

APPROACHES TO ENGLISH

BOOK - 2

(APPROVED BY C. H. S. E, ORISSA FOR +2 ALTERNATIVE ENGLISH)



ORISSA STATE BUREAU OF TEXTBOOK PREPARATION AND PRODUCTION
PUSTAK BHAVAN, BHUBANESWAR

APPROACHES TO ENGLISH

(BOOK - 2)

(Poetry, Short Stories and One - Act Plays)

Approved by:

**The Council of Higher Secondary Education, Orissa, Bhubaneswar
for +2 Examination 2005 A.D and onwards**

Editors

**Prof. Prafulla C. Mohanty
Dr. Amulya K. Purohit
Dr. Suman Mahapatra**

Reviewer

Dr. Bijoy K. Bal



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Member of Editorial Board in Alternative English

Prof. Prafulla C. Mohanty

Dr. Bijoy K. Bal

Prof. Sridhar Mohapatra

Dr. Amulya K. Purohit

Dr. Suman M.ahapatra

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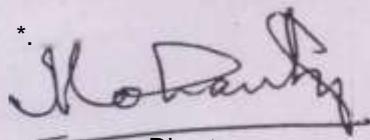
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FOREWORD

This year the Council of Higher Secondary Education Orissa has restructured the Syllabus in +2 Alternative English for Arts, Science and Commerce streams in line with the syllabus for Compulsory English. As per the requirement of the Syllabus the Orissa State Bureau of Textbook Preparation and Production, Bhubaneswar is going to publish the textbook entitled "Approaches to English" in 2 parts. The first part deals with Prose, Grammar, Usages and Writing while the second part covers the courses in Poetry, Short stories and One Act plays. These new text books have been prepared by eminent and experienced teachers of Orissa selected by the CHSE, Orissa. It is hoped that these books will be immensely useful to the advance-level students of English who offer English as an alternative to a Modern Indian language.

I take this opportunity to thank the Council of Higher Secondary Education for their cooperation in the preparation and production of these books. I extend my gratefulness to the authors and publishers whose textual materials are used in these books. My thanks are due to the members of the Board of Editors for their invaluable help to the Bureau. Lastly I extend my thanks to the officers and staff of the Bureau for their whole-hearted effort in bringing out these books.

Comments and suggestions for further improvement of these books are welcome.

*


Director

Sri Gundicha

01.07.2003

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PREPARATION AND PRODUCTION

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g "The Fog" - W.H. Davies Jonathan Cape
"Girl Lithe and Tawny" 30, Bedford Square, London
4. "Of a Questionable Conviction" Jayant Mohapatra, Tinikonia Bagicha, Cuttack
5. "Ecology" - A.K. Ramanujan - OUP, YMCA Library Building, Jail Singh Road, New Delhi - 007
6. "Indian Children Speak" - Juniata Bell
"Toads" - Philip Larkin

Bedford Books of St. Martins Press,
29, Winchester Street, Boston,
MA 02116

Stories :

1. The Rainbow Bird - (Vance Palmer) Generations : East and West - S. Chand & Co.
2. The Eyes Have It (Ruskin Bond) - The Best of Ruskin, Penguin Books India (P) Ltd., 1994.
3. The Little Wife (William March): Great American Short Stories, Dell Publishing Co., INC, 750, Third Avenue, New York 17, N.Y.
4. The Happy Man (W.S. Maugham): Collected Short Stories Vol. I.
Penguin Books.Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England
g The Tree (Manoj Das): Contemporary Indian English Stories, Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd., L-10, Green Park Extension, New Delhi -110016.
- g The Watchman (R.K. Narayan): Malgudi Days I - Indian Thought Publications, Mysore.

One Act Plays :

Samuel French Ltd., 26 Southanton Street, London WC 2 for JB Priestley's *Mother's Day*; George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd. for Percival Wilde's *The Hour of Truth*
Oxford University Press, Oxford, Walton Street, OX2 6DP for Ella Adkin's *The Unexpected* [From Nine Modern Plays, Ed. by B.T. Reddy]

PREFACE

("Approaches to English," Book Two)

The new syllabus for Higher Secondary Alternative English course builds on the language skills incorporated in the General English course and is meant to facilitate the learning of advanced skills in intensive reading as well as extensive reading. Approaches to English, Book 1 deals with intensive reading skills, and Book 2 comprising poems, stories and one-act plays focuses on the development of extensive reading skills. The chief aim of this extensive reading course is to encourage the habit of reading a variety of texts for pleasure and thereby develop the students' language proficiency as well as their overall grasp of extended texts. The thrust here is on making the students want to read and they will want to read only when they have enjoyed reading.

The pieces chosen in different genres such as poetry, short story and play, we hope, will be interesting for the Higher Secondary level learners and will, on that account, motivate them to go ahead and choose poems, stories and plays outside the textbook for personal reading. This can be ensured if the learners read the texts presented in this book on their own as far as possible and enjoy doing the Activities following each text. They can then transfer appropriate skills to their readings outside the textbooks in English.

A great responsibility, therefore, lies on the English teacher to stimulate the learners' interest so that they make an effort to read the texts at home and discuss points of common interest in the class. It is for the teacher to organise discussions, and to guide the students in doing the Activities only when they request his/her help. And it will be a gem in the teacher's crown if his/her efforts succeed in motivating some of the students to go beyond the prescribed texts. In view of the fact that the Alternative English classes may not be large in many of the colleges, discussions can be conducted fruitfully and the Activities for the development of extensive reading skills can be performed effectively in the classroom.

A model question paper along with its Analysis is also appended to the book to provide a meaningful test for a syllabus of this kind and to give a clear direction to teachers, learners and paper-setters.

We offer this textbook to the students of the Higher Secondary Alternative English course with the hope that this would help them to imbibe the expected extensive reading skills and to develop a love for reading for the sake of pleasure.

We sincerely hope that the students and teachers of this course will come forward to suggest revisions and modifications in respect of the texts as well as the Activities in this textbook, so that an improved version of the textbook can see the light of the day in its next edition.

Reviewer: Dr. B. K. Bal

Editors : Prof. P. C. Mohanty

Dr. A. K. Purohit

Dr. Suman Mahapatra

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Unit - I

ECOLOGY

A. K. Ramanujan

Pre-reading Activity :

The poem you will read presently has the title 'Ecology'. What does Ecology mean ? If you aren't sure of its meaning, look it up in the glossary following the text of the poem and write its meaning here :

Can you now guess what the poem would aim to tell the reader ?
Write your guess here :

Now read the poem, and find out what it is about.

The Text :

- 1 The day after the first rain,
 for years, I would come home
 in a rage,
- 2 for I could see from a mile away
 our three Red Champak trees
 had done it again,
- 3 had burst into flower and given Mother
 her first blinding migraine
 of the season,
- 4 with their street-long heavy-hung
 yellow pollen fog of a fragrance
 no wind could sift,
- 5 no door could shut out from our black-
 pillared house whose walls had ears
 and eyes.

- 6 scales, smells, bone-creaks, nightly •
 visiting voices, and were porous
 like us,
- 7 but Mother, flashing her temper
 like her mother's twisted silver,
 grandchildren's knickers
- 8 wet as the cold pack on her head,
 would not let us cut down
 a flowering tree
- 9 almost as old as her, seeded,
 she said, by a passing bird's
 providential droppings
- 10 to give her gods and her daughters
 and daughters' daughters basketfuls
 of annual flower
- 11 and for one line of cousins
 a dower of migraines in season.

Glossary :

ecology	the way in which plants, animals, and people are related to each other and to their environment.
rage	uncontrollable anger
migraine	severe headache
pollen	fine powder produced by flowers, which is carried by wind or by insects to other flowers of the same type.
sift	(here) separate
porous	having tiny holes
scales	small flat pieces of skin, as in fish and snakes.
Bone Creaks	sounds made at the bone joints when you move (comparison with the long high noise when a door opens)
flashing	showing something for a short time.
twisted	bent in many directions
providential	lucky
dower	gift

Questions for Discussion :

1. What story does the poem tell us ?
2. What is its theme ?

3. When does the speaker come home in a rage and why ?
 4. How does the poet describe the fragrance of the Champak flowers ?
 5. How are the walls of the black-pillared house described ?
 6. When the speaker says "had done it again" (stanza 2), what is its effect ? Does this expression convey approval or disapproval ?
 7. How are the words "sift" and "porous" related ? What purpose do they serve in the poem ?
 8. What makes the mother "flash" her temper ?
 9. "but Mother, flashing her temper like her mothers twisted silver, grand children's knickers wet as the cold pack on her head"

Explain the comparisons (similes) in these lines.

 10. Which stanza do you find the dramatic in the poem ?
- 1 I. What light does the poem throw on the Mother's attitude ?
12. How does the speaker's attitude contrast with that of the mother ?

COMPOSITION :

1. Examine the appropriateness of the title 'Ecology' for the poem.
2. Read the following poem by Nissim Ezekiel on a similar theme, and note the points of comparison and contrast between 'Ecology' and 'Night of the Scorpion'.

NIGHT OF THE SCORPION

I remember the night my mother
was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours
of steady rain had driven him
to crawl beneath a sack of rice.
Parting with his poison-flash

of diabolic tail in the dark room
he risked the rain again.
The peasants came like swarms of flies
and buzzed the name of God a hundred times
to paralyse the Evil One.

With candles and with lanterns
throwing giant scorpion shadows
on the mud-baked walls
they searched for him : he was not found.
they clicked their tongues.

With every movement that the scorpion made
his poison moved in Mother's blood, they said.
May he sit still, they said.
May the sins of your previous birth
be burned away tonight, they said.

5

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May your suffering decrease
the misfortunes of your next birth, they said.

May the sum of evil
Balanced in this unreal world
against the sum of good

25

become diminished by your pain.

May the poison purify your flesh
of desire, and your spirit of ambition,
they said, and they sat around
on the floor with my mother in the centre.

30

the peace of understanding on each face.

More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours,
more insects and the endless rain.

My mother twisted through and through
groaning on a mat.

35

My father, sceptic, rationalist,
trying every curse and blessing,
powder, mixture, herb and hybrid.

He even poured a little paraffin
upon the bitten toe and put a match to it.

40

I watched the Game feeding on my mother.

I watched the holy man perform his rites
to tame the poison, with an incantation.

After twenty hours
it lost its sting.

45

My mother only said
Thank God, the scorpion picked on me
and spared my children.

- Nissim Ezekiel

Notes on the Poet

A. K. Ramanujan (1929 - 1996) permits his poetry to spring out of "deep inner compulsions". Fear, despair and the need for familial warmth are some of the themes of his poetry. His major verse collections are *The Striders* (1966), *Relations* (1971), *Selected Poems* (1976), and *Second Sight* (1986).

The poem 'Ecology' expresses the contrasting attitudes of Mother and the children towards Nature; it highlights Mother's determination to preserve the Champak trees even though they are the cause of her suffering.

Unit - II

DOG'S DEATH

John Updike

Pre-reading Activity :

Have you ever kept a pet ? Why do people keep pets ? For companionship ? For love ? Or for some other benefit ? Can you recall some of the happiest moments with your pet ? And some sad moments ? How would you react to the sudden death of your pet ? Here's a poem in which Updike remembers his pet. As you read the poem, try to find an answer to the question : What is the most significant thing that the poet remembers about his pet ?

The Text :

She must have been kicked unseen or brushed by a car,
Too young to know much, she was beginning to learn
To use the newspapers spread on the kitchen floor
and to win, wetting there, the words, "Good dog ! Good dog !"

We thought her shy malaise was a shot reaction.
The autopsy disclosed a rupture in her liver.
As we teased her with play, blood was filling her skin
And her heart was learning to lie down forever.

Monday morning, as the children were noisily fed
And sent to school, she crawled beneath the youngest's bed. 10
We found her twisted and limp but still alive.
In the car to the vet's, on my lap, she tried

To bite my hand and died, I stroked her warm fur
And my wife called in a voice imperious with tears,
Though surrounded by love that would have upheld her, 15
Nevertheless she sank and, stiffening, disappeared.

Back home, we found that in the night her frame,
Drawing near to dissolution, had endured the shame
Of diarrhoea and had dragged across the floor
To a newspaper carelessly left there. *Good dog.* 20

Glossary :

Malaise	bodily discomfort without signs of illness.
autopsy	examination of the body in order to know the cause of death
rupture	breaking / bursting
imperious	giving orders

Questions for Discussion :

1. Why does the poem begin with the pronoun "She"? Would it make any difference if the poem began with "The dog....." ?
2. How did the dog win everybody's appreciation ?
3. What could "shy malaise" mean ?
4. What does the poet want to convey when he says- "...blood was filling her skin/And her heart was learning to lie down forever" ?
5. How does the poet describe the dying dog ?
6. What does the expression "her frame" suggest ?
7. Why did the dog drag herself to a newspaper on Sunday night ?
8. In stanza 4, the third line is : "Though surrounded by love that would have upheld her." Who was "surrounded" ? And by whom ?
9. Comment on the speaker's voice in "Dog's Death" ?
10. Can you suggest an alternative title to the poem ?

COMPOSITION :

1. Write an appreciation of the poem, beginning with a mention of its theme and then showing, through a stanza-by-stanza analysis, how this theme has been elaborated across the stanzas in a connected way. Your appreciation of the poem must include an analysis of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the poetic devices used, and must conclude with your personal response to the poem.
2. Suppose your pet is lost and there is little hope of your getting it back. Write a letter to a friend, expressing your sentiments for the lost pet. so that you may get over your depression.

Notes on the Poet :

John Updike (born 1932) is known as the chronicler of Modern America. His novels such as *Couples* and the "*Rabbit*" contemplate the "domestic needs" and "aesthetic-religious desires" of the average American. He has also tried his hand at light verse. Some of his well-known poetry collections are *The Carpentered Hen*, *Telephone Tales*, and *Facing Nature*. In "Dog's Death" the poet pays tribute to the memory of his pet. The appeal of the poem, however, is universal.

Unit - III

THE FOG

VV. H. Davies

Pre-reading Activity :

It's not always that we see the fog. When do we see this phenomenon ? Certainly, the fog hits our eyes straight and makes us nearly blind. If you happen to be walking through the fog, how would you go ahead ? Feel your way through ? In a situation like this, do you think a blind man could be a good guide ?

The Text :

1 I saw the fog grow thick,

Which soon made blind my ken;
It made tall men of boys
And giants of tall men.

2 It clutched my throat, I coughed;
Nothing was in my head
Except two heavy eyes
Like balls of burning lead.

3 And when it grew so black
That I could know no place
I lost all judgement then,
Of distance and of space.

4 The street lamps, and the lights
Upon the halted cars,
Could either be on earth
Or be the heavenly stars.

5 A man passed by me close
I asked my way; he said,
'Come follow me, my friend'
I followed where he led.

§ He rapped the stones in front,
 'Trust me,' he said, 'and come';
 I followed like a child -
 A blind man led me home.

Glossary :

Ken	:	sight
Clutched	:	held
rapped	:	knocked something quickly and lightly on the floor

Questions for Discussion :

1. How can the fog affect a person's vision ?
2. What examples does the poet offer to illustrate his error of judgement ?
3. What simile does he use to express how his eyes felt in the fog ?
4. At what stage of the poem is the poet completely overpowered by the fog ?
5. How does he describe the street scene in the fog ?
6. Who "rapped the stones in front" ? And why ?
7. What was the poet's reaction to the offer of help ?
8. Do you find the last line of the poem paradoxical ? Explain.
9. In an otherwise dark scene, we come across words like "burning", "lamps, and the lights,", and "heavenly stars". What purpose do these expressions serve in the poem ?
10. If you find yourself in a similar situation, what would you do ? - follow the blind man as the poet did ? Or wait till the fog clears ?

COMPOSITION :

1. The poem 'The Fog' by W.H. Davies describes the narrator's experience of a fog. The situation is introduced in stanza 1; its effect on the narrator is described in stanzas 2-4; and in the last two stanzas, the narrator's problem is resolved.
 Now write an elaborate note on how ideas are structured in the poem, including an analysis of the poetic devices used, such as similes, metaphors and paradoxes.
2. In pairs, write down at least twenty words which you associate with a fog. Then, using some of these words, try to write a short poem describing an imagined experience in a fog.

Notes on the Poet :

William Henry Davies (1871-1940) is chiefly remembered for expressing natural beauty in his short, simple verses. Important among his volumes of poetry are *The Soul's Destroyer and other Poems* (1907) and *Love Poems* (1935). His poems mainly touch upon "odds and ends of things". 'The Fog' is about one of life's ironies.

Unit - IV

GIRL LITHE AND TAWNY

Pablo Neruda

Pre-reading Activity :

The word 'lithe' means *graceful* and 'tawny' refers to a *skin colour made up of brown, yellow and orange colours*. Now look at the title of the poem you are going to read and guess what kind it is.

The Text :

Girl lithe and tawny, the sun that forms
the fruits, that plumps the grains, that curls sea-weeds,
filled your body with joy, and your luminous eyes
and your mouth that has the smile of the water.

A black yearning sun is braided into the strands
of your black mane, when you stretch your arms.
You play with the sun as with a little brook
and it leaves two dark pools in your eyes.

Girl lithe and tawny, nothing draws me towards you.
Every thing bears me farther away, as though you were noon.
You are the frenzied youth of the bee,
the drunkenness of the wave, the power of the wheat-ear.

Thy sombre heart searches for you, nevertheless,
and I love your joyful body, your slender and flowing voice,
Dark butterfly, sweet and definitive
like the wheat field and the sun, the poppy and the water.

Glossary :

Lithe	:	graceful
Plumps	:	makes the grains fleshy and rounded
luminous	:	glowing; bright
yearning	:	strong desire
braided	:	woven

strand	a single hair
mane	(here) long hair
brook	stream
frenzied	excited
sombre	dark-coloured
definitive	decisive
poppy	large, bright red flower

Questions for Discussion :

1. How does the sun form the beauty of the girl ?
2. What does the expression "filled your body with joy" mean ?
3. What, do you think, is the meaning of the line "and your mouth that has the smile of the water" 9
4. Why does the poet call the girl's hair "a black yearning sun" ? What figure of speech is used here ?
5. What can the poet mean by "Play with the sun as with a little brook"?
6. What draws the poet away from the girl ?
7. What purpose does the image of the bee serve in stanza 3 of the poem ?
8. What does the poet try to convey through the images of the wave and the wheat-ear ?
9. Whose heart searches for the girl ?
10. Why does the poet address the girl as "Dark butterfly" ?
11. What aspects / activities of the girl go towards making her lithe ?
12. Is the girl made tawny by the sun or was she born tawny ? How do you know the answer ?

COMPOSITION :

1. Make a list of objects which the girl has been compared to. Are the comparisons convincing or exaggerated ?
2. Write an appreciation of the poem 'Girl Lithe and Tawny', starting with a mention of the theme, then analysing the poem stanza by stanza, relating them to the theme, and concluding with your over-all assessment of the poem.
3. Can you write four or five poetic lines describing your appreciation of the beauty of a person or a natural happening like a sunrise/sunset ?

Notes on the poet :

Poetry and Politics were the chief preoccupations of Pablo Neruda who lived from 1904 to 1973. His love poetry written originally in Spanish focuses on the yearnings of romantic love. Among his major collections are *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (1924), *Spain is the Heart* (1937), and *Memorial of Isla Negra* (1964). The poem "Girl Lithe and Tawny" is English translation of a poem which was written when Neruda was barely twenty. It describes a young man's yearnings for a girl of his dreams.

Unit - V**BALLAD OF THE LANDLORD****Langston Hughes****Pre-reading Activity :**

Landlords and tenants do not always enjoy a happy relationship. What does the tenant do if he is evicted without any valid reason ? Does the law of the land protect him ? What can he do if he is denied justice, especially where law and justice are handmaidens of racial prejudice ?

Here is a ballad that dramatizes a situation of racial prejudice.

The Text :

Landlord,landlord,
My roof has sprung a leak.
Don't you 'member I told you about it
Way last week ?

Landlord,landlord,
These steps is broken down.
When you come up yourself
It's a wonder you don't fall down.

Ten Bucks you say I owe you ?
Ten Bucks you say is due ?
Well, that's Ten Bucks more'n I'll pay you
Till you fix this house up new.

What ? You gonna get eviction orders ?
You gonna cut off my heat ?
You gonna take my furniture and
Throw it in the street ?

Um-huh ! you talking high and mighty.
Talk on - till you get through.
You ain't gonna be able to say a word
If I land my fist on you.

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*Police ! Police !
Come and get this man !
He's trying to ruin the government
And overturn the land !*

Copper's whistle !

25

Patrol bell !

Arrest.

Precinct Station.

Iron cell.

Headlines in press :

30

MAN THREATENS LANDLORD

TENANT HELD NO BAIL

JUDGE GIVES NEGRO 90 DAYS IN COUNTY JAIL

Glossary :

Sprung a leak	has a crack through which water leaks
'member	remember
bucks	dollars
gonna	going to
high and mighty	arrogant
copper's	Police man's
Precinct	the main police station in a particular area

Questions for Discussion :

1. What are the tenant's complaints to the landlord ?
2. "These steps is broken down". Is the sentence grammatically correct ? If not, why has the poet used it ?
3. "Well, that's Ten Bucks more'n I'll pay you. Till you fix this house up new." Explain these lines.
4. Does the tenant actually beat the landlord ? How do you know ?
5. "He's trying to ruin the government' and overturn the land".
Who speaks these words ? And to what effect ?
6. Do you think the tenant committed an unbailable offence ? Explain.
7. What is the attitude of the poet towards the legal system and social justice of the land ? Is it justifiable in the context of the poem ?
8. Why is the last stanza printed in capital letters ?
In this poem the poet uses some words that are plain or ungrammatical or clipped or telegraphic.
Can you identify them ?
9. Who do you sympathise - the landlord or the tenant ? And why ?

COMPOSITION :

1. Examine how far the title 'Ballad of the Landlord' is justified.
2. Write an appreciation of the poem, following the outlines:

(theme-analysis of the sequence of events in narration, stanza by stanza - effectiveness of the poem in communicating the intended ideas and feelings- the functions of the deviant (unusual) language used - your response to the poem and your considered opinion.)

Activity on Poem Completion :

Complete the following poem by filling the gaps appropriately with the lines given below it.

Fight your little fight, my boy,

Don't be a good little, good little boy

and agreeing with all the mealy-mouthed, mealy-mouthed

cowardice, every old lout.

(D.H. Lawrence)

Lines for the gaps :

- i) truths that the shy trot out
- ii) being as good as you can -
- iii) fight and be a man
- iv) to protect themselves and their greedy-mouthed, greedy-mouthed.

Notes on the Poet :

Hailed as the poet of Harlem (a district in New York with a large concentration of Black Americans), Langston Hughes (1902-1967) is famous for works like *The Weary Blues* (1926), *One Way Ticket* (1949) and *The Panther and the Lash* (1967). His poetry has the rhythm close to Jazz Music; it is characterized by "conflicting changes . . . sharp interjections, broken rhythms." The poem " Ballad of the Landlord" is one of Hughes's 'protest' poems.

Unit - VI

INDIAN CHILDREN SPEAK

Juanita Bell

Pre-reading Activity :

Very often we ~~fail~~ tounAmtaad etch'other. This happens tsppdzAy Wen we are prejudiced against each other. To understand the other we need to develop a positive attitude. How would you react if you are described as just the opposite of what really you are ?

What can you do to clear the misunderstanding ?

Now read the poem below to see how the speaker tries to clear one such misunderstanding of some white people about the Red Indian children.

The Text:

People said, "Indian children are hard to teach.

Don't expect them to talk."

One day stubby little Boy said,

"Last night the moon went all the way with me,
When I went out to walk."

People said, "Indian children are very silent.

Their only words are no and yes."

But, ragged Pansy confided softly,

"My dress is old, but at night the moon is kind;
Then I wear a beautiful moon-coloured dress."

LA

10

People said, "Indian children are dumb.

They seldom make a reply."

Clearly I hear Delores answer,

"Yes, the sunset is so good, I think God is throwing
A bright shawl around the shoulders of the sky."

15

People said, "Indian children have no affection.

They just don't care for anyone."

Then I feel Ramon's hand and hear him whisper,

'A wild animal races in me since my mother sleeps
under the ground. Will it always run and run ?"

20

People said, "Indian children are rude.

They don't seem very bright."
 Then I remember Joe Henry's remark,
 "The tree is hanging down her head because the sun
 is staring at her. White people always stare,
 They do not know it is not polite."

25

People said, "Indian children never take you in,
 Outside their thoughts you'll always stand."
 I have forgotten the idle words that people said.
 But treasure the day when iron doors swung wide,
 And I slipped into the heart of Indian Land.

30

Glossary :

stubby	: short and thick
ragged	: (with clothes) torn (here, refers to someone wearing rags)
confided	: told a secret
dumb	: unintelligent; stupid

Questions for Discussion :

1. When you read the poem, you come across such names as Pansy, Delores Ramon and Joe Henry. How can you describe them together ?
 They are all _____

2. Throughout the poem the phrase people said has been repeated. Who are these people ?
3. What does "moon-coloured dress" refer to ?
4. Are the Indian children really dumb ? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Who do you think are rude -the white people or the Indians ? Why do you think so ?
6. What is the speaker's attitude towards the Indian children ?
7. How many voices do you hear in this poem ? Whose are they ?
8. The poem begins with "People said." But towards the end of the poem the speaker says - "I have forgotten the idle words that people said." Does this suggest a transition of mood and attitude in the speaker ? Explain.
9. What does the speaker convey in the last three lines of the poem ?
10. Do you think the Indian children's view of the world is different from that of the white people's ?
 How so ?
11. Is the speaker in the poem an American, Indian or a white American ? How do you know ?

Composition :

- I. The speaker in the poem is not one of the 'Indian children'. Why then does the poem bear the title 'Indian Children Speak' ? Examine the appropriateness of the title of the poem.

= There is an undercurrent of irony throughout the poem. Discuss how.

(Irony refers to -----)

Now discuss how there is an under current of irony in the poem.)

Activity on Poem completion :

Fill in the gaps appropriately with the lines given below the text of the incomplete poem 'Nurse's Song':

NURSE'S SONG

When the voices of children are heard on the green

.....
My heart is at rest within my breast

And everything else is still.

'Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down

'And the dews of the night arise;

'Come, come, leave off play, and let us away

• •?

.....
'and we cannot go to sleep;

'Besides, in the sky the little birds fly

• •

.....
'Well, well, go & play till the light fades away

• •

.....
The little ones leaped & shouted & laugh'd

And all the hills echoed.

Missing Lines :

- i) And the hills are all cover'd with sleep
- ii) And laughing is heard on the hill
- iii) And then go home to bed
- iv) No, no, let us play, for it is yet day
- v) Till the morning appears in the skies

Unit - VII

THE GOAT - PATHS

James Stephens

Pre-reading Activity :

The goat is a very common animal in our part of the country. What qualities do you associate with goats ? Think up five words that come to your mind when you think of goats.

The poem you are about to read has the title 'The Goat Paths'. Can you guess what the poem is about ?

Write your guess here :

Now read the poem to see what it is really about.

The Text :

The crooked paths go every way
Upon the hill - they wind about
Through the heather in and out
Of the quiet sunniness.
And there the goats, day after day,

Stray in sunny quietness,
Cropping here and cropping there,
As they pause and turn and pass,
Now a bit of heather spray,
Now a mouthful of the grass.

In the deeper sunniness,
In the place where nothing stirs,
Quietly in quietness,
In the quiet of the furze,
For a time they come and lie
Staring on the roving sky.

If you approach they run away,
They leap and stare, away they bound,
With a sudden angry sound,
To the sunny quietude;

10

15

20

Crouching down where nothing stirs
 In the silence of the furze,
 Crouching down again to brood
 In the sunny solitude.

If I were as wise as they,
 I would stray apart and brood,
 I would beat a hidden way
 Through the quiet heather spray
 To a sunny solitude;

And should you come I'd run away,
 I would make an angry sound,
 I would stare and turn and bound
 To the deeper quietude,
 To the place where nothing stirs
 In the silence of the furze.

In that airy quietness
 I would think as long as they;
 Through the quiet sunniness
 I would stray away to brood
 By a hidden, beaten way
 In the sunny solitude,

I would think until I found
 Something I can never find,
 Something lying on the ground,
 In the bottom of my mind.

25

30

35

40

45

Glossary :

crooked	:	not straight
heather	:	waste land covered with shrubs
cropping	:	grazing
furze	:	shrub with spikes
roving (sky)	:	moving (here, appearing to move)
quietude	:	calmness
crouching	:	lying close to the ground
brood	:	keep thinking for a long time about a particular thing
beat	:	make a path

Questions for Discussion :

1. Where are the straying goats found ?
 - § Why do the goats go to the heath and not to a grassy field ?
 - Are these goats different from the others of their kind ?
4. How many times are the words relating to "quiet" used in this poem ?
 - And to what effect ?
5. How does the poet relate "Quietly in Quietness" (line 13) to "the roving sky" ? (line 16) ?
 - If you were to make two sections of the poem, how would you divide it ?
6. How would you react if someone called the first section "observation" and the second, "reflections" ?
7. What do you notice in the voice of the poet ?
 - urgency, defiance, arrogance, envy, frustration, expectation, or a sense of oneness with God's creation ?
 - What does the poet say he would do when his 'sunny solitude' is disturbed ?
 - Why does the poet call the goals "wise" ?
10. The expression "If I were" conveys a wish. What is the poet's wish ?
11. "I would think until I found / something I can never find." How would you comment on the complexity of thought implicit in these lines ?
12. Can you write a simple paraphrase of the last stanza ?
13. Point out some of the striking images in the poem.
14. What purpose do the words "Quiet sunniness", "sunny quietness", "deeper sunniness", "Quietly in quietness," "sunny quietude", "sunny solitude" serve ?
 - i) they cast a spell on the reader.
 - ii) they add to the musicality of the poem.
 - iii) they are meant to create ambiguity for the reader.
15. Can you think of possible revisions of the following lines of the poem ?
 - Lines 17 : "If you approach they run away"
 - Line 30 : "And should you come I'd run away"

COMPOSITION :

1. Would you agree that the poem suggests the possibility of "a harmony within the self and with the natural process of life and the world" ? Justify your answer.
- Comment on the appropriateness of the title 'The Goat Paths'.

Activity on Composing A Poem :

The following are lines of a stanza jumbled up. Rearrange them to form the stanza.

- i) I remember, I remember
- ii) The little window where the sun
- iii) But now, I often wish the night
- iv) Came peeping in at morn;
- v) The house where I was born,
- vi) He never came a^wink too soon,
- vii) Had borne my breath away !
- viii) Nor brought too long a day;

Can you now write a similar stanza describing what you remember about your childhood: You can begin your stanza with 'I remember, I remember.'

Notes on the poet:

James Stephens (1882-1950), a British poet and novelist, is known for such works as *Insurrections* (1909), *The Crack of Gold* (1912), *The Hill of Vision* (1912), *Green Branches* (1912), and *Collected Poems* (1936). His "*delicately inspired*" poetry makes effective use of imagery; the familiar scene is often "translated into an image for a human meaning." In this poem, the poet, like the goats, seeks harmony with Nature.

Unit - VIII

OF A QUESTIONABLE CONVICTION

Jayanta Mahapatra

Pre-reading Activity :

Have you ever written poems ? If so what was your purpose in writing them ? Why does a poet write poems ? To persuade the readers into his own beliefs ? Is it always possible to know if the poet is sincerely expressing his convictions in his poems ? The poem you are going to read has the title 'Of a Questionable Conviction'. Can you guess what the poem is about ? Now read the poem and find out.

The Text :

This is a man who talks of pain
as though it belonged to him alone.

Maybe he has invented it himself
and made a virtue of it.

May be he is a poet.

For hours he waits, in the night.
Toward another night he waits,
for that is his excuse to live.
The empty window in his lonely wall
belongs to him.

For months together
the window has been deceiving him.
Light comes in, then goes away on its own.
He has been trying
to polish the light on his heart.

They all say he was a poet.
His eyes saw the pain in the mirror
that occupied him.
They didn't grudge him that :
such a harmless pastime never ruined anybody's sleep.

Glossary :

conviction	: a strong belief or opinion
grudge	: give or allow something very unwillingly
pastime	: an enjoyable or interesting activity

Questions for Discussion :

1. Why does the poet think the man who talks of pain invented it himself ?
 2. What is the main idea in stanza 1 ?
 3. What, according to the poet, is "his excuse to live" ?
 4. Can the wall be lonely ? Why does the poet use this expression ?
 5. "For months together the window has been deceiving him." What could the poet mean by these lines ?
 6. The poet described in the poem "has been trying to polish the light on his heart ." How ?
 7. You can easily see that in the first three stanzas only the present tense forms are used. In the final stanza, however, past tense forms are used. Why is this shift in the concluding stanza ?
 8. Would you consider the ending of the poem satisfactory ? Explain your point of view.
 9. What can you say about the tone of the poem ?
 10. What do you mean by
 - i) "The empty window in his lonely wall" (Stanza 2);
 - ii) "His eyes saw the pain in the mirror" (Stanza 4); and
 - iii) "They didn't grudge him that :" (Stanza 4)
- COMPOSITION :**
1. Make an analysis of the poem, following the outlines given below :
- (the theme of the poem - introduction (Stanza 1): "May be he is a poet." - description (Stanzas 2 and 3) : "For hours" / "For months" - conclusion (Stanza 4) : "such a harmless pastime" - general remarks on the metaphors used and the ironical tone- your opinion on the poem as a whole.)
- Write your own description of what a poet is, beginning with "A poet is a person who"

Notes on the poet :

Jayanta Mahapatra (born 1928) is foremost among the Indian English poets. His poetry expresses an "unhealable rift", a profound sense of loss. A tireless experimenter, Mahapatra's poetic idiom is subtle and suggestive. His well-known poetry collections are *Close the Sky*, *Ten By Ten* (1971), *A Rain Rited* (1976), *A Father's Hours* (1976), and *Relationship* (1980), and *Burden of Waves and Fruit* (1986). "Of a Questionable Conviction" addresses the issue of how important convictions are to the writing of a poem.

Unit - IX

MIRROR

Sylvia Plath

Pre-reading Activity :

Every one of us looks into a mirror everyday. In which way(s) is a mirror useful to us ? Can you list them here ? You are about to read a poem named **Mirror**. Can you guess what this poem tells the reader ? Now read the poem and find out.

The Text:

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.

Whatever I see I swallow immediately

Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.

I am not cruel, only truthful

The eye of a little god, four-cornered.

Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.

It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long

I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.

Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,

10

Searching my reaches for what she really is.

Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.

I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.

She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.

I am important to her, She comes and goes.

15

Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.

In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman

Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

Glossary :

preconceptions	: opinions formed before knowing actual facts
unmisted	: not prejudiced; unaffected

speckles	:	spots
flickers	:	flashes on and off quickly,
agitation of hands	:	waving of hands

Questions for Discussion :

1. Who is the speaker in the poem ?
2. What are the two things that the mirror in the poem reflects ?
3. Why is the mirror called the "eye of a little god ?"
4. What could the poet mean when she says :
"Now I am a lake"?
5. Why are the candles and the moon called 'liars' ?
6. How does the woman react to her reflection in the lake ?
7. Would our view of the aging woman be different if she, instead of the mirror, had narrated the story ?
8. Here the poet uses at least three of the poetic devices : personification, metaphor, and simile. Identify the lines where these figures of speech are used.
9. " and in me an old woman Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish." What is the significance of the image of "a terrible fish" here ?
10. Do you agree that the mirror in this poem reflects more than mere images ? How so ?
11. Notice that the first stanza of the poem begins with "I am silver and exact", and the second stanza begins with 'Now I am a lake'. Do these two autobiographical statements of the mirror contradict each other ? If so, how are they reconciled in the poem ?

COMPOSITION :

1. Write an appreciation of the poem "Mirror", beginning with a statement of the theme and (then proceeding to analyse the poem by lines along with your views regarding their communicative value (= how effectively the lines with their images and other poetic devices, if any, communicate an idea). The conclusion would sum up the salient features of the poem and end with your general assessment of the poem.
2. Basing on what you know of the relationship between the Mirror and the Wall in the poem, write a dialogue between them on the subject of the world around them.

Notes on the Poet :

Sylvia Plath (1932 - 1963) in her life, as in her poetry, tried to fuse the roles of "Muse, Mother and Poet". Her poetry is intensely personal and powerfully confessional. Notable among her works are *The Colossus* (1960) and *Arie/* (1965). In the poem mirror Plath shows how the mirror reflects mere than mere images.

Unit - X

TOADS

Philip Larkin

Pre-reading Activity :

What ideas do you associate with toads ? List them here The poem you are going to read now has the title 'Toads'. See if the ideas you associate with toads are reflected in the poem. Your focus, however, should be on finding answers to : Is it real toads that the poem is about ? If not, what does the poet mean by toads ?

The Text :

- 1 Why should I let the toad *work*
Squat on my life ?

2 Can't I use my wit as a pitchfork
And drive the brute off ?

2 Six days of the week it soils
With its sickening poison -

Just for paying a few bills !
That's out of proportion.

3 Lots of folk live on their wits :
Lecturers, lispers,
Losels, loblolly-men, louts -
They don't end as paupers;

4 Lots of folk live up lanes
With fires in a bucket,
Eat windfalls and tinned sardines -
They seem to like it.

5 Their nippers have got bare feet,
Their unspeakable wives

Are skinny as whippets - and yet
 No one actually starves.

Ah, were I courageous enough
 To shout *Stuff your pension!*

But I know, all too well, that's the stuff
 That dreams are made on :

For something sufficiently toad-like
 Squats in me, too;
 Its hunkers are heavy as hard luck,
 And cold as snow,

And will never allow me to blarney
 My way to getting
 The fame and the girl and the money
 All at one sitting.

I don't say, one bodies the other
 One's spiritual truth;
 But I do say it's hard to lose either,
 When you have both.

Glossary :

squat	: to sit on one's heels
pitchfork	: a fork with a long handle
wit	: intelligence
lispers	: those who speak with a speech fault
losels	: loafers
loblolly-men	: those who trick others into giving them money.
louts	: rude, violent men
windfalls	: fruits blowing off a tree
sardines	: small young fish that are often packed in flat metal boxes.
whippets	: small thin racing dogs
nippers	: children
Stuff your pension	: you say this when you do not want the pension that is offered and you are angry.
hunkers	: bent knees while the toad s sitting.
blarney	: talk pleasant but untrue things in order to convince or persuade people.

Questions for Discussion :

1. What does the poet mean by toads ?
2. How do the two questions with which the poem begins set the tone of the poem ?
3. The thing that oppresses the poet is first called "the toad", then "the brute" and then "it". Does this convey the poet's progressive indifference to the creature ? What else could this convey ?
4. Which stanza expresses the poet's intense disgust ? What is he disgusted with ?
 - ☞ Identify the stanza where alliteration is most pronounced ? What purpose does it serve ?
6. What is the poet's attitude to the people who 'live on their wits' ? Why does he cite their examples ?
7. What can the poet mean by the expression "Their unspeakable wives" ?
 - What is the poet's wish in stanza 6 ?
9. In the first stanza the poet says : "Why should I let the toad work / Squat on my life; in stanza 7 he says : "For something sufficiently toad-like *I* Squats in me too." Are they two different squatters ? Is there a difference of mood between stanza 1 and stanza 7 ?
10. What does the poet require from life ? Is he frustrated because he cannot get "All at one sitting" ?
11. The poet is a deft manipulator of words but he envies those who make a living through unscrupulous manipulation of words, who "blarney" their way to success. What could he mean ? Would you consider it mock modesty ?
12. What do these lines mean ? Attempt a simple and brief paraphrase.

"I don't say, one bodies the other
 One's spiritual truth;
 But I do say it's hard to lose either,
 When you have both."

Composition :

1. Assess the significance of the title *Toads*.
2. Write an appreciation of the poem. [First state the theme and say briefly how this theme is related to 'Toads'- Then discuss how the problem is introduced and elaborated in the poem, and whether there is any suggestion of a resolution of the problem- Also examine-how the introducing stanza and the concluding stanza are related to each other and to the stanzas in between- Identify the unusual words in the poem, if you find any, and point out their relevance in the poem- And conclude your appreciation with your personal response to the theme and its treatment in the poem.]

Notes on the Poet :

Phillip Larkin (1922 - 1995) is one of the outstanding poets of the post-war generation of poets. His volumes include *The North Ship* (1945) and *The Less Deceived* (1955). His poetry responds to "all the tints and flavours of provincial life." His sensitivity to human "absurdity and pathos" is strongly marked in many of his poems. The poem, "Toads" expresses the poet's disgust with a vice-like grip of a routined engagement.

Unit XI

THE RAINBOW BIRD

Vance Palmer

SECTION 1

Pre-reading activity

It is always a pleasure to remember how in your childhood days you ran after the colourful butterflies, how you wanted to keep pets and spend most of your time in their company, and how you developed an attachment to the birds and animals.

Here is a story depicting a small girl's love and concern for a colourful Australian bird befittingly called the rainbow bird.

Focusing questions :

As you read the first section of the story, focus on finding answers to these questions :

- i) What does this section of the story tell us about Maggie's preoccupation with the bird ?
- ii) How does the story-teller show the contrast between the real world of the school and the world of Maggie's dreams ?

The Text

1. All afternoon as she bent over her slate, Maggie's mind had been filled with vision of the bird. Blue-green shot with gold, its tail an arrow. Her hair fell over her intense, grape-dark eyes; she hardly knew what she was writing. It was the same every day now. The hands crawled down the cracked face of the clock with aggravating slowness; the teacher's voice droned on and on like a blowfly against the windowpane; the other children squirmed in their seats and folded paper darts to throw across the room. But all she lived for was the moment when she would again see the coloured shape skim from its cavern in the earth, making her catch her breath as if its wings had brushed across her heart.
2. As soon as school was out she flashed a look at Don, racing down to the bottom fence and along through the bushes that covered the side of the hill. Don was a little behind, limping because of his sore toe; flushed and breathless Maggie had reached the bottom of the gully before he emerged from the undergrowth. One stocking had fallen over her ankle and her hat was at the back of her neck held by the elastic around her throat, but she cared for nothing but getting away.

3. From the bottom of the playground she could hear the other girls calling her.

"Wait on, Maggie! We're coming too."

¹⁴ She tried to shut their voices from her ears ! None of them must find out her secret. She hated their empty faces, their coldly-mocking eyes; they made fun of her because she carried beetles' wings and cowries about in her matchbox to stare at under the desk.

6. "Come on, Don," she called back impatiently, "they'll all be on us soon."

¹⁵ He growled as he caught up with her.

"It's all right for you- you got boots on. This prickly grass hurts like blazes. Why didn't you go down the road ?"

9. "This is nearly half-a-mile shorter.... Come on."

10. They panted up the other hill and across a cleared paddock that lay between them and the beach. Before the eyes of both of them was the deep cleft left by the store-truck when it was bogged months before, and the little round hole with a heap of sand in front of it. Such a tiny tunnel in the side of the rut that no one would notice unless he saw the bird fly out. They had come on it together when they were looking for mushrooms; there had been a sudden burr of wings almost beneath their feet, a shimmer of opal in the sunbright air, and then a stillness as the bird settled on the she-oak thirty yards away, making their hearts turn over with the sheer beauty of its bronze and luminous green.

11. A rainbow-bird! And it had come from that rounded tunnel in the sandy earth where the couch-grass was growing over the old rut. Don had wanted to put his hand in and feel if there were any young ones, but Maggie had caught his arm, her eyes desperate.

12. "No, don't! She's watching. She'll go away and never come back- never."

13. She wanted just to stand and let her eyes have their fill. That stretch of cropped turf, with the she-oak on a sandy rise above the beach and the miraculous bird shining out of the greeny-grey branches! It was only rarely they surprised her in the nest, for she usually seemed to feel the pattering vibration of their feet along the ground and slip out unobserved. But they never had to look far for her. There in the she-oak she shone, flame-bright and radiant, as if she had just dropped from the blue sky. And sometimes they saw her make skimming through the air after flies, taking long, sweeping curves and pausing at the top of the curve, a skater on wings, a maker of jewelled patterns, body light as thistledown, every feather blazing with fire and colour. The vision came back to Maggie each night before she closed her eyes in sleep. It belonged to a different world from the

school, the dusty road, the yard behind the store that was filled with rusty tins and broken cases.

14. "That girl !" her mother said, hearing her mutter on the pillow. "It's a bird now."

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words / expressions occur]

1 <i>blowfly</i>	:	an insect that deposits its eggs or larvae on carrion; excrement, etc. or in the wounds of living animals
<i>squirmed</i>	:	twisted the body as in pain or discomfort
<i>dart</i>	:	arrow
<i>skim</i>	:	a thin layer or film formed on a liquid
<i>cavern</i>	:	a deep hollow place in rocks
<i>gully</i>	:	a narrow channel made by rain water
<i>beetle</i>	:	an insect with hard, horny forewings
<i>cowries</i>	:	highly polished , usually brightly coloured shells
7 <i>growl</i>	:	to utter a deep rough sound like a dog
8 <i>blazes</i>	:	flames of fire
10 <i>paddock</i>	:	^g small grassfield
<i>cleft</i>	:	crack
<i>bogged</i>	:	sunk and stuck fast in a marsh or quagmire
<i>rut</i>	:	^g furrow made by wheels on soft ground
<i>burr</i>	:	whisper or murmur
<i>shimmer</i>	:	a slightly shaking shine
<i>opal</i>	:	a type of white stone with changing colours in it
<i>she-oak</i>	:	a variety of oak tree
13 <i>thistledown</i>	:	the tufted feathery parachutes of thistle seeds

Questions for discussion

1. Why was Maggie unmindful in the classroom the whole of the afternoon ?
 - 'The hands crawled down the cracked face of the clock with aggravating slowness;....'" What does this expression suggest ?
3. Why did Maggie avoid other girls of the class ?
4. What did Maggie do when the school was over ?
 - How did Maggie feel at the sight of the rainbow- bird ? What vision came to her each night before she closed her eyes in sleep ?
6. Which lines present a contrast between the world of the bird and the world of the school ? What do they signify ?
7. "It's a bird now". In which context does Maggie's mother say so ? Why 'now' ? Does it imply that Maggie had other obsessions earlier ? Which ones ? (See paragraph 5)

SECTION 2

Pre-reading activity

Before reading the next part of the story, try to predict what would happen next.

The Text

15. They hurried across the road, past the spindle-legged house with no fence around it, past the red-roofed cottage where there were bathing-suits hung out to dry. Surely this afternoon the little birds would be out in front of the nest ! The day before when they had lain with their ears close to the ground they had heard something thin but distinct, a cheeping and twittering. It had come to them through the warm earth, thrilling them with intense life. Those bits of living colour down there in the dark-how wonderful it would be when they came out into the light !

16. Maggie pulled up suddenly in the final run, clutching at Don's arm.

17. "Wait!... Someone's there... Don't go on yet."

18. Breathing hard, Don stood staring at the big, dark figure on the slope overlooking the sea.

19. "It's Peter Riley watching if the mullet are coming in."

"No, it isn't. It's Cafferty. I know his hat."

20. "Yes, Cafferty the Honey Man."

The man was standing almost on the nest, looking down into the she-oak by the beach, his body still as a wooden stump, his eyes intent as their own. He moved slightly to the right; they saw he had a gun at his side. Horror laid an icy hand on the girl's heart. What was he doing with a gun there ?

21. Suddenly she started to run.

"Come on! I believe he's found the nest. I believe..."

22. Her slim legs twinkled like beams of light over the turf, her print frock blew up over her heated face, and Don found it hard to keep up with her. She was out of breath when she reached Cafferty and her eyes were points of fire. He was too occupied to notice her, he was shifting the gun in his hands and watching the she-oak tree. She saw a lump in the pocket of his shirt, a stain of blood.

23. Words came thickly from her throat.

"What're you doing with that gun ?"

"Eh ?" he said, hardly looking round.

"You - You've been shooting something... What's that in your pocket ?"

24. Cafferty let his eyes rest on her solidly, a slow grin parting his lips.
"Guess."
"It's notIt's a bird."
25. "Right. Right, first shot. Most people'd have thought it was a rabbit. Ever see one of those coloured bee-eaters, little girl ? Her mate's somewhere about. I'll get him, too, before long."
26. He took the crumpled bird from his pocket and dangled it before her proudly. Through a blur she saw the ruffled bronze and emerald of its plumage, the film over its eyes, the drop of blood oozing from its beak. Then she threw herself on the turf.
27. "Beast ! That's what you areA b-beast."
28. Cafferty looked from her small, sobbing figure to that of the boy, a sheepish bewilderment in his eyes. He was a hulking, slow-witted fellow, who lived in a humpy on the other side of the creek, surrounded by his hives and a thick growth of tea-tree.
"What's the trouble ?" he asked "That bird is it ?"
29. Don had no reply. He was confused, half-ashamed of his sister.
30. "Lord, you don't want to worry about vermin like that," said Cafferty. "Death on bees, them things are- hanging round the hives and licking 'em up as they come out. And they are not satisfied with robbing you like that, the little devils; they'll go through a flying swarm and take out the queen. It's a fact. Dinkum... I'd like to wipe the lot of 'em off the face of the earth."
31. He went over to the tiny opening of the tunnel and bruised the soft earth down over the face of it with his heavy boot. There was a dull passion in his absorbed eyes, a sense of warring against evil.
32. "No, you don't want to trouble about the likes of them, unless it's to go after them with a shanghai. There's sixpence a head waiting for any you fetch me. Tell the other youngsters that - a tanner a head. I'm going to clear the lot of'em out this winter."
33. Shouldering his gun he moved off down the beach, a lumbering heaviness in his gait. Maggie was still stretched prone on the turf, her face in her arms, and Don watched her awhile, awkward and ill-at-ease. But the superiority of one who has not given himself away was slowly asserting itself. Picking up the dead bird that Cafferty had thrown on the grass he fingered it clumsily, wondering if there were any bees in its crop. It was still warm, but its plumage was ruffled and streaky, and it didn't look nearly so wonderful as when it had shot into the air,

the light on its wings. Death on bees, the Honey Man had said. He began to feel a contempt for it.

34. "Come on, Mag! He's gone now. And the other kids'll be coming along soon."
35. She rose from the grass, tossing back her hair and looking at the bird with reddened eyes.
"Chuck it away."
- "Why ? I'm going to take it home and skin it."
- "Chuck it away !" she stormed.
36. He hesitated a moment, and then obeyed her. They trailed over the grass toward the store, Don swinging his bag and whistling to show he didn't care. There must be a lot of rainbow-birds about, and if the Honey Man kept his promise.....
Sixpence a head ! He could go out with the other boys on Saturday mornings, looking all along the sandy banks. But he wouldn't use a shanghai - no fear ! His new Bayard was three times as good.

Glossary

[The numbers indicate the paragraphs in which the words expressions occur.]

15 <i>cheeping</i>	chirping of a young bird
17 <i>mullet</i>	kind of sea fish
22 <i>turf</i>	surface of land matted with roots of grass
26 <i>dangled</i>	hung in the air
<i>ruffled</i>	wrinkled
<i>plumage</i>	a natural covering of feathers
<i>sheepish</i>	embarrassed
<i>hulking</i>	bulky, heavy and clumsy
<i>humpy</i>	(Australian) any crude aborigine hut or shelter
<i>creek</i>	a water course smaller than a river
30 <i>vermin</i>	harmful small-sized disgusting insects, difficult to control.
<i>Dinkum</i>	(Australian) a swear meaning 'genuinely or honestly speaking'
32 <i>shanghai</i>	drug applied to make somebody unconscious
33 <i>lumbering</i>	moving clumsily or heavily
<i>crop</i>	throat of a bird

Questions for discussion

1. Whom did Maggie and Don meet near the sledge-oak ? What was he doing there ?
2. How was Maggie shocked at the sight of the Honey Man ? Comment briefly on how her feeling of excitement and joy changed suddenly to one of fear, anger and hatred for the man.
[Note : 'Horror laid an icy hand on the girl's heart.' Try to understand the significance of this statement.]

3. "Beast ! That's what you are ... A b-beast." How do these words characterize the feelings of the small girl when she finds that her world of joy and wonder had been destroyed ?
4. Why did Cafferty swear to wipe the rainbow-birds off the face of the earth ?
5. There was a dull passion in his absorbed eyes, a sense of warring against evil.' How does this sentence portray the attitude of the Honey Man ? What contrast do you mark between the world of Maggie and the world of Cafferty ?
6. What difference do you mark between the attitudes of Maggie and Don ? Does Don support Cafferty ?.

Explain, You'll now come to the last part of the story. While reading it, try to find answers to the following questions :

- i) What happens to the Honey Man after the bird is killed ?
- ii) How does Maggie look at the happening ?

SECTION III

The Text

37. Maggie took no more notice of him than if he were merely a shadow behind her. Their father was standing waiting for them at the bowser outside the store, and Don had to go for orders on his pony. Maggie trudged upstairs to the room over the shop and flung herself down on the bed. Darkness had fallen over her life. Whenever she closed her eyes she could see the Honey Man's evil face, the broken, tobacco-stained teeth revealed in a grin through the ragged growth of beard. Hatred welled up in her as she thought of him squatting among the tea-tree on the other side of the creek, his gun between his knees, his eyes watching the leaves above. Devil ! Grinning devil ! If only forked lightning would leap out of the sky and char him to ashes.
38. When the evening meal was over she went upstairs again without waiting to do her homework. Her mother's voice followed at a distance, dying behind the closed door :
39. "What's the matter with Maggie now ?... The way that girl lets herself get worked up."
40. Lying awake, Maggie tried to imagine herself running down the slope and stopping suddenly to see the rainbow-bird whirling round over three spots of colour on the grass. But no ! She could only see the soft earth around the nest, squashed by the Honey Man's boot, and the dead bird lying on the grass with a drop of blood on its beak. Wonder and magic- they had gone out of everything. And Don was swaggering round, pretending he didn't care.
41. A light rain had begun to fall, making hardly any sound upon the roof, dropping with a faint insistent tinkle into the tanks. There were people coming and going in the store below. Between broken drifts of sleep she heard voices running on

and on, the telephones' muffled burring, the occasional hoot of a car. But all noises were muted, coming through a pad of distance, of woolly darkness. A funeral, she thought vaguely They were burying the rainbow-bird.

- 42. Near morning, or so it seemed, she heard someone come upstairs, and there was a blare of light in her eyes. Her mother was bending over her with a candle.
- 43. "Not asleep yet, dear ? Have those people kept you awake ?"
- 44. The drowsy aftermath of feeling made Maggie's voice thick.
- 45. "N-no; it wasn't that. It was because Why do they all come here now ?
- 46. Her mother tricked an end of the quilt in.

"They brought Mr. Cafferty to the shop to wait for the ambulance. He had a little accident and had to be taken into the hospital Go to sleep now."

Maggie's eyes were wide open.

"He's dead ?"

- 47. "Good gracious, no ! Nothing to worry about. He must have been dragging the gun after as he climbed through the wirefence across the creek. But they found him soon after it happened. Only in the thigh the wound was."
- 48. Through Maggie's mind flashed a sudden conviction. "He will die. I know he will. Serve him right, too."
- 49. "You don't understand what you're talking about, child," said her mother in a formal shocked voice. "Everyone's fond of the Honey Man and hopes he'll be all right soon.... You've been lying awake too long. Go to sleep now."
- 50. She faded away, leaving Maggie to stare up at the ceiling in the dark. But the vision of a world oppressed by a heavy, brutal heel had vanished. Her mind was lit up again; everything had come right. She could see the cropped slope by the sea, the overgrown wheel-rut, the small, round tunnel with the heap of sand in front of it. And it was the man with the gun who was lying crumpled on the grass. Above him sailed the rainbow-bird, lustrous, triumphant, her opal body poised at the top of a curve, shimmering in the sunbright air.

Glossary

[The numbers indicate the paragraph in which the words/ expressions occur.]

37	<i>bowser</i>	truck filled with a tank
	<i>trudge</i>	to walk with labour or effort
	<i>flung</i>	threw
40	<i>swaggering round</i>	walking with a sense of superiority

Questions for discussion

1. What ideas sweep Maggie's mind after she returned home and threw herself on the bed ? Do you mark the difference between Maggie's feelings in Section 1 and those in Section III ? (Note : 'Wonder and magic- they had gone out of everything.' This line is a key to the understanding of the changed world of Maggie.)
2. What did Maggie imagine when she heard voices between broken drifts of sleep ?
3. How did she react when she was told that Cafferty had been injured ? Why did she think 'everything had come right'?
4. Do you find in her a vengeful attitude ? Does she feel that justice has been done ? What impression do you form about her from her reaction to the Honey Man's suffering ?
5. What change do you mark in her in the last paragraph ? Has there been a restoration of her world of joy and wonder ? How did she imagine about the rainbow-bird and the Honey Man ?

Questions for Composition

1. How does the rainbow-bird create a world of wonder and magic for Maggie ?
2. Discuss how the story comes full circle with the restoration of Maggie's world of joy and wonder.
3. Give an account of the contrasting attitudes of Maggie and the others around her to the rainbow-bird.

Notes : - Vance Palmer (1885-1959) is an Australian short story writer who had considerable reputation among the Commonwealth literary figures. His writings are marked by an interesting portrait of the phenomenal world with its amazing beauty and wonder. With his deft sketch of manners and behaviour, especially the responses of the young and tender minds, some of his stories are very impressively drawn. He excels in the study of "the innocence of the unself-conscious years" and "the beginnings made towards discoveries and disappointments which are an essential part of growing up." His narrative is very often enriched by an evocative use of symbols.

The story in the beginning depicts the innocent joys of childhood days, a visionary world of beauty and wonder. The rainbow-bird with its multiple shining colours has a magic spell on the small girl. But the most painful part of the story is that the child's world of innocence, joy and wonder does not last long; to the utmost shock and depression of the child it is totally demolished with the killing of the rainbow-bird that represents for her the entire world of entralling beauty and splendour. The Honey Man for her is the Satan bent upon destroying God's beautiful creation and design, though to others his motive is utilitarian and business-like. The accident of the Honey Man, in her opinion, is retributive, and it signifies the ultimate triumph of good over evil. With the grant of poetic and divine justice, there is a restoration of the earlier world of magic and music, of course at the imaginative and psychic level of the child. The contrast between the two worlds is quite transparent. The rainbow-bird has a symbolic significance; most of the lines in the story with their alternative rhythm have a poetic effect and serve as appropriate expressions of the child's shimmering world of beauty and wonder.

Unit - XII

THE EYES HAVE IT

Ruskin Bond

SECTION I

Pre-reading activity

Have you ever come in close contact with a blind person or listened to him or her ? Have you noticed anything special about blind people ?

You might have noticed that they try to make up for their loss of sight by using their imagination.

Focusing Questions

Here is an interesting story narrated by a blind man who uses his imagination very well. As you read the story, try to find answers to these questions.

- i) How does the narrator make guesses about the fellow passenger ?
- ii) When does he get a surprise, and what is it ?

The Text

- 1 I had the train compartment to myself up to Rohana, then a girl got in. The couple who saw her off were probably her parents; they seemed very anxious about her comfort, and the woman gave the girl detailed instructions as to where to keep her things, when not to lean out of windows, and how to avoid speaking to strangers.
2. They called their goodbyes and the train pulled out of the station. As I was totally blind at the time, my eyes sensitive only to light and darkness, I was unable to tell what the girl looked like; but I knew she wore slippers from the way they slapped against her heels.
- 3 It would take me some time to discover something about her looks, and perhaps I never would. But I liked the sound of her voice, and even the sound of her slippers.

'Are you going all the way to Dehra ?' I asked.

I must have been sitting in a dark corner, because my voice startled her. She gave a little exclamation and said, 'I didn't know anyone else was here.'

Well, it often happens that people with good eyesight fail to see what is right in front of them. They have too much to take in, I suppose. Whereas people who

cannot see (or see very little) have to take in only the essentials, whatever registers most tellingly on their remaining senses.

- 6 'I didn't see you either,' I said. 'But I heard you come in.'
- 7 I wondered if I would be able to prevent her from discovering that I was blind. Provided I keep to my seat, I thought, it shouldn't be too difficult.
- 8 The girl said, 'I'm getting off at Saharanpur. My aunt is meeting me there.'
- 9 'Then I had better not get too familiar,' I replied. 'Aunts are usually formidable creatures.'
-
- 'Where are you going ?' she asked.
- 'To Dehra, and then to Mussoorie.'
- 10 'Oh, how lucky you are. I wish I were going to Mussoorie. I love the hills. Especially in October.'
- 11 'Yes, this is the best time,' I said, calling on my memories. 'The hills are covered with wild dahlias, the sun is delicious, and at night you can sit in front of a log fire and drink a little brandy. Most of the tourists have gone, and the roads are quiet and almost deserted. Yes, October is the best time.'
- 12 She was silent. I wondered if my words had touched her, or whether she thought me a romantic fool. Then I made a mistake.
- 13 'What is it like outside ?' I asked.
- 14 She seemed to find nothing strange in the question. Had she noticed already that I could not see ? But her next question removed my doubts.
- 15 'Why don't you look out of the window ?' she asked.
- 16 I moved easily along the berth and felt for the window ledge. The window was open, and I faced it, making a pretence of studying the landscape. I heard the panting of the engine, the rumble of the wheels, and, in my mind's eye, I could see telegraph posts flashing by.
- 17 'Have you noticed,' I ventured, 'that the trees seem to be moving while we seem to be standing still ?'
- 18 'That always happens,' she said. 'Do you see any animals ?'
- 19 'No,' I answered quite confidently. I knew that there were hardly any animals left in the forests near Dehra.
- 20 I turned from the window and faced the girl, and for _____ while we sat in silence.
- 21 'You have an interesting face,¹' I remarked. I was becoming quite daring, but it was a safe remark. Few girls can resist flattery. She laughed pleasantly - a clear, ringing laugh.

- 22 'It's nice to be told I have an interesting face. I'm tired of people telling me I have a pretty face.'
- 23 Oh, so you do have a pretty face, thought: I; and aloud I said, 'Well, an interesting face can also be pretty.'
- 24 'You are a very gallant young man,' she said, 'but why are you so serious ?'
- 25 I thought, then, I would try to laugh for her, but the thought of laughter only made me feel troubled and lonely.
 'We'll soon be at your station,' I said.
- 26 'Thank goodness it's a short journey. I can't bear to sit in a train for more than two-or-three hours.'
- 27 Yet, I was prepared to sit there for almost any length of time, just to listen to her talking. Her voice had the sparkle of a mountain stream. As soon as she left the train, she would forget our brief encounter; but it would stay with me for the rest of the journey, and for some time after.
- 28 The engine's whistle shrieked, the carriage wheels changed their sound and rhythm, the girl got up and began to collect her things. I wondered if she wore her hair in a bun, or if it was plaited; perhaps it was hanging loose over her shoulders, or was it cut very short ?
- 29 The train drew slowly into the station. Outside, there was the shouting of porters and vendors and a high-pitched female voice near the carriage door; that voice must have belonged to the girl's aunt.
 'Goodbye,' the girl said.
- 30 She was standing very close to me, so close that the perfume from her hair was tantalizing. I wanted to raise my hand and touch her hair, but she moved away. Only the scent of perfume still lingered where she had stood.

Glossary

[The numbers refer to paragraphs in which the words/expressions occur.]

so	<i>formidable</i>	: difficult to deal with
*	16 <i>ledge</i>	: raised edge
	<i>rumble</i>	: rolling noise
23	<i>gallant</i>	: brave, noble
28	<i>bun</i>	: a rounded mass of hair
	<i>plaited</i>	: intertwined
30	<i>tantalize</i>	: to torment by presenting something to excite desire but keeping it out of reach

Questions for discussion

1. Can you visualize the dramatic setting when the story begins ?

Note Imagine that you are standing on the platform of Rohana station. A train arrives. A blind young man is travelling all alone, seated in a dark corner of an empty compartment. A girl gets into the same compartment. An elderly couple comes to see her off, leaves after giving her the usual instructions to be observed during the journey. The train leaves the station.

2. Which lines in the text show that the man was blind ?
 3. How did the girl respond to the first question of the young man ?
 4. What does the narrator observe about the people with good eye -sight and the people who cannot see ?
 5. Is the protagonist afraid that his blindness may be discovered by the girl ? If so, why ?
 6. 'Then I had better not get too familiar.' What is the occasion and intention underlying this statement of the narrator ? Does it throw any light on his character ?
 7. How does the man try to hide his blindness from the girl ? Do his efforts create a situation of comicality and light-heartedness ?
 8. How does Bond add colour and beauty to a world of blindness and suffering ? Discuss briefly the world of beauty and romance as noticed in the conversation between the travellers.
 9. What was the thing that tormented the protagonist about the girl ?

SECTION II

Pre-reading activity

- i) Can you guess the feelings of the young traveller after the girl's departure ?
 ii) What do you think would happen next ?

Now read the last part of the story.

The Text

- 31 There was some confusion in the doorway. A man, getting into the compartment, stammered an apology. Then the door banged, and the world was shut out again. I returned to my berth. The guard blew his whistle and we moved off. Once again, I had a game to play and a new fellow-traveller.
- 32 The train gathered speed, the wheels took up their song, the carriage groaned and shook. I found the window and sat in front of it, staring into the daylight that was darkness for me.
- 33 So many things were happening outside the window : it could be a fascinating game, guessing what went on out there.
- 34 The man who had entered the compartment broke into my reverie.
- 35 'You must be disappointed,' he said. 'I'm not nearly as attractive a travelling companion as the one who just left.'

36 'She was an interesting girl,' I said. 'Can you tell me - did she keep her hair long or short ?'

37 'I don't remember,' he said, sounding puzzled. 'It was her eyes I noticed, not her hair. She had beautiful eyes - but they were of no use to her. She was completely blind. Didn't you notice ?'

Glossary

[The number refers to the paragraph in which the word occurs.]

34 *reverie* : kind of daydream about pleasant things or events

Questions for discussion

1. In which line of this section do you get an idea about the youngman's blindness ?

2. What was the youngman doing when the new traveller entered the compartment ? What was the observation of the new traveller on the situation ?

3. When does the narrator discover that the girl was also blind ?

4. What impression do you form about the youngman in the story ?

5. Do you find the same romantic spirit in this section of the story as in the first section ? Or has the tone become serious ?

6. Does Bond present a painful world of blindness and suffering ? Or is it a world of beauty and romance woven around a short meeting between the two blind travellers ? Give reasons for your answer.

Questions for Composition

1. Give an account of the progress of the story from an interesting meeting to a surprise ending.

Would you regard 'The Eyes have It' as an appropriate title to the story ? Give reasons for your answer.

Write a note on the conversation between the two blind travellers.

Critically examine the atmosphere in the story.

Story -writing Activity

An interesting story may have a useful plan as given below :

- i) An orientation or introduction
- ii) A complication or middle part
- iii) A resolution or conclusion.

You've read 'The eyes have it'

- (a) Where does the orientation end, and where does the complication begin ?
- (b) What is the complication involved ?
- (c) Where does the resolution begin ? How is the complication resolved ? What incident or character does the writer use to resolve the complication and bring in the conclusion ?

Note

Born in Kasauli (India) in May 1934 of lower middle class parents, Ruskin Bond has made an indelible mark in the world of fiction and short stories. His first work *Room on the Roof* was published in London when he was only 19. Eventually, he returned from London in 1964 and settled down in Mussoorie to 'pursue the full-time career of a writer.' Ruskin Bond has been one of the most beloved

of Indian writers whose works have been mostly on Indian life and settings. The Himalayan mountains have been his realm. A graphic and picturesque portrait of nature with her varied colours, sights and sounds adds to the poetic beauty and charm of his fictional world. The stories delineate the intimate moments of the life of characters and their psychic responses in a dramatic manner.

The story, extracted from Bond's collection *Delhi is not Far*, transports us from a world of painful awareness of the misfortune and suffering due to blindness to a world of beauty and romance, as evident in the brief conversation between the two blind travellers. But the departure of the girl brings an end to the delightful world of sensuous appreciation. More pathetic is the final revelation about the girl which might be a shock to the romantic inquisitor and might have razed his romantic mansion to the ground. Bond very cunningly and evasively maintains the suspense, making the story amusing and comical. In addition to the emotional and psychic content of the story, it derives its charm from its poetic descriptions of the beautiful Mussoorie and the sonorous effects of the train's rumble on the rails and more so of the narrator's exhilarating moments with the girl. What is striking is that the story is not marred by cynicism or morbidity on account of the deprivation of sight, but rather celebrates, on that account, a strong desire to participate in the process of life. The elements of irony and pathos make the story a memorable one in spite of its simple plot.

Unit XIII

THE LITTLE WIFE

William March

SECTION I

Pre-reading activity

How do you feel when the postman knocks on your door and says that you have a telegram ?

Have you read R. K. Narayan's story 'The Gatekeeper's Gift' where the protagonist, a retired gatekeeper, avoids opening a registered letter, lest it might contain some bad news ?

How do you feel when you receive the news of a close relative being treated in a hospital ?

Focusing Question

The protagonist of the story 'The Little Wife' is in a troubled state of mind. As you read this interesting story, search for reasons why Hinckley behaves the way he does at different points in the story.

The Text

1 Joe Hinckley selected a seat on the shady side of the train and carefully stowed away his travelling bag and his heavy, black catalogue case. It was unusually hot for early June. Outside the heat waves shimmered and danced above the hot slag roadbed and the muddy river that ran by the station was low between its red banks. "If it's as hot as this in June, it sure will be awful in August," he thought. He looked at his watch: 2.28 - the train was five minutes late in getting out. If he had known the 2.23 was going to be late he might have had time to pack his sample trunk and get it to the station, but he couldn't have anticipated that, of course. He had had so little time after getting that telegram from Mrs. Thompkins : barely time to pack his bag and check out of the hotel. Joe loosened his belt and swabbed his neck with a limp handkerchief. "It don't matter so much about the trunk," he thought; "one of the boys at the hotel can express it to me, or I can pick it up on my way back."

2 Joe noticed that one end of his catalogue case protruded slightly. With his foot he shoved it farther under the seat. It was a battered, black case, made strongly to withstand constant travelling, and re-enforced at its corners with heavy copper cleats. One of the handles had been broken and mended with newer leather. On the front of the case there had once been stamped in gilt the firm name of Boykin & Rosen, Wholesale Hardware, Chattanooga, Tenn, but time had long since worn away the gold lettering.

3 The telegram had upset Joe : it had come so suddenly, so unexpectedly. He felt vaguely that somebody was playing a joke on him. He felt confused and helpless. It was difficult to believe that Bessie was so desperately sick. He sat for a time staring at his finger nails. Suddenly he remembered an appointment at four o'clock with the buyer for Snowdoun and Sims and he rose quickly from his seat with some dim idea of telephoning or sending a message to explain his absence. Then he realized that the train was already in motion. "I'll write him a letter when I get to Mobile," said Joe to himself; "he'll understand all right when I explain the circumstances. He won't blame me for breaking that date when I tell him about my wife being so sick. He sat down heavily in his seat and again looked at his hands.

4 Ahead of him two young girls were leaning out of the window and waving to their friends. Their eyes were shining and their cheeks were flushed and they were laughing with excitement at the prospect of going away.

5 Across the aisle sat a gaunt farm-woman. Her red-veined eyes protruded. Her neck was swollen with a goiter. In her arms she held a bouquet of crepe myrtle which was already wilting in the heat. Beside her she had placed her straw suitcase and several bulky, paper-wrapped parcels. She gazed steadily out of the window as if afraid that someone would catch her eye and try to talk to her.

6 It was very hot in the coach. The small electrician at the end of the car droned and wheezed sleepily but succeeded only in stirring up the hot air.

7 Joe took from his pocket the telegram that he had received from his mother-in-law and read it again : "J. G. Hinckley, American Hotel, Montgomery, Ala. Come home at once. Doctor says Bessie not expected live through day. Will wire again if necessary. It was a boy. Mother."

8 Joe's hands clenched suddenly and then relaxed. It had all happened so suddenly; he couldn't quite get it through his head, even yet. He had taken a buyer to lunch that day and they had laughed and talked and told each other stories. Then at two o'clock he had gone back to the hotel to freshen up and the clerk had reached in his box and taken out the key to his room and the telegram. The telegram had been waiting for him for two hours, the clerk said. Joe read it through twice and then looked at the address to make sure that the message was really for him. He hadn't understood. Bessie was getting along so nicely - she had had no trouble at all - and the baby wasn't expected for a month. He had arranged his itinerary so that he would be with her when the baby was born. They had gone over all that and had arranged everything. And now everything was upset. He thought : "I was out talking and laughing with that buyer and the telegram was waiting here all the time." That thought hurt him. He stood repeating stupidly : "I was out laughing and telling smutty stories and that telegram was here all the time."

- § Joe leaned his head against the red plush of the seat. He felt numb and very tired. At first the signature "Mother" had puzzled him. He couldn't understand what his mother would be doing in Mobile with Bessie; then he realized that it was Bessie's mother who had sent the telegram. He had never thought of Bessie's mother in any name except Mrs. Thompkins.
10. When he had married Bessie her mother had come to live with them as a matter of course. He was rather glad of that arrangement; he was really fond of the old lady in an impersonal sort of way. Then, too, it was pleasant for Bessie to have someone with her while he was on the road. His work made it impossible for him to get home oftener than every other week-end, and many times it was difficult for him to get home that often, but he had always managed to make it, one way or another. He couldn't disappoint Bessie, no matter what happened. Their year of married life had been the happiest that he had ever known. And Bessie had been happy too. Suddenly he had a clear picture of her lying on their bed, her face white with suffering, and a quick panic gripped his heart. To reassure himself he whispered : "Those doctors don't know everything. She'll be all right. Mrs. Thompkins was just excited and frightened. Everything's going to be all right!"

Glossary

[The numbers indicate the paragraphs in which the words / expressions occur.]

1	<i>stow</i>	put, place
	<i>shimmer</i>	gleam tremulously
	<i>swab</i>	to clean or dry with a piece of cloth
5	<i>aisle</i>	a passage between rows of seats
	<i>gaunt</i>	extremely thin and bony; emaciated
	<i>protruded</i>	projected, thrust forward
	<i>goiter</i>	an enlargement of thyroid gland on the front and sides of the neck.
	<i>crepe-myrtle</i>	a tall Chinese shrub having pink purple or white flowers grown as an ornamental in the southern and western US
6	<i>drone</i>	to make a dull continued monotonous sound
	<i>wheeze</i>	to make a sound resembling difficult breathing
8	<i>itinerary</i>	detailed plan for a journey, esp. a list of places to visit, a plan of travel
	<i>smutty</i>	obscene, filthy

Questions for discussion

1. Can you guess where Joe Hinckley worked ? What made you guess so ?
2. What was the occasion of his getting into the 2.23 train ? Was he in a normal state of mind ?

3. What was the initial reaction of Joe to the first telegram ?
4. Who were his co-travellers ? How was the journey ?
5. What tilings came to his mind after re-reading the telegram ? Do you get any idea about his married life in this section ?
6. Which lines show that he was upset and worried ?
7. What does his finding fault with the doctors reveal about him ?

Now read section II to find out what happens next.

SECTION II

The Text :

11. Ahead of him a white-haired old gentleman opened his bag and took out a travelling cap. He had some difficulty in fastening the catch while holding his straw hat in his hand, but his wife, sitting with him, took the bag and fastened it at once. Then she took his hat and held it on her lap. The wife was reading a magazine. She did not look up from the magazine when she fastened the bag.
12. Down the aisle came the Negro porter. He had a telegram in his hand. When he reached the centre of the coach he stopped and called out : "Telegram for Mr. J.G. Hinckley!" Joe let him call the name three times before he claimed the message. The porter explained that the telegram had been delivered to the train by a messenger from the American Hotel just as the train was getting under way. Joe gave the porter twenty-five cents for a tip and went back to his seat.
13. The country woman looked up for an instant and then turned her eyes away. The young girls giggled and whispered and looked boldly at Joe, and the old gentleman, after settling his cap firmly on his head, took a cigar from his case and went to the smoking-room.
14. Joe's throat felt tight and he noticed that his hands were shaking. He wanted to put his head on the window-sill but he was afraid that people would think him sick and try to talk to him. He placed the unopened telegram on the seat beside him and stared at it for a long time. At last he re-read the first telegram very slowly. "It must be from Mrs. Thompkins, all right," he thought, "she said she'd wire again if—" Then he thought: "It may not be from Mrs. Thompkins at all!"; it may be from somebody else; it may be from Boykin & Rosen about that cancellation in Meridian. That's who it's from: it's from the House, it's not from Mrs. Thompkins at all !" He looked up quickly and saw that the two young girls had turned around and were watching him, making laughing remarks to each other behind their hands.
15. He arose from his seat feeling weak and slightly nauseated, the unopened telegram in his hand. He passed through several coaches until he reached the end of the

train and went out on the rear vestibule. He had a sudden wish to jump from the end of the train and run off into the woods, but a brakeman was there tinkering with a red lantern and Joe realized that such an act would look very strange. When the brakeman looked up and saw Joe's face he put down his lantern and asked : "Are you feeling all right, mister ?" Joe said, "Yes, I'm feeling all right but it's a little hot, though." Finally the brakeman finished his job and left and Joe was very glad of that. He wanted to be alone. He didn't want anybody around him.

16. The rails clicked rhythmically and the wilted country-side flew past. A little Negro girlin a patched pink dressran down to the track.... and waved

her hand. A lame old country man.... ploughing in his stumpy field.... pulled up his mangy mule... to stare at the passing train. The rails clattered and clicked and the train flew over the hot slag roadbed. "There's no need of going so fast," thought Joe, "we've got all the time in the world." He felt sick. In the polished metal of the car he caught a distorted glimpse of his face. It was white and terrified. He thought: "No wonder that brakeman asked me how I was feeling." Then he thought : "Do I look so bad that people can tell it " That worried him. He didn't want people to notice him or to talk to him. There was nothing that anybody could say, after all.

17. He kept turning the telegram over in his hand thinking : "I've got to open it now; I've got to open it and read it." Finally he said aloud " "It's not true! I don't believe it!" He repeated these words a number of times and then he said : "It's from the House about that cancellation in Meridian- it isn't from Mrs. Thompkins at all." He tore the unopened telegram into tiny bits and threw the pieces from the end of the train. A wind fluttered and shimmered the yellow fragments before they settled down lightly on the hard, hot roadbed. He thought: "They look like a cloud of yellow butterflies dancing and settling that way." Immediately he felt better. He drew back his shoulders and sucked in lungfuls of the country air. "Everything's all right," he said. "I'm going home to see the little wife and everything's all right." He laughed happily. He felt like a man who has just escaped some terrible calamity. When he could no longer see the scraps of paper on the track he went back to his seat humming a tune. He felt very gay and immediately relieved.

18. Joe reached his seat just as the conductor came through the train. He nodded pleasantly as he gave up his ticket.

"Don't let anybody talk you out of a free ride," he said.

"No chance of that, Cap!" said the conductor.

Joe laughed with ringing heartiness and the conductor looked at him in surprise.

Then he laughed a little himself. "You sure are in a good humor, considering how hot it is," he said.

"And why shouldn't I be in a good humor ?" asked Joe. "I'm going home to see the little wife." Then he whispered, as if it were a great secret, "It's a boy!"

19. "That's fine, that's simply fine!" said the conductor. He put his papers and his tickets on the seat and shook Joe's hand. Joe blushed and laughed again. As the conductor moved off he nudged Joe's ribs and said : "Give my regards to the madam."

"I sure will," said Joe happily.

20. Joe was sorry that the conductor couldn't stay longer. He felt an imperative need of talking to someone. He felt that he must talk about Bessie to someone. He looked around the car to see if he knew anybody on the train. The two young girls smiled at him. Joe understood perfectly; they were just two nice kids going on a trip. Either one, alone, would never think of smiling at a strange man but being together changed things all the way around. That made it an exciting adventure, something to be laughed over and discussed later with their friends. Joe decided that he would go over and talk to them. He walked over casually and seated himself.

21. "Well, where are you young ladies going ?" he asked.

"Don't you think that you have a great deal of nerve ?" asked the black-eyed girl.
"Sure I have. I wouldn't be the best hardware salesman on the road if I didn't have a lot of nerve," said Joe pleasantly.

22. Both of the girls laughed at that and Joe knew that everything was all right. He decided that the blue-eyed girl was the prettier of the two but the black-eyed girl had more snap.

"We're getting off at Flomaton," said the blue-eyed girl.

"We've been in school in Montgomery," said the black-eyed girl.

"We're going home for the summer vacation."

23. "And we want the cock-eyed world to know we're glad of it !"

24. Joe looked at them gravely. "Don't make a mistake, young ladies; get all the education you can. You'll regret it later on if you don't."

23. Both the girls started laughing. They put their arms around each other and laughed until tears came into their eyes. Joe laughed too although he wondered what the joke was. After a while the girls stopped laughing, but a sudden giggle from the blue-eyed girl set them off again, worse than before.

"This is awfully silly !" said the black-eyed girl.

"Please don't think us rude," gasped the blue-eyed girl.

"What's the joke ?" asked Joe, who was really laughing as much as either of the girls.

"You sounded so -so-," explained the blue-eyed girl.

"So damned *fatherly* !" finished the black-eyed girl.

25. They went oft into another whirlwind of mirth, laughing and hugging each other. The old lady across the aisle put down her magazine and stalled laughing too, but the woman with the goiter held her bouquet of crepe-myrtle rigidly and stared out of the window.
26. Joe waited until the girls had exhausted themselves. Finally they wiped their eyes and opened their vanity cases to look at themselves in their mirrors and to repowder their faces. He said : "Well, I guess I ought to sound fatherly : I just got a telegram saying that I was a parent for the first time."
27. That interested the young girls and they crowded him with questions: they wanted to know all about it. Joe felt very happy. As he stalled to talk he noticed that the old lady had been listening and that she had moved over in her seat in order to hear better. Joe felt friendly towards everybody : "Won't you come over and join us ?" he asked.
"Yes, indeed," said the old lady and Joe moved over and made a place for her.
"Now tell us all about it!" demanded the blue-eyed girl.
"You must be very happy," said the old lady.
28. "I sure am happy," said Joe. Then he added : "There's not a whole lot to tell except that I got a telegram from Mrs. Thompkins-Mrs. Thompkins is my mother-in-law - saying that Bessie had given birth to a fine boy and that both of them were doing just fine : the doctor said that he'd never seen anybody do so well before, but of course my wife wanted me to be with her and so I just dropped everything and here I am. You see Bessie and I have only been married for a year. We've been very happy. The only bad thing is that I don't get home very often, but it wouldn't do to have everything perfect in the world, would it ? She sure is the finest little wife a man ever had. She doesn't complain at all about my being away so much, but some day we hope to have things different."
29. "There isn't anything nicer than a baby," said the blue-eyed girl.
"What are you going to name him ?" asked the old lady.
30. "Well. Bessie wants to name him for me, but I can't see much sense in that. My first name's Joe and I think that's a little common, don't you ? But I'll leave the naming part up to Bessie. She can name him anything she wants to. She sure has been a fine little wife to me."
31. Joe started talking rapidly. He told in detail of the first time he had met Bessie. It had been in the home of Jack Barnes, one of the boys he had met on the road, and he had been invited over for dinner and a little stud poker later. Mrs. Barnes didn't play poker; so Bessie, who lived across the street, had been invited over to keep Mrs. Barnes company while the men played. He had liked Bessie at once and the boys had kidded him about not keeping his mind on the game. He had never told anybody this before, but when the boys started kidding him he made

up his mind not to look at Bessie again as he didn't want her to think that he was fresh, but he couldn't stop looking at her and every time he caught her eye she would smile in a sweet, friendly sort of way. Finally everybody noticed it and they started joking Bessie too, but she hadn't minded at all. He had lost \$14.50 that night, but he had met Bessie. You couldn't call Bessie exactly beautiful but she was sweet and nice. Bessie was the sort of girl that any man would want to marry.

32. He told of their courtesy. He quoted whole paragraphs from letters that she had written to prove a particular point which he had brought up. Bessie hadn't liked him especially, not right at first, at any rate; of course she had liked him as a friend from the first but not in any serious way. There were one or two other fellows hanging around, too. Bessie had a great deal of attention; she could have gone out every night with a different man if she had wanted to. Being on the road all the time had been pretty much of a disadvantage. He didn't have an opportunity to see her often. Or may be that was an advantage-anyway he wrote her every day. Then, finally, they had become engaged. She hadn't even let him kiss her until then. He knew from the first that she would make a wonderful little wife but he was still puzzled why a girl as superior as Bessie would want to marry *him*.
33. He talked on and on, rapidly-feverishly. He told how he had once determined not to get married at all, but that was before he had met Bessie. She had changed all that. Two hours passed before he knew it. His audience was getting bored, but Joe didn't realize it.
34. Finally the old gentleman with the cap came back from the smoking-room and his wife, glad of a chance to get away, made her excuses and went over to sit with him. Joe smiled and nodded, but paused only a moment in his story. He was in the midst of a long description of Mrs. Thompkins. Mrs. Thompkins wasn't at all like the comic supplement mother-in-law. Quite the contrary. He didn't see how he and Bessie would get along without her. To show you the sort of woman she really was, she always took his side in any dispute - note that he and Bessie ever quarrelled! Oh, no! But occasionally they had little friendly discussions like all other married couples and Mrs. Thompkins always took his side of the argument. That was unusual, wasn't it ? Joe talked and talked and talked, totally unconscious of the passing of time.

Glossary

[The numbers refer to paragraphs in which the words/expressions occur.)

13 *giggle* : to laugh in a silly manner.

15 *vestibule* : Part of a railway carriage connecting with and giving access to the next.

16	<i>mangy</i>	affected by mange (a skin disease affecting animals and sometimes men, and characterized by loss of hair and scabby eruptions)
19	<i>elbow/nudge</i>	to push slightly, especially with the elbow
22	<i>snap</i>	quick, sharp speech or manner of speaking
	<i>cock-eyed</i>	(slang) foolish or absurd
31	<i>kid (v)</i>	to tease or jest with

Questions for discussion

1. How did Joe behave when he received the second telegram ? How did he evade the stark and painful reality ? Why did he not open the telegram ?
 2. 'There's no need of going so fast, we've got all the time in the world ?' What do these words signify ? Are they a happy utterance ?
 3. Why did Joe tear the second telegram to pieces ? What does it reflect ? Where do you get the evidence of his fixation with death of his little wife ?
 4. Why was Joe sorry that the conductor couldn't stay longer ?
 5. How does Joe try to overcome his depression ? What does his conversation with the fellow travellers reveal ?
 6. Give an account of Joe's affair with Bessie as related by Joe.
 7. What was the fellow travellers' reaction to Joe's incessant talk about Bessie and his married life ? Were they sympathetic ? Did they know about his mental condition ? Justify your answers.
- Now, you are going to read the last part of the story. How do you think the story will end ?

Read on and find out.

SECTION III

The Text

35. Finally the train reached Flomaton and the porter came to help the girls off with their bags. They were very glad to get away. They were getting a lit'l nervous. There was something about Joe that they couldn't understand. At first they had thought him just jolly and high spirited, but after a time they came to the conclusion that he must be a little drunk, or, possibly, slightly demented. For the past hour they had been nudging each other significantly.
 36. Joe helped them off the train and on to the station platform. Just as the train pulled out the black-eyed girl waved her hand and said : "Give my love to Bessie and the son and heir," and the blue-eyed girl said : "Be sure and kiss the baby for me."
- "I sure will," said Joe.
37. After the train had passed the girls looked at each other for a moment. Then they started laughing. Finally the black-eyed girl said : "Well. Bessie certainly has him roped and tied." The blue-eyed girl said : "Did you ever see anything like that in your life before ?"

38. Joe came into the coach again. "Just a couple of nice kids," he thought to himself. He looked at his watch. It was 5.25. He was surprised. The time had passed very quickly. "It won't be long now before I'm in Mobile," he thought.
39. He went back to his seat, but he was restless. He decided that he would have a cigarette. He found three men in the smoker. One of them was an old man with a tuft of gray whiskers. His face was yellow and sunken and blue veins stood out on his hands. He was chewing tobacco gravely and spitting into the brass cuspidor. The second man was large and flabby. When he laughed his eyes disappeared entirely and his fat belly shook. His finger nails were swollen and his underlip hung down in a petulant droop. The third man was dark and nervous looking. He had on his little finger a ring with a diamond much too large.
40. They were telling jokes and laughing when Joe came in. Joe wanted to talk to them about Bessie, but he couldn't bring her name up in such an atmosphere. Suddenly he thought: "I was laughing and telling smutty stories with that buyer in Montgomery and the telegram was there all the time." His face contracted with pain. He crushed the thought from his mind. Quickly he threw away his cigarette and went back to his seat.
41. A bright-skinned waiter came through the train announcing the first call for dinner. At first Joe thought that he would have his dinner on the train as that would break the monotony of the trip and help pass the time, but immediately he remembered that Mrs. Thompkins would have dinner for him at home- a specially prepared dinner with all of the things that he liked. "I'll wait until I get home," thought Joe. "I wouldn't disappoint Mrs. Thompkins and the little wife for the world after they went to all that trouble for me."
42. Again he felt that curious, compulsive need of talking about Bessie to someone. He had a feeling that as long as he talked about her she would remain safe. He saw the old lady and her husband in their seat eating a lunch which they had brought and he decided to go over and talk with them. "Can I come over and talk to you folks ?" asked Joe.
43. "Certainly, sir," said the old gentleman with the cap. Then, in order to make conversation he said : "My wife has been telling me that you are going home to see your new son."
44. That's right," said Joe, "that's right." He started talking rapidly, hardly pausing for breath. The old lady looked at her husband reproachfully. "Now see what you started 1" Her glance seemed to say.
45. Joe talked of his wedding. It had been very quiet. Bessie was the sort of a girl who didn't go in for a lot of show. There had been present only a few members of the family and one or two close friends. George Orcutt who travelled a line of rugs out

of New York had been his best man. Bessie was afraid that someone would try to play a joke on them : something like tying tin cans to the automobile that was to take them to the station or marking their baggage with chalk. But everything had gone off smoothly. The Barneses had been at the wedding, of course : he had met Bessie in their home and they were such close neighbours that they couldn't overlook them, but almost nobody else outside the family was there.

46. Then he told of the honeymoon they had spent in New Orleans; all the places they had visited there and just what Bessie had thought and said about each one. He talked on and on and on. He told of the first weeks of their married life and how happy they were. He told what a splendid cook Bessie was and what an excellent housekeeper, how much she had loved the home he had bought for her and her delight when she knew that she was going to have a baby.
47. The old gentleman was staring at Joe in a puzzled manner. He was wondering if he hadn't better call the conductor as it was his private opinion that Joe had a shot of cocaine in him. The old lady had folded her hands like martyr. She continued to look at her husband with an "I-told-you-so!" expression.
48. Joe had lost all idea of time. He talked on and on, rapidly, excitedly. He had got as far as Bessie's plans for the child's education when the porter touched him on the arm and told him that they are pulling into the station at Mobile. He came to himself with a start and looked at his watch : 7.35! He didn't believe it possible that two hours had passed so quickly.

"It sure has been a pleasure talking to you folks," said Joe.

"Oh, that's all right," said the man with the cap.

49. Joe gave the porter a tip and stepped off the train jauntily. As he turned to pick up his bag he saw that the woman with the goiter was staring at him. He walked over to the window that framed her gaunt face. "Good-bye, lady; I hope you have a nice trip." The woman answered : "The doctors said it wasn't no use operating on me. I waited too long." "Well that's fine ! - That sure is fine!" said Joe. He laughed gaily and waved his hand. He picked up his bag and his catalogue case and followed the people through the gate. The woman with the goiter stared at him until he was out of sight.
50. On the other side of the iron fence Joe saw Mrs. Thompkins. She was dressed in black and she wore a black veil. Joe went over to her briskly and Mrs. Thompkins put her arms around him and kissed him twice. "Poor Joe!" she said. Then she looked at his smiling excited face with amazement. Joe noticed that her eyes were red and swollen.
51. "Didn't you get my telegram ?" she asked. Joe wrinkled his brow in an effort to remember. Finally he said : "Oh, sure. I got it at the hotel."

"Did you get my second telegram ?" insisted Mrs. Thompkins.

52. She looked steadily into Joe's eyes. A feeling of terror swept over him. He knew that he could no longer lie to himself. He could no longer keep Bessie alive by talking about her. His face was suddenly twisted with pain and his jaw trembled like a child's. He leaned against the iron fence for support and Mrs. Thompkins held his hand and said : "You can't give in. You got to be a man. You can't give in like that, Joe!"
53. Finally he said : "I didn't read your telegram. I didn't want to know that she was dead. I wanted to keep her alive a little longer." He sat down on an empty baggage truck and hid his face in his hands. He sat there for a long time while Mrs. Thompkins stood guard over him, her black veil trailing across his shoulder.
- "Joe!" she said patiently..... "Joe!"
54. A man in a dirty uniform came up. T'm sorry, Mister, but you'll have to move. We got to use that truck." Joe picked up his catalogue case and his bag and followed Mrs. Thompkins out of the station.

Glossary

[The numbers refer to paragraphs in which the words/expressions occur.]

35	<i>demented</i>	:	insane
	<i>Cuspidor</i>	:	spittoon
	<i>flabby</i>	:	soft, yielding
	<i>petulant</i>	:	showing impatience and irritation
	<i>droop</i>	:	hanging down
49	<i>Jaunty</i>	:	an easy and sprightly manner

Questions for discussion

1. What impression did the fellow travellers take about Joe from his continuous talk ?
2. What idea does this section offer about his marriage ? What does his incessant talk about his little wife reveal ? Was he conscious of the listeners and also the time ?
3. Why did a feeling of terror sweep over him after he met Mrs. Thompkins ?
4. What do his final words to his mother-in-law reveal ?
5. What is the focus in the story ?
6. Why did Joe repeatedly use the expression 'my little wife' ? Was he successful in hiding his mental condition before the fellow travellers ?
7. In which lines do you know that Bessie was no more ?
8. Can you guess what would have been the story if the second telegram had been opened and had contained the message of Bessie's improving health ?

Questions for composition*

1. Give an account of the behaviour of Joe after he received the second telegram.
2. Write a note on Joe's relationship with Bessie leading to their marriage.
3. Attempt a justification of the title.

Activity on Story -writing

Read the short story below more than once, if necessary. Try to remember as much of the story as you can :

[The famous cricket star, Sunil Gavaskar, had lived in seclusion for many years because he was afraid of being mobbed by his adoring fans. He never went out, nor even to the shops. He had everything he needed delivered at his house.

After five years, however, he began to lose contact with other people. He wanted to be the centre of attention once more. So he decided to visit an ice-cream parlour where he had once been a well-known customer.

It was a disastrous decision. Not one person recognized him. He returned home even lonelier than before. I

Now rewrite the story from memory without looking at the above paragraphs. Keep as close to the original as possible. Compare your story with the original.

If you have to write the story in greater detail, how will you write your first paragraph ? How will you complete the orientation part of your story ? (Refer to the story writing activity in the previous unit where you learnt about the orientation, complication and resolution of a story.)

Note :

William March (1894-1954), a prominent American writer, has made a significant mark in the realm of short stories. His stories dwell upon the dramatic or critical moments of life; his discerning study of men and manners, especially of their psychic responses at such moments, makes his stories very interesting and powerful.

The present story enacts a drama of terrible tension procedure lingering for about 5 hours of a train journey (from 2-28 P.M.. to 7.35 P.M.). Joe's behaviour throughout the journey with the unopened telegram is a clear demonstration of his restlessness and fear-psychosis. After he throws away the torn pieces of the telegram outside, he feels relieved and gay. This mark of gaiety and relief is nothing but a psychic projection of an intense longing to keep his dear 'little wife' alive a little longer. All his words and abnormal behaviour in the compartment manifest a fear due to lack of courage to face the most painful reality. His reminiscences about his love for Bessie, there after, leading to marriage, and his obsession with his 'little wife' seem to provide him an escape from the dreadful truth he wants to forget, the memories of his most intimate moments with his dear wife only serve to highlight the pathos of this situation. The elements of pathos and psychological strain witnessed in the story are juxtaposed to by the light-heartedness of the fellow passengers and their responses to the babbling of Joe. The story with its atmosphere of gloom and depression reminds us of the dreadful finality of death.

Unit XIV

THE HAPPY MAN

W. S. Maugham

SECTION I

Pre-reading activity

You might have at times thought about who a happy man is. What do you think brings happiness in one's life ?

- (i) Is it something related to wealth and material comforts ?
- (ii) Or is it purely a state of mind, nothing much to do with one's financial status or social position ?
- (iii) Does it lie in a life of adventure and romance, a life of freedom and care free enjoyment away from the monotony and tedium of routine life ?

Here is an interesting story which tries to address this important question :
who is a happy man ?

Focusing Question

As you read the story, try to collect the answers to the questions :

- (i) Who is the happy man in the story ?
- (ii) What makes him a happy man ?

The Text

1. It is a dangerous thing to order the lives of others and I have often wondered at the self-confidence of politicians, reformers and suchlike who are prepared to force upon their fellows measures that must alter their manners, habits and points of view. I have always hesitated to give advice, for how can one advise another how to act unless one knows that other as well as one knows oneself ? Heaven knows, I know little enough of myself : I know nothing of others. We can only guess at the thoughts and emotions of our neighbours. Each one of us is a prisoner in a solitary tower and he communicates with the other prisoners, who form mankind, by conventional signs that have not quite the same meaning for them as for himself. And life, unfortunately, is something that you can lead but once; mistakes are often irreparable, and who am I that I should tell this one and that how he should lead it ? Life is a difficult business and I have found it hard enough to make my own a complete and rounded thing ; I have not been tempted to teach my neighbour what he should do with his. But there are men who flounder at the journey's start, the way before them is confused and hazardous, and on

occasion, however unwillingly, I have been forced to point the finger of fate. Sometimes men have said to me, what shall I do with my life ? and I have seen myself for a moment wrapped in the dark cloak of Destiny.

Once I know that I advised well.

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

3. I led him into my sitting-room and begged him to sit down. He seemed a trifle embarrassed. I offered him a cigarette and he had some difficulty in lighting it without letting go of his hat. When he had satisfactorily achieved this feat I asked him if I should not put it on a chair for him. He quickly did this and while doing it dropped his umbrella.

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

5. 'Yes, but I don't practise.'

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

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

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

'I shall be very glad.'

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

I surmised that it gave him confidence.

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

10. When people say this to me I always know that it is precisely what they are going to do. I do not mind. In fact I rather like it.
11. I was brought up by two old aunts. I've never been anywhere. I've never done anything. I've been married for six years. I have no children. I'm a medical officer at the Camberwell Infirmary. I can't stick it any more.'
12. There was something very striking in the short, sharp sentences he used. They had a forcible ring. I had not given him more than a cursory glance, but now I looked at him with curiosity. He was a little man, thick-set and stout, of thirty perhaps, with a round red face from which shone small, dark and very bright eyes. His black hair was cropped close to a bullet-shaped head. He was dressed in a blue suit a good deal the worse for wear. It was baggy at the knees and the pockets bulged unitedly.
13. 'You know what the duties are of a medical officer in an infirmary. One day is pretty much like another. And that's all I've got to look forward to for the rest of my life. Do you think it's worth it ?'
14. 'It's a means of livelihood,' I answered.
 'Yes, I know. The money's pretty good.'
 'I don't exactly know why you've come to me.'
15. 'Well, I wanted to know whether you thought there would be any chance for an English doctor in Spain ?'
 'Why Spain ?'
 'I don't know, I just have a fancy for it.'
16. 'It's not like *Carmen*, you know.'
17. 'But there's sunshine there, and there's good wine, and there's colour, and there's air you can breathe. Let me say what I have to say straight out. I heard by accident that there was no English doctor in Seville.'
18. Do you think I could earn a living there ? Is it madness to give up a good safe job for an uncertainty ?
 'What does your wife think about it ?'
 'She's willing.'
 'It's a great risk.'
19. 'I know. But if you say take it, I will ; if you say stay where you are, I'll stay.'
20. He was looking at me intently with those bright dark eyes of his and I knew that he meant what he said. I reflected for a moment.
21. 'Your whole future is concerned : you must decide for yourself. But this I can tell you : if you don't want money but are content to earn just enough to keep body and soul together, then go. For you will lead a wonderful life.'

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

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words/expressions occur.]

1 <i>flounder</i>	: to stumble in thinking or speaking
11 <i>infirmary</i>	: hospital or place for the treatment of the sick
12 <i>cursory</i>	: running quickly over, hasty
Carmen	: an opera (1875) by Georges Bizet

Questions for discussion

Why has the narrator always hesitated to give advice ?

1. 'Each one of us is a prisoner in a solitary town
2. How does the statement reflect on human life ?
3. Does the paragraph 1 logically lead to the story ? Where do you find the connection ?
4. Why did Stephens meet the narrator ? What made him do so ?
5. What impression do you form about Stephens from his account of life at Camberwell ? Is he happy with it ?
6. Why does he want to go to Spain ?
7. Would you call him a romantic ? Give reasons for your answer.
8. What does the narrator suggest to Stephens finally ?
9. Can you guess what would happen next in the story ?

Read Section II of the story and check how far your guess is right.

SECTION II

The Text

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

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

24. I explained my errand and he asked me to come in. He lived in an ordinary Spanish house, with a patio, and his consulting room which led out of it was littered with papers, books, medical appliances, and lumber. The sight of it would have started a squeamish patient. We did our business and then I asked the doctor what his fee was. He shook his head and smiled.

'There's no fee.'

'Why on earth not ?'

25. 'Don't you remember me ? Why, I'm here because of something you said to me. You changed my whole life for me. I'm Stephens.'
26. I had not the least notion what he was talking about. He reminded me of our interview, he repeated to me what we had said, and gradually, out of the night, a dim recollection of the incident came back to me.
27. 'I was wondering if I'd ever see you again,' he said, 'I was wondering if ever I'd have a chance of thanking you for all you've done for me.'
- 'It's been a success then ?'
28. I looked at him. He was very fat now and bald, but his eyes twinkled gaily and his fleshy, red face bore an expression of perfect good-humour. The clothes he wore, terribly shabby they were, had been made obviously by a Spanish tailor and his hat was the wide-brimmed sombrero of the Spaniard. He looked to me as though he knew a good bottle of wine when he saw it. He had a dissipated, though entirely sympathetic, appearance. You might have hesitated to let him remove your appendix, but you could not have imagined a more delightful creature to drink a glass of wine with.
- 'Surely you were married ?' I said.
29. 'Yes. My wife didn't like Spain, she went back to Camberwell, she was more at home there.'
- 'Oh, I'm sorry for that.'
30. His black eyes flashed a bacchanalian smile. He really had somewhat the look of a young Silenus.
31. 'Life is full of compensations,' he murmured.
32. The words were hardly out of his mouth when a Spanish woman, no longer in her first youth, but still boldly and voluptuously beautiful, appeared at the door. She spoke to him in Spanish, and I could not fail to perceive that she was the mistress of the house.
33. As he stood at the door to let me out he said to me :
- 'You told me when last I saw you that if I came here I should earn just enough money to keep body and soul together, but that I should lead a wonderful life. Well, I want to tell you that you were right. Poor I have been and poor I shall always be, but by heaven I've enjoyed myself. I wouldn't exchange the life I've had with that of any king in the world.'

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraph in which the words/ expressions occur]

24 <i>errand</i>	:	business, purpose
<i>patio</i>	:	courtyard

<i>lumber</i>	furniture stored away
<i>squeamish</i>	easily disgusted or offended
28 <i>sombrero</i>	a man's hat with a very wide brim which is worn especially in Mexico.
<i>dissipated</i>	drunken
(<i>appearance</i>)	
<i>silenus</i>	any of a group of forest spirits similar to satyars but having the begs of horses <

Questions for discussion

1. What change in place and time do you find in this section of the story ?
2. Why does Stephens refuse to accept fees from the narrator ? Do his words acknowledge his gratitude for the right suggestion of the narrator given to him years ago ?
3. What impression would you get about Stephens from his changed appearance in Spain ?
4. In which context does Stephens say : 'Life is full of compensations' ? What light does it throw on his character ?
5. Does the concluding passage reveal an attitude towards life ? What kind of attitude would you call it ?
6. Where does happiness lie in the words of the protagonist ?
7. Does the narrator favour a life of emancipation from the conventionalities and stereotypes ? Give a reasoned answer.
8. Which one of the following do you find in Stephens that most appropriately characterizes him ?
 - a) a cynical attitude (b) a pleasure-loving temperament (c) morbidity born of frustrations (d) quest for freedom from conventions.
9. Can you guess what would happen if his wife had not deserted him ?
10. Can you call him 'The Happy Man' ? Give reasons for your answer.

Questions for Composition

1. "... but by heaven I've enjoyed myself. I wouldn't exchange the life I've had with that of any king in the world." Make a critical estimate of Stephens in the light of the given statement.
2. Critically comment on the title of the story.

Activity on Story Completion

Read the following incomplete story and complete it :

A farmer and his son decided to go to the market one day. As the market was a long way from their house, they took their donkey with them. The son rode on the donkey and the father walked beside him. A man passing on the road said to the son, "You are young and strong

On hearing this, the son got down and the father got on to the donkey. They travelled some

more distance and then met another man on the road who said to the father : "You are very unkind

The father and son were puzzled for a moment. Then they both decide to ride on the donkey. After a while, the donkey stumbled and fell down. It refused to get up. On seeing this, a man passing by looked at the donkey with pity and said : "....." On hearing these words, they felt ashamed and decided to Now finish the story.

Note :

William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) is a prolific writer of the twentieth century having to his credit about 17 novels, 32 plays, more than 100 short stories, two travelogues and two treatises containing his views on life and literature. Among his novels Of Human Bondage, The Moon and Sixpence, The Painted Veil Calces and Ale and The Razor's Edge have earned him critical acclaim. His novels, plays and short stories, giving a realistic portrait of a degenerate society, a society given to selfish pleasures and hedonism with no respect for human values or scruples, encompass a larger area of human experience. Most of them depict the crumbling of the institution of marriage, which has almost become a tight rope around the neck of the spouses, from which each partner seeks a relief through an extra marital affair, such indulgences often leading to promiscuity. With a deft and dexterous use of irony and satire, his vision grows from a study of the wider spectrum of life towards an affirmation of its meaning at the individual level.

A careful reading of the story reveals that Stephens may not embody the essentials and philosophy of a happy man in a metaphysical sense, but projects undoubtedly a new vision and perspective. What we notice in him is not a spiritual attainment but an abandonment of a taken-for-granted life and relationship in favour of a life of sunshine, colour and mirth. In him are there a quest for freedom and a pursuit of bohemian life. Maugham seems to provide a new pattern and direction to life through his protagonist. Yet the undertones of irony are apparent to the discerning reader.

Unit XV

THE TREE

Manoj Das

Pre-reading activity

Have you seen a banian tree or a *Pippal* tree with its roots extending over a vast area, its huge trunk and leafy branches spreading all around ? Such a tree in a village, especially in an Orissan village, is considered holy and sacred. The old and ageless tree standing at the end of the village since time immemorial has been a mute spectator of changes in culture and civilization. It has always been a part of the life in the village. Can you guess the reactions of the villagers, if a tree of this kind is uprooted by a violent storm or a devastating flood ?

Here is a story about an old banian tree uprooted by a heavy flood in a village in Orissa. As you read the first part of the story by Manoj Das, recollect the ways in which the banian tree is significant in the life of the villagers.

SECTION I

The Text

1. RIGHT from the time the season was on the brink of monsoon the village elders had begun to look grave. The sinister cloud formation on the mountains several miles away, and a wide ring of uncanny aura around the moon had informed them that there were terrible days ahead.
2. The flood came at a little past midnight. Although the village abounded in quality sleep, the jackals, with their long moaning howls, managed to wake up several people who called out to each other and, reassured of a collective awareness, soon gathered on the riverbank with lanterns, or torches of dry twigs. The flames danced in the gusts making their faces alternately appear and disappear.
3. The moon was fully draped in clouds and the stars looked pallid as the eyes of dead fish. Nothing much could be seen of the river, but one could feel it bulging and hear it hissing like a thousand-hooded cobra. The wind carried the smell of crushed raw earth.
4. Flood waters never entered this village, although hardly a season passed without the river playing havoc with the villages a couple of miles downstream. The people down there knew when to go over to their roofs or perch on the trees. After three or four days they descended and took root again.

5. But even though the flood did not enter this village, it nibbled at the high ridge and once in a while gobbled up a chunk of the grassland stretching along the bank.
6. The villagers felt scandalised every time their familiar tame river expanded and looked alien and began hissing. It gave the sort of shock which one experienced when a domestic animal suddenly went crazy, behaving wildly and not responding to any amount of endearment. One just looked on helplessly.
7. And that is what the villagers were doing, when they suddenly realised that the situation was much more grave than they had imagined. They heard a chugging and the faint sound of voices already tired and crackling. They raised their lanterns. At that the voices grew more plaintive. The villagers strained their eyes to see through the darkness and the mist. A few of them could make out the black lump passing on the ashen waters and shouted the only sensible advice that could be given to a boat caught up in the first rush of a flood: "Have patience. As soon as it is dawn the villagers down-stream will throw ropes and save you. Keep on shouting. God be with you."
8. Such boats generally came from the forest at the foot of the mountains where they went to collect timber. Sometimes they were given another stock advice. "Throw away the load and make the vessel lighter, but do not go too light." A too light vessel became a plaything for the rollicking waves.
9. The sound from the darkness became fainter and remote, random syllables blown away by the erratic wind.
10. And the wind grew stronger and colder and was soon accompanied by a thin shower. All ran to take shelter under the banian tree. The wicks of the lanterns had to be turned low so that the glass cooled down enough not to crack at the splinters of raindrops.
11. The leaves chattered incessantly their familiar language of hope and courage. The innumerable boughs that spread overhead had been the very symbol of protection for generations, affording shelter not only to those who bore love and regard for the tree, but even to such people who had been impudent towards it, of course, so far as the latter were concerned, only after humbling them to their knees. The elders would point at a mound covered with grass and shrubs, not far from the tree, while citing the ancient-most proof of this fact. The mound had decayed through centuries, but it was still "as high as two men". They did not expect anyone to ignore a fact so solid and as high as two men.
12. The mound contained the ruins of a certain king's palace. It was neither possible nor necessary to recall the name of the king who had built it, or whether he had

been of the solar or the lunar dynasty. What was frequently recalled was that he had dared to cut down a few branches of the tree to make room for his palace. Perhaps he had planned to cut more, perhaps even to totally destroy the tree, but before he could do so a terrific storm had broken out. The palace collapsed. The king and his family took shelter under the tree and were saved. The king clasped the tree and wept. The storm subsided.

13. Further back in time, it was said, the tree had taken off and flown to the Himalayas or other such meaningful places, at the behest of a certain great soul who lived under it. But that was in the Era of Truth, and in the absence of some concrete evidence like the mound to support this legend, elders of the present generation spoke relatively less about it than had their predecessors.
14. The trunk that had once been clasped by the king had decayed and disappeared since time immemorial, after sending down numerous shoots which had formed new trunks. The tree with its branches spreading over an acre resting on these trunks had become an institution long ago.
15. At the foot of one of the trunks rested the tiny 'banian goddess'. She had no regular priest attached to her. Whoever so desired could approach her and sprinkle vermillion on her. In the course of generations the vermillion crust had come to account for the greater part of the goddess's body. Devotees ordinarily did not prostrate themselves to her, but everybody, while passing before her, bowed enough for her to take cognizance of his or her devotion. In matters complex and formidable in nature, the villagers prayed for the intervention of famous deities of distant temples. But small issues were referred to her from time to time. Children in particular found her quite helpful in regard to crises arising from undone homeworks or the ill humour of the pundits of the primary school.
16. The area before another trunk was the usual site for the village meetings.
17. Relaxing beside a neighbouring trunk, eyes shut and jaws moving in a leisurely rhythm, could be found the much revered sacred bull of the village.
18. In the afternoons of the bi-weekly njarket days, an old woman coming from a village on the horizon sat leaning against another trunk with a sack half-filled with greens and/or drumsticks; The market, still two miles distant, was her goal, but her knees, she would declare with a quiet toothless laugh, had refused to serve her any more, obliging her to sell her wares sitting there. At sunset she would rise and offer a handful of whatever still remained in her sack to the sacred bull.
19. In a hollow at the foot of another trunk resided a family of snakes which had earned the reputations of being conscientious and harmless and, in the branches above, rested a legion of birds.

20. The tree was taken to be immortal by all without anybody having to be told about it. Immortality being an attribute of the gods, it was godly. Nobody would easily flout a decision that had been arrived at in a meeting under the tree, for even when the decision was unpalatable to a party, it knew that behind it there was the seal of some power, invisible and inaudible though.

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words/expressions occur.]

1	<i>sinister</i>	: that which makes you feel that something evil is going to happen
	<i>uncanny</i>	: unearthly, supernatural
3	<i>draped</i>	: covered
	<i>pallid</i>	: pale
5	<i>nibble</i>	: to eat little by little
	<i>gobble</i>	: to swallow in lumps
7	<i>chugging</i>	: a short dull explosive sound
	<i>plaintive</i>	: mournful
11	<i>impudent</i>	: shamelessly bold
	<i>shrubs</i>	: small bushes
12	<i>clasp</i>	: to hold in the hands or arms tightly
13	<i>behest</i>	: command
20	<i>unpalatable</i>	: unpleasant and difficult to accept

Questions for discussion

- How does the writer describe the river in spate ? Did it cause havoc in the village ? What was the time of the flood ?
 - What did the villagers do to meet the crisis ?
 - The leaves chattered incessantly their familiar language of hope and courage.' How does this statement portray the banian tree ?
 - What was the story behind the mound and the tree ?
- Write briefly about the 'banian goddess . What does this portrait reveal about the villagers ? Do you mark an element of humour and satire in the description ?
- Oscn How does the author describe the different trunks of the banian tree ? Are the descriptions given in a serious or light-hearted vein ? Do they reveal the orthodoxy and superstition of the villagers ?
- How was the tree godly ? What did it symbolize ?

Now try to predict what would happen next in the story. And then go through the next part of 'The Tree.'

SECTION II

The Text

21. The rain stopped though not the wind. The first touch of awe and excitement passed. They could all go back to their homes now to return again in batches in the morning. It was more out of the respect for the river- to show that they had taken due note of her changing mood - than from any fear of the flood that some people must always gather at her edge.
22. A crashing sound stunned them. Suddenly the earth seemed to rock. A few who were nearest the river were splashed; had they been standing a few feet farther they would have been gone forever. In the dark no one had observed the crack that had developed on the ground before the huge chunk of the bank slipped into the water.
23. Nirakar Das, the retired head-pundit of the primary school, shouted, "Come away, come away, you all !" The authoritative voice was instantly obeyed.
24. A few snakes crept out of the hollow under the tree and wriggled away towards the mound. Some saw only one snake, some saw two and some three, but to all it appeared like the exodus of a thousand snakes, a stream of life abandoning its ancient body.
25. It was now about dawn. Nirakar Das advanced near the tree and looked up for a long time. "My eyes are gone," he declared again as he had on countless occasions during the past decade, and scanning the people who were now beginning to extinguish their lanterns and torches, called one of his ex-pupils, Ravindra, the founder-proprietor of the village's sole grocery, and asked him to look up and see if there were any birds on the tree.
26. Ravindra and others gazed up into the branches for a while and reported their findings : "No, not a single feather can be traced !"
27. Nirakar Das looked glum. "Can any of you recollect another instance like this ?" he asked the people of his age group. "No". They too looked grave and shook their heads.
28. "Far from a good sign," Nirakar Das observed, "snakes and birds fleeing this great shelter !"
29. Not long after this Ravindra and others with better eyesight detected an extensive crack, in the shape of a sickle, with both its ends pointing towards the river. The semi-circle embraced the tree.
30. "If the tree falls, it will carry this whole huge chunk along with it into the river, for its innumerable roots have made this much of earth like a single cake," young man explained to his two friends. They were the only boys from the village

studying in a college in the town. This was their first visit to the village after they had grown long hair and side-locks.

31. "What ! The tree falls ? How dare you say so ? How much do you know about this tree ?" an old Brahmin notorious for bad temper shouted at them.
32. "They have developed bones in their tongues," commented Ravindra. "You are studying in the college, aren't you ? Come on, save the tree with your English, Algebra and all that abracadabra," he challenged them.
33. "Why should we ?" the spokesman of the trio said sniffily.
34. "Why should you ? As if you could, only if you pleased ! Is this what you imply ? Well, please do it out of pity for us, out of pity for fourteen generations of our forefathers ! Would you ?" This time Ravindra was supported by a number of people. The young man blinked and muttered, "What I meant was, how can we save the tree ?"
35. "Now it's how we can ! If this is the limit of your capacity, how dared you grow such obscene hair ?" demanded the bad-tempered Brahmin tauntingly.
36. "Look here, my young fathers ! Just promise, not loudly, but silently within your hearts - let none but the spirit of the tree know - that if the tree is saved you will shorten your hair ! Please, my fathers, make a solemn promise," implored Shrikanta Das, the meek and mild Vaishnav, his palms joined in the shape of a lotus bud, out of humility.
37. As the sky in the east grew brighter it was observed that the ground between the tree and the river had already tilted towards the river.
38. The young men tried to appear engrossed in discussing something highly sophisticated among themselves. Shrikanta Das raised his voice and whimpered, "Hearken, you all ! Not only these boys, but we all have our shares of sin. And if the tree is going to collapse, it is because it cannot bear the burden of our sins any more. Let everyone of us confess his sin, addressing the spirit of the tree, silently in our hearts ! Let us pray to be pardoned ! *Hari bol* ! Glory to God !"
39. All shouted *Hari bol*. But it sounded like a cry of lamentation.
40. When they stopped, the silence seemed bitingly sharp. With the gradual brightening of the sky the seriousness of the situation became more and more apparent.
41. A few kites that were circling above the whirling waters at times swooped down on the crowd as though to show the contempt of those who could dwell at such height and see all that was happening from horizon to horizon for the wretched men below regarding their situation with utter helplessness.

42. The crowd swelled rapidly. Almost all the villagers, women and children included, were now gathered there. In different words all asked the same question : "What is to be done ?" A part of the tree was clearly leaning towards the river.
43. Once the college boys had been humbled, there was no hesitation to openly discuss the impending fall of the tree. Something, no doubt, had to be done. Only if one knew what that was.

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words / expressions occur.]

24	<i>exodus</i>	: a going out on a mass scale
33	<i>sniffily (adv)</i>	: sniff : to draw in air sharply and audibly through the nose
38	<i>whimper</i>	: to cry feebly and brokenly
41	<i>swoop</i>	: to come down with a sweeping rush

Questions for discussion

1. What is the central incident in this section ?
2. What attitude of the villagers is reflected in the words of the retired head-pundit ? How does he interpret the fleeing of the birds and snakes from the tree ?
3. How do the villagers react to the words of the college going young men ? What is distinctive about the attitude of the young men ?
4. What does Srikant Das, the Vaishnab, observe about the impending fall of the tree ? Does it reflect the orthodoxy and superstitiousness of the villagers ? How does Manoj Das describe the nature of the villagers ?
5. Do you find a contrast between two generations in this section ? Explain.

You will now read the last part of the story. As you read it, ask yourself these questions :

- (i) What is now the primary concern of the villagers ?
- (ii) What are the villagers' reactions to what happens to the tree ?

SECTION III

The Text

44. The crowd spontaneously looked at one after another of those who had claims to some sort of distinction.
45. Shridhar Mishra was a well-known homoeopath. He had saved so many from certain death. When the people looked expectantly to him, his lips quivered as they always did when he was about to diagnose a disease. The villagers were accustomed to read in that quiver the promise of remedy. But as now the quivering did not stop even when the people had looked at him for a long time, they focused their attention on Raghu Dalbehera, the only villager to possess a gun. Rarely was he seen without his

gun although the list of his kills during a period of twenty years was limited to a handful of birds and a greedy fox - the latter merely dazed by the sound and smoke from his gun and killed in an operation in which many had the privilege to participate.

46. When Raghu realised that the crowd had already been staring at him for five minutes, he raised his gun at an audaciously swooping kite, took aim and continued to take aim.
47. "Don't, Raghu, don't!" warned Nirakar Das and Raghu brought down his gun with relief. People sighed and ceased to concentrate on him.
48. Just then someone brought the news that the honourable Member of the Legislative Assembly had been observed going by on a nearby road perhaps heading for the next village.
49. "Bring him here, run boys, run!" said the elderly villagers. A number of young men disappeared running.
50. Freed from the obligation to think or do anything now that the M.L.A. had been located and summoned, all stood peacefully looking towards the bend of the road where he was expected to appear.
51. The M.L.A. arrived walking at a running pace, wrinkling his brows.
52. "Do you see the situation, M.L.A. *baboo* ? We are doomed!" more than one voice complained.
53. "Who says you are doomed ? Why this pessimism ? People further down are really in trouble. Flood waters have entered their village and are threatening their houses. You are in heaven compared to them, and I wish you to continue in heaven," said the M.L.A. displaying the particular variety of smile with which he aroused the conscience of his listeners.
54. "We have voted for you!" exclaimed a green voice. The three college boys were now elbowed their way forward, throwing glances back at the crowd as if defying it to stop them from confronting the leader. They were, of course, two to three years below the voting age, but they were determined to regain face after their earlier humiliation.
55. The M.L.A. paled, but ignored the boys, and asked the elders, "What would you like me to do ?"
56. There was no reply. Recovering his courage and flashing the conscience-rousing smile again, he repeated the challenge sweetly, "Order me to do and I am ready to do !"
57. "Do, eh! What can you do ? Only remember that we voted for you and that it is during your reign that the sacred tree which stood here since the Era of Truth is going to leave us," said an old man.

58. "Reign ? Who reigns nowadays ? Neither the British nor the Rajas. You are the rulers now and myself only your humble servant!" retorted the M.L.A.
59. "Servant, are you ? Let us then see you serve us ! Stop this tree from falling !" It was again one of the college trio.
60. The M.L.A. suddenly grew spirited. "Why not we all try together ? Come on, gird up the loins, what were you all doing so long ? Fetch as much rope as you can - thick and strong. Go, go, I say !" He girded up his own loins.
61. "Run run !" shouted several others. Though all knew how unrealistic the proposition was and how difficult it was to obtain even a few yards of rope such as the M.L.A. had specified, several people were about to set off under the impact of the leader's clarion call.
62. But suddenly a part of the tree resting on several trunks slid into the river. Water shot up in fountains touching the wings of the scared kites.
"O God, O God!"
63. The crowd stood thunderstruck. The silence was broken by an anxious voice. "What will happen to the banian goddess ?"
64. No sooner had this been said than the ill-tempered old Brahmin was seen rushing to the remnants of the tree.
65. He sat down on the muddy ground- a spot which had been considered dangerously unsafe even by the snakes- and mustering all his strength pulled up the small stone that has stuck to the spot for God-knows-how-many ages.
66. Holding the uprooted goddess close to his bosom as though to protect her from invisible enemies, he returned to the crowd that watched him breathlessly.
67. "Give place to the goddess !" shouted the people excitedly while thronging closer around the Brahmin. Someone spread a towel on the grass. The Brahmin put down the goddess and patted her. All looked at her with the sympathy which an orphan infant deserved and pressed around dangling their hands in eagerness to do for her something or the other.
68. Another terrific splashing sound. The entire tree was gone. The old branches were seen wrestling pathetically with the mad waters, reluctant to be carried away.
"Gone ! The tree-god gone ! *Hari bol ! Hari bol !*"
69. For a long time, under a continuous drizzle, they kept up the poignant chant with all their hearts, all looking stupefied and some weeping.
70. Old Bishu Jena had seated himself before the banian goddess. Someone who observed that he had begun to shiver, announced, "I think Bishu is falling into his trance !"

71. Several people rushed to their homes and brought out cymbals and drums and conch-shells. In days gone by, when there was no vote, no college lor village boys, Bishu used to get 'possessed' before the banian goddess. Drums and cymbals and conch-shells had to be played close to his ears as loudly as possible. He began with shivering. Then he would fall down in a swoon and rise up with face beaming supernaturally, eyes wild with inexplicable experiences and often, though not everytime, he would utter words that were understood by a few who only nodded.

72. Bishu was in trance after at least two decades. Those who used to play the instruments close to his ears had now grown old, yet, their sagging skin flapping like empty purses, they were doing their best.

Bishu opened his mouth. The sounds stopped.

"I will be born as a thousand trees- here, there, every where !"

"*Hari bol! Hari bol!!* Hearken to the tree-god's message. He will be reborn thousand trees !"

73. The instruments played louder as the younger ones took over Irom the tired old hands. Along with Bishu danced Nirakar Das, ShrikantaDas, the Vaishnav and several others, their hands raised in ecstasy.

"*Hari bol ! Hari bol!"*

74. "My God ' But the sun is rising ! " a kid drew the attention ot his pals to a luminous crack in the clouds and clapped his hands.

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words/ expressions occur]

60	<i>gird</i>	to bind around; to make fast by a belt or girdle
61	<i>clarion call</i>	the battle cry of an ancient trumpet
64	<i>remnants</i>	surviving and remaining portion after destruction
67	<i>thronging</i>	crowding or pressing
69	<i>pignant</i>	deeply moving
72	<i>sagging</i>	bent down with age, wrinkled
74	<i>pals</i>	mates, chums

Questions for discussion

- What is the primary concern of the villagers in this section ? In which context does Manoj Das bring in the names of some important villagers ? What tone do you mark in the description ?
- How did the M.L. A. console the villagers ? What was his reaction to the words of the old man ? Is it typical of the politicians ? Do you notice any element of humour and satire in his statements ?
- What did the old Brahmin do when the tree was about to be swept away by the flood ?
- How did the villagers behave when the tree was gone ? What did it reflect about them ?
- How does the story end ? Is it a satisfactory ending ?

Composition

1. Give an account of the life and attitude of the villagers as portrayed in the story.

Discuss how the tree is an integral part of the life of the villagers.

L Describe the feelings and reactions of the villagers when the age old tree is swept away by the flood.

4. Bring out the elements of humour and satire in the story.

Activity on Developing a Story from an outline

Story writing activity

Read the short story below and discuss in groups which parts represent the orientation, complication and resolution in the story.

[Hero by Accident

I woke up with a start. There was a lot of shouting outside : "Fire", "Fire". The room was filled with smoke and the house was the wooden farm house of the Mayor. I was on the third floor.

When I tried to open the window, it did not budge an inch. In panic I ran towards the stairs but flames of fire were leaping out of it.

Closing the door I stepped back and fell when the floor collapsed on the floor below. Luckily, a window stood open at the far end.

I picked up a bundle of rags to cover my eyes burning due to smoke. Jumping on to a bush in the garden and rolling two or three times on the grass I found a group of villagers trying to raise me.

Suddenly, I found the bundle moving in my hand. A faint wail came out of it.

The Mayor's wife in her night gown and with dishevelled hair came running and almost snatched away the bundle from me. She was sobbing, 'My child ! My child !']

Now take out the resolution part of the story and rewrite it in detail.

Activity on Story Completion

Read the opening paragraph (orientation) of a short story below :

Maya lived with her husband and two children in a small cottage at one end of the village in the highlands of western Orissa. She was a quiet woman. Nothing much seemed to worry her and she went about her life without worrying other people. She lived a very ordinary life until one day last summer, when all that changed.

Discuss in your group what might happen in the rest of the story.

First decide an outline of the rest of the story in about 100 words, and then write the full story.

Notes

Manoj Das (b. 1934), a devoted disciple of Sree Aurobindo, is a bilingual writer of international repute, writing in both English and Oriya. Born in a small village of Orissa, he has a rich understanding of the life of her people, their rites and rituals, their orthodoxy and superstitions. *Cyclones* (a novel), *The Submerged Valley and Other Stories*, *A Bride inside a Casket and other Tales*, *Man who lifted the Mountain and other Fantasies* are some of his important contributions to Indian English literature. His *Katha O Kahani* won him the most prestigious Sahitya Akademi award. The world of his short stories is not merely a world of stark reality but blended to a world of dreams and fantasy, which he creates at the psychic level. The elements of irony, humour and satire add to the beauty and charm of

his writings. The novelty and innovation both in theme and form exhibited in his fictional world have brought him immense fame. He now teaches English at the Sree Aurobindo International Centre of Education in Pondichery. He has been recently honoured with *Utkalarcitna Samman* for his outstanding contributions to literature.

This story, woven round an age old banian tree of a village, typically portrays the behavioural pattern and psychic responses of its inhabitants at a critical moment, when the tree is uprooted and carried away by the river in spate. Das very interestingly depicts the life and attitudes of the people of an Orissan village, their life governed by rituals, orthodoxy and superstitions. The old tree symbolizing the past, present and the future is intimately connected with the villagers and their life-pattern. They cannot bear the nerve-racking incident of the tree being swept away by the flood. They even think of the rebirth of the tree in thousands. The discussion among the different categories of villagers is really amusing and humorous. The elements of irony and satire are discernible, even on the occasion of a terrible loss to the village.

Unit XVI

THE WATCHMAN

R. K. Narayan

SECTION I

Pre-reading activity

Have you ever given thought to why people commit suicide ? Give it a thought now and list possible reasons here :

What is your view of the people who commit suicide ?

Focusing questions

In this unit you will read a story dealing with a case of attempting suicide. As you read the story, the focusing questions you will bear in mind are :

- (i) Why didn't the girl want to live ?
- (ii) Is it a justifiable reason for committing suicide ?

The Text

1. There was still a faint splash of red on the western horizon. The watchman stood on the tank bund and took a final survey. All the people who had come for evening walks had returned to their homes. Not a soul anywhere- except that obstinate angler, at the northern end, who sat with his feet in water, sadly gazing on his rod. It was no use bothering about him: he would sit there till midnight, hoping for a catch.
2. The Taluk off ? gong struck nine. The watchman wa. itisfied that no trespassing cattle had sneaked in through the wire fencing. As he turned to go, he saw, about a hundred yards away, a shadowy figure moving down the narrow stone steps that led to the water's edge. He thought for a second that it might be a ghost. He dismissed the idea, and went up to investigate. If it was anyone come to bathe at this hour.... From the top step he observed that it was a woman's form. She stooped over the last step and placed something on it- possibly a letter. She then stepped into knee-deep water, and stood there, her hands pressed together in prayer. Unmistakable signs- always to be followed by the police and gruesome details, bringing the very worst possible reputation to a tank.

3. He shouted, "Come out, there, come out of it." The form looked up from the water. "Don't stand there and gaze. You'll catch a cold, come up whoever you are" He raced down the steps and picked up the letter. He hurriedly lit his lamp, and turned its wick till it burnt brightly, and held it up, murmuring : "I don't like this. Why is everyone coming to the same tank ? If you want to be dead, throw yourself under an engine," he said.
4. The light fell upon the other's face. It was a young girl's wet with tears. He felt a sudden pity. He said, "Sit down, sit down and restno, no up two more steps and sit down. Don't sit so near the water" She obeyed. He sat down on the last step between her and the water, placed the lantern on the step, took out a piece of tobacco, and put it in his mouth. She buried her face in her hands, and began to sob. He felt troubled and asked : "Why don't you rise and go home, lady ?"
5. She sputtered through her sob : "I have no home in this world !" "Don't tell me ! Surely, you didn't grow up without a home all these years!" said the watchman.
 "I lost my mother when I was five years old- "she said.
 "I thought so" replied the watchman, and added, "and your father married again and you grew up under the care of your step-mother ?"
 "Yes, yes, how do you know ?" she asked.
 "I am sixty-five years old," he said and asked, "Did your step-mother trouble you ?"
6. "No, there you are wrong," the girl said, "She is very kind to me. She has been looking after me ever since my father died a few years ago. She has just a little money on hand left by my father, and she spends it on us."
- The watchman looked at the stars, sighed for the dinner that he was missing.
 "It's very late, madam, go home."
 "I tell you I've no home -" she retorted angrily.
 "Your stepmother's house is all right from what you say. She is good to you."
 "But why should I be a burden to her ? Who am I ?"
 "You are her husband's daughter," the watchman said, and added, "That is enough claim."
 "No, no. I won't live on any body's charity."
7. "Then you will have to wait till they find you a husband -"

She glared at him in the dark. "That's what I do not want to do. I want to study and become a doctor and earn my livelihood. I don't want to marry. I often catch

mother talking far into the night to her eldest son, worrying about my future, about my marriage. I know they cannot afford to keep me in college very long now; it costs about twenty rupees a month."

8. "Twenty rupees !" the watchman exclaimed. It was his month's salary. "How can anybody spend so much for books !"
9. "Till today," she said, "I was hoping that I would get a scholarship. That would have saved me. But this evening they announced; others have got it, not I. My name is not there- " and she broke down again. The watchman looked at her in surprise. He comprehended very little of all this situation. She added : "And when they come to know of this, they will try to arrange my marriage. Someone is coming to have a look at me tomorrow."
10. "No, no," she cried hysterically. "I don't want to marry, I want to study."

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words / expressions occur.]

1	<i>splash</i>	: small area of bright colour.
2	<i>trespassing</i>	: entering unauthorized
	<i>sneak</i>	: enter unnoticed
	<i>gr up some</i>	: horrible, ghastly
5	<i>sputter</i>	: to speak indistinctly
10	<i>hysterical</i>	: violently emotional

Questions for discussion

1. How does the story writer present the setting of the story ? Does it arouse the thrill and excitement of a detective story ?
 - What does the watchman think about the figure at a distance ?
3. "Unmistakable signs- always to be followed by the police and gruesome details,..... - what does this statement of the watchman indicate ?
4. What kind of tone do you mark in the words of the watchman in his first encounter with the girl ?
 - Why did the girl want to commit suicide ? Was the reason she advanced good enough to warrant such a step ?
 - What impression do you get about the girl from her narration ? Do her words indicating her self-reliance and strong desire to study, and her decision to commit suicide go together ?
7. Can you guess what would happen next in the story ? Now read the last part of the story and find out.

SECTION II

The Text

11. The silent night was stabbed by her sobbing and some night bird rustled the water, and wavelets beat upon the shore. Seeing her suffer, he found his own sorrows in life came to his mind; how in those far-off times, in his little village home an epidemic of cholera laid out his father and mother and brothers on the same day, and he was the sole survivor, how he was turned out of his ancestral home through the trickery of his father's kinsmen, and he wandered as an orphan, suffering indescribable hunger and privation.
12. "Everyone has his own miseries," he said. "If people tried to kill themselves for each one of them, I don't know how often they would have to drown." He remembered further incidents and his voice shook with sorrow. "You are young and you don't know what sorrow is...." He remained silent and a sob broke out of him as he said : "I prayed to all the gods in the world for a son. My wife bore me eight children. Only one daughter lives now, and none of the others saw the eleventh year...." The girl looked at him in bewilderment.
13. The Taluk office gong struck again. "It is late, you had better get up and go home," he said.
 She replied : "I have no home."
 He fell irritated. "You are making too much of nothing. You should not be obstinate -"
 "You don't know my trouble," she said.
- ,4. lie picked up his lantern and staff and got up. He put her letter down where he found it.
 "If you are going to be obstinate. I'll leave you alone. No one can blame me." He pi d for a moment, looked at her, and went up the steps; not a word passed between them again.
15. The moment he came back to duty next morning, he hurried down the stone steps. The ietter lay where he had dropped it on the previous night. He picked it up and gazed on it, helplessly, wishing that it could tell him about the fate of the girl after he had left her. He tore it up and flung it on the water. As he watched the bits float off on ripples, he blamed himself for leaving her and going away on the previous night. "I am responsible for at least one suicide in this tank," he often remarked to himself. He could never look at the blue expanse of water again with an easy mind Even many months later he could not be certain that the remains of a body would not come up all of a sudden. "Who knows, it sometimes happens that the body gets stuck deep down," he reflected.

16. Years later, one evening as he stood on the bund and took a final survey before going home, he saw a car draw up on the road below. A man, a woman, and three children emerged from the car and climbed the bund. When they approached, the watchman felt a start at his heart; the figure and face of the woman seemed familiar to him. Though the woman was altered by years, and ornaments, and dress, he thought that he had now recognized the face he had once seen by the lantern light. He felt excited at this discovery. He had numerous questions to ask. He brought together his palms and saluted her respectfully. He expected she would stop and speak to him. But she merely threw at him an indifferent glance and passed on. He stood staring after her for a moment, baffled, "Probably this is someone else," he muttered and turned to go home, resolving to dismiss the whole episode from his mind.

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words/expressions occur.]

11 <i>rustle</i>	to produce a soft whispering sound (as of dry leaves) by stirring
<i>wavelets</i>	small waves, ripples
<i>privation</i>	state of being deprived of something, especially of what is necessary for comfort
14 <i>staff</i>	a stick carried in the hand as a support

Questions for discussion

1. Do you notice a shift of focus in this part of the story ?
 ☰ Give an account of the past life of the watchman.
 "Every one has his own miseries. If people tried to kill themselves for each one of them, I don't know how often they would have to drown." How does this statement of the watchman affect the girl ?
4. What do you think was the outcome of the conversation between the watchman and the girl ?
 5. What did the watchman believe when he saw the letter on the steps next morning ? How did he feel thereafter ?
6. If you believe the watchman's words, he recognized the married young woman as (he girl he thought was dead. Why, then, should she look away from the watchman ?
7. Whom do you like more - the girl or the watchman ? Justify your answer.

Composition

1. Attempt an appreciation of the character of the watchman.
 ☰ Sketch the character of the girl in contrast with the character of the watchman.
3. Comment on Narayan's art of story telling, with reference to the short story 'The Watchman'

Activity on Developing a Story from an outline

Read the following outline and develop it into a story that will be interesting for your readers :

A clever jester at a king's court - the king's favourite - offended the king seriously one day- sentenced to death- pleaded with the king for mercy- the king was stern- but granted him permission to choose how he should die- jester chose to die of old age - king laughed - freed the clever jester.

(In order to expand the outline into an interesting story, you may try to write three or four sentences on each point. The story would be interesting if you include conversations between the jester and the king.)

Note

R.K. Narayan , who passed away on 13 May, 2001 at the age of 94, is undoubtedly one of the greatest Indian Writers in English, having to his credit a number of novels, volumes of short stories, travelogues, retold legends and an autobiography. *Swamy and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts*, *The English Teacher*, *Mr. Sampath*, *The Guide*, *The Vendor of Sweets*, *Waiting for Mahatma*, *The Maneater of Malgudi*, *A Tiger for Malgudi* are some of his important novels. *An Astrologer's Day and other Stories*, *Lawly Road and other Stories*, *Malgudi Days*, *Under the Banyan Tree and other Stories* include his best-known stories *My Date less Diary* is a travelogue and *My Days* is the writer's autobiography. Having an intimate knowledge of Indian life and society beset with orthodoxy and superstition, he becomes India's greatest story teller, an astute observer of Indian psyche growing through the Pre as well as Post-Independence times. His characters, mostly belonging to the lower middle class and poorer sections, exhibit an uncanny sense of fear in their actions and behaviour, the fear and uncertainty stemming mainly out of foreign domination and a servile attitude of the people who suffer. Sometimes they are the victims of social evils and a corrupt order, of which his writings are a humorous and satiric exposition. Irony at times lapses into cynicism in his writings. Narayan will live for ever for his beautiful imaginary town of Malgudi faithfully representing Indian ethos, milieu and sensibility.

The story extracted from *Malgudi Days* enacts an incident of a late evening on a tank bund, which ultimately brings into focus a contrast between two characters - a girl and a watchman. The girl is ambitious, believes in self-reliance and detests being a liability or living on charity : 'I won't live on any body's charity; she says. To the watchman's suggestion of accepting marriage she hysterically reacts: "No. no, I don't want to marry. I want to study.' But a deeper look into her character reveals that her cowardly thought of suicide is not in harmony with the bold statements she makes before the watchman. Like most of Narayan's characters, she being poor suffers from a fear of uncertainty. She lacks a strong will power to arrange money somehow in order to pursue her studies. In contrast, the watchman demonstrates a greater understanding of man's predicament and endurance to encounter boldly the onslaughts of misfortune. The story ends with a note of ambiguity and uncertainty as regards the identity of the woman. With its element of irony and undertone of cynicism the story is typical of Narayan's fictional writing.

Unit XVII

MOTHER'S DAY

J. B. Priestley

SECTION 1

Pre-reading activity

1. We observe certain days of the years as special occasions, such as, Teacher's Day, Children's Day, World Environment Day, World Literacy Day and so on.
Why do we treat these days as special occasions ?
How do we observe, for instance, Teacher's Day in educational institutions ?
- When Shiv Sundar Das, the young Indian cricketer, batted superbly in a match against Zimbabwe and helped India win, the newspapers said it was Shiv Sundar's day. Would you say 'Shiv Sundar's Day' is used in the same sense as when we say : 'The Teachers' Day was observed in our college with great enthusiasm' ? Or does it convey a different shade of meaning ? If so, what ?

Focusing questions

Mother's Day, as you may be knowing, is observed in many countries of the world on May 9 every year. On this occasion, mothers receive gifts and greetings from their children. The spirit behind the observance of this day is to acknowledge with gratitude a mother's contribution to the well-being of the family.

Now, as you go through the play, try to find answer to the following :

1. Do Mrs. Pearson's husband, daughter and son treat her in accordance with the spirit of Mother's Day ?
Or, would you say it is Mrs. Pearson's final success in asserting her due position in the household that the play's title hints at ?

Introducing the writer

J. B. Priestley (1894-1984) is a major British playwright, novelist and essayist of our time. Some of his well-known plays are *Laburnum Grove*, *When We Are Married*, *An Inspector Calls* and *The Linden Tree*. In his plays, he presents ideas about life, and tries to wake up his audiences to the possibilities of their altering their lives for the better, and to suggest that human life can be a fuller and finer thing than it normally is.

Priestley's popular one-acter, 'Mother's Day', focuses attentions on a mother who is treated by her husband, daughter and son as nothing better than a mere domestic help, until a neighbour teaches her the art of asserting herself in her household. The play is in the comic vein.

The Text**CHARACTERS**

MRS. ANNIE PEARSON
 GEORGE PEARSON
 DORIS PEARSON
 CYRIL PEARSON
 MRS. FITZGERALD

The action takes place in the living-room of the Pearson's
 house in a London suburb

Time: the present

SCENE : The living-room of the Pearson family. Afternoon.

1. *It is a comfortably furnished, much lived-in room in a small suburban semi-detached villa. If necessary only one door need be used, but it is better with two—one up leading to the front door and the stairs and the other in the R. wall leading to the kitchen and the back door. There can be a muslin-covered window in the wall and possibly one in the R. wall too. The fireplace is assumed to be in the fourth wall. There is a settle up R. and armchair down L and one down R. A small table with two chairs either side of it stands C.*

When the CURTAIN rises it is an afternoon in early autumn and the stage can be well lit. MRS. PEARSON at R. and MRS. FITZGERALD at L. are sitting opposite each other at the small table, on which are two tea cups and saucers and the cards with which MRS. FITZGERALD has been telling MRS. PEARSON'S fortune. MRS. PEARSON is a pleasant but worried-looking woman in her forties. MRS. FITZGERALD is older, heavier and a strong and sinister personality. She is smoking. It is very important that these two should have sharply contrasting voices—MRS. PEARSON speaking in a light, flurried sort of tone, with a touch of suburban Cockney perhaps, and Mrs. FITZGERALD with a deep voice, rather Irish perhaps.

3. MRS. FITZGERALD (collecting up the cards) : And that's all I can tell you. Mrs. Pearson. Could be a good fortune. Could be a bad one. All depends on yourself now. Make up your mind - and there it is.
4. MRS. PEARSON : Yes, thank you, Mrs. Fitzgerald. I'm much obliged, I'm sure. 'It's wonderful having a real fortune-teller living next door. Did you learn that out East, too ?
5. MRS. FITZGERALD : I did. Twelve years I had of it, with my old man rising to be Lieutenant Quarter-master. He learnt a lot, and I learnt a lot more. But will

you make up your mind now, Mrs. Pearson dear ? Put your foot down, once an' for all, and be the mistress of your own house and the boss of your own family.

^{os} MRS. PEARSON (*smiling apologetically*): That's easier said than done. Besides I'm so fond of them even if they are so thoughtless and selfish. They don't mean to be

7. MRS. FITZGERALD (*cutting in*) : May be not. But it'd be better for them if they learnt to treat you properly

MRS. PEARSON : Yes, I suppose it would, in a way.

^{SOOO}

MRS. FITGERALD : No doubt about it at all. Who's the better for being spoilt - grown man, lad or girl ? Nobody. You think it does 'em good when you run after them all the time, take their orders as if you were the servant in the house, stay at home every night while they go out enjoying themselves ? Never in all your life. It's the ruin of them as well as you. Husbands, sons, daughters should be taking notice of wives an' mothers, not giving 'em orders and treating 'em like dirt. An' don't tell me you don't know what I mean, for I know more than you've told me.

10. MRS. PEARSON (*dubiously*) : I - keep dropping a hint
 11. MRS. FITZGERALD : Hint ? It's more than hints your family needs. Mrs. Pearson.
 12. MRS. PEARSON (*dubiously*) : I suppose it is. But I do hate any unpleasantness. And it's so hard to know where to start. I keep making up my mind to have it out with them- but somehow. I don't know how to begin. (*She glances at her watch or at a clock*). Oh- good gracious I Look at the time. Nothing ready and they'll be home any minute- and probably all in a hurry to go out again

(As she is about to rise, MRS. FITZERALD reaches out across the table and pulls her down.)

13. MRS. FITZGERALD : Let'em wait or look after themselves for once. This is
 where your foot goes down. Start now. >
 (She lights a cigarette from the one she has just finished).
 14. MRS. PEARSON (*embarrassed*) : Mrs. Fitzgerald - I know you mean well - in fact. I agree with you - but I just can't- and it's no use you trying to make me. If I promise you I'd really have it out with them, I know I wouldn't be able to keep my promise.
 15. MRS. FITZGERALD : Then let me do it.

16. MRS. PEARSON (flustered) : Oh no - thank you very much, Mrs. Fitzgerald - but that wouldn't do at all. It couldn't possibly be somebody else- they'd resent it at once and wouldn't listen- and really I couldn't blame them. I know I ought to do it - but you see how it is ?
(She looks apologetically across the table, smiling rather miserably).
17. MRS. FITZGERALD (*coolly*) : You haven't got the idea.
18. MRS. PEARSON (*bewildered*) : Oh- I'm sorry, I thought you asked me to let you do it.
19. MRS. FITZGERALD : I did. But not as me - as *you*.
20. MRS. PEARSON : But - I don't understand. You couldn't be me.
21. MRS. FITZGERALD (*coolly*) : We change places. Or - really - bodies. You look like me. I look like you.
22. MRS. PEARSON. But that's impossible.
23. MRS. FITZGERALD : How do you *know* ? Ever tried it ?
24. MRS. PEARSON : No. of course not
25. MRS. FITZGERALD (*coolly*) : I have. Not for some time, but it still ought to work. Won't last long, but long enough for what we want to do. Learnt it out East, of course, where they're up to all these tricks. (*She holds her hand out across the table, keeping the cigarette in her mouth*). Gimme your hands, dear.
26. MRS. PEARSON (*dubiously*) : Well - I don't know - is it right ?
27. MRS. FITZGERALD : If s your only chance. Give me your hands an' keep quiet a minute. Just don't think about anything. (*Taking her hands*). Now look at me.
[They stare at each other.
(Muttering). Arshtatta dum - arshtatta lam - arshtatta lam dumbona.....)
- [This little scene should be acted very carefully. We are to assume that the personalities change bodies. After the spell has been spoken, both women, still grasping hands, go lax, as if the life were out of them. Then both come to life, but with the personality of the other. Each must try to adopt the voice and mannerisms of the other. So now MRS PEARSON is bold and dominating and MRS. FITZGERALD is nervous and fluttering.*
28. MRS. PEARSON (*now with MRS. FITZGERALD'S personality*) : See what I mean, dear ? (*She notices the cigarette*).
 Here - you don't want that. (*She snatches it and puts it in her own mouth, puffing contentedly*.)

[MRS. FITZGERALD, now with MRS. PEARSON'S personality, looks down at herself and sees that her body has changed and gives a scream offright.]

29. MRS. FITZGERALD (*with MRS. PEARSON'S personality*):
Oh - it's happened.
30. MRS. PEARSON (*complacently*) : Of course it's happened. Very neat. Didn't know I had it in me.
31. MRS. FITZGERALD (*alarmed*) : But whatever shall I do, Mrs. Fitzgerald ? George and the children can't see me like this.
32. MRS. PEARSON (*grimly*) : They aren't going to - that's the point. They'll have me to deal with - only they won't know it.
33. MRS. FITZGERALD (*still alarmed*): But what if we can't change back ? It'd be terrible.
34. MRS. PEARSON : Here - steady, Mrs. Pearson - if you had to live my life it wouldn't be so bad. You'd have more fun as me than you've had as you...
35. MRS. FITZGERALD : Yes - but I don't want to be anybody else....
36. MRS. PEARSON : Now - stop worrying. It's easier changing back - I can do it any time we want
37. MRS. FITZGERALD : Well - do it now
38. MRS. PEARSON : Not likely. I've got to deal with your family first. That's the idea, is n't it ? Didn't know how to begin with'em, you said. Well. I'll show you.
39. MRS. FITZGERALD : But what am I going to do ?
40. MRS. PEARSON : Go into my house for a bit - there's nobody there - then pop back and see how we're doing. You ought to enjoy it. Better get off now before one of 'em comes.
41. MRS. FITZGERALD (*nervously rising*) : Yes - I suppose that's best. You're sure it'll be all right ?
42. MRS. PEARSON (*chuckling*) : It'll be *wonderful*. Now off you go, dear.

(MRS. FITZGERALD crosses and hurries out through the door R. Left to herself MRS. PEARSON smokes away- lighting another cigarette - and begins laying out the cards for patience on the table.

After a few moments DORIS PEARSON comes bursting in L. She is a pretty girl in her early twenties, who would be pleasant enough if she had not been spoilt.)

Glossary

[The numbers indicate the paragraphs in which the words/expressions occur.]

1 <i>settee</i>	:	a long seat with a back for two or more persons
2. <i>sinister</i>	:	looking harmful
<i>Cockney</i>	:	the dialect and accent of the working class people living in the East End of London
5 <i>pul your foot clown</i>	:	assert your authority
16 <i>flustered</i>	:	nervous
25 <i>Gimme</i>	:	(colloquial) give me
<i>Arshtatta.. dumbara</i>	:	unintelligible words meant for castin ^g a magic spell
42 <i>Patience</i>	:	a card game for only one player

Questions for discussion

1. What tips does the dramatist give you in his opening Stage Direction on the central issue of the play and the central characters and their manners ? (paragraph-2)
2. How does Mrs Fitzgerald offer to help Mrs Pearson assert her position in the family ? What is Mrs Pearson's reaction to her suggestion ? What is the method she adopts to effect a change in their personalities ? Would you call it natural or supernatural ?
3. What is the trick that the dramatist applies to make the change in the personalities of Mrs Fitzgerald and Mrs. Pearson theatrically convenient ?

SECTION II

Pre-reading activity

Section I ended with Mrs Fitzgerald in Mrs Pearson's personality smoking a cigarette and playing patience as Doris Pearson came bursting in.

Now, what do you expect to happen next ?

The Text

43. DORIS (before she has taken anything in): Mum- you'll have to iron my yellow silk. I must wear it tonight. (*She now sees what is happening and is astounded.*) What are you doing ? (She moves down L.C.)
 (MRS. PEARSON *now uses her ordinary voice but her manner is not fluttering and apologetic but cool and incisive.*)
44. MRS. PEARSON (*not even looking up*) : What d'you think I'm doing- whitewashing the ceiling ?
45. DORIS (*still astounded*) : But you're *smoking* !
46. MRS. PEARSON : That's right, dear. No law against it, is there ?
47. DORIS : But I thought you didn't smoke.
48. MRS. PEARSON : Then you thought wrong.

49. DORIS : Are we having tea in kitchen ?
50. MRS. PEARSON : Have it where you like, dear.
51. DORIS (*angrily*) : Do you mean it isn't ready ?
52. MRS. PEARSON: Yours isn't. I've had all I want. Might go out later and get a square meal at the *Clarendon*.
53. DORIS (*hardly believing her ears*) : Who might ?
54. MRS PEARSON : I might. Who'd you think ?
55. DORIS (*Staring at her*): Mum - What's the matter with you ?
56. MRS PEARSON : Don't be silly.
57. DORIS (*indignantly*) : It's not me that's being silly- and I must say it's a bit much when I've been working hard all day and you can't even bother to get my tea ready. Did you hear what I said about my yellow silk ?
58. MRS. PEARSON : No. Don't you like it now ? I never did
59. DORIS (*indignantly*): Of course I like it. And I'm going to wear it tonight. So I want it ironing.
60. MRS. PEARSON : Want it ironing ? What d'you think it's going to do- iron itself ?
61. DORIS : No, you're going to iron it for me- you always do.
62. MRS. PEARSON : Well, this time I don't. And don't talk rubbish to me about working hard. I've a good idea how much you do,'Doris Pearson. I put in twice the hours you do, and get no wages nor thanks for it. Why are you going to wear your yellow silk ? Where are you going ?
63. DORIS (*sulkily*) : Out with Charlie Spence.
64. MRS. PEARSON : Why ?
65. DORIS (*wildly*) : Why ? Why ? What's the matter with you ? Why shouldn't I go out with Charlie Spence if he asks me and I want to ? Any objections ? Go on- you might as well tell me....
66. MRS. PEARSON (*severely*): Can't you find anybody better ? I wouldn't be seen dead with Charlie Spence. Buck teeth and half-witted....
67. DORIS : He isn't
68. MRS. PEARSON : When I was your age I'd have found somebody better than Charlie Spence - or given myself up as a bad job.

69. DORIS (*nearly in tears*) : Oh - shut up !
 [DORIS runs out L. MRS. PEARSON chuckles and begins putting the cards together.
After a moment CYRIL PEARSON enters L. He is the masculine counterpart of DORIS.
70. CYRIL (*briskly*) : Hello - Mum. Tea ready ?
71. MRS. PEARSON : No.
72. CYRIL (*moving to the table; annoyed*) : Why not ?
73. MRS. PEARSON (*coolly*) : I couldn't bother.
74. CYRIL : Feeling off-colour or something ?
75. MRS. PEARSON : Never felt better in my life.
76. CYRIL, (*aggressively*) : What's the idea then ?
- 'll. MRS. PEARSON : Just a change.
78. CYRIL (*briskly*) : Well, snap out of it, Ma- and get cracking.
 Haven't too much time.
 (CYRIL, *is about to go when MRS. PEARSON'S voice checks him.*)
79. MRS. PEARSON : I've plenty of time.
80. CYRIL : Yes, but I haven't. Got a busy night tonight. (*Moving L., to the door*).
 Did you put my things out ?
81. MRS. PEARSON (*coolly*): Can't remember. But I doubt it.
82. CYRIL (*moving to the table; protesting*) : Now - look. When I asked you this morning, you promised. You said you'd have to look through 'em first in case there was any mending.
83. MRS. PEARSON : Yes - well now I've decided I don't like mending.
84. CYRIL : That's a nice way to talk - what would happen if we all talked like that ?
85. MRS. PEARSON : You all do talk like that. If there's something at home you don't want to do, you don't do it. If it's something at your work, you get the Union to bar it. Now all that's happened is that /rejoined the movement.
86. CYRIL (*staggered*) : I don't get this, Mum. What's going on ?
87. MRS PEARSON (*laconic and sinister*): Changes.

[DORIS enters L *She is in the process of dressing and is now wearing a wrap. She looks pale and red-eyed.*]

88. MRS. PEARSON : You look terrible. I wouldn't wear that face even for Charlie Spence.
89. DORIS (*moving above the table, angrily*) : Oh- shut up about Charlie Spence. And anyhow I'm not ready yet-just dressing. And if I do look terrible, it's your fault - you made me cry.
90. CYRIL (*curious*) : Why - what did she do ?
91. DORIS : Never you mind.
92. MRS. PEARSON (*rising and preparing to move to the kitchen*) : Have we any stout left ? I can't remember.
93. CYRIL : Bottle or two, I think. But you don't want stout now.
94. MRS. PEARSON (*moving L slowly*) : I do.
95. CYRIL : What for ?
96. MRS. PEARSON (*turning at the door*): To drink - you clot !
 (MRS. PEARSON exits R. Instantly CYRIL and DORIS are in a huddle, close together at L.C., rapidly whispering)
97. DORIS : Has she been like that with you, too ?
98. CYRIL : Yes - no tea ready - couldn't care less
99. DORIS : Well, I'm glad it's both of us. I thought I'd done something wrong.
100. CYRIL : So did I. But it's her of course
101. DORIS : She was smoking and playing cards when I came in. I couldn't believe my eyes.
102. CYRIL : I asked her if she was feeling off-colour and she said she wasn't.
103. DORIS : Well, she's suddenly all different. An' that's what made me cry. It wasn't what she said but the way she said it - an' the way *she looked*.
104. CYRIL : Haven't noticed that. She looks just the same to me.
105. DORIS : She doesn't to me. Do you think she could have hit her head or something
 >- y'know-an' got - what is it ? - y'know
106. CYRIL (*staggered*): Do you mean *she's* barmy ?
107. DORIS : No. you fathead, Y'know - concussion. She might have.

108. CYRIL : Sounds far - fetched.
109. DORIS : Well, she's far -fetched, if you ask me (*She suddenly begins to giggle*).
110. CYRIL : Now then - what is it ?
111. DORIS : If she's going to be like this when Dad comes home.
(She giggles again.)
112. CYRIL (*beginning to guffaw*) : I'm staying in for that - two front dress circles for the first house
 [MRS. PEARSON enters R., carrying a bottle of stout and a half-filled glass. CYRIL and DORIS try to stop their guffawing and giggling, but they are not quick enough. MRS. PEARSON regards them with contempt.]
113. MRS. PEARSON (*coldly*): You two are always talking about being grown up - why don't you both try for once to be your age ? (*She moves to the settee and sits.*)
114. CYRIL : Can't we laugh now ?
115. MRS. PEARSON : Yes, if it's funny. Go on, tell me. Make me laugh. I could do with it.
116. DORIS : Y'know you never understand our jokes, Mum
117. MRS. PEARSON : I was yawning at your jokes before you were born, Doris.
118. DORIS (*almost tearful again*) : What's making you talk like this ? What have we done ?
119. MRS. PEARSON (*promptly*) : Nothing but come in, ask for something, go out again, then come back when there's nowhere else to go.
120. CYRIL (*aggressively*): Look - if you won't get tea ready, then I'll find something to eat myself
121. MRS. PEARSON : Why not ? Help yourself. (*She takes a sip of stout.*)
122. CYRIL, (*turning on his way to the kitchen*) : Mind you, I think it's a bit thick.
 I've been working all day.
123. DORIS : Same here.
124. MRS. PEARSON (*calmly*): Eight hour day ?
125. CYRIL : Yes - eight hour day - an don't forget it.
126. MRS. PEARSON : I've done my eight hours.

127. CYRIL : That's different.
128. DORIS : Of course it is.
129. MRS. PEARSON (*calmly*): It *was*. Now it isn't. Forty-hour week for all now. Just watch it at the week-end when I have my two days off.
 (DORIS and CYRIL exchange alarmed glances. Then they stare at Mrs. PEARSON who returns their look *calmly*.)
130. CYRIL : Must grab something to eat. Looks as if I'll need to keep my strength up.
 (CYRIL exits to the kitchen.)
131. DORIS (*moving to the settee; anxiously*): Mummie, you don't mean you're not going to do *anything* on Saturday and Sunday ?
132. MRS. PEARSON (*airily*): No, I wouldn't go that far. I might make a bed or two and do a bit of cooking *as a favour*, which means, of course, I'll have to be asked very nicely and thanked for everything and generally made a fuss of. But any of you forty-hour-a-weekers who expect to be waited on hand and foot on Saturday and Sunday with no thanks for it, are in for a nasty disappointment. Might go off for the week-end perhaps.
133. DORIS (*aghast*) : Go off for the week-end ?
134. MRS. PEARSON : Why not ? I could do with a change. Stuck here day after day, week after week. If I don't need a change, who does ?
135. DORIS : But where would you go, who would you go with ?
136. MRS. PEARSON : That's my business. You don't ask me where you should go and who you should go with, do you ?
137. DORIS : That's different.
138. MRS. PEARSON : The only difference is that I'm a lot older and better able to look after myself, so it's you who should do the asking.
139. DORIS : Did you fall or hit yourself with something ?
140. MRS. PEARSON (*coldly*) : No, but I'll hit you with something, girl, if you don't stop asking silly questions.
 (DORIS stares at her open-mouthed, ready to cry.)
- I
141. DORIS : Oh - this is awful(*She begins to cry. not passionately.*)

142. MRS. PEARSON (*coldly*) : Stop blubbering. You're not a baby. If you're old enough to go out with Charlie Spence, you're old enough to behave properly. Now stop it....

Glossary

[The numbers indicate the paragraphs in which the words/expressions occur.]

43 <i>incisive</i>	: clear and forceful
74 <i>off-colour</i>	: looking slightly ill
78 <i>snap out of it</i>	: (informal) change into a more cheerful mood
<i>get cracking</i>	: (informal) start doing something immediately using very few words
87 <i>laconic</i>	: a strong, dark beer
92 <i>stout</i>	: (informal) silly fellow
96 <i>clot</i>	: (informal expression) slightly mad, very foolish
106 <i>barmy</i>	: damage to the brain caused by a blow or fall
107 <i>concussion</i>	: laugh noiselessly
112 <i>guffaw</i>	: a very loud, hearty laugh
122 <i>thick</i>	: (informal) stupid
142 <i>blubbering</i>	: crying noisily

Questions for discussion

1. What does Doris find strange about her mother's behaviour ? What are Mrs. Pearson's comments on Charlie Spence, Doris' boy friend ? How does Doris react to her comments ?
2. How does Mrs. Pearson treat Cyril ? How does she explain her behaviour that Cyril finds so strange ? How do Doris and Cyril account for their mother's changed manners ?
3. What does Mrs Pearson say about her plans for the week-end ? What does she expect of her children in return for everything she does for them ?

SECTION III

Pre-reading activity

In Section I you have seen how Mrs. Pearson snubbed her children for their improper behaviour. What do you expect to see next ?

The Text

(GEORGE PEARSON enters L. He is about fifty, fundamentally decent but solemn, self-important, pompous. Preferably he should be a heavy, slow-moving type. He notices DORIS'S tears.)

143. GEORGE : Hello - what's this ? Can't be anything to cry about.
144. DORIS (*through sobs*): You'll see.

[DORIS runs out L. with a sob or two on the way. GEORGE stares after her a moment, then looks at MRS. PEARSON.]

145. GEORGE : Did she say You'll see'

..... ?

146. MRS. PEARSON : Yes.

147. GEORGE : What did she mean ?

148. MRS. PEARSON : Better ask her .

[GEORGE looks slowly again at the door then at MRS. PEARSON. Then he notices the stout MRS. PEARSON raises for another sip. His eyes almost bulge.]

149. GEORGE : Stout ?

150. MRS. PEARSON : Yes.

151. GEORGE (*amazed*): What are you drinking stout for ?

152. MRS. PEARSON : Because I fancied some.

153. GEORGE : At this time of day ?

154. MRS. PEARSON : Yes - What's wrong with it at this time of day ?

155. GEORGE (*bewildered*) : Nothing, I suppose, Annie - but I've never seen you do it before

156. MRS. PEARSON : Well, you're seeing me now.

157. GEORGE (*with heavy distaste*) : Yes an' I don't like it. It doesn't look right. I'm surprised at you.

158. MRS. PEARSON : Well, that ought to be a nice change for you.

159. GEORGE : What do you mean ?

160. MRS. PEARSON : It must be some time since you were surprised at me, George.

161. GEORGE : I don't like surprises - I'm all for a steady going on- you ought to know that by this time. By the way, I forgot to tell you this morning I wouldn't want any tea. Special snooker match night at the club tonight- an' a bit of supper going. So no tea.

162. MRS. PEARSON: That's all right. There isn't any.

163. GEORGE (*astonished*): You mean you didn't get any ready ?

164. MRS. PEARSON: Yes. And a good thing, too, as it's turned out.

165. GEORGE (*aggrieved*) : That's all very well, but suppose I'd wanted some ?

- /
166. MRS. PEARSON: My goodness ! Listen to the man ! Annoyed because I don't get a tea for him that he doesn't even want. Ever tried that at the club ?
167. GEORGE : Tried what at the club ?
168. MRS. PEARSON : Going up to the bar and telling 'em you don't want a glass of beer but you're annoyed because they haven't already poured it out. Try that on them and see what you get.
169. GEORGE : I don't know what you're talking about.
170. MRS. PEARSON: They'd laugh at you even more than they do now.
171. GEORGE (*indignantly*) : Laugh at me ? They don't laugh at me.
172. MRS. PEARSON : Of course they do. You ought to have found that out by this time. Anybody else would have done. You're one of their standing jokes. Famous. They call you Pomy-ompy Pearson because they think you're -so slow and pompous.
173. GEORGE (*horrified*): Never!
- ◆
174. MRS. PEARSON : It's always beaten me why you should want to spend so much time at a place where they're always laughing at you behind your back and calling you names. Leaving your wife at home, night after night. Instead of going out with her, who doesn't make you look a fool
- [CYRIL enters R. with a glass of milk in one hand and a thick slice of cake in the other. GEORGE, almost dazed, turns to him appealingly.]
175. GEORGE : Here, Cyril, you've been with me to the club once or twice. They don't laugh at me and call me Pompy-ompy Person, do they ?
- [CYRIL, embarrassed, hesitates.]
- (Angrily). Go on - tell me. Do they ?
176. CYRIL (*embarrassed*): Well - Yes, Dad. I'm afraid they do.
- [GEORGE slowly looks from one to the other, staggered]
177. GEORGE (*slowly*): Well - I'll be- damned !
- [GEORGE exits L. slowly, almost as if somebody had hit him over the head. CYRIL, after watching him go, turns indignantly to MRS. PEARSON]
178. CYRIL : Now you shouldn't have told him that, Mum. That's not fair. You've hurt his feelings. Mine, too.

179. MRS. PEARSON : Sometimes it does people good to have their feelings hurt. The truth oughtn't to hurt anybody for long. If your father didn't go to the club so often, perhaps they'd stop laughing at him.
180. CYRIL (*gloomily*) : I doubt it.
181. MRS. PEARSON (*severely*) : Possibly you do, but what I doubt is whether your opinion's worth having. What do you know ? Nothing. You spend too much time and good money at greyhound races and dirt tracks and ice shows.
182. CYRIL (*sulkily*) : Well, what if I do ? I've got to enjoy myself somehow, haven't I ?
183. MRS. PEARSON : I wouldn't mind so much if you were really enjoying yourself. But are you ? And where's it getting you.
[There is a sharp hurried knocking heard off.]
184. CYRIL : Might be for me. I'll see.
[CYRIL, hurries out L In a moment he re-enters, closing the door behind him.)
 It's that silly old bag from next door - Mrs. Fitzgerald. You don't want her here, do you ?
185. MRS. PEARSONfs/uzrp/y) : Certainly I do. Ask her in. And don't call her a silly old bag neither. She's a very nice woman, with a lot more sense than you'll ever have.
[CYRIL exits L. MRS. PEARSON finishes her stout, smacking her lips.
CYRIL re-enters L ushering in MRS. FITZGERALD, who hesitates in the doorway.]
 Come in, come in, Mrs. Fitzgerald.
186. MRS. FITZERALD : (*moving to L.C. anxiously*) : I - just wondered - if everything's - all right
187. CYRIL (*sulkily*) : No, it isn't.
188. MRS. PEARSON (*sharply*) : Of course it is. You be quiet.
189. CYRIL (*indignantly and loudly*) : Why should I be quiet ?
190. MRS. PEARSON (*shouting*) : Because I tell you to - you silly, spoilt, young piecan.
191. MRS. FITZGERALD (*protesting nervously*) : Oh - no - surely.
192. MRS. PEARSON : (*severely*) : Now, Mrs. Fitzgerald, just let me manage my family in my own way - *please !*

193. MRS. FITZGERALD : Yes - but Cyril
194. CYRIL (*sulky and glowering*) : Mr. Cyril Pearson to you, please, Mrs. Fitzgerald.
 [CYRIL stalks off into the kitchen.]
195. MRS. FITZGERALD (*moving to the settee : whispering*) : Oh - dear - what's happening ?
196. MRS. PEARSON (*calmly*) : Nothing much. Just putting 'em in their places, that's all. Doing what you ought to have done long since.
197. MRS. FITZGERALD : Is George home ? (*She sits beside MRS. PEARSON on the settee*).
198. MRS. PEARSON : Yes. I've been telling him what they think of him at the club.
199. MRS. FITZGERALD : Well, they think a lot of him, don't they
200. MRS. PEARSON : No, they don't . And now he knows it.
201. MRS. FITZGERALD (*nervously*): Oh - dear - I wish you hadn't Mrs. Fitzgerald
-
202. MRS. PEARSON : Nonsense ! Doing'em all a world of good. And they'll be eating out of your hand soon - you'll see....
203. MRS. FITZGERALD : I don't think I want them eating out of my hand
204. MRS. PEARSON (*impatiently*): Well, whatever you want, they'll be doing it - all three of 'em. Mark my words. Mrs. Pearson.
- [GEORGE enters L. *glumly. He is unpleasantly surprised when he sees the visitor. He moves to the armchair L, sits down heavily and glumly lights his pipe. Then he looks from MRS. PEARSON to MRS. FITZGERALD, who is regarding him anxiously.*.)
205. GEORGE : Just looked in for a minute, I suppose, Mrs. Fitzgerald ?
206. MRS. FITZGERALD (*who doesn't know what she is saying*) : Well - yes - I suppose so, George.
207. GEORGE (*aghast*) : George I
208. MRS. FITZGERALD (*nervously*): Oh - I'm sorry
209. MRS. PEARSON (*impatiently*) : What does it matter ? Your name's George, isn't it ? Who do you think you are - Duke of Edinburgh ?
210. GEORGE (*angrily*): What's he got to do with it ? Just tell me that. And isn't it bad enough without her calling me George ? No tea. Pompy - omphy Pearson.

And poor Doris has been crying her eyes out upstairs- yes, crying her eyes out.

211. MRS. FITZGERALD (*wailing*) : Oh-dear-I ought to have known
212. GEORGE (*staring at her, annoyed*) : You ought to have known ! Why ought you to have known ? Nothing to do with you, Mrs. Fitzgerald. Look- we're at sixes and sevens here just now - so perhaps you'll excuse us
213. MRS. PEARSON (*before MRS. FITZGERALD can reply*): I won't excuse you, George Pearson. Next time a friend^and neighbour comes to see me, just say something when you see her- Good evening or How d'you do ? or something-an' don't just march in an' sit down without a word. It's bad manners.....
214. MRS. FITZGERALD (*nervously*): No- it's all right
215. MRS PEARSON : No, it isn't all right. We'll have some decent manners in this house- or I'll know the reason why. (*Glaring at GEORGE*) : Well ?
216. GEORGE (*intimidated*): Well what ?
217. MRS. PEARSON (*taunting him*): Why don't you get off to your club ? Special night tonight, isn't it ? They'll be waiting for you- wanting to have a good laugh. Go on then. Don't disappoint 'em.
218. GEORGE (*bitterly*) : That's right. Make me look silly in front of her now ! Go on - don't mind me. Sixes and sevens ! Poor Doris been crying her eyes out ! Getting the neighbours in to see the fun ! (*Suddenly losing his temper, glaring at MRS. PEARSON and shouting*). All right - let her hear it. What's the matter with you ? Have you gone barmy - or what ?
219. MRS. PEARSON(*jumpmg up : savagely*) : If you shout at me again like that, George Pearson, I'll slap your big fat silly face
220. MRS. FITZGERALD (*moaning*): Oh - no - no - no - O - please. Mrs. Fitzgerald [MRS. PEARSON site.]
221. GEORGE (*staring at her, bewildered*): Either I'm off my chump or you two are. How d'you mean - 'No - no. please. Mrs. Fitzgerald' ? Look - *you're* Mrs. Fitzgerald. So why are you telling yourself to stop when you're not' doing anything ? Tell *her* to stop - then there'd be some sense in it. (*staring at MRS. PEARSON*). I think you must be tiddly.
222. MRS. PEARSON (*starting up : savagely*): Say that again George Pearson.
223. GEORGE (*intimidated*): All right - all right- all right....
(DORIS enters L., slowly, looking miserable. She is still wearing the wrap. MRS. PEARSON sits on the settee.)

- 224 MRS. FITZGERALD : Hello - Doris dear !
225. DORIS (*rhiserably*) : Hello - Mrs. Fitzgerald !
226. - MRS. FITZGERALD: I thought you were going out with Charlie Spence tonight.
227. DORIS (*annoyed.*): What's that to do with you ?
228. MRS. PEARSON (*sharply*) : Stop that !
229. MRS. FITZGERALD (*nervously*) : No - it's all right
- ^230. MRS. PEARSONfyevereZy) : It isn't all right. I won't have a daughter of mine .talking to anybody like that. Now answer Mrs. Fitzgerald properly, Doris- or go upstairs again
231. GEORGE (*in despair*) : Don't look at me. I give it up. I just give it up.
232. MRS. PEARSON (*fiercely*) : Well ? Answer her.
233. DORIS (*sulkily*) : I was going out with Charlie Spence tonight- but now I've called it off...
234. MRS. FITZGERALD : Oh- what a pity, dear ! Why have you ?
235. DORIS (*with a flash of temper*): Because - if you must know- my mother's been going on at me - making me feel miserable- an saying he's got buch-teeth and is half-witted....
236. MRS. FITZGERALD (*rather holder to MRS PEARSON*) : Oh- you shouldn't have said that
237. MRS PEARSON (*sharply*) : MRS. Fitzgerald, I'll manage my famjly - you manage yours.
238. GEORGE (*grimly*): Ticking *her* off now, are you, Annie ?
239. MRS PEARSON (*even more grimly*): They're waiting for you at the club. George, don't forget. And don't you start crying again, Doris.
240. MRS. FITZGERALD (*getting up; with sudden decision*) ; That's enough- quite enough.
- [GEORGE and DORIS *stare at her bewildered*]
- (To GEORGE and DORIS). Now listen, you two. I want to have a private little talk with Mrs. Fitz- (*She corrects herself hastily*) with Mrs. Pearson, so I'll be obliged if you'll leave us alone for a few minutes. I'll let you know when we've finished. Go on, please. I promise you that you won't regret it. There's something here that only I can deal with.

241. GEORGE (*rising*): I'm glad somebody can - 'cos I can't. Come on, Doris.
 [GEORGE and DORIS exit. As they go MRS. FITZGERALD moves to L. of the small table and sits. She eagerly beckons MRS PEARSON to do the same thing.]
242. MRS. FITZGERALD : Mrs. Fitzgerald, we must change back now-we really must
243. MRS. PEARSON (*rising*): Why ?
244. MRS. FITZGERALD : Because this has gone far enough. I can see they're all miserable- and I can't bear it....
245. MRS. PEARSON : A bit more of the same would do 'em good. Making a great difference already(*She moves to R. of the table and sits.*)
246. MRS. FITZGERALD : No, I can't stand any more of it -I really can't. We must change back. Hurry up, please, Mrs. Fitzgerald.
247. MRS. PEARSON : Well- if you insist
248. MRS. FITZGERALD : Yes-I do - please - *please*
[She stretches her hands across the table eagerly. Mrs. PEARSON takes them.]
249. MRS. PEARSON : Quiet now. Relax.
 [MRS. PEARSON and MRS FITZGERALD stare at each other.]
(Muttering : exactly as before.) Arshtatta dum - arshtatta dum - arshtatta lamdumbona
[They carry out the same action as before, going lax, and then coming to life. Rut this time of course, they become their proper personalities.]

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words / expressions occur.]

172 <i>pompous</i>	: self-important
190 <i>piecan</i>	: useless fellow
194 <i>glowering</i>	: looking ^{an} grily
212 <i>til sixes and sevens</i>	: in a state of disorder
221 <i>tiddly</i>	: (informal) drunk
238 <i>ticking her off</i>	: rebuking her

Question for discussion

I don't like surprises'. Who says that ? Why ?

What does Mrs. Fitzgerald (now Mrs. Pearson) tell George about the way people think of him at the club ? What is the effect of her remarks on George ?

3. What happens when Mrs. Pearson (now Mrs. Fitzgerald) forgets her new role ? Do you find her pathetic or funny ? How do the members of her family react to her mistakes ? What does Mrs. Fitzgerald (now Mrs. Pearson) do to set things right ?
4. Why does Mrs. Pearson (now Mrs. Fitzgerald) insist on changing back to her proper personality ?

SECTION IV

Pre-reading activity

In Sections II and III, Mrs. Fitzgerald applies a kind of shock-treatment to bring the members of Mrs. Pearson's family to order and discipline.

Do you think she has succeeded in achieving her prime object ?

What do you expect to find in the final section of the play ?

The Text

250. MRS. FITZGERALD :Ah well -I enjoyed that.
251. MRS. PEARSON : I didn't.
252. MRS FITZGERALD : Well, you ought to have done. Now - listen, Mrs. Pearson.
Don't go soft on 'em again, else it'll all have wasted....
253. MRS. PEARSON : I'll try not to, Mrs. Fitzgerald.
254. MRS. FITZGERALD : They've not had as long as I'd like to have give 'em-
another hour or two's rough treatment might have made it certain....
255. MRS. PEARSON : I'm sure they'll do better now - though I don't know how I'm
going to explain
256. MRS. FITZGERALD (*severely*): Don't you start any explaining or apologizing
- or you're done for.
257. MRS. PEARSON (*with spirit*) .It's all right for you. Mrs. Fitzgerald. After all,
they aren't your husband and children....
258. MRS FITZGERALD (*impressively*): Now you listen to me. You admitted yourself
you were spoiling 'em - and they didn't appreciate you. Any apologies - any
explanations- an' you'll be straight back where you were. I'm warning you, dear.
Just give 'em a look- a tone of voice - now an' again, to suggest you' might be
tough with 'em if you wanted to be - an' it ought to work. Any how, we can test it.
259. MRS PEARSON : How ?
MRS FITZGERALD : Well, that is it you'd like 'em to do that they don't do ?
Stop at home for once ? ,
260. MRS PEARSON : Yes - and give me a hand with supper

261. MRS. FITZGERALD : Anything you'd like 'em to do - that you enjoy whether they do or not ?
262. MRS PEARSON : (*hesitating*): Well - yes. I - like a nice game of rummy- but, of course, I hardly ever have one - except at Christmas
263. MRS. FITZGERALD (*getting up*) : That'll do then. (*She moves towards the door L. then turns*). But remember keep firm - or you've had it. (*She opens the door. Calling.*) Hoy ! You can come in now. (*Coming away from the door, and moving R. slightly, Quietly*): But remember - remember - a firm hand.
- [GEORGE, DORIS and CYRIL file in through the doorway looking apprehensively at MRS. PEARSON.]
- I'm just off. To let you enjoy yourself.
- [The family look anxiously at MRS. PEARSON, who smiles. Much relieved, they smile back at her.]*
264. DORIS (*anxiously*): Yes, Mother ?
265. MRS PEARSON (*smiling*) : Seeing that you don't want to go out, I tell you what I thought we'd do
266. MRS. FITZGERALD (*giving a final warning*): Remember ?
267. MRS PEARSON (*nodding, then looking sharply at her family*): No objections, I hope ?
268. GEORGE (*humbly*): No, Mother - whatever you say
269. MRS PEARSON (*smiling*): I thought we'd have a nice family game of rummy- and then you children could get the supper ready while I have a talk with your father
270. GEORGE (*firmly*) : Suits me. (*He looks challengingly at the children.*) What about you two ?
271. CYRIL (*hastily*): Yes - that's all right.
272. DORIS (*hesitating*) : Well -1
273. MRS PEARSON (*sharply*) : What ? Speak up !
274. DORIS (*hastily*): On -1 think it would be lovely
275. MRS PEARSON (*smiling*): Good-bye, Mrs. Fitzgerald. Come again soon.
276. MRS. FITZGERALD : Yes, dear, 'Night all - have a nice time.

[MRS. FITZGERALD exits. L and the family cluster round Mother as the CURTAIN falls.]

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words/expressions occur.]

256 *done for* : (informal) ruined

262 *rummy* : a card game

Questions for discussion

1. What are Mrs. Fitzgerald's instructions to Mrs Pearson after they have changed back to their proper personalities ?
2. How does Mrs. Pearson put her new-found formula to test ? Does it work ? How ?

Composition

1. Would you call 'Mother's Day' a humorous play with a serious intent ? How ? Where do you find elements of humour in the play- situations, characterization or dialogues ? What is the message of the play, if any ?
2. How would you justify the title of the play ? Could you suggest another suitable title for the play ?
3. Who do you think is the central character of the play ? Would you say the characters of Mrs. Pearson and Mrs. Fitzgerald are complementary ? How ?
4. Attempt a character sketch of Mrs. Pearson.
5. - Imagine that you are Mrs. Pearson. Write about your experiences of the day in your diary.

Unit XVIII

THE UNEXPECTED

Ella Adkins

SECTION I

Pre-reading activity

1. What kind of a movie / stage play interests you most ? Do you like viewing suspense movies / drama ? Can you name some of the elements that go with a suspense play ?
2. Here is a gripping suspense play, 'The Unexpected' by Ella Adkins, a British playwright. What do you think this play is going to be about ?

Focusing questions

As you read Section I of the play, try to find answers to the following questions :

1. What would you say about the setting of the play ? Is it urban or rural ? How about the weather ? Is it pleasant or gloomy ?
2. What makes Joe suspect the activities of Mrs Parker ?

The Text

CHARACTERS

MRS PARKER

ALEC

TOM

JOE BADGER

CONVICT

WARDER

SCENE: A room in a lonely cottage on Dartmoor. The room is simply furnished. Table (set for tea) clown R. C. Armchair down L. C. Door up R. Door up L. At rise of curtain MRS. PARKER is discovered at table, preparing tea.

Knock at door L. MRS PARKER answers it. Enter ALEC and TOM.

1. . MRS PARKER : Hello ! I certainly didn't expect to see you boys this afternoon.

2. ALEC : We *had* to cycle over to see you, Mrs. Parker. We've brought you an exciting piece of news.
3. MRS PARKER : Have you indeed ? Well, come along inside. I expect it's hot tea and cakes that you are needing.

[TOM and ALEC cross R. C.J

[Closing door and crossing R. above table.] You boys shouldn't be allowed on the moors on such an afternoon as this. *The fog's getting thicker every minute.* Sit down at once, and I'll pour out some tea.

[TOM sits R. and ALEC L of table]

- 4* MRS PARKER : Now. what's this exciting piece of news ?
5. TOM : Two convicts escaped from the prison this afternoon.

[MRS PARKER has a teacosy in her hand. As this is said she drops it, and remains motionless.]

6. ALEC : Yes. According to what we heard they got away from a working gang about half an hour ago, when the mist came on so suddenly. They are believed to be somewhere on the moors, and of course, everyone in the village - *[Suddenly noticing MRS PARKER'S expression.]* Why, Mrs. Parker- what's up ? *[Rising and picking up tea-cosy.]* I say, I believe we've frightened you.
7. TOM : There's nothing to be scared about, you know. The convicts aren't likely to come this way, and, anyhow, Alec and I are with you.
8. MRS PARKER *[recovering herself].* That's all right. I'm not afraid, but I was thinking of you boys. You'll have to start back for the village as soon as you've had a cup of tea. Your mother will be worried out of her life if you're not home before long. *[Crossing R.]* Wait one moment and I'll bring two more cups. *[Exit RJ*
9. ALEC : *[above table].* Now, who would have thought Mrs. Parker would be nervous of a convict ? She's lived alone in this cottage for the last six months, and has never shown the slightest fear of tramps, or of anything else for that matter, yet, just now, she looked as frightened as a rabbit.
10. TOM : Ah, well, as my dad says : 'Where women are concerned, the unexpected always happens.

[Knock at door L.]

11. ALEC: Hello ! Who can this be ?
12. TOM *[rising].* Let's hope it's not one of the convicts.

13. ALEC : [L.C.J. I wonder if I'd better open the door or call Mrs. Parker.

[Knock repeated]

14. TOM : *[picking up toasting fork and holding it behind him].* Open the door, Alec. If it's a convict we'll be ready for him.

[ALEC opens door. Enter JOE BADGER.]

15. JOE : Goodevenin. I've called to see Mrs. Parker. What be you two kids doin' here ?

16. ALEC : Hello, Joe ! We're also here to see Mrs. Parker - and, by the way, there's no need for that word 'kids'. You're not quite ninety-nine yourself yet.

17. JOE : Boys of your age should be kept at home when there be dangerous criminals at large. Do you know there may by a couple of convicts prowling about the house at this moment ?

18. TOM : *[replacing toasting fork].* As a matter of fact, I picked this up in case you were one of them.

[Enters MRS PARKER R. carrying tray of cups and saucers.]

19. MRS PARKER : *[to JOE].* Why, Joe ! What are you doing here on such an evening ?

20. JOE : *[crossing L.C.]* I've just come to ask you a few questions, Mrs Parker, and seein' as I'm helping my uncle, the constable of the village. I'm hopin' as you'll be so kind as to answer them.

21. MRS PARKER : *[setting down tray]* Well, Joe, I'll do my best. Will you have a cup of tea ?

22. JOE : No, thanks. I've no time for tea when there be man's work to do. *[With a melodramatic gesture.]* Somewhere out on those moors there be two desperate criminals, ready to murder us all in our beds, may be - if they get the chance.

23. MRS PARKER : *[pouring tea]* I shouldn't let that make you nervous, Joe. They'll probably be caught before nightfall.

24. JOE : *[angrily]* Nervous ! Make me nervous ! It takes more than a couple of gaol-birds to scare me. As a matter of fact, I be hopin' to catch one of them myself afore long.

25. TOM : Then why not do it first, and boast about it afterwards ?

26. JOE : That'll be quite as much sauce as I'll need from you, Tom. Just because you've won a couple of prizes at school you think you can give yourself airs. Well, let me tell you something. My edication may not be so fine as yours, but

I've been taking correspondence lessons from a school of detectives, and afore you knows, where you are I'll be top of the Force. See ?

27. ALEC : [up L.] Don't be a silly chump, Joe. You're too much of a gas-bag to make a decent detective.
28. JOE : [*angrily*]. Oh, am I ? That's as may be seen. I tell you I'm goin' to catch one, and may be both, of them convicts, and afore I go there's one or two questions I'd like to ask Mrs Parker. I've been hearin' things down in the village, and what I wants to know is, why should a lady like her want to live alone in a place like this ?

[*MRS PARKER is obviously startled*]

Why should she live as near to the prison as she possibly can, and never encourage any visitors to see her - unless it be you two boys, may be

29. TOM : [R of table.] Well ! Of all the confounded cheek -
- MRS PARKER : [*interrupting*] Wait a minute, Tom. [*to JOE*] Why are you asking these questions ?
30. JOE : [*more calmly*.] Because I've been hearin' things down in the village, that's why. Mind you, I be making no accusations against you, but when my aunt wanted you to take over one of her boarders last summer you wouldn't hear of it - not for any price she offered you. Well, that made people wonder why you always want to be so private like.
31. MRS PARKER : I'd thank the people of the village to mind their own business.
32. JOE : Yes, but that's not all. I've been doin' a little detective work round here myself this last half-hour. What be a lady like you doin' with a Bentley sports car hidden away in an old shed where no one be likely to notice it ?
33. MRS PARKER : [*icw thoroughly alarmed*] Why, how dare you spy on me like this ? You'll be accusing me of hiding the convicts next.
34. JOE : Tha's as may be. My uncle be the constable, and I want to join the Force myself. It's my business to find out things; that's why I be asking questions.
35. TOM : If you're not careful you'll find out something you don't want to know. I've a good mind to knock your block off for this.
36. MRS PARKER : Please, Tom, don't let's have any fighting. Joe has been reading too many *detective* stories. I expect that's the cause of the trouble. [*Crossing L to JOE*]. Now, listen, Joe. I want you to leave this house at once. Perhaps you don't realize that you insulted me just now, but I want you to go home before you cause any further unpleasantness. The sports car you saw this afternoon belongs

to my nephew, if that is any satisfaction to your curiosity. *[Opening door L]*
 Now, go away Joe- please. And for goodness' sake stop reading silly detective stories !

37. JOE :*[at door L]*, Very well, Mrs Parker. I'll be goin'. But mind, I warn you, I'm goin' to get to the bottom of this.
38. ALEC : *[coming down L]* You'll get to the bottom of the duck-pond if you don't clear out quickly. *[Exit JOE hurriedly]*,
[Crossing R. to table]. The cheek of that blighter !
39. MRS PARKER : *[coming down L.C. and sitting in armchair.]* I'm afraid he's going to make a great deal of trouble for me.
40. TOM *[sitting R. of table]*. He'd better not. You know, Mrs. Parker, you've been that good to us fellows that anyone who starts making trouble for you is going to get a nasty tap on the nose.
41. ALEC : *[sitting L of table]* Rather ! I say , though - fancy your having a Bentley sports car hidden away in that old shed ! Why have you never told us about it ?
42. MRS PARKER : Because you might have worried me to let you drive it. Come, now, hurry up and drink that tea. I want you to go, or your mother will be worried.
43. TOM : *[between sips of tea]*. No fear ! We're not going home yet. We don't like the idea of leaving you here alone.
44. MRS PARKER : *[in great agitation]*. But you must go. I tell you.
45. ALEC : I say, Mrs. Parker, what's up ? You seem awfully worried this afternoon.
46. MRS PARKER : I - Oh, heavens ! I only wish I could tell you.
47. ALEC : *[rising and crossing L.C.]*. Then there is something wrong ! *[Leaning over R. of armchair.]* Please tell us what it is.
48. MRS PARKER : Listen, boys. Ever since I took this cottage we three have been pals, haven't we ?
49. TOM : *[coming L of table]*. You bet we have !
50. MRS PARKER : Will you both promise me - on your honour - that you will never repeat what I am going to tell you ?
51. ALEC : Why, of course !
52. TOM : Certainly. We promise.

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words *I* expressions occur.]

3	<i>moor</i>	:	an area of open, uncultivated highland covered with grass
5	<i>tea-cosy</i>	:	a soft cover of cloth or wool put over a tea-pot to keep the tea hot.
6	<i>working gang</i>	:	a group of prisoners taken outside the prison to work as labourers at some project
	<i>What's up?</i>	:	What's wrong?
17	<i>prowling</i>	:	moving quietly and carefully to avoid being noticed
24	<i>gaol-bird</i>	:	(also spelt jail-bird) a person who is in prison, or has been in prison
26	<i>sauce</i>	:	rude behaviour
	<i>edication</i>	:	(country dialect) education
	<i>afore</i>	:	before
27	<i>gas-bag</i>	:	empty talker
35	<i>knock your block</i>	:	hit your head
38	<i>blighter</i>	:	(swear word) devil.

Questions for discussion

1. What is the exciting piece of news Alec and Tom bring Mrs. Parker? How does Mrs. Parker react to it? How do Alec and Tom feel about the way she reacts to their information?
2. Who is Joe? Why does he call at Mrs. Parker's cottage? What is it about his manners that Tom and Alec object to? Would you say he is educated or uneducated? Why would you say so?
3. What makes Joe suspect Mrs. Parker's activities? How does Mrs. Parker explain herself? Does Joe find her answers convincing? What does he threaten to do?

SECTION II

Pre-reading activity

Section I ends with a note of suspense. Mrs. Parker seems to have a secret she would like to share with Alec and Tom.

Can you guess what it is going to be about?

Now read Section II of the play-text to check if your guess is right.

The Text

53. MRS PARKER :Then listen. Somewhere in that prison a boy is suffering for another's crime. May be you heard of the Felton Forgery case? Well, Roger Felton is as innocent of that crime as either of you boys. Oh, I've no time to go into details now, but working in the same office with Roger was a scoundrel who pretended to be his friend. This man signed his employer's name to a cheque but he covered his tracks so cleverly that when the forgery was discovered suspicion fell upon Roger. The chain of circumstantial evidence was very strong indeed.

Roger was known to be in money difficulties and to have had unusual opportunities for passing a forged cheque. Oh, I can't bear to remember the disgrace and horror of it all ! And in the end Roger was convicted and sentenced to three years' penal servitude.

- 54. ALEC : You speak as though you knew this boy.
- 55. MRS. PARKER : *[slowly]* He is my son. My real name is Mrs. Felton.
- 56. TOM : What! You mean that- that your son-
- 57. MRS PARKER : *[rising].* Oh, my dear boys, I am trusting you as I have never trusted anyone else in my life. *[Crossing R]* I had but one object when I took this cottage, and that was to help Roger to escape. I have kept the car ready for use ever since I came here, and this afternoon I am praying that my boy may be one of the escaped convicts. If he is, he knows where I am, and he will come here. I have a suit of clothes ready for him and then-
- 58. TOM : Then he'll escape in the Bentley. *[With great enthusiasm.]* Oh, golly! What a thrill !
- 59. MRS PARKER : Yes, but now you must go. Go, please, and for pity's sake don t breathe a word of this to anyone.
- 60. ALEC : But, Mrs Parker - I mean Mrs Felton- can't we stay and help ? We'll do anything in our power if you'll only let us stay.
- 61. MRS PARKER : No, no, I can't let you do that ! You don't realize what it would mean *if* you were caught helping me in this. You must go quickly.

[Knock at door L]

- 62. ALEC : Too late. There's someone here now. *[Crossing L]* I'll open the door.
[Opens door L. Enter CONVICT, who staggers quickly into the room, then looks in alarm at the boys. MRS PARKER gasps, and clutches the table as though about to faint!]
- 63. TOM : *[catching hold of MRS PARKER to support her].* Quick ! Get some water !
- 64. MRS PARKER : *[recovering].* No, no ! I'm all right.
- 65. ALEC : *[to CONVICT].* Don't be afraid of us fellows. Your mother has told us your story, and for her sake we'll do everything in our power to help you to escape.
- 66. CONVICT : *[crossing R. to MRS PARKER and taking her hands]* Mother_ please- don't give up now. They're after me, and there's no time to lose if I'm to get

away. For pity's sake don't lose your nerve now. I must talk to you about our plans for afterwards.

67. MRS PARKER : *[weakly]* My boy- I'm sorry. The strain has been so terrible. *{Leading him off R.]* Come quickly-you must change at once. *[MRS PARKER AND CONVICT go off R.J*
68. ALEC .*[flinging himself in armchair]* Well, of all the extraordinary adventures ! Who on earth thought we should be mixed up in a thrill like this ?
69. TOM : *[leaning on L. side of table]* Fancy Mrs Parker having the nerve to plan all this, and then almost fainting at the last minute ! Ah, well, as my dad says, 'Where women are concerned the unexpected always happens.'
70. ALEC : That poor fellow will need a mighty lot of luck, even now, if he's to get away. All the roads are sure to be watched.
71. TOM : It must be a nerve-racking job to escape from prison. You never know from one moment to the next when someone is going to pounce on you and-
[Knock at door L. The boys look at each other in alarm.]
72. ALEC : *[rising].* It sounds as though someone has pounced.
73. TOM : Here- wail a bit. Don't go to the door. It may be a harder from the prison. Someone is almost sure to come here to make inquiries.
74. ALEC : All the same, I must open the door. . *[Crossing L],* Delay will only make things look suspicious. If it's a warder, we'll have to throw him off the scent somehow, for Mrs. Parker's sake.

[Opens door L. Enter JOE]

75. JOE : Where's Mrs. Parker ?
76. ALEC : She's very busy at the moment, trying to find a cure for boys that can't mind their own business.
77. JOE : *[advancing into the room]* I'll be taking no impudence from a kid like you, so just tell Mrs. Parker I want to see her.
78. TOM : You'll be getting a thick ear if you start worrying Mrs. Parker again.
79. JOE : Shall 1, now ? Well, let me tell you, you may find yourselves in a prison cell before tomorrow. 1 thought there be somethin' suspicious-like goin' on around here, so I just lay low, and watched. Well *[with an air of triumph],* I saw him come in ! So what have you to say about that ?
80. ALEC : *[trying to hide his alarm].* Really, Joe. I haven't the least idea what you're talking about.

81. JOE : Oh, haven't you ? Well, may be you will have when you find yourselves arrested for helpin' a convict to escape. I saw him dart in here, I tell you, an' I'm goin' to tell all I know.

[Enter MRS PARKER R.]

82. MRS. PARKER : Joe, what are you doing here ?
83. JOE : *[with great self-importance].* I just now saw a convict come in here. Are you goin' to hand him over, or must I go for help ?
84. MRS PARKER : You saw a convict come in here ? Why, Joe, have you taken leave of your senses ? If you saw anyone come in just now it must have been my nephew, who arrived from London this morning.
85. JOE .*[with sarcasm.]* Oh, him as owns the sports car, I suppose ! Well, that may be. but I haven't heard that convicts' clothes be fashionable just now in London.
86. MRS PARKER : Really, Joe, if this were not so utterly ridiculous I should be angry with you for insulting me. *[Calling off R.]* Frank, come here a moment, will you ?

[Enter CONVICT R. now wearing an ordinary suit]

87. MRS PARKER : *[to CONVICT].* This young fellow *[indicating JOE]* has an idea he saw a convict enter this house just now.
88. CONVICT '*[to JOE].* What's that ? A convict in the house ? No, no, young man. I'm quite sure you're making a mistake.
89. JOE : *[looking hard at CONVICT.]* Oh, no, I'm not ! You be the man I saw come in here a few minutes ago, and you were wearing a convict's suit then.
90. CONVICT : Look here, my lad, if you go about making accusations like that you'll get yourself into serious trouble.
91. JOE : Very well, then. If you be Mrs Parker's nephew, and not a convict, you won't have no convict's clothes hidden away, will you ?
92. CONVICT .*[with sarcasm].* That sounds very logical.
93. JOE : *(crossing R.)* Well, then, do you mind if I just look in the next room for a moment ?
94. CONVICT .*[quickly barring his way.]* Indeed I do.
95. JOE : Ah ! Of course you do. Your convict's clothes are in that room.
96. CONVICT :Now, look here, I've stood about enough of this nonsense. I think we'd all be well pleased if you'd kindly get out of the house.

97. JOE : *[crossing L.C.J.* All right ! I'm goin', but mind you, I have my bike outside. I'm goin' straight to my uncle, and I'm goin' to tell him all that I've seen here. He'll soon send out a description of that car of yours, and you'll find you won't get away so easily after all.]
98. TOM: *[coming down L.]* You rotten sneak, you're going to do no such thing!
99. JOE : Oh and who's goin' to stop me ?
100. TOM : *[taking off his coat.]* I am. You may be a bit bigger than I am, but I could lick you any day. Just put up your fists, and by the time I've done with you it will be a doctor that you'll need, not a constable.
- [JOE rushes savagely at TOM, who skilfully avoids his blows.]*
101. MRS PARKER : *[R.C.]* Tom- Joe-for goodness' sake stop fighting !
102. ALEC : Go on, Tom - sock him a beauty. Go on. Tom.
- (In the midst of the commotion loud knock at door L. The boys stop fighting and, there are a few moments of silent anxiety. Knock repeated.)*
103. JOE : *[holding handkerchief to his face, as though hurt].* Now, you'd better open that door, if yoirdare.
104. MRS PARKER : *[to CONVICT].* Quickly! You'll have to get out the back way.
- [Knock repeated, this time more peremptorily.]*
105. CONVICT : Too late! There's no time for that.

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words/expressions occur.]

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 53 | <i>penal servitude</i> | : | punishment of being sent to prison and forced to do hard physical labour |
| 62 | <i>stagger</i> | : | walk very unsteadily |
| 77 | <i>impudence</i> | : | disrespectful manners |
| 84 | <i>taken leave of your senses</i> | : | gone mad |
| 102 | <i>sock him a beauty</i> | : | (informal) hit him hard |

Questions for discussion

1. What is the secret Mrs. Parker shares with Alec and Tom ? What was her object when she took the cottage ? How does she propose to use the Bentley car ? What is the real surname of Mrs. Parker ?

2. Why is Mrs. Parker reluctant to let Alec and Tom stay with her ?
3. What does Mrs. Parker tell Joe about the ownership of the Bentley car ? How does she explain her relationship with the Convict ? Does Joe believe her ? Why do Tom and Joe fight ?

Section III

Pre-reading activity

Section II ends with repeated knocks on Mrs. Parker's door.

Whom do you expect to see at the opening of section III ?

What do you think will happen in the last part of the play ? Several things could happen.

- a) Joe could have the Convict arrested by his uncle, the village Constable
- b) Prison officials looking for the fugitive convict could find him in Mrs Parker's cottage and take him back to jail.
- c) The Convict could escape through the back door and drive away to safety. Which of these possibilities seems most likely to you ?

The Text

[JOE opens door. Enter WARDER. L. TOM L.C., and ALEC, up C. , look in alarm at each other, and at the WARDER. MRS. PARKER, R., clings to CONVICT'S arm, as though the strain is almost too much for her.]

106. WARDER : *[looking about the room suspiciously]* Excuse me - I don't want to interrupt the excitement- but we're looking for an escaped convict. Two men got away in the mist this afternoon. Fortunately one has already been caught, but we're still looking for the other man. Have you, by any chance, noticed any strangers about here ?
107. JOE : You need look no further. *[Pointing to CONVICT.]* There be the man you've been searching for.
108. WARDER -. *[crossing R.C.]* Ah, I thought I recognized him !
109. MRS PARKER -. *[clinging to CONVICT.]* No, no,! It's all a mistake, I tell you!
110. JOE : I saw him sneak in here about ten minutes ago, and if you want proof his prison clothes be in the next room. I was just goin' to fetch my uncle- the constable of the village, you know- and these boys tried to stop me. They both set about me; that's why we were fighting when you came in.
111. WARDER ; Indeed! This is a smart bit of work, my lad. Your uncle should be proud of you.
[Produces handcuffs and goes towards CONVICT.]
112. MRS PARKER -. *[almost in tears]* Oh, wait! Please- please don't take him.

113. CONVICT : *[trying to console her]* Hush! It's no use. The game's up now.
114. WARDER : *[handcuffing CONVICT]* I'll have to take you back at once. *[To MRS PARKER.]* I'm sorry, lady, but I'm afraid there's going to be trouble for you over this. Did you know that this man was a convict when he entered the house ?
115. JOE *.[promptly]* Of course she did. She had a sports car hidden in her shed ready to get him away; and what's more, she must have had those clothes waitin' for him.
116. TOM *.[to JOE]* You rotten sneak! Wait till I get you outside tonight!
117. WARDER *.[sharply to TOM]* That's enough of that, my lad. This boy is simply doing his duty. *[To JOE]* Just keep an eye on this fellow for a moment. I'm going to have a look for those prison clothes.
118. MRS PARKER :But please - won't you just let me explain ? You see- *[Exit WARDER R.. followed by MRS PARKER.]*
119. TOM *.[slowly approaching JOE]* I'm going to hit you so hard that you won't know what's happened until you wake up in hospital next week
120. JOE : *[nervously backing up L.]* Stop that! You daren't touch me. I be doin' my duty, and if you're not careful, you'll be gettin locked up yourself for this.
121. ALEC : *[up C.]* Listen, you rotter. You're not doing your duty. You're sending an innocent man back to prison. That's what you're doing.
[Re-enter WARDER with CONVICT'S clothes and a parcel, followed by MRS PARKER.]
122. WARDER : *[to JOE].* You were quite right, my lad. Here are the prison clothes, and I've found this parcel of provisions, which was evidently prepared for a long journey. *(To MRS PARKER.)* I'm sorry, lady, but this is going to be very serious for you. You were obviously helping this man to escape, and it's my duty to report the matter.
123. ALEC :Oh, I say, officer - must you do that ?
124. WARDER : I'm sorry, but duty's duty, you know.
125. MRS PARKER *.[wearily]* Oh, it doesn't matter ! If my boy goes back to prison they can do as they like with me.
[Sits L. of table, crying bitterly]
126. WARDER :*[to CONVICT]*, Come along, my man. We'll be getting back, and 1 may as well take these clothes with us. *[Crossing L. with CONVICT.]* Oh, and by the way, I don't think it would be a bad idea if 1 took you back in that sports

car the lady has outside. That car's an important piece of evidence, and I don't want anyone to tamper with it.

127. JOE: *[up L.C.]* I have my bike outside, so I think I'll ride up to the prison after you. May be I could see the Governor, and tell him just what happened this evening. Seein' as I want to get into the Force may be- well, what I mean is- it might help.
128. WARDER :*[at door L]* It's a good idea, but I don't think you'd better ride tonight. All the roads are guarded, and you might have trouble to pass. *[Thoughtfully]* Of course, I could give you the password, but that's against the regulations.
129. JOE :*[proudly.]* That be all right, officer. I already know the password. 'Regent' is the word; I believe.
130. WARDER .*[startled.]* Yes, that's right, but how did you know ?
131. JOE :Ah! You forget that my uncle be constable in the village. He told me the word, although it be against the regulations. You see, he knows it's safe with me. I'm not the one to blab any secrets about.
132. WARDER :No, my lad. I'm sure of that. You've done me a very good turn this evening, and some day I'm sure you'll be a great man in the Force yourself. Good night.
[WARDER and CONVICT go out L.]
133. JOE *[exultantly]*. Well, I told you I'd catch one of them convicts, didn't I ? You thought I hadn't the brains to be a detective- said I was too much of a 'gas-bag!' Well, I've shown you all tonight what I can do.
134. ALEC *[R.C.]* Oh, get out of here if you want to get out alive!
135. TOM .*[savagely.]* He's not going yet. I'm going to thrash the rotten sneak for this. *[Exit JOE L. TOM follows him to door.]*
136. MRS PARKER .*[Lowering handkerchief from her face]*, Tom, please don't fight again tonight . It's no use now. *[She continues to cry],*
137. ALEC :*[standing awkwardly above MRS PARKER'S chair, as though not knowing how to comfort her.]* Mrs Parker - I - I can't tell you how sorry we are about this.
138. TOM *[crossing R.C.]* There's nothing too bad for that sneak Joe after this.
[Sound of car off L.]
139. MRS PARKER : Listen. There goes the car.
140. ALEC : I could have howled like a kid when they took your boy away.

141. MRS PARKER : *[suddenly drying her eyes.]* Hush! Listen, boys - I've something to tell you. *[In a stage whisper.]* They've not taken my boy away.
142. ALEC : *[mystified]* But why ? What do you mean ?
143. MRS PARKER : *[now perfectly calm]* Just this. The convict you saw just now was not Roger.
144. TOM : Not Roger. You mean he was not your son ?
145. MRS PARKER : I've never seen him before in my life.
146. ALEC : But - he called you Mother ?
147. MRS PARKER : I know - after you told him that you were willing to help my son escape. He called me Mother in the hope that I should not tell the truth. And I - well, I thought of Roger, and I just hadn't the heart to turn against the poor fellow.
148. ALEC -*[incredulously].* Then - then your son didn't escape after all ? *[MRS PARKER rises, crosses L, and makes sure that they are not overheard.]*
149. MRS PARKER -*[coming down C.J.]* Yes, boys - Roger did escape. That's just what's making me so marvellously happy. You see, he was the warder who just now arrested his pal, and took him off to freedom in the Bentley.
150. TOM : *[in great excitement, coming down L. of MRS PARKER].* What ? You mean-
151. MRS PARKER : Hush! Not so loudly! Yes, Roger explained every thing to me while we had that minute together in the next room. He was hiding behind a boulder when a warder who had separated from the others came quite close to him. By springing on the man, and using a little wrestling trick he had learned in his schooldays. Roger managed to overcome the warder; and then he effected a change of clothes. He immediately made for this cottage, but he very soon realized the situation where Master Joe was concerned. *[Laughing]* It was a splendid idea of Roger's to commandeer the Bentley as evidence.
152. ALEC : *[coming down R.C.]* Then by this time they're well on the way to freedom. But, I say, won't it be awkward if they're stopped on the road ?
153. MRS PARKER : Why, that's just the cream of the joke ! Joe never blabs any of his uncle's secrets, but he told Roger the one thing he needed to know. He told him the password that will get him safely to freedom. Now, all I have to do is join him, and we're going to Australia to start all over again.
154. ALEC : *[gripping her hands]* Mrs. Parker, you're a brick. I can't tell you how glad I am about this.

155. MRS PARKER : And I can't tell you how grateful I am to you boys.
156. TOM : Why, I say, you're crying, aren't you ? There's nothing to cry about now.
157. MRS PARKER : *[wiping her eyes]*. I know, but I'm just crying for happiness.
158. TOM : *[down L.C.]* Well, I'm blowed ! But there, as my dad says, 'Where women are concerned , the unexpected always happens.'

Glossary

(The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words / expressions occur. |

- 158 *blow ed* ! (informal) an expression of great surprise

Questions for discussion /

1. What does the Warder collect from Mrs. Parker's house as pieces of evidence against the Convict ? How does he propose to use the car ? What purpose do they really serve ?
2. What is the password Joe tells the Warder ? How was Joe able to get it ? ". . . it's safe with me," he claims. Do you agree with him ?
3. What, as Mrs Parker says, is the 'cream of the Joke'? Who really are the convict and the Warder ? How does Joe unwittingly help them escape to safety ?
4. 'Where women are concerned, the unexpected always happens.' Who says this ? How many times has this statement been repealed in the play ? How is this statement relevant to the play ?

Composition

1. Who do you think is the central character of the play ? Why ?
2. Can you suggest another title for the play ? Justify your choice of the proposed alternative.
3. Sketch the character of Mrs. Parker.
4. Imagine that you are a news reporter working for a national English daily. Make a report on the escape of a hard-core criminal from the local prison and his subsequent arrest.

Unit XIX

THE HOUR OF TRUTH

Percival Wilde

SECTION 1

Pre-reading activity

1. There is a saying : 'Honesty is its own reward.' 'Honesty is the lack of opportunity,' goes another saying. What would you say to that ?
2. What does the title 'The Hour of Truth' suggest to you ? Can you guess from the title what the play may be about ?

Focusing questions

As you read the play, ask yourself :

What is the true test of one's honesty and truthfulness ? How would you tell the truly honest from the seemingly honest persons ?

Introducing the Writer

Percival Wilde (b. 1887) is a popular American writer of short stories, mystery novels and plays. The 'Hour of Truth', a powerful one-act play on the corrupting influence of money on people, is taken from a volume of his short plays titled *A Question of Morality and Other Plays*.

The Text

CHARACTERS

ROBERT BALDWIN

MARTHA, *his wife*

JOHN, *his son*

EVIE, *his daughter*

MR MARSHALL

1. *[It is a rather hot and sultry Sunday afternoon, and the sun overhead and the baked clay under foot are merciless. In the distance, lowering clouds give promise of coming relief And at the parlour window of a trim little cottage the BALDWIN family is anxiously awaiting the return of its head.*

2. JOHN, the son, an average young man of twenty-seven, is smoking a pipe as philosophically as if this day were no whit more momentous than any other. But his mother has made little progress in the last half-hour; and EVIE, his sister, takes no pains to conceal her nervousness.

3. There is a tense pause. It seems as if none of them likes to break the silence. For the tenth time in ten minutes, EVIE goes to the window and looks out along the sultry road.]

4. MARTHA : It's time he was home.

5. EVIE : Yes, Mother.

6. MARTHA : I do hope he hasn't forgotten his umbrella : he has such a habit of leaving it behind him

7. EVIE : Yes, Mother.

8. MARTHA; It might rain. Don't you think so, Evie ? [Without waiting for an answer she goes to the window and looks out anxiously.] The sky is so dark. [She starts.] There was a flash of lightning ! [JOHN rises slowly, moves to a centre table, and knocks the ashes out of his pipe. His mother turns to him.] John, run into your father's room and see that the windows are closed. There's a good boy.

9. JOHN : Right- • [He goes]

10. EVIE [after a pause] : Mother. [There is no answer]. Mother ! [MRS BALDWIN turns slowly.] What does Mr Gresham want with him ? Has he done anything wrong ?

11. MARTHA [proudly] Your father ? No, Evie.

12. EVIE : Then why did Mr Gresham send for him ?

13. MARTHA : He wanted to talk to him.

14. EVIE : What about ? Mr Gresham has been arrested; they're going to try him tomorrow. What can he want with Father ?

15. MARTHA : Your father will have to give evidence.

16. EVIE : But he's going to give evidence *against* Mr Gresham. Why should Mr Gresham want to see him ?

17. MARTHA : I don't know, Evie. You know, your father doesn't say much about his business affairs. [She pauses.] I didn't know there was anything wrong with the bank until I saw it in the papers. Your father wouldn't tell me to draw my money out- he thought it wasn't loyal to Mr. Gresham. [EVIE nods.] I did it of my own accord - against his wishes- when I suspected...

18. EVIE [*after a pause*] : Do you think that Father had anything to do with-with
 [She does not like to say z/.]
19. MARTHA : With the wrecking of the bank ? You know him better than that. Evie.
20. EVIE : But did he know what was going on ? You know what the papers arc saying-
21. MARTHA : They haven't been fair to him, Evie.
22. EVIE : Perhaps not. But they said he must have been a fool not to know. They said that only he could have known- he and Mr. Gresham. Why didn't he stop it
 9
23. MARTHA : He was acting under Mr Gresham's orders.
24. EVIE [*contemptuously*] : Mr Gresham's orders ! Did he have to follow them ?
25. MARTHA [*after a pause*] : Evie. I don't believe your father ever did a wrong thing in his life - not if he knew it was wrong. He found out by accident - found out what Mr Gresham was doing.
26. EVIE : How do you know that ?
27. MARTHA : I don't know it. I suspect it - something he said [*Eagerly*], You see, Evie, he *can't* have done anything wrong. They haven't indicted him.
28. EVIE [*slowly*] : No. They didn't indict him - because they want him to testify against Mr Gresham. That's little consolation, Mother.

[JOHN *re-enters*]

29. MARTHA [*seizing the relief*] : Were the windows open, John ?
30. JOHN [*shortly*] : I've closed them. [*He crosses to the table, takes up his pipe, and refills it.*] Look here, Mother, what does Gresham want with Father ?
31. EVIE [*nodding*] : I've just been asking that.
32. MARTHA : I don't know. John.
33. JOHN : Didn't you ask him ? [As she does not answer] Well ?
34. MARTHA : Yes, I asked him. He didn't say, John. [*Anxiously*] I don't think he knew himself.
35. JOHN [*after an instant's thought*] : I was talking to the assistant cashier yesterday.
36. EVIE : Donovan ?

37. JOHN : Yes, Donovan. I saw him up at the Athletic Club. He said that nobody had any idea that there was anything wrong until the crash came. Donovan had been there eight years. He thought he was taken care of for the rest of his life. He had gotten married on the strength of it. And then, one morning, there was a sign up on the door. It was like a bolt out of a clear sky.
38. EVIE: And Father ?
39. JOHN : He says Father must have known. He'll swear nobody else did. You see, Father was closer to Gresham than any one else. That puts him in a nice position, doesn't it ?
40. MARTHA : What do you mean. John ?
41. JOHN : Father the only witness against John Gresham - and me named after him ! John Gresham Baldwin, at your service !
42. MARTHA : Your father will do his duty, John, no matter what comes of it.
43. JOHN [*shortly*] : I know it. And I'm not sure but what it's right. [*They look at him inquiringly.*] There's John Gresham grown rich in twenty years, and the governor pegging along as his secretary at five thousand a year !
44. MARTHA : Your father never complained.
45. JOHN : No; that's just the pity of it. He didn't complain. Well, he'll have his chance tomorrow. He'll go in the box, and when he's through, they'll put John Gresham where he won't be able to hurt anybody for a while. Wasn't satisfied with underpaying his employees; had to rob his depositors ! Serves him jolly well right !
46. MARTHA [*rather timidly*] : I don't think your father would like you to talk that way, John.
47. JOHN [*shrugs his shoulders speaks contemptuously*] : Humph !
48. MARTHA: Your father has nothing against Mr Gresham. He will tell the truth - nothing but the truth.
49. JOHN : Did you think I expected him to lie ? Not Father ! He'll tell the truth , just the truth. It'll be plenty !
50. EVIE [*at the window*] : There's Father now !
- [There is the click of a latchkey outside. EVIE makes for the door.]*
51. MARTHA : Evie ! You stay here; let me talk to him first.
- [MARTHA hurries out. JOHN and EVIE look at each other.]*

52. JOHN : Wonder what Gresham had to say to him ? [EVIE shrugs her shoulders.
He turns away to the window], It's started to rain.

53. EVIE: Yes.

[There is a pause. Suddenly JOHN crosses to the door and flings it open.]

Glossary

[The numbers indicate the paragraphs in which the words / expressions occur.]

1. <i>sultry'</i>	: hot and oppressive
	<i>momentous</i> : very important
19 <i>wrecking</i>	: ruin, collapse
27 <i>indicted</i>	: accused (officially or legally)
37 <i>a bolt out of the clear sky</i>	: a quite unexpected danger
43 <i>governor</i>	: (informal) father
	<i>pegging along</i> : doing a work determinedly, but without much success

Questions for discussion

1. How is the opening situation of the play introduced in the stage direction ? What mood or moods does it convey to you ?
2. Who are the Baldwin family waiting for, as the play begins ? What traits of the person's character are they talking about ?
3. What do the newspapers think about Robert Baldwin's role in the fall of Gresham's bank ? How does Martha defend her husband ?
4. How does John feel about his father naming him after John Gresham ? What is his attitude towards his father ?

SECTION II

Pre-reading activity

In Section 1, you have been introduced to Robert Baldwin in his absence.

What do you expect to see of him in Section 2 ?

The Text

54. JOHN : Hullo, Dad !
55. BALDWIN [*coming in, followed by MARTHA*] : How are you, my boy ? [*He shakes hands with JOHN.*]
Evie ! [*He kisses her.*]
56. MARTHA : You are sure your shoes aren't wet, Robert ?

57. BALDWIN [*shaking his head*] : I took the car. Not a drop on me. See ?
[He passes his hands over his sleeves. He goes to a chair; sits. There is an awkward pause.] I
58. JOHN : Well, Dad ? Don't you think it's about time you told us something ?
59. BALDWIN : Told you something ? I don't understand, John.
60. JOHN : People have been talking about you - saying things
61. BALDWIN : What kind of things, John ?
62. JOHN : You can imagine: rotten things. And I couldn't contradict them.
63. BALDWIN : Why not, John ?
64. JOHN : Because I didn't know.
65. BALDWIN : Did you *have* to know ? Wasn't it enough that you knew your father ?
66. JOHN [*after a pause*] : I beg your pardon, sir.
67. BALDWIN : It was two days before the smash-up that I found out what Gresham was doing. *[He pauses. They are listening intently.]* I told him he would have to make good. He said he couldn't
68. EVIE fa.v *he does not continue*] : And what happened ?
69. BALDWIN : I told hiip h^would have to do the best he could- and the first step would be to close the bank. He didn't want to do that.
70. MARTHA : But he did it.
71. BALDWIN : I made him do it. He was angry - very angry, but I had the whip hand.
72. EVIE : The papers didn't mention that.
73. BALDWIN : I didn't think it was necessary to tell them.
74. MARTHA : But you let your name rest under a cloud meanwhile.
75. BALDWIN : It will be cleared tomorrow, won't it ? *[He pauses.]* Today Gresham sent for me. The trial begins in twenty-four hours. I'm the only witness against him. He asked- you can guess what
76. JOHN [*indignantly*] : He wanted you to lie to save his skin, eh ? Wanted you to perjure yourself ?
77. BALDWIN : That wouldn't be necessary, John. He just wanted me to have an attack of poor memory. If I tell all I knew, John Gresham will go to gaol - no power on earth can save him from it. But he wants me to forget a little just the

- essential things. When they question me I can answer, I don't remember. They can't prove I *do* remember. And there you are.
78. JOHN : It would be a lie, Dad !
79. BALDWIN (*smiling*) . Of course. But it's done every day. And they couldn't touch *me* - any more than they could convict him.
80. MARTHA [*quivering with indignation*]: How dared he - how dared he ask such a thing -
81. EVIE : What did you say, Father ?
82. BALDWIN [*smiling and raising his eyes to JOHN'S*]. Well, son, what would you have said ?
83. JOHN: I'd have told him to go to the devil !
84. BALDWIN [*nodding*] : I did.
85. JOHN: Bully for you, Dad !
86. MARTHA [*half to herself*] : I knew ! I knew !
87. BALDWIN : I didn't use your words, John. He's too old a friend of mine for that. But I didn't mince matters any. He understood what I meant.
88. EVIE : And what did he say then ?
89. BALDWIN : There wasn't much to say. You see, he wasn't surprised. He's known me for thirty-five years, and, well [*with simple pride*] anybody who's known me for thirty-five years doesn't expect me to haggle with my conscience. If it had been anybody else than John Gresham I would have struck him across the face. But John Gresham and I were boys together. We worked side by side. And I've been in his employ ever since he started in for himself. He is desperate - he doesn't know what he is doing - or he wouldn't have offered me money.
90. JOHN [*furious*] : Offered you money , Dad ?
91. BALDWIN :He'd put it aside, ready for the emergency. If they don't convict him, he'll hand it over to me. The law can't stop him. But if I live until tomorrow night, they *will* convict him! [*He sighs.*] God knows I want no share in bringing about his punishment.... [*He breaks off. EVIE pats his hand silently.*] Young man and old man, I've worked with him or for him the best part of my life. I'm loyal to him- I've always been loyal to him- but when John Gresham ceases to be an honest man, John Gresham and I part company!
92. MARTHA [*weeping softly*] : Robert! Robert!
93. BALDWIN : I've got only a few years to live, but I'll live those as I've lived the rest of my life. I'll go to my grave clean! [*He rises presently, goes to the window, and looks out.*] The rain's stopped, hasn't it ?

94. EVIE [*following him and taking his hand*] : Yes. Father.
 95. BALDWIN : It'll be a fine day tomorrow.

[There is a pause.]

96. JOHN : Dad.
 97. BALDWIN : Yes ?
 98. JOHN : What did Gresham offer you ?
 99. BALDWIN [*simply*] : A hundred thousand dollars.
 100. EVIE : What ?
 101. MARTHA : Robert !
 102. BALDWIN : He put it aside for me without anybody knowing it. It's out of his private fortune, he says. It's not the depositors' money- as if that made any difference.
 103. EVIE [*as if hypnotized*] : He offered you a hundred thousand dollars ?
 104. BALDWIN [*smiling at her amazement*] : I could have had it for the one word 'Yes'- or even for nodding my head- or a look of the eyes.
 105. JOHN : How - how do you know he meant it ?
 106. BALDWIN : His word is good.
 107. JOHN : Even now ?
 108. BALDWIN : He never lied to me, John. [*He pauses.*] I suppose my eyes must have shown something I didn't feel. He noticed it. He unlocked a drawer and *showed* me the hundred thousand.
 109. JOHN : In cash ?
 110. BALDWIN : In thousand dollar bills. They were genuine; I examined them.
 111. EVIE [*slowly*] : And for that he wants you to say, 'I don't remember,'
 112. BALDWIN [*smiling*] : Just that; three words only.
 113. JOHN : But you won't ?
 114. BALDWIN [*shaking his head*] : Those three words would choke me if I tried to speak them. For some other man, perhaps, it would be easy. But for me ? All of my past would rise up and strike me in the face. It would mean to the world that for years I had been living a lie; that I was not the honourable man I thought I was. When John Gresham offered me money I was angry. But when I rejected it, and he showed no surprise, then I was pleased. It was a compliment, don't you think so ?

115. JOHN [*slowly*] : Rather an expensive compliment.
116. BALDWIN : Eh ?
117. JOHN : A compliment which cost you a hundred thousand dollars.
118. BALDWIN : A compliment which was *worth* a hundred thousand dollars. I've never had that much money to spend in my life. John, but if I had I couldn't imagine a finer way to spend it.
119. JOHN [*slowly*] : I suppose so.
120. MARTHA [*after a pause*] : Will the depositors lose much, Robert ?
121. BALDWIN [*emphatically*] : The depositors will not lose a cent.
122. EVIE [*surprised*] : But the papers said -
123. BALDWIN [*interrupting*] : They had to print something; they guessed. *I know. I tell you.*
124. MARTHA : But you never said so before.
125. BALDWIN : I left that for Gresham. It will come out tomorrow.
126. JOHN : Why tomorrow ? Why didn't you say so before ? The papers asked you often enough.
127. BALDWIN : Nothing forced me to answer, John.
128. JOHN : That wasn't your real reason, was it, Dad ? You knew the papers would keep right on calling you names [BALDWIN *does not answer JOHN'S face lights up with sudden understanding*]. You wanted to let Gresham announce it himself : because it will be something in his favour ! Eh ?
129. BALDWIN : YesWe were able to save something from the wreck, Gresham and I. It was more than 1 had expected - almost twice as much - and with what Gresham has it will be enough.
130. EVIE : Even without the hundred thousand ?
- [BALDWIN *does not answer*]
131. JOHN [*insistently*] : Without the money that Gresham had put away for you ?
132. BALDWIN : Yes. I didn't know there *was* the hundred thousand until today. Gresham didn't tell me. We reckoned without it.
133. EVIE : Oh !
134. JOHN : And you made both ends meet ?

135. BALDWIN : Quite easily [*He smiles*]. Mr Marshall is running the reorganization : Mr Marshall of the Third National. He hasn't the least idea that it's going to turn out so well.

[*There is a pause.*]

Glossary

[The numbers indicate the paragraphs in which the words/ expressions occur.]

67	<i>smash-up</i>	crash
	<i>make good</i>	repair the damage
71	<i>whip hand</i>	control
74	<i>under a cloud</i>	under a suspicion
76	<i>perjure</i>	lie under oath
85	<i>Bully for you, Dad !</i>	John does not think that what his father has done is a great achievement or something very exciting.
87	<i>mincing matter</i>	cover up an unpleasant statement in delicate or nice words
89	<i>haggle</i>	argue, bargai m
135	<i>the Third National</i>	Third National Bank supervising and controlling private banks in America

Questions for discussion

1. What does Baldwin say about why Gresham had sent for him ? What did Gresham propose to him ? How did Baldwin respond to his proposal ?
2. What light does Baldwin throw on his relationship with Gresham ? Would you say he sounds emotional ? What does he say he would do if required to choose between friendship and personal integrity ?
3. Do you find a turning point in the attitude of the rest of the Baldwins toward Robert Baldwin's honesty. What is it due to ? What does it reveal about ordinary human nature ? In what way is Robert extra-ordinary ?
4. How did Gresham react to Robert's rejection of his offer of bribe to help him escape punishment ? Why does Robert consider Gresham's reaction a compliment ?

Section III

Pre-reading activity

In Section I, we gather from the discussion among Robert Baldwin's wife, son and daughter about his unflinching commitment to honesty which they are all so proud of.

In Section II, Baldwin gives a good account of himself in rejecting Gresham's offer of a huge amount of money as bribe in return for a safe lie in his favour.

So what do you think is going to happen next ?

Do you think :

- a) the members of Baldwin's family will support his action ?
- b) Baldwin will succumb to temptation and accept the bribe, on second thought ?
- c) Baldwin will be rewarded for his honesty ?

Now read on and see which of your guesses is right.

The Text

136. JOHN : They're going to punish Gresham, aren't they ?
137. BALDWIN : I'm afraid so.
138. JOHN : What for?
139. BALDWIN : Misappropriating the funds of the -
140. JOHN -./*[interrupting]* : Oh, I know that. But what *crime* has he committed ?
141. BALDWIN : That's a crime, John.
142. EVIE : But if nobody loses anything by it ?
143. BALDWIN : It's a crime nevertheless.
144. JOHN : And they're going to *punish* him for it !
145. BALDWIN : They can't let him go, John. He's too conspicuous.
146. JOHN : Do you think that's right, Dad ?
147. BALDWIN : *My* opinion doesn't matter, John.
148. JOHN : But what do you think ?
149. BALDWIN ; I think- I think that I'm sorry for John Gresham- terribly sorry.
150. JOHN *[slowly]* : It's nothing but a technicality, Dad. Nobody loses a cent. It's rather hard on Gresham. I say.
151. BALDWIN *[after a pause]* : Yes, John.
152. EVIE *[timidly]* : Would it be such an awful thing, Father, if you let him off ?
153. BALDWIN *[smiling]* : I wish I could, Evie. But I'm not the Judge.
154. EVIE : No, but
155. BALDWIN : But what ?
156. EVIE : You're the only witness against him.
157. BALDWIN *[nonplussed]* : Evie !
158. JOHN : She's right, Dad !
159. BALDWIN : You too, John ?
160. JOHN : It's going to be a nasty mess if they put John Gresham in gaol- with your own son named after him ! It's going to be pleasant for *me!* John Gresham Baldwin !

161. MARTHA [*after a pause*] : Robert, I'm not sure I understand what you said before. What did Mr. Gresham want you to do for him ?
162. BALDWIN : Get him off tomorrow.
163. MARTHA : You could do that ?
164. BALDWIN : Yes.
165. MARTHA : How ?
166. BALDWIN : By answering, 'I don't remember' when they ask me dangerous questions.
167. MARTHA : Oh! And you *do* remember?
168. BALDWIN : Yes. Nearly everything.
169. JOHN : No matter what they ask you?
170. BALDWIN : I can always refresh my memory. You see, I have notes.
171. JOHN : But without those notes you wouldn't remember ?
172. BALDWIN : What do you mean, John ?
173. JOHN : [*without answering*] : As a matter of fact, you will have to rely on your notes nearly altogether, won't you ?
174. BALDWIN : Everybody else does the same thing.
175. JOHN : Then it won't be far from the truth if you say, 'I don't remember ?'
176. MARTHA : I don't see that Mr Gresham is asking so much of you.
177. BALDWIN : Martha !
178. MARTHA : Robert, I'm as honourable as you are-
179. BALDWIN : That goes without saying, Martha.
180. MARTHA : It doesn't seem right to me to send an old friend to gaol. [*As she speaks she holds up her hand.*] Now don't interrupt me ! I've been thinking. The day John was christened when Mr. Gresham stood sponsor for him: how proud we were ! And when we came home from the church you said- do you remember what you said, Robert ?
181. BALDWIN : No. What was it ?
182. MARTHA : You said, 'Martha, may our son always live up to the name which we have given him !' Do you remember that ?
183. BALDWIN : Yes- dimly.

184. JOHN :Ha! Only *dimly*, Dad ?
185. BALDWIN : What do you mean, John ?
186. MARTHA [*giving JOHN no opportunity to answer*] : It would be sad- very sad- if the name of John Gresham, our son's name, should come to grief through you, Robert.
187. BALDWIN [*after a pause*] : Martha, are you telling me to accept the bribe money that John Gresham offered me ?
188. EVIE : Why do you call it bribe money, Father ?
189. BALDWIN [*bitterly*] : Why indeed ? Gresham had a prettier name for it. He said that he had underpaid me all these years. You know, I was getting only five thousand a year when the crash came—
190. JOHN[*impatiently*] : Yes, yes ?
191. BALDWIN : He said a hundred thousand represented the difference between what he had paid me and what I had actually been worth to him.
192. MARTHA :That's no less than true, Robert. You've worked for him very faithfully.
193. BALDWIN : He said that if he had paid me what he should have, I would have put by more than a hundred thousand by now.
194. JOHN : That's so, isn't it, Dad ?
195. BALDWIN : Who knows ? I never asked him to raise my salary. When he raised it, it was of his own accord. [*There was a pause. He looks around.*] Well, what do you think of it, Evie ?
196. EVIE [*hesitantly*] : If you go on the stand tomorrow....
197. BALDWIN : Yes ?
198. EVIE : Did they put John Gresham in gaol, what will people say ?
199. BALDWIN :They will say I have done my duty, Evie; no more and no less.
200. EVIE : *Will* they ?
201. BALDWIN : Why, what should they say ?
202. EVIE :/ don't think so, of course, but other people might say that you had turned traitor to your best friend.
203. BALDWIN : You don't mean that, Evie ?
204. EVIE :When they find out that they haven't lost any money- when John Gresham tells them that he will pay back every cent- then they won't *want* him to go to gaol. They'll feel sorry for him.

205. BALDWIN : Yes, I believe that. I hope so.
206. JOHN : And they won't feel too kindly disposed toward the man who helps put him in gaol.
207. MARTHA : They'll say you went back on an old friend, Robert.
208. JOHN : When you pull out your notes in court, to be *sure* of sending him to gaol/...

[He breaks off with a snort.]

209. EVIE : And Mr Gresham hasn't done anything really wrong.
210. JOHN : It's a technicality, that's what it is. Nobody loses a cent. Nobody wants to see him punished.
211. EVIE : Except you, Father.
212. JOHN : Yes. And you're willing to jail the man after whom you named your son !
213. MARTHA [*after a pause*] : I believe in being merciful, Robert.
214. BALDWIN : Merciful ?
215. MARTHA : Mr Gresham has always been very good to you. / *There is another pause. Curiously enough, they do not seem to be able to meet each other's eyes.* Ah, well ! What are you going to do now, Robert ?
216. BALDWIN : What do you mean ?
217. MARTHA : You have been out of work since the bank closed.
218. BALDWIN : [*shrugging his shoulders*] : Oh, I'll find a position.
219. MARTHA [*shaking her head*] : At your age ?
220. BALDWIN : It's the *man* that counts.
221. 'MARTHA : Yes. You said that a month ago.
222. JOHN : I heard from Donovan-
223. BALDWIN [*quickly*] : What did you hear ?
224. JOHN : He's gone with the Third National, you know.
225. BALDWIN : Yes : he's helping with the reorganization.
226. JOHN : They wouldn't take stalics on there-
227. BALDWIN : Their staff was full. They couldn't very well offer me a position as a clerk.

228. JOHN : That was what they told *you*.
229. BALDWIN : Wasn't it true ?
230. JOHN [*shakes his head*] : Mr. Marshall said he wouldn't employ a man who was just as guilty as John Gresham.
231. BALDWIN : But I'm not !
232. JOHN : Who knows it ?
233. BALDWIN : Everybody will tomorrow !
234. JOHN : Will they believe you ? Or will they think you're trying to save your own skin ?
235. BALDWIN : I found out only a day before the smash.
236. JOHN : Who will believe that ?
237. BALDWIN : They will *have* to !
238. JOHN : How will you make them ? I'm afraid you'll find that against you wherever you go. Dad. Your testifying against John Gresham won't make things any better. If you ever get another job, it will be with *him* ! [*This is a startling idea to BALDWIN , who shows his surprise.*] If Gresham doesn't go to gaol, he'll start in business again, won't he ? And he can't offer you anything less than a partnership.
239. BALDWIN : A partnership ?
240. JOHN [*with meaning.*] : With the hundred thousand capital you could put in the business, Dad.
241. BALDWIN : John !
242. JOHN : Of course, the capital doesn't matter. He'll owe you quite a debt of gratitude besides.

[There is a pause.]

243. MARTHA : A hundred thousand would mean a great deal to us, Robert. If you don't find a position soon John will have to support us.
244. JOHN : On thirty dollars a week, Dad
245. EVIE : That won't go very far.
246. MARTHA : It's not fair to John.
247. JOHN [*angrily*] : Oh, don't bother about *me*.

[EVIE begins to weep.]

248. JOHN : Look here, Dad, You've said nothing to the papers. If you say nothing more tomorrow, what does it amount to but sticking to your friend ? It's the square thing to do- he'd do as much for you.
249. BALDWIN [*looks appealingly from one face to another. They are averted. Then.*] You - you want me to take this money ? [*There is no answer.*] Say 'Yes', one of you. [*Still no answer*] Or, 'No'. [*A long pause. Finally.*] I couldn't go into partnership with Gresham.
250. MARTHA [*promptly*] : Why not ?
251. BALDWIN : People wouldn't trust him.
252. JOHN : Then you could go into business with some one else, Dad. A hundred thousand is a lot of money.
253. BALDWIN [*walks to the window. Looks out.*] God knows I never thought this day would come ! I know - I know no matter how you try to excuse it- I know that if I take this money I do a dishonourable thing. And you know it ! You, and you, and you ! All of you ! Come, admit it !
254. JOHN [*resolutely*] : Nobody'll ever hear of it.
255. BALDWIN : But among ourselves, John ! Whatever we are to the world, let us be honest with each other, the four of us ! Well ? [*His glance travels from JOHN to EVIE, whose head is bowed : from her to his wife, who is apparently busy with her knitting. He raises MARTHA'S head; looks into the eyes. He shudders.*] Shams ! Liars ! Hypocrites ! Thieves ! And I no better than any of you ! We have seen our souls naked, and they stink to Almighty Heaven ! Well, why don't you answer me ?
256. MARTHA [*feebley*] : It's not wrong, Robert.
257. BALDWIN : It's not right.
258. JOHN [*facing him steadily*] : A hundred thousand is a lot of money, Dad.
259. BALDWIN [*nodding slowly*] : You can look into my eyes *now*, my son, can't you ?
260. JOHN [*without moving*] : Dad, why did you refuse ? Wasn't it because you were afraid of what *we'd* say ?
261. BALDWIN [*after a long pause*] : Yes, John.
262. JOHN : Well, nobody will ever know it.
263. BALDWIN : Except the four of us.

264. JOHN : Yes - Father. *[Abruptly they separate. EVIE weeps in silence. MARTHA, being less emotional, blows her nose noisily, and fumbles with her knitting. JOHN, having nothing better to do, scowls out of the window, and BALDWIN, near the fireplace, clenches and unclenches his hands.]* Some one's coming.
265. MARTHA *[raising her head]* : Who is it ?
266. JOHN : I can see. *[With sudden apprehension]* It looks like Mr. Marshall.
267. BALDWIN : Mr Marshall ? *[The door-bell rings. He goes to the window commanding a view of the doorway.]* It is Mr Marshall !
268. MARTHA : The President of the Third National ?
269. BALDWIN : Yes. What does he want here ?
270. EVIE : Shall I show him in, Father ?
271. BALDWIN : Yes, yes - by all means.

[EVIE goes out]

272. MARTHA *[crossing to him quickly]* : Robert ! Be careful of what you say; you're to go on the stand tomorrow.
273. BALDWIN *[nervously]* : Yes, yes. I'll look out.
274. MARTHA : Let him talk. Say nothing at all.
- [EVIE re-enters, opening the door for Mr MARSHALL.]*
275. MR MARSHALL *[coming into the room very buoyantly]*: Well, well, spending the afternoon indoors ? How are you, Mrs Baldwin ? *[He shakes hands cordially.]* And you, Baldwin ?
276. MARTHA : We were just going out. Come, Evie.
277. MR MARSHALL : Oh, you needn't go on my account. You can hear what I have to say. *[He turns to the head of the family.]* Baldwin, if you feel like coming around to the Third National some time this week, you'll find a position waiting for you.
278. BALDWIN *[thunderstruck]*: Do you mean that, Mr Marshall ?
279. MARSHALL *[smiling]*: I wouldn't say it if I didn't *[He continues more seriously.]* I was in to see Gresham this afternoon. He told me about the offer he had made you. But he knew that no amount of money would make you do something you thought wrong. Baldwin, he paid you the supreme compliment; rather than go to trial with you to testify against him, he confessed.

280. BALDWIN [*sinking into a chair*]. Confessed !
281. MARSHALL : Told the whole story. [*He turns to MARTHA*] I can only say to you what every man will be saying tomorrow: how highly I honour and respect your husband ! How sincerely -
282. MARTHA [*seizing his hand piteously*] Please ! Please ! Can't you see he's crying ?
The Curtain falls slowly.

Glossary

[The numbers refer to the paragraphs in which the words / expressions occur.]

157 <i>nonplussed</i>	puzzled
180 <i>Christened</i>	named
196 <i>stand</i>	witness-box in a court room
264 <i>scowls</i>	frowns
275 <i>bouyantly</i>	very cheerfully

Questions for discussion

1. Do you notice any change in John's attitude towards corruption in general, and Gresham in particular ? What is it due to ? What are his arguments in Gresham's favour ?
 ↗ What are the present views of Martha and Evie on the Gresham case ? Would you call it a reversal in their earlier attitudes to Baldwin's honesty ? How ?
2. How does Baldwin react on being impelled by the members of his family to accept the bribe offered by Gresham ? (Paragraph-255)
3. 4. How is Baldwin rewarded at the end for his unfailing honesty ? In what way does Gresham pay him his 'supreme compliment'? (Paragraph-279) What makes Baldwin cry at the end ?

Composition

1. What do you think is the hour of truth ? How does Robert Baldwin stand the hour ?
 ↗ Contrast the early and later attitudes of the Baldwin family towards corruption. What brings about the shift in their attitudes ?
2. Imagine that you are Robert Baldwin facing a group of press reporters who are interviewing you on your relationship with Gresham and your role in the collapse of his bank.
 ↗ Can you write up the interview as it may have taken place ?

APPENDIX I

A SAMPLE QUESTION PAPER IN ALTERNATIVE ENGLISH (for H.S. Examination, 2005)

Full Marks -100

Time Allowed : 3 hours

Answer Questions 1 through 12.

The figures in the right margin indicate marks.

QI. Read the passage carefully and answer the questions following it:

THE LURE OF LEARNING

The parents of my former classmates can't figure out what went wrong. They had sent in bright curious children and gotten back, nine years later, helpless adolescents. Some might say that those of us who freaked out would have freaked out anywhere, but when you see the same bizarre

5 behaviour pattern in succeeding graduating classes, you can draw certain terrifying conclusions.

Now I see my twelve-year-old brother (who is in a traditional school) doing college-level math and I know that he knows more about many other things besides math than I do. And I also see traditional education working in the case of my fifteen-year-old brother (who was summarily yanked from Sand and Sea, by my reformed mother, when he was eight so that he wouldn't become like me). Now, after seven years of real education, he is making impressive film documentaries for a project on the Bicentennial.

15 A better learning experience than playing Pilgrim for four and a half months and Indian for four and a half months, which is how I imagine they spent this year at Sand and Sea.

And now I've come to see that the real job of school is to entice the student into the web of knowledge and then, if he's not enticed, to drag him in. I wish I had been.

a) Suggest an alternative title to the passage. [2]

b) Answer the following as briefly as you can : [2 X 3]

- i) What does the phrase 'bizarre behaviour pattern' in line 5 refer to ?
- ii) Why does the narrator refer to his mother as 'my reformed mother' in line 11 ?
- iii) "I wish I had been." What does this sentence in the last paragraph mean ?

c) Say whether the following statements are true or false with reference to the passage. Write each sentence and mark on its right (T) for true and (F) for false : [1 X 2]

- i) The writer says that her three brothers had better education than she had.
- ii) For the writer as well as the parents of her former classmates, it is a mystery why the education at Sand and Sea is a failure.

Q2. Read the passage and answer the questions that follow :

A wide range of impacts are predicted by scientists. These range from sea level rise to destruction of ecological systems. Every aspect of society will be affected.

Global warming will bring about major changes in water distribution and have impact on water resources. The flow of water in streams located in high latitudes and south-east Asia will increase while it will decrease in Central Asia, Southern Africa, Australia and the Mediterranean. Most glaciers will shrink while smaller glaciers will disappear. Water stress in lower latitudes will increase. Higher evaporation due to higher temperatures will lead to greater demand for water for irrigation purposes. Water systems which are not managed or poorly managed will be degraded further.

Rainfall patterns will change considerably. Monsoons will possibly become more intense causing greater flooding. More rain will fall in shorter periods. This is already happening in southern African regions. The northern latitudes will also become wetter and humid. At the same time, dry and semi arid regions will probably become even drier. The change in precipitation will have impact on local agriculture and vegetation.

The effect on crops will be varied depending upon many factors such as the type of plant, properties of soil, the interaction between CO₂ and agricultural growth processes. Although, the increased amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere is generally beneficial to vegetation growth, the growth depends on many other factors such as water availability, soil condition etc. The IPCC projections show that overall, food production will decrease particularly at the higher end of the predicted global warming range.

Terrestrial and fresh water ecosystems are at risk from climate change.

The habitat for cold and cool water fish will be destroyed. Many species of fish will be endangered or destroyed.

Climate change will have major influence on the oceans. Decrease in sea ice cover, changes in water salinity, alteration of ocean circulation currents can be expected. Due to the coupling between the oceans and atmosphere, changes in the oceans will in turn interfere with atmospheric circulation. Many marine ecosystems will be affected. In the coastal areas, flooding will increase and land erosion will accelerate. Wetlands mangroves will be degraded or destroyed. Seawater will contaminate fresh water sources. Severity of storms will increase. Coral reefs, atolls and their biological systems will be affected.

Human health will be at risk. Many vector borne, food-borne and water-borne infectious diseases will expand their range. The incidence of malaria and dengue which currently affects 40-50% of the global population, will increase. Increased heat waves would lead to more heat related fatalities. Recurrent flooding will bring in its wake more diarrhoeal and respiratory diseases. Floods and storms will also reduce food production and increase food insecurity. Malnutrition will rise among poorer societies.

Socio-economic impacts of climate change will be severe.

, Flooding and landslide and sea level rise coupled with uneven rainfall and extreme weather could lead to human migration. This will aggravate living conditions in overcrowded human settlements. Industrial transportation and commercial infrastructure will be degraded by floods and other climate-induced phenomena. More energy will be required for cooling purposes in the areas affected by higher temperature. The cost of extreme weather events, borne by insurance and financial services, will increase as global economic losses increase due to catastrophic events. Which of the following describes most appropriately the writer's attitude to the problem depicted?

with in the above passage ?

[2]

i) admiring (ii) indifferent (iii) condemning

iv) serious (v) prejudiced

b)

Which of the following text-types does the passage belong to ?

[2]

i) imaginative (ii) narrative (iii) information

c)

Look at the gaps (Gap 1 and 2) in the passage and say which of the following sentences would fit into which gap. There is one extra sentence which does not belong in any of the gaps. [1X2]

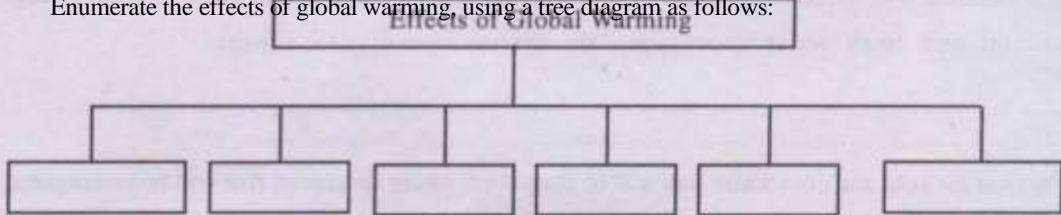
A. The impact of climate change will not be uniform across the regions.

B. Many economic sectors, particularly physical infrastructure, will be affected by climate change.

d)

C. Freshwater fish will migrate poleward.

Enumerate the effects of global warming, using a tree diagram as follows:



e)

Study the verb forms used in the passage and say which verb form is used most and why ? [2]

Q3.(a) Choose from among the following link words and fill in the blanks :

f 1 X 3]

therefore - despite-as-so-however-although-but

Sophia didn't feel like going to the party, she went

anyways she had promised her friend that she would be there. She knew that she would not enjoy the party.

b)

Look at the words in bold letters in the paragraph below and say what they refer to : [1 X 2]

Over time, more and more of life has become subject to the controls of knowledge. However, **this** is never a one-way process. Scientific investigation is continually increasing our knowledge. But if we are to make good use of this knowledge, we must not only rid our minds of old,

superseded beliefs and fragments of magical practice, but also recognize new superstitions for what they are. Both are generated by our wishes, our fears and our feeling of helplessness in difficult situations.

Q4.a) Answer *one* of the following as briefly as you can : [2]

- i) Why wouldn't the mother in 'Ecology' allow the children to cut down the champak trees ?
- ii) What is the theme of the poem 'Indian Children Speak' ?

b) Write an appreciation of *one* of these poems : [8]

- i) *Dog's Death*
- ii) *Mirror*

Q5.a) Answer *one* of these questions briefly : [2]

- i) Why was Maggie shocked at the sight of the Honeyman ?
- ii) What impression did the fellow travellers take about Joe from his continuous talk ?

b) Answer *one* of the following : [8]

- i) How was the banian tree an integral part of the villagers' life as described in 'The Tree' ?
- ii) Attempt an appreciation of the character of Stephens in the story, 'The Happy Man.'

Q6.a) Answer *one* of the following as briefly as you can : [2]

- i) Why had Mrs Parker hired a lovely cottage on Dartmoor ?
- ii) Why did John dislike being named after Gresham ?

b) Answer *one* of these : [8]

- i) Examine the appropriateness of the title 'Mother's Day.'
- ii) Sketch the character of Joe Badger in the play 'The Unexpected.'

Q7. Design a one-page brochure on five important places of tourist interest in Orissa. [10]

OR

Write a pamphlet to impress upon your readers that we cannot develop as a nation unless we imbibe a genuine work culture and put an end to corrupt practices in public life.

Q8. Write a dialogue between two friends discussing the careers of their choice. [10]

OR

Write a telephone conversation between two friends, beginning with one of them breaking news of his or her success in a Joint Entrance Examination.

<The dialogue or telephone conversation should be written in 20-25 bits.>

Q9. Write a story about meeting a long-lost friend in a strange situation and making an interesting discovery. [10]

OR

Write a story dealing with an unusual or difficult journey with a surprise ending.

[The story should be in about two hundred words]

Q10.(a) Complete the poetic passage below, filling in the gaps appropriately with these lines :

[1X3]

- i) That chooses right, and never find a friend
- ii) Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught
- iii) Being made beautiful overmuch

May she be granted beauty and yet not

Or hers before a looking glass, for such,

Consider beauty a sufficient end,
Lose natural kindness and may be
The heart-revealing intimacy

[2]

(b) Suggest a suitable title for the poetic passage.

I 1 X 3]

Q1 1. Fill ~~make~~ each blank, choosing an appropriate expression from the following list :
call for faces as though trivialize was inclined to

Each one of us was trying to the crisis. What's more interesting, Pinak was acting it simply was not there. After some time it dawned upon us that we had to do something about it and that the situation did immediate action.

QI2.(a). Fill in each blank with the correct form of the verb in parentheses :

[1X2]

Mr Mishra : Ugh ! Something(smell) terrible in here !
What happened ?

Mrs Mishra: The refrigerator(break) down last night,
and all the food is spoilt.

(b) Fill in the blanks, making appropriate choice from the list below :

[1/2X4]

can	may	need	will
can't	might	mustn't	won't

There are some clouds, but it train today. It will be a beautiful day, and I might catch some fish. Uh-oh. There's water coming in the boat. Therebe a leak. HowI find it ? Let me think. Ipanic.

(c) Rewrite the following paragraph after making necessary corrections and underlining the places where corrections are made :

[1X3]

[There are three errors to be corrected.]

I liked the new neighbour right from the day he moved in. We used to greet each other during our morning walks, but we had never talked. Yesterday afternoon we had a long conversation. Only then I discovered that he had a stammer. He related to me how a road accident had caused the stammer. Then he invited me to his apartment. He opened the door-lock, and in the drawing room there were a lot of beautiful furniture which everyone would like to possess. It was after much persuasion when he agreed to sell the divan of my choice. I was about to make the payment in advance when I discovered that there were blood stains on the divan.

APPENDIX II

ANALYSIS OF THE SAMPLE QUESTION PAPER

(To be sent to the Paper Setter along with the 'Sample Question Paper'
& 'Instructions for Evaluation')

Q.No.	Reference to Course Component	What does it test ?	Marks allotted
1.	PROSE (First Year) [Intensive Reading]	(a) Skimming the text for the main idea (b) Local comprehension, and understanding of implications..... (c) Inferential skill.....	} 10 2 2
2.	PROSE (Second Year) [Intensive Reading]	(a) Understanding the writer's attitude... (b) Identifying the text type..... (c) Understanding the structure of a text (d) Relating the parts of a text to the main idea..... (e) Understanding the language functions in a text.....	} 10 2
3.	COHESIVE DEVICES	(a) Link words..... (b) Reference.....	3 2 }
4.	POETRY (Extensive Reading)	(a) Local comprehension (Alternatives : one from the First Year Course and the other from the Second Year Course). (b) Appreciation of a poem..... (Alternatives: one from the First Year Course and the other from the Second Year Course)	2 8 }
5.	SHORT STORIES [Extensive Reading]	(a) Local comprehension..... (b) Composition on Theme, Plot or Character.....	2 8 }
6.	ONE-ACT PLAYS [Extensive Reading]	(a) Local comprehension..... (b) Composition on Theme, Plot or Character.....	2 8 }

[P.T.O.]

Q.No.	Reference to Course Component	What does it test ?	Marks allotted
7.	BROCHURE WRITING	(a) Brochure Writing OR PAMPHLET WRITING (b) Pamphlet Writing 10	
8.	WRITING A DIALOGUE	(a) Face-to-face Conversation OR (b) Telephone Conversation 10	
9.	STORY-WRITING	On a given situation, (a) OR (b)	10
10.	COMPOSING A POEM	(a) Setting lines in the gaps in a poetic passage..... (b) Giving a title to a poetic passage...	3 2 } 5
11.	VOCABULARY & USAGE	Using an appropriate word, an idiom and a phrasal verb in context $1 \times 3 = 3$	
12.	GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT	(a) Correct verb forms (b) Modals (c) Inversion, Agreement, and Pseudo-clefts	7
Total Marks :			100

NOTE : Care must be taken not to set questions included in the Activities in the textbooks, although the passages for testing the intensive reading skills must be set from among the prescribed prose-texts.