



O. Henry

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Exercises

Answer the following questions.

1. What are some of the signs of approaching winter referred to in the text?

Answer: Some of the signs of approaching winter are birds begin to fly south, people want new warm coats and dead leaves falling.

2. Write 'True' or 'False' against each of the following.

(i) Soapy did not want to go to prison.

(ii) Soapy had been to prison several times.

(iii) It was not possible for Soapy to survive in the city through the winter.

(iv) Soapy hated to Answer: questions of a personal nature.

Answer: (i) False

(ii) True

(iii) False

(iv) True

3. What was Soapy's first plan? Why did it not work?

Answer: Soapy's first plan was to have dinner at some fine restaurant and after that he would say that he had no money to pay so that cop will arrest him and the judge would sentence him for three months in the prison on Blackwell's Island.

This plan did not work because the head waiter saw his broken old shoes and the torn clothes that covered his legs. Strong and ready hands turned Soapy around and moved him quietly and quickly outside the restaurant.

4. "But the cop's mind would not consider Soapy". What did the cop not consider, and why?

Answer: The cop's mind didn't consider Soapy because the men who break windows do not stop there to talk to cops. They run away as fast as they can. The cop saw a man further along the street, running and they ran after him.

5. "We have orders to let them shout". What is the policeman referring to?

Answer: The policeman referring to the orders that allowed college to shout as they would not hurt anything. He said this to a man standing near him when Soapy shouted as if he was drunk thinking that Soapy is a college boy.

6. Write 'True' or 'False' against each of the following.

(i) Soapy stole a man's umbrella.

(ii) The owner of the umbrella offered to give it to Soapy.

(iii) The man had stolen the umbrella that was now Soapy's.

(iv) Soapy threw away the umbrella

Answer:

(i) True

(ii) False

- (iii) True
- (iv) True

7. "There was a sudden and wonderful change in his soul". What brought about the change in Soapy?

Answer: When Soapy came near his old home, he remembered his old days and his childhood life. He saw his worthless days, his wrong desires, his dead hopes, the lost power of his mind. These made sudden and wonderful change in his soul. His heart answered this change in his soul. He would fight to change his life, pull himself up, out of the mud and make a man of himself again.

Discuss the following topics in groups.

1. Suppose no cop came at the end. What would Soapy's life be like through the winter?

Answer: If no cop came at the end, there would have been significant and positive changes in his life. He would have looked for the man who had offered him a job and able to live a respectable life in the society. The changes brought in his soul may have changed his whole life and he might have given up his bad habits as he was determined. The story had an happy ending with Soapy as a respectful man.

2. Retell an episode in the story which is a good example of irony in a situation.

Answer: The ironic episode in the story is when Soapy came to his old home. It's memory changed his mind and made him strong willing person who was ready to brought positive changes in his life. "Here was his old childhood home. Through one window, he could see a soft light shining. That had been his living room, where he had spent many happy peaceful moments. Sweet music came to Soapy's ears and seemed to hold him there. The moon was above, peaceful and bright. There were few people passing. He could hear birds high above him. And the music that came from the room held Soapy there, for he had known it well long ago. In those days, his life contained such things as mothers and flowers and high hopes and friends and clean thoughts and clean clothes. There was a sudden and wonderful change in his soul. He saw with sick fear how he had fallen. He saw his worthless days, his wrong desires, his dead hopes, the lost power of his mind. And also, in a moment, his heart answered this change in his soul. He would fight to change his life. He would pull himself up, out of the mud. He would make a man of himself again."

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