

58 A Blessing in Disguise?

- The tiny village of Frinley is said to possess a 'cursed tree'. Because the tree was mentioned in a newspaper, the number of visitors to Frinley has now increased. The tree was planted near a church fifty years ago, but it is only in recent years that it has gained an evil reputation. It is said that if anyone touches the tree, he will have bad luck; if he picks a leaf, he will die. Many villagers believe that the tree has already claimed a number of victims. The vicar has been asked to have the tree cut down, but so far he has refused. He has pointed out that the tree is a useful source of income as tourists have been coming from all parts of the country to see it. In spite of all that has been said, the tourists have been picking leaves and cutting their names on the tree-trunk. So far, not one of them has been struck down by sudden death!



Comprehension and Précis

Answer these questions in not more than 80 words.

1. Has the number of visitors to the village of Frinley increased or not? Is there said to be a 'cursed tree' near a church or not? (*because*)
2. Do the villagers believe that if anyone picks a leaf he will die. What have they asked the vicar to do? (*Since*)
3. Is the tree a useful source of income or not? Has the vicar agreed to have the tree cut down, or has he refused to do so? (*As*)
4. Have tourists been picking leaves or not? Have any of them come to harm or not? (*Meanwhile, though . . .*)

Composition

Rewrite the following sentences using the joining words in brackets:

1. A village well was said to be cursed. It was bought by a man. (*which*)
2. Tourists came to see it. There was not even any water in it. (*though*)
3. The tourists could look into the well. They had to throw a coin in first. (*Before*)

Letter-writing

Learn the following opening phrases by heart:

You will be glad to hear that . . .

Thank you for letting me know that . . .

Exercise

Write two short paragraphs (of not more than two sentences each) completing the above phrases.

Key Structures

Frinley is said to possess a 'cursed tree'.

a Do you remember these sentences: (KS 89)

He is being sent abroad.

I was told to wait for him.

Your wallet has been found.

b Now study these sentences:

Instead of saying:

People say he is a genius.

We can say:

He is said to be a genius.

Or: It is said that he is a genius.

People say that there is oil under the North Sea.

There is said to be oil under the North Sea.

Or: It is said that there is oil under the North Sea.

She gave me a pen.

I was given a pen.

A pen was given to me.

The manager offered the vacant post to him.

He was offered the vacant post.

Or: The vacant post was offered to him.

Exercises

A. There are some verbs in the passage which are similar in form to the examples given above. Can you find them?

B. Give the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Do not refer to the passage until you finish the exercise.

1. The tiny village of Frinley (say) to possess a 'cursed tree'. Because the tree (mention) in a newspaper, the number of visitors to Frinley has now increased. The tree (plant) near a church fifty years ago, but it is only in recent years that it has gained an evil reputation. It (say) that if anyone touches the tree he will have bad luck.
2. The vicar (ask) to have the tree cut down, but so far he has refused.
3. In spite of all that (say), the tourists have been picking leaves and cutting their names on the tree-trunk. So far, not one of them (strike) down by sudden death!

Special Difficulties

Verbs Often Confused.

a Increase and Grow. Compare SD 46c. Study these examples:

The number of visitors to Frinley has now increased. (ll. 3-5)

She has grown so much she is nearly as tall as I am.

b Gain and Earn. Study these examples:

It has gained an evil reputation. (ll. 7-8)

The children gained good results in the examination.

He has gone abroad and I hear he is earning a lot of money.

c Pick and Cut. Study these examples:

The tourists have been picking the leaves and cutting their names on the tree trunk. (ll. 17-18)

She has picked a lot of flowers.

She cut the apple into two.

Exercise

Choose the correct words in these sentences:

1. This fruit is fresh. I have just (cut) (picked) it.
2. If you travel by air, you will (earn) (gain) time.
3. He (earns) (gains) £20 a week.
4. Judy has (increased) (grown) so much I can hardly recognize her.