

М. С. Кулакович

**ЧИТАЕМ И ОБСУЖДАЕМ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ
РАССКАЗЫ О. ГЕНРИ**

Министерство просвещения Российской Федерации
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гуманитарно-педагогический университет»

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Практикум содержит адаптированные тексты рассказов О. Генри и задания к ним, охватывающие разные сферы читательского восприятия.

Издание может быть использовано при углубленном изучении английского языка по направлению подготовки бакалавриата – Педагогическое образование как в ходе аудиторных занятий, так и во внеаудиторной, самостоятельной работе.

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ВВЕДЕНИЕ

Целевая аудитория практикума – студенты, получающие высшее образование и углублённо изучающие английский язык по направлению подготовки – Педагогическое образование (профили: Начальное образование и английский язык, Дошкольное образование и иностранный язык, История и английский язык, Информатика и иностранный язык). В издание включены адаптированные для уровней Pre-Intermediate и Intermediate тексты рассказов американского писателя XIX века Уильяма Сидни Портера, более известного как О. Генри.

Тексты рассказов предваряются информацией о жизни и творчестве писателя и сопровождаются заданиями. Задания охватывают различные сферы читательского восприятия: осмысление, воображение и эмоции, что позволяет развивать мышление, навыки речевой деятельности, погрузиться в атмосферу культуры страны изучаемого языка. Кроме того, смешные моменты и неожиданная концовка каждого рассказа поддерживают мотивацию к чтению.

Лингводидактический потенциал практикума заключается в развитии у студентов таких компетенций, как речевая, лингвокультурологическая и когнитивная.

Пособие может быть использовано на групповых занятиях по дисциплинам «Чтение произведений английских писателей», «Чтение произведений писателей страны изучаемого языка», «Домашнее чтение», «Практический курс изучаемого иностранного языка», «Практический курс английского языка», «Практика устной и письменной речи» и курсах иностранных языков, а также во внеаудиторной и самостоятельной работе.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF O. HENRY (11.09.1862 – 05.06.1910)

O. Henry (born September 11, 1862, Greensboro, North Carolina, U.S. – died June 5, 1910, New York, New York) was an American short-story writer whose tales romanticized the commonplace – in particular the life of ordinary people in New York City. His stories expressed the effect of coincidence on character through humour, grim or ironic, and often had surprise endings, a device that became identified with his name and cost him critical favour when its vogue had passed. He was an American writer whose short stories are known for wit, wordplay and clever twist endings. He wrote nearly 600 stories about life in America.

Most of the stories are optimistic as he wrote about poor people and felt great pity for them. His stories are full of love and wonders. His characters struggle to be happy and they succeed. But his life was full of tragic events.

He was born William Sidney Porter in Greensboro, North Carolina. His father, Algernon Sidney Porter, was a medical doctor. When William was three, his mother died and he was raised by his grandmother and aunt. He received only formal education at the school of his Aunt Lina, where he developed a lifelong love of books. But at the age of fifteen he had to leave school and begin to work in a drugstore of his uncle. It was bad for his health to spend all day long being surrounded with different medicines, mixtures for cough and powders. His health began to worsen. That's why he went to Texas, where he worked on a ranch, in a general land office, and

later as teller in the First National Bank in Austin. He began writing sketches at about the time of his marriage to Athol Estes in 1887.

In February 1896 he was indicted for embezzlement of bank funds. He hid from the law to New Orleans and later went to Honduras. When he learned that his wife was dying, he returned to US and surrendered to police. When convicted, Porter received the lightest sentence possible, and in 1898 he entered the penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio; his sentence of five years was shortened to three years and three months for good behaviour. As night druggist in the prison hospital, he could write to earn money for support of his daughter Margaret when his wife died.

There are still some doubts if he was guilty or not. Indeed he badly needed money at that time for his ill wife and for publishing his magazine, but on the other hand the owners of the bank were sure to have unclean hands.

His first published story was 'Whistling Dick's Christmas Stocking' (1899). Before sending it to newspaper, he read the story to his cellmates. One of them remembered: 'From that minute when Porter began to read his story in his low soft a little stuttering voice a dead silence fell in the cell. We were afraid to move. At last Raindler sighed deeply and rubbed his eyes with his mutilated hand. Damn you, Porter. It is for the first time in my life. Before I have never known what a tear is.' He used a pseudonym, Olivier Henry, only once and changed his pen name to O. Henry, not wanting his readers to know he was in jail. His stories of adventure in the southwest U.S. and Central America were immediately popular with magazine readers, and when he emerged from prison he became O. Henry.

In 1902 O. Henry arrived in New York. From December 1903 to January 1906 he produced a story a week for the New York Sunday World magazine and also wrote for other magazines. His first book 'Cabbages and Kings' (1904) depicted fantastic characters against exotic Honduran backgrounds. Both 'The Four Million' (1906) and 'The Trimmed Lamp' (1907) explored the lives of the multitude of New York in their daily routines and searchings for romance and adventure. 'Heart of the West' (1907) presented accurate and fascinating tales of the Texas range.

In his lifetime O. Henry was able to see the silent film adaptations of his stories: 'The Sacrifice' (1909), 'Trying to Get Arrested' (1909) and 'His Duty' (1909). His success brought him pressure, and he suffered from alcohol addiction. His second marriage lasted for 2 years, and his wife left him in 1909. He died of cirrhosis of the liver in New York.

Interesting facts

1) He coined the phrase 'banana republic'.

A 'banana republic' is a country – especially a small state – whose economy is almost entirely dependent on one commodity. This commodity is usually fruit, and the term banana republic was originally applied to countries in Central America, where bananas are grown in vast numbers before being exported around the world.

In 'Cabbages and Kings' O. Henry coined the phrase banana republic to refer to Anchuria: a small state which is not exactly a big player on the economic world stage.

2) Nobody knows where he got his pen name from.

The origins of Porter's universally known pseudonym 'O. Henry' are a complete mystery. While he was still serving time in prison, he had 14 stories published under various pseudonyms, but it was the name 'O. Henry' that stuck.

According to one of the theories he used the letters from the prison to create his nickname: Ohio State Penitentiary.

Another theory says that the name "Henry" was from the newspaper and the author added the "O" because it was an easy letter.

3) He has a writing prize named in his honour.

The O. Henry Memorial Awards were set up in 1919, just nine years after his death. Over the century or so since the first prizes were given out, writers as distinguished as William Faulkner, Truman Capote, Joyce Carol Oates and Stephen King have won the O. Henry Awards.

THE COUNT AND THE WEDDING GUEST

Andy Donovan was a boarder at Mrs. Scott's boarding house.

One evening he came to dinner and Mrs. Scott introduced him to a new boarder, a young girl, Miss Conway.

Miss Conway was small and quite simple. She wore a plain brown dress. After the introduction she did not speak to Andy Donovan. She sat looking at her plate and he forgot Miss Conway almost at once.

Two weeks later Andy was sitting on the front steps of the boarding-house, smoking a cigar. Suddenly somebody came out. He turned his head ... and his head turned.

Miss Conway was coming out of the door. She wore a beautiful black dress and a beautiful black hat. Her shoes and her gloves were black too. Her rich golden hair, and her large grey eyes made her almost beautiful. She stood looking above the houses across the street up into the sky. Her eyes were sad. All in black, and that sad far-away look and the golden hair shining under the black veil...

Mr. Donovan threw away his unfinished cigar.

'It's a fine, clear evening, Miss Conway,' he said.

'Yes, it is,' answered Miss Conway, 'but not for me, Mr. Donovan.'

'I hope none of your family is ...' said Andy.

Miss Conway was silent. At last she said:

'Not my family. Death has taken from me somebody who was very, very dear to me... Now I am alone in the world. And I have no friends in this city.'

Andy Donovan did not ask any more questions and their conversation came to an end.

The more Andy thought of Miss Conway the more he was sorry for her. Once he said to her at table:

'It's hard to be alone in New York. You should go out sometimes to forget your trouble. Do you wish to take a walk in the park, Miss Conway? If you allow me...'

'Thank you, Mr. Donovan,' said Miss Conway. 'I shall be very glad to have your company. You are very kind.'

While walking in the park Miss Conway told Andy her sad story.

‘His name was Fernando Mazzini and he was an Italian Count. He had a lot of land and a villa in Italy. We were going to get married next spring. Fernando went to Italy to make his villa ready for us. After he left I came to New York to get a job. Three days ago I received a letter from Italy. It says that Fernando is dead. He was killed in a gondola accident.

‘That is why I am wearing black. That is why I am always sad. I cannot take an interest in anybody. If you wish to walk back to the house, Mr. Donovan, let’s go.’

Andy Donovan did not wish to walk back to the house.

‘I’m very sorry,’ he said softly. ‘No, we won’t go back to the house, not yet. And don’t say that you have no friends in this city, Miss Conway. I’m very, very sorry for you. And you must believe that I’m your friend.’

‘I have a small photograph of him with me,’ said Miss Conway. ‘I have never shown it to anybody. But I will show it to you, Mr. Donovan, because I believe that you are my friend.’

Mr. Donovan looked at the photograph with much interest and for a long time. The face of Count Mazzini was an interesting one. It was a clever face of a strong man.

‘I have a larger photo of him in my room,’ said Miss Conway. ‘When we get back to the house I’ll show it to you. I look at it many times a day. He will always be present in my heart.’

When they came into the hall of the boarding-house she ran up to her room and brought down a big photograph of the dead man.

'A fine-looking man,' said Donovan. 'I like his face very much. Miss Conway, may I ask you to come to the theatre with me next Sunday?'

A month later they told Mrs. Scott that they were going to get married. But in spite of this Miss Conway continued to wear black.

One evening Mr. Donovan and Miss Conway were sitting in the park. It was a fine clear night. The moon shone brightly on the green leaves. Everything around them was very beautiful. But Donovan was silent. He had been so silent all day that Miss Conway at last decided to ask him a question.

'What is the matter, Andy?'

'Nothing, Maggie.'

'But you never looked so unhappy before. What is it?'

'It's nothing much, Maggie.'

'I want to know, Andy. I am sure you are thinking about some other girl. Well, why don't you go to her if you love her? Take your arm away, please!'

'All right, I'll tell you,' said Andy. 'I have a friend. His name is Mike Sullivan. Do you know him?'

'No, I don't,' said Maggie. 'And I don't want to know him if you are so unhappy because of him.'

'He is a good friend, Maggie,' continued Andy. 'I saw him yesterday and I told him I was going to get married in two weeks. 'Andy,' says he, 'I want to be present at your wedding. Send me an invitation and I'll come.'"

'Well, why don't you invite him then if he wants so much to come?' said Maggie.

‘There is a reason why I can’t invite him,’ said Andy sadly. ‘There is a reason why he must not be present at our wedding. Don’t ask me any more questions now, because I can’t answer them.’

‘You must! You must tell me everything,’ said Maggie.

‘All right,’ answered Andy. ‘Maggie, do you love me as much as you loved your ... your Count Mazzini?’

He waited a long time, but Maggie did not answer. Suddenly she turned to him and began to cry.

‘There, there, there!’ repeated Andy. ‘What is the matter now?’

‘Andy,’ said Maggie at last, ‘I have lied to you, and you will never marry me. You will never love me anymore. But I feel that I must tell you everything. Andy, there was no count in my life. There was nobody who loved me in all my life. All the other girls always talked about love and marriage. But nobody loved me. Nobody wanted to marry me. So at last I thought of a plan. I went to a photographer and bought that big photo which I showed you. He also made a small one for me. Then I invented that story about the Count and about the gondola accident so that I could wear black. I look well in black, and you know it. But nobody can love a liar. And you will now leave me, Andy, and I shall die for shame. You are the only man I loved in my life. That’s all.’

But instead of leaving her, Andy put his arms about her and looked into her face. She looked up and saw how happy he was.

‘Can you ... can you forget it, Andy?’ she asked.

‘Of course, I can,’ said Andy. ‘I’m glad you have told me everything, Maggie.’

They were silent for some time. Then Maggie said:

'Andy, did you believe all that story about the Count?'

'Well, not all of it,' said Andy, 'because the photograph you have shown me is the photograph of my friend, Mike Sullivan.'

TASKS ON THE TEXT

The sphere of comprehension

1) Explain in English:

a boarder, a boarding house, an introduction, a count, a villa, an invitation, a reason.

2) Put the events of the story in the correct order.

a) Mr. Andy Donovan meets a new guest, a young lady, Miss Maggie Conway.

b) Two weeks later, Andy sees Maggie again wearing all black.

c) Maggie tells Andy the real story about the Count who was never real.

d) Maggie receives a letter from Italy saying that Fernando has been killed.

e) After Maggie's father finally agrees to the marriage, Fernando goes to Italy to prepare for the wedding.

f) Maggie plans to marry Count Fernando Mazzini, but her father is against it.

g) Maggie shows Andy the picture of Fernando, and Andy decides to take Fernando's place in Maggie's heart.

h) After a month, Andy and Maggie decide to get married.

i) Andy invites Maggie for a walk, and Maggie tells Andy her sad story.

j) A week later, Andy has a sad face all day because he cannot invite Big Mike

Sullivan to his wedding for a reason he won't tell.

k) After Maggie tells the truth, Andy is happy again and ready to get married.

3) Answer the questions on the text.

a) Why does Miss Conway wear black at the beginning of the story?

b) At the end of the story, why does Mr. Andy Donovan have a sad face?

c) Miss Conway says that the man in the picture is Count Fernando Mazzini.

But who is the actual man in the picture that Miss Conway has in her room and on a chain around her neck?

d) What did Miss Conway tell Andy Donovan that wasn't true?

4) Find the examples of irony in the text. Discuss how O. Henry uses the irony to explain the main idea of the story.

5) What ethical questions does the story raise about honesty and deception?

6) Identify symbols in the story. How do they deepen the reader's understanding of the characters?

7) Compare "The Count and the Wedding Guest" with other O. Henry's stories. What similarities and differences can you name?

8) Find some information about boarding houses in the XIX century.

The sphere of imagination

1) Retell the story as if you are Mr. Donovan or Miss Conway, or Mrs. Scott.

2) Why do you think Mr. Donovan didn't break up with Miss Conway although he knew the truth?

3) Can you explain from the psychological point of view why Miss Conway thought up this sad story?

4) Can you imagine Andy and Maggie's wedding? Describe it in detail.

5) Imagine a modern setting for the story, for example online context. Write a short text with the original themes but which reflects today's society.

The sphere of emotions

1) What would you advise to Miss Conway when she confessed that somebody very dear to her had died?

2) Mr. Donovan reassured Miss Conway that he was her friend. What does it mean to be a real friend?

3) Miss Conway lied to Mr. Donovan to get his love. Is it possible to lie for the sake of love?

4) Widows and widowers should be in mourning for at least a year. If it's not, the society strictly criticizes them. Do you agree with this stereotype in the society?

GIRL

On the glass door of the office were the words: 'Robbins & Hartley, Brokers'. It was past five, and the clerks had already gone. The two partners – Robbins and Hartley – were going to leave the office too. Robbins was fifty; Hartley – twenty-nine, serious, good-looking and nervous.

A man came in and went up to Hartley.

'I have found out where she lives,' he said in a half-whisper. Hartley made a sign of silence to him.

When Robbins had put on his coat and hat and left the office, the detective said:

'Here is the address,' and gave Hartley a piece of paper. There were only a few words on it.

Hartley took the paper and read: 'Vivienne Arlington, No.341, East Tenth Street.'

'She moved there a week ago,' said the detective. 'Now, if you want to know more about her, Mr. Hartley, I can try to find out. It will cost you only seven dollars a day. I can send you a report every day.'

'Thank you,' said the broker. 'It is not necessary. I only wanted the address. How much shall I pay you?'

'One day's work,' said the sleuth. 'Ten dollars will be enough.'

Hartley paid the man, sent him away and left the office. He went to find the address written on the paper the sleuth had given him. It took him about an hour to get to the place. It was a new building of cheap flats. Hartley began to climb the stairs. On the fourth floor he saw Vivienne standing in an open door. She invited

him inside with a bright smile. She put a chair for him near the window, and waited.

Hartley gave her a friendly look. He said to himself that she was a nice girl and dressed in good taste.

Vivienne was about twenty-one. She was of the Saxon type. Her hair was golden. Her eyes were sea-blue. She wore a white blouse and a dark skirt – a costume that looks well on any girl, rich or poor.

‘Vivienne’, said Hartley, ‘you didn’t answer my last letter. It took me over a week to find your new address. Why did you take no notice of my letter? You knew very well that I wanted very much to see you and talk to you!’

The girl looked out of the window, thoughtfully.

‘Mr. Hartley,’ she said at last, ‘I don’t know what to say to you. The more I think of your offer – the less I know what to answer you. I understand you are doing it for my happiness. Sometimes I feel that I should say yes. But at the same time I don’t want to make a mistake. I was born in the city and I am afraid I shall not be happy in the country.’

‘My dear girl,’ answered Hartley, ‘I have told you many times that my house is situated only a little way from the city. I have also promised to give you everything that you want. You will be able to come to the city, to go to the theatres and to visit your friends as often as you wish. Do you believe that?’

‘Yes, of course I believe you,’ she said, turning her beautiful eyes on him with a smile. ‘I know you are a very kind man. The girl that you will get – will be a lucky one. I found out all about you when I was at the Montgomerys.’

'Ah,' cried Hartley, 'I remember well the evening I first saw you at the Montgomerys'. Mrs.Montgomery told me so much about you that evening. And she made no mistake. I shall never forget that supper. Come with me, Vivienne! Promise me! I need you so much. You will never be sorry for coming to me. No one will give you a home as good as mine.'

The girl said nothing.

Suddenly an idea came into his head.

'Tell me, Vivienne,' he asked, looking at her, 'is there another – is there someone else?'

The girl blushed and answered very quickly:

'You shouldn't ask that, Mr. Hartley. But I will tell you. There is another – but he has no right – I have promised him nothing.'

'His name?' demanded Hartley.

'Townsend.'

'Rafford Townsend!' exclaimed Hartley angrily. 'Where did you meet that man? I have done so much for him! How could he!'

'His car has just stopped at the house,' said Vivienne, looking out of the window. 'He is coming for his answer. Oh, I don't know what to do!'

The bell rang. Vivienne hurried to open the door. 'Stay here,' said Hartley. 'I will open the door myself.'

Townsend was surprised to see Hartley.

'Go back,' said Hartley.

'Hullo!' said Townsend. 'What's up? What are you doing here, old man?'

'Go back,' repeated Hartley. 'The Law of the Jungle. She is mine.'

'I came here to see her on business,' said Townsend bravely.

'Don't tell me any lies,' said Hartley, 'go back!'

Townsend left very angry. Hartley returned to the girl.

'Vivienne,' he said, 'I need you very much. Stop playing with me!'

'When do you need me?' she asked.

'Now. As soon as you are ready to go.'

She stood quietly and thought for a short time.

'Do you think for one moment,' she said, 'that I shall enter your house while Helen is there?'

Hartley did not expect that. At first he did not know what to say.

Then he said bravely: 'She will have to go. She is making my life miserable. I have never had a peaceful day since she came to my house. But this is the end.'

You are right, Vivienne, Helen must be sent away before I can take you home. She must go. I have decided. I will turn her out.'

'When will you do this?' asked the girl.

'To-night,' said Hartley. 'I will send her away tonight.'

'Then,' said Vivienne, 'my answer is 'yes'. Come for me when you wish.'

She looked into his eyes and smiled. Hartley was happy, but he was afraid to believe her.

'Promise me,' he said, 'on your word of honor.'

'On my word of honor,' repeated Vivienne softly.

At the door he turned and looked at her happily.

'Tomorrow,' he said.

'Tomorrow,' she repeated with a smile.

It took Hartley an hour and forty minutes to get to his home in the country.

The door was opened by a young woman who kissed him as he came in.

'Mother is here,' she said. 'She came to dinner, but there is no dinner.'

'I've something to tell you,' said Hartley, 'some news.'

'What kind of news,' asked the woman, 'good or bad news?' He whispered something in her ear. Hartley's wife screamed. Her mother came running into the hall. His wife screamed again – it was a happy scream, very happy.

'Oh, Mother,' she cried, 'what do you think? Vivienne has agreed to come and cook for us! She is the cook that worked for the Montgomerys a whole year. I am so happy! And now, Bill, dear, you must go to the kitchen and send Helen away. She is drunk again.'

TASKS ON THE TEXT

The sphere of comprehension

1) Explain in English:

a broker, a sleuth, to be of the Saxon type, to demand.

2) Say if the statements are true or false according to the text.

Correct false statements.

a) Robbins and Hartley work as detectives in London.

b) Hartley left the office in the morning to look for a girl.

- c) It took him quite a long time to find the girl.
- d) Vivienne lived in a new house with expensive flats.
- e) Vivienne was glad to see Hartley and smiled.
- f) Vivienne was dressed like a model and looked very attractive.
- g) Hartley offered Vivienne to live in the country.
- h) Hartley promised Vivienne to send his wife Helen away.
- i) At home Hartley was met by his mother.
- j) His mother asked the guy to send Helen away because she was drunk.

3) Answer the questions on the text:

- a) How many people are mentioned in the story?
- b) Where did the events take place?
- c) Why didn't Vivienne want to live in the country?
- d) Why did Hartley send Helen away?
- e) Why did Hartley's wife scream?

4) Analyze the character of the girl in the story.

What do her actions and decisions reveal about her personality?

5) Study the social and cultural context of the story.

How does the setting influence the characters' behavior?

6) Find some information about The Law of the Jungle.

The sphere of imagination

1) Retell the story as if you are Mr. Hartley or Vivienne, or Helen.

2) Robbins and Hartley were partners, but they have a big difference in age. Is it possible for people of different generations work successfully together?

3) 'I was born in the city and I am afraid I shall not be happy in the country.' Do you agree that people from cities can't live in the country side or vice versa? Where would you like to live? Why?

4) Why do you think Vivienne didn't accept Hartley's offer at once?

5) Can you think up Helen's life in detail? Why do you think she is often drunk?

6) Rewrite the ending of "The Girl" from the perspective of the man or the girl. How would your version change the story's message?

7) O. Henry's stories often have unexpected endings. What ending did you expect while you were reading this story?

8) Act out the talk between Hartley and Vivienne (when she is in doubt).

The sphere of emotions

1) Do you think Vivienne will be happy at Hartley's house? Why?/Why not?

2) Explain the moral reasons of the girl's deception.

Is it possible to sympathize with her?

3) Remember the situation when you or someone you know was tempted to deceive others. What were the consequences of this?

WITCHES' LOAVES

Miss Martha Meacham had a small bakery. She was neither very rich nor very poor. She had two thousand dollars in the bank.

Miss Martha was forty years old. She had a kind heart, and only two of her teeth were false. Although she was still unmarried she hoped to get married some time.

Two or three times a week a customer came in to buy some bread. He was a middle-aged man with a beard and he wore glasses.

Soon Miss Martha began to take an interest in him. He spoke English with a strong German accent. His clothes were old but clean and he had good manners.

He always bought two loaves of stale bread. Fresh bread was five cents a loaf. Stale bread was two loaves for five cents. The customer never bought fresh bread.

Once Miss Martha saw red and brown stains on his hands. She was sure then that he was an artist and very poor. She was sure he lived in a cold room where he painted his pictures. He ate stale bread and thought of the good things that were sold in Miss Martha's bakery. When she sat down to dinner or had tea and jam, she used to think of the poor artist with good manners and feel sorry for him. She wanted to share all the good things she had with the well-mannered man. I have told you already that Miss Martha had a kind heart.

One day she brought from her room a picture that she had bought many years before. With its help she hoped to find out whether the man was really an artist.

It was a Venetian scene. There was a beautiful palace in the picture, gondolas, young ladies, the moon and the stars. She hung the picture on the wall of her bakery so that the artist could notice it.

Two days passed. The customer came in for bread.

‘Two loaves of stale bread, please!’

‘You have here a fine picture, madam,’ he said taking the bread from her.

Miss Martha was very happy to hear these words. ‘Do you think it is a good picture?’ she said.

‘Well...’ he said, ‘the palace is not so good. The perspective is not true. Good morning, madam.’ He took his bread and left.

Yes, he must be an artist! Miss Martha was sure of it now. She took the picture back to her room. How kindly his eyes shone behind his glasses! How clever he was!

He saw the perspective at once. And he has to eat stale bread only! But artists often have to struggle before they become famous.

How she wanted to be of some help to him! She wanted to keep house for him, to share with him all the good things she had in her bakery. She was even ready to share her two thousand dollars with him!

Time went on. Sometimes he talked to her for a few minutes. He bought only stale bread as before. He never bought a cake, or a loaf of fresh bread.

She thought he began to look thinner. It was clear to her he did not eat enough, he was starving! How she wished to add something good to the stale bread he ate. But she knew, poor artists were proud and she was afraid to make him angry.

Miss Martha began to wear her new dress in the bakery. She also bought some cold cream in order to make her face a little more beautiful.

One day the customer came in as usual and asked for stale loaves. While Miss Martha was getting them from the shelf the siren of a fire-engine was heard.

The customer ran to the door to look. Suddenly a bright idea came to Miss Martha. On one of the shelves there was a pound of butter she had bought in the morning. With her bread knife Miss Martha made a deep cut in each of the stale loaves. Then she quickly put a big piece of butter into each cut and pressed the loaves together again.

When the customer turned from the door she was wrapping the loaves in paper.

As usual he said a few pleasant words to her and left.

After he had gone, Miss Martha smiled to herself. But she was not sure... Did she have the right to do such a thing?.. Who knows? Artists have their pride. Will he be angry with her? Still, the more she thought of it the more she became sure that the customer would not be angry.

For a long time she thought about him: now he comes home and sits down to his dinner of stale bread and water... Now he cuts into a loaf... ah!

Miss Martha blushed. Will he think of the hand that put the butter in the bread? Will he thank her in his heart?..

Suddenly the front door bell rang loudly. Somebody was coming in making a lot of noise.

Miss Martha hurried to the door. Two men were there. One was a young man smoking a pipe. She had never seen him before. The other was her artist.

His face was very red. His hat was on the back of his head. His eyes looked at her angrily. He raised his fists and shook them in Miss Martha's face. In Miss Martha's face!

'Dummkopf!' he shouted very loudly and angrily. Then 'Tausendonfer!' or something like that in German.

The young man tried to pull him away.

'I will not go,' the artist shouted, 'I want to tell her all!'

'You have spoiled everything,' he cried, 'I want to tell you. You were a MEDDLESOME OLD CAT!'

Miss Martha was silent. She could not say a word. She put her hand to her heart.

The young man took the artist by the arm.

'Let's go,' he said. 'You have said too much.' He dragged the angry artist out into the street. Then he came back to the bakery.

'I want to explain everything,' he said. 'That man's name is Blumberger. He is an architectural draftsman. I work in the same office with him.

'It took him three months to draw a plan for a new building. It was for a prize competition. That's why he worked so hard at it. He finished inking the lines yesterday. You know a draftsman always

makes his drawing in pencil first. After that he inks the line. When it's done he rubs out the pencil lines with stale bread. It is better than India-rubber.

'Blumberger has always bought stale bread here. Today he tried to rub out the pencil lines of his plan with the bread he bought in your bakery... Well, you know that butter is not good for paper... You must understand that his plan can now be used only as paper for sandwiches.'

Miss Martha went to her room. She took off her new dress. She put on the old brown one she used to wear. Then she threw the cold cream out of the window.

TASKS ON THE TEXT

The sphere of comprehension

1) Explain in English:

a bakery, stale bread, a gondola, to struggle, a perspective, to blush, meddlesome, cold cream.

2) Choose the correct variant:

1. In the story "Witches' Loaves", Miss Martha assumes that the man who buys stale bread is ____.

- a) attracted to her
- b) a starving artist
- c) an architect

d) scared of witches

2. O. Henry, author of "Witches' Loaves", is known for ____ like we find in this story.

a) surprise endings

b) romance

c) scary plots

d) stories about bread

3. In "Witches' Loaves" the man is angry at Miss Martha because her kind gesture of adding butter to his bread has ruined his ____ .

a) best painting

b) contest entry blueprint

c) new suit

d) plans to court Miss Martha

3) What does the title of the story mean?

4) How does Miss Martha's character develop throughout the story?

5) Why did Miss Martha believe the customer was an artist?

6) How does O. Henry use irony in "Witches' Loaves"? What is the main irony of the story?

The sphere of imagination

1) Retell the story as if you are Miss Martha or Mr. Blumberger.

2) Miss Martha decided that the customer was an artist. What would you think of him if you saw stains on his hands?

3) Think up a story how Miss Martha got a picture with a Venetian scene.

4) Imagine that you are Sherlock Holmes. Describe the customer having in mind the following facts about him: two or three times a week he buys two loaves of stale bread, he has a German accent, he has old but clean clothes and he is well-mannered.

5) Mr. Blumberger used stale bread in an unusual way. Can you think up other unusual ways of using stale bread apart from eating it?

6) Imagine that Miss Martha and Mr. Blumberger meet after the end of the story. Act out a conversation between them.

7) What does the stale bread symbolize in the story?

The sphere of emotions

1) Do you agree that Miss Martha could be a good wife? Why?

2) What do you think Miss Martha's life will be after the end of the story?

3) What does the stale bread symbolize in the story?

4) What role does humour play in the story?

5) How does O. Henry use the characters' feelings of loneliness and generosity to create emotional depth in the story?

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLS

Old Jerome Warren lived in a hundred-thousand dollar house in East Fiftieth Street. He was so rich that he could allow himself to walk to his office for his health.

His wife was dead and he had no children. But his wife's niece Barbara lived in his house. He also had an adopted son, – the son of an old friend – named Gilbert. Gilbert was an artist and had a studio a little way from old Jerome's house.

Gilbert and Barbara were friends. People hoped that some day they would marry and spend the old man's money together. But here I have to introduce some difficulties.

Thirty years ago when old Jerome was young, he had a brother named Dick. Dick went West hoping to find gold. Nothing was heard of him for many years. Then one day old Jerome got a letter from his brother. It was clear that the man who wrote it was very ill. In fact Dick wrote that he was dying and was writing with great difficulty. In his letter he asked his brother to take care of Nevada, his nineteen-year-old daughter, the only child he had. He was going to send her to Jerome at once. Old Jerome could not say 'no' to his dying brother. So he said 'yes'.

Old Jerome, Barbara and Gilbert met Nevada Warren at the station.

She was not a very big girl, but strong and good-looking.

'I'm sure we shall be the best of friends,' said Barbara, kissing Nevada.

'I hope so,' said Nevada.

'Dear little niece,' said old Jerome, 'you are welcome to my house. It is your house now.'

'Thanks,' said Nevada.

'And I am going to call you 'cousin',' said Gilbert.

When we hear about any difficulties between one man and two women, or one woman and two men, we call such situations triangles. Very soon Nevada, Barbara and Gilbert formed such a triangle. And Barbara formed the hypotenuse of this triangle.

One morning old Jerome sat a long time after breakfast, reading his newspaper. A servant brought in a note for Miss Nevada.

'A messenger has brought it,' she said. 'He is waiting for an answer.'

Nevada took the letter. She knew it was from Gilbert before she opened it because of the little gold palette in the left-hand corner of the envelope. All of Gilbert's envelopes had such palettes. Nevada opened the envelope and looked at the note attentively. She looked at it for some time and then went up to her uncle.

'Uncle Jerome,' she said. 'Is Gilbert a nice boy?'

'Oh, yes, of course, he is,' said old Jerome, who was very fond of both Gilbert and Nevada. He is a very nice boy. I raised him myself. Why do you ask?'

'Are you sure, uncle Jerome, that Gilbert will never write anything that is not nice?'

'Of course I am, my dear,' said old Jerome. 'I am sure that Gilbert cannot write anything that is not nice. But I don't understand why you ask me that.'

‘Read this note and see for yourself,’ said Nevada. Do you think that everything in it is all right? I don’t know much about city people and their manners. That’s why I am asking you.’

Old Jerome took Gilbert’s note and looked at it attentively. He read it twice, and then a third time.

‘Why, child,’ he said at last, ‘I was sure of the boy and I have not made a mistake. There is nothing bad in the note. He only asks you and Barbara to be ready at four o’clock this afternoon for an automobile drive. I don’t see anything bad in it. I hope you will have a good time.’

‘Will it be all right to go?’ asked Nevada.

‘Yes, yes, yes, child, of course. Why not? Go and have a good time!’

‘Will you come with us, uncle?’ said Nevada.

‘I? No, no, no! I’ve gone once in a car that Gilbert was driving. Never again! But never mind me! You and Barbara go! Yes, yes. But I will not. No, no, no, no!’

Nevada ran to the door and said to the servant:

‘Of course, we’ll go! I’m sure Miss Barbara will be glad to go too. Tell the messenger-boy to tell Mr. Warren that we will go.’

‘I’m sorry, Nevada my dear,’ said the old man, ‘but are you not going to send Gilbert a note? Only a line or two.’

‘No,’ said Nevada, ‘it will take me too much time to write a note, and the boy is waiting for an answer. Gilbert will understand, I’m sure. I have never ridden in an automobile in my life, but, uncle, I used to paddle a canoe down Little Devil River and it was not easy!’

Two months passed.

Barbara was sitting in the study of her uncle's house.

She was alone. Uncle Jerome and Nevada had gone to the theatre. Barbara had not wanted to go. She wanted to stay at home. I've told you before that Barbara was the hypotenuse of the triangle. It usually takes a hypotenuse a long time to discover that it is the longest side of the triangle. But at last Barbara began to understand that the beautiful Western Witch was getting a lasso on the young man she herself wanted.

Barbara sat at the writing table holding a letter in her hand. The letter was not addressed to her. It was addressed to Nevada Warren. In the left-hand corner of the envelope was Gilbert's gold palette. The letter had been brought at nine o'clock, after Nevada had left. What was in the letter? Barbara could not guess. But, oh, how she wanted to know!

She could not open the envelope by means of steam, or by any other method. She was a lady and ladies do not do such things. We all know that. She had held the envelope up to a strong light in order to read the lines. But no, – she could not read a word.

At eleven-thirty old Jerome and Nevada returned from the theatre. Old Jerome was tired and went to bed at once. Nevada came into the study where Barbara was still sitting. She sat down in an armchair trying to unbutton her long gloves. She began telling Barbara about the play she had just seen.

'Here is a letter for you, dear,' said Barbara. 'It came just after you had gone.'

'Who is it from?' asked Nevada struggling with a button on her glove.

'I don't know,' said Barbara with a smile. 'I think it is from Gilbert because the envelope has a little gold palette in the corner. You can see it for yourself.'

'What can he write to me about?' said Nevada.

'We are all alike,' said Barbara. 'All women try to guess what is in a letter before they open it. So they study the envelope. And it is not of great help. Open it and read it, dear. Here it is!' She was going to throw the letter to Nevada but the girl said: 'I can't take these gloves off. It is always so difficult. Oh, Barbara, open the envelope and read the letter, please!'

'Why, dear, the letter is for you! How can you ask other people to read Gilbert's letter?'

Nevada raised her beautiful blue eyes from her gloves and said:

'Nobody writes me anything that everybody can't read. Read it, Barbara! Maybe Gilbert wants to take us for a drive again tomorrow.'

'All right, dear,' said Barbara, 'I'll read it if you like!'

She opened the envelope and quickly read the letter. Then she read it again and looked at Nevada who was still looking at her gloves.

Suddenly she smiled. 'Nevada,' she said: 'Why did you ask me to read this letter? I am sure it was written for your eyes only, and not for mine!'

Nevada forgot her gloves for a moment.

‘Read it aloud,’ she said, ‘you have already read it, so you can read it again. If Mr. Warren has written something bad to me, – everybody should know it.’

‘Well,’ said Barbara, ‘this is what the letter says: ‘Dearest Nevada, – Come to my studio at twelve o’clock to-night. Do not be late. I shall be waiting for you!’”

Barbara rose and gave the letter to Nevada.

‘I’m very sorry that I have read it,’ she said. ‘It isn’t like Gilbert. There must be some mistake. I don’t understand how he could write such a letter. I hope he will explain everything. Let’s forget it. And now I must go to bed. Good night.’

Nevada looked at her watch. It said a quarter to twelve. She went out of the room and ran quickly to the front door. She went out into the snowstorm. Gilbert Warren’s studio was only a little way from old Jerome’s house. The snow lay a foot deep in the street and she walked with difficulty.

‘Hello, little girl,’ a policeman called to her, ‘it’s too late for such a little girl to be out.’

Nevada took no notice of him and went on.

There was a light in Gilbert’s window. He was waiting for her. She knew his window because she had been in his studio before, with Barbara and uncle Jerome.

On the eighth floor she found room 89 and knocked at the door. Gilbert opened the door. He had a pencil in his hand and a pipe in his mouth. The pipe fell to the floor.

‘Am I late?’ asked Nevada. ‘I came as quickly as I could. Uncle and I have been to the theatre this evening. Here I am, Gilbert!’

Gilbert was standing in the door with his mouth open.

'You asked me to come,' said Nevada simply, 'and I came. You said so in your letter. Why did you send for me?'

'Did you read my letter?' asked Gilbert.

'No, I didn't,' said Nevada. 'Barbara read it to me. Your letter said: 'Come to my studio at twelve o'clock to-night. Do not be late. I shall be waiting for you.' I thought you were ill. But you look quite well.'

'Aha,' cried Gilbert. 'I'll tell you why I asked you to come, Nevada. I wanted to ask you to marry me ... at once ... tonight! That is why I asked you to come. Will you?'

'Of course I will,' answered Nevada. 'You knew long ago that I would marry you! I am sure, you knew it. And it will be nice to be married in a snowstorm at night. In fact, I don't like rich wedding ceremonies in a church full of guests.'

'Wait a minute,' said Gilbert, 'I want to do a little 'phoning.' He went to his bedroom and closed the door behind him. Then he began to telephone.

'Is that you, Jack? Wake up, I need you at once. I am going to be married right away! So I want two witnesses. Wake up and bring your sister too. You must! Nevada is here waiting. We are both waiting for you! What? You will? Good, old boy! I knew you were a good friend.'

Gilbert returned to the room where Nevada was waiting. He said, 'I had to telephone Jack Peyton, an old friend of mine. I asked him and his sister to be our witnesses. They had promised to be here at a quarter to twelve. But they are late. I have 'phoned them

to hurry. They will be here in a few minutes. Oh, Nevada, I am the happiest man in the world. Nevada, dear, what did you do with the letter I sent you this evening?’

‘I have it with me,’ said Nevada and gave him the letter.

Gilbert took the letter out of the envelope and looked at it attentively. Then he looked at Nevada thoughtfully.

‘Were you angry with me because I asked you to come to my studio at midnight?’ he asked.

‘Why, no,’ said Nevada. ‘How could I be angry if you needed me? Out West, when a friend sends for you and asks you to hurry, – you get there first and talk about it after. And we are not afraid of snowstorm.’

‘Nevada,’ said Gilbert, ‘Jack and his sister will be here in a few minutes. I shall try to find a raincoat for you to put on. It will take me some time, so you can look through the evening paper on the table. There is an article on the front page. It’s about your section of the West. I know it will interest you.’

He went to his bedroom and returned in a minute or two. Nevada was not reading when he came in. She had not moved. She looked at him nervously.

‘I was going to tell you something,’ she said, ‘before you ... before we ... before ... you must know that father never sent me to school. I have never learned to read or write... So if you...’

At this very moment

the door opened and Jack and his sister came in.

When Mr. and Mrs. Warren were riding home after the wedding ceremony, Gilbert said:

'Nevada, do you want to know what I really wrote in the letter you received last night?'

'Yes, of course,' said Nevada, 'what was it?'

'Word for word, it was this,' said her husband: 'My dear Miss Warren, - you were right about the name of that flower yesterday. It was a hydrangea, and not a lilac, as I thought.'

'All right,' said Nevada. 'But let's forget it. The joke is on Barbara, anyway.'

TASKS ON THE TEXT

The sphere of comprehension

1) Explain in English:

a triangle, a hypotenuse, to raise smb, a gold palette, to paddle a canoe, a lasso, a witness.

2) Choose the correct variant

1. In "Schools and Schools" by O. Henry, which of the following characteristics best defines Nevada Warren?

- a) Wealthy
- b) Erudite
- c) Mendicant
- d) Illiterate

2. In "Schools and Schools" by O. Henry, what role does Barbara play in the love triangle?

- a) Third wheel
- b) Bride-to-be
- c) Mentor
- d) Beard

3. Which of the following explains the meaning of the title of O. Henry's short story "Schools and Schools"?

- a) Barbara tried to 'school' Nevada in the customs of female socialites.
- b) Gilbert and Barbara both went to boarding school.
- c) Nevada aspires to attend an Ivy League college.
- d) Jerome was a charitable benefactor to urban schools.

3) Make a family tree of the characters.

4) What does the title of the story mean? Can you think up another title?

5) Analyze the central themes of "Schools and Schools." Does O. Henry criticize the educational system through the story?

The sphere of imagination

1) Retell the story as if you are old Jerome, Barbara, Gilbert or Nevada.

2) The story doesn't say how Jerome made his fortune. Can you guess how he did it?

3) Comment on the quotation 'He was so rich that he could allow himself to walk to his office for his health'.

4) Why do you think Nevada considered the first letter from Gilbert not to be nice?

5) Why do you think Barbara lied to Nevada about the content of the letter?

6) What do you think will happen to Gilbert and Nevada after the wedding? Will Nevada go to school? Will Gilbert teach her? Will they live happily?

7) Imagine you are the narrator, and rewrite a key scene from a different point of view.

8) Imagine you are the narrator, and rewrite a key scene from a different point of view.

The sphere of emotions

1) Which couple do you prefer: Barbara and Gilbert or Nevada or Gilbert? Why?

2) Barbara, Gilbert and Nevada form a love triangle. Can you explain from the psychological point of view how to solve this problem?

3) Analyze how the protagonist's emotional state changes from the beginning to the end of the story.

4) Write a dialogue or a short scene that could take place before or after the story, focusing on the characters' emotions.

5) Think of a personal experience that reflects emotions similar to those described in the story.

LOST ON DRESS PARADE

When in the evening Mr. Towers Chandler appeared in the streets of New York, people took him for a rich young man. He was handsome, well dressed and sure of himself. In a word, he looked like a typical clubman going out to have a good time. No one knew that he was not rich. He was in fact quite poor.

Chandler was twenty-two years old. He worked in the office of an architect and got eighteen dollars a week. At the end of each week he put aside one dollar out of his salary. At the end of each ten weeks he ironed his evening suit and went out to have a good time. He usually dined at a fashionable restaurant where there was wine and music. It took him ten weeks to accumulate his capital of ten dollars and it took him only a few hours to spend it, playing the role of a rich idler.

One night he went out, dressed in his evening clothes and started for the restaurant where he dined one evening out of seventy.

He was just going to turn around the corner when a young girl in front of him slipped on the snow and fell down. Chandler ran up and helped her to her feet.

‘Thank you,’ said the girl. ‘I think I have twisted my ankle.’

‘Does it hurt very much?’ asked Chandler.

‘Yes, it does,’ she answered, ‘but I think I shall be able to walk in a few minutes.’

‘Can I do anything for you?’ said Chandler. ‘I will call a cab, or...’

‘Thank you,’ said the girl again, ‘but I don’t want to trouble you any longer...’

Chandler looked at the girl. She was very young. Her face was both beautiful and kind. She was dressed in a cheap black dress that looked like a uniform that salesgirls wear. A cheap black hat was on her shining dark brown hair. She looked like a working girl of the best type.

A sudden idea came into the young architect’s head. He decided to ask this girl to dine with him. He was sure she was a nice girl. Her speech and manners showed it. And in spite of her simple clothes he felt he would be happy to sit at table with her. He thought: This poor girl has never been to a fashionable restaurant, it is clear. She will remember the pleasure for a long time.

‘I think,’ he said to her, ‘that your foot must rest for some time. Now, I am going to tell you something. I am on my way to dine. Come with me. We’ll have a nice dinner and a pleasant talk together. And when our dinner is over your foot will be better, I am sure.’

The girl looked up into Chandler’s clear, blue eyes. Then she smiled: ‘We don’t know each other. I’m afraid it is not right,’ she said.

‘Why not?’ asked the young man. ‘I’ll introduce myself. My name is Towers Chandler. I will try to make our dinner as pleasant as possible. And after dinner I will say good-bye to you, or will take you to your door as you wish.’

‘But how can I go to the restaurant in this old dress and hat?’ said the girl, looking at Chandler’s evening suit.

‘Never mind that,’ said Chandler. ‘I’m sure you will look better in them than any one we shall see there in the richest evening dress.’

‘I think I will go with you, Mr. Chandler,’ said the girl, ‘because my ankle still hurts me. You may call me ... Miss Marian.’

‘All right, Miss Marian,’ said the young architect, ‘you will not have to walk far. There is a very good restaurant a little way from here. You will have to hold my arm and walk slowly. It will take only a few minutes to get there.’

The two young people came to the restaurant and sat down at a table. Chandler ordered a good dinner. He felt quite happy.

The restaurant was full of richly-dressed people. There was a good orchestra playing beautiful music. The food was excellent. His companion, even in her cheap hat and dress, looked more beautiful than some ladies in evening dresses.

And then... some kind of madness came upon Towers Chandler. He began to play the role of a rich idler before the girl. He spoke of clubs and teas, of playing golf and riding horses and tours in Europe. He could see that the girl was listening to him with attention, so he told her more and more lies. The longer he talked the more lies told her about his life.

At last she said: ‘Do you like living such an idle life? Do you have no work to do? Do you have no other interests?’

‘My dear Miss Marian,’ he exclaimed, ‘work! I am too busy to work. It takes so much time to dress every day for dinner, to make a dozen visits in an afternoon...

I have no time for work.’

The dinner was over. The two young people walked out to the corner where they had met. Miss Marian walked very well now, her ankle was much better.

‘Thank you for a nice time,’ she said to Chandler. ‘I must run home now. I liked the dinner very much, Mr. Chandler.’

He shook hands with her, smiling, and said that he also had to hurry. He was going to his club to play bridge.

In his cheap cold room Chandler put away his evening suit to rest for sixty nine days.

‘That was a fine girl,’ he said to himself. ‘I should like to meet her again. I have made a mistake in playing the role of a rich idler before a poor working girl. Why did I lie to her? All because of my evening suit, I think... I’m sorry it’s all over!’

After she had left Chandler the girl came to a rich and handsome house facing a beautiful avenue. She entered a room where a young lady was looking out of the window.

‘Oh, Marian!’ she exclaimed when the other entered. ‘When will you stop frightening us? Two hours ago you ran out in this old dress and Helen’s hat. Mother is so worried. She sent the chauffeur in the automobile to look for you. You are a bad, bad girl, Marian!’

Then she pressed a button. A servant came in and she said:

‘Helen, tell Mother that Miss Marian has returned.’

‘Don’t be angry with me, Sister,’ said Marian. ‘I only ran down to my dressmaker to tell her to use blue buttons instead of white for my new dress. My old dress and Helen’s hat were just what I needed. Everyone thought I was a sales-girl, I am sure.’

‘Dinner is over, dear, you were away so long,’ said Marian’s sister.

‘I know,’ said Marian. ‘I slipped in the street and twisted my ankle. So I walked to a restaurant with great difficulty and sat there until my ankle was better. That’s why I was so long.’

The two girls sat down at the window, looking out. Then Marian said: ‘We will have to marry one day, both of us. We have too much money, so we shall not be left in peace, I am sure. Shall I tell you the kind of man I can love?’

‘Go on, dear,’ said her sister, smiling.

‘The man I can love must have clear blue eyes, he must be handsome and good and he mustn’t try to flirt. But I shall love a man like that only if he is not lazy, if he has some work to do in the world. No matter how poor he is I shall love him. But, Sister, dear, what kind of young men do we meet every day? They live an idle life between visits to their friends and visits to their clubs. No, I can’t love a man like that, even if his eyes are blue and he is handsome: even if he is kind to poor girls whom he meets in the street.’

TASKS ON THE TEXT

The sphere of comprehension

1) Explain in English:

to put aside, an idler, to twist an ankle.

2) Choose the correct variant

1. Chandler was employed in _____ .

a) the laundry centre where he pressed evening suits

b) the office of an architect

c) a nearby club

2. What is an honorarium?

a) The loss or giving up of something as a penalty for wrongdoing.

b) An amount of money that you owe to somebody.

c) A payment made for professional services.

3. How much money a week did Mr. Chandler put aside out of his earnings?

a) \$1

b) \$3

c) \$7

4. What happened to Miss Marian on the sidewalk?

a) She slipped on a banana peel and fractured her ankle.

b) She slipped on a patch of icy snow and fell and twisted her ankle.

c) She slipped on a patch of icy snow and fell and fractured her ankle.

5. Why did Mr. Chandler say, "I'm just a little bit glad that you slipped on the ice"?

a) He was happy that the girl was now dependent on him.

b) He was happy that he wouldn't have to now dine all by himself.

c) He was happy to see her fall and poke fun at her.

3) Why do you think the girl accepted the invitation to dine together with Mr. Chandler? Only because of her ankle?

4) Analyze O. Henry's use of humor and wit in the story. How do these literary devices influence the reader's perception?

The sphere of imagination

1) Retell the story as if you are Mr. Towers Chandler or Miss Marian.

2) Mr. Chandler was saving money for ten weeks and then spent it for a few hours. Where are you ready to spend money that you had been saving for some months?

3) When you began reading what did you think an unexpected ending of this story would be?

4) During the dinner Mr. Chandler spoke a lot about his “idle” life. What do you think Miss Marian told him about?

5) Why do you think a lot of people live not their life and try to be someone else? Why is it difficult to be oneself?

6) Imagine that Miss Marian and Mr. Chandler meet once again. What do you think they will tell each other?

7) Think up a translation for a title of the story.

8) Imagine a modern setting for the story. How might the plot change if it were set today?

9) Write an alternative ending where the protagonist behaves in a different way. How does this change the story’s message?

10) Have a debate on whether the protagonist’s deception was justified or morally wrong. Give arguments on both sides.

The sphere of emotions

1) Can you explain from the psychological point of view why Mr. Chandler played a role of an idle rich man?

2) Remember the situation when you or someone you know tried to impress others through appearance or behavior. What was the result of this action?

THE TRIMMED LAMP

Lou and Nancy were friends. They came to New York to find work because there was not enough to eat at their homes. Nancy was nineteen. Lou was twenty. Both Nancy and Lou were very pretty. Lou found work in a laundry. She was an ironer. Nancy began to work as a sales-girl.

At the end of six months of their life in the big city, Lou met a young man named Dan. They soon became good friends. In fact they fell in love with each other. They went out together several times a week.

‘Aren’t you cold, Nancy?’ Lou asked her friend one evening. They were standing on the corner waiting for pan. ‘I feel sorry for you. Why are you working in that old store for eight dollars a week? I made eighteen dollars last week! Of course, ironing is not so pleasant as selling gloves in a store, but it pays. None of the ironers make less than ten dollars a week. I like my work.’

‘And I like mine,’ said Nancy, ‘even though I make only eight dollars a week. I like to work in a big store, and to be among beautiful things and nice people. One of our sales-girls married a steel maker from Pittsburg. He makes a lot of money! You may be sure I’ll catch a millionaire some day! And whom can you marry working in a laundry?’

‘Why, I met Dan in the laundry,’ said Lou. ‘He came in to get his Sunday shirt and collars and saw me. I was ironing. Later he said

he had noticed my arms first, how white and round they were. I tell you, some very rich men come to laundries. Of course if you want to starve and put on airs, do as you like!

Just then Dan came. He was an electrician, making thirty dollars a week. It was clear he was in love with Lou, he looked at her with the sad eyes of Romeo.

'Nancy, I want to introduce to you my friend, Mr. Owens. Dan, shake hands with Miss Danforth,' said Lou.

'I'm very glad to meet you, Miss Danforth,' said Dan. 'I've heard so much about you from Lou.'

'Thanks,' said Nancy, 'I've heard from her about you, too.'

'I have tickets for a theatre,' said Dan. 'Let's all go.'

The three of them started out to have a good time together.

Nancy had no gentlemen friends. Nobody waited for her after work. Some of the sales-girls joked that she was waiting to 'catch a millionaire'. 'I'll make the biggest catch in the world, – or nothing at all!' she used to say.

One day, two of the sales-girls who worked with Nancy invited her to have dinner together with them and their gentlemen friends. The dinner took place in a fashionable cafe.

One of the gentlemen friends had no hair on his head, – the other wore a diamond ring and liked neither the food nor the wine.

The next day the gentleman with the diamond ring appeared in the shop and asked Nancy to marry him. She said 'no'. When he left, one of the girls said to Nancy:

'What a terrible fool you are! That fellow is a millionaire – he is the son of Van Skittles himself! Are you mad, Nancy? What do you

want? Do you want to be a Mormon and marry Rockefeller and the King of Spain at the same time?’

‘I don’t want his money,’ said Nancy. ‘I don’t like him, that’s all! I want to marry a rich man, that’s true. But I also want to like him!’

Lou worked on in the laundry. Out of her eighteen dollars a week she paid six dollars for her room and board. The rest of the money went for clothes.

When the day’s work was over she met Dan who was always waiting for her outside the laundry. Sometimes Dan did not like her clothes, they were too bright – he thought – and in bad taste. But she liked bright clothes, and when people in the streets looked at her, she liked that very much.

Dan and Lou always asked Nancy to come with them when they went out to have a good time.

One Saturday afternoon the two girls met, and Lou said:

‘Dan is always asking me to marry him. But why should I? I am independent. Now I can do what I like with the money I make. And if I marry Dan he will not allow me to work. Nancy, what are your plans for the future? Have you caught your millionaire yet?’

‘Not yet,’ said Nancy with a laugh. ‘I haven’t selected one yet...’

‘You are joking, of course,’ said Lou. ‘Millionaires don’t notice working girls like us. Still I am sure that I’ll catch one before you do.’

Nancy worked on. She watched and studied the rich men and women who came to the store. She hoped some day to find the man she could marry.

So she kept her lamp trimmed and burning to receive her bridegroom when he should come.

One Thursday evening Nancy left the store and walked over to the laundry. Dan and Lou had invited her to go to a musical comedy with them.

Dan was just coming out of the laundry when she arrived. There was a strange nervous look on his face.

'I hoped to find out something about her. I thought they had heard from her,' he said.

'Heard from whom? What are you talking about?' said Nancy. 'Isn't Lou there?'

'I thought you knew everything,' said Dan. 'She hasn't been here or at the house where she lived since Monday. She took all her things from there. She told one of the girls in the laundry that she was going to Europe.'

'Has anybody seen her anywhere?' asked Nancy.

Dan looked at her. His gray eyes were like steel.

'They told me in the laundry,' he said, 'that they saw her yesterday ... in an automobile. With one of those millionaires that you and Lou were always talking about.'

For the first time in her life Nancy did not know what to say. Then she laid her hand on Dan's arm and said:

'You have no right to say such a thing to me, Dan. Do you think that she has done it because of my jokes about millionaires? I am sorry for you, but I have nothing to do with it.'

'I'm sorry I said it,' answered Dan, 'Don't be angry with me!'

'I have tickets for a show to-night,' he said a moment later.
'If you...'

Nancy saw how miserable he was and she felt sorry for him.

'I'll come with you, Dan,' she said.

Three months passed before Nancy saw Lou again.

One evening she was hurrying home from the store. Suddenly somebody called her name. She turned around and saw Lou who caught her in her arms.

Nancy noticed at once that Lou had become rich. She was very well dressed and had diamond rings on her fingers.

'You little fool,' cried Lou, 'I see you are still working in that store. I see you haven't caught a millionaire yet.'

And then Lou looked and saw that Nancy had something better than money, something that shone brighter than stars in her eyes, something that was redder than a rose in her cheeks. Happiness!

'Yes, I'm still in the store,' said Nancy, 'but I am going to leave it next week. I've made my catch, the best catch in the world. I'm going to be married to Dan ... to Dan! He is my Dan now.'

A policeman, going around the corner of the park saw two young women. One of them, with diamond rings on her fingers was crying like a child. The other, a simply dressed working girl, was trying to console her. The policeman passed on. He knew he could not help the one who was crying.

TASKS ON THE TEXT

The sphere of comprehension

- 1) Explain in English:
a laundry, to put on airs, a gentleman friend, to console.
- 2) Can you explain the metaphor of the title?
- 3) Examine the symbolism of the trimmed lamp. What does it represent in the context of the story?
- 4) Why do you think Dan is compared with Romeo?
- 5) Lou asked Nancy what her plans for the future are. Is the future of girls always connected with marriage? Was it true in O. Henry's time? (The second part of the XIX century) Is it true nowadays?
- 6) Describe how the setting of New York City contributes to the story's mood and themes.
- 7) Remember any contemporary story with a similar theme. Compare "The Trimmed Lamp" with this story. What has changed or remained the same?
- 8) Identify examples of irony in the story. How do they help to reveal the story's message?
- 9) Identify and analyze at least three literary devices used by O. Henry in the story.

The sphere of imagination

1) Retell the story as if you are Lou (Louise), Nancy or Dan.

2) Lou and Nancy went to a big city to earn some money. What well-paid occupations would you advise them in their time? In the present-day world?

3) Lou has a hard but more well-paid job and Nancy – less-paid but more beautiful one. What job would you choose and why?

4) What do you think happened to Lou at the end of the story? Where did she disappear?

5) How does "The Trimmed Lamp" depict social class distinctions? Do you think these distinctions are still relevant today?

The sphere of emotions

1) Agree/ disagree with the quotation 'I'll make the biggest catch in the world, – or nothing at all!'

2) Can you imagine Nancy and Dan's future life? Will they be happy?

3) What do you like and dislike about the story? Why?

NO STORY

The conversation I am going to tell you about took place in the reporter's room of The Morning Beacon. I was doing some work for this newspaper. I wrote about anything I could see in New York City during my long walks about its streets. I had very little money because I had no regular work.

One day Tripp came in and stopped at my table. Tripp was working in the printing department. I think he had something to do with pictures, because he always smelled of photographers' chemicals and his hands were always stained and burnt with acids. He was about twenty-five but looked forty. Half of his face was covered with a short red beard, which looked like a door-mat. He looked pale, miserable and unhealthy. He always borrowed money from all of us. He asked for a small sum – from twenty-five cents to a dollar. One dollar was his limit. He knew that nobody would give him more than a dollar. He sat on my table holding one hand with the other with difficulty. But it was no use: both hands were shaking. Whisky!

That day I had got five new silver dollars as an advance on a story I was writing for the paper. So I was feeling at peace with the world.

'Well, Tripp,' said I looking up at him, 'how are you?'

'Have you got a dollar?' asked Tripp. He was looking more miserable than ever.

'I have,' said I. And again I said: 'I have five dollars in fact. And I got them with great difficulty, I can tell you. And I am very glad I got them because I need them very much.' I was afraid he would ask me to give him a dollar. So I made everything clear.

'I don't want to borrow any money,' said Tripp, and I was glad to hear those words. 'I can give you some facts for a story and you can write it up and get a lot of money. It will make an interesting story. It will cost you a dollar or two to get the facts for the story. But I don't want any money for myself.'

'What are the facts?' I asked him.

'I'll tell you,' said Tripp. 'It's a girl. A beauty. You have never seen a girl like her. She is a flower... She has lived in a village for twenty years and never saw New York City before. I met her on Thirty-fourth Street. I tell you, she is the most beautiful girl in the world. She stopped me in the street and asked me where she could find George Brown. Asked me where she could find **GEORGE BROWN IN NEW YORK CITY!** What do you think of that?

'I talked to her, and found out that she was going to marry a young farmer named Hiram Dodd next week. But she cannot forget her first love – George Brown. George left his village some years ago, and came to the city to make his fortune. But he forgot to go back to his village, so after some time she agreed to marry Hiram Dodd. And now a few days before the wedding Ada – her name is Ada Lowery – suddenly went to the railroad station and took the train for New York City. She is looking for her George. You understand women, I hope: George was not there, so she wanted him.

‘Well, you know, I couldn’t leave her in the streets of New York. She was sure that the first person she asked about George Brown would say: ‘George Brown? – Let me see... Is he a short man with light-blue eyes? Yes? Then you will find him on One hundred and Twenty-fifth Street a little way from the bakery.’ Do you see now what a child she is? A beautiful child! But you must see her!

‘What could I do?’ Tripp continued. ‘I never have money in the morning. And she has paid her last cent for her railroad ticket. So I took her to a boarding-house on Thirty-second Street where I used to live. I left her there. We shall have to pay one dollar for her room. That is the price per day. I’ll show you the house.’

I was angry. ‘What are you talking about, Tripp?’ I said. I thought you had facts for a story. Every train brings in or takes out hundreds of young girls! What kind of story can I make out of this?’

‘I am sorry you don’t see what an interesting story you could write,’ said Tripp. ‘You could describe the beauty of the girl; you could write about true love! Well, you know how to do it. I am sure you could get fifteen dollars for the story. And it will cost you only four dollars.’

‘How will it cost me four dollars?’ I asked him.

‘One dollar for the room, and two dollars to pay for the girl’s ticket home.’

‘And the fourth dollar?’

‘One dollar to me,’ said Tripp, ‘for whisky. Do you agree?’

I did not answer him but only smiled and began writing again.

‘You don’t understand,’ said Tripp, looking more miserable than before. ‘This girl must be sent home today. Not to-night nor to-

morrow, but to-day. I can't do anything for her. I thought you could make a newspaper story out of it and get some money for it. But no matter whether you want to write the story or not – she must get back home before night!

And then I began to feel sorry for the girl. I knew that my three dollars would be spent on Ada Lowery.

But I promised myself that Tripp would not get his dollar for whisky. Very angry I put on my coat and hat.

It took us half an hour to get to the boarding-house. Tripp rang the bell.

'Give me one of the dollars – quick!' he said.

A woman opened the door a little. Tripp gave her the dollar without a word, and she let us in.

'She is in the parlor,' said the woman, turning her back on us.

In the dark parlor a girl was sitting at a table. She was crying. Yes, she was a beauty! Crying had only made her beautiful eyes brighter.

'Miss Lowery, this is my friend Mr. Chalmers,' said Tripp. He looked like a beggar in his old coat and I was ashamed when he called me his 'friend'.

'My friend,' said Tripp again, 'will tell you, Miss Lowery, the same that I did. He is a reporter and he can talk better than I can. That's why I have brought him here. He is a very clever man. He will tell you what is the best thing to do.'

'Miss Lowery,' I began and stopped. I did not know what to say. 'I shall be glad to help you, of course, but first tell me your story, please...'

‘It’s the first time I have ever been to New York,’ said the girl. ‘I had no idea that it was such a big place. And I met Mr. ... Mr. Flip in the street and asked him about a friend of mine, and he brought me here and asked me to wait.’

‘I advise you, Miss Lowery,’ said Tripp, ‘to tell Mr. Chalmers all. He is a friend of mine, and he will tell you what to do.’

‘Why, of course,’ said Ada. ‘There is nothing to tell ... only ... that I was going to marry Hiram Dodd next Thursday evening. He has got two hundred acres of land and one of the best farms in our village. But this morning I told my mother that I was going to spend the day with Susie Adams. It was a lie, of course ... but I don’t care. And I came to New York by train, and I met Mr. ... Mr. Flip in the street and asked him if he knew where I could find G-G-G ... George...’

‘Miss Lowery,’ Tripp stopped her, ‘you told me that you liked this young man, Hiram Dodd. You also told me that he was in love with you and was very good to you.’

‘Of course, I like him,’ said Miss Lowery. ‘And of course he is good to me. Everybody is good to me.’

Of course, all men were good to Ada. I was sure that men would always be good to her: she was so beautiful!

‘But,’ continued Miss Lowery, ‘last night I began thinking about G ... – George ... and I ...’

And she began to cry again. Such a beautiful spring storm! I was sorry that I could not be of great help to her. I was not George. And I was glad that I was not Hiram. I was glad and sorry at the same time.

By and by the storm passed. She smiled and went on with her story.

‘George Brown and I were in love with each other since he was eight and I was five. When he was nineteen – that was four years ago – he left our village and went to the city. He said he was going to be a policeman or a president of a railroad company or something like that. He promised to come back for me. But I have never heard from him anymore. And I ... I liked him.’

She was going to cry again. But then Tripp said quickly to me: ‘Mister Chalmers, can you tell the lady what is the best thing to do now?’

‘Miss Lowery,’ said I, ‘life is hard for all of us. We seldom marry those whom we first love. You say that Mr. Dodd is very good to you and that you like him. I am sure you will be happy when you marry him.’

‘Yes,’ said Miss Lowery, ‘I can get along with him. He promised me an automobile and a motor-boat. And still, when the time of our wedding was so close – I began thinking about George. I know, he doesn’t write me because something bad has happened to him. On the day he left, he and I got a hammer and a chisel and cut a dime into two pieces. I took one piece and he took the other. We promised to be true to each other and always keep the pieces till we meet again. I keep my piece at home. I see now that it was silly to come up here looking for him. I didn’t know what a big place it is.’

Tripp laughed. I saw he was trying to be of help in order to get his whisky dollar.

‘Oh,’ he said, ‘the boys from the country forget their girls when they come to the city. I am afraid he is in love with another girl now, or maybe he has gone to the dogs because of whisky. You listen to Mr. Chalmers and go home, and everything will be all right.’

At last she agreed to go home. The three of us went to the station. The price of a ticket to her village was only a dollar and eighty cents. I bought the ticket and also a red, red rose for Miss Lowery. We said good-bye to her.

It was over at last. Tripp and I looked at each other. He looked more miserable than ever.’

‘Can you make a story out of it?’ he asked.

‘Not a line,’ said I. ‘There is nothing interesting in all this. But we should be glad that we have helped the little girl. That’s all.’

‘I’m sorry,’ said Tripp softly. ‘I’m sorry you’ve had to spend money.’

‘Let’s try to forget it,’ I said. I was not going to give him a dollar for whisky.

Tripp unbuttoned his coat to take a handkerchief out of his pocket. As he did so I noticed a cheap watch-chain across his vest. Something was hanging from the chain. I took it in my hand. It was half of a dime. It had been cut in halves with a chisel.

‘What?’ I said, looking at him in surprise.

‘Oh, yes,’ he answered, softly. ‘George Brown, now Tripp. What’s the use?’

I took a dollar out of my pocket and put it into Tripp’s hand.

TASKS ON THE TEXT

The sphere of comprehension

1) Explain in English:

a beacon, to feel at peace with the world, to make one's fortune, a parlour, a chisel, to go to the dogs.

2) Comment on the quotation 'I hope: George was not there, so she wanted him.' Is it true that we don't pay attention to things and people in our life but need them badly when we lose them?

3) Comment on the quotation "I was sure that men would always be good to her: she was so beautiful!" Is it true that only beautiful people can get help and support? Does our attitude to people depend mostly on their appearance?

4) Why do you think Mr. Chalmers finally gave Tripp a dollar?

5) Describe Tripp and say how he made his living.

6) Why did Chalmers refuse to write a story about the girl?

7) Describe Ada and explain why Chalmers felt ashamed in her presence?

8) Prove that Ada really loved George.

9) Why do you think Tripp didn't tell Ada who he was?

10) What are advantages and disadvantages of living in the country and a big city? In the middle of the XIX century and in the present-day world?

11) Name positive and negative features of the profession of a reporter. Can you compare a present-day reporter with that in O. Henry's time?

The sphere of imagination

1) Retell the story as if you are Mr. Chalmers, Tripp or Ada Lowery.

2) Tripp wants to borrow some money from Mr. Chalmers but the narrator is reluctant to give it to him. Can you name any ways how he could refuse lending money politely?

3) Before George left, he and Ada cut a dime into two pieces and each took one part. This ritual helped Ada to live without George. Can you name any rituals in your life that help you to overcome difficulties?

4) Describe Tripp's life in New York during those four years.

The sphere of emotions

1) Tripp named the story of Ada Lowery a true love. Do you agree with it? What do you think the true love is?

2) Do you think this story is happy or sad? Why?

3) Who is your favourite character of the story? Why?

THE RANSOM OF RED CHIEF

I am going to tell you a story about how we tried to kidnap a child.

Bill and I were in a small town in the state of Alabama when the idea of kidnapping came to us. We needed money. Kidnapping seemed to us the best way to get a lot of money. It did not take us long to select a child for kidnapping. We selected the only child of a rich man named Ebenezer Dorset.

The kid was a boy of ten, with a face full of freckles. His hair was red, in fact it was bright red. We hoped that Ebenezer would be glad to give us a ransom of two thousand dollars for his son. But wait till I tell you the story.

About two miles from the town there was a little mountain covered with a thick wood. There was a cave in the mountain. We kept our food and things in the cave.

One evening we drove in a buggy past Ebenezer's house. The kid was in the street. He was throwing stones at a cat.

'Hey, little boy,' said Bill, 'would you like to have a bag of candy and a nice ride?'

The boy threw a stone at Bill and hit him straight in the eye.

'Old Ebenezer will have to pay an extra five hundred dollars for this,' said Bill, getting out of the buggy.

It took Bill some time to catch the boy and drag him into the buggy. The boy fought like a bear. At last we drove away.

We took him up to the cave. When it became dark I drove to the little village, three miles away, where we had hired the buggy and left it there. Then I walked back to the cave in the mountain.

When I came up Bill was sitting near the fire at the entrance of the cave. He was putting plaster on the scratches on his face and arms. The boy was watching the fire. He had two bird feathers in his red hair. When I came up he raised the stick he was holding and cried:

‘Ha! you wicked pale-face! Do you dare to enter the camp of Red Chief, the terror of the land?’

‘He’s all right now,’ said Bill, who was examining the scratches on his legs. We are playing Indian. He is Red Chief and I am his prisoner. To-morrow at sunrise he is going to scalp me. By God that kid can kick hard!’

The boy was having a good time. He liked our cave very much. And he liked to play Indian and to be Red Chief. He forgot that he was a prisoner himself. He gave me the name of Snake-eye, the Spy. He told me that he was going to burn me in the fire at sunrise.

Then we had supper. The boy’s mouth was full of bacon and bread but he began to talk. He made a long dinner speech. It was something like this:

‘I like this very much. I never camped before. I hate to go to school. Are there any real Indians in these woods? I want some more bacon. We have two dogs. Are the stars hot? I don’t like girls. My father has a lot of money. A parrot can talk but a fish can’t. Do you have beds to sleep on in this cave? What makes your nose so red, Snake-eye?’

Every few minutes he remembered that he was Red Chief, so he got up and ran to the entrance of the cave to see if there were any pale-face spies hiding there. Now and then he gave a loud war-cry and Bill shivered. That boy terrorized Bill from the very beginning.

‘Red Chief,’ I said to the boy, ‘do you want to go home?’

‘What for?’ he asked. ‘I have no fun at home. I hate to go to school. I like camping here. Are you going to take me home, Snake-eye?’

‘Not right away,’ I said. ‘We’ll stay here in the cave for some time.’

‘All right,’ he said, ‘that will be fine. I never had such fun in all my life.’

We went to bed at about eleven o’clock. We put Red Chief between us. We were not afraid he would run away. But for three hours we could not fall asleep. Every now and then Red Chief jumped up and shouted in Bill’s ear or mine: ‘Somebody is coming. Who is there?’

At last I fell asleep. I dreamed that I had been kidnapped and tied to a tree by a pirate with red hair.

Early in the morning I was awakened by terrible screams. They came from Bill. I jumped up to see what had happened. Red Chief was sitting on Bill’s chest. With one hand he was holding Bill’s hair. In the other he had the knife which we used for cutting bacon. He was trying to take Bill’s scalp, according to his promise the evening before.

I took the knife away from the kid and told him to go back to sleep. He did so. But from that moment on Bill knew no peace. He did not close his eyes in sleep as long as that boy was with us. I could not

sleep myself. I remembered that Red Chief had promised to burn me in the fire at sunrise. I wasn't nervous or afraid but I could not sleep. So I sat up and smoked my pipe.

'Why are you getting up so early, Sam?' asked Bill.

'Oh, I want a smoke,' said I, 'that's all!'

'You lie,' said Bill. 'You are afraid! He said he would burn you at sunrise. And you are afraid he will do it. And he will if he finds a match. What shall we do, Sam? Do you think anybody will pay us money to have this little devil back home?'

'Of course,' I said, 'parents love their kids even if they are little devils. Now, Bill, you and the Chief get up and cook some breakfast. I'll go up to the top of the mountain to look around.'

From the top of the mountain I looked down at the town. I saw the streets very clearly. They were very quiet. I did not see any parents running around, looking for their son. And I did not see any policemen arresting anybody for kidnapping a kid. Everything was quiet. Maybe, I said to myself, they have not yet discovered that the boy has been kidnapped.

When I returned to the cave I saw a frightened Bill standing with his back to the wall. The boy was going to hit him with a large stone.

'He put a hot potato down my back,' explained Bill. 'Then he pressed the potato to my back with his foot. So I had to box his ears.'

I took the stone away from the boy and told him and Bill to make peace.

'You'll be sorry for that,' said the boy to Bill. 'Nobody has ever hit the Red Chief. Those who tried, had to pay for it...'

After breakfast the boy took something out of his pocket. It was a sling. Then he went out of the cave.

‘What is he up to now?’ said Bill nervously. ‘Is he going to run away, Sam?’

‘No fear of that,’ I said. ‘He doesn’t look like a boy who likes to stay at home. Quite the contrary. And he is having a good time here. But now we must make our plans to get the ransom for him. I don’t think his father has noticed his disappearance yet. Maybe he thinks the boy is sleeping at his aunt’s house. She lives a little way from him. But to-day they will discover that he has disappeared. We must send a letter to his father to-night, demanding the two thousand dollars for the boy’s return.’

At that moment we heard a kind of war-cry. It came from Red Chief who was sending a shot from his sling.

A stone as big as an egg hit Bill behind his left ear. He fell across the fire which we had made to cook our breakfast. I dragged him out of the fire and threw cold water on his head for half an hour. At last Bill opened his eyes.

‘Take it easy, Bill,’ I said. ‘You will be all right soon.’

‘Please, Sam, please,’ said Bill, ‘do not leave me here alone!’

I went out and caught the boy. I shook him until his freckles rattled.

‘If you don’t stop doing such things,’ I said, ‘I’ll take you home at once. Now, are you going to be good, or not?’

‘I was only playing,’ he said, ‘I didn’t want to hit him. I’ll be good, Snake-eye. Don’t send me home. May I play the Black Scout to-day?’

‘What kind of game is it?’ I asked. ‘I don’t know it. Now I am going away on business for some time. You play with Mr. Bill to-day.’

Come in and make peace with him. Say you are sorry that you have hit him. Do what I tell you, or you will go home at once!

Red Chief and Bill shook hands and made peace. I took Bill aside and told him I was going to send a letter to the boy's father from the nearest post office. In the letter we shall demand the ransom of two thousand dollars and tell him how to pay the money.

'You know, Sam,' said Bill, 'that I have always stood by you. I have helped you in everything you did. I have never been afraid of the police or anything till we kidnapped this two-legged sky-rocket. The more I stay with him the more nervous I become. Please, don't leave me with him for a long time!'

'I'll be back in the afternoon,' I said. 'Play with the kid and be kind to him. And now let's write the letter.'

We took paper and pencil and began to write the letter. Bill asked me to make the ransom fifteen hundred dollars instead of two thousand. He was afraid old Dorset would not pay two thousand dollars for the 'freckled wild cat'. That is what he called the boy.

'You will get a thousand and I will take only five hundred,' he said.

This is what we wrote:

'Ebenezer Dorset,

We are hiding your boy in a place which is very far from your town. Don't look for him. It is useless. Neither you nor the police can find him. So, don't try! You can have him back only on these terms: We demand fifteen hundred dollars for his return. If you agree – write a note and send it with your messenger to-night at half past eight. A little way from the wood there are three large trees on the road. There is a fence opposite these trees. And at the foot of the

fence-post opposite the third tree your messenger will find a small paper box.

He must put the letter with your answer in that box and go back at once. At midnight you must put the money into the same paper box.

If you do not do as we ask you to do – you will never see your boy again. If you pay the money – it will take us only three hours to bring him back.

Two Desperate Men.’

I addressed the letter to Ebenezer Dorset, and put it into my pocket. As I was leaving, the boy came up to me and said:

‘Snake-eye, you said I could play the Black Scout while you are away.’

‘Play it, of course,’ said I. ‘Mr. Bill will play with you. What kind of game is it?’

‘I am the Black Scout and I have to ride a horse. I am tired of playing Indian... I want to be the Black Scout.’

‘But what am I to do?’ asked Bill.

‘You are the horse,’ said the boy. ‘Get down on your hands and knees and I’ll ride on you.’

‘How far are you going to ride?’ asked Bill.

‘Ninety miles,’ was the answer.

‘Ninety miles!’ said Bill. ‘For Heaven’s sake, Sam, hurry back. Return as quickly as you can. I’m sorry we didn’t ask for a thousand dollars only!’

I walked to the town. While posting the letter at the post office I listened to the people’s talk. A man was telling his friend that old Ebenezer Dorset’s son had been lost or kidnapped. That was all I wanted to know. I posted the letter.

When I got back to the cave I could find neither Bill nor the boy. So I lighted my pipe and sat down to have a rest.

At the end of half an hour I saw Bill. He was walking softly towards the cave. Behind him I saw the boy walking as softly as Bill. He was smiling. Bill stopped, took off his hat. He was hot. The boy also stopped about three yards behind him.

‘Sam,’ said Bill, ‘you may think I am a bad comrade, but I couldn’t help it. You know I used to take part in many dangerous plans. You know I have always stood by you and was of great help to you in everything you did. But this time I couldn’t help it... The boy is gone. I have sent him home. Everything is lost. My patience has come to an end.’

‘What’s the matter, Bill?’ I asked him.

‘He rode me,’ said Bill. ‘He rode me ninety miles. Then he gave me oats to eat. And it was not real oats of course, – it was earth. And then for an hour he asked me questions and I had to explain why there is nothing in holes; why a road runs in both directions; why grass is green. So at the end of two hours I took him by the ear and dragged him down the mountain. On the way down he kicked my legs black and blue from the knees down. He bit my hand so hard that I have to use some iodine now. But I am glad to say he is gone. He is gone home. I showed him the road to the town and kicked him so hard that he fell down. I am sorry we have lost the ransom. But we had to choose: either the ransom or Bill Driscoll goes to the madhouse.’ There was peace and happiness in Bill’s face.

‘Bill,’ I said, ‘is your heart strong?’

‘I think so,’ said Bill, ‘why do you ask?’

‘If your heart is strong,’ said I, ‘you may turn around and look.’

Bill turned around and saw the boy. As soon as he saw him he sat down on the ground. I raised him with difficulty. For an hour I was afraid for his mind. It took me a long time to explain that there was still hope. I told him we would get the ransom that night and go away at sunrise.

Some time passed and Bill was able to give the boy a weak smile. He also promised to play war with him.

I acted according to our plan. I went to the three trees in the road. At half-past eight I was already in the tree, waiting for the messenger. I had had to climb up the tree because there were open fields on all sides. I was afraid to be seen walking up to the tree.

Soon a young boy rode up to the trees on a bicycle. He found the paper box at the foot of the fence-post and put an envelope into it. Then he rode away. I waited for an hour. When I was sure that no one was looking I got down from the tree. I took the envelope and ran back to the cave as fast as I could. I opened the envelope and took out the note. It was written in pen. I read it to Bill. This is what Ebenezer Dorset wrote:

‘Two Desperate Men.

Gentlemen, I have received your letter to-day by post. You ask me for fifteen hundred dollars’ ransom for the return of my son Johnny. I think you are asking too much for him. That is why I am making you a counter-proposition and I hope you will agree to it. You bring Johnny home and pay me two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and I agree to take him off your hands. I advise you to bring him back at night because of the neighbours. They are sure he is lost. If they see you bringing him back, – they may kill you.

Yours,

Ebenezer Dorset.’

‘God!’ said I, ‘the old man is mad...’

Then I looked at Bill and stopped. I had never seen such miserable eyes.

‘Sam,’ said Bill, ‘what’s two hundred and fifty dollars, after all? We have the money. One more night with the boy and you will have to take me to the madhouse. I think we must agree to Mr. Dorset’s kind proposition. Oh, Sam, please, let us pay the money and go away from here!’

‘To tell you the truth, Bill,’ I said, ‘I am tired of our little friend too. We’ll take him home, pay the ransom and leave the town at once.’

We took Johnny home that night. We told him that his father had bought a rifle and moccasins for him. We also promised to hunt bears with him the next day.

It was twelve o’clock when we knocked at Ebenezer’s front door. He opened the door and, instead of receiving money from him, Bill put two hundred and fifty dollars into his hand.

When the boy saw that we were going to leave him at home he screamed and ran after us. His father caught him and held him.

‘How long can you hold him?’ asked Bill.

‘I’m not so strong as I used to be,’ said old Dorset, ‘but I think I can promise you ten minutes.’

‘Enough,’ said Bill. ‘In ten minutes I’ll cross the Central, Southern and Middle Western States. In fifteen minutes I’ll be in Canada.’

And although the night was very dark, and Bill was fat, and I was a much better runner than he, it took me a long time to catch up with him.

TASKS ON THE TEXT THE

The sphere of comprehension

1) Explain in English:

a ransom, to kidnap, freckles, a buggy, to box smb's ears, a sling (in the context), to stand by smb, to catch up with smb.

2) What do you think about Johnny? Are there any good features in his personality?

3) Analyze the personalities of Bill and Sam.

4) Are Sam and Bill real criminals? Do they deserve punishment, sympathy or anything else?

5) Identify and analyze examples of situational irony in the story. How do they contribute to the story's message?

6) Identify the main types of conflict in the story. How are these issues solved?

7) Explore any moral dilemmas faced by the kidnappers. What choice did they make? Was it right?

8) Identify specific techniques O. Henry uses to create humor. Give examples.

9) Analyze the story's structure. How does O. Henry build suspense through narration?

The sphere of imagination

1) Retell the story as if you are Bill, Sam, Johnny or Ebenezer Dorset.

2) Sam and Bill were so desperate that they decided to kidnap a child to get some money. Can you think up a story from their past how they got to such a life?

3) Johnny hates going to school. Imagine that you are a primary school teacher. How would you get him interested in school subjects?

4) Imagine that you are Ebenezer Dorset. What answer would you write to the desperate men who kidnapped your son?

5) Act out a conversation between Johnny and his father after Johnny was returned home.

6) What kind of a man do you think Johnny will become in the future?

The sphere of emotions

1) Johnny liked playing Indians. What role plays did you like in your childhood? What games apart from surfing the Internet do modern children like?

2) Agree/disagree with the quotation 'Parents love their children even if they are little devils.' Do you think that parents' love is always unconventional?

CUPID A LA CARTE

Jeff Peters was a man who travelled through the United States, selling cheap rings, bracelets, and other things of that kind.

Once he told me what happened to him at Guthrie, a small town in Oklahoma.

Guthrie was a boom town,' Jeff Peters began his story, and most of the difficulties of life there were due to the boom. You had to stand in line to wash your face. If it took you more than ten minutes to eat at a restaurant, you had to pay more money for the extra time. If you slept on the floor in a hotel, you had to pay as much as for a bed.

As soon as I came to the town I found a good place to eat.

It was a restaurant tent which had just been opened by Mr. Dugan and his family. The tent was decorated with placards describing good things to eat: 'Try Mother's Home-Made Biscuits', 'Hot Cakes Like Those You Ate When a Boy' and others of that kind.

Old man Dugan did not like to work. All the work in the tent was done by his wife and his daughter. Mrs. Dugan did the cooking and her daughter Mame waited at table.

As soon as I saw Mame I knew that there was only one girl in the United States – Mame Dugan. She was full of life and fun... No, you will have to believe me. Yes, there was no other girl like her. She was the only one.

I began to come to the tent to eat when most of the customers had gone and there were not many people there. Mame used to come in smiling and say: 'Hello, Jeff, why don't you come at meal-time?'

Every day I used to eat two or three dinners because I wanted to stay with Mame as long as possible.

Some time later another fellow began coming to eat after meal-time. His name was Ed Collier. He looked pleasant and talked very well. I liked him and sometimes after meals we left the tent together and talked.

'I notice you like coming to eat after mealtime,' I said to him one day.

'Well, yes,' said Collier, 'I don't like the noise, that's why I try to eat when nobody is in the tent.'

'So do I,' said I. 'Nice little girl, don't you think?'

'Yes, Mame is a very nice girl, I have noticed that,' he said.

'To tell you the truth,' I said, 'I am in love with her.'

'So am I,' answered Collier, 'and I am going to try to win her love.'

'Well,' I said, 'we'll see which of us will win the race.'

So Collier and I began the race. We came to the tent to eat three or four times a day. The more we ate the more time we could spend in the tent. And the more time we spent with Mame the more each of us hoped to win her. She was very nice to both Collier and me and she waited on each with a smile and a kind word.

One evening in September I asked Mame to take a walk with me after supper. We walked for some time and then I decided to open my heart to her. I made a long speech, telling her that I had been in love with her for a long long time; that I had enough money

for both of us; that the name of Dugan should be changed for the name of Peters, and if she says not, – then why not?

Mame didn't answer right away. Then she gave a kind of shudder and said something that surprised me very much.

'Jeff,' she said, 'I am sorry you spoke about it. I like you as well as other men who come and eat in our restaurant. But I shall never marry anyone of you. Do you know what a man is in my eyes? He is a machine for eating beefsteak and ham-and-eggs, and cakes and biscuits. He is a machine for eating and nothing more. For two years I have watched them. Men eat, eat, eat! A man is only something that is sitting in front of a knife and fork and plate at the table. When I think of men I see only their mouths moving up and down, eating, eating. No matter what they think of themselves, – they are only eating machines. No, Jeff! I do not want to marry a man and see him at the table eating his breakfast in the morning, eating his dinner at noon and eating his supper in the evening. Always eating, eating, eating!'

'But, Mame,' I said, 'you are making a mistake. Men don't always eat.'

'As far as I know them they do, they eat all the time. No, I'll tell you what I am going to do. There is a girl named Susie Foster in Terre Haute. She is a good friend of mine. She waits at table in the railroad restaurant. Poor Susie hates men worse than I do, because he men at railroad stations do not eat, they gobble, as they have little time for their meals. They try to gobble and flirt at the same time. It's terrible! Susie and I have made a plan. We are saving money. When we save enough we are going to buy a small cottage. We are going to live together in that cottage and grow flowers for the market. And as long

as we live we are not going to let any man with an appetite come near our cottage.'

'Do girls never eat?' I asked.

'No, they don't! They nibble a little sometimes. That's all.'

'I thought they liked candy...'

'For heaven's sake, change the subject,' said Mame.

I did not know what to do. I could not stop eating and I could not stop loving Mame. I had a good appetite and had to eat several times a day. So I continued to come to the tent hoping that Mame would be sorry for what she had said. But each time I put some food into my mouth I felt that I was losing my chance of winning Mame's love. The more I ate – the less chance I had.

I was sure that Collier had also spoken to Mame and got the same answer, because one day he ordered only a cup of coffee and a biscuit. He nibbled it like a girl in the parlor. As soon as I saw that I also ordered a cup of coffee and a biscuit.

The next day both Collier and I again ordered coffee and biscuits for breakfast. But then old Dugan came to our table with ham and eggs and other good things to eat.

'What is the matter, gentlemen?' he asked with a smile. 'I'm afraid you have lost your appetite? You should eat more or you will lose your health.'

So Collier and I began eating more food again. I noticed that my appetite had never been so great as at that time – I ate and ate in spite of Mame who was there. I am sure she hated me for eating so much. Some time after I discovered that Collier had played a trick on me. He and I used to take drinks together. Well. Ed Collier had bribed the bartender to put a little Appetite Bitters in every glass of

whisky I drank. That's why I ate more than before. But another trick that he played on me was harder to forget.

One day Collier did not come to eat at the tent. A man told me he had left the town that morning. A few days before he left Collier had given me a big bottle of fine whisky. I am sure now that it also had some Appetite Bitters in it. My appetite grew and grew. I ate more and more every day. In Mame's eyes I was simply an animal.

About a week after Collier had left, a kind of museum or exhibition came to the town. A tent was put up near the railroad. A lot of people went to see the freak show.

One evening when I asked for Mame her mother said that she and Thomas, her younger brother, had gone to the show. The same thing happened three evenings that week. On Saturday I caught her on her way and took her home. We sat down on the steps and talked for some time. I saw that Mame looked different. Her eyes were shining and her look was softer.

'Why do you go to the show three times a week?' I asked her. 'Are you so fond of freaks?'

'Oh, yes,' said Mame, 'I like freaks. When I see them I forget my work and the tent.'

'What kind of freaks are there?' I asked. 'Do they eat?'

'Not all of them. Some of them are wax.'

'Look out, then. You may get stuck,' said I, trying to joke.

Mame blushed. I didn't know what to think.

On Monday I did not find Mame in the restaurant again. She had gone to the freak show with Thomas.

‘Well,’ I said to myself, ‘I’ll have to go there and see for myself. What kind of a show can it be, that Mame goes to see three times a week?’

Next day before starting out for the show tent I called for Mame and found she was not at home. But she was not at the show with Thomas this time, because Thomas was at home.

‘What will you give me, Jeff,’ he said, ‘if I tell you something?’

‘Anything you wish,’ I said.

‘Mame is in love with a freak at the show,’ he said. ‘I don’t like him but she does. She likes him very much.

I know because I heard what they said to each other. I thought it would interest you. Oh, Jeff, could you give me two dollars for what I told you? I want to buy...’

I gave Thomas two dollars for the information.

‘Thank you, Thomas, thank you ... a freak, you said. Can you describe him to me?’

‘You can read about him if you like,’ said Thomas. ‘He took a yellow programme out of his pocket and read: HE DOES NOT EAT. I think that is why my sister is in love with him. He is going to starve for forty-nine days. To-day is the sixth day.’

I looked at the name on the programme: ‘Professor Eduardo Collieri.’

‘Ah!’ said I, ‘that is not so bad, Ed Collier, I give you credit for the trick. But I am not going to give you Mame, oh, no!’

I went to the show tent. As I went up to the back door a man came out and by the light of the stars I saw it was Professor Eduardo Collieri himself. I caught him by the arm.

'Hello, freak,' I said. 'Let me have a look at you! How do you like being a professor?'

'Jeff Peters,' said Collier, in a weak voice. 'Let me go or you will be sorry! I am in a hurry! Hands off!'

'Oh no, Eddie,' I answered, holding him hard. 'You can't fight me now. You have got a lot of nerve, that's true. But you also have an empty stomach. You are as weak as a cat.'

That was true. He was very weak and could not fight.

'Yes, Jeff, you are right. I made a mistake thinking I could go hungry for forty-nine days. Our conflict is over. You have won. You will find Miss Dugan inside. She is a fine girl. I am sorry that I've lost. I starved for six days and began to understand that love and business and family and religion are only words when a man is starving. I love Mame Dugan, but I can't go hungry. An empty stomach is a terrible thing. Now I'm going to eat tons of beefsteak and hundreds of eggs. Excuse me now, Jeff, I am in a hurry to get to a restaurant. Good-bye!'

'I hope you'll like your dinner, Ed,' I said, 'and don't be angry with me!'

He disappeared at once, and I went inside the tent. I found Mame there and asked her to come for a walk with me. She did not say yes or no, but looked around the tent. I knew she was looking for her freak.

'I'll tell you some news,' I said. 'The freak that lives on wind has just run away. At this moment he is having a big meal at some restaurant, eating pork and beefsteak.'

'Are you speaking about Ed Collier?' asked Mame.

'Yes,' I answered. 'I met him outside the tent a few minutes ago and he told me he was going out to eat all the food in the world.'

'Jeff,' said Mame, 'don't say anything bad about Ed Collier. He stopped eating only to please me and I like him for this. Could you do what he did?'

'I don't know, Mame,' I answered. 'I can't go hungry for a long time. I have to eat, I can't help it.'

'Ed Collier and I are good friends,' she said, 'the same as you and I. I gave him the same answer that I gave you: I shall not marry anybody. I liked to be with Ed and I liked to talk to him. It was pleasant to know that here was a man who stopped eating because of me.'

'Are you in love with him?' I asked.

It was a mistake of course to ask this question. All of us make mistakes sometimes.

Mame got angry. 'You have no right to ask me such a thing, Jeff,' she said. 'If you go hungry for forty-nine days, – maybe I shall answer it.'

So, even after he had disappeared Collier was still in my way.

And then my business came to an end and I was ready to leave Guthrie. I decided to go to Oklahoma City. I came to the Dugans to say good-bye. I was surprised to see Mame in a blue travelling dress, holding her little suit-case in her hand. Her friend who lived in Terre Haute was going to get married next Thursday. Mame was leaving for a week's visit to be present at the wedding. I offered to take her there in my waggon. She agreed and thirty minutes later we started for Terre Haute.

It was a fine morning. Mame was full of talk, and I was full of joy. Not a word was said either about Ed Collier or about food. But at noon Mame looked and found that she had forgotten to take the

basket with the food. I did not say anything because I was afraid to talk to Mame about food.

And then I discovered that I had lost my way. I think it happened because of Mame: she talked and I listened and didn't look where I was going. Then it began to rain. We were both very tired. Then we saw a small house a little way from the road and decided to take a rest there.

The house had two empty rooms. There was nobody in them. Mame and I sat on the waggon seats on the floor. Mame was having a good time, she laughed and talked all the time. It was a change for her.

When it became dark I brought my coat and blankets from the waggon and made a bed for Mame on the floor. She lay down and I sat in the other room smoking and thinking about her. Then I fell asleep.

I opened my eyes at sunrise. Mame stood looking at me.

'Good morning, Jeff!' she cried. 'I'm so hungry! I could eat a...'

I looked up at her and laughed. It seemed so funny to me, that I laughed and laughed. When I stopped and looked at Mame, she was sitting with her back to me.

'Don't be angry, Mame,' I said. 'I could not help it. I laughed because I was glad to see you.'

'Don't tell me any lies, sir,' said Mame very angrily. 'I know what you were laughing about... Why, Jeff, look outside!'

I opened the little window and looked out. The water in the river had risen. The land on which the house stood became an island in the middle of a sea of yellow water. And it was still raining hard. All we could do was to stay and wait.

We were hungry. We were very hungry. I imagined a table full of food. Very hungry people always see pictures of food in their mind.

Night came on again. The river was still rising and the rain was still falling. I looked at Mame and noticed a hungry look in her eyes. The poor girl was very hungry – maybe for the first time in her life.

‘What would you like to eat, Mame?’ I asked her.

‘Beefsteak and potatoes and ham and eggs,’ she answered. ‘Oh, Jeff, I could eat anything! I am so hungry!’

Next morning we found that the rain had stopped and the water around the house had gone. We found the road with difficulty. In two hours we were in Oklahoma City. The first thing we saw was a big restaurant. We hurried inside.

I ordered a banquet for ten, not for two, I looked across the table at Mame and smiled, because I remembered something. Mame was looking at the food as a boy looks at his first watch. Then she looked at me, and two big tears came into her eyes.

‘Jeff,’ she said. ‘I have been a foolish girl ... I did not understand many things. But that is over now, I understand now that men get hungry every day like this. They are big and strong and they work hard. They must eat in order to work. You said once ... that is ... you asked me ... you wanted to be my ... well, Jeff, if you still love me – I will be glad to have you always sitting across the table from me. Now, give me something to eat, quick, please!’

TASKS ON THE TEXT

The sphere of comprehension

1) Explain in English:

a la carte, a placard, to wait on smb, to gobble, to nibble, to play a trick on smb, wax, to have a lot of nerve, be in the way.

2) Say if the statements are true or false. Correct false ones.

- a) Most difficulties in Guthrie were due to poor service.
- b) The restaurant tent was opened long ago.
- c) Jeff came to the restaurant after mealtime.
- d) Jeff was glad to meet Collier.
- e) Mame surprised Jeff with her speech.
- f) Mame decided to go to live in the cottage.
- g) Collier went hungry to please Mame.
- h) Collier understood that hunger was the strongest feeling.
- i) Jeff and Mame had a good meal on the way to Oklahoma.
- j) The trip to Oklahoma was full of joy.

3) Can you translate and explain the title of the story?

4) There is a theory that eating helps people solve their psychological problems. What problems do you think Jeff tries to solve?

5) Why did Mame think that men were only eating machines?

6) Why did Jeff begin to think that he was losing his chance?

7) Why did Jeff decide to go to Oklahoma City?

8) Why did Mame say that she had been a foolish girl?

9) What moral questions are raised in the story? Do the characters act ethically?

10) Read about O. Henry's life and discuss how his experiences might have influenced this story.

The sphere of imagination

1) Retell the story as if you are Jeff Peters, Ed Collier or Mame.

2) Agree/disagree with the quotations

– 'Men eat, eat and eat! A man is only something that is sitting in front of a knife and fork and plate at the table.' Do you think that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach?

– 'I began to understand that love and business and family and religion are only words when a man is starving.'

3) In the middle of the story Jeff mentioned one more trick by Collier. Did you guess what it was?

4) What advice can you give to Jeff to win the girl?

5) Create a storyboard or comic strip illustrating the story's plot.

The sphere of emotions

1) Jeff Peters was attracted by Mr. Dugan's restaurant. What restaurants and cafes attract you? Do you like them only because of the food?

2) Ed decided not to eat for 49 days because of love. What can you do for love?

3) Do you think hunger is stronger than love? Can hunger and love be compared as feelings?

THE LAST LEAF

In a little district west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called "places." These "places" make strange angles and curves. One Street crosses itself a time or two. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself coming back, without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth-century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Sixth Avenue, and became a "colony."

At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio. "Johnsy" was familiar for Joanna. One was from Maine; the other from California. They had met at the table of an Eighth Street "Delmonico's," and found their tastes in art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the joint studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy fingers. Over on the east side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown "places."

Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by California

zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy, gray eyebrow.

‘She has one chance in – let us say, ten,’ he said, as he shook down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. ‘And that chance is for her to want to live. Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?’

‘She – she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples some day.’ said Sue.

‘Paint? – bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking twice – a man for instance?’

‘A man?’ said Sue, with a jew's-harp twang in her voice. ‘Is a man worth - but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind.’

‘Well, it is the weakness, then,’ said the doctor. ‘I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession I subtract 50 per cent from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in-five chance for her, instead of one in ten.’

After the doctor had gone Sue went into the workroom and cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into Johnsy's room with her drawing board, whistling ragtime.

Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes, with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep.

She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horseshow riding trousers and a monocle of the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.

Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting – counting backward.

'Twelve,' she said, and little later 'eleven'; and then 'ten,' and 'nine'; and then 'eight' and 'seven', almost together.

Sue look solicitously out of the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

'What is it, dear?' asked Sue.

'Six,' said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. 'They're falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It made my head ache to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now.'

'Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie.'

'Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go, too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?'

'Oh, I never heard of such nonsense,' complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. 'What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? And you used to love that vine so, you naughty girl. Don't be a goosey. Why, the doctor told me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were – let's see exactly what he said – he said the chances were ten to one! Why, that's almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the street cars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork chops for her greedy self.'

'You needn't get any more wine,' said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window. 'There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I'll go, too.'

'Johnsy, dear,' said Sue, bending over her, 'will you promise me to keep your eyes closed, and not look out the window until I am done working? I must hand those drawings in by tomorrow. I need the light, or I would draw the shade down.'

'Couldn't you draw in the other room?' asked Johnsy, coldly.

'I'd rather be here by you,' said Sue. 'Beside, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves.'

'Tell me as soon as you have finished,' said Johnsy, closing her eyes, and lying white and still as a fallen statue, 'because I want to see the last one fall. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of thinking. I

want to turn loose my hold on everything, and go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves.'

'Try to sleep,' said Sue. 'I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move 'til I come back.'

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelo's Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along with the body of an imp. Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mistress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in any one, and who regarded himself as especial mastiff-in-waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and how she feared she would, indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away, when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

'Vass!' he cried. 'Is dere people in de world mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey drop off from a confounded vine? I haf not heard of such a thing. No, I will not bose as a model for your fool hermit-dunderhead. Vy do you allow dot silly pusiness to come in der brain of her? Ach, dot poor leetle Miss Yohnsy.'

'She is very ill and weak,' said Sue, 'and the fever has left her mind morbid and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr. Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn't. But I think you are a horrid old – old flibbertigibbet.'

'You are just like a woman!' yelled Behrman. 'Who said I will not bose? Go on. I come mit you. For half an hour I haf been trying to say dot I am ready to bose. Gott! dis is not any blace in which one so goot as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Some day I vill baint a masterpiece, and ve shall all go away. Gott! yes.'

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the shade down to the windowsill, and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade.

'Pull it up; I want to see,' she ordered, in a whisper.

Wearily Sue obeyed.

But, lo! After the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the

brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last one on the vine. Still dark green near its stem, with its serrated edges tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from the branch some twenty feet above the ground.

‘It is the last one,’ said Johnsy. ‘I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall today, and I shall die at the same time.’

‘Dear, dear!’ said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow, ‘think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?’

But Johnsy did not answer. The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night the north wind was again loosed, while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down from the low Dutch eaves.

When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the shade be raised.

The ivy leaf was still there.

Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.

‘I've been a bad girl, Sudie,’ said Johnsy. ‘Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and – no; bring me a hand-mirror first, and

then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook.'

And hour later she said:

'Sudie, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples.'

The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go into the hallway as he left.

'Even chances,' said the doctor, taking Sue's thin, shaking hand in his. 'With good nursing you'll win.' And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is – some kind of an artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man, and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital to-day to be made more comfortable.'

The next day the doctor said to Sue: 'She's out of danger. You won. Nutrition and care now – that's all.'

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woollen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.

'I have something to tell you, white mouse,' she said. 'Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in the hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn't imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colors mixed on it, and – look out the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind

blew? Ah, darling, it's Behrman's masterpiece – he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell.'

TASKS ON THE TEXT

The sphere of comprehension

1) Explain in English:
to traverse, a gable, congenial, zephyr, to swagger, to pave the way, a goosey.

2) What are the themes of this story?

3) Choose the correct variant.

1. What does Sue do?

- a) She is an artist.
- b) She is a singer.
- c) She is an English teacher.
- d) She is a dancer.

2. Who is Behrman?

- a) a doctor
- b) a musician
- c) a painter
- d) an actor

3. Who gets sick first?

- a) Sue
- b) one of their neighbors
- c) Johnsy
- d) Behrman

4. Who paints the last leaf?

- a) Johnsy
- b) their friend
- c) Behrman
- d) Sue

5. What is the last leaf symbol of?

- a) fortitude
- b) death
- c) a new life
- d) a chance

6. Why did Behrman paint the leaf?

- a) Behrman was retired and he had free time to paint the leaf.
- b) Old Behrman had been working on a painting of a leaf for many years.
- c) Behrman wanted to paint a masterpiece and he wanted to protect Johnsy.
- d) Sue asked him to paint the leaf.

4) Is there a real friendship between Sue and Johnsy?

Give specific examples from the text.

5) What are the conflicts in "The Last Leaf"?

6) Sue is lying about Johnsy's chances to survive. Explain why she is twisting the doctor's statement.

The sphere of imagination

1) Retell the story as if you are Johnsy, Sue, Mr. Behrman or the doctor.

2) What would have happened if Mr. Berhman hadn't painted the leaf?

3) What would have happened if Mr. Berhman had stayed alive?

4) Why do you think the author decides to personify the disease by calling it "Mr. Pneumonia"?

5) Imagine that you are the director of the film based on this story. How would you make this film? Which actors will play in it?

6) Think up a continuation of this story or your own unexpected ending.

The sphere of emotions

1) Are you ready to sacrifice yourself for somebody?

2) Who is your favorite character? Why?

ЗАКЛЮЧЕНИЕ

Чтение – один из самых эффективных способов развития памяти, воображения и совершенствования владения иностранным языком. Поэтому использование художественной литературы, созданной на изучаемом языке, позволяет преподавателям познакомить студентов с иноязычной культурой и углубить знания.

Знакомство с произведениями классика американской литературы О. Генри и выполнение заданий по ним способствуют развитию языковых навыков учащихся, культуроведческих компетенции, формированию творческого и аналитического мышления.

Задания практикума охватывают все сферы читательского восприятия, их выполнение помогает чувствовать себя увереннее в различных коммуникативных ситуациях. Мотивирующие элементы, такие как юмор и неожиданные концовки рассказов, делают процесс обучения более увлекательным и запоминающимся.

Желаем успехов в изучении английского языка!

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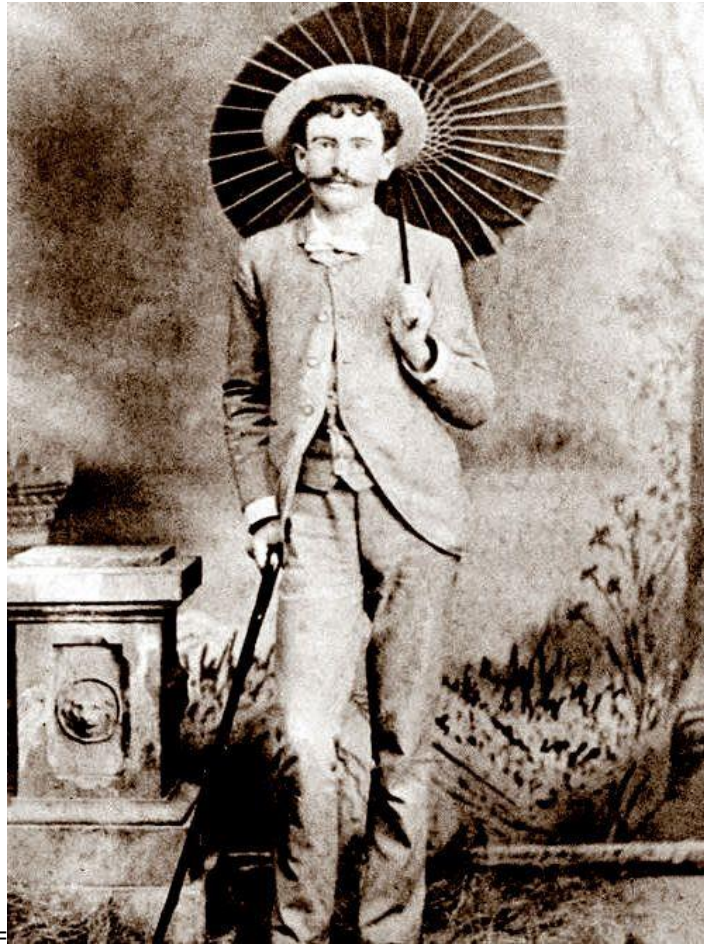
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