

Guy de Maupassant

Before Reading**Answer these questions.**

- Can there be conflict in love?
- Is it good to betray a friend?
- Have you ever read a tragic story or watched a tragic movie? What happens in tragedy?

Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) was a popular 19th-century French writer. His short stories are characterized by their economy of style and their efficient effortless dénouement. His stories are linked by irony and the frailty of human nature. He was an author of the realist and naturalist schools of writing. He wrote novels, poetry and newspapers articles, but he is best known for his short stories in the field of literature.



The story '*Two Little Soldiers*' is about a triangular love with a completely unexpected twist at the end. This story shows the compatibility of friendship and romantic love with change, discontent, conflict, betrayal and jealousy.

Reading

Every Sunday, as soon as they were free, the little soldiers would go for a walk. They turned to the right on leaving the barracks, crossed Courbevoie with rapid strides, as though on a forced march; then, as the houses grew scarcer, they slowed down and followed the dusty road which leads to Bezons.

They were small and thin, lost in their ill-fitting capes, too large and too long, whose sleeves covered their hands; their ample red trousers fell in folds around their ankles. Under the high, stiff shako one could just barely perceive two thin, hollow-cheeked Breton faces, with their calm, naïve blue eyes. They never spoke during their journey, going straight before them, the same idea in each one's mind taking the place of conversation. For at the entrance of the little forest of Champioux they had found a spot which reminded them of home, and they did not feel happy anywhere else.

At the crossing of the Colombes and Chatou roads, when they arrived under the trees, they would take off their heavy, oppressive headgear and wipe their foreheads.

They always stopped for a while on the bridge at Bezons, and looked at the Seine. They stood there several minutes, bending over the railing, watching the white sails, which perhaps reminded them of their home, and of the fishing smacks leaving for the open.

As soon as they had crossed the Seine, they would purchase provisions at the delicatessen, the baker's, and the wine merchant's. A piece of bologna, four cents' worth of bread, and a quart of wine, made up the luncheon which they carried away, wrapped up in their handkerchiefs. But as soon as they were out of the village their gait would slacken and they would begin to talk.

Before them was a plain with a few clumps of trees, which led to the woods, a little forest which seemed to remind them of that other forest at Kermarivan. The wheat and oat fields bordered on the narrow path, and Jean Kerderen said each time to Luc Le Ganidec:

"It's just like home, just like Plounivon."

"Yes, it's just like home."

And they went on, side by side, their minds full of dim memories of home. They saw the fields, the hedges, the forests, and beaches.

Each time they stopped near a large stone on the edge of the private estate, because it reminded them of the dolmen of Locneuen.

As soon as they reached the first clump of trees, Luc Le Ganidec would cut off a small stick, and, whittling it slowly, would walk on, thinking of the folks at home.

Jean Kerderen carried the provisions.

From time to time Luc would mention a name, or allude to some boyish prank which would give them food for plenty of thought. And the home country, so dear and so distant, would little by little gain possession of their minds, sending them back through space, to the well-known forms and noises, to the familiar scenery, with the fragrance of its green fields and sea air. They no longer noticed the smells of the city. And in their dreams they saw their friends leaving, perhaps forever, for the dangerous fishing grounds.

They were walking slowly, Luc Le Ganidec and Jean Kerderen, contented and sad, haunted by a sweet sorrow, the slow and penetrating sorrow of a captive animal which

remembers the days of its freedom.

And when Luc had finished whittling his stick, they came to a little nook, where every Sunday they took their meal. They found the two bricks, which they had hidden in a hedge, and they made a little fire of dry branches and roasted their sausages on the ends of their knives.

When their last crumb of bread had been eaten and the last drop of wine had been drunk, they stretched themselves out on the grass side by side, without speaking, their half-closed eyes looking away in the distance, their hands clasped as in prayer, their red-trousered legs mingling with the bright colours of the wild flowers.

Towards noon they glanced, from time to time, towards the village of Bezons, for the dairy maid would soon be coming. Every Sunday she would pass in front of them on the way to milk her cow, the only cow in the neighbourhood which was sent out to pasture.

Soon they would see the girl, coming through the fields, and it pleased them to watch the sparkling sunbeams reflected from her shining pail. They never spoke of her. They were just glad to see her, without understanding why.

She was a tall, strapping girl, freckled and tanned by the open air - a girl typical of the Parisian suburbs.

Once, on noticing that they were always sitting in the same place, she said to them:

"Do you always come here?"

Luc Le Ganidec, more daring than his friend, stammered:

"Yes, we come here for our rest."

That was all. But the following Sunday, on seeing them, she smiled with the kindly smile of a woman who understood their shyness, and she asked:

"What are you doing here? Are you watching the grass grow?"

Luc, cheered up, smiled: "P'raps."

She continued: "It's not growing fast, is it?"

He answered, still laughing: "Not exactly."

She went on. But when she came back with her pail full of milk, she stopped before them and said:

"Want some? It will remind you of home."

She had, perhaps instinctively, guessed and touched the right spot.

Both were moved. Then not without difficulty, she poured some milk into the bottle in which they had brought their wine. Luc started to drink, carefully watching lest he should take more than his share. Then he passed the bottle to Jean. She stood before them, her hands on her hips, her pail at her feet, enjoying the pleasure that she was giving them. Then she went on, saying: "Well, bye-bye until next Sunday!"

For a long time, they watched her tall form as it receded in the distance, blending with the background, and finally disappeared.

The following week as they left the barracks, Jean said to Luc:

"Don't you think we ought to buy her something good?"

They were sorely perplexed by the problem of choosing something to bring to the dairy maid. Luc was in favour of bringing her some chitterlings; but Jean, who had a sweet tooth, thought that candy would be the best thing. He won, and so they went to a grocery to buy two sous' worth, of red and white candies.

This time they ate more quickly than usual, excited by anticipation.

Jean was the first one to notice her. "There she is," he said, and Luc answered: "Yes, there she is."

She smiled when she saw them, and cried:

"Well, how are you today?"

They both answered together:

"All right! How's everything with you?"

Then she started to talk of simple things which might interest them; of the weather, of the crops, of her masters.

They didn't dare to offer their candies, which were slowly melting in Jean's pocket. Finally, Luc, growing bolder, murmured:

"We have brought you something."

She asked: "Let's see it, "

Then Jean, blushing to the tips of his ears, reached in his pocket, and drawing out the little paper bag, handed it to her.

She began to eat the little sweet dainties. The two soldiers sat in front of her, moved and delighted.

At last she went to do her milking, and when she came back she again gave them some milk. They thought of her all through the week and often spoke of her. The following Sunday she sat beside them for a longer time.

The three of them sat there, side by side, their eyes looking far away in the distance, their hands clasped over their knees, and they told each other little incidents and little details of the villages where they were born, while the cow, waiting to be milked, stretched her heavy head toward the girl and mooed.

Soon the girl consented to eat with them and to take a sip of wine. Often she brought them plums pocket for plums were now ripe. Her presence enlivened the little Breton soldiers, who chattered away like two birds.

One Tuesday something unusual happened to Luc Le Ganidec; he asked for leave and did not return until ten o'clock at night.

Jean, worried and racked his brain to account for his friend's having obtained leave.

The following Friday, Luc borrowed ten cents from one of his friends, and once more asked and obtained leave for several hours.

When he started out with Jean on Sunday he seemed queer, disturbed, changed. Kerderen did not understand; he vaguely suspected something, but he could not guess what it might be.

They went straight to the usual place, and lunched slowly. Neither was hungry.

Soon the girl appeared. They watched her approach as they always did. When she was near, Luc arose and went towards her. She placed her pail on the ground and kissed him. She kissed him passionately, throwing her arms around his neck, without paying attention to Jean, without even noticing that he was there.

Poor Jean was dazed, so dazed that he could not understand. His mind was upset and his heart broken, without his even realizing why.

Then the girl sat down beside Luc, and they started to chat.

Jean was not looking at them. He understood now why his friend had gone out twice during the week. He felt the pain and the sting which treachery and deceit leave in their wake.

Luc and the girl went together to attend to the cow.

Jean followed them with his eyes. He saw them disappear side by side, the red trousers of his friend making a scarlet spot against the white road. It was Luc who sank the stake to which the cow was tethered. The girl stooped down to milk the cow, while he absent-mindedly stroked the animal's glossy neck. Then they left the pail in the grass and disappeared in the woods.

Jean could no longer see anything but the wall of leaves through which they had passed. He was unmanned so that he did not have strength to stand. He stayed there, motionless, bewildered and grieving-simple, passionate grief. He wanted to weep, to run away, to hide somewhere, never to see anyone again.

Then he saw them coming back again. They were walking slowly, hand in hand, as village lovers do. Luc was carrying the pail.

After kissing him again, the girl went on, nodding carelessly to Jean. She did not offer him any milk that day.

The two little soldiers sat side by side, motionless as always, silent and quiet, their calm faces in no way betraying the trouble in their hearts. The sun shone down on them. From time to time they could hear the plaintive lowing of the cow. At the usual time they arose to return.

Luc was whittling a stick. Jean carried the empty bottle. He left it at the wine merchant's in Bezons. Then they stopped on the bridge, as they did every Sunday, and watched the water flowing by.

Jean leaned over the railing, farther and farther, as though he had seen something in the stream which hypnotized him. Luc said to him:

"What's the matter? Do you want a drink?"

He had hardly said the last word when Jean's head carried away the rest of his body, and the little blue and red soldier fell like a shot and disappeared in the water.

Luc, paralyzed with horror, tried vainly to shout for help. In the distance he saw something move; then his friend's head bobbed up out of the water only to disappear again.

Farther down he again noticed a hand, just one hand, which appeared and again went out of sight. That was all.

The boatmen who had rushed to the scene found the body that day.

Luc ran back to the barracks, crazed, and with eyes and voice full of tears, he related the accident: "He leaned--he--he was leaning--so far over--that his head carried him away--and--he--fell--he fell----"

Emotion choked him so that he could say no more. If he had only known.

Glossary

gait (n.): a manner of walking or moving on foot

slacken (v.): to reduce or decrease in speed

whittle (v.): to cut, trim, or shape (a stick, piece of wood, etc.) by carving off bits with a knife

allude (v.): to mention it in an indirect way

nook (n.): a small sheltered place or recess

instinctively (adv.): without conscious thought

recede (v.): to go or move further away into the distance, or to become less clear

perplexed (adj.): completely baffled; very puzzled

enliven (v.): to make more entertaining, interesting, or cheerful

Understanding the text

Answer these questions.

- Why do the two soldiers spend their free time on Sundays away from the barracks out in the countryside?
- Why does the girl become the topic of conversation for these soldiers?
- Why does deception enter into their friendship?
- Do you think that Luc is a betrayer of friendship?
- What is the cause of suicide of Jean? Do you think that it was the only release of his love?

Reference to the context

- What is the central theme of the story?
- "What are you doing here? Are you watching the grass grow?"
 - Who is the speaker?
 - What does the word "here" indicate?
 - Who does "you" refer to?
- "He leaned--he--he was leaning--so far over--that his head carried him

away--and--he--fell--he fell----"

- i. Who is the speaker?
 - ii. Why is the speaker speaking with interruption?
 - iii. What does he mean when he says "he--fell--he fell---"?
- d. *Two Little Soldiers* can be viewed as a series of dramatic scenes. Describe the story as tragedy.
- e. What is the setting and style of the story?
- f. How would you describe the conflict between the friends?

Reference beyond the text

- a. Is it good to have conflict between friendship and love? Is it morally good that a person and his best friend can love the same person?
- b. How would you describe the triangular love?

Before Reading**Answer these questions.**

- Have you ever visited a palm reader? Do you believe in fortune telling?
- Why do you think people want to know their futures?
- Look at this picture. Can you name each of the zodiac signs? What is your zodiac sign?



R. K. Narayan (1906-2001) was an Indian writer known for his works set in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. He was born in Madras, South India. He wrote many novels including *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The English Teacher*, along with short stories and other works. He was among the best known and most widely read Indian novelists who wrote in English. He highlighted the social context and everyday life of his characters.



Astrology is a form of fortune telling, originated in ancient Babylonia. It has been practised in many cultures, including ancient Rome, Greece, India, and China. *'An Astrologer's Day'* is a thriller, suspense story describing a day in the life of an astrologer who makes his living by selling cosmic insights to gullible villagers, though he has no knowledge of the cosmos or actual spiritual insight.

Reading

Punctually at midday he opened his bag and spread out his professional equipment, which consisted of a dozen cowrie shells, a square piece of cloth with obscure mystic charts on it, a notebook and a bundle of palmyra writing. His forehead was resplendent with sacred ash and vermillion, and his eyes sparkled with a sharp abnormal gleam which was really an outcome of a continual searching look for customers, but which his simple clients took to be a prophetic light and felt comforted. The power of his eyes was considerably enhanced by their position—placed as they were between the painted

forehead and the dark whiskers which streamed down his cheeks: even a half-wit's eyes would sparkle in such a setting. To crown the effect, he wound a saffron-coloured turban around his head. This colour scheme never failed. People were attracted to him as bees are attracted to cosmos or dahlia stalks. He sat under the boughs of a spreading tamarind tree which flanked a path running through the Town Hall Park. It was a remarkable place in many ways: a surging crowd was always moving up and down this narrow road morning till night. A variety of trades and occupations was represented all along its way: medicine-sellers, sellers of stolen hardware and junk, magicians and, above all, an auctioneer of cheap cloth, who created enough din all day to attract the whole town. Next to him in vociferousness came a vendor of fried groundnuts, who gave his ware a fancy name each day, calling it Bombay Ice-Cream one day, and on the next Delhi Almond, and on the third Raja's Delicacy, and so on and so forth, and people flocked to him. A considerable portion of this crowd dallied before the astrologer too. The astrologer transacted his business by the light of a flare which crackled and smoked up above the groundnut heap nearby. Half the enchantment of the place was due to the fact that it did not have the benefit of municipal lighting. The place was lit up by shop lights. One or two had hissing gaslights, some had naked flares stuck on poles, some were lit up by old cycle lamps and one or two, like the astrologer's, managed without lights of their own. It was a bewildering crisscross of light rays and moving shadows. This suited the astrologer very well, for the simple reason that he had not in the least intended to be an astrologer when he began life; and he knew no more of what was going to happen to others than he knew what was going to happen to himself next minute. He was as much a stranger to the stars as were his innocent customers. Yet he said things which pleased and astonished everyone: that was more a matter of study, practice and shrewd guesswork. All the same, it was as much an honest man's labour as any other, and he deserved the wages he carried home at the end of a day.

He had left his village without any previous thought or plan. If he had continued there he would have carried on the work of his forefathers—namely, tilling the land, living, marrying and ripening in his cornfield and ancestral home. But that was not to be. He had to leave home without telling anyone, and he could not rest till he left it behind a couple of hundred miles. To a villager it is a great deal, as if an ocean flowed between.

He had a working analysis of mankind's troubles: marriage, money and the tangles of human ties. Long practice had sharpened his perception. Within five minutes he understood what was wrong. He charged three pies per question and never opened his

mouth till the other had spoken for at least ten minutes, which provided him enough stuff for a dozen answers and advices. When he told the person before him, gazing at his palm, 'In many ways you are not getting the fullest results for your efforts,' nine out of ten were disposed to agree with him. Or he questioned: 'Is there any woman in your family, maybe even a distant relative, who is not well disposed towards you?' Or he gave an analysis of character: 'Most of your troubles are due to your nature. How can you be otherwise with Saturn where he is? You have an impetuous nature and a rough exterior.' This endeared him to their hearts immediately, for even the mildest of us loves to think that he has a forbidding exterior.

The nuts-vendor blew out his flare and rose to go home. This was a signal for the astrologer to bundle up too, since it left him in darkness except for a little shaft of green light which strayed in from somewhere and touched the ground before him. He picked up his cowrie shells and paraphernalia and was putting them back into his bag when the green shaft of light was blotted out; he looked up and saw a man standing before him. He sensed a possible client and said: 'You look so careworn. It will do you good to sit down for a while and chat with me.' The other grumbled some vague reply. The astrologer pressed his invitation; whereupon the other thrust his palm under his nose, saying: 'You call yourself an astrologer?' The astrologer felt challenged and said, tilting the other's palm towards the green shaft of light: 'Yours is a nature . . .' 'Oh, stop that,' the other said. 'Tell me something worthwhile . . .'

Our friend felt piqued. 'I charge only three pies per question, and what you get ought to be good enough for your money . . .' At this the other withdrew his arm, took out an anna and flung it out to him, saying, 'I have some questions to ask. If I prove you are bluffing, you must return that anna to me with interest.'

'If you find my answers satisfactory, will you give me five rupees?' 'No.' 'Or will you give me eight annas?'

'All right, provided you give me twice as much if you are wrong,' said the stranger. This pact was accepted after a little further argument. The astrologer sent up a prayer to heaven as the other lit a cheroot. The astrologer caught a glimpse of his face by the match-light. There was a pause as cars hooted on the road, jutka-drivers swore at their horses and the babble of the crowd agitated the semi-darkness of the park. The other sat down, sucking his cheroot, puffing out, sat there ruthlessly. The astrologer felt very uncomfortable. 'Here, take your anna back. I am not used to such challenges. It is late for me today . . .' He made preparations to bundle up. The other held his wrist and said,

‘You can’t get out of it now. You dragged me in while I was passing.’ The astrologer shivered in his grip; and his voice shook and became faint. ‘Leave me today. I will speak to you tomorrow.’ The other thrust his palm in his face and said, ‘Challenge is challenge. Go on.’ The astrologer proceeded with his throat drying up. ‘There is a woman . . .’

‘Stop,’ said the other. ‘I don’t want all that. Shall I succeed in my present search or not? Answer this and go. Otherwise I will not let you go till you disgorge all your coins.’ The astrologer muttered a few incantations and replied, ‘All right. I will speak. But will you give me a rupee if what I say is convincing? Otherwise I will not open my mouth, and you may do what you like.’ After a good deal of haggling the other agreed. The astrologer said, ‘You were left for dead. Am I right?’

‘Ah, tell me more.’ ‘A knife has passed through you once?’ said the astrologer. ‘Good fellow!’ He bared his chest to show the scar. ‘What else?’ ‘And then you were pushed into a well nearby in the field. You were left for dead.’ ‘I should have been dead if some passer-by had not chanced to peep into the well,’ exclaimed the other, overwhelmed by enthusiasm. ‘When shall I get at him?’ he asked, clenching his fist.

‘In the next world,’ answered the astrologer. ‘He died four months ago in a far-off town. You will never see any more of him.’ The other groaned on hearing it. The astrologer proceeded. ‘Guru Nayak—’ ‘You know my name!’ the other said, taken aback.

‘As I know all other things. Guru Nayak, listen carefully to what I have to say. Your village is two days’ journey due north of this town. Take the next train and be gone. I see once again great danger to your life if you go from home.’ He took out a pinch of sacred ash and held it out to him. ‘Rub it on your forehead and go home. Never travel southward again, and you will live to be a hundred.’

‘Why should I leave home again?’ the other said reflectively. ‘I was only going away now and then to look for him and to choke out his life if I met him.’ He shook his head regretfully. ‘He has escaped my hands. I hope at least he died as he deserved.’ ‘Yes,’ said the astrologer. ‘He was crushed under a lorry.’ The other looked gratified to hear it.

The place was deserted by the time the astrologer picked up his articles and put them into his bag. The green shaft was also gone, leaving the place in darkness and silence. The stranger had gone off into the night, after giving the astrologer a handful of coins.

It was nearly midnight when the astrologer reached home. His wife was waiting for him at the door and demanded an explanation. He flung the coins at her and said, 'Count them. One man gave all that.'

'Twelve and a half annas,' she said, counting. She was overjoyed. 'I can buy some jaggery and coconut tomorrow. The child has been asking for sweets for so many days now. I will prepare some nice stuff for her.'

'The swine has cheated me! He promised me a rupee,' said the astrologer. She looked up at him. 'You look worried. What is wrong?' 'Nothing.'

After dinner, sitting on the pyol, he told her, 'Do you know a great load is gone from me today? I thought I had the blood of a man on my hands all these years. That was the reason why I ran away from home, settled here and married you. He is alive.' She gasped. 'You tried to kill!'

'Yes, in our village, when I was a silly youngster. We drank, gambled and quarrelled badly one day—why think of it now? Time to sleep,' he said, yawning, and stretched himself on the pyol.

Glossary

cheroot (n.): a cigar cut square at both ends

jutka (n.): a two-wheeled, horse-drawn vehicle

disgorge (v.): to give up or hand over

cowrie (n.): a small snail commonly found in warm, shallow waters of the Pacific and Indian Oceans

impetuous (adj.): done quickly without thought; hasty

incantation (n.): words spoken in a magic spell or charm

jaggery (n.): solid dark brown sugar made from sugarcane

pyol (n.): a low bench

palmyra (n.): paper made from the leaves of the palmyra tree

paraphernalia (n.): things used in a particular activity; equipment

piqued (adj.): aroused in anger or resentment; offended

saffron (n.): an orange-yellow colour

vociferousness (n.): noisy outcrying

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- a. How does the astrologer's appearance help him attract customers? How does he help the customers satisfy their needs?
- b. How do you characterise the astrologer's attitude toward the stranger?
- c. What details does the astrologer give the stranger about his past?
- d. Why does he advise the stranger to go home immediately?
- e. What is your reaction to the conversation between the astrologer and his wife?

Reference to the context

- a. Suspense is the feeling of anticipation you may have as you read. In this story, what details contributed to your feelings of suspense and surprise? Explain.
- b. Analyze the conflicts in "An Astrologer's Day." Explain how the conflicts are resolved and what they reveal about the characters involved in the story.
- c. "All right. I will speak. But will you give me a rupee if what I say is convincing? Otherwise I will not open my mouth, and you may do what you like."
 - i. Who is the speaker?
 - ii. Who is he speaking to?
 - iii. What does the expression 'open my mouth' mean?
- d. Description helps readers visualize what is happening in a story. What details and techniques does the author use to describe the astrologer?
- e. Irony is a contrast between appearances and reality. What is ironic about Guru Nayak's meeting with the astrologer?
- f. How does the astrologer's manner of dress suit his character?

Reference beyond the text

- a. The astrologer attracts many customers in the street who are pleased and astonished by what he tells them. What does this tell you about the people of the town walking in the street?
- b. Why do most people want to know their future? Do you think astrologers can really help them know their future?
- c. Is astrology a good practice of fortune telling or is it just a blind faith? Give reasons.

Vishnu S. Rai

Before Reading**Answer these questions.**

- What is pandemic? Describe a pandemic that you have heard about in the history.
- Is Corona Virus a pandemic? How?
- Do you think that human behaviour is responsible for the pandemic?

Vishnu S Rai (1951-) was educated in India, Nepal, and the UK. He taught English at Tribhuvan University for three decades and retired as Professor of English Language Education. Rai writes both in English and Nepali. He has written stories *Martyrs & Other Stories* (English), play *Realities* (English), travelogues *Nau Dandapari* (Nepali), and a novel *Paheli* (Nepali).



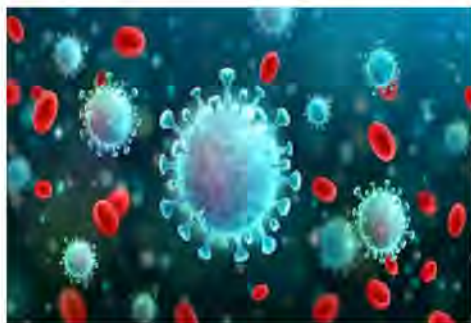
But above all he is a poet and he has published *Sudama* (a semi epic in Nepali), *Jeevan* (a collection of poems in Nepali), *Vagabond Verses* (a collection of poems in English), and *Tritiyaki joon* (a collection of songs and gazals in Nepali, and his English poems are taught in Nepal and abroad. Rai is known as a poet of human emotions.

The poem, *Corona Says*, written on the theme of the present world crisis Corona and its devastating impact on human life, is a subtle satire on man's conduct and attitude. It views COVID-19 as the byproduct of man's treatment to nature.

Reading

Stop crying,
Oh man,
Stop cursing me
And listen.
I didn't come here
of my own free will.

I was invited.
Believe me,
I had no choice
but to visit you.
How many lives were lost
Because of me?
You count.
But have you ever counted
How many have died so far
Because of you and your wars?



You call yourself
'the crown of creation'.
What about the others,
Those who fly in the sky,
Those who live in the ocean,
Those who crawl on the earth,
And those, the sources of your oxygen?
You think they all are your slaves
Who you can sell or kill
At your will.

Don't blame me.
I just wanted to show you
How clean the blue sky looks
Without dust and smoke.
I wanted you to realise
How caged animals feel
In a zoo.

I came
Not to give you a test.
I came
So that mother Earth
Could have a little rest.

You claim that you know everything.
I just wanted you to know yourself
The earth is not your property alone -
It's as much ours as yours.

Sure,
I will depart one day.
But remember
There're many others like me.
They'll come too.
If you don't get rid of your inflated ego,
You'll be back to your cave time
That you endured
Long, l o n g, l o n g ago ...

Glossary

crown (n.): authority

cursing (v.): uttering offensive words in anger

ego (n.): a person's sense of self importance

endured (v.): went through

slaves (n.): people who are legal property of another and is forced to obey them

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- Who is the speaker in the poem?
- Who claim that they are superior to all?

- c. Why has the speaker come to the Earth?
- d. What positive changes have occurred on Earth after the speaker's visit?

Reference to the context

- a. What does the speaker mean when he says:
But have you ever counted
How many have died so far
Because of you and your wars?
- b. Explain the following:
 I will depart one day.
 But remember
 There're many others like me.
 They'll come too.
 If you don't get rid of your inflated ego,
 You'll be back to your cave time
 That you endured
 Long, l o n g, l o n g ago ...
- c. What does the speaker mean in the following lines? Explain.
The earth is not your property alone -
It's as much ours as yours.

Reference beyond the text

- a. What human behaviours are responsible for the suffering in people's lives?
- b. How does an epidemic differ from pandemic? Briefly explain the impact of Corona Virus on human life and environment.

*Robert Burns***Before Reading****Answer these questions.**

- How do people express love?
- What is the symbolic meaning of 'rose'?
- What images in nature would you use to express love?

Robert Burns (1759-1796) was a Scottish poet and lyricist. He is considered the national poet of Scotland and a central figure in Scottish literature. His father was a tenant farmer, and Burns worked as a plowboy. He grew up poor but well-read and began writing poetry in Scottish dialect. As an adult, he was as unsuccessful as his father in making a living at farming.

In 1791, however, he quit farming for good and moved his family to the nearby town of Dumfries. Never in good health, on the morning of July 21, 1796, he died in Dumfries at the age of 37. He is best known as a pioneer of the Romantic Movement for his lyrical poetry.

The poem '*A Red, Red Rose*' is a lyrical ballad that describes the speaker's deep love for his beloved and promises that this love will last longer than human life. The beloved of the speaker is as beautiful as the red rose and as sweet as the music. With the help of the literary devices, the poet has sketched a very vivid and realistic picture of his profound love.

**Reading**

O, my love is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
O, my love is like the melody,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonny lass,
So deep in love am I,
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
And I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only love,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!



Glossary

a' (det.): short form of the word 'all'

art (v.): an older form of the word 'are'

bonny (adj.): attractive, beautiful

gang (v.): 'go' in Scottish

lass (n.): a girl or young woman

o' (prep.): short form of the word 'of'

weel (adj.): an older form of the word 'well'

thee (pro.): an older form of the word 'you'

tho' (conj.): though

thou (pro.): an older form of the word 'you'

wi' (prep.): short form of the word 'with'

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- What does the speaker compare his love in the first stanza?
- What does the speaker promise in the second and third stanzas?

- c. What imagery does he use in his promise, and why do you think he uses such language?
- d. In the last stanza, what event is about to happen by mentioning the number of miles?
- e. Which image in the poem do you find the most memorable or surprising and why?

Reference to the context

- a. What can you infer about the speaker's devotion to his beloved from the following lines?

*And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!*

- b. What is the theme of the poem?
- c. Paraphrase the whole poem into simple prose form.
- d. Literary devices are tools that enable the writers to present their ideas, emotions, and feelings and also help the readers understand those more profound meanings. Analyse the poem in terms of the literary devices such as simile, symbolism, imagery, alliteration, and assonance.
- e. What is hyperbole? Explain its purpose citing examples of hyperbole used in the poem.
- f. What is refrain? Why is it used in the poem? Explain citing an example from the poem.

Reference beyond the text

- a. What kind of love is expressed in "A Red, Red Rose"?
- b. Do you think that love has power? Why do the poets compose poems addressing their beloved?
- c. Poetry is the expression of feeling and emotions. Explain.

William Shakespeare

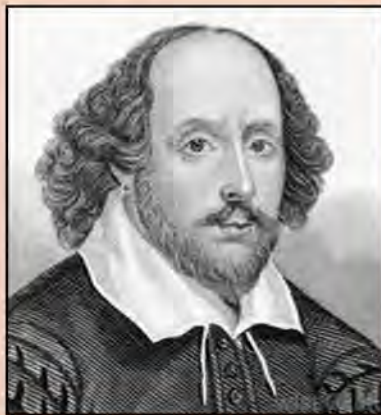
Before Reading**Answer these questions.**

- How does life begin?
- Do you think that the whole world is a stage?
- Are we the actors in the world? What roles can a person play in his/her life?

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was an English poet, dramatist and actor of the Renaissance era. He is widely regarded as the greatest writer in English language and the world's greatest dramatist. His most famous works include *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Romeo* and *Juliet and Macbeth*.

This poem is taken from William Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*. With these words "*all the world's a stage*" begins the monologue by the character Melancholy Jaques in Act II Scene VI of the play.

In this poem, Shakespeare has compared life with a stage. The seven stages of a person's life are infant, school going boy, lover/husband, soldier/fighter, justice/ability to understand the right and wrong, Pantalone (greediness and high in status) and old-age., which can come into your mind when you go through this poem with the theme that a person is the ultimate loser in the game of life.

**Reading**

All the world's a stage,
 And all the men and women merely players;
 They have their exits and their entrances,
 And one man in his time plays many parts,
 His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
 Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
 Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
 And shining morning face, creeping like snail

Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
 Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
 Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
 Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
 Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
 Seeking the bubble reputation
 Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
 In fair round belly with good capon lined,
 With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
 Full of wise saws and modern instances;
 And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
 Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
 With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
 His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
 For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
 Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
 And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
 That ends this strange eventful history,
 Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.



Glossary

furnace (n.): a device for heating

hose (n.): tights, thin trousers that men wore in Shakespeare's time

mewling (v.): crying weakly with a soft, high-pitched sound

oaths (n.): promises

oblivion (n.): a state of nothingness

pard (n.): a leopard

puking (v.): vomiting

sans (prep.): without, lacking

satchel (n.): a shoulder bag for school

treble (adj.): high-pitched

whining (v.): uttering a high-pitched cry

woeful (adj.): sorrowful; distressed with grief

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- Why does the poet compare the world with a stage?
- What is the first stage in a human's life? In what sense can it be a troubling stage?
- Describe the second stage of life based on the poem.
- Why is the last stage called second childhood?
- In what sense are we the players in the world stage?

Reference to the context

- Explain the following lines:
All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players
- Explain the following lines briefly with reference to the context.
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
- Read the given lines and answer the questions that follow.
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school.
 - Which stage of life is being referred to here by the poet?
 - Which figure of speech has been employed in the second line?
 - Who is compared to the snail?
 - Does the boy go to the school willingly?
- Simile and metaphor are the two major poetic devices used in this poem. Explain citing examples of each.
- Which style does the poet use to express his emotions about how he thinks that the world is a stage and all the people living in it are mere players?
- What is the theme of this poem?

Reference beyond the text

- Describe the various stages of a human's life picturised in the poem "All the World's a Stage."
- Is Shakespeare's comparison of human's life with a drama stage apt? How?

E. E. Cummings

Before Reading**Answer these questions.**

- Have you ever looked out through a window and taken pleasure in what you saw? If so, what did you look at?
- Which beautiful scenes do you think would make you want to look out through the window?

E(dward) E(stlin) Cummings (1894-1962), often styled as e e cummings, was an American poet, painter, essayist, novelist, and playwright. He wrote approximately 2,900 poems, two autobiographical novels, four plays, and several essays, as well as numerous drawings and paintings.



He developed the style of poetry writing for which he became renowned, with its unconventional use of capitalization, punctuation, spacing, and structure. He is regarded as an eminent voice of the 20th century English literature.

Cummings' poem '*who are you, little i*' describes a child looking out a window at the end of the day. It is about nature and the effect it has on the speaker. The speaker of the poem is the person "voicing" the words, recalling a childhood moment closely connected with nature. Perhaps the speaker is Cummings.

Reading

who are you, little i
 (five or six years old)
 peering from some high
 window; at the gold
 of november sunset
 (and feeling: that if day
 has to become night
 this is a beautiful way)

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- Who can be the speaker of this poem?
- What is “little i” doing?
- What can be the relationship between “little i” and the speaker of the poem?
- What is the speaker remembering from his childhood days in the poem?
- What attitude does the speaker seem to have toward the child in the poem?

Reference to the context

- Why do you think Cummings has placed a semicolon between the words window and at?
- If the speaker is the child grown up, why does he ask, “who are you”?
- In this poem, an adult reflects on the childhood experience. Based on that, what might be the theme of the lines: “(and feeling: that if day / has to become night / this is a beautiful way)”?
- What is the rhyme scheme used in the poem?
- Explain the pun in “little i” that is related to what he is doing.
- How does Cummings’s use of lowercase letters affect your understanding of the poem? Explain.

Reference beyond the text

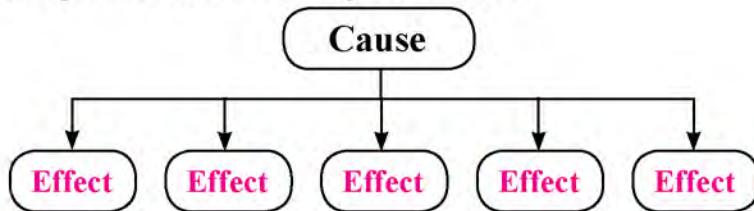
- How does nature inspire the speaker in “who are you, little i”? Explain.
- Recall a childhood moment when you felt closely connected with nature. Describe the time and place as well as your feelings and thoughts about it.
- Interpret the poem in any way you like.

Tran Mong Tu (translated by Vann Phan)

Before Reading

Answer these questions.

- Have you ever experienced the death of someone close to you? If yes, how did you feel?
- Is war always destructive?
- Using a cause-and-effect chart like the one given here, describe the immediate effects that person's death had on you and others.



Tran Mong Tu was born and grown up in Hai Dong, North Vietnam in 1943. She worked for Associated Press in South Vietnam in the 1960s. She moved to the US in 1975 after South Vietnam fall. Tran had wanted to be a writer since elementary school, but her poetry was not published until she reached the United States.

Today, she frequently contributes poems and short stories to Vietnamese literary publications in the US and other countries. “*War is a terrible thing*,” says Tran, who has first-hand experience of the Vietnam War (1954-1975). According to Tran, “The Vietnam War is a shameful experience, for both Vietnamese and Americans.” Many people in both countries felt the terrible tragedy of the war. Losses in the war were heavy; more than two million Vietnamese and 57,000 Americans died.

In the poem ‘*The Gift in Wartime*’, Tran addresses an absent person. For example, as she says, “I offer you roses,” the person to whom she is speaking is not present and can neither hear nor understand what she is saying.



Reading

I offer you roses
Buried in your new grave
I offer you my wedding gown
To cover your tomb still green with grass.

You give me medals
Together with silver stars
And the yellow pips on your badge
Unused and still shining.

I offer you my youth
The days we were still in love
My youth died away
When they told me the bad news.

You give me the smell of blood
From your war dress
Your blood and your enemy's
So that I may be moved.

I offer you clouds
That linger on my eyes on summer days
I offer you cold winters
Amid my springtime of life.

You give me your lips with no smile
You give me your arms without tenderness
You give me your eyes with no sight
And your motionless body.

Seriously, I apologize to you
I promise to meet you in our next life
I will hold this shrapnel as a token
By which we will recognize each other.



Glossary

pips (n.): military badges of rank worn on the shoulder

shrapnel (n.): fragments scattered from exploding bombs

tenderness (n.): a feeling of concern, gentle affection or warmth

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- Who is the speaker addressing and why can that person not hear or understand what she is saying?
- What can you infer about the speaker's feelings for the person addressed as "you"?
- What is the speaker's attitude toward war?
- In what ways do you think this person's fate has affected the speaker?
- What does the speaker promise at the end of the poem? Why do you think the speaker does this?

Reference to the context

- What is the theme of the poem?
- What imagery from the poem made the greatest impression on you? Why?
- Which figurative language is used in the poem? Explain with examples.
- What does the speaker "offer" in this poem? What does the person addressed as "you" give in return?
- An apostrophe is a literary device in which a writer or speaker addresses an absent person or an abstract idea in such a way as if it were present and can understand. Discuss the poem in relation to apostrophe.

Reference beyond the text

- One way to get relief from grief is to write or talk about it. In your opinion, how might the speaker in this poem have benefitted from saying what she did? Explain.
- Write an essay on the effects of war.

Sharing Tradition

Frank LaPena

Before Reading**Answer these questions.**

- Do you share your cultural traditions with your friends?
- Did your parents tell you stories when you were a child? If yes, did they have anything to do with your culture or values?
- Should we preserve our cultural values and traditions? Why?

Frank LaPena (1937-2019) was born in San Francisco, California. He attended federal Indian boarding school in Stewart, Nevada. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Chico State in 1965 and a Master of Arts in Anthropology at Sac State in 1978. He lectured widely on American Indian traditional and cultural issues, emphasizing California traditions.



He was a professor of art and former director of Native American Studies at California State University, Sacramento. His paintings, sculpture, and poetry reflect a deep understanding and love of his native heritage. He was a founding member of the Maidu Dancers and Traditionalists, dedicated to the revival and preservation of Native arts. He also published several volumes of poetry and wrote a report on contemporary California art activities for News from Native California. He was quite interested in the arts and traditions of Native Americans. He coedited *Legends of Yosemite Miwok* (1992) with Craig D. Bates and wrote *Dream Songs and Ceremony: Reflections on Traditional California Indian Dance* (2004). The essay 'Sharing Tradition' is about passing on culture and values from generation to generation through oral tradition. For this, we must listen to our elders' stories.

Reading

I was thinking one day about recent deaths of some of the traditional people and how

difficult it is to maintain tradition. I was also thinking how important oral tradition is in helping maintain the values of culture, and how in a sense oral tradition is also an art form. As the elders pass on, the young people fill their places. Even though we know no one lives forever, no one dies if what they have gained by living is carried forward by those who follow—if we as individuals assume the responsibilities. This is easy to talk and write about, but it is hard to practise.

Not everyone is capable of fulfilling the roles of the elders. On one hand, everyone who lives long enough automatically becomes an elder—it is something that just happens. Yet some elders have enhanced their lives by creating a special “niche,” and once they have passed on, that niche is hard to fill. Religious obligations for the ceremonies and dance, for example, were reflected in their knowledge and in how those elders lived and how they affected people around them in common everyday activities as well. In fact, after the elders passed away, their knowledge of the culture and the responsibilities they had in their community had to be assumed by several individuals.

Because longevity is the guarantor of becoming an elder, the young don’t pay too much attention to something that will happen some years down the road, but they regret it later. I have talked to individuals who were seventy years old or older, and even those forty and fifty years old, and they all expressed the feeling that they wished they had listened more, remembered more, or asked more about the things that the elders were willing to share with them.

The separation that exists between generations will always be with us. Each generation is faced with new technologies which replace the old; ever-growing populations make necessary new developments that replace fertile land with housing and impact on the natural resources of air and water. Part of tradition is tied to a natural world which is being destroyed. If we are not worried about the apocalypse, getting killed in the streets, or having the drug culture undercut our lives, we might wonder what kind of world it will be in the future. It is hard to live with all the stress, worry, and change that modern technology imposes on people. It is hard to maintain traditions in such circumstances. Our world is not the world of our great-grandparents.

So we have to remind ourselves that there are things that transcend generations, and the living force of that truth is carried by the person-to-person confidentiality of oral tradition. A lot depends upon the transmission of information from one person to another. Oral tradition is the educational tool of understanding the natural world.

Oral tradition is not, however, the way many people in modern society learn things. The

educational process of getting degrees to show how educated we are forces people to do things out of necessity and not necessarily out of interest, passion for the true story, or because it is good for the community. Sometimes modern researchers gathering what they think is “oral” material “in the field” are not always told the truth. I can still see the smile of my friend who used to tell people “whatever they wanted to hear. I let them figure it out later,” he said. Or a person doesn’t understand what has been told, so he/she corrects it by modifying the material so it makes sense. The result is that erroneous information is published and falsely validates one’s research. With the printed word there is a tendency to place the author as “someone who knows” what’s going on. As “experts,” writers and lecturers may be put into a position where they think they must have an answer, so they answer by making something up. We need to learn to say we don’t know the answer, and direct the question to someone who might know. We need to learn from the elders who sometimes say “I’ll sleep on it,” or who approach a problem by having everybody’s input come up with an answer—which can be changed. Logistically, it is harder to correct errors in a book if it is already published.

A living oral tradition, as opposed to a literary tradition, accommodates corrections, because the stories are “known” by the listeners—although today a story could be someone’s fantasy and it might be harder to validate. The source of one’s information and how it was given affects how correct it is. Only if one is patient and gains information over a long period of time is it possible to get a proper understanding of one’s information. If a person is one of the groups (an insider), usually the information is given correctly, because it relates to something the speaker and listener have a vested interest in or participate in. It is their life. It is worth doing right.

For an artist, the oral tradition has an impact on how one visualizes the stories, the characters, the designs and colour for art, the atmosphere, and other information which can be useful to an artist. If I think of these elders whom I respect and love and who were my teachers, I sometimes wonder—as I extend and alter the traditions—if I am somehow not doing right by them. If an artist’s work is abstract, is it true to the stories? At what time of doing one’s art does the artist begin to relate conceptually instead of representationally to his source, and is that good or bad? Ultimately being good or bad can refer to how we do our art—what’s included or left out, and how true the artwork is to the “real” Native American thing. Do our modern life and new things function independently of or holistically with the old ways and symbols? Each of us has choices in the outcome of our lives.

As an artist, I won't try to answer these questions because the answers will be reflected in artists' works, and how they explain their work and how they understand their work. Each of us makes choices in how we work and how we live. If one knows tradition and modifies how he/she presents it, I hope it is not only for one's ego but that more independently we are also paying attention to the source of our inspiration. And if it is tradition, I hope that we honour the elders and think of the responsibility they entrusted to us by sharing the traditions with us.

Glossary

alter (v.): change

apocalypse (n.): a very serious event resulting in great destruction and change

confidentiality (n.): the state of keeping or being kept secret or private

entrust (v.): give responsibility for

erroneous (adj.): wrong; incorrect

holistically (adv.): relating to or concerned with wholes or with complete systems

logistically (adv.): something done in logical or practical way

longevity (n.): long life

niche (n.): ideal position; slot

obligation (n.): responsibility, compulsion

transcend (v.): rise above or go beyond the limits of something

validate (v.): check or prove the validity or accuracy of something

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- According to LaPena, what is the importance of the oral tradition? To what extent do you agree with his opinions and why?
- Who preserve and pass on the oral tradition?
- What is the danger of not passing on information from generation to generation?
- What is the difference between oral tradition and literary tradition?
- How does LaPena establish a relationship between art and the oral tradition?

Reference the context

- LaPena states that the oral tradition helps maintain the values of a culture. If you believe that the oral tradition is important, how would you maintain it?

- b. “Not everyone is capable of fulfilling the roles of the elders.” Explain this statement with reference to the essay.
- c. What is the controlling idea or thesis of this essay?
- d. How do topic sentences guide the reader through the essay? What would be lost without them?
- e. What are the four major problems developed by LaPena with regard to maintaining the oral tradition. How are they used to structure the essay?

Reference beyond the text

- a. Write a paragraph or two explaining your attitude toward the oral tradition of passing along information.
- b. Our culture is our identity. Write a few paragraphs explaining how you intend to preserve your culture, values and norms.

Before Reading

Answer these questions.

- What do you know about Steve Jobs' family and economic background?
- Steve Jobs was a very successful man. What makes a person successful in your view?
- Steve Jobs had many doubts on how he wanted to lead his life. Do you have the same problem?

Steven Jobs (1955-2011) was an American business magnate, industrial designer, investor, and media proprietor. He was the chairperson, chief executive officer (CEO), and co-founder of Apple Inc. and one of the pioneers of microcomputer technology. He was named the most powerful person in business by Fortune magazine in 2007.



The then CEO of Apple Computer, Steve Jobs' speech '*How to Live Before You Die*' adopts a tripartite structure and uses autobiographical anecdotes to communicate a message of resilience and personal integrity. This inspiring speech was delivered at Stanford University 2005 commencement address.

Reading

Now read the following transcript of Steve Jobs' full speech.

I am honoured to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world.

Truth be told, I never graduated from college, and this is the closest I've ever gotten to a college graduation.

Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. No big deal. Just three stories.

The first story is about connecting the dots.

I dropped out of Reed College after the first six months, but then stayed around as a

drop-in for another 18 months or so before I really quit. So why did I drop out?

It started before I was born. My biological mother was a young, unwed college graduate student, and she decided to put me up for adoption. She felt very strongly that I should be adopted by college graduates, so everything was all set for me to be adopted at birth by a lawyer and his wife. Except that when I popped out they decided at the last minute that they really wanted a girl. So my parents, who were on a waiting list, got a call in the middle of the night asking: "We have an unexpected baby boy; do you want him?" They said: "Of course." My biological mother later found out that my mother had never graduated from college and that my father had never graduated from high school. She refused to sign the final adoption papers. She only relented a few months later when my parents promised that I would someday go to college.

And 17 years later I did go to college. But I naively chose a college that was almost as expensive as Stanford, and all of my working-class parents' savings were being spent on my college tuition. After six months, I couldn't see the value in it. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out. And here I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life. So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked interesting.

It wasn't all romantic. I didn't have a dorm room, so I slept on the floor in friends' rooms, I returned Coke bottles for the 5¢ deposits to buy food with, and I would walk the 7 miles across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple. I loved it. And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless later on. Let me give you one example:

Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed. Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and sans serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating.

None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we

designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them. If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on this calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do. Of course, it was impossible to connect the dots looking forward when I was in college. But it was very, very clear looking backward ten years later.

Again, you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.

My second story is about love and loss.

I was lucky — I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents' garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4,000 employees. We had just released our finest creation — the Macintosh — a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down — that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me. I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me — I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over.

I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar went on to create the world's first computer animated feature film, *Toy Story*, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance. And Laurene and I have a wonderful family together.

I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it. Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle.

My third story is about death.

When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: "If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure — these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumour on my pancreas. I didn't even know what a pancreas was. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months. My doctor advised me to

go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for prepare to die. It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you'd have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months. It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family. It means to say your goodbyes.

I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that evening I had a biopsy, where they stuck an endoscope down my throat, through my stomach and into my intestines, put a needle into my pancreas and got a few cells from the tumour. I was sedated, but my wife, who was there, told me that when they viewed the cells under a microscope the doctors started crying because it turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery. I had the surgery and I'm fine now.

This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope it's the closest I get for a few more decades. Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept:

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

When I was young, there was an amazing publication called *The Whole Earth Catalog*, which was one of the bibles of my generation. It was created by a fellow named Stewart Brand not far from here in Menlo Park, and he brought it to life with his poetic touch. This was in the late 1960s, before personal computers and desktop publishing, so it was all made with typewriters, scissors and Polaroid cameras. It was sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along: It was idealistic, and overflowing with neat tools and great notions.

Stewart and his team put out several issues of *The Whole Earth Catalog*, and then when it had run its course, they put out a final issue. It was the mid-1970s, and I was your age. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early

morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: “Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.” It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you.

Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.

Thank you all very much.

NOTES

David Packard (1912-1996): an American electrical engineer and the co-founder of Hewlett-Packard Company, manufacturer of electronic measuring devices, calculators, and computers

Bob Noyce (1927-1990): an American engineer and co-inventor of the integrated circuit

Stewart Brand (born in 1938): an American writer, best known as editor of the Whole Earth Catalog

Glossary

calligraphy (n.): decorative handwriting or handwritten lettering

commencement (n.): a ceremony in which degrees or diplomas are conferred on graduating students

dogma (n.): a principle or belief accepted as true

generation (n.): all of the people born and living at about the same time

intuition (n.): an ability to understand or know something immediately based on your feelings

naively (adv.): in a way that shows a lack of experience, wisdom, or judgment

relent (v.): to change one's mind; agree to something

sedated (adj.): being in a calm, relaxed state

serif (n.): a short line at the end of the main strokes of a letter

unwed (adj.): not married

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- What is the story about Steve Jobs' birth?

- b. What does he mean when he says, “you can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards”?
- c. What happened when Steve Jobs turned 30?
- d. Jobs contends that you need to love to do what you do in order to be great at it. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- e. Is death really life’s greatest invention?

Reference to the context

- a. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:
 “We have an unexpected baby boy; do you want him?” They said: “Of course.”
 - i. Who was the baby boy?
 - ii. What does ‘do you want him?’ mean?
 - iii. Who does ‘they’ refer to?
- b. Explain the following lines:
 - i. “You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever.”
 - ii. “Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life.”
- c. What does he mean by “don’t settle”?
- d. Which style of speech is used by the speaker to persuade the audience?
- e. It is not easy to motivate others. How do you think Steve Jobs’ speech is so inspiring?
- f. Why do you think Steve Jobs used the personal narrative story telling technique in his speech? What influence does it have on the audiences?

Reference beyond the text

- a. One of Steve Jobs mottos was: ‘Think differently’. Does this contribute to succeed in life? What challenges are there in thinking differently?
- b. What does the slogan “Stay hungry; stay foolish” mean to you?
- c. What does it mean to be a visionary? What makes Steve Jobs different from a fortune teller?

J.B.S. Haldane

Before Reading**Answer these questions.**

- What do you want to be in your life?
- Do you see equality in your society or any discrimination?
- What are the basic needs of human beings?

John Burdon Sanderson Haldane (1892-1964) was a British-Indian scientist known for his work in the study of physiology, genetics, evolutionary biology, and mathematics. His formal schooling was done at Eton College and New College at Oxford. He obtained his M.A. in 1914. Soon after, Haldane enlisted in the British Army and served during World War I. After returning from the war, Haldane began his teaching career at University.



Haldane's first paper in 1915 demonstrated genetic linkage in mammals. Haldane was a professed socialist, Marxist, atheist and humanist. His political dissent led him to renounce his British citizenship in 1956 and live in India, becoming a naturalised Indian citizen. His major works include *Daedalus* (1924), *Animal Biology* (with British evolutionist Julian Huxley, 1927), *The Inequality of Man* (1932), *The Causes of Evolution* (1932), *The Marxist Philosophy and the Sciences* (1938), *Keeping Cool and Other Essays* (1940), *Science Advances* (1947), and *The Biochemistry of Genetics* (1954).

The essay '*What I Require from Life*' (1940), first published in *The Daily Worker*, reflects socialistic convictions demanding democratic activities in work places. This essay is written in simple and lucid language.

Reading

I have got to accept the universe as it is. I must not require the impossible, and I shall do harm rather than good if I try to imagine perfect beings in a perfect world. But given the world as it is, I can say what I may reasonably hope both for myself and for others.

I was born in a peaceful age, and in my youth I looked forward to a life of peace. Since 1914 I have been living in a heroic age, and I see no prospect of surviving into another epoch of peace and quiet. So I must try to make the best of the time in which I live. What do I ask for myself? I assume that I have food, water, clothes, and shelter.

First, work, and a decent wage for my work. Aristotle defined happiness, not as a sum of pleasures, but as unimpeded activity. I want work which is hard but interesting, work of which I can see the fruits. I am exceptionally lucky because I can choose my own work to a large extent. If I want a respite from science I can go and be a war correspondent, or write children's stories, or make political speeches.

So I enjoy a good deal of my second requirement, freedom, in fact vastly more than most people. But I want still more, particularly more freedom of speech. I should like to say and write what I think about Lord Blank's newspapers, Mr Dash's pills, and Sir John Asterisk's beer, all of which are poisonous. The law of libel prevents me from doing so.

I require health. I don't mind an occasional toothache or headache, or even an acute illness every seven years or so. But I want to be fit for work and enjoyment in the intervals, and to die when I can work no longer.

I require friendship. Particularly I require the friendship of my colleagues and comrades in scientific and political work. I want the society of equals who will criticize me, and whom I can criticize. I cannot be friends with a person whose orders I have to obey without criticism before or after, or with one who has to obey my orders in a similar way. And I find friendship with people much richer or poorer than myself very difficult.

These four things are general human needs. For myself I also demand adventure. Since my life is useful it would be wrong to risk it for the mere sake of risk, as by mountaineering or motor racing. As a physiologist I can try experiments on myself, and I can also participate in wars and revolutions of which I approve. By the way, love of adventure does not mean love of thrills. I spent six weeks in Madrid during the recent siege. The only thrill that I got there was from reading Rimbaud's poetry. The satisfaction of adventure is something much more solid than a thrill.

There are other things which I desire, but do not demand. I like to have a room of my own with some books, a motor-car, and a daily bath. I should like to have a garden, a bathing-pool, a beach, or a river within easy reach. But I have not, and I bear up quite happily.

I am an exceptionally lucky person because I get a good deal of what I want, and can work actively for the rest. But most of my fellows do not enjoy what I regard as essential requirements. And I cannot be completely happy while they are unhappy.

I want to see every healthy man and woman on the planet at work. But everywhere outside the Soviet Union there is unemployment, though very little in Sweden. I am a socialist because unemployment, at least during times of depression, is an essential feature of capitalism. I want the workers to see the fruit of their own work not in profits for others, but in their own and their friends' well-being. My main personal complaint is that my work is not applied. I discover new biological facts, but no use is made of them, because although the community would benefit, no individuals would make profits from their application.

I want to see the workers controlling their conditions of work as I control my own to a considerable extent. Most work is dull, much of it is unhealthy and exhausting. This need not be the case, and I believe will not be after a few generations of democracy in industry. How pleasant work can be shown by a simple fact. When we have time and money to spare, two of our favourite occupations are hunting and gardening, the work of our paleolithic and neolithic ancestors respectively. I am a socialist because I want industry to be controlled by the workers. Freedom should begin in the workshop.

I want to see every man and woman as healthy as possible. This implies food, housing, and medical attendance of the quantity and quality which human biology demands and modern technique can supply.

I want to see the end of class subjection and sex subjection. Only so will the equality which is the condition for fraternity be achieved. Since the main barriers between classes and the main reasons for the subjection of women are economic, I look to a revolution in the economic field for their end.

I am a socialist because I want to see my fellow men and women enjoying the advantages which I enjoy myself. I know that socialism will not confer all these advantages in an instant, but if I live to see capitalism overthrown and the workers in power through most of Europe I shall die happy.

Certain things are lacking in my list of requirements, notably peace and security. It is futile to require things which one is most unlikely to obtain. Fascism is a living reality, and fascism, as Hitler and Mussolini explicitly state, and prove by their actions, implies war. War is spreading at present. I sincerely hope that it will not spread over the world, as it spread from 1914 to 1917; but I do not look forward to perfect peace

till fascism is dead.

I fully realize that peace and security are rightful aims, and that my own desire for violent adventure is probably merely an adaptation to the age in which I live. I am a child of my age, and all the worse for being one. I therefore demand security rather than adventure for others.

I have said nothing about many things which I desire to see, such as a spread of education, and an increasing application of scientific methods in all branches of life. From what I have seen in Russia and in Spain I do not doubt that these and other good things would follow almost automatically if our class distinctions were abolished.

To sum up, for myself I require food, warmth, work, liberty, health, and friendship. For the society in which I live I require socialism.

Supplementary to my requirements of life are my requirements of death. Of all men whose deaths are recorded, I consider that Socrates' was the most enviable. He died for his convictions, when he could easily have survived by betraying them. He died at the age of about seventy, still in full possession of his faculties, but having completed all the work which he could reasonably hope to do. And he died laughing. His last words were a joke.

I do not require of death that I shall be as fortunate as Socrates. A death which fulfils all the three conditions of his is very rare. But if I can achieve even two of them I shall have done well, and though my friends may lament me, I trust that they will not pity me.

NOTES

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.): an ancient Greek philosopher, student of Plato and founder of Western philosophy

Lord Blank, Mr Dash, Sir John Asterisk: names invented for humorous effect

Madrid: the Spanish capital

Rimbaud: Jean Nicolas Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) was a French poet and the Symbolist.

Fascism: a political system of government led by a dictator having complete power

Hitler: Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) was the leader of the Nazi Party who rose to become dictator of Germany (1933-45) whose fascist agenda led to World War II.

Mussolini: Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) was an Italian political leader who became the fascist dictator of Italy (1925-1945).

Socrates (470-399 B.C.): an ancient Greek philosopher

Glossary

ancestors (n.): forefathers, predecessors

confer (v.): grant or bestow (a title, degree, benefit, or right)

decent (adj.): satisfactory, reasonable, fair

enviable (adj.): arousing or likely to arouse envy

epoch (n.): a period of time in history or a person's life

fraternity (n.): brotherhood, friendship

futile (adj.): incapable of producing any useful result; pointless

lament (v.): to express deep regret, grief, or sorrow

libel (n.): a published false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation

neolithic (adj.): relating to or denoting the later part of the Stone Age

paleolithic (adj.): relating to or denoting the early phase of the Stone Age

prospect (n.): possibility, likelihood

respite (n.): a short period of rest or relief from something difficult or unpleasant

siege (n.): a military blockade of a city or fortified place to compel it to surrender

thrill (n.): a sudden feeling of excitement and pleasure

unimpeded (adj.): not obstructed or hindered

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- How does the writer distinguish between a peaceful age and a heroic age?
- Why does the writer want more freedom of speech than most people?
- According to the writer, what are the four general human needs?
- What is the difference between desire and demand according to the writer?
- Why does the writer demand security?

Reference to the context

Explain the following lines with reference to the context:

- a. “The satisfaction of adventure is something much more solid than a thrill.”
- b. “I want the workers to see the fruit of their own work not in profits for others, but in their own and their friends’ well-being.”
- c. Why do you think the essayist has taken reference from the ancient philosophers?
- d. Discuss the essay in terms of its language, purpose, subject, point of view and mode of writing.

Reference beyond the text

- a. What do you require from your life to be happy and satisfied?
- b. What is socialism? How is it different from capitalism?
- c. Write an essay about your dream house.

Jo Goodwin Parker

Before Reading

Answer these questions.

- What do you consider poverty to be? Do you have a definitive explanation of it or do you consider it an abstract circumstance?
- Look at this picture. What do you see? Where do you see such people? Who are the poor? Why are they poor? Where do the poor usually live?



Jo Goodwin Parker was an anonymous person from West Virginia, the Southern United States. Parker mailed her essay to George Henderson, preferring that the editor present no byline. George Henderson, a professor at the University of Oklahoma, received it while he was writing his 1971 book, *America's Other Children: Public Schools Outside Suburbia*.

It was signed "*Jo Goodwin Parker*". No further information was ever discovered about the essay or its source. Whether the author of this essay was in reality a woman describing her own painful experiences or a sympathetic writer who had adopted her persona, Jo Goodwin Parker remains a mystery. So in keeping with the spirit of its initial publication, Parker's essay is kept here without any biographical data about its author.

Jo Goodwin Parker's essay '*What is Poverty?*' is about Parker who has personally experienced rural poverty. She explains her story from childhood to adulthood. Her struggles are overwhelming. Using examples drawn from personal experience, she explains the meaning of poverty in this essay. Her use of connotative language creates many harsh images of her experiences in a life of poverty illustrating the difficulties and challenges her impoverished family experiences. The essay is a personal account, addressed directly to the reader, about living in poverty.

Reading

You ask me what is poverty? Listen to me. Here I am, dirty, smelly, and with no “proper” underwear on and with the stench of my rotting teeth near you. I will tell you. Listen to me. Listen without pity. I cannot use your pity. Listen with understanding. Put yourself in my dirty, worn out, ill-fitting shoes, and hear me.

Poverty is getting up every morning from a dirt- and illness-stained mattress. The sheets have long since been used for diapers. Poverty is living in a smell that never leaves. This is a smell of urine, sour milk, and spoiling food sometimes joined with the strong smell of long-cooked onions. Onions are cheap. If you have smelled this smell, you did not know how it came. It is the smell of the outdoor privy. It is the smell of young children who cannot walk the long dark way in the night. It is the smell of the mattress where years of “accidents” have happened. It is the smell of the milk which has gone sour because the refrigerator long has not worked, and it costs money to get it fixed. It is the smell of rotting garbage. I could bury it, but where is the shovel? Shovels cost money.

Poverty is being tired. I have always been tired. They told me at the hospital when the last baby came that I had chronic anemia caused from poor diet, a bad case of worms, and that I needed a corrective operation. I listened politely—the poor are always polite. The poor always listen. They don’t say that there is no money for iron pills, or better food, or worm medicine. The idea of an operation is frightening and costs so much that, if I had dared, I would have laughed. Who takes care of my children? Recovery from an operation takes a long time. I have three children. When I left them with “Granny” the last time I had a job, I came home to find the baby covered with fly specks, and a diaper that had not been changed since I left. When the dried diaper came off, bits of my baby’s flesh came with it. My other child was playing with a sharp bit of broken glass, and my oldest was playing alone at the edge of a lake. I made twenty-two dollars a week, and a good nursery school costs twenty dollars a week for three children. I quit my job.

Poverty is dirt. You can say in your clean clothes coming from your clean house, “Anybody can be clean.” Let me explain about housekeeping with no money. For breakfast, I give my children grits with no oleo or cornbread without eggs and oleo. This does not use up many dishes. What dishes there are, I wash in cold water and with no soap. Even the cheapest soap has to be saved for the baby’s diapers. Look at my hands, so cracked and red. Once I saved for two months to buy a jar of Vaseline for my

hands and the baby's diaper rash. When I had saved enough, I went to buy it and the price had gone up two cents. The baby and I suffered on. I have to decide every day if I can bear to put my cracked sore hands into the cold water and strong soap. But you ask, why not hot water? Fuel costs money. If you have a wood fire, it costs money. If you burn electricity, it costs money. Hot water is a luxury. I do not have luxuries. I know you will be surprised when I tell you how young I am. I look so much older. My back has been bent over the wash tubs every day for so long, I cannot remember when I ever did anything else. Every night I wash every stitch my school age child has on and just hope her clothes will be dry by morning.

Poverty is staying up all night on cold nights to watch the fire knowing one spark on the newspaper covering the walls means your sleeping child dies in flames. In summer, poverty is watching gnats and flies devour your baby's tears when he cries. The screens are torn and you pay so little rent you know they will never be fixed. Poverty means insects in your food, in your nose, in your eyes, and crawling over you when you sleep. Poverty is hoping it never rains because diapers won't dry when it rains and soon you are using newspapers. Poverty is seeing your children forever with runny noses. Paper handkerchiefs cost money and all your rags you need for other things. Even more costly are antihistamines. Poverty is cooking without food and cleaning without soap.

Poverty is asking for help. Have you ever had to ask for help, knowing your children will suffer unless you get it? Think about asking for a loan from a relative, if this is the only way you can imagine asking for help. I will tell you how it feels. You find out where the office is that you are supposed to visit. You circle that block four or five times. Thinking of your children, you go in. Everyone is very busy. Finally, someone comes out and you tell her that you need help. That never is the person you need to see. You go see another person, and after spilling the whole shame of your poverty all over the desk between you, you find that this isn't the right office after all—you must repeat the whole process, and it never is any easier at the next place.

You have asked for help, and after all it has a cost. You are again told to wait. You are told why, but you don't really hear because of the red cloud of shame and the rising cloud of despair.

Poverty is remembering. It is remembering quitting school in junior high because "nice" children had been so cruel about my clothes and my smell. The attendance officer came. My mother told him I was pregnant. I wasn't, but she thought that I could

get a job and help out. I had jobs off and on, but never long enough to learn anything. Mostly I remember being married. I was so young then. I am still young. For a time, we had all the things you have. There was a little house in another town, with hot water and everything. Then my husband lost his job. There was unemployment insurance for a while and what few jobs I could get. Soon, all our nice things were repossessed and we moved back here. I was pregnant then. This house didn't look so bad when we first moved in. Every week it gets worse. Nothing is ever fixed. We now had no money. There were a few odd jobs for my husband, but everything went for food then, as it does now. I don't know how we lived through three years and three babies, but we did. I'll tell you something, after the last baby I destroyed my marriage. It had been a good one, but could you keep on bringing children in this dirt? Did you ever think how much it costs for any kind of birth control? I knew my husband was leaving the day he left, but there were no good-byes between us. I hope he has been able to climb out of this mess somewhere. He never could hope with us to drag him down.

That's when I asked for help. When I got it, you know how much it was? It was, and is, seventy-eight dollars a month for the four of us; that is all I ever can get. Now you know why there is no soap, no needles and thread, no hot water, no aspirin, no worm medicine, no hand cream, no shampoo. None of these things forever and ever and ever. So that you can see clearly, I pay twenty dollars a month rent, and most of the rest goes for food. For grits and cornmeal, and rice and milk and beans. I try my best to use only the minimum electricity. If I use more, there is that much less for food.

Poverty is looking into a black future. Your children won't play with my boys. They will turn to other boys who steal to get what they want. I can already see them behind the bars of their prison instead of behind the bars of my poverty. Or they will turn to the freedom of alcohol or drugs, and find themselves enslaved. And my daughter? At best, there is for her a life like mine.

But you say to me, there are schools. Yes, there are schools. My children have no extra books, no magazines, no extra pencils, or crayons, or paper and most important of all, they do not have health. They have worms, they have infections, they have pink-eye all summer. They do not sleep well on the floor, or with me in my one bed. They do not suffer from hunger, my seventy-eight dollars keep us alive, but they do suffer from malnutrition. Oh yes, I do remember what I was taught about health in school. It doesn't do much good. In some places there is a surplus commodities program. Not here. The country said it cost too much. There is a school lunch program. But I have two children who will already be damaged by the time they get to school.

But, you say to me, there are health clinics. Yes, there are health clinics and they are in the towns. I live out here eight miles from town. I can walk that far (even if it is sixteen miles both ways), but can my little children? My neighbour will take me when he goes; but he expects to get paid, one way or another. I bet you know my neighbour. He is that large man who spends his time at the gas station, the barbershop, and the corner store complaining about the government spending money on the immoral mothers of illegitimate children.

Poverty is an acid that drips on pride until all pride is worn away. Poverty is a chisel that chips on honour until honour is worn away. Some of you say that you would do something in my situation, and maybe you would, for the first week or the first month, but for year after year after year?

Even the poor can dream. A dream of a time when there is money. Money for the right kinds of food, for worm medicine, for iron pills, for toothbrushes, for hand cream, for a hammer and nails and a bit of screening, for a shovel, for a bit of paint, for some sheeting, for needles and thread. Money to pay in money for a trip to town. And, oh, money for hot water and money for soap. A dream of when asking for help does not eat away the last bit of pride. When the office you visit is as nice as the offices of other governmental agencies, when there are enough workers to help you quickly, when workers do not quit in defeat and despair. When you have to tell your story to only one person, and that person can send you for other help and you don't have to prove your poverty over and over and over again.

I have come out of my despair to tell you this. Remember I did not come from another place or another time. Others like me are all around you. Look at us with an angry heart, anger that will help you help me. Anger that will let you tell of me. The poor are always silent. Can you be silent too?

Glossary

antihistamines (n.): a drug used to treat allergies

chronic (adj.): long-standing, long-term

diapers (n.): thick soft paper or cloth wrapped around a baby's bottom and between its legs to absorb and retain urine

enslave (v.): make a slave

illegitimate (adj.): illegal, unlawful

immoral (adj.): not having morality

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- What is poverty according to Parker?
- How is poverty difficult for Parker's children? List some specific examples.
- How does Parker try to obtain help, and what problems does she encounter?
- Why are people's opinions and prejudices her greatest obstacles?
- How does Parker defend her inability to get help? How does she discount the usual solutions society has for poverty (e.g., welfare, education, and health clinics)?

Reference to the context

- Explain the following:
Poverty is looking into a black future.
- What does Parker mean by "The poor are always silent"?
- What writing strategy does the author use at the beginning of most of the paragraphs? Do you notice a recurring pattern? What is it?
- How does Parker develop each paragraph? What details make each paragraph memorable?
- In the final paragraph, how does the author use questions to involve the reader in the issue of poverty?

Reference beyond the text

- Define a social problem (homelessness, unemployment, racism) imitating Parker's style.
- Write a short essay on **Growing up in Poverty** using adjectives to highlight the futility of the situation.

Scientific Research is a Token of Humankind's Survival

Vladimir Keilis-Borok

Before Reading

Answer these questions.

- What is science? What do the scientists do?
- We are all scientists. The nature of science can be captured to our ordinary experiences. Share your scientific experiences that you have got in your everyday life.
- Work in pairs and then complete the following table.

Professionals	Writer	Lawyer	Teacher	Scientist
Vocation		arguing		
Field	Literature			
Reward				freedom

Vladimir Keilis-Borok (1921-2013) was a Russian mathematical geophysicist and seismologist. He taught at the University of California, Los Angeles. He was the research group leader of the International Institute for Earthquake Prediction Theory and Mathematical Geophysics, Russian Academy of Science.



He was also Co-director (and Founder) of the Research Programme on non-linear dynamics and earthquake prediction of the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste.

In the essay '*Scientific Research is a Token of Humankind's Survival*', Keilis-Borok says about his profession as a scientist, and views that science is the humankind's indispensable guardian and caretaker.

Reading

If you are so clever, why are you so poor? (Popular expression) Why is it that some of us still decide to become scientists, despite the fact that businessmen, lawyers, and doctors enjoy a much higher income? A famous Russian writer L. Tolstoy once wrote that a writer is not merely a person who writes; a writer is a person who cannot live without writing. The same, I believe, is true for a scientist. Science is an exciting

adventure where major reward comes from the discovery itself. What you get instead of big money is freedom, camaraderie, independence. The honours and promotions will depend on yourself more than in the other occupations. And you will have the overwhelming feeling of uncovering yet another one of nature's mysteries.

An instant understanding, the efficiency of thought and action, and a good feeling that comes when the like-minded people work together. (F. Press)

It was 1960, the height of the cold war. I was in Moscow doing research on the theory of seismic waves—tremors in the earth generated by an earthquake. I was absorbed in my problem; I enjoyed the mathematical challenge. I did not give much thought to how it connects with the real life.

The summons came from the President of the Russian (then Soviet) Academy of Sciences. He had received a message from the Palace of Nations in Geneva, where technical experts from the Soviet Union, United States, and United Kingdom—three powers possessing nuclear weapons—met behind closed doors. The President showed me a letter from Geneva: an American scientist, Frank Press, quoted my work while arguing with Moscow experts. And, to my great surprise, I found myself in Geneva.

At that time every man, woman, and child on the Earth lived under the threat of annihilation by nuclear weapon. Each superpower had more than enough nuclear bombs to destroy the others in the first strike. But in the 20 minutes it took for the rockets to reach their targets, the other side had plenty of time to launch retaliation strikes ensuring the destruction of their enemies only a few minutes later. This threat of 'Mutually Assured Destruction,' with ominous acronym 'MAD,' was for some years the only thin thread protecting all of us from the common fatal fate. Continuing nuclear tests meant development of even stronger bombs, introducing even more imbalance into the global nuclear standoff. The three nuclear powers were willing to come to an agreement, putting a ban on the nuclear weapon test. And hence, the technical experts were summoned to solve the problem that arose.

In formal terms, the problem was the following. Suppose that: (i) the nuclear powers had signed agreement to stop the test of the new nuclear weapons, and (ii) one of the participants had violated this agreement and secretly made an underground nuclear explosion. The problem is: how can the other powers detect the violation?

It turned out that this problem had a direct connection with the theory of seismic waves. Underground nuclear explosions produced earth tremors very similar to those generated by earthquakes. How could one distinguish the natural tremors from the

ones produced by the explosion? Suddenly, my theoretical knowledge had a direct application in the area of survival of the humankind.

In the atmosphere of the ongoing Cold War, with political tensions hanging over our heads, scientists and engineers from the opposite sides of the Iron Curtain had to find a solution, which outwardly seemed impossible, given all our differences in cultural background. What saved us was a clear and obvious distinction. We were all scientists. We were able to work out a common language, based on respect to hard evidence, undisputable ranking by expertise only, and persistent self-criticism. We were able to work out a solution that eventually allowed politicians to reach one of the most important decisions of their times: nuclear test ban.

This episode taught me that as a scientist I have people all over the world who think and interact the way I do. It taught me never to feel lonely abroad. And, above all, it taught me that while there is science, there is hope of survival and well-being for all of us.

A common lore is that immersion in science does not go with practical sense. It is true that on occasions a greatest mathematician of our time was so involved in a current problem that he could leave home wearing shoes from two different pairs. However, if you look carefully, you will find another side to this, which makes scientists the most practical people in the world. All new technologies, all new brands of industry from defence to entertainment stem from fundamental research. Among past examples are antibiotics, electronics, biotechnology, synthetic fibres, the green revolution, and genetic forensic diagnosis, to name just a few. And now only the basic research could give us new sources of energy; new mineral deposits; efficient defence from terrorism; cure from cancer; new forms of transportation. People trained in theoretical physics are headhunted by financial institutions; those trained in frontiers of biological research become founders and directors in the pharmaceutical industry. So, knowledge of basic science will give you a head start in whatever career you choose.

It is commonly recognised, that the very survival of our civilisation is threatened by natural and man-made disasters. Among them are earthquakes, self-inflicted destruction of megacities, environmental catastrophes, economic and social crises. Today, a massive release of radioactivity from a nuclear waste disposal, an earthquake in the middle of a megalopolis, an outburst of mass violence, or any other global disaster, can cause up to a million of casualties, render large part of our world inhabitable, trigger global economic depression, or a war in a “hot” region. Such dangers keep growing, although trillions dollars a year are spent to contain them by all known techniques.

The hope and the responsibility for breaking the stalemate rest not on the money but on intellectual resources, though the money is more popular, according to the French proverb: “Nobody is satisfied with his wealth, everybody is satisfied with his wisdom.” Only the basic research can create a springboard for developing new disaster preparedness industry.

Ours is the time of contest over issues not completely understood. (Mc George Bundy)
Scientific research is an exciting venture into the great unknown and the token of humankind’s survival. It is the scientists with their tools that are up to the challenge and can ensure that we all safely move with the time.

Finally, I have to remind you that the science is not the beginning and the end. More important for the humankind and for each individual are the human qualities. However, if humanly used, science is their indispensable guardian and caretaker.

NOTES

Iron Curtain: the name for the socio-political border that was believed to exist between Western Europe and the communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe

L. Tolstoy: (Leo Tolstoy) a Russian writer, author of the novel War and Peace

Mc George Bundy: He was United States National Security Advisor to presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.

Glossary

acronym (n.): a word made from the first letters of the name of any organisation, e.g. MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction)

annihilation (n.): complete destruction

camaraderie (n.): a feeling of close friendship in a team overwhelming (adj.): a great effect on you that you feel very happy; overpowering

cold war: intense economic, political, military, and ideological conflict between nations

forensic (adj.): of scientific method of finding out about a crime

indisputable (adj.): known to be true

lore (n.): information about a subject

ominous (adj.): making you feel that something bad is going to happen

retaliation (n.): counterattack, revenge

self-inflict (v.): to cause pain or problem for oneself

stalemate (n.): a situation without an agreement or disagreement

standoff (n.): a situation in which one side counterbalances the other a standstill

venture (n.): anew risky activity

war mystery (n.): something that people do not know anything about it; an unknown

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- What does a scientist get instead of big money?
- What was the problem that the nuclear powers had faced?
- In which area did Keilis Borok's theoretical knowledge have a direct application?
- What was the important decision that the politicians took before Geneva Summit?
- What are the natural and man-made disasters as mentioned by the author?

Reference to the context

- The professional addressed as 'you' in the sentence "If you are clever, why are you so poor?" refers to a...
i. lawyer ii. doctor iii. scientist iv. businessman.
Justify your choice.
- The writer says, "I found myself in Geneva." What does it express?
- Are the following statements true? Why or why not? Discuss with your partner.
 - Money is more powerful than intellectual resources.
 - Intellectual resources help survival of the mankind.
 - Basic research is a way of stalling disasters.
- How does the essayist justify that scientific research is the humankind's survival?
- What can be the purpose of the essayist of using quotations in the essay?
- Discuss and illustrate the writer's stand that scientists are the most practical people in the world.

Reference beyond the text

- Everyone lives under the fear of annihilation by nuclear weapons. Explain this statement.
- The essayist says 'While there is science, there is hope of survival and well-being for all of us.' Explain it.
- Is science a blessing or a curse? Write an essay on it.

Susan Glaspell

Before Reading**Answer these questions.**

- In what ways do societal norms affect you?
- Are women dominated by men in your society?
- Are there differences between men and women in how they think, act, communicate, behave and relate to others?

Susan Glaspell (1876-1948) was an American playwright, novelist, journalist and actress. First known for her short stories (fifty were published), Glaspell is known also to have written nine novels, fifteen plays, and a biography. Her works typically explore contemporary social issues, such as gender, ethics, and dissent, while featuring deep, sympathetic characters. Her first novel *The Glory of the Conquered* was published in 1909. She wrote three best-selling novels *Brook Evans* (1928), *Fugitive's Return* (1929), and *Ambrose Holt and Family* (1931).



Her first play *Trifles* (1916) was based on the murder trial she had covered as a young reporter in Des Moines. Her play *Alison's House* (1930) earned the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1931. Glaspell is today recognized as a pioneering feminist writer and America's first important modern female playwright.

The play *Trifles* revolves around murder investigation providing a perspective about the status of women in contemporary American society reflecting the male mentality as the dominant gender.

Trifles chronicles the day after Mrs. Wright is arrested on suspicion of murdering her husband. Though the play is about the Wrights and the circumstances of Mr. Wright's death, Mrs. Wright never appears onstage. The audience learns about her from the perspective of her neighbours and their reactions to items they find inside the Wrights' home.

Reading

Now read the following one act play about murder investigation.

Casting Characters

GEORGE HENDERSON, County Attorney

HENRY PETERS, Sheriff and husband of Mrs. Peters

LEWIS HALE, a neighbouring farmer of the Wrights

MRS. PETERS, Wife of the sheriff

MRS. HALE, Neighbour to the Wrights and wife of Lewis Hale

(The kitchen in the now abandoned farmhouse of John Wright, a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the bread-box, a dish-towel on the table—other signs of incomplete work. At the rear the outer door opens and the Sheriff comes in followed by the County Attorney and Hale. The Sheriff and Hale are men in middle life, the County Attorney is a young man; all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove. They are followed by the two women—the Sheriff's wife first; she is a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face. Mrs. Hale is larger and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (at stove rubbing his hands) This feels good. Come up to the fire, ladies.

MRS. PETERS: (after taking a step forward). I'm not—cold.

SHERIFF: (unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove to right of table as if to mark the beginning of official business). Now, Mr. Hale, before we move things about, you explain to Mr. Henderson just what you saw when you came here yesterday morning.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (crossing down to left of the table) By the way, has anything been moved? Are things just as you left them yesterday?

SHERIFF: (looking about) It's just the same. When it dropped below zero last night, I thought I'd better send Frank out this morning to make a fire for us— (sits right of centre table) no use getting pneumonia with a big case on, but I told him not to touch anything except the stove—and you know Frank.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Somebody should have been left here yesterday.

SHERIFF: Oh—yesterday. When I had to send Frank to Morris Centre for that man who went crazy—I want you to know I had my hands full yesterday. I knew you could get back from Omaha by today and as long as I went over everything here myself—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Well, Mr. Hale, tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning.

HALE: *(crossing down to above table)* Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place and as I got here I said, “I’m going to see if I can’t get John Wright to go in with me on a party telephone.” I spoke to Wright about it once before and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn’t know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Let’s talk about that later, Mr. Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.
HALE: I didn’t hear or see anything; I knocked at the door, and still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up, it was past eight o’clock. So I knocked again, and I thought I heard somebody say, “Come in.” I wasn’t sure, I’m not sure yet, but I opened the door—this door *(indicating the door by which the two women are still standing)* and there in that rocker—*(pointing to it)* sat Mrs. Wright. *(They all look at the rocker downstage left.)*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: What—was she doing?

HALE: She was rock in’ back and forth. She had her apron in her hand and was kind of—pleating it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And how did she—look?

HALE: Well, she looked queer.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: How do you mean—queer?

HALE: Well, as if she didn’t know what she was going to do next. And kind of done up.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(takes out notebook and pencil and sits left of center table)* How did she seem to feel about your coming?

HALE: Why, I don’t think she minded—one way or other. She didn’t pay much attention. I said, “How do, Mrs. Wright, it’s cold, ain’t it?” And she said, “Is it?”—and went on

kind of pleating at her apron. Well, I was surprised; she didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to set down, but just sat there, not even looking at me, so I said, "I want to see John." And then she—laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" "No," she says, kind o' dull like. "Ain't he home?" says I. "Yes," says she, "he's home." "Then why can't I see him?" I asked her, out of patience. "Cause he's dead," says she. "Dead?" says I. She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin' back and forth. "Why—where is he?" says I, not knowing what to say. She just pointed upstairs—like that (*himself pointing to the room above*). I started for the stairs, with the idea of going up there. I walked from there to here—then I says "Why, what did he die of?" "He died of a rope round his neck," says she, and just went on pleatin' at her apron. Well, I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—need help. We went upstairs and there he was lyin'—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I think I'd rather have you go into that upstairs, where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story.

HALE: Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked . . . (*Stops. His facetwitches.*) . . . but Harry, he went up to him, and he said, "No, he's dead all right, and we'd better not touch anything." So we went back downstairs. She was still sitting that same way. "Has anybody been notified?" I asked. "No," says she, unconcerned. "Who did this, Mrs. Wright?" said Harry. He said it business like—and she stopped pleatin' of her apron. "I don't know," she says. "You don't know?" says Harry. "No," says she. "Weren't you sleepin' in the bed with him?" says Harry. "Yes," says she, "but I was on the inside." "Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him and you didn't wake up?" says Harry. "I didn't wake up," she said after him. We must 'a' looked as if we didn't see how that could be, for after a minute she said, "I sleep sound." Harry was going to ask her more questions but I said maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the coroner, or the sheriff, so Harry went fast as he could to Rivers' place, where there's a telephone.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And what did Mrs. Wright do when she knew that you had gone for the coroner?

HALE: She moved from the rocker to that chair over there (*pointing to a small chair in the downstage right corner*) and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me—scared. (*The County Attorney, who has had his*

notebook out, makes a note.) I dunno, maybe it wasn't scared. I wouldn't like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr. Lloyd came, and you, Mr. Peters, and so I guess that's all I know that you don't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(rising and looking around)* I guess we'll go upstairs first—and then out to the barn and around there. *(To the Sheriff)* You're convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive?

SHERIFF: Nothing here but kitchen things. *(The County Attorney, after again looking around the kitchen, opens the door of a cupboard closet in right wall. He brings a small chair from right—gets up on it and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky.)*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Here's a nice mess. *(The women draw nearer upstage canter.)*

MRS. PETERS: *(to the other woman)* Oh, her fruit; it did freeze. *(To the Lawyer)* She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break.

SHERIFF: *(rises)* Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(getting down from chair)* I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about. *(crosses down right centre)*

HALE: Well, women are used to worrying over trifles. *(The two women move a little closer together.)*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(with the gallantry of a young politician)* And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies? *(The women do not unbend. He goes below the centre table to the sink, takes a dipper full of water from the pail and, pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. While he is doing this, the Sheriff and Hale cross to cupboard, which they inspect. The County Attorney starts to wipe his hands on the roller towel, turns it for a cleaner place.)* Dirty towels! *(Kicks his foot against the pans under the sink.)* Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?

MRS. HALE: *(stiffly)* There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: To be sure. And yet *(with a little bow to her)* I know there are some Dickson County farmhouses which do not have such roller towels. *(He gives it a pull to expose its full length again.)*

MRS. HALE: Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean

as they might be.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Ah, loyal to your sex, I see. But you and Mrs. Wright were neighbours. I suppose you were friends, too.

MRS. HALE: (*shaking her head*) I've not seen much of her of late years. I've not been in this house—it's more than a year.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*crossing to women upstage centre*) And why was that? You didn't like her?

MRS. HALE: I liked her all well enough. Farmers' wives have their hands full, Mr. Henderson. And then—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Yes—?

MRS. HALE: (*looking about*) It never seemed a very cheerful place.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No—it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct.

MRS. HALE: Well, I don't know as Wright had, either.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: You mean that they didn't get on very well?

MRS. HALE: No, I don't mean anything. But I don't think a place'd be any cheerfuller for John Wright's being in it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I'd like to talk more of that a little later. I want to get the lay of things upstairs now. (*He goes past the women to upstage right where steps lead to a stair door.*)

SHERIFF: I suppose anything Mrs. Peters does will be all right. She was to take in some clothes for her, you know, and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Yes, but I would like to see what you take, Mrs. Peters, and keep an eye out for anything that might be of use to us.

MRS. PETERS: Yes, Mr. Henderson. (*The men leave by upstage right door to stairs. The women listen to the men's steps on the stairs, then look about the kitchen.*)

MRS. HALE: (*crossing left to sink*) I'd hate to have men coming into my kitchen, snooping around and criticizing. (*She arranges the pans under sink which the lawyer had shoved out of place.*)

MRS. PETERS: Of course it's no more than their duty. *(crosses to cupboard upstage right)*

MRS. HALE: Duty's all right, but I guess that deputy sheriff that came out to make the fire might have got a little of this on. *(Gives the roller towel a pull.)* Wish I'd thought of that sooner. Seems mean to talk about her for not having things slicked up when she had to come away in such a hurry. *(Crosses right to Mrs. Peters at cupboard.)*

MRS. PETERS: *(who has been looking through cupboard, lifts one end of a towel that covers a pan)* She had bread set. *(Stands still.)*

MRS. HALE: *(eyes fixed on a loaf of bread beside the breadbox, which is on a low shelf of the cupboard)* She was going to put this in there. *(Picks up loaf, then abruptly drops it. In a manner of returning to familiar things.)* It's a shame about her fruit. I wonder if it's all gone. *(Gets up on the chair and looks.)* I think there's some here that's all right, Mrs. Peters. Yes—here; *(holding it toward the window)* this is cherries, too. *(looking again)* I declare I believe that's the only one. *(Gets down, jar in her hand. Goes to the sink and wipes it off on the outside.)* She'll feel awful bad after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer. *(She puts the jar on the big kitchen table, centre of the room. With a sigh, is about to sit down in the rocking chair. Before she is seated realizes what chair it is; with a slow look at it, steps back. The chair which she has touched rocks back and forth. Mrs. Peters moves to centre table and they both watch the chair rock for a moment or two.)*

MRS. PETERS: *(shaking off the mood which the empty rocking chair has evoked; now in a business-like manner she speaks).* Well, I must get those things from the front room closet. *(She goes to the door at the right, but, after looking into the other room, steps back.)* You coming with me, Mrs. Hale? You could help me carry them. *(They go in the other room; reappear, Mrs. Peters carrying a dress, petticoat and skirt, Mrs. Hale following with a pair of shoes.)* My, it's cold in there. *(She puts the clothes on the big table, and hurries to the stove.)*

MRS. HALE: *(right of centre table examining the skirt).* Wright was close. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies' Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. I heard she used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that— oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in? **MRS. PETERS:** She said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want, for there isn't

much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. *(crosses to cupboard)* She said they was in the top drawer in this cupboard. Yes, here. And then her little shawl that always hung behind the door. *(Opens stair door and looks.)* Yes, here it is. *(Quickly shuts door leading upstairs.)*

MRS. HALE: *(abruptly moving toward her)*. Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS: Yes, Mrs. Hale? *(At up stage right door.)*

MRS. HALE: Do you think she did it?

MRS. PETERS: *(in a frightened voice)*. Oh, I don't know.

MRS. HALE: Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. Worrying about her fruit.

MRS. PETERS: *(Starts to speak, glances up, where footsteps are heard in the room above. In a low voice)*. Mr. Peters says it looks bad for her. Mr. Henderson is awful sarcastic in a speech and he'll make fun of her sayin' she didn't wake up.

MRS. HALE: Well, I guess John Wright didn't wake when they was slipping that rope under his neck.

MRS. PETERS: *(crossing slowly to table and placing shawl and apron on table with other clothing)*. No, it's strange. It must have been done awful crafty and still. They say it was such a—funny way to kill a man, rigging it all up like that.

MRS. HALE: *(crossing to left of Mrs. Peters table)*. That's just what Mr. Hale said. There was a gun in the house. He says that's what he can't understand.

MRS. PETERS: Mr. Henderson said coming out that what was needed for the case was a motive; something to show anger, or— sudden feeling.

MRS. HALE: *(who is standing by the table)*. Well, I don't see any signs of anger around here. *(She puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the table, stands looking down at table, one half of which is clean, the other half messy.)* It's wiped to here. *(Makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at loaf of bread outside the breadbox. Drops towel. In that voice of coming back to familiar things.)* Wonder how they are finding things upstairs. *(crossing below table to downstage right)* I hope she had it a little more readied-up up there. You know, it seems kind of sneaking. Locking her up in town and then coming out here and trying to get her own house to turn against her!

MRS. PETERS: But, Mrs. Hale, the law is the law.

MRS. HALE: I s'pose' tis. (unbuttoning her coat) Better loosen up your things, Mrs. Peters. You won't feel them when you go out. (*MRS. PETERS takes off her fur tippet, goes to hang it on chair back left of table, stands looking at the work basket on floor near downstage left window.*)

MRS. PETERS: She was piecing a quilt. (*She brings the large sewing basket to the centre table and they look at the bright pieces, Mrs. Hale above the table and Mrs. Peters left of it.*)

MRS. HALE: It's a log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn't it? I wonder if she was goin' to quilt it or just knot it? (*Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs. The Sheriff enters followed by Hale and the County Attorney.*)

SHERIFF: They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it! (*The men laugh, the women look abashed.*)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*rubbing his hands over the stove*). Frank's fire didn't do much up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up. (*The men go outside by upstage left door.*)

MRS. HALE: (*resentfully*). I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. (*She sits in chair right of table smoothing out a block with decision.*) I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

MRS. PETERS: (apologetically). Of course they've got awful important things on their minds. (*Pulls up a chair and joins Mrs. Hale at the left of the table.*)

MRS. HALE: (*examining another block*). Mrs. Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about! (*After she has said this they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant Mrs. Hale has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing.*)

MRS. PETERS: Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE: (*mildly*). Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good. (*threading a needle*) Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

MRS. PETERS: (*with a glance at door, nervously*). I don't think we ought to touch things.

MRS. HALE: I'll just finish up this end. *(suddenly stopping and leaning forward)* Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS: Yes, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE: What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

MRS. PETERS: Oh—I don't know, I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired. *(Mrs. Hale starts to say something, looks at Mrs. Peters, then goes on sewing.)* Well, I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think. *(putting apron and other things together)* I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string. *(Rises.)*

MRS. HALE: In that cupboard, maybe.

MRS. PETERS: *(crosses right looking in cupboard)*. Why, here's a birdcage. *(Holds it up.)* Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE: Why, I don't know whether she did or not—I've not been here for so long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I don't know as she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.

MRS. PETERS: *(glancing around)*. Seems funny to think of a bird here. But she must have had one, or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it?

MRS. HALE: I s'pose maybe the cat got it.

MRS. PETERS: No, she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. My cat got in her room and she was real upset and asked me to take it out.

MRS. HALE: My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain't it?

MRS. PETERS: *(examining the cage)*. Why, look at this door. It's broke. One hinge is pulled apart. *(Takes a step down to Mrs. Hale's right.)*

MRS. HALE: *(looking too)*. Looks as if someone must have been rough with it.

MRS. PETERS: Why, yes. *(She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table.)*

MRS. HALE: *(glancing toward upstage left door)*. I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd be about it. I don't like this place.

MRS. PETERS: But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

MRS. HALE: It would, wouldn't it? (*dropping her sewing*) But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I—(*looking around the room*)—wish I had.

MRS. PETERS: But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale—your house and your children.

MRS. HALE: (*rises and crosses left*). I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's why I ought to have come. I (*looking out left window*)—I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I dunno what it is, but it's a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—(*shakes her head*)

MRS. PETERS: (*left of table and above it*). Well, you mustn't reproach yourself, Mrs. Hale. Somehow we just don't see how it is with other folks until—something turns up.

MRS. HALE: Not having children makes less work—but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. (*turning from window*) Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS: Not to know him; I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man.

MRS. HALE: Yes—good; he didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—(*shivers*). Like a raw wind that gets to the bone. (*pauses, her eye falling on the cage*) I should think she would' a' wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went with it?

MRS. PETERS: I don't know, unless it got sick and died. (*She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again, both women watch it.*)

MRS. HALE: You weren't raised round here, were you? (*Mrs. Peters shakes her head.*) You didn't know—her?

MRS. PETERS: Not till they brought her yesterday.

MRS. HALE: She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change. (*Silence; then as if struck by a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things, crosses right above Mrs. Peters to cupboard, replaces small chair used to stand on to its original place downstage right.*) Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.

MRS. PETERS: Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale. There couldn't possibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her patches are in here—and her things. *(They look in the sewing basket.)*

MRS. HALE: *(crosses to right of table)*. Here's some red. I expect this has got sewing things in it. *(Brings out a fancy box.)* What a pretty box. Looks like something somebody would give you. Maybe her scissors are in here. *(Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose.)* Why— *(Mrs. Peters bends nearer, then turns her face away.)* There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

MRS. PETERS: Why, this isn't her scissors.

MRS. HALE: *(lifting the silk)*. Oh, Mrs. Peters—it's—*(Mrs. Peters bends closer.)*

MRS. PETERS: It's the bird.

MRS. HALE: But, Mrs. Peters—look at it! Its neck! Look at its neck! It's all—other side to.

MRS. PETERS: Somebody—wrung—its—neck. *(Their eyes meet. A look of growing comprehension, of horror. Steps are heard outside, Mrs. Hale slips box under quilt pieces, and sinks into her chair. Enter Sheriff and County Attorney. Mrs. Peters steps downstage left and stands looking out of window.)*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(as one turning from serious things to little pleasantries)*. Well, ladies, have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it? *(Crosses to centre above table.)*

MRS. PETERS: We think she was going to— knot it. *(Sheriff crosses to right of stove, lifts stove lid and glances at fire, then stands warming hands at stove.)*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Well, that's interesting, I'm sure. *(Seeing the birdcage.)* Has the bird flown?

MRS. HALE: *(putting more quilt pieces over the box)*. We think the—cat got it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(preoccupied)*. Is there a cat? *(Mrs. Hale glances in a quick covert way at Mrs. Peters.)*

MRS. PETERS: *(turning from window takes a step in)*. Well, not now. They're superstitious, you know. They leave.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(to Sheriff Peters, continuing an interrupted conversation)*. No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let's go

up again and go over it piece by piece. *(They start upstairs.)* It would have to have been someone who knew just the— *(Mrs. Peters sits down left of table. The two women sit there not looking at one another, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now it is in the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they cannot help saying it.)*

MRS. HALE: *(hesitantly and in hushed voice)* She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box.

MRS. PETERS: *(in a whisper)*. When I was a girl—my kitten—there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes—and before I could get there— *(covers her face an instant)* If they hadn't held me back I would have—*(catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly)*—hurt him.

MRS. HALE: *(with a slow look around her)*. I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around. *(pause)* No, Wright wouldn't like the bird—a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too.

MRS. PETERS: *(moving uneasily)*. We don't know who killed the bird.

MRS. HALE: I knew John Wright.

MRS. PETERS: It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him.

MRS. HALE: His neck. Choked the life out of him. *(Her hand goes out and rests on the birdcage.)*

MRS. PETERS: *(with rising voice)*. We don't know who killed him. We don't know.

MRS. HALE: *(her own feeling not interrupted)*. If there'd been years and years of nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still, after the bird was still.

MRS. PETERS: *(something within her speaking)*. I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then—

MRS. HALE: *(moving)*. How soon do you suppose they'll be through looking for the evidence?

MRS. PETERS: I know what stillness is. *(pulling herself back)* The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale.

MRS. HALE: *(not as if answering that)*. I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. *(a look around the room)* Oh, I wish I'd come over here once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?

MRS. PETERS: *(looking upstairs)*. We mustn't—take on.

MRS. HALE: I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs. Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing. *(Brushes her eyes. Noticing the jar of fruit, reaches out for it.)* If I was you I wouldn't tell her fruit was gone. Tell her it ain't. Tell her it's all right. Take this in to prove it to her. She—she may never know whether it was broke or not.

MRS. PETERS: *(takes the jar, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins winding this around the jar; in a false voice)*. My, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us. Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with—with—wouldn't they laugh! *(The men are heard coming downstairs.)*

MRS. HALE: *(under her breath)*. Maybe they would—maybe they wouldn't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No, Peters, it's all perfectly clear except a reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing. *(Crosses slowly to above table. Sheriff crosses downstage right. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters remain seated at either side of table.)* Something to show—something to make a story about—a thing that would connect up with this strange way of doing it—*(The women's eyes meet for an instant. Enter Hale from outer door.)*

HALE: *(remaining upstage left by door)*. Well, I've got the team around. Pretty cold out there.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I'm going to stay awhile by myself. *(To the Sheriff)* You can send Frank out for me, can't you? I want to go over everything. I'm not satisfied that we can't do better.

SHERIFF: Do you want to see what Mrs. Peters is going to take in? *(The Lawyer picks up the apron, laughs.)*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Oh, I guess they're not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out. *(Moves a few things about, disturbing the quilt pieces which cover the*

box. Steps back.) No, Mrs. Peters doesn't need supervising. For that matter a sheriff's wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS: Not—just that way.

SHERIFF: *(chuckling).* Married to the law. *(Moves to downstage right door to the other room.)* I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(scoffingly).* Oh, windows!

SHERIFF: We'll be right out, Mr. Hale. *(Hale goes outside. The Sheriff follows the County Attorney into the other room. Then Mrs. Hale rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at Mrs. Peters, whose eyes make a slow turn, finally meeting Mrs. Hale's. A moment Mrs. Hale holds her, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is concealed. Suddenly Mrs. Peters throws back quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is carrying. It is too big. She opens box, starts to take bird out, cannot touch it, goes to pieces, stands there helpless. Sound of a knob turning in the other room, Mrs. Hale snatches the box and puts it in the pocket of her big coat. Enter County Attorney and Sheriff, who remains downstage right.)*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(crosses to upstage left door facetiously).* Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it, ladies?

MRS. HALE: *(standing centre below table facing front, her hand against her pocket).* We call it—knot it, Mr. Henderson.

Glossary

abashed (adj.): embarrassed or ashamed

canary (n.): a small, yellow bird that is well known for its singing, sometimes kept as a pet

coroner (n.): the public employee responsible for investigating deaths that are not thought to be from natural causes

facetiously (adv.): in a manner not meant to be taken seriously

fidgety (adj.): restless or uneasy

homestead (v.): (as provided by the federal Homestead Act of 1862) live in an area of public land granted to any US citizen willing to settle on and farm the land for at least five years

pleat (v.): fold cloth

queer (adj.): strange; odd

quilt (v.): join together (layers of fabric) with lines of stitching to form a warm bed covering

resentfully (adv.): angrily, unhappily

scoffingly (adv.): scornfully

sheriff (n.): (in the US) an elected officer in a county who is responsible for keeping the peace

tippet (n.): a shawl or scarf

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- Do you believe that Mrs. Wright killed her husband? Explain.
- Do you think Mr. Wright's death would have been uncovered if Mr. Hale hadn't stopped by the Wrights' home?
- Why does Mrs. Hale think that Mrs. Wright's worries about her preserves indicate her innocence?
- How does Mrs. Peters' homesteading experience connect her to Mrs. Wright?
- How do the women's perspectives on men differ?

Reference to the context

Read the extracts from the play given below and answer the questions that follow.

- "MRS. PETERS:(glancing around). Seems funny to think of a bird here. But she must have had one, or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it?
MRS. HALE: I s'pose maybe the cat got it."
 - Who does 'she' refer to?
 - What does the word 'one' stand for?
 - What is the full form of "s'pose"?
 - What do you mean when Mrs. Hale says, "the cat got it"?
- "MRS. HALE: Wright was close. she used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir.

But that— oh, that was thirty years ago.”

- i. Why does Mrs. Hale refer to Mrs. Wright as “Minnie Foster”?
 - ii. What does her description tell you about Mrs. Wright?
 - iii. What does Mrs. Hale mean by “that was thirty years ago”?
- c. What is the main theme of the play?
 - d. Discuss the symbolism used in the play.
 - e. Discuss the setting of the play. Does it have an impact on the theme of the play?

Reference beyond the text

- a. The credibility of a character is determined not only by the character’s thoughts and actions but also by what other characters say and think about him or her. Discuss in relation to the characters of Trifles.
- b. Dramatic irony occurs when the reader or audience has information that is unknown to the characters in a play; it creates tension and suspense. Analyse the play discussing the author’s use of dramatic irony based on these questions:
 - What information is crucial to the play Trifles?
 - How does the playwright use this information to create dramatic irony?
 - What effect does the dramatic irony have on the audience and on the play?

A Sunny Morning

Serafin and Joaquin Alvarez Quintero

(translated from the Spanish by Lucretia Xavier Floyd)

Before Reading

Answer these questions.

- Have you ever had an unexpected meeting with someone in a park?
- How do your expectations influence the way you interact with others?
- How have unexpected encounters in your life sometimes turned out to be rewarding?

Serafin Álvarez Quintero (1871-1938) and *Joaquin Alvarez Quintero* (1873-1944) were Spanish dramatists. They grew up in Utrera, a small town near Seville in the region of Spain called Andalusia. They began writing for the theatre at a young age. They were popularly known as the *Golden Boys* of the Madrid theatre. They collaborated in almost 200 dramas depicting the life, manners, and speech of Andalusia.



Their first stage piece, *Gilito*, was written in 1889. Among the brothers' best-known works are the comedies *The Flowers* (1901), *A Sunny Morning* (1905), and *The Merry Heart* (1906), as well as the uncharacteristically serious *Malvaloca* (1912). Several of their plays were translated into English by Helen and Harley *Granville-Barker* (1927–32). Their complete collection of plays was published in seven volumes as *Obras Completas* in the early 1950s.

A Sunny Morning is a light comedy that narrates the reunion of two lovers now in their 70s meeting at a park who in their youth were passionate lovers but torn apart by the cruelty of fate. The setting of this play is a sunny morning in Madrid, Spain on a bench in the park.

Reading

Casting Characters

DON LAURA

PETRA, her maid

DON GONZALO

JUANITO, his servant

Scene: A park in Madrid, the capital of Spain

(A sunny morning in a retired corner of a park in Madrid. Autumn. A bench at right. Dona Laura, a handsome, white-haired old lady of about seventy, refined in appearance, her bright eyes and entire manner giving evidence that despite her age her mental faculties are unimpaired, enters leaning upon the arm of her maid, Petra. In her free hand she carries a parasol, which serves also as a cane.)

DONA LAURA: I am so glad to be here. I feared my seat would be occupied. What a beautiful morning!

PETRA: The sun is hot.

DONA LAURA: Yes, you are only twenty. *(She sits down on the bench.)* Oh, I feel more tired today than usual. *(Noticing Petra, who seems impatient.)* Go, if you wish to chat with your guard.

PETRA: He is not mine, senora; he belongs to the park.

DONA LAURA: He belongs more to you than he does to the park. Go find him, but remain within calling distance.

PETRA: I see him over there waiting for me.

DONA LAURA: Do not remain more than ten minutes.

PETRA: Very well, senora. *(Walks toward right.)*

DONA LAURA: Wait a moment.

PETRA: What does the senora wish?

DONA LAURA: Give me the bread crumbs.

PETRA: I don't know what is the matter with me.

DONA LAURA: *(Smiling.)* I do. Your head is where your heart is—with the guard.

PETRA: Here, senora. *(She hands Dona Laura a small bag. Exit Petra by right.)*

DONA LAURA: Adios. *(Glances toward trees at right.)* Here they come! They know just when to expect me. *(She rises, walks toward right, and throws three handfuls of bread crumbs.)* These are for the spryest, these for the gluttons, and these for the little ones which are the most persistent. *(Laughs. She returns to her seat and watches, with a pleased expression, the pigeons feeding.)* There, that big one is always first! I know him by his big head. Now one, now another, now two, now three— That little fellow is the least timid. I believe he would eat from my hand. That one takes his piece and flies up to

that branch alone. He is a philosopher. But where do they all come from? It seems as if the news had spread. Ha, ha! Don't quarrel. There is enough for all. I'll bring more tomorrow. *(Enter Don Gonzalo and Juanito from left centre. Don Gonzalo is an old gentleman of seventy, gouty and impatient. He leans upon Juanito's arm and drags his feet somewhat as she walks.)*

DON GONZALO: Idling their time away! They should be saying Mass.

JUANITO: You can sit here, señor. There is only a lady. *(Dona Laura turns her head and listens.)*

DON GONZALO: I won't, Juanito. I want a bench to myself.

JUANITO: But there is none.

DON GONZALO: That one over there is mine.

JUANITO: There are three priests sitting there.

DON GONZALO: Rout them out. Have they gone?

JUANITO: No, indeed. They are talking.

DON GONZALO: Just as if they were glued to the seat. No hope of their leaving. Come this way, Juanito. *(They walk toward the birds, right.)*

DONA LAURA: *(Indignantly.)* Look out!

DON GONZALO: Are you speaking to me, senora?

DONA LAURA: Yes, to you.

DON GONZALO: What do you wish?

DONA LAURA: You have scared away the birds who were feeding on my crumbs.

DON GONZALO: What do I care about the birds?

DONA LAURA: But I do.

DON GONZALO: This is a public park.

DONA LAURA: Then why do you complain that the priests have taken your bench?

DON GONZALO: Senora, we have not met. I cannot imagine why you take the liberty of addressing me. Come, Juanito. *(Both go outright.)*

DONA LAURA: What an ill-natured old man! Why must people get so fussy and cross when they reach a certain age? *(Looking toward right.) I am glad.*

He lost that bench, too. Serves him right for scaring the birds. He is furious. Yes, yes; find a seat if you can. Poor man! He is wiping the perspiration from his face. Here he comes. A carriage would not raise more dust than his feet. (Enter Don Gonzalo and Juanito by right and walk toward left.)

DON GONZALO: Have the priests gone yet, Juanito?

JUANITO: No, indeed, señor. They are still there.

DON GONZALO: The authorities should place more benches here for these sunny mornings. Well, I suppose I must resign myself and sit on the bench with the old lady. *(Muttering to himself, he sits at the extreme end of Dona Laura's bench and looks at her indignantly. Touches his hat as he greets her.)* Good morning.

DONA LAURA: What, you here again?

DON GONZALO: I repeat that we have not met.

DONA LAURA: I was responding to your salute.

DON GONZALO: "Good morning" should be answered by "good morning," and that is all you should have said.

DONA LAURA: You should have asked permission to sit on this bench, which is mine.

DON GONZALO: The benches here are public property.

DONA LAURA: Why, you said the one the priests have was yours.

DON GONZALO: Very well, very well. I have nothing more to say. *(Between his teeth.)* Senile old lady! She ought to be at home knitting and counting her beads.

DONA LAURA: Don't grumble any more. I'm not going to leave just to please you.

DON GONZALO: *(Brushing the dust from his shoes with his handkerchief.)* If the ground were sprinkled a little it would be an improvement.

DONA LAURA: Do you use your handkerchief as a shoe brush?

DON GONZALO: Why not?

DONA LAURA: Do you use a shoe brush as a handkerchief?

DON GONZALO: What right have you to criticize my actions?

DONA LAURA: A neighbour's right.

DON GONZALO: Juanito, my book. I do not care to listen to nonsense.

DONA LAURA: You are very polite.

DON GONZALO: Pardon me, senora, but never interfere with what does not concern you.

DONA LAURA: I generally say what I think.

DON GONZALO: And more to the same effect. Give me the book, Juanito.

JUANITO: Here, senor. *(Juanito takes a book from his pocket, hands it to Don Gonzalo, then exits by right. Don Gonzalo, casting indignant glances at Dona Laura, puts on an enormous pair of glasses, takes from his pocket a reading glass, adjusts both to suit him, and opens his book.)*

DONA LAURA: I thought you were taking out a telescope.

DON GONZALO: Was that you?

DONA LAURA: Your sight must be keen.

DON GONZALO: Keener than yours is.

DONA LAURA: Yes, evidently.

DON GONZALO: Ask the hares and partridges.

DONA LAURA: Ah! Do you hunt?

DON GONZALO: I did, and even now—

DONA LAURA: Oh, yes, of course!

DON GONZALO: Yes, senora. Every Sunday I take my gun and dog, you understand, and go to one of my estates near Aravaca and kill time.

DONA LAURA: Yes, kill time. That is all you kill.

DON GONZALO: Do you think so? I could show you a wild boar's head in my study—

DONA LAURA: Yes, and I could show you a tiger's skin in my boudoir. What does that prove?

DON GONZALO: Very well, senora, please allow me to read. Enough conversation.

DONA LAURA: Well, you subside, then.

DON GONZALO: But first I shall take a pinch of snuff. *(Takes out snuff box.)* Will

you have some? (*Offers box to Dona Laura.*)

DONA LAURA: If it is good.

DON GONZALO: It is of the finest. You will like it.

DONA LAURA: (*Taking pinch of snuff.*) It clears my head.

DON GONZALO: And mine.

DONA LAURA: Do you sneeze?

DON GONZALO: Yes, senora, three times.

DONA LAURA: And so do I. What a coincidence! (*After taking the snuff, they await the sneezes, both anxiously, and sneeze alternately three times each.*)

DON GONZALO: There, I feel better.

DONA LAURA: So do I. (*Aside.*) The snuff has made peace between us.

DON GONZALO: You will excuse me if I read aloud?

DONA LAURA: Read as loud as you please; you will not disturb me.

DON GONZALO: (*Reading.*) “All love is sad, but sad as it is, it is the best thing that we know.” That is from Campoamor.

DONA LAURA: Ah!

DON GONZALO: (*Reading.*) “The daughters of the mothers I once loved kiss me now as they would a graven image.” Those lines, I take it, are in a humorous vein.

DONA LAURA: (*Laughing.*) I take them so, too.

DON GONZALO: There are some beautiful poems in this book. Here. “Twenty years pass. He returns.”

DONA LAURA: You cannot imagine how it affects me to see you reading with all those glasses.

DON GONZALO: Can you read without any?

DONA LAURA: Certainly.

DON GONZALO: At your age? You’re jesting.

DONA LAURA: Pass me the book, then. (*Takes book; reads aloud.*) “Twenty years pass. He returns. And each, beholding the other, exclaims— Can it be that this is he? Heavens, is it she?” (*Dona Laura returns the book to DON GONZALO.*)

DON GONZALO: Indeed, I envy you your wonderful eyesight.

DONA LAURA: (*Aside.*) I know every word by heart.

DON GONZALO: I am very fond of good verses, very fond. I even composed some in my youth.

DONA LAURA: Good ones?

DON GONZALO: Of all kinds. I was a great friend of Espronceda, Zorrilla, Bécquer, and others. I first met Zorrilla in America.

DONA LAURA: Why, have you been in America?

DON GONZALO: Several times. The first time I went I was only six years old.

DONA LAURA: You must have gone with Columbus in one of his caravels!

DON GONZALO: (*Laughing.*) Not quite as bad as that. I am old, I admit, but I did not know Ferdinand and Isabella. (*They both laugh.*) I was also a great friend of Campoamor. I met him in Valencia. I am a native of that city.

DONA LAURA: You are?

DON GONZALO: I was brought up there and there I spent my early youth. Have you ever visited that city?

DONA LAURA: Yes, señor. Not far from Valencia there was a villa that, if still there, should retain memories of me. I spent several seasons there. It was many, many years ago. It was near the sea, hidden away among lemon and orange trees. They called it—let me see, what did they call it—Maricela.

DON GONZALO: (*Startled.*) Maricela?

DONA LAURA: Maricela. Is the name familiar to you?

DON GONZALO: Yes, very familiar. If my memory serves me right, for we forget as we grow old, there lived in that villa the most beautiful woman I have ever seen, and I assure you I have seen many. Let me see—what was her name? Laura—Laura—Laura Llorente.

DONA LAURA: (*Startled.*) Laura Llorente?

DON GONZALO: Yes. (*They look at each other intently.*)

DONA LAURA: (*Recovering herself.*) Nothing. You reminded me of my best friend.

DON GONZALO: How strange!

DONA LAURA: It is strange. She was called “The Silver Maiden.”

DON GONZALO: Precisely, “The Silver Maiden.” By that name she was known in that locality. I seem to see her as if she were before me now, at that window with the red roses. Do you remember that window?

DONA LAURA: Yes, I remember. It was the window of her room.

DON GONZALO: She spent many hours there. I mean in my day.

DONA LAURA: [*Sighing.*] And in mine, too.

DON GONZALO: She was ideal. Fair as a lily, jet black hair and black eyes, with an uncommonly sweet expression. She seemed to cast a radiance wherever she was. Her figure was beautiful, perfect. “What forms of sovereign beauty God models in human clay!” She was a dream.

DONA LAURA: (*Aside.*) If you but knew that dream was now by your side, you would realize what dreams come to. (*Aloud.*) She was very unfortunate and had a sad love affair.

DON GONZALO: Very sad. (*They look at each other.*)

DONA LAURA: Did you hear of it?

DON GONZALO: Yes.

DONA LAURA: The ways of Providence are strange. (*Aside.*) Gonzalo!

DON GONZALO: The gallant lover, in the same affair—

DONA LAURA: Ah, the duel!

DON GONZALO: Precisely, the duel. The gallant lover was—my cousin, of whom I was very fond.

DONA LAURA: Oh, yes, a cousin? My friend told me in one of her letters the story of that affair, which was truly romantic. He, your cousin, passed by on horseback every morning down the rose path under her window, and tossed up to her balcony a bouquet of flowers which she caught.

DON GONZALO: And later in the afternoon the gallant horseman would return by the same path, and catch the bouquet of flowers she would toss him. Am I right?

DONA LAURA: Yes. They wanted to marry her to a merchant whom she would not have.

DON GONZALO: And one night, when my cousin waited under her window to hear her sing, this other person presented himself unexpectedly.

DONA LAURA: And insulted your cousin.

DON GONZALO: There was a quarrel.

DONA LAURA: And later a duel.

DON GONZALO: Yes, at sunrise, on the beach, and the merchant was badly wounded. My cousin had to conceal himself for a few days and later to fly.

DONA LAURA: You seem to know the story well.

DON GONZALO: And so do you.

DONA LAURA: I have explained that a friend repeated it to me.

DON GONZALO: As my cousin did to me. (*Aside.*) This is Laura!

DONA LAURA: (*Aside.*) Why tell him? He does not suspect.

DON GONZALO: (*Aside.*) She is entirely innocent.

DONA LAURA: And was it you, by any chance, who advised your cousin to forget Laura?

DON GONZALO: Why, my cousin never forgot her!

DONA LAURA: How do you account, then, for his conduct?

DON GONZALO: I will tell you. The young man took refuge in my house, fearful of the consequences of a duel with a person highly regarded in that locality. From my home he went to Seville, then came to Madrid. He wrote Laura many letters, some of them in verse. But undoubtedly they were intercepted by her parents, for she never answered at all. Gonzalo then, in despair, believing his love lost to him forever, joined the army, went to Africa, and there, in a trench, met a glorious death, grasping the flag of Spain and whispering the name of his beloved Laura—

DONA LAURA: (*Aside.*) What an atrocious lie!

DON GONZALO: (*Aside.*) I could not have killed myself more gloriously.

DONA LAURA: You must have been prostrated by the calamity.

DON GONZALO: Yes, indeed, senora. As if he were my brother. I presume, though, on the contrary, that Laura in a short time was chasing butterflies in her garden, indifferent to regret.

DONA LAURA: No señor, no!

DON GONZALO: It is woman's way.

DONA LAURA: Even if it were woman's way, "The Silver Maiden" was not of that disposition. My friend awaited news for days, months, a year, and no letter came. One afternoon, just at sunset, as the first stars were appearing, she was seen to leave the house, and with quickening steps wend her way toward the beach, the beach where her beloved had risked his life. She wrote his name on the sand, then sat down upon a rock, her gaze fixed upon the horizon. The waves murmured their eternal threnody and slowly crept up to the rock where the maiden sat. The tide rose with a boom and swept her out to sea.

DON GONZALO: Good heavens!

DONA LAURA: The fishermen of that shore who often tell the story affirm that it was a long time before the waves washed away that name written on the sand. (*Aside.*) You will not get ahead of me in decorating my own funeral.

DON GONZALO: (*Aside.*) She lies worse than I do.

DONA LAURA: Poor Laura!

DON GONZALO: Poor Gonzalo!

DONA LAURA: (*Aside.*) I will not tell him that I married two years later.

DON GONZALO: (*Aside.*) In three months I ran off to Paris with a ballet dancer.

DONA LAURA: Fate is curious. Here are you and I, complete strangers, met by chance, discussing the romance of old friends of long ago! We have been conversing as if we were old friends.

DON GONZALO: Yes, it is curious, considering the ill-natured prelude to our conversation.

DONA LAURA: You scared away the birds.

DON GONZALO: I was unreasonable, perhaps.

DONA LAURA: Yes, that was evident. (*Sweetly.*) Are you coming again tomorrow?

DON GONZALO: Most certainly, if it is a sunny morning. And not only will I not scare away the birds, but I will bring a few crumbs.

DONA LAURA: Thank you very much. Birds are grateful and repay attention. I wonder where my maid is? Petra! (*Signals for her maid.*)

DON GONZALO: *(Aside, looking at LAURA, whose back is turned.)* No, no, I will not reveal myself. I am grotesque now. Better that she recall the gallant horseman who passed daily beneath her window tossing flowers.

DONA LAURA: Here she comes.

DON GONZALO: That Juanito! He plays havoc with the nursemaids. *(Looks right and signals with his hand.)*

DONA LAURA: *(Aside, looking at Gonzalo, whose back is turned.)* No, I am too sadly changed. It is better he should remember me as the black eyed girl tossing flowers as he passed among the roses in the garden. *(Juanito enters by right, Petra by left. She has a bunch of violets in her hand.)*

DONA LAURA: Well, Petra! At last!

DON GONZALO: Juanito, you are late.

PETRA: *(To Dona Laura.)* The guard gave me these violets for you, senora.

DONA LAURA: How very nice! Thank him for me. They are fragrant. *(As she takes the violets from her maid a few loose ones fall to the ground.)*

DON GONZALO: My dear lady, this has been a great honour and a great pleasure.

DONA LAURA: It has also been a pleasure to me.

DON GONZALO: Good-bye until tomorrow.

DONA LAURA: Until tomorrow.

DON GONZALO: If it is sunny.

DONA LAURA: A sunny morning. Will you go to your bench?

DON GONZALO: No, I will come to this—if you do not object?

DONA LAURA: This bench is at your disposal.

DON GONZALO: And I will surely bring the crumbs.

DONA LAURA: Tomorrow, then?

DON GONZALO: Tomorrow! *(Laura walks away toward right, supported by her Maid. Gonzalo, before leaving with Juanito, trembling and with a great effort, stoops to pick up the violets Laura dropped. Just then Laura turns her head and surprises him picking up the flowers.)*

JUANITO: What are you doing, señor?

DON GONZALO: Juanito, wait—

DONA LAURA: (Aside.) Yes, it is he!

DON GONZALO: (Aside.) It is she, and no mistake. (*Dona Laura and Don Gonzalo wave farewell.*)

DONA LAURA: “Can it be that this is he?”

DON GONZALO: “Heavens, is it she?” (*They smile once more, as if she were again at the window and he below in the rose garden, and then disappear upon the arms of their servants.*)

CURTAIN

NOTES

Senora: a Spanish way of addressing a married woman, similar to ‘Madam’. Senorita is the term used to address unmarried women, and señor is used to address men.

Adios: a courteous way of saying ‘goodbye’ in Spanish

Mass: a religious celebration held regularly in the Roman Catholic Church

Aravaca: a village near Madrid

Campoamor: Ramón de Campoamor (1817–1901), a Spanish poet and philosopher

Espronceda: José de Espronceda (1808–1842), a Spanish romantic poet

Zorrilla: José Zorrilla (1817–1893), a Spanish romantic poet and dramatist

Bécquer: Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (1836–1870), a Spanish poet

Ferdinand and Isabella: the king and queen of Spain who financed Christopher Columbus’s voyage across the Atlantic Ocean in the late 1400s

Valencia: a city on the eastern coast of Spain

Seville: a city in southern Spain

Glossary

atrocious (adj.): very bad; disgusting; horrifyingly wicked

boudoir (n.): a woman’s bedroom

caravels (n.): ships built in Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth century

duel (n.): a contest between two people with deadly weapons in order to settle a point of honour

glutton(n.): a person who is greedy for food

gouty (adj.): suffering from the swelling in the joints

snuff (n.): powdered tobacco

graven (adj.): carved

grotesque (adj.): comically or repulsively ugly or distorted

indignant (adj.): feeling or showing anger because of something unjust or unfair

parasol(n.): a small, colourful umbrella used for protection from the sun

Providence (n.): a force that determines human fate; God

spryest (adj.): active and lively

threnody (n.): a song of lament for the dead

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- What makes Dona Laura think that Don Gonzalo is an ill-natured man? Why do neither Dona Laura nor Don Gonzalo reveal their true identities?
- At what point of time, do you think, Laura and Gonzalo begin to recognise each other?
- When does Dona Laura realise that Don Gonzalo was her former lover?
- Why do Dona Laura and Don Gonzalo spin fictitious stories about themselves?
- How do Dona Laura and Don Gonzalo feel about each other?

Reference to the context

- Look at the extract below and answer the questions that follow:
“Yes, you are only twenty. (She sits down on the bench.) Oh, I feel more tired today than usual. (Noticing Petra, who seems impatient.) Go, if you wish to chat with your guard.”
 - Who is the speaker?
 - Who does ‘you’ refer to?
 - Who is the ‘guard’ the speaker is talking to?
- Read the given extract from the play and answer the questions that follow:

DONA LAURA: (Indignantly.) Look out!

DON GONZALO: Are you speaking to me, senora?

DONA LAURA: Yes, to you.

DON GONZALO: What do you wish?

DONA LAURA: You have scared away the birds who were feeding on my crumbs.

DON GONZALO: What do I care about the birds?

DONA LAURA: But I do.

DON GONZALO: This is a public park.

- i. Who is Dona addressing by saying “Look out”?
- ii. What was Dona doing?
- iii. Who scared the birds? Are they pet birds?
- iv. Where are the speakers at the time of the conversation?
- v. What is the effect of flashback in the play when Dona Laura and Don Gonzalo knew that they were the lovers in the past?
- vi. Discuss how the play is built around humour and irony.
- vii. How is the title ‘A Sunny Morning’ justifiable? Discuss.

Reference beyond the text

- a. What do you predict will happen in the next meeting between Dona Laura and Don Gonzalo? Discuss.
- b. Was it wise for Dona Laura and Don Gonzalo to keep their identities secret? How might their secrets affect future meetings?
- c. Write the summary of the play.

Fritz Karinthy

Before Reading**Answer these questions.**

- Will you demand your tuition fees back from the school if you don't get any job in the future?
- What do you want to be after getting education?
- Does one's certificate show the talent of that person?

Fritz Karinthy (1887-1938) was a Hungarian satirical writer. He excelled as a novelist, short story writer, poet, essayist and playwright. Deeply interested in natural sciences, he studied to be a teacher, but became a journalist and joined the literary periodical *Nyugat*. Strongly philosophical and humanistic in his outlook, he raised his powerful voice against the barbarism and horrors of World War I. His works such as *That's How You Write* (1912), *Journey around My Skull* (1939), *Please Sir* (1916) and *Professor* won him a lot of recognition.



The play *Refund* written in 1938 is about a man about forty who goes back to the school in which he had studied and demands a refund of the fees he had paid eighteen years back claiming that he had learnt nothing useful at school and he is now good-for-nothing. This play was adopted by the American playwright Percival Wilde for a general audience. *Refund* brings out the extraordinary sense of parody, word play in Karinthy's literary art. The play is full of humour which deals with an extraordinarily absurd situation.

Reading

Now read the following hilarious literary play.

Casting Characters

THE PRINCIPAL

THE SERVANT

WASSERKOPF

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER

THE PHYSICS MASTER

THE STAFF

THE GEOGRAPHY MASTER

THE HISTORY MASTER

(The Principal is seated at his flat-tapped desk in his office in a high school. Enter a servant.)

THE PRINCIPAL: Well, what is it?

THE SERVANT: A man, sir. Outside. He wants to see you.

THE PRINCIPAL: *(leaning back and stretching)* I receive parents only during office hours. The particular office hours are posted in the notice-board. Tell him that.

THE SERVANT: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. But it isn't a parent, sir.

THE PRINCIPAL: A pupil?

THE SERVANT: I don't think so. He has a beard.

THE PRINCIPAL: *(disquieted)* Not a parent and not a pupil. Then what is he?

THE SERVANT: He told me I should just say 'Wasserkopf.'

THE PRINCIPAL: *(much disquieted)* What does he look like? Stupid? Intelligent?

THE SERVANT: Fairly intelligent, I'd say, sir.

THE PRINCIPAL: *(reassured)* Good! Then he's not a school inspector. Show him in.

THE SERVANT: Yes, sir. *(He goes off. An instant later the door reopens to admit a bearded man, carelessly dressed, somewhat under forty. He is energetic and decided)*

WASSERKOPF: How do you do? *(He remains standing)*

THE PRINCIPAL: *(rising)* What can I do for you?

WASSERKOPF: I'm Wasserkopf. *(He pauses)* Don't you remember me?

THE PRINCIPAL: *(shaking his head)* No.

WASSERKOPF: It's possible I've changed. What the hell...! Your class records will show I've got a right to come here.

THE PRINCIPAL: The class records? How so?

WASSERKOPF: Mr. Principal, if you please, I'm Wasserkopf.

THE PRINCIPAL: Doubtless, doubtless – but what has that to do with it?

WASSERKOPF: You mean to say you don't even remember my name? *[He thinks it over]* No, I imagine you wouldn't. You were probably glad to forget me. Well, Mr. Principal, I was a student in this school eighteen years ago.

THE PRINCIPAL: *(without enthusiasm)* Oh, were you? Well, what do you want now? A certificate?

WASSERKOPF: *(doubtfully)* Since I'm bringing back the leaving certificate you gave me I suppose I can get along without another one. No, that isn't why I came here.

THE PRINCIPAL: Well?

WASSERKOPF: *(clearing his throat firmly)* As a former pupil of this school I want you to refund the tuition fees, which were paid you for my education eighteen years ago.

THE PRINCIPAL: *(incredulously)* You want me to refund your tuition fees?

WASSERKOPF: Exactly; the tuition fees. If I were a rich man I'd tell you to keep them, so far as I'm concerned. What the hell...! But I'm not a rich man, and I need the money.

THE PRINCIPAL: I'm not sure I understand.

WASSERKOPF: Dammit, I want my tuition fees back! Is that plain enough?

THE PRINCIPAL: Why do you want it back?

WASSERKOPF: Because I didn't get my money's worth, that's why! This certificate here says I got an education. Well, I didn't. I didn't learn anything and I want my money back.

THE PRINCIPAL: But, look here, look here! I don't understand it at all! I've never heard of anything like it. What an absurd idea!

WASSERKOPF: Absurd, is it? It's a good idea. It's such a good idea that I didn't get it out of my own head, thanks to the education I got here, which made nothing but an incompetent ass out of me. My old classmate Leaderer gave me the idea not half an hour ago.

THE PRINCIPAL: Gave it to you?

WASSERKOPF: (*nodding violently*) Like that. Here I was walking along the street, fired from my last job, and wondering how I could get hold of some cash, because I was quite broke. I met Leaderer. I said, 'How goes it, Leaderer?' 'Fine!' he says. 'I've got to hurry to the broker's to collect the money I made speculating in foreign exchange.' 'What's foreign exchange?' I said. He says 'I haven't got the time to tell you now, but, according to the paper, Hungarian money is down seventy points, and I've made the difference. Don't you understand?' Well, I didn't understand. I said, 'How do you make money if money goes down?' and he says, 'Wasserkopf, if you don't know that, you don't know a damn thing. Go to the school and get your tuition fees back.' Then he hurried away and left me standing there, and I said to myself, 'Why shouldn't I do that?' He's right, now that I've thought it over. So I came here as fast as I could, and I'll be much obliged if you give me back my tuition fees, because they amount to a lot of money, and I didn't get anything for them.

THE PRINCIPAL: (*at a loss for words*) Really... But now... See here, we've never had a request like yours before. Leaderer told you –

WASSERKOPF: He's a good friend, Leaderer. He told me, and when I get my money back I'm going to buy him a present.

THE PRINCIPAL: (*rising*) You – you are not really serious, are you?

WASSERKOPF: I was never more serious in my life. Treat me wrong here and I'll go straight to the Ministry of Education and complain about you! You took my money and you taught me nothing. Now I'm no good for anything, and I can't do the things that I should have learned in school.

THE PRINCIPAL: You're mad! (*He breaks off, to continue in a more conciliatory tone*) My dear sir, Herr – er – Wasserkopf, please go away quietly. I'll think the matter over after you've gone.

WASSERKOPF: (*sitting*) No, no! You don't get rid of me so easy. I'll go when everything's been settled. I was given the instruction here in exchange for money, so that I might be able to do something; but I can't do anything because I was taught so badly, and anybody can see I ought to have my money back.

THE PRINCIPAL: (*trying to gain time*) What makes you think you can't do anything?

WASSERKOPF: Everybody thinks so. If I get a job I can't keep it. Give me an examination and tell me what I ought to do. Call in the masters and let them say.

THE PRINCIPAL: What a distressing business! How unfortunate! You really want to take another examination?

WASSERKOPF: Yes. I've a right to take one.

THE PRINCIPAL: What an unusual case! *(He scratches his head)* I've never heard of anything like it before. Er – I shall have to consult the staff. I shall have to call a conference... Er – will you wait in the waiting room and give me a few minutes?

WASSERKOPF: *(rising)* Yes, be quick. I've got no time to waste *(he saunters out in a leisurely fashion.)*

THE PRINCIPAL: *(rings; the servant enters)* Ask the staff to come here at once. A most extraordinary conference!

THE SERVANT: Yes, sir. *(He goes out)*

THE PRINCIPAL: *(trying out his speech)* Gentlemen, I have asked you to come here on account of a most unusual state of affairs. It is unprecedented. In the thirty years that I have been a schoolmaster I have never heard of anything like it. Never, so long as I live, shall I expect to hear of anything like it again. Never! God forbid! *(The masters enter; they are characteristic figures whose eccentricities are exaggerated)* Gentlemen, I have asked you to come here on account of a most unusual state of affairs. Sit down, gentlemen. I shall open the conference. It is unprecedented, incredible and fantastic. A former pupil has come to see me – er – an individual named Wasserkopf. He brought up a question, which I've never encountered in my many years of experience. *(He explodes)* I have never heard of anything like it.

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: Tell us about it.

THE PRINCIPAL: He wants – he wants his tuition fees back.

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: Why?

THE PRINCIPAL: Because he's lost his job. Because he's broke. Because he's an ass. I should be glad to have you express your views on this unparalleled case.

THE PHYSICS MASTER: The case is natural. The law of conservation of energy proves that any given pupil will lose, in any given period, as much knowledge as a teacher can drill into his head in another period of like duration.

THE HISTORY MASTER: There is nothing like it in the history of civilization. It is said that the Bourbons learned nothing and forgot nothing. If that is true,

THE PHYSICS MASTER: The law of conservation of energy – *(The two argue)*

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: The question is, does he want the amount with simple or compound interest, because in the latter event –

THE GEOGRAPHY MASTER: Where is the fellow, anyhow?

THE PRINCIPAL: He's waiting outside. He wants to be re-examined. He says he learned nothing. He says a re-examination will prove it. I'd like to know what you gentlemen think about it.

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: *(chuckling)* A re-examination? Gentlemen, it is my conviction that we will lose nothing by re-examining Wasserkopf. If he fails, he will place us in an awkward position; therefore he must not fail. He has – shall I say? – pursued advanced studies in the school of life. We will not make our questions too difficult – agreed, gentlemen? We are dealing with a sly, crafty individual, who will try to get the better of us – and his money back – by hook or crook. We must checkmate him.

THE PHYSICS MASTER: How?

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: By sticking together. The object is to prevent him from failing, because if he fails he succeeds. That we must stop. If he fails, tomorrow there will be two more former pupils, and the next day a dozen. We must back each other up, gentlemen, so that this painful affair does not become a pedagogical scandal. We will ask him questions. Whatever his answers, we agree beforehand that they are correct.

THE PHYSICS MASTER: Who will decide?

THE MATHEMATICS TEACHER: I, if you will permit me. Mr. Principal, let us proceed with the examination. We will show the former pupil that we too can be shrewd!

THE PRINCIPAL: *(ringing; uneasily)* Isn't there a chance of something going wrong? Suppose it gets into the newspapers –

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: Leave it to us.

THE PRINCIPAL: *(to the servant who has reappeared)* Show in Herr Wasserkopf. *(He enters, without waiting to be shown in. He is most truculent. His hat is over one ear; he keeps his hands thrust into his pockets and stares insolently)*

THE STAFF: *(bowing, heartily)* How do you do?

WASSERKOPF: Who the hell are you? Sit down, you loafers! *(He grins, waiting to be thrown out)*

THE PRINCIPAL: How dare you –

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: *(interrupting)* Please! *(He turns to the others.)* Sit down, you loafers! *(They sit, greatly astonished. He turns to Wasserkopf.)* My dear sir, the greeting you have just given us shows that you understand the patriarchal manners, which we impress upon everybody in this institution. Exactly as in the days of the medieval humanists, teachers and pupils here are on a footing of perfect equality. You have shown us, in a most tactful way, that you approve of our customs. That is good of you, and I am sure my colleagues will agree that the pupil Wasserkopf, who appears before us for re-examination, need not be examined in what appertains to gentlemanliness. Instead we waive the examination in that subject, and mark him ‘Excellent.’

THE PRINCIPAL: *(understanding at once)* Quite right! Quite right! *(He writes)* ‘Manners: Excellent.’

THE STAFF: Agreed! Agreed!

WASSERKOPF: *(puzzled, then shrugging his shoulders)* All right, if you say so. What the hell...! I don’t give a damn for the lot of you. My being gentlemanly isn’t going to pass the examination. Let me fail as quickly as possible, and give me my money. Everything else is just nonsense.

THE PRINCIPAL: *(flattering)* Speaking for the staff, we agree with you. Your exquisite courtesy will not affect us one way or the other. We will examine you, and be guided entirely by your replies to our questions. Take notice of that.

WASSERKOPF: All right, carry on! Let’s hear the questions. I need money. *(He takes off his coat and hitches up his sleeve bands.)* Go to it! Ask me questions, professors – I mean, long-eared asses! I’d like to see you get a single correct answer out of me.

THE PRINCIPAL: The examination will begin. History. Herr Schwefler?

THE HISTORY MASTER: *(moving to the centre of the table and indicates a chair facing of it)* Herr Wasserkopf, won’t you be seated?

WASSERKOPF: *(staring at him insolently, arms akimbo)* To hell with a seat! I’ll stand. *(THE HISTORY MASTER is disconcerted, and shows it, but the Mathematics Master leaps into the breach)*

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: Bravo! Excellent! Herr Wasserkopf wishes us to understand two things. He will dispense with a formal written examination and will answer orally. Good! He will not be seated; he will stand. Also good. It follows that his physical condition is splendid, and I take it upon myself to award him an 'Excellent' in physical culture. I ask the Principal, who teaches that subject, to concur.

THE PRINCIPAL: Quite Right. *(He writes)* 'Physical Culture: Excellent'

THE STAFF: Agreed! Agreed!

WASSERKOPF: *(energetically)* No! *(He sits; he grins.)* You caught me once, didn't you? Well, you won't do it again. From now I'll have my ears open.

THE PRINCIPAL: 'Alertness: Very Good'

THE HISTORY MASTER: 'Perseverance: Unusual.'

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: 'Logic: Excellent.'

WASSERKOPF: Get on with your questions!

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: *(to the Principal)* 'Ambition: Boundless.' *(The Principal nods and writes)*

THE HISTORY MASTER: *(scratching his head)* Yes, yes, just a minute. *(The other masters look at him with concern.)*

WASSERKOPF: What's the matter, Schwefler? Aren't you prepared?

THE HISTORY MASTER: A moment!

WASSERKOPF: Oh, you can't think of a question that's easy enough? You were always a numskull.

THE HISTORY MASTER *(the idea arrives; triumphantly):* Candidate, answer this question: How long did the Thirty Years' War last?

WASSERKOPF: Thirt – *(He interrupts himself.)* I mean to say, I don't know.

THE HISTORY MASTER: Please answer my questions! I am sure you know! Give me the answer! *(Wasserkopf thinks with his eyebrows drawn together. The Physics Master tiptoes to him and whispers loudly, 'Thirty years.' The Geography Master winks at him and holds up ten fingers three times.)* Well, well?

WASSERKOPF: Mr. Principal, this is no way to run an examination. *(He indicates the Physics Master)* That fellow is trying to make me cheat.

THE PRINCIPAL: I shall deal with this decisively. *(To the Physics Master)* Go away! *(The Physics Master slinks back to his place)*

WASSERKOPF (after much thought): How long did the Thirty Years' War last? Was that the question?

THE HISTORY MASTER: Yes, yes!

WASSERKOPF: *(grinning)* I know! Exactly seven meters! *(They are paralyzed. He looks about in triumph.)* Ha, ha! Seven meters! I know it lasted that long. It's possible I'm wrong, and if I am I fail. Seven meters! Ha, ha! Seven meters long! Seven meters! Please give me back my tuition fees. *(The Masters look at each other; at their wits' ends)*

THE HISTORY MASTER: *(decisively)* Seven meters? Right! Your answer is excellent.

WASSERKOPF: *(incredulously)* What. What did you say?

THE HISTORY MASTER: *(swallowing manfully and watching the Principal out of the corner of his eye)* The answer is correct, as a matter of fact. The candidate has shown us that his thought processes are not merely superficial, and that he has investigated the subject in accordance with moderns researches based on – based on – based on –

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: Relativity, of course. The quantum theory. Planck. Einstein. It's all very simple. *(To the THE HISTORY MASTER)* Don't say another word. We understand perfectly. Einstein has taught us that time is as real as space and matter. It consists of atoms, and may be synthesized into a unified whole, and may be measured like anything else. Reduce the mass-system to a unit and a year may be represented by a meter, or seven years by seven meters. We may even assert that the Thirty Years' War lasted seven years only because – because – because –

THE HISTORY MASTER: Because the actual warfare took place only during half of each day – that is to say, twelve hours out of twenty-four – and the thirty years at once become fifteen. But not even fifteen years were given up to incessant fighting, for the combatants had to eat – three hours a day, reducing our fifteen years to twelve. And if we deduct from this the hours given up to noon-day siestas, to peaceful diversions, to non-warlike activities – *(He wipes his brow)*

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: To social distractions, we are left only with time which the candidate has represented by the Einsteinian equivalent of seven meters. Correct! I take it upon myself, gentlemen, to propose a grading of 'Very Good' in

History. Oof!

THE STAFF: Bravo! Excellent! He has passed! *(They congratulate Wasserkopf)*

WASSERKOPF: *(objecting)* But I don't see –

THE PRINCIPAL: That ends the examination in History. *(Writing)* 'History: Very Good.' *(The staff surround THE HISTORY MASTER and congratulate him.)* Now the examination in physics.

WASSERKOPF: Now we'll see something, you tricksters!

THE PHYSICS MASTER *(energetically)*: Come, come!

WASSERKOPF: *(defiantly)* Well, what's going to happen? Ask your questions, or don't. I haven't got any more time to waste. *(He stares at the Physics Master)* Oh, now I remember you. Do you know what we used to call you behind your back? *(The Physics Master smiles in agony)* We called you cannibal, because you were always chewing your thumbs, just as you're doing now! *(The master removes his thumb hastily. The rest of the staff smile.)* That's what we called you! Oh, by the way, do you remember the day you tripped and fell flat in the aisle? Do you know who tied a string across from desk to desk, so you'd do that? I did it!

THE PHYSICS MASTER *(furiously)*: You?

WASSERKOPF: Don't get excited, little man. Ask me a hard question instead. Plough me.

THE PHYSICS MASTER *(controls himself, well aware that Wasserkopf is trying to irritate him. Very sweetly)*: Kind of you – very kind of you. And now, tell me, Herr Wasserkopf, do clocks in church steeples really become smaller as you walk away from them, or do they merely appear to become smaller because of an optical illusion?

WASSERKOPF: What an absolute rot? How should I know? Whenever I walk away from clocks they get larger! Invariably! If I want them to get smaller I turn round and walk straight up to them, and they're not small at all.

THE PHYSICS MASTER: In a word, therefore, in a word –

WASSERKOPF: In a word, therefore, you give me a pain in the neck. You're an ass! That's my answer.

THE PHYSICS MASTER: *(furiously)* Is that your answer? *(He controls himself)* Good! It is correct. *(Turning to the staff)* A difficult answer but a most brilliant one.

I'll explain – that is to say, I'll explain. *(With a sigh, he gets on with it)* When we talk of an ass we always notice – we always notice –

THE STAFF: *(anxiously)* Yes? Yes?

THE PHYSICS MASTER: that his look is sad. Therefore – *(He thinks. Suddenly triumphant)* I've got it!

WASSERKOPF: *(worried)* What have you got, you whiskered baboon?

THE PHYSICS MASTER: I've got it, and the answer is right. Why is the look of the ass so sad? Because we are all the victims of illusion. But what illusions can affect the extremely primitive apperceptive powers of an ass? Obviously, the illusions of the senses, for the ass lacks imagination; and these must be none other than optical illusions, since the ass, like us, observes that objects appear to become smaller as he moves away from them. The candidate has given us a most excellent answer in calling our attention to an animal whose whole expressions is melancholy because its senses are deceptive; or, to put it in another way, because the apparent decrease in size of an object, in this case a clock, is to be ascribed to optical illusion. The answer was correct. I certify, therefore, that the candidate may be given 'Very Good' in Physics.

THE PRINCIPAL: *(writing)* 'Physics: Very Good'

THE STAFF: Bravo! *(They surround the Physics Master, slapping him on the back and shaking his hands, while he sinks into his chair, completely exhausted)*

WASSERKOPF: I protest!

THE PRINCIPAL: *(silencing him with a gesture)* The examination in Geography. *(The Geography Master takes the place facing Wasserkopf)*

WASSERKOPF: Just look at him! The old hypocrite! How are you, anyhow, nitwit?

THE GEOGRAPHY MASTER: I beg your pardon?

WASSERKOPF: My name used to be in our class-book, didn't it? You old reprobate! You just wait! I'll fix you all right!

THE GEOGRAPHY MASTER: Tell me, candidate –

WASSERKOPF: I'll tell you! I'll tell you! Oh, how I used to hate you eighteen years ago!

THE GEOGRAPHY MASTER: *(imperturbably)* Please tell me what city of the same name is the capital of the German province of Brunswick?

WASSERKOPF: What a dumb question! The answer's part of the question.

THE GEOGRAPHY MASTER: *(pleased)* Isn't it? And the answer – what is it?

WASSERKOPF: 'Same' of course. That's the answer. If the name of the city is same, then the name of the city is 'Same.' Right? If it isn't I fail, and you refund my tuition fees.

THE GEOGRAPHY MASTER: The answer is correct. The name of the city is 'Same.' Gentlemen, the candidate shows exceptional knowledge of the history of the city Brunswick. There is a legend that once, as the Emperor Barbarossa was riding in to the city, he met a young peasant girl who was munching a bun, and whose mouth was full. He called out to her, 'God bless you. What's the name of this city?' and the peasant girl answered 'Same to you, sir.' Then she stopped because her mouth was full, and the Emperor laughed and said, 'Ho, ho! So the name of the city is "Same."?' And for many years, thereafter, he never referred to Brunswick, except by that title. *(He turns, winks solemnly at his colleagues.)* The answer is excellent. The candidate is entitled to a grade of 'Excellent' in Geography. *(He returns to his place to be showered with congratulations)*

THE PRINCIPAL: *(writing)* 'Geography: Excellent.' Thus far the candidate has come through with flying colours. Only the examination in mathematics is left. Should he pass that he will have passed the entire examination.

WASSERKOPF: *(nervously)* I'm going to be more careful now. *(The Mathematics Master takes his place facing Wasserkopf. The Other Masters are worried but the Mathematics Master assures them with a gesture that they may depend on him.)* So here you are, old-stick-in-the-mud! Do you know we used to call you 'old-stick-in-the-mud' behind your back? You'd better brush up your wits if you think you're going to put one over me. I'll start off by telling you a few things about mathematics: two times two is five, and I make up my own multiplication tables as I go along. And if you add eight apples and two pears the answer is twenty-seven apricots. That's my system, and you'll see me use it. To hell with mathematics! 'Answer excellent'? 'Answer very good' 'Answer correct'? Not this time. It will be simpler if you say you aren't prepared, and let me fail.

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: *(forcibly)* You must not joke about a serious examination. I'm going to ask you two questions. One of them is easy; the other is hard.

WASSERKOPF *(imitating him):* One of them is easy; the other is hard. The same

old-stick-in-the-mud that you always were! I remember the pictures of you we used to draw on the board –

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: *(interrupting)* If this were an examination in art you would be marked excellent. *(He pauses, and Wasserkopf is suddenly silent.)* But we are dealing with mathematics. The easy question: If we represent the speed of light by x , and the distance of the star Sirius from the sun by y , what is the circumference of a one-hundred-and-nine-sided regular polyhedron whose surface coincides with that of the hip-pocket of a State railway employee whose wife has been deceiving him for two years and eleven months with a regimental sergeant-major of hussars?

THE STAFF: *(much upset)* But look here, Professor! Professor!

THE PRINCIPAL: Professor!

WASSERKOPF: Don't interfere with him! *(To the Mathematics Master)* Will you repeat the question?

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: No. Either you paid attention or you did not. Either you know the answer, or you don't. Tell me the answer, because if you don't know it –

WASSERKOPF: Of course I know it! Naturally I know it! I'll tell you: two thousand six hundred and twenty nine litres. Exact. No fractions. And did I give you the correct answer? *(He chuckles)* I've given you an answer which is too good!

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: No. The answer is wrong. The correct answer is two thousand six hundred and twenty-eight litres, and not twenty nine. *(He turns to The Principal)* I refuse to pass the candidate. Mark him 'Failure.'

WASSERKOPF: *(bounding)* I told you so! I told you so!

THE PRINCIPAL: *(thunderstruck)* Professor! Professor!

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: I'm sorry. It is true that his error amounted to less than a tenth of a percent, in the total, but it was an error. He fails.

WASSERKOPF: My tuition fees! My tuition fees!

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: In my opinion the candidate's request is reasonable. Now that I have satisfied myself he cannot pass our examination it is his right to recover the money which was paid us.

WASSERKOPF: That's so! That's right! Give me the money. *(The staff stare as if the heaven had fallen)*

THE PRINCIPAL: *(furiously, to the Mathematics Master)* Is that what you think?

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: Absolutely. This is a good school. It is our duty to see that nothing ever injures its reputation. How much do we owe you, Herr Wasserkopf?

WASSERKOPF: *(greedily, forgetting everything else)* I'll tell you exactly. I attended this school for six years in all. During the first three years the fee was 150 crowns quarterly. Total for three years 1, 800. During the second three years the fee was 400 crowns semi-annually. Total: 2, 400 and 1, 800 is 4, 200. Examination fees, 250 crowns 95 heller. Certificates, documents, books, stamp taxes, 1, 241 crowns 43 heller. Total: 5, 682 crowns 38 heller. Incidentals, stationery, notebooks, 786 crowns 12 heller. Grand total: 6, 450 crowns 50 heller. Knock off the heller and call it crowns.

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: *(checking with his paper and pencil as Wasserkopf calls out the amount)* Exactly!

WASSERKOPF: Exactly! You can rely on it.

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: It's right. There's no question of it. It's right to the smallest detail. *(He offers Wasserkopf his hand)* I congratulate you! That was my difficult question!

WASSERKOPF: *(not understanding)* What?

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: *(to the Principal)* I certify that the candidate passes in Mathematics. His answer to the easy question was a very little out of the way; but his answer to the difficult question – how much the refund should be – was exactly correct. Herr Wasserkopf is a mathematical genius.

WASSERKOPF: *(striking his forehead)* So you did put one over me!

THE PRINCIPAL: *(rising)* I present the results of the examination. Herr Wasserkopf has passed with distinction in every subject, and has again shown that he is entitled to the certificate we awarded him on his graduation. Herr Wasserkopf, we offer our congratulations – accepting a large share of them for ourselves for having taught you so excellently. And now that we have verified your knowledge and your abilities – *(he makes an eloquent gesture)* get out before I have you thrown out! *(He rings for the servant. The following speeches are nearly spoken simultaneously.)*

THE HISTORY MASTER: So I'm a numskull, am I? Say it again and I'll show you what is what!

THE PHYSICS MASTER: I'm a cannibal? What? And you were the one who tied a string across the aisle –

THE GEOGRAPHY MASTER: Hypocrite? Nitwit? Ass? Me?

THE MATHEMATICS MASTER: Old stick-in-the-mud?

THE SERVANT: *(entering)* Yes, sir?

THE PRINCIPAL: *(indicating Wasserkopf)* Remove that object! *(The servant seizes Wasserkopf by the collar and the seat of his trousers and rushes him off. The Principal turns to the staff and beams.)* Thank you, gentlemen, for your magnificent co-operation. In the future it will be our proudest boast that in this school a pupil simply cannot fail!

CURTAIN

NOTES

Bourbons: members of the French royal family that ruled France, Spain and Naples at various times

Quantum theory: a theory in physics based on Planck's radiation law concerned with the emission and absorption of energy by finite quanta

Planck: Max Planck (1858-1947), a German theoretical physicist whose discovery of energy quanta won him the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1918

Einstein: Albert Einstein (1879-1955), a German-born theoretical physicist who developed the Theory of Relativity. He was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1921.

Brunswick: the historical English name for the German city of Braunschweig

Barbarossa: Friedrich Barbarossa (1122-1190), also known as Frederick I, was the Holy Roman Emperor as well as the King of Germany during the 12th century. The word Barbarossa literally means 'Red beard' in Italian. Barbarossa reigned as Holy Roman Emperor from 1155 to 1190.

Glossary

apperceptive (adj.): having or showing conscious perception with full awareness

ascribe (v.): to attribute a cause or characteristic to something

by hook or crook (idm.): by any method possible

cannibal (n.): a person who eats the flesh of other human being

concur (v.): be of the same opinion; agree

disquieted (adj.): anxious or worried

eloquent (adj.): well spoken; expressive; effective

heller (n.): a Hungarian coin of small value

herr: German term of address for a man

hussar (n.): (in the 15th century) a Hungarian light horseman

hypocrite (n.): a person who pretends to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs

incessant (adj.): continuing without pause or interruption

melancholy (adj.): having a feeling of sadness without obvious cause

nitwit (n.): a silly or foolish person

numskull (n.): a very stupid or silly person

old-stick-in-the-mud (idm.): a person who avoids new, fun, or exciting activities or ideas

rot (n): a process of becoming worse; a decline in standards

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

- a. Why does Wasserkopf demand a refund of his tuition fees from the school?
- b. Why does Wasserkopf consider himself good for nothing?
- c. What did the teachers decide to do when Wasserkopf asked for a refund?
- d. Why did Wasserkopf give ridiculous answers? Why did the teachers accept these answers?
- e. How does the Mathematics Master describe Wasserkopf's character?
- f. How did the teachers outwit Wasserkopf?
- g. What is the final judgment on Wasserkopf's demand of refund?

Reference to the context

- a. Read the extract from the play given below and answer the questions that follow:
"It's possible I've changed. What the hell...! Your class records will show I've got a right to come here."
 - i. Who is the speaker? Who is he speaking to?
 - ii. Why is the speaker say these words?
 - iii. Where is the speaker at this moment?
- b. Read the extract dialogue given below and answer the questions that follow:

“THE STAFF: (bowing, heartily) How do you do?

WASSERKOPF: Who the hell are you? Sit down, you loafers! (He grins, waiting to be thrown out)

THE PRINCIPAL: How dare you –”

- i. What is to be the response to ‘How do you do?’
 - ii. Is Wasserkopf’s response polite enough to the staff?
 - iii. How does Wasserkopf rebuke the staff?
 - iv. What does the principal mean by ‘How dare you -’?
- c. Explain the following line of the play:
“Because I didn’t get my money’s worth, that’s why!”
- d. What is the theme of the play?
- e. Sketch the character of Wasserkopf.

Reference beyond the text

- a. The play is a satire on the present day education system. Do you think that our education system does not prepare students for life? Discuss.
- b. Our education system focuses on memorisation rather than creative thinking. Do you think the knowledge imparted by education may not have practical relevance in one’s day-to-day life? Who do you blame for this?
- c. Most of the students want to learn just for examination rather than knowledge. Do you think that certificate will help them in their future career?