

**STORY TIME**

**Exercises in the Study  
of American Literature  
for Advanced Students of English**

*María Jesús Hernández Lerena  
Julieta Ojeda Alba  
James R. Sullivan*



*Universidad de la Rioja*



# STORY TIME

Exercises in the Study  
of American Literature  
for Advanced Students of English

*MATERIAL DIDÁCTICO*

Filología

nº 3

María Jesús Hernández Lerena  
Julieta Ojeda Alba  
James R. Sullivan

## STORY TIME

Exercises in the Study  
of American Literature  
for Advanced Students of English

Volume 1: Nineteenth Century

UNIVERSIDAD DE LA RIOJA  
Servicio de Publicaciones



**Story time: Exercises in the study of american literature for advanced students of english.**

**Volume 1: Nineteenth century**

de María Jesús Hernández Lerena, Julieta Ojeda Alba, James R. Sullivan (publicado por la Universidad de La Rioja) se encuentra bajo una Licencia

Creative Commons Reconocimiento-NoComercial-SinObraDerivada 3.0 Unported.

Permisos que vayan más allá de lo cubierto por esta licencia pueden solicitarse a los titulares del copyright.

© Los autores

© Universidad de La Rioja, Servicio de Publicaciones, 2011

[publicaciones.unirioja.es](http://publicaciones.unirioja.es)

E-mail: [publicaciones@unirioja.es](mailto:publicaciones@unirioja.es)

ISBN: 978-84-694-0874-2

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD .....	9
PART 1 .....	11
<b>I. Theme: Marriage and freedom</b>	
“The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin .....	13
<b>II. Theme: Money temptations</b>	
“The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg” by Mark Twain .....	21
<b>III. Theme: The experience of war</b>	
<i>The Red Badge of Courage</i> by Stephen Crane .....	29
<b>IV. Theme: Wit and cynism</b>	
<i>The Devil’s Dictionary</i> by Ambrose Bierce.....	37
<b>V. Theme: Old age</b>	
“Going to Shrewsbury” by Sarah Orne Jewett .....	45
PART 2 .....	53
<b>VI. Theme: The antimaterialistic hero</b>	
“Rip Van Winkle” by Washington Irving.....	55
<b>VII. Theme: Generosity</b>	
“The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry.....	63
<b>VIII. Theme: Child abuse</b>	
“The Pupil” by Henry James.....	71
<b>IX. Theme: Childhood innocence</b>	
“Little Annie’s Ramble” by Nathaniel Hawthorne .....	77
<b>X. Theme: The American South</b>	
“La Grande Demoiselle” by Grace Elizabeth King.....	83
<b>XI. Theme: Love and jealousy</b>	
“The Lady or the Tiger” by Frank R. Stockton.....	91
<b>XII. Theme: The nature of obsession</b>	
“The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe .....	99





## FOREWORD

This book is a response to a need for English language readings for classroom use that are both immediately interesting to students and more manageable for teachers who prefer to accomplish objectives in blocks of class time (approximately one hour) without unnecessary extensions that can jeopardize student interest and performance. The exercises and activities that accompany each literary text or excerpt herein are designed to be specific and efficient in generating the application and practice of the language skills being learned.

The general educational objectives are rather straightforward and basic. This book is designed to be used with students of English at Advanced and Upper Intermediate levels. Intended as a learning tool, it contains short stories and excerpts from American literary works carefully chosen and presented in order of increasing difficulty. We expect this will foster early involvement and a growing appreciation of literature. The book is divided into two distinct sections, each with its own teaching focus; accordingly, two different heading styles are used.

In particular, the authors designed the lessons as incentives for the student to use and practice oral and written skills. The selected compelling texts can quickly stimulate emotional responses that rest equally upon the student's personal experience and the implications of the text. The exercises that follow many passages are meant to encourage oral use of any dormant vocabulary along with newly learned words by way of asking students to narrate personal experiences and emotions. Written skills will be practiced and developed under the guidance and examples of the literature and students and teachers will be involved in both language and literature learning.

Reading comprehension is stimulated by encouraging students to use their imagination in tasks such as providing a context or perhaps a development or outcome for the story. Understanding the motivations of characters requires a close understanding of the reading in order to proceed acceptably. Suspense is used as a means of igniting imagination and a desire to gather information from the text. Concurrent with this, it is hoped that by interrupting the story at a crucial point curiosity will be awakened and students will want to read the whole story. The strategy for optimizing reading comprehension is to present the reading in a format

accessible during class time and containing those sections of a longer work that are most apt to keep a strong grip on the student's attention. For those practical reasons the authors base the exercises and applications on short or excerpted selections.

The three authors of this book teach nineteenth century American literature and English language. It was consistent with our particular classes to select nineteenth century American writers, but there are distinct strengths beneficial to all English classes. We believe that a good nineteenth century collection will allow students to discover for themselves how very rich, amusing, and timeless these works truly are and that they will be able to build a bridge from contemporary customs and images to those of the American past. These historical and connecting levels of literature study are well served.

There are two sections, each with a different teaching focus as well as a suggested procedure of presentation. Lessons one through five focus on comprehension, oral skills, and identification of semantic fields (words related semantically that express different attitudes or emotional involvement). The final seven lessons focus on vocabulary acquisition and practice with particular emphasis on speaking and writing skills called to use by the text-related activities. By early establishing a body of semantic fields and vocabulary knowledge, a student is better prepared to practice oral and written forms of expression which are requested with increasing frequency in later lessons. A typical class procedure would be to review and discuss the WORD FOCUS section in advance of the in-class reading. This is done so as not to hamper either a good understanding or student interest in the content of the text by reason of vocabulary default.

It is hoped that this text will bring increased efficiency and specificity to those English classes that may be attempting too many goals at the same time. The practical exercises can easily form an anchor as the standard classroom activity. Around this anchor a teacher is certainly free and encouraged to supplement or introduce material deemed appropriate and necessary. The intended role of this text is to be a predictable course foundation that can be easily embellished by teachers and by students as well.

# **PART I**



# I

## MARRIAGE AND FREEDOM

### WORD FOCUS

*forestall*: v. prevent someone from doing something by doing the action first oneself

*aquiver*: trembling

*peddler*: a person who goes to different places selling articles

*eaves*: the edge of a roof

*twitter*: short rapid sounds made by birds

*sob*: v. weep softly and stop for breath

*bespeak*: be a sign of

*yonder*: over there, in view

*run riot*: become uncontrollable

*shudder*: v. shake from fear or dislike

*unwittingly*: without knowledge or intention

*latchkey*: a key for opening a lock on an outside door of a house

*piercing*: very sharp, unpleasant, and penetrating

### THE STORY OF AN HOUR by Kate Chopin

1        Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was  
2 taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

3        It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that  
4 revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there too, near her.  
5 It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad  
6 disaster was received, with Brenty Mallard's name leading the list of "killed". He had  
7 only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had  
8 hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

9        She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a  
10 paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild  
11 abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she  
12 went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

13           There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into  
14 this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and  
15 seemed to reach into her soul.

16           She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were  
17 all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In  
18 the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which  
19 some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering  
20 in the eaves.

21           There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds  
22 that had met and piled above the other in the west facing her window.

23           She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite  
24 motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child  
25 who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

26           She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and  
27 even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze  
28 was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of the blue sky. It was not a  
29 glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

30           There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully.  
31 What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt  
32 it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents,  
33 the color that filled the air.

34           Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize  
35 this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back  
36 with her will - as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

37           When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly  
38 parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The  
39 vacant stare and look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They  
40 stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and  
41 relaxed every inch of her body.

42           She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her.  
43 A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

44           She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands  
45 folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and  
46 gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years  
47 to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms  
48 out to them in welcome.

49           There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would  
50 live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind  
51 persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a

52 private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the  
53 act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

54 And yet she had loved him - sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter!  
55 What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-  
56 assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

57 "Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

58 Josephine was kneeling before the closed doors with her lips to the keyhole,  
59 imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door - you will  
60 make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

61 "Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in the very elixir  
62 of life through that open window.

63 Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and  
64 summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick  
65 prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a  
66 shudder that life might be long.

67 She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There  
68 was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a  
69 goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the  
70 stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

71 Some one was opening the door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who  
72 entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He  
73 had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been  
74 one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to  
75 screen him from the view of his wife.

76 But Richards was too late.

77 When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease- of joy that kills.

## I. UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

Use your own words to answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think Mrs. Mallard's sister had to break the bad news gently?
2. How did they learn that Mr. Mallard had died?
3. According to the author, how do most wives react when they learn of their husband's death?
4. What was Mrs. Mallard's first reaction when she heard the bad news?

5. What was that elusive thought that Mrs. Mallard did not want to recognize at first?
6. Did she feel guilty when she realized that she was not feeling pain but happiness? Why?
7. What were her thoughts about the future?
8. Can you identify the paragraphs where she considers the advantages of love and those of independence? Which of the two prospects does she enjoy better?
9. What did Mrs. Mallard consider to be a crime when talking about the relationship between men and women?
10. How did Mrs. Mallard's sister feel about Mrs. Mallard's refusal to open the door?
11. Why do you think neither Louise's sister nor Richards can imagine how Louise is feeling?
12. What happens at the end of the story?
13. In what way is the doctor's conclusion wrong?

## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Try to find in the text words that are related to pain or sorrow and those that are related to happiness or joy.

## III. REVISION AND EXPANSION OF THEME: WORDS EXPRESSING FEELING AND EMOTION

### Feeling, depression, and discontent (adjectives)

*depressed*: in low spirits, sad.

*fed up*: (informal), to feel unable to do what one wants to do. "I'm fed up with this job!"

*bored*: not interested, not happy.

*discontented*: dissatisfied, unhappy. "She is a rather discontented person, she never enjoys life".

*low*: (informal), depressed. "I'm feeling low today, let's have a drink".

*blue*: (informal), sad, without hope.

*bleak*: (of weather, places, future events) cold, cheerless, discouraging. "His future looks bleak."



### Showing unhappiness ( adjectives)

*sorrowful*: causing sadness. "During the funeral he had a sorrowful expression on his face".

*regretful*: feeling remorse about something that has or has not happened. "He looked so regretful after having told Mary off."

*heartbroken*: full of sorrow. "He was heartbroken when his cat was put down".

*grief-stricken*: suffering emotional pain from loss. "As you can imagine, my mother was grief-stricken after the death of my grandfather."

### Verbs with prepositions relating to someone dying

*mourn*: (for, over) to feel or show grief at someone's death. "After the raid, the young soldier was alone, mourning over the loss of his best buddies".

*grieve*: (for) to suffer sadness because of a death or a loss or any cause of anxiety. "I'm grieving for my lost youth."

*bereave*: (of) to be left alone and sad because of a death. "He was bereaved of his wife"

*pass on, pass away*: (euphemistic) die, go to another life, usually peacefully. "She passed away last week. Her funeral will be held tomorrow at 5 p. m."

*kick the bucket*: (slang), to die. "The old gray mare finally kicked the bucket."

### Adjective forms and verbs related to feeling pleasure

*overjoyed*: very pleased, really delighted. " Everyone is overjoyed at the birth of Sarah's baby".

*satisfied*: having what one wants. "She was satisfied with her new job."

*relieved*: feeling comfort when one knows everything is alright. " We were relieved when you made the right decision."

*gladden*: (formal) to make happy, glad. "The victory of democracy gladdened the hearts of the citizens."

*cheer*: (formal and standard) make someone happy or give encouragement or hope (sometimes by shouting or other supportive actions) "He's so optimistic that his visits always cheer everyone."

*cheer up*: (colloquial) to become or make cheerful. "When he failed the exam, I tried to cheer him up".

*appease*: to satisfy someone, make someone calm by doing something. "My father was appeased when I told him I would make up for my bad behavior".

*rejoice*: (biblical) feel or show great joy. "Rejoice with me; for I have found my lost sheep."

**IV. PRACTICE: USE A WORD FROM THE PREVIOUS SECTION THAT BEST COMPLETES EACH SENTENCE.**

1. The recovery of the nation's leader was a \_\_\_\_\_ event.
2. It \_\_\_\_\_ me to see how few people of our generation are left.
3. I've always felt \_\_\_\_\_ about selling our lovely little farm.
4. When your dear little aunt \_\_\_\_\_ last spring, we paid a short visit to your \_\_\_\_\_ uncle.
5. The woman kept on complaining about mistreatment; she wouldn't be \_\_\_\_\_ by the comforting remarks of her lawyer.
6. I like to go to football matches and \_\_\_\_\_ every time my team scores a goal.
7. We were \_\_\_\_\_ when we learned that she was safe.
8. The future of our firm will be very \_\_\_\_\_ indeed if we don't do something about it.
9. The old woman still \_\_\_\_\_ for her daughter, who died at the age of 18.
10. The crowd \_\_\_\_\_ when the president announced an imminent ceasefire.
11. Come on! \_\_\_\_\_! You didn't do so badly in the last race.
12. She had a \_\_\_\_\_ look on her face. Apparently, she didn't get the salary increase she expected.

**V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY**

Be prepared to discuss these questions in class:

1. "If you don't want to feel lonely, don't get married." Do you think there is any truth in this statement? Do you think that in the future you could be in Mrs. Mallard's position? What is your opinion of marriage? Do you believe, together with the protagonist of the story, that any kind of imposition, however well-intentioned, is a crime? Do you think that both men and women benefit from marriage in the same way? Where do you think lies the irony in the story?
2. Retell this story briefly using your own words.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR: KATE CHOPIN**

Kate Chopin (1851-1904) started to write at thirty-six, after being left a widow with six children to raise. She turned her experiences in remote Louisiana among the Creoles and Acadians into novels and short stories. In 1894 she managed to publish a collection of stories, *Bayou Folk*, but she never won much popularity. In 1899 her novel *The Awakening* was received with hostility because of its freedom in dealing with a morally and sexually emancipated woman. Many of her stories deal with women who have to endure claustrophobic attachments to prejudiced men and opt to break free from such ties at the expense of loneliness and social incomprehension. Unfortunately, her reputation was established at least half a century after her death (1904), mainly with the 60's revision and appreciation of the work of female writers who had not been previously given much critical attention.



## II MONEY TEMPTATIONS

### WORD FOCUS

*upright*: respectable, honest  
*besmirch*: bring disgrace on  
*staple*: the most basic part  
*sneer at*: show your dislike by half-smiling  
*hail from*: come from  
*rap*: a light blow or a scolding  
*contrive*: make a clever plan  
*sweeping*: including many things  
*buggy*: a carriage pulled by a horse  
*stagger*: v. walk unsteadily  
*to wit*: "that is to say"  
*tally*: v. be exactly the same, to equate  
*defilement*: that which destroys purity  
*skim*: v. read quickly to get the main ideas  
*grind*: hard work  
*gleeful*: showing satisfaction

### THE MAN THAT CORRUPTED HADLEYBURG by Mark Twain

1           It was many years ago. Hadleyburg was the most honest and upright town in  
2 all the region round about. It had kept that reputation unsmirched during three  
3 generations, and was prouder of it than of any other of its possessions. It was so  
4 proud of it, and so anxious to insure its perpetuation, that it began to teach the  
5 principles of honest dealing to its babies in the cradle, and make the like teachings  
6 the staple of their culture thenceforward through all the years devoted to their  
7 education. Also, throughout the formative years temptations were kept out of the  
8 way of the young people, so that their honesty could have every chance to harden  
9 and solidify, and become a part of their very bone. The neighboring towns were

10 jealous of this honorable supremacy, and elected to sneer at Hadleyburg's pride in  
11 it and call it vanity; but all the same they were obliged to acknowledge that  
12 Hadleyburg was in reality an incorruptible town; and if pressed they would also  
13 acknowledge that the mere fact that a young man hailed from Hadleyburg was all  
14 the recommendation he needed when he went forth from his natal town to seek  
15 for responsible employment.

16 But at last, in the drift of time, Hadleyburg had the ill luck to offend a passing  
17 stranger - possibly without knowing it -, certainly without caring, for Hadleyburg  
18 was sufficient unto itself, and cared not a rap for strangers or their opinions. Still,  
19 it would have been well to make an exception in this one's case, for he was a  
20 bitter man and revengeful. All through his wanderings during a whole year he  
21 kept his injury in mind, and gave all his leisure moments to trying to invent a  
22 compensating satisfaction for it. He contrived many plans, and all of them were  
23 good, but none of them was quite sweeping enough; the poorest of them would  
24 hurt a great many individuals, but what he wanted was a plan which would  
25 comprehend the entire town, and not let so much as one person escape unhurt.  
26 At last he had a fortunate idea, and when it fell into his brain it lit up his whole  
27 head with an evil joy. He began to form a plan at once, saying to himself, "That is  
28 the thing to do - I will corrupt the town".

29 Six months later he went to Hadleyburg, and arrived in a buggy at the house  
30 of the old cashier of the bank about ten at night. He got a sack out of the buggy,  
31 shouldered it, and staggered with it through the cottage yard, and knocked at the  
32 door. A woman's voice said "Come in", and he entered, and set his sack behind  
33 the stove in the parlor, saying politely to the old lady who sat reading the  
34 *Missionary Herald* by the lamp:

35 "Pray keep your seat, madam, I will not disturb you. There - now it is pretty  
36 well concealed; one would hardly know it was there. Can I see you husband a  
37 moment, madam?"

38 No, he was gone to Brixton, and might not return before morning.

39 "Very well, madam, it is no matter. I merely wanted to leave that sack in his  
40 care, to be delivered to the rightful owner when he shall be found. I am a stranger;  
41 he does not know me; I am merely passing through the town tonight to discharge  
42 a matter which has been long in my mind. My errand is now completed, and I go  
43 pleased and a little proud, and you will never see me again. There is a paper  
44 attached to the sack which will explain everything. Good night, madam."

45 The old lady was afraid of the mysterious big stranger, and was glad to see  
46 him go. But her curiosity was roused, and she went straight to the sack and  
47 brought away the paper. It began as follows:

48 TO BE PUBLISHED; or, the right man sought out by private inquiry -either  
49 will answer. This sack contains gold coin weighing a hundred and sixty pounds  
50 four ounces-

51 "Mercy on us, and the door not locked!"

52 Mrs. Richards flew to it all in a tremble and locked it, then pulled down the  
53 window-shades and stood frightened, worried, and wondering if there was  
54 anything else she could do toward making herself and the money more safe. She  
55 listened awhile for burglars, then surrendered to curiosity and went back to the  
56 lamp and finished reading the paper:

57 I am a foreigner, and am presently going back to my own country, to  
58 remain there permanently. I am grateful to America for what I have received at  
59 her hands during my stay under her flag, and to one of her citizens - a citizen of  
60 Hadleyburg - I am especially grateful for a great kindness done me a year or two  
61 ago. Two great kindnesses, in fact. I will explain. I was a gambler. I say W A S. I  
62 was a ruined gambler. I arrived in this village at night, hungry and without a  
63 penny. I asked for help - in the dark, I was ashamed to beg in the light. I begged  
64 of the right man. He gave me twenty dollars - that is to say, he gave me life, as I  
65 considered it. He also gave me fortune, for out of that money I have made myself  
66 rich at the gaming-table. And finally, a remark which he made to me has  
67 remained with me to this day, and has at last conquered me, and in conquering  
68 has saved the remnant of my morals: I shall gamble no more. Now I have no idea  
69 who that man was, but I want him found, and I want him to have this money,  
70 to give away, throw away, or keep, as he pleases. It is merely my way of testifying  
71 my gratitude to him. If I could stay, I would find him myself, but no matter, he  
72 will be found. This is an honest town, an incorruptible town, and I know I can  
73 trust it without fear. This man can be identified by the remark which he made  
74 to me, I feel persuaded that he will remember it.

75 And now my plan is this: If you prefer to conduct the inquiry privately, do  
76 so. Tell the contents of this present writing to any one who is likely to be the  
77 right man. If he shall answer, "I am the man, the remark I made was so-and-so",  
78 apply the test - to wit: open the sack and in it you will find a sealed envelope  
79 containing that remark. If the remark mentioned by the candidate tallies with it,  
80 give him the money, and ask no further questions, for he is certain to be the  
81 right man.

82 But if you shall prefer a public inquiry, then publish this present writing in  
83 the local paper - with these instructions added, to wit: Thirty days from now, let  
84 the candidate appear at the town-hall at eight in the evening (Friday), and hand  
85 this remark, in a sealed envelope, to the Rev. Mr. Burgess (if he will be kind  
86 enough to act), and let Mr. Burgess there and then destroy the seals on the sack,  
87 open it, and see if the remark is correct, if correct, let the money be delivered,  
88 with my sincere gratitude, to my benefactor thus identified.

89 Mrs. Richards sat down, gently quivering with excitement, and was soon lost  
90 in thinking - after this pattern: "What a strange thing it is! ... And what a fortune  
91 for that kind man who set his bread afloat upon the waters! ... If it had only been  
92 my husband that did it! - for we are so poor, so old and poor! ..." Then, with a sigh  
93 But it was not my Edward; no, it was not he that gave a stranger twenty dollars. It

94 is a pity too; I see it now ...” Then, with a shudder - “ But it is a gambler’s money!  
95 the wages of sin; we couldn’t take it; we couldn’t touch it. I don’t like to be near  
96 it; it seems a defilement.” She moved to a farther chair... “ I wish Edward would  
97 come, and take it to the bank; a burglar might come at any moment; it is dreadful  
98 to be here all alone with it.”

99 At eleven Mr. Richards arrived, and while his wife was saying, “I am so glad  
100 you’ve come!” he was saying, “ I’m so tired - tired clear out; it is dreadful to be  
101 poor, and have to make these dismal journeys at my time of life. Always at the  
102 grind, grind, grind, on a salary - another man’s slave, and he sitting at home in his  
103 slippers, rich and comfortable”.

104 “ I am so sorry for you, Edward, you know that; but be comforted; we have  
105 our livelihood; we have our good name -”.

106 Yes, Mary, and that is everything. Don’t mind my talk - it’s just a moment’s  
107 irritation and doesn’t mean anything. Kiss me - there, it’s all gone now, and I am  
108 not complaining any more. What have you been getting? What’s in the sack?”

109 Then his wife told him the great secret. It dazed him for a moment; then he  
110 said:

111 “It weights a hundred and sixty pounds? Why, Mary, it’s for-ty thou-sand  
112 dollars - think of it - a whole fortune! Not ten men in this village are worth that  
113 much. Give me the paper.”

114 He skimmed through it and said:

115 “ Isn’t it an adventure! Why, it’s a romance; its like the impossible things one  
116 reads about in books, and never sees in life.” He was well stirred up now; cheerful,  
117 even gleeful. He tapped his old wife on the cheek, and said, humorously, “Why,  
118 we’re rich, Mary, rich; all we’ve got to do is to bury the money and burn the  
119 papers. If the gambler ever comes to inquire, we’ll merely look coldly upon him  
120 and say: “ What is this nonsense you are talking” We have never heard of you and  
121 your sack of gold before”; and then he would look foolish, and - “

122 “ And in the mean time, while you are running on with your jokes, the  
123 money is still here, and it is fast getting along toward burglar-time”.

124 “ True. Very well, what shall we do - make the inquiry private? No, not that;  
125 it would spoil the romance. The public method is better. Think what a noise it will  
126 make! And it will make all the other towns jealous; for no stranger would trust  
127 such a thing to any town but Hadleyburg, and they know it. It’s a great card for  
128 us. I must get to the printing-office now, or I shall be too late.”

129 “ But stop - stop - don’t leave me here alone with it, Edward!”

130 But he was gone. For only a little while, however. Not far from his own house  
131 he met the editor-proprietor of the paper, and gave him the document, and said,  
132 “ Here is a good thing for you, Cox - put it in.”



- 133           “ It may be too late, Mr. Richards, but I’ll see.”
- 134           At home again he and his wife sat down to talk the charming mystery over;
- 135           they were in no condition for sleep. The first question was, Who could the citizen
- 136           have been who gave the stranger the twenty dollars? It seemed a simple one; both
- 137           answered it in the same breath -
- 138           “Barclay Goodson”.

## I. UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

This story contains limitless possibilities of development and outcome. Bear them in mind when you try to answer the following questions:

1. What was the source of Hadleyburg’s popularity?
2. How were the people born in that city educated?
3. Why do you think the narrator offers such a long introduction to highlight the fact that Hadleyburg was incorruptible?
4. What is the event that triggers off this story?
5. What do you think was the stranger’s plan for revenge?
6. Whom does the stranger meet when he arrives in town?
7. What does the stranger say before going away?
8. What are the contents of the letter?
9. What was Mrs. Richards’s reaction after reading the letter?
10. What was Mr. Richards’s reaction?
11. Do you think that he is talking seriously when he imagines himself rich?
12. What is the first thing he does when he realizes he is responsible for the success of the stranger’s command?
13. After this passage, thanks to the press, news is quickly spread about the existence of the gold, and everyone in the town thinks that Barclay Goodson must have been the man who helped the stranger. But Barclay Goodson had died recently.

Write what you think will happen given these circumstances.

## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Hadleyburg was considered a virtuous town. Think of all the things its inhabitants must not do in order to be considered virtuous. Now think of all the things they should do in order to be considered virtuous.

### III. REVISION AND EXPANSION OF THEME

#### nouns for behavior

*morality*: rightness of behavior. "One wonders if there is any morality in politics."

*morals*: rules of behavior, especially in matters of sex. "She thinks his morals are not very good."

*ethics*: moral rules, the study of morality. "I am reading a book on ethics."

*scruple*: qualm, a feeling of doubt about whether one is doing right or wrong. "He has no scruples; he'll do anything to get what he wants."

*duty*: what one must do. "It is my duty to help my young brother."

*obligation*: (formal) duty. "He did it from a sense of obligation."

#### adjectives: humanitarian and greedy

*humanitarian*: trying to give human beings better living conditions. "In the aftermath of the war, people depended on humanitarian help from Europe."

*generous*: showing willingness to give money, kindness. "You are too generous with your money."

*liberal*: generous, especially in giving money easily, or in large amounts. "Mr. Simms is a liberal supporter of the hospital."

*charitable*: showing kindness and charity. "My two aunts are very charitable, they are always giving help to the poor."

*merciful*: willing to forgive people for bad things done. "The judge was merciful and did not punish the criminals too severely."

*mean*: ungenerous, not wanting to share. "He's really mean, I had to pay for his meal!"

*selfish*: wanting as much as possible for oneself. "She's so selfish that she doesn't let anyone touch her books or records."

*greedy*: full of a strong desire for food or money. "The greedy little boy ate all the food."

*jealous*: possessive. "My younger brother is jealous of my success."

*envious*: feeling disappointment and ill will (one envies the luck, possessions or qualities of other people because one would like them for one's self). "She looked at my new dress with envious eyes."

*resentful*: feeling angry at someone because of something unfair. "She is very resentful because he left her."

*vengeful*: (of an action) a wish to harm another for what has been done to oneself. "After he was fired, his mind started to fill with vengeful plans."

**verbs for getting one's revenge**

*avenge*: to punish someone for a received mistreatment. "He avenged his father's death by burning the murderer's house."

*pay back*: to make one suffer in return. "I will pay you back for what you did to my family!"

*get even*: to be avenged, to take one's revenge. "I'll get even if it takes me one hundred years."

**IV. PRACTICE. Choose the words from last section that best complete the following sentences:**

1. The criminal was fortunate to have such a \_\_\_\_\_ judge at his trial.
2. He's always concerned with the plight of the third world and is therefore involved in all kinds of \_\_\_\_\_ actions.
3. Their older son became extremely \_\_\_\_\_ when his little brother drew everyone's attention.
4. He \_\_\_\_\_ his unjust treatment by playing a trick on the whole village.
5. I'm loath to put the blame on the poor old man for that little theft. Unlike you, I still have \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I've always thought that Sarah was a little bit of a glutton, she always is so \_\_\_\_\_ for sweets.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ of our western society keep changing due to the different standards of behavior offered by the media.
8. Of course, nobody believes nowadays that there is any \_\_\_\_\_ left in international trade.
9. I told him not to be so \_\_\_\_\_ toward his brother-in-law just because he called him a softie in front of his wife.
10. When his wife confessed that she had been unfaithful to him, he threatened her by saying that he would \_\_\_\_\_ for her faithless act.
11. I know you have always felt \_\_\_\_\_ of your friend's beauty.
12. If he keeps being so \_\_\_\_\_ with his money he will end up as a tattered beggar.

## V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY

1. Do you think things are going to be easy in Hadleyburg when they all know that a sack of gold will be given to the person who guesses the kind remark given to a stranger? Why?
2. Describe how you imagine the town before and after that piece of news stirred up the interest of the people.
3. Do you think the stranger's scheme was clever and ill-intended? In what way?
4. If you wanted to get even after a friend of yours did you a bad turn, what would you do? Can you imagine taking revenge on someone by scheming against him with an elaborate plan? Describe the plan.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: MARK TWAIN

Samuel Langhorne Clemens' life (1835-1910) and writings were marked by his experiences as a Mississippi river-pilot. He explained his very realistic characters by saying that "when I find a well-drawn character in fiction or biography I generally take a warm personal interest in him, for the reason that I have known him before -met him on the river". Twain's schooling ended early, when he was twelve and he started to work as an apprentice to a printer's shop. After the outbreak of the hostilities in 1861, he traveled to the west, where he worked as a miner and as an inventor. His luck started when he returned to journalistic humor and met Artemus Ward, the professional humorist. Twain's artistic talent is twofold: on the one hand, he could create hilarious sketches like "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" (1865) or exploit from an optimistic and vital perspective the cruel society Huck has to face in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), and, on the other hand, develop a more pessimistic vision as in the short story "The Mysterious Stranger" (1916). His contribution to American literature is invaluable, since he accurately reproduced the speech of the common people and deliberately refused to impose on his fiction any rule -however fashionable at the time- that he considered to be lacking in common-sense. In this sense his article "James Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offences" is simultaneously a hilarious catalogue of the flaws of the romanticized fiction of the time and a manifesto of his own literary convictions.

### III

## THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR

#### WORD FOCUS

*sprawl*: v. stretch out oneself when lying down

*swell*: v. become bigger, more rounded

*shell*: an explosive

*swirl*: v. move with twisting turns

*groan*: v. complain in a deep, low voice

*smudge*: v. make dirty by rubbing

*fret*: v. be worried, anxious

*doleful*: sad, self-pitying

*rip*: v. tear violently, as with cloth

*tumble*: v. fall over something suddenly

*toss*: v. move rapidly and pointlessly

*grate*: the bars which hold the wood in a fireplace

*tinge*: v. give a slight degree of color to an object

*jaded*: tired, worn out

*mitten*: similar to a glove, but the four fingers have only one cover

*joint*: a place where bones join

*cantering*: moving at the rapid speed of a horse

*imp*: a child who misbehaves

*smite*: have a powerful effect on

*blanche*: become colorless, white

*scamper*: run quickly for cover

*bulge*: v. swell

*meager*: slight, not enough

*cringe*: move back from fear

*wallow*: v. move or roll about with pleasure as some animals, such as pigs, do

*flurry*: a sharp rush of wind, a shared feeling of excitement

*derision*: the act of making fun of something or somebody

*shamble*: v. drag the feet when walking

These are two excerpts from a novel that explores the feelings of a young lad, Henry Fleming, when coming face to face with the absurdity and violence of war. Some paragraphs have been omitted for the sake of clarity, but the original sequence of events of the novel remains intact. Read carefully in order to absorb as many details of the boy's impressions and reasonings as possible. The first excerpt contains an unexpected and fierce counterattack of the enemy and the second one deals with Henry's attempt at finding an explanation for his shameful behavior.

### **THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE by Stephen Crane**

*An episode of the American civil war.*

(From Chapter VI)

1           But, all of a sudden, cries of amazement broke out along the ranks of the new  
2 regiment. "Here they come ag'in! Here they come ag'in!" The man who had  
3 sprawled upon the ground started up and said, "Gosh!"

4           The youth turned quick eyes upon the field. He discerned forms begin to  
5 swell in masses out of a distant wood. He again saw the tilted flag speeding  
6 forward.

7           The shells, which had ceased to trouble the regiment for a time, came  
8 swirling again, and exploded in the grass or among the leaves of the trees. They  
9 looked to be strange war flowers bursting into fierce bloom.

10          The men groaned. The luster faded from their eyes. Their smudged  
11 countenances now expressed a profound dejection. They moved their stiffened  
12 bodies slowly, and watched in sullen mood the frantic approach of the enemy. [...]

13          They fretted and complained each to each. "Oh, say, this is too much of a  
14 good thing! Why can't somebody send us supports?"

15          "We ain't never goin' to stand this second banging. I didn't come here to fight  
16 the hull damn' rebel army."

17          There was one who raised a doleful cry. "I wish Bill Smithers had trod on my  
18 hand, insteader me treddin' on his'n." [...]

19          The youth stared. Surely, he thought, this impossible thing was not about to  
20 happen. He waited as if he expected the enemy to suddenly stop, apologize, and  
21 retire bowing. It was all a mistake.

22          But the firing began somewhere on the regimental line and ripped along in  
23 both directions. The level sheets of flame developed great clouds of smoke that  
24 tumbled and tossed in the mild wind near the ground for a moment, and then  
25 rolled through the ranks as through a grate. The clouds were tinged an earth-like  
26 yellow in the sunrays and in the shadow were a sorry blue. The flag was

27 sometimes eaten and lost in this mass of vapor, but more often it projected, sun-  
28 touched, resplendent.

29 Into the youth's eyes there came a look that one can see in the orbs of a jaded  
30 horse. His neck was quivering with nervous weakness and the muscles of his arms  
31 felt numb and bloodless. His hands, too, seemed large and awkward as if he was  
32 wearing invisible mittens. And there was a great uncertainty about his knee joints.

33 The words that comrades had uttered previous to the firing began to recur to  
34 him. "Oh, say, this is too much of a good thing! What do they take us for - why  
35 don't they send supports? I didn't come here to fight the hull damn' rebel army."

36 He began to exaggerate the endurance, the skill and the valor of those who  
37 were coming. [...]

38 He slowly lifted his rifle and catching a glimpse of the thickspread field he  
39 blazed at a cantering cluster. He stopped then and began to peer as best he could  
40 through the smoke. He caught changing views of the ground covered with men  
41 who were all running like pursued imps, and yelling. [...]

42 A man near him who up to this time had been working feverishly at his rifle  
43 suddenly stopped and ran with howls. A lad whose face had borne an expression  
44 of exalted courage, the majesty of he who dares give his life, was, at an instant,  
45 smitten abject. He blanched like one who has come to the edge of a cliff at  
46 midnight as is suddenly made aware. There was a revelation. He, too, threw down  
47 his gun and fled. There was no shame in his face. He ran like a rabbit.

48 Others began to scamper away through the smoke. The youth turned his  
49 head, shaken from his trance by this movement as if the regiment was leaving him  
50 behind. He saw fleeting forms.

51 He yelled then with fright and swung about. For a moment, in the great  
52 clamor, he was like a proverbial chicken. He lost his direction of safety.  
53 Destruction threatened him from all points.

54 Directly he began to speed toward the rear in great leaps. His rifle and cap  
55 were gone. His unbuttoned coat bulged in the wind. The flap of his cartridge box  
56 bobbed wildly, and his canteen, by its slender cord, swung out behind. On his face  
57 was all the horror of those things which he imagined. [...]

58 He ran like a blind man. Two or three times he fell down. Once he knocked  
59 his shoulder so heavily against a tree that he went headlong. [...]

60 As he ran on he mingled with others. He dimly saw men on his right and on  
61 his left, and he heard footsteps behind him. He thought that all the regiment was  
62 fleeing, pursued by these ominous crashes.

63 In his flight the sound of these following footsteps gave him his one meager  
64 relief. He felt vaguely that death must make a first choice of the men who were  
65 nearest; the initial morsels for the dragons would be then those who were

66 following him. So he displayed the zeal of an insane sprinter in his purpose to  
67 keep them in the rear. There was a race. [...]

68 (From Chapter VII)

69 The youth cringed as if discovered in a crime. By heavens, they had won after  
70 all! The imbecile line had remained and become victors. He could hear cheering.

71 He lifted himself upon his toes and looked in the direction of the fight. A  
72 yellow fog lay wallowing on the treetops. From beneath it came the clatter of  
73 musketry. Hoarse voices told of an advance.

74 He turned away amazed and angry. He felt that he had been wronged.

75 He had fled, he told himself, because annihilation approached. He had done  
76 a good part in saving himself, who was a little piece of the army. He had  
77 considered the time, he said, to be one in which it was the duty of every little  
78 piece to rescue itself if possible. Later the officers could fit the little pieces  
79 together again, and make a battle front. If none of the little pieces were wise  
80 enough to save themselves from the flurry of death at such a time, why, then,  
81 where would be the army? It was all plain that he had proceeded according to  
82 very correct and recommendable rules. His actions had been sagacious things.  
83 They had been full of strategy. They were the work of a master's legs.

84 Thoughts of his comrades came to him. [...] He grew bitter over it. It seemed  
85 that the blind ignorance and stupidity of those little pieces had betrayed him. [...].  
86 He felt a great anger against his comrades. He knew it could be proved that they  
87 had been fools.

88 He wondered what they would remark when later he appeared in camp. His  
89 mind heard howls of derision. Their destiny would not enable them to understand  
90 his sharper point of view.

91 He began to pity himself acutely. [...]

92 He shambled along with bowed head, his brain in a tumult of agony and  
93 despair. When he looked loweringly up, quivering at each sound, his eyes had the  
94 expression of those of a criminal who thinks his guilt little and his punishment  
95 great, and knows he can find no words.

## I. UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

Use your own words to answer the following questions:

1. What were the first signs that showed that the enemy was approaching?
2. What was the soldiers' reaction to this new attack?



3. What was Henry's initial reaction to the attack?
4. Why do you think the author describes the color of the clouds as " a sorry blue"?
5. Which physical effects does danger have on Henry's body?
6. Which words are metaphorically used to describe the soldiers' and Henry's fright?
7. Why does Henry think that if he runs fast enough, he can save his life?
8. What is the first thing Henry discovers at the beginning of chapter VII?
9. Why does he feel that "he had been wronged"?
10. How does he try to justify his desertion?
11. What does Henry think will happen when he returns to camp?
12. How does he feel about it?
13. Do you think he will go back to his comrades? If he doesn't, What do you think he can do?

## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

List all those words or expressions you think convey an unusual meaning in the text and discuss why they have been chosen by the author. For instance, the shells are compared to "strange war flowers" that burst into a " fierce bloom". Do you think this comparison is valid? What about the others?

## III. REVISION AND EXPANSION OF THEME. RELATED WORDS EXPRESSING EMOTION AND ATTITUDE

### **fear (verbs and adjectives)**

*fright*: fear coming in a sudden sharp attack, an experience that causes sudden shock. "I nearly died of fright at the sight of the venomous snake."

*alarm*: sudden anxiety caused by the possibility of danger. "After seeing the fire we were all in a state of alarm."

*frighten*: to fill with fear. " As a little girl, I was frightened by big spiders."

*petrify*: to be immobile in a state of shock, unable to react. "The thought of the examination petrified him and he couldn't do any work."

*frightening*: causing fear. “It’s frightening to think that so many people are attacked in the streets.”

*fearful*: very frightening. “That book is full of pictures of fearful monsters.”

*bloodcurdling*: causing a feeling of fear to run through the whole body. “My eldest brother told me a bloodcurdling story of what happened to a little girl in the woods.”

*appalling*: very frightening, shocking, terrible. “What an appalling thing to happen! I can’t believe anything so bad could happen to someone like you!”

### **Feeling or showing no fear (adjectives)**

*brave*: not feeling fear.

*courageous* (literary and formal): showing courage, brave. “It was courageous of her to go into the burning building to save the child.”

*heroic*: showing the qualities of a hero. “His was a heroic quest: he went to the Far East in search of the Holy Grail.”

*audacious*: brave, often to a degree that is considered foolish. “That was a very audacious act; luckily he succeeded.”

*reckless*: too hasty, not caring about danger. “His reckless driving will cause an accident one day.”

*daredevil*: a person who is brave but not reasonably careful. “That daredevil is going to jump into the water from a great height!”

### **disgracing, shaming, and embarrassing (nouns)**

*disgrace*: loss of honor and respect. “His actions brought disgrace on his family.”

*shame*: painful feeling of guilt or failure. “He felt no shame for all the bad things he had done.”

*embarrassment*: feeling uncomfortable and self-conscious before other people. “It is always an embarrassment trying to find an excuse for rejecting an invitation.”

*humiliation*: a sense that people or circumstances have made us lose the respect of others. “It is such a humiliation to be considered someone else’s property!”

## **IV. PRACTICE. CHOOSE THE WORD FROM LAST SECTION THAT BEST COMPLETES THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES:**

1. The ambush caused the enemy to retreat far beyond the river. Nevertheless, the lieutenant said it had been rather an \_\_\_\_\_ thing to do.

2. The leader's \_\_\_\_\_ behavior resulted in a violent demonstration with hundreds of people injured.
3. Governments put a great deal of pressure on war deserters and obviously nobody likes to be called a \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. It was foolish to climb that skyscraper with no protection, that boy is a real \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. When we heard on the news that a thug had escaped from prison and was thought to have fled to our area of town, we were so \_\_\_\_\_ that we locked all the doors.
6. What I remember of Wuthering Heights is that \_\_\_\_\_ scene where the visitor has to rub a woman's wrist against the broken glass of a window.
7. She wanted revenge for past \_\_\_\_\_ .
8. The new member of our department makes a fool of himself every time we have a meeting, he is an \_\_\_\_\_ to everyone.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ on you! Didn't your parents teach you to respect the elderly?
10. The doctor who abused his patient is a \_\_\_\_\_ to our profession.

#### V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY

Would you enroll voluntarily as a soldier if your country got involved in a war? Why?

If you had to face a trial because you became a conscientious objector, what reasons would you argue to convince the members of the jury? Do you think Henry Fleming's desertion is only natural? Or do you think that he wasn't strong enough to face the enemy?.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR: STEPHEN CRANE

Crane (1871-1900) lived a short and somewhat chaotic life (1871-1900), working as a freelance journalist, novelist, short story writer, and war correspondent. The fourteenth son of a Methodist minister, he soon rebelled against his religious education, spent a brief time at university and became a freelance journalist in New York. After his success with *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), he moved to England in 1897, where he met Joseph Conrad, Henry James, and H. G. Wells. Then he covered the Spanish-American war in Cuba and the Graeco-Turkish war. He died of tuberculosis in the spa town of Baden Baden in Germany where he had been taken for a cure.

Crane's novels, *Maggie, a Girl of the Streets* (1893) and *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), represent a shocking and revelatory approach to the sordid realities of life in the American slums and the civil war. Paradoxically, *The Red Badge of Courage* represents the first truly authentic literary account of the American war, written by a man who had no first-hand experience of it. Although often considered a document of American naturalism, *The Red Badge of Courage*, with its intensely metaphorical distortion of the brutality and absurdity of the war, has the reader experience it rather as a product of an impressionistic or surrealist mind.

## IV WIT AND CYNICISM

### WORD FOCUS

*shrine*: n. a place of commemoration and respect, containing the remains of a saint's body

*draft*: n. a preliminary design or an order of money to be paid

*earnest*: very eager

*maudlin*: foolishly sad

*scoundrel*: a wicked man

*blackguard*: a dishonorable man

*pluck out*: pull out

*dicky-bird*: a small bird

*cockroach*: an unpleasant large insect

*bedbug*: a blood-sucking insect

*elope*: run away with a lover without the approval of the parents

The following definitions have been taken from a wild, amusing book of definitions by Ambrose Bierce. Try to understand them fully to grasp the irony they contain. Then you will have to formulate definitions of your own.

### THE DEVIL'S DICTIONARY by Ambrose Bierce

*Abdomen*, n. A shrine enclosing the object of man's sincerest devotion.

*Abhorrence*, n. One of the degrees of disapproval due to what is imperfectly understood.

*Abnormal*, adj. Not conforming to standard. In matters of thought and conduct, to be independent is to be abnormal, to be abnormal is to be detested. Wherefore the lexicographer adviseth a striving towards a straighter resemblance to the Average Man than he hath to himself. Who so attaineth thereto shall have peace, the prospect of death and the hope of Hell.

*Absence*, n. That which “makes the heart grow fonder” - of absence. Absence of mind is the cerebral condition to success in popular preaching. It is sometimes termed lack of sense.

*Accomplice*, n. Your partner in business

\_\_\_\_\_, n. One associated with another in a crime, having guilty knowledge and complicity, as an attorney who defends a criminal, knowing him guilty. This view of the attorney’s position in the matter has not hitherto commanded the assent of attorneys, no one having offered them a fee for assenting.

*Accuracy*, n. A certain uninteresting quality carefully excluded from human statements.

*Accuser*, n. One’s former friend; particularly the person for whom one has performed some friendly service.

*Adam’s apple*, n. A protuberance in the throat of man, thoughtfully provided by Nature to keep the rope in place.

*Air*, n. A nutritious substance supplied by a bountiful Providence for the fattening of the poor.

*Ambrosie*, n. The diet of the gods - the modern peanut.

*Amnesty*, n. The state’s magnanimity to those offenders whom it would be too expensive to punish.

*Apathetic*, adj. Six weeks married.

*Architect*, n. One who drafts a plan of your house, and plans a draft of your money.

*Arrested*, p.p. Caught criming without the money to satisfy the policeman.

*Bald*, adj. Destitute of hair from hereditary or accidental causes - never from age.

*Barber*, n. (Latin Barbarus, savage, from barba, the beard.) A savage whose laceration of your cheek is unobserved in the superior torment of his conversation.

*Beg*, v. To ask for something with an earnestness proportioned to the belief that it will not be given.

*Beggar*, n. A pest unkindly inflicted upon the suffering rich.

\_\_\_\_\_, n. One who relied on the assistance of his friends.

*Bore*, n. A person who talks when you wish him to listen.

*Bride*, n. A woman with a fine prospect of happiness behind her.

*Cannibal*, n. A gastronome of the old school who preserves the simple taste and adheres to the natural diet of the pre-pork period.

*Cat*, n. A soft, indestructible automaton provided by nature to be kicked when things go wrong in the domestic circle.

*Censor*, n. An officer of certain governments, employed to suppress the works of genius. Among the Romans the censor was an inspector of public morals, but the public morals of modern nations will not bear inspection.

*Christmas*, n. A day set apart and consecrated to gluttony, drunkenness, maudlin sentiment, gift-taking, public dullness and domestic behaviour.

*Circus*, n. A place where horses, ponies and elephants are permitted to see men, women and children acting the fool.

*Client*, n. A person who has made the customary choice between the two methods of being legally robbed.

*Comet*, n. An excuse for being out late at night and going home drunk in the morning.

*Competitor*, n. A scoundrel who desires that which we desire.

*Corpse*, n. A person who manifests the highest possible degree of indifference that is consistent with a civil regard for the solicitude of others.

*Coward*, n. One who in a perilous emergency thinks with his legs.

*Cynic*, n. A blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be. Hence the custom among the Scythians of plucking out a cynic's eyes to improve his vision.

*Day*, n. A period of twenty-four hours, mostly misspent. The period is divided into two parts, the day proper and the night, or day improper - the former devoted to sins of business, the latter consecrated to the other sort. These two kinds of social activity overlap.

*Diagnosis*, n. The physician's art of determining the condition of the patient's purse, in order to find out how sick to make him.

*Edible*, adj. Good to eat and wholesome to digest, as a worm to a toad, a toad to a snake, a snake to a pig, a pig to a man, and a man to a worm.

*Egoist*, n. A person of low taste, more interested in himself than in me.

*Family*, n. A body of individuals living in one household, consisting of male, female, young, servants, dog, cat, dicky-bird, cockroaches, bedbugs, and fleas - the "unit" of modern civilised society.

*Grave*, n. A place in which the dead are laid to await the coming of the medical student.

*King*, n. A male person commonly known in America as a "crowned head", although he never wears a crown and has usually no head to speak of.

*Patience*, n. A minor form of despair, disguised as a virtue.

*Peace*, n. In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

*Precocious*, adj. A four-year-old who elopes with his sister's doll.

*Resign*, v. A good thing to do when you are going to be kicked out.

*Scruples*, n. A word that is falling into disuse as expressing an idea that no longer exists.

*Self*, n. The most important person in the universe.

*Vote*, n. The instrument and symbol of a freeman's power to make a fool of himself and a wreck of his country.

## I. UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Use your own words to answer the following questions:

1. Why does Bierce believe that abhorrence depends on disapproval?
2. Does the word "abnormal" have a positive or a negative sense for the author? Why?
3. What is the accepted meaning of "accomplice"? Why does he think that certain attorneys are accomplices? Why haven't they accepted that term for themselves?
4. Why is the definition of "Adam's Apple" ironical?
5. Why does the state give amnesty to criminals?
6. Why do you think Bierce compares apathy to marriage?
7. Why doesn't Bierce like barbers?
8. Why do beggars become so earnest when begging?
9. Cats are defined as a domestic facility. Why?
10. Do you agree with Bierce's definition of Christmas Day?
11. Which perspective does Bierce use to define the word "circus"?
12. What does Bierce mean when he says that the night is the "day improper" "consecrated to sins of the other sort"?
13. How would you define the word "grave"? What is Bierce's perspective about it?
14. Try to describe Bierce's vision of the universe in general, taking into account his view of friendship, marriage, politics, trade, and morals. Give examples.



## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Choose the definition you like best from section I and explain why you like it.

Try to define the following concepts expressing emphatically your own outlook on life: a politician, a priest, a doctor, a dog, an idiot, war, boredom, holidays, retirement, jealousy, poverty, intelligence.

## III. REVISION AND EXPANSION OF THEME

### **questioning, doubting, and contradicting (nouns)**

*query*: a question or a doubt. "Have you any queries about the method to use?"

*inquiry* (enquiry): an act aimed to find out information. "He has been making inquiries to find out where you were last night."

*dispute*: a strong argument, a great doubt. "There was a long dispute over the ownership of the land."

*doubt*: a condition of uncertainty. "There is no doubt that he will eventually turn up."

*suspicion*: to believe something is concealed and has not been revealed yet. "I have my suspicions about who the thief is, but I won't tell."

*skepticism*: a habit of mind that leads the thinker away from belief or acceptance. "Her skepticism showed clearly when she was told that fantastic story of the new prophet."

*cynicism*: a state of mind when a person always doubts other people's intentions. "It is his cynicism that I don't like, he's always sneering at his colleagues' plans."

*contradiction*: inconsistency, an opposition between things that are compared. "There is a contradiction between what you say and what you actually do."

*paradox*: a contradictory statement that seems to be impossible but has some truth in it. "It is a paradox that England, in spite of all the rain, is officially in a state of drought."

*refutation*: a proof that something is not true. "This paper is the refutation of your manager's claims."

### **Assuming, conceiving, judging, criticizing (nouns)**

*assumption*: something that is taken for granted without any proof. "Our assumption that he was guilty because he was the only foreigner was wrong after all."

*guess*: an opinion that one is not sure about. "My guess is that she'll end up marrying George."

*afterthought*: an idea that comes after something. "Following the meeting his afterthoughts centered on the consequences of his decision."

*intuition*: to feel or understand without the support of reasoning.

*insight*: the power to get at the very essence or meaning of things. "He had an insight into the nature of the problem."

*hypothesis*: a useful idea that serves as the basis of analysis and is likely to explain something. "Our hypothesis is that the virus is transmitted by blood contact."

*judgment*: the ability to value or judge correctly. "He used poor judgement and found himself in trouble."

*assessment*: the act of evaluating or forming a judgement. "This year's assessment of the quality of our products indicates that the demands of our customers are satisfied."

*review*: an analysis resulting from the reflection on something already done. "After watching the film, he had to write a review for the local newspaper."

*criticism*: the act of expressing judgements about the quality of anything, especially a work of art. "To receive favorable criticism is a very rare achievement nowadays."

*critique*: an article or a book which analyzes the value of a work or person. "The professor has considered that *A History of the Middle Ages* is the best critique ever written about that period of history."

#### IV. PRACTICE. CHOOSE THE WORD FROM THE LAST SECTION THAT BEST COMPLETES EACH SENTENCE:

1. The writer confessed to her interviewer that she had never cared for the bad \_\_\_\_\_ of her novels.
2. Her novel offers the reader powerful \_\_\_\_\_ into our modern society.
3. The advisor's \_\_\_\_\_ of the relationship between the two companies has been negative.
4. The little girl's relatives have asked their lawyer to make an \_\_\_\_\_ about the causes of her accident.

5. You can tell she is getting old because she makes many errors of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. He's such a \_\_\_\_\_ ! He's always making unfair remarks about all the members of your family.
7. The scientist's \_\_\_\_\_ gives a possible reason for the deterioration of our planet.
8. That essay is a really good \_\_\_\_\_ of the president. I strongly recommend it to whoever is interested in politics.
9. I have my own \_\_\_\_\_ about the motives of your benefactor.
10. My old grandmother always listened to my childish far-fetched stories with a high degree of \_\_\_\_\_ .

## V. COMPOSITION

Write a short composition on a topic of your choice using as many words from the selected vocabulary as possible.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR: AMBROSE BIERCE

Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914?) was nicknamed "Bitter Bierce" because of his cynical and biting style. His wit and cleverness made of him a controversial figure, both respected and feared at his time. His definition of "cynic" would very well suit himself, since he wrote about the flaws of his time without mitigating the cruelty or morbidity of human nature.

After being wounded in the Civil War (he was on the Union side), Ambrose Bierce moved to San Francisco, where he worked as a political cartoonist and as a writer for the *San Francisco News Letter* of which he would become the editor. He became very popular when working for the *Sunday Examiner* (1886-7), but soon afterwards tragedy abruptly struck his life. His first son died in a duel in 1889, his wife left him in 1891 and his younger son died of alcoholism in 1901. At the age of seventy-one Bierce went to Mexico to fight for the revolutionary Pancho Villa and he was never seen again. He is presumed to have died in the battle of Ojinaga in 1914.

*In the Midst of Life: Tales of Soldiers and Civilians* (1891), *Can Such Things Be?* (1893), *Fantastic Fables* (1899), and *The Devil's Dictionary* (1906) are some of his works. He dealt with the psychological aspects of fear and horror, and always took a sincere look at man's worse realities.



## V OLD AGE

### WORD FOCUS

*jerk*: n. a short, quick movement

*cowslip*: a small wild plant which has yellow flowers

*thorough-braced*: a type of wagon design

*rack*: a framework with bars or hooks for holding things

*gleam*: n. a radiated emotion

*coax*: v. persuade someone by being kind or gentle

*sign off*: end a letter by writing one's signature

*scant*: not enough

*spool*: a cylinder which can wind wire or thread

*covet*: (derogatory) to desire to possess something that belongs to another person

*trickery*: the use of tricks to deceive

*sly*: clever in deceiving

*pop up*: happen suddenly, arise

### GOING TO SHREWSBURY by Sarah Orne Jewett

1           The train stopped at a way station with apparent unwillingness, and there  
2   was barely time for one elderly passenger to be hurried on board before a sudden  
3   jerk threw her almost off her unsteady old feet and we moved on. At my first  
4   glance I saw only a perturbed old countrywoman, laden with a large basket and a  
5   heavy bundle tied up in an old-fashioned bundle-handkerchief; then I discovered  
6   that she was a friend of mine, Mrs. Peet, who lived on a small farm, several miles  
7   from the village. She used to be renowned for good butter and fresh eggs and the  
8   earliest cowslip greens; in fact, she always made the most of her farm's slender  
9   resources; but it was some time since I had seen her drive by from market in her  
10   ancient thorough-braced wagon.

11           The brakeman followed her into the crowded car, also carrying a number of  
12 packages. I leaned forward and asked Mrs. Peet to sit by me; it was a great pleasure  
13 to see her again. The brakeman seemed relieved, and smiled as he tried to put part  
14 of his burden into the rack overhead; but even the flowered carpet-bag was much  
15 too large, and he explained that he would take care of everything at the end of the  
16 car. Mrs. Peet was not large herself, but with the big basket, and the bundle-  
17 handkerchief, and some possessions of my own we had very little spare room.

18           “So this ‘ere is what you call ridin’ in the cars! Well, I do declare!” said my  
19 friend, as soon as she had recovered herself a little. She looked pale and as if she  
20 had been in tears, but there was the familiar gleam of humor in her tired old eyes.

21           “Where in the world are you going, Mrs. Peet?” I asked.

22           “Can’t be you ain’t heard about me, dear?” said she.

23           “Well, the world’s bigger than I used to think’twas. I’ve broke up, - ‘t was the  
24 only thing to do, - and I’m a-movin’ to Shrewsbury.”

25           “To Shrewsbury? Have you sold the farm?” I exclaimed, with sorrow and  
26 surprise. Mrs. Peet was too old and too characteristic to be suddenly transplanted  
27 from her native soil.

28           “ ‘T wa’n’t mine, the place wa’n’t.” Her pleasant face hardened slightly. “He  
29 was coaxed an’ over-persuaded into signin’ off before he was taken away. Isi’ah,  
30 son of his sister that married old Josh Peet, come it over him about his bein’ past  
31 work and how he’d do for him like an own son, an’ we owed him a little  
32 somethin’. I’d paid off everythin’ but that, an’ was fool enough to leave it till the  
33 last, on account o’ Is’iah’s bein’ a relation and not needin’ his pay as much as  
34 some others did. It’s hurt me to have the place fall into other hands. Some  
35 wanted me to go right to law; but ‘twouldn’t be no use. Is’iah’s smarter’n I be  
36 about them matters. You see he’s got my name on the paper, too; he said’t was  
37 somethin’ ‘bout bein’ responsible for the taxes. We was scant o’ money, an’ I was  
38 wore out with watchin’ an’ being broke o’ my rest. After my tryin’ hard for risin’  
39 forty-five year to provide for bein’ past work, here I be, dear, here I be! I used  
40 to drive things smart, you remember. But we was fools enough in ‘72 to put  
41 about everything we had safe in the bank into that spool factory that come to  
42 nothin’. But I tell ye I could ha’ kept myself long’s I lived, if I could ha’ held the  
43 place. I’d parted with most o’ the woodland, if Is’iah’d coveted it. He was  
44 welcome to that, ‘cept what might keep me in ovenwood. I’ve always desired  
45 to travel an’ see somethin’ o’ the world, but I’ve got the chance now when I  
46 don’t value it no great”.

48           “Shrewsbury is a busy, pleasant place”, I ventured to say by way of comfort,  
49 though my heart was filled with rage at the trickery of Isaiah Peet, who had always  
50 looked like a fox and behaved like one.

51 "Shrewsbury's be'n held up consid'able for me to smile at", said the poor old  
52 soul, "but I tell ye, dear, it's hard to go an' live twenty-two miles from where  
53 you've always had your home and friends. It may divert me, but it won't be home.  
54 You might as well set out one o' my old apple-trees on the beach, so 't could see  
55 the waves come in, -there wouldn't be no please to it."

56 "Where are you going to live in Shrewsbury" I asked presently.

57 "I don't expect to stop long, dear creatur'. I'm 'most seventy-six year old", and  
58 Mrs. Peet turned to look at me with pathetic amusement in her honest wrinkled  
59 face. "I said right out to Is'iah, before a roomful o' the neighbors, that I expected  
60 it of him to git me home an' bury me when my time come, and do it respectable;  
61 but I wanted to airn my livin', if't was so I could, till then. He'd made sly talk, you  
62 see, about my electin' to leave the farm and go' long some o' my own folks; but"  
63 - and she whispered this carefully -" he didn't give me no chance to stay there  
64 without hurtin' my pride and dependin' on him. I ain't said that to many folks, but  
65 all must have suspected. A good sight on 'em's had money of Is'iah, though, and  
66 they don't like to do nothin' but take his part an' be prettly soft spoken, fear it'll  
67 git to his ears. Well, well, dear, we'll let it be bygones, and not think of it no more;"  
68 but I saw the great tears roll slowly down her cheeks, and she pulled her bonnet  
69 forward impatiently, and looked the other way.

70 "There looks to be plenty o' good farmin' land in this part o' the country",  
71 she said, a minute later. "Where be we now? See them handsome farm buildin's;  
72 he must be a well-off man" But I had to tell my companion that we were still  
73 within the borders of the old town where we had both been born. Mrs. Peet gave  
74 a pleased little laugh, like a girl. "I'm expectin' Shrewsbury to pop up any minute.  
75 I'm feared to be kerried right by. I wa'n't never aboard of the cars before, but I've  
76 so often thought about 'em. I don't know but it seems natural. Ain't it jest like  
77 flyin' through the air? I can't catch holt to see nothin'. Land! And here's my old  
78 cat goin' too, and never mistrustin'. I ain't told you that I'd fetched her."

79 "Is she in that basket? I inquired with interest.

80 "Yis dear. Truth was, I calc'lated to have her put out o' the misery o' moving,  
81 an' spoke to one o' the Barnes boys, an' he promised me all fair; but he wa'n't  
82 there in season, an' I kind o' made excuse to myself to fetch her along. She's an  
83 old creatur', like me, an' I can make shift to keep her some way or 'nuther; there's  
84 probably mice where we're goin', an' she's a proper mouser that can about keep  
85 herself if there's any sort o' chance. 'T will be somethin' o' home to see her goin'  
86 an' coming, but I expect we're both on us goin' to miss our old haunts. I'd love to  
87 know what kind o' mousin' there's going to be for me."

88 "You mustn't worry" I answered, with all the bravery and assurance I could  
89 muster.

## I. UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

There are two main characters in this story. It seems that clearly one of them takes the role of an observer, while the other tells about her misfortunes and her fears about an uncertain future. Answer these questions to get to know the details of the circumstances and of the characters' particular reactions to those circumstances.

1. What are the narrator's first impressions of the new passenger on the train?
2. Once the narrator has identified the woman, what are his or her thoughts concerning Mrs. Peet's past life?
3. Does Mrs. Peet hold back her feelings or does she immediately tell about the latest incidents in her life?
4. What happened to Mrs. Peet that caused her to leave her old home?
5. What was Isaiah's scheme to take over the place? Use as many adjectives as possible to describe him.
6. How would you describe Mrs. Peet's attitude toward Isaiah? Resentful?, Resigned?, Forgiving? Why? The narrator's soul is filled with rage when he or she hears the whole story, but do you think that Mrs. Peet's sufferings are even more pathetic because she refuses to feel sorry for herself?
7. How do you think you would react if the same thing were done to you? Use meaningful verbs, adjectives, and adverbs to explain your reaction in detail.
8. How is the reader made to understand that, in spite of all the harm that has been done to her, Mrs. Peet is still optimistic and even cheerful?
9. In which ways does the text suggest that Mrs. Peet retains the innocence of a girl?
10. What kind of future do you foresee for Mrs. Peet? Do you remember what her abilities are? Do you think she will be able to get by? Respond to each question in a short paragraph.
11. Why do you think she is taking her cat with her?
12. What do you think is the meaning of the word "mousin"?
13. Why do you think Mrs. Peet compares herself to an apple-tree? Is it a good comparison?
14. Would you object to the narrator's behavior? Does he/she get involved in any way with Mrs. Peet's problems or does he/she appear to be detached, in spite of being Mrs. Peet's friend? Defend or criticize his behavior.



## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Identify and list some features of Mrs. Peet's speech that are not considered to be correct English, in terms of misspellings and grammatical irregularities. Was this done intentionally? If so, why?

## III. REVISION AND EXPANSION OF THEME:

### Words expressing attitude and feeling

#### Words expressing fear and panic (nouns and verbs)

*fear*: an emotion or feeling caused by the possibility of danger. "His fears are unnecessary; we won't hurt him."

*scare*: a sudden feeling of fear. "You gave me a good scare, appearing suddenly in the dark."

*dread*: a great fear, especially of some harm to come. "Illness is the great dread of his life."

*panic*: sudden and uncontrollable fear. "Soon after the bomb went off, she started to panic because she could not find the exit."

#### Words related to desirable qualities (adjectives)

*noble*: unselfish, morally good, admirable. "His attempt to save the poor people's homes was truly noble."

*worthy*: deserving praise. "He is a worthy man and has led a good life."

*conscientious*: taking care to work well. "She is a conscientious student; she always tries hard."

*selfless*: caring for others. "What a selfless person she is, always helping other people!"

#### Words related to undesirable qualities (adjectives)

*nasty*: morally bad or improper, ugly, unpleasant. "Censorship considered the book to be the work of a nasty mind, that's why it was banned."

*rotten*: (informal and emotional) bad, mean. "It was rotten of you to tell him what I said about him."

*selfish*: concerned only with one's own advantage. "He took advantage of his friends for selfish reasons."

*evil*: very bad in thought or behavior, harmful, sinful. "That murder is absolutely evil."

*wicked*: spiteful, wrong, immoral. "What a wicked man he is, you can tell that just by looking into those terrible eyes of his."

*sinful*: (biblical), wicked, guilty. "As he had led a sinful life, the priest asked him to repent."

*mischievous*: wanting to play and causing trouble as a result. "The little girl had a mischievous expression on her face."

*heartless*: showing no kindness. "How can you be so heartless as to refuse to help that poor child?"

### **Adjective forms expressing happiness, sadness, and feeling pleasure**

*carefree*: free from anxiety. "When he was able to finish his work, his mind filled with carefree thoughts."

*joyful*: very happy (about people and events). "The birth of our son is a joyful occasion; let's all be happy."

*delighted*: very pleased. "He was delighted when they invited him to that party."

*content*: satisfied, pleased. "The secret of happiness is to be content with what one has."

### **Adjective forms used to express feeling little or no pleasure**

*unhappy*: not happy or satisfied. "I'm unhappy about the new house; it isn't what I expected."

*miserable*: very unhappy. "She is miserable because she thinks her boyfriend does not care about her any longer."

*wretched*: very miserable. "That wretched woman had to be in hospital for two years, and her relatives have not even come to visit her."

*pitiful*: causing sorrow. "She made a pitiful attempt to get out of bed but she was too weak to stand on her feet."

*pathetic*: making one feel very sad. "After hearing the bad news about her father, she had a pathetic look on her face."

### **Words used for a person's character: honesty, loyalty, trickery, and deceit**

*honest*: not likely to lie or cheat. "He's one of the few honest men that I've met in the film industry."

*trustworthy*: to be trusted, honest. "He's completely trustworthy, he won't cheat us, I recommend him for this post."

*reliable*: to be dependable. "I can't give her the job unless I'm sure she's one hundred per cent reliable."

*straight*: (informal) honest. "Play straight with me and I'll play straight with you."

*truthful*: always telling the truth. "He's a truthful lad, he will never tell you any lies."

*crooked*: dishonest, usually in a criminal way. "I don't trust this business, your partners are thoroughly crooked."

*deceitful*: dishonest, especially in telling lies. "Stop being so deceitful, tell the truth!"

*insincere*: not trustworthy. "He made some insincere remarks about being happy to see them again."

*secretive*: fond of keeping secrets, hiding one's plans. "She's being so secretive about her job lately, I hope she is not involved in anything shady."

**IV. PRACTICE. Choose the word from section III that best completes the following sentences:**

1. Suzanne has led a \_\_\_\_\_ life, she has been through so much since her parents died.
2. On a gorgeous spring morning like this, I forget all my troubles and feel quite \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Don't worry about that little incident. One has to expect children to be \_\_\_\_\_ at times.
4. How could you tease her in front of her teacher? What a \_\_\_\_\_ thing to do to her!
5. Her sources are not very \_\_\_\_\_, she likes to improvise and sometimes she makes things up.
6. In the eighteenth century, women who had children without being married were considered to be \_\_\_\_\_.
7. She was a woman of a \_\_\_\_\_ mind, it is a pity there are so very few like her now.
8. This fairy tale concerns an innocent girl and a \_\_\_\_\_ stepmother.
9. She told me a \_\_\_\_\_ story about a dog starving to death.

10. Don't let that noise \_\_\_\_\_ you, its only a storm.
11. You look so \_\_\_\_\_ in that photograph! I bet you were feeling homesick.
12. All the professors on the examination board agree to consider your essay as a \_\_\_\_\_ piece of work.
13. It is not like Peter to entertain such \_\_\_\_\_ thoughts. It had never occurred to me that he could think of killing anyone.
14. She \_\_\_\_\_ for the little boy when she saw him at the top of the tree.
15. We can truly say that after all the candidates' achievements have been examined, she is a \_\_\_\_\_ winner.
16. The overworked slaves \_\_\_\_\_ the return of the cruel owner.

#### V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY

1. Tell the story of Mrs. Peet's life in your own words. Use five to ten sentences.
2. Have you ever been a witness to a friend's plight? What did you do about it?
3. How would you like to be treated by your own relatives when you grow old? Do you have any grandparents left? How do you think they feel about their situation?

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR: SARAH ORNE JEWETT

Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) was one of those writers whose strength emerges from a deep knowledge of the region in which they are born. She was born in South Berwick, Maine, New England. As a child, she used to accompany her father on his professional rounds as a doctor and thanks to him she came into close contact with the lives of every family over a wide area. Her first collection of stories is *Deephaven* (1877), which centers on characterization rather than on the elaboration of a sequence of actions. Her stories are mild, subtle, almost evanescent and the reader has to be very careful to recognize how sadness, tragedy, or emotion is woven into an apparently placid conversation. She offers faithful portraits of old women, who seek solace in everyday tasks and in the vision of the sea-scented landscape of New England. Nothing spectacular seems to alter the lives of these women, they meditate and put recollections of their past together. The smallest incident becomes for them a triumph or a defeat. "Going to Shrewsbury" was first published in 1899 in the *Atlantic Magazine*. Other collections of stories she wrote are *Country By-Ways* (1881), *A White Heron and Other Stories* (1886) and *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896).

## **PART II**



## VI THE ANTIMATERIALISTIC HERO

### WORD FOCUS

*hooting*: making loud ridiculing sounds  
*haunts*: places where one usually spends one's leisure time  
*misgive*: give doubt  
*bewitched*: enchanted, under a magic spell  
*dale*: valley  
*flagon*: container, especially for alcoholic drinks  
*addled*: confused, bewildered  
*skulking*: hiding suspiciously  
*snarled*: made threatening sounds  
*forlorn*: solitary and forsaken  
*rickety*: shaky, likely to collapse or break  
*of yore*: of days gone by  
*was reared*: stood  
*ruby*: of red color  
*buff*: yellow-brown color  
*bustling*: energetic and active  
*doling forth*: giving out  
*jargon*: specialized vocabulary  
*grizzled*: streaked or mixed with gray  
*fowling*: the shooting or trapping of birds  
*uncouth*: clumsy, strange, ill mannered  
*akimbo*: with hands on hips and elbows projecting outwards  
*squall*: ocean storm  
*chubby*: plump, somewhat fat

### EXPRESSIONS

*an unkind cut*: an action that hurts the feelings of a person, a malicious speech or deed

*bustled up to him*: forced one's way close to him  
*to be at wit's end*: to be on the verge of insanity

### **RIP VAN WINKLE by Washington Irving**

1           He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran  
2 at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his grave beard. The dogs, too, not  
3 one of which he recognized for his old acquaintances, barked at him as he passed.  
4 The very village seemed altered: it was larger and more populous. There were  
5 rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his  
6 familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors- strange faces  
7 at the windows- every thing was strange. His mind now began to misgive him, that  
8 both he and the world around him were bewitched. Surely this was his native  
9 village, which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains-  
10 there ran the silver Hudson at a distance- there was every hill and dale precisely  
11 as it had always been- Rip was sorely perplexed- "That flagon last night," thought  
12 he, "has addled my poor head sadly!"

13           It was with some difficulty he found the way to his own house, which he  
14 approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of  
15 Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay- the roof fallen in, the  
16 windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half starved dog, that looked  
17 like Wolf, was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled,  
18 showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed-"My very dog,"  
19 sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

20           He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always  
21 kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. This  
22 desolateness overcame all his connubial fears- he called loudly for his wife and  
23 children- the lonely chambers rung for a moment with his voice, and then all again  
24 was silence.

25           He now hurried forth, and hastened to his own resort, the little village inn-  
26 but it too was gone. A large rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great  
27 gaping windows, some of them broken, and mended with old hats and petticoats,  
28 and over the door was painted, "The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle." Instead  
29 of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now  
30 was reared a tall naked pole, with something on top that looked like a red night  
31 cap, and from it was fluttering a flag on which was a singular assemblage of stars  
32 and stripes- all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognised on the sign,  
33 however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a  
34 peaceful pipe, but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was  
35 changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was stuck in the hand instead of a



36 sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted  
37 in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

38 There was, as usual, a crowd of folk about the door, but none that Rip  
39 recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy,  
40 bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead the accustomed phlegm and drowsy  
41 tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face,  
42 double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco smoke instead of idle  
43 speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an  
44 ancient newspaper. In place of this, a lean bilious looking fellow, with his pockets  
45 full of handbills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens- election-  
46 members of congress- liberty- Bunker's hill- heroes of 76- and other words, that  
47 were a perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

48 The appearance of Rip, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling piece,  
49 his uncouth dress, and the army of women and children that had gathered at his  
50 heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded around  
51 him, eyeing him from head to foot, with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to  
52 him, and drawing him partly aside, enquired "which side he voted?" Rip stared in  
53 vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and  
54 raising on tiptoe, enquired in his ear, "whether he was federal or democrat." Rip  
55 was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important  
56 old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting  
57 them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself  
58 before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen  
59 eyes and sharp hat penetrating as it were, into his very soul, demanded, in an  
60 austere tone, "what brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and  
61 a mob at his heels, and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?" "Alas!  
62 gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, "I am a poor quiet man, a native of  
63 the place, and a loyal subject of the King, God bless him!"

63 Here a general shout burst from the bystanders- "A tory! a tory! a spy! a  
64 refuge! hustle him! away with him!" It was with great difficulty that the self-  
65 important man in the cock hat restored order; and having assumed a tenfold  
66 austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there  
67 for, and whom he was seeking: The poor man humbly assured them that he meant  
68 no harm; but merely came there in search of some of his neighbours who used to  
69 keep about the tavern.

70 "Well- who are they? - name them."

71 Rip bethought himself a moment, and enquired, "where is Nicholas Vedder?"

72 There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied in a thin piping  
73 voice, "Nicholas Vedder? why he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There  
74 was a wooden tombstone in the church yard that used to tell all about him, but  
75 that's rotten and gone too."

76 "Where is Brom Dutcher?"

77 "Oh he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some said he was  
78 killed at the battle of Stoney-Point- others say he was drowned in a squall, at the  
79 foot of Anthony's Nose. I don't know- he never came back again."

80 "Where is Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?"

81 "He went off to the wars too, was a great militia general, and is now in  
82 Congress."

83 Rip's heart died away, at hearing of these sad changes in his home and  
84 friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him,  
85 too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could  
86 not understand: war- Congress- Stoney Point; - he had no courage to ask after any  
87 more friends, but cried out in despair "does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?"

88 "Oh, Rip Van Winkle!" exclaimed two or three, "Oh, to be sure! that's Rip Van  
89 Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree."

90 Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the  
91 mountain: apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now  
92 completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was  
93 himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked  
94 hat demanded who he was, and what was his name?

95 "God knows," exclaimed he, at his wit's end; "I am not myself- I am somebody  
96 else- that's me yonder- no- that is somebody else got into my shoes- I was myself  
97 last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain and they changed my gun, and every  
98 thing's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!"

99 The bystanders began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and  
100 tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing  
101 the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief. At the very suggestion  
102 of which, the self-important man in the cocked hat retired with some  
103 precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh likely woman pressed through the  
104 throng to get a peep at the graybearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms,  
105 which, frightened at his looks began to cry. "Hush, Rip," cried she, "hush, you  
106 little fool, the old man won't hurt you." The name of the child, the air of the  
107 mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind.

## I. CLOSE READING AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. In which way had Rip's village changed?
2. Why does Rip doubt his own sanity?
3. What was the first thing that reassured Rip that he was in his native village?

4. What does Rip suspect was the cause of his confusion?
5. What was Rip's manner on approaching his own house?
6. Why do you think the dog avoided Rip?
7. What made Rip forget the fear his wife inspired in him?
8. Were the Union Hotel windows closed? Describe them.
9. Why do you think Rip could recognize the face of King George painted on the sign?
10. What was the first transformation noticeable in the folk around the village hotel?
11. What seems to have been the main topic of conversation the day Rip appeared in the village?
12. What event was taking place in the village when Rip arrived?
13. What similarities are there between the two older characters called Rip?
14. When did the crowd begin to hypothesize about what had happened? Were they correct in their conjectures?
15. What do you think is the relationship between the three characters called Rip in the story?

## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

1. The speech of the crowd is said to be "perfect Babylonish jargon" for Rip. What is the main reason?
2. Rip's speeches are mostly questions and exclamations. Give a reason for this fact.

## III. USE OF ENGLISH

Complete the sentences with a suitable word from the "word focus" section.

1. Cinderella's godmother \_\_\_\_\_ the mice and the pumpkin.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ contained a strong alcoholic beverage.
3. When the thief broke into the house all the domestic animals \_\_\_\_\_ and he instantly fled from the house.
4. New York is a \_\_\_\_\_ city full of business and entertainment

5. Policemen use their own peculiar \_\_\_\_\_ when they talk among themselves.
6. The bad tempered woman was telling off her children with her arms \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The top of the mountains still had some snow, but the \_\_\_\_\_ was full of beautiful flowers.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ children with \_\_\_\_\_ cheeks are not necessarily healthier than thin pale ones.
9. The singer was so bad that the entire audience began \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ farmer did not feel comfortable in the center of the dance hall.
11. The raging \_\_\_\_\_ capsized the sailboat before anybody could prevent it.
12. The \_\_\_\_\_ house was torn down and a new one was built instead.
13. When I saw Peter again the first thing I noticed was that his beautiful brown hair was now \_\_\_\_\_.
14. I cannot go shooting tomorrow because my \_\_\_\_\_ gun is being repaired.
15. The students of today have far more opportunities than the students of \_\_\_\_\_.

#### IV. SYNTHESIS AND COMPOSITION

1. Summarize the passage in 10-15 lines stating the main conflict of the story.
2. What qualities in this short story do you like best? Write a short composition discussing them.

#### V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY

1. What would you do if you went home one day and you could not recognize any of the people living there?
2. Reconstruct the beginning of the story as you imagine it and then compare it to what Irving wrote.
3. Read the complete story and then imagine a different ending that you would like better.
4. Which one of the three Rips is the person named in the title?

## VI. SEMANTIC FIELDS

1. Find words associated with the idea of “surprise” and “confusion”.
2. List all the words in the text that can be associated with “politics”.

## VII. LITERARY ASPECTS

1. What details emphasize the changes in the political arena?
2. In the fragment you have read there is a clear contrast between Irving's characterization of men and women. Discuss this contrast.
3. Would the story be better narrated in the first person? Justify your answer.
4. What is the main conflict in this story?
5. Is Rip Van Winkle a hero? If so, compare him to real-life American heroes such as Benjamin Franklin.
6. What traits does Rip have which you think might be an obstacle for family life?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: WASHINGTON IRVING

Born in 1783 to a New York merchant, Washington Irving was trained as a lawyer, being admitted to the bar in 1806. Neither law nor business interested him greatly and he published his first literary sketches while he was in his teens.

His interest in history and his satirical bent combined in 1809 to produce *The Knickerbocker History of New York* which brought him fame for his comic descriptions, although it has been less understood by later generations. He spent seventeen years in Europe and incorporated unused folk tales in his stories. His best-known work is *The Sketch Book* from which “Rip Van Winkle” was published in 1820. Other books such as *Bracebridge Hall* (1822) or *Tales of a Traveler* (1824) were not so well received. Helped by the American consul in Madrid, Obadiah Rich, he went to Spain where he worked with manuscripts of Spanish and Latin American history. Out of these Spanish years came *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828), *The Conquest of Granada* (1829) and *The Alhambra* (1832), known as “The Spanish Sketch Book”.

He was appointed the American Ambassador to Spain in 1842 and he served four years in Madrid with great success, after these four years he returned to America in 1837 and died in 1859 at Sunnyside, his Hudson River estate.



## VII GENEROSITY

### WORD FOCUS

*airshaft*: shaft or passage for ventilation

*janitor*: the caretaker of a building

*rippling*: undulating

*faltered*: trembled, vacillated

*sparkle*: flash, brilliance

*whirl*: spin, rotation

*fluttered*: shook, trembled

*tripped by*: stumbled, walked haltingly

*ransacking*: searching violently and carelessly

*job*: a piece of leather or other material to which a group of keys or a watch is fastened

*meretricious*: gaudy, ornate

*truant*: absent from school without permission

*quail*: a game bird

*wriggled*: moved by twisting the body

*trance*: a hypnotic state

*enfolded*: embrace

*wit*: a verbally clever person

*tresses*: locks of hair

*coveted*: much desired, much envied

### EXPRESSIONS

*a hashed metaphor*: a ruined metaphor

*she had turned all of them inside out*: she had examined them completely

*proclaiming its value by substance*: being valuable because of the essence

*on the sly*: in a hidden way

*mammoth task*: an enormous job

*Coney Island*: famous amusement park in old New York

*a patent fact*: an obvious fact  
*in the way of*: in the category of  
*you had me going*: you made me excited or nervous

### THE GIFT OF THE MAGI by O. Henry

1           Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which  
2 they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's  
3 and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in  
4 the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window  
5 some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King  
6 Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim  
7 would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at  
8 his beard from envy.

9           So Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of  
10 brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for  
11 her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a  
12 minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

13           On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of  
14 skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door  
15 down the stairs to the street.

16           Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of all Kinds."  
17 One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white,  
18 chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

19           "Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

20           "I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks  
21 of it.

22           Down rippled the brown cascade.

23           "Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

24           "Give it to me quick," said Della.

25           Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed  
26 metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

27           She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There  
28 was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out.  
29 It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its  
30 value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation-as all good  
31 things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she  
32 knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value- the description



33 applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried  
34 home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly  
35 anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes  
36 looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of  
37 the chain.

38 When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and  
39 reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work  
40 repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a  
41 tremendous task, dear friends- a mammoth task.

42 Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that  
43 made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in  
44 the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

45 "If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at  
46 me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do- oh! what  
47 could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

48 At 7 o' clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the  
49 stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

50 Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the  
51 corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step  
52 on the stair way down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment.  
53 She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about her simplest everyday things,  
54 and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

55 The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very  
56 serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two- and to be burdened with a family!  
57 He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

58 Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His  
59 eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression on them that she could  
60 not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor  
61 horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared  
62 at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

63 Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

64 "Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and  
65 sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a  
66 present. It'll grow out again- you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair  
67 grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know  
68 what a nice- what a beautiful, nice gift I got for you."

69 "You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at  
70 that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

71 "Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow?  
72 I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

73 Jim looked about the room curiously.

74 "You say you hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

75 "You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you- sold and gone, too.  
76 It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. maybe the hairs of my  
77 head were numbered," she went on with a sadden serious sweetness, "but nobody  
78 could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

79 Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten  
80 seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the  
81 other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year- what is the difference? A  
82 mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought  
83 valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be  
84 illuminated later on.

85 Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it on the table.

86 "Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's  
87 anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like  
88 my girl any less. But if you' ll unwrap that package you may see why you had me  
89 going a while at first."

90 White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic  
91 scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and  
92 wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of  
93 the lord of the flat.

94 For there lay the combs- the set of combs, side and back, that Della had  
95 worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell,  
96 with jewel rims- just the shade to wear in the beautiful banished hair. They were  
97 expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over  
98 them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the  
99 tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

## I. CLOSE READING AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions according to the text and using your own words:

1. Why did Della return home with 87 cents?
2. Why did Jim sometimes look at his watch "on the sly"?
3. What did Della do to her hair after arriving home?
4. What emotions did Jim NOT show on his face when he saw Della?

5. What was Della's first reaction when she first opened her husband's present?
6. What was her second reaction?
7. Why do you think Jim stared at Della with an air "almost of idiocy"?
8. Why does the narrator suggest that the reader look in the other direction?
9. Had Della seen the beautiful set of combs at Madame Sofronie's shop window on Broadway? If not explain where she saw it.
10. Why did Della's joy at seeing Jim's present change to dismay and tears?
11. Why does the narrator show some compassion for Jim?
12. What was Jim's emotional state after he saw that Della's hair had been cut off?
13. Jim tells Della not to make any mistakes. What kind of mistake is Jim referring to?
14. Why does Della's say that nobody can ever count her love for Jim?
15. Why do you think Jim was looking about the room after Della had told him that she had cut off and sold her hair?

## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

1. O. Henry often makes use of slang words and phrases in his stories. Find some of these words or expressions in this text.
2. Judging from her words what would you say is Madame Sofronie's social class?

## III. USE OF ENGLISH

Complete the sentences with a suitable word from the "word focus" section.

1. My mother \_\_\_\_\_ the whole house looking for her lost wedding ring.
2. Most people have played \_\_\_\_\_ at least once in their childhood.
3. She won the lottery, so she bought a very expensive watch \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The hunter only shot one \_\_\_\_\_ the whole afternoon.
5. Most young people cannot sit still in their seats and they keep \_\_\_\_\_ all the time.

6. After my friend Ana was told that she had won the lottery she was in a \_\_\_\_\_ for several hours.
7. It was a very cold day and the mother tried to \_\_\_\_\_ her child in her arms.
8. He is always telling clever jokes. His \_\_\_\_\_ is outstanding.
9. She has not had a haircut for years and she is very proud of her beautiful \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The young boy \_\_\_\_\_ the toy car so much that he cried every time he saw it in the shop.
11. The \_\_\_\_\_ provided the only daylight to the gloomy apartment where my friend Mary lived.
12. The building is incredibly dirty because the \_\_\_\_\_ has been sick for about a month.
13. The group of inland children stood for a long time watching the \_\_\_\_\_ of the sea waves.
14. After the accident the injured man had been waiting for two hours to be examined by the doctor, so when the police arrived he \_\_\_\_\_ and could not give clear answers.
15. Do not buy that bedroom set, it is full of \_\_\_\_\_ decoration.

#### **IV. SYNTHESIS AND COMPOSITION**

1. Write a very short summary or a plot line of the action in the passage you have just read.
2. Jim's present creates an ironic situation. Can you rewrite the story with another different but similarly ironic event?

#### **V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY**

1. Describe what you think might be the circumstances of this couple at the beginning of the story.
2. Would you make such a sacrifice for someone you love? Explain what you would do.
3. In your opinion, did their actions show foolishness or love? Would you act in a similar manner?

## VI. SEMANTIC FIELDS

1. Find words and phrases semantically associated to the idea of "movement".
2. Find words associated to the idea of "poverty".

## VII. LITERARY ASPECTS

1. Find evidence of love (words and deeds) in the story.
2. Find evidence of their love in O. Henry's narrative techniques.
3. Can you find evidence of realism in the passage?
4. Are the two lovers well characterized as individuals or do you think they are simply the embodiment of certain virtues or vices?
5. Who do you think is the main character of the story? Justify your answer.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: O. HENRY

William Sidney Porter known by his pen name O. Henry, was born in 1862 in Greensboro, North Carolina. He left school at fifteen and worked for five years in an uncle's drug store. In 1882 he went to Texas and lived for two years on a ranch, a setting that is later found in some of his stories.

Thereafter he lived in Austin, Texas, where he was a bank teller for a time and began to contribute sketches and stories to various newspapers. In 1896 he was summoned to stand trial for alleged embezzlement of funds during his tellership in the bank. In a moment of panic he fled to New Orleans and thence to Honduras.

News that his wife was fatally ill brought him back to Austin where his trial resulted in a five-year sentence. He was allowed to write and sell stories written in the penitentiary and he collected many stories from his fellow prisoners. O. Henry was released in 1901 and a year later he arrived in New York. His output of stories was large and his collected short stories run to twelve volumes. He invented what is called "the snapper" or "twist", an unexpected ending which long ago became a convention. He saw life as a business in which penalties and rewards were bestowed erratically but underlying his stories there is always an attitude of friendly understanding of life.



## VIII CHILD ABUSE

### WORD FOCUS

*sated*: to be satisfied beyond capacity of desire

*shabby*: worn out, decayed, deteriorated

*scuffle*: dispute, fight

*hearth*: fireside

*prostrate*: exhausted, overcome

*compunction*: remorse, guilt

*tentative*: temporary, alternative

*indulgent*: easygoing, docile

*mitigate*: relieve, moderate

*commingled*: combined, mixed

*conceded*: admitted, agreed to

*wailed*: screamed, shouted

*bereavement*: sadness, mourning caused by death of a loved one

### EXPRESSIONS

*the hatchets were down*: they had stopped fighting

*they had enough of an eye to him*: they had some interest in him

*Pemberton could not blink the fact*: he could not ignore the fact

*to turn oneself about*: to reverse one's attitude or behavior

### THE PUPIL by Henry James

- 1 One winter afternoon -it was a Sunday- he and the boy walked far together in
- 2 the Bois de Boulogne. The evening was so splendid, the cold lemon-coloured
- 3 sunset so clear, the stream of carriages and pedestrians so amusing and the
- 4 fascination of Paris so great, that they stayed out later than usual and became

5 aware that they would have to hurry home to arrive in time for dinner. They  
6 hurried accordingly, arm-in-arm, good-humoured and hungry, agreeing that there  
7 was nothing like Paris after all and that after all, too, that had come and gone they  
8 were not yet sated with innocent pleasures. When they reached the hotel they  
9 found that, though scandalously late, they were in time for all the dinner they  
10 were likely to sit down to. Confusion reigned in the apartments of the Moreens  
11 (very shabby ones this time, but the best in the house), and before the interrupted  
12 service of the table (with objects displaced almost as if there had been a scuffle)  
13 and a great wine stain from an overturned bottle), Pemberton could not blink the  
14 fact that there had been a scene of proprietary mutiny. The storm had come- they  
15 were all seeking refuge. The hatchets were down- Paula and Amy were invisible  
16 (they had never tried the most casual art upon Pemberton, but he felt that they  
17 had enough of an eye to him not to wish to meet him as young ladies whose  
18 frocks had been confiscated), and Ulick appeared to have jumped overboard. In a  
19 word, the host and his staff had ceased to “go on” at the pace of their guests, and  
20 the air of embarrassed detention, thanks to a pile of gaping trunks in the passage,  
21 was strangely commingled with the air of indignant withdrawal.  
22

23 When Morgan took in all this- and he took it in very quickly- he blushed to  
24 the roots of his hair. He had walked, from his infancy, among difficulties and  
25 dangers, but he had never seen a public exposure. Pemberton noticed, in a  
26 second glance at him, that the tears had rushed into his eyes and that they were  
27 tears of bitter shame. He wondered for an instant, for the boy’s sake, whether  
28 he might successfully pretend not to understand. Not successfully, he felt, as Mr.  
29 and Mrs. Moreen, dinnerless by their extinguished hearth, rose before him in  
30 their little dishonoured salon, considering apparently with much intensity what  
31 lively capital would be next on their list. They were not prostrate, but they were  
32 very pale, and Mrs. Moreen had evidently been crying. Pemberton quickly  
33 learned however that her grief was not for the loss of her dinner, much as she  
34 usually enjoyed it, but on account of a necessity much more tragic. She lost no  
35 time in laying this necessity bare, in telling him how the change had come, the  
36 bolt had fallen, and how they would all have to turn themselves about.  
37 Therefore cruel as it was to them to part with their darling she must look to him  
38 to carry a little further the influence he had so fortunately acquired with the  
39 boy- to induce his young charge to follow him into some modest retreat. They  
40 depended upon him, in a word, to take their delightful child temporarily under  
41 his protection- it would leave Mr. Moreen and herself so much more free to give  
42 the proper attention (too little, alas! had been given), to the readjustment of  
43 their affairs.  
44

45 “We trust you - we feel that we can, “ said Mrs. Moreen, slowly rubbing her  
46 plump white hands and looking, with compunction, hard at Morgan, whose chin,  
47 not to take liberties, her husband stroked with a tentative paternal forefinger.



48 "Oh, yes; we feel that we can. We trust Mr. Pemberton fully, Morgan," Mr.  
49 Moreen conceded.

50 Pemberton wondered again if he might pretend not to understand; but the  
51 idea was painfully complicated by the immediate perception that Morgan had  
52 understood.

53 "Do you mean that he may take me to live with him- for ever and ever?" cried  
54 the boy. "Away, away, anywhere he likes?"

55 "For ever and ever? Comme vous-y-allez!" Mr. Moreen laughed indulgently.  
56 "For as long as Mr. Pemberton may be so good."

57 "We've struggled, we've suffered," his wife went on; "but you've made him so  
58 your own that we've already been through the worst of the sacrifice."

59 Morgan had turned away from his father- he stood looking at Pemberton  
60 with a light in his face. His blush had died out, but something had come that  
61 was brighter and more vivid. He had a moment of boyish joy, scarcely mitigated  
62 by the reflection that, with this unexpected consecration of his hope-too  
63 sudden and too violent; the thing was a good deal less like a boy's book-the  
64 "escape" was left on their hands. The boyish joy was there for an instant, and  
65 Pemberton was almost frightened at the revelation of gratitude and affection  
66 that shone through his humiliation. When Morgan stammered "My dear fellow  
67 what do you say to that?" he felt that he should say something enthusiastic. But  
68 he was still more frightened at something else that immediately followed and  
69 that made the lad sit down quickly on the nearest chair. He had turned very  
70 white and had raised his hand to his left side. They were all three looking at him,  
71 but Mrs. Moreen was the first to bound forward. "Ah, his darling little heart!"  
72 she broke out; and this time, on her knees before him and without respect for  
73 the idol, she caught him ardently in her arms. "You walked him too far, you  
74 hurried him too fast!" she tossed over her shoulder at Pemberton. The boy made  
75 no protest, and the next instant his mother, still holding him, sprang up with her  
76 face convulsed and with the terrified cry "Help, help! he is going, he is gone!"  
77 Pemberton saw, with equal horror, by Morgan's own stricken face, that he was  
78 gone. He pulled him half out of his mother's hands, and for a moment, while  
79 they held him together, they looked, in their dismay into each other's eyes. "He  
80 couldn't stand it, with his infirmity, " said Pemberton- "the shock, the whole  
81 scene, the violent emotion."

82 "But I thought he wanted to go to you!" wailed Mrs. Moreen.

83 "I told you he didn't, my dear," argued Mr. Moreen. He was trembling all over,  
84 and he was, in his way, as deeply affected as his wife. But, after the first, he took  
85 his bereavement like a man of the world.

## I. CLOSE READING AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions according to the text and using your own words:

1. What did Pemberton and Morgan share as things they liked?
2. Describe the apartments of the Moreens.
3. How was the traffic in Paris that day?
4. What evidence of a possible scuffle was there in the apartment?
5. What kind of storm had come according to the narrator?
6. What exactly had happened to Paula's and Amy's frocks?
7. Why do you think everyone was seeking refuge?
8. What does the narrator mean when he observes that "Ulick appeared to have jumped overboard"?
9. What circumstances do you think Morgan's shame is due to?
10. What did Pemberton want to pretend for Morgan's sake?
11. Why do you think the Moreens are thinking of going to other "lovely capitals"?
12. What was Morgan's reaction to his parents' plans?
13. What happened before Pemberton could openly accept or refuse the proposal?
14. Describe Morgan's emotional response to Pemberton's lack of reaction.
15. What type of family does Morgan's seem to be?

## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

1. Find and explain some of the images the author uses such as "gaping trunks".
2. In this short story Henry James uses a number of French expressions. What effect does he try to create?

## III. USE OF ENGLISH

Complete the sentences with a suitable word from the "word focus" section.

1. The crew \_\_\_\_\_ against the captain's authority.
2. My \_\_\_\_\_ apartment needs painting and repair.

3. This timetable is \_\_\_\_\_ and therefore it may change.
4. I was completely \_\_\_\_\_ after eating three pizzas.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ took place between the two boys over a toy they both wanted.
6. Dogs like sleeping on the \_\_\_\_\_ by the fire.
7. After working for fifteen hours he was \_\_\_\_\_ with fatigue.
8. He felt great \_\_\_\_\_ after having stolen money from his mother.
9. Parents are often too \_\_\_\_\_ of their children's bad manners.
10. Peter says that a large inheritance would \_\_\_\_\_ his financial problems.
11. After his wife's death the resulting \_\_\_\_\_ caused him a severe depression.
12. People from all over the world \_\_\_\_\_ at the united nations.
13. The husband \_\_\_\_\_ that his wife was right.

#### IV. SYNTHESIS AND COMPOSITION

1. Summarize the story segment in a few sentences of your own using the following words: friendship, perception, mature, indifference, fear, etc.
2. Write a short composition discussing the different ways in which children may be abused by adults.

#### V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY

1. Write your own version of the events you think preceded this passage.
2. What other possible endings can you imagine for this story.
3. What do you think was the real cause of Morgan's death?

#### VI. SEMANTIC FIELDS

1. Find words within the text which are semantically related to "love" and "indifference".
2. Find words associated with the idea of "sadness".

## VII. LITERARY ASPECTS

1. What type of narrator is telling the story?
2. Does Morgan's death come as a surprise or is the tragic ending in any way foreshadowed?
3. How is Mrs. Moreen characterized?
4. In which way does the expression "a man of the world" characterize Mr. Moreen?
5. Which character do you think is the most realistic? Justify your answer.
6. Who do you think is the most honest character in the story?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: HENRY JAMES

Henry James was the son of an educated and wealthy family. He was born in the city of New York in 1843 but grew up and was educated all over Europe. He was briefly a student at Harvard Law School but his drive toward social observation and analysis led him to begin writing essays, reviews, and short stories, etc. In 1876 he wrote his first novel *Roderick Hudson*. Much of his subject matter centers on the social, sexual, and moral, relative positions of Europeans and Americans. Such are *The American* (1877), *The Europeans* (1878), *Daisy Miller* (1879) and *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) considered his first masterpiece. After an unsuccessful attempt at playwrighting, James wrote increasingly complex and subtle novels and stories on a variety of themes such as *What Maisie Knew* (1897) a story seen through the eyes of a young girl, "The Turn of the Screw" (1898) a tale of the supernatural, etc. His last major novels include *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904). James died in London in 1916.

## IX CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE

### WORD FOCUS

*flinging*: extending  
*fluttering*: flying, waving  
*bounding*: taking short high steps in running  
*on tiptoe*: walking on your toes  
*attire*: manner of dress  
*trips*: walks as if about to fall  
*hacks*: carriages to rent  
*laden*: loaded with  
*rattling*: making a rapid succession of short sharp sounds  
*gigs*: small carriage for one or two people  
*trundling*: using the handles (or trundles) to push a wheelbarrow  
*shrink*: to become smaller  
*jostles*: bumps or hits against a person  
*yonder*: distant  
*pours forth*: emits  
*strains*: a line of melody  
*astray*: lost  
*tramp*: walk with heavy steps  
*buzz*: onomatopoeic sound, murmur  
*flagstones*: flat pieces of stone used as pavement  
*leaden*: having the qualities, especially weight, of lead  
*chanced*: came upon by accident  
*giddy*: capricious, inconstant

### EXPRESSIONS

*as if she were loath*: as if she were disgusted  
*stiff with age*: having lost physical agility because of age

Peter Parley's tomes: series of children's books published by Samuel G. Goodrich; in these tomes a deliberate attempt was made to eliminate the British background from children's literature.

### **LITTLE ANNIE'S RAMBLE by Nathaniel Hawthorne**

1           DING- DONG! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!

2           The town crier has rung his bell, at a distant corner, and little Annie stands  
3 on her father's doorsteps, trying to hear what the man with the loud voice is  
4 talking about. Let me listen too. O! he is telling the people that an elephant, and  
5 a lion, and a royal tiger, and a horse with horns, and other strange beasts from  
6 foreign countries, have come to town, and will receive all visitors who choose to  
7 wait upon them. Perhaps little Annie would like to go. Yes; and I can see that the  
8 pretty child is weary of this wide and pleasant street, with the green trees flinging  
9 their shade across the quiet sunshine, and the pavements and the sidewalks all as  
10 clean as if the housemaid had just swept them with her broom. She feels that  
11 impulse to go strolling away- that longing after the mystery of the great world-  
12 which many children feel, and which I felt in my childhood. Little Annie shall take  
13 a ramble with me. See! I do but hold out my hand, and, like some bright bird in  
14 the sunny air, with her blue silk frock fluttering upwards from her white pantalets,  
15 she comes bounding on tiptoe across the street.

16           Smooth back your brown curls, Annie; and let me tie on your bonnet, and we  
17 will set forth! What a strange couple to go on their rambles together! One walks  
18 in black attire, with a measured step, and a heavy brow, and his thoughtful eyes  
19 bent down, while the gay little girl trips lightly along, as if she were forced to keep  
20 hold of my hand, lest her feet should dance away from the earth. Yet there is  
21 sympathy between us. If I pride myself on any thing, it is because I have a smile  
22 that children love; and, on the other hand, there are few grown ladies that could  
23 entice me from the side of little Annie; for I delight to let my mind go hand in hand  
24 with the mind of a sinless child. So, come, Annie; but if I moralise as we go, do  
25 not listen to me; only look about you and be merry!

26           Now we turn the corner. Here are hacks with two horses, and stage coaches  
27 with four, thundering to meet each other, and trucks and carts moving at a slower  
28 pace, being heavily laden with barrels from the wharves, and here are rattling gigs,  
29 which perhaps will be smashed to pieces before our eyes. Hitherward, also, comes  
30 a man trundling a wheelbarrow along the pavement. Is not little Annie afraid of such  
31 a tumult? No; she does not even shrink closer to my side, but passes on with fearless  
32 confidence, a happy child amidst a great throng of grown people, who pay the same  
33 reverence to her infancy, that they would to extreme old age. Nobody jostles her; all  
34 turn aside to make way for little Annie; and what is most singular, she appears  
35 conscious of her claim to such respect. Now her eyes brighten with pleasure! A

36 street musician has seated himself on the steps of yonder church, and pours forth  
37 his strains to the busy town, a melody that has gone astray among the tramp of  
38 footsteps, the buzz of voices, and the war of passing wheels. Who heeds the poor  
39 organ grinder? None but myself and little Annie, whose feet begin to move in unison  
40 with the lively tune, as if she were loath that music should be wasted without a  
41 dance. But where would Annie find a partner? Some have the gout in their toes, or  
42 the rheumatism in their joints; some are stiff with age; some feeble with disease;  
43 some are so lean that their bones would rattle, and others of such ponderous sizes  
44 that their agility would crack the flagstones; but many, many have leaden feet,  
45 because their hearts are far heavier than lead. It is a sad thought that I have chanced  
46 upon. What a company of dancers should we be! For I, too, am a gentleman of sober  
47 footsteps, and therefore, little Annie, let us walk sedately on.

48 It is a question with me, whether this giddy child, or my sage self, have most  
49 pleasure in looking at the shop windows. We love the silks of sunny hue, that  
50 glow within the darkened premises of the spruce dry goods' men; we are  
51 pleasantly dazzled by the burnished silver, and the chased gold, the rings of  
52 wedlock and the costly love ornaments, glistening at the window of the jeweller;  
53 but Annie, more than I, seeks for a glimpse of her passing figure in the dusty  
54 looking glasses at the hardware stores. All that is bright and gay attracts us both.

55 Here is a shop to which the recollections of my boyhood, as well as present  
56 partialities, give a peculiar magic. How delightful to let the fancy revel on the dainties  
57 of a confectioner; those pies, with such white and flaky paste, their contents being a  
58 mystery, whether rich mince, with whole plums intermixed, or piquant apple,  
59 delicately rose flavored; those cakes, heart-shaped or round, piled in a lofty pyramid;  
60 those sweet little circlets, sweetly named kisses; those dark majestic masses, fit to be  
61 bridal loaves at the wedding of an heiress, mountains in size, their summits deeply  
62 snow-covered with sugar! Then the mighty treasures of sugar plums, white, and  
63 crimson, and yellow, in large glass vases; and candy of all varieties; and those little  
64 cockles, or whatever they are called, much prized by children for their sweetness,  
65 and more for the mottoes which they enclose, by love-sick maids and bachelors! O!  
66 my mouth waters, little Annie, and so doth yours; but we will not be tempted, except  
67 to an imaginary feast; so let us hasten onward, devouring the vision of a plum cake.

68 Here are pleasures, as some people would say, of a more exalted kind, in  
69 the window of a bookseller. Is Annie a literary lady? Yes; she is deeply read in  
70 Peter Parley's tomes, and has an increasing love for fairy tales, though seldom  
71 met with nowadays, and she will subscribe, next year, to the Juvenile Miscellany.  
72 But, truth to tell, she is apt to turn away from the printed page, and keep gazing  
73 at the pretty pictures, such as the gay-colored ones which make this shop  
74 window the continual loitering place of children. What would Annie think, if,  
75 in the book which I mean to send her, on New Year's day, she should find her  
76 sweet little self, bound up in silk or morocco with gilt edges there to remain till  
77 she become a woman grown with children of her own to read about their  
78 mother's childhood. That would be very queer.

## I. CLOSE READING AND COMPREHENSION

1. What do town criers do? What does the town crier in this story do?
2. Annie is said to be “weary” of the wide and pleasant street. What do you think is the reason?
3. What is the little girl compared to at the beginning of the story?
4. What do you think is the relationship between the narrator and Annie?
5. What is Annie’s reaction to what she sees on her walk?
6. What do you think is the profession of Annie’s companion?
7. Why are Annie and her companion called “a strange couple”?
8. List the problems that would prevent people from being Annie’s dance partners.
9. What is the narrator mainly proud of?
10. What goods can you find in a confectioner’s shop?
11. Give a description of Annie as complete as possible.
12. What does the narrator find most strange?
13. What do you think is “The Juvenile Miscellany”?
14. What present does the narrator intend to give Annie?
15. According to the narrator what are Annie’s preferences in books: the text or the pictures? Give evidence.

## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

1. Analyze the way the narrator uses the verb “shall” in the first paragraph and explain its implications.
2. Study the vocabulary used to list the goods in the confectioner shop and list any words that you think are old fashioned.
3. What other signs of the text having been written in the 19th century can you find?

## III. USE OF ENGLISH

Complete the sentences with a suitable word from the “word focus” section.

1. The bridegroom’s \_\_\_\_\_ was rather shocking for a wedding, he was wearing jeans and a checked shirt.



2. The children were sleeping so their parents walked about on \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The bushes by the garden gate were \_\_\_\_\_ their branches out through the fence.
4. The farmer's cart approached \_\_\_\_\_ down the path.
5. The little boy did not \_\_\_\_\_ at the sight of the big dog, he approached with the intention of stroking him.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the melody coming out of the circus were so sweet that everyone stopped to listen to them.
7. The little girl's dress \_\_\_\_\_ in the wind as she ran down the street.
8. The baby \_\_\_\_\_ pitiful cries as he was being examined by the doctor.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ are small vehicles used by one or two people in the nineteenth century.
10. A mosquito was \_\_\_\_\_ incessantly, which kept the people in the room awake all night.
11. The young child approached his mother \_\_\_\_\_ dangerously.
12. The mayor has decided to replace the \_\_\_\_\_ on Main Street.
13. In the autumn fruit trees are \_\_\_\_\_ with many varieties of fruit which is one of the main charms of that season.
14. The boy who lives upstairs has enormous feet and \_\_\_\_\_ all day long up and down the corridor.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ children often change their minds.

#### IV. SYNTHESIS AND COMPOSITION

1. Write a composition discussing all the possible dangers that Annie might encounter in her rambles with the narrator.
2. Summarize the plot line of this passage.

#### V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY

1. Why do you think the narrator takes Annie for a walk?
2. Describe a circus atmosphere in your home town.
3. When do you think the ramble is going to end?
4. What do you think is going to happen at the end of the ramble?

5. Imagine you were a child of Annie's age. What would be your tastes in books and music?

## VI. SEMANTIC FIELDS

1. Hawthorne presents a noisy town. Find names of noisy objects or noisy animals.
2. Flavors are also important. Make a list of all the flavorful food mentioned in the passage.
3. List the words associated with "colors".

## VII. LITERARY ASPECTS

1. Explain Hawthorne's method of developing each of the two main characters.
2. Compare the clothing of both characters and explain in which way they are used to characterize them.
3. Annie's companion in this ramble is associated with childhood. Is this association mostly physical or spiritual?
4. What are the dissimilarities between the two main characters?
5. Do you think the ramble will be educational for either of the two characters?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Nathaniel Hawthorne, American novelist and short story writer was born in Salem, Massachusetts in 1804 into an old New England family. Hawthorne was very much aware of his Puritan ancestors. The Hawthornes, as they spelled their name, participated in the Salem witch trials in the 17th century and later in the Quaker persecution. Our writer reflecting on the past always felt a sense of guilt and made this a very important theme in his work.

His first novel *Fanshawe* was published in 1828 anonymously but the stories and sketches he wrote for annuals and newspapers are a much finer work than his first novel. Many of his short stories were collected and published in *Twice-Told Tales* (1836) in which "Little Annie's Ramble" was included; *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846); and *The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales* (1851). The book which brought him fame and international recognition is *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). Other important novels are *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). His last major work inspired and written in Europe was *The Marble Faun* published in London in 1860. Hawthorne died in May 1864, while traveling in New Hampshire with his friend, the former American President Franklin Pierce.

## X THE AMERICAN SOUTH

### WORD FOCUS

*perfidid*: extremely ardent, enthusiastic  
*untrammelled*: uncontrolled  
*unfettered*: free, unobstructed  
*tread*: step, walk  
*layette*: cradle, babyhood  
*tapes*: bands, straps  
*ripped off*: removed violently  
*flounced*: trimmed, decorated  
*tulle*: fine fabric of silk, rayon, etc. used for evening dresses  
*bodices*: the upper part of a woman's dress from the shoulder to the waist  
*raved about*: spoken about with foolish enthusiasm  
*beaux*: lovers, handsome young men  
*preposterous*: extravagant, foolish, ridiculous  
*romp*: play, hop, frolic  
*levee*: dike, dam  
*knee-keep (knee-deep)*: up to your knees  
*hauling*: carrying heavy freight  
*waffle-irons*: cooking utensils used to make a kind of pancake  
*reckoned*: estimated, considered

### EXPRESSIONS

*she came into society*: she was presented to society  
*carte blanche*: having no restrictions  
*make her début*: make her first appearance in society  
*goes without saying*: it is unnecessary to say  
*she held the refusal of*: she had rejected

## LA GRANDE DEMOISELLE by Grace Elizabeth King

1           That was what she was called by everybody as soon as she was seen or  
2 described. Her name, besides baptismal titles, was Idalie Sainte Foy Mortemart des  
3 Islets. When she came into society, in the brilliant little world of New Orleans, it  
4 was the event of the season, and after she came in, whatever she did became also  
5 events. Whether she went, or did not go; what she said, or did not say; what she  
6 wore, and did not wear- all these became important matters of discussion, quoted  
7 as much or more than what the president said, or the governor thought. And in  
8 those days, the days of '59, New Orleans was not, as it is now, a one-heiress place,  
9 but it may be said that one could find heiresses then as one finds typewriting girls  
10 now.

11           Mademoiselle Idalie received her birth, and what education she had, on her  
12 parents' plantation, the famed old Reine Sainte Foy place, and it is no secret that,  
13 like the ancient kings of France, her birth exceeded her education.

14           It was a plantation, the Reine Sainte Foy, the richness and luxury of which are  
15 really well described in those perfervid pictures of tropical life, at one time the  
16 passion of philanthropic imaginations, excited and exciting over the horrors of  
17 slavery. Although these pictures were often accused of being purposely  
18 exaggerated, they seem now to fall short of, instead of surpassing, the truth.  
19 Stately walls, acres of roses, miles of oranges, unmeasured fields of cane, colossal  
20 sugar-house- they were all there, and all the rest of it, with the slaves, slaves, slaves  
21 everywhere, whole villages of Negro cabins. And there were also, most noticeable  
22 to the natural, as well as to the visionary, eye- there were the ease, idleness,  
23 extravagance, self-indulgence, pomp, pride, arrogance, in short the whole  
24 enumeration, the moral sine qua non, as some people considered it, of the  
25 wealthy slaveholder of aristocratic descent and tastes.

26           What Mademoiselle Idalie cared to learn she studied, what she did not she  
27 ignored; and she followed the same simple rule untrammelled in her eating,  
28 drinking, dressing, and comportment generally; and whatever discipline may have  
29 been exercised on the place, either in fact or fiction, most assuredly none of it,  
30 even so much as in threat, ever attained her sacred person. When she was just  
31 turned sixteen, Mademoiselle Idalie made up her mind to go into society. Whether  
32 she was beautiful or not, it is hard to say. It is almost impossible to appreciate  
33 properly the beauty of the rich, the very rich. The unfettered development, the  
34 limitless choice of accessories, the confidence, the self-esteem, the sureness of  
35 expression, the simplicity of purpose, the ease of execution- all these produce a  
36 certain effect of beauty behind which one really cannot get to measure length of  
37 nose, or brilliancy of eye. This much can be said: there was nothing in her that  
38 positively contradicted any assumption of beauty on her part, or credit it on the  
39 part of others. She was very tall and very thin with small head, long neck, black  
40 eyes, and abundant straight black hair,- for which her hair-dresser deserved more

41 praise than she, - good teeth, of course, and a mouth that, even in prayer, talked  
42 nothing but commands; that is about all she had en fait d' ornements, as the  
43 modistes say. It may be added that she walked as if the Reine Sainte Foy plantation  
44 extended over the whole earth, and the soil of it were too vile for her tread. Of  
45 course she did not buy her toilets in New Orleans. Everything was ordered from  
46 Paris, and came as regularly through the custom house as the modes and robes to  
47 the milliners. She was furnished by a certain house there, just as one of a royal  
48 family would be at the present day. As this had lasted from her layette up to her  
49 sixteenth year, it may be imagined what took place when she determined to make  
50 her *début*. Then it was literally, not metaphorically, *carte blanche*, at least so it got  
51 to the ears of society. She took a sheet of notepaper, wrote the date at the top,  
52 added, "I make my *début* in November," signed her name at the extreme end of  
53 the sheet, addressed it to her dressmaker in Paris, and sent it.

54 It was said that in her dresses the very handsomest silks were used for linings,  
55 and that real lace was used where others put imitation- around the bottoms of the  
56 skirts, for instance,- and silk ribbons of the best quality served the purposes of  
57 ordinary tapes; and sometimes the buttons were of real gold and silver, sometimes  
58 set with precious stones. Not that she ordered these particulars, but the  
59 dressmakers, when given *carte blanche* by those who do not condescend to  
60 details, so soon exhaust the outside limits of garments that perforce they take to  
61 plastering them inside with gold, so to speak, and, when the bill goes in, they  
62 depend upon the furnishings to carry out a certain amount of the contract in  
63 justifying the price. And it was said that these costly dresses, after being worn  
64 once or twice, were cast aside, thrown upon the floor, given to the Negroes-  
65 anything to get them out of sight. Not an inch of the real lace, not one of the  
66 jewelled buttons, not a scrap of ribbon, was ripped off to save. And it was said  
67 that if she wanted to romp with her dogs in all her finery, she did it; she was  
68 known to have ridden horseback, one moonlight night, all around the plantation  
69 in a white silk dinner-dress flounced with Alençon. And at night, when she came  
70 from the balls, tired, tired to death as only balls can render one, she would throw  
71 herself down upon her bed in her tulle skirts,- on top, or not, of the exquisite  
72 flowers, she did not care,- and make her maid undress her in that position; often  
73 having her bodices cut off her, because she was too tired to turn over and have  
74 them unlaced.

75 That she was admired, raved about, loved even, goes without saying. After  
76 the first month she held the refusal of half the beaux of New Orleans. Men did  
77 absurd, undignified, preposterous things for her; and she? Love? Marry? The idea  
78 never occurred to her. She treated the most exquisite of her pretenders no better  
79 than she treated her Paris gowns, for the matter of that. She could not even bring  
80 herself to listen to a proposal patiently; whistling to her dogs, in the middle of the  
81 most ardent protestations, or jumping up and walking away with a shrug of the  
82 shoulders, and a "Bah!"

83 Well! Every one knows what happened after '59. There is no need to repeat.  
84 The history of one is the history of all. But there was this difference- for there is  
85 every shade of difference in misfortune, as there is every shade of resemblance in  
86 happiness. Mortemart des Islets went off to fight. That was natural; his family had  
87 been doing that, he thought, or said, ever since Charlemagne. Just as naturally he  
88 was killed in the first engagement. They, his family, were always among the first  
89 killed; so much so that it began to be considered assassination to fight a duel with  
90 any of them. All that was in the ordinary course of events. One difference in their  
91 misfortunes lay in that after the city was captured, their plantation, so near,  
92 convenient, and rich in all kinds of provisions, was selected to receive a  
93 contingent of troops- a colored company. If it had been a colored company raised  
94 in Louisiana it might have been different; and these Negroes mixed with the  
95 Negroes in the neighborhood, - and Negroes are no better than whites, for the  
96 proportion of good and bad among them,- and the officers were always off duty  
97 when they should have been on, and on when they should have been off.

98 One night the dwelling caught fire. There was an immediate rush to save the  
99 ladies. Oh, there was no hesitation about that! They were seized in their beds, and  
100 carried out in the very arms of their enemies; carried away off to the sugar-house,  
101 and deposited there. No danger of their doing anything but keep very quiet and  
102 still in their chemises de nuit, and their one sheet apiece, which was about all that  
103 was saved from the conflagration- that is, for them. But it must be remembered  
104 that this is all hearsay. When one has not been present, one knows nothing of  
105 one's own knowledge; one can only repeat. It has been repeated, however, that  
106 although the house was burned to the ground, and everything in it destroyed,  
107 wherever, for a year afterward, a man of that company or of that neighborhood  
109 was found, there could have been found also, without search-warrant, property  
110 that had belonged to the Des Islets. That is the story; and it is believed or not,  
111 exactly according to prejudice.

112 How the ladies ever got out of the sugar-house, history does not relate; nor  
113 what they did. It was not a time for sociability, either personal or epistolary. At  
114 one offensive word your letter, and you, very likely, examined; and Ship Islands for  
115 a hotel, with soldiers for hostesses! Madame Des Islets died very soon after the  
116 accident- of rage, they say; and that was about all the public knew.

117 Indeed, at that time the society of New Orleans had other things to think  
118 about than the fate of the Des Islets. As for la grande demoiselle, she had prepared  
119 for her own oblivion in the hearts of her female friends. And the gentlemen,- her  
120 preux chevaliers,- they were burning with other passions than those which had  
121 driven them to her knees, encountering a little more serious response than "bahs"  
122 and shrugs. And, after all, a woman seems the quickest thing forgotten when once  
123 the important affairs of life come to men for consideration.

124 It might have been ten years according to some calculations, or ten  
125 eternities,- the heart and the almanac never agree about time, -but one morning

126 old Champigny (they used to call him Champignon) was walking along his levee  
127 front, calculating how soon the water would come over, and drown him out, as  
128 the Louisianians say. It was before a seven- o'clock breakfast, cold, wet, rainy, and  
129 discouraging. The road was knee-keep in mud, and so broken up with hauling that  
130 it was like walking upon waves to get over it. A shower poured down. Old  
131 Champigny was hurrying in when he saw a figure approaching. He had to stop to  
132 look at it, for it was worth while. The head was hidden by a green barège veil  
133 which the showers had plentifully besprinkled with dew, a tall, thin figure. Figure!  
134 No; not even could it be called a figure: straight up and down, like a finger or a  
135 post; high-shouldered, and a step- like a plow-man's. No umbrella; no -nothing  
136 more, in fact. It does not sound so peculiar as when first related- something must  
137 be forgotten. The feet- oh, yes, the feet- they were like waffle-irons, or frying-pans,  
138 or anything of that shape.

139 Old Champigny did not care for women- he never had; they simply did not  
140 exist for him in the order of nature. He had been married once, it is true, about a  
141 half century before; but that was not reckoned against the existence of his  
142 prejudice, because he was cèlibatere to his finger-tips, as any one could seen a  
143 mile away. But that woman intrigued him.

## I. CLOSE READING AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the name of the main character tells us from the opening of the story?
2. According to some, what were the common traits shared by slaveholders ?
3. In what ways has New Orleans changed from the days of '59 to the time the story is told?
4. What type of society is presented at the beginning of the story?
5. What kind of education did Idalie have according to the narrator?
6. The narrator calls Idalie a "sacred person". What does he mean by that? Was she in fact sacred?
7. What kind of discipline did Idalie have?
8. What indications can you find that gossip is important in the story?
9. Why does the narrator use the expression "either in fact or fiction" applying it to the discipline on the estate of the Des Islets?
10. Why did it begin to be considered assassination to fight a duel with any of the Des Islets?
11. How does the writer conceive the concept of "beauty"?

12. What is the narrator's opinion of the officers?
13. What type of feet did the approaching stranger have?
14. What directions did Idalie give her dressmakers for her début?
15. Was Idalie interested in getting married?

## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

1. Find phrases which suggest Idalie's breeding.
2. Henry James uses some French expressions in his story "The Pupil". Grace E. King does likewise in "La Grande Demoiselle". Compare and discuss this use of French vocabulary and expressions by both authors.

## III. USE OF ENGLISH

Complete the sentences with a suitable word from the "word focus" section.

1. Henry David Thoreau wrote \_\_\_\_\_ descriptions of nature in his famous work Walden Pond.
2. The Queen appeared at the reception wearing a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ dress that had been made for the occasion.
3. Children in small villages spend their holidays \_\_\_\_\_ all over the fields.
4. The Duke's daughter was a beautiful maiden and there were innumerable \_\_\_\_\_ trying to conquer her.
5. She was an only child and her behavior was often \_\_\_\_\_ on account of her parents' reluctance to discipline her.
6. She was a good actress and she was constantly \_\_\_\_\_ by the whole nation.
7. The thief \_\_\_\_\_ the victim's mink coat and ran away down the street before the police arrived.
8. Our teacher was extremely thin and light and her \_\_\_\_\_ was completely soundless.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ attitude of the president brought about abundant petitions to remove him from office.
10. The princess' dress was beautifully \_\_\_\_\_ with strings of pearls.



11. The king's \_\_\_\_\_ was spent away from his parents.
12. The leading dancer was wearing a light blue \_\_\_\_\_ and a short white skirt.
13. My mother used to make waffles every Sunday morning, but that Sunday she had dropped her \_\_\_\_\_ the day before.
14. The crane is constantly being used, right now it is \_\_\_\_\_ a heavy iron beam.
15. My aunt is not going on holidays this year because she \_\_\_\_\_ that she needs the money to install a new heating system.

#### IV. SYNTHESIS AND COMPOSITION

1. Write a possible ending for the story, then read King's denouement and compare both.
2. Write a short composition holding the opinion that the author is moralizing.

#### V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY

1. Why do you think Idalie treated her admirers with indifference and even scorn?
2. Do you believe that Idalie fits the fictional type of "Southern Heroine"? In which way does she or does she not?
3. Paragraph eight deals with the destruction of the estate of the Des Islets. Please imagine the scene and describe it in your own words.
4. Do you think the story considers love a priority in human life? Support your answer with evidence from the story.
5. Why do you think Idalie intrigued Champigny?

#### VI. SEMANTIC FIELDS

1. Find the words and expressions associated with the idea of "clothing".
2. Find the words and expressions associated to the idea of "lack of discipline".

## VII. LITERARY ASPECTS

1. What is your judgement of this short story? Give reasons why you do or do not like it.
2. Does the narrator portray any of her characters sympathetically?
3. What time references are there in the first paragraph and how are they used?
4. Would you say the story is factual? Justify your answer.
5. Is Idalie's treatment of her admirers plausible?
6. List some of the sentences within the text which explicitly characterize Idalie.
7. Have you detected any signs of racism on the narrator's part?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: GRACE ELIZABETH KING

Grace Elizabeth King was born in 1851 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Although she spoke English at home, she was educated in a French Creole school and drew much of her inspiration for her works from French writers such as Guy de Maupassant. She was fiercely Southern and during the Civil War her family had to flee from Northern-occupied New Orleans. Her fiction seems to have begun as a way to complain about what she saw as the treacherous writings of George Washington Cable. These were stories such as *The Creoles of Louisiana* (1884), which she believed betrayed New Orleans.

Her stories are collected in *Monsieur Motte* (1888), *Tales of a Time and Place* (1892) and *Balcony Stories* (1893) from which "La Grande Demoiselle" is taken. She also wrote some novels of which the best known is *The Pleasant Ways of St. Mendard* (1916) and a number of historical works such as *New Orleans, the Place and the People* (1895). Grace E. King died in 1932.

## XI

### LOVE AND JEALOUSY

#### WORD FOCUS

*slaughter*: massacre, killing

*blooming*: healthy, rosy

*florid*: luxurious, ornate

*fancies*: dreams, fantasies

*imperious*: commanding

*courtiers*: members of the court

*waver*: to be uncertain

*premises*: a house or other building with any surrounding land, a realm

*cast*: thrown

*startling*: strange or surprising

*relentless*: cruel, severe

*fitting*: appropriate, suitable

*thronged*: crowded, filled with people

*fateful*: fatal, decisive

*portals*: gates, doors

*bow*: To bend, incline

*moiety*: fraction, part

*latch*: door fastener, buckle

*crouched*: lowered its body close to the ground

#### EXPRESSIONS

*she was the apple of his eye*: she was a source of delight and pride to him

*the youth would be disposed of*: the youth would be got rid of

*from far and near*: from all over

*throwing glances*: looking hastily or briefly

## THE LADY OR THE TIGER by Frank R. Stockton

1 Introduction: This story takes place in a barbaric age when, in cases of interest to  
2 the King, a male accused of a crime was judged innocent or guilty by fate.

3 His fate was decided in a public arena where everyone gathered to witness  
4 the judgement. The accused decided his own fate by freely selecting and opening  
5 one of two identical doors. Behind one was a man-eating tiger who would take his  
6 life to punish his guilt. Behind the other was a beautiful young maiden to whom  
7 the accused would be wed- a reward for his innocence. This story has a setting in  
8 that time and in such an arena.

9 This was the king's semibarbaric method of administering justice. Its perfect  
10 fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come  
11 the lady: he opened either he pleased, without having the slightest idea whether,  
12 in the next instant, he was to be devoured or married. On some occasions the  
13 tiger came out of one door, and on some out of the other. The decisions of this  
14 tribunal were not only fair, they were positively determinate: the accused person  
15 was instantly punished if he found himself guilty; and if innocent, he was  
16 rewarded on the spot, whether he liked it or not. There was no escape from the  
17 judgement of the king's arena.

18 The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together  
19 on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they were to witness a  
20 bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an  
21 interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus, the  
22 masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community  
23 could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan; for did not the accused  
24 person have the whole matter in his own hands?

25 This semibarbaric King had a daughter as blooming as his more florid fancies,  
26 and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own. As is usual in such cases, she  
27 was the apple of his eye, and was loved by him above all humanity. Among his  
28 courtiers was a young man of that fineness of blood and lowness of station  
29 common to the conventional heroes of romance who love royal maidens. This  
30 royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to  
31 a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom; and she loved him with an ardour that  
32 had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. This love  
33 affair moved on happily for many months, until one day the King happened to  
34 discover its existence. He did not hesitate nor waver in regard to his duty in the  
35 premises. The youth was immediately cast into prison, and a day was appointed  
36 for his trial in the king's arena. This, of course, was an especially important  
37 occasion; and his majesty, as well as all the people, was greatly interested in the  
38 workings and development of this trial. Never before had such a case occurred;  
39 never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of a king. In afteryears such

40 things became commonplace enough; but then they were, in no slight degree,  
41 novel and startling.

42 The tiger-cages of the kingdom were searched for the most savage and  
43 relentless beasts, from which the fiercest monster might be selected for the arena;  
44 and the ranks of maiden youth and beauty throughout the land were carefully  
45 surveyed by competent judges, in order that the young man might have a fitting  
46 bride in case fate did not determine for him a different destiny. Of course,  
47 everybody knew that the deed with which the accused was charged had been  
48 done. He had loved the princess, and neither he, she, nor any one else thought of  
49 denying the fact; but the king would not think of allowing any fact of this kind to  
50 interfere with the workings of the tribunal, in which he took such great delight  
51 and satisfaction. No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be  
52 disposed of; and the king would take an aesthetic pleasure in watching the course  
53 of the events, which would determine whether or not the young man had done  
54 wrong in allowing himself to love the princess.

55 The appointed day arrived. From far and near the people gathered, and  
56 thronged the great galleries of the arena; and the crowds, unable to gain  
57 admittance, massed themselves against its outside walls. The king and his court  
58 were in their places, opposite the twin doors, - those fateful portals, so terrible in  
59 their similarity.

60 All was ready. The signal was given. A door beneath the royal party opened,  
61 and the lover of the princess walked into the arena. Tall, beautiful, fair, his  
62 appearance was greeted with a low hum of admiration and anxiety. Half the  
63 audience had not known so grand a youth had lived among them. No wonder the  
64 princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there!

65 As the youth advanced into the arena, he turned, as the custom was, to bow  
66 to the king; but he did not think at all of that royal personage; his eyes were fixed  
67 upon the princess, who sat to the right of her father. Had it not been for the  
68 moiety of barbarism in her nature, it is probable that lady would not have been  
69 there; but her intense and fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an  
70 occasion in which she was so terribly interested. From the moment that the  
71 decree had gone forth, that her lover should decide his fate in the king's arena,  
72 she had thought of nothing, night or day, but this great event, and the various  
73 subjects connected with it. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of  
74 character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she  
75 had done what no other person had done, - she had possessed herself of the secret  
76 of the doors. She knew in which of the two rooms, that lay behind those doors,  
77 stood the cage of the tiger, with its open front, and in which waited the lady.  
78 Through these thick doors, heavily curtained with skins on the inside, it was  
79 impossible that any noise or suggestion should come from within to the person  
80 who should approach to raise the latch of one of them; but gold, and the power  
81 of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.

82           And not only did she know in which room stood the lady ready to emerge,  
83 all blushing and radiant, should her door be opened, but she knew who the lady  
84 was. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court who had  
85 been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent  
86 of the crime of aspiring to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often  
87 had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances  
88 of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these  
89 glances were perceived and even returned. Now and then she had seen them  
90 talking together; it was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief  
91 space; it may have been on most unimportant topics, but how could she know  
92 that? The girl was lovely, but she had dared to raise her eyes to the loved one of  
93 the princess; and, with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her  
94 through long lines of wholly barbaric ancestors, she hated the woman who  
95 blushed and trembled behind that silent door.

96           When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eye met hers as she sat  
97 there paler and whiter than any one in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her,  
98 he saw, by that power of quick perception which is given to those whose souls  
99 are one, that she knew behind which door crouched the tiger and behind which  
100 stood the lady. He had expected her to know it. He understood her nature, and  
101 his soul was assured that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself  
102 this thing, hidden to all other lookers-on, even to the king. The only hope for the  
103 youth in which there was any element of certainty was based upon the success of  
104 the princess in discovering this mystery; and the moment he looked upon her, he  
105 saw she had succeeded, as in his soul he knew she would succeed.

106           Then it was that his quick and anxious glance asked the question: "Which?"  
107 It was as plain to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not an  
109 instant to be lost. The question was asked in a flash; it must be answered in  
110 another.

111           Her right arm lay on the cushion parapet before her. She raised her hand, and  
112 made a slight, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw her.  
113 Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena.

114           He turned and with a firm and rapid step he walked across the empty space.  
115 Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held, every eye was fixed  
116 immovably upon that man. Without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door  
117 on the right, and opened it.

## I. CLOSE READING AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions according to the text and using your own words:

1. Why was this king's method of administering justice so popular?

2. Why were the intellectuals of the realm forced to agree with this method?
3. Were the princess and her lover well matched?
4. Had the King's subjects met the princess' lover before the trial?
5. Why do you think the twin doors are called "fateful" in the tale?
6. What means of finding out the secret of the doors did the princess use?
7. What were the princess's feelings towards the fair lady who was in one of the two cages?
8. Did the princess trust the feelings of the young man towards her? Justify your answer.
9. How are the princess's suspicions about the fair lady in the cage justified?
10. How did the young man ask his lover the momentous question which could save him from the tiger?
11. How did the princess answer her lover's question?
12. Why did the princess's answer pass unnoticed by everybody except her lover?
13. Did the young man doubt the princess in any way or did he trust her completely?
14. Why are the doors according to the narrator so "terrible in their similarity"?
15. Did the princess inherit any of the King's characteristics? If so, which ones?

## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

1. What different types of language are used in this story? Give some examples.
2. Find some characterizing vocabulary words for each: the princess, the King, the lady, and the lover.

## III. USE OF ENGLISH

Complete the sentences with a suitable word from the "word focus" section.

1. Seeing an elephant on Main Street was the most \_\_\_\_\_ thing I've ever seen.
2. The man told the children to leave in such an \_\_\_\_\_ tone that no one dared to stay.

3. The King lived in an enormous castle surrounded by all his \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The streets of every city in the country are \_\_\_\_\_ with people on New Year's Eve.
5. I have heard there are thieves in this part of the city. We'll have to fasten the door \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Some young girls have foolish \_\_\_\_\_ about their future.
7. He is one of the bravest boys I have ever seen. He seldom \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of danger.
8. Everybody was looking for the King's daughter, but she was not on the \_\_\_\_\_.
9. I remember the \_\_\_\_\_ day President Kennedy was assassinated.
10. Both children should each receive a \_\_\_\_\_ of his father's possessions.
11. The child had to \_\_\_\_\_ to get into the small toy truck.
12. The criminals were \_\_\_\_\_ into gloomy dungeons.
13. After the horrendous \_\_\_\_\_ the police swept the area in search of the killer.

#### **IV. SYNTHESIS AND COMPOSITION**

1. Write a short composition of 200-300 words discussing why the lover should or should not have believed the princess's signal.
2. Compose a paragraph on the topic: "woman's jealousy".

#### **V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY**

1. If you had been in the princess's position would you have attended the trial? Give your reasons why or why not.
2. Write your opinion of this fatalistic system of justice: Give advantages and disadvantages involved for the king (government) and the lover (accused).
3. Complete the story as you wish events to develop. Include justification of your characters' actions.
4. Do you believe in "the power of a woman's will"? What kinds of situations could activate this power in your opinion?



## VI. SEMANTIC FIELDS

1. Find words within the text which are semantically associated to “barbarism” and “cruelty”.
2. Find words associated to the idea of “jealousy”.

## VII. LITERARY ASPECTS

1. Which character is most directly and which is most indirectly developed? Give reasons for your choices.
2. This story centers mostly around the conflict the princess experiences, what are the forces in this conflict?
3. Why does the narrator mention so often the barbarism in the princess's nature?
4. What made the princess's lover similar to the typical heroes of romance?
6. Who is the narrator? Do you think the story would improve if told by the princess? Explain.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: FRANK R. STOCKTON

Frank R. Stockton was born in Philadelphia in 1834, to an old and influential New Jersey family. He became one of the most admired fiction writers of the later 19th century- for his humor, his ingenuity, and his narrative. After graduating from school he became a wood engraver and practiced this craft for many years. He wrote for children's magazines for a time and then he became assistant editor of *Saint Nicholas Monthly Magazine* where he remained until 1881 when he was able to earn a living by writing novels and short stories for adults. His status as a popular author of cheerful and even fantastic fiction was secured with the wide success of *Rudder Grange* (1879). He continued writing this type of literature almost until the end of his long life and his stories later appeared in a collection of twenty-three volumes.

“The Lady or the Tiger” was first published in *Century Magazine* in November, 1882 and later in a volume of collected short stories. It was immediately popular and its charm lies mainly in the delightful practical joke it plays on the reader. “The Lady or the Tiger” is considered one of the cleverest stories ever written. Stockton died in 1902.



## XII THE NATURE OF OBSESSION

### WORD FOCUS

- hinge*: a device allowing doors to swing  
*bearken*: in literature to listen, pay attention to  
*thrust*: push forward, plunge  
*vex*: annoy, irritate, anger  
*cunning*: clever, ingenious  
*chuckled*: laughed quietly, giggled  
*groan*: moan, cry  
*stifled*: suffocated, suppressed  
*refrain*: abstain, restrain  
*chirp*: a short, high pitched sound  
*stalked*: pursued, chased (secretively)  
*stealthily*: furtively, covertly, done in a way to avoid detection  
*burst*: to break suddenly and completely from pressure  
*chilled*: benumbed, froze  
*marrow*: essence, quintessence, the central and most meaningful part of something  
*waned*: declined, diminished in size, quality, or quantity  
*scantlings*: thin floor boards  
*trifles*: trivialities, bagatelles, unimportant issues or happenings  
*derision*: scorn, mockery  
*boldly*: with great courage, confidently  
*dissemble*: pretend, conceal

### EXPRESSIONS

- rid myself of*: free myself of  
*as black as pitch*: extremely black  
*do you mark me well?*: Do you understand the importance of what I say?  
*the dead hour of the night*: the quietest time of the night  
*he was stone dead*: he was completely dead

## THE TELL-TALE HEART by Edgar Allan Poe

1 TRUE! - nervous- very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why  
2 will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses- not destroyed  
3 - not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in  
4 the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad?  
5 Hearken! and observe how healthily- how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

6 It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once  
7 conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was  
8 none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me  
9 insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! One of  
10 his eyes resembled that of a vulture- a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever  
11 it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees- very gradually- I made up  
12 my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye for ever.

13 Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you  
14 should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded- with what  
15 caution- with what foresight- with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never  
16 kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every  
17 night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it- oh, so gently!  
18 And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark  
19 lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head.  
20 Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly-  
21 very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an  
22 hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he  
23 lay upon his bed. Ha!- would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when  
24 my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously- oh, so cautiously-  
25 cautiously (for the hinges creaked)- I undid it just so much that a single thin ray  
26 fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights- every night just at  
27 midnight- but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the  
28 work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every  
29 morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke  
30 courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and enquiring how he  
31 had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man,  
32 indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he  
33 slept.

34 Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door.  
35 A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that  
36 night had I felt the extent of my own powers- of my sagacity. I could scarcely  
37 contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little  
38 by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly  
39 chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly,  
40 as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back- but no. His room was as black

41 as pitch with the thick darkness (for the shutters were close fastened through fear  
42 of robbers), and so I knew he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept  
43 pushing it on steadily, steadily.

44 I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped  
45 upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in the bed, crying out- "Who's  
46 there?"

47 I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle,  
48 and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed  
49 listening;- just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches  
50 in the wall.

51 Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror.  
52 It was not a groan of pain or of grief-oh, no!- it was the low stifled sound that  
53 arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound  
54 well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up  
55 from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that  
56 distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him,  
57 although I chuckled at heart. I knew he had been lying awake ever since the first  
58 slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since  
59 growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He  
60 had been saying to himself- "It is nothing but the wind in the chimney- it is only a  
61 mouse crossing the floor," or "it is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp."  
62 Yes, he has been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions; but he had  
63 found all in vain. All in vain; because Death, in approaching had stalked with his  
64 black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful  
65 influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel-although he neither  
66 saw nor heard-to feel the presence of my head within the room.

67 When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down,  
68 I resolved to open a little- a very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it- you  
69 cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily-until, at length, a single dim ray, like the  
70 thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and full upon the vulture eye.

71 It was open- wide, open- and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with  
72 perfect distinctness-all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very  
73 marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person:  
74 for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.

75 And now have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over  
76 acuteness of the senses? - now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick  
77 sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well  
78 too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the beating  
79 of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

80 But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern  
81 motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the eye upon the eye. Meantime  
82 the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder  
83 and louder every instant. The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew  
84 louder, I say, louder every moment! - do you mark me well? I have told you that I  
85 am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful  
86 silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable  
87 terror. Yet, for so many minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating  
88 grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety  
89 seized me- the sound would be heard by a neighbour! The old man's hour had  
90 come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He  
91 shrieked once-once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the  
92 heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many  
93 minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me;  
94 it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was  
95 dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead.  
96 I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no  
97 pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

98 If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the  
99 wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned and I  
100 worked hastily, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the  
101 head and the arms and the legs.

102 I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited  
103 all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly,  
104 that no human eye- not even his- could have detected anything wrong. There was  
105 nothing to wash out- no stain of any kind- no blood-spot whatever. I had been too  
106 wary for that. A tub had caught all- ha! ha!-

107 When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock- still dark as  
108 midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door.  
109 I went down to open it with a light heart, -for what had I now to fear? There  
110 entered three men who introduced themselves with perfect suavity, as officers of  
111 the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbour during the night; suspicion of  
112 foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and  
113 they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

115 I smiled,- for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek,  
116 I say, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the  
117 country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search- search well. I  
118 led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure,  
119 undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room,  
120 and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild  
121 audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath  
122 which reposed the corpse of the victim.

123       The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was singularly  
124 at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily they chatted familiar things. But,  
125 ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I  
126 fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still they chatted. The ringing  
127 became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it  
128 continued and gained definitiveness- until, at length, I found that the noise was  
129 not within my ears.

130       No doubt I now grew very pale; but talked more fluently, and with a  
131 heightened voice. Yet the sound increased- and what could I do? It was a low, dull,  
132 quick sound - much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I  
133 gasped for breath-and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly-more  
134 vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a  
135 high key and with violent gesticulations, but the noise steadily increased. Why  
136 would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if  
137 excited to fury by the observation of the men- but the noise steadily increased. Oh  
138 God! What could I do? I foamed- I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been  
139 sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually  
140 increased. It grew louder-louder-louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and  
141 smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!- no, no! They heard! they  
142 suspected!-they knew!- they were making a mockery of my horror!-this I thought,  
143 and this I think. But any thing was better than this agony! Any thing was more  
144 tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt  
145 that I must scream or die!- and now-again! -hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!-

146       “Villains!” I shrieked; “dissemble no more! I admit the deed! -tear up the  
147 planks! here, here!- it is the beating of his hideous heart!”

## I. CLOSE READING AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions according to the text and using your own words:

1. What is the narrator's main concern and anxiety?
2. Does the narrator hate the old man?
3. Describe the two characters mentally according to the text.
4. What do you think is the real motivation of the young man to kill the old man?
5. Comment on the setting description in this short story.
6. How did the idea of killing the old man enter the narrator's head?
7. What made the narrator angry?
8. What did the narrator do after the old man screamed for the last time?

9. Who do you think the narrator is telling the story to?
10. Why do you think the narrator answers the knock at the door with a light heart?
11. Why do you think the narrator placed his own seat upon the spot beneath which the old man lay?
12. What is the final proof of his madness?
13. Why do you think he is so eager to show his cunning?
14. What methods does the narrator use to prevent the policemen from hearing the heartbeat?
15. The narrator believes the policemen are being hypocritical. Do you agree with him?
16. Describe the process by which the young man brings the old man to his death.

## II. LANGUAGE AWARENESS

1. The narrator is constantly repeating his own words. What does Poe aim at by using this technique of word repetition?
2. What kind of personality would you associate with a man who speaks the way the narrator does?

## III. USE OF ENGLISH

Complete the sentences with a suitable word from the "word focus" section.

1. The top door \_\_\_\_\_ squeaks loudly.
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ scream broke the silence.
3. A bystander \_\_\_\_\_ softly when the escaping thief ran into a policeman.
4. Canaries \_\_\_\_\_ and sing all day long.
5. The dog \_\_\_\_\_ his head through the fence.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ fox escaped his pursuers.
7. My hopes \_\_\_\_\_ as I became the last runner in the race.
8. Children should \_\_\_\_\_ from using violence.



9. The constant ringing of the telephone \_\_\_\_\_ me as I was reading.
10. The suitcase suddenly \_\_\_\_\_ and spilled its contents.
11. My trust in him \_\_\_\_\_ when I discovered that he was cheating me.
12. The actor in the horror film \_\_\_\_\_ at the sight of the ghost.
13. The little dog \_\_\_\_\_ attacked the bear.
14. Don't bother me with \_\_\_\_\_ when I am working.
15. People who treat beggars with \_\_\_\_\_ are cruel and unfair.

#### IV. SYNTHESIS AND COMPOSITION

1. Write a story in which the main character has one of the following obsessions: getting rich, being famous, marrying a movie star.
2. Summarize the plot of the story in a few sentences using some of the words in the "word definition" section.

#### V. CONNECTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO THE STORY

1. Imagine the life that the young man might have led and will lead before and after the crime.
2. Imagine what the two characters might look like and describe them physically.
3. Would the story be as good with a different ending? Explain.
4. What do you think might be the relationship between the killer and the victim?

#### VI. SEMANTIC FIELDS

1. Find words which are semantically related to "see".
2. Find words which are semantically related to "sadness".
3. Find words associated with the idea of sound and noise.
4. Find words which are semantically related to "fear" and "increasing suspense".

## VII. LITERARY ASPECTS

1. What would you say is the main theme of the story?
2. What value does the blue eye have to the story? Is it a symbol?
3. The story is extremely intense. Find words or phrases that show the development of its intensity.
4. How does Poe build our sense of obsession in the narrator's mind?
5. How does Poe build our sense of madness in the narrator's mind?
6. What strength does the story gain by having a limited setting? characters? conflict?
7. Why do you think Poe didn't have the old man scream or defend himself?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: EDGAR ALLAN POE

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) was born in Boston the son of actors. He was orphaned in Richmond, VA in 1811 and was taken into the home of John Allan. The Allans took him to Europe where they lived from 1815 to 1820 but when Mrs. Allan died and John remarried he and Poe severed relations. Poe had an unstable youth and entered and left several schools including West Point.

In 1827 he published *Tamerlane and Other Poems* and in 1829 "Al Aaraaf." His Poems, in which content and preface he shows the influence of the English romantic poets, appeared in 1831. He won a story contest with "MS. Found in a Bottle". He obtained the position of editor of *The Southern Literary Messenger* where he began the serialization of *The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym* in 1837.

In 1836 Poe married his teenage cousin who died eleven years later and about whom he wrote his poem "Annabel Lee". In 1840 he published his first collection of stories, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. In 1845 with "The Raven" his national reputation was established and he started his own publication *The Broadway Journal*, which collapsed in 1846. In 1849 a series of drinking bouts left him exhausted and he was found ill by a friend. He died several days later at the age of forty. Although Poe felt that he was primarily a poet his tales of horror and his books of literary criticism have made him increasingly popular in recent years.





*Material Didáctico : Filología, 3*