

# MINDSCAPES

**English Text Book (Second Language)**

**XI & XII**

With financial aid from the Government of West Bengal,  
this book is to be distributed to students of XI  
free of cost. This book is not for sale.



**West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education**

West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education

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## THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

### PREAMBLE

**WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AND TO SECURE TO ALL ITS CITIZENS :**

**JUSTICE**, social, economic and political;

**LIBERTY** of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

**EQUALITY** of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all;

**FRATERNITY** assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

**IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY** this twenty-sixth day of November 1949, do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**



## PREFACE

The Expert Committee on School Education in collaboration with the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education has developed *Mindscapes* as English (Second Language) textbook for classes XI and XII to be studied in all Government, Government sponsored, Government aided and Government affiliated schools of West Bengal.

The delight of meeting great minds, the discovery of new worlds, the excitement of facing different real-life situations and characters and the sensitising of the mind and the soul come to us through the experience of reading and responding to good literature. That is what the selections in *Mindscapes* aim to do.

In *Mindscapes*, learners are exposed to a wide range of literary English texts.

The texts are an interesting mix of classic and contemporary selections of prose and poetry. There is an assortment of Indian and global texts in a variety of genres so that students can enjoy the richness of literature in its various forms. A play has also been included in the syllabus for class XII. Serious thought has gone into ensuring that the choice of texts are sensitive, relevant and thought provoking so that students become more insightful and responsive in their reading of literature.

The Government has decided to distribute this book free of cost. We are grateful to Dr. Partha Chatterjee, the Minister In-Charge, Department of School and Higher Education, Government of West Bengal, for his initiative.

Suggestions, views and comments to improve the book are welcome.

January, 2017

Vidyasagar Bhavan

**Dr. Mahua Das**

**President**

**West Bengal Council of  
Higher Secondary Education**



## **FOREWORD**

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal Smt. Mamata Banerjee constituted The Expert Committee on School Education to review the pedagogical aspects of school curriculum, syllabus and textbooks in 2011.

The committee in collaboration with the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education has developed *Mindscapes* as English (Second Language) textbook for classes XI and XII to be studied in all Government, Government sponsored, Government aided and Government affiliated schools of West Bengal.

This collection is a rich composite of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama from the best known writers in the world, including India. The texts have been selected according to the age-appropriateness of learners. There is a paradigm shift in question format and marks distribution. Project has been included in the higher secondary curriculum. These changes are showing positive results in students acquisition of English as second language. The Government has decided to distribute this book free of cost so that all students may easily benefit from it. We are grateful to Dr. Partha Chatterjee, the Minister In-Charge, Department of School and Higher Education, Government of West Bengal, for his initiative.

We express our gratitude to Prof. (Dr.) Mahua Das for her valuable suggestions. We are grateful to those who have directly or indirectly contributed to the development of this book

January, 2017

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CLASS XI  
PROSE





# Leela's Friend



R. K. Narayan

**Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanswami** (1906-2001) is one of the most widely read Indian writers in English. His famous works include *Swami and Friends*(1935), *The English Teacher* (1945), *The Guide* (1958). Apart from novels, Narayan displayed versatility as an author in his essays, short stories, memoirs and travel books.

*Leela's Friend* is taken from R.K. Narayan's popular short story collection *The Malgudi Days*. The story explores the issues of the interaction between different social classes, friendship and trust, prejudice and exploitation.

**S**idda was hanging about the gate at a moment when Mr Sivasanker was standing in the front veranda of his house, brooding over the servant problem.

"Sir, do you want a servant?" Sidda asked.

"Come in," said Mr Sivasanker. As Sidda opened the gate and came in, Mr Sivasanker subjected him to a scrutiny and said to himself, "Doesn't seem to be a bad sort ... At any rate, the fellow looks tidy."

"Where were you before?" he asked.

Sidda said, "In a bungalow there," and indicated a vague somewhere, "in the doctor's house."

"What is his name?"

"I don't know master," Sidda said. "He lives near the market."

"Why did they send you away?"

"They left the town, master," Sidda said, giving the stock reply.

Mr Sivasanker was unable to make up his mind. He called his wife .

She looked at Sidda and said, "He doesn't seem to me worse than the others we have had."

---

*brooding*: thinking deeply

*scrutiny* : close examination

*vague* : not clear

Leela, their five-year-old daughter, came out, looked at Sidda and gave a cry of joy. "Oh Father!" she said, "I like him. Don't send him away. Let us keep him in our house." And that decided it.

Sidda was given two meals a day and four rupees a month, in return for which he washed clothes, tended the garden, ran errands, chopped wood and looked after Leela.

"Sidda, come and play!" Leela would cry, and Sidda had to drop any work he might be doing and run to her, as she stood in the front garden with a red ball in her hand. His company made her supremely happy. She flung the ball at him and he flung it back. And then she said, "Now throw the ball into the sky." Sidda clutched the ball, closed his eyes for a second and threw the ball up. When the ball came down again, he said, "Now this has touched the moon and come. You see here a little bit of the moon sticking." Leela keenly examined the ball for traces of the moon and said, "I don't see it." "You must be very quick about it," said Sidda, "because it will all evaporate and go back to the moon. Now hurry up ...." He covered the ball tightly with his fingers and allowed her to peep through a little gap.

"Ah yes," said Leela. "I see the moon, but is the moon very wet?"

"Certainly it is," Sidda said.

"What is in the sky, Sidda?"

"God," he said.

"If we stand on the roof and stretch our arms, can we touch the sky?"

"Not if we stand on the roof here," he said. "But if you stand on a coconut tree you can touch the sky."

"Have you done it?" asked Leela.

"Yes, many times," said Sidda. "Whenever there is a big moon, I climb a coconut tree and touch it."

"Does the moon know you?"

"Yes, very well. Now come with me. I will show you something nice."

They were standing near the rose plant. He said, pointing, "You see the moon there, don't you?"

*errand:* a short trip for undertaking a task

"Yes."

"Now come with me," he said, and took her to the backyard. He stopped near the well and pointed up. The moon was there, too. Leela clapped her hands and screamed in wonder, "The moon here! It was there! How is it?"

"I have asked it to follow us about."

Leela ran in and told her mother, "Sidda knows the moon."

At dusk he carried her in and she held a class for him. She had a box filled with catalogues, illustrated books and stumps of pencils. It gave her great joy to play the teacher to Sidda. She made him squat on the floor with a pencil between his fingers and a catalogue in front of him. She had another pencil and a catalogue and commanded, "Now write." And he had to try and copy whatever she wrote in the pages of her catalogue. She knew two or three letters of the alphabet and could draw a kind of cat and crow. But none of these could Sidda even remotely copy. She said, examining his effort "Is this how I have drawn the crow? Is this how I have drawn the B?" She pitied him, and redoubled her efforts to teach him. But that good fellow, though an adept at controlling the moon, was utterly incapable of plying the pencil. Consequently, it looked as though Leela would keep him there, pinned to his seat till his stiff, inflexible wrist cracked. He sought relief by saying, "I think your mother is calling you in to dinner." Leela would drop the pencil and run out of the room, and the school hour would end.

After dinner Leela ran to her bed. Sidda had to be ready with a story. He sat down on the floor near the bed and told incomparable stories: of animals in the jungle, of gods in heaven, of magicians who could conjure up golden castles and fill them with little princesses and their pets ....

Day by day she clung closer to him. She insisted upon having his company all her waking hours. She was at his side when he was working in the garden or chopping wood, and accompanied him when he was sent on errands.

One evening he went out to buy sugar and Leela went with him. When they came home, Leela's mother noticed that a gold chain Leela had been wearing was missing. "Where is your chain?" Leela looked into her shirt, searched and said, "I don't know." Her mother gave her a slap and said, "How many times have I told you to take it off and put it in the box?"

*squat* : to sit on heels

*catalogue* : a list of things

*remotely* : by far

*redoubled* : increased

*plying*: wielding

*conjure* : summon

"Sidda! Sidda!" she shouted a moment later. As Sidda came in, Leela's mother threw a glance at him and thought the fellow already looked queer. She asked him about the chain. His throat went dry. He blinked and answered that he did not know. She mentioned the police and shouted at him. She had to go back into the kitchen for a moment because she had left something in the oven. Leela followed her, whining, "Give me some sugar, Mother, I am hungry." When they came out again and called, "Sidda, Sidda!" there was no answer. Sidda had vanished into the night.

Mr. Sivasanker came home an hour later, grew very excited over all this, went to the police station and lodged a complaint.

After her meal Leela refused to go to bed. "I won't sleep unless Sidda comes and tells me stories. I don't like you, Mother. You are always abusing and worrying Sidda. Why are you so rough?"

"But he has taken away your chain .... "

"Let him. It doesn't matter. Tell me a story."

"Sleep, sleep," said Mother, attempting to make her lie down on her lap.

"Tell me a story, Mother," Leela said. It was utterly impossible for her mother to think of a story now. Her mind was disturbed. The thought of Sidda made her panicky. The fellow, with his knowledge of the household, might come in at night and loot. She shuddered to think what a villain she had been harbouring all these days. It was God's mercy that he hadn't killed the child for the chain. "Sleep, Leela, sleep," she cajoled. "Can't you tell the story of the elephant?" Leela asked.

"No."

Leela made a noise of depreciation and asked, "Why should not Sidda sit in our chair, Mother?" Mother didn't answer the question. Leela said a moment later, "Sidda is gone because he wouldn't be allowed to sleep inside the house just as we do. Why should he always be made to sleep outside the house, Mother? I think he is angry with us, Mother." By the time Sivasanker returned, Leela had fallen asleep. He said, "What a risk we took in engaging that fellow. It seems he is an old criminal. He has been in jail half a dozen times for stealing

*queer:* unusual

*cajole:* to urge gently

*harbouring:* giving shelter to

*deprecation:* disapproval

jewellery from children. From the description I gave, the inspector was able to identify him in a moment."

"Where is he now?" asked the wife.

"The police know his haunts. They will pick him up very soon, don't worry. The inspector was furious that I didn't consult him before employing him ...."

Four days later, just as Father was coming home from the office, a police inspector and a constable brought in Sidda. Sidda stood with bowed head. Leela was overjoyed. "Sidda! Sidda!" she cried, and ran down the steps to meet him.

"Don't go near him," the inspector said, stopping her.

"Why not?"

"He is a thief. He has taken away your gold chain."

"Let him. I will have a new chain," Leela said, and all of them laughed. And then Mr Sivasanker spoke to Sidda; and then his wife addressed him with a few words on his treachery. They then asked him where he had put the chain.

"I have not taken it," Sidda said feebly, looking at the ground.

"Why did you run away without telling us?" asked Leela's mother. There was no answer.

Leela's face became red. "Oh, policemen, leave him alone. I want to play with him."

"My dear child," said the police inspector, "he is a thief."

"Let him be," Leela replied haughtily.

"What a devil you must be to steal a thing from such an innocent child!" remarked the inspector. "Even now it is not too late. Return it. I will let you go provided you promise not to do such a thing again." Leela's father and mother, too, joined in this appeal. Leela felt disgusted with the whole business and said, "Leave him alone, he hasn't taken the chain." "You are not at all a reliable prosecution witness, my child," observed the inspector humorously.

"No, he hasn't taken it!" Leela screamed.

Her father said, "Baby, if you don't behave, I will be very angry with you."

Half an hour later, the inspector said to the constable, "Take him to the station. I think I shall have to sit with him tonight." The constable took Sidda by

*haunt* : hide out

*consult* : get advice from

*treachery* : betrayal

*prosecution witness* : someone who provides evidence in a legal court

the hand and turned to go. Leela ran behind them crying, "Don't take him. Leave him here, leave him here." She clung to Sidda's hand. He looked at her mutely, like an animal. Mr Sivasanker carried Leela back into the house. Leela was in tears.

Every day when Mr Sivasanker came home he was asked by his wife, "Any news of the jewel?" and by his daughter, "Where is Sidda?"

"They still have him in the lockup, though he is very stubborn and won't say anything about the jewel," said Mr Sivasanker.

"Bah! What a rough fellow he must be!" said his wife with a shiver.

"Oh, these fellows who have been in jail once or twice lose all fear. Nothing can make them confess."

A few days later, putting her hand into the tamarind pot in the kitchen, Leela's mother picked up the chain. She took it to the tap and washed off the coating of tamarind on it. It was unmistakably Leela's chain. When it was shown to her, Leela said, "Give it here. I want to wear the chain."

"How did it get into the tamarind pot?" Mother asked.

"Somehow," replied Leela.

"Did you put it in?" asked Mother.

"Yes."

"When?"

"Long ago, the other day."

"Why didn't you say so before?"

"I don't know," said Leela.

When Father came home and was told, he said, "The child must not have any chain hereafter. Didn't I tell you that I saw her carrying it in her hand once or twice? She must have dropped it into the pot sometime ... And all this bother on account of her." "What about Sidda?" asked Mother.

"I will tell the inspector tomorrow .. in any case, we couldn't have kept a criminal like him in the house."

# Karma



Khushwant Singh

**Khushwant Singh** (1915-2014) has won fame as a journalist as well as a fiction writer. *With Malice towards One and All* was a very popular weekly newspaper column penned by him. He was editor to the prominent newsweekly known as *The Illustrated Weekly*. Khushwant Singh is also well known for his poems and short stories.

Karma is taken from *The Collected Short Stories of Khushwant Singh* (2005). The story is written with a note of irony. The author shows concern with the issue of cultural identity.

Sir Mohan Lal looked at himself in the mirror of a first class waiting room at the railway station. The mirror was obviously made in India. The red oxide at its back had come off at several places and long lines of translucent glass cut across its surface. Sir Mohan smiled at the mirror with an air of pity and patronage.

"You are so very much like everything else in this country, inefficient, dirty, indifferent," he murmured.

The mirror smiled back at Sir Mohan.

"You are a bit of all right, old chap," it said. "Distinguished, efficient—even handsome. That neatly-trimmed moustache—the suit from Saville Row with the carnation in the buttonhole—the aroma of eau de cologne, talcum powder and scented soap all about you! Yes, old fellow, you are a bit of all right."

Sir Mohan threw out his chest, smoothed his Balliol tie for the umpteenth time and waved a goodbye to the mirror.

He glanced at his watch. There was still time for a quick one.

"Koi Hai!"

A bearer in white livery appeared through a wire gauze door.

"Ek Chota," ordered Sir Mohan, and sank into a large cane chair to drink and ruminate. Outside the waiting room, Sir Mohan Lal's luggage lay piled

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*carnation* : a reddish, pink flower

*translucent* : allowing light to pass

*umpteenth* : numerous times

*ruminante* : think deeply

along the wall. On a small grey steel trunk, Lachmi, Lady Mohan Lal, sat chewing a betel leaf and fanning herself with a newspaper.

She was short and fat and in her middle forties. She wore a dirty white sari with a red border. On one side of her nose glistened a diamond nose-ring, and she had several gold bangles on her arms. She had been talking to the bearer until Sir Mohan had summoned him inside. As soon as he had gone, she hailed a passing railway coolie.

“Where does the zenana stop?”

“Right at the end of the platform.”

The coolie flattened his turban to make a cushion, hoisted the steel trunk on his head, and moved down the platform. Lady Lal picked up her brass tiffin-carrier and ambled along behind him. On the way she stopped by a hawker’s stall to replenish her silver betel leaf case, and then joined the coolie. She sat down on her steel trunk (which the coolie had put down) and started talking to him.

“Are the trains very crowded on these lines?”

“These days all trains are crowded, but you’ll find room in the zenana.”

“Then I might as well get over the bother of eating.”

Lady Lal opened the brass carrier and took out a bundle of cramped chapattis and some mango pickle. While she ate, the coolie sat opposite her on his haunches, drawing lines in the gravel with his finger.

“Are you travelling alone, sister?”

“No, I am with my master, brother. He is in the waiting room. He travels first class. He is a vizier and a barrister, and meets so many officers and Englishmen in the trains—and I am only a native woman. I can’t understand English and don’t know their ways, so I keep to my zenana inter-class.”

Lachmi chatted away merrily. She was fond of a little gossip and had no one to talk to at home. Her husband never had any time to spare for her. She lived in the upper storey of the house and he on the ground floor. He did not like her poor illiterate relatives hanging around his bungalow, so they never came. He came up to her once in a while at night and stayed for a few minutes. He just ordered her about in anglicised Hindustani, and she obeyed passively. These nocturnal visits had, however, borne no fruit.

**zenana compartment:** train compartment reserved for ladies in olden times

**ambled:** walked slowly in a relaxed way

**replenish:** to refill or fill again

**vizier:** important government official

The signal came down and the clanging of the bell announced the approaching train. Lady Lal hurriedly finished off her meal. She got up, still licking the stone of the pickled mango. She emitted a long, loud belch as she went to the public tap to rinse her mouth and wash her hands. After washing she dried her mouth and hands with the loose end of her sari, and walked back to her steel trunk, belching and thanking the gods for the favour of a filling meal.

The train steamed in. Lachmi found herself facing an almost empty inter-class zenana compartment next to the guard's van, at the tail end of the train. The rest of the train was packed. She heaved her squat, bulky frame through the door and found a seat by the window. She produced a two-anna bit from a knot in her sari and dismissed the coolie. She then opened her betel case and made herself two betel leaves charged with a red and white paste, minced betel nuts and cardamoms. These she thrust into her mouth till her cheeks bulged on both sides. Then she rested her chin on her hands and sat gazing idly at the jostling crowd on the platform.

The arrival of the train did not disturb Sir Mohan Lal's sang-froid. He continued to sip his scotch and ordered the bearer to tell him when he had moved the luggage to a first-class compartment. Excitement, bustle and hurry were exhibitions of bad breeding, and Sir Mohan was eminently well-bred. He wanted everything 'ticky-boo' and orderly. In his five years abroad, Sir Mohan had acquired the manners and attitudes of the upper classes. He rarely spoke Hindustani. When he did, it was like an Englishman's-only the very necessary words and properly anglicised. But he fancied his English, finished and refined at no less a place than the University of Oxford. He was fond of conversation, and like a cultured Englishman, he could talk on almost any subject-books, politics, people. How frequently had he heard English people say that he spoke like an Englishman!

Sir Mohan wondered if he would be travelling alone. It was a Cantonment and some English officers might be on the train. His heart warmed at the prospect of an impressive conversation. He never showed any sign of eagerness to talk to the English as most Indians did. Nor was he loud, aggressive and opinionated like them. He went about his business with an expressionless matter-of-factness. He would retire to his corner by the window and get out a copy of *The Times*. He

*emitted* : let out

*belch* : to let out gas from the stomach through the mouth

*squat* : here, short, thick

*sang-froid* : ability to keep calm in difficult situations

*rickety boo* : old-fashioned British way of expressing perfection

*anglicised* : spoken like an Englishman

would fold it in a way in which the name of the paper was visible to others while he did the crossword puzzle. *The Times* always attracted attention. Someone would like to borrow it when he put it aside with a gesture signifying "I've finished with it." Perhaps someone would recognise his Balliol tie which he always wore while travelling. That would open a vista leading to a fairy-land of Oxford colleges, masters, dons, tutors, boat-races and rugger matches. If both *The Times* and the tie failed, Sir Mohan would 'Koi Hai' his bearer to get the Scotch out. Whiskey never failed with Englishmen. Then followed Sir Mohan's handsome gold cigarette case filled with English cigarettes. English cigarettes in India? How on earth did he get them? Sure he didn't mind? And Sir Mohan's understanding smile—of course he didn't. But could he use the Englishman as a medium to commune with his dear old England? Those five years of grey bags and gowns, of sports blazers and mixed doubles, of dinners at the inns of Court and nights at Piccadilly. Five years of a crowded glorious life. Worth far more than the forty-five in India with his dirty, vulgar countrymen, with sordid details of the road to success, of nocturnal visits to the upper storey and obese old Lachmi, smelling of sweat and raw onions.

Sir Mohan's thoughts were disturbed by the bearer announcing the installation of the Sahib's luggage in a first-class coupe next to the engine. Sir Mohan walked to his coupe with a studied gait. He was dismayed. The compartment was empty. With a sigh he sat down in a corner and opened the copy of *The Times* he had read several times before.

Sir Mohan looked out of the window down the crowded platform. His face lit up as he saw two English soldiers trudging along, looking in all the compartments for room. They had their haversacks slung behind their backs and walked unsteadily. Sir Mohan decided to welcome them, even though they were entitled to travel only second class. He would speak to the guard. One of the soldiers came up to the last compartment and stuck his face through the window. He surveyed the compartment and noticed the unoccupied berth.

"Ere, Bill," he shouted, "one 'ere."

His companion came up, also looked in, and looked at Sir Mohan.

*vista* : view of a region

*rugger*: informal British word for the rugby game

*sordid*: repulsive

*nocturnal* : relating to night

*dismayed* : disappointed

*coupe* : train compartment

*gait*: movement

"Get the nigger out," he muttered to his companion .  
They opened the door, and turned to the half-smiling, half-protesting Sir Mohan.

"Reserved!" yelled Bill.

"Janta-Reserved. Army-Fauj," exclaimed Jim, pointing to his khaki shirt.

"Ek Dum jao—get out!"

"I say, I say, surely," protested Sir Mohan in his Oxford accent. The soldiers paused. It almost sounded like English, but they knew better than to trust their inebriated ears. The engine whistled and the guard waved his green flag.

They picked up Sir Mohan's suitcase and flung it on to the platform. Then followed his thermos flask, briefcase, bedding and *The Times*. Sir Mohan was livid with rage.

"Preposterous, preposterous," he shouted, hoarse with anger. "I'll have you arrested-guard, guard!"

Bill and Jim paused again. It did sound like English, but it was too much of the King's for them.

"Keep yer ruddy mouth shut!" And Jim struck Sir Mohan flat on the face.

The engine gave another short whistle and the train began to move. The soldiers caught Sir Mohan by the arms and flung him out of the train. He reeled backwards, tripped on his bedding, and landed on the suitcase.

"Toodle-oo!"

Sir Mohan's feet were glued to the earth and he lost his speech. He stared at the lighted windows of the train going past him in quickening tempo. The tail-end of the train appeared with a red light and the guard standing in the open doorway with the flags in his hands. In the inter-class zenana compartment was Lachmi, fair and fat, on whose nose the diamond nose-ring glistened against the station lights. Her mouth was bloated with betel saliva which she had been storing up to spit as soon as the train had cleared the station. As the train sped past the lighted part of the platform, Lady Lal spat and sent a jet of red dribble flying across like a dart.

*nigger* : insulting call to a non-white person

*inebriated* : drunk

*toodle-oo* : goodbye

*preposterous* : unbelievable

# Jimmy Valentine



O. Henry

William Sydney Porter (1862-1910), popularly known as O. Henry, was a noted short story writer from the United States of America. His famous short story collections include *Cabbages and Kings* (1904), *The Trimmed Lamp* (1910) and *The Gentle Grafters* (1919).

This short story has been taken from the collection *Roads of Destiny* (1909). The story is marked by humour and sentimentality. The surprise at the end is a typifying characteristic of O. Henry's short stories.

A guard came to the prison shoe-shop, where Jimmy Valentine was assiduously stitching uppers, and escorted him to the front office. There the warden handed Jimmy his pardon, which had been signed that morning by the governor. Jimmy took it in a tired kind of way. He had served nearly ten months of a four year sentence. He had expected to stay only about three months, at the longest. When a man with as many friends on the outside as Jimmy Valentine had is received in the 'stir' it is hardly worthwhile to cut his hair.

"Now, Valentine," said the warden, "you'll go out in the morning. Brace up, and make a man of yourself. You're not a bad fellow at heart. Stop cracking safes, and live straight."

"Me?" said Jimmy, in surprise. "Why, I never cracked a safe in my life." "Oh, no," laughed the warden. "Of course not. Let's see, now. How was it you happened to get sent up on that Springfield job? Was it because you wouldn't prove an alibi for fear of compromising somebody in extremely high-toned society? Or was it simply a case of a mean old jury that had it in for you? It's always one or the other with you innocent victims."

"Me?" said Jimmy, still blankly virtuous. "Why, warden, I never was in Springfield in my life!"

---

*assiduously* : tirelessly

*upper* : the top part of a shoe

*stir* : American slang for a prison

*brace up* : prepare

*cracking* : here, forcing open

*alibi* : an excuse

"Take him back, Cronin!" said the warden, "and fix him up with outgoing clothes. Unlock him at seven in the morning, and let him come to the bull-pen. Better think over my advice, Valentine."

At a quarter past seven on the next morning Jimmy stood in the warden's outer office. He had on a suit of the villainously fitting, ready-made clothes and a pair of the stiff, squeaky shoes that the state furnishes to its discharged compulsory guests.

The clerk handed him a railroad ticket and the five-dollar bill with which the law expected him to rehabilitate himself into good citizenship and prosperity. The warden gave him a cigar, and shook hands. Valentine, 9762, was chronicled on the books, "Pardoned by Governor," and Mr James Valentine walked out into the sunshine.

Disregarding the song of the birds, the waving green trees, and the smell of the flowers, Jimmy headed straight for a restaurant. There he tasted the first sweet joys of liberty in the shape of a broiled chicken and a bottle of white wine—followed by a cigar a grade better than the one the warden had given him. From there he proceeded leisurely to the depot. He tossed a quarter into the hat of a blind man sitting by the door, and boarded his train. Three hours set him down in a little town near the state line. He went to the cafe of one Mike Dolan and shook hands with Mike, who was alone behind the bar.

"Sorry we couldn't make it sooner, Jimmy, me boy," said Mike. "But we had that protest from Springfield to buck against, and the governor nearly balked. Feeling all right?"

"Fine," said Jimmy. "Got my key?"

He got his key and went upstairs, unlocking the door of a room at the rear. Everything was just as he had left it. There on the floor was still Ben Price's collar-button that had been torn from that eminent detective's shirt-band when they had overpowered Jimmy to arrest him.

Pulling out from the wall a folding-bed, Jimmy slid back a panel in the wall and dragged out a dust-covered suitcase. He opened this and gazed fondly at

***bull-pen:*** the area in a baseball field where players practise throwing; here, the warden's office

***rehabilitate :*** to help get back to a good and useful life

***chronicled : recorded***

***quarter :*** coin of a small denomination

***to buck against :*** to oppose

***balked :*** stopped

the finest set of burglar's tools in the East. It was a complete set, made of specially tempered steel, the latest designs in drills, punches, braces and bits, jimmies, clamps, and augers, with two or three novelties, invented by Jimmy himself, in which he took pride. Over nine hundred dollars they had cost him to have made at —, a place where they make such things for the profession.

In half an hour Jimmy went down stairs and through the cafe. He was now dressed in tasteful and well-fitting clothes, and carried his dusted and cleaned suitcase in his hand.

"Got anything on?" asked Mike Dolan, genially.

"Me?" said Jimmy, in a puzzled tone. "I don't understand. I'm representing the New York Amalgamated Short Snap Biscuit Cracker and Frazzled Wheat Company."

This statement delighted Mike to such an extent that Jimmy had to take a seltzer-and-milk on the spot. He never touched "hard" drinks.

A week after the release of Valentine, 9762, there was a neat job of safe-burglary done in Richmond, Indiana, with no clue to the author. A scant eight hundred dollars was all that was secured. Two weeks after that a patented, improved, burglar-proof safe in Logansport was opened like a cheese to the tune of fifteen hundred dollars, currency; securities and silver untouched. That began to interest the rogue-catchers. Then an old-fashioned bank-safe in Jefferson City became active and threw out of its crater an eruption of bank-notes amounting to five thousand dollars. The losses were now high enough to bring the matter up into Ben Price's class of work. By comparing notes, a remarkable similarity in the methods of the burglaries was noticed. Ben Price investigated the scenes of the robberies, and was heard to remark:

"That's Dandy Jim Valentine's autograph. He's resumed business. Look at that combination knob-jerked out as easy as pulling up a radish in wet weather. He's got the only clamps that can do it. And look how clean those tumblers were punched out! Jimmy never has to drill but one hole. Yes, I guess I want Mr. Valentine. He'll do his bit next time without any short-time or clemency foolishness."

*jimmies*: American slang word for metal bars used to break open windows

*augers*: tools used for making holes

*seltzer*: water that is bubbly

*clemency*: pardon

*tumblers*: slang for locks

Ben Price knew Jimmy's habits. He had learned them while working on the Springfield case. Long jumps, quick get-aways, no confederates, and a taste for good society-these ways had helped Mr Valentine to become noted as a successful dodger of retribution. It was given out that Ben Price had taken up the trail of the elusive cracksman, and other people with burglar-proof safes felt more at ease.

One afternoon Jimmy Valentine and his suitcase climbed out of the mail-hack in Elmore, a little town five miles off the railroad down in the black-jack country of Arkansas. Jimmy, looking like an athletic young senior just home from college, went down the board side-walk toward the hotel.

A young lady crossed the street, passed him at the corner and entered a door over which was the sign, "The Elmore Bank." Jimmy Valentine looked into her eyes, forgot what he was, and became another man. She lowered her eyes and coloured slightly. Young men of Jimmy's style and looks were scarce in Elmore.

Jimmy collared a boy loafing on the steps of the bank as if he were one of the stockholders, and began to ask him questions about the town, feeding him dimes at intervals. By and by the young lady came out, looking royally unconscious of the young man with the suit-case, and went her way.

"Isn't that young lady Polly Simpson?" asked Jimmy, with specious guile.

"Naw," said the boy. "She's Annabel Adams. Her pa owns this bank. Why'd you come to Elmore for? Is that a gold watch-chain? I'm going to get a bulldog. Got any more dimes?"

Jimmy went to the Planters' Hotel, registered as Ralph D. Spencer, and engaged a room. He leaned on the desk and declared his platform to the clerk. He said he had come to Elmore to look for a location to go into business. How was the shoe business, now, in the town? He had thought of the shoe business. Was there an opening?

The clerk was impressed by the clothes and manner of Jimmy. He, himself, was something of a pattern of fashion to the thinly gilded youth of Elmore, but he now perceived his shortcomings. While trying to figure out Jimmy's manner of tying his four-in-hand he cordially gave information.

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*mail-hack* : mail train

*confederates*: partners

*dodger* : one who avoids

*retribution*: severe punishment

*specious*: pretending

*guile*: the use of dishonest methods to deceive someone

*four-in-hand*: a method of knotting a necktie

Yes, there ought to be a good opening in the shoe line. There wasn't an exclusive shoe-store in the place. The dry-goods and general stores handled them. Business in all lines was fairly good. Hoped Mr Spencer would decide to locate in Elmore. He would find it a pleasant town to live in, and the people very sociable.

Mr Spencer thought he would stop over in the town a few days and look over the situation. No, the clerk needn't call the boy. He would carry up his suitcase, himself; it was rather heavy.

Mr Ralph Spencer, the phoenix that arose from Jimmy Valentine's ashes—ashes left by the flame of a sudden and alterative attack of love—remained in Elmore, and prospered. He opened a shoe—store and secured a good run of trade.

Socially he was also a success, and made many friends. And he accomplished the wish of his heart. He met Miss Annabel Adams, and became more and more captivated by her charms.

At the end of a year the situation of Mr Ralph Spencer was this: he had won the respect of the community, his shoe-store was flourishing, and he and Annabel were engaged to be married in two weeks. Mr Adams, the typical, plodding, country banker, approved of Spencer. Annabel's pride in him almost equalled her affection. He was as much at home in the family of Mr Adams and that of Annabel's married sister as if he were already a member.

One day Jimmy sat down in his room and wrote this letter, which he mailed to the safe address of one of his old friends in St. Louis:

Dear Old Pal:

I want you to be at Sullivan's place, in Little Rock, next Wednesday night, at nine o'clock. I want you to wind up some little matters for me. And, also, I want to make you a present of my kit of tools. I know you'll be glad to get them—you couldn't duplicate the lot for a thousand dollars. Say, Billy, I've quit the old business—a year ago. I've got a nice store. I'm making an honest living, and I'm going to marry the finest girl on earth two weeks from now. It's the only life, Billy—the straight one. I wouldn't touch a dollar of another man's money now for a million. After I get married I'm going to sell out and go West, where there won't be so much danger of having old scores brought up against me. I tell you, Billy, she's an angel. She believes in me; and I wouldn't do another crooked thing for the whole world. Be sure to be at Sully's, for I must see you. I'll bring along the tools with me.

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*plodding* : walking slowly  
*scores* : here, criminal jobs

Your old friend,

Jimmy.

On the Monday night after Jimmy wrote this letter, Ben Price jogged unobtrusively into Elmore in a livery buggy. He lounged about town in his quiet way until he found out what he wanted to know. From the drug-store across the street from Spencer's shoe-store he got a good look at Ralph D. Spencer.

"Going to marry the banker's daughter are you, Jimmy?" said Ben to himself, softly. "Well, I don't know!"

The next morning Jimmy took breakfast at the Adamses. He was going to Little Rock that day to order his wedding-suit and buy something nice for Annabel. That would be the first time he had left town since he came to Elmore. It had been more than a year now since those last professional "jobs," and he thought he could safely venture out.

After breakfast quite a family party went downtown together—Mr Adams, Annabel, Jimmy, and Annabel's married sister with her two little girls, aged five and nine. They came by the hotel where Jimmy still boarded, and he ran up to his room and brought along his suit-case. Then they went on to the bank. There stood Jimmy's horse and buggy and Dolph Gibson, who was going to drive him over to the railroad station.

All went inside the high, carved oak railings into the banking-room—Jimmy included, for Mr Adams's future son-in-law was welcome anywhere. The clerks were pleased to be greeted by the good-looking, agreeable young man who was going to marry Miss Annabel. Jimmy set his suitcase down. Annabel, whose heart was bubbling with happiness and lively youth, put on Jimmy's hat, and picked up the suitcase. "Wouldn't I make a nice drummer?" said Annabel. "My! Ralph, how heavy it is? Feels like it was full of gold bricks."

"Lot of nickel-plated shoe-horns in there," said Jimmy coolly, "that I'm going to return. Thought I'd save express charges by taking them up. I'm getting awfully economical."

The Elmore Bank had just put in a new safe and vault. Mr Adams was very proud of it, and insisted on an inspection by everyone. The vault was a small one, but it had a new, patented door. It fastened with three solid steel bolts thrown simultaneously with a single handle, and had a time-lock. Mr

*unobtrusively* : unnoticed

drug-store : medicine shop

*livery buggy* : horse and carriage

Adams beamingly explained its workings to Mr Spencer, who showed a courteous but not too intelligent interest. The two children, May and Agatha, were delighted by the shining metal and funny clock and knobs.

While they were thus engaged Ben Price sauntered in and leaned on his elbow, looking casually inside between the railings. He told the teller that he didn't want anything; he was just waiting for a man he knew.

Suddenly there was a scream or two from the women, and a commotion.

Unperceived by the elders, May, the nine-year-old girl, in a spirit of play, had shut Agatha in the vault. She had then shot the bolts and turned the knob of the combination as she had seen Mr Adams do.

The old banker sprang to the handle and tugged at it for a moment. "The door can't be opened," he groaned. "The clock hasn't been wound nor the combination set."

Agatha's mother screamed again, hysterically.

"Hush!" said Mr Adams, raising his trembling hand. ' All be quiet for a moment. Agatha!" he called as loudly as he could. "Listen to me." During the following silence they could just hear the faint sound of the child wildly shrieking in the dark vault in a panic of terror.

"My precious darling!" wailed the mother. "She will die of fright! Open the door! Oh, break it open! Can't you men do something?"

"There isn't a man nearer than Little Rock who can open that door," said Mr Adams, in a shaky voice. "My God! Spencer, what shall we do? That child—she can't stand it long in there. There isn't enough air, and, besides, she'll go into convulsions from fright."

Agatha's mother, frantic now, beat the door of the vault with her hands. Somebody wildly suggested dynamite. Annabel turned to Jimmy, her large eyes full of anguish, but not yet despairing. To a woman nothing seems quite impossible to the powers of the man she worships.

"Can't you do something, *Ralph*—try, won't you?"

He looked at her with a queer, soft smile on his lips and in his keen eyes.

"Annabel," he said, "give me that rose you are wearing, will you?"

Hardly believing that she heard him alright, she unpinned the bud from the bosom of her dress, and placed it in his hand. Jimmy stuffed it into his vest-

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*convulsion* : violent twisting of inner muscles

pocket, threw off his coat and pulled up his shirt-sleeves. With that act Ralph D. Spencer passed away and Jimmy Valentine took his place.

"Get away from the door, all of you," he commanded, shortly.

He set his suitcase on the table, and opened it out flat. From that time on he seemed to be unconscious of the presence of anyone else. He laid out the shining, queer implements swiftly and orderly, whistling softly to himself as he always did when at work. In a deep silence and immovable, the others watched him as if under a spell.

In a minute Jimmy's pet drill was biting smoothly into the steel door. In ten minutes-breaking his own burglarious record-he threw back the bolts and opened the door.

Agatha, almost collapsed, but safe, was gathered into her mother's arms.

Jimmy Valentine put on his coat, and walked outside the railings towards the front door. As he went he thought he heard a far-away voice that he once knew call "Ralph!" But he never hesitated.

At the door a big man stood somewhat in his way.

"Hello, Ben!" said Jimmy, still with his strange smile. "Got around at last, have you? Well, let's go. I don't know that it makes much difference, now."

And then Ben Price acted rather strangely.

"Guess you're mistaken, Mr Spencer," he said. "Don't believe I recognise you. Your buggy's waiting for you, ain't it?"

And Ben Price turned and strolled down the street.

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*implements* : tools

*strolled* : walked casually

# Nobel Lecture



M o t h e r T e r e s a

**Mother Teresa** (1910-1997) joined the Roman Catholic church as a nun at a very early age. She came to India when she was eighteen. She spent many years in Calcutta. She began to work as a religious teacher and later founded 'The Missionaries of Charity'. She devoted her entire life helping the poor and the needy. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997.

Mother Teresa imparts a message of love. She insists that the happiness of humanity depends on universal love. She puts great emphasis on a smile, for as she says, "Smile is the beginning of love."

**A**s we have gathered here together to thank God for the Nobel Peace Prize I think it will be beautiful that we pray the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi which always surprises me very much—we pray this prayer every day after Holy Communion, because it is very fitting for each one of us, and I always wonder that 4—500 years ago as St. Francis of Assisi composed this prayer that they had the same difficulties that we have today, as we compose this prayer that fits very nicely for us also. I think some of you already have got it - so we will pray together.

Let us thank God for the opportunity that we all have together today, for this gift of peace that reminds us that we have been created to live that peace, and Jesus became man to bring that good news to the poor. He being God became man in all things like us except sin, and he proclaimed very clearly that he had come to give the good news. The news was peace to all of good will and this is something that we all want—the peace of heart—and God loved the world so much that he gave his son—it was a giving—it is as much as if to say it hurt God

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*proclaimed*: declared

to give, because he loved the world so much that he gave his son, and he gave him to Virgin Mary, and what did she do with him?

As soon as he came in her life—immediately she went in haste to give that good news, and as she came into the house of her cousin, the unborn child in the womb of Elizabeth leapt with joy. That little unborn child was the first messenger of peace. He recognised the Prince of Peace, he recognised that Christ has come to bring the good news for you and for me. And as if that was not enough—he died on the cross to show that greater love, and he died for you and for me and for that leper and for that man dying of hunger and that naked person lying in the street not only of Calcutta, but of Africa, and New York, and London, and Oslo—and insisted that we love one another as he loves each one of us. And we read that in the Gospel very clearly—love as I have loved you—as I love you—as the Father has loved me, I love you—and the harder the Father loved him, he gave him to us, and how much we love one another, we, too, must give each other until it hurts. It is not enough for us to say: I love God, but I do not love my neighbour. St John says you are a liar if you say you love God and you won't love your neighbour. How can you love God whom you do not see, if you do not love your neighbour whom you see, whom you touch, with whom you live. And so this is very important for us to realise that love, to be true, has to hurt. It hurt Jesus to love us, it hurt him. And to make sure we remember his great love he made himself the bread of life to satisfy our hunger for his love. Our hunger for God, because we have been created for that love. We have been created in his image. We have been created to love and be loved, and then he has become man to make it possible for us to love as he loved us. He makes himself the hungry one—the naked one—the homeless one—the sick one—the one in prison—the lonely one—the unwanted one—and he says: You did it to me. Hungry for our love, and this is the hunger of our poor people. This is the hunger that you and I must find, it may be in our own home.

I never forget an opportunity I had in visiting a home where they had all these old parents of sons and daughters who had just put them in an institution and forgotten maybe. And I went there, and I saw in that home they had everything, beautiful things, but everybody was looking towards the door. And I did not see a single one with their smile on their face. And I turned to the Sister and I asked: How is that? How is it that the people they have everything here, why are they all looking towards the door, why are they not smiling? I am so used to see the smile on our people, even the dying one smile, and she said: This is nearly every day, they are expecting, they are hoping that a son or daughter will come to visit them. They are hurt because they are forgotten, and see-this is

where love comes. That poverty comes right there in our own home, even neglect to love. Maybe in our own family we have somebody who is feeling lonely, who is feeling sick, who is feeling worried, and these are difficult days for everybody. Are we there, are we there to receive them, is the mother there to receive the child?

I was surprised in the West to see so many young boys and girls given into drugs, and I tried to find out why—why is it like that, and the answer was: Because there is no one in the family to receive them. Father and mother are so busy they have no time. Young parents are in some institution and the child takes back to the street and gets involved in something. We are talking of peace. These are things that break peace, but I feel the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a direct war, a direct killing—direct murder by the mother herself. And we read in the Scripture, for God says very clearly: Even if a mother could forget her child—I will not forget you—I have carved you in the palm of my hand. We are carved in the palm of His hand, so close to Him that unborn child has been carved in the hand of God. And that is what strikes me most, the beginning of that sentence, that even if a mother could forget something impossible—but even if she could forget—I will not forget you. And today the greatest means—the greatest destroyer of peace is abortion. And we who are standing here—our parents wanted us. We would not be here if our parents would do that to us. Our children, we want them, we love them, but what of the millions. Many people are very, very concerned with the children in India, with the children in Africa where quite a number die, maybe of malnutrition, of hunger and so on, but millions are dying deliberately by the will of the mother. And this is what is the greatest destroyer of peace today. Because if a mother can kill her own child—what is left for me to kill you and you kill me—there is nothing between. And this I appeal in India, I appeal everywhere: Let us bring the child back, and this year being the child's year: What have we done for the child? At the beginning of the year I told, I spoke everywhere and I said: Let us make this year that we make every single child born, and unborn, wanted. And today is the end of the year, have we really made the children wanted? I will give you something terrifying. We are fighting abortion by adoption, we have saved thousands of lives, we have sent words to all the clinics, to the hospitals, police stations—please don't destroy the child, we will take the child. So every hour of the day and night it is always somebody, we have quite a number of unwedded mothers—tell them come, we will take care of you, we will take the child from you, and we will get a home for the child. And we have a tremendous demand from families who have no children, that is the blessing of God for us. And also, we are doing another thing which is very beautiful—we are teaching our beggars, our leprosy patients, our slum dwellers, our people of the street, natural family planning.

And in Calcutta alone in six years—it is all in Calcutta—we have had 61,273 babies less from the families who would have had, but because they practise this natural way of abstaining, of self-control, out of love for each other. We teach them the temperature meter which is very beautiful, very simple, and which our poor people understand. And you know what they have told me? Our family is healthy, our family is united, and we can have a baby whenever we want. So clear—those people in the street, those beggars—and I think that if our people can do like that how much more you and all the others who can know the ways and means without destroying the life that God has created in us.

The poor people are very great people. They can teach us so many beautiful things. The other day one of them came to thank and said: You people who have vowed chastity you are the best people to teach us family planning. Because it is nothing more than self-control out of love for each other. And I think they said a beautiful sentence. And these are people who maybe have nothing to eat, maybe they have not a home where to live, but they are great people. The poor are very wonderful people. One evening we went out and we picked up four people from the street. And one of them was in a most terrible condition—and I told the Sisters: You take care of the other three, I take of this one that looked worse. So I did for her all that my love can do. I put her in bed, and there was such a beautiful smile on her face. She took hold of my hand, as she said one word only: Thank you—and she died.

I could not help but examine my conscience before her, and I asked what would I say if I was in her place. And my answer was very simple. I would have tried to draw a little attention to myself, I would have said I am hungry, that I am dying, I am cold, I am in pain, or something, but she gave me much more—she gave me her grateful love. And she died with a smile on her face. As that man whom we picked up from the drain, half eaten with worms, and we brought him to the home. I have lived like an animal in the street, but I am going to die like an angel, loved and cared for. And it was so wonderful to see the greatness of that man who could speak like that, who could die like that without blaming anybody, without cursing anybody, without comparing anything. Like an angel—this is the greatness of our people. And that is why we believe what Jesus had said: I was hungry—I was naked—I was homeless—I was unwanted, unloved, uncared for—and you did it to me.

I believe that we are not real social workers. We may be doing social work in the eyes of the people, but we are really contemplatives in the heart of the

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*abstaining*: choosing not to

*contemplative*: here, people who think deeply

world. For we are touching the Body of Christ 24 hours. We have twenty-four hours in this presence, and so you and I. You too try to bring that presence of God in your family, for the family that prays together stays together. And I think that we in our family don't need bombs and guns, to destroy to bring peace — just get together, love one another, bring that peace, that joy, that strength of presence of each other in the home. And we will be able to overcome all the evil that is in the world.

There is so much suffering, so much hatred, so much misery, and we with our prayer, with our sacrifice are beginning at home. Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the action that we do. It is to God Almighty — how much we do it does not matter, because He is infinite, but how much love we put in that action. How much we do to Him in the person that we are serving.

Some time ago in Calcutta we had great difficulty in getting sugar, and I don't know how the word got around to the children, and a little boy of four years old, a Hindu boy, went home and told his parents: I will not eat sugar for three days, I will give my sugar to Mother Teresa for her children. After three days his father and mother brought him to our home. I had never met them before, and this little one could scarcely pronounce my name, but he knew exactly what he had come to do. He knew that he wanted to share his love.

And this is why I have received such a lot of love from you all. From the time that I have come here I have simply been surrounded with love, and with real, real understanding love. It could feel as if everyone in India, everyone in Africa is somebody very special to you. And I felt quite at home I was telling Sister today. I feel in the Convent with the Sisters as if I am in Calcutta with my own Sisters. So completely at home here, right here.

And so here I am talking with you — I want you to find the poor here, right in your own home first. And begin love there. Be that good news to your own people. And find out about your next-door neighbour — do you know who they are? I had the most extraordinary experience with a Hindu family that had eight children. A gentleman came to our house and said: "Mother Teresa, there is a family with eight children, they have not eaten for so long — do something." So I took some rice and I went there immediately. And I saw the children — their eyes shining with hunger. I don't know if you have ever seen hunger — but I have seen it very often. And the lady of the house took the rice, divided it, and went out. When she came back I asked her — where did you go, what did you do? And she gave me a very simple answer: They are hungry too. What struck

me most was that she knew—and who are they, a Muslim family—and she knew. I didn't bring more rice that evening because I wanted them to enjoy the joy of sharing. But there were those children, radiating joy, sharing the joy with their mother because she had the love to give. And you see this is where love begins—at home. And I want you—and I am very grateful for what I have received. It has been a tremendous experience and I go back to India—I will be back by next week, the 15th I hope—and I will be able to bring your love.

And I know well that you have not given from your abundance, but you have given until it has hurt you. Today the little children they have—I was so surprised there is so much joy for the children that are hungry. That the children like themselves will need love and care and tenderness, like they get so much from their parents. So let us thank God that we have had this opportunity to come to know each other, and this knowledge of each other has brought us very close. And we will be able to help not only the children of India and Africa, but will be able to help the children of the whole world, because as you know our Sisters are all over the world. And with this prize that I have received as a prize of peace, I am going to try to make the home for many people that have no home. Because I believe that love begins at home, and if we can create a home for the poor—I think that more and more love will spread. And we will be able through this understanding love to bring peace, be the good news to the poor. The poor in our own family first, in our country and in the world.

To be able to do this, our Sisters, our lives have to be woven with prayer. They have to be woven with Christ to be able to understand, to be able to share. Because today there is so much suffering—and I feel that the passion of Christ is being relived all over again—are we there to share that passion, to share that suffering of people. Around the world, not only in the poor countries, but I found the poverty of the West so much more difficult to remove. When I pick up a person from the street, hungry, I give him a plate of rice, a piece of bread, I have satisfied. I have removed that hunger. But a person that is shut out, that feels unwanted, unloved, terrified, the person that has been thrown out from society—that poverty is so hurtful and so much, and I find that very difficult. Our Sisters are working amongst that kind of people in the West. So you must pray for us

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*radiating* : lighting brightly

*abundance* : plenty

that we may be able to be that good news, but we cannot do that without you, you have to do that here in your country. You must come to know the poor, maybe our people here have material things, everything, but I think that if we all look into our own homes, how difficult we find it sometimes to smile at each other, and that the smile is the beginning of love.

And so let us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love, and once we begin to love each other naturally we want to do something. So you pray for our Sisters and for me and for our Brothers, and for our Co-Workers that are around the world. That we may remain faithful to the gift of God, to love Him and serve Him in the poor together with you. What we have done we should not have been able to do if you did not share with your prayers, with your gifts, this continual giving. But I don't want you to give me from your abundance, I want that you give me until it hurts.

The other day I received 15 dollars from a man who has been on his back for twenty years, and the only part that he can move is his right hand. And the only companion that he enjoys is smoking. And he said to me: I do not smoke for one week, and I send you this money. It must have been a terrible sacrifice for him, but see how beautiful, how he shared, and with that money I bought bread and I gave to those who are hungry with a joy on both sides, he was giving and the poor were receiving. This is something that you and I—it is a gift of God to us to be able to share our love with others. And let it be as it was for Jesus. Let us love one another as he loved us. Let us love Him with undivided love. And the joy of loving Him and each other—let us give now—that Christmas is coming so close. Let us keep that joy of loving Jesus in our hearts. And share that joy with all that we come in touch with. And that radiating joy is real, for we have no reason not to be happy because we have no Christ with us. Christ in our hearts, Christ in the poor that we meet, Christ in the smile that we give and the smile that we receive. Let us make that one point: That no child will be unwanted, and also that we meet each other always with a smile, especially when it is difficult to smile.

I never forget some time ago about fourteen professors came from the United States from different universities. And they came to Calcutta to our house. Then we were talking about that they had been to the home for the dying. We have a home for the dying in Calcutta, where we have picked up more than 36,000 people only from the streets of Calcutta, and out of that big number more than

18,000 have died a beautiful death. They have just gone home to God; and they came to our house and we talked of love, of compassion, and then one of them asked me: Say, Mother, please tell us something that we will remember, and I said to them: Smile at each other, make time for each other in your family. Smile at each other. And then another one asked me: Are you married, and I said: Yes, and I find it sometimes very difficult to smile at Jesus because he can be very demanding sometimes. This is really something true, and there is where love comes—when it is demanding, and yet we can give it to Him with joy. Just as I have said today, I have said that if I don't go to Heaven for anything else I will be going to Heaven for all the publicity because it has purified me and sacrificed me and made me really ready to go to Heaven. I think that this is something, that we must live life beautifully, we have Jesus with us and He loves us. If we could only remember that God loves me, and I have an opportunity to love others as he loves me, not in big things, but in small things with great love, then Norway becomes a nest of love. And how beautiful it will be that from here a centre for peace has been given. That from here the joy of life of the unborn child comes out. If you become a burning light in the world of peace, then really the Nobel Peace Prize is a gift of the Norwegian people. God bless you!

## Notes

The text of the prayer which Mother Teresa used, is attributed to St. Francis. It reads as follows:

Lord, make a channel of Thy peace that, where there is hatred, I may bring love; that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness; that, where there is discord, I may bring harmony; that, where there is error, I may bring truth; that, where there is doubt, I may bring faith; that, where there is despair, I may bring hope; that, where there are shadows, I may bring light; that, where there is sadness, I may bring joy.

Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted, to understand than to be understood; to love than to be loved; for it is by forgetting self that one finds; it is forgiving that one is forgiven; it is by dying that one awakens to eternal life.

# The Place of Art in Education



Nandalal Bose

**Nandalal Bose** (1882-1966) studied art under the famous artist Abanindranath Tagore. Nandalal played a major role in shaping the modern face of Indian art. His famous works include the painting titled, *Sati* and *Mahasweta*. He sketched many of Rabindranath's works such as *Chayanika* and *Gitanjali*. He also illustrated Rabindranath's *Sahaj Path*.

In this extract taken from his notable work *Drishti ar Shrishti (Vision and Creation)*, Nandalal attempts to revive the aesthetic sensibilities of his country. He discusses the importance of art education and measures that could be taken to implement the same.

**A**mong those things that man has devised to acquire knowledge, or seek inner delight with, language has an important place. It is the vehicle for literature, science, and philosophy. Literature certainly provides man inner delight, but its field of expression is limited. Art, music, dance and the like make up for this. They have their own specialities of expression as literature has its. Man apprehends the world with his mind and senses, derives aesthetic delight and communicates this to others. Education in arts heightens man's knowledge and aesthetic experience and trains him in various modes of expression. This education in art, music and dance cannot be achieved through the medium of reading and writing, like the ear cannot do what the eye is meant to do.

If the objective of our education is total development, art training should have the same status and importance as reading and writing. But the provision that our universities make for this is sorely inadequate at present. It would seem that this is due to the general notion that art is the exclusive preserve of a few professionals and common people have nothing to do with it. When the educated do not feel any sense of shame at not understanding art, what question can there

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*apprehends* : knows

*aesthetic* : relating to perception of beauty

*notion* : general idea

*preserve* : exclusive right

be of commoners? They cannot differentiate between a painting and a photograph. They gape in amazement at Japanese dolls as if they are great specimens of art. Garish German wrappers in red, blue and purple do not strain their eyes but give them pleasure. On grounds of utility they use tin containers in place of (elegant) earthen pitchers they can easily lay their hands on. The educated public of this country and its universities are mainly responsible for this. A cursory look at our educational scene will reveal that, while this country's cultural life has fanned out, its aesthetic sensibilities have grown distressingly worse. The only redress for this lies in spreading art education amongst the so-called educated public, as they set the standards for the people at large.

The absence of a sense of beauty not only cheats man of aesthetic experience, but it also harms his physical and mental well-being. Those who lack this sense and litter rubbish in their houses and courtyards, keep themselves and their surroundings filthy, spit betel-juice on their walls, streets, even railway coaches, harm their own health and that of others. They contaminate society with diseases on one hand and their despicable standards of behaviour on the other.

There are some amongst us who think that art is the domain for the rich and the pleasure-loving and want to banish it with contempt from their daily lives. They forget the vitality of a work of art lies in its sense of beauty and order, not in its money value. A poor Santhal sweeps and mops his hut, stacks in order his earthen pots and tattered quilts; an educated college student keeps his clothes and things in disorganised mess in his seemingly palatial hostel room or lodging. For the poor Santhal the sense of beauty is an essential part of his life and, so, vital; for the rich man's son it is superficial, so, lifeless. I often see our educated men advertise their devotion to art by showing framed pin-ups side by side with good paintings; I see in the hostel rooms shirts hanging from picture frames, tea-cups and combs littering the study table, paper flowers stuck into used cocoa tins. And for dress, I see people use the open-breasted jacket with the 'dhoti', high-heeled shoes with the saree. Regardless of whether we are materially affluent or not, this widespread disproportion and lack of taste is a sure indication of our poverty in aesthetic sensibilities.

*cursory* : not detailed

*sensibilities* : feelings

*redress* : to compensate

*despicable* : vile

*palatial* : like a palace

*pin-ups* : photographs pinned on the wall

*affluent* : wealthy

*disproportion* : lack of balance among the parts

Some pose the question, "Will art give us a livelihood?" Here we need to remember that just as there are two aspects to the practice of literature, one concerned with the cultivation of knowledge and aesthetic pleasure and another with professional returns, there are two sides to art too; you may call one fine art and the other functional art. Fine art liberates our mind from the constraints of sorrows and conflicts of our daily lives into a world of aesthetic delight, while, with its touch of magic, functional art brings beauty to the objects of our daily use, and to our lives, and provides us with means of livelihood. In fact our country's economic decline has followed closely the decay of its functional arts. So to exclude art from the sphere of our needs is harmful to the economic well-being of the country as well.

This lack of art education has not only deprived the present course of our lives of beauty, it has also estranged us from our past heritage. Because our eyes are untrained we have remained ignorant and insensitive to the glory of our past painting, sculpture and architecture; foreign connoisseurs have had to come and expound it to us. To our shame, even our present-day art does not get any recognition in our country until it finds approval in foreign markets.

Let us discuss now in a general way the remedy for this. The roots of art education lie in the observation of nature and good works of art with dedicated attention, living in close contact with them and understanding them with the assistance of men with developed aesthetic sensibilities. Each school and university should provide a place for art studies with other studies, making it compulsory. It should provide the students with time and the environment to get acquainted with Nature. Training in drawing will develop their powers of observation and this in turn will give them better insight into literature, philosophy and science. It will be wrong on our part to expect, however, that the provision of facilities for art studies in an institution will make all its students artists, leave alone good artists, like no one can become a poet by just passing a course in poetry an institution might offer.

Firstly, good paintings, sculpture and other specimens of fine and functional arts (or in their absence, good reproductions or photographs of these) should be displayed in the class-rooms, libraries, studies and living rooms of the students.

Secondly, we should get well-qualified people to write readable books on art with good reproductions and historical texts, in ample measure.

*constraints:* that which limits something

*connoisseurs:* expert in appreciation of fine arts

Thirdly, students should be introduced through films to selected examples of art, of this country and elsewhere, from time to time.

Fourthly, students should accompany qualified teachers to museums and picture galleries to see distinguished examples of the art of the past. When it is possible for schools to take students out to play football matches, it should not be impossible to take them to museums and picture galleries. One should have to keep in mind that a direct encounter with an art object will do more to arouse their aesthetic vision than hearing a hundred lectures. Seeing good paintings and sculpture, whether or not they understand them fully, will train their eyes, strengthen their powers of discernment, and gradually awaken their aesthetic sensibilities.

Fifthly, to get students into an encounter with Nature we should hold seasonal festivals, including displays of the season's fruits and flowers, and we should try to familiarise them with those beautiful creations in art and literature these have given rise to.

Sixthly, students should be introduced to Nature's own festival of the seasons, to see with their own eyes and enjoy the rice fields and lotus ponds in autumn, the carnival of *palash* and *shimul* flowers in spring. This is essential for the town-dweller; though, for the rural boys, pointing them out maybe enough. For these seasonal festivals one needs to declare special holidays and hold picnics and games, encourage wearing of seasonal costumes. Once the students get acquainted with Nature, and learn to love it, their aesthetic sensibilities will never run dry for, through the ages, it is Nature that has provided the source material for all artistic creation.

Lastly, the school should have an art festival some time during the year. Each student should participate in it devotedly with something he has made with his own hand, however simple. All these should be put together and shown as reverential offerings. An effort should be made to give the festival a total shape and beauty with music, dances and processions; the time of the festival should be decided according to the location.

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*discernment* : keen understanding

*acquainted* : familiar

*reverential* : showing respect





CLASS XI  
POETRY





Composed  
**Upon Westminster Bridge,**  
September 3, 1802



William Wordsworth

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was one of the pioneers of the English Romantic movement. Some of his noted works include *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, *Prelude*.

The poet is touched by the untainted beauty of the morning over the city of London. In his poem, Wordsworth describes the pure and peaceful beauty of his city before the bustle and hurry of the day have started. The poet is moved by the somnolent beauty of the morning that wraps up the city in tranquility.

Earth has not anything to show more fair:  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
    A sight so touching in its majesty:  
    This City now doth, like a garment, wear  
    The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
    Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
        Open unto the fields, and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
Never did sun more beautifully steep  
    In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!  
    The river glideth at his own sweet will:  
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
    And all that mighty heart is lying still!

*doth* : old form of does (poetical use)

*steep* : here, slope down

*ne'er* : short form of never (poetical use)

*glideth* : glide (poetical use)

# Meeting at Night



Robert Browning

Robert Browning (1812-1889) was an English poet and playwright from the nineteenth century. Browning's major works include *The Last Ride Together*, *My Last Duchess*, *Fra Lippo Lippi*. *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* is a famous children's verse written by him.

In the poem, the poet describes a journey that ends in a secret meeting between lovers. The poet describes the journey and the meeting in detail. The poem concludes with the delighted meeting of the lovers by a farm near the sea beach.

The grey sea and the long black land;  
And the yellow half-moon large and low;  
And the startled little waves that leap  
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,  
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,  
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;  
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;  
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch  
And blue spurt of a lighted match,  
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,  
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

---

*ringlets : small ring*

*cove : narrow cave*

*prow : the front of a boat*

*quench : here, slow down*

*i' : short form of in (poetical use)*

*spurt : here, sudden glow*

# The Sick Rose



William Blake

**William Blake** (1757-1827) was a noted poet, painter and engraver. He is a famous figure of the English Romantic Movement. Blake's poetry is marked by intense spiritual visions. Some of his famous works are *Songs of Innocence*, *Songs of Experience*, *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

Blake wrote two sets of poems *Songs of Innocence* and *Song of Experience*. *The Sick Rose* occurs as part of the *Songs of Experience*. The poet mentions through the symbols of the rose and the worm, how intense experience preys upon unpolluted innocence.

O Rose thou art sick,  
The invisible worm  
That flies in the night,  
In the howling storm,  
Has found out thy bed  
Of crimson joy:  
And his dark secret love  
Does thy life destroy.

---

*thou art* : you are (old use)

*thy* : your (old use)

*crimson* : deep red

# Brotherhood: Homage to Claudius Ptolemy



Octavio Paz

**Octavio Paz Lozano** (1914-1998) was a Mexican writer of great renown from the twentieth century. The recurring thing of his poetry are philosophical speculation about the nature of time and love. Some of his famous works are *The Sun Stone*, *The Bough and the Liar* (1956), *The Labyrinth of solitude* (1963).

In this poem of eight lines, the speaker conducts an inquiry upon the insignificance of man as compared to the vastness of the universe. Then a realization as to his inclusion in the general scheme of the universe dawns on the speaker. He realises the signification of the universal brotherhood of all beings in a scheme of celestial organisation.

I am a man: little do I last  
and the night is enormous.

But I look up:

the stars write.

Unknowing I understand:

I too am written,

and at this very moment

someone spells me out.

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*Claudius Ptolemy* : astronomer and mathematician from ancient Rome  
*homage* : showing respect

# Daybreak



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow** (1807-1882) was an American writer from nineteenth century well known for lyric poem. A few of his famous work are *Voices of the Night*, *Ballads and other poems*, *The Songs of Hiawatha*.

The poem is written in rhyming couplets, continuing for nine lines. Longfellow traces the journey of the wind as it passes over land and ocean, ushering in fresh lively activities with daybreak.

A wind came up out of the sea,  
And said, O mists, make room for me.  
It hailed the ships, and cried, Sail on,  
Ye mariners, the night is gone.  
And hurried landward far away,  
Crying, Awake! it is the day.  
It said unto the forest, Shout!  
Hang all your leafy banners out!  
It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,  
And said, O bird, awake and sing .  
And o'er the farms, O chanticleer,  
Your clarion blow; the day is near.  
It whispered to the fields of corn,  
Bow down, and hail the coming morn.  
It shouted through the belfry-tower,  
Awake, O bell! proclaim the hour.  
It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,  
And said, Not yet! in quiet lie.

*landward* : in the direction of land

*o'er* : short form of over (poetical use)

*chanticleer* : rooster

*belfry tower*: The tower that contains the church bell





CLASS XII  
PROSE





# The Eyes Have It



Ruskin Bond

Ruskin Bond (1934-) is a widely read writer of Indian origin who writes in English. The setting for most of his stories are the hills of the Himalayas. Among his most notable works are *The Room on the Roof*, *The Angry River*, *Rain in the Mountains*.

In this story Bond exploits the situational irony that originates between two people who meet by chance in railway compartment. The young man and the girl are unaware of their individual blindness and converse with each other from the conviction that both of them can see.

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.

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.

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.

"I didn't see you either," I said. "But I heard you come in."

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.

The girl said, "I'm getting off at Saharanpur. My aunt is meeting me there."

"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."

"Oh, how lucky you are. I wish I were going to Mussoorie. I love the hills. Especially in October."

"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 logfire 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."

She was silent. I wondered if my words had touched her, or whether she thought me a romantic fool. Then I made a mistake.

"What is it like outside?" I asked.

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.

"Why don't you look out of the window?" she asked.

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.

"Have you noticed," I ventured, "that the trees seem to be moving while we seem to be standing still?"

"That always happens," she said. "Do you see any animals?"

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*tellingly* : significantly

"No," I answered quite confidently. I knew that there were hardly any animals left in the forests near Dehra.

I turned from the window and faced the girl, and for a while we sat in silence.

"You have an interesting face," 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.

"It's nice to be told I have an interesting face. I'm tired of people telling me I have a pretty face."

Oh, so you do have a pretty face, thought I-and aloud I said: "Well, an interesting face can also be pretty."

"You are a very gallant young man," she said, "but why are you so serious?"

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.

"Thank goodness it's a short journey. I can't bear to sit in a train for more than two-or-three hours."

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.

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 bun, or if it was plaited; perhaps it was hanging loose over her shoulders, or was it cut very short?

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.

She was standing very close to me, so close that the perfume from her hair was tantalising. 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.

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.

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.

So many things were happening outside the window: it could be a fascinating game, guessing what went on out there.

The man who had entered the compartment broke into my reverie.

"You must be disappointed," he said. "I'm not nearly as attractive a travelling companion as the one who just left."

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

"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?"

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*tantalising*: a making you feel a desire to have or do something  
*reverie*: daydream

# Strong Roots



A P J A b d u l K a l a m

**Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam** (1931-2015) was one of the pioneers of aerospace engineering in India. For a major part of his life he worked as a scientist in Indian space programmes. Some of his famous works are *India 2020*, *Ignited Minds*, *Wings of Fire*. He was the President of India from 2002 to 2007.

*Strong Roots* is an extract from Dr. Kalam's autobiography *Wings of Fire*. In this extract, he talks about his childhood in his hometown. The piece presents a delightful sketch of the author's early life and the development of his spiritual growth.

I was born into a middle-class Tamil family in the island town of Rameswaram in the erstwhile Madras state. My father, Jainulabdeen, had neither much formal education nor much wealth; despite these disadvantages, he possessed great innate wisdom and a true generosity of spirit. He had an ideal helpmate in my mother, Ashiamma. I do not recall the exact number of people she fed every day, but I am quite certain that far more outsiders ate with us than all the members of our own family put together.

My parents were widely regarded as an ideal couple. My mother's lineage was the more distinguished, one of her forebears having been bestowed the title of 'Bahadur' by the British.

I was one of many children—a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents. We lived in our ancestral house, which was built in the middle of the 19th century. It was a fairly large pucca house, made of limestone and brick, on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram. My austere father used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries. However, all necessities were provided for, in terms of food, medicine or clothing. In fact, I would say mine was a very secure childhood, materially and emotionally.

I normally ate with my mother, sitting on the floor of the kitchen. She would place a banana leaf before me, on which she then ladled rice and aromatic sambar, a variety of sharp, home-made pickle and a dollop of fresh coconut chutney.

The Shiva temple, which made Rameswaram so famous to pilgrims, was about a ten-minute walk from our house. Our locality was predominantly Muslim, but there were quite a lot of Hindu families too, living amicably with their Muslim neighbours. There was a very old mosque in our locality where my father would take me for evening prayers. I had not the faintest idea of the meaning of the Arabic prayers chanted, but I was totally convinced that they reached God. When my father came out of the mosque after the prayers, people of different religions would be sitting outside, waiting for him. Many of them offered bowls of water to my father, who would dip his fingertips in them and say a prayer. This water was then carried home for invalids. I also remember people visiting our home to offer thanks after being cured. Father always smiled and asked them to thank Allah, the merciful.

The high priest of Rameswaram temple, Pakshi Lakshmana Sastry, was a very close friend of my father's. One of the most vivid memories of my early childhood is of the two men, each in traditional attire, discussing spiritual matters. When I was old enough to ask questions, I asked my father about the relevance of prayer. My father told me there was nothing mysterious about prayer. Rather, prayer made possible a communion of the spirit between people. "When you pray," he said, "you transcend your, body and become a part of the cosmos, which knows no division of wealth, age, caste, or creed."

My father could convey complex spiritual concepts in very simple, down-to-earth Tamil. He once told me, "In his own time, in his own place, in what he really is, and in the stage he has reached—good or bad—every human being is a specific element within the whole of the manifest divine Being. So why be afraid of difficulties, sufferings and problems? When troubles come, try to understand the relevance of your sufferings. Adversity always presents opportunities for introspection."

***predominantly:*** mostly

***amicably:*** in a friendly manner

***invalids:*** people with incapacities

***communion:*** a special communication

***adversity:*** hardship

***introspection:*** thinking deeply about oneself

"Why don't you say this to the people who come to you for help and advice?" I asked my father. He put his hands on my shoulders and looked straight into my eyes. For quite some time he said nothing, as if he was judging my capacity to comprehend his words. Then he answered in a low, deep voice. His answer filled me with a strange energy and enthusiasm: "Whenever human beings find themselves alone, as a natural reaction, they start looking for company. Whenever they are in trouble, they look for someone to help them. Whenever they reach an impasse, they look to someone to show them the way out. Every recurrent anguish, longing, and desire finds its own special helper. For the people who come to me in distress, I am but a go-between in their effort to propitiate demonic forces with prayers and offerings. This is not a correct approach at all and should never be followed. One must understand the difference between a fear-ridden vision of destiny and the vision that enables us to seek the enemy of fulfilment within ourselves."

I remember my father starting his day at 4 am by reading the namaz before dawn. After the namaz, he used to walk down to a small coconut grove we owned, about four miles from our home. He would return with about a dozen coconuts tied together thrown over his shoulder, and only then would he have his breakfast. This remained his routine even when he was in his late sixties.

I have, throughout my life, tried to emulate my father in my own world of science and technology. I have endeavoured to understand the fundamental truths revealed to me by my father, and feel convinced that there exists a divine power that can lift one up from confusion, misery, melancholy and failure, and guide one to one's true place. And once an individual severs his emotional and physical bond, he is on the road to freedom, happiness and peace of mind.

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*impasse* : a situation which allows no progress

*distress* : sadness

*propitiate* : appease

*namaz* : Urdu word for prayer

# Thank You Ma'am



Langston Hughes

Jameo Mercer Langton Hughes (1902-1967) was a famous writer and social activist from America. Hughes was interested in the revival of African folk culture. Some of his well known works are the weary Blues (1926), *Not without Laughter* (1930), *The Way of White Folks* (1934).

This story is about the sympathy shown by an older woman to a young urchin, who tried to steal her pocketbook. The young boy was eager to acknowledge the lenity shown to him by her, but he got no more chance to do that beyond a brief, "Thank You".

**S**he was a large woman with a large purse that had everything in it but hammer and nails. It had a long strap, and she carried it slung across her shoulder. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind her and tried to snatch her purse. 'The strap broke with the single tug the boy gave it from behind. But the boy's weight and the weight of the purse combined caused him to lose his balance so, instead of taking off full blast as he had hoped, the boy fell on his back on the sidewalk, and his legs flew up. The large woman simply turned around and kicked him right square in his blue-jeaned sitter. Then she reached down, picked the boy up by his shirt front, and shook him until his teeth rattled.

After that the woman said, "Pick up my pocketbook, boy, and give it here. " She still held him. But she bent down enough to permit him to stoop and pick up her purse. 'Then she said, "Now ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

Firmly gripped by his shirt front, the boy said, "Yes'm."

'The woman said, "What did you want to do it for?"

'The boy said, "I didn't aim to."

She said, "You a lie!"

By that time two or three people passed, stopped, turned to look, and some stood watching.

"If I turn you loose, will you run?" asked the woman.

"Yes'm," said the boy.

"Then I won't turn you loose," said the woman. She did not release him.

"I'm very sorry, lady, I'm sorry," whispered the boy.

"Um-hum! And your face is dirty. I got a great mind to wash your face for you.

Ain't you got nobody home to tell you to wash your face?"

"No'm," said the boy.

"Then it will get washed this evening," said the large woman starting up the street, dragging the frightened boy behind her. He looked as if he were fourteen or fifteen, frail and willow-wild, in tennis shoes and blue jeans.

The woman said, "You ought to be my son. I would teach you right from wrong. Least I can do right now is to wash your face. Are you hungry?"

"No'm," said the being dragged boy. "I just want you to turn me loose."

"Was I bothering you when I turned that corner?" asked the woman.

"No'm."

"But you put yourself in contact with me," said the woman. "If you think that that contact is not going to last awhile, you got another thought coming. When I get through with you, sir, you are going to remember Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones."

Sweat popped out on the boy's face and he began to struggle. Mrs. Jones stopped, jerked him around in front of her, put a half-nelson about his neck, and continued to drag him up the street. When she got to her door, she dragged the boy inside, down a hall, and into a large kitchenette-furnished room at the rear of the house. She switched on the light and left the door open. The boy could hear other roomers laughing and talking in the large house. Some of their doors were open, too, so he knew he and the woman were not alone. The woman still had him by the neck in the middle of her room.

She said, "What is your name?"

*popped* : came out with force

*half-nelson* : a wrestling hold

"Roger," answered the boy.

"Then, Roger, you go to that sink and wash your face," said the woman, whereupon she turned him loose—at last. Roger looked at the door—looked at the woman—looked at the door—and went to the sink.

"Let the water run until it gets warm," she said. "Here's a clean towel."

"You gonna take me to jail?" asked the boy, bending over the sink.

"Not with that face, I would not take you nowhere," said the woman. "Here I am trying to get home to cook me a bite to eat and you snatch my pocketbook! May be, you ain't been to your supper either, late as it be. Have you?"

"There's nobody home at my house," said the boy.

"Then we'll eat," said the woman, "I believe you're hungry—or been hungry—to try to snatch my pocketbook."

"I wanted a pair of blue suede shoes," said the boy.

"Well, you didn't have to snatch my pocketbook to get some suede shoes," said Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones. "You could of asked me."

"M'am?"

The water dripping from his face, the boy looked at her. There was a long pause. A very long pause. After he had dried his face and not knowing what else to do dried it again, the boy turned around, wondering what next. The door was open. He could make a dash for it down the hall. He could run, run, run, run, run!

The woman was sitting on the day-bed. After a while she said, "I were young once and I wanted things I could not get."

There was another long pause. The boy's mouth opened. Then he frowned, but not knowing he frowned.

The woman said, "Um-hum! You thought I was going to say but, didn't you?

You thought I was going to say, but I didn't snatch people's pocketbooks. Well, I wasn't going to say that." Pause. Silence. "I have done things, too, which I would not tell you, son—neither tell God, if he didn't already know. So you set down while I fix us something to eat. You might run that comb through your hair so you will look presentable."

*lima beans* : large flat edible seeds

*ham* : a cut of meat

In another corner of the room behind a screen was a gas plate and an icebox.

Mrs. Jones got up and went behind the screen. The woman did not watch the boy to see if he was going to run now, nor did she watch her purse which she left behind her on the day-bed. But the boy took care to sit on the far side of the room where he thought she could easily see him out of the corner of the other eye, if she wanted to. He did not trust the woman not to trust him. And he did not want to be mistrusted now.

"Do you need somebody to go to the store," asked the boy, "maybe to get some milk or something?"

"Don't believe I do," said the woman, "unless you just want-sweet milk yourself I was going to make cocoa out of this canned milk I got here."

"That will be fine," said the boy.

She heated some lima beans and ham she had in the icebox, made the cocoa, and set the table. The woman did not ask the boy anything about where he lived, or his folks, or anything else that would embarrass him. Instead, as they ate, she told him about her job in a hotel beauty-shop that stayed open late, what the work was like, and how all kinds of women came in and out, blondes, red-heads, and Spanish. Then she cut him a half of her ten-cent cake.

"Eat some more, son," she said.

When they were finished eating she got up and said, "Now, here, take this ten dollars and buy yourself some blue suede shoes. And next time, do not make the mistake of latching onto my pocketbook nor nobody else's—because shoes come by devilish like that will burn your feet. I got to get my rest now. But I wish you would behave yourself, son, from here on in."

She led him down the hall to the front door and opened it. "Goodnight!

Behave yourself, boy!" she said, looking out into the street.

The boy wanted to say something else other than "Thank you, ma' am" to Mrs.

Luella Bates Washington Jones, but he couldn't do so as he turned at the barren stoop and looked back at the large woman in the door. He barely managed to say

"Thank you" before she shut the door. And he never saw her again.

*latching* : fastening

# Three Questions



Leo Tolstoy

Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1828-1910) was a Russian writer of worldwide fame. His novels are marked by sharp psychological insights and graphic description of reality. His most noted works are *war and peace* (1809), *Sebastopol Sketches* (1855), *Anna Karenina* (1877).

Through the tale of a Tsar who wanted to know the nature of appropriate counsel and action, Tolstoy reveals an illuminating notion about the duties of man. This simple tale is loaded with deep thoughts on the way human beings should conduct their actions.

**I**t once occurred to a certain Tsar, that if he always knew the right time to begin everything; if he knew who were the right people to listen to, and whom to avoid; and, above all, if he always knew what was the most important thing to do, he would never fail in anything he might undertake.

And this thought having occurred to him, he had it proclaimed throughout his kingdom that he would give a great reward to anyone who would teach him what was the right time for every action, and who were the most necessary people, and how he might know what was the most important thing to do.

And learned men came to the Tsar, but they all answered his questions differently.

In reply to the first question, some said that to know the right time for every action, one must draw up in advance, a table of days, months and years, and must live strictly according to it. Only thus, said they, could everything be done at its proper time.

Others declared that it was impossible to decide beforehand the right time for every action; but that, not letting oneself be absorbed in idle pastimes, one should always attend to all that was going on, and then do what was most needful. Others, again, said that however attentive the Tsar might be to what was going

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Tsar : title of a Russian ruler

on, it was impossible for one man to decide correctly the right time for every action, but that he should have a Council of wise men, who would help him to fix the proper time for everything.

But then again others said there were some things which could not wait to be laid before a Council, but about which one had at once to decide whether to undertake them or not. But in order to decide that, one must know beforehand what was going to happen. It is only magicians who know that; and, therefore, in order to know the right time for every action, one must consult magicians.

Equally various were the answers to the second question. Some said, the people the Tsar most needed were his councillors; others, the priests; others, the doctors; while some said the warriors were the most necessary.

To the third question, as to what was the most important occupation: some replied that the most important thing in the world was science. Others said it was skill in warfare; and others, again, that it was religious worship.

All the answers being different, the Tsar agreed with none of them, and gave the reward to none. But still wishing to find the right answers to his questions, he decided to consult a hermit, widely renowned for his wisdom.

The hermit lived in a wood which he never quitted, and he received none but common folk. So the Tsar put on simple clothes, and before reaching the hermit's cell dismounted from his horse, and, leaving his body-guard behind, went on alone.

When the Tsar approached, the hermit was digging the ground in front of his hut. Seeing the Tsar, he greeted him and went on digging. The hermit was frail and weak, and each time he stuck his spade into the ground and turned a little earth, he breathed heavily.

The Tsar went up to him and said: "I have come to you, wise hermit, to ask you to answer three questions: How can I learn to do the right thing at the right time? Who are the people I most need, and to whom should I, therefore, pay more attention than to the rest? And, what affairs are the most important, and need my first attention?"

The hermit listened to the Tsar, but answered nothing. He just spat on his hand and recommenced digging.

"You are tired," said the Tsar, "let me take the spade and work awhile for you."

---

*dismounted*: got down

"Thanks!" said the hermit, and, giving the spade to the Tsar, he sat down on the ground.

When he had dug two beds, the Tsar stopped and repeated his questions. The hermit again gave no answer, but rose, stretched out his hand for the spade, and said: "Now rest awhile-and let me work a bit."

But the Tsar did not give him the spade, and continued to dig. One hour passed, and another. The sun began to sink behind the trees, and the Tsar at last stuck the spade into the ground, and said: "I came to you, wise man, for an answer to my questions. If you can give me none, tell me so, and I will return home."

"Here comes someone running," said the hermit, "let us see who it is."

The Tsar turned round, and saw a bearded man come running out of the wood. The man held his hands pressed against his stomach, and blood was flowing from under them. When he reached the Tsar, he fell fainting on the ground moaning feebly. The Tsar and the hermit unfastened the man's clothing. There was a large wound in his stomach. The Tsar washed it as best he could, and bandaged it with his handkerchief and with a towel the hermit had. But the blood would not stop flowing, and the Tsar again and again removed the bandage soaked with warm blood, and washed and rebandaged the wound.

When at last the blood ceased flowing, the man revived and asked for something to drink. The Tsar brought fresh water and gave it to him. Meanwhile the sun had set, and it had become cool. So the Tsar, with the hermit's help, carried the wounded man into the hut and laid him on the bed. Lying on the bed the man closed his eyes and was quiet; but the Tsar was so tired with his walk and with the work he had done, that he crouched down on the threshold, and also fell asleep-so soundly that he slept all through the short summer night. When he awoke in the morning, it was long before he could remember where he was, or who was the strange bearded man lying on the bed and gazing intently at him with shining eyes.

"Forgive me!" said the bearded man in a weak voice, when he saw that the Tsar was awake and was looking at him.

"I do not know you, and have nothing to forgive you for," said the Tsar.

"You do not know me, but I know you. I am that enemy of yours who swore to revenge himself on you, because you executed his brother and seized his property.

*executed* : took the life of

*resolved* : decided

## THREE QUESTIONS

I knew you had gone alone to see the hermit, and I resolved to kill you on your way back. But the day passed and you did not return. So I came out from my ambush to find you, and I came upon your bodyguard, and they recognised me, and wounded me. I escaped from them, but should have bled to death had you not dressed my wound. I wished to kill you, and you have saved my life. Now, if I live, and if you wish it, I will serve you as your most faithful slave, and will bid my sons do the same. Forgive me!"

The Tsar was very glad to have made peace with his enemy so easily, and to have gained him for a friend, and he not only forgave him, but said he would send his servants and his own physician to attend him, and promised to restore his property.

Having taken leave of the wounded man, the Tsar went out into the porch and looked around for the hermit. Before going away he wished once more to beg an answer to the questions he had put. The hermit was outside, on his knees, sowing seeds in the beds that had been dug the day before.

The Tsar approached him, and said: "For the last time, I pray you to answer my questions, wise man."

"You have already been answered!" said the hermit, still crouching on his thin legs, and looking up at the Tsar, who stood before him.

"How answered? What do you mean?" asked the Tsar.

"Do you not see," replied the hermit. "If you had not pitied my weakness yesterday, and had not dug those beds for me, but had gone your way, that man would have attacked you, and you would have repented of not having stayed with me. So the most important time was when you were digging the beds; and I was the most important man; and to do me good was your most important business. Afterwards when that man ran to us, the most important time was when you were attending to him, for if you had not bound up his wounds he would have died without having made peace with you. So he was the most important man, and what you did for him was your most important business. Remember then: there is only one time that is important—Now! It is the most important time because it is the only time when we have any power. The most necessary man is he with whom you are, for no man knows whether he will ever have dealings with anyone else: and the most important affair is, to do him good, because for that purpose alone was man sent into this life!"

---

*crouching* : bending the knees and the upper body forward





CLASS XII  
POETRY





# On Killing a Tree



Gieve Patel

**Gieve Patel** (1940-) is a renowned Indian poet playwright and painter. In his poetry, Patel uses a syncopated rhythm. He brings the flavour of everyday's speech in his poetry. Some of his notable works are *Mirrored, Mirroring* (1991), *How do you withstand, body* (1976).

The poem is about the harm done to the environment by human beings. In a voice of sarcasm and irony, the poet speaks of man's violence and impatience towards nature. The poem is written in free verse.

**I**t takes much time to kill a tree,  
Not a simple jab of the knife  
Will do it. It has grown  
Slowly consuming the earth,  
Rising out of it, feeding  
Upon its crust, absorbing  
Years of sunlight, air, water,  
And out of its leprous hide  
Sprouting leaves.  
  
So hack and chop  
But this alone won't do it.  
Not so much pain will do it.  
The bleeding bark will heal

---

*jab* : short thrust

*leprosy* : relating to leprosy (a kind of skin disease)

*hide*: here, the bark of a tree

*sprouting* : growing

And from close to the ground  
Will rise curled green twigs,  
Miniature boughs  
Which if unchecked will expand again  
To former size.

No,  
The root is to be pulled out -  
Out of the anchoring earth;  
It is to be roped, tied,  
And pulled out-snapped out  
Or pulled out entirely,  
Out from the earth-cave,  
And the strength of the tree exposed,  
The source, white and wet,  
The most sensitive, hidden  
For years inside the earth.

Then the matter  
Of scorching and choking  
In sun and air,  
Browning, hardening,  
Twisting, withering,  
And then it is done .

---

*miniature*: very small

*curled*: folded up

*withering* : drying

# Asleep In The Valley



Arthur Rimbaud

Jean Nicolas Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) was a French poet from the nineteenth century. He started writing poetry even before he reached his teens. He stopped writing poetry at the age of nineteen. His major works include *To Music*, *Evening prayer*. The present poem, originally titled *Le Dormeur le Val*, was included in his collection of poetry called, *Poesis* (1872).

This poem is written in the model of the Italian sonnet that has fourteen lines divided as octave and sestet. The poet explores the inherent futility of war. This theme is expressed in the contrasting images of a bountiful nature as background and the tragic death of a young soldier in the midst of nature's splendour.

A small green valley where a slow stream flows  
And leaves long strands of silver on the bright  
Grass; from the mountain top stream the Sun's  
Rays; they fill the hollow full of light.  
  
A soldier, very young, lies open-mouthed,  
A pillow made of fern beneath his head,  
Asleep; stretched in the heavy undergrowth,  
Pale in his warm, green, sun-soaked bed .  
  
His feet among the flowers, he sleeps. His smile  
Is like an infant's —gentle, without guile.  
Ah, Nature, keep him warm; he may catch cold.  
The humming insects don't disturb his rest;  
He sleeps in sunlight, one hand on his breast;  
At peace. In his side there are two red holes.

---

*strands* : here, long strips

*hollow* : refers to the valley

*undergrowth* : bushes

*humming* : making a droning noise

## Sonnet 18

# Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?



William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was a famous English poet and dramatist the sixteenth century. He wrote sonnets, tragedies, comedies and historical plays. Some of his noted works are *Macbeth*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Venus and Adonis*.

Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets. Shakespearean sonnet has fourteen lines, ending in a rhymed couplet. In this poem Shakespeare enquires into the theme of the destruction brought by time and the eternal quality of art which transcends the ravages of time.

**S**hall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed.  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;  
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee .

---

*temperate* : mild

*lease* : to give out something in rent

*complexion* : skin colour

*untrimmed* : uncut

*brag* : boast

# The Poetry of Earth



John Keats

**John Keats** (1795-1821) was a noted poet of the English Romantic Movement. He belonged to the second generation of Romantic poets who came after Coleridge and Wordsworth. He is known for his vivid imagery which are noted for their sensuous appeal. Some of his famous works are *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Hyperion* and *Isabella*.

The argument put forward by Keats in this poem is that, the natural music of the earth never ceases to play through the cycle of seasons. The poem is a sonnet in which the song of the grasshopper is embodied in the octave and that of the cricket is portrayed in the sestet.

**T**he poetry of earth is never dead:

When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,

And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run

From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;

That is the Grasshopper'—he takes the lead

In summer luxury, —he has never done

With his delights; for when tired out with fun

He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never:

On a lone winter evening, when the frost

Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills

The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,

And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,

The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

---

*mead* : meadow

*stove* : a device for cooking and heating

*wrought* : made





CLASS XII  
PLAY





# The Proposal



A n t o n C h e k h o v

**Anton Pavlovich Chekhov** (1860-1904) was a famous playwright and short story writer from Russia. He is often considered as a pioneer of modernism in theatre. He was also one of the architects of modern short story. His famous works include *Uncle Vanya*, *Three Sisters*, *The Cherry Orchard*. The present play has been translated from Russian by Julius West.

## **The One-act Play**

One act play gained currency as a dramatic form towards the end of the nineteenth century. The one act play is called so because the entire dramatic action is complete within a single act. The play is tightly constructed. There is little scope of development of character or plot, rather the focus is on the dramatic situation. An example of a renowned one act play is J. M. Synge's *Riders to the sea*.

## CHARACTERS

STEPAN STEPANOVITCH CHUBUKOV,  
a landowner

NATALYA STEPANOVNA,  
his daughter,  
twenty-five years old

IVAN VASSILEVITCH LOMOV,  
a neighbour of Chubukov, a large  
and hearty, but very  
suspicious landowner

## SETTING

### Chubukov's country-house

*[A drawing-room in CHUBUKOV'S house.]*

*[LOMOV enters, wearing a dress-jacket and white gloves. CHUBUKOV rises to meet him.]*

CHUBUKOV : My dear fellow, whom do I see! Ivan Vassilevitch! I am extremely glad! *[Squeezes his hand]* Now this is a surprise, my darling\* .... How are you?

LOMOV : Thank you. And how may you be getting on?

CHUBUKOV : We just get along somehow, my angel, to your prayers, and so on. Sit down, please do .... Now, you know, you shouldn't forget all about your neighbours, my darling. My dear fellow, why are you so formal in your get-up? Evening dress, gloves, and so on. Can you be going anywhere, my treasure?

LOMOV : No, I've come only to see you, honoured Stepan Stepanovitch.

CHUBUKOV : Then why are you in evening dress, my precious? As if you're paying a New Year's Eve visit!

LOMOV : Well, you see, it's like this. *[Takes his arm]* I've come to you, honoured Stepan Stepanovitch, to trouble you with a request. Not once or twice have I already had the privilege of applying to you for help, and you have always, so to speak ... I must ask your pardon, I am getting excited. I shall drink some water, honoured Stepan Stepanovitch. *[Drinks.]*

*dress-jacket:* a short coat

*get-up:* style of clothing

*honoured:* used as a mark of respect

*New Year's Eve:* 31 December, the last day of the year. A time of celebration

*privilege :* special right

## MINDSCAPES ♦ CLASS XII

CHUBUKOV : [Aside] He's come to borrow money! Shan't give him any!  
[Aloud] What is it, my beauty?

LOMOV : You see, Honour Stepanitch ... I beg pardon, Stepan Honouritch ... I mean, I'm awfully excited, as you will please notice ... In short, you alone can help me, though I don't deserve it, of course ... and haven't any right to count on your assistance. ....

CHUBUKOV : Oh, don't go round and round it, darling! Spit it out! Well?

LOMOV : One moment ... this very minute. The fact is, I've come to ask the hand of your daughter, Natalya Stepanovna, in marriage.

CHUBUKOV : [Joyfully] By Jove! Ivan Vassilevitch! Say it again-I didn't hear it all!

LOMOV : I have the honour to ask ...

CHUBUKOV : [Interrupting] My dear fellow ... I'm so glad, and so on .... Yes, indeed, and all that sort of thing. [Embraces and kisses LOMOV] I've been hoping for it for a long time. It's been my continual desire. [Sheds a tear] And I've always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son. May God give you both His help and His love and so on, and I did so much hope ... What am I behaving in this idiotic way for? I'm off my balance with joy, absolutely off my balance! Oh, with all my soul ... I'll go and call Natasha, and all that.

LOMOV : [Greatly moved] Honoured Stepan Stepanovitch, do you think I may count on her consent?

CHUBUKOV : Why, of course, my darling, and ... as if she won't consent! She's in love; egad, she's like a love-sick cat, and so on .... Shan't be long! [Exit.]

LOMOV : It's cold ... I'm trembling all over, just as if I'd got an examination before me. The great thing is, I must have my mind made up. If I give myself time to think, to hesitate, to talk a lot, to look for an ideal, or for real love, then I'll never

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*consent*: approval

*egad*: expression of surprise (old use)

*love-sick*: very much in love

*critical*: here, vital

get married .... Brr! ... It's cold! Natalya Stepanovna is an excellent housekeeper, not bad-looking, well-educated .... What more do I want? But I'm getting a noise in my ears from excitement. [Drinks] And it's impossible for me not to marry .... In the first place, I'm already 35—a critical age, so to speak. In the second place, I ought to lead a quiet and regular life .... I suffer from palpitations, I'm excitable and always getting awfully upset .... At this very moment my lips are trembling, and there's a twitch in my right eyebrow .... But the very worst of all is the way I sleep. I no sooner get into bed and begin to go off when suddenly something in my left side gives a pull, and I can feel it in my shoulder and head .... I jump up like a lunatic, walk about a bit, and lie down again, but as soon as I begin to get off to sleep there's another pull! And this may happen twenty times ....

[NATALYA STEPANOVNA comes in.]

NATALYA STEPANOVNA :

Well, there! It's you, and papa said, "Go; there's a merchant come for his goods." How do you do, Ivan Vassilevitch!

LOMOV :

How do you do, honoured Natalya Stepanovna?

NATALYA STEPANOVNA :

You must excuse my apron and negligee ... we're shelling peas for drying. Why haven't you been here for such a long time? Sit down. [They seat themselves] Won't you have some lunch?

LOMOV :

No, thank you, I've had some already.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA :

Then smoke .... Here are the matches .... The weather is splendid now, but yesterday it was so wet that the workmen didn't do anything all day. How much hay have you stacked? Just think, I felt greedy and had a whole field cut, and now I'm not at all pleased about it because I'm afraid my hay may rot. I ought to have waited a bit. But what's this? Why, you're in evening dress! Well, I never! Are you going to a

*palpitations:* rapid heartbeat

*pull:* a twitch (generally of the muscle)

*negligee:* a loose gown worn in the house

ball, or what?-though I must say you look better.  
Tell me, why are you got up like that?

LOMOV :

*[Excited]* You see, honoured Natalya Stepanovna ... the fact is, I've made up my mind to ask you to hear me out .... Of course you'll be surprised and perhaps even angry, but a ... *[Aside]* It's awfully cold!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA :

What's the matter? *[Pause]* Well?

LOMOV :

I shall try to be brief. You must know, honoured Natalya Stepanovna, that I have long, since my childhood, in fact, had the privilege of knowing your family. My late aunt and her husband, from whom, as you know, I inherited my land, always had the greatest respect for your father and your late mother. The Lomovs and the Chubukovs have always had the most friendly, and I might almost say the most affectionate, regard for each other. And, as you know, my land is a near neighbour of yours. You will remember that my Oxen Meadows touch your birchwoods.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Excuse my interrupting you. You say, "my Oxen Meadows ... " But are they yours?

LOMOV:

Yes, mine.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

What are you talking about? Oxen Meadows are ours, not yours!

LOMOV:

No, mine, honoured Natalya Stepanovna.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Well, I never knew that before. How do you make that out?

LOMOV:

How? I'm speaking of those Oxen Meadows which are wedged in between your birchwoods and the Burnt Marsh.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Yes, yes .... They're ours.

LOMOV:

No, you're mistaken, honoured Natalya Stepanovna, they're mine.

*affectionate* : loving

*birchwoods* : types of trees

*wedged*: inserted tightly between two things

## THE PROPOSAL

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Just think, Ivan Vassilevitch! How long have they been yours?

LOMOV:

How long? As long as I can remember.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Really, you won't get me to believe that!

LOMOV:

But you can see from the documents, honoured Natalya Stepanovna. Oxen Meadows, it's true, were once the subject of dispute, but now everybody knows that they are mine. There's nothing to argue about. You see, my aunt's grandmother gave the free use of these Meadows in perpetuity to the peasants of your father's grandfather, in return for which they were to make bricks for her. The peasants belonging to your father's grandfather had the free use of the Meadows for forty years, and had got into the habit of regarding them as their own, when it happened that ...

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

No, it isn't at all like that! Both my grandfather and great-grandfather reckoned that their land extended to Burnt Marsh—which means that Oxen Meadows were ours. I don't see what there is to argue about. It's simply silly!

LOMOV:

I'll show you the documents, Natalya Stepanovna!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

No, you're simply joking, or making fun of me .... What a surprise! We've had the land for nearly three hundred years, and then we're suddenly told that it isn't ours! Ivan Vassilevitch, I can hardly believe my own ears .... These Meadows aren't worth much to me. They only come to five dessiatins [Note: 13.5 acres], and are worth perhaps 300 roubles but I can't stand unfairness. Say what you will, but I can't stand

---

*dispute* : quarrel

*perpetuity* : continuity

*reckoned* : thought

*roubles* : Russian currency

*implore* : earnestly request

unfairness.

LOMOV:

Hear me out, I implore you! The peasants of your father's grandfather, as I have already had the honour of explaining to you, used to bake bricks for my aunt's grandmother. Now my aunt's grandmother, wishing to make them a pleasant ...

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

I can't make head or tail of all this about aunts and grandfathers and grandmothers! The Meadows are ours, and that's all.

LOMOV:

Mine!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Ours! You can go on proving it for two days on end, you can go and put on fifteen dress-jackets, but I tell you they're ours, ours, ours! I don't want anything of yours and I don't want to give up anything of mine. So there!

LOMOV:

Natalya Ivanovna, I don't want the Meadows, but I am acting on principle. If you like, I'll make you a present of them.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

I can make you a present of them myself, because they're mine! Your behaviour, Ivan Vassilevitch, is strange, to say the least! Up to this we have always thought of you as a good neighbour, a friend: last year we lent you our threshing-machine, although on that account we had to put off our own threshing till November, but you behave to us as if we were Gypsies. Giving me my own land, indeed! No, really, that's not at all neighbourly! In my opinion, it's even impudent, if you want to know ....

---

*head or tail*: sense of a thing

*threshing machine*: machine that separates grain from corn

*gypsies* : a nomadic community

*impudent* : rude

## THE PROPOSAL

LOMOV:

Then you make out that I'm a land-grabber?  
Madam, never in my life have I grabbed  
anybody else's land, and I shan't allow anybody  
to accuse me of having done so .... [Quickly steps  
to the carafe and drinks more water] Oxen  
Meadows are mine!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

It's not true, they're ours!

LOMOV:

Mine!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

It's not true! I'll prove it! I'll send my mowers  
out to the Meadows this very day!

LOMOV:

What?

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

My mowers will be there this very day!

LOMOV:

I'll give it to them in the neck!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

You dare!

LOMOV:

[Clutches at his heart] Oxen Meadows are mine!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

You understand? Mine!

Please don't shout! You can shout yourself  
hoarse in your own house, but here I must ask  
you to restrain yourself!

LOMOV:

If it wasn't, madam, for this awful, excruciating  
palpitation, if my whole inside wasn't upset, I'd  
talk to you in a different way! [Yells] Oxen  
Meadows are mine!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Ours!

LOMOV:

Mine!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Ours!

LOMOV:

Mine!

[Enter CHUBUKOV.]

CHUBUKOV:

What's the matter? What are you shouting at?

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Papa, please tell this gentleman: who owns  
Green Meadows, we or he?

CHUBUKOV:

[To LOMOV] Darling, the Meadows are ours!

---

*carafe* : a glass container

*mowers*: workers who cut down grass

*hoarse* : to talk so loudly so that the voice breaks

*restrain* : limit

*excruciating* : severe

LOMOV:

But, please, Stepan Stepanitch, how can they be yours? Do be a reasonable man! My aunt's grandmother gave the Meadows for the temporary and free use of your grandfather's peasants. The peasants used the land for forty years and got as accustomed to it as if it was their own, when it happened that ...

CHUBUKOV:

Excuse me, my precious.... You forget just this, that the peasants didn't pay your grandmother and all that, because the Meadows were in dispute, and so on. And now everybody knows that they're ours. It means that you haven't seen the plan.

LOMOV:

I'll prove to you that they're mine!

CHUBUKOV:

You won't prove it, my darling.

LOMOV:

I shall!

CHUBUKOV:

Dear one, why yell like that? You won't prove anything just by yelling. I don't want anything of yours, and don't intend to give up what I have. Why should I? And you know, my beloved, that if you propose to go on arguing about it, I'd much sooner give up the meadows to the peasants than to you. There!

LOMOV:

I don't understand! How have you the right to give away somebody else's property?

CHUBUKOV:

You may take it that I know whether I have the right or not. Because, young man, I'm not used to being spoken to in that tone of voice, and so on: I, young man, am twice your age, and ask you to speak to me without agitating yourself, and all that.

LOMOV:

No, you just think I'm a fool and want to have me on! You call my land yours, and then you want me to talk to you calmly and politely! Good neighbours don't behave like that, Stepan Stepanitch! You're not a neighbour, you're a grabber!

---

*agitating*: exciting

*grabber*: someone who takes what is rightfully not his

## THE PROPOSAL

CHUBUKOV:

What's that? What did you say?

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Papa, send the mowers out to the Meadows at once!

CHUBUKOV:

What did you say, sir?

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Oxen Meadows are ours, and I shan't give them up, shan't give them up, shan't give them up!  
We'll see! I'll have the matter taken to court, and then I'll show you!

LOMOV:

To court? You can take it to court, and all that! You can! I know you; you're just on the look-out for a chance to go to court, and all that. ... You pettifogger! All your people were like that! All of them!

LOMOV:

Never mind about my people! The Lomovs have all been honourable people, and not one has ever been tried for embezzlement, like your grandfather!

CHUBUKOV:

You Lomovs have had lunacy in your family, all of you!

All, all, all!

CHUBUKOV:

Your grandfather was a drunkard, and your younger aunt, Nastasya Mihailovna, ran away with an architect, and so on.

LOMOV:

And your mother was hump-backed. *[Clutches at his heart]* Something pulling in my side .... My head .... Help! Water!

CHUBUKOV:

Your father was a guzzling gambler!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

And there haven't been many backbiters to equal your aunt!

LOMOV:

My left foot has gone to sleep .... You're an intriguer .... Oh, my heart! ... And it's an open secret that before the last elections you bri ... I can see stars .... Where's my hat?

---

*pettifogger* : a lawyer who takes up petty cases

*embezzlement* : cheating

*lunacy* : madness

*hump-backed* : a bent back

*guzzling* : a drunkard

*back-biter* : a person who says bad things about someone behind his back

*malicious* : harmful

*double-faced* : an insincere person

## MINDSCAPES ♦ CLASS XII

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

It's low! It's dishonest! It's mean!

CHUBUKOV:

And you're just a malicious, double-faced  
intriguer! Yes!

LOMOV:

Here's my hat.... My heart! ... Which way?  
Where's the door? Oh!.... I think I'm dying ....  
My foot's quite numb ....

[Goes to the door.]

CHUBUKOV:

[Following him] And don't set foot in my house  
again!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Take it to court! We'll see!

[LOMOV staggers out.]

CHUBUKOV:

Devil take him! [Walks about in excitement.]

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

What a rascal! What trust can one have in one's  
neighbours after that!

CHUBUKOV:

The villain! The scarecrow!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

The monster! First he takes our land and then  
he has the impudence to abuse us.

CHUBUKOV:

And that blind hen, yes, that turnip-ghost has  
the confounded cheek to make a proposal, and  
so on! What? A proposal!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

What proposal?

CHUBUKOV:

Why, he came here so as to propose to you.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

To propose? To me? Why didn't you tell me so  
before?

CHUBUKOV:

So he dresses up in evening clothes. The stuffed  
sausage! The wizen-faced frump!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

To propose to me? Ah! [Falls into an easy-chair  
and wails] Bring him back! Back! Ah! Bring him  
here.

CHUBUKOV:

Bring whom here?

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Quick, quick! I'm ill! Fetch him! [Hysterics.]

CHUBUKOV:

What's that? What's the matter with you?  
[Clutches his head] Oh, unhappy man that I am!  
I'll shoot myself! I'll hang myself!

---

*confounded*: confused

*wizen-faced*: wrinkled faced

*frump* : unattractive person

## THE PROPOSAL

NATALYA STEPANOVNA: I'm dying! Fetch him!  
CHUBUKOV: At once. Don't yell!

[Runs out. A pause. NATALYA STEPANOVNA wails.]

NATALYA STEPANOVNA. What have they done to me! Fetch him back!  
Fetch him! [A pause.]

[CHUBUKOV runs in.]

CHUBUKOV: He's coming, and so on, devil take him! Ouf!  
Talk to him yourself; I don't want to ....

[Wails] Fetch him!

[Yells] He's coming, I tell you. Oh, what a burden, Lord, to be the father of a grown-up daughter! I'll cut my throat! I will, indeed! We cursed him, abused him, drove him out, and it's all you ... you!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA: No, it was you!

CHUBUKOV: I tell you it's not my fault. [LOMOV appears at the door] Now you talk to him yourself [Exit.]

[LOMOV enters, exhausted]

LOMOV: My heart's palpitating awfully .... My foot's gone to sleep .... There's something keeps pulling in my side.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA: Forgive us, Ivan Vassilevitch, we were all a little heated .... I remember now: Oxen Meadows really are yours.

LOMOV: My heart's beating awfully... My Meadows ....  
My eyebrows are both twitching ...

NATALYA STEPANOVNA: The Meadows are yours, yes, yours .... Do sit down .... [They sit] We were wrong ....

LOMOV: I did it on principle .... My land is worth little to me, but the principle ...

NATALYA STEPANOVNA: Yes, the principle, just so .... Now let's talk of something else.

LOMOV: The more so as I have evidence. My aunt's grandmother gave the land to your father's grandfather's peasants ...

NATALYA STEPANOVNA: Yes, yes, let that pass .... [Aside] I wish I knew

LOMOV:

how to get him started .... *[Aloud]* Are you going to start shooting soon?

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

I'm thinking of having a go, honoured Natalya Stepanovna, after the harvest. Oh, have you heard? Just think, what a misfortune I've had! My dog Guess, whom you know, has gone lame. What a pity! Why?

LOMOV:

I don't know .... Must have got twisted, or bitten by some other dog .... *[Sighs]* My very best dog, to say nothing of the expense. I gave Mironov 125 roubles for him.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

It was too much, Ivan Vassilevitch.

LOMOV:

I think it was very cheap. He's a first-rate dog. Papa gave 85 roubles for his Squeezee, and Squeezee is heaps better than Guess!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Squeezee better than. Guess? What an idea! *[Laughs]* Squeezee better than Guess!

LOMOV:

Of course he's better! Of course, Squeezee is young, he may develop a bit, but on points and pedigree he's better than anything that even Volchanetsky has got.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Excuse me, Natalya Stepanovna, but you forget that he is overshot, and an overshot always means the dog is a bad hunter!

LOMOV:

Overshot, is he? The first time I hear it!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

I assure you that his lower jaw is shorter than the upper.

LOMOV:

Have you measured?

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Yes. He's all right at following, of course, but if you want him to get hold of anything...

LOMOV:

In the first place, our Squeezee is a thoroughbred animal, the son of Harness and Chisels, while there's no getting at the pedigree

---

*overshot*: a defect in the jaw

*pedigree* : good breeding of an animal

*cab-horse*: a carriage pulled by horse

## THE PROPOSAL

of your dog at all. ... He's old and as ugly as a worn-out cab-horse.

LOMOV:

He is old, but I wouldn't take five Squeezers for him .... Why, how can you? ... Guess is a dog; as for Squeezer, well, it's too funny to argue .... Anybody you like has a dog as good as Squeezer ... you may find them under every bush almost. Twenty-five roubles would be a handsome price to pay for him.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

There's some demon of contradiction in you today, I van Vassilevi tch. First you pretend that the Meadows are yours; now, that Guess is better than Squeezer. I don't like people who don't say what they mean, because you know perfectly well that Squeezer is a hundred times better than your silly Guess. Why do you want to say it isn't?

LOMOV:

I see, Natalya Stepanovna, that you consider me either blind or a fool. You must realise that Squeezer is overshot!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

It's not true.

LOMOV:

He is!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

It's not true!

LOMOV:

Why shout, madam?

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

Why talk rot? It's awful! It's time your Guess was shot, and you compare him with Squeezer! Excuse me; I cannot continue this discussion: my heart is palpitating.

LOMOV:

I've noticed that those hunters argue most who know least.

LOMOV:

Madam, please be silent .... My heart is going to pieces .... [Shouts] Shut up!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

I shan't shut up until you acknowledge that Squeezer is a hundred times better than your Guess!

LOMOV:

A hundred times worse! Hang your Squeezer! Squeezer! His head ... eyes ... shoulder ...

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

There's no need to hang your silly Guess; he's

*demon* : here, terrible

*contradiction*: opposition

## MINDSCAPES ♦ CLASS XII

LOMOV:

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

[Enter CHUBUKOV.]

CHUBUKOV:

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

LOMOV:

CHUBUKOV:

LOMOV:

CHUBUKOV:

LOMOV:

CHUBUKOV:

LOMOV:

CHUBUKOV:

half- dead already!

[Weeps] Shut up! My heart's bursting!

I shan't shut up.

What's the matter now?

Papa, tell us truly, which is the better dog, our Squeezee or his Guess.

Stepan Stepanovitch, I implore you to tell me just one thing: is your Squeezee overshot or not? Yes or no?

And suppose he is? What does it matter? He's the best dog in the district for all that, and so on.

But isn't my Guess better? Really, now?

Don't excite yourself, my precious one .... Allow me .... Your Guess certainly has his good points .... He's pure-bred, firm on his feet, has well-sprung ribs, and all that. But, my dear man, if you want to know the truth, that dog has two defects: he's old and he's short in the muzzle.

Excuse me, my heart .... Let's take the facts .... You will remember that on the Marusinsky hunt my Guess ran neck-and-neck with the Count's dog, while your Squeezee was left behind.

He got left behind because the Count's whipper-in hit him with his whip.

And with good reason. The dogs are running after a fox, when Squeezee goes and starts worrying a sheep!

It's not true! ... My dear fellow, I'm very liable to lose my temper, and so, just because of that, let's stop arguing. You started because everybody is always jealous of everybody else's dogs. Yes, we're all like that! You too, sir, aren't blameless! You no sooner notice that some dog is better than your Guess than you begin with this, that

---

*neck-and -neck*: staying level in a race

*liable* : likely

## THE PROPOSAL

... and the other ... and all that .... I remember everything!

LOMOV: I remember too!

CHUBUKOV: [Teasing him] I remember, too .... What do you remember?

LOMOV: My heart ... my foot's gone to sleep .... I can't ...

NATALYA STEPANOVNA: [Teasing] My heart .... What sort of a hunter are you? You ought to go and lie on the kitchen oven and catch black beetles, not go after foxes! My heart!

CHUBUKOV: Yes really, what sort of a hunter are you, anyway? You ought to sit at home with your palpitations, and not go tracking animals. You could go hunting, but you only go to argue with people and interfere with their dogs and so on. Let's change the subject in case I lose my temper. You're not a hunter at all, anyway!

LOMOV: And are you a hunter? You only go hunting to get in with the Count and to intrigue. .... Oh, my heart! ... You're an intriguer!

CHUBUKOV: What? I an intriguer? [Shouts] Shut up!

LOMOV: Intriguer!

CHUBUKOV: Boy! Pup!

LOMOV: Old rat! Jesuit!

CHUBUKOV: Shut up or I'll shoot you like a partridge! You fool!

LOMOV: Everybody knows that-oh my heart!-your late wife used to beat you .... My feet ... temples ... sparks .... I fall, I fall!

CHUBUKOV: And you're under the slipper of your housekeeper!

LOMOV: There, there, there ... my heart's burst! My shoulder's come off .... Where is my shoulder? I die. [Falls into an armchair] A doctor! [Faints.]

CHUBUKOV: Boy! Milksop! Fool! I'm sick! [Drinks water] Sick!

---

*partridge* : a kind of bird

*milksop*: here, a silly and weak person

## MINDSCAPES ♦ CLASS XII

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

What sort of a hunter are you? You can't even sit on a horse! [To her father] Papa, what's the matter with him? Papa! Look, papa! [Screams] Ivan Vassilevitch! He's dead!

CHUBUKOV:

I'm sick! ... I can't breathe! ... Air!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

He's dead. [Pulls LOMOV'S sleeve] Ivan Vassilevitch! Ivan Vassilevitch! What have you done to me? He's dead. [Falls into an armchair] A doctor, a doctor! [Hysterics.]

CHUBUKOV:

Oh! ... What is it? What's the matter?

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

[Wails] He's dead ... dead!

CHUBUKOV:

Who's dead? [Looks at LOMOV] So he is! My word! Water! A doctor! [Lifts a tumbler to LOMOV'S mouth] Drink this! ... No, he doesn't drink. ... It means he's dead, and all that. ... I'm the most unhappy of men! Why don't I put a bullet into my brain? Why haven't I cut my throat yet? What am I waiting for? Give me a knife! Give me a pistol! [LOMOV moves] He seems to be coming round .... Drink some water! That's right ....

LOMOV:

I see stars ... mist .... Where am I?

CHUBUKOV:

Hurry up and get married and—well, to the devil with you! She's willing! [He puts LOMOV'S hand into his daughter's] She's willing and all that. I give you my blessing and so on. Only leave me in peace!

LOMOV:

[Getting up] Eh? What? To whom?

CHUBUKOV:

She's willing! Well? Kiss and be damned to you!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

[Wails] He's alive ... Yes, yes, I'm willing ....

CHUBUKOV:

Kiss each other!

LOMOV:

Eh? Kiss whom? [They kiss] Very nice, too. Excuse me, what's it all about? Oh, now I understand ... my heart ... stars ... I'm happy. Natalya Stepanovna .... [Kisses her hand] My foot's gone to sleep ....

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

I ... I'm happy too. ....

CHUBUKOV:

What a weight off my shoulders. .... Ouf!

NATALYA STEPANOVNA:

But ... still you will admit now that Guess is worse than Squeezier.

---

tumbler : drinking glass without a handle

## THE PROPOSAL

LOMOV: Better!  
NATALYA STEPANOVNA: Worse!  
CHUBUKOV: Well, that's a way to start your family bliss! Have some champagne!  
  
LOMOV: He's better!  
NATALYA STEPANOVNA: Worse! worse! worse!  
CHUBUKOV: *[Trying to shout her down]* Champagne!  
Champagne!

CURTAIN





SUMMARY  
CLASS XI  
PROSE





### **Leela's friend :**

Sidda finds employment as servant in the house of Mr. Sivasankar. Sidda becomes an instant favourite of Mr. Sivasankar's five year old daughter Leela. Sidda is expected to do plenty of work at a meagre salary. He also has the duty to be a playmate to Leela. Sidda is an obedient servant to the family and a charming playmate to Leela. Intimacy between Sidda and Leela is exquisitely demonstrated in the game they play together. Sidda tells her bed-time stories. Leela is impressed with Sidda's knowledge of the moon. She teaches him the alphabets. One day the gold chain worn by Leela goes missing. Mrs. Sivasankar interrogates Sidda about it. That night Sidda runs away. A police complaint is filed against him by Leela's parents. Sidda is captured by the police. He denies having taken the chain. Leela is very upset with Sidda's absence. Finally, the gold chain is discovered in a tamarind pot, but Mr. and Mrs. Sivasankar are not convinced of Sidda's innocence.

### **Karma :**

The story is about an anglophile named Sir Mohan Lal. An anglophile is a person who is an admirer of England and the English people. Mr. Lal yearns to leave his Indian origin behind and imitates the English as closely as possible. The story opens with Mr. and Mrs. Lal waiting for a train. Mr. Lal travels first class, since he considers himself one of English gentry who rides first class. Mrs. Lal is unlike her husband in taste and disposition. She is a traditional Indian woman. She travels in inter-class women's compartment. Mr. and Mrs. Lal share a strained relationship. When the train arrives Mr. and Mrs. Lal board their respective compartments. Two drunken English soldiers get into the compartment with Sir Lal. Sir Lal is ready to treat them with a spirit of camaraderie. But the two soldiers refuse to overlook his Indian origin and treat him in the same way as they would treat a native. Sir Lal pleads his affinity with the English, but the soldiers refuse to recognise him as one of their own countrymen. They throw him out of the train. The story concludes with Mrs. Lal spitting out from there compartment the red juice from the betel leaf she was chewing.

### **Jimmy Valentine:**

Jimmy Valentine, a skilled burglar, is released from prison by the Governor's order. Warden Cronin advises him to lead a straight life and not to crack safes any more. However, as soon as Jimmy leaves prison, he gets involved in a series of burglaries. This puts detective Ben Price in his pursuit. Meanwhile, Jimmy settles in Elmore and becomes a successful store owner. Jimmy falls in love Annabel who is the daughter of Mr. Adam, the banker. Having fallen in love, Jimmy undergoes a change of heart and decides to marry Annabel and live a reformed life. Jimmy writes a letter to his friend expressing his wish to give up his safe-cracking tools. The day Jimmy is to hand over his safe-cracking tools, he goes to the bank with Annabel, her sister and her two children, Mary and Agatha. Unknown to Jimmy, detective Ben Price has followed him to the bank. In the bank, Agatha is locked by accident in the bank's vault. When Annabel turns to Jimmy for help, Jimmy revives his identity as burglar. He opens the vault with his safe-cracking tools and rescues Agatha. Detective Ben Price has the same realisation as Warden Cronin, who made a remark that Jimmy was a "good fellow at heart". Ben Price does not arrest Jimmy. Jimmy's goodness is finally rewarded.

### **Nobel lecture :**

Mother Teresa gave her Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech on December 11, 1979 at Oslo in Sweden where the Nobel Prize Committee is based. Her speech is simple and powerful and preaches the tenets of peace and love. She recounts the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi in her opening address. She proclaims the message of Jesus Christ, "The Prince of Peace" to spread love among mankind. She talks about family bonding and love as a panacea for social separations. She shares her experience about distressed people from all over the world. She is earnest in ensuring that an unwanted child should not be cast away from this world but be brought within the folds of love. She talks about the mutual love and resilience of the people fighting against poverty. She mentions a touching tale of a child in Calcutta who sacrificed his share of sugar so that other children may have it. She recounts a tale of communal harmony. She ends with the reminder that a smile is the most priceless of all human possessions.

### The Place of Art in Education :

Nandalal Bose talks about art as special vehicle of expression. He makes a distinction between literature and other forms of art. Nandalal maintains that education in art moulds the aesthetic experience and facilitates the various expressions of man. He insists that a training in art should be given parallel importance with reading and writing. He remarks that the absence of a sense of beauty detracts from man's physical and mental well being. He seeks to correct the notion that art belongs to the domain of the rich. He says that the beauty and order found in a work of art is universal property of mankind. To support his argument, he cites the example of the poor Santhal who keeps his hut tidy and beautifies it. In contrast, a rich man without a sense of art, displays bad taste in fashion by wearing jacket with dhoti. Nandalal says that an education in art is essential for preserving our traditional heritage. He suggests certain remedies. He advocates the display of good works of art in the classrooms to engage the attention of the students. The students should also visit museums and picture galleries. He emphasizes observing of nature to discover the beauty contained in our environment. Nandalal puts special emphasis on the celebration of nature festivals, so that children may familiarise themselves with the bounties of nature.





S U M M A R Y  
C L A S S   X I  
P O E T R Y





### **Upon Westminster Bridge:**

This poem is a sonnet. A sonnet is a short poem of fourteen lines, of which the first eight lines are called octave, which are followed by a turn of thought, called the volta. The last six lines is called sestet, which offers a new direction to the poem. In this poem, Wordsworth describes his native city of London. The poet is impressed by the beauty of his city in the early morning sunlight. The poet finds the majestic sight to be full of inspiration. The city is fully clothed in the beauty of the morning. The bustle and din of the day had not begun yet. The ships, the towers and the buildings are glimmering in the sun. The poet finds the unparalleled beauty of the morning spread over valleys, rocks and hills. It is a serene scene. The massive pulse of civilisation is lying in calm peace.

### **Meeting at Night :**

In his poem, Browning describes the journey to the clandestine meeting between two lovers. The poem is divided into two stanzas of six lines each. The first stanza describes a journey by boat through the grey sea towards a stretch of black land. There is a yellow half-moon in the sky. The speaker sails through choppy waves. Then the boat is pushed up on the soft sand of an inlet.

The second stanza talks about the actual meeting place of the lovers. Beyond three fields, a tap from the outside on a window pane and the igniting of a match, announces the arrival of the lover. In the excitement of the meeting, the lovers' hearts beat louder than their whispered voices.

### **The Sick Rose :**

In this poem, Blake talks about a beautiful rose spoiled by an invisible worm. The poet uses the rose and the worm as symbols of purity and corruption respectively. Thus, the poet brings about two opposing actions within the compass of a single poem. The worm steals upon the rose and destroys its innocence. The poet regards the love of the worm as dark and secret. This is because the poet considers the worm as an agent of passion which by its experience mutilates the pure innocence of the rose.

### **Brotherhood : Homage to Claudius Ptolemy**

This poem, as the title indicates, is a homage to the Roman astronomer and mathematician from the tenth century. In the ancient age, when technology was not so advanced, the people were awed by the universe as it appeared to them. Man began speculations as to his position in this universe. Paz writes this poem in the spirit of the astronomer Claudius Ptolemy who tries to define the location of man in the scheme of the universe. The speaker in the poem observes his littleness and brevity of existence in contrast with the enormity of the universe. Upon reflection, the speaker realises that there is a design that organises this universe and man's existence in it.

### **Daybreak :**

Longfellow in his poem sounds the clarion call of the day. He describes the sights and sounds hailing the rousing of life at daybreak. The poet picks on the wind as the agent of herald, announcing the dawn. The wind cheers the mariners, stimulates the forest, enlivens the birds, rouses the chanticleer, animates the cornfields and invigorates the belfry tower to ring out loud. The wind does not want to disturb the repose of those sleeping in the graveyard, for it is not time for them to wake up yet.



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### **The Eyes Have It :**

The story traces an ironic encounter between two people who are blind but are unaware of each other's blindness. The narrator, himself a young man, meets a young girl in a train compartment. The narrator finds the young girl to be attractive and strikes up a conversation with her. Assuming that the young girl can see, the narrator describes to her the beauty of the hills. The narrator relies on his memory for the description, for he has not always been blind. The narrator is quite taken with the young girl and wants to spend a memorable time with her as long as their brief journey lasted. The narrator continues to address her not as a blind man, but as someone who could see. When the woman alights at her destination, the narrator is shocked to learn from his new fellow traveller that the young girl was as blind as the narrator himself.

### **Strong Roots:**

Dr. Kalam presents us a pen-picture of his childhood in the island town of Rameswaram at Tamil Nadu. In a nostalgic vein, he describes the simple life in his household. The author presents a heart warming picture of communal harmony in his native town. He recalls how he started developing his spiritual belief and outlook under the influence of his father. The narrative reveals the deep respect the author had for his parents. The affectionate experience of his childhood went into moulding his character and attitude in a later life. While being the architect of the most advanced scientific programmes in space research, Dr. Kalam remained firm in his spiritual convictions throughout his life.

### **Thank You Ma'am :**

Hughes's short story builds around two characters, Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones and a young boy called Roger. Roger tries to fulfill his desire of owning a pair of blue suede shoes by attempting to steal the pocketbook that belongs to Mrs. Jones. But Roger is caught red-handed by Mrs. Jones. However, Mrs. Jones feels compassion for him and does not hand him over to the police. She finds out that the boy is hungry and offers him food. Mrs. Jones seems to feel at ease in the boy's company and tells him about her own life. She also gives him some money before bidding him good-bye. Roger is overwhelmed with emotion at the goodness and sympathy he received from her. He wants to express his gratitude earnestly, but his gratefulness gets no opportunity to bloom beyond a mere 'Thank

you, Ma'am", before she closed the door on his face.

**Three Questions:**

Tolstoy treats a philosophical theme couched in the tale of a Tsar who is troubled by three questions. The three questions that haunt the Tsar concerns the right time for any action, the person whose advice the Tsar must listen to and the most important thing to do under all circumstances. The Tsar meets a hermit to whom the three questions are posed. The hermit did not give him an immediate answer. Several events ensues after that. The Tsar dug the ground on behalf of the hermit and treated a wounded man who came rushing. Having gone through the events, the Tsar got the answer to his three questions. By helping the hermit the Tsar learnt of the insipience of any action and by nursing the wounded man the Tsar understood the kindness that attends all action. Finally he was advised by the hermit to do good, for that was the purpose incumbent on man under all circumstances.



S U M M A R Y  
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### **On Killing a Tree:**

The present poem posits a scathing attack upon the human action of reckless cutting down of trees. The poem is a lyric where Patel raises an angry voice against deforestation. The poet considers the cutting down of a tree to be a violent ritual. He looks upon the felling of a tree as a murder. It is a murder which is heinous in the slow drawing out of the action. The poet casts a pathetic glance at the growing up of a tree by deriving nourishment from the land and the sky. The poet thinks that human beings harbour an intense dislike for a full-grown tree. Therefore, a tree is cut in a cruel process that reflects the merciless mood of the cutter. The poet says, destruction of the tree is not complete by the mere felling of it. The tree is removed from its place of birth by vengefully uprooting it and leaving the stump to wither.

### **Asleep in the Valley:**

In the poem, Rimbaud holds up his first hand experience of war. The poem begins with a description of the serene beauty of nature's bounty in a green valley. Subsequently, Rimbaud goes on to describe the tragic death of a soldier lying among the heavy undergrowth. In an ironic tone, the poet describes the calm and peace which envelops the soldier in his death. The poem creates a shock as the imagery passes from pictures of nature's fruition to the image of cold death. The irony comes out strongly as the poet unfolds the presence of a dead body in the midst of a beautiful, idyllic scene. This emphasises the notion of death in the middle of life. It is the intention of the poet to underline the futility manifest in war.

### **Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day:**

Sonnet no. 18 is dedicated to a friend of the poet whom he admires greatly. The friend is a young man of great beauty. To bring out the exquisite beauty of his friend, the poet goes into several comparisons in the first light lines. The poem says that where as the beauty of a summer's day is subject to fluctuation, the beauty of his friend is eternal and unchangeable. The poem affirms that his

friend is more beautiful than the changing beauty of nature. It is beauty of the sort whose fairness cannot be entrapped by age or death. The poet immortalises the beauty of his friend in his verse. Whenever the poem will be read, the beauty of his friend would be revived. This points to the timeless nature of art which captures beauty and keeps it safe from, to quote another line from Shakespeare, “the blank hand of time”.

### **The Poetry of Earth:**

The poem presents the song of the grasshopper and the cricket as the natural music of the two different seasons of summer and winter. In summer, when the earth is drowsy with heat, the grasshopper among the hedges celebrates a song of the overflowing endowments of nature. The buzzing activity of summer comes to a stop in the frost of winter. There is little sign of life. Then the stillness of a winter evening is broken by a cricket's song. To one who is alerted by the cricket's song, the music comes as a reminder of the grasshopper's song in summer. The point that Keats is trying to make is that the cycle of nature is never empty of its innate music. In this way, “the poetry of the earth” continues from one season to another. Hence, the poem highlights the eternal quality of nature's cyclical pattern and assures us of the permanency of nature's creation.



SUMMARY  
CLASS XII  
PLAY





## The Proposal

The play revolves around three characters. They are Lomov, a landed farmer, Chubukov, another landed farmer, and Chubukov's daughter, Natalya. The play explores the comic situation that arises in the course of a marriage proposal made by Lomov to Chubukov's daughter. Chubukov, who first assumes that Lomov has come to borrow money, is delighted when Lomov asks instead for his daughter's hand. Chubukov is certain of his daughter's assent to the marriage proposal and hastily fetches her.

While Lomov is alone, he reveals his agitation at the course of action he has chosen. He also suffers from a number of ailments the visitations of which hold up his character in a comic light.

When Natalya and Lomov interact, their chat pleasantly hovers on weather and agriculture. To facilitate his marriage proposal, Lomov mentions the intimacy between the two families. This leads him to mention Oxen Meadows which he declares to be his family property. Natalya instantly flares up in disagreement and makes a contrary claim. They fall to quarrelling with each other. The marriage proposal is forgotten. Natalya is supported by her father and the violent row of ownership terminates in Lomov's departure.

When Lomov has left, Chubukov reveals to his daughter, Lomov's intention of marrying her. Natalya appears eager for marriage. She insinuates her father to bring back the prospective bridegroom.

Lomov returns. He and Natalya gets a second chance at veering the subject again towards the romantic proposal. However, instead of an untroubled communication of the proposal, they start bickering once more with each other. This time the argument centres on the superiority of their respective hunting dogs named Guess and Squeezers. Lomov's ailment is suddenly accelerated and he faints. Chubukov revives him. As soon as Lomov comes around, Chubukov insists that he complete his proposal. Lomov finishes the original purpose of his visit, which was to ask for Natalya's hand. Chubukov is relieved and shouts for a celebration while Lomov and Natalya start quarrelling again.

## Understanding of the Play :

In the play, the author draws a thumbnail sketch of his contemporary society. Through the contract of marriage as it is proposed from one landed-farmer to another, Chekhov exposes the non-romantic nature of marriage as it occurs as a social practice. The point Chekhov is trying to make, is that marriage is more of a convenient business deal subscribed to by society, rather than a romantic union between two people. Chekhov resorts to satire in order to bring out the hollowness of marriage as a social institution. Chekhov underscores no bitterness with his observations, instead through the mounting absurdity in the play, he offers his audience a sincere food for thought. The thought is all the more striking in its reception by the audience, because of the comic wrapping in which the play's central theme is presented.

The three characters in the play register volatile emotions. Lomov is obsessed with concerns for his ailments and principles of ownership. Chubukov is an astute businessman who keeps at heart the interest of his property and his daughter. Natalya reveals a kindred obsession about property ownership. The characters represent class attitudes rather than full-grown personalities. The characters share a common platform of acquisitive greed. Marriage is reduced to a mere social mechanism for farther accumulation of wealth. Chekhov indicates that marriage is more a union of necessity than choice. This is poignantly expressed in Lomov's declaration, " If I give myself time to think, to hesitate, to talk a lot, to look for an ideal, or for real love, then I'll never get married. " When Chubukov says, " I ought to be hanged", his regret is more about a social security broken off than the romantic well-being of his daughter. When Natalya exclaims, " Worse! Worse! Worse! " She shows greater propensity for argument than for acceptance of the merit of a romantic proposal.

Within the tight structure of the play, Chekhov puts the focus on marriage as convenience and treats his theme at a level of farce. The play lands a carefully contrived plot and attempts to provide no solution to the dramatic complication. Chekhov's handling of comedy attempts to provide no solution to the dramatic crisis, but merely holds up the mirror to the artificial resolution of conflict through a perfunctory proposal of marriage.