PANORAMA

Class XII

Class
XII

PANORAMA

COMPULSORY ENGLISH
BOOK II

BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
RAJASTHAN, AJMER

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PANORAMA

CLASS XII

COMPULSORY ENGLISH BOOK II

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PANORAMA

CLASS XII

COMPULSORY ENGLISH BOOK II

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As per the directive of State Government, new syllabus has been prepared by Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan on the basis of major social, historical and cultural events at National and State Level, for the students with a view to provide them a platform for an overall personality development and establishing a meaningful relationship between their roots and academics.

Under the programme, in the first phase, text books have been prepared for the session 2016-17 for the students of IX and XI, session 2017-18 for the students of X and XII standard, who are pursuing education in the schools affiliated to the Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan

Along with an insight into the social, cultural and historical benchmarks, factual information, project-based task and activity-based exercises have also been effectively dealt with in the prescribed books. The books will promote creativity, original thinking, contemplation and expression among the students. The modern techniques and teaching aids will make the learning more effective, interesting and result oriented.

I, therefore, on my behalf and on behalf of the Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan extend my deep gratitude to the writers and Rajasthan State Text book Board for their kind co-opreation in our endeavour to undertake the important work of text book writing and hope to get the same co-operation in future also.

Prof. B.L. Choudhary
Chairman
Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan, Ajmer

PREFACE

This book is designed for the students of Class XII studying English, Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan, as per the specifications given in the syllabus at this level. The main objective of this book is to make reading an enjoyable experience, and enable students to understand the social milieu around them by appreciating some of the most exquisite literary writings.

Literature replenishes lives, broadens mental horizon and enhances awareness of human values. The short stories in this collection are like rare gems and encompass varied shades of life and cultures. The collection is a thoughtful blend of the classic and the contemporary, highlighting human relationships, social, political and environmental issues that are integral to the understanding of human life. It is hoped that the students will find these stories interesting and will enhance their linguistic skills through reading and writing.

Each story is preceded by a brief introduction of the author and is followed by a gist of the story as well as an exhaustive glossary. Different types of comprehension questions will help the students understand the text in a better way. The questions based on imagination will bring out the creative spark in the students.

I hope the textbook shall meets its purpose. Suggestions for improvement are welcome.

Convener

SYLLABUS

PANORAMA

CLASS XII

COMPULSORY ENGLISH BOOK II

The Examination Scheme for the subject is as follows -

Paper	Time (Hrs.)	Marks for the Paper	Sessional	Total Marks
One	3.15	80	20	100

Area of Learning	Marks
Reading	15
Writing	25
Text book : **RAINBOW**	25
Supp. Book : **PANORAMA**	15

SECTION A

1. Reading - passages for comprehension and note making **15**

Two unseen passages (about 700-900 words in all)

The passages will include two of the following -

(a) **Factual passage** e.g. instruction, description, report.

(b) **Discursive passage** involing opinion e.g. argumentative, persuasive or interpretative text.

(c) **Literary passage** e.g. extract from fiction, drama, poetry, essay or biography.

The details are as given below -

Unseen passages	**Testing Areas words**	**No. of**	**Marks**	**Total**
Comprehension	1. Short answer type questions to test local, global and inferential comprehension 2. Vocabulary-such as word formation and inferring meaning.	400-500	6 3	9
Note-making	1. Note-making in an appropriate format 2. Abstraction	300-400	**4** 2	6

SECTION B

Writing **25**

3. One out of two short compositions- (about 50 words) 4
(It includes- writing advertisement and notices, drafting posters on social, current or national issues, description of arguments for or against topic accepting and decling invitations.)

4. A report on an event or a factual description - (about 100 words) 7
(one out of two based on some verbal input)

5. Letter - 7
(one out of two based on some verbal input)

The letters will include the following -

(a) business or official letters (for making enquiries, registering complaints, asking for and giving information, placing orders and sending replies):

(b) letters to the editor on various social, national and international issues

(c) application for a job including CV (Curriculum Vitae)/Resume.

6. One out of two compositions - (about 100 words) 7
(based on visual and or verbal input, the compositions may be descriptive or argumentative in nature such as an article, or a speech.)

SECTION C

Text Books **40**

Rainbow **25**

7. One out of two extracts-
(based on poetry from the text to test comprehension and appreciation) 4

8. Three out of four short questions from the poetry section to test local and global comprehension of text. 6

9. Four short answer questions based on the lessons from prescribed text. 8

10. One out of two long answer type questions based on the text to test global comprehension (about 125 words each) 7

Panorama **15**

11. One out of two long answer type question based on Supplementary Reader to test comprehension and extrapolation of theme, character and incidents (about 125 words) 7

12. Four short answer questions from the Supplementary Reader 8

Prescribed Books -

1. Rainbow - Published by Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan, Ajmer

2. Panorama- Published by Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan, Ajmer

1. RAINBOW (Text Book)-

1. On Reading in Relation to Literature - Lafcadio Hearn
2. Third Thoughts - E.V. Lucas
3. A Walk Through the Fire - A.D. Smith
4. A Room 10 x 8 - K.S. Duggal
5. Indians Gifts to the World
   (i) How Yoga Heals - Timothy Burgin
   (ii) Purity is Power - Dr. K. Subrahmanyam
6. Deep Water - William Douglas
7. Water - C.V Raman
8. Indigo - Louis Fischer
9. Lost Spring - Anees Jung
10. Journey to the End of the Earth - Tishani Joshi
11. On the Face of It - Susan Hill

Poems

1. The Seven Ages of Man - William Shakespeare
2. A boy's Song - Wilfrid Wilson Gibson
3. The Noble nature - Ben Jonson
4. The Snare - James Stephens
5. The Hope - Rajan Agrawal

2. PANORAMA (Text Book)-

1. Trouble in Bohemia - Arthur Canon Doyle
2. Dead Men's Path - Chinua Achebe
3. Drought - Sharat Chandra Chatterjee
4. The Gift of the Magic - O' Henry
5. The Guitar Player & Swayanwara - Suniti Nam Joshi
6. Love Across the Salt Desert - Keki N. Daruwalla
7. The Portrait of a Lady - Khushwant Singh
8. The Last Lesson - Alphonse Dandet
9. Going Places - A.R. Barton
10. The Rattrap - Selma Lagerlof
11. The Tiger King - Kalki

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1. The Tiger King

Kalki

About the writer

Ramaswami Iyer Krishnamurthy, better known by his pen name Kalki, was a Tamil writer, journalist, poet, critic and an Indian independence activist. He derived his pen name Kalki from the suffixes of his wife's name Kalyani and his name Krishnamurthy. His writings include a large number of short stories, five novels, editorial and political writings, film and music reviews.

* * * * *

I

The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram is the hero of this story. He may be identified as His Highness Jamedar-General, Khiledar-Major, Sata Vyaghra Samhari, Maharajadhiraja Visva Bhuvana Samrat, Sir Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur, M.A.D., A.C.T.C., or C.R.C.K. But this name is often shortened to the Tiger King. I have come forward to tell you why he came to be known as Tiger King. I have no intention of pretending to advance only to end in a strategic withdrawal. Even the threat of a Stuka bomber will not throw me off track. The Stuka, if it likes, can beat a hasty retreat from my story.

Right at the start, it is imperative to disclose a matter of vital importance about the Tiger King. Everyone who reads of him will experience the natural desire to meet a man of his indomitable courage face-to-face. But there is no chance of its fulfillment. As Bharata said to Rama about Dasaratha, the Tiger King has reached that final abode of all living creatures. In other words, the Tiger King is dead.

The manner of his death is a matter of extraordinary interest. It can be revealed only at the end of the tale. The most fantastic aspect of his demise was that as soon as he was born, astrologers had foretold that one day the Tiger King would actually have to die.

"The child will grow up to become the warrior of warriors, hero of heroes, champion of champions. But..." they bit their lips and swallowed hard. When compelled to continue, the astrologers came out with it. "This is a secret which should not be revealed at all. And yet we are forced to speak out. The child born under this star will one day have to meet its death."

At that very moment a great miracle took place. An astonishing phrase emerged from the lips of the ten-day – old Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur, "O wise prophets!" Everyone stood transfixed in stupefaction. They looked wildly at each other and blinked. "O wise prophets! It was I who spoke." This time there were no grounds for doubt. It was the infant born just ten days ago who had enunciated the words so clearly. The chief astrologer took off his spectacles and gazed intently at the baby. "All those who are born will one day have to die. We don't need your predictions to know that. There would be some sense in it if you could tell us the manner of that death," the royal infant uttered these words in his little squeaky voice.

The chief astrologer placed his finger on his nose in wonder. A baby barely ten days old opens its lips in speech! Not only that, it also raises intelligent questions! Incredible! Rather like the bulletins issued by the war office, than facts. The chief astrologer took his finger off his nose and fixed his eyes upon the little prince.

"The prince was born in the hour of the Bull. The Bull and the Tiger are enemies, therefore, death comes from the Tiger," he explained. You may think that crown prince Jung Jung Bahadur was thrown into a quake when he heard the word 'Tiger'. That was exactly what did not happen. As soon as he heard it pronounced, the crown prince gave a deep growl. Terrifying words emerged from his lips. "Let tigers beware!" This account is only a rumour rife in Pratibandapuram. But with hindsight we may conclude it was based on some truth.

II

Crown prince Jung Jung Bahadur grew taller and stronger day by day. No other miracle marked his childhood days apart from the event already described. The boy drank the milk of an English cow, was brought up by an English nanny, tutored in English by an Englishman, saw nothing but English films — exactly as the crown princes of all the other Indian states did. When he came of age at twenty, the State, which had been with the Court of Wards until then, came into his hands.

But everyone in the kingdom remembered the astrologer's prediction. Many continued to discuss the matter. Slowly it came to the Maharaja's ears.

There were innumerable forests in the Pratibandapuram State. They had tigers in them. The Maharaja knew the old saying, 'You may kill even a cow in self-defense'. There could certainly be no objection to killing tigers in self-defense.The Maharaja started out on a tiger hunt.

The Maharaja was thrilled beyond measure when he killed his first tiger. He sent for the State astrologer and showed him the dead beast.

"What do you say now?" he demanded.

"Your majesty may kill ninety-nine tigers in exactly the same manner.

But..." the astrologer drawled. "But what? Speak without fear."

"But you must be very careful with the hundredth tiger."

"What if the hundredth tiger were also killed?"

"Then I will tear up all my books on astrology, set fire to them, and…"

"And…"

"I shall cut off my tuft, crop my hair short and become an insurance agent," the astrologer finished on an incoherent note.

III

From that day onwards it was celebration time for all the tigers inhabiting Pratibandapuram. The State banned tiger hunting by anyone except the Maharaja. A proclamation was issued to the effect that if anyone dared to fling so much as a stone at a tiger, all his wealth and property would be confiscated.

The Maharaja vowed he would attend to all other matters only after killing the hundred tigers. Initially the king seemed well set to realize his ambition.Not that he faced any dangers. There were times when the bullet missed its mark, the tiger leapt upon him and he fought the beast with his bare hands. Each time it was the Maharaja who won.

At another time he was in danger of losing his throne. A high-ranking British officer visited Pratibandapuram. He was very fond of hunting tigers. And fonder of being photographed with the tigers he had shot. As usual, he wished to hunt tigers in Pratibandapuram. But the Maharaja was firm in his resolve. He refused permission. "I can organize any other hunt. You may go on a boar hunt. You may conduct a mouse hunt. We are ready for a mosquito hunt. But tiger hunt! That's impossible!"

The British officer's secretary sent word to the Maharaja through the dewan that the *durai* himself did not have to kill the tiger. The Maharaja could do the actual killing. What was important to the *durai* was a photograph of himself holding the gun and standing over the tiger's carcass. But the Maharaja would not agree even to this proposal. If he relented now, what would he do if other British officers turned up for tiger hunts? Because he prevented a British officer from fulfilling his desire, the Maharaja stood in danger of losing his kingdom itself.

The Maharaja and the dewan held deliberations over this issue. As a result, a telegram was dispatched forthwith to a famous British company of jewellers in Calcutta.

'Send samples of expensive diamond rings of different designs.' Some fifty rings arrived. The Maharaja sent the whole lot to the British officer's good lady. The king and the minister expected the *duraisani* to choose one or two rings and send the rest back. Within no time at all the *duraisani* sent her reply: 'Thank you very much for your gifts.'

In two days a bill for three lakh of rupees came from the British jewellers. The Maharaja was happy that though he had lost three lakh of rupees, he had managed to retain his kingdom.

IV

The Maharaja's tiger hunts continued to be highly successful. Within ten years he was able to kill seventy tigers. And then, an unforeseen hurdle brought his mission to a standstill. The tiger population became extinct in the forests of Pratibandapuram. Who knows whether the tigers practiced birth control or committed harakiri? Or simply ran away from the State because they desired to be shot by British hands alone?

One day the Maharaja sent for the dewan. "Dewan saheb, aren't you aware of the fact that thirty tigers still remain to be shot down by this gun of mine?" he asked brandishing his gun. Shuddering at the sight of the gun, the dewan cried out, "Your Majesty! I am not a tiger!" "Which idiot would call you a tiger?" "No, and I'm not a gun!" "You are neither tiger nor gun. Dewan saheb, I summoned you here for a different purpose. I have decided to get married." The dewan began to babble even more. "Your Majesty, I have two wives already. If I marry you ..." "Don't talk nonsense! Why should I marry you? What I want is a tiger..." "Your Majesty! Please think it over. Your ancestors were married to the sword. If you like, marry the gun. A Tiger King is more than enough for this state. It doesn't need a Tiger Queen as well!"

The Maharaja gave a loud crack of laughter. "I'm not thinking of marrying either a tiger or a gun, but a girl from the ranks of human beings. First you may draw up statistics of tiger populations in the different native states. Next you may investigate if there is a girl I can marry in the royal family of a state with a large tiger population."

The dewan followed his orders. He found the right girl from a state which possessed a large number of tigers. Maharaja Jung Jung Bahadur killed five or six tigers each time he visited his father-in-law. In this manner, ninety-nine tiger skins adorned the walls of the reception hall in the Pratibandapuram palace.

V

The Maharaja's anxiety reached a fever pitch when there remained just one tiger to achieve his tally of a hundred. He had this one thought during the day and the same

dream at night. By this time the tiger farms had run dry even in his father-in-law's kingdom. It became impossible to locate tigers anywhere. Yet only one more was needed. If he could kill just that one single beast, the Maharaja would have no fears left. He could give up tiger hunting altogether. But he had to be extremely careful with that last tiger. What had the late chief astrologer said? "Even after killing ninety-nine tigers the Maharaja should be beware of the hundredth..." True enough. The tiger was a savage beast after all. One had to be wary of it. But where was that hundredth tiger to be found? It seemed easier to find tiger's milk than a live tiger. Thus the Maharaja was sunk in gloom. But soon came the happy news which dispelled that gloom. In his own state sheep began to disappear frequently from a hillside village. It was first ascertained that this was not the work of Khader Mian Saheb or Virasami Naicker, both famed for their ability to swallow sheep whole. Surely, a tiger was at work. The villagers ran to inform the Maharaja. The Maharaja announced a three-year exemption from all taxes for that village and set out on the hunt at once.

The tiger was not easily found. It seemed as if it had wantonly hid itself in order to flout the Maharaja's will. The Maharaja was equally determined. He refused to leave the forest until the tiger was found. As the days passed, the Maharaja's fury and obstinacy mounted alarmingly. Many officers lost their jobs.

One day when his rage was at its height, the Maharaja called the dewan and ordered him to double the land tax forthwith. "The people will become discontented. Then our state too will fall a prey to the Indian National Congress." "In that case you may resign from your post," said the king. The dewan went home convinced that if the Maharaja did not find the tiger soon, the results could be catastrophic. He felt life returning to him only when he saw the tiger which had been brought from the People's Park in Madras and kept hidden in his house.At midnight when the town slept in peace, the dewan and his aged wife dragged the tiger to the car and shoved it into the seat. The dewan himself drove the car straight to the forest where the Maharaja was hunting. When they reached the forest the tiger launched its Satyagraha and refused to get out of the car. The dewan was thoroughly exhausted in his efforts to haul the beast out of the car and push it down to the ground.

On the following day, the same old tiger wandered into the Maharaja's presence and stood as if in humble supplication, "Master, what do you command of me?" It was with boundless joy that the Maharaja took careful aim at the beast. The tiger fell in a crumpled heap. "I have killed the hundredth tiger. My vow has been fulfilled," the Maharaja was overcome with elation. Ordering the tiger to be brought to the capital in grand procession, the Maharaja hastened away in his car.

After the Maharaja left, the hunters went to take a closer look at the tiger. The tiger looked back at them rolling its eyes in bafflement. The men realized that the tiger was

not dead; the bullet had missed it. It had fainted from the shock of the bullet whizzing past. The hunters wondered what they should do. They decided that the Maharaja must not come to know that he had missed his target. If he did, they could lose their jobs. One of the hunters took aim from a distance of one foot and shot the tiger. This time he killed it without missing his mark.Then, as commanded by the king, the dead tiger was taken in procession through the town and buried. A tomb was erected over it.

A few days later the Maharaja's son's third birthday was celebrated. Until then the Maharaja had given his entire mind over to tiger hunting. He had had no time to spare for the crown prince. But now the king turned his attention to the child. He wished to give him some special gift on his birthday. He went to the shopping centre in Pratibandapuram and searched every shop, but couldn't find anything suitable. Finally he spotted a wooden tiger in a toyshop and decided it was the perfect gift.The wooden tiger cost only two annas and a quarter. But the shopkeeper knew that if he quoted such a lowprice to the Maharaja, he would be punished under the rules of the Emergency. So, he said, "Your Majesty, this is an extremely rare example of craftsmanship. A bargain at three hundred rupees!" "Very good. Let this be your offering to the crown prince on his birthday," said the king and took it away with him. On that day father and son played with that tiny little wooden tiger. It had been carved by an unskilled carpenter. Its surface was rough; tiny slivers of wood stood up like quills all over it. One of those slivers pierced the Maharaja's right hand. He pulled it out with his left hand and continued to play with the prince.

The next day, infection flared in the Maharaja's right hand. In four days, it developed into a suppurating sore which spread all over the arm. Three famous surgeons were brought in from Madras. After holding a consultation they decided to operate. The operation took place. The three surgeons who performed it came out of the theatre and announced, "The operation was successful. The Maharaja is dead." In this manner the hundredth tiger took its final revenge upon the Tiger King.

About the story :

'The Tiger King' is a story of a brave and obstinate man. It was predicted at the time of his birth that a tiger would cause his death. So he decided to kill all the tigers. He killed many tigers with great cruelty. His whim took life of so many innocent animals but what is to be must happen at any cost and so it happened. After killing so many tigers, a small wooden tiger caused his death. Thus came the painful end of a heartless king who had no sympathy for wildlife.

GLOSSARY

attitude (n)	:	a way of seeing things
pretending (v)	:	making a false show
strategic (adj)	:	well planned
throw off (v)	:	to remove from position
hasty (adj)	:	hurried
abode (n)	:	a place to live
extraordinary (adj)	:	unusual
revealed (v)	:	disclosed
demise (n)	:	death
foretold (v)	:	predicted
emerged (v)	:	came out
enunciated (v)	:	said clearly
squeaky (adj)	:	high noise
barely (adv)	:	hardly
bulletins (n)	:	news
thrilled (adj)	:	excited
sent for (v)	:	called
beast (n)	:	wild animal

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS :

A. Choose the correct alternative:

1. The Maharaja was determined to kill the.....
   (a) hundredth lion (b) hundredth tiger
   (c) hundredth elephant (d) hundredth leopard

2. The royal astrologer's prediction was that the Tiger King would be killed by a.....
   (a) lion (b) leopard
   (c) tiger (d) snake

3. The Dewan had brought the hundredth tiger from the .....
   (a) Gir forest (b) Ranthambore Wild Sanctuary
   (c) People's Park in Madras (d) National Park Mumbai

4. The reason of the death of the Maharaja was .....
   (a) sliver of a golden toy tiger (b) sliver of a wooden toy tiger
   (c) sliver of a silver toy tiger (d) nails of a real tiger

5. The hundredth tiger was actually killed by the .....
   (a) Maharaja (b) hunter
   (c) Dewan (d) villagers

B. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

1. Who was the Tiger King? Why did he get that name?
2. What miracle happened when the Tiger King was just an infant?
3. How was prince Jung Bahadur brought up?
4. "You may kill even a cow in self-defense". What did this old saying mean to the Tiger King?
5. How did the Tiger King feel when he killed his first tiger? Why did he send for the royal astrologer?
5. Why was tiger hunting banned in Pratibandapuram?
7. What steps did the king take to complete his mission?
8. Why did the Tiger King decide to marry a girl of the royal family of a state with a large tiger population?

C. Answer the following questions in 115-125 words each:

1. How did the prediction of the astrologer about the king of Pratibandapuram come true?
2. How did the Tiger King come in the danger of losing his throne and how did he save his kingdom?
3. How was the hundredth tiger found and killed?
4. What was the rumour rife in Pratibadapuram?

D. State True or False:

1. The Tiger King is the king of Pratibandapuram. (True/False)

2. Royal astrologers predicted his death to be caused by a snake. (True/False)
3. The king hunted ninety nine tigers. (True/False)
4. The Tiger King's story is a satire on the conceit of those in power. (True/False)
5. The Maharaja had killed all the tigers found within his state. (True/False)
6. The Maharaja ordered his Dewan to find the nineteenth tiger at any rate. (True/False)

E. Creative Writing :

Imagine the world devoid of tigers. How would it adversely affect the ecological balance?

2. The Portrait of a Lady

Khushwant Singh

About the writer :

Khushwant Singh is one of the most celebrated authors of India. Apart from being a writer, he has been a lawyer, a public relations officer, and the editor of *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. Two of his most famous novels are *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1961).

* * * * *

My grandmother, like everybody's grandmother, was an old woman. She had been old and wrinkled for the twenty years that I had known her. People said that she had once been young and pretty and had even had a husband, but that was hard to believe. My grandfather's portrait hung above the mantelpiece in the drawing-room. He wore a big turban and loose-fitting clothes. His long, white beard covered the best part of his chest and he looked at least a hundred years old. He did not look the sort of person who would have a wife or children. He looked as if he could only have lots and lots of grandchildren. As for my grandmother being young and pretty, the thought was almost revolting. She often told us of the games she used to play as a child. That seemed quite absurd and undignified on her part and we treated it like the fables of the Prophets she used to tell us.

She had always been short and fat and slightly bent. Her face was a criss- cross of wrinkles running from everywhere to everywhere. No, we were certain she had always been as we had known her. Old, so terribly old that she could not have grown older, and had stayed at the same age for twenty years. She could never have been pretty; but she was always beautiful. She hobbled about the house in spotless white with one hand resting on her waist to balance her stoop and the other telling the beads of her rosary. Her silver locks were scattered untidily over her pale, puckered face, and her lips constantly moved in inaudible prayer. Yes, she was beautiful. She was like the winter landscape in the mountains, an expanse of pure white serenity- breathing peace and contentment.

My grandmother and I were good friends. My parents left me with her when they went to live in the city and we were constantly together. She used to wake me up in the morning and get me ready for school. She said her morning prayer in a monotonous sing-

song while she bathed and dressed me in the hope that I would listen and get to know it by heart; I listened because I loved her voice but never bothered to learn it. Then she would fetch my wooden slate which she had already washed and plastered with yellow chalk, a tiny earthen ink-pot and a red pen, tie them all in a bundle and hand it to me. After a breakfast of thick, stale chapatti with a little butter and sugar spread on it, we went to school. She carried several stale chapattis with her for the village dogs.

My grandmother always went to school with me because the school was attached to the temple. The priest taught us the alphabet and the morning prayer. While the children sat in rows on either side of the verandah singing the alphabet or the prayer in a chorus, my grandmother sat inside reading the scriptures. When we had both finished, we would walk back together. This time the village dogs would meet us at the temple door. They followed us to our home growling and fighting with each other for the chapattis we threw to them.

When my parents were comfortably settled in the city, they sent for us. That was a turning-point in our friendship. Although we shared the same room, my grandmother no longer came to school with me. I used to go to an English school in a motor bus. There were no dogs in the streets and she took to feeding sparrows in the courtyard of our city house.

As the years rolled by we saw less of each other. For some time she continued to wake me up and get me ready for school. When I came back she would ask me what the teacher had taught me. I would tell her English words and little things of western science and learning, the law of gravity, Archimedes' principle, the world being round, etc. This made her unhappy. She could not help me with my lessons. She did not believe in the things they taught at the English school and was distressed that there was no teaching about God and the scriptures. One day I announced that we were being given music lessons. She was very disturbed. To her music had lewd association. It was the monopoly of harlots and beggars and not meant for gentlefolk. She said nothing but her silence meant disapproval. She rarely talked to me after that.

When I went to University, I was given a room of my own. The common link of friendship was snapped. My grandmother accepted her seclusion with resignation. She rarely left her spinning- wheel to talk to anyone. From sunrise to sunset she sat by her wheel spinning and reciting prayers. Only in the afternoon she relaxed for a while to feed the sparrows. While she sat in the verandah breaking the bread into little bits, hundreds of little birds collected round her creating a veritable bedlam of chirpings. Some came and perched on her legs, others on her shoulders. Some even sat on her head. She smiled but never shoo'd them away. It used to be the happiest half-hour of the day for her.

When I decided to go abroad for further studies, I was sure my grandmother would be upset. I would be away for five years, and at her age one could never tell. But my grandmother could. She was not even sentimental. She came to leave me at the railway station but did not talk or show any emotion. Her lips moved in prayer, her mind was lost in prayer. Her fingers were busy telling the beads of her rosary. Silently she kissed my forehead, and when I left I cherished the moist imprint as perhaps the last sign of physical contact between us.

But that was not so. After five years I came back home and was met by her at the station. She did not look a day older. She still had no time for words, and while she clasped me in her arms I could hear her reciting prayers. Even on the first day of my arrival, her happiest moments were with her sparrows whom she fed longer and with frivolous rebukes.

In the evening a change came over her. She did not pray. She collected the women of the neighbourhood, got an old drum and started to sing. For several hours she thumped the sagging skins of the dilapidated drum and sang of the home- coming of warriors. We had to persuade her to stop to avoid overstraining. That was the first time since I had known her that she did not pray.

The next morning she was taken ill. It was a mild fever and the doctor told us that it would go. But my grandmother thought differently. She told us that her end was near. She said that, since only a few hours before the close of the first chapter of her life she had omitted to pray, she was not going to waste any more time talking to us.

We protested. But she ignored our protests. She lay peacefully in bed praying and telling her beads. Even before we could suspect her lips stopped moving and the rosary fell from her lifeless fingers. A peaceful pallor spread on her face and we knew that she was dead.

We lifted her off the bed and, as is customary, laid her on the ground and covered her with a red shroud. After a few hours of mourning we left her alone to make arrangements for her funeral. In the evening we went to her room with a crude stretcher to take her to be cremated. The sun was setting and had lit her room and verandah with a blaze of golden light. We stopped half-way in the courtyard. All over the verandah and in her room right up to where she lay dead and stiff wrapped in the red shroud, thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor. There was no chirping. We felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them. She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to, and threw it to them. The sparrows took no notice of the bread. When we carried my grandmother's corpse off, they flew away quietly. Next morning the sweeper swept the bread crumbs into the dustbin.

About the story :

In the story 'The Portrait of a Lady', Khushwant Singh presents a portrait of his grandmother. She is seen as a very religious and down-to-earth lady who believes in values. The author traces his relationship with her in the story.

GLOSSARY

mantelpiece (n)	:	shelf projecting from the wall above a fireplace
absurd (adj)	:	inappropriate
criss-cross (n)	:	crossed lines forming a kind of pattern
hobble (v)	:	walk as when lame
rosary (n)	:	a string of beads used for prayer
puckered (adj)	:	contracted into wrinkles
expanse (n)	:	wide and open area
monotonous (adj)	:	unchanging
lewd (adj)	:	indecent, lustful
harlots (n)	:	prostitutes
seclusion (n)	:	keeping away from company
veritable (adj)	:	real
bedlam (n)	:	noisy confusion
pallor (n)	:	paleness
shroud (n)	:	a piece of cloth wrapped around a dead body

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS :

A. Choose the correct alternative:

1. The grandmother fed the dogs with.....
   (a) rice (b) stale chapattis
   (c) sugar (d) bread
2. The grandmother worked on a..... .
   (a) sewing machine (b) spinning wheel
   (c) gas stove (d) sitar
3. Where did the author go for higher studies?
   (a) Lucknow (b) Delhi
   (c) Abroad (d) Calcutta

4. The author found the thought of his grandmother once having been young and pretty almost

(a) absurd (c) revolting

(c) undignified (d) fantastic

B. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

1. "That was the turning point in our friendship". What was the turning point?
2. How did the grandmother help her grandson in the morning before going to school?
3. What were the grandmother's views about learning music?
4. Describe the grandmother's association with the sparrows.
5. What did the grandmother do on the eve of the author's return from abroad?

C. Answer the following questions in 115-125 words each:

1. Write a character-sketch of the author's grandmother.
2. 'Everybody including the sparrows mourned the grandmother's death'. Discuss.
3. Trace the various phases of the author's relationship with his grandmother.
4. What was the common link of friendship between the author and his grandmother? How did the grandmother behave when their friendship was snapped?
5. "She was like the winter landscape in the mountains, an expanse of pure white serenity-breathing peace and contentment." How far do you agree with the author's description of his grandmother as stated above.

D. Creative Writing :

Recreate your relationship with your grandparents.

3. (i) The Guitar Player
(ii) Svayamvara

Suniti Namjoshi

About the writer :

Suniti Namjoshi was born in India but left for Canada where she lived for a number of years. Currently, she lives in the U.K. She has published numerous poems, fables, articles and reviews. Her books include *The Conversations of Cow* (1985), *Aditi and One Eyed Monkey* (1986), *The Blue Donkey Fables* (1988), *Because of India: Selected Poems* (1989) and *The Mother of Maya Diip* (1989).

The Guitar Player :

A girl played on her guitar and it so happened that someone passing by listened and fell in love with her. 'Is it my music you love', inquired the girl, 'or me?' The music continued, water from a fountain rose into the air and fell away. The listener thought hard and finally said, 'I don't know'. What is the right answer?' 'Shan't tell you', replied the girl, 'but that's not it,' and she went on playing. Soon another passer-by happened to see her and also fell in love. 'Is it me you love', inquired the girl, 'or my guitar?' The second passer-by stared at the guitar, smiled at the girl and at last ventured to say, 'Well, I don't know. It's a beautiful instrument. What is the right answer?' But she just said that wasn't it, and went on playing.

The two passers-by were greatly perplexed. All night long the guitar music ran through their heads, and when they returned the next day it was perfectly obvious that they had both prepared their speeches. 'I would love you', declared the first, 'even if you could not play a note of music.' 'And I would love you', swore the second, 'even if you did not own a guitar.'

'You don't understand', replied the girl. 'I am a musician. Which me do you love, if you do not care about my music at all?'

'Oh', they said. 'Did we give you the wrong answer?'

'Yes', replied the girl.

'Well, what is the right answer?'

'You must love me altogether, just as I am, all my gifts, all my possessions, everything I've been and ever shall be from now on.'

'But that's impossible!' they cried out together.

'Yes', agreed the girl and chose a sad little tune to suit the occasion.

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Svayamvara

Once upon a time there was a little princess who was good at whistling. 'Don't whistle', said her mother. 'Don't whistle', said her father, but the child was good at it and went on whistling. Years went by and she became a woman. By this time she whistled beautifully. Her parents grieved. 'What man will marry a whistling woman?' said her mother dolefully. 'Well', said her father, 'we will have to make the best of it. I will offer half my kingdom and the princess in marriage to any man who can beat her at whistling.' The king's offer was duly proclaimed, and soon the palace was jammed with suitors whistling. It was very noisy. Most were terrible and a few were good, but the princess was better and beat them easily. The king was displeased, but the princess said, 'Never mind, father. Now let me set a test and perhaps some good will come of it.' Then she turned to the suitors, 'Do you acknowledge that you were beaten fairly?' 'No', they all roared, all except one, 'we think it was magic or some sort of trick.' But one said, 'Yes.' 'Yes', he said, 'I was beaten fairly.' The princess smiled and turning to her father she pointed to this man. 'If he will have me', she said, 'I will marry him.'

About the stories :

'The Guitar Player' and 'Svayamvara' are taken from her book *Feminist Fables* (1981). In these stories she focuses on the condition of women in a patriarchal society. She raises her voice against gender inequality and stresses the fact that women should have their own identity. These stories are very thought- provoking and highly relevant to the contemporary Indian society. The story 'The Guitar Player' depicts a girl who wants her talents, skills and the art that she possesses, to be greatly valued, recognized and given importance. The story 'Svayamvara' is about women's freedom and focuses on the fact that certain set roles are assigned to women in the Indian society and if she wants a little more freedom, the parents and members of the society are unhappy. Men think themselves to be superior to women and do not like to accept their defeat. However, a woman likes to choose a companion who believes in gender equality, values her talents, and accepts his own shortcomings.

GLOSSARY

The Guitar Player

fountain (n)	:	a spring of water, especially a jet of water made to spout artificially as an ornament
stared (v)	:	looked or gazed fixedly with the eyes wide open
ventured (v)	:	dared
perplexed (adj)	:	puzzled, bewildered, confused
obvious (adj)	:	easy to see or understand, clear
possessions (n)	:	belongings

Svayamvara

Svayamvara (n)	:	the choosing of a husband by the bride herself
grieved (v)	:	felt sad, experienced deep sorrow
dolefully (adv)	:	sadly, mournfully
proclaimed (v)	:	announced officially or publicly, declared
jammed (v)	:	crowded or blocked (an area) with people or things
acknowledge (v)	:	admit that something is true
beaten (v)	:	defeated
roared (v)	:	made a long, deep, loud sound

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS :

A. Choose the correct alternative (from both the stories):

1. How many passers-by responded to the girl's question the next day?
   (a) 2 (c) 5
   (b) 3 (d) 10
2. At the end of the story which tune did the girl choose to suit the occasion?
   (a) happy (b) melodious
   (c) sad (d) sharp
3. The little princess was good at
   (a) eating (b) whistling
   (c) rebuking (d) dancing

4. What was the King's offer?
   (a) Half of the kingdom
   (b) The princess
   (c) Half of the kingdom and the princess
   (d) A whistle

B. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

The Guitar Player

1. What feelings arose in the heart of the passers-by after listening to the music?
2. According to the girl, did the passers-by give the right answer?
3. How did the girl react to the reply of the passers-by?
4. Why were the passers-by greatly perplexed?
5. What was the right answer according to the girl?

Svayamvara

1. What is the meaning of the word 'Svayamvara'?
2. Why did her parents grieve?
3. On what basis was the princess finally able to choose her husband?
4. Why did the parents tell the princess not to whistle?
5. Why was the king displeased when the princess beat the suitors at the whistling?
6. Whom did the princess choose as her husband and why?

C. Answer the following questions in 115-125 words each:

The Guitar Player

1. What was the right answer according to the girl?
2. Why did the girl choose to play a sad little tune and what did the writer want to convey through this?

Svayamvara

1. 'Most of the suitors did not accept the fact that they were fairly beaten'. Why? Explain. How does it reflect the Indian society?
2. Discuss the deeper meaning and significance of the story.

D. State True or False:

1. The girl stopped playing the music after she heard the reply of the first passer-by. (True/False)

2. The passers-by said that they would love the girl even if she did not own a guitar and could not play a note of music. (True/False)
3. The girl said that her lover must love her altogether, just as she was, all her gifts and all her possessions. (True/False)
4. The princess knew the art of whistling better than the men. (True/False)
5. Only one of the suitors accepted the fact that he was fairly beaten. (True/False)
6. The princess did not marry the person who accepted the fact that he was fairly beaten. (True/False)

E. Creative Writing :

Suppose your elder sister is very talented and working as an officer in the Indian Administrative Service. She gets engaged to a boy who asks her to leave her job against her wish. How will you deal with this situation?

4. Drought

Sarat Chandra Chatterjee

About the writer

Sarat Chandra Chatterjee was a prominent Bengali novelist and short story writer of the early twentieth century. Most of his works deal with the lifestyle, tragedy, struggle of the village people and the contemporary social practices that prevailed in Bengal.

* * * * *

The village was called Kashipur. It was a small village, its Zamindar was smaller still. Yet his tenants dared not stand up to him. He was so ruthless.

It was the birthday of his youngest son. It was noon. Tarkaratna, the priest, was on his way home from the landlord's house, where he had been offering prayers. It was nearing the end of May, but not a patch of cloud could be seen in the sky. The rainless firmament poured fire.

The field in front, stretching out to the horizon, had broken up into tens of thousands of fissures in the burning blaze, and it looked as though the life-blood of Mother Earth was unceasingly flowing out through them as smoke. If one gazed long at its rising, flame-like sinuous movement, it left him, as it were, dazed with drunkenness.

At the end of the field, beside the road, there stood the house of Gafur; the weaver. Now that the mud walls were in ruins, the courtyard touched the public highway, and the inner privacy was thrown on the mercy of the passers-by.

"Hey! Gafur! Is anybody in?" called out Tarkaratna, standing in the shade of a tree by the roadside.

"What do you want? Father is down with fever," answered Gafur's little daughter, aged ten, appearing at the door.

"Fever! Call the scoundrel!" Tarkaratna shouted.

The noise brought Gafur out, shivering with fever. A bull was tied to the old acacia that leaned against the broken wall.

"What do I see there?" demanded Tarkaratna, indicating the bull. "Do you realize that the landlord will not tolerate this?" His face was crimson with indignation and the heat

of the sun. It was to be expected that his words should be hot and harsh. But Gafur simply looked at him, unable to follow the import of his words.

"Well," said Tarkaratna, "I saw it tied there in the morning and it's still there. If the bull dies your master will flay you alive!"

"What shall I do, Father? I'm helpless. I've had fever for the last few days. I can't take him out to graze. I feel so ill."

"Can't you let him graze by himself?"

"Where shall I let him go, Father. People haven't threshed their paddy yet. It's still lying in the fields. The straw hasn't been gathered. Everything is burnt to cinders…There isn't a blade of grass anywhere. How can I let him loose, Father? He might start poking his nose into somebody's paddy or eating somebody's straw."

Tarkaratna softened a little. "But you can at least tie him in the shade somewhere and give him a bundle of straw or two to munch. Hasn't your daughter cooked rice? Why not give him a tub of boiled rice water? Let him drink it."

Gafur made no reply. He looked helplessly at Tarkaratna and a deep sigh escaped him.

"I see you haven't even got that much? What have you done with your share of straw? I suppose you have gone and sold it to satisfy your belly? Not saved even one bundle for the bull! How callous you are!"

At this cruel accusation Gafur seemed to lose the power of speech. "This year I was to have received my share of straw", said Gafur slowly after a moment of hesitation, "but the master kept it all on account of my last year's rent. 'Sir, you are our lord and master,' I implored, falling at his feet. 'Where am I to go if I leave your domain? Let me have at least a little straw. There's no straw on my roof, and we have only one hut in which two- father and daughter- live. We'll patch the roof with palm leaves and manage this rainy weather, somehow, but what will happen to our Mahesh without food?"

"Indeed! So you're fond enough of Mahesh! This is a joke."

But his sarcasm did not reach Gafur. "But the master took no pity on me," he went on. "He gave me paddy to last only two months. My share of straw was added to his own stock- Mahesh didn't have even a wisp of it."

"Well, don't you owe him money?" said Tarkaratna, unmoved. "Why shouldn't you have to pay? Do you expect the landlord to support you?"

"But what am I to pay him with? We till four bighas of land for him, but the paddy has dried up in the fields during the droughts in the last two years. My daughter and I have

not even enough to eat. Look at the hut! When it rains, I spend the night with my daughter huddled in one corner we can't even stretch our legs. Look at Mahesh! You can count his ribs. Do lend me a bit of hay for him so that he can have something to eat for a day or two." And Gafur sank down on the ground at the Tarkaratna's feet.

"No, no! Move aside! Let me go home, it's getting late." Tarkaratna made a movement as though to depart, smiling. "Good God! He seems to brandish his horns at me! Will he hurt?" he cried out with fright and anger, stepping hurriedly back from the bull.

Gafur staggered to his feet. "He wants to eat a handful," he said, indicating the wet bundle of rice and fruit in Tarakaratna's hand.

"Wants to eat? Indeed! Like master, like animal. Hasn't even a bit of straw to eat and must have rice and fruit. Take him away and tie him somewhere else! What horns! He will gore somebody to death one of these days." Edging away, the priest made a quick exit.

Looking away from him, Gafur silently watched Mahesh, whose two deep, brown eyes were full of pain and hunger. "Didn't even give a handful," he muttered, patting the bull's neck and back. "You are my son, Mahesh," he whispered to him. "You have grown old and served us for eight years. I can't even give you enough to eat- but you know how much I love you, don't you?"

Mahesh only stretched out his neck and closed his eyes with pleasure.

"Tell me," went on Gafur, "how can I keep you alive in this dreadful year? If I let you loose, you will start eating other people's paddy or munching their banana leaves. What can I do with you? You have no strength left in your body- nobody wants you. They ask me to sell you at the cattle market…" At the very idea his eyes filled with tears again. Wiping his tears on the back of his hand and looked this way and that, he fetched a tiny bunch of discoloured old straw from behind the hut. "Eat it quickly, my child, otherwise…" he said, softly placing it before Mahesh.

"Father…"

"What is it?"

"Come and eat," answered Gafur's daughter, looking out of the door. "Why, have you again given Mahesh straw from the roof?"

He had feared as much. "It's old straw it was rotting away," he answered, ashamed.

"I heard you pulling it, father."

"No darling, it wasn't exactly…"

"But you know. Father, the wall will crumble…"

Gafur was silent. He had nothing left but this hut. Who knew better than he that unless he was careful it would not last another rainy season. And yet what good was it really?

"Wash your hands and come and eat. I have served you food," said the little girl.

"Give me the rice water; let me feed him."

"There is none, father, it has dried up in the pot."

Nearly a week had passed. Gafur was sitting in the yard, sick of body and anxious. Mahesh had not returned since the day before.

He himself was helpless. Amina had been looking for the bull everywhere from early morning. The evening shadows were already falling when she came home. "Have you heard, father, Manik Ghose has sent Mahesh to the police pen", she said.

"Nonsense!"

"Yes, father, it's true. His servant said to me, tell your father to look for the bull at Dariapur…"

"What did he do?"

"He entered their garden, father."

"At the end of three days, they say, the police will sell him at the cattle market."

Amina did not know what the "cattle market" meant. She had often noticed her father grow restless whenever it was mentioned in connection with Mahesh, but today he went out without saying another word.

Under the cover of night, Gafur secretly came around to Banshi's shop.

"Uncle, you'll have to lend me a rupee", said he, putting down a grass plate under the seat. Banshi was well acquainted with this object. In the last two years he had lent a rupee at least five times on this security. He made no objection today either.

The next morning Mahesh was seen at his usual place again. An elderly man was examining him with very sharp eyes. Not far away, on one side, Gafur sat on the ground, all hunched up. The examination was over, the old man untied a ten-rupee note from a corner of his shawl, and smoothing it again and again, said: "Here, take this, I shan't take anything off. I'm paying the full price."

Stretched his hand, Gafur took the money, but remained silent. As the two men who came with the old man were about to take the rope round the animal's neck, he

suddenly stood bold upright. "Don't touch that rope. I tell you. Be careful, I warn you!" he cried out hoarsely.

They were taken aback. "Why?" asked the old man in surprise.

"There's no why to it. He's my property- I shall not sell him: it's my pleasure," he answered in the same tone, and threw the note away.

"But you accepted the deposit yesterday," all three said in a chorus.

"Take this back," he answered, flinging the two rupees across to them.

Gafur begged for rice water from the neighbours and fed Mahesh. Patting him on the head and horns, he whispered vague sounds of endearment to him.

It was about the middle of June. Nobody who has not looked at an Indian summer sky will realize how terrible, how unrelenting, the heat can be. Not a trace of mercy anywhere. Today even the thought that some day this aspect of sky would change, that it would become overcast with soft, moisture-laden clouds was impossible. It seemed as though the whole blazing sky would go on burning day after day endlessly, to the end of time.

Gafur returned home at noon. He was not used to working as a hired labourer, and it was only four or five days since his temperature had gone down. His body was still weak and tired. He had gone out to seek work, but in vain. He had had no success. Hungry, thirsty, tired, everything was dark before his eyes. "Is the food ready, Amina dear?" he called out from the courtyard.

Without answering, his daughter silently came out and stood leaning against the wall.

"Is the food ready?" Gafur repeated without receiving an answer.

"What do you say? No? Why?"

"No rice? Why didn't you tell me in the morning?"

"Why, I told you last night."

"I told you last night," mimicked Gafur. "How am I to remember what you told me last night?" His anger grew more and more violent at the sound of his own voice. "Of course, there is no rice!" he growled, with his face more distorted than ever. "What does it matter whether your father eats or not? But the young lady must have her three meals! In the future I shall lock up the rice when I go out. Give me some water to drink-I'm dying of thirst….So, you haven't any water, either!"

Amina remained standing with bowed head as before. Realizing that there was not even a drop of water in the house, he lost all self-control. Rushing at her, he slapped her face noisily. "Wretched girl! What do you do all day? So many people die – why don't you?"

The girl did not utter a word. She took the empty earthen pitcher and went out into the afternoon sun, quietly wiping her silent tears.

The moment she was out of sight, her father was overwhelmed with remorse. He alone knew how he had brought up that motherless girl. He knew that this affectionate, dutiful, quiet daughter of his was not to blame. They had never had enough to eat even while their little store of rice lasted. It was impossible to eat three times a day. Nor was he unaware of the reason for the absence of water. Two of the three tanks in the village had all dried up. The little water that there was still in the private tank of Shibu Babu was not for the public. A few holes had been dug at the bottom of the other tanks, but there was such crowding and jostling for a little water that this chit of a girl could not even approach them. She stood for hours on and, after much begging, if somebody took pity on her, she returned home with little water. He knew all this. Perhaps there was no water today or nobody had found time to take pity on her. Something of the sort must have happened, he thought, and his own eyes, too, filled with tears.

"Gafur! Are you in?" somebody cried out in the yard. The landlord's messenger had arrived.

"Yes, I'm in. Why?" answered Gafur bitterly.

"Master has sent for you. Come."

"I haven't had any food yet. I will come later," said Gafur.

Such impudence seemed intolerable to the messenger.

"It's master's order to drag you to him and give you a good thrashing," he roared, calling the man ugly names. Gafur lost self-control for the second time. "We are nobody's slave," he replied, returning similar compliments. "We pay rent to live here. I will not go."

But in this world it is not only futile for the small to appeal to authority, it is dangerous as well. Fortunately the tiny voice seldom reaches big ears or who knows what might happen? When Gafur returned home from the landlord's and quietly lay down, his face and eyes were swollen. The chief cause of so much suffering was Mahesh. When Gafur left that morning, Mahesh broke loose from his tether, and, entering the grounds of the landlord, had eaten up flowers and upset the corn drying in the sun. When finally they tried to catch him, he had hurt the landlord's youngest daughter and had escaped. This was not

the first time this had happened, but Gafur was forgiven because he was poor. If he had come round, and, as on other occasions, begged for the landlord's forgiveness, he would probably have been forgiven, but instead he had claimed that he paid rent, and that he was nobody's slave. This was too much for Shibu Babu, the zamindar, to swallow. Gafur had borne the beatings and torture without protest. At home, too, he lay in a corner without a word. Hunger and thirst he had forgotten, but his heart was burning within him like the sun outside. He had kept no count of how time passed.

He was suddenly shaken out of his listlessness by the shriek of a girl. She was prostrate on the ground. The pitcher which she had been carrying tumbled over, and Mahesh was sucking up the water as it flowed on the earth. Gafur was completely out of his mind. Without waiting another moment he seized his plough-head he had left yesterday for repair, and with both hands struck it violently on the bent head of Mahesh. Once only Mahesh attempted to raise his head, but immediately his starving, lean body staggering to the ground. A few drops of blood rolled down from his ears. His whole body shook once or twice and then stretching the fore and hind legs as far as they would reach. Mahesh fell dead. "What have you done, father? Our Mahesh is dead!" Amina burst out weeping.

Gafur did not move nor answer her. He remained staring without blinking at a pair of motionless beady black eyes.

Before two hours were out, the tanners living at the end of the village came crowding in and carried off Mahesh on a bamboo pole. Shuddering at the sight of the shining knives in their hands, Gafur closed his eyes but did not speak.

The neighbours informed him that the landlord had sent for Tarakaratna to ask for advice. How would Gafur pay for the penance which the killing of a sacred animal demanded?

Gafur made no reply to these remarks, but remained squatting with his chin resting on his knees.

"Amina, dear, come, let's go," said Gafur, rousing his daughter at the dead of night.

She had fallen asleep in the yard. "Where, father?" she asked rubbing her eyes.

"To work at the jute mill at Fulbere," said the father.

The girl looked at him incredulously. Through all his misery he had declined to go to Fulbere. "No religion, no respect, no privacy for womenfolk there," she had often heard him say.

"Hurry up, my child; we have a long way to go," said Gafur.

Amina was going to collect the drink bowl and her father's brass plate. "Leave them alone, darling. They'll pay for the penance for Mahesh," said Gafur.

In the dead of night Gafur set out, holding his daughter by the hand. He had nobody to call his own in the village. He had nothing to say to anybody. Crossing the yard, when he reached the acacia, he stopped stock-still and burst out crying loudly. "Allah," he said, raising his face towards the black star-spangled sky, "punish me as much as you like- Mahesh died with thirst on his lips. Nobody left the tiniest bit of land for him to feed on. Pray never forgive those their guilt who never let him eat the grass nor drink the water you have given."

About the story

In 'Drought', the writer has drawn a graphic picture of drought. Drought takes the form of a natural calamity in many parts of India, in Rajasthan frequently. In the present story, Gafur, the main character, is under stress. The writer has successfully depicted social and psychological aspects of human nature under stress.

GLOSSARY

ruthless (adj)	:	merciless, cruel
patch (n)	:	piece
firmament (n)	:	sky
fissures (n)	:	cracks
unceasingly (adv)	:	constantly
sinuous (adj)	:	winding
crimson (adj)	:	deep red
indignation (n)	:	anger
import (n)	:	meaning
flay (v)	:	to take out the skin
thresh (v)	:	separate grain from corn
cinders (n)	:	partly burnt wood, coal etc.
munch (v)	:	chew
callous (adj)	:	without feelings
domain (n)	:	kingdom

wisp (n)	:	small bundle
bigha (n)	:	a measure of land
brandish (v)	:	to wave about
gore (n)	:	wound with horns
crumble (v)	:	to fall
pen (n)	:	a small enclosure for cattle, sheep etc.
hunched up (v)	:	sat with a hunch
chorus (n)	:	singing, shouting in group
flinging (v)	:	throwing
unrelenting (adj)	:	severe
mimicked (v)	:	imitated
overwhelmed (v)	:	moved greatly
remorse (n)	:	regret
chit of a girl (n)	:	small girl
impudence (n)	:	rudeness
tiny (adj)	:	small
tether (n)	:	rope
prostrate (adj, v)	:	lying flat
fore (adj)	:	front
hind (adj)	:	back
tanners (n)	:	persons collecting animal skins
shuddering (v)	:	shaking
incredulously (adv)	:	unbelievingly
stock-still (adj)	:	motionless
star-spangled (adj)	:	studded with stars

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS :

A. Choose the correct alternative:

1. Who killed Mahesh?
   (a) Tarakratna (b) Shibu
   (c) Gafur (d) Amina
2. Who was Amina?
   (a) Tarakratna's daughter (b) Shibu's daughter
   (c) Gafur's sister (d) Gafur's daughter
3. The story took place in .....
   (a) April (b) December
   (c) May (d) June
4. Shibu is the name of the.....
   (a) bull (b) zamindar
   (c) priest (d) tanner
5. Why did Gafur go to Fulbere at the end?
   (a) to sell Mahesh (b) to attend a funeral
   (c) to work at the jute mill (d) to befool Amina

B. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

1. 'Many a time Gafur was forgiven by the landlord.' Why?
2. Describe the two times when Gafur lost self-control.
3. What is penance? Why did Gafur think of doing it?
4. What kind of life did poor Amina lead right from her childhood?
5. Why was there so much scarcity of water in the village?
6. Why did Gafur lose his temper and kill Mahesh?
7. Write a character-sketch of Tarakratna.

C. Answer the following questions in 115-125 words each:

1. Giving examples from the story, comment on the relationship between Shibu and Gafur.
2. Draw a graphic picture of the Indian summer as depicted by the writer.
3. Describe the attitude of Shibu Babu towards the villagers.
4. Draw a character-sketch of Gafur.

D. State True/False:

1. Gafur tilled eight bighas of land for the landlord. (True/False)
2. It was Zamindar's elder son's birthday. (True/False)
3. Amina informed Gafur that Mahesh was at Dariapur. (True/False)
4. Gafur left the brass plate behind as a payment for penance. (True/False)
5. All the three tanks in the village had dried up. (True/False)

E. Creative Writing :

Imagine you have been invited to participate in a discussion on how to face scarcity of water during drought. What suggestions would you give?

5. Love Across The Salt Desert

Keki N. Daruwalla

About the writer

Keki N.Daruwalla is a well- known Indian short story writer and poet. He was born in Lahore in 1937. Keki N.Daruwalla began his career as a government servant and was also a member of the CommonWealth observer group to Zimbabwe in 1980. His writings reflect sensitivity to human feelings. He has authored several books and is a recipient of Sahitya Akademi award.

* * * * *

The drought in Kutch had lasted for three successive years. Even when clouds were sighted they passed by, ignoring the stricken country. The monsoons had, so to speak, forgotten the land. The Rann lay like a paralyzed monster, its back covered with scab and scar tissue and dried blister- skin. The earth had cracked and it looked as if chunks of it had been baked in a kiln and then embedded in the soil crust. The cattle became thin and emaciated. The oxen died. The camel alone survived comfortably, feeding on the *bawal,* camel-thorn. Then one day the clouds rolled in like wineskins and the lightening crackled and the wineskins burst. Though two years have passed since the drought ended, everyone remembers that it first rained on the day when Fatimah entered the village. This is how she came.

What would he not do for her, the daughter of the spice- seller; she who smelt of cloves and cinnamon, whose laughter had the timbre of ankle- bells, whose eyebrows were like black wisps of the night and whose hair was the night itself? For her he would cross the salt desert!

He had stayed the day at Kala Doongar, a black hill capped with basalt, the highest in Kutch. He had set his camel, Allaharakha, free to crop on the *bawal* trees. At dusk he paid homage to the footprints of the *Panchmai Pir* on the hilltop. He left some food there and started beating on his thali, according to the custom here. In a few minutes jackals materialized and gobbled up the food. This was auspicious. If they had not turned up he would have considered the ill- effects of the omen serious enough to have cancelled the journey. A lamp was lighted in the *Pir's* honour every night on the hilltop and the flame

could be seen all the way from Khavda. Over a hundred years earlier the *Panchmai Pir* had trudged these salt wastes serving the people, accompanied, as legend had it, by a jackal. Reclusive by habit he used to retire to thorn jungles, where apart from his vulpine companions none else dared to disturb his nocturnal trysts. The custom of feeding the jackals had lingered since then.

Najab bowed before the flame and set out. He left behind the camel- thorn shrubs and the area once famous for its savannahs of stunted grass, but now sere and brown as desert. He had left behind all human habitation, Kuran being the last village. For the next three days he would not be seeing any *bhungas,* those one- room mud houses, circular at the base, but tapering into conical thatch roofs at the top. Now only the sand- scapes stretched out before him, mile upon mile. Water splashed in the *chagals*. With the name of *Pir* on his lips Najab Hussain set forth.

Najab's diffidence was notorious among his friends. He was known to have blushed at the mere mention of a girl. A strangely introverted lad with dreamy eyes, no one had ever associated him with any act of bravado. His father, Aftab, would say. "All that my ancestors and I have acquired during a hundred years, this lad will squander away, not because he is a spendthrift but because he will be too shy to charge money for what he sells!"

He had crossed the Rann on four occasions earlier, though he had turned twenty only a month ago. But each time he had either accompanied his father or that wily old smuggler Zaman, the veteran of a hundred illegal trips into Sind. Each time they had taken *tendu* leaf worth about five hundred, and sold it across the border for twelve hundred. But between the pay- off to officials and to the intermediaries who arranged the sale of *biri* leaf, to the man who took the camel out to graze and to the friend or relative who harbored them, there was precious little left. It was just enough to buy some used terylene garments and then it was time to make the long trek back across the desert. It was during one of these trips that they had stayed with Kaley Shah, the clove- seller. "He is a distant relative of your mother, his father had told Najab. Kaley Shah was tall, and well- fleshed and his thick- jowled face had a purple tinge about it as if somewhere along the way it had got stuck with a discolored patch. He always wore a *tahmat* of black and white checks. Within a day Najab discovered that the fellow was an absolute rogue who drove such a cussed bargain that for the first time in his hearing father started mouthing obscenities.

But his daughter Fatimah was a *hoor* with eyes so bright that they would have lit up the darkness of the underworld. She was taken by this quiet, pleasant young man so ready with his smiles. But she could hardly elicit a word out of him. Fatimah had been

under pressure to get engaged to someone in the village known for his slurred speech and grotesque stammer. "Just my luck to run into mutes", she thought. But then, as she caught him staring at her, she laughed back. And in the evening when Fatimah repeated the performance and her face flooded with excitement as if she dared him to take the next step, he had flung his arms around her in a reckless dizzy moment. Yes, he would come again, he told her, and saw her start with disbelief for he seemed to have answered her inarticulated question: Would he come again? This time he would come alone with no father or uncle to cramp his style. And as he left, he looked behind to find her gaze following him, her eyes like a pair of storm lanterns in the dark.

Ever since his return to Khavda, Najab had been straining to get away. What was there about the Rann that he did not know? He could cross the Rann in the daylight, leave alone starlight, a thing none of his elders had dared to do! And one morning Aftab was woken up by a shout from Zaman. What does the old rogue want, he muttered rubbing his sleepy eyes. Zaman asked about Najab's whereabouts.

"The boy has been sulking of late but he should be around. Anyway, what business is it of yours?" The old man did not hide his irritation.

"Who are you trying to fool, Aftab Mian?" asked the smuggler. "Don't you know that Allaharakha is also missing?"

In these border villages the pattern of life was such that if a man was absent along with his camel, it was taken for granted that he had made a foray across the desert into Pakistan.

Aftab went into the mud enclosure where his camel was kept and found it empty. His heart sank. He ran into the house to see if the bundles of *tendu* leaf he had bought had been taken by the boy. "Oh, the fool! That son of a fool!" exclaimed Aftab, almost shaking with fury. "He has forgotten to take the leaf with him!"

"Who are you trying to fool with all this drama?" called out Zaman who was still standing at the door. "This son of yours is not as innocent as the world believes. He is a pig and the son of a pig."

There was no limit to the chagrin. Zaman was the chief, the man who kept the Rangers across happy. Anyone crossing the Rann without his support was running the gauntlet with the law. And here this fledgling had blundered in without as much as a word to him, or a *salaam*, or a hundred rupee note.

"May Allah bring him safely out of this!" said the old rogue piously. He means just the opposite, thought Aftab. Nothing would please him more than to see Najab turned into carrion with vultures hovering around.

"Don't worry, Zaman, Allah will see him through!" he said testily and banged the door in the smuggler's face.

As Zaman stalked off, Aftab went in to break the news of their son's escapade to his wife. She would faint, he thought. He found her crouching with her back against the mud wall. She did not even blink in surprise, once. She was waist- deep in this conspiracy along with her son and never even breathed a word about it. His eye fell on her bare arm.

"Where is that gold bangle my father gave you, woman."

"You need not worry. Najab will return with cloves."

The long striding Allaharakha kept a brisk pace. A strong south wind drove the tang of the Kori creek hack into Najab's nostrils. He followed the stars, the Milky Way flaked with mica the Great Bear shambling towards the north. Before dawn he had reached his destination, for a sandy elevation palisaded with the bones of dead animals told him that he had arrived at Sarbela, over twenty miles from Kala Doongar. He was already beyond the international boundary. Here he rested. During daylight, movement was impossible. The Indus Rangers would be looking from their bamboo watch- towers. And in the heat everything became a *mirage.* A depression in the sand looked like a splash of water, a freak, stunted cactus gave the appearance of a grove, and a camel looked like a huge prehistoric animal on the move. Any movement was sure to be noticed through binoculars.

When the sun came up Najab took his first drink of water from his *chagal*. At noon he had his first meal- dry, stale bread with onion. By now thoughts about Fatimah took a vice- like grip over him. An entire night lay between them, he thought. And the distance was less than ten miles. The thought of it made him writhe even as the sun started heating its hammer on the anvil of the desert. A whiff of the tangy south wind caught his nostrils again. But this time it brought with it a thin dappled veil of cloud, patches of which lay overlapping like fish scales. Within an hour this corrugated cloud had covered a substantial portion of the sky, looking for all the world like a stretch of wind-rippled sand. Yes, this was the time! He got up and shook the sand from his turban. Even as he harnessed his camel he thought that Allaharakha was looking at him quizzically, as if asking what the hell he was up to. At one level of consciousness he knew that this was madness. He knew of overworked camels dying of fatigue, of the patrolling parties of the B.S.F and Indus Rangers and the mirage- chequered, trackless wastes of the desert. But he succumbed to a rush of blood and the face of Fatimah beckoned him like a mirage.

Najab crossed the International Boundary Pillar Number 1066. He knew the track he had to take, bisecting the two posts of the Indus Rangers at Jagtarai and Vingoor.

But he strayed ever so slightly, and from their watch- tower they saw through their binoculars this sleek camel, warped and distorted by the heat shimmer into a lumbering leviathan. An Indian slipping into their territory with *tendu* leaf right under their noses, and that too without paying any hush money! They were not going to stand for it. Najab was in a trance now events flashing past him like figures on a screen. The mile-long chase, the firing from behind, the spent bullets flipping in the sand and then the rising wind which churned the dust into his eyes and then rose between the hunter and the hunted. When the dust settled half an hour later he was alone in the Rann.

The next few hours passed in a daze. He was mortally scared that Allaharakha may die of fatigue. To ease him of his burden he now started walking beside him. Within an hour the sail had scraped the callus from his feet and scarred them with agonizing cracks. Under a hot tin sky, the Rann was blazing now, throwing up while needles which hurt the eyes. And as the Rann palpitated, it haunted him with its mirage, pools of shadow, scooped half- moons of water. Hours of wandering as if in trance, attempting to lick the receding edges of the mirage. Then light thinning away, and an hour or two later, dusk, and a thin plume of smoke rising from a dung fire. Allah be praised! He was now within range.

He waited for night to descend and then struck out hobbling on his toes, for this desert Odyssey had cost him his heels. Within an hour he was at the clove seller's door.

Fatimah rose from her bed like a panic- stricken doe as he called out her name softly through the window bars. It took some anxious moments for it to sink in that it was Najab. Her lustrous eyes lit up the dark of the room as she opened the door.

Two hours before dawn, Kaley Shah was woken up by the beat constable banging on the door. "A smuggler has come across the Rann, Kaley Shah. You wouldn't know anything about him, would you?"

"*Kasam tumhari*, not a sparrow has entered the house, or the village. Even the dogs have not been barking tonight." Then he added with a knowing wink. "Why should a smuggler come to me?"

But the law was not amused. "Kaley Shah", he said sardonically, 'your belly is stuffed full with silver. It would outweigh even the dirt in your heart!"

The constable's words rattled like a sack of empty cans in his head and prevented him from sleeping.

"You have a guest", said Fatimah as she brought him his tumbler of hot, steaming milk next morning. "It is Najab. He stayed the night in the cattle shed." For a moment he was terrified. A smuggler in the house, the police prowling all around and he did not even

know of it! His meeting with Najab had been brief. The wretched fellow had brought no *tendu* leaf.

"First you come unannounced, dragging the police behind you, and then I find you have come with nothing. Trading with you is going to be a dead loss, son, with the cops on your back and your hands empty."

Najab thought that Kaley Shah's waist cloth, with its black and white checks looked like a chess board. He would have to make his moves carefully. He showed the gold bracelet. "I have come for the cloves, *Chacha jaan.* And I shall pay in gold."

The next two days Kaley Shah was busy buying cloves and arranging to get Allaharakha grazed a few miles away, by a cowherd. Otherwise the presence of a strange camel would have let loose a babble of tongues. Najab slept in the cattle-shed in the evening and slipped into Fatimah's room late at night.

"They want me to marry Mahfuz Ali", she told him. "He is related to us from my mother's family. The way he stammers! You should hear him! Urchins start mimicking him the moment they set eyes on him. It is just a step removed from being hounded like a madman and pelted with stones."

"Has it never occurred to you to take a ride on Allaharakha across the Rann?" She had kept silent and silence was assent. It was as simple as that.

The first lurch of the camel next evening and they were off. He had waited with his camel at the outskirts of the village and she had slipped out after her father had started snoring. The moment was too big for them and they did not speak. It was only in passing that she thought of the village she was leaving for good. As for quitting one country and entering another, she never gave it a thought. Where did one have the time for Pakistan and Hindustan when one was eloping with one's love and crossing the desert which divided, both physically and symbolically, the two countries? For her it meant just a shift in dialect, a smear of Kutchi added and a little of Sindhi sandpapered away.

And the camel lurched and bumped onwards and Najab drove him hard. By the time they reached Sarbela she was exhausted and fell asleep.

She woke up in the afternoon to find the sky overcast. It turned ominous in the evening with depth upon depth of dark-edged nimbus gathering at the summons of a storm-god. Another night they journeyed facing the wind which hurled the sand in their faces. As they neared Khavda, the thunder started rolling and reverberating across the skies.

Three times during the night Aftab had opened the door, thinking his son had come. But it was only the wind knocking against the door. This time the banging was persistent. When he unlatched the door he found Allaharakha shying away from a streak of lightening. Huge, isolated drops of rain were falling, kicking up the dust. Aftab steeled himself. He would not allow any relief, any expression of joy to show on his face.

"Son, have you brought anything?" he asked, an edge of iron deliberately introduced into voice.

"Yes", he replied, as he ushered Fatimah in.

The rain stormed down and swept away three years of drought.

About the story :

The story 'Love Across the Salt Desert' narrates the triumph of human will and determination. Every individual is capable of achieving remarkable feats provided he has a strong will to do so.

GLOSSARY

drought (n)	:	a long period when there is little or no rain
stricken (adj)	:	suffering severely from the effect of something unpleasant
scab (n)	:	rough surface made of dried blood which forms over a cut, broken skin while it is healing
chunks (n)	:	a roughly cut piece
emaciated (adj)	:	very weak and thin usually because of illness or extreme hunger
omen (n)	:	something that is considered to be a sign of how a future event will take place (both a good omen and a bad omen)
gobbled up (v)	:	ate food too fast while making a noise in the throat, swallowed hastily
trudged (v)	:	walked slowly with a lot of effort especially over a difficult surface or while carrying something heavy
reclusive (adj)	:	a person who lives alone and avoids any company or talking to other people
squander (v)	:	spend or use money in supplies in a wasteful way, or to waste opportunities by not using them

diffidence (n)	:	shy and not confident of abilities
introvert (n)	:	someone who is quiet and speaks less or who is concerned with his or her thoughts and feelings than the outside world
veteran (n)	:	a person who has had a lot of experience of a particular activity having been involved in a particular activity for a long time
tinge (n)	:	a very slight amount of a colour or of a feeling
elicit (v)	:	bring about or draw out a response or reaction
slurred (v)	:	pronounced badly and wrongly, spoke in an unclear way
grotesque (adj)	:	very odd and ugly
stammer (n)	:	sounds in a speech which has unusual pauses or repetitions of syllables
fury (n)	:	wild anger; uncontrolled violence
chagrin (n)	:	disappointment or anger, especially when caused by a failure or mistake (also annoyance)
fledgling (n)	:	new and without experience
shambling (v)	:	walking very slowly and awkwardly without lifting one's feet
corrugated (adj)	:	a sheet of iron or cardboard shaped into folds
mirage (n)	:	a hope or wish that has no chance of being achieved; an image seems to be far away but does not exist
fatigue (n)	:	extreme tiredness
succumbed (v)	:	lost the determination to oppose something, to accept defeat
Odyssey (n)	:	a long exciting journey
leviathan (n)	:	a sea animal
lumbering (adj)	:	moving slowly, heavily and awkwardly
callus (n)	:	an area of hard thickened skin especially on the feet or hands
lustrous (adj)	:	a quality of being shiny with bright light

sardonically (adv)	:	showing little respect to a person and making fun in an unkind way just because one thinks that he or she is very important
lurch (v)	:	to move in a way that is not regular or normal or to make sudden movements backwards or forward
ushered (v)	:	showed someone where he or she should go or made someone go
Nimbus (n)	:	A dark grey cloud which often produces rain
reverberating (v)	:	a loud deep sound that continues to echo or resound or heard around an area

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS :

A. Choose the correct alternative:

1. Drought in Kutch had lasted for
   (a) five years (b) one year
   (c) three years (d) two years
2. Whenever Najab and his father crossed Rann earlier each time they had taken------ with them.
   (a) tea leaf (b) herbal leaf
   (c) green leaf (d) tendu leaf
3. The relationship between Kaley Shah and Fatimah was
   (a) brother-sister (b) husband-wife
   (c) teacher-student (d) father-daughter
4. The name of Najab's camel was
   (a) Janbaz (b) Allaharakha
   (c) Aftab (d) Tabeez

B. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

1. Why did the Rann look like 'a paralyzed monster'?
2. What important incident occurred when Fatimah came into the village?
3. Why did Fatimah not like Mahfuz Ali?
4. Why did Aftab open the door three times during the night? Was anybody knocking at the door?

5. Why was it not easy to cross the boundary? How were people checked while crossing the border?
6. Why was Fatimah happy despite she was leaving her country as well as home?

C. Answer the following questions in 115-125 words each:

1. Discuss the aptness of the title 'Love across the Salt Desert'?
2. Write about the rituals performed at Panchmai Pir.
3. The image of Rann has been used twice in this story: in the beginning and also in the end. How was it associated with love, joy and harmony among the characters?
4. Throw light on the difference of attitude between Najab's mother and father when they came to know about his escapade.
5. What difficulties did Najab face while crossing the border?

D. State True or False:

1. 'Chagal' was used to drinking water. (True/False)
2. The Spice-seller had a beautiful son. (True/False)
3. Najab succeeded in crossing the border. (True/False)
4. Najab's mother knew about his escapade. (True/False)
5. Kaley Shah helped Najab in taking his daughter away. (True/False)

E. Creative Writing :

Imagine you are a member of the drought relief team. Describe the measures you would take to help the drought stricken people in a remote desert area.

6. Trouble in Bohemia

Arthur Conan Doyle

About the writer :

Arthur Conan Doyle was a Scottish writer most noted for creating the legendary world famous fictional character 'Sherlock Holmes' and his loyal assistant Dr. Watson. He wrote more than sixty 'Sherlock Holmes' mystery stories, which attracted the readers all over the world. Some of his notable 'Sherlock Holmes' works include *The Stories of Sherlock Holmes, The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, The Hound of Baskervilles*, *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes* and *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*. He also wrote many non-fictional books, works of fantasy, science fiction, historical novels and poetry and also created the fictional character named *Professor Challenger* and wrote a series of novels based on him.

* * * * *

Whenever Sherlock Holmes spoke of Irene Adler, it was in terms of great respect. She was always *the* Woman. This did not mean that he was in anyway sentimental about her, but throughout his long career Irene Adler had been one of the few persons who had proven to be just as clever as Sherlock Holmes himself.

Anyway, I was in Holmes' apartment one day when a tall, handsome man, dressed in the uniform of a foreign country, came to see him. The man wore a mask and pretended to represent a second person, but Holmes soon recognized the man, addressed him as "Your Majesty," and the fellow then admitted that he was the king of Bohemia. He had come, he said, to ask Sherlock Holmes' help in a matter of great importance. It seems that five years earlier, before he had become king, he had been in Warsaw on a visit and had fallen in love with a beautiful American actress, Miss Irene Adler.

"I was crown prince at the time," he explained. "And I was young. Shortly after, I became king. Irene Adler was not of royal blood. My family and the members of the government found out about the matter and naturally insisted that I must give Miss Adler up. I loved her deeply, but my first responsibility was, naturally, to my country."

The king went on to explain that he was now about to be married to a princess of

one of the neighboring countries and that Irene Adler, who was still apparently in love with him, had said that she was going to write to the princess and tell her all.

"Is it money Ms. Adler wants?" asked Holmes.

"Heavens no!" said the king. "She is not that kind of person. She simply insists that she still loves me and she refuses to let me marry someone else."

"I suppose she has some letters of yours, but we can prove that they are false," said Holmes.

"They are written on my own private paper and in my own handwriting. She also has my photograph."

"We can prove that the paper was stolen and that your handwriting was copied. Anyone can buy your photograph."

"Unfortunately, she and I are both in the same photograph together," said the king.

"That is quite different," said Holmes. "Have you tried to get the photograph from her in any way?"

"I have had the police examine her apartment. I have had her stopped on the street and also while travelling, but nothing has been found in her pocketbook or in her travelling bags. You see, Mr. Holmes not only is Irene Adler a beautiful woman, but she is clever and highly intelligent as well."

Holmes obtained all the additional information he could from the king and the next day left home early. I happened to meet him that night outside our house just as he was getting home. I did not recognize him, naturally, because he was disguised as an old cab driver. It seems that he had spent all day in and around Irene Adler's home talking with other cab drivers and with anybody who seemed to know anything about Miss Adler. He had seen her personally and, by one means or another, had even talked with her.

"She is all that the king says she is and more," he said. "She is a beautiful woman. I also discovered a surprising fact: Irene Adler got married at five o' clock today to a Mr. Godfrey Norton, previously her lawyer. I do not know whether this makes the matter more simple or more complicated. Although she herself is an honorable person, who knows what advantages her husband, a lawyer, may see in a photograph of her and the king of Bohemia taken together. We must get the photograph by all means. I am sure the

photograph is in her home and tomorrow, Watson, you must help me to go there and get it."

While Holmes was telling me this, we stood at the front door. A young man in a long overcoat passed the street.

"Good night, Sherlock Holmes!" said the young man.

"Now, who the devil could have recognized me in this disguise?" said Holmes. "That voice also sound familiar."

Anyway, the next day five o' clock in the afternoon Holmes, now disguised as a priest, was walking in front of Irene Adler's home when Miss Adler arrived from her daily ride in the park. As she stepped out of her cab, Holmes pretended to faint; several people came to help him, and Ms. Adler finally told them to carry him into her living room. As Holmes had directed, I stood waiting during all this time in the garden, just outside the living room window, and at a signal from Holmes inside I threw some lighted pieces of paper into the room through the window. There was a cry of "Fire! Fire!" from one of the servants, and I then disappeared. Several hours later Holmes arrived home, quite pleased with himself and with the satisfactory way everything had turned out.

"It's an old trick, Watson," he said, "but it worked just as I expected. When someone cried "Fire!" Irene Adler ran, almost automatically, to get the one thing of greatest importance in the house- the photograph. It is hidden in a secret place in one of the walls. She did not remove the photograph because when she saw that the fire was only a matter of a few burning papers, she stopped, but she did all that was necessary to show me exactly where the photograph is hidden. Tomorrow we shall go there with the king and with several policemen and get the photograph."

The next day, however, when Holmes went to Miss Adler's house, he had one of the greatest shocks of his long career. There was no one at home, and Miss Adler and all her servants had apparently gone away. Holmes went at once to the secret place in the wall. The photograph was there but there was this message with it. It read:

Dear Sherlock Holmes,

I had been told that the king would probably go to you for help in getting the photograph. Thus, I was expecting you any day. First, I recognized your disguise as a cab driver and then followed you to your apartment just to make sure it was you. I was the

young man who passed in the street and spoke to you. Don't forget that I too am an artist. Yesterday I also recognized your little trick of gaining entrance to my house and forcing me to show you where the photograph was hidden. But it is not important now. The photograph is here for you. I am married now to a man much better than the king, and we have gone away together. My husband loves me deeply, and I am in love with him. Clearly, I have no need of the photograph any longer!

Yours truly,
Irene Adler

About the story

The story 'Trouble in Bohemia' is about Sherlock Holmes and Miss Irene Adler; both fictional characters created by Arthur Conan Doyle. The story narrates how the king of Bohemia hires the famous detective Sherlock Holmes to get some letters and photograph back from Miss Adler. But Miss Adler beats Sherlock Holmes at his own game.

GLOSSARY

sentimental (adj.)	:	(1) relating to emotions rather than reason (2) having intense feelings about someone or something
pretend (v)	:	to behave in a particular way, in order to make other people believe something that is not true
mask (n)	:	a covering for part or all of the face
recognized (adj.)	:	notable, honored
give up (ph.v)	:	to surrender, to stop or to quit
apparently (adv)	:	clearly, obviously
disguised (v)	:	appeared in a changed way so that your real identity is not known to others
cab (n)	:	a taxi
honorable (adj)	:	respectable
faint (v)	:	to become unconscious
turned out (ph.v)	:	resulted
probably (adv.)	:	perhaps, likely

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS :

A. Choose the correct alternative:

1. Miss Irene Adler was _____
   (a) a secret detective (b) an assistant
   (c) an American actress (d) a relative of Sherlock Holmes
2. The king wanted _____ from Miss Adler.
   (a) some documents (b) letters and photograph
   (c) money (d) address
3. Sherlock Holmes disguised himself as a_____ at first.
   (a) priest (b) cab driver
   (c) servant (d) bank officer
4. Miss Adler got married to _____.
   (a) Mr. Godfrey Norton (b) Sherlock Holmes
   (c) The King of Bohemia (d) Dr. Watson
5. _____ bade "good night" to Sherlock Holmes.
   (a) A friend (b) Miss Irene Adler
   (c) Mr. Godfrey Norton (d) The King

B. Answer the following questions in 20 to 30 words each:

1. Why did the king want his letters and photograph back?
2. What were Sherlock Holmes disguises to solve the case?
3. Where did Miss Irene Adler hide the letters and the photograph?
4. Why did the king write letters to Irene Adler?
5. Why could the letters not be proved false?
6. Why was Sherlock Holmes interested in getting the letters and photograph at the earliest?

C. Answer the following questions in 115-125 words each:

1. What trick did Sherlock Holmes use to find the place where letters and photograph were hidden?
2. Discuss the character of Miss Irene Adler.
3. The story proves Sherlock Holmes to be less intelligent than Miss Irene Adler. Do you agree?

D. State True or False:

1. Miss Irene Adler wanted to extract money from the king in exchange of letters and photograph (True/False)

2. Miss Adler knew that the king would go to Holmes for help in getting back the photograph. (True/False)

3. Miss Irene Adler wished "good night" to Sherlock Holmes. (True/False)

4. At first Sherlock Holmes disguised himself as a priest. (True/False)

5. Miss Irene Adler herself did not want to keep the letters and photograph. (True/False)

E. Creative Writing :

Imagine that your friend has planned a mischief on you but you, very intelligently, beat him at his own game.

7. Dead Men's Path

Chinua Achebe

About the writer :

Chinua Achebe was a famous Nigerian novelist, poet, professor and critic. He was born and educated in Nigeria (Africa). His most famous novel is *Things Fall Apart.* His other novels include *No Longer at Ease, Arrow of God, A Man of the People* and *Anthills of Savannah.* Achebe's writings express the Nigerian culture; especially the traditions of Igbo society, the effects of Christian influences and the clash of Western and African values during and after the colonial era.

* * * * *

Michael Obi's hopes were fulfilled much earlier than he had expected. He was appointed headmaster of Ndume Central School in January 1949. It had always been an unprogressive school, so the Mission authorities decided to send a young and energetic man to run it. Obi accepted this responsibility with enthusiasm. He had many wonderful ideas and this was an opportunity to put them into practice. He had had sound secondary school education which designated him a "pivotal teacher" in the official records and set him apart from the other headmasters in the mission field. He was outspoken in his condemnation of the narrow views of these older and often less-educated ones.

"We shall make a good job of it, shan't we?" he asked his young wife when they first heard the joyful news of his promotion.

"We shall do our best," she replied. "We shall have such beautiful gardens and everything will be just modern and delightful . . . " In their two years of married life she had become completely infected by his passion for "modern methods" and his denigration of "these old and superannuated people in the teaching field who would be better employed as traders in the Onitsha market." She began to see herself already as the admired wife of the young headmaster, the queen of the school.

The wives of the other teachers would envy her position. She would set the fashion in everything. Then, suddenly, it occurred to her that there might not be other wives. Wavering between hope and fear, she asked her husband, looking anxiously at him.

"All our colleagues are young and unmarried," he said with enthusiasm which for once she did not share. "Which is a good thing," he continued.

"Why?"

"Why? They will give all their time and energy to the school."

Nancy was sad. For a few minutes she became doubtful about the new school~ but it was only for a few minutes. Her little personal misfortune could not blind her to her husband's happy prospects. She looked at him as he sat folded up in a chair. He was stoop-shouldered and looked frail. But he sometimes surprised people with sudden bursts of physical energy. In his present posture, however, all his bodily strength seemed to have retired behind his deep- set eyes, giving them an extraordinary power of penetration. He was only twenty -six, but looked thirty or more. On the whole, he was not unhandsome.

"What are you thinking, Mike," said Nancy after a while.

"I was thinking what a grand opportunity we've got at last to show these people how a school should be run." Ndume School was backward in every sense of the word. Mr. Obi put his whole life into the work, and his wife hers too. He had two aims. A high standard of teaching was insisted upon, and the school compound was to be turned into a place of beauty. Nancy's dream- gardens came to life with the coming of the rains, and blossomed. Beautiful hibiscus and allamanda hedges in brilliant red and yellow marked out the carefully tended school compound from the rank neighborhood bushes.

One evening as Obi was admiring his work he was scandalized to see an old woman from the village hobble right across the compound, through a marigold flower-bed and the hedges. On going up there he found faint signs of an almost disused path from the village across the school compound to the bush on the other side.

"It amazes me," said Obi to one of his teachers who had been three years in the school, "that you people allowed the villagers to make use of this foot- path. It is simply incredible." He shook his head.

"The path," said the teacher apologetically, "appears to be very important to them. Although it is hardly used, it connects the village shrine with their place of burial."

"And what has that got to do with the school?" asked the headmaster.

"Well, I don't know," replied the other with a shrug of the shoulders. "But I remember there was a big row some time ago when we attempted to close it."

"That was some time ago. But it will not be used now," said Obi as he walked away. "What will the Government Education Officer think of this when he comes to inspect the

school next week? The villagers might, for all I know, decide to use the schoolroom for a pagan ritual during the inspection."

Heavy sticks were planted closely across the path at the two places where it entered and left the school premises. These were further strengthened with barbed wire.

Three days later the village priest of Ani called on the headmaster. He was an old man and walked with a slight stoop. He carried a stout walking stick which he usually tapped on the floor, by way of emphasis, each time he made a new point in his argument.

"I have heard," he said after the usual exchange of cordialities, "that our ancestral footpath has recently been closed… "

"Yes," replied Mr. Obi. "We cannot allow people to make a highway of our school compound."

"Look here, my son," said the priest bringing down his walking stick, "this path was here before you were born and before your father was born. The whole life of this village depends on it. Our dead relatives depart by it and our ancestors visit us by it. But most important, it is the path of children coming in to be born . . ."

Mr. Obi listened with a satisfied smile on his face.

"The whole purpose of our school," he said finally, "is to eradicate just such beliefs as that. Dead men do not require footpaths. The whole idea is just fantastic. Our duty is to teach your children to laugh at such ideas."

"What you say may be true," replied the priest, "but we follow the practices of our fathers. If you reopen the path we shall have nothing to quarrel about. What I always say is: let the hawk perch and let the eagle perch." He rose to go.

"I am sorry," said the young headmaster. "But the school compound cannot be a thoroughfare. It is against our regulations. I would suggest you construct another path, going around our premises. We can even get our boys to help in building it. I don't suppose the ancestors will find the little detour too burdensome."

"I have no more words to say," said the old priest, already outside.

Two days later a young woman in the village died in childbirth. A diviner was immediately consulted and he prescribed heavy sacrifices to pacify ancestors insulted by the fence.

Obi woke up next morning among the ruins of his work. The beautiful hedges were torn up not just near the path but right round the school, the flowers trampled to death and one of the school buildings pulled down. That day, the white Supervisor came to inspect the school and wrote a nasty report on the state of the premises but more

seriously about the "tribal-war situation developing between the school and the village, arising in part from the misguided zeal of the new headmaster."

About the story :

'Dead Men's Path' is one of his most famous short stories. In this story the conflict takes place between the priest representing the traditions of the village fore-fathers and the new headmaster of Ndume Central School representing modern ideas and education. As a result a tribal-war situation develops between the school and the village.

GLOSSARY

put into practice (v)	:	to execute
sound (adj)	:	good
designated (v)	:	ranked, titled
pivotal (adj)	:	important
condemnation (n)	:	criticism
denigration (n)	:	defame
superannuated (adj)	:	old-fashioned, out of date
colleagues (n)	:	co-workers
stoop shouldered (adj)	:	with bent shoulders
frail (adj)	:	weak
hibiscus (n)	:	a plant or shrub with brightly coloured flowers
allamanda (n)	:	a plant or shrub with brightly coloured flowers
tended (adj)	:	cared
rank (adj)	:	coarse, indecent
scandalized (v)	:	offended, shocked
hobble (v)	:	to walk in a limping manner
incredible (adj)	:	unbelievable
shrine (n)	:	building or place associated with something deeply respected
shrug (v)	:	to lift shoulders high to show difference

row (n)	:	noisy quarrel
ritual (n)	:	religious act, ceremony
premises (n)	:	campus
stoop (v)	:	to bend
cordialities (n)	:	exchange of wishes
eradicate (v)	:	to remove
thoroughfare (n)	:	way for all
detour (n)	:	a roundabout way
trampled (v)	:	crushed, trodden

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS :

A. Choose the correct alternative:

1. Obi and his wife were married for_____ years

   (a) five (b) four

   (c) two (d) one

2. _____ was the name of Obi's wife.

   (a) Michael (b) Nancy

   (c) Odanta (d) Marry

3. _____ was the name of the school.

   (a) Missonary School (b) Ndume Central School

   (c) Secondary School (d) Onitsha School

4. _____ died in the village.

   (a) A little boy (b) An old man

   (c) A young woman (d) A priest

B. Answer the following questions in 30 to 40 words each :

1. Why was Obi given the responsibility of the Ndume Central school?
2. What were the two aims set by Obi for the betterment of the school?

3. What did the priest of Ani tell Obi about the path?
4. Why was the path very important for the villagers?
5. What did the diviner suggest at the death of a young woman?
6. Describe the report prepared by the white supervisor.

C. Answer the following questions in 125 words each :

1. Describe the condition of the Ndume Central School before and after Michael Obi.
2. Draw a character sketch of Obi.
3. Why were the school building and the hedges ruined?

D. State True or False:

1. Michael Obi was 30 years of age. (True/False)
2. Nancy was the name of Obi's wife. (True/False)
3. A young woman died in a road accident in the village. (True/False)
4. Michael Obi and the priest of Ani had a heated discussion between them. (True/False)
5. The White Supervisor wrote a good report of Obi's work in the school. (True/False)

E. Creative Writing :

Extend the story and imaginatively create a new end of the story.

8. The Gift Of The Magi

O. Henry

About the writer :

William Sydney Porter (1862- 1910) wrote under the pen name O. Henry. He is a short story writer of the United States of America. He has written six hundred stories, noted for their blending of humour and pathos, O.Henry's stories are remarkable for the ingenious twist of a surprise ending. He is regarded as one of the grandmasters of modern short stories.

* * * * *

One dollar and eighty seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it, which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at $8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The 'Dillingham' had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per week. Now when the income was shrunk to $20, the letters of Dillingham looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called 'Jim' and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della, which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with a powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling- something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier- glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in a $8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its colour within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's, the other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out of the window someday to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knees and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with a brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: Mme Sofronie, Hair Goods of All Kinds. One flight up Della ran, and collected herself panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly, looked the 'Sofronie'.

'Will you buy my hair?' asked Della. 'I buy hair', said Madame. 'Take your hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it.'

Down rippled the brown cascade.

'Twenty dollars', said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand.

'Give it to me quick', said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain, simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by mere precious ornamentation – as all good things should do. It was even worthy of the watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value, the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way to little prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends- a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

'If Jim doesn't kill me', she said to herself, 'before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do-oh, what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?'

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove, hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stairway down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered; 'Please, God, make him think, I am still pretty.'

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two- and had to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed on Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

'Jim, darling', she cried, 'don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present, it'll grow out again- you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast, Say "Merry Christmas!" Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice- what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you.'

'You've cut off your hair?' asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet, even after the hardest mental labour.

'Cut it off and sold it', said Della. 'Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?'

Jim looked about the room curiously.

'You say your hair is gone?' he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

'You needn't look for it', said Della. 'It's sold. I tell you- sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. May be the hairs of my head were numbered', she went on with the sudden serious sweetness, 'but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?'

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The Magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

'Don't make any mistake, Dell', he said, 'about me. I don't think that there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going awhile at first'.

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs- the set of combs, side and back, that Della had wished for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jewelled rims- just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: 'My hair grows so fast, Jim!'

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, 'Oh, oh!' Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

'Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it.'

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put the hands under the back of his head and smiled.

'Dell', said he, 'let's put our Christmas presents away and keep'em a while. They're too nice to use just as present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on.'

The Magi as you know, were wise men- wonderfully wise men- who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the Magi.

About the Story:

'The Gift of the Magi' is one of the writer's most celebrated stories. It narrates a strange incident in the life of a poor young couple who sacrificed their most precious possessions for each other's joy on the eve of Christmas.

GLOSSARY

Magi (n)	:	The three wise men thought to be kings or astrologers who followed a star to visit infant Christ and gave gifts

bulldozing (v)	:	forcing someone to do something although they might not want, bullying
cheeks burned (v)	:	felt ashamed
sniffle (n)	:	the act of breathing noisily and quickly, especially when one has a cold or has been crying
parsimony (n)	:	not willing to spend money or give money
instigate (v)	:	to initiate (an event or action)
mendicancy (n)	:	asking public for food and money especially for religious reasons
vestibule (n)	:	lobby or entrance where hats and coats may be left
coax (v)	:	to persuade gradually or gently to do something
appertaining (v)	:	to be connected to or belong to
longitudinal (adj.)	:	in length, measured length- wise
sterling (adj.)	:	something very good, of a high standard
Queen of Sheba (n)	:	the famous queen who visited King Solomon and gave him many rich gifts
King Solomon (n)	:	King of Israel in the Old Testament regarded as the wisest one
janitor (n)	:	care taker of a building
rippling (v)	:	to cause to move in small waves or something like this
cascade (n)	:	a small waterfall, a mass of something falling or hanging down
faltered (v)	:	spoke hesitantly or reluctantly
the Sofronie	:	it stands for grace and dignity
fob (n)	:	a small pocket
quail (n)	:	a small bird hunted for food; to feel and show fear
prudence (n)	:	wisdom
mammoth (n) (adj)	:	also a big task; large hairy elephant
truant (n)	:	who stays or runs away from school without seeking permission
Coney Island (n)	:	an amusement center near New York

wriggled (v)	:	a short quick twisting and turning movement
trance (n)	:	a dreamy state
inconsequential (adj.)	:	irrelevant
coveted (adj.)	:	much desired
dandy (adj.)	:	splendid, first rate thing
adorned (adj.)	:	decorated
Babe in the manger (n)	:	the infant Christ who was laid in the manger; a long open box for horses or cattle to eat from

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS :

A. Choose the correct alternative:

1. The amount Della got from Madame was
   (a) 15 dollars (b) 20 dollars
   (c) 18 dollars (d) 10 dollars
2. Della's hair reached below the knees and made itself a ———————— for her.
   (a) scarf (b) belt
   (c) garment (d) cap
3. Jim needed a new ------ and he was without gloves.
   (a) pen (b) ring
   (c) bag (d) overcoat
4. The chain was made of:
   (a) platinum (b) gold
   (c) silver (d) diamond

B. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

1. How were Jim and Della planning to celebrate Christmas?
2. What were the two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which Jim and Della took mighty pride? By whom was Jim's possession transferred to him ?
3. Why did Della go to Madame Sofronie?
4. Jim said "What a beautiful nice gift I have got for you". What was the gift? How did Della react?
5. "It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror." What explanation did Jim give for his reaction on Della's hair?

C. Answer the following questions in 115-125 words each:

1. Describe the anxiety of Della after she had sacrificed her hair.
2. Why does the writer refer to the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon? What do you understand by it? Explain.
3. Throw light on the remarkable qualities that Jim and Della had.
4. In the title "The Gift of the Magi" what does the phrase 'the Magi' stand for?

D. State True or False:

1. Life is not made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles with sniffles predominating. (True/False)
2. Della saved eighty seven cents of which sixty seven cents were in pennies. (True/False)
3. Della and Jim always quarreled with each other. (True/False)
4. Jim was late many times. (True/False)
5. Jim bought a beautiful necklace for Della on Christmas eve. (True/False)

E. Creative Writing :

"Presenting a gift to someone is a matter of joy."

Imagine that you have to present a gift to someone very dear to you. Narrate your experience.

9. The Last Lesson

Alphonse Daudet

About the writer :

Alphonse Daudet was a French novelist and a short-story writer and has more than three dozen works of literature to his credit. He is considered to be one of the most iconic names of French Literature. He portrayed human emotions in a very realistic manner.

* * * * *

I started for school very late that morning and was in great dread of a scolding, especially because M. Hamel had said that he would question us on participles, and I did not know the first word about them. For a moment I thought of running away and spending the day out of doors. It was so warm, so bright! The birds were chirping at the edge of the woods; and in the open field back of the sawmill the Prussian soldiers were drilling. It was all much more tempting than the rule for participles, but I had the strength to resist, and hurried off to school.

When I passed the town hall there was a crowd infront of the bulletin-board. For the last two years all our bad news had come from there — the lost battles, the draft, the orders of the commanding officer — and I thought to myself, without stopping, "What can be the matter now?"

Then, as I hurried by as fast as I could go, the blacksmith, Wachter, who was there, with his apprentice, reading the bulletin, called after me, "Don't go so fast, bub; you'll get to your school in plenty of time!"

I thought he was making fun of me, and reached M. Hamel's little garden all out of breath.

Usually, when school began, there was a great bustle, which could be heard out in the street, the opening and closing of desks, lessons repeated in unison, very loud, with our hands over our ears to understand better, and the teacher's great ruler rapping on the table. But now it was all so still! I had counted on the commotion to get to my desk without being seen; but, of course, that day everything had to be as quiet as Sunday morning. Through the window I saw my classmates, already in their places, and M. Hamel walking

up and down with his terrible iron ruler under his arm. I had to open the door and go in before everybody. You can imagine how I blushed and how frightened I was.

But nothing happened. M. Hamel saw me and said very kindly, "Go to your place quickly, little Franz. We were beginning without you."

I jumped over the bench and sat down at my desk. Not till then, when I had got a little over my fright, did I see that our teacher had on his beautiful green coat, his frilled shirt, and the little black silk cap, all embroidered, that he never wore except on inspection and prize days. Besides, the whole school seemed so strange and solemn. But the thing that surprised me most was to see, on the back benches that were always empty, the village people sitting quietly like ourselves; old Hauser, with his three-cornered hat, the former mayor, the former postmaster, and several others besides. Everybody looked sad; and Hauser had brought an old primer, thumbed at the edges, and he held it open on his knees with his great spectacles lying across the pages.

While I was wondering about it all, M. Hamel mounted his chair, and, in the same grave and gentle tone which he had used to me, said, "My children, this is the last lesson I shall give you. The order has come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The new master comes tomorrow. This is your last French lesson. I want you to be very attentive."

What a thunderclap these words were to me!

Oh, the wretches; that was what they had put up at the town-hall!

My last French lesson! Why, I hardly knew how to write! I should never learn anymore! I must stop there, then! Oh, how sorry I was for not learning my lessons, for seeking birds' eggs, or going sliding on the Saar! My books, that had seemed such a nuisance a while ago, so heavy to carry, my grammar, and my history of the saints, were old friends now that I couldn't give up. And M. Hamel, too; the idea that he was going away, that I should never see him again, made me forget all about his ruler and how cranky he was.

Poor man! It was in honour of this last lesson that he had put on his fine Sunday clothes, and now I understood why the old men of the village were sitting there in the back of the room. It was because they were sorry, too, that they had not gone to school more. It was their way of thanking our master for his forty years of faithful service and of showing their respect for the country that was theirs no more.

While I was thinking of all this, I heard my name called. It was my turn to recite. What would I not have given to be able to say that dreadful rule for the participle all

through, very loud and clear, and without one mistake? But I got mixed up on the first words and stood there, holding on to my desk, my heart beating, and not daring to look up.

I heard M. Hamel say to me, "I won't scold you, little Franz; you must feel bad enough. See how it is! Every day we have said to ourselves, 'Bah! I've plenty of time. I'll learn it tomorrow.' And now you see where we've come out. Ah, that's the great trouble with Alsace; she puts off learning till tomorrow. Now those fellows out there will have the right to say to you, 'How is it; you pretend to be Frenchmen, and yet you can neither speak nor write your own language?' But you are not the worst, poor little Franz. We've all a great deal to reproach ourselves with."

"Your parents were not anxious enough to have you learn. They preferred to put you to work on a farm or at the mills, so as to have a little more money. And I? I've been to blame also. Have I not often sent you to water my flowers instead of learning your lessons? And when I wanted to go fishing, did I not just give you a holiday?"

Then, from one thing to another, M. Hamel went on to talk of the French language, saying that it was the most beautiful language in the world — the clearest, the most logical; that we must guard it among us and never forget it, because when people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language it is as if they had the key to their prison. Then he opened a grammar and read us our lesson. I was amazed to see how well I understood it. All he said seemed so easy, so easy! I think, too, that I had never listened so carefully, and that he had never explained everything with so much patience. It seemed almost as if the poor man wanted to give us all he knew before going away, and to put it all into our heads at one stroke.

After the grammar, we had a lesson in writing. That day M.Hamel had new copies for us, written in a beautiful round hand— France, Alsace, France, Alsace. They looked like little flags floating everywhere in the school-room, hung from the rod at the top of our desks. You ought to have seen how everyone set to work, and how quiet it was! The only sound was the scratching of the pens over the paper. Once some beetles flew in; but nobody paid any attention to them, not even the littlest ones, who worked right on tracing their fish-hooks, as if that was French, too. On the roof the pigeons cooed very low, and I thought to myself, "Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons?"

Whenever I looked up from my writing I saw M. Hamel sitting motionless in his chair and gazing first at one thing, then at another, as if he wanted to fix in his mind just how everything looked in that little school-room. Fancy! For forty years he had been there in the same place, with his garden outside the window and his class in front of him, just like

that. Only the desks and benches had been worn smooth; the walnut-trees in the garden were taller, and the hop vine that he had planted himself twined about the windows to the roof. How it must have broken his heart to leave it all, poor man; to hear his sister moving about in the room above, packing their trunks! For they must leave the country next day.

But he had the courage to hear every lesson to the very last. After the writing, we had a lesson in history, and then the babies chanted their *ba, be bi, bo.* Down there at the back of the room old Hauser had put on his spectacles and, holding his primer in both hands, spelled the letters with them. You could see that he, too, was crying; his voice trembled with emotion, and it was so funny to hear him that we all wanted to laugh and cry. Ah, how well I remember it, that last lesson!

All at once the church-clock struck twelve. Then the Angelus. At the same moment the trumpets of the Prussians, returning from drill, sounded under our windows. M. Hamel stood up, very pale, in his chair. I never saw him look so tall.

"My friends," said he, "I—I—" But something choked him. He could not go on.

Then he turned to the blackboard, took a piece of chalk, and, bearing on with all his might, he wrote as large as he could —

"Vive La France!"

Then he stopped and leaned his head against the wall, and, without a word, he made a gesture to us with his hand —

"School is dismissed —you may go."

About the Story :

'The Last Lesson' narrates an event about the year 1870 when Prussian forces under Bismarck captured France. The new Prussian rule discontinued the teaching of French in the schools of the two districts- Alsace and Lorraine. The French teachers were asked to leave. Now M. Hamel could no longer stay in his old school. Still he gave the last lesson to his students with utmost sincerity.

GLOSSARY

scolding (v)	:	speaking angrily
participles (n)	:	verb form
drilling (v)	:	exercising in morning
resist (v)	:	to try to stop
apprentice (n)	:	a person who learns the skills

unison (n)	:	in one voice
still (ad.) (adv)	:	quiet or calm
commotion (n)	:	great noise, excitement
terrible (adj)	:	extremely bad, great shock
blushed (v)	:	became red in the face
embroidered (adj)	:	decorated cloth patterns by sewing on it with thread
spectacles (n)	:	eye glasses
attentive (adj)	:	to listen carefully
nuisance (n)	:	a person or thing causing trouble
cranky (n)	:	a person who behaves in a strange way
pretend (v)	:	to put an act or show
logical (adj)	:	reasonable
floating (adj)	:	buoyant or suspended in water or air; fluctuating
scratching (v)	:	to rub skin
twined (v, adj)	:	encircled, coiled, interlaced
chanted (v)	:	to say repeatedly in a sing-song tone
struck (v)	:	strike past tense, to hit sb/sth
trumpet (v, n)	:	proclaim great happiness; a brass material instrument with a flared bell

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS :

A. Choose the correct alternative :

1. Who was reading the bulletin?
   (a) Mr.Hamel (b) Black smith
   (c) Commanding officer (d) Little Franz

2. "What a thunderclap these words were to me". The words were-------.
   (a) loud and clear. (b) startling and unexpected.
   (c) pleasant and welcome. (d) heavy and inaudible.

3. What made him forget all about Mr.Hamel's ruler and cranky behavior?
   (a) seeking bird's eggs (b) going sliding on the saar.
   (c) the idea that he was going away. (d) Mr.Hamel allowed him in the class.

4. Which language according to M.Hamel was the most beautiful and the most logical?
   (a) German (b) French
   (c) Spanish (d) English

B. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

1. Why was the narrator scared of going to school that morning?
2. What did Franz see as he passed the town hall?
3. Who were the village people? How did they look?
4. Why did Mr Hamel say that it was his last lesson?
5. How did Franz's attitude towards his books and Mr Hamel change?
6. Why had Franz not been able to learn much at school?
7. What did Mr Hamel say about the French language?
8. How did Mr Hamel bid farewell to his school?

C. Answer the following questions in 115-125 words each:

1. 'It was the day of surprises for Franz'. What surprises did he notice at school that day?
2. Franz hated school at first, but he suddenly began to like it. Comment.
3. What ideas of Mr Hamel's character do you form after reading the last lesson?
4. Draw a character sketch of Mr Hamel.

D. State True or False:

1. The Prussian soldiers were running. (True/False)
2. That day everything had to be as quiet as Sunday morning.(True/False)
3. His sister was packing their trunks. (True/False)
4. Mr Hamel had no cap on his head. (True/False)
5. Franz was happy to hear school being dismissed. (True/False)

E. Creative Writing :

1. Imagine that you are little Franz and you see a crowd near a bulletin board .What ideas would come into your mind at that time?
2. Have you ever changed your opinion about someone or something that you had earlier liked or disliked? Narrate what led you to change your mind.

10. Going Places

A. R. Barton

About the writer :

A.R. Barton is a modern writer, who lives in Zurich and writes in English. He has authored many stories that are mainly concerned with the problems and predicaments of the adolescents.

* * * * *

"When I leave," Sophie said, coming home from school,"I'm going to have a boutique."

Janise, linking arms with her along the street; looked doubtful.

"Takes money, Soaf, something like that."

"I'll find it," Sophie said, staring far down the street.

"Take you a long time to save that much."

"Well I'll be a manager then - yes, of course - to begin with. Till I've got enough. But anyway, I know just how it's all going to look."

"They wouldn't make you manager straight off, Soaf."

"I'll be like Mary Quant," Sophie said. "I'll be a natural.They'll see it from the start. I'll have the most amazing shop this city's ever seen."

Jansie, knowing they were both earmarked for the biscuit factory, became melancholy. She wished Sophie wouldn't say these things.

When they reached Sophie's street Jansie said, "It's only a few months away now, Soaf, you really should be sensible. They don't pay well for shop work; you know that, your dad would never allow it."

"Or an actress. Now there's real money in that. Yes, and I could, may be, have the boutique on the side. Actresses don't work full time, do they? Anyway, that or a fashion designer, you know - something a bit sophisticated".

And she turned in through the open street door leaving Jansie standing in the rain.

"If ever I come into money I'll buy a boutique."

"Huh - if you ever come into money... if you ever come into money you'll buy us a blessed decent house to live in, thank you very much."

Sophie's father was scooping shepherd's pie into his mouth as hard as he could go, his plump face still grimy and sweat - marked from the day.

"She thinks money grows on trees, doesn't she, Dad?" said little Derek, hanging on the back of his father's chair.

Their mother sighed.

Sophie watched her back stooped over the sink and wondered at the incongruity of the delicate bow which fastened her apron strings. The delicate-seeming bow and the crooked back. The evening had already blacked in the windows and the small room was steamy from the stove and cluttered with the heavy-breathing man in his vest at the table and the dirty washing piled up in the corner. Sophie felt a tightening in her throat. She went to look for her brother Geoff.

He was kneeling on the floor in the next room tinkering with a part of his motorcycle over some newspaper spread on the carpet. He was three years out of school, an apprentice mechanic, travelling to his work each day to the far side of the city. He was almost grown up now, and she suspected areas of his life about which she knew nothing, about which he never spoke. He said little at all, ever, voluntarily. Words had to be prized out of him like stones out of the ground. And she was jealous of his silence. When he wasn't speaking it was as though he was away somewhere, out there in the world in those places she had never been. Whether they were only the outlying districts of the city, or places beyond in the surrounding country - who knew? - they attained a special fascination simply because they were unknown to her and remained out of her reach.

Perhaps there were also people, exotic, interesting people of whom he never spoke - it was possible, though he was quiet and didn't make new friends easily. She longed to know them. She wished she could be admitted more deeply into her brother's affections and that someday he might take her with him. Though their father forbade it and Geoff had never expressed an opinion, she knew he thought her too young. And she was impatient. She was conscious of a vast world out there waiting for her and she knew instinctively that she would feel as at home there as in the city which had always been her home. It expectantly awaited her arrival. She saw herself riding there behind Geoff. He wore new, shining black leathers and she a yellow dress with a kind of cape that flew out behind. There was the sound of applause as the world rose to greet them.

He sat frowning at the oily component he cradled in his hands, as though it were a small dumb animal and he was willing it to speak.

"I met Danny Casey," Sophie said.

He looked around abruptly. "Where?"

"In the arcade - funnily enough."

"It's never true."

"I did too."

"You told Dad?"

She shook her head, chastened at his unawareness that he was always the first to share her secrets.

"I don't believe it."

"There I was looking at the clothes in Royce's window when someone came and stood beside me, and I looked around and who should it be but Danny Casey."

"All right, what does he look like?"

"Oh come on, you know what he looks like."

"Close to, I mean."

"Well, he has green eyes. Gentle eyes. And he's not so tall as you'd think..." She wondered if she should say about his teeth, but decided against it.

Their father had washed when he came in and his face and arms were shiny and pink and he smelled of soap. He switched on the television, tossed one of little Derek's shoes from his chair onto the sofa, and sat down with a grunt.

"Sophie met Danny Casey," Geoff said.

Sophie wriggled where she was sitting at the table.

Her father turned his head on his thick neck to look at her. His expression was one of disdain.

"It's true," Geoff said.

"I once knew a man who had known Tom Finney," his father said reverently to the television. "But that was a long time ago."

"You told us," Geoff said.

"Casey might be that good some day."

"Better than that even. He's the best."

"If he keeps his head on his shoulders. If they look after him properly. A lot of distractions for a youngster in the game these days."

"He'll be all right. He's with the best team in the country."

"He's very young yet."

"He's older than I am."

"Too young really for the first team."

"You can't argue with that sort of ability."

"He's going to buy a shop," Sophie said from the table.

Her father grimaced. "Where'd you hear that?"

"He told me so.

"He muttered something inaudible and dragged himself round in his chair. "This another of your wild stories?"

"She met him in the arcade," Geoff said, and told him how it had been.

"One of these days you're going to talk yourself into a load of trouble," her father said aggressively.

"Geoff knows it's true, don't you Geoff?"

"He won't believe you -though he'd like to."

* * *

The table lamp cast an amber glow across her brother's bedroom wall, and across the large poster of United's first team squad and the row of coloured photographs beneath, three of them of the young Irish prodigy, Casey.

"Promise you'll tell no-one?" Sophie said.

"Nothing to tell, is there?"

"Promise, Geoff - Dad'd murder me."

"Only if he thought it was true."

"Please, Geoff."

"Christ, Sophie, you're still at school. Casey must have strings of girls."

"No he doesn't."

"How could you know that?" he jeered.

"He told me, that's how."

"As if anyone would tell a girl something like that."

"Yes he did. He isn't like that. He's... quiet."

"Not as quiet as all that - apparently."

"It was nothing like that, Geoff - it was me spoke first. When I saw who it was, I said, "Excuse me, but aren't you Danny Casey?" And he looked sort of surprised. And he said, "Yes, that's right." And I knew it must be him because he had the accent, you know, like when they interviewed him on the television. So I asked him for an autograph for little Derek, but neither of us had any paper or a pen. So then we just talked a bit. About the clothes in Royce's window. He seemed lonely. After all, it's a long way from the west of Ireland. And then, just as he was going, he said, if I would care to meet him next week he would give me an autograph then. Of course, I said I would."

"As if he'd ever show up."

"You do believe me now, don't you?"

He dragged his jacket, which was shiny and shapeless from the back of the chair and pushed his arms into it. She wished he paid more attention to his appearance. Wished he cared more about clothes. He was tall with a strong dark face. Handsome, she thought.

"It's the unlikeliest thing I ever heard," he said.

* * *

On Saturday they made their weekly pilgrimage to watch United. Sophie and her father and little Derek went down near the goal - Geoff, as always, went with his mates higher up. United won two-nil and Casey drove in the second goal, a blend of innocence and Irish genius, going round the two big defenders on the edge of the penalty area, with her father screaming for him to pass, and beating the hesitant goalkeeper from a dozen yards. Sophie glowed with pride. Afterwards Geoff was ecstatic.

"I wish he was an Englishman," someone said on the bus.

"Ireland'll win the World Cup," little Derek told his mother when Sophie brought him home. Her father was gone to the pub to celebrate.

"What's this you've been telling?" Jansie said, next week.

"About what?"

"Your Geoff told our Frank you met Danny Casey.

"This wasn't an inquisition, just Jansie being nosey. But Sophie was startled.

"Oh, that.

Jansie frowned, sensing she was covering. "Yes - that."

"Well - yes, I did."

"You never did?" Jansie exclaimed.

Sophie glared at the ground. Damn that Geoff, this was a Geoff thing not a Jansie thing. It was meant to be something special just between them. Something secret. It wasn't a Jansie kind of thing at all. Tell gawky Jansie something like that and the whole neighborhood would get to know it. Damn that Geoff, was nothing sacred?

"It's a secret - meant to be."

"I'll keep a secret, Soaf, you know that."

"I wasn't going to tell anyone. There'll be a right old row if my dad gets to hear about it.

Jansie blinked. "A row? I'd have thought he'd be chuffed as anything.

She realized then that Jansie didn't know about the date bit - Geoff hadn't told about that. She breathed more easily. So Geoff hadn't let her down after all. He believed in her after all. After all some things might be sacred.

"It was just a little thing really. I asked him for an autograph, but we hadn't any paper or a pen so it was no good." How much had Geoff said?

"Jesus, I wish I'd have been there."

"Of course, my dad didn't want to believe it. You know what a misery he is. But the last thing I need is queues of people round our house asking him, "What's all this about Danny Casey?" He'd murder me. And you know how my mum gets when there's a row.

Jansie said, hushed, "You can trust me, Soaf, you know that."

* * *

After dark she walked by the canal, along a sheltered path lighted only by the glare of the lamps from the wharf across the water, and the unceasing drone of the city was muffled and distant. It was a place she had often played in when she was a child. There was a wooden bench beneath a solitary elm where lovers sometimes came. She sat down to wait. It was the perfect places; she had always thought so, for a meeting of this kind, for those who wished not to be observed. She knew he would approve.

For some while, waiting, she imagined his coming. She watched along the canal, seeing him come out of the shadows, imagining her own consequent excitement. Not until sometime had elapsed did she begin balancing against this the idea of his not coming.

Here I sit, she said to herself, wishing Danny would come, wishing he would come and sensing the time passing. I feel the pangs of doubt stirring inside me. I watch for him but still there is no sign of him. I remember Geoff saying he would never come, and how none of them believed me when I told them. I wonder what will I do, what can I tell them now if he doesn't come? But we know how it was, Danny and me - that's the main thing. How can you help what people choose to believe? But all the same, it makes me despondent, this knowing I'll never be able to show them they're wrong to doubt me.

She waited, measuring in this way the changes taking place in her. Resignation was no sudden thing.

Now I have become sad, she thought. And it is a hard burden to carry, this sadness. Sitting here waiting and knowing he will not come I can see the future and how I will have to live with this burden. They, of course, will doubt me, as they always doubted me, but I will have to hold up my head remembering how it was. Already I envisage the slow walk home and Geoff's disappointed face when I tell him, "He didn't come, that Danny." And then he'll fly out and slam the door. "But we know how it was," I shall tell myself, "Danny and me." It is a hard thing, this sadness.

She climbed the crumbling steps to the street. Outside the pub she passed her father's bicycle propped against the wall, and was glad. He would not be there when she got home.

"Excuse me, but aren't you Danny Casey?"

Coming through the arcade she pictured him again outside Royce's.

He turns, reddening slightly. "Yes, that's right."

"I watch you every week, with my dad and my brothers. We think you're great."

"Oh, well now - that's very nice."

"I wonder - would you mind signing an autograph?"

His eyes are on the same level as your own. His nose is freckled and turns upwards slightly, and when he smiles he does so shyly, exposing teeth with gaps between. His eyes are green, and when he looks straight at you they seem to shimmer. They seem gentle, almost afraid. Like a gazelle's. And you look away. You let his eyes run over you a little. And then you come back to find them, slightly breathless.

And he says, "I don't seem to have a pen at all."

You realize you haven't either.

"My brothers will be very sorry," you say.

And afterwards you wait there alone in the arcade for a long while, standing where he stood, remembering the soft melodious voice, the shimmer of green eyes. No taller than you. No bolder than you. The prodigy. The innocent genius. The great Danny Casey.

And she saw it all again, last Saturday — saw him ghost past the lumbering defenders, heard the fifty thousand catch their breath as he hovered momentarily over the ball, and then the explosion of sound as he struck it crisply into the goal, the sudden thunderous eruption of exultant approbation.

About the story :

The story is about unrealistic dreams and how one indulges in them knowing well that they have little possibility of coming true. The story seems to suggest that it is good to dream but one should be grounded in reality.

GLOSSARY

boutique (n)	:	a small shop that sells fashionable clothes
earmarked (v)	:	set for future
sophisticated (adj)	:	a lot of experience
decent (adj)	:	standard
cluttered (adj)	:	untidy place
tightening (v)	:	suffocated
tinkering (v)	:	trying to repair
fascination (n)	:	attraction
exotic (adj)	:	unusual
forbade (v)	:	did not allow
applause (n)	:	praise
component (n)	:	part
grunt (v)	:	short low sound
disdain (n)	:	the feeling not good enough to be respected
inaudible (adj)	:	that which cannot be heard
aggressively (adv)	:	ready to fight
prodigy (n)	:	genius
dragged (v)	:	pulled

hesitant (adj)	:	slow to speak
sheltered (v)	:	protected
chuffed (adj)	:	happy
despondent (adj)	:	without hope
crumble (v)	:	to break
shimmer (v)	:	to shine with a soft light

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS :

A. Choose the correct alternative:

1. Whom did Sophie meet in Royce's window?
   (a) Geoff (b) Jansie
   (c) Danny Casey (d) Manager
2. Danny Casey belonged to ———————
   (a) England (b) Ireland
   (c) India (d) America
3. Where did Sophie go, sit and wait wishing———————
   (a) Danny would come (b) her father would come
   (c) Geoff would come (d) Jansie would come
4. What was Sophie's father scooping into his mouth?
   (a) shepherd's pie (b) apple pie
   (c) sweetmeat (d) pudding

B. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

1. Why was Sophie's dream about her future? Was her dream realistic?
2. Who was little Derek? What did he say about Sophie?
3. Why did Jansie discourage Sophie from entertaining such dreams?
4. Why was Sophie jealous of Geoff's silence?
5. How did Sophie include her brother Geoff in her fantasy of the future?
6. Why did Sophie call Jansie nosey?
7. Why was Sophie glad seeing the bicycle of her father standing against the pub wall?
8. Which was the only occasion when sophie got to see Danny Casey in person?

C. Answer the following questions in 115-125 words each:

1. Sophie and Jansie were classmates and friends. What were the differences between them that showed up in the story?
2. Sophie's real world is different from her fantasies.Explain.
3. What did Sophie tell her brother Geoff about Danny Casey?
4. Comment on the aptness of the title 'Going Places'.

D. State True or False:

1. Jansie keeps all information and secrets to herself. (True/False)
2. Sophie's brother is an apprentice mechanic. (True/False)
3. Sophie fantasizes about Gareth Bale, an Irish football player. (True/False)
4. Sophie wanted to buy a decent house for her parents. (True/False)

E. Creative Writing :

1. If you were Danny Casey, what would you think about Sophie?
2. It is natural for teenagers to have unrealistic dreams. What would you say are the benefits and disadvantages of such fantasizing?

11. The Rattrap

Selma Lagerlof

About the writer

Selma Lagerlof was a Swedish writer whose stories have been translated into many languages. A universal theme runs through all of them - a belief that the essential goodness in a human being can be awakened through understanding and love.

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Once upon a time there was a man who went around selling small rattraps of wire. He made them himself at odd moments, from the material he got by begging in the stores or at the big farms. But even so, the business was not especially profitable, so he had to resort to both begging and petty thievery to keep body and soul together. Even so, his clothes were in rags, his cheeks were sunken, and hunger gleamed in his eyes. No one can imagine how sad and monotonous life can appear to such a vagabond, who plods along the road, left to his own meditations. But one day this man had fallen into a line of thought, which really seemed to him entertaining. He had naturally been thinking of his rattraps when suddenly he was struck by the idea that the whole world about him - the whole world with its lands and seas, its cities and villages - was nothing but a big rattrap. It had never existed for any other purpose than to set baits for people. It offered riches and joys, shelter and food, heat and clothing, exactly as the rattrap offered cheese and pork, and as soon as anyone let himself be tempted to touch the bait, it closed in on him, and then everything came to an end. The world had, of course, never been very kind to him, so it gave him unwonted joy to think ill of it in this way. It became a cherished pastime of his, during many dreary plodding, to think of people he knew who had let themselves be caught in the dangerous snare, and of others who were still circling around the bait. One dark evening as he was trudging along the road he caught sight of a little gray cottage by the roadside, and he knocked on the door to ask shelter for the night. Nor was he refused. Instead of the sour faces which ordinarily met him, the owner, who was an old man without wife or child, was happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness. Immediately he put the porridge pot on the fire and gave him supper; then he carved off such a big slice from his tobacco roll that it was enough both for the stranger's pipe and his own. Finally he got out

an old pack of cards and played 'mjolis' with his guest until bedtime. The old man was just as generous with his confidences as with his porridge and tobacco. The guest was informed at once that in his days of prosperity his host had been a crofter at Ramsjo Ironworks and had worked on the land. Now that he was no longer able to do day labour, it was his cow which supported him. Yes, that bossy was extraordinary. She could give milk for the creamery every day, and last month he had received all of thirty kronor in payment. The stranger must have seemed incredulous, for the old man got up and went to the window, took down a leather pouch which hung on a nail in the very window frame, and picked out three wrinkled ten-kronor bills. These he held up before the eyes of his guest, nodding knowingly, and then stuffed them back into the pouch.

The next day both men got up in good season. The crofter was in a hurry to milk his cow, and the other man probably thought he should not stay in bed when the head of the house had gotten up. They left the cottage at the same time. The crofter locked the door and put the key in his pocket. The man with the rattraps said goodbye and thank you, and thereupon each went his own way. But half an hour later the rattrap pedlar stood again before the door. He did not try to get in, however. He only went up to the window, smashed a pane, stuck in his hand, and got hold of the pouch with the thirty kronor. He took the money and thrust it into his own pocket. Then he hung the leather pouch very carefully back in its place and went away. As he walked along with the money in his pocket he felt quite pleased with his smartness. He realized, of course, that at first he dared not continue on the public highway, but must turn off the road, into the woods. During the first hours this caused him no difficulty. Later in the day it became worse, for it was a big and confusing forest which he had gotten into. He tried, to be sure, to walk in a definite direction, but the paths twisted back and forth so strangely! He walked and walked without coming to the end of the wood, and finally he realized that he had only been walking around in the same part of the forest. All at once he recalled his thoughts about the world and the rattrap. Now his own turn had come. He had let himself be fooled by a bait and had been caught. The whole forest, with its trunks and branches, its thickets and fallen logs, closed in upon him like an impenetrable prison from which he could never escape. It was late in December. Darkness was already descending over the forest. This increased the danger, and increased also his gloom and despair. Finally he saw no way out, and he sank down on the ground, tired to death, thinking that his last moment had come. But just as he laid his head on the ground, he heard a sound - a hard regular thumping. There was no doubt as to what that was. He raised himself. "Those are the hammer strokes from an iron mill", he thought. "There must be people nearby". He summoned all his strength, got up, and staggered in the direction of the sound. The Ramsjo Ironworks, which are now

closed down, were, not so long ago, a large plant, with smelter, rolling mill, and forge. In the summertime long lines of heavily loaded barges and scows slid down the canal, which led to a large inland lake, and in the wintertime the roads near the mill were black from all the coal dust which sifted down from the big charcoal crates. During one of the long dark evenings just before Christmas, the master smith and his helper sat in the dark forge near the furnace waiting for the pig iron, which had been put in the fire, to be ready to put on the anvil. Every now and then one of them got up to stir the glowing mass with a long iron bar, returning in a few moments, dripping with perspiration, though, as was the custom, he wore nothing but a long shirt and a pair of wooden shoes. All the time there were many sounds to be heard in the forge. The big bellows groaned and the burning coal cracked. The fire boy shoveled charcoal into the maw of the furnace with a great deal of clatter. Outside roared the waterfall, and a sharp north wind whipped the rain against the brick-tiled roof. It was probably on account of all this noise that the blacksmith did not notice that a man had opened the gate and entered the forge, until he stood close up to the furnace. Surely it was nothing unusual for poor vagabonds without any better shelter for the night to be attracted to the forge by the glow of light which escaped through the sooty panes, and to come in to warm themselves in front of the fire. The blacksmiths glanced only casually and indifferently at the intruder. He looked the way people of his type usually did, with a long beard, dirty, ragged, and with a bunch of rattraps dangling on his chest. He asked permission to stay, and the master blacksmith nodded a haughty consent without honouring him with a single word. The tramp did not say anything, either. He had not come there to talk but only to warm himself and sleep.

In those days the Ramsjo iron mill was owned by a very prominent ironmaster, whose greatest ambition was to ship out good iron to the market. He watched both night and day to see that the work was done as well as possible, and at this very moment he came into the forge on one of his nightly rounds of inspection. Naturally the first thing he saw was the tall raga muffin who had eased his way so close to the furnace that steam rose from his wet rags. The ironmaster did not follow the example of the blacksmiths, who had hardly deigned to look at the stranger. He walked close up to him, looked him over very carefully, and then tore off his slouch hat to get a better view of his face. "But of course it is you, Nils O lof!" he said. "How you do look!" The man with the rattraps had never before seen their own master at Ramsjo and did not even know what his name was. But it occurred to him that if the fine gentleman thought he was an old acquaintance, he might perhaps throw him a couple of kronor. Therefore he did not want to undeceive him all at once. "Yes, God knows things have gone downhill with me", he said. "You should not have resigned from the regiment", said the ironmaster. "That was the mistake. If only I

had still been in the service at the time, it never would have happened. Well, now of course you will come home with me.'' To go along up to the manor house and be received by the owner like an old regimental comrade - that, however, did not please the tramp. ''No, I couldn't think of it!'' he said, looking quite alarmed. He thought of the thirty kronor. To go up to the manor house would be like throwing himself voluntarily into the lion's den. He only wanted a chance to sleep here in the forge and then sneak away as inconspicuously as possible. The ironmaster assumed that he felt embarrassed because of his miserable clothing. ''Please don't think that I have such a fine home that you cannot show yourself there'', He said... ''Elizabeth is dead, as you may already have heard. My boys are abroad, and there is no one at home except my oldest daughter and myself. We were just saying that it was too bad we didn't have any company for Christmas. Now come along with me and help us make the Christmas food disappear a little faster.''But the stranger said no, and no, and again no, and the iron master saw that he must give in. ''It looks as though Captain von Stanle preferred to stay with you tonight, Stjernstrom'', he said to the master blacksmith, and turned on his heel. But he laughed to himself as he went away, and the blacksmith, who knew him, understood very well that he had not said his last word. It was not more than half an hour before they heard the sound of carriage wheels outside the forge, and a new guest came in, but this time it was not the ironmaster. He had sent his daughter, apparently hoping that she would have better power of persuasion than he himself. She entered, followed by a valet, carrying on his arm a big fur coat. She was not at all pretty, but seemed modest and quite shy. In the forge everything was just as it had been earlier in the evening. The master blacksmith and his apprentice still sat on their bench, and iron and charcoal still glowed in the furnace. The stranger had stretched himself out on the floor and lay with a piece of pig iron under his head and his hat pulled down over his eyes. As soon as the young girl caught sight of him, she went up and lifted his hat. The man was evidently used to sleeping with one eye open. He jumped up abruptly and seemed to be quite frightened. ''My name is Edla Willmansson,'' said the young girl. ''My father came home and said that you wanted to sleep here in the forge tonight, and then I asked permission to come and bring you home to us. I am so sorry, Captain, that you are having such a hard time.'' She looked at him compassionately, with her heavy eyes, and then she noticed that the man was afraid. ''Either he has stolen something or else he has escaped from jail'', she thought, and added quickly, ''You may be sure, Captain, that you will be allowed to leave us just as freely as you came. Only please stay with us over Christmas Eve.'' She said this in such a friendly manner that the rattrap pedlar must have felt confidence in her. ''It would never have occurred to me that you would bother with me yourself, miss,'' he said. ''I will come at once.'' He accepted the fur coat, which the valet handed him with a deep bow,

threw it over his rags, and followed the young lady out to the carriage, without granting the astonished blacksmiths so much as a glance. But while he was riding up to the manor house he had evil forebodings. "Why the devil did I take that fellow's money?" he thought. "Now I am sitting in the trap and will never get out of it." The next day was Christmas Eve, and when their own master came into the dining room for breakfast he probably thought with satisfaction of his old regimental comrade whom he had run across so unexpectedly."First of all we must see to it that he gets a little flesh on his bones," he said to his daughter, who was busy at the table. "And then we must see that he gets something else to do than to run around the country selling rattraps." "It is queer that things have gone downhill with him as badly as that," said the daughter. "Last night I did not think there was anything about him to show that he had once been an educated man." "You must have patience, my little girl," said the father. "As soon as he gets clean and dressed up, you will see something different. Last night he was naturally embarrassed. The tramp manners will fall away from him with the tramp clothes." Just as he said this the door opened and the stranger entered. Yes, now he was truly clean and well dressed. The valet had bathed him, cut his hair, and shaved him. Moreover he was dressed in a good-looking suit of clothes which belonged to the ironmaster. He wore a white shirt and a starched collar and whole shoes. But although his guest was now so well groomed, their own master did not seem pleased. He looked at him with puckered brow, and it was easy to understand that when he had seen the strange fellow in the uncertain reflection from the furnace he might have made a mistake, but that now, when he stood there in broad daylight, it was impossible to mistake him for an old acquaintance. "What does this mean?" he thundered. The stranger made no attempt to dissimulate. He saw at once that the splendor had come to an end. "It is not my fault, sir," he said. "I never pretended to be anything but a poor trader, and I pleaded and begged to be allowed to stay in the forge. But no harm has been done. At worst I can put on my rags again and go away". "Well," said the ironmaster, hesitating a little, "it was not quite honest, either. You must admit that, and I should not be surprised if the sheriff would like to have something to say in the matter." The tramp took a step forward and struck the table with his fist. "Now I am going to tell you, Mr. Ironmaster, how things are," he said. "This whole world is nothing but a big rattrap. All the good things that are offered to you are nothing but cheese rinds and bits of pork, set out to drag a poor fellow into trouble. And if the sheriff comes now and locks me up for this, then you, Mr. Ironmaster, must remember that a day may come when you yourself may want to get a big piece of pork, and then you will get caught in the trap." The ironmaster began to laugh. "That was not so badly said, my good fellow. Perhaps we should let the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve. But now get out of here as fast as you can." But just as the man was

opening the door, the daughter said, "I think he ought to stay with us today. I don't want him to go." And with that she went and closed the door. "What in the world are you doing?" said the father. The daughter stood there quite embarrassed and hardly knew what to answer. That morning she had felt so happy when she thought how homelike and Christmassy she was going to make things for the poor hungry wretch. She could not get away from the idea all at once, and that was why she had interceded for the vagabond. "I am thinking of this stranger here," said the young girl. "He walks and walks the whole year long and there is probably not a single place in the whole country where he is welcome and can feel at home. Wherever he turns he is chased away. Always he is afraid of being arrested and cross examined. I should like to have him enjoy a day of peace with us here - just one in the whole year." The ironmaster mumbled something in his beard. He could not bring himself to oppose her. "It was all a mistake, of course," she continued. "But anyway I don't think we ought to chase away a human being whom we have asked to come here, and to whom we have promised Christmas cheer." "You do preach worse than a parson," said their own master. "I only hope you won't have to regret this." The young girl took the stranger by the hand and led him up to the table. "Now sit down and eat," she said, for she could see that her father had given in. The man with the rattraps said not a word; he only sat down and helped himself to the food. Time after time, he looked at the young girl who had interceded for him. Why had she done it? What could the crazy idea be? After that, Christmas Eve at Ramsjo passed just as it always had. The stranger did not cause any trouble because he did nothing but sleep. The whole forenoon he lay on the sofa in one of the guest rooms and slept at one stretch. At noon they woke him up so that he could have his share of the good Christmas fare, but after that he slept again. It seemed as though for many years he had not been able to sleep as quietly and safely as here at Ramsjo. In the evening, when the Christmas tree was lighted, they woke him up again, and he stood for a while in the drawing room, blinking as though the candlelight hurt him, but after that he disappeared again. Two hours later he was aroused once more. He then had to go down into the dining room and eat the Christmas fish and porridge. As soon as they got up from the table he went around to each one present and said thank you and good night, but when he came to the young girl she gave him to understand that it was her father's intention that the suit which he wore was to be a Christmas present - he did not have to return it; and if he wanted to spend next Christmas Eve in a place where he could rest in peace, and be sure that no evil would befall him, he would be welcomed back again. The man with the rattraps did not answer anything to this. He only stared at the young girl in boundless amazement. The next morning their own master and his daughter got up in good season to go to the early Christmas service. Their guest was still asleep, and

they did not disturb him. When, at about ten o'clock, they drove back from the church, the young girl sat and hung her head even more dejectedly than usual. At church she had learned that one of the old crofters of the ironworks had been robbed by a man who went around selling rattraps. "Yes, that was a fine fellow you let into the house," said her father. "I only wonder how many silver spoons are left in the cupboard by this time." The wagon had hardly stopped at the front steps when the ironmaster asked the valet whether the stranger was still there. He added that he had heard at church that the man was a thief. The valet answered that the fellow had gone and that he had not taken anything with him at all. On the contrary, he had left behind a little package which Miss Willmansson was to be kind enough to accept as a Christmas present. The young girl opened the package, which was so badly done up that the contents came into view at once. She gave a little cry of joy. She found a small rattrap, and in it lay three wrinkled ten kronor notes. But that was not all. In the rattrap lay also a letter written in large, jagged characters -

"Honored and noble Miss, Since you have been so nice to me all day long, as if I was a captain, I want to be nice to you, in return, as if I was a real captain - for I do not want you to be embarrassed at this Christmas season by a thief; but you can give back the money to the old man on the roadside, who has the money pouch hanging on the window frame as a bait for poor wanderers. "The rattrap is a Christmas present from a rat who would have been caught in this world's rattrap if he had not been raised to captain, because in that way he got power to clear himself". Written with friendship and high regard, "Captain von Stahle".

About the story :

'The Rattrap' is set amidst the mines of Sweden, rich in iron ore, which figure largely in the history and legends of that country. The story is told somewhat in the manner of a fairy tale.

GLOSSARY

beg (v)	:	to ask for alms
material (n)	:	substance that things can be made of
petty (adj)	:	trifle
rags (n)	:	torn clothes
sunken (adj)	:	curved inward
gleam (v)	:	shine brightly
vagabond (n)	:	homeless traveller

monotonous (adj)	:	dull
plod (v)	:	to walk heavily
exist (v)	:	to be
riches (n)	:	luxury
pork (n)	:	pig's meat
cottage (n)	:	a small house
refuse (v)	:	to deny
Mjolis (n)	:	a game of cards
hung (v)	:	rested
smashed (v)	:	broke
pane (n)	:	window glass

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS ;

A. Choose the correct alternative:

1. The peddler sells———————
   (a) rattraps of wire (b) sweets of sugar
   (c) fruits (d) toys
2. The world itself is a ———————
   (a) big rattrap (b) big well
   (c) big village (d) big market
3. The peddler's pasttime is to ———————
   (a) sell rattraps (b) sell sweets
   (c) amuse the children (d) help the poor
4. Edla was the daughter of the ———————
   (a) peddler (b) ironmaster
   (c) villager (d) forester

B. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

1. From where did the peddler get the idea of the world being a rattrap?
2. How did the crofter behave with the peddler after opening the door?
3. What made the peddler think that he had indeed fallen into a rattrap?
4. Why did the iron master speak kindly to the peddler and invite him home and why did the peddler decline the invitation?

5. What made the peddler accept Edla Willmansson's invitation?
6. Why did Edla still entertain the peddler even after she knew the truth about him?
7. Why was Edla happy to see the gift left by the peddler?
8. What was the reaction of the pedlar after stealing thirty Kroner of the old man?
9. Do you think that the peddler is a great philosopher? Explain.

C. Answer the following questions in 115-125 words each:

1. Why did the peddler say about the world being a big rattrap? How did he once get into a trap?
2. Why did the Iron master insist on taking peddler home? Why did he change his attitude later?
3. Attempt a character sketch of the peddler in the story 'The Rattrap'.
4. Who was Edla? How did she change the peddler's behavior?
5. How did the Rattrap peddler lead his life and why did the peddler sign himself as Captain Von Stahle in the end?

D. State True or False:

1. Miss Edla is the eldest daughter of the iron master. (True/False)
2. The peddler is a poor man. (True/False)
3. The ironmaster came for the day inspection of his factory. (True/False)
4. The peddler goes around selling rattraps of wire. (True/False)
5. Mjolis is a card game of Sweden. (True/False)

E. Creative Writing :

Have you known or heard of an episode where a good deed by an act of kindness has changed a person's view of the world?