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И.В.ПОГОРЕЛОВА

=Eight Short Stories=

**Учебно-методическое пособие по домашнему чтению
для студентов III курса
факультета иностранных языков
(вторая специальность)**

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Настоящее пособие представляет собой комплекс аутентичных текстов и упражнений, имеющий своей конечной целью развитие коммуникативной компетенции у студентов соответствующей ступени обучения.

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MAN PROPOSES

by A. Maley

Bruce Nesbitt sipped his coffee appreciatively. Rosalind, his new secretary, certainly understood about coffee. It was just strong enough, without being bitter, and just sweet enough, without spoiling the taste of the special Arabica blend he always drank. Only the best was good enough. And why not indeed? He certainly deserved it. He would be fifty tomorrow, and had worked his way up through the ranks of the company to become the youngest Chief Executive in its history. He had worked hard to get where he was. He had started as an office-boy and now he was the big boss. Now he could look forward to another ten good years in control before 'retirement'. Then his reputation would bring him a string of company directorships and profitable consultancies as an 'elder statesman' of the business world.

Life was good and would get better. His wife was still an attractive woman and their son Alistair, just twenty-one, would be getting engaged to the daughter of Lord Bentwich this very evening. A grand party at Claridges Hotel had been arranged and... that reminded him. He pressed the call button to call Rosalind; there was still the seating plan to finalize. Then there was the unpleasant bit of business with Jenkins to settle. Jenkins would have to go. He looked in the mirror and put on his 'important' face. Then he sat at his big desk and pretended to be writing when Rosalind arrived.

Bill Jenkins looked at his haggard and unshaven face in the mirror of the staff toilets at the factory. He was the factory manager. He had stayed on until the early hours of the morning trying to get the figures to balance. But, whatever he did, the gap remained: an enormous hole down which, somehow, £50,000 had disappeared. He suspected that Alistair had taken it but he could not prove it. Anyway, it was more than his job as manager was worth to accuse the boss's own son of stealing it, with or without proof. In the past three months he had been spending more and more nights like this at the factory. And more and more bottles of malt whisky had been keeping him company, helping to soften the blow which he knew would soon strike him.

Strangely enough, he now, felt quite detached. His main worry was for Margaret and his daughter Mandy. What would become of them if anything happened to him? They had a very big mortgage – there was still £100,000 left to pay for the house. And there were all the specialists' bills for Mandy too. He sometimes wondered if she would ever be like other children.

His watch alarm suddenly started to ring, to remind him of the morning meeting. At least Alistair Nesbitt, with his nasty smile, would not be there, he was off somewhere in town running around with that rich bitch he was going to marry. Bill ran the electric razor over his chin and cheeks, combed his hair, straightened his tie and walked out bravely to face the day.

Margaret Jenkins sat on a bench in Hyde Park, keeping a watchful eye on Mandy. The child was chasing the pigeons in the dappled sunlight under the big plane trees. It was spring and the lawns were splashed with clumps of bright yellow daffodils. She thought of her own childhood. There had been daffodils then too, but wild ones in the fields behind the farm. She often found herself remembering things like this these days. What if she had stayed on the farm and never gone to Cambridge, never met Bill, never had Mandy? ...

She pushed these disturbing thoughts out of her mind as Mandy shambled towards her across the grass. In her hand the five-year-old child clutched a pigeon's feather. Mandy offered it to her like a precious possession. Her large head lolled to one side and her slack mouth dribbled saliva as always, but her eyes were bright with pleasure. Margaret took the feather and took her daughter into her arms. Some people walking by turned to look at them. In their eyes she recognized a mixture of pity and disgust. Never mind, she was used to it by now. How could they understand? Mandy slobbered and shrieked with delight.

Quite suddenly, Margaret felt terribly afraid – it was something to do with Bill. He had not been home again last night. But that did not worry her; he had stayed out many times before. In any case, he had phoned her several times from the factory last night. She felt that something very bad had happened to him. He was in some kind of trouble – she must get home at once and call him.

She tugged at Mandy's hand and half-led, half-dragged her towards the park gates. Their flat was only a few yards away across the busy highway; she would be home within a few minutes. They stood waiting for the traffic lights to change; there, green. It was safe to cross. Suddenly Mandy twisted out of her hand and ran across the road.

Alistair Nesbitt muttered to himself angrily as he inched forward in the morning rush-hour traffic. The traffic was terrible. At this rate he would never be in time to pick Angela up at ten. And there was so much to be done before he met her father at the Club for lunch. He eased the Alfa Romeo into second gear and wove his way round a taxi, only to find himself behind a big delivery lorry. This stop-start log jam of vehicles seemed to go on as far ahead as he could see. It was made worse by the traffic lights at every intersection. They always seemed to be red.

Thank goodness he wouldn't have to go through this daily torture once he and Angela were married. His father had already promised him the manager's job at the factory. Today he would be getting rid of that twit Jenkins who ran it. Once Jenkins had gone, no one would ever find out about the money he, Alistair, had 'borrowed'. It would not be long. Then he'd be able to buy a house in the country, nearer Angela's parents and no farther away from the factory. And once they were married, there would be no more problems over money either. Lord Bentwich had already told his father, in confidence, that he would see the young couple off to a good start. Lord Bentwich was a very wealthy man.

The traffic miraculously started to clear as he came up to the bottom end of Hyde Park. There was a good straight bit of road here. He would be able to make up some of the time he had lost. He changed into top gear and accelerated. He was in luck; a whole series of lights were green for him. He zoomed along, touching sixty miles an hour. The light ahead suddenly changed to orange. He thought that, if he accelerated, he would just get past it before it changed to red. He was only yards from it when it did change. Hell, what difference did it make anyway? He put his foot down. He hardly saw the small figure on the zebra crossing as it ran across in front of

the car. All he felt was the sickening thump. The child's body lay like a heap of old clothes. In its hand it clutched a pigeon feather.

Bruce Nesbitt put down the receiver with a sigh of relief. He hated these unpleasant situations but it had been necessary to do it. In the event, it had proved easier than he had feared, Jenkins had seemed to be expecting it. Now there would only be the details to sort out: the size of the compensation payment of lieu of notice, the actual date for Jenkins's departure, getting someone in to replace him for a few weeks till Alistair got back from his holiday with Angela. Personnel Department would take care of all that.

The phone rang again. Rosalind explained that the police were on the line. They needed to speak to him urgently. It was probably about the break-in at the factory last month. He took the call. The expression of relaxed satisfaction faded from his face. As the call went on the feeling of unease grew to a panic which filled his whole mind. He replaced the receiver. His face was grey as he left the office. There had to be a way of keeping this quiet – but how? And what about this evening's party? It was all so terribly inconvenient.

APPOINTMENT WITH LOVE

by S.I. Kishor

Six minutes to six, said the great round clock over the information booth in Grand Central Station. The tall young army lieutenant who had just come from the direction of the tracks lifted his sunburned face, and his eyes narrowed to note the exact time. His heart was pounding with a beat that shocked him because he could not control it. In six minutes he would see the woman who had filled such a special place in his life for the past thirteen months, the woman he had never seen, yet whose written words had been with him and sustained him unfailingly.

He placed himself as close as he could to the information booth, just beyond the ring of people besieging the clerks.

Lieutenant Blandford remembered one night in particular, the worst of the fighting, when his plane had been caught in the midst of a pack of Zeros¹. He had seen the grinning face of one of the enemy pilots.

In one of his letters he had confessed to her that he often felt fear, and only a few days before this battle, he had received her answer. “Of course you fear ... all brave men do. Didn't King David know fear? That's why he wrote the Twenty-third Psalm. Next time you doubt yourself, I want you to hear my voice reciting to you: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for Thou art² with me...” And he had remembered, he had heard her imagined voice, and it had renewed his strength and skill.

Now he was going to hear her real voice. Four minutes to six. His face grew sharp.

Under the immense, starred roof, people were walking fast, like threads of color being woven into a gray web. A girl passed close to him and Lieutenant Blandford started. She was wearing a red flower in her suit lapel, but it was a crimson sweet pea, not the little red rose they had agreed upon. Besides, this girl was too young, about eighteen, whereas Hollis Meynell had frankly told him she was thirty. “Well, what of it?” he had answered. “I'm thirty-two.” He was twenty-nine. His mind went back to that book - the book the Lord Himself must have put into his hands out of the hundreds of army library books sent to the Florida training camp, *Of Human Bondage*, it was; and throughout the book were notes in a woman's writing. He had always hated that writing-in habit, but these remarks were different. He had never believed that a woman could see into a man's heart so tenderly, so understandingly. Her name was on the bookplate: Hollis Meynell. He had got hold of a New York City Telephone book and found her address. He had written, she had answered. Next day he had been shipped out but they had gone on writing.

¹ a single-seat fighter plane used by the Japanese Navy in WWII

² Thou art (archaic) – You are

For thirteen months, she had faithfully replied, and more than replied. When his letters did not arrive, she wrote anyway, and now he believed he loved her, and she loved him.

But she had refused all his pleas to send him her photograph. That seemed rather bad, of course. But she had explained: “If your feeling for me has any reality, any honest basis, what I look like won’t matter. Suppose I’m beautiful. I’d always be haunted by the feeling that you had been taking a chance on just that, and that kind of love would disgust me. Suppose I’m plain (and you must admit that this is more likely). Then I’d always fear that you were going on writing to me only because you were lonely and had no one else. No, don’t ask for my picture. When you come to New York, you shall see me and then you will make your decision. Remember, both of us are free to stop or to go on after that - whichever we choose...”

The girl in the green suit was walking quickly away.

One minute to six...

Then Lieutenant Blandford’s heart leaped higher than his plane had ever done. ‘A young woman was coming toward him. Her figure was long and slim; her blond hair lay back in curls from her delicate ears. Her eyes were blue as flowers; her lips and chin had a gentle firmness. In her pale green suit she was like springtime come alive.

He started toward her, entirely forgetting to notice that she was wearing no rose, and as he moved, a small, provocative smile curved her lips. “Going my way, soldier?” she murmured.

Uncontrollably, he made one step closer to her. Then he saw Hollis Meynell.

She was standing almost directly behind the girl, a woman well past forty, her graying hair tucked under a worn hat. She was more than plump; her thick-ankled feet were thrust into low-heeled shoes. But she wore a red rose in the ruffled lapel of her brown coat.

The girl in the green suit was walking quickly away. Blandford felt as though he were being split in two, so keen was his desire to follow the girl, yet so deep was his longing for the woman whose spirit had truly companioned and upheld his own; and there she stood. Her pale plump face was gentle and sensible; he could see that now. Her grey eyes had a warm, kindly twinkle.

Lieutenant Blandford did not hesitate. His fingers gripped the small, worn, blue leather copy of *Of Human Bondage*, which was to identify him to her. This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even rarer than love - a friendship for which he had been and must ever be grateful...

He squared his broad shoulders, saluted, and held the book out toward the woman, although even while he spoke he felt choked by the bitterness of his disappointment.

“I’m Lieutenant John Blandford, and you - you are Miss Meynell. I’m so glad you could meet me. May - may I take you to dinner?”

The woman’s face broadened in a tolerant smile. “I don’t know what this is all about, son,” she answered. “That young lady in the green suit – the one who just went by - begged me to wear this rose on my coat. And she said that if you asked me to go out with you, I should tell you that she’s waiting for you in that big restaurant across the street. She said it was some kind of a test. I’ve got two boys with Uncle Sam myself, so I didn’t mind to oblige you.”

DOG STAR

by A. Clarke

When I heard Laika’s frantic barking, my first reaction was annoyance. I turned over in my bed and muttered sleepily: “Shut up, you silly bitch.” That lasted only a fraction of a second: then consciousness returned – and with it, fear. Fear of loneliness, and fear of madness. For a moment I did not dare to open my eyes; I was afraid of what I might see. Reason told me that no dog had ever set foot upon this

world, that Laika was separated from me by a quarter of million miles of space - and more than that - five years of time.

“You’ve been dreaming,” I told myself angrily. “Stop being a fool - open your eyes! You won’t see anything except the walls.”

That was right, of course. The little cabin was empty, the door closed. I was alone with my memories, overwhelmed by the transcendental sadness that often comes when some bright dream fades into drab reality. The sense of loss was so great that I wished to return to sleep. It was well that I did not do so, for at that moment sleep would have meant death. But I did not know this for another five seconds and during that time I was back on the Earth, seeking for the comfort I could find from the past...

No one knew Laika’s origin, though the Observatory staff made a few inquiries and gave several advertisements in the newspapers. I found her, a lost and lonely ball of fluff, huddled by the roadside one summer evening when I was driving up to Palomar. Though I had never liked dogs, it was impossible to leave this helpless little creature to the mercy of the passing cars. With some disgust, wishing that I had a pair of gloves, I picked her up and threw her in the baggage compartment. When I had parked the car at the Monastery - the astronomers residential quarters, where I had been living for a few years – I inspected my find without enthusiasm. I intended to give the puppy to somebody but then it whimpered and opened its eyes. There was such an expression of helpless trust in them that... well, I changed my mind.

Sometimes I regretted that decision, though never for long. I had no idea how much trouble a growing dog could cause. My cleaning and repair bills soared; I could never be sure of finding an undamaged pair of shoes and an unchewed copy of the astrophysical journal. But finally, Laika became a well-trained dog. She was the only dog that was ever allowed to come into an Observatory. She lay there quietly for hours while I was busy, quite happy if she could hear my voice from time to time. The other astronomers also became fond of her (it was old Dr. Anderson who suggested her name), but from the beginning she was my dog, and obeyed no one else. Not that she always obeyed me.

She was a beautiful animal, about 95% Alsatian. It was because of that missing 5%, I think, that her masters abandoned her. (I still get angry when I think of it.) Except for two dark patches over her eyes, she was a smoky grey, and her coat was soft and silky. She was very intelligent, and when I was discussing spectral types of evolution of stars with my colleagues, it was hard to believe that she was not following the conversation.

Even now I cannot understand why she became so attached to me, as I have made very few friends among human beings. Yet when I returned to the Observatory after an absence, she would go almost frantic with delight, jumping and putting her paws on my shoulders – which she could reach quite easily – all the time uttering small squeaks of joy which seemed strange for so large a dog. I tried not to leave her for more than a few days and though I could not take her with me on overseas trips, she accompanied me on most of my journeys. She was with me when I went to that ill-fated seminar at Berkley.

We were staying with university friends; they obviously did not like having a monster in the house, but reluctantly let Laika sleep in the living room. “You needn’t worry about burglars tonight,” I said. “We don’t have any in Berkley,” they answered rather coldly.

In the middle of the night, it seemed that they were wrong. I was awakened by a hysterical barking of Laika, which I had heard only once before - when she had first seen a cow and did not understand what it was. Angry, I got up and went to the door to silence Laika before she awoke my hosts, if it was not already too late. She was scratching frantically at the door, pausing from time to time to give that hysterical barking.

“If you want out,” I said angrily, “there’s no need for all that fuss.” I went down, opened the door and she took off into the night like a rocket.

It was very quiet and still with the moon struggling to get through the Fog. I stood in the morning haze waiting for Laika to come back when the San Francisco earthquake, one of the strongest in the 20th century, began.

What happened afterwards, I would prefer to forget. The Red Cross did not take me away until late the next morning because I refused to leave Laika. As I looked at the destroyed house where were the bodies of my friends, I knew that I owed my life to her, but the helicopter pilots thought that I was mad like so many of the others they had found among the fires and the ruin.

After that we were never apart for more than a few hours. We went for long walks together over the mountains; it was the happiest time I have ever known. But I knew, though Laika did not, how soon it must end.

We had been planning the move for more than a decade. It was realised that Earth was no place for an astronomical observatory. Our observatory could still be used for training purposes, but the research had to move out into space.

I had to move with it, I had already been offered the post of Deputy Director. In a few months I had to leave.

It was quite impossible of course to take Laika with me. The only animals on the Moon were those needed for experimental purposes; it must be another generation before pets were allowed, and even then it would cost a lot of money to carry them there - and to keep them alive.

The choice was simple. I could stay on Earth and abandon my career. Or I could go to the Moon – and abandon Laika.

After all, she was only a dog. In ten years she would be dead, while I should be reaching the peak of my profession. No sensible man would have hesitated over the matter; yet I did hesitate, and if by now you do not understand why, no further words of mine can help.

Up to the very week I was to leave I had made no plans for Laika. When Dr. Anderson said he would look after her, I agreed with almost no word of thanks. The old physicist and his wife had always been fond of her, and I am afraid that they considered me cruel and heartless. We went for one more walk together over the hills; then I gave her silently to the Andersons, and did not see her again.

The spaceship was already over the Moon but I took little interest in my work. I was not really sorry to leave Earth; I wanted no recollections, I intended to think

only of the future. Yet I could not shake off the feeling of guilt; I had abandoned someone who loved and trusted me, and was no better than those who had abandoned Laika when she was a puppy beside the dusty road to Palomar.

The news that she was dead reached me a month later. Nobody knew why she died. The Andersons had done their best and were very upset. It seemed that she had just lost interest in living. For a while I did the same, but work is a wonderful remedy, and my programme was just getting under way. Though I never forgot Laika, in the course of time the memory of her stopped hurting me.

Then why had it come back to me five years later, on the far side of the Moon? I was thinking about it when the metal building around me quivered as if under a heavy blow. I reacted immediately and was already closing the helmet of my emergency suit when the floor slipped and the wall tore open in front of me. Because I automatically pressed the General Alarm button we lost only two men despite the fact that the earthquake – the worst ever recorded on the Moon - destroyed all three of our Observatories.

The human mind has strange and labyrinthine ways of doing its business; it knew the signal that could most swiftly wake me and make me aware of danger. There is nothing supernatural in that; though one can say that it was Laika who woke me on both occasions, during the earthquake in San Francisco and the quake on the Far side of the Moon.

Sometimes I wake now in the silence of the Moon, and wish that the dream could have lasted a few seconds longer – so that I could look just once more into those luminous brown eyes, full of unselfish understanding love that I have found nowhere else on this or on any other world.

SALVATORE

by W.S. Maugham

I wonder if I can do it.

I knew Salvatore first when he was a boy of fifteen with a pleasant, ugly face, a laughing mouth and care-free eyes. He used to spend the morning lying about the beach with next to nothing on and his brown body was as thin as a rail. He was full of grace. He was in and out of the sea all the time, swimming with the clumsy, effortless stroke common to the fisher boys rambling up the jagged rocks on his hard feet, for except on Sundays he never wore shoes, he would throw himself into the deep water with a cry of delight. His father was a fisherman who owned his own little vineyard and Salvatore acted as nursemaid to his two younger brothers. He shouted to them to come inshore when they ventured out too far and made them dress when it was time to climb the hot, vine-clad hill for the frugal midday meal.

But boys in those Southern parts grow apace and in a little while he was madly in love with a pretty girl who lived on the Grande Marina³. She had eyes like forest pools and held herself like a daughter of the Caesars. They were affianced, but they could not marry till Salvatore had done his military service, and when he left the island which he had never left in his life before, to become a sailor in the navy of King Victor Emmanuel⁴, he wept like a child. It was hard for one who had never been less free than the birds to be at the beck and call of others, it was harder still to live in a battleship with strangers instead of in a little white cottage among the vines; and when he was ashore, to walk in noisy, friendless cities with streets so crowded that he was frightened to cross them, when he had been used to silent paths and the mountains and the sea. I suppose it had never struck him that Ischia, which he looked at every evening (it was like a fairy island in the sunset) to see what the weather would be like next day, or Vesuvius, pearly in the dawn, had anything to do with him at all; but when he ceased to have them before his eyes he realised in some dim

³ the name of a road or street along the seafront in Italian towns

⁴ King of Italy (1900-1946)

fashion that they were as much part of him as his hands and his feet. He was dreadfully homesick. But it was hardest of all to be parted from the girl he loved with all his passionate young heart. He wrote to her (in his childlike handwriting) long, ill-spelt letters in which he told her how constantly he thought of her and how much he longed to be back. He was sent here and there, to Spezia, to Venice, to Bari and finally to China. Here he fell ill of some mysterious ailment that kept him in hospital for months. He bore it with the mute and uncomprehending patience of a dog. When he learnt that it was a form of rheumatism that made him unfit for further service his heart exulted, for he could go home; and he did not bother, in fact he scarcely listened, when the doctors told him that he would never again be quite well. What did he care when he was going back to the little island he loved so well and the girl who was waiting for him?

When he got into the rowing-boat that met the steamer from Naples and was rowed ashore he saw his father and mother standing on the jetty and his two brothers, big boys now, and he waved to them. His eyes searched among the crowd that waited there, for the girl. He could not see her. There was a great deal of kissing when he jumped up the steps and they all, emotional creatures, cried a little when they exchanged their greetings. He asked where the girl was. His mother told him that she did not know; they had not seen her for two or three weeks; so in the evening when the moon was shining over the placid sea and the lights of Naples twinkled in the distance he walked down to the Grande Marina to her house. She was sitting on the doorstep with her mother. He was a little shy because he had not seen her for so long. He asked her if she had not received the letter that he had written to her to say that he was coming home. Yes, they had received a letter, and they had been told by another of the island boys that he was ill. Yes, that was why he was back; was it not a piece of luck? Oh, but they had heard that he would never be quite well again. The doctors talked a lot of nonsense, but he knew very well that now he was home again he would recover. They were silent for a little, and then the mother nudged the girl. She did not try to soften the blow. She told him straight out, with the blunt directness of her race that she could not marry a man who would never be strong enough to work like a

man. They had made up their minds, her mother and father and she, and her father would never give consent.

When Salvatore went home he found that they all knew. The girl's father had been to tell them what they had decided, but they had lacked the courage to tell him themselves. He wept on his mother's bosom. He was terribly unhappy, but he did not blame the girl. A fisherman's life is hard and it needs strength and endurance. He knew very well that a girl could not afford to marry a man who might not be able to support her. His smile was very sad and his eyes had the look of a dog that has been beaten, but he did not complain, and he never said a hard word of the girl he had loved so well.

Then, a few months later, when he had settled down to the common round, working in his father's vineyard and fishing, his mother told him that there was a young woman in the village who was willing to marry him. Her name was Assunta. "She's as ugly as the devil," he said.

She was older than him, twenty-four or twenty-five, and she had been engaged to a man who, while doing his military service, had been killed in Africa. She had a little money of her own and if Salvatore married her she could buy him a boat of his own and they could take a vineyard that by a happy chance happened at that moment to be without a tenant. His mother told him that Assunta had seen him at the festa⁵ and had fallen in love with him. Salvatore smiled his sweet smile and said he would think about it. On the following Sunday, dressed in the stiff black clothes in which he looked so much less well than in the ragged shirt and trousers of every day, he went up to High Mass at the parish church and placed himself so that he could have a good look at the young woman. When he came down again he told his mother that he was willing.

Well, they were married and they settled down in a tiny white-washed house in the middle of a handsome vineyard. Salvatore was now a great, big husky fellow, tall and broad, but still with that ingenuous smile and those trusting, kindly eyes that he had as a boy. He had the most beautiful manners I have ever seen in my life. Assunta

⁵ holiday (*It.*)

was a grim-visaged female, with decided features, and she looked old for her years. But she had a good heart and she was no fool. I used to be amused by the little smile of devotion that she gave her husband when he was being very masculine and masterful; she never ceased to be touched by his gentle sweetness. But she could not bear the girl who had thrown him over, and notwithstanding Salvatore's smiling expostulations she had nothing but harsh words for her. Presently children were born to them.

It was a hard enough life. All through the fishing season towards evening he set out in his boat with one of his brothers for the fishing grounds. It was a long pull of six or seven miles, and he spent the night catching the profitable cuttlefish. Then there was the long row back again in order to sell the catch in time for it to go on the early boat to Naples. At other times he was working in his vineyard from dawn till the heat drove him to rest and then again, when it was a trifle cooler, till dusk. Often his rheumatism prevented him from doing anything at all and then he would lie about the beach, smoking cigarettes, with a pleasant word for everyone notwithstanding the pain that racked his limbs. The foreigners who came down to bathe and saw him there said that these Italian fishermen were lazy devils.

Sometimes he used to bring his children down to give them a bath. They were both boys and at this time the elder was three and the younger less than two. They sprawled about at the water's edge stark naked and Salvatore standing on a rock would dip them in the water. The elder one bore it with stoicism, but the baby screamed lustily. Salvatore had enormous hands, like legs of mutton, coarse and hard from constant toil, but when he bathed his children, holding them so tenderly, drying them with delicate care; upon my word they were like flowers. He would seat the naked baby on the palm of his hand and hold him up, laughing a little at his smallness, and his laugh was like the laughter of an angel. His eyes then were as candid as his child's.

I started by saying that I wondered if I could do it and now I must tell you what it is that I have tried to do. I wanted to see whether I could hold your attention for a few pages while I drew for you the portrait of a man, just an ordinary fisherman who

possessed nothing in the world except a quality which is the rarest, the most precious and the loveliest that anyone can have. Heaven only knows why he should so strangely and unexpectedly have possessed it. All I know is that it shone in him with a radiance that, if it had not been unconscious and so humble, would have been to the common run of men⁶ hardly bearable. And in case you have not guessed what the quality was, I will tell you. Goodness, just goodness.

THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES

by G. Wells

I don't know whether the gift was inborn. I think it came to him suddenly. In fact, until he was 30 he was a sceptic, and did not believe in miracles. And here I must mention that he was a little man with dark brown eyes, straight red hair and a moustache with ends that he twisted up. His name was George Fotheringay - not the sort of name that leads to an expectation of miracles – and he was a shop assistant. He was very fond of arguing. It was while he was arguing about the impossibility of miracles that he became first aware of his extraordinary powers.

This argument was held in the bar of the Long Dragon, and Toddy Beamish was conducting the opposition by repeating monotonously, "So you say." That drove Mr. Fotheringay to the very limit of his patience. He decided to use a new rhetorical trick.

"Look here, Mr. Beamish," he said. "Let us clearly understand what a miracle is. It's something that contradicts the course of Nature done by power of will, something that can't happen without being specially willed."

"So **you** say," said Mr. Beamish again.

"For instance," said Mr. Fotheringay, "here would be a miracle. That lamp in the natural course of Nature can't burn upside down, can it, Beamish?"

"You say it can't," said Beamish.

⁶ average, ordinary kind of people

“And you?” said Fotheringay. “You don’t mean to say - yes?”

“No,” said Beamish reluctantly. “No, it can’t.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Then here comes someone, it may be me, and stands here as I can do and says to that lamp collecting all his will: ‘Turn upside-down without breaking and go on burning... and...’ Hallo!”

It was enough to make anyone say “Hallo!” The impossible, the incredible thing was visible to them all. The lamp hung inverted in the air, burning quietly with its flame pointing down.

Everybody jumped. For nearly three seconds the lamp remained still. Then Mr. Fotheringay cried out, “I can’t keep it up any longer.” He stepped back and the inverted lamp suddenly fell on the floor and went out.

It was lucky it had a metal reservoir or the whole place would have been on fire. Mr. Cox was the first to speak and he said that Fotheringay was a fool. Fotheringay did not even argue with him. He was astonished more than anybody else at the thing that had occurred.

He went home face flushed, eyes smarting and ears red. He watched each of the ten street lamps nervously as he passed them. It was only when he found himself alone in his little bedroom that he was able to pull his thoughts together and ask, “What on earth happened?” It occurred to him that at the moment he had said the commanding words he strongly willed the thing he said, and that when he saw the lamp in the air he felt that it depended on him to keep it there, though it wasn’t clear to him how this was done. And from that he came to the test of the experiment.

He pointed to a candle and collected his will, though he felt he was doing a foolish thing. “Be raised up,” he said. And the miracle happened again. The candle was raised, hung in the air one giddy moment, and fell on his toilet-table.

For some time Mr. Fotheringay sat in the darkness perfectly still. It did happen after all,” he said. “And how I can explain it I don’t know.” He sighed and began to fumble in his pocket for a match. He could find none, and he rose and extended a hand in the dark. “Let there be a match in that hand,” he said. He felt some light object fall across his palm and his fingers closed upon a match.

After several ineffective attempts to light it he discovered it was a safety-match. He threw it down, and then it occurred to him that he could light it by his will. He did, and watched it burning on his toilet-table. He caught it up quickly and it went out. For some time he stared at the match and then looked up and met his own gaze in the looking-glass. "How about miracles now?" said Mr. Fotheringay addressing his reflection.

The subsequent meditations of Mr. Fotheringay were too confused to describe. At about midnight he had reached the fact that his will-power must be of a particularly rare and extraordinary quality. This discovery filled him with pride and feeling of superiority.

He awoke at his usual hour and during all breakfast-time he was wondering whether his night experience was only a strange and fantastic dream. All day he could do no work because of this astonishingly new self-knowledge, but this caused him no inconvenience, because he made up for it miraculously in the last ten minutes.

The more he thought about his gift the more promising it seemed. He intended among other things to increase his personal property by numerous acts of creation. He called into existence a beautiful gold watch and quickly annihilated it again as his boss came to his desk. He was afraid that the chief would ask him how he had got it. He saw quite clearly that he had to be very careful in exercising his gift.

After supper he went out into a lonely street to work a few miracles in private. He wanted to do something original but couldn't think of anything of the kind because except for his will-power Mr. Fotheringay was quite an ordinary man. At last he recollected the story of "Tannhauser" that he had read in the Philharmonic programme. It seemed to him attractive and harmless. He stuck his walking-stick in the ground and commanded the dry wood to blossom. The air was immediately full of the scent of roses and he saw that his beautiful miracle was done. At that moment he heard advancing footsteps. Afraid of discovery of his powers, he addressed the blossoming stick: "Go back." What he meant was "change back", but of course he was confused. The stick went back at a considerable speed and there immediately came a cry of anger and a bad word from the approaching person.

“Who are you throwing sticks at, you fool?” cried a voice. “It got me on the head.”

“I am sorry, old chap,” said Mr. Fotheringay and then he saw Winch, one of the three constables of the town.

“What do you mean by it?” asked the constable. “Hallo! It’s you, is it? The man that broke the lamp at the Long Dragon!”

“I didn’t mean anything by it,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Nothing at all.”

“What did you do it for, then? Don't you know that sticks hurt?”

Mr. Fotheringay could think of no explanation but the truth.

“Look here, Mr. Winch,” he said, annoyed and confused. “I’m very sorry. The fact is...”

“Well?”

“The fact is I was working a miracle.”

“Working – what? Don’t talk nonsense. Working a miracle. Indeed! Miracle! Well, that’s funny! The fact is, this is another of your silly conjuring tricks – that’s what it is. Now, I tell you...”

But Mr. Fotheringay never heard what Mr. Winch was going to tell him. He realised he had given himself away. A wave of anger swept over him. Swiftly he turned on the constable. “Here,” he said, “I’ve had enough of this. I’ll show you a silly conjuring trick. I will. Go to Hell! Go, now!”

...He was alone.

Mr. Fotheringay performed no more miracles that night. He returned to the town, frightened and very quiet and went to his bedroom. “Lord!” he said, “it’s a powerful gift - an extremely powerful gift. I didn’t want so much. Not really... I wonder what hell is like!”

He decided to transfer the constable from hell to San Francisco and without any more remorse went to sleep.

The next day he went to church. Mr. Fotheringay was not a regular churchgoer but he decided to consult the local minister, Mr. Maydig, who took a certain interest in occult matters.

Mr. Maydig seated him comfortably and standing in front of a fire, asked Mr. Fotheringay to state his business.

At first Mr. Fotheringay was a little confused and found some difficulty in opening the matter.

“You will not believe me, Mr. Maydig, I am afraid,” he said, “that some common sort of person - like myself, for instance, might have some sort of eccentricity inside him that made him able to do things by his will.”

“It’s possible,” said Mr. Maydig. “Something of the sort, perhaps, is possible.”

“I think I may show you by a sort of experiment,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Now, take that tobacco-box on the table, for instance. What I want to know is whether what I am going to do with it is a miracle or not. Just a minute, Mr. Maydig, please.”

He collected his will, pointed to the tobacco-box and said, “Be a vase with violets.”

The tobacco-box changed as it was ordered. Mr. Maydig started at the change and stood looking from Mr. Fotheringay to the vase of flowers. He said nothing. At last he leaned over the table and smelled the violets. Then he stared at Mr. Fotheringay again.

“How did you do that?” he asked.

Mr. Fotheringay pulled his moustache. “Just told it - and there you are. Is that a miracle or is it black art, or what is it? And what do you think is the matter with me? That’s what I want to ask.”

“It’s a most extraordinary thing.”

“And before this week I knew no more that I could do things like that than you did. It came quite suddenly, you know.”

“It’s astonishing. It’s incredible. You are either a most extraordinary...”

“I can do anything. Just anything. Here!” He pointed to the vase with violets. “Be a pigeon, will you?”

In another moment a blue pigeon was flying round the room. “Stop there,” said Mr. Fotheringay, and the pigeon hung motionless in the air. “I can change it back to a tobacco-box,” he said and after replacing the pigeon on the table worked that miracle.

Mr. Maydig had followed all these changes in silence. He stared at Mr. Fotheringay. “Well!” was the only expression of his feelings.

Mr. Fotheringay proceeded to tell Mr. Maydig of his strange experiences and his misadventure with Winch. Mr. Maydig listened attentively, and the expression of his face changed with the course of the story. When he had finished Mr. Maydig said gravely:

“I don't think this is a case of black art or anything of the sort. I don't think there is any criminality about it, Mr. Fotheringay, - none at all. No, it's miracles - pure miracles, miracles, if I may say so, of the very highest class. It's a practically unlimited gift. Let us test your powers. If they really are... If they really are so unlimited as they seem to be.”

And so, incredible as it may seem, in the little house behind the church on the evening of Sunday, November 10, 1896, Mr. Fotheringay, inspired by Mr. Maydig, began to work miracles.

Their first affair was due to their hunger and the negligence of Mrs Minchin, Mr. Maydig's housekeeper, of her duties. The meal, to which the minister invited Mr. Fotheringay, was certainly bad and not sufficient for two industrious miracle-makers. But they sat down and Mr. Maydig started complaining about his housekeeper before it occurred to Mr. Fotheringay what an opportunity lay before him.

“Don't you think, Mr. Maydig,” he said, “if you allow me – I might be able (chum, chum) to work (chum, chum) a miracle with Mrs. Minchin (chum, chum) - make her a better woman.”

Mr. Maydig put down a glass and looked doubtful. “She – she strongly objects to interference, you know, Mr. Fotheringay. And, as a matter of fact, it's past eleven and she's probably in bed and asleep.”

Mr. Fotheringay thought over these objections.

“I am sure that it can be done in her sleep.”

For a time Mr. Maydig opposed the idea, but then he yielded. Mr. Fotheringay gave his orders to Mrs. Minchin and the two gentlemen proceeded with their supper.

Mr. Maydig was speaking about the changes he might expect in his housekeeper next day with great optimism when a series of confused noises from Mrs. Minchin's bedroom began. Mr. Maydig left the table hastily and Mr. Fotheringay heard him calling up to his housekeeper and then his footsteps going softly up to her room.

In a minute or so he returned with a radiant face. "Wonderful!" he said, "And touching! Most touching. Poor woman! A most wonderful change! She got up out of her sleep to smash a bottle of brandy which she kept in her bag. And to confess it, too... But it gives us - it opens - most wonderful possibilities. If we could work this miraculous change in her..."

"The thing seems unlimited," said Mr. Fotheringay.

"Absolutely unlimited," agreed Mr. Maydig. And he made a series of wonderful proposals, which, however, we won't describe in this story.

The late night found Mr. Maydig and Mr. Fotheringay going across the market-square under the full moon, in a sort of ecstasy of miracle-making. They had reformed every drunkard in the town, changed all the beer and alcohol to water, improved the railway communication of the place, drained the swamps, improved the soil of One Tree Hill, and cured the Vicar's wart. And they were going to see what could be done with the old South Bridge when the church clock struck three.

"I say," said Mr. Fotheringay, "that's three o'clock. I must be getting home. And Mrs. Wimms..."

"We're only beginning," said Mr. Maydig, excited with a realization of their unlimited power. "We're only beginning. Think of all the good things we are doing. When people wake up..."

"But..." said Mr. Fotheringay.

Mr. Maydig gripped his arm suddenly. His eyes were bright and wild. "My dear," he said, "don't hurry. Look..." he pointed to the moon at the zenith. "Stop it."

Mr. Fotheringay looked at the moon. "That's a bit high," he said after a pause.

"Why not?" said Mr. Maydig. "Of course it won't stop. You stop the rotation of the earth. There will be no harm."

"Hm!" said Mr. Fotheringay. "Well." He sighed. "I'll try. Here - "

He buttoned up his jacket and addressed the globe with these words. "Please, stop rotating, will you?"

At the same moment he was flying head over heels through the air at the speed of dozens of miles a minute. In spite of the innumerable circles he was describing per second, he willed: "Let me come down safe and sound. Whatever else happens, let me down safe and sound."

He willed it only just in time, for his clothes, heated by his rapid flight through the air, were beginning to burn. He came down in a large mass of metal and stones and fresh-turned earth and heard a violent crash that made all other crashes of his past life seem like the sound of falling dust. A terrible wind roared throughout earth and heaven, so that he could hardly lift his head to look. For a while he was too astonished even to see where he was or what had happened. And his first movement was to feel his head and reassure himself that it was on its place.

He looked about him. The appearance of things was extremely strange. "The sky is at least all right," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And that's all that is all right. And there's the moon overhead. Just as it was just now. Bright as midday. But, as for the rest – where's the village? Where's – where's anything? And why on earth is the wind blowing? I didn't order any wind."

Mr. Fotheringay tried to get to his feet but in vain and remained on all fours holding on. "There's something seriously wrong," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And what it is - God knows."

All around him nothing was visible in the white haze of dust but masses of turned earth and heaps of ruins. No trees, no houses, no living creatures - only a wilderness and chaos vanishing into the darkness beneath. All the world had been smashed and totally destroyed. That was all.

Mr. Fotheringay did not, of course, fully understand how it all had happened. But he realised that his miracle was dangerous, and a great disgust of miracles came upon him. He was in darkness now. A great roaring of wind and waters filled earth and sky, and, looking under his hand through the dust he saw by the play of the lightning, a huge wall of water pouring towards him.

“Maydig!”” cried Mr. Fotheringay’s weak voice amid the roar. “Here! - Maydig!”

“Stop!” cried Mr. Fotheringay to the advancing water. “Oh, for Goodness's sake, stop!”

“Just a moment,” said Mr. Fotheringay to the lightnings and thunder. “Stop just a moment while I collect my thoughts... And now what shall I do?” he said. “What shall I do? Lord! I wish Maydig was about.”

He lifted his little voice against the wind, shouting louder and louder in the vain desire to hear himself speak.

“Let me lose my miraculous power, let my will become just like anybody else’s will, and all these dangerous miracles be stopped. I don’t like them. I wish I hadn’t worked them. That’s the first thing. And the second is - let me be back just before the miracles began; let everything be just as it was before that blessed lamp turned up. It’s a big job, but it’s the last. Do you understand? No more miracles, everything as it was - me back in the Long Dragon just before I drank my beer. I will it. Yes.”

He dug his fingers into the earth, closed his eyes and waited.

Everything became perfectly still... He perceived that he was standing on his legs.

“So you say,” said a voice.

He opened his eyes. He was in the bar of the Long Dragon, arguing, about miracles with Toddy Beamish. He had a sense of some great thing that he had forgotten. Except for the loss of his miraculous powers, everything was back as it had been; his mind and memory therefore were, now just as they had been at the time when this story began. So he knew absolutely nothing of all that was told here. And among other things, of course, he still did not believe in miracles.

“I tell you that miracles can’t possibly happen,” he said, “whatever you think. And I’m ready to prove it.”

“That’s what **you** say,’ said Toddy Beamish. “Prove it if you can.”

“Look here, Mr. Beamish,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Let us clearly understand what a miracle is. It’s something that contradicts the course of Nature done by the power of Will...”

THE WAXWORK

by A.Burrage

The manager of Marriner’s Museum of Waxworks sat in his office and interviewed Raymond Hewson. The manager was a youngish man, well-dressed, stout and rather tall. Raymond Hewson looked different. He was a small, pale man with a tired face and thin brown hair. His clothes, which had been good when new and which were still clean and carefully pressed, were beginning to show signs of their owner’s losing battle with the world.

The manager was speaking.

“There is nothing new in your request,” he said. “In fact we refuse it to different people - mostly young idlers who try to make bets - about three times a week. If I permitted it and some young idiot lost his senses, what would my position be? But your being a journalist alters the matter.”

Hewson smiled.

“You mean that journalists have no senses to lose?”

“No, no,” laughed the manager, “but one imagines them to be responsible people. Besides, it can give us publicity. Err - what is your newspaper, Mr. Hewson?”

“I don’t work for any definite paper at present,” Hewson confessed. “However, I would have no difficulty in publishing the story. *THE MORNING ECHO* would take it immediately. A Night with Marriner’s Murderers. No paper will refuse it.”

The manager thought a little.

“And how do you propose to treat it?”

“I shall make it thrilling, of course, thrilling but with a touch of humour.”

The manager nodded and offered Hewson his cigarette case.

“Very well, Mr. Hewson,” he said. “Get your story published in *THE MORNING ECHO*, and there will be a five-pound note waiting for you here. But first of all I must warn you that it’s not an easy job that you are going to take. I shouldn’t take it on myself. I’ve seen those figures dressed and undressed. I know all about the process of their manufacture. I can walk about the museum in company as indifferently as if I were walking among toys, but I should never sleep there alone among them.”

“Why?” asked Hewson.

“I don’t know. There isn’t any reason. I don’t believe in ghosts. It’s just that I can’t sit alone among them all night, with their eyes seeming to stare at me. The whole atmosphere of the place is unpleasant, and if you are sensitive to atmosphere you will have a very uncomfortable night.”

Hewson had known it himself from the moment when the idea first occurred to him. His soul protested against the prospect, though he smiled at the manager. But he had a wife and children to keep and for the last months he had not had any regular work and he was living on his small savings. Here was a chance to earn some money - the price of a special story in *THE MORNING ECHO* and a five-pound note promised by the manager. Besides, if he wrote the story well, it might lead to the offer of a regular job.

“The way of newspaper men is hard,” he said. “I have already promised myself an uncomfortable flight because your Murderers’ Den is certainly not a hotel bedroom. But I don’t think your waxworks will worry me much. I’m not superstitious.”

The manager smiled and rose.

“All right,” he said. “I think the last of the visitors have gone. Wait a moment. I’ll let the night people know that you’ll be here. Then I’ll take you down and show you round.”

He took up the receiver of a house telephone, spoke into it and then said:

“I must ask you not to smoke there. We had a fire alarm in the Murderers’ Den this evening. I don’t know who gave it but it was a false one. And now, if you’re ready, we’ll go.”

They went through an open barrier and down dimly lit stone stairs, which gave a sinister impression of leading to a prison. In a room at the bottom of the stairs were a few relics of the Inquisition and other mementos of man's cruelty to man. Beyond this room was the Murderers' Den.

It was a room of irregular shape, dimly lit by electric lights burning behind glass lamps. It was, by design, a mysterious and uncomfortable chamber - a chamber whose atmosphere invited visitors to speak in a whisper.

The waxwork murderers stood on low pedestals with labels at their feet. The manager, walking around with Hewson, pointed out several of the more interesting of these figures.

"That's Crippen! I think you recognize him. Insignificant little beast who looks as if he couldn't hurt a fly. And of course this - "

"Who's that?" Hewson interrupted in a whisper, pointing.

"Oh, I was coming to him," said the manager. "Come and have a good look at him. This is our star. He's the only one of this company that hasn't been changed."

The figure which Hewson had indicated was that of a small, thin man not much more than five feet tall. It wore a little moustache, large spectacles and a long coat. He could not say precisely why this kind-looking face seemed to him so disgusting, but he made a step back and even in the manager's company he was afraid to look at him again.

"But who is he?" he asked.

"That," said the manager, "is Dr. Bourdette."

Hewson shook his head. "I think I've heard the name," he said, "but I forgot in connection with what."

The manager smiled.

"You'd remember better if you were a Frenchman," he said. "For a long time this man was the terror of Paris. He did his work of a doctor in the daytime and of a murderer at night. He killed for the devilish pleasure it gave him to kill, and always in the same way - with a razor. After his last crime he mysteriously disappeared, and ever since the police of every civilized country have been looking for him."

Hewson shuddered. "I don't like him at all," he confessed. "Ugh! What eyes he's got!"

"Yes, this figure's a little masterpiece. It seems to you that the eyes stare at you? Well, that is excellent realism, for Bourdette practised mesmerism and was supposed to hypnotise his victims before killing them. Indeed, it explains how such a small man could do his terrible work. There were never any signs of a struggle."

"It seemed to me I saw him move," said Hewson in a whisper.

The manager smiled.

"You'll have more than one optical illusion before the end of the night, I expect. I'm sorry I can't give you any more light: we keep this place as gloomy as possible. And now come with me to the office and have a drink of whisky before you return here again."

The night attendant placed an armchair for Hewson and wished him good night. Hewson turned the armchair a little so that its back was toward the figure of Dr. Bourdette. For some reason he liked him much less than his companions. While he was busy with arranging the chair he was almost light-hearted, but when the attendant's footsteps had died away and a deep hush fell over the chamber he realised that he had a difficult night before him.

The dim light fell on the rows of figures which were so like human beings that the silence and the stillness seemed unnatural and even sinister. "It must be like this at the bottom of the sea," he thought and decided to use this phrase in his story on the next morning. He faced the figures boldly enough. They were only waxworks. So long as he let that thought dominate all others, he promised himself that all would be well. It did not, however, save him long from the discomfort caused by the waxen stare of Dr. Bourdette, which, he knew, was directed upon him from behind. The eyes of the little Frenchman tormented him, and he with difficulty suppressed the desire to turn and look. At last Hewson turned his chair round a little and looked behind him.

"He's only a waxwork like the rest of you," he said loudly. "You are all only waxworks."

They were only waxworks, yes, but waxworks don't move. Not that he had seen any movement anywhere, but it seemed to him that in the moment or two while he had looked behind him, there had been a slight change in the group of the figures in front. Crippen, for instance, seemed to have turned a little to the left. Or, thought Hewson, the illusion was due to the fact that he had not fixed his chair back into its exact original position.

He took a notebook from his pocket and wrote quickly: "Remember: Deathly silence. Like being at the bottom of sea. Hypnotic eyes of Dr. Bourdette. Figures seem to move when not being watched."

He closed the book suddenly and looked round quickly over the right shoulder. He had neither seen nor heard a movement, but it was as if some sixth sense had made him aware of one. He looked straight at Lefroy, which smiled as if to say, "It wasn't I!"

Of course, it wasn't him, or any of them. It was his own nerves. Or was it? Hadn't Crippen moved during that moment when his attention was directed elsewhere? You couldn't trust that little man. When you took your eyes off him he took advantage of it to change his position. That was what they were all doing. If he had only known it, he would have never come here. He was leaving. He wasn't going to spend the night with a lot of waxworks which moved while he wasn't looking.

Hewson sat down again. This was very cowardly and very absurd. They were only waxworks and they couldn't move; let him hold on to that thought and all would be well. He swung round quickly and stared straight at Crippen. Ha! He'd nearly caught Crippen that time! "You'd better be careful, Crippen - and all the rest of you! If I see one of you move I'll smash you to pieces! Do you hear?"

He must go, he told himself. Already he had experience enough to write his story, or ten stories about it. Then, why not go? Yes, but that night attendant upstairs will laugh at him. And the manager won't give him that five-pound note which he needed so badly. He thought of his wife. She must be asleep now or maybe she is lying awake and thinking of him. She'll laugh when he tells her what he imagined.

This was too much! The murderers not only moved but they breathed, too. Because somebody was breathing. Or was it his own breath which sounded to him as if it came from a distance? This won't do! This certainly will not do! He must hold on to something which belonged to the daylight world. He was Raymond Hewson, an unsuccessful journalist, a living and breathing man, and these figures around him were only dummies, made of wax and sawdust who stood there for the entertainment of idle visitors. They could neither move nor whisper.

That was better! Now, what was that funny story which somebody told him yesterday?

He recalled a part of it, but not all, for the gaze of Dr. Bourdette burned, challenged and finally forced him to turn.

Hewson half turned his chair so as to bring him face to face with the wearer of those dreadful hypnotic eyes. Then he sat quite still staring before him, like a man found frozen in the Arctic snows.

Dr. Bourdette's movements were slow. He stepped off his pedestal with the mincing care of a lady getting out of a bus and sat down on the edge facing Hewson. Then he nodded and smiled and said, "Good evening."

"I hardly have to tell you," he continued in perfect English, "that before I overheard the conversation between you and the manager of this establishment, I did not suspect that I should have the pleasure of a companion here for the night. You cannot move or speak without my command, but you can hear me perfectly well. Something tells me that you are - shall I say nervous? My dear sir, have no illusions. I am not one of these contemptible dummies! I am Dr. Bourdette himself."

He paused, coughed and shifted his legs.

"Pardon me," he went on, "but I am a little stiff. And let me explain. Circumstances which I won't describe here to you, made it desirable that I should live in England. I was close to this building this evening when I saw a policeman watching me too curiously. I guessed that he intended to follow me and perhaps ask me embarrassing questions, so I mixed with the crowd and came in here. An inspiration showed me a way of escape. I shouted "Fire!" and when all the fools had

rushed to the stairs I took the coat which you see on me off my dummy, hid my wax figure under the platform and took its place on the pedestal.

“The manager’s description of me, which I had overheard, was biased but not quite wrong. Of course, I am not dead, although the world thinks otherwise. His description of my hobby, which I have indulged for years, though through necessity less frequently lately, was in the main true, but not intelligently expressed. You see, the world is divided between collectors and non-collectors. With the non-collectors we are not concerned. The collectors collect anything, according to their individual tastes, from money to cigarette packets, from butterflies to match labels. I collect throats.”

He paused again and regarded Hewson’s throat with interest mixed with disfavour.

“I am obliged to chance which brought us together,” he continued, “and perhaps it would be ungrateful to complain. But you have a skinny neck, sir, excuse me. I should have never selected you from choice. I like men with thick necks... thick red necks...”

He fumbled in a pocket and took out something which he tested against a wet forefinger and then began to pass against the palm of his left hand.

“This is a little French razor,” he remarked. “They are not much used in England, but perhaps you know them? The blade, you will see, is very narrow. It doesn’t cut very deep, see for yourself. I shall ask you the usual question of all polite barbers: “Does the razor suit you, sir?”

He rose up and approached Hewson with the furtive step of a hunting panther. “Will you be so kind,” he said, “as to raise your chin a little? Thank you. A little more, please. Just a little more. Ah, thank you!... Merci, m’sieur... Ah... merci... merci...”

At one end of the chamber the ceiling was thick frosted glass which by day let in a few rays from the floor above. After sunrise they began to mingle with the dim light from the electric lamps, and this combined illumination added a certain horror to a scene which was terrible enough.

The waxwork figures stood apathetically in their places, waiting for the crowds of visitors who would walk among them with cries of admiration or fear. In the middle of them, in the centre of the room, Hewson sat still, leaning back in his armchair. His chin was lifted as if he was waiting to be shaved, and although there was not a scratch on his throat nor anywhere on his body, he was cold and dead. His editors were wrong saying that he had no imagination.

Dr. Bourdette on his pedestal watched the dead man unemotionally. He did not move, nor was he capable of motion. After all, he was only a waxwork.

THE PEARLY BEACH

by Lord Dunsany

We could not remember, any of us at the Club, who it was that first invented the twopenny stamp on checks⁷. There were eight or nine of us there, and not one of us could put a name to him. Of course a lot of us knew, but wed all forgotten it. And that started us talking of the tricks memory plays. Some said memory didn't matter so much; some said it was looking forward that mattered most in business, or even watching closely what was going on around you now. And at that Jorkens stepped in. No, memory was the thing, he said; he could have made more by a good steady memory than by any amount of looking into the future.

"I don't see how that could be," said a stockbroker, who had just bought Jaffirs at 62⁸, on pretty good information that they would go to 75. As a matter of fact they fell to 59.

But Jorkens stuck to his point. "With a good allround memory," he said, "I could have made millions."

"But how?" asked the stockbroker.

⁷ in England all cheques must have a revenue stamp on them

⁸ stock at the price of £62 for one £100 share

“Well, it was this way,” said Jorkens. “I had a rather nice pearl in a tiepin. And things weren’t quite going the way I liked: financially, I mean. Well, to cut a long story short, I decided to hock my pearl. I remember waiting till it was dark one winter’s evening, so as to get to the pawnshop decently unobserved. And I went in and unscrewed the pearl off its pin, and saw it no more. That put the financial position on a sound basis again; but I came out a little what you call ruefully, and I suppose my face must have shown it, and I was sticking back what was left of my gold pin into my tie. Funny how anyone could have noticed all that, but I’ve observed that when people are a little bit drunk they sometimes do. Anyway there was a tall man against a wall, a man I had never seen before in my life, and he looked at me in a lazy sort of way, not troubling to move his head, only his eyes, and even then he seemed barely troubling to turn and keep open; and he said, ‘You want to go to Carrapaccas beach. That’s where you want to go.’ And he gave me the latitude and longitude. ‘Pearls to be had for the gathering there,’ he said.

And I asked him what he meant, why he spoke to me. I asked him all kinds off things. But all he would say was, ‘You go to Carrappas beach,’ not even giving it the same name the second time.

Well, I jotted the latitude and longitude down on my shirt cuff, and I thought the thing over a lot. And the first thing I saw as I thought things over was that the man was perfectly genuine; he had probably had this secret for years, and then one day he had had a drop too much, and had blurted it out. You may say what you like against drink, but you don’t find a man to tell you a thing like that, just because he’s sorry for you for losing a pearl, when he’s sober. And mind you the Carrappas beaches, or whatever them, were there. The longitude was a long way east, and the latitude a lot south, and I started one day from London, heading for Aden. Did I tell you all this was in London? No place like it for starting on journeys. Well, I started from London and came again to Aden. I had a very curious romance there once.

So I came to Aden and began looking about. What I was looking for was three sailors; I fancied we could do with that; and one of those queer boats with green keels. Sails, of course. Well, I found two sailors, just the men I was looking for. One

was named Bill and the other the Portugee, though both looked English to me so far as I could tell. And they could get another man who was a half-wit, who they said would do very well. The beauty of that was that only two had to be in it. I told them at once it was something to do with treasure, and they said that the third hand could be left on board when the rest of us went ashore, and would be quite happy singing a song that he sang. I never knew what his name was; Bill and the Portugee used just to shout at him, and he would always answer. His home was Aden; I never learned where the other two came from. Well, I told Bill the latitude and the longitude, and we slipped out in a tiny ship one morning from Aden, sailing toward India. And it was a long, long time before we came to Carrappas beach, or whatever it was. And day after day the sky was the same blistering blue, till sunset flamed in our faces, gazing back over the stem, and there came every evening behind us the same outburst of stars, and all the way the half-wit sang the same song; only the sea altered. And at last we got there, as Bill had promised we would, a tiny bay with a white beach shining, shut off by rocks from the rest of the coast, and from the inner land by a cliff, a low cliff steep behind it. The little bay was no more than fifty yards long. We cast anchor then, and I swam ashore with Bill and the Portugee, and the third hand sat on the deck singing his song. All that the drunken man had said was more than true. I hardly like to call him drunken, when I think what he did for me, all out of pure kindness. But you know what I mean; he had had a few drinks and they had made him quick to notice things and quick to feel for other people, and perfectly truthful; you know the old proverb⁹. Probably, too, the drinks had brightened his memory, even to tiny details like latitude and longitude. I shall never forget the peculiar crunch as we walked. The pearls were mostly the size of good large peas, and seemed to go down to about six or eight inches on to a hard gray sand; but to that depth of six or eight inches along that fifty yards, and from the sea to the cliff, the beach was entirely composed of them. From sea to cliff was about fifteen yards, so that if you multiply that by fifty yards for the length, and by half a foot for the depth, you will see how much that was of solid pearls. I haven't done the sum myself. They didn't go out

⁹ *In vino veritas (Lat)* – In wine is truth.

under the sea. There was nothing but dead oyster shells there. A funny little current scooped around that bay. We could see it doing it still, though the shells were all empty now; but once it must have idly gathered those pearls, and idly flung them on to the little beach, and roamed away into the Indian Ocean beyond the gaze of man. Well, of course there was nothing to do but to fill our pockets, and we set about doing that, and it was a very curious thing - you may hardly believe me - but it was all I could do to get Bill to fill one pocket. Of course we had to swim back to the ship, which makes a reasonable explanation, but it wasn't Bill's reason at all. It was simply a fear he had of growing too rich. 'What's it worth?' he kept saying, of his one pocketful; 'Over two hundred thousand,' I said at a guess. 'Can't see the difference between two hundred thousand and four hundred thousand,' Bill would say.

'There's a lot of difference,' I'd tell him.

'Yes, when I've spent the two hundred thousand,' Bill would go on.

'Well, there you are,' I'd say.

'And when will that be?' Bill would answer.

"I saw his point.

And another thing he was very keen on, Bill seemed to have read of men who had come by big fortunes; won lotteries and one thing and another; and according to Bill they went all to pieces quickly, and Bill was frightened. It was all I could do to get him to fill the other pocket. The Portugee was filling his, but with an uneasy ear taking in all Bill's warnings. You know there was something a bit frightening about all that wealth. There was enough of it to have financed a war, or to have ruined a good-sized country in almost any other way. I didn't stay more than a few minutes after my pockets were full, to sit on the beach and let the pearls run through my fingers. Then we swam back to the ship. I said to Bill, 'What about one load of pearls?' For it seemed a pity not to. And Bill said only, 'Up anchor.' And the Portugee said, 'I expect that's best.' And the half-wit led his song and got up the anchor, and we turned homeward toward Aden.

In little more than a fortnight we came to that cindery harbor, safe with our pearls. And there we sold a few in a quiet way, without waking suspicion, and paid

the half-wit a thousand pounds for his wages, and went on to Port Said. The three of us took cabins on a large ship bound for London in order to sell our pearls, and late one evening we came into Port Said and were to sail on next morning. By the time we'd paid off half-wit and paid for our cabins we hadn't much ready money left, but Bill said he knew how to get some. Bill had gone pretty slow on drinks since he got the pearls, but gambling was a thing he would never give up. 'We can afford it now,' he used to say, which is of course what you never can do. So we went ashore at Port Said, and took our pearls with us, as we'd none of us trust all that out of our sight. And we came to a house Bill knew. Now, wasn't it a curious thing that Bill, who wouldn't trouble to put another two hundred thousand pounds in his pocket, was keen as mustard to make a hundred pounds or so in a Port Said gambling den? And it wasn't that he'd altered his mind about his pocketfuls of pearls being enough: he was never going back to that bay. Again and again I suggested it, but there was some sort of terror about that little white beach of pearls that seemed to have got hold of him.

"I wasn't keen on the gambling myself, but it seemed only friendly to keep an eye on the other two. So I slipped a revolver into my pocket and came with them. And I was probably drawn too by that feeling one used to have that, if the name of Port Said should turn up in a conversation, one has seen all that there is to see there. One liked to be able to say, if any particular den was mentioned, 'Oh yes, I dropped fifty pounds there.'

"I dropped more than that.

Anyway we came to the house, and Bill and I and the Portugee went in, and soon we were playing and winning. The stakes aren't high downstairs, and you usually win there. In fact that downstairs room reminded me of a trail of grain over grass leading up to a trap. Upstairs the stakes were much higher, and upstairs we asked to go. A Greek ran the show downstairs, the sort of Greek you might meet at night in the shadier parts of Port Said and very often did. The man upstairs was a Greek too, but not the kind that you would count on meeting; he seemed worse than I'd been warned against. As we walked in he looked at us, each in turn, and it was

when he looked at you that his eyes seemed to light up, and the blood seemed to pale in his face, and the man's power and energy went to those eyes.

'High stakes,' he said.

I nodded my head, and Bill and the Portugee began to babble something.

'Got the stuff?' snapped the Greek.

The man's style irritated me. I suppose I lost my temper. Certainly Bill and the Portugee looked pretty angry at the way he was speaking to us. I never answered a word to him. I merely slipped a hand into my pocket and brought out a handful of pearls, all gleaming in the ugly light of the room. And the Greek looked at them with his lips slowly widening, for a long while before he spoke. And then he said, 'Pearls,' in quite a funny small voice. And I was just going to say 'Yes'. It was like a page in a book, like a page with a picture of a man in a dingy room with pearls in his hand, just going to speak; you turn the page and come on something quite different, nothing to do with pearls, no room, and nobody speaking. Just silence and open air. And then the voice of a man coming up out of depths of silence, saying the same thing over again, but with words that didn't as yet bring any meaning. A long time passed like that. Then the words again and this time they seemed to mean something, if only one steadied oneself and tried to think.

'He fainted in the street!' a man was saying.

I was in a street right enough: I could see that as soon as I looked up. And a man I had never seen before was saying that to a policeman. Fainted indeed! There I was with a lump on my forehead the size of two eggs, not to mention a taste in my mouth that I always get after chloroform.

"And the pearls?" blurted out the broker.

"The pearls," said Jorkens, and a sad smile shone for a moment. "Men found unconscious at night in the streets of Port Said never have pearls on them."

Jorkens remained shaking his head for a long time. "I suppose not," said someone to break the silence and bring him back to his tale.

"No," said Jorkens.

And after a while, in a voice that seemed low with mourning for his few weeks of fabulous wealth, Jorkens gave us what was left of his tale.

“I never saw Bill or the Portugee again. Living or dead I never found trace of them. I took the policeman back to the house of the Greek, and was easily able to identify it. The downstairs room was the same as ever and I identified the man who ran it, as soon as we were able to wake him up and get him to come out of bed. What I couldn’t do was to find the upstairs room, or even the staircase that led to it. As far as I could see we went all over the house, and I could neither say what had happened nor where it had happened, while the Greek was swearing by all kinds of things, that to the policeman were holy, that nothing had happened at all. How they made the change I was never able to see. So I just withdrew my charges, and gave the policeman *baksheesh*, and got back to the ship, and never saw any of my pearls again, except one that got lost in the lining, or ever saw trace of the upstairs Greek. I got that one pearl in the lining fitted onto my tiepin. Carrappas or Carrapaccas I could not find on any map, and no one I questioned in twenty seaports had ever heard of it either; so that one pearl in my tiepin was all I got out of the kindly advice of the drunken man by the wall.”

“But the latitude and the longitude,” said Terbut, with the quiet air of one playing a mate.

“You see, *that*,” said Jorkens, “was what I couldn’t remember.”

ENOCH’S TWO LETTERS

by A.Sillitoe

Enoch’s parents parted in a singular way. He was eight years of age at the time.

It happened one morning after he had gone to school, so that he didn’t know anything about it till coming home in the evening.

Jack Boden got up as usual at seven o’clock, and his wife, who was Enoch’s mother, set a breakfast of bacon and egg before him. They never said much, and

spoke even less on this particular morning because both were solidly locked in their separate thoughts which, unknown to each other, they were at last intending to act on.

Instead of getting a bus to his foundry, Jack boarded one for the city centre. He sought out a public lavatory where, for the price of a penny, he was able to draw off his overalls, and emerge with them under his arm. They were wrapped in the brown paper which he had put into his pocket before leaving the house, a sly and unobtrusive movement as he called from the scullery: 'So long, love. See you this afternoon.'

Now wearing a reasonable suit, he walked to the railway station. There he met Rene, who had in her two suitcases a few of his possessions that he had fed to her during clandestine meetings over the past fortnight. Having worked in the same factory, they had, as many others who were employed there saw, 'fallen for each other'. Rene wasn't married, so there seemed nothing to stop her going away with him. And Jack's dull toothache of a conscience had, in the six months since knowing her, cured itself at last.

Yet they got on the train to London feeling somewhat alarmed at the step they had taken, though neither liked to say anything in case the other should think they wanted to back out. Hardly a word was spoken the whole way. Rene wondered what her parents would say when they saw she'd gone. Jack thought mostly about Enoch, but he knew he'd be safe enough with his mother, and that she'd bring him up right. He would send her a letter from London to explain that he had gone - in case she hadn't noticed it. |

No sooner had Jack left for his normal daylight stint at the foundry than his wife, Edna, attended to Enoch. She watched him eat, standing by the mantelshelf for a good view of him during her stare. He looked up, half out of his sleep, and didn't smile back at her.

She kissed him, pushed sixpence into his pocket, and sent him up the street to school, then went upstairs to decide what things to take with her. It wasn't a hard choice, for though they had plenty of possessions, little of it was movable. So it turned out that two suitcases and a handbag held all she wanted.

There was ample time, and she went downstairs to more tea and a proper breakfast. They'd been married ten years, and for seven at least she'd had enough. The trouble with Jack was that he'd let nothing worry him. He was so trustworthy and easy-going he got on her nerves. He didn't even seem interested in other women, and the worst thing about such a man was that he hardly ever noticed when you were upset. When he did, he accused you of upsetting him.

There were so many things wrong, that now she was about to leave she couldn't bring them to mind and this irritated her, and made her think that it had been even worse than it was, rather than the other way round. As a couple they had given up tackling any differences between them by the human method of talking. It was as if the sight of each other struck them dumb. On first meeting, a dozen years ago, they had been unable to say much - which, in their mutual attraction, they had confused with love at first sight. And nowadays they didn't try to talk to each other about the way they felt any more, because neither of them thought it would do any good. Having come this far, the only thing left was to act. It wasn't that life was dull exactly, but they had nothing in common. If they had, maybe she could have put up with him, no matter how bad he was.

For a week she'd been trying to write a letter, to be posted from where she was going, but she couldn't get beyond: "I'm leaving you for good, so stop bothering about me any more. Just look after Enoch, because I've had my bellyful and I'm off." After re-reading it she put it back and clipped her handbag shut.

Having decided to act after years of thinking about it, she was now uncertain as to what she would do. A sister lived in Hull, so her first plan was to stay there till she found a job and a room. This was something to hang on to, and beyond it she didn't think. She'd just have to act again, and that was that. Once you started there was probably no stopping, she thought, not feeling too good about it now that the time had come.

An hour later she turned the clock to the wall, and walked out of the house for good, safe in knowing that shortly after Enoch came in from school his father would be home to feed him. They had lavished a lot of love on Enoch - she knew that -

maybe too much, some of which they should have given to each other but had grown too mean and shy to.

She left the door unlocked so that he could just walk in. He was an intelligent lad, who'd be able to turn on the gas fire if he felt cold. When Mrs Mackley called from her back door to ask if she was going on her holidays, Edna laughed and said she was only off to see Jack's mother at Netherfield, to take some old rags that she needed to cut up and use for rug-clippings.

"Mum," Enoch cried, going in by the back door. "Mum, where's my tea?" He'd come running down the road with a pocketful of marbles.

'Gossiping again', he thought scornfully, seeing the kitchen empty. He threw his coat, still with the sleeves twisted, over to the settee. The house did have more quiet than usual, he didn't know why. He turned the clock to face the right way, then went into the scullery and put the kettle on.

The tea wasn't like his mother made it. It was too weak. But it was hot, so he put a lot of sugar in to make up for it, then sat at the table to read a comic.

It was early spring, and as soon as it began to get dark he switched the light on and went to draw the curtains. One half came over easily, but the other only part of the way, leaving a foot-wide gap of dusk, like a long, open mouth going up instead of across. This bothered him for a while, until it got dark, when he decided to ignore it and switch the television on.

From hoping to see his mother, he began to wonder where his father was. If his mother had gone to Aunt Jenny's and missed the bus home, maybe his father at the foundry had had an accident and fallen into one of the moulds - from which it was impossible to get out alive, except as a skeleton.

Jam pot, butter dish, knife, and crumbs were spread over the kitchen table when he got himself something to eat. Not that it bothered him, that his father might have been killed, because when they had left him for an hour on his own a few months ago he had wondered what he would do if they never came back. Before he'd had time to decide, though, they had opened the door to tell him to get a sandwich and be off to bed sharp, otherwise he'd be too tired to get up for school in the

morning. So he knew they'd be back sooner than he expected. When Johnny Beetle's father had been killed in a lorry last year he'd envied him, but Johnny Bootle himself hadn't liked it very much.

Whether they came back or not, it was nice being in the house on his own. He was boss of it, could mash another pot of tea if he felt like it, and keep the gas fire burning as long as he liked. The telly was flickering but he didn't want to switch it off, even though heads kept rolling up and up, so that when he looked at it continually for half a minute it seemed as if they were going round in a circle. He turned to scoop a spoonful of raspberry jam from the pot, and swallow some more cold tea.

He sat in his father's chair by the fire, legs stretched across the rug, but ready to jump at the click of the outdoor latch, and be back at the table before they could get into the room. His father wouldn't like him - being in his chair, unless he were sitting on his knee. All he needed was a cigarette, and though he looked on the sideboard and along the shelf there were none in sight. He had to content himself with trying to whistle in a thick manly style. Johnny Bootle had been lucky in his loss, because he'd had a sister.

If they didn't come back tonight he wouldn't go to school in the morning. They'd shout at him when they found out, but that didn't matter if they were dead. It was eight o'clock, and he wondered where they were. They ought to be back by now and he began to regret that he'd hoped they never would be, as if Gods punishment for thinking this might-be that He'd never let them.

He yawned, and picked up the clock to wind it. That was what you did when you yawned after eight in the evening. If they didn't come soon he would have to go upstairs to bed, but he thought he would get some coats and sleep on the sofa down here, with the gas fire shining bright, rather than venture to his bedroom alone. They'd really gone for a night out, and that was a fact. Maybe they were late coming back because they'd gone for a divorce. When the same thing had happened to Tom Brunt it was because his mam had gone to fetch a baby, though he was taken into a neighbour's house next door before he'd been alone as long as this.

He looked along the shelf to see if he had missed a cigarette that he could put into his mouth and play at smoking with. He had good eyes and no need of glasses, that was true, because he'd been right the first time. In spite of the bread and jam he still felt hungry, and went into the scullery for some cheese.

When the light went, taking the flickering telly with it, he found a torch at the back of the dresser drawer, then looked for a shilling to put in the meter. Fortunately the gas fire gave off enough pink glow for him to see the borders of the room, especially when he shone the torch beam continually around the walls as if it were a searchlight looking for enemy planes.

"It was a long way to Tipperary" - as he had sometimes heard his father sing while drunk, but his eyes closed, with the piece of cheese still in his hands, and he hoped he would drop off before they came in so that they'd be sorry for staying out so late, and wouldn't be able to be mad at him for not having gone to bed.

He walked across the room to the coat hooks in the recess, but his mother's and father's coats had gone, as he should have known they would be, since neither of them was in. There was nothing to put over himself when he went to sleep, but he still wouldn't go upstairs for a blanket. It would be as bad as going into a wood at night. He had run across the road when a bus was coming, and seen. Frankenstein once on the telly, but he wouldn't go into a wood at night, even though lying Jimmy Kemp claimed to have done so.

Pushing one corner at a time, he got the table back against the sideboard. There was an oval mirror above the mantelshelf, and he leaned both elbows on it to get as good a look at himself as he could in the wavering pink light - his round face and small ears, chin in shadow, and eyes popping forward. He distorted his mouth with two fingers, and curled a tongue hideously up to his nose to try and frighten himself away from the bigger fear of the house that was threatening him with tears.

It was hard to remember what they'd done at school today, and when he tried to imagine his father walking into the house and switching on the light it was difficult to make out his face very clearly. He hated him for that, and hoped one day to kill him with an axe. Even his mother's face wasn't easy to bring back, but he didn't want

to kill her. He felt his kneecaps burning, being too close to the gas bars, so he stood away to let them go cool.

When he was busy rolling up the carpet in front of the fire, and being away from the mirror, his parents suddenly appeared to him properly, their faces side by side with absolute clarity, and he wished they'd come back. If they did, and asked what the bloody hell he thought he was doing rolling up the carpet, he'd say well what else do you expect me to do? I've got to use something for a blanket when I go to sleep on the settee, haven't I?

If there was one skill he was glad of, it was that he could tell the time. He'd only learned it properly six months ago, so it had come just right. You didn't have to put a shilling in the clock, so that was still ticking at least, except that it made him feel tired.

He heaved at the settee, to swivel it round in front of the fire, a feat which convinced him that one day he'd be as strong as his father - wherever he was. There was certainly no hope of the gas keeping on till the morning, so he turned it down to number two. Then he lay on the settee and pulled the carpet over him. It smelled of stone and pumice, and of soap that had gone bad. He sniffed the cold air, and sensed there was daylight in it, though he couldn't open his eyes. Weaving his hand as far as it would go, he felt that the gas fire had gone out, meaning that the cooking stove wouldn't work.

When his eyes mysteriously opened, old Tinface the clock said it was half past seven. In any case there were no matches left to light anything. He went into the scullery to wash his face.

He had to be content with a cup of milk, and a spoon of sugar in it, with more bread and cheese. People were walking along the backyards on their way to work. If they've gone for good, he thought, I shall go to my grandma's, and I'll have to change schools because she lives at Netherfield, miles away.

His mother had given him sixpence for sweets the morning before, and he already had twopence, so he knew that this was enough to get him half fare to Netherfield.

That's all I can do, he thought, turning the clock to the wall, and wondering whether he ought to put the furniture right in case his parents came in and got mad that it was all over the place, though he hoped they wouldn't care, since they'd left him all night on his own.

Apart from not wanting to spend the sixpence his mother had given him till she came back, he was sorry at having to go to his grandma's because now he wouldn't be able to go to school and tell his mates that he'd been all night in a house on his own. He pushed a way to the upper-deck of the bus, from which height he could look down on the roofs of cars, and see level into the top seats of other buses passing them through the town. You never know, he thought, I might see 'em - going home to put a shilling each in the light and gas for me. He gave his money to the conductor.

It took a long time to get clear of traffic at Canning Circus, and he wished he'd packed up some bread and cheese before leaving the house. Men were smoking foul fags all around, and a gang of boys going to Peoples' College made a big noise until the conductor told them to stop it or he'd put them off.

He knew the name of his grandmother's street, but not how to get there from the bus stop. A postman pointed the direction for him. Netherfield was on the edge of Nottingham, and huge black cauliflower clouds with the sun locked inside came over on the wind from Colwick Woods.

When his grandmother opened the back door he was turning the handle of the old mangle outside. She told him to stop it, and then asked in a tone of surprise what had brought him there at that time of the morning. "Dad and Mam have gone," he said. "Gone?" she cried, pulling him into the scullery. "What do you mean?" He saw the-big coal fire, and smelled the remains of bacon that she must have done for Tom's breakfast - the last of her sons living there. His face was distorted with pain.

"No," she said, "nay, you mustn't cry. Whatever's the matter for you to cry like that?"

The tea she poured was hot, strong, sweet, and he was sorry at having cried in front of her. "All right, now?" she said, drawing back to watch him and see if it was. He nodded.

“I slept on the couch.”

“The whole night! And where can they be?” He saw she was worried. “They had an accident,” he told her, pouring his tea into the saucer to cool it. She fried him an egg, and gave him some bread and butter.

“Our Jack’s never had an accident,” she said grimly.

“If they’re dead, grandma, can I live with you?”

“Aye, you can. But they’re not, so you needn’t worry your little eyes.”

“They must be,” he told her, feeling certain about it. “We’ll see,” she said. “When I’ve cleaned up a bit, we’ll go and find out what got into ‘em.” He watched her sweeping the room, then stood in the doorway as she knelt down to scrub the scullery floor, a smell of cold water and pumice when she reached the doorstep. “I’ve got to keep the place spotless,” she said with a laugh, standing up, “or your Uncle Tom would leave home. He’s bound to get married one day though, and that’s a fact. His three brothers did, one of ‘em being your daft father.” She held his hand back to the bus stop. If Uncle Tom does clear off it looks like she’ll have me to look after. It seemed years already since he’d last seen his mother and father, and he was growing to like the adventure of it, provided they didn’t stay away too long. It was rare going twice across town in one day.

It started to rain, so they stood in a shop doorway to wait for the bus. There weren’t so many people on it this time, and they sat on the bottom deck because his grandma didn’t feel like climbing all them steps. “Did you lock the door behind you?”

“I forgot.”

“Let’s hope nobody goes in.”

“There was no light left,” he said. “Nor any gas, I was cold when I woke up.”

“I’m sure you were,” she said. “But you’re a big lad now. You should have gone to a neighbour’s house. They’d have given you some tea. Mrs Upton would, I’m sure. Or Mrs Mackley.”

“I kept thinking they’d be back any minute.”

“You always have to go to the neighbours,” she told him, when they got off the bus and walked across Ilkeston Road. Her hand had warmed up now from the pumice and cold water. “Don’t kick your feet like that.”

If it happened again, he would take her advice. He hoped it wouldn’t, though next time he’d sleep in his bed and not be frightened.

They walked down the yard, and in by the back door. Nothing was missing, he could have told anybody that, though he didn’t speak. The empty house seemed dead, and he didn’t like that. He couldn’t stay on his own, so he followed his grandmother upstairs and into every room, half expecting her to find them in some secret place he’d never known of.

The beds were made, and wardrobe doors closed. One of the windows was open a few inches, so she slammed it shut and locked it. “Come on down. There’s nowt up here.”

She put a shilling in the gas meter, and set a kettle on the stove. “Might as well have a cup of tea while I think this one out. A bloody big one it is, as well.” It was the first time he’d heard her swear, but then, he’d never seen her worried, either. It made him feel better. She thought about the front room, and he followed her.

“They kept the house clean, any road up,” she said, touching the curtains and chair covers.

At this moment he saw two letters lying on the mat just inside the front door. He watched her broad back as she bent to pick them up, thinking now that they were both dead for sure.

STUDENT'S HOME READING GUIDE

MAN PROPOSES

by A.Maley

1. Speak about the author of the story.

2. **Transcribe and practise reading the given words, learn their Russian equivalents.**

appreciatively, to chase, to comb, feather, gear, mortgage, personnel, saliva, vehicle

3. **Find in the story the English for:**

1) служебный туалет 2) «... что бы с ними произошло, если бы...?» 3) причесаться 4) гонять голубей 5) она отогнала от себя эти тревожные мысли 6) к тому времени она уже привыкла к этому 7) светофор 8) час «пик» 9) по секрету 10) наверстать потерянное время 11) пешеходный переход 12) вздох облегчения 13) отдел кадров 14) он снял трубку/ответил на звонок 15) он положил трубку (телефона)

Translate the sentences using these lexical items:

1. В парке было шумно – мальчишки гоняли голубей, смеялись и что-то кричали друг другу. 2. Террористы заложили (to plant) бомбу в служебном туалете. 3. «Что с нами станет, если мы уедем отсюда?» Она отогнала от себя эти тревожные мысли – в конце концов, они были не единственные, кто собирался уехать из этих мест. 4. Мы заметили их у пешеходного перехода. 5. Он не хотел брать трубку, когда зазвонил телефон. 6. В час пик на этой улице всегда много народа. 7. Трейси причесалась, еще раз посмотрела на себя в зеркало и направилась (to make for) в отдел кадров. 8. Я знаю более короткий путь – так мы сможем наверстать упущенное время. 9. Он сказал: «Они здесь» и услышал вздох облегчения в ответ.

4. **VOCABULARY**

1) to keep sb company (Cf: to keep company with sb)

2) to remind sb of sth (Cf: to remind sb that..., to remind sb about sth)

- 3) to soften the blow (also: to cushion the blow)
- 4) to keep an eye on sb/sth
- 5) to be used to sth (also: to get/become/grow used to sth/doing sth)
- 6) to pick sb up
- 7) in confidence
- 8) to be in luck

5. Say it in English:

to disappear → исчезновение → исчезающий → появиться → появление

to suspect → подозрение → подозрительный → подозрительно → подозреваемый

urgently → срочный, неотложный → насущная необходимость, императив → побуждать/ призывать к действию, настаивать (на выполнении действия)

6. Say who/what is meant by:

- a) Arabica blend, Claridges Hotel, Alfa Romeo, Hyde Park,
- b) malt whisky, mortgage, a twit, rush-hour, consultancy, the seating plan, in lieu of notice, elder statesman

Find reference to these words and word-combinations in the story.

7. FOR FURTHER WORK

“Now there would only be the details to sort out...”

Study the meanings of the phrasal verb ‘to sort out’. In which meaning was it used in the story?

- a) to separate from a mass or group
- b) (BrE) to deal with; to make clear
- c) to make sb less confused or unsettled
- d) (BrE, *infml*) to attack and punish

Translate the sentences into English using the verb *to sort out*:

1. Прими это лекарство – оно **поможет** тебе. 2. Ты уже **выяснил**, как добраться до этой глухой деревушки? 3. Продюсер **отобрал** самых талантливых детей из всех конкурсантов. 4. Это была глупая ссора, которая уже **улажена**. 5. Она была подавлена, когда мы пришли, но нам удалось **развеять** ее. 6. **Отсортируй** письма, чтобы я сделал работу быстрее. 7. Если на тебя еще кто-нибудь пожалуется, я тебе **задам!** 8. Давай **проясним** наши отношения как можно скорее. 9. Ты думаешь, мы сможем все **уладить** так скоро?

8. Supply the missing words. In each case, the first letter of the missing word is given. All these expressions are taken from the text.

1. This tea is very hot; you'd better s___ it carefully. 2. How do you like my new car? It's a Rolls-Royce. Only the b___ is g___ e___ you know. 3. I'll be late home tonight. I've got a lot of work to do so I'm s___ o___ until I finish it. 4. I can't let you into the factory without a pass. It's m___ than my j___ is w___ . 5. I've lost my job, my house, my family ... everything. W___ w___ b___ of me? 6. Mrs Wilkins has popped out to the shops. I'm k___ an e___ on her kids till she gets back. 7. After my accident people started to look at me strangely. At first I was upset, but I'm u___ t___ i___ by now. 8. The dog suddenly jumped over the fence and r___ a___ the field. 9. I don't like the new secretary so I'm going to g___ r___ of her. 10. When Daren told me he'd broken up with Sadie I heaved a s___ of r___ .

9. Translate the sentences from the story:

1. It was spring and the lawns were splashed with clumps of bright yellow daffodils. 2. He eased the Alfa Romeo into second gear and wove his way round a taxi, only to find himself behind a big delivery lorry. 3. He changed into top gear and accelerated. 4. They stood waiting for the traffic lights to change; there, green. It was safe to cross. 5. The expression of relaxed satisfaction faded from his face.

10. Match up the words from the story (column A) with their synonyms (column B):

| A | B |
|--------------|---------------------|
| haggard | secure |
| disturbing | difficulty |
| safe | contentment |
| nasty | interrupting |
| urgently | rich |
| bravely | discomfort |
| unease | courage |
| satisfaction | exhausted |
| wealthy | courageously |
| | horrible |
| | troubling |
| | as soon as possible |

11. ARE YOU A CAREFUL READER?

1. What was the name of Bruce Nesbitt's secretary?
2. Complete the sentences:
 - a) £50,000 was the sum of money which...
 - b) £ 100,000 ...
3. ? was chasing pigeons in Hyde Park.
4. What make was Alistair's car?

12. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. Write down a list of adjectives which best describe each of the four main characters – Bruce Nesbitt, Alistair Nesbitt, Bill Jenkins, Margaret Jenkins.
2. Imagine you have to interview each of the characters after this tragedy, in order to write a newspaper article. Which questions would you ask them?

3. Who do you think is the most guilty person in the story? If you were a judge, what punishment would you give?
4. Comment on the proverb '*Man proposes, God disposes*'. Do you agree with it? Have you ever found yourself in a situation when all your plans crumbled? How did you react to it?
5. Formulate the message of the story.
6. Bruce Nesbitt "replaced the receiver. His face was grey as he left the office." What happened to the main characters afterwards, do you think?
7. How big a role does chance play in our lives, in your opinion?

13. Prepare a passage of your choice to be read aloud in class. Read the passage carefully and with great feeling.

14. **Give a brief summary of the story.**

APPOINTMENT WITH LOVE

by S.I.Kishor

1. Speak about the author of the story.
2. **Transcribe and practise reading the given words, learn their Russian equivalents.**

to besiege, doubt, figure, crimson, exact, to haunt, honest, lapel, leather, lieutenant, to oblige, photograph, plea, precious, psalm, to recite, soldier, thread, throughout, toward

3. **Find in the story the English for:**

- 1) загорелое лицо
- 2) испытывать чувство страха
- 3) душистый горошек
- 4) Его мысли вернулись к той книге...
- 5) по всей книге/через всю книгу
- 6) (ч-л, написанное) женским почерком
- 7) аккуратно отвечать на письма (не

задерживая с ответом) 8) непроизвольно, не контролируя себя 9) шагнуть навстречу к-л 10) (к-л) далеко за 40 11) туфли на низком каблуке 12) лацкан (пальто, и т.п.) 13) расправить (свои широкие) плечи

Translate the sentences using these lexical items:

1. Ее мысли вернулись к тому незнакомцу (a stranger) с загорелым лицом.
2. Бландфорд расправил свои широкие плечи и сделал шаг навстречу Холлис.
3. Дэниел аккуратно отвечал на письма, хотя это занятие ему не очень нравилось.
4. Она никогда не носит туфли на низком каблуке.
5. Ему было далеко за пятьдесят, и каждый раз, когда он думал об этом, он испытывал чувство страха.
6. Записка была написана женским почерком.
7. Миссис Дагерти обожала душистый горошек.
8. Я непроизвольно сделал шаг назад (to step back).

4. VOCABULARY

- 1) to confess (Cf: to admit)
- 2) to doubt oneself (Cf: to doubt sth, to doubt that/if/whether...)
- 3) to agree (up)on sth (Cf: to agree with/to)
- 4) anyway
- 5) to take a chance on sth
- 6) to be haunted by sth (a fear, memories, images, etc.)
- 7) to disgust (disgusting, to be disgusted with sth, disgust (n))
- 8) to murmur
- 9) precious

5. Say it in English:

to hesitate → колебание, нерешительность → колеблющийся, нерешительный (2 варианта) → нерешительно, колеблясь

tenderly → нежный → нежность

delicate → изящность, тонкость → нежно, тонко → восхитительный; вкусный → деликатес

fear → бояться → испуганный, опасующийся, боязливый → бесстрашный →
 бесстрашие → пугающий
rare → редко → редкость

6. Say who/what is meant by:

- a) King David; the Lord; Uncle Sam;
- b) *the Book of Psalms; Of Human Bondage;*
- c) Grand Central Station/Terminal; New York (City);
- d) bookplate.

7. FOR FURTHER WORK

a) “*Next time you doubt yourself, I want you to hear my voice reciting to you...*”

Look up the following phrases with the word “doubt” in the dictionary and use them in your own examples.

to cast doubt on sth, to raise doubts, (to have) grave/serious doubts (as to/whether/if), to be in doubt, beyond any doubt, if/when in doubt, no doubt (about it), open to doubt, without (a) doubt

b) “*His face grew sharp.*” p. 45

In this sentence ‘to grow’ is used as a link-verb. Study the table to learn the meanings rendered by the most widely used link-verbs:

| Link-Verbs of being and Seeming | | | Link-Verbs of Becoming | | | Link-Verbs of Remaining | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---------------------|
| be | + | young/a teacher /a man, etc. | become | + | old/beautiful/a student, etc. | remain | + | silent/ calm |
| seem | + | tired/difficult/ bored, etc. | get | + | dark/pale/worried, etc. | keep | + | fine/ warm |
| look | + | nice/funny/like a doctor | turn | + | pale/red/yellow, etc. | stay | + | cold/ motionless |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------|---|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| feel | + | well/hurt/uneasy, etc. | go | + | mad/bad, etc. | | | |
| so- und | + | strange/pleasant/ good, etc. | run | + | dry/cold, etc. | | | |
| | | | fall | + | ill/silent/asleep, etc. | | | |
| | | | grow | + | old/tall/silent, etc. | | | |

Translate the sentences using link-verbs:

1. Вдруг он почувствовал, что краснеет. 2. Он стал очень знаменит. 3. Она рано поседела и выглядит старше своих лет. 4. Стемнело, и мы включили свет. 5. Он внезапно заболел, и его отвезли в больницу. 6. Она очень разозлится, если ты скажешь ей об этом. 7. Он очень побледнел, когда услышал это известие. 8. Дни стояли солнечные и теплые. 9. Мы остались друзьями, хотя встречались очень редко. 10. Становилось поздно.

8. Translate the sentences from the story:

1. A girl passed close to him and Lieutenant Blandford started. 2. He had always hated that writing-in habit, but these remarks were different. 3. Next day he had been shipped out but they had gone on writing. 4. Then Lieutenant Blandford's heart leaped higher than his plane had ever done. 5. He started toward her, entirely forgetting that she was wearing no rose, and as he moved, a small, provocative smile curved her lips. 6. She was more than plump; her thick-ankled feet were thrust into low-heeled shoes.

9. Match up the words from the story (column A) with their synonyms (column B):

A

to sustain

to start

B

patient

to jump with fright

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| to reply | request |
| plea | tender |
| immense | entire |
| plain | to support |
| to go on doing sth | to finish |
| gentle | to answer |
| tolerant | ordinary-looking |
| | to maintain |
| | enormous |
| | to continue |

10. ARE YOU A CAREFUL READER?

1. Lieutenant Blandford was a) a foot soldier b) a trooper c) a pilot.
2. The book that helped Blandford to strike up a friendship with Hollis was a paperback. (True or false?)
3. Lieutenant Blandford was a British soldier. (True or false?)
4. What was Lieutenant Blandford's name?

11. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. How did Lieutenant Blandford get acquainted with Hollis Meynell?
2. Describe Hollis Meynell. Keep the original wording of the story. Was the girl beautiful, in your opinion?
3. Why was J.Blandford so interested to see the girl? Prove that he felt very excited waiting for Hollis.
4. Why did Hollis refuse to send Blandford her picture? Do you agree with her line of reasoning?
5. How did Hollis test Blandford's feelings? Do you approve of this step?
6. *"This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even rarer than love – a friendship which he had been, and must ever be grateful..."*

Do you agree that friendship can be more precious than love, or is it a kind of exaggeration?

7. Would Lieutenant Blandford have fallen in love with Hollis Maynell, had she turned out to be just plain, and sent him her photograph?

8. Do you think there is any future for Hollis and Lieutenant Blandford's relationship?

9. What can you say about a) Hollis' b) Lieutenant Blandford's personal qualities? Do these characters appeal to you? Why (not)?

10. Do you believe that it's possible to find one's true love through correspondence?

11. "*He had always hated that writing-in habit...*" Do you share the main character's attitude towards writing marginal notes in books?

12. Prepare a passage of your choice to be read aloud in class. Read the passage carefully and with great feeling.

13. **Give a brief summary of the story.**

DOG STAR

by A. Clarke

1. Speak about the author of the story.

2. **Transcribe and practise reading the given words, learn their Russian equivalents.**

to accompany, Alsatian, annoyance, astronomer, automatically, burglar, consciousness, comfort, creature, earthquake, enthusiasm, helicopter, hysterical, inquiry, to obey, paw, physicist, to quiver, staff, transcendental

3. Find in the story the English for:

1) страх одиночества/сумасшествия 2) наедине с воспоминаниями 3) чувство утраты 4) подавленный неясной тоской 5) серая реальность 6) «пушистый шарик/комочек» 7) оставить ч-л/к-л на милость ч-л/к-л 8) находка 9) привязаться к к-л (полюбить к-л) 10) брать к-л с собой в зарубежные поездки 11) сопровождать к-л 12) тот злополучный семинар 13) посреди ночи 14) утихомирить, заставить к-л замолчать 15) быть обязанным к-л своей жизнью 16) бросить карьеру 17) в этом нет ничего сверхъестественного 18) дать объявление в газету 19) достигнуть пика карьеры 20) отделаться от чувства вины

Translate the sentences using these lexical items:

1. Хозяин (a master) Лайки, конечно же, не мог бросить карьеру ради собаки. 2. Как правило, супруги президентов сопровождают своих мужей в зарубежных поездках. 3. В мире есть немало людей, которые обязаны своей жизнью своим питомцам – кошкам, собакам и даже птицам. 4. Прошли годы, но я так и не смог отделаться от чувства вины. 5. Энди всего 27, но он уже достиг пика карьеры. – В этом нет ничего сверхъестественного: он очень настойчив и трудолюбив. 6. Вскоре дети привязались к своей мачехе (a step-mother), что очень обрадовало их отца. 7. Он боялся оставаться один, потому что тогда он оказывался (to find oneself) наедине со своими грустными воспоминаниями о жене и сыне. 8. Посреди ночи зазвонил телефон.

4. VOCABULARY

- 1) to set foot (up)on (Cf: to set foot in)
- 2) to be overwhelmed by sth
- 3) to obey sb/sth
- 4) to be/become attached to sb
- 5) to stay with sb (Cf: to stay at)
- 6) reluctantly, reluctant

7) to owe sth to sb / to owe sb sth

8) to abandon sb/sth

9) remedy (for)

5. Say it in English:

annoyance → раздражать к-л → раздражающий → раздраженный

advertisement → рекламировать → рекламодатель → рекламная компания/кампания

experimental → эксперимент → экспериментировать → экспериментально

to obey → послушаться к-л; послушный; непослушный; послушание; непослушание

creature → творить → творчество → творец → творческий

destroyed → разрушать → разрушительный → разрушение

6. Say what is meant by:

a) Palomar; the Red Cross; the Moon;

b) observatory; earthquake

7. FOR FURTHER WORK

“...and my programme was just getting under way.”

Look up the following phrases with the word “way ” in the dictionary and use them in your own examples.

to be on the/its way, to get in the/sb’s way, to get sth out of the way, to go out of one’s way to do sth, to have a long way to go, to have a way with sb/sth, in no way, that’s always the way

8. Translate the sentences from the story:

1. That lasted only a fraction of a second; then consciousness returned – and with it, fear. 2. My cleaning and repair bills soared; I could never be sure of finding an

undamaged pair of shoes and an unchewed copy of the astrophysical journal. 3. Except for two dark patches over her eyes, she was a smoky grey, and her coat was soft and silky. 4. Yet when I returned to the Observatory after an absence, she would go almost frantic with delight, jumping and putting her paws on my shoulders – which she could reach quite easily – all the time uttering small squeaks of joy which seemed strange for so large a dog.

9. Match up the words from the story (column A) with their synonyms (column B):

| A | B |
|--------------|--------------|
| immediately | confidence |
| heartless | to pronounce |
| recollection | dull |
| drab | near |
| sadness | bright |
| trust | memory |
| to utter | callous |
| luminous | to refer |
| beside | wistfulness |
| | at once |
| | weak |

10. What's the difference between:

a) journal – magazine, b) burglar – robber, c) intelligent – clever, d) sensible – sensitive?

11. ARE YOU A CAREFUL READER?

1. What was the weather like on the morning of the San Francisco earthquake?
2. Laika died from maltreatment. (True or false?)

12. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. "*Laika was 95% Alsatian*". What other dog varieties do you know? Here are some of them. Learn their pronunciation and Russian equivalents.

German shepherd, poodle, Pekinese, dachshund, collie, Afghan, rottweiler, pit bull terrier, Dalmatian, Dobermann pinscher, Old English sheepdog.

2. Do you think the narrator's words about Laika's intelligence to be an exaggeration? Why (not)?

3. Do you find anything supernatural in the narrator's miraculous salvation during the quake on the Moon?

4. Do you disapprove of the narrator abandoning the dog? What would you do in his place?

5. What role can a pet play in one's life?

6. "*I had no idea how much trouble a growing dog could cause.*" People often complain of the damage caused by pets to their clothes, furniture, etc. Yet, this doesn't stop pet owners keeping and even indulging their pets. What's the reason behind this?

7. "*... but work is a wonderful remedy*". Do you agree with the narrator?

8. What are your impressions of the story? Do you like science fiction? Why (not)?

13. Prepare a passage of your choice to be read aloud in class. Read the passage carefully and with great feeling.

14. **Give a brief summary of the story.**

SALVATORE

by W.S.Maugham

1. Speak about the author of the story.

2. **Transcribe and practise reading the given words, learn their Russian equivalents.**

to bathe, bosom, candid, courage, ingenuous, island, masculine, portrait, precious, pretty, rheumatism, southern, vineyard

3. Find in the story the English for:

1) с восторженным криком 2) усеянный виноградниками холм 3) «... ему никогда в голову не приходило ...» 4) писать к-л детским почерком 5) стоять на пристани/пирсе 6) «...у них не хватало мужества сказать ему об этом самим...» 7) она [жизнь рыбака] требует силы и выносливости

Translate the sentences using these lexical items:

1. Эта работа требует большой силы и выносливости. Вы уверены, что справитесь? 2. На пирсе стояли какие-то люди. Они встречали пароход восторженными криками. 3. Письмо было написано детским почерком – кто бы это мог быть? 4. Мне в голову не приходило, что они родственники. 5. Лигурия (Liguria) – живописная область (region) в Италии с многочисленными холмами, усеянными виноградниками. 6. Лиз хотела развестись (to divorce), но у нее не хватало мужества сказать об этом Патрику.

4. VOCABULARY

- 1) to be at sb's beck and call
- 2) homesick
- 3) to long (for sb) to do sth
- 4) to wave to sb
- 5) to recover
- 6) to soften the blow (Cf: to cushion the blow)
- 7) to tell/ask straight out
- 8) to make up one's mind (to do sth)
- 9) to lack sth
- 10) to afford to do sth
- 11) husky

12) to prevent sb from doing sth

13) to hold sb's attention

5. Say it in English:

delight → восхижительный → восхищать к-л → восхищаться ч-л/к-л

southern → юг → южанин

clumsy → неуклюже → неуклюжесть

devotion → посвящать ч-л/к-л → посвященный (ч-л/к-л) → последователь, приверженец, энтузиаст

6. Say who/what is meant by:

- a) the Caesars, King Victor Emmanuel,
- b) Ischia, Vesuvius, La Spezia, Venice, Bari, China, Naples
- c) High Mass
- d) (a) humble (person)

7. FOR FURTHER WORK

"I used to be amused by the little smile of devotion that she gave her husband..."

Used to is used for saying what was true or what happened regularly in the past, especially when you want to emphasize that this is not true or does not happen now:

e.g. *Russia used to be an empire, but now it is a federation.*

Translate the sentences using the structure "(sb/sth) used to do (sth)":

1. Когда-то мы были друзьями. 2. Раньше мы жили в Воронеже. 3. Когда-то здесь был кинотеатр 4. Раньше мороженое стоило 10 копеек. 5. Давным-давно мы вместе ходили в школу. 6. Он, бывало, заходил к нам (to come to see sb), когда приезжал в сюда по делам (on business).

8. Translate the sentences from the story:

1. Then, a few months later, when he had settled down to the common round, working in his father's vineyard and fishing, his mother told him that there was a young woman in the village who was willing to marry him. 2. I used to be amused by the little smile of devotion that she gave her husband when he was being very masculine and masterful; she never ceased to be touched by his gentle sweetness. 3. They sprawled about at the water's edge stark naked and Salvatore standing on a rock would dip them in the water. 4. All I know is that it shone in him with a radiance that, if it had not been unconscious and so humble, would have been to the common run of men hardly bearable.

9. Match up the words from the story (column A) with their synonyms (column B):

| A | B |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| apace | to rejoice |
| friendless | self-conscious |
| ailment | labour |
| to cease | in spite of |
| to exult | soon |
| notwithstanding | to have |
| placid | at present |
| shy | very quickly |
| ugly | a bit, a little |
| to possess | hostile |
| presently | illness |
| a trifle | peaceful |
| toil | unsightly |
| | to stop |
| | to extol |

10. ARE YOU A CAREFUL READER?

1. When a boy, Salvatore was slender. (True or false?)
2. Salvatore was an only child in his family. (True or false?)
3. Salvatore returned from the army a) by bus b) by plane c) by boat d) in a rowing-boat. (Which is correct?)
4. Salvatore did his military service both in Europe and in Asia. (True or false?)
5. Salvatore's elder son was 3 years older than his brother. (True or false?)

11. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. Describe
 - a) Salvatore (before and after marriage)
 - b) Assunta.
2. Why didn't Salvatore marry the girl he loved? What can you say about his fiancée in this respect? Did the girl love Salvatore, do you think?
3. What do you think of Assunta and Salvatore's marriage? Wasn't it reckless of Salvatore to marry Assunta without loving her? Wasn't it immoral of Assunta to have actually imposed marriage on Salvatore?
4. The author admires the virtue of goodness. How does this virtue manifest itself in Salvatore's case? Do you agree that it is goodness? What is your idea of goodness? Would you like to possess this quality? Why (not)?
5. Everyone knows the famous lines from "Eugene Onegin": *"Привычка свыше нам дана, замена счастью она."* Do you agree? Do these words apply to Salvatore's situation?

12. Prepare a passage of your choice to be read aloud in class. Read the passage carefully and with great feeling.

13. Give a brief summary of the story.

THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES

by H.Wells

1. Speak about the author of the story.

2. Transcribe and practise reading the given words, learn their Russian equivalents.

to annihilate, to argue, beer, church, conjuring trick, constable, experiment, extraordinary, giddy, inconvenience, moustache, patience, Philharmonic, pigeon, to proceed, reservoir, rhetorical, sceptic, subsequent, superiority, vicar, violet, wart, wilderness, to wonder

3. Find in the story the English for:

1) врожденный дар 2) верить в чудеса 3) подкручивать усы 4) вести спор 5) вывести к-л из себя 6) лампа погасла 7) к счастью, ... 8) М-р Кокс заговорил первым... 9) после нескольких неудачных попыток 10) последующие размышления 11) переполнять к-л чувством гордости и превосходства 12) это не доставляло ему никаких неудобств 13) творить чудеса (2 варианта) 14) аромат роз 15) услышать звук приближающихся шагов 16) с внушительной скоростью 17) глупый фокус 18) сильно возражать, быть категорически против ч-л 19) осушить болота 20) бородавка 21) «...часы ... пробили три» 22) вращение Земли

Translate the sentences using these lexical items:

1. У него был врожденный дар убеждать (to convince) других. 2. Комната была наполнена благоуханием роз. 3. К счастью, после нескольких неудачных попыток нам удалось (to manage) завести (to start) машину. 4. Я был категорически против этого предложения. 5. Биггс знал, что его предки (ancestors) были английскими аристократами, и это переполняло его чувством гордости и превосходства. 6. Когда часы пробили пять, я услышал звук приближающихся шагов. 7. В этот момент мы увидели машину – она проехала мимо (past) нас с внушительной скоростью. 8. Знаете ли вы, что бородавки это

вирусная (viral) инфекция? 9. Вскоре свеча погасла, и стало совсем темно. 10. Чтобы творить чудеса, нужно в них верить. 11. Кажется, они вели спор о последнем футбольном матче. 12. Экологи рекомендовали осушить это болото. 13. Адвокат (a lawyer) заговорил первым: «Если слушание дела (trial) начнется позже, это не доставит нам никаких неудобств».

4. VOCABULARY

- 1) to mention sth/sb
- 2) to be aware of sth
- 3) (to be/to put/to set (sth)) on fire
- 4) what (why/how/where) on earth
- 5) to occur to sb
- 6) to sigh
- 7) to fumble for sth
- 8) to address sb
- 9) to give sb away
- 10) to take an interest in sth
- 11) to yield
- 12) to cure sb/sth (Cf: to cure sb of sth)

5. Say it in English:

sceptic → скептический → скептически → скептицизм

to argue → спор → аргумент → вздорный, любящий поспорить

miracle → чудесный → чудесно, чудесным образом → чудотворец

danger → опасный → подвергать опасности → находящийся в опасности

explanation → объяснять ч-л к-л → объяснимый → необъяснимый

6. Say who/what is meant by:

- a) Tannhäuser,
- b) a minister, occult matters, black art

7. FOR FURTHER WORK

“It’s a most extraordinary thing.”

“But it gives us – it opens – most wonderful possibilities.”

Pay attention to the use of articles with the nouns “thing” and “possibilities” in these sentences. The word ‘most’ here has the meaning of *very*, that’s why it is not stressed in speech and doesn’t require the use of the definite article as it normally would being part of the analytical form of the superlative. Adjectives with the grammatical suffix *-est* when used without the definite article render the same meaning.

Read and translate the sentences given below. Say what meaning the word ‘*most*’ has in each of them.

1. It’s a most interesting question, I don’t know how to answer it now. 2. It was the most interesting question of all the questions asked at the conference. 3. He went on speaking about greatest opportunities for career advancement. 4. This is a most vivid example of how important education is. 5. This was the biggest mistake I’d ever made.

8. Translate the sentences from the story:

1. He went home face flushed, eyes smarting and ears red. 2. In a minute or so he returned with a radiant face. 3. At the same moment he was flying head over heels through the air at the speed of dozens of miles a minute. 4. Mr. Fotheringay tried to get to his feet but in vain and remained on all fours holding on.

9. Match up the words from the story (column A) with their synonyms (column B):

| A | B |
|-------------|-------------|
| astonished | strangeness |
| ineffective | countless |
| annoyed | to precede |

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| for instance | unsuccessful |
| eccentricity | inaccurate |
| incredible | entirely |
| to proceed | surprised |
| hastily | seriously |
| gravely | for example |
| innumerable | to continue |
| totally | unbelievable |
| | irritated |
| | hurriedly |

10. ARE YOU A CAREFUL READER?

1. George Fotheringay was of medium height. (True or false?)
2. What was G. Fotheringay?
3. What was Mrs. Minchin?

11. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. How does the author describe and characterise George Fotheringay at the beginning of the story?
2. How did the customers of the *Long Dragon* react to the miracle performed by Mr Fotheringay? How can you account for the fact that Mr Cox, one of the customers, called him a fool?
3. In what meaning is the word 'hallo' used in the story?
4. How does George Fotheringay define a miracle a) at the beginning of the story? b) at the end of the story? Why is the first letter of the word 'will' made capital in the second definition, do you think?
5. How would you define a miracle? Have you ever witnessed miraculous things in your life?
6. Do you believe in extrasensory perception, telepathy, etc.?
7. Would you like to have a magic wand? Why (not)?

12. Prepare a passage of your choice to be read aloud in class. Read the passage carefully and with great feeling.

13. Give a brief summary of the story.

THE WAXWORK

by A. Berridge

1. Speak about the author of the story.

2. Transcribe and practise reading the given words, learn their Russian equivalents.

absurd, to alter, although, apathetically, barber, barrier, battle, breath, to breathe, ceiling, circumstances, command, cowardly, to earn, echo, exact, false, figure, to hypnotise, idiot, idler, ghost, mesmerism, murderer, panther, pedestal, precisely, razor, request, relic, sinister, stout, throat, waxwork

3. Find in the story the English for:

1) спорить, заключать пари 2) верить в привидения 3) постоянная (т.е. не временная) работа 4) заработать немного денег 5) ложная тревога 6) сделать шаг назад 7) оптическая иллюзия 8) подавить в себе желание обернуться и посмотреть 9) опилки 10) шагнуть/сойти с пьедестала 11) продолжить (говорить) на безупречном английском 12) смешаться с толпой 13) считать по-другому, думать противоположное

Translate the sentences using these lexical items:

1. Я не верю в привидения. Я считаю, что привидения существуют лишь в воображении людей, но вот мой собеседник (interlocutor) думает иначе. 2. Согласно легенде (The legend has it, that...), Орфей (Orpheus) не смог подавить в себе желание обернуться и посмотреть на Эвридику (Eurydice), поэтому Эвридика исчезла (to vanish). 3. Они не искали постоянную работу – они всего

лишь хотели заработать немного денег. 4. Как известно (As is known), опилки используются в садоводстве. 5. Этот фокус (trick) основан на эффекте оптической иллюзии. 6. Мы думали, что они вернулись. К счастью, оказалось (it turned out to be), что это ложная тревога. 7. Никто не удивился, когда она продолжила свою речь на безупречном немецком. 8. Джордж сделал шаг назад и сказал: «Я не собираюсь заключать пари, время покажет (to tell), кто был прав». 9. Через мгновение Даррен и Кейт смешались с толпой пассажиров, и мы больше их не видели.

4. VOCABULARY

- 1) to refuse sb sth
- 2) publicity (to give sb/sth publicity, to attract publicity)
- 3) superstitious, superstition
- 4) to show sb round
- 5) sb wouldn't hurt/harm a fly
- 6) in connection with sth/sb
- 7) to take one's eyes off sb/sth
- 8) to take advantage of sth/sb
- 9) to hold on to sth
- 10) to overhear sth
- 11) biased
- 12) to indulge sb/sth
- 13) to be capable of sth

5. Say it in English:

hypnotic → гипноз → гипнотизировать → гипнотизер

curiously → любопытный → любопытство

inspiration → вдохновлять → вдохновитель(-ница) → вдохновенный → вдохновлённый → вдохновляющий

imagination →представлять себе, воображать →творческий, с фантазией →
воображаемый, вымышленный

6. Say what is meant by:

sixth sense, mesmerism

7. FOR FURTHER WORK

Here was a chance to earn some money...

“I am obliged to chance which brought us together,” he continued...

Look up the following phrases with the word “chance” in the dictionary and use them in your own examples.

by any chance, the chance of a lifetime, a chance in a million, to do sth on the off chance, to blow one’s chance, sb’s last chance, a fifty-fifty chance, by chance, to waste a chance

8. Translate the sentences from the story:

1. His clothes, which had been good when new and which were still clean and carefully pressed, were beginning to show signs of their owner’s losing battle with the world. 2. I shall make it thrilling, of course, thrilling but with a touch of humour. 3. He stepped off his pedestal with the mincing care of a lady getting out of a bus and sat down on the edge facing Hewson. 4. “I am obliged to chance which brought us together,” he continued... 5. He rose up and approached Hewson with the furtive step of a hunting panther.

9. Match up the words from the story (column A) with their synonyms (column B):

| A | B |
|-----------|-------------|
| to permit | unimportant |
| to alter | exactly |
| by design | bravely |
| cruelty | to excuse |

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| insignificant | to confide |
| precisely | to mix |
| to torment | to allow |
| boldly | to torture |
| to trust | indifferently |
| dreadful | to spring |
| to pardon | to change |
| in the main | to alternate |
| to mingle | brutality |
| unemotionally | mostly |
| | awful |
| | deliberately |

10. ARE YOU A CAREFUL READER?

1. Which of the two men was taller – the manager of the museum or the journalist?
2. Dr Bourdette’s height was not much more than a) 170 cm b) 160 cm c) 150 cm. (Which is correct?)
3. Raymond Hewson was a bachelor. (True or false?)

11. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. Supply evidence from the story to prove that a) Dr Bourdette was “only a waxwork” and b) Dr Bourdette was real.
2. Who or what killed Raymond Hewson, do you think?
3. How important is imagination in our life? Is it always a good thing to have a vivid imagination?
4. How do you feel about waxwork museums?
5. Would you agree to spend a night in the Murderers’ Den if you were offered a good sum of money for it?

12. Prepare a passage of your choice to be read aloud in class. Read the passage carefully and with great feeling.

13. Give a brief summary of the story.

THE PEARLY BEACH

by Lord Dunsany

1. Speak about the author of the story.

2. **Transcribe and practise reading the given words, learn their Russian equivalents.**

to alter, an anchor, chloroform, a current, genuine, latitude, longitude, to multiply, oyster, pearl, sober, a tiepin, treasure, twopenny

3. **Find in the story the English for:**

1) заложить (ч-л в ломбарде) 2) ломбард 3) широта и долгота (*геогр.*) 4) манжета рубашки 5) остаться на борту (корабля) 6) сойти на берег 7) бросить якорь 8) выиграть в лотерею 9) возбудить/вызвать подозрения 10) игорный дом (нелегальный, подпольный) 11) высокие ставки 12) вполголоса, тихо 13) с шишкой на лбу 14) сказочное/баснословное богатство 15) найти ч-л на карте

Translate the sentences using these lexical items:

1. Густав пришел в ломбард, чтобы заложить свои золотые часы, но хозяин ломбарда (а pawnbroker) не поверил молодому человеку, что это были его часы.
2. Йоркенс не мог вернуться на Жемчужный Пляж, потому что он не помнил широту и долготу этого места и, естественно, не мог найти его на карте.
3. Рубашка была чистая, за исключением маленького пятнышка на манжете.
4. Чтобы не возбудить подозрения, часть экипажа (а crew) осталась на борту судна.
6. Мы решили бросить якорь и сойти на берег.
7. После драки у него была большая шишка на лбу.
8. Кто-то говорил, что Билби разбогател после того, как выиграл в лотерею. Кто-то утверждал, что своим баснословным

богатством он обязан (to owe sth to sth) игорным домам его покойного (late) отца. 9. «Ставки слишком высоки, нам нельзя проигрывать», сказал он вполголоса.

4. VOCABULARY

- 1) (to have a good) memory (for sth) (Cf: a photographic memory, to have a memory like a sieve, to have a bad memory for sth)
- 2) to lean against sth/sb
- 3) to think sth over
- 4) to blurt sth out
- 5) to feel for sb
- 6) to set about doing sth
- 7) (to say sth) at a guess
- 8) to come by sth
- 9) gambling, to gambler, gambler
- 10) to count on sth/sb's doing sth
- 11) to faint

5. Say it in English:

perfectly → (не)совершенный → (не)совершенство → совершенствовать → перфекционист

curious → любопытно → любопытство

silence → молчащий → молча → заставить замолчать

6. Say who/what is meant by:

- a) Aden, India, Port Said,
- b) stockbroker, pawnshop, fortnight.

7. FOR FURTHER WORK

“And mind you the Carrappas beaches, or whatever he called them, were there.”

“And it was a long, long time before we came to Carrappas beach, or whatever it was.”

Pay attention to the usage of the pronoun “whatever”. Translate the sentences below. Study the meanings of the underlined word-combinations and use them in your own examples.

1. Whatever happens, don't look back.
2. Whatever he says, don't lend him money.
3. Buy a swimsuit or whatever else you need for the camping trip.

8. Translate the sentences from the story:

1. That put the financial position on a sound basis again... . 2. ...a tiny bay with a white beach shining, shut off by rocks from the rest of the coast, and from the inner land by a cliff, a low cliff steep behind it. 3. Now, wasn't it a curious thing that Bill, who wouldn't trouble to put another two hundred thousand pounds in his pocket, was keen as mustard to make a hundred pounds or so in a Port Said gambling den? 4. So I just withdrew my charges, and gave the policeman *baksheesh*, and got back to the ship...

9. Match up the words from the story (column A) with their synonyms (column B):

| A | B |
|-------------|-------------|
| to alter | to ask |
| good-sized | fair |
| to ruin | to heighten |
| ruefully | to notice |
| to jot | small |
| to question | to reply |
| to observe | to believe |

tiny to change
to fancy to destroy
big
sadly
to write down

10. ARE YOU A CAREFUL READER?

1. In what country did the characters of the story lose all their pearls?
2. The man who told Jorkens about the Carrapaccas beaches was a) tall b) short c) medium height.

11. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. Why was Bill unwilling to fill his pockets with pearls? The narrator says: "...there was some sort of terror about that little whit beach of pearls that seemed to have got hold of him". What was Bill afraid of? Do you share his fears?
2. How can you account for the fact that Jorkens, who "wasn't keen on gambling", as he put it, soon found himself involved in the activity? Why do millions of people all over the world lose huge sums of money in casinos and gambling dens, and yet continue to gamble?
3. How important is it for people to have a good memory? Is a good memory more important than wisdom and foresight, in your opinion?
4. Jorkens put his unstable financial position down to his bad memory. But was what had happened to him about memory at all? What's the message of the story, as you see it? What does the Pearly Beach symbolise, do you think?

12. Prepare a passage of your choice to be read aloud in class. Read the passage carefully and with great feeling.

13. Give a brief summary of the story.

ENOCH'S TWO LETTERS

by A.Sillitoe

1. Speak about the author of the story.

2. **Transcribe and practise reading the given words, learn their Russian equivalents.**

axe, aye, clandestine, conscience, curtains, divorce, to emerge, foundry, nowt, pumice, recess, saucer, scullery, settee, sugar, to swivel, wardrobe

3. **Find in the story the English for:**

1) общественный туалет 2) завернутый в бумагу 3) сесть на поезд до Лондона
4) слабый/некрепкий чай 5) малиновое варенье 6) завести часы 7) тикать (о часах)
8) на краю Ноттингема 9) «Его лицо исказилось от боли...» 10) выйти из автобуса
11) последовать ч-л совету 12)

Translate the sentences using these lexical items:

4. **VOCABULARY**

- 1) unobtrusive
- 2) to fall for sb
- 3) to bring sb up
- 4) trustworthy
- 5) mutual
- 6) to get on sb's nerves
- 7) to accuse sb of sth/doing sth
- 8) (to leave (sb)) for good/for good and all
- 10) to gossip
- 11) to yawn
- 12) to threaten sb
- 13) to distort sth

5. **Say it in English:**

mysteriously → тайна/загадка → загадочный → мистифицировать

choice → выбирать → разборчивый, привередливый

employed → работодатель → работник, служащий → безработный → занятость
→ безработица → нанимать, предоставлять работу; использовать

conscience → добросовестный → добросовестность

6. Say who/what is meant by:

a) Frankenstein, Nottingham,

b) a comic

7. FOR FURTHER WORK

“When the same thing had happened to Tom Brunt it was because his mam had gone to fetch a baby...”

to fetch – to collect – to gather – to bring

8. Translate the sentences from the story:

1. And Jack’s dull toothache of a conscience had, in the six months since knowing her, cured itself at last. 2. There was ample time, and she went downstairs to more tea and a proper breakfast. 3. As a couple, they had given up tackling any differences between them by the human method of talking. 4. Just look after Enoch, because I’ve had my bellyful and I’m off.

9. Match up the words from the story (column A) with their synonyms (column B):

A

to emerge

sly

to sniff

daft

B

ungenerous

secret

clean

to leave (quickly)

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| to bring to mind | television |
| clandestine | to fall asleep |
| possessions | to smell |
| mean | cunning |
| scornfully | to remember |
| to drop off | crazy |
| to clear off | belongings |
| telly | reproachfully |
| spotless | to appear |
| | to memorise |

10. ARE YOU A CAREFUL READER?

1. How long had Enoch's father and Rene known each other before they left for London?
2. How long had Enoch's parents been married before they split up?
3. What were the names of Enoch's parents?
4. How many brothers did Enoch's father have?
5. Enoch's grandmother lived in a) England b) Scotland c) Wales d) the US.
(Which is correct?)

11. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. *"On first meeting, a dozen years ago, they had been unable to say much – which, in their mutual attraction, they had confused with love at first sight."* In other words, Enoch's parents had thought that their love was so strong that they were able to understand each other without any words. Some people say that true feelings need no words. Do you agree with this line of reasoning?
2. How would you rate Enoch's father and mother as parents?
3. *"They had lavished a lot of love on Enoch - she knew that - maybe too much, some of which they should have given to each other but had grown too mean and shy to."* Do people need to work on their relationship to prevent it from

becoming stale?

4. Why did Enoch's mother fall out of love with his father? What was wrong with the man, in her opinion?
5. How can you explain the fact that Enoch's father abandoned his family and moved to another town with his lover, while his wife was sure that the man "didn't even seem interested in other women"?
6. Point out the lines characterising Enoch's behaviour as typically childlike.
7. The story is somewhat unfinished. In your opinion, what will Enoch's fate be?
Write a suitable end to the story.

12. Prepare a passage of your choice to be read aloud in class. Read the passage carefully and with great feeling.

13. Give a brief summary of the story.

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