

The Dream and other stories

Daphne du Maurier and others

British English

Contemporary

Life on Mars, a strange dream, and attacks by murderous birds – these are just some of the subjects of these enjoyable short stories. They will amuse and shock you.

Number of words (excluding activities): 16,504

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PENGUIN ACTIVE READING

LEVEL 4

The Dream and other stories

Daphne du Maurier and others



The Dream

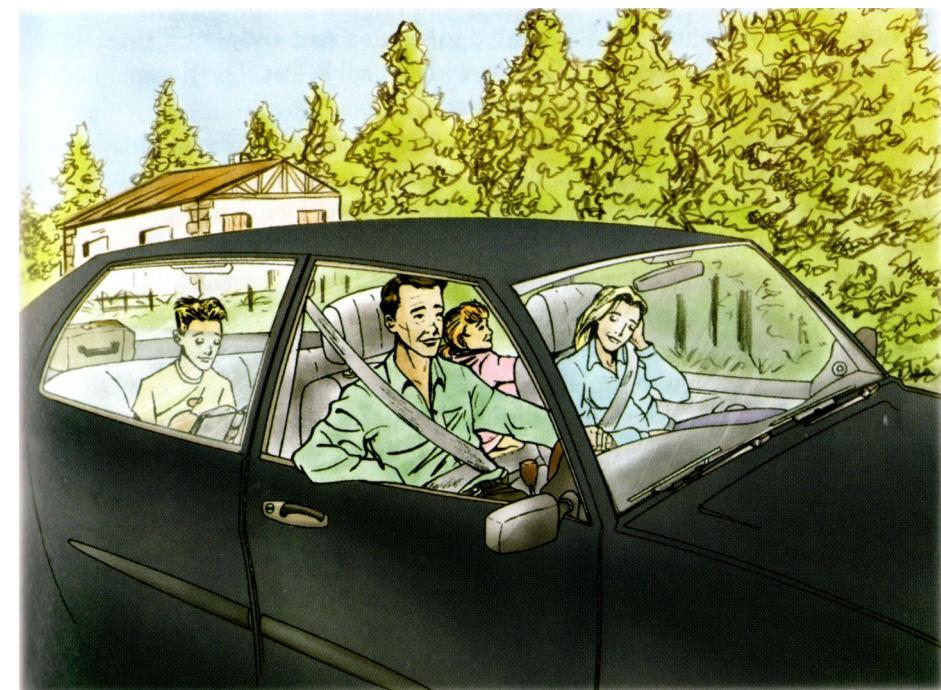
Frank Tilsley

Even if dreams can show us the future, this dream did not make sense.

Must I never pass a lorry on a clear road?

Can a dream show us the future and give us the opportunity of changing it? It is hard to believe. If we can see the future in a dream, then surely the future already exists. If it does, then we are not free to act in the ways we wish to; we are not responsible for our own lives.

Before I tell you the dream, I must explain a little about the context. It was the summer of four years ago, and I was driving my family back from Italy through the south of France. My son had not yet learned to drive, my daughter was too young, and my wife doesn't drive at all. I had been at the wheel for the best part of three weeks. Perhaps I was tired; perhaps I could think of nothing except cars. We spent the night of the dream in a town called Tain l'Hermitage.



Now I'll tell you the dream. I was sitting in a big, powerful, cream-coloured car, and I was driving at high speed through the country. I was coming to a bend in the road, and in front of me there was a very large lorry.

My foot reached out towards the brake, but it could not find it. I looked down: there was no brake! Worse: my hands held empty air. There was no wheel for them to hold. There were no controls of any kind. Already we were almost into the back of the lorry.

I shouted in fear. Then I heard a calm voice coming from my left, and I turned my head. A stranger was sitting there. He was a cheerful man of about forty. He was wearing an expensive shirt, and on his head he had a red hat. I couldn't understand what he said; he spoke very quickly in French, and my own French is not very good. I didn't, in fact, care what he said. My eyes were on his clean, fat hands, which were holding the wheel. This car had its wheel on the left. He, not I, was in control.

We drove safely round the bend. He turned the wheel slightly to place the car in the middle of the road. He was going to pass the lorry. The road stretched straight ahead. It was bright in the sunlight and it was quite empty. Only one other person was in sight; a woman was sitting outside a small house with white walls, and this house was almost exactly ahead of us. She was sitting by a table putting some flowers in pots. She wanted to sell us some, and waved them at us.

This sight, for some reason, filled me with a terrible fear. The flowers made me think of death and our final resting place.

At this moment we were level with the lorry and ready to pass it, but then the lorry began to turn away from the side of the road, towards our car. It appeared that the driver was doing this on purpose. The stranger by my side shouted loudly and tried to move out of the way. There was a terrible noise from the back of the car, and then an explosion. The earth seemed to turn over, and the noise of flames burned in my ears. At that point I woke up in fear.

I was very worried by this dream, and could not sleep again. It seemed to have a message, and I wanted to explain it.

Even if dreams can show us the future, this dream did not make sense. Must I never pass a lorry on a clear road? The road to Paris is always filled with very large lorries. Most of them come up from Marseilles, and I always have to pass them when the road is clear; I can't drive slowly behind them for ever. No, this was not the meaning of the dream. At its heart was some kind of fear. I had to recognize my fear, and then I could forget all about it.

I thought about my driving during the last three weeks. I tried to remember all the lorries and all the small white houses. I thought of all the cars which were

brake /breɪk/ (n) the part of a vehicle that makes it go more slowly or stop

painted cream. I remembered nothing of any great interest. I had imagined that the road in the dream must be in France; it was long, empty and straight. But then I remembered that we had passed the lorry on the right. So the dream was about a road in England; in England all cars keep to the left. Immediately, I remembered something.

Two years before this, I was travelling in the north of England. An American and I were making some radio programmes. He had brought his car from America, and of course the driver sat on the left side. The brakes and other controls were also on the left, but the colour of his car was not cream.

The American was a careless driver, and often passed other cars against my advice. Remember that I was in a better position to see: I was sitting on the right. Once, just after Nottingham, he played chicken'.

You probably know about 'chicken'; it is a game that is played on the roads. It is becoming more and more popular in America, because long journeys are often very dull. You just move your car into the middle of the road and stay there.

When another car appears, it comes towards you in the middle of the road. The driver who turns away is the chicken. Quite often neither driver turns away.

I expressed my displeasure at this game in language that the American could not fail to understand. We did not play it again, but it had probably left its mark on my mind. So then, when I was asleep, I experienced it all again in a dream. I also remembered something else while I was having breakfast. When we played 'chicken', it was an uncommonly windy day. We stopped at Chesterfield, and the American bought a hat. It was a black hat, not a red one, but in dreams details are not always exact. After this I forgot about the dream until the afternoon.

The big French lorries often play their own game. They stay in the middle of the road, and you can't pass them. You have to stay behind them. Sometimes you have to follow them for endless kilometres, although the roads are almost completely empty.

This afternoon we were following a large vehicle which was making terrible noises. When I blew my horn, the driver moved to the side of the road, but it was the wrong side. He was driving along on the left, instead of keeping to the right. There was enough space on the right for me to pass him. But to do that would be wrong. So I just followed him for a few kilometres and I told myself not to pass him.

I considered the situation from every point of view. I could certainly turn my car more quickly than he could turn his lorry. It was a very big, heavy lorry. Could I, perhaps, pass him quickly on the right before he could do anything? If he turned to the right, though, he could easily kill us all. He probably wanted a

horn /ho:n/ (n) the part of a car that you push to make a warning sound

bit of fun, but he might want an accident. If he killed us, nobody would say it was his fault; the law would be on his side.

The road ahead was quite empty, and went on for many kilometres. I drove more slowly until some distance separated us. Then I increased my speed as much as I could. I drove towards that empty space beside the lorry. My car was moving at about 110 kilometres an hour.

The front of my car was almost level with the back of the lorry. Then I saw something that knocked the breath out of my body. On the grass beside the road a woman was sitting outside a small white house with a table of flowers!

For the first time in my life I changed my mind while I was preparing to pass another vehicle. My foot went down hard on the brake. The car rocked from side to side. From behind me I heard the sound of a horn. Another car was following us at a high speed. I knew its colour before I saw it; it was cream.

I pressed hard on the brake and turned the wheel slightly. I was just able to move in behind the lorry without touching it. The other car passed us and the driver blew his horn wildly. It reached the lorry - and then the lorry turned towards it.

For a moment I thought that the car was going to pass the lorry safely; it was moving very fast. Then the front of the lorry just touched the back of the car. It was only a light touch, but it knocked the car towards the side of the road and the woman at the table.

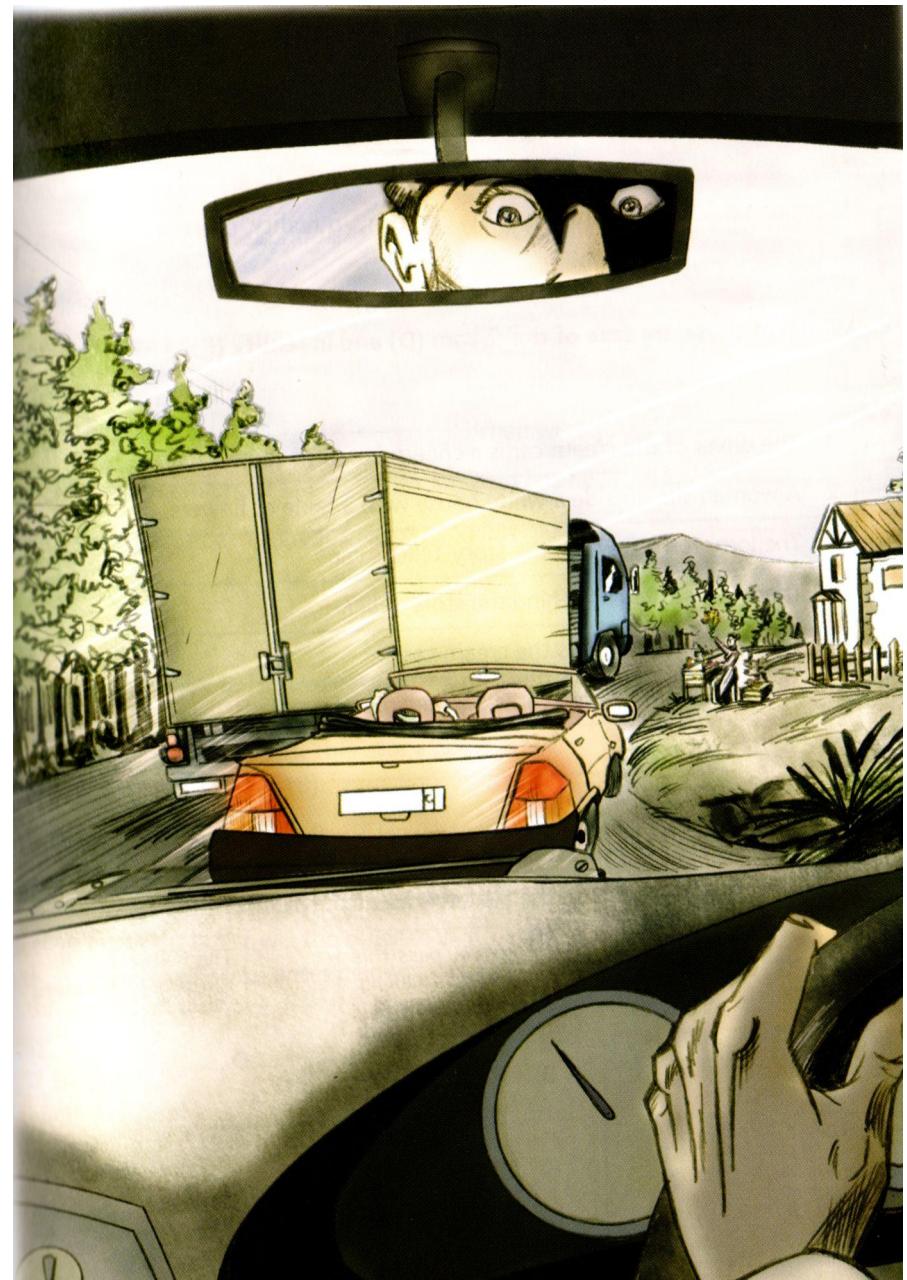
The driver of that car knew exactly what to do. With the greatest skill he turned it back into the middle of the road. His control was wonderful, much better than mine. He waved angrily at the lorry driver and drove quickly away in a cloud of dust. He was soon out of sight.

We stayed that night in Fontainebleau. A big car was standing outside the hotel, and the back showed signs of damage to the paintwork. It was a cream car, and so I looked for the driver. He was not wearing a red hat or an expensive shirt.

He was a young man from Paris - not like the driver in my dream. He spoke good English, so I asked him if he would like the number of that lorry. I had noticed it, and I was happy to give it to him. But he only laughed; the law won't help you if you pass on the wrong side of the road. To him the whole thing had been a game.

'It tests your skill,' he said. 'If the car is powerful enough, you can do it. But you couldn't do it, not in your car.'

I didn't tell him about my dream, my reason for not passing the lorry. There was no time; he was in a hurry and wanted to reach Paris quickly. It made me think, though. I don't really believe in dreams, of course; but something saved us all from a terrible death.



Were you right?

- 1 Look back at your answers to 1.2 on page iv. Then complete these sentences.

In the dream, the driver is in ¹ where people drive on the ² The story-teller is the ³ and a ⁴ crashes into his car. But, in reality, there is ⁵ crash.

- 2 Which of these are true of the dream (D) and in reality (R)? Tick (✓) them.

	D	R
1 The driver of the cream car is a cheerful man of about forty.		
2 A woman sits outside a white house with a table of flowers.		
3 The lorry turns towards the story-teller's car.		
4 There is another car behind the story-teller.		
5 The lorry turns towards the cream car.		
6 The driver of the cream car is a young man from Paris.		
7 Nobody is hurt.		

What more did you learn?**Who might say these words in the real events of the story?**

Are we going to be
in this car much
longer?

Can't you pass this
lorry? It's making
terrible noises.

The flower seller!
We're going to die!



Pass me! You can't
do it, can you?!

Dad, you nearly
killed us all.

Language in use

Look at the sentence on the right and the example below. Then complete the other sentences with verb forms.

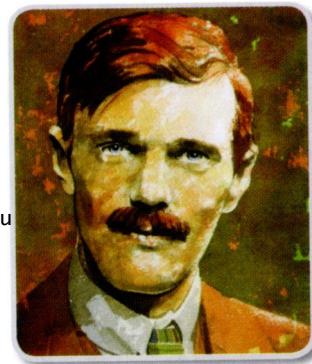
- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1 This <i>sight</i> filled me with fear. | What did you ? |
| Put your hands on the <i>controls</i> . | What do they ? |
| Her <i>death</i> was unexpected. | When did she ? |
| 4 I <i>here</i> was an <i>explosion</i> . | What ? |
| 5 I had a terrible <i>dream</i> . | What did you ? |
| 6 We've got an <i>invitation</i> . | When were you ? |
| / It is his second <i>marriage</i> . | Who has he ? |
| 8 His business has been a great <i>success</i> . | How did he ? |

| This *sight*, for some reason, filled me with a terrible fear.

What's next?

The next story is by D. H. Lawrence, one of Britain's most famous writers. He wrote about human relationships and emotions. This story takes place after World War 1 (1914–18).

Look at the pictures on pages 8–19. How happy do you think the blind man and his wife are, alone on their farm? What are their worries, for themselves and for each other? What effect will the other man, a visitor, have on their lives? Make notes below.



The Blind Man

D. H. Lawrence

Maurice didnt think much or worry muc. While he had the power of touch, he was happy without sight.

Isabel Pervin was listening for two sounds - for the sound of wheels on the drive outside and for the noise of her husband's footsteps in the hall. It was the late afternoon of a rainy November day. Her dearest and oldest **friend** was on his way from the station. Her husband, who had been blinded in the war in France, was outside somewhere.

Maurice had been home for a year now. He was badly scared and totally blind, but they had been very happy. Grange Farm was Maurice's place. The farm workers lived at the back of the house, while Isabel lived with her husband in the comfortable rooms at the front. They had spent most **of** their time alone together since his return. They talked and sang and read, together. She wrote short pieces for a newspaper and he did some work on the farm - simple work, it is true, but it gave him satisfaction. He milked the cows and looked after the pigs and horses. Life was still very full for the blind man, peaceful in darkness. With his wife he had a whole world, rich and real.

But sometimes their happiness left them. In that silent house, **Isabel** sometimes felt she was going crazy. And sometimes her husband became **despairing**. She tried then to force the old cheerfulness to continue but the effort was almost too much for her. At such times she would give anything, anything, to escape.

She looked for a way out. She invited friends. She tried to give her husband some further connection with the outside world. But it was no good. Nobody could understand the depth of the experiences that they had shared in the past year.

But now, in a few weeks' time, her second baby would be born. The first had died while her husband was in France. She looked forward with pleasure to the coming of the second, but she also felt a little anxious. The child would take her love and attention. And then, what about Maurice? What would he do?

It was at this time that Isabel's old friend, Bertie Reid,, wrote to her. All her life he had been her friend - like a brother, but better than her own brothers. She loved him, though not in the same way as the man she had chosen to marry.

scar /skɑ:/ (v/n) to be given a mark on your skin from a deep cut, which never goes away
despair /di'spes/ (v/n) to feel that there is no hope



Bertie was a lawyer, a thoughtful type with a quick mind. Maurice was different. He was slow and sensitive - a big, heavy man. The two men had never been close. Isabel thought they should like each other. But they did not.

So when Maurice was going out to France, she wrote to Bertie saying that she must end her friendship with him.

For nearly two years there had been no communication between the two friends. Then a little note came from Bertie. He wrote of the real pain he felt about Maurice's blindness. Isabel felt a nervous excitement again, and she read the letter to Maurice.

'Ask him to come down,' he said.

'Ask Bertie to come here?'

'Yes - if he wants to.'

Isabel thought about this.

'I know he wants to,' she replied. 'But what about you, Maurice? How would you like it?'

'I should like it.'

'Well - in that case - But I thought you didn't care for him -'

"Oh, I don't know. I might think differently of him now," the blind man replied.



So Bertie was coming, coming this evening, in the November rain and darkness. Isabel looked nervously again at the high windows, where the rain was beating against the glass. Maurice was out in the stable.

She stood up and looked at herself in the mirror. Her face was calm. Her neck made a beautiful line to her shoulder. She had a warm, motherly look.

She passed down the wide hall and put on heavy shoes, a large coat and a man's hat. Then she went outside. It was very dark and very windy. As she walked on, the darkness seemed deeper, and she was sorry she had not brought a lamp. Rain blew against her. She half liked it and she half felt that she did not want to light against it.

She reached the door of the stable. There was no light anywhere. She opened the door and looked in, into total darkness. The sudden smell of horses shocked her. She listened but could only hear the night and the restless movement of a horse.

'Maurice!' she called softly. 'Maurice - are you there?'



Nothing came from the darkness. The rain and the wind were blowing in, so she entered and shut the door. She was conscious of the horses, though she could not see them, and she was afraid.

Then she heard a small noise in the distance. It was Maurice in the other part of the stable. The low sound of his voice as he spoke to the horses came to her in the darkness.

She called quietly, 'Maurice, Maurice - dear!'

'Yes,' he answered. 'Isabel?'

She saw nothing, and the sound of his voice seemed to touch her.

'Won't you come in, dear?' she said.

'Yes, I'm coming. Just half a minute. Bertie hasn't arrived yet, has he?'

'Not yet,' said Isabel.

She wanted him to come to her. When she could not see him, she was frightened of him.

'Bertie won't much enjoy the drive in this weather,' he said, as he closed the door.

'No, he won't!' said Isabel calmly, watching the dark shape at the door. 'Give me your arm, dear.'

Isabel was pleased to be back in the house. She was a little afraid of him out there in the darkness. In the hall he sat down heavily. As he bent down to take off his boots, he didn't seem blind. When he stood up, the blood rushed to his face and neck, and she didn't look at his eyes.

He went away upstairs. She saw him go into the darkness. He did not know that the lamps upstairs were not lit. She heard him in the bathroom.

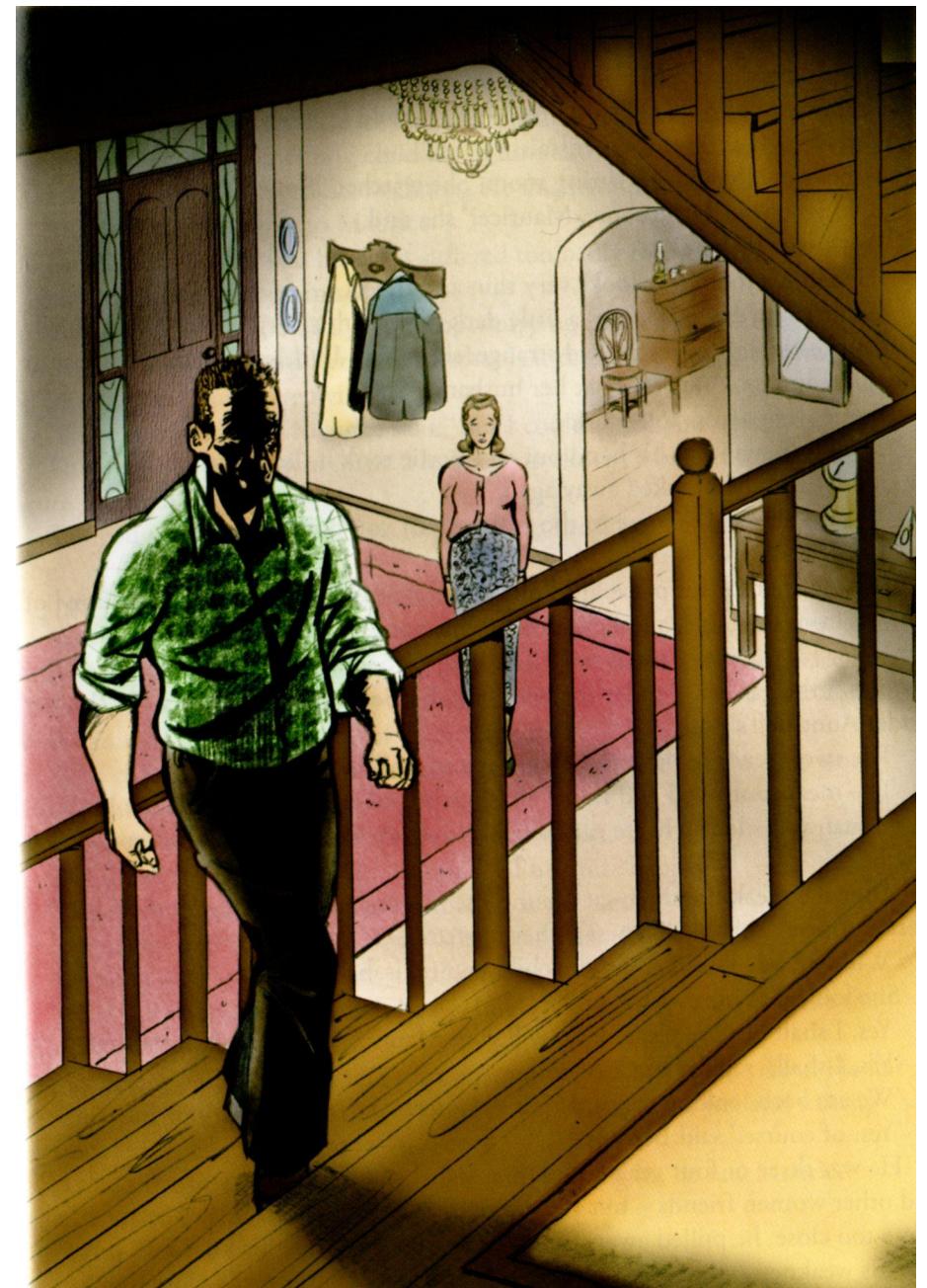
Maurice moved around almost unconsciously. He seemed to know where things were before he touched them. He didn't think much or worry much. While he had the power of touch, he was happy without sight. It was a pleasure to stretch out his hands and pick up something that he couldn't see, to hold it and to own it. He didn't try to remember what it looked like. He didn't want to. This new consciousness had become natural to him. He was generally happy and he had a burning love for Isabel. But at times despair swept over him and destroyed his happiness. Then he suffered.

But tonight he was still calm, though his senses were a little sharp. His hearing was too sharp. He was conscious of all the sounds in the house. As he went to his room he heard a vehicle arrive.

Then came Isabel's voice, like a bell ringing. 'Is it you, Bertie?'

And a man's voice answered out of the wind. 'Hello, Isabel. There you are. You're looking as fit as ever.'

'Oh yes,' said Isabel. 'I'm very well. How are you? Rather thin, I think—'



'Worked to death. But I'm all right. How's Maurice? Isn't he here?'

'Oh yes, he's upstairs, changing his clothes. Yes, he's well.'

They moved away. Maurice heard no more. But a childish sense of despair had come over him. He felt shut out — like a child in the company of adults. He dressed himself and went downstairs.

Isabel was alone in the sitting room. She watched him enter.

'Did you hear Bertie come, Maurice?' she said.

'Yes - isn't he here?'

'He's in his room. He looks very thin and tired.'

Bertie came down. He was a little dark man, with a very big forehead, thin hair, and sad, large eyes. He had strange, short legs. Isabel watched him pause at the door, and look nervously at her husband.

Bertie went across to Maurice.

The blind man put his hand out and Bertie took it. Isabel watched them anxiously, and then looked away again.

'Come,' she said. 'Come to the table. Aren't you both hungry?'

They sat down.

Maurice felt for his place, his knife and fork. Bertie picked up a little bowl of flowers from the table, and held them to his nose.

'They have a lovely sweet smell,' he said. 'Where do they come from?'

'From the garden - under the windows. Bertie, do you remember the flowers under Aunt Bell's wall?'

The two friends looked at each other and smiled.

The meal continued and Isabel and Bertie spoke easily together. The blind man was silent. He ate carefully but quickly. He could never accept any help.

After the meal, the three sat around the fire. Isabel put more wood on and Bertie noticed a slight slowness in her movements.

'Will you be pleased when the child comes, Isabel?' he said.

She looked at him with a smile.

'Yes, I shall be very pleased. So will you, Maurice, won't you?' she added.

'Yes, I shall,' replied her husband.

'We are both looking forward to it so much,' she said.

'Yes, of course,' said Bertie.

He was three or four years older than Isabel and had never married. He had other women friends — but they were friends, not lovers. If they seemed to come too close, he pulled away. Isabel knew him very well, his kindness, but also his weakness, which made him unable ever to enter into any close human relationships. He was ashamed of himself because he couldn't marry. He wanted

to, but he couldn't. Deep down inside he was afraid. He became a successful lawyer, a rich man and a great social success. But at the centre he felt that he was nothing.

Isabel looked at his sad face and his short little legs. She looked at his dark grey eyes. There was something childlike in him and she loved him. At the same time she pitied and disliked his weakness. He understood this.

Suddenly, Bertie spoke to Maurice.

'Isabel tells me that you have not suffered too badly from losing your sight.'

Maurice straightened himself.

'No,' he said, 'not too badly. You stop worrying about many things.'

'And that is good,' said Bertie. 'But what is it that takes the place of worry?' Maurice was slow in replying.

'There is something,' Maurice said. 'But I couldn't tell you what it is.'

Then the blind man was silent. He stood up slowly, a big, uncomfortable figure. He wanted to go away.

'Do you mind,' he said, 'if I go and speak to the farm manager? I won't be long.'

'No — go along, dear,' said Isabel.

And he went out. A silence came over the two friends. The wind blew loudly outside. Rain beat like a drum on the windows. The wood in the fireplace burned lowly with hot small flames. Bertie seemed uncomfortable. There were dark circles around his eyes. Isabel looked into the fire.

'The child coming seems to make me calm. I feel there's nothing to worry about,' she said.

'A good thing, I should say,' Bertie replied slowly.

'If I didn't feel anxious about Maurice, I'd be quite happy.'

The evening passed slowly. Isabel looked at the clock.

'It's nearly ten o'clock,' she said. 'Where can Maurice be?'

Bertie looked at her. 'Would you like me to go out and see?'

'Well - if you wouldn't mind. I'd go, but-' She did not want to make the effort.

Bertie put on an old coat and took a lamp. He left by the side door. He felt nervous and strangely empty. He walked slowly through the wet and stormy night.

At last he opened the door of a stable and, looking in, he saw Maurice standing, listening.

'Who is that?' said Maurice.

'It's me,' said Bertie. He entered and shut the door behind him.

'You came to look for me?' he asked.

'Isabel was a little worried,' said Bertie.
'I'll come in.'

'I hope I'm not in your way at all,' said Bertie, rather shyly.

'My way?' Maurice said. 'Not a bit. I'm pleased Isabel has someone to talk to. I'm afraid that I am in the way. I know I'm not very good company. Is Isabel all right, do you think? She's not unhappy, is she?'

'I don't think so.'

'What does she say?'

'She says she's very happy - only a little worried about you,' said Bertie carefully.

'She needn't worry about me. I'm afraid that she'll find me dull, always alone with me down here.'

Maurice lowered his voice and took a deep breath. 'Bertie,' he asked, 'is my face a very ugly sight? Do you mind telling me?'



'There is a scar,' said Bertie, surprised. 'But one feels pity more than shock at the sight of it.'

'A bad scar, though,' said Maurice.

'Oh, yes.'

There was a pause.

'I don't really know you, do I?' Maurice said suddenly in a strange voice.

'Probably not,' said Bertie.

'Do you mind if I touch you?'

Bertie stepped back but said, in a small voice, 'Not at all.'

He suffered as the blind man stretched out a strong hand and felt his head.

He covered the face of the smaller man, touching the forehead, the closed eyes, the small nose, the mouth, the strong chin.

'You seem young,' Maurice said quietly, at last.



Bertie stood, nearly destroyed, unable to answer.

'Your head seems soft,' Maurice continued. 'So do your hands. Touch my eyes, will you? Touch my scar.'

Bertie was sickened by the idea, but he was under the power of the blind man. He lifted his hand, and touched the scar. Maurice suddenly covered it with his own hand, pressed the fingers of the other man onto his scarred eyes. He stayed in this position for a minute or more while Bertie froze, helpless.

Then, suddenly, Maurice took the other man's hand away and stood holding it in his own.

'Oh my God,' he said. 'We shall know each other now, shan't we? We shall know each other now.'

Bertie could not answer. He looked at the blind man silently and in terror, despairing at his own weakness. He knew that he could not answer. He had an unreasonable fear that the other man would suddenly destroy him. Maurice was actually filled with a burning desire for friendship — and Bertie only wanted to escape.

'It's all right now, as long as we live. We're all right together now, aren't we?' Maurice said.

'Yes,' said Bertie.

Maurice turned to pick up his coat.

'Come,' he said, 'we'll go to Isabel.'

Bertie took the lamp and opened the door. The two men went in silence.

Isabel heard their footsteps and looked up anxiously as they entered. There seemed a strange happiness in Maurice. Bertie looked tired. His eyes were darker than before.

'What is it?' she asked.

'We've become friends,' said Maurice.

She looked at Bertie. He met her eyes with a despairing look.

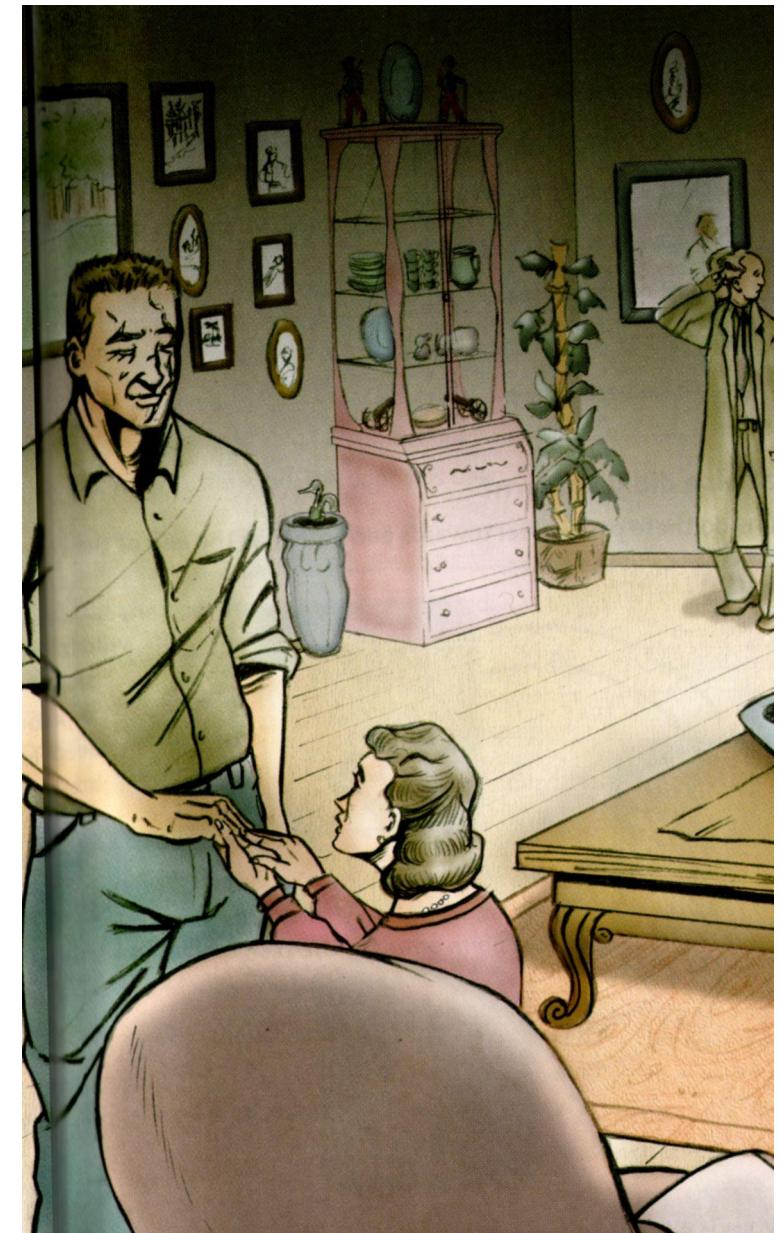
'I'm so pleased,' she said, confused.

'Yes,' said Maurice.

Isabel took his hand with both of hers and held it tight.

'You'll be happier now, dear,' she said.

But she was watching Bertie. She knew that he had one desire - to escape from this friendship which had been forced on him. He could not accept that he had been touched by the blind man.



Were you right?

Look back at your answers to Activity 2.4. Then answer this question: Which of these experiences have Maurice and Isabel shared in the last year?

- 1 They have lost their first child.
- 2 Isabel has felt that she is going mad.
- 3 Isabel is expecting a second child.
- 4 They have lived at Grange Farm.
- 5 Maurice has felt despair.
- 6 Maurice has gone blind.
- 7 They have been happy.

What else did you learn?

- 1 How do these people feel towards each other at the end of the story? Write these words in the boxes.



wild friendship
sickened
anxious
deep love
brotherly
love and pity

- 1 anxious
- 2.....—
- 3.....—
- 4.....—
- 5.....—
- 6.....—

Work with another student. You are two of the farm workers at Grange Farm. You live at the back of the house. Talk about Maurice and Isabel. What do you think about their lives? Will they be happy?

Language in use

Look at the sentence on the right. Then make these sentences into one in the same way. Use **who**, **whose** and **which**.

Her husband, **who had been blinded in the war in France**, was outside somewhere.

1 Isabel was waiting for Bertie. Bertie was late.

Isabel was waiting for Bertie, who was late

2 Maurice went upstairs. Maurice didn't know that the lights were off.

3 Bertie finally arrived. Bertie was like a brother to Isabel.

4 The stable door blew in the wind. The door was open.

5 Bertie looked at the scar. The scar was long and red.

16 Isabel looked at Bertie. Bertie's eyes showed his despair.

What's next?

- 1 Read the first part of the next story, to the middle of page 22. Then discuss these questions and make notes.

a Which adjectives in these lines describe Mr Beaseley's life?

b What would he do if he suddenly had a lot of money?

- 2 What would you do if you suddenly had a lot of money? Tell the class. Who has the most interesting idea?

It Happened Near a Lake

John Collier

Mrs Beaseley went with him. She hated it; but she was prepared to do anything that reduced her husband's pleasure.

Mr Beaseley was fifty. As he washed, he examined his face in the mirror. 'I'm older,' he thought. 'But what do I care? I don't care, even if Maria does. And she's getting old, too!'

He finished dressing and hurried downstairs. He thought anxiously that he was probably late for breakfast. Immediately after breakfast he had to open his shop, and that always kept him busy until ten o'clock at night. He never made much money, although he worked so hard. Sometimes, during the day, Maria Beaseley came into the shop and explained the mistakes that he was making. She did this even when there were customers there.

He found a little happiness every morning when he opened the newspaper. While he was reading it, he could escape from his dull life. For a short time he could forget. On Fridays he enjoyed himself more than on other days. On Fridays he received his copy of a magazine called *Scientific Discoveries*. With *Scientific Discoveries* he escaped from the dull house and his hopeless life into a more exciting world.

On this particular morning, good news came to Mr Beaseley in his own home. It came in a long envelope from a lawyer.

'Believe it or not, my dear,' Mr Beaseley said to his wife. 'Someone has died and left me four hundred thousand dollars.'

'What?' she said. 'Where? Let me see! Don't keep the letter to yourself like that! Give it to me!'

'Go on!' he said. 'Read it! Push your nose into it! Do you think it will help you?'

'Oh!' she cried. 'The money has already made you unpleasant!'

'Yes,' he said thoughtfully. 'I've been left four hundred thousand dollars. Four hundred thousand!'

'We'll be able to have a flat in New York,' she said, 'or a little house in Miami.'

'You can have half the money,' said Mr Beaseley. 'You can do what you like with it. But I intend to travel.'

Mrs Beaseley heard these words without pleasure. He belonged to her. She never liked losing anything that belonged to her. She always wanted to keep everything, even things that had become old and useless.

'So you want to leave me!' she cried.

'I want to see other places, unusual places, different places. In *Scientific Discoveries* it says that there are people with very long necks. I want to see them. And I want to see the very small people who live in Africa, and some of the strange animals and birds. I want to visit the old cities of the Yucatan in Mexico. I have offered you half the money because you like city life. You like mixing with the rich and the famous, but I prefer to travel. If you want to come with me, come!'

She did not have to think long before answering. 'I will come,' she said. 'And don't forget that I'm doing it for you. When you're tired of walking around with your mouth open, we'll buy a house. We'll have a flat in New York and a house in Miami.'

So Mrs Beaseley went with him. She hated it; but she was prepared to do anything that reduced her husband's pleasure. Their journeys took them into deep forests. Their bedroom walls and floors were often made of plain wood; but outside the window there were beautiful views. The colours of the flowers and the straightness of the trees looked fine in the bright light.

In the high mountains of the Andes their window was a square of burning blue. Sometimes a small white cloud appeared in a lower corner of the square. On islands in the sun they stayed in huts by the sea. There the sea brought offerings of plants and sea creatures to their door in the mornings. Mr Beaseley was glad, but his wife preferred bottles of wine. She dreamed every day of a flat in New York; or she thought about the little house in Miami. She tried endlessly to punish the man who kept her from them.

If a beautiful bird came to rest on a branch over her husband's head, she gave a terrible cry. Then the bird flew away before Mr Beaseley had the time to examine it. When they planned a trip to the Yucatan, she told him the wrong time for the start of the journey. Often, while he was trying to watch an interesting animal, she told him that she had something in her eye. So he had to look into it and get the thing out. Usually he found nothing.

She wanted to stay in Buenos Aires for a long time. She had to have her hair done; she also needed some better clothes. Mr Beaseley agreed to these trips because he wanted to be fair to her.

They took rooms in a comfortable hotel. One day, when his wife was out hopping, Mr Beaseley met a little Portuguese doctor. Soon they were talking happily together. They discussed some of the animals that lived in South America.

'I have recently returned from the River Amazon,' said the doctor. 'In one of the lakes there is a very strange creature. It is unknown to science, but the Indians have seen it. It is very big. It lives in the water and has a very long neck. Its teeth are like knives.'

Mr Beaseley was terribly excited. 'What a monster!' he cried happily.

'Yes,' said the Portuguese doctor. 'It is certainly interesting.'

'I must go there!' cried Mr Beaseley. 'I must talk to those Indians. If there's a monster in the lake, I must see it. Will you show me the way? Can you come with me?'

The doctor agreed, and they decided to prepare for the trip immediately. Mrs Beaseley returned from the shops and learned of the new plan with little pleasure. The two men explained that they would live near the unknown lake. They would spend their time with the Indians.

She was not pleased, and she spoke rudely to the little doctor. He just replied politely. He had no need to worry. He was going to be paid well for his help.

Mrs Beaseley complained loudly all the way up the river. She told her husband that there was no monster in the lake. She said that the doctor was lying to him. Although this was the way she always spoke, her husband was hurt. He felt ashamed in front of the Portuguese man. His wife's voice was also very loud and sharp, so every animal hurried away from them. Mr Beaseley saw nothing of the animals except their back legs. They all left the great river and the terrible voice at high speed and hid themselves in the dark forest behind the biggest trees.

The little party reached the lake after many days on the river.

'How do we know that this is the right place?' Mrs Beaseley said to her husband. She was watching the doctor, who was talking to some Indians. 'It is probably just a lake. It's not a special one. What are those Indians saying to him? You can't understand a word. You're ready to believe anything, aren't you? You'll never see the monster. Only a stupid person would believe that story!'

Mr Beaseley did not reply. The doctor continued his conversation with the Indians, and they gave him some useful information. They told him about an empty grass hut which was near the lake. The little party found this hut with great difficulty, and they stayed in it for several days. Mr Beaseley watched the lake every day, but he never saw the monster. In fact, he saw nothing at all. Mrs Beaseley was very satisfied with the result of their long journey, but she continued to look angry.

One day she shouted at her husband. 'I will not live this kind of life any longer,' she said. 'I've followed you from one place to another. I've tried to watch you and take care of you all the time. I've travelled hundreds of kilometres in an

monster /'mrjnsta/ (n) a very large, ugly, frightening animal

open boat with Indians. Now you're throwing your money away on a man who only wants to rob you. We shall leave for Para in the morning.'

'You can go if you wish,' he said. 'I'll write you a cheque for two hundred thousand dollars. Perhaps you can ask an Indian to take you down the river in a boat. But I will not come with you.'

'We shall see,' she said. She had no wish to leave her husband alone. She was afraid that he might enjoy himself.

He wrote out the cheque and gave it to her. She still continued to talk about leaving him, but she stayed.

She got up early the next morning and went outside the hut. She decided to have breakfast alone, and walked angrily towards some trees intending to pick some fruit. But she had not gone far before she noticed a mark on the sand. It was a very large footprint nearly a metre wide. The toes seemed to have sharp points, and the next footprint was three metres away.

Mrs Beaseley looked without interest at the marks which the monster had left. Her only feeling was anger at the thought of her husband's success. She was angry because the Portuguese doctor had been right. She did not cry out in excitement; she did not call to the sleeping men. She only gave a kind of bitter laugh.

Then she picked up a small branch which was lying on the ground. The monster's footprints had never been seen before by a European, but she brushed the first one with the branch until it disappeared. When she had finished, she smiled to herself. There was now no sign of the footprint, and so she looked for the next one. She cleaned that away, too. Further on she saw another, and then one more. She brushed earth over them. Then she saw another, moved towards it, and made it disappear. She continued in this way, holding the branch with both hands. Soon every footprint down to the edge of the lake had gone. The last footprint was partly in the water. The monster had clearly gone back to the lake.

Mrs Beaseley stood up straight. She looked coldly back towards the hut.

'I will tell you about this,' she said to herself, thinking of her sleeping husband, 'when we are far away. We shall be in our house in Miami, and you will be an old man. You will never see the footprint or the monster. You'll be too old to do anything then.'

At that moment there was a sound in the water behind her and large teeth closed on her. The Portuguese doctor had described these teeth very well: they were exactly like knives. He had described a number of other details, but she had no time to see if they were correct. After she had given one short cry, she was pulled under the water. Her cry was not heard by either of the men. She had used her voice too much during the past weeks, and it was tired.

A short time later Mr Beaseley awoke and saw that his wife was absent. He went to talk to the doctor, and asked him if he had seen her. The doctor, of course, knew nothing and went back to sleep. Mr Beaseley went outside and looked around for his wife, but he could see nothing. He returned to his friend

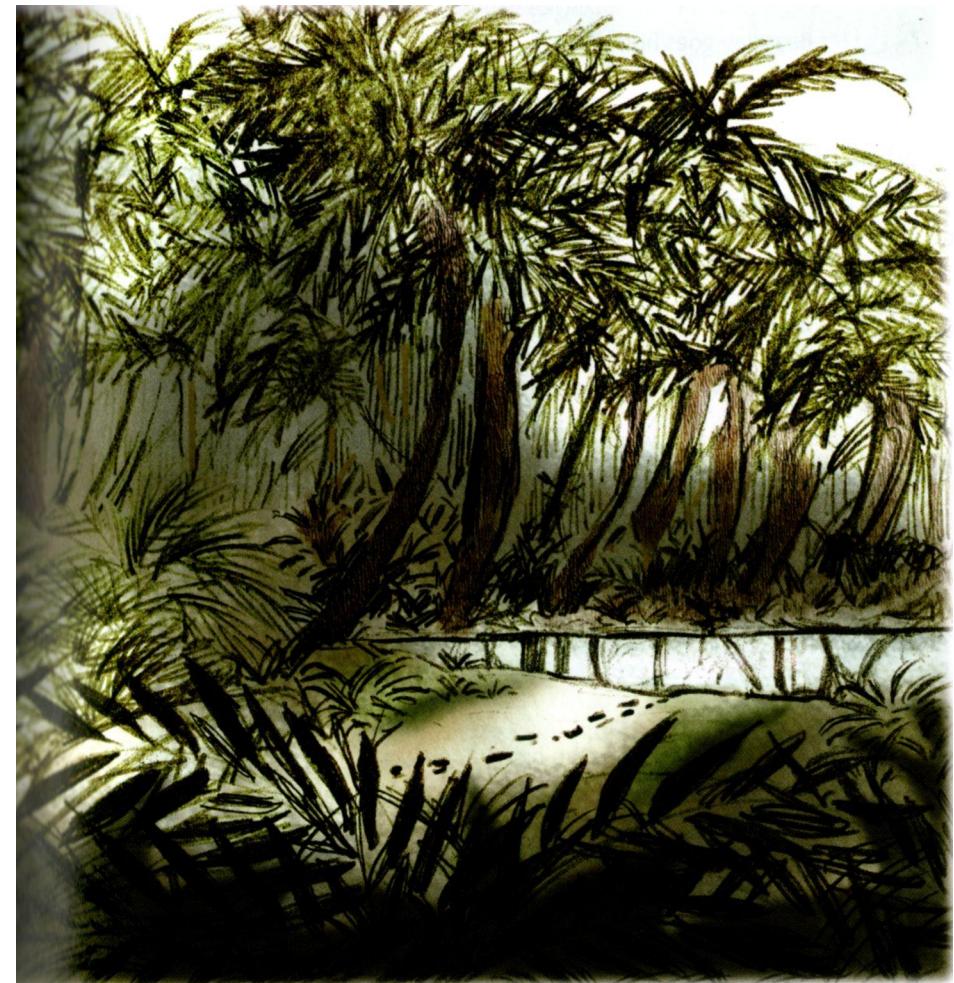
'I think my wife has run away,' he explained. 'I've found her footprints. They lead down to the lake. I expect she saw an Indian in his boat who has taken her away from here. She was talking about leaving yesterday. She wants to find a small house in Miami.'



'That is not a bad place,' the doctor replied. 'But Buenos Aires is probably a better one'. I'm sorry we haven't found the monster, my dear friend. Let us go back to Buenos Aires. I will show you some things there that will surprise you. They are very different from anything here, of course.'

'You're a very good friend,' said Mr Beaseley. 'You make even life in a city seem attractive.'

'If you get tired of it,' the Portuguese said, we can always move on. I know some wonderful islands, with friendly people on them. We can visit them after we leave the cities.'



Were you right?

Look back at your answers to Activity 3.4. Then decide if these sentences are true() or false (X).

- 1 Mr and Mrs Beaseley love each other very much.
- 2 She wants to leave him.
- 3 They travel to South America.
- 4 The lake is near the Amazon.
- 5 There is a monster in the lake.
- 6 Mrs Beaseley leaves her husband.
- 7 Mr Beaseley goes home.

What more did you learn?

- 1 Tick (✓) the places that the Beaseleys definitely visit.

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| • Africa | • Buenos Aires | Miami |
| • New York | • Para | Portugal |
| • the Andes | • the River Amazon | the Yucatan |

- 2 Discuss in pairs why these are important in the story.



Language in use

Look at the sentence on the right. Then report these words from the story.

1. 'You can have half the money,' said Mr Beaseley.

Mrs Beaseley told his wife that she could have half the money.

2. 'I will come,' she said.

Mrs Beaseley said that.....

- 3 'I have recently returned from the River Amazon,' said the doctor.

The doctor told them that.....

- 4 'If there's a monster in the lake, I must see it,' cried Mr Beaseley.

Mr Beaseley said that.....

- 5 'You're throwing money away on a man who only wants to rob you.'

Mrs Beaseley told her husband that.....

'I think my wife has run away.'

Mr Beaseley said that.....

What's next?

Read this statement from the next story and discuss the questions below it. Then write answers to the questions. Write notes.

'When you give a man something for nothing, he is never grateful. He turns against you.'

- 1 Why do people give away money, clothes and other things that they own?
- 2 How do they feel when they give them?
- 3 How does it feel to receive them?
- 4 How true is the statement above?

Notes

She told him that she had something in her eye.