

# 3

## A DAY'S WAIT

— Earnest Hemingway

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### Introduction

This is a short story written by Ernest Hemingway, an American Nobel Prize winner. It is about a boy, named Schatz who believes that he is going to die soon. His belief, as he realizes it later, was the result of a misunderstanding. Schatz has a light attack of Flue. He becomes pale. He can walk slowly because of pain. The doctor takes his temperature. It is 102. The doctor gives medicines and advises not to worry. But as soon as Schatz hears that he has 102 degree fever, he begins thinking that he is going to die! His friends in France have told him that none can live with 44 degree temperature. He has 102 degree, so he begins waiting for death! His father explains him the difference of two types of thermometers. He also says that seventy miles are not equal to seventy kilometers. Luckily, Schatz realizes his mistake. He feels relaxed. The effect of medicine works and he becomes normal from his physical and mental illness after waiting for the death for a day. **A small misunderstanding is as dangerous as a spark to burn a house.**

# **EXERCISE-I**

\* Read the passage and choose the correct answer for the following :

- (1) The author of the *Book of Pirates* is.....

(a) Howard Pyle (b) Earnest Hemingway  
(c) Schatz (d) Schatz's father.

(2) In the beginning of the story, Schatz complained of.....

(a) a headache (b) a toothache  
(c) a backache (d) a fever

(3) How old is Schatz ?

- (a) 8 years
- (b) 9 years
- (c) 10 years
- (d) 11 years



(4) Why did the doctor prescribe the third medicine ?

- (a) to overcome acid condition
- (b) to bring down the fever
- (c) as a purgative
- (d) to make Schatz sleep.

(5) Why did Schatz's father go out of his house with the Irish setter ?

- (a) to go for a stroll on the frozen creek
- (b) to shoot birds
- (c) to breathe fresh air
- (d) to hide his feelings from his son

(6) How much did Schatz's temperature really measure ?

- (a) a hundred
- (b) a hundred and two
- (c) a hundred and two and four tenths
- (d) a hundred and four

(7) Schatz had a misunderstanding regarding.....

- (a) two thermometers
- (b) *Book of Pirates*
- (c) miles and kilometers
- (d) two pirates

(8) Schatz's father removes his misunderstanding by showing the difference between.....

- (a) two thermometers
- (b) *Book of Pirates*
- (c) miles and kilometers
- (d) two pirates

**Answers :**

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) (a) Howard Pyle                | (5) (c) to breathe fresh air |
| (2) (a) a headache                 | (6) (b) a hundred and two    |
| (3) (b) 9 years                    | (7) (a) two thermometers     |
| (4) (a) to overcome acid condition | (8) (c) miles and kilometers |

## EXERCISE - V

→ Answer the following questions.

2. **Describe Schatz's condition in the beginning of the story.**

❖ When Schatz's entered room he was looking very sick with white face. There were dark areas under his eyes. He was trembling. He walked slowly because of pain. He had headache and fever.

3. **Which medicines did the doctor prescribe for Schatz's?**

❖ The doctor gave three different colored capsules.

❖ First was to bring down the fever.

❖ Second was to clean the intestine.

❖ Third was to relieve him from acidity.

4. **Why did Schatz not want his father to stay in the room with him?**

❖ Schatz had heard doctor stating 102 degree temperature and about his disease. He was under the impression that he had infectious disease. He feared that his father might get infected of flue by staying in the room. So he did not want his father to stay in the room with him.

5. **What are the two thermometers mentioned in the lesson?**

The two thermometers mentioned in the lesson are

❖ 1. Celsius Thermometer,

❖ 2. Fahrenheit Thermometer.

6. **How did Schatz's father clarify his doubts about temperature?**

❖ Towards the end of story Schatz asked his father the time of his death. There was a misunderstanding in his mind. When shocked father inquired he came to know about the confusion in Schatz's mind. At a school in France, Schatz was told by his friends that nobody could live with 44 degree temperature. Father cleared Schatz's misunderstanding by explaining him the difference between two thermometers, 1. Celsius Thermometer, 2. Fahrenheit Thermometer. His father also gave him example of miles and kilometers to clear this confusion. Soon Schatz felt relaxed and went to sleep. After that he recovered completely.

## **7. Explain the signification of the title of the story?**

The title is reflected in three different ways in the story.

- ❖ 1. Doctor prescribed the medicine for Schatz to be healthy again by a day's wait.
- ❖ 2. Schatz waited for a day for his death. He overheard doctor stating his temperature 102 degree. He unknowingly mixed to different contexts of temperature and thought that he was going to die. Because of that for one day he became introvert and stopped talking and sharing his ideas and feelings with others.
- 3. Father waited for a day for Schatz's recovery and gave full attention to his son for a day. Towards the end of story Schatz asked his fathers the time of his death. Shocked father inquired and cleared Schatz's misunderstanding. After that Schatz felt relaxed and went to sleep. So after a day's wait father succeeded in bringing his son back to positive mental state. After that he recovered completely. Thus the meaning of title is conveyed in many ways.

### **Exercise - VI**

#### **1. Schatz's illness**

- ❖ When Schatz's entered room he was looking very sick with white face. There were dark areas under his eyes. He was trembling. He walked slowly because of pain. He had headache and fever. His father called the doctor. The doctor examined him and told that he had 102 degree temperature. The doctor diagnosed it as a light attack of flue. The doctor gave three different colored capsules. First was to bring down the fever. Second was to clean the intestine. Third was to relieve him from acidity. Schatz had heard doctor stating 102 degree temperature and about his disease. He was under the impression that he had infectious disease. He feared that his father might get infected of flue by staying in the room. So he did not want his father to stay in the room with him. Towards the end of story Schatz asked his fathers the time of his death. Shocked father inquired and cleared Schatz's misunderstanding and confusion about 'Temperature'. Soon Schatz felt relaxed and went to sleep. After that he recovered completely.

#### **2. Write a short paragraph on the end of the story.**

- ❖ Towards the end of story Schatz asked his father the time of his death. There was a misunderstanding in his mind. When shocked father inquired he came to know about the confusion in Schatz's mind. At a school in France Schatz was told by his friends that nobody could live with 44 degree temperature. Father cleared Schatz's misunderstanding by explaining him the difference between two thermometers, 1. Celsius Thermometer, 2. Fahrenheit Thermometer. His father also gave him example of miles and kilometers to clear this confusion. Soon Schatz felt relaxed and went to sleep. So after a day's wait

father succeeded in bringing his son back to positive mental state. After that he recovered completely. Thus it is a happy end of the story depicting good father - son relationship.

### **3. Character sketch of Schatz:**

❖ Title of the story actually reveals the real mental state of Schatz. Schatz, a nine year old boy, thought like he was swinging between death and life. Schatz actually had a flu and high fever. He stayed in bed, but did not pay any attention to his surrounding, he did not listen to the story his father read to him. He only stared at the foot of the bed, looking very strangely. Schatz is a character that makes reader more serious when we associate it with untimely death. He actually conveys an idea of youth and innocence throughout "A Day's Wait". His concept of comparing body temperature with that of weather temperature makes reader feel pity for him. In real sense he was quite cautious about temperature and sure about his death. But when father cleared his presumption Schatz was back to his childhood, his original behavior. His crying at little things that were of no importance conveys that he is back to his normal life.

### **4. Schatz's Father:**

Character of Schatz's father is revealed more in the story as a caring father. Prime task he had taken was to spend time with his son.

❖ He read "Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates" aloud to comfort his son. But he was unable to divert his attention.

❖ Throughout the story he keeps on answering questions coming to Schatz's mind. He accompanied Schatz and also gave him his medicine and a glass of water.

❖ He also corrected fault in a previous mindset of Schatz. Schatz believed that one cannot live with forty-four degrees and he had actually more than 100 degree temperature. Father quickly explained his son about the difference between Fahrenheit and Celsius thermometers by comparing them to miles and kilometers. After this explanation Schatz relaxed slowly and slept. He recovered quickly and next day he was back to his normal life. Thus his father plays important role to pacify Schatz's anxiety.