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Characterization


The Other Wife
 by Colette
 (translated by Matthew Ward)

“Table for two? This way, Monsieur, Madame, there is still a table next to the window, if Madame and Monsieur would like a view of the bay.”

Alice followed the maitre d’.

“Oh, yes. Come on, Marc, it’ll be like having lunch on a boat on the water . . .”

Her husband caught her by passing his arm under hers. “We’ll be more comfortable over there.”

“There? In the middle of all those people? I’d much rather . . .”

“Alice, please.”

He tightened his grip in such a meaningful way that she turned around. “What’s the matter?”

“Shh. . .” he said softly, looking at her intently, and led her toward the table in the middle.

“What is it, Marc?”

“I’ll tell you, darling. Let me order lunch first. Would you like the shrimp? Or the eggs in aspic?”

“Whatever you like, you know that.”

They smiled at one another, wasting the precious time of an overworked maitre d’, stricken with a kind of nervous dance, who was standing next to them, perspiring.

“The shrimp,” said Marc. “Then the eggs and bacon. And the cold chicken with a romaine salad. *Fromage blanc*? The house specialty? We’ll go with the specialty. Two strong coffees. My chauffeur will be having lunch also, we’ll be leaving again at two o’clock. Some cider? No, I don’t trust it . . . Dry champagne.”

He sighed as if he had just moved an armoire, gazed at the colorless midday sea, at the pearly white sky, then at his wife, whom he found lovely in her little Mercury hat with its large, hanging veil.

“You’re looking well, darling. And all this blue water makes your eyes look green, imagine that! And you’ve put on weight since you’ve been traveling . . . It’s nice up to a point, but only up to a point!”

Her firm, round breasts rose proudly as she leaned over the table.

“Why did you keep me from taking that place next to the window?”

Marc Seguy never considered lying. “Because you were about to sit next to someone I know.”

“Someone I don’t know?”

“My ex-wife.”

She couldn’t think of anything to say and opened her blue eyes wider.

“So what, darling? It’ll happen again. It’s not important.”

The words came back to Alice and she asked, in order, the inevitable questions. “Did she see you? Could she see that you saw her? Will you point her out to me?”

“Don’t look now, please, she must be watching us . . . The lady with brown hair, no hat, she must be staying in this hotel. By herself, behind those children in red . . .”

“Yes, I see.”

Hidden behind some broad-brimmed beach hats, Alice was able to look at the woman who, fifteen months ago, had still been her husband’s wife.

“Incompatibility,” Marc said. “Oh, I mean . . . total incompatibility! We divorced like well-bred people, almost like friends, quietly, quickly. And then I fell in love with you, and you really wanted to be happy with me. How lucky we are that our happiness doesn’t involve any guilty parties or victims!”

The woman in white, whose smooth, lustrous hair reflected the light from the sea in azure patches, was smoking a cigarette with her eyes half closed. Alice turned back toward her husband, took some shrimp and butter, and ate calmly. After a moment’s silence she asked, “Why didn’t you ever tell me that she had blue eyes, too?”

“Well, I never thought about it!”

He kissed the hand she was extending toward the bread basket and she blushed with pleasure. Dusky and ample, she might have seemed somewhat coarse, but the changeable blue of her eyes and her wavy, golden hair made her look like a frail and sentimental blonde. She vowed overwhelming gratitude to her husband. Immodest without knowing it, everything about her bore the overly conspicuous marks of extreme happiness.

They ate and drank heartily, and each thought the other had forgotten the woman in white. Now and then, however, Alice laughed too loudly, and Marc was careful about his posture, holding his shoulders back, his head up. They waited quite a long time for their coffee, in silence. An incandescent river, the straggled reflection of the invisible sun overhead, shifted slowly across the sea and shone with a blinding brilliance.

“She’s still there, you know,” Alice whispered.

“Is she making you uncomfortable? Would you like to have coffee somewhere else?”

“No, not at all. She’s the one who must be uncomfortable! Besides, she doesn’t exactly seem to be having a wild time, if you could see her . . .”

“I don’t have to. I know that look of hers.”

“Oh, was she like that?”

He exhaled his cigarette smoke through his nostrils and knitted his eyebrows.

“Like that? No. To tell you honestly, she wasn’t happy with me.”

“Oh, really now!”

“The way you indulge me is so charming, darling . . . It’s crazy . . . You’re an angel . . . You love me . . . I’m so proud when I see those eyes of yours. Yes, those eyes . . . She . . . I just didn’t know how to make her happy, that’s all, I didn’t know how.”

“She’s just difficult!”

Alice fanned herself irritably, and cast brief glances at the woman in white, who was smoking, her head resting against the back of the cane chair, her eyes closed with an air of satisfied lassitude.

Marc shrugged his shoulders modestly.

“That’s the right word,” he admitted. “What can you do? You have to feel sorry for people who are never satisfied. But we’re satisfied . . . Aren’t we, darling?”

She did not answer. She was looking furtively, and closely, at her husband's face, ruddy and regular; at his thick hair, threaded here and there with white silk; at his short, well-cared-for hands; and doubtful for the first time, she asked herself, "What more did she want from him?"

And as they were leaving, while Marc was paying the bill and asking for the chauffeur and about the route, she kept looking, with envy and curiosity, at the woman in white, this dissatisfied, this difficult, this superior . . .

(1924)



Answer the following questions based on the story:

- 1) In the beginning of the story, what does Alice's comment reveal about her and Marc's relationship?
- 2) What motivates Alice's "inevitable questions"?
- 3) What can be inferred about Marc's values from his remarks about the nature of his divorce?
- 4) What does Alice notice about the first wife? What does this show about her?
- 5) Why does Marc ask the question, "As for us, we're so happy...aren't we darling?"
- 6) Why did Marc resist sitting by the bay window?
- 7) What physical description is given for Marc's first wife?
- 8) How long has it been since Marc divorced his first wife?
- 9) Why might Marc have married Alice, who seems so different from his first wife?
- 10) What is achieved by having the first wife say nothing and merely be part of the environment?
- 11) At the end of the story, Alice "continued to watch, with envious curiosity, the lady in white that discontented, hard-to-please, superior woman..." How might the things she has learned during this lunch make Alice "dubious for the first time"?
- 12) To which of the two wives do you think the title of the story applies? Explain.

In your Reader's Journal: Write a 1 and a ½ page analysis of the two women in the story based on the descriptions given by the author and other characters in the story and discuss the type of man the husband is based on the words the author uses to describe him. Direct quotes should be included.

The Scarlet Ibis

by James Hurst

Summer was dead, but autumn had not yet been born when the ibis came to the bleeding tree. It's strange that all this is so clear to me, now that time has had its way. But sometimes (like right now) I sit in the cool green parlor, and I remember Doodle.

Doodle was about the craziest brother a boy ever had. Doodle was born when I was seven and was, from the start, a disappointment. He seemed all head, with a tiny body that was red and shriveled like an old man's. Everybody thought he was going to die.

Daddy had the carpenter build a little coffin, and when he was three months old, Mama and Daddy named him William Armstrong. Such a name sounds good only on a tombstone.

When he crawled on the rug, he crawled backward, as if he were in reverse and couldn't change gears. This made him look like a doodlebug, so I began calling him 'Doodle.' Renaming my brother was probably the kindest thing I ever did for him, because nobody expects much from someone called Doodle.

Daddy built him a cart and I had to pull him around. If I so much as picked up my hat, he'd start crying to go with me; and Mama would call from wherever she was, "Take Doodle with you."

So I dragged him across the cotton field to share the beauty of Old Woman Swamp. I lifted him out and sat him down in the soft grass. He began to cry.

"What's the matter?"

"It's so pretty, Brother, so pretty."

After that, Doodle and I often went down to Old Woman Swamp.

There is inside me (and with sadness I have seen it in others) a knot of cruelty borne by the stream of love. And at times I was mean to Doodle. One time I showed him his casket, telling him how we all believed he would die. When I made him touch the casket, he screamed. And even when we were outside in the bright sunshine he clung to me, crying, "Don't leave me, Brother! Don't leave me!"

Doodle was five years old when I turned 13. I was embarrassed at having a brother of that age who couldn't walk, so I set out to teach him. We were down in Old Woman Swamp. "I'm going to teach you to walk, Doodle," I said.

"Why?"

"So I won't have to haul you around all the time."

"I can't walk, Brother."

"Who says so?"

"Mama, the doctor—everybody."

"Oh, you can walk." I took him by the arms and stood him up. He collapsed on to the grass like a half-empty flour sack. It was as if his little legs had no bones.

"Don't hurt me, Brother."

"Shut up. I'm not going to hurt you. I'm going to teach you to walk." I heaved him up again, and he collapsed.

"I just can't do it."

"Oh, yes, you can, Doodle. All you got to do is try. Now come on," and I hauled him up once more.

It seemed so hopeless that it's a miracle I didn't give up. But all of us must have something to be proud of, and Doodle had become my something.

Finally one day he stood alone for a few seconds. When he fell, I grabbed him in my arms and hugged him, our laughter ringing through the swamp like a bell. Now we knew it could be done.

We decided not to tell anyone until he was actually walking. At breakfast on our chosen day I brought Doodle to the door in the cart. I helped Doodle up; and when he was standing alone, I let them look. There wasn't a sound as Doodle walked slowly across the room and sat down at the table. Then Mama began to cry and ran over to him, hugging him and kissing him. Daddy hugged him, too. Doodle told them it was I who had taught him to walk, so they wanted to hug me, and I began to cry.

"What are you crying for?" asked Daddy, but I couldn't answer. They didn't know that I did it just for myself, that Doodle walked only because I was ashamed of having a crippled brother.

Within a few months, Doodle had learned to walk well. Since I had succeeded in teaching Doodle to walk, I began to believe in my own infallibility. I decided to teach him to run, to row, to swim, to climb trees, and to fight. Now he, too, believed in me; so, we set a deadline when Doodle could start school.

But Doodle couldn't keep up with the plan. Once, he collapsed on the ground and began to cry.

"Aw, come on, Doodle. You can do it. Do you want to be different from everybody else when you start school?"

"Does that make any difference?"

"It certainly does. Now, come on."

And so we came to those days when summer was dead but autumn had not yet been born. It was Saturday noon, just a few days before the start of school. Daddy, Mama, Doodle, and I were seated at the dining room table, having lunch. Suddenly from out in the yard came a strange croaking noise. Doodle stopped eating. "What's that?" He slipped out into the yard, and looked up into the bleeding tree. "It's a big red bird!"

Mama and Daddy came out. On the topmost branch perched a bird the size of a chicken, with scarlet feathers and long legs.

At that moment, the bird began to flutter. It tumbled down through the bleeding tree and landed at our feet with a thud. Its graceful neck jerked twice and then straightened out, and the bird was still. It lay on the earth like a broken vase of red flowers, and even death could not mar its beauty.

"What is it?" Doodle asked.

"It's a scarlet ibis," Daddy said.

Sadly, we all looked at the bird. How many miles had it traveled to die like this, in our yard, beneath the bleeding tree?

Doodle knelt beside the ibis. "I'm going to bury him."

As soon as I had finished eating, Doodle and I hurried off to Horsehead Landing. It was time for a swimming lesson, but Doodle said he was too tired. When we reached Horsehead landing, lightning was flashing across half the sky, and thunder was drowning out the sound of the sea.

Doodle was both tired and frightened. He slipped on the mud and fell. I helped him up, and he smiled at me ashamedly. He had failed and we both knew it. He would never be like the other boys at school.

We started home, trying to beat the storm. The lightning was near now. The faster I walked, the faster he walked, so I began to run.

The rain came, roaring through the pines. And then, like a bursting Roman candle, a gum tree ahead of us was shattered by a bolt of lightning. When the deafening thunder had died, I heard Doodle cry out, "Brother, Brother, don't leave me! Don't leave me!"

The knowledge that our plans had come to nothing was bitter, and that streak of cruelty within me awakened. I ran as fast as I could, leaving him far behind with a wall of rain dividing us. Soon I could hear his voice no more.

I stopped and waited for Doodle. The sound of rain was everywhere, but the wind had died and it fell straight down like ropes hanging from the sky.

I peered through the downpour, but no one came. Finally I went back and found him huddled beneath a red nightshade bush beside the road. He was sitting on the ground, his face buried in his arms, which were resting on drawn-up knees. "Let's go, Doodle."

He didn't answer so I gently lifted his head. He toppled backward onto the earth. He had been bleeding from the mouth, and his neck and the front of his shirt were stained a brilliant red.

"Doodle, Doodle." There was no answer but the rosy rain. I began to weep, and the tear-blurred vision in red before me looked very familiar. "Doodle!" I screamed above the pounding storm and threw my body to the earth above his. For a long time, it seemed forever, I lay there crying, sheltering my fallen scarlet ibis

Answer the following questions honestly and thoughtfully. Be sure to write in full sentences and completely answer each question. Save your answers in your Network folder as *Scarlet Ibis* Questions.

1. What restrictions does the doctor place on Doodle's activities?
2. What secret about teaching Doodle to walk does the narrator keep to himself?
3. What other skills does the narrator include in his development program for Doodle? What success does he have?
4. How is the appearance of the scarlet ibis explained?
5. Discuss the close relationship between the brothers, focusing on what each seems to need from the other.
6. What do we learn about Doodle from each of the following incidents: Doodle's first visit to the Old Woman Swamp; Doodle's 'lie' about the boy and his pet peacock; and Doodle's behavior from the time the family first hears the cry of the ibis until Doodle buries it?
7. What is the climax of the story?
8. What does the narrator mean when he says that Doodle's lifeless body "looked very familiar"?
9. Recall the circumstances of the brothers' last outing together. Do you feel that the narrator should be blamed for Doodle's death?
10. When telling this story, the narrator- now grown up – is recounting events of long ago. In what ways might this story have been different if he (like Dave in "Split Cherry Tree") were telling it close to the time it actually happened?
11. Through indirect characterization, James Hurst gives you a revealing glimpse of Aunt Nicey, though she is a minor character. What can you tell about her from Hurst's portrayal?

12. Hurst tells, indirectly, several things about the father's personality in the lines beginning, "Doodle and I followed Daddy out onto the cotton field." Characterize the father as best as you can.
13. What is a caul? Why did Aunt Nicey think the caul was important? Explain and support your answer.
14. What is significant about Doodle's interaction with the bird the scarlet ibis. Find specific quotes from the text to support your answer.
15. In what way does the narrator's pride help and also hurt Doodle? Provide textual evidence of both from the text.
16. The author, James Hurst, grew up in the southern part of the United States. How can we tell that the story took place in the South? Use at least two quotes from the story to support your answer.
17. What [literary devices](#) does Hurst use to tell his story? How do these devices help make the story effective? Offer textual support.
18. Does the story end the way you expect it to? Why does the author choose this ending? What effect does this conclusion have on the reader?

Fill in the answers for the Literary Terms based on the "Scarlet Ibis"

- setting
- dramatic irony
- symbolism
- foreshadowing
- theme
- conflict
 - man vs. man
 - man vs. nature
 - man vs. self
 - man vs. society
 - man vs. supernatural
- characterization
 - antagonist
 - protagonist
 - dynamic
 - static
- point of view
- plot
 - exposition
 - rising action
 - climax
 - falling action
 - resolution
- tone

Point of View**The Open Window**

by Saki (H.H. Munro)

"My aunt will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel," said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; "in the meantime you must try and put up with me."

Framton Nuttel endeavored to say the correct something which should duly flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing.

"I know how it will be," his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; "you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul, and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there. Some of them, as far as I can remember, were quite nice."

Framton wondered whether Mrs. Sappleton, the lady to whom he was presenting one of the letters of introduction came into the nice division.

"Do you know many of the people round here?" asked the niece, when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communion.

"Hardly a soul," said Framton. "My sister was staying here, at the rectory, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here."

He made the last statement in a tone of distinct regret.

"Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?" pursued the self-possessed young lady.

"Only her name and address," admitted the caller. He was wondering whether Mrs. Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. An undefinable something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation.

"Her great tragedy happened just three years ago," said the child; "that would be since your sister's time."

"Her tragedy?" asked Framton; somehow in this restful country spot tragedies seemed out of place.

"You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon," said the niece, indicating a large French window that opened on to a lawn.

"It is quite warm for the time of the year," said Framton; "but has that window got anything to do with the tragedy?"

"Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their day's shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favorite snipe-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It had been that dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the dreadful part of it." Here the child's voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. "Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back someday, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walk in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening till it is quite dusk. Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm, and Ronnie, her youngest brother, singing 'Bertie, why do you bound?' as he always did to tease her, because she said it got on her nerves. Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window--"

She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance.

"I hope Vera has been amusing you?" she said.

"She has been very interesting," said Framton.

"I hope you don't mind the open window," said Mrs. Sappleton briskly; "my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way. They've been out for snipe in the marshes today, so they'll make a fine mess over my poor carpets. So like you menfolk, isn't it?"

She rattled on cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds, and the prospects for duck in the winter. To Framton it was all purely horrible. He made a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic, he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate coincidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary.

"The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise," announced Framton, who labored under the tolerably widespread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and infirmities, their cause and cure. "On the matter of diet they are not so much in agreement," he continued.

"No?" said Mrs. Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention--but not to what Framton was saying.

"Here they are at last!" she cried. "Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!"

Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with a dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction.

In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window, they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house, and then a hoarse young voice chanted out of the dusk: "I said, Bertie, why do you bound?"

Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat; the hall door, the gravel drive, and the front gate were dimly noted stages in his headlong retreat. A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid imminent collision.

"Here we are, my dear," said the bearer of the white mackintosh, coming in through the window, "fairly muddy, but most of it's dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?"

"A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel," said Mrs. Sappleton; "could only talk about his illnesses, and dashed off without a word of goodbye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost."

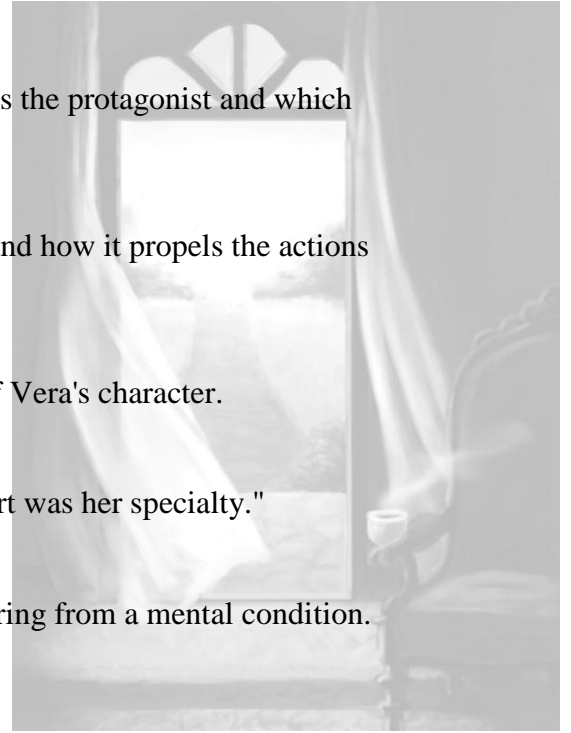
"I expect it was the spaniel," said the niece calmly; "he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make anyone lose their nerve."

Romance at short notice was her specialty.

END

“Open Window” by Saki Text Based Questions

- 1) Cite the textual evidence which shows which character is the protagonist and which character is the antagonist.
- 2) Analyze the reason Framton Nuttel had to take the trip and how it propels the actions of the plot.
- 3) Analyze how paragraphs 14, 24 and 28 reveal aspects of Vera's character.
- 4) Determine the meaning of the last line "Romance at short was her specialty."
- 5) Determine why Saki chose to have his protagonist suffering from a mental condition. Explain your answer.
- 6) Determine a theme or central idea of "The Open Window" and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- 7) Analyze how dramatic irony and irony of situations are both used in this story.
- 8) Analyze how the point of view of which the story is being told from creates a mood of suspense.





“The Open Window” by SAKI (H. H. Munro)

Story Study Guide: answer the following questions

1. Identify *and* describe the two (2) main characters in the story. Who is the protagonist? Who is the antagonist?
2. Why has Framton Nuttel taken a trip?
3. Who encourages Framton to embark on a journey?
4. Fully describe the story’s setting, including place and time (month and approximate year).
5. In whose home is Framton during the majority of the story?
6. Who greets him upon his arrival?
7. Vera tells Framton a ghastly story. Thoroughly summarize the story.
8. After having read “The Open Window,” is Vera’s story true? How do you know?
9. Has the trip helped Framton? Why or why not?
10. Describe Framton’s departure from the rectory. What caused his departure?
11. What explanation does Vera offer when Framton leaves the rectory? How is her explanation ironic?
12. Identify and explain one theme of the story.
13. Foreshadowing plays a major role in the story. Describe one instance of foreshadowing.
14. Why did SAKI choose to have his main character suffering from a nervous condition? Explain your answer.
15. If you were the author of this story, would you have ended “The Open Window” in the same way that SAKI did? Why or why not? Explain.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1899)

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer.

A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity--but that would be asking too much of fate!

Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and *perhaps*--(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)--*perhaps* that is one reason I do not get well faster.

You see he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression--a slight hysterical tendency-- what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.

So I take phosphates or phosphites--whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to "work" until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas.

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

I did write for a while in spite of them; but it does exhaust me a good deal--having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus--but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.

So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village. It makes me think of English places that you read about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people.

There is a *delicious* garden! I never saw such a garden--large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them.

There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.

There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and coheirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years.

That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid, but I don't care--there is something strange about the house--I can feel it.

I even said so to John one moonlight evening but he said what I felt was a *draught*, and shut the window.

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition.

But John says if I feel so, I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself-- before him, at least, and that makes me very tired.

I don't like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! but John would not hear of it.

He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another.

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.

I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more.

He said we came here solely on my account, that I was to have perfect rest and all the air I could get. "Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear," said he, "and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time." So we took the nursery at the top of the house.

It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine galore. It was nursery first and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls.

The paint and paper look as if a boys' school had used it. It is stripped off--the paper in great patches all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life.

One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin.

It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide--plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions.

The color is repellent, almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight.

It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others.

No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in this room long.

There comes John, and I must put this away,--he hates to have me write a word.

We have been here two weeks, and I haven't felt like writing before, since that first day.

I am sitting by the window now, up in this atrocious nursery, and there is nothing to hinder my writing as much as I please, save lack of strength.

John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious.

I am glad my case is not serious!

But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing.

John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no reason to suffer,

and that satisfies him.

Of course it is only nervousness. It does weigh on me so not to do my duty in any way!

I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!

Nobody would believe what an effort it is to do what little I am able,--to dress and entertain, and order things.

It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby!

And yet I cannot be with him, it makes me so nervous.

I suppose John never was nervous in his life. He laughs at me so about this wall-paper!

At first he meant to repaper the room, but afterwards he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies.

He said that after the wall-paper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of the stairs, and so on.

"You know the place is doing you good," he said, "and really, dear, I don't care to renovate the house just for a three months' rental."

"Then do let us go downstairs," I said, "there are such pretty rooms there."

Then he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down to the cellar, if I wished, and have it whitewashed into the bargain.

But he is right enough about the beds and windows and things.

It is an airy and comfortable room as any one need wish, and, of course, I would not be so silly as to make him uncomfortable just for a whim.

I'm really getting quite fond of the big room, all but that horrid paper.

Out of one window I can see the garden, those mysterious deepshaded arbors, the riotous old-fashioned flowers, and bushes and gnarly trees.

Out of another I get a lovely view of the bay and a little private wharf belonging to the estate. There is a beautiful shaded lane that runs down there from the house. I always fancy I see people walking in these numerous paths and arbors, but John has cautioned me not to give way to fancy in the least. He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency. So I try.

I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me.

But I find I get pretty tired when I try.

It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work. When I get really well, John says we will ask Cousin Henry and Julia down for a long visit; but he says he would as soon put fireworks in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now.

I wish I could get well faster.

But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it knew what a vicious influence it had!

There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down.

I get positively angry with the impertinence of it and the everlastingness. Up and down and sideways they crawl, and those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere There is one place where two breaths didn't match, and the eyes go all up and down the line, one a little higher than the other.

I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before, and we all know how much expression they have! I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of blank walls and plain furniture than most children could find in a toy-store.

I remember what a kindly wink the knobs of our big, old bureau used to have, and there was one chair that always seemed like a strong friend.

I used to feel that if any of the other things looked too fierce I could always hop into that chair and be safe.

The furniture in this room is no worse than inharmonious, however, for we had to bring it all from downstairs. I suppose when this was used as a playroom they had to take the nursery things out, and no wonder! I never saw such ravages as the children have made here.

The wall-paper, as I said before, is torn off in spots, and it sticketh closer than a brother--they must have had perseverance as well as hatred.

Then the floor is scratched and gouged and splintered, the plaster itself is dug out here and there, and this great heavy bed which is all we found in the room, looks as if it had been through the wars.

But I don't mind it a bit--only the paper.

There comes John's sister. Such a dear girl as she is, and so careful of me! I must not let her find me writing.

She is a perfect and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession. I verily believe she thinks it is the writing which made me sick!

But I can write when she is out, and see her a long way off from these windows.

There is one that commands the road, a lovely shaded winding road, and one that just looks off over the country. A lovely country, too, full of great elms and velvet meadows.

This wall-paper has a kind of sub-pattern in a, different shade, a particularly irritating one, for you can only see it in certain lights, and not clearly then.

But in the places where it isn't faded and where the sun is just so--I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to skulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design.

There's sister on the stairs!

Well, the Fourth of July is over! The people are all gone and I am tired out. John thought it might do me good to see a little company, so we just had mother and Nellie and the children down for a week.

Of course I didn't do a thing. Jennie sees to everything now.

But it tired me all the same.

John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall.

But I don't want to go there at all. I had a friend who was in his hands once, and she says he is just like John and my brother, only more so!

Besides, it is such an undertaking to go so far.

I don't feel as if it was worth while to turn my hand over for anything, and I'm getting dreadfully fretful and querulous.

I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time.

Of course I don't when John is here, or anybody else, but when I am alone.

And I am alone a good deal just now. John is kept in town very often by serious cases, and Jennie is good and lets me alone when I want her to.

So I walk a little in the garden or down that lovely lane, sit on the porch under the roses, and lie down up here a good deal.

I'm getting really fond of the room in spite of the wall-paper. Perhaps *because* of the wall-paper.

It dwells in my mind so!

I lie here on this great immovable bed--it is nailed down, I believe--and follow that pattern about by the hour. It is as good as gymnastics, I assure you. I start, we'll say, at the bottom, down in the corner over there where it has not been touched, and I determine for the thousandth time that I *will* follow that pointless pattern to some sort of a conclusion.

I know a little of the principle of design, and I know this thing was not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that I ever heard of.

It is repeated, of course, by the breadths, but not otherwise.

Looked at in one way each breadth stands alone, the bloated curves and flourishes--a kind of "debased Romanesque" with *delirium tremens*--go waddling up and down in isolated columns of fatuity.

But, on the other hand, they connect diagonally, and the sprawling outlines run off in great slanting waves of optic horror, like a lot of wallowing seaweeds in full chase.

The whole thing goes horizontally, too, at least it seems so, and I exhaust myself in trying to distinguish the order of its going in that direction.

They have used a horizontal breadth for a frieze, and that adds wonderfully to the confusion.

There is one end of the room where it is almost intact, and there, when the crosslights fade and the low sun shines directly upon it, I can almost fancy radiation after all,--the interminable grotesques seem to form around a common centre and rush off in headlong plunges of equal distraction.

It makes me tired to follow it. I will take a nap I guess.

I don't know why I should write this.

I don't want to.

I don't feel able. And I know John would think it absurd. But I must say what I feel and think in some way--it is such a relief!

But the effort is getting to be greater than the relief.

Half the time now I am awfully lazy, and lie down ever so much.

John says I mustn't lose my strength, and has me take cod liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat.

Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and hates to have me sick. I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him how I wish he would let me go and make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia.

But he said I wasn't able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there; and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished.

It is getting to be a great effort for me to think straight. Just this nervous weakness I suppose.

And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me till it tired my head.

He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well.

He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me.

There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy this nursery with the horrid wall-paper.

If we had not used it, that blessed child would have! What a fortunate escape! Why, I wouldn't have a child of mine, an impressionable little thing, live in such a room for worlds.

I never thought of it before, but it is lucky that John kept me here after all, I can stand it so much easier than a baby, you see.

Of course I never mention it to them any more--I am too wise,--but I keep watch of it all the same.

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will.

Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day.

It is always the same shape, only very numerous.

And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder--I begin to think--I wish John would take me away from here!

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so.

But I tried it last night.

It was moonlight. The moon shines in all around just as the sun does.

I hate to see it sometimes, it creeps so slowly, and always comes in by one window or another.

John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wall-paper till I felt creepy.

The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out.

I got up softly and went to feel and see if the paper *did* move, and when I came back John was awake.

"What is it, little girl?" he said. "Don't go walking about like that--you'll get cold."

I thought it was a good time to talk, so I told him that I really was not gaining here, and that I wished he would take me away.

"Why darling!" said he, "our lease will be up in three weeks, and I can't see how to leave before.

"The repairs are not done at home, and I cannot possibly leave town just now. Of course if you were in any danger, I could and would, but you really are better, dear, whether you can see it or not. I am a doctor, dear, and I know. You are gaining flesh and color, your appetite is better, I feel really much easier about you."

"I don't weigh a bit more," said I, "nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away!"

"Bless her little heart!" said he with a big hug, "she shall be as sick as she pleases! But now let's improve the shining hours by going to sleep, and talk about it in the morning!"

"And you won't go away?" I asked gloomily.

"Why, how can I, dear? It is only three weeks more and then we will take a nice little trip of a few days while Jennie is getting the house ready. Really dear you are better!"

"Better in body perhaps--" I began, and stopped short, for he sat up straight and looked at me with such a stern, reproachful look that I could not say another word.

"My darling," said he, "I beg of you, for my sake and for our child's sake, as well as for your own, that you will never for one instant let that idea enter your mind! There is nothing so dangerous, so fascinating, to a temperament like yours. It is a false and foolish fancy. Can you not trust me as a physician when I tell you so?"

So of course I said no more on that score, and we went to sleep before long. He thought I was asleep first, but I wasn't, and lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately.

On a pattern like this, by daylight, there is a lack of sequence, a defiance of law, that is a constant irritant to a normal mind.

The color is hideous enough, and unreliable enough, and infuriating enough, but the pattern is torturing.

You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you. It is like a bad dream.

The outside pattern is a florid arabesque, reminding one of a fungus. If you can imagine a toadstool in joints, an interminable string of toadstools, budding and sprouting in endless convolutions--why, that is something like it.

That is, sometimes!

There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes.

When the sun shoots in through the east window--I always watch for that first long, straight ray--it changes so quickly that I never can quite believe it.

That is why I watch it always.

By moonlight--the moon shines in all night when there is a moon--I wouldn't know it was the same paper.

At night in any kind of light, in twilight, candlelight, lamplight, and worst of all by moonlight, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be.

I didn't realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind, that dim sub-pattern, but now I am quite sure it is a woman.

By daylight she is subdued, quiet. I fancy it is the pattern that keeps her so still. It is so puzzling. It keeps me quiet by the hour.

I lie down ever so much now. John says it is good for me, and to sleep all I can.

Indeed he started the habit by making me lie down for an hour after each meal.

It is a very bad habit I am convinced, for you see I don't sleep.

And that cultivates deceit, for I don't tell them I'm awake--O no!

The fact is I am getting a little afraid of John.

He seems very queer sometimes, and even Jennie has an inexplicable look.

It strikes me occasionally, just as a scientific hypothesis,--that perhaps it is the paper!

I have watched John when he did not know I was looking, and come into the room suddenly on the most innocent excuses, and I've caught him several times *looking at the paper!* And Jennie too. I caught Jennie with her hand on it once.

She didn't know I was in the room, and when I asked her in a quiet, a very quiet voice, with the most restrained manner possible, what she was doing with the paper--she turned around as if she had been caught stealing, and looked quite angry-- asked me why I should frighten her so!

Then she said that the paper stained everything it touched, that she had found yellow smooches on all my clothes and John's, and she wished we would be more careful!

Did not that sound innocent? But I know she was studying that pattern, and I am determined that nobody shall find it out but myself!

Life is very much more exciting now than it used to be. You see I have something more to expect, to look forward to, to watch. I really do eat better, and am more quiet than I was.

John is so pleased to see me improve ! He laughed a little the other day, and said I seemed to be flourishing in spite of my wall-paper.

I turned it off with a laugh. I had no intention of telling him it was because of the wall-paper--he would make fun of me. He might even want to take me away.

I don't want to leave now until I have found it out. There is a week more, and I think that will be enough.

I'm feeling ever so much better! I don't sleep much at night, for it is so interesting to watch developments; but I sleep a good deal in the daytime.

In the daytime it is tiresome and perplexing.

There are always new shoots on the fungus, and new shades of yellow all over it. I cannot keep count of them, though I have tried conscientiously.

It is the strangest yellow, that wall-paper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw--not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things.

But there is something else about that paper-- the smell! I noticed it the moment we came into the room, but with so much air and sun it was not bad. Now we have had a week of fog and rain, and whether the windows are open or not, the smell is here.

It creeps all over the house.

I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs.

It gets into my hair.

Even when I go to ride, if I turn my head suddenly and surprise it--there is that smell!

Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like.

It is not bad--at first, and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met.

In this damp weather it is awful, I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me.

It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house--to reach the smell.

But now I am used to it. The only thing I can think of that it is like is the *color* of the paper! A yellow smell.

There is a very funny mark on this wall, low down, near the mopboard. A streak that runs round the room. It goes behind every piece of furniture, except the bed, a long, straight, even *smooch*, as if it had been rubbed over and over.

I wonder how it was done and who did it, and what they did it for. Round and round and round--round and round and round--it makes me dizzy!

I really have discovered something at last.

Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out.

The front pattern does move--and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!

Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard.

And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern--it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads.

They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside down, and makes their eyes white!

If those heads were covered or taken off it would not be half so bad.

I think that woman gets out in the daytime!

And I'll tell you why--privately--I've seen her!

I can see her out of every one of my windows!

It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight.

I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines.

I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!

I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can't do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once.

And John is so queer now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take another room! Besides, I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself.

I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.

But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time.

And though I always see her, she may be able to creep faster than I can turn!

I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind.

If only that top pattern could be gotten off from the under one! I mean to try it, little by little.

I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time! It does not do to trust people too much.

There are only two more days to get this paper off, and I believe John is beginning to notice. I don't like the look in his eyes.

And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give.

She said I slept a good deal in the daytime.

John knows I don't sleep very well at night, for all I'm so quiet!

He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind.

As if I couldn't see through him!

Still, I don't wonder he acts so, sleeping under this paper for three months.

It only interests me, but I feel sure John and Jennie are secretly affected by it.

Hurrah! This is the last day, but it is enough. John to stay in town over night, and won't be out until this evening.

Jennie wanted to sleep with me--the sly thing! but I told her I should undoubtedly rest better for a night all alone.

That was clever, for really I wasn't alone a bit! As soon as it was moonlight and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her.

I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper.

A strip about as high as my head and half around the room.

And then when the sun came and that awful pattern began to laugh at me, I declared I would finish it to-day!

We go away to-morrow, and they are moving all my furniture down again to leave things as they were before.

Jennie looked at the wall in amazement, but I told her merrily that I did it out of pure spite at the vicious thing.

She laughed and said she wouldn't mind doing it herself, but I must not get tired.

How she betrayed herself that time!

But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me,--not alive !

She tried to get me out of the room--it was too patent! But I said it was so quiet and empty and clean now that I believed I would lie down again and sleep all I could; and not to wake me even for dinner--I would call when I woke.

So now she is gone, and the servants are gone, and the things are gone, and there is nothing left but that great bedstead nailed down, with the canvas mattress we found on it.

We shall sleep downstairs to-night, and take the boat home to-morrow.

I quite enjoy the room, now it is bare again.

How those children did tear about here!

This bedstead is fairly gnawed!

But I must get to work.

I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path.

I don't want to go out, and I don't want to have anybody come in, till John comes.

I want to astonish him.

I've got a rope up here that even Jennie did not find. If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!

But I forgot I could not reach far without anything to stand on!

This bed will not move!

I tried to lift and push it until I was lame, and then I got so angry I bit off a little piece at one corner--but it hurt my teeth.

Then I peeled off all the paper I could reach standing on the floor. It sticks horribly and the pattern just enjoys it! All those strangled heads and bulbous eyes and waddling fungus growths just shriek with derision!

I am getting angry enough to do something desperate. To jump out of the window would be admirable exercise, but the bars are too strong even to try.

Besides I wouldn't do it. Of course not. I know well enough that a step like that is improper and might be misconstrued.

I don't like to *look* out of the windows even-- there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast.

I wonder if they all come out of that wall-paper as I did?

But I am securely fastened now by my well-hidden rope--you don't get me out in the road there !

I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!

It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!

I don't want to go outside. I won't, even if Jennie asks me to.

For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow.

But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way.

Why there's John at the door!

It is no use, young man, you can't open it!

How he does call and pound!

Now he's crying for an axe.

It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!

"John dear!" said I in the gentlest voice, "the key is down by the front steps, under a

plantain leaf!"

That silenced him for a few moments.

Then he said--very quietly indeed, "Open the door, my darling!"

"I can't," said I. "The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!"

And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it of course, and came in. He stopped short by the door.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "For God's sake, what are you doing!"

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

"I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!"

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!

1. Describe the basic situation that the narrator finds herself in at the beginning of the story.
2. Discuss John's attitude and behavior toward his wife, especially in terms of her illness. In the course of thinking about this issue, consider the symbolism of the "nursery."
3. Identify some of the ways in which the conflict between the narrator and her husband are established.
4. Discuss the general nature of the narrator's feelings toward her husband.
5. Do you think John is *trying* to drive his wife crazy?
6. What clues can you point to that suggest that the woman in the story is not an entirely "reliable" narrator? Is there any irony to this fact?
7. Consider the multiple functions that the wallpaper plays in the story. Also, does the wallpaper stay the same throughout the story, or does it change?
8. Who is the figure in the wallpaper?
9. What is the principal social institution against which the narrator of the story struggles?
10. In what ways might the ending of the story be seen as both a victory *and* a defeat for the narrator? In what ways is her situation both similar to and different from that of the creeping woman in the wallpaper?

Setting

"August 2026: **There Will Come Soft Rains**" (1950)

Ray Bradbury

In the living room the voice-clock sang, *Tick-tock, seven o'clock, time to get up, time to get up, seven o'clock!* as if it were afraid that nobody would. The morning house lay empty. The clock ticked on, repeating and repeating its sounds into the emptiness. *Seven-nine, breakfast time, seven-nine!*

In the kitchen the breakfast stove gave a hissing sigh and ejected from its warm interior eight pieces of perfectly browned toast, eight eggs sunnyside up, sixteen slices of bacon, two coffees, and two cool glasses of milk.

"Today is August 4, 2026," said a second voice from the kitchen ceiling, "in the city of Allendale, California." It repeated the date three times for memory's sake. "Today is Mr. Featherstone's birthday. Today is the anniversary of Tilita's marriage. Insurance is payable, as are the water, gas, and light bills."

Somewhere in the walls, relays clicked, memory tapes glided under electric eyes.

Eight-one, tick-tock, eight-one o'clock, off to school, off to work, run, run, eight-one! But no doors slammed, no carpets took the **soft** tread of rubber heels. It was raining outside. The weather box on the front door sang quietly: "Rain, rain, go away; rubbers, raincoats for today..."

And the rain tapped on the empty house, echoing.

Outside, the garage chimed and lifted its door to reveal the waiting car. After a long wait the door swung down again.

At eight-thirty the eggs were shriveled and the toast was like stone. An aluminum wedge scraped them into the sink, where hot water whirled them down a metal throat which digested and flushed them away to the distant sea. The dirty dishes were dropped into a hot washer and emerged twinkling dry.

Nine-fifteen, sang the clock, *time to clean*.

Out of warrens in the wall, tiny robot mice darted. The rooms were a crawl with the small cleaning animals, all rubber and metal. They thudded against chairs, whirling their mustached runners, kneading the rug nap, sucking gently at hidden dust. Then, like mysterious invaders, they popped into their burrows. Their pink electric eyes faded. The house was clean.

Ten o'clock. The sun came out from behind the rain. The house stood alone in a city of rubble and ashes. This was the one house left standing. At night the ruined city gave off a radioactive glow which could be seen for miles.

Ten-fifteen. The garden sprinklers whirled up in golden fountains, filling the **soft** morning air with scatterings of brightness. The water pelted windowpanes, running down the charred west side where the house had been burned evenly free of its white paint. The entire west face of the house was black, save for five places. Here the silhouette in paint of a man mowing a lawn. Here, as in a photograph, a woman bent to pick flowers. Still farther over, their images burned on wood in one titanic instant, a small boy, hands flung into the air; higher up, the image of a thrown ball, and opposite him a girl, hands raised to catch a ball which never came down.

The five spots of paint—the man, the woman, the children, the ball—remained. The rest

was a thin charcoaled layer.

The gentle sprinkler rain filled the garden with falling light.

1

Until this day, how well the house had kept its peace. How carefully it had inquired, "Who goes **there**? What's the password?" and, getting no answer from lonely foxes and whining cats, it had shut up its windows and drawn shades in an old maidenly preoccupation with self-protection which bordered on a mechanical paranoia.

It quivered at each sound, the house did. If a sparrow brushed a window, the shade snapped up. The bird, startled, flew off! No, not even a bird must touch the house! The house was an altar with ten thousand attendants, big, small, servicing, attending, in choirs. But the gods had gone away, and the ritual of the religion continued senselessly, uselessly.

Twelve noon.

A dog whined, shivering, on the front porch.

The front door recognized the dog voice and opened. The dog, once huge and fleshy, but now gone to bone and covered with sores, moved in and through the house, tracking mud. Behind it whirred angry mice, angry at having to pick up mud, angry at inconvenience. For not a leaf fragment blew under the door but what the wall panels flipped open and the copper scrap rats flashed swiftly out. The offending dust, hair, or paper, seized in miniature steel jaws, was raced back to the burrows. **There**, down tubes which fed into the cellar, it was dropped into the sighing vent of an incinerator which sat like evil Baal in a dark corner.

The dog ran upstairs, hysterically yelping to each door, at last realizing, as the house realized, that only silence was here.

It sniffed the air and scratched the kitchen door. Behind the door, the stove was making pancakes which filled the house with a rich baked odor and the scent of maple syrup. The dog frothed at the mouth, lying at the door, sniffing, its eyes turned to fire. It ran wildly in circles, biting at its tail, spun in a frenzy, and died. It lay in the parlor for an hour.

Two o'clock, sang a voice.

Delicately sensing decay at last, the regiments of mice hummed out as softly as blown gray leaves in an electrical wind.

Two-fifteen.

The dog was gone.

In the cellar, the incinerator glowed suddenly and a whirl of sparks leaped up the chimney.

Two thirty-five.

Bridge tables sprouted from patio walls. Playing cards fluttered onto pads in a shower of pips. Martinis manifested on an oaken bench with egg-salad sandwiches. Music played. But the tables were silent and the cards untouched.

At four o'clock the tables folded like great butterflies back through the paneled walls.

Four-thirty.

The nursery walls glowed.

Animals took shape: yellow giraffes, blue lions, pink antelopes, lilac panthers cavorting in crystal substance. The walls were glass. They looked out upon color and fantasy.

Hidden films docked through well-oiled sprockets, and the walls lived. The nursery floor was woven to resemble a crisp, cereal meadow. Over this ran aluminum roaches and iron crickets, and in the hot still air butterflies of delicate red tissue wavered among the sharp aroma of animal spoor! **There** was the sound like a great matted yellow hive of bees within a dark bellows, the lazy bumble of a purring lion. And **there** was the patter of okapi feet and the murmur of a fresh jungle rain, like other hoofs, falling upon the summer-starched grass. Now the walls dissolved into distances of parched weed, mile on mile, and warm endless sky. The animals drew away into thorn brakes and water holes. It was the children's hour.

Five o'clock. The bath filled with clear hot water.

Six, seven, eight o'clock. The dinner dishes manipulated like magic tricks, and in the study a click. In the metal stand opposite the hearth where a fire now blazed up warmly, a cigar popped out, half an inch of **soft** gray ash on it, smoking, waiting.

Nine o'clock. The beds warmed their hidden circuits, for nights were cool here.

Nine-five. A voice spoke from the study ceiling:

"Mrs. McClellan, which poem would you like this evening?"

The house was silent.

The voice said at last, "Since you express no preference, I shall select a poem at random."

Quiet music rose to back the voice. "Sara Teasdale. As I recall, your favorite...."

"There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,

And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,

And wild plum trees in tremulous white;

Robins **will** wear their feathery fire,

Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one **will** know of the war, not one

Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,

if mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn

Would scarcely know that we were gone."

The fire burned on the stone hearth and the cigar fell away into a mound of quiet ash on its tray. The empty chairs faced each other between the silent walls, and the music played.

At ten o'clock the house began to die.

The wind blew. A failing tree bough crashed through the kitchen window. Cleaning solvent, bottled, shattered over the stove. The room was ablaze in an instant!

"Fire!" screamed a voice. The house lights flashed, water pumps shot water from the ceilings. But the solvent spread on the linoleum, licking, eating, under the kitchen door, while the voices took it up in chorus: "Fire, fire, fire!"

The house tried to save itself. Doors sprang tightly shut, but the windows were broken by the heat and the wind blew and sucked upon the fire.

The house gave ground as the fire in ten billion angry sparks moved with flaming ease

from room to room and then up the stairs. While scurrying water rats squeaked from the walls, pistoled their water, and ran for more. And the wall sprays let down showers of mechanical rain.

But too late. Somewhere, sighing, a pump shrugged to a stop. The quenching rain ceased. The reserve water supply which had filled baths and washed dishes for many quiet days was gone.

The fire crackled up the stairs. It fed upon Picassos and Matisses in the upper halls, like delicacies, baking off the oily flesh, tenderly crisping the canvases into black shavings. Now the fire lay in beds, stood in windows, changed the colors of drapes!

And then, reinforcements.

From attic trapdoors, blind robot faces peered down with faucet mouths gushing green chemical.

The fire backed off, as even an elephant must at the sight of a dead snake. Now **there** were twenty snakes whipping over the floor, killing the fire with a clear cold venom of green froth.

But the fire was clever. It had sent flames outside the house, up through the attic to the pumps **there**. An explosion! The attic brain which directed the pumps was shattered into bronze shrapnel on the beams.

The fire rushed back into every closet and felt of the clothes hung **there**.

The house shuddered, oak bone on bone, its bared skeleton cringing from the heat, its wire, its nerves revealed as if a surgeon had torn the skin off to let the red veins and capillaries quiver in the scalded air. Help, help! Fire! Run, run! Heat snapped mirrors like the brittle winter ice. And the voices wailed Fire, fire, run, run, like a tragic nursery rhyme, a dozen voices, high, low, like children dying in a forest, alone, alone. And the voices fading as the wires popped their sheathings like hot chestnuts. One, two, three, four, five voices died.

In the nursery the jungle burned. Blue lions roared, purple giraffes bounded off. The panthers ran in circles, changing color, and ten million animals, running before the fire, vanished off toward a distant steaming river....

Ten more voices died. In the last instant under the fire avalanche, other choruses, oblivious, could be heard announcing the time, playing music, cutting the lawn by remote-control mower, or setting an umbrella frantically out and in the slamming and opening front door, a thousand things happening, like a clock shop when each clock strikes the hour insanely before or after the other, a scene of maniac confusion, yet unity; singing, screaming, a few last cleaning mice darting bravely out to carry the horrid ashes away! And one voice, with sublime disregard for the situation, read poetry aloud in the fiery study, until all the film spools burned, until all the wires withered and the circuits cracked.

The fire burst the house and let it slam flat down, puffing out skirts of spark and smoke. In the kitchen, an instant before the rain of fire and timber, the stove could be seen making breakfasts at a psychopathic rate, ten dozen eggs, six loaves of toast, twenty dozen bacon strips, which, eaten by fire, started the stove working again, hysterically hissing!

The crash. The attic smashing into kitchen and parlor. The parlor into cellar, cellar into

sub-cellar. Deep freeze, armchair, film tapes, circuits, beds, and all like skeletons thrown in a cluttered mound deep under.

Smoke and silence. A great quantity of smoke.

Dawn showed faintly in the east. Among the ruins, one wall stood alone. Within the wall, a last voice said, over and over again and again, even as the sun rose to shine upon the heaped rubble and steam:

"Today is August 5, 2026, today is August 5, 2026, today is..."



- 1) Cite 5 special automated functions the house performs.
- 2) Make an inference about the inhabitants of the house.
- 3) Determine the reason the house continues its activity even when it no longer makes sense. Determine what this indicates about the human qualities the house does not have.
- 4) Based on the information in the first two pages of the story, what **two** inferences could you make about events that occurred before the story opens. For each inference, note at least one detail later on in the story that either proves or disproves it.
- 5) Analyze what new information have you learned about the setting based on the section which starts with *ten fifteen*.
- 6) Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports what has happened to the rest of the city, based on an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- 7) Cite the descriptions used in this piece which show that the story is set in a different time from the present.
- 8) Cite the accident which threatens the house.
- 9) Determine the two objects being personified in this story. Determine the effect of Bradbury using personification in this story.
- 10) In the paragraph the house shuddered, oak bone on bone... what do you infer is happening?
- 11) Do you think Bradbury gives a realistic view of the future of technology? Explain.
- 12) Determine a theme or central idea of "There Will Come Soft Rains" and analyze its development over the course of the story, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

Review Questions: Answer the following questions based on the story

- 1) What appears to be special about the house? List five automated functions the house performs.
- 2) Make an inference about the inhabitants of the house.
- 3) Why does the house continue its activity even when it no longer makes sense? What does this indicate about the human qualities the house does not have?
- 4) Based on the information in the first two pages of the story, what **two** inferences could you make about events that occurred before the story opens. For each inference, note at least one detail later on in the story that either proves or disproves it.
- 5) As you get to the section with *ten fifteen* what new information have you learned about the setting?
- 6) What has happened to the rest of the city?
- 7) How do the descriptions used in this piece show that the story is set in a different time from the present?
- 8) What accident threatens the house?
- 9) What two objects are being personified in this story? Why do you think Bradbury used personification in this story?
- 10) In the paragraph the house shuddered, oak bone on bone... what do you infer is happening?
- 11) Do you think Bradbury gives a realistic view of the future of technology? Explain.

Reader's Journal Question: In a 1 to 1 and a 1/2 page response answer the following questions: Identify these aspects of setting in "There Will Come Soft Rains": the specific place in which events occur; the historical period. For each aspect, give an example of a description that helps make this setting vivid for readers. In what ways has the house changed from the beginning to the end? Explain why, in this story, the setting might also be called the main character.

Plot

The Bet [Anton Chekhov](#)

It was a dark autumn night. The old banker was walking up and down his study and remembering how, fifteen years before, he had given a party one autumn evening. There had been many clever men there, and there had been interesting conversations. Among other things they had talked of capital punishment. The majority of the guests, among whom were many journalists and intellectual men, disapproved of the death penalty. They considered that form of punishment out of date, immoral, and unsuitable for Christian States. In the opinion of some of them the death penalty ought to be replaced everywhere by imprisonment for life. "I don't agree with you," said their host the banker. "I have not tried either the death penalty or imprisonment for life, but if one may judge *a priori*, the death penalty is more moral and more humane than imprisonment for life. Capital punishment kills a man at once, but lifelong imprisonment kills him slowly. Which executioner is the more humane, he who kills you in a few minutes or he who drags the life out of you in the course of many years?"

"Both are equally immoral," observed one of the guests, "for they both have the same object - to take away life. The State is not God. It has not the right to take away what it cannot restore when it wants to."

Among the guests was a young lawyer, a young man of five-and-twenty. When he was asked his opinion, he said:

"The death sentence and the life sentence are equally immoral, but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisonment for life, I would certainly choose the second. To live anyhow is better than not at all."

A lively discussion arose. The banker, who was younger and more nervous in those days, was suddenly carried away by excitement; he struck the table with his fist and shouted at the young man:

"It's not true! I'll bet you two million you wouldn't stay in solitary confinement for five years."

"If you mean that in earnest," said the young man, "I'll take the bet, but I would stay not five but fifteen years."

"Fifteen? Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two million!"

"Agreed! You stake your millions and I stake my freedom!" said the young man.

≤ 2 ≥

And this wild, senseless bet was carried out! The banker, spoilt and frivolous, with millions beyond his reckoning, was delighted at the bet. At supper he made fun of the young man, and said:

"Think better of it, young man, while there is still time. To me two million is a trifle, but you are losing three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four, because you won't stay longer. Don't forget either, you unhappy man, that voluntary confinement is a great deal harder to bear than compulsory. The thought that you have the right to step out in liberty at any moment will poison your whole existence in prison. I am sorry for you."

And now the banker, walking to and fro, remembered all this, and asked himself:

"What was the object of that bet? What is the good of that man's losing fifteen years of his life and my throwing away two million? Can it prove that the death penalty is better or worse than imprisonment for life? No, no. It was all nonsensical and meaningless. On my part it was the caprice of a pampered man, and on his part simple greed for money ..."

Then he remembered what followed that evening. It was decided that the young man should spend the years of his captivity under the strictest supervision in one of the lodges in the banker's garden. It was agreed that for fifteen years he should not be free to cross the threshold of the lodge, to see human beings, to hear the human voice, or to receive letters and newspapers. He was allowed to have a musical instrument and books, and was allowed to write letters, to drink wine, and to smoke. By the terms of the agreement, the only relations he could have with the outer world were by a little window made purposely for that object. He might have anything he wanted - books, music, wine, and so on - in any quantity he desired by writing an order, but could only receive them through the window. The agreement provided for every detail and every trifle that would make his imprisonment strictly solitary, and bound the young man to stay there *exactly* fifteen years, beginning from twelve o'clock of November 14, 1870, and ending at twelve o'clock of November 14, 1885. The slightest attempt on his part to break the conditions, if only two minutes before the end, released the banker from the obligation to pay him the two million.

≤ 3 ≥

For the first year of his confinement, as far as one could judge from his brief notes, the prisoner suffered severely from loneliness and depression. The sounds of the piano could be heard continually day and night from his lodge. He refused wine and tobacco. Wine, he wrote, excites the desires, and desires are the worst foes of the prisoner; and besides, nothing could be more dreary than drinking good wine and seeing no one. And tobacco spoilt the air of his room. In the first year the books he sent for were principally of a light character; novels with a complicated love plot, sensational and fantastic stories, and so on.

In the second year the piano was silent in the lodge, and the prisoner asked only for the classics. In the fifth year music was audible again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him through the window said that all that year he spent doing nothing but eating and drinking and lying on his bed, frequently yawning and angrily talking to himself. He did not read books. Sometimes at night he would sit down to write; he would spend hours writing, and in the morning tear up all that he had written. More than once he could be heard crying.

In the second half of the sixth year the prisoner began zealously studying languages, philosophy, and history. He threw himself eagerly into these studies - so much so that the banker had enough to do to get him the books he ordered. In the course of four years some six hundred volumes were procured at his request. It was during this period that the banker received the following letter from his prisoner:

"My dear Jailer, I write you these lines in six languages. Show them to people who know the languages. Let them read them. If they find not one mistake I implore you to fire a shot in the garden. That shot will show me that my efforts have not been thrown away. The geniuses of all ages and of all lands speak different languages, but the same flame burns in them all. Oh, if you only knew what unearthly happiness my soul feels

now from being able to understand them!" The prisoner's desire was fulfilled. The banker ordered two shots to be fired in the garden.

≤ 4 ≥

Then after the tenth year, the prisoner sat immovably at the table and read nothing but the Gospel. It seemed strange to the banker that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred learned volumes should waste nearly a year over one thin book easy of comprehension. Theology and histories of religion followed the Gospels.

In the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an immense quantity of books quite indiscriminately. At one time he was busy with the natural sciences, then he would ask for Byron or Shakespeare. There were notes in which he demanded at the same time books on chemistry, and a manual of medicine, and a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology. His reading suggested a man swimming in the sea among the wreckage of his ship, and trying to save his life by greedily clutching first at one spar and then at another.

The old banker remembered all this, and thought:

"To-morrow at twelve o'clock he will regain his freedom. By our agreement I ought to pay him two million. If I do pay him, it is all over with me: I shall be utterly ruined."

Fifteen years before, his millions had been beyond his reckoning; now he was afraid to ask himself which were greater, his debts or his assets. Desperate gambling on the Stock Exchange, wild speculation and the excitability which he could not get over even in advancing years, had by degrees led to the decline of his fortune and the proud, fearless, self-confident millionaire had become a banker of middling rank, trembling at every rise and fall in his investments. "Cursed bet!" muttered the old man, clutching his head in despair "Why didn't the man die? He is only forty now. He will take my last penny from me, he will marry, will enjoy life, will gamble on the Exchange; while I shall look at him with envy like a beggar, and hear from him every day the same sentence: 'I am indebted to you for the happiness of my life, let me help you!' No, it is too much! The one means of being saved from bankruptcy and disgrace is the death of that man!"

It struck three o'clock, the banker listened; everyone was asleep in the house and nothing could be heard outside but the rustling of the chilled trees. Trying to make no noise, he took from a fireproof safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat, and went out of the house.

≤ 5 ≥

It was dark and cold in the garden. Rain was falling. A damp cutting wind was racing about the garden, howling and giving the trees no rest. The banker strained his eyes, but could see neither the earth nor the white statues, nor the lodge, nor the trees. Going to the spot where the lodge stood, he twice called the watchman. No answer followed. Evidently the watchman had sought shelter from the weather, and was now asleep somewhere either in the kitchen or in the greenhouse.

"If I had the pluck to carry out my intention," thought the old man, "Suspicion would fall first upon the watchman."

He felt in the darkness for the steps and the door, and went into the entry of the lodge. Then he groped his way into a little passage and lighted a match. There was not a soul there. There was a bedstead with no bedding on it, and in the corner there was a dark cast-iron stove. The seals on the door leading to the prisoner's rooms were intact.

When the match went out the old man, trembling with emotion, peeped through the little window. A candle was burning dimly in the prisoner's room. He was sitting at the table. Nothing could be seen but his back, the hair on his head, and his hands. Open books were lying on the table, on the two easy-chairs, and on the carpet near the table.

Five minutes passed and the prisoner did not once stir. Fifteen years' imprisonment had taught him to sit still. The banker tapped at the window with his finger, and the prisoner made no movement whatever in response. Then the banker cautiously broke the seals off the door and put the key in the keyhole. The rusty lock gave a grating sound and the door creaked. The banker expected to hear at once footsteps and a cry of astonishment, but three minutes passed and it was as quiet as ever in the room. He made up his mind to go in.

At the table a man unlike ordinary people was sitting motionless. He was a skeleton with the skin drawn tight over his bones, with long curls like a woman's and a shaggy beard. His face was yellow with an earthy tint in it, his cheeks were hollow, his back long and narrow, and the hand on which his shaggy head was propped was so thin and delicate that it was dreadful to look at it. His hair was already streaked with silver, and seeing his emaciated, aged-looking face, no one would have believed that he was only forty. He was asleep ... In front of his bowed head there lay on the table a sheet of paper on which there was something written in fine handwriting.

≤ 6 ≥

"Poor creature!" thought the banker, "he is asleep and most likely dreaming of the millions. And I have only to take this half-dead man, throw him on the bed, stifle him a little with the pillow, and the most conscientious expert would find no sign of a violent death. But let us first read what he has written here ... "

The banker took the page from the table and read as follows:

"To-morrow at twelve o'clock I regain my freedom and the right to associate with other men, but before I leave this room and see the sunshine, I think it necessary to say a few words to you. With a clear conscience I tell you, as before God, who beholds me, that I despise freedom and life and health, and all that in your books is called the good things of the world.

"For fifteen years I have been intently studying earthly life. It is true I have not seen the earth nor men, but in your books I have drunk fragrant wine, I have sung songs, I have hunted stags and wild boars in the forests, have loved women ... Beauties as ethereal as clouds, created by the magic of your poets and geniuses, have visited me at night, and have whispered in my ears wonderful tales that have set my brain in a whirl. In your books I have climbed to the peaks of Elburz and Mont Blanc, and from there I have seen the sun rise and have watched it at evening flood the sky, the ocean, and the mountain-tops with gold and crimson. I have watched from there the lightning flashing over my head and cleaving the storm-clouds. I have seen green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, towns. I have heard the singing of the sirens, and the strains of the shepherds' pipes; I have touched the wings of comely devils who flew down to converse with me of God ... In your books I have flung myself into the bottomless pit, performed miracles, slain, burned towns, preached new religions, conquered whole kingdoms ...

"Your books have given me wisdom. All that the unresting thought of man has created in the ages is compressed into a small compass in my brain. I know that I am wiser than all of you.

<7>

"And I despise your books, I despise wisdom and the blessings of this world. It is all worthless, fleeting, illusory, and deceptive, like a mirage. You may be proud, wise, and fine, but death will wipe you off the face of the earth as though you were no more than mice burrowing under the floor, and your posterity, your history, your immortal geniuses will burn or freeze together with the earthly globe.

"You have lost your reason and taken the wrong path. You have taken lies for truth, and hideousness for beauty. You would marvel if, owing to strange events of some sorts, frogs and lizards suddenly grew on apple and orange trees instead of fruit, or if roses began to smell like a sweating horse; so I marvel at you who exchange heaven for earth. I don't want to understand you.

"To prove to you in action how I despise all that you live by, I renounce the two million of which I once dreamed as of paradise and which now I despise. To deprive myself of the right to the money I shall go out from here five hours before the time fixed, and so break the compact ..."

When the banker had read this he laid the page on the table, kissed the strange man on the head, and went out of the lodge, weeping. At no other time, even when he had lost heavily on the Stock Exchange, had he felt so great a contempt for himself. When he got home he lay on his bed, but his tears and emotion kept him for hours from sleeping.

Next morning the watchmen ran in with pale faces, and told him they had seen the man who lived in the lodge climb out of the window into the garden, go to the gate, and disappear. The banker went at once with the servants to the lodge and made sure of the flight of his prisoner. To avoid arousing unnecessary talk, he took from the table the writing in which the millions were renounced, and when he got home locked it up in the fireproof safe.



“The Bet” by Anton Chekhov | Text Based Questions:

- 1) Explain what is meant by the line "The State is not God" in paragraph 3 of the text.
- 2) Analyze how the rebuttal "Any sort of life's better than none at all," reveals aspects of the way the lawyer thinks.
- 3) In the paragraph which begins with "During the first year of his confinement..."determine the meaning of the words the lawyer says, "...desires are the worst foes of the prisoner." Is this true?
- 4) Analyze the line the lawyer writes in his first letter, "The geniuses of all ages and of all lands speak different languages, but the same flame burns in them all." What does he mean by this?
- 5) The narrator characterizes his reading as "a man swimming in the sea among the wreckage of his ship, and trying to save his life by greedily clutching first at one spar and then at another." What does this mean? Is this true?
- 6) How does the banker calling the bet "cursed" reveal aspects of his life at this section of the plot?
- 7) A paragraph in the second half of the story begins, "It was dark and cold in the garden. Rain was falling. A damp cutting wind was racing about the garden, howling and giving the trees no rest." How does this language and atmosphere relate to what is going on in the story?
- 8) Analyze how the differences in point of view motivate the Lawyer and the Banker to make such a bet which creates suspense in the plot. What does engaging in such a bet reveal about each of the characters?
- 9) What are the drawbacks of gambling in general? Are there appropriate forms of gambling?
- 10) Determine the impact of the lawyer's words when he says, "You have taken lies for truth," on the meaning Chekov is trying to impart on his readers.
- 11) The lawyer marvels at those who "exchange heaven for earth"? What does he mean by this?
- 12) During his confinement, the Lawyer had the opportunity to read and learn about the world. Meanwhile, the Banker had the opportunity to experience many pleasures in the world. In the end, both were driven to desperation. One man was willing to commit

murder, the other despised "all the blessings of the world." How does this textual evidence strongly support an analysis of what the text says about "the truly wise person values ideas more than objects?"

13) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

Embedded Task #2 - "The Bet"

"The Bet" is a story in which two characters debate whether it is more humane to be imprisoned for life or to be put to death for a crime. Over the course of fifteen years both the banker and the young lawyer have very different experiences.

- Discuss how each character does or does not change (consider types of characters i.e., round, flat, dynamic or static).
- Refer to the text to support your evaluation of each character and explain why the character developed as he did.
- In a well written essay, be sure to:
Use appropriate paragraphing , transitions, textual evidence to support your analysis
- Follow the conventions of standard English including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Review Questions:

- 1) This story is told in flashback. What is a flashback?
- 2) What kinds of people are present at the banker's party?
- 3) What is the debate over?
- 4) Define moral and humane.
- 5) What is the banker's position on the topic?
- 6) What is the young lawyer's position on the topic?
- 7) What is the original bet?
- 8) Why does Chekhov refer to the bet as a "preposterous, senseless" one?
- 9) What detail is worked out between the two? What does each man wager?
- 10) Trace the years of imprisonment. What happened in year 1, 2, 5, 6?
- 11) What is the significance of the letter he wrote to the banker in the sixth year?
Why does he call him a goaler?
- 12) Why is it important that in the tenth year he read only the Gospels?
- 13) As the lawyer's time drew near, why was the banker upset?
- 14) How does the banker give up his own responsibility for the bet?
- 15) What is the banker's plan to do away with the lawyer? Who will be suspected?
- 16) What does the banker see when he goes to the lodge?
- 17) What does the lawyer's letter say in detail?
- 18) What is contempt? What is self contempt?
- 19) Despite the letter the banker locks up the lawyer's letter in the safe. Why?
- 20) What is Chekhov's philosophy of mankind?



vs.



It's time to dump California's death penalty by passing Prop. 34
The state's death penalty already effectively has been abolished. The question now is
whether we should keep throwing away tax money on a broken system.

George Skelton | Capitol Journal



September 12, 2012|SACRAMENTO — Officially, Proposition 34 is about whether to abolish the death penalty and replace it with life in prison. But that's not the pertinent question.

The death penalty already effectively has been abolished in California. Capital punishment exists only in fantasyland. Condemned killers essentially have been living out their natural lives behind bars.

The relevant question is whether we should keep pouring tax money down a rat hole, feeding a broken system that shows no signs of ever being fixed.

California has executed only 13 people in the last 34 years, and none since 2006. A study last year found that the state had spent \$4 billion to administer capital punishment since 1978. That's about \$308 million per execution.

So for me, Prop. 34 is not about the merits of capital punishment. It's about whether we should keep paying extravagantly for something we're not getting.

The November ballot measure is relatively simple compared to most other initiatives. It would repeal California's death penalty and replace it with life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

It would apply retroactively to the 729 convicted killers already sentenced to death. They and future murderers would be tossed into the general prison population and treated like other convicts — double-bunked and required to work.

Current death row inmates at San Quentin are relatively coddled — in their own private cells with personal TVs and extensive access to the recreation yard.

"They're allowed to go to the exercise yard seven days a week, up to six hours a day, or they can lay in their cell and watch TV seven days a week if they want," says Jeanne Woodford, a former San Quentin warden and ex-director of the state corrections department. She's a leading proponent of Prop. 34.

"They don't work because there's no work for death row inmates. So they're not required to pay restitution to victims' families." They would be under Prop. 34.

The legislative analyst estimates that state and county governments ultimately would save about \$130 million annually by repealing the death penalty.

Over an initial four-year span, \$100 million would be doled out to local law enforcement agencies to help solve homicide and sex crimes.

"In California on average each year," Woodford says, "46% of murders and 56% of reported rapes go unsolved. The best way to prevent crime is to solve it. The more solved crimes, the lower the crime rate. That's really the deterrent to crime."

Don't read me wrong. You won't see any arguments here about the death penalty being immoral, unfair or barbaric. I don't buy it. These creeps — once proven guilty beyond a shadow of doubt — should be removed from our planet ASAP.

It's just that a condemned man in California is far more likely to die of old age than execution. In all, 57 have died of natural causes and 21 from suicide.

The death penalty isn't a deterrent? Anyone executed will never kill again. Moreover, it's deserved punishment. Any mercy should be up to the depraved killer's God.

We might execute an innocent man? That may have occurred in other states, but no one can point to it ever happening in California in modern times.

Former Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. Gil Garcetti, however, worries about the innocence question. As a prosecutor, he sent dozens to death row. With 729 currently housed on the row, "I just have to believe that there are at least a couple who are factually innocent," he says. "We're all human beings. We make mistakes."

Garcetti strongly supports Prop. 34, but principally because of the wasted money issue.

"I'm not absolutely opposed morally to the death penalty," he says, "but I've concluded that in California it serves no useful purpose, it doesn't work and it's not fixable. The costs are obscene.

"We're laying off teachers and firefighters and police officers. Spending \$184 million more per year on the death penalty doesn't make sense."

The \$184-million figure comes from a study conducted last year by U.S. 9th Circuit Judge Arthur L. Alarcon and Loyola Law School professor Paula M. Mitchell. They figured that was the annual cost of housing death row prisoners over what it would be if they had been sentenced to life in prison.

They also estimated that fully implementing the death penalty, chiefly by hiring more judges and attorneys, would cost an extra \$85 million annually.

Opponents of Prop. 34 — district attorneys, sheriffs, police chiefs, victims' rights groups — dispute those figures but don't offer their own.

They argue that executions could be expedited if the state moved quickly to a one-drug process for lethal injections. The former three-drug process has been blocked by courts.

Gov. Jerry Brown has directed the state corrections department to develop a one-drug method. But don't expect him to stay on top of it and push. For Brown, repeal of the death penalty has been a lifelong cause.

State Atty. Gen. Kamala D. Harris also is a staunch death penalty opponent, although, like Brown, she pledges to carry out the law.

Well, for whatever reasons — mainly the lethal injection flap and prolonged court appeals — it's not being carried out.

"The Prop. 34 proponents' best argument is that nobody is getting executed," asserts Mitch Zak, campaign strategist for the vastly underfunded opponents. "They don't want anyone to be executed. They've successfully broken the system.

"What you're doing [with Prop. 34] is rewarding them by giving them what they want. But voters are smart enough to know that the death penalty is an appropriate tool for the worst of the worst."

But the tool isn't working. Time to dump it and stop throwing away money.

Lt. Sam Robinson, press information officer, and others are reflected... (Wally Skali / Los Angeles...)

george.skelton@latimes.com

An Argument in Favor of Capital Punishment

Posted by Nicole Smith, Dec 15, 2011 Politics No Comments Print

As this argumentative essay in favor of capital punishment will explore, capital punishment is absolutely necessary because it deters instances of murder and because it offers the only just punishment for a crime that is without parallel. The existence of capital punishment and the threat that it is a possibility is enough to deter crime and as a result, this practice should be continued. If future criminals feel that they can easily get off with a light sentence for one of the most horrible possible crimes, it seems only natural that instances of murder would increase. “Some argue that executing murderers may actually cause more murders by desensitizing society at large to killing. But over the years, several studies have shown that killing convicted murderers does deter future murders” (Sage 77). In addition to the more statistical aspect of the benefits of keeping capital punishment, there is a more ethereal issue to contend with; the pain and suffering of both the victim and his or her family.

It is not difficult to maintain the position of being in favor of capital punishment when one takes a close look at the pain and suffering caused when someone’s loved one is murdered. The act of murdering someone is one of the most heinous acts and must be dealt with accordingly so that the families and victims of the crime have some sort of retribution. One finds in the Bible the popular expression, “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” and this almost seems a perfect statement for capital punishment. One must ask how, if not through capital punishment, is one supposed to be punished for the crime of taking another human being’s life? By examining the benefits of capital punishment in deterring crime and looking at the more philosophical issues of general punishment for murder it will be demonstrated how important it is for the nation to retain capital punishment.

There are many statistics that point to the success of capital punishment. Several studies indicate a strong correlation between execution and the determent of crimes, especially murder. Such studies “suggest that capital punishment has a strong deterrent effect, each execution results, on average, in 18 fewer murders—with a margin of error of plus or minus ten. Tests show that results are not driven by tougher sentencing laws.” (Ellsworth 116). While this data is highly subjective and considers the national average (as opposed to a region or city) it does show that violence is reduced. Although tough sentences that are imposed for serious non-capital crimes are generally extremely high, it is interesting that the thought of life in prison is not as much of a deterrent as the prospect of death. When people are trying to make a decision about capital punishment, many are inclined

to think that it is not fair to punish one murder with another and others tend to suggest that there is too much of a possibility of executing the wrong person.

While there may be some legitimacy to these claims, it seems much more pressing for us to consider what a beneficial solution capital punishment has been. Although it would be impossible to support in any real argument for capital punishment, it seems fair, based on the data that is already available, to suggest that murder rates would be far higher in this country if we did not have capital punishment in many states. Those who would question this might remind us that the murder rates are lower in Europe than in the United States (Ellsworth 119) and they do not have capital punishment. The counter-argument, however, is that they do not face some of the same societal problems that we do in the United States and thus what works for them might not apply in the case of our society. In general, keeping capital punishment has been proven to work in deterring some instances of murder and thus we should not try to fix what is not broken and should keep capital punishment.

For further proof as to the usefulness of capital punishment in deterring crime, it is necessary to consider how it deters crime when its existence directly confronts people. It should be noted as well that many studies reveal that this particularly the case if the execution has been highly publicized. Consider, for example that, “On the average, homicides decrease by 35.7% immediately following a publicized execution. The more publicity devoted to the execution, the more homicides decrease thereafter. This decrease apparently occurs because capital punishment has a short-term deterrent effect on homicides” (Phillips 139). Although this study only examines the short-term decreases in homicides following an execution, there is plenty of evidence that suggests that capital punishment brings overall rates of murder down—simply because it exists and is a possibility. When people are confronted with the realities of capital punishment as opposed to thinking about it in more abstract terms, they are more likely to understand and internalize its message. With the data above it is conceivable to think how a potential murderer could witness an execution and then really get the message that it is a real and effective punishment. Whether or not this study only looks at the short term effects after one witnesses an execution, it is still proof that this mode of punishment is directly connected with lower rates of violent crime.

Murder rates rise and fall at different rates but there has never been a state that did not see several per year. This has caused the public to grow more concerned about the crime and as a result more people have come to support capital punishment. We live in an increasingly complex and violent society and must keep capital punishment in place to deter future rising murder rates nationwide. Although rates have fallen slightly in recent years, “in 1994, public support for capital punishment peaked at around 80%” (Soss 398).

With still well over half of the nation supporting capital punishment, the anxieties about crime are apparent. It is necessary for people to realize how important it is to retain capital punishment and to consider the data above, especially that about rates dropping after executions, in mind when forming an opinion about the highly controversial issue. In addition to this, there are other considerations to be made when denying capital punishment a place in society. Many opponents, especially those who question the rights of prisoners facing execution may argue that, “there are too many mistakes for a such a permanent solution; there are too many racial, IQ and class inequities” (Morgan 30) and while this may be true on some levels, these concerns could be alleviated if our society put more effort into the legal process. Also, these concerns seem like detractions from the real issue—that we must punish violent criminals with according punishment.

Many who are not in favor of capital punishment might suggest that capital punishment is “cruel and unusual” and thus is not constitutional, but this argument is virtually meaningless when we consider that we are not a society that draws and quarters criminals or tortures them before finally killing them. Most states that do favor the act of capital punishment have lethal injection; a virtually painless punishment, thus making it far more ethical than other forms practiced elsewhere. Aside from this, those who would use the “cruel and unusual” argument are not taking into account the vast amount of pain caused to the families and friends of the person who was slain and certainly have not thought about whether or not (and to what extent) the victim suffered before death. Murder is a horrible crime and no matter how justified the murderer might have thought the reasons for the act were, he or she still committed the most grave crime of taking another person’s life. To highlight my point about pain and suffering, let me pose a hypothetical situation. A serial murderer kidnapped and tortured 15 people, all for his own gratification. He chose these people at random and they were reported missing for many days before their bodies finally found in awful condition. Is it even possible for anyone to rationalize a good reason for someone doing this? Can we even imagine, if we have not gone through something like this personally, what the families and loved ones of the victims suffered when their loved one was missing suddenly and then they find that they were dead—the victims of senseless, selfish, and completely random crime? These are tough questions to even consider but the hardest yet is asking how we as a society can best mete out punishment for something so awful. Keeping someone in prison for the rest of his life seems too easy, especially considering the fact that the United States has relatively cozy prisons compared to those in lesser developed countries. Furthermore, these types of violent criminals are a drain on taxpayer dollars as they waste away in prison. The only real viable and just-seeming action is to dole out the same treatment that they did to their victims, except the criminal is going to be spared any physical pain under lethal injection.

Ethical questions are at the forefront of the debate about the permissibility of capital punishment as both a way of deterring crime and making criminals “pay” for their violent acts against individuals and society. While this is certainly not a new question, it still has not been resolved and instead, there are some states that exercise their ability to punish the harshest criminals while others, generally for moral reasons, do not. In examining the questions behind this issue, it is useful to consider public opinion and rhetoric behind this debate to determine for what reasons it is considered right or wrong to have such a criminal penalty. To best examine the questions behind the debate, objectivity is important as is a keen mind for the differences between mere rhetoric and solid empirical fact. Although there is plenty of empirical evidence to support the continuation of capital punishment in the United States, there are other more complex issues that also must be examined. We must really think hard about pain and suffering—not that of the criminal or murderer, but that which the victim and his or her family suffered as well. Murder is the most awful crime that exists and the one that our society deems heinous enough to punish with the most extreme form of punishment. We must continue supporting capital punishment so that due justice is given to those who violate society’s rules in such a drastic way and to ensure that future murders do not occur.

You might be interested in other essays and articles in the [Arguments Archive](#) including, [Capital Punishment, Ethics, and Public Opinion](#) & [Issues Surrounding the Rights of Prisoners](#)

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Answer the following TEXT BASED QUESTIONS:

- 1) Cite the textual evidence which strongly supports an analysis of what “It’s time to dump California’s death penalty by passing Prop. 34” says explicitly about the **cons** of the capital punishment.

- 2) Cite the textual evidence which strongly supports an analysis of what “An Argument in Favor of capital Punishment” says explicitly about the **pros** of the capital punishment.
- 3) Determine the central idea of “It’s time to dump California’s death penalty by passing Prop. 34” and include its supporting idea.
- 4) Determine the central idea of “An Argument in Favor of capital Punishment” and include its supporting idea.
- 5) Provide an objective summary of “It’s time to dump California’s death penalty by passing Prop. 34”.
- 6) Provide an objective summary of “An Argument in Favor of capital Punishment”.
- 7) Analyze how the dateline develops a key concept throughout the article “It’s time to dump California’s death penalty by passing Prop. 34”.
- 8) Cite the figurative language used in paragraph 3. Determine its meaning.
- 9) How does this figurative language statement set the tone of the article?
- 10) How does the line “Any mercy should be up to the depraved killer’s God”, in the article “It’s time to dump California’s death penalty by passing Prop. 34”, reminiscent to the statement “The State is not God” in paragraph 3 from “The Bet” by Anton Chekhov?
- 11) Determine the meaning of the words abolish, extravagantly, coddle, barbaric, obscene and creepy as used in “It’s time to dump California’s death penalty by passing Prop. 34”. Do they have positive or negative connotations? What effect do they have on the article?
- 12) Determine George Skelton’s point of view or purpose in “It’s time to dump California’s death penalty by passing Prop. 34”.
- 13) Cite and analyze how he acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- 14) Analyze how “It’s time to dump California’s death penalty by passing Prop. 34” makes connections among and distinctions between individual ideas or events (ie through comparisons, analogies or categories) identify which is which.
- 15) Evaluate the argument and specific claims in “It’s time to dump California’s death penalty by passing Prop. 34” and assess whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is sufficient and relevant.

- 16) Analyze the impact of the words **draws and quarters** in paragraph 7 of “An Argument in Favor of capital Punishment” on the meaning and tone of the paragraph.
- 17) Determine Nicole Smith’s point of view/purpose in the essay, “An Argument in Favor of capital Punishment” and analyze how she acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- 18) Evaluate the argument and specific claims in “An Argument in Favor of capital Punishment” and assess whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is sufficient and relevant.
- 19) Analyze how both, “It’s time to dump California’s death penalty by passing Prop. 34” by George Skelton and “An Argument in Favor of capital Punishment” by Nicole Smith provide conflicting information on the same topic.
- 20) Which article would the lawyer and the banker from “The Bet” by Anton Chekhov support based on "It's time to dump California's death penalty by passing Prop. 34" by George Skelton and "An Argument in Favor of Capital Punishment" by Nicole Smith? Why?



THE MONKEY'S PAW (1902) by W.W. Jacobs

Vocabulary

placidly adv. – pleasantly calm or peaceful; unruffled; tranquil; serenely quiet or undisturbed: placid waters.

amiably adv. – having or showing pleasant, good-natured personal qualities; affable: *an amiable disposition*.

desirous adj. – having or characterized by desire; desiring: *desirous of high political office*.

condoled v.t. – to express sympathy with a person who is suffering sorrow, misfortune, or grief (usually fol. by *with*): *to condole with a friend whose father has died*.

rubicund adj. – red or reddish; ruddy: *a rubicund complexion*.

proffered v.t. – to put before a person for acceptance; offer.

doughty adj. – steadfastly courageous and resolute; valiant

fakir n. – a Muslim or Hindu religious person or monk commonly considered a wonder-worker.

jarred v.i. – to have a harshly unpleasant or perturbing effect on one's nerves, feelings, thoughts, etc.: *The sound of the alarm jarred*.

presumptuous adj. – unwarrantedly or impertinently bold; forward

fancy n. – a caprice; whim; vagary: *It was his fancy to fly to Paris occasionally for dinner*.

doggedly adv. – persistent in effort; stubbornly tenacious: *"I won't let you share my dessert! I won't! I won't!" the toddler said doggedly*.

talisman n. – anything whose presence exercises a remarkable or powerful influence on human feelings or actions.

enthralled v.t. – to captivate or charm: *the performer's grace and skill enthralled her audience*.

maligned v.t. – to speak harmful untruths about; speak evil of; slander; defame: *to malign an honorable man*.

antimacassar n. – a small covering, usually ornamental, placed on the backs and arms of upholstered furniture to prevent wear or soiling; a tidy.

dubiously adv. – of doubtful quality or propriety; questionable: *a dubious compliment; a dubious transaction*.

shamefacedly adv. – 1) modest or bashful, 2) showing shame: *shamefaced apologies*.

credulity n. – willingness to believe or trust too readily, esp. without proper or adequate evidence; gullibility

marred v.t. – to damage or spoil to a certain extent; render less perfect, attractive, useful, etc.; impair or spoil: *That billboard mars the view. The holiday was marred by bad weather.*

ill-gotten adj. – acquired by dishonest, improper, or evil means: *ill-gotten gains.*

prosaic adj. – commonplace or dull; matter-of-fact or unimaginative: *a prosaic mind.*

betokened v.t. – to give evidence of; indicate: *to betoken one's fidelity with a vow; a kiss that betokens one's affection.*

frivolous adj. – characterized by lack of seriousness or sense: *frivolous conduct.*

attribute v.t. – to regard as resulting from a specified cause; consider as caused by something indicated (usually fol. by *to*): *She attributed his bad temper to ill health.*

coincidence n. – a striking occurrence of two or more events at one time apparently by mere chance: *Our meeting in Venice was pure coincidence.*

avaricious adj. – characterized by avarice; greedy; covetous

disown v.t. – to refuse to acknowledge as belonging or pertaining to oneself; deny the ownership of or responsibility for; repudiate; renounce: *to disown one's heirs; to disown a published statement.*

scurrying v.i. – to go or move quickly or in haste.

at the expense of n. – at the sacrifice of; to the detriment of: *quantity at the expense of quality.*

bibulous adj. – fond of or addicted to drink.

resolution n. – a resolve or determination: *to make a firm resolution to do something.*

apparel n. – clothing, esp. outerwear; garments; attire;

broach to mention or suggest for the first time: *to broach a subject.*

resignation n. – an accepting, unresisting attitude, state, etc.; submission; acquiescence: *to meet one's fate with resignation*

apathy n. – absence or suppression of passion, emotion, or excitement.

shudderingly adv. – trembling or quivering with fear, dread, cold, etc.

scarcely adv. – barely; hardly; not quite: *The light is so dim we can scarcely see.*

audible adj. – capable of being heard; loud enough to be heard; actually heard.

resounded adj. – uttered loudly: *resounding speech.*

appealingly adv. – evoking or attracting interest, desire, curiosity, sympathy, or the like; attractive.

fusillade n. – a general discharge or outpouring of anything: *a fusillade of questions.*

reverberated v.i. – to reecho or resound: *Her singing reverberated through the house.*

I

WITHOUT, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlour of Laburnam Villa the blinds were drawn and the fire burned brightly. Father and son were at chess, the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical changes, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly by the fire.

"Hark at the wind," said Mr. White, who, having seen a fatal mistake after it was too late, was amiably desirous of preventing his son from seeing it.

"I'm listening," said the latter, grimly surveying the board as he stretched out his hand. "Check."

"I should hardly think that he'd come to-night," said his father, with his hand poised over the board.

"Mate," replied the son.

"That's the worst of living so far out," bawled Mr. White, with sudden and unlooked-for violence; "of all the beastly, slushy, out-of-the-way places to live in, this is the worst. Pathway's a bog, and the road's a torrent. I don't know what people are thinking about. I suppose because only two houses on the road are let, they think it doesn't matter."

"Never mind, dear," said his wife soothingly; "perhaps you'll win the next one."

Mr. White looked up sharply, just in time to intercept a knowing glance between mother and son. The words died away on his lips, and he hid a guilty grin in his thin grey beard.

"There he is," said Herbert White, as the gate banged to loudly and heavy footsteps came toward the door.

The old man rose with hospitable haste, and opening the door, was heard condoling with the new arrival. The new arrival also condoled with himself, so that Mrs. White said, "Tut, tut!" and coughed gently as her husband entered the room, followed by a tall burly man, beady of eye and rubicund of visage.

"Sergeant-Major Morris," he said, introducing him.

The sergeant-major shook hands, and taking the proffered seat by the fire, watched contentedly while his host got out whisky and tumblers and stood a small copper kettle on the fire.

At the third glass his eyes got brighter, and he began to talk, the little family circle regarding with eager interest this visitor from distant parts, as he squared his broad shoulders in the chair and spoke of strange scenes and doughty deeds; of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

"Twenty-one years of it," said Mr. White, nodding at his wife and son. "When he went away he was a slip of a youth in the warehouse. Now look at him."

"He don't look to have taken much harm," said Mrs. White, politely.

"I'd like to go to India myself," said the old man, "just to look round a bit, you know."

"Better where you are," said the sergeant-major, shaking his head. He put down the empty glass, and sighing softly, shook it again.

"I should like to see those old temples and fakirs and jugglers," said the old man. "What was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw or something, Morris?"

"Nothing," said the soldier hastily. "Leastways, nothing worth hearing."

"Monkey's paw?" said Mrs. White curiously.

"Well, it's just a bit of what you might call magic, perhaps," said the sergeant-major off-handedly.

His three listeners leaned forward eagerly. The visitor absentmindedly put his empty glass to his lips and then set it down again. His host filled it for him.

"To look at," said the sergeant-major, fumbling in his pocket, "it's just an ordinary little paw, dried to a mummy."

He took something out of his pocket and proffered it. Mrs. White drew back with a grimace, but her son, taking it, examined it curiously.

"And what is there special about it?" inquired Mr. White, as he took it from his son and, having examined it, placed it upon the table.

"It had a spell put on it by an old fakir," said the sergeant-major, "a very holy man. He wanted to show that fate ruled people's lives, and that those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow. He put a spell on it so that three separate men could each have three wishes from it."

His manner was so impressive that his hearers were conscious that their light laughter jarred somewhat.

"Well, why don't you have three, sir?" said Herbert White cleverly.

The soldier regarded him in the way that middle age is wont to regard presumptuous youth. "I have," he said quietly, and his blotchy face whitened.

"And did you really have the three wishes granted?" asked Mrs. White.

"I did," said the sergeant-major, and his glass tapped against his strong teeth.

"And has anybody else wished?" inquired the old lady.

"The first man had his three wishes, yes," was the reply. "I don't know what the first two were, but the third was for death. That's how I got the paw."

His tones were so grave that a hush fell upon the group.

"If you've had your three wishes, it's no good to you now, then, Morris," said the old man at last. "What do you keep it for?"

The soldier shook his head. "Fancy, I suppose," he said slowly.

"If you could have another three wishes," said the old man, eyeing him keenly, "would you have them?"

"I don't know," said the other. "I don't know."

He took the paw, and dangling it between his front finger and thumb, suddenly threw it upon the fire. White, with a slight cry, stooped down and snatched it off.

"Better let it burn," said the soldier solemnly.

"If you don't want it, Morris," said the old man, "give it to me."

"I won't," said his friend doggedly. "I threw it on the fire. If you keep it, don't blame me for what happens. Pitch it on the fire again, like a sensible man."

The other shook his head and examined his new possession closely. "How do you do it?" he inquired.

"Hold it up in your right hand and wish aloud," said the sergeant-major, "but I warn you of the consequences."

"Sounds like the *Arabian Nights*," said Mrs. White, as she rose and began to set the supper. "Don't you think you might wish for four pairs of hands for me?"

Her husband drew the talisman from his pocket and then all three burst into laughter as the sergeant-major, with a look of alarm on his face, caught him by the arm.

"If you must wish," he said gruffly, "wish for something sensible."

Mr. White dropped it back into his pocket, and placing chairs, motioned his friend to the table. In the business of supper the talisman was partly forgotten, and afterward the three sat listening in an enthralled fashion to a second installment of the soldier's adventures in India.

"If the tale about the monkey paw is not more truthful than those he has been telling us," said Herbert, as the door closed behind their guest, just in time for him to catch the last train, "we shan't make much out of it."

"Did you give him anything for it, father?" inquired Mrs. White, regarding her husband closely.

"A trifle," said he, coloring slightly. "He didn't want it, but I made him take it. And he pressed me again to throw it away."

"Likely," said Herbert, with pretended horror. "Why, we're going to be rich, and famous, and happy. Wish to be an emperor, father, to begin with; then you can't be henpecked."

He darted round the table, pursued by the maligned Mrs. White armed with an antimacassar.

Mr. White took the paw from his pocket and eyed it dubiously. "I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact," he said slowly. "It seems to me I've got all I want."

"If you only cleared the house, you'd be quite happy, wouldn't you?" said Herbert, with his hand on his shoulder. "Well, wish for two hundred pounds, then; that'll just do it."

His father, smiling shamefacedly at his own credulity, held up the talisman, as his son, with a solemn face somewhat marred by a wink at his mother, sat down at the piano and struck a few impressive chords.

"I wish for two hundred pounds," said the old man distinctly.

A fine crash from the piano greeted the words, interrupted by a shuddering cry from the old man. His wife and son ran toward him.

"It moved, he cried, with a glance of disgust at the object as it lay on the floor. "As I wished it twisted in my hands like a snake."

"Well, I don't see the money," said his son, as he picked it up and placed it on the table, "and I bet I never shall."

"It must have been your fancy, father," said his wife, regarding him anxiously.

He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."

They sat down by the fire again while the two men finished their pipes. Outside, the wind was higher than ever, and the old man started nervously at the sound of a door banging upstairs. A silence unusual and depressing settled upon all three, which lasted until the old couple rose to retire for the night.

"I expect you'll find the cash tied up in a big bag in the middle of your bed," said Herbert, as he bade them good-night, "and something horrible squatting up on top of the wardrobe watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten gains."

He sat alone in the darkness, gazing at the dying fire, and seeing faces in it. The last face was so horrible and so simian that he gazed at it in amazement. It got so vivid that, with a

little uneasy laugh, he felt on the table for a glass containing a little water to throw over it. His hand grasped the monkey's paw, and with a little shiver he wiped his hand on his coat and went up to bed.

II.

IN the brightness of the wintry sun next morning as it streamed over the breakfast table Herbert laughed at his fears. There was an air of prosaic wholesomeness about the room which it had lacked on the previous night, and the dirty, shriveled little paw was pitched on the sideboard with a carelessness which betokened no great belief in its virtues.

"I suppose all old soldiers are the same," said Mrs. White. "The idea of our listening to such nonsense! How could wishes be granted in these days? And if they could, how could two hundred pounds hurt you, father?"

"Might drop on his head from the sky," said the frivolous Herbert.

"Morris said the things happened so naturally," said his father, "that you might if you so wished attribute it to coincidence."

"Well, don't break into the money before I come back," said Herbert, as he rose from the table. "I'm afraid it'll turn you into a mean, avaricious man, and we shall have to disown you."

His mother laughed, and following him to the door, watched him down the road, and returning to the breakfast table, was very happy at the expense of her husband's credulity. All of which did not prevent her from scurrying to the door at the postman's knock, nor prevent her from referring somewhat shortly to retired sergeant-majors of bibulous habits when she found that the post brought a tailor's bill.

"Herbert will have some more of his funny remarks, I expect, when he comes home," she said, as they sat at dinner.

"I dare say," said Mr. White, pouring himself out some beer; "but for all that, the thing moved in my hand; that I'll swear to."

"You thought it did," said the old lady soothingly.

"I say it did," replied the other. "There was no thought about it; I had just---What's the matter?"

His wife made no reply. She was watching the mysterious movements of a man outside, who, peering in an undecided fashion at the house, appeared to be trying to make up his mind to enter. In mental connection with the two hundred pounds, she noticed that the stranger was well dressed and wore a silk hat of glossy newness. Three times he paused at the gate, and then walked on again. The fourth time he stood with his hand upon it, and

then with sudden resolution flung it open and walked up the path. Mrs. White at the same moment placed her hands behind her, and hurriedly unfastening the strings of her apron, put that useful article of apparel beneath the cushion of her chair.

She brought the stranger, who seemed ill at ease, into the room. He gazed at her furtively, and listened in a preoccupied fashion as the old lady apologized for the appearance of the room, and her husband's coat, a garment which he usually reserved for the garden. She then waited as patiently as her sex would permit, for him to broach his business, but he was at first strangely silent.

"I--was asked to call," he said at last, and stooped and picked a piece of cotton from his trousers. "I come from Maw and Meggins."

The old lady started. "Is anything the matter?" she asked breathlessly. "Has anything happened to Herbert? What is it? What is it?"

Her husband interposed. "There, there, mother," he said hastily. "Sit down, and don't jump to conclusions. You've not brought bad news, I'm sure, sir" and he eyed the other wistfully.

"I'm sorry----" began the visitor.

"Is he hurt?" demanded the mother.

The visitor bowed in assent. "Badly hurt," he said quietly, "but he is not in any pain."

"Oh, thank God!" said the old woman, clasping her hands. "Thank God for that! Thank--"

She broke off suddenly as the sinister meaning of the assurance dawned upon her and she saw the awful confirmation of her fears in the other's averted face. She caught her breath, and turning to her slower-witted husband, laid her trembling old hand upon his. There was a long silence.

"He was caught in the machinery," said the visitor at length, in a low voice.

"Caught in the machinery," repeated Mr. White, in a dazed fashion, "yes."

He sat staring blankly out at the window, and taking his wife's hand between his own, pressed it as he had been wont to do in their old courting days nearly forty years before.

"He was the only one left to us," he said, turning gently to the visitor. "It is hard."

The other coughed, and rising, walked slowly to the window. "The firm wished me to convey their sincere sympathy with you in your great loss," he said, without looking

round. "I beg that you will understand I am only their servant and merely obeying orders."

There was no reply; the old woman's face was white, her eyes staring, and her breath inaudible; on the husband's face was a look such as his friend the sergeant might have carried into his first action.

"I was to say that Maw and Meggins disclaim all responsibility," continued the other. "They admit no liability at all, but in consideration of your son's services they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation."

Mr. White dropped his wife's hand, and rising to his feet, gazed with a look of horror at his visitor. His dry lips shaped the words, "How much?"

"Two hundred pounds," was the answer.

Unconscious of his wife's shriek, the old man smiled faintly, put out his hands like a sightless man, and dropped, a senseless heap, to the floor.

III.

IN the huge new cemetery, some two miles distant, the old people buried their dead, and came back to a house steeped in shadow and silence. It was all over so quickly that at first they could hardly realize it, and remained in a state of expectation as though of something else to happen--something else which was to lighten this load, too heavy for old hearts to bear.

But the days passed, and expectation gave place to resignation--the hopeless resignation of the old, sometimes miscalled, apathy. Sometimes they hardly exchanged a word, for now they had nothing to talk about, and their days were long to weariness.

It was about a week after that that the old man, waking suddenly in the night, stretched out his hand and found himself alone. The room was in darkness, and the sound of subdued weeping came from the window. He raised himself in bed and listened.

"Come back," he said tenderly. "You will be cold."

"It is colder for my son," said the old woman, and wept afresh.

The sound of her sobs died away on his ears. The bed was warm, and his eyes heavy with sleep. He dozed fitfully, and then slept until a sudden wild cry from his wife awoke him with a start.

"*The paw!*" she cried wildly. "The monkey's paw!"

He started up in alarm. "Where? Where is it? What's the matter?"

She came stumbling across the room toward him. "I want it," she said quietly. "You've not destroyed it?"

"It's in the parlour, on the bracket," he replied, marvelling. "Why?"

She cried and laughed together, and bending over, kissed his cheek.

"I only just thought of it," she said hysterically. "Why didn't I think of it before? Why didn't *you* think of it?"

"Think of what?" he questioned.

"The other two wishes," she replied rapidly. "We've only had one."

"Was not that enough?" he demanded fiercely.

"No," she cried, triumphantly; "we'll have one more. Go down and get it quickly, and wish our boy alive again."

The man sat up in bed and flung the bedclothes from his quaking limbs. "Good God, you are mad!" he cried aghast.

"Get it," she panted; "get it quickly, and wish---- Oh, my boy, my boy!"

Her husband struck a match and lit the candle. "Get back to bed," he said, unsteadily. "You don't know what you are saying."

"We had the first wish granted," said the old woman, feverishly; "why not the second."

"A coincidence," stammered the old man.

"Go and get it and wish," cried the old woman, quivering with excitement.

The old man turned and regarded her, and his voice shook. "He has been dead ten days, and besides he--I would not tell you else, but--I could only recognize him by his clothing. If he was too terrible for you to see then, how now?"

"Bring him back," cried the old woman, and dragged him toward the door. "Do you think I fear the child I have nursed?"

He went down in the darkness, and felt his way to the parlour, and then to the mantelpiece. The talisman was in its place, and a horrible fear that the unspoken wish might bring his mutilated son before him ere he could escape from the room seized upon him, and he caught his breath as he found that he had lost the direction of the door. His brow cold with sweat, he felt his way round the table, and groped along the wall until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand.

Even his wife's face seemed changed as he entered the room. It was white and expectant, and to his fears seemed to have an unnatural look upon it. He was afraid of her.

"*Wish!*" she cried, in a strong voice.

"It is foolish and wicked," he faltered.

"*Wish!*" repeated his wife.

He raised his hand. "I wish my son alive again."

The talisman fell to the floor, and he regarded it fearfully. Then he sank trembling into a chair as the old woman, with burning eyes, walked to the window and raised the blind.

He sat until he was chilled with the cold, glancing occasionally at the figure of the old woman peering through the window. The candle end, which had burnt below the rim of the china candlestick, was throwing pulsating shadows on the ceiling and walls, until, with a flicker larger than the rest, it expired. The old man, with an unspeakable sense of relief at the failure of the talisman, crept back to his bed, and a minute or two afterward the old woman came silently and apathetically beside him.

Neither spoke, but both lay silently listening to the ticking of the clock. A stair creaked, and a squeaky mouse scurried noisily through the wall. The darkness was oppressive, and after lying for some time screwing up his courage, the husband took the box of matches, and striking one, went downstairs for a candle.

At the foot of the stairs the match went out, and he paused to strike another, and at the same moment a knock, so quiet and stealthy as to be scarcely audible, sounded on the front door.

The matches fell from his hand. He stood motionless, his breath suspended until the knock was repeated. Then he turned and fled swiftly back to his room, and closed the door behind him. A third knock sounded through the house.

"*What's that?*" cried the old woman, starting up.

"A rat," said the old man, in shaking tones--"a rat. It passed me on the stairs."

His wife sat up in bed listening. A loud knock resounded through the house.

"It's Herbert!" she screamed. "It's Herbert!"

She ran to the door, but her husband was before her, and catching her by the arm, held her tightly.

"What are you going to do?" he whispered hoarsely.

"It's my boy; it's Herbert!" she cried, struggling mechanically. "I forgot it was two miles away. What are you holding me for? Let go. I must open the door."

"For God's sake, don't let it in," cried the old man trembling.

"You're afraid of your own son," she cried, struggling. "Let me go. I'm coming, Herbert; I'm coming."

There was another knock, and another. The old woman with a sudden wrench broke free and ran from the room. Her husband followed to the landing, and called after her appealingly as she hurried downstairs. He heard the chain rattle back and the bottom bolt drawn slowly and stiffly from the socket. Then the old woman's voice, strained and panting.

"The bolt," she cried loudly. "Come down. I can't reach it."

But her husband was on his hands and knees groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. If he could only find it before the thing outside got in. A perfect fusillade of knocks reverberated through the house, and he heard the scraping of a chair as his wife put it down in the passage against the door. He heard the creaking of the bolt as it came slowly back, and at the same moment he found the monkey's paw, and frantically breathed his third and last wish.

The knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house. He heard the chair drawn back and the door opened. A cold wind rushed up the staircase, and a long loud wail of disappointment and misery from his wife gave him courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond. The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.

(End.)

Answer the following text based questions:

- 1) Cite and contrast the scene outside the White's home with the scene in the living room as the Whites await sergeant-major's arrival.
- 2) When Herbert sits and watches the fire, he sees a "monkey-like" face. How is this foreshadowing, or hint, that the action will focus on Herbert.
- 3) Determine when the rising action of the story takes place.
- 4) Cite particular lines in the story which reveal aspects of the characters of Mr. White, Mrs. White, Herbert and the Sergeant. Decipher the types of characters they are and what the lines reveal about them.
- 5) Determine what can be inferred about Sergeant Morris as he discusses the monkey's paw.
- 6) Analyze some of the internal and external conflicts Mr. White faces during the story.



- 7) Analyze how Herbert's words, "Well, I don't see the money, and I bet I never shall." becomes an ironic foreshadowing.
- 8) Analyze what the statement, "He was the only one left to us...It is hard" reveal about the White family.
- 9) Analyze the change in point of view of Mr. & Mrs. White from the beginning of the story to the end and how it creates suspense.
- 10) Determine when Mr. White makes his final wish. What is it?
- 11) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

In your Reader's Journal: Argue either side of the following statement: The Whites are responsible for the tragedy that occurs, or they are innocent victims of an evil curse. Explain in 1 page.

Guy de Maupassant



“THE DIAMOND NECKLACE”

The girl was one of those pretty and charming young creatures who sometimes are born, as if by a slip of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no way of being known, understood, loved, married by any rich and distinguished man; so she let herself be married to a little clerk of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

She dressed plainly because she could not dress well, but she was unhappy as if she had really fallen from a higher station; since with women there is neither caste nor rank, for beauty, grace and charm take the place of family and birth. Natural ingenuity, instinct for what is elegant, a supple mind are their sole hierarchy, and often make of women of the people the equals of the very greatest ladies.

Mathilde suffered ceaselessly, feeling herself born to enjoy all delicacies and all luxuries. She was distressed at the poverty of her dwelling, at the bareness of the walls, at the shabby chairs, the ugliness of the curtains. All those things, of which another woman of her rank would never even have been conscious, tortured her and made her angry. The sight of the little Breton peasant who did her humble housework aroused in her despairing regrets and bewildering dreams. She thought of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestry, illumined by tall bronze candelabra, and of two great footmen in knee breeches who sleep in the big armchairs, made drowsy by the oppressive heat of the stove. She thought of long reception halls hung with ancient silk, of the dainty cabinets containing priceless curiosities and of the little coquettish perfumed reception rooms made for chatting at five o'clock with intimate friends, with men famous and sought after, whom all women envy and whose attention they all desire.

When she sat down to dinner, before the round table covered with a tablecloth in use three days, opposite her husband, who uncovered the soup tureen and declared with a delighted air, "Ah, the good soup! I don't know anything better than that," she thought of dainty dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestry that peopled the walls with ancient personages and with strange birds flying in the midst of a fairy forest; and she thought of delicious dishes served on marvelous plates and of the whispered gallantries to which you listen with a sphinx like smile while you are eating the pink meat of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no gowns, no jewels, nothing. And she loved nothing but that. She felt made for that. She would have liked so much to please, to be envied, to be charming, to be sought after.

She had a friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, who was rich, and whom she did not like to go to see any more because she felt so sad when she came home.

But one evening her husband reached home with a triumphant air and holding a large envelope in his hand.

"There," said he, "there is something for you."

She tore the paper quickly and drew out a printed card which bore these words:

The Minister of Public Instruction and Madame Georges Ramponneau request the honor of M. and Madame Loisel's company at the palace of the Ministry on Monday evening, January 18th.

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table crossly, muttering:

"What do you wish me to do with that?"

"Why, my dear, I thought you would be glad. You never go out, and this is such a fine opportunity. I had great trouble to get it. Everyone wants to go; it is very select, and they are not giving many invitations to clerks. The whole official world will be there."

She looked at him with an irritated glance and said impatiently:

"And what do you wish me to put on my back?"

He had not thought of that. He stammered: "Why, the gown you go to the theatre in. It looks very well to me." He stopped, distracted, seeing that his wife was weeping. Two great tears ran slowly from the corners of her eyes toward the corners of her mouth.

"What's the matter? What's the matter?" he answered.

By a violent effort she conquered her grief and replied in a calm voice, while she wiped her wet cheeks:

"Nothing. Only I have no gown, and, therefore, I can't go to this ball. Give your card to some colleague whose wife is better equipped than I am."

He was in despair. He resumed:

"Come, let us see, Mathilde. How much would it cost, a suitable gown, which you could use on other occasions--something very simple?"

She reflected several seconds, making her calculations and wondering also what sum she could ask without drawing on herself an immediate refusal and a frightened exclamation from the economical clerk.

Finally she replied hesitating:

"I don't know exactly, but I think I could manage it with four hundred francs."

He grew a little pale, because he was laying aside just that amount to buy a gun and treat himself to a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre, with several friends who went to shoot larks there of a Sunday.

But he said:

"Very well. I will give you four hundred francs. And try to have a pretty gown."

The day of the ball drew near and Madame Loisel seemed sad, uneasy, anxious. Her frock was ready, however.

Her husband said to her one evening:

"What is the matter? Come, you have seemed very queer these last three days."

And she answered: "It annoys me not to have a single piece of jewelry, not a single ornament, nothing to put on. I shall look poverty-stricken. I would almost rather not go at all."

"You might wear natural flowers," said her husband. "They're very stylish at this time of year. For ten francs you can get two or three magnificent roses."

She was not convinced.

"No; there's nothing more humiliating than to look poor among other women who are rich."

"How stupid you are!" her husband cried. "Go look up your friend, Madame Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewels. You're intimate enough with her to do that."

She uttered a cry of joy:

"True! I never thought of it."

The next day she went to her friend and told her of her distress.

Madame Forestier went to a wardrobe with a mirror, took out a large jewel box, brought it back, opened it and said to Madame Loisel:

"Choose, my dear."

She saw first some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian gold cross set with precious stones, of admirable workmanship. She tried on the ornaments before the mirror, hesitated and could not make up her mind to part with them, to give them back. She kept asking:

"Haven't you anymore?"

"Why, yes. Look further; I don't know what you like."

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart throbbed with an immoderate desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it round her throat, outside her high-necked waist, and was lost in ecstasy at her reflection in the mirror.

Then she asked, hesitating, filled with anxious doubt:
"Will you lend me this, only this?"

"Why, yes, certainly."

She threw her arms round her friend's neck, kissed her passionately, then fled with her treasure.

The night of the ball arrived. Madame Loisel was a great success. She was prettier than any other woman present, elegant, graceful, smiling and wild with joy. All the men looked at her, asked her name, sought to be introduced. All the attaches of the Cabinet wished to waltz with her. She was remarked by the minister himself.

She danced with rapture, with passion, intoxicated by pleasure, forgetting all in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness comprised of all this homage, admiration, these awakened desires and of that sense of triumph which is so sweet to woman's heart.

She left the ball about four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been sleeping since midnight in a little deserted anteroom with three other gentlemen whose wives were enjoying the ball.

He threw over her shoulders the wraps he had brought, the modest wraps of common life, the poverty of which contrasted with the elegance of the ball dress. She felt this and wished to escape so as not to be remarked by the other women, who were enveloping themselves in costly furs.

Loisel held her back, saying: "Wait a bit. You will catch cold outside. I will call a cab."

But she did not listen to him and rapidly descended the stairs. When they reached the street they could not find a carriage and began to look for one, shouting after the cabmen passing at a distance.

They went toward the Seine in despair, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those ancient night cabs which, as though they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day, are never seen round Paris until after dark.

It took them to their dwelling in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly they mounted the stairs to their flat. All was ended for her. As to him, he reflected that he must be at the ministry at ten o'clock that morning.

She removed her wraps before the glass so as to see herself once more in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She no longer had the necklace around her neck!

"What is the matter with you?" demanded her husband, already half undressed.

She turned distractedly toward him.

"I have--I have--I've lost Madame Forestier's necklace," she cried.

He stood up, bewildered.

"What!--how? Impossible!"

They looked among the folds of her skirt, of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere, but did not find it.

"You're sure you had it on when you left the ball?" he asked.

"Yes, I felt it in the vestibule of the minister's house."

"But if you had lost it in the street we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"Yes, probably. Did you take his number?"

"No. And you--didn't you notice it?"

"No."

They looked, thunderstruck, at each other. At last Loisel put on his clothes.

"I shall go back on foot," said he, "over the whole route, to see whether I can find it."

He went out. She sat waiting on a chair in her ball dress, without strength to go to bed, overwhelmed, without any fire, without a thought.

Her husband returned about seven o'clock. He had found nothing.

He went to police headquarters, to the newspaper offices to offer a reward; he went to the cab companies--everywhere, in fact, whither he was urged by the least spark of hope.

She waited all day, in the same condition of mad fear before this terrible calamity.

Loisel returned at night with a hollow, pale face. He had discovered nothing.

"You must write to your friend," said he, "that you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. That will give us time to turn round."
She wrote at his dictation.

At the end of a week they had lost all hope. Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

"We must consider how to replace that ornament."

The next day they took the box that had contained it and went to the jeweler whose name was found within. He consulted his books.

"It was not I, madame, who sold that necklace; I must simply have furnished the case."

Then they went from jeweler to jeweler, searching for a necklace like the other, trying to recall it, both sick with chagrin and grief.

They found, in a shop at the Palais Royal, a string of diamonds that seemed to them exactly like the one they had lost. It was worth forty thousand francs. They could have it for thirty-six. So they begged the jeweler not to sell it for three days yet. And they made a bargain that he should buy it back for thirty-four thousand francs, in case they should find the lost necklace before the end of February.

Loisel possessed eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. He would borrow the rest.

He did borrow, asking a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, took up ruinous obligations, dealt with usurers and all the race of lenders. He compromised all the rest of his life, risked signing a note without even knowing whether he could meet it; and, frightened by the trouble yet to come, by the black misery that was about to fall upon him, by the prospect of all the physical privations and moral tortures that he was to suffer, he went to get the new necklace, laying upon the jeweler's counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Madame Loisel took back the necklace Madame Forestier said to her with a chilly manner:

"You should have returned it sooner; I might have needed it."

She did not open the case, as her friend had so much feared. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought, what would she have said? Would she not have taken Madame Loisel for a thief?

Thereafter Madame Loisel knew the horrible existence of the needy. She bore her part, however, with sudden heroism. That dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their servant; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know what heavy housework meant and the odious cares of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, using her dainty fingers and rosy nails on greasy pots and pans. She washed the soiled linen, the shirts and the dishcloths, which she dried upon a line; she carried the slops down to the street every morning and carried up the water, stopping for breath at every landing. And dressed like a woman of the people, she went to the fruiterer, the grocer, the butcher, a basket on her arm, bargaining, meeting with impertinence, defending her miserable money, sou by sou.

Every month they had to meet some notes, renew others, obtain more time.

Her husband worked evenings, making up a tradesman's accounts, and late at night he often copied manuscript for five sous a page.

This life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years they had paid everything, everything, with the rates of usury and the accumulations of the compound interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become the woman of impoverished households--strong and hard and rough. With frowsy hair, skirts askew and red hands, she talked loud while washing the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window and she thought of that gay evening of long ago, of that ball where she had been so beautiful and so admired.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows? who knows? How strange and changeable is life! How small a thing is needed to make or ruin us!

But one Sunday, having gone to take a walk in the Champs Elysees to refresh herself after the labors of the week, she suddenly perceived a woman who was leading a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

Madame Loisel felt moved. Should she speak to her? Yes, certainly. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all about it. Why not?

She went up.

"Good-day, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be familiarly addressed by this plain good-wife, did not recognize her at all and stammered:

"But--madame!--I do not know--You must have mistaken."

"No. I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry. "Oh, my poor Mathilde! How you are changed!"

"Yes, I have had a pretty hard life, since I last saw you, and great poverty--and that because of you!"

"Of me! How so?"

"Do you remember that diamond necklace you lent me to wear at the ministerial ball?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"What do you mean? You brought it back."

"I brought you back another exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. You can understand that it was not easy for us, for us who had nothing. At last it is ended, and I am very glad."

Madame Forestier had stopped.

"You say that you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine?"

"Yes. You never noticed it, then! They were very similar."

And she smiled with a joy that was at once proud and ingenuous.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took her hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Why, my necklace was paste! It was worth at most only five hundred francs!"



TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS - "The Necklace"

- By the author's choice of words how does the reader initially perceive Mme. Loisel?
What words or phrases shape your understanding of the character?
- Using the text as a reference how did Mme. Loisel envision her life?
- Refer to the following sentence: "She had longed so eagerly to charm, to be desired, to be wildly attractive and sought after." What else is revealed about this character specifically through these words?

- Refer to the phrase: "She let herself be married off to a "little clerk" in the Ministry of Education." How does the author's choice of words "little clerk" reveal Mme. Loisel's feelings about her social status? Use a synonym for the word "little" as used in this phrase.
(Little is not a powerful word but it is in this sentence.)
- How are M. Loisel's reactions to Mathilde's behavior revealing about the way he feels about his wife?
- What sacrifice does M. Loisel make so that his wife can attend this party? What does this reveal about his character?
- In section 3, what clues are provided for the reader to understand that Mathilde's dissatisfaction cannot be soothed with money?
- How does Mathilde's delight at Mme. Forestier's generosity foreshadow disaster?
- Describe the party. How is Mathilde in her element at the party? How does she treat her husband at the party?
- What is the irony that Guy de Maupassant uses in naming their street Rue des Martyrs?
How is this a use of foreshadowing?

Embedded Task #1 "The Necklace"

WI .8.9b " Mathilde Loisel deserved/did not deserve her fate."

In a well written 3 paragraph essay evaluate one side of this argument's claim and support with evidence from the text.

*Be sure to:

- In your essay state your position clearly.
- Use textual evidence to support your claim.
- Organize your ideas effectively and coherently in your writing including an introduction and conclusion.
- Use varied and effective sentence structure in vocabulary.
- Follow the conventions of standard English including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Review Questions: [Answer](#) the following questions based on the story

- 1) What can you infer about Mathilde based on the first 2 paragraphs of the story?
- 2) What are the personal characteristics of both Mathilde and her husband? Make a chart.
- 3) What “two” problems make Mathilde unwilling to go to the party? How are they resolved?
- 4) Who feels the greater responsibility for the lost jewels? Why do you think that is?
- 5) What extra work do Mathilde and her husband do to repay the debt? How long does it take?
- 6) When using a surprise ending, a careful author provides clues preparing the reader to accept that ending. Name some clues that hint at the story’s surprise ending.
- 7) How does the story’s **point of view** help to keep the outcome secret?
- 8) In your opinion are the things that happen to Mathilde the result of fate or coincidence, or are they caused by her own character? Give reasons for your answer.
- 9) Towards the end of the story, the narrator asks, “How would it have been if she had not lost the necklace?...How small a thing will ruin or save one!” Explain in what way Mathilde was both ruined and saved?
- 10) **In your Reader’s Journal:** List at least three times where irony occurs in the story, what type of irony is it and how it affects the story?

The Curse of the Hope Diamond

By [Jennifer Rosenberg](#), About.com Guide

According to the legend, a curse befell the large, blue diamond when it was plucked (i.e. stolen) from an idol in India - a curse that foretold bad luck and death not only for the owner of the diamond but for all who touched it.

Whether or not you believe in the curse, the Hope diamond has intrigued people for centuries. Its perfect quality, its large size, and its rare color make it strikingly unique and beautiful. Add to this a varied history which includes being owned by King Louis XIV, stolen during the French Revolution, sold to earn money for gambling, worn to raise money for charity, and then finally donated to the Smithsonian Institution. The Hope diamond is truly unique.

Is there really a curse? Where has the Hope diamond been? Why was such a valuable gem donated to the Smithsonian?

Taken from the Forehead of an Idol

The legend is said to begin with a theft. Several centuries ago, a man named Tavernier made a trip to India. While there, he stole a large blue diamond from the forehead (or eye) of a statue of the Hindu goddess Sita. For this transgression, according to the legend, Tavernier was torn apart by wild dogs on a trip to Russia (after he had sold the diamond). This was the first horrible death attributed to the curse.

How much of this is true? In 1642 a man by the name of Jean Baptiste Tavernier, a French jeweler who traveled extensively, visited India and bought a 112 3/16 carat blue diamond. (This diamond was much larger than the present weight of the Hope diamond because the Hope has been cut down at least twice in the past three centuries.) The diamond is believed to have come from the Kollur mine in Golconda, India.

Tavernier continued to travel and arrived back in France in 1668, twenty-six years after he bought the large, blue diamond. French King Louis XIV, the "Sun King," ordered Tavernier presented at court. From Tavernier, Louis XIV bought the large, blue diamond as well as forty-four large diamonds and 1,122 smaller diamonds. Tavernier was made a noble and died at he age 84 in Russia (it is not known how he died).¹

According to Susanne Patch, author of *Blue Mystery: The Story of the Hope Diamond*, the shape of the diamond was unlikely to have been an eye (or on the forehead) of an idol.²

In 1673, King Louis XIV decided to re-cut the diamond to enhance its brilliance (the previous cut had been to enhance size and not brilliance). The newly cut gem was 67 1/8

carats. Louis XIV officially named it the "Blue Diamond of the Crown" and would often wear the diamond on a long ribbon around his neck.

In 1749, Louis XIV's great-grandson, Louis XV, was king and ordered the crown jeweler to make a decoration for the Order of the Golden Fleece, using the blue diamond and the Cote de Bretagne (a large red spinel thought at the time to be a ruby).³ The resulting decoration was extremely ornate and large.

Stolen!

When Louis XV died, his grandson, Louis XVI, became king with Marie Antoinette as his queen. According to the legend, Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI were beheaded during the French Revolution because of the blue diamond's curse.

Considering that King Louis XIV and King Louis XV had both owned and worn the blue diamond a number of times and have not been set down in legend as tormented by the curse, it is difficult to say that all those who owned or touched the gem would suffer an ill fate. Though it is true that Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI were beheaded, it seems that it had much more to do with their extravagance and the French Revolution than a curse on the diamond. Plus, these two royals were certainly not the only ones beheaded during the Reign of Terror.

During the French Revolution, the crown jewels (including the blue diamond) were taken from the royal couple after they attempted to flee France in 1791. The jewels were placed in the Garde-Meuble but were not well guarded.

From September 12 to September 16, 1791, the Garde-Meuble was repeatedly robbed, without notice from officials until September 17. Though most of the crown jewels were soon recovered, the blue diamond was not.

Why is it called the "Hope diamond"?

There is some evidence that the blue diamond resurfaced in London by 1813 and was owned by a jeweler Daniel Eliason by 1823.⁴ No one is sure that the blue diamond in London was the same one stolen from the Garde-Meuble because the one in London was of a different cut. Yet, most people feel the rarity and perfectness of the French blue diamond and the blue diamond that appeared in London makes it likely that someone re-cut the French blue diamond in the hopes of hiding its origin. The blue diamond that surfaced in London was estimated at 44 carats.

There is some evidence that shows King George IV of England bought the blue diamond from Daniel Eliason and upon King George's death, the diamond was sold to pay off debts.

By 1939, possibly earlier, the blue diamond was in the possession of Henry Philip Hope, from whom the Hope diamond has taken its name.

The Hope family is said to have been tainted with the diamond's curse. According to the legend, the once-rich Hopes went bankrupt because of the Hope diamond.

Is this true? Henry Philip Hope was one of the heirs of the banking firm Hope & Co. which was sold in 1813. Henry Philip Hope became a collector of fine art and gems, thus he acquired the large blue diamond that was soon to carry his family's name. Since he had never married, Henry Philip Hope left his estate to his three nephews when he died in 1839. The Hope diamond went to the oldest of the nephews, Henry Thomas Hope.

Henry Thomas Hope married and had one daughter; his daughter soon grew up, married and had five children. When Henry Thomas Hope died in 1862 at the age of 54, the Hope diamond stayed in the possession of Hope's widow. But when Henry Thomas Hope's widow died, she passed the Hope diamond on to her grandson, the second oldest son, Lord Francis Hope (he took the name Hope in 1887).

Because of gambling and high spending, Francis Hope requested from the court in 1898 for him to sell the Hope diamond (Francis was only given access to the life interest on his grandmother's estate). His request was denied. In 1899, an appeal case was heard and again his request was denied. In both cases, Francis Hope's siblings opposed selling the diamond. In 1901, on an appeal to the House of Lords, Francis Hope was finally granted permission to sell the diamond.

As for the curse, three generations of Hopes went untainted by the curse and it was most likely Francis Hope's gambling, rather than the curse, that caused his bankruptcy.

The Hope Diamond as a Good Luck Charm

It was Simon Frankel, an American jeweler, who bought the Hope diamond in 1901 and who brought the diamond to the United States.

The diamond changed hands several times during the next several years, ending with Pierre Cartier.

Pierre Cartier believed he had found a buyer in the rich Evalyn Walsh McLean. Evalyn first saw the Hope diamond in 1910 while visiting Paris with her husband. Since Mrs. McLean had previously told Pierre Cartier that objects usually considered bad luck turned into good luck for her, Cartier made sure to emphasize the Hope diamond's negative history. Yet, since Mrs. McLean did not like the diamond in its current mounting, she didn't buy it.

A few months later, Pierre Cartier arrived in the U.S. and asked Mrs. McLean to keep the Hope diamond for the weekend. Having reset the Hope diamond into a new mounting,

Carter hoped she would grow attached to it over the weekend. He was right and Evalyn McLean bought the Hope diamond.

Susanne Patch, in her book on the Hope diamond, wonders if perhaps Pierre Cartier didn't start the concept of a curse. According to Patch's research, the legend and concept of a curse attached to the diamond did not appear in print until the twentieth century.⁵

Evalyn McLean wore the diamond all the time. According to one story, it took a lot of persuading by Mrs. McLean's doctor to get her to take off the necklace even for a goiter operation.⁶

Though Evalyn McLean wore the Hope diamond as a good luck charm, others saw the curse strike her too. McLean's first born son, Vinson, died in a car crash when he was only nine. McLean suffered another major loss when her daughter committed suicide at age 25. In addition to all this, Evalyn McLean's husband was declared insane and confined to a mental institution until his death in 1941.

Whether this was part of a curse is hard to say, though it does seem like a lot for one person to suffer.

Though Evalyn McLean had wanted her jewelry to go to her grandchildren when they were older, her jewelry was put on sale in 1949, two years after her death, in order to settle debts from her estate.

The Hope Diamond is Donated

When the Hope diamond went on sale in 1949, it was bought by Harry Winston, a New York jeweler. Winston offered the diamond, on numerous occasions, to be worn at balls to raise money for charity.

Though some believe that Winston donated the Hope diamond to rid himself of the curse, Winston donated the diamond because he had long believed in creating a national jewel collection. Winston donated the Hope diamond to the Smithsonian Institution in 1958 to be the focal point of a newly established gem collection as well as to inspire others to donate.

On November 10, 1958, the Hope diamond traveled in a plain brown box, by registered mail, and was met by a large group of people at the Smithsonian who celebrated its arrival.

The Hope diamond is currently on display as part of the National Gem and Mineral Collection in the National Museum of Natural History for all to see.

Answer the following text based questions based on the article.

- 1) Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly about the hope diamond being cursed as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- 2) Determine a central idea of a article and analyze its development over the course of the article, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the article.
- 3) Determine Jennifer Rosenberg's point of view or purpose in the article and analyze how the she acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- 4) Evaluate the argument and specific claims in the article, assess whether the reasoning is sound (believable) and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; find a specific section in the text where irrelevant evidence is introduced
- 5) Analyze how the article provides conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
- 6) Determine the meaning of the word cursed and its effect on the article.
- 7) Analyze the similar concepts in the article, "The Curse of the Hope Diamond" and "The Necklace" by Guy De Maupassant.

The Most Dangerous Game Richard Connell

"Mirage," thought Rainsford. But it was no mirage, he found, when he opened the tall spiked iron gate. The stone steps were real enough; the massive door with a leering gargoyle for a knocker was real enough; yet above it all hung an air of unreality.

"The world is made up of two classes--the hunters and the hunted. Luckily, you and I are hunters."

The Most Dangerous Game
by Richard Connell

"OFF THERE to the right--somewhere--is a large island," said Whitney. "It's rather a mystery--"

"What island is it?" Rainsford asked.

"The old charts call it `Ship-Trap Island,'" Whitney replied. "A suggestive name, isn't it? Sailors have a curious dread of the place. I don't know why. Some superstition--"

"Can't see it," remarked Rainsford, trying to peer through the dank tropical night that was palpable as it pressed its thick warm blackness in upon the yacht.

"You've good eyes," said Whitney, with a laugh, "and I've seen you pick off a moose moving in the brown fall bush at four hundred yards, but even you can't see four miles or so through a moonless Caribbean night."

"Nor four yards," admitted Rainsford. "Ugh! It's like moist black velvet."

"It will be light enough in Rio," promised Whitney. "We should make it in a few days. I hope the jaguar guns have come from Purdey's. We should have some good hunting up the Amazon. Great sport, hunting."

"The best sport in the world," agreed Rainsford.

"For the hunter," amended Whitney. "Not for the jaguar."

"Don't talk rot, Whitney," said Rainsford. "You're a big-game hunter, not a philosopher. Who cares how a jaguar feels?"

"Perhaps the jaguar does," observed Whitney.

"Bah! They've no understanding."

"Even so, I rather think they understand one thing--fear. The fear of pain and the fear of death."

"Nonsense," laughed Rainsford. "This hot weather is making you soft, Whitney. Be a realist. The world is made up of two classes--the hunters and the huntees. Luckily, you and I are hunters. Do you think we've passed that island yet?"

"I can't tell in the dark. I hope so."

"Why?" asked Rainsford.

"The place has a reputation--a bad one."

"Cannibals?" suggested Rainsford.

"Hardly. Even cannibals wouldn't live in such a God-forsaken place. But it's gotten into sailor lore, somehow. Didn't you notice that the crew's nerves seemed a bit jumpy today?"

"They were a bit strange, now you mention it. Even Captain Nielsen--"

"Yes, even that tough-minded old Swede, who'd go up to the devil himself and ask him for a light. Those fishy blue eyes held a look I never saw there before. All I could get out of him was 'This place has an evil name among seafaring men, sir.' Then he said to me, very gravely, 'Don't you feel anything?'--as if the air about us was actually poisonous. Now, you mustn't laugh when I tell you this--I did feel something like a sudden chill.

"There was no breeze. The sea was as flat as a plate-glass window. We were drawing near the island then. What I felt was a--a mental chill; a sort of sudden dread."

"Pure imagination," said Rainsford.

"One superstitious sailor can taint the whole ship's company with his fear."

"Maybe. But sometimes I think sailors have an extra sense that tells them when they are in danger. Sometimes I think evil is a tangible thing--with wave lengths, just as sound and light have. An evil place can, so to speak, broadcast vibrations of evil. Anyhow, I'm glad we're getting out of this zone. Well, I think I'll turn in now, Rainsford."

"I'm not sleepy," said Rainsford. "I'm going to smoke another pipe up on the afterdeck."

"Good night, then, Rainsford. See you at breakfast."

"Right. Good night, Whitney."

There was no sound in the night as Rainsford sat there but the muffled throb of the engine that drove the yacht swiftly through the darkness, and the swish and ripple of the wash of the propeller.

Rainsford, reclining in a steamer chair, indolently puffed on his favorite brier. The sensuous drowsiness of the night was on him. "It's so dark," he thought, "that I could sleep without closing my eyes; the night would be my eyelids--"

An abrupt sound startled him. Off to the right he heard it, and his ears, expert in such matters, could not be mistaken. Again he heard the sound, and again. Somewhere, off in the blackness, someone had fired a gun three times.

Rainsford sprang up and moved quickly to the rail, mystified. He strained his eyes in the direction from which the reports had come, but it was like trying to see through a blanket. He leaped upon the rail and balanced himself there, to get greater elevation; his pipe, striking a rope, was knocked from his mouth. He lunged for it; a short, hoarse cry came from his lips as he realized he had reached too far and had lost his balance. The cry was pinched off short as the blood-warm waters of the Caribbean Sea dosed over his head.

He struggled up to the surface and tried to cry out, but the wash from the speeding yacht slapped him in the face and the salt water in his open mouth made him gag and strangle. Desperately he struck out with strong strokes after the receding lights of the yacht, but he stopped before he had swum fifty feet. A certain coolheadedness had come to him; it was not the first time he had been in a tight place. There was a chance that his cries could be heard by someone aboard the yacht, but that chance was slender and grew more slender as the yacht raced on. He wrestled himself out of his clothes and shouted with all his power. The lights of the yacht became faint and ever-vanishing fireflies; then they were blotted out entirely by the night.

Rainsford remembered the shots. They had come from the right, and doggedly he swam in that direction, swimming with slow, deliberate strokes, conserving his strength. For a

seemingly endless time he fought the sea. He began to count his strokes; he could do possibly a hundred more and then--

Rainsford heard a sound. It came out of the darkness, a high screaming sound, the sound of an animal in an extremity of anguish and terror.

He did not recognize the animal that made the sound; he did not try to; with fresh vitality he swam toward the sound. He heard it again; then it was cut short by another noise, crisp, staccato.

"Pistol shot," muttered Rainsford, swimming on.

Ten minutes of determined effort brought another sound to his ears--the most welcome he had ever heard--the muttering and growling of the sea breaking on a rocky shore. He was almost on the rocks before he saw them; on a night less calm he would have been shattered against them. With his remaining strength he dragged himself from the swirling waters. Jagged crags appeared to jut up into the opaqueness; he forced himself upward, hand over hand. Gasping, his hands raw, he reached a flat place at the top. Dense jungle came down to the very edge of the cliffs. What perils that tangle of trees and underbrush might hold for him did not concern Rainsford just then. All he knew was that he was safe from his enemy, the sea, and that utter weariness was on him. He flung himself down at the jungle edge and tumbled headlong into the deepest sleep of his life.

When he opened his eyes he knew from the position of the sun that it was late in the afternoon. Sleep had given him new vigor; a sharp hunger was picking at him. He looked about him, almost cheerfully.

"Where there are pistol shots, there are men. Where there are men, there is food," he thought. But what kind of men, he wondered, in so forbidding a place? An unbroken front of snarled and ragged jungle fringed the shore.

He saw no sign of a trail through the closely knit web of weeds and trees; it was easier to go along the shore, and Rainsford floundered along by the water. Not far from where he landed, he stopped.

Some wounded thing--by the evidence, a large animal--had thrashed about in the underbrush; the jungle weeds were crushed down and the moss was lacerated; one patch

of weeds was stained crimson. A small, glittering object not far away caught Rainsford's eye and he picked it up. It was an empty cartridge.

"A twenty-two," he remarked. "That's odd. It must have been a fairly large animal too. The hunter had his nerve with him to tackle it with a light gun. It's clear that the brute put up a fight. I suppose the first three shots I heard was when the hunter flushed his quarry and wounded it. The last shot was when he trailed it here and finished it."

He examined the ground closely and found what he had hoped to find--the print of hunting boots. They pointed along the cliff in the direction he had been going. Eagerly he hurried along, now slipping on a rotten log or a loose stone, but making headway; night was beginning to settle down on the island.

Bleak darkness was blacking out the sea and jungle when Rainsford sighted the lights. He came upon them as he turned a crook in the coast line; and his first thought was that he had come upon a village, for there were many lights. But as he forged along he saw to his great astonishment that all the lights were in one enormous building--a lofty structure with pointed towers plunging upward into the gloom. His eyes made out the shadowy outlines of a palatial chateau; it was set on a high bluff, and on three sides of it cliffs dived down to where the sea licked greedy lips in the shadows.

"Mirage," thought Rainsford. But it was no mirage, he found, when he opened the tall spiked iron gate. The stone steps were real enough; the massive door with a leering gargoyle for a knocker was real enough; yet above it all hung an air of unreality.

He lifted the knocker, and it creaked up stiffly, as if it had never before been used. He let it fall, and it startled him with its booming loudness. He thought he heard steps within; the door remained closed. Again Rainsford lifted the heavy knocker, and let it fall. The door opened then--opened as suddenly as if it were on a spring--and Rainsford stood blinking in the river of glaring gold light that poured out. The first thing Rainsford's eyes discerned was the largest man Rainsford had ever seen--a gigantic creature, solidly made and black bearded to the waist. In his hand the man held a long-barreled revolver, and he was pointing it straight at Rainsford's heart.

Out of the snarl of beard two small eyes regarded Rainsford.

"Don't be alarmed," said Rainsford, with a smile which he hoped was disarming. "I'm no robber. I fell off a yacht. My name is Sanger Rainsford of New York City."

The menacing look in the eyes did not change. The revolver pointing as rigidly as if the giant were a statue. He gave no sign that he understood Rainsford's words, or that he had even heard them. He was dressed in uniform--a black uniform trimmed with gray astrakhan.

"I'm Sanger Rainsford of New York," Rainsford began again. "I fell off a yacht. I am hungry."

The man's only answer was to raise with his thumb the hammer of his revolver. Then Rainsford saw the man's free hand go to his forehead in a military salute, and he saw him click his heels together and stand at attention. Another man was coming down the broad marble steps, an erect, slender man in evening clothes. He advanced to Rainsford and held out his hand.

In a cultivated voice marked by a slight accent that gave it added precision and deliberateness, he said, "It is a very great pleasure and honor to welcome Mr. Sanger Rainsford, the celebrated hunter, to my home."

Automatically Rainsford shook the man's hand.

"I've read your book about hunting snow leopards in Tibet, you see," explained the man. "I am General Zaroff."

Rainsford's first impression was that the man was singularly handsome; his second was that there was an original, almost bizarre quality about the general's face. He was a tall man past middle age, for his hair was a vivid white; but his thick eyebrows and pointed military mustache were as black as the night from which Rainsford had come. His eyes, too, were black and very bright. He had high cheekbones, a sharpcut nose, a spare, dark face--the face of a man used to giving orders, the face of an aristocrat. Turning to the giant in uniform, the general made a sign. The giant put away his pistol, saluted, withdrew.

"Ivan is an incredibly strong fellow," remarked the general, "but he has the misfortune to be deaf and dumb. A simple fellow, but, I'm afraid, like all his race, a bit of a savage."

"Is he Russian?"

"He is a Cossack," said the general, and his smile showed red lips and pointed teeth. "So am I."

"Come," he said, "we shouldn't be chatting here. We can talk later. Now you want clothes, food, rest. You shall have them. This is a most-restful spot."

Ivan had reappeared, and the general spoke to him with lips that moved but gave forth no sound.

"Follow Ivan, if you please, Mr. Rainsford," said the general. "I was about to have my dinner when you came. I'll wait for you. You'll find that my clothes will fit you, I think."

It was to a huge, beam-ceilinged bedroom with a canopied bed big enough for six men that Rainsford followed the silent giant. Ivan laid out an evening suit, and Rainsford, as he put it on, noticed that it came from a London tailor who ordinarily cut and sewed for none below the rank of duke.

The dining room to which Ivan conducted him was in many ways remarkable. There was a medieval magnificence about it; it suggested a baronial hall of feudal times with its oaken panels, its high ceiling, its vast refectory tables where twoscore men could sit down to eat. About the hall were mounted heads of many animals--lions, tigers, elephants, moose, bears; larger or more perfect specimens Rainsford had never seen. At the great table the general was sitting, alone.

"You'll have a cocktail, Mr. Rainsford," he suggested. The cocktail was surpassingly good; and, Rainsford noted, the table appointments were of the finest--the linen, the crystal, the silver, the china.

They were eating *borsch*, the rich, red soup with whipped cream so dear to Russian palates. Half apologetically General Zaroff said, "We do our best to preserve the amenities of civilization here. Please forgive any lapses. We are well off the beaten track, you know. Do you think the champagne has suffered from its long ocean trip?"

"Not in the least," declared Rainsford. He was finding the general a most thoughtful and affable host, a true cosmopolite. But there was one small trait of the general's that made Rainsford uncomfortable. Whenever he looked up from his plate he found the general studying him, appraising him narrowly.

"Perhaps," said General Zaroff, "you were surprised that I recognized your name. You see, I read all books on hunting published in English, French, and Russian. I have but one passion in my life, Mr. Rainsford, and it is the hunt."

"You have some wonderful heads here," said Rainsford as he ate a particularly well-cooked *filet mignon*. "That Cape buffalo is the largest I ever saw."

"Oh, that fellow. Yes, he was a monster."

"Did he charge you?"

"Hurled me against a tree," said the general. "Fractured my skull. But I got the brute."

"I've always thought," said Rainsford, "that the Cape buffalo is the most dangerous of all big game."

For a moment the general did not reply; he was smiling his curious red-lipped smile. Then he said slowly, "No. You are wrong, sir. The Cape buffalo is not the most dangerous big game." He sipped his wine. "Here in my preserve on this island," he said in the same slow tone, "I hunt more dangerous game."

Rainsford expressed his surprise. "Is there big game on this island?"

The general nodded. "The biggest."

"Really?"

"Oh, it isn't here naturally, of course. I have to stock the island."

"What have you imported, general?" Rainsford asked. "Tigers?"

The general smiled. "No," he said. "Hunting tigers ceased to interest me some years ago. I exhausted their possibilities, you see. No thrill left in tigers, no real danger. I live for danger, Mr. Rainsford."

The general took from his pocket a gold cigarette case and offered his guest a long black cigarette with a silver tip; it was perfumed and gave off a smell like incense.

"We will have some capital hunting, you and I," said the general. "I shall be most glad to have your society."

"But what game--" began Rainsford.

"I'll tell you," said the general. "You will be amused, I know. I think I may say, in all modesty, that I have done a rare thing. I have invented a new sensation. May I pour you another glass of port?"

"Thank you, general."

The general filled both glasses, and said, "God makes some men poets. Some He makes kings, some beggars. Me He made a hunter. My hand was made for the trigger, my father said. He was a very rich man with a quarter of a million acres in the Crimea, and he was an ardent sportsman. When I was only five years old he gave me a little gun, specially made in Moscow for me, to shoot sparrows with. When I shot some of his prize turkeys with it, he did not punish me; he complimented me on my marksmanship. I killed my first bear in the Caucasus when I was ten. My whole life has been one prolonged hunt. I went into the army--it was expected of noblemen's sons--and for a time commanded a division of Cossack cavalry, but my real interest was always the hunt. I have hunted every kind of game in every land. It would be impossible for me to tell you how many animals I have killed."

The general puffed at his cigarette.

"After the debacle in Russia I left the country, for it was imprudent for an officer of the Czar to stay there. Many noble Russians lost everything. I, luckily, had invested heavily in American securities, so I shall never have to open a tearoom in Monte Carlo or drive a taxi in Paris. Naturally, I continued to hunt--grizzliest in your Rockies, crocodiles in the Ganges, rhinoceroses in East Africa. It was in Africa that the Cape buffalo hit me and laid me up for six months. As soon as I recovered I started for the Amazon to hunt jaguars, for I had heard they were unusually cunning. They weren't." The Cossack sighed. "They were no match at all for a hunter with his wits about him, and a high-powered rifle. I was bitterly disappointed. I was lying in my tent with a splitting headache one night when a terrible thought pushed its way into my mind. Hunting was beginning to bore me! And hunting, remember, had been my life. I have heard that in America businessmen often go to pieces when they give up the business that has been their life."

"Yes, that's so," said Rainsford.

The general smiled. "I had no wish to go to pieces," he said. "I must do something. Now, mine is an analytical mind, Mr. Rainsford. Doubtless that is why I enjoy the problems of the chase."

"No doubt, General Zaroff."

"So," continued the general, "I asked myself why the hunt no longer fascinated me. You are much younger than I am, Mr. Rainsford, and have not hunted as much, but you perhaps can guess the answer."

"What was it?"

"Simply this: hunting had ceased to be what you call `a sporting proposition.' It had become too easy. I always got my quarry. Always. There is no greater bore than perfection."

The general lit a fresh cigarette.

"No animal had a chance with me any more. That is no boast; it is a mathematical certainty. The animal had nothing but his legs and his instinct. Instinct is no match for reason. When I thought of this it was a tragic moment for me, I can tell you."

Rainsford leaned across the table, absorbed in what his host was saying.

"It came to me as an inspiration what I must do," the general went on.

"And that was?"

The general smiled the quiet smile of one who has faced an obstacle and surmounted it with success. "I had to invent a new animal to hunt," he said.

"A new animal? You're joking." "Not at all," said the general. "I never joke about hunting. I needed a new animal. I found one. So I bought this island built this house, and here I do my hunting. The island is perfect for my purposes--there are jungles with a maze of traits in them, hills, swamps--"

"But the animal, General Zaroff?"

"Oh," said the general, "it supplies me with the most exciting hunting in the world. No other hunting compares with it for an instant. Every day I hunt, and I never grow bored now, for I have a quarry with which I can match my wits."

Rainsford's bewilderment showed in his face.

"I wanted the ideal animal to hunt," explained the general. "So I said, 'What are the attributes of an ideal quarry?' And the answer was, of course, 'It must have courage, cunning, and, above all, it must be able to reason.'"

"But no animal can reason," objected Rainsford.

"My dear fellow," said the general, "there is one that can."

"But you can't mean--" gasped Rainsford.

"And why not?"

"I can't believe you are serious, General Zaroff. This is a grisly joke."

"Why should I not be serious? I am speaking of hunting."

"Hunting? Great Guns, General Zaroff, what you speak of is murder."

The general laughed with entire good nature. He regarded Rainsford quizzically. "I refuse to believe that so modern and civilized a young man as you seem to be harbors romantic ideas about the value of human life. Surely your experiences in the war--"

"Did not make me condone cold-blooded murder," finished Rainsford stiffly.

Laughter shook the general. "How extraordinarily droll you are!" he said. "One does not expect nowadays to find a young man of the educated class, even in America, with such a naive, and, if I may say so, mid-Victorian point of view. It's like finding a snuffbox in a limousine. Ah, well, doubtless you had Puritan ancestors. So many Americans appear to have had. I'll wager you'll forget your notions when you go hunting with me. You've a genuine new thrill in store for you, Mr. Rainsford."

"Thank you, I'm a hunter, not a murderer."

"Dear me," said the general, quite unruffled, "again that unpleasant word. But I think I can show you that your scruples are quite ill founded."

"Yes?"

"Life is for the strong, to be lived by the strong, and, if needs be, taken by the strong. The weak of the world were put here to give the strong pleasure. I am strong. Why should I

not use my gift? If I wish to hunt, why should I not? I hunt the scum of the earth: sailors from tramp ships--lassars, blacks, Chinese, whites, mongrels--a thoroughbred horse or hound is worth more than a score of them."

"But they are men," said Rainsford hotly.

"Precisely," said the general. "That is why I use them. It gives me pleasure. They can reason, after a fashion. So they are dangerous."

"But where do you get them?"

The general's left eyelid fluttered down in a wink. "This island is called Ship Trap," he answered. "Sometimes an angry god of the high seas sends them to me. Sometimes, when Providence is not so kind, I help Providence a bit. Come to the window with me."

Rainsford went to the window and looked out toward the sea.

"Watch! Out there!" exclaimed the general, pointing into the night. Rainsford's eyes saw only blackness, and then, as the general pressed a button, far out to sea Rainsford saw the flash of lights.

The general chuckled. "They indicate a channel," he said, "where there's none; giant rocks with razor edges crouch like a sea monster with wide-open jaws. They can crush a ship as easily as I crush this nut." He dropped a walnut on the hardwood floor and brought his heel grinding down on it. "Oh, yes," he said, casually, as if in answer to a question, "I have electricity. We try to be civilized here."

"Civilized? And you shoot down men?"

A trace of anger was in the general's black eyes, but it was there for but a second; and he said, in his most pleasant manner, "Dear me, what a righteous young man you are! I assure you I do not do the thing you suggest. That would be barbarous. I treat these visitors with every consideration. They get plenty of good food and exercise. They get into splendid physical condition. You shall see for yourself tomorrow."

"What do you mean?"

"We'll visit my training school," smiled the general. "It's in the cellar. I have about a dozen pupils down there now. They're from the Spanish bark *San Lucar* that had the bad

luck to go on the rocks out there. A very inferior lot, I regret to say. Poor specimens and more accustomed to the deck than to the jungle." He raised his hand, and Ivan, who served as waiter, brought thick Turkish coffee. Rainsford, with an effort, held his tongue in check.

"It's a game, you see," pursued the general blandly. "I suggest to one of them that we go hunting. I give him a supply of food and an excellent hunting knife. I give him three hours' start. I am to follow, armed only with a pistol of the smallest caliber and range. If my quarry eludes me for three whole days, he wins the game. If I find him "--the general smiled--" he loses."

"Suppose he refuses to be hunted?"

"Oh," said the general, "I give him his option, of course. He need not play that game if he doesn't wish to. If he does not wish to hunt, I turn him over to Ivan. Ivan once had the honor of serving as official knouter to the Great White Czar, and he has his own ideas of sport. Invariably, Mr. Rainsford, invariably they choose the hunt."

"And if they win?"

The smile on the general's face widened. "To date I have not lost," he said. Then he added, hastily: "I don't wish you to think me a braggart, Mr. Rainsford. Many of them afford only the most elementary sort of problem. Occasionally I strike a tartar. One almost did win. I eventually had to use the dogs."

"The dogs?"

"This way, please. I'll show you."

The general steered Rainsford to a window. The lights from the windows sent a flickering illumination that made grotesque patterns on the courtyard below, and Rainsford could see moving about there a dozen or so huge black shapes; as they turned toward him, their eyes glittered greenly.

"A rather good lot, I think," observed the general. "They are let out at seven every night. If anyone should try to get into my house--or out of it--something extremely regrettable would occur to him." He hummed a snatch of song from the *Folies Bergere*.

"And now," said the general, "I want to show you my new collection of heads. Will you come with me to the library?"

"I hope," said Rainsford, "that you will excuse me tonight, General Zaroff. I'm really not feeling well."

"Ah, indeed?" the general inquired solicitously. "Well, I suppose that's only natural, after your long swim. You need a good, restful night's sleep. Tomorrow you'll feel like a new man, I'll wager. Then we'll hunt, eh? I've one rather promising prospect--" Rainsford was hurrying from the room.

"Sorry you can't go with me tonight," called the general. "I expect rather fair sport--a big, strong, black. He looks resourceful--Well, good night, Mr. Rainsford; I hope you have a good night's rest."

The bed was good, and the pajamas of the softest silk, and he was tired in every fiber of his being, but nevertheless Rainsford could not quiet his brain with the opiate of sleep. He lay, eyes wide open. Once he thought he heard stealthy steps in the corridor outside his room. He sought to throw open the door; it would not open. He went to the window and looked out. His room was high up in one of the towers. The lights of the chateau were out now, and it was dark and silent; but there was a fragment of sallow moon, and by its wan light he could see, dimly, the courtyard. There, weaving in and out in the pattern of shadow, were black, noiseless forms; the hounds heard him at the window and looked up, expectantly, with their green eyes. Rainsford went back to the bed and lay down. By many methods he tried to put himself to sleep. He had achieved a doze when, just as morning began to come, he heard, far off in the jungle, the faint report of a pistol.

General Zaroff did not appear until luncheon. He was dressed faultlessly in the tweeds of a country squire. He was solicitous about the state of Rainsford's health.

"As for me," sighed the general, "I do not feel so well. I am worried, Mr. Rainsford. Last night I detected traces of my old complaint."

To Rainsford's questioning glance the general said, "Ennui. Boredom."

Then, taking a second helping of *crêpes Suzette*, the general explained: "The hunting was not good last night. The fellow lost his head. He made a straight trail that offered no problems at all. That's the trouble with these sailors; they have dull brains to begin with,

and they do not know how to get about in the woods. They do excessively stupid and obvious things. It's most annoying. Will you have another glass of *Chablis*, Mr. Rainsford?"

"General," said Rainsford firmly, "I wish to leave this island at once."

The general raised his thickets of eyebrows; he seemed hurt. "But, my dear fellow," the general protested, "you've only just come. You've had no hunting--"

"I wish to go today," said Rainsford. He saw the dead black eyes of the general on him, studying him. General Zaroff's face suddenly brightened.

He filled Rainsford's glass with venerable *Chablis* from a dusty bottle.

"Tonight," said the general, "we will hunt--you and I."

Rainsford shook his head. "No, general," he said. "I will not hunt."

The general shrugged his shoulders and delicately ate a hothouse grape. "As you wish, my friend," he said. "The choice rests entirely with you. But may I not venture to suggest that you will find my idea of sport more diverting than Ivan's?"

He nodded toward the corner to where the giant stood, scowling, his thick arms crossed on his hogshead of chest.

"You don't mean--" cried Rainsford.

"My dear fellow," said the general, "have I not told you I always mean what I say about hunting? This is really an inspiration. I drink to a foeman worthy of my steel--at last." The general raised his glass, but Rainsford sat staring at him.

"You'll find this game worth playing," the general said enthusiastically. "Your brain against mine. Your woodcraft against mine. Your strength and stamina against mine. Outdoor chess! And the stake is not without value, eh?"

"And if I win--" began Rainsford huskily.

"I'll cheerfully acknowledge myself defeat if I do not find you by midnight of the third day," said General Zaroff. "My sloop will place you on the mainland near a town." The general read what Rainsford was thinking.

"Oh, you can trust me," said the Cossack. "I will give you my word as a gentleman and a sportsman. Of course you, in turn, must agree to say nothing of your visit here."

"I'll agree to nothing of the kind," said Rainsford.

"Oh," said the general, "in that case--But why discuss that now? Three days hence we can discuss it over a bottle of *Veuve Cliquot*, unless--"

The general sipped his wine.

Then a businesslike air animated him. "Ivan," he said to Rainsford, "will supply you with hunting clothes, food, a knife. I suggest you wear moccasins; they leave a poorer trail. I suggest, too, that you avoid the big swamp in the southeast corner of the island. We call it Death Swamp. There's quicksand there. One foolish fellow tried it. The deplorable part of it was that Lazarus followed him. You can imagine my feelings, Mr. Rainsford. I loved Lazarus; he was the finest hound in my pack. Well, I must beg you to excuse me now. I always take a siesta after lunch. You'll hardly have time for a nap, I fear. You'll want to start, no doubt. I shall not follow till dusk. Hunting at night is so much more exciting than by day, don't you think? Au revoir, Mr. Rainsford, au revoir." General Zaroff, with a deep, courtly bow, strolled from the room.

From another door came Ivan. Under one arm he carried khaki hunting clothes, a haversack of food, a leather sheath containing a long-bladed hunting knife; his right hand rested on a cocked revolver thrust in the crimson sash about his waist.

Rainsford had fought his way through the bush for two hours. "I must keep my nerve. I must keep my nerve," he said through tight teeth.

He had not been entirely clearheaded when the chateau gates snapped shut behind him. His whole idea at first was to put distance between himself and General Zaroff; and, to this end, he had plunged along, spurred on by the sharp rowers of something very like panic. Now he had got a grip on himself, had stopped, and was taking stock of himself and the situation. He saw that straight flight was futile; inevitably it would bring him face to face with the sea. He was in a picture with a frame of water, and his operations, clearly, must take place within that frame.

"I'll give him a trail to follow," muttered Rainsford, and he struck off from the rude path he had been following into the trackless wilderness. He executed a series of intricate

loops; he doubled on his trail again and again, recalling all the lore of the fox hunt, and all the dodges of the fox. Night found him leg-weary, with hands and face lashed by the branches, on a thickly wooded ridge. He knew it would be insane to blunder on through the dark, even if he had the strength. His need for rest was imperative and he thought, "I have played the fox, now I must play the cat of the fable." A big tree with a thick trunk and outspread branches was near by, and, taking care to leave not the slightest mark, he climbed up into the crotch, and, stretching out on one of the broad limbs, after a fashion, rested. Rest brought him new confidence and almost a feeling of security. Even so zealous a hunter as General Zaroff could not trace him there, he told himself; only the devil himself could follow that complicated trail through the jungle after dark. But perhaps the general was a devil--

An apprehensive night crawled slowly by like a wounded snake and sleep did not visit Rainsford, although the silence of a dead world was on the jungle. Toward morning when a dingy gray was varnishing the sky, the cry of some startled bird focused Rainsford's attention in that direction. Something was coming through the bush, coming slowly, carefully, coming by the same winding way Rainsford had come. He flattened himself down on the limb and, through a screen of leaves almost as thick as tapestry, he watched. . . . That which was approaching was a man.

It was General Zaroff. He made his way along with his eyes fixed in utmost concentration on the ground before him. He paused, almost beneath the tree, dropped to his knees and studied the ground. Rainsford's impulse was to hurl himself down like a panther, but he saw that the general's right hand held something metallic--a small automatic pistol.

The hunter shook his head several times, as if he were puzzled. Then he straightened up and took from his case one of his black cigarettes; its pungent incenselike smoke floated up to Rainsford's nostrils.

Rainsford held his breath. The general's eyes had left the ground and were traveling inch by inch up the tree. Rainsford froze there, every muscle tensed for a spring. But the sharp eyes of the hunter stopped before they reached the limb where Rainsford lay; a smile spread over his brown face. Very deliberately he blew a smoke ring into the air; then he turned his back on the tree and walked carelessly away, back along the trail he had come. The swish of the underbrush against his hunting boots grew fainter and fainter.

The pent-up air burst hotly from Rainsford's lungs. His first thought made him feel sick and numb. The general could follow a trail through the woods at night; he could follow an extremely difficult trail; he must have uncanny powers; only by the merest chance had the Cossack failed to see his quarry.

Rainsford's second thought was even more terrible. It sent a shudder of cold horror through his whole being. Why had the general smiled? Why had he turned back?

Rainsford did not want to believe what his reason told him was true, but the truth was as evident as the sun that had by now pushed through the morning mists. The general was playing with him! The general was saving him for another day's sport! The Cossack was the cat; he was the mouse. Then it was that Rainsford knew the full meaning of terror.

"I will not lose my nerve. I will not."

He slid down from the tree, and struck off again into the woods. His face was set and he forced the machinery of his mind to function. Three hundred yards from his hiding place he stopped where a huge dead tree leaned precariously on a smaller, living one. Throwing off his sack of food, Rainsford took his knife from its sheath and began to work with all his energy.

The job was finished at last, and he threw himself down behind a fallen log a hundred feet away. He did not have to wait long. The cat was coming again to play with the mouse.

Following the trail with the sureness of a bloodhound came General Zaroff. Nothing escaped those searching black eyes, no crushed blade of grass, no bent twig, no mark, no matter how faint, in the moss. So intent was the Cossack on his stalking that he was upon the thing Rainsford had made before he saw it. His foot touched the protruding bough that was the trigger. Even as he touched it, the general sensed his danger and leaped back with the agility of an ape. But he was not quite quick enough; the dead tree, delicately adjusted to rest on the cut living one, crashed down and struck the general a glancing blow on the shoulder as it fell; but for his alertness, he must have been smashed beneath it. He staggered, but he did not fall; nor did he drop his revolver. He stood there, rubbing his injured shoulder, and Rainsford, with fear again gripping his heart, heard the general's mocking laugh ring through the jungle.

"Rainsford," called the general, "if you are within sound of my voice, as I suppose you are, let me congratulate you. Not many men know how to make a Malay mancatcher. Luckily for me I, too, have hunted in Malacca. You are proving interesting, Mr. Rainsford. I am going now to have my wound dressed; it's only a slight one. But I shall be back. I shall be back."

When the general, nursing his bruised shoulder, had gone, Rainsford took up his flight again. It was flight now, a desperate, hopeless flight, that carried him on for some hours. Dusk came, then darkness, and still he pressed on. The ground grew softer under his moccasins; the vegetation grew ranker, denser; insects bit him savagely.

Then, as he stepped forward, his foot sank into the ooze. He tried to wrench it back, but the muck sucked viciously at his foot as if it were a giant leech. With a violent effort, he tore his feet loose. He knew where he was now. Death Swamp and its quicksand.

His hands were tight closed as if his nerve were something tangible that someone in the darkness was trying to tear from his grip. The softness of the earth had given him an idea. He stepped back from the quicksand a dozen feet or so and, like some huge prehistoric beaver, he began to dig.

Rainsford had dug himself in in France when a second's delay meant death. That had been a placid pastime compared to his digging now. The pit grew deeper; when it was above his shoulders, he climbed out and from some hard saplings cut stakes and sharpened them to a fine point. These stakes he planted in the bottom of the pit with the points sticking up. With flying fingers he wove a rough carpet of weeds and branches and with it he covered the mouth of the pit. Then, wet with sweat and aching with tiredness, he crouched behind the stump of a lightning-charred tree.

He knew his pursuer was coming; he heard the padding sound of feet on the soft earth, and the night breeze brought him the perfume of the general's cigarette. It seemed to Rainsford that the general was coming with unusual swiftness; he was not feeling his way along, foot by foot. Rainsford, crouching there, could not see the general, nor could he see the pit. He lived a year in a minute. Then he felt an impulse to cry aloud with joy, for he heard the sharp crackle of the breaking branches as the cover of the pit gave way; he heard the sharp scream of pain as the pointed stakes found their mark. He leaped up from his place of concealment. Then he cowered back. Three feet from the pit a man was standing, with an electric torch in his hand.

"You've done well, Rainsford," the voice of the general called. "Your Burmese tiger pit has claimed one of my best dogs. Again you score. I think, Mr. Rainsford, I'll see what you can do against my whole pack. I'm going home for a rest now. Thank you for a most amusing evening."

At daybreak Rainsford, lying near the swamp, was awakened by a sound that made him know that he had new things to learn about fear. It was a distant sound, faint and wavering, but he knew it. It was the baying of a pack of hounds.

Rainsford knew he could do one of two things. He could stay where he was and wait. That was suicide. He could flee. That was postponing the inevitable. For a moment he stood there, thinking. An idea that held a wild chance came to him, and, tightening his belt, he headed away from the swamp.

The baying of the hounds drew nearer, then still nearer, nearer, ever nearer. On a ridge Rainsford climbed a tree. Down a watercourse, not a quarter of a mile away, he could see the bush moving. Straining his eyes, he saw the lean figure of General Zaroff; just ahead of him Rainsford made out another figure whose wide shoulders surged through the tall jungle weeds; it was the giant Ivan, and he seemed pulled forward by some unseen force; Rainsford knew that Ivan must be holding the pack in leash.

They would be on him any minute now. His mind worked frantically. He thought of a native trick he had learned in Uganda. He slid down the tree. He caught hold of a springy young sapling and to it he fastened his hunting knife, with the blade pointing down the trail; with a bit of wild grapevine he tied back the sapling. Then he ran for his life. The hounds raised their voices as they hit the fresh scent. Rainsford knew now how an animal at bay feels.

He had to stop to get his breath. The baying of the hounds stopped abruptly, and Rainsford's heart stopped too. They must have reached the knife.

He shinned excitedly up a tree and looked back. His pursuers had stopped. But the hope that was in Rainsford's brain when he climbed died, for he saw in the shallow valley that General Zaroff was still on his feet. But Ivan was not. The knife, driven by the recoil of the springing tree, had not wholly failed.

Rainsford had hardly tumbled to the ground when the pack took up the cry again.

"Nerve, nerve, nerve!" he panted, as he dashed along. A blue gap showed between the trees dead ahead. Ever nearer drew the hounds. Rainsford forced himself on toward that gap. He reached it. It was the shore of the sea. Across a cove he could see the gloomy gray stone of the chateau. Twenty feet below him the sea rumbled and hissed. Rainsford hesitated. He heard the hounds. Then he leaped far out into the sea. . . .

When the general and his pack reached the place by the sea, the Cossack stopped. For some minutes he stood regarding the blue-green expanse of water. He shrugged his shoulders. Then he sat down, took a drink of brandy from a silver flask, lit a cigarette, and hummed a bit from *Madame Butterfly*.

General Zaroff had an exceedingly good dinner in his great paneled dining hall that evening. With it he had a bottle of *Pol Roger* and half a bottle of *Chambertin*. Two slight annoyances kept him from perfect enjoyment. One was the thought that it would be difficult to replace Ivan; the other was that his quarry had escaped him; of course, the American hadn't played the game--so thought the general as he tasted his after-dinner liqueur. In his library he read, to soothe himself, from the works of Marcus Aurelius. At ten he went up to his bedroom. He was deliciously tired, he said to himself, as he locked himself in. There was a little moonlight, so, before turning on his light, he went to the window and looked down at the courtyard. He could see the great hounds, and he called, "Better luck another time," to them. Then he switched on the light.

A man, who had been hiding in the curtains of the bed, was standing there.

"Rainsford!" screamed the general. "How in God's name did you get here?"

"Swam," said Rainsford. "I found it quicker than walking through the jungle."

The general sucked in his breath and smiled. "I congratulate you," he said. "You have won the game."

Rainsford did not smile. "I am still a beast at bay," he said, in a low, hoarse voice. "Get ready, General Zaroff."

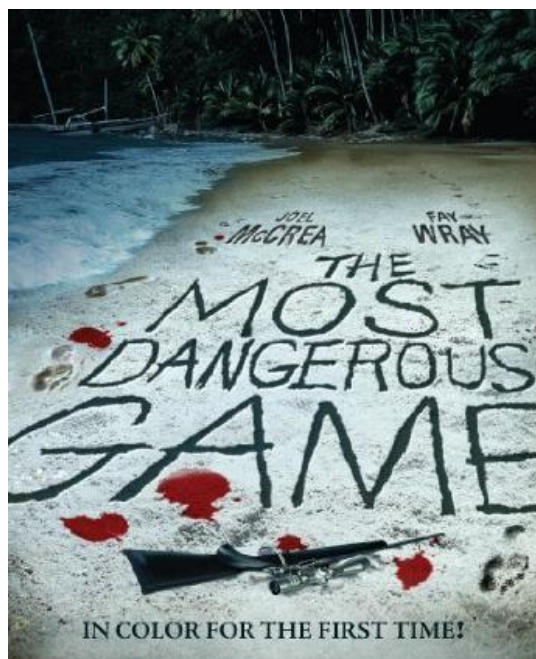
The general made one of his deepest bows. "I see," he said. "Splendid! One of us is to furnish a repast for the hounds. The other will sleep in this very excellent bed. On guard, Rainsford." . . .

He had never slept in a better bed, Rainsford decided.

Digging Deep

- 1) Analyze what the dialogue with Whitney reveals about Rainsford.
- 2) How does Rainsford end up on the Ship-Trap Island?
- 3) Explain the presence of the twelve other person on the island besides Rainsford, the general and Ivan.
- 4) Determine what traits of humans make them the ideal “animal” for Zaroff to hunt.
- 5) Compare and contrast Rainsford’s and Zaroff’s attitudes toward hunting.
- 6) Besides Zaroff’s attitude toward hunting, what else makes him so unusual?
- 7) Determine the two meanings of *game*, giving two meaning to the title of the story.
- 8) Analyze the significance of the last line, “He had never slept in a better bed, Rainsford decided.”
- 9) Cite textual evidence which shows the general is or is not a believable character.
- 10) Determine the major conflict in the story.
- 11) Analyze how the conflict in a story propels the action and provokes a decision.
- 12) Analyze how effective the ending of the story is, where only the outcome and not the details are known.
- 13) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

Reader’s Journal: While still on the ship, Rainsford says that “the world is made up of two classes—the hunter and the hunted.” Challenge or support the view based on what you see in the world, “The Most Dangerous Game” and other stories you read. (2 page response)





Study Guide for “The Most Dangerous Game”

I. VOCABULARY: Be able to define the following words and understand them when they appear in the story and class discussions.

palpable _____

amenity _____

condone _____

naïve _____

scruple _____

futile _____

cosmopolite _____

debacle _____

gargoyle _____

zealous _____

affable _____

tangible _____

quarry _____

II. LITERARY TERMS: Be able to define each term and apply each term to the story.

suspense _____

conflict _____

*identify the conflicts in the story:

_____ vs. _____

Explain: _____

human nature
_____ vs. _____

Explain: _____

human human
_____ vs. _____ Explain:

human himself/herself

Who is the protagonist in the story? _____

antagonist _____

Example: _____

metaphor

Examples: _____

Simile:

Examples:

Describe the mood of the story: _____

Who is the narrator? From what point of view is the story told?

What is the theme of the story? _____

III. QUESTIONS: Answer the following questions.

1. What is meant by "He lived a year in a minute"?
2. What is meant by "I am still a beast at bay"?
3. In which sea has Connell set Ship-Trap Island?

4. How is Zaroff able to finance his life style?
5. If Rainsford wins the hunt, what does Zaroff promise him?
6. What happened to Lazarus?
7. Where does Rainsford spend the first night of his hunt?
8. How many acres did Zaroff's father have in the Crimea?
9. Why does Zaroff suggest Rainsford wear moccasins?
10. What caused Rainsford to believe Zaroff knew he was hiding in the tree? Do you think he was right? Give reasons.
11. How does Zaroff stock his island with "game"?
12. What happened to General Zaroff at the end of the story?
13. In spite of being hurt, Zaroff congratulates Rainsford on his "Malay mancatcher," why?
14. How do we know Rainsford is an exceptionally fit man?

THEME



MARRIAGE IS A PRIVATE AFFAIR - Chinua Achebe

'HAVE you written to your dad yet?' asked Nene one afternoon as she sat with Nnaemeka in her room at 16 Kasanga Street, Lagos.

'No. I've been thinking about it. I think it's better to tell him when I get home on leave!'

'But why? Your leave is such a long way off yet—six whole weeks. He should be let into our happiness now.'

Nnaemeka was silent for a while, and then began very slowly as if he groped for his words: 'I wish I were sure it would be happiness to him.'

'Of course it must,' replied Nene, a little surprised. 'Why shouldn't it?'

'You have lived in Lagos all your life, and you know very little about people in remote parts of the country.'

'That's what you always say. But I don't believe anybody will be so unlike other people that they will be unhappy when their sons are engaged to marry.'

'Yes. They are most unhappy if the engagement is not arranged by them. In our case it's worse—you are not even an Ibo.'

This was said so seriously and so bluntly that Nene could not find speech immediately. In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city it had always seemed to her something of a joke that a person's tribe could determine whom he married.

At last she said, 'You don't really mean that he will object to your marrying me simply on that account? I had always thought you Ibos were kindly disposed to other people.'

'So we are. But when it comes to marriage, well, it's not quite so simple. And this,' he added, 'is not peculiar to the Ibos. If your father were alive and lived in the heart of Ibiboland he would be exactly like my father.'

'I don't know. But anyway, as your father is so fond of you, I'm sure he will forgive you soon enough. Come on then, be a good boy and send him a nice lovely letter . . .'

'It would not be wise to break the news to him by writing. A letter will bring it upon him with a shock. I'm quite sure about that.'

‘All right, honey, suit yourself. You know your father.’

As Nnaemeka walked home that evening he turned over in his mind different ways of overcoming his father’s opposition, especially now that he had gone and found a girl for him. He had thought of showing his letter to Nene but decided on second thoughts not to, at least for the moment. He read it again when he got home and couldn’t help smiling to himself. He remembered Ugoye quite well, an Amazon of a girl who used to beat up all the boys, himself included, on the way to the stream, a complete dunce at school.

I have found a girl who will suit you admirably—Ugoye Nweke, the eldest daughter of our neighbor, Jacob Nweke. She has a proper Christian upbringing. When she stopped schooling some years ago, her father (a man of sound judgment) sent her to live in the house of a pastor where she has received all the training a wife could need. Her Sunday School teacher has told me that she reads her Bible very fluently. I hope we shall begin negotiations when you come home in December.

On the second evening of his return from Lagos Nnaemeka sat with his father under a cassia tree. This was the old man’s retreat where he went to read his Bible when the parching December sun had set and a fresh, reviving wind blew on the leaves.

‘Father,’ began Nnaemeka suddenly, ‘I have come to ask for forgiveness.’

‘Forgiveness? For what, my son?’ he asked in amazement.

‘It’s about this marriage question.’

‘Which marriage question?’

‘I can’t—we must—I mean it is impossible for me to marry Nweke’s daughter.’

‘Impossible? Why?’ asked his father.

‘I don’t love her.’

‘Nobody said you did. Why should you?’ he asked.

‘Marriage today is different . . .’

‘Look here, my son,’ interrupted his father, ‘nothing is different. What one looks for in a wife are a good character and a Christian background.’

Nnaemeka saw there was no hope along the present line of argument.

‘Moreover,’ he said, ‘I am engaged to marry another girl who has all of Ugoye’s good qualities, and who . . .’

His father did not believe his ears. 'What did you say?' he asked slowly and disconcertingly.

'She is a good Christian,' his son went on, 'and a teacher in a Girls' School in Lagos.'

'Teacher, did you say? If you consider that a qualification for a good wife I should like to point out to you, Nnaemeka, that no Christian woman should teach. St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians says that women should keep silence.' He rose slowly from his seat and paced forwards and backwards. This was his pet subject, and he condemned vehemently those church leaders who encouraged women to teach in their schools. After he had spent his emotion on a long homily he at last came back to his son's engagement, in a seemingly milder tone.

'Whose daughter is she, anyway?'

'She is Nene Atang.'

'What!' All the mildness was gone again. 'Did you say Nene Atang, what does that mean?'

'Nene Atang from Calabar. She is the only girl I can marry.' This was a very rash reply and Nnaemeka expected the storm to burst. But it did not. His father merely walked away into his room. This was most unexpected and perplexed Nnaemeka. His father's silence was infinitely more menacing than a flood of threatening speech. That night the old man did not eat.

When he sent for Nnaemeka a day later he applied all possible ways of dissuasion. But the young man's heart was hardened, and his father eventually gave him up as lost.

'I owe it to you, my son, as a duty to show you what is right and what is wrong. Whoever put this idea into your head might as well have cut your throat. It is Satan's work.' He waved his son away.

'You will change your mind, Father, when you know Nene.'

'I shall never see her,' was the reply. From that night the father scarcely spoke to his son. He did not, however, cease hoping that he would realize how serious was the danger he was heading for. Day and night he put him in his prayers.

Nnaemeka, for his own part, was very deeply affected by his father's grief. But he kept hoping that it would pass away. If it had occurred to him that never in the history of his people had a man married a woman who spoke a different tongue, he might have been less optimistic. 'It has never been heard,' was the verdict of an old man speaking a few weeks later. In that short sentence he spoke for all of his people. This man had come with others to commiserate with Okeke when news went round about his son's behavior. By that time

the son had gone back to Lagos.

‘It has never been heard,’ said the old man again with a sad shake of his head.

‘What did Our Lord say?’ asked another gentleman.

‘Sons shall rise against their Fathers; it is there in the Holy Book.’

‘It is the beginning of the end,’ said another.

The discussion thus tending to become theological, Madubogwu, a highly practical man, brought it down once more to the ordinary level.

‘Have you thought of consulting a native doctor about your son?’ he asked Nnaemeka’s father.

‘He isn’t sick,’ was the reply.

‘What is he then? The boy’s mind is diseased and only a good herbalist can bring him back to his right senses. The medicine he requires is Amalile, the same that women apply with success to recapture their husbands’ straying affection.’

‘Madubogwu is right,’ said another gentleman. ‘This thing calls for medicine.’

‘I shall not call in a native doctor.’ Nnaemeka’s father was known to be obstinately ahead of his more superstitious neighbors in these matters. ‘I will not be another Mrs. Ochuba. If my son wants to kill himself let him do it with his own hands. It is not for me to help him.’

‘But it was her fault,’ said Madubogwu. ‘She ought to have gone to an honest herbalist. She was a clever woman, nevertheless.’

‘She was a wicked murderess,’ said Jonathan who rarely argued with his neighbors because, he often said, they were incapable of reasoning. ‘The medicine was prepared for her husband, it was his name they called in its preparation and I am sure it would have been perfectly beneficial to him. It was wicked to put it into the herbalist’s food, and say you were only trying it out.’

Six months later, Nnaemeka was showing his young wife a short letter from his father:

It amazes me that you could be so unfeeling as to send me your wedding picture. I would have sent it back. But on further thought I decided just to cut off your wife and send it back to you because I have nothing to do with her. How I wish that I had nothing to do with you either.

When Nene read through this letter and looked at the mutilated picture her eyes filled with

tears, and she began to sob.

‘Don’t cry, my darling,’ said her husband. ‘He is essentially good-natured and will one day look more kindly on our marriage.’ But years passed and that one day did not come.

For eight years, Okeke would have nothing to do with his son, Nnaemeka. Only three times (when Nnaemeka asked to come home and spend his leave) did he write to him.

‘I can’t have you in my house,’ he replied on one occasion. ‘It can be of no interest to me where or how you spend your leave—or your life, for that matter.’

The prejudice against Nnaemeka’s marriage was not confined to his little village. In Lagos, especially among his people who worked there, it showed itself in a different way. Their women, when they met at their village meeting, were not hostile to Nene. Rather, they paid her such excessive deference as to make her feel she was not one of them. But as time went on, Nene gradually broke through some of this prejudice and even began to make friends among them. Slowly and grudgingly they began to admit that she kept her home much better than most of them.

The story eventually got to the little village in the heart of the Ibo country that Nnaemeka and his young wife were a most happy couple. But his father was one of the few people in the village who knew nothing about this. He always displayed so much temper whenever his son’s name was mentioned that everyone avoided it in his presence. By a tremendous effort of will he had succeeded in pushing his son to the back of his mind. The strain had nearly killed him but he had persevered, and won.

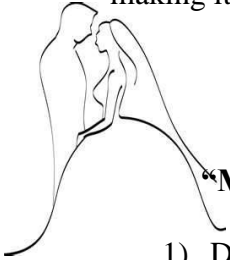
Then one day he received a letter from Nene, and in spite of himself he began to glance through it perfunctorily until all of a sudden the expression on his face changed and he began to read more carefully:

... Our two sons, from the day they learnt that they have a grandfather, have insisted on being taken to him. I find it impossible to tell them that you will not see them. I implore you to allow Nnaemeka to bring them home for a short time during his leave next month. I shall remain here in Lagos. ...’

The old man at once felt the resolution he had built up over so many years falling in. He was telling himself that he must not give in. He tried to steel his heart against all emotional appeals. It was a re-enactment of that other struggle. He leaned against a window and looked out. The sky was overcast with heavy black clouds and a high wind began to blow filling the air with dust and dry leaves. It was one of those rare occasions when even Nature takes a hand in a human fight. Very soon it began to rain, the first rain in the year. It came down in large sharp drops and was accompanied by the lightning and thunder which mark a change of season. Okeke was trying hard not to think of his two grandsons. But he knew he was now fighting a losing battle. He tried to hum a favorite hymn but the pattering of large raindrops on the roof broke up the tune. His mind immediately returned to the children. How could he shut his door against them? By a

curious mental process he imagined them standing, sad and forsaken, under the harsh angry weather—shut out from his house.

That night he hardly slept, from remorse—and a vague fear that he might die without making it up to them.



“Marriage is a Private Affair” by Chinua Achebe Text Based Questions

- 1) Describe in detail the conflict between traditional views and the attitudes of the young people as depicted in the story "Marriage Is A Private Affair."
- 2) Determine a theme or central idea of “Marriage is a Private Affair” and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.
- 3) In examining the characterization of Nnaemeka, discuss how the persona of the son stands defeated in the persona of the Okeke, the father.
- 4) In "Marriage is a Private Affair," cite the points of similarities and differences between Nnaemeka and Okeke?
- 5) Analyze how “Yes. They are most unhappy if the engagement is not arranged by them. In our case it’s worse—you are not even an Ibo,” shows there is a clash between the generations in the story.
- 6) Cite and discuss what enables the father's mind to change in "Marriage is a Private Affair"?
- 7) Determine how the following lines are a metaphor for his life, “By a curious mental process he imagined them standing, sad and forsaken, under the harsh angry weather—shut out from his house.”
- 8) Analyze how the differences in point of views between tribal tradition and individual freedom propel the action in the short story?
- 9) In "Marriage is a Private Affair", determine what is Okeke's internal conflict.
- 10) Discuss the changes in society that have been highlighted in “Marriage is a Private Affair."

- 11) Cite a statement from the text which best describes Nnaemeka and Nene after their marriage?
- 12) Explain the significance of Achebe's title in his short story, "Marriage is a Private Affair."
- 13) Identify where there is hope in Nene's letter to Okeke at the end of "Marriage is a Private Affair."
- 14) Describe the symbolism used by Chinua Achebe in marriage is a private affair.
- 15) Inter-cultural marriages are a much discussed issue in Indian society; discuss it with reference to the story, "Marriage is a Private Affair".



REVIEW: Answer the questions based on the story:

- 1) What tribe was Nnaemeka a tribe of in Nigeria?
- 2) Who was his father and what did he object to? Why?
- 3) Who did Nnaemeka marry against his father's wishes?
- 4) Where did the young couple live?
- 5) Whom did Okeke want his son to marry? Why?
- 6) What did his father do to the wedding picture? What does this symbolize?
- 7) Who did Nene want Okeke to meet?
- 8) What was going on when the old man spent a restless night?
- 9) Explain what made Okeke change his mind about the marriage.
- 10) How did the world of nature reflect the struggle inside Okeke?
- 11) Answer the following questions based on the following questions: Do you think Nnaemeka was right to break with the tradition of his people? Why or why not? Imagine that he had complied with his father's wishes; do you think he would have been happy? Explain.

The Last Leaf by O'Henry



In a little district west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called "places." These "places" make strange angles and curves. One Street crosses itself a time or two. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself coming back, without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth-century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Sixth Avenue, and became a "colony."

At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio. "Johnsy" was familiar for Joanna. One was from Maine; the other from California. They had met at the table d'hôte of an Eighth Street "Delmonico's," and found their tastes in art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the joint studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy fingers. Over on the east side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown "places."

Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by California zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy, grey eyebrow.

"She has one chance in - let us say, ten," he said, as he shook down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. "And that chance is for her to want to live. This way people have of lining-u on the side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopoeia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?"

"She - she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples some day." said Sue.

"Paint? - bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking twice - a man for instance?"

≤ 2 ≥

"A man?" said Sue, with a jew's-harp twang in her voice. "Is a man worth - but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind."

"Well, it is the weakness, then," said the doctor. "I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count

the carriages in her funeral procession I subtract 50 per cent from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in-five chance for her, instead of one in ten."

After the doctor had gone Sue went into the workroom and cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into Johnsy's room with her drawing board, whistling ragtime.

Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes, with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep.

She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horseshow riding trousers and a monocle of the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.

Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting - counting backward.

"Twelve," she said, and little later "eleven"; and then "ten," and "nine"; and then "eight" and "seven", almost together.

Sue look solicitously out of the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

"What is it, dear?" asked Sue.

"Six," said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. "They're falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It made my head ache to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now."

"Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie."

"Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go, too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?"

≤ 3 ≥

"Oh, I never heard of such nonsense," complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. "What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? And you used to love that vine so, you naughty girl. Don't be a goosey. Why, the doctor told me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were - let's see exactly what he said - he said the chances were ten to one! Why, that's almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the street cars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork chops for her greedy self."

"You needn't get any more wine," said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window. "There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I'll go, too."

"Johnsy, dear," said Sue, bending over her, "will you promise me to keep your eyes closed, and not look out the window until I am done working? I must hand those drawings in by to-morrow. I need the light, or I would draw the shade down."

"Couldn't you draw in the other room?" asked Johnsy, coldly.

"I'd rather be here by you," said Sue. "Beside, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves."

"Tell me as soon as you have finished," said Johnsy, closing her eyes, and lying white and still as fallen statue, "because I want to see the last one fall. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of thinking. I want to turn loose my hold on everything, and go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves."

"Try to sleep," said Sue. "I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move 'til I come back."

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelo's Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along with the body of an imp. Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mistress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in any one, and who regarded himself as especial mastiff-in-waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.

≤ 4 ≥

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and how she feared she would, indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away, when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

"Vass!" he cried. "Is dere people in de world mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey drop off from a confounded vine? I haf not heard of such a thing. No, I will not bose as a model for your fool hermit-dunderhead. Vy do you allow dot silly pusiness to come in der brain of her? Ach, dot poor leetle Miss Yohnsy."

"She is very ill and weak," said Sue, "and the fever has left her mind morbid and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr. Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn't. But I think you are a horrid old - old flibbertigibbet."

"You are just like a woman!" yelled Behrman. "Who said I will not bose? Go on. I come mit you. For half an hour I haf been trying to say dot I am ready to bose. Gott! dis is not any blace in which one so goot as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Someday I vill baint a masterpiece, and ve shall all go away. Gott! yes."

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the shade down to the window-sill, and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade.

"Pull it up; I want to see," she ordered, in a whisper.

Wearily Sue obeyed.

But, lo! after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last one on the vine. Still dark green near its stem, with its serrated edges tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from the branch some twenty feet above the ground.

[≤ 5 ≥](#)

"It is the last one," said Johnsy. "I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall to-day, and I shall die at the same time."

"Dear, dear!" said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow, "think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?"

But Johnsy did not answer. The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night the north wind was again loosed, while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down from the low Dutch eaves.

When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the shade be raised. The ivy leaf was still there.

Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.

"I've been a bad girl, Sudie," said Johnsy. "Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and - no; bring me a hand-mirror first, and then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook."

And hour later she said:

"Sudie, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples."

The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go into the hallway as he left.

"Even chances," said the doctor, taking Sue's thin, shaking hand in his. "With good nursing you'll win." And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is - some kind of an artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man, and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital to-day to be made more comfortable."

The next day the doctor said to Sue: "She's out of danger. You won. Nutrition and care now - that's all."

[≤ 6 ≥](#)

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woollen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.

"I have something to tell you, white mouse," she said. "Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia to-day in the hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn't imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been

dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colours mixed on it, and - look out the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it's Behrman's masterpiece - he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell."

"The Last Leaf" by O. Henry

1. Name the main characters in the story.
2. What did Mr. Behrman paint before he died?
3. Try to describe his master piece?
4. What did Mr. Behrman paintings do to help Johnsy survive?
5. What feeling did it give her?
6. Why does Sue call "the last leaf" Mr. Behrman's masterpiece?
7. What is the irony in the story and what type of irony is it?



Questions based on "The Last Leaf" by O. Henry

1) Setting is an important element in any short story, and it is particularly important in "The Last Leaf".

What are the two main parts of a story's setting?

2. IN-STORY

2a) A **masterpiece** is the greatest piece of art an artist creates. The Mona Lisa, for example, is Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece. It is simple and beautiful and the painting shows great technique and use of color.

There are 3 painters in this story. What are their names?

S _____

J _____

Mr. _____N

Another main character is Mr. Pneumonia, though he doesn't sound much like a painter. How would you describe Mr. Pneumonia?

2b) If you have already read the Last Leaf try to remember the ending of the story. If you have not read the story yet, this would be good time to read it before trying this exercise.

3) Ten Lines from "The Last Leaf"

3a) Here are ten lines from the end of the story. Put them into the correct order to find out how Mr Behrman created his masterpiece. Try to do this without looking at the book.

- a) There was a light he had taken outside. _____
- b) Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in the hospital. _____
- c) There was green and yellow paint. _____

- d) He was helpless with pain. _____
- e) He painted his great masterpiece before the last leaf fell. _____
- f) And they found some things. _____
- g) The night had been so cold and wild. _____
- h) Someone found him in his room. _____
- i) There were materials for painting. _____
- j) His clothes were as wet and cold as ice. _____

3b) The O' Henry Twist

O' Henry is famous for surprise endings or "twists" in his stories. In The Last Leaf, Johnsy seems to be dying of pneumonia when the story begins, but it is Mr. Behrman who dies in the end, while Johnsy survives. Now we know how Mr. Behrman died, think of these other points and discuss them with a friend:

- What did Mr. Behrman paint before he died?
- Try to describe his masterpiece.
- What did Mr. Behrman's painting do for Johnsy to help her survive?
- What feeling did it give her?
- Why does Sue call "The Last Leaf" Behrman's masterpiece?

4. EXERCISES

4a) There are 3 main types of art: Visual Arts (**V**), Literary Arts (**L**) and Performing Arts (**P**). You will find an example of each in the columns below. How would you categorize the other art forms listed here? Some might be able to go into two or even all three columns.

• drama (acting)		V	L	P
• painting		V	L	P
• music	V	L	P	
• fashion design		V	L	P
• cartoons (animation)	V	L	P	
• film (cinema, movies)		V	L	P
• short stories	V	L	P	
• novels		V	L	P
• photography	V	L	P	

4b) Art and Artists: suffixes

What do you call the people who perform or create these arts?
 There are five suffixes that we commonly use for artists.
 Be careful of spellings with some endings.

-ist	-er	-or	-ian	-ess
• sculpture				_____
• dance				_____
• poetry				_____

- drama (acting) _____
- painting _____
- music _____
- fashion design _____
- movie making _____
- short stories _____
- novels _____
- photography _____
- cartoons (animation) _____

5) What kind of artist is...?

- What kind of artists are the following people?
- What are they famous for?

Choose one of these artists, or one of your own favorite artists and describe what you think their "masterpiece" is.

- Steven Spielberg _____
- O' Henry _____
- Ralph Lauren _____
- Michael Jackson _____
- Pablo Picasso _____
- William Shakespeare _____
- Mozart _____
- Leonardo Da Vinci _____
- Harrison Ford _____

The father was respectable and tight, a mortgage fancier and a stern, upright collection-plate passer and forecloser. The kid was a boy of ten, with bas-relief freckles, and hair the

colour of the cover of the magazine you buy at the news-stand when you want to catch a train. Bill and me figured that Ebenezer would melt down for a ransom of two thousand dollars to a cent. But wait till I tell you.

About two miles from Summit was a little mountain, covered with a dense cedar brake. On the rear elevation of this mountain was a cave. There we stored provisions.

One evening after sundown, we drove in a buggy past old Dorset's house. The kid was in the street, throwing rocks at a kitten on the opposite fence.

"Hey, little boy!" says Bill, "would you like to have a bag of candy and a nice ride?"

The boy catches Bill neatly in the eye with a piece of brick.

"That will cost the old man an extra five hundred dollars," says Bill, climbing over the wheel.

That boy put up a fight like a welter-weight cinnamon bear; but, at last, we got him down in the bottom of the buggy and drove away. We took him up to the cave, and I hitched the horse in the cedar brake. After dark I drove the buggy to the little village, three miles away, where we had hired it, and walked back to the mountain.

Bill was pasting court-plaster over the scratches and bruises on his features. There was a fire burning behind the big rock at the entrance of the cave, and the boy was watching a pot of boiling coffee, with two buzzard tail feathers stuck in his red hair. He points a stick at me when I come up, and says:

"Ha! cursed paleface, do you dare to enter the camp of Red Chief, the terror of the plains?"

"He's all right now," says Bill, rolling up his trousers and examining some bruises on his shins. "We're playing Indian. We're making Buffalo Bill's show look like magic-lantern views of Palestine in the town hall. I'm Old Hank, the Trapper, Red Chief's captive, and I'm to be scalped at daybreak. By Geronimo! that kid can kick hard."

Yes, sir, that boy seemed to be having the time of his life. The fun of camping out in a cave had made him forget that he was a captive himself. He immediately christened me Snake-eye, the Spy, and announced that, when his braves returned from the warpath, I was to be broiled at the stake at the rising of the sun.

Then we had supper; and he filled his mouth full of bacon and bread and gravy, and

began to talk. He made a during-dinner speech something like this:

"I like this fine. I never camped out before; but I had a pet 'possum once, and I was nine last birthday. I hate to go to school. Rats ate up sixteen of Jimmy Talbot's aunt's speckled hen's eggs. Are there any real Indians in these woods? I want some more gravy. Does the trees moving make the wind blow? We had five puppies. What makes your nose so red, Hank? My father has lots of money. Are the stars hot? I whipped Ed Walker twice, Saturday. I don't like girls. You dassent catch toads unless with a string. Do oxen make any noise? Why are oranges round? Have you got beds to sleep on in this cave? Amos Murray has got six toes. A parrot can talk, but a monkey or a fish can't. How many does it take to make twelve?"

Every few minutes he would remember that he was a pesky redskin, and pick up his stick rifle and tiptoe to the mouth of the cave to rubber for the scouts of the hated paleface. Now and then he would let out a warwhoop that made Old Hank the Trapper, shiver. That boy had Bill terrorized from the start.

"Red Chief," says I to the kid, "would you like to go home?"

"Aw, what for?" says he. "I don't have any fun at home. I hate to go to school. I like to camp out. You won't take me back home again, Snake-eye, will you?"

"Not right away," says I. "We'll stay here in the cave a while."

"All right!" says he. "That'll be fine. I never had such fun in all my life."

We went to bed about eleven o'clock. We spread down some wide blankets and quilts and put Red Chief between us. We weren't afraid he'd run away. He kept us awake for three hours, jumping up and reaching for his rifle and screeching: "Hist! pard," in mine and Bill's ears, as the fancied crackle of a twig or the rustle of a leaf revealed to his young imagination the stealthy approach of the outlaw band. At last, I fell into a troubled sleep, and dreamed that I had been kidnapped and chained to a tree by a ferocious pirate with red hair.

Just at daybreak, I was awakened by a series of awful screams from Bill. They weren't yells, or howls, or shouts, or whoops, or yawps, such as you'd expect from a manly set of vocal organs--they were simply indecent, terrifying, humiliating screams, such as women emit when they see ghosts or caterpillars. It's an awful thing to hear a strong, desperate, fat man scream incontinently in a cave at daybreak.

I jumped up to see what the matter was. Red Chief was sitting on Bill's chest, with one hand twined in Bill's hair. In the other he had the sharp case-knife we used for slicing bacon; and he was industriously and realistically trying to take Bill's scalp, according to the sentence that had been pronounced upon him the evening before.

I got the knife away from the kid and made him lie down again. But, from that moment,

Bill's spirit was broken. He laid down on his side of the bed, but he never closed an eye again in sleep as long as that boy was with us. I dozed off for a while, but along toward sun-up I remembered that Red Chief had said I was to be burned at the stake at the rising of the sun. I wasn't nervous or afraid; but I sat up and lit my pipe and leaned against a rock.

"What you getting up so soon for, Sam?" asked Bill.

"Me?" says I. "Oh, I got a kind of a pain in my shoulder. I thought sitting up would rest it."

"You're a liar!" says Bill. "You're afraid. You was to be burned at sunrise, and you was afraid he'd do it. And he would, too, if he could find a match. Ain't it awful, Sam? Do you think anybody will pay out money to get a little imp like that back home?"

"Sure," said I. "A rowdy kid like that is just the kind that parents dote on. Now, you and the Chief get up and cook breakfast, while I go up on the top of this mountain and reconnoitre."

I went up on the peak of the little mountain and ran my eye over the contiguous vicinity. Over toward Summit I expected to see the sturdy yeomanry of the village armed with scythes and pitchforks beating the countryside for the dastardly kidnappers. But what I saw was a peaceful landscape dotted with one man ploughing with a dun mule. Nobody was dragging the creek; no couriers dashed hither and yon, bringing tidings of no news to the distracted parents. There was a sylvan attitude of somnolent sleepiness pervading that section of the external outward surface of Alabama that lay exposed to my view.

"Perhaps," says I to myself, "it has not yet been discovered that the wolves have borne away the tender lambkin from the fold. Heaven help the wolves!" says I, and I went down the mountain to breakfast.

When I got to the cave I found Bill backed up against the side of it, breathing hard, and the boy threatening to smash him with a rock half as big as a cocoanut.

"He put a red-hot boiled potato down my back," explained Bill, "and then mashed it with his foot; and I boxed his ears. Have you got a gun about you, Sam?"

I took the rock away from the boy and kind of patched up the argument. "I'll fix you," says the kid to Bill. "No man ever yet struck the Red Chief but what he got paid for it. You better beware!"

After breakfast the kid takes a piece of leather with strings wrapped around it out of his pocket and goes outside the cave unwinding it.

"What's he up to now?" says Bill, anxiously. "You don't think he'll run away, do you, Sam?"

"No fear of it," says I. "He don't seem to be much of a home body. But we've got to fix up some plan about the ransom. There don't seem to be much excitement around Summit on account of his disappearance; but maybe they haven't realized yet that he's gone. His folks may think he's spending the night with Aunt Jane or one of the neighbours. Anyhow, he'll be missed to-day. To-night we must get a message to his father demanding the two thousand dollars for his return."

Just then we heard a kind of war-whoop, such as David might have emitted when he knocked out the champion Goliath. It was a sling that Red Chief had pulled out of his pocket, and he was whirling it around his head.

I dodged, and heard a heavy thud and a kind of a sigh from Bill, like a horse gives out when you take his saddle off. A rock the size of an egg had caught Bill just behind his left ear. He loosened himself all over and fell in the fire across the frying pan of hot water for washing the dishes. I dragged him out and poured cold water on his head for half an hour.

By and by, Bill sits up and feels behind his ear and says: "Sam, do you know who my favourite Biblical character is?"

"Take it easy," says I. "You'll come to your senses presently."

"King Herod," says he. "You won't go away and leave me here alone, will you, Sam?"

I went out and caught that boy and shook him until his freckles rattled.

"If you don't behave," says I, "I'll take you straight home. Now, are you going to be good, or not?"

"I was only funning," says he sullenly. "I didn't mean to hurt Old Hank. But what did he hit me for? I'll behave, Snake-eye, if you won't send me home, and if you'll let me play the Black Scout to-day."

"I don't know the game," says I. "That's for you and Mr. Bill to decide. He's your playmate for the day. I'm going away for a while, on business. Now, you come in and make friends with him and say you are sorry for hurting him, or home you go, at once."

I made him and Bill shake hands, and then I took Bill aside and told him I was going to Poplar Cove, a little village three miles from the cave, and find out what I could about how the kidnapping had been regarded in Summit. Also, I thought it best to send a peremptory letter to old man Dorset that day, demanding the ransom and dictating how it should be paid.

"You know, Sam," says Bill, "I've stood by you without batting an eye in earthquakes, fire and flood--in poker games, dynamite outrages, police raids, train robberies and cyclones. I never lost my nerve yet till we kidnapped that two-legged skyrocket of a kid. He's got me going. You won't leave me long with him, will you, Sam?"

"I'll be back some time this afternoon," says I. "You must keep the boy amused and quiet till I return. And now we'll write the letter to old Dorset."

Bill and I got paper and pencil and worked on the letter while Red Chief, with a blanket wrapped around him, strutted up and down, guarding the mouth of the cave. Bill begged me tearfully to make the ransom fifteen hundred dollars instead of two thousand. "I ain't attempting," says he, "to decry the celebrated moral aspect of parental affection, but we're dealing with humans, and it ain't human for anybody to give up two thousand dollars for that forty-pound chunk of freckled wildcat. I'm willing to take a chance at fifteen hundred dollars. You can charge the difference up to me."

So, to relieve Bill, I acceded, and we collaborated a letter that ran this way:

Ebenezer Dorset, Esq.:

We have your boy concealed in a place far from Summit. It is useless for you or the most skilful detectives to attempt to find him. Absolutely, the only terms on which you can have him restored to you are these: We demand fifteen hundred dollars in large bills for his return; the money to be left at midnight to-night at the same spot and in the same box as your reply--as hereinafter described. If you agree to these terms, send your answer in writing by a solitary messenger to-night at half-past eight o'clock. After crossing Owl Creek, on the road to Poplar Cove, there are three large trees about a hundred yards apart, close to the fence of the wheat field on the right-hand side. At the bottom of the fence-post, opposite the third tree, will be found a small pasteboard box.

The messenger will place the answer in this box and return immediately to Summit.

If you attempt any treachery or fail to comply with our demand as stated, you will never see your boy again.

If you pay the money as demanded, he will be returned to you safe and well within three hours. These terms are final, and if you do not accede to them no further communication will be attempted.

TWO DESPERATE MEN.

I addressed this letter to Dorset, and put it in my pocket. As I was about to start, the kid comes up to me and says:

"Aw, Snake-eye, you said I could play the Black Scout while you was gone."

"Play it, of course," says I. "Mr. Bill will play with you. What kind of a game is it?"

"I'm the Black Scout," says Red Chief, "and I have to ride to the stockade to warn the settlers that the Indians are coming. I'm tired of playing Indian myself. I want to be the Black Scout."

"All right," says I. "It sounds harmless to me. I guess Mr. Bill will help you foil the pesky savages."

"What am I to do?" asks Bill, looking at the kid suspiciously.

"You are the hoss," says Black Scout. "Get down on your hands and knees. How can I ride to the stockade without a hoss?"

"You'd better keep him interested," said I, "till we get the scheme going. Loosen up."

Bill gets down on his all fours, and a look comes in his eye like a rabbit's when you catch it in a trap.

"How far is it to the stockade, kid?" he asks, in a husky manner of voice.

"Ninety miles," says the Black Scout. "And you have to hump yourself to get there on time. Whoa, now!"

The Black Scout jumps on Bill's back and digs his heels in his side.

"For Heaven's sake," says Bill, "hurry back, Sam, as soon as you can. I wish we hadn't made the ransom more than a thousand. Say, you quit kicking me or I'll get up and warm you good."

I walked over to Poplar Cove and sat around the post office and store, talking with the chaw bacons that came in to trade. One whisker and says that he hears Summit is all upset on account of Elder Ebenezer Dorset's boy having been lost or stolen. That was all I wanted to know. I bought some smoking tobacco, referred casually to the price of black-eyed peas, posted my letter surreptitiously and came away. The postmaster said the mail-carrier would come by in an hour to take the mail on to Summit.

When I got back to the cave Bill and the boy were not to be found. I explored the vicinity of the cave, and risked a yodel or two, but there was no response.

So I lighted my pipe and sat down on a mossy bank to await developments.

In about half an hour I heard the bushes rustle, and Bill wobbled out into the little glade in front of the cave. Behind him was the kid, stepping softly like a scout, with a broad grin on his face. Bill stopped, took off his hat and wiped his face with a red handkerchief. The kid stopped about eight feet behind him.

"Sam," says Bill, "I suppose you'll think I'm a renegade, but I couldn't help it. I'm a grown person with masculine proclivities and habits of self-defense, but there is a time when all systems of egotism and predominance fail. The boy is gone. I have sent him home. All is off. There was martyrs in old times," goes on Bill, "that suffered death rather

than give up the particular graft they enjoyed. None of 'em ever was subjugated to such supernatural tortures as I have been. I tried to be faithful to our articles of depredation; but there came a limit."

"What's the trouble, Bill?" I asks him.

"I was rode," says Bill, "the ninety miles to the stockade, not barring an inch. Then, when the settlers was rescued, I was given oats. Sand ain't a palatable substitute. And then, for an hour I had to try to explain to him why there was nothin' in holes, how a road can run both ways and what makes the grass green. I tell you, Sam, a human can only stand so much. I takes him by the neck of his clothes and drags him down the mountain. On the way he kicks my legs black-and-blue from the knees down; and I've got two or three bites on my thumb and hand cauterized.

"But he's gone"--continues Bill--"gone home. I showed him the road to Summit and kicked him about eight feet nearer there at one kick. I'm sorry we lose the ransom; but it was either that or Bill Driscoll to the madhouse."

Bill is puffing and blowing, but there is a look of ineffable peace and growing content on his rose-pink features.

"Bill," says I, "there isn't any heart disease in your family, is there?"

"No," says Bill, "nothing chronic except malaria and accidents. Why?"

"Then you might turn around," says I, "and have a look behind you."

Bill turns and sees the boy, and loses his complexion and sits down plump on the ground and begins to pluck aimlessly at grass and little sticks. For an hour I was afraid for his mind. And then I told him that my scheme was to put the whole job through immediately and that we would get the ransom and be off with it by midnight if old Dorset fell in with our proposition. So Bill braced up enough to give the kid a weak sort of a smile and a promise to play the Russian in a Japanese war with him as soon as he felt a little better.

I had a scheme for collecting that ransom without danger of being caught by counterplots that ought to commend itself to professional kidnapers. The tree under which the answer was to be left--and the money later on--was close to the road fence with big, bare fields on all sides. If a gang of constables should be watching for any one to come for the note they could see him a long way off crossing the fields or in the road. But no, sirree! At half-past eight I was up in that tree as well hidden as a tree toad, waiting for the messenger to arrive.

Exactly on time, a half-grown boy rides up the road on a bicycle, locates the pasteboard box at the foot of the fencepost, slips a folded piece of paper into it and pedals away again back toward Summit.

I waited an hour and then concluded the thing was square. I slid down the tree, got the note, slipped along the fence till I struck the woods, and was back at the cave in another half an hour. I opened the note, got near the lantern and read it to Bill. It was written with a pen in a crabbed hand, and the sum and substance of it was this:

Two Desperate Men.

Gentlemen: I received your letter to-day by post, in regard to the ransom you ask for the return of my son. I think you are a little high in your demands, and I hereby make you a counter-proposition, which I am inclined to believe you will accept. You bring Johnny home and pay me two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and I agree to take him off your hands. You had better come at night, for the neighbours believe he is lost, and I couldn't be responsible for what they would do to anybody they saw bringing him back.

Very respectfully, EBENEZER DORSET.

"Great pirates of Penzance!" says I; "of all the impudent--"

But I glanced at Bill, and hesitated. He had the most appealing look in his eyes I ever saw on the face of a dumb or a talking brute.

"Sam," says he, "what's two hundred and fifty dollars, after all? We've got the money. One more night of this kid will send me to a bed in Bedlam. Besides being a thorough gentleman, I think Mr. Dorset is a spendthrift for making us such a liberal offer. You ain't going to let the chance go, are you?"

"Tell you the truth, Bill," says I, "this little he ewe lamb has somewhat got on my nerves too. We'll take him home, pay the ransom and make our get-away."

We took him home that night. We got him to go by telling him that his father had bought a silver-mounted rifle and a pair of moccasins for him, and we were going to hunt bears the next day.

It was just twelve o'clock when we knocked at Ebenezer's front door. Just at the moment when I should have been abstracting the fifteen hundred dollars from the box under the tree, according to the original proposition, Bill was counting out two hundred and fifty dollars into Dorset's hand.

When the kid found out we were going to leave him at home he started up a howl like a calliope and fastened himself as tight as a leech to Bill's leg. His father peeled him away gradually, like a porous plaster.

"How long can you hold him?" asks Bill.

"I'm not as strong as I used to be," says old Dorset, "but I think I can promise you ten minutes."

"Enough," says Bill. "In ten minutes I shall cross the Central, Southern and Middle Western States, and be legging it trippingly for the Canadian border."

And, as dark as it was, and as fat as Bill was, and as good a runner as I am, he was a good mile and a half out of summit before I could catch up with him.

The end.



STUDY GUIDE "The Ransom of Red Chief"

- 1) What is the intended meaning of this passage from the story: "It contained inhabitants of as undeleterious and self-satisfied a class of peasantry as ever clustered around a Maypole."?
2. Why did Sam and Bill decide to kidnap someone in the first place?
3. What makes the men decide to pick the son of Ebenezer Dorsett?
4. What is the boy's first reaction when he sees the men?
5. How does the boy act once he gets to the cave?
6. What are everyone's nicknames?
7. What are some of the things "Red Chief" does to terrorize Bill?
8. What happens after Bill boxes the boy's ears?
9. The two men write a note to Mr. Dorsett, list the two main conditions for returning Dorset's son.
10. What does Bill do when he finally loses his patience with the boy?
11. Describe what was in Dorsett's note to the kidnapers.
12. What is the most likely reason Dorsett says in his note: "I couldn't be responsible for what [the neighbors] would do to anybody they saw bringing him back"?
13. What happens at the very end of the story?
14. What does **ironic** mean?
15. In your **READER'S JOURNAL**: List at least three ironic situations from the story and explain what type of irony they are.



The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry

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 look-out 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 the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. To-morrow 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.

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There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 Bat. 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 some day 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 knee 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 the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she cluttered 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 Eight 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 yer 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 practised 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.

< 3 >

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 meretricious 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 78 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 a little to 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 stair away 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 to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was with out gloves.

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Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon 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. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a 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 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 a while at first."

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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 worshipped 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 {lash 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 his 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 at 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.



Answer the following Text Based Questions.

- 1) Cite textual evidence where the author uses a metaphor in the story. Determine the impact the metaphor has on the story.
- 2) Cite textual evidence where the author uses a simile in the story. Determine the impact the simile has on the story.
- 3) Cite textual evidence where the author uses allusion in the story. Determine the impact the allusion has on the story.
- 4) Determine and cite where situational irony and dramatic irony are used in the story.
- 5) Determine a theme or central idea of "The Gift of the Magi" and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- 6) Analyze how what has happened to Jim's salary propel the action of the story.
- 7) Analyze how Della deciding to cut her hair to buy Jim a Christmas gift reveals aspects of her character.

- 8) Analyze how Jim deciding to sell his grandfather's watch to buy Della a Christmas gift reveals aspects of his character.
- 9) Determine the irony in the two possessions Jim and Della take a lot of pride in.
- 10) Determine the impact of O. Henry making an allusion to the magi in the story.

REVIEW



“The Gift of the Magi” WORKSHEET

- Mendicancy –
- Prosperity –
- Meretricious –
- Quail –
- Laboriously –
- Nimble –
- Magi –
- Necessitating –
- Ravages –
- Cascades –
- Faltered –
- Unassuming –
- Tremendous –
- Possessions –
- Ornamentation –

1. What did Della want to buy for her husband for Christmas? How much money did she have to start with?
2. What did Della sell to get the \$20.00 she needed to buy her husband’s present?
3. What did Jim buy for his wife for Christmas?
4. How much money did Jim make a week at his job?
5. Where does Della work? Give the reference that’s made in the story.
6. What do we learn about the relationship between Della and Jim? Do they love each other still after the events of the story?
7. What are magi?
8. How does the magi and their significance relate to the meaning of the story?
9. What experience in giving can you relate to that makes this short story so famous?
10. What is Christmas to you after reading the *Gift of the Magi*



“Federigo’s Falcon” by Giovanni Boccaccio



There was a young Florentine called Federigo, the son of Messer Filippo Alberighi, who for his deeds of chivalry and courtly manners was more highly spoken of than any other squire in Tuscany. In the manner of most young men of gentle breeding, Federigo lost his heart to a noble lady, whose name was Monna Giovanna, and who in her time was considered one of the loveliest and most adorable women to be found in Florence. And with the object of winning her love, he rode at the ring, tilted, gave sumptuous banquets, and distributed a large number of gifts, spending money without any restraint whatsoever. But since she was no less chaste than she was fair, the lady took no notice, either of the things that were done in her honor, or of the person who did them.

In this way, spending far more than he could afford and deriving no profit in return, Federigo lost his entire fortune (as can easily happen) and reduced himself to poverty, being left with nothing other than a tiny little farm, which produced an income just sufficient for him to live very frugally, and one falcon of the finest breed in the whole world. Since he was as deeply in love as ever, and felt unable to go on living the sort of life in Florence to which he aspired, he moved out to Campi, where his little farm happened to be situated. Having settled in the country, he went hunting as often as possible with his falcon, and, without seeking assistance from anyone, he patiently resigned himself to a life of poverty.

Now one day, while Federigo was living in these straitened circumstances, the husband of Monna Giovanna happened to fall ill, and, realizing that he was about to die, he drew up his will. He was a very rich man, and in his will he left everything to his son, who was just growing up, further stipulating that, if his son should die without legitimate issue, his estate should go to Monna Giovanna, to whom he had always been deeply devoted.

Shortly afterward he died, leaving Monna Giovanna a widow, and every summer, in accordance with Florentine custom; she went away with her son to a country estate of theirs, which was very near Federigo's farm. Consequently, this lad of hers happened to become friendly with Federigo, acquiring a passion for birds and dogs; and, having often seen Federigo's falcon in flight, he became fascinated by it and longed to own it, but since he could see that Federigo was deeply attached to the bird, he never ventured to ask him for it.

And there the matter rested, when, to the consternation of his mother, the boy happened to be taken ill. Being her only child, he was the apple of his mother's eye, and she sat beside his bed the whole day long, never ceasing to comfort him. Every so often she asked him whether there was anything he wanted, imploring him to tell her what it was, because if it were possible to acquire it, she would move heaven and earth to obtain it for him.

After hearing this offer repeated for the umpteenth time, the boy said:

"Mother, if you could arrange for me to have Federigo's falcon, I believe I should soon get better."

On hearing this request, the lady was somewhat taken aback, and began to consider what she could do about it. Knowing that Federigo had been in love with her for a long time, and that she had never deigned to cast so much as a single glance in his direction she said to herself: "How can I possibly go to him, or even send anyone, to ask him for this falcon, which to judge from all I have heard is the finest that ever flew, as well as being the only thing that keeps him alive? And how can I be so heartless as to deprive so noble a man of his one remaining pleasure?"

Her mind filled with reflections of this sort, she remained silent, not knowing what answer to make to her son's request, and even though she was quite certain that the falcon was hers for the asking.

At length, however, her maternal instincts gained the upper hand, and she resolved, come what may, to satisfy the child by going in person to Federigo to collect the bird, and bring it back to him. And so she replied:

"Bear up, my son, and see whether you can start feeling any better. I give you my word that I shall go and fetch it for you first thing tomorrow morning."

Next morning, taking another lady with her for company, his mother left the house as though intending to go for a walk, made her way to Federigo's little cottage, and asked to see him. For several days, the weather had been unsuitable for hawking, so Federigo was attending to one or two little jobs in his garden, and when he heard, to his utter astonishment, that Monna Giovanna was at the front door and wished to speak to him, he happily rushed there to greet her.

When she saw him coming, she advanced with womanly grace to meet him. Federigo received her with a deep bow, whereupon she said:

"Greetings, Federigo!" Then she continued: "I have come to make amends for the harm you have suffered on my account, by loving me more than you ought to have done. As a token of my esteem, I should like to take breakfast with you this morning, together with my companion here, but you must not put yourself to any trouble."

"My lady," replied Federigo in all humility, "I cannot recall ever having suffered any harm on your account. On the contrary I have gained so much that if ever attained any kind of excellence, it was entirely because of your own great worth and the love I bore you. Moreover, I can assure you that this visit which you have been generous enough to pay me is worth more to me than all the money I ever possessed, though I fear that my hospitality will not amount to very much."

So saying, he led her unassumingly into the house and thence into his garden, where, since there was no one else he could call upon to chaperon her, he said:

"My lady, as there is nobody else available, this good woman, who is the wife of the farmer here will keep you company whilst I go and see about setting the table."

Though his poverty was acute, the extent to which he had squandered his wealth had not yet been fully borne home to Federigo; but on this particular morning, finding that he had nothing to set before the lady whose love he had entertained so lavishly in the past, his eyes were well and truly opened to the fact. Distressed beyond all measure, he silently cursed his bad luck and rushed all over the house like one possessed, but could find no trace of either money or valuables. By now the morning was well advanced, he was still determined to entertain the gentlewoman to some sort of meal, and, not wishing to beg assistance from his own farmer (or from anyone else, for that matter), his gaze alighted on his precious falcon, which was sitting on its perch in the little room where it was kept. And having discovered, on picking it up, that it was nice and plump, he decided that since he had nowhere else to turn, it would make a worthy dish for such a lady as this. So without thinking twice about it he wrung the bird's neck and promptly handed it over to his housekeeper to be plucked, dressed, and roasted carefully on a spit. Then he covered the table with spotless linen, of which he still had a certain amount in his possession, and returned in high spirits to the garden, where he announced to his lady that the meal, such as had been able to prepare, was now ready.

The lady and her companion rose from where they were sitting and made their way to the table. And together with Federigo, who waited on them with the utmost deference, they made a meal of the prize falcon without knowing what they were eating.

On leaving the table they engaged their host in pleasant conversation for a while, and when the lady thought it time to broach the subject she had gone there to discuss, she turned to Federigo and addressed him affably as follows:

"I do not doubt for a moment, Federigo, that you will be astonished at my impertinence when you discover my principal reason for coming here, especially when you recall your former mode of living and my virtue, which you possibly mistook for harshness and cruelty. But if you had ever had any children to make you appreciate the power of parental love, I should think it certain that you would to some extent forgive me.

"However, the fact that you have no children of your own does not exempt me, a mother, from the laws common to all other mothers. And being bound to obey those laws, I am forced, contrary to my own wishes and to all the rules of decorum and propriety, to ask you for something to which I know you are very deeply attached--which is only natural, seeing that it is the only consolation, the only pleasure, the only recreation remaining to you in your present extremity of fortune. The gift I am seeking is your falcon, to which my son has taken so powerful a liking, that if I fail to take it to him I fear that he will succumb to the illness from which he is suffering, and consequently I shall lose him. In imploring you to give me this falcon, I appeal, not to your love, for you are under no obligation to me on that account, but rather to your noble heart, whereby you have proved yourself superior to all others in the practice of courtesy. Do me this favor, then, so that I

may claim that through your generosity I have saved my son's life, thus placing him forever in your debt."

When he heard what it was that she wanted, and realized that he could not oblige her because he had given her the falcon to eat, Federigo burst into tears in her presence before being able to utter a single word in reply. At first the lady thought his tears stemmed more from his grief at having to part with his fine falcon than from any other motive, and was on the point of telling him that she would prefer not to have it. But on second thoughts she said nothing, and waited for Federigo to stop crying and give her his answer, which eventually he did.

"My lady," he said, "ever since God decreed that you should become the object of my love, I have repeatedly had cause to complain of Fortune's hostility towards me. But all her previous blows were slight by comparison with the one she has dealt me now. Nor shall I ever be able to forgive her, when I reflect that you have come to my poor dwelling, which you never deigned to visit when it was rich, and that you desire from me a trifling favor which she has made it impossible for me to concede. The reason is simple, and I shall explain it in few words.

"When you did me the kindness of telling me that you wished to breakfast with me, I considered it right and proper, having regard to your excellence and merit, to do everything within my power to prepare a more sumptuous dish than those I would offer to my ordinary guests. My thoughts therefore turned to the falcon you have asked me for and knowing its quality, I reputed it a worthy dish to set before you. So, I had it roasted and served to you on the trencher this morning, and I could not have wished for a better way of disposing of it. But now that I discover that you wanted it in a different form, I am so distressed by my inability to grant your request that I shall never forgive myself for as long as I live."

In confirmation of his words, Federigo caused the feathers, talons, and beak to be cast on the table before her. On seeing and hearing all this, the lady reproached him at first for killing so fine a falcon, and serving it up for a woman to eat; but then she became lost in admiration for his magnanimity of spirit, which no amount of poverty had managed to diminish, nor ever would. But now that her hopes of obtaining the falcon had vanished she began to feel seriously concerned for the health of her son, and after thanking Federigo for his hospitality and good intentions, she took her leave of him, looking all despondent, and returned to the child. And to his mother's indescribable sorrow within the space of a few days, whether through his disappointment in not being able to have the falcon, or because he was in any case suffering from a mortal illness, the child passed from this life.

After a period of bitter mourning and continued weeping, the lady was repeatedly urged by her brothers to remarry, since not only had she been left with a vast fortune but she was still a young woman. And though she would have preferred to remain a widow, they gave her so little peace in the end, recalling Federigo's high merits and his latest act of generosity, namely to have killed such a fine falcon in her honor, she said to her brothers:

"If only it were pleasing you, I should willingly remain as I am; but since you are so eager for me to take a husband, you may be certain that I shall never marry any other man except Federigo Alberighi."

Her brothers made fun of her, saying:

"Silly girl, don't talk such nonsense! How can you marry a man who hasn't a penny with which to bless himself?"

"My brothers," she replied, "I am well aware of that. But I would sooner have a gentleman without riches, than riches without a gentleman."

Seeing that her mind was made up, and knowing Federigo to be a gentleman of great merit even though he was poor, her brothers fell in with her wishes and handed her over to him, along with her immense fortune. Thenceforth, finding himself married to this great lady with whom he was so deeply in love, and very rich into the bargain, Federigo managed his affairs more prudently, and lived with her in happiness to the end of his days.

Text based Questions:

- 1) Cite textual evidence in the first paragraph which reflects the time setting of the Middle Ages.
- 2) Determine the meaning of the word virtuous as it is applied to Monna Giovanna. As the story progresses analyze if it is a fitting adjective for her or is there a better suited one.
- 3) Cite textual evidence that shows Monna Giovanna's view of Federigo's love for her.
- 4) Analyze the difference between saying that she "took no notice" of his love and saying that she did notice it on the meaning of this line in the exposition. Why is this distinction important?
- 5) Analyze the request Monna Giovanna's son makes and how it propels the actions of the plot.
- 6) Analyze how social and moral conflicts arise when Monna Giovanna's son asks her to obtain Federigo's falcon.
- 7) Analyze how her resolution of these problems reveals aspects of her character.
- 8) Analyze how paragraph 14 foreshadows the rest of the plot.
- 9) How is Federigo's decision to kill his falcon similar to Monna's decision to ask him for it?
- 10) Cite textual evidence which shows that this is a story about loss and restoration, for both Monna and Federigo?
- 11) Explain what the lines, "Silly girl, don't talk such nonsense! How can you marry a man who hasn't a penny with which to bless himself?"
"My brothers," she replied, "I am well aware of that. But I would sooner have a gentleman without riches, than riches without a gentleman."
Reveal about her brothers' beliefs on marriage and the status of women at this time. How does Monna's response reveal aspects of her virtuous character?

- 12) Write a statement about the theme which relates to the word sacrifice. Analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- 13) Compare and contrast the ideals of love expressed in this story to current notions of romantic love.

Embedded Task:

In a well-developed 4 paragraph essay,

Determine the theme of “The Falcon” and analyze **the irony** as it develops over the course of the story including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.

- Discuss how each character does or does not change (consider types of characters i.e., round, flat, dynamic or static).
- Refer to the text to support your evaluation of each character and explain why the character developed as he/she did based on **the irony** used in the story.
- Use appropriate paragraphing , transitions, textual evidence to support your analysis
- Follow the conventions of standard English including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.



Finding Joy in Sacrifice

by [Alan Smith](#) on July 30, 2004

Category: [Timely Truths](#)

I heard a story once about two wealthy Christians, a lawyer and a merchant, who traveled with a group that was going around the world. As they were visiting in Korea, they saw by the side of the road, a field in which a boy was pulling a crude plow and an old man held the plow handles and guided it. The lawyer was amused and took a snapshot of the scene.

He turned to the missionary, who served as their interpreter and guide, and he said, "That's a curious picture. I suppose they are very poor."

The guide replied, "Yes, that is the family of Chi Noue. When the place of worship was being built, they were eager to give something to it, but they had no money, so they sold their only ox and gave the money to the church. This spring, they are pulling the plow themselves."

The men were silent for several moments. Then the businessman replied, "That must have been a real sacrifice."

He does so with joy.

The guide said, "They do not call it that. They thought it was fortunate that they had an ox to sell."

I am reminded of a parable from the bible: *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."*

Notice carefully the words, "for joy." This man doesn't just sell everything he has; he does so with joy. He doesn't regret it. He doesn't complain about the sacrifice he has to make. In fact, he probably doesn't even consider it to be a sacrifice. He gives a lot for the field, but he gets so much more in return.

When I perform a wedding ceremony, I often include these words: "Whatever sacrifice you will be required to make to preserve this common life, always make it generously. Sacrifice is usually difficult. Only love can make it easy; and perfect love can make it a joy."

Answer the following TEXT BASED questions:

- 1) Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what "Finding Joy in Sacrifice" says explicitly about sacrifice as well as your inferences drawn from the text.
- 2) Determine a central idea of "Finding Joy in Sacrifice" and analyze its development over the course of the article including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- 3) Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
- 4) Analyze the statement the business man makes in paragraph 4 in the article, including the role the statement makes in developing and refining a key concept Mr. Smith was trying to get across.
- 5) Determine an Alan Smith's purpose in "Finding Joy in Sacrifice".
- 6) Analyze and cite the similarities found in "Finding Joy in Sacrifice" by Alan Smith and "Federigo's Falcon" by Giovanni Boccaccio?

Symbolism

“God Sees the truth, but waits” by Leo Tolstoy

In the town of Vladimir lived a young merchant named Ivan Dmitrich Aksionov. He had two shops and a house of his own.

Aksionov was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing. When quite a young man he had been given to drink, and was riotous when he had had too much; but after he married he gave up drinking, except now and then.

One summer Aksionov was going to the Nizhny Fair, and as he bade good-bye to his family, his wife said to him, "Ivan Dmitrich, do not start to-day; I have had a bad dream about you."

Aksionov laughed, and said, "You are afraid that when I get to the fair I shall go on a spree."

His wife replied: "I do not know what I am afraid of; all I know is that I had a bad dream. I dreamt you returned from the town, and when you took off your cap I saw that your hair was quite grey."

Aksionov laughed. "That's a lucky sign," said he. "See if I don't sell out all my goods, and bring you some presents from the fair."

So he said good-bye to his family, and drove away.

When he had traveled half-way, he met a merchant whom he knew, and they put up at the same inn for the night. They had some tea together, and then went to bed in adjoining rooms.

It was not Aksionov's habit to sleep late, and, wishing to travel while it was still cool, he aroused his driver before dawn, and told him to put in the horses.

Then he made his way across to the landlord of the inn (who lived in a cottage at the back), paid his bill, and continued his journey.

When he had gone about twenty-five miles, he stopped for the horses to be fed. Aksionov rested awhile in the passage of the inn, then he stepped out into the porch, and, ordering a samovar to be heated, got out his guitar and began to play.

Suddenly a troika drove up with tinkling bells and an official alighted, followed by two soldiers. He came to Aksionov and began to question him, asking him who he was and whence he came. Aksionov answered him fully, and said, "Won't you have some tea with me?" But the official went on cross-questioning him and asking him. "Where did you spend last night? Were you alone, or with a fellow-merchant? Did you see the other merchant this morning? Why did you leave the inn before dawn?"

Aksionov wondered why he was asked all these questions, but he described all that had happened, and then added, "Why do you cross-question me as if I were a thief or a robber? I am traveling on business of my own, and there is no need to question me."

Then the official, calling the soldiers, said, "I am the police-officer of this district, and I question you because the merchant with whom you spent last night has been found with his throat cut. We must search your things."

They entered the house. The soldiers and the police-officer unstrapped Aksionov's luggage and searched it. Suddenly the officer drew a knife out of a bag, crying, "Whose knife is this?"

Aksionov looked, and seeing a blood-stained knife taken from his bag, he was frightened. "How is it there is blood on this knife?"

Aksionov tried to answer, but could hardly utter a word, and only stammered: "I--don't know--not mine." Then the police-officer said: "This morning the merchant was found in bed with his throat cut. You are the only person who could have done it. The house was locked from inside, and no one else was there. Here is this blood-stained knife in your bag and your face and manner betray you! Tell me how you killed him, and how much money you stole?"

Aksionov swore he had not done it; that he had not seen the merchant after they had had tea together; that he had no money except eight thousand rubles of his own, and that the knife was not his. But his voice was broken, his face pale, and he trembled with fear as though he went guilty.

The police-officer ordered the soldiers to bind Aksionov and to put him in the cart. As they tied his feet together and flung him into the cart, Aksionov crossed himself and wept. His money and goods were taken from him, and he was sent to the nearest town and imprisoned there. Enquiries as to his character were made in Vladimir. The merchants and other inhabitants of that town said that in former days he used to drink and waste his time, but that he was a good man. Then the trial came on: he was charged with murdering a merchant from Ryazan, and robbing him of twenty thousand rubles.

His wife was in despair, and did not know what to believe. Her children were all quite small; one was a baby at her breast. Taking them all with her, she went to the town where her husband was in jail. At first she was not allowed to see him; but after much begging, she obtained permission from the officials, and was taken to him. When she saw her husband in prison-dress and in chains, shut up with thieves and criminals, she fell down, and did not come to her senses for a long time. Then she drew her children to her, and sat down near him. She told him of things at home, and asked about what had happened to him. He told her all, and she asked, "What can we do now?"

"We must petition the Czar not to let an innocent man perish."

His wife told him that she had sent a petition to the Czar, but it had not been accepted. Aksionov did not reply, but only looked downcast.

Then his wife said, "It was not for nothing I dreamt your hair had turned grey. You remember? You should not have started that day." And passing her fingers through his hair, she said: "Vanya dearest, tell your wife the truth; was it not you who did it?"

"So you, too, suspect me!" said Aksionov, and, hiding his face in his hands, he began to weep. Then a soldier came to say that the wife and children must go away; and Aksionov said good-bye to his family for the last time.

When they were gone, Aksionov recalled what had been said, and when he remembered that his wife also had suspected him, he said to himself, "It seems that only God can know the truth; it is to Him alone we must appeal, and from Him alone expect mercy."

And Aksionov wrote no more petitions; gave up all hope, and only prayed to God.

Aksionov was condemned to be flogged and sent to the mines. So he was flogged with a knot, and when the wounds made by the knot were healed, he was driven to Siberia with other convicts.

For twenty-six years Aksionov lived as a convict in Siberia. His hair turned white as snow, and his beard grew long, thin, and grey. All his mirth went; he stooped; he walked slowly, spoke little, and never laughed, but he often prayed.

In prison Aksionov learnt to make boots, and earned a little money, with which he bought *The Lives of the Saints*. He read this book when there was light enough in the prison; and on Sundays in the prison-church he read the lessons and sang in the choir; for his voice was still good.

The prison authorities liked Aksionov for his meekness, and his fellow-prisoners respected him: they called him "Grandfather," and "The Saint." When they wanted to petition the prison authorities about anything they always made Aksionov their spokesman, and when there were quarrels among the prisoners they came to him to put things right, and to judge the matter.

No news reached Aksionov from his home, and he did not even know if his wife and children were still alive.

One day a fresh gang of convicts came to the prison. In the evening the old prisoners collected round the new ones and asked them what towns or villages they came from, and what they were sentenced for. Among the rest Aksionov sat down near the newcomers, and listened with downcast air to what was said.

One of the new convicts, a tall, strong man of sixty, with a closely-cropped grey beard, was telling the others what he had been arrested for.

"Well, friends," he said, "I only took a horse that was tied to a sledge, and I was arrested and accused of stealing. I said I had only taken it to get home quicker, and had then let it go; besides, the driver was a personal friend of mine. So I said, 'It's all right.' 'No,' said they, 'you stole it.' But how or where I stole it they could not say. I once really did something wrong, and ought by rights to have come here long ago, but that time I was not found out. Now I have been sent here for nothing at all... Eh, but it's lies I'm telling you; I've been to Siberia before, but I did not stay long."

"Where are you from?" asked some one.

"From Vladimir. My family is of that town. My name is Makar, and they also call me Semyonich."

Aksionov raised his head and said: "Tell me, Semyonich, do you know anything of the merchants Aksionov of Vladimir? Are they still alive?"

"Know them? Of course I do. The Aksionovs are rich, though their father is in Siberia: a sinner like ourselves, it seems! As for you, Gran'dad, how did you come here?"

Aksionov did not like to speak of his misfortune. He only sighed, and said, "For my sins I have been in prison these twenty-six years."

"What sins?" asked Makar Semyonich.

But Aksionov only said, "Well, well--I must have deserved it!" He would have said no more, but his companions told the newcomers how Aksionov came to be in Siberia; how some one had killed a merchant, and had put the knife among Aksionov's things, and Aksionov had been unjustly condemned.

When Makar Semyonich heard this, he looked at Aksionov, slapped his *own* knee, and exclaimed, "Well, this is wonderful! Really wonderful! But how old you've grown, Gran'dad!"

The others asked him why he was so surprised, and where he had seen Aksionov before; but Makar Semyonich did not reply. He only said: "It's wonderful that we should meet here, lads!"

These words made Aksionov wonder whether this man knew who had killed the merchant; so he said, "Perhaps, Semyonich, you have heard of that affair, or maybe you've seen me before?"

"How could I help hearing? The world's full of rumors. But it's a long time ago, and I've forgotten what I heard."

"Perhaps you heard who killed the merchant?" asked Aksionov.

Makar Semyonich laughed, and replied: "It must have been him in whose bag the knife was found! If someone else hid the knife there, 'He's not a thief till he's caught,' as the saying is. How could anyone put a knife into your bag while it was under your head? It would surely have woke you up."

When Aksionov heard these words, he felt sure this was the man who had killed the merchant. He rose and went away. All that night Aksionov lay awake. He felt terribly unhappy, and all sorts of images rose in his mind. There was the image of his wife as she was when he parted from her to go to the fair. He saw her as if she were present; her face and her eyes rose before him; he heard her speak and laugh. Then he saw his children, quite little, as they were at that time: one with a little cloak on, another at his mother's breast. And then he remembered himself as he used to be—young and merry. He remembered how he sat playing the guitar in the porch of the inn where he was arrested, and how free from care he had been. He saw, in his mind, the place where he was flogged, the executioner, and the people standing around; the chains, the convicts, all the twenty-six years of his prison life, and his premature old age. The thought of it all made him so wretched that he was ready to kill himself.

"And it's all that villain's doing!" thought Aksionov. And his anger was so great against Makar Semyonich that he longed for vengeance, even if he himself should perish for it. He kept repeating prayers all night, but could get no peace. During the day he did not go near Makar Semyonich, nor even look at him.

A fortnight passed in this way. Aksionov could not sleep at night, and was so miserable that he did not know what to do.

One night as he was walking about the prison he noticed some earth that came rolling out from under one of the shelves on which the prisoners slept. He stopped to see what it was. Suddenly Makar Semyonich crept out from under the shelf, and looked up at Aksionov with frightened face. Aksionov tried to pass without looking at him, but Makar seized his hand and told him that he had dug a hole under the wall, getting rid of the earth by putting it into his high-boots, and emptying it out every day on the road when the prisoners were driven to their work.

"Just you keep quiet, old man, and you shall get out too. If you blab, they'll flog the life out of me, but I will kill you first."

Aksionov trembled with anger as he looked at his enemy. He drew his hand away, saying, "I have no wish to escape, and you have no need to kill me; you killed me long ago! As to telling of you—I may do so or not, as God shall direct."

Next day, when the convicts were led out to work, the convoy soldiers noticed that one or other of the prisoners emptied some earth out of his boots. The prison was searched and the tunnel found. The Governor came and questioned all the prisoners to find out who

had dug the hole. They all denied any knowledge of it. Those who knew would not betray Makar Semyonich, knowing he would be flogged almost to death. At last the Governor turned to Aksionov whom he knew to be a just man, and said:

"You are a truthful old man; tell me, before God, who dug the hole?"

Makar Semyonich stood as if he were quite unconcerned, looking at the Governor and not so much as glancing at Aksionov. Aksionov's lips and hands trembled, and for a long time he could not utter a word. He thought, "Why should I screen him who ruined my life? Let him pay for what I have suffered. But if I tell, they will probably flog the life out of him, and maybe I suspect him wrongly. And, after all, what good would it be to me?"

"Well, old man," repeated the Governor, "tell me the truth: who has been digging under the wall?"

Aksionov glanced at Makar Semyonich, and said, "I cannot say, your honor. It is not God's will that I should tell! Do what you like with me; I am your hands."

However much the Governor! tried, Aksionov would say no more, and so the matter had to be left.

That night, when Aksionov was lying on his bed and just beginning to doze, someone came quietly and sat down on his bed. He peered through the darkness and recognized Makar.

"What more do you want of me?" asked Aksionov. "Why have you come here?"

Makar Semyonich was silent. So Aksionov sat up and said, "What do you want? Go away, or I will call the guard!"

Makar Semyonich bent close over Aksionov, and whispered, "Ivan Dmitrich, forgive me!"

"What for?" asked Aksionov.

"It was I who killed the merchant and hid the knife among your things. I meant to kill you too, but I heard a noise outside, so I hid the knife in your bag and escaped out of the window."

Aksionov was silent, and did not know what to say. Makar Semyonich slid off the bed-shelf and knelt upon the ground. "Ivan Dmitrich," said he, "forgive me! For the love of God, forgive me! I will confess that it was I who killed the merchant, and you will be released and can go to your home."

"It is easy for you to talk," said Aksionov, "but I have suffered for you these twenty-six years. Where could I go to now?... My wife is dead, and my children have forgotten me. I have nowhere to go..."

Makar Semyonich did not rise, but beat his head on the floor. "Ivan Dmitrich, forgive me!" he cried. "When they flogged me with the knot it was not so hard to bear as it is to see you now ... yet you had pity on me, and did not tell. For Christ's sake forgive me, wretch that I am!" And he began to sob.

When Aksionov heard him sobbing he, too, began to weep. "God will forgive you!" said he. "Maybe I am a hundred times worse than you." And at these words his heart grew light, and the longing for home left him. He no longer had any desire to leave the prison, but only hoped for his last hour to come.

In spite of what Aksionov had said, Makar Semyonich confessed, his guilt. But when the order for his release came, Aksionov was already dead.

“God Sees the Truth but Waits” by Leo Tolstoy Text Based Questions.

- 1) Cite where the following words are used and determine the meaning of them: samovar, Troika, downcast, meekness and fortnight.
- 2) Analyze the type of man the protagonist is based on these lines from the exposition of the plot, “Aksionov was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing. When quite a young man he had been given to drink, and was riotous when he had had too much; but after he married he gave up drinking, except now and then.”
- 3) Analyze how his wife’s dream propels the action of the plot.
- 4) Cite what Askionov says in response to his wife and what does this reveal about his character.
- 5) Provide an objective summary of the rising action of the plot.
- 6) Analyze what the following lines reveal about how Askionov feels at the time of his arrest. “But his voice was broken, his face pale, and he trembled with fear as though he went guilty.”
- 7) Analyze how the title of the story comes about and cite the lines which lead to it.
- 8) Determine the irony in why the new convict (Makar Semyonich) says he belonged here earlier but not now for the crime he is accused of.
- 9) Discuss how Askionov comes to realize Makar is the real murderer.
- 10) Determine the 2 types of conflict Askionov has in following lines after he figures out the truth. Explain your answer.

When Aksionov heard these words, he felt sure this was the man who had killed the merchant. He rose and went away. All that night Aksionov lay awake. He felt terribly unhappy, and all sorts of images rose in his mind. There was the image of his wife as she was when he parted from her to go to the fair. He saw her as if she were present; her face and her eyes rose before him; he heard her speak and laugh. Then he saw his children, quite little, as they: were at that time: one with a little cloak on, another at his mother's breast. And then he remembered himself as he used to be—young and merry. He remembered how he sat playing the guitar in the porch of the inn where he was arrested, and how free from care he had been. He saw, in his mind, the place where he was flogged, the executioner, and the people standing around; the chains, the convicts, all the twenty-six years of his prison life, and his premature old age. The thought of it all made him so wretched that he was ready to kill himself.

And it's all that villain's doing!" thought Aksionov. And his anger was so great against Makar Semyonich that he longed for vengeance, even if he himself should perish for it. He kept repeating prayers all night, but could get no peace. During the day he did not go near Makar Semyonich, nor even look at him.

- 11) Determine the meaning of the following line Askionov says to Semyonich, “I have no wish to escape, and you have no need to kill me; you killed me long ago!”
- 12) Determine what leads to Makar confessing to Askionov.
- 13) Analyze and cite textual evidence which show Askionov’s home and prison are symbols in his life.

- 14) Analyze how “God sees the truth but waits” draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible.
- 15) Determine a theme or central idea of “God sees the truth but waits” and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.

SYMBOL

The Needle

Isaac Bashevis Singer Poland/USA

Some might take extreme measures in choosing the right mate, but according to the teller of this tale, "Everything depends on luck."



My good people, nowadays all marriages are arranged by Mr. Love. Young folks fall in love and begin to date. They go out together until they start to quarrel and hate each other. In my time we relied on father and mother and the matchmaker. I myself did not see my Todie until the wedding ceremony, when he lifted the veil from my face. There he stood with his red beard and disheveled sidelocks. It was after Pentecost,¹ but he wore a fur coat as if it were winter. That I didn't faint dead away was a miracle from heaven. I had fasted through the long summer day. Still, I wish my best friends no worse life than I had with my husband, he should intercede for me in the next world. Perhaps I shouldn't say this, but I can't wait until our souls are together again.

"Yes, love-shmuv. What does a young boy or girl know about what is good for them? Mothers used to know the signs. In Krasnostaw² there lived a woman called Reitze Leah,³ and when she was looking for brides for her sons she made sure to drop in on her prospective in-laws early in the morning. If she found that the bed linens were dirty and the girl in question came to the door with uncombed hair, wearing a sloppy dressing gown, that was it. Before long everybody in the neighboring villages was on to her, and when she

was seen in the marketplace early in the morning, all the young girls made sure their doors were bolted. She had six able sons. None of the matches she made for them was any good, but that is another story. A girl may be clean and neat before the wedding, but afterwards she becomes a slattern. Everything depends on luck.

"But let me tell you a story. In Hrubyeshow there lived a rich man, Reb Lemel Wagmeister.⁴ In those days we didn't use surnames, but Reb Lemel was so rich that he was always called Wagmeister. His wife's name was Esther Rosa, and she came from the other side of the Vistula.⁵ I see

Isaac Bashevis Singer (bə shev'is).

1. *sidelocks* . . . *Pentecost*. Sidelocks, locks of hair worn long on the side of the head, are worn by Jewish male Hasidim (has'i dim), members of a religious movement founded in the 1700s in Poland. Pentecost is a religious festival observed during the spring.

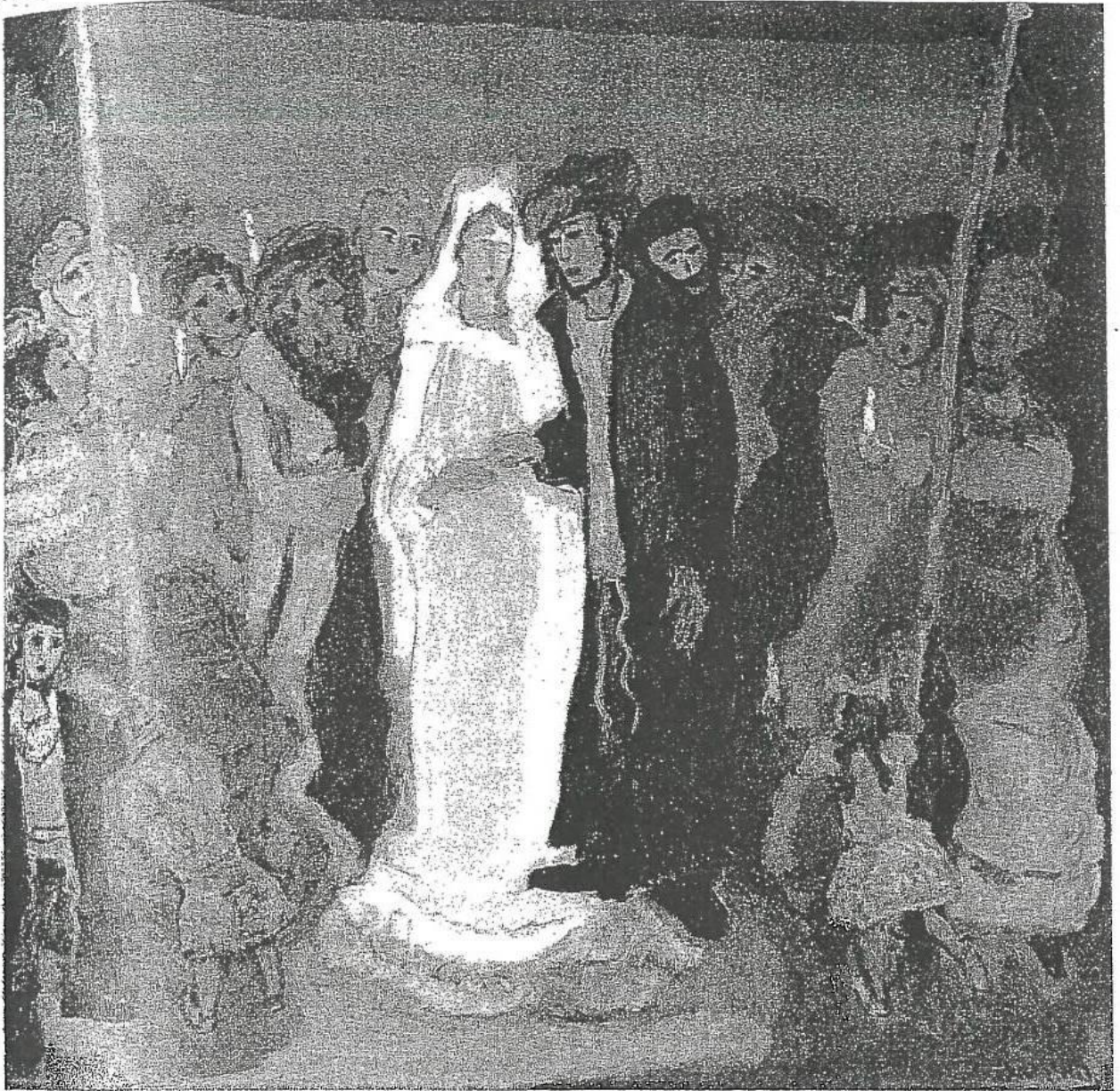
2. *Krasnostaw* (krus'nù stáf), a village in Poland. Other places mentioned are Hrubyeshow (hrü byesh'uf), Zamosc (zä'mosh), Lublin (lü'blën), and Warsaw, all cities in Poland; and Vienna, the capital of Austria.

3. *Reitze Leah* (rī'tzə lä'tə).

4. *Reb Lemel Wagmeister* (reb' lä'məl vāg'mī'stər). *Reb* is a title of respect meaning "rabbi" or "mister."

5. *Vistula* (vis'chə lə), the longest river in Poland.

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Mane Katz (män kats), *Jewish Wedding*, Private Collection.

her with my own eyes: a beautiful woman, with a big-city air. She always wore a black-lace mantilla over her wig. Her face was as white and smooth as a girl's. Her eyes were dark. She spoke Russian, Polish, German, and maybe even French. She played the piano. Even when the streets were

muddy, she wore high-heeled patent-leather shoes. One autumn I saw her hopping from stone to stone like a bird, lifting her skirt with both hands, a real lady. They had an only son, Ben Zion. He was as like his mother as two drops of water. We were distant relatives, not on her side

but on her husband's. Ben Zion—Benze, he was called—had every virtue: he was handsome, clever, learned. He studied the Torah⁶ with the rabbi in the daytime and in the evening a teacher of secular subjects took over. Benze had black hair and a fair complexion, like his mother. When he took a walk in the summertime wearing his elegant gaberdine with a fashionable slit in the back, and his smart kid boots, all the girls mooned over him through the windows. Although it is the custom to give dowries only to daughters, Benze's father set aside for his son a sum of ten thousand rubles.⁷ What difference did it make to him? Benze was his only heir. They tried to match him with the richest girls in the province, but Esther Rosa was very choosy. She had nothing to do, what with three maids, a manservant, and a coachman in addition. So she spent her time looking for brides for Benze. She had already inspected the best-looking girls in half of Poland, but not one had she found without some defect. One wasn't beautiful enough; another, not sufficiently clever. But what she was looking for most was nobility of character. 'Because,' she said, 'if a woman is coarse, it is the husband who suffers. I don't want any woman to vent her spleen on my Benze.' I was already married at the time. I married when I was fifteen. Esther Rosa had no real friend in Hrubyeshow and I became a frequent visitor to her house. She taught me how to knit and embroider and do needlepoint. She had golden hands. When the fancy took her, she could make herself a dress or even a cape. She once made me a dress, just for the fun of it. She had a good head for business as well. Her husband hardly took a step without consulting her. Whenever she told him to buy or sell a property, Reb Lemel Wagmeister immediately sent for Lippe the agent and said: 'My wife wants to buy or sell such-and-such.' She never made a mistake.

"Well, Benze was already nineteen, and not even engaged. In those days nineteen was consid-

ered an old bachelor. Reb Lemel Wagmeister complained that the boy was being disgraced by his mother's choosiness. Benze developed pimples on his forehead.

"One day I came to see Esther Rosa to borrow a ball of yarn. And she said to me: 'Zeldele,⁸ would you like to ride to Zamosc with me?'

" 'What will I do in Zamosc?' I asked.

" 'What difference does it make?' she replied. 'You'll be my guest.'

"Esther Rosa had her own carriage, but this time she went along with someone else who was going to Zamosc. I guessed that the journey had something to do with looking over a bride, but Esther Rosa's nature was such that one didn't ask questions. If she were willing to talk, well and good. If not, you just waited. To make it short, I went to tell my mother about the trip. No need to ask my husband. He sat in the study house all day long. When he came home in the evening, my mother served him his supper. In those days a young Talmud scholar⁹ barely knew he had a wife. I don't believe that he would have recognized me if he met me on the street. I packed a dress and a pair of bloomers—I beg your pardon—and I was ready for the trip. We were traveling in a nobleman's carriage and he did the driving himself. Two horses like lions. The road was dry and smooth as a table. When we arrived in Zamosc, he let us off not at the marketplace but on a side street where the Gentiles live. Esther Rosa thanked him and he tipped his hat and waved his whip at us good-naturedly. It all looked arranged.

6. *Benze* (ben'tsə) . . . studied the *Torah*. The young man was studying the first five books of the Old Testament.

7. *ten thousand rubles*. At the time of the story, this amount in Russian money was worth about five thousand dollars in United States currency.

8. *Zeldele* (zel'də lə).

9. *Talmud scholar*. It was once customary for all young Jewish men to study the Talmud, a collection of sixty-three volumes containing Jewish law in the form of interpretation and expansion of Old Testament teachings.

"As a rule, when Esther Rosa traveled anyplace she dressed as elegantly as a countess. This time she wore a simple cotton dress, and a kerchief over her wig. It was summer and the days were long. We walked to the marketplace and she inquired for Berish Lubliner's dry-goods store. A large store was pointed out to us. Nowadays in a dry-goods store you can only buy yard goods, but in those days they sold everything: thread, wool for knitting, and odds and ends. What didn't they sell? It was a store as big as a forest, filled with merchandise to the ceiling. At a high desk-stand a man sat writing in a ledger, as they do in the big cities. I don't know what he was, the cashier or a bookkeeper. Behind a counter stood a girl with black eyes that burned like fire. We happened to be the only customers in the store, and we approached her. 'What can I do for you?' she asked. 'You seem to be strangers.'

" 'Yes, we are strangers,' said Esther Rosa.

" 'What would you like to see?' the girl asked.

" 'A needle,' said Esther Rosa.

"The moment she heard the word 'needle,' the girl's face changed. Her eyes became angry. 'Two women for one needle,' she said.

"Merchants believe that a needle is unlucky. Nobody ever dared to buy a needle at the beginning of the week, because they knew it meant the whole week would be unlucky. Even in the middle of the week the storekeepers did not like to sell needles. One usually bought a spool of thread, some buttons, and the needle was thrown in without even being mentioned. A needle costs only half a groshen and it was a nuisance to make such small change.

" 'Yes,' said Esther Rosa. 'All I need is a needle.'

"The girl frowned but took out a box of needles. Esther Rosa searched through the box and said: 'Perhaps you have some other needles?'

" 'What's wrong with these?' the girl asked impatiently.

" 'Their eyes are too small,' Esther Rosa said. 'It will be difficult to thread them.'

" 'These are all I have,' the girl said angrily. 'If you can't see well, why don't you buy yourself a pair of eyeglasses.'

"Esther Rosa insisted. 'Are you sure you have no others? I must have a needle with a larger eye.'

"The girl reluctantly pulled out another box and slammed it down on the counter. Esther Rosa examined several needles and said: 'These too have small eyes.'

"The girl snatched away the box and screamed: 'Why don't you go to Lublin and order yourself a special needle with a big eye.'

"The man at the stand began to laugh. 'Perhaps you need a sackcloth needle,' he suggested. 'Some nerve,' the girl chimed in, 'to bother people over a half-groshen sale.'

"Esther Rosa replied: 'I have no use for sackcloth or for girls who are as coarse as sackcloth.' Then she turned to me and said: 'Come, Zeldele, they are not our kind.'

"The girl turned red in the face and said loudly, 'What yokels! Good riddance!'

"We went out. The whole business had left a bad taste in my mouth. A woman passed by and Esther Rosa asked her the way to Reb Zelig Izbitzer's dry-goods store. 'Right across the street,' she said, pointing. We crossed the marketplace and entered a store that was only a third of the size of the first one. Here too there was a young saleswoman. This one wasn't dark; she had red hair. She was not ugly but she had freckles. Her eyes were as green as gooseberries. Esther Rosa asked if she sold needles. And the girl replied, 'Why not? We sell everything.'

" 'I'm looking for a needle with a large eye, because I have trouble threading needles,' Esther Rosa said.

" 'I'll show you every size we have and you can pick the one that suits you best,' the girl replied.

"I had already guessed what was going on and

my heart began to beat like a thief's. The girl brought out about ten boxes of needles. 'Why should you stand?' she said. 'Here is a stool. Please be seated.' She also brought a stool for me. It was perfectly clear to me that Esther Rosa was going to test her too.

" 'Why are the needles all mixed together?' Esther Rosa complained. 'Each size should be in a different box.'

" 'When they come from the factory, they are all sorted out,' the girl said apologetically. 'But they get mixed up.' I saw Esther Rosa was doing her best to make the girl lose her temper. 'I don't see too well,' Esther Rosa said. 'It's dark here.'

" 'Just one moment and I'll move the stools to the door. There is more light there,' the girl replied.

" 'Does it pay you to make all this effort just to sell a half-penny needle?' Esther Rosa asked. And the girl answered: 'First of all, a needle costs only a quarter of a penny, and then as the Talmud says, the same law applies to a penny as it does to a hundred guilders.¹⁰ Besides, today you buy a needle and tomorrow you may be buying satins for a trousseau.'

" 'Is that so? Then how come the store is empty?' Esther Rosa wanted to know. 'Across the street, Berish Lubliner's store is so full of customers you can't find room for a pin between them. I bought my materials there but I decided to come here for the needle.'

"The girl became serious. I was afraid that Esther Rosa had overdone it. Even an angel can lose patience. But the girl said, 'Everything according to God's will.' Esther Rosa made a move to carry her stool to the door, but the girl stopped her. 'Please don't trouble yourself. I'll do it.' Esther Rosa interrupted. 'Just a moment, I want to tell you something.'

" 'What do you want to tell me?' the girl said, setting down the stool.

" 'My daughter, *Mazel Tov!*'¹¹ Esther Rosa called out.

"The girl turned as white as chalk. 'I don't understand,' she said.

" 'You will be my daughter-in-law,' Esther Rosa announced. 'I am the wife of Reb Lemel Wagmeister of Hrubyeshow. I have come here to look for a bride for my son. Not to buy a needle. Reb Berish's daughter is like a straw mat and you are like silk. You will be my Benze's wife, God willing.'

"That the girl didn't faint dead away was a miracle from heaven. Everybody in Zamosc had heard of Reb Lemel Wagmeister. Zamosc is not Lublin. Customers came in and saw what was happening. Esther Rosa took a string of amber beads out of her basket. 'Here is your engagement gift. Bend your head.' The girl lowered her head submissively and Esther Rosa placed the beads around her neck. Her father and mother came running into the store. There was kissing, embracing, crying. Someone immediately rushed to tell the story to Reb Berish's daughter. When she heard what had happened, she burst into tears. Her name was Itte.¹² She had a large dowry and was known as a shrew saleswoman. Zelig Izbitzer barely made a living.

"My good people, it was a match. Esther Rosa wore the pants in the family. Whatever she said went. And as I said, in those days young people were never asked. An engagement party was held and the wedding soon after. Zelig Izbitzer could not afford a big wedding. He barely could give his daughter a dowry, for he also had two other daughters and two sons who were studying in the yeshiva.¹³ But, as you know, Reb Lemel Wagmeister had little need for her dowry. I went to

10. *a hundred guilders*, about twenty dollars.

11. *Mazel Tov* (ma'zəl tōv), congratulations. [*Hebrew*]

12. *Itte* (ē'tə).

13. *yeshiva* (yə shē'və), a Jewish school for higher studies, often a rabbinical seminary.

the engagement party and I danced at the wedding. Esther Rosa dressed the girl like a princess. She became really beautiful. When good luck shines, it shows on the face. Whoever did not see that couple standing under the wedding canopy and later dancing the virtue dance will never know what it means to have joy in children. Afterwards they lived like doves. Exactly to the year, she bore a son.

"From the day Itte discovered that Esther Rosa had come to test her, she began to ail. She spoke about the visit constantly. She stopped attending customers. Day and night she cried. The matchmakers showered her with offers, but first she wouldn't have anyone else and second what had happened had given her a bad name. You know how people exaggerate. All kinds of lies were invented about her. She had insulted Esther Rosa in the worst way, had spat in her face, had even beaten her up. Itte's father was stuffed with money and in a small town everybody is envious of his neighbor's crust of bread. Now his enemies had their revenge. Itte had been the real merchant and without her the store went to pieces. After a while she married a man from Lublin. He wasn't even a bachelor. He was divorced. He came to Zamosc and took over his father-in-law's store. But he was as much a businessman as I am a musician.

"That is how things are. If luck is with you, it serves you well. And when it stops serving you, everything goes topsy-turvy. Itte's mother became so upset she developed gallstones, or maybe it was jaundice. Her face became as yellow as saffron. Itte no longer entered the store. She became a stay-at-home. It was hoped that when she became pregnant and had a child, she would forget. But twice she miscarried. She became half crazy, went on cursing Frieda Gittel—that is what Benze's wife was called—and insisted that the other had connived against her. Who knows what goes on in a madwoman's head? Itte also foretold

that Frieda Gittel would die and that she, Itte, would take her place. When Itte became pregnant for the third time, her father took her to a miracle-worker. I've forgotten to mention that by this time her mother was already dead. The miracle-worker gave her potions and talismans, but she miscarried again. She began to run to doctors and to imagine all kinds of illnesses.

"Now listen to this. One evening Itte was sitting in her room sewing. She had finished her length of thread and wanted to rethread her needle. While getting the spool she placed the needle between her lips. Suddenly she felt a stab in her throat and the needle vanished. She searched all over for it, but—what is the saying—'Who can find a needle in a haystack?' My dear people, Itte began to imagine that she had swallowed the needle. She felt a pricking in her stomach, in her breast, her legs. There is a saying 'A needle wanders.' She visited the leech,¹⁴ but what does a leech know? She went to doctors in Lublin and even in Warsaw. One doctor said one thing; another, something different. They poked her stomach but could find no needle. God preserve us. Itte lay in bed and screamed that the needle was pricking her. The town was in a turmoil. Some said that she had swallowed the needle on purpose to commit suicide. Others, that it was a punishment from God. But why should she have been punished? She had already suffered enough for her rudeness. Finally she went to Vienna to a great doctor. And he found the way out. He put her to sleep and made a cut in her belly. When she woke up he showed her the needle that he was supposed to have removed from her insides. I wasn't there. Perhaps he really found a needle, but that's not what people said. When she returned from Vienna, she was her former self again. The store had gone to ruin. Her father was

14. *the leech*, one who applies leeches—bloodsucking worms—to draw blood from wounds.

already in the other world. Itte, however, opened a new store. In the new store she succeeded again, but she never had any children.

"I've forgotten to mention that after what happened between Esther Rosa and the two girls, the salesgirls of Zamosc became the souls of politeness, not only to strangers, but even to their own townspeople. For how could one know whether a customer had come to buy or to test? The book peddler did a fine trade in books on etiquette, and when a woman came to buy a ball of yarn, she was offered a chair.

"I can't tell you what happened later, because I moved away from Zamosc. In the big cities one forgets about everything, even about God. Reb Lemel Wagmeister and Esther Rosa have long since passed away. I haven't heard from Benze or his wife for a long time. Yes, a needle. Because of a rooster and a chicken a whole town was de-

stroyed in the Holy Land,¹⁵ and because of a needle a match was spoiled. The truth is that everything is fated from heaven. You can love someone until you burst, but if it's not destined, it will come to naught. A boy and a girl can be keeping company for seven years, and a stranger comes along and breaks everything up. I could tell you a story of a boy who married his girl's best friend out of spite, and she, to spite him, kept to her bed for twenty years. Tell it? It's too late. If I were to tell you all the stories I know, we'd be sitting here for seven days and seven nights."

15. *Because . . . Holy Land.* It was an ancient Jewish custom to carry a chicken and rooster before the bride and groom in a wedding procession to symbolize a fruitful union. According to the Talmud, when a contingent of Roman soldiers once happened upon such a scene in a town near Jerusalem, a skirmish took place that was reported to Roman authorities as a rebellion. As a result, Roman forces destroyed the town.

THINK AND DISCUSS

Understanding

1. What complaint does Zedeke, the narrator of the story, make about marriages nowadays as compared with the old days?
2. Does the narrator's story about Reitze Leah support her point? Discuss.
3. How does Esther Rosa use a needle to test the natures of Itte and Frieda Gittel? What qualities is she looking for?

Analyzing

4. What makes Zedeke think Esther Rosa's trip to Zamosc has a hidden purpose?
5. What is the cause of Itte's many problems after she fails the test?
6. Does the needle test work? Explain.
7. What might the needle symbolize to each of the following characters? Esther Rosa, Itte, Frieda Gittel, the narrator?

Extending

8. Do you think the "needle test" is a fair and accurate measure of character? Explain.



“The Needle” Isaac Bashevis Singer Text Based Questions.

- 1) Cite and determine the meaning of dowry, mantilla, talisman, Gentile, naught, trousseau as they are used in “The Needle”.
- 2) Determine how personification is used in line 1, “My good people, nowadays all marriages are arranged by Mr. Love.” (426)
- 3) Analyze how the complaint Zedele, the narrator of the story, has about marriages nowadays compared with the old days in "The Needle" propels the action, reveal aspects of her character, and provokes her decision.
- 4) Determine if the narrator's story about Reitze Leah support her opinion. Discuss and cite examples from the text in your answer.
- 5) Determine how Esther Rosa uses a needle to test the natures of Itte and Freida Gittel? Cite the qualities she was looking for.
- 6) Cite the particular lines that make Zedele think Esther Rosa's trip to Zamosc has a hidden purpose.
- 7) Determine the cause of Itte's many problems after she fails the test.
- 8) Analyze if the needle test works.
- 9) Determine what the needle symbolizes to each of the following characters: Esther Rosa, Itte, Freida Gittel, the narrator.
- 10) Determine a theme or central idea of “The Needle” and analyze its development over the course of the story, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the story.
- 11) Determine if the “needle test” is a fair and accurate measure of character. Explain.