at the back – he raised his hand as a signal to go ahead and pushed his way through the standing passengers to the front, upon which the other two produced 'gazelle horn' knives and pointed them at the backs of the driver and conductor. Then the third man whipped out his gun and aimed at the passengers. 'Put your hands up,' he said, 'and don't move.' Stunned, the passengers hesitated for a few seconds, then raised their hands. So did the conductor, in spite of the Belmont cigarette burning between his thumb and forefinger, the one his friend, the street vendor had given him before calling out to sell his wares, then jumping off the bus. The only one whose hands didn't go up was the driver; he clutched the steering wheel and followed the instructions of the leader with the gun, slowing the bus down. This holdup, he thought sadly, could only put back the moment when he got back home and dropped on his bed like a stone, sinking into a sound sleep and getting a little relief from the pain and toil of a long day. No doubt, too, the passengers would insist he change course when the thieves had run off, heading for the nearest police station to file a complaint. He gave an angry grunt. Here was one more reason, he reflected, just one more to add to all the other reasons, for cursing the ill-starred day he was appointed a driver in the Public Transport Department. Meanwhile there were thirty-five of its clients on the bus, six of whom had fallen into a deep sleep after the first stop or two, probably because they lived in the district at the other end of the route; these, for a few minutes at least, were still unconscious of what was going on and so were saved the trouble of putting up their hands. Then the man with the gun yelled at them, frightening them so much they sat up and raised their

3. What did the third man command?

4. Why didn't the driver raise his hands?

5. How were the six passengers saved from the trouble of putting up their hands for a few minutes?

hands like all the other passengers. Even the little boy who'd been sitting on his mother's lap and smiling and gaily putting up his hands because he supposed everyone was playing 'Doves on the Wing' – even he got upset and started crying when his hands stayed up too long, and his mother didn't, as she usually did when they played this game, say 'Put down the dove' and lower her hands into her lap. But the man with the gun glared at him, and the boy buried his face in his mother's bosom. She was tense as well, and had started worrying, not about the one pound five piastres wrapped up in a piece of cloth and hidden between her breasts – she didn't suppose the thieves would be so mean and low as to search the secret places in her bosom – but because they might seize the goose in the basket under her seat, which now kept stretching out its neck and moving it enquiringly from side to side. For the moment, though, the thieves didn't share her concern about the goose, or about all the trouble she'd taken to feed it and fatten it so she could take it to her daughter, a bride of less than a week, whose home she was now going to on this bus, to spend the night and slaughter the goose, the next morning. All the thieves were worried about for the moment was collecting the passengers' money just as quickly as they could. The one in the rear started ordering the passengers to get all their money out, and to take their watches off if they had them, and he also told them all, men and women alike, to give up any items of gold jewellery like rings and earrings. The one farmer on the bus, who was not only carrying nineteen pounds thirty piastres in his pocket but had a gold crown in his mouth as well, decided– a true child of our times – to keep his mouth shut tight and quietly hand over everything in his pocket, not letting the smallest grumble escape his lips. In contrast, the young conscript soldier sitting next to him had his mouth wide open, unable to believe this was actually happening on a bus that was supposed to be taking him to the nearest place to his military unit (from which he would still have

6. At the beginning, the little boy was happy. Why?

7. Why did the little boy start crying?

8.What was the mother of the little boy worried about?

9. Where was she going with her son?

10. What did the thief in the rear order?

11. The farmer decided to keep his mouth shut. Why?

to walk at least three kilometers across the desert to reach his destination), the whole thing was like a scene from some American gangster film. It was true he had no more than twenty-five piastres in his pocket, and the thieves, damn them, were more than welcome to it, but he was bitter because he'd saved the provisions his mother had given him rather than eating them all straight off: three boiled eggs, a loaf of homemade bread, onions and a large fig. The thieves, though, passed him by; the one collecting the money didn't, for some reason, bother to ask the soldier for his money-probably he'd learned from the wise saying: 'What can the wind gain from bare tiles?' Not wanting to waste his precious thief's time, he didn't even glance at the soldier who (whatever the words of the popular song might say) obviously wasn't the Pride of the Egyptian Nation, but told the old man in the next seat to produce his wallet and empty the contents. The old man pleaded with him. 'For the Prophet's sake,' he begged, 'let me keep just five pounds. My daughter Loza needs a pair of shoes to wear to the children's festival at school tomorrow.' But the thief told him to keep his mouth shut. The thin black man sitting in the back made a similar request (with three pounds difference in the sum involved); then, when the thief took no notice, he moaned and grumbled and cursed his own stupidity and lack of foresight, because if he'd stayed in the cafe and played backgammon and smoked the nargila the one pound fifty would have been well spent instead of being stolen by thieves. But no, he'd decided to be sensible and wise; rather than spend money on pointless games, he'd told himself, make your children happy by buying them some fruit. As for the young man with the thick glasses who was carrying books, the man with the gun told him to stop scratching the floor with his feet because it was setting his teeth on edge; he'd cut those feet off, he threatened, if it happened again. When four pounds sixty piastres had been extracted from the young man, the money collector announced that the operation was complete. 'What about

12. How did the soldier feel about the incident in the bus?

13. The thief did not bother to ask the soldier for his money. Why?

14. What was the old man's plea to the thief?

15. Why did the thin black man curse himself?

16. What did the man with the gun tell the young man with thick glasses?

the conductor?' asked the man with the gun. 'We've done him,' said the money collector. 'He didn't have much on him anyway.' This annoyed the man with the gun. He grunted irritably. 'We'll take it anyway,' he said, 'just to get back at the government.' He hurled some insults at the passengers and started telling them again what he'd do if anyone tried to move, but the money collector interrupted him. 'That woman with the child's got a goose,' he said. 'Shall I go and grab it?' The man with the gun considered this for a while, but, fearing the goose might expose them with its honking, he didn't answer his partner, ordering the driver, instead, to open the bus doors which had stayed shut since he got on. Then he made a sign to his partners to join him. 'Come on,' he ordered. 'Jump off, quick!'

17. The man with the gun did not prefer snatching the goose. Why?

The bus sped away, and the thieves ran like the wind to a piece of waste land behind the old mosque, in a distant street parallel to the one where they'd got off. There they sat down to catch their breath, count the money and examine the articles they'd stolen – the latter consisting of three wedding rings (one of silver and two which broke between the teeth of the man with the scar on his neck, showing that they were polished brass) and five watches (two of them not working and another two at

18. What were the things looted from the passengers?

least thirty years old and not worth a thing). The combined money from the passengers and the conductor amounted to the sum of sixty-eight pounds ninety-three piastres. 'Bastards!' yelled the man with the gun bitterly. He was backed up by the man with the scar, whose only wish at that moment was to smash anything he could lay his hands on. Finding nothing suitable he took his shoe off and banged it on the ground. 'Scum!' he said. 'God damn a country with passengers like these!' The third man, who'd pointed his knife into the driver's back, was struck by the force of his friends' words. The whole situation was so ridiculous his laughter rang through the empty lot. 'We'll have to forget about eating kebabs or getting drunk tonight,' he said. 'We've ended up with nothing.' He fingered his scar, as he always did when he got worked up. 'A great, fat bus full of people,' he went on, 'and we come out with a lousy sixty-eight pounds! Just our luck! God, this bunch had already been robbed before we came along!' The thin, nervous-looking man joined in his partner's laughter. 'The ones who robbed them must have been big thieves,' he answered. 'Really big thieves! It's a big-time game they're playing. Ha, ha, ha!'

19. 'We'll have to forget about eating kebabs or getting drunk tonight.' Why did the thief say so?

20. Why did the thieves remark that the passengers had already been robbed?

backgammon: a board game for two players; pieces move according to throws of dices

conscript: to make somebody join the armed forces

gazelle: an antelope found in Africa

lousy : very bad or worthless

merchandise: goods that are bought or sold

nargila : a tobacco pipe

piastre: a fractional monetary unit in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon

stifle: to prevent something from happening

Understanding the Text

1. 'They carried out their plan very efficiently.' Who are the 'they' referred to here? What was their plan?
2. How is the theme of theft related to the game 'Doves on the Wing'?
3. Describe the route taken by the bus. Does it contribute in any way to the social setting of the story? Comment.

4. People from different walks of life were travelling in the bus. Comment on their responses to the incident in the bus.
5. What were the attitudes of the passengers towards their possessions?
6. 'The ones who robbed them must have been big thieves.' Why did one of the thieves say so?
7. Attempt a character sketch of the thieves as revealed from their actions and attitude towards the passengers.
8. What does the title *Doves on the Wing* signify?

Writing about the Text

1. Theft is a theme handled by many authors. Do you think that Salwa Bakr has treated it in a unique manner?
2. Satire often becomes a weapon in the hands of the author while exposing the darker shades of life. Pick out instances in which dark humour and satire reveal the plight of the characters in the story.
3. The passengers do not resist the thieves from looting them. Instead, they give away their possessions. What aspect of mob psychology is revealed here? Discuss the social concerns that get highlighted in this context.
4. 'Broken pavements', 'potholes', 'gangster film', 'empty wasteland' are some of the images employed by the author to precipitate the crisis. Comment.
5. The characterisation and plot mutually support the storyline. What conclusion do you arrive at after reading the story? What do you think of the author's point of view? Substantiate.
6. Did you notice that the story reads like a long passage, without being broken up into paragraphs? Does it have any bearing on the theme?

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Bama (1958-)

Bama is the pen-name of Tamil Dalit novelist Bama Faustina Soosairaj. Basically from a Roman Catholic family, Bama has been hailed as the leading voice of the suppressed class of Dalits in Tamil Nadu. She came into the limelight with her autobiographical novel *Karukku* (1992) and penned two more novels, *Sangati* (1994) and *Vanmam* (2002) along with two collections of short stories: *Kusumbukkaran* (1996) and *Oru Tattvum Erumaiyum* (2003). Her critically acclaimed work *Karukku* won the Crossword Book Award in 2000. Bama's novels focus on caste and gender-based discrimination.

The story *We too are Human Beings* has been taken from *Karukku* (means palmyra leaves). It throws light on her childhood experiences especially on the caste-based discrimination that prevailed in her society.

We too are Human Beings

When I was studying in the third class, I hadn't yet heard people speak openly of untouchability. But I had already seen, felt, experienced and been humiliated by what it is.

I was walking home from school one day, an old bag hanging from my shoulder. It was actually possible to walk the distance in ten minutes. But usually it would take me thirty minutes at the very least to reach home. It would take me from half an hour to an hour to dawdle along, watching all the fun and games that were going on, all the entertaining novelties and oddities in the streets, the shops and the bazaar.

1. Bama took more than half an hour to reach home from school. Why?

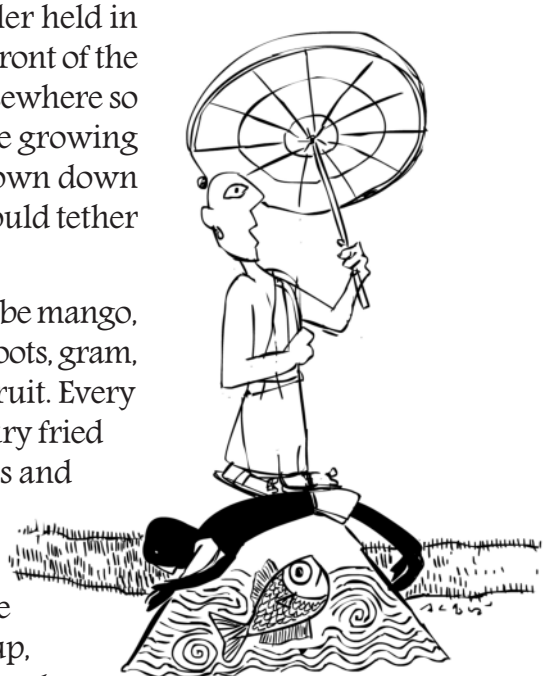
The performing monkey; the snake which the snake charmer kept in its box and displayed from time to time; the cyclist who had not got off his bike for three days, and who kept pedalling as hard as he could from break of day; the rupee notes that were pinned on to his shirt to

spur him on; the spinning wheels; the Maariyaata temple, the huge bell hanging there; the *pongal* offerings being cooked in front of the temple; the dried fish stall by the Statue of Gandhi; the sweet stall, the stall selling fried snacks, and all the other shops next to each other; the street light always demonstrating how it could change from blue to violet; the Narikkuravan hunter-gypsy with his wild lemur in cages, selling needles, clay beads and instruments for cleaning out the ears — Oh, I could go on and on. Each thing would pull me to a stand-still and not allow me to go any further.

At times, people from various political parties would arrive, put up a stage and harangue us through their mikes. Then there might be a street play, or a puppet show, or a 'no magic, no miracle' stunt performance. All these would happen from time to time. But almost certainly there would be some entertainment or other going on.

2. What were the sights that held the author from going home?

Even otherwise, there were the coffee clubs in the bazaar: the way each waiter cooled the coffee, lifting a tumbler high up and pouring its contents into a tumbler held in his other hand. Or the way some people sat in front of the shops chopping up onion, their eyes turned elsewhere so that they would not smart. Or the almond tree growing there and its fruit which was occasionally blown down by the wind. All these sights taken together would tether my legs and stop me from going home.



And then, according to the season, there would be mango, cucumber, sugar-cane, sweet-potato, palm-shoots, gram, palmsyrup and palm-fruit, guavas and jack-fruit. Every day I would see people selling sweet and savoury fried snacks, payasam, halva, boiled tamarind seeds and iced lollies.

Gazing at all this, one day, I came to my street, my bag slung over my shoulder. At the opposite corner, though, a threshing floor had been set up, and the landlord watched the proceedings, seated

on a piece of sacking spread over a stone ledge. Our people were hard at work, driving cattle in pairs, round and round, to tread out the grain from the straw. The animals were muzzled so that they wouldn't help themselves to the straw. I stood for a while there, watching the fun.

3. What was the landlord watching?

Just then, an elder of our street came along from the direction of the bazaar. The manner in which he was walking along made me want to double up. I wanted to shriek with laughter at the sight of such a big man carrying a small packet in that fashion. I guessed there was something like *vadai* or green banana *bhajji* in the packet, because the wrapping paper was stained with oil. He came along, holding out the packet by its string, without touching it. I stood there thinking to myself, if he holds it like that, won't the package come undone, and the *vadai*s fall out?

4. Which sight evoked laughter in the author?

The elder went straight up to the landlord, bowed low and extended the packet towards him, cupping the hand that held the string with his other hand. The landlord opened the parcel and began to eat the *vadai*s.

5. How did the author guess that the small packet contained *vadai*s?

After I had watched all this, at last I went home. My elder brother was there. I told him the story in all its comic detail. I fell about with laughter at the memory of a big man, and an elder at that, making such a game out of carrying the parcel. But Annan was not amused. Annan told me the man wasn't being funny when he carried the package like that. He said everybody believed that they were upper caste and therefore must not touch us. If they did, they would be polluted. That's why he had to carry the package by its string.

6. How did her brother's explanation change the author's attitude?

When I heard this, I didn't want to laugh any more, and I felt terribly sad. How could they believe that it was disgusting if one of us held that package in his hands, even though the *vadai* had been wrapped first in a banana leaf, and then parcelled in paper? I felt so provoked and angry that I wanted to touch those wretched *vadai*s myself

straight away. Why should we have to fetch and carry for these people, I wondered. Such an important elder of ours goes meekly to the shops to fetch snacks and hands them over reverently, bowing and shrinking, to this fellow who just sits there and stuffs them into his mouth. The thought of it infuriated me.

How was it that these fellows thought so much of themselves? Because they had scraped four coins together, did that mean they must lose all human feelings? But we too are human beings. Our people should never run these petty errands for these fellows. We should work in their fields, take home our wages, and leave it at that.

7. 'The thought of it infuriated me.' What was the thought?

My elder brother, who was studying at a university, had come home for the holidays. He would often go to the library in our neighbouring village in order to borrow books. He was on his way home one day, walking along the banks of the irrigation tank. One of the landlord's men came up behind him. He thought my Annan looked unfamiliar, and so he asked, 'Who are you, appa, what's your name?' *Annan* told him his name. Immediately the other man asked, 'Thambi, on which street do you live?' The point of this was that if he knew on which street we lived, he would know our caste too.

8. Why did the landlord's man ask about the street where *Annan* lived?

Annan told me all these things. And he added, 'Because we are born into this community, we are never given any honour or dignity or respect; we are stripped of all that. But if we study and make progress, we can throw away these indignities. So study with care, learn all you can. If you are always ahead in your lessons, people will come to you on their own accord and attach themselves to you. Work hard and learn.' The words that *Annan* spoke to me that day made a very deep impression on me. And I studied hard, with all my breath and being, in a frenzy almost. As *Annan* had urged, I stood first in my class. And because of that, many people became my friends.

9. What reason did *Annan* give for not getting honour or dignity in the society?

10. What way did *Annan* suggest to throw away the social inequalities?

dawdle : to take a long time to do something

double up : overcome with laughter

errand : a petty job

harangue : long, loud, angry speech to persuade people

humiliate : abuse; ill-treat

indignity : a situation that makes you feel embarrassed or ashamed

infuriate : make a person extremely angry

Lemur : a long tailed primate living in trees usually found in Madagaskar

Maariyata temple : temple of goddess Mariyamman

muzzle : guard fitted over an animal's nose and mouth to stop it feeding or biting

Narikkuravan : a tribal gypsy group

novelty : something new and unusual

oddity : something that seems strange and unusual

pongal : a harvest festival celebrated by Tamilians

scrape : collect/gather

spur : something that encourages someone to do something

tether : to tie an object to a post with rope

wretched : (here) something of no merit

Understanding the Text

1. The narrator is a keen observer of things on her way home. Describe the 'entertaining novelties and oddities' on her way.
2. What was the narrator's initial reaction to the incident on the street? Did it change later on?
3. Why did the narrator feel terribly sad and provoked?
4. 'I wanted to touch those wretched *vadai*s….' Were the *vadai*s wretched? If so, why did Bama want to touch them?
5. Contrast the landlord with the people at work.
6. How did *Annan* justify the strange behaviour of the elder man of their community?
7. Describe the role played by *Annan* in the life of the narrator.

Writing about the Text

1. Humanity is beyond caste, creed and race. Elucidate this statement in the light of the story *We too are Human Beings.*
2. Education plays a key role in eradicating casteism and securing a respectable status for the marginalised sections in the society. Do you agree with this statement? Justify the statement in the light of the story *We Too are Human Beings.*

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LuHsun (1881-1936)

LuHsun was the Chief Commander of China's Modern Cultural Revolution. He was not only a great thinker but also the founder of modern Chinese literature. His *A Madman's Diary* was the first short story in the history of modern Chinese literature. This was his declaration of war against China's feudal society. His other works include *The True Story of AhQ* and *The New Year's Sacrifice*.

My Old Home portrays his childhood experience in his ancestral home.

My Old Home

Braving the bitter cold, I travelled more than seven hundred miles back to the old home I had left over twenty years before.

It was late winter. As we drew near my former home the day became overcast and a cold wind blew into the cabin of our boat, while all one could see through the chinks in our bamboo awning were a few desolate villages, void of any sign of life, scattered far and near under the sombre yellow sky. I could not help feeling depressed.

1. Why did Hsun feel depressed when he was nearing his former home?

Ah! Surely this was not the old home I had remembered for the past twenty years.

The old home I remembered was not in the least like this. My old home was much better. But if you asked me to recall its peculiar charm or describe its beauties, I had no clear impression, no words to describe it. And now it seemed this was all there was to it. Then I rationalized the matter to myself, saying: Home was always like this, and although it has not improved, still it is not so depressing as I imagine; it is only my mood that has changed, because I am coming back to the country this time with no illusions.

2. How did Hsun pacify his depressed state of mind?

This time I had come with the sole object of saying goodbye. The old house our clan had lived in for so many years had already been sold to another family, and was to change hands before the end of the year. I had to hurry there before New Year's Day to say goodbye for ever to the familiar old house, and to move my family to another place where I was working, far from my old home town.

3. Why did the author want to say goodbye to his old home?

At dawn on the second day I reached the gateway of my home. Broken stems of withered grass on the roof, trembling in the wind, made very clear the reason why this old house could not avoid changing hands. Several branches of our clan had probably already moved away, so it was unusually quiet. By the time I reached the house my mother was already at the door to welcome me, and my eight-year-old nephew, Hungerh, rushed out after her.

Though mother was delighted, she was also trying to hide a certain feeling of sadness. She told me to sit down and rest and have some tea, letting the removal wait for the time being. Hungerh, who had never seen me before, stood watching me at a distance.

But finally we had to talk about the removal. I said that rooms had already been rented elsewhere, and I had bought a little furniture; in addition it would be necessary to sell all the furniture in the house in order to buy more things. Mother agreed, saying that the luggage was nearly all packed, and about half the furniture that could not easily be moved had already been sold. Only it was difficult to get people to pay up.

4. What were their plans about their shifting from the old home?

"You must rest for a day or two, and call on our relatives, and then we can go," said mother.

"Yes."

"Then there is Jun-tu. Each time he comes here he always asks after you, and wants very much to see you again. I told him the probable date of your return home, and he

may be coming any time."

At this point a strange picture suddenly flashed into my mind: a golden moon suspended in a deep blue sky and beneath it the seashore, planted as far as the eye could see with jadegreen watermelons, while in their midst a boy of eleven or twelve, wearing a silver necklet and grasping a steel pitchfork* in his hand, was thrusting with all his might at a *zha* which dodged the blow and escaped between his legs.

This boy was Jun-tu. When I first met him he was just over ten—that was thirty years ago, and at that time my father was still alive and the family well off, so I was really a spoilt child. That year it was our family's turn to take charge of a big ancestral sacrifice, which came round only once in thirty years, and hence was an important one. In the first month the ancestral images were presented and offerings made, and since the sacrificial vessels were very fine and there was such a crowd of worshippers, it was necessary to guard against theft. Our family had only one part-time labourer. (In our district we divide labourers into three classes: those who work all the year for one family are called full-timers; those who are hired by the day are called dailies; and those who farm their own land and only work for one family at New Year, during festivals or when rents are being collected are called part-timers.) And since there was so much to be done, he told my father that he would send for his son Jun-tu to look after the sacrificial vessels.

5. When did he meet Jun-tu for the first time? What was the importance of that occasion?

When my father gave his consent I was overjoyed, because I had long since heard of Jun-tu and knew that he was about my own age, born in the intercalary month*, and when his horoscope was told it was found that of the five

6. Who was Jun-tu? Why was he named so?

Note : intercalary The Chinese lunar calendar reckons 360 days to a year, and each month comprises of 29 or 30 days, never 31. Hence every few years a 13th, or intercalary month is inserted in the calendar.

elements that of earth was lacking, so his father called him Jun-tu (Intercalary Earth). He could set traps and catch small birds.

I looked forward every day to New Year, for New Year would bring Jun-tu. At last, when the end of the year came, one day mother told me that Jun-tu had come, and I flew to see him. He was standing in the kitchen. He had a round, crimson face and wore a small felt cap on his head and a gleaming silver necklet round his neck, showing that his father doted on him and, fearing he might die, had made a pledge with the gods and buddhas, using the necklet as a talisman. He was very shy, and I was the only person he was not afraid of. When there was no one else there, he would talk with me, so in a few hours we were fast friends.

I don't know what we talked of then, but I remember that Jun-tu was in high spirits, saying that since he had come to town he had seen many new things.

7. How did Jun-tu describe his method of catching birds?

The next day I wanted him to catch birds.

'Can't be done,' he said. 'It's only possible after a heavy snowfall. On our sands, after it snows, I sweep clear a patch of ground, prop up a big threshing basket with a short stick, and scatter husks of grain beneath. When the birds come there to eat, I tug a string tied to the stick, and the birds are caught in the basket. There are all kinds: wild pheasants, woodcocks, wood-pigeons, blue-backs...'

Accordingly I looked forward very eagerly to see the snowfall.

'Just now it is too cold,' said Jun-tu another time, 'but you must come to our place in summer. In the daytime we'll go to the seashore to look for shells, there are green ones and red ones, besides 'scare-devil' shells and 'buddha's hands.' In the evening when dad and I go to see to the watermelons, you shall come too.'

'Is it to look out for thieves?'

'No. If passers-by are thirsty and pick a watermelon, folk down our way don't consider it as stealing. What we have to look out for are badgers, hedgehogs and *zha*. When under the moonlight you hear the crunching sound made by the *zha* when it bites the melons, then you take your pitchfork and creep stealthily over...'

8. The message of sharing is conveyed in the story. Pick out an instance from the story.

I had no idea then what this thing called *zha* was—and I am not much clearer now for that matter—but somehow I felt it was something like a small dog, and very fierce.

'Don't they bite people?'

'You have a pitchfork. You go across, and when you see it you strike. It's a very cunning creature and will rush towards you and get away between your legs. Its fur is as slippery as oil....'

9. What were the strange lores which he heard from Jun-tu?

I had never known that all these strange things existed: at the seashore there were shells all colours of the rainbow; watermelons were exposed to such danger, yet all I had known of them before was that they were sold in the greengrocer's.

'On our shore, when the tide comes in, there are lots of jumping fish, each with two legs like a frog....'

10. Jun-tu and the author shared a deep bond even after their separation. How?

Jun-tu's mind was a treasure-house of such strange lore, all of it outside the ken of my former friends. They were ignorant of all these things and, while Jun-tu lived by the sea, they like me could see only the four corners of the sky above the high courtyard wall.

Unfortunately, a month after New Year Jun-tu had to go home. I burst into tears and he took refuge in the kitchen, crying and refusing to come out, until finally his father carried him off. Later he sent me by his father a packet of shells and a few very beautiful feathers, and I sent him presents once or twice, but we never saw each other again.

Now that my mother mentioned him, this childhood

memory sprang into life like a flash of lightning, and I seemed to see my beautiful old home. So I answered:

'Fine! And he—how is he?'

'He's not at all well off either,' said mother. And then, looking out of the door: 'Here come those people again. They say they want to buy our furniture; but actually they just want to see what they can pick up. I must go and watch them.'

Mother stood up and went out. The voices of several women could be heard outside. I called Hung-erh to me and started talking to him, asking him whether he could write, and whether he would be glad to leave.

'Shall we be going by train?'

'Yes, we shall go by train.'

'And boat?'

'We shall take a boat first.'

'Oh! Like this! With such a long moustache!' A strange shrill voice suddenly rang out.

I looked up with a start, and saw a woman of about fifty with prominent cheekbones and thin lips. With her hands on her hips, not wearing a skirt but with her trousered legs apart, she stood in front of me just like the compass in a box of geometrical instruments.

I was flabbergasted.

'Don't you know me? Why, I have held you in my arms!'

I felt even more flabbergasted. Fortunately my mother came in just then and said:

'He has been away so long, you must excuse him for forgetting. You should remember,' she said to me, 'this is Mrs. Yang from across the road... She has a bean curd shop.'

Then, to be sure, I remembered. When I was a child there was a Mrs. Yang who used to sit nearly all day long in

11. Who was Mrs. Yang? How different was she in her appearance, many years ago?

the bean curd shop across the road, and everybody used to call her Beancurd Beauty. She used to powder herself, and her cheekbones were not so prominent then nor her lips so thin; moreover she remained seated all the time, so that I had never noticed this resemblance to a compass. In those days people said that, thanks to her, that bean curd shop did very good business. But, probably on account of my age, she had made no impression on me, so that later I forgot her entirely. However, the Compass was extremely indignant and looked at me most contemptuously, just as one might look at a Frenchman who had never heard of Napoleon or an American who had never heard of Washington, and smiling sarcastically she said:

12. What was the demand put forward by Mrs. Yang?

'You had forgotten? Naturally I am beneath your notice....'

'Certainly not... I...' I answered nervously, getting to my feet.

'Then you listen to me, Master Hsun. You have grown rich, and they are too heavy to move, so you can't possibly want these old pieces of furniture any more. You had better let me take them away. Poor people like us can do with them.'

'I haven't grown rich. I must sell these in order to buy....'

'Oh, come now, you have been made the intendant of a circuit, how can you still say you're not rich? You have three concubines now, and whenever you go out it is in a big sedan chair with eight bearers. Do you still say you're not rich? Hah! You can't hide anything from me.'

Knowing there was nothing I could say, I remained silent.

13. What was Mrs. Yang's opinion about the rich?

'Come now, really, the more money people have the more miserly they get, and the more miserly they are the more money they get...' remarked the Compass, turning indignantly away and walking slowly off, casually picking up a pair of mother's gloves and stuffing them into her pocket as she went out.

After this a number of relatives in the neighbourhood came to call. In the intervals between entertaining them, I did some packing, and so three or four days passed.

One very cold afternoon, I sat drinking tea after lunch when I was aware of someone coming in, and turned my head to see who it was. At the first glance I gave an involuntary start, hastily stood up and went over to welcome him.

The newcomer was Jun-tu. But although I knew at a glance that this was Jun-tu, it was not the Jun-tu I remembered. He had grown to twice his former size. His round face, once crimson, had become sallow, and acquired deep lines and wrinkles; his eyes too had become like his father's, the rims swollen and red, a feature common to most peasants who work by the sea and are exposed all day to the wind from the ocean. He wore a shabby felt cap and just one very thin padded jacket, with the result that he was shivering from head to foot. He carried a paper package and a long pipe, nor was his hand the plump red hand I remembered, but coarse and clumsy and chapped, like the bark of a pine tree.

14. What were the changes that Hsun noticed in Jun-tu?

Delighted as I was, I did not know how to express myself, and could only say: 'Oh! Jun-tu—so it's you...?'

After this there were so many things I wanted to talk about, they should have poured out like a string of beads: woodcocks, jumping fish, shells, *zha*.... But I was tongue-tied, unable to put all I was thinking into words.

He stood there, mixed joy and sadness showing on his face. His lips moved, but not a sound did he utter. Finally, assuming a respectful attitude, he said clearly:

'Master....!'

15. Why was Hsun shocked by Jun-tu's response?

I felt a shiver run through me; for I knew then what a lamentably thick wall had grown up between us. Yet I could not say anything.

He turned his head to call:

'Shui-sheng, bow to the master.' Then he pulled forward a boy who had been hiding behind his back, and this was just the Jun-tu of twenty years before, only a little paler and thinner, and he had no silver necklet.

'This is my fifth,' he said. 'He's not used to company, so he's shy and awkward.'

Mother came downstairs with Hung-erh, probably after hearing our voices.

'I got your letter some time ago, madam," said Jun-tu. "I was really so pleased to know the master was coming back....'

'Now, why are you so polite? Weren't you playmates together in the past?' said mother gaily. 'You had better still call him Brother Hsun as before.'

'Oh, you are really too. . . . What bad manners that would be. I was a child then and didn't understand.' As he was speaking Jun-tu motioned Shui-sheng to come and bow, but the child was shy, and stood stock-still behind his father.

16. Why did Jun-tu hesitate to call the author Brother Hsun?

'So he is Shui-sheng? Your fifth?' asked mother. 'We are all strangers, you can't blame him for feeling shy. Hung-erh had better take him out to play.'

When Hung-erh heard this he went over to Shui-sheng, and Shui-sheng went out with him, entirely at his ease. Mother asked Jun-tu to sit down, and after a little hesitation he did so; then leaning his long pipe against the table he handed over the paper package, saying:

'In winter there is nothing worth bringing; but these few beans we dried ourselves, if you will excuse the liberty, sir.'

17. What hardships did Jun-tu explain to Hsun?

When I asked him how things were with him, he just shook his head.

'In a very bad way. Even my sixth can do a little work, but still we haven't enough to eat . . . and then there is no security . . . all sorts of people want money, there is no fixed rule . . . and the harvests are bad. You grow things, and when you take them to sell you always have to pay several taxes and lose money, while if you don't try to sell, the things may go bad...'

18. '...the harvests are bad.' The plight of farmers like Jun-tu was also bad. How do you relate it to our society?

He kept shaking his head; yet, although his face was lined with wrinkles, not one of them moved, just as if he were a stone statue. No doubt he felt intensely bitter, but could not express himself. After a pause he took up his pipe and began to smoke in silence.

From her chat with him, mother learned that he was busy at home and had to go back the next day; and since he had had no lunch, she told him to go to the kitchen and fry some rice for himself.

After he had gone out, mother and I both shook our heads over his hard life: many children, famine, taxes, soldiers, bandits, officials and landed gentry, all had squeezed him as dry as a mummy. Mother said that we should offer him all the things we were not going to take away, letting him choose for himself.

19. What were the things Jun-tu picked up?

That afternoon he picked out a number of things: two long tables, four chairs, an incense burner and candlesticks, and one balance. He also asked for all the ashes from the stove (in our part we cook over straw, and the ashes can be used to fertilize sandy soil), saying that when we left he would come to take them away by boat.

That night we talked again, but not of anything serious; and the next morning he went away with Shui-sheng.

After another nine days it was time for us to leave. Jun-tu came in the morning. Shui-sheng did not come with him—he had just brought a little girl of five to watch the boat. We were very busy all day, and had no time to talk. We also had quite a number of visitors, some to see us off,

some to fetch things, and some to do both. It was nearly evening when we left by boat, and by that time everything in the house, however old or shabby, large or small, fine or coarse, had been cleared away.

As we set off, in the dusk, the green mountains on either side of the river became deep blue, receding towards the stern of the boat.

Hung-erh and I, leaning against the cabin window, were looking out together at the indistinct scene outside, when suddenly he asked:

'Uncle, when shall we go back?'

'Go back? Do you mean that before you've left you want to go back?'

'Well, Shui-sheng has invited me to his home....'

He opened wide his black eyes in anxious thought.

Mother and I both felt rather sad, and so Jun-tu's name came up again. Mother said that ever since our family started packing up, Mrs. Yang from the bean curd shop had come over every day, and the day before in the ash-heap she had unearthed a dozen bowls and plates, which after some discussion she insisted must have been buried there by Jun-tu, so that when he came to remove the ashes he could take them home at the same time. After making this discovery Mrs. Yang was very pleased with herself, and flew off raking the dog teaser with her. (The dog-teaser is used by poultry keepers in our parts. It is a wooden cage inside which food is put, so that hens can stretch their necks in to eat but dogs can only look on furiously.) And it was a marvel, considering the size of her feet, how fast she could run.

20. Mrs.Yang alleged that Jun-tu had buried some vessels under the ash. What aspect of her character gets revealed here?

I was leaving the old house farther and farther behind, while the hills and rivers of my old home were also receding gradually ever farther in the distance. But I felt no regret. I only felt that all around me was an invisible

high wall, cutting me off from my fellows, and this depressed me thoroughly. The vision of that small hero with the silver necklet among the watermelons had formerly been as clear as day, but now it suddenly blurred, adding to my depression.

Mother and Hung-erh fell asleep.

I lay down, listening to the water rippling beneath the boat, and knew that I was going my way. I thought: although there is such a barrier between Jun-tu and myself, the children still have much in common, for wasn't Hung-erh thinking of Shui-sheng just now? I hope they will not be like us, that they will not allow a barrier to grow up between them. But again I would not like them, because they want to be akin, all to have a treadmill existence like mine, nor to suffer like Jun-tu until they become stupefied, nor yet, like others, to devote all their energies to dissipation. They should have a new life, a life we have never experienced.

21. Is there any barrier between Hung-erh and Shui-sheng? Why?

The access of hope made me suddenly afraid. When Jun-tu asked for the incense burner and candlesticks I had laughed up my sleeve at him, to think that he still worshipped idols and could not put them out of his mind. Yet what I now called hope was no more than an idol I had created myself. The only difference was that what he desired was close at hand, while what I desired was less easily realised.

22. What was the difference between Jun-tu's desire and that of Hsun's?

As I dozed, a stretch of jade-green seashore spread itself before my eyes, and above a round golden moon hung in a deep blue sky. I thought: hope cannot be said to exist, nor can it be said not to exist. It is just like roads across the earth. For actually the earth had no roads to begin with, but when many men pass one way, a road is made.

awning : sheet of canvas or similar material stretched on a frame and used as a shelter from sun or rain

badgers : omnivorous gray–coated nocturnal mammal with a black and white striped head

bean-curd : soft, spongy food made from fermented soyabeans, that is regularly eaten in China

chinks : narrow openings, slits

clan : a number of households which claim descent from a common ancestor

concubine : a mistress

contemptuously : expressing lack of respect for something or someone

dodge : move quickly to elude a blow

flabbergast : overwhelm with shock, surprise or wonder

hedgehogs : a spiny mammal similar to a porcupine

illusion : a faulty perception of an external object

indignant : feeling or showing anger or annoyance

lamentably : expressing regret

miserly : stingy, greedy

mummy : a body that has been treated for burial and is well-preserved

pitchfork : a farm tool with a long handle and two sharp metal prongs

rationalize : offer a special explanation of one's behaviour

sedan-chair : a portable, covered chair that is carried on poles by two men designed to carry one person

sombre : dark or dull in colour

spoilt : having a selfish/greedy character due to pampering

talisman : an object that is worn and thought to act as a charm to protect one from evil and bring good fortune

thrusting : pushing with a sudden impulse

withered : to make or become dry

zha : a small dog-like animal having soft and slippery fur all over its body

Understanding the Text

1. Attempt a character sketch of Jun-tu.
2. 'Jun-tu's mind was a treasure house of such strange lore.' What prompts Hsun to think so?
3. Why did Mrs. Yang regard Hsun as a miserly person?
4. Jun-tu addressed Hsun as 'master' rather than call him 'brother' when they met years later. What was the reason for this change?
5. 'Mother and I both shook our heads over his hard life... all had squeezed him as dry as a mummy.' What picture do we get from these lines about the life of Jun-tu?
6. 'Master...! I felt a shiver run through me for I knew then what a lamentably thick wall had grown up between us.' What do you understand from the expression 'thick wall' used by the author?

7. Describe the friendship that existed between LuHsun and Jun-tu, during their childhood.

8. What was Hsun's hope regarding the friendship between Jun-tu's son and his nephew?

Writing about the Text

1. *My Old Home* is the description of a nostalgic excursion to Hsun's ancestral home.' Comment on the statement.

2. What message does Hsun give the readers through his story?

3. Social barriers prevent people belonging to different classes from mingling with each other. How far is it true in the friendship between Lu Hsun and Jun-tu?

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Leopoldo Lugones (1874-1938)

Leopoldo Lugones is an Argentinian poet, essayist and journalist who gave new dimensions to Argentinian poetry. His prose includes essays on a broad range of subjects. Some of his early stories are excellent examples of fantasy and science fiction written under the influence of H G Wells and Edgar Allan Poe. He published two collections of stories.

'Yzur' is a short story taken from the collection *Strange Forces,* which deals with the attempts of the narrator to make an ape speak.

Yzur

I bought the ape at an auction from a circus that had gone bankrupt.

The first time it occurred to me to try the experiment described in these pages was an afternoon when I happened to read, somewhere or other, that the natives of Java ascribe the absence of articulate speech among the apes to deliberate abstention, not to incapacity. "They keep silent," the article states, "so as not to be set to work."

This idea, which at first struck me as superficial, in the end engaged my mind until it evolved into this anthropological theory – apes were men who for one reason or another had stopped speaking, with the result that the vocal organs and the centers of the brain that control speech had atrophied; the connection between the two was weakened nearly to the breaking-point; the language of the species was arrested at the stage of the inarticulate cry; and the primitive human being sank to the animal level.

1. What made the narrator decide 'to make the ape talk'?

Clearly if this could be proved it would readily account for all the anomalies which make the ape such a singular

creature. But there could be only one proof possible – to get an ape to talk.

Meanwhile I had travelled the world over with my ape, and our experiences, our ups and downs, had bound him closer and closer to me.

2. Will apes speak? What conclusion did the narrator arrive at?

In the grip of my obsession I exhausted the entire literature on the subject of speech among the apes, with no appreciable result. All that I knew, with absolute certainty, was that *there is no scientific explanation for the fact that apes do not speak*. And this took five years of study and thought.

Yzur (where he got his name I could never find out, for his former owner did not know either) was certainly a remarkable animal. His training in the circus, even though it was restricted almost exclusively to mimicry, had greatly developed his faculties; and this prompted me to try out on him a theory that seemed, on the face of it, nonsensical. Moreover I knew that of all the apes the chimpanzee (which Yzur was) is equipped with the best brain, and is also one of the most docile – my chances of success were thus increased. Every time I saw him, rolling along like a drunken sailor, with his hands behind his back to keep his balance, I felt more strongly convinced that he was a retarded human being.

3. What prompted the narrator to think that Yzur was 'a retarded human being'?

Actually there is no way of accounting for the fact that an ape does not articulate at all. His native speech, that is, the system of cries he uses to communicate with his fellows, is varied enough, his larynx, although very different from a human being's, is not so different as the parrot's, yet the parrot speaks.

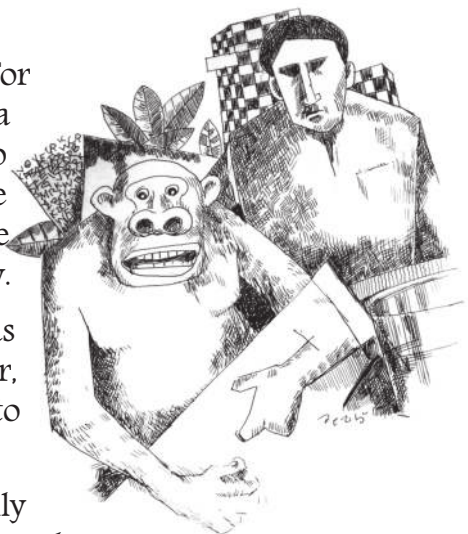
Fortunately, among so many bad traits, the ape has a taste for learning, as his aptitude for mimicry proves, an excellent memory, a capacity for reflection that can turn him into a profound dissembler, and an attention span comparatively better developed than a human child's. Hence he is a most promising subject for pedagogy.

4. Why does the narrator conclude that the ape is 'a most promising subject for pedagogy?'

My ape was young, moreover, and we know that it is in youth that the ape's intelligence reaches its peak. The only difficulty lay in choosing what teaching method to use. I was well aware of the fruitless endeavours of my predecessors, and when I considered all the effort expended, with no result, but so many, some of them of the highest competence, my purpose faltered more than once. But all my thinking on the subject led me to this conclusion: *the first step is to develop the organs which produce sound.*

5. What is the first step in teaching the apes to speak?

I decided, then, to begin with series of exercises for the lips and tongue, treating my ape as I would a deaf mute. After that his ear would enable me to establish direct communication, I should not have to resort to the sense of touch. The reader will see that in this I was planning ahead too optimistically.



Happily, of all the great apes the chimpanzee has the most mobile lips; and in this particular case Yzur, having been subject to sore throat, knew how to open his mouth wide for examination.

His lips had to be stretched with pincers. But he fully realized–perhaps from the expression of my face – the importance of that singular task, and performed it with zeal. While I demonstrated the lip movements he was supposed to imitate, he would sit there with one arm twisted behind him, scratching his rump, his face screwed up in mingled concentration and doubt, or rubbing his hairy cheeks, for all the world like a man using rhythmic gestures as an aid to setting his thoughts in order. In the end he learned how to move his lips.

6. How did Yzur respond to the narrator's attempts at teaching him lip movements?

With regard to speech, Yzur was in the same situation as the child, who already understands many words before he begins to talk; but his greater experience of life made him far quicker to associate ideas and to reach conclusions. Conclusions not based on mere impressions; to judge by their varied character they must have been

the fruit of intellectual curiosity and a spirit of inquiry. All this indicated a capacity for abstract reasoning and a superior intelligence which would be highly favourable to my purpose.

And so I began Yzur's phonetic education. The point was to teach him the mechanics first of all, leading him on gradually to rational speech. Since the ape possessed a voice –he had this advantage over the deaf mute, besides having a rudimentary control of the organs of articulation–the question was how to train him to modulate that voice, how to produce those sounds which speech teachers call static if they are vowels, dynamic if they are consonants.

7. Why did the narrator conclude that Yzur had the capacity for abstract reasoning and a superior intelligence?

Considering the greediness of the ape tribe, and following a method which Heinicke had employed with deaf mutes, I decided to associate each vowel with something tasty to eat: *a* with potato, *e* with cream, *i* with wine, *o* with cocoa, *u* with sugar, in such a way that the vowel would be contained in the name of the tidbit either alone and repeated as in cocoa, or combining the basic sounds in both accented and unaccented syllables, as in potato. All went smoothly while we were on the vowels, the sounds, that is, which are formed with the mouth open. Yzur learned them in two weeks. The *u* was the hardest for him.

8. How did the narrator give phonetic lessons to Yzur?

But I had the devil of a time with the consonants. I was soon forced to admit he would never be able to pronounce those consonants which involve the teeth and the gums. His long eye teeth were an absolute impediment. He would always be limited to the five vowels, plus *b, k, m, g, f* and *c*, the consonants which require the action of the tongue and the palate only. Even for this much, his hearing alone was not sufficient. I had to resort to the sense of touch, as one does with deaf mutes, placing his hand first on my chest and then on his, so that he could feel the sound vibrations.

9. 'Yzur learned the vowels in two weeks.' Describe the learning process.

Three years passed, and I had still not succeeded in getting him to form a single word. He tended to name things after the letter that predominated in them. That was all.

10. How did Yzur try to pacify the narrator?

In the circus he had learned to bark, like the dogs he worked side by side with; and when he saw me in despair over my vain attempts to wrest a word from him, he would bark loudly, as though trying to offer me all he had to give. He could pronounce isolated vowels and consonants, but he could not combine them. The best he could produce was a dizzying series of repeated *p*'s and *m*'s.

For all the slowness of his progress, a great change had come over him. His face was less mobile, his expression more serious, his attitudes were those of a creature deep in thought. He had acquired, for instance, the habit of gazing at the stars…. And at the same time his sensibilities had developed: I noticed that he was easily moved to tears.

11. What were the changes that had come over Yzur?

The lessons continued with unremitting determination, but with no greater success. The whole business had become a painful obsession with me; and as time went on I felt inclined to resort to force. The failure was embittering my disposition, filling me with unconscious resentment against Yzur. As his intellect developed he withdrew into a stubborn silence which I was beginning to believe I should never draw him out of, when I suddenly discovered that he wasn't speaking because he chose not to!

12. Why did the narrator resort to force?

One evening the horrified cook came to tell me he had overheard the ape "speaking real words." According to his story, Yzur had been squatting beside a fig-tree in the garden; but the cook's terror prevented him from recalling what was the real point, the actual words. He thought he could remember two: *bed and pipe*. I came near to kicking him for his stupidity.

13. What was the striking revelation that the cook made?

Needless to say the profoundest agitation preyed upon

me the whole night through; and what I had not done in the three years, the mistake that ruined everything was the result of the exasperation that followed on that sleepless night, and of my overweening curiosity as well. Instead of allowing the ape to arrive at his natural pace to the point of revealing his command of speech, I summoned him the next day and tried to compel him to it. All I could get out of him was the *p*'s and *m*'s I'd already had my fill of, the hypocritical winks, and– may God forgive me– a hint of mockery in the incessant grimaces. I lost my temper: without thinking twice I beat him. The only result was tears and absolute silence, unbroken even by moans.

14. What were the feelings of the author after the ape fell ill?

Three days later he fell ill, with a kind of deep depression complicated by symptoms of meningitis. Leeches, cold showers, purgatives, counter-irritants, tincture of alcohol, bromides–every remedy for the terrible illness was applied to him. Driven by remorse and fear, I struggled with desperate energy. Remorse for the cruelty which had made him its victim, fear for the secret he might perhaps be carrying with him to the grave.

15. What change came over, in the behaviour of the ape during his illness?

After a long time he began to improve, but he was still too feeble to stir from his bed. The closeness of death had ennobled and humanized him. His eyes, filled with gratitude, never left me, following me about the room like two revolving globes, even when I was behind him; his hand sought mine in the companionship of convalescence. In my great solitude he was rapidly assuming the importance of a person.

16. How did the ape assume the importance of a person?

Yet the demon of investigation, which is only one other form of the spirit of perversity, kept urging me on to renew my experiment. The ape had actually talked. It was impossible simply to let it go at that.

I began very slowly, asking for the letters he knew how to pronounce. Nothing! I left him alone for hours at a time, spying on him through a chink in the wall. Nothing!

I spoke to him In brief sentences, trying to appeal to his loyalty or his greediness. Nothing! When my words moved him, his eyes would fill with tears. When I uttered a familiar phrase, such as the "I am your master" with which every lesson began, or the "You are my ape" with which I completed the statement, to impress upon his mind the conviction of a total truth, he would close his eyelids by way of assent; but he would not utter a sound, not even move his lips.

He had reverted to sign language as the only way of communicating with me; and this circumstance, together with the analogies between him and deaf mutes, led me to redouble my precautions, for everyone knows that mutes are extremely subject to mental illness. I had moments of wishing he would really lose his mind, to see if delirium would at last break his silence.

His convalescence had come to a halt. The same emaciation, the same depression. It was clear he was ill and suffering, in body and mind. The abnormal effort demanded of his brain had shattered his organic unity, and sooner or later he would become a hopeless case. But for all his submissiveness, which increased still more as the illness took its course, his silence, that despairing silence my fury had driven him to, would not yield. Out of a dim past of tradition that had petrified and become instinct, the species was forcing its millennial mutism on the animal, whose ancestral will was strengthened by his own inner being. The primitive men of the jungle, driven into silence, to intellectual suicide that is, were guarding their secret; ancient mysteries of the forest, formidable with the immense weight of ages, dictated that unconscious decision that Yzur was now making.

17. What might be the reasons that prompted Yzur to remain mute?

18. Why were the primitive men of the jungle driven into silence?

In the race we call evolution, man had overtaken the anthropoid and crushed him with savage brutality, dethroning the great families who ruled their primitive Eden, thinning their ranks, capturing their females so that

organized slavery might begin in the very womb. Until, beaten and helpless, they expressed their human dignity by breaking the higher but fatal bond-speech-that linked them to the enemy, and as their last salvation took refuge in the dark night of the animal kingdom.

19. Why did apes give up their faculty of speech?

And what horrors, what monstrous excesses of cruelty the conquerors must have inflicted upon this half-beast in the course of his evolution to make him-once he had tasted the joys of the intellect, the forbidden fruit of the Bible-resign himself to stultifying his mind in degrading equality with inferior begins; to that retrogression which fixed of his intelligence for ever, leaving him a robot, an acrobat, a clown; to that fear of life which would bend his servile back as a sign of his animal condition, and imprint upon him that melancholy bewilderment which is his basic trait.

20. How did melancholy become the basic trait of apes?

This is what had aroused my evil temper, buried deep in some atavist limbo, on the very brink of success. Across the millions of years the magic of the word still kept its power to stir the simian soul; but against that temptation which was about to pierce the dark shadows of animal instinct, ancestral memories that filled his race with some instinctive horror were heaping age upon age as a barrier.

21. What was the extraordinary thing which made the narrator write this account?

Yzur did not lose consciousness as death approached. It was gentle death, with closed eyes, faint breathing, feeble pulse, and perfect tranquility, interrupted only at intervals, when he would turn his sad, old mulatto face toward me with a heart-rending expression of eternity. And the last afternoon,the afternoon he died, the extraordinary thing occurred that decided me to write this account.

Overcome by the heat, drowsy with the quiet of the twilight coming on, I had dozed off by his bedside. Suddenly I felt something gripping my wrist. I woke up with a start. The ape, his eyes wide open, was dying, unmistakably, and his look was so human that I was

seized with horror; yet something expressive in his hands and in his eyes impelled me to bend over him. And then with his last breath which at once crowned and blasted all my hopes, he murmured (how can I describe the tone of a voice which has not spoken for ten thousand centuries?) these words, whose humanity reconciled our two species:

'Water, master. Master, my master…'

Translated by GREGORY WOODRUFF

abstention **:** the act of choosing not to do or have something

ascribe **:** to refer to a supposed cause or source

atavistic : related to the attitudes and behaviour of the first humans

atrophy **:** the condition of losing the strength of a part of the body

auction **:** a public event at which things are sold to the person who offers the biggest amount for them

bromide : a chemical which contains bromine

convalescence : a period of time when we get well after an illness or a surgery

dissemble : to hide your real feelings or intentions, often by pretending to have a different one

docile : quiet and easy to control and persuade

emaciation : the state of being thin and weak, usually because of illness or lack of food

exasperate : to annoy or irritate someone very much

grimace : to make an ugly expression with your face to show pain, disgust, etc.

limbo : a situation in which you are not certain what to do next

millennial : relating to a millennium (a period of time equal to thousand years)

mulatto : a person with one black parent and one white parent

mutism : a medical condition in which a person is unable to speak

overweening : showing too much of confidence or pride

perversity : showing deliberate determination to behave in a way that most people think is wrong, unacceptable or unreasonable

resentment : a feeling of anger or unhappiness about something that you think is unfair

retrogression : the process of returning to the previous state

revert : to return to the original position

rudimentary : dealing with only the most basic traits or ideas

simian : like an ape; connected with apes

squat : to sit on one's heels with one's knees bent up close to your body

stultify : making one feel very bored and unable to think of new ideas

tidbit : a small special piece of food

tincture : a medicine that is made of a drug mixed with alcohol

wink : to blink with one eye as a message, signal or suggestion

Understanding the Text

1. The narrator does intense research in the science of articulation so as to make Yzur speak. Does it show the undying spirit of enquiry and research in human beings? Explain.
2. Till the end of the story, Yzur does not speak. What might be the reason behind his muteness? Why does he speak at last?
3. What is Yzur's attitude towards the narrator?
4. In the story you come across the sentence, 'The reader will see that in this I was planning ahead too optimistically.' Why does the author say so?
5. Yzur died with the word 'master' on his lips. What does this signify?

Writing about the Text

1. Is the narrator a true representative of the civilised man who is inflicts monstrous cruelty upon animals? Write an essay on this topic, in the light of the incident in the story 'Yzur'.
2. In certain circumstances, human beings lose their human character and beasts lose their beastly character as revealed in the story. How far is this true in the context of the modern world?
3. Examine the story 'Yzur' as a critique on man's constant attempt to subjugate the weaker species.
4. Language is a means to assert one's supremacy over the other. Do you think that Yzur's soul frets under the weight of the narrator's language? Explain.

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Khyrunnisa A (1956-)

Khyrunnisa A. worked as Associate Professor of English at All Saints' College, Thiruvananthapuram, and is now a full time writer. She is a prize winning author of children's fiction and occasionally writes for adults. She created the popular comic character, Butterfingers, for the children's magazine Tinkle. Her novels in the Butterfingers series-*Howzzat Butterfingers!* (2010), *Goal Butterfingers!* (2012) and *Clean Bowled, Butterfingers!* (2015) have been published by Penguin (Puffin). A collection of her short stories, *Lost in Ooty and Other Adventure Stories*, was brought out by Unisun Publications in 2010. She is a columnist for The New Indian Express, The Hindu Metroplus and freelances for other publications.

Lt. Aaron Eats his Hat is a short story taken from *Let's Play!*, a collection of sports stories, published by Penguin (Puffin) in 2010.

Lt. Aaron Eats his Hat

'Kabaddi, kabaddi, kabaddi, kabaddi…!' Sundar Kapoor muttered quite audibly as he made his way, like a raider, to the dining table adopting a sideways motion. For a heavy man, he was surprisingly lithe as he deftly dodged a chair and made a quick lunge at another one. He adroitly stretched out his right leg and touched the chair with his big toe before plonking himself on it and letting out his breath like a whale giving distress signals in the deep.

1. How is Sundar Kapoor described in the story?

His wife, Sarala, was bringing in the dish of hot puris when this mock kabaddi exhibition took place and emitting an exasperated sigh that seemed a poor cousin to his explosive expiration, she quickly placed it out of harm's way at the other end of the table and said archly, 'How old do you think you are?'

'All of forty one!' her husband replied cheerfully and as he reached for the puris and piled them on his plate he chanted, 'Puri, puri, puri, puri…'

'Oh, stop it!' said Sarala, covering her ears as their son, thirteen-year-old Ashwin, laughed.

'You two don't realize how important the match is. Our town must win this time. We hope it'll be third time lucky for Dilshan. Don't you think it's high time we all held up our heads and walked with pride whenever someone from Deewar approached us?'

2. Who are the other members of Sundar's house?

Dilshan and Deewar were neighbouring towns and all was well between them until three years before when the Lok Sabha elections took place. That was when Manohar Ram, a rich and influential businessman who had a house in each town and travelled back and forth like a well aimed shuttlecock between the two, decided to stand for elections. Determined to win, he decided to play safe and contested from both Dilshan and Deewar constituencies. He showed himself to be a wily politician with his shrewd campaigning tactics. Knowing how dear the game of kabaddi was to the adult residents of the two towns, he chose as his election symbol a kabaddi raider flat on the ground with his right hand just touching the centre line.

3. Who was Manohar Ram?

4. Which was the election symbol chosen by Manohar Ram? Why?

But his masterstroke was telling the residents of Dilshan that his father Dheeraj Ram was a native of that town and loved it so much that on his death his ashes were immersed in the river that ran through the town. This impressed the Dilshanians so much that they voted for him without a second thought. He assured the people of Deewar in their turn that his mother Rukmani Devi originally came from there and had died in Delhi pining for her native town. That successfully tugged at the heartstrings of the Deewarites who decided to reward such touching attachment with their votes. Neither town knew how authentic his claims were but didn't care, preferring to believe that a son of their soil would soon take care of their interests in Parliament.

5. How did Manohar Ram impress the people of Dilshan and Deewar at the same time??

Manohar Ram's ploy worked like a dream and he won the elections from both constituencies with an overwhelming majority. The two towns rejoiced but not for long. The time soon came for him to give up one constituency since he couldn't hold both simultaneously. After much mulling over this issue, he gave up Deewar and immediately incurred the wrath of its electorate. The people of Dilshan though, were very pleased at having been chosen over Deewar and made no secret of their glee. Overnight the two towns became hostile towards each other. The children, however, were mercifully quite unaffected. The reason was simple. The two towns shared a huge common playground that touched both towns and since the children of both Deewar and Dilshan gathered there practically every day to play, they were all friends and had no time to be bothered about quarrels between grownups. They found the whole thing silly but wisely kept this opinion from the adults.

6. What was the outcome of the elections?

7. Why did the towns of Dilshan and Deewar become hostile towards each other?

8. Why were the children of the two towns unaffected by the hostility?

Manohar Ram felt guilty about his role in the rift and thought long and hard about how he could resolve the crisis and bring the two towns together again. He finally came up with what he believed was a gem of an idea. He instituted an annual Kabaddi competition between the two towns and offered as prize for the winners a glittering gold plated trophy called the Rukmani Devi Trophy and instituted the Dheeraj Ram Trophy, a sparkling affair in silver, as the prize for the runners up. But the competition only added fuel to the flames of animosity between the two towns and when Deewar won both times, a bitter rivalry developed between the two. The only adults not drawn into this hate drama were Lt. Aaron, a 65 year old retired army lieutenant, and his wife Sonu, who baked the most delectable pastry. Two years back they had come to live in a small but elegant house right on the border between the two towns and set up a bakery, *Taste Buds Bakery*, that was patronized by all.

9. Why did Manohar Ram feel guilty? How did he try to solve the issue?

10. What was the result?

11. How is Lt. Aaron described?

12. What is special about *Taste Buds Bakery*?

Lt. Aaron was a stern, rather fierce-looking man, always impeccably turned out in stiff and starched formal attire and was never seen without a solar topee on his head. He carried his army background and training with him wherever he went and was always polite and courteous. His politeness was inevitably couched in excellent English. At first the boys of Deewar and Dilshan were a little wary of him, but soon they realized that his rough exterior hid a loving heart and warmed towards him. His gentle and bird like wife Sonu, entirely dwarfed by her big built husband, made sweets and baked cakes, biscuits and breads, the likes of which had only been read or dreamt about by the two towns. People's mouths began to water even before they set out for the bakery and after tasting the cakes, they would weep tears of pure joy and satisfaction.

Ashwin and his friends practically lived in *Taste Buds* during their spare time when they were not involved in playing cricket or football, their two favourite games. The Dilshan boys, unlike the boys of Deewar, did not share their fathers' love for kabaddi, finding it too rough for their taste. In vain did Ashwin's father try to inculcate love for the traditional game in his son.

13. Why were the Dilshan boys not interested in kabaddi? What were their favourite games?

Wolfing down the puris with noisy relish, Sundar Kapoor continued, directing his words to his son, 'It's only two weeks to the match and you seem so casual about it. I can't understand why you don't like kabaddi. Kabaddi, kabaddi, kabaddi, kabaddi… it's our national game!' he announced as a clinching argument. 'If we are to win, we have to practise all the time.'

14. What is the relevance of kabaddi in the Indian context?

'If you would make an exception of meal times, I'd be very grateful,' said Sarala with mock politeness as she took the empty plate to the kitchen to replenish it with puris.

'Father, is it true that Manohar Ramji is coming this time to watch the match?' asked Ashwin.

'That's what we heard. All the more reason why we should try and win. Kabaddi, kabaddi, puri, puri…' He stretched himself from his chair and neatly snatching the laden plate from an exasperated Sarala, thrust his left thumb forward indicating a bonus point.

Both the towns were taken by surprise when they heard two days later that Manohar Ram had brought about a change in the rules governing the competition and now wanted the children of the 'towns' and not the 'adults' to play the match. This was yet another bid on Manohar Ram's part to bring the rivalry to a close. Having heard that the children of the two towns were good friends, he thought a game between them might solve the issue. But he had not reckoned with the response of the adults who were shocked and felt cheated.

15. What was the news that took the towns by surprise?

'How dare!' exclaimed Sundar Kapoor, frothing at the mouth. 'Here we've been practising for such a long time and he coolly says we adults need not play!'

'Good thing!' said Sarala, looking pleased as her husband directed black looks at her and the world in general.

Neither had Manohar Ram reckoned with the response of the children. 'Why should we play kabaddi of all games?' said Ashwin to his friends. 'We don't even know how to play it. We could've had a game of cricket or football or even hockey. The Deewar boys will definitely win.'

16. How did the Dilshan boys react to the news?

That evening when the Dilshan boys met gloomily at *Taste Buds*, Lt. Aaron asked them, 'So what's eating you, boys? And what would you wish to eat, anyway?'

The boys smiled faintly and Dilip said, 'We'd like one piece of cake and a chocolate shake. We've only money for one of each. We'll share. As for what's eating us, Uncle, Ashwin here will tell you.'

17. What does the phrase 'what's eating you' mean?

'Ha, ha, ha!' Lt. Aaron guffawed loudly when Ashwin told him about the new rule. 'That's hilarious! You Dilshan

boys to play kabaddi!! Why, it's like asking a cat to knit a sweater! I'll eat my hat if you guys win against the Deewar boys!'

'You will, Uncle?' asked Rajesh immediately.

'I sure will! I'm an honourable man. I always keep my word.'

The boys quickly looked at one other, interest kindling in their eyes. 'I'll eat my hat' was Lt. Aaron's favourite expression and the boys had already spent hours discussing how wonderful it would be if they could actually see him do it. Lt. Aaron's solar topee that fitted so perfectly on his head was a source of great interest to them and they often wondered why Lt. Aaron never ever took it off. During one of their endless discussions about it, Rajesh had said, 'I'm sure he's completely bald.'

'That's tame! I think his hair must have turned a weird colour after he experimented with some hair dye,' Dilip had offered as his explanation. 'Probably purple or green or a brilliant peacock blue or all these colours together streaked with red and yellow!' The boys had hollered at the image of Lt. Aaron sporting a multi-coloured head of hair.

Ashwin, the most imaginative of the lot, had something different to suggest. 'Uncle was in the army, wasn't he? I bet he was involved in some dare devil mission and got badly hurt. His head probably took the brunt. Quite likely it's now covered with bumps or craters or both. I bet it has some strange shaped, ugly scars. Who knows, probably the enemy scalped him and had a fierce looking tattoo done on his head!'

As at the end of every such discussion, the boys had fallen silent, looks of fascination seen on their faces as open mouthed, they allowed their imagination free rein.

As they left the bakery, Ashwin said, 'Did you hear that? This is a golden opportunity to make him eat his hat and

18. Why does Lt. Aaron comment, 'Why, it's like asking a cat to knit a sweater!'?

19. What comment did Lt. Aaron make when he heard that the Dilshan boys were playing kabaddi?

20. What assumptions were made by the boys about Lt. Aaron's hiding his head under a hat?

to see what lies hidden underneath the solar wonder.'

'True,' agreed Dilip. 'We can't let this chance go. We've got to practice and win. I'll ask my father if he'll teach me.'

'So will I,' said Ashwin.

'And I,' added Rajesh.

But the boys were in for a rude surprise. That evening at dinner Ashwin was surprised to see his father full of high spirits again and repeating the kabaddi cant as he tackled his food. Sarala, who had been relieved at the peace of the last few days, asked in some irritation, 'What's wrong now?'

'What's right is what you should ask, my dear. So what if Manohar Ram cancels our match? We adults have decided to go ahead anyway with the match. Both teams have practised so hard.'

'But who'll sponsor the prizes?' asked his wife, dismayed that kabaddi was once more going to become a feature at the dining table.

'Somebody will. We're not bothered about that. Kabaddi, kabaddi, kabaddi, chappati, chappati, chappati…'

'Father, will you train us in kabaddi?' asked Ashwin.

'Train you? No time! There's only a week to go for our match.'

'Ditto for us, father.'

'It's too late to start, Ashwin. You don't know the ABC of it. If I start teaching you now, I'll unlearn all I know. You'd better offer a walkover to the Deewar boys and start from scratch next year.'

The other boys had similar experiences in their homes and the next evening they met along with many of their friends to decide on their plan of action.

21. Why did the children decide to practise and win the kabaddi match?

22. What did the children see as a 'golden opportunity'?

23. Why did Ashwin's father refuse to train the children in kabaddi?

'Let's search the Internet and find out. And maybe we can go watch the grownups play. We've never done it so far. Vacation has started, so we can put in quite some practice,' said Ashwin.

'We better practice secretly,' said Manoj. 'The Deewar boys are taking it easy since they know we're hopeless at it and we shouldn't alert them.'

24. Why did the Dilshan boys decide to practise kabaddi secretly?

'Right you are,' said Ashwin approvingly. 'And Aaron Uncle also shouldn't get wind of this, lest he withdraws his bet.'

'We can practice in the yard behind my house,' said Sachin. 'My father's gone on tour this month and Ma has no idea about any game.'

'That's a good idea!' said Ashwin. 'Let's all try to find out the rules and then go ahead with the practise.'

Frantic net surfing that night resulted in a wealth of conflicting information about kabaddi that led to much argument and it was only after watching the adults practising that the boys were able to put two and two together and arrive at some sensible understanding of the rules. Then began the practise that went on at a frenetic pace. Ashwin was made captain – a case of the blind leading the blind, as Rajesh put it – and the others who made the playing seven were Dilip, Rajesh, Sachin, Manoj, Vijay and Pradeep. Another five were in reserve and some others came regularly to watch the practise sessions.

25. Who was made the captain of the kabaddi team? How did Rajesh view Ashwin's captaincy?

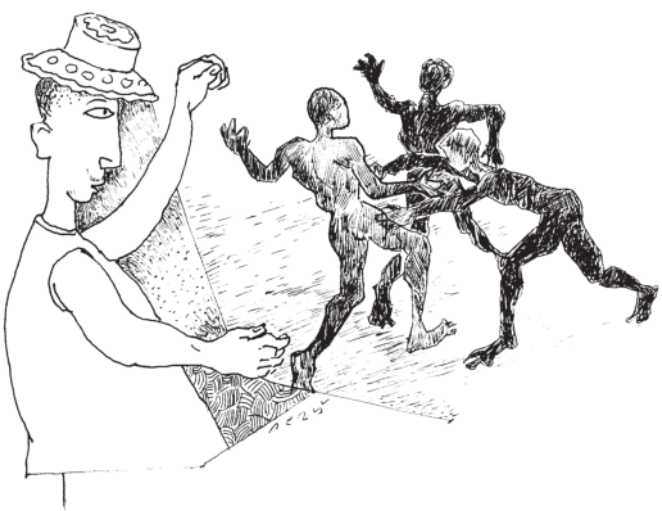
Though the boys continued to go to the bakery, they hardly lingered long there, much to the disappointment of Lt. Aaron who loved to talk to them. Ashwin tried to throw him off the scent by saying they were busy with a holiday project.

'Holiday project, eh?' said Lt. Aaron. 'So you're prepared to go down without fighting! That's not done in the army.'

'We are very considerate boys, Uncle. We don't want you to be forced to eat your hat, ha, ha!' laughed Ashwin as he raced away with the pastry leaving Lt. Aaron looking speculatively after him.

The day of the match dawned bright and clear and by 4 in the afternoon, the adults and children of Dilshaan and Deewar had reached the playground. Both teams were barefooted. The Deewar boys wore white T-shirts and khaki coloured shorts and the Dilshan boys turned up in black. The Deewar boys, in addition, wore huge smiles on their faces, as if they had already won the match and kept darting proprietorial glances at the winners' trophy that was prominently displayed in a makeshift pavilion where the guest of honour, Manohar Ram, and his friends, were seated.

26. How were the boys of the two teams dressed on the day of the match?



The referee, the scorer and the line umpires who came from Bageecha, a neighbouring town, took their places and at sharp 4.30, the captains went for the toss. Ashwin called right and choosing to attack, sent Rajesh as raider. Everyone laughed for Rajesh was a very thin boy and they thought he would be out in no time. But Rajesh stunned the spectators into silence by thundering out the cant for the whole world to hear, and while everyone was trying to get adjusted to the cacophony, quickly darted to the bonus line, touched an opponent and managed to return. The referee signalled two points for Dilshan whose supporters recovered from their shock and cheered wildly. Deewar's raider quickly followed Rajesh, but as he made for the bonus line, Dilip in left cover position pounced on him and Manoj came to help but the clever raider threw off the two and returned gasping. Dilip and Manoj were out but Ashwin in a flash went for the next raid and got hold

27. How did Rajesh stun the spectators?

of the returning Deewar raider and returned in a trice.

Sunder Kapoor rubbed his eyes in disbelief as the crowd settled down to watch an absorbing game of kabaddi. The Deewar boys stopped looking at the trophy and began concentrating on the game and soon Dilshan got a lona when they managed to put all their opponents out. Deewar stepped up their game and began to play brilliantly and at half time, had 23 points to Dilshan's 20. During the 5-minute break, as the boys changed sides, Ashwin jerked his head towards where Lt. Aaron was seated and said, 'This is our only chance to make him eat his hat. Let's do it.'

28. Why did Sundar Kapoor rub his eyes in disbelief?

Dilshan went on the offensive from the beginning, making daring raids, and fortune favoured them when the Deewar boys in their desperation forgot to chant and got cant out several times. The teams were soon level with 44 points each and there was just a minute to go when Ashwin went as raider. A defender got hold of his shirt but Ashwin deftly slipped out of it and returned with a point gained. Deewar's captain and best raider, Shyam, swiftly followed and got involved in a struggle with Rajesh and Vijay, but shook off their double crocodile holds and throwing them out, was close to the centre line when, sand having got into his nose, he began sneezing. 'Kabadachooo! Kabchooo! Kachoo! Achooo! Choo!' He chanted gamely as the final whistle blew and he was given cant out. Dilshan had won and a huge cheer greeted this announcement from the referee.

29. Who won the game of kabaddi?

'Hard luck!' said Ashwin to Shyam, as he tried to wear his shirt and shake his opponent's hand at the same time.

'Well played!' said Shyam, blowing his nose and trying hard not to show his disappointment.

'Now Aaron Uncle will have to eat his hat!' shouted Rajesh. Lt. Aaron smiled, nodded and coming to the centre of the court, in full view of all present, took off his topee with a flourish and coolly began to munch it. At first everyone

looked shocked, and then a huge roar of laughter went up as they realized that the topee was obviously made of something edible. He broke it into many pieces and began to distribute them. When Manohar Ram's friend Mr. Deepak Kumar, a retired bureaucrat who had accompanied him, bit into one, his eyes lit up behind his glasses and looking closely at Lt. Aaron, said, 'Aarumugham, aren't you? I knew it from the taste of this pastry. Aaaah! Only you can bake this heavenly stuff! So this is where you've been hiding! I was trying to figure out where I'd seen you before!'

30. Who discovered the true identity of Lt Aaron?

Lt. Aaron looked sheepish, but Mr. Deepak Kumar, licking his lips appreciatively, greedily looked around for more bits of topee. Handing him the final crumbs, Lt. Aaron decided that, the cat being out of the bag, he might as well come clean dramatically and let his audience decide what to do. So, addressing the people of Deewar and Dilshan and the others, his bare, sparsely vegetated head held high, he came out with his story. Everyone listened enthralled as he disclosed that he was no army lieutenant, but just a cook at Mr. Deepak's house. 'A top class cook!' Mr. Deepak interrupted, blowing out a spray of pastry in his enthusiasm.

Lt. Aaron continued, 'I was bored with life as a cook and wanted a change. Having picked up excellent English and good manners at Mr. Deepak's, I decided to use them, just for fun and just for a little while. I changed my appearance and came here. But I just fell in love with the place and the people and decided to stay on. I cook and Sonu serves. I thought these boys might win their bet, so I came prepared with an edible hat. Now you can do whatever you want with me.'

31. What was his true story that Lt. Aaron revealed?

The people reacted with good-humoured laughter. 'Great story, Lieutenant, sorry Aarumugham,' said Sundar Kapoor. 'And stop looking like a lamb waiting to be slaughtered! Deewar and Dilshan can't think of life without you and your delectable cakes. You and *Taste*

32. How did the people react to Lt. Aaron?

Buds belong to all of us, and we want you to make your home with us always.'

'Couldn't have put it better myself!' said Rajat Singh of Deewar town, nodding approvingly. 'We've been silly to have this meaningless rivalry. Let's have a kabaddi match to seal our friendship.'

'Right away!' said Sunder Kapoor as all except Sarala whistled, shouted and laughed in enthusiastic assent. Sarala groaned.

Manohar Ram smiled with relief. As the adults got ready for the match, Ashwin and his friends, who had all this while been gazing at Lt. Aaron's very normal head with almost comical disappointment, gathered round him.

33. Why were Ashwin and his friends disappointed?

'Uncle, why did you always keep your head covered?' Ashwin asked. 'We've been so curious about it.'

'Oh, that!' said "Lt. Aaron" with a laugh. 'I get a cold in my head very easily, so my wife insists I keep my head covered all the time, as protection. And I wouldn't dare disobey her.' He rolled his eyes towards Sonu standing a little distance away, puckered his face and stiffened his body in a mock gesture of fear. The boys looked at his gentle and mild-looking wife and laughed.

34. What was the real reason for Lt. Aaron wearing his hat all the time?

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audible: that which can be heard clearly

deftly: skilfully and quickly

dodge: to move quickly and suddenly to one side in order to avoid somebody or something

adroitly: skilfully and cleverly

archly: in a tone of voice that deliberately shows amusment

frothing: seem attractive and enjoyable but have no real value

guffawed: laughed noisily

lunge: a sudden powerful forward movement of the body and arm that a person makes towards another person or thing

mutter: to speak or say something in a quiet voice that is difficult to hear

plonk: to put something down on something, especially noisily or carelessly

puckered: to form or to make something to form small folds or lines

tug: to pull something hard, often several times

Understanding the text

1. What does the expression 'eat one's hat' mean? Describe the significance of the title *Lt. Aaron Eats His Hat.*
2. How far is the story successful in presenting a lively and energetic picture of a local township in India?
3. What is the role played by kabaddi in the story?

Writing about the text

1. Tagore in his Gitanjali says that the world should not be broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls. How far is the same idea brought out in the story *Lt. Aaron Eats His Hat*?
2. Children are often more compassionate and they have greater feeling of unity than grown-ups. Do you agree with this statement? If so, prepare a write-up on this topic based on your reading of the story, *Lt Aaron Eats His Hat.*
3. How does the author use humour to enliven the story? Give examples.

Know your text

- Compare and contrast the various themes dealt with in the stories you have come across in this section and examine their link with modernism.
- Across the world, stories show striking similiarity in plot, characterisation, narrative techniques, use of realism and symbolism. Substantiate.
- Attempt an essay on the marginalisation and discrimination as presented in the stories you have read in this section.

Let's conclude

In this unit we have seen how social, cultural, political and economic issues from different parts of the world are addressed in the short stories. Now, let's enjoy prose in the non-fiction form.

Section 3
Non-fiction

Preface

Non-fiction has emerged as a popular genre of literature in the 20th century comprising of essays, journals, biographies, memoir documentaries, travel books, magazine articles, literary criticism and so on. A work of non-fiction derives its origin from presumably real life events and established facts. Since it reflects upon various social and cultural aspects of life, it promises to offer us a variety of literary experiences. This unit takes us through some of the sub genres of non-fiction, which help us to understand the essential features of this genre.

Learning Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

- express and share ideas with friends.
- analyse and comprehend the content of a text.
- relate with the point of view, style of writing, etc. of the author.
- explain the theme of the text.
- attempt a critical appreciation of the article.
- communicate the new perspectives and diverse views.
- support the idea of equality of men and women.
- demonstrate awareness of the role of media.
- demonstrate an awareness of various cultures and traditions.
- explain the specific features of travel writing.
- demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of the creative process involved in screen writing.
- identify the terminology related to screenplays.
- examine the different formatting styles of screenplays.
- analyse the literary elements in screenplays.
- differentiate between a story and a screenplay.
- rewrite a story into a screenplay.
- appraise the elements of humour in a literary work.

Manoj Night Shyamalan (1970 -)

Manoj Shyamalan, known professionally as M. Night Shyamalan, is an Indian-born American screenwriter, film director and producer known for making movies with contemporary supernatural plots including *The Sixth Sense* (1999), *Unbreakable* (2000), *Signs* (2002), *The Village* (2004), *Lady in the Water* (2006), *The Last Airbender* (2010), *and After Earth* (2013). He is also known for filming and setting his movies in and around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where he was brought up and for including unexpected twists and turns in the plot in most of his films.

Excerpts from 'The Sixth Sense' (Screenplay)

INT. SCHOOL LOBBY – LATE AFTERNOON

The rain comes down a little stronger now on the stained glass window.

Malcolm sits on the stairs in the lobby. Cole walks back and forth in front of him. Cole still holds the sword from the play.

COLE

How come we're so quiet?

Malcolm shrugs his shoulders.

MALCOLM

I think we said everything we needed to say.

(beat)

May be it's time to say things to someone else? Someone close to you?

1. Identify the location of this shot.

2. Do you find anything peculiar about writing of the names of characters?

3. Which word denotes a pause in the dialogue?

COLE

May be.

Cole keeps moving. Beat.

COLE (CONT'D)

I'm not going to see you anymore, am I?

Malcolm doesn't respond for a while. He shakes his head, 'No'. Beat.

MALCOLM

You were great in the play, Cole.

COLE

Really?

MALCOLM

And you know what else?

COLE

What?

MALCOLM

Tommy Tammisimo sucked big time.

Cole smiles huge. Beat. Cole's sword drags on the tile as he continues to circle around the hall. We get the idea he doesn't want to be still.

COLE

May be we can pretend we're going to see each other tomorrow?

Cole glances at Malcolm.

COLE (CONT'D)

Just for pretend.

Beat. Malcolm exhales very slowly as he gets up.

MALCOLM

Okay, Cole, I'm going to go now.... I'll see you tomorrow.

4. How is the dialogue continued after a pause?

5. Why does Malcolm say 'I'm going to go now....'?

Cole watches as Malcolm walks down the stairs to the entrance. Cole stops moving.

COLE

(soft)

See you tomorrow.

Malcolm's face shows his losing battle against his emotions. He doesn't turn to look back.

CUT TO:

EXT. MALCOLM'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Malcolm walks quietly down the sidewalk towards his home.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Malcolm enters the living room and smiles at what he sees.

Anna is asleep in a chair. She's curled up in a ball. In a way, she looks like a little girl.

Their WEDDING VIDEO PLAYS SOFTLY ON THE TELEVISION.

Malcolm watches himself and Anna cutting their wedding cake. THE CROWD APPLAUDS AS THEY FEED EACH OTHER, PIECES.

Malcolm turns from the television and takes a seat next to Anna. He gazes upon his wife softly.

MALCOLM

(whispers)

Anna, I've been so lost.

(beat)

6. What is the tone of Cole's voice?

7. The stage directions appear both in upper and lowercase letters. How is it significant?

8. What are the sounds we listen to during the action?

9. How are sounds other than dialogues differentiated?

10. From where do you get the idea of the tone of the dialogue?

I need my best friend.

Silence. Malcolm gazes for a beat before looking down.

ANNA

I miss you.

Malcolm's eyes move back up. He looks at his sleeping wife. ANNA'S TALKING IN HER SLEEP.

Malcolm can't believe it.

MALCOLM

I miss you.

Beat. Her lips move again. Eyes never open.

ANNA

Why, Malcolm?

MALCOLM

What, Anna? What did I do? What's made you so sad? Beat.

ANNA

Why did you leave me?

MALCOLM

I didn't leave you.

Beat. She becomes silent. Anna falls back into deep sleep, her arm slides down. SOMETHING SHINY FALLS OUT AND ROLLS ON THE GROUND.

Malcolm's eyes watch as it comes to a stop... Beat. He gazes curiously at a GOLD WEDDING BAND laying on the wood floor.

Confusion washes over his face. He looks to Anna's hand... An identical gold wedding ring is on her finger.

Beat. Malcolm looks down at his own hand.... HIS WEDDING RING IS GONE.

11. Which action is highlighted here?

12. What is the sound you hear at this part of the action?

Malcolm is completely lost. He takes a couple steps back. Looks around in confusion...

His eyes come to rest on the door to his basement office. He looks in disbelief at the set of DEAD BOLT LOCKS on the door.

Malcolm doesn't know what the hell's going on.. His eyes are drawn to the dining table... Only ONE PLACE SETTING is out on the tabletop.

His eyes search again — they finally lock on the WEDDING VIDEO PLAYING. Malcolm watches images of himself on the screen.... His eyes fill with a storm of emotions...

13. What is special about the setting on the dining table?

Malcolm looks to Anna's face and becomes very still. Beat.

CLOSE ON ANNA... TILL HER SLEEPING FACE FILLS THE FRAME... IT'S NOW WE NOTICE FOR THE FIRST TIME, THAT ANNA'S BREATHS ARE FORMING TINY CLOUDS IN THE COLD AIR.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(like he's falling down a deep hole)

No...

SLAM CUT:

14. Where is the end of this shot?

FLASHBACK: INT. BEDROOM – NIGHT

VIOLENT GUN SHOTS RING THROUGH THE BEDROOM.

Anna rushes across the room to a crumpled Malcolm laying on the floor. Malcolm's hands are clutched at his side.

15. Is this shot a flashback? Explain.

Anna pries his hands away to reveal the tiniest tear in his shirt. Anna's eyes catch something dark — moving... A POOL OF BLOOD IS FORMING UNDER MALCOLM. She slowly turns him over on his side... A horrific sight... An enormous exit wound on his lower back pours out blood uncontrollably.

Malcolm's jaw is locked open. His breaths are long and strained.

ANNA IS SCREAMING, BUT HER VOICE SOUNDS FAR AWAY.

Malcolm's open jaw releases a long strained breath and then becomes silent. Anna tries to cover the wound with her hands desperately.

SLAM CUT:

PRESENT: INT. LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

MALCOLM

(screaming)

ANNA!

16. How does this shot end?

MALCOLM'S VOICE SHAKES THE ROOM.

Anna just sleeps.

Malcolm staggers back. His breathing erratic.

He takes a seat across from her. He looks at his wife and suddenly becomes very still.

Anna's still curled up asleep, but tears are falling from her shut eyes.

Beat.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Don't cry.

Anna doesn't move, but her tears seem to fall little faster.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I think I have to go.

Malcolm's mind is racing.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(realizing)

I just needed to do a couple of things.

Beat.

And I needed to tell you something.

ANNA

Tell me.

Beat.

MALCOLM

You were never second... ever.

Malcolm gazes at his wife. Tears fall from both their eyes.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

You sleep now, Anna. Everything will be different in the morning.

Anna lays still.

ANNA

Goodnight, Malcolm.

MALCOLM

Goodnight, sweetheart.

The room falls into silence. Malcolm sits still across from his wife. He drinks her in with his eyes.

Malcolm leans back in the chair. Slowly closes his eyes. They close shut.

WE ARE TIGHT ON ANNA... WE SEE HER SOFT BREATHS FORMING A TINY CLOUD IN THE COLD AIR...

WITH EACH BREATH, THEY BECOME LESS AND LESS VISIBLE... THE ROOM BECOMING LESS AND LESS COLD.

SOON HER BREATHS AREN'T VISIBLE AT ALL. SHE BREATHES GENTLY, FALLING BACK INTO A PEACEFUL SLEEP.

WE PULL BACK to reveal Anna alone in the living room.

THE WEDDING VIDEO PLAYS ITS LAST SCENES..... MALCOLM IS AT THE MICROPHONE ON THE DANCE

17. What are the couple of things Malcolm wants to do?

FLOOR IN FRONT OF ALL THE GUESTS.HE'S HOLDING A GLASS OF WINE.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(on tape)

...I think I've had too much to drink.

Malcolm smiles as he takes a sip. The guests chuckle as they watch. Beat.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(on tape)

I just have to say, this day today has been one very special day... I wish we all could stay and play.

The crowd erupts in LAUGHTER.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(on tape)

What?

Malcolm looks around at everyone's smiling faces.Beat. Malcolm takes his time. He looks just past the camera.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Anna, I never thought I'd feel the things I'm feeling. I never thought I'd be able to stand up in front of my friends and family and tell them what's inside me...

Today I can...

Malcolm's eyes fill with water.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(softly)

Anna Crowe... I am in love. In love I am.

FADE TO BLACK.

18. For what reason do you think the action is written in capitals?

19. How do we know that this dialogue is from the video tape?

Understanding the Text

1. A screenplay makes use of abbreviations to suggest the place of action. What are the abbreviations used for actions happening outdoors and indoors? How do you know the time of the action from the screenplay?
2. Action in a screenplay follows different formatting. What type of actions do we write in capital letters? There can be pauses during action and dialogues. What difference do you find while marking pauses during an action and pauses during a dialogue?
3. A screenplay is the literary form of a film which uses visuals and sounds. How do we express different tones in dialogues? How are sounds other than dialogues written in a screenplay? What technique is used for a loud sound or a loud dialogue?
4. What do you think is the climax of the scene?
5. Which terms are used to mark the end of different shots?

Writing about the Text

1. Attempt a plot summary of this excerpt.
2. Attempt a screenplay selecting a scene from a story you have read.
3. Collect screenplays written in English and other languages and find out the difference in formatting screenplays.

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Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910)

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known by his pen name Mark Twain, was an American author and humourist. He wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), which is often called 'The Great American Novel'. During his tour of Europe and the Middle East, he wrote a popular collection of travel letters, which were later compiled as *The Innocents Abroad* in 1869. It was on this trip that he met his future brother-in-law, Charles Langdon. Both were passengers aboard the Quaker City on their way to the Holy Land of Jerusalem.

In Memory of Azores

I think the Azores must be very little known in America. Out of our whole ship's company, there was not a solitary individual who knew anything whatever about them. Some of the party, well-read concerning most other lands, had no other information about the Azores than that they were a group of nine or ten small islands far out in the Atlantic, something more than halfway between New York and Gibraltar. That was all. These considerations move me to put in a paragraph of dry facts just here.

1. What information do you get about Azores?

The community is eminently Portuguese—that is to say, it is slow, poor, shiftless, sleepy, and lazy. There is a civil governor, appointed by the King of Portugal, and also a military governor, who can assume supreme control and suspend the civil government at his pleasure. The islands contain a population of about 200,000, almost entirely Portuguese. Everything is staid and settled, for the country was one hundred years old when Columbus discovered America. The principal crop is corn, and they raise it and grind it just as their great-great great-grandfathers did. They plow with a board slightly shod with iron; their trifling little harrows are drawn by men and women; small windmills grind the corn, ten bushels a day, and

2. What is the staple crop of Azores?

there is one assistant superintendent to feed the mill and a general superintendent to stand by and keep him from going to sleep. When the wind changes they hitch on some donkeys and actually turn the whole upper half of the mill around until the sails are in proper position, instead of fixing the concern so that the sails could be moved instead of the mill. Oxen tread the wheat from the ear, after the fashion prevalent in the time of Methuselah. There is not a wheelbarrow in the land—they carry everything on their heads, or on donkeys, or in a wicker-bodied cart, whose wheels are solid blocks of wood and whose axles turn with the wheel. There is not a modern plow in the islands or a threshing machine. All attempts to introduce them have failed. The Portuguese crossed himself and prayed God to shield him from all blasphemous desire to know more than his father did before him. The climate is mild; they never have snow or ice, and I saw no chimneys in the town. The donkeys and the men, women, and children of a family all eat and sleep in the same room, and are unclean, are ravaged by vermin, and are truly happy. The people lie, and cheat the stranger, and are desperately ignorant, and have hardly any reverence for their dead. The latter trait shows how little better they are than the donkeys they eat and sleep with. The only well-dressed Portuguese in the camp are the half a dozen well-to-do families, the priests, and the soldiers of the little garrison.

3. Why don't you find a modern plow or a threshing machine in Azores?

4. The people in Azores are not better than the donkeys they eat and sleep with. Do you agree? Explain.

The wages of a laborer are twenty to twenty-four cents a day, and those of a good mechanic about twice as much. They count it in reis at a thousand to the dollar, and this makes them rich and contented. Fine grapes used to grow in the islands, and an excellent wine was made and exported. But a disease killed all the vines fifteen years ago, and since that time no wine has been made. The islands being wholly of volcanic origin, the soil is necessarily very rich. Nearly every foot of ground is under cultivation, and two or three crops a year of each article

5. What makes the people rich and contented?

are produced, but nothing is exported save a few oranges—chiefly to England. Nobody comes here, and nobody goes away. News is a thing unknown in Fayal. A thirst for it is a passion equally unknown. A Portuguese of average intelligence inquired if our civil war was over. Because, he said, somebody had told him it was—or at least it ran in his mind that somebody had told him something like that! And when a passenger gave an officer of the garrison copies of the Tribune, the Herald, and Times, he was surprised to find later news in them from Lisbon than he had just received by the little monthly steamer. He was told that it came by cable. He said he knew they had tried to lay a cable ten years ago, but it had been in his mind somehow that they hadn't succeeded!

6. 'Nobody comes here, and nobody goes away.' What idea do you get of the life at Azores?

We visited a Jesuit cathedral nearly two hundred years old. In a chapel of the cathedral is an altar with facings of solid silver—at least they call it so, and I think myself it would go a couple of hundred to the ton (to speak after the fashion of the silver miners)—and before it is kept forever burning a small lamp. A devout lady who died, left money and contracted for unlimited masses for the repose of her soul, and also stipulated that this lamp should be kept lighted always, day and night. She did all this before she died, you understand. It is a very small lamp and a very dim one, and it could not work her much damage, I think, if it went out altogether. The great altar of the cathedral and also three or four minor ones are a perfect mass of gilt gimcracks and gingerbread.

7. What picture do you get about the cathedral?

The walls of the chancel are of porcelain, all pictured over with figures of almost life size, very elegantly wrought and dressed in the fanciful costumes of two centuries ago. The design was a history of something or somebody, but none of us were learned enough to read the story. The old father, reposing under a stone close by, dated 1686, might have told us if he could have risen. But he didn't.

8. What does the author hope to learn if the dead old father could have risen?

As we came down through the town we encountered a squad of little donkeys ready saddled for use. The saddles were peculiar, to say the least. They consisted of a sort of saw-buck with a small mattress on it, and this furniture covered about half the donkey. There were no stirrups, but really such supports were not needed—to use such a saddle was the next thing to riding a dinner table—there was ample support clear out to one's knee joints. A pack of ragged Portuguese muleteers crowded around us, offering their beasts at half a dollar an hour—more rascality to the stranger, for the market price is sixteen cents. Half a dozen of us mounted the ungainly affairs and submitted to the indignity of making a ridiculous spectacle of ourselves through the principal streets of a town of 10,000 inhabitants.

9. What is the 'ridiculous spectacle' referred to here?

We started. It was not a trot, a gallop, or a canter, but a stampede, and made up of all possible or conceivable gaits. No spurs were necessary. There was a muleteer to every donkey and a dozen volunteers beside, and they banged the donkeys with their goad sticks, and pricked them with their spikes, and shouted something that sounded like "Sekki-yah!" and kept up a din and a racket that was worse than Bedlam itself. These rascals were all on foot, but no matter, they were always up to time—they can outrun and outlast a donkey. Altogether, ours was a lively and a picturesque procession, and drew crowded audiences to the balconies wherever we went.

10. Why does the author refer to their procession, 'worse than Bedlam'?

Blucher could do nothing at all with his donkey. The beast scampered zigzag across the road and the others ran into him; he scraped Blucher against carts and the corners of houses; the road was fenced in with high stone walls, and the donkey gave him a polishing first on one side and then on the other, but never once took the middle; he finally came to the house he was born in and darted into the parlor, scraping Blucher off at the doorway. After remounting, Blucher said to the muleteer, "Now, that's enough, you know; you go slow hereafter."

11. Do you think Blucher had a comfortable trip? Why?

But the fellow knew no English and did not understand, so he simply said, "Sekki-yah!" and the donkey was off again like a shot. He turned a corner suddenly, and Blucher went over his head. And, to speak truly, every mule stumbled over the two, and the whole cavalcade was piled up in a heap. No harm done. A fall from one of those donkeys is of little more consequence than rolling off a sofa. The donkeys all stood still after the catastrophe and waited for their dismembered saddles to be patched up and put on by the noisy muleteers. Blucher was pretty angry and wanted to swear, but every time he opened his mouth his animal did so also and let off a series of brays that drowned all other sounds.

12. What is the funny incident of donkey riding that the author narrates?

It was fun, scurrying around the breezy hills and through the beautiful canyons. There was that rare thing, novelty, about it; it was a fresh, new, exhilarating sensation, this donkey riding, and worth a hundred worn and threadbare home pleasures. The roads were a wonder, and well they might be. Here was an island with only a handful of people in it 25,000—and yet such fine roads do not exist in the United States outside of Central Park. Everywhere you go, in any direction, you find either a hard, smooth, level thoroughfare, just sprinkled with black lava sand, and bordered with little gutters neatly paved with small smooth pebbles, or compactly paved ones like Broadway. They talk much of the Russ pavement in New York, and call it a new invention—yet here they have been using it in this remote little isle of the sea for two hundred years! Every street in Horta is handsomely paved with the heavy Russ blocks, and the surface is neat and true as a floor—not marred by holes like Broadway. And every road is fenced in by tall, solid lava walls, which will last a thousand years in this land where frost is unknown. They are very thick, and are often plastered and whitewashed and capped with projecting slabs of cut stone. Trees from gardens above hang their swaying tendrils down, and contrast their bright green with the

13. What makes the author comment about the Russ pavement in New York?

whitewash or the black lava of the walls and make them beautiful. The trees and vines stretch across these narrow roadways sometimes and so shut out the sun that you seem to be riding through a tunnel. The pavements, the roads, and the bridges are all government work.

The bridges are of a single span—a single arch—of cut stone, without a support, and paved on top with flags of lava and ornamental pebble work. Everywhere are walls, walls, walls, and all of them tasteful and handsome—and eternally substantial; and everywhere are those marvelous pavements, so neat, so smooth, and so indestructible. And if ever roads and streets and the outsides of houses were perfectly free from any sign or semblance of dirt, or dust, or mud, or uncleanliness of any kind, it is Horta. The lower classes of the people, in their persons and their domiciles, are not clean—but there it stops—the town and the island are miracles of cleanliness.

14. What gives you the impression that you are riding through a tunnel?

We arrived home again finally, after a ten-mile excursion, and the irrepressible muleteers scampered at our heels through the main street, goading the donkeys, shouting the everlasting "Sekki-yah," and singing "John Brown's Body" in ruinous English.

When we were dismounted and it came to settling, the shouting and jawing and swearing and quarreling among the muleteers and with us was nearly deafening. One fellow would demand a dollar an hour for the use of his donkey; another claimed half a dollar for pricking him up, another a quarter for helping in that service, and about fourteen guides presented bills for showing us the way through the town and its environs; and every vagrant of them was more vociferous, and more vehement and more frantic in gesture than his neighbor. We paid one guide and paid for one muleteer to each donkey.

The mountains on some of the islands are very high. We

sailed along the shore of the island of Pico, under a stately green pyramid that rose up with one unbroken sweep from our very feet to an altitude of 7,613 feet, and thrust its summit above the white clouds like an island adrift in a fog!

We got plenty of fresh oranges, lemons, figs, apricots, etc., in these Azores, of course. But I will desist. I am not here to write Patent Office reports.

We are on our way to Gibraltar, and shall reach there five or six days out from the Azores.

15. What gives the island of Pico an impression that it is adrift in a fog?

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blasphemy : behaviour or language that insults or shows a lack of respect for God or religion

canter : a movement of a horse at a speed that is fairly fast but not very fast

gait : manner of walking

garrison : a group of soldiers living in a town or fort to defend it

gimcracks : badly made and of little value

muleteer : a person who controls mules

ravage : destroy

Reis : obsolete Portuguese money

scamper : to walk unsteadily

scurry : to run with quick, short steps

shiftless : inefficient

solitary : alone

staid : boring and old-fashioned

stampede : a sudden rush of a panic-stricken herd

stipulate : to demand or specify

stirrups : the metal rings that hang down on each side of a horse's saddle, used to support the rider's foot

thread bare : something that is old and thin because it has been thoroughly used

thrush : to beat out

trifle : silly

vagrant : a person who has no home or job, especially one who begs

vermin : troublesome animals that threaten human society by spreading diseases or destroying crops

vociferous : expressing your opinions or feelings in a loud and confident manner

wrought : shaped by tools

Understanding the Text

1. Do you think that Mark Twain is being dispassionate and balanced in his assessment of the inhabitants of Azores? Why?
2. A travelogue contains a description of the people of a locality and their culture. What details of the life and culture of the people of Azores can you find in this travelogue?
3. Anecdotes make a travelogue interesting to readers. How does Mark Twain use anecdotes in his travelogue?
4. Descriptions of the scenic beauty of places enrich a travelogue. What details of scenic beauty and places make this travelogue interesting?

Writing about the Text

1. Consider *In Memory of Azores* as a travelogue. How does the author present the details of the people, places, scenic beauty and the culture of Azores in his narration?
2. Mark Twain's works are celebrated for their touch of humour. Find instances of Twain's humour in the text. What other features do you think make him a popular writer. Comment on the literary style of the writer based on your reading of *In Memory of Azores*.
3. Did you notice the difference in the spelling of words like 'laborer', 'quarreling', 'marvelous', 'neighbor', etc.? How can we account for it?

   In British and American English, the same words are often spelt differently. Find such examples from the text.

   There is a remarkable difference in vocabulary too. The word 'pavement' which occurs in the text is a typical American usage for what we call 'footpath'. Likewise, for an American, a 'lift' is an 'elevator', a 'car' is an 'automobile' and 'petrol' is 'gasolene'. Find out more such word pairs referring to a dictionary.

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V Geetha

V Geetha, writer, translator, social historian and activist has written widely, both in Tamil and English on gender, popular culture, caste and politics. The present extract 'Role Play' is taken from her book *Gender* which was published in 2002. Geetha makes an observation that gender is 'both part of the world we live in as well as a way of understanding the world.' She points out that when we allocate specific attributes and roles to male and female sexes, we are 'doing' gender.

Role Play

Masculine and feminine modes of behaviour are relevant in as far as they reflect social expectations. Men and women enact different roles, because society expects them to act in these ways and rewards them if they do, punishes them if they do not.

1. What do you think is the reason, for men and women enacting different roles?

Why do these expectations exist in the first place? Role theory has little to offer by way of a convincing answer. It accepts different roles as a point of departure. It only allows for the possibility that roles and expectations can be transformed, provided one knows how this system works.

What Happens with Children?

How are social expectations expressed and enforced? Through a variety of practices and institutions. A child acquires its earliest knowledge of its destined role in the family. Parents dress their boy and girl children in different ways. They buy them different toys and books. They have different codes of behaviour for boys and girls. Boys must not cry. Boys can run, jump, climb trees, girls are asked to be careful. In countries like India, there are further distinctions: Girls in poor families get to eat less food than boys. They are less likely to be sent to school,

2. How does a child get to know its destined role in the family?

less favoured when it comes to buying new clothes or toys. By the time a child is six or seven years old, it has a fairly coherent sense of its sexual identity and the expectations which are attached to it.

Children accept and abide by these roles for two major reasons: They are scolded, reprimanded or punished if they do not. Or worse, they are shamed if they dare to be different. Girl children, especially learn at a very early age that they will be laughed at, teased, if, for example, they do not wear clothes which they are expected to wear. Often they are teased by their own peers. Boys are likewise mocked at for being 'sissies' should they wish to play with girls.

3. Why do children accept and abide by their destined roles?

Schools reinforce some of these expectations: in Indian schools girls and boys are made to sit separately in the classroom, are not encouraged to talk or play together. This segregation sends out signals to children that boys and girls are inescapably, dangerously different. Primary school textbooks are replete with references to distinctive male and female roles. Boy–girl interactions in school are not spontaneous. They are mediated by notions of shame, modesty and fear, for girls, and aggression and awkwardness for boys. An advertisement for a biscuit, popular in the late 1990s in India expresses this perfectly. A schoolboy tears open a packet of biscuits. A girl associates the sound of tearing with a slit hem in her school uniform and embarrassedly pulls her pinafore down. The boy laughs indulgently and holds out the biscuit packet to her, the girl realizes she has been deliberately fooled, and coyly accepts a biscuit.

4. What role do schools play in reinforcing the social expectations?

As children grow up, they find out that everything around them communicates fairly identical messages about growing up male or female. Many things seem to suggest that it is natural and inevitable for men and women to pursue different paths and seek particular and exclusive destinies. These come from the media or from the things

5. Certain behavioural patterns for boys and girls are reinforced in schools. What are they?

parents and teachers say, the books they read; the behaviour of men and women as they conduct themselves at home, on the streets, at work. These norms of masculinity and femininity, for in effect that is what they are, are not merely descriptive. They also prescribe and demand certain sorts of behaviour from men and women. If such behaviour is not forthcoming, punishment is swift. Think of what happened to a female social worker, Bhanwari Devi of Rajasthan. Unlike most women from her state, she dared to do public work. She also attempted something more. She actively campaigned against the practice of child marriage in her area of work. For being forward and daring, a group of upper caste men raped her: as if to remind her that she was after all a woman and must never presume to act out of character. If she did, this is what would befall her.

6. How does the society prescribe roles for men and women?

Challenging Stereotypes

Given the force of social expectations, and the fact that they are justified on the grounds of biology, can they be challenged at all? Those who insist that it is society which is responsible for assigning particular roles to men and women argue that this is indeed possible. For example, the content of media messages can be changed. Women can be shown in more enabling and empowering roles. Textbooks can be re-written in such a way that we present men and women as being not really all that different. Likewise male and female roles and functions can also be shown to be reversible. Most important, men must be told that norms of masculinity limit and make them quite oppressive. The government can be persuaded to reserve a certain number of posts for women in all its departments, including legislative bodies. All these are of course possible and must be done. But will such measure undermine the belief, the idea, that there exist distinctive male and female roles?

7. How can textbooks and media prevent people from thinking that men and women are different?

We know from history that these roles have been reversed, if need be. There have been men like St. Francis of Assisi, and in our time, Mahatma Gandhi, who exhibited great compassion and care. Gandhi confessed feeling like a woman and a mother on several occasions. Heroic female warriors are legion. Joan of Arc and Lakshmibai of Jhansi come to mind. There are also female guerrilla fighters in many resistance movements. Then again there have been power-renouncing kings who retired to the forest to write, and there have been women who ruled for several decades. Today there is no domain of work or achievement which men can claim to be theirs and theirs only. Whatever was conventionally deemed the province of men has been encroached upon by women. Women may not be accepted in their new roles but this has not stopped them from doing what they can and wish to do.

8. Do you think the roles prescribed by the society have been reversed today? Why?

The fact, however, is that whether from the leisure classes or the working classes, women take on male roles, they do this either because they need to survive or because they do not see their sex as a disqualification and simply go ahead to do things, or at least struggle to do them. It is also significant that men have not taken to female roles and functions, as women have taken to theirs. Women's work does not bring prestige or power. Besides there has really been no bar on men doing women's work– in fact, in those instances where men have taken on characteristically female roles and tasks, such as cooking, they have transformed them into professions which fetch money and prestige.

9. 'Women's work does not bring prestige or power.' Why does the author say so?

We also need to differentiate here between different classes of men. In countries like India, working class men have always helped around the house and obligingly carried and looked after infants. For them, as with their women who work outside the home, such a sharing of work is a crucial aspect of a distinctive culture of survival.

10. What is the attitude of working class men in India?

The problem is while to an extent male and female roles and functions have become interchangeable, they continue to remain female and male roles and functions. A caring father is like a mother. A working class man who takes on female roles is as conscious of roles and identities as any other man. While he may work around the house, he is under no illusion that it is a woman's job. He does it because the women in his house too work. In fact, as working class families improve their lives, women stop going to work. They retire into domesticity.

11. What do you think is the reason for women retiring into domesticity?

At the other end of the spectrum, successful female professionals rarely view their success as legitimately female. Often they imagine they have 'usurped' a man's place and therefore must do justice to the position that is theirs. Many of them consider it a matter of pride that they are seen as being as tough and efficient as men. Consequently, they learn to eschew their so called feminine qualities of compassion and gentleness. Significantly Indira Gandhi was often referred to by the Indian press as 'the only man in the cabinet' and there is no record of her having repudiated such a statement.

12. How do female professionals view their success?

Do Roles Fit?

There is a further problem. Assigned social roles also produce and perpetrate emotions and ways of relating that justify these roles. Being a man also means that one is rational, always in control, unemotional and consistently strong. Being female requires that she is patient, understanding, emotionally expressive and compassionate. Roles and emotions do not always exist in a perfect fit – there are irritable and impatient mothers, timid and self-effacing men who are uneasy in their professions. Yet both men and women strive to be as typical as possible, convinced that these are their natural modes of being, often suppressing or downplaying contrary emotions. The irritable mother ends up feeling

13. How do the social roles that are thrust upon men and women affect their emotions?

enormously guilty for not being sufficiently gentle and patient, while the timid man cultivates a huge sense of inferiority for not being man enough.

One of the Guys

Women who persist in being tough and hard come up against very real limits. They find that they are often unable to find suitable professional positions, though they may be brave and sexually confident, the rules which govern behaviour are such that their courage is often mistaken for brazenness, their honesty for promiscuity. Most important, the world is so arranged that such women find that at best the fact of their sex is ignored and they are treated as 'one of the guys', at worst, they are punished for being different– made fun of, ostracized, physically hurt.

14. Women who persist in being tough are treated worst. How?

A Complete Man

Men who seek to downplay their given, masculine roles and feelings and be like women, more expressive and emotional, find out–like the 'complete man' who is portrayed in a textile advertisement–that they do not really have to stop being male. They continue to occupy positions of power, prestige and authority. They may spend more time with their children, attending to the old, even lead a rich emotional life, but these emotional transformations do not alter the structures they inhabit. Unlike women for whom a life of the emotions went hand in hand with a limited engagement with the world, less pay, lack of mobility, overwork and loneliness, for men who seek to step out of their ordained emotional lives, there are no such limits.

15. A man can attain the stature of a 'complete man'. How?

This does not mean that one cannot afford to be really untypical, or that women somehow are forced to conform, while men get to have the best of both worlds. This is neither true nor indeed possible, given the ingenuity of human behaviour and action. But the point is that social

roles and functions exist as parts of real structures of power, of inclusion and exclusion, approval and disapproval, privilege and punishment. These structures are not external to our lives, but are embedded in the ways we work, live, behave and think. Thus protest and resistance need to be continuous, reflected in the actual choices women and men make, both in relation to how they wish to live and think and what they wish to do, by way of a living.

16. Why does the writer feel that we cannot afford to be really untypical?

brazen: shameless, brave

coherent: adhesive, tenacious

convincing : plausible, valid

coy: shy

embarrassedly: uneasily

encroach: to trespass or advance, beyond usual limits

enforce: to strengthen

eschew: to avoid on moral, practical grounds

guerilla fight: an aggressive warfare

illusion: hallucination

innate: native, inherent

legion: in large numbers

oblige: to force

ostracize: to exclude or keep out

pertinent: to the point, relevant

prestige: self-esteem

pursue: to reveal, display

reprimand: to rebuke or reproach

segregate: to seclude, isolate

self-effacing: reticent, unassertive

stereotype: a conventional custom, fixed or unalterable form

usurp: to take over, seize

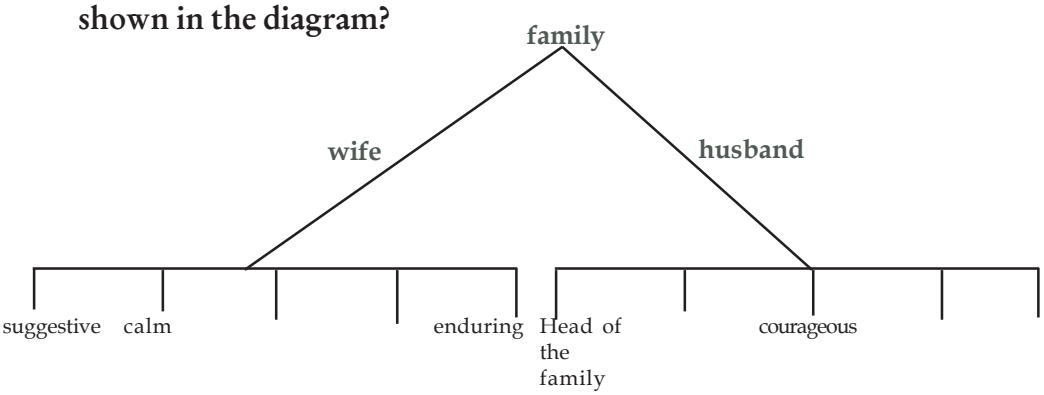
Gender Studies : It is based on the premise that while sex is determined by anatomy, gender is largely independent of it as it is a social construct that is diverse, variable and dependent on historical circumstances.

Feminism : It is an umbrella term that signifies women's socio-political rights, cultural freedom and equality. It may also mean the philosophical notions on which all these are founded.

Understanding the Text

1. Read the text and identify the following.

What are the traditional roles and qualities ascribed to men and women as shown in the diagram?



2. 'An advertisement for a biscuit, popular in the late 1980's in India expresses this perfectly.' What does it express?
3. What happened to the female social worker Bhanwari Devi of Rajasthan?
4. Do you think the word 'encroachment' in the eighth paragraph of the essay is appropriate? If so, state your opinion.
5. 'Successful women like to be equated with men.' Cite an example from the essay.

Writing about the Text

1. Do you think that society is responsible for assigning particular roles for men and women? Justify.
2. What is the role of media in constructing images of women and men?
3. Point out the instances where great men confessed feeling like women and heroic women warriors fought like men.
4. Men playing both the male and female roles get the best of both worlds while women doing the same suffer. Why?
5. Why do girls and boys try to meet to the social expectations?
6. Do you think Indian schools and curricula segregate boys and girls? How?

Read the following text.

I want a Wife (1971)

[Judy Brady's essay became an instant classic when it appeared in 1971 in the premier issue of the feminist magazine Ms. As you read, analyze the definitions of "husband" and "wife" that Brady uses, and consider why this essay became so powerful in the 1970s.]

I belong to that classification of people known as wives. I am a wife, not altogether incidentally, I am a mother.

Not too long ago a male friend of mine appeared on the scene fresh from a recent divorce. He had one child, who is, of course, with his ex-wife. He is looking for another wife. As I thought about him while I was ironing one evening, it suddenly occurred to me that I, too, would like to have a wife. Why do I want a wife?

I would like to go back to school so that I can become economically independent, support myself, and, if need be, support those dependent upon me. I want a wife who will work and send me to school. And while I am going to school I want a wife to take care of my children. I want a wife to keep track of the children's doctor and dentist appointments. And to keep track of mine, too. I want a wife to make sure my children eat properly and are kept clean. I want a wife who is a good nurturant attendant to my children, who arrange for their schooling, makes sure that they have an adequate social life with their peers, takes them to the park, the zoo, etc. I want a wife who takes care of the children when they are sick, a wife who arranges to be around when the children need special care, because, of course, I cannot miss classes at school. My wife must arrange to lose time at work and not lose the job. It may mean a small cut in my wife's income from time to time, but I guess I can tolerate that. Needless to say, my wife will arrange and pay for the care of the children while my wife is working.

I want a wife who will take care of my physical needs. I want a wife who will keep my house clean, a wife who will pick my children up, a wife who will keep my clothes clean, ironed, mended, replaced when need be, and who will see to it that my personal things are kept in their proper place so that I can find what I need the minute I need it. I want a wife who cooks the meals, a wife who is a good cook. I want a wife who will plan the menus, do the necessary grocery shopping, prepare the meals, serve them pleasantly, and then do the cleaning up while I do my studying. I want a wife who will care for

me when I am sick and sympathize with my pain and loss of time from school. I want a wife to go along when our family takes a vacation so that someone can continue to care for me and my children when I need a rest and change of scene.

I want a wife who will not bother me with rambling complaints about a wife's duties. But I want a wife who will listen to me when I feel the need to explain a rather difficult point I have come across in my course of studies. And I want a wife who will type my papers for me when I have written them.

I want a wife who will take care of the details of my social life. When my wife and I are invited out by my friends, I meet people at school that I like and want to entertain, I want a wife who will have the house clean, will prepare a special meal, serve it to me and my friends, and not interrupt when I talk about things that interest me and my friends. I want a wife who will have arranged that the children are fed and ready for bed before my guests arrive so that the children do not bother us. I want a wife who takes care of the needs of my guests so that they feel comfortable, who makes sure that they have an ash-tray, that they are passed the hors d'oeuvres, that they are offered a second helping of the food, that their wine glasses are replenished when necessary, that their coffee is served to them as they like it. And I want a wife who knows that sometimes I need a night out by myself.

If, by chance, I find another person more suitable as a wife than the wife I already have, I want the liberty to replace my present wife with another one. Naturally, I will expect a fresh new life; my wife will take the children and be solely responsible for them so that I am left free.

When I am through with school and have a job, I want my wife to quit working and remain at home so that my wife can more fully and completely take care of a wife's duties.

My God, who wouldn't want a wife?

Prepare a short note on the problems faced by women in the light of your reading of *Role Play* and *I Want a Wife*.

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Stephen Butler Leacock (1869 -1944)

Stephen Leacock was born in England but later his family emigrated to Canada in 1876 and settled in Ontario. He graduated from University College in 1891with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He is remembered for his best-selling book *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912). His famous works include *Further Foolishness* and *Essays and Literary Studies* (1916) *The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice* (1920) *My Discovery of England* (1922) *Economic Prosperity in the British Empire* (1930) *Humour: Its Theory and Technique* (1935).

Are the Rich Happy?

Let me admit at the outset that I write this essay without adequate material. I have never known, I have never seen, any rich people. Very often I have thought that I had found them. But it turned out that it was not so. They were not rich at all. They were quite poor. They were hard up. They were pushed for money. They didn't know where to turn for ten thousand dollars.

1. Why does the author feel that he is attempting to write the essay without adequate material?

In all the cases that I have examined this same error has crept in. I had often imagined, from the fact of people keeping fifteen servants, that they were rich. I had supposed that because a woman rode down town in a limousine to buy a fifty-dollar hat, she must be well-to-do. Not at all. All these people turn out on examination to be not rich. They are cramped. They say it themselves. Pinched, I think is the word they use. When I see a glittering group of eight people in a stage box at the opera, I know that they are all pinched. The fact that they ride home in a limousine has nothing to do with it.

2. What does the author infer about the seemingly rich people?

A friend of mine who has ten thousand dollars a year told me the other day with a sigh that he found it quite impossible to keep up with the rich. On his income he

couldn't do it. A family that I know who have twenty thousand a year have told me the same thing. They can't keep up with the rich. There is no use in trying. A man that I respect very much who has an income of fifty thousand dollars a year from his law practice has told me with the greatest frankness that he finds it absolutely impossible to keep up with the rich. He says it is better to face the brutal fact of being poor. He says he can only give me a plain meal, what he calls a home dinner—it takes three men and two women to serve it—and he begs me to put up with it.

3. What do the acquaintances of the author admit frankly?

On the other hand there are, and there must be, rich people somewhere. I run across traces of them all the time. The janitor in the building where I work has told me that he has a rich cousin in England who is in the South Western Railway and gets ten pounds a week. He says the railway wouldn't know what to do without him. In the same way the lady who washes at my house has a rich uncle. He lives in Winnipeg and owns his own house, clear, and has two girls at the high school.

But these are only reported cases of richness. I cannot vouch for them myself.

4. Which are the reported cases of richness mentioned by the author?

When I speak therefore of rich people and discuss whether they are happy, it is understood that I am merely drawing my conclusions from the people that I see and know.

My judgment is that the rich undergo cruel trials and bitter tragedies of which the poor know nothing.

5. What is the author's judgment about the rich?

In the first place I find that the rich suffer perpetually from money troubles. The poor sit snugly at home while sterling exchange falls ten points in a day. Do they care? Not a bit. An adverse balance of trade washes over the nation like a flood. Who have to mop it up? The rich. Call money rushes up to a hundred per cent, and the poor can still sit and laugh at a ten cent moving picture show and forget it.

6. How do the rich people suffer from troubles caused by money? How different are the poor?

But the rich are troubled by money all the time.

I know a man, for example—his name is Spugg—whose private bank account was overdrawn last month twenty thousand dollars. He told me so at dinner at his club, with apologies for feeling out of sorts. He said it was bothering him. He said he thought it rather unfair of his bank to have called his attention to it. I could sympathise, in a sort of way, with his feelings. My own account was overdrawn twenty cents at the time. I knew that if the bank began calling in overdrafts it might be my turn next. Spugg said he supposed he'd have to telephone his secretary in the morning to sell some bonds and cover it. It seemed an awful thing to have to do. Poor people are never driven to this sort of thing. I have known cases of their having to sell a little furniture, perhaps, but imagine having to sell the very bonds out of one's desk. There's a bitterness about it that the poor can never know.

7. What was bothering Mr. Spugg?

With this same man, Mr. Spugg, I have often talked of the problem of wealth. He is a self-made man and he has told me again and again that the wealth he has accumulated is a mere burden to him. He says that he was much happier when he had only the plain, simple things of life. Often as I sit at dinner with him over a meal of nine courses, he tells me how much he would prefer a plain bit of boiled pork, with a little mashed turnip. He says that if he had his way he would make his dinner out of a couple of sausages, fried with a bit of bread. I forget what it is that stands in his way. I have seen Spugg put aside his glass of champagne—or his glass after he had drunk his champagne— with an expression of something like contempt. He says that he remembers a running creek at the back of his father's farm where he used to lie at full length upon the grass and drink his fill. Champagne, he says, never tasted like that. I have suggested that he should lie on his stomach on the floor of the club and drink a saucerful of soda water. But he won't.

8. What is 'the problem of wealth' narrated by Mr. Spugg?

9. Why did Mr. Spugg put aside his glass of champagne with an expression of contempt?

I know well that my friend Spugg would be glad to be rid of his wealth altogether, if such a thing were possible. Till I understood about these things, I always imagined that wealth could be given away. It appears that it cannot. It is a burden that one must carry. Wealth, if one has enough of it, becomes a form of social service. One regards it as a means of doing good to the world, of helping to brighten the lives of others, in a word, a solemn trust. Spugg has often talked with me so long and so late on this topic—the duty of brightening the lives of others—that the waiter who held blue flames for his cigarettes fell asleep against a door post, and the chauffeur outside froze to the seat of his motor.

10. What alternative does the author suggest for the disgust that Mr. Spugg feels for champagne?

Spugg's wealth, I say, he regards as a solemn trust. I have often asked him why he didn't give it, for example, to a college. But he tells me that unfortunately he is not a college man. I have called his attention to the need of further pensions for college professors; after all that Mr. Carnegie and others have done, there are still thousands and thousands of old professors of thirty-five and even forty, working away day after day and getting nothing but what they earn themselves, and with no provision beyond the age of eighty-five. But Mr. Spugg says that these men are the nation's heroes. Their work is its own reward.

11. The author describes wealth as a burden. Why?

12. Why was Mr. Spugg not ready to give away his wealth?

But after all, Mr. Spugg's troubles—for he is a single man with no ties—are in a sense selfish. It is perhaps in the homes—or more properly in the residences—of the rich that the great silent tragedies are being enacted every day—tragedies of which the fortunate poor know and can know nothing.

13. The author says that the poor are 'fortunate'. Why does he say so?

I saw such a case only a few nights ago at the house of the Ashcroft-Fowlers, where I was dining. As we went in to dinner, Mrs. Ashcroft-Fowler said in a quiet aside to her husband, "Has Meadows spoken?" He shook his head rather gloomily and answered, "No, he has said nothing

yet.' I saw them exchange a glance of quiet sympathy and mutual help, like people in trouble, who love one another. They were old friends and my heart beat for them. All through the dinner as Meadows–he was their butler—poured out the wine with each course, I could feel that some great trouble was impending over my friends.

14. Though rich, the Ashcroft-Fowlers were in trouble. Why?

After Mrs. Ashcroft–Fowler had risen and left us, and we were alone over our port wine, I drew my chair near to Fowler's and I said, "My dear Fowler, I'm an old friend and you'll excuse me if I seem to be taking a liberty. But I can see that you and your wife are in trouble."

"Yes," he said very sadly and quietly, "we are."

"Excuse me," I said. "Tell me—for it makes a thing easier if one talks about it—is it anything about Meadows?"

"Yes," he said. "It is about Meadows."

There was silence for a moment, but I knew already what Fowler was going to say. I could feel it coming.

"Meadows," he said presently, constraining himself to speak with as little emotion as possible, "is leaving us."

"Poor old chap!" I said, taking his hand.

15. What made Meadows leave Ashcroft-Fowlers?

"It's hard, isn't it?" he said. "Franklin left last winter—no fault of ours; we did everything we could—and now Meadows." There was almost a sob in his voice.

"He hasn't spoken definitely as yet," Fowler went on, "but we know there's hardly any chance of his staying."

"Does he give any reason?" I asked.

"Nothing specific," said Fowler. "It's just a sheer case of incompatibility. Meadows doesn't like us."

He put his hand over his face and was silent.

I left very quietly a little later, without going up to the drawing room. A few days afterwards I heard that Meadows had gone. The Ashcroft-Fowlers, I am told, are giving up in despair. They are going to take a little suite of ten rooms and four baths in the Grand Palaver Hotel, and rough it there for the winter.

16. Why does the author say that the rich people who get ruined are fortunate?

Yet one must not draw a picture of the rich in colours altogether gloomy. There are cases among them of genuine, light-hearted happiness.

I have observed that this is especially the case among those of the rich who have the good fortune to get ruined, absolutely and completely ruined. They may do this on the Stock Exchange or in a dozen other ways. The business side of getting ruined is not difficult. Once the rich are ruined, they are—as far as my observation goes—all right. They can then have anything they want.

I saw this point illustrated again just recently. I was walking with a friend of mine and a motor passed bearing a neatly dressed young man, chatting gaily with a pretty woman. My friend raised his hat and gave it a jaunty and cheery swing in the air as if to wave goodwill and happiness.

"Poor old Edward Overjoy!" he said, as the motor moved out of sight.

17. Why can't Edward Overjoy sell his motor?

"What's wrong with him?" I asked.

"Hadn't you heard?" said my friend. "He's ruined—absolutely cleaned out—not a cent left."

"Dear me!" I said. "That's awfully hard. I suppose he'll have to sell that beautiful motor?"

My friend shook his head. "Oh, no," he said. "He'll hardly do that. I don't think his wife would care to sell that."

My friend was right. The Overjoys have not sold their motor. Neither have they sold their magnificent sandstone residence. They are too much attached to it, I believe, to sell it. Some people thought they would have given up

their box at the opera. But it appears not. They are too musical to care to do that. Meantime it is a matter of general notoriety that the Overjoys are absolutely ruined; in fact, they haven't a single cent. You could buy Overjoy—so I am informed—for ten dollars.

But I observe that he still wears a seal-lined coat worth at least five hundred.

17. Even though Mr. Overjoy is ruined, he wears an expensive coat. Why?

brutal : violent and cruel

chauffeur : a person whose job is to drive a car, especially a luxury vehicle

creek : a stream, a narrow channel

incompatible : in conflict with, so different in nature

janitor : caretaker

limousine : a large expensive comfortable car

outset : beginning

perpetual : eternal

snugly : comfortably sheltered

turnip : a round white, or white and purple, root vegetable

Understanding the Text

1. The essay opens with the statement, 'Let me admit at the outset that I write this essay without adequate material.' Do you think that the writer should collect enough material before attempting to write an essay? Why?
2. What is the theme of the essay? Is the theme relevant in the modern society? Substantiate with suitable examples from the essay.
3. Mention some of the great silent tragedies enacted in the life of the rich? Do you agree with the author's opinion? Comment.

Writing about the Text

1. Leacock's essay focuses on the triviality of the twentieth century Canadian society. Attempt an article on the artificialities of our society.
2. 'English Snobbery' by Aldous Huxley is an essay with a similar theme. Read the essay and compare it with *Are the Rich Happy* and prepare a write-up.

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The Story of English - An Overview

The study of the evolution of English is interesting to us not only because it plays an important role in our educational system and in our national life but also because it is the most widely spoken language in the world. Even though English was introduced in India by the British as a handy tool to smoothen their colonial administration, it ultimately proved a useful aid in the growth of nationalism, an instrument of political awakening which culminated in our liberation from the British yoke.

1. Why did the British introduce English in India?

English has been for us, our window to the world right from the beginning of the modern era. Our national leaders drew inspiration from the writings of great thinkers like Ruskin, Carlyle, Abraham Lincoln and others who wrote in English. English served as a great unifying force in our struggle for independence. It was through this language that the leaders across our vast country could communicate and chalk out their common plan of action.

2. How did English help the growth of nationalism in India?

English has enriched Indian languages every now and then. All Indian languages have freely borrowed words from English and have coined words and phrases modelled on English thus enriching their vocabulary. The most noteworthy contribution of English languages is

3. Why is English important in the Indian context?

however, in the field of scientific advancement and learning. English has been serving as a national link language, an international link language and most importantly as a library language. Even now, English acts as a link language for the purpose of inter-state correspondence and as the language of trade and commerce between different parts of the country.

English can rightly be regarded as the key to a treasure-house of knowledge. Everything happening in the world of science and technology, arts, music and humanities gets documented in English. Hence to keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in these fields, our youth will have to acquire a minimum functional knowledge in English which is justified by the fact that more than sixty percent of the world's technical journals, newspapers and periodicals are published in English.

4. How does English language help the youth?

Soon after gaining Independence, the role of English in our education as well as in our national life came to be scrutinised seriously. It became apparent that English could not continue to occupy the privileged position it had been occupying under the British. There ensued a controversy over the status of English in the changed scenario and its reverberations are not yet over. However, the importance of English as a library language can best be summed up in the words of the Radhakrishna Commission: 'English is a language which is rich in literature- humanistic, scientific and technical. If under sentimental urges we should give up English, we would cut ourselves from the living stream of ever-growing knowledge.'

5. According to Radhakrishna Commision, what will happen if we give up English?

As we have examined the scope of English language in India, let us now have a quick glance about the evolution of English language. The first inhabitants of the island of Britain – the birth place of English – were the Celts. Languages like Welsh, Scots and Irish grew out of old Celtic languages that the Celts spoke. It is interesting to

6. Who were the first inhabitants of Britain and what was the language spoken by them?

note that although the Celts were the first people to inhabit Britain, English is not derived from their language.

The Celts were conquered by the Romans under Julius Caesar in 55 BC. The Romans wanted to exploit the land rich in minerals. The Celts were either killed or enslaved and the few surviving ones lived in the remote parts of the land. The Romans established their customs and their language, Latin, in the following five hundred years that they ruled but they did not succeed in making the native population learn Latin.

7. What happened to the Celts under the Roman rule?

The Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes who were Germanic tribes from the nearby regions now known as France and Germany invaded Britain. These people known as the Anglo Saxons fought against the Celts and successfully defeated them. The Anglo Saxons were a kind of agricultural people who farmed the land that they had taken from the Celts. They domesticated the population of the island and influenced their way of life considerably. Their language was closely connected with their life style and it is no wonder that their everyday words like: 'earth', 'plough', 'field', 'work', 'wood', 'dog', 'ox', 'sheep' and 'shepherd' later became part of the English language. Some of the words which form the basic building blocks of English sentences such as: 'the', 'is', 'you', 'here' and 'there' are also taken from the language of the Anglo Saxons. In short, it can be estimated that more than 80 percent of the words that we use in everyday speech came from the Anglo Saxon language.

8. How was English language enriched by the Anglo-Saxons?

By about 600 AD England was christianised and the conversion had far reaching linguistic consequences. The missionaries brought Greek and Latin words like 'angel', 'disciple', 'apostle', 'litany', 'psalm' and 'mass' with them which have become part of the English language today. Most of the ecclesiastical words in English are of Latin origin.

9. How did christianising of England influence the growth of English language?

The next invasion took place almost 200 years later in AD. 793. The Vikings, known as Danes who came from Denmark invaded the island and nearly defeated the Anglo Saxons. It was King Alfred the Great who defeated them in a famous battle and thus saved English language which might have otherwise disappeared. Over the next 200 years the Danes began to speak the language of the people they have conquered and the words of Danish origin like: 'get', 'hit', 'root', 'low' etc. have become part of English. Then came the Norman Conquest of 1066 A.D. The Normans who won the famous Battle of Hastings brought with them French which was to become the language of the Royal court. The French set the fashion in the later Middle ages, as they do even now. However, Latin was used in the law courts and the peasants and common people continued to speak English. It is interesting to note that the names of several animals while they are alive are in English [ox, cow, calf, sheep, swine, boar, deer], while they appear as delicacies on the table are with French names [beef, veal, mutton, pork, bacon, brawn, venison]. The masters generally left the care of the living animals to the lower classes,while they did not leave much of the meat to be eaten by them. The humbler breakfast is an English word whereas the more sumptuous meals, dinner and supper as well as feasts generally are French words. On the whole, words related to the best things in life: 'joy', 'pleasure', 'delight', 'ease' and 'comfort' were of French origin. In English, many words related to arts and sports can be traced back to French.

10. What is the significance of the Norman Conquest of 1066 AD?

11. Why did the animals have English names while their meat had French names?

All these clearly points to the fact that English language has always welcomed intrusions of some other languages. However, the invention of printing press by William Caxton in 1476, the English translation of The Holy Bible by Tyndale and Coverdale in 1526 and the Authorized Version of the Bible brought out by James I in 1611 were instrumental in shaping the Standard English language. Moreover the contribution of writers such as Geoffrey

12. How did the invention of the printing press help the evolution of English?

Chaucer, William Shakespeare, John Milton, Dr Johnson and many others have enriched English language. Besides the American–Indian languages, Australian aboriginal languages and the languages of Africa and India also contributed a great deal of culture specific words to English language.

Along with these changes, in the field of syntax and grammar too there has been a constant tendency towards simplification. Inflexions have disappeared, verb conjugations have been levelled, and dialects have been replaced by many regional varieties of English. In course of time, many words have also undergone a change of meaning.

13. What do you think were the most influential aspects in fixing the standards for English language?

Thus the English language – which had an obscure origin – is now widely accepted as a global language and is the *lingua franca* in most of the larger and highly developed countries. English language, as we know it today is in a constant state of flux. This is partly due to the historical peculiarities and foreign influences and partly due to the influence of science and technology. Thousands of new words make their way into the language everyday. Vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and even grammatical rules are all moving towards greater flexibility and simplicity. Thus English is far ahead of any competitor, for no other language is attaining as fast a growth as English language does.

14. Name some known writers who have enriched the English language.

15. What are the factors that helped English in becoming what it is today?

Understanding the Text

1. English has become an indispensable language in India. Comment.
2. Why is English called the key to the treasure-house of knowledge?
3. How did the Norman conquest influence the growth of English?
4. English language has always welcomed intrusions from other languages. Elucidate.

Writing about the Text

1. Write notes on the following.
    a. The introduction of English in India.
    b. The influence of English on Indian languages.
    c. English as a key to knowledge.
    d. The status of English in post-independent India.
2. Based on the above notes prepare an article on the role of English in India to be published in your school magazine.
3. Write an essay on the evolution of English into a global language.

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Know your Text

- Compare different forms of essays and prepare a write-up on their stylistic features.
- Write an essay on a subject of your choice and publish in magazines or blogs.
- Prepare a travelogue of a journey that you have undertaken.

Let's conclude

We have seen how non-fiction acts as a mirror in which we can find the reflection of life as it is. It amuses but often jolts us into serious thinking about the everyday concerns of life.

Section - 4
Drama

Preface

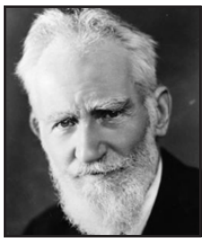
Modern drama flourished from realistic and naturalistic traditions. The theatre of Europe was deeply influenced by the two World Wars. The technical innovations of the European theatre crept into the British drama only in the latter half of the twentieth century. Till then the British theatre had been preoccupied with addressing many of the contemporary social issues like class distinctions, morality, family and marriage, the status of women etc. in a realistic manner. This type of drama which drew its inspiration from social realism was perfected by G B Shaw.

Learning Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

- understand major trends in modern drama.
- demonstrate an awareness of the Victorian society.
- form an idea about the structure and form of a five-act play.
- develop a positive attitude towards social issues like female emancipation and class distinctions.
- compare different characters and their character traits.
- critically examine how language functions in different contexts.
- find the elements of social criticism and satire in a literary work.
- exhibit an insight into the changing nature of social values.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)



G B Shaw was a leading figure in the twentieth century theatre. He was a free thinker, a defender of women's rights and an advocate of social equality. He began his literary career by writing musical reviews and criticism without much success. A man of many causes, Shaw joined the Fabian Society in 1884 and stood for some radical social changes. He addressed the prevailing social problems and moral issues with a vein of comedy making these star themes more palpable. He was a prolific writer who wrote more than sixty plays, essays, novels, short stories and innumerable pieces of journalistic writing. His famous plays include *The Apple Cart, The Devil's Disciple, The Doctor's Dilemma* and *Saint Joan*. The year 1912 saw the publication of what might be Shaw's most famous play *Pygmalion* which shot into fame when it was adapted first into a Broadway musical (1856) and later on the silver screen as *My Fair Lady* (1964). Shaw won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925.

Pygmalion

[Covent Garden at 11.15 p.m. Torrents of heavy summer rain. Cab whistles blowing frantically in all directions. Pedestrians running for shelter into the market and under the portico of St. Paul's Church, where there are already several people, among them a lady and her daughter in evening dress. They are all peering out gloomily at the rain, except one man with his back turned to the rest, who seems wholly preoccupied with a notebook in which he is writing busily.

The church clock strikes the first quarter.]

The Daughter [*in the space between the central pillars, close to the one on her left*]: I'm getting chilled to the bone. What can Freddy be doing all this time? He's been gone twenty minutes.

The Mother [*on her daughter's right*]: Not so long. But he ought to have got us a cab by this time.

A Bystander [*on the lady's right*]: He won't get no cab not until half-past eleven, missus, when they come back after dropping their theatre fares.

The Mother: But we must have a cab.

frantically: desperately

peer: look with difficulty

We can't stand here until half-past eleven. It's too bad.

The Bystander: Well, it ain't my fault, missus.

The Daughter: If Freddy had a bit of gumption, he would have got one at the theatre door.

The Mother: What could he have done, poor boy?

The Daughter: Other people got cabs. Why couldn't he?

[*Freddy rushes in out of the rain from the Southampton Street side, and comes between them closing a dripping umbrella. He is a young man of twenty, in evening dress, very wet around the ankles.*]

The Daughter: Well, haven't you got a cab?

Freddy: There's not one to be had for love or money.

The Mother: Oh, Freddy, there must be one. You can't have tried.

The Daughter: It's too tiresome. Do you expect us to go and get one ourselves?

The Mother: You really are very helpless, Freddy. Go again; and don't come back until you have found a cab.

Freddy: Oh, very well. I'll go, I'll go.

[*He opens his umbrella and dashes off Strandwards, but comes into collision with a flower girl, who is hurrying in for shelter, knocking her basket out of her hands. A blinding flash of lightning, followed instantly by a rattling peal of thunder, orchestrates the incident.*]

The Flower Girl: Nah then, Freddy: look wh' y' gowin, deah.

Freddy : Sorry.

[*He rushes off.*]

The Flower Girl [*picking up her scattered flowers and replacing them in the basket*]: There's menners f' yer! Te-oo banches o voylets trod into the mad. [*She sits down on the plinth of the column, sorting her flowers, on the lady's right. She is not at all an attractive person. She is perhaps eighteen, perhaps twenty, hardly older. She wears a little sailor hat of black straw that has long been exposed to the dust and soot of London and has seldom if ever, been brushed. Her hair needs washing rather badly, its mousy colour can hardly be natural. She wears a shoddy black coat that reaches nearly to her knees and is shaped to her waist. She has a brown skirt with a coarse apron. Her boots are much the worse for wear. She is no doubt as clean as she can afford to be; but compared to the ladies she is very dirty. Her features are no worse than theirs; but their condition leaves something to be desired; and she needs the services of a dentist.*]

missus: lady gumption: cleverness plinth: footstall shoddy: cheap

The Mother: How do you know that my son's name is Freddy, pray?

The Flower Girl: Ow, eez ye-ooa san, is e? Wal, fewd dan y' de-ooty bawmz a mather should, eed now bettern to spawl a pore gel's flahrzn than ran awy atbaht pyin. Will yeoo py me f 'them?

[*Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as unintelligible outside London.*]

The Daughter: Do nothing of the sort, mother. The idea!

The Mother: Please allow me, Clara. Have you any pennies?

The Daughter: No. I've nothing smaller than sixpence.

The Flower Girl [*hopefully*]: I can give you change for a tanner, kind lady.

The Mother [*to Clara*]: Give it to me. *[Clara parts reluctantly.]* Now *[to the girl]* This is for your flowers.

The Flower Girl: Thank you kindly, lady.

The Mother: Now tell me how you know that young gentleman's name.

The Flower Girl: I didn't.

The Mother: I heard you call him by it. Don't try to deceive me.

The Flower Girl [*protesting*]: Who's trying to deceive you? I called him Freddy or Charlie same as you might yourself if you was talking to a stranger and wished to be pleasant.

[*She sits down beside her basket.*]

The Daughter. Sixpence thrown away! Really, mamma, you might have spared Freddy that.

[*She retreats in disgust behind the pillar.*]

[*An elderly gentleman of the amiable military type rushes into shelter, and closes a dripping umbrella. He is in the same plight as Freddy, very wet about the ankles. He is in evening dress, with a light overcoat. He takes the place left vacant by the daughter's retirement.*]

The Flower Girl [*taking advantage of the military gentleman's proximity to establish friendly relations with him.*]: If it's worse it's a sign it's nearly over. So cheer up, Captain; and buy a flower off a poor girl.

The Gentleman: I'm sorry, I haven't any change.

The Flower Girl: I can give you change, Captain,

The Gentleman: For a sovereign? I've nothing less.

The Flower Girl: Garn! Oh do buy a flower off me, Captain. I can change half-a-crown. Take this for tuppence.

The Gentleman: Now don't be troublesome, there's a good girl.

tanner: six pence disgust: aversion amiable: friendly proximity: closeness

[*Trying his pockets*] I really haven't any change – Stop, here's three hapence, if that's any use to you.

[*He retreats to the other pillar.*]

The Flower Girl [*disappointed, but thinking three halfpence better than nothing*]: Thank you, sir.

The Bystander [*to the girl*]: You be careful, give him a flower for it. There's a bloke here behind taking down every blessed word you're saying.

[*All turn to the man who is taking notes.*]

The Flower Girl [*springing up terrified*]: I ain't done nothing wrong by speaking to the gentleman. I've a right to sell flowers if I keep off the kerb. [*Hysterically*] I'm a respectable girl, so help me, I never spoke to him except to ask him to buy a flower off me.

[*General hubbub, mostly sympathetic to the flower girl but deprecating her excessive sensibility. What's the row? What she do? Where is he? A tec taking her down. What! him? Yes, him over there. Took money off the gentleman, etc. The flower girl, distraught and mobbed, breaks through them to the gentleman, crying mildly.*]

Oh, sir, don't let him charge me. You dunno what it means to me. They'll take away my character and drive me on the streets for speaking to gentlemen. They—

The Note Taker [*coming forward on her right, the rest crowding after him*]: There, there, there, there! Who's hurting you, you silly girl? What do you take me for?

The Bystander: It's all right, he's a gentleman, look at his boots. [*Explaining to the Note Taker*] She thought you was a copper's nark, sir.

The Note Taker [*with quick interest*]: What's a copper's nark?

The Bystander [*inept at definition*]: It's a—well, it's a copper's nark, as you might say. What else would you call it? A sort of informer.

The Flower Girl [*still hysterical*]: I take my Bible oath I never said a word—

The Note Taker *[overbearing but good-humoured]*: Oh, shut up, shut up. Do I look like a policeman?

The Flower Girl [*far from reassured*]: Then what did you take down my words for? How do I know whether you took me down right? You just show me what you've wrote about me.

[*The Note Taker opens his book and holds it steadily under her nose, though the pressure of the mob trying to read it over his shoulders would upset a weaker man.*]

What's that? That ain't proper writing. I can't read that.

deprecating: belittling tupence: two pence distraught: distract

The Note Taker: I can. *[Reads, reproducing her pronunciation exactly]* "Cheer ap, Keptin; n' haw ya flahr orf a pore gel."

The Flower Girl [*much distressed*]: It's because I called him Captain. I meant no harm. [*To the gentleman*] Oh, sir, don't let him lay a charge agen me for a word like that. You—

The Gentleman: Charge! I make no charge. [*To the Note Taker*] Really, sir, if you are a detective, you need not begin protecting me against molestation by young women until I ask you. Anybody could see that the girl meant no harm.

The Bystanders [*demonstrating against police espionage: Course they could. What business is it of yours? You mind your own affairs. He wants promotion, he does. Taking down people's words! Girl never said a word to him. What harm if she did? Nice thing a girl can't shelter from the rain without being insulted, etc.*]

[*She is conducted by the more sympathetic demonstrators back to her plinth, where she resumes her seat and struggles with her emotion.*]

The Note Taker [*To the girl*]: How do you come to be up so far east? You were born in Lisson Grove.

The Flower Girl [*appalled*]: Oh, what harm is there in my leaving Lisson Grove? It wasn't fit for a pig to live in; and I had to pay four-and-six a week. [*In tears*] Oh, boo—hoo—oo—

The Note Taker: Live where you like; but stop that noise.

The Flower Girl [*subsiding into a brooding melancholy over her basket, and talking very low-spiritedly to herself*]: I'm a good girl, I am.

The Sarcastic Bystander [*not attending to her*]: Do you know where *I* come from?

The Note Taker [*promptly*]: Hoxton. [*Titterings. Popular interest in the note taker's performance increases.*]

The Sarcastic One [*amazed*]: Well, who said I didn't? Bly me! You know everything, you do.

The Flower Girl [*still nursing her sense of injury*]: Ain't no call to meddle with me, he ain't.

The Bystander [*to her*]: Of course he ain't. Don't you stand it from him. [*To the Note Taker*] See here: what call have you to know about people what never offered to meddle with you? Where's your warrant?

Several Bystanders [*encouraged by this seeming point of law*]: Yes: where's your warrant?

The Flower Girl: Let him say what he likes. I don't want to have no truck with him.

The Sarcastic Bystander: Yes: tell him where he come from if you want to go fortune-telling.

espionage: spying meddle: interfere

The Note Taker: Cheltenham, Harrow, Cambridge, and India.

The Gentleman: Quite right.

[*Great laughter. Reaction in the note taker's favour. Exclamations of He knows all about it. Told him proper. Hear him tell where he come from? etc.*].

May I ask, sir, do you do this for your living at a music hall?

The Note Taker: I've thought of that. Perhaps I shall some day.

[*The rain has stopped; and the persons on the outside of the crowd begin to drop off.*]

The Flower Girl [*resenting the reaction*]: He's no gentleman, he ain't, to interfere with a poor girl.

The Daughter [*out of patience, pushing her way rudely to the front and displacing the gentleman, who politely retires to the other side of the pillar*]: What on earth is Freddy doing? I shall get pneumonia if I stay in this draught.

The Note Taker [*to himself, hastily making a note of her pronunciation of "monia"*]: Earlscourt.

The Daughter [*violently*]: Will you please keep your impertinent remarks to yourself?

The Note Taker: Did I say that out loud? I didn't mean to. I beg your pardon. Your mother's Epsom, unmistakably.

The Mother [*advancing between her daughter and the Note Taker*]: How very curious! I was brought up in Largelady Park, near Epsom.

The Note Taker [*uproariously amused*]: Ha! ha! What a devil of a name! Excuse me. [*To the daughter*] You want a cab, do you?

The Daughter: Don't dare speak to me.

The Mother: Oh, please, please Clara.

[*Her daughter repudiates her with an angry shrug and retires haughtily.*]

We should be so grateful to you, sir, if you found us a cab. [*The Note Taker produces a whistle.*] Oh, thank you.

[*She joins her daughter. The Note Taker blows a piercing blast.*]

The Sarcastic Bystander: I knowed he was a plain-clothes copper.

The Bystander: That ain't a police whistle: that's a sporting whistle.

The Flower Girl [*still preoccupied with her wounded feelings*]: He's no right to take away my character. My character is the same to me as any lady's.

The Note Taker: I don't know whether you've noticed it; but the rain stopped about two minutes ago.

The Bystander: So it has. Why didn't you say so before? We are losing our time listening to your silliness.

impertinent: discourteous repudiate: refuse to obey

[*He walks off towards the Strand.*]

The Mother: It's quite fine now, Clara. We can walk to a motor bus. Come.

[*She gathers her skirts above her ankles and hurries off towards the Strand.*]

The Daughter: But the cab—[*her mother is out of hearing*]. Oh, how tiresome!

[*She follows angrily.All the rest have gone except the note taker, the gentleman, and the flower girl, who sits arranging her basket, and still pitying herself in murmurs.*]

The Flower Girl: Poor girl! Hard enough for her to live without being worrited and chivied.

The Gentleman [*returning to his former place on the Note Taker's left*]: How do you do it, if I may ask?

The Note Taker: Simply phonetics. The science of speech, that's my profession; also my hobby. Happy is the man who can make a living by his hobby! You can spot an Irishman or a Yorkshireman by his brogue. I can place any man within six miles. I can place him within two miles in London. Sometimes within two streets.

The Flower Girl: Ought to be ashamed of himself, unmanly coward!

The Gentleman: But is there a living in that?

The Note Taker: Oh yes. Quite a fat one. This is an age of upstarts. Men begin in Kentish Town with 80 pounds a year, and end in Park Lane with a hundred thousand. They want to drop Kentish Town; but they give themselves away every time they open their mouths. Now I can teach them—

The Flower Girl: Let him mind his own business and leave a poor girl—

The Note Taker: A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere—no right to live. Remember that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech, that your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and The Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon.

The Flower Girl [*quite overwhelmed, and looking up at him in mingled wonder and deprecation without daring to raise her head*]: Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

The Note Taker [*whipping out his book*]: Heavens! What a sound!

[*He writes; then holds out the book and reads, reproducing her vowels exactly*] Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—ow—oo!

The Flower Girl [*tickled by the performance, and laughing in spite of herself*]: Garn!

The Note Taker: You see this creature with her kerbstone English, the English that will keep her in the

brogue: dialect upstart: arrogant crooning: singing

gutter to the end of her days. Well, sir, in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party. I could even get her a place as lady's maid or shop assistant, which requires better English,

The Gentleman: I am myself a student of Indian dialects; and—

The Note Taker [*eagerly*]: Are you? Do you know Colonel Pickering, the author of Spoken Sanskrit?

The Gentleman: I am Colonel Pickering. Who are you?

The Note Taker: Henry Higgins, author of Higgins's Universal Alphabet.

Pickering [*with enthusiasm*]: I came from India to meet you.

Higgins: I was going to India to meet you.

Pickering : Where do you live?

Higgins : 27A Wimpole Street. Come and see me tomorrow.

Pickering : I'm at the Carlton. Come with me now and let's have a jaw over some supper.

Higgins : Right you are.

The Flower Girl [*rising in desperation flinging the basket at his feet*]: Take the whole basket for six pence.

[*The church clock strikes the second quarter.*]

Higgins [*hearing in it the voice of God, rebuking him for his Pharisaic want of charity to the poor girl*]: A reminder.

[*He raises his hat solemnly; then throws a handful of money into the basket and follows Pickering.*]

The Flower Girl [*picking up a half-crown*]: Ah—ow—ooh!

[*Picking up a couple of florins.*]

Aaah—ow—ooh! [*Picking up several coins.*] Aaaaaah—ow—ooh!

[*Picking up a half sovereign*]

Freddy [*springing out of a taxicab*]: Got one at last. Hallo! [*To the girl*] Where are the two ladies that were here?

The Flower Girl: They walked to the bus when the rain stopped. Never you mind, young man. I'm going home in a taxi.

[*She sails off to the cab. The driver puts his hand behind him and holds the door firmly shut against her. Quite understanding his mistrust, she shows him her handful of money.*]

Eight pence ain't no object to me, Charlie.

[*He grins and opens the door.*]

Angel Court, Drury Lane, round the corner of Micklejohn's oil shop. Let's see how fast you can make her hop it.

[*She gets in and pulls the door to with a slam as the taxicab starts.*]

Freddy : Well, I'm dashed!

1. What is the dramatic purpose of the sudden summer rain? How does it help to introduce the main characters of the play?
2. Why does the attitude of the crowd change dramatically?
3. What impression do you form of the Flower Girl?
4. Where does the Note Taker live?
5. Why does the Note Taker think that a woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to live?
6. Who is a Copper's nark?
7. How does the Note Taker manage to tell people the places of their orgin?
8. Who is the author of *Spoken Sanskrit*?
9. What is the name of the book written by Higgins?
10. 'Cheer ap, Keptin; n' haw ya flahr orf a pore gel.' How would you transform this sentence to Standard English?

ACT II

[*Next day at 11 a.m. Higgins's laboratory in Wimpole Street. It is a room on the first floor, looking on the street, and was meant for the drawing-room. The double doors are in the middle of the back hall; and persons entering find in the corner to their right two tall file cabinets at right angles to one another against the walls. In this corner stands a flat writing-table, on which are a phonograph, a laryngoscope, a row of tiny organ pipes with a bellows, a set of lamp chimneys for singing flames with burners attached to a gas plug in the wall by an India rubber tube, several tuning forks of different sizes, a life-size image of half a human head, showing in section the vocal organs, and a box containing a supply of wax cylinders for the phonograph. Pickering is seated at the table, putting down some cards and a tuning-fork which he has been using. Higgins is standing up near him, closing two or three file drawers which are hanging out. He appears in the morning light as a robust, vital, appetizing sort of man of forty or thereabouts, dressed in a professional-looking black frock coat with a white linen collar and black silk tie. He is of the energetic, scientific type, heartily, even violently interested in everything that can be studied as a scientific subject, and careless about himself and other people, including their feelings.*]

Higgins [*as he shuts the last drawer*]: Well, I think that's the whole show.

Pickering: It's really amazing. I haven't taken half of it in, you know.

Higgins: Would you like to go over any of it again?

Pickering: Yes. It's a fearful strain. I rather fancied myself because I can pronounce twenty-four distinct vowel sounds; but your hundred and thirty beat me. I can't hear a bit of difference between most of them.

Higgins [*chuckling, and going over to the piano to eat sweets*]: Oh, that comes with practice. You hear no difference at first; but you keep on listening, and presently you find they're all as different as A from B.

[*Mrs. Pearce looks in. She is Higgins's housekeeper*]

What's the matter?

Mrs. Pearce [*hesitating*]: A young woman wants to see you, sir.

Higgins: A young woman! What does she want? Let's have her up. Show her up, Mrs. Pearce.

[*He rushes across to his working table and picks out a cylinder to use on the phonograph.*]

Mrs. Pearce [*only half resigned to it*]: Very well, sir. It's for you to say.

[*She goes downstairs.*]

Higgins : This is rather a bit of luck. I'll show you how I make records. We'll set her talking; and I'll take it down first in Bell's Visible Speech; then in broad Romic; and then we'll get her on the phonograph so that you can turn her on as often as you like with the written transcript before you.

Mrs. Pearce [*returning*]: This is the young woman, sir.

[*The flower girl enters in state. She has a hat with three ostrich feathers, orange, sky-blue, and red. She has a nearly clean apron, and the shoddy coat has been tidied a little.*]

Higgins [*brusquely, recognizing her with unconcealed disappointment, and at once, baby-like, making an intolerable grievance of it*] : Why, this is the girl I jotted down last night. She's no use. I've got all the records I want of the Lisson Grove lingo; and I'm not going to waste another cylinder on it. [*To the girl*] Be off with you. I don't want you.

The Flower Girl: Don't you be so saucy. You ain't heard what I come for yet.

[*To Mrs. Pearce, who is waiting at the door for further instruction.*]

Did you tell him I come in a taxi?

Mrs. Pearce: Nonsense, girl! what do you think a gentleman like Mr. Higgins cares what you came in?

The Flower Girl:Well, if you was a

chuckle: laugh phonograph: gramaphone brusquely: abruptly

gentleman, you might ask me to sit down, I think. Don't I tell you I'm bringing you business?

Pickering [*gently*]: What is it you want, my girl?

The Flower Girl: I want to be a lady in a flower shop at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him—not asking any favour—and he treats me as if I was dirt.

Mrs. Pearce: How can you be such a foolish ignorant girl as to think you could afford to pay Mr. Higgins?

The Flower Girl: Why shouldn't I? I know what lessons cost as well as you do; and I'm ready to pay.

Higgins: How much?

The Flower Girl [*coming back to him, triumphant*]: Now you're talking! I thought you'd come off it when you saw a chance of getting back a bit of what you chucked at me last night. [*Confidentially*] You'd had a drop in, hadn't you?

Higgins [*peremptorily*]: Sit down.

The Flower Girl: Oh, if you're going to make a compliment of it—

Higgins [*thundering at her*]: Sit down.

Mrs. Pearce [*severely*]: Sit down, girl. Do as you're told.

[*She places the stray chair near the hearthrug between Higgins and Pickering, and stands behind it waiting for the girl to sit down.*]

The Flower Girl: Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

[*She stands, half rebellious, half bewildered.*]

Pickering [*very courteous*]: Won't you sit down?

Liza [*coyly*]: Don't mind if I do.

[*She sits down. Pickering returns to the hearthrug.*]

Higgins: What's your name?

The Flower Girl: Liza Doolittle.

Higgins: How much do you propose to pay me for the lessons?

Liza: Oh, I know what's right. A lady friend of mine gets French lessons for eighteen pence an hour from a real French gentleman. Well, you wouldn't have the face to ask me the same for teaching me my own language as you would for French; so I won't give more than a shilling. Take it or leave it.

Higgins [*walking up and down the room, rattling his keys and his cash in his pockets*] You know, Pickering, if you consider a shilling, not as a simple shilling, but as a percentage of this girl's income, it works out as fully equivalent to sixty or seventy guineas from a millionaire.

Pickering: How so?

Higgins: Figure it out. A millionaire has about 150 pounds a day. She earns about half-a-crown.

Liza [*haughtily*]: Who told you I only—

Higgins [*continuing*] : She offers me two-fifths of her day's income for a lesson. Two-fifths of a millionaire's income for a day would be somewhere about 60 pounds. It's handsome. By George, it's enormous! it's the biggest offer I ever had.

Liza [*terrified*]: Sixty pounds! What are you talking about? I never offered you sixty pounds. Where would I get—

Higgins: Hold your tongue.

Liza [*weeping*]: But I ain't got sixty pounds. Oh—

Higgins: Here!

[*He offers her his silk handkerchief.*]

Liza: What's this for?

Higgins: To wipe your eyes. To wipe any part of your face that feels moist. Remember: that's your handkerchief; and that's your sleeve. Don't mistake the one for the other if you wish to become a lady in a shop.

[*Liza, utterly bewildered, stares helplessly at him.*]

Pickering: Higgins: I'm interested. What about the ambassador's garden party? I'll say you're the greatest teacher alive if you make that good. I'll bet you all the expenses of the experiment you can't do it. And I'll pay for the lessons.

Liza: Oh, you are real good. Thank you, Captain.

Higgins [*tempted, looking at her*]: It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low—so horribly dirty—

Liza [*protesting extremely*]: Ah—ah—ah—ah—ow—ow— oooo!!! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did.

Pickering: You're certainly not going to turn her head with flattery, Higgins.

Mrs. Pearce [*uneasy*]: Oh, don't say that, sir, there's more ways than one of turning a girl's head; and nobody can do it better than Mr. Higgins, though he may not always mean it. I do hope, sir, you won't encourage anything foolish.

Higgins [*excited as the idea grows on him*]: What is life but a series of inspired follies? The difficulty is to find them to do. Never lose a chance. I shall make a duchess of this draggle tailed gutter snipe.

Liza [*strongly deprecating this view of her*]: Ah—ah—ah— ow—ow—oo!

Higgins [*carried away*] : Yes: in six months—in three if she has a good ear

draggle tailed gutter snipe: a dirty woman who lives in the streets

and a quick tongue—I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We'll start today, now! This moment! Take her away and clean her, Mrs. Pearce. Is there a good fire in the kitchen?

Mrs. Pearce [*protesting*]: Yes; but—

Higgins [*storming on*]: Take all her clothes off and burn them. Ring up Whiteley for new ones. Wrap her up in brown paper till they come.

Liza: You're no gentleman, you're not, to talk of such things. I'm a good girl, I am; and I know what the like of you are, I do.

Higgins: We want none of your Lisson Grove prudery here, young woman. You've got to learn to behave like a duchess. Take her away, Mrs. Pearce. If she gives you any trouble wallop her.

Liza: Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

Pickering: Oh come, Higgins! be reasonable.

Mrs. Pearce [*resolutely*]: You must be reasonable, Mr. Higgins, really you must. You can't walk over everybody like this.

[*Higgins, thus scolded, subsides. The hurricane is succeeded by a zephyr of amiable surprise.*]

Higgins [*with professional exquisiteness of modulation*]: I walk over everybody! My dear Mrs. Pearce, my dear Pickering, I never had the slightest intention of walking over anyone. All I propose is that we should be kind to this poor girl. We must help her to prepare and fit herself for her new station in life. If I did not express myself clearly it was because I did not wish to hurt her delicacy, or yours.

[*Liza, reassured, steals back to her chair.*]

Mrs. Pearce [*to Pickering*]: Well, did you ever hear anything like that, sir?

Pickering [*laughing heartily*]: Never, Mrs. Pearce, never.

Higgins [*patiently*]: What's the matter?

Mrs. Pearce: Well, the matter is, sir, that you can't take a girl up like that as if you were picking up a pebble on the beach.

Higgins: Why not?

Mrs. Pearce: Why not! But you don't know anything about her. What about her parents? She may be married.

Liza: Garn!

Higgins: There! As the girl very properly says, Garn! Married indeed! Don't you know that a woman of that class looks a worn out drudge of fifty a year after she's married.

Liza: Who'd marry me?

Higgins [*suddenly resorting to the most thrillingly beautiful low tones in*

prudery: modesty wallop: heavy blow zephyr: a soft gentle breeze

his best elocutionary style]: By George, Eliza, the streets will be strewn with the bodies of men shooting themselves for your sake before I've done with you.

Mrs. Pearce: Nonsense, sir. You mustn't talk like that to her.

Liza [*rising and squaring herself determinedly*] : I'm going away. He's off his chump, he is. I don't want no balmies teaching me.

Higgins [*wounded by her insensibility to his elocution*]: Oh, indeed! I'm mad, am I? Very well, Mrs. Pearce, you needn't order the new clothes for her. Throw her out.

Liza [*whimpering*]: Nah—ow. You got no right to touch me.

Mrs. Pearce: You see now what comes of being saucy. [*Indicating the door*] This way, please.

Liza [*almost in tears*]: I didn't want no clothes. I wouldn't have taken them.

[*She throws away the handkerchief.*]

I can buy my own clothes.

Higgins [*deftly retrieving the handkerchief and intercepting her on her reluctant way to the door*]: You're an ungrateful wicked girl. This is my return for offering to take you out of the gutter and dress you beautifully and make a lady of you.

Mrs. Pearce: Stop, Mr. Higgins. I won't allow it. It's you that are wicked. Go home to your parents, girl; and tell them to take better care of you.

Liza: I ain't got no parents. They told me I was big enough to earn my own living and turned me out.

Mrs. Pearce: But what's to become of her? Is she to be paid anything? Do be sensible, sir.

Higgins: Oh, pay her whatever is necessary, put it down in the housekeeping book. [*Impatiently*] What on earth will she want with money? She'll have her food and her clothes.

Pickering [*in good-humoured remonstrance*]: Does it occur to you, Higgins, that the girl has some feelings?

Higgins [*looking critically at her*]: Oh no, I don't think so. Not any feelings that we need bother about. [*Cheerily*] Have you, Eliza?

Liza: I got my feelings same as anyone else.

Higgins [*to Pickering, reflectively*]: You see the difficulty?

Pickering: Eh? What difficulty?

Higgins: To get her to talk grammar. The mere pronunciation is easy enough.

Liza: I don't want to talk grammar. I want to talk like a lady.

whimper: sobbing, crying remonstrance: protest

Mrs. Pearce: Will you please keep to the point, Mr. Higgins. I want to know on what terms the girl is to be here. Is she to have any wages? And what is to become of her when you've finished your teaching? You must look ahead a little.

Higgins: Well, when I've done with her, we can throw her back into the gutter; and then it will be her own business again; so that's all right.

Liza: Oh, you've no feeling heart in you: you don't care for nothing but yourself.

[*She rises and takes the floor resolutely.*]

Here! I've had enough of this. I'm going [*making for the door.*] You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you ought.

Higgins [*snatching a chocolate cream from the piano, his eyes suddenly beginning to twinkle with mischief*]: Have some chocolates, Eliza.

Liza [*halting, tempted*]: How do I know what might be in them? I've heard of girls being drugged by the like of you.

[*Higgins whips out his penknife; cuts a chocolate in two; puts one half into his mouth and bolts it; and offers her the other half.*]

Higgins: Pledge of good faith, Eliza. I eat one half you eat the other.

[*Liza opens her mouth to retort, he pops the half chocolate into it.*]

You shall have boxes of them, barrels of them, every day. You shall live on them. Eh?

Liza [*who has disposed of the chocolate after being nearly choked by it*]: I wouldn't have ate it, only I'm too ladylike to take it out of my mouth.

Higgins: Listen, Eliza. I think you said you came in a taxi.

Liza: Well, what if I did? I've as good a right to take a taxi as anyone else.

Higgins: You have, Eliza; and in future you shall have as many taxis as you want. Think of chocolates, and taxis, and gold, and diamonds.

Liza: No. I don't want no gold and no diamonds. I'm a good girl, I am.

[*She sits down again, with an attempt at dignity.*]

Higgins: You shall remain so, Eliza, under the care of Mrs. Pearce. And you shall marry an officer in the Guards, with a beautiful moustache, the son of a marquis, who will disinherit him for marrying you, but will relent when he sees your beauty and goodness—

Pickering: Excuse me, Higgins; but I really must interfere. Mrs. Pearce is quite right. If this girl is to put herself in your hands for six months for an experiment in teaching, she must understand thoroughly what she's doing.

Higgins [*To Eliza*] : At the end of six months you shall go to Buckingham Palace in a carriage, beautifully dressed. If the King finds out you're not a lady, you will be taken by the police to the Tower of London, where your head will be cut off as a warning to other presumptuous flower girls. If you are not found out, you shall have a present of seven-and-sixpence to start life with as a lady in a shop. If you refuse this offer you will be a most ungrateful and wicked girl; and the angels will weep for you. [*To Pickering*] Now are you satisfied, Pickering? [*To Mrs. Pearce*] Can I put it more plainly and fairly, Mrs. Pearce?

Mrs. Pearce [*patiently*]: I think you'd better let me speak to the girl properly in private. I don't know that I can take charge of her or consent to the arrangement at all. Of course I know you don't mean her any harm; but when you get what you call interested in people's accents, you never think or care what may happen to them or you. Come with me, Eliza.

Higgins: That's all right. Thank you, Mrs. Pearce. Bundle her off to the bath-room.

Mrs. Pearce: Come with me.

[*She leads the way to the door, and holds it open for Eliza.*]

Pickering : Excuse the straight question, Higgins. Are you a man of good character where women are concerned?

Higgins [*moodily*]: Have you ever met a man of good character where women are concerned?

Pickering: Yes, very frequently.

Higgins [*dogmatically, lifting himself on his hands and sitting on piano with a bounce*]: Well, I haven't. I find that the moment I let myself make friends with a woman, I become selfish and tyrannical. Women upset everything. You find that the woman is driving at one thing and you're driving at another.

Pickering [*rising and standing over him gravely*]: Come, Higgins! You know what I mean. If I'm to be in this business I shall feel responsible for that girl. I hope it's understood that no advantage is to be taken of her position.

Higgins: What! That thing! Sacred, I assure you. [*Rising to explain*] You see, she'll be a pupil; and teaching would be impossible unless pupils were sacred. They might as well be blocks of wood. I might as well be a block of wood. It's—

[*Mrs. Pearce opens the door. She has Eliza's hat in her hand. Pickering retires to the chair at the hearth and sits down.*]

Higgins [*eagerly*]: Well, Mrs. Pearce, is it all right?

dogmatical: assertively tyrannical: oppressive, autocratic

Mrs. Pearce [*at the door*]: I wish to trouble you with a word Mr. Higgins.

Higgins: Yes, certainly. Come in. [*She comes forward.*] Don't burn that, Mrs. Pearce. I'll keep it as a curiosity. [*He takes the hat.*]

Mrs. Pearce: Handle it carefully, sir, please. I had to promise her not to burn it; but I had better put it in the oven for a while.

Higgins [*putting it down hastily on the piano*]: Oh! Thank you. Well, what have you to say to me?

Pickering: Am I in the way?

Mrs. Pearce: Not at all, sir. You're not at all particular when you've mislaid anything or when you get a little impatient. Now it doesn't matter before me: I'm used to it. But you really must not swear before the girl.

Higgins [*indignantly*]: I swear! [*Most emphatically*] I never swear.

Mrs. Pearce [*not to be put off*]: —but there is a certain word I must ask you not to use. The girl has just used it herself because the bath was too hot. It begins with the same letter as bath. She knows no better, she learnt it at her mother's knee. But she must not hear it from your lips.

Higgins [*loftily*]: I cannot charge myself with having ever uttered it, Mrs. Pearce.

[*She looks at him steadfastly. He adds, hiding an uneasy conscience with a judicial air.*]

Mrs. Pearce: Only this morning, sir, you applied it to your boots, to the butter, and to the brown bread.

Higgins: Oh, that! Mere alliteration, Mrs. Pearce, natural to a poet.

Mrs. Pearce: Well, sir, whatever you choose to call it, I beg you not to let the girl hear you repeat it.

Higgins: Oh, very well, very well. Is that all?

Mrs. Pearce: No, sir. We shall have to be very particular with this girl as to personal cleanliness.

Higgins: Certainly. Quite right. Most important.

Mrs. Pearce: I mean not to be slovenly about her dress or untidy in leaving things about.

Higgins: Not at all, not at all. You're quite right, Mrs. Pearce, I shall be particularly careful before the girl. Is that all?

Mrs. Pearce: No, sir. Might she use some of those Japanese dresses you brought from abroad? I really can't put her back into her old things.

Higgins: Certainly. Anything you like. Is that all?

Mrs. Pearce: Thank you, sir. That's all.

[*She goes out.*]

indignantly: angrily slovenly: untidy and dirty alliteration: a figure of speech

Higgins: You know, Pickering, that woman has the most extraordinary ideas about me. Here I am, a shy, diffident sort of man. I've never been able to feel really grown-up and tremendous, like other chaps. And yet she's firmly persuaded that I'm an arbitrary overbearing bossing kind of person. I can't account for it.

[*Mrs. Pearce returns.*]

Mrs. Pearce: If you please, sir, the trouble's beginning already. There's a dustman downstairs, Alfred Doolittle, wants to see you. He says you have his daughter here.

Pickering [*rising*]: Phew! I say!

[*He retreats to the hearthrug.*]

Higgins [*promptly*]: Send the blackguard up.

Mrs. Pearce: Oh, very well, sir.

[*She goes out. She admits Doolittle and retires. Alfred Doolittle is an elderly but vigorous dustman, clad in the costume of his profession, including a hat with a back brim covering his neck and shoulders. He has well marked and rather interesting features, and seems equally free from fear and conscience. He has a remarkably expressive voice, the result of a habit of giving vent to his feelings without reserve. His present pose is that of wounded honour and stern resolution.*]

Higgins [*at the door, uncertain which of the two gentlemen is his man*]: Professor Higgins?

Higgins: Here. Good morning. Sit down.

Doolittle: Morning, Governor. [*He sits down magisterially.*] I come about a very serious matter, Governor.

Higgins [*to Pickering*]: Brought up in Hounslow. Mother Welsh, I should think.

[*Doolittle opens his mouth, amazed. Higgins continues*] What do you want, Doolittle?

Doolittle [*menacingly*]: I want my daughter, that's what I want. See?

Higgins: Of course you do. You're her father, aren't you? You don't suppose anyone else wants her, do you? I'm glad to see you have some spark of family feeling left. She's upstairs. Take her away at once. Then how did you know she was here?

Doolittle [*most musical, most melancholy*]: I'll tell you, Governor, if you'll only let me get a word in. I'm willing to tell you. I'm wanting to tell you. I'm waiting to tell you.

Higgins: Pickering, this chap has a certain natural gift of rhetoric. Observe the rhythm of his native woodnotes wild. 'I'm willing to tell you: I'm wanting to tell you: I'm waiting to tell you.' Sentimental rhetoric! That's the Welsh strain in

arbitrary: domineering resolution: determination menancingly: with evil intention

him. It also accounts for his mendacity and dishonesty.

Pickering: Oh, Please, Higgins: I'm west country myself. [*To Doolittle*] How did you know the girl was here if you didn't send her?

Doolittle: It was like this, Governor. The girl took a boy in the taxi to give him a jaunt. Son of her landlady, he is. He hung about on the chance of her giving him another ride home. Well, she sent him back for her luggage when she heard you was willing for her to stop here. I met the boy at the corner of Long Acre and Endell Street.

Higgins: So you came to rescue her from worse than death, eh?

Doolittle [*appreciatively relieved at being understood*]: Just so, Governor. That's right.

Pickering: But why did you bring her luggage if you intended to take her away?

Doolittle: Have I said a word about taking her away? Have I now?

[*Mrs. Pearce opens the door and awaits orders.*]

Higgins: Mrs. Pearce, this is Eliza's father. He has come to take her away. Give her to him.

[*He goes back to the piano, with an air of washing his hands off the whole affair.*]

Doolittle: No. This is a misunderstanding. Listen here—

Mrs. Pearce: He can't take her away, Mr. Higgins, how can he? You told me to burn her clothes.

Doolittle: That's right. I can't carry the girl through the streets like a blooming monkey, can I? I put it to you.

Higgins: You have put it to me that you want your daughter. Take your daughter. If she has no clothes go out and buy her some.

Doolittle [*desperate*]: Where's the clothes she come in? Did I burn them or did your missus here?

Mrs. Pearce: I am the housekeeper, if you please. I have sent for some clothes for your girl. When they come you can take her away. You can wait in the kitchen. This way, please.

[*Doolittle, much troubled, accompanies her to the door; then hesitates; finally turns confidentially to Higgins.*]

Doolittle: Listen here, Governor. You and me is men of the world, ain't we?

Higgins: Oh! Men of the world, are we? You'd better go, Mrs. Pearce.

Mrs. Pearce: I think so, indeed, sir.

[*She goes, with dignity.*]

Pickering: The floor is yours, Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle [*to Pickering*]: I thank you, Governor. [*To Higgins, who takes refuge on the piano bench, a little*

mendacity: falsehood jaunt: trip

overwhelmed by the proximity of his visitor; for Doolittle has a professional flavour of dust about him.]

Well, the truth is, I've taken a sort of fancy to you, Governor; and if you want the girl, I'm not so set on having her back home again but what I might be open to an arrangement. Regarded in the light of a young woman, she's a fine handsome girl. As a daughter she's not worth her keep; and so I tell you straight. All I ask is my rights as a father; and you're the last man alive to expect me to let her go for nothing; for I can see you're one of the straight sort, Governor. Well, what's a five pound note to you? And what's Eliza to me?

[*He returns to his chair and sits down judicially.*]

Pickering: I think you ought to know, Doolittle, that Mr. Higgins' intentions are entirely honourable.

Doolittle: Course they are, Governor. If I thought they wasn't, I'd ask fifty.

Higgins [*revolted*]: Do you mean to say, you callous rascal, that you would sell your daughter for 50 pounds?

Doolittle: Not in a general way I wouldn't; but to oblige a gentleman like you I'd do a good deal, I do assure you.

Pickering: Have you no morals, man?

Doolittle [*unabashed*]: Can't afford them, Governor. Neither could you if you was as poor as me. Not that I mean any harm, you know. But if Liza is going to have a bit out of this, why not me too?

Higgins [*troubled*]: I don't know what to do, Pickering. There can be no question that as a matter of morals it's a positive crime to give this chap a farthing. And yet I feel a sort of rough justice in his claim.

Higgins: I suppose we must give him a fiver.

Pickering: He'll make a bad use of it, I'm afraid.

Doolittle: Not me, Governor, so help me I won't. Don't you be afraid that I'll save it and spare it and live idle on it. There won't be a penny of it left by Monday: I'll have to go to work same as if I'd never had it.

Higgins: Pickering: if we listen to this man another minute, we shall have no convictions left. [*To Doolittle*] Five pounds I think you said.

Doolittle: Thank you kindly, Governor.

Higgins : You're sure you won't take ten?

Doolittle: Not now. Another time, Governor.

Higgins [*handing him a five-pound note*]: Here you are.

Doolittle: Thank you, Governor. Good morning.

[*He hurries to the door, anxious to get away with his booty. When he opens it he is confronted with a dainty and exquisitely clean young Japanese lady in a simple blue cotton kimono printed cunningly with small white jasmine blossoms. Mrs. Pearce is with her. He gets out of her way deferentially and apologizes.*] Beg pardon, miss.

The Japanese Lady: Garn! Don't you know your own daughter?

[*Exclaiming simultaneously.*]

Doolittle: Bly me! it's Eliza!

Higgins: What's that! This!

Pickering: By Jove!

Liza: Don't I look silly?

Higgins: Silly?

Mrs. Pearce [*at the door*]: Now, Mr. Higgins, please don't say anything to make the girl conceited about herself.

Higgins [*conscientiously*]: Oh! Quite right, Mrs. Pearce. [*To Eliza*] Yes: damned silly.

Mrs. Pearce: Please, sir.

Higgins [*correcting himself*]: I mean extremely silly.

Liza: I should look all right with my hat on.

[*She takes up her hat; puts it on; and walks across the room to the fireplace with a fashionable air.*]

Higgins: A new fashion, by George! And it ought to look horrible!

Doolittle [*with fatherly pride*]: Well, I never thought she'd clean up as good looking as that, Governor. She's a credit to me, ain't she?

Liza: I tell you, it's easy to clean up here. Hot and coldwater on tap, just as much as you like, there is. Soft brushes to scrub yourself, and a wooden bowl of soap smelling like primroses. Now I know why ladies is so clean. Washing's a treat for them. Wish they saw what it is for the like of me!

Higgins: I'm glad the bath-room met with your approval.

Liza: It didn't, not all of it; and I don't care who hears me say it. Mrs. Pearce knows.

Higgins: What was wrong, Mrs. Pearce?

Mrs. Pearce [*blandly*]: Oh, nothing, sir. It doesn't matter.

Liza: I had a good mind to break it. I didn't know which way to look. But I hung a towel over it, I did.

Higgins: Over what?

Mrs. Pearce: Over the looking-glass, sir.

Higgins : Doolittle, you have brought your daughter up too strictly.

Doolittle: Me! I never brought her up at all, except to give her a lick of a strap now and again. Don't put it on me, Governor. She ain't accustomed

dainty: charming deferentially: respectfully

to it, you see, that's all. But she'll soon pick up your free-and-easy ways. Afternoon, gentlemen. Afternoon, ma'am.

[*He takes off his hat to Mrs. Pearce, who disdains the salutation and goes out. He winks at Higgins, thinking him probably a fellow sufferer from Mrs. Pearce's difficult disposition, and follows her.*]

Liza: Don't you believe the old liar. He'd as soon you set a bull-dog on him as a clergyman. You won't see him again in a hurry.

Higgins: I don't want to, Eliza. Do you?

Liza : Not me. I don't want never to see him again, I don't. He's a disgrace to me, he is, collecting dust, instead of working at his trade.

Pickering: What is his trade, Eliza?

Liza: Talking money out of other people's pockets into his own. His proper trade's a navvy; and he works at it sometimes too—for exercise—and earns good money at it. Ain't you going to call me Miss Doolittle any more?

Pickering: I beg your pardon, Miss Doolittle. It was a slip of the tongue.

Liza: Oh, I don't mind; only it sounded so genteel. I should just like to take a taxi to the corner of Tottenham Court Road and get out there and tell it to wait for me, just to put the girls in their place a bit. I wouldn't speak to them, you know.

Pickering: Better wait till we get you something really fashionable.

Higgins: Besides, you shouldn't cut your old friends now that you have risen in the world. That's what we call snobbery.

Liza: You don't call the like of them my friends now, I should hope. They've took it out of me often enough with their ridicule when they had the chance; and now I mean to get a bit of my own back. But if I'm to have fashionable clothes, I'll wait. I should like to have some. Mrs. Pearce says you're going to give me some to wear in bed at night different to what I wear in the daytime; but it do seem a waste of money when you could get something to show. Besides, I never could fancy changing into cold things on a winter night.

Mrs. Pearce [*coming back*]: Now, Eliza. The new things have come for you to try on.

Liza: Ah—ow—oo—ooh! [*She rushes out*].

Mrs. Pearce [*following her*]: Oh, don't rush about like that, girl.

[*She shuts the door behind her.*]

Higgins: Pickering, we have taken on a stiff job.

Pickering [*with conviction*]: Higgins, we have.

disposition: temperament snobbery: pretension conviction: belief

1. Why does the Flower Girl want to talk more genteel?
2. What is the real name of the Flower Girl?
3. How much does Liza offer Higgins for the lessons?
4. Why does Higgins accept Liza's offer?
5. Who is the draggle-tailed gutter snipe?
6. Why does Higgins ask Mrs. Pearce to burn Liza's clothes?
7. Why does Mrs. Pearce say, "You can't take a girl up like that as if you were picking up a pebble on the beach." to Mr. Higgins?
8. Why does Mrs. Pearce think that Mr. Higgins is wicked?
9. Why does Mrs. Pearce warn Mr. Higgins repeatedly? What character trait of Mrs. Pearce is revealed here?
10. Why does Mr. Higgins offer cakes of chocolate to Miss Liza?
11. What is Higgins' attitude to women?
12. What does Mrs. Pearce want to say to Mr. Higgins as she takes Liza to the bathroom?
13. Mrs. Pearce makes certain conditions to Mr. Higgins. What do these conditions tell us about Mr. Higgins' character?
14. Who is Alfred Doolittle?
15. Why does Mr. Doolittle pay a visit to Mr. Higgins?
16. How does Mr. Doolittle convince Mr. Pickering that he will not make bad use of the pounds?
17. Why is Mr. Doolittle convinced that his daughter is a credit to him?
18. How did Mr. Doolittle bring his daughter up?
19. What is Doolittle's trade according to his daughter?
20. How did Mr. Doolittle come to know that Eliza is with Mr. Higgins?

ACT III

[*It is Mrs. Higgins' at-home day. Nobody has yet arrived. Her drawing-room, in a flat on Chelsea embankment, has three windows looking on the river; and the ceiling is not so lofty as it would be in an older house of the same pretension. The windows are open, giving access to a balcony with flowers in pots. If you stand with your face to the windows, you have the fireplace on your left and the door in the right-hand wall close to the corner nearest the windows. A few good oil-paintings from the exhibitions in the Grosvenor Gallery thirty years ago are on the walls. There is a portrait of Mrs. Higgins as she was when she defied fashion in her youth in one of the beautiful. Rossettian costumes which, when caricatured by people who did not understand, led to the absurdities of popular aestheticism in the eighteen-seventies. In the corner diagonally opposite the door Mrs. Higgins, now over sixty and long past taking the trouble to dress out of the fashion, sits writing at an elegantly simple writing-table with a bell button within reach of her hand. There is a chair further back in the room between her and the window nearest her side. At the other side of the room, further forward, is an Elizabethan chair. On the same side a piano in a decorated case. The corner between the fireplace and the window is occupied by a divan. It is between four and five in the afternoon. The door is opened violently; and Higgins enters with his hat on.*]

Mrs. Higgins [*dismayed*]: Henry [*scolding him*] What are you doing here to-day? It is my at home day, you promised not to come.

[*As he bends to kiss her, she takes his hat off, and presents it to him.*]

Higgins: Oh bother!

[*He throws the hat down on the table.*]

Mrs. Higgins: Go home at once.

Higgins [*kissing her*]: I know, mother. I came on purpose.

Mrs. Higgins: But you mustn't. I'm serious, Henry. You offend all my friends: they stop coming whenever they meet you.

Higgins: Nonsense! I know I have no small talk; but people don't mind.

[*He sits on the settee.*]

Mrs. Higgins: Oh! don't they? Small talk indeed! What about your large talk? Really, dear, you mustn't stay.

Higgins: I must. I've a job for you. A phonetic job.

Mrs. Higgins: No use, dear. I'm sorry; but I can't get round your vowels; and though I like to get pretty postcards in your patent shorthand, I always have to read the copies in

ordinary writing you so thoughtfully send me.

Higgins: Well, this isn't a phonetic job.

Mrs. Higgins: You said it was.

Higgins : Not your part of it. I've picked up a girl.

Mrs. Higgins: Does that mean that some girl has picked you up?

Higgins: Not at all. I don't mean a love affair.

Mrs. Higgins: What a pity!

Higgins: Why?

Mrs. Higgins: Well, you never fall in love with anyone under forty-five. When will you discover that there are some rather nice-looking young women about?

Higgins: Oh, I can't be bothered with young women. My idea of a loveable woman is something as like you as possible. I shall never get into the way of seriously liking young women, some habits lie too deep to be changed. [*Rising abruptly and walking about, jingling his money and his keys in his trouser pockets.*] Besides, they're all idiots.

Mrs. Higgins: Do you know what you would do if you really loved me, Henry?

Higgins: Oh bother! What? Marry, I suppose?

Mrs. Higgins: No. Stop fidgeting and take your hands out of your pockets.

[*With a gesture of despair, he obeys and sits down again.*]

That's a good boy. Now tell me about the girl.

Higgins: She's coming to see you.

Mrs. Higgins: I don't remember asking her.

Higgins: You didn't. I asked her. If you'd known her you wouldn't have asked her.

Mrs. Higgins: Indeed! Why?

Higgins: Well, it's like this. She's a common flower girl. I picked her off the kerbstone.

Mrs. Higgins: And invited her to my at-home!

Higgins [*rising and coming to her to coax her*]: Oh, that'll be all right. I've taught her to speak properly; and she has strict orders as to her behaviour. She's to keep to two subjects: the weather and everybody's health—Fine day and How do you do, you know—and not to let herself go on things in general. That will be safe.

Mrs. Higgins: Safe! To talk about our health! About our insides! Perhaps about our outsides! How could you be so silly, Henry?

Higgins [*impatiently*]:Well, she must talk about something.

[*He controls himself and sits down again.*]

fidgeting: make small movements of hands and feet coax: persuade

Oh, she'll be all right, don't you fuss. Pickering is in it with me. I've a sort of bet on that I'll pass her off as a duchess in six months. I started on her some months ago; and she's getting on like a house on fire. I shall win my bet. She has a quick ear; and she's been easier to teach than my middle-class pupils because she's had to learn a complete new language. She talks English almost as you talk French.

Mrs. Higgins: That's satisfactory, at all events.

Higgins: Well, it is and it isn't.

Mrs. Higgins: What does that mean?

Higgins: You see, I've got her pronunciation all right; but you have to consider not only how a girl pronounces, but what she pronounces; and that's where—

[*They are interrupted by the parlour-maid, announcing guests.*]

The Parlour-maid: Mrs. and Miss Eynsford Hill. [*She withdraws.*]

Higgins: Oh Lord!

[*He rises; snatches his hat from the table; and makes for the door; but before he reaches it his mother introduces him. Mrs. and Miss Eynsford Hill are the mother and daughter who sheltered from the rain in Covent Garden. The mother is well bred, quiet, and has the habitual anxiety of straitened means. The daughter has acquired a gay air of being very much at home in society, the bravado of genteel poverty.*]

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*to Mrs. Higgins*]: How do you do?

[*They shake hands.*]

Miss Eynsford Hill: How d'you do? [*She shakes.*]

Mrs. Higgins [*introducing*]: My son Henry.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill: Your celebrated son! I have so longed to meet you, Professor Higgins.

Higgins [*glumly, making no movement in her direction*]: Delighted.

[*He backs against the piano and bows brusquely.*]

Miss Eynsford Hill [*going to him with confident familiarity*]: How do you do?

Higgins [*staring at her*]: I've seen you before somewhere. I haven't the ghost of a notion where; but I've heard your voice. [*Drearily*] It doesn't matter. You'd better sit down.

Mrs. Higgins: I'm sorry to say that my celebrated son has no manners. You mustn't mind him.

Miss Eynsford Hill [*gaily*]: I don't.

[*She sits in the Elizabethan chair.*]

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*a little bewildered*]: Not at all.

glumly: unsociable, moody brusquely: abruptly

[*She sits on the ottoman between her daughter and Mrs. Higgins, who has turned her chair away from the writing-table.*]

Higgins: Oh, have I been rude? I didn't mean to be.

[*The parlour-maid returns, ushering in Pickering.*]

The Parlour-maid: Colonel Pickering.

[*She withdraws.*]

Pickering: How do you do, Mrs. Higgins?

Mrs. Higgins: So glad you've come. Do you know Mrs. Eynsford Hill—Miss Eynsford Hill?

[*Exchange of bows. The Colonel brings the Chippendale chair a little forward between Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Higgins, and sits down.*]

Pickering: Has Henry told you what we've come for?

Higgins [*over his shoulder*]: We were interrupted, damn it!

Mrs. Higgins: Oh Henry, Henry, really!

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*half rising*]: Are we in the way?

Mrs. Higgins [*rising and making her sit down again*]: No, no. You couldn't have come more fortunately, we want you to meet a friend of ours.

Higgins [*turning hopefully*]: Yes, by George! We want two or three people. You'll do as well as anybody else.

[*The parlour-maid returns, ushering Freddy.*]

The Parlour-maid: Mr. Eynsford Hill.

Higgins [*almost audibly, past endurance*]: God of Heaven! another of them.

Freddy [*shaking hands with Mrs. Higgins*]: Ahdedo?

Mrs. Higgins: Very good of you to come. [*Introducing*] Colonel Pickering.

Freddy [*bowing*]: Ahdedo?

Mrs. Higgins: I don't think you know my son, Professor Higgins.

Freddy [*going to Higgins*]: Ahdedo?

Higgins [*looking at him much as if he were a pickpocket*]: I'll take my oath I've met you before somewhere. Where was it?

Freddy: I don't think so.

Higgins [*resignedly*]: It don't matter, anyhow. Sit down.

Higgins: Well, here we are, anyhow!

[*He sits down on the ottoman next Mrs. Eynsford Hill, on her left.*]

And now, what the devil are we going to talk about until Eliza comes?

Mrs. Higgins: Henry, you are the life and soul of the Royal Society's soirees; but really you're rather trying on more commonplace occasions.

usher: to take or show where they should go

soirees: an elegant evening gathering

Higgins: Am I? Very sorry. [*beaming suddenly*] I suppose I am, you know. [*uproariously*] Ha, ha!

Miss Eynsford Hill [*who considers Higgins quite eligible matrimonially*]: I sympathize. I haven't any small talk. If people would only be frank and say what they really think!

Higgins [*relapsing into gloom*]: Lord forbid!

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*taking up her daughter's cue*]: But why?

Higgins: What they think they ought to think is bad enough, Lord knows; but what they really think would break up the whole show. Do you suppose it would be really agreeable if I were to come out now with what I really think?

Miss Eynsford Hill [*gaily*]: Is it so very cynical?

Higgins: Cynical! Who the dickens said it was cynical? I mean it wouldn't be decent.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*seriously*]: Oh! I'm sure you don't mean that, Mr. Higgins.

Higgins: You see, we're all savages, more or less. We're supposed to be civilized and cultured—to know all about poetry and philosophy and art and science, and so on; but how many of us know even the meanings of these names? [*To Miss Hill*] What do you know of poetry? [*To Mrs. Hill*] What do you know of science? [*Indicating Freddy*] What does he know of art or science or anything else? What the devil do you imagine I know of philosophy?

Mrs. Higgins [*warningly*]: Or of manners, Henry?

The Parlour- maid [*opening the door*]: Miss Doolittle. [*She withdraws.*]

Higgins [*rising hastily and running to Mrs. Higgins*]: Here she is, mother.

[*He stands on tiptoe and makes signs over his mother's head to Eliza to indicate to her which lady is her hostess.*

Eliza, who is exquisitely dressed, produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty as she enters that they all rise, quite flustered. Guided by Higgins's signals, she comes to Mrs. Higgins with studied grace.]

Liza [*speaking with pedantic correctness of pronunciation and great beauty of tone*]: How do you do, Mrs. Higgins?

[*She gasps slightly in making sure of the H in Higgins, but is quite successful.*]

Mr. Higgins told me I might come.

Mrs. Higgins [*cordially*]: Quite right: I'm very glad indeed to see you.

Pickering: How do you do, Miss Doolittle?

Liza [*shaking hands with him*]: Colonel Pickering, is it not?

uproarious: loud laughter cynical: distrustful, contemptuous pedantic: precise, exact

Mrs. Eynsford Hill: I feel sure we have met before, Miss Doolittle. I remember your eyes.

Liza: How do you do?

[*She sits down on the ottoman gracefully in the place just left vacant by Higgins.*]

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*introducing*]: My daughter Clara.

Liza: How do you do?

Clara [*impulsively*]: How do you do?

[*She sits down on the ottoman beside Eliza, devouring her with her eyes.*]

Freddy [*coming to their side of the ottoman*]: I've certainly had the pleasure.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*introducing*]: My son Freddy.

Liza: How do you do?

[*Freddy bows and sits down in the Elizabethan chair, infatuated.*]

Mrs. Higgins: Henry, please!

[*He is about to sit on the edge of the table.*]

Don't sit on my writing-table, you'll break it.

Higgins [*sulkily*]: Sorry.

[*He goes to the divan, stumbling into the fender and over the fire-irons on his way; extricating himself with muttered imprecations; and finishing his disastrous journey by throwing himself so impatiently on the divan that he almost breaks it. Mrs. Higgins looks at him, but controls herself and says nothing. A long and painful pause ensues.*]

Mrs. Higgins [*conversationally.*]: Will it rain, do you think?

Liza: The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation.

Fredd : Ha! ha! how awfully funny!

Liza: What is wrong with that, young man? I bet I got it right.

Freddy: Killing!

Mrs. Eynsford Hill: I'm sure I hope it won't turn cold. There's so much influenza about. It runs right through our whole family regularly every spring.

Liza [*darkly*]: My aunt died of influenza: so they said.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*clicks her tongue sympathetically*] : !!!

Liza [*in the same tragic tone*]: But it's my belief they done the old woman in.

Mrs. Higgins [*puzzled*]: Done her in?

Liza: Y-e-e-e-es, Lord love you! Why should she die of influenza? She come through diphtheria right enough the year before. I saw her with my own eyes. Fairly blue with it, she was. They

devour: look carefully sulkily: angrily imprecation: curse

all thought she was dead; but my father he kept ladling gin down her throat till she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*startled*]: Dear me!

Liza [*piling up the indictment*]: What call would a woman with that strength in her to die of influenza? What become of her new straw hat that should have come to me? Somebody pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill: What does doing her in mean?

Higgins [*hastily*]: Oh, that's the new small talk. To do a person in means to kill them.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*to Eliza, horrified*]: You surely don't believe that your aunt was killed?

Liza: Do I not! Them she lived with would have killed her for a hat-pin, let alone a hat.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill : But it can't have been right for your father to pour spirits down her throat like that. It might have killed her.

Liza: Not her. Gin was mother's milk to her. Besides, he'd poured so much down his own throat that he knew the good of it.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill: Do you mean that he drank?

Liza: Drank! My word! Something chronic.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill: How dreadful for you!

Liza: Not a bit. It never did him no harm what I could see. But then he did not keep it up regular. [*cheerfully*] On the burst, as you might say, from time to time. And always more agreeable when he had a drop in. When he was out of work, my mother used to give him four pence and tell him to go out and not come back until he'd drunk himself cheerful and loving-like. There's lots of women has to make their husbands drunk to make them fit to live with. [*Now quite at her ease*] You see, it's like this. If a man has a bit of a conscience, it always takes him when he's sober; and then it makes him low-spirited. A drop of booze just takes that off and makes him happy. [*To Freddy, who is in convulsions of suppressed laughter.*] Here! what are you sniggering at?

Freddy: The new small talk. You do it so awfully well.

Liza: If I was doing it proper, what was you laughing at? [*to Higgins*] Have I said anything I oughtn't?

Mrs. Higgins [*intervening*]: Not at all, Miss Doolittle.

Liza: Well, that's a mercy, anyhow. [*expansively*] What I always say is—

Higgins [*rising and looking at his watch*] : Ahem!

ladling: serving indictment: accusation convulsion: sudden movement snigger: laugh

Liza [*looking round at him; taking the hint; and rising*]: Well, I must go.

[*They all rise. Freddy goes to the door.*]

So pleased to have met you. Good-bye.

[*She shakes hands with Mrs.Higgins.*]

Mrs. Higgins: Good-bye.

Liza: Good-bye, Colonel Pickering.

Pickering: Good-bye, Miss Doolittle.

[*They shake hands.*]

Liza [*nodding to the others*]: Good-bye, all.

Freddy [*opening the door for her*]: Are you walking across the Park, Miss Doolittle? If so—

Liza: Walk! Not bloody likely. [*sensation*]. I am going in a taxi.

[*She goes out. Pickering gasps and sits down. Freddy goes out on the balcony to catch another glimpse of Eliza.*]

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*suffering from shock*]: Well, I really can't get used to the new ways.

Clara [*throwing herself discontentedly into the Elizabethan chair*]: Oh, it's all right, mamma, quite right. People will think we never go anywhere or see anybody if you are so old-fashioned.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill: I daresay I am very old-fashioned; but I do hope you won't begin using that expression, Clara. I have got accustomed to hear you talking about men as rotters, and calling everything filthy and beastly; though I do think it horrible and unladylike. But this last is really too much. Don't you think so, Colonel Pickering?

Pickering: Don't ask me. I've been away in India for several years; and manners have changed so much that I sometimes don't know whether I'm at a respectable dinner-table or in a ship's forecastle.

Clara: It's all a matter of habit. There's no right or wrong in it. Nobody means anything by it. And it's so quaint, and gives such a smart emphasis to things that are not in themselves very witty. I find the new small talk delightful and quite innocent.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*rising*]: Well, after that, I think it's time for us to go.

[*Pickering and Higgins rise.*]

Clara [*rising*]: Oh yes: we have three at homes to go to still. Good-bye, Mrs. Higgins. Good-bye, Colonel Pickering. Good-bye, Professor Higgins.

Higgins [*coming grimly at her from the divan, and accompanying her to the door*]: Good-bye. Be sure you try on that small talk at the three at-homes. Don't be nervous about it. Pitch it in strong.

Clara [*all smiles*]: I will. Good-bye. Such nonsense, all this early Victorian prudery!

filthy: dirty quaint: unusual grimly: firmly

Higgins [*tempting her*]: Such damned nonsense!

Clara: Such bloody nonsense!

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*convulsively*]: Clara!

Clara: Ha! ha!

[*She goes out radiant, conscious of being thoroughly up to date, and is heard descending the stairs in a stream of silvery laughter.*]

Freddy [*to the heavens at large*]: Well, I ask you. [*He gives it up, and comes to Mrs. Higgins.*] Good-bye.

Mrs. Higgins [*shaking hands*]: Good-bye. Would you like to meet Miss Doolittle again?

Freddy [*eagerly*]: Yes, I should, most awfully.

Mrs. Higgins: Well, you know my days.

Freddy: Yes. Thanks awfully. Good-bye. [*He goes out.*]

Mrs. Eynsford Hill: Good-bye, Mr. Higgins.

Higgins: Good-bye. Good-bye.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*to Pickering*]: It's no use. I shall never be able to bring myself to use that word.

Pickering: Don't. It's not compulsory, you know. You'll get on quite well without it.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill: Only, Clara is so down on me if I'm not positively reeking with the latest slang. Good-bye.

Pickering: Good-bye.

[*They shake hands.*]

Mrs. Eynsford Hill [*to Mrs. Higgins*]: You mustn't mind Clara.

[*Pickering, catching from her lowered tone that this is not meant for him to hear, discreetly joins Higgins at the window.*]

We're so poor! She gets so few parties, poor child! She doesn't quite know.

[*Mrs. Higgins, seeing that her eyes are moist, takes her hand sympathetically and goes with her to the door.*]

But the boy is nice. Don't you think so?

Mrs. Higgins: Oh, quite nice. I shall always be delighted to see him.

Mrs. Eynsford Hill: Thank you, dear. Good-bye.

[*She goes out.*]

Higgins [*eagerly*]: Well? Is Eliza presentable?

[*He swoops on his mother and drags her to the ottoman, where she sits down in Eliza's place with her son on her left. Pickering returns to his chair on her right.*]

Mrs. Higgins: You silly boy, of course she's not presentable. She's a triumph of your art and of her dressmaker's; but if you suppose for

reeking: unpleasant discreet: careful sanguinary: bitter

a moment that she doesn't give herself away in every sentence she utters, you must be perfectly cracked about her.

Pickering: But don't you think something might be done? I mean something to eliminate the sanguinary element from her conversation.

Mrs. Higgins: Not as long as she is in Henry's hands.

Higgins [*aggrieved*]: Do you mean that my language is improper?

Mrs. Higgins: No, dearest, it would be quite proper but it would not be proper for her at a garden party.

Higgins [*deeply injured*]: Well I must say—

Pickering [*interrupting him*]: Come, Higgins, you must learn to know yourself. I haven't heard such language as yours since we used to review the volunteers in Hyde Park twenty years ago.

Higgins [*sulkily*]: Oh, well, if you say so, I suppose I don't always talk like a bishop.

Mrs. Higgins [*quieting Henry with a touch*]: Colonel Pickering, will you tell me what is the exact state of things in Wimpole Street?

Pickering [*cheerfully,as if this completely changed the subject*]: Well, I have come to live there with Henry. We work together at my Indian Dialects; and we think it more convenient—

Mrs. Higgins: Quite so. I know all about that, it's an excellent arrangement. But where does this girl live?

Higgins: With us, of course. Where would she live?

Mrs. Higgins: But on what terms? Is she a servant? If not, what is she?

Pickering [*slowly*]: I think I know what you mean, Mrs. Higgins.

Higgins: Well, dash me if I do! I've had to work at the girl every day for months to get her to her present pitch. Besides, she's useful. She knows where my things are, and remembers my appointments and so forth.

Mrs. Higgins: How does your housekeeper get on with her?

Higgins: Mrs. Pearce? Oh, she's jolly glad to get so much taken off her hands; for before Eliza came, she had to have to find things and remind me of my appointments.

Mrs. Higgins: You certainly are a pretty pair of babies, playing with your live doll.

Higgins: Playing! The hardest job I ever tackled, make no mistake about that. But you have no idea how frightfully interesting it is to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being by creating a new speech for her. It's filling up the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul.

pitch: level assail: attack

Pickering [*drawing his chair closer to Mrs. Higgins and bending over to her eagerly*]: Yes: it's enormously interesting. I assure you, Mrs. Higgins, we take Eliza very seriously. Every week—every day almost—there is some new change. [*Closer again*] We keep records of every stage—dozens of gramophone disks and photographs—

Higgins [*assailing her at the other ear*]: Yes, by George, it's the most absorbing experiment I ever tackled. She regularly fills our lives up; doesn't she, Pick?

Pickering: We're always talking Eliza.

Higgins: Teaching Eliza.

Pickering: Dressing Eliza.

Mrs. Higgins: What!

Higgin: Inventing new Elizas.

[*Higgins and Pickering, speaking together.*]

Higgins: You know, she has the most extraordinary quickness of ear.

Pickering: I assure you, my dear Mrs. Higgins, that girl

Higgins: just like a parrot. I've tried her with every

Pickering: is a genius. She can play the piano quite beautifully.

Higgins: possible sort of sound that a human being can make—

Pickering: We have taken her to classical concerts and to music.

Higgins: Continental dialects, African dialects, Hottentot

Pickering: halls; and it's all the same to her: she plays everything

Higgins: clicks, things it took me years to get hold of; and

Pickering: she hears right off when she comes home, whether it's

Higgins: she picks them up like a shot, right away, as if she had

Pickering: Beethoven and Brahms or Lehar and Lionel Morickton;

Higgins: been at it all her life.

Pickering: though six months ago, she'd never as much as touched a piano.

Mrs. Higgins [*putting her fingers in her ears, as they are by this time shouting one another down with an intolerable noise*]: Sh—sh—sh—sh!

[*They stop.*]

Pickering: I beg your pardon.

[*He draws his chair back apologetically.*]

Higgins: Sorry. When Pickering starts shouting nobody can get a word in edgeways.

Mrs. Higgins: Be quiet, Henry. Colonel Pickering: don't you realize that when Eliza walked into Wimpole Street, something walked in with her? A problem.

Pickering: Oh, I see. The problem of how to pass her off as a lady.

Higgins: I'll solve that problem. I've half solved it already.

Mrs. Higgins: No, you two infinitely stupid male creatures, the problem of what is to be done with her afterwards.

Higgins: I don't see anything in that. She can go her own way, with all the advantages I have given her.

Mrs. Higgins: The advantages of that poor woman who was here just now! The manners and habits that disqualify a fine lady from earning her own living without giving her a fine lady's income! Is that what you mean?

Pickering [*indulgently, being rather bored*]: Oh, that will be all right, Mrs. Higgins.

[*He rises to go.*]

Higgins [*rising*]: We'll find her some light employment.

Pickering: She's happy enough. Don't you worry about her. Good-bye.

[*He shakes hands as if he were consoling a frightened child, and makes for the door.*]

Higgins: Anyhow, there's no good bothering now. The thing's done. Good-bye, mother.

[*He kisses her and follows Pickering.*]

Pickering [*turning for a final consolation*]: There are plenty of openings. We'll do what's right. Good-bye.

Higgins [*to Pickering as they go out together*]: Let's take her to the Shakespeare exhibition at Earls Court.

Pickering: Yes: let's. Her remarks will be delicious.

Higgins: She'll mimic all the people for us when we get home.

Pickering: Ripping.

[*Both are heard laughing as they go downstairs.*]

Mrs. Higgins [*rises with an impatient bounce, and returns to her work at the writing-table. She sweeps a litter of disarranged papers out of her way; snatches a sheet of paper from her stationery case; and tries resolutely to write. At the third line she gives it up; flings down her pen; grips the table angrily and exclaims*]: Oh, men! men!! men!

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1. Why does Mrs. Higgins ask Higgins not to come on her at home days?
2. Why did Higgins say that he can't be bothered with young women?
3. Why does Mrs. Higgins opine that her celebrated son has no manners?
4. For what reason does Higgins want two or three people?
5. Why does Higgins correct Miss Eynsford Hill?

6. How does Miss Doolittle greet Pickering?
7. How does Liza take part in the conversation at Mrs. Higgins' house? What changes happen as their conversation progresses?
8. How do Mrs. Eynsford Hill and Miss Clara react to Eliza's new small talk?
9. Why does Mrs. Eynsford remark that they are poor?
10. What is Mrs. Higgins' opinion of Liza's performance?
11. Why does Mrs. Higgins call them a pretty pair of babies?
12. What is the problem that walked in with Eliza? What solution does Higgins and Pickering offer?

ACT IV

[*The Wimpole Street laboratory. Midnight. Nobody in the room. The clock on the mantelpiece strikes twelve. The fire is not alight, it is a summer night. Presently Higgins and Pickering are heard on the stairs.*]

Higgins [*calling down to Pickering*]: I say, Pick: lock up, will you. I shan't be going out again.

Pickering: Right. Can Mrs. Pearce go to bed? We don't want anything more, do we?

Higgins: Lord, no!

[*Eliza opens the door and is seen on the lighted landing in opera cloak, brilliant evening dress, and diamonds, with fan, flowers, and all accessories. She comes to the hearth, and switches on the electric lights there. Puts her fan and flowers on the piano; and sits down on the bench, brooding and silent. Higgins, in evening dress, with overcoat and hat, comes in, carrying a smoking jacket which he has picked up downstairs. He takes off the hat and overcoat; throws them carelessly on the newspaper stand; disposes of his coat in the same way; puts on the smoking jacket; and throws himself wearily into the easy-chair at the hearth. Pickering, similarly attired, comes in. He also takes off his hat and overcoat, and is about to throw them on Higgins's when he hesitates.*]

Pickering: I say: Mrs. Pearce will row if we leave these things lying about in the drawing-room.

Higgins: Oh, chuck them over the banisters into the hall. She'll find them there in the morning and put them away all right. She'll think we were drunk.

Pickering: We are, slightly. Are there any letters?

Higgins: I didn't look.

[*Pickering takes the overcoats and hats and goes down stairs. Higgins begins half singing half yawning an air from La Fanciulla del Golden West. Suddenly he stops and exclaims.*] I wonder where the devil my slippers are!

[*Eliza looks at him darkly; then leaves the room. Higgins yawns again and resumes his song. Pickering returns, with the contents of the letter-box in his hand.*]

Pickering: Only circulars.

[*Eliza returns with a pair of large down-at-heel slippers. She places them on the carpet before Higgins, and sits as before without a word.*]

Higgins [*yawning again*]: Oh Lord! What an evening! What a crew! What a silly tomfoollery!

[*He raises his shoe to unlace it and catches sight of the slippers. He stops and looks at them as if they had appeared there of their own accord.*]

Oh! they're there, are they?

Pickering[*stretching himself*]: Well, I feel a bit tired. It's been a long day. The garden party, a dinner party, and the opera! But you've won your bet, Higgins. Eliza did the trick, and something to spare, eh?

Higgins [*fervently*]: Thank God it's over!

[*Eliza flinches violently; but they take no notice of her; and she recovers herself and sits stonily as before.*]

Pickering: Were you nervous at the garden party? I was. Eliza didn't seem a bit nervous.

Higgins: Oh, she wasn't nervous. I knew she'd be all right. No, it's the strain of putting the job through all these months that has told on me. It was interesting enough at first, while we were at the phonetics; but after that I got deadly sick of it. It was a silly notion, the whole thing has been a bore.

Pickering: Oh come! The garden party was frightfully exciting.

Higgins: Yes, for the first three minutes. But when I saw we were going to win hands down, I felt like a bear in a cage, hanging about doing nothing. Pickering, never again for me. No more artificial duchesses. The whole thing has been simple purgatory.

Pickering: You've never been broken in properly to the social routine. [*Strolling over to the piano.*] I rather enjoy dipping into it occasionally myself. Anyhow, it was a great success, an immense success. I was quite frightened once or twice because Eliza was doing it so well. You see, lots of the real people can't do it at all, they're such fools that they think style comes by nature to people in their position; and so they never learn.

accord: wish fervently: showing emotion flinch: draw back purgatory: purify

Higgins: Yes: that's what drives me mad, the silly people don't know their own silly business. [*Rising*] However, it's over and done with; and now I can go to bed at last without dreading tomorrow.

Pickering: I think I shall turn in too. Still, it's been a great occasion, a triumph for you. Good-night.

[*He goes out.*]

Higgins [*following him*]: Good-night. [*Over his shoulder, at the door*] Put out the lights, Eliza; and tell Mrs. Pearce not to make coffee for me in the morning: I'll take tea. [*He goes out.*]

[*Eliza tries to control herself and feel indifferent as she rises and walks across to the hearth to switch off the lights. By the time she gets there she is on the point of screaming. She sits down in Higgins's chair and holds on hard to the arms. Finally she gives way and flings herself furiously on the floor raging.*]

Higgins [*in despairing wrath outside*]: What the devil have I done with my slippers?

[*He appears at the door.*]

Liza [*snatching up the slippers, and hurling them at him one after the other with all her force*]: There are your slippers. And there. Take your slippers.

Higgins [*astounded*]: What on earth!

[*He comes to her.*] What's the matter? Get up.

[*He pulls her up.*] Anything wrong?

Liza [*breathless*]: Nothing wrong—with YOU. I've won your bet for you, haven't I? That's enough for you. _I_ don't matter, I suppose.

Higgins: YOU won my bet! You! Presumptuous insect! _I_ won it. What did you throw those slippers at me for?

Liza: Because I wanted to smash your face. I'd like to kill you, you selfish brute. Why didn't you leave me where you picked me out of—in the gutter [*She crisps her fingers, frantically*].

Higgins [*looking at her in cool wonder*]: The creature is nervous, after all.

[*Liza gives a suffocated scream of fury, and instinctively darts her nails at his face.*]

Higgins [*catching her wrists*]: Ah! Would you? Claws in, you cat. How dare you show your temper to me? Sit down and be quiet.

[*He throws her roughly into the easy-chair.*]

Liza [*crushed by superior strength and weight*]: What's to become of me? What's to become of me?

Higgins: How the devil do I know what's to become of you? What does it matter what becomes of you?

Liza: You don't care. I know you don't care. You wouldn't care if I was dead. I'm nothing to you—not so much as these slippers.

astounded: surprised presumptuous: arrogant

Higgins: Has anybody behaved badly to you? Colonel Pickering? Mrs. Pearce? Any of the servants?

Liza: No.

Higgins: I presume you don't pretend that I have treated you badly.

Liza: No.

Higgins: I am glad to hear it.

[*He moderates his tone.*] Perhaps you're tired after the strain of the day. Will you have a glass of champagne?

[*He moves towards the door.*]

Liza: No. [*recollecting her manners*] Thank you.

Higgins [*good-humored again*]: This has been coming on you for some days. I suppose it was natural for you to be anxious about the garden party. But that's all over now.

[*He pats her kindly on the shoulder. She writhes.*] There's nothing more to worry about.

Liza: No. Nothing more for you to worry about.

[*She suddenly rises and gets away from him by going to the piano bench, where she sits and hides her face.*] Oh God! I wish I was dead.

Higgins [*staring after her in sincere surprise*]: Why? in heaven's name, why?

[*Reasonably, going to her*] Listen to me, Eliza. All this irritation is purely subjective.

Liza: I don't understand. I'm too ignorant.

Higgins: It's only imagination. Low spirits and nothing else. Nobody's hurting you. Nothing's wrong. You go to bed like a good girl and sleep it off. Have a little cry and say your prayers, that will make you comfortable.

Liza: I heard YOUR prayers. "Thank God it's all over!"

Higgins [*impatiently*]: Well, don't you thank God it's all over? Now you are free and can do what you like.

Liza [*pulling herself together in desperation*]: What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What's to become of me?

Higgins [*enlightened, but not at all impressed*]: Oh, that's what's worrying you, is it?

[*He thrusts his hands into his pockets, and walks about in his usual manner, rattling the contents of his pockets, as if condescending to a trivial subject out of pure kindness.*] I shouldn't bother about it if I were you. I should imagine you won't have much difficulty in settling yourself, somewhere or other, though I hadn't quite realized that you were going away.

[*She looks quickly at him: he does not look at her, but examines the dessert stand on the piano and decides that he will eat an apple.*] You might marry, you know. You go to bed and have a

writhe: jerk rattle: make sound condescend: look down trivial: of little importance

good nice rest; and then get up and look at yourself in the glass; and you won't feel so cheap.

[*Eliza again looks at him, speechless, and does not stir. The look is quite lost on him, he eats his apple with a dreamy expression of happiness, as it is quite a good one.*]

Higgins [*a genial afterthought occurring to him*]: I daresay my mother could find some chap or other who would do very well—

Liza: We were above that at the corner of Tottenham Court Road.

Higgins [*waking up*]: What do you mean?

Liza: I sold flowers. I didn't sell myself. Now you've made a lady of me I'm not fit to sell anything else. I wish you'd left me where you found me.

Higgins [*slinging the core of the apple decisively into the grate*]: Tosh, Eliza. You needn't marry the fellow if you don't like him.

Liza: What else am I to do?

Higgins: Oh, lots of things. What about your old idea of a florist's shop? Pickering could set you up in one, he's lots of money. [*chuckling*] Why, six months ago you would have thought it the millennium to have a flower shop of your own. Come! You'll be all right. I must clear off to bed, I'm devilish sleepy. By the way, I came down for something.

Liza: Your slippers.

Higgins: Oh yes, of course. You shied them at me.

[*He picks them up, and is going out when she rises and speaks to him.*]

Liza: Before you go, sir—

Higgins [*dropping the slippers in his surprise at her calling him sir*]: Eh?

Liza: Do my clothes belong to me or to Colonel Pickering?

Higgins [*coming back into the room as if her question were the very climax of unreason*]: What the devil use would they be to Pickering?

Liza: He might want them for the next girl you pick up to experiment on.

Higgins [*shocked and hurt*]: Is THAT the way you feel towards us?

Liza: I want to know what I may take away with me. I don't want to be accused of stealing.

Higgins [*now deeply wounded*]: Stealing! You shouldn't have said that, Eliza. That shows a want of feeling.

Liza: I'm sorry. I'm only a common ignorant girl; and in my station I have to be careful. There can't be any feelings between the like of you and the like of me. Please will you tell me what belongs to me and what doesn't?

Higgins [*very sulky*]: You may take the whole damned houseful if you like. Except the jewels. Hand them over.

genial: pleasant decisive: firm

[*She puts them into his hands.*] If these belonged to me instead of to the jeweller, I'd ram them down your ungrateful throat.

[*He perfunctorily thrusts them into his pockets, unconsciously decorating himself with the protruding ends of the chains.*]

Liza [*taking a ring off*] : This ring isn't the jeweller's: it's the one you bought me in Brighton. I don't want it now.

[Higgins dashes the ring violently into the fireplace, and turns on her so threateningly that she crouches over the piano with her hands over her face, and exclaims.] Don't you hit me.

Higgins: Hit you! You infamous creature, how dare you accuse me of such a thing? It is you who have hit me. You have wounded me to the heart.

Liza [*thrilling with hidden joy*]: I'm glad. I've got a little of my own back, anyhow.

Higgins [*with dignity, in his finest professional style*]: You have caused me to lose my temper, a thing that has hardly ever happened to me before. I prefer to say nothing more tonight. I am going to bed.

Liza [*pertly*]: You'd better leave a note for Mrs. Pearce about the coffee; for she won't be told by me.

Higgins [*formally*]: Damn Mrs. Pearce; and damn the coffee; and damn you; and damn my own folly in having lavished MY hard-earned knowledge and the treasure of my regard and intimacy on a heartless gutter snipe.

[*He goes out with impressive decorum, and spoils it by slamming the door savagely. Eliza smiles for the first time; expresses her feelings by a wild pantomime in which an imitation of Higgins's exit is confused with her own triumph; and finally goes down on her knees on the hearthrug to look for the ring.*]

1. Why does Higgins remark "No more artificial duchesses"?
2. Who won the bet?
3. What makes Liza get agitated?
4. What made Liza reply, 'We were above that at the corner of Tottenham Court Road'?
5. What character trait of Liza is revealed in her arguments with Higgins?
6. Why did Higgins take away the jewels from Liza?
7. What makes Liza look for the ring after Higgins leaves?

perfunctorily: showing indifference decorum: behaviour pantomime: gesture

ACT V

[*Mrs. Higgins's drawing-room. She is at her writing-table as before. The parlour-maid comes in.*]

The Parlour- maid [*at the door*]: Mr. Henry, mam, is downstairs with Colonel Pickering.

Mrs. Higgins: Well, show them up.

The Parlour-maid: They're using the telephone, mam. Telephoning to the police, I think.

Mrs. Higgins: What!

The Parlour-maid [*coming further in and lowering her voice*]: Mr. Henry's in a state, mam. I thought I'd better tell you.

Mrs. Higgins: If you had told me that Mr. Henry was not in a state it would have been more surprising. Tell them to come up when they've finished with the police. I suppose he's lost something.

The Parlour-maid: Yes, mam. [*going*]

Mrs. Higgins Go upstairs and tell Miss Doolittle that Mr. Henry and the Colonel are here. Ask her not to come down till I send for her.

The Parlour-maid: Yes, mam.

[*Higgins bursts in. He is, as the parlour-maid has said, in a state.*]

Higgins: Look here, mother, here's a confounded thing!

Mrs. Higgins: Yes, dear. Good-morning.

[*He checks his impatience and kisses her, whilst the parlour-maid goes out.*]

What is it?

Higgins: Eliza's bolted.

Mrs. Higgins [*calmly continuing her writing*]: You must have frightened her.

Higgins: Frightened her! nonsense! She was left last night, as usual, to turn out the lights and all that; and instead of going to bed she changed her clothes and went right off, her bed wasn't slept in. She came in a cab for her things before seven this morning; and that fool Mrs. Pearce let her have them without telling me a word about it. What am I to do?

Mrs. Higgins: Do without, I'm afraid, Henry. The girl has a perfect right to leave if she chooses.

Higgins [*wandering distractedly across the room*]: But I can't find anything. I don't know what appointments I've got. I'm—

[*Pickering comes in. Mrs. Higgins puts down her pen and turns away from the writing-table.*]

Pickering [*shaking hands*]: Good-morning, Mrs. Higgins. Has Henry told you?

[*He sits down on the ottoman.*] The inspector made a lot of difficulties. I

really think he suspected us of some improper purpose.

Mrs. Higgins: Well, of course he did. What right have you to go to the police ?

[*She sits down again, deeply vexed.*]

Higgins: But we want to find her.

Pickering: We can't let her go like this, you know, Mrs. Higgins. What were we to do?

Mrs. Higgins: You have no more sense.

[*Parlour-maid comes in and breaks off the conversation.*]

The Parlour-maid: Mr. Henry, a gentleman wants to see you very particular. A Mr. Doolittle, Sir.

Pickering: Doolittle! Do you mean the dustman?

The Parlour-maid: Dustman! Oh no, sir: a gentleman.

Higgins [*springing up excitedly*]: By George, Pick, it's some relative of hers that she's gone to.

[*To the Parlour-maid*] Send him up, quick.

The Parlour-maid: Yes, Sir. [*She goes.*]

Mrs. Higgins : Do you know any of her people?

Pickering: Only her father: the fellow we told you about.

The Parlour-maid [*announcing*]: Mr. Doolittle.

[*She withdraws.*

Doolittle enters. He is brilliantly dressed in a new fashionable frock-coat, with white waistcoat and grey trousers. He walks straight to Higgins, and accosts him with vehement reproach.]

Doolittle [*indicating his own person*]: See here! Do you see this? You done this.

Pickering: Has Eliza been buying you clothes?

Doolittle: Eliza! Not she. Not half. Why would she buy me clothes?

Mrs. Higgins: Good-morning, Mr. Doolittle. Won't you sit down?

Doolittle [*taken aback as he becomes conscious that he has forgotten his hostess*]: Asking your pardon, ma'am.

[*He approaches her and shakes her proffered hand.*] Thank you.

[*He sits down on the ottoman, on Pickering's right.*] I am that full of what has happened to me that I can't think of anything else.

Higgins: What the dickens has happened to you?

Doolittle: But this is something that you done to me, yes, you, Henry Higgins.

Higgins: Have you found Eliza? That's the point.

vexed: worried accosts: speaks vehement: powerful proffer: extend

Doolittle: Have you lost her?

Higgins: Yes.

Doolittle: You have all the luck, you have. I ain't found her; but she'll find me quick enough now after what you done to me.

Mrs. Higgins: But what has my son done to you, Mr. Doolittle?

Doolittle: Done to me! Ruined me. Destroyed my happiness. Tied me up and delivered me into the hands of middle class morality.

Higgins [*rising intolerantly and standing over Doolittle*]: You're raving. You're drunk. You're mad. I gave you five pounds. After that I had two conversations with you, at half-a-crown an hour. I've never seen you since.

Doolittle: Oh! Drunk! am I? Mad! am I? Tell me this. Did you or did you not write a letter to an old blighter in America that was giving five millions to fund Moral Reform Societies all over the world, and that wanted you to invent a universal language for him?

Higgins: What! Ezra D. Wannafeller! He's dead.

[*He sits down again carelessly.*]

Doolittle: Yes: he's dead; and I'm done for. Now did you or did you not write a letter to him to say that the most original moralist at present in England, to the best of your knowledge, was Alfred Doolittle, a common dustman.

Higgins: Oh, after your last visit I remember making some silly joke of the kind.

Doolittle: Henry Higgins, thanks to your silly joking, he leaves me a share in his Pre-digested Cheese Trust worth three thousand a year on condition that I lecture for his Wannafeller Moral Reform World League as often as they ask me up to six times a year.

Higgins: The devil he does! Whew!

[*Brightening suddenly.*] What a lark!

Pickering: A safe thing for you, Doolittle. They won't ask you twice.

Doolittle: It ain't the lecturing I mind. I'll lecture them blue in the face, I will, and not turn a hair. It's making a gentleman of me that I object to. Who asked him to make a gentleman of me? I was happy. I was free. I touched pretty nigh everybody for money when I wanted it, same as I touched you, Henry Higgins. Now I am worrited; tied neck and heels; and everybody touches me for Money. It's a fine thing for you, says my solicitor. Is it? says I. You mean it's a good thing for you, I says. When I was a poor man and had a solicitor once when they found a pram in the dust cart, he got me off, and got shut of me and got me shut of him as quick as he could. Same

with the doctors, used to shove me out of the hospital before I could hardly stand on my legs, and nothing to pay. Now they finds out that I'm not a healthy man and can't live unless they looks after me twice a day. In the house I'm not let do a hand's turn for myself, somebody else must do it and touch me for it. A year ago I hadn't a relative in the world except two or three that wouldn't speak to me. Now I've fifty, and not a decent week's wages among the lot of them. I have to live for others and not for myself, that's middle class morality. You talk of losing Eliza. Don't you be anxious, I bet she's on my doorstep by this: she that could support herself easy by selling flowers if I wasn't respectable. I have to live for others and not for myself, that's middle class morality. And the next one to touch me will be you, Henry Higgins. I'll have to learn to speak middle class language from you, instead of speaking proper English.

Mrs. Higgins: But, my dear Mr. Doolittle, you need not suffer all this if you are really in earnest. Nobody can force you to accept this bequest. You can repudiate it. Isn't that so, Colonel Pickering?

Pickering: I believe so.

Doolittle [*softening his manner in deference to her sex*]: That's the tragedy of it, ma'am. It's easy to say chuck it; but I haven't the nerve. Which one of us has? We're all intimidated. Intimidated, ma'am, that's what we are. It's a choice between the workhouse and the middle class; and I haven't the nerve for the workhouse. Intimidated, that's what I am. Broke. Bought up. And that's what your son has brought me to.

[*He is overcome by emotion.*]

Mrs. Higgins: Well, I'm very glad you're not going to do anything foolish, Mr. Doolittle. For this solves the problem of Eliza's future. You can provide for her now.

Doolittle [*with melancholy resignation*]: Yes, ma'am; I'm expected to provide for everyone now, out of three thousand a year.

Higgins [*jumping up*]: Nonsense! He can't provide for her. He shan't provide for her. She doesn't belong to him. I paid him five pounds for her. Doolittle, either you're an honest man or a rogue.

Doolittle [*tolerantly*]: A little of both, Henry, like the rest of us, a little of both.

Mrs. Higgins: Henry, don't be absurd. If you really want to know where Eliza is, she is upstairs.

Higgins [*amazed*]: Upstairs!!! Then I shall jolly soon fetch her downstairs. [*He makes resolutely for the door.*]

Mrs. Higgins: Sit down, dear; and listen to me.

repudiate: reject, refuse deference: respect

Higgins: Oh very well, very well, very well.

[*He throws himself ungraciously on the ottoman, with his face towards the windows.*] But I think you might have told me this half an hour ago.

Mrs. Higgins: Eliza came to me this morning. She passed the night partly walking about in a rage, partly trying to throw herself into the river and being afraid to, and partly in the Carlton Hotel. She told me of the brutal way you two treated her.

Higgins [*bounding up again*]: What!

Pickering [*rising also*]: My dear Mrs. Higgins, she's been telling you stories.

[*Turning on Higgins.*] Higgins did you bully her after I went to bed?

Higgins: Just the other way about. She threw my slippers in my face. She behaved in the most outrageous way. And used perfectly awful language.

Pickering [*astonished*]: But why? What did we do to her?

Mrs. Higgins: I think I know pretty well what you did. The girl is naturally rather affectionate, I think. Isn't she, Mr. Doolittle?

Doolittle: Very tender-hearted, ma'am. Takes after me.

Mrs. Higgins: Just so. She had become attached to you both. She worked very hard for you, Henry! Well, it seems that when the great day of trial came, and she did this wonderful thing for you without making a single mistake, you two sat there and never said a word to her, but talked together of how glad you were that it was all over and how you had been bored with the whole thing. And then you were surprised because she threw your slippers at you! -I- should have thrown the fire-irons at you.

Higgins: We said nothing except that we were tired and wanted to go to bed. Did we, Pick?

Mrs. Higgins: You didn't thank her, or pet her, or admire her, or tell her how splendid she'd been.

Higgins[*impatiently*] : But she knew all about that. We didn't make speeches to her, if that's what you mean.

Pickering [*conscience stricken*]: Perhaps we were a little inconsiderate. Is she very angry?

Mrs. Higgins [*returning to her place at the writing-table*]: Well, I'm afraid she won't go back to Wimpole Street but she says she is quite willing to meet you on friendly terms and to let bygones be bygones.

Higgins [*furious*]: Is she, by George? Ho!

Mrs. Higgins : If you promise to behave yourself, Henry, I'll ask her to come down. If not, go home; for you have taken up quite enough of my time.

outrageous: shocking awful: unpleasant

[*The Parlour-maid answers the bell. Pickering sits down in Doolittle's place.*]

Mrs. Higgins: Ask Miss Doolittle to come down, please.

The Parlour-maid: Yes, mam. [*She goes out.*]

Mrs. Higgins: Now, Henry, be good.

Higgins: I am behaving myself perfectly.

Pickering: He is doing his best, Mrs. Higgins.

[*A pause. Higgins throws back his head; stretches out his legs; and begins to whistle.*]

Higgins [*springing up, out of patience*]: Where the devil is that girl? Are we to wait here all day?

[*Eliza enters, sunny, self-possessed, and giving a staggeringly convincing exhibition of ease of manner. She carries a little work-basket, and is very much at home. Pickering is too much taken aback to rise.*]

Liza: How do you do, Professor Higgins? Are you quite well?

Higgins [*choking*]: Am I—

[*He can say no more.*]

Liza: But of course you are, you are never ill. So glad to see you again, Colonel Pickering.

[*He rises hastily; and they shake hands.*] Quite chilly this morning, isn't it?

[*She sits down on his left. He sits beside her.*]

Higgins: Don't you dare try this game on me. I taught it to you; and it doesn't take me in. Get up and come home; and don't be a fool.

[*Eliza takes a piece of needlework from her basket, and begins to stitch at it, without taking the least notice of this outburst.*]

Mrs. Higgins: Very nicely put, indeed, Henry. No woman could resist such an invitation.

Higgins: You let her alone, mother. Let her speak for herself. You will jolly soon see whether she has an idea that I haven't put into her head or a word that I haven't put into her mouth. I tell you I have created this thing out of the squashed cabbage leaves of Covent Garden; and now she pretends to play the fine lady with me.

Mrs. Higgins [*placidly*]: Yes, dear; but you'll sit down, won't you?

[*Higgins sits down again, savagely.*]

Liza [*to Pickering, taking no apparent notice of Higgins, and working away deftly*]: Will you drop me altogether now that the experiment is over, Colonel Pickering?

Pickering: Oh don't. You mustn't think of it as an experiment. It shocks me, somehow.

Liza: Oh, I'm only a squashed cabbage leaf.

placid: calm savage: ruthless deftly: mildly squashed: squeezed

Pickering [*impulsively*]: No.

Liza [*continuing quietly*] : —but I owe so much to you that I should be very unhappy if you forgot me.

Pickering: It's very kind of you to say so, Miss Doolittle.

Liza: It's not because you paid for my dresses. I know you are generous to everybody with money. But it was from you that I learnt really nice manners; and that is what makes one a lady, isn't it? You see it was so very difficult for me with the example of Professor Higgins always before me. I was brought up to be just like him, unable to control myself, and using bad language on the slightest provocation. And I should never have known that ladies and gentlemen didn't behave like that if you hadn't been there.

Higgins: Well!

Pickering: Oh, that's only his way, you know. He doesn't mean it.

Liza: Oh, I didn't mean it either, when I was a flower girl. It was only my way. But you see I did it; and that's what makes the difference after all.

Pickering: No doubt. Still, he taught you to speak; and I couldn't have done that, you know.

Liza [*trivially*]: Of course: that is his profession.

Higgins: Damnation!

Liza [*continuing*]: It was just like learning to dance in the fashionable way, there was nothing more than that in it. But do you know what began my real education?

Pickering: What?

Liza [*stopping her work for a moment*]: Your calling me Miss Doolittle that day when I first came to Wimpole Street. That was the beginning of self-respect for me.

Mrs. Higgins: Please don't grind your teeth, Henry.

Pickering: Well, this is really very nice of you, Miss Doolittle.

Liza: I should like you to call me Eliza, now, if you would.

Pickering: Thank you. Eliza, of course.

Liza: And I should like Professor Higgins to call me Miss Doolittle.

Higgins: I'll see you damned first.

Mrs. Higgins: Henry! Henry!

Pickering [*laughing*]: Why don't you slang back at him? Don't stand it. It would do him a lot of good.

Liza: I can't. I could have done it once; but now I can't go back to it. Last night, when I was wandering about, a girl spoke to me; and I tried to get back into the old way with her; but it was no use. Leaving Wimpole Street finishes it.

Pickering [*much alarmed*]: Oh! but you're coming back to Wimpole Street, aren't you? You'll forgive Higgins?

Higgins [*rising*]: Forgive! Will she? by George! Let her go. Let her find out how she can get on without us. She will relapse into the gutter in three weeks without me at her elbow.

Pickering: He's incorrigible, Eliza. You won't relapse, will you?

Liza: No: Not now. Never again. I have learnt my lesson. I don't believe I could utter one of the old sounds if I tried.

[*Doolittle touches her on her left shoulder. She drops her work, losing her self-possession utterly at the spectacle of her father's splendour.*] A—a—a—a—a—ah—ow—ooh!

Doolittle: Can you blame the girl? Don't look at me like that, Eliza. It ain't my fault. I've come into money.

Liza : You must have touched a millionaire this time, dad.

Doolittle: I have. But I'm dressed something special today. I'm going to St. George's, Hanover Square. Your stepmother is going to marry me.

Liza [*angrily*]: You're going to let yourself down to marry that low common woman!

Pickering [*quietly*]: He ought to, Eliza. [*To Doolittle*] Why has she changed her mind?

Doolittle [*sadly*]: Intimidated, Governor. Intimidated. Middle class morality claims its victim. Won't you put on your hat, Liza, and come and see me turned off?

Liza: If the Colonel says I must, I-I'll [almost sobbing] I'll demean myself. And get insulted for my pains, like enough.

Doolittle: Don't be afraid: she never comes to words with anyone now, poor woman! respectability has broke all the spirit out of her.

Pickering [*squeezing Eliza's elbow gently*]: Be kind to them, Eliza. Make the best of it.

Liza [*forcing a little smile for him through her vexation*]: Oh well, just to show there's no ill feeling. I'll be back in a moment.

[*She goes out.*]

Doolittle [*sitting down beside Pickering*]: I feel uncommon nervous about the ceremony, Colonel. I wish you'd come and see me through it.

Pickering: With pleasure. As far as a bachelor can.

Mrs. Higgins: May I come, Mr. Doolittle? I should be very sorry to miss your wedding.

Doolittle: I should indeed be honored by your condescension, ma'am; and my poor old woman would take it as a tremenjous compliment. She's been

incorrigible: uncorrectable relapse: regress, fall intimidate: frighten

very low, thinking of the happy days that are no more.

Mrs. Higgins [*rising*]: I'll order the carriage and get ready.

[*The men rise, except Higgins.*] I shan't be more than fifteen minutes.

[As *she goes to the door Eliza comes in, hatted and buttoning her gloves.*]

I'm going to the church to see your father married, Eliza. You had better come in the brougham with me. Colonel Pickering can go on with the bridegroom.

Pickering: Before I go, Eliza, do forgive him and come back to us.

Liza: I don't think papa would allow me. Would you, dad?

Doolittle [*sad but magnanimous*]: They played you off very cunning, Eliza, them two sportsmen. If it had been only one of them, you could have nailed him. I shan't interfere. It's time for us to go, Colonel. So long, Henry. See you in St. George's, Eliza.

[*He goes out.*]

Pickering [*coaxing*]: Do stay with us, Eliza.

[*He follows Doolittle. Eliza goes out on the balcony to avoid being alone with Higgins. He rises and joins her there. She immediately comes back into the room and makes for the door; but he goes along the balcony quickly and gets his back to the door before she reaches it.*]

Higgins: Well, Eliza, you've had a bit of your own back, as you call it. Have you had enough? Are you going to be reasonable? Or do you want any more?

Liza: You want me back only to pick up your slippers and put up with your tempers and fetch and carry for you.

Higgins: I haven't said I wanted you back at all.

Liza: Oh, indeed. Then what are we talking about?

Higgins: About you, not about me. If you come back I shall treat you just as I have always treated you. I can't change my nature; and I don't intend to change my manners. My manners are exactly the same as Colonel Pickering's.

Liza: That's not true. He treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess.

Higgins: And I treat a duchess as if she was a flower girl.

Liza: I see.

[*She turns away composedly, and sits on the ottoman, facing the window.*] The same to everybody.

Higgins: Just so.

Liza: Like father.

Higgins [*grinning, a little taken down*]: Without accepting the comparison at all points, Eliza, it's quite true that your father is not a

magnanimous: noble, great tremendous: wonderful, terrific

snob, and that he will be quite at home in any station of life to which his eccentric destiny may call him. [*Seriously*] The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls.

Liza: Amen. You are a born preacher.

Higgins [*irritated*]: The question is not whether I treat you rudely, but whether you ever heard me treat anyone else better.

Liza [*with sudden sincerity*]: I don't care how you treat me. I don't mind your swearing at me. I don't mind a black eye: I've had one before this. But [*standing up and facing him*] I won't be passed over.

Higgins : Then get out of my way; for I won't stop for you. You talk about me as if I were a motor bus.

Liza: So you are a motor bus, all bounce and go, and no consideration for anyone. But I can do without you: don't think I can't.

Higgins: I know you can. I told you could.

Liza [*wounded, getting away from him to the other side of the ottoman with her face to the hearth*]: I know you did, you brute. You wanted to get rid of me.

Higgins: Liar.

Liza: Thank you. [*She sits down with dignity.*]

Higgins: You never asked yourself, I suppose, whether I could do without YOU.

Liza [*earnestly*]: Don't you try to get round me. You'll HAVE to do without me.

Higgins [*arrogant*]: I can do without anybody. I have my own soul, my own spark of divine fire. But [*with sudden humility*] I shall miss you, Eliza. And I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance. I like them, rather.

Liza: Well, you have both of them on your gramophone and in your book of photographs. When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the machine on. It's got no feelings to hurt.

Higgins: I can't turn your soul on. Leave me those feelings; and you can take away the voice and the face. They are not you.

Liza: Oh, you ARE a devil. You can twist the heart in a girl as easy as some could twist her arms to hurt her. Mrs. Pearce warned me. Time and again she has wanted to leave you; and you always got round her at the last minute. And you don't care a bit for her. And you don't care a bit for me.

Higgins: I care for life, for humanity; and you are a part of it that has come my way and been built into my house.

Liza: I won't care for anybody that doesn't care for me.

Higgins : Commercial principles,

Eliza. Like [*reproducing her Covent Garden pronunciation with professional exactness*] s'yollin voylets [*selling violets*], isn't it?

Liza : Don't sneer at me. It's mean to sneer at me.

Higgins: I have never sneered in my life. Sneering doesn't become either the human face or the human soul. I am expressing my righteous contempt for Commercialism. I don't and won't trade in affection. If you come back, come back for the sake of good fellowship; for you'll get nothing else. if you dare to set up your little dog's tricks of fetching and carrying slippers against my creation of a Duchess Eliza, I'll slam the door in your silly face.

Liza: What did you do it for if you didn't care for me?

Higgins [*heartily*]: Why, because it was my job.

Liza: You never thought of the trouble it would make for me.

Higgins: Would the world ever have been made if its maker had been afraid of making trouble? Making life means making trouble.

Liza: I'm no preacher, I don't notice things like that. I notice that you don't notice me.

Higgins [*jumping up and walking about intolerantly*]: Eliza, you're an idiot. I waste the treasures of my Miltonic mind by spreading them before you.

Liza: What am I to come back for?

Higgins [*bouncing up on his knees on the ottoman and leaning over it to her*]: For the fun of it. That's why I took you on.

Liza [*with averted face*]: And you may throw me out tomorrow if I don't do everything you want me to?

Higgins: Yes; and you may walk out tomorrow if I don't do everything YOU want me to.

Liza: And live with my stepmother?

Higgins: Yes, or sell flowers.

Liza: Oh! if I only COULD go back to my flower basket! I should be independent of both you and father and all the world! Why did you take my independence from me? Why did I give it up? I'm a slave now, for all my fine clothes.

Higgins: Not a bit. I'll adopt you as my daughter and settle money on you if you like. Or would you rather marry Pickering?

Liza [*looking fiercely round at him*]: I wouldn't marry YOU if you asked me; and you're nearer my age than what he is.

Higgins [*gently*]: Than he is: not "than what he is."

Liza [losing her temper and rising]: I'll talk as I like. You're not my teacher now.

Higgins [*reflectively*]: I don't suppose Pickering would, though. He's as confirmed an old bachelor as I am.

Liza: That's not what I want; and don't you think it. I've always had chaps enough wanting me that way. Freddy Hill writes to me twice and three times a day, sheets and sheets.

Higgins [*getting off the ottoman*]: You have no right to encourage him.

Liza: Every girl has a right to be loved.

Higgins: Can he MAKE anything of you? That's the point.

Liza: Perhaps I could make something of him. But I never thought of us making anything of one another; and you never think of anything else. I only want to be natural.

Higgins: It's all you'll get until you stop being a common idiot. If you're going to be a lady, you'll have to give up feeling neglected if the men you know don't spend half their time snivelling over you and the other half giving you black eyes.

Liza [*desperate*]: Oh, you are a cruel tyrant. I can't talk to you: you turn everything against me, I'm always in the wrong. But you know very well all the time that you're nothing but a bully. You know I can't go back to the gutter, as you call it, and that I have no real friends in the world but you and the Colonel. I'll marry Freddy, I will, as soon as he's able to support me.

Higgins [*sitting down beside her*] : Rubbish! You shall marry an ambassador. You shall marry the Governor-General of India or the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, or somebody who wants a deputy-queen. I'm not going to have my masterpiece thrown away on Freddy.

Liza: You think I like you to say that. But I haven't forgot what you said a minute ago; and I won't be coaxed round as if I was a baby or a puppy. If I can't have kindness, I'll have independence.

Higgins: Independence? That's middle class blasphemy. We are all dependent on one another, every soul of us on earth.

Liza [*rising determinedly*]: I'll let you see whether I'm dependent on you. If you can preach, I can teach. I'll go and be a teacher.

Higgins: What'll you teach, in heaven's name?

Liza: What you taught me. I'll teach phonetics.

Higgins: Ha! Ha! Ha!

Liza: I'll offer myself as an assistant to Professor Nepean.

Higgins [*rising in a fury*]: What! That impostor! that humbug! That toadying ignoramus! Teach him my

blasphemy: language that insults or shows a lack of respect ignoramus: fool, idiot

methods! my discoveries! You take one step in his direction and I'll wring your neck. [He lays hands on her]. Do you hear?

Liza [*defiantly non-resistant*]: Wring away. What do I care? I knew you'd strike me some day.

[*He lets her go, stamping with rage at having forgotten himself, and recoils so hastily that he stumbles back into his seat on the ottoman.*]

Aha! Now I know how to deal with you. What a fool I was not to think of it before! You can't take away the knowledge you gave me.

Higgins [*wondering at her*]: You damned impudent slut, you! But it's better than snivelling; better than fetching slippers and finding spectacles, isn't it? [*Rising*] By George, Eliza, I said I'd make a woman of you; and I have. I like you like this.

Liza : Yes, you turn round and make up to me now that I'm not afraid of you, and can do without you.

Higgins: Of course I do, you little fool. Five minutes ago you were like a millstone round my neck. Now you're a tower of strength, a consort battleship. You and I and Pickering will be three old bachelors together instead of only two men and a silly girl.

[*Mrs. Higgins returns, dressed for the wedding. Eliza instantly becomes cool and elegant.*]

Mrs. Higgins: The carriage is waiting, Eliza. Are you ready?

Liza: Quite. Is the Professor coming?

Mrs. Higgins: Certainly not. He can't behave himself in church. He makes remarks out loud all the time on the clergyman's pronunciation.

Liza: Then I shall not see you again, Professor. Good bye.

[*She goes to the door.*]

Mrs. Higgins [*coming to Higgins*]: Good-bye, dear.

Higgins: Good-bye, mother.

[*He is about to kiss her, when he recollects something.*] Oh, by the way, Eliza, order a ham and a Stilton cheese, will you? And buy me a pair of reindeer gloves, number eights, and a tie to match that new suit of mine. You can choose the color.

[*His cheerful, careless, vigorous voice shows that he is incorrigible.*]

Liza [*disdainfully*]: Buy them yourself.

[*She sweeps out.*]

Mrs. Higgins: I'm afraid you've spoiled that girl, Henry. But never mind, dear, I'll buy you the tie and gloves.

Higgins [*sunnily*]: Oh, don't bother. She'll buy em all right enough. Good-bye.

[*They kiss. Mrs. Higgins runs out. Higgins, left alone, rattles his cash in his pocket; chuckles; and disports himself in a highly self-satisfied manner.*]

1. Why wasn't Mrs. Higgins surprised at Mr. Higgins' condition when Liza left his house?
2. Why did Higgins and Pickering go to the police?
3. Whom did Doolittle accuse of for his change?
4. What did Higgins do to Mr. Doolittle?
5. What makes Doolittle 'worried; tied neck and heels'?
6. Why does Liza address Higgins as 'Prof. Higgins'?
7. Who is the 'squashed cabbage leaves of Covent Garden' according to Higgins?
8. Whom did Liza learn good manners from?
9. When did Liza feel self-respect for herself?
10. Why doesn't Liza want to go to Wimpole Street?
11. What does Eliza mean when she said 'I won't be passed over'?
12. How does Higgins treat Mrs. Pearce?
13. What is Higgins' objection against Liza marrying Freddy?

Understanding the Text

1. Pygmalion is a sculptor who creates the sculpture of a woman so perfectly carved that he falls in love with her. Aphrodite is moved by his love and she endows the statue with life. The statue becomes Galatea, a beautiful woman, whom he marries. How does Shaw transform this myth in his play?
2. Can *Pygmalion* be set in the modern day, when there are, generally, more options and opportunities for women?
3. Higgins claims that he treats everyone equally, that he does not change his behaviour under different circumstances. Does Higgins himself change in the course of the play?
4. At Mrs. Higgins' party, Freddy and Clara confuse Eliza's normal way of speaking for "the new small talk." What does this indicate about the way language works in different contexts?
5. Why is it that the play's poorest characters, Eliza and her father, are also two of the most gifted characters?

7. Higgins and Pickering tell Mrs. Higgins that Eliza is an incredibly quick learner. They even call her a genius. Who deserves more credit for Eliza's transformation: Eliza herself, because of her potential intelligence, or Higgins, for bringing it out?

8. Eliza tells Higgins that she wants to be independent. Does she achieve that independence by the end of the play?

Writing about the Text

1. It has been said that *Pygmalion* is not a play about the transformation of an immature and unrefined girl into a confident woman. Justify?

2. At the beginning of the play, Higgins sets out to teach Eliza Doolittle. Don't you think that, in the process, it is Higgins himself who benefits the most by the 'teaching'? Apart from 'fetching slippers and finding spectacles', what more, of enduring value, does Higgins earn?

3. Can *Pygamlion* be called 'a romantic in five acts'? How does the play conform (or not) to the traditional form of a romance? (for example: a boy meets a girl, the boy likes her, he meets the girl's father, faces disapproval, marriage, living happily ever after)

4. While Eliza Doolittle is being remade, Victorian society itself can be said to be unmade. How does Shaw reveal the pruderies, hypocrisies and inconsistencies of this higher society to which the Kerbstone flower girl aspires to be a part of? Whom does he sympathise?

5. Attempt character sketches of:

    1. Professor Henry Higgins
    2. Mrs. Pearce
    3. Alfred Doolittle
    4. Mrs. Higgins

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Section 5
Novella

Preface

The novel as a genre can be regarded as a recent literary invention when compared to poetry and drama which can be traced back to the ancient literary works such as the Babylonian epic of *Gilgamesh* (2150-1400 BC) and the Greek play *Oresteia* (458 BC) written by *Aeschylus*. A novel is a long narrative, normally in prose which describes fictional characters and events usually in the form of a sequential story. Some scholars date the birth of modern novel to the publication of the eighteenth century novel Pamela or Virtue Rewarded (1740) authored by Samuel Richardson.

The English novel has come a long way from allegory and romanticism with vigorous attempts at verisimilitude and associations with middle class pragmatism and morality. Within the broader framework, the novel encompasses various subgenres such as picaresque, epistolary, Gothic romance, social realist, political, historical and so on.

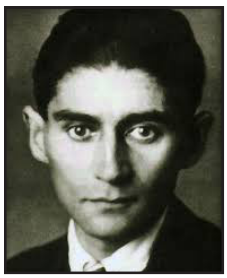
Like a novel, a novella is a long narrative, much longer than a short story and slightly shorter than a novel. Hence it bears the attributes of both the novel and the short story.

Learning Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the literary form 'novella'.
- identify the major concept of 'absurd literature'.
- demonstrate an understanding of the literary device 'magical realism' in fiction.
- understand and critically review the trends in modern post-war fiction.
- analyse the theme and plot of a work of fiction.
- demonstrate an awareness of various aspects of first person narrative.
- compare and contrast different types of characters like flat and round.
- critically analyse and study the characters.
- develop a taste for reading fiction.

Franz Kafka (1883-1924)



Franz Kafka, one of the most acclaimed and influential German writers of the 20th century is renowned for his prophetic and profoundly enigmatic stories that often portray human degradation and cruelty. The term 'Kafkaesque' is often used to relate to his writings characterised by a senseless, disorienting and menacing complexity. Most of his works deal with the theme of absurdity of life, human alienation, physical and psychological brutality, parent-child conflict and mystical transformations. His works include *The Metamorphosis*, *In the Penal Colony* (1914), *The Trial* (1925), *The Castle* (1926) and *Amerika* (1927).

The Metamorphosis (Die Verwandlung) is a novella by Franz Kafka published in 1915. The story revolves around a travelling sales man, Gregor Samsa who finds himself transformed overnight in to a large monstrous insect, becoming an object of disgrace to his family. The cause of Samsa's transformation is not revealed by the writer. After Samsa's metamorphosis, his family members struggle with feelings of both sympathy and revulsion towards him. Samsa becomes an outsider, an alienated man in his own house. Kafka shows the difficulties of living in a modern society and how ordinary people can become as cruel as the Samsas who are able to turn their backs on their own family members. The novella is a comic meditation on the human feelings of inadequacy, guilt and isolation.

The Metamorphosis

I

One morning, as Gregor Samsa was waking up from anxious dreams, he discovered that in bed he had been changed into a monstrous verminous bug. He lay on his armour-hard back and saw, as he lifted his head up a little, his brown, arched abdomen divided up into rigid bow-like sections. From this height the blanket, just about ready to slide off completely, could hardly stay in place. His numerous legs, pitifully thin in comparison to the rest of his circumference, flickered helplessly before his eyes.

'What's happened to me,' he thought. It was no dream. His room, a proper

room for a human being, only somewhat too small, lay quietly between the four well-known walls. Above the table, on which an unpacked collection of sample cloth goods was spread out (Samsa was a traveling salesman) hung the picture which he had cut out of an illustrated magazine a little while ago and set in a pretty gilt frame. It was a picture of a woman with a fur hat and a fur boa. She sat erect there, lifting up in the direction of the viewer a solid fur muff into which her entire forearm disappeared.

Gregor's glance then turned to the window. The dreary weather (the rain drops were falling audibly down on the metal window ledge) made him quite melancholy. 'Why don't I keep sleeping for a little while longer and forget all this foolishness,' he thought. But this was entirely impractical, for he was used to sleeping on his right side, and in his present state he couldn't get himself into this position. No matter how hard he threw himself onto his right side, he always rolled again onto his back. He must have tried it a hundred times, closing his eyes, so that he would not have to see the wriggling legs, and gave up only when he began to feel a light, dull pain in his side which he had never felt before.

'O God,' he thought, 'what a demanding job I've chosen! Day in, day out on the road. The stresses of trade are much greater than the work going on at head office, and, in addition to that, I have to deal with the problems of traveling, the worries about train connections, irregular bad food, temporary and constantly changing human relationships which never come from the heart. To hell with it all!' He felt a slight itching on the top of his abdomen. He slowly pushed himself on his back closer to the bed post so that he could lift his head more easily, found the itchy part, which was entirely covered with small white spots (he did not know what to make of them), and wanted to feel the place with a leg. But here tracted it immediately, for the contact felt like a cold shower all over him.

He slid back again into his earlier position. 'This getting up early,' he thought, 'makes a man quite idiotic. A man must have his sleep. Other traveling salesmen live like harem women. For instance, when I come back to the inn during the course of the morning to write up the necessary orders, these gentlemen are just sitting down to breakfast. If I were to try that with my boss, I'd be thrown out on the spot. Still, who knows whether that mightn't be really good for me. If I didn't hold back for my parents' sake, I would've quit ages ago. I would've gone to the boss and told him just what I think from the bottom of my

heart. He would've fallen right off his desk! How weird it is to sit up at the desk and talk down to the employee from way up there. The boss has trouble hearing, so the employee has to step up quite close to him. Anyway, I haven't completely given up that hope yet. Once I've got together the money to pay off the parents' debt to him–that should take another five or six years–I'll do it for sure. Then I'll make the big break. In any case, right now I have to get up. My train leaves at five o'clock.'

And he looked over at the alarm clock ticking away by the chest of drawers. 'Good God,' he thought. It was half past six and the hands were going quietly on. It was past the half hour, already nearly quarter to. Could the alarm have failed to ring? One saw from the bed that it was properly set for four o'clock. Certainly it had rung. Yes, but was it possible to sleep through this noise that made the furniture shake? Now, it's true he'd not slept quietly, but evidently he'd slept all the more deeply. Still, what should he do now? The next train left at seven o'clock. To catch that one, he would have to go in a mad rush. The sample collection wasn't packed up yet, and he really didn't feel particularly fresh and active. And even if he caught the train, there was no avoiding a blow up with the boss, because the firm's errand boy would've waited for the five o'clock train and reported the news of his absence long ago. He was the boss's minion, without backbone or intelligence. Well then, what if he reported in sick? But that would be extremely embarrassing and suspicious, because during his five years' service Gregor hadn't been sick even once. The boss would certainly come with the doctor from the health insurance company and would reproach his parents for their lazy son and cut short all objections with the insurance doctor's comments; for him everyone was completely healthy but really lazy about work. And besides, would the doctor in this case be totally wrong? Apart from a really excessive drowsiness after the long sleep, Gregor in fact felt quite well and even had a really strong appetite.

As he was thinking all this over in the greatest haste, without being able to make the decision to get out of bed (the alarm clock was indicating exactly quarter to seven) there was a cautious knock on the door by the head of the bed. 'Gregor,' a voice called (it was his mother!) 'it's quarter to seven. Don't you want to be on your way?' The soft voice! Gregor was startled when he heard his voice answering. It was clearly and unmistakably his earlier voice, but in it was intermingled, as if from below, an irrepressibly painful squeaking which left the words positively

distinct only in the first moment and distorted them in the reverberation, so that one didn't know if one had heard correctly. Gregor wanted to answer in detail and explain everything, but in these circumstances he confined himself to saying, 'Yes, yes, thank you mother. I'm getting up right away.' Because of the wooden door the change in Gregor's voice was not really noticeable outside, so his mother calmed down with this explanation and shuffled off. However, as a result of the short conversation the other family members became aware of the fact that Gregor was unexpectedly still at home, and already his father was knocking on one side door, weakly but with his fist. 'Gregor, Gregor,' he called out, 'what's going on?' And after a short while he urged him on again in a deeper voice. 'Gregor!' Gregor!' At the other side door, however, his sister knocked lightly. 'Gregor? Are you all right? Do you need anything?' Gregor directed answers in both directions, 'I'll be ready right away.' He made an effort with the most careful articulation and by inserting long pauses between the individual words to remove everything remarkable from his voice. His father turned back to his breakfast. However, the sister whispered, 'Gregor, open the door, I beg you.' Gregor had no intention of opening the door, but congratulated himself on his precaution, acquired from traveling, of locking all doors during the night, even at home.

First he wanted to stand up quietly and undisturbed, get dressed, above all have breakfast, and only then consider further action, for (he noticed this clearly) by thinking things over in bed he would not reach a reasonable conclusion. He remembered that he had already often felt a light pain or other in bed, perhaps the result of an awkward lying position, which later turned out to be purely imaginary when he stood up, and he was eager to see how his present fantasies would gradually dissipate. That the change in his voice was nothing other than the onset of a real chill, an occupational illness of commercial travelers, of that he had not the slightest doubt.

It was very easy to throw aside the blanket. He needed only to push himself up a little, and it fell by itself. But to continue was difficult, particularly because he was so unusually wide. He needed arms and hands to push himself upright. Instead of these, however, he had only many small limbs which were incessantly moving with very different motions and which, in addition, he was unable to control. If he wanted to bend one of them, then it was the first to extend

itself, and if he finally succeeded doing with this limb what he wanted, in the meantime all the others, as if left free, moved around in an excessively painful agitation. 'But I must not stay in bed uselessly,' said Gregor to himself.

At first he wanted to get of the bed with the lower part of his body, but this lower part (which he incidentally had not yet looked at and which he also couldn't picture clearly) proved itself too difficult to move. The attempt went so slowly. When, having become almost frantic, he finally hurled himself forward with all his force and without thinking, he chose his direction incorrectly, and he hit the lower bedpost hard. The violent pain he felt revealed to him that the lower part of his body was at the moment probably the most sensitive.

Thus, he tried to get his upper body out of the bed first and turned his head carefully toward the edge of the bed. He managed to do this easily, and in spite of its width and weight his body mass at last slowly followed the turning of his head. But as he finally raised his head outside the bed in the open air, he became anxious about moving forward any further in this manner, for if he allowed himself eventually to fall by this process, it would take a miracle to prevent his head from getting injured. And at all costs he must not lose consciousness right now. He preferred to remain in bed.

However, after a similar effort, while he lay there again sighing as before and once again saw his small limbs fighting one another, if anything worse than before, and didn't see any chance of imposing quiet and order on this arbitrary movement, he told himself again that he couldn't possibly remain in bed and that it might be the most reasonable thing to sacrifice everything if there was even the slightest hope of getting himself out of bed in the process. At the same moment, however, he didn't forget to remind himself from time to time of the fact that calm (indeed the calmest) reflection might be better than the most confused decisions. At such moments, he directed his gaze as precisely as he could toward the window, but unfortunately there was little confident cheer to be had from a glance at the morning mist, which concealed even the other side of the narrow street. 'It's already seven o'clock' he told himself at the latest striking of the alarm clock, 'already seven o'clock and still such a fog.' And for a little while longer he lay quietly with weak breathing, as if perhaps waiting for normal and natural conditions to re-emerge out of the complete stillness.

But then he said to himself, 'Before it strikes a quarter past seven, whatever

happens I must be completely out of bed. Besides, by then someone from the office will arrive to inquire about me, because the office will open before seven o'clock.' And he made an effort then to rock his entire body length out of the bed with a uniform motion. If he let himself fall out of the bed in this way, his head, which in the course of the fall he intended to lift up sharply, would probably remain uninjured. His back seemed to be hard; nothing would really happen to that as a result of the fall. His greatest reservation was a worry about the loud noise which the fall must create and which presumably would arouse, if not fright, then at least concern on the other side of all the doors. However, it had to be tried.

As Gregor was in the process of lifting himself half out of bed (the new method was more of a game than an effort; he needed only to rock with a constant rhythm) it struck him how easy all this would be if someone were to come to his aid. Two strong people (he thought of his father and the servant girl) would have been quite sufficient. They would have only had to push their arms under his arched back to get him out of the bed, to bend down with their load, and then merely to exercise patience and care that he completed the flip onto the floor, where his diminutive legs would then, he hoped, acquire a purpose. Now, quite apart from the fact that the doors were locked, should he really call out for help? In spite of all his distress, he was unable to suppress a smile at this idea.

He had already got to the point where, with a stronger rocking, he maintained his equilibrium with difficulty, and very soon he would finally have to decide, for in five minutes it would be a quarter past seven. Then there was a ring at the door of the apartment. 'That's someone from the office' he told himself, and he almost froze while his small limbs only danced around all the faster. For one moment everything remained still. 'They aren't opening,' Gregor said to himself, caught up in some absurd hope. But of course then, as usual, the servant girl with her firm tread went to the door and opened it. Gregor needed to hear only the visitor's first word of greeting to recognize immediately who it was, the manager himself. Why was Gregor the only one condemned to work in a firm where at the slightest lapse someone immediately attracted the greatest suspicion? Were all the employees then collectively, one and all, scoundrels? Was there then among them no truly devoted person who, if he failed to use just a couple of hours in the morning for office work, would become abnormal from pangs of conscience and really be in no state

to get out of bed? Was it really not enough to let an apprentice make inquiries, if such questioning was even necessary? Must the manager himself come, and in the process must it be demonstrated to the entire innocent family that the investigation of this suspicious circumstance could only be entrusted to the intelligence of the manager? And more as a consequence of the excited state in which this idea put Gregor than as a result of an actual decision, he swung himself with all his might out of the bed. There was a loud thud, but not a real crash. The fall was absorbed somewhat by the carpet and, in addition, his back was more elastic than Gregor had thought. For that reason the dull noise was not quite so conspicuous. But he had not held his head up with sufficient care and had hit it. He turned his head, irritated and in pain, and rubbed it on the carpet.

'Something has fallen in there,' said the manager in the next room on the left. Gregor tried to imagine to himself whether anything similar to what was happening to him today could have also happened at some point to the manager. At least one had to concede the possibility of such a thing. However, as if to give a rough answer to this question, the manager now took a few determined steps in the next room, with a squeak of his polished boots. From the neighbouring room on the right the sister was whispering to inform Gregor: 'Gregor, the manager is here.' 'I know,' said Gregor to himself. But he did not dare make his voice loud enough so that his sister could hear. 'Gregor,' his father now said from the neighbouring room on the left, 'Mr. Manager has come and is asking why you have not left on the early train. We don't know what we should tell him. Besides, he also wants to speak to you personally. So please open the door. He will good enough to forgive the mess in your room.'

In the middle of all this, the manager called out in a friendly way, 'Good morning, Mr. Samsa.' 'He is not well,' said his mother to the manager, while his father was still talking at the door, 'He is not well, believe me, Mr. Manager. Otherwise how would Gregor miss a train! The young man has nothing in his head except business. I'm almost angry that he never goes out at night. Right now he's been in the city eight days, but he's been at home every evening. He sits there with us at the table and reads the newspaper quietly or studies his travel schedules. It's quite a diversion for him if he busies himself with fretwork. For instance, he cut out a small frame over the course of two or three evenings. You'd be amazed how pretty it is. It's hanging right inside

the room. You'll see it immediately, as soon as Gregor opens the door. Anyway, I'm happy that you're here, Mr. Manager. By ourselves, we would never have made Gregor open the door. He's so stubborn, and he's certainly not well, although he denied that this morning.' 'I'm coming right away,' said Gregor slowly and deliberately and didn't move, so as not to lose one word of the conversation. 'My dear lady, I cannot explain it to myself in any other way,' said the manager; 'I hope it is nothing serious. On the other hand, I must also say that we business people, luckily or unluckily, however one looks at it, very often simply have to overcome a slight indisposition for business reasons.' 'So can Mr. Manager come in to see you now' asked his father impatiently and knocked once again on the door. 'No,' said Gregor. In the neighbouring room on the left a painful stillness descended. In the neighbouring room on the right the sister began to sob.

Why didn't his sister go to the others? She'd probably just gotten up out of bed now and hadn't even started to get dressed yet. Then why was she crying? Because he wasn't getting up and wasn't letting the manager in; because he was in danger of losing his position, and because then his boss would badger his parents once again with the old demands? Those were probably unnecessary worries right now. Gregor was still here and wasn't thinking at all about abandoning his family. At the moment he was lying right there on the carpet, and no one who knew about his condition would've seriously demanded that he let the manager in. But Gregor wouldn't be casually dismissed right way because of this small discourtesy, for which he would find an easy and suitable excuse later on. It seemed to Gregor that it might be far more reasonable to leave him in peace at the moment, instead of disturbing him with crying and conversation. But it was the very uncertainty which distressed the others and excused their behaviour.

'Mr. Samsa,' the manager was now shouting, his voice raised, 'what's the matter? You are barricading yourself in your room, answer with only a yes and a no, are making serious and unnecessary troubles for your parents, and neglecting (I mention this only incidentally) your commercial duties in a truly unheard of manner. I am speaking here in the name of your parents and your employer, and I am requesting you in all seriousness for an immediate and clear explanation. I am amazed. I am amazed. I thought I knew you as a calm, reasonable person, and now you appear suddenly to want to start parading around in weird moods. The Chief indicated to

me earlier this very day a possible explanation for your neglect–it concerned the collection of cash entrusted to you a short while ago–but in truth I almost gave him my word of honour that this explanation could not be correct. However, now I see here your unimaginable pig headedness, and I am totally losing any desire to speak up for you in the slightest. And your position is not at all the most secure. Originally I intended to mention all this to you privately, but since you are letting me waste my time here uselessly, I don't know why the matter shouldn't come to the attention of your parents. Your productivity has also been very unsatisfactory recently. Of course, it's not the time of year to conduct exceptional business, we recognize that, but a time of year for conducting no business, there is no such thing at all, Mr. Samsa, and such a thing must never be.'

'But Mr. Manager,' called Gregor, beside himself and in his agitation forgetting everything else, 'I'm opening the door immediately, this very moment. A slight indisposition, a dizzy spell, has prevented me from getting up. I'm still lying in bed right now. But now I'm quite refreshed once again. I'm in the midst of getting out of bed. Just have patience for a short moment! Things are not going so well as I thought. But things are all right. How suddenly this can overcome someone! Just yesterday evening everything was fine with me. My parents certainly know that. Actually just yesterday evening I had a small premonition. People must have seen that in me. Why have I not reported that to the office! But people always think that they'll get over sickness without having to stay at home. Mr. Manager! Take it easy on my parents! There is really no basis for the criticisms which you are now making against me, and really nobody has said a word to me about that. Perhaps you have not read the latest orders which I shipped. Besides, now I'm setting out on my trip on the eight o'clock train; the few hours' rest have made me stronger. Mr. Manager, do not stay. I will be at the office in person right away. Please have the goodness to say that and to convey my respects to the Chief.'

While Gregor was quickly blurting all this out, hardly aware of what he was saying, he had moved close to the chest of drawers without effort, probably as a result of the practice he had already had in bed, and now he was trying to raise himself up on it. Actually, he wanted to open the door; he really wanted to let himself be seen by and to speak with the manager. He was keen to witness what the others now asking after him would say at the sight of him. If they were startled, then

Gregor had no more responsibility and could be calm. But if they accepted everything quietly, then he would have no reason to get excited and, if he got a move on, could really be at the station around eight o'clock. At first he slid down a few times from the smooth chest of drawers. But at last he gave himself a final swing and stood upright there. He was no longer at all aware of the pains in his lower body, no matter how they might still sting. Now he let himself fall against the back of a nearby chair, on the edge of which he braced himself with his thin limbs. By doing this he gained control over himself and kept quiet, for he could now hear the manager. 'Did you understood a single word?' the manager asked the parents, 'Is he playing the fool with us?' 'For God's sake,' cried the mother already in tears, 'perhaps he's very ill and we're upsetting him. Grete! Grete!' she yelled at that point. 'Mother?' called the sister from the other side. They were making themselves understood through Gregor's room. 'You must go to the doctor right away. Gregor is sick. Hurry to the doctor. Have you heard Gregor speak yet?' 'That was an animal's voice,' said the manager, remarkably quietly in comparison to the mother's cries. 'Anna! Anna!' yelled the father through the hall into the kitchen, clapping his hands, 'fetch a locksmith right away!' The two young women were already running through the hall with swishing skirts (how had his sister dressed herself so quickly?) and yanked open the doors of the apartment. One couldn't hear the doors closing at all. They probably had left them open, as is customary in an apartment in which a huge misfortune has taken place.

However, Gregor had become much calmer. All right, people did not understand his words any more, although they seemed clear enough to him, clearer than previously, perhaps because his ears had gotten used to them. But at least people now thought that things were not all right with him and were prepared to help him. The confidence and assurance with which the first arrangements had been carried out made him feel good. He felt himself included once again in the circle of humanity and was expecting from both the doctor and the locksmith, without differentiating between them with any real precision, splendid and surprising results. In order to get as clear a voice as possible for the critical conversation which was imminent, he coughed a little, and certainly took the trouble to do this in a really subdued way, since it was possible that even this noise sounded like something different from a human cough. He no longer trusted himself to decide any more. Meanwhile in the

next room it had become really quiet. Perhaps his parents were sitting with the manager at the table and were whispering; perhaps they were all leaning against the door and listening.

Gregor pushed himself slowly towards the door, with the help of the easy chair, let go of it there, threw himself against the door, held himself upright against it (the balls of his tiny limbs had a little sticky stuff on them), and rested there momentarily from his exertion. Then he made an effort to turn the key in the lock with his mouth. Unfortunately it seemed that he had no real teeth. How then was he to grab hold of the key? But to make up for that his jaws were naturally very strong; with their help he managed to get the key really moving, and he did not notice that he was obviously inflicting some damage on himself, for a brown fluid came out of his mouth, flowed over the key, and dripped onto the floor. 'Just listen for a moment,' said the manager in the next room, 'he's turning the key.' For Gregor that was a great encourage ment. But they all should've called out to him, including his father and mother, 'Come on, Gregor,' they should've shouted, 'keep going, keep working on the lock.' Imagining that all his efforts were being followed with suspense, he bit down frantically on the key with all the force he could muster. As the key turned more, he danced around the lock. Now he was holding himself upright only with his mouth, and he had to hang onto the key or then press it down again with the whole weight of his body, as necessary. The quite distinct click of the lock as it finally snapped really woke Gregor up. Breathing heavily he said to himself, 'So I didn't need the locksmith,' and he set his head against the door handle to open the door completely.

Because he had to open the door in this way, it was already open very wide without him yet being really visible. He first had to turn himself slowly around the edge of the door, very carefully, of course, if he did not want to fall awkwardly on his back right at the entrance into the room. He was still preoccupied with this difficult movement and had no time to pay attention to anything else, when he heard the manager exclaim a loud 'Oh!' (it sounded like the wind whistling), and now he saw him, nearest to the door, pressing his hand against his open mouth and moving slowly back, as if an invisible constant force was pushing him away. His mother (in spite of the presence of the manager she was standing here with her hair sticking up on end, still a mess from the night) with her hands clasped was looking at his father; she then went two steps towards Gregor and collapsed right in the middle of

her skirts spreading out all around her, her face sunk on her breast, completely concealed. His father clenched his fist with a hostile expression, as if he wished to push Gregor back into his room, then looked uncertainly around the living room, covered his eyes with his hands, and cried so that his mighty breast shook.

At this point Gregor did not take one step into the room, but leaned his body from the inside against the firmly bolted wing of the door, so that only half his body was visible, as well as his head, titled sideways, with which he peeped over at the others. Meanwhile it had become much brighter. Standing out clearly from the other side of the street was a part of the endless gray-black house situated opposite (it was a hospital) with its severe regular windows breaking up the facade. The rain was still coming down, but only in large individual drops visibly and firmly thrown down one by one onto the ground. The breakfast dishes were standing piled around on the table, because for his father breakfast was the most important meal time in the day, which he prolonged for hours by reading various newspapers. Directly across on the opposite wall hung a photograph of Gregor from the time of his military service; it was a picture of him as a lieutenant, as he, smiling and worry free, with his hand on his sword, demanded respect for his bearing and uniform. The door to the hall was ajar, and since the door to the apartment was also open, one saw out into the landing of the apartment and the start of the staircase going down.

'Now,' said Gregor, well aware that he was the only one who had kept his composure. 'I'll get dressed right away, pack up the collection of samples, and set off. You'll allow me to set out on my way, will you not? You see, Mr. Manager, I am not pig-headed, and I am happy to work.

Traveling is exhausting, but I couldn't live without it. Where are you going, Mr. Manager? To the office? Really? Will you report everything truthfully? A person can be incapable of work momentarily, but that is precisely the best time to remember the earlier achievements and to consider that later, after the obstacles have been shoved aside, the person will work all the more keenly and intensely. I am really so indebted to Mr. Chief–you know that perfectly well. On the other hand, I am concerned about my parents and my sister. I'm in a fix, but I'll work myself out of it again. Don't make things more difficult for me than they already are. Speak up on my behalf in the office! People don't like traveling salesmen. I know that. People think they earn pots of money and thus lead a fine life. People don't even have any special reason to think through this judgment more clearly. But you, Mr. Manager, you have a better perspective on the interconnections than the other people, even, I tell you in total confidence, a better perspective than Mr. Chairman himself, who in his capacity as the employer may let his judgment make casual mistakes at the expense of an employee. You also know well enough that the traveling salesman who is outside the office almost the entire year can become so easily a victim of gossip, coincidences, and groundless complaints, against which it's impossible for him to defend himself, since for the most part he doesn't hear about them at all and only then when he's exhausted after finishing a trip, and gets to feel in his own body at home the nasty consequences, which can't be thoroughly explored back to their origins. Mr. Manager, don't leave without speaking a word telling me that you'll at least concede that I'm a little in the right!'

But at Gregor's first words the manager had already turned away, and now he looked back at Gregor over his twitching shoulders with pursed lips. During Gregor's speech he was not still for a moment, but was moving away towards the door, without taking his eyes off Gregor, but really gradually, as if there was a secret ban on leaving the room. He was already in the hall, and after the sudden movement with which he finally pulled his foot out of the living room, one could have believed that he had just burned the sole of his foot. In the hall, however, he stretched out his right hand away from his body towards the staircase, as if some truly supernatural relief was waiting for him there.

Gregor realized that he must not under any circumstances allow the manager to go away in this frame of mind, especially if his position in the

firm was not to be placed in the greatest danger. His parents did not understand all this very well. Over the long years, they had developed the conviction that Gregor was set up for life in his firm and, in addition, they had so much to do nowadays with their present troubles that all foresight was foreign to them. But Gregor had this foresight. The manager must be held back, calmed down, convinced, and finally won over. The future of Gregor and his family really depended on it! If only the sister had been there! She was clever. She had already cried while Gregor was still lying quietly on his back. And the manager, this friend of the ladies, would certainly let himself be guided by her. She would have closed the door to the apartment and talked him out of his fright in the hall. But the sister was not even there. Gregor must deal with it himself. Without thinking that as yet he didn't know anything about his present ability to move and without thinking that his speech possibly (indeed probably) had once again not been understood, he left the wing of the door, pushed himself through the opening, and wanted to go over to the manager, who was already holding tight onto the handrail with both hands on the landing in a ridiculous way. But as he looked for something to hold onto, with a small scream Gregor immediately fell down onto his numerous little legs. Scarcely had this happened, when he felt for the first time that morning a general physical well being. The small limbs had firm floor under them; they obeyed perfectly, as he noticed to his joy, and strove to carry him forward in the direction he wanted. Right away he believed that the final amelioration of all his suffering was immediately at hand. But at the very moment when he lay on the floor rocking in a restrained manner quite close and directly across from his mother (apparently totally sunk into herself) she suddenly sprang right up with her arms spread far apart and her fingers extended and cried out, 'Help, for God's sake, help!' She held her head bowed down, as if she wanted to view Gregor better, but ran senselessly back, contradicting that gesture, forgetting that behind her stood the table with all the dishes on it. When she reached the table, she sat down heavily on it, as if absent-mindedly, and did not appear to notice at all that next to her coffee was pouring out onto the carpet in a full stream from the large overturned container.

'Mother, mother,' said Gregor quietly, and looked over towards her. The manager momentarily had disappear ed completely from his mind; by contrast, at the sight of the flowing coffee he couldn't stop himself

snapping his jaws in the air a few times . At that his mother screamed all over again, hurried from the table, and collapsed into the arms of his father, who was rushing towards her. But Gregor had no time right now for his parents: the manager was already on the staircase. His chin level with the banister, the manager looked back for the last time. Gregor took an initial movement to catch up to him if possible. But the manager must have suspected something, because he made a leap down over a few stairs and disappeared, still shouting 'Huh!' The sound echoed throughout the entire stairwell.

Now, unfortunately this flight of the manager also seemed completely to bewilder his father, who earlier had been relatively calm, for instead of running after the manager himself or at least not hindering Gregor from his pursuit, with his right hand he grabbed hold of the manager's cane, which he had left behind with his hat and overcoat on a chair. With his left hand, his father picked up a large newspaper from the table and, stamping his feet on the floor, he set out to drive Gregor back into his room by waving the cane and the newspaper. No request of Gregor's was of any use; no request would even be understood. No matter how willing he was to turn his head respectfully, his father just stomped all the harder with his feet. Across the room from him his mother had pulled open a window, in spite of the cool weather, and leaning out with her hands on her cheeks, she pushed her face far outside the window. Between the alley and the stair well a strong draught came up, the curtains on the window flew around, the newspapers on the table swished, and individual sheets fluttered down over the floor. The father relentlessly pressed forward pushing out sibilants, like a wild man. Now, Gregor had no practice at all in going backwards; it was really going very slowly. If Gregor only had been allowed to turn himself around, he would have been in his room right away, but he was afraid to make his father impatient by the time-consuming process of turning around, and each moment he faced the threat of a mortal blow on his back or his head from the cane in his father's hand. Finally Gregor had no other option, for he noticed with horror that he did not understand yet how to maintain his direction going backwards. And so he began, amid constantly anxious sideways glances in his father's direction, to turn himself around as quickly as possible (although in truth this was only very slowly). Perhaps his father noticed his good intentions, for he did not disrupt Gregor in this motion, but with the tip of the cane from a distance he even directed here and there Gregor's rotating movement.

If only there hadn't been his father's unbearable hissing! Because of that Gregor totally lost his head. He was already almost totally turned around, when, always with this hissing in his ear, he just made a mistake and turned himself back a little. But when he finally was successful in getting his head in front of the door opening, it became clear that his body was too wide to go through any further. Naturally his father, in his present mental state, had no idea of opening the other wing of the door a bit to create a suitable passage for Gregor to get through. His single fixed thought was that Gregor must get into his room as quickly as possible. He would never have allowed the elaborate preparations that Gregor required to orient himself and thus perhaps get through the door. On the contrary, as if there were no obstacle and with a peculiar noise, he now drove Gregor forwards. Behind Gregor the sound was at this point no longer like the voice of only a single father. Now it was really no longer a joke, and Gregor forced himself, come what might, into the door. One side of his body was lifted up. He lay at an angle in the door opening. His one flank was sore with the scraping. On the white door ugly blotches were left. Soon he was stuck fast and would have not been able to move any more on his own. The tiny legs on one side hung twitching in the air above, the ones on the other side were pushed painfully into the floor. Then his father gave him one really strong liberating push from behind, and he scurried, bleeding severely, far into the interior of his room. The door was slammed shut with the cane, and finally it was quiet.

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1. What were the physical changes Gregor felt as he woke up from his sleep?
2. Describe the changes in Gregor's voice at the beginning of his transformation?
3. How did Gregor manage to get himself out of the bed?
4. Why did the manager visit Gregor's home?
5. Why did the chief suggest to the manager to seek an explanation from Gregor?
6. How did Gregor reject the charges levelled against him by the manager?
7. How did Gregor manage to open the door of his room?
8. How did each member of the family react, seeing him transformed to a vermin?

II

Gregor first woke up from his heavy swoon-like sleep in the evening twilight. He would certainly have woken up soon afterwards without any disturbance, for he felt himself sufficiently rested and wide awake, although it appeared to him as if a hurried step and a cautious closing of the door to the hall had aroused him. The shine of the electric streetlights lay pale here and there on the ceiling and on the higher parts of the furniture, but underneath around Gregor it was dark. He pushed himself slowly toward the door, still groping awkwardly with his feelers, which he now learned to value for the first time, to check what was happening there. His left side seemed one single long unpleasantly stretched scar, and he really had to hobble on his two rows of legs. In addition, one small leg had been seriously wounded in the course of the morning incident (it was almost a miracle that only one had been hurt) and dragged lifelessly behind.

By the door he first noticed what had really lured him there: it was the smell of something to eat. For there stood a bowl filled with sweetened milk, in which swam tiny pieces of white bread. He almost laughed with joy, for he now had a much greater hunger than in the morning, and he immediately dipped his head almost up to and over his eyes down into the milk. But he soon drew it back again in disappointment, not just because it was difficult for him to eat on account of his delicate left side (he could eat only if his entire panting body worked in a coordinated way), but also because the milk, which otherwise was his favorite drink and which his sister had certainly placed there for that reason, did not appeal to him at all. He turned away from the bowl almost with aversion and crept back into the middle of the room.

In the living room, as Gregor saw through the crack in the door, the gas was lit, but where on other occasions at this time of day the father was accustomed to read the afternoon newspaper in a loud voice to his mother and sometimes also to his sister, at the moment not a sound was audible. Now, perhaps this reading aloud, about which his sister always spoken and written to him, had recently fallen out of their general routine. But it was so still all around, in spite of the fact that the apartment was certainly not empty. 'What a quiet life the family leads', said Gregor to himself and, as he stared fixedly out in front of him into the darkness, he felt a great pride that he had been able to provide such a life in a beautiful

apartment like this for his parents and his sister. But how would things go if now all tranquility, all prosperity, all contentment should come to a horrible end? In order not to lose himself in such thoughts, Gregor preferred to set himself moving and crawled up and down in his room.

Once during the long evening one side door and then the other door was opened just a tiny crack and quickly closed again. Someone presumably needed to come in but had then thought better of it. Gregor immediately took up a position by the living room door, determined to bring in the hesitant visitor somehow or other or at least to find out who it might be. But now the door was not opened any more, and Gregor waited in vain. Earlier, when the door had been barred, they had all wanted to come in to him; now, when he had opened one door and when the others had obviously been opened during the day, no one came any more, and the keys were stuck in the locks on the outside.

The light in the living room was turned off only late at night, and now it was easy to establish that his parents and his sister had stayed awake all this time, for one could hear clearly as all three moved away on tiptoe. Now it was certain that no one would come into Gregor any more until the morning. Thus, he had a long time to think undisturbed about how he should reorganize his life from scratch. But the high, open room, in which he was compelled to lie flat on the floor, made him anxious, without his being able to figure out the reason, for he had lived in the room for five years. With a half unconscious turn and not without a slight shame he scurried under the couch, where, in spite of the fact that his back was a little cramped and he could no longer lift up his head, he felt very comfortable and was sorry only that his body was too wide to fit completely under it.

There he remained the entire night, which he spent partly in a state of semi-sleep, out of which his hunger constantly woke him with a start, but partly in a state of worry and murky hopes, which all led to the conclusion that for the time being he would have to keep calm and with patience and the greatest consideration for his family tolerate the troubles which in his present condition he was now forced to cause them.

Already early in the morning (it was still almost night) Gregor had an opportunity to test the power of the decisions he had just made, for his sister, almost fully dressed, opened the door from the hall into his room and looked eagerly inside. She did not find him immediately, but when she noticed him under the couch (God, he

had to be somewhere or other; for he could hardly fly away) she got such a shock that, without being able to control herself, she slammed the door shut once again from the outside. However, as if she was sorry for her behaviour, she immediately opened the door again and walked in on her tiptoes, as if she was in the presence of a serious invalid or a total stranger. Gregor had pushed his head forward just to the edge of the couch and was observing her. Would she really notice that he had left the milk standing, not indeed from any lack of hunger, and would she bring in something else to eat more suitable for him? If she did not do it on her own, he would sooner starve to death than call her attention to the fact, although he had a really powerful urge to move beyond the couch, throw himself at his sister's feet, and beg her for something or other good to eat. But his sister noticed right away with astonishment that the bowl was still full, with only a little milk spilled around it. She picked it up immediately (although not with her bare hands but with a rag), and took it out of the room. Gregor was extremely curious what she would bring as a substitute, and he pictured to himself different ideas about that. But he never could have guessed what his sister out of the goodness of her heart in fact did. She brought him, to test his taste, an entire selection, all spread out on an old newspaper. There were old half-rotten vegetables, bones from the evening meal, covered with a white sauce which had almost solidified, some raisins and almonds, cheese, which Gregor had declared inedible two days earlier, a slice of dry bread, a slice of salted bread smeared with butter. In addition to all this, she put down a bowl (probably designated once and for all as Gregor's) into which she had poured some water. And out of her delicacy of feeling, since she knew that Gregor would not eat in front of her, she went away very quickly and even turned the key in the lock, so that Gregor could now observe that he could make himself as comfortable as he wished. Gregor's small limbs buzzed as the time for eating had come. His wounds must, in any case, have already healed completely. He felt no handicap on that score. He was astonished at that and thought about it, how more than a month ago he had cut his finger slightly with a knife and how this wound had hurt enough even the day before yesterday.

'Am I now going to be less sensitive,' he thought, already sucking greedily on the cheese, which had strongly attracted him right away, more than all the other foods. Quickly and with his eyes watering with satisfaction, he ate one after the other the cheese, the

vegetables, and the sauce; the fresh food, by contrast, didn't taste good to him. He couldn't bear the smell and even carried the things he wanted to eat a little distance away. By the time his sister slowly turned the key as a sign that he should withdraw, he was long finished and now lay lazily in the same spot. The noise immediately startled him, in spite of the fact that he was already almost asleep, and he scurried back again under the couch. But it cost him great self-control to remain under the couch, even for the short time his sister was in the room, because his body had filled out somewhat on account of the rich meal and in the narrow space there he could scarcely breathe. In the midst of minor attacks of asphyxiation, he looked at her with somewhat protruding eyes, as his unsuspecting sister swept up with a broom, not just the remnants, but even the foods which Gregor had not touched at all, as if these were also now useless, and as she dumped everything quickly into a bucket, which she closed with a wooden lid, and then carried all of it out of the room. She had hardly turned around before Gregor had already dragged himself out from the couch, stretched out, and let his body expand.

In this way Gregor got his food every day, once in the morning, when his parents and the servant girl were still asleep, and a second time after the common noon meal, for his parents were, as before, asleep then for a little while, and the servant girl was sent off by his sister on some errand or other. Certainly they would not have wanted Gregor to starve to death, but perhaps they could not have endured finding out what he ate other than by hearsay. Perhaps his sister wanted to spare them what was possibly only a small grief, for they were really suffering quite enough already.

What sorts of excuses people had used on that first morning to get the doctor and the locksmith out of the house Gregor was completely unable to ascertain. Since he was not comprehensible, no one, not even his sister, thought that he might be able to understand others, and thus, when his sister was in her room, he had to be content with listening now and then to her sighs and invocations to the saints. Only later, when she had grown somewhat accustomed to everything (naturally there could never be any talk of her growing completely accustomed to it) Gregor sometimes caught a comment which was intended to be friendly or could be interpreted as such. 'Well, today it tasted good to him,' she said, if Gregor had really cleaned up what he had to eat; whereas, in the reverse situation, which gradually repeated itself more and more frequently, she used to say sadly, 'Now everything has stopped again.'

But while Gregor could get no new information directly, he did hear a good deal from the room next door, and as soon as he heard voices, he scurried right away to the relevant door and pressed his entire body against it. In the early days especially, there was no conversation which was not concerned with him in some way or other, even if only in secret. For two days at all meal times discussions on that subject could be heard on how people should now behave; but they also talked about the same subject in the times between meals, for there were always at least two family members at home, since no one really wanted to remain in the house alone and people could not under any circumstances leave the apartment completely empty. In addition, on the very first day the servant girl (it was not completely clear what and how much she knew about what had happened) on her knees had begged his mother to let her go immediately, and when she said good bye about fifteen minutes later, she thanked them for the dismissal with tears in her eyes, as if she was receiving the greatest favour which people had shown her there, and, without anyone demanding it from her, she swore a fearful oath not to betray anyone, not even the slightest bit.

Now his sister had to team up with his mother to do the cooking, although that didn't create much trouble because people were eating almost nothing. Again and again Gregor listened as one of them vainly invited another one to eat and received no answer other than 'Thank you. I have enough' or something like that. And perhaps they had stopped having anything to drink, too. His sister often asked his father whether he wanted to have a beer and gladly offered to fetch it herself, and when his father was silent, she said, in order to remove any reservations he might have, that she could send the caretaker's wife to get it. But then his father finally said a resounding 'No,' and nothing more would be spoken about it.

Already during the first day his father laid out all the financial circum stances and prospects to his mother and to his sister as well. From time to time he stood up from the table and pulled out of the small lockbox salvaged from his business, which had collapsed five years previously, some document or other or some notebook. The sound was audible as he opened up the complicated lock and, after removing what he was looking for, locked it up again. These explanations by his father were, in part, the first enjoyable thing that Gregor had the chance to listen to since his imprisonment. He had thought that nothing at all was left over for his father from that business; at least his

father had told him nothing to the contradict that view, and Gregor in any case hadn't asked him about it. At the time Gregor's only concern had been to devote everything he had in order to allow his family to forget as quickly as possible the business misfortune which had brought them all into a state of complete hopeless ness. And so at that point he'd started to work with a special intensity and from an assistant had become, almost overnight, a traveling salesman, who naturally had entirely different possibilities for earning money and whose successes at work at once were converted into the form of cash commissions, which could be set out on the table at home in front of his astonished and delighted family. Those had been beautiful days, and they had never come back afterwards, at least not with the same splendour, in spite of the fact that Gregor later earned so much money that he was in a position to bear the expenses of the entire family, expenses which he, in fact, did bear. They had become quite accustomed to it, both the family and Gregor as well. They took the money with thanks, and he happily surrendered it, but the special warmth was no longer present. Only the sister had remained still close to Gregor, and it was his secret plan to send her (in contrast to Gregor she loved music very much and knew how to play the violin charmingly) next year to the conservatory, regardless of the great expense which that must necessitate and which would be made up in other ways. Now and then during Gregor's short stays in the city the conservatory was mentioned in conversations with his sister, but always only as a beautiful dream, whose realization was unimaginable, and their parents never listened to these innocent expectations with pleasure. But Gregor thought about them with scrupulous consideration and intended to explain the matter ceremoniously on Christmas Eve.

In his present situation, such futile ideas went through his head, while he pushed himself right up against the door and listened. Sometimes in his general exhaustion he couldn't listen any more and let his head bang listlessly against the door, but he immediately pulled himself together, for even the small sound which he made by this motion was heard near by and silenced everyone. ' There he goes on again,' said his father after a while, clearly turning towards the door, and only then would the interrupted conversation gradually be resumed again. Gregor found out clearly enough (for his father tended to repeat himself often in his explanations, partly because he had not personally concerned himself with these matters for a long time

now, and partly also because his mother did not understand everything right away the first time) that, in spite all bad luck, a fortune, although a very small one, was available from the old times, which the interest (which had not been touched) had in the intervening time gradually allowed to increase a little. Furthermore, in addition to this, the money which Gregor had brought home every month (he had kept only a few florins for himself) had not been completely spent and had grown into a small capital amount. Gregor, behind his door, nodded eagerly, rejoicing over this unanticipated foresight and frugality. True, with this excess money, he could have paid off more of his father's debt to his employer and the day on which he could be rid of this position would have been a lot closer, but now things were doubtless better the way his father had arranged them.

At the moment, however, this money was nowhere near sufficient to permit the family to live on the interest payments. Perhaps it would be enough to maintain the family for one or at most two years, that's all. Thus it came only to an amount which one should not really take out and which must be set aside for an emergency. But the money to live on must be earned. Now, his father was a healthy man, although he was old, who had not worked at all for five years now and thus could not be counted on for very much. He had in these five years, the first holidays of his trouble-filled but unsuccessful life, put on a good deal of fat and thus had become really heavy. And should his old mother now maybe work for money, a woman who suffered from asthma, for whom wandering through the apartment even now was a great strain and who spent every second day on the sofa by the open window labouring for breath? Should his sister earn money, a girl who was still a seventeen-year-old child, whose earlier life style had been so very delightful that it had consisted of dressing herself nicely, sleeping in late, helping around the house, taking part in a few modest enjoyments and, above all, playing the violin? When it came to talking about this need to earn money, at first Gregor went away from the door and threw himself on the cool leather sofa beside the door, for he was quite hot from shame and sorrow.

Often he lay there all night long. He didn't sleep a moment and just scratched on the leather for hours at a time. He undertook the very difficult task of shoving a chair over to the window. Then he crept up on the window sill and, braced in the chair, leaned against the window to look out, obviously with some memory or other

of the satisfaction which that used to bring him in earlier times. Actually from day to day he perceived things with less and less clarity, even those a short distance away: the hospital across the street, the all too frequent sight of which he had previously cursed, was not visible at all any more, and if he had not been precisely aware that he lived in the quiet but completely urban Charlotte Street, he could have believed that from his window he was peering out at a featureless wasteland, in which the gray heaven and the gray earth had merged and were indistinguishable. His attentive sister must have observed a couple of times that the chair stood by the window; then, after cleaning up the room, each time she pushed the chair back right against the window and from now on she even left the inner casement open.

If Gregor had only been able to speak to his sister and thank her for everything that she had to do for him, he would have tolerated her service more easily. As it was he suffered under it. The sister admittedly sought to cover up the awkwardness of everything as much as possible, and, as time went by, she naturally got more successful at it. But with the passing of time Gregor also came to understand everything more precisely. Even her entrance was terrible for him. As soon as she entered, she ran straight to the window, without taking the time to shut the door (in spite of the fact that she was otherwise very considerate in sparing anyone the sight of Gregor's room), and yanked the window open with eager hands, as if she was almost suffocating, and remained for a while by the window breathing deeply, even when it was still so cold. With this running and noise she frightened Gregor twice every day. The entire time he trembled under the couch, and yet he knew very well that she would certainly have spared him gladly if it had only been possible to remain with the window closed in a room where Gregor lived.

On one occasion (about one month had already gone by since Gregor's transformation, and there was now no particular reason any more for his sister to be startled at Gregor's appearance) she came a little earlier than usual and came upon Gregor as he was still looking out the window, immobile and well positioned to frighten someone. It would not have come as a surprise to Gregor if she had not come in, since his position was preventing her from opening the window immediately. But she not only did not step inside; she even retreated and shut the door. A stranger really could have concluded from this that Gregor had been lying in wait for her and wanted to bite her. Of course, Gregor immediately

concealed himself under the couch, but he had to wait until the noon meal before his sister returned, and she seemed much less calm than usual. From this he realized that his appearance was still constantly intolerable to her and must remain intolerable in future, and that she really had to exert a lot of self-control not to run away from a glimpse of only the small part of his body which stuck out from under the couch. In order to spare her even this sight, one day he dragged the sheet on his back onto the couch (this task took him four hours) and arranged it in such a way that he was now completely concealed and his sister, even if she bent down, could not see him. If this sheet was not necessary as far as she was concerned, then she could remove it, for it was clear enough that Gregor could not derive any pleasure from isolating himself away so completely. But she left the sheet just as it was, and Gregor believed he even caught a look of gratitude when on one occasion he carefully lifted up the sheet a little with his head to check as his sister took stock of the new arrangement.

In the first two weeks his parents could not bring themselves to visit him, and he often heard how they fully acknowledged his sister's present work; whereas, earlier they had often got annoyed at his sister because she had seemed to them a somewhat useless young woman. However, now both his father and his mother often waited in front of Gregor's door while his sister cleaned up inside, and as soon as she came out she had to explain in detail how things looked in the room, what Gregor had eaten, how he had behaved this time, and whether perhaps a slight improvement was perceptible. In any event, his mother comparatively soon wanted to visit Gregor, but his father and his sister restrained her, at first with reasons which Gregor listened to very attentively and which he completely endorsed. Later, however, they had to hold her back forcefully, and when she then cried 'Let me go to Gregor. He's my unlucky son! Don't you understand that I have to go to him?' Gregor then thought that perhaps it would be a good thing if his mother came in, not every day, of course, but maybe once a week. She understood everything much better than his sister, who in spite of all her courage was still a child and, in the last analysis, had perhaps undertaken such a difficult task only out of childish recklessness.

Gregor's wish to see his mother was soon realized. While during the day Gregor, out of consideration for his parents, did not want to show himself by the window, he couldn't crawl around very much on the few square metres of the floor. He found it

difficult to bear lying quietly during the night, and soon eating no longer gave him the slightest pleasure. So for diversion he acquired the habit of crawling back and forth across the walls and ceiling. He was especially fond of hanging from the ceiling. The experience was quite different from lying on the floor. It was easier to breathe, a slight vibration went through his body, and in the midst of the almost happy amusement which Gregor found up there, it could happen that, to his own surprise, he let go and hit the floor. However, now he naturally controlled his body quite differently, and he did not injure himself in such a great fall. His sister noticed immediately the new amusement which Gregor had found for himself (for as he crept around he left behind here and there traces of his sticky stuff), and so she got the idea of making Gregor's creeping around as easy as possible and thus of removing the furniture which got in the way, especially the chest of drawers and the writing desk.

But she was in no position to do this by herself. She did not dare to ask her father to help, and the servant girl would certainly not have assisted her, for although this girl, about sixteen years old, had courageously remained since the dismissal of the previous cook, she had begged for the privilege of being allowed to stay permanently confined to the kitchen and of having to open the door only in answer to a special summons. Thus, his sister had no other choice but to involve his mother while his father was absent. His mother approached Gregor's room with cries of excited joy, but she fell silent at the door. Of course, his sister first checked whether every thing in the room was in order. Only then did she let his mother walk in. In great haste Gregor had drawn the sheet down even further and wrinkled it more. The whole thing really looked just like a coverlet thrown carelessly over the couch. On this occasion, Gregor held back from spying out from under the sheet. Thus, he refrained from looking at his mother this time and was just happy that she had come. 'Come on; he is not visible,' said his sister, and evidently led his mother by the hand. Now Gregor listened as these two weak women shifted the still heavy old chest of drawers from its position, and as his sister constantly took on herself the greatest part of the work, without listening to the warnings of his mother who was afraid that she would strain herself. The work lasted a long time. After about a quarter of an hour had already gone by his mother said that it would be better if they left the chest of drawers where it was, because, in the first place, it was too heavy: they would not be finished

before his father's arrival, and with the chest of drawers in the middle of the room it would block all Gregor's pathways, but, in the second place, it might not be certain that Gregor would be pleased with the removal of the furniture. To her the reverse seemed to be true; the sight of the empty walls pierced her right to the heart, and why should Gregor not feel the same, since he had been accustomed to the room furnishings for a long time and in an empty room would thus feel himself abandoned.

'And is it not the case,' his mother concluded very quietly, almost whispering as if she wished to prevent Gregor, whose exact location she really didn't know, from hearing even the sound of her voice (for she was convinced that he did not understand her words), 'and isn't it a fact that by removing the furniture we're showing that we're giving up all hope of an improvement and are leaving him to his own resources without any consideration? I think it would be best if we tried to keep the room exactly in the condition in which it was before, so that, when Gregor returns to us, he finds everything unchanged and can forget the intervening time all the more easily.'

As he heard his mother's words Gregor realized that the lack of all immediate human contact, together with the monotonous life surrounded by the family over the course of these two months must have confused his understanding, because otherwise he couldn't explain to himself that he in all seriousness could've been so keen to have his room emptied. Was he really eager to let the warm room, comfortably furnished with pieces he had inherited, be turned into a cavern in which he would, of course, then be able to crawl about in all directions without disturbance, but at the same time with a quick and complete forgetting of his human past as well? Was he then at this point already on the verge of forgetting and was it only the voice of his mother, which he had not heard for a long time, that had aroused him? Nothing was to be removed; everything must remain. In his condition he couldn't function without the beneficial influences of his furniture. And if the furniture prevented him from carrying out his senseless crawling about all over the place, then there was no harm in that, but rather a great benefit.

But his sister unfortunately thought otherwise. She had grown accustomed, certainly not without justification, so far as the discussion of matters concerning Gregor was concerned, to act as an special expert with respect to their parents, and so now the mother's advice was for his sister sufficient reason to insist on the removal, not only of the chest of

drawers and the writing desk, which were the only items she had thought about at first, but also of all the furniture, with the exception of the indispensable couch. Of course, it was not only childish defiance and her recent very unexpected and hard won self-confidence which led her to this demand. She had also actually observed that Gregor needed a great deal of room to creep about; the furniture, on the other hand, as far as one could see, was not of the slightest use. But perhaps the enthusiastic sensibility of young women of her age also played a role. This feeling sought release at every opportunity, and with it Grete now felt tempted to want to make Gregor's situation even more terrifying, so that then she would be able to do even more for him than now. For surely no one except Grete would ever trust themselves to enter a room in which Gregor ruled the empty walls all by himself.

And so she did not let herself be dissuaded from her decision by her mother, who in this room seemed uncertain of herself in her sheer agitation and soon kept quiet, helping his sister with all her energy to get the chest of drawers out of the room. Now, Gregor could still do without the chest of drawers if need be, but the writing desk really had to stay. And scarcely had the women left the room with the chest of drawers, groaning as they pushed it, when Gregor stuck his head out from under the sofa to take a look how he could intervene cautiously and with as much consideration as possible. But unfortunately it was his mother who came back into the room first, while Grete had her arms wrapped around the chest of drawers in the next room and was rocking it back and forth by herself, without moving it from its position. His mother was not used to the sight of Gregor; he could have made her ill, and so, frightened, Gregor scurried backwards right to the other end of the sofa, but he could no longer prevent the sheet from moving forward a little. That was enough to catch his mother's attention. She came to a halt, stood still for a moment, and then went back to Grete.

Although Gregor kept repeating to himself over and over that really nothing unusual was going on, that only a few pieces of furniture were being rearranged, he soon had to admit to himself that the movements of the women to and fro, their quiet conversations, the scratching of the furniture on the floor affected him like a great swollen commotion on all sides, and, so firmly was he pulling in his head and legs and pressing his body into the floor, he had to tell himself unequivocally that he wouldn't be able to endure all this much longer. They were cleaning out

his room, taking away from him everything he cherished; they had already dragged out the chest of drawers in which the fret saw and other tools were kept, and they were now loosening the writing desk which was fixed tight to the floor, the desk on which he, as a business student, a school student, indeed even as an elementary school student, had written out his assignments. At that moment he really didn't have any more time to check the good intentions of the two women, whose existence he had in any case almost forgotten, because in their exhaustion they were working really silently, and the heavy stumbling of their feet was the only sound to be heard.

And so he scuttled out (the women were just propping themselves up on the writing desk in the next room in order to take a breather) changing the direction of his path four times. He really didn't know what he should rescue first. Then he saw hanging conspicuously on the wall, which was otherwise already empty, the picture of the woman dressed in nothing but fur. He quickly scurried up over it and pressed himself against the glass that held it in place and which made his hot abdomen feel good. At least this picture, which Gregor at the moment completely concealed, surely no one would now take away. He twisted his head towards the door of the living room to observe the women as they came back in.

They had not allowed themselves very much rest and were coming back right away. Grete had placed her arm around her mother and held her tightly. 'So what shall we take now?' said Grete and looked around her. Then her glance crossed with Gregor's from the wall. She kept her composure only because her mother was there. She bent her face towards her mother in order to prevent her from looking around, and said, although in a trembling voice and too quickly, 'Come, wouldn't it be better to go back to the living room for just another moment?' Grete's purpose was clear to Gregor: she wanted to bring his mother to a safe place and then chase him down from the wall. Well, let her just attempt that! He squatted on his picture and did not hand it over. He would sooner spring into Grete's face.

But Grete's words had immediately made the mother very uneasy. She walked to the side, caught sight of the enormous brown splotch on the flowered wallpaper, and, before she became truly aware that what she was looking at was Gregor, screamed out in a high pitched raw voice 'Oh God, oh God' and fell with outstretched arms, as if she was surrendering everything, down onto the couch and lay there motionless. 'Gregor, you…,' cried out his sister with a raised fist

and an urgent glare. Since his transformation those were the first words which she had directed right at him. She ran into the room next door to bring some spirits or other with which she could revive her mother from her fainting spell. Gregor wanted to help as well (there was time enough to save the picture), but he was stuck fast on the glass and had to tear himself loose forcefully. Then he also scurried into the next room, as if he could give his sister some advice, as in earlier times, but then he had to stand there idly behind her, while she rummaged about among various small bottles. Still, she was frightened when she turned around. A bottle fell onto the floor and shattered. A splinter of glass wounded Gregor in the face, some corrosive medicine or other dripped over him. Now, without lingering any longer, Grete took as many small bottles as she could hold and ran with them into her mother. She slammed the door shut with her foot. Gregor was now shut off from his mother, who was perhaps near death, thanks to him. He could not open the door, and he did not want to chase away his sister who had to remain with her mother. At this point he had nothing to do but wait, and overwhelmed with self-reproach and worry, he began to creep and crawl over everything: walls, furniture, and ceiling,. Finally, in his despair, as the entire room started to spin around him, he fell onto the middle of the large table.

A short time elapsed. Gregor lay there limply. All around was still. Perhaps that was a good sign. Then there was ring at the door. The servant girl was naturally shut up in her kitchen, and Grete must therefore go to open the door. The father had arrived. 'What's happened,' were his first words. Grete's appearance had told him everything. Grete replied with a dull voice; evidently she was pressing her face into her father's chest: 'Mother fainted, but she's getting better now. Gregor has broken loose.' 'Yes, I have expected that,' said his father, 'I always told you that, but you women don't want to listen.' It was clear to Gregor that his father had badly misunderstood Grete's short message and was assuming that Gregor had committed some violent crime or other. Thus, Gregor now had to find his father to calm him down, for he had neither the time nor the opportunity to clarify things for him. And so he rushed away to the door of his room and pushed himself against it, so that his father could see right away as he entered from the hall that Gregor fully intended to return at once to his room, that it was not necessary to drive him back, but that one only needed to open the door and he would disappear immediately.

But his father was not in the mood to observe such niceties. 'Ah,' he yelled as soon as he entered, with a tone as if he were all at once angry and pleased. Gregor pulled his head back from the door and raised it in the direction of his father. He had not really pictured his father as he now stood there. Of course, what with his new style of creeping all around, he had in the past while neglected to pay attention to what was going on in the rest of the apartment, as he had done before, and really should have grasped the fact that he would encounter different conditions. Nevertheless, nevertheless, was that still his father? Was that the same man who had lain exhausted and buried in bed in earlier days when Gregor was setting out on a business trip, who had received him on the evenings of his return in a sleeping gown and arm chair, totally unable of standing up, who had only lifted his arm as a sign of happiness, and who in their rare strolls together a few Sundays a year and on the important holidays made his way slowly forwards between Gregor and his mother, always a bit more slowly than them, bundled up in his old coat, all the time setting down his walking stick carefully, and who, when he had wanted to say something, almost always stood still and gathered his entourage around him?

But now he was standing up really straight, dressed in a tight fitting blue uniform with gold buttons, like the ones servants wear in a banking company. Above the high stiff collar of his jacket his firm double chin stuck out prominently, beneath his bushy eyebrows the glance of his black eyes was freshly penetrating and alert, his otherwise disheveled white hair was combed down into a carefully exact shining part. He threw his cap, on which a gold monogram (apparently the symbol of the bank) was affixed, in an arc across the entire room onto the sofa and moved, throwing back the edge of the long coat of his uniform, with his hands in his trouser pockets and a grim face, right up to Gregor.

He really didn't know what he had in mind, but he raised his foot uncommonly high anyway, and Gregor was astonished at the gigantic size of his sole of his boot. However, he did not linger on that point. For he knew from the first day of his new life that as far as he was concerned his father considered the greatest force the only appropriate response. And so he scurried away from his father, stopped when his father remained standing, and scampered forward again when his father merely stirred. In this way they made their way around the room repeatedly, without anything decisive taking place; indeed because of the slow pace it

didn't look like a chase. Gregor remained on the floor for the time being, especially as he was afraid that his father could take a flight up onto the wall or the ceiling as an act of real malice. At any event Gregor had to tell himself that he couldn't keep up this running around for a long time, because whenever his father took a single step, he had to go through an enormous number of movements. Already he was starting to suffer from a shortage of breath, just as in his earlier days his lungs had been quite unreliable. As he now staggered around in this way, hardly keeping his eyes open, in his listlessness he had no notion at all of any escape other than by running and had almost already forgotten that the walls were available to him, although they were obstructed by carefully carved furniture full of sharp points and spikes–at that moment something or other thrown casually flew down close by and rolled in front of him. It was an apple; immediately a second one flew after it. Gregor stood still in fright. Further flight was useless, for his father had decided to bombard him.

From the fruit bowl on the sideboard his father had filled his pockets, and now, without for the moment taking accurate aim, was throwing apple after apple. These small red apples rolled as if electrified around on the floor and collided with each other. A weakly thrown apple grazed Gregor's back but skidded off harmlessly. However another thrown immediately after that one drove into Gregor's back really hard. Gregor wanted to drag himself off, as if the unexpected and incredible pain would go away if he changed his position. But he felt as if he was nailed in place and lay stretched out completely confused in all his senses. Only with his final glance did he notice how the door of his room was pulled open and how, right in front of his sister (who was yelling), his mother ran out in her undergarments, for his sister had undressed her in order to give her some freedom to breathe in her fainting spell, and how his mother then ran up to his father, on the way her tied up skirts one after the other slipped toward the floor, and how, tripping over her skirts, she hurled herself onto his father and, throwing her arms around him, in complete union with him–but at this moment Gregor's powers of sight gave way–as her hands reached to the back of his father's head and she begged him to spare Gregor's life.

1. How did Gregor's taste for food change during his transformation?
2. How did Grete respond on seeing him hide under the sofa? Why?
3. How did Grete test Gregor's taste for food after the transformation?
4. Why did Gregor's family members prefer not to be alone in the house?
6. How did Gregor's transformation affect the family economically?
7. What are the services rendered by Grete to Gregor?
8. Why did Grete decide to shift the furniture from Gregor's room?
9. Why did the mother disagree with Grete's plan to shift the furniture?
10. How did Gregor respond to the shifting of furniture?
11. Why did Gregor crawl over the picture of the lady in fur?
12. What happened to the mother when she saw Gregor, as a vermin?
13. Why did Samsa hit Gregor with an apple?

III

Gregor's serious wound, from which he suffered for over a month (since no one ventured to remove the apple, it remained in his flesh as a visible reminder), seemed by itself to have reminded the father that, in spite of his present unhappy and hateful appearance, Gregor was a member of the family, something one should not treat as an enemy, and that it was, on the contrary, a requirement of family duty to suppress one's aversion and to endure–nothing else, just endure. And if through his wound Gregor had now apparently lost for good his ability to move and for the time being needed many many minutes to crawl across this room, like an aged invalid (so far as creeping up high was concerned, that was unimaginable), nevertheless for this worsening of his condition, in his opinion, he did get completely satisfactory compen sation, because every day towards evening the door to the living room, which he was in the habit of keeping a sharp eye on even one or two hours beforehand, was opened, so that he, lying down in the darkness of his room, invisible from the living room, could see the entire family at the illuminated table and listen to their conversation, to acertain extent with their common permission, a situation quite different from what happened before.

Of course, it was no longer the animated social interaction of former times, about which Gregor in small hotel rooms had always thought about with a certain longing, when, tired out, he had to throw himself in the damp bedclothes. For the most part what went on now was very quiet. After the evening meal the father fell asleep quickly in his arm chair; the mother and sister talked guardedly to each other in the stillness. Bent far over, the mother sewed fine under garments for a fashion shop. The sister, who had taken on a job as a salesgirl, in the evening studied stenography and French, so as perhaps later to obtain a better position. Sometimes the father woke up and, as if he was quite ignorant that he had been asleep, said to the mother 'How long you have been sewing today!' and went right back to sleep, while the mother and the sister smiled tiredly to each other.

With a sort of stubbornness the father refused to take off his servant's uniform even at home, and while his sleeping gown hung unused on the coat hook, the father dozed completely dressed in his place, as if he was always ready for his responsibility and even here was waiting for the voice of his superior. As result, in spite of all the care of the mother and sister, his uniform, which even at the start was not new, grew dirty, and Gregor looked, often for the entire evening, at this clothing, with stains all over it and with its gold buttons always polished, in which the old man, although very uncomfort able, slept peacefully nonetheless.

As soon as the clock struck ten, the mother tried encouraging the father gently to wake up and then persuading him to go to bed, on the ground that he couldn't get a proper sleep here and the father, who had to report for service at six o'clock, really needed a good sleep. But in his stubbornness, which had gripped him since he had become a servant, he insisted always on staying even longer by the table, although he regularly fell asleep and then could only be prevailed upon with the greatest difficulty to trade his chair for the bed. No matter how much the mother and sister might at that point work on him with small admonitions, for a quarter of an hour he would remain shaking his head slowly, his eyes closed, without standing up. The mother would pull him by the sleeve and speak flattering words into his ear; the sister would leave her work to help her mother, but that would not have the desired effect on the father. He would settle himself even more deeply in his arm chair. Only when the two women grabbed him under the armpits would he throw his eyes open, look back and forth at the

mother and sister, and habitually say 'This is a life. This is the peace and quiet of my old age.' And propped up by both women, he would heave himself up, elaborately, as if for him it was the greatest travail, allow himself to be led to the door by the women, wave them away there, and proceed on his own from there, while the mother quickly threw down her sewing implements and the sister her pen in order to run after the father and help him some more.

In this overworked and exhausted family who had time to worry any longer about Gregor more than was absolutely necessary? The household was constantly getting smaller. The servant girl was now let go. A huge bony cleaning woman with white hair flapping all over her head came in the morning and the evening to do the heaviest work. The mother took care of everything else in addition to her considerable sewing work. It even happened that various pieces of family jewelery, which previously the mother and sister had been overjoyed to wear on social and festive occasions, were sold, as Gregor found out in the evening from the general discussion of the prices they had fetched. But the greatest complaint was always that they could not leave this apartment, which was too big for their present means, since it was impossible to imagine how Gregor might be moved. But Gregor fully recognized that it was not just consideration for him which was preventing a move (for he could have been transported easily in a suitable box with a few air holes); the main thing holding the family back from a change in living quarters was far more their complete hopelessness and the idea that they had been struck by a misfortune like no one else in their entire circle of relatives and acquaintances.

What the world demands of poor people they now carried out to an extreme degree. The father bought breakfast to the petty officials at the bank, the mother sacrificed herself for the undergarments of strangers, the sister behind her desk was at the beck and call of customers, but the family's energies did not extend any further. And the wound in his back began to pain Gregor all over again, when now mother and sister, after they had escorted the father to bed, came back, let their work lie, moved close together, and sat cheek to cheek and when his mother would now say, pointing to Gregor's room, 'Close the door, Grete,' and when Gregor was again in the darkness, while close by the women mingled their tears or, quite dry eyed, stared at the table.

Gregor spent his nights and days with hardly any sleep. Sometimes he thought that the next time the door opened he would take over the family

arrangements just as he had earlier. In his imagination appeared again, after a long time, his employer and supervisor and the apprentices, the excessively gormless custodian, two or three friends from other businesses, a chambermaid from a hotel in the provinces, a loving fleeting memory, a female cashier from a hat shop, whom he had seriously, but too slowly courted–they all appeared mixed in with strangers or people he had already forgotten, but instead of helping him and his family, they were all unapproachable, and he was happy to see them disappear.

But then he was in no mood to worry about his family. He was filled with sheer anger over the wretched care he was getting, even though he couldn't imagine anything for which he might have an appetite. Still, he made plans about how he could take from the larder what he at all account deserved, even if he wasn't hungry. Without thinking any more about how one might be able to give Gregor special pleasure, the sister now kicked some food or other very quickly into his room in the morning and at noon, before she ran off to her shop, and in the evening, quite indifferent about whether the food had perhaps only been tasted or, what happened most frequently, remained entirely undisturbed, she whisked it out with one sweep of her broom. The task of cleaning his room, which she now always carried out in the evening, could not be done any more quickly. Streaks of dirt ran along the walls; here and there lay tangles of dust and garbage. At first, when his sister arrived, Gregor positioned himself in a particularly filthy corner in order with this posture to make something of a protest. But he could have well stayed there for weeks without his sister's changing her ways. Indeed, she perceived the dirt as much as he did, but she had decided just to let it stay.

In this business, with a touchiness which was quite new to her and which had generally taken over the entire family, she kept watch to see that the cleaning of Gregor's room remained reserved for her. Once his mother had undertaken a major cleaning of Gregor's room, which she had only completed successfully after using a few buckets of water. But the extensive dampness made Gregor sick and he lay supine, embittered and immobile on the couch. However, the mother's punishment was not delayed for long. For in the evening the sister had hardly observed the change in Gregor's room before she ran into the living room mightily offended and, in spite of her mother's hand lifted high in entreaty, broke out in a fit of crying. Her parents (the father had, of course, woken up with a start in

his arm chair) at first looked at her astonished and helpless; until they started to get agitated. Turning to his right, the father heaped reproaches on the mother that she was not to take over the cleaning of Gregor's room from the sister and, turning to his left, he shouted at the sister that she would no longer be allowed to clean Gregor's room ever again, while the mother tried to pull the father, beside himself in his excitement, into the bed room; the sister, shaken by her crying fit, pounded on the table with her tiny fists, and Gregor hissed at all this, angry that no one thought about shutting the door and sparing him the sight of this commotion.

But even when the sister, exhausted from her daily work, had grown tired of caring for Gregor as she had before, even then the mother did not have to come at all on her behalf. And Gregor did not have to be neglected. For now the cleaning woman was there. This old widow, who in her long life must have managed to survive the worst with the help of her bony frame, had no real horror of Gregor. Without being in the least curious, she had once by chance opened Gregor's door. At the sight of Gregor, who, totally surprised, began to scamper here and there, although no one was chasing him, she remained standing with her hands folded across her stomach staring at him. Since then she did not fail to open the door furtively a little every morning and evening to look in on Gregor. At first, she also called him to her with words which she presumably thought were friendly, like 'Come here for a bit, old dung beetle!' or 'Hey, look at the old dung beetle!' Addressed in such a manner, Gregor answered nothing, but remained motionless in his place, as if the door had not been opened at all. If only, instead of allowing this cleaning woman to disturb him uselessly whenever she felt like it, they had instead given her orders to clean up his room every day! One day in the early morning (a hard downpour, perhaps already a sign of the coming spring, struck the window panes) when the cleaning woman started up once again with her usual conver sation, Gregor was so bitter that he turned towards her, as if for an attack, although slowly and weakly. But instead of being afraid of him, the cleaning woman merely lifted up a chair standing close by the door and, as she stood there with her mouth wide open, her intention was clear: she would close her mouth only when the chair in her hand had been thrown down on Gregor's back. 'This goes no further, all right?' she asked, as Gregor turned himself around again, and she placed the chair calmly back in the corner.

Gregor ate hardly anything any more. Only when he chanced to move past the food which had been prepared did he, as a game, take a bit into his mouth, hold it there for hours, and generally spit it out again. At first he thought it might be his sadness over the condition of his room which kept him from eating, but he very soon became reconciled to the alterations in his room. People had grown accustomed to put into storage in his room things which they couldn't put anywhere else, and at this point there were many such things, now that they had rented one room of the apartment to three lodgers. These solemn gentlemen (all three had full beards, as Gregor once found out through a crack in the door) were meticulously intent on tidiness, not only in their own room but (since they had now rented a room here) in the entire household, and particularly in the kitchen. They simply did not tolerate any useless or shoddy stuff. Moreover, for the most part they had brought with them their own pieces of furniture. Thus, many items had become superfluous, and these were not really things one could sell or things people wanted to throw out. All these items ended up in Gregor's room, even the box of ashes and the garbage pail from the kitchen. The cleaning woman, always in a hurry, simply flung anything that was momentarily useless into Gregor's room. Fortunately Gregor generally saw only the relevant object and the hand which held it. The cleaning woman perhaps was intending, when time and opportunity allowed, to take the stuff out again or to throw everything out all at once, but in fact the things remained lying there, wherever they had ended up at the first throw, unless Gregor squirmed his way through the accumulation of junk and moved it. At first he was forced to do this because otherwise there was no room for him to creep around, but later he did it with a with a growing pleasure, although after such movements, tired to death and feeling wretched, he didn't budge for hours.

Because the lodgers sometimes also took their evening meal at home in the common living room, the door to the living room stayed shut on many evenings. But Gregor had no trouble at all going without the open door. Already on many evenings when it was open he had not availed himself of it, but, without the family noticing, was stretched out in the darkest corner of his room. However, once the cleaning woman had left the door to the living room slightly ajar, and it remained open even when the lodgers came in in the evening and the lights were put on. They sat down at the head of the table, where in earlier days the

mother, the father, and Gregor had eaten, unfolded their serviettes, and picked up their knives and forks. The mother immediately appeared in the door with a dish of meat and right behind her the sister with a dish piled high with potatoes. The food gave off a lot of steam. The gentlemen lodgers bent over the plate set before them, as if they wanted to check it before eating, and in fact the one who sat in the middle (for the other two he seemed to serve as the authority) cut off a piece of meat still on the plate obviously to establish whether it was sufficiently tender and whether or not something should be shipped back to the kitchen. He was satisfied, and mother and sister, who had looked on in suspense, began to breathe easily and to smile.

The family itself ate in the kitchen. In spite of that, before the father went into the kitchen, he came into the room and with a single bow, cap in hand, made a tour of the table. The lodgers rose up collectively and murmured something in their beards. Then, when they were alone, they ate almost in complete silence. It seemed odd to Gregor that out of all the many different sorts of sounds of eating, what was always audible was their chewing teeth, as if by that Gregor should be shown that people needed their teeth to eat and that nothing could be done even with the most handsome toothless jawbone. 'I really do have an appetite,' Gregor said to himself sorrowfully, 'but not for these things. How these lodgers stuff themselves, and I am dying.'

On this very evening (Gregor didn't remember hearing the violin all through this period) it sounded from the kitchen. The lodgers had already ended their night meal, the middle one had pulled out a newspaper and had given each of the other two a page, and they were now leaning back, reading and smoking. When the violin started playing, they became attentive, got up, and went on tiptoe to the hall door, at which they remained standing pressed up against one another. They must have been audible from the kitchen, because the father called out 'Perhaps the gentlemen don't like the playing? It can be stopped at once.' 'On the contrary,' stated the lodger in the middle, 'might the young woman not come into us and play in the room here where it is really much more comfortable and cheerful?' 'Oh, thank you,' cried out the father, as if he were the one playing the violin. The men stepped back into the room and waited. Soon the father came with the music stand, the mother with the sheet music, and the sister with the violin. The sister calmly prepared everything for the recital. The parents, who had never previously rented a room and

therefore exaggerated their politeness to the lodgers, dared not sit on their own chairs. The father leaned against the door, his right hand stuck between two buttons of his buttoned up uniform. The mother, however, accepted a chair offered by one lodger. Since she left the chair sit where the gentleman had chanced to put it, she sat to one side in a corner.

The sister began to play. The father and mother, followed attentively, one on each side, the movements of her hands. Attracted by the playing, Gregor had ventured to advance a little further forward and his head was already in the living room. He scarcely wondered about the fact that recently he had had so little consideration for the others; earlier this consideration had been something he was proud of. And for that very reason he would've had at this moment more reason to hide away, because as a result of the dust which lay all over his room and flew around with the slightest movement, he was totally covered in dirt. On his back and his sides he carted around with him dust, threads, hair, and remnants of food. His indifference to everything was much too great for him to lie on his back and scour himself on the carpet, as he often had done earlier during the day. In spite of his condition he had no timidity about inching forward a bit on the spotless floor of the living room.

In any case, no one paid him any attention. The family was all caught up in the violin playing. The lodgers, by contrast, who for the moment had placed themselves, their hands in their trouser pockets, behind the music stand much too close to the sister, so that they could all see the sheet music, something that must certainly bother the sister, soon drew back to the window conversing in low voices with bowed heads, where they then remained, worriedly observed by the father. It now seemed really clear that, having assumed they were to hear a beautiful or entertaining violin recital, they were disappointed, and were allowing their peace and quiet to be disturbed only out of politeness. The way in which they all blew the smoke from their cigars out of their noses and mouths in particular led one to conclude that they were very irritated. And yet his sister was

playing so beautifully. Her face was turned to the side, her gaze followed the score intently and sadly. Gregor crept forward still a little further and kept his head close against the floor in order to be able to catch her gaze if possible. Was he an animal that music so seized him? For him it was as if the way to the unknown nourishment he craved was revealing itself to him. He was determined to press forward right to his sister, to tug at her dress and to indicate to her in this way that she might still come with her violin into his room, because here no one valued the recital as he wanted to value it. He did not wish to let her go from his room any more, at least not as long as he lived. His frightening appearance would for the first time become useful for him. He wanted to be at all the doors of his room simultaneously and snarl back at the attackers. However, his sister should not be compelled but would remain with him voluntarily; she would sit next to him on the sofa, bend down her ear to him, and he would then confide in her that he firmly intended to send her to the conservatory and that, if his misfortune had not arrived in the interim, he would have declared all this last Christmas (had Christmas really already come and gone?), and would have brooked no argument. After this explanation his sister would break out in tears of emotion, and Gregor would lift himself up to her armpit and kiss her throat, which she, from the time she started going to work, had left exposed without a band or a collar.

'Mr. Samsa,' called out the middle lodger to the father, and pointed his index finger, without uttering a further word, at Gregor as he was moving slowly forward. The violin fell silent. The middle lodger smiled, first shaking his head once at his friends, and then looked down at Gregor once more. Rather than driving Gregor back again, the father seemed to consider it of prime importance to calm down the lodgers, although they were not at all upset and Gregor seemed to entertain them more than the violin recital. The father hurried over to them and with outstretched arms tried to push them into their own room and simultaneously to block their view of Gregor with his own body. At this point they became really somewhat irritated, although one no longer knew whether that was because of the father's behaviour or because of knowledge they had just acquired that they had had, without knowing it, a neighbour like Gregor. They demanded explanations from his father, raised their arms to make their points, tugged agitatedly at their beards, and moved back towards their room quite slowly. In the meantime, the isolation which had

suddenly fallen upon his sister after the sudden breaking off of the recital had overwhelmed her. She had held onto the violin and bow in her limp hands for a little while and had continued to look at the sheet music as if she was still playing. All at once she pulled herself together, placed the instrument in her mother's lap (the mother was still sitting in her chair having trouble breathing and with her lungs labouring) and had run into the next room, which the lodgers, pressured by the father, were already approaching more rapidly. One could observe how under the sister's practiced hands the sheets and pillows on the beds were thrown on high and arranged. Even before the lodgers had reached the room, she was finished fixing the beds and was slipping out. The father seemed so gripped once again with his stubbornness that he forgot about the respect which he always owed to his renters. He pressed on and on, until at the door of the room the middle gentleman stamped loudly with his foot and thus brought the father to a standstill. 'I hereby declare,' the middle lodger said, raising his hand and casting his glance both on the mother and the sister, 'that considering the disgraceful conditions prevailing in this apartment and family,' with this he spat decisively on the floor, 'I immediately cancel my room. I will, of course, pay nothing at all for the days which I have lived here; on the contrary I shall think about whether or not I will initiate some sort of action against you, something which– believe me– will be very easy to establish.' He fell silent and looked directly in front of him, as if he was waiting for something. In fact, his two friends immediately joined in with their opinions, 'We also give immediate notice.' At that he seized the door handle, banged the door shut, and locked it.

The father groped his way tottering to his chair and let himself fall in it. It looked as if he was stretching out for his usual evening snooze, but the heavy nodding of his head (which looked as if it was without support) showed that he was not sleeping at all. Gregor had lain motionless the entire time in the spot where the lodgers had caught him. Disappointment with the collapse of his plan and perhaps also his weakness brought on his severe hunger made it impossible for him to move. He was certainly afraid that a general disaster would break over him at any moment, and he waited. He was not even startled when the violin fell from the mother's lap, out from under her trembling fingers, and gave off a reverberating tone.

'My dear parents,' said the sister banging her hand on the table by way of an introduction, 'things cannot go

on any longer in this way. Maybe if you don't understand that, well, I do. I will not utter my brother's name in front of this monster, and thus I say only that we must try to get rid of it. We have tried what is humanly possible to take care of it and to be patient. I believe that no one can criticize us in the slightest.' 'She is right in a thousand ways,' said the father to himself. The mother, who was still incapable of breathing properly, began to cough numbly with her hand held up over her mouth and a manic expression in her eyes.

The sister hurried over to her mother and held her forehead. The sister's words seemed to have led the father to certain reflections. He sat upright, played with his hat among the plates, which still lay on the table from the lodgers' evening meal and looked now and then at the motionless Gregor.

'We must try to get rid of it,' the sister now said decisively to the father, for the mother, in her coughing fit, wasn't listening to anything, 'it is killing you both. I see it coming. When people have to work as hard as we all do, they cannot also tolerate this endless torment at home. I just can't go on any more.' And she broke out into such a crying fit that her tears flowed out down onto her mother's face. She wiped them off her mother with mechanical motions of her hands.

'Child,' said the father sympathetically and with obvious appreciation, 'then what should we do?'

The sister only shrugged her shoulders as a sign of the perplexity which, in contrast to her previous confidence, had come over her while she was crying.

If only he understood us,' said the father in a semi-questioning tone. The sister, in the midst of her sobbing, shook her hand energetically as a sign that there was no point thinking of that.

'If he only understood us,' repeated the father and by shutting his eyes he absorbed the sister's conviction of the impossibility of this point, 'then perhaps some compromise would be possible with him. But as it is…'

'It must be gotten rid of,' cried the sister; 'That is the only way, father. You must try to get rid of the idea that this is Gregor. The fact that we have believed for so long, that is truly our real misfortune. But how can it be Gregor? If it were Gregor, he would have long ago realized that a communal life among human beings is not possible with such an animal and would have gone away voluntarily. Then we would not have a brother, but we could go on living and honour his memory. But this animal plagues us. It drives away the lodgers, will obviously take over the entire apartment, and leave us to

spend the night in the alley. Just look, father,' she suddenly cried out, 'he's already starting up again.' With a fright which was incomprehensible to Gregor, the sister even left the mother, pushed herself away from her chair, as if she would sooner sacrifice her mother than remain in Gregor's vicinity, and rushed behind her father who, excited merely by her behaviour, also stood up and half raised his arms in front of the sister as though to protect her.

But Gregor did not have any notion of wishing to create problems for anyone and certainly not for his sister. He had just started to turn himself around in order to creep back into his room, quite a startling sight, since, as a result of his suffering condition, he had to guide himself through the difficulty of turning around with his head, in this process lifting and banging it against the floor several times. He paused and looked around. His good intentions seem to have been recognized. The fright had only lasted for a moment. Now they looked at him in silence and sorrow. His mother lay in her chair, with her legs stretched out and pressed together; her eyes were almost shut from weariness. The father and sister sat next to one another. The sister had set her hands around the father's neck.

' Now perhaps I can actually turn myself around,' thought Gregor and began the task again. He couldn't stop puffing at the effort and had to rest now and then.

Besides no on was urging him on. It was all left to him on his own. When he had completed turning around, he immediately began to wander straight back. He was astonished at the great distance which separated him from his room and did not understand in the least how in his weakness he had covered the same distance a short time before, almost without noticing it. Constantly intent only on creeping along quickly, he hardly paid any attention to the fact that no word or cry from his family interrupted him.

Only when he was already in the door did he turn his head, not completely, because he felt his neck growing stiff. At any rate he still saw that behind him nothing had changed. Only the sister was standing up. His last glimpse brushed over the mother who was now completely asleep. Hardly was he inside his room when the door was pushed shut very quickly, bolted fast, and barred. Gregor was startled by the sudden commotion behind him, so much so that his little limbs bent double under him. It was his sister who had been in such a hurry. She had stood up right away, had waited, and had then sprung forward nimbly. Gregor had not heard anything of her approach. She cried

out 'Finally!' to her parents, as she turned the key in the lock.

'What now?' Gregor asked himself and looked around him in the darkness. He soon made the discovery that he could no longer move at all. He was not surprised at that. On the contrary, it struck him as unnatural that he had really been able up to this point to move around with these thin little legs. Besides he felt relatively content. True, he had pains throughout his entire body, but it seemed to him that they were gradually becoming weaker and weaker and would finally go away completely. The rotten apple in his back and the inflamed surrounding area, entirely covered with white dust, he hardly noticed. He remembered his family with deep feeling and love. In this business, his own thought that he had to disappear was, if possible, even more decisive than his sister's. He remained in this state of empty and peaceful reflection until the tower clock struck three o'clock in the morning. From the window he witnessed the beginning of the general dawning outside. Then without willing it, his head sank all the way down, and from his nostrils flowed out weakly out his last breath.

Early in the morning the cleaning woman came. In her sheer energy and haste she banged all the doors (in precisely the way people had already asked her to avoid), so much so that once she arrived a quiet sleep was no longer possible anywhere in the entire apartment. In her customarily brief visit to Gregor she at first found nothing special. She thought he lay so immobile there intending to play the offended party. She gave him credit for as complete an understanding as possible. Because she happened to hold the long broom in her hand, she tried to tickle Gregor with it from the door. When that was quite unsuccess ful, she became irritated and poked Gregor a little, and only when she had shoved him from his place without any resistance did she become attentive. When she quickly realized the true state of affairs, her eyes grew large, she whistled to herself, but didn't restrain herself for long. She pulled open the door of the bedroom and yelled in a loud voice into the darkness, 'Come and look. It's kicked the bucket. It's lying there, totally snuffed!'

The Samsa married couple sat upright in their marriage bed and had to get over their fright at the cleaning woman before they managed to grasp her message. But then Mr. and Mrs. Samsa climbed very quickly out of bed, one on either side. Mr. Samsa threw the bedspread over his shoulders, Mrs. Samsa came out only in her night-shirt, and like this they stepped into Gregor's room.

Meanwhile the door of the living room (in which Grete had slept since the lodgers had arrived on the scene) had also opened. She was fully clothed, as if she had not slept at all; her white face also seem to indicate that. 'Dead?' said Mrs. Samsa and looked questioningly at the cleaning woman, although she could check everything on her own and even understand without a check. 'I should say so,' said the cleaning woman and, by way of proof, poked Gregor's body with the broom a considerable distance more to the side. Mrs. Samsa made a movement as if she wished to restrain the broom, but didn't do it. 'Well,' said Mr. Samsa, 'now we can give thanks to God.' He crossed himself, and the three women followed his example.

Grete, who did not take her eyes off the corpse, said, 'Look how thin he was. He had eaten nothing for such a long time. The meals which came in here came out again exactly the same.' In fact, Gregor's body was completely flat and dry. That was apparent really for the first time, now that he was no longer raised on his small limbs and, moreover, now that nothing else distracted one's gaze.

'Grete, come into us for a moment,' said Mrs. Samsa with a melancholy smile, and Grete went, not without looking back at the corpse, behind her parents into the bed room. The cleaning woman shut the door and opened the window wide. In spite of the early morning, the fresh air was partly tinged with warmth. It was already the end of March. The three lodgers stepped out of their room and looked around for their breakfast, astonished that they had been forgotten. 'Where is the breakfast?' asked the middle one of the gentlemen grumpily to the cleaning woman. However, she laid her finger to her lips and then quickly and silently indicated to the lodgers that they could come into Gregor's room. So they came and stood around Gregor's corpse, their hands in the pockets of their somewhat worn jackets, in the room, which was already quite bright.

Then the door of the bed room opened, and Mr. Samsa appeared in his uniform, with his wife on one arm and his daughter on the other. All were a little tear stained. Now and then Grete pressed her face onto her father's arm.

'Get out of my apartment immediately,' said Mr. Samsa and pulled open the door, without letting go of the women. 'What do you mean?' said the middle lodger, somewhat dismayed and with a sugary smile. The two others kept their hands behind them and constantly rubbed them against each other, as if in joyful anticipation of a great squabble which must end up in their favour. 'I mean exactly what I say,' replied Mr. Samsa and went

directly with his two female companions up to the lodger. The latter at first stood there motionless and looked at the floor, as if matters were arranging themselves in a new way in his head. 'All right, then we'll go,' he said and looked up at Mr. Samsa as if, suddenly overcome by humility, he was asking fresh permission for this decision. Mr. Samsa merely nodded to him repeatedly with his eyes open wide.

Following that, the lodger actually went immediately with long strides into the hall. His two friends had already been listening for a while with their hands quite still, and now they hopped smartly after him, as if afraid that Mr. Samsa could step into the hall ahead of them and disturb their reunion with their leader. In the hall all three of them took their hats from the coat rack, pulled their canes from the cane holder, bowed silently, and left the apartment. In what turned out to be an entirely groundless mistrust, Mr. Samsa stepped with the two women out onto the landing, leaned against the railing, and looked down as the three lodgers slowly but steadily made their way down the long staircase, disappeared on each floor in a certain turn of the stairwell and in a few seconds came out again. The deeper they proceeded, the more the Samsa family lost interest in them, and when a butcher with a tray on his head come to meet them and then with a proud bearing ascended the stairs high above them, Mr. Samsa., together with the women, left the banister, and they all returned, as if relieved, back into their apartment.

They decided to pass that day resting and going for a stroll. Not only had they earned this break from work, but there was no question that they really needed it. And so they sat down at the table and wrote three letters of apology: Mr. Samsa to his supervisor, Mrs. Samsa to her client, and Grete to her proprietor. During the writing the cleaning woman came in to say that she was going off, for her morning work was finished. The three people writing at first merely nodded, without glancing up. Only when the cleaning woman was still unwilling to depart, did they look up angrily. 'Well?' asked Mr. Samsa. The cleaning woman stood smiling in the doorway, as if she had a great stroke of luck to report to the family but would only do it if she was asked directly. The almost upright small ostrich feather in her hat, which had irritated Mr. Samsa during her entire service, swayed lightly in all directions. 'All right then, what do you really want?' asked Mrs. Samsa, whom the cleaning lady still usually respected. 'Well,' answered the cleaning woman (smiling so happily she couldn't go on speaking right away), 'about how that

rubbish from the next room should be thrown out, you mustn't worry about it. It's all taken care of.' Mrs. Samsa and Grete bent down to their letters, as though they wanted to go on writing; Mr. Samsa, who noticed that the cleaning woman wanted to start describing everything in detail, decisively prevented her with an outstretched hand. But since she was not allowed to explain, she remembered the great hurry she was in, and called out, clearly insulted, 'Ta ta, everyone,' turned around furiously and left the apartment with a fearful slamming of the door.

'This evening she'll be let go,' said Mr. Samsa, but he got no answer from either his wife or from his daughter, because the cleaning woman seemed to have upset once again the tranquility they had just attained. They got up, went to the window and remained there, with their arms about each other. Mr. Samsa turned around in his chair in their direction and observed them quietly for a while. Then he called out, 'All right, come here then. Let's finally get rid of old things. And have a little consideration for me.' The women attended to him at once. They rushed to him, caressed him, and quickly ended their letters.

Then all three left the apartment together, something they had not done for months now, and took the electric tram into the open air outside the city. The car in which they were sitting by themselves was totally engulfed by the warm sun. They talked to each other, leaning back comfortably in their seats, about future prospects, and they discovered that on closer observation these were not at all bad, for all three had employment, about which they had not really questioned each other at all, which was extremely favorable and with especially promising prospects. The greatest improvement in their situation at this moment, of course, had to come from a change of dwelling. Now they wanted to rent an apartment smaller and cheaper but better situated and generally more practical than the present one, which Gregor had found. While they amused themselves in this way, it struck Mr. and Mrs. Samsa almost at the same moment how their daughter, who was getting more animated all the time, had blossomed recently, in spite of all the troubles which had made her cheeks pale, into a beautiful and voluptuous young woman. Growing more silent and almost unconsciously understanding each other in their glances, they thought that the time was now at hand to seek out a good honest man for her. And it was something of a confirmation of their new dreams and good intentions when at the end of their journey the daughter first lifted herself up and stretched her young body.

1. Describe the impact of the injury Gregor sustained on his back?
2. Did Grete's attitude to Gregor change? Why?
3. Why did the Samsas decide to entertain lodgers in the house?
4. Why did Gregor stop Grete from playing violin for the lodgers?
5. How did Grete react when Gregor interrupted her playing the violin?
6. What was the lodger's reaction on seeing Gregor?
7. Why did Samsa decide to shift the house?
8. Why did the sister desire to get rid of Gregor?
9. What are the reasons Grete put forth for avoiding Gregor?

Understanding the Text

1. How does Gregor react to his transformation at the beginning of the novella?
2. What are the difficulties faced by Gregor in being an insect with a human mind?
3. How did the Samsas react when they came to know about Gregor's transformation?
4. What behavioural changes did Gregor undergo in the course of his life as a vermin?
5. How did Gregor feel when Grete and his mother moved the furniture out of his room?
6. Why did the mother oppose the idea of shifting furniture from Gregor's room?
7. Why did Gregor cling to the picture of the woman in fur as the furniture was shifted?
8. What changes occured in Gregor's taste for food? Why?
9. Did the sympathetic attitude of the Samsas towards Gregor change in the course of the story? How?
10. Comment on the theme of alienation in *The Metamorphosis*.
11. How does food represent the feelings of the Samsas towards Gregor?
12. How does Gregor's lingering humanity get revealed in the novella?
13. Describe how money shapes human relationships as depicted in the novella.
14. Comment on the significance of sleep and rest in *The Metamorphosis*.

15. Can the financial constraints of the Samas be considered as one of the reasons for Gregor's metamorphosis and his death?

16. Describe the symbolic significance of the picture of the woman in fur.

Writing about the Text

1. Gregor's metamorphosis is not merely physical. Justify.

2. Do you think Gregor's metamorphosis into a vermin is the result of his job as a travelling salesman which involves a lot of physical and mental weariness?

3. Describe the death of Gregor in a paragraph.

4. Do you think Gregor willingly embraced death by starving?

5. If the Samsas had accepted Gregor's human-insect hybridity, do you think, they would have been able to live with him for long?

6. What happened to Gregor's corpse? Why does the author end the novella so ambiguously?

7. How would have the story been if Gregor had been transformed in to a less repulsive animal?

8. Comment on the symbols used in the novella.

9. Write the character sketch of

   a. Gregor
   b. Grete
   c. Samsa
   d. The manager
   e. The mother

10. Comment on the change in the attitude of Grete as the story moves on.

11. How does the theme of absurdity of human relations reflect in the novella?

12. Do you think the transformation of Gregor Samsa is symbolic of the transformation of the people around him? If so, why?

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