

Министерство образования и науки Украины
Донбасская государственная машиностроительная академия

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ЧТЕНИЕ И ОБСУЖДЕНИЕ
РАССКАЗОВ АНГЛО-АМЕРИКАНСКИХ
ПИСАТЕЛЕЙ

Учебное пособие

для студентов групп
углубленного изучения английского языка

Утверждено
на заседании
ученого совета
Протокол № 8 от 03.04.2008

Краматорск 2008

УДК 811.111
ББК 81.2 Англ
М 71

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М 71 Чтение и обсуждение рассказов англо-американских писателей : учебное пособие для студентов групп углубленного изучения английского языка / В. И. Мишина. – Краматорск : ДГМА, 2008. – 124 с.
ISBN 978-966-379-242-2

Учебное пособие, составленное на материале рассказов английских американских писателей, может быть использовано для развития навыков чтения, говорения, аудирования для студентов групп с углубленным изучением английского языка, а также для студентов, самостоятельно изучающих английский язык на среднем этапе обучения.

ISBN 978-966-379-242-2

УДК 811.111
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ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ

Предлагаемый сборник рассказов английских и американских писателей может быть использован для развития навыков чтения, говорения, аудирования для учащихся старших классов школ с углубленным изучением английского языка, для групп углубленного изучения иностранных языков, студентов и лиц, самостоятельно изучающих английский язык на среднем этапе обучения.

Рассказы разнообразны по тематике, языку и стилю, представляют интересный сюжетный материал, дают возможность выйти на обсуждение проблемных вопросов, легко поддаются пересказу, доступны студентам.

Сборник состоит из двух частей.

Тексты 1-ой части – небольшие по объему. Это дает возможность проработать лексический материал, ответить на поставленные вопросы и принять участие в дискуссии без больших затрат учебного времени. Небольшой объем текстов также позволяет преподавателю использовать их для аудирования и изложений. Тексты могут быть использованы и для занятий домашнего чтения. Все тексты 1-ой части снабжены специально разработанными упражнениями.

Рассказы 2-ой части содержат более сложный языковой материал и предназначены для самостоятельного чтения с последующим обсуждением. Все рассказы снабжены лексическим комментарием и вопросами на проверку понимания. Эти рассказы могут быть использованы в качестве самостоятельного чтения. Рассказы подобраны по степени возрастания сложности.

PART ONE

Unit 1

LOST IN THE POST

A. Philips

Ainsley, a post-office sorter, turned the envelope over and over in his hands. The letter was addressed to his wife and had an Australian stamp.

Ainsley knew that the sender was Dicky Soames, his wife's cousin. It was the second letter Ainsley received after Dicky's departure. The first letter had come six months before, he did not read it and threw it into the fire. No man ever had less reason for jealousy¹ than Ainsley. His wife was frank as the day, a splendid housekeeper, a very good mother to their two children. He knew that Dicky Soames had been fond of Adela and the fact that Dicky Soames had years back gone away to join his and Adela's uncle made no difference to him. He was afraid that some day Dicky would return and take Adela from him.

Ainsley did not take the letter when he was at work as his fellow-workers could see him do it. So when the working hours were over he went out of the post-office together with his fellow workers, then he returned to take the letter addressed to his wife. As the door of the post-office was locked, he had to get in through a window. When he was getting out of the window the postmaster saw him. He got angry and dismissed Ainsley. So another man was hired and Ainsley became unemployed. Their life became hard, they had to borrow money from their friends.

Several months had passed. One afternoon when Ainsley came home he saw the familiar face of Dicky Soames. "So he had turned up, " Ainsley thought to himself.

Dicky Soames said he was delighted to see Ainsley. "I have missed all of you so much, " he added with a friendly smile.

Ainsley looked at his wife. "Uncle Tom has died, " she explained, "and Dicky has come into his money". "Congratulation, " said Ainsley, "you are lucky. "

Adela turned to Dicky. "Tell Arthur the rest, " she said quietly. "Well, you see," said Dicky, "Uncle Tom had something over sixty thousand and he wished Adela to have half. But he got angry with you because Adela never answered the two letters I wrote to her for him. Then he changed his will and left her money to hospitals. I asked him not to do it, but he wouldn't listen to me!" Ainsley turned pale. "So those two letters were worth reading after all," he thought to himself. For some time everybody kept silence. Then Dicky Soames broke the silence, "It's strange about those two letters. I've often wondered why you didn't answer them?" Adela got up, came up to her husband and said, taking him by the hand. "The letters were evidently lost." At that moment Ainsley realized that she knew everything.

NOTES:

¹ No man had less reason for jealousy – Никто не имел меньше оснований для ревности.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

сортировщик почты, вертел в руках, отъезд, великолепная хозяйка, Адела ему нравилась, увезет, сотрудники, уволил, наняли другого, знакомое лицо, скучал без вас, остальное, изменил завещание, подумал про себя, взяв его за руку, очевидно.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own.

be addressed to smb, make some (much, no) difference to smb, lock the door, get in through..., become unemployed, borrow smth from smb, be delighted, come into one's money, be lucky, turn pale (red), be worth doing, keep (break) silence

III Questions on the text:

- 1) What was Ainsley's?
- 2) Who was Dicky Soames?
- 3) What was the main reason for Ainsley's hiding Dicky's letters from Adela?
- 4) How did Ainsley behave when the second letter arrived?
- 5) What happened as a result of his behaviour?
- 6) Was Adela's uncle a rich person? Prove it.
- 7) Did he want Adela to come into his money and why did he have to change his will?
- 8) What did Ainsley mean saying, "Those two letters were worth reading"?
- 9) What proves that Ainsley's wife guessed everything?
- 10) Why do you think she said that the letters had been lost?

IV True or false?

- 1) Ainsley read Dicky's letters before throwing them into the fire. Adela often gave reason for jealousy.
- 2) It was a long time since Dicky Soames had gone away to Australia to join his uncle.
- 3) This fact made Ainsley forget his jealousy.
- 4) When the working hours were over Ainsley took the letter and left the post-office together with his fellow-workers.
- 5) The postmaster saw Ainsley getting out of the window and thinking that he had stolen something dismissed him.
- 6) Ainsley envied Dicky when he learned that the latter had come into his uncle's money.
- 7) When Ainsley understood that he was to blame for everything he told the truth.

V "Adela was as frank as the day" – what does it mean? There are a lot of idioms of the same kind. Explain their meaning, try to give the corresponding Russian expressions and use these idioms in the sentences of your own.

- as strong as an ox
- as fresh as a cucumber
- as strong as nails
- as busy as a bee
- as sure as fate (as certainly as)
- as thick as thieves (very friendly)
- as hungry as a hunter
- as old as the sea
- as slow as a snail

VI Retell the story on the part of 1) Ainsley, 2) Adela, 3) Dicky Soames.

Unit 2

SUCCESS STORY

J. G. Cozzens

I met Richards ten or more years ago when I first went down to Cuba. He was a short, sharp-faced, agreeable chap, then about 22. He introduced himself to me on the boat and I was surprised to find that Panamerica Steel¹ was sending us both to the same job.

Richards was from some not very good state university engineering school². Being the same age myself, and just out of technical college I saw at once that his knowledge was rather poor. In fact I couldn't imagine how he had managed to get this job.

Richards was naturally likable, and I liked him a lot. The firm had a contract for the construction of a private railroad. For Richards and me it was mostly an easy job of inspections and routine paper work. At least it was easy for me. It was harder for Richards, because he didn't appear to have mastered the use of a slide rule. When he asked me to check his figures I found his calculations awful. "Boy," I was at last obliged to say, "you are undoubtedly the silliest white man in this province. Look, stupid, didn't you ever take arithmetic? How much are seven times thirteen?" "Work that out," Richards said, "and let me have a report tomorrow. "

So when I had time I checked his figures for him, and the inspector only caught him in a bad mistake about twice. In January several directors of the United Sugar Company came down to us on business, but mostly pleasure; a good excuse to get south on a vacation. Richards and I were to accompany them around the place. One of the directors, Mr. Prosser was asking a number of questions. I knew the job well enough to answer every sensible question — the sort of question that a trained engineer would be likely to ask. As it was Mr. Prosser

was not an engineer and some of his questions put me at a loss. For the third time I was obliged to say, "I'm afraid I don't know, sir. We haven't any calculations on that". When suddenly Richards spoke up.

"I think, about nine million cubic feet, sir", he said. "I just happened to be working this out last night. Just for my own interest".

"Oh," said Mr. Prosser, turning in his seat and giving him a sharp look. "That's very interesting, Mr. Richards, isn't it? Well, now, maybe you could tell me about it."

Richards could. Richards knew everything. All the way up Mr. Prosser fired questions on him and he fired answers right back. When we reached the head of the rail, a motor was waiting for Mr. Prosser. He nodded absent-mindedly to me, shook hands with Richards. "Very interesting, indeed," he said. "Good-bye, Mr. Richards, and thank you."

"Not, at all, sir," Richards said. "Glad if I could be of service to you."

As soon as the car moved off, I exploded. "A little honest bluff doesn't hurt; but some of your figures...!"

"I like to please," said Richards grinning. "If a man like Prosser wants to know something, who am I to hold out on him?"

"What's he going to think when he looks up the figures or asks somebody who does know?"

"Listen, my son," said Richards kindly. "He wasn't asking for any information he was going to use. He doesn't want to know these figures. He won't remember them. I don't even remember them myself. What he is going to remember is you and me." "Yes," said Richards firmly. "He is going to remember that Panamerica Steel has a bright young man named Richards who could tell him everything, he wanted — just the sort of chap he can use; not like that other fellow, who took no interest in his work, couldn't answer the simplest question and who is going to be doing small-time contracting all his life."

It is true. I am still working for the Company, still doing a little work for the construction line. And Richards? I happened to read in a newspaper a few weeks ago that Richards had been made a vice-president and director of Panamerica Steel when the Prosser group³ bought the old firm.

NOTES:

¹ Panamerica Steel – американская корпорация;

² state university engineering school – школа, готовящая строителей дорог, мостов;

³ Prosser group – группа акционеров корпорации, которая отстаивала интересы Проссера.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

приятный парень, с удивлением обнаружил, обладать природным обаянием, обычная канцелярская работа, уметь пользоваться логарифмической линейкой, проверить цифры, поймать на ошибке, хороший повод,

ряд вопросов, квалифицированный инженер, ставить в тупик, засыпать вопросами, рассеянно кивнуть, способный молодой человек, не интересоваться работой, мелкая работа.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

ten or more years ago, a sharp-faced chap, being the same age, just out of technical college, found his calculations awful, take arithmetic, every sensible question, be of service, just the sort of chap he can use, introduce smb to smb, master smth, come on business, accompany smb., be likely to do smth, shake hands with smb., take a lot (some, no) interest in smth.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Describe Richards (age, appearance, education, manners)
- 2) Why was the author surprised that Richards had managed to get the same job?
- 3) What kind of work were the young men to do?
- 4) How did they cope with it?
- 5) Why did the author call his colleague stupid? Did it annoy Richards?
- 6) Why did the young men find themselves in the company of Mr. Prosset?
- 7) Why was the author unable to answer Mr. Prosset's questions?
- 8) What did Richard do and how did he explain his behaviour to the author later?
- 9) What made Mr. Prosset give Richards a sharp look?
- 10) What opinion had Mr. Prosset formed of the two young men, judging by the way he said good-bye to them?
- 11) Why did the author explode?
- 12) Whose theory proved to be right?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Explain why Richards took little trouble to do his job properly. What was Richards' ambition? Do you approve of his behaviour? Give your reasons.
- 2) What to your mind is more important: to have good knowledge in the field you work or the ability to be equal to the situation?
- 3) Can we say that Richards was a good "psychologist"? In what way did it help him?
- 4) Who had more advantages to win the top job: Richards or his friend? Do you agree that hard work plus knowledge always leads to success?
- 5) Give a character sketch of a) Richards, b) the other young man, c) Mr. Prosset
- 6) Whom do you think are the author's sympathies with? Prove your choice.

V Retell the story on the part of 1) Richards, 2) his friend, 3) Mr. Prosset.

Unit 3

HUNTING FOR A JOB

S. S. McClure

I reached Boston late that night and got out at the South Station. I knew no one in Boston except Miss Bennet. She lived in Somerville¹, and I immediately started out for Somerville. Miss Bennet and her family did all they could to make me comfortable and help me to get myself established² in some way. I had only six dollars and their hospitality was of utmost importance to me.

My first application for a job in Boston was made in accordance with an idea of my own. Every boy in the Western states knew the Pope Manufacturing Company, which produced bicycles. When I published my first work "History of Western College Journalism" the Pope Company had given me an advertisement, and that seemed to be a "connection" of some kind. So I decided to go to the offices of the Pope Manufacturing Company to ask for a job. I walked into the general office and said that I wanted the president of the company.

"Colonel Pope?" asked the clerk.

I answered, "Yes, Colonel Pope."

I was taken to Colonel Pope, who was then an alert energetic man of thirty-nine. I told Colonel Pope, by way of introduction, that he had once given me an advertisement for a little book I had published, that I had been a College editor and out of a job. What I wanted was work and I wanted it badly.

He said he was sorry, but they were laying off hands³. I still hung on⁴. It seemed to me that everything would be all up with me⁵, if I had to go out of that room without a job. I asked him if there wasn't anything at all that I could do. My earnestness made him look at me sharply.

"Willing to wash windows and scrub floors?" he asked.

I told him that I was, and he turned to one of his clerks.

"Has Wilmot got anybody yet to help him in the downtown⁶ rink?" he asked.

The clerk said he thought not.

"Very well", said Colonel Pope. "You can go to the rink and help Wilmot out for tomorrow."

The next day I went to the bicycle rink and found that what Wilmot wanted was a man to teach beginners to ride. I had never been on a bicycle in my life nor even very close to one, but in a couple of hours I had learnt to ride a bicycle myself and was teaching other people.

Next day Mr. Wilmot paid me a dollar. He didn't say anything about my coming back the next morning, but I came and went to work, very much afraid that I would be told I wasn't needed. After that Mr. Wilmot did not exactly engage me, but he forgot to discharge me, and I came back every day and went to work. At the end of the week Colonel Pope sent for me and placed me in charge of the uptown⁷ rink.

Colonel Pope was a man who watched his workmen. I hadn't been mistaken when I felt that a young man would have a chance with him. He often used to

say that "water would find its level", and he kept an eye on us. One day he called me into his office and asked me if I could edit a magazine.

"Yes, sir, " I replied quickly. I remember it flashed through my mind that I could do anything I was put at — that if I were required to run an ocean steamer I could somehow manage to do it. I could learn to do it as I went along⁸. I answered as quickly as I could get the words out of my mouth, afraid that Colonel Pope would change his mind before I could get them out.

This is how I got my first job. And I have never doubted ever since that one of the reasons why I got it was that I had been "willing to wash windows and scrub floors". I had been ready for anything.

NOTES:

¹ Somerville – окраина Бостона;

² to get oneself established – найти работу;

³ laying off hands – увольняя рабочих;

⁴ hang on – настаивать;

⁵ everything would be all up with me – для меня все будет кончено;

⁶ downtown – деловая часть города;

⁷ uptown – жилая часть города;

⁸ as I went along – по ходу дела.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

направиться куда-либо, помочь устроиться, гостеприимство, было необычайно важно, в соответствии с, рекламировать, энергичный человек, без работы, никогда в жизни не ездил на велосипеде, нанимать на работу, увольнять, назначить заведующим, издавать журнал, вымолвить, передумать, с тех пор не сомневался.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

got out at, to make me comfortable, in some way, application for a job, wanted it badly, scrub floors, in a couple of hours, kept an eye on us, it flashed through my mind, be ready for anything.

III Paraphrase the sentences using phrases from the text:

- 1) Miss Bennet and her family received him very warmly.
- 2) Everybody tried to help him to find some kind of job.
- 3) Their concern and hospitality were very important to him.
- 4) He told Colonel Pope that he was unemployed and needed any job very much.
- 5) The man thought that everything would be lost for him if he didn't find a job.
- 6) He had never ridden a bicycle in his life.
- 7) Mr. Wilmot neither employed the journalist nor dismissed him.
- 8) The boss made him responsible for the uptown rink.

9) It suddenly occurred to him that his willingness to do any job had helped him to get his first job.

IV Questions on the text:

- 1) Who was the only person the author knew in Boston?
- 2) In what way was he received? Why was it of great importance to him?
- 3) What made the young man apply for a job to the Pope Company?
- 4) Describe Colonel Pope. What was his answer to the young man's story?
- 5) Why did the man still hang on though he found out that the company was laying off hands?
- 6) What question did the Colonel ask him? Describe the young man's job and say whether he coped with it.
- 7) Why did the man continue to work for Mr. Wilmot though he hadn't engaged him?
- 8) What happened at the end of the week?
- 9) What job was the young man offered in the long run?
- 10) What idea flashed through his mind?
- 11) What helped the man to get his first job?

V Discuss the following:

- 1) Say if you agree or disagree with the statement "water would find its level". How do you understand it? Give examples in support of your opinion.
- 2) Give a character sketch of the main hero. Compare him with the heroes of the story "Success Story. "
- 3) Is the problem of unemployment acute nowadays? Why? Is this problem interconnected with the problem of wasted lives? Give your grounds.

VI Retell the text using the following:

to start for, to make smb. comfortable, to get oneself established, to be of utmost importance to smb, application for a job, to give smb. an advertisement, alert, by way of introduction, out of a job, to want badly, to lay off hands, to hang on, earnestness, to look sharply at, willing, to scrub floors, to ride, to engage, to discharge, to place in charge of, to have a chance with, to keep an eye on, to edit, to flash through one's mind, to run an ocean steamer, to get the words out of one's mouth, to change one's mind, to doubt.

Unit 4

A FOUL PLAY¹

R. Ruark

In 1943 Lieutenant Alexander Barr was ordered into the Armed Guard aboard the merchant ship, like many other civilian officers with no real mechanical skills – teachers, writers, lawyers.

His men were the rag-tag² of merchant service and knew very little of it. Lieutenant Alec Barr had his crew well in hand except one particularly unpleasant character, a youngster called Zabinski. Every ship has its problem child, and Zabinski was Alec's cross. If anybody was drunk and in trouble ashore³, it was Zabinski. If anybody was smoking on watch, or asleep on watch⁴, it always was Zabinski. Discipline on board was hard to keep and Zabinski made it worse.

Alec called the boy to his cabin. "I've tried to reason with you⁵, " he said. "I've punished you with everything from confinement to ship⁶ to extra duty. I've come to the conclusion that the only thing you may understand is force. I've got some boxing gloves. Navy Regulations say they should be used for recreation. We are going to have some. "

"That's all right", Zabinski said smiling.

Alec announced the exhibition of boxing skill. A lot of people gathered on deck to watch the match.

It didn't take Lieutenant Barr long to discover that he was in the ring with a semiprofessional. They were fighting two-minute rounds. But from the first five seconds of the first round Alec knew that Zabinski could knock him out with a single punch⁷ if he wanted to. But Zabinski didn't want to, he was toying with his commander, and the snickers⁸ grew into laughter. In the third round Alec held up a glove. "Time out!", he said. "I'm going to my cabin, I'll soon be back". He turned and ran up to his cabin. In the cabin there was a safe. Alec's duty was to pay wages to his personnel. Alec Barr opened the safe and took out a paper-wrapped roll of ten-cent coins. He put this roll of silver coins into his glove and returned on deck.

"Let's go!" he said and touched gloves with Zabinski. It had pleased Zabinski before to allow the officer to knock him from time to time because it gave him a chance for a short and painful punch. But now the silver-weighted glove crashed into the boy's chin and Zabinski was out. He was lying on the floor motionless. Alec Barr looked briefly at the boy. "Somebody throw some water on him, " he said coldly to the seamen. And he went up to his room to clean his cuts⁹ and put the roll of coins back to the safe. After that Lieutenant Alexander Barr had no more personnel trouble aboard ship.

NOTES:

¹ foul play – нечестная игра;

² rag-tag – случайные люди;

³ ashore – на берегу;

⁴ on watch – на вахте;

⁵ to reason with smb. – убедить кого-то;

⁶ confine to ship – оставлять без увольнения;

⁷ punch – удар кулаком;

⁸ snickers – смешки;

⁹ cuts – раны.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

был назначен, на борту торгового корабля, держал команду корабля в подчинении, "трудный" ребенок, спать на вахте, поддерживать дисциплину, наряд вне очереди, демонстрация боксерских умений, на ринге, отправить в нокаут одним ударом, выплачивать зарплату, завернутый в бумагу, лежать без движений.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

with no skills, reason with smb., punish smb. with smth, come to the conclusion, take smb. (not) long to do smth, please smb., from time to time, have trouble with smb.

III Questions on the text:

1) Why was Alexander Barr being a civilian officer ordered aboard the merchant ship?

2) Explain the phrase "He had his crew well in hand. "

3) What proves that Zabinski was a problem child?

4) What sort of measures did Lieutenant Barr use to reason with the youngster?

5) Did Alec Barr really mean to have some recreation when he spoke about boxing?

6) Why was Zabinski smiling when he accepted Lieutenant's suggestion?

7) Did it take Barr long to discover Zabinski's boxing skills?

8) What was the reaction of the seamen who had gathered on deck to watch the match?

9) Why did Barr ask for the time out?

10) What was Zabinski's tactics during the match? Prove that he didn't expect a change in the course of the match. What did Alexander Barr do after he had knocked the boy out?

11) Did the result of the match help Lieutenant to keep discipline on board?

IV Discuss the following:

1) Supposing Zabinski guessed something wrong in Lieutenant's behaviour. How do you think he would have acted?

2) What kind of methods did Alexander Barr use trying to reason with the boy? Were they proper methods? Which methods to your mind should he have applied? Could Barr's methods of keeping discipline be justified?

3) Comment on the title of the story. Is the word "foul" used in its direct or figurative meaning?

4) Give a character sketch of 1) Zabinski, 2) Lieutenant Barr

V Retell the story on the part of 1) Alexander Barr, 2) Zabinski, 3) one of the sailors.

Unit 5

JIMMY VALENTINE'S REFORMATION

O. Henry

Jimmy Valentine was released¹ that day.

"Now, Valentine, " said the warden², "you'll go out today. Make a man of yourself. You are not a bad fellow really. Stop breaking open safes and be honest. "

"Me?" said Jimmy in surprise. "Why, I've never broken a safe in my life." The warden laughed. "Better think over my advice, Valentine. "

In the evening Valentine arrived in his native town, went directly to the cafe of his old friend Mike and shook hands with Mike. Then he took the key of his room and went upstairs. Everything was just as he had left it. Jimmy removed a panel in the wall and dragged out a dust-covered suitcase. He opened it and looked fondly at the finest set of burglar's³ tools. It was a complete set made of special steel. The set consisted of various tools of the latest design. Over nine hundred dollars they had cost him.

A week after the release of Valentine there was a new safe-burglary in Richmond. Two weeks after that another safe was opened. That began to interest the detectives. Ben Price, a famous detective, got interested in these cases.

"That's all Jimmy Valentine's work. He has resumed business. He has got the only tools that can open any safe without leaving the slightest trace. "

One afternoon Jimmy Valentine came to Elmore, a little town in Arkansas. A young lady crossed the street, passed him at the corner and entered a door over which was the sign "The Elmore Bank". Jimmy Valentine looked into her eyes, forgot what he was and became another man. She lowered her eyes and blushed slightly. Young men of Jimmy's style and looks were not often met in Elmore. Jimmy called a boy who was standing on the steps of the bank and began to ask him questions about the town and the people of the town. From this boy he learnt that this girl was Annabel Adams and that her father was the owner of the bank.

Jimmy went to a hotel and registered as Ralf Spencer. To the clerk he said that he had come to Elmore to start business. The clerk was impressed by the clothes and manner of Jimmy and he was ready to give Jimmy any information. Soon Jimmy opened a shoe-store and made large profits. In all other respects he was also a success. He was popular with many important people and had many friends. And he accomplished the wish of his heart. He met Miss Annabel Adams and she fell in love with him too. Annabel's father, who was a typical country banker approved of Spencer. The young people were to be married in two weeks. Jimmy gave up safe-burglary forever. He was an honest man now. He decided to get rid of his tools.

At that time a new safe was put in Mr. Adams' bank. The old man was very proud of it and insisted that everyone should inspect it. So one day the whole family with the children went to the bank. Mr. Adams enthusiastically

explained the workings of the safe to Spencer. The two children were delighted to see the shining metal and the funny clock. While they were thus engaged Ben Price, the detective, walked into the bank and stood at the counter watching the scene. He told the cashier that he was just waiting for the man he knew. Suddenly there was a loud scream from the women. Unseen by the elders, May, the smallest girl had shut herself in the vault⁴.

"It's impossible to open the door now, " said Mr. Adams in a trembling voice, "because the clock of the safe hasn't been wound. Oh, what shall we do? That child—she can't stand it for long because there isn't enough air there!"

"Get away from the door, all of you, " suddenly commanded Spencer. And it must be mentioned that Jimmy happened to have his suit-case with him because he was going to get rid of it that day. Very calmly he took out the tools and in ten minutes the vault was opened. The others watched him in amazement. The little girl, crying, rushed to her mother.

Jimmy took his suit-case and came up to Ben Price whom he had noticed long before. "Hello, Ben", he said, "Let's go. I don't think it matters much now. "And then suddenly Ben Price acted rather strangely."I guess, you are mistaken Mr. Spencer, "he said. "I don't seem to recognize you. I think your fiancée' is waiting for you, isn't she?" And Ben Price turned and walked out of the Bank.

NOTES:

¹ was released – был освобожден из тюрьмы;

² a warden – охранник;

³ a burglar – вор-взломщик;

⁴ vault – зд. внутренняя часть сейфа.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

стань человеком, неплохой парень, обдумай мой совет, покрытый пылью чемоданчик, посмотрел с любовью, последней модели, возобновить занятие, не оставляя ни малейших следов, слегка покраснеть, молодые люди с такой внешностью, владелец банка, открыть дело, получать хорошую прибыль, пользоваться популярностью среди важных персон, сокровенное желание, должны были пожениться, избавиться от инструментов, принцип работы сейфа, наблюдая за происходящим, громкий крик, пока взрослые не видели, часы не были заведены, чемоданчик случайно оказался с ним; не думаю, что теперь это имеет значение; повел себя странно, возлюбленная.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

be honest, say smth in surprise, shake hands with smb., a set of tools, get interested in smth, become another man, register at a hotel, be impressed by smth, be a success, fall in love with smb., approve of smb/ smth, give up smth for ever, be proud of smth, insist that smb. should do smth, say smth in a trem-

bling voice, stand smth for long, it must be mentioned, watch smb/smith in amazement, be mistaken, recognize smb.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) What kind of man was Jimmy Valentine? (age, looks, occupation)?
- 2) Where did he go immediately after the release?
- 3) What was the first thing he did on entering his room?
- 4) There were a number of safe-burglaries in Richmond. Why did Ben Price get interested in them? Why did he suspect Jimmy?
- 5) How did Jimmy happen to meet Annabel Adams? What did he manage to find out about her?
- 6) Why did Jimmy register at the hotel under another name?
- 7) Explain the phrase, "In all respects Jimmy was a success."
- 8) What final decision did Jimmy make that proved that he wanted to give up his old business forever?
- 9) How did the child happen to find himself in the vault? Why was it dangerous?
- 10) Why did all the present watch Jimmy in amazement while he was opening the safe?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) By the time the incident happened Jimmy had completely changed his way of life. What did he risk when he showed everybody his skill? What could the price of this action have been?
- 2) Analyse Ben Price's behaviour through the cause of events. Why do you think he said he didn't recognize Valentine? In what way does it characterize him?
- 3) Think of another end of the story supposing a) Jimmy didn't meet the girl, b) Ben Price revealed everything to the people present in the bank.

V Retell the story on the part of 1) Jimmy, 2) Ben Price, 3) Annabel, 4) Annabel's father.

Unit 6

LETTERS IN THE MAIL

E. Caldwell

Almost everybody likes to receive letters. And perhaps nobody in Stillwater liked to get letters more than Ray Buffin. But unfortunately Ray received fewer letters in his box at the post-office than anybody else.

Guy Hodge and Ralph Barnhill were two young men in town who liked to play jokes on people. But they never meant anything bad. One afternoon they

decided to play a joke on Ray Buffin. Their plan was to ask a girl in town to send Ray a love letter without signing it, and then tell everybody in the post-office to watch Ray read the letter; then somebody was to ask Ray if he had received a love letter from a girl. After that somebody was to snatch the letter out of his hand and read it aloud.

They bought blue writing paper and went round the corner to the office of the telephone company where Grace Brooks worked as a night telephone operator. Grace was pretty though not very young. She had begun working for the company many years ago, after she had finished school. She had remained unmarried all those years, and because she worked at night and slept in the daytime it was very difficult for her to find a husband.

At first, after Guy and Ralf had explained to her what they wanted to do and had asked her to write the letter to Ray, Grace refused to do it.

"Now, be a good girl, Grace, do us a favour and write the letter." Suddenly she turned away. She didn't want the young men to see her crying. She remembered the time she had got acquainted with Ray. Ray wanted to marry her. But she had just finished school then and had started to work for the telephone company; she was very young then and did not want to marry anybody. Time passed. During all those years she had seen him a few times but only a polite word had passed between them, and each time he looked sadder and sadder.

Finally she agreed to write the letter for Guy and Ralph and said that she would send it in the morning.

After they left the telephone office Grace thought about Ray and cried. Late at night she wrote the letter.

The next day Guy and Ralph were in the post-office at 4 o'clock. By that time there was a large crowd in the post-office. When Ray came in and saw a letter in his box he looked at it in surprise. He couldn't believe his eyes. He opened the box, took out the blue envelope and went to the corner of the room to read it. When he finished he behaved like mad. He smiled happily and ran out of the room before Guy and Ralph had time to say anything to stop him. Ray hurried round the corner to the telephone office.

When Guy and Ralph ran into the room where Grace worked they saw Ray Buff in standing near the girl with the widest and happiest smile they had ever seen on his face. It was clear they had not spoken a word yet. They just stood in silence, too happy to worry about Guy and Ralph watching them.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

к сожалению, разыгрывать людей, никогда не замыслили ничего плохого, без подписи, выхватить из рук, работала телефонисткой в ночную смену, так и не вышла замуж, оказать услугу, отвернулась, они лишь обменялись вежливыми фразами, в конце концов, много народу, глазам не поверил, быстро пошел за угол.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

receive letters, watch smb do smth, read (speak) aloud, explain smth to smb, refuse to do smth, get acquainted with smb, look at smth (smb) in surprise, in silence, worry about smth/smb, without doing smth.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Did Ray Buff in often receive letters?
- 2) What was it Guy Hodge and Ralph Barnhill liked to do?
- 3) What was their plan?
- 4) Who was Grace Brooks?
- 5) Why did the two young men ask her to do them a favour?
- 6) Why didn't the girl agree at once?
- 7) What was Ray's reaction when he saw a letter in his box?
- 8) What did he do next?
- 9) What did Guy and Ralph see when they entered the telephone office?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Why did the girl agree to write the letter in the end?
- 2) Comment on the phrase "They were too happy to worry about Guy and Ralph watching them. "
- 3) What do you think Grace wrote in her letter?
- 4) Why do people like to receive letters? Do you agree that it is easier to express your feelings in a letter than during a talk? Give your grounds.
- 5) Why do you think the art of writing letters is dying nowadays?

V Retell the story on the part of 1) Ray, 2) Grace, 3) Ralph or Guy.

Unit 7

THE BRAMBLE BUSH

Ch. Mergendahl

As Fran Walker, one of the nurses of the Mills Memorial Hospital, was sitting between rounds behind her duty desk, she often recollected her childhood, which would return to her as it had existed in reality – bewildering, lonely, and frustrating.

Her father, Mr. Walker, had owned a small lumber business¹ in Sagamore, one of Indiana's numerous smaller towns, where Fran had lived in a large frame house on six acres of unused pasture land². The first Mrs. Walker had died, when Fran was still a baby, so she did not remember her real mother at all. She remembered her stepmother, though – small, tight-lipped, thin-faced, extremely possessive of her new husband and the new house which had suddenly become her own. Fran had adored her father, tried desperately to please him. And since he desired nothing more than a good relationship between his daughter and his

second wife, she had made endless attempts to win over her new mother. But her displays of affection had not been returned. Her stepmother had remained constantly jealous, resentful, without the slightest understanding of the small girl's motives and emotions.

Fran felt herself losing out, slipping away into an inferior position. She began to exaggerate – often lie – about friends, feelings, grades at school, anything possible to keep herself high in her father's esteem, and at the same time gain some small bit of admiration from her mother. The exaggerations, though, had constantly turned back on her, until eventually a disgusted Mrs. Walker had insisted she be sent away to a nearby summer camp. "They award a badge of honour there, "she had said," and if you win it – not a single untruth all summer – then we'll know you've stopped lying and we'll do something very special for you."

"We'll give you a pony," her father had promised.

Fran wanted the pony. More than the pony, she wanted to prove herself. After two months of near-painful honesty, she finally won the badge of honour, and brought it home clutched tight in her fist, hidden in her pocket while she waited, waited, all the way from the station, all during the tea in the living-room for the exact proper moment to make her announcement of glorious victory.

"Well?" her mother had said finally. "Well, Fran?"

"Well –", Fran began, with the excitement building higher and higher as she drew in her breath and thought of exactly how to say it.

"You can't hide it any longer, Fran." Her mother had sighed in hopeless resignation. "We know you didn't win it, so there's simply no point in lying about it now."

Fran had closed her mouth. She'd stared at her mother, then stood and gone out to the yard and looked across the green meadow where the pony was going to graze³. She had taken the green badge from her pocket, fingered it tenderly, then buried it beneath a rock in the garden. She had gone back into the house and said, "No, I didn't win it, " and her mother had said, "Well, at least you didn't lie this time," and her father had held her while she'd cried and known finally that there was no further use in trying.

Her father had bought her an Irish setter as a consolation prize.

NOTES:

¹ a lumber business – лесопилка;

² pasture land – пастбище;

³ to graze – пастись.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

вспоминать детство, один из множества городков в штате Индиана, рубленый дом, с поджатыми губами, имеющая необычайную власть над

своим мужем, отчаянно стараться угодить кому-либо, взять верх над кем-либо, не имея ни малейшего понятия, оставаться злой и ревнивой; чувствовала, что проигрывает; завоевать хоть небольшое проявление любви, выходило ей боком, значок честности, зажатый в кулаке, ждать подходящего момента, объявить о своей блистательной победе, нет смысла лгать, дальнейшие попытки бесполезны.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

adore smb, a good relationship, make endless attempts, display of affection, exaggerate, keep oneself high in smb's esteem, eventually, stop lying, do smth special for smb, prove oneself, draw in one's breath, stare at smb, a consolation prize.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Where did Fran Walker spend her childhood?
- 2) What can you say about her parents?
- 3) Describe Fran's stepmother.
- 4) Why did Fran do her best to win her stepmother's affection though she didn't like the woman?
- 5) What was the new mother's attitude towards her stepdaughter?
- 6) What was the reason of Fran's exaggerations? What do you think she said about her friends, school, etc.?
- 7) What way out did Fran's stepmother find to make the girl stop lying?
- 8) Which phrase in the text proves that it wasn't easy for the girl to win the badge?
- 9) Fran was eager to announce her victory, wasn't she? Prove it by the text.
- 10) It was only once that Fran's stepmother believed her. When? Was it of any use?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Give a character sketch of the girl's stepmother.
- 2) Analyse relationship between the girl and her stepmother. What prevented them from becoming friends? Do you think stepmother may have become mother for the girl?
- 3) Whose side did Fran's father take? Give your grounds.
- 4) Why was it so difficult for the girl to announce her victory? Which words of her stepmother killed all her three-month hopes and expectations?
- 5) What did the girl bury beneath a rock in the garden? Was it only the badge?
- 6) Why was Fran's childhood "bewildering, lonely and frustrating"?

V Retell the text on the part of 1) Fran Walker, 2) her stepmother, 3) one of the teachers at the summer camp.

Unit 8

THE BEARD¹

G. Clark

I was going by train to London. I didn't have the trouble to take anything to eat with me and soon was very hungry. I decided to go to the dining-car to have a meal.

As I was about to seat myself, I saw that the gentleman I was to face wore a large beard. He was a young man. His beard was full, loose and very black. I glanced at him uneasily and noted that he was a big pleasant fellow with dark laughing eyes.

Indeed I could feel his eyes on me as I fumbled with the knives and forks. It was hard to pull myself together. It is not easy to face a beard. But when I could escape no longer, I raised my eyes and found the young man's on my face.

"Good evening," I said cheerily.

"Good evening," he replied pleasantly, inserting a big buttered roll within the bush of his beard. Not even a crumb fell off. He ordered soup. It was a difficult soup for even the most barefaced of men to eat, but not a drop did he waste on his whiskers². He kept his eyes on me in between bites. But I knew he knew that I was watching his every bite with acute fascination.

"I'm impressed," I said, "with your beard."

"I suspected as much," smiled the young man.

"Is it a wartime device?" I inquired.

"No," said he; "I'm too young to have been in the war. I grew this beard two years ago."

"It's magnificent," I informed him.

"Thank you," he replied. "As a matter of fact this beard is an experiment in psychology. I suffered horribly from shyness. I was so shy it amounted to a phobia. At university I took up psychology and began reading books on psychology³. And one day I came across a chapter on human defence mechanisms, explaining how so many of us resort to all kinds of tricks to escape from the world, or from conditions in the world which we find hateful. Well, I just turned a thing around, I decided to make other people shy of me. So I grew this beard.

The effect was astonishing. I found people, even tough, hard-boiled people, were shy of looking in the face. They were panicked by my whiskers. It made them uneasy. And my shyness vanished completely."

He pulled his fine black whiskers affectionately and said: "Psychology is a great thing. Unfortunately people don't know about it. Psychology should help people discover such most helpful tricks. Life is too short to be wasted in desperately striving to be normal."

"Tell me," I said finally. "How did you master eating the way you have? You never got a crumb or a drop on your beard, all through dinner."

"Nothing to it, sir," said he. "When you have a beard, you keep your eyes on those of your dinner partner. And whenever you note his eyes fixed in horror on your chin, you wipe it off."

NOTES:

¹ beard – борода;

² whiskers – бакенбарды;

³ psychology – психология.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

не позаботился, вагон-ресторан, только я собирался сесть, чувствовал на себе его взгляд, в самую гущу своей бороды, безбородый, внушительная; дело в том что; психологический эксперимент, смущение, занялся психологией, защитные силы человека, прибегать к различным уловкам, уйти от реальности, потрясающий эффект, черствые люди, бакенбарды наводили на них панику, чувствовать себя не в своей тарелке, полностью исчезла, отчаянно пытаюсь, ничего сложного.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

face smb, glance at smb, pull oneself together, keep one's eyes on smb, be impressed with smth, suffer from smth, read books on smth, come across, find smth hateful, make smb do smth, be shy of doing smth, waste life (time), master (doing) smth.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Why did the author go to the dining-car?
- 2) Describe the man who was sitting opposite him.
- 3) Why did the author feel ill at ease?
- 4) What was it that struck the author in the manner his companion was eating?
- 5) What did the young man suffer from when he was a student?
- 6) What did he read about human defence mechanisms in one of the books on psychology?
- 7) What idea occurred to him?
- 8) What was the effect of his experiment?
- 9) How did the young man explain to the author his careful manner of eating?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Is the knowledge of psychology important for a person? Why? Give your grounds.
- 2) What do you know about human defence mechanisms? In what situations are they displayed?
- 3) What kind of world conditions do you consider "hateful"? What are the ways to improve them?
- 4) How do you understand the phrase "escape from the world"? When and why do people have to do it?

Unit 9

LAUTISSE PAINTS AGAIN

H. A. Smith

Everybody knows by this time that we met Lautisse on board a ship, but few people know that in the beginning, Betsy and I had no idea who he was.

At first he introduced himself as Monsieur Roland, but as we talked he asked me a lot of questions about myself and my business and finally he asked me if I could keep a secret and said: "I am Lautisse. "

I had no idea who he was. I told Betsy and after lunch we went up and talked to the ship's librarian, asked him a few questions. And then we found out that my new friend was probably the world's best living painter. The librarian found a book with his biography and a photograph. Though the photograph was bad, we decided that our new acquaintance was Lautisse all right. The book said that he suddenly stopped painting at 53 and lived in a villa in Rivera. He hadn't painted anything in a dozen years and was heard to say he would never touch the brush again.

Well, we got to be real friends and Betsy invited him to come up to our place for a weekend.

Lautisse arrived on the noon train Saturday, and I met him at the station. We had promised him that we wouldn't have any people and that we wouldn't try to talk to him about art. It wasn't very difficult since we were not very keen on art.

I was up at seven-thirty the next morning and I remembered that I had a job to do. Our vegetable garden had a fence around it which needed a coat of paint. I took out a bucket half full of white paint and a brush and an old kitchen chair. I was sitting on the chair thinking, when I heard footsteps and there stood Lautisse. I said that I was getting ready to paint the garden fence but now that he was up, I would stop it. He protested, then took the brush from my hand and said, "First, I'll show you!" At that moment Betsy cried from the kitchen door that breakfast was ready. "No, no, " he said." No breakfast, — I will paint the fence. "I argued with him but he wouldn't even look up from his work. Betsy laughed and assured me that he was having a good time. He spent three hours at it and finished the fence. He was happy the whole day. He went back to town on the 9.10 that evening and at the station he shook my hand and said that he hadn't enjoyed himself so much in years.

We didn't hear anything from him for about 10 days but the newspapers learnt about the visit and came to our place. I was out but Betsy told the reporters everything and about the fence too. The next day the papers had quite a story and the headlines said: LAUTISSE PAINTS AGAIN. On the same day three men came to my place from different art galleries and offered 4.000 dollars for the fence. I refused. The next day I was offered 25.000 and then 50.000. On the fourth day a sculptor named Gerston came to my place. He was a friend of Lautisse. He advised me to allow the Palmer Museum in New York to exhibit it for a few weeks. He said that the gallery people were interested in the fence because

Lautisse had never before used a bit of white paint. I agreed. So the fence was put in the Palmer Museum. I went down myself to have a look at it. Hundreds of people came to see the fence, and I couldn't help laughing when I saw my fence because it had a fence around it.

A week later Gerston telephoned me and asked to come to him. He had something important to tell me. It turned out that Lautisse visited the exhibition and signed all the thirty sections of my fence. "Now," said Gerston, "you have really got something to sell." And indeed with Gerston's help, 29 of the 30 sections were sold within a month's time and the price was 10.000 each section. I didn't want to sell the 30th section and it's hanging now in cur living-room.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

на борту корабля, не имел понятия, в конце концов, хранить тайну, наш новый знакомый, мы стали настоящими друзьями, огород, его надо было покрасить, уже давно не проводил так хорошо время, заголовки гласили, никогда не использовал белую краску, не мог удержаться от смеха, оказалось, в течение месяца.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

introduce oneself, the world's best painter, be keen on smth, look up from one's work, assure smb, hear from smb, exhibit smth, be interested in smth, sign smth.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Where did the author and his wife meet Lautisse for the first time?
- 2) Was his name known to them? What did they find out at the library?
- 3) What did they promise the painter when they invited him to their place?
- 4) What kind of job did the author have to do in the morning?
- 5) Who did the job in the long run? What proves that he enjoyed it?
- 6) Was Lautisse's visit a kind of sensation for the reporters? Why?
- 7) What effect did the newspaper articles produce?
- 8) How much money was the author offered for the fence?
- 9) How did the gallery people explain their deep interest in the fence?
- 10) What do the author's words "the fence had a fence around it" mean?
- 11) What made the fence price rise?
- 12) Why did Lautisse's visit become a lucky chance for the author?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Does advertising mean a lot in life? Prove it by the text.
- 2) How did Lautisse use people's interest in his so-called "art" to prolong his fame?
- 3) Do people who visit picture galleries or collect pieces of art always understand art? Why do they do it then?
- 4) Does it often happen that a name means more than talent?

V Retell the text on the part of 1) Lautisse, 2) Betsy, 3) Gerston.

Unit 10

A GOOD START

Bill liked painting more than anything in life. He started painting when he was 15 and people said that as a painter he had quite a lot of talent and had mastered most of the technical requirements. At 22 he had his first one-man show when he was discovered by the critics and his pictures were all sold out. With the money he could afford to marry Leila, rent a studio and stop being a student. To complete his education he went to Italy but after 5 months all the money was spent and he had to return.

Bill never had another show like the first one, though he became a better painter. The critics did not think him modern enough and said he was too academic. From time to time he managed to sell some of his paintings but eventually things had got very tight and he was obliged to look for a job.

The day before he went for an interview with his uncle Bill was especially gloomy. In the morning he went up to one of his unfinished pictures in the studio but he felt he couldn't paint. He threw down his brush and a bright red spot appeared on the board already covered with black and yellow paint from his previous work. The board had been used to protect the floor and was at that moment a mixture of bright colours.

When Bill left, Leila got down to cleaning the studio. She took up the board and put it against the wall to clean the floor. At that moment Garrad, Bill's dealer, came in. Bill had asked him to come, look at his work and arrange a show but the dealer had for some time been uncertain on the matter. So he was looking around the studio, explaining how the gallery was booked up for a year and how he could not really promise Bill a show yet for two years or so.

Suddenly the board against the wall attracted his attention.

"Leila, my dear," he exclaimed. "I felt that there must be something like this. Tell me, why is he keeping it away from us?"

Leila was too shocked to answer. But Garrad went on: "I think it's wonderful. I never doubted Bill would catch up with the modern trends. Now Leila, are there more pictures for a full show? I must go now but I'll be ringing him up. I'm going to change the whole plan and show his new work in the autumn. Tell him not to waste time. As to this one if he wants to sell it, I'll buy it myself."

Leila stayed in the studio till Bill came back. She was too excited to tell him the story clearly and Bill could not understand anything at first. When he realized what had happened he shook with laughter. "You didn't explain the whole thing about the board to him, did you?" he managed to say at last.

"No, I didn't. I couldn't really, I believe I should have, but it would have made him look too silly. I just said I didn't think you'd sell it".

What was Bill to do?

Think of your own ending.

(What was Bill to do? What a thing, he thought, to find waiting for you on your return from taking a job at two pounds a week. He could paint more for an

exhibition that very evening and show them to Garrad the next day. After all, why not use it as a start for a good painter's career?)

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

больше всего в жизни, индивидуальная выставка, о ней узнали критики, мог позволить себе, чтобы закончить образование, не считали его достаточно современным, в конце концов, дела пошли совсем плохо, мрачный день, ярко-красное пятно, начала убирать студию, поставила у стены, организовать выставку, современные тенденции, выставить его новую работу, не терять времени, была слишком взволнована, вразумительно расказать, затрясся от смеха.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

master smth, manage to do smth, be (un) certain on smth, be booked up, attract smb's attention, keep smth away from smb., be too shocked to do smth, doubt smth, catch up with smth (smb.).

III Questions on the text:

- 1) When did Bill start painting and what did people say about his abilities?
- 2) What did he do with the money he got for his first show?
- 3) Why wasn't his further activity as a painter a success?
- 4) What was the reason of his going for an interview?
- 5) How did Garrad explain to Bill's wife the fact that he didn't want to arrange the show of Bill's pictures?
- 6) What attracted his attention suddenly?
- 7) What had the board been used for before? Why was Garrad so impressed?
- 8) What did Garrad mean by the words "catch up with the modern trends?"
- 9) Why did he change his mind at once?
- 10) What was Bill's reaction when his wife told him everything?
- 11) What trick did he decide to play on Garrad?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) What do you know about abstract manner of painting? Can you guess from the story what the author's attitude to this trend in painting is?
- 2) Comment on the title of the story. Do you think Bill will continue to paint in this manner?
- 3) Sometimes (or often) your life or your future depends on the opinion of some people. Is that so?
- 4) Compare Bill and Lautisse. Is there anything in common in their careers? What is the difference?

V Retell the story on the part of 1) Bill, 2) his wife, 3) Bill's dealer.

Unit 11

THE FILIPINO AND THE DRUNKARD¹

W. Saroyan

This loud-mouthed guy in the brown coat was not really mean², he was drunk. He took a sudden dislike to the small well-dressed Filipino and began to order him around the waiting-room, telling him to get back, not to crowd among the white people. They were waiting to get on the boat and cross the bay to Oakland. He was making a commotion in the waiting-room, and while everyone seemed to be in sympathy with the Filipino, no one seemed to want to come to his rescue, and the poor boy became very frightened.

He stood among the people, and this drunkard kept pushing up against him and saying: "I told you to get back. Now get back. I fought twenty-four months in France. I'm a real American. I don't want you standing up here among white people. "

The boy kept squeezing politely out of the drunkard's way, hurrying through the crowd, not saying anything and trying his best to be as decent as possible. But the drunkard didn't leave him alone. He didn't like the fact that the Filipino was wearing good clothes.

When the big door opened to let everybody to the boat, the young Filipino moved quickly among the people, running from the drunkard. He sat down in a corner, but soon got up and began to look for a more hidden place. At the other end of the boat was the drunkard. He could hear the man swearing. The boy looked for a place to hide, and rushed into the lavatory. He went into one of the open compartments and bolted the door. The drunkard entered the lavatory and began asking others in the room if they had seen the boy. Finally he found the compartment where the boy was standing, and he began swearing and demanding that the boy come out.

"Go away," the boy said.

The drunkard began pounding on the door. "You got to come out some time," he said. "I'll wait here till you do."

"Go away," said the boy. "I've done you nothing."

Behind the door the boy's bitterness grew to rage. He began to tremble, not fearing the man but fearing the rage growing in himself. He brought the knife from his pocket.

"Go away," he said again. "I have a knife. I don't want any trouble."

The drunkard said he was a real American, wounded twice. He wouldn't go away. He was afraid of no dirty little yellow-faced Filipino with a knife.

"I will kill you," said the boy. "I don't want any trouble. Go away. Please, don't make any trouble," he said earnestly.

He threw the door open and tried to rush beyond the man, the knife in his fist, but the drunkard caught him by the sleeve and drew him back. The sleeve of the boy's coat ripped, and the boy turned and thrust the knife into the side of the drunkard, feeling it scrape against the ribbone³. The drunkard shouted and screamed at once, then caught the boy by the throat, and the boy began to thrust

the knife into the side of the man many times. When the drunkard could hold him no more and fell to the floor, the boy rushed from the room, the knife still in his hand.

Everyone knew what he had done, yet no one moved. The boy ran to the front of the boat, seeking some place to go, but there was no place to go, and before the officers of the boat arrived he stopped suddenly and began to shout at the people.

"I didn't want to hurt him, why didn't you stop him? Is it right to chase a man like a rat? You knew he was drunk I didn't want to hurt him, but he wouldn't let me go. He tore my coat and tried to choke me. I told him I would kill him if he wouldn't go away. It is not my fault. I must go to Oakland to see my brother. He is sick. Do you think I'm looking for trouble when my brother is sick? Why didn't you stop him?"

NOTES:

¹ drunkard – пьяный;

² mean – грубый, зловредный;

³ ribbon – ребро.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

невзлюбил, сесть на корабль, казалось все ему симпатизировали, продолжал толкать его, старался не попадаться ему на пути, не оставлял его в покое, был хорошо одет, искать более укромное место, тебе все равно придется выйти, горечь сменилась яростью, дважды, ранен, зажав нож в руке, поймал за рукав, никто не двинулся с места, деваться было некуда, пытался задушить меня, это не моя вина.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

come to one's rescue, try one's best to do smth, demand that smb. do smth, fear smth, make some trouble, hold smb./smth, shout at smb., chase smb., let smb. go, hurt smb.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) How did it happen that the boy and the American found themselves in the same room?
- 2) In what condition was the man?
- 3) What did he begin to do?
- 4) Did anybody try to save the Filipino when the man began to tease him?
- 5) How did the man explain his behaviour?
- 6) What did the poor boy do?
- 7) Why did the boy rush into the lavatory?
- 8) What made the Filipino bring the knife out of his pocket?
- 9) He warned the man of the possible trouble, didn't he?
- 10) What happened when the boy opened the door?
- 11) What did the Filipino accuse the people of?

IV Discuss the following:

1) Give a character sketch of the drunkard. Find in the text the words and phrases he used to hurt the boy and to praise himself.

2) Do you think the man would have behaved so if he hadn't felt the silent support of the people? Do you agree that silence is sometimes more dangerous than words?

3) Comment on the words "the boy's bitterness grew to rage." Why did the boy feel bitterness? Why did he fear the rage growing in him?

4) How would you qualify the boy's behaviour if you were a fair judge? Was the man's death the Filipino's fault?

5) What is the main problem raised in the text? Is it acute nowadays? Does it exist in this country? Give examples.

6) Where do the roots of the problem of race discrimination lie? What do you think must be done to eliminate this phenomenon? Why is it dangerous?

V Retell the story on the part of 1) the boy, 2) one of the passengers, 3) a police-officer.

Unit 12

THE DINNER PARTY

N. Monsarrat

There are still some rich people in the world. Many of them lead lives of particular pleasure. But rich people do have their problems. They are seldom problems of finance, since most rich people have enough sense to hire other people to take care of their worries. But there are other, more genuine problems. They are the problems of behaviour.

Let me tell you a story, which happened to my uncle Octavian a full thirty years ago. At that time I myself was fifteen. My uncle Octavian was then a rich man. He was a charming and accomplished host whose villa was an accepted rendezvous of the great. He was a hospitable and most amiable man—until January 3, 1925.

There was nothing special about that day in the life of my uncle Octavian, except that it was his fifty-fifth birthday. As usual on such a day he was giving a party, a party for twelve people. All of them were old friends.

I, myself, aged fifteen, was deeply privileged. I was staying with my uncle at his exquisite villa, on holiday from school, and as a special concession on this happy day, I was allowed to come down to dinner. It was exciting for me to be admitted to such company, which included a newspaper proprietor of exceptional intelligence and his fabulous¹ American wife, a recent prime-minister of France and a distinguished German prince and princess.

At that age, you will guess, I was dazzled. Even today, 30 years later, one may fairly admit that the company was distinguished. But I should also stress that they were all old and intimate friends of my uncle Octavian.

Towards the end of a wonderful dinner, when dessert had been brought in and the servants had left, my uncle leant forward to admire a magnificent diamond ring on the princess's hand. She was a handsome woman. She turned her hand gracefully towards my uncle. Across the table, the newspaper proprietor leant across and said: "May I also have a look?" She smiled and nodded. Then she took off the ring and held it out to him. "It was my grandmother's — the old empress," she said. "I have not worn it for many years. It is said to have once belonged to Genghis Khan. "

There were exclamations of delight and admiration. The ring was passed from hand to hand. For a moment it rested on my own palm, gleaming splendidly. Then I passed it on to my neighbor. As I turned away again, I saw her pass it on.

It was some 20 minutes later when the princess stood up and said: "Before we leave you, may I have my ring back?"... There was a pause, while each of us looked expectantly at his neighbor. Then there was silence.

The princess was still smiling, though less easily. She was unused to asking for things twice. The silence continued, I still thought that it could only be a practical joke, and that one of us—probably the prince himself— would produce the ring with a laugh. But when nothing happened at all, I knew that the rest of the night would be dreadful.

I am sure that you can guess the sort of scene that followed. There was the embarrassment of the guests— all of them old and valued friends. There was a nervous search of the whole room. But it did not bring the princess's ring back again. It had vanished—an irreplaceable thing, worth possibly two hundred thousand pounds—in a roomful of twelve people, all known to each other.

No servants had entered the room. No one had left it for a moment. The thief (for now it could only be theft) was one of us, one of my uncle Octavian's cherished friends.

I remember it was the French cabinet minister who was most insistent on being searched, indeed, in his excitement he had already started to turn out his pockets, before my uncle held up his hand and stopped him. "There will be no search in my house," he commanded. "You are all my friends. The ring can only be lost. If it is not found"— he bowed towards the princess— "I will naturally make amends² myself."

The ring was never found, it never appeared, either then or later.

To our family's surprise, uncle Octavian was a comparatively poor man, when he died (which happened, in fact, a few weeks ago). And I should say that he died with the special sadness of a hospitable host who never gave a single lunch or dinner party for the last thirty years of his life.

NOTES:

1 fabulous – зд. известная, роскошная;

2 make amends (for) – зд. возместить ущерб.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

вести жизнь, состоящую из одних удовольствий, проблемы, связанные с деньгами, очаровательный хозяин, место, где обычно встречались великие мира сего, радушный и хороший человек, устраивал прием на 12 персон, мне оказали особую привилегию, человек необычайного ума, я был ослеплен, общество было избранным, великолепное кольцо с бриллиантом, передавали из рук в руки, выжидательно посмотреть, смущение гостей, старые, проверенные друзья, незаменимая вещь, больше всех настаивал на обыске, выворачивать карманы, ни тогда, ни потом.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

hire smb, have enough (much, little, no) sense to do smth, be allowed to do smth, admire smth, have a look at, be (un) used to doing smth, to smb's surprise.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) How old was the author of the story which happened to his uncle?
- 2) What kind of man was uncle Octavian?
- 3) In what way did he want to celebrate his fifty-fifth birthday?
- 4) Describe the guests.
- 5) Why did the boy consider himself to be deeply privileged?
- 6) What was peculiar about all those people present at the party?
- 7) What did the princess tell the guests about her ring?
- 8) Why did the boy think it was a joke when the ring had disappeared?
- 9) What attempts were made to find the ring?
- 10) Could the servants take the ring?
- 11) Why didn't uncle Octavian allow the guests to be searched?
- 12) Why did he tell the princess he would make amends though it was clear he wasn't the thief?
- 13) What was the reason of uncle Octavian's not giving parties in the last years of his life?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) What did the author mean saying that rich people do have their problems?
- 2) "Problems of behaviour"—what are they? Have you ever run across them? What do you know about them? Discuss the situations you find most interesting. In what way are these problems connected with the text?
- 3) Why does the author stress many times that the guests were close, valuable friends?
- 4) Do high moral principles and well-being always go together?
- 5) Why did the author say that his uncle had died with sadness? What kind of sadness was it? Was it more than sadness, perhaps?
- 6) Think of another end of the story.

V Retell the text on the part of 1) uncle Octavian, 2) one of the guests.

Unit 13

FAIR OF FACE

C. Hare

John Franklin, with whom I was at Oxford, invited me to stay with his people at Markhampton for the Markshire Hunt Ball¹. He and his sister were arranging a small party for it, he said.

"I've never met your sister," I remarked. "What is she like?"

"She is a beauty," said John, seriously and simply.

I thought at the time that it was an odd, old-fashioned phrase, but it turned out to be strictly and literally true. Deborah Franklin was beautiful in the grand, classic manner. She didn't look in the least like a film star or a model. But looking at her you forgot everything. It was the sheer beauty of her face that took your breath away.

With looks like that, it would be asking too much to expect anything startling in the way of brains, and I found Deborah, a trifle dull. She was of course well aware of her extraordinary good looks, and was perfectly prepared to discuss them, just as a man seven feet high might talk about the advantages and inconveniences of being tall.

Most of our party were old friends of the Franklins, who took Deborah for granted as a local phenomenon, but among them was a newcomer—a young man with a beard named Aubrey Melcombe, who had lately taken charge of the local museum. As soon as he set eyes on Deborah he said:

"We have never met before, but your face, of course, is perfectly familiar."

Deborah had evidently heard that one before.

"I never give sitting to photographers," she said, "but people will snap me in the street. It's such a nuisance."

"Photographs!" said Aubrey. "I mean your portrait—the one that was painted four hundred years ago. Has nobody ever told you that you are the living image of the Warbeck Titian²?"

"I've never heard of the Warbeck Titian," said Deborah, "You shall judge for yourself," – said Aubrey. "I'll send you a ticket for the opening of the exhibition."

Then he went off to dance with Rosamund Clegg, his assistant at the museum, who was said to be his fiancée.

I did not care much³ for Aubrey, or for his young woman, but I had to admit that they knew their job when I came to the opening of the exhibition a few months later. They had gathered in treasures of every sort from all over the county and arranged them admirably. The jewel of the show was, of course, the great Titian. It had a wall to itself at the end of the room and I was looking at it when Deborah came in.

The likeness was fantastic. Lord Warbeck had never had his paintings cleaned, so that Titian's flesh tints were golden and carmine, in vivid contrast to Deborah's pink and white. But the face behind the glass might have been her mirror image. By a happy chance she had chosen to wear a very plain black dress, which matched up well to the portrait's dark clothes. She stood there still and silent, staring at her centuries-old likeness. I wondered what she felt.

A pressman's camera flashed and clicked. First one visitor and then another noticed the resemblance and presently the rest of the gallery was deserted. Everyone was crowding round the Titian to stare from the painted face to the real one and back again. The only clear space was round Deborah herself. People were moving to get a good view of her profile, without losing sight of the Titian, which fortunately was in profile also. It must have been horribly embarrassing for Deborah, but she never seemed to notice them. She went on peering into the picture, for a very long time. Then she turned round and walked quickly out of the building. As she passed me I saw that she was crying – a surprising display of emotion in one so calm.

About ten minutes later Aubrey discovered that a pair of Degas⁴ statuettes was missing from a stand opposite the Titian. They were small objects and very valuable. The police were sent for and there was a considerable fuss, but nothing was found. I left as soon as I could and went to the Franklins'. Deborah was in.

"Have you got the statuettes?" I asked.

She took them out of her handbag.

"How did you guess?"

"It seemed to me that your reception in front of the Titian was a performance," I explained. "It distracted attention from everything else in the room while the theft took place."

"Yes," said Deborah, "Aubrey arranged it very cleverly, didn't he? He thought of everything. He even helped me choose this dress to go with the one in the picture, you know."

"And the press photographer? Had he been laid on too?"

"Oh, yes. Aubrey arranged for someone to be there to photograph me. He thought it would help to collect a crowd. "

Her coolness was astonishing. Even with the evidence of the statuettes in front of me I found it hard to believe that I was talking to a thief.

"It was a very clever scheme altogether," I said. "You and Aubrey must have put a lot of work into it. I had no idea that you were such friends."

There was a flush on her cheeks as she replied:

"Oh yes, I've been seeing a good deal of him lately. Ever since the Hunt Ball, in fact."

After that there didn't seem to be much more to say.

"There's one thing I don't quite understand," I said finally, "People were surrounding you and staring at you up to the moment you left the gallery. How did Aubrey manage to pass the statuettes to you without anyone seeing?"

She rounded on me in a fury of surprise and indignation.

"Pass the statuettes to me?" she repeated. "Good God! Are you suggesting that I helped Aubrey to steal them?"

She looked like an angry goddess, and was about as charming.

"But – but – " I stammered. "But if you didn't who did?"

"Rosamund, of course. Aubrey gave them to her while all was going on in front of the Titian. She simply put them in her bag and walked out. I'd only just got them back from her when you came in."

"Rosamund!" It was my turn to be surprised. "Then the whole thing was a put-up job between them?"

"Yes. They wanted to get married and hadn't any money, and she knew a dealer who would give a price for things like these with no questions asked and – and there you are."

"Then how did you come into it?" I asked.

"Aubrey said that if I posed in front of the Titian it would be wonderful publicity for the exhibition – and, of course, I fell for it. " She laughed. "I've only just remembered. When Aubrey wanted to make fun of me he used to say I'd make a wonderful cover girl. That's just what I was – a cover girl for him and Rosamund."

She stood up and picked up the statuettes.

"These will have to go back to the gallery, I suppose, " she said, "Can it be done without too much fuss? It's silly of me, I know, but I'd rather they didn't prosecute Aubrey."

I made sympathetic noises.

"It was Rosamund's idea in the first place," she went on. "I'm sure of that. Aubrey hasn't the wits to think of anything so clever."

"It was clever enough," I said. "But you saw through it at once. How was that?"

Deborah smiled.

"I'm not clever," she said. "But that old dark picture with the glass on it made a perfect mirror. Aubrey told me to stand in front of it, so I did. But I'm not interested in art, you know. I was looking at myself. And of course I couldn't help seeing what was happening just behind me..."

NOTES:

¹ Markshire Hunt Ball – a ball given by the hunting club;

² the Warbeck Titian – a picture by the great Venetian painter in the Warbeck Hall;

³ didn't care much – didn't like;

⁴ Degas – a famous French painter.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

старомодная фраза, ни в малейшей степени, захватывала дух, с такой внешностью, скучноватая, отдавала себе отчет, встал во главе, очень знакомо, никогда не позирую фотографам, судить самому, вынужден был признать, сходство было поразительным, зеркальное отражение, по счастливой случайности, заметили сходство, казалось, не замечала, не хватало двух статуэток, изрядная суматоха, отвлечь внимание, продумал все, было трудно поверить, часто виделись, помогла украсть, в чем заключалась ваша роль, попала на крючок, служила для отвода глаз, не хватило бы ума, раскусила, не интересоваться живописью.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

turn out to be true, sheer beauty, arrange a party, take for granted, local phenomenon, set eyes on, not care much for smb, arrange admirably, the jewel of the show, match up well (to), get a good view of smth/smb, peer into the picture, display of emotion, astonishing coolness, wonderful publicity, without much fuss, prosecute.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Why did the author come to the Franklins'?
- 2) Describe Deborah.
- 3) Why didn't the author expect Deborah to be a clever girl?
- 4) What did Aubrey Melcombe say about Deborah's face?
- 5) Where did he invite the girl?
- 6) Why did the author say that Aubrey and his fiancée knew their job when he came to the opening of the exhibition?
- 7) Why did everybody crowd round the picture?
- 8) Describe Deborah's behaviour at the exhibition.
- 9) What surprised the author in the way Deborah left the exhibition?
- 10) What was discovered some time later?
- 11) How did the author guess that the theft had been carefully planned?
- 12) Why was Deborah indignant?
- 13) Who had stolen the statuettes?
- 14) How had Aubrey make Deborah act as a cover girl?
- 15) How had Deborah found out what was going on?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Give a character sketch of a) Deborah, b) Aubrey.
- 2) Do you agree with the author that if a person has good appearance "it would be asking too much to expect anything startling in the way of brains"? Was Deborah really such stupid?
- 3) Analyse Aubrey's behaviour. Do you think he belongs to the sort of people who make use of others for their own sake?
- 4) Why did Deborah say "I'd rather they didn't prosecute him"?
- 5) What's the author's attitude to the heroine of the story?

Unit 14

CAGED L. E. Reeve

Purcell was a small, fussy¹ man; red cheeks and a tight melonlike stomach. Large glasses so magnified his eyes as to give him the appearance of a wise and kind owl.

He owned a pet shop. He sold cats and dogs and monkeys; he dealt in fish food and bird seed, prescribed remedies for ailing canaries, on his shelves there were long rows of cages. He considered himself something of a professional man.

There was a constant stir of life in his shop. The customers who came in said:

"Aren't they cute²? Look at that little monkey! They're sweet. "

And Mr. Purcell himself would smile and rub his hands and nod his head.

Each morning, when the routine of opening his shop was completed, it was the proprietor's custom to perch on a high stool, behind the counter, unfold his morning paper, and digest the day's news.

It was a raw, wintry day. Wind gusted against the high, plateglass windows. Having completed his usual tasks, Mr. Purcell again mounted the high stool and unfolded his morning paper. He adjusted his glasses, and glanced at the day's headlines.

There was a bell over the door that rang whenever a customer entered. This morning, however, for the first time Mr. Purcell could recall, it failed to ring. Simply he glanced up, and there was the stranger, standing just inside the door, as if he had materialized out of thin air.

The storekeeper slid off his stool. From the first instant he knew instinctively, that the man hated him; but out of habit he rubbed his hands, smiled and nodded,

"Good morning," he beamed, "What can I do for you?"

The man's shiny shoes squeaked forward, His suit was cheap, ill-fitting, but obviously new. Ignoring Purcell for the moment, he looked around the shadowy shop.

"A nasty morning," volunteered the shopkeeper. He clasped both hands across his melonlike stomach, and smiled importantly. Now what was it you wanted?"

The man stared closely at Purcell, as though just now aware of his presence. He said, "I want something in a cage."

"Something in a cage?" Mr. Purcell was a bit confused. "You mean – some sort of pet?"

"I mean what I said!" snapped³ the man. "Something in a cage. Something alive that's in a cage."

"I see," hastened the storekeeper, not at all certain that he did. "Now let me think. A white rat, perhaps? I have some very nice white rats."

"No!" said the man. "Not rats. Something with wings. Something that flies."

"A bird!" exclaimed Mr. Purcell.

"A bird's all right" The customer pointed suddenly to a cage which contained two snowy birds. "Doves? How much for those?"

"Five-fifty," came the prompt answer. "And a very reasonable price. They are a fine pair. "

"Five-fifty?" The man was obviously disappointed. He produced a five-dollar bill. "I'd like to have those birds. But this is all I've got. Just five dollars. "

Mentally, Mr. Purcell made a quick calculation, which told him that at a fifty cent reduction he could still reap a tidy profit. He smiled kindly "My dear man, if you want them that badly, you can certainly have them for five dollars."

"I'll take them." He laid his five dollars on the counter. Mr. Purcell unhooked the cage, and handed it to his customer. "That noise!" The man said suddenly. "Doesn't it get on your nerves?"

"Noise? What noise?" Mr. Purcell looked surprised. He could hear nothing unusual.

"Listen." The staring eyes came closer. "How long d'you think it took me to make that five dollars?"

The merchant wanted to order him out of the shop. But oddly enough, he couldn't. He heard himself asking, "Why—why, how long did it take you?"

The other laughed. "Ten years! At hard labor⁴. Ten years to earn five dollars. Fifty cents a year. "

It was best, Purcell decided, to humor him. "My, my! Ten years. That's certainly a long time. Now—"

"They give you five dollars," laughed the man, "and a cheap suit, and tell you not to get caught again."

The man swung around, and stalked abruptly from the store.

Purcell sighed with sudden relief. He walked to the window and stared out. Just outside, his peculiar customer had stopped. He was holding the cage shoulder-high, staring at his purchase. Then, opening the cage, he reached inside and drew out one of the doves. He tossed it into the air. He drew out the second and tossed it after the first. They rose like balls and were lost in the smoky gray of the wintry city. For an instant the liberator's silent gaze watched them. Then he dropped the cage and walked away.

The merchant was perplexed. So desperately had the man desired the doves that he had let him have them at a reduced price. And immediately he had turned them loose. "Now why, "Mr. Purcell muttered, "did he do that?" He felt vaguely insulted.

NOTES:

¹ fussy – суетливый;

² cute – очаровательный;

³ snap – огрызнуться;

⁴ at hard labor – зд. на каторге.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

придать сходство, зоомагазин, лекарства для больных канареек, считал себя большим специалистом, потирать руки, кивать головой, усаживаться на высокую табуретку, разворачивать газету, не зазвонил, возник из воздуха, с первой минуты, плохо сшитый костюм, сложил руки на животе, немного смущен, быстро прикинул в уме, при скидке 50 центов, получить существенную прибыль, снял клетку с крючка, хотел выпроводить, облегченно вздохнул, достал одного из голубей, на мгновение, выпустил на свободу, чувствовал себя оскорбленным.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

own smth, consider himself, digest the day's news, nod in agreement, ignore smb/smth, stare closely, get reasonable price, be disappointed, want badly, on one's nerves, toss into the air.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Describe Mr. Purcell.
- 2) What did he own and what did he sell?
- 3) What did the customers say?
- 4) What did Mr. Purcell do every morning?
- 5) What was the weather like on that day?
- 6) When did he notice the stranger?
- 7) What did the stranger look like?
- 8) What did he want to buy?
- 9) What shows that Mr. Purcell didn't understand the man at first?
- 10) In what manner did the man speak to the owner of the shop?
- 11) Why did Mr. Purcell have to reduce the price?
- 12) How had the man earned the five dollars?
- 13) What scene did the shopkeeper watch through the window?
- 14) What was his reaction to the stranger's behaviour?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Characterize Mr. Purcell. Find in the text all the details that show the author's attitude to the shopkeeper.
- 2) Describe the stranger. Explain why he let loose the birds.
- 3) Compare the shopkeeper and the customer. Find in the text the details that prove the contrast between them.
- 4) Comment on the title of the story. Who was "caged"? Why was it the pet-shop where the stranger came?
- 5) Describe the stranger's previous life.
- 6) Why did Mr. Purcell feel insulted?

V Retell the story on the part of 1) the owner of the shop, 2) the stranger.

Unit 15

THE TV BLACKOUT¹

Art Buchwald

A week ago Sunday New York city had a blackout¹ and all nine television stations in the area went out for several hours. This created tremendous crises in families all over New York and proved that TV plays a much greater role in people's lives than anyone can imagine.

For example, when the TV went off in the Bufkins's house panic set in. First Bufkins thought it was his set in the living-room, so he rushed into his bedroom and turned on that set. Nothing. The phone rang, and Mrs. Bufkins heard her sister in Manhattan tell her that there was a blackout.

She hung up and said to her husband, "It isn't your set. Something's happened to the top of the Empire State Building. "

Bufkins looked at her and said, "Who are you?"

"I'm your wife, Edith."

"Oh," Bufkins said. "Then I suppose those kids² in there are mine."

"That's right," Mrs. Bufkins said. "If you ever got out of that armchair in front of the TV set you'd know who we are."

"Oh! they've really grown," Bufkins said, looking at his son and daughter. "How old are they now?"

"Thirteen and fourteen," Mrs. Bufkins replied.

"Hi, kids!"

"Who's he?" Bufkins's son, Henry, asked.

"It's your father," Mrs. Bufkins said.

"I'm pleased to meet you," Bufkins's daughter, Mary, said shyly.

There was silence all around.

"Look," said Bufkins finally. "I know I haven't been a good father but now that the TV's out I'd like to know you better."

"How?" asked Henry.

"Well, let's just talk," Bufkins said. "That's the best way to get to know each other."

"What do you want to talk about?" Mary asked.

"Well, to begin with, what school do you go to?"

"We go to High School," Henry said.

"So you're both in high school!" There was a dead silence.

"What do you do?" Mary asked.

"I'm an accountant³," Bufkins said.

"I thought you were a car salesman," Mrs. Bufkins said in surprise.

"That was two years ago. Didn't I tell you I changed jobs?" Bufkins said.

"No, you didn't. You haven't told me anything for two years."

"I'm doing quite well too," Bufkins said.

"Then why am I working in a department store?" Mrs. Bufkins demanded.

"Oh, are you still working in a department store? If I had known that, I would have told you could quit last year. You should have mentioned it," Bufkins said.

There was more dead silence.

Finally Henry said, "Hey, you want to hear me play the guitar?"

"You know how to play the guitar? Say, didn't I have a daughter who played the guitar?"

"That was Susie," Mrs. Bufkins said.

"Where is she?"

"She got married a year ago, just about the time you were watching the World Series⁴."

"You know," Bufkins said, very pleased. "I hope they don't fix the antenna for another couple hours. There's nothing better than a blackout for a man who really wants to know his family."

NOTES:

¹ blackout – a period of complete darkness (when all the electric lights go out) due to the power failure;

² kids (Am.) – children;

³ an accountant – бухгалтер;

⁴ World Series – baseball contest in America.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

вышли из строя, создало огромный кризис, началась паника, бросился в спальню, повесила трубку, смущенно, воцарилось молчание, лучший способ узнать друг друга, я преуспеваю, могла бросить работу в прошлом году, как раз в то самое время, починить антенну, еще пару часов.

II Questions on the text:

- 1) What did the blackout in New York city cause?
- 2) What was the result of it?
- 3) Why did the panic set in the Bufkins's house?
- 4) Why was Bufkins surprised to see his wife and children?
- 5) What did father learn about his children?
- 6) What did Bufkins tell the members of his family about himself?
- 7) Why didn't he know that his elder daughter had got married?
- 8) Why did Bufkins come to the conclusion that a TV-blackout is the best time for a man to get to know his family?

III Discuss the following:

- 1) What role does TV play in the life of people?
- 2) What are the advantages and disadvantages of TV?
- 3) Can you prove that the life of the American family is dominated by TV?
- 4) What about your family? What kind of programs do you watch? Explain your choice.

5) Do you think that immense cultural possibilities of television are used to the utmost? Give your grounds.

6) Suggest improvements on our TV programs. What else would you like to see on TV? Which programs do you want to be taken off the screen? Why?

IV Retell the text using indirect speech on the part of: 1) Bufkins's wife, 2) one of the children.

Unit 16

THEN IN TRIUMPH

F. L. Parke

There were cars in front of the house. Four of them. Clifford Oslow cut across the lawn and headed for the back steps. But not soon enough. The door of a big red car opened and a woman came rushing after him. She was a little person, smaller even than Clifford himself. But she was fast. She reached him just as he was getting through the hedge.

"You're Mr. Oslow, aren't you?" she said. She pulled out a little book and a pencil and held them under his nose. "I've been trying to get her autograph all week," she explained. "I want you to get it for me. Just drop the book in a mailbox. It's stamped and the address is on it. "

And then she was gone and Clifford was standing there holding the book and pencil in his hand.

He put the autograph book in his pocket and hurried up the steps.

There was a lot of noise coming from the living-room. Several male voices, a strange woman's voice breaking through now and then, rising above the noise. And Julia's voice, rising above the noise, clear and kindly and very sure.

"Yes," she was saying. And, "I'm very glad." And, "People have been very generous to me."

She sounded tired.

Clifford leaned against the wall while he finished the sandwich and the beer. He left the empty bottle on the table, turned off the kitchen light and pushed easily on the hall door.

A man grabbed him by the arm and pushed him along the hall and into the parlor¹. "Here he is, " somebody shouted. "Here's Mr. Oslow!"

There were a half-a-dozen people there, all with notebooks and busy pens. Julia was in the big chair by the fireplace, looking plumper than usual in her new green dress.

She smiled at him affectionately but, it seemed to him, a little distantly. He'd noticed that breach in her glance many times lately. He hoped that it wasn't superiority, but he was afraid that it was.

"Hello, Clifford," she said.

"Hello, Julia," he answered.

He didn't get a chance to go over and kiss her. A reporter had him right against the wall. How did it seem to go to bed a teller² at the Gas Company and to wake up the husband of a best-selling novelist? Excellent, he told them. Was he going to give up his job? No, he wasn't. Had he heard the news that "Welcome Tomorrow" was going to be translated into Turkish? No, he hadn't.

And then the woman came over. The one whose voice he'd heard back in the kitchen where he wished he'd stayed.

"How", she inquired briskly, "did you like the story?"

Clifford didn't answer immediately. He just looked at the woman. Everyone became very quiet. And everyone looked at him. The woman repeated the question. Clifford knew what he wanted to say. "I liked it very much," he wanted to say and then run. But they wouldn't let him run. They'd make him stay. And ask him more questions. Which he couldn't answer.

"I haven't," he mumbled, "had an opportunity to read it yet. But I'm going to," he promised. And then came a sudden inspiration. "I'm going to read it now!" There was a copy on the desk by the door, Clifford grabbed it and raced for the front stairs.

Before he reached the second flight, though, he could hear the woman's voice on the hall phone. "At last", she was saying, "we have discovered an adult American who has not read "Welcome Tomorrow". He is, of all people, Clifford Oslow, white, 43, a native of this city and the husband of..."

On the second floor Clifford reached his study, turned on the light over the table and dropped into the chair before it. He put Julia's book right in front of him, but he didn't immediately open it.

Instead he sat back in the chair and looked about him. The room was familiar enough. It had been his for over eighteen years. The table was the same. And the old typewriter was the one he had bought before Julia and he were married.

There hadn't been many changes. All along the bookcase were the manuscripts of his novels. His rejected novels. On top was his latest one, the one that had stopped going the rounds six months before.

On the bottom was his earliest one. The one he wrote when Julia and he were first married.

Yes, Clifford was a writer then. Large W. And he kept on thinking of himself as one for many years after, despite the indifference of the publishers. Finally, of course, his writing had become merely a gesture. A stubborn unwillingness to admit defeat. Now, to be sure, the defeat was definite. Now that Julia, who before a year ago hadn't put pen to paper, had written a book, had it accepted and now was looking at advertisements that said, "over four hundred thousand copies."

He picked up "Welcome Tomorrow" and opened it, as he opened every book, in the middle. He read a paragraph. And then another. He had just started a third when suddenly he stopped. He put down Julia's book, reached over to the shelf and pulled out the dusty manuscript of his own first effort. Rapidly he turned over the crisp pages. Then he began to read aloud.

Clifford put the manuscript on the table on top of the book. For a long time he sat quietly. Then he put the book in his lap and left the manuscript on the table and began to read them, page against page. He had his answer in ten minutes.

And then he went back downstairs. A couple of reporters were still in the living-room. "But, Mrs. Oslow, naturally our readers are interested," one was insisting. "When," he demanded, "will you finish your next book?"

"I don't know," she answered uneasily.

Clifford came across the room to her, smiling. He put his arm around her and pressed her shoulder firmly but gently. "Now, now, Julia," he protested. "Let's tell the young man at once."

The reporter looked up.

"Mrs. Oslow's new novel," Clifford announced proudly, "will be ready in another month."

Julia turned around and stared at him, quite terrified.

But Clifford kept on smiling. Then he reached into his pocket and brought out the autograph book and pencil that had been forced on him on his way home. "Sign here," he instructed.

NOTES:

¹ parlor – гостиная;

² teller – кассир в банке.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

пересек лужайку, направился к заднему крыльцу, бросилась за ним, достала записную книжку, прислонился к стеклу, нежно ему улыбнулась, отчужденный взгляд; пожалел, что не остался; побежал к лестнице, взрослый американец, уроженец этого города, рукописи его романов, перестал посылать из одного издательства в другое, писатель с большой буквы, упрямое нежелание, в жизни не написала ни слова, плод его авторских усилий, сравнивая страницы рукописи и книги, с чувством неловкости, в ужасе.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

rise above the noise, be generous to smb, a best-selling novelist, inquire briskly, have an opportunity to do smth, be familiar, keep on doing smth, admit defeat, have smth accepted, turn over the pages, read aloud, demand, insist on smth, announce proudly, make smb stay, answer uneasily, be forced on smb.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Why did Mr. Oslow try to get into the house through the back door?
- 2) Who stopped him?
- 3) What did the woman want Mr. Oslow to do?
- 4) Why was the living-room noisy?
- 5) What were the people in the room doing?

- 6) What did Mr. Oslow think of his wife's attitude towards him? Was it different from her usual attitude?
- 7) What questions did the reporters ask Mr. Oslow?
- 8) Why did Mr. Oslow say that he was going to read the book just then?
- 9) Were his words a sensation? Prove it.
- 10) What did he remember sitting in his study?
- 11) Why did he think that his defeat as a writer was definite now?
- 12) What did he discover when he began reading his wife's novel?
- 13) Why did Mr. Oslow give an answer to the reporter's questions? What did he feel?
- 14) Why was his wife terrified at his answer?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Was Mr. Oslow a talented writer? Why were his novels rejected? Why was his rejected novel published under his wife's name and had a success?
- 2) Mr. Oslow was not a selfish man. Fame wasn't his only aim. What about Julia?
- 3) Is genuine talent always recognized? Who has a right to judge real talent?
- 4) What scene do you think will follow Clifford's last words?

V Retell the story on the part of 1) Clifford, 2) his wife, 3) one of the reporters.

Unit 17

THE VERGER¹

W. S. Maugham

There had been a wedding that afternoon at St. Peter's Church, and Edward Foreman still wore his verger's gown. He had been verger for 16 years and liked his job. The verger was waiting for the vicar. The vicar had just been appointed. He was a red-faced energetic man and the verger disliked him. Soon the vicar came in and said: "Foreman, I've got something unpleasant to say to you. You have been here a great many years and I think you've fulfilled your duties quite satisfactorily here; but I found out a most striking thing the other day. I discovered to my astonishment that you could neither read nor write. I think you must learn, Foreman. "

"I'm afraid I can't now, sir. I'm too old a dog to learn new tricks."

"In that case, Foreman, I'm afraid you must go."

"Yes, sir, I quite understand. I shall be happy to hand in my resignation as soon as you have found somebody to take my place."

Up to now Edward's face hadn't shown any signs of emotion. But when he had closed the door of the church behind him his lips trembled. He walked slow-

ly with a heavy heart. He didn't know what to do with himself. True, he had saved a small sum of money but it was not enough to live on without doing something, and life cost more and more every year.

It occurred to him now that a cigarette would comfort him and since he was not a smoker and never had any in his pockets he looked for a shop where he could buy a packet of good cigarettes. It was a long street with all sorts of shops in it but there was not a single one where you could buy cigarettes.

"That's strange," said Edward. "I can't be the only man who walks along the street and wants to have a smoke," he thought. An idea struck him. Why shouldn't he open a little shop there? "Tobacco and Sweets." "That's an idea," he said. "It is strange how things come to you when you least expect it."

He turned, walked home and had his tea.

"You are very silent this afternoon, Edward," his wife remarked.

"I'm thinking," he said. He thought the matter over from every point of view and the next day he went to look for a suitable shop. And within a week the shop was opened and Edward was behind the counter selling cigarettes.

Edward Foreman did very well. Soon he decided that he might open another shop and employ a manager. He looked for another long street that didn't have a tobacconist's in it and opened another shop. This was a success too. In the course of ten years he acquired no less than ten shops and was making a lot of money. Every Monday he went to all his shops, collected the week's takings and took them to the bank.

One morning the bank manager said that he wanted to talk to him.

"Mr. Foreman, do you know how much money you have got in the bank?"

"Weil, I have a rough idea."

"You have 30 thousand dollars and it's a large sum. You should invest it. "We shall make you out a list of securities² which will bring you a better rate of interest³ than the bank can give you."

There was a troubled look on Mr. Foreman's face. "And what will I have to do?"

"Oh, you needn't worry," the banker smiled. "All you have to do is to read and to sign the papers. "

"That's the trouble, sir. I can sign my name but I can't read." The manager was so surprised that he jumped up from his seat, He couldn't believe his ears.

"Good God, man, what would you be if you had been able to read?!"

"I can tell you that, sir," said Mr. Foreman. "I would be verger of St. Peter's church."

NOTES:

¹ verger – служитель в церкви;

² securities – ценные бумаги;

³ a better rate of interest – больше процентов.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

энергичный человек, недолюбливал, на днях, к своему изумлению, найти кого-то вместо меня, до сих пор, признаки переживания, губы дрожали, скопить небольшую сумму денег, становилась дороже с каждым днем, успокоит, ни одного магазина, его осенило, со всех сторон, в течение недели, нанять управляющего, приобрел не менее 10 магазинов, подписать документы, в том-то и беда, не поверил своим ушам.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

wear smth, be appointed, have something (un) pleasant to say, fulfill one's duties, find out smth, neither... nor..., with a heavy heart, live on smth, occur to smb, think smth over, be a success, have a rough idea of smth, a striking thing (idea), to one's astonishment, do well, invest money in smth.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) For how long had Edward Foreman worked at St. Peter's Church?
- 2) What did the verger think of the new vicar?
- 3) What had the vicar become aware of?
- 4) Did the verger's face betray any emotions at first?
- 5) Did it really make no difference for him that he had to leave his position? Give your grounds.
- 6) What caused his idea to open a tobacco shop?
- 7) "He thought the matter over from every point of view". What do you think he may have considered?
- 8) His business was a success, wasn't it? Prove it.
- 9) How did Foreman accept the idea of investing his money?
- 10) What was it that made the banker jump up from his seat?

IV True or false?

- 1) The vicar said that the verger hadn't done his job properly that's why he had to dismiss him.
- 2) Foreman promised to start learning to read.
- 3) The verger was a very reserved person and didn't show how offended he was by the vicar's words.
- 4) The sum of money Edward had saved was enough to live on and he didn't worry about work.
- 5) Edward didn't smoke that's why when he needed a cigarette he began looking for a tobacconist's.
- 6) The new business brought Foreman no profit and he thought of giving it up.
- 7) Mr. Foreman hid it from the banker that he couldn't read and followed his advice.

V Discuss the following:

- 1) "It's strange how things come to you when you least expect it." Comment on this phrase. Has the same ever happened to you? Speak about it.
- 2) Describe how the verger's feelings and emotions have changed since the moment he was awaiting the new vicar.

3) Mr. Foreman was a promising businessman. Why do you think he said he would be a verger if he had been able to read?

4) "I'm too old a dog to learn new tricks." What did the verger mean saying these words? Do you agree that there's an age limit for starting a new life?

VI Retell the text on the part of 1) Mr. Foreman, 2) the banker, 3) Edward's wife.

Unit 18

A LION'S SKIN

W. S. Maugham

A good many people were shocked when they read that Captain Forestier had met his death in a fire trying to save his wife's dog, which had been accidentally shut up in the house. Some said they never knew he had it in him; others said it was exactly what they would have expected him to do. After the tragic occurrence Mrs. Forestier found shelter in the villa of some people called Hardy, their neighbors.

Mrs. Forestier was a very nice woman. But she was neither charming, beautiful nor intelligent; on the contrary she was absurd and foolish; yet the more you knew her, the more you liked her. She was a tender, romantic and idealistic soul. But it took you some time to discover it. During the war she in 1916 joined a hospital unit. There she met her future husband Captain Forestier. This is what she told me about their courtship¹. "It was a case of love at first sight. He was the most handsome man I'd ever seen in my life. But he wasn't wounded. You know, it's a most extraordinary thing, he went all through the war, he risked his life twenty times a day, but he never even got a scratch. It was because of carbuncles² that he was put into hospital. "

It seemed quite an unromantic thing on which to start a passionate attachment, but after 16 years of marriage Mrs. Forestier still adored her husband. When they were married Mrs. Forestier's relations, hard-bitten Western people, had suggested that her husband should go to work rather than live on her money (and she had a nice sum of money on her account before the marriage), and Captain Forestier was all for it. The only stipulation he made was this: "There are some things a gentleman can't do, Eleanor. If one is a sahib one can't help it, one does owe something to his class. "

Eleanor was too proud of him to let it be said that he was a fortune-hunter who had married her for her money and she made up her mind not to object if he found a job worth his while. Unfortunately, the only jobs that offered were not very important and gradually the idea of his working was dropped.

The Forestiers lived most of the year in their villa and shortly before the accident they made acquaintance of the people called Hardy who lived next door. It turned out that Mr. Hardy had met Mr. Forestier before, in India. But Mr. Forestier was not a gentleman then, he was a car-washer in a garage. He was young then and full of hopes. He saw rich people in a smart club with their ease,

their casual manner and it filled him with admiration and envy. He wanted to be like them. He wanted — it was grotesque and pathetic — he wanted to be a GENTLEMAN. The war gave him a chance. Eleanor's money provided the means³. They got married and he became a "sahib"⁴.

But everything ended very tragically.

Once the Forestiers' villa caught fire. The Forestiers were out. When they arrived it was already too late to do anything about it. Their neighbors, the Hardies saved whatever they could, but it wasn't much. They had nothing left to do but stand and look at the roaring flames. Suddenly Eleanor cried: "God! My little dog, it's there in the fire!"

Forestier turned round and started to run to the house. Hardy caught him by the arm. "What are you doing? The house is on fire!" Forestier shook him off. "Let me go. I'll show you how a gentleman behaves!"

It was more than an hour later that they were able to get at him. They found him lying on the landing, dead, with the dead dog in his arms. Hardy looked at him for a long time before speaking. "You fool," he muttered between his teeth, angrily. "You damned fool!"

Bob Forestier had pretended for so many years to be a gentleman that in the end, forgetting that it was all a fake, he found himself driven to act as in that stupid, conventional brain of his he thought a gentleman must act.

Mrs. Forestier was convinced to her dying day that her husband had been a very gallant⁵ gentleman.

NOTES:

¹ courtship – ухаживание;

² carbuncles – карбункулы;

³ means – средство;

⁴ sahib – саиб (господин);

⁵ gallant – благородный.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

погиб при пожаре, случайно, именно то, что от него ожидали; трагическое событие, нашла приют, как раз наоборот, романтическая душа, страстная привязанность, на счету, единственное возражение, охотник за состоянием, найти достойную работу, постепенно эта мысль отпала, незадолго до, жили по соседству, наполняло его завистью, спасли все, что могли, им ничего не оставалось как, пробормотал сквозь зубы, так долго притворялся, забыв, что все это была фикция, своим глупым умишком, до последнего дня.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

join smth, love at first sight, risk one's life, put into hospital, adore smb, suggest that smb should do smth, owe smth to smb, can't help doing smth, be proud of smb, make acquaintance with smb, catch fire.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) What was the cause of Mr. Forestier's death according to the newspapers?
- 2) What did people think of it?
- 3) Describe Mrs. Forestier.
- 4) Where did she meet her future husband?
- 5) Was it because of his wound that he was put into hospital?
- 6) Why did Mrs. Forestier's relatives suggest that her husband should find some work after the marriage?
- 7) Why couldn't Mr. Forestier find a job?
- 8) What was Mr. Forestier's occupation when he lived in India? What was his dream?
- 9) What happened during the fire? Why did Mr. Forestier rush into the house?
- 10) What were Hardy's words when he saw the dead body? Do you agree with them?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Was Mr. Forestier a fortune-hunter? Give your grounds.
- 2) What was the real reason of his refusal to find a job?
- 3) Is there any difference between a wish to be a gentleman and being a gentleman? Is only a wish enough?
- 4) Did Mr. Forestier manage to become a real gentleman? Prove it by the text. I
- 5) Why was Mrs. Forestier convinced to her dying day that her husband had been a very gallant gentleman?
- 6) What is the difference between a sensible risk and a silly risk? Is it always possible to weigh up the danger? Discuss some risks that you think would be worth talking.

V Retell the story on the part of 1) Mrs. Forestier, 2) Mr. Hardy.

Unit 19

FOOTPRINTS IN THE JUNGLE

W. S. Maugham

It was in Malaya that I met the Cartwrights. I was staying with a man called Gaze who was head of the police and he came into the billiard-room, where I was sitting, and asked if I would play bridge with them. The Cartwrights were planters and they came to Malaya because it gave their daughter a chance of a little fun. They were very nice people and played a very pleasant game of bridge. I followed Gaze into the card-room and was introduced to them.

Mrs. Cartwright was a woman somewhere in the fifties. I thought her a very agreeable person. I liked her frankness, her quick wit, her plain face. As for Mr. Cartwright, he looked tired and old. He talked little, but it was plain that he

enjoyed his wife's humour. They were evidently very good friends. It was pleasing to see so solid and tolerant affection between two people who were almost elderly and must have lived together for so many years.

When we separated, Gaze and I set out to walk to his house.

"What did you think of the Cartwrights?" he asked me.

"I liked them and their daughter who is just the image of her father."

To my surprise Gaze told me that Cartwright wasn't her father. Mrs. Cartwright was a widow when he married her. Olive was born after her father's death. And when we came to Gaze's house he told me the Cartwrights' story.

"I've known Mrs. Cartwright for over twenty years," he said slowly. "She was married to a man called Bronson. He was a planter in Selantan. It was a much smaller place than it is now, but they had a jolly little club, and we used to have a very good time. Bronson was a handsome chap. He hadn't much to talk about but tennis, golf and shooting; and I don't suppose he read a book from year's end to year's end. He was about thirty-five when I first knew him, but he had the mind of a boy of eighteen. But he was no fool. He knew his work from A to Z. He was generous with his money and always ready to do anybody a good turn.

One day Mrs. Bronson told us that she was expecting a friend to stay with them and a few days later they brought Cartwright along. Cartwright was an old friend of Bronson's. He had been out of work for a long time and when he wrote to Bronson asking him whether he could do anything for him, Bronson wrote back inviting him to come and stay till things got better. When Cartwright came Mrs. Bronson told him that he was to look upon the place as his home and stay as long as he liked. Cartwright was very pleasant and unassuming; he fell into our little company very naturally and the Bronsons, like everyone else, liked him."

"Hadn't the Bronsons any children at that time?" I asked Gaze.

"No," Gaze answered. "I don't know why, they could have afforded it. Bronson was murdered," he said suddenly.

"Killed?"

"Yes, murdered. That night we had been playing tennis without Cartwright who had gone shooting to the jungle and without Bronson who had cycled to Kabulong to get the money to pay his coolies¹ their wages and he was to come along to the club when he got back. Cartwright came back when we started playing bridge. Suddenly I was called to police sergeant outside. I went out. He told me that the Malays had come to the police station and said that there was a white man with red hair lying dead on the path that led through the jungle to Kabulong. I understood that it was Bronson.

For a moment I didn't know what to do and how to break the news to Mrs. Bronson. I came up to her and said that there had been an accident and her husband had been wounded. She leapt to her feet and stared at Cartwright who went as pale as death. Then I said that he was dead after which she collapsed into her chair and burst into tears.

When the sergeant, the doctor and I arrived at the scene of the accident we saw that he had been shot through the head and there was no money about him. From the footprints I saw that he had stopped to talk to someone before he was shot. Whoever had murdered Bronson hadn't done it for money. It was obvious that he had stopped to talk with a friend.

Meanwhile Cartwright took up the management of Bronson's estate. He moved in at once. Four months later Olive, the daughter, was born. And soon Mrs. Bronson and Cartwright were married. The murderer was never found. Suspicion fell on the coolies, of course. We examined them all—pretty carefully—but there was not a scrap of evidence to connect them with the crime. I knew who the murderer was... "

"Who?"

"Don't you guess?"

NOTES:

¹ coolies – рабочие-носильщики.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

возможность развлечься, ей было за 50, откровенность и сообразительность, прочная привязанность, точная копия отца, симпатичный парень, за год не прочитал ни книги, знал свое дело в совершенстве, долгое время был без работы, пока дела не поправятся, вписался в нашу компанию, сообщить новости, побледнел как полотно, приехали на место происшествия, по следам, стал управляющим поместья, сразу вошел в курс дела, ни малейшей улики.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

be introduced to smb, elderly people, do smb a good turn, be wounded, burst into tears (laughter), it is obvious, connect smth with smth/smb, play a game of, an agreeable person, a handsome chap, fall into the company naturally.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Describe Mrs. Cartwright and her husband.
- 2) Why did they come to Malaya?
- 3) Who was Mrs. Cartwright's first husband and where did Gaze get acquainted with him?
- 4) How did he characterize Bronson?
- 5) Why did Bronson invite Cartwright to come and stay at their place?
- 6) What kind of a person was Cartwright? Did his traits help him to get along with the local society?
- 7) Why were Bronson and Cartwright absent at the club on the night of the murder?
- 8) Who found Bronson's body?
- 9) How did Mrs. Bronson take the news?
- 10) What did Gaze and the others see at the scene of the accident?

11) Can you prove that Bronson was killed by someone whom he knew well?

12) What were Cartwright's actions after Bronson's death?

13) Was the crime disclosed?

IV Discuss the following:

1) Who was Olive's real father? Which phrases from the text prove it? Has this fact anything to do with the crime?

2) Does Cartwright's behaviour after Bronson's death prove that the crime was well-planned?

3) Follow through the text Cartwright's characteristics and say whether they coincide with the reality.

4) Try to continue the story.

V Retell the story on the part of 1) Mrs. Cartwright, 2) Bronson, 3) the doctor.

Unit 20

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

W. S. Maugham

When I was a small boy I was made to learn by heart some fables of La Fontaine and the moral of each was carefully explained to me. Among them was "The Ant and the Grasshopper". In spite of the moral of this fable my sympathies were with the grasshopper and for some time I never saw an ant without putting my foot on it.

I couldn't help thinking of this fable when the other day I saw George Ramsay lurching in a restaurant. I never saw an expression of such deep gloom. He was staring into space. I was sorry for him: I suspected at once that his unfortunate brother had been causing trouble again.

I went up to him. "How are you?" I asked. "Is it Tom again?" He sighed. "Yes, it's Tom again."

I suppose every family has a black sheep. In this family it had been Tom. He had begun life decently enough: he went into business, married and had two children. The Ramsays were respectable people and everybody supposed that Tom would have a good career. But one day he announced that he didn't like work and that he wasn't suited for marriage. He wanted to enjoy himself.

He left his wife and his office. He spent two happy years in the various capitals of Europe. His relations were shocked and wondered what would happen when his money was spent. They soon found out: he borrowed. He was so charming that nobody could refuse him. Very often he turned to George. Once or twice he gave Tom considerable sums so that he could make a fresh start. On these Tom bought a motor-car and some jewelry. But when George washed his hands of him, Tom began to blackmail him. It was not nice for a respectable

lawyer to find his brother shaking cocktails behind the bar of his favorite restaurant or driving a taxi. So George paid again.

For twenty years Tom gambled, danced, ate in the most expensive restaurants and dressed beautifully. Though he was forty-six he looked not more than thirty-five. He had high spirits and incredible charm. Tom Ramsay knew everyone and everyone knew him. You couldn't help liking him.

Poor George, only a year older than his brother, looked sixty. He had never taken more than a fortnight's holiday in the year. He was in his office every morning at nine-thirty and never left it till six. He was honest and industrious. He had a good wife and four daughters to whom he was the best of fathers. His plan was to retire at fifty-five to a little house in the country. His life was blameless. He was glad that he was growing old because Tom was growing old, too. He used to say: "It was all well when Tom was young and good-looking. In four years he'll be fifty. He won't find life so easy then. I shall have thirty thousand pounds by the time I'm fifty. We shall see what is really best to work or to be idle. "

Poor George! I sympathized with him. I wondered now what else Tom had done. George was very much upset. I was prepared for the worst. George could hardly speak. "A few weeks ago," he said, "Tom became engaged to a woman old enough to be his mother. And now she has died and left him everything she had: half a million pounds, a yacht, a house in London and a house in the country. It is not fair, I tell you, it isn't fair!"

I couldn't help it. I burst into laughter as I looked at George's face, I nearly fell on the floor. George never forgave me. But Tom often asks me to dinners in his charming house and if he sometimes borrows money from me, it is simply from force of habit.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

мне тщательно объясняли, не раздавив его, на днях, смотрел в никуда, занялся бизнесом, уважаемые люди, семейная жизнь не для него, когда деньги закончатся, значительные суммы денег, начать заново, шантажировать, всегда был в прекрасном настроении, его нельзя было не любить, лучший из отцов, симпатичный, бездельничать, приготовился к худшему, это несправедливо, чуть не упал, приглашает на обеды, по привычке.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

make smb do smth, in spite of smth, cause trouble, enjoy oneself, borrow smth from smb, turn to smb for smth, wash one's hands of smb (smth), be upset, burst into laughter (tears).

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Give a short sketch of the Ramsay Family.
- 2) How do you understand the expression "a black sheep"? Why is it applied to Tom?
- 3) What was the "decent" beginning of Tom's life?

- 4) What did Tom announce one day?
- 5) What was the point of his life according to his words?
- 6) How did he spend his time?
- 7) Why did George give Tom considerable sums of money not once?
- 8) What did Tom do with the money?
- 9) In what way and why did Tom blackmail his brother?
- 10) Describe Tom at the age of forty-six.
- 11) Was his brother much older than him? Describe his way of life.
- 12) Why was George glad that he was growing older? What were his plans?
- 13) What news did George break to the author?
- 14) What was the author's reaction?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Why does the author make such an introduction to the story? Who is the "ant" and who is the "grasshopper" in the story? Give your grounds.
- 2) When the author was a small boy and heard the fable for the first time his sympathies were with the grasshopper. Did he remain stick to his sympathies throughout his life? Prove it by the text.
- 3) What did "causing trouble" mean to the Ramsays? Why?
- 4) Why couldn't people help liking Tom in spite of everything? He was an idler, wasn't he? How would you explain such a contradiction?
- 5) Compare the two brothers. Tom's life was pleasure and entertainment. George's life was honesty and labour. Is the end of the story fair? Whom are your sympathies with? Why?
- 6) All his life George had to help his brother. What did he get in exchange? Could you suggest any other way of behaviour on the part of George?

V Retell the story on the part of 1) George, 2) Tom, 3) one of the Ramsays, 4) one of Tom's friends.

Unit 21

THE HAPPY MAN

W. S. Maugham

It is a dangerous thing to order the lives of others and I have often wondered at the self-confidence of politicians, reformers and such like who are prepared to force upon their fellows measures that must alter their manners, habits and points of view. I have always hesitated to give advice, for how can one advise another how to act unless one knows that other as well as one knows oneself? Heaven knows, I know little enough of myself: I know nothing of others. We can only guess at the thoughts and emotions of our neighbors. And life, unfortunately, is something that you can lead but once; and who am I that I should tell this one and that how he should lead it?

But once I knew that I advised well.

I was a young man and I lived in a modest apartment in London near Victoria Station. Late one afternoon, when I was beginning to think that I had worked enough for that day, I heard a ring at the bell. I opened the door to a total stranger. He asked me my name; I told him. He asked if he might come in.

"Certainly. "

I led him into my sitting-room and begged to sit down. He seemed a trifle embarrassed. I offered him a cigarette and he had some difficulty in lighting it.

"I hope you don't mind my coming to see you like this," he said. "My name is Stephens and I am a doctor. You're in the medical¹, I believe? "

"Yes, but I don't practice. "

"No, I know. I've just read a book of yours about Spain and I wanted to ask you about it. "

"It's not a very good book, I'm afraid. "

"The fact remains that you know something about Spain and there's no one else I know who does. And I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind giving me some information. "

"I shall be very glad. "

He was silent for a moment. He reached out for his hat and holding it in one hand absent-mindedly stroked it with the other.

"I hope you won't think it very odd for a perfect stranger to talk to you like this. "He gave an apologetic laugh. "I'm not going to tell you the story of my life. "

When people say this to me I always know that it is precisely what they are going to do. I do not mind. In fact I rather like it.

"I was brought up by two old aunts. I've never been anywhere. I've never done anything. I've been married for six years. I have no children. I'm a medical officer at the Camberwell Infirmary. I can't bear it any more. "

There was something very striking in the short, sharp sentences he used. I looked at him with curiosity. He was a little man, thickset and stout, of thirty perhaps, with a round red face from which shone small, dark and very bright eyes. His black hair was cropped close to a bullet-shaped head. He was dressed in a blue suit a good deal the worse for wear. It was baggy at the knees and the pockets bulged untidily.

"You know what the duties are of a medical officer in an infirmary. One day is pretty much like another. And that's all I've got to look forward to for the rest of my life. Do you think it's worth it? "

"It's a means of livelihood," I answered.

"Yes, I know. The money's pretty good. "

"I don't exactly know why you've come to me."

"Well, I wanted to know whether you thought there would be any chance for an English doctor in Spain."

"Why Spain?"

"I don't know, I just have a fancy for it."

"It's not like Carmen, you know, " I smiled.

"But there's sunshine there, and there's good wine, and there's colour, and there's air you can breathe. Let me say what I have to say straight out. I heard by accident that there was no English doctor in Seville, Do you think I could earn a living there? Is it madness to give up a good safe job for an uncertainty? "

"What does your wife think about it?"

"She's willing."

"It's a great risk."

"I know. But if you say take it, I will: if you say stay where you are, I'll stay. "

He was looking at me with those bright dark eyes of his and I knew that he meant what he said. I reflected for a moment.

"Your whole future is concerned: you must decide for yourself. But this I can tell you: if you don't want money but are content to earn just enough to keep body and soul together, then go. For you will lead a wonderful life. "

He left me, I thought about him for a day or two, and then forgot. The episode passed completely from my memory.

Many years later, fifteen at least, I happened to be in Seville and having some trifling indisposition asked the hotel porter whether there was an English doctor in the town. He said there was and gave me the address. I took a cab and as I drove up to the house a little fat man came out of it. He hesitated, when he caught sight of me.

"Have you come to see me?" he said. 'I'm the English doctor. "

I explained my matter and he asked me to come in. He lived in an ordinary Spanish house, and his consulting room was littered with papers, books, medical appliances and lumber. We did our business and then I asked the doctor what his fee was. He shook his head and smiled.

"There's no fee."

"Why on earth not?"

'Don't you remember me? Why, I'm here because of something you said to me. You changed my whole life for me. I'm Stephens."

I had not the least notion what he was talking about. He reminded me of our interview, he repeated to me what we had said, and gradually, out of the night, a dim recollection of the incident came back to me.

"I was wondering if I'd ever see you again," he said, "I was wondering if ever I'd have a chance of thanking you for all you've done for me."

"It's been a success then?"

I looked at him. He was very fat now and bald, but his eyes twinkled gaily and his fleshy, red face bore an expression of perfect good humour. The clothes he wore, terribly shabby they were, had been made obviously by a Spanish tailor and his hat was the wide-brimmed sombrero of the Spaniard. He looked to me as though he knew a good bottle of wine when he saw it. He had an entirely sympathetic appearance. You might have hesitated to let him remove your appendix², but you could not have imagined a more delightful creature to drink a glass of wine with.

"Surely you were married?" I said.

"Yes. My wife didn't like Spain, she went back to Camberwell, she was more at home there."

"Oh, I'm sorry for that."

His black eyes flashed a smile.

"Life is full of compensations," he murmured.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a Spanish woman, no longer in her first youth, but still beautiful, appeared at the door. She spoke to him in Spanish, and I could not fail to feel that she was the mistress of the house.

As he stood at the door to let me out he said to me: "You told me when last I saw you that if I came here I should earn just enough money to keep body and soul together, but that I should lead a wonderful life. Well, I want to tell you that you were right. Poor I have been and poor I shall always be, but by heaven I've enjoyed myself. I wouldn't exchange the life I've had with that of any king in the world. "

NOTES:

¹ be in the medical – work in the field of medicine;

² remove appendix – вырезать аппендицит.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

вершить судьбы других, самоуверенность политических деятелей, навязать, изменить привычки и точки зрения, мы можем лишь догадываться, скромная квартира, совершенно незнакомый человек, с трудом зажег сигарету, рассеянно, не сочтете это очень странным, я посмотрел на него с любопытством, один день похож на другой, способ заработать на жизнь, случайно узнал, все ваше будущее поставлено на карту; объяснил, что сомной; спросил, сколько я ему должен; вы изменили всю мою жизнь; понятия не имел, смутное воспоминание, ужасно потрепанная одежда, был не прочь выпить, невозможно представить более подходящего человека, не успел он это произнести, не первой молодости, не мог не почувствовать.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

hesitate to do smth, be embarrassed, would you mind... (doing smth)?, be brought up by smb, look forward to smth, be worth (doing) smth, have a fancy for smth/smb, give up smth, be content to (do) smth, catch sight of smb, shake one's head, remind smb of smth, be a success, keep body and soul together.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Who visited the author of the story once?
- 2) What did he look like?
- 3) How did he explain the reason of his coming?
- 4) What showed that the man was embarrassed?
- 5) What did Stephens tell the author about his life?
- 6) Why did he say that he couldn't bear it any longer?
- 7) What kind of advice did Stephens want to get?

- 8) What did the author recommend him?
- 9) How did the author happen to meet with Stephens many years later?
- 10) What had changed in the man?
- 11) What proves that Stephens was really happy?

IV Discuss the following:

1) Stephens wasn't rich, he had money only to keep body and soul together. But nevertheless he said that he had led a wonderful life. Can a man be happy without money? Are there things in life that are more important?

2) Compare Stephens at the beginning and at the end of the story. What in his appearance showed that he was pleased with life?

3) Is it easy to advise people? Who to your mind has the right to give advice?

4) Speak on the author's attitude to the main hero of the story.

V Retell the text on the part of a) Stephens, b) his wife.

VI Say what happened to Stephens during fifteen years of his life in Spain.

Unit 22

THE ESCAPE

W. S. Maugham

I have always believed that if a woman made up her mind to marry a man nothing could save him. I have only once known a man who in such circumstances managed to save himself. His name was Roger Charing. He was no longer young when he fell in love with Ruth Barlow and he had had enough experience to make him careful; but Ruth Barlow had a gift that makes most men defenceless. This was the gift of pathos. Mrs. Barlow was twice a widow¹. She had splendid dark eyes and they were the most moving I ever saw. They seemed to be always on the point of filling with tears and you felt that her sufferings had been impossible to bear. If you were a strong fellow with plenty of money, like Roger Charing, you should say to yourself: I must stand between the troubles of life and this helpless little thing. Mrs. Barlow was one of those unfortunate persons with whom nothing goes right. If she married the husband beat her; if she employed a broker he cheated her; if she took a cook she drank.

When Roger told me that he was going to marry her, I wished him joy. As for me I thought she was stupid and as hard as nails².

Roger introduced her to his friends. He gave her lovely jewels. He took her everywhere. Their marriage was announced for the nearest future. Roger was very pleased with himself, he was committing a good action.

Then suddenly he fell out of love. I don't know why. Perhaps that pathetic look of hers ceased to touch his heart-strings. He realized that Ruth Barlow had made up her mind to marry him and he swore that nothing would make him marry her. Roger knew it wouldn't be easy.

Roger didn't show that his feelings to Ruth Barlow had changed. He remained attentive to all her wishes, he took her to dine at restaurants, he sent her flowers, he was charming.

They were to get married as soon as they found a house that suited them; and they started looking for residences. The agents sent Roger orders to view³ and he took Ruth to see some houses. It was very difficult to find anything satisfactory. They visited house after house. Sometimes they were too large and sometimes they were too small; sometimes they were too far from the center and sometimes they were too close; sometimes they were too expensive and sometimes they wanted too many repairs; sometimes they were too stuffy and sometimes they were too airy. Roger always found a fault that made the house unsuitable. He couldn't let his dear Ruth to live in a bad house.

Ruth began to grow peevish. Roger asked her to have patience. They looked at hundreds of houses; they climbed thousands of stairs. Ruth was exhausted and often lost her temper. For two years they looked for houses. Ruth grew silent, her eyes no longer looked beautiful and pathetic. There are limits to human patience.

"Do you want to marry me or do you not?" she asked him one day.

"Of course I do. We'll be married the very moment we find a house. "

"I don't feel well enough to look at any more houses."

Ruth Barlow took to her bed. Roger remained gallant as ever. Every day he wrote her and told her that he had heard of another house for them to look at. A week later he received the following letter:

'Roger —

I do not think you really love me. I've found someone who really wants to take care of me and I am going to be married to him today.

Ruth. '

He sent back his reply:

'Ruth —

I'll never get over this blow. But your happiness must be my first concern. I send you seven addresses. I am sure you'll find among them a house that will exactly suit you.

Roger. '

NOTES:

¹ widow – вдова;

² as hard as nails – упрямая;

³ orders to view – смотровые ордера.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

при таких обстоятельствах, был уже не молод, он был достаточно опытен, беззащитный, трогательный, беспомощное создание, всегда что-то происходит, обмануть, повсюду возил ее, совершал доброе дело, перестал затрагивать струны его сердца, ничто не заставит его, продолжал внимать

всем ее желаниям, подходящий дом, требовали ремонта, измученная, уже не выглядели, есть пределы человеческому терпению, слегла, оправиться от удара.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

make up one's mind, fall in (out of) love with, have a gift, splendid eyes, be on the point of smth, bear sufferings, employ smb, introduce smb to smb, announce smth, swear, start doing smth, be far (close) from the center, a stuffy (airy) house, find faults, have patience, lose one's temper, take care of smb, be one's first concern.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) How old was Roger Charing when he fell in love?
- 2) What gift did Ruth Barlow possess?
- 3) Describe Ruth Barlow. Why does the author call her "an unfortunate person"?
- 4) How did Roger court Ruth Barlow?
- 5) Why was he pleased with himself?
- 6) Why did his feelings suddenly change and what did he swear?
- 7) Why didn't Ruth feel that his attitude towards her had changed?
- 8) What was Roger's plan? In what way did he put it into life?
- 9) How many houses did they visit and what faults did Roger find?
- 10) What had changed in Ruth's disposition by the time she began to doubt if Roger would marry her?
- 11) What was Ruth's letter about?
- 12) Prove that Roger was stuck to his plan to the end.

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Was Roger really in love with Ruth Barlow or was he only committing a good action?
- 2) Comment on Roger Charing's plan. Do you find it interesting?
- 3) Was Roger a good psychologist? Prove it by the facts from the story.
- 4) Follow through the text how the author shows his attitude to the main heroes.

V Retell the story on the part of 1) Roger, 2) Ruth, 3) one of Roger's close friends.

Unit 23

MR. KNOW-ALL

W. S. Maugham

Once I was going by ship from San-Francisco to Yokohama. I shared my cabin with a man called Mr. Kelada. He was short and of a sturdy build, clean-shaven and dark-skinned, with a hooked nose and very large liquid eyes. His long black hair was curly. And though he introduced himself as an Englishman I

felt sure that he was born under a bluer sky than is generally seen in England. Mr. Kelada was chatty. He talked of New York and of San Francisco. He discussed plays, pictures and politics. He was familiar. Though I was a total stranger to him he used no such formality¹ as to put mister before my name when he addressed me. I didn't like Mr. Kelada. I not only shared a cabin with him and ate three meals a day at the same table, but I couldn't walk round the deck without his joining me. It was impossible to snub him. It never occurred to him that he was not wanted. He was certain that you were as glad to see him as he was glad to see you. In your own house you might have kicked him downstairs and slammed the door in his face.

Mr. Kelada was a good mixer, and in three days knew everyone on board. He ran everything. He conducted the auctions, collected money for prizes at the sports, organized the concert and arranged the fancy-dress ball. He was everywhere and always. He was certainly the best-hated man in the ship. We called him Mr. Know-All, even to his face. He took it as a compliment. But it was at meal times that he was most intolerable. He knew everything better than anybody else and you couldn't disagree with him. He would not drop a subject till he had brought you round to his way of thinking. The possibility that he could be mistaken never occurred to him,

We were four at the table: the doctor, I, Mr. Kelada and Mr. Ramsay.

Ramsay was in the American Consular Service, and was stationed at Kobe. He was a great heavy fellow. He was on his way back to resume his post, having been on a flying visit to New York to fetch his wife, who had been spending a year at home. Mrs. Ramsay was a very pretty little thing with pleasant manners and a sense of humour. She was dressed always very simply, but she knew how to wear her clothes.

One evening at dinner the conversation by chance drifted to the subject of pearls. There was some argument between Mr. Kelada and Ramsay about the value of culture and real pearls. I did not believe Ramsay knew anything about the subject at all. At last Mr. Kelada got furious and shouted: "Well, I know what I am talking about. I'm going to Japan just to look into this Japanese pearl business. I'm in the trade. I know the best pearls in the world, and what I don't know about pearls isn't worth knowing."

Here was news for us, for Mr. Kelada had never told anyone what his business was.

Ramsay leaned forward.

"That's a pretty chain, isn't it?" he asked pointing to the chain that Mrs. Ramsay wore.

"I noticed it at once," answered Mr. Kelada. "Those are pearls all right."

"I didn't buy it myself, of course," said Ramsay. "I wonder how much you think it cost."

"Oh, in the trade somewhere round fifteen thousand dollars. But if it was bought on Fifth Avenue anything up to thirty thousand was paid for it."

Ramsay smiled. "You'll be surprised to hear that Mrs. Ramsay bought that string the day before we left New

York for eighteen dollars, I'll bet you a hundred dollars it's imitation."

"Done."

"But how can it be proved?" Mrs. Ramsay asked.

"Let me look at the chain and if it's imitation I'll tell you quickly enough. I can afford to lose a hundred dollars," said Mr. Kelada.

The chain was handed to Mr. Kelada. He took a magnifying glass from his pocket and closely examined it. A smile of triumph spread over his face. He was about to speak. Suddenly he saw Mrs. Ramsay's face. It was so white that she looked as if she were about to faint². She was staring at him with wide and terrified eyes. Mr. Kelada stopped with his mouth open. He flushed deeply. You could almost see the effort he was making over himself. "I was mistaken," he said. "It's a very good imitation." He took a hundred-dollar note out of his pocket and handed it to Ramsay without a word. "Perhaps that'll teach you a lesson," said Ramsay as he took the note. I noticed that Mr. Kelada's hands were trembling.

The story spread over the ship. It was a fine joke that Mr. Know-Aall had been caught out. But Mrs. Ramsay went to her cabin with a headache.

Next morning I got up and began to shave. Suddenly I saw a letter pushed under the door. I opened the door and looked out. There was nobody there. I picked up the letter and saw that it was addressed to Mr. Kelada. I handed it to him. He took out of the envelope a hundred-dollar note. He looked at me and reddened.

"Were the pearls real?" I asked.

"If I had a pretty little wife I shouldn't let her spend a year in New York while I stayed at Kobe, " said he.

NOTES:

¹ formality – формальность;

² faint – упасть без сознания.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

жить в одной каюте, невысокий, водянистые глаза, фамильярный, были совершенно чужими, никогда не приходило в голову, спустить с лестницы, захлопнуть дверь перед носом, проводить аукционы, прямо в глаза, особенно невыносим, сменить тему разговора, склонить на свою сторону, случайно зашел разговор о, красивая нитка, держу пари, подделка, увеличительное стекло, победная улыбка, не говоря ни слова, покраснел.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

a chatty man, address smb, be certain, be a good mixer, take smth as a compliment, a way of thinking, be mistaken, pleasant manners, a sense of humour, dress simply, get furious, be worth doing, can afford to do smth, examine

smth closely, stare at smb with wide eyes, make an effort over oneself, trembling hands.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Where did the author get acquainted with Mr. Kelada?
- 2) What did Mr. Kelada look like?
- 3) Why did the author doubt whether his companion was an Englishman?
- 4) Prove that Mr. Kelada was chatty and familiar. In what way did Mr. Kelada force himself upon his fellow-travellers?
- 5) Why did the passengers call him Mr. Know-All?
- 6) When and why was he most intolerable?
- 7) Who was Mr. Ramsay and why had he flown to New York?
- 8) Describe his wife.
- 9) What subject did the conversation drift to one evening?
- 10) What did Mr. Kelada's companions find out about his business?
- 11) How did Mr. Kelada value Mrs. Ramsay's string of pearls?
- 12) Why did Mr. Kelada and Mr. Ramsay make a bet?
- 13) Why was Mr. Know-All so certain that he would win the bet?
- 14) What made him say the thing he didn't want to?
- 15) What was Mr. Ramsay's and other passengers' reaction?
- 16) What happened next morning?
- 17) How did Mr. Kelada explain his strange behaviour the night before?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Give a character sketch of Mr. Kelada.
- 2) Was his gentle behaviour during the last argument a surprise to you? Does it contradict to the author's previous portrait of his? Why do you think the author gave such a contrast?

3) Why did Mr. Kelada's words cost him a lot of effort? Analyze other possible variants of his behaviour.

- 4) Who wrote the letter? What for?

V Retell the story on the part of 1) Mr. Kelada, 2) Mr. Ramsay, 3) the doctor.

Unit 24

ART FOR HEART'S SAKE¹

R. Goldberg

"Here, take your juice, " said Koppel, Mr. Ellsworth's servant and nurse.

"No, " said Collis P. Ellsworth.

"But it's good for you, sir!"

"No!"

"The doctor insists on it. "

"No!"

Koppel heard the front door bell and was glad to leave the room. He found Doctor Caswell in the hall downstairs.

"I can't do a thing with him, " he told the doctor. " He doesn't want to take his juice. I can't persuade him to take his medicine. He doesn't want me to read to him. He hates TV. He doesn't like anything!"

Doctor Caswell took the information with his usual professional calm. This was not an ordinary case. The old gentleman was in pretty good health for a man of seventy. But it was necessary to keep him from buying things. His financial transactions always ended in failure, which was bad for his health.

"How are you this morning? Feeling better?" asked the doctor. "I hear you haven't been obeying my orders. "

The doctor drew up a chair and sat down close to the old man. He had to do his duty. "I'd like to make a suggestion, " he said quietly. He didn't want to argue with the old man.

Old Ellsworth looked at him over his glasses. The way Doctor Caswell said it made him suspicious. "What is it, more medicine, more automobile rides to keep me away from the office?" the old man asked with suspicion. "Not at all, " said the doctor, "I've been thinking of something different. As a matter of fact I'd like to suggest that you should take up art. I don't mean seriously of course, " said the doctor, "just try. You'll like it. "

Much to his surprise the old man agreed. He only asked who was going to teach him drawing. "I've thought of that too, " said the doctor. "I know a student from an art school who can come round once a week. If you don't like it, after a little while you can throw him out. " The person he had in mind and promised to bring over was a certain Frank Swain, eighteen years old and a capable student. Like most students he needed money. Doctor Caswell kept his promise.

He got in touch with Frank Swain and the lessons began. The old man liked it so much that when at the end of the first lesson Koppel came in and apologised to him for interrupting the lesson, as the old man needed a rest, Ellsworth looked disappointed.

When the art student came the following week, he saw a drawing on the table. It was a vase. But something was definitely wrong with it.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked the old man stepping aside.

"I don't mean to hurt you, sir... ", began Swain.

"I see, " the old man interrupted, "the halves don't match. I can't say I am good at drawing. Listen, young man, " he whispered. "I want to ask you something before Old Juice comes again. I don't want to speak in his presence. "

"Yes, sir, " said Swain with respect.

"I've been thinking... Could you come twice a week or perhaps three times?"

"Sure, Mr. Ellsworth, " the student said respectfully. "When shall I come?"

They arranged to meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

As the weeks went by, Swain's visits grew more frequent. The old man drank his juice obediently. Doctor Caswell hoped that business had been forgotten forever.

When spring came, Ellsworth painted a picture which he called "Trees Dressed in White. " The picture was awful. The trees in it looked like salad thrown up against the wall. Then he announced that he was going to display it at the Summer Show at the Lathrop Gallery. Doctor Caswell and Swain didn't believe it. They thought the old man was joking.

The summer show at the Lathrop Gallery was the biggest exhibition of the year. All outstanding artists in the United States dreamt of winning a Lathrop prize.

To the astonishment of all "Trees Dressed in White" was accepted for the Show.

Young Swain went to the exhibition one afternoon and blushed when he saw "Trees Dressed in White" hanging on the wall. As two visitors stopped in front of the strange picture, Swain rushed out. He was ashamed that a picture like that had been accepted for the show.

However Swain did not give up teaching the old man. Every time Koppel entered the room he found the old man painting something. Koppel even thought of hiding the brush from him. The old man seldom mentioned his picture and was usually cheerful.

Two days before the close of the exhibition Ellsworth received a letter. Koppel brought it when Swain and the doctor were in the room. "Read it to me, " asked the old man putting aside the brush he was holding in his hand. "My eyes are tired from painting. "The letter said: "It gives the Lathrop Gallery pleasure to announce that Collis P. Ellsworth has been awarded the First Landscape Prize of ten thousand dollars for his painting "Trees Dressed in White".

Swain became dumb with astonishment. Koppel dropped the glass with juice he was about to give Ellsworth. Doctor Caswell managed to keep calm. "Congratulations, Mr. Ellsworth, " said the doctor. "Fine, fine... Frankly, I didn't expect that your picture would win the prize. Anyway I've proved to you that art is more satisfying than business. "

"Art is nothing. I bought the Lathrop Gallery, " said the old man highly pleased with the effect of his deception.

NOTES:

¹ art for heart's sake – искусство для души

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

ничего не могу с ним поделаться, с привычным профессиональным спокойствием, необычный случай, сел рядом, вызвало подозрение; дело в том, что; заняться живописью, к большому удивлению, через некоторое время, способный студент, одна половина не соответствует другой, говорить в его присутствии, два раза в неделю, стали чаще, послушно, забыт навсегда, вы-

ставить картину, была принята, покраснел, убежал, ему было стыдно, редко говорил о картине, откладывая в сторону кисть, онемел от изумления, сохранить спокойствие, довольный результатами своего обмана.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

insist on smth, persuade smb to do smth, keep smb from doing smth, end in failure, obey smb's orders, make a suggestion, argue with smb, ask with suspicion, keep one's promise, get in touch with smb, apologise to smb for (doing) smth, look disappointed, be good at smth, whisper smth, arrange to do smth, an awful picture, an outstanding artist, dream of (doing) smth, give up doing smth, be awarded smth, prove to smb.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Who was Koppel and why wasn't he satisfied with the behaviour of his patient?
- 2) Was Mr. Ellsworth really ill? Why was his case not an ordinary one?
- 3) What suggestion did Dr. Caswell make to Ellsworth?
- 4) Who was Frank Swain?
- 5) Prove that Ellsworth enjoyed painting.
- 6) Why did Ellsworth ask Swain to come three times a week?
- 7) Was Dr. Caswell pleased with the results of his "treatment"?
- 8) What picture did Ellsworth paint?
- 9) What did he want to do with the picture?
- 10) Why did everybody think at first that Ellsworth was joking?
- 11) What was Swain's reaction when he saw Ellsworth's picture at the show?
- 12) Why didn't Swain give up teaching Ellsworth?
- 13) What happened two days before the close of the exhibition?
- 14) What did the letter say?
- 15) What was the reaction of all present?
- 16) What did Ellsworth tell them about?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Ellsworth tried to prove to everybody that business is more important than art. Did he succeed? What do you consider more important?
- 2) Why do you think Ellsworth didn't give up taking lessons after he had sent the picture to the show? Was it a part of his plan of deception? Comment on his plan. Find in the text other details of his clever scheme.
- 3) Why didn't Ellsworth read the letter himself? Were his eyes really tired?
- 4) All Ellsworth's financial transactions ended in failure. Do you think the purchase of the Gallery was also a transaction of this kind? What do you think he will do with the Gallery later?
- 5) "Life is short, art is long." Do you agree with it? Why do people need art? What is more satisfying art or business?

V Retell the text on the part of 1) Ellsworth, 2) Koppel,

3) Dr. Caswell, 4) Frank Swain.

Unit 25

WAGER WITH DESTINY

E. E. Gatti

Anderson was alone in camp when the native boy brought him Barton's book.

"The boss has dropped it on the trail, " the boy said. Anderson knew the book well, a cheap, shabby little notebook. He had heard Barton say a dozen times that he'd bought it with the first dime he'd earned, and every financial transaction he'd made since was entered in that book.

The camp was inside a mountain jungle in the Kuvi region of the Congo. And the heavy clouds overhead made Anderson feel gloomy. He was not well, and he was nervous. And he was unreasonably disturbed about the cage.

He had come on this hunting safari as Barton's guest. Barton, now, was one of the richest men in America; a hard man, who was proud of his power. It was surprising, therefore, to Anderson, that after fifteen years of silence, Barton had looked him up, renewed their boyhood friendship and made him this invitation. Anderson was grateful for it; for he, himself, was penniless and a failure.

Barton had made a bet at his club that he could capture alive a full-grown gorilla and bring it back to America. Hence the safari. And hence the portable steel cage with its automatic door.

Anderson couldn't bear to think of a great gorilla, unable to use his magnificent strength, shut up in the cage. But Anderson, of course, was sensitive about steel bars.

He did not mean to look in Barton's book. It had fallen into the mud, and Anderson only wanted to clean it.

But as he turned the pages shaking out the dried mud, his eyes fell upon a date—April 20, 1923. That was the date that had been seared into Anderson's mind with a red-hot iron, and mechanically he read the entry. Then he opened his mouth and the air swam around him.

"April 20, 1923, received \$50, 000" the book stated, Nothing more than that. And on April 20, 1923, he, Anderson, an innocent man, a young accountant in the same firm where Barton was just beginning his career, had been sentenced to fifteen years in prison for embezzlement¹ of \$50, 000.

Anderson was as shaken as if the very ground had opened under his feet. Memories rushed back to him. The books² had been tampered³ with, all right. But they had never been able to locate the money.

And all the time it was Barton who had stolen the money; had used it as the cornerstone⁴ of his vast success; had noted it down, laconically, in his little book!

"But why did he bring me here?" Anderson asked himself. His body was burning with heat, and his head was heavy; he felt the first sign of malaria. And his heart was filled with the terrible, bitter rage of one betrayed. "Does he think I suspect him? Does he plan to kill me now?"

And then the reason came, cold and clear. There was a power of justice in life, and that power had made Barton bring him, so that he, Anderson, could take the law in his own hands, and the guilty would be punished instead of the innocent.

At once his mind was made up, and he had never known his thinking to be so clear and direct. He would kill Barton while he slept – they shared the same tent. And he would go to bed now and pretend sleeping, so that he would not have to speak to Barton.

It was already late in the afternoon. Anderson uneasily walked into the tent. But he did not have to play a role, for as soon as he touched the bed he fell into the heavy sleep of increasing malaria.

It was bright moonlight outside the tent when he awoke. He could hear Barton's regular, rhythmic breathing in the darkness near him. He dressed quickly and noiselessly, turned the safety catch of his revolver and bent above Barton. But a sudden shock of revulsion came over him.

He put the revolver down carefully on the table near his bed. Then he was outside the tent and trying to run, to get away from that accusing voice that cried within him, again and again, "Murderer!"

He did not know where he was until his hand touched something cold and hard—a steel bar of the cage. God, it knew steel bars, that hand. He closed his eyes against the thought, and took a few steps forward. Then a noise behind him made him turn around. The steel door of the cage had dropped! He had walked into the cage, closing the automatic door!

"Where you should be, " cried the accusing voice, "where murderers ought to be, in a cage!"

Anderson sobbed hysterically. Then he fell and the flames of his fever licked him.

Anderson opened his eyes with great effort, and saw above him the face of the friendly planter who lived some miles from the camp.

"You'll be all right now, " the man said, "the fever's over. But how did you get into the cage?"

Anderson tried to explain, but he didn't have strength enough to speak. He knew where he was, in a bed in the planter's house. And gradually he became aware that there was another white man in the room, one he had never seen before.

"He was lucky, " the planter was saying to this strange man. "If he hadn't been safe in that cage, the gorillas would have got him as they did Barton and those pygmies. "

"Do you feel able to talk now?" the stranger asked. "I expect you're wondering who I am. I am Barton's lawyer, I flew down from New York to take charge of Barton's affairs as soon as I got the news. You've been delirious three weeks, you know. "

The lawyer sat down beside Anderson's bed. "As you know, my late client was a superstitious man, and a great gambler⁵, " he said. "You two, as young men, started your careers together. And on the very day that he received the capital that gave him his chance, you were sentenced to prison on a charge of embezzling the identical⁶ sum—fifty thousand dollars. Barton took the coincidence as an act of fate⁷. "

"He made a kind of bet with fate, " the lawyer went on. "If he were allowed to succeed, he promised to do something good for you. And he kept the bet, he remembered you in his will⁸. I thought you'd like to know why. "

"I know why all right, " said Anderson. A little word called "conscience⁹", he thought.

"I happened to know all about it, " the lawyer added, "Because I was the executor of the will of Barton's aunt. She hadn't liked him, and he'd expected nothing from her. So that fifty thousand was like money falling from the skies. "

NOTES:

¹ embezzlement – растрата;

² books – бухгалтерские книги;

³ tamper – подделывать;

⁴ cornerstone – основа;

⁵ gambler – игрок;

⁶ identical – такая же;

⁷ fate – судьба;

⁸ will – завещание;

⁹ conscience – совесть.

I Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

туземец, обронил на тропе, беспричинно волновался, гордился своей властью, возобновил, заключил пари, стальная решетка, упала в грязь, была выжжена в мозгу Андерсена каленым железом, был приговорен к пятнадцати годам заключения, как будто земля разверзлась под ногами, обнаружить деньги, приступ малярии, жили в одной палатке, внезапно его охватило отвращение, постепенно он начал понимать, гориллы убили бы его, заняться делами Бартона, суеверный, воспринял это совпадение как волю судьбы, исполнитель завещания.

II Give Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:

make a financial transaction, feel gloomy, be grateful for smth, be a failure, be unable to do smth, begin one's career, vast success, bitter rage, suspect smb, punish the guilty, pretend sleeping, make smb turn around, with great effort, be delirious, make a bet, keep the bet, happen to know, expect smth from smb.

III Questions on the text:

- 1) Where does the action take place?
- 2) How did Barton's notebook get into Anderson's hands?
- 3) What information did he become aware of?
- 4) What kind of man was Barton?
- 5) Why did he come on a hunting safari?
- 6) Why did Anderson think of killing Barton?
- 7) Why couldn't he put his idea into life?
- 8) How did Anderson find himself in the cage?
- 9) What happened to Barton?
- 10) Where was Anderson when he came to himself?
- 11) Why did Barton's lawyer come to Africa?
- 12) Why and when did Barton make a note about \$50.000 in his notebook?
- 13) What kind of bet had he made?

IV Discuss the following:

- 1) Anderson said about himself that he was a failure. What does it mean?
- 2) In spite of his hard life Anderson remained a kind, soft-hearted man. What facts from the text prove it?
- 3) Anderson could kill Barton. Was it conscience that stopped him? What role does conscience play in the life of people according to Anderson?
- 4) A businessman cannot afford conscience. Do you agree with it? Discuss this problem taking into consideration Barton's example.
- 5) Coincidence can play an important role in people's life. Do you agree with it? Discuss some situations connected with this problem.

V Retell the text on the part of 1) Anderson, 2) Barton, 3) Barton's lawyer.

PART TWO

RIKKI-TIKKI-TAVI

R. Kipling

This is the story of the great war that Rikki-Tikki-Tavi fought all alone, Darzee, the tailor-bird, helped him, and Chuchundra, the muskrat, who never comes out into the middle of the room, but always creeps round by the walls, gave him advice, but Rikki-Tikki-Tavi did the real fighting.

He was a mongoose, but in his fur and tail he was like a little cat, and like a weasel in his head and habits. His eyes and the end of his restless nose were pink; he could scratch himself anywhere he liked, with any leg, front or back; he could fluff up his tail till it looked like a bottle-brush, and his war-cry as he ran through the long grass, was: "Rikk-tikk-tikki-tikki-tchk!"

One day, a hard summer rain washed him out of the hole where he lived with his father and mother, and carried him down a roadside ditch. There he found some grass, and clung to it till he lost his senses. When he came to himself, he was lying in the hot sun in the middle of a garden path, and a small boy was saying: "Here's a dead mongoose. Let's have a funeral. "

"No, " said his mother; "let's take him home and dry him. Perhaps he isn't really dead. "

They took him into the house, and a big man picked him up and said he was not dead but half choked¹ so they wrapped him in cotton-wool, and warmed him, and he opened his eyes and sneezed.

"Now, " said the big man (he was an Englishman who had just moved into the bungalow); "don't frighten him. and we'll see what he'll do. "

It is the hardest thing in the world to frighten a mongoose, because he is full of curiosity from nose to tail. The motto of all the mongoose family is, "Run and find out"; and Rikki-Tikki was a true mongoose. He looked at the cotton-wool, decided that it was not good to eat, ran all round the table, sat up and put his fur in order, scratched himself, and jumped on the small boy's shoulder.

"Don't be frightened, Teddy, " said his father. "That's how he makes friends. "

Rikki-Tikki looked down at the boy's neck, sniffed at his ear, and climbed down to the floor, where he sat rubbing his nose.

"And that is a wild creature!" said Teddy's mother. "I suppose he is so tame because we have been kind to him. "

"All mongooses are like that, " said her husband. "If Teddy doesn't pull him by the tail, or try to put him in a cage, he'll run in and out of the house all day long. Let's give him something to eat. "

They gave him a little piece of raw meat. Rikki-Tikki liked it very much, and when he finished he went out into the veranda and sat in the sunshine and fluffed up his fur to make it dry to the roots. Then he felt better.

"I can find out about more things in this house, " he said to himself, "than all my family could find out in all their lives. I shall certainly stay and find out. "

He spent all that day running over the house. He nearly drowned himself in the bath-tubs, put his nose into the ink on a writing-table, and burned it on the end of the big man's cigar, for he climbed up in the big man's lap to see how he was writing. In the evening he ran into Teddy's room to watch how kerosene lamps were lighted, and when Teddy went to bed Rikki-Tikki climbed up too, but he was a restless companion, because he had to get up and find out about every noise all the night long. When Teddy's mother and father came in to look at their boy, Rikki-Tikki was sitting on the pillow. "I don't like that," said Teddy's mother; "he may bite the child." "He'll not do such a thing," said the father. "Teddy is safe with that little beast. If a snake comes into the room now —"

But Teddy's mother didn't even want to hear of such a terrible thing.

Early in the morning Rikki-Tikki came to breakfast in the veranda riding on Teddy's shoulder, and they gave him banana and some boiled egg; and he sat on all their laps one after the other, because Rikki-Tikki's mother (she used to live in a general's house) had told him what to do if ever he came to the house of Man.

Rikki-Tikki went out into the garden. It was a large garden with bushes, fruit trees, bamboos and high grass. Rikki-Tikki licked his lips. "This is a splendid hunting-ground," he said and he ran up and down the garden sniffing here and there till he heard very sorrowful voices in a bush.

It was Darzee, the tailor-bird, and his wife. They had made a beautiful nest of two big leaves, cotton and fluff. The nest swayed to and fro, as they sat in it and cried.

"What is the matter?" asked Rikki-Tikki.

"We are very unhappy," said Darzee. "One of our babies fell out of the nest yesterday and Nag ate him."

"H'm!" said Rikki-Tikki, "that is very sad—but I am a stranger here. Who is Nag?"

Darzee and his wife only bent down in the nest without answering, for from the thick grass at the foot of the bush there came a low hiss—a terrible sound that made Rikki-Tikki jump back almost two feet. Then out of the grass rose up the head and hood of Nag, the big black cobra, and he was five feet long from tongue to tail. When he had lifted one-third of himself from the ground, he looked at Rikki-Tikki with the wicked snake's eyes that never change their expression.

"Who is Nag?" he said. "I am Nag. The great god Brahm put his mark upon all our people when the first cobra spread his hood to keep the sun off Brahm as he slept. Look, and be afraid!"

He spread out his hood, and Rikki-Tikki saw the spectacle-mark² on the back of it and at that moment he was afraid; but it is impossible for a mongoose to be afraid for a long time, and though Rikki-Tikki had never met alive cobra before, his mother had given him dead ones to eat, and he knew that a grown mongoose's business in life was to fight and eat snakes. Nag knew that too, and at the bottom of his cold heart he was afraid.

"Well, " said Rikki-Tikki, and his tail began to fluff up again, "marks or no marks, do you think it is right for you to eat babies out of a nest?"

Nag was thinking to himself, and watching each little movement in the grass behind Rikki-Tikki. He knew that mongooses in the garden meant death sooner or later for him and his family; but he wanted to get Rikki-Tikki off his guard³. So he dropped his head a little, and put it on one side.

"Let us talk, " he said. "You eat eggs. Why should not I eat birds?"

"Behind you! Look behind you!" sang Darzee.

Rikki-Tikki jumped up in the air as high as he could, and just under him whizzed by the head of Nagaina, Nag's wicked wife. She crept up behind him as he was talking, to make an end of him; and he heard her savage hiss as the stroke missed⁴. He came down almost on her back, and then was the time to break her back with one bite – but he was a young mongoose and did not know it and he was afraid of the terrible return-stroke of the cobra. He bit, indeed, but did not bite long enough, and he jumped off her tail, leaving Nagaina wounded and angry.

"Wicked, wicked Darzee!" said Nag, lifting up his head as high as he could toward the nest; but Darzee had built it out of reach⁵ of snakes, and it only swayed to and fro.

Rikki-Tikki felt that his eyes were growing red and hot (when a mongoose's eyes grow red, he is angry), and he sat back on his tail and hind legs like a little kangaroo, and looked all around him angrily, but Nag and Nagaina had disappeared into the grass. When a snake misses its stroke, it never says anything or gives any sign of what it is going to do next. Rikki-Tikki did not want to follow them, for he was not sure that he could manage two snakes at once. So he trotted off to the path near the house, and sat down to think. It was a serious matter for him.

The victory is only a matter of quickness of eye and quickness of foot, – snake's blow against mongoose's jump, – and no eye can follow the turn of a snake's head when it strikes. Rikki-Tikki knew he was a young mongoose, and it made him very glad to think that he had managed to escape a blow from behind. It made him believe in himself, and when Teddy came running down the path, Rikki-Tikki was ready to play with him.

But as Teddy was stooping, something moved in the dust, and a faint voice said: "Be careful. I am Death!" It was Karait, the dusty brown Snakeling that lies on the dusty earth; and his bite is as dangerous as the Cobra's. But he is so small that nobody thinks of him, and so he does much harm to people.

Rikki-Tikki's eyes grew red again, and he danced up to Karait rocking and swaying like all the mongooses of his family. Rikki-Tikki did not know that he was doing a much more dangerous thing than, fighting Nag, for Karait is so small, and can turn so quickly, that if Rikki does not bite him close to the back of the head, he may get the return stroke in his eye or lip. But Rikki did not know it and his eyes were all red, and he rocked back and forth, looking for a good place to bite. Karait struck out. Rikki jumped aside, but the wicked little dusty grey head struck almost at his shoulder, and Rikki had to jump over him.

Teddy shouted to the house: "Oh, look here! Our mongoose is killing a snake"; and Rikki-Tikki heard a scream from Teddy's mother. His father ran out with a stick, but by the time he came up, Karait ran away too far, and Rikki-Tikki had jumped on the snake's back, bit as high up the back as he could, and rolled away. That bite paralyzed Karait, and Rikki-Tikki was just going to eat him up from the tail, after the custom of his family, when he remembered that a full meal makes a slow mongoose, and if he wanted to be strong and quick his stomach must be empty.

He went away for a dust-bath under the bushes, while Teddy's father beat the dead Karait. "What is the use of that?" thought Rikki-Tikki. "I have put an end to him"; and then Teddy's mother picked him up from the dust and hugged him, crying that he had saved Teddy from Death, and Teddy's father said that he brought luck, and Teddy looked on with big frightened eyes. Rikki-Tikki did not understand all this but he was enjoying himself very much.

Teddy carried him off to bed, and wanted Rikki-Tikki to sleep under his chin. Rikki-Tikki did not bite or scratch – he was too well-bred – but as soon as Teddy was asleep he went off to walk round the house, and in the dark he ran up against Chuchundra, the muskrat, creeping round by the wall. Chuchundra is a frightened little beast. He creeps all night, trying to make up his mind to run into the middle of the room, but he never gets there. "Don't kill me, " said Chuchundra, almost weeping. "Rikki-Tikki, don't kill me. "

"Do you think a snake-killer kills muskrats?" said Rikki-Tikki scornfully.

"Those who kill snakes are killed by snakes, ' said Chuchundra very sorrowfully. "And how can I be sure that Nag won't mistake me for you one dark night?"

"There's not the least danger, " said Rikki-Tikki; "but Nag is in the garden, and I know you don't go there. "

"My cousin Chua, the rat, told me –" said Chuchundra, and then he stopped.

"Told you what?"

"H'sh! Nag is everywhere, Rikki-Tikki. Why didn't you talk to Chua in the garden?"

"I did not – so you must tell me. Quick, Chuchundra, or I'll bite you!"

Chuchundra sat down and cried till the tears rolled off his whiskers. "I am a very poor man, " he sobbed. "I was never brave enough to run into the middle of the room. H'sh! I mustn't tell you anything. Can't you hear, Rikki-Tikki?"

Rikki-Tikki listened. The house was still, but he thought he could just hear the faintest scratch-scratch in the world.

"That's Nag or Nagaina, " he said to himself; "and he is crawling into the bathroom. Chuchundra, you are right, I am sorry I did not talk to Chua. "

He stole off to Teddy's bathroom; but there was nothing there, and as Rikki-Tikki stole to Teddy's mother's bathroom, he heard Nag and Nagaina whispering together outside in the moonlight.

"When there are no people in the house, " said Nagaina to her husband, "he will have to go away, and then the garden will be our own again. Go in qui-

etly, and first bite the big man who killed Karait. Then come out and tell me, and we will hunt for Rikki-Tikki together. "

"But are you sure that we shall gain anything if we kill the people?" said Nag.

"Everything. When there were no people in the bungalow, did we have any mongoose in the garden? So long as the bungalow is empty, we are king and queen of the garden; and remember that as soon as our eggs in the melon-bed hatch (and they may hatch to-morrow), our children will need room and quiet. "

"I had not thought of that, " said Nag. "I will go, but there is no need for us to hunt for Rikki-Tikki afterward. I will kill the big man and his wife, and the child if I can, and come away quietly. Then the bungalow will be empty, and Rikki-Tikki will go, "

Rikki-Tikki shook all over with rage when he heard this, and then Nag's head came into the bath-room, and his five feet of cold body followed it. Rikki-Tikki was angry but he got very frightened when he saw the size of the big cobra. Nag coiled himself up, raised his head, and looked into the bathroom in the dark, and Rikki could see his eyes glitter.

"Now, if I kill him here, Nagaina will know; and if I fight him on the open floor, the odds are in his favour⁶. What shall I do?" said Rikki-Tikki-Tavi.

Nag waved to and fro, and then Rikki-Tikki heard him drinking from the biggest water-jar that was used to fill the bath. "That is good, " said the snake. "Now, when Karait was killed, the big man had a stick. He may have that stick still, but when he comes into the bathroom in the morning he will not have a stick. I shall wait here till he comes. Nagaina – do you hear me? – I shall wait here till daytime. "

There was no answer from outside, so Rikki-Tikki knew that Nagaina had gone away. Nag coiled himself down, round the bottom of the water-jar, and Rikki-Tikki stayed still as death. After an hour he began to move toward the jar. Nag was asleep, and Rikki-Tikki looked at his big back, wondering which would be the best place for a good bite. "If I don't break his back at the first jump," said Rikki, "he can still fight; and if he fights – Oh, Rikki!" He looked at the thick neck below the hood, but that was too much for him; and a bite near the tail would only make Nag wild.

"I must bite the head, " he said at last; "the head above the hood; and when I am there I must not let go. "

Then he jumped and caught the snake by the head and held fast. Then he was shaken to and fro as a rat is shaken by a dog – to and fro on the floor, up and down, and round in great circles. His eyes were red, and he held fast as the body rolled over the floor, upsetting the basins and jars and banging against the side of the bath. As he held he closed his jaws tighter and tighter, for he was ready to be shaken to death, and for the honour of his family, he preferred to be found with his teeth locked. He was dizzy, and he felt that he was shaken to pieces when something went off like a thunder-clap just behind him; he lost his senses in the hot wind and the red fire burned his fur. The big man had been wakened by the noise, and had fired a gun into Nag just behind the hood.

Rikki-Tikki still held fast with his eyes shut, for now he was quite sure he was dead; but the head did not move, and the big man picked him up and said: "It's the mongoose again, Alice; the little fellow has saved our lives now. " Then Teddy's mother came in with a very white face, and saw what was left of Nag, and Rikki-Tikki dragged himself to Teddy's bedroom and spent the rest of the night shaking himself to find out whether he really was broken into forty pieces, as he thought.

When morning came he was very stiff, but very much pleased with himself. "Now I have to put an end to Nagaina, and she will be worse than five Nags, and who knows when the eggs she spoke about will hatch, I must go and see Darzee, " he said.

Without waiting for breakfast, Rikki-Tikki ran to the bush where Darzee was singing a song of triumph at the top of his voice- The news of Nag's death was all over the garden, for the sweeper had thrown the body on the rubbish-heap.

"Oh, you stupid bird!" said Rikki-Tikki, angrily. "Is this the time to sing?"

"Nag is dead – is dead – is dead!" sang Darzee. "The brave Rikki-Tikki caught him by the head and held fast. The big man brought the bang-stick⁷ and Nag fell in two pieces! He will never eat my babies again. "

"All that is true; but where is Nagaina?" said Rikki-Tikki, looking carefully around him.

"On the rubbish-heap, mourning for Nag. Great is Rikki-Tikki with the white teeth. "

"Bother my white teeth! Have you ever heard where she keeps her eggs?"

"In the melon-bed, on the end nearest the wall, where the sun is hot almost all day. She had them there many weeks ago. "

"Why didn't you tell me about it before? The end nearest the wall, you said?"

"Rikki-Tikki, are you going to eat her eggs?"

"Not eat exactly; no, Darzee, if you have some sense you will fly to the rubbish-heap and pretend that your wing is broken, and let Nagaina follow you away to this bush; I must go to the melon-bed, and if I go there now she will see me."

Darzee was a silly little fellow who could never hold more than one idea at a time in his head; and just because he knew that Nagaina's children were born in eggs like his own, he thought that it was bad to kill them. But his wife was a sensible bird, and she knew that cobra's eggs meant young cobras later on; so she flew out of the nest, and left Darzee to keep the babies warm, and continue his song about the death of Nag. Darzee was very like a man in some ways.

She flew in front of Nagaina by the rubbish-heap, and cried out: "Oh, my wing is broken! The boy in the house threw a stone at me and broke it, " and she fluttered desperately,

Nagaina lifted up her head and hissed, "You warned Rikki-Tikki and that's why I could not kill him. But indeed, you have chosen the bad place to be lame in." And she moved toward Darzee's wife, slipping along over the dust,

"The boy broke it with a stone!" cried Darzee's wife.

"Well! When you are dead you may be glad to know that I shall settle accounts⁸ with the boy. My husband lies on the rubbish-heap this morning, but before night the boy in the house will be very still. What is the use of running away? I am sure that I shall catch you. Little fool, look at me!"

Darzee's wife was clever enough not to do that, for a bird who looks at a snake's eyes gets so frightened that she cannot move. Darzee's wife fluttered on, crying sorrowfully, and never leaving the ground, and Nagaina followed her.

Rikki-Tikki heard them going up the path from the rubbish-heap, and he ran to the end of the melon-bed nearest the wall. There cunningly hidden, he found twenty-five eggs about the size of a hen's egg, but with white skin instead of shell.

"I was just in time, " he said; for he could see the baby cobras curled up inside the eggs, and he knew that as soon as they were hatched they could each kill a man or a mongoose. He bit off the tops of the eggs as fast as he could, crushing the young cobras. At last there were only three eggs left, and Rikki-Tikki began to smile to himself, when he heard Darzee's wife crying:

"Rikki-Tikki, I led Nagaina toward the house, and she has gone into the veranda, and – oh, come quickly – she is going to kill... "

Rikki-Tikki crushed two eggs, and with the third egg in his mouth, he ran to the veranda as fast as he could. Teddy and his mother and father were there at breakfast; but Rikki-Tikki saw that they were not eating. They sat still, and their faces were white. Nagaina had curled up by Teddy's chair, and she was swaying to and fro singing a song of triumph.

"Son of the big man that killed Nag," she hissed, "stay still. I am not ready yet. Wait a little. Keep very still, all you three. If you move I strike, and if you do not move I strike. Oh, foolish people, who killed my Nag!"

Teddy's eyes were fixed on his father, and all his father could do was to whisper, "Sit still, Teddy. You mustn't move. Teddy, keep still. "

Then Rikki-Tikki came up and cried: "Turn round, Nagaina; turn and fight!"

"All in good time," said she without moving her eyes. "I will settle accounts with you very soon. Look at your friends, Rikki-Tikki. They are still and white; they are afraid. They dare not move, and if you come a step nearer I strike. "

"Look at your eggs," said Rikki-Tikki, "in the melon-bed near the wall. Go and look, Nagaina. "

The big snake turned half round, and saw the egg on the veranda. "Ah-h! Give it to me," she said.

Rikki-Tikki put his paws on each side of the egg, and his eyes were blood-red. "What price for a snake's egg? For a young cobra? For the last – the very last of all the eggs? The ants are eating all the others near the melon-bed. "

Naina turned around, forgetting everything but her one egg; and Rikki-Tikki saw Teddy's father catch Teddy by the shoulder and drag him across the table out of reach of Nagaina.

"Tricked!⁹ Tricked! Tricked! Rikk-tck-tck!" laughed Rikki-Tikki. "The boy is safe, and it was I – I – I that caught Nag by the hood last night in the bathroom. " Then he began to jump up and down, all four feet together. "He threw me to and fro, but he could not shake me off. He was dead before the big man fired the gun. I did it Rikki-tikki-tck-tck! Come then, Nagaina. Come and fight with me. You shall not be a widow long. "

Nagaina saw that now she could not kill Teddy, and the egg lay between Rikki-Tikki's paws. "Give me the egg, Rikki-Tikki, Give me the last of my eggs, and I will go away and never come back," she said, lowering her hood.

"Yes, you will go away, and you will never come back; for you will go to the rubbish-heap with Nag. Fight, widow! The big man has gone for his gun! Fight!"

Rikki-Tikki was jumping all round Nagaina, keeping out of reach of her stroke, his little eyes were like hot coals. Nagaina gathered herself together, and flung herself at him. Rikki-Tikki jumped up and backward. Again and again she struck, but each time she missed her strokes.

Rikki-Tikki had forgotten the egg. It still lay on the veranda, and Nagaina came nearer and nearer to it, till at last, while Rikki-Tikki was drawing his breath, she caught it in her mouth, turned to the veranda steps, and flew like an arrow down the path and Rikki-Tikki flew behind her.

Rikki-Tikki knew that he must catch her, or all the trouble would begin again. She ran straight for the long grass by Darzee's bush, and as he was running Rikki-Tikki heard Darzee still singing his foolish little song of triumph. But Darzee's wife was wiser. She flew out of her nest as Nagaina came along, and fluttered about Nagaina's head. Nagaina only lowered her head and went on; but when she stopped for a second Rikki-Tikki jumped on her, and as she plunged into the hole where she and Nag used to live, his little white teeth hit her tail, and he went down with her—and very few mongooses, even wise and old ones, follow a cobra into its hole. It was dark in the hole; and Rikki-Tikki didn't know when Nagaina would turn and strike at him, but he held on fast.

Then the grass by the mouth of the hole stopped waving, and Darzee said: "It is all over with Rikki-Tikki! We must sing his death-song. Brave Rikki-Tikki is dead! For Nagaina will surely kill him in the hole underground. "

So he sang a very sorrowful song that he made up on the spur of the minute, and just as he got to the most sorrowful part the grass waved again, and Rikki-Tikki, covered with dirt, dragged himself out of the hole leg by leg, licking his whiskers. Darzee stopped with a little shout. Rikki-Tikki shook some of the dust out of his fur and sneezed. "It is all over," he said. "The widow will never come out again. "

Rikki-Tikki curled himself up in the grass and slept where he was—slept and slept till it was late in the afternoon, for he had worked hard that day.

"Now," he said, when he awoke, "I will go back to the house. Tell the Coppersmith, Darzee, and he will tell the garden that Nagaina is dead."

When Rikki came to the house, Teddy and Teddy's mother and Teddy's father came out and almost cried over him; and that night he ate all that was giv-

en to him till he could eat no more; and went to bed on Teddy's shoulder, where Teddy's mother saw him when she came to look late at night.

"He saved our lives and Teddy's life," she said to her husband. "Just think, he saved all our lives."

Rikki-Tikki had a right to be proud of himself; but he did not grow too proud, and he guarded the house and the garden with tooth and jump and spring and bite, till no cobra dared to show its head inside the walls.

NOTES:

¹ half choked – захлебнулся;

² the spectacle-mark – очковая метка;

³ to get Rikki-Tikki-Tavi off his guard – усыпить внимание;

⁴ miss a stroke – промахнуться;

⁵ out of reach – вне досягаемости;

⁶ the odds are in his favour – преимущество на его стороне;

⁷ the bang-stick – зд. ружье;

⁸ settle accounts – разделаться;

⁹ Tricked! – Обманул!

Comprehension:

- 1) How did the mongoose get into Teddy's house?
- 2) What did the little bird tell Rikki about Nag and Nagaina?
- 3) What was Nag and Nagaina's plan?
- 4) What happened in the bathroom?
- 5) How did Rikki settle accounts with Nagaina?
- 6) Prove that the mongoose had a real right to be proud of himself.

The Fisherman and His Soul

O. Wilde

Every evening the young Fisherman went to sea and threw his nets into the water.

Every evening he went to sea, and one evening the net was so heavy that he could not draw it into the boat, And he laughed, and said to himself, "Surely I have caught all the fish of the sea, or some monster," and he put forth all his strength and drew the net to the surface of the water.

But there were no fish at all in it, nor any monster, but only a little Mermaid, who was fast asleep.

Her wet hair was like gold, her body was as white as ivory, and her tail was of silver and pearl, and like sea-shells were her ears, and her lips were like sea-coral.

She was so beautiful that the young Fisherman drew the net close to him, and embraced her. And when he touched her, she gave a cry, and awoke, and

looked at him in terror and tried to escape. But he held her so tight that she could not free herself.

And when she saw that she could in no way¹ escape from him, she began to weep, and said, "I ask you to let me go, for I am the only daughter of a King, and my father is very old and all alone. "

But the young Fisherman answered, "I shall let you go if you promise that whenever I call you, you will come and sing to me, for the fish like to listen to the songs of the Sea-folk, and so my nets will be full. "

"Will you indeed let me go if I promise you this?" asked the Mermaid.

"Indeed I will let you go, " said the young Fisherman.

So she promised him, and swore it by the oath of the Sea-folk² and he loosened his arms, and let her go, and she sank down into the water, trembling with a strange fear.

* * *

Every evening the young Fisherman went to sea, and called to the Mermaid, and she rose out of the water and sang a marvelous song to him.

And as she sang, all the fish came from the depth to listen to her, and the young Fisherman threw his nets and caught them. And when his boat was full, the Mermaid smiled at him and sank down into the sea.

Yet, she never came so near to him that he could touch her. He often called to her and begged her, but she did not come near him; and when he tried to seize her she sank down into the water, and he did not see her again that day. And each day the sound of her voice became sweeter to his ears. So sweet was her voice that he forgot his nets and his boat. With eyes dim with wonder, he sat idly in his boat and listened, and listened, till night came.

And one evening he called to her, and said: "Little Mermaid, little Mermaid, I love you- Let me be your bridegroom, for I love you."

But the Mermaid shook her head. "You have a human soul," she answered, "Send away your soul and I shall love you. "

And the young Fisherman said to himself, "What is the use of my soul to me? I cannot see it. I may not touch it. I do not know it. Surely I can send it away. " He gave a cry of joy, and held out his arms to the Mermaid. "I shall send my soul away, " he cried, "and you will be my bride, and I shall be your bridegroom, and we shall live together in the depth of the sea, and you will show me all that you have sung to me about, and I shall do all that you desire, and we shall never separate, "

And the little Mermaid laughed with pleasure and hid her face in her hands,

"But how shall I send my soul away?" cried the young Fisherman. "Tell me how to do it. "

"Alas! I do not know, " said the little Mermaid: "the Sea-folk have no souls. " And she looked thoughtfully at him and sank down into the depth.

* * *

Early the next morning the young Fisherman went to the house of the Priest. When he entered the house and saw the Priest he knelt down on the floor and said to him, "Father, I am in love with one of the Sea-folk, but we cannot be together because of my soul. Tell me how I can send my soul away, for indeed I don't need it. What is the value of my soul to me? I cannot see it. I may not touch it. I do not know it. "

"Alas! You are mad," cried the Priest, "for the soul is the noblest part of a man. There is nothing more precious than a human soul. It is worth all the gold that is in the world, and is more precious than the rubies of the kings. Therefore, my son, do not think of this any more, for it is a sin. And as for the Sea-folk, they are lost, and those who wish to be with them are also lost. They are like beasts that do not know the difference between good and evil. "

The young Fisherman's eyes filled with tears when he heard the bitter words of the Priest, and he rose up from his knees and said, "Father, what is my soul to me, if it stands between me and my love?"

"The love of the body is a sin," cried the Priest and frowned. "Accursed be³ the singers of the sea! I have heard them at night, and they have tried to tempt me. They knock at my window and laugh when I am praying. They whisper into my ears the tale of their joys. They tempt me with strange temptations. They are lost, I tell you, they are lost, and there is neither heaven nor hell for them.⁴"

"Father, " cried the young Fisherman, "you do not know what you are saying. Once I caught in my net the daughter of a King, She is more beautiful than the morning star, and whiter than the moon. For her body I shall give my soul, for her love I shall give up heaven. Tell me how to get rid of my soul, and let me go in peace. "

"Go away, go away!" cried the Priest; "your mermaid is lost, and you will be lost with her," and he turned him out of the house.

And the young Fisherman went slowly to the market place, and his heart was full of sorrow. When the merchants saw him they began to whisper to each other, and one of them called him by name, and asked him, "What have you to sell?"

"I will sell you my soul," he answered. "I ask you to buy it, for I am tired of it. What is the use of my soul to me? I cannot see it. I may not touch it. I do not know it. "

But the merchants mocked at him, and said, "What is the use of a man's soul to us? It is not worth a single piece of silver. Sell us your body into slavery. But do not talk about your soul, for it is worth nothing to us. "

And the young Fisherman said to himself: "How strange! The Priest tells me that the soul is worth all the gold in the world, and the merchants say that it is not worth a single piece of silver. " And he went to the seashore, and began to think what to do.

* * *

And at noon he remembered that in a cave near the bay lived a young Witch who was very clever in her witchcraft. And he ran there, so eager was he to get rid of his soul.

The young Witch knew that he would come, and she laughed and let down her red hair. She met him at the opening of the cave.

"What do you need? What do you need?" she cried, as he bowed to her. "Fish for your net? I have a little reed-pipe, and when I play it the fish come into the bay. But it has a price, pretty boy, it has a price. What do you need?"

"I desire only a little thing," answered the young Fisherman, "yet the Priest has turned me out of his house, and the merchants have laughed at me. That is why I have come to you, though men call you evil, and whatever price you ask, I shall pay it. "

"What is your desire?" asked the Witch, coming near to him.

"My desire is to get rid of my soul," answered the young Fisherman.

The Witch grew pale and trembled. "Pretty boy, pretty boy," she murmured, "that is a terrible thing to do." He brushed his brown hair back and laughed. "My soul is nothing to me," he answered, "I cannot see it. I may not touch it. I do not know it. "

"What will you give me, if I tell you?" asked the Witch, looking at him with her beautiful green eyes.

"Five pieces of gold," he said, "and my nets, and the house where I live, and the painted boat in which I sail. Only tell me how to get rid of my soul, and I shall give you all that I possess."

She laughed at him, and said, "I can turn the autumn leaves into gold if I want to. He whom I serve is richer than all the kings of the world. "

"What then shall I give you, " exclaimed the young Fisherman.

"You must dance with me, pretty boy, " she murmured, and she smiled at him as she spoke.

"Then at sunset in some secret place we shall dance together, " he said, "and after that you will tell me the thing which I desire to know. "

She shook her head. "When the moon is full, " she murmured. Then she looked all round and listened. There was no other sound but the sound of the sea. But she drew him near to her, and put her dry lips close to his ear, and whispered, "To-night, when the moon is full, you must come to the top of the mountain. It is a Sabbath, and He will be there. "

The young Fisherman started and looked at her, and she showed her white teeth and laughed. "Who is He?" he asked.

"It doesn't matter," she answered. "Come to-night, and stand under the branches of the oak, and wait for me. If a black dog runs towards you, strike it with a stick, and it will go away. If an owl speaks to you, don't answer it. When the moon is full, I shall be with you, and we shall dance together on the grass. "

"But will you swear to me to tell me how I can send my soul away?" he asked.

"By the hoofs of the goat I swear it," she answered.

"You are the best of witches," cried the young Fisherman, "and I shall dance with you to-night on the top of the mountain. I would prefer to pay you either gold or silver. But you will get your price because it is only a little thing." And he bent his head before her and ran back to the town filled with great joy.

And the Witch watched him as he ran. Then she entered her cave and took a mirror from a box and burnt grass before it. She looked through the rings of smoke, and after a time she clenched her hands in anger. "He must be mine," she murmured, "I am as fair as his love is."

* * *

And that evening the young Fisherman came to the top of the mountain and stood under the branches of the oak.

At midnight the witches came. They flew through the air like bats. Last of all came the young Witch. She wore a dress of gold satin embroidered with silver, and a little cap of green velvet. She ran to the oak, and taking the young Fisherman by the hand she led him into the moonlight, and they began to dance.

Round and round they whirled, and the young Witch jumped so high that he could see the heels of her shoes. Then he heard the sound of the galloping of a horse, but nowhere could he see the horse, and he felt afraid.

"Faster, " cried the Witch, and she put her arms around his neck, and he felt her hot breath on his face. "Faster, faster!" she cried, and the earth seemed to whirl under his feet, and a great terror fell on him because he felt that some evil thing⁵ was watching him, and at last he noticed that under the shadow of a rock there was a figure.

It was a man, dressed in a suit of black velvet. His face was strangely pale, but his lips were like a red flower; he wore rings on his delicate white fingers. On the grass beside him lay a hat and a pair of gloves. He seemed tired.

"Come! Let us worship, " whispered the Witch, and he followed her. But when he came close, and without knowing why he did it, he made on his breast the sign of the Cross.

As soon as he did so the witches screamed and flew away, and the pale face of the man was twisted in a spasm of pain. The man whistled and a horse appeared before him. As he jumped into the saddle he turned round and looked at the young Fisherman sadly.

And the Witch with the red hair also tried to fly away but the young Fisherman caught her by the hand and held her tight and said, "I shall not let you go if you do not tell me the secret. "

"What secret?" asked the Witch, struggling with him like a wild cat.

"You know, " he replied.

"Ask me anything but that!" she said with tears in her green eyes.

He laughed, and held her more tightly.

And when she saw that she could not free herself, she whispered to him, "Surely I am as fair as the daughter of the sea," and she embraced him and put her face close to his.

But he pushed her away with anger, and said to her, "If you do not keep your promise, I shall kill you."

She grew pale and trembled. "Be it so," she murmured "It is your soul and not mine. Do with it as you wish." And she took out a little knife with a handle of snake skin and gave it to him.

"What shall I do with it?" he asked her in wonder.

She was silent for a few moments, and fear came over her. Then she brushed her hair back from her forehead and smiled strangely. "What men call the shadow of the body," she said, "is not the shadow of the body, but is the body of the soul. Stand on the sea-shore with your back to the moon, and cut away from around your feet⁶ your shadow, which is your soul's body, and order your soul to leave you, and it will do so. "

The young Fisherman trembled. "Is this true?" he murmured.

"It is true, and I am sorry that I have told you about it," she cried, and threw herself at his feet, weeping.

He pushed her away, put the knife into his belt, and went down to the sea-shore. And on his way his Soul said to him, "I have been your servant, for all these years. Don't send me away from you now! What evil have I done to you? "

And the young Fisherman laughed. "You have done me no evil, but I have no need of you, " he answered. "The world is wide, go wherever you want and don't trouble me, for my love is calling to me. "

At last he reached the sea-shore. He stood on the sand with his back to the moon and before him lay his shadow, which was the body of his Soul.

And his Soul said to him, "If you indeed must send me away, give me your heart to take with me. The world is cruel, and I am afraid. "

The young Fisherman shook his head and smiled. "With what shall I love my love if I give you my heart?" he exclaimed.

"No, be merciful," said the Soul; "give me your heart, for the world is very cruel."

"My heart belongs to my love," answered the Fisherman.

"But I also want to love," said his Soul.

"Go away, for I have no need of you, " cried the Fisherman and he took the little knife with the handle of snake skin and cut away his shadow from around his feet, and it rose up and stood before him, and it looked like himself. He put the knife into his belt and a feeling of terror came over him. "Go away, " he murmured, "and let me see your face no more. "

"No, but we must meet again, " said the Soul in a low voice,

"How shall we meet?" cried the young Fisherman. "You will not follow me into the depths of the sea!"

"Once every year I will come to this place and call to you," said the Soul. "It may be that you will need me. "

"What shall I need you for?" cried the young Fisherman, "but let it be as you wish, " and he plunged into the water and the little Mermaid rose out of the sea to meet him, and she embraced him, and kissed him on the lips.

And the Soul stood on the shore and watched them. And when they sank into the sea, it went weeping away.

* * *

And after a year was over, the Soul came to the seashore and called to the young Fisherman, and he rose out of the depths and asked, "Why did you call me?"

"Come nearer," answered the Soul, "I want to tell you about the marvelous things that I have seen."

So he came nearer and began to listen.

"When I left you, " said the Soul, "I turned my face to the East and began my journey. From the East comes everything that is wise. Six days I journeyed, and on the morning of the seventh day I came to a hill that is in the country of the Tartars. I sat down under the shadow of a tree to shelter myself from the sun.

"When the moon rose I saw a camp-fire on the plain and went towards it. A company of merchants were sitting round it on carpets. Their camels were behind them. As I came near them, the chief of the merchants drew his sword and asked me who was the prophet of God; and I answered him Mohammed.

"When the chief heard the name of the false prophet⁷, he bowed, and took me by the hand, and asked me to sit by his side. A Negro brought me some milk and a piece of meat.

"At dawn we started on our journey, I rode on a camel by the side of the chief. There were forty camels in the caravan, and the mules were twice forty in number.

"We left the country of the hills and went to the East. As we passed over the mountains we held our breath because we were afraid that the snow might fall on us.

As we passed through the valleys, the Pygmies shot arrows at us from the hollows of the trees. When we came to the Tower of Monkeys we gave them fruit, and they did not harm us. When we came to the Tower of Snakes we gave them warm milk, and they let us go by.

"The kings of each city imposed taxes on us, but did not allow us to enter their gates. They threw us bread and fruit over the walls.

"When the people in the villages saw us coming, they poisoned the wells. We fought with the Magadae who are born old, and grow younger and younger every year, and die when they are little children; and with the Laktroi who say that they are the sons of tigers, and paint themselves yellow and black; and with the Agazonbae, who are dog-faced, and with the Sibans, who have horses' feet, but run more swiftly than horses. A third of our company died in battle and a third died of hunger and thirst. The rest spoke against me,⁸ and said that I had brought them misfortune. I took a snake from under a stone and let it sting me. When they saw that I did not fall ill they felt afraid.

"In four months we reached the city of Illel. The interpreter of the caravan explained to the guards that we had come from Syria with plenty of goods. So at noon they opened the gate and we entered the city. We stood in the market, and

the merchants displayed their strange goods for sale: the waxed linen from Egypt, and the painted linen from Ethiopia, the blue silk from China and many other beautiful things.

"When the moon rose I wandered away through the streets of the city and came to the garden of its god. The priests in their yellow robes moved silently among the green trees, and on black marble stood the temple. In front of it was a pond of clear water. I lay down beside it. One of the priests came towards me and stood behind me.

"He was silent for a few moments and then asked me what I desired.

"I told him that my desire was to see the god.

"The god is hunting, ' said the priest, looking strangely at me with his small eyes.

"Tell me in what forest, and I shall ride to him," I answered.

"The god is asleep," he murmured.

"Tell me on what couch, and I shall watch over him," I answered.

"The god is at a feast," he cried.

"If the wine is sweet, I shall drink it with him, and if it is bitter, I shall also drink it with him, ' was my answer.

"He bowed his head in wonder, and, taking me by the hand, he led me into the temple, and in the first chamber I saw an idol sitting on a throne. It was made of ebony and was of a man's height. Its feet were red with the blood of a newly-killed kid.⁹

"And I asked the priest, 'Is this the god?' and he answered me, "This is the god."

"Show me the god," I cried, 'or I shall kill you. " And I touched his hand, and it became withered.

"And the priest begged me, saying 'Please my lord, heal me, your servant, and I will show you the god. '

"So I healed him and he led me into the second chamber, and I saw an idol standing on a block of marble. It was made of ivory and was twice the height of a man. In one hand it held a crooked scepter and in the other a round crystal.

"And I asked the priest, 'Is this the god?' And he answered me, 'This is the god. '

"Show me the god, ' I cried, 'or I shall kill you. ' And I touched his eyes, and he went blind.¹⁰

"And the priest begged me, saying 'Please my lord, heal me, your servant, and I shall show you the god. '

"So I healed him and he led me into the third chamber, and there was no idol in it, but only a metal mirror.

"And I asked the priest, 'Where is the god?'

"And he answered me: 'There is no god, but this mirror is the Mirror of Wisdom. And through it you can see all things that are in heaven and on earth. Those who possess this mirror know everything and there is nothing hidden from them. For this reason it is the god, and we worship it, ' and I looked into the mirror, and it was just as he had said to me.

"And I did a strange thing, but it doesn't matter what I did, for in a valley that is only a day's journey from this place I have hidden the Mirror of Wisdom, Let me enter into you again and be your servant, and nobody will be as wise as you."

But the young Fisherman laughed. "Love is better than Wisdom," he cried, "and the little Mermaid loves me."

"No, there is nothing better than Wisdom," said the Soul.

"Love is better, " answered the young Fisherman, and he plunged into the depth of the sea, and the Soul went weeping away.

* * *

And after the second year was over, the Soul came to the sea-shore and called to the young Fisherman, and he rose out of the depths and asked: "Why did you call me?"

And the Soul answered, "Come nearer, I want to tell you about the marvelous things that I have seen."

So he came nearer and began to listen.

"When I left you," said the Soul, "I turned my face to the South, and began my journey. From the South comes everything that is precious, Six days I journeyed along the road by which the pilgrims go, and on the morning of the seventh day I saw the city. When I tried to enter, the guards stopped me and asked me who I was. I answered that I was a Dervish¹¹ and the guards allowed me to go in.

"Inside it is like a bazaar. Surely you should have been with me, Across the narrow streets hang gay lamps of paper. They are like large butterflies. In front of the shops sit the merchants on silken carpets. Some of them sell curious perfumes from the islands of the Indian Sea. Others sell silver bracelets with blue stones, anklets with little pearls, finger-rings and the claws of the tiger set in gold, and many other precious things.

"Certainly you should have been with me at the feast of the New Moon. At sunrise the young Emperor came out of his palace in a robe of silver, and at sunset he returned to it again in a robe of gold. The people threw themselves on the ground and hid their faces, but I did not want to do so. When the Emperor saw me, he raised his painted eyebrows and stopped. I stood quite still and did not bow to him. The people were surprised at my bravery, and advised me to run away from the city, but I paid no attention to them.

"That night when I was in the tea-house, the guards of the Emperor entered and led me to the palace. As I went in they closed each door behind me, and put a chain across it. The guards hastened me on¹² and soon I found myself in a garden. At the end of the garden stood a little pavilion. The captain of the guard led me into it. I walked on without trembling. The young Emperor was lying on a couch of lion skins. Behind him stood a Nubian, naked down to the waist. On the table by the side of the couch lay a great sword.

"When the Emperor saw me he frowned, and said to me, 'What is your name? Don't you know that I am the Emperor of this city?' But I did not answer him.

"He pointed with his finger at the sword, and the Nubian seized it and struck at me with great strength. The sword whizzed through me, and did not hurt me. The man fell on the floor in fear and hid himself behind the couch.

"The Emperor jumped to his feet, and taking a spear, he threw it at me. I caught it and broke it into two pieces. He shot at me with an arrow but I stopped it in its flight. Then he took a dagger and killed the Nubian for the Emperor did not want to have a witness of his dishonour.

"After this the Emperor turned to me and said, 'Are you a prophet or the son of a prophet that I cannot hurt you? I ask you to leave my city to-night, for while you are in it, I am not its lord. '

"And I answered him, 'Give me half of your treasure and I shall go away. '

"He took me by the hand, and led me out into the garden. When the captain of the guard saw me, he wondered what had happened.

"There is a chamber in the palace that has eight walls. The Emperor touched one of them and it opened, and we passed down a corridor that was lit with many lamps. On each side stood great wine-jars with silver pieces. When we reached the center of the corridor the Emperor spoke the word that may not be spoken, and a granite door opened on a secret spring.

"You can't imagine how marvelous a place it was. There were huge tortoise-shells full of pearls and red rubies. The gold and the gold-dust were in trunks of great size. There were opals, sapphires and many other precious stones. And yet I have told you only a tenth of what was there.

"And the Emperor said to me, 'This is my treasure house, and half of it is yours. And I shall give you camels and camel drivers, and they will take your part of the treasure to whatever country of the world you desire to go. But you must leave the city to-night for I do not want the Sun, who is my father, to see that there is in my city a man whom I cannot kill. '

"But I answered him, "The gold that is here is yours, and the silver is also yours and yours are the precious jewels. As for me, I do not need them. I shall take nothing, but that little ring that you wear on your finger. "

"And the Emperor frowned. "It is only a leaden ring," he cried, "it has no value. Therefore take your half of the treasure and go from the city."

"No, " I answered, "I shall take nothing but that leaden ring, for I know for what purpose it is used."

"And the Emperor trembled, and said, "Take all the treasure and go from the city. The half that is mine shall be yours also."

"And I did a strange thing, but it does not matter what I did, for in a cave that is only a day's journey from this place I have hidden the Ring of Riches, and it waits for you. Those who possess this Ring are richer than all the kings of the world. Come therefore and take it, and all the riches of the world shall be yours."

But the young Fisherman laughed. "Love is better than riches," he cried, "and the little Mermaid loves me."

"No, there is nothing better than riches," said the Soul.

"Love is better," answered the young Fisherman, and he plunged into the depth of the sea, and the Soul went weeping away.

* * *

And after the third year was over, the Soul came to the sea-shore and called to the young Fisherman, and he rose out of the depths and asked, "Why did you call me?"

And the Soul answered, "Come nearer, I want to tell you about the marvelous things that I have seen. "

So he came nearer and began to listen.

And the Soul said to him, "I know a city in which there is an inn that stands by a river. I sat there with sailors who drank wine and ate bread and salt fish. And as we sat and made merry an old man with a lute entered. And when he began to play the lute, a girl whose face was veiled ran in and began to dance before us. Her face was veiled but her feet were naked and they moved over the carpet like little white pigeons. I have never seen anything so marvelous, and the city in which she dances is only a day's journey from this place!"

Now when the young Fisherman heard the words of his Soul, he remembered that the little Mermaid had no feet and could not dance. And a great desire came over him, and he said to himself, "It is only a day's journey, and I can return to my love," and he laughed and went towards the shore.

And on the shore he laughed again and held out his arms to his Soul. And his Soul gave a great cry of joy, and ran to meet him, and entered into him, and the young Fisherman saw again before him on the sand the shadow of his body which was the body of his Soul.

And his Soul said to him, "Let us go at once, for the Sea-gods are jealous, and have monsters that will do everything they wish."

So they made haste, and all that night and all the next day they journeyed, and in the evening they came to a city.

And the young Fisherman asked his Soul, "Is this the city in which she dances?"

And his Soul answered him, "It is not that city, but another. Nevertheless let us enter it."

So they entered it and passed through its streets, and as they passed through the street of the Jewelers, the young Fisherman saw a silver cup on a stall and his Soul said to him, "Take that silver cup and hide it."

So he took the cup and hid it, and they went hurriedly out of the city.

And when they had gone some miles from the city, the young Fisherman frowned, and threw the cup away, and said to his Soul, "Why did you tell me to take that cup and hide it, for it was an evil thing to do?"

But his Soul answered him, "Be quiet, be quiet."

And in the evening of the second day they came to a city, and the young Fisherman asked his Soul, "Is this the city in which she dances?"

And his Soul answered him, "It is not this city but another. Nevertheless let us enter it. "

So they entered it and passed through the streets, and as they passed through the street of the Sellers, the young Fisherman saw a child with a jar of water. And his Soul said to him, "Strike that child." So he struck the child till it wept, and they went hurriedly out of the city.

And when they had gone some miles from the city, the young Fisherman got angry, and said to his Soul, "Why did you tell me to strike the child, for it was an evil thing to do?"

But his Soul answered him, "Be quiet, be quiet."

And in the evening of the third day they came to a city, and the young Fisherman asked his Soul, "Is this the city in which she dances?"

And his Soul answered him, "It may be this city, therefore let us enter it."

So they entered it and passed through the streets, but nowhere could the young Fisherman find the river or the inn that stood by its side. And he said to his Soul, "Let us go away, for she who dances is not here. "

But the Soul answered him, "No, let us stay here, for the night is dark, and there may be robbers on the way. "

So he sat in the market-place and rested, and after a time a merchant came up to him and asked, "Why do you sit in the market-place, when the shops are closed?"

And the young Fisherman answered him, "I can find no inn in this city and I have no friends here. "

"Are we not all friends?" said the merchant. "And did not one God make us? Therefore come with me, for I have a guest-room. "

So the young Fisherman rose up and followed the merchant to his house. At home the merchant brought him rose-water in a jar to wash his hands and set a plate of rice and a piece of meat before him.

And after supper the merchant led him to the guestroom and showed him his bed. And the young Fisherman thanked him and kissed his hand, and very soon fell asleep.

And three hours before dawn his Soul waked him, and said to him, "Get up and go to the room where the merchant sleeps and kill him, and take his gold, for we need it. "

And the young Fisherman got up and went to the merchant's room. On the couch by the side of the merchant lay a sword and nine purses of gold. When he touched the sword the merchant awoke and cried to the young Fisherman, "Do you return evil for good?"

And his Soul said to the young Fisherman, "Strike him," and he struck him so that the merchant fainted, and he seized the nine purses of gold, and they went hurriedly out of the city.

And when they had gone some miles from the city, the young Fisherman became furious, and said to his Soul,

"Why did you order me to kill the merchant and take his gold? Surely you are evil. "

But his Soul answered him, "Be quiet, be quiet."

"No," cried the young Fisherman, "I cannot be quiet, for I hate all that you have ordered me to do. I hate you also and I ask you to tell me why you have guided me in this way?"

And his Soul answered him, "When you sent me away from you into the world you gave me no heart, so I learned to do all these things and to love them."

"What do you say?" murmured the young Fisherman.

"You know," answered his Soul, "you know it well. Have you forgotten that you gave me no heart? And don't trouble yourself and me, but be quiet. "

And when the young Fisherman heard these words he trembled and said to his Soul, "No, you are evil, and have made me forget my love, and have tempted me with temptations, and have guided me in the ways of sin."

And his Soul answered him, "You have not forgotten that when you sent me away from you into the world you gave me no heart. Come, let us go to another city, and make merry, for we have nine purses of gold. "

But the young Fisherman took the nine purses of gold, and threw them away. "No," he cried, "I shall have nothing to do with you,¹³ and I shall go with you nowhere. And as I sent you away before, I shall send you away now, for you have done me no good." And he turned his back to the Moon, and with the little knife that had the handle of snake skin, he tried to cut from his feet the shadow of the body which is the body of the Soul.

Yet his Soul did not leave him and paid no attention to his order, but said to him, "The witchcraft that the Witch told you does not help you any more, therefore you cannot send me away. Only once in his life can a man send his Soul away, but he who receives back his Soul must keep it with him forever, and this is his punishment and his reward. "

And the young Fisherman grew pale and cried, "She was a false Witch, for she did not tell me that." And when he understood that he could no longer get rid of his Soul, and that it was an evil Soul and would always remain with him, he fell on the ground weeping bitterly.

* * *

And next day, the young Fisherman got up and said to his Soul, "I shall tie my hands so as not to carry out your orders, and close my lips in order not to speak your words, and I shall return to the place where my love usually sings, and I shall call to her and tell her the evil I have done and the evil you have ordered me to do."

And his Soul tempted him and said, "Who is your love that you want to return to her? The world has many fairer than she is. There are the dancing girls of Samaria who dance in the manner of birds and beasts. Come with me and I shall show them to you. Do not trouble about sin, but come with me to another city."

But the young Fisherman did not answer his Soul. He closed his lips with the seal of silence¹⁴ and tied his hands with a cord and journeyed back to the

place from which he had come, so great was the power of the love that was within him.

And when he had reached the sea-shore, he loosened the cord from his hands and took the seal of silence from his lips, and called to the little Mermaid. But she did not answer his call, though he called the whole day and begged her to come.

And his Soul mocked at him and said. "Surely you have little joy out of your love. You gave away all you had, and you got nothing in return. Come with me, for I know where is the Valley of Pleasure."

But the young Fisherman did not answer his Soul. He built himself a house near the sea and lived there for a year. And every morning he called to the little Mermaid, and every noon he called to her again, and at night he called her by name. Yet she never rose out of the sea to meet him, and he could not find her in any part of the sea.

And though his Soul tempted him all the time with evil and terrible things, it could not persuade him, so great was the power of his love.

And after the year was over, the Soul said to himself, "I have tempted my master with evil, and his love is stronger than I am. I shall tempt him now with good, and it may be that he will come with me. "

So he said to the young Fisherman, "I have told you of the joy of the world, and you have turned a deaf ear to me.¹⁵ Let me now tell you of the world's pain, and it may be that now you will listen to me. For indeed pain is the Lord of the world and there is no one who escapes from its net. There are some who need clothes, and others who need bread. There are widows who wear jewels, and widows who wear rags. The beggars go up and down on the roads, and through the streets of the cities walks Famine, and the Plague sits at the gates of the poor people. Come, let us go and mend these things. Do not waste your time, calling to your love when you see that she doesn't answer you. "

But the young Fisherman did not answer his Soul, so great was the power of his love. And every morning he called to the Mermaid, and every noon he called to her again, and at night he called her by name. But she never rose out of the sea to meet him and nowhere could he find her.

And after the second year was over, the Soul said to the young Fisherman, "I have tempted you with evil, and I have tempted you with good, but your love is stronger than I am. So I shall not tempt you any more, but I beg you to allow me to enter your heart, in order to be one with you as before. "

"Surely you may enter," said the young Fisherman, "for in the days when you walked without a heart through the world you evidently suffered very much."

"Alas!" cried his Soul, "I can find no place in your heart, it is so full of love."

"Yet I wish I could help you," answered the young Fisherman.

And as he spoke there came a great cry from the sea, just like the cry that men hear when one of the Sea-folk dies. And the young Fisherman jumped up, and left his house and ran to the shore. And the black waves came hurriedly to

the shore, bearing with them a burden that was whiter than silver. And the shore received it, and the young Fisherman saw at his feet the body of the little Mermaid.

With a cry of pain he threw himself down beside it on the sand. Weeping, he held it to his breast. Cold were the lips, yet he kissed them. He kissed the closed eyelids, and the sea-water that was on them, was less salty than his tears. And to the dead thing he confessed everything. Bitter, bitter was his joy, and full of strange gladness was his pain.

The black sea came nearer. With white claws of foam the sea struck on the shore. From the palace of the Sea-King came again a cry. "Run away," said his Soul, "for the sea is coming, and if you stay it will kill you. Run away for I am afraid, seeing that your heart is closed against me¹⁶ because of the greatness of your love. Run away to a safe place. Surely you will not send me away without a heart into another world?"

But the young Fisherman did not listen to his Soul, but called to the little Mermaid, and said, "Love is better than wisdom, and more precious than riches. The fires cannot destroy it, and the waters cannot quench it. I called to you at dawn, and you did not come at my call, I whispered your name in the night, but you did not answer, for I had evilly left you. Yet I never forgot you and my love was always in my heart. "

And his Soul begged him to run away, but he would not, so great was his love. And the sea came nearer, ready to cover him with its waves, and when he knew that the end was near, he kissed the cold lips of the Mermaid, and his heart broke, and as through the fullness of his love his heart broke,¹⁷ the Soul found a place and entered it, and was one with him as before. And the sea covered the young Fisherman with its waves.

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And in the morning when the sea became calm the Priest went to bless it. And with him went very many people.

And when he reached the shore he saw the young fisherman who was drowned embracing the body of the little Mermaid. The Priest turned away and said, "I will not bless the sea and I will not bless anything that is in it. Accursed be the Sea-folk, and accursed be those who are with them. And as for the Fisherman who for love gave up God, take his body and the body of his love, and bury them in a lonely corner of the field, and put no mark above them, so that nobody will find their place."

And the people did as the Priest ordered.

And once when the third year was over the Priest went to church to speak to the people about the might of God.

And when he entered and bowed before the altar, he saw that the altar was covered with strange white flowers that he had never seen before. Strange were their shapes and strange was their sweet odour.

And when the Priest began to speak to the people he felt that the white flowers somehow troubled him. He did not know why, but he began to speak not about the might of God, but about the God whose name is Love.

And when he had finished he asked the people where they had got the beautiful white flowers. And they answered him, "The flowers come from the lonely corner of the field."

And the Priest trembled, and returned to his own house, thinking of the power of true love.

And in the morning the Priest went to the sea-shore, and blessed the sea, and all the wild things that are in it. But the Sea-folk never again came into the bay, for they went to another part of the sea.

NOTES:

- ¹ in no way – никак;
- ² swore it by the oath of the Sea-folk – поклялась клятвой обитателей моря;
- ³ accursed be – будь прокляты;
- ⁴ there is neither heaven nor hell for them – им нет места ни в раю, ни в аду;
- ⁵ some evil thing – кто-то злой;
- ⁶ and cut away from around your feet – и отрежь свою тень у самых ног;
- ⁷ false prophet – лжепророк;
- ⁸ spoke against me – говорили обо мне враждебно;
- ⁹ a newly-killed kid – только что убитый козленок;
- ¹⁰ go blind – ослепнуть;
- ¹¹ Dervish – дервиш (монах);
- ¹² the guards hastened me on – стража торопила меня;
- ¹³ I shall have nothing to do with you – я не хочу иметь с тобой ничего общего;
- ¹⁴ closed his lips with the seal of silence – наложил на свои уста печать молчания;
- ¹⁵ turned a deaf ear – не слушал;
- ¹⁶ is closed against me – закрыто от меня;
- ¹⁷ and as through the fullness of his love his heart broke – и когда переполненное любовью сердце разорвалось.

Comprehension:

- 1) Whom did the Fisherman catch one day?
- 2) What promise did the Mermaid give to him?
- 3) What did the Mermaid ask the young man to do when he said he loved her?
- 4) Why was it difficult for him to get rid of his soul?
- 5) Where did the young Witch take him?
- 6) What did the Witch teach the Fisherman?
- 7) What adventures did the Fisherman's Soul have?

- 8) How did it happen that the Soul came into the young man's body again?
- 9) In what way did the Soul tempt him? Why wasn't it a success?
- 10) Did the Fisherman suffer greatly after the Mermaid's death?
- 11) Why did the Priest believe in the power of love?

THE SURPRISE OF MR. MILBERRY

J. K. Jerome

[The story was told to the author by Henry, an attendant in a hotel at a small town near Stratford-upon-Avon in England.]

It was the strangest story and I shall never forget it. A young man came by the bus that meets the 4. 52 train. He had a handbag and a kind of hamper¹. He wouldn't let anybody touch it, but carried it up to his bedroom himself. He carried it in front of him in his arms. Once he fell going up the stairs and knocked his head badly, but he did not drop that hamper. I could see he was nervous and excited, but people very often are like that in hotels.

This man interested me, he was very young and serious looking. I followed him up into his room and asked him if I could do anything for him. He put the hamper on the bed with relief², took off his hat, and then turned to answer me.

"Are you a married man?" said he. It was a strange question to put to an attendant.

"Well, not exactly," said I. "I am only engaged, but I know a lot about it, and if it's matter of advice—"

"It isn't that," he answered, "but I don't want you to laugh at me. I thought if you were a married man, you would be able to understand the thing better. Have you got an intelligent woman in the house?"

"We've got women," I said. "As to their intelligence that's difficult to say. Shall I call the maid?"

"Ah, do," he said. "Wait a minute. We'll open it first. "

He began to open the hamper, then suddenly stopped and said: "No, you open it. Open it carefully. It will surprise you."

"What's in it?" I asked.

"You'll see, if you open it," he said.

Then I had an idea and asked him: "It isn't a dead body, is it?"

He became white and said: "Good God! I never thought of that. Open it quickly."

I cut the cord³, opened the hamper, and looked in. He kept his eyes turned away because he was frightened to look at it.

"Is it all right?" he asked. "Is it alive?"

"Yes, of course, quite alive."

"Is it breathing all right?" he asked.

"If you can't hear it breathing," I said, "I'm afraid you're deaf."

He listened and said nothing. Then he sat down in the chair by the fire. "You know," he said, "I've never thought of that. He was shut up in the hamper for over an hour, what if there was not enough air... Oh, I'll never do it again."

"Do you love it?" I asked.

"Love it?" he repeated. "Why, I'm his father."

"Oh," I said. "Then I have the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Coster King?"⁴

"Coster King?" he answered in surprise. "My name is Milberry."

I said: "According to the label inside the basket the father of this child is Coster King out of Starlight, his mother is Jenny Deans."

He looked at me nervously, then he came nearer and looked inside the basket. I never heard a man give such a yell in all my life. He stood on one side of the bed, and I on the other. The dog that was sleeping in the basket, woke and sat up. It was a bull-dog of about nine months old.

"My child," he cried. "That animal isn't my child. What's happened? Am I going mad?"

"You are nearly," said I, and so he was.

"What did you expect to see?" I asked.

"My child," he cried, "my only child – my baby!"

"Do you mean a real child?" I said.

"Of course I do," he said, "the most beautiful child you ever saw in all your life, just thirteen weeks on Sunday. He had his first tooth yesterday."

The sight of the dog's face made him angry. He threw himself upon the hamper, but I stopped him.

"It's not the dog's fault⁵. He's lost too. Somebody played a joke on you. They took your baby out and put the dog in – that is, if there ever was a baby there. "

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Well, sir," I said, "if you'll excuse me, gentlemen in their sober senses don't take their babies about in hampers. Where do you come from?"

"From Banbury," he said; "I'm well-known in Banbury."

"I can quite believe it," I said, "you are the sort of young man that would be known anywhere. "

"I'm Mr. Milberry," he said, "the grocer in this little town."

"Then what are you doing here with this dog?" I said.

"Don't make me angry," he answered. "I tell you I don't know myself. My wife is staying here, because her mother is ill, and in every letter that she's written home for the last two weeks, she's said: 'Oh, how I want to see Eric! If only I could see Eric for a moment!'"

"A very motherly feeling," I said.

"So this afternoon," continued he, "I decided to bring the child here so that she could see it, and see that it was all right. She can't leave her mother for more than an hour, and I can't go up to the house because the old lady doesn't like me.

I had to wait here, and Milly – that's my wife – was going to come here when she had time. I wanted this to be a surprise for her. "

"And I think," I said, "it will be the biggest surprise you have ever given her."

"Don't try to joke," said he, "I'm very nervous now and I may knock you down!"

He was right. It wasn't a subject for joking.

"But why," said I, "did you put the baby into a hamper?"

"At the last moment I found I didn't have the courage to carry the child in my arms. He sleeps very well, and I thought that if I made him comfortable in this hamper, he would sleep during the journey, which is very short. I had the hamper with me all the time. How did it happen? It's magic! That's what it is."

"Don't be silly," I said, "there's some explanation and it must be found. You are sure this is the same hamper you packed the child in?" He came nearer and examined it carefully.

"It looks like it," he said, "but I am not sure."

"Now tell me," said I, "when did you put the hamper down?"

He thought and thought and then said: "Now I remember, I did put it down for a moment on the platform at Banbury, while I bought some biscuits."

"There you are," I said. "And isn't tomorrow the first day of the Birmingham Dog Show?"

"I think you're right," he said.

"Now we are coming somewhere," I said. "It so happened that this dog was taken to Birmingham, packed in a hamper exactly like the one you put your baby in. You've got this man's dog, he's got your baby. It's possible that he thinks, you've done it on purpose. "⁶

Mr. Milberry put his head on his hands and groaned⁷. "Milly may be here at any moment," said he, "and I'll have to tell her the baby was sent by mistake to a Dog Show, I cannot do it."

"Go on to Birmingham," I said, "and try to find it. You can return in an hour. "

"Come with me," he said, "you're a good man, come with me. I cannot go alone. "

"Well," I said, "if the manager of the hotel allows me to go."

"Oh! He will, he must," cried the young man. "Tell him it's a matter of a life's happiness. Tell him –"

"I'll tell him it's a matter of more money for the room," I said. "That will help."

And so it did, with the result that in another twenty minutes I and young Milberry and the dog in its hamper were on our way to Birmingham. When we reached Birmingham we asked the station-master, and he asked all the porters who met the 5. 13 train, but they all said that no man with a hamper had come by that train. The station-master was a family man himself, and when we explained everything to him, he telegraphed to Banbury,

But in Banbury only one man carrying a hamper had taken that train and that man was Mr. Milberry himself. The business began to look serious, when one of the newspaper boys said that he had seen an old lady with a hamper, getting into a cab.

With the help of the boy, we found the cabman who had taken the old lady to a small hotel.

I heard all the details from the maid at the hotel. They could not get the hamper into the cab and it had to go on top. The old lady was very worried as it was raining all the time, and she asked the cabman to cover it up. Taking it off the cab they dropped the hamper in the road; that woke the child up, and it began to cry.

"Good Lord, ma'am! What is it?" asked the maid. "A baby?"

"Yes, my dear, it's my baby," answered the old lady, who was a little deaf. "Poor dear, I hope it is all right."

The old lady had ordered a room with a fire in it. The maid brought the hamper into the room and the old lady began to cut the cord so as to open it. The baby inside was crying very loudly.

"Poor dear!" said the old lady. "Don't cry; mother's opening it as fast as she can." Then she turned to the maid. "If you open my bag," said she, "you will find a bottle of milk and some dog-biscuits."

"Dog-biscuits!" said the maid.

"Yes," said the old lady, laughing, "my baby loves dog-biscuits."

The maid opened the bag and found there the milk and the biscuits. She was standing with her back to the old lady and did not see her open the hamper, but she heard the sound of a fall.

When she looked round, she saw the old lady lying on the floor. The maid thought the old lady was dead. The child was sitting up in the hamper, crying loudly. The maid gave him a dog-biscuit which he began sucking⁸ greedily.

In about a minute the old lady opened her eyes and looked round. The baby was quiet now. The old lady looked at it and turned to the maid.

"What is it?" she asked, speaking in a frightened voice. "The thing in the hamper?"

"It's a baby, ma'am," said the maid.

"You're sure it isn't a dog?" asked the old lady, "Look again."

The maid began to feel nervous and to wish that she wasn't alone with the old lady.

"I cannot mistake a dog for a baby, ma'am," said the maid. "It's a child, a baby."

The old lady began to cry. "It's a punishment for me, " she said, "because I often spoke to that dog as to a baby, and now this thing has happened. "

"What has happened?" asked the maid who did not understand anything.

"I don't know, " said the old lady, sitting up on the floor. "I started from my home two hours ago with a one-year-old dog in that hamper. You saw me open it, you see what's in it now. "

"But dogs are not changed into babies by magic."

"I don't know how it's done," said the old lady. "I only know that I started with a dog. "

"Somebody has put the baby there," said the maid, "somebody that wanted to get rid of the child. They have taken your dog and put the baby in its place."

"They must have been very quick," said the old lady. "I left the hamper for five minutes in Banbury, when I went to drink a cup of tea."

"That's when they did it," said the maid, "and a clever trick it was."

The old lady suddenly understood her position and jumped up from the floor.

"And a nice thing for me⁹," she said. "An unmarried woman with a baby. This is awful!"

"It's a beautiful child," said the maid.

"Would you take it?" asked the old lady.

"Oh, no, I wouldn't," said the maid.

The old lady sat down and began to think, but she did not know what to do. At that moment somebody came up to the door and said: "Here is a young man with a dog." When the old lady saw Mr. Milberry with her dog in the hamper, she nearly went mad with joy.

And Mr. Milberry snatched¹⁰ the baby and kissed him. We just caught the train to our town and got back to the hotel ten minutes before the baby's mother came in.

I don't think Mr. Milberry ever told his wife what had happened.

NOTES:

¹ hamper – корзина с крышкой;

² with relief – с облегчением;

³ cord – веревка;

⁴ Coster King of Starlight – Костер Кинг от Старлайт (о родословной собак);

⁵ fault – вина;

⁶ on purpose – нарочно;

⁷ groan – стонать;

⁸ suck – сосать;

⁹ and a nice thing for me – а каково мне;

¹⁰ snatch – схватить.

Comprehension:

- 1) What was strange about the man who came to the hotel?
- 2) Whom did the man ask to invite to his room and why?
- 3) Whom did Mr. Milberry expect to see in the hamper and whom did he see?
- 4) How did it happen that he had taken another hamper?
- 5) What did the old lady do when she saw a child in her hamper?
- 6) Who helped Mr. Milberry to find his child?

THE ALLIGATORS

J. Updike

Joan Edison came to their half of the fifth grade from Maryland¹ in March. She had a thin face with something of a grown-up's tired expression and long black eyelashes like a doll's. Everybody hated her. That month Miss Fritz was reading to them during homeroom about a girl, Emmy, who was badly spoiled and always telling her parents lies about her twin sister Annie; nobody could believe, it was too amazing, how exactly when they were despising Emmy most Joan should come into the school with her show-off clothes and her hair left hanging down the back of her fuzzy sweater instead of being cut or braided and her having the crust to actually argue with teachers. "Well, I'm sorry, " she told Miss Fritz, not even rising from her seat, "but I don't see what the point is of homework. In Baltimore we never had any, and the little kids there knew what's in these books. "

Charlie, who in a way enjoyed homework, was ready to join in the angry moan of the others. Little hurt lines had leaped up between Miss Fritz's eyebrows. "You're not in Baltimore now, Joan," Miss Fritz said. "You are in Olinger, Pennsylvania."

The children, Charlie among them, laughed, and Joan, blushing a soft brown color and raising her voice excitedly against the current of hatred, got in deeper by trying to explain, "Like there, instead of just reading about plants in a book we'd one day all bring in a flower we'd picked and cut it open and look at it in a microscope."

Miss Fritz puckered her orange lips into fine wrinkles, then smiled. "In the upper levels you will be allowed to do that in this school. All things come in time, Joan, to patient little girls." When Joan started to argue this, Miss Fritz lifted one finger and said with the extra weight adults always have, "No. No more, young lady, or you'll be in serious trouble with me." It gave the class courage to see that Miss Fritz didn't like her either.

After that, Joan couldn't open her mouth in class without there being a great groan. Outdoors in the playground, at recess² waiting in the morning for the buzzer, hardly anybody talked to her except to say "Stuck-up"³ or "Emmy". Boys were always flipping little spitballs into the curls of her hanging hair. Once John Eberly even cut a section of her hair off with a yellow plastic scissors stolen from art class. This was the one time Charlie saw Joan cry actual tears. He was as bad as the others: worse, because what the others did because they felt like it, he did out of a plan, to make himself more popular. In the first and second grade he had been liked pretty well, but somewhere since then he had been dropped. There was a gang, boys and girls both, that met Saturdays in Stuart Morrison's garage, and took hikes and played football together, and in winter sledged on Hill Street, and in spring bicycled all over Olinger and did together what else, he couldn't imagine. Charlie had known the chief members since be-

fore kindergarten. But after school there seemed nothing for him to do but go home and do his homework and go to horror movies alone, and on weekends nothing but beat monotonously at marbles or Monopoly or chess Darryl Johns or Marvin Auerbach, who he wouldn't have bothered at all with if they hadn't lived right in the neighborhood, they being at least a year younger and not bright for their age, either. Charlie thought the gang might notice him and take him in if he backed up their policies without being asked.

In Science, which 5A had in Miss Brobst's room across the hall, he sat one seat ahead of Joan and annoyed her all he could, in spite of a feeling that, both being disliked, they had something to share. One fact he discovered was, she wasn't that bright. Her marks on quizzes were always lower than his. He told her, "Cutting up all those flower's didn't do you much good. Or maybe in Baltimore they taught you everything so long ago you've forgotten it in your old age."

Charlie drew; on his tablet where she could easily see over his shoulder he once in a while drew a picture titled "Joan the Dope": the profile of a girl with a lean nose and sad mouth, the lashes of her lowered eye as black as the pencil could make them and the hair falling, in ridiculous hooks, row after row, down through the sea-blue cross-lines clear off the bottom edge of the tablet.

In the weeks since she had come, Joan's clothes had slowly grown simpler, to go with the other girls', and one day she came to school with most of her hair cut off, and the rest brushed flat around her head and brought into a little tail behind. The laughter at her was more than she had ever heard. "Ooh, Baldypaldy⁴!" some idiot girl had exclaimed when Joan came into the cloakroom, and the stupid words went sliding around class all morning. "Baldypaldy from Baltimore. Why is old Baldypaldy red in the face?"

Charlie's own reaction to the haircut had been quiet, to want to draw her, changed. Halfway across the room from him, Joan held very still, afraid, it seemed, to move even a hand, her face ashamed pink. The haircut had brought out her forehead and exposed her neck and made her chin pointier and her eyes larger. Charlie felt thankful once again for having been born a boy and having no sharp shocks, like losing your curls. How much girls suffer had been one of the first thoughts he had ever had.

That night he had the dream. He must have dreamed it while lying there asleep in the morning light, for it was fresh in his head when he woke. They had been in a jungle, Joan, dressed in a torn sarong, was swimming in a clear river among alligators. Somehow, as if from a tree, he was looking down, and there was a calmness in the way the slim girl and the green alligators moved, in and out, perfectly visible under the water. Joan's face sometimes showed the horror she was undergoing. Her hair trailed behind and fanned when her face came toward the surface. He shouted silently with grief. Then he had rescued her; without a sense of having dipped his arms in water, he was carrying her in two arms, and his feet firmly fixed to the knobby back of an alligator which skimmed up-

stream, through the shadows of high trees and white flowers and hanging vines. They seemed to be heading toward a wooden bridge arching over the stream. He wondered how he would duck it, and the river and the jungle gave way to the sweetness and pride he had felt in saving and carrying the girl.

He loved Joan Edison. The morning was rainy, and under the umbrella his mother made him take this new knowledge, repeated again and again to himself, gathered like a bell of smoke. Love had no taste, but sharpened his sense of smell so that his oilcloth coat, his rubber boots, the red-tipped bushes hanging over the low walls holding back lawns all along Grand Street, even the dirt and moss in the cracks of the pavement each gave off clear odors. He would have laughed, if a wooden weight had not been placed high in his chest, near where his throat joined. He could not imagine himself laughing soon. Yet he felt firmer and lighter and felt things as edges he must whip around and channels he must rush down. If he carried her off, did rescue her from the others' cruelty, he would have defied the gang and made a new one, his own. Just Joan and he at first, then others escaping from meanness and dumbness, until his gang was stronger and Stuart Morrison's garage was empty every Saturday. Charlie would be a king, with his own football game. Everyone would come and plead with him for mercy.

His first step was to tell all those in the cloakroom he loved Joan Edison now. They cared less than he had expected, considering how she was hated. He had more or less expected to have to fight with his fists. Hardly anybody gathered to hear the dream he had pictured himself telling everybody. Anyway that morning it would go around the class that he said he loved her, and though this was what he wanted, to in a way open a space between him and Joan, it felt funny nevertheless, and he stuttered when Miss Fritz had him go to the blackboard to explain something.

At lunch, he deliberately hid in the store until he saw her walk by. The homely girl with her he knew turned off at the next street. He waited a minute and then began running to overtake Joan in the block between the street where the other girl turned down and the street where he turned up. Coming up behind her, he said, "Bang, Bang."

She turned, and under her gaze, knowing she knew he loved her, his face heated and he stared down. "Why, Charlie," her voice said with her Maryland slowness, "what are you doing on this side of the street?" Carl, the town cop, stood in front of the elementary school to get them on the side of Grand Street where they belonged. Now Charlie would have to cross the avenue again, by himself, at the dangerous crossing.

"Nothing," he said, and used up the one sentence he had prepared ahead: "I like your hair the new way."

"Thank you," she said, and stopped. In Baltimore she must have had manner lessons.

"But then I didn't mind it the old way either."

"Yes?"

A peculiar reply. Another peculiar thing was the tan beneath her skin; he had noticed before, though not so closely, how when she colored it came up a gentle dull brown more than red. Also she wore something perfumed.

He asked, "How do you like Olinger?"

"Oh, I think it's nice."

"Nice? I guess. I guess maybe. Nice Olinger. I wouldn't know because I've never been anywhere else."

She luckily took this as a joke and laughed. Rather than risk saying something unfunny, he began to balance the umbrella by its point on one finger and, when this went well, walked backwards, shifting the balanced umbrella, its hook black against the patchy blue sky, from one palm to the other, back and forth. At the corner where they parted he got carried away and in imitating a suave gent leaning on a cane bent the handle hopelessly. Her amazement was worth twice the price of his mother's probable crossness.

He planned to walk her again, and further, after school. All through lunch he kept calculating. His father and he would repaint his bike. At the next haircut he would have his hair parted on the other side to get away from his cowlick- He would change himself totally; everyone would wonder what had happened to him. He would learn to swim, and take her to the dam.

In the afternoon the momentum of the dream wore off somewhat. Now that he kept his eyes always on her, he noticed, with a qualm of his stomach, that in passing in the afternoon from Miss Brobst's to Miss Fritz's room, Joan was not alone, but chattered with others. In class, too, she whispered. So it was with more shame – such shame that he didn't believe he could ever face even his parents again – than surprise that from behind the dark pane of the store he saw her walk by in the company of the gang, she and Stuart Morrison throwing back⁵ their teeth. Charlie watched them walk out of sight behind a tall hedge; relief was as yet a tiny fraction of his reversed world. It came to him that what he had taken for cruelty had been love, that far from hating her everybody had loved her from the beginning, and that even the stupidest knew it weeks before he did. That she was the queen of the class and might as well not exist, for all the good he would get out of it.

NOTES:

¹ Maryland – штат США;

² recess – большой перерыв;

³ Stuck-up – "задавала";

⁴ Baldy-paldy – кличка (от слова "bald");

⁵ throwing back their teeth – громко смеясь.

Comprehension:

- 1) Who was Joan Edison and where had she come from?
- 2) How did the children treat her?

- 3) Why was she different from the others?
- 4) What was Charlie's role in the girl's prosecution?
- 5) Why did Charlie do it?
- 6) What was Charlie's dream one night?
- 7) What happened when Charlie revealed his feelings to Joan?

THE MYSTERY OF THE BLUE JAR

A. Christie

I

Jack Hartington surveyed his topped drive¹ ruefully. With a sigh he drew out his club and addressed himself firmly to the ball.

He swung back – and then stopped, petrified², as a shrill cry broke the silence of the summer's morning.

"Murder," it called. "Help! Murder!"

It was a woman's voice, and it died away at the end into a sort of gurgling sigh.

Jack ran in the direction of the sound. It had come from somewhere quite near at hand. This particular part of the course³ was quite wild country, and there were few houses about. In fact, there was only one near at hand, a small picturesque cottage. It was towards this cottage that he ran.

There was a girl standing in the garden, and for a moment Jack jumped to the natural conclusion that it was she who had uttered the cry for help. But he quickly changed his mind.

She had a little basket in her hand, half full of weeds, and had evidently just straightened herself up from weeding a wide border of pansies. Her eyes, Jack noticed, were just like pansies themselves, velvety and soft and dark, and more violet than blue.

The girl was looking at Jack with an expression midway between annoyance and surprise.

"I beg your pardon," said the young man. "But did you cry out just now?"

"I? No, indeed."

Her surprise was so genuine that Jack felt confused. Her voice was very soft and pretty with a slight foreign accent.

"But you must have heard it," he exclaimed. "It came from somewhere just near here. "

She stared at him.

"I heard nothing at all."

"It came from somewhere close at hand," he insisted.

She was looking at him suspiciously now.

"What did it say?" she asked.

"Murder – help! Murder!"

"Murder – help, murder," repeated the girl. "Somebody has played a trick on you, Monsieur. Who could be murdered here?" Jack looked about him with a confused idea of discovering a dead body upon a garden path. Yet he was still perfectly sure that the cry he had heard was real and not a product of his imagination. He looked up at the cottage windows. Everything seemed perfectly still and peaceful.

"Do you want to search our house?" asked the girl dryly.

She was so clearly sceptical that Jack's confusion grew deeper than ever. He turned away.

"I'm sorry," he said. "It must have come from higher up in the woods."

For some time he hunted through the woods, but could find no sign of anything unusual having occurred. Yet he was as positive as ever that he had really heard the cry. Was he absolutely certain that he had heard the cry?

By now he was not nearly so positive as he had been. Was it some bird's cry in the distance that he had taken for a woman's voice?

But he rejected the suggestion angrily. It was a woman's voice and he had heard it. He remembered looking at his watch just before the cry had come. As nearly as possible it must have been five and twenty minutes past seven when he had heard the call. That might be a fact useful to the police if – if anything should be discovered.

II

Going home that evening, he looked through the evening papers anxiously to see if there were any mention of a crime having been committed. But there was nothing, and he hardly knew whether to be relieved or disappointed.

The following morning was wet—so wet that even the most ardent golfer might have his enthusiasm damped. Jack rose at the last possible moment, ate his breakfast, ran for the train and again eagerly looked through the papers. Still no mention of any tragic discovery having been made. The evening papers told the same tale.

"Queer," said Jack to himself, "but there it is. Probably some little boys having a game together up in the woods."

He was out early the following morning. As he passed the cottage, he noted out of the tail of his eye that the girl was out in the garden again weeding. Evidently a habit of hers. He did a particularly good shot, and hoped that she had noticed it.

"Just five and twenty past seven," he murmured. "I wonder –"

The words were frozen on his lips. From behind him came the same cry which had so startled him before. A woman's voice, in distress.

"Murder – help! murder!"

Jack raced back. The pansy girl was standing by the gate. She looked startled, and Jack ran up to her triumphantly, crying out: "You heard it this time, anyway."

Her eyes were wide with some emotion and he noticed that she shrank back from him⁴ as he approached, and even glanced back at the house, as though she was about to run for shelter.

She shook her head, staring at him.

"I heard nothing at all," she said wonderingly.

It was as though she had struck him a blow between the eyes. Her sincerity was so evident that he could not disbelieve her. Yet he couldn't have imagined it – he couldn't – he – couldn't –

He heard her voice speaking gently – almost with sympathy. "You have had the shell-shock⁵, yes?"

In a flash he understood her look of fear, her glance back at the house. She thought that he suffered from delusions⁶...

And then, like a douche of cold water, came the horrible thought, was she right? Did he suffer from delusions?

In horror of the thought he turned and stumbled away without saying a word. The girl watched him go, sighed, shook her head, and bent down to her weeding again.

Jack tried to reason matters out with himself.

"If I hear the damned thing again at twenty-five minutes past seven, " he said to himself, "it's clear that I've got hold of a hallucination of some sort. But I won't hear it. "

He was nervous all that day, and went to bed early determined to put the matter to the proof the following morning.

As was perhaps natural in such a case, he remained awake half the night, and finally overslept himself. It was twenty past seven by the time he was clear of the hotel and running towards the links. He realised that he would not be able to get to the fatal spot by twenty-five past, but surely, if the voice were a hallucination pure and simple, he would hear it anywhere. He ran on, his eyes fixed on the hands of his watch.

Twenty-five past. From far off came the echo of a woman's voice, calling. The words could not be distinguished, but he was convinced that it was the same cry he had heard before, and that it came from the same spot, somewhere in the neighbourhood of the cottage.

Strangely enough, that fact reassured him. It might, after all, be a hoax⁷. Unlikely as it seemed, the girl herself might be playing a trick on him.

The girl was in the garden as usual. She looked up this morning, and when he raised his cap to her, said good morning rather shyly... She looked, he thought, lovelier than ever.

"Nice day, isn't it?" Jack called out cheerily.

"Yes, indeed, it is lovely."

"Good for the garden, I expect?"

The girl smiled a little.

"Alas, no! For my flowers the rain is needed. See, they are all dried up. Monsieur is much better today, I can see. "

Her encouraging tone annoyed Jack intensely.
"I'm perfectly well," he said irritably.
"That is good then," returned the girl quickly and soothingly.
Jack had the irritating feeling that she didn't believe him.
He played a few more holes and hurried back to breakfast.

III

As he ate it, he was conscious, not for the first time, of the close scrutiny of a man who sat at the table next to him. He was a man of middle-age, with a powerful forceful face. He had a small dark beard and very piercing grey eyes. His name, Jack knew, was Lavington, and he had heard vague rumours⁸ as to his being a well-known medical specialist, but as Jack was not a frequenter of Harley Street, the name had told little or nothing to him.

But this morning he was very conscious of the quiet observation under which he was being kept, and it frightened him a little. Was his secret written plainly in his face for all to see?

Jack shivered at the thought. Was it true? Was he really going mad? Was the whole thing a hallucination, or was it a gigantic hoax?

And suddenly a very simple way of testing the solution occurred to him. He had hitherto been alone on the course. Supposing someone else was with him? Then one out of three things might happen. The voice might be silent. They might both hear it. Or – he only might hear it.

That evening he proceeded to carry his plan into effect. Lavington was the man he wanted with him. They fell into conversation easily enough—the older man might have been waiting for such an opening. It was clear that for some reason or other Jack interested him. The latter was able to come quite easily and naturally to the suggestion that they might play a few holes together before breakfast. The arrangement was made for the following morning.

They started out a little before seven. It was a perfect day, still and cloudless, but not too warm. The doctor was playing well, Jack awfully. He kept glancing at his watch.

The girl, as usual, was in the garden as they passed. She did not look up as they passed.

It was exactly twenty-five minutes past seven.

"If you didn't mind waiting a minute, " he said, "I think I'll have a smoke."

They paused a little while. Jack filled and lit the pipe with fingers that trembled a little in spite of himself. An enormous weight seemed to have lifted from his mind.

"Lord, what a good day it is," he remarked. "Go on, Lavington, your shot."

And then it came. Just at the very instant the doctor was hitting. A woman's voice, high and agonized.

"Murder – Help! Murder!"

The pipe fell from Jack's nerveless hand, as he turned round in the direction of the sound, and then, remembering, gazed breathlessly at his companion.

Lavington was looking down the course, shading his eyes.

He had heard nothing.

The world seemed to spin round with Jack. He took a step or two and fell. When he recovered himself, he was lying on the ground, and Lavington was bending over him.

"There, take it easy now, take it easy."

"What did I do?"

"You fainted, young man – or gave a very good try at it."

"My God!" said Jack, and groaned.

"What's the trouble? Something on your mind?"

"I'll tell you in one minute, but I'd like to ask you something first."

The doctor lit his own pipe and settled himself on the bank. "Ask anything you like," he said comfortably.

"You've been watching me for the last day or two Why?"

Lavington's eyes twinkled a little.

"That's rather an awkward question. A cat can look at a king, you know. "

"Don't put me off. I'm earnest. Why was it? I've a vital reason for asking. "

Lavington's face grew serious.

"I'll answer you quite honestly. I recognized in you all the signs of a man who is under acute strain⁹, and it intrigued me what that strain could be. "

"I can tell you that easily enough," said Jack bitterly. "I'm going mad. "

He stopped dramatically, but as his statement did not seem to arouse the interest he expected, he repeated it.

"I tell you I'm going mad."

"Very curious," murmured Lavington. "Very curious indeed."

"I suppose that's all it does seem to you. Doctors are so damned callous."¹⁰

"To begin with, although I have taken my degree, I do not practice medicine. Strictly speaking, I am not a doctor – not a doctor of the body, that it."

Jack looked at him keenly.

"Of the mind?"

"Yes, in a sense, but more truly I call myself a doctor of the soul."

"Oh!"

IV

"I see you do not quite believe me, and yet you've got to come to terms with the soul, you know, young man. I can assure you that it really did strike me as very curious that such a well-balanced and perfectly normal young man as yourself should suffer from the delusion that he was going out of his mind. "

"I'm out of my mind, all right. Absolutely mad."

"You will forgive me for saying so, but I don't believe it."

"I suffer from delusions."

"After dinner?"

"No, in the morning."

"Can't be done," said the doctor,

"I tell you I hear things that no one else hears."

"It's quite possible that the delusions of to-day may be the proved scientific facts of to-morrow."

In spite of himself, Lavington's matter-of-fact manner was having its effect upon Jack. He felt awfully cheered. The doctor looked at him attentively for a minute or two and then nodded.

"That's better," he said. "The trouble with you young fellows is that you're so sure nothing can exist outside your own philosophy that you get the wind up when something occurs that may change your opinion. Let's hear your grounds for believing that you're going mad, and we'll decide whether or not to lock you up afterwards. "

As faithfully as he could, Jack told the whole series of occurrences.

"But what I can't understand," he ended, "is why this morning it should come at half past seven – five minutes Late."

Lavington thought for a minute or two. Then –

"What's the time now by your watch?" he asked.

"Quarter to eight," replied Jack, consulting it.

"That's simple enough, then. Mine says twenty to eight

Your watch is five minutes fast. That's a very interesting and important point—to me. In fact, it's invaluable.'

"In what way?"

Jack was beginning to get interested.

"Well, the obvious explanation is that on the first morning you did hear some such cry—may have been a joke, may not. On the following mornings, you suggestioned yourself¹¹ to hear it at exactly the same time."

"I'm sure I didn't."

"Not consciously¹², of course, but the subconscious plays us some funny tricks, you know. If it were a case of suggestion, you would have heard the cry at twenty-five minutes past seven by your watch, and you could never have heard it when the time, as you thought, was past."

"Well, then?"

"Well – it's obvious, isn't it? This cry for help occupies a perfectly definite place and time in space. "

"Yes, but why should I be the one to hear it? I don't believe in ghosts, spirits¹³, and all the rest of it. Why should I hear the damned thing?"

"Ah! That we can't tell at present. Some people see and hear things that other people don't – we don't know why. Some day, no doubt, we shall know why you hear this thing and I and the girl don't."

"But what am I going to do?" asked Jack.

"Well, my young friend, you are going to have a good breakfast and get off to the city without worrying your head further about things you don't under-

stand. I, on the other hand, am going to look about, and see what I can find out about that cottage back there. That's where the mystery centers."

Jack rose to his feet.

"Right, sir, I'm on, but I say –"

"Yes?"

Jack flushed awkwardly.

"I'm sure the girl's all right," he muttered.

Lavington looked amused.

"You didn't tell me she was a pretty girl! Well, cheer up, I think the mystery started before her time."

V

Jack arrived home. Now he believed Lavington completely.

He found his new friend waiting for him in the hall when he came down for dinner, and the doctor suggested that they should dine together at the same table.

"Any news, sir?" asked Jack anxiously.

"I've collected the life history of Heather Cottage all right. It was tenanted first by an old gardener and his wife. The old man died, and the old woman went to her daughter. Then a builder got it, and modernised it with great success, selling it to a city gentleman who used it for week-ends. About a year ago, he sold it to some people called Turner—Mr. and Mrs. Turner. They seem to have been rather a curious couple from all I can make out¹⁴. They lived very quietly, seeing no one, and hardly ever going outside the cottage garden. The local rumour goes that they were afraid of something. And then suddenly one day they departed and never came back. The agents here got a letter from Mr. Turner, written from London, instructing him to sell up the place as quickly as possible. The furniture was sold off, and the house itself was sold. The people who have it now are a French professor and his daughter. They have been there just ten days. "

Jack digested this in silence.

"I don't see that that gets us anywhere," he said at last.

"Do you?"

"I rather want to know more about the Turners," said Lavington quietly. "They left very early in the morning, you remember. As far as I can make out, nobody actually saw them go. Mr. Turner has been seen since—but I can't find anybody who has seen Mrs. Turner. "

Jack paled.

"It can't be – you don't mean –"

"Don't excite yourself, young man. Let us drop the subject – for to-night at least," he suggested.

Jack agreed readily enough, but did not find it so easy to vanish the subject from his own mind.

During the week-end, he made inquiries¹⁵ of his own, but succeeded in getting little more than the doctor had done. He had definitely given up playing golf before breakfast.

On getting back one day, Jack was informed that a young lady was waiting to see him. To his surprise it proved to be the girl of the garden—the pansy girl, as he always called her in his own mind. She was very nervous and confused.

"You will forgive me, Monsieur, for coming to see you like this? But there is something I want to tell you – I –"

She looked round uncertainly.

"Come in here," said Jack.

"Now, sit down, Miss, Miss –"

"Marchaud, Monsieur. Felise Marchaud."

"Sit down, Mademoiselle Marchaud, and tell me all about it."

Felise sat down obediently. She was dressed in dark green to-day, and the beauty and charm of the proud little face was more evident than ever. Jack's heart beat faster as he sat down beside her.

"It is like this," explained Felise. "We have been here but a short time, and from the beginning we hear the house – our so sweet little house – is haunted¹⁶. No servant will stay in it.

This talk of ghosts, I think it is all folly¹⁷ – that is until four days ago. Monsieur, four nights running, I have had the same dream. A lady stands there – she is beautiful, tall and very fair. In her hands she holds a blue china jar. She is distressed – very distressed, and continually she holds out her jar to me, as though asking me to do something with it. But alas!¹⁸ She cannot speak, and I – I do not know what she asks. That was the dream for the first two nights – but the night before last, there was more of it. She and the blue jar faded away¹⁹, and suddenly I heard her voice crying out—I know it is her voice, you understand – and, oh! Monsieur, the words she says are those you spoke to me that morning. "Murder – Help! Murder!" I awoke in terror. I say to myself – it is a nightmare²⁰, the words you heard are an accident. But last night the dream came again. Monsieur, what is it? You too have heard. What shall we do?"

Felise's face was terrified. Her small hands clasped themselves together, and she gazed at Jack. The latter pretended to look calm.

"That's all right, Mademoiselle Marchaud. You mustn't worry. I tell you what I'd like you to do, if you don't mind, repeat the whole story to a friend of mine who is staying here, a Dr. Lavington."

Felise showed her willingness, and Jack went off in search of Lavington. He returned with him a few minutes later.

VI

Lavington gave the girl a keen scrutiny as he acknowledged Jack's hurried introductions. With a few reassuring words, he soon put the girl at her ease, and he, in his turn, listened attentively to her story.

"Very curious," he said, when she had finished. "You have told your father of this?"

Felise shook her head.

"I have not liked to worry him. He is very ill still" – her eyes filled with tears—"I keep from him anything that might excite or agitate him. "

"I understand," said Lavington kindly. "And I am glad you came to us, Mademoiselle Marchaud. Hartington here, as you know, had an experience something similar to yours. I think I may say that we are well on the track now. There is nothing else that you can think of?"

Felise gave a quick movement.

"Of course! How stupid I am. It is the point of the whole story. Look, Monsieur, at what I found at the back of one of the cupboards where it had slipped behind the shelf. "

She held out to them a dirty piece of drawing-paper on which was made in water colours a sketch of a woman. It was a mere sketch, but the likeness was probably good enough. She was standing by a table on which was standing a blue china jar.

"I only found it this morning, " explained Felise. "Monsieur le doctour, that is the face of the woman I saw in my dream, and that is the identical blue jar. "

"Extraordinary, " commented Lavington. "The key to the mystery is evidently the blue jar. It looks like a Chinese jar to me, probably an old one. It seems to have a curious raised pattern over it. "

"It is Chinese," declared Jack. "I have seen an exactly similar one in my uncle's collection—he is a great collector of Chinese porcelain, you know, and I remember noticing a jar just like this a short time ago. "

"The Chinese jar, " mused Lavington. He remained a minute or two lost in thought, then raised his head suddenly, a curious light shining in his eyes. "Hartington, how long has your uncle had that jar?"

"How long? I really don't know."

"Think. Did he buy it lately?"

"I don't know—yes, I believe he did."

"Less than two months ago? The Turners left Heather Cottage just two months ago. "

"Yes, I believe it was."

"Your uncle attends country sales sometimes?"

"He always goes to sales."

"Then there is a probability that he bought this particular piece of porcelain at the sale of the Turners' things. A curious coincidence. Hartington, you must find out from your uncle at once where he bought this jar."

Jack's face fell.

"I'm afraid that's impossible. Uncle George is away on the Continent. I don't even know where to write to him."

"How long will he be away?"

"Three weeks to a month at least."

There was a silence. Felise sat looking anxiously from one man to the other.

"Is there nothing that we can do?" she asked.

"Yes, there is one thing," said Lavington. "It is unusual, perhaps, but I believe that it will succeed. Hartington, you must get hold of that jar. Bring it down here, and, if Mademoiselle permits, we will spend a night in Heather Cottage, taking the blue jar with us."

"What do you think will happen?" Jack asked uneasily.

"I have not the slightest idea – but I honestly believe that the mystery will be solved.

Felise clasped her hands. "It is a wonderful idea," she exclaimed.

Her eyes were alight with enthusiasm. Jack did not feel nearly so enthusiastic—in fact, he was afraid of it, but nothing would have forced him to admit the fact before Felise. The doctor acted as though his suggestion were the most natural one in the world.

"When can you get the jar?" asked Felise, turning to Jack.

"To-morrow," said the latter, unwillingly.

He went to his uncle's house the following evening and took away the jar in question. He was more than ever convinced when he saw it again that it was the identical one pictured in the water colour sketch.

It was eleven o'clock when he and Lavington arrived at Heather Cottage. Felise was on the look-out for them, and opened the door softly before they had time to knock.

"Come in," she whispered. "My father is asleep upstairs, and we must not wake him. I have made coffee for you in here. "

She led the way into a small cosy sitting-room.

Jack unwrapped the Chinese jar. Felise gasped as her eyes fell on it.

"But yes, but yes," she cried eagerly. "That is it—I would know it anywhere. "

Meanwhile Lavington was making his own preparations. He removed all the things from a small table and set it in the middle of the room. Round it he placed three chairs. Then, taking the blue jar from Jack, he placed it in the center of the table.

"Now," he said, "we are ready. Turn off the lights, and let us sit round the table in the darkness. "

The others obeyed him. Lavington's voice spoke again out of the darkness.

"Think of nothing – or of everything. Do not force the mind. It is possible that one of us has mediumistic powers. If so, that person will go into a trance. Remember, there is nothing to fear. Cast out fear²¹ from your hearts, and drift – drift –"

It was not fear that Jack felt – it was panic. And he was almost certain that Felise felt the same way. Suddenly he heard her voice, low and terrified.

"Something terrible is going to happen. I feel it."

"Cast out fear," said Lavington. "Do not fight against the influence."

The darkness seemed to get, darker and the silence more acute. And nearer and nearer came that indefinable sense of menace,

Jack felt himself choking – stifling – the evil thing was very near. –

And then the moment of conflict passed. He was drifting, drifting down stream – his lids closed – peace – darkness...

VII

Jack stirred slightly²². His head was heavy – heavy as lead. Where was he?

Sunshine... birds... He lay staring up at the sky.

Then it all came back to him. The little sitting-room. Felise and the doctor. What had happened?

He sat up and looked round him. He was lying not far from the cottage. No one else was near him. He took out his watch. To his surprise it registered half past twelve.

Jack struggled to his feet²³, and ran as fast as he could in the direction of the cottage. They must have been alarmed by his failure to come out of the trance, and carried him out into the open air.

Arrived at the cottage, he knocked loudly on the door. But there was no answer, and no signs of life about it. They must have gone off to get help. Or else – Jack felt an indefinable fear invade him. What had happened last night?

He made his way back to the hotel as quickly as possible. He was about to make some inquiries at the office, when he got a colossal punch in the ribs which nearly knocked him off his feet. Turning in some indignation, he saw a white-haired old gentleman merrily laughing

"Didn't expect me, my boy Didn't expect me, hey?" said this individual.

"Why, Uncle George, I thought you were miles away – it Italy somewhere."

"Ah! but I wasn't. Landed at Dover last night. Thought I'd motor up to town and stop here to see you on the way. And what, did I find. Out all night, hey? Nice goings on" "Uncle George," Jack checked him firmly. "I've got the most extraordinary story to tell you. I dare say you won't believe it."

"I dare say I shan't," laughed the old man. "But do your best, my boy."

"But I must have something to eat," continued Jack. "I'm hungry."

He led the way to the dining-room, and over a substantial meal, he told the whole story.

"And God knows what's become of them," he ended.

His uncle seemed on the verge of apoplexy²⁴.

"The jar," he managed to cry out at last. "THE BLUE JAR! What's become of that?"

Jack stared at him without understanding, but under the torrent of words that followed he began to understand.

It came with a rush: "Worth ten thousand pounds at least – offer from Hoggenheimer, the American millionaire – only one of its kind in the world – what have you done with my BLUE JAR?"

Jack rushed from the room. He must find Lavington. The young lady at the office eyed him coldly.

"Dr. Lavington left late last night – by motor. He left a note for you."

Jack, tore it open. It was short and to the point.

'My Dear Young Friend,

Is the day of the supernatural over? Kindest regards from Felise, invalid father, and myself. We have twelve hours start, which is quite enough.

Yours ever,

Ambrose Lavington,

Doctor of the Soul'

NOTES:

¹ lopped drive – неправильный удар (в гольфе);

² petrified – в оцепенении;

³ course – зд. площадка для игры в гольф;

⁴ shrank back from him – отпрянула;

⁵ shellshock – контузия;

⁶ delusion – галлюцинация;

⁷ hoax – обман, шутка;

⁸ rumours – слухи;

⁹ acute strain – сильное напряжение;

¹⁰ damned callous – чертовски бездушны;

¹¹ you suggestioned yourself – вы убедили себя;

¹² not consciously – подсознательно;

¹³ spirits – духи;

¹⁴ from all I can make out – насколько я понимаю;

¹⁵ inquiries – справки;

¹⁶ folly – глупость;

¹⁷ the house is haunted – в доме живет привидение;

¹⁸ Alas! – Увы!

¹⁹ faded away – растаял;

²⁰ nightmare – кошмар;

²¹ Cast out fear – отбросьте страх;

²² stirred slightly – слегка пошевелился;

²³ struggled to his feet – с трудом поднялся;

²⁴ on the verge of apoplexy – на грани удара.

Comprehension:

- 1) What happened to Jack Hartington one morning?
- 2) Why was the young man afraid that he was getting mad?
- 3) Whom did he make acquaintance with?
- 4) Why did he fully trust Lavington?
- 5) Why did Felise come to Jack one day and what did she tell him about?
- 6) In what way was the blue jar connected with her story?
- 7) What happened at night?
- 8) Who revealed the truth to Jack Kartington?

THE FLOCK OF GERYON ¹

A. Christie

I

"I really apologize for bothering you, M. Poirot."

Miss Carnaby leaned forward, looking anxiously into Poirot's face. She said: "You do remember me, don't you?"

Hercule Poirot smiled. He said: "I remember you as one of the most successful criminals that ¹ have ever met."

"Oh dear me, M. Poirot, must you really say such things? You were so kind to me. Emily and I often talk about you, and if we see anything about you in the paper we cut it out at once. As for Augustus, we have taught him a new trick. We say, "Die for M. Hercule Poirot, " and he goes down and, lies like a log."

"I'm gratified, " said Poirot. "He is so clever. But what has brought you here, Miss Carnaby?"

Miss Carnaby's nice round face grew worried and sad. She said: "Oh M. Poirot, I was going to consult you. I have been anxious lately about a friend of mine. Of course, you may say it is all an old maid's fancy – just imagination."

"I do not think you would imagine things, Miss Carnaby. Tell me what worries you."

"Weil, I have a friend, a very dear friend, though I have not seen very much of her lately. Her name is Emmeline Clegg. She married a man and he died a few years ago leaving her a big sum of money. She was unhappy and lonely after his death and I am afraid she is in some ways a rather foolish woman. Religion, M. Poirot, can be a great help and consolation – but not these odd sects there are so many around. They have a kind of emotional appeal but sometimes I have very grave doubts as to whether there are any true religious feelings behind them at all. "

"You think your friend has become a victim of a sect of this kind?"

"I do. Oh! I certainly do. The Flock of the Shepherd, ² they call themselves. Their headquarters is in Devonshire – a very lovely estate by the sea. The

whole sect centers round the head of the movement, the Great Shepherd, he is called. A Dr. Andersen. A very handsome man, I believe."

"Which is attractive to the women, yes?"

"I am afraid so, " Miss Carnaby sighed.

"Are the members of the sect mostly women?"

"At least three quarters of them. I think, It is upon the women that the success of the movement depends and— and on the funds they supply. "

"Ah," said Poirot. "Now I see. Frankly, you think the whole thing is a ramp?"

"Frankly, M. Poirot, I do. And another thing worries me. I know that my poor friend is so devoted to this religion that she has recently made a will leaving all her property to the movement. What really worries me is —"

"Yes —go on —"

"Several very rich women have been among the devotees. In the last year three of them have died."

"Leaving all their money to this sect?"

"Yes."

Poirot nodded thoughtfully. Miss Carnaby hurried on:

"Of course I've no right to suggest anything at all. From what I have been able to find out, there was nothing wrong about any of these deaths. One, I believe, was pneumonia following influenza and another was attributed to gastric ulcer. There were absolutely no suspicious circumstances and the deaths did not take place in Devonshire, but at their own homes. I've no doubt it is quite all right, but all the same — I —well —I shouldn't like anything to happen to Emmie."

Poirot was silent for some minutes. Then he said:

"Will you give me, or will you find out for me, the names and addresses of these members of the sect who have recently died?"

"Yes indeed, M. Poirot."

Poirot said slowly:

"Mademoiselle, I think you are a woman of great courage and determination. Will you be able to do a piece of work that may be associated with considerable danger?"

"I should like nothing better," said the adventurous Miss Carnaby.

Poirot said warningly:

"If there is a risk at all, it will be a great one. You understand — either this is all a mare's nest³ or it is serious. To find out which it is, it will be necessary for you yourself to become a member of the Great Flock. You'll pretend to be a rich woman with no definite aim in life. You'll allow your friend Emmeline to persuade you to go down to Devonshire. And there you will fall a victim to the magnetic power of Dr. Andersen. I think I can leave that to you?"

Miss Carnaby smiled modestly. She murmured:

"I think I can manage that all right."

II

"Well, my friend, what have you got for me? Have you learned anything about this Dr. Andersen?"

Chief Inspector Japp looked thoughtfully at Poirot. He said: "I've looked up Dr. Andersen's past history. He was a promising chemist but was expelled from some German University. He was always keen on the study of Oriental Myths and Religions and has written various articles on the subject – some of the articles sound pretty crazy to me. "

"So it is possible that he is a genuine fanatic?"

"It seems quite likely."

"What about those names and addresses I gave you?"

"Nothing suspicious there. Miss Everitte died of ulcerative colitis. Mrs. Lloyd died of pneumonia. Lady Western died of tuberculosis. Had suffered from it many years ago. Miss Lee died of typhoid somewhere in the north of England. There is nothing to connect these deaths with the Great Flock or with Andersen's place down in Devonshire. Must be no more than coincidence."

Hercule Poirot sighed. He said:

"And yet, mon cher, I have a feeling that this Dr. Andersen is the Monster Geryon whom it is my mission to destroy."

* * *

Hercule Poirot said:

"You must obey my instructions very carefully, Miss Carnaby. You understand?"

"Oh yes, Mr. Poirot. You may rely on me. "

"You have spoken of your intention to benefit the sect?"

"Yes, Mr. Poirot, I spoke to the Master – excuse me, to Dr. Andersen, myself. I told him very emotionally how I had come to Flock and remained to believe. Really it seemed quite natural to say all these things. Dr. Andersen, you know, has a lot of magnetic charm. "

"So I think," said Hercule Poirot dryly.

"His manner was most convincing. One really feels he doesn't care about money at all." Give what you can," he said smiling. "It does not matter. You are one of the Flock just the same." "Oh, Dr. Andersen," I said, "I am not poor at all. " And then I explained that I had inherited a considerable amount of money from a distant relative and that I wanted to leave in my will all I had to the Brotherhood. I explained that I had no near relatives."

"And he accepted the gift?"

"He was very indifferent about it. Said it would be many long years before I died, that he could tell I had a long life of joy in front of me. He really speaks most movingly. "

"So it seems."

Poirot's tone was dry. He went on:

"You mentioned your health?"

"Yes, Mr. Poirot, I told him I had lung trouble, though why it is necessary for me to say that I am ill when my lungs are as sound as a bell I really cannot see."

"Be sure it is necessary. You mentioned your friend?"

"Yes. I told him strictly confidentially that dear Emmeline, besides the fortune she had inherited from her husband, would inherit an even larger sum shortly from an aunt who was deeply attached to her. "

"Good. That must keep Mrs. Clegg safe for some time."

"Oh, Mr. Poirot, do you really think there is anything wrong?"

"That is what I am going to find out. Have you met a Mr. Cole at the Sanctuary?"

"There was a Mr. Cole there last time I went down to Devonshire. A most extraordinary man. He wears grass-green shorts and eats nothing but cabbage. He is a very ardent believer. "

"All progresses well – I make you my compliments on the work you have done – all is now set for the Autumn Festival."

III

On the afternoon preceding the Festival Miss Carnaby met Hercule Poirot in a small restaurant. Miss Carnaby was flushed and even more breathless than usual.

Poirot asked several questions to which she replied only "yes" or "no". Then he said: "Good. You know what you have to do?"

There was a moment's pause before Miss Carnaby said in a rather odd voice:

"I know what you told me, Mr. Poirot."

"Very good."

Then Amy Carnaby said clearly and distinctly:

"But I am not going to do it."

Hercule Poirot stared at her. Miss Carnaby rose to her feet. Her voice was fast and hysterical.

"You sent me here to spy on Dr. Andersen. You suspected him of all sorts of things. But he is a wonderful man – a great Teacher. I believe in him heart and soul. And I am not going to do your spying work any more, M. Poirot. I am one of the Sheep of the Shepherd. And I'll pay for my tea myself."

With these words Miss Carnaby threw down one shilling and rushed out of the restaurant.

The waitress had to ask him twice before Poirot realized that she was giving him the bill. He met the curious stare of an unfriendly looking man at the next table, flushed, paid the bill and went out.

* * *

The Sheep were assembled for the traditional festival.

The Festival took place in the white concrete building called by the Sheep the Sacred Fold. Here the devotees assembled just before the setting of the sun.

They wore sheep-skin cloaks and had sandals on their feet. Their arms were bare. In the center of the Fold on a raised platform stood Dr. Andersen. The big man, golden-haired and blue-eyed, with his fair beard and handsome profile had never seemed more magnificent. He was dressed in a green robe and carried a shepherd's crook of gold.

The ritual questions and answers had been chanted.

Then the Great Shepherd said:

"Are you prepared for the Sacrament?"

"We are."

"Shut your eyes and hold out your right arm. "

The crowd obediently shut their eyes. Miss Carnaby like the rest held her arm out in front of her. The Great Shepherd, magnificent in his green robe, moved along the waiting lines... He stood by Miss Carnaby. His hands touched her arm. _

"No, you won't do it!"

Mr. Cole aided by another devotee grasped the hand of the Great Shepherd who was struggling to get himself free. In rapid professional tones, the former Mr. Cole was saying: "Dr. Andersen, I have here a warrant for your arrest."

There were other figures now at the door of the Sheep Fold – blue uniformed figures.

Someone cried, "It's the police. They're taking the Master away. They're taking the Master..."

Everyone was shocked – horrified... To them the Great Shepherd was a martyr, suffering, as all great teachers, from the ignorance and persecution of the outside world.

Meanwhile Detective Inspector Cole was carefully packing up the syringe that had fallen from the Great Shepherd's hand.

IV

"My brave colleague!"

Poirot shook Miss Carnaby warmly by the hand and introduced her to Chief Inspector Japp.

"First class work, Miss Carnaby," said Chief Inspector Japp. "We couldn't have done it without you. "

"Oh dear!" Miss Carnaby was flattered. "It's so kind of you to say so. And I'm afraid, that I've really enjoyed it all. The excitement, you know, and playing my part. I really felt I was one of those foolish women."

"That's where your success lay," said Japp. "You were very genuine. Otherwise you wouldn't have been hypnotized by that gentleman. He's a pretty smart scoundrel. "

Miss Carnaby turned to Poirot.

"That was a terrible moment in the restaurant. I didn't know what to do. It was such a shock. Just when we had been talking confidentially I saw in the

glass that Lipscomb, who keeps the Lodge of the Sanctuary, ⁴ was sitting at the table behind me. I don't know now if it was an accident or if he had actually followed me. I had to do the best I could in this situation and hope that you would understand. "

Poirot smiled.

"I did understand. There was only one person sitting near enough to overhear anything we said and as soon as I left the restaurant I followed him. He went straight back to the Sanctuary. So I understood that I could rely on you and that you would not let me down—but I was afraid because it increased the danger for you."

"Was – was there really danger? What was there in the syringe?"

Japp said: "Will you explain or shall I?"

Poirot said gravely:

"Mademoiselle, this Dr. Andersen devised a scheme of exploitation and murder – scientific murder. Most of his life has been spent in bacteriological research. Under a different name he has a chemical laboratory in Sheffield. There he makes cultures of various bacilli. It was his practice at the Festivals to inject into his followers a small but sufficient dose of Cannabis Indica – which is also known by the name of Hashish. It gives the sensation of great and pleasurable enjoyment. It bound his devotees to him. These were the Spiritual Joys that he promised them. "

"Most remarkable," said Miss Carnaby. "Really a most remarkable sensation."

Hercule Poirot nodded.

"That was the secret of his popularity – a dominating personality, the power of creating mass hysteria and the reactions produced by this drug. But he had a second aim in view."

"Lonely women made wills leaving their money to the Cult. One by one, these women died. Without being too technical I will try to explain. It is possible to make intensified cultures of certain bacteria. The bacillus Coli Communis, for instance, is the cause of ulcerative colitis. Typhoid bacilli can be introduced into the system. So can the Pneumococcus. You realize the cleverness of the man? These deaths would occur in different parts of the country, with different doctors attending them and without any risk of arousing suspicion.

"He's a devil, if there ever was one," said Chief Inspector Japp.

Poirot went on.

"By my orders, you told him that you suffered from tuberculosis. There was a tuberculin in the syringe when Cole arrested him. It is harmless to a healthy person but stimulates any old tubercular lesion into activity. Since you were a healthy person it would not have harmed you, that is why I asked you to tell him you had suffered from a tubercular trouble. I was afraid that even now he might choose some other germ, but I respected your courage and I had to let you take the risk."

"Oh, that's all right," said Miss Carnaby brightly. "I don't mind taking risks. I'm only frightened of bulls in fields and things like that. But have you enough evidence to convict this dreadful person?"

Japp grinned. "Plenty of evidence." he said. "We've got his laboratory and his cultures and the whole equipment."

Poirot said:

"It is possible, I think, that he has committed a long line of murders. "

Miss Carnaby sighed.

"I was thinking," she said, "of a marvelous dream I had. I arranged the whole world so beautifully! No wars, no poverty, no diseases, no cruelty..."

"It must have been a fine dream," said Japp enviously.

Miss Carnaby jumped up. She said:

"I must get home. Emily has been so anxious. And dear Augustus has been missing me terribly, I hear."

Hercule Poirot said with a smile:

"He was afraid, perhaps, that like him, you were going to 'die for Hercule Poirot!'"

NOTES:

¹ "The Flock of Geryon" – "Стадо Гериона". Миф о том, как Геракл победил великана Гериона и увел его стадо;

² The Flock of the Shepherd – Стадо Пастуха;

³ a mare's nest – "бред сивой кобылы";

⁴ who keeps the Lodge of the Sanctuary – привратник святилища.

Comprehension:

- 1) What did Miss Carnaby tell Poirot about her friend Emmeline Clegg?
- 2) What was it that worried Miss Carnaby most?
- 3) What was Poirot's plan?
- 4) Why did Miss Carnaby behave in such a way when she was sitting with Poirot in the restaurant?
- 5) What was the real secret of the Great Shepherd?
- 6) Why did Poirot call his murders scientific murders?

Навчальне видання

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СЬМЕННИКІВ**

Навчальний посібник

для студентів груп
поглибленого вивчення англійської мови

Редактор Я. О. Бершацька

Комп'ютерна верстка О. П. Ордіна

285/2008. Підп. до друку 08.04.08. Формат 60x84/16.
Папір офсетний. Ум.-друк. арк. 7,21. Обл.-вид. арк. 7,48.

Тираж 200 прим. Зам. № 65.

Видавець і виготівник

«Донбаська державна машинобудівна академія»
84313, м. Краматорськ, вул. Шкадінова, 72.

Свідоцтво про внесення суб'єкта видавничої справи
до Державного реєстру
серія ДК №1633 від 24.12.03.