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# READING COMPREHENSION BOOK (3)



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## **An English-Speaking World**

*The Story of English* by R McCrum, W Cran, and R MacNeil

1. On September 5, 1977, the American spacecraft *Voyager One* blasted-off on its historic mission to Jupiter and beyond. On board, the scientists, who knew that *Voyager* would on day spin through distant star systems, had installed a recorded greeting from the people of the planet Earth. Preceding a brief message in fifty-five languages for the 'people' from outer space, the record plays a statement from the Secretary-General of the United Nations—in English.
2. The rise of English is a remarkable success story. When Julius Caesar landed in Britain nearly two thousand years ago, English did not exist. Approximately fifteen hundred years later, at the end of the sixteenth century, during William Shakespeare's time, English was the native speech of between five and seven million Englishmen and was confined to the island of Great Britain.
3. Four hundred years later, the contrast is extraordinary. Between 1600 and present, in armies, navies, companies and expeditions, the speakers of English travelled into every corner of the globe, carrying their language and culture with



them. Today, English is used by at least 750 million people, and barely half of those speak it as a mother tongue. Some estimates have put that figure closer to one billion. Whatever the total, English at the end of the twentieth century is more widely scattered, more widely spoken and written, than any other language has ever been. It has become *the* language of the planet, the first truly global language.

4. The statistics of English are astonishing. Of all the world's languages (which now number some 2700), it is arguably the richest in vocabulary. The "Oxford English Dictionary" lists about 500,000 words; and a further half million scientific and technical terms remain uncatalogued. According to traditional estimates, neighboring German has a vocabulary of about 185,000 words and French fewer than 100,000. About 350 million people use the English vocabulary as a mother tongue: about one-tenth of the world's population. Three-quarters of the world's mail, and its telexes and cables, are in English. So are more than half the world's technical and scientific periodicals. English is the medium for 80 per cent of the information stored in the world's computers. Nearly half of all business deals in Europe are conducted in English.
5. The remarkable story of how English spread within predominantly English-speaking societies like the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand is not unique. The truly significant

development which has occurred only in the last one hundred years or so, is the use of English by three or four hundred million people for whom it is not a native language. English has become a second language in countries like India, Nigeria or Singapore where it is used for administration, broadcasting and education. In these countries, English is a vital alternative language, often unifying huge territories and populations. When Rajiv Gandhi appealed for an end to the violence that broke out after the assassination of his mother, Mrs. Indira Gandhi., he went on television and spoke to his people in English. In parts of Africa, seizures of power are announced in English. Then there is English as a foreign language, used in countries (like Holland or Yugoslavia) where it is backed up by a tradition of English teaching, or where it has been more recently adopted, Senegal for instance. Here it is used to have contact with people in other countries, usually to promote trade and scientific progress, but to the benefit of international communication generally.

## COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions:

1. What made the scientists install a recorded message on the spacecraft *Voyager One*? What is the point of doing this?

---

2. How many languages was the message recorded in? In what language did the Secretary-General of the United Nations record the statement he read?

---

3. Was English spoken anywhere outside the island of Britain at the time of Shakespeare? How many people spoke the language then?

---

4. What is the total number of vocabulary items is English estimated approximately to have?

---

5. How many languages are spoken in the world today?

---

6. Why is Senegal mentioned in the article? What has it done that proves a point the writer makes in the article?

---

7. What countries, quoted in the article, have adopted English as their second language?

---

*B. Find the word in the text that means the following:*

1. (paragraph one)

launch, take off, lift off: \_\_\_\_\_

2. (paragraph one)

put in place, placed: \_\_\_\_\_

3. (paragraph one)

take place or happen before something else: \_\_\_\_\_

4. (paragraph two)

restricted, limited, stay within: \_\_\_\_\_

5. (paragraph five)

used officially as equivalent to mother tongue: \_\_\_\_\_

6. (paragraph five)

used for some communication purposes but not officially accepted by government offices : \_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION II**

### **(Reports and Investigations)**

A collection of reports and investigations of the baffling phenomenon of the *Bermuda Triangle* followed by an heartening report on friendly *Dolphins* then another of our increasing lack of privacy in our modern marvel world of technological gadgets, and finally a report on the requirement of modern education.

## Graveyard of the Atlantic (Newsweek, 1974)

### Preparing to read:

1. Where is Bermuda?

In the Atlantic Ocean.

2. What do you think the relation between the title "Graveyard of Atlantic" and Bermuda is?

Many ships and airplanes have disappeared without a trace while passing through Bermuda.

3. What do you know about "the Bermuda triangle"? Why is it called by this name?

I know nothing. Because it resembles a triangle on the map.

3. Do you know of you any place or places in the world that are associated with strange unexplainable phenomena? Do you believe that there must be a logical explanation, or are there things in the world that defy science and logical thinking? Why?

---

---

4. Do you think that stories of unexplainable disappearances are usually of the past, or can they still happen today?

---

As you read look for answers to the following questions:

1. What is common for all the planes and ships that disappear in the triangle?

---

2. How did the scientists explain this phenomenon?

---

3. What other name is given to this "triangle"?

---

4. What did Christopher Columbus notice when he entered that stretch of the Atlantic? Is it still visible today?

---

5. What is the largest ship that has disappeared in the triangle? How heavy it was, and when did it disappear?

---

6. What is the Navy's position regarding the phenomena?

---

7. Where does Richard Winer think the many disappeared crews are now?

---

8. What does NOAA believe is the explanation of the strange phenomenon?

---

## Graveyard of the Atlantic

(Newsweek, 1974)

1. At 2 P.M. on Dec. 5, 1945, five Navy bomber planes took off in perfect flying weather from a Naval Air Station on a routine training mission over the Atlantic Ocean. Less than two hours later, the flight commander radioed that he was "completely lost." Then there was silence. A rescue plane was sent to search for the missing aircraft and it, too, disappeared. Six planes and 27 men vanished that day without a trace. Despite one of history's most extensive search efforts, involving more than 300 planes and dozens of ships, the Navy was unable to discover even floating wreckage or a telltale oil slick.

2. This is just one of the many chilling stories told of "The Bermuda Triangle," a mysterious area of the Atlantic Ocean stretching south from Bermuda to the Florida coast and Puerto Rico. During the past 30 years, the triangle has claimed the lives of some 1000 seamen and pilots. Among sailors, it is known as "The Triangle of Death," and "The Graveyard of the Atlantic" because of the mysterious calms, waterspouts, and sudden storms that have bothered seafarers in its water. When he entered this stretch of the Atlantic, Christopher Columbus noted curious glowing streaks of "white water." The



mysterious patches of light and foam are still visible today and are so bright that they have been seen by U.S. astronauts from outer space.

3. The triangle has frequently aroused considerable public interest through three hot-selling books, a television documentary and a special exposition at the Library of Congress. None of these investigations has produced convincing answers to the mystery of the triangle, but there is no shortage of interesting theories. Some scientists and popular authors go so far as to suggest that the triangle is the hunting ground of extraterrestrial beings in search of human specimens for their "cosmic zoos."
4. Whatever the truth may be, planes and ships disappear in the triangle with eerie regularity. On July 3, 1947, a U.S. Army C-54 Superfort disappeared 100 miles off Bermuda without broadcasting any word of difficulty. An immediate search over 100,000 square miles of sea failed to turn up a single piece of wreckage. On Jan. 30, 1948, a British airliner, the Star Tiger, vanished over the triangle with 31 passengers and crew aboard. A year later, the Star Tiger's sister plane, the Star Ariel, disappeared en route to Jamaica. Seventy-two search planes, plus dozens of ships, failed to turn up any sign of the missing aircraft.

9/5

5. One of the largest ships claimed by the mysterious triangle was the U.S.S. Cyclops, a 500-foot coaling ship that disappeared on March 4, 1918. Investigations revealed no evidence of foul weather, no messages for help, no wreckage and no sign of the 309 men aboard. Stranger yet are the numerous "ghost" ships that have been found floating crewless within the triangle. On one weird occasion in 1881, the cargo ship Ellen Austin discovered a schooner, sails flapping in the wind, a full cargo of mahogany intact, but no sign of human life. The captain of the Ellen Austin installed a new crew to sail it, but two days later, during a rough storm, the two ships temporarily lost sight of each other. When the captain again boarded the schooner, he found his crew had disappeared. After a second crew was assigned, the ship was again lost in a fog bank. This time, no trace of the schooner—or the crew—was ever found.

9-2

6. Officially, the U.S. Navy does not recognize the triangle as a danger zone and the U.S. Coast Guard is convinced that "the majority of disappearances can be attributed to the area's unique environmental features." These include the swift Gulf Stream current, the unexplored underwater canyons of the Atlantic and the often violent weather patterns within the mystery zone. Then too, the triangle is one of only two places on earth where a compass needle points to true rather than magnetic north. (The other is "The Devil's Sea," an equally treacherous

هنا كبح العنبر

zone in the Pacific, southeast of Japan.) Thus, a navigator who does not remember this may find himself well off course.<sup>9/3</sup> "There are mysterious and strange things going on out there," admits Richard Winer, author of *The Devil's Triangle*, a paperback that has sold 500,000 copies in three months. "But I believe that all the answers lie in human error, mechanical mal-<sup>وظائف</sup> functions, freak weather or magnetic abnormalities."<sup>تفسير</sup>

7. <sup>إصدار الرضوية للمهمات والملاحة الجوية</sup> Officials of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are not so certain. "Despite efforts by the U.S. Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard," NOAA reports, "no reasonable explanation to date has been made for the vanishings." Because of these uncertainties, private investigators have sought <sup>تفسير</sup> more fanciful explanations. John Wallace Spencer, <sup>تفسير</sup> author of <sup>تفسير</sup> *Limbo of the Lost*, a paperback that has sold 1.5 million copies in fifteen months, <sup>تفسير</sup> argues that beings from outer space have <sup>تفسير</sup> established a highly advanced civilization in the unexplored depths of the Atlantic inside the triangle. There, he believes, most of the missing vessels—and their crews—may still be on display for study by these higher intelligences. "It sounds weird," Spencer admits, "until you realize that it's the only explanation that covers all the facts."

8. <sup>حوار النفس / علم النفس الغيبي / حوار مع اللاشعور</sup> To test such theories, a para-psychological institute called the Isis Center for Research and Study of the Esoteric Arts, based in Silver Springs, Md., is planning to take 300 psychics

العلماء

and scientists on a cruise into the triangle. The researchers hope to make contact with whatever "higher intelligences" may lie under the sea. A similar expedition into the Devil's Sea was made by a group of Japanese scientists in 1955. Nothing has been heard of them since.

## COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions:

1. How many people have disappeared in the triangle in the last thirty years?

1200 Seaman and Pilots have disappeared

5/6 2. What are the environmental features of the triangle that makes it unique?

the swift and stream current. the unexplored  
underwater canyons.

3. In the triangle, a compass needle points to true north rather than to magnetic north. How might this fact help explain the disappearances?

the triangle would be a treacherous zone for those who don't know

4. Richard Winer, John Wallace Spencer, and Charles Berlitz all offer theories concerning the triangle. What is your opinion of each of these theories?

I believe in science

5. What is meant by the term 'ghost ship'?

a ship with no living crew aboard

B. Decide whether the following statements are True, False, or Not Stated:

1. The Bermuda Triangle is an area of the Atlantic Ocean where a number of ships and planes have disappeared in a mysterious way. T

2. The triangle has been a source of mystery for only thirty years. F

3. In spite of great public interest in the triangle, no theory has yet been suggested that explain the disappearances. F

4. According to the article, important information regarding the disappearances came from people who lived through the experiences. N.S. no

5. Navy Pilots are reluctant to fly over the triangle. N.S.

6. Although a great deal of publicity has been given to the mystery of the triangle, officials of the U.S. government all agree that natural causes account for the disappearances. T

7. If the team from the <sup>الجزيرة</sup> Isis Center for Research and Study of the Esoteric is as successful as the team of Japanese scientists was in 1955, the mystery will be solved. F

8. The mystery hasn't been solved yet because investigators have not used modern technology in their investigations.

N.S.

9. The latest documented disappearance happened approximately 50 years ago.

N.S.

C. Find the word that means the following:

1. (paragraph one)

considerable, thorough, complete, deep: extensive

2. (paragraph one)

destruction, remnants, fragments: wreckage

3. (paragraph two)

extremely frightening, horrible, , fragments: chilling

4. (paragraph two)

sailors, boatman, seaman: seafarers

5. (paragraph three)

aliens, not from this earth: extraterrestrial beings

6. (paragraph three)

belonging to the universe: Cosmic zoo

7. (paragraph four)

creepy, frighteningly, ghostly: erie عري

8. (paragraph four)

disappear in thin air: vanish

9. (paragraph five)

sailing ship: Schooner سكوبير (ش)

10. (paragraph six)

ravine, deep valley, chasm: Canyon وادي



## **Dolphins** (Anonymous)

Preparing to read:

1. What do you expect Dolphins rescue people from?

---

2. What do you know about dolphins? Where do they live, near the shore or in the deep seas?

---

3. Are dolphins solitary animals, or do they live in groups?

---

4. Dolphins are popular animals in circuses and are loved by children of all ages. What do you think the reason for this is?

---

5. Are dolphins, by instinct, 'friendly' towards man, afraid of man, or neutral towards him?

---

6. Dolphins are known to love to 'play'. Does this tell us anything about their level of intelligence, do you think?

---

As you read look for answers to the following questions:

1. How many people are involved in the story?

---

2. How many dolphins were involved in the story?

---

3. Why do people love dolphins, according to the article?

---

4. How far had Adam swam when he saw the shark?

---

5. When was it clear to Adam that the shark was going to kill him?

---

6. What did the dolphins do?

---

7. What state is Adam in now?

---

8. What indications are there in the story that dolphins may have a 'language' and can communicate?

---

## Dolphins

(Anonymous)

1. Everybody loves dolphins. Perhaps it is their smile and their playful personality, which is so appealing. Dolphins are also very intelligent. Some scientists say that they are more intelligent than humans. There are many people who are alive today because dolphins helped them when they were in danger. It is as if the dolphins have some special telepathic<sup>1</sup> power.
2. Teenager Adam Maguire owes his life to a school of dolphins, which came to his aid one afternoon in February 1989. He was surfing near Sydney, Australia. He was quite near the beach but, while he was waiting for the next big wave, he saw a three-metre long Great White shark swimming towards him. Adam was terrified when the shark took a huge bite out of his surfboard. The shark then attacked Adam and bit him. As soon as the shark tasted Adam's blood, it was clear that it was going to kill him.
3. Luckily, some dolphins were playing in the area. The dolphins quickly swam around Adam in circles. As they did so, they leapt and splashed in the water and frightened the shark

---

<sup>1</sup> Telepathy refers to the communication of thoughts and feelings.

away. Adam, who was still losing a lot of blood, managed to swim to the beach. He went to hospital, where he had an emergency operation. He recovered, and is now able to walk – thanks to the help of the dolphins.

## COMPREHENSION

Home work

A. Select the letter of the choice that indicates the correct meaning of the first word (in italics), as it appears in context:

1. *rescue*      a. endanger      b. save      c. activate
- a. *appealing*      a. has attractive influence  
b. has positive attitude  
c. has special power
2. *owe*      a. has      b. get      c. attribute
3. *surfing*      a. swimming      b. playing sport      c. sinking
4. *shark*      a. jellyfish      b. dangerous fish  
c. dangerous water-plant
5. *leapt*      a. attacked      b. jumped  
c. produced some sounds
6. *splashed*      a. sink deeply      b. moved quickly  
c. caused water to fly
7. *managed to*      a. tried to      b. was able to      c. wanted to
8. *aid*      a. help      b. side      c. relief

B. The following information is either stated or implied in the text.  
Choose the letter of the most appropriate answer.

1. The writer's attitude towards dolphins is ...  
a. positive                      b. negative                      c. neutral
  
2. Dolphins are ...  
a. dangerous.                      b. intelligent.                      c. very nice.
  
3. a. Adam Maguire saved a dolphin from real danger.  
b. Some dolphins saved the teenager's life.  
c. Adam Maguire and the dolphins faced real danger.
  
4. Adam Maguire was terrified because ...  
a. a shark approached him.  
b. he saw no dolphins around him.  
c. the shark and the dolphins were attacking each other.
  
5. Dolphins ...  
a. love human beings who care about them.  
b. are highly sensitive to danger.  
c. have some special telepathic power.
  
6. Dolphins seems to be ...  
a. more intelligent than other animals.  
b. more intelligent than humans.  
c. the most intelligent.



**PUBLIC PLACES HAVE EYES**  
(From PC Computing)

Preparing to read:

1. What do you expect the title to mean? In what ways can public places have 'eyes'?

---

2. What do you expect these eyes to be?

---

3. What public places is the writer talking about, do you expect, and who, do you think, is watching you through these eyes?

---

4. How difficult is it, would you expect, to spy on people? Can ordinary people do it? Think of a few reasons for doing so.

---

5. What are the available devices that facilitate this spying, especially in this 'electronics' age?

---

6. Watching people is not usually called spying, but it happens in all spheres of life, albeit under different names. How would you feel if you felt that some people, or various bodies are collecting information about you—as clearly happens on the Internet?

---



7. Do you believe that, once you are inside your home and you shut your door and close your window shutters, you are safe from prying eyes? Can 'they' still get you or get to you?

---

8. Can anything be done about all the busy electronics bodies that collect information about you, especially in today's technologically advanced world? What?

---

9. Do you think that your cellular telephone conversations, once done, have disappeared for ever, or can the mobile phone service provider retrieve your conversations, their times and to whom you made them?

---

10. Does our modern advanced digital technology make it easier or harder for those interested to keep tabs on everybody in today's highly mobile society? Why do you think so?

---

---

As you read look for the following information:

1. What revelation does the first paragraph make? What do we learn from it?

---

2. Why were four employees at KEZI-TV fired?

---

3. What, do we learn, happens in every American city?

---

4. What city uses most surveillance? How many cameras were used in December 1998?

---

5. What is one of the most popular uses of video technology? Where are these videos available?

---

6. What is the advantage of using a cellular phone while driving? What possible good uses could this technology provide?

---

7. What information can automatic toll collection devices provide that manpower toll collection can't?

---

## PUBLIC PLACES HAVE EYES

(From PC Computing)

### It's Not Your Imagination: You Are Being Watched.

1. Thanks to advanced technology video cameras and micro-phones are cheap, small, powerful, and <sup>EVERYWHERE</sup> ubiquitous. Any spy shop can sell you high-powered bugging devices that can be concealed anywhere—inside a stuffed animal, for example, if you want to see how the babysitter really treats your kids. An increasing number of privately owned video cameras are aimed at public spaces too. Four employees at KEZI-TV in Eugene, Oregon, were fired for aiming the station's Sky-Cam (mounted atop a downtown bank building) into rooms at the nearby Hilton. <sup>UP TO YOU</sup>  
*للتلصق والتجسس*
2. <sup>دائماً</sup> Virtually every American city uses some form of video <sup>بشكل مكثف</sup> surveillance, and New York, predictably, is at the top of the list. In December 1998, the New York Civil Liberties Union counted 2,397 cameras focused on public places in Manhattan. One of the most popular uses of video technology is to monitor traffic on freeways, with live images available on the Internet in Seattle, San Francisco, and Phoenix, to name just a few examples.

## Video Spy

*Technology in the city*

3. In the past, law enforcement officials have doubted the usefulness of video surveillance, but improvements in technology have changed that opinion dramatically. Imaging software developed at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, for example, is capable of dramatically sharpening fuzzy images. An experimental system in London uses a network of \$96,000 cameras to compare the faces of passersby with digitized mug <sup>face</sup> shots on a central server. And a new network of 19 freeway cameras in Sacramento, California, is accurate enough to pick up individual license plate numbers and store them in a database; freeway planners want to match those numbers with motor vehicle records so they can learn where travelers are coming from and decide where to increase freeway capacity.
4. *You are being watched even in using a cell phone*  
And that's not the only electronic trail you leave in your daily travels. If you use a cell phone while driving, your phone company keeps a record of each cell with which you make contact. Technology that will soon be widely available will pinpoint the location of a caller to within 55 to 325 yards.
5. Automatic toll collection devices record the exact time your car passes through a toll booth. <sup>to collect</sup> If you use an electronic ID badge to gain access to your workplace, your employer can pinpoint when that card arrived and left. work—

*full: money you pay to use a particular road*

merits —  
demerits —

by link cars  
عبر  
عبر

presumably with you holding it. Astonishingly, some motorists are voluntarily installing a black box called Autograph, which records their movements and sends the data to their insurance companies. The payoff? As much as \$400 off a year's insurance policy. The risk? With modest advances in technology, the black boxes will be capable of capturing data about driving speeds, use of turn signals, and braking. In theory it could even act as a silent witness in the event of an accident.

### Subheading Home Invasion

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البيت

6. Think you're safe from surveillance when you get off the road and hole up in your home or office? Not so fast. A federal appeals court has ruled that police in California can obtain a warrant to aim thermal imaging systems at private homes in hopes of sniffing out drug labs and clandestine indoor marijuana-growing operations. Of course, the technology is advancing quickly. Existing systems can identify which rooms in a home or office contain people; within a few years, authorities will essentially be able to see through walls and tell what people in those rooms are doing.

7. And from the "Is nothing sacred?" file comes this news flash, which sounds like an urban legend but is absolutely, positively true. Scientists in the advanced R&D labs at Matsushita Electric Industrial in Tokyo have developed a slew of gadgets for the company's "digital home of the future". The re-

a legal document that -72- is signed by a judge

frigerator can order milk when you're running low and all gas appliances report their monthly usage to the utility company automatically, without requiring a visit from the meter reader. But the capper is a Health Monitoring Toilet System, which measures the user's weight, body fat, and uric sugar levels and can send the results to an Internet service for health and diet advice.

8. Get over your assumption that you have a private life. If you're in a public place, you're almost certain to be under surveillance most of the time. Smile for the camera.

Woj ar khar' sm.

## COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions:

1. What can you easily buy now from any spy shop?

---

2. Why did aiming a camera into the Hilton Hotel rooms cause the four KEZI-TV station employees their jobs?

Because they were doing something illegal

3. What do you think is the function of the New York Civil Liberties Union?

Preserve<sup>and</sup> protecting civil rights and liberties of individual

4. How has the attitude of the law enforcement officials changed towards video surveillance? Why?

They have doubted the usefulness of it but

5. How does the surveillance system in London work?

---

6. How accurate is the system of surveillance employed in Sacramento, California?

It is accurate enough to pick up

7. What is the risk of using a cell phone while driving?

None

8. What is the function of the black box, called Autograph? Why do some drivers install it voluntarily?

9. What can a thermal camera do that a normal camera can't?

It can sniff out drug labors.

10. What can the new appliances of the future digital home do? Give examples.

11. According to the writer, do we still have a private life? Where? Why?

No, we don't because of the technology.

12. Why does the writer say "Smile for the camera"?

Please to accept the fact: You are watched all the time.

13. What, do you think, is the purpose of the writer in writing this article in a popular computer magazine?



B. Find the words or expressions in the passage that mean the following:

1. (paragraph one)

easily available, found everywhere: ubiquitous

2. (paragraph two)

watching, spying on: surveillance

3. (paragraph two)

observe, watch, supervise: monitor

4. (paragraph three)

unfocused, unclear, blurry: fuzzy

5. (paragraph three)

simple pictures, unsophisticated photos: shots

6. (paragraph four)

path, route, track: location trail

7. (paragraph five)

fee, payment, tariff, charge: toll

8. (paragraph five)

instrument, gadget, apparatus: device

9. (paragraph five)

locate, home in on, specify the exact place: pinpoint

10. (paragraph five)

emblem, shield, sign: badge

11. (paragraph six)

hide, conceal oneself: hole up

12. (paragraph six)

discovering, finding: sniffing out

13. (paragraph six)

underhand, illegal, hidden: clandestine

14. (paragraph six)

cannabis, hashish, hemp, grass: marijuana

15. (paragraph seven)

safe, secure, unthreatened: secured

16. (paragraph seven)

number, range, variety: slaw

17. (paragraph seven)

peak, crest, top, best: capex

## DISCUSSION

1. Are you in favour of more technological advance? Would you like this kind of technology to be applied here in Syria? In what fields of human activity? Why?
2. The question that seems to beset many concerned individuals in the world today is where all this technology is leading us? Is man now happier than he used to be before this apparently unstoppable advance in technology? Why? Is it the fault of technology or man? Why? What should man do?
3. What is the future of man? Are we destined to be controlled by machines in our (humanity's) strive to make life easier, fairer and more secure for us all? Is there going to be a time when we will have no freedom whatsoever because we want to secure equal freedom/rights for everyone?
4. How do you see the world fifty years from now? Will there be more leisure time, more entertainment, easier life for everyone? Will the world be a more relaxed and friendlier place to live in? Why?

## Discrimination In Textbooks

By Chun Su-jin, JoongAng Daily, Seoul

(International Herald Tribune, Dec. 9, 2002)

(26/11/2024)

Home work

### Preparing to read:

1. What is discrimination, how many kinds are there, and where do you normally expect to find it?

---

2. What kind of discrimination would you expect to find in school text books, if ever? Why?

---

3. Is it right that there should be discrimination in school text books? Why?

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4. In what subjects (scientific subjects, social studies, human sciences), if ever, would you expect to find discrimination? Why?

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5. Would you expect some, or any kind of discrimination to be intentional in some subjects? Why?

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6. Can any kind of discrimination in text books be a positive aspect of general school education?

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7. How important is it for Syrian Secondary school students to do very well in the Baccalaureate exams? Why?

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8. Do you expect textbooks to provide accurate information about the state of things and knowledge in the world, or can they be misleading in some circumstances? How?

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9. What do you imagine is the effect of inaccurate information on the developing minds of school children? And what are the consequences for the future of that society where such practice continues unchecked?

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As you read look for answers to the following questions:

1. What do school students have to do in order to get a perfect score in the national General Certificate of Education exams?

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2. What national body in Korea recommended that the Ministry of Education to take "proper measures"? Why?

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3. What are these "proper measures"?

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4. What was the problem with the high school social studies book?

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5. Why was the quoted text from a social studies book about the disabled unacceptable?

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6. What did the commission find wrong with the definition of family in middle school textbook?

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7. What is wrong with referring to "work time" as "office hours" according to the commission?

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8. What was wrong with the description of the colours of the national flag of Korea?

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9. How do you know that in recommending the changes to the Ministry of Education, the Korean National Human Rights Commission took into consideration the feelings and interests of Korean citizens as well as the world's? Give a couple of examples.

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## **Discrimination in Textbooks**

By Chun Su-jin, JoongAng Daily, Seoul

(International Herald Tribune, Dec. 9, 2002)

1. Textbooks, along with other reference books, are like holy books for most South Korean students. A few years ago, a student who got a perfect score on the Korean Scholastic Aptitude Test said that if others wanted to do as well as she did, "all they have to do is dive into the textbooks."
2. But textbooks, it turns out, are not infallible. The National Human Rights Commission recently told the Ministry of Education to take "proper measures" in 13 cases in various textbooks used by elementary, middle and high school students that were described as misleading or unfair to certain groups.
3. The head of the commission, Kim Chang Kuk, said, "After carefully going through the textbooks, we found cases that could harm students' development of conscientiousness and sense of human rights." The Education Ministry accepted all the suggestions and the books will be revised.



4. One case the commission found fault with was in a high school social studies book that teaches about gross domestic product.

5. The book used an example of a housekeeper and her employer. "If somebody gets married to his housekeeper, the GDP decreases," the textbook says. To illustrate, next to the passage was a drawing of a man—kneeling and offering a ring—as he proposed to a woman busily scrubbing the floor.

② 6. The commission said that the word "house-keeper" disparages the role while the picture promotes prejudices about women. Above all, the commission said, the example did little to explain how GDP is calculated.

7. Another thing the commission caught in its net was a definition of the disabled. A social studies textbook for those in high school says:

"If the disabled can do work that is equal in quality and ability to what normal people can do, the disabled should not be treated unfairly."

⑤ 8. The commission pointed out that using the word "normal" implied that all people excluded from that category were abnormal, and thus the use of the word is improper for textbooks.

8. The commission also considered the winds of change.

9. A science textbook for middle schoolers says: "A family consists of a married couple and their children." The commission said that since the formation of families varies as society develops, the definition should be more flexible. If not, the textbook could give students the idea that anybody from a family that doesn't fit the description is somehow incomplete or abnormal.
10. The same textbook also said that "work time" refers to "office workers at work and students at school studying and housewives at home doing household chores." It should be changed to remove the gender discrimination, the commission said.
11. Another wrinkle the commission wants to straighten out is in an art textbook, which says: "Seoul's colors are green for its mountains, blue for the Han River and flesh color for the sun."
12. The flesh color definition, referring to the average Asian's skin color, would offend those with a different skin color, the commission said.
13. The commission already set the same matter right in the Korean Industrial Standards manual last August. The alternative colors suggested were "light apricot" and "light citrus."

## COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions:

1. How many instances of discrimination did the commission find in Korean textbooks?

Thirteen

2. In what way were these cases of discrimination, and were they harmful to students?

3. What was the response of the Ministry of Education?

The Ministry of Education accepted all --

4. What did the commission find objectionable with the example of a man proposing to a woman scrubbing the floor?

It is gender discrimination

5. What was the problem with ordinary workers as "normal"?

6. What should the definition of family be, in the opinion of the commission?

more flexible as society develops

7. Why is the reference to a "housewives at home doing household chores" unacceptable and discriminatory?

because it's gender discrimination

B. Find the words or expressions in the passage that mean the following:

1. (paragraph one)

a test of educational ability: Scholastic Aptitude Test

2. (paragraph two)

flawless, faultless, unerring: infallible

3. (paragraph three)

morale, standard of correct behaviour: conscientiousness

4. (paragraph three)

amended, corrected, rewritten: revised

5. (paragraph four)

total or entire household income: Gross Domestic Product

6. (paragraph five)

rubbing or brushing to clean well: scrubbing

7. (paragraph six)

detract from, derogate, denigrate: disparage

8. (paragraph six)

bias, partiality, pre-judgment: prejudice

9. (paragraph seven)

impaired, damaged, handicapped: disabled

10. (paragraph ten)

domestic routine work: household chores

## DISCUSSION

1. Which of the 'problems' the Korean National Commission of Human Rights found in the school curricula would you consider the most urgent to deal with? Which is the least urgent?
2. Is it important for nations to check their school and/or university books for this kind of discrimination? Why?
3. Since the Baccalaureate is the standard by which the nation judges its knowledge and education, should its curricula not be constantly and meticulously under constant check and be in continual revision?
4. Would you find examples of this kind of discrimination in Syrian curricula? If "Yes", should anything be done about them? And, where would you expect to find the most examples of this kind of discrimination?
5. If you were the official in charge, would you set up a commission, or ask an independent commission to look for instances of discrimination in the curricula? Why?
6. Do you feel 'uncomfortable' discussing these questions? Why?

### **SECTION III**

#### **(Women Stories)**

Here are four different stories written by women which give the reader a superb insight into the world from women's view point on life and its complexities. Almost all of these stories provide a vision of life that has not been exposed clearly enough or strongly enough. Therefore, readers are well advised to be ready for some, perhaps unexpected, revelations.

**Rebel Heart: *The Scandalous Life of Jane Digby***  
Mary S Lovell

Preparing to read:

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word "scandalous"?

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2. In what way was Jane Digby's life scandalous, do you think?

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3. At what age should a woman marry? What about a man?

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4. If a woman was given a choice between marrying a rich aristocrat (upper class) or a Bedouin, to be his second wife, what would she choose do you think? Is there really a choice here? What factors would influence her choice? Why?

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5. What attracts a woman to a man?

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6. What constitutes happiness for you?

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7. How is happiness the same (or different) for men and women?

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As you read look for answers to the following questions:

1. How did the idea of the book about Jane Digby's life begin?

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2. When did the author, Mary Lovell, decide to investigate Jane Digby's life and loves?

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3. How attractive was Jane Digby?

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4. At what approximate age did Jane Digby marry for the first time?

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5. Who was Jane Digby's first lover? Who was the last?

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6. What was so unusual for The Times to do?

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7. How many lovers did she have in her life?

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8. Altogether, how many times did she get married?

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9. How old was she when she came to Syria?

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**Rebel Heart: The Scandalous Life of Jane Digby**  
Mary S Lovell

**Preface**

1. Friends often ask me how I choose my subjects. The answer is that my subjects usually choose me, and so it was with Jane Digby.
2. This book began at a cocktail party at the RAF<sup>\*</sup> Club in London in the spring of 1992 when Jane Digby's name and her story came up in conversation. I had never heard of her, so I made a mental note to do some research and rapidly found myself in the early stages of an obsession that was to last several years. Who was Jane Digby, and why should she cast such an appeal?
3. Born into the English aristocracy with every conceivable advantage in physical beauty, social position and wealth, Jane spent the final years of her life married to a desert prince. The Palladian mansions and gilded Mayfair salons of her youth made way for low black goat-hair tents and rugs spread upon

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\* Royal Air Force

wind-washed sands. Even now, with jet travel and motorised transport, the Syrian desert is one of the few lonely places left on earth. What unlikely circumstance, I wondered, had led Jane Digby there a century and a half ago?

4. Barely out of the schoolroom, already regarded as one of the most beautiful women of her day, Jane had married an ambitious politician, Lord Ellenborough, who was twice her age. In achieving his desire for a Cabinet post, Ellenborough neglected his bride and she soon sought consolation elsewhere. Before she was twenty-one Jane's love affair with an Austrian prince precipitated her into one of the most scandalous divorce cases of the nineteenth century. In April 1830, to the astonishment of its readers, The Times cleared its traditional front page of classified advertisements to carry a sensational news story—a verbatim report of the Ellenborough divorce hearing in Parliament which included intimate details about the beautiful peeress and her prince.

5. Jane did not dispute the charges. Head over heels in love, she had already run off to Europe. But her story did not end there. Subsequently, for over twenty years Jane was to have a number of love affairs with members of the European aristocracy including a German baron, a Greek count and the King of Bavaria, as well as an Albanian general from the mountains. During this time she also married twice and travelled from the

baron = lord (br)

royal courts of Europe to the wilder regions of Turkey and the Orient. After a succession of scandals and betrayals, she made a journey to Syria. By then she was almost fifty and feared her life was over. Astonishingly, the most exciting part of her story still lay ahead of her.

6. The Arab nobleman who had been engaged to escort her caravan to the ruined city of Palmyra fell in love with her. He was young enough to be her son, was of a different culture and already had a spouse; indeed, he had recently divorced a second wife but he asked Jane to marry him. Although she was doubtful at first, she was soon deeply in love and, ignoring the entreaties of British officials, placed herself willingly in the power of a man who could divorce his partners on a whim. Sheikh Medjuel el Mezrab was the love of her life, and he brought her all the romance and adventure she had ever dreamed of.

## COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions:

1. What made the author, Mary Lovell, curious about Jane Digby's life?

It is when Jane Digby's name and story came up.

2. How did the author come to write about Jane Digby's life?

The author made a mental note to do some research.

3. What was the consequence of Jane Digby's first love affair?

It was the most scandalous divorce case of the ---

4. How did Jane Digby come to meet lovers from so many nationalities?

By travelling to different places she met lovers.

5. How old was her last husband?

He was young enough to be her son.

6. How would you summarise Jane Digby's life?

She's a crazy woman

7. Are there any indications in the text that reveal how the author, Mary S Lovell, a mature lady, herself, feels towards Jane Digby and the life she lived?

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B. Find the word in the text that means the following:

1. (paragraph two)

strong passion, infatuation, mania: obsession

2. (paragraph two)

create, produce, spread out: cast

3. (paragraph three)

believable, imaginable, thinkable: conceivable

4. (paragraph four)

compassion, support, help: consolation

5. (paragraph four)

dragged, brought: precipitated

6. (paragraph four)

spectacular, exciting, shocking: sensational

7. (paragraph four)

noble woman, titled woman: peeress

8. (paragraph five)

following that, after that: subsequently

9. (paragraph five)

series, sequence chain: succession

10. (paragraph six)

appeal, pleading, petition: entreaty

## DISCUSSION

1. How do you feel towards Jane Digby? Why?
2. Would you accept that the pursuit of happiness is an inalienable right of every human being?
3. What factors, do you think, made Jane Digby accept to become a second wife to Sheikh Medjuel el Mezrab, with all the hardships involved in living in a tent in the desert, especially for a British aristocrat, who had spent her life in the courts and palaces of Europe—especially when we learn that she seems to have lived the best years of her life?
4. Do you think Jane Digby's attractiveness was an important factor in her leading the kind of life she did?
5. Jane Digby was certainly an unusual woman, especially considering that she lived more than 150 years ago. Would you consider her a normal woman? Why?

**God Dies by the Nile**  
Nawal El Saadawi

Preparing to read:

1. The Egyptian writer, Nawal El Saadawi, is well known for her outspokenness and daring to write about issues that other writers shy from or avoid. What do you expect this excerpt from her novel to be about?  

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2. Do you expect the events of her novel to take place in the rural areas of Egypt or in an urban society (a big city)?  

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3. Almost all novels are about human conflicts in relation to society or culture and established practices in these (or at least with what goes under the pretense of these institutions). From the title, with what practices do you expect the conflict in this excerpt to be with?  

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4. Would you, at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, expect some rural areas in Egypt to be rife with debilitating ignorance, and prejudices still? Why? Would this be true of other rural areas? Why?  

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5. The main character in this excerpt is Sheikh Hamzawi.  
What do you expect this old man's preoccupation to be?

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6. What problems, do you expect, he has? Would you expect him to have a problem with society, politics, his wife, or what?

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7. How old would you expect his wife to be?

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8. Another important character in that of Haj Ismail. He is the Sheikh's crony. What would you expect the relation between these two to be like? Pure friendship, mutual benefit, or exploitation? Who would you expect to have power over the other? Why?

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9. Would you expect either of them to have more than one wife? Who? Why?

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10. Who of the two people is more satisfied with his life? Who has fewer regrets at this advanced stage in life? Why?

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As you read look for answers to the following questions:

1. How keen is Sheikh Hamzawi on performing his duty calling the faithful to prayer at dawn?

It was not a successful marriage as she treated...

2. How successful is Sheikh Hamzawi's marriage to his wife, Fatheya? How do you know?

3. Why does Sheikh Hamzawi no longer care how his wife treats him? What is his satisfaction in relation to her?

Because what mattered to him is that he succeeded.

4. On waking up, Sheikh Hamzawi reminisce about his seeing her for the first time, etc. What is this an indication of regarding his present life with her? In other words, when does a man dwell on the past?

Probably because that was the only good memory he had

5. How old was Fatheya when Sheikh Hamzawi married her?

Was she willing to marry him?

She was 16. No, she wasn't.

6. What excuse did Sheikh Hamzawi <sup>give</sup> gave for wanting to marry a young attractive woman?

He wants to have a son.

7. Why was Haj Ismail initially against the marriage? What was then his role in securing the marriage? What did he do it for, especially as he 'knew'?

because Fatheya was too young enough to be his grandchild

8. What is Haj Ismail's official profession? Is this an important profession? Why?

He's a barber, his profession was important because he was

9. Does Sheikh Hamzawi truly believe that God will reward Haj Ismail for his endeavours in securing his marriage to Fatheya? Does Haj Ismail believe that? How do you know, and why?

No, they don't. Sheikh Hamzawi only cared about Fatheya's

looks and appearance.

10. How does Haj Ismail justify his endeavours in securing Sheikh Hamzawi's marriage to Fatheya? What are his stated reasons? What are his real reasons?

The stated: Hamzawi preserves the faith in the village  
The real: Hamzawi will pay him generously

11. Does Fatheya's opinion figure at all in the two men's schemes? Why?

No, because in the past girl had no opinions in such matter

12. In the rural setup portrayed in the novel, does Fatheya's father have any chance of resisting Sheikh Hamzawi and Haj Ismail?

No, because he was a poor man.

## **God Dies by the Nile**

**Nawal El Saadawi**

1. Just before she heard the first cock crow in the dark silence, Fatheya opened her eyes. Or perhaps she did not realize that her eyes had already been open for some time. She could see her husband lying on his back with his mouth open, snoring with a deep choking noise. His breath smelt heavily of tobacco, and his chest kept up a wheezing sound as though phlegm had been collecting in it all night.
  
2. She nudged him in the shoulder with her fist to wake him up, but he turned over and gave his back to her, muttering unintelligible words in his slumber. The crow of the cock rang out in the silence once more. This time she hit him with her knuckles sharply on the shoulder.
  
3. 'Sheikh Hamzawi, the cock has awakened and called out to prayer, and you are still snoring away,' she said irritably.
  
4. Sheikh Hamzawi opened his eyes but closed his lips tightly as though he had decided not to respond to her verbal and manual attacks on him, already starting at this early hour of the day. He got up without a word. His wife, Fatheya, was

not like his previous wives. None of them would ever have dared to look him straight in the face, or to say anything inappropriate to him, or compare him to any other man in Kafr El Teen, let alone to a cock which had crowed a few moments earlier, and which she had had the impudence to insinuate was better than he.

imply  
indicate

5. But he no longer cared how she behaved, even if it went as far as putting the cock on an equal level with him. What mattered was that he had succeeded in forcing her to marry him against her will, and obliging her to live with him all these years even though Haj Ismail's potions and amulets had been totally ineffective in restoring or even patching up his virility.
6. The first time he had seen her, he was seated as usual in front of Haj Ismail's shop. He glimpsed her supple body as she walked along the river bank carrying an earthenware jar on her head. Turning to Haj Ismail, he had whispered, 'That girl over there. Who's she?'
7. 'Fatheya, the daughter of Masoud,' answered Haj Ismail.
8. 'Her father is that poor man then. No doubt he would be happy to have me as a member of the family?'

9. 'Do you mean that you want to marry her, Sheikh Hamzawi?'
10. 'Why not? I have been married three times and still have no son. I must have a son before I die.'
11. 'But she is young enough to be one of your grandchildren,' said Haj Ismail. 'Besides, how do you know that she will not remain childless like your previous wives?'
12. Sheikh Hamzawi bowed his head to the ground in silence, but the rosary beads continued to run uninterrupted through his fingers, impelled by a mechanism of their own. Haj Ismail eyed him with a knowing smile. He burst into a laugh, cut it short abruptly and said, 'It looks as though the girl has turned your head for you, Sheikh Hamzawi.'
13. Sheikh Hamzawi smiled quietly and looked at the village barber with a gleam in his eyes. 'Verily the look of her revives my spirit. I've always longed for the kind of female she is.'
14. 'Talking of females, female she certainly is. Her eyes seethe with desire. But do you think you can keep her under control, Sheikh Hamzawi? Do you think a man of your age can take her on?'

15. 'I can satisfy not only her, but her father if necessary,' retorted Sheikh Hamzawi. 'It's only what you have in your pocket that counts where a man is concerned.'
16. 'What will you do if the years go by and she does not give you a son?' enquired Haj Ismail.
17. 'Allah is great, Haj Ismail. I am going through difficult times, but they will soon be over. God will breathe his spirit into me, and give me strength.'
18. Haj Ismail laughed out loudly. 'Those are the kind of things you can say to other people, but not to me, Sheikh Hamzawi. You haven't stopped complaining to me about your condition. How can Allah give you strength? Are you insinuating that God will. . ?'
19. Sheikh Hamzawi cut him short quickly. 'Allah can infuse life into dead bones, Haj Ismail. Besides you yourself told me that I can be cured.'
20. 'But you have not been listening to my advice, nor have you followed the treatment I prescribed to you. You've been lending an attentive ear to what the doctors say, and paying through your eyes for their medicines. I told you, doctors know nothing and their prescriptions are useless. But you did not

believe me. And now what is the result? You've wasted your money and you're not one step ahead of where you were. Say so, if I'm wrong.'

21. 'Yes, yes, Haj Ismail, but one cannot learn except at a high price. Now I know all doctors are ignorant cheats, and that the only real doctor in the village is you. From now on I refuse to be treated by anyone else. But you must marry me to Fatheya, the daughter of Masoud. If you do that, Allah will reward you generously, because you will have done a service to the man who preserves the holy mosque and defends the teachings of God in this village.'
22. Haj Ismail burst into hilarious laughter. 'Both I and my children would have died of hunger long ago if we had waited until Allah rewards us.'
23. 'Of course I will pay you, and handsomely. You know me well,' Sheikh Hamzawi said quickly.
24. 'I know you are a generous man, and that you are the descendant of a generous family. But most important of all, you are the man who preserves the faith in this village and watches over our morals. Therefore you must leave the matter in the hands of Allah, and not worry about it any further. I will see to it. You can depend on that. Just follow what I told you

to do before. Make constant use of warm water, and salt, and lemon. Burn your incense every night leaving none of it to the following morning, then take the rosary between your fingers and recite a thanksgiving to Allah ninety-nine times. After that, curse your first wife thirty-three times, for were you not fully potent when you married her, Sheikh Hamzawi?'

25. Sheikh Hamzawi answered in a voice that rang with despair, 'I was as strong as a horse.'
26. 'She managed to cast a spell on you, and I know who prepared the amulet for her. He is not from Kafr El Teen, but I know the secret of his spell, and how to destroy it.'



## COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions:

1. After reading the excerpt, perhaps you can understand what the writer meant by the title. Give at least one possible explanation.

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2. Why is Sheikh Hamzawi infuriated by his wife's comparing him to a cock? In what ways is the cock better than him? Is there any symbolism or irony in this? Explain.

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3. What revelation about Sheikh Hamzawi is made in paragraph five? What does this tell us about his preoccupation?

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4. How many wives has Sheikh Hamzawi had?

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5. Read paragraphs 16, 17, and observe that Haj Ismail responded to Sheikh Hamzawi's words, in paragraph 18, by laughing loudly, and saying "Those are the kind of things you can say to other people, but not to me..." What does this ex-

change between the two men say, first, about the integrity of Sheikh Hamzawi, and, second, about the kind of relationship between them? Also, what does this say about both men's religiousness?

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6. In paragraph 24, Haj Ismail praises Sheikh Hamzawi's generosity and his family, and tells him that he was the "preserver of the faith in this village and watches over our morals." Therefore the Sheikh should "leave the matter in the hands of Allah, and not worry about it any further. I will see to it. You can depend on that."

What ironies would you find in these words?

Why are these words ironical?

What do they say about the double facedness of these two men, and by implication of everyone else? Explain.

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B. Find the words or expressions in the passage that mean the following:

1. (paragraph one)

breathing with a husky or whistling sound: Snoring

2. (paragraph one)

substance produced in the nose and throat: Mucous

3. (paragraph two)

sleep, doze, nap: Slumber

4. (paragraph two)

fingers, or finger joints: Knuckles

5. (paragraph three)

complaining, tensely, shrewdly: irritably

6. (paragraph four)

arrogance, audacity, nerve: Impudence

7. (paragraph four)

imply, indicate, allude, hint: insinuate

8. (paragraph five)

mixtures, concoctions, beverages: Potions

9. (paragraph five)

fix or repair hastily, curing: Patch up

10. (paragraph five)

sexual ability, manliness: Virility

11. (paragraph six)  
saw, glanced, looked at quickly: glimpsed
12. (paragraph six)  
soft limbed, lithe, lively attractive: Supple
13. (paragraph twelve)  
bent, inclined, nodded: Bowed
14. (paragraph twelve)  
obliged, demanded, forced: impelled
15. (paragraph twelve)  
suddenly, instantly, quickly: abruptly
16. (paragraph thirteen)  
glow, glitter, glimmer, radiance: gleam
17. (paragraph thirteen)  
archaic word meaning truthfully, in truth: verily
18. (paragraph thirteen)  
brings life back to, put life into: revives
19. (paragraph fourteen)  
burn, rage, fume: seethe
20. (paragraph fifteen)  
fulfill, gratify, give sexual pleasure to: satisfy
21. (paragraph nineteen)  
put, insert, bring back: infuse

22. (paragraph nineteen)

restored to full health, become well again: cured

23. (paragraph twenty)

gave, recommended, suggested: prescribed

24. (paragraph twenty-one)

protects, safeguards, take care of: ~~save~~ preserves

25. (paragraph twenty-three)

very well, generously, lavishly: handsomely

26. (paragraph twenty-four)

strong and powerful sexually: potent

27. (paragraph twenty-five)

hopelessness, dejection, depression: despair

28. (paragraph twenty six)

use magic and sorcery: cast a spell

29. (paragraph twenty six)

anything worn as protection against evil: amulet

## The Story of an Hour

Kate Chopin

### Preparing to read:

1. From the title, what do you expect the story to be about? Clearly it cannot be about "an hour" but about what happens in this hour, so what do you expect happens in this hour, or what can happen in the space of one hour?

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2. Why do people get married? Do men and women marry for the same reason, do you think? What about different cultures? Are their reasons the same?

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3. Marriage clearly imposes duties and responsibilities on both spouses. Are these different for husbands and wives? Why? Give some examples.

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4. Are these marital duties and responsibilities related to culture, i.e. are they different from society to another, or are they cross-cultural? Who or what defines these?

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As you read look for answers to the following questions:

1. Who brought the news about Brently, Mrs Louise Mallard's husband, and who broke the news to her?

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2. Why did she have to be told 'the news' gently?

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3. What did Mrs Louise Mallard do on hearing the news?

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4. What did she hear from her open window? And what did she see?

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5. How did she feel after being alone in her room for some time?  
What did her sister worry about?

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6. What kind of husband did she have? What kind of life did she have?

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7. How does the story end?

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## **The Story of an Hour**

**Kate Chopin**

*Kate Chopin was born to a rich family in 1851 in St. Louis, Missouri. She married, had six children and lived a family life like other rich ladies in those days. But she was well educated and liked to read and write. After her husband died, in 1883, she began to write. She wrote about the freedom of women. At that time, her stories were considered too shocking to read. She died in 1904.*

1. They knew that Louise Mallard had a weak heart. So they broke the bad news softly. Her husband, Brently, was dead.
2. "There was a train accident, Louise," said her Sister Josephine, quietly.
3. Her husband's friend, Richards, stood with Josephine. Richards brought the news, but Josephine told the story. She spoke in broken sentences.
4. "Richards. . . was at the newspaper office. News of the accident came. Louise . . . Louise, Brently's name was on the list. Brently . . . was killed, Louise."
5. Louise did not hear the story coldly, like some women would. She could not close her mind or her heart to the news. Like a sudden storm, her tears broke out. She cried loudly in



her sister's arms. Then, just as suddenly, the tears stopped. She went to her room alone. She wanted no one with her.

6. In front of the window stood an empty chair. She sat down and looked out the window. She was very tired after her tears. Her body felt cold, her mind and heart were empty.
7. Outside her window she could see the trees. The air smelled like spring rain. She could hear someone singing far away. Birds sang near the house. Blue sky showed between the clouds. She rested.
8. She sat quietly, but a few weak tears still fell. She had a young, strong face. But now her eyes showed nothing. She looked out the window at the blue sky. She was not thinking, or seeing. She was waiting.
9. There was something coming to her. She was waiting for it with fear. What was it? She did not know; she could not give it a name. But she felt it coming out from the sky. It reached her through the sound, the smell, the color of the air.
10. Slowly she became excited. Her breath came fast, her heart beat faster. She began to see this thing. It wanted to find her and take her. She tried to fight against it. But she could not. Her

mind was as weak as her two small white hands. Then she stopped fighting against it. A little word broke from her lips.

11. "Free," she said. "Free, free, free!" The emptiness and fear left her. Her eyes showed her excitement. Her heart beat fast, and the blood warmed her body. A sudden feeling of joy excited her.
12. She did not stop to ask if her joy was wrong. She saw her freedom clearly. She could not stop to think of smaller things.
13. She knew the tears would come again when she saw her husband's body. The kind hands, now dead and still. The loving face, now still and gray. But she looked into the future. She saw many long years to come that would belong to her alone. And now she opened her arms wide to those years in welcome.
14. There would be no one else to live for during those years. She would live for herself alone. There would be no strong mind above hers. Men and women always believe they can tell others what to do and how to think. Suddenly Louise understood that this was wrong. She could break away and be.
15. And yet, she loved him—sometimes. Often she did not. What did love mean now? Now she understood that freedom is stronger than love.

16. "Free! Body and mind free!" she said again.
17. Her sister Josephine was waiting outside the door.
18. "Please open the door," Josephine cried. "You will make yourself sick. What are you doing in there, Louise? Please please, let me in!"
19. "Go away. I am not sick." No, she was drinking in life through that open window.
20. She thought joyfully of all those days before her. Spring days, summer days. All kinds of days that would be her own. She began to hope life would be long. And just yesterday, life seemed so long!
21. After a while she got up and opened the door. Her eyes were bright, her cheeks were red. She didn't know how strong and well she looked—so full of joy. They went downstairs, where Richards was waiting.
22. A man was opening the door. It was Brently Louise Mallard. He was dirty, and tired. He carried a suitcase and an umbrella. He was not killed in the train accident. He didn't even know there was an accident. He was surprised at Josephine's sudden cry. He didn't understand why Richards moved suddenly between them, to hide Louise from her husband.

23. But Richards was too late.

24. When the doctors came, they said it was her weak heart.  
They said she died of joy—of joy that kills.

A woman gets news about the death of her husband which makes her have mixed emotions:

She grieves his death but feels excited about the prospect of freedom. She thinks of all the years she has ahead of her only to be surprised that the news was false which made her die of excessive joy.

Break out = Start suddenly

Break down = Pronounced down her life

Break away = to be free

was  
drowned

## COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions:

1. What was the news that Mrs Louise Mallard heard?

---

2. How did Mrs Louise Mallard react when she first heard the news? Was that what was expected? By whom?

---

3. Why did Mrs Louise Mallard sit in front of the open window? Did she know what she was waiting for? Why?

---

4. What floated in through the open window to fill heart and mind? How did she react to these new sensations?

---

---

5. Why did she feel joy?

---

6. Why was everyone surprised when Brently came home?

---

7. "They said she died of joy." Did she? If not, why not? In other words, what did she die of?

---

B. Mark the odd word out:

1. train                  accident                  plane                  ~~incident~~
2. window                  door                  glass                  ~~bird~~
3. floating clouds      blue sky                  ~~plant pot~~                  singing birds
4. commitment      love                  freedom                  marriage
5. bright eyes                  red cheeks                  joy of life                  ~~husband~~

I see no odd word.

## DISCUSSION

1. "The Story of an Hour" is about a marriage more than a hundred years ago. Have marriages changed in the past hundred years? In what ways? In what ways have marriages not changed? Why?
2. If Mrs Louise Mallard had been asked an hour before she heard the news of her husband's demise whether she was a happy woman or not, what do you expect her answer would have been? Do you sympathise with Mrs Louise Mallard?
3. Many people would consider Mrs Louise Mallard's marriage to be blissfully happy; she has a loving husband, a good life, a spacious house surrounded by gardens, and she seems to be lacking nothing to make her happy. Why then did she feel as she felt in her room? And why did she die on seeing her husband?
4. Why does the writer call the heroine by her first name, Louise, and not, as I have done in the Comprehension questions, Mrs Mallard? Is there any significance in that? What?

**Woman**  
A woman

Preparing to read:

1. From the title, what do you expect the passage to be about?

---

2. Are women really more emotional than men? If "Yes," then, is this in her genetic make up or is it social conditioning?

---

3. Apart from the equality issue, how are women's psychological make up different from men's?  
What about different cultures?

---

4. Read the first paragraph then try to guess "what had happened that morning"?

---

5. Read the last paragraph, then, try to guess what the story of this woman is.

---

6. Do you agree that "There is usually no real happy ending"?  
What does "happy ending" mean, in this context?

---



7. Why doesn't the woman's love story end happily, do you expect? What factors prevent a "happy ending"?

---

8. Why does the woman seem to accept her "fate" philosophically? Is this specific to her particular culture, or to her personality, or to circumstances? Why?

---

9. What is "the story of every woman in this society," do you expect? Why? What society does the woman belong to, do you think, Arabic, Indian/Pakistani, Chinese/far eastern? Is it urban society or rural society?

---

---

As you read look for answers to the following questions:

1. What happened that morning?

---

2. Was the man in the story expecting her? Why?

---

3. What did he do when he saw her?

---

4. What dream does she talk about towards the end of the second paragraph?

---

5. What really hid under the seemingly quiet appearance of the woman? What was waiting to break loose?

---

6. Was she really at peace with her heart till then?

---

7. How was the woman brought up?

---

8. What does she suppose "for argument's sake"?

---

9. What is her "consolation"? How does the story end?

---

## Woman

A woman

1. It was late at night. Everybody was asleep, and in the silence of the night there were only her heart beats mixed with the soft sound of gentle and dreamy music floating from the tape recorder. She was finally alone to recall what had happened that morning.
2. She hadn't seen him for a while, and that day she went to see him—nothing out of the ordinary, and nothing out of the ordinary was supposed to happen. She simply wanted to see him as she had done so many times before... "Hi, how are you?" ... a few more words and then "Bye. See you." She did see him, but this time he didn't utter a word. He turned to her when she said "Hello!" and, without any warning, and without perhaps even thinking, he took her in his arms... and held her to his chest. He held her tight as though he never wanted to let go. She didn't want him to let go. She just wished she could stop time to stay in his arms. It could have only been a few seconds before he let go, but they were enough to make her live in a beautiful dream; they were enough to awaken the dormant woman in her. He awakened feelings that her culture did not allow, and that she herself had tried to deny they ex-

isted. That day there was no denial anymore; no sham pre-  
tense they weren't there, fiery and powerful. She did not want  
to lie to herself; there was no doubt anymore: she loved him  
with all her being; she realized that she had always loved him,  
in fact.

3. Before that day, she had always been at peace with her heart. She had never been in love. She had never wanted to be close to any man, ... to anyone at all in fact. Now he was in her heart, in her mind, and in her dreams. She could imagine him holding her for ever. She could feel his strong but gentle arms around her. She felt that she had in fact been waiting for him all her life. She felt she loved him with all her might. Every heartbeat called him. Every part of her trembling and never-before-touched body wanted him. Every particle of her whole being danced at the thought of him. Intimate depths in her soul that she had never dared peer into, and parts in her body she had never knew existed, suddenly surfaced and, glaringly, asserted their existence demanding to be acknowledged. She was shocked and strangely happy at the way she felt. She was floating in an exquisite haze of blissfulness that she didn't want to leave. She wanted to float in that beautiful dream world for ever—perhaps, partly because she did not know what to do. What next?

4. She was brought up on strict moral and religious principles. She knew that such feelings were forbidden in her complex culture. Soon she was torn between what she felt, what she longed for, what she felt she had waited for all her life, and the reality of an impossibility. There was a million reasons that prevented her from even thinking of him—and he of her.

5. The insistent whisper, lodged in her mind demanding to be answered, grew louder: What next? She had no answer, and he had no answer. In fact there was no answer available anywhere. There was this impenetrable wall, called social conventions, society, between them. His words, that he had said sometime earlier, rang so poignantly, and painfully: Society is a powerful tyrant that cannot be confronted; he who thinks he can stand in its face makes a grave error. Did she have to turn her back on this torrential love, the love that she had waited for all her thirty-five years of life? Those monotonous barren years in which she never even once felt alive, or that there was anything worth living for. Just thinking of that made her want him even more, made her cling to him with all the power of her newly awakened womanhood. Besides, suppose, just suppose for argument's sake, that she stopped seeing him, how did she know she would meet someone like him? It is true that she didn't know what tomorrow would bring, but she couldn't imagine another thirty-five vacuous years. She shuddered at the thought and ran back to the present... to him. For

① in a way that shows a (ironic) feeling of sadness  
② great

now, she only wanted to follow her heart's desire and abandon herself to the excruciating power of love...

6. Somehow, this is the story of every woman in love in my society. There is usually no (never?) a real happy ending. Maybe, I shall get married and all, and live like everyone else, but, for me, there will always be this happy memory... Perhaps my consolation is that in the end nothing remains except memories. In which case I am luckier than most, at least according to the saying: It is better to have loved and failed than not to have loved at all, and I have not failed.

(Adapted by TST)

A woman who lived an emotionless life falls in love unexpectedly after a sudden hug by a man whom she knows, but when she becomes confused when faced with the tyranny of her society, unable to be with the man she loves. Eventually, she is merely content with the memories she made with him.

## COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions:

1. Why is the woman eager for everybody in her family to go to sleep? How do we know that?

---

---

2. Why did she really go to see him that morning? What does the way she talks about "seeing him" suggest to us about the relationship between these two people?

---

---

3. How does the man in the story feel, do you think? How do you know? What do we know about him?

---

---

4. How do they know each other? Are they employees in the same company, neighbours, students at university, customer and a shopkeeper?

---

---

5. How often do they see each other? How do you know?

---

6. What effect did that embrace have on the woman? Why?

---

---

7. How long did the embrace last in fact? How long did she wish it had lasted?

---

8. What feelings, she says, she had tried to suppress? Why had she tried to deny their existence?

---

---

9. How does she feel about the raging storm that uprooted her traditions and earlier beliefs and convictions? How do you feel about that? Explain.

---

---

---

10. How old is the writer? How does she describe her life before she met him?

---

---



11. While she recalls that the experience of that morning, what frightens her the most? Why?

---

---

12. What is the story of every woman in this woman's society, according to her? Is this true, in your experience? Why?

---

---

---

13. Why is the writer luckier than most women, according to her? Do you agree? Why?

---

---

B. Find the words or expressions in the passage that mean the following:

1. (paragraph two)

asleep, inactive, unexpressed: dormant

2. (paragraph two)

simulated, fake, simulated: sham

3. (paragraph three)

beautiful, ethereal, fantastic: exquisite

4. (paragraph three)

blissfulness, rapture, ecstasy, joyousness: blissfulness

5. (paragraph five)

dwelled, nagged, entrenched: lodged

6. (paragraph five)

solid, hard, impervious: impenetrable

7. (paragraph five)

dictator, absolute ruler, oppressor: tyrant

8. (paragraph five)

very serious, severe, deadly: grave

9. (paragraph five)

flooding, overpowering, strong current: torrential

10. (paragraph five)

boring, unchanging, routine: monotonous

11. (paragraph five)

desert-like, waste land, arid: barren, vacuous

12. (paragraph five)

stick, attach, hold on strongly, grip: cling to

13. (paragraph five)

shake, shiver, tremble: shudder

14. (paragraph five)

agonizing, intensely painful: excruciating

15. (paragraph six)

solace, comfort, help: consolation

## DISCUSSION

1. How do you feel about the woman, and the man?  
Do you sympathise with either of them? Why?
2. What society is the woman talking about, do you think? How prevalent is her situation in this society, do you think?
2. What circumstances or reasons can prevent the existence of this "love", do you expect? Which of these would be insurmountable, is your opinion? Is this cultural?
4. Do you agree with the saying that "it is better to have loved and failed than not to have loved at all"? Why?
5. The woman says she hasn't failed. What do you think she means? Do you agree?
6. Do you expect to fall in love and to be loved? Is this a human "right"? Does it matter if one falls in love or not?
7. A problem question is always whether or not love is under one's control? Is it possible to decide to love or not to love somebody? Do people love the "wrong" person, sometimes? What can one do if s/he falls in a forbidden love?

#### **SECTION IV (Short stories)**

Three short stories, written by men,  
and each has a different flavour.  
The first is a touching love story.  
The second is an allegorical fable  
that has a special significance  
especially in our world today.  
The last is a little mystery,  
chosen for its good plot and for  
being a good sample of the *genre*.

# LONG WALK TO FOREVER

By Kurt Vonnegut

## Preparing to read:

1. How can a long walk be 'forever'? Where do you expect such a walk to lead?

---

---

2. What is the best way for a man to express love to a woman? Does love need words to express it? Explain.

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3. Which is a truer expression of love, to hold onto your loved one/s (for whatever reason), or to let them free (even to leave you)? Why?

---

---

4. Does love usually end in marriage? Should it? Why?

---

5. What about love and duty? Which comes first? What would you define as duty? Does it come first?

---

As you read, look for answers to the following questions:

1. What does Newt intend to accomplish by suggesting a walk?

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2. Why does Catharine agree to go for a walk?

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3. During their walk, Catharine makes little speeches. Why?

---

4. What happens while they are walking? Why do they stop? Why do they resume their walk?

---

5. What one thing Newt knows in his heart, and controls his actions and reactions towards Catherine so that he does not reveal it?

---

6. What happens in the end?

---

## **A Long Walk to Forever**

By Kurt Vonnegut

1. They had grown up next door to each other, on the fringe of a city, near fields and woods and orchards, within sight of a lovely bell tower that belonged to a school for the blind.
  
2. Now they were twenty, had not seen each other for nearly a year. There had always been playful, comfortable warmth between them, but never any talk of love.
  
3. His name was Newt. Her name was Catharine, in the early afternoon, Newt knocked on Catharine's front door.
  
4. Catharine came to the door. She was carrying a fat, glossy magazine she had been reading. The magazine was devoted entirely to brides. "Newt!" she said. She was surprised to see him.
  
5. "Could you come for a walk?" he said. He was a shy person, even with Catharine. He covered his shyness by speaking absently, as though what really concerned him were far away—as though he were a secret agent pausing briefly on a mission between beautiful, distant, and sinister points. This man-



ner of speaking had always been Newt's style, even in matters that concerned him desperately.

"A walk?" said Catharine.

"One foot in front of the other," said Newt, "through leaves, over bridges

"I had no idea you were in town," she said.

"Just this minute got in," he said.

"Still in the Army, I see," she said.

6. "Seven more months to go," he said. He was a private first class in the Artillery. His uniform was rumped. His shoes were dusty. He needed a shave. He held out his hand for the magazine. "Let's see the pretty book," he said.

She gave it to him. "I'm getting married, Newt," she said.

"I know," she said. "Let's go for a walk."

"I'm awfully busy, Newt," she said. "The wedding is only a week away."

7. "If we go for a walk," he said, "it will make you rosy. It will make you a rosy bride?" He turned the pages of the magazine. "A rosy bride like her—like her—like her," he said, showing her rosy brides.

Catharine turned rosy, thinking about rosy brides.

"That will be my present to Henry Stewart Chasens," said Newt. "By taking you for a walk, I'll be giving him a rosy bride."

"You know his name?" said Catharine.

"Mother wrote," he said. "From Pittsburgh?"

"Yes," she said. "You'd like him."

"Maybe," he said.

"Can—can you come to the wedding, Newt?" she said.

"That I doubt," he said.

"Your furlough isn't for long enough?" she said.

"Furlough?" said Newt. He was studying a two-page ad for flat silver. "I'm not on furlough," he said.

"Oh?" she said.

"I'm what they call A.W.O.L.," said Newt.

"Oh, Newt! You're not" she said.

"Sure I am," he said, still looking at the magazine.

"Why, Newt?" she said.

8. "I had to find out what your silver pattern is," he said. He read names of silver patterns from the magazine. "Albemarle? Heather?" he said. "Legend? Rambler Rose?" He looked up, smiled. "I plan to give you and your husband a spoon," he said.

"Newt, Newt—tell me really," she said.

"I want to go for a walk," he said.

She wrung her hands in sisterly anguish. "Oh, Newt— you're fooling me about being A.W.O.L.," she said.

Newt imitated a police siren softly, raised his eyebrows.

"Where—where from?" she said.

"Fort Bragg," he said.

"North Carolina?" she said,

"That's right," he said, "Near Fayetteville—where Scarlet O'Hara went to school."

"How did you get here, Newt?" she said.

He raised his thumb, jerked it in a hitchhike gesture.

"Two days," he said.

"Does your mother know?" she said.

"I didn't come to see my mother," he told her.

"Who did you come to see?" she said.

"You," he said.

"Why me?" she said.

"Because I love you," he said. "Now walk?" he said. "One foot in front of the leaves, over bridges—"

They were taking the walk now, were in a woods with a brown-leaf floor.

Catharine was angry and rattled, close to tears. "Newt," she said, "this is absolutely crazy?"

"How so?" said Newt.

"What a crazy time to tell me you love me," she said. "You never talked that way before." She stopped walking.

"Let's keep walking," he said.

"No," she said. "So far, no farther. I shouldn't have come out with you at all," she said.

"You did," he said.

"To get you out of the house," she said. "If somebody walked in and heard you talking to me that way, a week before the wedding—"

"What would they think?" he said.

"They'd think you were crazy," she said.

"Why?" he said.

9. Catharine took a deep breath, made a speech. "Let me say that I'm deeply honored by this crazy thing you've done," she said. "I can't believe you're really A.W.O.L., but maybe you are. I can't believe you really love me, but maybe you do. But--

"I do," said Newt.

10. "Well, I'm deeply honored," said Catharine, "and I'm very fond of you as a friend, Newt, extremely fond—but it's just too late." She took a step away from him. "You've never even kissed me," she said, and she protected herself with her hands. "I don't mean you should do it now. I just mean this is all so unexpected. I haven't got the remotest idea of how to respond."

"Just walk some more," he said. "Have a nice time."

They started walking again.

"How did you expect me to react?" she said.

"How would I know what to expect?" he said. "I've never done anything like this before."

"Did you think I would throw myself into your arms?" she said,

"Maybe," he said.

"I'm sorry to disappoint you," she said.

"I'm not disappointed," he said. "I wasn't counting on it. This is very nice, just walking."

Catharine stopped again. "You know what happens next?" she said.

"Nope," he said.

"We shake hands," she said. "We shake hands and part friends," she said. "That's what happens next."

Newt nodded. "All right," he said. "Remember me from time to time. Remember how much I loved you."

Involuntarily, Catharine burst into tears. She turned her back to Newt, looked into the infinite colonnade of the woods.

"What does that mean?" said Newt.

"Rage!" said Catharine. She clenched her hands. "You have no right—"

"I had to find out," he said.

"If I'd loved you," she said, "I would have let you know before now."

"You would?" he said.

"Yes," she said. She faced him, looked up at him, her face quite red. "You would have known," she said.

"How?" he said.

"You would have seen it," she said. "Women aren't very clever at hiding it."

Newt looked closely at Catharine's face now. To her consternation,, she realized that what she had said was true, that a woman couldn't hide love.

Newt was seeing love now.

And he did what he had to do. He kissed her.

"You're hell to get along with!" she said when Newt let her go.

"I am?" said Newt.

"You shouldn't have done that," she said.

"You didn't like it?" he said.

"What did you expect," she said—"wild, abandoned passion?"

"I keep telling you," he said, "I never know what's going to happen next."

11. "We say good-by," she said. He frowned slightly. "All right," he said. She made another speech. "I'm not sorry we kissed," she said. "That was sweet. We should have kissed, we've been so close. I'll always remember you, Newt, and good luck."

"You too," he said.

"Thank you, Newt," she said.

"Thirty days," he said.

"What?" she said.

Thirty days in the stockade," he said—"that's what one kiss will cost me."

"I—I'm sorry," she said, "but I didn't ask you to go A.W.O.L."

"I know," he said.

12. "You certainly don't deserve any hero's reward for doing something as foolish as that," she said. "Must be nice to be a hero," said Newt. "Is Henry Stewart Chasens a hero?"

13. "He might be, if he got the chance," said Catharine. She noted uneasily that they had begun to walk again. The farewell had been forgotten.

14. "You really love him?" he said. "Certainly I love him!" she said hotly. "I wouldn't marry him if I didn't love him!"

15. "What's good about him?" said Newt.

16. "Honestly!" she cried, stopping again. "Do you have any idea how offensive you're being? Many, many things are good about Henry! Yes," she said, "and many, many things are probably bad too. But that isn't any of your business. I love Henry, and I don't have to argue his merits with you!"

"Sorry," said Newt.

"Honestly!" said Catharine.

Newt kissed her again. He kissed her again because she wanted him to.

17. They were now in a large orchard.

"How did we get so far from home, Newt?" said Catharine.

"One foot in front of the other—through leaves, over bridges," said Newt.

"They add up—the steps," she said.

Bells rang in the tower of the school for the blind nearby.

"School for the blind," said Newt.

"School for the blind," said Catharine. She shook her head in drowsy wonder. "I've got to go back now," she said.

"Say good-by," said Newt.

"Every time I do," said Catharine, "I seem to get kissed."

Newt sat down on the close-cropped apple tree. "Sit down," he said.

"No," she said.

"I won't touch you," he said.

"I don't believe you," she said.

She sat down under another tree, twenty feet away from him.

She closed her eyes.

"Dream of Henry Stewart Chasens," he said.

"What?" she said.

"Dream of your wonderful husband-to-be," he said.

"All right, I will," she said. She closed her eyes tighter, caught glimpses of her husband-to-be.



Newt yawned.

18. The bees were humming in the trees, and Catharine almost fell asleep. When she opened her eyes she saw that Newt really was asleep.

He began to snore softly.

Katharine let Newt sleep for an hour, and while he slept, she adored him with all her heart.

The shadows of the apple trees grew to the east. The bells in the tower of the school for the blind rang

"Chick-a-dee-dee-dee," went a chickadee.

Somewhere far away an automobile starter nagged and failed, nagged and failed, fell still.

19. Catharine came out from under her tree, knelt by Newt.

"Newt?" she said.

"H'm?" he said. He opened his eyes.

"Late," she said.

"Hello, Catharine," he said.

"Hello, Newt," she said.

"I love you," he said.

"I know," she said.

"Too late," he said.

"Too late," she said.

He stood, stretched groaningly. "A very nice walk," he said.

"I thought so," she said.

"Part company here?" he said.

"Where will you go?" she said.

"Hitch into town, turn myself in," he said.

"Good luck," she said.

"You, too," he said. "Marry me, Catharine?"

"No," she said.

He smiled, stared at her hard for a moment, then walked away quickly.

20. Catharine watched him grow smaller in the long perspective of shadows and trees, knew that if he stopped and turned now, if he called to her, she would run to him. She would have no choice.

21. Newt did stop. He did turn. He did call. "Catharine," he called.

22. She ran to him, put her arms around him, could not speak.

## COMPREHENSION

*A. Answer the following questions:*

1. What had been the relationship between Catherine and Newt before?

---

2. Why does Newt come home for the weekend?

---

3. What will probably happen to Newt on his return? Why would he risk this?

---

4. How does Catherine react when she opens the door?

---

5. Describe Newt and Catharine's walk together. Where do they go? What do they talk about? When do they stop?

---

6. Point out some of the strange things Newt does or says along the way.

---

B. From the following list of adjectives, choose as many as necessary to describe, first, Catherine and, then, Newt:

stubborn	playful	serious	honest
funny	shy	hesitant	forward
angry	sincere	introspective	defiant
wishy-washy	intelligent	lonely	passionate
dry	witty	nervous	idealistic
spontaneous	scheming	bold	reluctant
honourable	romantic	laid back	calculating

### DISCUSSION:

1. What do you think about Newt's approach to Catherine?  
Is it fair? Honourable? Clever?  
Do you think he had any right to kiss her?
2. Catherine says that women aren't very clever at hiding love.  
What is your opinion?  
Are men different from women in this respect?
3. What do you think Henry Stewart Chasens is like?  
How do you think he might differ from Newt in personality?
4. Do you think that Newt had meticulously planned the whole thing? Why do you think so?

## TRANSLATION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Notice that the writer does not interfere to tell us about the personality of Newt or Catherine, but lets them talk for themselves together. Compare the language that Newt uses with that of Catherine. Has the writer succeeded in reflecting their personalities and their relationship through the way they talk?
2. Is this approach easier, interesting, or is it better for the writer himself to describe the characters and what they feel? Which is easier for the translator? And, should the translator be aware of these dramatic devices or can s/he afford to ignore them?
3. Compare the writing style of this writer with the descriptive style of the other stories in this book, and, as a translation student, decide which would you rather translate. Why? Which is the more difficult to translate? Why?
4. Which style allows the translator more freedom in translating the work? Why?

**Brave Little Parrot**  
Rafe Martin

Preparing to Read

1. With such a title, you would expect the story to involve a parrot, i.e. the story has a bird as the protagonist (hero)?

If so, then, what do you call this kind of story? Why are such stories written, normally? Are these restricted to children's stories, do you think? Why?

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2. What brave thing would you expect a parrot to be able to do to merit its "hero" status in this fable?

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3. Have you, personally, done anything that you, or people around you, would call brave? If "Yes," what was it, and why did you do it? Are bravery and heroism restricted to people who are great, powerful, and have authority?

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4. In this fable, the forest is on fire. The parrot could fly away to save itself from the fire, but many other animals, and the forest,

itself, couldn't fly away to save themselves. What could a single parrot do? Would it not be wiser of it to fly away and save itself? What do you think? Explain why you think so.

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5. The parrot could not leave the forest—its and all other fellow creatures' home—to burn away. It was not right, it thought. It decided to do something about it, however insignificant its contribution was and, even though it was, in effect, killing itself in the process. What could a little insignificant parrot do in the face of a raging forest fire?

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6. Would you expect that the parrot's efforts to produce any results, or would it die sad and in vain, only for us to read this story about an unwise parrot who knew it was not up to the challenge it faced, yet faced it anyway and died in the attempt? How would the story end, do you think?

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7. Write a couple of sentences to predict the moral of the story. What is the story about?

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As you read, look for answers to the following questions:

1. What caused the fire in the forest? How did it start?

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2. What was the parrot's life like before the fire?

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3. Why and how did the parrot decide to try to put out the fire?

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4. Why did 'she' (the parrot) do it when she knew that her attempt to put out the fire was futile and totally impractical?

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5. Who passed overhead while the little parrot was charred and exhausted in her futile attempt to save the forest? What were they doing?

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6. How was one of the gods moved, and what did 'he' do? Why did he do so?

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7. What was the parrot's response to the great eagle's advice? What did she say she needed?

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8. How did that response affect the great eagle when he was back among his fellow gods?

---

9. What did he do in his sadness for the little parrot? What was the effect of this?

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10. What then is the moral of the story? Does it remind you of an Arabic saying? What is it?

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11. Decide, after reading the story, whether the parrot deserves the description "brave"?

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Before reading the story, and to help you understand it better, read this list of facts<sup>1</sup> about what is happening to the earth:

- It takes an entire forest—over 500,000 trees—to supply Americans with their Sunday newspapers every week.
- Over a billion people could be fed by the grain and soybeans eaten by U.S. livestock every year.
- The junk mail Americans receive in one day could produce enough energy to heat 250,000 homes.
- Each year, 27 million acres<sup>2</sup> of tropical rainforests are destroyed, and translates to 74,000 acres per day 3,000 acres per hour. ... 50 acres per minute.
- Americans produce enough "styrofoam" cups every year to circle the earth 436 times.

These facts apply everywhere in the world to varying degrees, so everybody is involved.

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<sup>1</sup> **50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth.** The Earthworks Group.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Acre = 4000 metres. (27mil. x 4000 = 108,000,000,000 m<sup>2</sup>)

## **Brave Little Parrot**

**Rafe Martin**

*Rafe Martin is an award-winning author and storyteller. His work has received very many awards.*

1. Once a little parrot lived happily in a beautiful forest. But one day, without warning, lightning flashed, thunder crashed, and a dead tree burst into flames. Sparks, carried on the rising wind, began to leap from branch to branch and tree to tree.
2. The little parrot smelled the smoke. "Fire!" she cried. "Run to the river!" Flapping her wings, rising higher and higher, she flew toward the safety of the river's far shore. After all, she was a bird and could fly away.
3. But as she flew, she could see that many animals were already surrounded by the flames and could not escape. Suddenly a desperate idea, a way to save them, came to her.
4. Darting to the river, she dipped herself in the water. Then she flew back over the now-raging fire. Thick smoke coiled up, filling the sky. Walls of flame shot up, now on one side, now on the other. Pillars of fire leapt before her. Twisting and tum-

ing through a mad maze of flame, the little parrot flew bravely on.

5. Having reached the heart of the burning forest, the little parrot shook her wings. And the few tiny drops of water that still clung to her feathers tumbled like jewels down into the flames and vanished with a hiss.
6. Then the little parrot flew back through the flames and smoke to the river. Once more she dipped herself in the cool water and flew back over the burning forest. Once more she shook her wings, and a few drops of water tumbled like jewels into the flames. *Hisssss.*
7. Back and forth she flew, time and time again from the river to the forest, from the forest to the river. Her feathers became charred. Her feet and claws were scorched. Her lungs ached. Her eyes burned. Her mind spun as dizzily as a spinning spark. Still the little parrot flew on.
8. At that moment some of the blissful gods floating overhead in their cloud palaces of ivory and gold happened to look down and see the little parrot flying among the flames. They pointed at her with their perfect hands. Between mouthfuls of honied foods, they exclaimed, "Look at that foolish bird! She's

trying to put out a raging forest fire with a few sprinkles of water! How absurd!" They laughed.

9. But one of those gods, strangely moved, changed himself into a golden eagle and flew down, down toward the little parrot's fiery path.
10. The little parrot was just nearing the flames again, when a great eagle with eyes like molten gold appeared at her side. "Go back, little bird!" said the eagle in a solemn and majestic voice. "Your task is hopeless. A few drops of water can't put out a forest fire. Cease now, and save yourself before it is too late."
11. But the little parrot continued to fly on through the smoke and flames. She could hear the great eagle flying above her as the heat grew fiercer. He called out, "Stop, foolish little parrot! Stop! Save yourself!"
12. "I didn't need some great, shining eagle," coughed the little parrot, "to tell me that. My own mother, the dear bird, could have told me the same thing long ago. Advice! I don't need advice. I just"—cough, cough—"need someone to help!"
13. Rising higher, the eagle, who was a god, watched the little parrot flying through the flames. High above, he could see his

own kind, those carefree gods, still laughing and talking even as many animals cried out in pain and fear far below. He grew ashamed of the gods' carefree life, and a single desire was kindled in his heart.

14. "God though I am," he exclaimed, "how I wish I could be just like that little parrot. Flying on, brave and alone, risking all to help—what a rare and marvelous thing! What a wonderful little bird!"

15. Moved by these new feelings, the great eagle began to weep. Stream after stream of sparkling tears began pouring from his eyes. Wave upon wave they fell, washing down like a torrent of rain upon the fire, upon the forest, upon the animals and the little parrot herself.

16. Where those cooling tears fell, the flames shrank down and died. Smoke still curled up from the scorched earth, yet new life was already boldly pushing forth—shoots, stems, blossoms, and leaves. Green grass sprang up from among the still-glowing cinders.

17. Where the eagle's teardrops sparkled on the little parrot's wings, new feathers now grew: red feathers, green feathers, yellow feathers too. Such bright colors! Such a pretty bird!

18. The animals looked at one another in amazement. They were whole and well. Not one had been harmed. Up above in the clear blue sky they could see their brave friend, the little parrot, looping and soaring in delight. When all hope was gone, somehow she had saved them.

19. "Hurray!" they cried. "Hurray for the brave little parrot and for this sudden, miraculous rain!"

## COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions:

1. What do you think the message of this story is? Does the introduction provide you with any clue?

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2. How did the author help the reader understand the story? Is his use of specific details and images helpful?

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3. In the original introduction to *The Brave Little Parrot*, the author says that storytelling is a way to change things in ways we might never guess. What effect do you think this story could have on readers? How might it change them? Would it have any effect at all?

---

4. In the original introduction, the author also says: "Small deeds, done wholeheartedly, may have the potential to change everything." Do you agree? What small deed changed things in your life, or in the life of somebody you know?

---



B. Find the words or expressions in the passage that mean the following:

1. (paragraph one)

flash, flare, or flicker of fire: \_\_\_\_\_

2. (paragraph four)

rushing, running quickly, sprinting: Darting

3. (paragraph four)

fiercely burning, angry, furious: Raging

4. (paragraph four)

twisted, wound up, curled up: coiled up

5. (paragraph four)

towers, columns: pillars

6. (paragraph four)

labyrinth, network, tangle: maze

7. (paragraph five)

dropped, fell down: tumbled

8. (paragraph five)

disappeared, evaporated: vanished

9. (paragraph seven)

toasted, scorched, singed: charred

10. (paragraph seven)

burned, seared, singed: scorched

11. (paragraph seven)

went round and round, turned in circles: span

12. (paragraph seven)

in a light-headed way, about to faint, staggeringly: dizzily

13. (paragraph eight)

ecstatic, happy, rapturous: blissful

14. (paragraph eight)

sailing, gliding, drifting: floating

15. (paragraph eight)

elephant tusks (bone of great value): ivory

16. (paragraph eight)

drops, droplets: sprinkles

17. (paragraph nine)

affected, touched, ached his heart: moved

18. (paragraph ten)

very serious, grave, profound: solemn

19. (paragraph ten)

stop, end, leave off, quit: cease

20. (paragraph thirteen)

aroused, stirred, set alight, started: kindled

21. (paragraph fifteen)

shimmering, glittering, gleaming, glowing: sparkling

22. (paragraph fifteen)

flood, deluge, stream, rush, current: torrent

23. (paragraph sixteen)

spiraled, coiled, twisted, looped, snaked: curled up

24. (paragraph sixteen)

flowerettes, little flowers: blossoms

25. (paragraph sixteen)

ashes, embers, charcoals: cinders

26. (paragraph eighteen)

turning around, twirling, circling: looping

27. (paragraph eighteen)

floating, climbing, flying, ascending: soaring

28. (paragraph nineteen)

a word used for cheering somebody: huzzah

## DISCUSSION

1. A parrot is a small helpless bird—compared to a hawk, or an eagle, for example. It is also a bird that is not involved in the struggle for survival, usually. People keep it for its beautiful colours and its ability to imitate human speech. It is docile, friendly, and reputed to be very intelligent, so why, do you think, did the writer choose it for the main character in this fable? Is it significant, do you think, that the writer chose a 'she' parrot as the protagonist, while he refers to the god eagle as 'he'?
2. Rafe Martin's idea that the world is burning is clearly a figurative way of telling us that the planet earth is dying under our own eyes. Think of, at least, one practical thing people could do to help conserve resources, or help in lessening the destruction of the global village that we live in.
3. What environmental problems do we face here in Syria? What can the individual do about these?
4. Would it have been more effective, or easier to translate, if the writer chose another form of writing, i.e. an essay, for example, or a story involving human beings, children, perhaps? Why?

## **The Decoy**

A Mini Mystery by Wayne Willert

### Preparing to read:

1. What is the main function of a decoy in a detective story?

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2. Who do you expect the decoy to be, Sara or the well-dressed woman? Any clues?

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3. Is it wise for a woman to go out alone at night, knowing there is a vicious killer on the loose in the city? Why would she do so?

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4. What risk does such a woman run standing at a deserted bus-stop at 11 at night? Would the company of another woman be a welcome thing? Why?

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5. What would bring a woman out alone at night, especially if she has to get a bus to get back home?

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6. Would the appearance of a man, in such a situation, be a welcome event?

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As you read look for answers to the following questions:

1. Who says "It'll be another 20 minutes now"? What effect would that produce? Is this reassuring information? Why?

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2. Why is the woman out alone? Does Sarah give away any information about herself, or why she is out at night?

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3. Of the two women, who seems to be in control of the situation? Who is the frightened one? Why?

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4. What impression does the "dark man" give? Is his presence reassuring or causing more anxiety to the women?

---

5. What is frightening about the criminal who is still loose? What does he do to his victims?

---

6. Who says that she hopes this man is the criminal? Why? What does she show the other woman? Would you be reassured by such behaviour? Why?

---

7. Who walks off after the man passes the women? Why?

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8. What does the man do when Sara walks away? What does Sara do?

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9. Why couldn't the man subdue Francine?

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10. What happens as Francine is fighting off the man?

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11. What is the surprise ending? Who is the killer?

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12. At the end of the story, Sarah says that she doesn't understand. What does she not understand?

---

## **The Decoy**

A Mini Mystery by Wayne Willert

1. The well-dressed woman was breathing hard, clearly upset at having missed the bus that had just pulled away. Sarah joined her at the curb. "It'll be another 20 minutes now," she said.
2. The woman clutched her purse nervously. "My husband will be furious at me," she said. "He didn't want me to come out alone tonight, but I wanted to attend an antique auction. I don't drive and he's at a business meeting."
3. "I know what you mean. I'm without a car myself. And it's dangerous on the streets at night."
4. The woman glanced over her shoulder. "Especially now. The newspapers are full of that horrible purse snatcher, the one who knifes his victims."
5. Sarah nodded. "He's become quite a famous killer," she said.
6. The boulevard was cold and silent, poorly lighted. Sarah watched a dark man come out of the shadows and saunter



their way. He had his hands in the pockets of a leather jacket and a cigarette dangled from his lips. His face was unshaven, his slacks rumpled. Not a man you'd want to meet in a dark alley.

7. Sarah turned back to the woman. "My name is Sarah," she said. "Are you waiting for the last suburban bus?"

8. "Yes, I am, and my name is Francine. I'm glad to have your company. I don't like the looks of that man over there."

9. "I don't either. Just ignore him."

10. The man stopped a short distance away and leaned against a brick wall, watching them. He flipped his cigarette butt away and it sparked along the concrete sidewalk.

11. "Oh, dear," Francine said. "Do you suppose he could be the one?"

12. "I hope he is."

13. "You what?"

14. Sarah smiled. "I've been on the streets a month trying to lure him out. Look," Sarah opened her purse and showed Fran-

cine a wallet with a gold shield. "I'm a police decoy. I'm wearing a concealed microphone and my partners are listening in an unmarked police car a block away.

15. "There's only one problem: I have to be alone. I don't think our killer will attack while the two of us are together."
16. "Well, I hope you're not going to walk off and leave me here," Francine said.
17. "That man is still staring at us. Oh, dear. Who would kill for a purse?"
18. "You'd be surprised at the valuables women carry. Especially the affluent ones. Look at you—you have an expensive brooch and diamond rings, a good watch. Credit cards, probably."
19. "That man is coming closer," Francine said.
20. The man moved past them, heading up the block, he disappeared into a dark alley.
21. "If that's our killer, I'd hate to lose him," Sarah said. "Look, I'm going to walk past that alley as if I'm headed for the taxi

stand. If that's our man, we'll have him. If not—well, we'll just have to keep looking. You wait here."

22. "I—I'm frightened," Francine said.

23. "I'll be watching from a short distance away. Don't worry. Remember, I'm wired, and the police are just around the corner. If nothing happens, I'll return in a few minutes and keep you company."

24. Sarah moved off at a normal pace, her footsteps clicking on the pavement. She felt the tension cutting through her as she studied the street ahead. At the alley she shifted her bag to the other shoulder and kept walking. A bit later she stepped into a doorway and looked back. Within seconds the man in the leather jacket emerged from the mouth of the alley and headed toward Francine. Abruptly, Sarah left the doorway and hurried back the way she had come.

25. She had almost reached the bus stop when the man in the leather jacket suddenly grabbed Francine and threw her to the ground. Sarah heard the stifled scream. She broke into a full sprint.

26. Reaching the struggling pair, she fell to her knees on the sidewalk and said, "For heaven's sake, Fred, put the knife into her. Quick!"
27. "I can't," her husband gasped, fighting to cover Francine's mouth. "She's like a cougar! You picked a good one this time."
28. Sarah wrestled the purse from Francine, then grabbed one of the flailing arms and held it. She started to strip away the rings and the watch while Fred reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a switchblade knife. He flicked it open.
29. "Do it!" Sarah urged. "Hurry up! We don't have all day."
30. At that moment the wail of a police siren cut into the night and headlights flooded the curb. A patrol car skidded to a halt. Two police officers ran toward them, guns drawn.
31. "Police!" a cop shouted. "Hold it right there!"
32. Fred squinted into the glare and froze. He slowly dropped the knife and raised his arms.
33. Sarah frowned. Where—where did they come from? Francine sat up, rubbing her bruised lips. She struggled to her feet and said, "You two had a clever operation going. You would have pulled it off again, except for one thing."

34. The police handcuffed Sarah, then her husband. Sullenly, Sarah looked up: "I just don't understand," she said.

35. "This time you ran into a real policewoman," Francine explained. "I'm the one who was wired."

## COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions:

1. Why does the well-dressed woman have to wait 20 minutes now?  

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2. The two women play a similar game with each other. What game are they playing?  

---
4. How does the setting contribute towards the atmosphere in the story?  

---
5. How does the description of the man contribute to the atmosphere the writer wants to create in the story?  

---
5. Why does Sarah really introduce herself to the well-dressed woman?  

---
6. Notice that when Francine retorts "You *what*?" the writer wrote "*what*" is written in italics. Why do you think writers do that sometimes? What is italics supposed to signify?  

---

7. What is Sarah's excuse for leaving Francine alone? What is the real reason, do you think?

---

8. What is the name of the killer? How does Sarah know it?

---

9. When Sarah says to Fred to "Do it!", what does she mean? Does he? Why?

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10. In paragraph 33, Sarah asks, "Where did they come from?" What does she mean by "they"?

---

11. What does "wired", in the context of the story, mean?

---

**B. Find the words or expressions in the passage that mean the following:**

1. (paragraph one)

left, drove away, left: \_\_\_\_\_

2. (paragraph one)

side walk, street edge: \_\_\_\_\_

3. (paragraph two)

hang on to, clasp, hold tightly: \_\_\_\_\_

4. (paragraph two)

a place where items are sold to the highest bidder: \_\_\_\_\_

5. (paragraph four)

steal, grab, make off with: \_\_\_\_\_

6. (paragraph six)

walk in a care-free manner, wander: \_\_\_\_\_

7. (paragraph six)

hang down, hang loosely, droop: \_\_\_\_\_

8. (paragraph six)

backstreet, path, lane: \_\_\_\_\_

9. (paragraph ten)

throw away, toss, cast: \_\_\_\_\_

10. (paragraph fourteen)

hidden, kept out of sight, disguised: \_\_\_\_\_



11. (paragraph eighteen)

well off, rich, wealthy, loaded: \_\_\_\_\_

12. (paragraph twenty-four)

suddenly, unexpectedly: \_\_\_\_\_

13. (paragraph twenty-five)

smothered, suppressed, muffled, silenced: \_\_\_\_\_

14. (paragraph twenty-seven)

drew (his) breath, fought for breath: \_\_\_\_\_

15. (paragraph twenty-seven)

mountain lion, puma, panther: \_\_\_\_\_

16. (paragraph twenty-eight)

thrashing about, waving helplessly: \_\_\_\_\_

17. (paragraph twenty-nine)

howl, sharp pained sound: \_\_\_\_\_

18. (paragraph thirty-two)

squeeze one's eyes because of sudden strong light: \_\_\_\_\_

19. (paragraph thirty-four)

gloomily, sulkily, crossly, angrily: \_\_\_\_\_